

POTOMAC RAIL NEWS

POTOMAC CHAPTER, NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 235, KENSINGTON, MARYLAND 20895-0235

JULY 2023



THE CHESSIE CAT IS BACK! On June 10, 2023, CSX Transportation CEO Joe Hinrichs showed off the railroad's second heritage locomotive on LinkedIn: ES44AH No. 1973, a salute to the Chessie System. The locomotive was painted at CSX's Waycross, Georgia, shop and recognizes Chessie System's founding year. (CSX Photo)

PROGRAM. Noted writer and photographer Tom Nemeth will present a ZOOM program featuring the New York, Susquehanna and Western Railway in the sixties and seventies. His program provides a look at freight operations "Before the Stack Trains" on the heritage Susquehanna between Little Ferry, Butler, and Sparta Junction, along with a visit to Edgewater on the Hudson River. More details on page 3.

MEETING VIA ZOOM: July 18, 2023. 8PM. ZOOM LOGIN LINK on page 3.

NEXT MEETING DATE: August 15, 2023

DEADLINE FOR AUGUST ISSUE: July 29, 2023. Send news items to Clay Moritz, Editor, Potomac Rail News, at c.moritz@comcast.net

INFO ON CHAPTER ACTIVITIES: <http://potomacnrhs.org/>

ADDRESS MEMBERSHIP INQUIRIES TO: Rick Davidson, Membership Agent, 2908 Breezy Terrace, Alexandria, VA 22303-2401 rdavidsonjr2908@gmail.com

THE CHAPTER FAMILY

If you know of a Chapter Member who is sick, has lost a loved one, or has a new birth in the family, please contact the editor at: c.moritz@comcast.net

IN MEMORIAM. With sadness we note the passing of THOMAS H. GARVER, CURATOR AND O. WINSTON LINK ADVOCATE, DIES AT 89. By Kevin P. Keefe Trains Magazine June 14, 2023. MADISON, Wisconsin – Great artists often depend on advocates to protect their reputations, and that was never truer than in the relationship between noted American photographer O. Winston Link and his one-time assistant and longtime friend Thomas H. Garver. A significant art figure in his own right, Garver did as much as anyone to secure Link's reputation as a great interpreter of the culture of the steam locomotive.

Garver, an accomplished museum curator, art impresario, and author, died June 9 in Madison. He was 89. Born in Duluth, Minn., on January 23, 1934, Garver received his B.A. from Haverford College and an M.A. in art history from the University of Minnesota. Among several museum associations over nearly 30 years, Garver served as founding director of what is now California's Orange County Museum of Art and later was director 1980-1987 of what is now the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art. He subsequently organized art exhibitions for several museums and companies, including building the art collection of the former Rayovac Corporation.

But it was likely his work with and on behalf of Link that Garver will be best remembered. The relationship began in the late 1950s, when Garver worked for Link in New York and made three trips to assist the photographer in making recordings of steam on Norfolk & Western, notably on N&W's fabled Abingdon Branch, as well as on Y6 2-8-8-2 pushers on Blue Ridge grade.

More than 40 years later, Garver reflected on the experience in the Summer 2001 issue of Classic Trains. "Waiting, looking, listening: every sense was heightened, knowing that what we were recording was a precious document, for soon all these sounds and sights would all be gone," Garver wrote. "Working for Winston Link wasn't easy, but it was a magical and transformative experience, which I will treasure forever."

Years later, at a point when Link keenly needed a friend and supporter, Garver served as the business agent for Link, who died January 30, 2001, at age 86. Following Link's death, Garver became the organizing curator of the O. Winston Link Museum in Roanoke, VA, which opened in 2004 in Roanoke's former N&W passenger station.

Garver was also a noted author, first of a 1985 monograph about the American figurative artist George Tooker, and later of a definitive work on Link, *The Last Steam Railroad in North America*, published in 1995 by Harry N. Abrams, Inc. In the Link book, Garver revealed himself to be not only an expert on the nature of photography, but also a skilled writer.

"These photographs are, in every way, works of art," wrote Garver. "Winston Link innately possessed what has been called photographic vision, the ability to visualize photographs before they are created and to recognize in the process that what one sees, no matter how interesting, does not necessarily translate into an interesting photograph. The thing photographed and a photograph of it are coequal neither in interest, nor in appearance."

Adding perspective to Garver's contributions in art and photography is Scott Lothes, President and Executive Director of the Center for Railroad Photography & Art, based in Madison. "Tom Garver's contributions to the railroad community's understanding of one of its most remarkable practitioners are impossible to overstate," says Lothes. "With deep firsthand knowledge built up over a relationship that spanned nearly half a century, Tom helped us gain a better

understanding of both Link and his photography."

Lothes notes that Garver assisted the Center in mounting a decade-long Link exhibition with prints from Garver's personal collection. Garver also donated several prints to the Center, all of which are now in the organization's permanent collection. Beyond his work in the art world, Garver volunteered at Madison's Second Harvest food bank and Agrace Hospice, was active in the First Unitarian Society of Madison, served on the city of Madison's Alcohol License Review Committee, and was a board member for Wright in Wisconsin, an organization promoting the legacy of architect Frank Lloyd Wright.

Garver is survived by his brother, John T. Garver of Central Point, Ore. At Garver's request, no funeral or memorial service is planned, although he left instructions for a friend to, in the words of Garver's official obituary, "travel to San Francisco with a thimbleful of his ashes, which will be sent into the air from the center span of the Golden Gate Bridge, a structure Tom regarded as being one the few creations of humankind which truly complement and enhance its natural environment."

The Potomac Chapter extends its Deepest Sympathy to Tom's family and friends. (Trains News Wire)

THIS MONTH'S PROGRAM. The program includes interesting views along the line, many with NYS&W's then-new GP18s, and also some Alco RS1s on locals, including the Lodi Branch. There is a good look at NYS&W's freight and passenger cars, cabooses and other equipment, and a few views of the passenger trains parked at Butler in 1964.

Tom is the Editor-in-Chief of Railpace Newsmagazine, a monthly magazine that focuses on railroad news and photos from around the Northeastern U.S. and maritime Canada. The publication was founded in 1982 by Tom Nemeth, Denis Connell, and Bill Chaplik. On January 20, 2020, White River Productions acquired Railpace Newsmagazine.

ZOOM TOPIC: POTOMAC CHAPTER JULY MEMBERSHIP MEETING:

Time: Jul 18, 2023 08:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86741529997?pwd=REMzalprR3F3cnZ2UjVFRXBvZlZlWUT09>

Meeting ID: 867 4152 9997

Passcode: 653332

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,86741529997#,,,,*653332# US (Washington DC)

RAIL NEWS

DIESEL DAYS AT THE B&O RAILROAD MUSEUM 901 West Pratt St. Baltimore, MD 21223 410-752-2490. The B&O Railroad Museum is hosting Diesel Days on October 21, 2023, at 12:00pm with a parade of diesel locomotives! Travel through time with a trackside view of some of the Museum's most iconic locomotives - including "Sweet Toot," CSXT No. 1507, B&O No. 6944, B&O No. 3802, B&O No. 6405, Conrail No. 8905, and more! Attendees will ride the Mile One Express to the staging area, where there will be ample opportunity for photos, videos, and any questions about the

B&O's diesel fleet. Rain date: October 28. To purchase tickets, VISIT www.borail.org

CENTER FOR RAILROAD PHOTOGRAPHY & ART LAUNCHES ONLINE IMAGE ARCHIVE. The Center for Railroad Photography & Art has unveiled its online archive of digital images from the Center's expansive collection. Odyssey, the CRP&A's new online portal, [is now available here](#). A downloadable search guide PDF is [is available here](#).

The image management system was selected by the CRP&A staff in June 2022, and in the intervening year the Center and the platform's developers have worked to customize and implement the software. The Center has provided previews of the archive during this year's "Conversations" event in Lake Forest, Illinois, and a recent members-only online presentation.

"The Center's archives and digitization efforts have grown tremendously over the past few years, and Odyssey's large storage capacity limit offers opportunities for even further collection development," Adrienne Evans, Director of Archives and Collections, said in a CRP&A announcement. "We recently finished migrating all of our digital collections from Flickr to Odyssey and we're excited to introduce everybody to the new portal. Being a new system, we'll constantly make improvements as we expand the galleries to include more images from our growing collections."

Scott Lothes, the Center's President and Executive Director, said the organization was "excited to begin sharing more of our collections through Odyssey" following the lengthy search and development process.

"Our collections team has digitized tens of thousands of photographs in the past couple of years alone," Lothes said. "We have so much to share with you."

Follow the Center on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) for updates on the archive and other activities. Visit the [the CRP&A website](#) for more information on the Center. (Trains News Wire)

CREWS BEGIN REMOVING RISKY CHEMICAL AT MONTANA TRAIN-DERAILED SITE. On June 25th, cleanup crews began the delicate task of transferring a potentially dangerous substance from the site where a freight train carrying hazardous materials plunged into the Yellowstone River in Montana, according to railroad officials.

Several cars that were part of a Montana Rail Link freight train fell into the river around 6:45 a.m. on June 24th when a bridge near Columbus, Montana, collapsed. Ten cars were affected, according to Montana Rail Link spokesman Andy Garland. Two cars contained sodium hydrosulfide, a flammable substance with a rotten egg odor. The cars carrying that chemical did not enter the water, Garland said. Crews were removing the sodium hydrosulfide from one train car early the next day after emergency track repairs were done to facilitate the site cleanup, Garland said.

The cars that made contact with the Yellowstone River carried molten sulfur and hot asphalt, which harden and solidify upon contact with cooler temperatures, he said. Both materials are flammable in liquid form and can produce potentially dangerous fumes. "We continue to closely monitor all releases involving molten sulfur and asphalt and mitigating any impacts to the site and surrounding area," Garland said. "Modeling suggests that significant downstream movement of material is unlikely," he said.

The derailment occurred in a sparsely populated area of Stillwater County in the Yellowstone River Valley. Yellowstone National Park is about 110 miles south of the area. Railroad crews and first responders rushed to the site from surrounding counties. Officials said neighboring Yellowstone County and the City of Billings, about 40 miles east of Columbus, were not expected to suffer environmental impacts from the derailment.

Montana Rail Link owns the bridge that collapsed, according to Governor Greg Gianforte's office. Federal Railroad Administration investigators at the site are working with local officials on determining the cause of the derailment, an agency spokesman said on Sunday. The owner of the bridge is responsible for maintaining and inspecting it, the spokesman said. (Wall Street Journal)

ERROR DURING SIGNAL REPAIRS LED TO RAIL DISASTER IN INDIA, Report says a signal repair error led to the three-train collision that killed 288 people in June, according to a Reuters report. The news report cites a report from investigators for the Commission of Railway Safety that says workers trying to address problems at a nearby grade crossing did not have a circuit diagram, leading to faulty wiring. That caused a malfunction in the automated signaling system that sent the Cormandel Express passenger train, traveling at 80 mph, into a stationary train of iron ore. Some cars of the Cormandel Express then hit another train, the Yesvantpur-Howrah Superfast Express, leading to fatalities on both trains. More than 1,000 people were injured in the June 2nd collision. The report says there were multiple lapses in Indian Railways' signal and telecom departments and that standard operating procedures were not followed during the repairs.

On July 7th, India's federal police have arrested three railway employees in connection with the country's deadliest train crash in more than two decades that killed 292 people last month, the crime agency said in a statement. The arrests were made under Indian penal code sections related to culpable homicide and causing evidence to disappear, according to the statement from The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). Of the three people arrested, two are engineers and one worked as a technician for the railways.

The CBI had launched an investigation after registering a case of criminal negligence. The investigation into the case was continuing, the CBI said. Reuters reported earlier that workers repairing a rail-road barrier had made faulty connections in the automated signaling system on the network.

In a report seen by Reuters, the Commission of Railway Safety (CRS) investigators said the first collision occurred due to modifications made to the signaling circuit to fix frequent problems at a nearby rail-road barrier. Local railway staff did not have a standard circuit diagram which led to a faulty connection in the signaling system when they tried to take the boom-barrier circuit offline for repair, it said. The malfunctioning system directed the passenger train onto the path of the freight train, it said.

Indian Railways, the fourth largest train network in the world, is a state monopoly run by the Railway Board. The board reports to the Railways Ministry. The rail network is undergoing a \$30 billion transformation with new trains and modern stations under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's push to boost infrastructure and connectivity. (Trains News Wire, Reuters)

NORFOLK SOUTHERN COMPLETES SOIL REMOVAL WORK BENEATH EAST PALESTINE MAIN LINE.

Norfolk Southern has completed removal of soil underneath and between tracks of its main line through East Palestine, Ohio, the railroad announced on June 26th, completing a process that had been ongoing since the February 3rd derailment.

"We promised to listen to residents and support East Palestine for the long haul. Fully cleaning up both tracks shows that we are keeping our promises," Norfolk Southern CEO Alan H. Shaw said in a press release. "We fully understand our responsibility to make things right in East Palestine, and as we mark this phase of remediation, we are dedicated to making further progress and investing in the community."

The process, performed under a protocol approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, included excavating soil and replacing it with approved backfill material, as well as replacement of the track. With that work complete,

NS says rail traffic through the community will resume a normal schedule "in the coming weeks."

Additional remediation work will continue, including removal of soil in other areas, disposal of additional waste, and assessment and washing of the Sulphur and Leslie Run streams. To date, NS has removed more than 73,000 tons of soil and 20 million gallons of water, the work is supervised by the U.S. and Ohio EPA and the site's Unified Command. (Trains News Wire)

FEDERAL PROPOSAL WOULD REQUIRE RAILROADS TO MAINTAIN AND PROVIDE HAZARDOUS MATERIALS DATA IN TRAIN CONSISTS. A new proposal from the Federal government would require railroads to maintain updated electronic information on hazardous materials in train consists, and to transmit that information to local first responders as soon as the railroad is aware of an incident.

On June 21st, The Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration announced the proposed rule, which would require the hazardous-material information to be updated in real time. The information would include the quantity of the material; its position on the train; the shipment's point of origin and destination; and a designated emergency contact at the railroad.

"On-demand access to key information about hazmat shipments coupled with proactive information sharing will enable first responders to better prepare for the risks present at the scene of an incident BEFORE they arrive on scene," PHMSA Deputy Administrator Tristan Brown said in a press release. "This will improve safety for firefighters and first responders, and the communities they so courageously serve."

The full rule has yet to be published in the Federal Register, but according to a pre-publication version, it will require train crews to be provided with a printed copy of the information, which will be "maintained in a conspicuous location of an occupied locomotive." In case of an incident, railroads will be required to provide the electronic version of the information to first responders within a 10-mile radius.

A report on The Hill website notes that while large railroads already have an app for firefighters to look up cargo information, smaller railroads do not. This rule will apply to all railroads. (Trains News Wire)

FIRST PORTION OF MONTREAL LIGHT RAIL NETWORK. Service on the first segment of Montreal's Réseau express métropolitain light rail system could begin within 30 to 45 days, CTV News reports. REM officials shared that news with public transportation areas on June 26th as they said the final phase of testing would begin on June 28th on the 10.3-mile, six-station segment between Central Station and Brossard on Montreal's South Shore. That final phase of testing will involve simulated service without passengers, with frequencies mimicking those of actual operation, system builder CDPQ Infra said in a press release. Several days of testing are planned. Once results are evaluated, a start date will be announced.

The C\$6.9 billion project, announced in 2016, originally aimed to open its first segment in 2020. The builders have said delays are because of issues including the pandemic, a labor shortage, and problems in converting the 3.3-mile Mount Royal tunnel from commuter rail to light rail use. Most of the rest of the 42-mile, 26-station system is expected to open by late 2024, although the last piece, to Montreal's Trudeau Airport, is not expected to be completed until 2027. (Trains News Wire)

HONOLULU RAIL SYSTEM MAKES ITS DEBUT. (HONOLULU) On June 30th, Hawaii's new Skyline light rail system, billed by manufacturer Hitachi as the first fully

autonomous metro system in the U.S., made its debut. It will be the first new major rail transit system to debut in the United States since 1993. The first train ran at 11:30 a.m. local time (5:30 p.m. ET), launching with a 10.75-mile, nine-station segment of what will eventually be an 18.9-mile, 19-station system. Regular service began Saturday, July 1.

When completed, the system is projected to replace an estimated 40,000 trips by car per day. The Skyline trainsets can carry up to 800 people (Hitachi). The Hitachi-built fleet of 20 four-car trains are fully ADA compliant, and have wi-fi, among other features. Along with manufacturing trainsets, Hitachi Rail designed subsystems such as fire detection and passenger gates, tested and performed commissioning of the system, and will be its contract operator. The almost entirely elevated system is operated from a single control room.

"We're delighted to have delivered Honolulu's largest ever infrastructure project, which will have a major impact reducing congestion and emissions on the island," Alistair Dormer, Hitachi Ltd. Executive Vice President, Energy and Mobility, said in a press release. "Reducing car journeys by up to 40,000 a day, once the full system is complete, will make a huge difference to travel in Hawaii."

The first portion will launch more than 2½ years after the initial opening date, with the entire system slated to cost more than \$10 billion, about twice the original estimate. The next phase of the project, adding 5.2 miles and four stations, is projected to open in summer 2025. (Trains News Wire)

NEW YORK'S HUDSON TUNNEL PROJECT WILL RECEIVE LARGEST U.S. TRANSIT GRANT EVER AWARDED. The Biden Administration is awarding a \$6.9 billion grant to help build a long-planned passenger rail tunnel between New York and New Jersey, Federal transportation officials announced on July 6th, part of a critical connection to the rest of the Northeast Corridor.

The tunnel is part of a \$16.1 billion overhaul of a section of rail that carries Amtrak and commuter lines into and out of Manhattan, the nation's busiest transit corridor. The plan also calls for the revitalization of the 112-year-old tunnel, which was severely damaged by Superstorm Sandy in 2012.

"This is a giant leap forward," Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) tweeted, while marking the grant from the Federal Transit Administration as the largest Federal transit grant ever awarded. The funding provides a path to construction for the new tunnel and rehabilitation of the existing tunnel to create a four-track system between New Jersey and Manhattan's Penn Station, project officials say. That expansion is critical to eliminating one of the biggest bottlenecks in Amtrak's Washington-to-New York corridor: the only crossing for passenger trains from New Jersey into the nation's largest city.

Brian Fritsch, of the Regional Plan Association, a nonprofit that promotes projects in the New York Metro area, said the Federal funding guarantees construction will begin this year on both sides of the river. It also brings the project closer to being fully-funded, Fritsch said. "By advancing into the Engineering Phase, the project moves from planning to reality, ensuring we will build the 21st-Century transportation system that our environment needs, that our nation's economy relies on, and that trans-Hudson riders deserve," he said in a statement.

Despite upgrades in recent decades, the crossing, which is used by more than 400 passenger trains each weekday, has not kept up with modern rail technology. At more than a century old, it is showing its age. The concrete lining of the two single-track tunnels is worn. Water saturation has undermined the ground beneath the track ballast. The tunnel size creates a tight squeeze for modern train operations. Saltwater from Superstorm Sandy ravaged the electrical system, leading to signal problems that delay hundreds of thousands of passengers on

commuter and intercity trains.

In January, the project was awarded a \$292 million Federal grant, which project officials said would be used to build an extension of the concrete tunnel casing on the New York side. The 2.4-mile Hudson River Tunnel will be built by boring a trench and lowering preconstructed, sealed segments of concrete into the water. Some sections could be as much as 250 feet deep. After the new tunnel is built, officials will close the old tunnel for rehabilitation. Once both are open, commuter and passenger rail capacity will greatly increase.

Work on the new tunnel and overhaul of the existing tunnel are expected to take about a decade. Early construction work is expected this year with major construction beginning in 2024, officials said.

The Federal Transit Administration said it expects a funding commitment to the project of \$6.88 billion, subject to annual congressional appropriations. The project, one of the largest in American history, will create 72,000 jobs in the New York region and eventually improve more than 200,000 commuter trips daily, the FTA said. In 2020, commuters were delayed more than 210 hours in the tunnel because of maintenance issues, according to a Northeast Corridor Commission study.

"Hundreds of thousands of Americans travel under the Hudson River every day, not just between New York and New Jersey but between points all along the East Coast," FTA Administrator Nuria Fernandez said in a statement. "FTA is proud to invest in the Hudson River Tunnel so these rails can continue to carry millions of people and billions of dollars that help define our country's economy every year."

The Gateway Development Commission, which coordinates the project, said last year that it would seek more Federal grants to reduce the reliance on other financing and ultimately bring down costs. Stephen Sigmund, spokesman for the Commission, said that the group was "thrilled" by the injection of Federal money.

On July 6th, the Commission said it had received a letter from the FTA upgrading the project to the engineering phase of its Capital Investment Grants program. The move clears the way for the project to receive the vast majority of the Federal funding needed for construction, the Commission said.

Amtrak, which owns the existing tunnel, welcomed the news as an "important milestone" for the long-delayed project and applauded Federal and regional commitments to the plan. "We are thrilled to be even closer to the start of major construction on this critical Gateway Program project," said Laura Mason, Amtrak's Executive Vice President for Capital Delivery. (Washington Post)

RAILROADS OFFER PAID SICK LEAVE & BETTER WORK CONDITIONS. U.S. freight railroads are adopting labor-friendly policies such as paid sick leave and predictable shifts to help address long-running staffing shortages that nearly boiled over into a nationwide strike last year.

The railroads have reached agreements with unions representing employees such as track workers and machinists to pay for at least four days of sick leave a year. Union Pacific, CSX, and Norfolk Southern have also signed agreements with unions to offer train crews more predictable rest schedules.

The changes are in addition to providing unionized workers a retroactive pay raise under a new national contract as well as scheduled increases this year and in 2024. These labor-friendly moves, company executives said, are aimed at boosting morale among existing workers and making jobs more attractive to those outside the industry. The four major U.S. freight railroads have increased the number of train and engine employees by 19% over the past three years, and staffing is nearing levels last seen at the start of the pandemic. Short-term paid sick leave, which was not previously available for union

workers, became a sticking point in contract talks last year between railroads and labor groups representing more than 115,000 employees. As of late May, 57% of all union railroad employees had new paid sick-leave agreements in place, according to the Association of American Railroads.

After months of tumult that resulted in interventions from Congress and the White House, railroad executives said they are ready for a reset in relations with workers. "Having an engaged workforce and delivering strong returns to our investors are not mutually exclusive," said Joe Hinrichs, Chief Executive of CSX, which became the first major railroad to reach a deal on paid sick leave with a union this year. "We can and will do both."

Railroad workers have raised concerns for years about operating changes that companies pursued in a bid to become more efficient, labor leaders said. Those changes often resulted in staff reductions, a problem that was magnified during the Covid-19 pandemic. Strong demand from rail customers and thin staffing levels left workers shouldering heavy workloads to keep trains moving.

A new labor pact late last year did not quell discontent among rank-and-file employees at several railroads. The companies continued to face pressure from politicians and union leaders to enhance workers' quality of life. They also fielded complaints from customers and Federal officials to improve rail service, which they have associated with worker shortages.

Union leaders said they are now seeing a shift in how railroad operators are engaging with employees. "America started to see that the cultures on these railroads were very toxic and it was time for a change," said Jeremy Ferguson, President of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers—Transportation Division, or SMART-TD. Engineers on rail assignments at Union Pacific can be called to work anytime after completing their legally allocated hours of rest. But in late May the railroad and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, or BLET, tentatively agreed to put workers on defined work schedules. In the new schedule, engineers would work no more than four days in a row and would get four consecutive days off in a 15-day period.

CSX has a schedule of six work days and two rest days for its engineers, while Norfolk Southern has a mix of five or six work days and two rest days. "It's a huge step in the right direction," said Cliff Horton, a Sweetwater, Texas-based locomotive engineer at Union Pacific. Horton, who has been on the road crew for 10 years, said that workers currently are not necessarily guaranteed time-off because it is contingent on staffing levels. "We will be able to schedule events. When you tell somebody you're going to be somewhere and you cancel on them, they just kind of give up on you," Horton added.

Higher employee wages combined with forecasts of paltry growth in rail volumes could curb profits for railroads this year, according to industry analysts. However, there are early signs that the companies' moves are resulting in higher staffing levels and retention, which help to improve service for their customers, executives said. "If we can be more stable and more consistent, there's a whole book of business out there from existing customers," said Union Pacific CEO Lance Fritz at an investor conference earlier this month.

Freight railroads and unions are not in lockstep on all potential changes in work rules, including those mandating the size of train crews. In the current round of negotiations with conductors, Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific backed-off efforts to reduce train crews to one person, an issue that workers have said could threaten rail safety and their job security. CSX did not raise crew size issues in recent talks. SMART-TD, the union representing conductors, said it is still in talks with BNSF on crew-size requirements. "BNSF is in continued dialogue with all our unions on modernization concepts and ways to address

quality of life," said BNSF spokesman Zak Andersen.

Railroad operators have said in recent years that improved technology has rendered the role of an onboard conductor obsolete, and that conductors could be redeployed to other positions that would minimize time away from home. For now, Norfolk Southern is giving priority to predictable work assignments and time-off for conductors, as well as wellness benefits such as paid sick leave, said Thomas Crosson, a company spokesman.

Lawmakers are also pushing for industry changes they say will improve rail safety. A bipartisan group of senators introduced legislation that would mandate a minimum two-person crew for certain freight trains. The full Senate has yet to vote on the measure. (Wall Street Journal)

DURANGO & SILVERTON SUES INSURANCE COMPANY OVER COVERAGE FOR 2018 FIRE. Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad is suing its insurance company over damage caused by a 2018 wildfire and subsequent floods and mudslides in the burn area, saying the insurance company should have paid for damages from the fire and flooding as separate incidents. The insurance company disagrees, saying the fire led to the flooding, and it therefore qualifies as one event. Some \$25 million rides on who is determined to be right.

The Durango Herald reports that the railroad's parent company, American Heritage Railways, has filed suit in U.S. District Court over damage from the 416 Fire that started in June of 2018 and flooding and mudslide damage that occurred in September of that year. The railroad says its policy with Steadfast Insurance means the company should have paid the maximum \$25 million for damage from the fire, and another \$25 million for the later flooding and mudslide damage, up to the policy aggregate of \$50 million. Steadfast says the fire, flooding, and mudslides were one event, and it therefore should pay only \$25 million. The railroad is seeking compensatory damages of twice the amount of the denied coverage, on the basis it was "unreasonably denied or delayed."

Investigations concluded the fire was caused by cinders from a Durango & Silverton train. The railroad eventually agreed to pay \$20 million to settle a suit by the Federal government over firefighting costs, settled a group of civil suits, and agreed to major operational changes [see "[Durango & Silverton settles lawsuits ...](#)" Trains News Wire, March 22, 2022] (Trains News Wire)

NORTHERN CENTRAL'S ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION. Over the weekend of June 17-18, the Northern Central Railway of York carried more than 500 passengers on six trains during the weekend events. The 10th Anniversary Celebration was capped with a June 18 steam doubleheader pulling all available rolling stock. NCR 4-4-0 engine No. 17 (Kloke Locomotive Works, 2013) led the much-traveled Gramling Locomotive Works 0-4-0T engine No. 85 (Vulcan Iron Works, 1928) southward up the grade at Railroad Park in Railroad, PA, 2 miles north of NCR's headquarters at New Freedom, PA. During the Anniversary events, the railroad posed a lineup of NCR's GP9 No 6076 (EMD, 1959), Gramling Locomotive Works Jeddo Coal Co. No. 85, and NCR's 4-4-0 engine No. 17 for photographers. (Trains News Wire Dan Cupper)

AMTRAK ABRUPTLY SUSPENDS 'ADIRONDACK' AFTER CN IMPOSES HEAT RESTRICTION.

Following a 47-mile run during the weekend of June 24-25 that reportedly took four hours because of a 10-mph speed restriction imposed by Canadian National, Amtrak has suspended operation of the New York-Montreal Adirondack north of Albany-Rensselaer, N.Y., as of Saturday, June 24.

The Adirondack, the last Amtrak route to return after pandemic-related cutbacks, had only resumed operation in April. The restriction is on CN's track

north of the U.S.-Canada border. A Canadian National spokesman tells Trains News Wire that for the class of track involved, the railroad imposes a 10-mph restriction if temperatures exceed 30 degrees Celsius (86 degrees Fahrenheit) "to insure safe operation." He adds, "We are currently negotiating with Amtrak to get necessary investments to insure continuous service at higher temperatures."

If track does not meet certain tolerances related to tie placement and roadbed quality, temperature extremes can cause rails to move out of alignment, which can lead to a derailment. Not clear is when negotiations began, whether other parties are involved, or what class of track CN would require. Deteriorating track conditions clearly played a role leading to the Adirondack being the last Amtrak restored after the COVID-19 pandemic. However, neither Amtrak nor the sponsoring New York State Department of Transportation would discuss why the train was not reinstated north of Albany-Renssalaer during the final two years of its extended hiatus, despite repeated News Wire inquiries.

As for the latest interruption, Amtrak spokesman Jason Abrams says, "A restoration date has not been determined." He says passengers whose trains were cancelled were offered refunds but no alternate transportation. When asked whether Amtrak is considering a connecting bus service north of the State capital or turning the train south of the border so it could continue to serve New York State residents, he says, "we're looking at all options."

Amtrak posted a service alert notice, although passengers attempting to book the train through June 30 were advised without explanation that it was cancelled. Despite the statement, as of this evening (Monday, June 26), the Amtrak website was still offering tickets beginning Sunday July 2. Northbound and southbound trains were both showing a 90% sellout that day.

Now the issues are what track upgrades are necessary, how much they will cost, who will pay, and when work can commence. The immediate question is what weather conditions will allow service to resume. The 14-day Montreal forecast calls for daytime highs between 23 degrees and 28 degrees Celsius (73.4F-82.4F), below CN's stated threshold when the 10-mph speed restriction kicks in. Though temperatures in Canada south of Montreal may have exceeded 28C (82.4F), for the city itself, that was the high temperature on June 24 according to World Weather Info. Since then, temperatures have dropped. (Trains News Wire)

MINOR LEAGUER'S HOME RUN HITS PASSING TRAIN. When Trains Magazine wrote about baseball parks near railroad tracks ("High iron baseball," June 2023), one of the qualifications for the article was the ability to see trains pass from within the ballpark. Worcester's Polar Park did not make the magazine, although it's in [this Trains.com article](#), but it's clear it qualifies. In fact, you can not only see the trains, you can hit them with a batted ball. At least, Boston Red Sox farmhand Bobby Dalbec can. While it's hard to see in the accompanying video clip, broadcasters and subsequent news reports say Dalbec's June 20th home run against the Lehigh Valley Iron Pigs carried beyond the ballpark and hit a passing train; one of the five to 10 CSX freights that passes daily. (Trains News Wire)

ANNUAL BALTIMORE CHAPTER PICNIC Saturday, August 5, 2023 5:00 - 8:00 PM Baltimore Streetcar Museum. Catered Pit Beef, Pit Turkey, Pit Ham. Minimum \$18 donation per adult; \$10 per child, and (if possible) a donation of salads, cakes, desserts, etc. Pit Beef, Pit Turkey, Burgers, Hot Dogs, condiments, sodas & other goodies! Bring the Family, Bring your friends! Streetcar rides during the Evening! Operate a Streetcar! RETURN TO ADDRESS BELOW BY August 1, 2023 with NAMES, Number in Party, Phone number, E-Mail Address, Donation amount enclosed; Food or Food & Dessert Donation Yes or No, Type of Food Donation Send reservation (DONATIONS: checks payable to Baltimore Chapter, NRHS) to: Baltimore Chapter, NRHS, 3025 Orlando Ave., Parkville, MD 21234

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- Historian.....Bob Cohen (301) 424-3228
- Editor, PRN.....Clay Moritz (301) 933-3618
- Program Committee: Alex Mayes, John Sery

Contributors: Alex Mayes, John Morris, Glenn Orletsky, Ray Saunders

**POTOMAC CHAPTER, NRHS
P.O. BOX 235
KENSINGTON, MD. 20895-0235**

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