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**NEWS CLIPS**

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8/30/2010 Project Update

## **UP invests \$11.5 million in track improvements**

[Union Pacific Railroad](#) will spend more than \$11.5 million to improve a rail line from Topeka, Kan., to Herington, Kan., UP officials said in a prepared statement.

Work on two projects covering a more than 80-mile stretch of track began Aug. 19 and is scheduled to be completed by the end of October.

The projects include removing and installing more than 93,000 ties, spreading nearly 50,000 tons of rock ballast to reinforce the roadbed and replacing the surfaces at 84 grade crossings. In May, crews replaced rail in various curves between Herington and Volland, Kan.

UP plans to spend approximately \$2.6 billion in 2010 to support current and future freight transportation needs and enhance safety and efficiency along the railroad's 32,000-mile network, UP officials said.

8/30/2010 Security

## **CSX partners with Alabama, Mississippi for safety measures**

On Friday, [CSX](#) Transportation entered into rail security partnerships with the states of Alabama and Mississippi.

The SecureNOW partnerships formalize and enhance CSXT's commitment to share information, resources and strategies to protect communities in which the company operates, CSXT officials said in a prepared statement.

SecureNOW is designed to be another resource for state, federal and local agencies to work together to evaluate and act upon potential security threats.

The partnership gives security officials access to CSXT's Network Operations Workstation (NOW) system. Developed and used by CSXT, the secure online system enables security and law enforcement officials to independently track the location of CSXT trains and the contents of rail cars in a nearly real-time environment, Class I officials said.

CSXT also will work with law enforcement officials on joint rail security training and preparedness exercises and provides around-the-clock access to CSXT rail security professionals.

8/30/2010 Short-Line Labor

## **Springfield Terminal Railway workers ratify TCU contract; Fulton County Railway workers join UTU**

By a four-to-one margin, Transportation Communications Union (TCU) members recently ratified a new contract with Springfield Terminal Railway Co., which is owned by Pan Am Railways.

The new contract includes 18 percent wage increases spread out over a five-year period, according to the TCU.

Meanwhile, train and engine-service employees at Fulton County Railway recently voted in favor of being represented by the United Transportation Union. Owned by OmniTRAX Inc., the short line operates 55 miles of track in the Atlanta area.

Chicago Tribune  
August 30, 2010

Critics urge railroads: Shoot for bullet trains;  
They say plans for 110-mph target don't go far, or fast, enough

BY Jon Hilkevitch

A revolt is building against what some public officials mistakenly consider high-speed rail.

You can't blame anybody who has experienced riding aboard bullet trains for being completely unimpressed by the current goal to have passenger trains traverse the Midwest at top speeds of 110 mph, up from 79 mph on Amtrak today.

But that's the game plan, at a cost of billions of dollars.

Bullet trains routinely operate at 150 to 220 mph. It's the performance level Illinois should be shooting for, said state Sen. Martin Sandoval, D-Chicago, who is chairman of the Illinois Senate Transportation Committee .

Sandoval sponsored legislation this year creating a commission working to establish world-class bullet trains, and he helped push the administration of Gov. Pat Quinn to seek more than \$8 million in federal seed money toward that goal.

Other lawmakers have joined the campaign, urging U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood to approve the funding to explore truly fast trains that would bring major cities in the Midwest within three hours of each other via rail. A decision is expected soon.

"We need to get to work on true high-speed rail. The people want it," Sandoval said, adding he is frustrated that the process of appointing members to the Illinois and Midwest High Speed Rail Commission is "moving as fast as our current freight trains."

There is a lot of push-back and inertia coming from various quarters.

Officials at Amtrak, which has minimal expertise in operating high-speed rail, don't see a problem topping out at only 110 mph. An infusion of billions of dollars in federal and state funding will mean better Amtrak service in the Midwest -- just don't mistake it for true high-speed trains.

The genuine article, service at up to 220 mph, is being planned in California and Florida. It already exists to a lesser degree on Amtrak Acela Express trains that get up to 150 mph on small portions of the route between Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Washington.

The Union Pacific Railroad, which owns the track between Chicago and St. Louis that is set to be the first higher-speed route in Illinois, officially supports the 110 mph plan because it provides millions of dollars in government subsidies to upgrade tracks, signals and other infrastructure that freight trains share with Amtrak and Metra trains.

The rail modernization will benefit the freight railroad, even though Union Pacific executives would prefer to have nothing to do with high-speed trains.

Union Pacific agreed to allow 110 mph passenger trains on the tracks being rebuilt mostly with federal stimulus funds between Chicago and St. Louis only because it inherited the obligation when it bought the track along the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1996. An earlier Southern Pacific agreement allowing the Illinois Department of Transportation to run faster trains was part of a grandfather clause.

"If I had a choice, I wouldn't be doing this investment (in high-speed rail)," Union Pacific Chief Executive Officer James Young told the Bloomberg news agency in July. "We need to focus on freight for our good and for the good of the country."

Sandoval said Illinois "can't sell the real benefits of investing in freight and Amtrak service on the back of the bullet train."

"Our current state strategy falls short because it relies on the Union Pacific to deliver to the people more round-trips, more reliability at faster times without any guarantees. This investment in the UP is not the bullet train the people want," Sandoval said. "We should be upfront with the people of Illinois."

He is right about no guarantees. The Union Pacific has not agreed to allow for increases in passenger service once the 110 mph track upgrades are completed on the 284-mile line between Chicago and St. Louis. So a huge investment is being made to operate only a few trains a day?

Wouldn't the money be more wisely spent on building track dedicated to 220 mph, electric-powered trains, like California and Florida are doing?

After prodding by true high-speed rail supporters, IDOT begrudgingly asked the Obama administration last year for \$5 million to conduct a preliminary study on the feasibility of 220 mph trains between Chicago and St. Louis. The request was submitted during the first round of the high-speed rail funding. Illinois' application was denied, although the state did receive \$1.23 billion for improvements for future 110 mph service.

Now, IDOT is seeking more than \$8 million to begin designing a 220 mph bullet train railroad linking Chicago and St. Louis, with stops in downstate Illinois as well as O'Hare and McCormick Place.

The current 5 1/2-hour Amtrak trip between Chicago and St. Louis would be two hours.

The request is contained in IDOT applications vying for a second round of federal grants to advance Illinois' 110 mph passenger rail program. A decision by the Federal Railroad Administration is expected as early as late September, officials said.

Officials who have recently written to LaHood, the U.S. transportation secretary and a former congressman from Peoria, in support of the \$8 million in funding include Sandoval; state Senators John Millner, Toi Hutchinson, Dale Risinger, Michael Bond and David Koehler; state Reps. Ken Dunkin, Sara Feigenholtz, Elaine Nekritz and Dave Winters; U.S. Reps. Phil Hare and Jesse Jackson Jr.; Chicago Ald. Toni Preckwinkle; St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay; Glenn Poshard, president of Southern Illinois University; and Randall Blankenhorn of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

**AUGUST 30, 2010**

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## **As Schaumber Leaves, NLRB Drops From Five To Four Members**

The National Labor Relations Board, plagued by years of vacancies, enjoyed just a brief two months at full strength this summer before losing another member with the departure last week of Peter Schaumber.

Schaumber's second term on the board expired Aug. 27. The board's membership now drops from five to four: three Democrats and one Republican.

Schaumber and Board Chair Wilma Liebman were the only members for 27 months—a situation which led to numerous lawsuits challenging whether two members were a quorum for deciding labor cases. The Supreme Court in *New Process Steel v. NLRB* ruled in June that federal labor law required a quorum of three. That decision potentially put at risk roughly 600 rulings by the two-member board.

Schaumber, nominated by President George W. Bush, first took his seat on the board in December 2002. He served as chairman from April 2008 until January 2009. Schaumber began

his legal career as an assistant corporation counsel for the District of Columbia. He subsequently was appointed assistant U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia and served in that office's Criminal and Civil divisions. After leaving that office, he became senior trial attorney and associate director of a law department division in the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency.

Schaumber said in a statement that it was his "good fortune" to have served with Liebman during the 27-months when they were the entire board.

"Our shared commitment to collaboration and the agency's mission enabled us to process scores of cases to resolution, despite our ideological differences," he said. "While the Supreme Court ultimately determined that a three-member quorum is necessary to issue decisions, Chairman Liebman and I set a tone for collegiality and dedication to case processing that I hope will carry forward to future boards."

During a farewell ceremony last week, Liebman called Schaumber's chairmanship "his finest hour."

Schaumber, a graduate of Georgetown University Law Center, said he has no immediate plans. "I look forward to taking time off to spend with family, then returning to work in traditional labor law, government affairs and the legislative arena."

Besides Liebman, a Clinton appointee, the board now consists of three appointees by President Barack Obama: Democrat Craig Becker, a recess appointee who can serve until December 2011; Democrat Mark Pearce, serving until August 2013, and Republican Brian Hayes, serving until December 2012.

9/2/2010 Government

## **FRA proposes rulemaking on concrete ties**

The [Federal Railroad Administration \(FRA\)](#) recently issued a notice of proposed rulemaking regarding concrete crossties, according to the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association's latest ["Views & News"](#) newsletter.

The FRA proposes to amend federal track safety standards to boost the safety of railroad operations over track featuring concrete ties. The rulemaking would set specific requirements for concrete ties, rail fastening systems connected to such ties and automated inspections of track constructed with the ties. In addition, the rulemaking would remove a provision on pre-emptive effect.

The FRA will accept comments on the proposed rulemaking until Oct. 12.

## Freight rail traffic notches 2010 highs



**Thursday, September 02, 2010**

Both U.S. freight carload traffic and U.S. intermodal traffic hit their highest levels in 2010 during the week ended August 28, the Association of American Railroads said Thursday.

U.S. freight carload traffic rose 5.8% compared with the same week in 2009, though still trailing 2008's total by 11.3%. U.S. intermodal traffic advanced 17.1% from the same week in 2009, though down 1.2% from 2008 levels.

AAR said 15 of the 19 carload commodity groups increased from the comparable week in 2009, with "significant increases" in metallic ores, up 62.%, metals and metal products, up 40.2%, and farm product excluding grain, up 33.%.

Canadian freight carload traffic rose 16.5% from the comparable week in 2009, while intermodal also rose, up 24.4%. Mexico's two major railroads reported freight carload traffic rose 18% from one year ago, while intermodal grew by 26.7%.

Combined North American rail volume for the first 34 weeks of 2010 on 13 reporting U.S., Canadian, and Mexican railroads was up 10% from 2009, while intermodal was up 14.% compared with the first 34 weeks of last year.

## Rail fatalities rise 18.2% in six months



**Thursday, September 02, 2010**

The Surface Transportation Board posted preliminary statistics Thursday showing that fatalities on U.S. railroads increased 18.2% to 370 in the first six months of this year compared with the same period in 2009.

The principal contributors to the increase were trespassing fatalities, which increased 20% to 228, and grade-crossing fatalities, which were up 12.7% to 124.

Train accidents caused six fatalities in this year's first six months, compared with one in the prior-year period. There were 10 employee fatalities this year, the same as in the 2009 period.

The number of accidents and incidents reported by 740 railroads totaled 5,403 in this year's first half compared with 5,424 reported by 741 railroads in the 2009 period.

Train accidents were down 5.4% to 892 in the 210 period. Collisions were down 7.5% to 62, and derailments declined 2.4% to 640. Yard accidents declined 1% to 488.

Breaking News Alert  
The New York Times  
Fri, September 03, 2010 -- 8:39 AM ET  
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U.S. Economy Lost 54,000 Jobs in August; Jobless Rate Rose to 9.6%

The unemployment rate rose in August for the first time in four months as weak hiring by private employers wasn't enough to keep pace with a large increase in the number of people looking for work.

The Labor Department says companies added a net total 67,000 new jobs last month, down from July's upwardly revised total of 107,000.

Overall, the economy lost 54,000 jobs as 114,000 temporary census positions came to an end. State and local governments shed 10,000 positions. The jobless rate rose to 9.6 percent from 9.5 percent in July.