

- **Next Meeting:**
- **Program: Slides by members 10 January 2009**
- **West Carrollton Civic Center. West Carrollton, Ohio**
- **Meeting time, 7:30 PM**

## January Program...

The January meeting will be slides by members.

November started another year of membership with the MVR. Be sure to send your dues to the address on the back of the newsletter. If you have any news worthy articles you can also send them to my address or VIA email at [sdccabin@n8qnp.com](mailto:sdccabin@n8qnp.com).

### CN wins fight for EJ&E, and makes history

The Surface Transportation Board has approved Canadian National's application for authority to acquire the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway, which offers the Class I railroad a circumferential route around Chicago--and STB has done so with unaccustomed enthusiasm.

"Approval of this important merger, with the conditions we have imposed, marks a significant step forward in our nation's efforts to alleviate rail and highway congestion," said Board Chairman Charles D. Nottingham in announcing the decision on Christmas Eve. "I am pleased that the Board agreed, after an unprecedented public involvement process, to grant the relief that this merger will provide to the many Chicago neighborhoods that have been disproportionately burdened for many decades with rail-traffic related roadway congestion."

For CN, the case had become a cliffhanger. Its financing agreement for the transaction expires Dec. 31, and there was no guarantee that a decision would come this year.

The approval came with environmental mitigation measures sought by some 10,000 citizens in on-line communities who participated in the process.

The Board said that "although the transaction will result in environmental benefits to those living in or near Chicago, it will have adverse environmental impacts on communities along the EJ&E rail line."

Mitigation measures imposed by the board in-

clude:

--Two highway-rail grade separation projects, with CN bearing 67% of the cost of one and 78.5% of the cost of the other.

--Cameras to monitor highway-rail crossings to assist in the timely response of emergency providers.

--School and pedestrian safety measures.

--Noise reduction measures.

--A five-year environmental reporting requirement mandating quarterly reports on mitigation measures.

The Board also imposed a five-year, formal oversight period, with applicants required to submit monthly operational reports and to comply with "their extensive voluntary environmental mitigation, and with the negotiated agreements that have entered into with Amtrak and communities in Illinois and Indiana containing tailored mitigating that applicants have agreed to provide."

### NS To Increase Speed Through Selma, Alabama

Norfolk Southern Railway announced Monday it would increase train speeds at three railroad crossings in Selma.

Selma Fire Chief Henry Allen said he met with an official from Norfolk Southern about a month ago to discuss the increase in speed from 20 mph to 25 mph.

“Selma being a railroad town, it means you’re getting the freight on out of here,” Allen said. “So increasing the speed is not going to create a problem for Selma. It will help Selma because it takes delays out.”

Norfolk Southern Railway, a subsidiary of Norfolk Southern Corporation, announced the speed increase for three highway-rail grade crossings in Selma — Church Street, Union Street and Lapsley Street. The change will take effect Saturday.

A highway-rail grade crossing is an intersection where a roadway crosses railroad tracks at the same level or grade. Norfolk Southern operates about eight trains daily through Selma.

The company will also increase train speeds from 30 mph to 49 mph at three crossings in Maplesville. It will increase speeds at varying rates for 12 crossings in Tuscaloosa.

The company has adjusted the crossing warning devices at these locations to properly activate when the faster-moving trains are approaching, according to a release Norfolk Southern issued Monday. The measure is expected to improve public traffic flow and grade crossing safety by moving trains in and out of the area faster. Police response should also increase with the change in speed limit.

“Those long trains go straight through the heart of Selma, and it backs up things — especially when we try to respond to things,” Selma Police Chief William T. Riley III said. “It should help us out a little bit more there as far as us being able to respond across the tracks when things are going on. My main focus is doing it in a safe manner for the public. But right now that 5 mph increase should not cause us any great problems.”

Meridian & Bigbee Railroad, owned by Genesee and Wyoming Inc., operates another line in Selma. Its trains run 10 mph in Selma and 5 mph over the Alabama River bridge crossing.

M&B Selma office manager Willie Noble said the company just received new operating orders from headquarters Monday morning.

“There’s nothing in there that states the speed is going to increase more than what it is right now,” Noble said. Short-line railroads like M&B, called Class III railroads by the Federal Railroad Administration, typically travel at slower speeds than larger railroads.

Norfolk Southern is a Class I line.

“Our main line speed is not but 25 mph,” Noble said. “Their main line speed, I think, is something like 49 or above.”

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 \$10.00 per Calendar Year**  
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