



Volume 4, Number 4

May 27, 2022

TCMC SPRING 2022 UPDATE

Here are the latest TCMC (Twin Cities- Milwaukee- Chicago) updates as known at the time of the initial distribution of this newsletter.

There have been few updates coming from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) this calendar year. The WisARP General Member meeting in March did not have a representative from WisDOT. Most updates the newsletter is able to get regarding the second daily train running between Chicago and the Twin Cities have come from our friends at the Minnesota Department of Transportation. (MnDOT)

The two main actors for MnDOT are Dan Krom, Director of the Passenger Rail Office and Frank Lotterle, MnDOT Project Manager for the Passenger Rail Office.

CANADIAN PACIFIC ACQUISITION

The biggest news from the first four months of 2022 came from the partnership of Amtrak and the Canadian Pacific Railway. Several news sources broke the news in early January that Canadian Pacific had reached an agreement with Amtrak about writing a letter of recommendation for Canadian Pacific’s buyout of the Kansas City Southern Railroad. CP also indicated public support for Amtrak’s long-term vision for growth.

The letter of support for Amtrak by Canadian Pacific isn’t just for Wisconsin in general and isn’t just specifically for the TCMC. In the Midwest, Amtrak is aiming for permission to travel through the Detroit River Tunnel, enabling Amtrak to connect to Toronto. Back in Wisconsin, WisDOT is hoping the CP -Amtrak agreement will allow increased frequency of the Hiawatha service up to ten round -



trip trains per day between Milwaukee and Chicago in addition to starting the TCMC service.

Amtrak is also looking to grow passenger service between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, LA, over CP/ Kansas City Southern tracks, and study the potential for service between Meridian, MS. And Dallas, TX.

(Continued on page two)

(Continued from page one)
The larger surprise from these discussions yielded Canadian Pacific's allowance of the

This latest word from our friends at the Minnesota Department of Transportation

intent to assist with daily running trains. The early start of a 3-day per week round trip TCMC train will likely have to be entirely supported by the States involved. Indications from Madison are Wisconsin will be able to support this states' share of an early 3-day TCMC train without a special budget session.



CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY

TCMC train to begin before the final design and construction phase is completed. This was a huge announcement that means the commencement of the second daily train could begin one year or more earlier than the previous estimates of the fall quarter 2024. CP does want the Milwaukee-area Hiawatha construction projects completed before allowing the TCMC to roll.

This announcement likely caught everyone unaware. This is incredible news that could set the stage for a daily train beginning by Christmas 2023.

The Minnesota officials have also begun mentioning they will need to ask their State Legislatures for their share of

The secondary news item was a comment from the CP that within one year of the beginning of the TCMC, CP would entertain the potential of another daily train running between Chicago and St. Paul. What are the possibilities there?

FORWARD TO MAY 4

At the Great River Rail Commission meeting Lotterle announced that negotiations were currently under way for a three day a week TCMC train possibly beginning first quarter 2023. (That is not a typo error. 2023!) Many details need to be worked out. Several interested parties have asked that these trains run on the weekend when tradition has it that the Empire Builder is at its busiest.



operations of the TCMC in upcoming budget discussions this summer. They are ideally suggesting an ongoing funding mechanism would be best to support Minnesota's share of the ongoing TCMC operating cost.

In 2021 a Restoration & Enhancement Grant of \$12.6 million was awarded by the Federal Rail Administration to help offset the operating cost of the TCMC for the states involved. This grant was originally awarded with the

What is the TCMC train?

The acronym is derived from the endpoints with Milwaukee in the center: Twin Cities- Milwaukee-Chicago. The TCMC project will add one daily round-trip regional train between these cities and serve all current Empire Builder stations in-between. The TCMC service will be considered a regional passenger rail corridor (as opposed to Amtrak long-distance) because it is under the 750 mile-standard set by the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008. This train will be state supported like the Milwaukee-Chicago Hiawatha trains. The cost of the TCMC Train will be split between the three state sponsors: Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

For more detailed information about any of WisARPs Newsletters this year, head to the WisARP website: www.wisarp.info



TCMC NEWS

Is created and written by Terry Brown, Vice President- Public Relations for WisARP and is solely responsible for its content.

CAN AMTRAK CONNECT US?

The first player, and the most important team member that will be scrambling to make this three-train per week “special” happen hopefully next year will be Amtrak itself. The National Rail Passenger Corporation, otherwise known as Amtrak, will more than need to come up with the equipment to fulfill the requirement of these trains. They will likely need to hire and train an entirely new staff to work and serve these trains. Amtrak may also have to scramble creating a service facility in the St. Paul area as one of the trainsets will have to call the State of Minnesota home overnight.

There are scattered news reports in several regions where Amtrak is cutting service temporarily due to a shortage of employees to staff all trains. A Fox Business story by Peter Aitken from December 2021 quoted House testimony by Amtrak CEO Stephen Gardner claiming that the vaccine mandate will force the company to cut services in order to comply.



There are numerous reports from the field by Amtrak riders experiencing first-hand training of new hires on revenue trains. Jerry Ratliff, Outreach Coordinator for All Aboard Minnesota reported on a recent train ride to Florida where the water was shut off during a shower. A new car attendant wasn't completely trained on the procedure for filling the sleeper car water tank.

[You can read Ratliff's full report in the second quarter 2022 Badger Rail newsletter from WisARP.](#)
The full version of this newsletter is available at www.WisARP.info.

PICTURES IN THIS ISSUE

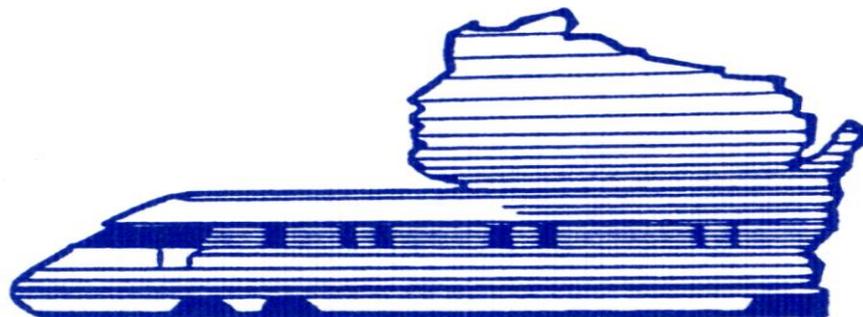
For those that have been around the Empire Builder this spring, you've no doubt seen the new Siemens built ALC-42 engines. These have a little more horsepower than the older GE Genesis P42s, but for those concerned about the environment the ALC-42s are very low emissions earning the most recent Tier-4 certification.

The bottom picture on page one and the picture on page three show the two ALC-42s that have become familiar with the Wisconsin landscape, numbers 301 and 302. On their maiden return voyage from the State of Washington heading east, 302 at the lead in Washington state collided with a pick-up truck that entered a crossing. The picture on page three shows it is in good cosmetic repair and looking good again. These two ALC-42 pictures are courtesy of Alan Baker.

The picture at the top of page one shows a Canadian Pacific freight train at West Salem, WI. on September 24, 2021. Canadian Pacific was already showing off cooperation with Kansas City Southern using one of their engines as the second power on this train. This picture was taken by Terry Brown.

By the time you read this newsletter

the Amtrak Empire Builder should have resumed daily operation across the entire route from Chicago, through Milwaukee and central Wisconsin, continuing west to Seattle and Portland. The subject of Face Masks could be an ongoing set of changing rules this summer. Consult with Amtrak train personnel for the current Face Mask rules.



Wisconsin Association of Railroad Passengers (WisARP) **New member sign-up form 2022**

Since 1977, WisARP has been the voice of the rail passenger in Wisconsin. Our strength is in the size of our membership. A one-year trial WisARP membership is just \$5. Besides our quarterly newsletter Badger Rails, WisARP also has email groups to provide members with the latest news.

It has been over 10 years since the Walker administration turned back federal money that WisDOT had applied for to continue development of the Madison Extension. But the work of WisARP has continued. We are still focused on:

(1) You are seeing this New Member Sign-Up sheet in a newsletter keeping Wisconsin citizens informed over developments of the second train on the current Empire Builder route between the Twin Cities and Chicago (called the TCMC train.). Funding has been secured, but our education efforts continue.

(2) Educating the public on the usefulness of the Hiawatha service in a post-Pandemic/ Endemic era, and
(3) Creation and Implementation of the Hiawatha Extension trains to Green Bay and Madison.

If you would like to join WisARP for the journey ahead, it is simple. Just fill out the form below. Your first year (2022) is \$5 with this special TCMC Newsletter form! Just \$10 per year afterwards.

Jim Sponholz, WisARP VP-Membership- May 2022

Name _____

Address _____ Cell Phone _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please add your email address below to receive the latest WisARP news including Badger Rails.

Email address _____

Mail To: WisARP Memberships
4230 N. Oakland Ave, Box 259
Shorewood, WI 53211-2042