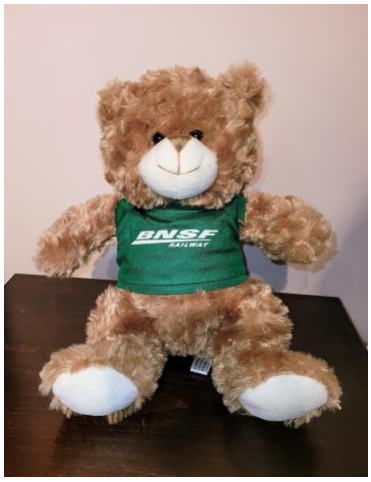
Volume 7 * Issue 4 * April, 2023

RAILROAD PASSENGER CAR ALLIANCE
INFORMATION EXCHANGE

FROM THE PRESIDENT



The end of February came way too fast for me, it being a short month and all, so I did not get to mention the passing of our member Jeff Schmid. Jeff was a great supporter of the RPCA, attending conferences with his wife Judy and always bringing an assortment of BNSF Calendars and items for the Fuehring Fund Silent Auctions. Jeff was a consummate railroader, a Frisco (later BN, BNSF) locomotive engineer, a union official, and one of the three engineers that ran the Frisco 1522 for the St Louis Steam Train Association. Jeff appreciated the need for passenger cars to be hauled by the 1522 and became a regular at RPCA meetings as a result. Every year, when I would see Jeff at the Conferences, he was always cheery and had some new story to tell or information to share. I had missed him this January, but he still managed to send BNSF goodies for the silent auction (including the little guy at the top).

Jeff's untimely passing brings to mind again the need to make the most of our conferences and the seminars that are presented at them. I have sat in sessions that I attended at an earlier conference more than once and have learned some new information, often because the presenter had added new content as a result of comments or information received after a previous presentation. Our collective expertise is a valuable yet perishable commodity that your membership in the RPCA gives you access to. To mitigate the perishable aspect, I encourage everyone to attend our conferences and carry on the transfer of our collective knowledge to other members and your organizations. The more people who the knowledge is shared with, the less likely it will be lost. To further protect the knowledge base we have, we have seen some of the sessions start to be recorded, in particular, because of the impact of COVID-19. Going forward, I encourage anyone planning to host an RPCA conference to consider recording/videoing the seminars.

One of the areas RPCA has been expanding into in the past decade is becoming a spokesman for the private car owner community in general. That role was previously almost the sole domain of the American Association of Private Railcars Owners (AAPRCO), and it was one that they generally defended as their "territory". Just prior to my last Presidency of RPCA in 2012, my predecessor, Roy Wullich, secured RPCA a seat on the FRA's Railroad Safety Advisory Committee as an equal with AAPRCO and Tourist Rail (now HRA). At that same time, the President of AAPRCO and I reached out to each other and worked to begin a new era of cooperation that continues today.

One of the biggest events where we can have a chance to get on the radar with our representatives is the annual Railroad Day on Capitol Hill, sponsored by the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association. This is the first in-person railroad day since the start of COVID, and everyone is looking forward to it. Along with AAPRCO and the NRHS, RPCA will be represented by our new Board Member, Bill Gray of Pennsylvania Pullmans, Inc. I want to thank Bill for stepping up to represent us in my place due to a scheduling conflict I have for the May 17, 2023 date.

On the Amtrak front, our monthly calls with Steve Robusto and the charter movements group continue to exchange information and gain an understanding of our respective positions and needs. I am pleased to report that there is some progress being made on the methods and opportunities for training and re-training Private Car Inspectors that will be going into effect next year. Amtrak recognizes the need for availability of inspectors and that some of the current inspectors are getting up there in age.

As we close out the third month of 2023, I wish you all the best and a Happy Easter. Spring is here; at least that is what the calendar says!

Brad Black

IN MEMORIAM

Jeffrey Schmid, 74

Jeff worked 53 years as a professional railroader, but his greatest fulfillment was his sideline work of helping rebuild the Frisco 1522 steam locomotive and then serving as one of its engineers as the 1522 pulled hundreds of excursion passengers hundreds of miles over mainline railroad tracks during the 15 years permitted by the Federal Railroad Administration.
Jeff started on the Frisco Railroad track gang in 1969, did his Uncle Sam time in the railroad reserves, went into engine service in 1973, and ran trains as a locomotive engineer for 15 years between Saint Louis and Springfield, Missouri. Then he was recruited into railroad management.
Jeff worked passionately in railroad safety education. He was part of a team that wrote instruction education for police for investigating railroad crossing accidents. He was part of another team that negotiated with landowners to close down 5,000 hazardous railroad crossings. After retiring to Nebraska, Jeff worked with the Nebraska Operation Lifesaver railroad safety education organization.

AMTRAK

Amtrak RPCA Conference Call

March 24, 2023

From RPCA:
Brad Black
Burt Hermey
Mike Stickel
From Amtrak:
Theresa Smith
Mike DeAngelo
Steve Robusto

For FY ending 9/30/23 to date, moves and mileage are both down vs the same period last year.

Chicago is undergoing significant construction that requires long-term PV parking to be suspended. Amtrak will revisit in late summer/early fall. Mike Stickel mentioned that plenty of room on the Lake State Railway is available in Pontiac. Amtrak is checking which trains would be best for PV moves to/from Pontiac.

Inspectors have to complete various courses in order to be Amtrak-OK. The following are some:
Two online courses in the inspector portal of the Amtrak website. Brad will be receiving and distributing the link to inspectors. All inspectors need to complete the courses.
FRA 232 freight car air brake test class. Five inspectors need to complete. Amtrak will set up classes in the east and midwest. Apparently there is no need at present for a west coast class.
FRA 238 class. Brad and Amtrak are exploring dates and locations. Becomes due for recertification beginning March 2024. Class during the Annual Conference being explored.

During our Feb 27 conference call with Amtrak, Brad and Burt asked Amtrak about their interpretation of when penalty charges are applicable in the case of a PNR change due to en route bad order of a PV.

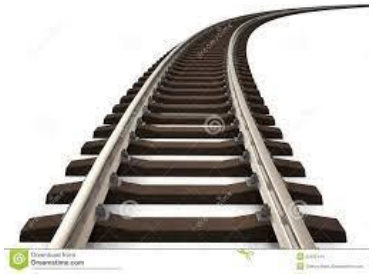
In 2021, Amtrak issued a new “Conditions for Movement of Privately Owned Cars on Amtrak. This superseded the Tariff of 2007 and all the rate addenda that followed. The 2007 document detailed penalty charges for what was widely interpreted as arbitrary Move Request changes made less than two weeks prior to first departure. Also, there was language waiving the charges when a car had to be substituted as a result of bad order of the originally scheduled car. Amtrak interpreted that to mean if a car was bad ordered and the PNR had to be amended as a result, penalties would not apply. Nor would parking if the bad ordered car was waiting to get into the shop. The 2021 document, in addition to increasing the length of the penalty period to 30 days from 14 days, eliminated any language waiving penalties in the event of a bad order that requires a change to the PNR.

The penalty charge could range from a couple of hundred dollars to several thousand, depending on the number of miles involved in the segment(s) that require changing. Because of the nature of en-route bad orders, it’s a near certainty that the penalty will be in the 25% bracket. In addition, extra parking days and any mechanical services performed by Amtrak will be charged to the owner/operator.

RPCA was recently made aware of one case of a 25% penalty charge being assessed for a PNR change on a bad ordered car; we are curious how many of our members have had the same experience, when it occurred, and what the resolution was. Please call or text me at (714) 264-9167, or email me at <cbhermey@pacbell.net> if you have been assessed this charge for your bad-ordered car.

Burt Hermey

SAFETY



WORTH CHECKING AGAIN

It seems as though the rail industry is having big trouble keeping equipment on the rails. The NS derailment in East Palestine, OH is very troubling. This situation is not going to go away very soon. CSX, BNSF, and UP have all had their turn at contacting the ground as well. I suppose that almost everyone who operates anything resembling a locomotive has faced a similar situation.

What can we do to mitigate the chances of experiencing this sort of adverse event? My guess is that we start with human eyes that know what to look for when it comes to inspecting ballast, ties, rail, switches, rolling stock, etc.

I know that our local museum does a pretty good job of inspecting ties, plates, and switches on a regular basis. I am sure some of this is due to past experiences. It can be difficult to manage this, as our membership is aging out of the ability to do extensive yard work. Still, we manage to replace ties and plates and gauge the curves and do a very decent job at that.

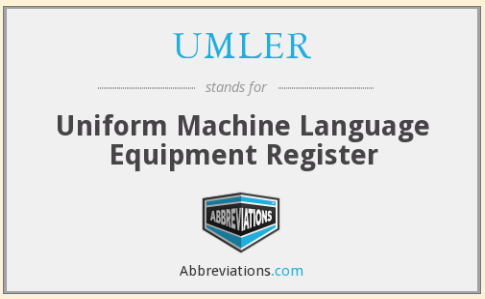
How about our cars and other pieces of rolling stock? We are getting geared up for another passenger season, and a close inspection should be on the agenda. This would be especially needed if we just stored the equipment after the holiday season. Is there anything hanging down or dragging like air hoses or electrical cords? How about wheels and bearings? Are the flanges or wheels wearing thin? Are cut levers and couplers working properly?

Now is the time to do a full inspection of the yard and the equipment. Finding a surprise the night before the first run of the season is always stressful. Taking that second look at the total operation helps get things off to a good start. Here is hoping you have a successful and safe start to your passenger season. And after you spend eight hard hours working in the yard, please remember to give those hands a good washing.

Cheers,

Gary

UMLER



A new Umler Data Specification Manual was released with the system update of March 16. The change to handling instructions we requested was not included, but then it wasn't promised this soon. It is supposed to be in a new release next quarter.

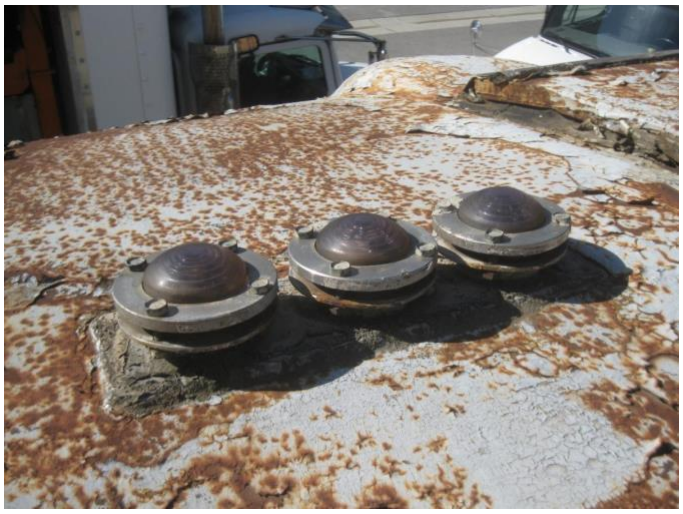
We have had some issues with the data people have sent to us.

PLEASE NOTE:
We went to paperless data several years ago. But we have limitations on what formats we can accept.
If you can not send us data in a format we can use, it is the same as if you didn't send anything. Nothing happens.
Make sure the name and email address you are using clearly identifies you! We don't open emails from really bad names and/or URLs we don't recognize. Between the six email addresses we have, we get over 100 useless, if not spam, or unlawful emails a day. You don't want your email getting lost in the mess.
The same goes for phone calls. We get about 40 spam calls a day. If you don't have caller ID enabled, we don't answer calls from numbers we don't recognize. If you get our voicemail, leave a message with your name and call back number.
Don't park things you want to get to us electronically in "the Cloud." We won't go get them. This goes for systems such as DropBox also.

Formats we have to work with:
Libre Office, word and spreadsheet (a free open-source system that opens and saves in various formats, including MS formats). Microsoft, Word (doc and docx), Excel (xls and xlsx).
Scanned data: if not the above, then Acrobat (pdf)
For pictures of your equipment, we do have two containers in the database for one pic per container, they need to be jpg or png.

Thank you Take care, stay safe.
Pamm&Dan

Did you Know?



The Vapor Solar Disk

Those of you with a keen sense of observation may have noticed over the years - while riding upstairs in certain mid-1950s dome cars - a small, odd device located on the roof of some of those cars. On regular (non-full dome) cars, these were usually at the “long end” of the car, towards the end of the roof, roughly above the vestibule. On full domes, they were usually on the short “low” part of the roof, also above the vestibule. That device is the Vapor Company “Solar Disk.”

This was a device with usually two or three round (roughly 3” in diameter) stainless-steel fixtures with glass lenses that were connected to the floor heat and air conditioning thermostats in the dome. These devices would sense when the sun was out or when it was cloudy or overcast and adjust the temperature setting accordingly by ½ to 4 degrees in the dome section.

Thus, if it was a warm day but with intermittent cloud cover if clouds covered the sun for a period of time, the solar disks would sense that and send that message to the thermostats, which would in turn cause the Vapor control panel in the electrical locker to adjust the temperature setting upward a few degrees as long as the dome section was not in the direct sun. If the cloud cover went away, the disks would sense the direct sun, and the temperature setting would be adjusted downward a few degrees cooler. Similarly, if it was a cold day in the middle of winter, but the sun was out, the dome section could still heat up enough that the solar disks would adjust the temperature down a few degrees to keep it comfortable upstairs.

The Vapor Solar Disks were an innovation used on most of the dome cars delivered in the mid-1950s, such as the dome coaches and dome sleepers delivered by Budd in 1954 for the Northern Pacific; the Santa Fe "Big Dome" bar lounge and bar lounge dormitory cars delivered by Budd in 1954; the SP home-built dome lounge cars delivered in 1955; the UP "Cities" fleet of dome coaches, dome diners, and dome observation lounge cars delivered by ACF in 1955; and the dome coffee shop coaches and dome sleeper buffet lounge observation cars delivered by Budd in 1954 and 1955 for the Canadian Pacific.

The photo shows a Vapor Solar Disk assembly on the "low" part of the roof of a former Southern Pacific7/8ths dome lounge car.
If anyone has comments or questions about this article, email Jon Clark at domeliner@hotmail.com.

Jon Clark

GRANTS

The JOHN EMERY RAIL HERITAGE TRUST GRANTS

Twenty-nine (29) applications were received requesting almost $ 875,000.00. After extensive research and serious consideration by advisors of the Trust, nineteen (19) grants were awarded totaling $ 250,000.

- Abilene & Smoky Valley Railroad Association: $ 15,000.00 to help refurbish their C&NW passenger car.
- Danbury Railway Museum: $ 12,000.00 to aid in rebuilding the engines of their 1953 New Haven Budd car.
- East Troy Railroad Museum: $ 10,000.00 for work on their CSS&SB car #107.
- Friends of the SP4449: $ 10,000.00 for their Shasta SP 2395 coach.
- Illinois Railway Museum: $ 10,000.00 for electrical and air brake work on their Milwaukee coach 649.
- Michigan State Trust for Railway Preservation: $ 1,000.00 to help start work on their C&NW steam locomotive #175.
- Mid-Continent Railway Museum: $ 10,000.00 for continued work on the DSS&A sleeping car Duluth.
- Nashville Steam Preservation Society: $ 15,000.00 to help refurbish the crossheads, guides and one wrist pin on the steam locomotive NC&StL #576.
- National Railway Museum: $ 8,500.00 to update their ex-Reading car, Josephine.
- Pacific Locomotive Association: $ 31,000.00 for purchasing stay bolts for use on the SP steam engine #1744.
- Pacific Railroad Preservation Association: $ 10,500.00 for replacement of three blowdowns for the SP&S steam locomotive #700.
- Railroaders Memorial Museum: $ 11,000.00 for work on the PRR observation car Mountain View, once used on the Broadway Limited.
- Railroad Heritage of Midwest America: $ 25,000.00 for a HEP generator to power their UP coaches at Silvis, Illinois.
- Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum: $ 11,500.00 for structural repairs to their Erie Stillwell coach #2103.

- Southern Michigan Railroad Society: $ 10,000.00 for work on their heavyweight Pullman Emerald Vale.
- Sumpter Valley Railroad Restoration: $ 15,000.00 toward their Sumpter Valley Railway steam locomotive #19.
- Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum: $ 20,000,00 for work on their dining car #899.
- United Railroad Historical Society: $ 14,500.00 toward replacing the generator on their ex-NYC Hickory Creek observation car.
- Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society and Museum: $ 10,000.00 for truck repair on the ex-Clinchfield Railroad office car #100.

John Emery was a long-time Chicago resident who was an avid rail enthusiast who loved to ride trains around the world and wanted to help preserve rail equipment and infrastructure that will allow future generations to share his experiences during what he considered the “Golden Age” of railway travel, from 1920 to 1960.

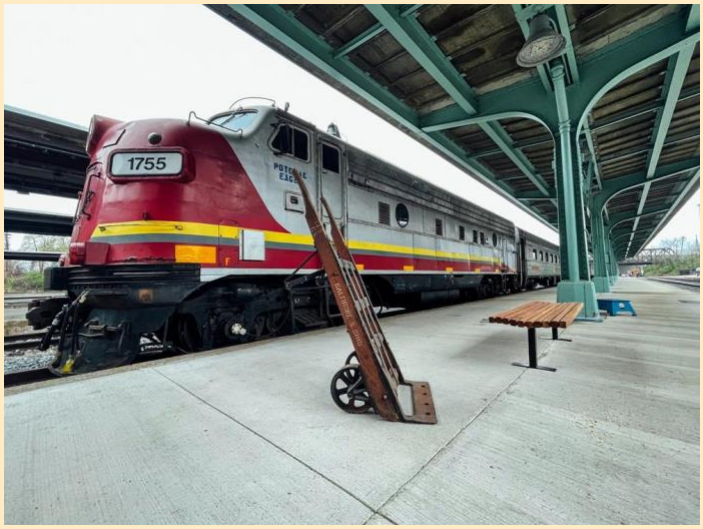
Applications for the next round of grants will be due not later than February 1, 2024.

.RAILROAD NEWS

This is a synopsis of Railroad-related news culled from various sources, including Trains Magazine, Progressive Railroading, Railway Age, and various websites.

Please submit your railroad news.

Museum and Excursion Trains



Rail consulting firm FMW Solutions and several heritage railways combined to recreate a 1970s-era commuter train for the recent Tom Hanks film “A Man Called Otto,” The movie makes use of equipment and locations of the Potomac Eagle Scenic Railway, Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad, and Washington D.C. chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. The film’s railroad sequences were shot on three days at three locations, with aerial exterior work at Romney, W.Va., with the Potomac Eagle’s diesel locomotive and passenger cars. Interior scenes were shot on the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic and moving-train shots on a modified former Budd Rail Diesel Car between Jaite and Rockside, Ohio. The Potomac Eagle locomotive and two Cuyahoga Valley cars were used to shoot at Toledo’s Central Union Terminal. The train work makes up about 5 minutes of screen time.

A former Chicago & North Western F7 donated by Union Pacific will eventually be restored to operation at the Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad. Locomotive No. 401, built in 1949 and stored in Cheyenne, Wyo.., since the 1990s arrived in March.

The Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad, which had planned to resume full operations in March has had to suspend all operations due to increasing erosion along the 26-mile railway.

Cass Scenic Railroad operator Durbin & Greenbrier Valley Railroad has announced that the 2023 Parade of Steam will take place June 17 at the Cass depot. In previous years, the event has featured five of Cass Scenic’s geared steam locomotives, in various combinations, under steam. If all goes as planned, six locomotives should be available this year: Climax No. 9 and Shays Nos. 2, 4, 5, 6, and 11. The parade will

commence at 10:00 a.m. and last about an hour. Special trains will run at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. along the newly reopened Greenbrier River line as far as Wanless Run and then return, an approximately 8-mile, 1-hour round trip.

Amtrak/Freight/Federal Agencies

Amtrak's annual funding request to Congress seeks $1.7 billion for the Northeast Corridor and $1.95 billion for its National Network needs in the coming fiscal year, as well as almost $9.7 billion in additional funding. The $3.65 billion in the annual grant request — a figure set by Congress in 2021 — includes a significant shift of resources from the 2023 version. A year ago, the company sought $3.3 billion overall, with one-third ($1.1 billion) going to the Northeast Corridor and the remaining two thirds to the National Network. The allocation sought this year would devote 46.6% of the funding to the corridor. The shift reflects costs associated with ownership of the Northeast Corridor, compared to the national network, where Amtrak owns little infrastructure; a slower recovery of business-travel demand following the COVID-19 pandemic, which has hurt NEC fare income, particularly on the high-revenue Acela service. The largest modernization expense is $202.6 million budgeted for the Long-Distance Improvement Program, which the report says includes infrastructure investments to reduce trip times and improve on-time performance. The Northeast Corridor would see $200 million for the Trip Time and Speed Improvement Program. Another $175 million is budgeted for the Chicago Hub Improvement Program, which seeks to make improvements at Chicago Union Station.

Federal regulators have approved the historic merger of Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern. Their $31.6 billion deal redraws the North American rail map by creating the first railroad linking Canada, the U.S., and Mexico. CP will create Canadian Pacific Kansas City on April 14, the earliest date CP could take control of KCS. Keith Creel will be president and CEO of CPKC.