

# DANVILLE FLYER

A PUBLICATION OF THE DANVILLE JUNCTION CHAPTER, INC. NRHS

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

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

Membership in the Chapter is open to anyone having an interest in any aspect of railroading. Dues per year are \$17.00 for Chapter membership in addition to \$33.00 for NRHS membership. Meetings are held on the third (3rd) Sunday of each month (except June, July, August and December) at the Jocko's Depot Restaurant, Gilbert Street (Illinois Route 1) and Williams Street, next to CSX, in Danville, IL with lunch beginning at 1:00 PM Central Time followed by meeting and program.

## OFFICERS FOR 2007 - Our 39th Year

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



Freight Car Services in the old C&EI shops at Danville churns out a lot of aluminum hoppers for the coal industry. But as Allen Cooke discovered, some of these cars are narrow-gauge for export and are loaded onto flat cars for transportation from the facility. 12-14-07 image taken from the Oregon Street overpass by Doug Nipper, assisted by Allen Cooke

## Coming Events

### *January 20, 2008*

Danville, IL - Chapter monthly meeting at Jocko's Depot Restaurant, Williams and Gilbert Street, lunch at 1:00, meeting and program to follow.

### *January 5 & 6, 2008*

Indianapolis, IN - Great Train Expo at the Indiana Fairgrounds. 10-4 PM each day. Admission is \$7.

### *January 26 & 27, 2008*

Cisco, IL - Annual train show on North Eldon Street, 10-4 each day

### *February 23 & 24, 2008*

Hoopeston, IL - Annual train show at Hoopeston Civic Center in the park, 10-4 each day.

## Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held Sunday, **January 20, 2008 at Jocko's Depot Restaurant, Williams and Gilbert Street, beginning at 1:00 PM.**

In last month's Flyer and this month, Doug Nipper has been keeping us informed on the progress of the second track extension north of Danville. Slated to be put in service around December 15 this new section will not only allow for replacement of the Winter Avenue bridge but in years to come give CSXT the flexibility of meeting additional trains at this location while using No. 2 track south of Liberty Lane for storage of trains either waiting for crews or waiting to be yarded at Brewer.

**We had our election of officers at the November meeting, and guess what, the same group was elected to serve for 2008.** This issue is smaller at the end of the year due to the holiday season and also remember there is no meeting on the normal third Sunday of the month - the annual dinner held early this month takes place of that meeting.

In October member Gene Cronkite and his wife moved from Hoopeston to Oklahoma. We got this recent message from Gene.

*Dear Members,*

*We arrived safely Oct. 26/07. Already miss the meetings. No meetings out here but haven't had time to look around.*

*Sincerely,  
Gene Cronkrite*

*Editor: I first met Gene when I joined the Family Model Railroad Club around 1964. Gene worked for the C&EI and lived on Michigan Avenue, not too far from the shops. We used to meet at homes at that time and if I remember correctly*

## Model Operating Sessions

### *Rossville*

Once again we are setting up operating sessions on Saturdays at Rossville. For 2008 the sessions on the Chicago, Illinois and Eastern Railroad will be:

January 5, 2008  
February 2, 2008  
March 1, 2008  
April 5, 2008

All sessions start around 1:00 PM and last until 3:30 PM.

### *Danville and Western Railroad, 1819 Coventry Dr, Champaign*

December 29, 2007  
January 26, 2008  
February 16, 2008  
March 29, 2008  
April 19, 2008

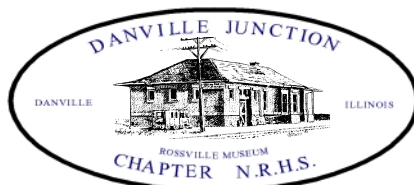
All D&W sessions begin at 1:00 PM and are for operators that are 14 years of age or older. A new dispatchers board will be in place this year so an additional person is needed and radios will be used.

*had about 10 members. Gene, although only 92 years old, made it to almost every meeting in Danville and we wish him well in their new home in Oklahoma.*

**The officers of the Danville Junction Chapter wish you and your family a happy holiday season and look forward to 2008.**

## Dues are due now

**For those of you that are members of the NRHS your renewal statement has been sent by the national to your home. If renewing the NRHS, considering the increase, please send your check to Allen Cooke, Treasurer, PO Box 1013, Danville, IL 61834. Allen will process the renewal and forward to the NRHS. If you have not paid yet you will receive a second notice after the first of the year. For museum members the annual renewal is still only \$17 per year. We hope that those of you than plan not to renew with the NRHS will continue to be museum members. If that is your desire please forward the renewal of \$17 to Allen and let him know you intend to remain museum members and continue to receive the publication. We appreciate the donations that have been made this year. These donations help offset the cost of running the museum at Rossville.**



## 12 Days of a Railroad Christmas...

On the first day of Christmas my railroad gave to me; one junk freight with zero point two horsepower per ton.

On the second day of Christmas, my railroad gave to me; two grouchy dispatchers with trains in every hole; and one junk freight with zero point two horsepower per ton.

On the third day of Christmas, my railroad gave to me; three lousy Yardmasters ducking behind a window sill; two grouchy dispatchers with trains in every hole; and one junk freight with zero point two horsepower per ton.

On the fourth day of Christmas, my railroad gave to me; four railroad managers hiding in the weeds; three lousy Yardmasters ducking behind a window sill; two grouchy dispatchers with trains in every hole; and one junk freight with zero point two horsepower per ton.

On the fifth day of Christmas, my railroad gave to me; five Form B's joint with other trains; four railroad managers hiding in the weeds; three lousy Yardmasters ducking behind a window sill; two grouchy dispatchers with trains in every hole; and one junk freight with zero point two horsepower per ton.

On the sixth day of Christmas, my railroad gave to me; six slow orders, all ten miles an hour; five Form B's joint with other trains; four railroad managers hiding in the weeds; three lousy Yardmasters ducking behind a window sill; two grouchy dispatchers with trains in every hole; and one junk freight with zero point two horsepower per ton.

On the seventh day of Christmas, my railroad gave to me; seven broken rails to keep it entertaining; six slow orders, all ten miles an hour; five Form B's joint with other trains; four railroad managers hiding in the weeds; three lousy Yardmasters ducking behind a window sill; two grouchy dispatchers with trains in every hole; and one junk freight with zero

point two horsepower per ton.

On the eighth day of Christmas, my railroad gave to me; eight broken crossings that need to be flagged; seven broken rails to keep it entertaining; six slow orders, all ten miles an hour; five Form B's joint with other trains; four railroad managers hiding in the weeds; three lousy Yardmasters ducking behind a window sill; two grouchy dispatchers with trains in every hole; and one junk freight with zero point two horsepower per ton.

On the ninth day of Christmas, my railroad gave to me; nine cars on the ground, dragged through the ties and two switches; eight broken crossings that need to be flagged; seven broken rails to keep it entertaining; six slow orders, all ten miles an hour; five Form B's joint with other trains; four railroad managers hiding in the weeds; three lousy Yardmasters ducking behind a window sill; two grouchy dispatchers with trains in every hole; and one junk freight with zero point two horsepower per ton.

On the tenth day of Christmas, my railroad gave to me; ten misroutes, that have to be setout at the nearest side track; nine cars on the ground, dragged through the ties and two switches; eight broken crossings that need to be flagged; seven broken rails to keep it entertaining; six slow orders, all ten miles an hour; five Form B's joint with other trains; four railroad managers hiding in the weeds; three lousy Yardmasters ducking behind a window sill; two grouchy dispatchers with trains in every hole; and one junk freight with zero point two horsepower per ton.

On the eleventh day of Christmas, my railroad gave to me; eleven lazy pool engineers, all laid off sick; ten misroutes, that have to be setout at the nearest side track; nine cars on the ground, dragged through the ties and two switches; eight broken crossings that need to be flagged; seven broken rails to keep it entertaining; six slow orders, all ten miles an hour; five Form B's joint with other trains; four railroad managers hiding in the weeds; three lousy Yardmasters ducking behind a window sill; two grouchy dispatchers with trains in every hole; and one junk freight

with zero point two horsepower per ton.

On the twelfth day of Christmas, my railroad gave to me; twelve pissed off crews, all stuck away from home; eleven lazy pool engineers, all laid off sick; ten misroutes, that have to be setout at the nearest side track; nine cars on the ground, dragged through the ties and two switches; eight broken crossings that need to be flagged; seven broken rails to keep it entertaining; six slow orders, all ten miles an hour; five Form B's joint with other trains; four railroad managers hiding in the weeds; three lousy Yardmasters ducking behind a window sill; two grouchy dispatchers with trains in every hole; and one junk freight with zero point two horsepower per ton.

*Merry Christmas and Happy  
New Year!!*

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## The President's Corner

I had started this article for the June issue and didn't finish it, and we have since been so focused on reporting on the #2 main extension project each month that I stopped doing this monthly column. I needed to start writing it again since once the project is done, there will be no more to write about. But you have to be careful... Every e-mail that you send Rick will probably end up in the newsletter!

Earlier this year, the Chapter and C&EIHS received a donation of a collection of memorabilia from the late Harry Lind's family. Harry was a brakeman and conductor on the C&EI and worked into the CSX era. I remember Harry from his visits to North Yard, and he was quite a character. He always drove Subaru automobiles, and always had a new story to tell.

We split the bounty with the C&EIHS, their interest being a few timetables and passenger brakemen's hats with C&EI buttons. The rest we are selling to make a few bucks for the Chapter. Rick has even



sold a couple of other hats on Ebay.

One of the things I held out was the MoPac “Operating Employees Rules Examination” booklet for 1982. In that year I was two years out of high school and just starting my first real job at Autotron. I had been hanging out at North Yard for about four years, but was still exploring the railroad. And this exam reminded me that during that time, railroading was still done the old-fashioned way: Cabooses were still on the back of every train; train orders were handed up with hoop and string, and hotbox detectors didn’t talk; they had to be read by the crew on the caboose.

The book is unique in that each question is actually a narrative about something that really happened at some point on the MoPac system. Each question also has a photo, obviously staged to match the incident. I guess your task as the test-taker was to write up what was right or wrong about each incident. In the back of the booklet are the “answers” that explain what went astray in each instance and what rules were violated.

I don’t know what rules exams these days are like, but I suspect they’re more “sterile” like everything else in the industry. I used to help Bob Barker prepare for his exams and learned the rules pretty well myself in the process. Bob always told me that the rules could always be interpreted by the company to justify firing an employee, and there was a rule for every bad incident that had happened on railroads in the past. With the extremes they go to in order to protect roadway workers these days, it’s obvious that rules on the railroad accumulate over time...

*Doug*



## Rail News

### **STB orders full EIS in CN/EJ&E case-**

The Surface Transportation Board announced today (11/26) that it will order a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as part of its consideration of CN’s application to acquire control of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern. While the board accepted the application as a “minor” transaction that will get expedited handling, STB said a full EIS was warranted “in view of the large projected traffic increases on certain line segments and the resulting potential impacts of the proposed transaction on a number of communities.”

The STB added “Although, under the board’s statute, the transportation merits of the transaction would be reviewed and a final decision ordinarily be issued by April 2008, it will not issue a final decision until the environmental review process, which proceeds on a separate track, is complete.” Under a procedural schedule announced today, notices of intent to participate in the proceeding are due by Dec. 13. March 13, 2008, is the due date for responses to “comments, protests, requests for conditions, and other opposition.” The remainder of the schedule—a public hearing or oral argument, date for a final decision, and date for the decision to become effective—depend on the progress of the environmental inquiry.

**CP purchase of DM&E Timeline-** Under a procedural schedule proposed today, the Surface Transportation Board will render a final decision on Canadian Pacific’s application to acquire the Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern on Sept. 30, 2008, with an effective date of Oct. 30, 2008. Written comments on the proposed schedule are due Dec. 10. Any filing submitted in the proceeding may be made via an e-filing format (instructions at [www.stb.dot.gov](http://www.stb.dot.gov) at the E-FILING link) or in the traditional paper format. The proposed schedule begins Dec. 5 with the filing of the application, and provides for submission of supporting and opposing evidence and rebuttal, including a possible oral hearing and public argument in June, with the date to be determined. Final briefs are due July 2, 2008.

### **BNSF coal train loadings up more than four trains per day in November.**

Average BNSF daily train loadings for the Powder River Basin, including Wyoming and Montana mines, stand at 53.9 trains per day through Nov. 18, 2007, compared with an average of 49.6 trains per day for the first 18 days of November 2006. Year-to-date through Nov. 18, 2007, BNSF has loaded a total daily average of 50.1 trains in the PRB, up 1.3 percent from the 49.4 trains loaded through the same period in 2006. System wide, BNSF has loaded a total of 256.2 million tons of coal through Nov. 18, 2007, up 1.8 percent from the 2006 year-to-date total of 251.7 million tons.

Track-laying crews completed construction of 21 miles of fourth main track on Logan Hill in Wyoming on November 1, 2007, and ballast is being delivered and applied to the new track. The new track is scheduled to go into service in spring 2008, with additional crossover and signal work to follow. Elsewhere, an 11-mile stretch of new second main track was placed in service November 14, 2007, between Enterprise, Neb., and Stuart, Wyo., southeast of the Joint Line. This trackage is providing additional capacity for the movement of loaded and empty coal trains between the PRB and destinations to the south and southeast.

### **The National Transportation Safety Board**

noted sun glare on a signal as a contributing cause to a rear-end collision on Norfolk Southern in January, 2006. In its report on the accident, which took place near Lincoln AL, the NTSB noted that the engineer and conductor thought they saw a green-over-red signal, after which the crew proceeded and rear-ended the train ahead. NTSB did tests that showed that, at the time of day of the accident, sunlight reflecting off the signal optics caused the green light to appear lit, even though it was not on. NTSB recommended to NS that it instruct its crews, when extra lights appear lit, to treat the signal display as an error

**Amtrak and Wisconsin state officials dedicated** the rebuilt rail station in Milwaukee, WI. The \$17 million renovation to the station, which was first opened in 1965, includes revamped interiors and a

new area allowing intercity bus operators to also use the facility. 16 Amtrak trains a day stop at the station

**Chicago Terminal filed** to lease, from Canadian Pacific-Soo Line, and operate approximately 4 miles of line, entirely within the Bensenville Industrial Park in Bensenville, IL

**Norfolk Southern** is maintaining its edge over other U.S. Class I railroads in return on net investment (ROI). The latest report from the Surface Transportation Board shows NS with an ROI of 14.6% in the 12 months ended Sept. 30, up from 13.7% in the corresponding period a year ago. Soo Line's earned a return of 12.64%, up from 9.62%; BNSF Railway, 11.21%, up from 10.58%; CN/Grand Trunk, 10.41%, up from 8.84%; Kansas City Southern, 10.19%, up from 8.99%; Union Pacific, 9.02%, up from 7.07%; and CSX Transportation, 8.06%, up from 7.39%. The average rate of return for all U.S. Class I's in the 12 months ended Sept. 20 was 10.40% compared with 8.64% a year earlier.

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## UP raises the bar on coal, again

There's an old Christmas tale about how, if you don't behave, Santa Claus will leave coal in your stocking instead of, say, an electric trainset around the tree.

Union Pacific says Santa will have no problem delivering coal this Christmas if need be because it has once again surpassed its own monthly record for delivering coal originated in Wyoming's Southern Powder River Basin (SPRB). In November, UP delivered 17.9 million tons of SPRB coal—the best month on record, surpassing the previous record of 17.1 million tons of coal delivered in September, and making November 2007 the best coal loading month in UP history.

“For three straight months, we have consistently increased our SPRB coal train loadings year-over-year and month-over-month based upon the strength and performance of all three parties in the coal supply,” said Doug Glass, UP vice president and general manager-Energy. Those three parties are SPRB mines, the utilities, and UP employees.

UP set several monthly SPRB coal delivery records. A record 1,159 coal trains were loaded in November, surpassing September's record of 1,114 trains loaded in a 30-day month. A daily average of 38.63 trains were loaded in the SPRB in November vs. the previous daily average record of 37.13 trains loaded in September. A single-day loading record of 46 trains were loaded on Nov. 29 to eclipse the previous record of 45 set on Sept. 29. A consecutive seven-day record set was set twice during the last week of November with 293 and 284 trains loaded, vs. the previous consecutive seven-day record set during the last week of September with 278 trains loaded. Coal train size records of 15,460 tons per train and 130.6 cars per train were established in November. Both metrics are more than 2% higher than last year. Finally, the entire Energy commodity group, which includes SPRB, Colorado/Utah, Southern Illinois, Hanna Basin, and coke, had best-ever records for any month in tons and carloadings. The total tons record of 23.9 million tons surpasses the August 2007 record of 23.6 million tons. The total carloadings record of 205,462 topped the August 2007 total of 203,759.

UP did not say whether Santa's coal would be transported to the North Pole on the Polar Express.

*Via Railway Age*

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## Chicago suburbs to fight CN acquisition of EJ&E

Several northwestern Chicago suburbs are lining up to oppose Canadian National's \$300 million purchase of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern, Crain's Chicago Business reported. CN is acquiring the “J” to relieve congestion on its Chicago-area routes. Barrington and neighboring municipalities predict CN's plans will significantly increase train volumes through their towns and would lead to nightmarish traffic conditions. Residents say they are worried that noise from locomotives will shatter the area's bucolic character, undermining property values and small businesses. Barrington and at least six neighboring towns intend to lodge objections with the Surface Transportation Board in hopes of blocking or restricting CN's acquisition of the EJ&E from U.S. Steel. The communities have formed a coalition to oppose CN's plan. Completion of the sale is contingent on STB approval.

“Traffic is difficult now,” says Carol Nelson, a Lake Barrington resident. “I can't even imagine what's going to happen if we have 20 trains a day coming through. The serenity, peacefulness, and quality of life will change quite drastically if that happens.” CN expects about 15 more freight trains would pass through Barrington on top of the 3-5 trains a day already using the EJ&E line linking Waukegan, Ill., and Gary, Ind. Volumes are likely to increase even more next year as CN hauls more freight into Chicago from a new container port in Prince Rupert, British Columbia. Within two years, the port will be able to handle at least a million shipping containers a year.

Canadian National says the route would allow it to move trains through the Chicago area faster and move trains off routes where they now wait for hours or move slowly because owing to the high volume of rail traffic. “This needs to be viewed as providing

relief to the entire surface transportation system,” a railroad spokesman told Crain’s.

The STB has wide-ranging authority to require CN to install sound walls, underpasses, or other remedies to address environmental issues. Observers say a motivated and well-financed opposition could delay a decision on the sale for months and that approval of the sale could be challenged in federal court. But the likelihood of Barrington and other towns killing the deal is, at best, a long shot. “For them to meddle in interstate commerce like that, it’s just not going to happen,” Chicago railroad attorney and TRAINS special correspondent Michael Blaszak told Crain’s.

*Via TRAINS On-Line*

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## **Iowa Pacific to acquire steam power for Colorado railroad**

A subsidiary of Iowa Pacific Holdings, owner of five midwestern and western shortline railroads, yesterday purchased two 2-8-0 steam locomotives: former Lake Superior & Ishpeming No. 18 and Grand Canyon Railway No. 20. The 18 is operational while No. 20 will require an overhaul before running again; Iowa Pacific hopes the engine can enter service in 2009. The two locomotives are presently stored in Hood River, Ore., where No. 18 was used on the Mount Hood Railroad last summer. Alco’s Pittsburgh Works built the pair for the LS&I in 1910.

A spokesman for Iowa Pacific told Trains News Wire the two locomotives are destined for use on the San Luis & Rio Grande Railroad in Colorado. There they will join former Southern Pacific 2-6-0 No. 1744 in pulling tourist trains over scenic La Veta Pass. Plans call for the two engines to be moved from Oregon to Colorado in December. The locomotives will be used both on regular tourist trains and occasionally on freight or mixed trains on the

lines to Monte Vista and Antonito, Colo. The railroad expects that with the addition of the larger steam locomotives it will be able to run longer trains and have more operating flexibility.

The San Luis & Rio Grande operates excursion trains over La Veta Pass and through the San Luis Valley to connect with the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad from May through October. The trains leave daily from Alamosa, Antonito, and La Veta and operate in conjunction with the Denver & Rio Grande Historical Foundation.

The San Luis & Rio Grande Railroad runs west from a connection with the Union Pacific at Walsenburg, Colo., over the Sangre de Cristo Mountains at La Veta Pass, and into the valley of the San Luis and Rio Grande rivers. At Alamosa, the railroad splits, with a branch extending south to Antonito and northwest to South Fork. In addition to the Union Pacific, the SL&RG connects with short line San Luis Central Railroad at Monte Vista and the Denver & Rio Grande Historical Foundation at Derrick, just west of South Fork. The SLRG is just less than 150 miles long. The highest point on the SLRG is at La Veta Pass, 9,242 feet above sea level, the highest rail-freight line in North America.

In addition to the steam locomotives, the company has also completed a deal to acquire five former Santa Fe Big Dome cars from Holland America. The cars were last used in service for the cruise line on the Alaska Railroad, running between Anchorage and Fairbanks via Denali National Park. The cars will be moved to the lower 48 and will also be used on San Luis & Rio Grande excursion trains.

The domes were built by the Budd Company for the Santa Fe in 1954 as part of an order for 14 full-length domes. The first eight cars, AT&SF Nos. 506-513, were for El Capitan and Chicagoan/Kansas Citian service. Two years later, the Cap went hi-level, and the domes were moved to the Chief. The last six cars, Nos. 550-555, were for the San Francisco Chief. Auto-Train Corp. purchased 13 of the cars in the early 1970s, with Santa Fe retaining one car, which today is part of BNSF’s executive-train fleet. Two cars have been scrapped,

but the other 12 cars survive today.

With five dome cars on hand, there is a possibility that some of the cars will be used on other railroads owned by Iowa Pacific, a spokesman said. In addition to the San Luis & Rio Grande, the other railroads owned by Iowa Pacific are the Arizona Eastern Railway, Texas-New Mexico Railroad, West Texas & Lubbock Railway, Permian Basin Railways, and the Chicago Terminal Railroad.

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## **Amtrak gains ridership**

In September 2007, Amtrak boardings increased 8.4 percent for the month and 7.1 percent for the year-to-date, according to the Travel Industry Association of America’s latest Industry Performance Indicators report. The IPI are a set of monthly measurements that provide a quick snapshot of recent trends in travel-related industry segments. Data are obtained from both the private sector and government sources. The same report indicated domestic air passenger boardings rose 1.8 percent over the previous year and year-to-date, while the demand for motor gas rose just 0.2 percent and 0.9 percent respectively. Public demand for the rail travel option is now growing faster than that of the travel industry as a whole, even while the supply of seats on Amtrak is constrained in many markets by limited frequencies and shortened train consists.

*Via TRAINS On-Line 11-06*

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## **Urbana Train Show** **March 15 & 16,** **2008 Lincoln Square** **Village - Urbana, IL**

## **BNSF marks completion of triple track on PRB joint line**

The Powder River Basin (PRB) joint line in Wyoming now is triple-tracked from end to end. Late last month, BNSF Railway Co. opened a 12-mile third main between Caballo Junction and Coal Creek Junction, marking the completion of triple track along the entire 103-mile line BNSF shares with Union Pacific Railroad.

In July, BNSF placed in service 15 miles of third main track between Donkey Creek Junction and Caballo Junction; in September, the Class I opened an additional 13 miles of triple track between Coal Creek Junction and Reno Junction.

"Completion of the third mainline not only improves the flow of loaded and empty coal trains to and from the 10 mines served by BNSF and UP on the joint line, but also allows double-track operations to continue when any one of the three tracks must be taken out of service for maintenance," BNSF officials said in a service advisory posted on the Class I's Web site. By year's end, BNSF also expects to complete 21 miles of quadruple track south of the North Antelope Rochelle Mine — the joint line's first segment of fourth mainline.

Additional track capacity already is helping BNSF boost PRB coal traffic. In October, the railroad averaged 51.4 daily train loadings compared with October 2006's 50.4-train average. And through 2007's first 10 months, BNSF averaged 49.8 train loadings per day, up slightly compared with a 49.4-train average during the same 2006 period.

*Via Progressive Railroading*

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## **Change in CN (IC) detectors**

The assimilation of IC into CN continues. The Tolono, Peotone and Clifton defect detectors all now ID themselves as CN instead of IC. Both the Tolono and Peotone detectors have completely new voices, very electronic sounding instead of a recording of a real human being. And both of them give the temperature say "F" after the numbers. Peotone no longer gives a train length, which is too bad as it was the most accurate one on the Chicago Sub. And Peotone is an all-new detector, not just a new voice. There are new bolometers, dragger panels and wiring in place. Clifton is still the old equipment. Don't know about Tolono as I don't get that far south.

Clifton is the combination of two voices. I think they just change to talker portion. It is both old and new voices and you can clearly hear that when you listen to it. And the voice that says "CN Detector" sounds like it is in serious pain.

Now oddly enough, the sign at the Center

Street entrance to Markham Yard's Moyers Intermodal Terminal still says Illinois Central and has the IC death star logo on it. And this sign was down for quite some time before they put it back up too. Go figure.

An update on the merger with the J; the Surf Board has announced that the merger will be considered a minor transaction, which was somewhat of a shock to me as it will have a major impact on all Chicago area railroading. And they must conduct an environmental impact study as it will be a huge impact on most of the towns and cities the J operates through. Don't bet that this will stop the merger though, no matter how much the towns along the way are whining and crying about it. It wasn't all that many years ago the J was a much busier property than it is today. Now though, much of what once was the country where the J operated is now fully or greatly developed. And all those folks that built right next to the railroad are the ones really whining.

Even my father in law, who built right next to the J two years ago is whining and crying. And I told him back then he was

making a serious mistake building next to a railroad. He didn't believe me or want to hear it when I told him the J would only get busier over time. He believed the developers when they told him they hardly operate any trains at all on that line. I guess the present 10 trains per day is nothing. When the time comes that I am rolling past his home, I will give him a shot of whistle to tell him hello. Or maybe, ha ha. His present belief is that they should find somewhere else to run those trains, like out in the country. Hmm, three years ago where he now lives was out in the country.

Perhaps they should have built someplace a little more bucolic, like say next to I-65. There really isn't that much traffic there after one of those seemingly weekly big wrecks occur and all the traffic is stopped for several hours.

*Tuch*

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## **Signal confusion may have caused Amtrak wreck**

The National Transportation Safety Board is investigating whether the engineer of an Amtrak train that slammed into the back of a stopped freight train properly interpreted a signal, the Chicago Tribune reported.

According to the Tribune, the dispatcher gave the engineer of the train a red over yellow signal prior to the collision. According to the operating rules in place on the Norfolk Southern line on Chicago's South Side where the accident occurred, red over yellow would be a restricting signal. Under that indication, the train would be permitted to proceed no faster than 15 mph, and must be prepared to stop short of any obstructions in its path, such as the stopped freight. The locomotive's event recorder indicated the engineer slowed to cross from one track to another, as the signal indicated, but then accelerated and was traveling 40 mph until nine seconds prior to the collision, when a crew member applied the train's emergency brake.



Colored signals indicate different things on different railroads. The Amtrak train in question, the Pere Marquette from Grand Rapids, Mich., travels over two railroads on which the same signal appearance (signal aspect, in technical terms) can mean two separate things. And while Amtrak isn't releasing the name of the crew members involved, it has said the engineer was somewhat new.

"Signals mean different things at different places," said Keith Holloway, a spokesman for the NTSB. "We don't yet know if there was confusion or a distraction, but we are looking at what the engineer was doing at the time the red over yellow was displayed. We are trying to determine what the different interpretations could have been."

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## **STB Rejects sale of NS Michigan Line**

The Surface Transportation Board Monday (12/10) rejected a planned sale by Norfolk Southern of rail right-of-way between Kalamazoo and Ypsilanti, Mich. NS had planned to sell the route, along with two other lines, to Watco Cos. Inc., which planned to form the Michigan Central Railway. NS would have kept a one-third interest in the new company.

Because of the decision, "We're just a wannabe railroad company that doesn't have a railroad," said Ed McKechnie, Watco's executive vice president and chief commercial officer.

"Because of all the time and the effort we've put into addressing the legitimate concerns of all of the parties in this matter, the decision certainly is a disappointment," said NS spokesman Rudy Husband. "We're going to take some time to thoroughly review our options."

Unions and numerous municipalities along the route opposed the sale, stressing concerns over future maintenance and possible impact on Amtrak operations. Amtrak supported the proposed sale since Michigan Central officials pledged to keep the right-of-way up to passenger rail standards.

The proposed NS sale also included rights-of-way between Grand Rapids, Mich., and Elkhart, Ind., and between Jackson and Lansing. It also included Michigan Central operating Norfolk Southern's rail yards in Battle Creek, Kalamazoo, Jackson, Lansing, and Grand Rapids.

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## **Peoria area short lines battle each other**

The Surface Transportation Board told the Central Illinois Railway and the Pioneer Industrial Railway to come to an agreement for joint use of the so-called Kellar Branch, a seven-mile line in Peoria and Peoria Heights, Ill. Since the ruling, the two railroads have not been able to come to terms, and Central Illinois went so far as to ask Peoria police to cite Pioneer for trespassing, which police declined to do, according to a story in the Peoria Journal Star.

"The STB ruling directed the two of them to develop an operating protocol between them," said Peoria City Manager Randy Oliver. "The STB created this mess, and the STB is going to have to unscramble it."

The trespassing battle broke out when one hi-rail truck from each railroad encountered each other on the branch yesterday morning while inspecting the line. Pioneer CEO and President Mike Carr accused the CI employee of ignoring a flagman his company had in place and said the driver of the CI hi-rail truck proceeded to "charge" down the line at Pioneer's truck. *Via TRAINS On-Line*

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## **New No. 2 Main at Danville**

**December 1 (early)** - Foreman Shaw has a 707 today, and I just heard them talking to someone who asked if they were taking the entire #2 track out of service. There was a discussion of how the yard jobs could still use it at the south end, but the order clearly stated all of #2 so that's what

they're going with until someone higher up says differently. (Put a portable derail a mile south of Winter and you've got it covered.)

So it sounds like they will be cutting #2 away from the old RA switch and realigning it to the new track north of there as the first part of the cutover. They can jumper things up so RA will still work for mainline moves.

**(Same day, later)** on to the real news of the day. They tore out the whole switch at the old RA Jct. yesterday and straight-railed #1 main. #2 main is OOS completely and the signal department was making some changes down at the new Voorhees St. temporary signals. They are still lining the old RA for moves, but it's only a hold-out signal like Hoopston in this twilight of its existence.

On the way up to Rossville for the operating session, I went by the 116 signal to see if there were any changes there, or if it looked like that signal might be retired. I still thought at the time that there's enough stopping distance to keep it as the distant signal for NE RA Jct. (There was already an Electrocode repeater in the old West Newell flasher case, so from there to 116 was at least 1.5 miles.)

But on up to Alvin (I missed Bismarck) I was floored to see they added a second head for \*southbound trains\* on that intermediate signal. I could understand if it was for northbounds since they're planning on circuiting the Rossville siding. But no way could this be the approach to NE RA Jct. It's too far (about 8 miles), and they would have a multitude of EC repeaters for that big of a block.

So I mention this at the session, and Skylar says they've also added a lower head to the Bismarck signal! Now that could be the new southbound approach to double track which would mean that the 116 signal WILL go and just be an EC repeater location. Or, it could be for another yellow to give an advance approach in the case there isn't quite stopping distance between 116 and the new control point. We'll just have to wait and see.

On the Alvin signal, they might just have it turned the wrong way and it is going to



be new lower head for northbounds after all. That's the only thing that makes sense to me.

Don't know if they'll work Sunday or not. Since the old northbound signal at RA is between the mains, they'll have to leave it until it's completely retired and shove the new #2 main track right up against it. It looked like they also still needed to lay the welded rail on top of the existing ties down to the new RA Jct when I went by this morning.

**December 3 - (full speed ahead)** Well, they sure bit off more than they could chew in one day, that's for sure! I think it must have been planned for at least two days or maybe all week. All morning and early into the afternoon was spent on bonding old insulated joints, knocking off temporary bonds on new ones, turning heads and all the fun stuff. Then I started to hear Gary Bell, the head brain, working at S. Rossville. They tested from there to the signal at Bismarck both ways several times. S. Rossville got a new ATCS address even though it's still the same message type.

I went up during some of this and saw some signals. At Bismarck, the new lower head only has two pods, and I saw a yellow over flashing green. This means that the signal at 116 will be gone, and further it means that we might be talking about LIMITED SPEED aspects, at least at NE RA Jct. That is 45MPH! And at Liberty Lane they are setting the starts at 3000 ft., which is about right for 69MPH.

Still, I don't understand the new extra head at Alvin. It is indeed for southbounds, and it too only is big enough for two pods. I don't know of any special aspect used in advance of Approach Limited, which is what Bismarck seems to be capable of.

As I was typing this, they were bringing 649 south on #1 and the dispatcher gave 124 the blocks to go up #2 even though there was confusion about whether or not it was really back in service. Someone at Jax didn't get a train message taken down as they thought they did.

There is switch tender at the new RA Jct, and flagman at West Newell Road. But

now the signal department isn't sure their suspension order covers #2! What a fiasco! And now it looks like they have 124 lined into North Yard. Should be interesting! (Aw, they figured it out...)

Later on December 3 (finally) Q124-02 ran the entire length of #2 from Danville to NE RA Jct, with foreman Steve Shaw on the locomotive's front walkway from MP 120 to the new switch admiring his handiwork. It was too damn cold to have a camera, darn, but the light was pretty low anyway. *(Editor - the first trains are run at 10 mph to knock the rust off and also start seating the ties into the ballast, usually two tonnage trains do the trick.)*

They want trains on both tracks in both directions now to test the new crossing protection at W. Newell and Liberty Lane. But other than that, the signal department is pretty quiet right now. From what I can see on the monitor program, only one of the new control points has the data radio on, the same one that was on over the weekend. Gary Bell said something about turning the other data radio on, but I never saw another number come in. They may have given up for the day on that part.

**December 6 (finally)** Well, this should be the final report on the siding extension project north of Danville, except for the Winter Ave. bridge project and what they do for that.

The signal suspension was removed Wednesday 12/5 about mid-day. I was home for lunch and did the initial ATCS decoding pretty quickly after seeing a few trains. There were still a couple 25MPH speed restrictions, like on the new track and where the old RA Jct switch was. They removed that one this afternoon.

The contractor was still at work, both on the speed restrictions and moving out used track material from the old RA Jct area. And some of the signal guys stuck around to remove old signals and the bungalow from old RA. It's kind of bitter-sweet to see that location go, as I used to see the northbound signal in the winter from my parents' kitchen, and since I've been living where I do now it became habit to look for that southbound signal whenever I went under the railroad on Poland

Road.

They did remove the signals and relay case from high fill at Winter Ave, and one of them was laying at Voorhees St when I went by there today. Since the "new" ones at Voorhees are temporary, I suppose once the bridge project is done they'll put something back up on that fill.

So a small section of C&EI's original double track has come back to life. So far, they are just using it as a long siding and I've only seen one of the crossovers at the new RA Jct. reversed once. Since #2 is still in service for now to Danville, they could have some interesting meets and passes if they wanted to. But soon enough that segment will be out of service and one of the crossovers will get a workout. Then I'll have to get more used to the sound of trains starting and stopping behind my house!

Oh, and it didn't look like they installed any of the welded rail on #2 south of the new RA Jct. In fact, I can't tell if they replaced it up to the old switch location, but I sure hope so. Now the \$64,000 question is will they re-build #2 to Danville while it is down for the bridge project??? *(Editor - our office has been reviewing the contractor's shoring plan for supporting the west track and it appears work on the bridge will start around March 1, pending weather for opening of Winter Avenue to the east and getting roads built up at the bridge site.)*

*Editor again - I want to thank Doug for his comments about the extension of Main #2 north of Danville and hope you get some insight as to what it takes for a railroad to put a new track in service.*

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**Urbana Train Show**  
**March 15 & 16,**  
**2008 Lincoln Square**  
**Village - Urbana, IL**

## Danville Photos

*By Doug Nipper*

Once again we had space left over for more photos. Why not?

*Right:* CSX had a little accident while pulling cars out of Bunge on the morning of 12-14-07, putting three cars on their sides right where the P&E diamond was (actually still is on the CSX City Lead). This blocked the NS westbound main for most of the day. Note that the Spirit of Hillery caboose was only two cars from disaster! The old northbound signal for CSX was flattened, while the eastbound for NS on the wrong main just got buried in grain. Gosh, CSX, do you see the new switches NS has ready to install in their yard at Williams St? It is OK to do a little work on the minor tracks now and then!



To finish out the series on the #2 main extension project, here are three images. *At left* on 11-4-07, the ballast regulator was finishing up the last brooming work on the new track behind my house.

Below, we have the new control points that were part of this project. *On the left* is N.E. RA Jct, the new north end of the double track just north of West Newell Road. They can run Limited Speed (45MPH) when diverging here. *On the right* is the re-incarnated RA Jct, now just north of Liberty Lane and featuring "universal" crossovers. But note that #2 main, the track on the right, is still 1949-era 115 pound jointed rail south of the first switch. We can only hope that it will be replaced when the Winter Avenue bridge project takes that entire portion out of service. Both of these images were taken on 12-14-07, the day before the big snowstorm.

