

Transport Central

NEWSFRONT

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STANDARD GAUGE -- Delaware & Hudson wants ICC permission to acquire trackage rights over Penn Central between Albany and Schenectady to allow continued Montreal-New York passenger service; the request was made because interstate highway construction will prevent continued interchange at Albany....Santa Fe has petitioned the Tulsa, 211-212, Kansas City-Tulsa, effective June 15, for the second time....Seaboard Coast Line has received permission to acquire the Piedmont & Northern Railway (a former electric interurban), pending any possible appeals.... Hearings have been set for the following trains: IC 11-12, the Hawkeye (Dubuque-Sioux City); D&RGW 17-18, the California Zephyr (Denver-Salt Lake City, ordered to run until October 16); and Norfolk & Western 15/25-26/16, the Powhatan Arrow (Norfolk-Cincinnati); the latter, although now discontinued, will get a hearing on appeals from a stockholder and a Virginia state senator....Penn Central has been ordered to pay an additional \$32 million to former New Haven stockholders following a federal court's decision that the ICC's set price was too low....Seaboard Coast Line has petitioned 33-34, the Silver Comet (Richmond-Atlanta) for June 15....The National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) has been allowed to intervene as an opponent in Missouri Pacific's Section 13a(2) petition to discontinue its remaining passenger service between St. Louis and Kansas City.

FLYING HIGH -- The Civil Aeronautics Board has cleared the way for the beginning of transpacific service any time after May 28, though the airlines involved will probably not begin any new service immediately. The board acted by rejecting petitions from Continental and others for rehearings of the controversial case; unresolved yet is that airline's court appeal of President Nixon's award of the services in the first place. As regular readers will recall, President Nixon left out lucrative awards to Continental and Braniff for South Pacific services from a series of rights given out by his predecessor, basing the denials on "cronyism" charges. The services affirmed by the CAB include: To TWA, a Los Angeles (Ontario or Long Beach)-Hong Kong via Hawaii, Guam, Okinawa and Formosa route completing an around-the-world network for that carrier; to NWAL, a route between Los Angeles and San Francisco and Tokyo by way of Honolulu; for Pan Am, a direct New York-Japan link; and to Flying Tiger various cargo services between the U.S. and the Far East.

JET JOTTINGS -- Houston's new Intercontinental Airport is now set to open on June 8, after a series of delays of one sort or another that have plagued the ultra-modern facility. The field had been scheduled to open long ago, but heavy rains delayed construction, blueprints were misinterpreted and work had to be re-done, and an expensive "waffled" ceiling collapsed. The new jetport, 17 miles north of Houston, utilizes battery-powered underground trains to keep walking to a minimum....The FAA has allocated some \$34 million to 177 public airports for construction projects in fiscal 1970. \$500,000 has been granted to O'Hare for the construction of a new parallel runway, and emergency standby power facilities for the entire field.

LOOKING AHEAD -- Our spies report that the Penn Central will soon initiate proceedings toward joining the mass transportation district proposed to purchase new cars for the South Shore electric line in northwest Indiana. The CSS&SB is to get new 125-passenger single-level long commuter cars; the PC will ask for funds to buy 10 bi-level cars for its Chicago-Valparaiso suburban runs (two each way each weekday). The Penn Central dropped a pair of runs some months back on the Valpo line; apparently feeling that the remaining service (which has shown a gain in patronage) is not about to wither away, it might as well be improved....The PC is having its problems in Philadelphia as well. Surveys have shown that the old "porthole" commuter cars the Pennsy has operated for years in the City of Brotherly Love will not make it up the grade in the new tunnel between the Reading and PC stations along Market Street, hence the project is back on the drawing boards. The old cars make up the bulk of the Philadelphia fleet and replacement is not in sight for some time to come.

METROPOLITAN REPORT -- The first of the firms with buses purchased via DOT is to shut up shop shortly. The city transit line in Springfield, Ohio, which received 12 new coaches thanks to federal monies, has failed to make the grade patronage-wise, and the equipment will have to find a new home (painting and lettering costs might be saved by conveying them to Springfield, Illinois, also a benefactee of DOT largesse)....An Illinois state representative in Congress has introduced a bill calling for federal aid in Cook County (the Chicago area) grade crossing elimination. Rep. Edward J. Derwinski, a Republican, authored legislation calling for DOT funds for the construction of overpasses and underpasses where required in the county.

CITY LINES -- Philadelphia Suburban Transportation Company (Red Arrow Lines) has asked the Pennsylvania PUC for permission to pave over its Sharon Hills and Media trolley rights-of-way along most of their routes for supplemental bus operation. Claiming a \$300,000 loss due to trolley operation, PST president Merritt Taylor blamed SEPTA's subsidies to paralleling rail lines for the trolleys' troubles, and averred that such dual operation would cut costs. The bus service, which would begin in the fall, would be more flexible than the fixed rail service (which would be at least temporarily retained) in that coaches could leave the rail line at intervals to serve areas removed from the fixed facility directly.... The North Western has been granted a 5% fare increase in all commutation tariffs for its Chicago area suburban rail services. The hikes go into effect on Sunday....HUD and DOT have joined together to fund a \$750,000 federal grant to help underwrite transportation costs of summer youth programs in 51 U.S. cities.

SHORT HAULS -- A new bus system for Ann Arbor, Michigan, (which has had several since World War II, including one operated by Greyhound) may be a reality by September if a proposed transit authority is approved and funded by DOT. The city has been without bus service since a subsidy to Ann Arbor Transit was canceled by the city in January....Add Virginia Transit in Norfolk to the Exact Fare city list....Add Steubenville, Ohio, to the list of cities soon to have transit authorities. The Steubenville Bus Company is scheduled to suspend operations this weekend, after which the city will go into the transit business with ten small coaches....54 trolley coaches were replaced by motor buses on three Winnipeg routes in April; only 71 electric units remain in operation in that Manitoba city.

LAST WORDS -- Boston's MBTA is to convert the Watertown streetcar line to motor bus operation for an 11-week trial period beginning June 21, a gambit that has been tried before (and failed).