

THE CROSS-TIE

Volume 3, Number 3
March 2005

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Railroad Quick Hits

- News updates and special reports are available online at 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 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.
- MTA Chairman Peter S. Kalikow on Feb. 15 sent letters to the New York Jets, LLC and Madison Square Garden, LP advising the parties that the MTA is seeking best and final offers for the development rights attendant to the western portion of the LIRR West Side Rail Yard to be submitted to the MTA no later than March 21, 2005. Responsive bids are expected to be presented to the MTA Board for consideration at its March 31 meeting.

Inside, Page 4: Northstar Funding Passes Minn. House
Inside, Page 6: CSX Files Lawsuit Over Ordinance



AMTRAK: HEADING ONCE AGAIN FOR A BUDGET CRISIS

WASHINGTON — Proponents of the nation’s passenger railroad say money budgeted by the Bush Administration is nowhere near enough to sustain passenger operations.

The administration counters a reform of Amtrak is needed, and that the railroad focus on operations that are “commercially viable.”

“The question is, what does the administration want to have happen with Amtrak, in light of the proposed cuts? What the administration would like to see,

and has sought for several years, is fundamental reform in the Amtrak system,” said Joshua Bolten, director of the White House Office of Management and Budget.

“It was originally set up 30-some years ago to be a for-profit, self-sustaining corporate entity, not intended to run on federal government subsidies. Over the course of that 30-some years, it’s now collected close to \$30 billion in federal subsidies. Last year it was subsidized

(Continued on page 2)

2005: YET AGAIN, AMTRAK FACES MONEY CRUNCH

(Continued from page 1)

to the tune — or in this year, in the '05 cycle, it's subsidized to the tune of \$1.2 billion."

Amtrak President David Gunn was dissatisfied about the federal budget, which he said "provides no funding for Amtrak," according to a statement.

"The President's proposal does provide \$360 million to the Surface Transportation Board for continued commuter and freight operations on the NEC only after forcing an Amtrak bankruptcy," Gunn added. "It also isn't accompanied by any kind of plan for how Amtrak could continue operations. In a word, they have no plan for Amtrak other than bankruptcy."

This year, Amtrak is spending \$1.4 billion, including \$1.2 billion from the federal government.

"Obviously, the proposal is irresponsible and a surprising disappointment," Gunn contends in his statement. "It doesn't acknowledge all the hard work you've done over the past two years to run a tighter and better ship. Our costs are more under control than ever before — that's quite an accomplishment."

Gunn admits that "reforms and improvements must continue." Amtrak management is working with the Department of Transportation and other government agencies to bring about reform, Gunn says.

"That work continues," Gunn said. "We are committed to an efficient and productive rail passenger system. The plan to force us into bankruptcy would be counterproductive to this goal."

Without a doubt, the President's proposal is the start of an expected lengthy budget process.

"This process has a lot of

twists and turns, and it always takes six to nine months to sort out," Gunn said. "It won't have any impact through the '05 fiscal year, but there's going to be very little cash left at the end of this year. Rest assured that after all we have been through, I am committed to doing everything I can to secure adequate funding for '06. We have strong support in Congress and a lot of support across the country."

This year's Amtrak budget is becoming a replay of past years.

In 2003, Amtrak's Union threatened a one-day strike to bring attention to what officials called gross under-funding for the national passenger railroad.

Ironically, that threat of a strike came on the heels of then-record ridership for Amtrak.

U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., indicated the proposed budget cut might not be approved, the *Savannah (Ga.) Morning News* reported.

"It's awfully early in the process, but given what has happened in the past, I would guess probably not," the newspaper quoted the senator as saying.

U.S. Rep. Jack Kingston, R-Ga., a member of the House Appropriations Committee, told the *Savannah Morning News*, there might be some savings to be had.

"I think it's important that we have some rail alternative," the newspaper quoted Kingston as saying. "But if there is a way to save some money and save their services, we need to explore them."

"Amtrak is very popular ... particularly in the Northeast," Kingston told the newspaper. "I don't know that we will be able to cut it, but I do think we should try to come up with

some savings."

Joseph Vranich, who has been involved with rail passenger service for more than 30 years, has declared Amtrak the least efficient North American railroad.

"Amtrak remains just one more government bailout away from bankruptcy even though federal and state subsidies are ballooning way beyond reason," Vranich said. "Amtrak's costs are enormously disproportionate to its meager traffic and the railroad refuses to implement true reforms."

Long-distance trains operated by Amtrak cannot compete with air travel, Vranich said. Federal funding should not be used to continue "nostalgia," such as trains, Vranich contends.

"The administration's plan to allocate \$360 million to the Northeast's rail line to the exclusion of frivolous services is overdue and protects the country's busiest commuter trains," Vranich said. "Every member of Congress from the Northeast should work to eliminate Amtrak's grip on non-Amtrak commuter trains like the Long Island Rail Road. If they vote to preserve Amtrak, they are voting against their big commuter constituencies."

Not every one in Congress is in favor of eliminating Amtrak, however.

"At a time when gas prices are going up and congestion is getting worse, it makes absolutely no sense to propose eliminating Amtrak as we know it," *The News Journal* of Wilmington, Del., quoted U.S. Sen. Tom Carper, D-Del., as saying. "The economy in the Northeast relies heavily on Amtrak, and the administration's approach will negatively affect businesses and everyday travelers."

In late February, after a tour

of North Carolina's Piedmont train and passenger station in Charlotte, U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta said the Bush Administration wants to save Amtrak with a reform proposal that will provide more passenger rail funding to states and encourage Amtrak and other rail operators to compete for contracts to service routes.

Mineta said the Administration soon will re-introduce its "Passenger Rail Investment Reform Act" to establish a 50-50 federal match for state investments in passenger rail infrastructure, like stations, trains and tracks, create competition for passenger rail service and allow Amtrak to focus on "running the trains on time."

But recent criticism of the proposal makes him "wonder whether the people talking have even read it," Mineta said.

"We cannot save intercity passenger rail service by burying our heads in the sand and simply shoveling more money into a system that cannot help but fail," Mineta said.

Proponents of the Bush Administration's budget proposal agree funding is OK for commercially viable rail projects, including some by Amtrak.

"What the administration is proposing is that we fund those efforts — the commuter rails, and so on, that are actually commercially viable — and insist that Amtrak focus its operations on those portions that are commercially viable," Bolten said. "Those that are likely to permanently require government subsidies — that was never the plan, that isn't the plan — and so we're asking that Amtrak be put on a sustainable basis over the long run."

— *The Cross-Tie*
and *PRNewswire*

WRECK ROUNDUP

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

The man charged in a deadly January Metrolink derailment pleaded not guilty to 11 counts of murder, according to various news sources. California authorities initially said Juan Manuel Alvarez parked his SUV on train tracks to commit suicide, but changed his mind and abandoned his vehicle. Eleven people were killed in the wreck and hundreds more injured.

One person was killed and at least 50 others injured when an express passenger train derailed Feb. 28 in eastern Bangladesh, *The Associated Press* reported. According to reports, the Joyantika Express derailed en route Dhaka. The train was traveling from Sylhet, a city in north-eastern Bangladesh. The derailment, which remains under investigation as of press time, disrupted rail service for at least two hours, published reports indicate.

In early February, three trains crashed near the rural city of Wellsville, Kan., *KMBC* reported. A westbound Burlington Northern Santa Fe freight train rear-ended a second westbound train leading to the derailment of several cars, the television station reported. A third train, which was eastbound on a parallel track, was struck by the derailing cars. One crew member was injured in the derailments, suffering arm and head injuries, *KMBC* reported.

In mid-February, seven cars of a 109-car Union Pacific freight train derailed in Sam Marcos, Texas, *KEYE* reported. The train was traveling to San Antonio from Houston, the television station reported. At first, authorities feared a hazardous material spill, but an investigation quelled those fears, according to reports. However, hundreds were evacuated because of the crash.

Trackside Profile

KINGSTON, GA.: A FORMER RAIL HUB



Todd DeFeo | The Cross-Tie

A CSX mixed freight rolls through Kingston, Ga., on July 28, 2004. Spur tracks heading to the former rail yard can be seen in the foreground.

KINGSTON, Ga. – This north Georgia town, though today a quiet hamlet, once served as a crossroads and as an important railroad city.

It was here the Rome Railroad and the Western & Atlantic Railroad came together. And although no railroad buildings are still standing in Kingston, the remains of the former depot and the former rail yard's right of way remain.

The Rome Railroad, a roughly 18-mile railroad, connected Rome, Ga., with Kingston, a line built since the Western & Atlantic Railroad skipped Rome.

Kingston is perhaps most famous for its role on April 12, 1862. Members of the Andrews Raid were stranded in the yard for 64 minutes waiting for southbound freights to pass.

If not for the lengthy delay, which allowed the party pursuing the raiders to nearly catch up, the Andrews Raid might have turned out quite differently with the complete destruction of the Western & Atlantic Railroad.

Kingston's history changed in 1943, when the Rome Railroad stopped its passenger service and the tracks were abandoned. Likewise, passenger service on the Western & Atlantic Railroad continued to

decline in the 1950s and 1960s and ultimately ceased on the railroad, then leased by the Louisville & Nashville Railroad.

"The significance of the railroad to post-war Kingston cannot be overstated," according to *roadsidegeorgia.com*. "The trains would stop at the downtown railyard and passengers and crews alike would walk to nearby churches. Fame came to the ministers of these churches ... Regulars would often take an excursion to the town from Atlanta just to hear these men speak."

Today, CSX operates trains along the tracks and through Kingston. Dozens of trains still pass through town, but no longer do they stop.

Although there is no train depot in the city, the remains of the former depot's foundation can be seen.

The former rail yard is still noticeable and a majority of the area is a public park. Two historical markers recognize the Rome Railroad and the city's role in the Andrews Raid.

— Todd DeFeo

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

NORTHSTAR FUNDING PASSES MINN. HOUSE

ANOKA, Minn. — The Minnesota House of Representatives on Feb. 22 passed a capital investment bill that includes funding for Northstar Commuter Rail.

The bill, authorizing \$10 million in state bonding for Northstar, passed by an overwhelming margin of 121 to 12. An amendment to remove Northstar funding from the bill failed on a vote of 29 to 104.

“The strong support by the Minnesota House today puts the Northstar project in the best position it’s ever been in at the

Legislature,” said Rep. Kathy Tingelstad, R-Andover, chief author of the Northstar legislation in the House.

“While the \$10 million in bonding doesn’t get us to the necessary state funding commitment at this point, House leadership and 104 legislative members demonstrated today that the House believes Northstar is a project that should be funded this year.”

The House Capital Investment bill, House File 3, needs to be reconciled with the Senate Capital Investment bill. The

Senate already has passed a bill that includes Gov. (Tim) Pawlenty’s recommendation of \$37.5 million in state bonding. A conference committee of Senate and House members will be appointed to craft a compromise bill.

“House passage of Northstar funding is one step in the legislative process,” said Rep. Melissa Hortman, DFL-Coon Rapids, co-author of the Northstar legislation.

“This project has the support of Gov. Pawlenty, key legislative leaders and now a strong

majority of Minnesota legislators. We are confident that the final 2005 bonding bill will include the Governor’s position of \$37.5 million so we can get Northstar Commuter Rail up and running.”

The Northstar Commuter Rail proposal is for service on the 40-mile segment of existing track along Highways 10 and 47 from Big Lake to Minneapolis. Stations are proposed for Big Lake, Elk River, Anoka, Coon Rapids, Fridley, and Minneapolis.

— PRNewswire

MARTA PARTNERS WITH TELEVISION, RADIO NETWORK FOR PASSENGERS

ATLANTA — The Rail Network and the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) unveiled the first television and radio network for rail passengers Feb. 22.

The Rail Network will equip the transit system with a digital TV and radio network capable of providing television programming, with multiple channels of wireless audio, inside subway and commuter rail cars.

Beginning this Spring, MARTA riders will be able to watch updated news programming from WSB-TV’s Channel 2 Action News. TV programming will be displayed on five 15-inch flat screen televisions inside each MARTA rail car and will contain advertising in amounts consistent with network TV’s morning or evening news broadcasts.

The TVs will have closed captioning and the audio will be available via headset on any

personal FM radio, or a cell phone with an FM headset so as not to disturb the other rail passengers.

“This innovative program will allow us to provide both information and entertainment to our customers while generating new revenue for MARTA,” said MARTA General Manager/CEO Nathaniel P. Ford, Sr. “We are delighted to be a part of such an exciting new venture and look forward to working with The Rail Network towards an enhanced customer experience.”

Passengers will be able to choose between English and Spanish versions of the TV content and three music channels, each playing a different type of music. Passengers can also tune into the MARTA Information Channel, which will provide operational, service and event announcements.

— Special to The Cross-Tie

PASSENGER RAIL TUNNEL GENERATES THOUSANDS OF NEW JOBS, DRIVES GROWTH

NEWARK, N.J. — The new Trans-Hudson Express (THE) Tunnel will create tens of thousands of new jobs, and dramatically increase gross regional product and real personal income, according to an analysis conducted by Economics Research Associates.

The study, which was commissioned by NJ TRANSIT, examined the economic benefits to New Jersey and New York of the Access to the Region’s Core project. By doubling passenger rail capacity between New Jersey and New York, THE tunnel will address current capacity constraints and meet future demand.

THE tunnel will produce two waves of significant, measurable economic benefits—one during the construction period and a second set of ongoing, permanent benefits. These benefits include new jobs and increases in overall

economic activity, measured by gross regional product (GRP) and real personal income that flow from the jobs.

“THE Tunnel project fuels economic growth and wealth in the region as a whole—helping the economy of both New Jersey and New York,” said acting Gov. Richard J. Codey. “The most important benefit of the THE Tunnel is the enhancement of regional competitiveness.”

“This study confirms just how vital it is for us to move forward in the construction of a second commuter rail tunnel to New York,” said N.J. Sen. Jon S. Corzine. “Getting more commuters off our roads and on to trains will lower emissions and result in cleaner air. Shorter commuting times will result in increased labor productivity and increased leisure time.”

— Special to The Cross-Tie

FRA: CSX FINED FOR VIOLATIONS OF GRADE CROSSING SAFETY REGULATIONS

WASHINGTON — The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has assessed civil penalties against CSX Transportation, Inc. for multiple violations of highway-rail grade crossing safety regulations related to a Feb. 3, 2004 accident in Henrietta, N.Y., where a train struck a vehicle and killed an elderly couple.

CSX has been assessed fines totaling \$298,000 for failure to make repairs without undue delay at three highway-rail grade crossings where the flashing lights and gates were known to be malfunctioning.

In addition, FRA cited the railroad for failing to have the train crew involved in

the accident 'stop and flag' highway traffic as the required alternate means of providing warning and protection to motorists. A citation also was issued for inadequate drainage caused by fouled ballast at one of the crossings.

"With rail traffic reaching record levels, it is more important than ever for railroads to remain focused on safety," said FRA Acting Administrator Robert D. Jamison. "Grade crossing warning systems are vital tools for protecting motorists which is why we will take every step necessary to make sure railroads keep them in proper working order."

As required by federal rail safety laws,

CSX will have an opportunity to respond to the notices of violation and present any defenses and mitigating factors that may lead to a settlement agreement.

Following the Henrietta accident, FRA conducted a focused inspection of 199 other highway-rail grade crossings maintained by CSX in New York State. FRA inspectors identified problems at several crossings that led CSX to develop and implement an action plan to bring them into compliance.

The FRA may assess civil penalties for violations found during the focused inspection.

— *Special to The Cross-Tie*

CN AND ONTARIO NORTHLAND SIGN ROUTING PROTOCOL FOR ONTARIO

TORONTO — CN and Ontario Northland signed a two-year routing agreement to expedite the transportation of north-eastern Ontario and northwestern Quebec freight traffic.

Under the haulage agreement, CN will pay Ontario Northland a fee to transport its freight traffic between North Bay and Noranda, Que., and between Noranda and Hearst, Ont.

CN and O.N. Rail, Ontario Northland's rail division, connect at Rouyn-Noranda, a major natural resources centre in northwestern Quebec, and at the northern Ontario communities of North Bay and Hearst.

O.N. Rail's Noranda-North Bay haulage route and CN's North Bay-Toronto route — for rail traffic moving between CN's network in Quebec's Abitibi Region and Toronto for

continuing to points throughout North America — together are approximately 220 miles shorter than the all-CN route via Quebec and allow traffic to avoid a major CN classification yard in Montreal. Initiated a year ago as a pilot project, this CN and O.N. Rail routing has proved highly successful.

In addition, CN and Ontario Northland have agreed on a haulage route between Hearst and Noranda for traffic moving between western Canada/western U.S. and northwestern Quebec.

This route over O.N. Rail is approximately 620 miles shorter than the current one over CN via Toronto and O.N. Rail via North Bay. It also allows this traffic to avoid marshalling at CN's Toronto yard.

— *Special to The Cross-Tie*

AMTRAK AWARDED THREE-YEAR CONTRACT EXTENSION TO OPERATE CALTRAIN

OAKLAND, Calif. — The Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board unanimously approved a three-year contract extension for Amtrak to continue operating the Caltrain commuter service between San Francisco, San Jose and Gilroy, Calif. through June 2009, with two one-year options.

Caltrain will pay Amtrak approximately \$180 million during the three years of the contract extension, subject to the fulfillment of performance clauses.

Amtrak has been the contract operator of the Caltrain service since 1992.

This extension includes phased-in modifications to the terms and conditions that improve the financial benefit to Amtrak while ensuring continuity and improving reliability of service provided under the existing contract, Amtrak officials say. These modifications include incentives for on-time performance and customer satisfaction.

Year-to-date, total ridership is up 16.9 percent with 4,666,654 passengers traveling on the service compared to 3,993,086 during the same period in fiscal year 2004. On-time performance (OTP) is 97 percent.

Amtrak provides on-board services, equipment and track maintenance as well as dispatching and administrative support to Caltrain, which runs 86 trains each weekday and 62 trains daily on weekends between San Francisco and San Jose, with commute-hour service to Gilroy.

— *Special to The Cross-Tie*

CSX FILES LAWSUIT OVER ORDINANCE

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — CSX Transportation Inc. on Feb. 16 said that it filed a complaint in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, asking the Court to declare invalid the District of Columbia's ban on the transportation of hazardous materials, D.C. Bill 16-77, and to block its implementation.

CSXT was also expected to seek a temporary restraining order and a preliminary injunction against the measure.

The complaint asserts that the D.C. measure violates the Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution, as well as express preemptive provisions of the Federal Railroad Safety Act, the federal Hazardous Materials Transportation Act and the Interstate Commerce Commission Termination Act.

CSXT said in the filing that as a "common carrier" it is required by federal law to transport the banned materials.

To comply with the common carrier law and to attempt to comply with the Washington, D.C., ordinance would not only impose an unreasonable burden on interstate commerce, it would increase risk to other communities by dramatically adding to the miles and the hours these materials

spend in other communities, railroad officials say.

"Common carrier" laws are federal laws that require railroads to move shipments when they get a reasonable request from a customer, CSX says. They have been a part of railroad legal obligations for more than a century, the railroad said in a news release announcing the lawsuit.

D.C. Bill 16-77 was passed by the D.C. City Council on Feb. 1, and signed into law on Feb. 15 by Washington, D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams. It prevents rail and truck transportation companies from transporting certain hazardous materials through the District of Columbia. Other communities are also discussing similar legislation.

"Federal laws require railroads to carry hazardous materials. As long as that legal duty exists, this company has a responsibility to move the materials as safely as possible for all communities," said CSX Senior Vice President-Law and Public Affairs, Ellen M. Fitzsimmons.

"Doubling the shipment times, the miles traveled and the handling requirements of dangerous materials, as the D.C. ordinance would require in many cases, just increases

risk to everyone else," Fitzsimmons said. "CSXT very much wants to work with federal railroad, security and commerce officials, as well as communities, producers and end-users, to create fair and balanced, long-term national solutions."

CSXT has been active in efforts to enhance security in the D.C. area, railroad officials contend.

"The security efforts surrounding CSXT's core Washington, D.C., route are among the most aggressive in the United States as a result of close collaboration between this company and federal security agencies," Skip Elliott, CSXT Vice President for public safety and environment, said.

"Our concern is increasing risk associated with these movements," Elliott said. "That is because in many cases the only alternative route would add hundreds of miles, and therefore require chemicals to run through and be collected close to more neighborhoods outside D.C. We estimate that the legislation would add about two million miles to the routes of the shipments that the D.C. Council considers the most dangerous."

— *Special to The Cross-Tie*

REPORT: U.S. RAILROADS REMAIN AT RISK

WASHINGTON — The U.S. rail network remains at risk, as a Spanish newspaper reported that a suspect in the Madrid train bombing had a sketch of New York's Grand Central Terminal.

"This is not something I think people should be panicked about or worried about," *The Associated Press* quoted Mayor Michael Bloomberg as saying. "We took the appropriate steps and we do not think that in that particular case there was a real plan to attack Grand Central."

The newspaper *El Mundo* reported terrorists were planning an attack at the station, but details were not immediately

available.

Spanish authorities found a computer disk in the home of a man arrested in connection with the March 11, 2004, Madrid train bombing, the *Reuters* news agency reported. That terrorist attack left 191 people dead.

The computer disk that contained the image was confiscated within about two weeks of the attack. Spanish authorities, however, did not turn over the information to U.S. authorities until the middle of December.

The suspect also had "technical details" about the station, *The Associated Press*

reported. Some reports about exactly what authorities found conflicted with one another.

The nation's rail network is often named as a possible target of a terrorist attack.

Since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, railroads, including subways, have been taking measures to thwart attacks.

For example, the MTA in New York has increased its police force by 39 percent, or 200 people, since 2001, authorities say. The system also unveiled a new advertising campaign urging people to report to authorities anything they think might be suspicious.

Since March 2004, the MTA

has received many more calls, and its bomb-sniffing K-9 units, which respond to calls of suspicious packages in Metro-North Railroad and Long Island Rail Road stations, Grand Central Terminal and Penn Station, have been increasingly busy.

Reports indicated that security at Grand Central Terminal was tightened after the reports about the findings.

However, "nothing in this new material has caused us to make changes in our security plans or procedures," *ABC News* quoted NYC Police Commissioner Ray Kelly as saying at a news conference.

— *The Cross-Tie*



NEWS FROM THE

RAILS

QUICK HITS FROM AROUND
THE RAILROAD INDUSTRY

Union Pacific Modifies Port Operation to Reduce Los Angeles Traffic Congestion

OMAHA, Neb. — Union Pacific has announced it is modifying its near-dock container transfer operation near the Port of Los Angeles to reduce truck traffic in and out of downtown Los Angeles.

The change will help eliminate an estimated 500,000 truck trips annually from Los Angeles-area highways such as the busy I-710.

Union Pacific's Intermodal Container Transfer Facility (ICTF), located just four miles from the Port, will load and unload nearly all L.A. Basin international marine containers not handled on dock, eliminating the need to truck international containers to other Los Angeles-area intermodal ramps via busy highways.

International containers will continue to make the short four-mile trip from the Port to Union Pacific's ICTF via truck, but once at the ICTF, international containers will be transferred to rail cars and then travel through the Alameda Corridor to destinations throughout the United States — favorably affecting traffic congestion and air emissions in the L.A. Basin.

— *PRNewswire-FirstCall*

Rendell Announces Funds for Four Rail Freight Improvement Projects

HARRISBURG, Pa. — Pennsylvania State Transportation Secretary Allen D. Biehler announced that more than \$860,000 that was awarded for

projects that will help preserve rail freight service and stimulate economic development across Pennsylvania.

The four projects are expected to create 63 jobs and retain nearly 900 jobs.

"The vital role of freight railroads in Pennsylvania's total transportation system cannot be overstated," Biehler said. "Trains move freight within the state and across the nation, energizing our economy, cutting highway wear and reducing traffic congestion."

Grant recipients are:

Allegheny County: \$250,000 to LaFarge North America, Towson, MD - to rehabilitate and construct track and to construct a scale to serve a new cement and aggregate distribution facility at the Pittsburgh and Ohio Central Railroad's Scully Yard near Chartiers.

Bucks County: \$203,000 to George S. Coyne Chemical Company Inc., Fairless Hills to rehabilitate track and construct a loading/unloading facility to serve a new chemical distribution center in Falls Township.

Columbia County: \$185,440 to Magee Reiter Automotive Systems, Bloomsburg - for track improvements and construction of a loading/unloading facility that will support a distribution center for the automotive carpet manufacturer's three satellite facilities.

Philadelphia County: \$225,960 to Philadelphia Regional Port Authority, Philadelphia - for switch and track improvements that will facilitate increased commercial and mili-

tary cargo loads at the Packer Avenue Marine Terminal.

— *PRNewswire*

Amtrak Temporarily Removes Fencing Along Keystone Corridor for Work

WASHINGTON — As part of Amtrak's major track reconstruction project on the Philadelphia-Harrisburg Keystone Corridor, fencing between tracks at rail stations from Overbrook to Paoli will be temporarily removed, starting Feb. 1, railroad officials said.

The fences must be removed to allow track-laying equipment to pass through the stations. The fences will be erected again after all track work is complete. The project is estimated to last through 2006.

In the interim, "No Trespassing" and warning signs will be placed along the removed fence line, at entrances to stations and along platforms to remind passengers and the public that crossing tracks is prohibited. Many trains pass through these stations at high rates of speed without stopping; therefore, passengers must never enter the track area, Amtrak said in a news release.

The track work is part of a \$145 million project, jointly funded by Amtrak and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, to upgrade the tracks along the Keystone Corridor.

The first phase of the track work will begin Feb. 1 between Paoli and Bryn Mawr and is expected to continue through December 2005. The second

phase of the work will take place between Bryn Mawr and Overbrook stations and is expected to begin in June 2005 and continue through June 2006.

— *Special to The Cross-Tie*

Safety Administrator Announced at Federal Railroad Administration

WASHINGTON — U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta announced the selection of Daniel C. Smith for the position of Associate Administrator for Safety at the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).

Smith will head the Federal Railroad Administration's safety program as one of the agency's senior executives. Mr. Smith has served for the past twelve years as FRA's Assistant Chief Counsel for Safety, heading up the agency's safety enforcement and civil penalty program. He will report to Robert D. Jamison, FRA's recently appointed Acting Administrator.

"Both individuals have a strong record on safety issues and will help the agency and its employees accomplish our safety objectives," Mineta said.

Smith was first appointed to the federal government's Senior Executive Service in 1999 and has served at the Federal Railroad Administration since 1978.

His selection was made by a unanimous vote of the Department of Transportation's Executive Resources Review Committee.

— *Special to The Cross-Tie*

THE CROSS-TIE

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY
RAILFANNING.ORG

Publisher & Editor:
Todd DeFeo

The Cross-Tie is a monthly e-zine dedicated to railroad news, general features and railfanning information.

Questions, comments, concerns, fears, trepidations?

We want your feedback. For more information, general feedback or to submit a press release, please e-mail us at: news@thecrosstie.com

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PORT OF LOS ANGELES BEGINS DISCUSSIONS WITH BNSF RAILWAY COMPANY

LOS ANGELES — The Port of Los Angeles Board of Harbor Commissioners in early February begin discussions with Burlington Northern Santa Fe on a new intermodal container transfer facility about five miles north of the Port, the railroad announced.

The facility, which will be developed on part of the Port's existing classification yard, is located between Sepulveda Boulevard and Pacific Coast Highway, in a highly industrialized area with direct access to the Alameda Corridor.

This new intermodal facility will allow trucks loaded with cargo containers from ships to travel just a short distance before transferring the containers to rail cars that would then travel through the Alameda Corridor and on to destinations

in the Midwest, Southeast and beyond.

"BNSF looks forward to working in partnership with the Port of Los Angeles to develop and operate this critical addition to the ports' infrastructure," said Matthew K. Rose, BNSF Chairman, President and CEO. "The new facility would significantly increase our capacity to service the ports' customers and to strengthen the role of international trade in the Southern California economy in an environmentally responsible manner."

The facility will improve the efficiency and safety of cargo transfer from ports to customers and allow shippers to take advantage of more efficient truck-rail transportation. The key benefits to be provided by the new facility include the

elimination of millions of truck miles annually from the 710 freeway while allowing truck drivers to make shorter and more frequent trips and the addition of approximately 800 to 1,000 new jobs, representing nearly \$40 million in annual direct wages and benefits, and hundreds of millions of additional dollars in indirect economic impact.

The intermodal container transfer facility will add capacity to accommodate port growth while increasing use of the Alameda Corridor.

"The communities surrounding the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach can benefit directly from BNSF's proposal," said Rob Reilly, General Manager of Operations, Los Angeles.

— *Special to The Cross-Tie*