

Central dispatching again

CSX returns its dispatchers to Jacksonville

CSX Transportation, which 10 years ago decentralized its train dispatchers, is bringing them back to Jacksonville, Fla., once again. The decision would relocate approximately 355 train dispatchers from nine offices to one single site near the railroad's headquarters. Plans call for the moves to start Aug. 31 and be completed by Oct. 15, 2017.

CSX operates nine major dispatching centers categorized by its division territories, and with one exception, each is named for its location: Jacksonville; Atlanta; Louisville, Ky.; Florence, S.C.; Nashville, Tenn.; Baltimore; Chicago; Albany, N.Y.; and the Great Lakes Division in Indianapolis.

Some dispatchers are returning home.

In 2007, CSX said it was moving dispatchers out of Jacksonville "and putting them into field offices, closer to where the train operations occur." At the time, CSX

management said the realignment would result in more effective and efficient decision-making, improved system reliability, and better train performance.

CSX declined to address the 2017 change, which would be the latest major realignment of the railroad's operations since Hunter Harrison took over as CEO earlier this year.

With CSX's move, centralization again seems to be the industry norm. BNSF Railway stations its dispatchers in a portion of its Fort Worth, Texas, headquarters campus. Union Pacific operates its Harriman Dispatch Center blocks away from headquarters in downtown Omaha, Neb. Of the big four U.S.-based railroads, only Norfolk Southern, CSX's primary Eastern competitor, has kept its dispatchers scattered across its system in acknowledgement of keeping them closer to the action. — *Chase Gunnoe*

TRAINS September 2017