

POTOMAC RAIL NEWS

POTOMAC CHAPTER, NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 235, KENSINGTON, MARYLAND 20895-0235

JANUARY 2018



THE CAP IN SNOW. Amtrak's east bound Capitol Limited eases down the east slope of Sand Patch grade at Foley, PA, on January 4, 1996, following an overnight snow storm. The two EMD F40PH diesels are in full dynamic braking, keeping the 12 car consist in control as it descends the steep grade. Photo by Teresa Renner

PROGRAM: STEAM TO DIESEL TRANSITION - A commercially produced presentation featuring the end of mainline steam and the introduction of diesels on U.S. railroads will be shown. Thanks to Bob Cohen for providing this presentation. See page 2 for details.

MEETING: January 16, 2018. 8PM. Lobby Level Auditorium of the Montgomery County Executive Office Building, 101 Monroe Street, Rockville, MD.

NEXT MEETING DATE: February 20, 2018

DEADLINE FOR FEBRUARY ISSUE: January 26, 2018. Send news items to Clay Moritz, Editor, Potomac Rail News, at c.moritz@comcast.net

INFO ON CHAPTER ACTIVITIES: <http://potomacnrhs.org/>

ADDRESS MEMBERSHIP INQUIRIES TO: Rick Davidson, Membership Agent, 2908 Breezy Terrace, Alexandria, VA 22303-2401 rdavidsonjr2908@verizon.net

THE CHAPTER FAMILY

If you know of a Chapter Member who is sick, has lost a loved one, or has a new birth in the family, please call the Chapter on (301) 251-9461.

WE EXTEND OUR BEST WISHES TO Long-time Members Jo and Jerry Hott as Jo is currently receiving treatment and physical therapy for a potentially acute ailment. Please keep Jo and Jerry in your Thoughts and Prayers. Both Jo and Jerry have been active members of the NRHS for over 50 years.

THIS MONTH'S PROGRAM. "STEAM TO DIESEL TRANSITION" is mostly in color, with sound and skillful narration. Included are many scenes of steam-powered freight and passenger trains in regular service in the 1940s and 1950s, and then transitions to scenes of early diesels built by EMD, Alco, Fairbanks-Morse and Baldwin. The railroads featured include New York Central, Nickel Plate, Erie, Boston & Maine, Pennsy, Long Island, Norfolk and Western, Virginian, Illinois Central, L&N and others.

IT'S TIME TO MAKE YOUR RESERVATION for our Annual Potomac Chapter Banquet, which will be held from 5-9 P.M. on March 24, 2018, in the Rockville/Potomac Room of the Hilton Washington DC North at 620 Perry Parkway, Gaithersburg, MD 20877. Our guest speaker this year is Steve Barry, the long-time Editor of Railfan and Railroad Magazine (R&R). At R&R, Steve is the successor to founding Editor Jim Boyd. Steve is President of the Wilmington Chapter, NRHS, and a Global Director of the NRHS. Steve leads the Wilmington Chapter's annual Super Saturday Trolley Charter in Philadelphia. Steve is an active railfan photographer, directing photo shoots and night photography sessions around the country and the world. Steve's will present a special two-part digital program, consisting of Part 1 - "Eastern Europe By Rail:" Trains in Germany, Poland, and the Ukraine with a visit to the Chernobyl disaster site; and Part 2 - "The Road & the Radio:" - Explaining the allure of railfanning with favorite photos from the last 36 years. You won't want to miss this special presentation. A reservation form is on Page 7.

CHAPTER MEETING INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY. If it snows on our meeting day, we follow the decision of Montgomery County. If the County government closes its offices (not school events), our meeting is cancelled. You can check the status of Montgomery County offices at the County's web page, which is located at <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcg/emergency/snow.html>. On the web page, click on "Community Activity/Meeting Cancellations," which is under the tab: "Latest Delays, Closings, and Information Updates." If the weather looks questionable, our Chapter webmaster will update the Potomac Chapter web page about 6 p.m. on the night of the meeting: (www.potomacnrhs.org).

RAIL NEWS

CSX CEO PASSES AWAY. E. Hunter Harrison, CSX CEO, passed away on December 16, 2017, due to complications from a recent illness at the age of 73, in Wellington, FL. His passing came days after taking medical leave. Harrison, who had heart bypass surgery in 1998, occasionally used a portable oxygen tank to treat shortness of breath.

After CSX announced on December 14th that he would take time off from his duties as CEO CSX's shares were down almost 8%.

In his 2005 book, "How We Work and Why: Running a Precision Railroad," Harrison laid out his core principles for running a rail carrier: service, cost control, asset utilization, safety and people.

"This book is about running the best damn railroad in the business," he wrote. "Run a tight ship, and you can expect a reasonable return; manage it badly, and the sheer weight of assets will sink you." Precision railroading "is applicable to any railroad," Harrison told Bloomberg News in a January 2012 interview.

Ewing Hunter Harrison was born in Memphis, Tennessee, on November 7, 1944. He began his career in 1963 as an 18-year-old carman-oiler for St. Louis-San Francisco Railway Co., lubricating train wheels while attending the University of Memphis. He moved to Illinois Central in 1989 as Chief Operating Officer, joining Canadian National when it acquired the Chicago-based carrier in 1998. Harrison was twice named "Railroader of the Year" by Railway Age magazine – in 2002, while serving as Canadian National's Chief Operating Officer, and in 2014 for his role at Canadian Pacific – becoming one of only a handful of executives to win the award twice.

While Harrison's efficiency drive rewarded investors, many shippers felt it did so at their expense. Inconsistent service, poor communication and a lack of available railcars were among the most frequent complaints in a 2015 survey of shippers by RBC Capital Markets. Of the respondents to the RBC poll, 37% that year said service at Canadian Pacific was poor, while only 16% deemed it to be good. In 2013, describing his first few months as CEO of Canadian Pacific, he likened his progress to that of a U.S. Civil War general, saying he "kind of went through Canada maybe like Sherman went through Atlanta." (Financial Post)

CSX ACTING CEO TAKES THE RAILROAD'S REIGNS. On December 15th, Acting CSX Corp Chief Executive Officer James Foote said that he would run CSX in the same manner as Hunter Harrison while Harrison was on medical leave due to an unspecified illness. On a conference call with analysts following the announcement of Harrison's leave, Foote offered no timeline for Harrison's return but said he would "drive forward" to run the company like him. CSX shares fell 10.3% to \$51.42 in pre-market trading. CSX shares has risen 15.8% since March, when Harrison took the helm. Investors have had high hopes that Harrison, who is famous for leading turnarounds of Canadian railroads, would increase profits at the company, which has been dogged for months by customer complaints, persistent service issues and increased Federal scrutiny. (Fortune Magazine)

CSX NAMES ACTING CEO AS PRESIDENT AND CEO. Following the passing of E. Hunter Harrison, CSX Corp. on December 22, 2017, CSX named James Foote as President and Chief Executive Officer, effective immediately. Formerly Chief Operating Officer, Foote had been Acting CEO since December 14th when Hunter Harrison was placed on medical leave. Harrison died December 16th. Foote will also join the CSX Board of Directors. Foote, a senior executive with more than 40 years of railroad industry experience in finance, operations and sales and marketing, was named Executive Vice President and COO of CSX in October 2017. Prior to joining CSX, he was President and CEO of Bright Rail Energy, a technology company formed in 2012 to design, develop and sell products that allow railroads to convert locomotives to natural gas power. Before heading Bright Rail, Foote was Executive Vice President of Sales and Marketing with Canadian National, which he joined in 1995 as Vice President of Investor Relations to assist the company's privatization. He also served as Vice President of Sales and Marketing-Merchandise. Foote began his career in the railroad industry in 1972 as a laborer in the mechanical department with the SOO Line Railroad in Superior, Wisconsin. For nine years, he worked union operating positions with SOO Line and Chicago & North Western full-time while earning his undergraduate and law degrees.

"I worked alongside Hunter for more than a decade," said Foote. "His pioneering approach to railroading unlocked significant efficiencies and value,

and we remain focused on delivering on this vision for CSX, our customers and our shareholders. The execution of Precision Scheduled Railroading is well under way, with the most critical components of the implementation completed and beginning to generate measurable operating improvement. We look forward to providing an update on our strategic progress and to showcase our deeply talented management team at our upcoming investor day in March." (Railway Age)

LAWMAKERS SAY CSX IS KEEPING AN 'OPEN MIND' ON HOWARD STREET TUNNEL PROJECT.

Members of Maryland's congressional delegation and Mayor Catherine Pugh emerged from a December 19th meeting with CSX Transportation officials encouraged that the railroad is keeping an open mind about whether to proceed with expanding the Howard Street Tunnel. Though the lawmakers received no commitment from CSX, both sides vowed to continue discussions. CSX abruptly pulled out of the \$425 million project this fall after years of planning by State and Federal officials.

Supporters want the larger tunnel to accommodate a growing volume of shipping containers following last year's expansion of the Panama Canal. Underscoring the project's longstanding bipartisan support, the meeting with CSX's acting CEO, Jim Foote, brought together the State's mostly Democratic congressional delegation, Pugh and Republican Representative Andy Harris of Baltimore County. "We expressed our disappointment - and that's putting it mildly," said Senator Ben Cardin, a Maryland Democrat. "The bottom line is [Foote] agreed to have an open mind."

CSX attributed the decision to back away from the Howard Street Tunnel expansion to an operating plan implemented in May by the company's new CEO, Hunter Harrison and Foote has vowed to continue his agenda. Cardin said Foote repeated during the closed meeting that CSX does not believe the ability to double-stack containers through the tunnel is necessary. He said that the railroad discussed, in broad terms, a number of alternatives that it is considering. "The best thing that was said this afternoon was that they would give it some reconsideration, that it was not a final [decision] at this point," Pugh said. (Baltimore Sun)

METRO TO START SATURDAY PARKING FEES IN FEBRUARY. Metro plans to start charging for parking on Saturdays in February, General Manager Paul Wiedefeld said on December 14th. The change, which will begin as a six-month pilot program, will apply at each of the system's 36 stations with Metro-operated parking lots or garages. We've already started to move on that, we're producing materials, signs and things like that in the very near future to educate people that this is coming, Wiedefeld told the Metro Board.

In planning documents over the summer, Metro staff suggested that the initial Saturday parking fee be no more than \$1 in order to collect data for future charging decisions. Metro will have staff monitoring operations at each garage. It is one of six changes for Metro parking facilities approved by the Metro Board this summer. "We are looking at variable pricing of our parking facilities, for instance [and] expanding the weekday hours (to start charging drivers who exit after 7:30AM rather than 9:30AM. Metro is also set to expand the number of Metro stations where people who park in the lots without actually taking the train are charged an extra fee on top of the base parking rate. (WTOP via High Green - Chesapeake Railway Association)

AMTRAK CREWS EXPRESS CONCERNS ABOUT TRAINING ON NEW ROUTE WHERE TRAIN DERAILED.

To prepare for the opening of a new rail line, conductors and engineers typically go through training to familiarize themselves with the route, its landmarks and its speed limits. Amtrak did some of those exercises along the new Point Defiance Bypass route in Washington State, according to Federal investigators,

who said crews had made trial runs in the weeks before the line opened on December 18th. But a number of Amtrak workers have expressed concern in recent days about the adequacy of the training, according to a person briefed on the matter who spoke to The Seattle Times on condition of anonymity because the person was not authorized to discuss it.

The workers, the person said, were concerned that engineers had been piled into a single locomotive to do training runs as a group, that conductors were largely kept in cars farther back in the train or on the trailing locomotive, that some did their familiarization runs in the dark after midnight, and that supervisors were unwilling or unavailable to answer questions about key route characteristics such as speed.

John Hiatt, a former railroad engineer who works as an investigator for a law firm that handles railroad accidents, said he has also heard from several Amtrak crew members in recent days who had similar concerns about the training for the new route, which was aimed at providing more daily roundtrips between Seattle and Portland. He said the concerns sounded credible and were a sign of a rushed effort to start new service without properly preparing crew members. "What is accomplished by them being in the rear engine in the dark?" Hiatt asked.

Officials with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) said training will be among the issues they examine as they investigate what caused the derailment south of Tacoma, which left three people dead and dozens more injured. NTSB officials have determined the train was going 78 mph in a 30-mph zone when it hit a curve and jumped off the tracks. It was not immediately clear if NTSB investigators had interviewed any of those concerned workers.

Amtrak said its training exceeds Federal standards but declined to provide specifics about the training that took place on the new line, citing the ongoing investigation. "Amtrak engineers and conductors comply with Federal requirements related to both certification for the roles that they hold and qualifications for the territories over which they perform service," said Amtrak spokeswoman Christina Leeds in an email. "Employees are encouraged to express safety concerns at any time."

Engineers who operate the trains from the locomotive and conductors who often manage and supervise the trips from other parts of the train typically rely on signs and a timetable that document the route. Crew members can follow that information to keep on track, but current and former industry workers say familiarization is critical to enhancing the safety of the trip. Mike Callanan, a former Amtrak conductor, said experience on the line helps crew members with location awareness. They grow familiar with landmarks and intersections and other details of the route, Callanan said, so that they know where they are at all times and where slowdown points are located – even if they miss seeing a speed sign. Callanan said he thinks crew members need about 10 round trips in order to be comfortable with the route. The person briefed on the new Point Defiance Bypass line said some crew members have reported going on about three to five trips.

Hiatt, the former engineer, said the training time needed depends on the type of route, and he thinks five runs for an engineer would be ideal and perhaps three for a conductor. But he said that would involve having a qualified engineer experienced on the route training just one person at a time – not as a group – and all being done from the front cab.

Engineers are required by Federal law to be "qualified on the physical characteristics of the territory" where they will be operating trains, according to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). Railroads are largely left to develop their own training programs. The FRA recommends that the training programs account for when an engineer moves to a new territory that requires greater skills, and that failure to prepare for such scenarios may lead to a

determination that the training program isn't sufficient, an FRA spokesman said. Similarly, according to the FRA, railroads cannot put conductors into service unless they are qualified for a territory, such as knowing the rules, instructions and physical characteristics of the area.

As the crew traveled south along the bypass route on December 18th at close to 80 mph, they would have passed a speed limit sign about 2 miles before the curve. That sign, smaller than a speed-limit sign that drivers would see alongside a freeway, sits in an open area along the track, tilted at a 45-degree angle. Hiatt said it would be unusual to miss such a warning sign, but he said there could be a perfect storm where it does happen, especially since engineers are monitoring so many different things, such as computer screens, air gauges, whistles and crossings. "Every trip I ever made, I knew where that sign was," Hiatt said. "I almost instinctively looked in that area and my eyes went in that direction. I knew it was there. That's training. That's repetitiveness."

The NTSB has said the engineer was in the front of the train along with a conductor-in-training, and investigators will be examining whether the engineer was distracted. Callanan said it wouldn't be abnormal to have a conductor-in-training in the cab but that it could have exacerbated the lack of situational awareness for an engineer who may have been unfamiliar with the route.

The NTSB has said that about six seconds before the derailment, the engineer made a comment about traveling too fast and hit the brakes. The train derailed at the curve, spilling down an embankment and onto Interstate 5 below. (Seattle Times)

DERAILMENT DAMAGE ESTIMATE TOPS \$40 MILLION. The damage from the December 18th deadly Amtrak train derailment in Washington State topped \$40.4 million, according to a preliminary report released on January 4th by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). The safety board also said the crash that killed three and injured 70 could have been prevented if positive train control had been operational. The Board previously said Amtrak 501 was traveling at 78 mph when it derailed, far above the 30 mph speed limit. The NTSB also said it has not been able to interview either operating crewmember due to their injuries from the accident. The NTSB reported in December that six seconds before the derailment off a bridge and onto a highway, the engineer remarked that the train was speeding. The engineer then applied the brakes but apparently not the emergency brake, NTSB said.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao, in letters released on January 2nd, urged the nation's railroads and transit agencies to "take all possible measures" to meet congressional deadlines to install positive train control to prevent crashes. Chao said she wanted railroads to "greatly accelerate" efforts to meet congressional deadlines for PTC

In 2008, Congress mandated the implementation of PTC nationwide by the end of 2015, then extended that deadline until the end of 2018 when its installation became more complex than anticipated. The government can extend the deadline to 2020 to complete some aspects of the system.

Amtrak said last month it was "imperative that the rail industry urgently work together to get PTC activated on the national network as soon as possible - and certainly by the December 2018 Federal deadline, if not before." Washington state officials have said PTC was installed and being tested but was not yet operational on the line where the derailment occurred. (NBC News)

EVENTS - OLD DOMINION DIVISION RRE MONTHLY MEETING. December 21, 2017 8:00 PM. James Madison High School, 2500 James Madison Drive, Vienna, VA, in room 110. The closest entrance door to this room is Entrance No. 1. Pre-meeting dinner at 6:30 at the Amphora Restaurant, 377 West Maple Avenue Vienna. TO REACH THE SCHOOL: From Amphora Restaurant go south two blocks on West Maple Avenue to James Madison Drive and turn right. School is at the end of this street. PROGRAM: Two commercially produced videos of steam and diesel trains in South Africa and neighboring countries will be shown. The program will include rail operations in Capetown, Johannesburg, and Pretoria. Thanks to David Bieritz for providing the videos.

**POTOMAC CHAPTER, NRHS
ANNUAL BANQUET
SATURDAY, March 24, 2018, 5:00-9:00 PM**

ALL POTOMAC CHAPTER MEMBERS, GUESTS, AND OTHER INTERESTED RAILFANS ARE INVITED. PLEASE JOIN US FOR AN ENJOYABLE EVENING!

FEATURING STEVE BARRY, EDITOR OF RAILFAN & RAILROAD MAGAZINE PRESENTING PART 1 - "EASTERN EUROPE BY RAIL:" - TRAINS IN GERMANY, POLAND AND THE UKRAINE WITH A VISIT TO THE CHERNOBYL DISASTER SITE; PART 2 - "THE ROAD & THE RADIO:" - EXPLAINING THE ALLURE OF RAILFANNING WITH FAVORITE PHOTOS FROM THE LAST 36 YEARS.

LOCATION: Rockville/Potomac Room of the Hilton Washington DC North, 620 Perry Parkway, Gaithersburg, MD 20877 DIRECTIONS: FROM THE CAPITAL BELTWAY (I-495): TAKE I-270 North to Exit 11 MD-124 Montgomery Village Ave, Go right (East) on Montgomery Village Avenue, Stay in right lane and Turn Right at MD 355, (N. Frederick Avenue); Make a Right Turn at Perry Parkway (the turn for the Montgomery County Fairgrounds) and proceed to 620 Perry Parkway, which is on the right past the shopping center. 301-977-8900

SOCIAL HOUR: 5:00 PM (CASH BAR); DINNER: 6:00 PM. PROGRAM: 7:30PM
BUFFET STYLE: ENTRÉE CHOICE OF CHICKEN, LONDON BROIL, AND SALMON PLUS CLASSIC CAESAR SALAD, MIXED GREEN SALAD, OVEN ROASTED POTATOES, SAUTÉED MIXED VEGETABLES, TEA AND COFFEE, AND ASSORTED DESSERTS.

COST: \$41.00 PER PERSON

DOOR PRIZE DONATIONS WILL BE GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED

RESERVATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY March, 15, 2018.

PLEASE USE OUR ON-LINE RESERVATIONS AT : <http://potomacnrhs.org/> (\$1.00 per Guest Service Charge Additional) OR

COMPLETE THE RESERVATION FORM BELOW AND MAIL IT ALONG WITH YOUR CHECK TO: POTOMAC CHAPTER, NRHS - BANQUET, P.O. BOX 235, KENSINGTON, MD 20895-0235 FURTHER INFORMATION CALL: (301) 649-2140 or email TheodoreXakellis@juno.com

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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

FIRST CLASS