

DANVILLE FLYER

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**OCTOBER 18TH
MONTHLY MEETING
AT JOCKO'S PIZZA BE-
GINNING AT 1:00 PM.
WE HAD A GOOD TURN-
OUT AT THE LAST ONE.
REMEMBER, MASK RE-
QUIRED TO ENTER
JOCKO'S.**

**WE ARE HAVING
OPERATING SESSION
AT THE MUSEUM IN
ROSSVILLE. FIRST SAT-
URDAY OF THE
MONTH, START
AROUND 1:00 PM**

October Chapter Meeting Will be at Jocko's

It has been a long time since our last meeting and, after checking with Jocko's Pizza, we will hold our October meeting in their back room as usual. The date is October 18th at 1:00 PM. We had a good attendance at the September meeting and hopefully many of you will attend this one, however, we understand if you choose not to. We will follow all requirements of the IDPH and the Vermilion County Health Department along with requirements of the restaurant (mask must be worn to enter, removed during the meal).

At this time a video program by Dave Sherrill is planned.

Homewood Station to get \$29 million Rebuild

Facility used by Amtrak, Metra will upgrade 1923 structure to meet ADA requirements, add other improvements

Shovels were out Monday, manned for the cameras by masked Amtrak, Metra, and civic officials that helped arrange \$29 million of federal and local funding that will enhance the original 1923 Illinois Central Homewood, Ill., facility with features that make it completely accessible to passengers with disabilities.

Construction began in July on the complicated project, where a 1911-vintage pedestrian tunnel underneath Canadian National and Metra Electric tracks links separate island platforms of different heights to serve Amtrak's City of New Orleans, Illini/Saluki state-supported trains to Carbondale, Ill., and Metra's University Park line.

The tunnel is being modernized with new walls, waterproofing, ventilation, lighting, accessible pedestrian ramping, and elevators at both ends under the multi-track main lines. Metra will soon be bidding out rehabilitation of the small structure above the tunnel's east side, where there is extensive parking and suburban PACE bus connections. On the west side, Amtrak is constructing a modern ramp building to house the elevator and walkways but will retain and upgrade the waiting area and restrooms of the existing station.

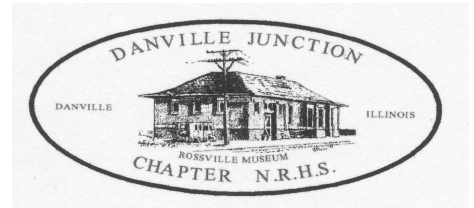
"We'll put down new tile and move some walls to make the restrooms accessible, but you should be able to distinguish what is new and what was original to this space without

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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 2020—our 52nd 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)

taking away any of the history or character of the building — it’s really a beautiful station,” Amtrak Project Manager Jamie Shindell tells Trains News Wire on a tour of the site after the groundbreaking ceremony. “The focus is to make it easy for passengers of any mobility to get around,” she adds.

Bill Moore, project manager for primary contractor Granite Construction, explains, “There has been a lot of staging involved to keep the Metra platform open.” While new stairs are being built, there is currently no tunnel access to Metra platforms from the west, but Moore expects to complete that job within the next few weeks and open the tunnel.

Safety concerns during ongoing construction of an entirely new Amtrak platform, according to Shindell, have meant that Amtrak trains have not been able to stop at Homewood since August, but passengers to and from the south can still buy through tickets that involve a shuttle bus transfer at Kankakee, Ill. She says travelers will again be able to use a temporary, 100-foot platform by the end of March 2021 when the elevator will be in service. The full build-out is set to be completed by next October.

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Amtrak's \$15 million contribution to the project is one of the company's largest accessibility-designated capital expenditures, while Metra's \$4 million infusion is being augmented with money from the Federal Transit Administration, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Cook County, and \$585,000 from the Village of Homewood. When completed, the tunnel will link the town's vibrant business district to residential areas west of the tracks with a pleasant and fully accessible passageway.

TRAINS ONLINE 9-29

Metra Expands Rock Island Shop

In ceremonies Wednesday, Metra marked the completion of expansion of its Rock Island Shops, giving the commuter railroad the ability to expand its locomotive and railcar rehabilitation programs and perhaps take on work for outside agencies. The expansion includes a new 38,000-square-foot building at the 49th Street Coach Shop, and improvements to the 47th Street Diesel Shop including an enclosed loading-dock crane and 17,500-square-foot building replacing the material storage area. "Modernizing these facilities will allow us to increase the output of both our in-house railcar and locomotive rehab programs and make significant strides in achieving a state of good repair,"

Metra CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski said in a news release. "Equally important, this facility will allow us to train and maintain a highly skilled workforce and keep good-paying jobs in Chicagoland." Metra board Chairman Norman Carlson said, "Metra has demonstrated that it is a good steward of public funding, saving \$125 million by bringing its rehabilitation programs in-house. Now, we have a facility that will allow us to stretch our capital dollars even farther and keep the benefits of these investments in our community all while training our people from entry-level onward and creating Metra's future leaders." Work on the facility began in May 2018 and was funded by federal money for capital projects.

TRAINS On Line 9-30

Second Section

South Shore Line offers 'Mask Optional' cars, citing enforcement difficulties. Commuter railroad South Shore Line is offering a Mask Optional car on trains for those who refuse to wear face coverings on public transit. Streetsblog Chicago reports that when Indiana issued its mask order, a July 27 South Shore announcement noted that passengers were required to wear masks "except within the 'mask optional' car ... [or] if excused for reasons of deafness or medical condition." Mike Noland, president of the South Shore's governing body, the Northern Indiana Transportation District, told the blog the move reflected the difficulty in enforcing mask orders: If [riders] don't want to comply, there's not a whole lot we can do," noting the railroad would have to "stand behind arrest charges" if someone refused to leave the train. Introducing the Mask Optional car, Noland said, has led to "100% compliance in other cars."

Three Metropolitan Transportation Authority workers have been suspended without pay and face potential termination after building a secret "man cave" under the tracks of New York's Grand Central Terminal. A report by the Office of the MTA Inspector General says the men used the room — complete with big-screen TV, refrigerator, microwave and futon — to "hang out and get drunk and party." Names of the three workers — a wireman, electrical foreman, and carpenter foreman — were not released because of ongoing disciplinary action. The New York Post reports that Metro-North President Cathy Rinaldi called the room "outrageously inappropriate." The three men denied using the room, behind a locksmith shop under track No. 114. But when found during an investigation by the Inspector General, the room included a receipt for the futon bearing the name of one of the men, a connection on the television to another man's smart phone, and a TV streaming device registered to the third man. A half-consumed beer was among items in the refrigerator. The Inspector General further found that Metro-North Railroad security failed to investigate two complaints about the existence of the room, and that the director of Grand Central Terminal had failed to follow up on testimony mentioning the room during a disciplinary hearing.

NORFOLK, Va. — Norfolk Southern will idle the hump at Enola Yard outside Harrisburg, Pa., on Friday, the fifth

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Graham Creek and Southern RR—outdoors

Terry, Don, and Clayton Bodine hosted an outdoor railroading day at their two thousand foot track into the woods. For standard gauge trains, this is 1.5 inches to the foot or seven inch wide track. There were several operating diesel trains. There was a very nice operating Nickle Plate Mikado steam engine.

Several club members attended the event: Skylar Brown, Bob Davison, Jack Enos, Bob Gallippi, John Mills, Doug Nipper, Henry Schmitt, and Dave Sherrill. All of us had the opportunity to ride behind Bodine's diesel engine to see the whole layout in the woods. A few were fortunate enough to ride behind the steam engine,



The Bodine's are building a narrow gauge steam engine coaches like the equipment run at Durango, Colorado. Hopefully, this steamer will be ready to run in 2021.

The Bodines allowed us to tour their steam tractor and equipment barn. Also, their shop was open where the steam engine is being built. The shop is full of many railroad artifacts.

Thank you to the Bodine family for inviting our club.

Henry Schmitt

Rockford via Rail?

State Senator Steve Stadelman (D-Rockford) announced today that his push to restore passenger rail between Rockford and Chicago is gaining speed now that the Illinois Department of Transportation has reached an agreement to hire a project manager.

"Passenger rail service to and from Chicago holds tremendous potential for economic growth and enhanced quality of life in the Rockford area," Stadelman said. "People across northern Illinois are excited about the prospect of a rail link with Chicago, and I think it's important to keep everyone fully informed and to include as much public input as possible."

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such move the railroad has made in the past year under its shift to a Precision Scheduled Railroading operating plan.

"As of Sept. 25, 2020, Norfolk Southern will idle the hump at the Enola Yard. All cars will be sorted and attached to outbound trains through flat switching. This will shorten the amount of time a rail car waits to leave the yard for its destination, improving Norfolk Southern's service to its customers," spokesman Jeff DeGraff says.

"The change impacts a limited number of jobs at the site; the yard's diesel shop will not be affected," DeGraff says. "The Harrisburg area is one of Norfolk Southern's three largest hubs; a productive and efficient Enola Yard is key to helping the region continue to grow as the economy rebounds."

NS has reduced its reliance on major terminals as part of its shift to Precision Scheduled Railroading. By pre-blocking more traffic at origin and focusing more on block-swapping en route, NS has siphoned switching volume out of its hump yard network. The reduced volume at some classification yards means it's more efficient to convert the hump yards to flat-switching facilities.

Over the past year NS has idled the humps at Allentown, Pa.; Sheffield, Ala.; Linwood, N.C.; and Bellevue, Ohio, which had been the largest classification yard in the East.

After Enola is idled, NS will have five active humps: Elkhart, Ind.; Conway, Pa.; Chattanooga, Tenn.; Birmingham, Ala.; and Macon, Ga. Last week NS CEO Jim Squires told an investor conference that the railroad was likely to idle additional humps.

"Over the past year we've fundamentally changed the way we run our railroad to ensure the greatest efficiency across our operations," Squires said. "Step change is hardly adequate to describe the pace at which we've reduced resources and assets. And yet we've dramatically improved the service we're providing to our customers and have created new capacity in the process."

NS rival CSX Transportation also has five active hump yards, down from a dozen before the railroad adopted PSR under then-CEO E. Hunter Harrison in 2017. In the West, Union Pacific has idled six humps since adopting a PSR-based operating model in October 2018.

American Society of Civil Engineers warns of \$5 trillion infrastructure funding gap. The American Society of Civil En-

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Under the contract, WSP USA assumes responsibility for managing the project overall with the ability to hire other companies as subcontractors to complete the work. IDOT, meanwhile, has begun discussions with key stakeholders including host railroads Metra and Union Pacific to determine the necessary improvements to bring passenger rail back to Rockford.

"A strong passenger rail network is a cornerstone of our commitment to building and maintaining a safe, reliable multi-modal system of transportation that serves all residents throughout our state," Acting Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman said.

With the WSP USA agreement in place, preliminary engineering and environmental analysis are among the next steps before final design and construction. IDOT will negotiate construction and maintenance agreements with Union Pacific and Metra.

Stadelman secured \$275 million in funding for the rail project as part of the Rebuild Illinois statewide construction program. A spokesperson for IDOT said the project is fortunate to have avoided delay because of the COVID-19 pandemic

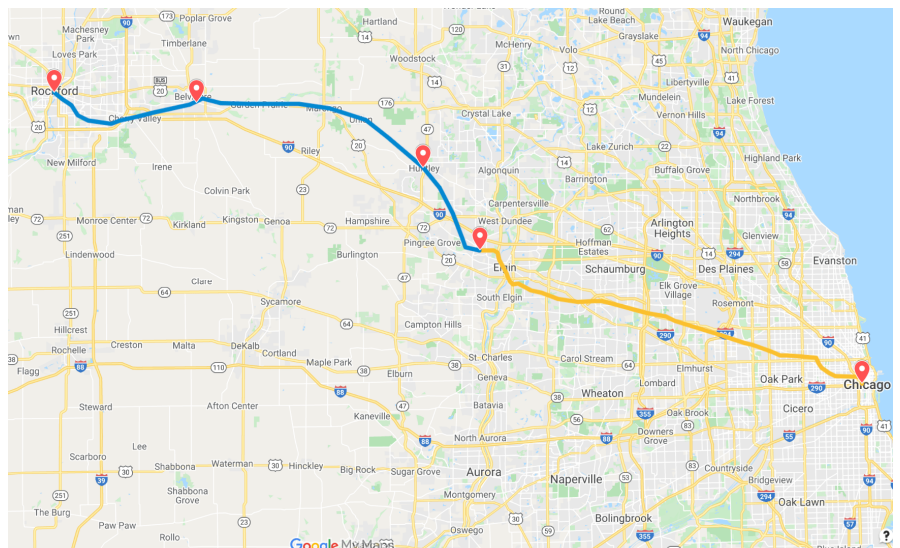
Editor: Several years ago, while I was still working part time our firm had the study for the Chicago to Rockford rail line. The first choice had been on the former IC line, now CN, and that railroad wanted "an arm and a leg" of over \$60 million for a line upgrade to handle the one passenger train per day (they never noted in the early days of the IC this line handled both passenger and freight in TOTT fashion). So, the next choice was via the former Chicago and North Western, now UP, line to Rockford. In Elgin at the Big Timber Station, the UP and Metra line are about 100 feet apart and our field review noted space east of Randall Road to install a crossover. From there the single-track line is in good service, probably 40 mph, to Belvidere and the auto plant. From that location we noted the line was 10 mph, in poor condition, and once in Rockford there was no facilities. Plans, of course, are to upgrade the line, signal it and install passenger facilities at Rockford for \$275 million. For some 55 miles that works out to around \$5 million per mile (depot will probably in the \$3 million area). The original plans at that time of our field survey were inbound to Chicago in the morning to Union Station, back at night.

Looking at the present transportation available there is a 5-lane toll road and bus transporta-

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gineers warns that the gap between current spending and the need to maintain the U.S. infrastructure in a state of good repair has reached \$5 trillion, measured in 2019 dollars. In preliminary findings for a report to be released later this year, the ASCE calls the future of the transit sector "bleak," with a current backlog of \$176 billion in investments, considering vehicles, tracks, and equipment that are already past their useful lives. That figure could reach \$535 billion for transit and intercity passenger rail by 2039 as existing assets age. The preliminary report does not specifically address freight rail needs, but in previous reports analyzing U.S. infrastructure, the freight rail system has generally fared better than other forms of transportation because of the private investment in right-of-way and other capital projects.

tion. Area east of Rockford has the choice to go to the Big Timber station in Elgin and ride Metra. Rockford and area north and west have bus transportation every 2 hours for \$21-31 one way to O'Hare, a dollar more to downtown Amtrak station. Same for return trip with round trip being twice as much. If you want to go to O'Hare the time is an hour and 30 minutes. By train you would go downtown and then take CTA back to the airport. So, if you live in Rockford and want to fly out which would you take? Drive and park or ride the bus. In Illinois the Carbondale line and Quincy routes have the advantage of major colleges in major cities on the route with a majority of the students from the Chicago area. Rockford does not have this advantage. So, who benefits from the line upgrade? Union Pacific (remember the higher-speed line to St. Louis?)



SEPTEMBER MEETING MINUTES

The Sept. 27, 2020, meeting opened at 1342 at Jockos.

There were no corrections to the secretary's report.

Utility bills and insurance for the depot were the major expenditures during the past 6 months, with a total of \$1113. Income was mostly donations. Closing balance is \$5223.48.

A fuel tank was ordered for the motor car, along with gaskets. Funds are available in the motor car account.

Gutters and soffits along the north side of the depot were discussed. Doug will examine, but repairs probably will occur in 2021. Skyler will look at cleaning the gutters in a month.

With the Vermilion Valley RR sold, there will not be a train ride there in October. Dave will bring a tape for the program.

On 8/15 some members visited the Bodine RR and enjoyed a ride.

On 8/29 some members visited the Whitewater RR. They rode and looked at plans the RR has.

On 10/17 the C&EI society is meeting in Shelbyville. Calendars from the society are being printed.

Dues statements for the chapter will be sent in mid October.

The Wabash had their meeting on-line the previous weekend.

The meeting was adjourned at 1358. A video from 2008 was presented which dealt with the CD&V RR to Stringtown, IN.

TOFC/COFC loadings up.

"September 2020 was the fourth best intermodal month in history for U.S. railroads, as retailers and others restocked their inventories and prepared for the holiday season," Association of American Railroads Senior Vice President John T. Gray noted on Oct. 7, 2020, as overall U.S. freight rail traffic volume for the month of September dipped a mere 1%, based on a healthy increase in intermodal. "Meanwhile, rail carloads, which don't include intermodal, remained down in September compared with last year, but showed marked improvement compared to a few months ago, especially if you exclude coal. In the meantime, railroads remain focused on keeping their employees safe while delivering the goods our nation needs."

U.S. railroads originated 1,423,883 containers and trailers in September 2020, up 7.1%, or 94,351 units, from the same month last year. They also originated 1,119,546 carloads in September 2020, down 9.7%, or 119,909 carloads, from September 2019. Combined U.S. carload and intermodal originations in September 2020 were 2,543,429, down 1%, or 25,558 carloads and intermodal units from September 2019

In September 2020, eight of the 20 carload commodity categories tracked by the AAR each month saw carload gains compared with September 2019. These included: grain, up 25,705 carloads or 27.8%; iron & steel scrap, up 2,021 carloads

or 12.2%; and grain mill products, up 1,978 carloads or 4.7%. Commodities that saw declines in September 2020 from September 2019 included: coal, down 95,400 carloads or 24.2%; crushed stone, sand & gravel, down 23,542 carloads or 20.9%; and chemicals, down 8,904 carloads or 5.6%.

Excluding coal, carloads were down 24,509 carloads, or 2.9%, in September 2020 from September 2019. Excluding coal and grain, carloads were down 50,214 carloads, or 6.7%.

Total U.S. carload traffic for the first nine months of 2020 was 8,567,803 carloads, down 15.3%, or 1,543,431 carloads, from the same period last year; and 10,034,360 intermodal units, down 5.9%, or 623,634 containers and trailers, from last year.

Total combined U.S. traffic for the first 40 weeks of 2020 was 18,602,163 carloads and intermodal units, a decrease of 10.4% compared to last year.

Editor: We have access through our new TV to YouTube and thus Virtual Rail. You can check them out on the computer but on a large screen it is really nice (even have found out our dog, Callie, will stop and watch). The other day I had time so went to YouTube and they have some 15 sites that I can watch free, one being Ft. Madison, IA. Great shot of the river and railroad. Westbound BNSF trains stop at Ft. Madison to change crews. The day I turned it on a WB stack came across the river, slow past the camera located on a nearby hotel, and finally stopped to change crews. I am not sure the distance from a

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Alaska to Canada and Lower 48?

President Donald Trump on Sept. 25 said in a tweet that he expects to issue a permit for a 1,600-mile rail line that would connect Alaska to Canada and the lower 48 states. Trump tweeted that, based on the "strong recommendation" of U.S. Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska) and U.S. Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska), he will issue a presidential permit for the Alaska to Alberta Railway.

A2A Railway was established to build, own and operate a railway connecting Alaska Railroad Corp. (ARRC) and Alaska's tidewater to northern Alberta, Canada. In June, ARRC and A2A Railway Development Corp. signed a master agreement of cooperation calling for the construction of a rail connection between ARRC's system and Canadian railroads that would link to the lower 48 U.S. states.

The new rail line would cut down on the time it takes to get products between Asia and North America, said A2A's Alaska Vice Chair Mead Treadwell, according to a report in the Anchorage Daily News.

Treadwell said Trump's announcement was a "wonderful surprise," adding that the permit would boost investor confidence in the project, the news outlet reported. The proposed route would carry commodities such as bitumen, grain, fertilizer, pipe, containers and sulfur, as well as passengers, Treadwell said.

Alaska Gov. Mike Dunleavy said in a statement that the presidential permit represented a "major milestone," and that south-central Alaska could become an "additional port of the Pacific and world for provinces such as Alberta and Midwestern states," according to the news report.

Progressive Railroading 9-28-2020

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nearby road crossing to the crew change point is but once the train stopped the rear end was on the river. A set of 2-DPU's had passed the camera and once moving, some 15 minutes later, there were none on the rear end. So my guess the train was at least 2+ miles long. Also, recently on a trip back from Danville I spotted EB 20T on Norfolk Southern. This train has been running longer than few years back and this one, checking both ends, was 1.75+/- miles long. Dick and I on a recent trip caught some long stack trains on BNSF. So intermodal is up and as you will note in this article, the economy is coming back, not all categories, but coming back.

Amtrak Requests More Funding

Amtrak reiterated to Congress this week that it needs up to \$4.9 billion this fiscal year to avoid laying off thousands of additional employees, reducing train service on state routes and scaling back capital projects.

The funding is necessary as the national intercity passenger railroad faces a financial crisis in responding to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Last month, Amtrak told Congress it needs up to \$4.9 billion in government funding for fiscal-year 2021, which began Oct. 1. That funding level is up from the \$2 billion in annual federal support the railroad normally receives.

In a letter to Congress sent yesterday, Amtrak President and Chief Executive Officer William Flynn said that the railroad's ridership "is not returning as quickly at the levels that we had hoped for," so the railroad updated its financial forecast for the new fiscal year. This spring, Amtrak received about \$1 billion as part of the federal government's pandemic relief legislation known as the CARES Act.

Amtrak business remains at about 25% of pre-pandemic levels. Based on its current forecast, Amtrak's FY2021 ridership and revenue are expected to improve to about 40% of pre-pandemic levels. Last month, Amtrak announced it would cut 2,000 jobs effective Oct. 1.

Of the \$4.9 billion the railroad is now requesting, \$3.2 billion would go toward Amtrak's services and capita program in response to the loss of revenue, with \$1.7 billion for the Northeast Corridor, \$413 for Amtrak's share of state-supported rail service, and \$1.1 billion for long distance service, according to Flynn. The remaining \$1.6 billion would support Amtrak debt; Amtrak's required payments to state and commuter partners; costs of any congressional workforce or service directives; and added revenue risk beyond the railroad's current projection.

Without additional supplemental funding from Congress, "we will be unable to avoid more drastic impacts that could have long-lasting effects on our Northeast Corridor infrastructure and the national rail system," Flynn's letter states. "For example, insufficient funding levels could force Amtrak to reduce its workforce by an additional 2,400 jobs as we scale back capital projects (approximately 775 jobs) and because our state partners have advised us that they would likely further reduce their train service (approximately 1,625 jobs)."

Delays in Amtrak's capital projects would also impact the rail supplier network, Flynn noted.

As Congress considers programs for stimulating the economy, Amtrak has also identified \$5.2 billion in additional investments in critical Amtrak projects, such as replacing bridges and tunnels on the Northeast Corridor, new fleet, infrastructure improvements along the national network and major station improvements.

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We're on the Web!
www.danvillejct.org

Photo of the Month



Member Dave Sherill got this shot of Whitewater RR GE beside the bridge over the canal near Metamora, Indiana during a group visit to the railroad August 29th. .