



# 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 71 Years

Visit the Chapter Webpage [www.nrhswis.org](http://www.nrhswis.org)



Heritage units: Wisconsin & Southern train L599 pauses on the WSOR in Slinger while Canadian National unit oil train U26842-04 roars south on adjacent CN trackage. The WSOR train had WAMX SD40-2 4170 (Wisconsin & Southern 40th anniversary unit) in the lead, and CN's EJ&E-painted CN ET44AC 3023 led the oil train. The engineers of the trains choreographed the meet for the fans at Slinger Road. Photo by Todd M. Taylor, January 8, 2021.

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# Wisconsin Chapter Meeting Schedule



February 5, 2021 - Soo Line Photos of Bill Raia and Soo Line #1003 - Mike Raia

February 16 - Online slide show with Steve Miazga, Dan Munson, Dean Sauvola, Jerry Pyfer and Mike Yuhas

March 5, 2021 - Rail Lines of Otto Mears - Edward M Koehler Jr

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 pandemic. 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](mailto: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](http://www.nrhswis.org)

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If you have a program idea please contact Program Chair Dave Nelson at [engine1385@aol.com](mailto:engine1385@aol.com)

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## 2021 Dues Reminder

As of press time, 75% of members and subscribers have renewed for 2021. Thank you! If you haven't yet done so (check the address label on this edition of S&C), we've made it ridiculously easy to continue to support the Wisconsin Chapter. Just go to the chapter's website ([www.nrhswis.org](http://www.nrhswis.org)) and click the "Join" link. Scroll down and you'll find the Pay Now button. Use it to renew at \$21 (the dollar defrays our bank costs). Or, send a \$20 check to Wisconsin Chapter NRHS, PO Box 070758, Milwaukee, WI 53207. Kindly include your name and address, NRHS member number (if known), phone number and email address. Please note, the NRHS national organization sends national dues renewals to all members; chapter and national dues are paid separately.

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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](http://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 Yuhas [president@nrhswis.org](mailto:president@nrhswis.org) (or via USPS at PO Box 070758 Milwaukee, WI 53207).

Wisconsin Chapter officers are: Mike Yuhas, President ([president@nrhswis.org](mailto: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](mailto: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.

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## Virtual Meeting Summary January 8, 2021

This is the annual formal business meeting. A quorum was confirmed. The minutes of the 2020 annual meeting were approved. Mike started with a recap of our activities in 2020, which included three in-person meetings at the beginning of the year, three board meetings, five online (Zoom) meetings, and two online slide shows.

Mike then turned to new projects and other initiatives—upcoming in 2021:

We are planning to publish a poster-size wall map of Wisconsin railroads from 1893 to 1970, based on Secretary Tom Marcussen's research of that subject.

We are also planning to publish a wall calendar for 2022.

We are planning a joint virtual meeting with the North West Illinois Chapter in May.

Treasurer Tara Grudzielanek presented a preliminary treasurer's report for 2020. The report was accepted.

Banquet Committee Chair Ralph McClure said that the plan was and is to return to Pallas Restaurant on 108th Street in West Allis. That date is unknown.

All 2020 incumbent directors and officers ran for re-election, with no opposition. All were re-elected.

A motion was made that beginning in 2022, the regular February meeting will be designated the chapter's annual meeting. The motion carried.

The official business meeting was declared adjourned at 8:02 pm, and Arlyn Colby took over at 8:03 pm. Arlyn joined our Chapter fairly recently, after we began offering virtual meetings via Zoom. He lives in Barron, in the northwest part of Wisconsin, where he had a long career as a math teacher.

Arlyn treated us to a tour of some very rare mileage, on seven abandoned branch lines in NW Wisconsin, covered in his seven books. The "Blueberry line" consists of the two Soo Line branches from Barron south to Ridgeland, and north from Cameron through Rice Lake and Birchwood to Reserve. "Blueberry"  
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is the tower at the level crossing of CStPM&O's main line from Eau Claire to Superior, about 3 miles south of Rice Lake. He moved on to the Milwaukee Road's Chippewa Valley line, from Wabasha, Minnesota, across the Mississippi River on a pontoon bridge, and then NE up the Chippewa River Valley to Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls. That line included a branch to the north up the Red Cedar River from Red Cedar to Menomonie. There were five more Omaha Road (CStPM&O, a subsidiary of the Chicago & North Western) branches. These went from Fairchild west to Mondovi, from Norma (Chippewa Falls) NE to Cornell and Hugh-ey, from Tuscobia NE to Park Falls, from Woodville SE to Spring Valley and Weston, and (book is in progress) from Hudson SE to Ellsworth.

Attendance held at 72-73 computers throughout the presentation.

The main presentation ended at 8:47 pm.

Adapted from the minutes recorded by Thomas W. Marcussen,

### Mike Raia - Soo Line in Chicagoland and Soo #1003 February 5 2021

Mike Raia will present a two-part program about the Soo Line. The first part features images that his father, Bill Raia, took in the 1970s and early 1980s. Bill spent 45 years working for the Soo in the Chicagoland area, in the Mechanical department. Bill had a fascination with railroad history and set out to document the Soo Line people and operations. Tonight's presentation is a collection of some of his son Mike's favorite images.

The second part revolves around Soo Line 1003. The 1003 is a 2-8-2 "Mikado" that is operational and resides in Hartford, Wisconsin. This presentation will talk about the history of the locomotive and its current operations.

Our presenter, Mike Raia, works in the Finance department for Anacostia Rail Holdings. Mike lives in Chicago with his wife Heidi and cat Bear. Mike and Heidi enjoy traveling throughout the US, Canada and Europe photographing and riding trains.

By the way, as a security measure, Zoom meeting connection information is sent to all members via email within 24 hours of meeting start time. If you haven't received a meeting announcement, it may be that we don't have a valid email address on file for you. Please keep us up to date - send any changes to president@nrhswis.org.



## From the Prexy

Hearty thanks to noted author Arlyn Colby for the informative presentation on abandoned northwest Wisconsin branchlines at our January meeting. If you missed it, it's archived on the chapter's YouTube. And if you haven't checked out Arlyn's bookstore, you can learn about his efforts at [www.wisconsinrailroadbooks.com](http://www.wisconsinrailroadbooks.com).

The January convocation also served as the chapter's annual business meeting. Complete minutes are posted on the chapter's website; a brief meeting summary may be found elsewhere in this issue.

On the calendar for February are two online events: a Soo Line presentation by Mike Raia at our February 5 gathering, and our five-presenter slide show February 16. You'll find the full scoop about these events on nearby pages in this issue of S&C.

In fact, we've got a great lineup of meeting programs to take us to the summer break. See [www.nrhswis.org](http://www.nrhswis.org) for details.

And while you're at our website, you'll see on our "Join" page that we now offer the ability to pay dues online. This is accomplished through Pay Pal, and in addition to Pay Pal, all major credit cards are accepted. Hat tip to Treasurer Tara Grudzielanek for facilitating this new service.

The unprecedented membership growth we've been experiencing through the pandemic has me thinking we must be doing something right. But... but... the number of active members is just one measure of the chapter's health. Do you have any thoughts? Please share your comments and ideas with me at [president@nrhswis.org](mailto:president@nrhswis.org) or 414-698-6625.

Please join me in welcoming the following new members:

- Matthew Diestler, Fort Atkinson
- Tony White, Stamford, Connecticut
- D. George Chiasson, Rockland, Massachusetts
- Steven McCarthy and Jennifer McCarthy, Mukwonago
- Courtney A. Aubrecht, Oaklawn, Illinois
- Mark Lynn, St. Paul, Minnesota
- Todd M. Taylor, Richfield
- Jim Rindt, Sheboygan
- Robert Tabern, Barron
- Gordon Smith, Circle Pines, MN
- Ed Weisensel, Milwaukee

Thanks for reading, and thank you for helping preserve railroad history. Stay safe and healthy!

### Change in Ownership of North Milwaukee Area Trackage by Mike Yuhas

In 2007, Wisconsin & Southern leased a 4.79-mile section of mainline railroad in Milwaukee from Canadian Pacific's Soo Line Railroad Company. The track in question extends from milepost 88.41, south of State Street, northward to MP 93.20 at Hampton Avenue. WSOR has operated this line for the last 13 years, and in November 2020, reached an agreement with CP to purchase the line. An application was filed with the Surface Transportation Board November 17 (FD 36452). The Board granted approval December 14; the sale was consummated on December 28, 2020. Terms were not disclosed. CP retains rights to exclusively serve two customers on the line, Miller Brewing Company and Pak Technologies, Inc.

## February online slide show Tuesday, February 16, 7:30

Join us for the Chapter's online slide show! Less formal than a regular meeting, these online events feature the work of five railroad photographers, each presenting a 15-minute slide show on a variety of railroad subjects. The presenters for tonight's event:

- Steve Miazga - "Duplainville diamond replacement work blitz"
- Dan Munson - "Blades along the route of the Southwest Chief"
- Dean Sauvola - "Wisconsin Central's White Pine line"
- Jerry Pyfer - "Wisconsin short lines - behind the Cheddar Curtain"
- Mike Yugas - "More adventures in aerial railroad photography"

Zoom connection details will be sent to members via email within 24 hours of this event. If you have not supplied the chapter with a valid email address, please send it to [president@nrhswis.org](mailto:president@nrhswis.org) to receive all notifications.



Bessemer & Lake Erie SD40T-3s Nos. 910 and 901 have been assigned to shover duty out of Fond du Lac this winter. On December 22, 2020 the units have just completed shoving CN train M340 up Byron Hill, have cut off the train, and are ready to head back down the hill at

## Wintertime Train Watching *By Dan Grudzielanek*



CP SD30C-ECO No. 5035 brings a train of empty auto racks up Lake Hill in Milwaukee. December 1, 2020



CN SD70M-2 No. 8952, the GTW heritage unit, stopped in the siding at Marsh on the Waukesha Sub. with unit sand train S750 (Independence, WI-NS Chicago). December 28, 2020



CP SD70ACu No. 7011, wearing a heritage paint scheme, brings empty auto rack train 2286 (Second 286) through the Cut-Off in Milwaukee. December 10, 2020



CN ET44AC No. 3069, the Wisconsin Central heritage unit, leading train M340 (Winnipeg-NS Elkhart, IN) as it climbs Byron Hill between Valley and Byron on the Waukesha Sub. December 14, 2020

## Do You Know – Railgrinders

Story and Photos by Dave Nelson

Replacing worn or damaged rail is expensive for the railroads -- not just the costs of materials and labor, but also the specialized machines involved, not to mention the lost revenue from taking track out of service, particularly since many railroads used CTC as a reason to reduce to single-track main lines. So it may come as a surprise to learn that railroads spend good money (and tie up their main lines) to grind the tops of rails -- and that the reason is to save money.

The goal of rail grinding is to return the head of the rail to the optimum rounded ("crowned") profile so that the wheel treads are not rolling on a flat surface. A curve of a very precise profile reduces the friction of rolling wheels, which saves on fuel and reduces wear on both rail and wheel. The useful life of the ties and even the ballast is prolonged because worn rail induces wheel pounding, which in turn sends destructive forces down to the ties themselves, causing them to grind and pulverize the ballast. When you hear "flange squeal" as a train goes around a curve you're hearing the sound of rail wear in action, but even on straight track the forces of tractive effort, braking, rolling wheels and concentrated weight are combining to make the surface rough and distorted, even corrugated.



The wear on the railhead is particularly acute on curves, and rail grinding trains might need multiple passes to get the railhead ground to just the right profile given the degree of curve, train speeds, and train weight. This calls for careful analysis of the rail line, and careful control over the grinding mechanisms. The host railroad and the rail grinding experts arrive at detailed grinding plans before work commences.

Because it involves highly specialized machinery, under the guidance of trained workers, most railroads rely on the rail grinding services to provide the rail grinding train and its staff. I have seen rail grinding trains from Speno, Loram, and Pandrol Jackson, and each firm has its own approach to the look of their train, but the common theme is that rail grinding trains are fairly short, slow moving, extremely noisy, emit an acrid odor of heated metal, and -- in spite of sophisticated dust-gathering equipment -- dirty. In warm weather they are also prone to setting trackside fires. After a rail grinding train has passed a slight look of cross hatching can be seen on the railhead, and for a time when trains pass over freshly ground rail, a distinct musical tone is heard as a sort of whirring noise.

Jim Zeirke's article "Succeeding at the daily grind" in the November 1998 issue of *Trains* magazine described his experience riding Pandrol Jackson's rail grinding train RMS-5 on the Canadian Pacific/Soo Line from Duplainville east to the Illinois

border. The lead photo shows RMS-5 rounding the curve at Waterford Avenue on Milwaukee's south side.

On January 31, 1997 I was at that same Waterford Avenue railfanning. I didn't know a railgrinding train was coming. I heard the noise and saw a dust cloud rounding the curve. The horn did not sound like other Soo Line or CP locomotives. It was Pandrol Jackson railgrinding train, RMS-14, with a consist different than the train Zeirke wrote about, grinding the rail on its way south. An interesting winter's day surprise.

Relying greatly on Zeirke's article, let's describe what I saw in 1997. The RMS-14 locomotive resembles that of RMS-5 which, almost unbelievably, was a rebuilt and modified GP38.



The "driver's" (Pandrol Jackson's job title versus "engineer") console is quite spacious because in addition to the usual railroad controls, the driver is also in charge of initiating when grinding begins and constantly monitors the process. The locomotive has special controls because grinding depends on precise speeds down to 1/2 mph. The train can go at almost track speed in between work, but grinding itself is closer to 8 mph. They grind 80 miles of track in a typical workday. A representative of the railroad is likely riding along in the cab, monitoring the grinding plan's results with the crew.

RMS-5 had a cabless locomotive at the end of the train, but RMS-14 had a slug unit, likely a former ALCO road switcher,



coupled to the locomotive. Then as with RMS-5 came two streamlined passenger cars, formerly GO Transit from Ontario. A crew of about a dozen lives full time on the train for



eight weeks followed by two weeks off. The crew members perform multiple tasks with much overlap; four members are qualified to be "drivers." Each person has a small private dorm room for the

*Do You Know continued from Page 5*

280 days a year they spend on the train. There is a laundry room and shower room on the train. The other car is the kitchen/dining room car, with booth-type seating. The crew pays Pandrol Jackson for their food but a member of the crew cooks three meals a day plus coffee and snacks, with steak on Sundays.

Next was a power car with a large diesel engine (on RMS-5 it was a 16-cylinder Caterpillar diesel) to generate electricity for 48 of the 96 grinding wheels (each of which has its own 30 horsepower electric motor). Following the power car is an un-



sual tank car which carries diesel fuel and (on RMS-5) 20,000 gallons of water, with an elevated fire fighting station and water nozzle because in warmer weather the right of way ahead of the



grinding cars is wetted before the grinding cars pass by. Following that, the heart and guts of the train: the three grinding cars, with their 96 grinding motors, each precision controlled as to speed, grinding angle, and pressure, coordinated with the speed of the train based on computer technology and the expertise of the crew. Small offices in one grinding car contain computers and work desks as the crew monitors every aspect of the grind. The third grinding car contains the dust collection and transfer machinery. A heavy fringe material at the lower side of the grinding cars controls most sparks of the rail grinding action, but the noise, smell, and dust are intense when this part of the train passes by. The 25 pound grinding stones are made of zirconium and the train goes through 150 stones a day, and takes on 4000 to 6000 in a month. Spent stones are visible on the side of the train; they are collected by a Pandrol Jackson truck which follows the train and disposed of responsibly.



Following the rail grinding cars is another tank car which presumably also holds water as well as diesel fuel. Then comes another power car with another large diesel to power the other 48 of the 96 electric motors. Either a power car or the locomotive would supply the train's other power needs: water pumps, dust collector, lights, computers, and "hotel power" for the passenger cars.

The last car on RMS-14 is an all-water tank car, again with an upper fire station perch for a crew person to control a powerful firehose nozzle to put out any fires that are seen, and a small rear cab which I assume is for monitoring trackside fires not extinguished by the water hose. January 31 was cold and snow covered and fire was not a concern. RMS-5, by contrast,



had at the end of the train a "B unit" locomotive without cab, actually a rebuilt F40PH-2M that Pandrol Jackson bought new.

Zeirke's article mentions that changes in rail grinding technology were on the immediate horizon in 1998, so it is probable that if you have the chance to see the Pandrol Jackson rail grinding train, it won't look like what I saw or what Zeirke wrote about. But it will be noisy and dirty - there is just no avoiding it.



Other sources for this article include the 1978 Track Cyclo-  
pedia from Simmons-Boardman, and Gene Lewis's book Tales  
of the Rails. The Web of Rail: A History from the Chicago &  
North Western Historical Society (2009).

# From the Archives

## February 1956 - 65 Years Ago

Latest scrap news: Milwaukee Road: January 29 – 214, 1009,1483, 221. February 5 –264, 209, 229, 239, 213, 1027, 224, 227, 986....A fund has been established to put Milwaukee Road 265 in a city park. The goal is \$25,000.

As of February 9 the total on hand is \$895.98....The Milwaukee Journal has donated \$35,000 to build a miniature railroad at the new zoo now being built. The railroad will be about two miles long. Equipment will consist of six coaches and a locomotive. What type of locomotive to be run has not been decided.

There are two possible choices. First is a steam engine which would be an Atlantic 4-4-2, the other choice is a diesel, an EMD F-7

## February 1961 - 60 Years Ago

CB&Q O-5b No. 5632 will power a Sunday trip at the 1961 NRHS National Convention in Chicago. (sponsored by Wisconsin Chapter)....The Wauwatosa depot is no more, a bank having purchased the property and torn the depot down. Cannonball passengers now use a small shelter somewhat to the east of the now departed depot.

## February 1966 - 55 Years Ago

One of our more capable photographers has broken into the "big-time" as a formal travelog performer. Don Reck will present an expanded version of his D&RGW Silverton narrow gauge film (which was one of the better films ever presented at a Chapter meeting) as the Milwaukee Public Museum film of the evening for February 16. Don states, "The film can be classed as a documentary-travelog of the railfan nature. Since showing it to the Chapter, I have re-shot much in order to get better settings and light conditions. The film has some very beautiful scenes along the route of the Yampa Valley Mail as well as the narrow gauge. This is the first time a railfan film has been shown at the lecture series.

## February 1971 - 50 Years Ago

Jim Scribbins has compiled a complete listing of all scheduled passenger rail service in Wisconsin. It includes 75 different schedules (not all daily), of long distance and suburban trains on four railroads....Jerry Hilton reports that currently Milwaukee Road Nos. 5 and 6, the Hiawathas, may be photographed in daylight at Duplainville. He recommends getting all the photos you can since it is possible all passenger service in the area will be eliminated when Railpax (the planning name for Amtrak – ed.) takes over the nation's rail passenger service....It was reported that the Milwaukee Road is planning to close its Milwaukee Shops sometime in February. This will result in the layoff of 800-900 machinists, electricians, carmen, boilermakers, and blacksmiths.

## February 1976 - 45 Years Ago

Mike Schafer will present a program on how to put together a program at the February Chapter meeting....The February issue of Sparks & Cinders included an up-to-date Milwaukee Road locomotive roster.

## February 1981 - 40 Years Ago

Carl Wall, Chief Special Agent for the AT&SF will be the speaker at the February 6 meeting. His presentation will feature the coordination between railroads and railfans to combat vandalism to railroad property....The ICG ceased operations in Wisconsin on January 30 and the Chicago, Madison & Northern began operations on the line on February 2....The Circus World Museum in Baraboo announced that it would produce a circus parade in Chicago on May 24.

## February 1986 - 35 Years Ago

Bob Baker is looking for information regarding good photo locations, equipment on display, and other rail facilities for inclusion in the new "Railfan's Guide to Wisconsin" being published by the Chapter....The C&NW KK River Bridge is frozen and out of service because of record high water levels in Lake Michigan. The C&NW Mitchell Yard to Marsh Yard job is detoured over the Milwaukee Road Milwaukee River bridge....The North Freedom Snow Train™ is scheduled to operate February 15 and 16.

## February 1991 - 30 Years Ago

Shades of "Silver Streak." On the afternoon of December 31 as a Metra train was being coupled up at the Western Ave. coach yard it sprang to life and headed out on the main line for Union Station, unmanned. It sped by Tower A-2 at Western Ave. pushing six cars. It derailed on the tight curve north of Union Station, completely blocking the north entrance ....American European Express operated its first train from Chicago to White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, on December 21....Fifty years after its first run, a North Shore Line Electroliner, in its original green and red livery, will operate at the Illinois Railway Museum on February 9 and 10. Fare for the inaugural trip on February 9 is \$100.

## February 1996 - 25 Years Ago

The UP has made several changes to former C&NW operating subdivisions and radio frequencies. The Chicago-Milwaukee line has been re-mileposted....The ex-C&NW swing bridge across the Kinnickinnic River, built in 1894, was demolished by explosives on January 19....NRHS Chairman of the Board and Director of Membership Records V. Allan Vaughn passed away on January 14.

## February 2001 - 20 Years Ago

The proxies were counted and former WC CEO Ed Burkhardt conceded defeat on January 13. Burkhardt had hoped to gain control of the railroad and replace the Board of Directors with his own slate because he felt the current officers were not operating the railroad in the best interests of shareholders.... After just one month of operation, Amtrak's Acela Express highspeed train is living up to its billing by outrunning revenue projections and posting an on-time record that airlines can only envy....As of December 31, 2000, there were 64 ex-CNW units still active on the UP.

## February 2006 - 15 Years Ago

A lengthy article by Dave Ingles highlighted recent service expansions in Metra service. Among the notable items was the extension of the UP West Service from Geneva to Elburn; the North Central Service increased train frequency from 10 to 22 trains daily; the South West Service increased train frequency from 16 to 30 trains daily plus an extension from Orland Park/179th Street to Manhattan; and several infrastructure improvements including a second main track on the CN Waukesha Sub. and extension of the third main track on the UP Geneva Sub. from Geneva to Elburn....Amtrak is wrapping up an agreement with Chicago real estate firm Jones Lang LaSalle Inc. that would revive efforts to expand and spruce up Chicago's landmark Union Station. The proposal calls for an 18-story addition to the eight-story building at 210 S. Canal, which is owned by Amtrak. About 1.25 million square feet would be added to the building with no alterations to its Great Hall waiting room, regarded as one of the finest public spaces in the United States

## February 2011- 10 Years Ago

Tom Hoffmann presented 30 years Ago—Where were you in 1981 slide presentation at the month meeting. This look back from Tom is an annual event every year. Union Pacific was conducting an online vote for stops for its Steam program. Unfortunately Milwaukee lost in the voting. Jerry Hilton was presented with a 50 Year Membership Pin. Greg Mross and Curt Richards were awarded 25 year membership pins.

## February 2016 - 5 Years Ago

In January 2016 Jeff Plale resigned as the Railroad Commissioner in Wisconsin. Jeff Plale was appointed as Railroad Commissioner in August 2011. Jeff was the speaker at the Wisconsin Chapter NRHS banquet in May 2013. Governor Walker has appointed Yash Wadhwa as the new commissioner. Commissioner Wadhwa is from Glendale, WI. He is a retired civil engineer that worked with the MMSD Deep Tunnel project. He also served as a board member for the Metropolitan Association of Commerce, Wisconsin Association of Consulting Engineers and Wisconsin Society of Professional Engineers. The appointment still has to be confirmed by the Wisconsin state senate. NS #611 has announced several steam excursions despite the NS 21st Century Steam Program ending. #611 will pull excursions mainly in North Carolina and Virginia.

## The Big Picture is your page!

We've changed the format of the Sparks & Cinders back page, giving us room to run a large photo. Member submissions are solicited. Please send one or two of your outstanding pictures to Keith Schmidt, editor@nrhswis.org.

# The Big Picture



UP GP60 No. 1136 leads train LBU51 across Van Norman Ave. on its way down the Kenosha Subdivision to do its work in Cudahy, WI. January 4, 2021 Photo by Dan Grudzielanek