

# THE CROSS-TIE

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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.
- Word in late June indicated Amtrak would receive the funding it needs to stay in operation for at least another year. In the August edition, we'll take a look at Amtrak's funding crisis and what the funding means for the struggling passenger railroad.
- In September, we plan to feature Savannah's Roundhouse Railroad Museum.

Inside, Page 2: Views from "The Funnel"  
 Inside, Page 4: "The Funnel" Log: A look at the trains



# Fanning the Funnel

Story and photographs by Todd DeFeo

FOLKSTON, Ga. — I stood with camera in hand, ready for whatever might come around the curve.

A man drove up and stopped in front of me and asked a simple, albeit complex, question.

"Why do you take pictures of trains?"

Without hesitation, I replied: "For fun."

The answer, I realized in

hindsight, really didn't explain why I was standing in the hot summer sun waiting for a train to speed through this south Georgia town. And really, it didn't explain why I would try to snap a few pictures as this happened.

Nonetheless, I was standing in the hot summer sun waiting for trains to pass through and I was having fun.



## Views from the Funnel

### What You'll See...

From fallen flags to rare locomotives, you're bound to see a wide range of trains on any given day at the Funnel. Case in point: The picture to the left. There were eight locomotives, yes eight, including CSX No. 1138, a former Louisville & Nashville switcher (it's the fourth locomotive). While it's not common to see a switcher among the engines pulling a freight train, it didn't seem out of place in Folkston.



### Want More?

For more information about the Folkston Funnel and to see more pictures from this south Georgia railfanning mecca, log onto [Railfanning.org](http://Railfanning.org), and click on 'Trackside' for a list of railfanning locations, including a page dedicated to Folkston.



## WRECK ROUNDUP

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

A Union Pacific coal train derailed June 26 near Glenwood Springs, Colo., and the mishap stranded 200 passengers aboard an Amtrak train using the same tracks. Eighteen cars of the Union Pacific train derailed, but no coal from any of the cars spilled, *WLS* television in Chicago reported. Amtrak planned on using buses to transport passengers past the derailment.

Eleven cars derailed in Jasper County, Texas, on June 24 and caused more than \$1 million in damages, *KTRE* reported. Although the 74 car Watco Co. train had four cars with hazardous materials, none of them derailed, and no injuries or evacuations were reported because of the derailment near the Neches River.

A Norfolk Southern Railway train carrying sodium hydroxide derailed in east Houston June 17, *KPRC* reported. While authorities closed down a road in town, no injuries or evacuations were reported because of the derailment.

A derailment about 100 miles northwest of Moscow spilled 60 tons of oil, according to Russian authorities. More than two dozen cars derailed overnight June 15-16.

At least 12 people were injured June 12 when a train traveling from Chechnya to Moscow derailed after an explosion believed to be a terrorist attack. The train derailed near the town of Uzunovo, about 93 miles southeast of Moscow. Investigators found evidence of electric wires connected to the tracks and the train's engineer slowed after seeing an explosion on the tracks ahead, news agency *AFP* reported. Russian authorities said they would boost security in response to the attack.

## Trackside Profile

### FOLKSTON, GA.: GATEWAY TO THE OKEFENOKEE



Todd DeFeo | The Cross-Tie

A northbound CSX mixed freight train passes through Folkston, Ga., on June 13, 2005. The town see between 60 and 80 freight trains daily.

FOLKSTON, Ga. — The first train, of the Savannah, Florida and Western Railroad, passed through town in June 1881, marking the beginning of an industry that would change the city's history forever, a change that is still visible.

Today, more than 120 years later, the town is still known for its trains, as dozens pass through the Charlton County, Ga., seat daily. And, railfans from around the country gather on a viewing platform downtown to catch the action.

The Savannah, Florida and Western Railroad completed two railroads — the Waycross and Florida Railroad, which was built from Waycross, Ga., to the Georgia-Florida state line and the East Florida Railroad, running from Jacksonville, Fla., and connecting with the Waycross and Florida Railroad at the Florida-Georgia state line.

Later, the Atlantic Coast Line built tracks through town. The line, now a part of CSX's Jesup Subdivision, from Jesup, Ga., to Jacksonville, Fla., also passes through town.

The Atlantic Coast Line probably built its tracks through Folkston because of the nearby Okefenokee Swamp. As a result, trains from the two railroads — today, two CSX subdivisions — come together, hence

funnel, just north of town and head into Florida.

A third railroad — the Brunswick and Pensacola Railroad — was built in 1894. The line, built by the Suwanee Canal Co., ran from Folkston to the nearby Suwanee Canal, but the line did not have a major impact on the city.

Today, as many as 80 CSX trains pass through the Folkston Funnel, running along the former Savannah, Florida and Western Railroad and the Atlantic Coast Line tracks.

The city of Folkston has embraced the railroad that passes through town daily and welcomes railfans from around the country who want to watch trains pass through the south Georgia town. In 2001, with the help of a \$30,000 state grant and inmate labor, the city opened a train viewing platform in downtown Folkston.

The platform has fans, lights and a scanner that allows railfans to listen in on railroad radio traffic.

— 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.



# About the Funnel



FOLKSTON, Ga. — Often known as the Gateway to the Okefenokee, Folkston sits in southeast Georgia, just a few miles from the Florida line.

The county seat of Charlton County, Folkston has a population of about 3,300 people.

Railfans are attracted to the city because of the volume of trains that pass through the city. Just north of town, two lines — CSX's Nahunta and Jesup subdivisions — merge and trains funnel through the town.

The city is located at mile post 602.2 on the Nahunta Subdivision. A train-viewing platform, located at mile post 602.6, is open to the public and has built-in scanners tuned to railroad frequencies, ceiling fans that

are a necessity during the hot summer months and lights for viewing trains at night.

At least 60-80 freight trains — including intermodal, coal and autorack — pass through town every day. In addition, a half-dozen Amtrak trains travel along the tracks, including the Auto train running between Sanford, Fla., and Lorton, Va.

Railfans will be treated to a diversity of motive power and rolling stock traveling along the line on a typical day. Plenty of film — or compact flash cards for the modern photographer — are a necessity.

Within walking distance of the viewing platform is the former Seaboard Air Line train depot. The building's grounds are also a viable

spot for train-watching, depending on the time of day and sunlight.

Lodging in town includes a few motels — such as the Days Inn — and the Inn at Folkston, a bed and breakfast.

A restored home, the Inn at Folkston features a quaint and cozy lodging environment for the weary railfan. Located about a mile from the viewing platform, the inn has four rooms.

In the morning, there is breakfast and in the evening, guests are treated to wine — or beer — and cheese. There are rocking chairs and a hot tub on the inn's front porch — which can be used when not spending time on the viewing platform.

— Todd DeFeo



# The Folkston Log

A (partial) look at the trains passing through town

## Sunday, June 12, 2005

**1:26 p.m.**

Southbound, double-stack  
UP 4295, UP 4693

**1:38 p.m.**

Southbound, coal  
CSX 4731, CSX 127

**2:40 p.m.**

Southbound, mixed freight  
UP 4953, CSX 7492

**2:48 p.m.**

Northbound, mixed freight  
CSX 7762, CSX 642

**2:50 p.m.**

Southbound, mixed freight  
UP 5025, CSX 9016

**3:01 p.m.**

Southbound, mixed freight  
CSX 595, CSX 342

**4:07 p.m.**

Southbound  
UP 4052, CSX 4779, CSX 8776

**4:18 p.m.**

Southbound, mixed freight  
FURX 3023, CEFX 3107

**4:26 p.m.**

Northbound, mixed freight  
Conrail 7489, CSX 736, CSX 7871, CSX 1138, CSX 639, CSX 754, CSX 7719, CEFX 3128

**4:47 p.m.**

Northbound  
CSX 4840, CSX 517

**5:39 p.m.**

Northbound  
CSX 5545, CSX 5897, CSX 5576

**5:42 p.m.**

Northbound, coal  
CSX 338, CSX 69

**6:41 p.m.**

Southbound, autorack  
CSX 8638, HLCX 9030

**6:50 p.m.**

Southbound, double-stack  
UP 4899, CSX 7610

**6:58 p.m.**

Northbound, mixed freight  
CSX 5560, CSX 5535, HLCX 6524

**7:11 p.m.**

Northbound, empty coal  
CSX 4807, HLCX 8180, CEFX 3140

**7:22 p.m.**

Northbound, auto train  
Amtrak 19, Amtrak 23

## Monday, June 13, 2005

**8:51 a.m.**

Southbound, tanker  
CP 9624, CSFX 135

**9:03 a.m.**

Southbound, autorack  
CSX 8709, CSX 7556

**9:52 a.m.**

Southbound, mixed freight  
CSX, 736, Conrail 7489, CSX 711, CSX 6

**10:03 a.m.**

Southbound, autorack  
CSX 8070, CEFX 3110

**10:15 a.m.**

Southbound, mixed freight  
UP 9034, UP 9099

**10:26 a.m.**

Southbound, autorack  
CSX 5957, CSX 8062

**11:39 a.m.**

Northbound, mixed freight  
CSX 8181, CSX 8352, HLCX 6250

**12:55 p.m.**

Northbound, mixed freight  
CSX 8365, Conrail 8499, CSX 438?, CSX 589

**1:45 p.m.**

Southbound, mixed freight  
CSX 8400, CSX 8463, CSX 5859

**1:59 p.m.**

Southbound  
UP 3807, CSX 7336, Ferromex 3218, UP 4150, UP 4522

**2:08 p.m.**

Southbound, mixed freight  
CSX 7815, CSX 7928

**2:23 p.m.**

Southbound, mixed freight  
CSX 58, MPEX 5000

**2:37 p.m.**

Southbound, mixed freight  
CSX 4693, CSX 4682

**2:54 p.m.**

Southbound, mixed freight  
CSX 7654, CSX 7684

**3:30 p.m.**

Northbound, mixed freight  
CSX 7730, CSX 7827

**3:59 p.m.**

Northbound, mixed freight  
CSX 165, CSX 112



# NEWS FROM THE RAILS

## QUICK HITS FROM AROUND THE FREIGHT RAILROAD INDUSTRY

### **UP Announces Emissions Program in Cooperation With Calif. Air Resources Board**

OMAHA, Neb. — Union Pacific Railroad on June 24 announced signing of a voluntary agreement with the California Air Resources Board (CARB) that will provide for continued reductions of diesel emissions at the company's rail yards in California.

Effective June 30, the program will focus on phased-in initiatives at nine of Union Pacific's largest rail yards in the state. The agreement was developed cooperatively with CARB and BNSF Railway Company and approved by all three parties.

This is the second significant agreement of this type. The first one was signed in 1998 and covered nitrous oxide emissions (NOx) from locomotives that contribute to the formation of ozone. Under the first agreement, NOx levels from locomotives will be reduced by 65 percent in the South Coast Air Quality Management District. The latest agreement represents the next logical step in the process and will reduce particulate matter (PM) emissions statewide.

The program has the potential to reduce particulate emissions by an estimated 15 to 20 percent at rail yards by June 2008 when all elements of the program are phased-in.

The company expects to spend about \$20 million over the next three years to implement the various aspects of this emissions reduction program.

In October 2004, Union Pacific announced an emissions reduction plan — using a combination of new technology, operational changes and new equipment — to achieve a goal of a 10 percent reduction in emissions by the end of 2007 in its Davis Yard in Roseville. Since 2000, Union Pacific has reduced emissions from the J. R. Davis Yard by 15 percent, so the company will actually reduce emissions by up to 25 percent in just seven years.

“Rail is by far the most environmentally friendly method of transporting freight. Over the past several years, we've made significant progress in modifying our operations to reduce emissions,” said Robert Grimailla, vice president, Environment and Safety for Union Pacific Railroad. “We intend to build upon this progress -- including what we've learned in the last eight months from our aggressive work in Roseville — to maintain our role as an environmental leader in the transportation industry.”

— *PRNewswire-FirstCall*

### **Norfolk Southern Reaches Settlements in Rate Cases**

NORFOLK, Va. — Norfolk Southern Corporation on June 24 said it has entered into a settlement agreement with Duke Energy Corp. and a tentative settlement agreement with Carolina Power & Light Company that resolve the rail transportation rate cases pending before the Surface Transportation Board.

The settlements are expected

to increase NS' second quarter net income by \$24 million, or \$0.06 per diluted share.

In 2002, Duke and CP&L each filed rate reasonableness complaints at the STB. In October 2004, the STB found Norfolk Southern's rates to be reasonable in both cases and, at the STB's invitation, Duke and CP&L each initiated proceedings to determine whether phasing constraints should apply.

The terms of both settlement agreements are confidential.

— *PRNewswire-FirstCall*

### **National Health Group Names UP One of Best Employers for Healthy Lifestyles**

OMAHA, Neb. — The National Business Group on Health, a national non-profit organization, honored Union Pacific Railroad for its commitment and dedication to combating obesity and promoting a healthy lifestyle for its employees.

Union Pacific is among 22 companies who received the “Best Employers for Healthy Lifestyles” award at the Obesity Leadership Summit sponsored by the Business Group's Institute on the Costs and Health Effects of Obesity. Union Pacific received a Platinum Award for its Health Promotion program.

“Creating a culture of health and wellness for employees helps Union Pacific fulfill its corporate vision — a railroad where our customers want to do business, employees are proud to work, shareholder value is created, and public and em-

ployee safety is our top priority,” said Marcy Zauha, UP director-health and safety.

The Best Employers for Healthy Lifestyles awards program was created by the Institute on the Costs and Health Effects of Obesity to honor those who recognize the urgent need to improve their workers' health, productivity and quality of life. The underlying goal of the program is to serve as a catalyst to encourage all employers to take action.

— *PRNewswire-FirstCall*

### **FreightCar America's Roanoke, Va., Facility Delivers its First Production Railcar**

CHICAGO — FreightCar America Inc. on June 9 celebrated the grand opening of a new railcar manufacturing facility in Roanoke, Va.

FreightCar America leased the facility from Norfolk Southern and has extensively upgraded it to build a broad range of railroad freight cars.

“This project will re-energize an industry that has a long-standing tradition in the Roanoke Valley,” said Gov. Mark Warner. In addition to a \$5.5 million investment by FreightCar America, the project will provide up to 400 new jobs.

“Hiring of employees and production of new cars are ramping up faster than expected, and we are very pleased with the people we are finding in the Roanoke area,” said Kenneth D. Bridges, FreightCar America's senior vice president of operations.

— *Business Wire*



# NEWS FROM THE RAILS

## QUICK HITS FROM AROUND THE PASSENGER RAILROAD INDUSTRY

### FTA Formally Approves Houston Rail Expansion on North and Southeast Lines

HOUSTON — The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has granted formal approval to the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County, Texas, to begin preliminary engineering on the North and Southeast corridor rail extensions.

The April decision represents a major step toward qualifying the two rail lines for federal funding, Metro officials say.

“This is an important milestone on our mission to improve mobility in our region,” said METRO President and CEO Frank J. Wilson. “We’re gaining momentum on the next rail segments and that’s good news worth sharing.”

The FTA approval was based on a comprehensive review of METRO’s proposed projects and of the agency’s financial ability to build and operate the lines without compromising the transportation services it already offers to residents of the eight-county region.

FTA criteria included the potential ridership of the two rail lines, the travel time savings for current bus riders and new riders who would be attracted to the extended rail system, benefits to air quality, and overall benefits to those dependent on public transit.

Metro estimates that preliminary engineering should be completed in mid-2006. During this phase of study, input will be solicited from affected communities and stakeholders for the precise location of the rail

line and associated station stops. Also, an Environmental Impact Statement will be completed. At the end of this preliminary engineering phase, cost and completion times for the overall project will be refined.

An estimated \$30 million will be spent on early engineering for both extensions - approximately \$15 million each. METRO has asked the federal government to reimburse 80% of that cost.

When preliminary engineering is complete, METRO will ask the FTA for approval to complete design of the rail extensions and begin negotiations for a full funding grant agreement for the projects.

The North and Southeast Corridor light rail projects are components of the METRO Solutions Transit System Plan approved by voters in November 2003.

— *Special to The Cross-Tie*

### After One Year, Charlotte’s CATS Celebrates 250,000 Trolley Riders

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — One lucky passenger aboard the Charlotte Trolley this weekend will become the 250,000th rider on the service since it started on June 28, 2004.

“We estimated to have 100,000 customers for the entire first year of full service,” said Brad Miller, Interim Chief Operating Officer for CATS. “We surpassed that goal in November. To have this record number of passengers is a clear indication that residents and

visitors in Charlotte are choosing to use the Charlotte Trolley Line as an alternate means of traveling around the Queen City.”

The 250,000th customer will receive a trolley boarding pass and various prizes donated from businesses along the Charlotte Trolley Line.

The trolley line runs approximately 2.1 miles with 10 stations along the line. The stations include stops at Atherton Mill, Tremont, East/West Boulevard, Park Avenue, Bland Street, Morehead Street, Stone-wall Street, Convention Center at Second Street, Sixth Street and Ninth Street.

— *Special to The Cross-Tie*

### Amtrak’s Blue Water Tops 100,000 Riders in First Year

LANSING, Mich. — More passengers are riding the Port Huron-East Lansing-Chicago route to and from Michigan since Amtrak and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) teamed up to improve service and launch the Blue Water train last year.

In the first full year of service, the *Blue Water* carried 104,655 passengers, an increase of 24.3 percent from the 84,167 carried the previous 12 months by the former *International* service. The *Blue Water* replaced the *International* on April 25, 2004, eliminating its service to Canada from Port Huron and changed its schedule, operating into Chicago in the morning and departing for Michigan destinations in the afternoon.

“We’re pleased with the re-

sult of this partnership,” said State Transportation Director Gloria J. Jeff. “The new *Blue Water* route is clearly offering a service that Michigan residents needed and value highly.”

Named for its home region of Port Huron, the *Blue Water* trains also serve Lapeer, Flint, Durand, Battle Creek, Kalamazoo, Dowagiac and Niles, Mich., and operate under a contract with the MDOT.

“We believed that the new schedule of the *Blue Water* Service would be extremely popular,” said Bruce Hillblom, Chicago-based Senior Principal responsible for Amtrak’s contractual relationship with MDOT. “It is great to know our partnership is paying off with an improved service that is attracting more passengers.”

The *Blue Water* replaced the *International*, which operated over the same route and continued on to Ontario, Canada. However, the former train’s scheduled late evening arrivals in Toronto and Chicago meant that passengers missed all daily long-distance connections at Amtrak’s Chicago Union Station. Amtrak introduced the *Blue Water* route to allow passengers to make day trips from Michigan to Chicago and return the same evening and also to connect to Amtrak trains with afternoon departures from the Chicago hub to hundreds of destinations throughout the country. Food service on the *Blue Water* features a variety of sandwiches, drinks and other snacks in the Café car.

— *Special to The Cross-Tie*

## THE CROSS-TIE

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

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## EIGHT KILLED AFTER TRAIN CRASHES INTO COAL TRUCK IN ISRAEL, DERAILS

REVADIM, Israel — Eight people were killed June 21 when an Israeli passenger train crashed with a coal truck and derailed, according to authorities and published reports.

The wreck, which injured at least 195 people, was ruled an accident, not terrorism, country officials said.

"We felt really helpless. All we could see around us was fields. We had no idea where we were," *The Associated Press* quoted a reporter on board the train as telling an Israeli television station. "Soldiers (on board the train) took out their bandages and began to treat the injured as much as possible."

The train, which was traveling about 87 m.p.h., was traveling from Tel Aviv to the city of Beersheba in southern Israel,

struck the 40-ton coal truck near the village of Revadim, south of Tel Aviv. After spotting the truck, the train's engineer slowed the train to about 75 m.p.h. before the collision, according to media reports.

"I heard the train's horn sound, and then we were all thrown forward as it slammed on the brakes," the *Baltimore Jewish Times* quoted an off-duty soldier who was on board the train as telling reporters.

"Next thing I know, there was a huge explosion, dust, and everything spun around. It was all I could do to get out of there."

Israeli police were probing the circumstances of the wreck, using the train's black box and a similar device from the truck to reconstruct the wreck.

Between 300 and 400 people

were on board the train at the time of the wreck.

At least three of the train's cars derailed in the wreck, and of those, at least one car overturned. Authorities initially treated the wreck as if it was a terrorist attack.

There were no lights at the crossing, according to media reports. The truck's driver, who was killed in the collision, had previous driving violations, Israeli media reported.

There were two wrecks at the same spot in 2000 and 2003, according to media reports. Those two wrecks were not as serious as the June 21 crash.

Fifty children were killed in a rail wreck in 1982. In the 1982 wreck, the children's bus stalled on some train tracks and was struck by a train.

— *The Cross-Tie*