

The “Big Bend Ties” monthly newsletter of the Gulf Wind Chapter, NRHS

Aug. 9, 2026

Big Bend Ties is a monthly publication of the Gulf Wind Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society.



The *Presidential Flyer*, an excursion offered by SAM Shortline of Cordele, GA, returns to Georgia Veterans State Park after traveling west to Plains, where the Jimmy Carter National Historical Park is located. The train also stops in nearby Archery, Carter's boyhood home.

Train Night at Tallahassee's IMAX Theater is Aug. 27

This summer's Train Night event at the Challenger Learning Center's IMAX Theater in Tallahassee is coming up Thursday, Aug. 27, a free illustrated lecture on rail excursions available and options for long-distance trips.

The program is presented by the Gulf Wind Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society in cooperation with the Challenger Learning Center and the Tallahassee Film Society.

Florida's railroad development actually started in Tallahassee, where the state's first railroad was chartered and built. While passenger trains don't serve Tallahassee any more, Big Bend residents can find several rides on vintage trains available in the region.

The guest speaker for the lecture is Gulf Wind Chapter member Richard C. Hall, Ph.D., a noted historian, author and Professor Emeritus of History at Georgia Southwestern State University.

Doors open at 6:30 p.m., with the lecture starting at 7 p.m. The Challenger Learning Center is located at 200 S. Duval St. in downtown Tallahassee.

For more information, visit the website gulfwindnrhs.org.



Travelers prepare to board the northbound *Silver Meteor* at Amtrak's Jacksonville Station in June. The free Train Night illustrated lecture at Tallahassee's IMAX Theater will explore options for long-distance travel both within Florida and out of state. Photo by Dave Hodges

Union Pacific, Norfolk Southern add merger provisions

Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern announced in late July that they have enhanced their merger application by offering customer protections that go beyond those provided in any prior rail merger, they said.

The new commitments were submitted with the supplemental information the Surface Transportation Board requested when it accepted the companies' merger

application as complete last May.

Union Pacific CEO Jim Vena said the provisions are intended to give customers "faster, more reliable and efficient coast-to-coast service from day one and create cost savings that will flow through to consumers."

The commitments will have the effect of doubling the number of eligible shipments and extending certain benefits to bulk unit train shippers, thereby creating more opportunities for customers to benefit from the merger.

In the event that service performance declines during merger integration, customers will be able to obtain temporary access to alternative rail service—an additional safeguard to help keep freight moving if unexpected service problems arise.

Also included is customer access to a new rate relief process if the merger's public benefits are not delivered in a timely fashion, the railroads said.

With this latest filing, Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern have completed their responses to the STB's requests for supplemental information. The railroads said they expect the transaction to be completed in mid-2027, following STB review and approval.

Two of the nation's biggest Class I railroads, Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern officially announced their merger plan July 29, 2025. They say the deal will create the first transcontinental railroad in the U.S. and give their customers access to a coast-to-coast network of more than 50,000 route miles across 43 states.



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We support . . .



The Gulf Wind Chapter of the NRHS joins Operation Lifesaver, Inc. in reminding rail fans and pedestrians to stay safe around railroad tracks and to always obey signals



The Gulf Wind Chapter is the Tallahassee area affiliate of the National Railway Historical Society, an organization that is committed to preserving and

The chapter's mailing
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and crossing gates.
For more information
on rail safety,
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States. For details,
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All tax-deductible donations we receive help fund the Lloyd Depot's ongoing restoration. Thank you for supporting one of the Big Bend's most notable historic sites.

If you have rail history or railroad news for "Big Bend Ties," send it to us at the e-mail address below.

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