

# DANVILLE FLYER

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**SUNDAY MARCH 16TH,  
REGULAR MEETING AT  
JOCKO'S PIZZA AT 1:00  
PM.**

**SATURDAY APRIL 5TH,  
OPERATING SESSIONS IN  
ROSSVILLE AT 1 PM.**

**MARCH 29TH AND 30TH,  
URBANA TRAIN SHOW AT  
LINCOLN SQUARE MALL.**

## March Meetings at Jocko's

**The meeting will be at Jocko's Pizza on West Williams Street —date is Sunday the 16th. Lunch will be around 1:00 PM with meeting. The program will be announced at the meeting**

## Indiana Ports

The Ports of Indiana shipped 13 million tons of cargo in 2024, the second-highest annual volume in the port authority's 60-year history.

Last year was the fourth consecutive year of increased shipments, up 3% from 2023 and second best to 2018, which holds the record at 14.8 million tons, ports authority officials said in a press release.

In 2024, public and private investments into Indiana's three ports totaled over \$200 million, including four expansions by companies located at the ports, three new companies opening at the ports, and six federal grant projects supporting infrastructure upgrades, said port authority officials in a press release.

Ports of Indiana also opened the Indiana River & Rails Terminals in 2024, which is the largest general cargo operation on the Ohio River. Opening new terminals increased the cargo shipments by 48% at the Mount Vernon port and 12% at Jeffersonville.

Mount Vernon port had the most shipments at 6.6 million tons last year, which is 2% less than 2023 but 32% above the last four-year average. Jeffersonville port handled 3.6 million tons, up 10% from 2023, and Burns Harbor handled 2.8 million tons of barge, laker and ocean cargo, up 5% from 2023.

In 2024, coal was the highest volume commodity at 3.7 million tons, up by 246,000 tons from 2023. Steel was the second highest volume commodity, increasing by 140,000 tons for a total of 2.9 million tons in 2024, port authority officials said. Road salt also contributed to the tonnage increase in 2024, with 80,000 tons more of it being shipped than in 2023.

Dried distillers grains had the highest percentage increase of 1,773%, due to the Jeffersonville port's opening of a high-speed bulk terminal in 2024.

Mount Vernon Railroad, a venture by the Ports of Indiana and OmniTRAX, offers daily interchange services to the Mount Vernon port location with Evansville Western Railway and has connections with CSX, Norfolk Southern Railway, BNSF Railway Co. and Union Pacific Railroad.

Jeffersonville is served by the Louisville and Indiana Railroad, with CSX and NS maintaining

(Continued on page 2)

## About Us

The DANVILLE JUNCTION CHAPTER, NRHS, is a not-for-profit corporation organized to preserve the history of railroading in Eastern Illinois and Western Indiana and operates a museum located in the former Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad depot on East Benton Street in Rossville, Illinois. The museum is open weekends from Memorial Day to Labor Day and features many railroad displays plus a large operating HO model railroad. Membership in the Chapter is open to anyone having an interest in any aspect of

railroading. Dues per year are \$30.00 for Chapter membership in addition to \$50.00 for NRHS membership. Rossville Depot Museum membership is \$30 per year. Meetings are held on the third (3rd) Sunday of each month (except June, July, August and December) at the Jocko's Depot Restaurant, Gilbert Street (Illinois Route 1) and Williams Street, next to CSX (former Conrail), in Danville, IL with lunch beginning at 1:00 PM Central Time followed by meeting and program.



## Officers for 2025—our 57th Year

Henry Schmitt – President  
 Doug Butzow – Vice President  
 Dick Brazda– Secretary  
 Doug Nipper– Treasurer  
 Dave Sherrill – Programs  
 – Historian  
 Bob Gallippi – Museum Director  
 Rick Schroeder – Editor & NRHS rep  
 Doug Nipper - Publisher & Distributor

## Upcoming Meetings—Presentations

### Illinois Terminal History in Vermilion County

On March 20th Dale Jenkins, editor of the Illinois Terminal Society, will present a program of the history of the IT in the Danville and Vermilion County area at the Vermilion County Museum. The hours are 5:30 to 7:00 PM on Thursday the 20th. This is a free program and we encourage our members to attend to learn more about the interurban that served the Danville area and much of Illinois.

### Chicago and Eastern Illinois HS Annual Meeting

On April 12th the C&EI HS will hold its annual meeting at the Vermilion County Museum from 10 AM to 5 PM. Vendors will be available until noon along with touring the museum. The annual meeting will be held at 1:15. At Dave Forbes will present a program on the passenger trains that traveled through Danville. From 3 to 4 Rick Schroeder will present a program on the history of Oaklawn Shops. The C&EI HS and the museum will have displays of C&EI railroading items along with models of freight and passenger trains. C&EI HS members will be able to browse through some of the photo collection.

(Continued from page 1)

switching yards nearby.

Burns Harbor is served by NS, with the Burns Harbor Railroad providing switching services. Additionally, the Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad interchanges daily with 16 rail carriers in the Chicago area.

*Progressive Railroading 2-14*

**LINCOLN SQUARE TRAIN SHOW—URBANA**  
**MARCH 29TH, 10 AM TO 6 PM AND SUNDAY**  
**THE 30TH FROM 11 AM TO 4 PM.**  
**ADMISSION FREE**

## Amtrak Projects

Amtrak and dozens of industry partners representing construction, manufacturing, rail supply, engineering and other sectors convened Feb. 14 for a roundtable discussion of trends and the hundreds of rebuilding projects that Amtrak and its partners are delivering across the country.

The companies, who are working with Amtrak to complete the railroad's biggest projects, together represent more than 100,000 workers from all 50 states, Amtrak officials said in a press release.

After investing an unprecedented \$4.5 billion into major infrastructure and fleet projects last year, Amtrak plans to increase its capital investments by 50% in 2025. The efforts are part of the railroad's plan to become a more modern and efficient intercity rail operator.

"We're leading a strong American workforce and private-sector partners in building new bridges, tunnels, and trains to help meet the historic demand for intercity passenger rail and improve connections for millions of people in more than 500 cities, towns, and rural areas around the country," said Amtrak CEO Stephen Gardner.



Amtrak's new era of rail is replacing, upgrading, and repairing iconic century-old bridges, tunnels, stations, and other critical infrastructure assets. Amtrak is also replacing a majority of its train fleet, which serves more than 500 communities in 46 states and today averages nearly 40 years old, with some equipment dating back to Amtrak's creation in 1971.

Collectively, the projects are creating the largest boom in rail construction in the railroad's history, Amtrak officials said.

Amtrak is also conducting important annual renewal work through its state-of-good repair program, which maintains tracks, signals and power systems.

*Progressive Railroading 2-18*



## Class I's Cargo Theft 2024

Cargo theft cost Class Is over \$100 million in losses in 2024, according to the Association of American Railroads.

AAR is calling for a federal response to better support railroads targeted by thieves.

"The disruptions to freight-rail operations are acutely felt, as incidents can involve damage to rail equipment that forces trains to stop, thereby resulting in costly delays in service that ripple across the interconnected network," said AAR President and CEO Ian Jefferies in The Signal AAR newsletter.

Along with the cost of insurance claims for stolen freight, railroads targeted by theft often need to replace or repair damaged infrastructure, manage the delays caused by disruptions and allocate funding for anti-theft technology, AAR officials said.

Approximately 65,000 thefts occurred in 2024, a roughly 40% increase over 2023, AAR reports. Railroads also cited an increase in suspects being armed, increasing the potential for violence during apprehension.

Only one out of 10 theft attempts result in an arrest, AAR officials said. Theft attempts are still committed by repeat offenders; one railroad reported apprehending the same individual five times in one day; another reported arresting the same person 17 times for repeated theft attempts.

"Railroads have invested millions in preventing these crimes across the 140,000-mile U.S. rail network," AAR officials said.

"However, the industry cannot disrupt these highly organized – and often transnational – criminal groups alone."

Railroads are working with supply chain partners to call for an increase in penalties for thieves and the advancement of U.S. Reps. David Valadao (R-Calif.) and Rep. Brad Schneider's (D-Ill.) Safeguarding our Supply Chains Act, which would create a data sharing platform and enhance coordination between the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI and local law enforcement to address cargo theft.

*Progressive Railroading 3-4-35*



## BNSF and Cold Weather Issues

FORT WORTH — The BNSF Northern Transcon is seeing a disruption of operations due to a winter weather blast that has brought temperatures down to 20 degrees below zero.

The National Weather Services describes the weather in the area as follows: "A winter storm will produce heavy snow from the Central Plains into the Great Lakes today and into New England tonight into Friday. A wintry mix of snow, sleet, and freezing rain will be south of the snow. Heavy rainfall and thunderstorms will bring concerns for flash flooding and severe weather over parts of the Lower Mississippi Valley and the Southeast."



BNSF has released a customer service advisory containing the following assessment of the situation: "BNSF is actively addressing service disruptions along parts of our Northern Corridor due to severe winter conditions. The extreme cold affecting the Northern Transcon route through Montana and North Dakota, with temperatures plunging over 20 degrees below zero in some

areas overnight, has hindered normal train operations. We have also experienced reduced productivity at terminals in the region due to multiple switch and air flow issues across rail yards. With the Arctic cold, additional locomotives are required to generate proper air flow for trains' braking systems. Train length restrictions have been implemented to support train braking performance in the impacted areas and will remain in effect until conditions improve. Some trains have been re-routed on a more southerly route to help minimize this disruption as much as possible.

"Additionally, our winter actions plans have been activated and operations teams are strategically positioned to help recovery efforts. While temperatures are expected to gradually rise over the next few days, challenging operating conditions will persist for the next 72 hours and customers should anticipate some delays for shipments destined to move through the region.

"Another winter weather system is expected to bring cold temperatures, snow, and ice to the Central Plains today. Our operations teams are closely monitoring this system and taking necessary actions to minimize any potential service dis-

ruptions." For information on how to contact BNSF, follow this link to the BNSF press release.

### *Railway Track and Structures 2-18*

*Editor: Even Amtrak canceled the Empire Builder due to the severe weather across the north region. BNSF experienced a derailment in Montana due to a broken rail because of the low temperature. With heavy snow, 20 below zero and high winds I assume they felt that the chance of getting a train stranded was high and canceled the train in each direction.*

## NS 2024 Projects

Norfolk Southern Railway today (Feb 10) announced it completed infrastructure improvements worth \$1 billion throughout its 22-state network in 2024. The projects were designed to maintain safe and reliable service to the customers and communities the railroad serves.

Safety projects that were completed last year included: five digital train inspection portals built and entered in service; 313 grade crossing protection warning systems installed; 130 hot box bearing detectors added; 17 acoustic bearing detectors installed; 29 hot wheel detectors installed; and 140 public improvement projects completed.

Projects to upgrade track, bridges and structures included: 558 track miles of rail replaced; 2.1 million ties installed; 4,202 miles of track surfaced; 30,480 bridge ties replaced; 553 panel turnouts installed; 43 bridges replaced; 78 bridges structurally rehabilitated; and 104 culverts installed.

In addition, communications and signals work included: 23 signal cut-ins completed; 180 switch machines replaced; 869 CTC to ITCMS cut-ins completed; three 3 classification yard speed controllers replaced; and three moveable bridge programmable logic controller system upgrades.

"Once again, our outstanding people in maintenance of way and structures, program maintenance, communications and signals, bridges and structures, and design and construction have achieved results in 2024 that were on time and within budget, demonstrating their unwavering dedication to excellence and operational efficiency," said Ed Boyle, NS' vice president of engineering, in a press release.

*Progressive Railroading*

## Northstar Service May End

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and the Metropolitan Council in the Twin Cities yesterday announced the likelihood that the Northstar Commuter Rail service will be replaced with a commuter bus service.

MnDOT Commissioner Nancy Daubenberger and Met Council Chair Charlie Zelle issued a joint statement that a recent study of the Twin Cities-St. Cloud-Fargo/Moorhead Corridor made it clear that commuter service would be less expensive if buses were used instead of trains, local Twin Cities' news outlets reported yesterday.

"We have jointly started the process to explore transitioning to bus service in this corridor. That process includes working with our federal partners and our rail partners at BNSF Railway, who we have appreciated as a critical partner," Daubenberger and Zelle said in their statement. "In the coming months, we will have more information, including timeline information and projected future savings. For Minnesotans who currently utilize this service, we are committed to working with you to ensure you have access to high-quality transportation in this corridor."

The Northstar offers commuter-rail service between suburban communities and downtown Minneapolis. The service began in 2009, with ridership reaching a high of nearly 800,000 passengers in 2017. But ridership plunged after the COVID-19 pandemic and has struggled to recover since.

The MnDOT study found that closing the commuter-rail service would save Minnesota taxpayers about \$12 million a year, while providing a similar service by bus would cost about \$2 million a year, the KARE 11 news station reported.

The MnDOT and Met Council announcement comes as Minnesota state lawmakers consider a bill that calls for shutting down Northstar Commuter Rail.

*Progressive Railroading 2-28*

## From My Office Window

*So if you want to railfan in central Illinois the Champaign/Savoy/Tolono area is a good place to start. My guess (not sure how many trains at night) is there are some 20+ per day. As I have noted in the past you can find almost any type of train from intermodal to grain, oil, coal, taconite and of course merchandise. I can't help with train numbers as I have not tried to find out (Terry has moved) and motive power, well, almost anything but I can't tell you the model of each unit, I don't follow new models anymore.*

*The most interesting is the merchandise trains southbound in the morning (9-11AM) and northbound around noon (11-1 PM) that have original IC power. Over the last two weeks the SD70's (I know these) have been #1000,1003, 1007, 1010, 1015, 1018, 1019, 1021, 1027,1028,1031,1032, 1035 and 1036. These are all in original paint. Sometimes one of the repainted CN units is in the consist. They run as pairs and one northbound last week had 4, no camera of course.*

*The UP connection train is northbound between 9 AM and Noon and always has 3 units, assume a requirement of CN. Most will be pure UP power. Grain has been on the move for a long time and today (3-6) a southbound load had 2 BNSF GE's for power and 20 minutes later a northbound empty train with 2 CN units. BNSF has been showing up more in the last month as have CSX and NS motive power, usually in consist. Yesterday a northbound empty coal train had 2 BNSF units on the lead. Oil trains as usually one per day either load south to Louisiana or north back to Canada. How the tariff will affect this move is not known. The taconite for Birmingham still runs but seems to be less frequent, same for the coal trains (maybe at night). The northbound intermodal will be early morning if running late and the southbound is usually between 2 and 4 PM. There is an afternoon auto rack train, usually UP power, about 3 days a week. So if you are looking for train action spend a day at Tolono and catch the CN and NS action.*

*Starting on March 15th there will be a display of C&EI memorabilia at the Vermilion County Museum. This display is for the upcoming annual meeting on April 12th and will be in place through May. Along with some of my collection items from Rossville and Watseka will be included. Two of the C&EI HS modelers will setup model equipment display. The museum will bring some of their collection out for viewing along with the G Scale model of the Meadowlark.*

*Be sure to attend Dale Jenkins presentation at VCM on the Illinois Terminal traction in Vermilion County, the train show at Lincoln Square and of course the C&EI HS annual meeting at VCM in April.*

*Rick*



## Amtrak High Speed for Texas

Amtrak has issued a request for qualifications (RFQ) that calls for a delivery partner for the proposed project to build a high-speed rail line between Dallas/Fort Worth and Houston.

Issued Feb. 25, the RFQ invites prospective companies, joint ventures, contractors and subcontractors to submit their qualifications so that Amtrak can shortlist the entries, Texas Rail Advocates reported. The issuance of the RFQ marks a step in advancing the project. The short list of firms would be invited to submit proposals for the proposed project.

"Amtrak is working to confirm the viability of the concept of a dedicated high-speed rail route between Dallas and Houston," Amtrak officials said in a statement issued this afternoon. "As part of these efforts, we are seeking to identify the interest of potential partners through responses to this request for qualifications process."

In September 2024, Amtrak was awarded a \$64 million grant from the Federal Railroad Administration to continue planning the high-speed rail line. In 2023, Amtrak announced it was exploring a potential partnership with Texas Central Partners, the private for-profit firm that spent years trying to develop the line, where trains could travel over 200 mph for a 90-minute trip between Dallas and Houston.

In 2024, Amtrak Senior Vice President Andy Byford announced Amtrak was officially in charge of the proposed project.

*Progressive Railroading 2-28*

## CTA Space Under the "L"

The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) last week shared final development concepts for the 10 blocks of open space under the 'L' elevated rail between the Lawrence and Bryn Mawr stations.

The redevelopment is part of the \$2.1 billion Red and Purple Modernization project's (RPM) first phase.

The 1.3-mile-long, century old concrete embankment wall under the Red Line was removed as part of the RPM project, CTA officials said in a press release. CTA's RPM project rebuilt the northbound Red and Purple elevated track structure in 2023. The southbound Red Line structure is near completion, and four renovated and fully accessible Red Lines sta-

tions are expected to open in summer.

Design plans for the 10 blocks include a pedestrian trail, dog parks, a playground, a fitness area, benches and plaza spaces for community events. CTA presented the plans to Edgewater and Uptown communities during public meetings on Feb. 25 and Feb. 26. Block by block concepts can be found [here](#).

The CTA is working with Chicago-based architects Site Design Group. Construction on the community spaces is anticipated to begin in 2026 and be completed in 2027, CTA officials said.

*Progressive Railroading 3-4-25*

## UP and Metra Agree on Dispatching

In mid-April, Union Pacific Railroad will turn over train operation services on three Chicago commuter-rail lines to Metra, the Class I announced yesterday.

UP is continuing to finalize the transfer of commuter-rail service to Metra on the Union Pacific North, Northwest and West lines. Mechanical and station agent services, along with some management services, already have been transferred to Metra. Engineering services will be transferred after train operations are transferred, UP officials said in a press release.

The two railroads have yet to reach a financial agreement for the transfer, including compensation for Metra's use of UP track and infrastructure. Negotiations are ongoing, UP officials said.

In August 2024, Metra and UP agreed to mediate the compensation matter before the Surface Transportation Board. The mediation, which had been extended several times, ended Jan. 31 without an agreement.

UP extended an offer to Metra to use binding arbitration to resolve the issue, UP officials said.

"We are committed to reaching a financial agreement this year that is fair to both parties," said Lisa Stark, UP's vice president of public affairs. In the meantime, UP will continue to maintain the track and manage train movements on all three lines.

*Progressive Railroading 2-11*

## February Meeting Minutes

The February 16, 2025, meeting opened at 1329 at Jockos.

The secretary's minutes were accepted as printed.

The treasurer's report included a postal box rental of \$182. Income from dues and donations totaled \$905. The checking account balance is \$4661.57.

Henry reported selling some stock certificates and C&EI material at the Lebanon, IN show. The February operating session went well, with the next one scheduled for March 1.

The Urbana show is on March 29 & 30. The chapter plans to rent one table and get free one when they become available.

The March program will be announced. The April meeting will be on the 4th Sunday, April 27.

Dave and Henry expect to attend the Muncie, IN show on March 22. Skyler reported on a trip he and Aden made to Chicago to ride Metra. They covered a lot of mileage!

On March 20 Dale Jenkins will present a program about the Illinois Terminal RR at the Vermilion County Museum at 1730. Rick noted that the C&EHS annual meeting will be held April 12 at the Vermilion County Museum.

The meeting was adjourned at 1338.

Lincoln and Doug presented pictures from Maine, Kentucky, Illinois and others.

## Sierra Northern and Clean Motive Power

Sierra Northern Railway (SNR), a division of Sierra Railroad Co., has acquired RailPower LLC to strengthen the railroad's clean energy technology and support its production of hydrogen locomotives.

RailPower has produced 190 locomotives, including 55 GG20B hybrid switchers, 116 RP20BD genset locomotives, and other models such as the GG10B, GK10B, RP14BD and RP20SD. Those locomotives serve industrial switching, short lines and ports across North America, SNR officials said in a press release.

SNR will integrate RailPower's hybrid technology into its plans to build hydrogen locomotives for use by short lines in California, they said. The railroad — which owns 34 RailPower gensets — has created hydrogen locomotive prototypes in partnership with the California Energy Commission and the California State Transportation Agency.

"This acquisition underscores Sierra Railroad Company's commitment to advancing sustainable transportation technologies while supporting California's ambitious climate goals," SNR officials said.

*Progressive Railroading 2-10*



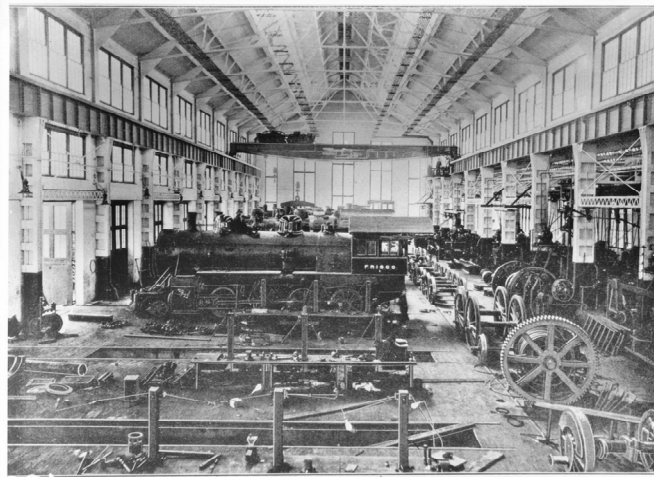
During one of the recent operating sessions the question was asked about constructing the layout. Here are a couple of photos from that period of time.

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**We're on the Web!**  
**[www.danvillejct.org](http://www.danvillejct.org)**

## Photo of the Month



Interior View of Frisco Shops.

In 1902 the Frisco Railroad acquired stock control of the C&EI and in 1903 began construction of the Oak-lawn Shops on the east side of town. Come to the C&EI HS Annual Meeting on April 12th to learn about the history of the shops and the use it still sees today.