

# THE SHORTLINE



Model Train Enthusiast Frank Sinatra shows off one of his prizes.

CHAMPLAIN VALLEY CHAPTER • NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 58, NUMBER 9

NOVEMBER 2023

## MONTHLY CHAPTER MEETING

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2023 - 7:30 PM

IN PERSON MEETING AND ZOOM MEETING

*See page 2 for location and Zoom information*

### “ CHAPTER MEMBER’S MODEL NIGHT ”

As mentioned in last month’s Shortline, we are going to do something different for our November Chapter Meeting. We are returning “ Member’s Model Night”. This used to be an annual event, but we have not had one in a long time. If you have favorite models, models that you have built (can be in progress) or bought, like myself, bring them to the November Chapter Meeting. We have plenty of tables to show off your models and for you to talk about them. Whether it is rolling stock, locomotives, buildings or scenery, come to the meeting and share with your fellow Chapter Members. The meeting will be live and via ZOOM video conference. If you cannot attend the meeting and still want to show off you models and talk about them, we ask that you send up to six photos of your models to Laz Scangas. He will show them at the meeting and you can talk about them. The pictures need to be jpegs and should be an attachment to the email and not embedded in the e-mail. Please contact Laz Scangas with any questions (lscangas@arnoldandscangas.com).

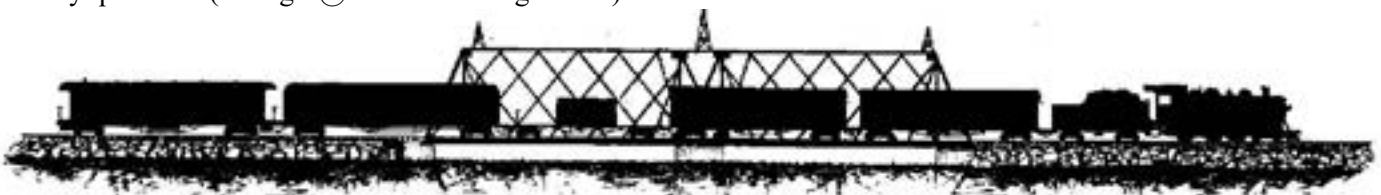
### CALENDAR OF SHOWS & EVENTS

#### NOVEMBER 2023

**18 Albany Train Show** Saturday.  
9 AM - 3 PM. Polish Community  
Center, Albany, NY Info at [https://  
www.albanytrainshow.org/](https://www.albanytrainshow.org/)

**18-19 Greenberg Train and Toy Show.**  
Saturday and Sunday 10AM-4PM.  
Shriner’s Auditorium, 99 Fordham  
Road, Wilmington MA. Admission  
\$12.00 covers both days. Info [http://  
greenbergshows.com/schedule.html](http://greenbergshows.com/schedule.html)

*continued on Page 2*



**CALENDAR OF  
SHOWS & EVENTS**  
*Continued from page 1*

**DECEMBER 2023**

**2-3 New England Model Train Expo,** Saturday 10 AM- 5 PM. Sunday 10 AM - 4 PM. Best Western Royal Plaza Trade Center, Marlborough MA. Sponsored by HUB Division NMRA 2-Day admission adults \$12, children under 12 free. More info at <https://www.hubdiv.org/fallshow/showFlier.pdf>

**3 Great Train Extravaganza 2022** Sunday 10AM-4PM. New York State Convention Center, Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY. Admission \$7, children under 10 free. For more information, visit <https://gtealbany.com/>

**8 Essex Junction Train Hop,** Friday 5:30 PM - 8:30 PM. Model train displays throughout the city, "Roaming Railroad" trackless train ride. HQ Brownell Library Essex Junction.

**JANUARY 2024**

**21 TTCS 43rd Annual Toy Train Show.** Sunday 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM. Union Station, Main Street, Utica NY. Adults \$5. Sponsored by Toy Train Collectors Society.

**27-28 Amherst Railway Society Railroad Hobby Show.** Saturday 9-5, Sunday 10-5. Eastern States Exposition, West Springfield MA. Adults: \$15.00 per day, Children 15 and under: FREE Accompanied by an Adult. EASTERN STATES PARKING: \$5.00 per day.

**FIND NEW MEMBERS**

Let's continue finding new members for the Chapter. Contact a friend who might like trains, real ones, or model trains, and invite him/her to join you at a meeting or other event.

**NOVEMBER CHAPTER MEETING**

**F**or our November meeting, we will have an IN PERSON meeting. The meeting will also be broadcast via ZOOM conference for those who choose not to attend in person.

**IN PERSON MEETING**

**O**ur November chapter meeting will be held at the VFW Hall at 73 Pearl Street, Essex Junction at 7:30 PM. The expectation is that you are not experiencing COVID symptoms. **WEARING A MASK IS OPTIONAL;** however if you are not feeling well please be considerate of others and consider attending by ZOOM meeting. If members wish to get something to drink during the meeting, they are welcome to purchase one at the bar in the VFW.

**ZOOM MEETING**

**F**or those who prefer not to attend in person, the chapter meeting will also be broadcast as a ZOOM presentation. Follow these steps to join the meeting:

Click on the address below or load the address below into your browser address search line and hit Enter.

**Time: Nov 15, 2023 05:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)**

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84354820599>**

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**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

**T**he Board of Directors of the Champlain Valley Chapter will meet on **TUESDAY, November 14, 2023 via ZOOM conference.**

**Time: Nov 14, 2023 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)**

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85768307482>**

Meeting is open to any CVC members. Any Board members unable to attend please let President Laz Scangas know ahead of time.

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**MEETING CANCELLATION NOTICES**

**I**n the event that a Chapter meeting must be canceled due to inclement weather, an announcement will be posted on the home page of the Chapter website, [www.cvcnrhs.org](http://www.cvcnrhs.org) as soon as the decision is made. In addition, a notice will be sent out by email by the secretary to everyone who has submitted their address. There will be an announcement on Tom Gallagher's phone (802-888-4835), as well as an announcement on WKOL, 105.1 FM. To have your address added to the list, please contact Tom Gallagher at [prevost453@comcast.net](mailto:prevost453@comcast.net)

## OCTOBER 2023: “MEMBERS PICTURE AND VIDEO NIGHT”

In October of each year, the Chapter hosts its annual “Picture and Video” night, where members share some of their images taken over the past year. This year we were treated to a variety of subjects by quite a few presenters. Below is a list of presenters and the subjects they provided.

Rodger Brassard - Selection of vintage images of railroad action on and around the New Hampshire Mountain Division.

Stephen Lowe- Inaugural views of the Amtrak Ethan Allen at Vergennes.

Art Bliss- Images from a Reading and Northern RDC fan trip in Pennsylvania.

Bill Crosby- Pictures from Maine on a RDC excursion from Brunswick to Rockport.

Carl Fowler- Susquehanna steam on the VRS in 1999, vintage images of the Sugarbush Express, and a view of the final trip of The Montrealer.

Jim Hoffman- Took a ride on the Conway Scenic RR to Crawford Notch.

Tom Gallagher- Pictures of ride on private railcars to Florida and the NRHS Convention, East Broad Top RR.

Jim Melone- Heritage locomotives on The Vermonter, Private car special to Burlington, and VRS locomotives.

Chris Monje- Images from the Bridgeview B&B, the East Broad Top RR, and the Yuengling brewery.

Jason Owen- The 2022 CP Holiday Train and assorted views of railroads and cities in Australia.

Bill Wheeler- The Tallylyn Railway in Wales.

Laz Scangas- Vintage photos taken around Vermont and New York, as well as images from the East Broad Top RR in Pennsylvania.

THANK YOU to those who provided great images, and to Laz for compiling the show. I hope everyone found it informative and entertaining. If you missed the show, or would like to view it again, a video has been posted on the Chapter website. It can be found in the members section listed under “Presentations.”

The website address is: [www.cvcnrhs.org](http://www.cvcnrhs.org). *Tom Gallagher*

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## NO BUS TO SPRINGFIELD SHOW

Due to insufficient interest, we have decided NOT to sponsor a bus excursion to the Amherst Railway Society Railroad Hobby Show 2024 in West Springfield Massachusetts in January 2024.

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## CPKC “D&H UNIT” REACHES LABOR AGREEMENT

The Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division recently ratified a new contract with the Delaware & Hudson Railway unit of CPKC.

The contract, retroactive to 2022, runs through 2024. It includes annual wage increases of 7%, 4%, and 4.5%; yearly bonuses of \$1,000; no reduction in medical benefits or change to cost sharing; and an additional paid day off per year. While the railroad was not a party to the National Carriers Conference Committee, which negotiated the most recent national contract determined through the recommendations of a Presidential Emergency Board, those recommendations did provide the framework for the contract agreement the union said. (*TRAINS NEWSWIRE*)

## FUTURE CHAPTER MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

### Wednesday, December 20, 2023

7:30 PM, Chapter Monthly Meeting.  
VFW Hall at 73 Pearl Street, Essex Junction.  
Program : TBD

### Wednesday, January 17, 2024

7:30 PM. Chapter Monthly Meeting.  
VFW Hall at 73 Pearl Street, Essex Junction.  
Program : “The Rutland Island Line”  
by Jim Jones

### Wednesday, February 21, 2024

7:30 PM. Chapter Monthly Meeting.  
VFW Hall at 73 Pearl Street, Essex Junction.  
Program : “Raymond Loewy” by Chris Monje

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## FIND NEW MEMBERS

Let’s continue finding new members for the Chapter. Contact a friend who might like trains, real ones, or model trains, and invite him/her to join you at a meeting or other event.

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## MEMBERSHIP ADDRESSES

Please let Membership Chairman John Gaworecki know of any address corrections or additions so our mailing list can be corrected. John’s address is 10 Maple Street Ext., Essex Junction, VT 05452-3706. Phone 802-999-7695, e-mail [cvcnrhs@comcast.net](mailto:cvcnrhs@comcast.net). This will ensure that your **SHORTLINE** and NRHS publications will be sent to the correct address.

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## CHAPTER WEB SITE

Check out the chapter website at <http://cvcnrhs.org> for chapter calendar and news events, and lots of links to railroad sites. Ed Bianchi has done a great job keeping the site current with many improved features.. The **SHORTLINE** is available to Chapter members on the CVC website. Current and recent past issues are available.

Contact Ed Bianchi for access information or if you are having difficulty logging on to the site.

## CHAPTER DUES FOR 2024

The process to renew your membership for the Champlain Valley Chapter and for National NRHS has started.

**CHAPTER** dues are payable directly to the chapter. For 2024, dues will remain at \$15.00 for chapter members and \$5.00 for family members. A renewal form will be included on page 9 below.

The rate of \$15.00 per year applies to all regular chapter members; however it is suggested that those who receive chapter documents by hard-copy US Post office delivery consider an additional donation of \$10.00 to cover printing and mailing costs.

**NATIONAL** Dues are payable directly to NRHS National. Renewal notices will be sent by National directly to members. Those who have provided an email address to National will receive an email offering the option to pay on-line. The process is straightforward and not complicated. If you do not renew on-line, or have not provided an email address to National, you should receive a renewal notice by mail.

**OR** once again you can renew through the chapter by sending one check to the Chapter with both Chapter and National dues.

SEE THE FORM ON PAGE 9. Contact John Gaworecki if you have any difficulty with the renewal process.

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## VERMONT CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION PRESSING AMTRAK ON VERMONTER RETURN TO MONTREAL

Vermont's congressional delegation, led by Senate Commerce Committee member Peter Welch, this week called on Amtrak to provide an update on the establishment of interim preclearance operations to support rail travel between Vermont and Quebec and the federal actions needed for the full implementation of a preclearance program.

Welch, Sen. Bernie Sanders and U.S. Rep. Becca Balint asked Amtrak board of directors Chair Anthony Coscia to work with the delegation to expand rail service in Vermont.

"Expanding Amtrak's existing service to connect Vermont and Quebec — already Vermont's largest international trading partner — would improve economic opportunity in our state. For many Vermont businesses and residents, Montreal is the closest out-of-state metropolitan area — closer even than Boston or New York City. However, despite this centuries-long relationship encompassing cross-border communities, friends, families, and businesses, Amtrak's Vermonter line has not

travelled to Montreal since 1995," the delegation wrote in the letter.

"As you know, a key challenge to expanding rail service to Quebec is the lack of preclearance operations in Canada that would allow passengers to undergo customs checks prior to boarding their train. Preclearance would reduce delays associated with international travel, improve safety and security along our northern border, and strengthen the cultural and commercial ties between the United States and Canada," the delegation concluded.

Vermont officials requested Amtrak detail the interim steps Amtrak is taking to establish a preclearance program at Montreal Central Station before the permanent facility can be constructed, and how Amtrak is working with U.S. Customs and Border Protection on those steps. The delegation also asked how soon Amtrak anticipates a preclearance program could begin between Vermont and Montreal, and the additional federal actions needed to expedite the completion of that process — including the staffing, equipment, access

agreements, and funding and timeline for the construction of a preclearance facility.

Congress authorized Amtrak to expand preclearance operations to allow rail activities in Canada in 2016 through the Promoting Travel, Commerce and National Security Act. Logistical and operational obstacles have hindered the full implementation of preclearance activities between the United States and Canada, and a preclearance facility in Montreal Central Station has not been finished to-date.

As outlined in the letter, the resumption of the Ethan Allen Express line between New York and Vermont, which included newly reopened stations in Burlington, Middlebury and Vergennes, has been a popular and economically impactful improvement for Vermont's local communities. Expanding rail service between Vermont and Quebec would build on this progress for the state's small businesses, workers and tourism industry, the delegation stated. *(COMPILED FROM NUMEROUS PUBLIC SOURCES)*

## “FLYING YANKEE” FOR SALE

The state of New Hampshire is looking to sell the Flying Yankee, the 1935 articulated New England streamliner built by Budd Co. for the Boston & Maine Railroad that is virtually identical to Burlington’s Pioneer Zephyr.

The *Concord Monitor* reports the state has issued a Request for Proposals for sale of the three-car trainset, which has long been at the Hobo Railroad in Lincoln, N.H., and has been the subject of failed restoration attempts both private and state-funded. Proposals are for “the relocation and encouraged restoration” of the trainset, and will be rated under a number of criteria addressing how they plan to handle preservation of the equipment. The buyer will have to sign “permanent restrictive covenants” regarding preservation and maintenance of the train at the time of closing; a document addressing those

restrictions, along with other documents related to the potential sale, are available at the “Cultural Resources” page of the New Hampshire Department of Transportation website. Prospective buyers can view the train on Nov. 15 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., with components available for inspection from 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

The Flying Yankee was ordered just two months after the completion of the train that would come to be known as the Pioneer Zephyr in June 1934, and entered service as the Boston-Portland-Bangor, Maine, Flying Yankee on April 4, 1935. Unlike the Burlington streamliner, which included a Railway Post Office in the power car, the Boston & Maine trainset had coach seating in all three cars, as well as a baggage section, buffet, and solarium lounge. It operated on various New England routes until its retirement in 1957, after which

it was displayed at the Edaville Railroad tourist line for 36 years.

It was moved to New Hampshire in 1993 as part of a restoration effort, was acquired by the state three years later, and moved again in 1997. But the restoration effort ran aground with the death of project leader Robert Morrell, and the train has been stored in Lincoln since 2005.

A nonprofit group formed in 1996 to support the restoration effort, the Flying Yankee Association, said that it will apply to gain ownership of the train.

“The Flying Yankee Association is in a unique position, with both a dedicated team and strong partnerships, to ensure this beloved treasure not only remains true to history, but to have it ride down the tracks under its own power once again,” Brian LaPlant, the association’s chairman, said in a press release. (*TRAINS NEWSWIRE*)

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## CANADIAN PACIFIC KANSAS CITY 25TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY TRAIN

Canadian Pacific Kansas City has announced the schedule and lineup for the 25th annual Holiday Train begun by Canadian Pacific, which this year will expand its route to visit a number of communities on the former Kansas City Southern. Meanwhile, the Holiday Express train formerly operated by KCS will also visit 20 locations in Louisiana, Missouri, and Texas.

“The Holiday Train program is close to the hearts of our CPKC family. Our railroaders take great joy in joining communities across our network as they come together in the giving spirit of the holidays,” CPKC CEO Keith Creel said in a press release. “We are proud to support local food banks as we fight food insecurity by collecting food and raising money and awareness. I am grateful to all the railroaders and community members who have supported the Holiday Train

over the past quarter century and made it such a success.”

The Holiday Train tour will include 191 live music performances in six provinces and 14 states between Nov. 20 and Dec. 19. Artists scheduled to participate are Anyway Gang, Breland, Kiesza, MacKenzie Porter, Seaforth, Tyler Shaw, Dallas Smith, Tenille Townes, Trudy, and Virginia to Vegas.

“I could not be more excited to be getting back on board the Holiday Train again. I feel like I witnessed the best parts of the human spirit on the ride last year, with everybody bundled in the cold bringing donations for their local food bank,” said Townes, a Canadian country music singer-songwriter. “I can’t wait to play and see communities along the way coming together again this year!”

The Holiday Express will operate between Nov. 25 and Dec. 14, continuing its longstanding mission of raising funds

for The Salvation Army. In 22 years of operation by KCS, the train has raised more than \$3.1 million.

The Holiday Train stops in New York State :

November 24

Menands at 4:00 PM

Mechanicville at 6:00 PM

Saratoga Springs 7:30 PM

November 25

Fort Edward at 1:15 PM

Port Henry at 5:10 PM

Plattsburgh at 7:15 PM

Rouses Point at 9:00 PM

See the full schedule on-line at :  
<https://www.cpkcr.com/en/community/HolidayTrain>  
(*TRAINS NEWSWIRE*)

## SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY...

The Champlain & Connecticut River Rail Road Company was incorporated 180 years ago this month to build a railroad between Burlington VT (on Lake Champlain) and Bellows Falls (on the Connecticut River), a distance of approximately 120 miles. C&CR was part of a

larger planned route from New England to Ogdensburg NY on the Saint Lawrence River. It was reorganized as the Rutland & Burlington Railroad in 1847.

After an 1854 bankruptcy, it was reorganized again as the Rutland Railroad.

Sixty two years ago all service ended

due to a labor strike, and sixty years ago the Rutland ceased to exist.

Portions were purchased by the State of Vermont and re-born as the Vermont Railway and Green Mountain Railroad.

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## CONNECTICUT EXCURSION LINE PURCHASES ANOTHER STEAM LOCOMOTIVE

The Essex Steam Train & Riverboat, a heritage railroad operated by the Valley Railroad Co. on a former New Haven rail line, has purchased Frisco 2-8-2 No. 1352 from the American Steam Railroad Preservation Association, the group restoring Reading Co. T-1 4-8-4 No. 2100.

The locomotive was built by Alco in 1912 as a 2-8-0 and later converted to a 2-8-2. Upon retirement, it was displayed in a park in Kansas City, Mo., until park officials wanted the engine removed because of its deterioration and vandalism.

Donated to the Smoky Hill Railway & Historical Society, subsequent ownership changes have seen it end up in storage, partially disassembled, in Taylorville, Ill. American Steam Railroad Preservation had owned the locomotive since 2008.

Essex Steam Train says in a Facebook post that the locomotive “will be coming to Essex soon.” In that same post, ASR President Rob Gardner says the transaction means No. 1352 “will be restored to operational condition much sooner than we could have hoped to accomplish,” and

that the funds from the sale will go toward ASR’s restoration of No. 2100, which the group plans to present in an American Freedom Train paint scheme. Gardner also thanked Genesee & Wyoming and the Illinois Midland Railroad “for allowing the 1352 to be stored on their property for all of these years.”

More information on the Essex Steam Train & Riverboat is available at its website: [https://essexsteamtrain.com/\(TRAINS NEWSWIRE\)](https://essexsteamtrain.com/(TRAINS%20NEWSWIRE))

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## BIDEN TO ANNOUNCE FUNDING FOR NORTHEAST CORRIDOR UPGRADES

President Joe Biden will ride an Amtrak train to Delaware today (November 6) to announce the award of \$16.4 billion for 25 passenger-rail projects designed to improve critical infrastructure along the Northeast Corridor (NEC).

The funding includes nearly \$10 billion for Amtrak to modernize critical infrastructure, improve stations and support future ridership growth on the NEC.

Among the 12 Amtrak-led projects that will receive funding through the Federal Railroad Administration’s Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Program include the:

- Frederick Douglass Tunnel Program, \$4.7 billion;
- Susquehanna River Rail Bridge, \$2.08 billion;
- East River Tunnel Rehabilitation, \$1.26 billion;

- Connecticut River Bridge Replacement, \$826.6 million; and
- Baltimore Penn Station Redevelopment, \$108.3 million.

“These grants will help advance Amtrak’s plans to modernize the Northeast Corridor and unlock major bottlenecks on the busiest passenger rail corridor in America,” said Amtrak CEO Stephen Gardner in a press release.

Another 13 NEC projects led by Amtrak partners to receive funding include:

- Hudson Tunnel, Gateway Development Commission, \$3.8 billion;
- Penn Station Access, Metropolitan Transportation Authority, \$1.64 billion;
- Walk Bridge replacement, Connecticut Department of Transportation, \$465 million;
- Delco Lead, New Jersey Transit, \$180.9 million; and

- Hartford Line Rail Program Double Track, Phase 3B, CTDOT, \$104.9 million.

Funding for the 25 projects comes from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act that Biden signed in November 2021. The law included unprecedented federal investments in rail. The funded projects announced today will replace or repair NEC infrastructure that has been in need of major upgrades for decades, said FRA Administrator Amit Bose.

The NEC is one of the busiest and economically vital transportation systems in the world, serving the Northeast’s five major metropolitan regions — Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington, D.C. Hundreds of thousands of people rely on the 2,200 Amtrak, commuter and freight trains that operate over some portion of the route each day. (*PROGRESSIVE RAIL*)

## RAILROAD WORKERS CLAIM LONGER TRAINS UNSAFE

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen has called on the Federal Railroad Administration to issue an emergency order setting a 7,500-foot maximum length for trains on Class I railroads, the union announced Oct. 16.

The BLET said in a press release that the union's national president, Eddie Hall, had made the request in an Oct. 9 letter to FRA Administrator Amit Bose.

The letter asserts that train size and length "played an extensive role" in recent derailments, citing Norfolk Southern incidents in Anniston, Ala.; New Castle, Pa.; and East Palestine, Ohio, as well as a CSX derailment in Hyndman, Pa.

(National Transportation Safety Board investigations are ongoing on the three NS incidents; the NTSB report from the Aug. 2, 2017, incident in Hyndman cited CSX's train-building methods, but did not specifically address the train's 178-car length.)

Hall wrote that railroads have increased train length "without training locomotive engineers to handle these monstrous trains properly" or considering route infrastructure. "Best practices do not exist" for operating such long trains, he wrote. With railroads running longer trains under the Precision Scheduled Railroading model, "excessive buff and draft forces have been created due to excessive train length,"

leading to more derailments because of in-train dynamics.

Hall's letter notes that the FRA issued a safety advisory on train length and makeup in April, but says that does not go far enough: "A regulatory standard is needed, but those take a very long time. For this reason, we are request an Emergency Order."

The union also sent a copy of the letter to all Class I railroads, asking them to voluntarily impose a 7,500-foot train length, Hall wrote, adding, "We do not want to wait until the next rail catastrophe to act." (TRAINS NEWSWIRE)

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### AAR DISAGREES...

The Association of American Railroads says long freight trains are safe and has told the Federal Railroad Administration that there's no need for an emergency order that would cap train length at 7,500 feet. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen on Oct. 9 called on the FRA to limit train length, claiming that trains longer than 7,500 feet pose an immediate safety hazard.

"Respectfully, there is no emergency," Ian Jefferies, the AAR's president, wrote in a letter to FRA Administrator Amit Bose on Oct. 12. "Railroads have safely operated millions of trains in excess of 7,500 feet over the last eight decades. Experience shows that these trains are safe. As such, there is absolutely no safety justification for the extraordinary step of an emergency order."

The FRA issued a pair of non-binding safety advisories in April — one covering train makeup and one on the complexities of operating long trains — in the wake of several derailments that were related to a combination of train handling, train length and weight, and how tonnage was distributed throughout trains.

The FRA issues safety advisories to raise awareness and promote discussions around

safety concerns, while an emergency order has the binding effect of a regulation and requires a higher burden of proof.

The April 27 train length advisory urged railroads to take steps to address the complexities of operating long trains. It was issued after three recent derailments involving trains with more than 200 cars, a length of 12,250 feet or more, and a weight over 17,000 tons.

"Since that time, nothing has happened to suddenly justify emergency action by FRA," Jefferies wrote. "None of the derailments cited in BLET's letter or FRA's Safety Advisory were determined to have been caused by excessive train length. With the exception of the derailment in East Palestine [Ohio], which involved an overheated bearing, all involved train makeup or train handling issues." (It should be noted that the National Transportation Safety Board has yet to issue reports on the cause of three of the four incidents cited in the BLET's letter.)

The Class I railroads use a variety of methods to ensure safe operations, including train marshaling rules and the use of distributed power to manage in-train forces, AAR said. The railroads also require

locomotive engineers to demonstrate in simulators that they can safely operate long, heavy trains before becoming qualified on a specific territory, AAR said.

The U.S. Class I railroads have increased train lengths since 2017 as part of a strategy to move tonnage on fewer but longer trains. Operating longer trains increases fuel efficiency and reduces the production of greenhouse gas emissions, AAR said, while also improving grade crossing safety by reducing the number of trains.

Mainline derailments have not increased since 2017, but the April FRA safety advisory said officials had "noticed a rising trend in recent incidents where train build and makeup have been identified as a potential cause or contributing factor."

Recent studies that examined train length found no correlation with derailment rates, AAR noted, pointing to a 2019 Government Accountability Office report and a 2022 FRA report on Precision Scheduled Railroading.

"FRA's Class I accident data for mainline accidents shows that over the last decade and across the system, accident

*Continued on Page 8)*

## AAR APPROVES OF LONG TRAINS

*Continued from Page 7)*

rates have decreased as train length has increased,” Jefferies wrote.

The overall mainline accident statistics, however, do not show whether trains over 7,500 feet derail more or less often than trains under 7,500 feet.

Two years ago Congress funded a National Academies study on trains longer than 7,500 feet, which is currently under way. Congress also mandated that FRA collect accident and incident data on crew size and train length. Separately, FRA has begun a study of air brake performance in longer trains.

The FRA in July proposed requiring the Class I railroads to provide monthly data that tracks train length and tonnage as well as the number of reportable accidents for trains over and under 7,500 feet.

The FRA says it wants to use the data to better understand the impact of train length on safety and whether trains over a certain length are disproportionately involved in derailments or incidents such as stalls or a loss of communications.

In public comments submitted to the FRA, representatives from Amtrak, rail labor unions, the Illinois Commerce Com-

mission, and the Chicago-area Coalition to Stop CPKC all backed the train-length data collection proposal.

The AAR opposed the rule proposal, arguing that the data collection would be burdensome, its low accident reporting threshold would make comparison with other years difficult, and that it undermines the FRA’s own proposal to mandate crew size.

An FRA spokesman said the agency is working on a response to the BLET’s train-length letter.

*(TRAINS NEWSWIRE)*

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## WOOD, CONCRETE, STEEL, AND NOW PLASTIC RAILROAD TIES

**G**ranite Peak Plastics, a plastic recycling company, has launched Triton Ties. Triton Ties will “manufacture a new fiber-reinforced polymer composite tie product line.” This precision molding process of the “Triton tie marks a significant advancement in railway infrastructure by providing a high-performing, long-lasting alternative to traditional wood ties and other composites on the market.”

Leveraging 25 years of plastic industry expertise from Granite Peak Plastics, Triton Ties will “develop a composite tie like no other. Both companies are co-located, as well as operated by the same leadership team.”

Granite Peak Plastics and Triton Ties CEO, Greg Janson expressed pride in his team, stating: “We’ve worked hard to engineer a process and product that addresses the shortfalls of composites that went before us. This product has a superior fatigue endurance and hits the sweet spot of performance and cost. A true one-for-one replacement for wood, Triton Ties will save billions of dollars over their lifetime when installed at scale.

And because we are committed to using recycled plastic, Triton Ties will also create a demand for massive quantities of scrap plastic, keeping it out of our landfills, waterways, and oceans. It’s a triple win – performance, profit, and planet.”

Triton Ties will use precision extrusion technology; “Automated feeders for each input ensure tight process control, while a custom extrusion process maintains the integrity of reinforcing agents. The result is a product uniquely positioned on the frontier of performance and cost-efficiency.”

With the power of recycled plastics and a proprietary resin matrix, Triton Ties develops a product that “outperforms wood ties in challenging applications, such as high moisture environments. With a projected lifespan exceeding 50 years, Triton Ties are impervious to rot, moisture, and insects and can be recycled at the end of their use. With approximately 20 million ties replaced annually in North America, the shift to Triton Ties’ more durable and greener solution promises substantial economic and environmental benefits.

“The Triton composite tie also offers seamless installation using the same machinery as wood. They can even be combined with existing wood crossties for optimal capital management. The Triton composite tie has undergone rigorous third-party and AREMA testing and validation, and the tightly controlled manufacturing process produces world-class consistency and quality.

“In addition to standard ties, Triton Ties also offers customized solutions to meet specific applications. Strength, stiffness, and cost can be adjusted by altering the formula for a solution that meets a customer’s specific requirements.

“Triton Ties is an affiliate of the Granite Peak Group, which also owns and operates Granite Peak Plastics. This gives Triton Ties complete control of the supply chain, allowing it to pass on consistent savings and reliable pricing to its customers. Located where all the Class 1s meet in St. Louis, Missouri, Triton Ties can ship to anywhere in the U.S.”

*(RAILWAY TRACK & STRUCTURES)*



**Use the form below to renew membership in the Champlain Valley Chapter.**

**Note that National NRHS dues can be paid through the chapter.**

The chapter will consolidate dues payment to National. Thus, *one check to CVC NRHS for \$65.00 will renew chapter and National for 2024!*

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**Champlain Valley Chapter-National Railway Historical Society  
Membership Renewal Form - 2024**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Family Member Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Do you currently receive your copies of **The Shortline** by e-mail? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to receive **The Shortline** by e-mail in the future? \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter Adult Member - @\$15.00. Number of Adult members \_\_\_\_\_

Suggested *Additional* Donation for US Postal Mail @\$10.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter Family members - @ \$5.00. Number of Family Members \_\_\_\_\_

**NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL @ \$50** \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ *Thank You!*

*Please send your dues, made out to "CVC NRHS", along with this form to:  
CVC NRHS, PO BOX 816, Burlington, VT 05402-0816*

**CHAMPLAIN VALLEY CHAPTER, NRHS**  
P.O. Box 816 Burlington, VT 05402-0816

**FIRST CLASS MAIL**

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Chapter dues payments (made out to Champlain Valley Chapter, NRHS), as well as membership applications, should be addressed to CVC NRHS, P.O. Box 816, Burlington, VT 05402-0816. For NRHS National applications and dues, see website [www.NRHS.com](http://www.NRHS.com).

Correspondence and exchange newsletters may be addressed to the Chapter at P.O. Box 816, Burlington, VT 05402-0816. Contributions and letters may be addressed to the Editor at the same address.

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OPINIONS EXPRESSED by individual writers are their own, and do not necessarily reflect any official view of the Chapter, or NRHS.