

The BN

Expediter

Volume 24, Number 4

October 2016



The official publication of *The Friends of the Burlington Northern Railroad*, the historical society focused on the Burlington Northern Railroad, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway, and the BNSF Railway.

Friends of the Burlington Northern Railroad

PO Box 271, West Bend, WI 53095-0271
www.fobnr.org

A 501(c)3 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.

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.

Directors

John Adams, MD; John McKenzie; John Parker;
David Poplawski; Larry Stephens

Officers

President John Adams, MD
Vice President Dave Poplawski
Secretary Kent Charles
Treasurer Jeff Hendricks

Editor / Associate Editor

Dave Poplawski / Mark Demaline

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.

The FOBNR is not supported by, nor affiliated in any way with, the BNSF Railway, 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 welcome for publication. Articles are compensated at \$25/page of text; contributors of photos will receive one free copy if an **FOBNR** member, two if not.

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

Send material for publication to either:

Dave Poplawski, Editor
7733 Copper Corner Drive SE
Caledonia, MI 49316
pop@mtu.edu

Mark Demaline, Assoc. Editor
29658 Schwartz Road
Westlake, OH 44145
conductor7@aol.com

Copyright 2016 by the Friends of the Burlington Northern Railroad. All rights reserved.

In This Issue

FOBNR Survey Report	4
Member Profile: John Parker	6
Convention Report	7
Stored Power	10
Cherokee Yard Expansion	12
One of a Kind / Air Car 90	17
The Renton Rocket	18

FOBNR 2017 Convention Denver, Colorado June 7-10

Mark your calendar and plan to attend the 2017 **FOBNR** convention in Denver, Colorado. The dates are Wednesday, June 7th through Saturday, June 10th. The convention planning committee has been busy working on a variety of activities which include, but are not limited to: BNSF facility tours, industry tours, BN model railroad layout tours and operating sessions, prototype railroad attractions, Denver area BNSF (former BN lines) railfanning opportunities, and much, much more!

You won't want to miss this opportunity to attend this great annual convention. Denver and the Front Range of Colorado also offer a host of great family activities and attractions. You'll want to extend your time in Colorado to visit the Rocky Mountain National Park, Estes Park, Elitch Gardens, Denver's Museum of Nature & Science, the Denver Zoo, Denver's Botanic Gardens, or take in a Colorado Rockies baseball game - there are just too many great activities to list!

Take advantage of this opportunity to attend a fantastic **FOBNR** convention and vacation in Colorado at the same time. Details and plans will be published in the January issue of *The BN Expediter*, on the website, and on Facebook.

New Members

Freeman Rawdon 16-023
(address withheld by request)

Russell Nelson 16-026
11016 Alhambra Drive
Austin, TX 78759

Daryl Mundis 16-024
Parkweg 344
2271BK Voorburg, Netherlands

Charles Zeiler 16-027
(address withheld by request)

David Leek 16-025
(address withheld by request)

Cover Photo: The Renton Rocket, a local switch job in the Seattle, Washington area, with BN GP9 1871 in charge brings brand new Alaska RR caboose 1079 and the rest of its train into Black River on it's way to Seattle on June 27, 1977. One of the jobs of the Rocket was to pick up new railcars from Pacific Car and Foundry in Renton and take it to Seattle, including new cabooses like this one and many built for BN. Photo by Brian Ambrose.

Item of Interest

Burlington Northern ALCO Locomotives

Kodachrome Slides on Photo CD

[From **FOBNR** member Peter Arnold] CD contains 270 JPEG images of Burlington Northern ALCO Locomotives during the 1970's following the BN Merger. All paint schemes are covered including BN Green and the BN Locos with BN lettering on SP&S and NP schemes. There are also some detail shots for modeling puposes, overhead and rear end images. Models covered included S-1, S-2, S-4, RS-2, RS-3, RS-11, FA-1, FA-2, C-415, C-424, C-425, C-636. High quality JPEG Photo CD's burned on Primera Tuffcoat Watershield CD's with inkjet color printed label directly on CD surface (no paper label to come off and ruin CD!). Large JPEG files that will make great 8 x 10 prints! Files are approximately 4000 x 2100 and 400-500dpi with file size approx. 1.8 to 2.2 MB each. \$19.95 plus \$2 shipping,

<http://www.rrimages.net/>

or

<http://stores.ebay.com/pismopete48/>

Peter also has Western Pacific Diesels, Cabooses and freight cars that might be of interest to modelers.

Sustaining Members

On behalf of our members, the **FOBNR** Board of Directors would like to thank our sustaining members for 2016. Their generous contributions have helped us to continue furthering the goals of our organization.

John Adams	Gerad Grossman	Richard Rehn
Doug Andreason	Bill Harvey	Richard Rink
Jim Archer	Alexander Hedin	Thomas Robb
Joseph Beasley	Richard Heggen	Kim Saign
Tom Bentley	Mark Herrick	Gary Seymour
James Bradley	Jesper Kaae	Dennis Shogren
Jay Burkgart	Steve Koberstein	Patrick Slater
David Burns	James Kreger	David Smith
Kent Charles	David Leek	Joe Snider
Gayle Christen	Dennis Lutz	Charles Sted
Mike Clifton	Alan Meyer	Mark Steenwyk
Kenneth Cocherell	William Miotek	Lawrence Stephens
Craig Connell	Allen Moore	Thomas Synovec
Earl Currie	John Murphy	Charles Taylor
Mark Dennis	David Obetz	John Tenerowicz
Duane Durr	Russell Nelson	Frederick Theiss
Micheal Farley	Dave Poplawski	Galen Thomaier
Peter Ferch	T. Michael Power	Aric Van de Vord
Roger Field	Emery Rahm	Gary Wlodarczyk
John Flodin	Anthony Raimondi	Charles Zeiler
Wade Griffis	Freeman Rawdon	

President's Message

At the Board meeting in Glendive this June the Board decided to send out a survey to the membership to be able to find a grass roots answer as to what the members wanted the future of the **FOBNR** to look like. Having accomplished this I have two major thank-you messages – first to John Parker for organizing this and collating the results, but most importantly to you, the members of the **FOBNR** for responding in such great numbers to the survey. We had responses from more than 50% of our membership, which is absolutely excellent.

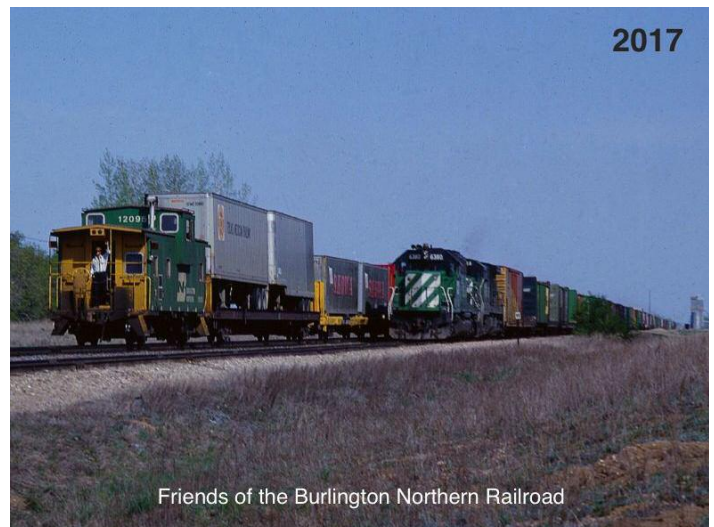
With this message I want to summarize the results, provide you with some of the comments that we received and some initial thoughts about what we plan to do with these results.

Question 1: What is your primary interest in the BN/BNSF?

50% responded the BN, while only 10.6% listed the BNSF. The second most common response (although we did get some comments that they had wanted an “all of the above” response available) was actually BN/BNSF modeling. We were a little surprised that the BNSF did not score higher, but felt this did give us a direction to provide as much BN material as we can obtain. We also realized that modeling is popular and we should continue to try to do modeling articles as people will provide them.

continued on next page

2017 All-BN Calendar



Friends of the Burlington Northern Railroad

Our 2017 all-BN calendar is now available. All sustaining members who renew for 2017 by December 31st will get one free. Regular/youth members can order one for \$10 plus postage, which is \$2 off the list price of \$12. Go to our website (www.fobnr.org) and click on the calendar link for information on how to order on-line or via US mail.

Question 2: Are you satisfied with the Current Direction of the Organization?:

96% felt that the organization was pointing in the correct direction, but with a number of comments again encouraging a focus on the BN and modelling.

Question 3: Are you satisfied with the BN Expediter?:

64% were very satisfied, 33% somewhat satisfied. Once again there were a number of comments on increasing the BN content and adding modeling information. The challenge associated with this will be to have members provide our editors with BN and modeling content. It is relatively easy to report on the BNSF in the present, but getting information about what happened 21+ years ago will require members with information about the BN to share this with our editors. We have also decided to try to re-establish a column reporting on new BN and BNSF models that have become available.

Question 4: Ranking of which BN Expediter topics interest you:

This was difficult to quantify, but it appeared that Geographical Information and Motive Power Equipment ranked highest. The third most popular seemed to be Employee stories and experiences, and we do hope to present more oral histories from former BN employees.

Question 5: Do you find the **FOBNR** web page useful?:

The responses here were positive 92% of the time, but only 41% very positive. This frankly did not surprise us as we have had a goal for the last 2 years of updating the feel and the navigation ability of the website. The problem here has been to find somebody who is both familiar with website development and our content, and who will charge us a price the treasury can absorb. We did notice later that seven people mentioned that they would be willing to help with the website – so we may need to search those people out!

Question 6: Would you support a “Members Only” Section of the Website?:

The responses here were 2-1 in favor of putting some material in a “members only” section. The comments were more mixed, the only real consensus seeming to be the Expeditors. This is something we have debated for several years at the Board level with the thought that if some material was available to all and some on a restricted portion it might encourage some people who use the “free” material to become members. This certainly looks like something we will investigate further, but will need someone to step forward to be willing to do the work to register the members and keep passwords and such up to date.

One issue that did come up – we will never give out names or email addresses without the member’s permission.

Question 7: How likely are you to attend future Conventions?:

Interestingly there were 17 responses of “very likely”,

which has been close to the present attendance at our conventions. However, 58 were “somewhat likely”, and those are the people we need to move into the “very likely” category. The 29 “not at all likely” seemed consistent on travel cost, time and ability to travel. The issue of cost to attend a convention has been an item for discussion for a number of years; the problem being that meeting in smaller BN communities creates less cost for housing and parking, but higher costs to travel to those destinations. Meeting in larger communities lowers the cost of travel as a rule, but requires higher costs for motel and parking. We have also made a real effort to move the conventions around geographically to enable members in different locations to attend conventions in their area.

Question 8: Ranking of Activities Members would enjoy at Conventions:

Not surprisingly BNSF and railroad facility tours ranked highest and this is certainly an important goal of every convention. Industrial tours ranked second, and again this is a goal of every convention. We realize that both of these activities are opportunities that probably only occur in the convention mode. Numbers 3 & 4 were tourist railroad rides and museums, and this was something of a surprise, as these are activities that would be available to individuals. Just behind this came model railroad layout tours and operating sessions, and these are activities that we have tried increasingly in the last several years. With the interest in these activities we will try to incorporate these activities in future conventions, and I know the organizers for next year’s convention in Denver are arranging these opportunities. We had a suggestion from the last convention to switch the Board meeting to follow the evening slide show, and this was exactly what the survey supported.

Question 9: What activities not listed above would you enjoy?:

Only 25% had new activities to suggest, and actually most of these had been done at one time or another in conventions. Several members mentioned modeling displays/contests, and we actually did this until there were so few entries that the same people were displaying all the time. If we could get some increased numbers at the conventions I think these activities and possibly even a swap meet could be great experiences. A number of members also mentioned talks by former BN managers and employees as something they would like to see. Once again, this would be an excellent opportunity if someone on the ground at the convention site could identify these people and help the convention organizers make contacts with them.

Question 10: Would you be willing to contribute to **FOBNR** Activities?:

Here there were 42 members who offered to help with BN Expediter content, and David and Mark are ready for your help!! Seven members offered to help with webpage

design and support, so please let us know who you are and what you can do to help us update the website. 13 members were willing to help with a convention – so please let us know where you would be able to help us and a convention is very likely to be coming to you! And 16 members offered to consider a leadership position, and David and I have been on the Board since time began, so please step forward and bring new leadership and ideas! We will be glad to share

advice and keep active, but we can already see how adding a new member to the Board has improved our organization

In summary, we again appreciate the work of John Parker, and we really appreciate the members who took the time and thoughtfulness to answer the survey. You have given us many things to think about and we will be working with your suggestions this year and in the years to come!

What is your primary interest in the BN/BNSF?

History of BN railroad and/or operations	50.4%
Burlington Northern and/or BNSF modelling	19.5%
Equipment (motive power, cars, etc.)	13.3%
History of BNSF railroad and/or operations	11.6%
Other	6.2%

Overall, are you satisfied with the current direction of the organization?

Yes	96.4%
No	3.6%

Are you satisfied with the organization's quarterly publication, *The BN Expediter*?

Very satisfied	64.2%
Somewhat satisfied	33.0%
Not satisfied	2.8%

Please rank which *BN Expediter* topics interest you.

Geographic information, history, divisions facilities, etc.	score* 6.87
Motive power and equipment.....	6.53
Employee stories/experiences	5.42
Modelling articles	4.35
New product reviews (models, books, videos, etc.).....	3.92
Convention coverage	3.12
Organizational news/business	3.09
Member profiles	2.56

Do you find the FOBNR web page useful?

Somewhat	51.0%
Yes, very	41.2%
Not so much	7.8%

Would you support a web page "members only" section?

Yes, some content should be restricted to our paying members only	66.0%
No, all content should be made available to the public at no cost to them.....	34.0%

How likely are you to attend future annual conventions?

Somewhat likely.....	55.8%
Not at all likely	27.9%
Very likely	16.3%

Please rank the activities you would enjoy at an annual convention.

	score*
BNSF/Railroad facility tours	9.8
Industrial tours	8.0
Model railroad layout tours	6.8
Train rides (tourist lines, Amtrak, commuter, etc.).....	6.8
Railroad museums and local attractions	6.8
Model railroad operating sessions	6.2
Evening slide shows and clinics	6.1
Dinners and social activities	4.9
Banquet and guest speaker(s).....	4.9
Membership meeting	3.7
Annual board meeting	2.8

Would you be willing to contribute to FOBNR activities (check all that apply)?

	count*
Yes, <i>The BN Expediter</i> content.....	42
Yes, web page development/support.....	7
Yes, annual convention planning	13
Yes, serving as a project/committee member or board member/officer.....	16
Other	21

*A high score means a lot of people ranked it of more importance, a low rank means a lot of people ranked it of lesser importance. For you math majors, the "score" is the weighted average rank subtracted from 12 to make a large number (lower rank) be smaller than a small number (higher rank). The weighted average rank is the sum of the products of the rank (1-11) and the number of people picking that rank.

*The count is the exact number of people picking that response.



Member Profile: John Parker

At the 2016 annual board of directors meeting, John Parker was elected as our newest board member. John has been a member of the **FOBNR** form more than 10 years, and has expressed an interesting in bringing some new ideas to our organization. As the subject of our next “member profile,” let’s learn more about him.

John began his passion for model railroading at an early age when his uncle went to college and gave him his model trains. Growing up in Minneapolis, MN he spent hours in the basement building model train kits and several small model railroad layouts. This also led to a passion for building all types of model kits, including car, boat, and airplane kits. Minneapolis is also what hooked John on railfanning the prototype railroads. Growing up on the Soo line he spent a lot of time watching trains on the Soo mainline and switching Humboldt Yard, as well as the rails around the North Minneapolis area.

After high school, John left Minneapolis and attend College in Colorado, earning two undergraduate college degrees (criminal justice and business management) and eventually a master's degree in business administration (MBA). During this time, John also met his wife Patricia, and started a family. John and Patricia have two grown children. Their son Michael lives and works in Southern California for Wells Fargo, while their daughter lives in the Denver area and is pursuing her master's degree in health and human services.

During John's early years in Colorado, he worked in several capacities (primarily in police and fire services) until settling on a career with IBM where he started as a plant protection officer providing security, fire and emergency response services. Thirty years later, he is currently a senior manager (at IBM) managing corporate security programs.

After taking a break to attend school and start a family, John's passion for the hobby reignited as he began building a small layout in their family's first home in 1990. As he learned new skills, techniques, and gained more experience he was just never satisfied with his layout projects. This led John to build larger and more complex layouts through the years, resulting in home changes, larger basements, and eventually his family building a new home that currently houses his BNSF Fall River Division model railroad, located in a 3,000 square foot layout room.

John's layout is a prototype-freelance model railroad, which was designed for operations—his real passion in the hobby. John travels several times a year, attending NMRA meets, operations weekends, railfanning events, and of course the annual **FOBNR** convention. John also believes that it is important to balance family life/events, work demands and hobby time, which requires continuous focus and adjustments at times.

John looks forward to serving on the **FOBNR** Board of Directors, and meeting / working with everyone in the organization over the next few years.

FOBNR 2016 Convention

Glendive, Montana

by John Adams

Despite heat usually reserved for locations much more southerly, the Glendive Convention was a great experience for all who attended.

Some of us arrived from the East on Tuesday and were treated to an operating session on Michael Farley's HO scale BN/Soo layout. His layout was well designed for operation and the layout and trains ran to perfection. Thanks to his great organizational efforts, the session was a real success.

On Wednesday we headed on for Glendive and registration at the La Quinta Inn. This process went well and gave all of us a chance to get re-acquainted as well as to meet our new convention attendee from Oregon. After that we headed for a group dinner and a quick orientation and then it was off to bed for Thursday activities.

On Thursday we met at the Glendive Depot and took a tour of the Depot and Yards. The local trainmaster was able to give us an overview of the facility and the operations in

the Glendive area. Although he started slowly, he seemed to quickly become more comfortable and was able to give us a good overview. The Montana Division headquarters are in the depot as well as crew lockers, a crew call room and a fully stocked gymnasium. The facility has been modernized on several occasions, but there were still areas where you could see the original architecture of the passenger era depot. The news about the Glendive area was not all cheerful, as he shared that of the approximately 500 coal sets in use several years ago, 310 are now in storage. This has meant furloughing employees and a marked decrease in traffic in the area. Fortunately, the rest of the railroad is doing better and most employees were offered transfers to other locations, but the effect on the railroad and the community are still easy to spot.

Next we were able to tour through the yards in a car caravan and were able to see the snow plow storage areas as well a number of locomotives in storage. He also showed us how the new electric switches operate in the yard and the

Convention group at the Glendive Depot. Photo by Pat Lana.



basic layout of the 9 track yard and service facility (a great modeling prototype)

We next toured the Roundhouse, originally built in 1883. The Roundhouse Foreman, Parts Superintendent and Safety Manager were able to tell us much of the history of the facility particularly through the BN and BNSF eras. Since coal is king in Glendive, the service facility was initially assigned to service EMD locomotives and was home for many of the SD40-2's that powered the coal boom. In later years they have expanded to service GE's as well and now can do any locomotive servicing except being able to drop a 3-axle truck. Most recently the upgrades have included the ability to do total engine change outs. Unfortunately, due to the age of the facility there are some real challenges to servicing the large modern locomotives including a restriction on the number of locomotives that will fit in the roundhouse and the requirement that technicians working on the locomotive roofs sometimes have to crawl on their bellies to clear the room rafters. Despite this they do a large number of repairs and seem quite proud of their work. We were also able to see the turntable in action, which is still an integral part of the shop facility. It was obvious to our group that the 3 gentlemen who gave us the presentation had a real desire to do a good job and turn out a great product even in the tough times as they saw some of their younger workers having to transfer to other shops to keep their jobs.

After a trip through Subway (the ONLY fast food in Glendive!) we headed off to follow the main to the west. With the help of several very knowledgeable members, GPS maps and the scanner, as well as good old fashioned helping each other, we were able to catch a number of coal trains as well as several manifest freights. For those of you who like to model the BNSF we actually found the perfect prototype if you can't run a long train as a manifest headed west from Glendive behind 2 high-horsepower GE's and 5 cars.



Photo by Dave Poplawski at Terry, Montana.

On Thursday evening we all cooled down from a hot day in the sun (nearing 100 degrees) and had our membership meeting. We discussed a number of issues, including a possible merger with the ATSF society, the need for a new Secretary as Gary Seymour ends his 20+ year term, and future convention sites. As a Board we received excellent input from the membership, Kent Charles volunteered to serve as Secretary and the Colorado contingent came for-

ward to offer a Denver convention in 2017. After the meeting we were able to watch a slide show of BN 40' boxcars, highlighting the many variations in type and doors, etc.

On Friday morning we headed north of Glendive to visit Sidney, Montana where 2 locals are based. The Sidney line itself was quiet except for the locals but with 1 heading north and 1 south we were able to see some switching action. We



Photo by Pat Lana in Dore, North Dakota.

then met at the craft and hobby shop in Sidney where the owner has operating HO and O scale layouts in the store. He was good enough to run these for us and the O scale layout in particular was quite eye catching. After a box lunch

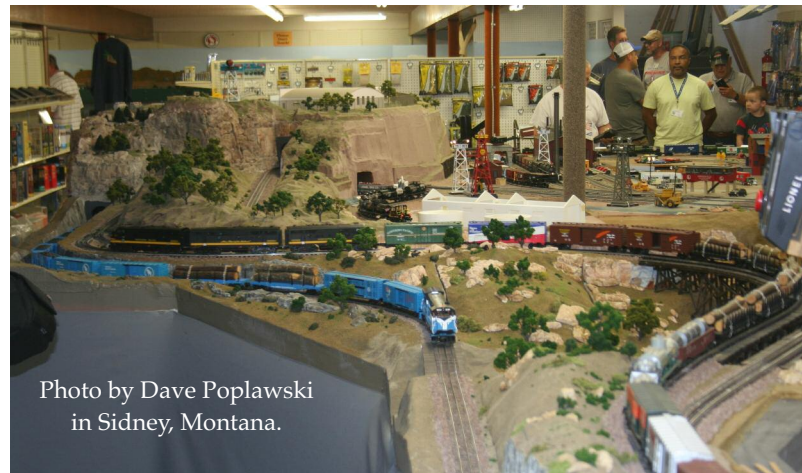


Photo by Dave Poplawski in Sidney, Montana.

in the Sidney park most of us headed to Snowden on the Hi-Line. There we were quickly able to catch 3 Z-trains, a manifest and an oil train. Watching the trains race along this stretch was an example of the desire of the BNSF to serve its customers in an efficient manner. Then all too soon it was

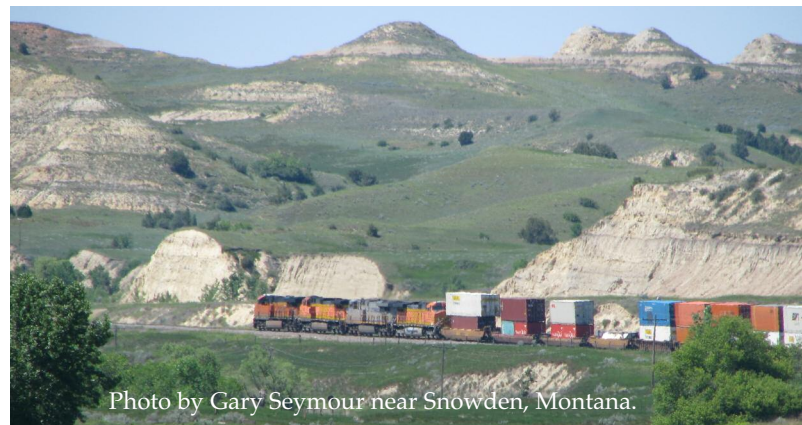


Photo by Gary Seymour near Snowden, Montana.

time to race back to Glendive as a number of us had to be at the Board meeting. Unfortunately, several of us got “stopped” by the local switching across the highway in Fairview, Montana, but still made it back.

At the Friday evening Board meeting we welcomed our new Board member, John Parker and elected officers for the coming year:

John Adams – President

Dave Poplawski – Vice-President

Kent Charles – Secretary

Jeff Hendricks - Treasurer

We then discussed the Expediter and thanked Dave and Mark Demaline for their efforts. The formatting changes were uniformly praised as well as the efforts to produce at least a 24 page issue each quarter. There will be a continued effort to produce high quality content, a 24-page issue and color for the coming year.

We also discussed an upgrade of our website and the ongoing need for members to help us with the website and in particular our social media footprint (see Help Wanted!)

John McKenzie discussed the ongoing operation of the Archives, in particular a push to get the large collection of slides digitized, an effort Kent Charles has been very helpful in accomplishing.

We reviewed the Glendive Convention, which seemed to be going very well. We were then fortunate to have a substantial group from the Denver area at the Convention and they offered to host the 2017 Convention in Denver. With a number of HO and N scale modelers in the area this convention may be particularly special if you are a BN or BNSF modeler, so stay tuned!

Once again this year we will be doing an all BN Calendar and hope to advertise this for the coming year.

A large discussion this year revolved around the information that the ATSF Historical Society will now be including a group following the BNSF. After substantial discussion about our options a consensus was reached that we will continue to follow our mission of studying the BN and continue our 1995 decision to also follow the BNSF. We hope to soon do some targeted advertising to highlight the efforts we have made in this for the last 21 years.

After the Board meeting we were shown a preview of Peter Ferch’s efforts on producing a searchable file of BN equipment and locomotives for the website which should be a great addition for those who want to research the years of the BN. We also watched some photographs from Boras Rosser including pictures both of BNSF sites, the present convention and also some shots from his native Atlanta area.

Saturday found us back at trackside, this time heading east to Dickinson, North Dakota on a cool and breezy morning. On a beautiful day for photography we were able to catch some coal loads and empties, as well as a manifest freight and an eastbound vehicle train. An overlook near a cemetery in Medora, North Dakota provided particularly



Photo by Dave Poplawski
near Sully Springs North
Dakota.

good views of a bridge in town. We also were able to see some activity at one of the oil loadouts and stopped for lunch at the Hardee’s outside the Dickinson yard and watch activity there.

We then returned to Glendive, with one last stop at a museum at Wibaux, Montana, where we also saw the storm chasers come through town on their way south, a harbinger of the evening to come when a tornado actually hit Baker, Montana.

In Glendive we met for our annual banquet which included an excellent buffet in Glendive. We only lost power once during the storm, but they quickly came back on and we were able to proceed. Our Convention presentation had a different look this year as we usually have an official from the BNSF make the presentation. This year we had a retired conductor, Keith Clingsmith, a retired engineer, Craig (CD) Smith and an active engineer, Barry Green, all from the Glendive area. Having initially assured us that they were not good speakers they all ended up being excellent speakers and were able to provide us with a look at what working on the railroad is really like. All of them were quite humorous, but also they were very serious in their concerns for their fellow railroaders and the community. They also were excellent spokesmen for the dedication to doing a good job for the railroad, even in the most challenging of times. All three felt that the railroad operated the most efficiently when the workers were seen as people instead of numbers and that their wish for the railroad was to care about making the work environment such that the workers could succeed in providing the best service for the railroad’s customers. They also had a strong devotion to the community and felt the relationship between Glendive and the railroad was strong, even as it is tested by the downturn in business. When asked what they would do if they had unlimited resources for the railroad they all agreed, as is true in so many businesses, that they would improve communication between the railroad, particularly the dispatchers and the workers.

After that we had our annual auction of items donated by the members as well as items donated to the organization and this year we cleared \$95. After that we went our separate ways, looking forward to meeting again next year in Denver.

Stored Power 2016

With a 33% decline in coal traffic and a 9% decrease in industrial product volumes (mostly oil and frac sand) in the first quarter of 2016 versus 2015, BNSF found itself with much unneeded power. As has happened many times in the past, idle locomotives found their way onto LUGO (Laid Up Good Order) lines in various yards, mostly in the midwest where the traffic declines were focused.

At the beginning of June 1,660 locomotives were in the LUGO “fleet”. Due to traffic demands picking up, probably due to the hot summer and increased electrical (i.e., coal) demand for air conditioning, BNSF returned almost 200 en-

gines to service from the fleet.

The reprieve may be short lived. BNSF admits that what in the past was a cyclical swing is more likely a permanent reduction in the need for coal, especially given the switch to low cost natural gas by electricity generating plants and the continued regulatory emphasis on clean air and less carbon dioxide emission. The company says it is unlikely that coal volumes will ever return to prior levels.

On these two pages are some examples of LUGO lines in various places around the system from various photographers.

Northtown - Early August. Peter Ferch photo.



Fargo, ND - Late June. Al Christianson photo.



Kansas City (Murray Yard) - Late May. Seymour Power photo.



Rozet, WY - Mid May. Carlos Ferran photo.



Rozet, WY - Mid May.
Carlos Ferran photo.





Willmar, MN - Mid August. John McKenzie photos.



Alliance, NE - Mid July.
Dave Poplawski photo.



Glendive, MT - Early June. John Parker photo.



Alliance, NE - Mid July.
Dave Poplawski photo.



Cherokee Yard Expansion

by Thomas J. Jenner

Photos by the author unless otherwise indicated

Back in June of 2014, the **Friends of the Burlington Northern Railroad** had a great convention hosted by Terry and Thomas Jenner in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Unfortunately due to a derailment two weeks prior to the convention we couldn't get a tour of BNSF's Cherokee Yard. Even though we shared some history of and information about the Cherokee Yard in a previous article in *The BN Expediter* (April 2014), let's review in more detail again.

History

The Cherokee Yard was built in early 1930s by the St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad, commonly known as the Frisco. They had a smaller yard in the nearby town of Sapulpa. In the early 1960s the yard was rebuilt by adding a hump, and soon afterwards it became the largest hump yard on the Frisco system.

In 1981, after the merger with the Burlington Northern, the yard saw declining use. At that time there were around 85 tracks in the yard. In 1981 some of the arrival yard tracks were cut out as service declined. There was still a small intermodal container yard by the diesel and service areas, but it was eventually taken out of service in the late 80s.

Before the AT&SF merger with BN, Santa Fe ran several trains through or into the Cherokee Yard using the Avard

Sub to connect the Santa Fe transcon. After the BNSF merger in 1995, BNSF didn't see a use for Cherokee Yard, wanting to move classification work to Memphis, Tennessee, the next hump yard east of Tulsa on the Frisco. But given that there was no hump yard in Texas, they decided to keep the Cherokee Yard open. Around 1,000 cars were humped a day for a long time.

The Creek Subdivision that runs south of yard to Madill, Oklahoma was shut down and most of the CTC signals were removed in the early 2000s. BNSF had the Creek Sub for sale in the early 2000s due to lack of industry. The Red Rock Sub was the only subdivision that ran trains between Kansas City and Houston, Texas, but after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, BNSF used the Creek Sub as a detour line out of Houston.

All the freight traffic, especially intermodal freight caused heavy congestion on the Red Rock Sub. BNSF decided to reopen the Creek Sub to remove unit bulk trains (coal, grain, rock, etc.) and several mixed freight off the Red Rock. Traffic on the Creek Sub increased slightly and CTC was put back in operation throughout all of the subdivision.

The Avard and Cherokee Subdivisions (which run west

A view from the Crest Tower looking down at the "bowl" of the yard. July 17, 2016.



and east of the yard respectively) were seeing around 30 to 35 trains a day between 2005 to 2012. In 2013, BNSF put new signals in around the Cherokee Yard, as well a bypass to avoid going into yard limits for westbound container trains going onto the Avarad Subdivision. Traffic in the yard and the Avarad and Cherokee Subs increased to 40 to 50 trains a day. The Creek Sub traffic increased to ten to 15 trains a day. Around 1,600 cars were humped daily. Eventually the Cherokee Yard was rated the third busiest hump yard on the BNSF system, with most cars that need to go east and north out of Texas getting humped, classified, and trimmed here.

2015 Diesel Shop Expansion

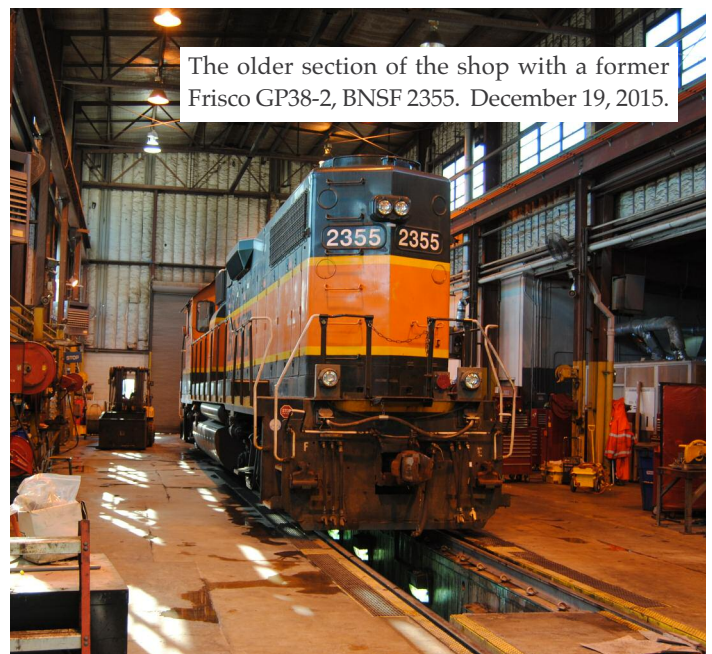
The diesel shop, where mechanics and electricians repair, inspect, and preform other activities to keep the locomotives in good running condition, was expanded in 2015. On November 19, 2015 the expanded part of the diesel shop was dedicated by corporate and other management members. Prior to the expansion the shop only could fit one locomotive in the shop; now there is room for two. The new section has a special tool that is like an elevator except only for traction motors. The expansion has helped the workers in the diesel shop keep on schedule.



The drop table is used to lower and raise traction motors so they don't have to lift locomotives. July 17, 2016.



BNSF Tulsa diesel shop whole view with BNSF 2713 (GP39-3). July 17, 2016



The older section of the shop with a former Frisco GP38-2, BNSF 2355. December 19, 2015.

Current Status

The Cherokee Yard operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week like all other yards on the railroads. There are three trainmasters on duty 24 hours a day, Monday through Friday. There are two yardmasters on duty 24 hours a day, and seven days a week, one for the Crest Tower for the hump and one for the Trimmer Tower where all trains must call for orders on where to do crew changes, hold short of the yard, or come into the yard. The Trimmer Tower is also in charge of building outbound trains and bringing in trains.

There are two people in each yard tower. Yardmasters, trainmasters, yard crews, and other yard personnel work eight hour shifts. BNSF tries to keep 12 hours ahead of schedule to keep up with freight demand, customer orders, and to have trains for train crews to operate.

The Cherokee Yard still has about 75 tracks in total. 41 of them are bowl tracks or classification tracks. Four arrival yard tracks (RD 8-11), seven departure tracks (RD 1-7), car shops (four tracks) and locomotive facilities (ten tracks) are also still in operation.

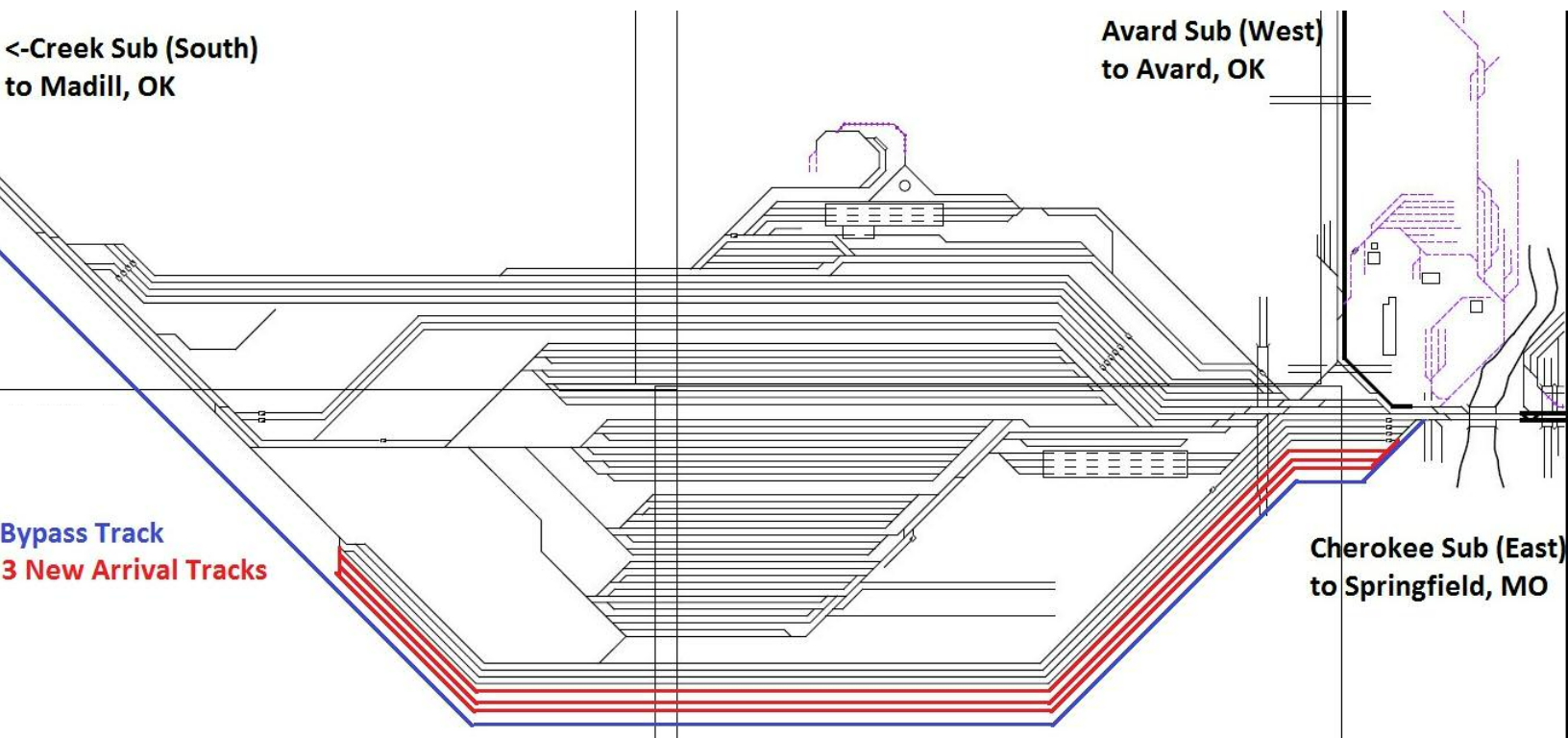
Ongoing Expansion

In early 2015, BNSF officials decided to expand the yard. The original plan was to add more four more arrival tracks and two bypass tracks for trains going onto the Creek Sub-division. Due to the tight space with Interstate 244 and not wanting to spend another 24 million dollars to build a bridge for a road from the Crest Tower to Southwest Blvd they decided to modify that plan. The new and official plan

Maintenance crews are working hard digging and filling in for the road bed for the future tracks. Photo by Terry Jenner, May 10, 2016.



Track chart of the yard showing the new future tracks in color coded (not official).





is to add three additional arrival tracks and only one bypass track around the yard. BNSF says its Tulsa Terminal improvements are part of \$175 million in capital improvement projects for its South Region.

The Terminal Superintendent of the yard and his team who want to keep the yard running smoothly hopes this will help prevent congestion and prevent trains tying down out on the road in passing sidings along the main lines. Along with the bypass track, trains going to the Creek Sub will no longer need to go into the yard to get from the Cherokee Sub to the Creek Sub. The road to the crest tower (West 33rd Place) will turn directly to the left just on the other side of Interstate 244 to parallel the bypass track and then make a right turn to cross the bypass track and the Old Passenger Main lead into the Crest Tower.

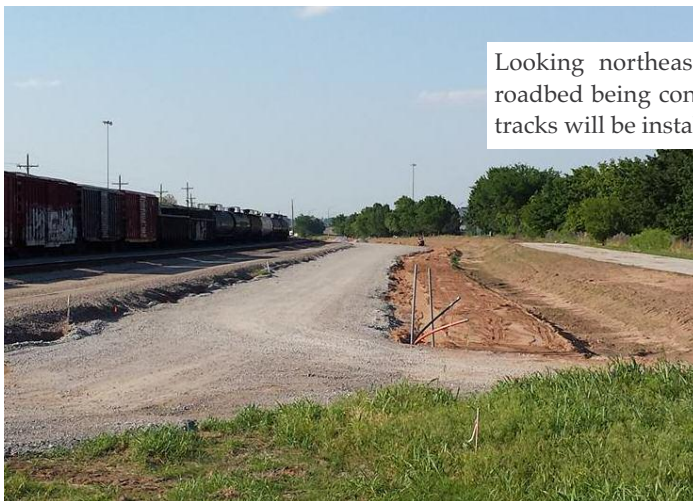
Construction for the Cherokee Yard expansion is now underway. Foundation for the bypass track between 33rd West Ave. and Cherokee Yard is about complete and the

service road that paralleled the yard has been fully removed. The 23rd Street bridge over the yard will be rebuilt as well as the exit ramp bridge off I-244 to 23rd Street bridge will be rebuilt as well due to bridge pillars in the way of the future tracks. Signals will be installed for the bypass track that will be installed at 33rd West Ave. and at control point Hall at 17th street at the north (east; timetable wise) of the yard. Construction is expected to be completed by mid to late 2018.

Sources:

www.newson6.com/story/27867845/bnsf-railroad-plans-improvements-to-west-tulsa-yard

www.tulsaworld.com/business/agriculture/bnsf-railroad-to-spend-million-in-capital-projects-in-oklahoma/article_a2f2a4a3-a481-502c-bd68-c91a73408053.html



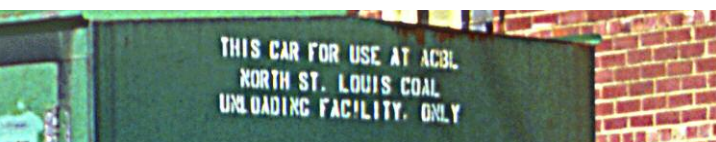
Looking northeast of 33rd Place at the roadbed being constructed where the new tracks will be installed. August 20, 2016.



Looking north at 33rd Street of the construction that has taken place recently. August 20, 2016.

One of a Kind

Air Car 90



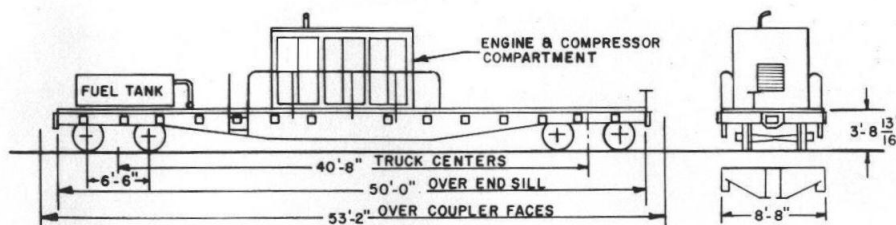
May 19, 1982 in St. Louis, Missouri.

Burlington Northern was never reticent about trying out new types of freight cars, locomotive fuels, home-made equipment, and various paint schemes. Here we have yet another unique piece of equipment - Air Car 90. Clearly built for a very special purpose, as shown below by mid-1983 it was modified in Galesburg and then repainted in Chicago. ACBL probably stands for the American Commercial Barge Line (St. Louis). If you have any other information about this car or how it was used, please contact the editor.

BUILT BY G.N. AT SUPERIOR-1928
CONVERTED AT ST. CLOUD-1978

FORMERLY G.N.
FLAT CAR 67527

AIR CAR 90



WEIGHT (CAR) 42,450 LBS.
CAPACITY (NOM.) 100,000 LBS.
DRAFT GEAR . . . L-25 . . . CARDWELL
COUPLER . . . TYPE E . . . 6" x 8"
CENTERING DEVICE NONE
YOKES . . . AAR CAST STEEL
RELEASE TOP LIFT, IMPERIAL B
AIR BRAKE . . . AB 10" x 12"
HANDBRAKE . . . VERTICAL WHEEL

SIDE BEARINGS FRICTION
TRUCK BOLSTER BATHTUB
KIND OF TRUCK-BETT. CAST STEEL
JOURNAL SIZE 5 1/2" x 10"
WHEELS-1 WEAR 33"
SNUBBERS YES
BRAKE BEAM-
NO. 2 PLUS CTR. HUNG
BRAKE BEAM SUPPORTS
3RD POINT CRECO

ENGINE GM6030C 6 CYL.
COMPRESSOR WXO
FUEL CAPY. 600 GAL.



June 11, 1983 in Galesburg, Illinois

Photos by Chuck Zeiler, diagram from Peter Ferch.



August, 1983 at Clyde (Chicago) Illinois.

The Renton Rocket

by Dave Poplawski



Renton Rocket? The name conjures up images of high speed passenger trains, the likes of which the Rock Island Railroad ran back in the 1930's, such as the Peoria Rocket. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The Rocket is, and was, a local switch job working the area around Renton, Washington. In its best days travelling only about 60 miles total out and back, it often took a full 16 hours to do its work for an average speed of less than 4 MPH. It even trundled down the middle of a street in downtown Renton, named Houser Way. While the real reason it was called the Rocket seems to have been lost in time, it certainly is plausible that it came from someone poking fun at its low speed. Ironically, it is the Rocket that has provided the last snail paced ride of Boeing jet fuselages from various suppliers to the plant in Renton—incredibly slow for vehicles that were built to go over 500 MPH. The name doesn't appear to have anything to do with real rockets.

The history of the Renton Rocket goes back before the

BN merger in 1970. In its earliest days it was a train that ran on the Pacific Coast Railroad (PCRR), which was purchased by the Great Northern 1951 but still retained its corporate identity. Right up to the BN merger, employees of the PCRR continued to crew the local, but as those employees started to dwindle GN employees were allowed to bid for the job using their GN seniority. With the BN merger, PCRR employees were allowed to bid for jobs anywhere on the BN system.

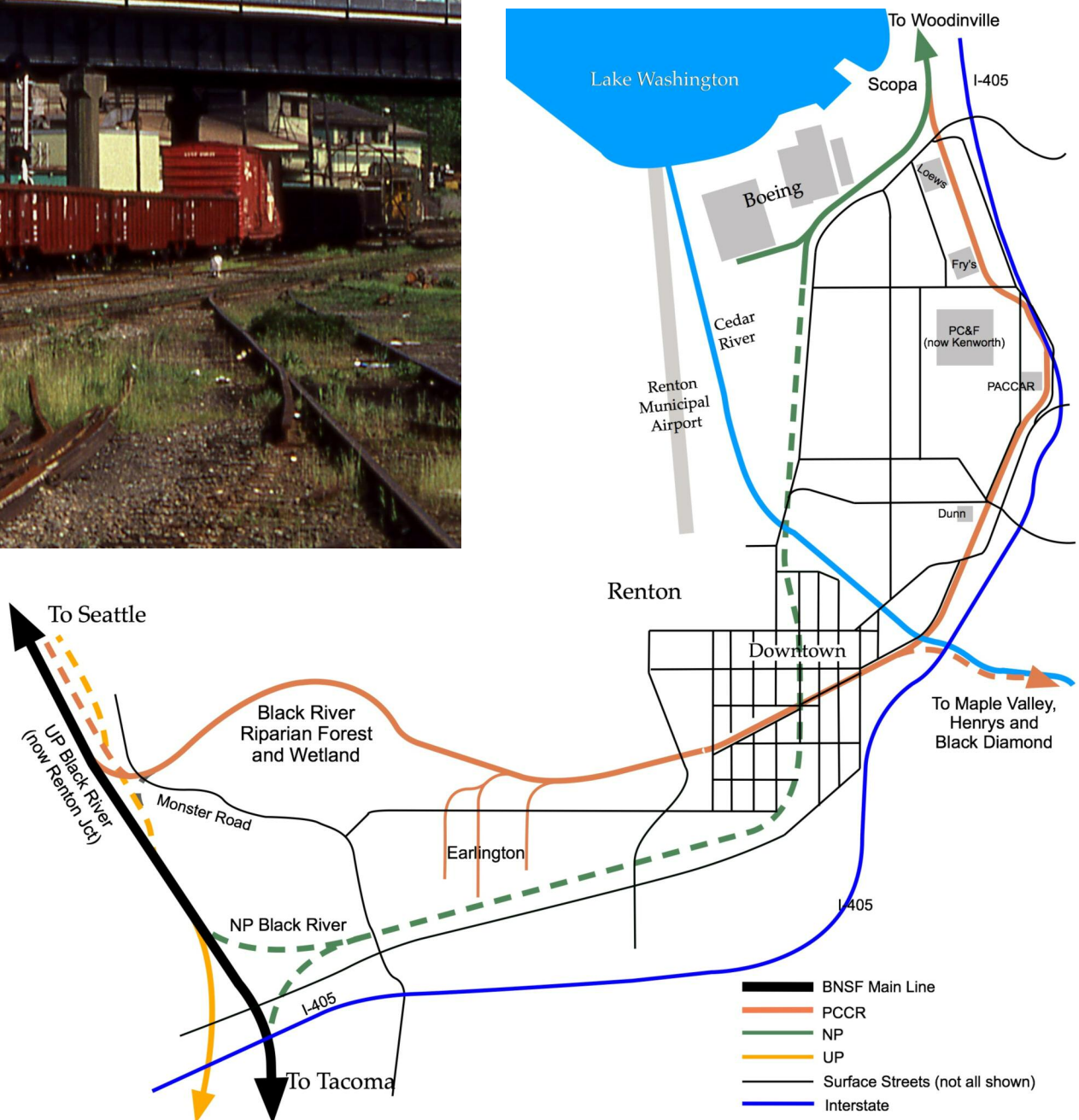
According to Dave Sprau, who worked as a fireman on the Rocket and then worked as dispatcher at Maple Valley soon after BN's formation, "At the time of the merger the engineer's name was Tommy Wiltschnig and the fireman was Virgil Ungherini, both of whom were PCRR prior rights employees. If Wiltschnig laid off, Ungherini became the engineer and an extra board GN fireman filled his spot. The conductor was George Andrew who was a GN man and his two brakemen were also GN men because by the 1960's all

The Rocket heads north at Argo on May 22, 1981 with six shiny new Milwaukee Road gondolas just picked up from Pacific Car and Foundry in Renton. The MILW would have picked up its own gons prior to its exit from the Pacific Northwest in 1980, so this is new business for BN. Photo by Brian Ambrose.



the former PC brakemen and conductors had retired. After the merger Ungherini was able to use his full PCRR seniority date anywhere on the BN west end, and he opted to take a daylight switch engine job as engineer at Auburn where he had lived for many years and could walk to work."

The Rocket worked out of Seattle and, among other things, served the Renton Boeing plant. The on-duty time at Seattle was 6:00AM and was assigned as far as the town of Black Diamond (until that branch was discontinued in 1971). It would switch all day and return to Seattle at night. Most of the work was on the North Renton line. Bob Wheeler, a long time BN / BNSF employee, relates: "I worked the Rocket back in the 70's a few times with ex-GN conductor George Andrew. At that time we started out at Stacy Street yard and departed for Renton. At Black River we would pick up cars off the interchange track and head around the wye on the old Pacific Coast RR main to Earlington

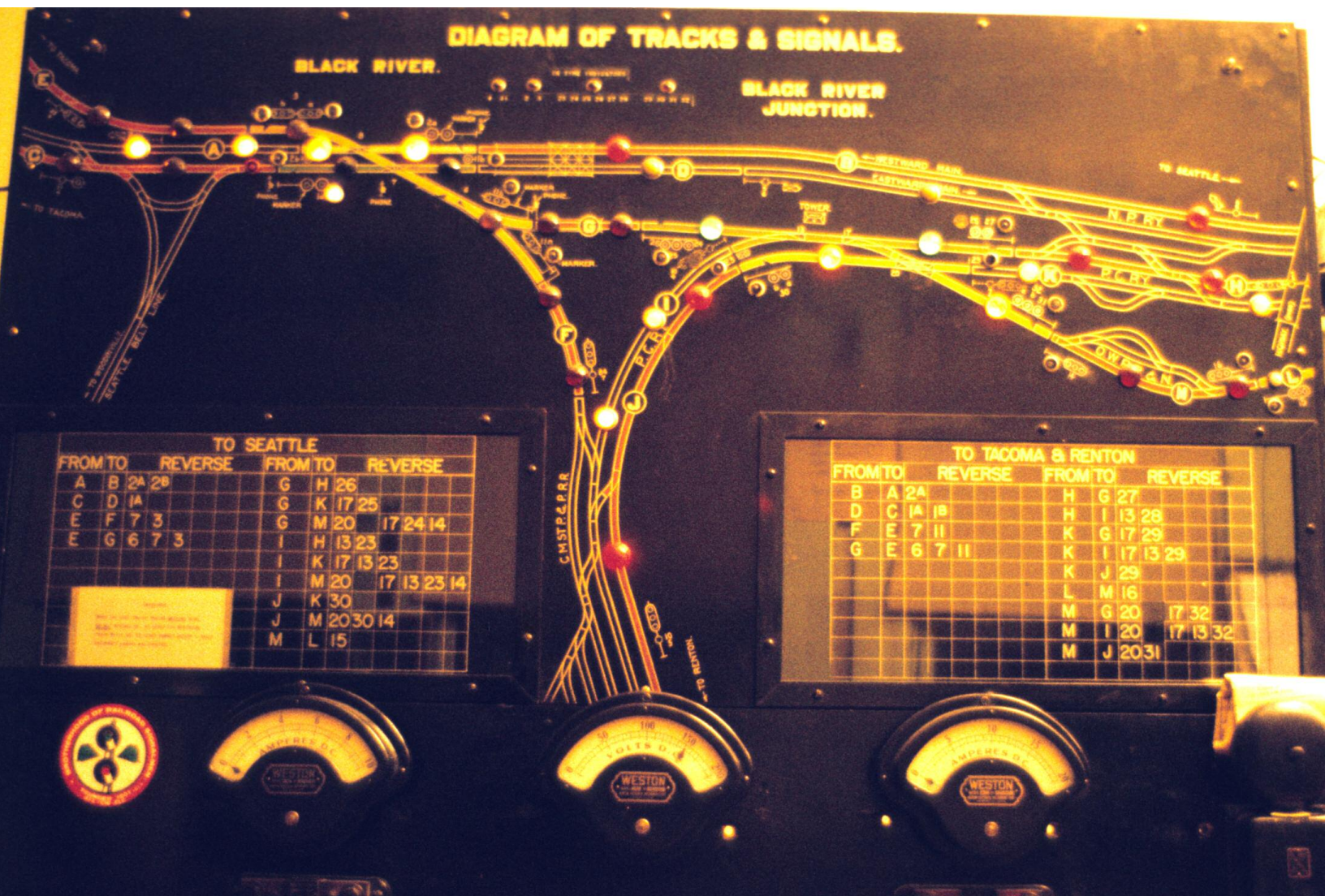




The operator in the Black River tower managed movements through the interlocking with the panel shown below. North is to the right, east is down. The tower itself was located between the two sets of double track below the junction label. The Rocket came south on the PCRR tracks and turned left (down) toward Renton. The tower was operated by the Union Pacific and can be seen at right in the photo above; the north-to-east leg of the wye branches off to the left. MILW's catenary is still in place. NP's wye and interlocking is shown at far left on the panel (south geographically), but was not under control of the tower and the Rocket never used it. Both photos by John Carr from his website: carrtracks.com. Photo above taken on February 3, 1973. Panel photo taken in March 1973.

just east of Black River yard (see the tower operator's panel photo below for details). There we would pull and spot at various industries, then head on to the Renton Depot to get paperwork and switch the Renton yard. Then we worked the Pacific Car and Foundry (PC&F) plant and then moved on to Boeing to pull and spot some more. There were many spurs to spot cars at, even a Dunn Lumber spur. On the way back from Boeing we pulled new rail cars built at Pacific Car and then built our return drag for the trip back to Stacy yard. At Renton the single track split at the depot to double track heading west, a spring switch routed the westbound trains to the westbound track. The track ran right down the middle of the street in Renton, and cars and trains usually mixed well but not always—they would have accidents every so often. Milwaukee trains operated over the PCRR tracks from Maple Valley to Seattle via Renton and Black River. I remember meeting MILW SD-40 powered trains with slave units cut in."

Two railroads served Renton at the time of the BN merger. One was the PCRR, which ran south from Seattle to Black River, turned east at a wye shared with the MILW and referred to as "UP Black River" and then headed east to Renton where it split again, one line continuing east to Black Diamond, the other north to Newcastle. The MILW leased PCRR's right of way from Maple Valley into Argo, rebuild-



The other was the NP's Belt Line that branched off the Tacoma-Seattle main line at a place referred to as "NP Black River," which was just south of the UP Black River wye. It then ran north-south along the eastern shore of Lake Washington up to Woodinville, junction with the former Seattle, Lake Shore and Eastern. It paralleled the north side of Grady Way to Burnett Ave, where it turned north and crossed the PCRR at Houser Street. It then continued north across the Cedar River, paralleling Logan Avenue past what is now the Boeing Plant and the old Puget Power Shuffleton steam plant, then north along Lake Washington.

Both railroads had stations in Renton only a few blocks apart, very near where their lines crossed at grade. According to Tim Repp, “After the merger, BN decided to simplify things by abandoning the NP line from the Black River wye up to just south of the Boeing plant, which included demolishing the NP station. The current BNSF line is the old

The Maple Valley dispatcher's train sheet below for March 3, 1980, shortly before the Renton Rocket was discontinued, gives an idea of its operation as well as other trains running through Renton on that day. Trains shown on the left are westbound, on the right are eastbound.

Record of the Rocket's activities on that day are highlighted in green. From the right column (eastbound), we see that conductor Hostetter and engineer Guerci came on duty at 6:00AM. Their train left the yard and passed Spokane St at 6:39AM with engine 1879 (a BN GP-9), 22 loads, 1 empty and 1458 tons. It arrived at Black River at 7:05AM and Renton at 7:20AM. In the left column (westbound) we see that the Rocket worked all day in Renton, passed the depot at 3:50PM with 1 load, 46 empties and 1518 tons, arrived at Black

PCRR, which continues from Seattle around the wye at Black River and past the PCRR depot to the east end of Hauser Way where it crosses the Cedar River to access Boeing.” This entire line is currently named the Renton Industrial Spur in BNSF’s employee timetables and is no longer a main or even a branch line.

Bob Wheeler relates: "The Black River Interchange track was used by GN, NP and later, BN trains leaving cars for the Rocket. The Renton Depot was just west of S 4th St and Houser Way South. The Renton Chamber of Commerce is there now, and before that The Spirit of Washington Dinner Train used it for their depot. Near the depot there was a scale track that held maybe 15 cars and on the south side of the eastbound track was a small yard with 2 tracks if I remember right. East of the depot the main track curved under I-405 and headed for Maple Valley (the right of way is now the Cedar River Trail)."

He continues: "The Pacific Car & Foundry was where the Kenworth Plant is now. They occupied 120 acres and had their own railroad and car movers inside the plant. Fry's Electronics and a strip mall now occupy part of the

River at 4:07PM, Spokane St 5:05PM and Seattle at 5:10PM. The crew went off duty at 6:00PM for a full 12-hour day.

The Maltby Turn with GP-9 1901 came eastbound through Renton at 10:22AM and returned westbound at 7:52PM. It originated and terminated at Auburn, south of Black River and hence shows no times at Spokane St or Seattle. The North Bend Local (shown as NoBend on the train sheet, and also known as the Snoqualmie Turn), also out of Auburn, with GP-9s 1878, 1750 and GP-7 1637, came eastbound through Renton at 8:15PM and continued on to Maple Valley and points farther east at 8:45PM. It returned westbound the next day.

Several MILW through trains also came through that day using trackage rights on the BN.

STATION Maple Valley, Wn

Elmer	Ryker
Mully	Reckert
High	Hastetter
845 AM	600 AM
	1000 P
Wischowski	Swane
845 AM	680 AM
	600 P
1901	1879

1/26
1518

pm	5	pm	46
52	350		1518
400	407		
pm	2		

1106

505	1/26
510	
pm	1518

1/26

at 6:00

May 1979

[illegible][illegible]

land and the vacant area south of Kenworth was part of PC&F. A good part of this area now is a superfund toxic cleanup site. PC&F's rail car and caboose production ended in the 1980's—they built such a good product they didn't wear out. The inbound tracks for PC&F were just south of what is now the Paccar Information & Technology building switch, opening north. Just north of that switch was a switch opening south that had two tracks for outbound empty cars plus new cars and cabooses to pick up. The old outbound tracks are now paved over. The siding further north by where Lowes is now was used to service several other customers in that same area. There also was another spur off the Boeing spur where large drop-center flat cars with electrical equipment were spotted for Puget Power."

In the early 1980's the Rocket was discontinued. Dave Sprau recalls that "the job and the work it did was slowly absorbed by the Maltby Turn, a post-merger job that started out of Auburn in the morning and usually went only as far as Woodinville. By that time BN had lost enough business around Renton that one switch job could do all the work."

The Maltby Turn eventually met its demise, making its last run on July 31, 2007. BNSF at that time sold its trackage north of Renton due to lack of business, doing in the Turn and the Spirit of Washington Dinner Train.

To continue serving industries in the Renton area, and particular Boeing, a switch job symbolled RNWE7371 (R for Road freight, NWE for BNSF's North-West Division) was initiated. *Affectionally* referred to again as the Renton Rocket, it regularly delivered fuselages to Boeing as well as serving a handful of local industries. BNSF also replaced the old PCRR bridge over the Cedar River to accommodate the larger 737-900 fuselages. In time most of the other local business dried up and currently the Rocket pretty much serves just Boeing, and given the rate at which Boeing is turning out new jets, it runs every day. Is it a coincidence that the symbol has "737" in it, given that it delivers Boeing 737 fuselages to the city that has produced more commercial jetliners than any other place on earth.

Many thanks to Dave Sprau, Tim Repp and Bob Wheeler for their help with this article.



(above) The Rocket is coming around the curve at Renton Junction with a 737 fuselage and Boeing parts cars in tow in on the morning of June 27, 2012. Boeing began receiving fuselages by rail beginning with the 737 in 1967 from its plant in Wichita, and 757s in 1980 from Rockwell in Tulsa.

(below) The same train a little while later is backing down the old NP tracks into the Boeing plant near Scopa.

Both photos by Brian Ambrose.





(above) The Rocket is returning from Boeing on July 19, 2016, running down the middle of Houser Way in downtown Renton. The empty fuselage cars are beginning their trip back to Wichita, Kansas for another “load”.



(left) The Rocket at Scopa on BNSF’s Renton Line on March 22, 2016. Scopa is where the old PCRR line was connected to the old NP line. The power is on the PCRR line. The NP line curves from foreground left (which leads to the Boeing plant) to background left (towards Woodinville), which was taken looking north.

Both photos by Brian Ambrose.



(right) With a cab door open on the warm afternoon of September 4, 2012, an eastbound Rocket negotiates a curve through the wooded segment between Monster Road and downtown Renton. Photo by Nick Krantz.

Rear Cover Photo: Shortly before noon on October 27, 2009, Nick Krantz caught the Renton Rocket as it slowly headed east towards the Renton Boeing plant with 737 fuselages in tow. The fuselages began their journey at the Sprit AeroSystems (ex-Boeing) plant in Wichita, Kansas, and at this point are just three miles from their destination, having just come off the busy main line at Black River and crossing Monster Road. Nick often has his camera with him as he walks or jogs the path along side of the tracks to photograph birds or trains. Although the Rocket generally runs in the late morning or early afternoon, he has seen or heard its horn at the Monster Road crossing at other times. Monster Road, incidentally, gets its name from a family of early Puget Sound settlers with the name of Monster.

