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ECP a bright spotlight at enlightening Windy City 'Wheel/Rail' seminar

A week after returning from the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association's annual convention in Las Vegas, I headed to Chicago yesterday for Wheel/Rail Interaction '09, a four-day seminar held May 4-7 that's organized by Wheel Rail Seminars and Advanced Rail Management Corp. (ARM), and presented by *Progressive Railroading*.

Instead of dealing with another crowded airplane and busy airport, I was able to drive the 85 miles from Milwaukee — *Progressive Railroading's* home base — to the Windy City, although I had to navigate through road work along Interstate 94 that lengthened the 90-minute commute to well more than two hours. Shortly after I arrived at the Chicago Marriott O'Hare for the first day of the two-day Heavy Haul Seminar, which already was under way, I attended two "InfoZones." These short 25-minute presentations by ARM, ENSCO Inc., the Portec Rail Group (including Kelsan and Salient Systems Inc.), Lincoln Industrial Corp. and Rail Sciences Inc. addressed various topics, such as top-of-rail lubrication and vehicle dynamic modeling software.

Later, I attended informative general sessions on how to establish successful rail grinding programs, how Canadian Pacific is reducing the stress state of its western corridor and how to best integrate technologies in rail network systems.

After hitting two more InfoZones, I sat in on a very detailed and enlightening general session on Union Pacific Railroad's ongoing electronically controlled pneumatic (ECP) brake pilot. Presented by UP General Director of Car and Locomotive Engineering Mike Iden, the session summarized the Class I's experiences to date with an ECP-equipped double-stack intermodal train.

Unlike BNSF Railway Co. and Norfolk Southern Corp., which are piloting ECP brakes predominantly on unit coal trains, UP is doing so on intermodal trains because of mileage accumulation, speed (which can reach 70 mph) and car control, said Iden. UP is piloting the brakes on a double-stack train moving between Long Beach, Calif., and Dallas — a distance of 2,998 miles, which is "well under" the Federal Railroad Administration waiver-rule threshold of 3,500 miles, he said.

Since launching the pilot on Oct. 18, 2008, the railroad has completed 23 round trips on a trainset equipped with New York Air Brake Corp.-supplied ECP brakes. The train has logged about 69,000 miles in 200 days, said Iden. Soon, UP will begin piloting a second trainset equipped with Wabtec Corp.-supplied ECP brakes, he said. UP plans to equip a total of 10 ES44AC locomotives and 50 five-well articulated cars controlled by TTX Co. with the brakes. The rolling stock will feature all-new ECP brake systems and not any type of overlay on existing brake systems, said Iden.

The goal of the pilot is to "get everybody comfortable with ECP for now and to get engineers qualified on ECP," he said.

There's a tad more to share about my one-day visit to Wheel/Rail Interaction '09, which also is sponsored by ARM, Speno International, Rail Sciences, FunctionSim, KLD Labs Inc., the National Coal Transportation Association and Full Service Railroad Consulting Inc. Look for a wrap-up in our June issue's Industry News section.

Posted 05-08-2009 7:31 AM by [Jeff Stagl](#)
Filed under: [ECP](#)

Comments

RAILWAYIST wrote re: **ECP a bright spotlight at enlightening Windy City 'Wheel/Rail' seminar**
on 05-09-2009 11:39 AM

When the US HIGH-SPEED-RAILWAY NETWORK is up and running, Mr. Jeff Stagl will be able to give his accounts en-route to and from various rail-business summits, seminars, conferences and even test runs of the new trains with videos from the engineers cab, or in comfort from a wi-fi equipped lounge car or sleeper berth. Or possibly in a chase jet with a mounted video camera flying above following the next generation American designed and built versions/variations of the ACELA, TGV, AGV, ICE, AVE, Shinkansen-bullet train-sets.

LarryKaufman wrote re: **ECP a bright spotlight at enlightening Windy City 'Wheel/Rail' seminar**
on 05-09-2009 12:58 PM

I apologize in advance for the following comment. This seems to be the morning for me to be churlish. I have just one question for the boundless enthusiasm of RAILWAYIST: Just who and how will all this wonderful equipment be paid for? There are a lot of things that would be great to have but no one has yet repealed the laws of economics.

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