

# THE CROSS-TIE

Volume 3, Number 9

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**Railroad Quick Hits**

- News updates and special reports are available online at [Railfanning.org](http://Railfanning.org).
- *The Cross-Tie* has launched an e-mail based subscription. To receive future issues of *The Cross-Tie*, drop a line to [subscriptions@thecrosstie.com](mailto:subscriptions@thecrosstie.com) or log onto <http://www.thecrosstie.com/subscribe>. There is no cost to subscribe and e-mail addresses are not sold to third party vendors.
- Gilbert H. Lamphere, a CN director since March 1998, has resigned from the Company's board of directors for personal reasons, the company announced. Lamphere, the former chair of Illinois Central Corporation (IC), joined CN's board of directors when CN acquired IC in 1998. He had been a member of four CN board committees. His departure leaves CN with 14 directors. — *Business Wire*

Inside, Page 4: CSX Expanding Key Rail Corridors  
 Inside, Page 5: Amtrak and the New Look Empire Builder

## A Brewing



Todd DeFeo | The Cross-Tie

## POOR MANAGEMENT LEADS TO MILLIONS IN LOSSES

WASHINGTON — Poor management controls of Amtrak's food and beverage service lead to millions in losses annually, reports reveal.

The Amtrak Inspector General (IG) and the Government Accountability Office (GAO), at a recent Congressional hearing, outlined their separate reviews of Amtrak's food and beverage service and the substantial losses incurred by Amtrak due to poor management.

According to the IG's review, Amtrak's food and beverage operations lose up to \$150 million each year. The IG figures do not incorporate

*(Continued on page 2)*

## MTA UPS THE SECURITY ANTE

NEW YORK — A thousand surveillance cameras are a part of a \$212 million Metropolitan Transportation Authority security plan aimed at thwarting a terrorist attack.

MTA awarded a \$212 million contract to Lockheed Martin for an Integrated Electronic Security System/Command, Communication and Control to beef up security throughout the New York transportation network.

"We are very pleased that this important project, which has been in the planning stages for well over a year, has come to fruition," MTA Executive Director Katherine N. Lapp said in a statement.

The MTA Integrated Electronic Security System, Command, Communication and Control program will enhance security while providing security operators incident management response and recovery capabilities across the MTA infrastructure, officials contend.

The installation of these security devices will begin immediately, MTA said. — *Special to The Cross-Tie*

# REPORTS: AMTRAK'S MONEY WOES CONTINUE

(Continued from page 1)

losses resulting from theft, which were discussed in the hearing as being significant.

The GAO review found that for every dollar Amtrak brings in for food and beverage revenue, it spends about two dollars.

"For the passenger, some form of food service is both a practical necessity and often a key social and leisure component of the rail experience," said U.S. Rep. Steve LaTourette, R-Ohio, Chairman of the Railroads Subcommittee.

"For the railroad, food service is an essential and challenging process that contributes little, other than goodwill, to the bottom line.

"While food operations have never contributed positively to Amtrak revenue, Amtrak has experimented over the years with different methods of managing its food operations trying to improve both quality of food service while at the same time trying to reduce costs. No easy task for any restaurant operation, especially one on wheels.

"Amtrak's management acknowledges that even though they have made progress on correcting the previous mistakes associated with the current contract, they still have a ways to go, and are pursuing other avenues in an effort to control and reduce costs, while continuing to increase ridership and sales margins," LaTourette said.

## The Report

The Amtrak Inspector General recently issued a report entitled "Amtrak Food & Beverage Operation-Evaluation of FY '03 Performance" examining Amtrak's performance on a system, route, and service-type level. The report also compares Amtrak's performance with that of the U.S. restaurant industries.

"The financial performance of Amtrak's food and beverage operation is significantly worse than that of the U.S. restaurant industry," said Amtrak Inspector General Fred Weiderhold.

"In our full report, we find that all of the varying types of food and beverage operations on all Amtrak routes lose money."

The IG report found that Amtrak food and beverage operations in FY03 generated approximately \$78 million in revenue but

had \$162 million in expenses – resulting in a loss of over \$83 million.

However, these figures do not include Amtrak's additional expense of operating, repairing, and maintaining the 65 lounge/café cars and 83 dining cars where food is served. These costs are estimated at over \$65 million per annum.

Lastly, the figures do not incorporate lost revenues due to theft.

"My office and Amtrak management have been involved in a number of investigations of food and beverage workers for the past three years," Weiderhold said.

"In an eighteen month period alone, 135 employees were dismissed, resigned or were disqualified for improper cash handling.

"The total financial benefit that Amtrak would accrue if it could operate its existing food and beverage operation at the U.S. Restaurant Industry expense to sales ratio is almost \$100 million annually," Weiderhold said.

## Poor Management

The Government Accountability Office conducted a separate review of Amtrak's food and beverage operations. According to their review, GAO uncovered losses in the same range as the IG – about \$245 million over three years (FY 2002-FY 2004).

"Amtrak's financial records show that for every dollar Amtrak earns in food and beverage revenue, it spends about 2 dollars – a pattern that has held consistent for all three years GAO reviewed," said GAO's Director of Physical Infrastructure JayEtta Hecker.

Gate Gourmet International, Inc. currently holds the contract to operate Amtrak's food and beverage service. That contract expires next year.

"The provisions of the contract for food and beverage services provide little incentive for Gate Gourmet to reduce or contain the costs of food and beverages," Hecker said. "The contract is a cost reimbursable contract, and under it, the contractor can charge for the costs of items purchased, in addition to management and other fees.

Given the way Amtrak is managing the contract, none of the contractor's profit is tied to controlling costs.

"Amtrak is not fully exercising prudent management techniques to control its food and beverage costs and prevent potential improper payments. We found three examples of this mismanagement at Amtrak.

"First, Amtrak has never required the contractor to submit an annual report – which would be independently audited – of budget variances for key line items, even though the contract requires such a report.

"Second, Amtrak has never audited the contractor's purchase data – which is allowed under the contract – to ensure that the contractor is passing along any discounts or rebates the contractor receives on items purchased.

"Finally, Amtrak does not adequately monitor purchase prices reported by the contractor to identify variances or products with high costs," Hecker said.

## Amtrak Acknowledges

"We concede that the contract we inherited was poorly negotiated and, at times, not managed to the best of our capabilities," said Amtrak Senior Vice President William Crosbie. "However, in recent years, we have made tremendous strides toward strengthening those weaknesses and created savings, better monitoring, and greater efficiencies."

In his written testimony, Crosbie outlined steps Amtrak has taken or plans to take in order to reduce losses in food and beverage operations.

Crosbie also stated that Amtrak will not renew the contract, in its current form, with Gate Gourmet.

"It's outrageous that taxpayers have footed a third of a billion dollars in Amtrak's food service losses over the past three years," said U.S. Rep. John L. Mica, R-Fla., Member of the Railroads Subcommittee. "Following the Acela high speed rail fiasco, this calls out for reform. Unfortunately, Amtrak has fine-tuned the art of wasting taxpayer funds."

"As Congress continues to assess the financial condition and long-term viability of Amtrak, I believe there are a number of business practices that must be examined. I believe their food and beverage operations, for instance, represent a business manage-

(Continued on page 8)

## WRECK ROUNDUP

The following is a list of some of the railroad wrecks and derailments reported in the last month:

A 19-year-old University of Kentucky student was killed Aug. 23 when he ran from police and into the path of a Norfolk Southern freight train. Police were about to cite Thomas Joseph Byers III with an alcohol-related charge when he took off on foot.

A 22-year-old man was killed Aug. 20 in Berea, Ohio after he was struck by an Amtrak train. The man was walking along the Norfolk Southern-owned tracks when he stepped in front of an eastbound train.

A 38-year-old man was killed when he was struck by a Florida East Coast freight train Aug. 17 near St. Augustine, Fla. A second man was also struck by the train.

On Aug. 14, a man was killed after his car was struck by a Canadian Pacific Freight train. Published reports quoted witnesses saying the man went around a gate at a grade crossing in Fountain Prairie, Wis.

Six people were killed Aug. 11 after a train collided with a tanker truck at a grade crossing in Lucio Blanco, Mexico, sparking a series of explosions. The truck was carrying propane tanks when it sped through a grade crossing, the driver ignoring warning signals. The truck's driver and the train's engineer were killed in the crash. The blast destroyed a large portion of Lucio Blanco, a Mexican border town.

Two people in a dump truck were killed Aug. 2 when Amtrak's northbound *Carolinian* crashed into their truck near Raleigh, N.C. According to authorities, the men drove around a gate at the grade crossing. Fifteen people on board the train are also injured.

## Trackside Profile

### ATLANTIC CITY, N.J.: ALWAYS TURNED ON



Railfanning.org Digital Collection | Special to The Cross-Tie

A Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Lines diesel sits in Atlantic City, N.J., on Aug. 15, 1956.

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — The first passenger train steamed into Atlantic City on July 1, 1854, making a 2½-hour journey from Camden, N.J.

The Camden-Atlantic City Railroad was the brainchild of Dr. Jonathan Pitney, a well-known physician and considered by many to be the father of Atlantic City, and Richard Osborne, an engineer from Philadelphia. That first train on July 1, 1854, arrived on the then-bare Absecon Island in Atlantic City with 600 dignitaries, politicians and members of the press.

The idea for the railroad dates back to 1852, though it would take two years and just over \$1.2 million for the road to be completed. The road would later become a part of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Osborne is also credited with designing Atlantic City's layout.

The city's major tourist attraction, the boardwalk, was in part built because of the railroad. As legend has it, Alexander Boardman, a conductor for the Camden-Atlantic City Railroad, was charged with building a device to keep sand out of area hotels and train cars. The boardwalk did, by covering large portions of the beach's sand, thus keeping tourists from tracking sand all over the city. The first section

opened on June 26, 1870.

In 1878, a second railroad opened between Atlantic City and Philadelphia. The Atlantic City & Philadelphia Railroad was built to narrow gauge. The road would later become a part of the Reading Railroad.

The 1920s started the decline for the railroads in Atlantic City, just as the number of automobiles began growing. And in 1933, the Pennsylvania and Reading railroads merged in south New Jersey, creating the Pennsylvania-Seashore Lines.

Over the next few decades, passenger traffic on the railroad continued to decline. And by the 1960s, only a few commuter trains serviced Atlantic City. Eventually all rail service ceased and many of the city's rail yards were torn up to make way for the Atlantic City Expressway.

By the early 1980s, rail service resumed to Atlantic City. By the end of the decade, N.J. Transit and Amtrak revitalized the line to Atlantic City.

— *The Cross-Tie*

Each month, *The Cross-Tie* will feature a trackside location. For more information about these locations, log onto Railfanning.org and click on Trackside.

## B&O MUSEUM IS A TOURISM AWARD FINALIST

BALTIMORE — The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Museum has been chosen as one of three worldwide finalists by Tourism Cares for Tomorrow and Smithsonian magazine for the annual Sustainable Tourism Award for Preservation.

The award honors members of the travel and tourism industry who are committed to protecting our cultural and historic treasures.

“We are honored to have been chosen as a finalist for the Sustainable Tourism Award for

Preservation. The nomination speaks volumes about the Museum’s reputation within the international preservation community,” said Courtney B. Wilson, executive director for the Museum. “It is our hope that our many members, visitors and friends will show their support by voting for the Museum.”

The winner will be selected via online votes at <http://www.sustainabletourismawards.com/>.

Until Oct. 31, people can vote once a day from the same e-mail address. Casting votes will

help the Museum achieve this global mark of distinction. As a winner, the Museum would also receive a \$20,000 grant to facilitate the restoration and preservation of the museum.

The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Museum, a full affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, is dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of American railroading and its impact on American society, culture and economy.

The Museum is home to the oldest and one of the most com-

prehensive collection of railroad artifacts in the Western Hemisphere, including an unparalleled roster of 19th and 20th century railroad equipment.

The 40-acre historic site is regarded as the birthplace of American Railroading and includes the 1851 Mt. Clare Station, the 1884 Baldwin Roundhouse and first mile of commercial railroad track in America.

For additional information, visit <http://www.borail.org/>.

— PRNewswire

## AFTER IMPROVED EARNINGS, CSX EXPANDING KEY RAIL CORRIDORS

NEW YORK — As part of its long-term growth strategy, CSX Corporation on Aug. 11 announced plans to expand capacity on its existing rail lines between Chicago and Florida, and between Albany, N.Y. and New York City.

Company officials made the announcement during an investor and analyst conference at the New York Stock Exchange.

“These investments will enable CSX to meet demand for freight service to the rapidly growing Southeast while continuing to improve service in the populous Northeast,” said Michael Ward, chairman, president and CEO of CSX.

“We’re delighted to add even more service capability to our excellent rail network at a time when demand for transportation services is at record levels,” Ward added.

Construction is expected to begin in early 2006 and includes the installation of rail sidings, signals and other infrastructure improvements to facilitate the movement of more freight with improved service and reliability, CSX says. In addition, the company will make infrastructure improvements to other parts of its 22,000-mile

rail network.

As a result, company officials said CSX Surface Transportation annual capital expenditures will be approximately \$1.3-\$1.4 billion in the next two years. This compares to average Surface Transportation capital expenditures of approximately \$1 billion in each of the past three years.

“Our goal is to make targeted investments for reliability and growth while increasing our customer service levels and financial results,” Ward said.

Over the last six quarters, CSX has recorded improved earnings performance in its core businesses, including two back-to-back quarters of record Surface Transportation earnings in the first half of 2005.

Company executives say they anticipate revenue growth of four to six percent annually over the next five years, primarily related to increased U.S. consumption, a rise in imports — which must be hauled across the country from ports to consumer markets — and tight transportation supply.

These and other market conditions have created a favorable pricing environment throughout the rail industry.

— PRNewswire-FirstCall

## HONDA RECOGNIZES BNSF RAILWAY COMPANY AS A TOP SUPPLIER WITH PARTNER AWARD

TORRANCE, Calif. — American Honda Motor Co., Inc. President and CEO Koichi Kondo on Aug. 30 presented the company’s Premier Partner Award to Fort Worth, Texas, -based BNSF Railway Company for excellence in rail transportation service.

BNSF was one of 15 award recipients selected from 51 suppliers nominated by American Honda associates nationwide. This is the seventh year BNSF has received this award.

The Premier Partner Awards were established in 1998 to recognize suppliers who embrace American Honda’s philosophy of exceeding customer expectations. The award winners represent excellence in a variety of industries including automobile batteries, railway transportation, information technology services, marketing services and much more.

Honda began operations in North America in 1959 with the establishment of American Honda Motor Co., Inc., Honda’s first overseas subsidiary. Honda began assembling motorcycles in America in 1979, with U.S. automobile manufacturing starting in 1982. Honda now employs more than 26,000 Americans in the design, manufacture and marketing of its products in America. Honda currently builds products in 12 manufacturing plants in North America.

— PRNewswire-FirstCall

# AMTRAK CELEBRATES EMPIRE BUILDER SERVICE WITH FRESH NEW LOOK AND NEW EXPERIENCE

WASHINGTON — Amtrak on Aug. 21 celebrated the re-launch of its popular *Empire Builder* service between Chicago and Portland/Seattle with a fresh new look for the train and an enhanced on-board experience for passengers.

The changes kicked off a major initiative at Amtrak to improve passengers' long-distance travel experience and improve the trains' financial performance, Amtrak officials said.

"Passengers will appreciate the newly refurbished train equipment and the improvements we've made to our on-board service on the *Empire Builder*," said Amtrak President and CEO, David L. Gunn.

"While the *Empire Builder* is already one of Amtrak's most popular trains — serving nearly half-a-million passengers annually — this will mean even stronger demand for the train and a better financial performance."

The *Empire Builder*, launched on June 11, 1929, by the Great Northern Railway, is the first train among the railroad's 15 long-distance train services being upgraded.

Amtrak began operating the train on May 1, 1971.

Officials tout the line as a popular route during Fiscal Year 2004, serving more than 437,000 passengers translating into a 5.1

percent increase in ridership over the previous fiscal year. However, critics often target the *Empire Builder*, saying the route is a costly one.

The *Empire Builder* offers daily departures from Chicago (2:15 p.m.) and the West Coast (Seattle and Portland sections both at 4:45 p.m.).

Events celebrating the re-launch of the *Empire Builder* were held Aug. 21 at Portland and Seattle stations on the western end of the route and in Chicago; on Aug. 22 in Whitefish, Mont., on Aug. 23 in Minot, N.D.; and Aug. 23 in St. Paul, Minn.

— Staff and Wire Reports

## CLEAN-DIESEL LOCOS COMING TO CALIFORNIA PORTS

LONG BEACH, Calif. — Taking a major step to improve air quality, the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles and Pacific Harbor Line (PHL) have tentatively agreed to launch a \$23 million program to replace the fleet of 18 harbor locomotives with "clean-diesel" and alternative-fuel locomotives that will significantly reduce air emissions.

The replacement program is part of a new 10-year extension of an agreement between the ports and Pacific Harbor Line, a private company that since 1998 has provided railroad switching services to customers in the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles. PHL also dispatches all BNSF Railway and Union Pacific trains within the ports.

"We are looking at all areas of port operations to see what we can do to improve air quality," said Port of Long Beach Executive Director Richard Steinke. "The agreement with PHL is a great example of the

two ports and private industry working together to find solutions that benefit everyone."

The tentative pact, which goes to the Long Beach and Los Angeles Harbor Commissions in the late August or early September for a vote, calls for PHL to replace its existing fleet of diesel-electric locomotives — some more than 50 years old. PHL would acquire 16 locomotives equipped with new diesel engines that exceed U.S. Environmental Protection Agency "Tier 2" standards for reduction of air pollutants.

In addition, PHL would acquire two alternative-fuel locomotives — one using liquefied natural gas and the other incorporating hybrid diesel-battery technology.

The use of these replacement locomotives equates to removal of an estimated 163 tons of NOx and three tons of particulate matter each year.

"Switching out these older locomotives with newer ones will result in a 53% reduction in

NOx emissions and a 45% reduction in particulate matter emissions per locomotive," Port of Los Angeles Interim Executive Director Bruce E. Seaton said. "This agreement is another step toward implementation of our No Net Increase program to reduce Port-related emission sources adjacent to our communities."

Under the tentative accord, the ports will each pay as much as \$5 million toward the estimated \$23 million cost to replace the PHL locomotive fleet, with the balance coming from PHL and a \$3.2 million AQMD Carl Moyer grant.

The agreement also includes a broad package of air quality improvement measures.

The accord provides incentives for PHL to not block street crossings for more than 10 minutes. The locomotives will be equipped with automatic shutdown devices if the engines idle for more than 15 minutes.

PHL will use cleaner-burning emulsified diesel fuel in its new

diesel locomotives. In addition, the existing fleet of older locomotives also will use emulsified diesel fuel during the transition period, thus yielding immediate air quality benefits.

In addition to the test on the alternative-fuel locomotives, PHL will be testing diesel oxidation catalysts (exhaust cleanup devices) on the locomotives. If they prove effective, PHL will use them on all locomotives.

All additional locomotives that PHL acquires for use at the two ports must also meet stricter future standards for fuel use and exhaust emissions.

"The U.S. EPA has adopted strict regulations for new switcher locomotives, but no regulations require the purchase of the clean-diesel locomotives," Steinke said.

Pacific Harbor Line is a subsidiary of Anacostia Rail Holdings, a firm that operates local and regional freight railroads in the United States.

— Business Wire



# NEWS FROM THE RAILS

## QUICK HITS FROM AROUND THE FREIGHT RAILROAD INDUSTRY

### Federal Court Approves Graniteville Train Wreck Class Action Suit Settlement

NORFOLK, Va. — During an Aug. 17 fairness hearing in federal district court, U.S. District Judge Margaret Seymour approved a class action settlement agreement that provides restitution for minor personal injury, property damage, business and wage loss, expenses and inconvenience associated with Norfolk Southern Railway's Jan. 6 derailment in Graniteville, S.C.

Judge Seymour granted formal approval of the settlement reached by Norfolk Southern and counsel representing many residents of Graniteville and other class members, finding the class settlement to be fair, adequate, and reasonable.

"We are pleased with the court's approval of the class action settlement, which provides full and fair compensation to the class members," said Bob Wells, general manager casualty claims. "This settlement will resolve the majority of claims resulting from the derailment without the delay and expense of lengthy litigation. In fact, Norfolk Southern is processing the first payments of claims submitted through the proof of claim process preliminarily approved by Judge Seymour in May and approved in August.

"This settlement is another step forward in our unwavering commitment to help the people of Graniteville recover from the accident," Wells added. "We continue to work with those

who were not included in the class, and with their counsel, to resolve the remaining claims."

The settlement agreement was subject to final approval by the court after members of the class were given an opportunity to review and object to the terms of the settlement. Judge Seymour found no merit in any of the objections filed.

Class members have until Sept. 15 to submit a claim form to the Claims Settlement Office.

— *Special to The Cross-Tie*

### Tacoma Rail to Receive \$2.4 Million to Upgrade Track For Expected Growth in Freight Service on Mountain Division

WASHINGTON — Farmers and manufacturing companies that use Tacoma Rail to ship their products will be able to move heavier loads and get them to market faster as a result of \$2.4 million in federal grants to improve the railroad tracks, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) announced.

The short line railroad, owned and operated by the city of Tacoma, will use the grant funding to replace 17 miles of track with new and upgraded rail, including the installation of thousands of new crossties, on its Mountain Division Line between Tacoma and Frederickson. The improved track conditions will allow for an increase in weight loads, track speeds, and safety. In addition, the railroad will be able to handle the expected growth of freight traffic when a new grain trans-loading facility opens at Frederickson.

"This rail infrastructure investment will have long lasting positive economic benefits for the region," said FRA Administrator Joseph H. Boardman. "Making an improvement in the transportation link between the local producer and world market opens economic opportunities," he added.

The track upgrades will help move more quickly locally produced items such as grains, agri-mulch, cedar fencing, aluminum billets, steel pipe and farm and other heavy equipment to connections with major railroads or ships at the Port of Tacoma for destinations such as Japan and China.

This federal funding also supports the city of Tacoma's long-term "Train to the Mountain" goal of restoring a passenger rail excursion service to transport visitors to the Upper Nisqually Valley and Mount Rainier National Park. This passenger service will one day use the same Tacoma Rail track as the existing freight operations.

— *Special to The Cross-Tie*

### Oregon's Port of Umatilla Receives \$1 Million FRA Grant To Complete Installation of New Gantry Crane

WASHINGTON — The Port of Umatilla is receiving a \$1 million grant from the Federal Railroad Administration to complete the installation of the new crane, upgrade the electric supply system and expand the container storage area on the port dock.

The crane will replace an aging gantry crane erected in the

1940s. Last year, FRA gave \$2.7 million to get the replacement project under way.

"It goes without saying the new crane will be faster and more reliable," FRA Administrator Joseph H. Boardman said.

The new crane is expected to double the number of containers that can be loaded onto barges per hour and will be able to shoulder heavier loads.

"It will mean the difference between night and day," Boardman added. "This investment will give growers in the area the confidence they need to ship their goods on the Columbia River."

Containers loaded at the port are shipped to the Port of Portland where they are transferred to ocean-going ships headed for Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Thailand.

The port handles value-added agricultural products such as alfalfa, dried grains, and frozen beef, vegetables and potatoes. It is located about 300 miles inland from Astoria on the Columbia River.

— *Special to The Cross-Tie*

### South African beer truck crashes, woman killed in ensuing rush for free beer

A train carrying 180,000 crates of beer derailed Aug. 19 in South Africa.

As many as 200 people tried to make off with beer after the train wreck and a 19-year-old woman was killed in the ensuing ruckus in the city of Waterval Boven, east of Johannesburg.

— *The Cross-Tie*



# NEWS FROM THE RAILS

## QUICK HITS FROM AROUND THE PASSENGER RAILROAD INDUSTRY

### Department of Homeland Security Lowers Threat Level for Mass Transit Network

Department of Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff announced Aug. 12 that the national threat level for mass transit is being reduced from Code Orange to Code Yellow.

Mass Transit lines, however, vowed to remain vigilant.

“Our police officers will continue their vigilant patrol of the system regardless of what threat level is in effect,” said MARTA General Manager/CEO Nathaniel Ford.

The threat level was raised after the subway bombings in London. U.S. officials, however, said there was no specific threat to the American mass transit network.

Regardless, transit users are urged to remain on the lookout for anything suspicious.

“They are always our first and best line of defense against anything unusual that may happen,” MARTA Police Chief Gene Wilson said.

— *The Cross-Tie*

### Hurricane Katrina Causes Rail Disruptions in La., Miss.

NEW ORLEANS — Due to Hurricane Katrina and severe damage across the Southeast, Amtrak had little choice but to implement a revised service plan for three trains that pass through New Orleans.

*The City of New Orleans* trains, which operates between New Orleans and Chicago; the *Crescent*, which operates between New Orleans and New York; and the *Sunset Limited*,

which operates between Orlando and Los Angeles via New Orleans, all offered revised routes.

*The City of New Orleans* ran between Memphis and Chicago. The *Crescent* operated between Atlanta and New York. The *Sunset Limited* ran between San Antonio, Texas, and Los Angeles.

Meanwhile, within days of Hurricane Katrina’s Aug. 29 landfall, Norfolk Southern said its rail operations in Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi are returning to normal. Some operations in the immediate New Orleans area remained closed into September.

“Lines are open, trains are moving, and we are ready to do our part in the overall recovery,” Chairman and Chief Executive Officer David R. Goode said Aug. 31. “Communities, customers and recovery organizations can depend on rail transportation. Our thoughts are with them, and our resources are at their call.”

Norfolk Southern said freight that regularly travels through New Orleans for connection to other carriers is being rerouted through the railroad’s other gateways.

Since the hurricane struck, Norfolk Southern crews have inspected some 1,400 miles of railroad and removed 3,680 trees on lines in the Gulf States.

— *The Cross-Tie and Wire Reports*

### DART Rail Expansion Receives Federal Support

DALLAS — DART is sched-

uled to receive an initial \$260 million for its Northwest/Southeast light rail expansion following a vote by congressional conferees finalizing a five-year, \$286.4 billion transportation funding bill.

“This is a clear commitment from Congress, and we’re ready to get construction under way and bring DART Rail to new customers,” said DART President/Executive Director Gary Thomas.

Construction is scheduled to begin later this year.

Federal funding will support the 35-mile expansion connecting the North Irving/Las Colinas Urban Center, Carrollton, Farmers Branch and South Dallas and Pleasant Grove. DART also is planning extensions to DFW International Airport and Rowlett, doubling the size of the system to 90 miles by 2013. Earlier this year, DART received an appropriation of \$8.5 million for the rail project.

DART also is scheduled to receive \$10.7 million in federal funds for bus service improvements including new bus shelters and benches and \$2.6 million for preliminary design of the Downtown Carrollton Station. This is in addition to the \$260 million for the rail project.

The earmarked money puts DART in a strong position to continue competing for an overall total of \$700 million to advance the rail expansion, Thomas said.

“Our congressional delegation has again done an excellent job of representing the interests of North Texas commuters in

their support of the DART project,” Thomas said. “Thanks to their support, Congress has added its own endorsement of our expansion by putting us in a strong position to keep DART on track.”

— *Special to The Cross-Tie*

### Taking time to Demonstrate Innovative Rail Technology

CHICAGO — The Chicago Transit Authority is replacing existing wooden rail ties with recycled plastic rail ties on much of its system to improve performance and lessen the environmental impact.

The plastic ties have a corrugated surface that better adheres to the gravel track bed and provides better stability, CTA officials said. Plastic ties last twice as long as wood ties, 50 years compared to 25, and better resist decay, insects, water absorption and are free of chemical preservatives.

To date, CTA has replaced 42,000 of its 650,000 wooden rail ties with plastic ties.

“Continued capital investment in equipment and facilities improves the transit experience for customers and enhances CTA’s ability to operate more efficiently,” said Chicago Transit Board Chairman Carole Brown. “With the time saved as a result of this new equipment, maintenance crews can perform their duties more effectively throughout the entire system.”

With a special machine, 240 ties can be replaced in a six-hour shift compared to 60 ties when performed manually.

— *Special to The Cross-Tie*

## THE CROSS-TIE

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*Questions, comments, concerns, fears, trepidations?*

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## THE CONTINUING SAGA OF AMTRAK

*(Continued from page 2)*

ment practice that, if corrected, could invigorate the railroad's frustrated financial condition," said U.S. Rep. Richard Baker, R-La., Member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Another witness, Karen Preston from Sacramento, CA, described a trip she and her husband Gary Preston took on Amtrak last December, during which an electrical power outage eventually led to no heat and no food service being provided to passengers for up to 18 ½ hours.

The problem was exacerbated by a lack of information from Amtrak staff, or updates on when any alternate services might be provided.

According to Preston, the Red Cross was eventually called upon to provide the passengers with food and blankets. "This whole experience has

been a horrendous display of neglect of the welfare and safety of passengers," said Preston. "From bad equipment to irresponsible decisions, it went from bad to worse."

### The Legislation

Meanwhile, legislation that would authorize annual funding of \$2 billion over the next three years to finance Amtrak's capital and operating expenses has been introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill is pending.

The legislation was introduced by U.S. Rep. Don Young, R-Alaska, Chairman, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, U.S. Rep. James Oberstar, D-Minn., ranking Democrat, Transportation Committee, U.S. Rep. Steven LaTourette, R-Ohio, chairman of the Subcommittee on Railroads and U.S. Rep. Cor-

rine Brown, D-Fla., the ranking Democrat on the Railroads Subcommittee.

In addition, the four Members also introduced legislation that would provide \$60 billion for high-speed rail and rail infrastructure projects.

"Although serious disagreements still exist about Amtrak's long-term management strategy and structure, there is a common understanding of the need for near-term funding," said Transportation Committee Chairman Don Young. "This bill, at its requested level of \$2 billion per year, will allow Amtrak to continue with critical work under its current five-year plan.

"It is my hope that the funding authorized in this bill will allow a window of opportunity for a last-chance Amtrak turnaround."

— *Special to The Cross-Tie*