

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 \$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.

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Visit our Chapter WWW Home Page On-Line - <http://www.prairienet.org/djc-nrhs/>



In the summer of 2004 the former C&EI coaling tower still stands over the CSX mainline on the north side of Sullivan, Indiana.

Coming Events

September 19, 2004

Danville, IL - We start the regular Chapter monthly meetings at the Pizza Inn, corner of Gilbert and Williams Street, 1:00 PM.

September 18 & 19, 2004

Monticello IL - Railroad Days, special events and trains all weekend.

October 2-3, 2004

Springfield, IL - Great American Train Show, Illinois State Fairgrounds, 11-5 each day.

October 24, 2004

Bloomington, IL - Central Illinois RR Club, train show, Interstate Center on Rte 9, 9-3, \$5.

November 6, 7 & 13, 2004

Monticello, IL - Throttle Time at the museum, reservations required

December 5, 2004

Danville, IL - Annual meeting at the Pizza Inn.

Next Meeting

The September meeting will be held on Sunday, September 19 at the Pizza Inn. As usual, we meet around 1:00 PM, order from the menu and start the meeting around 1:45 PM. Dave Sherrill will present the program, a video of steam and early diesel around the Peoria area.

In May we voted to tuckpoint part of the building. Over the summer President Dave Sherrill has been grinding out the mortar on the front of the building. Now that we are closed for the season we need to concentrate on grinding more joints in preparation of tuckpointing. The more we do the more money we will save, or the more we can get tuckpointed. We need to get this done, especially around the front door and bay window and on the back porch

area. There are other locations but these are the critical. Your editor plans to work some Friday's providing job does not interfere :-)

We had a representative at the museum each weekend during the summer and we thank you for helping. Attendance seemed to be up and over the Labor Day weekend we had a large number of visitors. With the season over we plan to get the work completed on the outside of the building and also start setting up the model layout for operating sessions. Please note the listing in this issue for the session schedule.

For those that attended the national convention this summer I would like to have a write-up of your experience to inform the members.

Amtrak to Stop Carrying Mail.

Amtrak plans to stop carrying mail in October as it refocuses on its core business of transporting passengers.

"The profit margin is small and we feel that making these changes will improve our bottom line, make the trains more efficient," Amtrak spokesman Cliff Black said.

The U.S. Postal Service has used passenger trains to carry mail since 1831, when some of the first regular passenger rail service started in the United States. The national passenger railroad carries mostly bulk mail under a \$60 million per year contract with the U.S. Postal Service.

Most of the mail, which Mr. Black calls "a lot of magazines," is carried on long-distance routes. Some first-class mail is carried shorter distances. Amtrak informed

the Postal Service of its decision last week.

Mr. Black said "interference with passenger train operations" compelled Amtrak's management to curtail the contract.

The interference includes delays from coupling and uncoupling freight rail cars to passenger trains. Amtrak also has to divert some of its resources to maintenance of the rail cars. Amtrak is under pressure from the Bush administration to operate more efficiently. The administration proposes giving Amtrak a \$900 million annual

subsidy when the new fiscal year begins Oct. 1. Amtrak officials say the \$900 million figure is about half the amount they need and could force the railroad to shut down before next summer. It operates with a \$1.2 billion budget this year.

Stopping mail service might represent a historical precedent, but would not significantly change the railroad's operations, Amtrak officials said. Before passenger trains started carrying mail, "a lot of it was still by stagecoach," said Nancy Pope, historian for the Smithsonian Institution's National Postal Museum. The nation's freight railroads continue to carry mail through their "intermodal" service, according to the Association of American Railroads (AAR). Ending mail service on Amtrak is likely to shift more bulk mail to freight railroads, long-haul trucks and airline service, said Tom White,

AAR spokesman. "It really depends on what the Postal Service's needs are," Mr. White said.

Norfolk Southern has already cut a deal with Amtrak to purchase all of the RoadRailer trailers to add to the Triple Crown Fleet. Over the past months NS has added some 1000 trailers to the fleet as business continues to increase.



Illinois city to celebrate depot's 150th anniversary

Batavia, Ill. - A special celebration marking the sesquicentennial of Batavia's railroad depot will take place from September 10 to 12, according to a story in the Chicago Tribune. Highlights are to include a dedication of a new permanent railroad history exhibit at 10 a.m. on September 11, plus live folk music and storytelling. On September 12 there will be a program on railroad history in the Fox Valley at 2 p.m. at the Batavia City Council chambers.

Built in 1854, the depot is believed to have been one of the oldest stations still in operation along the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy when it was shuttered in the late 1960s. Local businessmen later bought it with the aim of preservation. In 1973, the depot was moved 9 blocks west, from Webster and Van Buren streets on the east side of the Fox River to its present location at Houston and Water streets on the west side of the river.

Preservation grants from the county totaling more than \$191,000 have been awarded since 1998 to help restore the former station into what is now the Batavia Depot Museum.

[Via Trains On-Line](#)

Western Maryland Railway

It was reported in the August 5 Cumberland Times-News that the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection cited the WMSR after a July 9th inspection, precipitated by complaints by Ridgeley residents.

The Departments Division of Air Quality determined that the maintenance facility in Ridgeley "is in violation of West Virginia code because of improper operating practices creating excessive particulate emissions from the exhaust from the steam locomotive operation, impacting the residents of Ridgeley".

The consequences: civil or criminal penalties, which could include fines of up to \$10,000 per day for each violation. However, if it is the railroads first violation and it is corrected within 30 days after receiving notification, which was dated July 22, "no additional enforcement action will be taken.

The results: Subsequent trains operated with EMD, not Baldwin, power until problem solved.

Editor: The MRM is in the process of getting their steam engine to run, maybe sometime in 2005 or 2006. Hopefully they will review Illinois EPA requirements before entering Monticello.

Consolidated Rail Corporation

Abandonment Exemption

Vermilion and Champaign Counties, Il

Decided: August 6, 2004

On February 7, 1997, a decision and notice of interim trail use or abandonment (NITU) was served authorizing a 180-day period for Champaign County Design and Conservation Foundation (CCDC Foundation) to negotiate an interim trail use/rail banking agreement with Consolidated Rail Corporation (Conrail) for approximately 24.50 miles of railroad known as the Pekin Secondary Track from approximately milepost 4.00 to approximately milepost 28.50, in Vermilion and Champaign Counties, IL. At the request of the CCDC Foundation and CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSXT), which is the successor to Conrail's interest in this proceeding, the negotiation period under the NITU was extended several times; the latest extension was scheduled to expire on July 30, 2004.

On July 28, 2004, CSXT filed a request for an extension of the negotiating period until January 30, 2005. CSXT states that it and CCDC have been unable to finalize trail use negotiations. Additionally, CSXT requests an extension of the consummation notice filing deadline until January 30, 2005. The Board's regulations at 49 CFR

Operating Sessions

Grafton, Davis & Mt. Storm Ry.

Saturday, September 25, 2004

Saturday, October 23rd, 2004

Saturday, November 27th, 2004

Saturday, December 18th, 2004

Saturday, January 22nd, 2005

12:00 to 3:00+, 309 E. Dale Avenue,
Rossville

Chicago, Illinois & Eastern Railroad

Saturday, October 2, 2004

Saturday, November 6, 2004

Saturday, December 4, 2004

Saturday, January 8, 2005

1:00 to 3:00+ at the Depot Museum,
Rossville

Danville and Western Railroad

2005 dates to be announced.

1152.29(e)(2) require the filing of a notice of consummation within 1 year from the service date of the decision authorizing an abandonment, but only if there are no legal or regulatory barriers to consummation at that time. The trail use condition imposed in this proceeding is a regulatory barrier to consummation (see 49 CFR 1152.29(e)(2)). Pursuant to 49 CFR 1152.29(e)(2), CSXT has 60 days following the satisfaction, removal, or expiration of imposed conditions to file a notice of consummation of the abandonment. To provide certainty to CSXT, however, the Board will provide that the notice of consummation need not be filed until January 30, 2005.

Where, as here, the carrier has not consummated the abandonment at the end of the previously imposed negotiating period and is willing to continue trail use negotiations, the Board retains jurisdiction and the NITU negotiation period may be extended. Under the circumstances, an extension of the trail use negotiating period is warranted. See *Birt v. STB*, 90 F. 3d

580, 588-90 (D.C. Cir. 1996); *Grantwood Village v. Missouri Pac. R.R. Co.*, 95 F.3d 654, 659 (8th Cir. 1996) cert. denied, 519 U.S. 1149 (1997). Because an extension of the consummation notice filing deadline and the additional NITU negotiating period will promote the establishment of trail use and rail banking consistent with the National Trails System Act, 16 U.S.C. 1247(d), and the rail carrier has indicated its willingness to continue negotiations, the requested extension will be granted. See Policy Statement on Rails to Trails Conversions, Ex Parte No. 274 (Sub-No.13B) (ICC served Feb. 5, 1990). Accordingly, the NITU negotiating period and the consummation notice filing deadline will be extended until January 30, 2005.

This decision will not significantly affect either the quality of the human environment or the conservation of energy resources.

It is ordered:

1. CSXT's request for an extension of the negotiating period and its request for an extension of time to exercise abandonment authority are granted.
2. The negotiating period under the NITU is extended until January 30, 2005.
3. The authority to abandon must be exercised on or before January 30, 2005.
4. This decision is effective on its service date.

*By the Board, David M. Konschnik,
Director, Office of Proceedings.*

Genesee & Wyoming announces lease of the P & P U

Genesee & Wyoming Inc. announced today (8/30) that its newly formed subsidiary, the Tazewell & Peoria Railroad, Inc. (T&P), has signed a twenty year agreement to lease the assets of the Peoria and Pekin Union Railway Company (PPU). The owners of PPU include Norfolk Southern Railway Company, operating subsidiary of Norfolk Southern Corporation, Union Pacific Railroad Company and the Illinois Central Railroad Company (owned by

Canadian National Railway Company). The PPU system is contiguous with GWI's Illinois & Midland Railroad, which is based in Springfield, Illinois.

Operating over approximately 20 miles of track in the counties of Tazewell and Peoria, Illinois, PPU's customer base includes shippers of grain, steel and machinery products. In addition, PPU provides switching service for eight interconnecting railroads, including four Class I carriers (Canadian National, Norfolk Southern, Union Pacific, and Burlington Northern Santa Fe) and four short line carriers (Toledo, Peoria and Western, Iowa Interstate, Pioneer Industrial, and GWI's Illinois & Midland).

GWI expects that the T&P will contribute approximately \$10 million in annual revenue and that the transaction will be immediately accretive to its earnings per share. The twenty-year lease contains provisions for automatic five-year renewals. The lease payment may be adjusted based on certain factors, including inflation and customer shipment levels.

The boards of directors of both GWI and PPU have approved the transaction, which is subject to regulatory approval as well as other closing conditions. It is anticipated the T&P will commence operations by the fourth quarter of 2004.

Mortimer B. Fuller, Chairman and CEO of GWI, commented "We are pleased to be taking over the operations of a high quality terminal railroad and to be expanding our presence in the State of Illinois. We believe that our operating efficiencies and service commitment will ensure that this terminal railroad remains a competitive transportation hub in the Greater Peoria railroad system."

GWI is a leading operator of short line and regional freight railroads in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Australia and Bolivia. The Company operates in five countries on three continents over approximately 8,100 miles of owned, jointly owned or leased track. It also operates over more than 3,000 additional miles under track access arrangements.

Railstar Chosen To Run Georgetown Loop Line

Railstar Corp. of Cape Vincent, N.Y. has been selected by the state of Colorado to operate the Colorado Historical Society's (CHS) Georgetown Loop Historic Railroad beginning with the 2005 operating season. The current operator, Georgetown Loop Railroad, Inc., which is running the line until October 3, the end of the 2004 season, had a contractual impasse between it and the CHS. Georgetown Loop Railroad, Inc. owns the five locomotives and about 50 pieces of rolling stock currently on the line.

According to a story in the Denver Post, Mark Greksa, co-owner of Georgetown Loop Railroad Inc., said his company would not make its equipment available to the new operator and that the locomotives and rolling stock would go to either a railroad museum or another location where he could continue to grow his business. "This equipment is our children, and after the way we've been treated by the historical society, no way, never," Greksa said to the Post, adding that his team's negotiations with the CHS broke down after they were unable to agree on \$100,000 in expenses.

When contacted by *Trains* magazine, Ron Trottier, vice president and general manager of Railstar, said the subject of new rolling stock to operate the line was not open for public discussion yet, but he did say that his company and the CHS were looking into equipment currently in park settings either owned by the Society or capable of being leased for operation. "We think it [the railway] has been a very well-run operation, and we don't tend to move that around much," said Trottier. Railstar's contract is for 10 years with a 10-year renewable option. "We're in it for the long haul," he said. The Georgetown park, which has been operating for three decades, re-creates 3.5 miles of the 1877 narrow-gauge line that originally provided freight and passenger service to silver mining camps between Denver and Silver Plume, Colo. In an effort to reach the

mines, railroads including the Colorado Central began construction to Golden, Colo., with the intention of extending to the mining town of Leadville. This line never reached that goal, settling for providing freight and passenger service to the mining camps around Silver Plume. The Georgetown line was abandoned in 1939.

Although just 2 miles separate Georgetown and Silver Plume, the elevation difference is over 600 feet. The original railroad twisted and turned to gain the elevation, including a spiral on which it crossed over itself on the Devil's Gate Viaduct, 300 feet long and almost 100 feet high. Today's operation takes place on a re-laid portion of the original railroad, and crosses a reconstructed Devil's Gate bridge over Clear Creek and the track below. The Park includes nearly 1,000 acres, 12 buildings and bridges, and 4.5 miles of track. "We are looking forward to competing against a company we helped create," Greska said to the Post. His company also operates the Royal Gorge Route Railroad, a 12-mile standard-gauge, diesel-powered tourist train operation from Canon City, Colo. to the Royal Gorge on former Union Pacific track previously part of the Denver & Rio Grande Western.

Railstar currently operates the Belfast & Moosehead Lake Railroad in Maine, and owns and operates the Erie Canal Village Historic Park and Museum in Rome, N.Y., which includes a 2-foot narrow gauge steam railway.

Via TRAINS On Line 8-22

Locomotive Notes

By Tuch

This will be a very short one. We'll start off with the big news:

The latest order of Dash 9-44C's for Canadian National are being shipped. Three of them were delivered to Markham today (August 12th). They are the 2697, 2698 and 2701. All three of them are carrying four inch "IC" sublettering where it could be squeezed in below the road numbers. Aside from the sublettering, the only visible changes are louvers below the cab under the road numbers. These units are

equipped with air conditioning and there is an apparent change to where the units are being mounted.

Other Dash 9's have them mounted as a large unit behind the cab on the Fireman's (left) side. There is no outside mounted unit on these. So I would surmise that it is now under the deck, hence the louvers.

I was able to stop at Woodcrest when I tied up this evening and got a quick look at the 2697 and 2701. I boarded them both and took a quick look in the cabs to make certain they had the A/C. The heating and ventilation selector switch does indeed show two A/C settings. And as with all previous Dash 9 orders, these have the standard control stands. (YEA!)

2697 has serial number 55117 with a build date of 06/04. The blue card in the cab shows the first inspection as 08/04/04. I would gather this as the date the unit was released for shipment.

2701 has a serial number of 55121 with a build date of 07/04. Again, the blue card shows the first inspection as 08/04/04. Both units were running inside F Building. I did not see the 2698 anywhere. I drove around the facility looking for it but could not find it. The Foreman thought it was on the "dispatch track" but I did not see it there.

I didn't get a chance to find out if the units were shipped prepared for service or if GE Reps were at Woodcrest to place them into service after a final inspection and preparation. I do know there were people from the Mechanical Department at Erie last week, so I believe they may have done the final inspection and prep there just prior to shipping them.

I will try to get a long look at the next ones that come in should I get the chance. I will make notes and send them out at that time.

A correction from the last column; the GTW 5833 and 5834 DONOT have remote control equipment as I previously reported. The 5832 is the highest numbered GT unit to be equipped with it.

With reference to the CN 2667 that was wrecked comes this bit of information from reader Bill Miller; "CN 2667 wrecked at Mirror, AB 2004-03-08; retired 2004-07-

15; hulk sold to GE for parts (for \$70,000) which may or may not be part of replacement unit CN 2727. As an add-on to the IC 2697-2726 series, it could also come out as IC 2727."

With this information in mind, it is highly likely that the surviving parts will be used on the 2727. Depending upon the total content of reused (recycled perhaps?) parts, it is quite conceivable that the 2727 could actually be designated as some sort of rebuild. This will save CN money on taxes and the overall price of it as it will not be considered a brand new locomotive. It could be the first Dash 9-44CR. Now this is speculation on my part, but I will look into the idea and see if this, or something very similar is what will happen. Should this be the case, it may not be an "IC" unit but rather a pure CN unit.

Look to see more WC SD45's bite the dust as the latest order of Dash 9's is received and placed into service. Some of these units have really become quite ragged and several of them are not as reliable as they once were. I had the 6587 Wednesday as my trailing unit and it was pretty pathetic. There was oil blowing out the exhaust and it was suffering from ground relay (high voltage ground) trouble as well.

I received word from several IHB employees that the rebuilt SW1500's, referred to as "Pumpkins" by IHB employees owing to their orange paint, are not fairing very well. There are many complaints of poor performance and increased wheel slip problems over their unrebuilt brethren. One employee told me point blank, "the older, unrebuilt ones actually run far superior to the rebuilt ones." At least they look pretty good anyway.

From Northwest Indiana, Tuch

KBSR Alco Power

I talked with a KBS employee about their old power. Here's what he told me.

1. RS-11s 301, 309 and 318 have been scrapped. They were scrapped on site. The only visible remains I could see were some Alco truck assemblies stacked up near the shops.

2. As reported in an earlier post, RS-11s

312 and 324 have been sold. Both are now sitting in the shop area. 312 is now lettered VLIX and 324 is lettered DL. The guy I talked with didn't know when they would be shipped out, but he thought it would be soon. If you want photos, better hurry. In any case, I'll be posting photos of them in a day or two.

3. RS-20 (ex-RS-3) 308 and RS-11 321 were also sitting in the shop area. They are still in operating condition. I was told that KBS is now pondering whether to put them up for sale.

Forgot to ask about C-420 315, and no information was offered about it. But I was told that just three engines had been scrapped, so maybe it's already been shipped somewhere. *Via Internet - Bill Gustason, August 5, 2004*

Update - believe Vintage Locomotive bought the entire lot, is saving the most servicable units and the remainder cut up with the parts saved for use on other Alcos. Same group picked up ex-D&H/LV 408 from where it had been leased to the Adirondack RR in NY and has quite a fleet of locomotives. If I remember right the unit with the DL marks was swapped to them for a locomotive they had after the purchase - been a while since I heard about it, and it was second or third hand by then too. *Via Bill K - Internet*

Work Sessions for Tuckpointing Museum

At the next meeting we will establish work sessions to get the building ready for tuckpointing this fall. The more we do as volunteer work the more the contractor will do for the funds that have been authorized. We need your help.

Rail Design and Construction Projects

Norfolk Southern

The design of the Sidney, Illinois siding has been completed and NS took bids from contractors recently. They plan to start as soon as permits are approved, which should be by the middle of September. There is an existing bridge just west of the west end of the existing siding and NS plans to replace the superstructure as part of the project. It has been decided to replace it before the new on the second track is built. Transportation has give engineering 4 hours to complete the change out of the two span structures. Roadbed work will occur before the bridge building to provide a staging place for the work.

NS is looking to double track many portions of the former Wabash from Peru to Bement, end of the existing double track. Look for this work to occur over the next 2-5 years with completion of track between existing sidings. As of this month this line is up to 40-50 trains per day and operations are becoming a problem.

This year there are a number of grade separation projects on the former Conrail Chicago line in northern Indiana. Some politicians keep saying that the economy is bad but never before has there been so much construction work in Indiana and Ohio. Contractors are covered up with work. In Mishawaka, IN there are plans for a new underpass for Capitol Avenue. This work is in design and construction is planned for 2006-7.

CSX

The siding at Rushville, Indiana was completed on September 1 and the signals tested and placed in service. But due to tape load problems at the dispatching center in Jacksonville the turnouts were spiked and the railroad had to wait until September 15 for the new tape load and use of the siding.

Blue Island interlocking was rebuilt in July and all track work is complete. The CSX

and IHB lines are all up to 30 mph and trains are moving through the community much faster today. It took 12 days to complete the work with some 40 employees of the general contractor, rail contractor and CSX (along with myself from URS) to complete the work in 16-hour days. After almost 3 years it is great satisfaction to see our design project serving the rail industry.

CSX in C&EI territory

As many of you know I have been a Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad fan all my life, at least after I remember seeing the first trains. I also helped start the C&EI HS and serve as president now.

Being in the engineering business and handling various design projects I had not worked much on the former C&EI lines. In 2000 we started a project for CSX in Evansville but that part was on the former L&N and NYC lines they now own. In early 2001 the project was put on hold by CSX and soon forgotten about.

Two weeks ago we got the call to meet two CSX engineers in Evansville to look at the Evansville problems again along with other capacity improvement items. I can not tell you what the plans are as that is confidential information for the railroad. I can tell you that in the course of 3 days I walked some 5 miles of former C&EI lines in the areas of Evansville, Hazelton, Decker, King to Princeton, Princeton to North Gibson, Alice siding south of Vincennes, track changes at Vincennes, a siding at Smith and one at Beman on the former B&O west of Vincennes. We quickly prepared sketches at each location for track changes and sidings and prepared estimates for construction costs. CSX it receiving at least one coal train per day off the UP at St. Louis and routes it to aeras south of Evansville. This increase in business and that which will occur next year is forcing CSX to review capital expenditures and plan what can be spent this year to help the congestion problem and what will be set aside for the next few years. As usual, the items they will want for 2005 will get started now. Once they are designed, approved and started I can publish information.

CREATE

The big Chicago area project, will see major funding be approved by the end of September and design work started. We have 3 projects to design, one for CSX line, one for the CSX/BNSF connection at McCook and the 3rd main for the UP at Proviso Yard. Will be good wintertime work.

Alaska Railroad

The Alaska Railroad will be putting out proposals for an 85-mile extension from their line to a military base. URS and another firm are teaming to go after the project. Three of us from the lower 48, myself, one from Denver and one from Portland, made the trip to Anchorage to present the companies to the Alaska Railroad. I am to fly up on the 9th and back on Sunday the 12th. By the October meeting I should have some photos to show as on Saturday we are supposed to tour the yards and then some of the lines that are being relocated on the Alaska Railroad.

UP Cascade Area Tunnel Fire Extinguished

Union Pacific's tunnel No. 7 near Oakridge in Oregon's Cascade Range, on fire since August 14 and severing the railroad's north-south "I-5 Corridor" route between Seattle, Wash., and California, is back in service, according to UP spokesman John Bromley.

"Crews got the fire knocked down over the weekend and took care of the hot spots," Bromley said, adding that there was a fair amount of clean-up involved, including removing charred timbers and replacing burned ties and buckled rail. A ballast tamper operated through the bore, following work trains that did so. This afternoon, UP announced that the first revenue train through, as expected, was a



northbound freight, at 11:38 a.m. Pacific time, the MWCCO of the 19th, a merchandise train from West Colton, Calif., to Eugene, Ore., for interchange to the Central Oregon & Pacific (CORP). Four southbound freights were to follow. As many as 19 trains a day traverse the 3,164-foot tunnel, including Amtrak's "Coast Starlight" in each direction between Seattle and Los Angeles. Although UP has the tunnel back in service, the exact date for resumption of through Amtrak service is not as clear.

"We haven't been told the tunnel is open and have no information when full Coast Starlight service will resume," said an Amtrak spokeswoman about Noon Eastern time. Last Friday, Amtrak began busing passengers between two separate sections of the Coast Starlight, one with full equipment between Klamath Falls, Ore., and Los Angeles, and a train with coaches, lounge, and diner, but no sleeping cars, on the daylight portion between Eugene, Ore., and Seattle. The fire was originally reported by a freight-train crew as they passed through the tunnel about 1:30 p.m. on the 14th. Railroad employees wearing oxygen masks went inside to assess the damage, finding buckled rails and fire in the tunnel walls behind the concrete lining, which was burning chunks of wood which reportedly had been used to fill the gap between the bore and the lining when the latter was installed. Firefighting equipment, including water tankcars, were brought to the scene.

Union Pacific had detoured most of its Seattle/Portland-California traffic via Pocatello, Idaho, and Salt Lake City, Utah, with southern California traffic then continuing via Las Vegas, Nev., to the Los Angeles area. Northern California traffic went via Salt Lake City and then over Donner Pass to Sacramento and Oakland. A handful of freight trains detoured over Burlington Northern Santa Fe's nearby parallel "Inside Gateway" through central Oregon - the old Oregon Trunk - on which UP has trackage rights, but operations were hampered by the line's limited capacity.

When the tunnel fire originally closed the line, Amtrak's Coast Starlight schedule was quickly revamped to have it operate

only on each end of its run, with Amtrak not offering any form of substitute service between Oakland and Eugene, missing stops such as Martinez, Sacramento, Chico, and Redding, Calif., and Klamath Falls, Ore. That changed last Friday when Amtrak began running the southern portion of the Starlight as far north as Klamath Falls and instituted bus service between that city and Eugene to fill in the gap. Fueling the crisis, if not the fire, were rumors of the tunnel's collapse and the line potentially being out of service for months, which was a surprise to crews working the fire. They had not only made progress controlling the fire, said UP's Bromley, but sent "recon teams" into the bore to inspect for damage.

The line, built by Southern Pacific and known as The Natron Cutoff between Black Butte, Calif., and Springfield, Ore., near Eugene, was opened for through traffic in 1926 to improve operations through the Cascade Range. Its opening relegated the tortuous original SP north-south main line through Oregon, parallel to the west and known as the Siskiyou Line, to secondary status. That line is now operated by the regional railroad CORP.

Via TRAINS On-Line 8/23

Colorado Ski Train To Shuttle Fans To Iowa Football Game

Final details are being worked out for the University of Iowa to lease the Colorado Ski Train equipment for the entire 2004 football season, which begins September 4. For each Hawkeye home game, the equipment will operate with one Ski Train F40PH (ex-Amtrak) on each end of 11 cars, shuttling 3.3 miles on regional carrier Iowa Interstate Railroad between Coral Ridge Mall in Coralville east to Kinnick Stadium in Iowa City. Round-trip train tickets are expected to be priced at \$5, with free parking at Coralville.

Plans are for trains to begin running about 2 hours before kickoff through the end of the first quarter of the game and resume running at the beginning of the fourth quarter and continuing for 90 minutes

after the game is over. The railroad here, until 1980 part of the Rock Island's main line, passes right by Kinnick Stadium and has hosted football specials off and on over the years, but usually from more distant places such as Davenport, Iowa, or even Chicago, Ill.

The Ski Train equipment is expected to deadhead from Denver to Council Bluffs, Iowa, over Burlington Northern Santa Fe on August 28 and return to the Mile High City for the winter ski season after the football season is finished. The train normally operates on winter weekends, with some summer specials, on Union Pacific's Moffat Route, the former Rio Grande, from Denver to the city-owned Winter Park ski area just west of the Moffat Tunnel.

Amtrak Ohio Service Cuts

Three Ohio cities ... Youngstown, Akron and Fostoria ... will lose passenger rail service by March 2005, as the result of a business move by Amtrak to end its contract with the U.S. Postal Service to haul mail and express. The income from that mail and express service helped underwrite the cost of the train, "The Three Rivers." "The loss of rail passenger service to these Ohio cities is regrettable, but it is minimal," says ORDC Executive Director Jim Seney. "The change in thinking on the part of Amtrak that led to this decision: recognizing that continuing to haul mail and express for the USPS costs more than the revenue being generated, is significant.

Amtrak tells us dropping mail and express eliminates over \$12-million dollars in debt service." Seney says this change also presents an opportunity for Ohio and Amtrak to begin talking about better, more targeted rail passenger service for Ohio. "Ridership on the Three Rivers was minimal, barely over 12-thousand passengers in 2003," says Seney, "which reflects the fact Amtrak considers Ohio the railroad equivalent of a "flyover" state. That's why virtually all of our Amtrak service rolls through in the middle of the night. That's not going to generate good ridership numbers or revenue from fares.

The real solution to the lack of ridership is daytime corridor trains as we're proposing in ORDC's Ohio Hub Plan. Our plan projects ridership well beyond what we're seeing today on any of Amtrak's existing routes." "In fact," says Seney, "it might be possible to capture some of that ridership right now, if Amtrak would consider extending one of its Pennsylvania trains to Cleveland from Pittsburgh. That's a heavily traveled route, especially for business travelers. This would be a perfect example of how to attract new riders by giving them fast, convenient, same-day travel without the hassles or costs of driving or flying."

The ORDC Ohio Hub Plan is due to be "rolled out" in early November for public comment. Amtrak also tells ORDC that the remaining passenger trains serving Ohio could see major improvements both in schedules and running times because trains will no longer be delayed at key points by the coupling of mail and express cars en route. As much as a half-hour to and one-hour improvements could be to the three remaining trains serving Ohio:

- The Lake Shore (Chicago-New York: stops in Bryan, Toledo, Sandusky, Elyria, Cleveland)
- The Capitol Limited (Chicago-Washington DC: stops in Alliance, Cleveland, Elyria, Sandusky, Toledo)
- The Cardinal (Chicago-New York: stops in Cincinnati, Hamilton)

Amtrak officials told Seney that letters are being sent to the governors of all affected states about the dropping of mail and express. The only other train affected by it, besides "The Three Rivers," will be the Savannah, Georgia to Florida segment of "The Palmetto." "We don't need to waste time mourning the loss of trains that weren't making the grade financially anyway," said Seney. "What we need to be doing is moving forward on developing trains that make financial sense and get people where and when they want to go."

(ORDC - posted 9/05 at RailPace)

Wheel Report

Last month I printed an article from one of the C&E Flyer magazines. Member Wade Frasch gave us the following memories:

"Your article in the Danville Flyer about collecting milkweed pods brought back some memories. There was a 15 acre pasture north of our farmhouse and barns that always sprouted many milkweeds. None of the livestock (even sheep) would eat them so I was surprised that the military found the pods useful. We gathered them in burlap bags a few times over two summers. The first time we took a few bags onto the school bus since the collection point was the Pine Village School. The second time some of the area kids got together and we had so many bags that we needed a truck to deliver them. The second year there wasn't much enthusiasm so all we gathered was a few bags. I was in grade school, but those pods were so light that I could lift one by myself."

Thanks for the memories. Wade, The Hoosier connection to the West Coast.

August 10 - The northbound City Of New Orleans had to make a pit stop in the Champaign Yard about 7 a.m. Monday and fuel up. The loco was 125 and the yard switcher had to pull a line of locos out of the way. That line included an ex UP SD50 with CIRX reporting marks. He was about 45 minutes late at the start and this added some time to that. *Via Bruce Stickers*

Notes from Walt 8/8 - TRAINS magazine this month has a short article on Amtrak train delays. One of the reasons is due to freight trains. I witnessed one on Saturday morning. A NB tied up in the Tolono siding and the crew was standing at the road crossing waiting for the van. A SB occupied the main. I drove to Pesotum and caught "The City" going like a bat out of hell, but it was destined to pull in behind the NB at South Tolono. It was then 7:00 am, which meant it was going to be at least another 1/2 hour before "The City" reached Champaign. (I guess the answer would be that if "The City" had been on time, it might not have got stuck in Tolono. It probably got stuck in the same situation somewhere south.)