

FIRST CLASS MAIL

"THE DANVILLE FLYER"

DANVILLE IL 61834-1013

P.O. BOX 1013

NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## DANVILLE JUNCTION CHAPTER



A set of light power heading south on CSX passes the NS track and signal gangs working at the new Lafayette Junction. September 28, 2000 photo by Rick Schroeder.

# DANVILLE FLYER

A PUBLICATION OF THE DANVILLE JUNCTION CHAPTER, INC. NRHS

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 \$15.00 for Chapter membership in addition to \$17.00 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.

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## Coming Events

### *October 15, 2000*

Danville, IL Monthly chapter meeting at Pizza Inn, Gilbert and Williams Street next to CSX. Lunch at 1:00 PM and meeting after lunch.

### *October 22, 2000*

Operating Session at Rossville - Noon to 3:00 PM. Bring your motive power you want to run and check the article in this issue.

### *November 4, 2000*

Preliminary plans for tour of Lafayette, Indiana Railroad Relocation. Contact Rick at 217-359-2868 for more details after October 22.

### *December 3, 2000*

Annual Chapter Dinner at Pizza Inn, Noon to 3 PM. Program to be announced.

## Next Meeting

The next chapter meeting will be October 15 at the Pizza Inn on Williams Street adjacent to CSX. Lunch will begin at 1:00 PM and the meeting should start around 2:00 PM. Attendance at the last meeting was low and we look forward to seeing more of you at the October meeting.

We will discuss plans for the Operating Session that is scheduled for the following week. Train consists and planned activities will be distributed at the meeting. If you are one of the model railroaders in the chapter be sure to attend if you would like to operate the following weekend. Also, on Saturday the 21st we will be having a Boy Scout group in the museum for Merit Badge qualifications. About 100 are scheduled and we could use some help. In addition, we will be using this day to get ready for the operating session the following day.

Coming soon will be elections and annual dues statements. Does not seem like another year has gone by.

This month we will feature a recent European trip by member Bob McQuown. Bob will cover a tour of Europe along with some rail sites on the trip.



# Lafayette Passenger Stations of the 1950's

*By Wade Frasch*

The last time I traveled to Lafayette was 1994; the 40th. anniversary of my high school graduation. The arrival on Amtrak was still on 5th. Street on the old Monon. After I returned home I read that July 22 was the last day for street running.

My adventure with the railroads of Lafayette began the year before I started to high school. My older sister had been attending nurses training at Lake View Hospital in Danville, Illinois. In order to gain medical training not available in Danville the hospital sent her to Cook County Hospital in Chicago for six months. On weekends she would come home on the New York Central's James Whitcomb Riley; still steam powered at the time. On one occasion when we were waiting for the evening Riley for her return to Chicago two opposing Nickel Plate passenger trains arrived at the South Street Depot. As a coincidence, the eastbound Riley and the westbound Midwestern arrived, but were held outside the depot waiting for the tardy Nickel Plate trains to depart. That was the only time (1950) I ever saw a Nickel Plate passenger train. They were also steam powered and the only thing I remember about them was that the engines were smaller and the trains much shorter than the New York Central's.

My second recollection of Lafayette's railroads was going to the Monon's depot to pick up my aunt and uncle from Dayton, Ohio. In the early 50's the bus companies used that venerable limestone depot on 5th. Street as well. I remember my dad mentioning that the Monon's trains used diesel locomotives, but I didn't know what that meant at the time. After all I always expected a steam locomotive to be pulling a train.

In 1956 I enrolled at Purdue University and joined the model railroad club. There I met friends who were interested in full-scale railroading and we began going to the depots after our model railroad meetings ended. On Wednesday night we would

go to the Wabash depot after the meeting for the 11:40 PM Detroit Limited. For our evening meal after the Saturday sessions we would go to the Nickel Plate diner in time to see the Riley at 6:22 PM and the Midwestern at 6:36 PM at the South Street Depot. Schedules for Lafayette trains in the November 1958 Official Guide showed twelve trains:

## **NEW YORK CENTRAL**

Chicago to Cincinnati

W #303 James Whitcomb Riley 10:45 AM  
E #304 James Whitcomb Riley 6:22 PM  
W #321 Midwestern 6:36 PM  
E #302 Cincinnati Special 12:40 PM  
W #307 2:35 AM  
E #310 2:05 AM

#304 and #321 usually had a C & O sleeper in the consist which took the route of the present day Cardinal beyond Cincinnati. Power varied from the usual two GP's to E-7 & E-8's of both New York Central and Illinois Central. A friend gave me a slide of Fairbanks-Morse C-liners powering the Riley also. Along with the IC locomotives IC coaches were sometimes mixed in with the stainless steel cars of the NYC.

## **MONON**

Chicago to Louisville

S #5 Thoroughbred 12:42 PM  
N #6 Thoroughbred 1:50 PM

Power was a steam generator equipped F-3 or (F-5). Head end cars were heavy-weight RPO's and baggage cars. Express cars were ex-troupe sleepers with the windows covered with sheet metal. Usually there was only one coach. One of those rebuilt World War II hospital cars with six-wheel trucks; very smooth riding. If there were many head end cars or two coaches the Monon would use two F-3's (the F-5's I believe were wreck rebuilds with F-7 grills along the sides). Colors were Indiana University's cream and crimson, but before I graduated most of the cars and locomotives had been repainted into Purdue's old gold and black.

## **WABASH**

Detroit (Toledo) to St. Louis

W #1 Cannonball 11:50 AM

E #4 Cannonball 1:58 PM  
W #3 St. Louis Limited 2:03 AM  
E #2 Detroit Limited 11:40 PM

As I have noted in earlier posts power was E-7, E-8, GP's and PA's. Cars were usually rebuilt heavyweights - dark blue with gold lettering as were the locomotives after the railroad switched from the gray-blue-white original colors.

The Toledo sections were eliminated sometime in 1959 as they were not shown in the October timetable. The unnamed trains on the New York Central were also discontinued in 1959.

The depots in Lafayette were not quite as elegant as Danville's (my opinion). The joint Nickel Plate (Lake Erie and Western) and New York Central (Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis) was a brick and limestone structure with the usual overhanging hip roof. (How they moved it to its present location and raised it while a lower story was built is a marvel to me, but my sister sent me pictures and stories from the Lafayette Journal and Courier so I guess I'll have to believe it). Next to the depot was the Nickel Plate diner. It had similar architecture and also had a clock tower. I know little of its history, but it could have been mistaken for the depot.

The Monon had three depots during my college years. The beautiful limestone structure was near downtown on 5th. Street. A new depot was built at Salem and 5th. with a very small waiting room and a freight house replacing the freight depot along the river at Brown Street. While the new depot was being built the Monon had vacated the downtown depot for a temporary depot in a passenger coach spotted just north of the new depot. Passenger counts were so low that the coach was adequate. I really liked riding on the Monon. The crews and agent were always friendly which is more than could be said for the New York Central personnel.

The Wabash had a depot just off Ferry Street. There was also a freight depot adjacent to it where an SW8 800 h.p. switcher was spotted when not in use. Believe it or not, the passenger depot was

Continued on Page 3

## Microsoft Train Simulator to debut

Microsoft Corp. today announced that it will release "Microsoft(R) Train Simulator," a software program designed to simulate the thrills of the railways on the personal computer, in the spring of 2001. Attendees at the National Model Railroad Association's (NMRA) National Train Show next week in San Jose, Calif., will be the first to see an early version of the software and experience the excitement and adventure of "Microsoft Train Simulator." "Train Simulator" aims to bring the most true-to-life virtual train experience to the PC.

Working in cooperation with six of the world's leading railroads, Microsoft is recreating hundreds of miles of routes with realistic scenery, equipment and operations. Using multiple camera angles, players can take on the role of an engineer, passenger or bystander. Lifelike engineer's control panels, scenery and weather; and accurate elevations and terrain data mirror real-world train travel. Player activities can include anything from keeping passenger time schedules while managing unforeseen barriers and negotiating freight through mountain passes in winter storms to navigating some of the world's busiest commuter lines.

Players can operate nine different trains, ranging from steam locomotives and modern diesels to high-speed electric "bullet trains," as they travel any of six famous rail routes from around the globe. These routes include both historic and contemporary rail operations. The six railroads included in "Microsoft Train Simulator" are listed below:

- o *Amtrak.*
- o *Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway.*
- o *The Flying Scotsman Railways*
- o *Kyushu Railway Co.*
- o *Odakyu Electric Railway.*
- o *The Venice-Simplon Orient Express.*

The NMRA National Train Show takes place Aug. 4-6 at the San Jose Convention Center. Attendees can test-drive

"Microsoft Train Simulator" at booth 592-594. More information about the train show can be found on the NMRA's Web site at [www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org). Scheduled for broad availability in spring 2001, "Microsoft Train Simulator" will deliver unparalleled realism, enabling PC users to accurately recreate railroading adventures from a desktop. "Microsoft Train Simulator" is being developed in conjunction with United Kingdom-based Kuju Entertainment.

More information on Kuju Entertainment is available on the Web at [www.kuju.com](http://www.kuju.com). More information about "Microsoft Train Simulator" and the participating railroads is available on its official Web site at <http://www.microsoft.com/games/trainsim/>.

*RailPace - Microsoft via Steve Benkovitz - posted 7/25*

Continued from Page 3

not a wood structure; even though wood sheathing covered it. In the agent's office was a picture of the depot as built and it had sandstone or limestone walls. In my opinion the railroad made a rather plain depot even more unattractive.

I rode most of the trains to or from Lafayette. I never rode the Wabash from Attica to Lafayette and I never rode the very scenic Monon south to Louisville; much to my regret. The Nickel Plate trains were discontinued before I entered college, but I remember the class just below me taking a ride from Oxford to Lafayette when I was in junior high school. I was unlucky not to be in that class; yet, those train rides I did take are forever etched in my memory.

*The Hoosier West Coast connection*

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## Rail Freight Traffic Registers Solid Gain

WASHINGTON, August 10, 2000— Both carload and intermodal freight on the nation's railroads registered solid gains during the week ended August 5 in comparison with the corresponding week last year, the Association of American Railroads (AAR) reported today.

Carload freight totaled 356,370 cars, up 2.8 percent from last year. Carload volume was up 2.7 percent in the East, and 2.9 percent in the West. Intermodal volume, which is not included in the carload data, totaled 185,449 trailers and containers, up 5.8 percent from last year. Total volume was estimated at 28.7 billion ton-miles, up 2.9 percent from the corresponding 1999 week. Among commodities showing gains from a year ago were metallic ores, up 21.4 percent; food products, up 11.9 percent; and coal, the railroad

### HO Operating Session

**The model group (a very loose knit organization if we may say the least) of the chapter is planning an operating session at Rossville on Sunday, October 22 beginning at Noon. Actual operating time will be from 1:00 to 3:00 PM.**

**Members Bob G, Bill S and Rick S will be cleaning track and setting up the session. For rail operations we will need engineers for each staging yard, a Stanleyville operator, a local out of Yard Center (along with conductor to assist) and a Yard Center job. In addition will need most important position, dispatcher.**

**Train action planned includes general freights, empty coal train and passenger trains out of the staging yards. A local will operate from Yard Center and the Stanleyville operator will handle switching business for that area.**

**It has been several years since the last sessions were held so look for the "bugs" to appear. This is to be a fun session and we invite all modelers in the chapter to come out and try your hand at one of the engineer positions.**

**If all goes well we will plan another one before winter sets.**

industry's largest commodity, up 2.0 percent from last year. On the negative side, grain traffic was off 6.6 percent, primary forest products were down 6.9 percent, and coke volume declined 8.5 percent. In the intermodal category, container volume rose 14.5 percent while trailer traffic was off 9.4 percent.

The AAR also reported the following cumulative totals for U.S. railroads during the first 31 weeks of 2000: 10,676,744 cars, up 0.2 percent from last year; intermodal volume of 5,459,125 trailers and containers, up 3.4 percent; and total volume of an estimated 855.1 billion ton-miles, up 2.5 percent from 1999's first 31 weeks. Railroads reporting to AAR account for 92 percent of U.S. carload freight and 98 percent of rail intermodal volume. Railroads provide more than 40 percent of the nation's intercity freight transportation, more than any other mode, and rail traffic figures are regarded as an important economic indicator.

Both intermodal and carload freight were up on Canadian railroads during the week ended August 5. Carload volume totaled 49,776 cars, up 4.5 percent from last year. Intermodal traffic totaled 33,298 trailers and containers, up 22.2 percent from 1999.

Cumulative originations for the first 31 weeks of 2000 on the Canadian railroads totaled 1,664,746 carloads, up 4.6 percent from last year, and 985,733 trailers and containers, up 11.9 percent from last year. Combined cumulative volume for the first 31 weeks of 2000 on 18 reporting U.S. and Canadian railroads totaled 12,341,490 carloads, up 0.7 percent from last year and 6,444,858 trailers and containers, up 4.6 percent from last year.

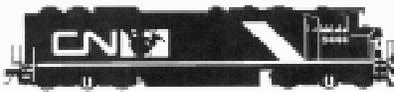
AAR is the world's leading railroad policy, research and technology organization focusing on the safety and productivity of rail carriers.

*This press release is available weekly via the Internet at [www.aar.org](http://www.aar.org).*

## Canadian National Extends RoadRailer Service to Toronto-Chicago Corridor

TORONTO - Sept. 21, 2000 - CN announced today it will extend its dual-mode RoadRailer service to shippers moving traffic in the busy Toronto-Chicago freight corridor. CN is acquiring 200 53-foot, tandem-axle RoadRailer trailers for the new service, bringing its RoadRailer fleet to 400 units.

"The new Toronto-Chicago lane augments CN's highly successful Toronto-Montreal RoadRailer service launched in August 1999," said William K. Berry, CN's vice-president, intermodal. "RoadRailer, a proven, cost-effective bimodal technology, is delivering 97 per cent on-time performance, door-to-door, between Toronto and Montreal. Shippers will enjoy this same superior level of door-to-door service in CN's new RoadRailer corridor between Quebec, southern Ontario and Chicago."



CN's RoadRailer trailers—equally at home pulling up to the loading dock on rubber wheels, or racing down the track behind a locomotive—have all the latest features:

110-inch interior height, 101.25-inch interior width and more than 4,000 cubic feet of carrying capacity. Their smooth air-ride suspension, combined with a slack-free coupling system, provides a superior, damage-free ride for high-value freight.

"The premium rail service makes CN competitive with full-load, over-the-road truckers in this important trade corridor between Montreal, Toronto and Chicago," said Berry.

Starting next month, CN's new RoadRailer service will offer shippers next-morning delivery five days a week in the Toronto-Chicago lane. Shippers will also enjoy second morning delivery between Montreal and Chicago. The existing Montreal-Toronto service, operating five days a week, continues to offer evening departures and early next morning arrivals. Shippers of retail products, food, beverages, automotive parts, packaging—anything that fits in a traditional dry highway trailer—will benefit from the new service, said Mark Lerner, director of CN's RoadRailer operation.

***RoadRailer***

"More and more shippers are discovering that they needn't be tied to the demands and rising prices of the trucking industry," Lerner said. "CN's RoadRailer service delivers all the flexibility of trucking with the efficiency of rail. It also offers shippers a single-point of contact with CN, saving them time and administrative hassle."

RoadRailer technology is produced by Wabash National Corp. of Lafayette, Ind.

*Via Transport News – Internet Connection*



To the right, we see the branch line under construction on Ricks layout in Champaign 4/00

# Another Month Of Record-Setting Revenue Leads To Amtrak's Best Summer Ever

## *Railroad on pace to set new annual ridership record*

**WASHINGTON, DC**—With an all-time monthly record—\$108.4 million in ticket revenue, and the highest monthly ridership in 21 years—2,097,471, Amtrak today announced that August 2000 has capped the best summer ever in the company's 29-year history.

The record-setting ticket revenues broke last month's record total revenue of \$107.2 million, and it was the third month in a row that ridership passed 2 million. With one month left in the fiscal year, Amtrak is on course to set a record for annual ticket revenue and to break its all-time annual ridership record of 22.2 million passengers.

In July, Amtrak announced a new Satisfaction Guarantee, promising its guests a safe comfortable and enjoyable experience – the first national travel guarantee of its kind.

“Through these record-breaking numbers, we see that Americans are responding to our guarantee of guest satisfaction, better service, and improved marketing,” said George D. Warrington, Amtrak President and CEO. “They see Amtrak the better way to travel.”

For the summer months of June, July, and August, Amtrak has hosted 6,161,230 guests, up 6.6 percent compared to the same period last year. Ticket revenue for those same months is \$317.7 million, up 16.5 percent compared to last year, making this the best summer ever for the railroad.

The \$108.4 million in ticket revenue for August 2000 is an increase of 16.5 percent over August of last year, and only the

third time ever that it has topped \$100 million. The 2,097,471-ridership figure is 7.6 percent higher than August, 1999.

Factors contributing to the new records include the new Service Guarantee, better service, successful marketing initiatives, consumer frustrations from air and auto congestion and costs, and strong seasonal travel.

Amtrak's one-of-a-kind Satisfaction Guarantee makes traveling by rail risk-free. Guests who believe their experience fell short may request a service guarantee certificate, no questions asked. For the month of August, Amtrak earned a guest satisfaction rate of 99.5 percent, as approximately 995 out of every 1,000 guests were satisfied with the service they received. In this past month, 10,689 guests requested service guarantee certificates totaling \$934,430. The average certificate value was \$87. Ticket sales for the same period were over \$100 million.

Ridership and revenue were up across the country. In the northeast, ridership was up 11% and ticket revenue was up 22% compared to August of 1999. Amtrak's long-distance routes saw increases of 2% and 12% for ridership and ticket revenue, respectively. In California, Oregon, and Washington, ridership increased 7% and ticket revenue increased 13% for the month.

In the northeast, Amtrak's Acela Regional service, introduced earlier this year, saw its best month yet in August. Ridership surpassed 72,000 for the month while ticket revenue was just under \$4 million. For year-to-date, the Acela Regional service ridership is up 45% and ticket revenue is up 76% compared to the trains the service replaced. The popular Metroliner service also saw record increases with total ridership of 194,931, up 18.6 percent and ticket revenue of \$17,919,363, up a notable 26.3 percent from the same period last year. Overall, in the northeast, Amtrak carried 1,139,877 guests up 10.9 percent generating ticket revenue of \$53,331,459 up 21.5 percent from August of 1999.

Among long distance trains, the Texas Eagle (Chicago-San Antonio-Los Angeles), which increased service from four days a week to daily earlier this year,

continued its record-breaking year with ridership of 15,014, up 55.9 percent and revenue of \$1,661,500, up 44.7 percent compared to last year. Other long distance routes with increases of note are the Crescent (New York-New Orleans) with a ridership increase of 15.9 percent and revenue increase of 15.2 percent and the Illinois Zephyr (Chicago-Quincy, Ill.) with ridership up 13.8 percent and revenue up 14.7 percent.

In the west, Amtrak's Cascades (Eugene, Ore.-Vancouver, BC) and Capitols (Reno-San Jose) services both saw double-digit growth in ridership and ticket revenue. In August, ridership for the Capitols service was 83,771 up 52.4 percent and ticket revenue was \$862,431, up 36.2 percent compared to last year. The Cascades service saw a ridership increase of 15.7 percent and a ticket revenue increase of 14.1 percent.

To date for the fiscal year (Oct – August), ridership is nearly 20.7 million. It is on course to beat last year's total ridership of 21.5 million and should exceed Amtrak's all-time record of 22.2 million. Ticket revenue for the railroad, year-to-date, is up 9.2 percent and has passed the \$1 billion point. It is on track to break last year's record of \$1.003 billion.

Amtrak is successfully continuing along the Congressionally-mandated glidepath to end federal operating assistance in FY 2003. This glidepath reduced Amtrak's assistance from \$484 million in FY 1999 to \$362 million in FY 2000. The company has successfully met these targets and fully expects to continue doing so through FY 2003.

*[Via Amtrak Web Site](#)*

## Construction Projects

As usually happens this time of year work begins to slow down. However, the backlog of new project is also off this year but indications are it will pickup in the spring.

### **CSX**

Wheeler, Indiana is complete and waiting for the contractor to finish the punch list. Garrett is in the same place but we are waiting for the contractor to jack 3 spans of the bridge to correct his construction problem of over a year ago. The last span of the deck on 3 of 4 bridge spans was constructed nearly flat and at the time we told the consultant of the problem. They advised the contractor and he tried to ignore it until the project was completed. When requested elevations showed we were correct he has tried every method possible to get out of correcting the problem. So far we are playing the waiting game but the project sill holds a lot of money against him.

Lafayette has seen most of the CSX track work completed. At Smith Street NS is beginning signal installations that will affect CSX (see the NS item). The interchange yard is complete and in use and the Hill Track is finally back in place and finished. The Evansville project is on hold due to lack of funds and change in operating patterns for CSX. They expect to have us begin again around 2002.

We have a new project in Toledo. CSX plans to construct a 9000 foot connection between the former C&O line and the acquired Conrail line south of Stanley Yard to expedite movement from Columbus into Stanley Yard. We have submitted the preliminary report with costs and alignments to the railroad. Another new project is a three-track underpass at Bremen, Indiana. This project will start this winter if bids are taken in October. Another underpass on the Frankfort line on the north-



west side of Indianapolis will start sometime next year.

Our best news, after months of traveling and expenses in preparing presentations, is that we were selected as one of five firms to provide engineering services to CSX for the next 3 years. We expect to provide service from Erie and Pittsburgh, PA to Chicago and from Nashville north to the same city. We also hope to assist the

December with track work next year. Other NS projects are nearly complete but more work is scheduled for spring.

Lafayette will have all contractor track work completed by the early part of November. Traffic is moving through the corridor to Crawfordsville on a daily basis. From Smith Street south to the old Lafayette Junction the contractor is grading the Wabash roadbed for the connection. NS



Lafayette Junction, the grave site of the tower was uncovered on August 20, a backhoe removes the remains of concrete and steel rods.

Albany, New York office with our resources in the Northeast. Competition was tough with 25 firms to start with. We were one of 8 that made 2 hour presentations to a CSX engineering board early in September. Our team of URS/WVP included ABC-NACO and Safetran for signal design and construction and CANAC for operational modeling and safety training in addition to design work.

### **Norfolk Southern**

Our Keystone project in Pennsylvania continues with final alignment completed, bridge plans under way and preliminary plans completed. The petitions have been filed with the STB and review of the EIS will be underway soon.

Columbus, Ohio will see the SR 315 bridge completed this month (September) and all track work and cuts/throws completed. Archbold is seeing pile driving still under way while abutment work starts. The contractor hopes to set the bridge in

has installed all the turnouts at Smith Street, a pair of No. 20's, No. 15's, and three No. 10's. Track work is in place and surfacing has begun. The signal department has completed most of Royer, the new crossovers near the former Monon Yard, with cantilever signals in place and is working in the Smith Street area. All outlying control points are nearly complete with data radio.

In August I conducted a tour of the new alignment for several of our Internet group. I am planning another tour in early November since all track work is to be complete and cutover is planned for November 20. The contractor and railroad are behind schedule but the date can still be hit if weather cooperates.

We have been providing inspection services in Decatur Yard for an environmental project for NS. Also, field stakeout has occurred for a new ADM connection at the east end of the yard. Both projects will be complete in November.

## ***Other Rail Related Work***

We are providing the temporary alignment design for the construction of U. S. Route 6, 159<sup>th</sup> Street, underpass at Harvey, Illinois. Metra and four tracks of the CN/IC are on the west bridge while the lead tracks into the CN Intermodal facility are on the east bridge. The design will involve 65 mph shoofly for all tracks including Metra. The yard leads will be staged to allow bridge construction and maintain traffic into the lift tracks.

For our Denver office we are providing assistance on a bridge and relocation project in Lewistown, Montana. I have made a trip out there for a preliminary meeting to relocate a portion of BNSF tracks and reactive some Central Montana trackage instead of building a new \$2.5 million overpass west of town.

*Rick*

## **Strasburg Rail Road Celebrates 40 Years Of Steam**

### ***Iron Horses Still Working on This Railroad***

STRASBURG, Pa., Aug. 25 - There's a place in Pennsylvania where time stands still; a place where the romance of the late 19th Century comes to life. It's a time before cars and traffic jams — before gasoline engines transformed America into a vast network of highways. A time when powerful steam engines stoked by rugged trainmen regulated travel and commerce.

The place is Strasburg, Pennsylvania, a sleepy town in the middle of Amish country where forty years ago a small group of train enthusiasts brought an aging railroad back to life. Through years of dedication and sweat, these 24 volunteers restored America's oldest shortline railroad and turned it into a premier tourist attraction, drawing more than 350,000 visitors annually.

On September 1, 2000, the Strasburg Rail Road will celebrate "40 Years of Steam" by

recreating the inaugural journey down the 4-mile track to the town of Paradise. The commemorative train's invited passengers include some of the original trainmen who returned steam to Strasburg in 1960.

Known as the "Road to Paradise," the Strasburg Rail Road takes visitors back to a simpler time when the only competition for overland travel was the horse and buggy — a mode of travel still prevalent on Lancaster County roads. From the stable of 100-year-old steam locomotives to the elegantly refurbished railroad cars, the railroad helps visitors experience the era of the iron horse.

Chartered in 1832, when Andrew Jackson was President of the United States, the Strasburg Rail Road primarily hauled local freight. Now the railroad draws passengers from across the country who come to experience an authentic steam train ride. The trains run on the same timetable used in 1851. The engines and railcars are so meticulously restored that they have been featured in movies such as Raintree County, Hello Dolly and the Wild Wild West.

During the train's 45-minute journey, visitors pass farm fields still plowed by horses and mules. Amish buggies wait patiently at railroad crossings. Passengers can even stop at an old-fashioned picnic grove for a snack while the trains rumble by.

On board are some of the same men who served as conductors and brakemen when the railroad first opened as a tourist attraction. These trainmen, such as conductor Walter Minnich, are here because they love railroading, and they share that love with the railroad's visitors. It's not just a job or hobby. Trains are a passion for these individuals.

"Some of our engineers are doctors and lawyers who maintain their certification just so they can run the trains on weekends," says Minnich.

The trainmen are eager to share their stories with curious passengers. Each train has a narrator who tells the railroad's history spiced with a few tall tales, such as the tale of the lonesome ghost train that's looking for its roundhouse.

For children, the Strasburg Rail Road as-

sumes a special identity. The station is the setting for this summer's feature length movie, Thomas and the Magic Railroad. A full-size Thomas the Tank Engine will return to Strasburg September 16 through 24.

During the holidays, children of all ages enjoy theme rides with the likes of Frankenstein or Santa Claus.

The Strasburg Rail Road offers visitors many reasons to hop on board. But whether it's the lure of a storybook character, the hiss of steam locomotives, or riding in a luxurious Victorian parlor car, all visitors seem to enjoy the railroad's pace of a bygone era. It's this ambiance that's brought visitors to the Strasburg Rail Road for forty years.

The Strasburg Rail Road is open year round. For information about schedules, rates and special events, call 717-687-7522, or visit [www.strasburgrailroad.com](http://www.strasburgrailroad.com).

*Via Transport News Internet Connection*

## **Amtrak, BNSF, and Union Pacific compete for apple business**

After decades of ceding the perishables market to trucks, railroads are not only seeking to regain the business, but suddenly rail-vs.-rail competition is cropping up in the West. Amtrak is preparing a pilot program that would use RoadRailers coupled behind passenger trains to haul apples from Washington state to markets in the East. Now, the Wall Street Journal reports, Union Pacific and Burlington Northern Santa Fe are vying for the same business. Amtrak is set to begin a small pilot program September 1, then follow up with full-scale test runs next year. UP and BNSF say they may test Washington-Chicago apple service by fall.

Both railroads told the newspaper that their bids to capture some of the traffic has everything to do with gaining a slice of the state's big apple market and nothing to do with the fact that Amtrak is seeking the

business.

But at least one Washington state official isn't so sure. "We find it interesting that the freight railroads suddenly discovered a market around here again when Amtrak began talking with the state," Stephen Anderson, rail-manager for the Washington Department of Transportation Rail Office, told the newspaper. Amtrak and some freight railroads have feuded over the passenger railroad's increased mail and express business.

Amtrak, using contractor ExpressTrak, competes with BNSF and UP for perishables business out of California. BNSF operates its *Ice Cold Express RoadRailer* trains, while UP fields the railroad industry's largest fleet of refrigerated boxcars ("reefers") to haul produce east. But the railroads' efforts just scratch the surface of the perishables market, which trucks dominate.

*TRAINS On-Line posted 8/2/00*

## Ohio to begin Ranking Railway Bridge Projects

A state committee charged with deciding which Ohio railroad crossings should receive priority for bridge construction might begin taking applications next month after adopting a selection process, the Toledo Blade reports. Ohio Department of Transportation staff and Don Jakeway, a member of the Transportation Review Advisory Council's grade-crossing subcommittee, said during a hearing that any projects to be funded immediately would be those for which extensive planning and design have been done.

But they cautioned communities against starting environmental or design work on projects independently to get early funding. Earlier in the hearing, local officials requested clearer language in the draft policy and procedures manual that the subcommittee will use to rank bridge projects for funding, but did not object to any of the manual's principles. Even the basic thresholds of 30 trains and 1,000

vehicles daily may be waived by the committee if it sees an overriding reason to do so - such as in cases when only a few trains run but they block a critical crossing for long periods.

*(Conrail Technical Society E-mail Update - posted 8/27) Via RailPace News Wire*

## Collecting Souvenirs

A year or two before I enrolled at Purdue an organization called the Purdue Steam Locomotive Association was formed by some members of the Model Railroad Club. The purpose of the PSLA was to obtain and preserve an operable steam locomotive, but more specifically operation was to be on the one mile long Purdue Railroad. A constitution had been written by its members and approved by the Executive Dean of the University. Plans called for the storage of the locomotive on a siding on the Agriculture Campus near the Nickel Plate Railroad interchange. Use of the University's Whitcomb 44 Ton locomotive for hostling was also planned when a suitable steam locomotive could be obtained.

When I joined the model railroad club at Purdue I was indoctrinated into another hobby called railfanning. I learned about the PSLA, but didn't give it much attention. That was until some of the members discovered a Wabash 0-6-0 switch engine in a gravel pit five miles south of Attica. Since the President of the PSLA (Jim Caldwell) knew that my home was near Attica, he asked me to find out if the locomotive was for sale. Having made friends with the agent at Attica, I asked him what he knew about the engine. The agent picked up the phone and called an executive of the gravel company in Veedersburg. I was informed that the locomotive was about to be scrapped; however, if the PSLA group could come up with the money he would sell it to them for scrap value.

When the "Official" approval to operate the locomotive on Purdue's railroad was sought from a University Vice President there was an emphatic NO given to

the PSLA members. Realizing that there would be no place to run the locomotive permission was obtained from the treasurer of the gravel company in Veedersburg to remove some parts of the locomotive for souvenirs. His very words were that we could have "anything but the bell".

On Saturday, February 21, 1959 five members of the Purdue Railroad Club traveled to Attica with the purpose to fill up Jim Caldwell's 1953 Buick with parts from the ex-Wabash locomotive. The parts selected were the headlight and the headlight from the tender, the throttle lever, the smoke box door, the two Baldwin builders plates, and the front coupler.

We had noticed a car going by the gravel pit several times. What we didn't know was that the occupant of the car was the superintendent of the gravel pit and that the treasurer in Veedersburg had not told him that we would be taking some parts from the locomotive. So we drove right down the main street of Attica and when Jim stopped for a signal light a police car pulled up behind us. He looked in the trunk and told Jim he would follow us to the police station after Jim explained that we had permission to take souvenirs.

When we arrived at the police station the superintendent called the treasurer and confirmed our story.

The plan after leaving Attica was to stop by my parent's farm and pick up my 1952 Chevy to take some of the weight off of Jim's car. Unfortunately my car had a flat tire and my dad didn't want me to drive all the way to Lafayette without a spare so the rest of the group proceed without me. The story I heard later was that it was quite a scene with bystanders seeing the club members carrying their trophies down to the sub-basement of the Purdue Memorial Union! Future plans were to build a locomotive front in the club room, but we became involved in a new model railroad layout and it never happened.

For those interested the Wabash 0-6-0 locomotive was No. 556, Class B-7, Built April 1912 by Baldwin, Builder No. 37647. Scrapped spring 1960. RIP

*By Wade Frasch*

## Wheel Report

**Chicago and Eastern Illinois models** - The C&EI Historical Society and the Calumet Division of the NMRA are selling a four-numbered hopper car from Model Die Casting. The cars are the three-bay hoppers in the 86000-86479 series. The cars are \$12.95 per kit with shipping to be \$3.25 per order for first three cars. The C&EI HS cars are the same price. Cars in three numbers can be ordered from the **Calumet Division of NMRA, Albert Kamm Jr., 2027 S. Greenfield Lane, Frankfort, IL 60638-4409.** The C&EI HS cars can be ordered from **Bob McQuown, 15 Woodland Drive, Bismarck, IL 61944.** Allow 3 to 4 weeks for delivery. No credit cards, money order or check is allowed. The run is limited with only 200 of each number available. Order now while supplies last.

*For you steam fans the Athern C&EI 2-8-2's have arrived in dealers. These engines were lettered for the C&EI as a result of contact from one of our members, Bob Lehnen, and we need to show Athern that the C&EI fans are still around and buying model equipment. (Just got mine and great model)*

**Conrail Power** - The ex-Pennsy E8 purchased from Norfolk southern by Juniata Terminal owner Bennett Levin has been moved to Juniata's Philadelphia shop. The former NS 1000, CR 4020, will receive its original PRR number 5809 and be restored to its early 1960's appearance with tuscan-red paint, wide yellow stripe with shadowed keystone, and dummy induction radio antenna. Levin is not negotiating with Maryland Mass Transit to acquire the retired MARCE8's #60 and #61.  
*Via Cinders*

**New Chapters Added** - three new chapters were added to the NRHS roster at this years convention. The Longhorn Chapter, San Antonio, Texas; the Southwest Florida Chapter in Cape Coral, Florida and the Willow Springs Chapter in Willow Springs, Missouri were welcomed to the NRHS.

Speaking of the NRHS and convention, remember the 2001 Annual Convention will be held in St. Louis, MO on June 19-24 of this coming year. Planned for the

convention is a trip on Metro Link, a guided tour of the Museum of Transportation, a cruise on the Mississippi River, night photo session, and a ride on the Wabash, Frisco and Pacific Railroad. Though not formally announced the St. Louis Chapter is still working on trips using Amtrack equipment with Engine 1522 on the point. Your director has advance registration forms and one will be sent upon request. Advance registration is \$20 and will get you an early mailing of all convention activities and ticket prices.

**Line Abandon?** - It appears that CSX will now apply to abandon the former Conrail line south of Danville. At least at this point the line has been downgraded for service and will be kept only south from Vermilion Grove, site of the proposed coal mine. Traffic has been reduced on the former C&EI line thus taking away the advantage of having a "double track" between Danville and Terre Haute. The Decatur train, Q593/594 operate from Avon Yard in Indianapolis. There was early discussion concerning routing the CP trains over the former Conrail line but decrease in trains on the C&EI has eliminated the congestion.

At the present time Hillary Yard is used for overflow grain cars. A month ago there were three track filled with TOFC flats and spine cars. These are gone and only one track used for grain car storage. The ex CR and ex PRR cars that have spend the last 15 years sitting at the west end of the stub track have been removed and we assume cut up for scrap. The yard office does have a new CSX sign on the south side of the building and has been used for some meetings and training sessions.

## Museum, Caboose and Chapter

As we near the end of another year, there are several needs the chapter needs to address. First is the museum in Rossville. Last year we did get some painting accomplished on the exterior and interior of the building. A few of the exterior windows still need painting and perhaps this can be accomplished before bad weather. In the interior, especially the north room we need to complete restoration of the walls along with painting. This work can continue into late fall with some heat inside to assist in drying.

The C&EI HS is discussing moving their document collection to someplace to preserve and protect it for history. I have mentioned that same for the chapter documents and this was briefly discussed at the last meeting. Many of the records we have, that have been in Rossville for some 20 plus years, need to be preserved for history and this is not occurring in the condition we have in the museum. The Vermilion County Museum is interested in assisting the C&EI and our group and once some agreements are acceptable to the C&EI group we will present a similar proposal to the chapter. This would also free up room for storage.

Next year we need to schedule the Wabash caboose, No. 2824, for painting at Monticello. I have talked to some people at the museum but we need to see if it can be scheduled for spring painting. We would have to reimburse the museum for costs plus a "profit" and volunteer time to clean and mask the caboose, In addition there is damage to windows and siding that must be repaired before painting.

We have some tasks ahead of us and planning is needed into the next year.

*Rick*

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Remember the operating session at Rossville on October 22. Bring your motive power to run. Everyone is welcome.