

# *The BN Expediter*

Volume 21, Number 2

April 2013



**BNSF** SM



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) On Saturday, January 26, 2013, two empty oil trains sit in the yard at Minot, ND.*

*-Al Christianson photo, Karla Walsh Collection*

## Front Cover

*Train #124 east is approaching Missoula, MT on June 6, 1989 with Oakways 9067, 8008 and BN 4027 (SD60/SD60/B30-7A).*

*-Brian Ambrose photo*

*(bottom) Right on the heels of an BNSF oil train, is this unit-Ethanol train with 98 loads (including the two sand-filled buffer cars, one on each end). This train, G-MNXTCY7-30, is seen westbound near Greenwood, NB. This Ethanol train originated in Minnesota, and is bound for Texas City, TX, over BNSF.*

*-Darrell D. Wendt photo*



# Friends of the Burlington Northern Railroad

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[www.fobnr.org](http://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 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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## FOBNR Expense Report

For period ending December 31, 2012

Balance on hand, beginning January 1 <sup>st</sup>	11,235.52
Revenue:	9,482.93
Expenses:	10,662.94
Balance on hand, end:	10,055.51

## Revenue

## Year To Date

Dues	
Regular:	4,050.00
Sustaining:	3,000.00
Youth:	20.00
Donations:	992.53
Company Store:	618.40
Single Issue Sales:	52.00
Convention:	750.00
Total:	9,482.93

## Expenses

Expediter	
Printing:	5,224.72
Postage:	1,287.46
Honorarium:	800.00
Misc.	130.32
Board of Directors	
Meeting:	00.00
General	
Printing:	297.82
Postage:	78.39
Box Rent:	70.00
Misc.:	559.02
Supplies:	654.74
Company Store:	295.74
Election:	51.14
Convention:	1,027.62
PayPal Fees:	90.57
Website Provider:	95.40
Total:	10,662.94

## Assets

Cash:	14,327.84
Office Equipment:	243.64

## Liabilities

Unearned 2013 dues:	3,935.00
Unearned 2014 dues:	575.00
Unearned 2015 dues:	125.00
Society Equity:	10,083.85
<i>Jeff Hendricks, Treasurer</i>	

## In This Issue

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# Missoula, Montana

by John Adams, MD

For the first time this year the FOBNR has decided to have our annual Convention at a site that is not a part of the present day BN/BNSF. The reason we felt we could take this step was that the Montana Rail Link is deeply involved with the history of the BN as well as the present day BNSF. We have also noted that a frequent answer to the annual question for our Banquet speakers of what they would do different in hindsight has been "Not to sell the MRL".

The history of the MRL starts with the pre-merger Northern Pacific, as this was the NP's route through southern Montana. With the merger the BN found themselves with a number of redundant routes that seemed ripe for restructuring to gain the efficiencies the merger had promised. In the case of the old NP main in Montana, three issues seemed to speak against the continued use of the NP. First, it had been the original route through Montana, and thus not as well engineered as the later Great Northern route to the north. Second, it had a climate of labor unrest since the BN merger. And finally, Montana was not the best climate for railroad business at that time.

At the time of the sale, Darius Gaskins was CEO of the BN. He had moved from a position in the Interstate Commerce Commission, and had actually been quite involved in allowing the BN-Frisco merger. He had also seen the problems of a number of railroads at the time, particularly with the Penn Central merger, and the recession of 1982-83 was still fresh in people's minds. All of this led to a statement at the BN Annual Meeting that the entire railroad was for sale and anyone who wanted to buy some should talk with the railroad after the meeting. Dennis Washington, who owned Washington Industries and had just recently re-opened a local mine in the Missoula area, read these comments and found an opportunity. Negotiations started soon after this and by October 31, 1987 the Montana Rail Link was formed. Due to bond obligations BN could only lease the prop-

*On September 15 1987, train #22 departs Paradise. MT.  
-Brian Ambrose photo.*



erty, and actually initially retained several segments to keep access to local shippers, but MRL was ready to go.

Initially the start-up was anything but smooth, as the first day of operation found 3 BN locomotives (2 LMX B39-8's and a SD40-2) lying upside down at the bottom of Bozeman Pass. Nobody was ever arrested, but suspicions revolved around labor unrest. The railroad

was able to proceed, with overhead traffic from BN, used BN locomotives (particularly SD-45's) and many ex-Milwaukee Road personnel. At the top, Bill Brodsky, an ex-Milwaukee executive, was hired to run the railroad, and many out of work Milwaukee railroaders signed on, enough that initially the joke was that MRL stood for Milwaukee Road Lives. Former NP employees did not

sign up in great numbers, as the labor contracts guaranteed their wages if they could not find work on the BN due to the sale.

The original lease covered 931 miles between Laurel, MT and Sandpoint Junction, ID, with trackage rights to Spokane. The original lease did not include Mullan Pass, as the BN wanted to keep the mineral traffic on that segment. With the closing of the mines in the early 90's this trackage, and the permission to dispatch the entire railroad, was included in MRL's lease. MRL now maintains a state of the art Dispatching Center in Missoula, which we will be able to tour on Thursday morning.

All of the railroads in this area have historically shared the same problem of a lack of locally generated traffic. Because of this, MRL has always depended on the overhead traffic it

WESTWARD	Length of Siding in Feet	Station Nos.	Line Segment	Mile Post Location	15th Subdiv MAIN LINE STATIONS			Distance from Livingston	EASTWARD
					Office Calls	Rule 8(A)			
	8,632	30956	41	115.3	VS LIVINGSTON	BKRTY	ABS	0.0	
	8,920	30968		127.1	11.9 MUIR			11.9	
	9,443	30970		128.5	1.2 WEST END			13.1	
	10,186	30981		140.4	11.7 BZ BOZEMAN	T		24.8	
	6,899	30991		149.8	9.5 BR BELGRADE			34.3	
	3,653	31000		159.3	9.4 MANHATTAN			43.7	
	7,757	31005		164.8	5.3 LOGAN	J	CTC	49.0	
	4,943	31011		170.5	5.9 RT TRIDENT			54.9	
	6,894	31020		178.9	8.3 CLARKSTON			63.2	
	5,419	31035		194.2	15.3 TOSTON			78.5	
	7,086	31046		205.2	11.1 TN TOWNSEND	T		89.6	
	7,028	31059		218.1	13.0 WINSTON			102.6	
	7,958	31068		227.4	9.2 LOUISVILLE			111.8	
		31075		234.0	6.5 JN EAST HELENA	J		118.3	
				238.4	4.4				
	6,660	31079	42	0.0	HY HELENA	BJKRTY	ABS	122.7	
		31084		5.0	5.2 TOBIN			127.9	
	6,825	31092		13.0	7.8 AUSTIN			135.7	
		31098		18.4	5.7 SKYLINE			141.4	
	7,951	31100		20.5	2.0 BLOSSBURG	T		143.4	
	9,488	31108		28.9	8.4 ELLISTON		CTC	151.8	
	6,213	31117		37.7	8.7 AVON			160.5	
	7,749	31130		50.5	13.2 GR GARRISON	K		173.7	
	14,660	31134		54.7	3.8 PHOSPHATE			177.5	
	10,669	31142		62.6	7.9 JENS			185.4	
	10,638	31150		70.7	8.1 D DRUMMOND	JT		193.5	
	14,103	31160		81.1	10.4 BEARMOUTH			203.9	
	9,358	31168		88.7	7.6 NIMROD			211.5	
	11,114	31182		102.5	13.9 CLINTON			225.4	
	14,250	31192		113.2	10.6 BN BONNER			236.0	
		31198		119.3	6.1 MA MISSOULA	BJKRTY	ABS	242.1	

BN Radio Channel No. 1 and No. 2 in service on this Subdivision.  
Dispatcher Radio Call-In Code 31 or 32 Livingston to Helena, 51 or 52 Helena to Missoula.

WESTWARD	Length of Siding in Feet	Station Nos.	Line Segment	Mile Post Location	21st Subdiv BRANCH LINE STATIONS			Distance from Missoula	EASTWARD
					Office Calls	Rule 8(A)			
		31198	333	0.0	MA MISSOULA	BJKRTY		0.0	
	592	87511		11.0	11.5 LOLO			11.5	
		87530		29.2	18.1 STEVENSVILLE			29.6	
		87536		35.6	6.4 VICTOR		S-227	36.0	
	388	87549		47.4	12.5 HA HAMILTON			48.5	
	2,530	87565		64.7	17.4 DA DARBY	T		65.9	

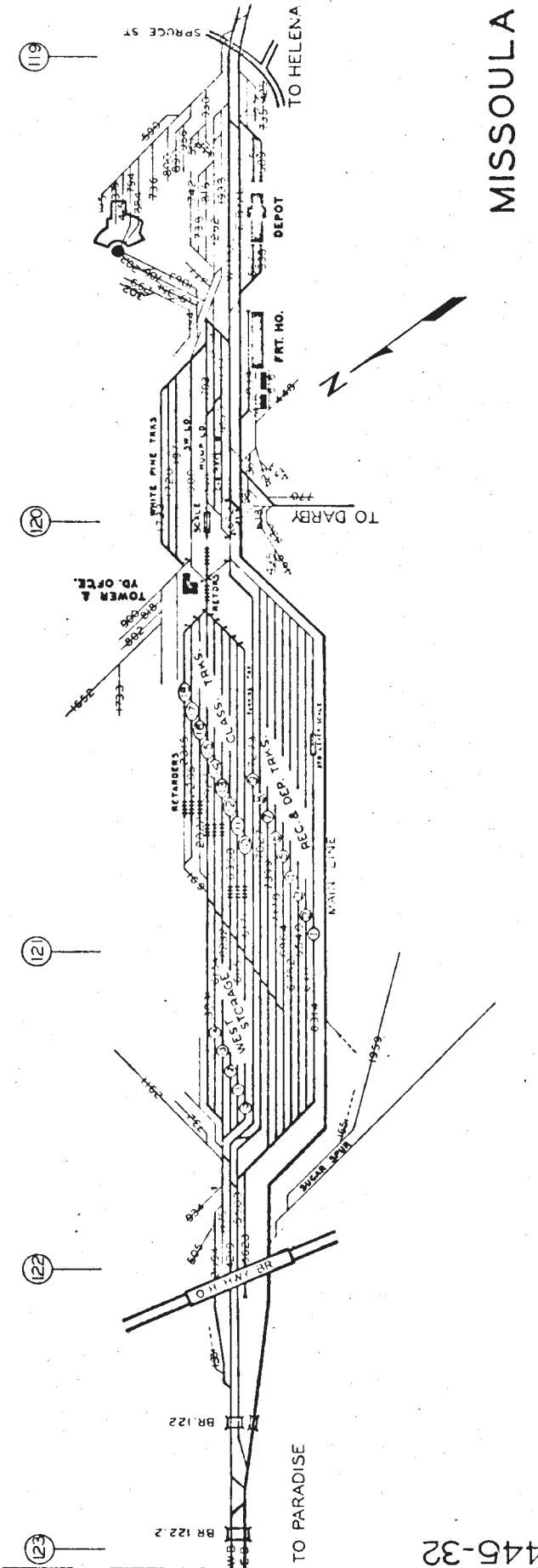
BN Radio Channel No. 1 and No. 2 in service on this Subdivision.

gets from BN and BNSF. This is particularly true if problems develop on the High Line, which will send large quantities of traffic south to MRL. As time has gone by, however, MRL's local presence and dedicated customer service have combined to attract more traffic originating or terminating on MRL.

MRL also was able to purchase the Livingston Shop complex, which BN had closed in 1986. This has been the maintenance hub of the MRL and was where BN locomotives shed their Cascade Green for MRL Blue. Locomotives were also rebuilt and upgraded there, including times when Livingston Rebuild Center was deeply involved in locomotive upgrades and leasing. MRL always lived with used power, mainly from BN, but also SP and CSX power until they became the first regional railroad to buy new power, investing in new EMD SD70ACe's.

MRL also became a leader in labor agreements, moving to 2 man crews of an engineer and assistant engineer who share duties. Their employees are covered by Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers contracts.

MRL has a number of physical challenges to handle, as it has to move trains over 3 mountain passes. Bozeman Pass has a 1.9% grade westbound and 1.8% eastbound. Mullan Pass has a 2.2% grade westbound



Length of Siding In Feet	Station Nos.	Line Segment	Mile Post Location	22nd Subdiv MAIN LINE STATIONS			Distance from DeSmet
				Office Calls	Rule 6(A)		
934	31205	43	0.0	2MT	DE SMET	JY	0.0
2,161	31216		10.6		10.6 EVARD		10.6
	31226		21.1		10.5 ARLEE		21.1
	31236		30.8		9.7 RAVALLI	TWC	30.8
4,489	31243		37.9		7.1 DIXON	JT	37.9
	31257		51.6		13.7 PERMA		51.6
	31269		64.2	PD	12.6 PARADISE	BJKTY TWC ABS	64.2

BN Radio Channel No. 2 in service on this Subdivision.  
Dispatcher Radio Call-in Code 51 or 52.

1. Speed Restrictions- Zone-Between	Maximum Speeds Permitted
MP 0.0 and MP 37.0 .....	10 MPH.
MP 37.0 and MP 49.1 .....	40 MPH.
MP 49.1 and MP 51.1 .....	35 MPH.
MP 51.1 and MP 53.5 .....	40 MPH.

and a 1.4% eastbound grade. Evaro Hill has 2.2% grades both directions, but is used only for lighter trains.

From east to west the MRL starts at Jones Junction where it connects to the BNSF. It then travels west to Laurel, MT where MRL's eastern classification yard is located. Moving further west it reaches Livingston, where their main shops are located. In the past this also included Livingston Rebuild Center, where contract locomotive repairs and upgrades were done. Leaving Livingston the 1.9% grade to Bozeman Pass begins immediately, cresting in Bozeman tunnel and then starting the downhill run into Helena. Many of these trains require manned helpers, often now with MRL's SD70ACe's.

Immediately upon leaving Helena the 2.2% grade to Mullan Pass and Blossburg Tunnel begins, passing through a double horseshoe curved to gain altitude and

crossing Greenhorn and Skyline trestles. Passing through the Blossburg Tunnel MRL then continues downhill into Missoula, the center point and headquarters for the railroad.

From Missoula the railroad heads west to Paradise, MT, splitting to follow the newer southern route through DeSmet and along the Snake River, while lighter trains will take the steeper Flathead River route over Evaro Hill on a 2.2% grade. At Paradise the 2 routes again join and follow a gentle 0.4% downhill grade into Sandpoint, ID along the Clark Fork River. Trackage rights bring MRL freights to their western terminus and BNSF connection in Spokane, Washington.

MRL currently runs about 15 trains per day, 1/3 of those are coal trains. To do this 1,000 MRL employees use 96 locomotives and approximately 1,300 freight cars. The most recent statistics are that they move about 364,500 freight cars and 49.7 million gross tons annually.

*On June 7 1989, two MRL GP9s sit on the turntable at Missoula. -Brian Ambrose photo.*





(above) In June 1989 train #196 passes through DeSmet, MT.

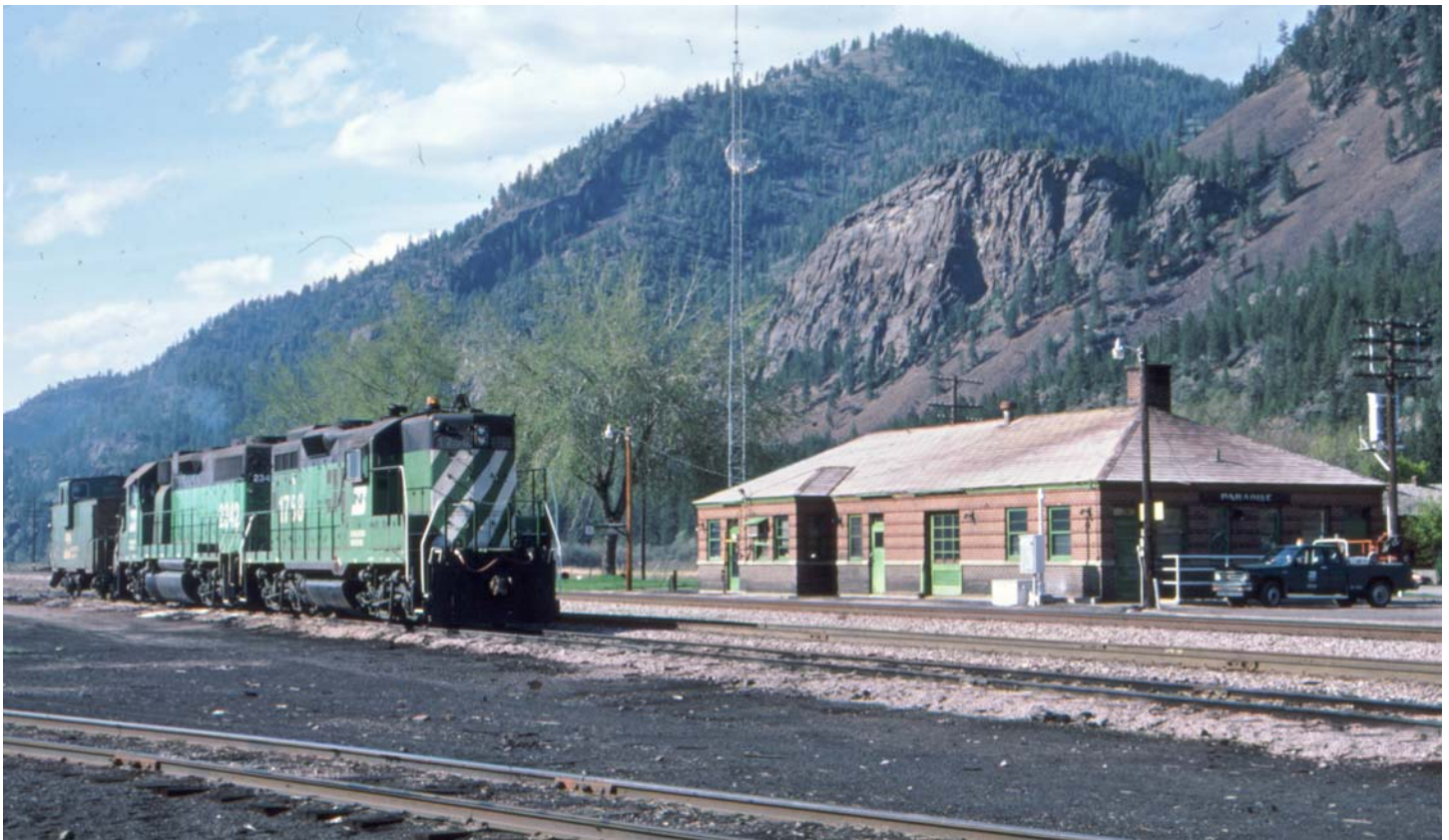


In June 1986 the Polson Turn is eastbound with BN2286, 2232, 2264 (GP38-2/GP30/GP38-2). -Brian Ambrose photos.



W E S T W A R D ↓	Length of Siding In Feet	Station Nos.	Line Segment	Mile Post Location	16th Subdiv MAIN LINE STATIONS				Distance from Mis- soula
					Office Calls		Rule 6(A)		
		31198	42	119.3	2MT MA	MISSOULA	BJKRTXY	ABS	0.0
		31205		125.9		6.6 DE SMET	J	CTC	6.6
5,025	87606			132.2		5.2 SCHILLING			11.8
11,895	87610			136.6		4.5 FRENCHTOWN			16.3
9,250	87624			150.8		14.2 LOTHROP			30.5
4,812	87634			161.2		10.4 CYR			40.9
8,649	87641			167.6		6.4 RIVULET			47.3
6,548	87649			176.2		8.5 WESTFALL			55.8
8,698	87657			183.6	QN	7.5 SUPERIOR		TWC	63.3
4,184	87662			188.8		5.2 SPRING GULCH		ABS	68.5
4,105	87670			197.2		8.4 ST. REGIS			76.9
5,408	87675			201.9		4.7 TOOLE			81.6
6,197	87687			214.2		12.3 QUINNS			93.9
				219.2		5.0			
		31269	44	0.0	PD	PARADISE	BJKRTY		98.9
11,440	31275			6.0		6.0 PLAINS			104.9
11,355	31290			20.5		14.5 EDDY			119.4
11,665	31301			31.5		11.0 FN THOMPSON FALLS			130.4
8,022	31316			46.4		14.9 CHILDS			145.3
	31323			54.0		7.5 TROUT CREEK			152.8
9,801	31331			61.6		7.6 TUSCOR			160.4
11,121	31342			72.5		10.9 NOXON			171.3
11,321	31349			80.1		7.6 HERON			178.9
12,347	31360			91.1		10.9 COLBY		CTC	189.8
8,900	31372			103.5		12.2 HOPE			202.0
8,425	31386			115.9		13.8 KOOTENAI			
		45	0.0		KOOTENAI			215.8	
7,176	01803		2.1		0.9 SANDPOINT SIDING			216.7	
	01798		2.9		0.6 SANDPOINT JCT.	J		217.3	

BN Radio Channel No. 1 and No. 2 in service on this Subdivision.  
Dispatcher Radio Call-in Code 51 or 52.



On April 24, 1987, GP9 1758 (a former NP unit) GP38-2 2342, the Polson Local, has tied up for the day at Paradise.  
-Brian Ambrose photos.



# Along the Line



The BNSF "410 Job" operates daily between BNSF's "Gibson Yard" in Omaha, NE and Council Bluffs, Iowa. Two round trips are completed within 24 hours, with the "412 Job" handling the night-time moves.

In February 2013 the "410 Daylight Job" rounds the curve on the "Council Bluffs Sub" at Pacific Junction, Iowa. This "Local" is returning to Omaha with 59 carloads, consisting of soybean meal in covered hoppers and soybean oil in tank cars, from the Bunge Corporation Soybean processing facility at Council Bluffs, IA. -Darrell D. Wendt photo

In September 1987, the 3111, FT12, 3157, 7500 pass through Rochelle, IL. -Dave Nicoletti photo, Ken Arding collection





*(top) In May 2012, a westbound stack train flies through Quincy, WA on the old GN transcon. This train is about to make its way around Trinidad Loop, and then drop down and travel along the Columbia River.*  
*-Kristopher Johnson photo*

*(below) On March 3, 2013, the eastbound M-TACPAS passes through Easton, WA on Stampede Pass. Traffic has been picked up on Stampede; along with the usual grain empty X-trains, the M-TACPAS and M-EVEPAS have been making regular appearances in recent weeks.*  
*-Brian Ambrose photo*



# Plattsmouth Bridge Update

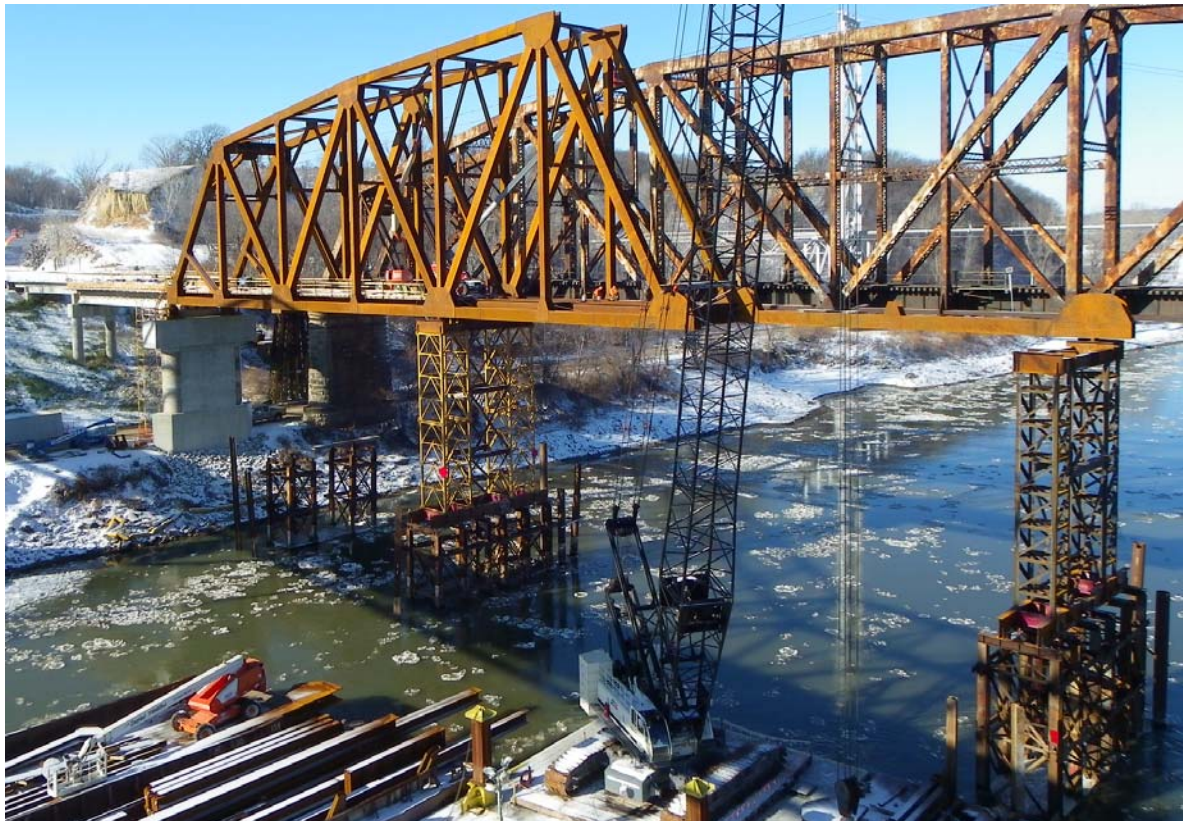


In December 2012, these photos show the progress of the second BNSF “Plattsmouth Rail Bridge”. The through-truss span will rest on this second main river pier.

Temporary support scaffolding holds the through-truss in place as steel work continues on this main span crossing over the navigational portion of the Missouri River.

Once the west side through-truss section is complete, the support scaffolding will be removed and taken out of the river.

The eastern section of the







The BNSF Plattsmouth, NE bridge project has continued through the winter months. The main through-truss section of the bridge is nearly complete, having reached the middle river pier in late January. The next major focus will be the installation of steel plate girders, from the middle pier and on east.

Once that's completed, the final deck work will begin. As for the hill cut widening project, most of the trimming and terracing is close to completion. In late Spring and early Summer, track work will begin on the second set of tracks, in the now widened cut. By late fall of this year, BNSF hopes to have the Plattsmouth Bridge and second track in operation.



The through-truss portion of the new Plattsmouth Bridge is nearing completion. This structure closely resembles the existing bridge, which was built in 1903, resting on 1880 stone-cut piers from the original bridge. In February, the east half (Iowa side) of the bridge will be constructed with steel plate girders (or box-girders), and installed in sections. These plate girders are being manufactured at Capital Steel Company at Lincoln, Nebraska.

The through-truss portion, on the west (Nebraska side) is very close to reaching the middle river pier. Once that is completed, the base and deck work will begin on the east half of the bridge, using steel plate girders.

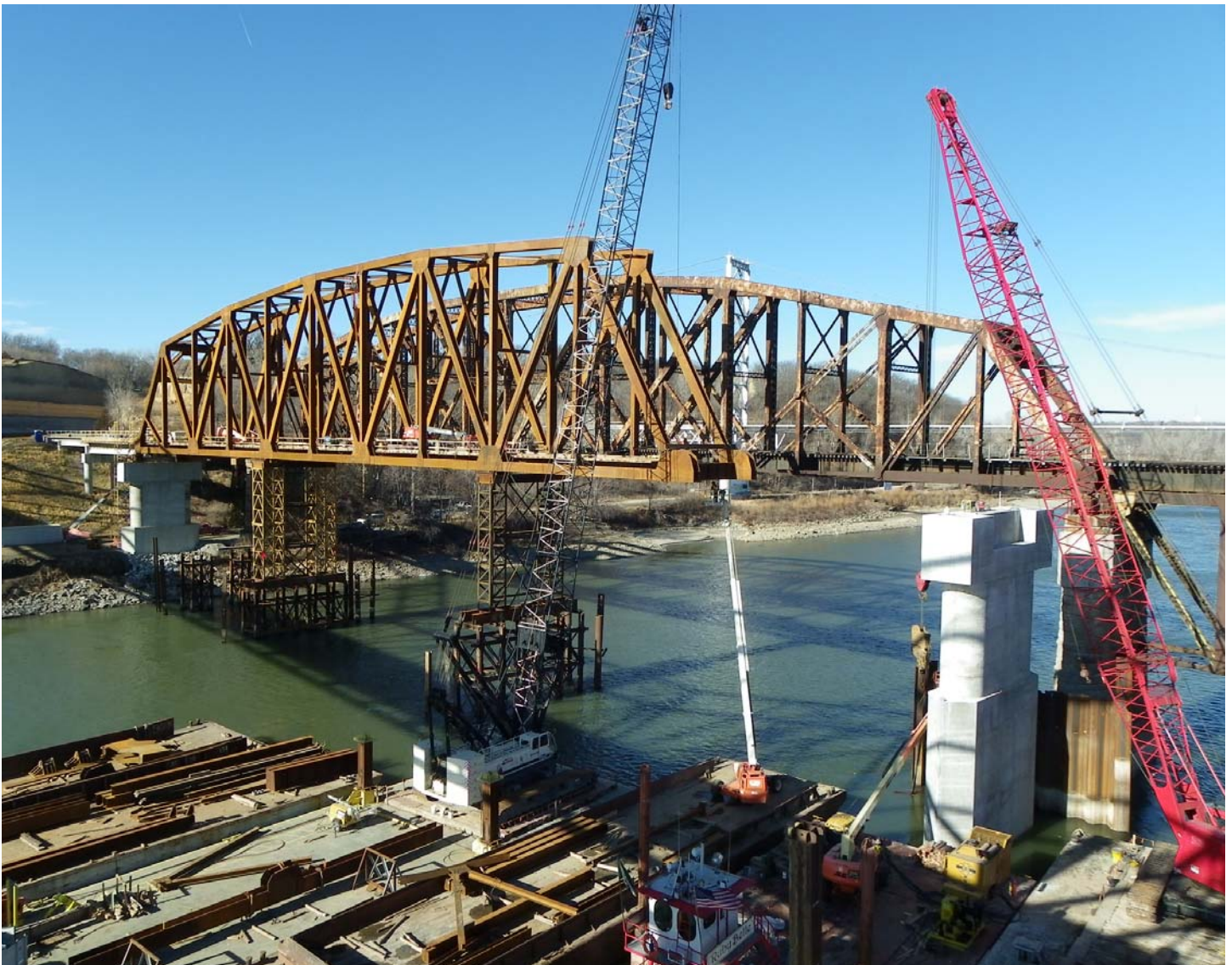
The new span is nearly to the middle river pier. Both through-truss' cross over the navigational part of the Missouri River. Support scaffolding holds the new span in-place, until the whole section is bolted and riveted.

The plate girder sections for the east half of the new Plattsmouth Bridge are being manufactured by "Capital Steel" in Lincoln, Nebraska. These and other plate girder

sections will be transported by truck to the Plattsmouth Bridge site, on the Iowa side of the river.

In the last few months BNSF has installed barbed-wire fencing along the south side of the hill cut, as the hill terracing and widening has created long, steep drop-offs.

*-all photos by Darrell D. Wendt*





The through-truss portion, on the west (Nebraska side) is very close to reaching the middle river pier. Once that is completed, the base and deck work will begin on the east half of the bridge, using steel plate girders. View is looking northwest from the U.S. Highway 34 “Toll” bridge.

