

Wisconsin Chapter National Railway Historical Society

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September 2020

SPARKS AND CINDERS

Our purpose as members of Wisconsin Chapter—National Railway Historical Society is to gather, preserve and disseminate information, both historic and current, pertaining to railroading in Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest.

Since 1950

Preserving Wisconsin Railroad History for 70 Years

Visit the Chapter Webpage www.nrhswis.org



Union Pacific #1111 "Powered by our People" SD70ACe powers an Officer's Special through Wisconsin on June 3 2020. Here #1111 and the train are southbound at St Francis, WI about to pass under the pedestrian overpass south of St Francis Ave. Photo by Keith Schmidt

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Wisconsin Chapter Meeting Schedule



September 11, 2020 - Favorite Slide/Digital Photo Night - Virtual Meeting via Zoom. We are continuing with the tradition of the First meeting in September being a chance for members to show off what happened over the summer or whenever. This time everything will need to be digital though. Please see Page 3 for more information on how to participate in showing your work

October 9, 2020 - Wisconsin Great Northern - Join Greg Vreeland virtually as he talks about the WGN's 24 year history and some of the railroad's latest acquisitions and current operations. This will be a virtual meeting via Zoom.

Monthly meetings are usually held in the lower level of the North Shore Congregational Church in Fox Point, but for now, we are meeting virtually, via the Zoom platform, during the coronavirus outbreak. The virtual meeting room will open by 7:00 pm, and the meeting will be called to order at 7:30 pm. Zoom meeting connection details are shared with chapter members and other interested persons via email the day of the meeting, or before. To ensure you are made aware of this info, we must have a working email address on file - send yours to president@nrhswis.org. Appropriate notice will be given (in Sparks & Cinders, on the chapter's website, and through the chapter's email announcement list) when we resume in-person meetings. For the latest, check the chapter's webpage at www.nrhswis.org

If you have a program idea please contact Program Chair Dave Nelson at engine1385@aol.com

Sparks & Cinders is published by and for the members of the Wisconsin Chapter, Inc., National Railway Historical Society monthly except for July and August. The Chapter meets at the North Shore Congregational Church, 7330 N Santa Monica Blvd, Fox Point, Wisconsin, on the first Friday of each month, except June, July and August, at 7:30 p.m. The Wisconsin Chapter is a not-for-profit corporation, affiliated with the National Railway Historical Society and the Wisconsin Historical Society, organized to preserve the history of railroading in Wisconsin and the surrounding area. Additional information is available on the chapter's website, www.nrhswis.org.

Membership in the Chapter is open to anyone having an interest in any aspect of railroading who is also a member of the NRHS. Paying \$20 annually to the Chapter will entitle you receive Sparks & Cinders. Paying the National dues of \$50 to the NRHS will entitle you to membership and subscriptions to the NRHS Bulletin and NRHS News. Full NRHS membership is required to participate in chapter business discussions and to vote in annual chapter elections. All address changes should be sent to Mike Yugas president@nrhswis.org (or via USPS at PO Box 070758 Milwaukee, WI 53207).

Wisconsin Chapter officers are: Mike Yugas, President (president@nrhswis.org); Keith Schmidt, Vice-President; Tom Marcussen, Secretary; Tara Grudzielanek, Treasurer. Directors: Dan Grudzielanek, Ralph McClure, Andrew Roach, Cathy Wegner and Neal Wegner.

Contributions to Sparks & Cinders should be sent to Editor Keith Schmidt at editor@nrhswis.org (or USPS at PO Box 070758 Milwaukee, WI 53207) by the 15th of the month to be considered for the following month's publication.

All original material published in Sparks & Cinders may be reprinted in other railfan publications provided credit is given to "Sparks & Cinders, Wisconsin Chapter, NRHS." If an author is indicated for the item or article, credit must also be given to the author. The views, opinions, and comments published in Sparks & Cinders are those of the authors and do not reflect the policies of the Wisconsin Chapter or the National Railway Historical Society. Copyright ©2020, Wisconsin Chapter, Inc.,

Virtual Meeting Summary June 2020

President Mike Yugas opened the June 5, 2020 monthly chapter meeting at 7:30pm. The meeting was held virtually using the Zoom meeting platform. At the peak there were 47 viewers watching the meeting. Mike introduced two new members Ward Wells and Steve Thomas. Also two members were recognized for membership milestones. Charles Parrot received a 25 year pin. Jay Lentzer received a 50 year pin. Congratulations to them. This meeting was actually in 3 parts. Each part hosted by a Wisconsin railroad museum. Each museum made a presentation and then took questions.

First was East Troy Railroad Museum. Presenters were Evan Richards and Steve Thomas. Next was the National Railroad Museum in Green Bay, WI. Presenter was Bob Lettenberger. The third was Mid-Continent Railway Museum. Presenters were Jeff Lentz, Bill Buhrmaster and Pete Deets. All three presentations were well received. All were followed by excellent questions by those watching. The meeting officially closed about 9:45pm. Next Meeting is Friday September 11th due to the Labor Day weekend. At this time it is not known if it will be in person or virtual. Please watch for updates.

Respectfully Submitted Keith Schmidt VP.



From the Prexy

I'm hoping you enjoyed your summer of isolation. It has certainly been a weird time!

Your Chapter board has decided to hold all meetings virtually, for the duration of the coronavirus pandemic. Our latest board meeting, on July 23, was held via Zoom. (As a side note, we've run out of room in Sparks & Cinders, so, going forward, minutes of our board meetings are posted at the chapter's website, www.nrhswis.org.) Chapter membership tends to skew toward an older demographic, potentially more susceptible to contracting the virus, so we felt it is in everyone's best interest to continue to use Zoom for our monthly membership meetings.

We have some great meetings lined up! September's meeting, as usual, is our traditional Members' Favorite Slide Night. Then in October, Greg Vreeland, of the Wisconsin Great Northern short line in the far northwestern corner of the state, will share the railroad's 24-year history and his vision for the future. More info about September's meeting may be found elsewhere in this issue; check the October S&C for a complete write-up about the WGN meeting. Or, visit the chapter's website now, as it is always the most authoritative, up-to-date source for chapter information.

Another exciting change is coming to the Wisconsin Chapter: In addition to our monthly meetings, we will begin hosting less-formal virtual slide shows. They will take place on the third Tuesday evening of even-numbered months (i.e., the first one is scheduled for October 20). More info can be found elsewhere in this issue. If the thought of these virtual meetings is a little off-putting to you, I would be happy to walk you through the process. Just send me an email (president@nrhswis.org) or phone 414-698-6625.

Finally, let's give a warm welcome to the following new members:

Ward Wells, Riverside, CA
Brian Sykes, Seneca, SC
Steve Thomas, Greendale, WI
Jim R. Yanke, Slinger, WI



Favorite Slide/Digital Night

As most of the photographers in our group have switched to digital media, the term "slide" is a bit of a misnomer, but serves to convey the rich tradition and history of our annual start-of-the-season program. The subject matter is up to you - what you did on your summer vacation, a few shots of a unique or out-of-the-way railroad operation, steam action from back in the day, railroads in transition in the 1980s, recent pics of trains or photos from deep in your vault. This is your chance to shine!

Guidelines for presenters

- Members will share their images directly from their computer
- You may use a presentation software (such as PowerPoint or Keynote) or show loose pictures
- If using a presentation software, avoid transitions such as dissolves, etc. (they don't work well due to Zoom's limited bandwidth)
- You may narrate in real-time or provide a soundtrack
- The images you show should be predominately railroad-related, any era
- Please limit your presentation to approximately five minutes
- A run-through will be held prior to the meeting to ensure there are no technical glitches

President Mike Yuhus will maintain a list of presenters as they sign up, which will be posted on the Chapter's website. If you are a member in good standing who would like to present, please email president@nrhswis.org by September 9th.

Starting in October: Informal Slide Shows

The Chapter will host informal online slide shows, on the Zoom platform, on a bi-monthly basis beginning in October. Here's how it will work:

- ◆ Third Tuesday of even-numbered months, shows start at 7:30 PM online. The first one will be October 20th.
- ◆ Members and non-members may present (membership is always encouraged!)
- ◆ Five presenters will show short programs no more than 15 minutes each
- ◆ Presenters share their own computer screen
- ◆ Sorry, due to limited bandwidth, no video, please
- ◆ Avoid dissolves, barn doors, and other bandwidth-intensive transitions
- ◆ Live narration or soundtrack audio

Sign up to present: president@nrhswis.org

The Extra Board - Upcoming Events

With all the cancellations the Extra Board is on furlough. In early 2021 will take another look to see what is happening. Until Then - Be Safe

Covid-19 Affects Milwaukee - Chicago Hiawatha Service

Article by Dan Grudzielanek Photos by Keith Schmidt

As the COVID-19 pandemic affected almost every aspect of life across the country, passenger railroads were forced to cut back the amount of service they provide due to drastic declines in ridership. Amtrak's operations between Milwaukee and Chicago were no exception. The Hiawatha Service operated its full schedule of seven daily roundtrips (six on Sunday) through March 18th. The following day service was cut back to just one daily round trip. It consisted of train No. 332 to Chicago in the morning and train No. 339 to Milwaukee in the evening.

Amtrak maintained that single roundtrip through April 23rd. The next day it was replaced by coach buses. The replacement bus service lasted until June 1st when trains 332 and 339 were reinstated again. Three more roundtrips were added to the schedule on June 29th. As this issue goes to press, the schedule consists of trains 330 (Mo-Fr only), 332, 338 and 342 departing from Milwaukee. Trains 329 (Mo-Fr only), 331, 337 and 339 depart from Chicago.

It's also noteworthy that during the period where the Hiawatha Service was either reduced to one roundtrip or replaced by buses, the Empire Builder trains, Nos. 7 and 8, added stops at the Milwaukee Airport and Sturtevant stations. Those stations are normally only served by the Hiawatha Service.



Above is the "Bus-titute" for Amtrak #339. Seen at the Airport Station



Amtrak Empire Builder #8 serves as a substitute Hiawatha and boards local passengers at the Airport on June 2 2020

CN to sell 850 miles of branch lines in Wisconsin, Michigan, Ontario

Canadian National plans to spin off 850 miles of low-density routes in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Ontario, the railway said while announcing its quarterly financial results.

Railroad officials did not specify which lines will be marketed for sale to short line operators. But executives say the bulk of the routes on the block are former Wisconsin Central routes in the Badger State and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

A railroad spokesman did not immediately respond to an email requesting additional details on the line sales.

"When we looked at our U.S. network, we decided some part of the network is better in the hands of others," CEO JJ Ruest told investors and analysts on the railway's earnings call July 21. CN has hired an investment banking firm to assist with the sale process and expects to close on the line sales within six to 12 months. CN recorded a \$486 million loss in the quarter "to adjust the carrying amount of these track and roadway assets to their estimated selling price."

A key to the sales will be finding solid shortline operators. "We need to have the best operator to come in because they will continue to manage these non-core lines, and that business will continue to come to us on our main lines," Chief Financial Officer Ghislain Houle says. "They will be better suited to run these lines than we are."

CN rationalized its Canadian network years ago, Houle notes. "We've never really done it in the U.S.," he says. "And these non-core lines came when we bought the WC."

The sales are part of the railway's Precision Scheduled Railroading operating model. "Part of PSR is you rationalize some of your network and you have better operators in terms of their cost structure ... operate some of the non-core lines," Houle says. Ruest noted that unlike CN, short lines can often tap government grant or loan programs to fund line maintenance programs. "It's a better model for those non-core lines that we are selling," Ruest says.

CN acquired Wisconsin Central in 2001 to create a link between its Western Canada main lines and the Chicago area.

- Excerpts from *TRAINS Newswire* by Bill Stephens

Wisconsin Chapter YouTube

The Wisconsin Chapter has established a YouTube channel, which you can find at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBwJUWsxGpU8lIH8ui-vldw/videos> - although it might be easiest to go to YouTube and search for Wisconsin Chapter, NRHS. It is also linked from the chapter's web page, www.nrhwis.org.

This site will be the chapter's official repository of meeting content. As of now, video from the chapter's May virtual meeting is available.

Please contact president Mike Yuhus with any queries about our YouTube channel.



Do You Know

Story and Photos by Dave Nelson

Containers or trailers on rail cars - intermodal - are so common (and common sense) that it's not easy to grasp why the railroad industry initially resisted the idea so vigorously. It was viewed as cooperating with the competition, and the Interstate Commerce Commission agreed, imposing any number of obstacles to the growth of intermodal. Yet Milwaukee saw some of the earliest intermodal: in May 1926 the North Shore Line began regular shipment of its own 17-foot trailers on flatcars, and by 1932 was carrying regular common-carrier trailers. (The New York Central started putting containers on special gondolas in 1921.)

Trailer on flatcar (TOFC) business grew, but slowly, into the 1950s. With a more lenient ICC ruling in 1954, the Pennsylvania Railroad, soon joined by others, began large scale investment in TOFC using long, purpose-built flatcars. The PRR initiative became Trailer Train (now TTX) in 1956. But TOFC had problems with efficiency and competitiveness: the cumbersome, backing-up-the-truck circus style loading, and having a crew of workers apply as many as 40 chains to secure each trailer, took tremendous amounts of time. Even when American Car & Foundry invented a collapsible flat car hitch that resembled the "5th wheel" on a truck, in 1956, there was still the time consuming circus-style loading.

Two faster and easier alternatives enjoyed periods of success. The Chesapeake & Ohio's "Railvan" debuted in 1956. Its fleet of 27 foot specially constructed trailers had retractable railroad wheels built onto the trailer floor, and on rails the trailers attached to each other "elephant style," tongue-in-slot, with only the first trailer on an adapter truck able to couple to a car or locomotive. The slow loading and unloading process was eliminated, as were the flatcars. A long train of trailers could be pulled by just one locomotive. The concept was renamed "RoadRailer" in 1962, and fortunately, the ICC dropped its initial insistence that each trailer have running boards, side ladders, grab irons and other boxcar safety appliances! But there were still challenges: the 27-foot length was substantially shorter than the 40-foot highway trailers which became legal in 1957. The railroad wheels made the 27 foot vans unusually heavy to haul on the road. The hoped-for long-distance freight traffic never materialized, and C&O's Railvans/RoadRailers hauled express and storage mail behind Detroit to Chicago passenger trains. The RoadRailer experiment ended in 1968, when the railroads lost the mail contracts. But it came back as we shall see.

The other alternative to TOFC was the New York Central's Flexi-Van of 1958, essentially a lightweight container 36 or 40 feet long, with a specially designed separate bogie of highway wheels, riding on distinctive 80 or 84 foot spine rail cars with turntables on the decks: the truck would back the trailer to the side of the rail car, the bogie wheels would detach from the container, which would then lock on to the turntable, and a single worker could push the balanced container into place on the car. Like RoadRailer it needed rail-height concrete areas to the sides of the rails for loading and unloading, but didn't need ramps, cranes, or side-unloading equipment. Best of all, the container/spine car met low-clearance requirements on the NYC that TOFC could not. It was also lighter and more aerodynamic. Flexi-Van served the NYC well even into the Penn-Central era, ending in 1974, by which time most NYC routes had been modified to accept the height of TOFC. A few other railroads dabbled in the Flexi-Van concept, including the Milwaukee Road, where Hiawathas pulled Flexi-Vans

hauling storage mail. Many a passenger anticipating relaxing scenic views from a Skytop Lounge observation car found themselves staring at a Flexi-Van instead. And the frugal Milwaukee experienced a weakness of the Flexi-Van system: for every highway wheel bogie that was left at the departure pad, there had to be one waiting at the destination, or the Flexi-Van could not be unloaded, and there it, and the car, sat. A railroad had to go all-in for Flexi-Van to work. The Milwaukee did not, and its Flexi-Vans ended when mail contracts ended. Photo 1 is from an old MRHA slide set.



In 1978 the dormant RoadRailer concept re-emerged with longer (45 foot) trailers and a determination to carry general freight, preferably in dedicated trains. The elimination of the railcar, the savings in cost and time due to the integral retractable railroad wheels, and the promise of less damage to cargo in a train with no slack action, were the selling points. I found a former CSX 45 foot RoadRailer, still with its railroad wheels, at CP's Nahant Yard in Davenport IA in 2011, hitched to an Asplundh truck which had its own railroad wheels. Photo 2 shows the retracted railroad wheels between the highway wheels.



A stumbling block was the insistence by the unions that such trains have full crews and a caboose. with mandatory crew changes at the usual division points. Not until 1986 when the Norfolk Southern negotiated for a two-man crew and found markets to carry auto parts did the reborn RoadRailer idea start to make money. But when longer 48 foot trailers were needed, a design change eliminated the permanently attached railroad wheels, saving nearly a ton of weight, at the cost of

Do You Know continued

adding back the terminal time and work. In 1991 the new 53 foot trailer length was adapted to RoadRailers, and more railroads began experimenting with the concept. By 2005, however, only Norfolk Southern's Triple Crown Service remained, and until December 2015, when Triple Crown was cut back to Detroit/Kansas City auto parts traffic, Wisconsin railfans enjoyed the sight of NS operating long, solid trains of RoadRailers on UP trackage to and from the Twin Cities. Closely-coupled RoadRailers snaking around curves looked like nothing else on rails. Photo 3 is a close-up showing the separate railroad wheel bogie on a Triple Crown Service train at Gurnee IL, and Photo 4 shows an NS Triple Crown Service train on the UP Adams Sub at Maple Ave. in Sussex.

For a time, RoadRailers were also seen on long-distance Amtrak trains, including the Empire Builder. From the late 1990s to 2003, Amtrak made a concerted effort to get into the LCL/LTL, express and storage mail business, an idea championed by Amtrak's Ed Ellis. Amtrak's material handling boxcars, built in 1986 and 1988, had Head End Power (HEP) connections and rode ahead of the baggage cars. Starting in 1997, similar-looking express boxcars (some of which were refrigerated) which lacked HEP rode at the ends of trains. Older baggage cars also began hauling express at the backs of trains.

Amtrak's 53 foot RoadRailers, with no side doors, hauled Third and Fourth Class mail, originally just in the North East Corridor. Photo 5 shows one at the end of Amtrak 3, the westbound Southwest Chief, leaving Galesburg IL. Amtrak's AMTZ 410000 series of 48 foot RoadRailers, with side doors, were specially modified to hold USPS containers securely. One of those, in special Amtrak paint, is seen in Photo 6 on No. 7, the westbound Empire Builder, on Feb. 28, 2004 at Milwaukee's Waterford Avenue. A few years earlier but also on the Builder at Waterford Ave., we see in Photo 7 an express boxcar, old baggage car, and RoadRailer all haulin' freight on Amtrak, something we won't see again: Ellis's bold initiative died in 2003 under new Amtrak leadership due to switching costs at terminals, delayed trains, and contractual penalties imposed by USPS for late trains.

Information for this article was largely gleaned from Jeff Wilson's "Piggyback & Container Traffic (Kalmbach 2017).



From the Archives

September 1955- 65 Years Ago

The Milwaukee Road wants to abandon the line from Woodruff to Heafford Jct., 27 miles. Passenger service would be pulled back to Tomahawk, an additional six miles....DSS&A has discontinued their passenger train between Duluth and Marquette. Trains 1 and 2 (St. Ignace-Marquette) have been extended to Ishpeming. They will be replaced soon by an RDC....The Milwaukee-Pembine-Sault Ste. Marie sleeper has been cut from six-days-a-week to three-days-a-week; north on Sunday-Tuesday-Thursday and south on Monday-Wednesday-Friday.

September 1960 - 60 Years Ago

The trip – what trip? Our October 16 jaunt via the C&NW to Baraboo, natch. For railfans: 80 miles of freight-only line – baggage car with open doors – photo stops. For everyone: much good scenery – Baraboo Hills – Lake Wisconsin – Devil's Lake – Circus World Museum. Adult tickets \$7.75, children 5-11 \$3.90. Box lunch \$1.20.

September 1965 - 55 Years Ago

This summer, in one of the most unexpected developments, the L&N resumed steam operation. No, we don't mean the Louisville & Nashville, but we do mean our own Laona & Northern in northern Wisconsin. For many years, the L&N has had their 2-6-2 No. 4 stored in unserviceable condition, but this year they rebuilt it, got ICC approval, and started what is now the only common carrier steam operation in Wisconsin. 2-6-2 No. 4 was built by Vulcan in 1916. L&N bought her from Birmingham Rail & Locomotive Co. in 1926. A coach was purchased this year from the Soo Line. The Camp 8, a cupola style caboose was purchased from the DM&IR. Train time is 10:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m., and 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Fare from Laona to Laona Jct. and return is \$1.75 for adults, 75¢ for children.

September 1970 - 50 Years Ago

The past summer featured lots of interesting rail activity, including the Circus Train, the Flying Scotsman, and the 90-car train operated by Royal American Shows. The train contains 28 heavyweight passenger cars painted in red, white, blue, and silver. Royal American Shows operated the midway at the State Fair in August....The last Railway Post Office car will run on Milwaukee Road Train 57 on September 18th....SP has begun testing prototype EMD SD45X units out of Los Angeles

September 1975 - 45 Years Ago

The American Freedom Train, powered by ex-SP Daylight 4-8-4 No. 4449, made two appearances in the area on August 14 and 19....The C&O carferry are making two round trips a day to Ludington, Michigan. The fare is \$8 one way and \$11 round trip, with one meal included. The C&O has petitioned for abandonment of the carferry service.

September 1980 - 40 Years Ago

Five new shortline railroads are operating in Wisconsin. They are the Chicago, Madison & Northern, operating from Janesville to Mineral Point and from Sparta to Viroqua; the Wisconsin Central operating from Waukesha to Milton Jct.; the Wisconsin & Southern, operating from Milwaukee to Oshkosh; the Chippewa River operating from Durand to Eau Claire; and the Nicolet Badger Northern operating from Wabeno to Tipler....Independent Presidential candidate John Anderson campaigned via rail over the Labor Day weekend in Wisconsin. Stops were made in Beloit, Janesville, Madison, and Milwaukee. The train continued on to Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh.

September 1985 - 35 Years Ago

Butler Railroad Day was a big success. The Chapter realized a profit of \$1,908 from five trips with ex-C&NW No. 1385. The Chapter also provided car crews for the NMRA convention fantrip to Kenosha on August 2....The last UP Centennial diesel revenue run was made with No. 6936 on May 6.

September 1990 - 30 Years Ago

Trains magazine is celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year....The Wisconsin Central has named their SW-1 Shop switcher the Francis Wiener in honor of the late Chapter member who was the unofficial corporate photographer and possibly the railroad's number one fan.

September 1995 - 25 Years Ago

The ICC approved the merger of Burlington Northern and Santa Fe by a vote of 4-0 on July 20. The merger is expected to take effect on September 23....Union Pacific announced on August 3 that it will acquire Southern Pacific for \$5.4 billion in stock and cash....UP announced that it will contribute a 19-car train and locomotives to transport the Olympic flame for a 3,500-mile trip from Los Angeles to Atlanta for the 1996 Olympic Games.

September 2000 - 20 Years Ago

Steam returned to WSOR with the ex-Soo Line No. 1003 powering trips from Waukesha to Stoughton on September 16 and 17....WSOR had a pleasant problem last summer – more business than it expected. The railroad leased three SD45s from WC to help out....WC changed directions on June 26 when timetable east and west was changed to timetable north and south to more accurately reflect actual operations....Amtrak announced an additional stop for the Lake Country Limited at Zenda, near Lake Geneva....Amtrak also announced in June that extension of Hiawatha Service trains 332 and 341 to Fond du Lac could begin in September.

September 2005 - 15 Years Ago

The Janesville roundhouse celebrated its 100th anniversary on July 9. Current owner WSOR hosted the celebration which was attended by over 1,000 persons....WSOR celebrated its 25th anniversary on July 23 in Madison. Free train rides from Madison to Waunakee were provided. UP unveiled the first two "Heritage Series" locomotive paint schemes on July 30. The EMD SD70ACe units – UP No. 1982 honoring Missouri Pacific and UP No. 1983 honoring Western Pacific – will be joined later by units honoring M-K-T, C&NW, D&RGW, and SP....The Empire Builder received newly-refurbished equipment in August....Plans are underway for the State to acquire the abandoned CP Air Line right-of-way for an expansion of the Hank Aaron Bike Trail.

September 2010 - 10 Years Ago

Mainline steam excursions could return to Norfolk Southern rails as early as this fall after NS said on June 30 it is negotiating with Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum to operate a limited schedule of steam locomotive appearances and public passenger excursions beginning later this year. The program would feature three venerable coal-powered steam locomotives: Southern 2-8-2 #4501, Southern 2-8-0 #630 and Southern 2-8-0 #610. "This is the right time for steam to ride the Norfolk Southern rails," said CEO Wick Moorman.

September 2015 - 5 Years Ago

On August 1 2015 38 members of the Chapter and guests took part in a pizza dinner, trolley car ride and ice cream. The warm evening started at Roma Italian Restaurant in East Troy with an all-u-care to eat pizza buffet. After that we proceeded to East Troy Railroad Museum for a chartered ride on Car #26 a beautifully restored Sheboygan street car. The staff and crew at East Troy were great. The trip included several photo run bys. After the trip ended it was time for ice cream sundaes at Lauber's Old Fashioned Ice Cream. It was a great evening to hopefully be repeated again.

Mark Twain Zephyr moves to Wisconsin

by Mike Yuhas

Trego-based short line Wisconsin Great Northern thinks differently. As a tourist hauler, the railroad initiated five-night-a-week dinner train service - and offered optional bed & breakfast accommodations on the train. When faced with the season-ending coronavirus, the railroad used the break to undertake a major trackwork project. And, in July 2020, the railroad announced that it is restoring the original Burlington Mark Twain Zephyr trainset for service. This trainset had languished, exposed to the elements, since its last run on the CB&Q six decades ago. Wisconsin Great Northern's audacious plan is to return it to revenue service on its scenic line along the Namekagon River in 2021.

Wisconsin Great Northern's Greg Vreeland is the featured presenter at the Wisconsin Chapter NRHS October meeting.



Mark Twain Zephyr power car Injun Joe at Gateway Rail Services, Madison, Illinois, July 2020 Photo by Mike Yuhas

The Final Frame



Bessemer and Lake Erie painted #901 is the rear unit of a manned helper set on the Canadian National at Byron Hill. The pusher set has just pushed a heavy train upgrade and is heading back to Fond du Lac to push another on June 12 2020. Photo by Keith Schmidt