

MAN ON A MISSION: CSX'S CEO JOE HINRICHS

May 2025

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Amtrak's dispatching dilemma

Amtrak and freight railroads
square off over delays

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From the Editor



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Amtrak's long-distance trains are a great way to travel, as long as you don't absolutely need to get to your destination at the scheduled time.

Bill Stephens notes in his article starting on page 20, in the 12 months ending Sept. 30, 2024, on-time performance of Amtrak's long-distance trains was just 56.7%.

Bill explores one reason for late-running trains, the preference — or lack of it — freight railroad dispatchers give Amtrak's trains.

Fast passenger trains and lumbering freights sharing the same railroad is a perpetual source of conflict, and one that's difficult to resolve.

In the meantime, Brian Solomon's Travel column (page 44) has tips for riders dealing with a delayed train.

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Canadian high speed rail moves forward

Government commits \$3.9 billion more to plan Toronto-Quebec City project

▲ A Deutsche Bahn ICE (Intercity Express) high-speed train arrives in Frankfurt, Germany. The Canadian government has committed funding to design and develop a high-speed system.

David Lassen

CANADA HAS COMMITTED to spend almost \$4 billion for the design phase of a high speed rail line linking Toronto, Montreal, and Quebec City, a project Prime Minister Justin Trudeau calls “the largest infrastructure project in Canadian history.”

Trudeau made the commitment to begin work on the 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) system, to be known as Alto, at a Feb. 19 press conference in Montreal. Trains will have a top speed of 300 kilometers per hour (186 mph), and will serve intermediate stops in Peterborough and Ottawa, Ontario, and Laval and Trois-Rivières, Quebec. Travel time between Toronto and Montreal would be cut to 3 hours from the current 5½.

The government pledged Ca\$3.9 billion (\$2.74 billion U.S.) for design and development over 6 years.

Construction is not expected to begin until the design

phase is complete, which could take 4 to 5 years. Construction funds will not be allocated until the end of the design period, which means a future government could modify or cancel the project. Canada will hold a federal election no later than Oct. 20 of this year, and polls currently show the Conservative Party with a significant but decreasing lead over Trudeau’s Liberal Party.

“Obviously, future governments will make their determinations about how they invest,” Trudeau said. “But this investment in Canadians, which starts right now, is going to be very difficult to turn back on.”

Martin Imbleau, CEO of Alto — formerly known as VIA HFR — says the earliest the route could be fully operational is 2041, although some service could begin in 2037. He also said the early estimate for the project’s cost was Ca\$60-90 billion (\$42.2-63.2 billion.)

Imbleau also said projections were that the system would generate 24 million round trips per year and provide a Ca\$24.5 billion boost to the economy.

The Cadence consortium — led by CDPQ Infra, the infrastructure arm of Quebec’s pension fund manager and builder of Montreal’s light rail system — was selected to build the project. Others involved in Cadence are Air Canada, Keolis, SNCF Voyageurs (operating subsidiary of France’s national railway company), and engineering firms Atkins Realis Group and Systra.

About Ca\$600 million (\$421 million) for planning has been spent since VIA Rail Canada first proposed a separate “high frequency” passenger-only Montreal-Toronto route in 2016. It evolved into a government-led venture, with the shift to a high-speed project coming only recently. — David Lassen

FRA study sees dual-mode freight locomotives aiding electrification

Converting current locomotives could cut cost; AAR calls electrification 'unviable'

THE AUTHORS OF A FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION study on mainline electrification recommend the railroad industry develop a prototype dual-mode freight locomotive and battery tender to test the feasibility of leaving cost-saving gaps between sections of overhead catenary.

The Association of American Railroads, however, says its own study shows freight electrification remains infeasible.

Over the decades, North American freight railroads have studied electrification but have always reached the same conclusion: Stringing wire over every mile of main line is prohibitively expensive and poses a colossal financial risk. The FRA study does not recommend electrifying everything, like Switzerland. Rather, the authors propose focusing on the 10% of mainline route miles that handle 30% of the gross ton-miles and consume 35% of rail energy.

"The primary barriers to freight rail electrification were found to be its high up-front capital costs, high risks due to the uncertainty of electrification in the North American context, and the presence of alternative investments that carry less risk," the FRA report says. "Over time, changing technology and a shift from using electrification to reduce energy costs to using it to reduce emissions have potentially altered the impact and relevancy of some of these barriers, and created pathways to overcome them."

The study, released in January, notes considerable changes in locomotive technology since completion of the last known Class I electrification study in 1980. Chief among those changes are the shift to AC traction and rapid improvements in batteries. It suggests dual-mode or battery-electric locomotives could navigate gaps in electrification, reducing the expense from dealing with bridge and tunnel clearance issues.

"Unlike the DC traction locomotive models considered during earlier electrification studies," the study says, "modern high horsepower AC traction locomotives could be readily adapted into electric locomotives during an interim operating phase, changing the locomotive replacement costs

and potentially delivering earlier benefits."

Among the report's locomotive options:

- Converting existing AC-traction, diesel-electric units to full electric instead of purchasing new electric locomotives.
- Pairing AC-traction, diesel-electric units with battery tenders that house batteries or use a pantograph and transformer to tap catenary when available, but run on diesel when overhead power is not available.
- Development of dual-mode freight locomotives that can operate at full power either as diesel-electrics or straight electrics.

A program to convert an existing AC locomotive into a dual-mode electric, develop an electric tender, and test their

build new power lines from generating stations to metropolitan areas — that also could power catenary.

And, finally, railroads could seek public funding to aid in decarbonization efforts.

But the AAR says stringing wire for freight is a no-go, and in February released a report from engineering firm HDR supporting that contention. "Our position remains that overhead catenary is an unviable option for the nation's freight rail network for a variety of reasons — including exorbitant costs," spokeswoman Jessica Kahanek says.

Unlike the FRA report, the study commissioned by the AAR looked at the cost of full electrification of up to 139,000 miles of



A Stadler dual-mode Class 99 locomotive for Britain is shown at InnoTrans in Berlin in 2024. An FRA report suggests developing a dual-mode locomotive for US testing. Keith Fender

performance "could substantially reduce uncertainty in the cost of implementing intermittent electrification and its associated risk," the report says.

The report identified three ways to bring down initial catenary installation costs.

First, intermittent electrification — or leaving gaps between catenary — would shave installation costs.

Second, railroads could partner with electric utilities to share risks and benefits of electrification projects. Railroad rights-of-way could host electric transmission lines — giving utilities a far easier way to

rail lines in the U.S. and Canada. It estimates the cost of electrifying those lines at \$1.1 trillion, which the AAR says is equivalent to 47 years of combined net income for the six Class I railroads. It also cites hurdles in the form of energy demands, reliability concerns, and other operating issues.

The FRA study's authors — C. Tyler Dick and Rydell D. Walthall of the University of Texas at Austin, locomotive expert Michael E. Iden, and railroad economist James R. Blaze — say more research is necessary to determine technical feasibility and costs. — *Bill Stephens*

New administration brings rail industry changes

Flurry of moves in first month include new DOT criteria to award grants

RAILROADING, like many other industries, is still waiting to determine the full effect of massive and sometimes chaotic changes enacted in the early weeks of President Donald Trump's second term. But after one month, it is clear the potential impacts are widespread.

Federal Railroad Administration grants for everything from passenger service to short line track maintenance to grade crossing programs will face new award criteria in light of directives from Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy. His Jan. 29 memo calls for elimination of all orders and directives that relate "in any way to climate change, 'greenhouse gas' emissions, racial equity, gender identity, 'diversity, equity, and inclusion' goals, environmental justice, or the Justice 40 Initiative." Environmental benefits of rail were frequently cited in grant applications and awards under the Biden Administration.

A subsequent order calling for "sound economic analysis" in Department of Transportation policies gained national attention because a portion says funding preference should go to projects located in "communities with marriage and birth rates higher than the national average."

Wrote the *New York Daily News* in a typical tabloid headline: "Trump to New York: Want money for trains, tunnels, and bridges? Get married and make babies."

The order also prohibits recipients of DOT funding "from imposing vaccine and mask mandates" and requires "local compliance or cooperation with Federal immigration enforcement."

It also contains provisions that would seem to threaten FRA funding for Amtrak, CRISI grants, and grade-crossing elimination projects. Specifically, the order says funding shouldn't go to projects that:

- Would depend on continuous or future DOT support or assistance for improvements and ongoing maintenance.
- Are "purely local in nature and unrelated to a proper Federal interest."

Amtrak's Northeast Corridor receives ongoing federal funding for maintenance and replacement projects, such as the Gateway Program in New York and New Jersey and Baltimore's B&P Tunnel.

Chuck Baker, president of the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association, is not concerned how the new criteria might impact programs like the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement grants, which often support short line infrastructure work. "It's an interconnected freight rail system and there is an inherent

federal interest in the whole thing working well, most certainly including short lines," Baker says. "I think short line projects will be very competitive under these criteria."

Other areas reflecting new administration policies include:

- An Amtrak notification to employees that it would no longer devote resources to diversity programs, following an executive order calling for the end of all federal programs, as well as Duffy's memo. Quickly stricken from the company's website were

program. Duffy informed New York Gov. Kathy Hochul of that decision in a Feb. 19 letter, and in a press release called the toll program "a slap in the face to working-class Americans and small business owners." Hochul said the state would fight the move, citing early indicators of its effectiveness, and called commuters "road kill on Donald Trump's revenge tour against New York." The MTA filed suit within hours.

- An announcement of a review of federal spending on California's high-speed



Trackwork on the Dakota Southern Railway between Chamberlain and Presho, S.D., in 2016 was funded in part by a federal TIGER grant. Changing criteria for federal awards will include marriage and birth rates, according to a Department of Transportation order. Chip Sherman

four years of reports on its diversity efforts, which had earned Amtrak a place on the 2023 Forbes Best Employers for Diversity list. The company also said employees would be required to work in the office four days a week, reflecting another executive order to end work-at-home policies.

- An announcement by Duffy that federal permission would be revoked for New York's congestion tolling program, which seeks to reduce traffic in lower Manhattan and funds Metropolitan Transportation Authority capital projects. That would fulfill a Trump campaign promise to kill the

rail project, a target of both Trump and advisor Elon Musk. Duffy said the FRA would determine if the project had met the requirements of the federal money it has received to date, with the result of the review determining if the administration would redistribute some \$4 billion already awarded but not yet spent. Trump has called the California effort "the worst-managed project I think I've ever seen," and Musk said in a recent social media post that it "is an example of where incompetence in the limit is indistinguishable from fraud." — *Bill Stephens and David Lassen*

East Broad Top adds diesel

Locomotive from Durango & Silverton adds operating flexibility

THE EAST BROAD TOP RAILROAD has added a former H.K. Porter diesel from the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad to its roster in a transaction involving two of the nation's premier heritage operations.

The locomotive arrived Feb. 13, 2025, after a week-long trip by heavy-haul truck at EBT headquarters in Rockhill Furnace, Pa. It was expected to begin work train and standby passenger duty after a few weeks of setup.

Currently, when EBT's single operating steam locomotive, 2-8-2 No. 16 (Baldwin Locomotive Works, 1916) is sidelined for any reason, 55-ton, 340-hp GE center-cab switcher No. M-7 pinch hits, but it cannot haul the same number of cars. As a result, EBT has been forced to reduce the consist and rebook or cancel hundreds of reservations while increasing schedule frequency with a shorter train.

Now, the newly arrived No. 1203, an 80-ton DE75CT model built in 1946, will serve as the prime protection power for No. 16. The diesel will be renumbered as EBT No. 19 and painted black with orange trim to match the steamers. It is powered by an Alco six-cylinder Model 251 prime mover, and is operated from an Electro-Motive Division control stand. An end-cab switcher that rides on spoked drivers in C-C configuration, the unit produces about the same pulling power as either of EBT's two medium-sized Mikados, Nos. 14 and 15, General Manager Brad Esposito tells *Trains*. "It's cool to have it here," he says. "It gives us peace of mind."

The move also represents the unit's repatriation to Pennsylvania. It was built in 1946 by H.K. Porter Co., Inc., of Pittsburgh, a producer of small industrial locomotives — internal-combustion as well as conventional steam and fireless steam types.

EBT Foundation President Henry Posner III said in a statement, "While there are many narrow-gauge railroads around the world, 36-inch gauge presents unique technical challenges in sourcing locomotives. In this case, we were lucky in that the Durango & Silverton had this one-of-a-kind locomotive available. [Speaking as] a Pittsburgher: It will be good to have the locomotive back home in Pennsylvania."

The locomotive was built in Pittsburgh, apparently for export to Pakistan. When that sale fell through, U.S. Gypsum Co. bought the engine for its narrow gauge plant railroad at Plaster City, Calif. In 1979, that firm re-equipped its fleet, selling the unit for tourist service on the Huckleberry Railroad in Michigan. That line later sold it for use on the Georgetown Loop Railroad in Colorado, and from there it moved on to the Durango & Silverton in 2015.

As part of the recent transaction, EBT sent two more of its home-built steel hopper cars to D&SNG, which already owns several for maintenance-of-way service. — *Dan Cupper*



An 80-ton H.K. Porter diesel acquired from the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad arrives at East Broad Top headquarters in Rockhill Furnace, Pa. The locomotive will aid EBT expansion efforts and provide a more powerful backup for its steam engine. Dan Cupper

Amtrak nixed Miami station move over costs

Estimates foresaw \$5 million in additional expenses from shift to airport facility

AMTRAK ABANDONED plans to move to a station adjacent to Miami International Airport because the company estimated the change would cost an extra \$5 million a year, although it would generate an additional 20,000 passengers and \$2 million in annual revenue.

The company revealed its decision to stay at its Hialeah station in December 2024 to officials involved with the Miami Intermodal Center. Its reasons became public in response to a Freedom of Information Act request from public radio station WLRN.

Additional yearly expense included \$4 million in labor costs for operating and onboard service crews to deadhead trains 4 miles between Hialeah's yard and the Intermodal Center. The company also said an additional \$6.4 million in improvements are needed at the new facility. But the move would have eliminated the need for \$15.5 million in upgrades to address Americans with Disability Act accessibility requirements at the Hialeah station, opened in 1978.

The move to the Intermodal Center would provide access to rental car, dining, and public transportation options not available at Hialeah. While the Intermodal Center has been used by commuter operator Tri-Rail since 2015 and includes space built specifically for

Amtrak, the passenger operator initially declined to move in because its longer trains would have blocked a major thoroughfare at the station's north end. The Florida Department of Transportation spent \$5.6 million creating a bypass route to address that issue, but Amtrak continued to balk over lease terms at the new facility.

In its December letter, Amtrak indicated it would be willing to

**ADDITIONAL YEARLY EXPENSE INCLUDED
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use the Miami Intermodal Center for any future state-supported corridor service.

The Miami-based Citizens Independent Transportation Trust, which oversees a half-cent local transportation surtax, has contacted elected officials and U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy in an effort to get Amtrak to reverse its decision. — *Bob Johnston*

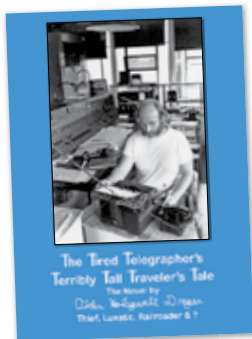


AMTRAK'S PACIFIC SURFLINER service has bolstered its fleet with the acquisition of seven former NJ Transit coaches previously used in *San Joaquin* service. The Comet 1B coaches were purchased by Caltrans in 2008 and rebuilt with features including restrooms, reclining seats, and luggage racks. They became surplus on the *San Joaquins* route with the introduction of Siemens Venture equipment. Six of the cars are shown on *Surfliner* train No. 562 at Del Mar, Calif., on Dec. 27, 2024. Alex Gillman

"This is real history that begs to be read" — Brian Solomon in *RAILROAD HISTORY* No. 231

The Tired Telegrapher's Terribly Tall Traveler's Tale

The Novel by Alden Holeywell Dreyer: Thief, Lunatic, Railroader & ?



The son of a career aircraft engine factory worker becomes enthralled with the railroad industry in the late 1950s. After quitting high school at age 15, Alden is hired as a spare telegrapher on the Boston & Maine in July 1964. Railroad work is challenging and fun, but Alden learns all too soon that it is detrimental to his health and love life. The health issue is resolved by retiring at age 41 on permanent disability. The love life problem is more complex, and Alden makes a deal with his Boss, Father Time, that if the Boss will provide the woman he wants and needs, then Alden will create the book the Boss wants and needs. This 160-page book, nearly a half-century in the making, is the fulfillment of that long-ago contract with the Boss. Alden is absolutely delighted with the woman that was provided. Will this book please the Boss? Time will tell.

\$19 (plus shipping and tax when applicable) from Amazon.com, eBay, or Alden Dreyer, 91 Reynolds Road, Shelburne, MA 01370-9649. 413-625-6384

NEWS BRIEFS

UP says Metra takeover of operations is near

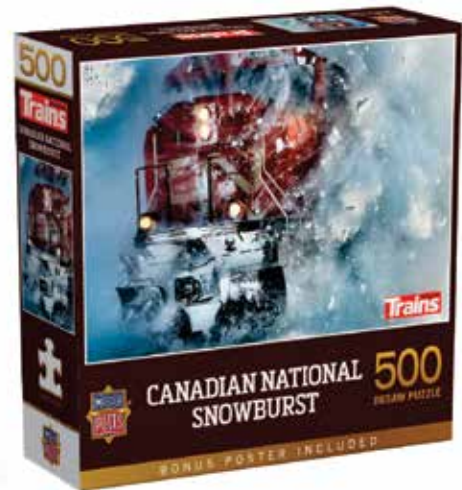
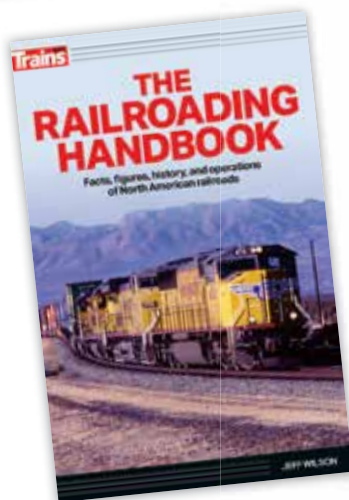
UNION PACIFIC said Chicago commuter operator **METRA** would take over train operations on three UP lines in mid-April, part of the freight railroad's long-running effort to exit its responsibility for running trains on Metra's UP North, Northwest, and West lines. UP will continue to dispatch and maintain the lines.

Shortline company **SIERRA NORTHERN RAILWAY** purchased assets of locomotive builder **RAILPOWER LLC**, boosting Sierra's efforts to develop alternative-fuel motive power. RailPower products include hybrid and genset locomotives, while Sierra Northern is involved in development of hydrogen-fueled units.

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CSX CEO Joe Hinrichs is on a mission

He truly believes boosting morale will improve service and lead to growth, but skepticism abounds



Bill Stephens

bybillstephens@gmail.com
Analysis: Trains.com

CSX CEO Joe Hinrichs is not one to shy away from a tall task. Since arriving at CSX in September 2022, he has been on a mission to repair the railroad's damaged relationship with its employees.

His goal: Build a culture of respect and trust, where workers feel valued and appreciated. It's the cornerstone of the ONE CSX strategy Hinrichs mentions everywhere he goes. The idea is that high morale will motivate employees to provide better service, which will produce happy customers, which in turn will lead to more freight and higher revenue and profits.

To get to this promised land, Hinrichs will have to overcome three things.

First, the rank and file still feel the sting of E. Hunter Harrison's 2017 implementation of the Precision Scheduled Railroad-ing operating model. CSX now has 20% fewer people on the payroll. And Harrison and his minions went out of their way to make railroad life miserable.

Second, unionized workers have a lingering bitterness over the 2019 round of contract negotiations. Talks dragged on for three years, created uncertainty, and delayed raises.

Finally, there's more than 150 years of confrontation between railroads and the unionized workers who keep the trains moving.

Yet Hinrichs insists the challenge is not insurmountable. "Intelligent people who listen to each other and work together can solve almost anything," he says.



CSX CEO Joe Hinrichs, at left, chats with employees and their children at a Family Day event last year. CSX

That's a lesson Hinrichs brought to CSX from Ford Motor Co., where he led the automaker's negotiations with the United Auto Workers through four contracts. Over that stretch, rival General Motors experienced two strikes. Ford had none. "We had a competitive advantage because we had a relationship that was better," Hinrichs says.

Another lesson Hinrichs brought to CSX as a former customer: Shippers do business with railroads because they have to, not because they want to. That's been a barrier to growth, he says, and it can't be fixed unless the railroad's culture changes.

Despite skepticism among unionized workers, there are signs that Hinrichs is making progress.

CSX was the first Class I railroad to reach sick time and contract agreements with most of its unions well in advance of the start of national negotiations last year.

About 20,000 people – employees and their families – attended CSX Family Day events around the system last year. You don't take part in a work-related social function if you're ticked off at your employer.

Sentiment in annual employee surveys has improved. The net promoter score – "I would recommend employment at CSX to a friend" – is up 39 points from the initial 2022 survey that was conducted before Hinrichs arrived. Independent reviews show the same trend.

Jared Cassity, the SMART-TD union's alternate national safety and legislative director, acknowledges Hinrichs says and often does the right things. But there's still a disconnect between the C-suite's message and how some managers treat workers, Cassity says.

Like Hinrichs, Cassity believes the labor-management relationship can be overhauled. "But it will take an absolute commitment from the CEO and from all levels of management to value employees," he says. "Workers ... need to feel they are the backbone of the industry. And that right now is unfortunately absent."

Hinrichs admits not everyone has climbed aboard the ONE CSX bandwagon. "Trust me, I get all the notes in the survey comments and whatnot," he says. "We win 'em over one at a time and we'll get 'em all eventually – or at least most of them."

Hinrichs contends that the railroad's improved relationship with its employees and customers is starting to show up in financial results. Last year CSX became the first Class I to see its traffic return to pre-pandemic levels, and the railroad's service tops shipper surveys.

More than two years into the job, Hinrichs remains optimistic. "I know people love trains. We really want to get 'em to love railroads," he says. "They don't right now. But we can get there." **I**

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Cataloging connections

The seven tribes of Train World

▲ Of the hundreds of railroad-related institutions across the country, the author can think of only one that seriously addresses all seven categories of rail interest, at scale, and with great professionalism: the California State Railroad Museum. Now in its fifth decade, it consistently fulfills its multiple missions of preservation, presentation, research, education — and unabashed railroad enthusiasm.

David Crosby

FORTY YEARS AGO, there was a lot going on in “Train World.” New museums, mainline steam programs, railroad-specific historical societies, and innovative preservation projects spawned a sense that railroad heritage had entered a different, more mature, phase. There were conversations about the emerging “railway heritage movement.”

In hindsight, that was a tad optimistic. It had the same chances for success as organizing a squirrel parade at a kennel club show. There wasn’t One Big Idea upon which to build a consensus or shared effort, no railroad version of clean air or liberty and justice — only very different people passionate about how they enjoy particular aspects of a sprawling, complex, 200-year-old industry.

There seem to be seven basic ways to understand how

most people interested in railroading engage the subject. The categories have been apparent for at least a hundred years, and none of this is remotely new.

Nor do our activities fit neatly into only one (or several) of these seven buckets. That is simply a function of the vastness of the opportunities and the creativity of the folks who find some connection with trains. What distinguishes our tribes is a shifting mix of motivation, reward, personal interest, and means of expression. Everything is on a continuum.

RAILROADING

The industry itself represents the greatest number of people somehow connected with railroading. I would not be surprised if the total number of folks who earned a railroad-related paycheck over the last 200 years didn’t reach 20 or 30

million. That would include employees in allied work, such as equipment building, contracting, and railway supply.

For a fair proportion of those folks, it may have been their occupation, but it was also their craft, their identity, and perhaps even their passion. I’ve worked with plenty of men and women like that. They wouldn’t call themselves fans. They were railroaders, with a much different level of connection. They clearly liked trains, whether they admitted it or not. It was subtle. But you could tell.

RAILROAD HISTORY

History, like railroading, is a vast and sprawling shared enterprise. There are dozens of sub-disciplines and many styles, schools of thought, and levels of sophistication. Approaches range from the narrow (individual locomotive

histories, memoirs, genealogy) to the impossibly broad (railroading in American life).

We produce and consume it in a dizzying array of forms and formats. Sometimes it is intentional and according to standards, as work has to be in law or medicine. Other times it is less formal and more lyrical, but no less revealing.

In many ways, sound railroad history (factual, well-constructed, carefully-argued, nicely presented) is the foundation of so much of what we do. You don't have to be a historian to enjoy railroading. But it certainly makes things more interesting to know where it comes from and how it got here.

PRESERVATION AND CURATION

This is a large and capacious category. It comprises libraries, archives, museums, historical societies, heritage railroads, historic preservation, private collections, and railroad elements of other peoples' projects. Four central aspects distinguish the work, whether it be private, volunteer, or paid.

First, someone makes a conscious effort to identify and keep safe some tangible or intangible bit of heritage. It doesn't matter what that might be, which is one of the reasons things can be so complicated. A single railroad artifact can weigh a couple of ounces — or a million pounds.

Second is some intent to share the heritage. That might be a train ride for hundreds of visitors or letting someone peek at a private collection of railroad china. The point of most preservation is to make it available. That kind of access is how culture is conserved and handed down through generations.

The third aspect is curation, making sense of what is being preserved and shared. It is the process of gathering knowledge, locating it in appropriate contexts, and then presenting the insights and conclusions. It is one thing to note a locomotive has Walschaerts valve gear. It is another to explain just what that is and how it works.

Education is the fourth leg of any stable platform. Rail-

roading itself has always relied on formal and informal education, from rough on-the-job training to the comprehensive courses once offered by elite universities across the country. Formal museum exhibits are educators. So are old-timers sharing stories at a Tuesday morning Liar's Club breakfast.

ENTHUSIASM

From the beginning, there have been railway enthusiasts. There are so many dimensions to "liking trains" that it becomes tedious to even try to describe what "enthusiasm" might look like — and I wish we had a better term for it. The same is true for sports, boats, cars, airplanes, or dozens of subjects. Humans are curious animals and now have the luxury of being involved in things besides mere survival or fending off saber-toothed tigers.

This is both a vague and a specific category, and like so much else is on a continuum. Many National Railway Historical Society chapters and railroad clubs emphasize enthusiast activities (site visits, train rides, news, preservation), while all of the seven categories have a discernible enthusiast component.

Maybe the best way to describe it is as a set of opinions and attitudes suggesting some positive connection with trains.

CREATION

Almost everyone who is seriously interested in railroading is a creator in some form or another. What I have in mind here are the photographers, collectors, writers, videographers, artists, and folks who don't simply enjoy railroading, but who also use their abilities to make something be shared, either privately or publicly.

The individuals and organizations bringing locomotives to life or restoring streetcars to service are also creators, as are curators and heritage railroad operators.

This may be a new category for some folks, but so much of what we do can be understood as part of a continuum of creativity. I think it time we give

creators of all stripes the recognition and respect they deserve, and understand their work as foundational to railroad history and heritage.

RAILROAD MODELING

There are many ways to create models of railroading. It is one of those umbrella terms that transcends categories. A well-presented history of a railroad could also be understood as a form of modeling — just using different tools.

FIFTY OR A HUNDRED YEARS AGO, IT WAS EASY TO ENGAGE RAILROADING. IT WAS ALL AROUND US, IN GLORIOUS VARIETY, AND RAILROADS BY HABIT AND INTENT WERE MUCH MORE WELCOMING

In my view, railroad modeling is almost any attempt to capture some aspect of railroading free from the constraints of time, place, or circumstances. I realize this may veer into reductive thinking, but modeling is the process of choosing the essence of a much larger reality and reproducing it in some accessible format.

I look forward with a mix of hope and trepidation to what technologies such as AI or next-generation virtual reality have to offer. Railroad modeling may never be the same.

TRAVELING BY TRAIN

One of the least-remarked but most varied and widespread ways to enjoy railroading is through train travel — and you don't even need to admit being a buff. Some people ride trains because they have little or no choice. Some ride for convenience or cost. But many people ride trains for

the experience. Recreational railroading is a legitimate economic category.

Train riding can have its rough patches, may not be the easiest or cheapest way to travel, and might not be convenient. Then consider a few things. The scenery might be urban back yards or seemingly endless corn fields, but it is authentic and up close. The trip can represent time to relax, think, work or be as isolated as you choose to be in relative comfort. And you might want to ride while you can. Nothing lasts forever.

PARADOX AND IRONY

Fifty or a hundred years ago, it was easy to engage railroading. It was all around us, in glorious variety, and railroads themselves by habit and intent were much more welcoming.

At the same time, the resources and technologies we now take for granted were sparse, costly, or non-existent. Kodachrome was expensive. Electrons arranged on a chip are cheap. Access to information and the sophistication of heritage work today is far better than it was a 50 years ago.

Almost all of our railroad heritage has been hard-won, the result of volunteer efforts, business gambles, advocacy, and personal commitment. It hasn't been easy or cheap. It is also surprisingly fragile.

Buy as many books and magazine subscriptions as you can afford. Join the major historical societies. Give time or money to whatever railroad heritage cause seems like a good idea. Train World's future depends on collective results powered by individual action. This isn't a time to be stingy.

Most of all, understand that we remain part of a loose confederation of like-minded people who may have different ways of connecting, but whose cumulative efforts are far greater than the sum of the parts. While railroad heritage may not be a movement, we have a lot in common. If we don't look out for ourselves and each other, we have a lot to lose, too. — John P. Hankey

A large, rusted cantilever signal structure stands on a railway track. A yellow excavator is positioned next to the structure, and a worker is visible on the structure's platform. The background shows trees and a clear sky.

The final ballad

CSX's Big Sandy Subdivision is the last holdout for US&S C&O cantilever signals

Story and photos by Chase Gunnoe



So long, Big Sandy Junction. On April 18, 2011, CSX signal contractors removed the signal heads governing main No. 1 at Big Sandy Junction, on CSX's Kanawha Sub in Catlettsburg, Ky. Crews had already moved one set of signal heads from the four-track signal bridge, and by day's end will have removed the entire bridge. The region was once home to several three-track and four-track signal bridges.



▲ **Stars over RB Cabin**
Rounding the curve and staring into RB Cabin's double-to-single main, CSX Waycross, Ga., to Russell, Ky, merchandise train M692 heads into RB under a medium clear signal, its headlights illuminating the classic Chesapeake & Ohio cantilever signal mast.

Fifteen years ago, coal trains on CSX's former Chesapeake & Ohio tracks could travel hundreds of miles across the Appalachian Mountains under the guidance of half-century-old Union Switch & Signal tri-light signals.

An array of mast signals, cantilevers of varying designs, and two-to-four-track signal bridges graced the former C&O main line and its tributaries. For 70 years, these signals weathered humid summers and cold winters, guiding heavy tonnage through some of Appalachia's most desolate places.

When some of these signals were erected, C&O 2-6-6-6 Allegheny steam locomotives still led coal trains. Showing no prejudice, these signals would

witness C&O's first diesel-electrics as F7s and GP9s became the standard workhorses. Eventually Chessie System SD40-2s would enter the mix before CSX's blue-and-grey took over.

Locomotives and companies changed, but the signals remained the same. Dependable US&S tri-lights with red, amber, and green discs have unfailingly directed more than a billion tons of coal across the Appalachians.

Railroaders' careers may span 40 years. Locomotives may rumble across a Class I railroad's network for 50 years. Signals, however, can outlive most any replaceable asset along the line, a true testament to the rugged hardware of centralized traffic control.





Distinctive wayside signals give character to railroads, helping identify its lineage, and giving a nod to its ancestry. They have inspired a new generation of photographers willing to travel great distances in search of former Pennsylvania Railroad position light signals, Southern Pacific's searchlights, or Santa Fe's iconic 100-year-old US&S T2 semaphores across New Mexico's desert.

For me, growing up in West Virginia, I naturally developed a fondness for C&O's tri-lights. I found the single-track lines to

the coalfields less attractive than the main line, with its graceful cantilevers and sturdy double-track bridges. Trains were more plentiful on the main line, too.

In the early 2010s, CSX spared little expense in its quest to upgrade signals across my West Virginia childhood stomping grounds.

Working east to west on the railroad's Kanawha Sub, crews torched large swaths of iconic signals in places like St. Albans and Huntington. They would continue around the Russell, Ky., area, upgrading signals on the railroad's Northern Sub to Columbus, Ohio, while simultaneously erecting new Safetran signals in remote places along the railroad's New River and Alleghany subdivisions in southern West Virginia.

Throughout the mid-2010s, I was in a race against time, making every effort to photograph the aging signals in both daytime and night before new signals were installed and cut over into service. For many years, the right-of-way and I were inseparable and there were times my preoccupation felt more burdensome than enjoyable, but this project taught me much about the business of railroading.

Today, with only a couple of exceptions, new Safetran-style signals cover the entire former

▲ **Welcome to Coal Run**

Diverging from the Big Sandy main, CSX empty coal train E912 eases onto the railroad's Coal Run Subdivision, in the aptly named town of Coal Run Village, Ky. Here, C&O mast signals still govern movements off and on the Big Sandy. After a couple of thrown switches, this crew will have finished its run from Russell, Ky.

◀ **Stacked at Dawkins**

The end-of-train device of CSX unit-ethanol train B669 is captured by the camera's long exposure at Dawkins, Ky., near Paintsville, Ky. The dispatcher has stacked a pair of eastbounds, and within this 61-second exposure, we see the ethanol train fading into the distance just as a restricting signal appears overhead. Within 20 minutes, another eastbound will be at Dawkins, on the heels of ethanol loads to Shelby Yard in Pikeville, Ky.





▲ **Easing into WD Cabin**

A not-so-common EMD SD40-2 leader leans into WD Cabin, just 9 miles into its journey on the Big Sandy Subdivision from Russell, Ky. Over the next 100-plus miles, this merchandise freight will pass under more than four dozen interlocking and intermediate signals still protected by C&O-style signals.

C&O main line between Newport News, Va., and Cincinnati, Ohio, and into northwestern Ohio from Columbus, Ohio.

My loose estimate, across a 10-year span, calculates that CSX replaced more than 415 C&O signals between coastal Virginia and northwestern Ohio on its coal network. Best I can tell, I photographed about 150 of them.

New signals dulled my interests for a time. Being young, in college, and without money also shifted my priorities.

I'd drift from the right-of-way for a few years, deciding to work for the railroad instead of photographing it. But things would soon change. Call it a paradigm shift or simply a rejuvenated interest, I found myself perusing Google Earth, study-

ing maps, and making notes on old timetables. It was becoming clear that CSX's Big Sandy Sub would be the last dance for the old C&O's US&S signals.

And with this realization, a new project was born.

At 126 miles, the Big Sandy Sub connects Catlettsburg, Ky., in eastern Kentucky, with Elkhorn City, Ky., at the northernmost section of CSX's former

► **Christmas at EM Cabin**

With Christmas lights illuminated on a nearby house, CSX Waycross, Ga., to Russell, Ky., merchandise freight M692 illuminates the C&O cantilever at EM Cabin on a mild winter's night in early December 2023. The crew is about four hours away from tying up in Russell, Ky., having started their run an hour earlier at Shelby Yard in Pikeville, Ky.





Clinchfield Railroad. The line hosts coal loads and the corresponding empties serving eastern Kentucky mines, as well as run-through utility coal trains for Carolina power plants, a pair of merchandise trains, and other run-through bulk traffic.

Named for the Big Sandy River, which the rail line parallels, the subdivision has a cadence of about seven to nine trains per day, passing an estimated 67 C&O-era tri-light signal installations.

Not all date back to the mid-20th century. The Chessie System invested in some modernizations, but the line, particularly the sections governed by cantilever signals, is pure C&O.

Of those 67 signals circled and underlined across my crinkled old timetable sheet, cantilevers account for 20. And it has been my objective to photograph trains at each of those locations.

There's also a double-track intermediate signal bridge, named Bobbs, which has attracted many photographers intent on capturing a train passing under the last C&O signal bridge. The rest of the line is home to Chessie-era bracket signals.

In a few isolated locations, much newer signals coexist with originals, but there are still plenty of completely authentic C&O signal installations.

With a general understanding of the lay of the land, coordinates to most signals, and old timetables, I have spent much of my time trackside in last few years immersing myself once again into the serious business of rail photography, making regular 1 hour, 45 minute drives from my home in southern West Virginia to eastern Kentucky.

These photographs offer a glimpse into those efforts — a selection of images captured only after the sun has set and before it rises. It's a step back in time on CSX's former C&O Business Unit, where coal is king and the landscape still resembles 1960. **I**

▲ Knocking 'em down at OX Cabin

This one-third of a second exposure captures the moment the former C&O cantilever signal at OX Cabin drops from medium clear as Stilesboro, Ga., to Martin, Ky., coal empties roll down the Big Sandy Sub. Winter's early dusk makes this scene possible.

Passage interference



Amtrak and freight railroads square off over how passenger trains should be dispatched

by Bill Stephens

Freight train interference has always been the biggest source of delays to Amtrak passenger trains — and a major source of friction between Amtrak and its host railroads. That much Amtrak and the Class I railroads can agree upon. Now, with Amtrak challenging host railroads with a pair of on-time performance cases, they don't see eye to eye on much else.

To the Class I systems, interference is the inevitable result of faster passenger trains and slower freights sharing the same tracks. Try as they might, it's simply impossible for dispatchers to keep freights out of Amtrak's way all the time.

But Amtrak says freights wouldn't delay its trains if the railroads abided by the right of preference that Congress granted

passenger trains in 1973. "The disregard of Amtrak's right to preference set forth in law is a fundamental challenge to Amtrak's survival and our ability to provide reliable service to the nation," CEO Stephen Gardner told Congress in 2020.

The concept of passenger train preference — and what, exactly, it means — is at the heart of the first-ever on-time performance complaint Amtrak filed with the Surface Transportation Board over Union Pacific's handling of the *Sunset Limited*. It's also front and center in the case the Justice Department filed against Norfolk Southern last year for tardiness of the *Crescent*.

Amtrak contends its trains should enjoy absolute and unlimited preference. It argues that every aspect of a host railroad's

operations must advance Amtrak's priority over freight. In other words, host railroads should bend over backward to accommodate passenger trains.

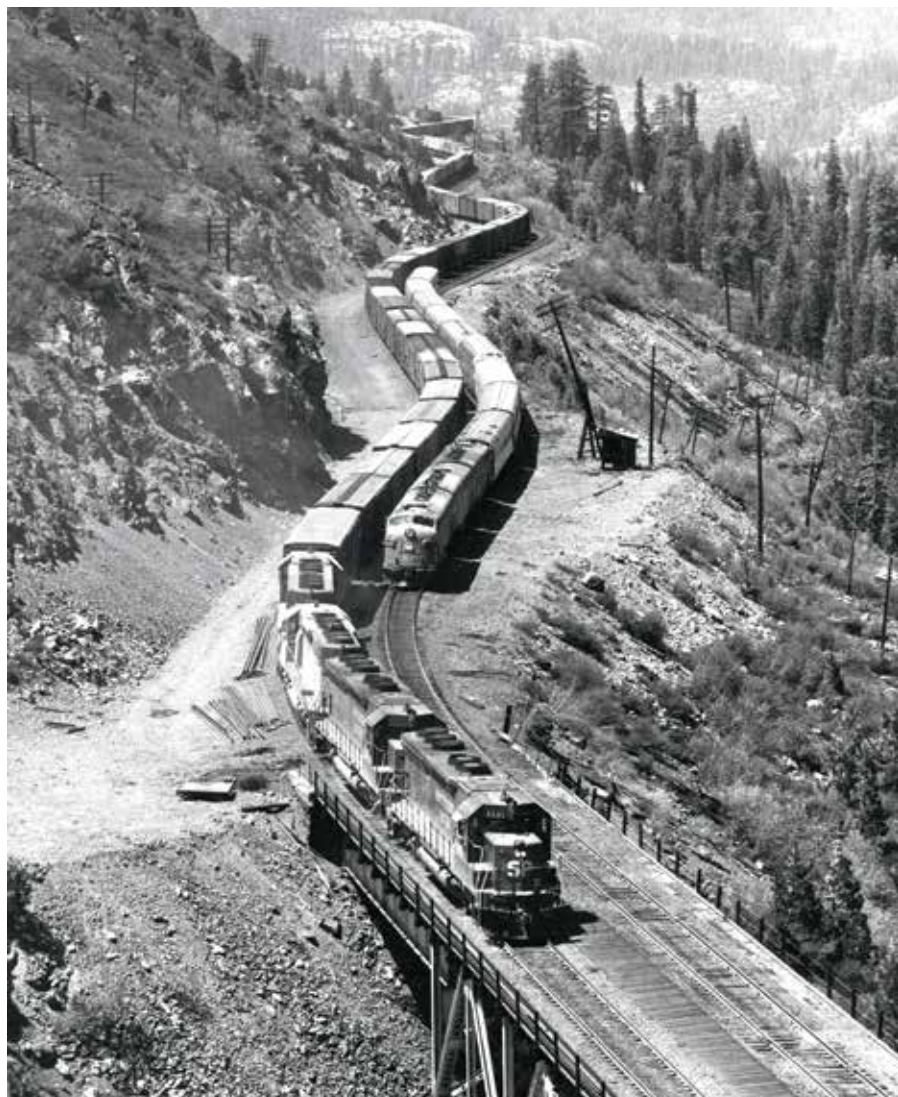
Class I railroads warn that parting the waters for every Amtrak train would quickly produce gridlock. As for structuring operations around Amtrak, the freight railroads say that's tantamount to the tail wagging the dog. Yes, Amtrak has the right

The eastbound *Sunset Limited*, train No. 2, meets a westbound Union Pacific freight at Rillito, Ariz., northwest of Tucson, in April 2001. Union Pacific's handling of the *Sunset* is the subject of an investigation by the Surface Transportation Board, the first such case of its type. Steve Schmollinger





The westbound *Crescent*, running a few hours late because of a snowstorm, passes Norfolk Southern stack train 290 near Bremen, Ga., on Dec. 9, 2017. The Justice Department has sued NS over delays to the *Crescent*. Kyle Yunker



Amtrak's *San Francisco Zephyr* overtakes an eastbound Southern Pacific refrigerator train on Donner Pass at Shed 10, between Emigrant Gap and Norden, Calif., on May 27, 1972. An SP official told Congress the railroad gave Amtrak trains preference before it was required. Russell Sharp

to use their rail lines, but that does not mean Amtrak gets to call the shots.

This much is clear: The *Sunset Limited* and *Crescent* cases could produce landmark decisions that shape the way Amtrak and host railroads interact for decades to come.

The right of preference

When Amtrak began operations on May 1, 1971, its trains were not legally entitled to preference over freight traffic. Rather, Class I officials — eager to be rid of passenger trains hemorrhaging red ink — promised Congress their railroads would continue to give passenger trains priority.

“Yet once relieved of the obligation to operate passenger trains themselves, those assurances ... quickly faded away,” Amtrak told the STB in the *Sunset Limited* case.

“Many railroads began to ‘sidetrack’ Amtrak passenger trains, placing them in sidings so that freight trains could pass. With these new ‘sidetracking’ practices, the average on-time performance of long-distance passenger rail trains (based on standards then in place) plummeted from over 70% in 1972 to 35% in 1973.”

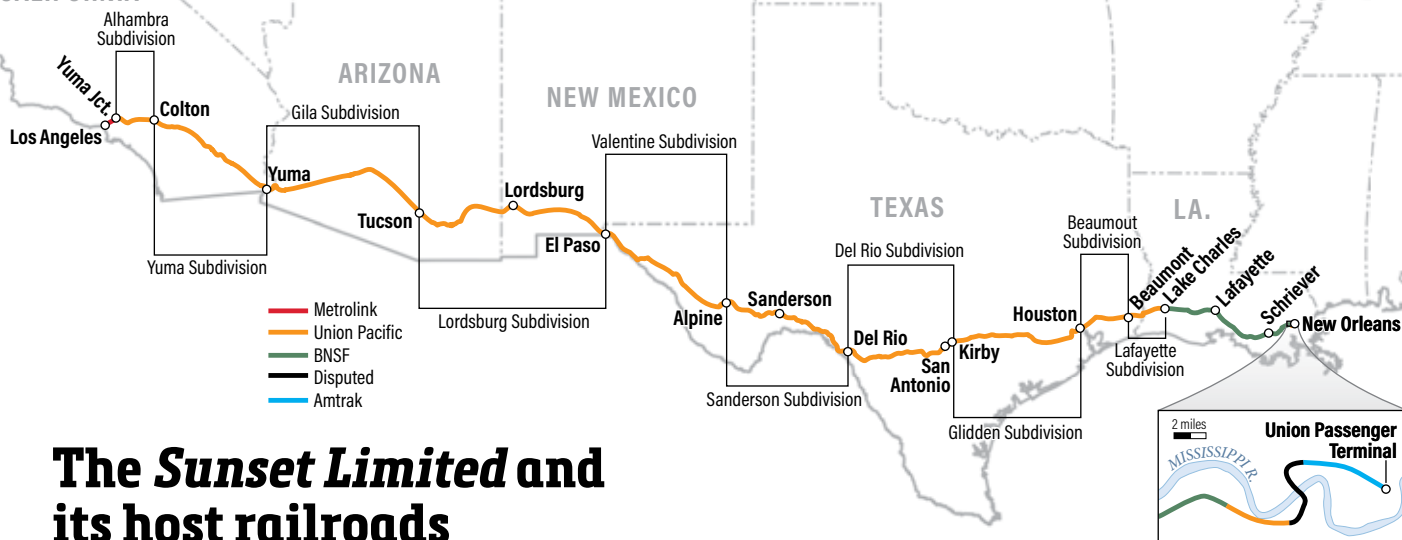
That erosion prompted Congress to create the Amtrak Improvement Act of 1973. Its key phrase: “Except in an emergency, intercity and commuter rail passenger transportation provided by or for Amtrak has preference over freight transportation in using a rail line, junction, or crossing.”

The Justice Department was given enforcement authority. Until last year, when Justice filed suit against NS over handling of the *Crescent* between Alexandria, Va., and New Orleans, that authority had been used just once. That was in 1979, when Justice sued Southern Pacific for preference violations involving the *Sunset Limited*.

At the time, the broken-down SP was in meltdown mode between El Paso and New Orleans. Three days’ worth of freight trains were tied down in passing sidings, which waylaid the *Sunset* and SP freights that were able to move. By the time the case wound through the courts, the *Sunset*’s performance improved as SP climbed out of the ditch. In the end, a federal judge approved a consent decree requiring SP to give the *Sunset* preference [see “The battle of the *Sunset Limited*,” March 1998].

Nearly three decades later, Congress passed the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008. Among its provisions: Establishing new customer on-time performance standards and granting the STB the ability to enforce them. Federal Railroad Administration service metrics — which set a minimum 80% customer on-time performance standard — went into effect in 2020.

Amtrak filed the *Sunset Limited* complaint in December 2022, when it said UP



The *Sunset Limited* and its host railroads



The eastbound *Pennsylvanian* splits a Norfolk Southern intermodal train and a manifest train at Lilly, Pa., on Oct. 19, 2016. While Amtrak argues its right of preference is absolute, freight railroads say that would quickly bring the rail network to gridlock. Carlos Ferran

routinely delayed the triweekly train by ignoring the right to preference from October 2021 through September 2022. In its worst-performing quarter in 2022, 90% of *Sunset* passengers arrived late. The average delay: 3.4 hours for eastbound train No. 2 and 3.8 hours for westbound No. 1. Amtrak claims UP was responsible for roughly 75% of the delays, with the lion's share due to following and meeting UP's freights.

The STB, in an August 2024 decision setting a timeline for the first phase of its *Sunset* probe, asked Amtrak and the railroads that handle the train for their views on what constitutes a violation of the right of preference. The board was, in essence, seeking help in defining a term used for 52 years but never clarified by a court or regulators.

Wick Moorman, who served as Amtrak's chief executive for a year after retiring as Norfolk Southern CEO in 2015,

says the statute is open to interpretation. "The great frustration at Amtrak," he says, "is what does preference mean?"

What emerged from the responses to the STB's query are two very different views of the right of preference, how trains should be dispatched, and whether host railroads should tailor operations around Amtrak service.

Make way for Amtrak

To Amtrak, the right of preference is as clear as a green signal. "If a host railroad does not resolve an individual dispatching decision at a rail line, junction, or crossing in favor of Amtrak, then the host has failed to provide preference over the freight train in using that rail line, junction, or crossing," Amtrak told the STB.

That right, Amtrak says, is absolute: Every dispatching decision should favor passenger trains. Amtrak claims history is on its side because providing passenger

trains with preference over freights has been longstanding industry practice.

Congress had the opportunity to clarify the right of preference as part of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008. "Congress chose not to do so," Amtrak says. "Instead ... Congress strengthened the passenger-preference right by authorizing additional paths to relief for Amtrak when rail carriers fail to provide preference to Amtrak passengers."

Amtrak also stakes out a new claim: "In addition to resolving individual dispatching decisions in Amtrak's favor, a host railroad also must have internal procedures, practices, and personnel that facilitate rather than frustrate Amtrak's priority access."

This would broaden the preference definition to include a host railroad's overall operating strategies, such as running trains that are over siding length. The no-fitters, Amtrak says, violate the right of preference by limiting where 79-mph passenger trains can meet or overtake lumbering freights.

Class I view: Absolute-ly not

It would be an understatement to say the freight railroads that control portions of the *Sunset's* route — UP, BNSF, Canadian National, and CPKC — took a dim view of Amtrak's claims.

First, they say Amtrak misreads the intent of Congress and ignores its history.

"Congress created Amtrak to relieve railroads from financial burdens of serving passengers that were endangering their ability to compete for freight, not to promote passenger service at the expense of freight service," UP told the STB.

BNSF agreed: "Congress did not place Amtrak as hierarchically superior to freight railroads on the rail network."

The freight railroads also point out that even Amtrak executives have said the right of preference is not absolute.

In 1973, Amtrak President Roger Lewis told Congress that dispatching freight and



The eastbound *Lake Shore Limited* passes a CSX train with BNSF power parked on the Mohawk Subdivision just east of Little Falls, N.Y., in July 2018. Amtrak has argued all freight moves should clear a path for passenger trains. Daniel Spitzer

passenger trains is complicated. “There are cases in railroad operations, a number of them, where freight train interference might be justified,” Lewis said. “For example, maybe in an operation in an area where you had a siding that would take five cars, which would be enough to accommodate that particular passenger train, but would not accommodate a 100-car freight train, it would be sensible to put the passenger train aside and get the freight train out of the way.

“I feel, and I have felt, that to try to legislate that and say, ‘You will always give preference to the passenger train, or never let a freight train interfere,’ just is not a real-world approach,” he added.

Three years later, Amtrak President Paul Reistrup made similar remarks to Congress, saying putting short Amtrak trains into sidings to await long freights “is just prudent operation.”

And in a 2004 STB proceeding, Paul Vilter, Amtrak’s vice president of freight railroad relations, said that despite the federal statute, “in the real world” it can be “more efficient for an Amtrak train to wait for a freight to come through.”

Second, the freight railroads insist they’ve always given Amtrak preference. They trotted out statements from freight



Three former Union Pacific E units are the motive power for a *Sunset Limited* swollen to 19 cars by holiday traffic. The train is about to depart El Paso in December 1971. The *Sunset* was the subject of the only preference lawsuit before the current case involving NS. Mel Patrick

railroad officials on how passenger trains were handled before and just after the creation of Amtrak.

Testifying before Congress in 1971, Southern Pacific’s system vice president for operations, Richard Spence, explained that SP’s policy was “that we would run the train to the very best of our ability and that [Amtrak] would be given preference on our railroad.” He also explained that did not mean that Amtrak “will be given absolute priority, in other words, that there will be absolutely no delays.”

Under questioning, Spence said the

Sunset Limited even had preference over the SP’s famed *Blue Streak Merchandise*, the hotshot from East St. Louis, Ill., to Los Angeles that shared nearly all of the *Sunset*’s route west of Flatonia, Texas.

Spence, Penn Central CEO William H. Moore, and Santa Fe President John Reed provided Congress with copies of strongly worded internal memos reminding their operations teams that Amtrak trains have preference. “This is to reiterate my ultimatum that all passenger trains will operate on time,” Moore wrote.

Third, the freight railroads say that as a

practical matter, preference can't be absolute. "Amtrak's arguments ... are not sensitive to how dispatching decisions are made in the real world," CPKC attorney David L. Meyer wrote to the STB.

"Dispatchers with responsibility for any given territory on the railroad must develop strategies for using available track capacity to move across the railroad the trains that present themselves at an entrance point to the dispatcher's assigned territory," Meyer explained. "Each of those trains will have a certain level of relative priority, and in this mix Amtrak trains are at the very top with the highest priority." While dispatchers will prioritize Amtrak movements, they must consider constraints that might limit their "feasible options in a given context."

Priority "does not mean that the Amtrak train will only see green signals or never be paused in a siding," Meyer argues. "CPKC and its dispatchers understand their obligation to treat Amtrak's trains as those most deserving of expedited handling, and least deserving of being delayed to accommodate conflicting traffic and other factors. But despite CPKC's best efforts, delays to Amtrak trains do happen, and sometimes those delays are appropriately classified as the result of 'freight train interference' (or 'FTI'). ... Juggling those conflicting demands for limited capacity will inevitably result in FTI delays, but that fact alone would not mean that Amtrak's train was not given preference."

The host railroads contend that if they had to keep every Amtrak train rolling at maximum authorized speed, it would quickly result in congestion. "The consequences to overall network fluidity would be disastrous," BNSF said. "The interconnected nature of the rail network means that congestion at one location can negatively



The westbound *Empire Builder* meets Canadian Pacific manifest train 470, led by freshly outshopped SD70ACU rebuild No. 7028, at Nashotah, Wis., on March 8, 2020. CPKC has argued that Amtrak's preference arguments do not reflect real-world dispatching decisions. Nolan Wallencamp

impact the overall network at large."

Fourth, the railroads sought to tamp down Amtrak's argument that host railroads should gear their operations around its passenger trains. "Amtrak ... incorrectly suggests Union Pacific should be able to structure its network and operations to avoid all delay Amtrak attributes to FTI. FTI is an inevitable consequence of Amtrak trains sharing infrastructure with freight trains," UP told the board.

UP contends that Congress authorized the STB to require host railroads to make operational changes to accommodate Amtrak in only two circumstances: When Amtrak seeks higher train speeds or to operate additional trains.

If Amtrak wants absolute priority, then it would have to pay a pretty penny for the privilege, freight railroads argue.

Said CPKC: "It is ... inconceivable that

Congress, having mandated that Amtrak compensate freight railroads for the full incremental costs of its presence on their tracks, would have chosen to magnify those costs manifold by imposing a preference entitlement as grandiose as Amtrak imagines."

UP said those "enormous costs" would even threaten the viability of an Amtrak operation that already loses tens of millions of dollars per year.

Because absolute preference would delay freight traffic, Amtrak would be on the hook for paying delay-related costs that would not exist without the presence of passenger trains, CN argues.

If the STB didn't require Amtrak to pay those costs, or allowed Amtrak to dictate freight railroad operations, it would raise constitutional issues, CN claims: "A requirement that a railroad build additional infrastructure to accommodate Amtrak or avoid running freight trains (or freight trains of a certain length) on a segment owned by the freight railroad would raise major questions of policy and substantial constitutional questions under the Takings and Due Process Clauses."

NS has made many of the same points in its reply to the Justice Department's *Crescent* suit. NS also sought to have the case dismissed.

The Sunset case

Amtrak's complaint alleges that the failure of the *Sunset Limited* to meet customer on-time performance standards was largely due to factors within UP's control. Freight train interference, Amtrak says, was by far the leading cause of delay. Contributing factors, Amtrak says, include UP's practice of operating trains over siding length, delaying the *Sunset* for meets an average of



In a view from the private dome car *Warren E. Henry*, the westbound *Sunset Limited* overtakes a Union Pacific domestic intermodal train at Paisano, Texas, on Feb. 27, 2025. UP has argued freight-train interference is inevitable when passengers and freight share tracks. Bill Stephens



An eastbound freight waits to follow the *Sunset Limited* out of the east end of Tucson Yard in Tucson, Ariz. UP says handling of the *Sunset* has recovered as crew shortages were addressed after the pandemic. Steve Schmollinger

Union Pacific single- and double-track mileage, <i>Sunset Limited</i> route				
Subdivision	Single-track miles	Double-track miles	Total miles	Double track pct.
Alhambra	38	18	56	32%
Yuma	35	159	194	82%
Gila	93	162	255	63%
Lordsburg	0	305	305	100%
Valentine	201	12	12	6%
Sanderson	220	0	220	0%
Del Rio	160	17	178	10%
Glidden	170	18	188	10%
Houston	62	32	94	34%
Beaumont	75	4	79	5%
Lafayette	72	4	75	5%
Total	1,126	731	1,856	39%

eight times per trip, and having the passenger trains follow slower freights for long stretches an average of four times per trip.

Amtrak also blames UP's dispatching and crew management practices.

Railroads once considered passenger trains as first-class trains in their employee timetables, which gave them priority over trains of lower classes. Today, most railroads' automated dispatching systems are programmed to give passenger trains the highest priority. But UP's algorithm gives Amtrak and hotshot Z-symbol intermodal trains equal status. Amtrak views this as a de facto preference violation.

Amtrak pointed a finger of blame at UP for allowing crews to tie down their trains on the main line short of crew-change points after reaching the maximum allowable hours of service. It also said UP gave trains priority over the *Sunset* so that crews who were short on hours could

reach the next terminal.

UP told the board in December that it has resolved the broader service problems that prompted Amtrak's complaint. UP, which hosts the *Sunset* for 1,770 of its 1,994 miles between New Orleans and Los Angeles, says service has improved to the point that it is now earning contractual on-time performance payments from Amtrak.

The *Sunset Limited* still does not meet the new federal customer on-time performance (OTP) standards, however, because Amtrak refuses to address necessary schedule changes for intermediate stations, UP told the STB. "The record identifies two primary causes: Union Pacific's overall service was unacceptably poor, and *Sunset Limited* schedules are not aligned with Customer OTP," UP said.

Like the other three big U.S. Class I railroads, UP's service suffered after it was caught short of crews as freight volume

rebounded from pandemic lows in 2021.

Congestion and crew shortages meant freight trains were encountering the *Sunset* outside of normal locations, "increasing the difficulties in planning efficient meets and overtakes. Freight trains were also spending more time tied down in terminals and in other locations, which limited planning options available to dispatchers," UP told the board. Those same issues made it more difficult for the railroad to recover when incidents delayed the *Sunset*. "When a freight train stopped on a main line or siding for any reason, the crew was more likely to be short on time. If the crew expired, the train remained tied down longer than usual. Congestion and crew shortage concerns also affected dispatching priorities, as dispatchers attempted to avoid the additional impacts on network fluidity and crew resources that would result if crews expired and trains were tied down far from crew change points."

As UP's crew boards came back to full strength, the *Sunset* was delayed less frequently. Delays attributed to freight train interference dropped 40% from October 2023 through September 2024, UP said.

As a result, the *Sunset* exceeded the 70% threshold for contractual on-time performance in every month. This was proof, UP said, that its operating strategies were not responsible for the *Sunset's* failure to meet customer on-time standards.

UP said it has consistently invested in capacity improvements on the *Sunset* Route, including 470 miles of second main track added since its 1996 acquisition of the SP. Since 2018 it has spent \$385 million on construction of seven new and 23 extended passing sidings on single-track portions of the *Sunset* Route. "*Sunset Limited* trains benefit from all this investment even though Amtrak has not contributed to the costs," UP notes.

UP also insisted Amtrak failed to identify any preference violations stemming from dispatching decisions. UP defended its dispatching protocols and the moves dispatchers made to keep the *Sunset* Route fluid. UP said its analysis of the performance of the *Sunset Limited* and UP's Z-symbol intermodal trains, for example, found that the passenger trains ran closer to their theoretical fastest run times than UP's hotshots. That, UP says, shows dispatchers gave the *Sunset* priority.

Balance at the STB?

When Amtrak was granted the right of preference in 1973, freight railroads had excess capacity. But the Staggers Act of 1980, which partially deregulated the industry, helped spark a freight rail renaissance while also permitting the abandonment of redundant main lines. Today,

Class I railroads concentrate far more tonnage on far less trackage, leaving Amtrak competing for limited capacity. Class I railroads say this helps explain the difficulty of keeping Amtrak trains on time.

This does not sit well with former STB Chairman Martin J. Oberman. “The Class I railroads are a bit like the man who murders his parents and then asks for mercy as an orphan,” Oberman noted several times before his retirement in May 2024.

That doesn’t mean the board will necessarily favor Amtrak’s version of the right of preference. Oberman tells *Trains* the board is handling the case while fully recognizing the complexity and nuances of the way a national freight and passenger network should work together. This mirrors a draft policy statement the STB issued in 2015 but withdrew in 2016.

“Currently, we do not view the preference requirement as absolute,” the draft statement said. “In other words, a host rail carrier need not resolve every individual dispatching decision between freight and passenger movements in favor of the passenger train. Under this view of preference, the Board would take a systemic, global approach in determining whether a host carrier has granted the intercity passenger trains preference.”

Some observers say that in the *Crescent* case, it’s unclear to what extent federal courts might balance Amtrak’s right with the need to keep freight moving. The freight network must remain fluid, Oberman says, noting that if it doesn’t, Amtrak service and the economy would both suffer.

Yet Oberman says enforcement is required. The question, he says, is what the remedy should be so that trains meet on-time performance standards. Is additional capacity needed? If so, should taxpayers be on the hook or should the host railroad chip in as well?

Gardner told Congress that a lack of enforcement has meant that public investments in capacity projects have not boosted in on-time performance. The \$200 million spent to unclog the Norfolk Southern Chicago Line in Indiana and Illinois, for example, did not relieve congestion that can clobber timekeeping for the *Lake Shore Limited*, *Capitol Limited* (now recast as the *Floridian*), and Michigan trains.

The blame game

Some longtime railroaders are critical of the Class I railroads’ inability to prevent conflicts with Amtrak trains. “Somehow the train that runs the same way every day, with the same crew and same consist on the same schedule, is viewed as the surprise disrupter that destroys capacity,” says a railroader with experience in freight and passenger operations. “It is not about dispatching preference.

Union Pacific capacity improvements, Sunset Limited route

(Sidings lengthened or added, listed west to east; lengths in feet)

Siding	Subdivision	Date operable	Prior length	Current Length
Mecca	Yuma	8/23/2019	8,388	14,420
Clyde	Yuma	8/6/2019	8,500	15,200
Aztec	Gila	8/30/2019	8,275	15,000
Piedra	Gila	6/8/2019	8,280	15,560
Bosque	Gila	8/10/2019	8,049	15,500
McNary	Valentine	1/7/2020	8,018	15,078
Finlay	Valentine	4/30/2020	7,552	16,611
Lasca	Valentine	1/31/2020	8,189	15,718
Sierra Blanca	Valentine	9/8/2020	10,265	15,000
Wendell	Valentine	12/15/2021	8,366	15,189
Marfa	Valentine	4/21/2020	8,375	15,389
Alpine	Sanderson	2/2/2022	8,314	15,040
Lenox	Sanderson	1/19/2022	8,377	16,500
Rosenfeld	Sanderson	5/2/2020	8,386	15,000
Dryden	Sanderson	3/2/2022	8,747	15,000
Lull	Sanderson	4/24/2020	8,396	15,984
Johnstone	Del Rio	10/28/2020	8,239	15,529
Anacacho	Del Rio	10/14/2020	8,365	15,221
Hacienda	Del Rio	8/5/2020	New	15,594
Inge	Del Rio	8/22/2020	New	15,000
Yucca	Del Rio	11/25/2020	New	15,000
Seco	Del Rio	7/22/2020	8,341	17,237
Medina	Del Rio	11/18/2020	New	15,000
Noonan	Del Rio	8/2/2022	9,463	16,200
Major	Del Rio	6/29/2022	New	14,640
Keller	Del Rio	6/25/2024	New	14,480
Kingsbury	Glidden	7/9/2020	8,422	17,263
Flatonia	Glidden	9/17/2020	9,957	15,000
Bernard	Glidden	11/18/2020	8,731	14,860
Richmond	Glidden	11/25/2020	New	12,464



The westbound *Pere Marquette* overtakes NS container train 25V in Whiting, Ind., on Nov. 8, 2018. Amtrak CEO Stephen Gardner testified to Congress that public money to add capacity on the NS Chicago Line did not relieve the area’s congestion. Randy Olson

Lincoln Service train No. 304 is delayed as a Union Pacific train creeps into a siding near Elkhart, Ill., with engine trouble in June 2013. Freight operations' allowance for a certain amount of equipment issues create conflicts with passenger service. Two photos, Steve Smedley



▲ *Lincoln Service* train 301 sits in the siding at McLean, Ill., sustaining a short delay because of a northbound UP container train on April 22, 2022. Past Amtrak officials have said such dispatching moves can be necessary, but the company currently argues for absolute preference.

► Picacho Peak looms in the distance as sunrise illuminates the eastbound *Sunset Limited* east of Eloy, Ariz., on Nov. 24, 2012. The STB's *Sunset* case has the potential to set precedent in the ongoing dispute over passenger train preference. Drew Mitchem



It is that failures en route make the system increasingly unstable.”

Freight railroad operating philosophy has a high tolerance for failure out on the main line. This is fundamentally at odds with scheduled passenger operations. Class I roads, the official notes, design operations around the expectation that 5% of trains will require an unplanned crew change and that a certain number of freights will encounter equipment problems en route.

And some argue that schedule discipline has been lost over the years as railroads cater to a highly profitable slice of the freight marketplace that is willing to accept slow, erratic service. It’s a recipe for trouble, a railroader says, when Amtrak wants to average 60 mph and even premium shippers are content with once-daily service that averages 28 mph between terminals.

Class I railroad service, shippers argue, suffers from Wall Street’s insistence on low operating ratios and keeping capital expenses to a minimum.

“The result is that they run trains that are too long for their existing sidings, causing congestion, degraded velocity, poor service, and a lack of resiliency,” says Ann Warner, who represents several shipper groups, including the National Industrial Transportation League. “These are the same problems that plague shippers generally —

Amtrak is just the canary in the coal mine.”

Some shippers are nervous a strict interpretation of the right of preference would degrade freight service. Their concerns are justified, says Rick Paterson, a railroader-turned-financial analyst at Loop Capital Markets who closely follows the railroads’ weekly performance metrics. “There’s certainly a recipe for chaos here if every Amtrak train suddenly becomes a true hotshot and everything ahead has to get out of the way,” Paterson says. “We’ve seen situations in the past when the railroads tried to run fast small-parcel intermodal hotshots for UPS, but the operational disruption was untenable.”

Several veteran railroad operating officials also pointed to the UPS bullet train experiments from two decades ago as an example of what can happen when priority trains see nothing but green signals.

BNSF cleared the railroad for the once-weekly UPS hotshot that left Los Angeles on a Monday and was due in New Jersey by Friday. BNSF and Norfolk Southern determined the collateral damage inflicted on the rest of their traffic was unacceptable.

“Passenger trains are just as disruptive to the operation and sap main track capacity,” a former chief operating officer says. “Yes, they are shorter and pass quicker; however, the dispatching teams’ planning and setting

up of the railroad still creates a ripple effect of delays had they not been there.”

A veteran network operations official says the Precision Scheduled Railroading strategy of running fewer but longer trains creates a capacity dividend that should benefit Amtrak. “Run an operating plan that minimizes the number of active trains on the network, which enables the hotshots to get out and run,” he says. “The reduction in active trains has dramatic effects on train velocity and schedule adherence.”

Others throw shade at Amtrak, noting it has plenty of operational and equipment problems of its own. “All Amtrak wants to do is fight using taxpayer money. It’s a waste of resources,” one industry official says. “Lawyers shouldn’t get involved in the dispatching of trains.”

Amtrak should realize the right of preference isn’t absolute, he says, and understand that the on-time performance of long-distance trains has always suffered because time and distance breed variability.

And the more things change, he says, the more they stay the same. In the 12 months ending Sept. 30, 2024, the customer on-time performance of Amtrak’s long-distance trains was 56.7%. From May through December 1971 — Amtrak’s first year of operation — long-distance on-time performance was a nearly identical 56.3%. **I**



Massachusetts survivor

The 122-year-old Fore River Railroad thrives

Story and photos by Stephen Delaney

Born out of the necessity to serve a new shipyard in Quincy, Mass., the 2½-mile Fore River Railroad began service in 1903 and was formally incorporated in 1919. Now, 122 years after it was founded and more than 37 years after the shipyard closed, the Fore River survives and thrives. It is a story of how additional customers enabled the railroad to weather lean years, the closing of the shipyard, and the fortuitous circumstance of playing a role in the Boston Harbor pollution clean-up effort.

Short line, long history

Today, the Fore River Railroad is owned by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority and operated under contract by Fore River Transportation. The railroad runs

from the deepwater anchorage at Quincy Point and over the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's Greenbush commuter line to reach its connection with CSX in Braintree, Mass.

Fore River's history is linked with that of the Quincy shipyard, ownership of which changed several times since its founding. About 1918, Bethlehem Steel purchased the shipyard and — in 1919 — the Fore River Railroad became a stand-alone component of the shipyard operation. Bethlehem sold the operation to General Dynamics in 1964.

In 1986, after building 500 ships of all types, including nearly 100 warships during World War II, the historic shipyard closed.

The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority assumed

Returning to the shipyard after interchanging cars with CSX, General Electric B23-7 No. 101 works the challenging grade and tight curves that typifies the Fore River Railroad's line in Quincy, Mass.





No. 101 switches the Twin Rivers Technologies works in Quincy, Mass. The plant ships fatty acids, glycerin, and vegetable oils over the Fore River to the CSX connection in Braintree, Mass.

ownership of the shipyard and the railroad in 1987 and Fore River Railroad operations were leased to Great Northern Transportation of Colorado Springs, Colo.

Birth of a railroad

Much has been written about the history of the shipyard. One of the best railroad-related histories can be found within the pages of Frank Kyper's book *The Railroad That Came Out at Night* (Carstens Publications, 1977 and 1990). The book offers a broad look at various railroad-related topics around the Boston

area, with the title referring to the Union Freight Railroad, which served customers along the waterfront between North and South Stations.

A brief overview of the history of the shipyard begins with its founding by Thomas A. Watson. Watson, who had been assistant to telephone inventor Alexander Graham Bell, established his first shipyard at East Braintree, Mass., in 1884, but consolidated the work at Quincy in 1900 because the site offered better land area and easier access to Quincy Bay.

Watson soon realized the need for rail access to keep raw

materials moving efficiently to his new shipyard. When the New Haven Railroad declined to build a branch to his yard, Watson was forced to build his own connecting line, securing a reasonable route after a two-year effort. The first rail car was delivered to the yard in 1903.

The shipyard's motive power has varied over the years. The first notation of power referenced two 0-4-4T Forneys, which came from the Manhattan Railway in 1902. A new Baldwin 0-4-0, No. 3, joined the group in 1907. During World War II, two 0-6-0 switchers were purchased from the New Haven Railroad. A Porter 0-4-0 from Bethlehem Steel also worked the yard during this period.

Diesels arrived in the post-war era, in the form of two GE 50-tonners arriving on the scene in 1947. In 1948, a Whitcomb diesel arrived, and a second Whitcomb unit was added in 1953. The Whitcombs proved unreliable and two 70-ton GE centercab switchers, supplied by Bethlehem Steel, were added to the roster in the 1950s. In 1977, a former Southern Pacific Alco S6 switcher (No. 17) arrived on the property. No longer in service, it remains on site and is owned by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority.

No. 102, a former Conrail B23-7, undergoes repair in the railroad's maintenance shop.



Cleaning up

With the closure of the shipyard in 1986, the MWRA purchased the property and the railroad in 1987. The property became an essential element in the long-term effort to clean up wastewater discharge from the metropolitan Boston area. Used as a staging area during the construction process, the facility now treats processed sludge from the Deer Island wastewater treatment plant across the harbor in Winthrop. Treated wastewater is discharged from Deer Island into a 9-mile tunnel to the Atlantic, where it is safely dispersed. The sludge portion is pumped via pipeline to Quincy for final processing at the pelletizing facility. Bay State Fertilizer — the brand of the fertilizer produced — is

Gross Interlocking controls access to the interchange yard with CSX at Braintree, Mass.

marketed by Synagro, the operator of the pellet plant.

Throughout its long service, the Fore River Railroad has had several customers within the yard area, which helped produce revenue through the line's lean years.

Today, in addition to servicing the MWRA, the primary customer for the railroad is Twin Rivers Technologies, a sprawling oleo-chemical works. Twin Rivers Technology receives raw materials primarily by ship at its dock from sources around the world, although carloads of raw materials are also received by rail. The refined materials, including fatty acids, glycerin, and vegetable oils, are shipped via tank cars to locations throughout the country. Between outgoing loads and incoming loads and empties, more than 5,000 cars move through the yard each year.

Presently, rail traffic related to the MWRA operation is minimal. Most processed and treated byproducts leave the site via truck, although the railroad has been used in the past and could be in the future if conditions change. There has been some change in the market conditions related to the fertilizer, which could also have an impact on rail traffic.

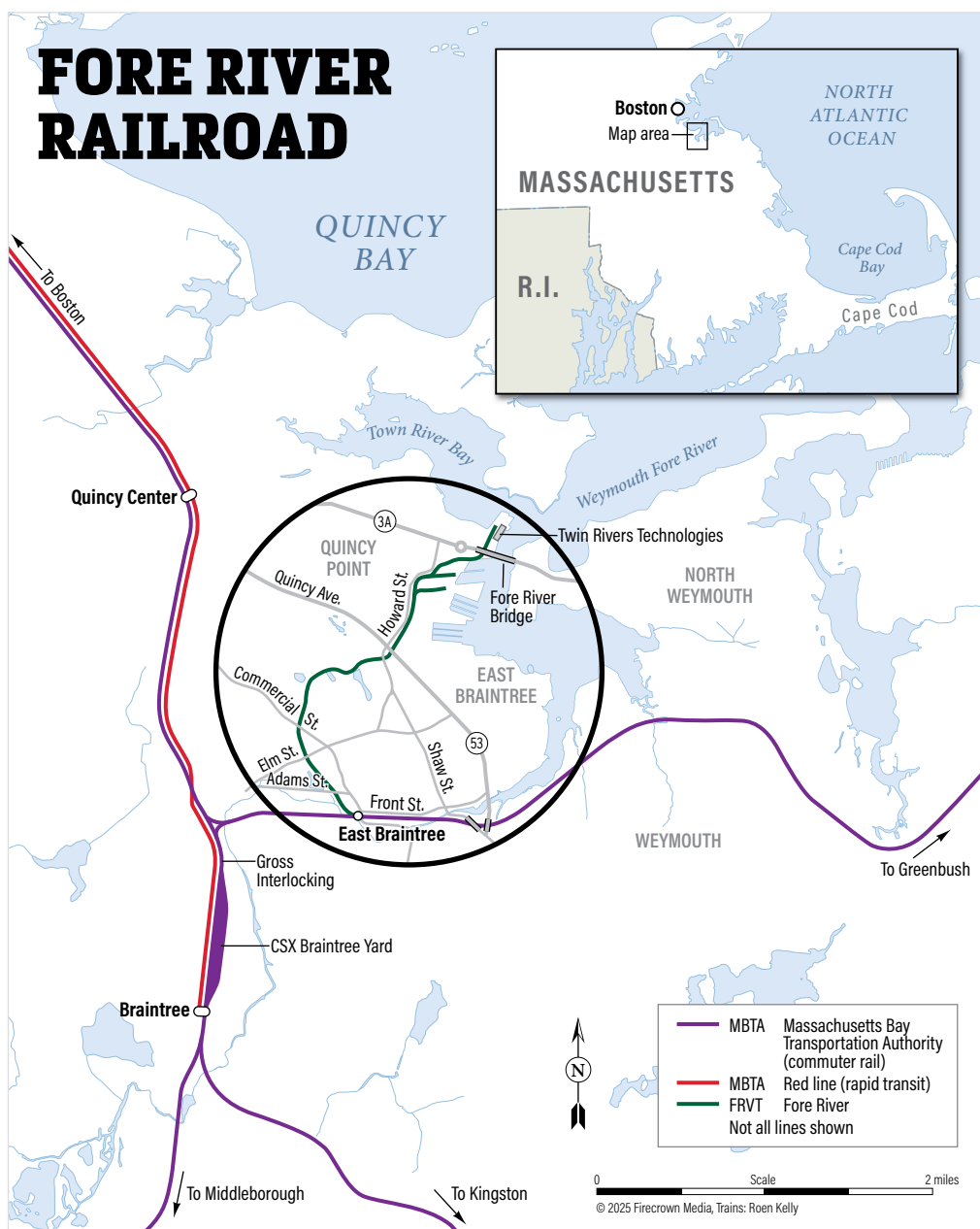
Fore River ride

The Fore River Railroad's crew and supporting staff offer an impressive display of quiet and efficient teamwork.

As I spent more time with them, I realized the complexity of the operation is managed so well that I missed several of the more subtle details of what makes this railroad work so smoothly.

The railroad normally operates on a five-day, week-day schedule. CSX, working from its Middleborough Yard, runs on MBTA trackage from Middleboro to reach Braintree each night.

A typical day on the railroad actually begins the night before





Engineer Mike Raymond skillfully guides No. 101 up the 2.5-mile route to MBTA's Shipyard Interlocking. The route includes a 2% grade and a 70-foot rise in elevation from the shipyard to the interlocking.

at the Twin Rivers Technologies plant. The evening shift at Twin Rivers includes a crew using a Trackmobile to move cars as they are loaded or emptied and — if they are to be moved off the property the following morning — getting them positioned on the outbound track. This evening crew will also weigh the cars being positioned for the move.

Waybills are created for cars slated for delivery to the CSX interchange yard at Braintree. A track map details the location of all the cars so they can be quickly located and assembled as part of the train that day. Empties from the plant are also logged on the track map.

In the morning, before the train crew arrives, the office administrator checks the computer to note the cars dropped by CSX at Braintree. She will coordinate the track map, switch list, and waybills to set the stage for the morning move.

A crew member then drives to the Braintree yard, verifies the cars delivered, and determines if the rolling stock is in acceptable condition to be received. That worker also verifies which cars have been picked up by CSX.

Visually inspecting the

Braintree yard also determines if there are any access issues, such as disabled MBTA units or maintenance-of-way equipment that might have moved into the yard.

All in a day's work

Movements are handled by one of the railroad's two former Conrail General Electric B23-7 locomotives. When the crew arrives, the engineer inspects the locomotive while the conductor gathers information for the cars slated for the Braintree Interchange yard.

Cars designated for customer delivery may come from storage tracks and or the interchange track at Twin Rivers. Other loaded cars from Twin Rivers may be designated for storage within the yard, or at the Braintree Interchange yard, until requested by customers. There may also be cars slated for delivery to Twin Rivers.

The engineer, conductor, and brakeman then begin assembling the train. Having both a conductor and a brakeman makes a huge difference in efficiency as they team up aligning switches ahead of the engine.

With the outbound train assembled, the brakeman performs an air brake test and inspects all the cars.

Before leaving the yard, the conductor checks in with the MBTA to arrange clearance to enter the controlled siding at the interlocking without having

Having completed switching at Braintree, the Fore River crew waits for an MBTA commuter train to pass before getting clearance to head back to Quincy.

to stop on the final grade before the East Braintree interlocking.

As our train exits the former shipyard at Quincy Avenue and begins the journey to Braintree yard, I'm reminded of Kyper's description of the difficulty Watson had in laying out the route through a valley and around the edge of a pond and quarry to reach the New Haven Railroad at East Braintree.

Normal operations include one engine and generally not more than 10 to 15 loads, but the line's 2% grade and tight curves require skillful train handling. The change in elevation from Quincy Avenue to the interlocking, a little over 2 miles, rises nearly 70 feet.

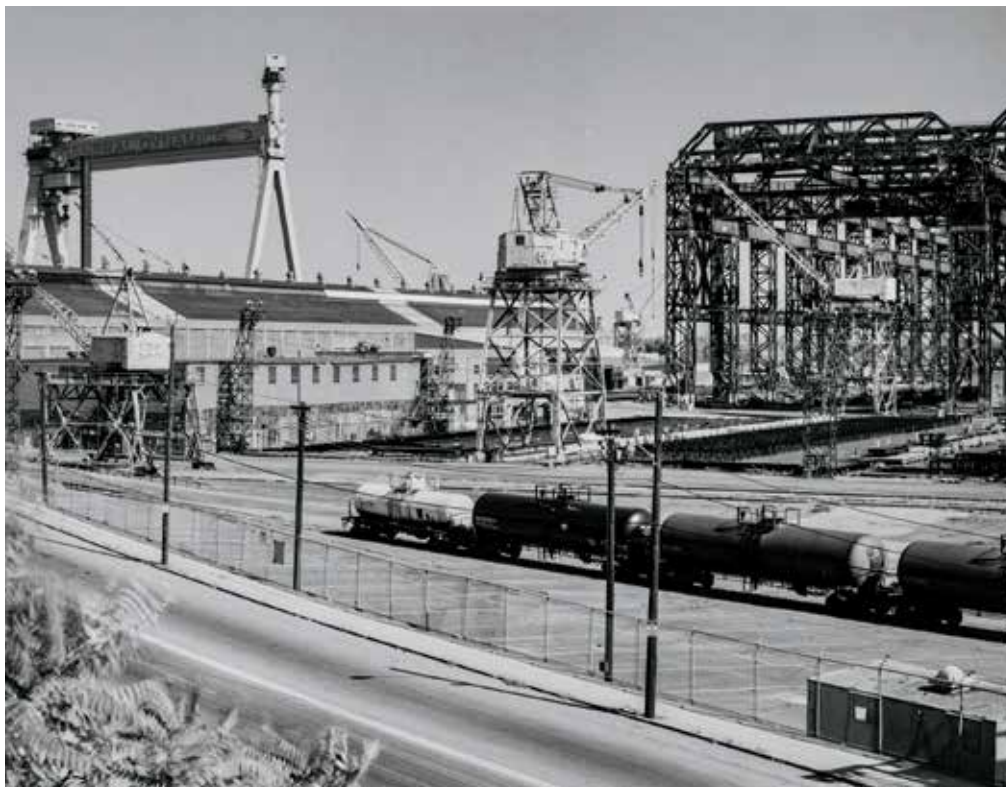
The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority assumed ownership of the shipyard and the railroad in 1987 as part of a broader harbor cleanup effort. This MWRA sludge/fertilizer silo overlooks the heavy cruiser USS Salem, built at the shipyard and commissioned in 1949. It is berthed at the shipyard and operates as a museum.



ENGINE ROSTER

NUMBER	MODEL	YEAR BUILT	FORMER OWNER	OWNER
No. 17	Alco S6 switcher	1956	Purchased from Southern Pacific in 1977. (Not in service)	MWRA
No. 7750	GP38	1969	Ex-Penn Central	Fore River Transportation
No. 101	B23-7	1979	Ex-Conrail No. 1992	Fore River Transportation
No. 102	B23-7	1979	Ex-Conrail No. 1980	Fore River Transportation





A 1984 photo of the shipyard, then owned by General Dynamics, shows GATX tank cars. Historic American Engineering Record, survey number HAER MA-26-4

Fore River No. 15, a GE 70-tonner, photographed on March 21, 1962. The oddball 600-hp locomotive has four diesel engines, two under each hood. Ralph L Phillips, author's collection



Today's crew keeps a close watch on grade crossings and the engineer maintains tight control of the move, avoiding any wheel slip with judicious applications of sand. As we approach Shipyard Interlocking, a stop signal held us just short of the entry into the commuter rail territory.

Once cleared onto the controlled siding, No. 101 pulls south to clear the Shipyard Interlocking and Commercial Street. Within moments a

southbound commuter rail from Boston to Greenbush rushes by on the main. Our tight window to move to the Braintree yard begins with a reverse move (with loads on the lead end) of about 1.5 miles to the wye that joins the MBTA Middleborough/Lakeville and Kingston commuter rail lines. During the move, the conductor and brakeman both ride the lead car and will guide the engineer through the move to the yard entrance.

At Gross Interlocking, the entrance to the yard, the conductor and brakeman manually line the switches, allowing No. 101 to enter the yard. The brakeman is already moving ahead, aligning additional switches. Once we're clear of the main, the conductor immediately closes the switch and notifies the dispatcher that No. 101 is in the yard. Less than 5 minutes later, another southbound commuter rail train passes on the main as it slows for the Braintree station.

The Fore River crew wastes no time. Because they already know what is waiting for them in the yard, they drop their out-bound loads onto a holding track for CSX and begin sorting the incoming cars.

Certain cars are specified for particular products produced at Twin Rivers so the immediate task is to build the return train with specified empty product cars and any incoming loads requested by Twin Rivers. The five-track yard also serves as a storage area for excess cars.

Switching is usually completed within an hour, with the hope the crew can get clearance to return to Quincy during the next open window on the main lines.

The conductor positions himself near the yard switch while he alerts the dispatcher that they are ready for the return trip. Another southbound commuter train moves quickly by and No. 101 receives clearance to start the switch timer at the main. A safety feature, the switch timer interrupts the control circuits on either side of the switch to prevent any train from entering the block until trains already in the block are past. When the timer expires, the conductor manually lines the switch so that we can exit the yard.

Departing the yard, No. 101 enters the busy Middleborough/Lakeville and the Kingston commuter rail lines.

As we head toward the controlled siding, we cross yet another commuter rail line, the Greenbush line. Once on the controlled siding, we move to Shipyard Interlocking. Cleared



onto the Fore River main, No. 101 begins the journey back to the yard with 10 empties. Once in the yard, the crew catches their breath and pulls together their tasks for the next portion of the day.

Yard work

The next phase of the day's operation involves delivering cars requested by the Twin Rivers Technologies plant, sorting incoming loads and empties, and pulling any additional cars out of the sprawling complex.

Placing each car properly according to the yard's track map is critical to the overall efficiency of the operation. Once again, the value of having both a conductor and brakeman was on display at Twin Rivers, as the brakeman guided the cars onto

the scales, while the conductor works ahead aligning switches, watching for hazards, and being mindful of the track capacity as the cars move toward him. All cars are weighed in and out of the facility.

The skill of the crew was on full display as the engineer, directed by the brakeman or conductor, precisely positioned each tank car under small fill pipes without a miss.

Looking ahead

What does the future hold for the Fore River Railroad? For now, business is good, with a consistent flow of traffic from the Twin Rivers facility.

As with any railroad, diversity in customers would help balance out lean times and strengthen the long-term health of the railroad but other

than MWRA, there are currently no additional potential customers. However, given the size of the yard and the water access for incoming shipping, there might be possibilities for additional customers. There is a large salt stockpile, for instance, that could easily be transported by rail. Additionally, a major portion of the yard is dominated by new automobile storage for a local dealer and perhaps an auto rack transload could be a possibility. Establishing a general transload facility for other products such as lumber, building materials, or propane might also be worth exploring. **I**

The author thanks the employees of the Fore River Railroad and Massachusetts Water Resources Authority for their assistance.

Fore River No. 101 and crew. From left: Kevin Linagen; Will Schonfeld, brakeman; Steve Teich, engine house mechanical; Jake Purcell, conductor; and Mike Raymond, engineer.



Hot spot: Winlock, Wash.

The roosters, the egg, and the trains

▲ A Union Pacific container train heads north past the crossover at Milepost 72 on May 28, 2020. This is a lightweight train with only GE C45AH No. 2758 up front and a second locomotive on the rear as distributed power. Four photos, Robert R. Harmen

WINLOCK, WASH., IS ONE OF MANY SMALL TOWNS along the mostly double-track BNSF-owned railroad connecting Seattle and Portland, Ore. What makes it unique is the huge egg celebrating its heritage as an egg capital, and eight cement roosters located about town, each painted in flamboyant dress. The roosters are mostly in the downtown area and it can be a game to find them all.



LOCATION:

Located west of Interstate 5 on state Route 505 at its intersection with state Route 603, downtown Winlock is on the east side of the main line as it makes an S curve, climbing northward toward the high point of the route at Napavine. There are two major street crossings of the railroad — Fir and Walnut streets — one near

each end of the downtown area. Both are gate and light protected, adding some warning of a train movement. Another crossing to the north of town — Hawkins Road — can also give audible warning of a train coming. The world's largest egg is located next to the Fir Street crossing. South of downtown, near double crossovers, is a private home built to look like a railroad depot. Winlock had two original depots — one burned down in 1911, the second was razed in the 1960s. At the south end of the double crossover interlocking is a paved pedestrian crossing. Any signal showing something other than red over red is a sign a train is approaching on that track.



RADIO FREQUENCIES:

BNSF 161.100 Seattle Sub, UP 160.515 Seattle Sub



Winlock, Wash., is home to the world's largest egg, along with eight roosters displayed around the downtown area. This one salutes the "12th man" fans of the NFL's Seattle Seahawks.



There is also a camera online showing traffic as it passes through Chehalis, Wash. This can be a great warning for southbound trains. Chehalis webcam: youtube.com/watch?v=wacIsiIYWm0.



TRAIN WATCHING:

And then, there are the trains. Lots of trains! This is one busy stretch of railroad upon which run trains from BNSF Railway, Union Pacific and Amtrak.

BNSF traffic can be just about any kind of train. Coal trains to Centralia, Wash., and Roberts Bank, British Columbia, often run about 125 cars. Centralia power plant trains are bottom-dump hoppers, while the Roberts Bank trains are rotary-dump cars. These are the only destinations for coal trains here. Grain trains can be empties from Vancouver, B.C.; Kalama, or Kelso-Longview, Wash., headed to Auburn, Wash., to travel east over Stampede Pass, or loads for various northern destinations. There are many crude oil loads headed for Cherry Point, Anacortes, Ferndale, and Tacoma, Wash. Ethanol tank trains bound for

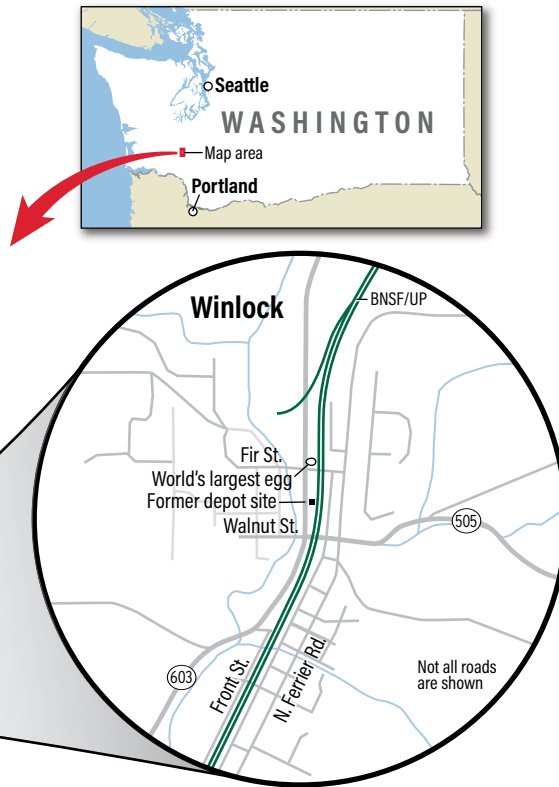
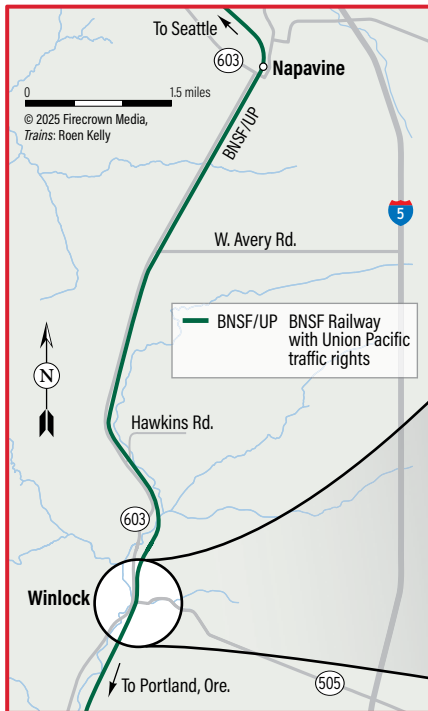


A meet at Winlock finds southbound Amtrak *Cascade* No. 507 passing a northbound BNSF freight on Aug. 14, 2019. The Siemens SC44 is working in push mode on the *Cascade*, while GE ES44C4 No. 8025 leads the BNSF freight.

Oil from Canada cracks the egg with Canadian National ES44AC No. 3847 in charge on Oct. 7, 2020. Foreign power frequents the line through Winlock and can show up on any train.



Winlock, Washington



Northbound *Cascade* No. 500 dashes through the crossover south of Winlock and heads into downtown on May 28, 2020. Siemens SC44 No. 1401 leads with a cabbage — cab/baggage — shell on the rear. Two photos, Robert R. Harmen

Tacoma also make appearances. Ethanol empties usually return east over Stampede or Stevens passes. Empty ethanol or, more recently, diesel fuel trains off the Portland & Western Railway, may be seen heading north to Auburn. There are also oil loads coming south from Canada to a Portland, Ore.,

transload facility, often with Canadian National locomotives. There is a mix of double-stacked container trains and general merchandise.

Oil, grain, and coal trains will usually have a distributed power unit or two on the rear, while the rest rarely run with DPUs. Another unusual move

is the trash or garbage train from the Seattle area going to and from sites along the upper Columbia River and loading/unloading at Roosevelt, Wash.

Union Pacific is the minority railroad in Winlock. UP trains tend to be intermodal, general merchandise or trash/garbage going to Arlington,





Ore., for burying. Some UP trains will have DPUs on the rear. The trash trains can run 100 cars or more at times when contaminated dirt cars are in the mix. While there is likely some sort of schedule for UP trains, is it not noticeable this far south for trains originating in the Seattle area. Some days you may see several UP trains, and other days just one or two. No matter, there is plenty of freight traffic through Winlock on any given day. You won't be disappointed.

Amtrak's *Coast Starlight*, along with 12 daily *Cascadians*, complement the freight traffic.

The *Starlight* runs south from Seattle early in the afternoon and its counterpart from Los Angeles passes through in the early evening. The train typically consists of two GE P42DC locomotives and eight cars with an occasional private car decorating the tail. Of late, the new Siemens SC44s have provided power, some paired with a P42DC.

The *Cascadian* regained part of its schedule early in 2021, with Amtrak Horizon cars filling in for the now-gone Talgo Series VI sets, utilizing a "cabbage unit" (cab/baggage)

on the south end and usually one of the Siemens SC44 locomotives, with an occasional Amtrak P42s substituting, on the other end.

The two remaining Series 8 Talgo sets with their unique cab cars fill out the fleet. Two of the southbound trains continue past Portland going to Eugene, Ore.

With the line being double track, a *Cascade* train can slip by unnoticed, especially when a 125-car unit coal train is slogging upgrade toward Napavine.

BEST VIEWING

The tracks are visible from many public streets in Winlock. Front Street runs along the line virtually the entire distance through town. State Route 603 roughly parallels the railroad north of Winlock for 6.5 miles upgrade to Napavine. There are several grade crossings along this route. Viewing to the south of Winlock is more obscured, as the tracks and the closest parallel road — North Ferrier Road — are separated by wooded stretches. Again, a number of grade crossings in the area will take you trackside.

You can also look for action at one of the crossovers in the area: Napavine, Milepost 66.2; Winlock, Milepost 71.3; and south of town, Milepost 72. The grade up to Napavine reaches its summit at Milepost 65. Mile posts increase north to south.

FOR THE FAMILY

Another train attraction, 15 miles north in Chehalis, is the Chehalis-Centralia Railroad & Museum. This tourist line offers train rides on weekends from April through the beginning of October. Check the schedule for special themed rail events throughout the year. The line normally runs 1916 Baldwin 2-8-2 No. 15 for power, although No. 15 is currently being inspected and rebuilt. Diesel No. 6, a 65-ton GE center cab, is the stand-in until No. 15 is completed.

Other than plenty of trains, the biggest area attraction is the Pacific coastline. About 40 miles west of Winlock, the coast offers recreational activities including hiking, biking, fishing, camping, and strolling along the beach. There are a number of state parks within a 30- to 60-minute drive of Winlock. — *Robert R. Harmen*

With a pair of P42DCs providing power, Amtrak's southbound *Coast Starlight* eases through Winlock, enjoying the patriotic Memorial Day flag presentation on May 28, 2020.



The Union Pacific dining car staff (above) with whom our author became good friends. Bill Russell, the “famous NBA star” turned off-season hamburger jockey, is second from left in the front row. Bill Fox (left in inset photo), UP assistant vice president of operations, invited the author to dine in his business car. Two photos, author’s collection



Growing up with UP passenger trains

I thought Bill Russell served my hamburger

by Alan Budwill

MY PARENTS MET IN THE UNION PACIFIC ticket office on Portland’s old Pittock Block. Dad was selling tickets and mom was buying. I was 3 years old when Frank Budwill, my dad, took a job as a UP traffic agent in Spokane, Wash. Mom didn’t really want to move, yet dad’s new job meant more train rides! To visit family, we rode

the *City of Portland*, No. 106, and the beloved “City of Hinkle” — officially train No. 19, a mixed run between Spokane and Hinkle, Ore.

I discovered dad’s company pass at an early age. By my teenage years, I was allowed to travel unaccompanied on the *City of Portland* to Nebraska for a visit

with Aunt Bess. Family friend and *City of Portland* dining car steward Matt Kruzich kept a watchful eye on me. In later years, Matt would let me stay in the *Pacific*-series crew sleeper that was carried in front of the first coach. My favorite meal in the dome diner was scrambled eggs with minced ham.

The dining car crew took me under their wings and pulled a few pranks while they were at it. Dining car waiter W. T. "Bill" Russell convinced me he was Bill Russell, the National Basketball Association star. Russell, the waiter, had a quite distinguished face. That was good enough to convince a 13-year-old who didn't follow much basketball. Russell told me working in the diner was his off-season, summer job. I recall attempting to impress several passengers with my brush with Celtics center Bill Russell, who just happened to be serving burgers in the diner!

In June 1970, I lobbied my folks for another trip to Omaha. Steward Matt Kruzich and crew were now turning around at Green River, Wyo., meaning I would be alone in coach for a night. I stepped off the train in Cheyenne and recognized my father's longtime friend Bill Fox, UP's assistant vice president of operations. He was walking the platform with another executive while his business car was put on the rear of eastbound No. 106. I said hello and he recognized me and invited me to dinner in his private car! Mr. Fox wisely advised that I return to my coach seat until leaving Cheyenne, so Charlie the car attendant knew I was on board.

After we cleared the Cheyenne yard, I walked through the final sleeper only to discover no business car on the rear. I asked the brakeman about Mr. Fox's whereabouts. The business car had not coupled properly and Mr. Fox didn't want to hold up the *City of Portland's* departure. A missed opportunity, but there was still plenty of excitement ahead.

The most memorable part of this early summer 1970 journey occurred at Ogallala, Neb. It wasn't the worn-out old depot beside the tracks. Ogallala is where my new seatmate boarded the coach. I never caught her name. She was 50-something years old and incredibly drunk, but had the foresight to pack more booze. The crew ended up restraining her in the women's lounge after she created a disturbance. I had a front-row seat to the whole incident, which culminated with the Omaha Police Department meeting the train, arresting the woman, and interviewing this traveler for details about the incident. I didn't share this story with my parents right away in fear that my solo trips would end.

As it turns out, on my return trip the railroad posted notices on the train that service was to end with the advent of Amtrak. The end of an era. Matt Kruzich continued to work special trains and even ran the UP Company Store in Portland's Albina Yard. And as for Bill Russell — thank goodness he had that NBA job to fall back on! **I**

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▲ A view from a departing train looking back toward Chicago Union Station, one of middle America's busiest stations. While an on-time departure is no guarantee of timely arrival, it helps when trains stick to their advertised running. Brian Solomon

IT'S NOT A SECRET — and it shouldn't be a surprise — that sometimes North American overnight long-haul passenger trains can run hours behind schedule. The reasons for these delays are frequently discussed in *Trains Magazine* (see page 20). Late trains often result from a combination of factors, including severe weather, mechanical failures; insufficient crew levels; rail congestion; conflicting approaches to infrastructure design, allocation, and capacity (plus funding for improvements); and grade crossing and trespassing incidents. How to solve these problems is a topic for another discussion.

AN IMPERFECT WORLD

In a perfect operating environment, all trains would run on time. But no railroad is perfect. Years ago, an Irish friend and I were traveling by rail in Germany — a nation I've long admired for its excellent rail-infrastructure — when we encountered an unexpected

problem. We had obtained day passes for the Bavarian region and were on a stopover in Kempten to explore the historic town and sample the local beer (which is some of the finest anywhere). We were staying in Buchloe, which is only a 35-40 minute journey by Regional Express train, with scheduled services normally running about every half-hour.

On a good day, this is a very civilized way to travel. Seat reservations are unnecessary, and if you miss your intended train you won't need to wait long for the next one. However, on this evening when we arrived back at the station, we sensed that something was amiss. We soon learned all the trains had been cancelled due to extreme wind: not just between Kempten and Buchloe, but all across Bavaria and most of Germany! Ultimately, a Munich city bus was summoned and we arrived back in Buchloe more than three hours later than planned (but we got there).

To be fair to train operators, whose timekeeping isn't always perfect, let's remember that air travel also has its issues: cancelled flights, diverted planes, and lost luggage.

Driving on highways has been equally frustrating, filled with traffic jams, lengthy detours, and weather-related delays. I've had so many delays on the road that I'm convinced increased investment in rail is the most sensible solution.

As a rail traveler, you can become stressed or outraged by a train delay, or you can accept that long-haul passenger trains sometimes arrive late. As the saying goes, "late trains get later," which is often true. In other words, if your train starts losing time, don't expect it to make up time. Indeed, it may get later.

When your train loses time, why not embrace the potential for delay as part of the adventure? Look forward to the unexpected extra time you will spend riding the rails and find enjoyment out of what is un-



Late trains get later so sit back and enjoy extra time on the rails. Train No. 48, the *Lake Shore Limited* is illuminated by signals during its Schenectady, N.Y., station stop. Brian Solomon

folding. As my friend Walter E. Zullig said, "Since the situation is beyond your control, relax and think: 'You're getting more train ride for your money!'"

It helps to be prepared for a late-running train. Amtrak offers a 'Train Status' feature on its website. I often use the third-party *asm.transitdocs.com* app to track train performance, which covers Amtrak and VIA Rail. It shows if a train is running late, how fast it is moving, and when it is expected to arrive. It updates every 4-7 minutes and is good tool to forecast if a particular service tends to hold its schedule or often runs later than advertised.

AVOIDING DISAPPOINTMENT

I view every rail journey as an opportunity to experience the railroad in action. More time spent on the train is more time

on the railroad. A delay caused by rail congestion is opportunity to see more trains. In some situations, congestion may result in a detour allowing you to experience rare rail-mileage.

When making long journeys, I try to leave ample time between the scheduled arrival and any crucial engagements. I also make sure I keep my contacts updated in the event of delay. I always pack plenty of reading material, my laptop, and other things to occupy my time. It's a good idea to bring some non-perishable snacks too.

Above all, I'd rather be on a late-running train than sleeping in an airport or, worse, finding myself wedged in traffic on the Interstate because a truck overturned and blocked all the lanes. At the very least the railroad offers entertainment and a comfortable seat! — *Brian Solomon*



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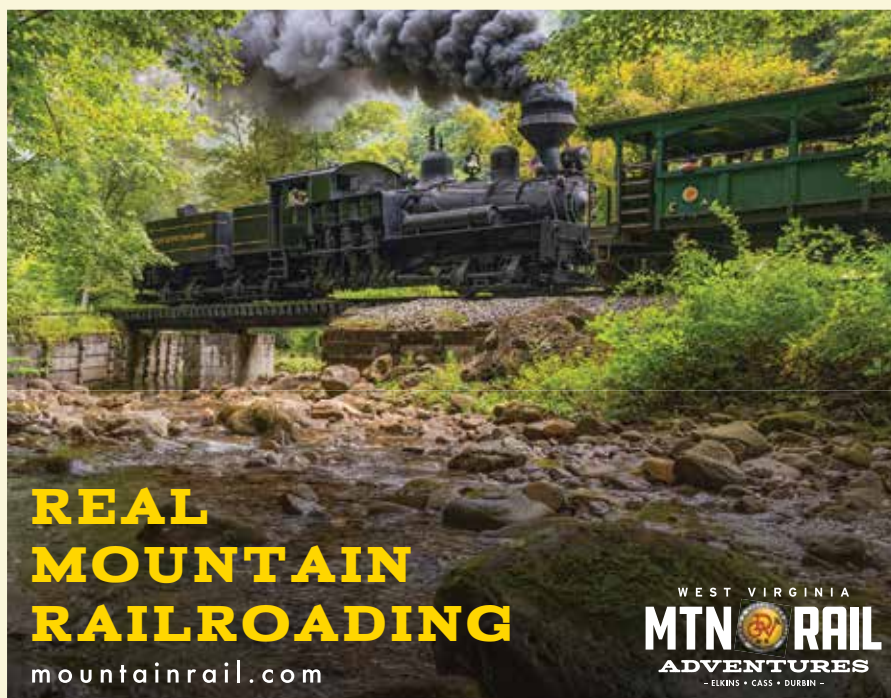
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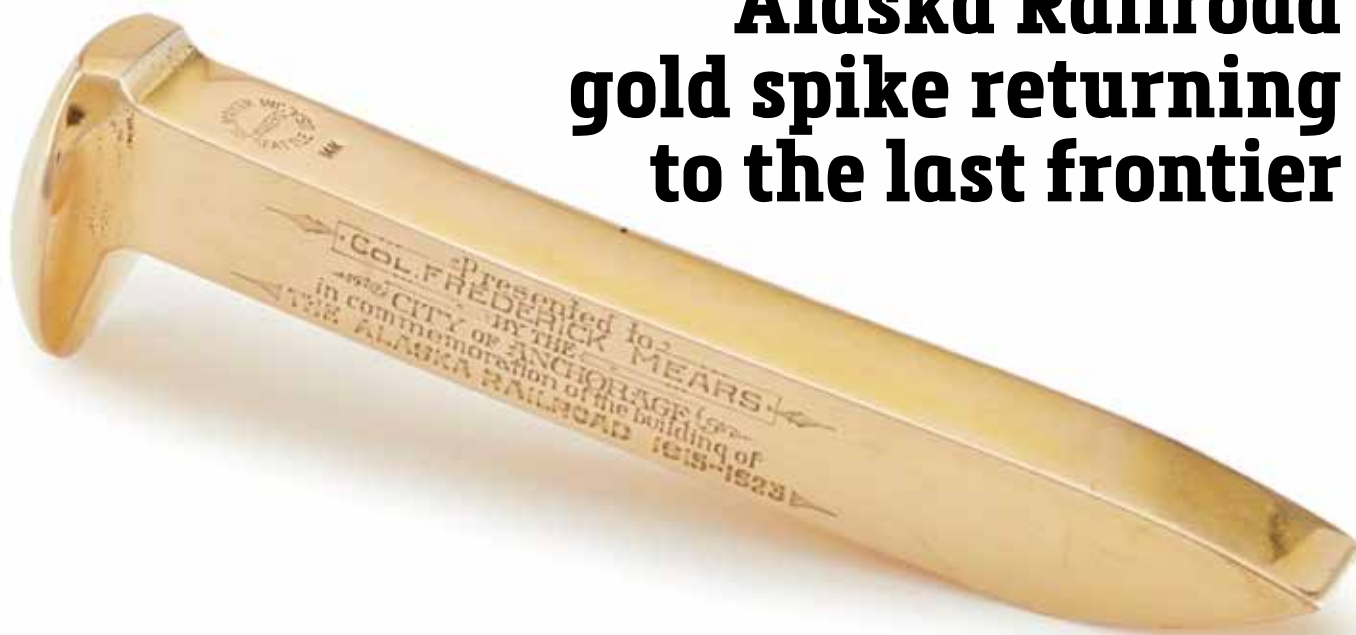
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▲ Presented to Col. Frederick Mears by Anchorage for his work on the Alaska Railroad, this gold spike completed the railroad. In January the Anchorage Museum and Nenana, Alaska, purchased the spike at a Christie's auction, returning it to the state. Anchorage Museum

ON JULY 15, 1923, A CROWD GATHERED at the end of what would be named the Mears Memorial Bridge spanning the Tanana River at Nenana, Alaska, about 300 miles north of Anchorage. The occasion marked the completion of the Alaska Railroad. Attention was focused on U.S. President Warren G. Harding, in attendance to drive a final gold spike on the line from Seward to Fairbanks.

Following the 1923 event, the gold spike has been held privately, making only a few public appearances — 1923 in

the Alaska Museum, Juneau; and 1967 at the Alaska 67 Centennial Exposition, Fairbanks. That is about to change through the efforts of the Anchorage Museum and the City of Nenana. The two entities partnered in January to purchase the spike when offered for sale by Christie's auction house. The win will return the spike to Alaska and joint custody between the museum and city.

"We are thrilled to partner with Nenana to share this piece of history with the public," says Julie Decker, director and chief executive officer of the Anchorage Museum. "The Golden Spike is a great piece of storytelling about place and people."

The spike — made of 14-karat gold, weighing about 1 pound, and measuring 5½ inches long — was presented to Col. Frederick Mears by the city of Anchorage, recognizing his dedication to completing the railroad. Mears, who joined the U.S. Army for service in the Philippine-American War (1899), demonstrated skills as an engineer. He was assigned to work on the Panama Canal and eventually the Panama Railroad, becoming the general superintendent of the Panama Railroad and Panama Canal Co. Steamship Line in 1914.

President Woodrow Wilson requested his services to complete the Alaska Railroad. Mears' efforts were directed toward the middle portion of the line from Anchorage to Nenana, the southern extension of tracks from Fairbanks.

The final price paid for the spike was \$201,600, four times more than Christie's estimate of \$30,000 to \$50,000. Funds supporting the bid came from private contributions, according to a joint statement from the museum and city of Nenana.

"I think it's a neat story of an urban and a rural community both along the rail belt coming together for a worthy cause," says Joshua Verhagen, Nenana mayor. "I look forward to working together and tying our communities together once again with this same Golden Spike."

For the ceremony, Mears lent the gold spike to Scott Cordelle Bone, Alaskan territorial governor. Harding, using a silver spike maul, tapped the gold spike twice. The gold spike was removed and replaced with a standard spike. The president took two mighty swings, missing on both tries. His third attempt connected.

Plans for exhibiting the gold spike have not yet been finalized. — *Bob Lettenberger*



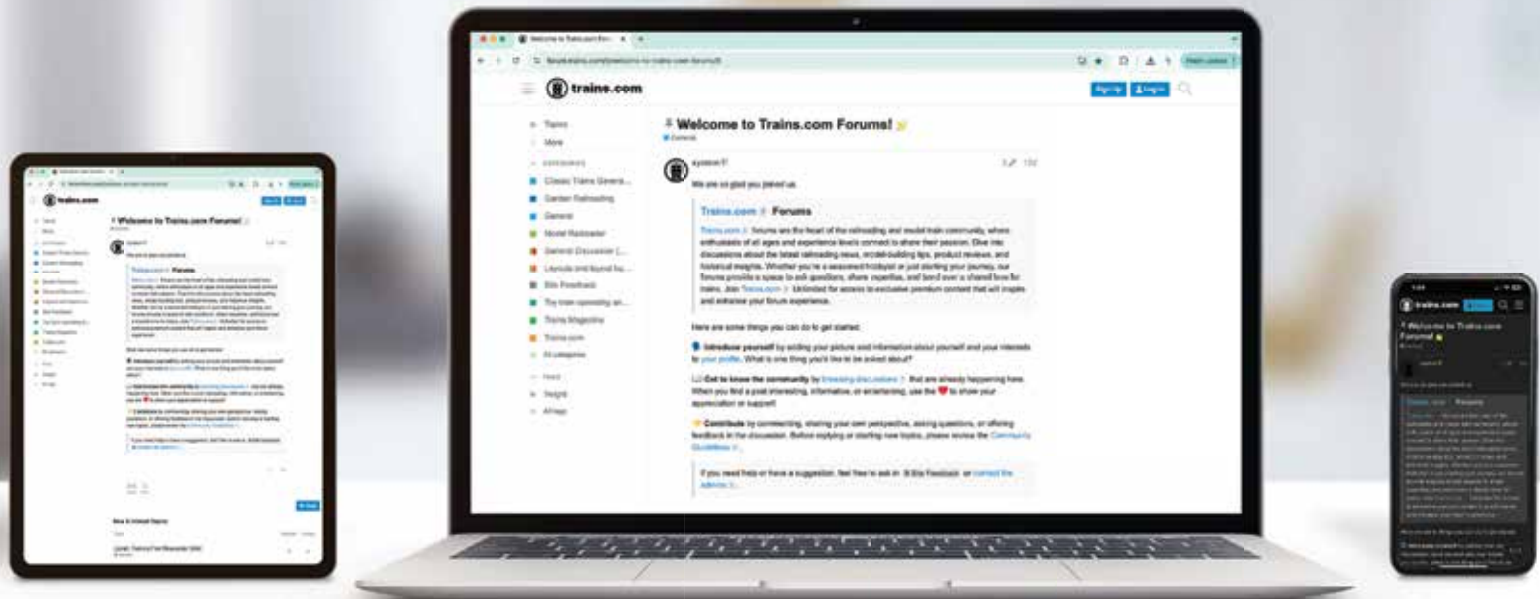
President Warren G. Harding drives the gold spike completing the Alaska Railroad on July 15, 1923, near Nenana, Alaska. Alaska Library



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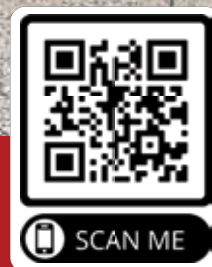
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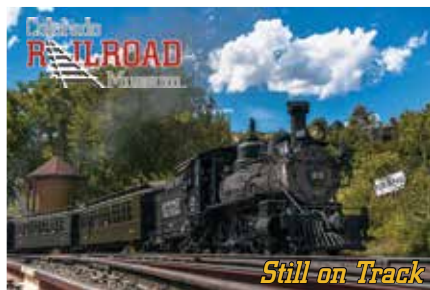
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At The Bridgeview B&B The action comes to you! Freight Trains are rolling in and out of Enola Yard right past our front porch. From the spacious decks and sitting room, you can watch the Susquehanna River, Blue Mountains and trains crossing World Famous Rockville Bridge, all in one spectacular panoramic view! Relax, in a comfortable, "home away from home" atmosphere at The Bridgeview, where we feature 10 clean, cozy rooms, all with private baths, A/C, WiFi, plus a freshly prepared breakfast to start your day! Visit Harrisburg, Hershey, Gettysburg, Adamstown and PA Dutch Country. See our website for more information, and give us a call. Come experience The Bridgeview Bed & Breakfast, where you never know, **what**, you might see next!!



www.bridgeviewbnb.com

717-957-2438

PENNSYLVANIA

Titusville

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409 S. Perry St., Titusville, PA 16354



Ride the Rails! All aboard the OC&T for a journey through history and scenic beauty.

Regular Rides June - October

Many Special Events including Murder Mystery Dinners, Wine Tasting Train Rides, Christmas in July, Speeder Rides, Santa Trains & more.

Call or visit our website for complete schedule.

www.octr.org

814-676-1733

PENNSYLVANIA

Washington

PENNSYLVANIA TROLLEY MUSEUM

1 Electric Way



Take a ride into the past at the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum. Your visit begins at our Welcome & Education Center that highlights the history of the trolley era through interactive exhibits, a museum store, and more. Take

a ride on a beautifully restored antique trolley on our four-mile scenic track, visit the restored Wexford Station, and tour the Trolley Display Building that houses many of our streetcars. Fun for all ages! Parking is free, and we have a picnic area and a playground for children.

Hours: 10:00am to 4:00pm (last full experience begins at 3:00pm)
January-May: Thursday through Sunday
June-August: Tuesday through Sunday
September-December: Thursday through Sunday
Closed Mondays except Memorial Day, Labor Day, and during the Washington County Fair.

Adults \$20

Seniors (ages 62+) \$19

Children (3-18) \$15

Toddler (2 and under) Free

Please visit our website for more information and special events pricing.

www.patrolley.org

724-228-9256

WASHINGTON

Othello

OTHELLO'S MILWAUKEE ROAD INTERPRETIVE CABOOSE

Explore the history of the Milwaukee Road in an original caboose turned interpretive center. Photos, memorabilia, maps and more ignite your imagination. Bay window, rib side caboose is open year round, Tuesday through Saturday from 10am-5pm. Groups welcome. Various train items and artwork available for sale in adjacent historic Old Hotel Art Gallery, originally built as a train hotel.

www.facebook.com/theoldhotelothello 509-488-5936

WISCONSIN

Frederic

1901 SOO LINE DEPOT

210 Oak Street West



Restored 1996 - Frederic Area Museum and State Trail Rest Stop - Soo Line wide-vision caboose #137. Weekends - Memorial Day through leaf season.

715-371-0574

www.fredericwi.com

715-483-1410

WISCONSIN

Green Bay

NATIONAL RAILROAD MUSEUM

2285 South Broadway



Explore dozens of historic trains and engaging exhibits at the National Railroad Museum, which is open year-round. Among our popular attractions are: the General Motors Aerotrain, Union Pacific "Big Boy" #4017, Pennsylvania Railroad GG-1 electric locomotive #4890, the Dwight D. Eisenhower A4 locomotive, and the world's largest collection of drumheads. Train rides are offered daily May-September (weekends in October).

www.nationalrrmuseum.org

920-437-7623

WISCONSIN

Osceola

OSCEOLA & ST. CROIX VALLEY RAILWAY

114 Depot Road, Osceola, WI 54020



Join us for a scenic and memorable trip through the St. Croix Valley. Come for the 1920's-1950's passenger rail experience, the awesome scenery, or special events such as pizza or wine tasting trains, fall color train rides and the popular Pumpkin Express.

Individual, family and group tickets available. Also, be sure to visit the Minnesota Transportation Museum in Saint Paul to experience railroading history.

www.trainride.org

651-500-1822

WISCONSIN

Trego

WISCONSIN GREAT NORTHERN RAILROAD

N6639 Dilly Lake Road



America's Only Moving BED & BREAKFAST DINNER TRAIN

The train departs Tuesday through Saturday evening at 5:30 May through December. The train features a queen bed, toilet, sink and shower in each sleeper deluxe suite. Enjoy cocktails in the lounge and then move to the diner for a scrumptious 4-course chef prepared meal from our onboard kitchen. When the train returns to the station, view the starlit sky while trading railroad tales with other passengers around our gas fire on the patio. Wake up to a hot breakfast in the diner. See the world famous Mark Twain Zephyr at Trego Depot!

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All Copy: Set in standard 6 point type. First several words only set in bold face. If possible, ads should be sent typewritten and categorized to ensure accuracy.

CLOSING DATES: July 2025 closes April 22, August closes May 19, September closes June 23, October closes July 22. For TRAINS' private records, please furnish: a telephone number and when using a P.O. Box in your ad, a street address.

Send your ads to: Trains magazine – Classified Advertising
18650 W. Corporate Dr., Ste. 103, Brookfield, WI 53045
Phone: 414-600-9285, E-mail: classads@firecrown.com

RAIL SHOWS AND EVENTS

JUNE 8, 2025: 49th Annual Kane County Railroadiana and Model Train Show. Kane County Fairgrounds, 525 South Randall Rd., St. Charles, IL. Sunday, 10:00am-3:00pm. Admission: \$6.00 w/tax. Tables starting at \$65.00. Information: 847-358-1185, RussFierce@aol.com or www.RRShows.com

All listed events were confirmed as active at the time of press.
Please contact event sponsor for current status of the event.

LODGING

INN ON THE RIVER: Book your stay for a relaxing getaway overlooking the beautiful Mississippi! Guests are minutes from quaint restaurants, stores and many outdoor opportunities. Each room has a balcony for stunning views of the Mississippi River and the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe Rail Line. Reservations: 608-534-7784 www.innontheriverwi.com or email: innontheriverwi@gmail.com

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STAY IN A CABOOSE! Visit the New River Gorge National Park in Fayetteville, WV. Stay in a caboose near town and the NP. www.redcaboose rentals.com

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

CAN DAN AND HIS CLUB SAVE their favorite engine from the scrap yard? Read the Deltic Disaster and Other Tales, and the sequel, That Which Was Lost, Deltic Disaster Part Two, available at Barnes & Noble, eBay, Amazon and Books-a-Million.

RAILROAD HOBBY BOOKS: Need to shed lifetime accumulation of railroad hobby books (not model railroading), from early 1960s to today, covering all areas of U.S. Free for taking all. Located mostly in basement. Will need oversized vehicle, not passenger sedan. Located in Saratoga Springs, NY. Contact: Robert Cooley, emd567@gmail.com or 518-587-5906.

COLLECTIBLES

PULLMAN CHINA AND L&N 1910 BRASS LAMP for sale at Kane County, IL RR Show in June & October. Telephone: 630-379-4424

TOP DOLLAR PAID for steam/diesel or electric builder plates. mr_slides@hotmail.com Telephone: 216-321-8446

PHOTOS, PRINTS AND SLIDES

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TOP DOLLAR PAID: for 35mm slide collections especially pre-1980. Mr. Slides, mr_slides@hotmail.com Telephone: 216-321-8446

RAILROAD ART

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THE ESTATE OF WELL-KNOWN RAILROAD ARTIST, ANDREW HARMANTAS, is selling all remaining paintings from his collection. Paintings are of various railroads, steam, diesel, and various sizes. Majority are framed. Inquiries, visit www.andreharmantasart.com

MISCELLANEOUS

RAILROAD PATCHES: Engineer caps with insignia. 1,000 designs. Catalog \$5.00. Patch King, Box 145, York Harbor, ME 03911.

WANTED

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WANTED: BUYING PRR LW PULLMAN CAR Cast-iron door nameplates, 1938-1950. J.H. STEVENSON, Rocky River, OH 440-333-1092 jhstevenson8445@gmail.com

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In the June issue



**Last trains
from Grand Central**

In 1991, the last long-distance train departed New York City's landmark **GRAND CENTRAL TERMINAL**. Quebec's **SARTIGAN** is a short line success story. Eight-hundred trains a day on a Swiss **NARROW GAUGE** railway. Riding **AMTRAK'S** one-of-kind **Palmetto**.

On sale May 13, 2025



We couldn't just go straight

The BNSF Broadview Sub snakes across the wide open terrain of south central Montana heading for Signal Peak Mine south of Roundup. This string of empties — E-RBGXMX2-50F — led by GE AC4400CW No. 5649, is northbound on July 25, 2021.



The Nittany Lions visit the fair

July 4, 2019, was the last day of the San Diego County Fair. A *Coaster* running north to Oceanside, Calif., passes the fairgrounds in Del Mar with a car wrapped in advertising for the Penn State online university. Our photographer is a former Pennsylvanian.

The ghost of Bryn Mawr

Like a sentinel from the past, the Bryn Mawr, Pa., interlocking tower guards Amtrak's four-track right-of-way west of Philadelphia. On Sept. 15, 2023, SEPTA train No. 9560 passes the tower, built by the Pennsylvania Railroad around 1915. SEPTA No. 9525 is approaching. The tower was closed after a 1994 fire.





Eastbound S

With its work completed in Allentown, Pa., Canadian Pacific train No. 256 snakes around the Bethlehem, Pa., S curves on its way east to Oak Island Yard in New Jersey on April 26, 2008. With only few empty garbage cars in tow the train is heavily overpowered by three CP SD40-2s and a Soo Line SD60.



Spring in Washington

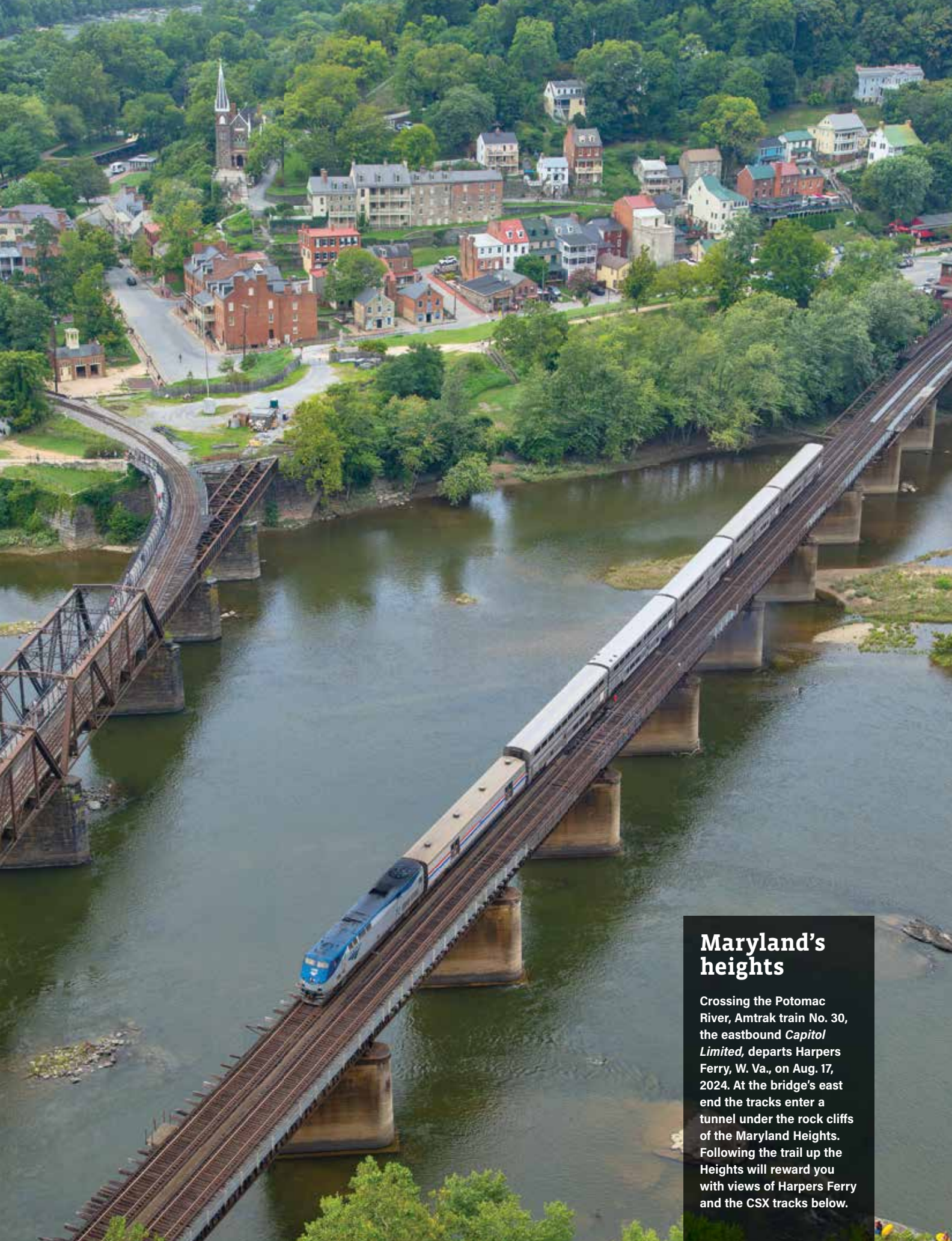
A sign of spring in our nation's capital is cherry trees blossoming along Washington Channel and the Tidal Basin. Only a few minutes from Union Station, an Amtrak train crosses the Channel, near the Jefferson Memorial, on April 1, 2017.

Young and old

In stark contrast, a new Amtrak Siemens ACS64 is spotted next to a well-worn EMD-ASEA AEM7 in the railroad's Wilmington, Del., shop during a June 2016 tour. Amtrak was then retiring the AEM7s from duty on the Northeast and Keystone corridors.



Austin MacDougall, 32, picked up his first camera at age 6 and has been photographing trains since. Originally from New Jersey by way of Pennsylvania, he honed his camera skills photographing trains throughout the Northeast during the Conrail-to-NS/CSX transition. Since then, his travels have taken him to more than 30 states seeking photogenic trains. His favorite places include the Columbia River Gorge, the Clinchfield, and Utah's Cane Creek Subdivision. Additionally, Austin serves as the Conrail Historical Society's treasurer, supporting efforts to preserve and document the railroad scene that captivated his childhood interest. Austin currently lives in Washington, D.C., with his wife Grace and cat Cannoli. He works as a financial consultant, and is also an avid ultramarathon runner.



Maryland's heights

Crossing the Potomac River, Amtrak train No. 30, the eastbound *Capitol Limited*, departs Harpers Ferry, W. Va., on Aug. 17, 2024. At the bridge's east end the tracks enter a tunnel under the rock cliffs of the Maryland Heights. Following the trail up the Heights will reward you with views of Harpers Ferry and the CSX tracks below.

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