



Three Lakes Model Railroad Club
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1st 100% Club in Wisconsin
Aug 2011



Danbury News

by Al Baker

From Danbury, Connecticut came our good friend Al Baker reporting on Amtrak events in the northeast corridor. Al, a long time prototype rail-fan speaks with the eye of experience. Ed

I missed an important milestone for Amtrak in the NE. December 2010 marked the tenth anniversary of Amtrak's ACELA high-speed service between Boston and Washington DC. Things can change in ten (10) years, especially with politicians. In 2000, former Wisconsin governor Tommy Thompson helped inaugurate that very same high-speed service as president of Amtrak's Board of Directors. Whereas, in 2010, he campaigned against high-speed rail between Milwaukee and Madison (something he previously supported).

To mark the tenth anniversary, I have included portions of a power point presentation by Al Engel, Amtrak's vice president of high-speed rail. It was presented to a business group in Philadelphia on December 15th, 2010. Why include it in the Connecticut POTW (publically owned transport works)? *(1) We will work on the answer partially as addressed by Mr. Engel.

Start with Amtrak's history beginning on May 1, 1971 when chartered by Congress. It is now 20,000 employees operating on a 21, 100 mile system. It runs 310 daily trains using 528 stations. Seventy percent of the train miles run on freight tracks. Amtrak has 1519 cars and 469 locos (in 2010). It generated 2.3 billion dollars revenue in FY 09 and was funded (by the government) with 1.6 billion dollars in FY 10. \$563 million was spent on

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operations and 1 billion was spent on capital items. There were 26.7 million riders in 2010. The following tableau by Al Engel of Amtrak further amplifies these statistics.

Amtrak Highlights

- **National railroad: May 1, 1971 Congressionally chartered corporation**
- **Acela Express service launched December 2000**
- **20,000 employees operate a 21,100 mile system**
 - 310 daily intercity trains using 528 stations [70% of our train-miles run on freight tracks]
 - 1,519 cars and 469 locomotives, 80 auto carriers, and 101 baggage cars
- **Amtrak generated total of \$2.3 billion in revenues in FY 09 (incl. ancillary business).** Federal funding for Amtrak slightly less than \$1.6 billion in FY 10
 - \$563 million for operating expenses
 - \$1 billion for capital needs
 - \$350 million in revenues and investment in FY 09 from operation of and infrastructure access for commuter services (13 agencies)
- **Record ridership - 28.7M riders FY10; 6 years of growth (FY 03-08)**
- **Established New Amtrak HSR Department:**
 - Two Areas of focus:
 - Greenfield projects - participate in design and operation of new HSR corridors together with public and private sector
 - Lead Next-Gen HSR development on the Northeast Corridor

Al Engel
Vice President High Speed Rail, Amtrak
December 15, 2010

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Amtrak's next generation high-speed rail plan calls for a routing north of NYC to Boston through Danbury, CT. The plan calls for a new, dedicated line (probably interstate highway medians) diverging from the present NE corridor in New Rochelle and stopping in Danbury, Waterbury, & Hartford, CT before eventually again connecting to the present NE corridor at the Route 128 station near Boston.

Near-term HSR in America



- **California**
 - Plan envisions dedicated 220 mph service
 - Prop 1A authorized \$9.9B bond issue, CA received \$3.6B in HSIPR grants
- **Florida**
 - Much of 84 I Tampa-Orlando line will be on I-4 median
 - \$2.4B in HSIPR grants
- **Midwest (Midwest Regional Rail Initiative)**
 - Current Amtrak Michigan line carries 95mph trains
 - \$1.1B grant to raise speeds on St. Louis-Chicago line to 110mph
- **Northeast Corridor (NEC)**
 - Amtrak vision just released
- **Areas with significant potential include:**
 - Southeast (SEHSR)
 - Texas

Al Engel
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I have also included a photo of a SB ACELA taken at New Haven, CT in February 2009.

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New Haven, the long time electric-diesel engine change location of the old New Haven is not in Amtrak's next generation plan for the North East Corridor (NEC).



Finally, a quick shot on Monday, 1/17/2011 (ML King Day) at the Dover Plains, NY station on the upper Harlem Line. Although Monday was a sunny day, you can see the accumulating snow. In Danbury, we have already passed the average annual snow accumulation (about 52 inches) for the entire seasons with two more months to go.



*Note: *(1) POTW could be publically owned treatment works, player of the week, picture of the week, poem of the week, post of the week, patient of the week, parting of the ways, patents on the web, point out the women but in this case it's simply referring to publically owned and operated train works. Thanks Al!*

Another Side of the Tracks:

by R.G. Blocks

I enjoy the positives that Amtrak has brought to the USA. I grew up in Norwood Park on the C&NW commuter line from Chicago to Crystal Lake, Illinois. I took the train 'downtown' as a kid. Early Supervision tasks included out-loading and unloading rail cars. Today, I enjoy model rail comparing high-speed rail with other forms of communication. For the past three decades we take either Amtrak or the Metra when going from Racine to Chicago. I recently wrote a short article for the Rhinelander Railroad Association (see Warrant Sept 2011) reflecting the positives of Italian High Speed Rail based on experience. Thus, my views are an attempt schooled in my experience in railroading, engineering and economics to reflect on Amtrak's direction.

I believe Amtrak's area of general focus is partially correct (i.e., concentrate on California and the North East Corridor). Concentrate on where population density is high, roads are overcrowded and intercity movement of people for job demands represents a constant. I believe it a mistake to spend resources elsewhere until these limited and potentially high return investments are achieved. Amtrak's goals to please the niceties are too diffuse.

All choices in life have consequences. There are needs and there are niceties. Needs are the food and water that sustain life. Niceties are the extras that while not core sustenance provide frosting on the cake. Cream puffs at the Wisconsin State Fair fall into that 'nicety' category in my book. One needs to be able to have both the extra pocket change and time to attend the State Fair. So too do certain Amtrak elements of high-speed rail.

I would argue that when we consider our transport needs it should be done in light of what is affordable. Every one of those riders should/could/or might have paid an additional \$59.92 per ticket if Amtrak were to run at breakeven. The National Railroad Passenger Corporation (AMTK) or Amtrak is a government owned corporation. The US federal government owns all Amtrak preferred stock. The common shares of stock were issued to the rail carriers that provided capital and equipment. Basically, it is worthless.

Amtrak has one of the lowest inter-city rail ridership in the developed world. At the same time we have one of the finest road networks and air transport systems in the world. In recent years several states (including Wisconsin) have 'helped Amtrak' meet its objectives: thus, state tax money joins federal tax money in perpetuation of what many call a money losing enterprise. Gasoline taxes (State and Fed) on road users are augmented by about a ½ cent per passenger mile (via taxes on corporations and personal income). Rail however is subsidized at the rate of 22 cents per passenger mile !

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Airlines, cars and busses are not without government support or their share of negatives. Whereas domestic airlines (and busses) charge passengers about 13 cents per passenger mile, Amtrak charges nearly 31 cents per passenger mile. The airlines and busses expend nearly 3000 BTUs per passenger mile (and cars about 3500 BTUs) whereas Amtrak a much more positive 1800 BTUs. Autos are involved in near 1 death per 100 million passenger miles (0.8 is closer). Domestic airlines (0.02), busses (0.05) and Amtrak (0.03) each have less than 1/10th of the death rate of the auto using the same measure. Reliability of service is about the same for Airlines and Amtrak.

Currently, our infrastructure of talent is being tested. Schools are preparing workers for jobs that will not exist unless we concentrate on manufacturing our own destiny. We can automate nearly all manner of office, assembly and financial tasks. We are exporting any job that requires thought or control of risk (mining, manufacturing essential needs, engineering, architecture, computer programming, etc). Available jobs will be fast food, agriculture, marketing and those that produce no exportable value. We have allowed the rule of law to curtail ‘new development’ and thus are burning thru our past savings.

Thus, if we spend our immediate time and money delivering a high-speed rail system that will be bought from a foreign source we have then decided that a future stream of support money will be expended as our export. When we send our money out of the country it is an export of our accumulated wealth. Further, we relegate our future to support of those who took the risk in some other country.

I love passenger railroading. I believe to make high-speed rail work we will find the solution in a train that rarely stops. We will not find it today’s systems from Europe. Future rail platforms will contain pods of passengers, pre-ticketed, pre-seated, that will be accelerated on a limited trackside system to join a high-speed train. Destinations for high-speed systems will be limited (much like the dozen plus large air hubs).

To achieve great things takes accumulated resource. You don’t go to the moon every day. Expense will kill you. The moon mission had payoffs in a dozen fields. We in the USA took the risk. We also reaped the reward. I’m making a case for high-speed rail. What I see being promoted as high-speed rail is in my mind obsolete technology.

I believe models of ideas to compete with my idea of future rail is where we model railroad builders can help our children find work. You can bet there are others working on similar ideas both inside and outside the USA.

We have a challenging period ahead. Such has always been the case. I challenge the reader to admire the past, challenge the future and present a model of what tomorrow might be. It’s certainly a mite less expensive to prove an idea in HO than prototype scale.

This article was written as a reflection on us. We must live with consequences. Scale things appropriately to ones pocket. Needs and niceties can be prioritized. *Ed.*

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Railroad Happenings: or Semi-local events...

September 18, 2011- WISE Division Meeting, 12:30 PM Best Western Airport, 5105 S Howell Avenue across from Mitchell Field. Three Clinics TBA

Sept. 24-25, 2011- Green County Model RR Show & Swap Meet- Monroe, WI
Stateline Ice & Community Expo- 1632 4th Ave. W
<http://www.gcmrrinc.org>

October 1, 2011- NMRA Winnebagoland Division Fall Meet- Lakeshore Lanes- Sheboygan, WI Info at: www.wld-nmra.com

October 1, 2011- 2nd Annual Hope Train Club Show & Sale- Wesley Center
199 E. Jefferson St. Waupun, WI (920) 324-2350

October 15-16, 2011- Layout Open House- Railroad Lodge- SSSMRE- Sheboygan, WI 1001 N. 10th St. Food, Refreshments & Fun 10:00-4:00

October 15, 16, 2011 Cisco Junction Train Show, Cisco Center, 325 Eldon St Cisco, IL
Cisco in between Champaign & Decatur, IL: Tentative: Monticello RR Museum will operate 401 Steam Loco: contact Don@ciscojunction.com or 217-669-2261.

October 16, 2011 – WISE Division Meeting, Veterans Terrace, Burlington, WI

October 23, 2011- Cedar Creek Central Model RR show & Swap Meet Circle B Recreation -6261 Hwy 60- Cedarburg Info at www.lammscape.com/cedarcreek

November 5, 2011- Winnebagoland Division Annual Operating Session- Waupaca, WI
Info at: www.wld-nmra.com

November 12-13, 2011 – Trainfest, State Fair Park Expo Bldg: West Allis, WI Note:
Early Bird Tickets are \$8 at Milwaukee area hobby shops Greenfield News and Hobbies- Greenfield, Hiawatha Hobbies- Waukesha, Silver Spring Hobby & Games- Milwaukee, Sommerfeld's Trains- Butler, South Side Trains- Milwaukee, Walthers Terminal Hobby. Outside metro Milwaukee: EngineHouse Service- Green Bay, WI, J & D Whistle Stop- Sheboygan, WI, Lombard Hobbies- Lombard, IL, Madison Hobby Stop- Madison, WI (more later).

February 18, 2012 Mad City Train Show, Madison, WI.

April 28, 2012 Title Town Show in AM and Packer Hall of Fame or National Railway Museum in PM (a WISE Div'n Bus Trip). Contact Sueoseland@aol.com for more info.

REMINDER

We are a 100% NMRA club

A few of our readers while enjoying the benefits of our little troop have not paid their NMRA dues at National. We'd appreciate when you do pay your dues that you send us a note stating your NMRA number and expiration date (as you see it). We ask a ten-dollar per year membership in TLMRC (pay in Oct - Dec for the next

year. If you join us mid year then no charge; however, we understand if you can't afford to pay (times are tough).. in which case send me a note saying something along the lines... I enjoy model-railroading, life and keep up the good work and by the way: I've paid my NMRA dues and my number is #123.. You will not be pestered by TLMRC. If you live outside the area of Three Lakes, please send us an article in lieu of TLMRC dues: but do join NMRA. We all enjoy reading about the other guy and broadening our knowledge.

Send your TLMRC \$10 membership check to 1162 Medicine Lake Lodge Road, Three Lakes, WI 54562. If you live outside the USA, no charge!

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NMRA Membership:

by R.G. Blocks

Encourage a friend. Sign up a pal. NMRA is the lever arm that helps the manufacturing arm of our hobby doing things to a common standard. The NMRA seal that you see on product at the hobby shop is an indication that products will work together. Our TLMRC exists to reflect our support for that standard and help its members support each other thru our mutual education.

This year we'll be working on a variety of tasks. Clinics to be sure, newsletter articles, joint meetings with other clubs, perhaps a trip or two to visit others. Topics we've heard need expression include: Free Mo, track laying, turnout (switch) construction, signals and their meanings, foam rock carving, Mountain building, Bridge building, trips folks take involving rail all a continuation of last year.

The Three Lakes Model Railroad Club Website is up and running at www.tlmrc.org. Contact Paul A Wussow at his email address: PaulWussow@WindyPines.net if you'd like to have a link to your own personal rail empire on this educational railroad portal.

View from the Tower

by Paul Wussow, Superintendent

Here it is the day after Labor Day and I am at my desk to work on planning fall and winter events for our group. As the fall starts to nip the air and the leaves will soon be turning, it is time to get back into our modeling. Over the summer I have been testing some ideas and reporting on others in the newsletters and at chance gatherings around the area. Roger and I have done some flying over the old SOO Line main to answer questions that we have been asked and all of this has generated ideas of things to do for the upcoming season.

Making Tracks or the construction of turnouts, gauntlet tracks (maybe scale tracks) and crossings have been tested and some results are reported in Teaching Roger to build a Turnout (see Sept 2011 Turn). This may be a clinic with hands on activities this year.

Bridging the gap is another activity that is easy for some and a challenge for others. How do you build a bridge across some kind of space? This topic has lead me to explore the different bridges (and gaps) along the Thunder Lake and the SOO Line's current and past trackage. There are many different types of bridges crossing roads, rivers and lakes on standard and narrow gauge lines in our local area. While I have photos and some measurements of these bridges most are easy to access by land or boat to measure and take photos that may be turned into drawings and then constructed into models.

Interlocking Towers have been a topic of discussion and are always an interesting addition to any layout. For this topic I have two areas to cover from other divisions I have the workings of Interlocking towers over the years. This would be a clinic on the operations of towers and how they were used and evolved over the years until they have been all but replaced. From Armstrong levers to modern computer signaling guarding the crossing of rails in a failsafe manor remains important.

As A project to go with this topic I have borrowed from my wife and her knitting group.

A **Kit-A-Long** project building an Atlas Interlocking Tower where we all start with the basic kit and build sections during the same time while sharing our ideas and experiences at meetings and on line. I picked the Atlas kit because it is inexpensive, is available in HO and O scale and has: brick and mortar, wood, and tile construction. With the use of some scratch parts or additional kit parts a kit that with just paint and weathering is great looking may become a contest winner. So starting in October I will start posting a weekly project step for working on the Atlas Tower. An interactive blog will be setup so that modelers may report on the web site their progress or questions. Guests from around the world will be invited to Kit-A-Long with us in Three Lakes on this project. I have arranged with Dale, at the Choo Choo Store, to have kits available to the club at a project price.

So these are some of my ideas for the year that most may be done in your own shops and shared on line. I hope that you all have other ideas that we can add or substitute to make this a fulfilling modeling year.