

DANVILLE FLYER

A PUBLICATION OF THE DANVILLE JUNCTION CHAPTER, INC. NRHS

Volume 40

August/September 2008

Number 7

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 2008 - Our 40th Year

PRESIDENT: Doug Nipper

SECRETARY: Dick Brazda

NATIONAL DIRECTOR: Rick Schroeder

MUSEUM DIRECTOR: Robert Gallippi

EDITOR: Rick Schroeder, rickschro1@gmail.com

1819 Coventry Dr.

Champaign, IL 61822-5239

MEMBER: Association of Illinois Museums and Historical Societies

VICE PRESIDENT: Mark Ziebart

TREASURER: Allen Cooke

PROGRAM CHAIRMAN: William Darner

HISTORIAN: Jesse Bennett

PUBLISHERS: Allen Cooke & Doug Nipper

Cooke Business Products, Inc.

John Cooke Sr., Honorary Member

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



New Hope and Ivyland 2-8-0 No. 40 takes on coal as they get her ready to depart. This is one of the trips this summer that member Dick Brazda and his brother took out east.

Coming Events

September 21, 2008

Danville, IL - Annual Chapter Meeting at Jocko's Depot Restaurant, 1:00 PM

September 20 & 21, 2008

Monticello, IL Monticello Railroad Museum Railroad Days.

October 4, 2008

Indianapolis, IN Great Train Expo, Indiana State Fairgrounds, 10-4, \$7

October 19, 2008

Danville, IL - Next Chapter meeting

November 9, 2008

Bloomington, IL Central Illinois Railroad Club annual train show, Interstate Center, 9-3, \$4

Charles 'Mac' McMillin

Longtime DJC and C&EIHS member Charles "Mac" McMillin of Montgomery, Ala., was born in Danville, Ill., Oct. 31, 1919, passed away on June 28.

Charlie and his wife often visited the museum on trips home to the Danville area. During their last visit to Danville, a few years back, he brought the Danville Junction sign he had made to hang at their garage. It has been placed in the Rossville depot. At the Block auction Charlie purchased a number of C&EI items to place in the museum at their home. He was active in both railroading and in the 14th Air Force Association, having served during the Second World War. Charlie was an avid fan of the C&EI. Our thoughts go out to his wife Barbara and the rest of the family.

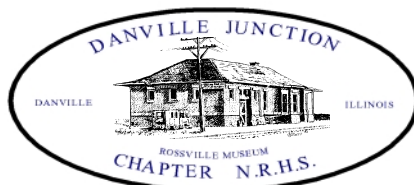
Next Meeting

Hard to believe that fall is coming and now our next meeting will be held, Sunday, September 21 at Jocko's Depot Restaurant, Williams and Gilbert Street, beginning at 1:00 PM.

The museum has closed for the season and attendance by members was good, by the public was fair. We did have several people in during the Labor Day weekend as a result of the Hoopston Sweet Corn Festival and activities in downtown Rossville. Doug Nipper and Allen Cooke brought up some new drawer storage boxes for the layout area to hold some of the model equipment. Some areas were cleaned out during the summer and items are being put on Ebay. This will raise some funds for the museum. We want to thank all that helped each weekend.

Next issue will have a listing of the Operating Sessions, which will begin the first Saturday in November. This summer we tired two session, always on a Saturday morning, and they proved somewhat successful. Due to members being busy they were not fully attended, but we did have some fun and found that the "bugs" came out that had gone away by the end of the sessions last spring.

If you have slides or video of trains you took this summer bring them to the meeting. No program has been set yet for September.



Demise of the Brothers Branch

By Doug Nipper

In July of 2008 the last of what I call the Sidell Axis was being removed. The Henning Branch, formerly known as the Brothers Branch, was scrapped from Henning to Rossville Jct.

The reason I use the term axis is that a long time ago Sidell, IL was quite a railroad hub. About mid-way on the Danville-Villa Grove branch, it was also at one time the northern terminus of Kansas & Sidell Railroad, and the wye connection to the line to Rossville just east of town completed the notion of this being an axis of sorts.

The first to go of these segments was the K&S, and soon after in the late 1940's the Brothers-Jamaica section. The bridge over the Salt Fork River was in poor condition and later Interstate 74 cut through the roadbed that was left. Next was the Danville-Westville segment, but even in my days at North Yard we had MoPac trains coming from Villa Grove to Westville and using trackage rights on Conrail to reach 16 Hill on the east side of Danville.

The northern line was pulled back from the Brothers elevator to Collison in the Seaboard System era. When the Illinois Power Company generation station near Collison started trucking in coal the branch was removed and then, with no business on the rest of the branch, it was removed north to Henning. In the early nineties the Westville-Villa Grove segment was trimmed to be a very small stub from Villa Grove. For several years the Henning elevator shipped grain, but a few years back, due to a change in ownership, the shipments ceased and CSX applied to abandon the line. The Henning to Rossville Junction segment as been out of service for a several years and now it's entirely gone for all intents and purposes.

We have been very lucky that virtually all of the ex-C&EI mainlines have survived and flourished under successor roads. But the branches have not fared so well. When Walker Ag Group bought the elevator at Henning from Cargill, it was a

The President's Corner

Gosh, here we are at another end of a museum season at Rossville. Although it seems to go faster each year, there is still some relief to see it come to an end. Perhaps now I can get back into a rhythm of writing these articles again...

With the project at Winter Avenue now well into the second stage, CSX has been a little boring lately. The tie gang got done back in July, and on the 10th of that month I saw their train of equipment headed south after completing their work up to Woodland Junction. It was also the first train to run on the re-built #2 main over the new bridge and down to Voorhees St.

They removed #1 main over Winter Ave. on July 13th, and while this wasn't a Friday, it was a bit of a sign of bad luck to come. The very next day, July 14th, a northbound "K" train was running on #2 just south of Liberty Lane and encountered a sun kink. This is when the rail is not able to expand laterally and instead does so length-wise, forcing the track to move sideways. In this case, the track moved out of line about 12 inches, but the engineer said his six-axle locomotives "straightened it out" to about 6-8 inches. No derailment, though, and they fixed it promptly, but it resulted in a slow order on their only track between Liberty Lane and Voorhees St. for about a week.

Speaking of speeds, it has been interesting to see how trains run on the secondary main and how the dispatchers route them. Even with limited speeds on the new control point turnouts, they seem to be a bit hesitant to run at 45MPH through them. Some dispatchers will route trains on #2 "end to end" just like single track if no meets are made. If another train is involved, they will route one train to #1 north of Liberty and use it as the "siding". Yet other dispatchers can't let go of the old mindset and even single trains use the crossovers at Liberty, always running #1 between there and West Newell. At least this difference in dispatching shares the wear and tear on tracks and turnouts equally!

When the bridge project is completed and two tracks are available on both sides of the Liberty Lane crossovers, it will be interesting to see how they handle meets and which track is used most frequently to store parked trains as they often do.

Also this summer we have seen the Henning Branch scrapped. The price of steel was high enough to make this very profitable, and they also cut up the S-2 switcher that was kept at the Henning elevator. The last of the "Sidell Axis", as I call it, is now gone. There will only be memories and imaginations to re-live the days of EJ&E coal trains coming to Rossville from Sidell Jct. And if things had gone differently and the C&EI never built the "cut off", now the UP, we could have seen Rossville Junction as Woodland Jct. UP trains by the depot? A guy can dream, can't he?

Doug

done deal for the Henning branch. The plan initially was to re-build the line and ties were even laid out, but scary talk of the weight capacity of the trestle over the North Fork of the Vermilion River was enough to change the owner's mind. There is now an Alco S-2 locomotive landlocked at Henning and it will probably be cut up on-site given the price of scrap steel these days.

NS sets revenue, income and earnings record

To say Norfolk Southern Corp. had a record-breaking second quarter is an understatement. The Class I set four high-water marks in the period.

NS' second-quarter railway operating revenue increased 16 percent to an all-time-high \$2.8 billion, income from operations rose 16 percent to a record \$799 million, net income went up 15 percent to a high-water mark of \$453 million and diluted earnings per share jumped 20 percent to a record \$1.18 compared with second-quarter 2007 totals.

"By any measure, it was another strong quarter for our company despite continued weakness in the automotive and housing markets and unprecedented fuel prices," said Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer Wick Moorman during NS' earnings conference held this morning. "It was an excellent quarter in the face of economic headwinds. The economy clearly is softer than anticipated."

Although traffic volume declined 2 percent year over year primarily because of the weak automotive- and housing-related markets, NS generated more revenue in several sectors, including general merchandise (up 10 percent to a record \$1.5 billion), coal (up 34 percent to a record \$775 million) and intermodal (up 11 percent to a record \$532 million).

"Revenue gains continue to be driven by strong market-based pricing, increased fuel surcharge revenue and our high-quality service product," said Executive Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer Donald Seale.

With the exception of automotive, six of NS' seven business segments produced record revenue per unit at \$1,455, he said. "The second quarter represented our 23rd consecutive quarter of revenue-per-unit growth," said Seale.

However, railway operating expenses jumped 16 percent year over year to \$2

billion, primarily because fuel expenses soared 76 percent to \$491 million. During the quarter, the Class I paid an average price per gallon of diesel of \$3.58, up 81 percent vs. second-quarter 2007's average price, said EVP and Chief Financial Officer James Squires.

NS' quarterly operating ratio of 71.1 was comparable to second-quarter 2007's level.

In the first half, railway operating revenue rose 14 percent to \$5.3 billion, net income increased 9 percent to \$744 million, railway operating expenses jumped 14 percent to \$3.9 billion and NS' operating ratio inched up 0.1 points to 73.8 compared with first-half 2007 levels.

During the conference, Moorman said NS has increased this year's capital expenditures by \$80 million to acquire more locomotives for coal service and replace rail

CN warns EJ&E's acquisition is not an absolute

Canadian National President and CEO E. Hunter Harrison has warned that the railroad may walk away from its proposed purchase of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway Co. (EJ&E) if critics and opponents enact too many conditions. "Would we ever walk? Absolutely. I mean, we're good business people," Mr. Harrison said Monday in a conference call.

Last September CN announced its intent to buy EJ&E for \$300 million, hoping the tap the target's capability to circumvent rail bottlenecks in Chicago and speed transcontinental freight service. Since then, numerous suburban communities have voiced concern or outright opposition to the acquisition, citing fears of increased freight traffic, pollution, noise, and disruption of community activities, such as emergency service access. As just one example, representatives from three municipalities plan to meet July 23 in Naperville, Ill., to organize opposition to CN's proposed purchase.

Others have expressed concern that CN's acquisition would jeopardize plans for a 55-mile circumferential Suburban Transit Access Route (STAR) on the EJ&E, linking several Metra commuter rail lines.

"We could run this railroad without the EJ&E. We could run it a lot more efficiently with it," Harrison said. "But if it gets to the point where the mitigation costs or the timing of the issue is going to drag out for so long. ... We're very good at turning our backs and walking the other way and figuring out another way to skin the cat."

Via Railway Age 7-23-08

Iowa railroad, bridge repairs may take full year

Iowa's freight railroads tallied at least \$67 million to \$82 million in losses in recent flooding that washed out hundreds of miles of tracks and destroyed or damaged 17 railroad bridges, a state report shows, according to the *Des Moines Register*. "Repairs and rebuilding the bridges will take six to 12 months and disruptions of rail service will continue, according to the Iowa Department of Transportation.

The severity of the flood damage underscores the need for a statewide study for long-term flood mitigation strategies for transportation infrastructure, including railroads, state officials said. Where feasible, state officials said railroads should be encouraged to invest in improvements. Based upon preliminary estimates, Iowa's shortline and regional railroads had \$22.7 million in damage. Larger railroads reported \$45 million to \$60 million in damage.

The immediate needs are greatest for shortline and regional railroads that do not have large capital reserves to help them get through the immediate difficulties, the study said. The report has been sent to Iowa's congressional delegation to help House and



Senate members develop plans for federal disaster assistance, said Dena Gray-Fisher, a spokeswoman for the Iowa Department of Transportation. The Iowa Railway Finance Authority is also exploring ways to provide financial help, she added.

U.S. Reps. Bruce Braley and Dave Loebsack, both Iowa Democrats, have introduced legislation intended to help quickly repair railroad bridges destroyed by flooding. The "Back on Track Act" would reduce federal railroad loan interest rates to 1 percent and decrease the amount of collateral necessary to obtain government financial aid. "U.S. Sen. Charles Grassley, an Iowa Republican, has urged the Senate Appropriations Committee to provide emergency assistance to help Iowa railroads recover", said Beth Pellett Levine, a Grassley aide. "The railroads will also benefit from several provisions in an emergency tax package introduced Wednesday", she said.

Among key railroad structures lost in the floods was a bridge over the Cedar River in Waterloo that is owned by the Union Pacific and leased by the Iowa Northern Railway. In addition, the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Railway lost its bridge over the Cedar River in Cedar Rapids.

Representatives of several Iowa railroads said Wednesday their rail service to shippers has generally returned to normal, although in some cases detours are required because bridges haven't been repaired. Mark Davis, a spokesman for the Union Pacific, Iowa's largest railroad, said his company will partner with the Iowa Northern Railway to replace the washed-out railroad bridge in Waterloo. Iowa Northern President Dan Sabin said normal operations are probably six months away, and his company will rely heavily upon state and federal financial assistance to recover from the floods.

The Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Railway plans to remove the damaged bridge over the river in Cedar Rapids as soon as possible, said Jeff Woods, the railroad's marketing manager. The structure will be rebuilt, he added.

Via Railway Age 7-24-08

Crossing fatalities down 30%

Deaths at highway-rail grade crossings continue to decline at a record rate. There were 93 crossing fatalities in this year's first five months compared with 133 in the same period last year, a 30.1% decrease, according to statistics posted Thursday on the Federal Railroad Administration website. Trespassing fatalities continued to rise, however, with 199 reported in January-May 2008, up 19.9% from 2007.

Preliminary reports from 694 large and small railroads showed a total of 4,875 accidents/incidents for the 2008 period, a decline of 9.6%. There were 989 train accidents, down 8.1%. Collisions increased 5.4% to 78, derailments were down 7.8% to 710, and yard accidents decreased 6.1% to 536. There were 10 employee fatalities, double then number reported last year.

Via Railway Age 8-08

50 Years of "Progressive Railroading"

In 1958 the industry magazine "Railway Materials" began publication. Five years later it was renamed "Progressive Railroading" to fit the needs better and today it is one of the premier railroad publications. The June 2008 issue is the 50th Anniversary Issue and they have run a freight and transit timeline from 1958 to 2008. I thought it would be interesting to list some of the items for each of the 10 years starting with 1958 (and a couple added around 1958).

In 1958 the Union Pacific acquired the Spokane International and gained a connection with the Canadian Pacific.

In 1959 the Southern Pacific ran their last revenue steam-powered train in California. That same year the UP ran their last steam locomotive in revenue service from North Platte to Cheyenne. (Ed: That year I was also interested in astronomy and in early September went to a convention in Denver. My parents took 3 of us and went through Cheyenne on the way. We stayed overnight there and I had to check out the yard. There were rows of steam engines on the south side of the yard near an overpass. The next morning I went to the office building with my two friends to see if I could get photos. The Super's office

gave permission for "Rick Schroeder and 2 friends" to take photos. We entered the round house and I got photos of the 4000 series big boys on the turntable and in the roundhouse. I took very few photos, but the memory is still there.)

In 1960 (the year I graduated) the last CN steam locomotive arrived in Winnipeg. The UP formed plans to merge with the Rock Island and began the longest, most bitterly contested merger, in railroad history. The SP and ATSF bid to acquire the Western Pacific.

In 1968 the MP gained control of the C&EI. The Great Western was merged into the C&NW. The MP and C&NW gained joint control of the Alton and Southern and the UP acquired the Mt Hood Railway.

In 1978 Bi-Modal unveiled the prototype Mark IV RoadRailer (and the rest is history).

In 1988 the UP acquired the MKT, Rio Grande Industries acquired the SP, the D&RGW and SP merged and the survivor was the SP.

In 1998 the CN became the first "scheduled railroad" adhering to velocity, dwell time and general-purpose train standards - and acquired the Illinois Central. The KCS acquired 50 percent stake in the Panama Canal Railway and the DM&E started the approval process to build a 280-mile line into the PRB.

This year, diesel fuel reached the price of \$4.72 per gallon compared to \$2.81 in 2007.

BNSF completed 21 miles of the 4th main track in the PRB and thus formed the world's longest 4-track line for freight service only.

This is a brief look back at railroad history. The timeline they produced is very interesting to see when major events happened, and how much we have really forgotten.

Rick

Indiana port introduces two hybrid locomotives

On August 7 the Port of Port of Indiana-Jeffersonville dedicated two new hybrid locomotives designed to reduce diesel emissions by 25 percent.

The new equipment was purchased through a \$200,000 Clean Ports USA grant secured by the port, Indiana Department of Environmental Management and MG Rail, the port's short-line operator. Administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Clean Ports USA is an incentive-based, voluntary program designed to help ports reduce emissions from existing diesel engines and non-road equipment. MG Rail's new equipment includes two locomotive "slugs," or electric locomotives with no engine or cab, and four auxiliary power units.

Indiana Rail Road Company excursion

On Sunday, November 9, Brian Banta will operate a rail excursion over the Indiana Rail Road from Switz City, IN across the Wabash River into Illinois. This trip will be limited to the first 66 passengers that sign up. An additional car will be added if there is an additional 28 signing up. The cost is \$65 per person, no children under 16, and includes drinks, food and dessert. All profit from the trip is donated to the "Indiana Rail Road Santa Train" fund. Departure is at 8:30 AM from Switz City with arrival back around 5:00 PM. Remember, this is eastern time.

To reserve your space contact Brian Banta, P. O. Box 56, Edinburg, IN 46124, call 812.526.6677 or email BantaRail@aol.com.

Flood Relief

Iowa Interstate to break out steam locomotives for Salvation Army benefit

After suffering track damage from heavy floods in June the Iowa Interstate Railroad will offer some relief to Iowa and Illinois communities that also were impacted by the flooding.

On Oct. 18-19, IAIS will operate two steam locomotives owned by parent Railroad Development Corp. (RDC) during special events organized to benefit The Salvation Army's flood-relief efforts. The city of Rock Island, Ill., is hosting and coordinating various rail-oriented events over the course of the two days.

On Oct. 18, a double-headed freight train will travel from Iowa City, Iowa, to Rock Island in an attempt to set a new record for steam-hauled revenue tonnage. IAIS will split the locomotives in Rock Island and operate passenger excursion shuttles east to Silvis, Ill., and west to Walcott, Iowa. At night, the railroad will provide a private evening dinner trip for special guests ca-

tered by RDC "celebrity chefs" from Pittsburgh, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Peru and Guatemala.

On Oct. 19, IAIS will operate a one-way limited excursion train from Rock Island to Iowa City, then return the steam locomotives to their home in Newton, Iowa.

"Although it has taken us some time to recover from our flood damage, we have not forgotten the many people who also suffered losses and were assisted by The Salvation Army," said IAIS President and Chief Executive Officer Dennis Miller in a prepared statement. "We hope these events will help to replenish their much-needed funds in order to continue their valuable service to our communities".

Via Progressive Railroading

UP sets PRB train loading records in August

Last month, Union Pacific Railroad loaded a record 1,190 trains in the southern Powder River Basin (PRB), surpassing the previous high of 1,174 trains achieved in July.

On Aug. 10, the Class I loaded 50 trains on the joint line — a PRB route UP shares with BNSF Railway Co. — establishing a new one-day record. The previous high of 46 trains was set on Nov. 29, 2007.

In August, a total of 2,197 trains were loaded on the joint line, reaching a new high-water mark. In addition, train loadings reached 81 on Aug. 16 and daily loadings averaged 70.9 trains, setting new records.

During 2008's first eight months, UP loaded 8,712 trains in the southern PRB, up 5.8 percent compared with the total from the same 2007 period. Joint line loadings rose 4.5 percent.

Via Progressive Railroading 9-2-08



Eastbound TP&W
at Watseka - date
not known

Rossville Operating Sessions

Mark your calendar now - the first operating session will be Saturday, November 1 with the second session to follow on December 6. Sessions start at 1:00 PM. More details and listings will follow next month.

Private Cars in St. Paul

ST. PAUL, Minn - 9-2-08. - The Republican National Convention, being held at St. Paul's Xcel Energy Center this week, has seen two Class I railroads bringing special business trains to the city along with private car movements. The cars are being used to entertain delegates and public officials during the convention.

Union Pacific brought by far the largest train, with 28 cars occupying two tracks adjacent to the St. Paul Union Depot. The train arrived in St. Paul Friday, Aug. 29, from the Democratic National Convention in Denver. UP installed special drainage and dust control systems in advance of the train's arrival. Two SD70Ms powered the special.

Just west of the Union Depot on Canadian Pacific trackage, BNSF has parked its 11-car business train, which arrived early on the morning of Saturday, Aug. 30. BNSF built a special pavilion next to the train for entertainment purposes. On the head end is freshly painted ES44DC No. 7245. Both the UP and BNSF special trains are scheduled to depart on the evening of Thursday, Sept. 4, immediately after the convention concludes, with the UP train heading to Council Bluffs, Iowa, and the BNSF special to Topeka, Kan.

At Amtrak's Midway Station, the Indiana Rail Road has brought in two private cars, former Santa Fe business car No. 56 and lounge car *Mohave*. They are coupled to three cars owned by the Friends of the 261: parlor car *Wisconsin Valley*, *Super Dome 53*, and Skytop lounge observation *Cedar Rapids*. Also at the depot is *Patron Tequila Express*, an ex-Gulf, Mobile & Ohio business car built in 1926 and owned by Patron Spirits Co., in which actor Dan Aykroyd is an investor.

Amtrak's *Empire Builder* has been rerouted through St. Paul during the convention. Canadian Pacific's Merriam Park Sub, which runs near the convention site and is used by Amtrak, has been closed during the event. To reach its Midway Station, the *Builder* is being rerouted over BNSF's Midway Subdivision, which

passes just east of downtown St. Paul. The *Empire Builder* used to travel this ex-Great Northern trackage as part of its regular route prior to the opening of Midway Station in 1978.

Amtrak is also in the mix in the event of an emergency. A special Amtrak train with six Amfleet cars bracketed by a pair of P42DCs has been stationed at Union Pacific's Western Avenue Yard, which is just west of the convention site. It is staged for possible evacuations in the event of an emergency at the Xcel Energy Center.

[Via TRAINS On-Line](#)

Back To The Future:

Don't Reregulate The Railroads!

Rail Reregulation Would Be Devastating to the Economy

"Back to the Future," a 1985 science fiction comedy, features a character played by Michael J. Fox who travels into the past and jeopardizes his own future.

A band of special interest groups is now attempting to produce its own version of "Back to the Future." But this time it isn't a fictional character whose future is jeopardized. It's the future of the nation's freight railroads. And that would have a devastating impact on the nation's economy.

Proponents of reregulation (primarily electric utilities, chemical companies and a few agricultural interests) advocate a regulatory system similar to that which existed prior to 1980 in hopes that their rates would go down — in spite of the fact that average rail rates have already declined by half since 1980.

Under the system that existed before 1980, virtually all aspects of rail operations were subject to federal regulations that controlled pricing, stifled innovation and mandated unprofitable services. By 1980, the industry was on its knees: 20 percent

of the railroad industry was in bankruptcy; accident rates were soaring; the rail share of the freight transportation market was dwindling; deferred maintenance amounted to billions of dollars; and the term "railroad" service was regarded as an oxymoron.

Then the Staggers Act partially deregulated the railroads. The impact was amazing. As earnings improved, deferred maintenance was wiped out. In fact, railroads have invested approximately \$400 billion to maintain and improve infrastructure and equipment since then. Train accident rates have declined by 68 percent and rail employee injuries have fallen by 81 percent. In fact, 2006 was the safest year in history in terms of overall rail safety. Volume is up more than 90 percent, and rail market share has begun to climb for the first time in decades. And average rates have declined by more than half on an inflation-adjusted basis.

The U.S. Department of Transportation estimates that demand for freight rail service, which is already at the highest level in history, will increase 88 percent by 2035. Railroads must spend hundreds of billions of dollars during this period in order to maintain their existing networks and expand capacity so that they can meet that demand. Passage of reregulation would make that investment impossible because it would substantially reduce the earnings railroads need in order to increase investment. Wall Street is emphatic. Investment capital for capacity expansion will dry up if reregulation passes.

Such a result could not come at a worse time for the United States. Already congestion is affecting all modes of transportation and threatening economic growth. With the demand for freight transportation expected to increase 92 percent by 2035 and the cost of highway construction and maintenance soaring, the need for increased rail transportation capacity has never been greater. Yet reregulation would deny railroads the very funds they need to expand.

"Back to the Future" was an engaging, funny film. But as policy, it is destructive.

From the AAR Web Site



Last year at this time, the double track extension project north of Danville was in full swing. These before and after shots looking southbound at MP 119.5 show the transformation that occurred. Taken in November of 2006 and May of 2008, respectively, they show a new #2 main on the left where there was none before, and a re-invigorated #1 that was formerly just single main track north of the original RA Jct. Now if they would just finish the Winter Ave bridge, this project will be finally DONE. Photos by DN.