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Iowa Railroad Ties

News and insights into Iowa's rail industry and the role it plays in Iowa's economy.

A newsletter published by the Iowa Department of Transportation's Office of Rail Transportation

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Feature Articles



www.iowarail.com

Did you know...

Engineers that are involved in a grade crossing or trespasser accident are the "second victims." Can you imagine the trauma of driving a hurtling train toward a car or person knowing that there is no time to stop?

Railroads have special procedures and programs in place to help engineers and other employees involved in accidents deal with the trauma, anxiety and stress that these "second victims" experience.

But they never forget...

Don't be in the wrong place at the wrong time...

Tempted to take that shortcut across the railroad tracks? Think again.

There's no harm in searching the underbrush along the tracks to bag a few pheasants? Think again.

Every time you step onto railroad property you are trespassing on private property and violating the law. You could be charged with trespassing, or in this era of heightened security, be questioned by law enforcement or railroad officials about your presence in a suspect area.

So, how can you tell when you're on railroad property? As a general rule, the railroad owns a minimum of 25 feet of property on either side of the tracks. Near yards, switching operations, sidings, and other "working" areas, the property owned by the railroad may be more expansive.



Beyond the legal issues, your presence on railroad property can be very dangerous. Did you know that over the last 10 years, *nearly half* of the train-related fatalities in Iowa occurred somewhere other than at a crossing?

On average, five to six Iowans are struck and killed by trains annually at a location other than at a highway/rail crossing. Between 1995 and 2004, 65 people lost their lives in Iowa by being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

If you live or work near the tracks, the railroad right-of-way becomes just another part of your local landscape. And that familiarity can lead to carelessness and a disregard for the potential dangers.

Play it safe and avoid the possibility of a tragedy by staying off railroad property.

To avoid becoming a trespassing statistic, follow these train safety tips:

- Never walk on or near railroad tracks or bridges.
- Cross tracks only at marked crossings.
- Never pass between cars of a train.
- Don't climb or crawl over, into or under train equipment.
- When watching trains, stay on public property and at a safe distance from trains.
- Teach your children train safety.

*Peggy Baer
Director, Office of Rail Transportation*

From the ashes of the Rock

The time is the late 1970s. The railroad industry in the U.S. is in turmoil. Transportation needs are changing. The Interstate System of cross-country highways has changed the dynamics of getting freight from place to place. Rail lines no longer have enough traffic or revenue to earn a profit. Yet, as a regulated industry, it is very difficult for railroads to abandon unprofitable lines or adjust rates for changing economic conditions. The debts of railroads are spiraling higher. Track and equipment maintenance is deferred or ignored. And, safety is becoming a real concern. As debts mount, many railroads find bankruptcy the only viable option, leaving customers with no rail transportation.

In light of the mounting crisis that was already affecting many areas of the nation, Congress passed the 1980 Staggers Act. It essentially deregulated the railroad industry.

Deregulation provided the railroads with more flexibility in responding to economic conditions. For some railroad companies, deregulation arrived too late to allow them to survive.

In Iowa, two of five east-west Iowa rail routes – the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad (commonly called the Milwaukee Road) and the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad (commonly

Hawkeye Express on Track for U of I Football

Football fans in Iowa City will once again have the opportunity to avoid the traffic tie-ups near the stadium by boarding the Hawkeye Express. The two-engine, 11-car Hawkeye Express train will board at Coral Ridge Mall and shuttle game fans to and from Kinnick Stadium. Pre-game service will begin about 2 ½ hours before kick-off. Parking is free at the departure point and round-trip tickets are \$10 for adults, children 12 and under free.

The Hawkeye Express is operated by the University of Iowa on tracks owned by Iowa Interstate Railroad (IAIS). The leased equipment, which serves as a Colorado ski train during the winter months, is put to good use in Iowa during the off-season. BNSF Railway transported the train from Colorado to Council Bluffs and Union Pacific Railroad will return it to Colorado at the end of the season.

“Another reduction in available parking space around the stadium should increase rider-ship this year over last year. The train will operate on a schedule so people will know exactly when it arrives and departs from both stations,” said IAIS President and CEO Dennis Miller.

Hawkeye fans can conveniently get to the game much as fans did when the stadium was new, over 75 years ago. University of Iowa officials expect to sell at least 4,000 tickets this season, up from 3,000 last year. Train tickets are available in advance at the U of I Athletic Ticket Office and Iowa City/Coralville Conventions and Visitor’s Bureau desk in the Coral Ridge Mall. Tickets can also be purchased on game days at the Hawkeye Express “depot” located at the corner of U.S. 6 and 25th Avenue.



Industry News

CRANDIC on the move

The Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Railway Co. (CRANDIC) has built a new railcar maintenance facility in Cedar Rapids. The former facility on 12th Street Southwest was sold to Archer Daniels Midland (ADM), who will operate its own maintenance facility from the site.

CRANDIC's new shop is located on land owned by CRANDIC for more than 100 years. Employees from CRANDIC's shop, train service and maintenance-of-way will work out of the new facility at 1445 Rockford Road.

"We're very excited to be going back to our roots, so-to-speak," said CRANDIC President and General Manager Paul Treangen. "By working at our existing Rockford Road location we can consolidate operations and perform services at an even higher level of efficiency."

Safety counts

The American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association has announced winners of its 2004 safety awards. Member railroads with no reportable injuries and no train accidents were honored with the "Jake with Distinction Award." Iowa railroads receiving the award were Appanoose County Community Railroad, Burlington Junction Railway and D & I Railroad Company.

Every year the E.H. Harriman Memorial Safety Awards are presented to three railroads in each of four categories. In the Group A category, comprising line-haul railroads whose employees worked 15 million employee-hours or more, the gold award went to Norfolk Southern Corporation, silver to BNSF Railway, and bronze to the Union Pacific. All three of the largest railroads operating in Iowa received awards for their employee safety.

Edward R. Hamberger, president and CEO of the Association of American Railroads, stated at the awards ceremony that the nation's railroads reported their lowest employee casualty rate in history in 2004, down 9 percent from 2003, when the previous record was set.

Iowa Traction Hosts Visit



Iowa Traction Railroad hosted a visit from members of the Electric Railroad Association on May 14. Iowa Traction Railroad, headquartered in Mason City, is the last freight-hauling, 600-volt, DC-electric railroad in the country. Twenty-six members of the organization from nine states toured the facilities. They were also treated to a ride in a historic passenger car and watched the railroad at work switching freight cars to a siding. Members of the organization expressed enthusiasm for the stop and hope to include Iowa Traction Railroad in

future tours.

Government News

Locomotive Horn Rule Workshop

A workshop to address the recently implemented locomotive horn rule will be held Sept. 14 in Des Moines. The workshop is being co-sponsored by the Iowa Department of Transportation and Iowa League of Cities.

The rule that went into effect June 24 requires locomotives to blow their horns at all public highway-railroad crossings. It includes provisions which allow communities to silence the horns in areas with certain safety improvements, qualifying the corridors as Quiet Zones.

An official from the Federal Railroad Administration will conduct the workshop. Registration is open to all interested parties. The workshop is held in conjunction with the League of Cities conference, but you need not be registered for the conference to attend the workshop. City or county officials who want to learn more about the requirements of the federal rule or the establishment of Quiet Zones are encouraged to attend.

Register online for the workshop at www.iowarail.com/workshopRegistration/default.asp

For additional information on the Locomotive Horn Rule: www.fra.dot.gov/

Are you ready for anything?

You can never be too prepared for the unexpected. Emergency preparedness personnel have the opportunity to attend a training session on the transport of hazardous materials. The Iowa Transcaer[®] Training Tour begins Oct. 15 and will visit seven Iowa communities by the end of the month. Sessions will focus on outreach and hands-on training.

Transcaer[®] is a voluntary national outreach effort sponsored by the chemical manufacturing and the rail and tanker truck industries. Its sessions are designed to assist communities with major transportation routes within their jurisdictions to address potential concerns about transportation of hazardous materials.

Sessions are scheduled for:

Sioux City, Oct. 15;
Council Bluffs, Oct. 17;
Mason City, Oct. 20;
Cedar Rapids, Oct. 22;
Des Moines, Oct. 24;
Ottumwa, Oct. 26; and
Davenport, Oct. 28 and 29.



www.transcaer.org

For additional information, consult the Transcaer[®] web site or contact the State Coordinator Rodney Tucker, Iowa Department of Natural Resources at 515-725-0387.

On the Web

[iowarail.com](http://www.iowarail.com) News

Have a question about rail transportation in Iowa? Are you interested in one of several different maps of Iowa's rail system? The place to go for a wide variety of information on Iowa rail transportation is our easy-to-remember Web site – www.iowarail.com.

New and updated information includes:

- A rail map showing the biodiesel plants in addition to ethanol plants operating or planned in Iowa.
- Railroads are on track a brochure detailing the ways that railroads keep Iowa's economy healthy and growing.

Passenger Rail Corner

Congress continues to struggle with the future of Amtrak



President Bush's FY2006 budget proposal eliminates the current funding amount for Amtrak. The Administration's goal is to fundamentally change the structure and financing of intercity passenger rail service.

Amtrak received \$1.217 billion in federal funding in FY2005. Except for \$360 million appropriated to the Surface Transportation Board for maintaining commuter rail service in the Northeast Corridor during any transition period, no funding is proposed for FY2006. Without federal funding Amtrak would be forced to cease operations and embark on bankruptcy proceedings.

Those monitoring the situation believe the Administration's proposal is simply intended to bring attention to the issues surrounding the long-term viability of Amtrak and to force Congress to debate passenger rail systems and service. As Congress continues to struggle with the issue, several differing proposals and bills are being circulated. While changes may be inevitable, the Iowa DOT is optimistic that passenger rail systems and service will have a bright future.

Many organizations are interested in the outcome of this issue. Their opinions can be viewed at the following Web sites:

www.s4prc.org

States for Passenger Rail Coalition

www.fra.dot.gov
www.narprail.org

Federal Railroad Administration
National Association of Railroad Passengers