

DANVILLE FLYER

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March Meeting at Jocko's

Those of us in eastern Illinois have seen the COVID-19 infection rate come down that restaurants could open for at least 50 percent capacity. We met last month at Jocko's and they have kept open to survive and as the manager told me last month, they paid the fines to just stay open to support the community and the employees. The March meeting will be held at Jocko's on the 21st at 1:00 PM.

The program will be Terry Bodine, who will talk about his days growing up near the C&NW livestock facility in West Chicago

REMEMBER, YOU MUST WEAR A MASK TO ENTER THE RESTAURANT AND THE MEETING ROOM.

Metra to Replace Aging Equipment

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — In separate bills, Illinois legislators are proposing to limit train lengths in the state to 8,500 feet and provide multiple actions to address trespassing along rail lines.

The train length bill, HB 2524, sponsored by state Reps. Jay Hoffman (D-Belleville) and Kelly Burke (D-Evergreen Park), was prompted by increasing complaints from constituents of longer, stalled freight trains blocking crossings in suburban St. Louis and Chicago areas. Delays have increased when trains experience mechanical issues, since troubleshooting takes more time with longer trains.

Illinois already has a statute permitting municipalities to fine railroad companies if a crossing is blocked during rush hours for more than 10 minutes in a 30-minute period, in counties of more than one million residents. That law, available here, also prescribes at least two operating employees on freight trains. However, the Federal Railroad Administration has no regulations mandating crew size, maximum train length or blocked crossing times, so the state law would still be subject to federal preemption, as railroads have consistently argued in court cases.

Addressing trespassing prevention
Another bill, HB 0813, would permit Illinois Grade Crossing Protection Fund money for "safety treatments that would deter trespassing;" eliminate the \$2 million yearly limit on pe-

(Continued on page 2)

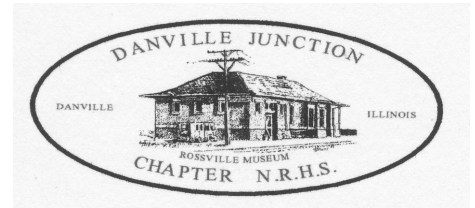
**MARCH 21ST
MEETING AT JOCKO'S
ON WILLIAMS STREET
AT 1:00 PM**

**LAST OPERATING
SESSIONS AT THE MU-
SEUM IN ROSSVILLE.
FIRST SATURDAY OF
APRIL, START AROUND
1:00 PM. NO SESSIONS
IN MAY.**

About Us

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 \$30.00 for Chapter membership in addition to \$50.00 for NRHS membership. Rossville Depot Museum membership is \$30 per year. 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 (former Conrail), in Danville, Il with lunch beginning at 1:00 PM Central Time followed by meeting and program.



Officers for 2021—our 53rd Year

- Henry Schmitt – President
- Doug Butzow – Vice President
- Dick Brazda– Secretary
- Doug Nipper– Treasurer
- Dave Sherrill – Programs
- Jess Bennett – Historian
- Bob Gallippi – Museum Director
- Rick Schroeder – Editor & NRHS rep
- Cooke Wireless, LLC - Publisher & Distributor



(Continued from page 1)

destrian walkway construction; and direct the Illinois Commerce Commission to manage identifying and constructing deterrents at trespassing locations within 1,000 feet of a public crossing.

It was re-introduced by Rep. Robyn Gabel (D-Evanston) after being stuck in a logjam at the end of last year’s session. The bill is an effort to recognize and fund trespassing mitigation efforts as part of an update to the state’s Highway-Railway Grade Crossing Action Plan [see “FRA publishes rule requiring state plans on grade crossing safety,” *Trains News Wire*, Dec. 15, 2020].

Rather than limiting state improvement funding to the highway crossing itself, the amendment would permit the state commission “to order the terms of installation, operation, maintenance, and use of safety treatments requested by a public authority or rail carrier to deter trespassing on railroad property at a place other than a public crossing.” The trespassing location could be “within 1,000 feet of a public crossing or at a hotspot location as identified by the FRA and confirmed by the unit of local government, railroad, and Illinois Commerce Commission via diagnostic review.”

CSX Gains New Line—NS New Rights

G&W to Operate Pan Am Southern; Norfolk Southern to Gain New Trackage Rights CSX Transportation has told federal regulators that its proposed acquisition of regional Pan Am Railways will improve service, capture business from trucks, and boost railroad competition in New England. CSX's merger application was posted on February 26 on the Surface Transportation Board website. CSX had announced on November 30 that it had reached a deal to acquire privately held Pan Am Railways, which stretches from the Albany area to Maine and totals 1,700 miles when trackage and haulage rights are included. CSX does not expect to make any significant changes in traffic routes or traffic volumes in the next few years," the filing says. CSX, already the dominant freight railroad in the region, will extend its reach into Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, as well as to Saint John, New Brunswick, via Pan Am's haulage rights agreement with Irving-owned short lines. CSX considers the Pan Am acquisition a minor transaction under STB rules and has proposed a review schedule that would have the transaction close in late September. Terms of the deal were not disclosed, although CSX said it would pay for the acquisition through the use of cash and CSX stock. The purchase price was nearly \$700 million, according to people familiar with the matter.

CSX and NS will jointly own Pan Am Southern, with NS retaining its 50% share and CSX acquiring Pan Am Railways' stake. "The selection of a G&W affiliate is based upon our desire to maintain competition and enhance rail service in the New England market," CSX said in a statement. Genesee & Wyoming will operate and maintain Pan Am Southern under its Pittsburg & Shawmut subsidiary, doing business as the as the Berkshire & Eastern Railway. The Pan Am Southern consists of about 425 miles of rail lines and trackage rights routes, including the B&M main line between Mechanicville and Ayer that provides NS access to the Boston area via its so-called Patriot Corridor. Pan Am's Springfield Terminal subsidiary currently operates the Pan Am Southern, which also includes the north-south route Pan Am uses between White River Junction, Vt., and its branches in Connecticut via Springfield, Mass. G&W will expand its footprint in New England, where it already operates three railroads that connect with Pan Am Southern: the New England Central, Providence & Worcester, and Connecticut Southern.

Norfolk Southern also gains trackage rights over CSX, Providence & Worcester, and Pan Am between the Albany, N.Y., area and Ayer, Mass., for intermodal and automotive traffic. The trackage rights will give NS a faster and fully cleared route for intermodal trains 22K and 23K, which currently run as single-stack trains east of the NS intermodal terminal at Mechanicville, N.Y., due to clearance restrictions in Pan Am Southern's 4.75-mile Hoosac Tunnel in western Massachusetts. NS will be limited to one trackage rights train per day in each direction between Voorheesville, N.Y., and Ayer, with train length capped at 9,000 feet due to siding lengths. The routing, via CSX's former Water Level Route and Boston & Albany via Worcester, Mass., will cut the NS intermodal trains' running time by 3 hours and eliminate the time-consuming single-stacking operation now required at Mechanicville. NS will fund required clearance work between Worcester and Ayer. NS also will rehabilitate its former Delaware & Hudson route from Delanson, N.Y., to Voorheesville, where it will restore a connection to the CSX main line. Short line SMS Rail Lines will lose its lease the Voorheesville Running Track. A pair of daily NS merchandise trains will continue to run via Pan Am Southern between the Albany, N.Y., area and the Pan Am classification yard at East Deerfield, Mass. From *Midwest Rail Scene*, adapted from a story by Bill Stephens, *Trains* newswire on February 26

Privatize Amtrak's NE Corridor?

Amtrak has reviewed a private firm's proposal that calls for privatizing the national intercity passenger railroad's Northeast Corridor (NEC) service.

AmeriStarRail LLC's proposal suggests it could expand Amtrak's NEC capacity to meet travel demand over the next 20 to 40 years. The group says it would operate 160 mph trains and include "triple-class service" for coach, business and first class on each train.

In response to a request for comment, Amtrak spokeswoman Beth Toll said in an email that the railroad has corresponded with AmeriStarRail officials about their proposal. In response to specific points in the group's proposal, Toll noted the following:

- Although AmeriStarRail has proposed creating a centralized maintenance facility, likely in Delaware, that would

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employ 150 people, Amtrak already employs more than 1,000 Delaware residents primarily at two major equipment maintenance facilities. If Amtrak wasn't operating the trains and maintaining the equipment on the NEC, most of those jobs would go away.

- It's not likely that riders would be comfortable sharing small, closed compartments on a train [as AmeriStarRail has proposed] while the country is recovering from a pandemic;

- The assertion that the private group could expand the NEC for only \$5 billion does not take into account that the NEC has a huge state-of-good-repair deficit, calculated at \$42 billion, that must be addressed to maintain current Amtrak and commuter services.

- The AmeriStarRail proposal would not produce more money for Amtrak [as proposed] because the vast majority of Amtrak revenue comes from passenger fares, which AmeriStarRail would receive.

Toll also noted that Amtrak already is pursuing many of the good ideas proposed, including: an agreement with Metropolitan Transportation Authority in New York City to plan for the eventual operation of Amtrak trains to Jamaica/Long Island; a procurement for new trains is underway to eliminate the need for engine changes in Washington for trains operating from NEC points to Virginia and the South; there already is a comprehensive NEC service improvement plan, which was developed by the Federal Railroad Administration with input from Amtrak and includes many of the components of AmeriStarRail's proposal.

In addition, Toll pointed out that proposals calling for privatizing Amtrak's NEC service have been made from time to time. Amtrak has issued this whitepaper to address questions often raised in discussions about whether to privatize the railroad's NEC operations.

Progressive Railroading 3-8



California High Speed Rail Issues

California's high-speed rail project has not yet hit a high gear. Delays and cost overruns have hampered the endeavor since the start, and the project's chief executive officer has announced another deadline will not be met.

Brian Kelly is expected to give the California High Speed Rail Authority an update on Feb. 9, but has already stated the 119-mile track from Bakersfield to Madera will not be complete until 2023. Furthermore, the price for the segment will rise from \$12.4 billion to \$13.8 billion.

At stake is federal funding. The project has a 2022 deadline in order to receive federal assistance, and the Biden administration is going to be asked to approve a one-year extension. Relations with the White House are expected to improve, and with Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg recently announcing a push to make high-speed rail in the U.S. the best in the world, it is likely that the extension will be granted. California also hopes it will receive \$1 billion in grant money that was cancelled by the Trump administration.

Kelly is blaming the COVID-19 pandemic for the failure to meet the latest deadline. The need to quarantine workers, a delay in procuring rights of way due to shortened court hours, a delay in signing contracts and the loss of \$288 million in revenue from the state's cap-and-trade program have all been negative outcomes over the past year, according to Kelly.

Over the next several months, 22 miles of track is expected to be completed that will run through Kern County. Environmental approval also should happen in Los Angeles County and a track and systems contract should be awarded.

Via RT&S 2-17

CP's Hydrogen Fuel Cells

Canadian Pacific (CP) will use fuel cell modules from Ballard Power Systems for its first hydrogen fuel cell (HFC)-powered linehaul freight locomotive.

The Class I railroad's Hydrogen Locomotive Program, announced in December, will retrofit an existing diesel-electric linehaul locomotive, replacing its diesel prime mover and traction alternator with hydrogen fuel cell (HFC) and battery technology to power its electric traction motors.

Ballard plans to deliver six 200-kilowatt fuel cell modules

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to CP in 2021 and will support their installation. The modules will provide a total of 1.2 megawatts of electricity to power the locomotive, the companies reported.

Once the locomotive is operational, CP said it “will conduct rail service trials and qualification testing to evaluate the technology’s readiness for the freight-rail sector.”

“With this purchase from Ballard, a leader in the hydrogen fuel cell industry, CP further demonstrates its commitment to developing the next generation of locomotive—one that produces zero emissions,” said Keith Creel, CP President and CEO and Railway Age’s 2021 Railroader of the Year. “How we power our trains matters to our customers, employees, shareholders and to the communities we operate in. This technology holds the possibility of eliminating emissions from freight train operations, which already represent the most efficient method of moving goods over land.”

“In addition to Ballard’s work focused on powering commuter trains in Europe and urban trams in China, CP’s Hydrogen Locomotive Program in North America underscores the strong fit for zero-emission fuel cells to power heavy- and medium-duty motive applications, including trains, for which it is otherwise difficult to abate emissions,” Ballard President and CEO Randy MacEwen said.

For more on locomotives using alternative power sources, check out Railway Age’s February 2021 feature: “The ‘H’ Factor.”

Railway Age 3-10



View from My Office Window—Rick

I noted last month that I have the connection to the ATCS through Doug’s computer more than I used to, sometimes having it up all day just so I can walk in and check train movements. It does help to check on NB or SB CN trains lined as I can wait and watch them go by.

On the 24th of January I kept track of several movements. The CN still has a number of ex-IC SD70’s still in IC paint and that day a NB had 9515 (CN paint), 1004 and 1005, all IC. 15 minutes later 1035 and 1000 lead a SB. Within about 20 minutes another SB coal train lead by 2-CSX units with a UP DPU on the rear went by. In the afternoon one of the Prince Rupert stack trains headed south (usually an early afternoon train). Some 15 minutes later another SB had IC 1021, 1008 in CN and a UP unit on a short train. I noted there was something in the siding at Tolono and once cleared a single unit, CN 3181, headed north.

I have seen SB grain trains with KCS units, SB coal trains with BNSF (UP DPU) and CSX motive power. Grain trains are around at least 2 per day and recent reports note CN grain movements are setting records. I see at least 2 oil trains per week with various power.

I also watch the movement on NS as the coverage is from east of Decatur to east of Lafayette, Indiana. NS uses software that will “decide” the best movement for a train, that is into a siding or stay on the main, for a meet. This same day there was a EB at Bement and a WB west of Homer. The WB was lined into the siding at Sidney and back out. The EB was lined into the Sloan siding. The WB was lined into the pass at Tolono, sat for 2 CN trains and was then lined out of the pass to meet the EB in the siding at Sloan. In the days of dispatcher controls the DS would have moved the EB up to Tolono, but computers know better. I have heard stories of a DS overriding the computer and getting disciplined.

When the weather gets better I will plan some trips to Tolono area when the “banana bunch” of trains are showing up. Tonight (1/27) as I write this a WB is lined into Sloan, another WB is lined ahead of him to #2 at Bement and a EB does not show up yet at Bement. Of interest is the Urbana local just cleared off the Bloomington line at Mansfield.

I did note about trains at night. The other night I woke up around 2, could not sleep and counted 7 trains between 2:15 and 4:30. Busy railroad.

FEBRUARY MEETING MINUTES

The Feb. 21, 2021, meeting opened at 1340 at Jockos.

The secretary's minutes were accepted as printed.

Utilities for \$150 were the only expenses for the month. Income was a combination of donations and dues. Closing balance is \$6062.60.

The last operating session went well and the next is planned for March 6.

There were no major updates on the motorcar.

March and April programs will be provided by Henry and Dick, respectively. The March program is scheduled to be Terry Bodine, who will talk about his days growing up near the C&NW livestock facility in West Chicago.

It was reported that Shane mentioned DJC in his Scale Trains on-line event.

Dave reported that the only show he knew of was in Franklin, IN in May.

The possibility of a spring trip was raised, with Jim Hile suggesting Elkhart as a good location. Further plans will depend on reopening of facilities.

Per JD, the older loco hulks at Olin have been scrapped at the Vermilion Valley by Mervis. They are working on ex UP units. They have purchased 3 ex NS SD40s waiting for scrap, one of which is in Danville.

The meeting was adjourned at 1354.

Rick presented some of his slides of the Wabash and Nickel Plate from the 1950-60s. He also showed some older C&EI pictures that were donated to the C&EI Society and Vermilion County Museum.

Railroads Graded

The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) awarded the nation's freight and passenger railroads a grade of B in a 2021 Infrastructure Report Card released yesterday.

The grade is the highest ever given by ASCE to U.S. railroads, according to the Association of American Railroads (AAR). Overall, ASCE gave the nation's infrastructure a C- in the quadrennial report.

In reviewing the rail sector, ASCE cited sustained private investment by the nation's freight railroads as the primary reason for the network's good condition.

From 1980 to 2020, U.S. privately owned freight railroads spent nearly \$740 billion — averaging about \$25 billion a year over the past five years — on capital expenditures and maintenance expenses related to locomotives, freight cars, tracks, bridges, tunnels and other infrastructure and equipment, AAR officials said in a press release.

"The nation's 140,000-mile rail network is its healthiest ever thanks to \$25 billion on average in private annual investments," said AAR President and Chief Executive Officer Ian Jefferies. "The ultimate mark of success is how railroads safe-

ly, reliably and sustainably deliver for customers and communities day in and day out across the country."

At the same time, the ASCE report noted that "despite freight and passenger rail being part of an integrated system, there remain stark differences in the challenges faced by the two rail categories." While most Amtrak operations are hosted on well-maintained, privately funded freight-rail infrastructure, the national intercity passenger railroad faces a \$45.2 billion state-of-good-repair backlog on the Northeast Corridor (NEC) alone.

The NEC infrastructure-related issues are the largest source of delays on the corridor. The ASCE called for significant, overdue investment in passenger-rail infrastructure, particularly in high-population areas.

Earlier this week, the AAR called for new funding streams for passenger rail as a mechanism to reduce passenger vehicle-based emissions.

Progressive Railroading 3-4

Environmental Issues

Dealing with an environmentally sensitive area, California's high-speed rail project is polluting its budget.

The Los Angeles Times has hit the California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) with another black eye in the form of a report that claims the agency went with the lowest bidder on a 65-mile section in Kings County and is now paying the ultimate price. The area is full of environmental obstacles, including an ancient lakebed and a fertile agricultural belt south of Fresno.

Back in 2014, contractor Dragados out of Spain promised it could do the work for \$300,000 less than the next lowest bidder, but design changes have led to over \$800 million in cost overruns and construction delays.

CHSRA consultants originally proposed an elevated rail line leading up to a train station south of Hanford. Dragados said it could save money by constructing the route at ground level, but that involved moving a four-lane highway into a trench and rerouting track owned by Union Pacific. The highway project proved to be much more complex than what was originally thought, and Union Pacific never agreed to the track change.

The at-grade work required the purchase of a 27-acre area at a cost of \$3.5 million from a local farmer. Dragados is now constructing a 2-mile-long, 60-ft-high concrete platform, and the acquired land is now serving as the site of a concrete mixing plant. The CHSRA had to purchase 29 more acres from the farmer to store precast sections.

Another design change mishap involves replacing a 2-mile-long viaduct that would span over a number of waterways of the Kings River with 13 box culverts. Dragados also offered up savings by lowering and shortening other bridges. However, The California Department of Fish and Wildlife would not approve the plans, and instead gave the green light to a 1,883-ft-long viaduct with 57 culverts. Then in May 2020 the department added more culverts and animal protections for the creeks.

The CHSRA claims it is not accepting the costs for the design changes, but the agency has been paying for the change orders, which have numbered in the hundreds.

Another problem has occurred at a site geologist's call the Corcoran subsidence bowl. A report that was still in progress during the bidding process revealed that some areas of the rail route would sink 20 ft between 2016 and 2036. The drop would increase the flood risk. CHSRA told bidders to

Second Section

Metra to replace aging switchers with Tier 4, electric locomotives. Metra will issue a request for proposals to replace its aging fleet of switchers with six new locomotives meeting Tier IV emission standards — as well as zero-emission, all-electric switcher — following approval by the commuter railroad's board on Wednesday. Funding will come from state bond funds. The locomotives will be delivered in about three years. Metra's current switcher fleet includes two SW1s, one of them dating to 1939; an SW1200; and five SW1500s built between 1967 and 1971. "At Metra, we've always prided ourselves on providing our customers with safe and reliable service that's good for the environment," Metra CEO/Executive Director James M. Derwinski said in a press release. "Now with funding provided through the State of Illinois bond program, we're taking advantage of the latest technology to do even more to reduce pollution in northeast Illinois."

The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad continues to prepare for a spring reopening and is seeing an upswing in reservations for the upcoming season, CEO Eric Mason told the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad Commission, the bi-stage agency overseeing the railroad owned by Colorado and New Mexico. The Rio Grande Sun reports the railroad has received \$53,000 in reservation revenue so far this fiscal year, compared to \$23,000 at the same time a year earlier. The railroad is preparing to operate with fewer passengers per train because of COVID-19 preparations and is considering different schedules that would allow more time for shopping and time at tourist locations in destinations such as Chama.

ignore the report. Embankments are now being elevated over a 21-mile span, adding \$40 million to the project cost.

Dragados still has not started work on half of the bridges and viaducts, and has finished less than half of planned work. In addition, CHSRA has not acquired all the land that is needed.

The original estimates of the Los Angeles-to-San Francisco high-speed line was \$33 billion back in 2008. Today the cost stands at \$100 billion, and there is no end in sight.

Earlier this month, the CHSRA requested the release of over \$4 billion in state bond funds to help pay for the project.

Via Rail Group News 2-23

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We're on the Web!
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Photo of the Month



The year is 1966 or 67 and Roy Handell of Bismarck photographed the Bismarck, Illinois depot while still in service. This depot was moved to the Bismarck community park in December 1979. Years later it was moved to Kennekuk County Park northwest of Danville. Vermilion County Museum collection donated by the Horton family.