

Next Meeting:

December 3, 2004

The next meeting will be a special presentation. December 11, 2004

- **West Carrollton Civic Center**
- **Meeting time 7:00 PM**

December 2004 Meeting....

Wilbur C. Smith loved trains big and small. During World War 2 he was a fireman for the B&O on the Wellston Subdivision. After the war, he founded Smitty's Hobby Shop in Dayton. In the 1950's Wilbur took many railfan trips to capture the last steam engines in North America. When the steam was all gone, he continued photographing trains in the 60's and 70's. Wilbur passed away in July 1977.

Wilbur's grandson, Brad McClelland received his slide collection this September. The program will include many steam with a few diesel also.

CSX News...

CSX Starts Work Using Virginia Money ...

In 2000, The Virginia General Assembly voted to give CSX \$65.7 million of state money to fund rail improvements to the former RF&P main line between Richmond and Washington D.C. The objective of the funding was to upgrade passenger rail service on the 100-mile long corridor, which for decades had been plagued by congestion that reduced speed and reliability.

After four years of increasing congestion and deteriorating relations with state rail officials, CSX finally decided to spend that money and on October 6, signed an agreement with the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation to begin construction on six projects.

Virginia Governor Mark R. Warner and Transportation Director Karen Rae, were both critical of CSX and the pace at which it has worked toward devising a plan to spend the funds. In its defense, CSX had never entered into a deal of this nature and

is now setting a precedent which subsequent construction deals will have to follow as it strives to upgrade its rail system.

CSX CEO Michael J. Ward wrote Governor Warner that the company is committed to learning from this experience, as well as strengthening the positive and productive relationship that has existed between CSX and the Commonwealth for many years. Ward said "Now that we have a master construction agreement in place, we can cover new projects under the master agreement for the foreseeable future without having our lawyers split hairs over the vast majority of the terms and conditions that have contributed to the delays."

Under the agreement, most of the construction will take place in northern Virginia. Improvements will include upgrades to the track's signal system, the addition of more crossovers, the installation of nine miles of a third main track, as well as the reconstruction of a third track through Fredericksburg. The first project is slated to get underway next month in Stafford County, and all six projects are expected to be completed by early 2007.

According to VDOT's Rae, "We can add up to five passenger trains and add capacity for up to 15 more freight trains per day." She also said the state's long term goal is to build a third main track along the entire corridor.

A focus will be on fixing bottlenecks. One such example is between Richmond's Main Street Station, located in downtown Richmond and the Amtrak station at Staples Mill. It currently takes trains a half-hour to travel between the two, a distance of five miles.

Operations Update ...

In an attempt to alleviate some of the conges-

tion at Acca Yard in Richmond, the following train changes were implemented on October 27 as part of the ONE Plan operating scheme. Q302 out of Cincinnati now terminates at Rocky Mount, NC instead of Acca. Q302 sets-off its Richmond cars at Collier Yard. West-bound counterpart Q303 originates at Rocky Mount and picks up cars for Lynchburg, Covington and points west at Fulton yard in Richmond.

Trains Q412/Q413 to and from Baltimore's Curtis Bay Yard, now originated at Acca rather than Rocky Mount. This change reduces the need for other through trains to set-off or pick-up Curtis Bay cars at Acca.

Michigan Steam Trip Canceled ... Steam Railroad Institute (SRI), the owners and operators of former Pere Marquette 2-8-4 No. 1225, was surprised when CSX canceled a trip planned for November 1 from Owosso to Grand Rapids, MI, which was part of the promotion for the premiere of the Warner Brothers animated movie "Polar Express." The locomotive was also to have appeared on display in downtown Grand Rapids.

The 1225 was used as the drawing board prototype for the animated movie locomotive. The round-trip move to Grand Rapids, which had been in the planning stage for more than a month and initially approved by CSX management, would have had the 1225 and five passenger cars on hand for the movie premiere.

The schedule called for the train to run from Owosso to Ann Pere, MI on short line Tuscola & Saginaw Bay Railway, then operate over CSX to Grand Rapids, a total of about 90 miles each way. CSX canceled the trip stating the move would divert critical assets away from the company's primary mission of meeting customer commitments.

Warner Brothers' animation department relied heavily on the 1225 to create a realistic steam engine for the motion picture. "Polar Express," which stars Tom Hanks in a number of roles, including that of the train's conductor, is a Christmas tale adapted from the book of the same name by author Chris Van Allsburg.

More CPL's Replaced ...

During early November, CSX signal crews replaced all of the remaining Color Position Lights (CPLs), including intermediate and interlocking signals, on the Toledo Subdivision between West Carrollton (signals 507/508) and Overpeck Junction; 302/303 with the now-standard tri-color Safetran signals. Crews are scheduled to deactivate the CPLs at New River Junction, the junction of

the Toledo Sub with NS's New Castle District on the north side of Hamilton, OH, on December 13. It appears the CPL's south of Butler Street junction in Hamilton are safe, for the time being. Following the New River Junction conversion, the signal crews will head to northeastern Ohio and western Pennsylvania and start work on the New Castle Subdivision from Greenwich, OH to New Castle, PA.

Markers ...

The C&N, Lake Erie and Central Ohio Subdivisions were conveyed to the Ohio Central Railroad on October 30. These three former B&O routes, which link Newark, OH, with Columbus, Mt. Vernon and Cambridge, respectively, will be operated by Ohio Central subsidiary Columbus and Ohio River (COUH) ... The York, South Carolina County Council passed a rezoning ordinance by a vote of 4-3 that allows CSX Intermodal (CSXI) to build an intermodal terminal off of Highway 21 in Catawba. Despite passing the vote by the same margin back in August, the issue was reviewed again on October 27. Nearly 300 residents showed to voice their support or opposition to the planned terminal. The Council believes that the growth in business and jobs offsets any additional truck traffic, which they say will be relatively small, compared to the overall vehicle traffic growth in the area.

NS News...

Grain Traffic ...

After purchasing the facility from local owners earlier in 2004, The Andersons is planning an expansion project at its Oakville, IN, elevator that will both increase capacity and improve safety along the NS' Fort Wayne-Cincinnati mainline. Being planned for 2005 is a siding expansion that will allow 75-car unit trains to be loaded. Oakville has a 3 million bushel capacity for corn, wheat and soybeans, and much of the corn is shipped to poultry feeders in Georgia. The expansion will also consolidate inspection and dumping operations on the east side of the mainline, eliminating dozens of truck moves over a grade crossing. The facility's location along NS' "Mid-South Corridor" was a prime factor in The Andersons purchase.

With grain traffic moving at strong levels, NS is using the 400-series of train numbers to supplement unit grain trains in the 500-series. For example, over a five-day period during the week of October 19, NS originated 17 loaded and empty grain trains in the 400 series: #40A (Albion, MI-Chicago, IL); #40T (Marion, IN-

Maysville, GA); #41E (Chester, SC-Toledo, OH); #41E (Columbia, SC-Linwood, NC); #41G (Decatur, IL-New Haven, IN); #41Z (Shenandoah, VA-Columbus, OH); #42E (Red Key, IN-Baldwin, GA); #42G (Tipton, IN-Winston-Salem, NC); #42K (Fostoria, OH-Bascomville, SC); #43A (Chattanooga, TN-Muncie, IN); #44E (Cincinnati, OH-Greensboro, NC); #44E (Lafayette, IN-Loudon, TN); #45R (Cincinnati, OH-White Pigeon, MI); #48A (Decatur, IL-Bluffton, IN); #48A (Decatur, IL-Montpelier, OH); and two #48As (Fort Wayne, IN-Decatur, IL). Note that these designations are very fluid, with the same number used for multiple origin-destination pairs on different days.

An interesting grain train was received from the Canadian Pacific on October 15 at Chicago. Train #52Z-15 was powered by NS-6715/CP-5965/CP-6009/CP-8614 (SD60/2 SD40-2s/AC4400CW) and consisted of 73 loads. The train originated in North Dakota and operated to Enola, PA. At Enola Yard, the train was split into three blocks destined to a trio of customers in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

More New Power ...

With NS moving tonnage at record levels, the need for new power has also increased beyond numbers previously planned. After receiving 75 DASH 9-40CWs from General Electric earlier in 2004, an additional 25 units were scheduled for delivery by year's end. This order has now been increased to 92 units for delivery by December 31. During the last week of September, NS 9887 was the first locomotive to be delivered as part of the 2004 order's second phase.

As with previous DASH 9s, the latest units are being towed to the Bellevue, OH shop for commissioning by GE and NS. Thanks to business levels, painting of the new locos at the Altoona, PA shop has been temporarily stopped. Thus, look for numerous "grey ghosts" to be powering NS trains over the next few months. Counting the 2004 total order for 167 units (series NS 9812-9978), NS has acquired 1,215 DASH 9 locomotives since 1995.

For those of you tired of the steady stream of GE products rolling in from Erie, do not fret. NS is also receiving 25 SD70Ms from EMD. As of early November, production of these units was underway at the London, ON plant. Reportedly, they will receive the same revised nose design that is featured on UP's locomotives and be numbered in the 2624-2648 series.

VA Abandonment ...

NS has filed to abandon a 34-mile stretch of former Norfolk & Western mainline trackage between Burkeville, Farmville and Pamplin, VA. The line has not seen regular mainline traffic in years, as through traffic between Norfolk and Roanoke utilizes the Farmville Belt, a low-grade route via Abilene that bypasses the old main through Farmville.

On October 26, NS operated a five-car passenger train over the eastern portion of the line into Farmville. The special carried a host of railroad, local and state officials, the latter of which are promoting plans to turn the route into the High Bridge Trail State Park after NS removes the track. Of historical significance is the bridge over the Appomattox River east of Farmville. The bridge was built in 1854 and played a key role in the Confederate retreat to Appomattox in the final days of the Civil War. The original stone pilings remain today.

Shorts ...

When Pittsburgh Division Assistant Superintendent Max Solomon retired from NS in December 2003, he ended a 41-year career that began with the Pennsylvania Railroad. During an October 26, 2004 ceremony, NS honored the popular official's service to the railroad by renaming a control point on the Pittsburgh Line from CP-East Pitt to CP-Solomon ... Plans are progressing for a proposed gypsum board plant near Progress Energy's Roxboro, NC power plant on Lake Hyco. The plant is being built account of the gypsum that will be collected as a by-product of the Hyco power plant's new anti-pollution equipment scheduled to be operating in 2007. Similar gear should be in service at the Progress' nearby Mayo plant by 2009. NS delivers unit trains of coal to both facilities and would also serve the proposed gypsum board plant. Progress estimates that the Hyco plant alone would generate roughly 600,000 tons of gypsum annually.

MVR Newsletter Available In PDF Format....

The newsletter is available in PDF format. This is an advantage over regular mail that allows you to receive the newsletter on the same day that I send it to the printer. It also saves on postage. Send me an e-mail request to be added to the list.

It is also time for dues again. See me at the meeting or send a check for \$10.00 payable to Miami Valley Railfans.

I am also back on AOL, my e-mail address is SDCabin@aol.com.

The Miami Valley Railfans is a loosely knit group of railfans that meet to discuss, exchange views and show slides and movies about railroads, We meet between the months of November and July, usually the second Saturday, at The West Carrollton Civic Center. Anyone interested is surely welcome!

Dues are \$10 per Calendar Year

MVR Web Site www.qsl.net/n8qnp/mvrpage.htm

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