

Zeitschrift: Annual report / Swiss federal railways
Herausgeber: Swiss federal railways
Band: - (2002)

Rubrik: Chronicle of the year 2002

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Chronicle of the year 2002.

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JANUARY

8th January: The heads of the transport and logistics companies SBB Cargo, Bertschi, Danzas, Eurocargo and Hupac present a joint strategy aimed at a massive increase of inter-modal traffic, and also of conventional wagonload traffic.

21st January: The SBB awards to Alstom the contract for the construction of the safety installation on the «Neubaustrecke» Mattstetten-Rothrist of the 1st phase of the Rail 2000 scheme. The system allows for line speeds of 200 km/h and 2-minute headways.

FEBRUARY

21st February: In Brig, the SBB opens a central Contact Center. It is planned that throughout Switzerland, the number of jobs in call centers will rise towards 300, for the most part in the Valais. Per year, 6 million telephone calls from customers are handled.

21st February: At Chiasso, a derailment of a freight train arriving from Italy claims two lives and leaves five injured. The cause: Human failure on the part of the two Italian locomotive drivers. Freight traffic via Chiasso is strongly hampered until 21st March.

22nd February: A landslide in Colmegna blocks the Luino line. This connection to Italy, important for freight traffic, remains closed until 9th March. The trains are re-routed.

MARCH

5th March: The reception for the mobile telephones of train passengers is being improved. Henceforth, all three cell phone network operators are offering their services also in the railway tunnels.

21st March: In Bern, SBB chief Benedikt Weibel signs the Charta for the improvement of safety in the vehicles of public transport.

APRIL

12th April: The SBB is awarded the contract for the operation of two S-Bahn lines in Baden-Württemberg. The border-near «Wiesentalbahn» is to be integrated into the overall concept of the «Regio S-Bahn Basel».

25th April: The SBB publishes the results of the business year 2001. With CHF 245.7 million, the operating income was 23.6 percent below the result of the previous year. The consolidated net income increased by 124.5 percent to CHF 314.1 million.

27th April: After a two-year test phase, revenue operation of cab signalling is taken up on the line Zofingen–Sempach–Neuenkirch. The locomotive driver receives the permission to run directly on a screen in the cabin. This allows for a denser traffic at higher speeds.

MAY

1st May: For the first time in three years, the tariffs in public transport change. Passengers can newly purchase a Three Years Half-tax Card for CHF 350. The new price of the Two Years Half-tax Card is now CHF 250 instead of 222. The ordinary fares for individual tickets go up by 3.7 percent on the average.

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3rd May: Again a landslide in Colmegna. The line Bellinzona–Luino, so important for goods traffic, is again interrupted for almost three weeks.

10th May: With symbolic events, the SBB draws the attention of the public to the start of the Expo. With hundreds of special trains and special ticket offers, the SBB wants to make sure that half of the visitors travel to the national exhibition by train.

12th May: To mark the occasion of its centenary, the SBB offers a special gift to the women: On Mothers' Day, they can all travel for free. Several hundred thousand women make enthusiastic use of this offer.

23rd May: The Swiss regular-interval timetable is 20 years old. «A train every hour» was the slogan when it was introduced on 23 May 1982. This marked the beginning of a success story: Since then, 40 percent more people are travelling by train.

JUNE

4th June: The SBB announces that within the coming 15 years, it intends to invest CHF 2.9 billion into new technologies for a yet more performing railway network.

6th June: For an outlay of CHF 340 million, the SBB gives its regional stations a completely new design. Until 2006, 619 stations in the whole of Switzerland will show themselves in a modern light.

14th June: SBB Cargo takes ten new dual-system, high-performance locomotives of the type Re 482 into service. They are intended for goods traffic Germany–Switzerland. 40 more are ordered and delivery has started in December 2002.

24th June: SBB Cargo founds the subsidiary company Swiss Rail Cargo Köln. The aim is to offer transport services in north-south freight traffic out of one hand, and to grow strongly. Other shareholders are «Häfen und Güterverkehr Köln» (44 percent) and Hupac (5 percent).

JULY

3rd July: SBB Cargo announces that 113 jobs will be cancelled. To boost competitiveness, costs must be reduced and productivity be increased. The reduction is achieved without creating social hardship and without dismissals.

5th July: The SBB procures 59 new diesel locomotives of the type Am 843, at a cost of CHF 146 million.

17th July: In the fight against violence in the trains, the SBB and the «Zürcher Verkehrsverbund ZVV» launch a «Treffpunktwagen» (passenger meeting car). In a test operation, it is in service on a line of S-Bahn Zurich.

AUGUST

29th August: A successful passenger traffic and a drop in the freight results due to the economic situation are the salient points of the SBB's statement for the first half of 2002. The traffic revenues decreased by CHF 40.3 million to make a total of CHF 1.415 billion. The operating income amounts to CHF 31.1 million (previous year's period of comparison: 158.9 million).

SEPTEMBER

27th September: For around CHF 330 million, the SBB procures 42 low-floor emu of the «Flirt» type. This type of rolling stock for regional traffic sets new standards in the fields of comfort and economic efficiency.

27th September: The SBB takes over the assets and the 240 employees of the Mittelthurgaubahn that finds itself in serious financial difficulties. The Board of Directors has approved the agreement. Thus the SBB does its part in the safeguarding of public transport in Eastern Switzerland.

OCTOBER

4th October: With «Cargo Domino», SBB Cargo launches a new freight product. The new system of transshipment between rail and road opens up the possibility of a door-to-door service. It is particularly suitable for providing transport services in decentralized regions.

18th October: The SBB strikes a positive first balance of its Expo commitment. In total, 3.5 million persons travelled to the Arteplages with the SBB. This represents more than half of all the visitors.

30th October: To be able to react quickly to the various interruptions of operation due to the teething troubles with cab signalling on the pilot sector Zofingen–Sempach–Neuenkirch, substitution trains and buses are held in readiness from now on, to be called to service at short notice.

NOVEMBER

4th November: Under the designation «Click&Rail», the SBB launches the rail ticket that the customer can print on his/her own computer. For the time being, the offer is available for a choice of trains on the sectors Basel-Ticino and Zurich-Ticino.

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14th November: New record achievement in the success story of the General Abonnement: Never before, so many SBB customers travelled with a GA. Since a few days ago, over 250,000 GAs have been in circulation.

22nd November: The Chairman of the Management Board of SBB, Benedikt Weibel, is elected new President of the UIC, the International Union of Railways. He succeeds Etienne Schouppe (Belgian Railways SNCB) who until now headed the worldwide organisation for the cooperation of the railways.

DECEMBER

1st December: Total closure of the tunnel «Monte Olimpino II» near Chiasso after an inrush of water. According to the FS, re-opening can be expected by May 2003. The closure is a serious impediment to freight traffic from and to Italy.

9th December: Under the name of «Swiss Rail Cargo Italy», SBB Cargo founds a subsidiary company in Northern Italy. By own authority, this company will provide a distribution service for transalpine freight from the border to the greater north-of-Milan area. This move is designed to improve quality in border-crossing traffic. The operative start shall take place on 15 December 2003.

13th December: The SBB and its social contract partners come to an agreement: The SBB increase the wage bill of the coming year by 2.3 percent.

15th December: The just under 2 million holders of a Half-tax Card, and the more than 250,000 holders of a GA in Switzerland are newly offered a 25 percent discount on the foreign sector of tickets from Switzerland to Germany and Austria. Thus, the General Abonnement and the Half-tax Card are given an international area of validity.

20th December: In parallel to the future-oriented new signal and train protection system (ERTMS) on the «Neubaustrecke» of Rail 2000, the SBB additionally installs a conventional safety system with lineside signals. Continued instabilities in the new system's pilot operation have prompted the SBB to take this step. This guarantees that the 1st phase of the Rail 2000 scheme can be put into operation on 12 December 2004, as planned.