

# DANVILLE FLYER

*A PUBLICATION OF THE DANVILLE JUNCTION CHAPTER, INC. NRHS*

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The *DANVILLE FLYER* is published monthly by the **DANVILLE JUNCTION CHAPTER** of the **NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY** for its members and other interested persons.

The **DANVILLE JUNCTION CHAPTER, NRHS**, is a not-for-profit corporation organized to preserve the history of railroading in Eastern Illinois and Western Indiana and operates a museum located in the former Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad depot on East Benton Street in Rossville, Illinois. The museum is open weekends from Memorial Day to Labor Day and features many railroad displays plus a large operating HO model railroad.

Membership in the Chapter is open to anyone having an interest in any aspect of railroading. Dues per year are \$17.00 for Chapter membership in addition to \$20.00 for NRHS membership. Meetings are held on the third (3rd) Sunday of each month (except June, July, August and December) at the Pizza Inn Restaurant, Gilbert Street (Illinois Route 1) and Williams Street, next to CSX, in Danville, Il. with lunch beginning at 1:00 PM Central Time followed by meeting and program.

## OFFICERS FOR 2004 - Our 36th Year

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California member Wade Frasch photographed the Colorado Railcar DMU unit on display in the San Jose station this past summer. The unit has been touring the country and the company has hopes that it will be accepted, along with additional units, as a mode of transportation on commuter lines. The unit is designed to handle additional cars behind the lead car.

## Coming Events

### *March 21, 2004*

Monthly meeting, Pizza Inn in Danville,  
1:00 PM

### *March 14, 2004*

Great Midwest Train Show - DuPage  
County Fairgrounds, 9:30 to 3 PM, \$7.

### *March 13 & 13, 2004*

Cisco, IL - Cisco Junction Model Railroad  
Group Train Show, Cisco Center, 10-4,  
vendors and donations accepted.

### *March 27 & 28, 2004*

Urbana, IL - Annual Train Show and Swap  
Session, 10-6 PM, 11-5 PM, Admission  
Free

### *March 28, 2004*

Danville, IN - NMRA Midwest Region,  
Central Indiana Div Train Show and meet,  
Hendricks County Fairgrounds, 10-3, \$3

### *April 24, 2004*

Danville, IL - Chicago and Eastern Illinois  
Historical Society meeting, Danville Area  
Community College, annual meeting. 10:00  
AM to 9:30 PM. Swap tables, displays,  
tour of Danville and Rossville Museum,  
program on C&EI passenger equipment  
and annual member meeting.

*Operating Sessions - see  
listing to the right*

## Next Meeting

The next meeting will be March 21, 2004 at  
the Pizza Inn. As usual, we will order off  
the menu and then begin the meeting  
around 1:45.

Over the last two meetings we have dis-  
cussed the inventory process at the  
Rossville Museum. Starting in late April  
and through the month of May we will

plan some sessions in which, with the help  
of several members, we will begin an in-  
ventory of the items in the museum. Some  
of this has been done in the past but over  
the years we have been very lax in getting  
the items listed. In addition it will help us  
determine the material that will be given to  
the Vermilion County Historical Society  
for preservation in their new museum  
facilities in Danville.

We also need to get tuck pointing and  
other outside work completed on the build-  
ing this year. Member JD Cooke will be  
checking on a firm that might do the  
tuckpointing. The major donation we re-  
ceived last year will go toward working on  
the exterior of the building.

For those of you not from the Rossville  
area on Friday, February 27 a major por-  
tion of downtown Rossville was destroyed  
by fire. The entire southwest quadrant at  
the stoplight, some 10 businesses, was  
destroyed. There were several major an-  
tique shops along with other businesses  
that were lost and it will be a major loss in  
tourist trade for Rossville. One of the  
buildings was owned by former member  
Leon (deceased) and Pete Gossett and  
Pete had moved all of the model equip-  
ment he planned to sell to the museum last  
fall. Some 40 plus years ago Jesse Bennett  
and other O Gaugers had a layout in one  
of the upstairs rooms of one of the build-  
ings. No one was injured in the fire and at  
this time the fate of many of the busi-  
nesses is not known.

Note the dates for model operating ses-  
sions. We have two left at Rossville, Bill  
has two and Rick will have one more  
before summer opening (and certain farm-  
ers hit the fields).. We look forward to  
having you at the sessions.



## Operating Sessions

### *Grafton Davis & Mt. Storm Ry*

309 Dale, Rossville, 12:00 PM

**Saturday, March 20, 2004**

**Saturday, April 24, 2004, last ses-  
sion of this spring.**

### *Chicago, Illinois and Eastern*

Depot Railroad Museum, 1:00 PM

Saturday, March 6, 2004

**Saturday, April 3, 2004, last ses-  
sion this spring.**

### *Danville and Western Railroad*

1819 Coventry Drive, Champaign, IL  
1-3 PM

**Sunday, March 14, 2004, last ses-  
sion this spring**

The program this time will be additional  
Louisville and Nashville slides by Rick  
Schroeder. Next month member Dick Braza  
will present another show of Central  
America railroads in the 1970's.

## Monticello Railway Museum

### *Photo Special*

The museum will host the 4th photo trains  
at the museum on April 24, 2004 starting at  
8 AM. There will be two trains operated for  
the photographers to take photo of during  
the day. The first train will be a freight with  
Milwaukee Road NW2 #1667. The other  
train will be a passenger train with Canadian  
National FPA-4/FPB-4 and Illinois Central



CSX has been using a "Hammerhead" for remote control jobs at Brewer Yard. It allows any MU-capable engine set to be used as remote power, rather than requiring remote-capable locos to be permanently assigned. Image by Doug Nipper.

passenger cars with IC business car #7 on the rear. Saturday night Steve Barry of Railfan & Railroad magazine will do a night photo section. Limited to 35 photographers.

On Sunday April 25, 2004 the museum will do Throttle Times where you can operate a train as engineer. The cost of the photo train event on Saturday is \$40.00. Sunday's Throttle Times is \$100.00.

## **Cimarron River to the NRHS Convention in Minneapolis**

*June 26 – July 6, 2004*

The St. Louis Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society will be taking the private sleeping car *Cimarron River* to Minneapolis for the 2004 NRHS Convention. We will depart from St. Louis with a one-day layover in Chicago before arriving in Minneapolis in time for the first convention activity on Tuesday, June 29. Departure from Minneapolis is on Monday, July 5 after the last event of the six-day convention with arrival back in St. Louis on Tuesday, July 6.

The 2004 NRHS Convention, the first ever held in the Twin Cities, promises to a memorable one with steam and diesel ex-

cursions, streetcar rides, a dinner train trip and museum visits. *Cimarron River* will be parked at the Amtrak station, a short taxicab ride from the Minneapolis Hilton, the convention hotel.

We will board *Cimarron River* at the St. Louis Amtrak station Saturday evening, June 25 and depart at 4:35 a.m. Sunday morning behind Amtrak train 300. Arrival in Chicago is at 10:00 a.m. Passengers will have the rest of the day and evening to tour the many sights of the Windy City and enjoy dinner at their favorite restaurant before retiring in the roomette on *Cimarron River*. Monday morning you can sleep in or see those sites you missed the day before. Our departure will be at 2:10 p.m. behind Amtrak train 7, the *Empire Builder*. The long June days will allow us to enjoy the Wisconsin countryside before following the Mississippi River the last 130 miles to Twin Cities, where arrival is scheduled for 10:25 p.m.

On Tuesday passengers will need to transfer to the Convention hotel for a three-night stay, returning to the car on Friday. The last excursion of the convention is scheduled for Sunday, July 4, and we will be departing Minneapolis at 7:40 Monday morning behind Amtrak train 8, the *Empire Builder*. Arrival in Chicago is scheduled for 3:45 p.m. Passengers again have the evening to have dinner at one of the many restaurants Chicago has to offer. Tuesday morning we will depart Chicago at 8:25

with arrival in St. Louis at 2:05 p.m.

We will be using the roomettes on *Cimarron River*, leaving the four double bedrooms ensuited and open as lounge space. Linens, towels and pillows are provided. *Cimarron River* is fully air-conditioned and is equipped with a shower, microwave oven, and toaster. Ice for coolers will be available enroute.

This will be a Picnic Class trip, meaning that passengers will provide their own lunch and dinner. Our schedule makes it easy to get meals in Chicago in both directions, leaving only dinner on the way to Minneapolis and lunch on the way back to Chicago to be brought aboard. We will have access to the Amtrak Café car both directions between St. Louis and Chicago but will not have access to the dining car on the *Empire Builder*.

Cost is \$625 per person from St. Louis. Your fare includes all rail transportation and seven nights roomette accommodation on *Cimarron River*. (Saturday through Monday night, June 26-29 and Friday through Monday night, July 2-5). Continental breakfast will be served each morning that you are on the car. Not included is ground transportation in Chicago and Minneapolis, or hotel accommodations for the nights of June 29, 30 and July 1. Fare for passengers boarding Springfield or Bloomington/Normal on Sunday morning is \$575 per person.

Reservations along with a down payment of \$300 must be received no later than **March 10**. This will allow convention attendees time to make other arrangements if the trip is canceled. The fare is based on ten passengers. If there are fewer than ten we can adjust the price or cancel the trip.

*Please note that the schedule may be adjusted once the final convention schedule is released.*

For more information or to make a reservation contact:

Rick Sprung Trip Director — St. Louis Chapter NRHS  
0101 Carolynne Drive St. Louis, MO 63128-1603 (314) 842-5980 Evenings E-mail: [sprung@att.net](mailto:sprung@att.net)

*Editor: Note the date that Rick needed reservations by, we received this late and with timing of this publication the date will be past when you receive the newsletter. If interested give Rick a call. This would be a fun trip, you could get on at Springfield or Bloomington, so if interested contact him as soon as possible to see if trip is still on.*

## Texas' last interlocking tower closing

ROSENBURG, Texas - Effective at 8 a.m. today, Texas begins to lose Tower 17, its last active interlocking tower guarding a railroad junction. All Texas towers were numbered, and the one at Rosenberg, 35 miles southwest of Houston where Union Pacific's former Southern Pacific Sunset Route main line crosses BNSF's former Santa Fe line from the north into the Houston-Galveston area, happened to be 17.

Tower 17's closure is said to leave UP's West Bridge Junction in Louisiana, near the Huey P. Long bridge, as the last staffed traditional tower in service (vs. towers at moveable rail bridges at waterways) in the U.S. west of the Mississippi River.

A 36-hour maintenance-of-way window is in effect today for UP signal forces to change out switches, switch machines, and cut over new signals and take down old ones at Tower 17. The UP Glidden Sub dispatcher now controls the remaining switches and signals. Rosenberg operators are expected to find work at other UP locations.

The last day that Tower 17 will be open will be Friday, Feb. 13, with the last operator reporting for work at 11 p.m. When that shift is over at 7 a.m. Saturday morning, the tower will be closed.

Texas' towers were given numbers, at random, by the Railroad Commission of Texas after the 1901 passage of a state law to regulate crossings at grade of railroads. The numeric progression of Texas interlockings has no logic either geo-

graphically or by railroad. It is believed that Tower 196, in El Paso near Union Station, had the highest number. As late as early 1985 there were still well over 100 active interlockings in Texas, but only a couple of dozen or so were controlled by active towers.

*Via TRAINS On-Line*

## Moffat Tunnel repairs to reroute California Zephyr, halt Ski Train

DENVER, Colo. - Amtrak's *California Zephyr*, which operates between Chicago, Ill., and Emeryville, Calif., in the San Francisco Bay area, will return to its pre-1983 routing between Denver and Salt Lake City through Wyoming for a month or more this summer while the Moffat Tunnel is shut down for track repairs, according to a story in the Denver Post.

When the Denver & Rio Grande Western, a Union Pacific predecessor, operated its own Denver-Salt Lake "Rio Grande Zephyr," Amtrak's train utilized Union Pacific tracks via several Wyoming points including Laramie, Rawlins, and Rock Springs. The Wyoming route is about 4 hours shorter than the Zephyr's current route through Moffat Tunnel and the Rocky Mountains, but is far less scenic.

The 76-year-old tunnel, which cuts through the Continental Divide at 9242 feet above sea level 50 miles west of Denver, hosts not only the Zephyr, Union Pacific coal and general freight trains, and Burlington Northern Santa Fe trackage-rights freights, it is also on the route of Denver's Ski Train to Winter Park, a ski resort owned by the City of Denver. This service operates on winter ski-season weekends and now also on summer Saturday excursions. The Ski Train, which hauls an estimated 6000 tourists in summer, according to Catherine Ross, executive director of the Winter Park Fraser Chamber of Commerce, will be canceled during the tunnel repairs.

During the detour period, whose exact dates have yet to be determined, the

*California Zephyr* will miss key passenger stops including Winter Park-Fraser, Granby, Glenwood Springs, and Grand Junction, Colo. The *California Zephyr* is not expected to make passenger stops between Denver and Salt Lake on its Wyoming detour route, although Amtrak has not made any official announcement as to substitute service.

The 6.2-mile Moffat Tunnel, first envisioned by David Moffat Jr., president of the Denver & Salt Lake Railroad, was built to eliminate a tortuous climb over nearby Rollins Pass at 12,000 feet, and in doing so saved 27 miles. About 2500 people witnessed the tunnel's opening on Feb. 24, 1928.

D&SL became part of the Denver & Rio Grande Western in the 1930's, and when the Dotsero Cutoff was opened in north central Colorado in 1934, the Moffat Tunnel line between Denver and Glenwood Springs saved 150 miles and at least 4 hours of travel time over the earlier D&RG route via Pueblo, Colo., Royal Gorge, and Tennessee Pass. A ride through the Moffat Tunnel on the *California Zephyr* takes about 11 minutes.

## From the you thought you had a bad day department - CSX style

Sometime today, CSX tied down a southbound train (Q597 I think) on #2 main north of Danville. Now this is a small section of signaled, secondary main that is restricted to 10MPH due to the fact it still has jointed rail. But I digress.

About 4PM local time, a northbound train passes the parked job and notices smoke coming from a boxcar about 3-car lengths south of the Winter Ave. viaduct. This is on a high fill, not only for the street underpass but also for bridge over the old NYC that went northeast out of town.

Another northbound train, Q128, is asked to stop short of this car and investigate. In the meantime, the yardmaster at Brewer

calls 911 to get the fire department headed that way "just in case". As 128 approaches, they can see thick white smoke coming from the car. About that time, three engine companies and a ladder truck arrive from the Danville FD. Much time is spent figuring how to get men and hoses up to the car. Although a crew is called and enroute for the southbound, there is no one on board to back the train up for better access.

After some time goes by, I finally hear the yardmaster ask if 128 can get moving again. There are other trains behind him. They can't due to hoses across the tracks, but it has become apparent to the fire boys that the car of pressboard lumber will have to be unloaded to get everything properly extinguished, and this can't be done at the present location. They get it doused as best they can, and the plan is hatched to move it to Brewer Yard for unloading.

With the new crew on and ready to go, they call the dispatcher for the signal. But this other traffic takes precedence, and they wait. And wait. After 128 finally moves north, there is at least one more northbound and maybe even a few NS trains that got run. Never mind that the car is technically still on fire!

Finally, the mobile command officer calls his dispatcher and says that if they don't get the car out to Brewer soon, they will lose the boxcar and then they would have a REAL problem. He departs for his station to make some concerned phone calls.

Now, even though they COULD have set the car out at North Yard, a mere 1.5 miles from the original scene, and let the Danville FD finish the job, they choose to move it all the way to Brewer, adding another four miles. And this also does another thing, it changes the fire department territory from Danville to the Lynch volunteer department.

When the car finally makes it to Brewer, on the south end of "C" track in the east yard, Lynch is waiting and ready. But wait! We can't unload this car by hand. They ask for a nearby backhoe, but no one is available to operate it and the keys can't be found anyway. The yardmaster has news that a contractor is coming from Chicago to unload the car. But Lynch wants it unloaded now.

So the mutual aid pages go out for two other volunteer FD's to respond with a tanker truck and more manpower. The cavalry arrives, and I guess they unloaded the car with good 'ole muscle. As of about 10:15 local time, the fire crews are all reporting back to their stations. Don't know if the contractor ever showed up or not.

So if you need some OSB, I'll bet there will be a fire sale in Danville this week! I did hear that the seal was already broken on the car when 128's crew first looked at it, but they couldn't tell if it was broken here or up the line somewhere. Wonder what the folks at the grade crossings thought as a smoldering, dripping boxcar went by.

*Doug Nipper*

## **CSX Taps Consultant To Overhaul Operations**

In an attempt to resolve deteriorating service issues, and straighten out its balance sheet, CSX is turning to rail consulting firm MultiModal Applied Systems to help revitalize its network operations.

The Jacksonville, Fla.-based railroad recently announced its partnership with MultiModal, a Princeton, N.J. based supplier of scheduling and planning software. The consultant's products have been used by a majority of the Class I freight railroad industry.

Most noticeably, MultiModal was hired by CSX's Eastern competitor, NS in 2001, to help the carrier implement its scheduled railroading program, which the railroad dubbed the Thoroughbred Operating Plan. Implementing new traffic routing, blocking and classification strategies, was expected to generate operational savings in excess of \$200 million a year for NS, the consulting firm claimed. Financial analysts have credited the company with helping greatly improve NS' system optimization, particularly during the past two years.

CSX's decision to hire MultiModal also comes while the carrier is in the midst of a

large round of management layoffs and corporate restructuring. CSX will eliminate as many as 1,000 jobs through the restructuring actions. Despite the restructuring, officials for the carrier say they are unsure when service levels or earnings will begin to improve. Changes "can't happen quick enough," said Oscar Munoz, CSX's new chief financial officer, "but we can't predict when the turnaround will take hold."

However, if CSX's actions mirror those taken when MultiModal assisted NS, analysts believe that some operational improvements may be seen in the last quarter of 2004, with a more meaningful impact occurring the following year. Other Class I's saw as much as a 3 percent improvement in their operating ratios because of the consulting work, Munoz noted.

So far in 2004, the carrier's operations largely have been stuck near the same levels as 2003, when service took a serious turn for the worse. Through mid-February, CSX's average weekly train speeds in 2004 have ranged between a low of 20.1 mph and a high of 22.9 mph. The carrier's network velocity has dropped 5.6 percent, year over year, since mid-year 2003, according to figures from Bear Stearns.

The consultant's process will take place in two steps. First, MultiModal will analyze carload and merchandise traffic over a three-to-six month period. At the same time, CSX will implement a new railcar blocking plan and new train schedules. These actions, affecting everything but CSX's unit trains, should be in place prior to the peak season this year, Munoz said. "This is a relatively low-cost concept, but [it's a] thorough review." as the carrier aims to reduce the work associated with moving trains, he said. The carrier historically does this process relatively often, but CSX hasn't preformed such a review in nearly a decade, Munoz noted.

The second part of the process is a more thorough network redesign, which could take about two years to complete.

The railroad and its consultants will evaluate local operations, terminals and yards, with an eye to eliminating some of the least efficient sections.

## Illinois wants more Chicago-St. Louis passenger trains

CHICAGO, Ill. - The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has asked Gov. Rod Blagojevich for money to run more passenger trains on the Chicago-St. Louis corridor, according to a report from Copley News Service. IDOT pays Amtrak \$12 million annually to run daily trains on four corridors linking Chicago and two dozen downstate Illinois communities.

Currently three trains operate between Chicago and St. Louis: the Statehouse, a round trip from St. Louis to Chicago; the Ann Rutledge, which runs daily between Chicago and Kansas City; and the Texas Eagle, which runs daily between Chicago and San Antonio, Texas. A total of 254,946 passengers rode the Chicago-St. Louis leg in fiscal year 2003, and Amtrak figures show that the number of riders grew 29 percent in the last three months of last year. Speculation is that IDOT would like two more trains a day, with one only traveling between Chicago and Springfield. A decade ago, there was such a train, called The Loop.

The Blagojevich administration is working on its proposed state budget for the next fiscal year, beginning July 1, which includes funding for IDOT. The state faces a projected funding shortfall of up to \$2 billion. Balgojevich is scheduled to unveil his fiscal 2005 spending plan to state lawmakers on Feb. 18.

Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari confirmed that talks are under way with IDOT to add service, but he said the railroad isn't sure where it would find additional equipment if a deal is struck. Amtrak's current contract with IDOT expires June 30.

## NS, UP set record for length of coal haul

A move of low-sulfur Powder River Basin coal by Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific Railway helped a major energy producer reduce sulfur dioxide emissions in an environmentally sensitive area of coastal New Jersey. Conectiv Energy's B.L. England plant, near Atlantic City, N.J., sits on the shores of Great Egg Harbor Bay near a resort town and a residential area.

"Conectiv wanted to make sure it was reducing emissions in the most cost-effective way at one of the two units at England station while complying with state standards," said Frank DiGregorio, Conectiv's manager fuel supply. "Introducing coal from the Powder River Basin was the answer."

NS and UP coordinated the coal movement from Wyoming to the New Jersey coast - a distance of more than 2,600 miles. "We believe this is the longest west-to-east coal movement in the United States," said **Doug Evans**, NS director utility coal north.

By blending Powder River Basin coal with Pittsburgh Seam coal, which originates on NS' Monongahela Railway south of Pittsburgh, Conectiv was able to reduce emissions in a cost-effective way that ensures reliable plant operation. **Bill Patterson**, manger utility coal north, worked closely with UP and Conectiv staff engineer Frank Costanzo to negotiate a new joint-line transportation contract. Patterson also was active in coordinating rail delivery of sufficient quantities of the two coals for blending at the plant.

"We worked with our customer to provide consistent, reliable transportation and a cost-effective solution to meet their goals," Patterson said.

"We were very pleased with the transportation plan NS and UP proposed," DiGregorio said. "We were able to bring the right coal and together to provide our customers with the power they need."

## Construction Projects

Spring is finally on the way (thank goodness) and projects are starting up again across CSX and NS systems. URS project managers, including myself, are once again very busy with the influx of submittals for bridge removals and other construction items.

### *Norfolk Southern*

This year we have projects at Dyer, Burns Harbor, LaPorte and Rolling Prairie, Indiana. Burns Harbor is a new bridge for access into the steel mill area. This was the sight of an accident a few years back between a South Shore train and a steel hauler. At the same time the new bridge will span the former Conrail Chicago Line, now NS. Completion should be late summer and the existing crossing will be closed. Other bridges are being replaced over the same line at LaPorte and Rolling Prairie. Track time is minimal for contractors with some 70 trains per day. A project is starting in Bloomington, IL to replace southbound US 51 bridge over NS and in the St. Louis the Corps of Engineers will start a sheeting project along the Kansas City line.

Design continues on the Keystone Buildout project in Saltsburg, PA. Environmental and cultural issues as well as providing bigger openings for deer to cross under the track has caused redesign of several locations. Also, now DNR wants a separate crossing for every small waterway instead of combining two or more to one culvert. Many of these actually amount to a ditch coming down part of the hillside and changes in ditch flows take time to redesign. NS still hopes to bid the project this year. The cost has gone from some \$20 million to over \$30 million due to changes.

### *CSXT*

**Walbridge, OH** - roadbed and bridge-work was completed last year for the interlocking medications. It was planned to complete all track and signal work this year but due to funding the signal portion will be pushed to 2005. CSX is working in



Walbridge Yard to add 6 arrival tracks and 3 long departure tracks along with other work in the amount of \$10 million. As a result we had to design a soil nailed retaining wall under Rt. 795 and our Cleveland office had to get permitting for wetland areas and erosion control. Work is being completed this month on the wall and filling of the wetland area should begin soon so 6 tracks can be construction.

**Blue Island Interlocking**—we had planned to start changing out turnouts on March 15. However, CSX was not ready with men and equipment until April. The IHB is impacted by auto trains until July 1 and felt that would be a better date. A consensus of all involved will see work start on June 21 with completion around the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of July. We will take a 4-day break over the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend. During the first 3 weeks of July the auto traffic is down due to change over for new models. At the same time CSX and IHB will reroute traffic to other railroads to help clear the way for long track outages. For railfans the Blue Island area won't be good for train watching for over a month.

Other work continues on various projects in all states we serve. Ohio and Michigan are very busy this year with several grade separation projects under way.

**CREATE** – I am sure all you of you are aware of the major 10-year project planned in the Chicago area to expedite rail traffic and grade separate many of the major streets that cross the complex rail system. Over the next 10 years the project should expend some \$1.5 billion to solve many of the transportation projects in the Chicago area. The railroads involved have indicated they will contribute some \$220 million as their part of the project.

Our company, along with Hanson Professional Services, has submitted on 4 of the major IDOT Bulletin items for design. These are what IDOT refers to as Phase 1 projects, which includes environ-

mental, geotechnical, cultural, right of way and preliminary design criteria for track and bridges.

Item 24 involves a new flyover for Metra Southwest service (ex-NS) at 75<sup>th</sup> Street over the former CWI and BRC/NS east/west connection. A second flyover for Metra will be at 74<sup>th</sup> Street (Forrest Hill) where the BRC/NS lines crosses B&O CT and Western Avenue. The bridge will continue over the NS lead to Landers Yard and then come down between Landers and Columbia Street. All of this will be a new double track line. BRC Junction will be eliminated and new crossovers and track arrangement made at Forrest Hill. The cost is estimated at some \$250 million.

Item 24 involves the new Amtrak City of New Orleans connection to Union Station along with upgrade of freight routes. The new connection will leave the CN (IC) south of the Skyway, crossover on an abandon NKP bridge, go under the Skyway and come up parallel to NS on former PRR right of way. The line will cross the Metra Rock Island District at Englewood, continue west on new alignment through residential area to the CWI, turn north and head to the former GTW line where a double track will head west. The former GTW line will be upgraded with 3 tracks to the B&O CT where a flyover will be constructed to the west side of the B&O CT to head north. New connections will be made to the CN(IC) line and BNSF lines. Most of this project will expedite traffic on the NS and CN as well as Amtrak. Cost is estimated at \$90 million.

We presented on these projects to IDOT and the railroads in Springfield (3-5). We had 15 minutes to state how we would proceed on the two projects in all parts of engineering. The interview panel consisted of 18 members of the CREATE team from Chicago and railroads. We were first out of 8 firms, had a good presentation and came away feeling good. It is very difficult to convey your message on \$350 million dollars worth of work in 15 minutes.

Selection is set for April 14 and the projects will take 2 years to complete. We are the lead on these two with me the rail lead on the track portion. The other two projects Hanson is the lead and we are the

sub. These involve projects along the UP and CSX along with upgrades of interlockings and connections. We are hopeful to get one of the projects.

Beginning in April I plan to go part time working 3-4 days per week for the rest of the year. If we get one of the projects this will become one of my full time jobs. Not sure how this is going to work - no time for working in the basement.

*Rick*

## Snow Stories

Illinois Central had a number of gondolas converted to plows. A wing plow was mounted on one end and I believe they were ballasted for additional weight. On the Freeport-Clinton "Gruber Line" (and probably on the Iowa Division) these plows were run on regular freight trains ahead of the lead unit, and this usually kept the line open without the need for snowplow extras.

EMD F units with the rounded pilots could do a fair job of plowing snow. During that 1978 - 1979 period the ICG had two of them on the westbound Jack Line local one day and they had to make the side trip from P&N Jct. down the Peoria Line to pick up some loads of grain. I was first trick dispatcher and at noon, when the Chief Dispatcher and other division honchos were out to lunch, the crew called saying they couldn't bust through a drift somewhere north of Middletown. It would probably have been a week before we would make the side trip again so in absence of anyone to consult with I decided to ask them to try it one more time.

They did. They hit so hard the skirt broke off from the pilot beam, went under the wheels and derailed the lead unit. Then they told me the drift was ten feet high, and they had walked out of the cab right on to the snow. Why didn't you say so in the first place? The only thing to do was drain and shut down the unit and leave it there, to be rerailed later when the mechanical and section forces could get around to it. By Bill Dunbar, Bloomington

*Editor:* Recently on the Internet Illiana Group the snow storms in the late 1970's



was mentioned. Several commented about the deep snow those years and some of the rail activity. Bill listed the above story when he worked for the ICG on the ex-GM&O line. If you have any memories of those two wild winters we would like to know and publish your story.

Your editor still remembers seeing a rotary plow for the first time. Ed Davis and I had gone to Rossville to work on the layout on a Saturday. We left sometime in the early afternoon and as we were heading south in my Vega, with scanner on, we heard the Conrail dispatcher taking to a "rotary plow" on the Danville line. Needless to say, we both looked at each other, turned the car around as soon as possible and headed east out of Rossville. As we went east we finally determined the plow was southbound and. We headed to the crossing north of the elevator and waited. In about 15 minutes we could see a cloud of snow coming south and sure enough, a former B&A rotary plow came up the crossing with just north of a former RS-2 as power and 4 units behind the power unit, all covered in snow.

The crew climbed down, did some cleaning around the windows, got back on and headed south in the siding. One crewmember said there were cars in the siding and to go slow. In about 2 minutes they disappeared, minutes went by and we then heard "Stop! Stop! Stop!" and then silence. About 5 minutes later they came out backing up, lined the switch and headed south on the main. What a sight, something we will probably never see here again.

We packed up and headed back to Rossville and home, cold and wet but really happy to be at the right place a the right time.

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## Rail traffic up in February

U.S. rail carload traffic rose 38,149 carloads (3 percent) while intermodal volume rose 47,808 trailers and containers (6.6 percent) in February 2004 compared with February 2003, the Association of American Railroads (AAR) reported yesterday. Thirteen of the 19 major commodity categories tracked by the AAR saw U.S. carload increases in February 2004. The 3 percentage point increase was the largest monthly year-over-year increase for U.S. railroads since October 1998.

Commodities showing traffic gains on U.S. railroads in February 2004 included coal (up 9,870 carloads, or 2 percent); crushed stone, sand, and gravel (up 8,833 carloads, or 13.9 percent); coke (up 6,551 carloads, or 41 percent); and grain (up 5,880 carloads, or 7 percent). Carloads of waste and scrap materials, consisting predominantly of scrap metal and paper, were up 4,351 carloads (12.3 percent). On the down side, carloads of metallic ores were off 5,654 carloads (13 percent) and motor vehicles and equipment were down 1,020 carloads (1 percent).

## Man pulls woman from path of speeding train

CHICAGO, Ill. - A Lockport, Ill., man is being hailed a hero after he pulled a woman to safety just moments before Amtrak's train 4, the *Southwest Chief* bound from Los Angeles to Chicago, struck her motorized scooter in suburban Downers Grove on Tuesday, according to a story in the *Chicago Tribune*. Downers Grove is 24 miles west of Chicago on the Burlington Northern Santa Fe's former Burlington three-track main line, also used by Metra commuter trains as far out as Aurora, and six Amtrak trains daily.

Rosetta Wiedemann, 65, a diabetic who is legally blind, was attempting to cross the BNSF tracks at Main Street at about 2:30 p.m. on her way to a market when one of the wheels on her scooter became lodged between a rail and a plank in the crossing. As she was trying to get the machine to move, the crossing gates activated for the *Chief*, moving at near the 70 mph speed limit.

Thomas Rutecki, 55, from nearby Lockport,

Ill., who was at the station to catch a Metra train, saw what was happening and ran to her rescue. First, he tried to move Wiedemann and her scooter off the tracks, but the handlebars broke off and the scooter remained stuck. Grabbing the woman, Rutecki pulled her out of the way seconds before the train reached the grade crossing and struck the scooter, which flew an estimated 800 feet. No one was injured.

Wiedemann said she has relied on her scooter for many years to run errands in downtown Downers Grove. After learning about her rescue, officials from Broadview, Ill.-based health-care company DependiCare donated a new champagne-colored scooter worth \$3,500.

"This one's a Cadillac; the other one was a Chevy," a grateful Wiedemann said Wednesday as she test-drove the machine outside her home in a Downers Grove senior citizens high-rise building. For his efforts, Rutecki, who regularly takes Metra to work, will be honored by the Downers Grove Police Dept. on March 25 with a departmental lifesaving award.

"I'm grateful for [the award], but I don't think they have to do it," Rutecki said Wednesday. "A hero to me is a guy who runs into a burning building to save some kids, or the firefighters from 9/11. This was just a spur-of-the-moment thing."

*TRAINS On-Line 3/4*

## Iowa shop city sues BNSF over 1858 agreement

BURLINGTON, Iowa - The city of Burlington filed a lawsuit against Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad Thursday in an attempt to force the carrier to live up to a 146-year-old agreement not to move or attempt to move maintenance shops out of the city, according to an *Associated Press* report.

Edwards says the city entered into an agreement with the Missouri River Railroad Co. in 1858 which allowed the railroad to run tracks through the city as long as

the railroad kept its local shops open. That railroad was subsequently absorbed by other companies, which in turn were absorbed by BNSF. The name "Burlington" in BNSF, in fact, stems from this Mississippi River city first reached on the Illinois side by the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, which became known as "the Burlington Route" and was a key element of the 1970 Burlington Northern merger. BN and Santa Fe merged in 1995 to create BNSF.

The West Burlington shops, on the flatland above the river valley at the west end of the city, have been a major locomotive facility for decades. Last year BNSF eliminated 258 local jobs and this month is set to move 93 more to the former Santa Fe shops in Topeka, Kans., leaving only 44 jobs behind.

Responded BNSF spokesman Steve Forsburg, "It has always been the BNSF's policy not to comment on litigation that we have not had a chance to review."

## Wheel Report

Burlington Northern Santa Fe announced that it would begin a new service to transport privately owned automobiles, A BNSF spokesman said that the new service, known as Car-Rail, will start March 8 and initially be offered between Phoenix/Tucson, AZ. and Chicago, IL or Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN. The spokesman added that the service was being operated in partnership with vehicle carrier Autolog Corp. and the BNSF subsidiary BNSF Logistics.

Norfolk Southern suffered an on-duty employee fatality. Steven Hall, Age 40, was killed when he fell under the wheels of a freight car he was switching. The accident occurred in NS's switching yard in Kankakee, IL.

Union Pacific announced that it would transfer over 1,038 positions from St. Louis, MO. to Omaha, NE. A UP spokesman said that the transferring positions are in the areas of accounting, finance and customer service, and also include those positions of UP's wholly owned technology subsidiary, Transcentric. The spokesman added that the transferring positions

would be relocated into UP's new 19-story, 1.1 million-square-foot headquarters complex now under construction in Omaha that is scheduled for completion in August.

Member makes the news – our G Gauge buddy, Bill Sandusky is mentioned in the recent issue of Model Railroader. Bills buddy Ed of Chicago has his HO B&O layout featured in the April issue and Ed mentions Bill as the designer and helping during construction. Some of us had visited the layout last year and it is really great – scenery detail everywhere. We would like to plan a trip sometime this spring, if interested let us know. Trip will have to be made sometime in March or early April.

Some fresh paint is in the CNIC yard in Champaign. Iowa Northern 3800 and 3802 in fresh red/maroon and gray with yellow stripes along with a CSX SD70M add some color to the IC dirty black engines. Also, some old IC engineers are still around. The other day on the scanner I heard an engineer reporting to the dispatcher his train was "ready to go down the Mainline of Mid-America". *Via Illiana -Bruce Stickers*

## Amtrak makes Michigan's 'Blue Water' official

CHICAGO, Ill. – Amtrak yesterday officially announced its new "Blue Water" service beginning April 26 between Chicago and Port Huron, Mich. The train will replace the "International," which operates over the same route but continues past Port Huron to Toronto, Ontario, operating in Canada as a VIA Rail Canada train. VIA will continue to operate service between Toronto and Sarnia, Ontario, across the border from Port Huron, but neither carrier will offer cross-border service there. The International's scheduled late evening arrivals in Toronto and Chicago meant the train missed virtually all the long-distance-train connections at either end, most affecting central Michigan riders who wanted to go farther on Amtrak. Ridership on the International fell 11 per-

cent in Amtrak's most recent fiscal year. The last International will leave each endpoint on April 25.

The Blue Water schedule is more Michigan-friendly. Westbound, still as train 365, it will depart Port Huron daily at 5:15 a.m. and arrive in Chicago at 11:10 a.m. Eastbound Blue Water, still train 364, will depart Chicago at 3 p.m. and arrive in Port Huron at 10:50 p.m. This schedule will allow passengers to make day trips from Michigan to Chicago and return the same evening.

The schedule mirrors the operating pattern of the "Pere Marquette," Amtrak's Grand Rapids, Mich.-Chicago service, trains 370 and 371, also operated under a contract with the Michigan Dept. of Transportation (MDOT).

The Blue Water, named for the region of Port Huron, will serve the same intermediate Michigan stops as the International: Lapeer, Flint, Durand, East Lansing, Battle Creek, Kalamazoo, Dowagiac, and Niles. The train operates under a contract with MDOT. The ticket offices at East Lansing, Flint, and Port Huron are among those staffed.

## California man dies after tossing rope at train

SIMI VALLEY, Calif. – A trespasser was killed Monday night about 8:40 p.m. when he threw at a passing Union Pacific freight train, a jug or some other type of bottle that was attached to a rope, the rope being tied to a shopping cart on the other end. His apparent intent was to watch the shopping cart be dragged along by the train, according to UP spokesman Mark Davis. The end result was that the trespasser somehow became entangled with the shopping cart and was also dragged down the right of way. Two other people who were with him were not injured.

The train, the MRVWCX-9, a manifest extra with 86 cars from Roseville, Calif., near Sacramento, to West Colton in southern California, dragged the shopping cart about 1 mile before it was able to stop.

## A Couple More Shots from Doug's Digital Camera

Hey, Rick left me a blank page, so let me indulge... The image to the right is on the old P&E in Danville looking west at Danville Junction. The line has seen better days for sure. Note the ABL (Approach Block Limit) sign still standing just west of the diamonds. It's been many years since a train got authority to occupy the Jack block, as it used to be called. Now this track only sees remote control switch jobs.



And speaking of remote jobs on the old P&E, here's one facing east at the Daisy Lane crossing. You can see Tee Pak in the back right, so that fits with the consist of tank cars. In the old days this might look like a train waiting for a signal over the Milwaukee at Pande. But they only go about a mile further east to the Central Sates Warehouse. That industry track acts as the interchange with the Vermilion Valley RR.

