

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

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



The much-anticipated return of Amtrak’s passenger service between New Orleans and Mobile is the subject of the Gulf Coast service settlement that was reached Nov. 21, 2022. *Photo courtesy of Amtrak*

## **Board requests update on Gulf Coast passenger plan**

The federal Surface Transportation Board will conduct a hearing Feb. 14 with the parties involved in the Gulf Coast passenger service case to hear what progress they have made in expanding Amtrak service east from New Orleans to Mobile.

The STB issued a request in January to the parties – Amtrak, CSX Transportation, Norfolk Southern, and the Alabama State Port Authority – to produce a status report and submit it by Feb. 1. The board was seeking an update on the parties’ implementation of the Gulf Coast settlement agreement from 2022. The agreement was to have Amtrak begin operating passenger service between New Orleans and Mobile, and the freight railroads were going to cooperate on the plan.

The parties in the case agreed to the settlement in lieu of the STB conducting its final hearing and making a ruling in the case in December 2022. The railroads had opposed Amtrak’s service extension for various reasons, but opted to proceed with the passenger service plan.

The board is also conducting a hearing on the matter at 11 a.m. EST on Feb. 14 in Washington, D.C. Members of the public can go to the website, [stb.gov](https://www.stb.gov), and get the link

for watching the proceeding online. In essence, the STB wants the parties' status report to provide "detailed information regarding the status of settlement implementation and describe any issues that remain outstanding."

Since the settlement was reached on Nov. 21, 2022, the board has granted motions two subsequent times – July and November 2023 – to suspend its proceedings so the parties could carry out their plan.

The case is STB docket No. FD 36496, for those who'd like to look up any of the records.

## **CPKC, CSX to link their networks via short line in Alabama**

Railroads CPKC and CSX Transportation have mapped their plans to acquire the Meridian & Bigbee Railroad, a short line that would provide an interchange link between the two Class I railroads and create a new rail corridor from the Southeast to Mexico.

The M&B is a unit of the Genesee & Wyoming system. The M&B's 168-mile network originates west of Montgomery, AL, and extends to Meridian, MS.

CPKC and CSX will need regulatory approval for their plan, and they have filed their proposal with the federal Surface Transportation Board. To achieve the interconnect objective, the two railroads indicated they propose a series of minor transactions.

The railroads have filed for a 210-day procedural schedule with the STB, which means the M&B deal would presumably take effect in May.



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

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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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