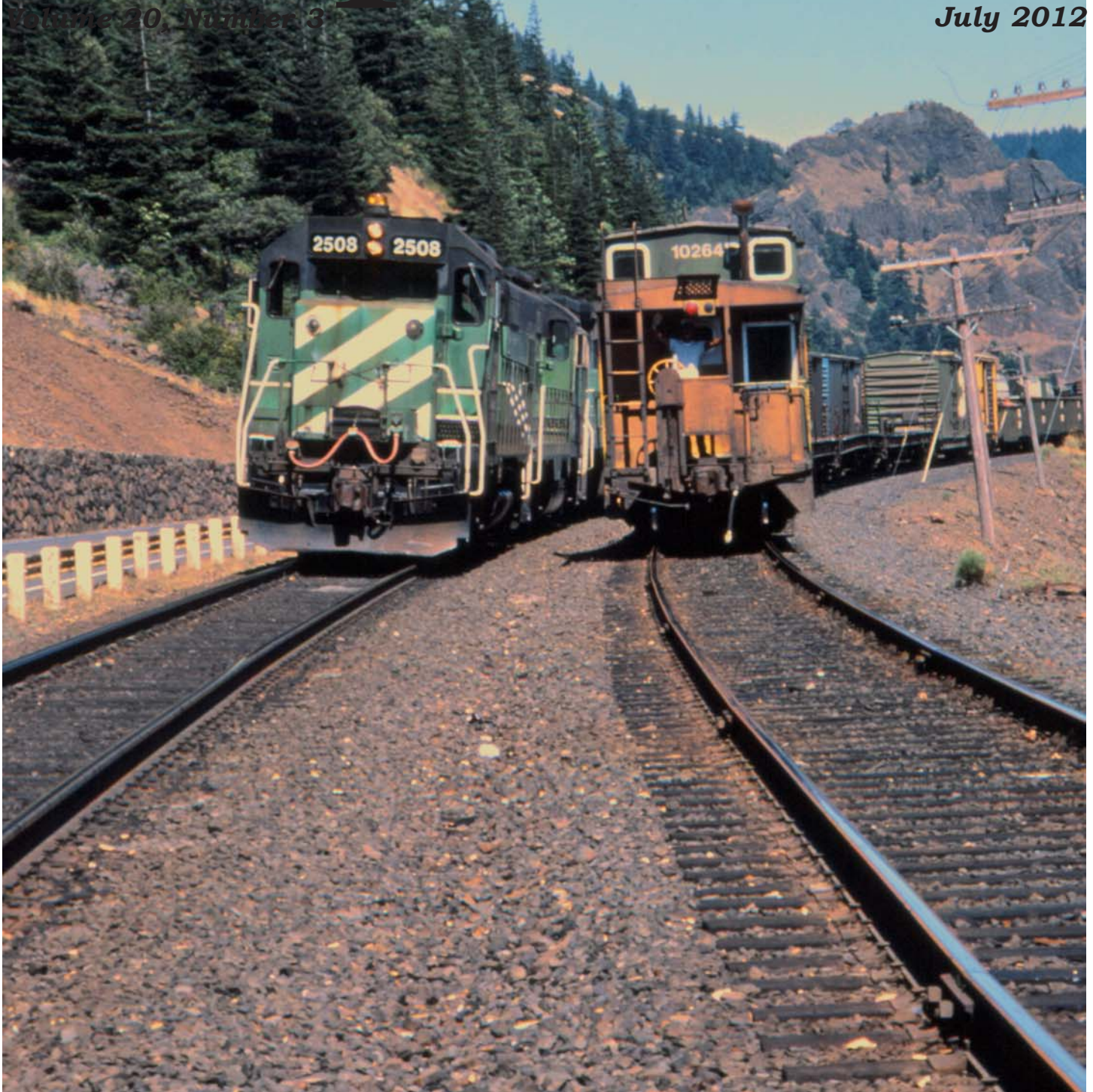


The BN Expediter

Volume 20, Number 3

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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 BNSF Railway



(top) In July 1989 GP50 3110 and MRL 602 sit by a turntable somewhere in Montana. Exact location is unknown

(bottom) In January 1990 a very colorful display of motive power sits at Wishram, WA. Three westbound grain trains sit in the yard, one has three Oakways, the second has Cascade green and the third has gray and red LMXs. -Roland Haynes photos.



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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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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Book for Sale

Frank Christopherson, An Oral History by Earl J. Currie is an oral history given by Mr. Christopherson, a locomotive engineer of the GN, BN and BNSF with 53 years of service. Frank worked mainly on the lines serving the Minnesota Iron Range and the Superior and Allouez terminals.

Copies may be obtained through the Lake Superior Railroad Museum. Price is \$37.50, which includes shipping.

Contact Buehler at kenbuehler@aol.com

Empire Builder Guide

Sonrisa Publications has a new railfan guide available called "Amtrak's Empire Builder".

This map guide is a 60-page, spiral bound, guide that covers the entire route from Seattle to Chicago, including the Portland section between Spokane and Portland.

Author David Cooley does an outstanding job with the maps which provide milepost, detectors, and station stops.

The station stop information includes railroad milepost, distance from Chicago, westbound and eastbound departure times (from November 2011 timetable), day of trip, and the GPS coordinates.

If you are at all interested in Amtrak's *Empire Builder*, or are planning a trip, this map guide is a must.

Visit the Sonrisa webiste: <http://djcooley.com/> for more details.

-Editor

Front Cover

In August 1984, the 2508 West holds the main at Cooks, WA in the Columbia River Gorge to let an eastbound go by.

-Roland Haynes

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Know Your Region!

Views of the Portland Region as from the pages of the Columbia Hot Line, Part Two

J.A. Phillips, III

The information in this article is drawn from a small collection of the Portland Region's Columbia Hot Line starting with Volume 1, Number 1, from October, 1971, and ending with Volume 6, Number 1—December/January 1975/1976. The collection, and thus the information available, is by no means complete. If you have copies of this newsletter, or copies of Seattle Region News or Sea-Port Region News from the 1970s you would be willing to share, please contact the editor Kristopher Johnson—kristopherandlori@msn.com.

In the fall of 1971, Editors Roy F. Dahlgren and Tom A. Burke, working out of the former Spokane, Portland and Seattle Railway Freight House at 1101 Northwest Hoyt Street in Portland, began an employee newsletter for Burlington Northern's Portland Region. The little four-page news brief started out with the less-than-inspirational title of *Portland Regional Publication*. By the time Vol. 1, No. 2, was printed in November, 1971, the *Columbia Hot Line* set out to inform nearly four thousand employees about their region.

Steam Up!

One of the more entertaining news clips from 1971 was in the December, 1971, issue of the *Columbia Hot Line*. Former Burlington Agent Walter R. Grande included a snapshot of the 1922-built *Flying Scotsman*, the British 4-6-2. The locomotive and train set had been in the United States since 1969, and passed over BN from Eola to Bieber to go on display at Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco until late 1972. Passing through Wishram on September 16 brought steam to town for the first time in fifteen years, the last trip being SP&S 700 on an excursion from Portland on May 20, 1956.

Daylighting

One of the first reports in the November, 1971, issue of the *Hot Line* was of the closure of the Second Sub-division about a mile east of Bingen, Washington. The line at Mile Post 77.75 was closed for thirty-two hours on November 1 and 2 so that the Washington State Department of Transportation could daylight a tunnel on the Evergreen Highway opposite the former SP&S main. R.A. Heinz Construction of Portland carried out the demolition of the 115-foot two-lane highway tunnel, with the powder work being handled by Atlas Chemical. Nearly 300 holes to a depth of up to 90 feet were packed with more than thirty tons of ammonia-nitrate.

Daylighting the highway tunnel required relocating BN's communication and signal lines. The signal at Mile Post 77.8 was relocated. A slide detector fence was removed. As a safety precaution, BN removed 1,400 feet of

115-pound ribbon-rail and replaced it with second hand 39-foot jointed rail. On top of this the contractor planked the track, then covered it with three to six feet of gravel.

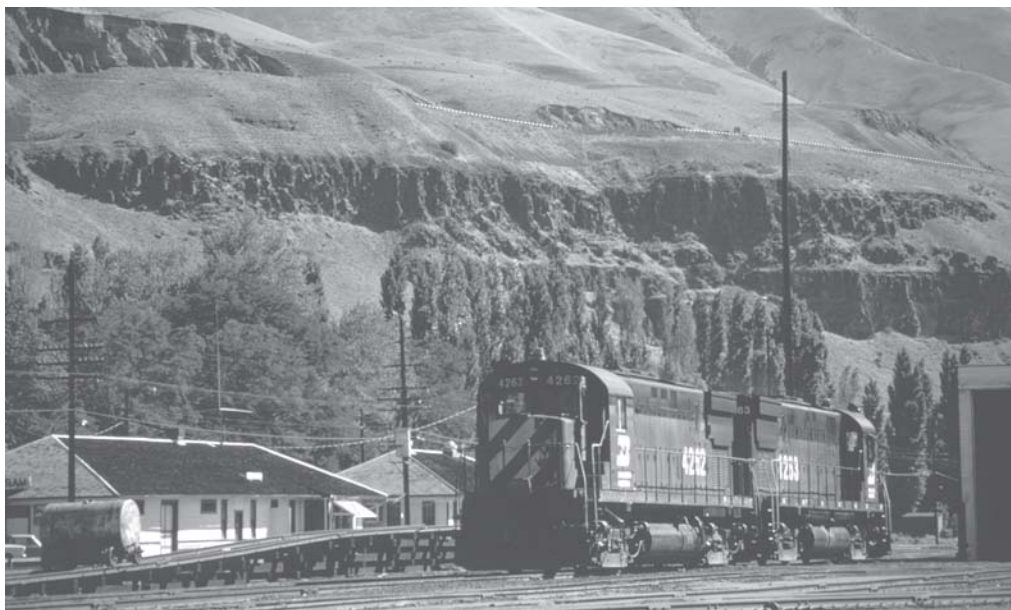
On November 1, the sub-division was shut down at 6 A.M. BN began detouring over the Union Pacific's line on the south bank of the Columbia River from Portland into Wishram, Washington. At 9:26 A.M. the contractor set off the blast, removing fifty feet of overburden from the tunnel site—40,000 cubic yards of rock and earth. D-9 Caterpillars were brought in to remove the blast debris, completing the work fifteen hours ahead of the planned forty-eight-hour closure. Track was reopened at 2:15 P.M. on November 2.

The Marketers

An on-going feature in the *Columbia Hot Line* was a tour of the region's departments—their operations—and their operators. The December, 1971, issue, introduced employees to the Marketing Department. Well into the 1960s the marketing functions of the Hill Lines were handled by their Traffic Departments. On the front line of the Traffic Department were the individual agent-telegraphers in small town depots spread out across the systems. Individual freight and passenger agents were posted in larger terminals, and larger cities off-line, which generated traffic bound to or from the home road. Baggage and Express, Agricultural Development, Passenger, Freight Sales and Service, and Freight Rate staffs all reported back to a vice-president in St. Paul or Chicago.

BN 4262 and 4263, ALCo C-425s, back-to-back at the former SP&S terminal in Wishram, Washington, on July 29, 1977. BN's entire ALCo fleet was not long for this world in 1977, within three years most would be headed off the roster en masse. The 4262, delivered in June, 1966, as SP&S 324, was retired in August, 1980. Post-BN the unit wound up working on the Kyle Railroad, which operates former Rock Island trackage in Kansas and Colorado.

-Vincent J. Porreca photograph



“There was an effort,” Chuck Moehring recalls, “to send people to several graduate schools to learn a little more about the cost of business and related subjects. Harvard, the University of Pittsburgh, and Northwestern were among the schools used. With merger there was more of an effort to study markets and develop transportation pricing and patterns which would cause shippers to use our railroad.” In the latter-half of the 1960s the Traffic Departments of the Hill Lines began evolving into the Marketing Departments of today.

In the early 1972 the eighty-seven marketers of the Portland Region occupied the twelfth floor of the American Bank Building in Portland, Oregon, a locale inhabited by the Northern Pacific’s General Agent William D. Miller, Passenger Manager M.L. “Tommy” Thomson, NP telegraph offices and the SP&S ticket office. In addition, twelve sales offices were spread across the region: Eugene, Medford, Klamath Falls and Bend, Oregon; Aberdeen, Longview, Yakima, Pasco and Walla Walla, Washington; Lewiston and Boise, Idaho.

Thomas C. Rowley, assistant vice-president and regional sales manager, was in charge of this staff. Reporting to Rowley were two area directors—Larry McCubbin and Bob Anderson. The area directors had two assistant directors—Charley Gardner and Dave

Shea. The regional staff included specialists, sales managers responsible for forest products, trailer-on-flat-cars, and import-export. Harold Ertz headed up the Pricing Department, publishing tariffs in this, the last full decade before the Staggers Act and partial deregulation. Tariffs covered traffic on the Oregon Electric, the Oregon Trunk, the Oregon, California and Eastern, and the City of Prineville.

An indication of how much railroading changed just between 1970 and 1980—the Portland Region still had a Passenger Department—headed up by Warren Watkins, as Amtrak was still in its formative stage. In addition, John Pienovi ran the Mail and Express Department, even as the remnants of this once formidable traffic load moved rapidly into TOFC service. Perhaps even more remarkable—BN still had a contract with the U.S. Postal Service handling the U.S. Mail not only between Portland and points in central Oregon, but also along the line out to Astoria on the shores of the Pacific, along the former SP&S along the north bank of the Columbia, even from Pasco to Spokane, Washington, although BN was already handling this last segment with trucks.

Distinct from BN’s other regions, the Portland marketers also handled a great deal of off-line territory—southwest Washington; southern Idaho; northern California. Despite its many antiquarian services, the handling of large off-line territories from a single, centralized location may be a foreshadowing of what was to come.

The head of Jim Hill’s rake continued to bring in the traditional staples of rail traffic in the Pacific Northwest—forest products, pulp, paper, foodstuffs, farm products, grain, as well as the products brought about by government and industrial development in the 1930s and 1940s—aluminum and chemicals. Some of the largest shippers on the entire BN system were headquartered on the Portland Region, including Boise Cascade, Georgia Pacific, Potlatch Forests, North Pacific Grain, United Grain, Longview Fibre, Evans Products, North Pacific Lumber and Willamette Industries. The shipper base of the region translated into 240,000 originated loads per year—ten percent of the total carloads handled by BN and an oversized fourteen percent of the company’s total revenue.

There was a bill to be paid, of course, the *Hot Line* noting BN accrued almost \$1.1 million in taxes to counties in Oregon in 1971-2. Ralph Hamilton, regional director of property and taxes noted that the total came up to nearly \$3 million once southern Washington, southern Idaho and northern California were included. Multnomah County, home to Portland, received the lion’s share, a check for \$261,513.56 being personally delivered to the chief deputy of the county by Vice-President and Regional Counsel Roger J. Crosby.

Centralizing the Traffic Control

As traffic flows over the integrated BN system changed, centralized traffic control was installed along the former SP&S route from Vancouver to Wishram, Washington. Harry

BN 4361, an ALCo C-636, leads a GE U-28C and an EMD SD40-2 south through Ostrander Tunnel at Rocky Point, Washington, on June 27, 1978. Following the 1970 merger, the big SP&S ALCos finally made it north over the ex-Northern Pacific line to Seattle. Allen Reuter notes the high-adhesion trucks had some harmonic vibration issues that peaked at some point under twenty miles an hour, as well as other teething problems. Post-merger, BN added rock and ice shields. The 4361, delivered as SP&S 331 in December, 1967, went off the roster in August, 1980.

-Keith E. Ardinger photograph





Surles, regional vice-president, noted in the *Hot Line* that the second of a three-phase CTC project was complete at the end of 1971. The project, begun just before merger in 1969, spent \$3.2 million in total. The first portion of the project, a CTC-equipped dispatching center in Vancouver proper, was completed in January, 1970, at a cost of \$366,000. Phase two extended CTC signaling from Vancouver east to Stevenson, Washington, 44.3 miles, at a cost of about \$1.4 million. Phase three would take CTC into Wishram at the end of 1972.

Long-range planning called for extending CTC from Pasco to Spokane. In addition, CTC would be extended south from Wishram all the way to Bieber, California, and dispatched from Vancouver. (Veteran Guy W. Baxter notes the only CTC on the former SP&S route between Pasco and Spokane was installed circa 1974 between Lakeside and Sunset Junction, including Overlook and Scribner Junction.) The completion of the 1971 phase of the project, Surles noted, brought BN's total mileage under CTC to 3,971 miles, which included 122 miles of CTC on BN's subsidiaries.

The goal of the work was to improve the overall operating efficiencies—reducing delays at sidings and creating a more consistent traffic flow of the twenty trains transiting the line daily. The seventeen regularly scheduled trains, the vice-president noted, could surge up to twenty-five trains a day at peak periods.

The Shape of Suits to Come

January, 1972, introduced region employees to Portland's Law Department. Headed by Vice-President and Regional Counsel Roger J. Crosby, the Portland offices were one of three frontier outposts away from the General Office Building in St. Paul, Minnesota (the others being Washington, D.C., Chicago, Illinois, and Seattle, Washington). Prior to 1970, three different law firms in Portland, as well as Northern Pacific and Great Northern attorneys in Seattle, handled cases. Consolidation showed the need for a satellite office in Portland, with attorneys admitted to the bar in both Washington and Oregon. Delbert Johnson as assistant regional counsel and chief trial attorney. James Cook was the office's administrative law specialist.

BN 6620 and an unidentified EMD SD45, lying in wait at Pasco, Washington, in March, 1974. Of all the Hill Lines, only the GN purchased F45s before merger. While EMD production was short-lived (1967-1971, 86 units produced). The GN's initial order of six came in 1969, with a follow-up order for twelve in 1970; the 6620 arrived in August of 1970, so it appears to be from the second GN order, delivered in Cascade green after M-Day. The design proved popular enough for BN to order additional twenty for delivery in 1971. The F45s could be seen going east over Stevens and Stampede passes, south to Portland, and east to Pasco along the Columbia. The 6620 went off the roster in August, 1985. NPTellTale collection

Both were members of the Washington bar. Louis Parker, an Oregon attorney, had recently served as a major in the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Corps. Crosby himself was admitted to the bar in both Washington and Oregon. Overseeing the office—and a fine law library—was Manager Betty Best, who came from the Great Northern.

"Our aim," wrote Crosby, "is to work for enactment of wise laws and rules that enable trains to keep rolling, while safeguards are being adopted and put into use." To that end, the Law Department assisted the Oregon Railroad Association in protecting railroad interests before the Oregon legislature. Attorneys were responsible for screening new legislation and testifying in the company's interest before state legislators. With the Oregon Trunk, this responsibility even covered the California legislature.

As BN was self-insured, much of the case work involved casualty suits arising employees injured on the job. (Vice-President Surles confessed himself "shocked" in the February, 1971, *Hot Line*,



BN 4180, an ALCo RS-11, followed by the 829 and another F-unit from EMD, roll through Vancouver, Washington, in November, 1978. Successor to the most popular diesel from ALCo, the RS-3, the RS-11 added horsepower (1,600 to 1,800) and went head-to-head with EMD's vaunted GP9. The numbers are telling—356 RS-11s came off assembly lines between 1956 and 1964, versus 4,279 for all types of GP9. The 4180 was the first of the NP's RS-11s, delivered as NP 900 in January, 1958. It went off the BN roster in August, 1980, in the great ALCo purge. After M-Day BN concentrated its ALCo fleet onto its former SP&S territory. —Keith E. Ardinger photograph

noting the region racked up 137 injuries in 1971—including three fatalities. Portland was dead last out of eight regions across the system, and in January, 1971, managed to more than double its reportable injuries over January, 1970.) Another segment of the work involved shippers—rates and claims, issues that, as Crosby put it, applied “directly to the bread-and-butter of the company.” Another segment of the office’s commerce law was to review the numerous leases, agreements, contracts and permits between BN and industries, as well as federal, state, county and city governments. Even a routine construction project might involved dealing with a dozen different entities. The Law Department handled issues all the way to U.S. Coast Guard regulations for lights on BN drawbridges. A new field for the Law Department attorneys, Crosby noted, was ecology law, which was “fast rising in importance and consumes more and more of our time.”

The First of Five

Regional Vice-President Harry Surles recounted in the January, 1972, issue, that with the passage of 1971, BN completed its first full year. “We indicated,” Surles noted of creation of BN on March 2, 1970, “that it would take approximately five years to realize the full benefits of merged operations.”

Per Surles, the benefits on the Portland Region were the computerization of hump yard operations at Pasco, Washington, at a cost of \$5 million; the continuing installation of COMPASS, BN’s computerized freight car management system. (The same issue of the *Hot Line* noted COMPASS was now operational from Vancouver, British Columbia, to Bieber, California, with terminals at Wenatchee, Kettle Falls, Quincy, Pullman, Hillyard and Yardley, Washington; Sand Point, Idaho; Whitefish, Missoula, Libby and Paradise, Montana, scheduled to be up and running by February 1. No further installations would be undertaken until April to give BN time to evaluate how well COMPASS was performing.)

In 1971 BN’s short-lived passenger service also came to an end, with the change over to the National Railroad Passenger Corporation in May. Amtrak left BN operating about eleven percent of the national network mileage. In addition to the formation of Amtrak was the formation—together with the Union Pacific and Milwaukee Road—of the Longview Switching Company at Longview, Washington, to take over the operations of the former Longview, Portland and Northern. In 1971 there were also land exchanges between the U.S. Forest Service and BN, with the Forest Service taking 10,000 BN acres in the Gifford-Pinchot National Forest area in exchange for 5,000 federal acres around Spirit Lake, Washington. This consolidated holdings and lessened the checkerboard pattern of ownership inherited from the Northern Pacific’s land grants of the 1800s. Finally, noted Surles, were equipment purchases totaling \$33 million to lease 104 road units, and the outright purchase of 67 units, twelve switchers, 50 cabooses and 3,090 freight cars for an aggregate of \$80 million.

Some of this equipment would be used in the newly added three direct freights in service each way daily between the Pacific Northwest, the San Francisco Bay Area, and points in southern California. In cooperation with the Western Pacific and the Santa Fe, the trains were expedited between terminals, avoiding interchange delays. Improved service also included no interchange freights between the Pacific Northwest and Galveston-Houston, Texas, via BN subsidiaries Colorado and Southern and Fort Worth and Denver.

Another of the major projects completed in 1971 was a new bridge across the Snake River between Pasco and Burbank, Washington,

opened December 20. The new bridge replaced a structure built by the Northern Pacific prior to 1889. Replacement was warranted by heavier loads brought about by the diversion of traffic, a 40-mile stretch of track along the north bank of the Snake being condemned for the construction of Lower Monumental Dam in 1968. For BN the trade-off from the Army Corps of Engineers was reconstruction of the bridge, while at the same time widening the lift span of the structure for river traffic.

Maintenance Engineer Don Thomas reported 1971 track work on the Portland Division included relaying sixteen out of eighteen scheduled track miles of new rails, with the two remaining miles—on the Oregon Trunk—underway as the *Columbia Hot Line* went to press. Division forces completed eight track miles of second-hand relay, including switches and short yard relays. Using power tampers, division crews placed approximately 84,000 cubic yards of ballast and surfaced four hundred miles of track. The year's tie placement program installed 82,500 ties in 1971, and installed 15,000 rail anchors on the Seventh Sub-division between Rainier and Warrenton, Oregon. In addition, 133 miles of rail joint welding was completed. Thomas singled out work by the Third Sub-division tie gang averaged 470 ties installed per day, at an average cost of \$1.37 per tie. "There were many days," the civil engineer noted, "when this gang placed in excess of 700 ties and on two occasions actually exceeded 800 ties placed."

The Shape of Boxes to Come

February, 1972, brought the news that BN was leasing from Realco Services one hundred new truck trailers, to be built by Brown Trailer of Spokane, a division of Clark Equipment. Numbered RBNZ

BN 8139, 8063, trailed by two F45s, roll through Pasco, Washington, on August 8, 1981. St. Paul eventually ordered a huge fleet of 835 SD40-2s. The 8139 is almost new—built by EMD in July, 1980—it went to Helm Leasing circa 2000, where it is still in service twelve years later. The 8063, built in November, 1979, soldiered on until February 27, 2009.

-Paul K. Withers photograph

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Burlington Northern Paint Schemes

By Michael Lang

In an effort to help with grade crossing accidents, Burlington Northern experimented with a “tiger-stripe” paint scheme in 1985. The first unit in this black/orange striped nose was an SD40-2 number 8002.

In February 1985 Burlington Northern ordered fifty-three GP50s from EMD in the tiger-striped black and orange scheme. Units 3110-3157 were configured with regular cabs while 3158-3162 was ordered with eight-foot cabs.

The next, and last units to receive the tiger-strip scheme, were the three leased EMD SD60s 8300-8302 in November 1985.

During the mid-1980s BN experimented with variations on the tiger striped theme. The front of the cabs on GP50 3110 and 3112 were painted white while their noses received orange and white stripes in place of the black and orange.

There were even differences between these two. Burlington Northern 3110 was painted with white number boards while the BN 3117 was painted with black number boards.

3110 in South Seattle, November 1989. -Brian Ambrose photo

Burlington Northern GP38-2 number 2100 was painted at Livingston in January 3, 1989 with a different twist. On this scheme, green and white stripes were painted on the cab face and the nose.

Experimenting with a variety of paint schemes, Burlington Northern adopted the white face paint scheme for its fleet. Several rebuilt units were delivered in this scheme.

Another variation was on BNs SD40 unit 6318 in a modified white face scheme still wearing green and white stripes on its nose.

Burlington Northern experimented with paint schemes on their General Electrics during 1989-1990. Burlington Northern C30-7, unit 5568, displays a variation of white face schemes. The large BN logo decorates the nose, and the cab front is white, but there are no frame stripes, thin or wide as seen on BN C30-7 unit 5113 with wide frame stripes. As GE C30-7 unit 5548 was another variation of the white face scheme with very thin frame stripes.

Still another interesting paint job was on BNs C30-7 unit 5550. It was painted in more unique experimental scheme with very little white. The BN logo was a little one on a green nose, however there is no white paint on the front of the cab and no white face frame stripes. There was the odd pattern of the reflective paint along the side of the battery boxes.

Two years after the white face paint scheme had been adopted as standard; Burlington Northern added another wrinkle to this paint scheme. Burlington Northern's SD40-2 unit 7151 and 7877 were painted in the white face scheme but with two-inch white stripes separat-





(top) The very first unit with the black/orange stripes was the 8002, painted in February 1985. -Anthony Raimondi photo.



(center) Then in June 1985 the GP50s were delivered with the same paint scheme. -K. Ardinger photo.

(bottom) SD40-2 7151 sports the new "pin stripe" that was added to the white face paint scheme. -Anthony Raimondi photo.



ing the black and green paint along the hood. Referred to as the “Pin-Striped White Face”, it was a test on these units, but then was adopted as the new paint standard.

In 1982 BN began testing an alternative fuel, natural gas. The first locomotive to use natural gas was a GP9, unit 1961. It was converted to burn natural gas, a flat car with a tank mounted on it served as its tender. It was stored in 1986.

Then again in 1991 came Phase II using an SD40-2. Unit 7890 was redesigned to burn either diesel or natural gas. The clean burning natural gas would be transported in double-vessel fuel tenders. The unit was painted with white cab and nose, a large green BN logo on the nose, and large green number on the side of the cab, green number boards and cab roof. The carbody was black and green with two inch white stripe separating them. GP50 lettering style on the carbody with fuel tender painted green and white lettered BNGT-100 RLM (refrigerated liquid methane).

Another exciting release was GP38 number 2075 christened “Pacific Pride”. Not only was the locomotive painted in the latest scheme, but it had heralds of the merging railroads affixed on the long hood with a slogan along the catwalk “If You Think Its Unsafe It Probably Is” and BN SAFE on the fuel tank.

Then Pacific Pride II, BN GP38-2 unit 2085, supported and original paint scheme with white stripes and white number boards.

Another oddly painted unit was BN SD38-2 unit 6263. It was painted in the white face scheme but with a non standard white cab roof and no dynamic brake housing.

Burlington Northern leased GE's through LMX Leasing. This added still another paint scheme to the fleet as the LMX B39-8s were painted in gray scheme with a white band, red stripe and red lettering.

Problems developed with this scheme as the gray nose was rather dull especially in inclement weather. So they painted the lower half of the nose a bright red as well as the number boards for added safety. They became part of BN's fleet.

(top) GP50 3112 lost its white/orange stripes and was repainted with the white face paint scheme.

(bottom) C33-7 5568 with its red number boards.
-Anthony Raimondi photos.



296300 to 296399, the trailers would be 40 feet long, thirteen feet, six inches high, with a maximum capacity of 48,200 pounds. Regional Manager of TOFC/COFC Sales R.L. Prefontaine noted “[BN was] prepared to handle all shipper traffic needs . . . at legal highway speeds.” Trailers would, the sales staff believed, “make every shipper a potential rail customer. No longer must a firm have in-plant trackage to take advantage of low-cost dependable rail transportation.”

In addition to new truck trailers, new freight cars were also showing up on the property, the February *Hot Line* noted the first cars to arrive from BN’s 1972 orders were 6,900-cubic-foot chip cars delivered by Gunderson of Portland, Oregon. Equipped with full doors at each end, the cars could be tilt-unloaded from either direction. The sides of the cars were also reinforced to allow roll-over dumping as well.

Swinging the Path

Among the other various consolidations taking place across the BN system was the integration of the former NP microwave system. W.W. Kuepfer of the Communications Department noted that on January 8 and 9, equipment scattered across the seventh, eleventh and fifteenth floors of the American Bank Building was removed and relocated to the former SP&S facilities at Eleventh and Hoyt streets. This consolidated Portland’s “GO” Relay Office, the anchor at the extreme west end of St. Paul’s microwave system. While the former Astoria Line and Oregon Electric were left on the wire, the critical move ended the use of three major river crossings—the Columbia and Willamette rivers and the Oregon Slough. All three were “a constant source of failure over the years,” the submarine cables

being susceptible to failure from ship channel dredging, struck by sunken logs or dragging anchors.

BN erected a 120-foot-high tower at the new site, sporting a six-foot-diameter antenna covered with a radome to protect the feed horn from ice. The Portland tower was aimed at a 100-foot-high repeater atop the 1,450-foot-high Rocky Point, located half-way between Linnton and Scappoose, Oregon. From Rocky Point the line continued on to a repeater at Green Mountain.

“Lining up the microwave path,” Kuepfer noted, “was an interesting operation [commonly referred to as] ‘swinging the path.’ This is accomplished with adjustments after a partial path is established on one end, by swinging through on a horizontal plane and finding the point of maximum signal, then finding the maximum signal in a vertical adjustment. After one end is lined up the same procedure is used on the opposite end.” Carried along the path were three separate dispatcher territories, BN’s direct dialing network, data, COMPASS, teletype and telephone operator-handled message telephone lines.

This consolidation, according to a report in the next issue of the *Hot Line*, would be accelerating. In St. Paul, BN’s Bob Downing announced a \$10.2 million contract with Collins Radio of Dallas, Texas, to engineer, furnish and install a 1,817-mile microwave system from a point just outside Chicago, Illinois, and Spokane, Washington. The first phase, from Mendota, Illinois, to St. Paul, was scheduled for completion by December 1, 1972. Follow-on stages would include St. Paul to Fargo, North Dakota, in early 1973; Fargo to Havre, Montana, in late 1973; and Havre to Spokane in mid-1974. The 93-station network would combine installations opened between Se-

BN 626-703-644 bound for points north through the terminal at Willbridge, Oregon. This A-B-A lash-up includes the former GN 308C (F7A, built October, 1950, retired November, 1981); an undetermined B-unit, and the former GN 314A (F7A, built April, 1952, retired June, 1981; to Precision National). -NPTellTale collection



attle and Portland by the NP in 1963, and the Pacific Northwest and St. Paul in 1969. It would also include the former Burlington system opened between Chicago and Lincoln, Nebraska, in 1966. Once finished, BN, which already owned one of the largest private communication networks in the U.S., would have a microwave system over 4,274 miles, with the balance of its 25,000-mile system on open wires.

A Scale for Albany

Assistant Vice-President-Operations Jerry Wicks closed out the February, 1972, *Hot Line* with a note on upcoming improvements at Albany, Oregon, on the Oregon Electric. BN planned to spend \$100,000 for a new yard and freight office in 1972, which would be located adjacent to BN's Oregon Electric Yard just off Waverly Drive in northeast Albany. In addition to the new facilities would be a weigh-in-motion electronic scale, replacing a single-car stop-and-weigh installation. The old scale, in service for many years, restricted the volume of cars the company could weigh in a single day. Its replacement would enable to BN to weigh every car in an entire train in a matter of minutes, versus a process presently consuming several hours. The new facility and adjacent scale would allow BN and its shippers to more closely coordinate car handling, as well as clerical and customer service functions.

Used Cars...

One historical note from the March, 1972, issue of the *Columbia Hot Line* was a note from Director of Material Norm Doerr, in St. Paul. With the advent of Amtrak and nationalized passenger rail service, BN was getting rid of its excess passenger fleet. The cars were selling, Doerr noted, "for a fraction of their cost . . . they'll sell for an average of \$7,000 to \$11,000 each. We're talking about cars that cost from \$96,000 (a typical coach) to \$172,000 (sleeper) two decades ago." After Amtrak selected BN predecessor cars it wanted for its inter-city service, BN was offering 272 cars on a bid basis.

...and Clean Sweeps

New to the Portland Region in March, 1972, was a new Kershaw mechanized yard cleaner. The self-propelled sweeper featured plows to either side, a broom at the center, and an elevator-conveyor system to move debris into a gondola it towed. Weighing in at 27 tons, the \$80,000 sweeper could clean up to one hundred feet of track in a minute.

COMPASS Comes to Car Distribution

Portland's Regional Transportation Department oversaw checking clearances on large dimensional shipments; coordinating schedules and blocking on time freights and communicating the same to customers; tracing stray waybills on no-bill cars; coordinating bulk movements such as talc, clay, grain, and, in 1972, sugar beets; monitoring, moving and tracking the final disposition of retired cars on their way to the scrappers; distributing Interstate Commerce Commission and Association of American Railroad orders; handling customer service issues with car supplies and train movements; handling overloaded cars; issuing transportation and operating instructions along with division superintendents.

Regional Transportation Manager Don H. Garrison reported from the front lines in the March issue of the *Hot Line* about BN's Complete Operating Movement Processing and Service System

(COMPASS), a system designed to take over a flow of information long handled by telegraph keys, papers, pencils. Based on a network developed by Stanford, IBM and the Southern Pacific's Total Operations Processing System, COMPASS was designed to link the far-flung BN system to headquarters in St. Paul via computer. Portland, one of the first regions to go live, took on a new phase of the computer control system when COMPASS started handling car distribution chores at Klamath Falls on a trial basis beginning February 23, 1972.

In Portland, the Regional Transportation Office programmed COMPASS to enter basic control orders, exception control orders, and movement instructions. Orders for cars to load were entered as movement instructions. Exception control orders directed that movement orders from a certain station to be filled with cars of a specific type, specific owner, and specific grade. Exception control orders could also be used to route cars back to their home roads to comply with Interstate Commerce Commission or Association of American Railroads directives. If COMPASS found no exceptions, it applied a basic control order, a general instruction such as returning a foreign car to its home road via the shortest route, or routing a car to a storage point or a cleaning track. Under COMPASS, an empty car released from a local yard not needed to fill a local order now had its marching orders instantaneously. In theory, COMPASS saved BN money in per diem and mileage charges, fewer switching moves, and improved car supply.

Rhapsody in Blueprints

April, 1972, brought *Columbia Hot Line* readers to the office of Harland F. "Hal" Moy, regional manager, Engineering. The Regional Engineering Department's primary duties were three-fold—first, to develop the appropriate plans for maintaining the region's physical plant; second, to recommend to the assistant vice-president in charge of operations on what the region should look like in the future in terms of track, signals, communications, buildings, bridges. With this came the fun part—administering budgets.

Moy, an Oregonian, was born November 1, 1915. After attending the University of Portland and Oregon State, he joined the SP&S as a chainman in August, 1937. Appointed engineer inspector in 1945, he made assistant engineer in 1949 and resident engineer in 1951. He was appointed chief engineer November 1, 1957, staying with BN until retiring in 1975.

Engineering work was broken up into four sections. Regional Engineer Guy E. LaSalle worked with Division Engineer Kenneth D. "Kenny" King and a staff of about twenty-five. Many, including LaSalle himself, were SP&S vets. LaSalle had been promoted to assistant engineer of structures circa 1956 on the North Bank Road, before becoming principal assistant engineer in 1957, a job he held through merger. Together, this staff tackled the larger assignments such as design work, inspecting ongoing construction, surveying industrial trackage and industrial sites, negotiating with government agencies when dealing with line changes, grade crossings, and the like. As much as half of their time was spent with other BN departments and officers, such as Law, the division superintendent, as well as government officials, shippers and contractors.

Maintenance Engineer Don D. Thomas joined the SP&S in the 1940s, and was made roadmaster at Spokane in 1951. He moved to Pasco in the same capacity the following year, becoming resident engineer for the Celilo Bridge lift span project in 1956. On the Portland Region he was responsible for, appropriately, planning all mainte-

nance work. This included tie replacement, rail relay, rail grinding, track surfacing, and ditching, as well as the bridge and building work. Thomas also oversaw water service, bridge operators, and the Equipment Maintenance Shop in nearby Vancouver.

Signal Engineer Murray B. Walker, his supervisors, signal maintainers, and signal gangs had their hands full in 1972. In addition to the continued installation of CTC eastward from Vancouver toward Wishram, they were also tasked with handling the computerization of operations at the Pasco hump yard. Not only had Walker and his crews overseen and installed the systems at Pasco, they were now responsible for their maintenance. Walker's crews were also charged with overseeing the more mundane but ever-present requirements of grade crossing signals across the region. Planning was also underway for installing CTC into Pasco, then on to Spokane, and south toward Klamath Falls.

The last SP&S vet in Moy's shop was Office Manager William V. Currie, a man who had been chief clerk to Hal in the old SP&S Engineering Department. Born January 31, 1920, in Belfast, Northern Ireland, he immigrated to the U.S. in 1923 with his family, ultimately settling in Bend, Oregon, where he graduated high school in 1939. Currie spent World War Two in the U.S. Navy, attending business college in Portland after the war. The author of several historical articles for the SP&S employee newsletter (*The Dope Bucket*), Currie had the distinction of being the last corporate secretary of the SP&S, an entity which continued, at least on paper, through 1979. Along with Chief Clerk C.J. Lingo, he directed the day-to-day operations of the clerical staff.

"One of the major projects being handled by this department," Moy noted, "is construction of a new railroad bridge over the Willamette River at Wilsonville, Oregon, on the Oregon Electric, Mile

Post 43-4. The new structure will be located downstream approximately 140 feet from the present bridge, which means a line change on either end of the new span. R.D. Larson, regional manager, Real estate, and his staff in Seattle, are in the process of purchasing the necessary right-of-way. A contract will be let in the next two weeks by this Department for soils exploration work and drilling in the river bed for determination of type of foundation materials present so design of piers can get underway. Design of the structure will be handled in St. Paul by our bridge engineer. We hope to commence on construction of piers and embankment sections in 1973 and placement of superstructure in 1974. This entire project will cost \$5 million. The new bridge will allow increased train speeds and do away with load restrictions, which has made for a costly operation on the Oregon Electric.

BN 204 rousts the birds feeding along the mains near the ADM mill on the Willamette riverfront in August, 1981. Behind the transfer is the clock tower at Portland Union Station, the former SP&S engine terminal at Hoyt Street, and the old NP freight houses. The unit itself is former NP 145, an SW1200 built by LaGrange in July, 1956. The train is likely out of the SP's Brooklyn Yard just across the river, bringing up forest products from coastal Oregon. The 204 went to General Metals in Tacoma on November 26, 1986, ending three-decade career on the main streets of the Northwest. -NPTellTale collection



"We have many other projects," Moy continued, "under study with the help of the division superintendent, such as rock scaling of bluffs on the Fourth and Seventeenth sub-divisions, daylighting Tunnel 14 on the Seventeenth Sub-division, a line change on the Oregon, California and Eastern to eliminate switchbacks, and line changes on the Fourth Sub-division to eliminate sharp curves."

Keep 'Em Rolling

June, 1972, brought *Columbia Hot Line* Editors Burke and Dahlgren across the river to the doors of the Regional Mechanical Department in Vancouver, Washington. Responsible for the "maintenance, service and repair[s] . . . to all car[s] and locomotive[s] assigned to or operating in the Portland Region." General Mechanical officers in St. Paul might set policy, but the regional officers were charged with carrying it out. In Vancouver the Regional Mechanical Manager was Lester Z. "Les" Daniels, a 54-year-old Idahoan promoted up through the ranks of the SP&S from laborer to general mechanical superintendent. He joined the North Bank Road in April, 1940, after attending Linfield, and was quickly promoted to fireman in 1941, then engineer in 1945. Daniels was traveling engineer with headquarters at Wishram from 1951 to 1953. He was a master mechanic on the SP&S from 1953 to 1959, when he was promoted to general mechanical superintendent at Vancouver. He retained this title through merger and part of 1970, when BN restyled the GMS post as manager, Mechanical, Portland Region.

Reporting to Daniels were the Superintendent, Locomotives (Everett L. Kennard) and Superintendent, Cars (H.H. Wickman). Kennard was another SP&S veteran, born in Kansas in 1923. He moved to Vancouver, Washington, in the early 1940s, before joining the armed services in 1944. Following World War Two he completed an electrical engineering degree from the International Correspondence School, and joined the North Bank Road in 1948. Like his boss Les Daniels, Kennard started out as a laborer, going from electrician's assistant to electrician to supervisor of diesel maintenance at Vancouver in 1954. Also like Daniels, Kennard was promoted in the fall of 1959, in Kennard's case as superintendent of motive power. He retired from BN in 1981, becoming a consultant in Bellevue, Washington. His counterpart, handling rolling stock issues, H.H. Wickman, started with the Burlington and was general car foreman at Galesburg, Illinois, through 1969.

Leg work in the field was undertaken by Supervisors Larry M. Capri (Cars) and William E. "Bill" Lofdahl (Locomotives). Capri had been with the SP&S since the 1950s, and was the North Bank Road's general car inspector just before merger. Lofdahl was supervisor of equipment on the GN before merger. Dan R. Smart, was master mechanic at Portland. Prior to merger he was master mechanic on the GN at Hillyard.

In-office staff at Regional Mechanical was composed entirely of SP&S veterans. Ernest H. Myers was assistant office manager, Ruth Tuominen was the personal secretary, Clarence Lindgren was the AAR clerk, Marion Cherednik and Janet Skellenger composed the clerical staff. Out in the field were another twenty-seven supervisors and 183 workers attending to locomotive maintenance issues. Another 336 people were assigned to rolling stock maintenance on the region.

The locomotive fleet the region maintained consisted of 185 units assigned to the facilities at Vancouver, Portland, Pasco and Klamath Falls. In addition, minor service was carried out at an additional five points. Major repairs were sent off the region to the former NP back shop at Livingston, Montana. Portland Region

motive power operated an estimated 25,000 switch engine shifts per month, in addition to approximately 390,000 freight train miles.

Running repair shops for rolling stock duplicated the locomotive maintenance bases—Vancouver, Portland, Pasco and K Falls. A small additional facility operated at Albany on the Oregon Electric. Every month regional car forces carried out 180,000 car inspections, completed 19,000 light repairs, cleaned 4,900 freight cars, serviced almost 1,500 specialized DF cars, undertook 150 heavy repairs, and repainted twenty cars. These numbers, the *Hot Line* noted, did not count "hundreds of special items handled, such as air brakes cleaned, journal boxes re-packed, loads adjusted, wheels changed," and so forth.

How did it all stack up? "Statistically," the *Hot Line* reported, the "Portland Region ranks about third place of the six regions [eight when including BN subsidiaries Colorado and Southern and Fort Worth and Denver] in over-all performance standings, rating first or second in certain areas of work done. These respective rankings are maintained by the second-lowest force assignment of the six regions."

BN's Big Pasco Plan: Détente?

On June 8, 1972, the *Hot Line* reported on a flying visit of Soviet rail officials to the Inland Empire. A ten-day visit sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation, Minister of Railroads Boris P. Breschev and six comrades flew from San Francisco to Spokane, accompanied by BN officials from St. Paul. Regional officers from both Portland and Seattle met the Soviet-St. Paul group. First off in Spokane was a presentation "modern track maintenance equipment and techniques." This was followed up by a journey out to the John M. Budd Bridge across Latah Creek, part of a \$15 million line change project. After lunch, the group flew down to Pasco to tour the newly computerized hump yard, BN's Big Pasco Public Warehouse, and BN's TOFC facilities. Returning to Spokane for the night, the Soviet delegation left the following day for Chicago and tours of Electro-Motive, Pullman-Standard, and other U.S. roads.

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Along the Line: North Dakota



(top) BNSF 2969 is southbound at Niobe Jct., ND. The train is making its way back to Minot.

(bottom) Earlier in the day the 2969 passes through Bowbells. -Al Christianson photos.





(top) BNSF 1038 refueling in West Fargo.

(bottom) The BNSF 5796 leads an eastbound oil train from Stanley, ND to Oklahoma. -Al Christianson photos.



Plattsmouth Bridge

BNSF is currently building a second, single-track bridge, across the Missouri River at Plattsmouth, Nebraska on the Creston subdivision.

The new bridge will be single track. Initial plans are to use the new bridge for eastbound loaded coal trains and the old bridge for westbound empties. The new bridge when completed will be 1,676 ft. in length and will be built with a cast-in-place concrete deck. The piers will be made of solid shaft cast-in-place concrete. (Source: Railway Track and Structures).

The new bridge structure will also be located 60 feet south of the existing railroad bridge. Current traffic over the existing bridge (along BNSF's Creston Sub.) are 30 to 32 freights per day and two daily Amtrak trains (*California Zephyr*, No. 5 and No. 6). The bridge project is estimated to take about two years to complete, with the footings and piers to be finished by the end of 2012.

(Page 18) From a hill top looking east toward the river and the bridges (BNSF on the left, and U.S. Highway 34

to the right). Earth removal continues as the hill cut is widened.

(Page 19) Looking to the west-northwest, you can see the terraced-type cuts to bring the south side of the hill down to track level, where the second track will be installed. Eventually this will become the second main line track for BNSF.

(Page 20, top) A westbound BNSF empty grain train passes over the Plattsmouth bridge entering Nebraska from Iowa.

(Page 20, bottom) An eastbound coal load enters rural western Iowa while crossing the Missouri River over the existing Plattsmouth rail bridge. The second "New" rail bridge is beginning to take shape, to the right, on both sides of the river.

-text & photos by Darrell Wendt





