

THE FLATWHEEL

The Official Monthly Publication of the Central Florida
Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society



January 2012

January Meeting

Monday, January 9th at 7:00 PM
Central Florida RR Museum
101 S. Boyd St., Winter Garden, FL
Refreshments Provided By: Lloyd
& Sylvia Brown
Program: Running Steam in Poland
By: Keith Mackey

February Meeting

Monday, February 13th
Central Florida RR Museum
101 S. Boyd St., Winter Garden, FL
Refreshments Provided By: Chuck Ansell
Program: FEC Railway's Key West Extension
By: Ken Murdock

Upcoming Events

Winter Live Steam Meets:

1. Big Boots & Western RR = February 6 – 12, 2012
2. Ridge Live Steamers = February 23 – 26, 2012

January 5-7, 2012 — PROTOTYPE RAILS, Cocoa Beach, FL, an NMRA sanctioned event and prototype modeling meet featuring modular layouts in O, HO and N scale. Location: Hilton Hotel, 1550 N. Atlantic Ave., (Highway A1A), Cocoa Beach, FL, 800-526-2609 or 321-799-0003. Website: <http://prototyperails.com/>.

January 7-8, Deland, FL — 38th Florida Rail Fair, Volusia County Fairgrounds, 3150 East New York Avenue, 9 am – 4 pm, Admission: Adults \$7.00, Under 12 Free. Contact: Charles Miller, 386-736-8185, rrshows@aol.com. Website: <http://www.gserr.com>.

January 18-21, 2012 — Florida Flywheelers Antique Engine Club's 25th Annual Swap Meet, 7000 Avon Park Cutoff Road, Ft. Meade, FL, 33841. Call 863-285-9121. Website: <http://www.floridaflywheelers.org>.

February 4, 2012 — CFCNRHS Quarterly Board of Directors Meeting, CFRR Museum, 8:30 AM.

February 11, 2012, Jacksonville, FL—Southeastern Railroadiana Collectors 34th Jacksonville Rail Fair, Railroadiana and Model Train Show, 9:00 to 4:00. Admission \$7 (under 12 free), Prime Osborn Convention Center, 1000 Water Street (former Jacksonville Terminal). Details: Charlie Miller, 3106 N. Rochester St., Arlington, VA 22213-1348, (703) 536-2954, rrshows@aol.com. Website: <http://www.gserr.com>.

February 22-25, 2012 — Florida Flywheelers Antique Engine Club's 20th Annual Antique Engine & Tractor Show, 7000 Avon Park Cutoff Road, Ft. Meade, FL, 33841. Call 863-285-9121. Website: <http://www.floridaflywheelers.org>.

March 2, 2012 — NARCOA Motorcar Excursion over the Florida Central RR roundtrip between Eustis and Mt. Dora.

Continued On Page 2.



Eleven Chapter members and guests on the front steps to the Plant Museum in the former Tampa Bay Hotel following a tour of the facilities on December 10. The former Plant hotel is currently part of the University of Tampa campus.

January Museum Work Session

Saturday, January 28, 2012

8:30 AM to 3:30 PM

**Please come out and help with the
many chores that need to be done!!!!**

January Birthdays

Joshua Monsalvatge 1/8

Bill Dusenbury 1/17

Irv Lipscomb 1/18

Al Pfeiffer's Photo Corner

This feature focuses on photos taken by our own Chapter member Al Pfeiffer. Over the years, Al has taken thousands of photos related to our favorite hobby and he would like to share some of them with us. Each month, three of Al's photos are featured.



CSX #4551 Southbound With Grain Train at Bushnell, FL
4/12/10



FEC #704 Northbound at MP 114, South Daytona FL 2/25/11



Amtrak #164 Northbound With Train # 92 (Silver Star) at Plant City FL. 5/31/10

Upcoming Events

Continued From Page 1

March 3, 2012 — NARCOA Motorcar Excursion over the Florida Central RR roundtrip between Eustis and Winter Garden.

March 4, 2012 — NARCOA Motorcar Excursion over the Florida Northern RR roundtrip between Ocala and Candler and Ocala and Lowell.

April 14, 2012 - Deland, FL — 39th Florida Rail Fair, Volusia County Fairgrounds, 3150 East New York Avenue, 9 am – 4 pm, Admission: Adults \$7.00, Under 12 Free. Contact: Charles Miller, 386-736-8185, rrshows@aol.com. Website: <http://www.gserr.com>.

May 5-6, 2012, The Villages, FL — The Villages Spring Train Expo, Lake Miona Regional Recreation Center, 1526 Buena Vista Boulevard, 9 am – 4 pm Sat., 10 am – 3 pm Sun., Admission: Adults - \$5.00, Children Under 10 – Free. Contact: Alan Goldberg, 352-205-4322, amgold15@hotmail.com, Website: <http://villagerailclubs.blogspot.com>.

May 18-20, 2012, Winter Haven, FL — Sunshine Region NMRA Convention "Rails on the Ridge" will be held at the Best Western Plus Park View Hotel (former Admiral's Inn). Interested people can contact the registrar, Bob Gangwish via email at BobGang.aol.com. The Convention website is <http://ridgemoderailroadclub.webs.com/>.

May 17-20, 2012 - Birmingham, AL — R&LHS Annual Convention,.

August 18-19, 2012, The Villages, FL — The Villages Summer Train Expo, Lake Miona Regional Recreation Center, 1526 Buena Vista Boulevard, 9 am – 4 pm Sat., 10 am – 3 pm Sun., Admission: Adults - \$5.00, Children Under 10 – Free. Contact: Alan Goldberg, 352-205-4322,

Below: Polar Express At The Maine Narrow Gauge Railroad Company & Museum, Portland, ME.

Thanks to Roger Wilson for the photo.



The following two articles are courtesy of Chapter Member Clarence Hurt.

Miniature Train Museum Planned In Greenville

The Associated Press
11/25/11

GREENVILLE, S.C. — Organizers say a miniature train museum will open in Greenville late next year.

The Greenville News reported developers of the Transportation Museum of the World will feature the Miniature World of Trains in a vacant store.

The museum will recreate famous railroad scenes and is expected to include models of oil refining, power plants, steel and automobile manufacturing, coal mining, an amusement park and a sports stadium.

The museum is modeled after one in Hamburg, Germany, that attracted more than four million visitors since opening in 2001.

The project is expected to cost about \$25 million, to be paid by corporate sponsors, private donations and grants. It could eventually employ up to 150 people.

The museum will have conference and event rooms, a model building viewing area and restaurants.

The newest occupant of the old Sam's Club on Laurens Road expects to attract visitors from all over world and create 150 local jobs.

Train Museum In Greenville To Create 150 Jobs

By Angelia Davis, Staff Writer
The State
11/25/11

That's the anticipation of developers of the Transportation Museum of the World, featuring the Miniature World of Trains, which expects to open in the 133,000-square-foot building at 2519 Laurens Road in late 2012.

The Miniature World of Trains, the nonprofit organization developing the museum, said its model railroading exhibit will depict, in phases, famous United States railroad scenes and city infrastructure with an additional European Prototype Model Railroad.

Oil refining, power plants, steel and automobile manufacturing, coal mining, goods transport facilities, tourist railroads, an amusement park and a sports stadium are among the entities that will be modeled.

The project, organizers said, will be similar in magnitude to the Miniatur-Wunderland in Hamburg, Germany, a railway model that features scenes spanning from Scandinavia to the United States. Along the way are various dioramas featuring people and landscaping. That exhibit has had more than four million visitors since its 2001 opening.

Frank Ruby, chairman and president of the Miniature World of Trains group, announced plans for the new 'miniature world' in late 2010.

He told GreenvilleOnline.com that the aim of the project is to promote the hobby of model train building, educate people on the technologies that go into the hobby, and create an attraction that draws people from all over the world to Greenville.

The educational component, which includes a new curriculum being developed with Greenville County Schools, will seek to "engage and excite children and young adults about the qualities,

capabilities and functions of railroads, city and town transportation infrastructures in the modern world, according to Mike Jensen, the group's IT director

"We know that the economic development of the Upstate Carolinas can be limited by the educational level of the locally available workforce," he said.

"Anything that we can do to peak students' interests early in their development can encourage them to pursue technological careers that improve their own job opportunities and enhance the economic engine of the Greenville area."

The project is expected to cost about \$25 million for the first five years, with funding coming from corporate sponsors, private donations, sponsorships, railroad charities and grants.

Ruby said the first phase of the project will feature South Carolina and North Carolina. It will include models in Spartanburg along the railroad tracks and downtown Greenville.

The exhibit will also include the BMW plant in Greer and the General Electric facility, both of which have ties to the railroad.

The second phase of the exhibit will span from Baltimore to New York City with high-speed rail and commuter rail, freight traffic for both rail and highways in the Northeast Corridor.

The Greenville exhibit will use computerized and digitally controlled systems to operate the hundreds of trains and moving vehicles, thousands of people and trees and hundreds of buildings, organizers said. The exhibit will also feature a sound system and simulated day and night scenes, and weather episodes.

The group will use volunteers to help create the layout, but the board expects to have a full-time paid staff of 100-150 employees when the museum is in full operation. The positions will range from management and ticket admissions to customer service support and maintenance, the group said.

The group will use proceeds from admissions fees to fund the future expansion and the day-to-day operation of the museum.

Excess donations and admission funds will be given to other charitable organizations in the Upstate, they said. The group projects the museum will have an economic impact of \$2.5 million annually in additional visitor revenue outside of the facility.

The museum will have conference and event rooms, a model building viewing area, corporate offices, restaurants and other spaces.

Blue Ridge Hobbies will move from its retail space on North Pleasantburg into the museum, Ruby said, because it has outgrown its current home.



Former Chapter members Frank & Evelyn Brubaker aboard their new motor car (an M-19 AA) at the South Carolina Railroad Museum in Winnsboro, SC recently. Frank restored this car after purchasing it and it looks as if he and Evelyn are getting to take it on a test run.

T&G DVD

The Whistle Blows No More....A History of the Tavares & Gulf Railroad 1881-1969

Available at the Railroad Museum for \$20.00
Get your copy today!!

January Museum Work Session

Saturday, January 28, 2012

8:30 AM to 3:30 PM

Please come out and help with the many chores that need to be done!!!!

Chapter Members: Don't forget to order your own personal Chapter name badge. The cost is only \$5.00. They may be ordered from Chapter Treasurer David Rhea. See David at the monthly meetings or contact him at 407-656-8749 or rhead43761@yahoo.com.

The Flatwheel is the official monthly publication of the Central Florida Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. Opinions and views expressed in this publication are those of the editor and contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the members, officers or directors of the Chapter.

Material for the Flatwheel (including exchange newsletters) should be sent to the editor via e-mail at: Crossrails@earthlink.net.

Please Note: Material from The Flatwheel may be reprinted in other publications provided credit is given as to the source.

The Central Florida Railroad Museum is located at 101 South Boyd Street, Winter Garden, FL, 34787 (downtown Winter Garden, immediately north of the water tower).

The Museum is open daily from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM (excluding selected holidays) or by special arrangements. Large groups are encouraged to contact the Museum at 407-656-0559 to arrange for their tour in advance.

The Central Florida Railroad Museum is operated under a cooperative agreement between the City of Winter Garden, the Winter Garden Heritage Foundation and the Central Florida Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society.

The Central Florida Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7:00 PM at the **Central Florida Railroad Museum**. The Museum is located at 101 South Boyd Street in downtown Winter Garden immediately north of the water tower. Guests and visitors are welcome and encouraged to attend.

All correspondence and other materials for the Chapter should be mailed to:

CFC-NRHS
PO Box 770567
Winter Garden, FL 34777-0567

Or e-mailed to the Chapter at: CFCNRHS@gmail.com.

Web page: <http://www.cfcnrhs.org>

Mission: The mission of the Central Florida Chapter is to promote railway heritage preservation and educates its members and the public about rail transportation, its history and impact, with a focus on Central Florida.

Through the operation of the Central Florida Railroad Museum, the Central Florida Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society is committed to the collection and preservation of railroad history, with a special focus on Central Florida, and the restoration and exhibition of railroad memorabilia for the education and enjoyment of present and future generations. It is the Chapter's intent that each visitor to the Central Florida Railroad Museum leave with such a pleasurable experience that they will tell others about the Museum and return again and bring friends and family with them.

President: Phil Cross
Crossrails@earthlink.net 407-509-4572

Vice President — Membership & Programs: Jerry Honetor
JerryHonetor@yahoo.com 407-957-8788

Vice President — Education: Irv Lipscomb
ilipscomb@cfl.rr.com 407-895-4749

Secretary: Les Westlake
LesWestlake@comcast.net 352-434-6160

Assistant Secretary: Clarence Hurt
clhurt@smartcity.us 407-347-1031

Treasurer: David Rhea
rhead34761@yahoo.com 407-656-8749

Assistant Treasurer: Frank Milmore
fmilmore@earthlink.net 407-366-8941

Museum Curator: Ken Murdock
rmurdock4@cfl.rr.com 407-277-5719

Historian: Phil Cross
Crossrails@earthlink.net 407-509-4572

Flatwheel Editor: Phil Cross
Crossrails@earthlink.net 407-509-4572

Webmaster: Phil Cross
Crossrails@earthlink.net 407-509-4572

Immediate Past President: Bill Dusenbury
sclbill@hotmail.com 352-360-0136

Rail News Courtesy of Chapter Member Roger Wilson

Georgia Port Approves Major Expansion

Published: November 22, 2011

SAVANNAH, Ga. — The Georgia Ports Authority will expand container-handling capacity at its Mason Intermodal Container Transfer Facility near Savannah, the board has announced. The expansion includes 6,000 feet of additional trackage at the two nearby rail yards that CSX and Norfolk Southern serve.

The Mason terminal, located on Savannah's north side, offers near-dock rail capacity. The port has seen a sharp growth in container shipments, with August 2011 its best-ever month of containers handled. The four-month July to October period saw a 14 percent increase in container volume over the same period last year. Atlantic ports like Savannah's are likely to see further growth when a widened Panama Canal opens in 2014.

The upgrades will enable locomotives to pull trains through the two yards. Currently, train crews must shove cars into the stub-ended terminals.

Amtrak Sets Thanksgiving Week Record

Published: December 1, 2011

WASHINGTON — Amtrak moved an estimated 720,000 passengers during Thanksgiving week, breaking its all-time record, the railroad announced based on preliminary data. That number puts this year's haul 2.2 percent higher than last year's, when the previous record was set.

"While retailers are reporting sales are up at stores and on the Internet, travel on Amtrak also exceeded expectations due, in part, to increased capacity and the recent introduction of Wi-Fi service on several Amtrak routes," said Emmett Fremaux, Amtrak's vice president of marketing and product management.

Apple Takes Bite of Grand Central

Published: December 7, 2011

This morning **Apple** held a press preview of their new Grand Central store, which is set to open this Friday, December 9th. The first impression of this glassless emporium, an anomaly for the company, is the respectful handling of the hallowed space. The store fills the space vacated by Metrazur restaurant, which wrapped around the Lexington Avenue side balcony. Apple's showroom takes up half of the northern balcony as well. For Mac fans, the cleaned lined furnishings will be familiar, as are the various stations spread throughout the 23,000-square-foot space. The Genius Bar is still there, as are the iPad and iPod stations, laptops, accessories, and a professional yet casual staff of more than 300. Bohlin Cywinski Jackson's design took sight lines into consideration, as the only real hint that the store is there from the concourse are small strips of table lighting, and, of course, the company's ubiquitous apple which hangs from a grand arch centered on the balcony. It could be argued that logo competes a bit with the world famous clock at the center of the terminal. But otherwise, the interventions appear considerate and reversible.



The store as seen from the concourse takes a delicate approach to advertising its presence.



The view from the northern balcony looking toward Lexington Avenue showroom.



The northern balcony looking west.



One of the grand antechambers now a sales floor.

Amtrak Boss Addresses 'Uncertainty' in Letter to Employees

Published: December 7, 2011

WASHINGTON — Amtrak President Joseph Boardman penned a letter to the company's employees today, seeking to settle "uncertainty" as the company cuts some management positions. TRAINS columnist Don Phillips wrote about the concerns of some employees Monday.

Boardman laid out the planned restructuring, and made the case it was necessary for Amtrak to survive. "We must operate a more competitive company and it must reflect the realities of the competitive environment today," he wrote. "We have global competitors coming into our backyard and convincing members of Congress, state, and commuter officials and others that they can do a better job than Amtrak. We are also in competition for federal assistance across transportation modes."

While he defended the changes as necessary "for a stronger future," Boardman acknowledged that "when it affects [employees] directly, that high-minded idea gets lost. That's the tougher part of leading change."

Union Pacific Unveils 150th Anniversary Merchandise

Published: December 7, 2011

OMAHA, Neb. — Union Pacific has unveiled more than 50 collectible items for sale in honor of its 150th anniversary. The items are available at www.upstore150.com and include clocks, cookie jars, crystal locomotive replicas, and other items.

UP was created on July 1, 1862, when President Abraham Lincoln signed the Pacific Railroad Act. It met the Central Pacific Railroad at Promontory, Utah, on May 10, 1869, creating the nation's first transcontinental railroad.

Union Pacific Issues Photo Policy, Reminds Photographers To Stay Off Railroad Property

Published: December 6, 2011

OMAHA, Neb. — Union Pacific is asking photographers of their trains and the railroad environment to stay off railroad property as they pursue their hobbies and jobs.

The railroad has laid out rules in an effort to protect photographers' rights while keeping photographers safe. They're available here: <http://www.uprr.com/she/photo-video.shtml>.

"We want to remind photographers that walking on or near railroads is extremely dangerous because you never know when a train will come along," said Dale Bray, UP's director-public safety. "We urge professional and amateur photographers alike to set the right example for others by adhering to the safety guidelines."

UP set up its photo/video guidelines in response to an individual who placed a video camera between the rails to document the passage of steam locomotive No. 844.

The rules also address recent actions taken by professional photographers, who have been staging yearbook portraits and other photo shoots on UP tracks.

National Railway Historical Society to Convene in Alaska

Published: December 5, 2011

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — The National Railway Historical Society has revealed it'll hold its 2013 convention in Anchorage, Alaska. The event will also include pre-convention activities in Fairbanks, Alaska, and several charter train operations on Alaska Railroad.

The convention will include an in-depth look at rail operations and history in the state. It'll take place in mid-September. Details are available at www.nrhs.com.

Amtrak Forces Out Top Operating Department Official

By: Don Phillips Published: December 16, 2011

WASHINGTON — Amtrak's top operations official, Jeff Geary, suddenly left the company today. Several sources said he was either fired or given the opportunity to resign.

Geary, who came to Amtrak only about six months ago, was blamed for not moving fast enough in developing a new strategic plan, the sources said. His departure came at the end of a two-day meeting of Amtrak's board of directors, during which there were numerous questions about Amtrak's plans as positions are eliminated during the current round of management buyouts.

Amtrak President Joe Boardman revealed the departure of Geary in a statement regarding a number of other staff changes. He gave no reason for the sudden departure. "I thank Jeff for his hard work and wish him the best in his future endeavors. In the midst of this transition, I want to assure all Amtrak employees that we are being thoughtful and thorough about the changes we're making in the organization."

Boardman announced that Geary's duties will be temporarily taken over by D.J. Stadtler, Amtrak's chief financial officer. Boardman said Amtrak will recruit to find a new vice president of operations after filling some other key positions. "In the near future, Amtrak will be actively recruiting to fill the roles of chief transportation officer, general manager - West, and central division general superintendent. Following that effort, a vice president of operations will also be recruited, following today's departure of Jeff Geary," he said.

He said Amtrak is also looking for replacements for other top officials who decided to take a buyout in November and early December. He mentioned specifically Vice President of Transportation Richard Phelps, General Manager - West Bill Duggan, and General Superintendent Daryl Pesce.

In addition to his temporary operations duties, Stadtler will have some other new reports including Chief Mechanical Officer and the Chief Engineer.

"In this role, D.J. will also be working with managers to develop a structure that is aligned with the strategic plan," Boardman said. "In the coming days and weeks, D.J. will be communicating with employees in the operating departments to provide more information about his role."

Tasmanian Rail to Purchase New Locomotives

Published: December 16, 2011

NEWSTEAD, Tasmania – Tasmanian Rail announced this week it will purchase 17 new locomotives to replace diesels in its aging fleet. The PR22L locomotives will be constructed under a partnership between Downer Rail and Progress Rail USA. The first new locomotives are to arrive by mid-2013, with completion of the order within 18 months.

Progress Rail will design the PR22L locomotives (modified for Tasmanian conditions) in Chicago, and manufacture them at its plant in Patterson, Ga. Downer will provide design support for Australian standards, delivery support, commissioning, training, and ongoing support.

TasRail Chief Executive Officer Damien White said the existing locomotive fleet was well beyond its useful operating life and represented a significant and escalating cost burden. TasRail said that the deciding factor in awarding the contract to the Downer Rail/Progress Rail partnership was its locomotive's hauling ability across curves and grades on the TasRail network.

The Tasmanian state government bought the 3-foot, 6-inch-gauge railroad network from Pacific National in 2009, and launched a major investment program. In recent months, TasRail announced a contract for up to 150,000 new concrete ties, and is expected to announce bids for the purchase of new freight cars in early 2012.

The Tasmanian and Australian governments have committed millions of dollars to the railroad. Tasmania will spend a total of \$137 million over seven years for the replacement of rolling stock, a new train control system, and other equipment replacements and upgrades.

Amtrak Official: Northeast Corridor Expansion Requires Larger New York Station

Published: December 16, 2011

NEW YORK – An Amtrak official says that for service to expand on the Northeast Corridor, it must move to a larger station in New York. Drew Galloway, assistant vice president for the Amtrak's eastern region, told *Bloomberg News*, "Either we are able to expand the station capacity to accommodate more passengers, or we can't expand the service on the corridor. It's that simple."

Amtrak would like to move across the street from Penn Station to the James A. Farley Post Office building. New York state and two developers plan to transform the 97-year-old building into a train station and retail complex at a cost of \$1 billion. Financing for the development remains uncertain.

Galloway said that Amtrak doesn't have the money to move out of Penn Station, which it owns, unless the new station is essentially rent-free. New York officials said Amtrak won't have to help pay for building the new station, but may have to

contribute to station operations. Galloway said Amtrak wouldn't occupy it if it faces more than a modest increase from costs at Penn Station. Once financing is arranged, construction will take 3 1/2 to 4 years.

Georgetown Loop Acquires Steam Locomotive

Published: December 16, 2011



Photo By James Waite

GEORGETOWN, Colo. – The Georgetown Loop Railroad has acquired an ex-National Railways of Colombia narrow gauge 2-8-2 for use on the Colorado tourist hauler. Baldwin built 3-foot gauge 2-8-2 No. 48, the “Carlos S. Cuartes” in 1928. Its chassis will be overhauled at the railroad shop in Bogota, Colombia, later this year. Boiler work will be done in the U.S. for Federal Railroad Administration certification.

The Georgetown Loop, between Georgetown and Silver Plume, Colo., completed in 1884, was considered an engineering marvel for its time. The two towns lie two miles apart in a steep, narrow canyon. To connect them, the railroad's builders route that traveled twice the distance, slowly gaining more than 600 feet in elevation. It included horseshoe curves, grades of up to 4 percent, and four bridges across Clear Creek, including the massive Devil's Gate High Bridge. The Colorado & Southern abandoned the line in 1938.

In 1973, the Colorado Historical Society began restoring the railroad. A replica of the bridge was completed in 1984, in time to celebrate the 100th anniversary of its original construction. In addition to diesels, the railroad uses 2-6-2 No. 12, built by Baldwin in 1929, to pull trains.

Norfolk Southern Intermodal Terminal Moves Ahead With Federal Funds

Published: December 16, 2011

HARRISBURG, Pa. – Norfolk Southern is moving forward with plans to expand operations at its Rutherford Intermodal Facility near Harrisburg after the U.S. Department of Transportation awarded a \$15 million TIGER III grant to the project this week.

Completion of the \$60.5 million project Rutherford Intermodal Facility near Harrisburg is expected in 2014. When completed, the Rutherford project will expand intermodal capacity by 50 percent.

The Harrisburg region and the new terminal are part of the 2,500-mile Crescent Corridor, stretching from Louisiana to New Jersey, where NS has identified \$2.5 billion in infrastructure improvement projects.

The Rutherford expansion is one of three projects Norfolk Southern has slated for Central Pennsylvania. The other two are a new \$96.9 million terminal under construction near Greencastle, and a \$28 million expansion of operations at the Harrisburg intermodal terminal on Industrial Road in the state capital.

Edaville Railroad To Stay Open At Least Five More Years

Published: December 15, 2011

SOUTH CARVER, Mass. — The Edaville USA amusement park and its Edaville Railroad will remain open for at least five years, the Quincy Patriot Ledger reports. In late 2010, the Edaville operators announced that they would not seek to renew their operating lease and the park was put up for sale for \$10 million.

Suzanne Byron, spokeswoman for the park, said that park owner Jon Delli Priscolli backed out of selling the property last year when he found out the buyer would not use it as a park. Instead, he has reinvested in the park, is putting in new rides, and plans to open it more during the summer. It will be around for at least another five years, she said.

Opened in 1947, the Edaville Railroad is generally regarded as one of the oldest heritage railroads in the country. It is a 2-foot-gauge railroad founded by the late Ellis D. Atwood using equipment he purchased from Maine 2-foot railroads. His initials were E.D.A, for which Edaville is named.

It was shut down in 1992 with much of the equipment going to the Maine Narrow Gauge Railroad Museum in Portland, Maine. In 1999, the “new” Edaville opened using narrow gauge steam locomotive No. 21, a 0-6-0T built by the English firm of Hudswell Clarke & Co. in 1935 for Fiji Island Sugar. It has been modified to resemble one of the original Maine steam locomotives.

CSX Closes Maryland Tower

Published: December 15, 2011

BRUNSWICK, Md. – CSX on Dec. 9 shut down the former Baltimore & Ohio WB Tower in Brunswick, Md. The railroad also replaced the former B&O position light signals it controlled. The old signals were cut down, with the last being removed Sunday.

Work began with a signal suspension at 8:45 p.m. Dec. 9, with all switches taken off power until the new computerized signal system was cut in and tested. On Sunday afternoon, CSX's BC dispatcher took formal control of the new signals.

The two-story wood tower, one of the last manned towers on the East Coast, faces an uncertain future. In addition to CSX freights, MARC commuter trains serve Brunswick and traveled through the interlocking, which is adjacent to the MARC station.

Private Bidders Hint At Interest In Running Amtrak Routes

By Bob Johnston

Published: December 15, 2011

WASHINGTON — Will private companies seek to operate Amtrak intercity routes when the federal government officially opens them up for bidding? Three companies hinted they might when they asked questions as part of the Federal Railroad Administration's rulemaking process that will eventually open two routes up for bidding. Congress mandated the pilot program as part of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008.

Two of the three names should be familiar to TRAINS readers: Herzog and Veolia, both of which operate U.S. commuter railroads under contract. The third is RATP Development America, a French company that operates the Paris Metro. Several trade and labor organizations also asked questions as part of the process.

FRA's notice of proposed rulemaking, released yesterday, didn't offer hints as to which routes the companies are interested in operating.

The rulemaking was supposed to be finalized by Oct. 16, 2009, one year after the legislation was enacted, but the FRA did not issue a request for comments until Sept. 7, 2011, with responses due by Nov. 7. Significantly, no freight railroad submitted written comments, even though they would be the conduit through which any privatized route must originate, presumably in conjunction with a third party operator.

Once the final rule is effective on Feb. 12, 2012, prospective bidders may apply to operate up to two Amtrak routes, with preference given to Amtrak's "worst performing" trains, based on their operating and financial performance. Leading that list is the tri-weekly New Orleans-Los Angeles *Sunset Limited*, but unless Union Pacific is dying to get back into the passenger business, it's unlikely any third party will be able to strike a deal with the carrier. UP rebuffed Amtrak's own efforts to improve the train's performance by upgrading the train from three times weekly to daily, quoting a price above \$700 million for capital improvements. Amtrak has never publicly questioned the UP's analysis. Most likely, a bidder would opt to go after an already-viable state-supported corridor with a robust revenue stream and proven ridership potential.

Before any bids are solicited, however, Congress must appropriate funds that FRA can tap to use for the pilot program, including money for any operating subsidy, because the agency has no authority to transfer any grant money from other uses, including Amtrak's appropriation. Other potential stumbling blocks are agreements on service performance measures and determining exactly how Amtrak's operating loss is allocated on a route-by-route basis. Because the pilot program was to cover a five-year period that expires in 2013, Congress must also modify the statute to allow any prospective operator an opportunity to extend the length of its franchise.

Amtrak is required to make its reservations system, stations, facilities, and rolling stock available to any successful bidder if asked, but the transaction would be subject to negotiation, and Amtrak has the right to submit a counter-bid to keep the route.

FRA Awards Money For Work On Southeast Corridor

Published: December 13, 2011

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation has awarded \$7 million to the Georgia Department of Transportation and District of Columbia Department of Transportation to continue work on the high speed passenger corridor linking Atlanta and Charlotte, N.C., to Washington.

The Georgia Department of Transportation received a \$4.1 million grant to complete a service development plan and environmental study for the 250-mile Atlanta-Charlotte corridor. The agency is contributing \$1.125 million for this phase of the project. The Georgia Department of Transportation recently announced a new multi-modal passenger terminal in downtown Atlanta, which is being designed to accommodate high speed rail service.

The District of Columbia Department of Transportation received \$2.9 million to evaluate alternatives for rehabilitation or replacement of the Long Bridge over the Potomac River. The bridge, more than 100 years old, is the only railroad bridge between Virginia and Washington, carrying approximately 90 passenger and freight trains daily. Rail service over the Long Bridge is expected to grow to nearly 150 trains per day in the next 20 years. CSX, which owns the bridge, will contribute \$100,000 to the study.

States in the corridor have received nearly \$581 million to develop high speed service in the region. Virginia recently received \$44.3 million for environmental analysis and preliminary engineering for the segment between Washington and Richmond. North Carolina received \$4 million for environmental and design work for the construction of a new connection between Raleigh and Richmond that could reduce travel time by 90 minutes from the current schedule.

As Centennial Nears, Florida Women Recall Riding Overseas Railroad To Key West

Published: December 13, 2011

KEY WEST, Fla. – Henry Flagler’s “Overseas” railroad from Miami to Key West ceased operating in 1935, but two Florida women vividly remember childhood experiences riding the “railroad that went to sea.”

Completed in 1912 by Flagler’s Florida East Coast, it was called the “Overseas Railroad” because its track stretched more than 100 miles out into open water. For 23 years it carried passengers from mainland Florida to and through the Keys, until a hurricane caused irreparable damage in 1935.

Minnie Dameron remembers trips to visit family in Key West. Dameron remembered her father flagging down the train at the Plantation Key freight station. “We’d get so excited when we knew we were coming to get the train and go all the way to Key West. We put on our best clothes,” said Dameron, 86, who now lives in Key West. “My sister and I used to love to ride the train and look out the window,” she recalled. “But when we’d come to the Seven Mile Bridge, it looked like you were riding on the water, so we’d get scared and hold one another’s hand.”

For Dameron, arriving at Key West was the trip’s highlight. On special occasions, she remembered, Cuban bands and dancers greeted arriving passengers.

Marie Gasser, 95, recalled her family boarding the train in Miami when she was 5 and walking back to the last seat, which resembled a church pew. Her mother sat by the window and her father on the aisle, while she rode between them. “Everybody was excited; take a train down to Key West,” said Gasser.

The journey was pleasant, she said, until her mother looked out the open window as the train crossed a bridge so narrow it seemed she was sitting over water. After arriving in Key West, her mother refused to take the train back to Miami and insisted they return by boat.

“She said boats were made to go on water and trains were not!” Gasser said.

In January 1912, the first train rolled from the Florida mainland through the Florida Keys to Key West. Three years after the 1935 hurricane, the Overseas Highway debuted, built on a foundation that incorporated most of the original railway bridges. Today, it contains 127 miles of roadway and 42 bridges over water connecting the Keys. The original rail bridges were retired in 1982, but many became fishing piers.

Celebrations commemorating the railroad’s centennial year are being organized throughout the Florida Keys. Plans include history tours showcasing Flagler sites, bicycling expeditions, educational presentations, and explorations of Pigeon Key. These events will lead up to the 100th anniversary of the first train’s arrival in Key West on Jan. 22, 2012.

Florida East Coast Runs Special For Toys For Tots

Published: December 12, 2011



Florida East Coast Railway’s Toys for Tots Train is 21 miles out of Jacksonville. Photo by Eric T. Henderson.

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – The Florida East Coast Railway operated its second annual “Christmas Train” on Dec. 10 between Jacksonville and Miami. The special train benefits the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots program, which distributes toys to children in need.

The railroad collected toys donated by employees with management matching the total amount of all toys and checks given by employees. In coordination with the Toys for Tots organizations in eight communities along the FEC, the train delivered the toys during stops in those cities. In addition to representatives from Toys for Tots, members of the Marine Corps were on hand to receive the donated toys.

Freshly repainted SD40-2 No. 714, which wears a version of FEC's red and yellow scheme worn by FEC diesels from 1939 to 1962, led the train. It is the second diesel painted in FEC's "heritage" colors. The other is GP40 2000, which led the 2010 Christmas Train.

Amtrak Boss: Long-Distance Trains Are Sacrosanct

By Don Phillips

Published: December 12, 2011

Amtrak President Joe Boardman says all long-distance trains will be protected as long as he is head of Amtrak, without any exceptions.

In an impromptu interview while touring mockups of new single-level equipment at a design facility in Maryland, Boardman said he had heard talk that he was favoring Northeast Corridor trains and would allow long-distance trains to go away. That is not true, he said, adding that Amtrak is looking for methods of squeezing its budget other than cutting service.

"We're not cutting any long-distance trains," he said, adding that the same statement applies to all other service, including short-distance service, whether it receives state subsidies or is fully paid for by Amtrak. "We're not cutting any service."

Asked why he had not made such an unequivocal statement earlier as Internet chatter speculated he was out to get the long-distance trains, Boardman said, "I'm not a big bragger."

Boardman also said he is looking for ways to finance other equipment beyond the 70 electric locomotives and 130 single-level cars that have already been ordered, as well as the 40 extra cars for current Acela trains that will be ordered next year. However, he said he cannot yet announce any other purchases.

Amtrak has been offering a series of voluntary buyout packages to managers, with almost 160 managers taking the first round. Boardman did not offer any clues about an expected second round of cuts, including whether they will include buyouts or layoffs or some combination. There are reports those buyouts have stirred anger inside Amtrak headquarters and led to the departure of a number of experienced senior managers including some Amtrak did not want to lose.

In a lengthy prepared statement, Boardman said he knows there is "a feeling of uncertainty in the air for some of you, and that many of you have questions." He said he does not yet have the answers, but "we need to ask ... how can we do a better job to minimize costs, what can be done differently so that cost is lower without hurting the safety, customer service, or reliability? Even more importantly, why are we still doing things in a way that does not take advantage of all the improvements available today? What should we stop doing?"

RailAmerica Chief Commercial Officer To Retire

Monday, December 19, 2011

Jacksonville, Fla.-based RailAmerica, Inc. Monday announced the upcoming retirement of Charlie Patterson, senior vice president and chief commercial officer. Patterson's retirement is effective December 31.

Patterson served in key roles at CSX Transportation, Great Lakes Transportation, and CN before joining RailAmerica when the company was taken private in early 2007. During his nearly five years at the commercial helm, Patterson boosted RailAmerica's revenue, strengthened the marketing and sales teams, and brought focus and direction to both non-freight revenues and industrial development, the company said.

"Charlie takes with him our thanks and best wishes," said RailAmerica President and CEO John Giles in a statement.