

The BN Expediter

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The official publication of the **FRIENDS OF THE BURLINGTON NORTHERN RAILROAD**, the historical society focused on the BURLINGTON NORTHERN RAILROAD and the BURLINGTON NORTHERN SANTA FE RAILWAY

Friends of the Burlington Northern Railroad

PO Box 271, West Bend, WI 53095-0271

www.fobnr.org

A Not-For-Profit Corporation
Registered in the State of Idaho

The Friends of the Burlington Northern Railroad (FOBNR) was formed to gather, preserve, and share information about the history, current operations, and future development of the Burlington Northern Railroad and its successors. It follows the evolution of the railroad from its inception in 1970 with the merger of the Great Northern; Northern Pacific; Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy; and the Spokane Portland and Seattle Railroads, along with the 1980 acquisition of the Frisco. We are a 501c(3) non-profit corporation.

The purpose of the FOBNR is educational. We wish to perpetuate the history of the Burlington Northern Railroad and its successors. We seek to collect and preserve any materials which help establish or illustrate the life, conditions, events, and activities of the railroad. We will disseminate this information through the publication of a newsletter, establishment of a web site, by maintaining an archive, and by conducting an annual convention somewhere along the lines operated by the railroad. We may also publish information in other media and may restore and operate historical railway equipment.

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Kristopher Johnson

Regular membership is \$25.00/year; Sustaining membership is \$50.00/year; Junior membership (16 and under) is \$10.00/year. The Membership year is from January 1 to December 31. Send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the address above for more information.

The FOBNR is not supported by, nor affiliated in any way with, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Co., its subsidiaries or affiliates.

The BN Expediter

The *BN Expediter* is published four times a year and is included with membership in the **Friends of the Burlington Northern Railroad**. Manuscripts, photographs and information are welcomed for publication. Materials are submitted with the understanding that no monetary compensation will be paid upon publication. Items will be returned only if requested. Otherwise they will go into the archives.

Anything published in *The BN Expediter* (including the classifieds), must be **focused** on the Burlington Northern Railroad, from the 1970 merger on. Information and/or pictures that give historical perspective or context are acceptable (e.g., pre-merger road numbers). The disposition of a locomotive, other piece of equipment or property is also acceptable. Further information is available from the Editor.

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Feature Articles Needed

The *BN Expediter* is currently looking for articles for future issues.

All types of articles are needed covering all aspects of the Burlington Northern railroad from modeling to rolling stock to locomotives, from the merger to the present.

-Kristopher Johnson

Photos Needed

The *BN Expediter* is currently looking for photographs of the Yellowstone Division from 1973 to 1980.

Need photos of regular freight, grain and coal trains. Need photos taken in and around all major yards and terminals within the Division

-Editor

New Members

Frederick Theiss 10-029
19115 Club Rim Drive
Canyon, TX 79015

Robert E. King 11-007
1000 Cold Harbor Drive
Roswell, GA 30075

Al Christianson 10-031
32500 380th St NW
Donnybrook, ND 58734

Douglas Geiger 11-008
701 South Terry Street
Longmont, CO 80501

Mike Camp 11-001
644 Ashland Creek Drive
Ashland, OR 97520

Rodney Black 11-009
149 South Carter Court
Louisville, CO 80027

Michael Nelson 11-005
Hc 64 Box 50
Gordon, NE 69343

Cover

*Mr. Downing at the James J. Hill memorial in
Superior, WI in June 2005.*

-John Gruber photo

In This Issue

President's Message	3
2010 Expense Report	3
Mr. Robert Downing	4

President's Message



There are three brief messages that I want to share with you as I write this tonight. The first is that the website and this issue of the Expediter include news and registration for our upcoming Annual Convention in Gillette.

This looks to be one of our best conventions ever (certainly surpassing the one I organized last year). Kent Charles has spearheaded the effort to put together a tremendous convention that will include railfanning, tours of several large mines, as well as a family event with a historic train ride and the possibility of side trips to several of the nearby sites. As you look at the things you want to do this summer, please keep this one on your list! Some of the mine tours are only available in this setting, and if your desire is to see BNSF trains, there is nowhere on the system with this kind of train frequency! It also is a great opportunity to meet other people interested in your hobby and to learn what experiences and expertise they can share. Please consider a trip to Gillette this June — you will not be disappointed!

Secondly, you may notice that Kent's name is not on the ballot for the FOBNR Board this year. Kent has decided to step down, at least temporarily, while he relocates with his wife from the Denver area to Maricopa, AZ (although I am not sure what BNSF line runs through Maricopa — I think it is that "other" railroad). Kent has been a tremendous asset to the Board over the years he has served, and a tremendous asset to the organization in general. He did the vast majority of the work to organize the convention in Denver, has been very active in promoting the placement of information on the website, and has actually scanned in a tremendous amount of material. He will be sorely missed and we want to give him our thanks!

The last message is more of a personal nature. I am actually writing this from the ICU at our local hospital where my wife is, fortunately at this point, starting to improve from a very serious illness. At the same time I read in one of the N scale modeling magazines about a donation of un-built kits and unused track and turnouts that a club received from the estate of one of its members. He had apparently been planning a large and complex layout for a long period of time, but died after a very short illness before he was able to do anything with the materials he had stockpiled.

Both of these combine to make me again realize that, while sometimes we have to postpone things we want to do briefly, we should not stay in that mode any longer than is absolutely necessary. Whether it is going out to your favorite train-watching spots with your camera or actually starting that layout you have planned for so long, get going with it! Take the time to actually do those things you want to do and gain those experiences that will mean so much to you in the future.

Maybe that even means signing up for that FOBNR Convention that you have thought about doing for so long! See you in Gillette!

FOBNR Expense Report

For period ending December 31, 2010

Balance on hand, beginning January 1 st	8,497.78
Revenue:	10,880.97
Expenses:	8,011.23
Balance on hand, end:	11,367.52

Revenue	Year To Date
Dues	
Regular:	4,525.00
Sustaining:	3,000.00
Youth:	10.00
Donations:	1,164.47
Company Store:	940.50
Single Issue Sales:	116.00
Convention:	1,125.00
Misc.:	0.00
Total:	10,880.97
Expenses	
Expediter	
Printing:	2,748.99
Postage:	1,341.96
Postal Permit:	0.00
Honorarium:	800.00
Misc.	130.32
Board of Directors	
Meeting:	43.69
General	
Printing:	117.93
Postage:	150.37
Box Rent:	70.00
Misc.:	408.27
Supplies:	662.69
Company Store:	311.14
Election:	44.37
Convention:	904.76
PayPal Fees:	164.89
Website Provider:	111.85
Total:	8,011.23
Assets	
Cash:	16,054.11
Office Equipment:	243.64
Prepaid Expenses	
(PayPal fees):	67.90
Due from PayPal:	578.77
Checks to be Deposited:	550.00
Liabilities	
Unearned 2011 dues:	4,725.00
Unearned 2012 dues:	725.00
Unearned 2013 dues:	175.00
Unearned 2014 dues:	25.00
Society Equity:	11,844.42
Jeff Hendricks, Treasurer	

ROBERT W. DOWNING

ONE OF THE BEST AND BRIGHTEST

Earl J. Currie

ROBERT W. DOWNING BIOGRAPHY

1935

Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering, Yale University

1935 – 38

Maintenance-of-Way, Pennsylvania Railroad

1938

Assistant to Superintendent, Great Northern, Whitefish, MT

1938 – 41

District Roadmaster, Great Northern, Whitefish, MT

1941 – 45

Service in U.S. Navy

1945 – 46

District Roadmaster, Great Northern, Great Falls, MT

1946 – 47

Trainmaster, Great Northern, Great Falls, MT

1947 – 49

Trainmaster, Glasgow, MT

1950 – 51

Trainmaster, Spokane, WA

1951 – 54

Trainmaster, Kelly Lake, MN

1954 – 56

Division Superintendent, Minot, ND

1956 – 58

Assistant to the President, St. Paul, MN

1958 – 67

Vice President, Executive Department, St. Paul, MN

1967 – 71

Executive Vice President, Great Northern and Burlington Northern, St. Paul

1971 – 73

President, Burlington Northern, St. Paul

1973 – 76

Vice Chairman and Chief Operating Officer, Burlington Northern, St. Paul

for maintenance and operations and for business ethics and general conduct across the company.

In the 34 years Bob lived after retiring, he continued to contribute to the rail industry and take an interest in many of its people. He served as a role model for railroading in all departments and for all levels of the organization. Bob was among the very best in terms of character, competency and job knowledge. He served as a mentor, coach and friend in the time and support he showed to the interests and needs of many. In sharing his knowledge and insight, Bob helped others in their career development, including many who reached senior levels of management in Burlington Northern and today's BNSF Railway.

Bob also shared and passed along his knowledge of history of the Great Northern and Burlington Northern through the writings and presentations he made to the Great Northern Railway Historical Society, the Lexington Group and in information he submitted to various publications. We are fortunate he was willing and able for so many years to document the history and legacy of the railroad companies he served.

Bob Downing demonstrated that a senior executive could be effective without applying such tactics as management by fear and intimidation in giving direction to people. Even with his high level of ability and vast knowledge, Bob was willing to listen and consider the ideas of others. He did not belittle them, but rather, made everyone feel they were valuable and appreciated by the company. People applied their talents and time to the work because they liked the character of the company, and not because they felt they were forced to work under a regime they did not like.

We were very fortunate to have leadership of this caliber at Burlington Northern in its first ten years together with the commitment to increase in capacity and upgrading all aspects of the company's functions in its early years under Bob Downing. Because of that Burlington Northern established a strong foundation for long term success.

While Bob Downing made many significant and lasting contributions during his long career as an officer, I believe there are six major accomplishments for which he deserves much of the credit:

1. For leadership in developing and implementing the operating plan for Burlington Northern upon merger of the Great Northern, Northern Pacific, Burlington and the Spokane, Portland and Seattle railways.
2. For persuading the Board of Burlington Northern (together with L.W. Menk, CEO of Burlington Northern at the time) to commit \$2 billion for expanding capacity and upgrading the railroad to handle the large tonnages of low sulfur coal to be mined in the Powder River Basin.

R.W. DOWNING

ONE OF THE BEST AND BRIGHTEST

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps more than anyone Bob Downing deserves credit for Burlington Northern's early success. Of course, it was a team effort that involved many other notables of that time, among them John Budd, Louis Menk and Norman Lorentzen. However, Bob was the leader of the team that built the operating plan that would be implemented on "M-Day".

Soon after the merger Bob set the course for expanding capacity and upgrading the railroad to meet the challenge to move higher tonnages of coal out of the Powder River Basin. At the same time Bob was a leader in setting high standards

3. For development of a plan for management succession that would carry Burlington Northern through its first ten years and beyond.
4. For setting the standards and culture of Burlington Northern, right from the time of merger, as a company that would treat its people with respect, have high standards of ethics and conduct, and provide opportunity for employees to develop competency and qualify for advancement. Burlington Northern would establish and build a reputation for safety, quality of service, and well-maintained equipment and physical plant.
5. For the success Bob and John Budd (President of the Great Northern from 1951 to 1970) had in completing virtually all of the line improvement projects (for reducing curvature, grades and distances) set up under the direction of Ralph Budd in the 1920's to help make the Great Northern and the SP&S among the best engineered railroads in North America. As a result of these projects, much of the preferred route (Minneapolis – Seattle and Portland) for the merged company is made up of line segments owned by the Great Northern and SP&S railways.
6. The design and construction of a large, modern hump classification yard (named Gavin Yard) on the Great Northern at Minot, ND, completed in 1956.

MERGER PLANNING

Planning for the merger of the northern lines, the Burlington and the SP&S began in 1956, following a meeting between John M. Budd and Robert S. McFarlane, President of the

John Strauss, Jr. and Robert Downing on the COLUMBIA RIVER on the rear of Amtrak #8. -Jessie Strauss photo

Northern Pacific. Budd promptly designated Bob Downing to head up the planning effort for the Great Northern. Doug Shoemaker, Chief Engineer, represented the Northern Pacific. Teams of officers from each of the three large railroads to be merged were set up in each department to compare the operating and maintenance practices in effect in each company and to establish the staffing needs for a merged company.

A transportation consulting firm from New Jersey, Wyer, Dick and Company, was hired to coordinate the development of the operating plan, which would include the designation of the preferred route for transcontinental service, consolidation of terminals and mechanical facilities, and determination of where connections would have to be built to link the line segments designated as the preferred route and at other common points. The study would also include estimating the opportunities for increased revenue from longer hauls and the preparation of new train service schedules. The planning effort begun in 1956 was carried on for the next 14 years, right up to the date the long-anticipated merger occurred.

Planning was conducted very intensely with broad participation from all departments, at all levels, and in all areas across the system of each of the component roads. Because the plan for operations under merger was thorough and had such broad participation, it was well understood and accepted by the time merger occurred. Much of the credit for the quality of the plan goes to Bob Downing and the team of managers he was a part of. While a number of key participants in the planning process retired before the date of the merger, Bob was a leader in the process from start to finish. As Bob stated in a presentation he made in 2009, "We went out of our way to ensure that everybody in our companies understood that this was not a takeover. It was a merger of equals, that everybody would be treated equally, and that we respected the way they were doing things."

At the time of the merger, Bob was appointed Executive Vice President, and one year into the merger, he was named President. In 1973, he was made Vice Chairman and Chief Operating Officer. After retiring in 1976, Bob continued to serve on the Board of Directors for three more years.

At the time of merger, there was much concern among investors, customers, some employees and the general public on whether a company as large as Burlington Northern could be managed successfully. Much of this skepticism was due to the bad experience following merger of the Pennsylvania and New York Central railroads in 1968. Also, a number of other eastern railroads and some Midwestern railroads were struggling to survive. In contrast to what happened in the Penn Central merger, Burlington Northern came into existence more smoothly, without major disruptions to service,



and with all employees knowing what was expected of them starting on M-Day. All of the detailed planning that had gone into the operating plan paid off. It was a real credit to Bob Downing and everyone who had had a part in the planning effort.

Immediately upon merger, the Engineering Department moved ahead with plans it had already prepared for getting the large structures built that would connect the lines of the Great Northern, Northern Pacific and SP&S at Spokane, and the GN and NP at Sandpoint, Idaho. An even larger project undertaken very soon after the merger was the construction of a large freight classification yard on the north side of Minneapolis.

Minneapolis – Casselton

The Northern Pacific's line was designated the preferred route. It was a high capacity line, all of it with double track except for 31 miles of single track under CTC in central Minnesota. The double track portion had an automatic block signal system governing movement in one direction on each track. The Great Northern's single track line was under CTC for 191 miles and under a single track automatic block system for 80 miles (between Breckenridge and Nolan, 24 miles northwest of Casselton). The track and bridges were in excellent condition on the lines of both companies. The Great Northern's

line had the advantage of bypassing the somewhat congested area of seven miles between Dilworth, Moorhead and Fargo. Overall, the Northern Pacific's line was more favorable due to the greater capacity it had as a largely double track railroad.

Casselton – Sandpoint

Within North Dakota, the Northern Pacific line had several segments with a grade of one per cent. On the Great Northern's line, the maximum grade was 0.4 per cent as far as Minot, and 0.65 per cent between Minot and Williston. Across Montana, the Northern Pacific line had two mountain crossings, Bozeman Pass with grades of 1.9 (westbound)

and 1.8 percent (eastbound), and over Mullan Pass with grades of 2.2 per cent (westbound) and 1.4 per cent (eastbound). On the Great Northern's line, the grades were much more favorable, 1.0 per cent (westbound) and 1.8 per cent (eastbound) and with only one mountain crossing. All of the Great Northern's line was single track under CTC, with the exception of short segments of double track near Williston and Whitefish, and on the 1.8 per cent grade over the Rocky Mountains. On the Northern Pacific's line, the line was entirely single track with ABS as far west as Laurel. West of Laurel, the line was single track with CTC except for 93 miles of single track ABS between DeSmet and Paradise (on the line with the river grade via St. Regis).

Sandpoint – Spokane

The route of the Northern Pacific was more favorable, primarily because of being located on a viaduct through downtown Spokane, thereby having no interference from grade crossings. It also had more favorable grades, 0.6 per cent compared to the one per cent grades on the Great Northern through Spokane. The Northern Pacific's line was located adjacent to a large parcel of land 20 miles east of Spokane that was available for construction of a new hump classification yard.



Mark Entrop (left), Robert Downing (center) and Earl Currie at the Hill memorial in Superior. -John Gruber photo

DESIGNATION OF THE PREFERRED ROUTE

The single most important decision to be made in the plan for train operation after merger was the designation of the preferred route for transcontinental main line service between Minneapolis and the Pacific Northwest. Once that decision was made, plans could be made for the relocation of crews, for building the connections needed to link segments of the preferred route, to develop train schedules and to determine where additional capacity would be needed to handle the combined traffic of the Great Northern and Northern Pacific.

Many factors had to be analyzed in determining which line segments would constitute the preferred route, among them the grades (especially in mountainous territory), curvature, train speeds allowed, the elapsed running times for priority freight trains, the type of train control (signal) system in effect, the state of maintenance on the line and the distance between principle points.

Following is a brief summary comparing the characteristics of the transcontinental route of the Great Northern and Northern Pacific between principle terminals and junctions:

Spokane – Seattle

The Great Northern's line was 66 miles shorter than the Northern Pacific and had the advantage of CTC in service. However, it had the disadvantage of a tunnel of 7.79 miles which became a restriction on capacity after the traffic of both companies was consolidated on one line, together with the large increase in international business that came about in the 1980's. Both routes had grades of 2.2 per cent over the Cascade Mountains. The Northern Pacific's line had the disadvantage of clearances in the Stampede Tunnel too restrictive for tri-level automobile rack cars and intermodal shipments using double stack containers, two rapidly growing segments of business.

Bob Downing and the merger planning team had to evaluate the characteristics of the alternate routes in determining which would constitute the preferred route across the northern tier of states. In addition to this analysis, careful consideration had to be given to labor issues, the concerns of local communities, relocation of crew headquarters and concerns of shippers who would not be located on the preferred route. Train schedules had to be developed that would reflect the advantages the merged company had in operating over the preferred route of the merged company in comparison with service on the Great Northern or Northern Pacific, and the service offered by their competitors.

In the service plan, it was decided to operate one priority train daily in each direction to handle freight originating and terminating at intermediate points that were not on the preferred route. Also, the Northern Pacific line via Missoula was designated the preferred route for traffic moving between Kansas City and the Pacific Northwest, instead of using the Great Northern line via Great Falls.

TWIN CITIES TERMINAL

At the time of the 1970 merger, there were 11 yards in operation in the Twin Cities terminal. Four of these yards were large classification yards in which trains were made up for outbound movement and for bringing trains in with cars for local industries, interchange and for connection to another train. To integrate the operations of the three railroads to improve service and reduce costs, a high priority of the merger planning team was to determine a location where a large, modern hump classification yard could be built. Fortunately, property owned by the Northern Pacific on the north side of Minneapolis (together with some adjacent parcels that could to be acquired) was large enough. Its location along what would become the preferred route of Burlington Northern made the Northtown property ideally suited for construction of a large yard.

This was a vital component of the merger planning effort undertaken by Bob Downing and others on the planning team. It was a project needed more than any other to integrate operations of the Great Northern, Northern Pacific and Burlington and thereby achieve the benefits of the merger. The savings achieved with the new yard in the Twin Cities far exceeded what was anticipated in the merger plan.

SPOKANE TERMINAL

Another vital part of the merger plan was the consolidation and restructuring of routes through Spokane. The merger plan prepared by the planning team called for construction of a long, high bridge over Latah Creek on the west side of Spokane. Getting that new bridge in service in 1972 made it possible to connect the preferred route segment of the Northern Pacific with the Great Northern's line to Seattle and the SP&S line to

In September 1995, train 7 leaves Spokane crossing the bridge over Latah Creek. -Kristopher Johnson photo



Portland. It allowed removal of much of the Great Northern's main line that crossed several major streets at grade in downtown Spokane. It also freed up property for Expo 74, a world exposition put on by the city of Spokane.

Bob Downing provided an interesting sidelight on this project in a speech he gave at the convention of the Great Northern Railway Historical Society in 1986. Bob mentioned that Ralph Budd, who had been President of the Great Northern in the 1920's, visited his son, John Budd, then President of the Great Northern, several times during the merger planning process. On one visit, Bob told Ralph Budd about the plan for consolidation and revision of lines in Spokane. Bob said, "I noticed a little smile on his face. Budd observed that when he was Chief Engineer of the SP&S in 1907, nearly 50 years before, he had proposed building a bridge in exactly the same location....If we had just known to ask Mr. Budd (first) we would not have had to study this so thoroughly. That is what knowing about history can do for you."

After the new bridge and connections were in service, Bob Downing continued to work with the Union Pacific and community leaders in Spokane on the terms for UP to run its trains on BN's viaduct through downtown Spokane and on both the Northern Pacific and the SP&S lines in the direction of Pasco and the Columbia River. Accomplishing this freed up additional property for redevelopment and for Expo 74.

To connect the track from the west end of the new bridge over Latah Creek with the Great Northern main line, a new line of six miles was built (Latah Junction-Lyons). The new line, commonly referred to as the "cemetery line change," is five miles shorter, and at the same grade of 0.8 per cent.



Sand Creek bridge in Sandpoint, ID, part of the line that connects the old NP to the old GN. -John Gruber photo.

BRIDGE AT SANDPOINT

The third major project required to link the Northern Pacific and Great Northern lines and create the preferred route was the construction of a new connection at Sandpoint, Idaho. The new connection was 1.1 miles in length, including a bridge of 997 feet over the Sand Creek and the Union Pacific Railroad.

OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE OPERATING PLAN

In addition to the large projects covered above, merger plans had to be developed for other common points, among them Sioux City, Duluth-Superior, Laurel, Seattle, Portland-Vancou-

ver, Fargo-Dilworth, Helena, Butte and Grand Forks. Over the entire system, plans had to be made for consolidation of facilities, yards, office buildings and shops for maintenance of cars and locomotives. Detailed train schedules, together with new instructions for train makeup (blocks) had to be prepared for the entire system. This included adjustment of the work force needed under a consolidated operation, where traffic was shifted to the preferred route and where lines were either abandoned or operations curtailed where parallel or duplicate lines had been in service.

ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE AND DESIGNATION OF MANAGEMENT TEAM

Because of concerns over the size of the merged company, and the very broad territory it would cover, the decision was made to establish six operating regions, each headed by a Vice President. The regions would have responsibility for line operations and marketing functions, and would report directly to the Executive Department at headquarters. Before the merger, each of the three large railroads that made up Burlington Northern had two regions, designated "Lines East" and "Lines West," for operations and maintenance functions. Each region was headed by a General Manager who reported to the Vice President – Operations. In the merged company, the marketing function was added to the responsibility of the regions.

The regions had the authority and accountability for dealing with local service issues, the implementation of operating changes contained in the merger plan, and handling issues raised by employees and community leaders. By decentralizing the authority to deal with such matters, it was felt that responses could be made much faster, and by managers who were close to the point of action. The executives and staffs at the General Office would then be able to concentrate more on forming system standards, policies, plans and overall coordination of marketing and operating functions.

The Vice Presidents who headed the regions were experienced executives who had advanced through various departments, among them Operations, Marketing, Administration and Labor Relations. In the past, all of the heads of the regions in each road (designated "Lines East" and "Lines West" had come up through the Operating Department. In time, the regional organization evolved to a more "standard" operating organization, but at the time of the merger, the concept under which the regions were established better met the needs for fast, effective resolution of problems, and helped to speed up the implementation of merger plans in all functions.

The regional concept was expensive at first since it required a large staff at each headquarters office. However, the early success at Burlington Northern proved it was worth the investment. Senior executives such as Bob Downing took a long term view in making the investment in the regional concept, to help insure a smooth transition rather than trying to minimize expenses right from the days of start-up. The same approach was taken in the consolidation of facilities, the transfer of people and the closing of duplicate shops, yards and facilities. All of that kind of change got done in an orderly way, and without the reckless abandon that has taken place in some of the other railroad mergers of the past 40 years.

In designating the heads of departments, Budd, Menk and the planning team made sure there was a "balance of power" among the three large railroads that were to form the new company. In many corporate mergers the executives of only one company are named to the top positions. In the case of Burlington Northern, that was not done at any level of management. In describing the process of selection of Vice Presidents to head the two largest departments, Bob Downing recalled that while Norman Lorentzsen of the Northern Pacific was named Vice President - Operations, Mal Scanlon of the Great Northern headed the Marketing Department. Similar "trade-offs" were made in the naming of the heads of the smaller departments.

There also was a balance in the "heritage" of those named Vice Presidents of the six regions. In this way, Burlington Northern did not have a "red team" and a "green team," as happened in the merger that formed the Penn Central. From M-Day and going forward, we were "Burlington Northern," with everyone on the team, and no in-groups or out-groups. We looked ahead, not back. We focused on making the new company successful. Getting this spirit established was a real tribute to the merger planning team, and of course, to Budd and Menk. They set a good example for the entire organization in the way they carried out their responsibilities. No power struggles ensued and there was no evidence of favoritism in the selection and promotion of managers, or in the way that employees were treated, no matter which of the four companies they had worked for.

The merger was delayed by the ICC's decision in 1966 to not approve it, followed by four years of challenges in the courts, and working out settlements with those opposed to the merger. This delay provided additional time to refine the plans for implementation. It gave us more time to get used to the idea of working together rather than competing. Getting to this level of acceptance of an impending merger was aided by relationships that operating people of the Great Northern and Northern Pacific had developed through joint ownership of the Burlington and the SP&S. Also, the operations of all four companies had been integrated at several locations by James J. Hill, e.g., terminals at the Twin Cities, Laurel, Sioux City, Spokane, Seattle, Tacoma and Portland. By having to work together in these joint facilities, operating officers at all levels were well acquainted and together, they and the merger planning team had made the plans for full consolidation of operations.

Bob Downing and the merger planning team should also be recognized for the courage they had in forming implementing agreements together with the labor unions. In agreeing to guarantee the level of wages paid to each employee, and to grant job security, the merged company took on a very costly burden. However, by granting this level of security in jobs and wages, we had the flexibility needed to implement the operating plan. This allowed train crews and switch crews to shift over to the yards and the routes that were designated the "preferred route." We had to pay employees for any difference in pay they earned after the merger compared with a pre-merger "test period," provided they worked the highest paying job their seniority would permit.

Again, this part of the plan for implementation was expensive at first, but without it, the full benefits of merger would not have been realized for a much longer time. The rate of attrition

was high enough to greatly reduce the "make whole" payments within a few years. The growth in business after merger soon began to absorb many of the "excess" employees who had job protection. For the long term, the decisions made by the merger planning team on labor agreements paid off handsomely.

It took courage on the part of Bob Downing and other senior executives to be willing to take criticism from some investors and other critics of the rail industry for having a high cost operation for a few years after Burlington Northern was formed. The test of time has validated the decisions they made in planning for the merger.

SERVICE TO THE POWDER RIVER BASIN

In 1974, Burlington Northern made a commitment to invest \$2 billion to expand its capacity and upgrade major parts of its system to handle the large tonnages of low sulfur coal that many electric companies began to purchase from newly opened mines in the Powder River Basin in Wyoming and Montana. The coal would be hauled long distances to power plants in the midwestern and southwestern parts of the country. There were many times that Bob Downing recounted the story of Burlington Northern's decision to raise and invest the \$2 billion to accomplish what was needed.

Bob and L.W. Menk, Chairman of the Board had to sell Burlington Northern's Board on the merits of making such a large investment at a time when the railroad industry was not held in high favor by the investment community. Some Directors were skeptical of making further investments in the railroad side of Burlington Northern. They preferred to make investments in developments that would increase revenue from the company's resource holdings. In making the commitment to invest \$2 billion to move the coal, Menk, Downing and the Board "bet the company."

By the time Bob Downing retired from the Board in 1979, the tonnage of coal handled was far in excess of the amount projected in 1974 when that commitment was made. Coal tonnage increased another four-fold from 1979 to 2008. It was a resounding success by any measure. The returns from the investment made continued to be very impressive. This success transformed Burlington Northern into an industry leader. It provided opportunity for employment and advancement for thousands of railroaders. Without the coal, some line segments would have remained light density lines. The company would not have had the leverage that a high density operation provided because of the economies of scale inherent in the railroad business.

During the years Bob Downing served as Executive Vice President and as President, he spent a great deal of time out on the railroad. With the knowledge and experience he had in maintenance of way, he had the ability to assess the extent of upgrading needed on any line segment. He could also assess the quality of work being done as well as the rate of productivity of the gangs and the managers responsible for the work. By putting such a strong emphasis on getting the track, bridge and signal work done, Bob energized the entire Burlington Northern organization to support and stand behind the effort. The style of leadership Bob applied to this unprecedented challenge and opportunity set the stage for successful continuation of this transformation of Burlington Northern in its second decade.

It is interesting to speculate on what might have happened if the Board had decided not to approve the \$2 billion in 1974. One way or another, the immense deposits of low sulfur coal in the Powder River Basin had to move to coal-burning electric power plants. The power companies had been mandated by law to reduce sulfur dioxide and nitrous oxide emissions. Without demonstration of a commitment and ability to act on the part of Burlington Northern, the electric power industry might have demanded government intervention. It could have been in the form of a government loan, or a move by a consortium of power companies to acquire and operate the most vital line segments owned by Burlington Northern.

Quite likely, the Union Pacific would have stepped in, using the power of the track record it had made over its history and its financial strength as evidence it could take on such a large project. Union Pacific might have urged the government to require Burlington Northern to transfer ownership of the most critical line segments to it. Fortunately, Burlington Northern people rose to the occasion and got the job done.

LINE IMPROVEMENTS ON THE GREAT NORTHERN

Bob Downing often mentioned the instructions James J. Hill gave his operating and engineering managers, that if you have to accept some less than desirable characteristics at the time a line is built, always have a plan on how it should be fixed or upgraded later when money is available to do it. In following Hill's mandate, by 1970, 40 per cent of the line between Havre and Seattle (about 850 miles) was no longer in its original location. In 1920, the Great Northern prepared a "master plan" for line improvements it would continue to make.

John Budd and Bob Downing continued the policy of selecting each year a segment of line which was troublesome, in terms of its restriction on capacity and train speed, or because of its high maintenance cost. A project for a line change would then be set up to bring that area up to a standard

"as good as the best." The result of these year to year line improvements was a vastly improved property. Each such project, if looked at singly, may not always have had a high return on investment. However, when looking at all of the improvements made over the entire main line over a number of years, the aggregate amount of reduced track maintenance cost and the improved train performance from these line changes is impressive. The Great Northern had a policy throughout its history of undertaking such projects, year after year. The advantages gained from these investments have carried over to today's BNSF Railway.

GN Line Change, Wheelock – Epping, ND

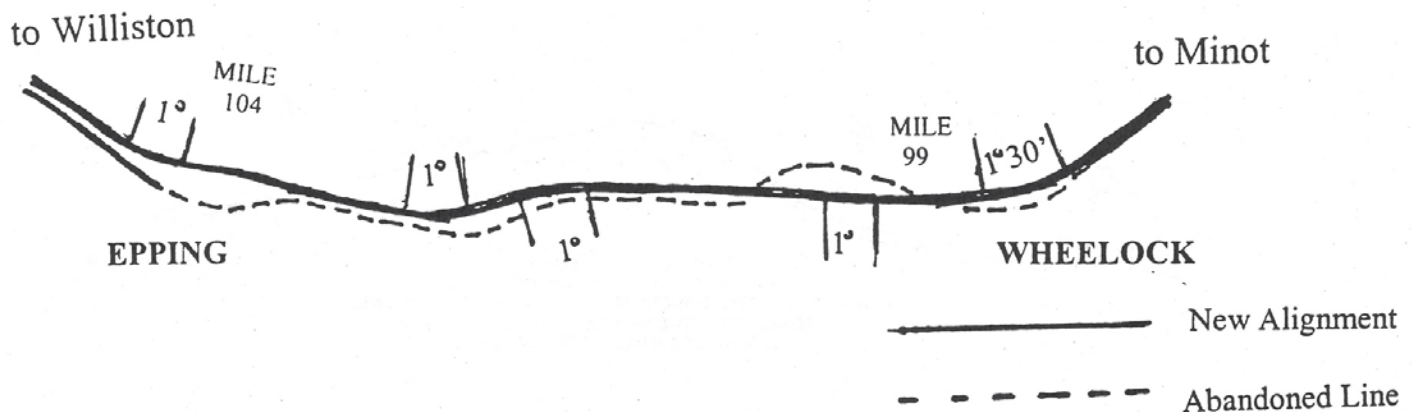
This line change, located on the main line between Minot and Williston, was completed in 1959. Five curves were eliminated within the five miles of the project. Maximum curvature was reduced from three degrees and 11 minutes, to one degree and 30 minutes. (Source: Great Northern Railway Co. Annual Report, 1959, page 11).

Line improvements were made even in North Dakota, where the terrain was not as severe as in western Montana or Washington. While Bob was working as Division Superintendent of the Minot Division in the 1950's a line change was made between Minot and Williston (see drawing below) in which five curves were eliminated within five miles. Maximum curvature was reduced from three degrees, 11 minutes, to one degree, 30 minutes.

Bob Downing told me that by the time of the Burlington Northern merger in 1970, all but two of the line improvements on the Great Northern's master plan had been completed. One location not completed is between the Glacier Park station and Summit. In this area there are six curves of between three degrees and seven degrees that would have been lessened. This project would also have eliminated the "false summit" at

This line change, located on the main line between Minot and Williston, was completed in 1959. Five curves were eliminated within the five miles of the project. Maximum curvature was reduced from three degrees and 11 minutes, to one degree and 30 minutes. (Source: Great Northern Railway Co. Annual Report, 1959, page 11).

GN Line Change, Wheelock-Epping, ND



about milepost 1145.6, thereby reducing the grades of 1.1 per cent and 0.8 per cent.

Bob felt that if the BN merger of 1970 had not occurred, this project would likely have been carried out in the 1970's. In the years following the merger there was a heavy demand on capital for the projects vital to implementing the merger, such as the new hump yard in Minneapolis and the connections that had to be built in Spokane and Sandpoint. By the time those projects were completed, the demand for capital to expand capacity and upgrade the railroad to handle the large tonnages of coal from the Powder River Basin had to be given priority over other line improvements.

The other project not completed was the reduction in curvature in an area with five curves with short tangents between curves west of Vandalia in eastern Montana. Bob continued to hope that in time, this project also would rise high enough on BNSF's priority list of line improvement projects to be undertaken. In a letter Bob wrote me in August, 2005, he stated, "...it is a shame to have to reduce speed (to 50 MPH) in an area where much higher speed is easily possible for a long distance in both directions. I would think that a freight speed of 70 MPH for intermodal trains would be possible from Shelby to Bainville (375 miles) if the BNSF really wants to do it for truck competitive reasons."

CONSTRUCTION OF NEW YARD AT MINOT, ND

On several occasions Bob related the story of how John Budd assigned him the primary accountability for planning a new electronic classification yard a short distance east of Minot. At that time Bob held the position of Division Superintendent of the Minot Division. Budd had decided upon Minot as the location for a new yard since it was at the junction of the transcontinental main line and the line between Minot and the head-of-the-lakes (Duluth-Superior). With the limitations and inadequacies of its yards in the Twin Cities, the Great Northern needed to enhance its capability for car classification and train makeup that would reduce costs, improve service reliability and reduce overall transit times. Minot was judged as the best location for constructing a yard that would meet those needs.

It was early in the morning on an inspection trip being made by the Board of Directors that Bob first learned of the idea from Budd of building a new yard at Minot. Budd told Bob that the Directors would begin meeting in about 20 minutes and that Bob should give them a talk on why such a yard should be built. In an interview Bob gave a few years ago, he said "I was completely unprepared and had twenty minutes to think up what had to be said. I gave my little talk and it seemed to meet with approval. At least nobody objected or asked any embarrassing questions." After the meeting, Budd advised Bob that the Board authorized \$6.5 million to build the yard.

On the same trip, Budd used the floor on a business car to lay out a large number of train consists and charts he had gathered that showed the volume of cars moving in a sample period to various destinations and interchange points. Bob recalled with humor how the two of them (both Civil Engineers) got on their hands and knees to pore over lists of data on which the design of the new yard and its operating plan would be based. Budd told Bob he was in charge of developing the plan

for the track layout and that the yard should be built with the best technology available at that time. An engineering officer and staff would be assigned to work with Bob on the actual design. They visited yards that had been built by other railroads in recent years to learn current best practices in design and operations.

Gavin Yard (named for F.J. Gavin, who preceded Budd as President of the Great Northern) was opened in 1956. It was a fine facility and served the Great Northern's needs very well. In the operating plan for the merged company, Gavin Yard was to have a major role in classifying cars moving in both directions on the preferred route. It was believed that both Gavin Yard and the new hump yard to be built in Minneapolis would have roles that would complement each other. However, by 1982, it was found that the new yard in Minneapolis was so much more productive than anticipated, and better located, that Gavin Yard was no longer needed as a major classification yard. It was then reconfigured into a flat yard for making up local trains and staging unit grain trains.

The way in which John Budd delegated responsibility for a project as large and important as building a new classification yard clearly showed the level of confidence he had in Bob's ability. It was not surprising that Bob was soon brought into the General Office to work for Budd as Assistant to the President.

BOB DOWNING AS PRESIDENT OF BURLINGTON NORTHERN

Bob Downing deserves a great deal of credit and thanks for leading Burlington Northern into the future. He took a long range view in developing the operating and organizational plans for the 1970 merger. Perhaps better than anyone else, he foresaw the kind of company we would become if we made the level of investment necessary to move the large tonnages of coal to be mined in the Powder River Basin. From his background in engineering and roadway maintenance, Bob understood the need for a high quality physical plant, a well-maintained locomotive fleet and enough capacity to move the freight efficiently and safely. Bob imparted high standards quality for completion of track, signal and bridge work, whether it was routine maintenance and inspection, or work involving large capital expenditures. Keeping the railroad "clean" and looking respectable was a vital part of his mandate.

From the days he worked as Trainmaster on the Mesabi Range, Bob understood the economics and overall benefits of moving bulk commodities such as iron ore, coal and grain in unit trains. Even after becoming President, he spent a great deal of his time out on the railroad, helping to get these concepts across to people. He was a good teacher and he set a good example through consistency of purpose, clarity of direction, and by giving constructive feedback from his observations of how the work was being conducted, in any and all specialties.

Bob emphasized the importance of our understanding and communicating how the work was to be done as "the BN way," and not "our way" or "your way." This approach was effective in moving everyone ahead as "one team."

In the first few months following the 1970 merger, the amount of business Burlington Northern handled through Chicago increased dramatically. There was reason for concern

about what could be done to keep the operation fluid and to handle even greater volumes in interchange with the eastern railroads in the future. Bob Downing advised us that by 1980, our business through Chicago would double, over and above the large increase we had experienced in the two years since the merger occurred. After years of fighting to hold on to truck competitive business, and without experiencing much growth in traffic, it was exciting to hear how optimistic Bob was about our future.

Bob believed it was necessary for Burlington Northern to acquire the EJ&E (Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railroad) which would make it possible to handle large volume interchange movements at junctions outside of Chicago. We made trips over the EJ&E with its management, and negotiations were conducted with U.S. Steel for purchase of the EJ&E, but its price was far too high for us to consider. Over the years, the Chicago terminal became increasingly congested as volumes increased on most railroads. Congestion was relieved to some extent by the shift to intermodal service for general merchandise and to unit trains for most bulk commodities. Some railroads were able to shift their points of interchange to locations outside of Chicago. Also, improved productivity at the Belt Railroad Company of Chicago helped reduce the problem. About 35 years after BN had pursued acquisition of the EJ&E, the Canadian National became so frustrated with the problems of congestion in Chicago that they moved ahead to obtain control of the EJ&E. By this time, U.S. Steel had sold the EJ&E to other interests.

POST 1979

When Bob Downing retired from Burlington Northern as Vice Chairman – Chief Operating Officer in 1976 and from its Board in 1979, he was confident the company was headed in the right direction. The long-awaited merger had been implemented successfully, new business opportunities were being developed, and the next generation of senior executives who were being developed would put the company in good hands for years to come.

However, in the early 1980's, Bob and at least a few other senior executives of his "era" became disenchanted at some of the strategic and technical decisions made by the new management team that had been brought into Burlington Northern. Richard M. Bressler, BN's new CEO, had reorganized the company and put all of its business units, both railroad and non-railroad, under a

holding company structure. Richard C. Grayson, CEO of the Frisco Railroad, had been hired shortly before the merger of BN and the Frisco as head of BN's railroad company. In many trips or meetings I had with Bob from 1981, right up to his death, he would recount what he considered the worst of the decisions made in those years. The decisions affecting the railway company that upset him the most were to abandon the line of the former SP&S between Spokane and Pasco, to pass on the opportunity to expand capacity by restoring the Milwaukee Road's line over Snoqualmie Pass in Washington, to sell the main line between Laurel and Sandpoint to a third party, and to sever or terminate some talented, capable executives who had been identified for development for the senior management team of the next generation.

Bob did not subscribe to the idea developed in the early 1980's that Burlington Northern should own and operate only one line between any of its major terminals or junctions, when both lines would likely be needed to handle the increases in business expected in the future. He took a long term view of the business. He did not favor putting the kind of short term emphasis on quarter-by-quarter earnings, and reducing the asset base, that was the thinking of the new management team. He was particularly upset with the decision to abandon the low-grade, superbly engineered SP&S route between Spokane and Pasco, in favor of the line of the former Northern Pacific with its grades of one per cent and areas of heavy curvature. James J. Hill had built the SP&S line between

(page 12) Robert Downing in Havre, MT, July 1995. -Jessie Strauss photo

(page 13) An eastbound on the old SP&S at Hooper, WA.--Ed Austin photo



Spokane and Pasco, even though the Northern Pacific (which he controlled at that time) already had its own line in service. Because of the one per cent grades and heavy curvature the Northern Pacific had to contend with, Hill decided a new line should be built. Also, having both the NP and SP&S lines in service as "double track" provided the capacity needed in that corridor.

In one of the several letters he wrote me on this subject, Bob stated, "With directional running it was possible to go from Spokane to Pasco in about four hours via the SP&S and about five hours on the NP which had lots of heavy curves plus one per cent grades at Providence Hill. In contrast the SP&S had no curves over three degrees and a ruling grade of only 0.4 per cent. Predictably, the running time of trains (on the NP line), even with CTC increased, with many trains using nine or ten hours and there were frequent occasions when less important trains had to be 'dog caught'. I have been on the engine on several trips and it is really sad to be forced to go only 35 to 40 MPH in a number of places and see the numerous trucks sailing by on the parallel four lane highway at 60 to 70 MPH.

The Milwaukee's line over the Cascade Mountains had substantially lower grades than either of Burlington Northern's lines. Bob had led the initiative to acquire several of the Milwaukee's lines when the Milwaukee shut down its operations west of the Minnesota-South Dakota state line. Bob felt the line over the Cascades would be Burlington Northern's best opportunity for expanding its capacity not too many years hence. Also, the Milwaukee's line had superior engineering and operating characteristics.

Bob felt the sale of the Laurel-Sandpoint line served no useful purpose. Instead, it broke the continuity in service and overall coordination that is important for success in railway operations. However, Bob had no particular complaints or

concerns that I know of about the way this corridor has been managed by its new owner.

In the last five years or so, Bob became increasingly concerned about decisions made by BNSF to either sever or discontinue operations on some of the secondary lines that connected the main lines of the former Great Northern and Northern Pacific across Montana. He felt too many options were lost by no longer having such links available when one of the transcontinental main lines would have to be out of service for 24 hours or more due to a major derailment or damage due to weather.

The first location of concern involved the line between Snowden and Glendive that was sold or leased to a short line operator. This line is 80 miles long and had been of great benefit for handling detour moves over the years. Bob felt this line should have been retained and laid with second-hand continuous welded rail and maintained for at least 25 MPH. In addition to serving as a detour route, Bob felt the Glendive-Snowden line should have been designated for unit coal trains moving to the power plant at Cohasset, MN (180 miles east of Grand Forks). Bob felt this alternate route would take some pressure off the line between Glendive and Fargo, which has fairly heavy grades, and some congestion. Also, it would eliminate the problem of having to run coal train on the line between Fargo and Grand Forks where major problems in maintaining surface and line occur each Spring due to saturation of the subgrade.

Another connecting link no longer available for detour movements that caused Bob some concern was the line between Great Falls and Helena. This line was taken out of service several years ago following a fairly small washout. It was another line that had proved useful many times over the years when either of the two east-west main lines was out of service.

A third case of somewhat less concern was the sale of the line between Casselton and Wahpeton Junction to a short line operator. This line segment had been the Great Northern's main line (freight only) up to the 1970 merger when the Northern Pacific line between Casselton and Minneapolis was designated the preferred route. The Great Northern's Casselton-Wahpeton Junction segment then lost its status as a main line. Again, it had the advantage of a detour route for reaching the line between Breckenridge, Willmar and Minneapolis in case of an emergency or to avoid the congestion experienced at times in getting a high volume of trains through Dilworth, a crew change point.

Bob expressed to BNSF his concerns over this loss over



flexibility and alternate routes that could be owned and maintained at a low cost. He was pleased in learning that his advice was taken under review by the BNSF officers he talked with from time to time.

As more and more field sales offices were closed, Bob became concerned that local business opportunities could be missed. He forwarded information he noticed on such possibilities to the market managers in Fort Worth and hoped they would pick up on his input and assess whether this was business BNSF should go after. Bob was pleased when BNSF later decided to place additional marketing personnel in the Pacific Northwest (including Spokane) to provide market intelligence to headquarters for analysis.

Bob worked hand in hand with BNSF mechanical, engineering, operating and environmental people in their effort to obtain the permits needed to construct a high capacity locomotive fueling station at Hauser, Idaho, about 20 miles east of Spokane. This facility was opened in 2004 and has helped improve locomotive utilization, resulted in less train delay and provided state of the art technology for the fueling of locomotives. This was an excellent example of Bob's efforts to maintain an interest and support of BNSF's current initiatives in any way he could.

In 2004, Bob developed a long range plan for improving rail operating capability needed to handle the increasing volume of business moving between Seattle/Tacoma and Spokane. He wrote, "Ordinarily when traffic reaches the point of congestion on a rail route it is possible to correct bottlenecks by carrying out relatively small projects on an incremental basis." In the case of the Cascade mountain crossings this is not possible because each of the three rail routes has major faults which cannot be corrected by small projects. To be competitive in the future we need to work toward a single, high speed, low grade, direct route between Seattle/Tacoma and Spokane. We are very close to being congested now and it seems to me that it is very important to be planning now to meet this challenge. We need to be seen in the eyes of the public, the shippers and state government that we are aware of the problem and can do something about it. In closing Bob wrote, "Even though retired I can't help but have ideas about things that might permit my old company to grow and not just make do with the way things are."

Bob provided a specific plan for an improved route across the Cascades. He started with a summary of the growth in business that had occurred since 1955:

FREIGHT TRAFFIC DENSITY IN MILLIONS OF GROSS TONS

	<u>1955</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
Everett to Wenatchee (GN - Stephens Pass)	9	25	27
Auburn to Ellensburg (NP - Stampede Pass)	10	4	5
Vancouver to Wishram (SP&S - Columbia Gorge)	13	61	70

Bob continued, "The tonnage through the Columbia Gorge includes traffic to and from Portland and the lower Columbia River Ports and is included to show that with the

high tonnage already on this line, it is not possible to divert tonnage to it from the two mountain crossings.

The trouble with trying to improve either of the two mountain crossings is that both Stevens Pass and Stampede Pass have steep 2.2 per cent grades on each side of the present tunnels. The Stampede Pass route is considerably longer due to the long swing to the south through Pasco. Also, the Stampede Tunnel cannot be improved without complete rebuilding. The Stevens Pass route is not capable of taking much additional traffic as it is almost at capacity now.

The ultimate solution would be to build a 55 mile new connection between Ellensburg and Malaga, thus combining the best of the old GN route between Spokane and Seattle with a new tunnel at Stampede (author's note: *the new tunnel would be about 7.9 miles long, provide a maximum grade of one per cent and would save about 10 miles in distance compared to the existing line, and eliminate a number of eight, nine and 10 degree curves. This would be preferable to increasing the clearance in the existing Stampede Tunnel, since there still would be grades of 2.2 per cent on both sides of the tunnel. It would also preclude the need to restore the 12.5 miles of double track between Lester and Cabin Creek that was removed in the early 1980's.*) The former GN line (east of Malaga) is in excellent condition for high speed operation of intermodal trains. It has a maximum grade of one per cent and with only 28 million gross tons, could handle more traffic. (*Connecting a new line to this route would avoid overloading the Pasco to Spokane line which already carries about 65 million gross tons.*)

The question of return on investment has to be considered but we should not expect it to pay for itself in a few quarters, but it will surely do so within a few years. I can personally testify that when we started work on upgrading hundreds of miles of line to handle the Powder River Basin coal traffic in the 1970's we were criticized for spending far too much money on which we could never expect a return. I haven't run into anyone in the last 20 years who even suggests that we should have done nothing.

Mr. Downing on the BNSF dock at Allouez (Superior) on which taconite unloaded from unit trains is conveyed for loading into ore carrier vessels. -John Gruber photo



CONCLUSION

For all of us, Bob Downing is remembered for the kind of person he was, with the time and consideration he gave to a large number of people who sought his advice. He was always generous and willing to search his archives or share his recollections in response to the numerous and frequent questions he was asked. In relating how he handled large and small issues in his career, we gained insight as to what made Bob a strong leader.



I was among those fortunate to make several trips out on the railroad with Bob during his years on Burlington Northern, and on many occasions after he retired in 1976, a span of 40 years. There was much to be learned from the observations Bob made on each trip, from his review of "how things came to be," and what he thought could be done to strengthen BNSF for the future.

In preparing for any trip we made, whether by train, hi-rail or driving along a stretch of track (of anyone's railroad), Bob would usually ask me, "Do you have a track chart for the line we will be going over (or along)?" Fortunately, I had maintained a good set of track charts of several railroads in my archives, or could reach a contact who would send a copy to me in time for the trip. Bob enjoyed focusing on the detailed characteristics of the line, and would share his knowledge of its history. He would then critique the quality and standards of maintenance we observed as we passed over it, just as he had done in all of his years on the Great Northern and Burlington Northern.

In addition to having excellent verbal communication skills, Bob was a skilled writer. We are fortunate he documented a great deal of his knowledge and experience through Refer-

ence Sheets of the Great Northern Railway Historical Society and in interviews various writers conducted with him.

Don Hofsommer, a noted railroad historian, wrote an excellent article, "What It Takes: Portraits of Three Successful Managers," about Bob Downing, Harold McKenzie of the Cotton Belt and Gus Aydelott of the Rio Grande in *Railroad History*, Fall-Winter 2002. Don wrote, "Downing retired in 1979. BN's board of directors honored him in a moving tribute which read in part, 'His leadership is his sense of compassion, his warmth, his understanding toward others. A quiet inner strength and willingness to share it with others have marked him as a valued friend and set him apart as a leader worthy of emulation. Bob Downing took the time to care.' "

At the time of Bob's death in August, 2010, Matt Rose, Chairman, President and CEO of BNSF Railway, also wrote a fine tribute to Bob: "I was honored to have called Bob a friend, and on numerous occasions sought his counsel. Bob's contributions to our railroad and the industry are immeasurable. He truly had a hand in shaping our company as we know it today. He was a great leader and a wonderful mentor, and we will miss him."

Bob is sorely missed these days, but we are fortunate that he was active in the rail industry for 75 years. Indeed, Bob was an industry icon. He definitely was on the "first string" of railroad leaders of the 20th and 21st centuries.

(top) Robert Downing, John Strauss and Sharon Straub relaxing in the COLUMBIA RIVER. Mrs. Straub is the manager of the retirement complex where Bob lived in Spokane.

(below) Jessie Strauss, John Strauss, Gloria Anderson and Robert Downing in the COLUMBIA RIVER. Mrs. Anderson was the Supervisor of Nursing Care for Mrs. Mary Downing. -both photo are from the Strauss family collection



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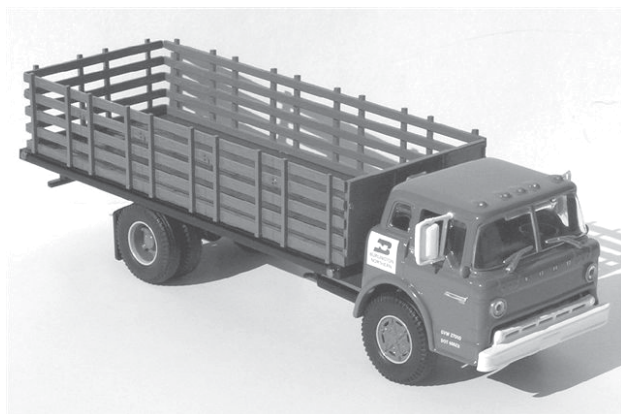
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BN 4650 cu ft Covered Hopper HO Decal Sets

FOBNR member Wade Griffis is making and selling the HO scale covered hopper car decals sets shown here. For each set you buy, the Friends of the Burlington Northern Railroad will make \$1.00, so your purchase not only gets you some nice decals for customizing your fleet of BN covered hoppers, but also benefits the finances of our organization.

Note that the decals have white lettering but is shown here in black so details can be easily seen.

Each decal sheet is \$3.50 plus shipping/handling. An order form is available from the FOBNR web page: www.fobnr.org/bnstore/decals/purchase.htm.

