

NRHS

WISCONSIN CHAPTER

Volume 76 Number 8

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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.

Preserving Wisconsin Railroad History for 76 Years

Visit the Chapter Webpage www.nrhwis.org



Steam Locomotives and tenders in Milwaukee Road Shops in Milwaukee, WI. There are some diesels in the background so likely the end of steam was near. Photo by Rod Robinson - Dave Nelson Collection

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Wisconsin Chapter Meeting Schedule

Upcoming chapter events

October 2 2026 Steam Locomotive Service Maintenance Facilities by Dave Nelson
November 6 2026 To be Announced

Monthly meetings are held in the lower level of the North Shore Congregational Church at 7330 N Santa Monica Dr. in Fox Point. The church is handicap accessible. For more up to date information on meetings and speakers, and also any weather cancellations, check the chapter's webpage at www.nrhswis.org.

Doors open by 7:00 pm, so arrive early to socialize. Meetings start at 7:30pm sharp. Please bring a friend!
Our meetings are live-streamed on the Zoom platform. 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.

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

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.

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 Yuhas membership@nrhswis.org (or via USPS at PO Box 070758 Milwaukee, WI 53207).

Wisconsin Chapter officers are: Keith Schmidt President
Ward Wells Vice President, Tom Marcussen, Secretary; Tara Grudzielanek, Treasurer. Directors: Dan Grudzielanek, Mike Yuhas, Neal Wegner, Ralph McClure and Brian Hechel.

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.

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Meeting Summary for September 11 2026

President Keith Schmidt ran our September meeting from the air-conditioned upstairs first-floor Friendship Lounge at the North Shore Congregational Church in Fox Point. We started with 13, which soon became 14, in-person attendees, and 22 devices on Zoom. Keith started the meeting at 7:31 pm. Recording started at 7:32 pm.

Tonight is our first regular membership meeting after our summer break. We will do the traditional "Favorite Slide (now digital image) Night." Our Rail Camp student Randy Christopherson will go first.

Announcements

Today is the exact-date 25th anniversary of the terror attacks on our nation on September 11, 2001. Keith was then a Milwaukee County Deputy Sheriff. He was teaching a 5th grade Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) class when he was ordered to drop that, and instead guard the Milwaukee County Court House. He provided us some statistics on the number of people killed: 2753 in the attack on the World Trade Center on Manhattan Island in New York City.

343 New York City fire fighters

441 first responders in New York City

184 at the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia (across the Potomac River from Washington, DC).

40 in hijacked American Airlines Flight 93, which crashed in Pennsylvania while headed toward Washington, DC.

Long-term member Don Goerke passed away on Monday, June 8, just three days after our last previous meeting on Friday, June 5. His widow Debbie Goerke was in attendance tonight. She still has his extensive collection of VHS video tape recordings of our (before Zoom) meetings, presentations and other railroad subjects. She is looking for someone who might be interested in taking them over. There might be a number of historical treasures, that we have no other records of, in there. The VHS tapes take up a lot of physical space. Digitizing that content so that it can be shared would take a lot of work.

From the President

Keith asked for a moment of silence, in honor of both Don Goerke and the victims of September 11, 2001.

There was discussion of the schedule for the Soo #1003 Charter sponsored by the chapter being held on Saturday September 26th. See the schedule and maps on Page 6

Our East Troy Electric Railroad excursion to the Mukwonago fireworks, on Friday, July 3, was a success. We went to LD's Barbecue for an informal dinner first. We had two large-capacity South Shore cars—1920s as-delivered #9 and 1940s expanded / Art Deco #13. There were enough seats on the NW side for everybody to see the fireworks. Mukwonago provided a big display for America's 250th birthday. About 1000 other spectators showed up. The fireworks were high enough, and close enough, that no one complained that the cars were blocking their view. We kept the lights inside the car off for the full-darkness trip back to East Troy. We may do a similar trip next year.

Our next meeting is coming up on Friday, October 2. That is a super-short 21 days away. That is driving a super-tight window for submissions for October Sparks & Cinders. Keith will need to send the finished issue to the printers by Friday, September 18, to assure that members will get their issues before the meeting. Program Chair Dave Nelson is still looking for presentations for that meeting and others to follow. He is willing to consider multiple short presentations. That format has worked out well in the past. Cate Cratville-Wrinn said that she would do a presentation. It was not clear if that would be at the next meeting or a later date.

Dave also announced that the Grohmann (Industrial) Art Museum at Milwaukee School of Engineering (MSOE) will be hosting a photo exhibit by Lina Bertucci, on her perspective of working for the Milwaukee Road, from 1974 through 1977. Her photos will on exhibit through December. They will host a Gallery Night, on Friday, October 16, from 5:00 to 9:00 pm. She will give a talk on her work starting at 6:30 pm. Presentation

Tonight is our Favorite Slide (now digital image) Night, which has been a long-standing tradition for the first meeting of the new season in September. These consist of multiple short presentations with widely varied subject matter.

Our Rail Camp student Randy Christopherson went first, starting a 7:52 pm. He gave his presentation via Zoom. He started by thanking all of us for our scholarship and stipend for expenses. His narrative of his experiences came with numerous images. His experience started with taking Amtrak to get there—Hiawatha train 334 to Chicago, Cardinal train 50 to Washington, DC, and Vermonter train 54 to Wilmington, Delaware. Monday was spent at the Amtrak Shops and Training Center in Wilmington. Tuesday brought a trip to New York City, in the Amtrak rear-view Theater Car and catenary measurement car, attached to the back of a Northeast Regional. They got to tour the North East Corridor Control Center at New York City's Penn Station. Wednesday took them to the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, and rail-fanning the North East Corridor at Perryville, Maryland, and the big Susquehanna River Bridge at Havre de Grace, Maryland. Thursday was spent at the early-1900s Strasburg Railroad in Pennsylvania. Friday was split between the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania and the Strasburg, which are across the road from each other. The tour ended with going back west on Amtrak to Milwaukee. We were all treated to a very thorough tour of those rail sites (and sights).

Tom Williams was our second remote presenter. He started with the Royal Gorge train in Colorado in 2025. There were

The chapter has begun its 76th season with Members Favorite Slide Night. The meeting was held on Friday October 11 2026. The 25th anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the United States. Several members gave presentations featuring shots from their travels this year or looking back several years. Randy Christopherson gave a nice presentation on his experience at NRHS Railcamp. The chapter sponsored Randy so he could attend. It looked like a great time. I wish I was many years younger. Thanks for everyone that put something together.

Dave Nelson, the chapter presentation coordinator is having some troubles finding people willing to put a presentation together. It doesn't have to be fancy or long. If you have some photos you wish to share let Dave know. We can always have two presenters who might want to do shorter presentations. Contact Dave Nelson at engine1385@aol.com

Hopefully you will receive this before the Soo #1003 charter that the chapter is sponsoring along with the Soo Line Historical Society. Plans are coming together. There is a schedule and some maps inside the issue. This event is being held rain or shine. Let's hope for nice weather to celebrate railroad history and the 250th anniversary of the USA. Hope to see you trackside or in Burnett for the group photo.

Like our friend Jim Wrinn would say "Get Busy Livin".



meeting summary continued

some 2025 shots from southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois. He went out to northern Arizona in April 2026. There were some shots of Union Pacific Big Boy #4114, on the former Chicago & North Western main line, west of Chicago. He finished with some very scenic shots on the former Milwaukee Road (now CPKC) secondary main line along the west side of the Mississippi River from La Crescent, Minnesota to Marquette, Iowa.

Keith Schmidt was the first of three in-person presenters. He gave us an automated montage of full-motion video and still shots, with captions and set to music. It was mostly captured on the Union Pacific in Nebraska. We saw a lot of the huge Bailey Yard in North Platte, some other shots elsewhere, and some of Big Boy #4014. A number of those were taken from his drone. We also got a drone shot of the seven-story 19th Century warehouse that collapsed, at Water and Bruce Streets in Walkers Point, earlier this week.

Dave Nelson followed. He caught Big Boy #4014 at and around the busy crossing and rail fan park in Rochelle, Illinois. He attended the Chicago & North Western Historical Society Convention in Reedsburg. The Mid Continent Railroad Museum had former C&NW 1907-built 4-6-0 #1385, with its new welded boiler, fired up and in steam. They are still working on parts of the running gear. They also went to the Circus World Museum, and the large C&NW depot, in Baraboo. The convention finished at the quarter-size 15-inch gauge Riverside & Great Northern northwest of Wisconsin Dells. That location now has all three of the former Milwaukee County Zoo's live steam engines.

Dan Grudzielanek was our final presenter. All of his pictures were from 2001, in honor today's somber anniversary (see above). These included one shot of Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District's blue and white double-ended Plymouth switching locomotive. Dan ended his presentation at 8:54 pm.

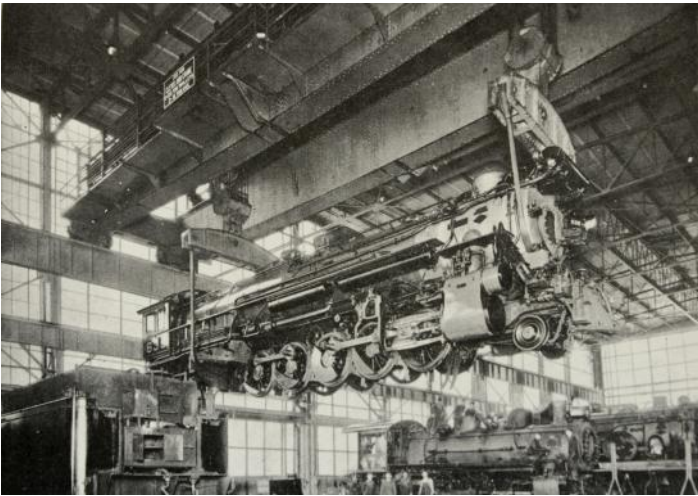
Steam Locomotive Service Maintenance Facilities

by Dave Nelson

One of the biggest reasons why the railroads were so eager to replace even their newest steam locomotives with diesel-electrics was the highly specialized and expensive facilities required just to keep a steam locomotive running. For much of the steam era, a locomotive would run just 100 miles before it needed thorough mechanical service, quite apart from the watering and refueling at terminals and en route. An army of employees, both skilled and unskilled labor, was needed to operate these facilities.

My October 2 presentation to the Wisconsin Chapter is going to look at these specialized buildings and facilities required by the steam locomotive: turntables, roundhouses, engine repair houses, sand towers, water tanks (and water treatment buildings), cinder pits, coaling towers, and oil houses. Few of these facilities are still in railroad use; some have been repurposed, but most are long gone, along with the locomotives themselves of course. For contrast, we will also see photos I have taken showing the ways modern-day preserved steam is serviced, but most of the presentation will be historical photos in my collection (some of them purchased from the late Rod Robinson).

The meeting takes place at the North Shore Congregational Church, 7330 North Santa Monica Boulevard, Fox Point, Wisconsin. Arrive early to socialize with your fellow members. Doors open at 7pm on Friday, October 2 2026. Announcements and the presentation at 7:30 pm CDT. The presentation will be available remotely on Zoom. For those participating remotely: This event requires advance registration. To register please contact membership@nrhswis.org to receive the meeting link.



Traveling with Big Boy #4014 Part 2

by Stephen Borleske

I have had the pleasure of serving as a member of the Union Pacific's Experience Car crew for the past several years, and this year was no exception. Due to obligations with my "day job," I was limited to when I would be with the train. My first time with the tour was in Roseville, CA in early April. On April 9th the railroad had an employee appreciation event on the west end of the yard. The 4014 and train did not arrive until 3:30 in the afternoon. After pulling off the wye connecting to the former WP Feather River route, the train backed west into the yard. The 4014 then made a fantastic run-by of the display site for the employees. After spotting the train, we opened the recently renovated Promontory display car for the employees and their families to view. We had the Experience Car open for the general public on April 10th and 11th.

Meeting Summary continued from Page 3

There was a short question and answer session, covering all five presenters. There was another reminder of our next meeting on Friday, October 2. Your secretary saw a maximum of 27 devices connected to Zoom. Adding the 14 in-person attendees at the church, and the subtracting the two devices there, yielded a total meeting attendance of 39.

The meeting broke up quickly after that. Recording stopped at 8:59 pm. There was no informal on-line discussion group. The Zoom meeting room closed at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Thomas W. Marcussen

Wisconsin Chapter Secretary

Model Train Show and Swap Meet Kettle Moraine Ballast Scorchers

When - Sunday October 11 2021 9am to 3pm

Where - Washington County Fairgrounds

Hwy 45 and Hwy PV

Cost - \$5.00 Donation Kids 12 and Under FREE

Military and First Responders with ID FREE

See operating model train layouts in N and HO Scale plus other scales.

Buy model trains to expand the collection or get started in the hobby.

For more information <http://www.kmbsrrclub.org>

The next time I was with the train, we were on the opposite coast and on a different railroad. July 4th and 5th we had the train on display in Philadelphia. The site chosen for the display had some history with it. When the Pennsylvania Railroad operated their many sections of extra passenger trains to the annual Army-Navy football games held at Philadelphia's Municipal (later JFK) Stadium (demolished in 1992), they spotted those trains in a yard near the stadium. The yard that hosted those many passenger trains has since been reduced to only two tracks, one of which the 4014 and train was spotted on. We experienced a significant heat wave while in Philadelphia. July 4th the actual temperature was over 100 degrees. July 5th was not much better with the mercury rising to only 95. We had the Experience Car open for public viewing on the 4th, but due to the extreme heat and fear of multiple heat related health issues, the car was closed to the public on the 5th. In those two days we had around 110,000 people come visit the display. This was quite an experience being in Philadelphia, the birthplace of our country, on the 250th Anniversary date as part of the America 250 celebration.

Our next stop for the public to visit the 4014 and the Experience Car was in Altoona, PA on July 8th-10th. Norfolk Southern had an employee appreciation event at the display site on July 8th. The 4014 and train arrived town at 5PM and after waiting for Amtrak 43 to clear, backed into the display site. The Heritage Fleet passenger cars from the 2055 through the NS 30 were parked on the east track of the display site. The center display track had the 4014, the three diesels, and the four support cars. NS also brought several other cars and locomotives to the display site. At the rear of the center track were NS 8184 "Altoona" and NS 1231 "Atlanta" painted in NS's new OCS locomotive paint scheme of maroon cab and black hood. NS 8102, the Pennsylvania Railroad heritage locomotive,

Traveling with Big Boy #4014 Part #2

by Stephen Borleske

ended the center display track. On the west display track were NS 2026 "The Lady Liberty," NS 250 "The Freedom," and nine NS passenger cars. Next on the west track were eight cars of the NS's HazMat training train. Rounding out the display area was NS 911 painted to honor first responders. The public was invited to tour the display site on July 9th and 10th. On July 9th the CEO's of Union Pacific, Jim Vena, and Norfolk Southern, Mark George, hosted Pennsylvania's governor, Josh Shapiro, at the site. Due to the extra security for the VIP's, the Experience Car was not open to the public. July 10th we did have the Experience Car open for the public until 3PM. Altoona was one of the two display sites on the east coast tour leg that utilized remote parking and shuttle bus transportation. Around 30,000 people came to visit the site each day the train was open for public viewing in Altoona.

The Experience Car, UP 5752 Promontory, was refurbished before this tour began. To start the experience people had a chance to learn about President Lincoln's signing of the Pacific Rail Act in 1862. A smaller panel described the building of the transcontinental railroad in the 1860's. The next display was on the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, a significant land addition to our then young country, which would become important in the history of the Union Pacific Railroad. Another panel described the impact the transcontinental railroad had on the country at the time. On the opposite wall was a panel describing the Union Pacific's participation in the national economy. The panels between the doors contained a map of the Union Pacific with some statistics and the opposite side described the Union Pacific's efforts at innovation in transportation. The last two panels in the car continued describing the Union Pacific's involvement in transportation innovation, safety, and supporting the economy. Along the centerline of the car roof were alternating American flags and the flags of the 14 states the Coast to Coast Tour passed through. In total 72,600 people passed through the Experience Car during the Coast to Coast tour. During typical opening times, we accommodate 750-1000 people through the car per hour.

Here are some quick questions to commonly asked questions about the 4014 and the train.

Q: How much fuel does the 4014 use?

A: It uses about 5 gallons per mile, but uses much more water per mile. The tender has a capacity of 6,500 gallons of fuel oil and 25,000 gallons of water. The two canteens hold an additional 28,000 gallons of water each. The fuel used is a special blend sourced from Sioux City, IA. On the eastern leg of the tour, three dedicated tank trucks were rotating between the train and western Iowa.

Q: How far can the Big Boy travel in a day?

A: Each travel day is limited to 100-200 miles per day. The length of each day can also be limited by the terrain encountered each day and where yards might be available to get the train off the main line.

Q: Why does the Big Boy no longer use coal?

A: The important reason is to prevent line-side fires caused by cinders. It is also getting difficult to source the right size (for stoker use) and grade of locomotive coal. This is the same reasoning that several western steam powered heritage railroads are using to convert to oil.

Q: Wasn't the test of oil firing the Big Boys in the steam era a failure?

A: Not really. The UP converted the 4005 (now at the Forney Museum in Denver) to oil firing in 1946 during a national coal strike. The need for additional refueling locations and the single burner installed in the firebox were detriments to the experiment.

Q: Why are the diesels along?

A: First of all, the diesels are not doing most of the work. The 4014 is an active locomotive and quite capable of moving the light passenger train over the road. The diesels are along for a couple reasons. One is for dynamic braking. It is easier on the aging equipment if dynamic brakes are used when coming down heavy grades. Another is for extending the range of the travel day. If the day is planned longer than the fuel and water supply on board can last, the diesels will assist in moving the train. This year's tour also had the semi-centennial locomotives along for public exhibit.

Q: Does the 4014 have PTC (Positive Train Control)?

A: Yes, the 4014 is equipped with PTC. The antennas and equipment for the electronics are located on the top of the tender behind the fuel oil bunker. There is a PTC interface screen in the cab next to the engineer's seat. The 4014 was equipped with equipment to operate on UP lines that were equipped with cab signals (CCS on UP lines and ATC on ex-CNW lines). Cab signals have been retired with the installation of PTC throughout the system.

Q: Did you get to ride on the train?

A: This year because of my schedule, I did not. Since the Experience Car team is not directly involved in the movement of the train, we precede the train to the next public viewing site. There we can assist in completing the site for the public. Yes, I have ridden behind the 4014 (2019, 2021, 2022). My time riding behind the 4014 is when the Union Pacific Museum has a scheduled excursion.

Q: Do you get to sleep on the train?

A: No, I do not. If all the crew members were to have sleeping accommodations on the train, several more cars would be needed which would make the train longer than most display locations would be able to handle.

Q: How many people are working on the train? A: That can depend on the location. There are six to twelve people that are associated with the steam crew from Cheyenne. There are usually six members of the Heritage Fleet crew from Council Bluffs with the train. Additionally, several members of the Union Pacific Police accompany the train. While we were on the Norfolk Southern, several of their special agents accompanied us. The Experience Car team usually has three people, but this is expanded when assisting with a Union Pacific Museum excursion. The dining car crew also varies depending on duties required. If a meal is to be served on the City of Denver, up to six staff may accompany the train. There are also Executive support staff from Omaha. Generally six members are along supporting the train.

Q: Where will the 4014 and train go to next year?

A: That information has not yet been made public. It will be a shorter trip than the half-year 7,000 mile adventure of this year. This year's grand excursion involved over two years of planning.

Soo Line #1003 Celebrates 250 Years of the USA

Please plan on being trackside for the Soo #1003 charter sponsored by the Wisconsin Chapter NRHS and Soo Line Historical Society and a generous young man Connor Siemers. This could be one of the last times the #1003 is under steam before its mandatory 15 year inspection. Below is latest schedule for the charter.

Depart Auto Museum in Hartford	8:30am
Runby at the Auto Museum in Hartford	8:45am
Switch Cars at West Yard in Hartford	9:00am
Depart West Yard Tender First to Horicon	9:15am
Arrive Horicon	10:15am
Take Water in Horicon—if needed	10:30am
Run around train and shove to Burnett	10:45am
Arrive Burnett	11:30am
Coaling and Service—Burnett	11:30am—12:00n
Photo Run-bys and photos in Burnett	12:00n-12:45pm
Run to Horicon	12:45-1:15pm
Take water in Horicon if needed	1:15-1:45pm
Depart Horicon	1:45pm
Photo Run by at Noble Road	2:00pm
Photo Run by at Iron Ridge/Cty Rd S	2:15pm
Photo Run bys at Rubicon	2:45pm
Switch Cars at West Yard in Hartford	3:15pm
Arrive at Museum	3:30pm

Upon arrival back at the Auto Museum chapter members will have a chance to check out the cabooses and #1003 up close. Please make sure you get a lanyard with a ID card in it.

This is most current timetable. All times are subject to change based on traffic on the host railroad the WSOR and any possible issues with equipment.

This event will be held rain or shine. We will like to have the chapter members in attendance meet in Burnett for a group photo. In Burnett we plan to have some classic cars and trucks that will pose with the #1003 during photo runbys.



Here are some maps that show the route of the train. The WSOR tracks are the very faint line in the maps. It can followed out of Hartford through Rubicon and to Iron Ridge. Then out of Iron Ridge to Horicon. The vertical map shows Horicon to Burnett. I hope that these will help out.



From the Archives

October 1956— 70 Years Ago

The steam power capital of American railroading has been tentatively designated the site of the 1957 NRHS Convention to be held at the N&W-owned Hotel Roanoke. All delegates will receive rooms overlooking the N&W main line (we hope). Roanoke: 4-8-4s, 2-6-6-4s, 2-8-8-2s; the Jawn Henry; Virginian electrification, which by convention-time will have new electric locomotives; wonderful mountain scenery; all of this at next year's convention, Labor Day weekend, September, 1957....The CSS&SB has just opened up a nice new stretch of track paralleling the Indiana Turnpike in a by-pass around East Chicago, Indiana.

October 1961 - 65 Years Ago

Comments from General Chairman Carl Solheim regarding the recent NRHS National Convention in Chicago, hosted by Wisconsin Chapter: "The railroads involved, the Burlington, Grand Trunk, South Shore, and North Shore, did a superior job in furnishing us with equipment and services during the Convention. Many others furnished literature, maps, historical booklets, pencils, matches, etc. Among the friend railroads who helped were CNW, UP, NP, Reading, RI, ACL, B&O, SP, WP, EBT, as well as those we actually rode. The Milwaukee Road and the Santa Fe printed, at their own expense, the note pads which were an excellent memento of the Convention, as well as a symbol of the healthy relationship between the railroads and their allies, the organized railfans and historians."

October 1966 - 60 Years Ago

The C&NW's Butler yards had lots of action over the Labor Day weekend. Ex-LS&I 2-8-0 No. 38 came through destined for someplace in Florida. It stayed at least one night outside the diesel house. Eight new SD-40s for the CGW went through on an evening freight, and the ex-RI Aero-train stopped briefly enroute to the museum in Green Bay. In addition, Mid-Continent museum is working on an ex-TMER&L steeple cab there.

October 1971—55 Years Ago

Amtrak has released the makeup of its roster of 1200 cars to be taken from various railroads for the startup of service. The majority of cars were selected from ATSF (447), SCL (276), BN (196), and UP (124).... A late bulletin announced additional Amtrak service in the Milwaukee-Chicago corridor and plans for through Milwaukee-St. Louis service

October 1976—50 Years Ago

MidRail '76, held in Kansas City, was a great success....AT&T installed its first private Morse telegraph line in 1887 and on June 15, 1976, disconnected its last remaining DC telegraph line. The line connected the Milwaukee Road depot in Eau Claire with Durand and Wabasha, Minnesota. The line was leased from AT&T in 1959 after the Milwaukee Road discontinued its own line.

October 1981—45 Years Ago

October 1981— 45 Years Ago

Chicago, Madison & Northern and the Wisconsin DOT have worked out an agreement whereby the CM&N will be able to go ahead with a \$150,000 interchange to connect the two lines of the railroad at Monroe. The ex-IC line from Freeport to Madison and the ex-Milwaukee Road line from Janesville to Mineral Point never had a physical connection at Monroe....Al Paske, the Milwaukee Road agent at Brookfield, has retired after 40 years of service. Al could always provide train location information and aided in the taking of many photos at Brookfield.

October 1986 - 40 Years Ago

Construction of the connection between the Soo Line (ex-Wisconsin Central, now CN) and Milwaukee Road (now CP) is well under way at Duplainville....The ICC has granted permission for the C&NW to abandon its Fond du Lac-Ripon line....Effective September 20, 1986, Soo Line discontinued all passenger service between Neenah, Gladstone, and Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, ending the era of caboose riding on the Soo.

October 1991 —35 Years Ago

The Tri-State High Speed Rail Study was recently released by Wisconsin, Illinois, and Minnesota. The preliminary study concludes that the Chicago-Milwaukee-Twin Cities corridor offers a "significant potential" for high speed rail in terms of ridership, revenues, and economic benefits....The Lake Michigan Car Ferry Service Co., Inc. plans to resume twice-daily car ferry service from Manitowoc, Wisconsin to Ludington, Michigan.

October 1996 —30 Years Ago

The Chicago Tribune reports that Amtrak is studying the possibility of running transcontinental trains through Chicago with only a service stop. One possible combination is the Capitol Limited and Southwest Chief....UP 4-8-4 No. 844 paid a visit to Butler on August 31. It powered a fantrip from Chicago to Butler and return via the C&NW New Line (UP Milwaukee Sub.)....The WC is removing rail from the former street running line through Oshkosh. This project has been going on for most of the past summer....Metra North service is now operating via the WC from Antioch, Illinois, to Chicago, on a Monday through Friday schedule.

October 2001—25 Years Ago

The Wisconsin Chapter web site www.nrhswis.org made its debut on the internet. It was designed and is being maintained by Jim Yanke's son Jim. On September 7 the Surface Transportation Board approved Canadian National's \$1.2 billion acquisition of Wisconsin Central. The deal is expected to close on October 9....Amtrak ridership increased 17 per cent in the aftermath of 9/11....Amtrak has dropped plans to extend one of the Chicago-Milwaukee Hiawatha ..Amtrak's Chicago-Janesville Lake Country Limited made its last run on September 22.

October 2006 — 20 Years Ago

A Photo Clinic sponsored by Trains Magazine and Wisconsin Chapter was held on September 9. Fifteen participants and six instructors shot photos from the CP crossings at Grange Ave. and Waterford Ave. The Milwaukee Amtrak depot, opened in 1965, the last intercity railroad depot built before Amtrak, and now owned by Wisconsin DOT, began its long-awaited makeover. The \$15.6 million remodeling will result in an intermodal facility for both train and bus passengers. It is expected to be completed in August 2007....UP rescinded its ban on photography from Metra platforms on August 28th.

October 2011 — 15 Years Ago

On August 27th the Chapter toured the WSOR Horicon Shop Complex. 25 members took part in the tour that had been rain delayed twice before. Canadian National announced its intent to merge the Duluth Missabe and Iron Range RR (DM&IR) and Duluth, Winnipeg and Pacific (DW&P) into the Wisconsin Central operating umbrella.

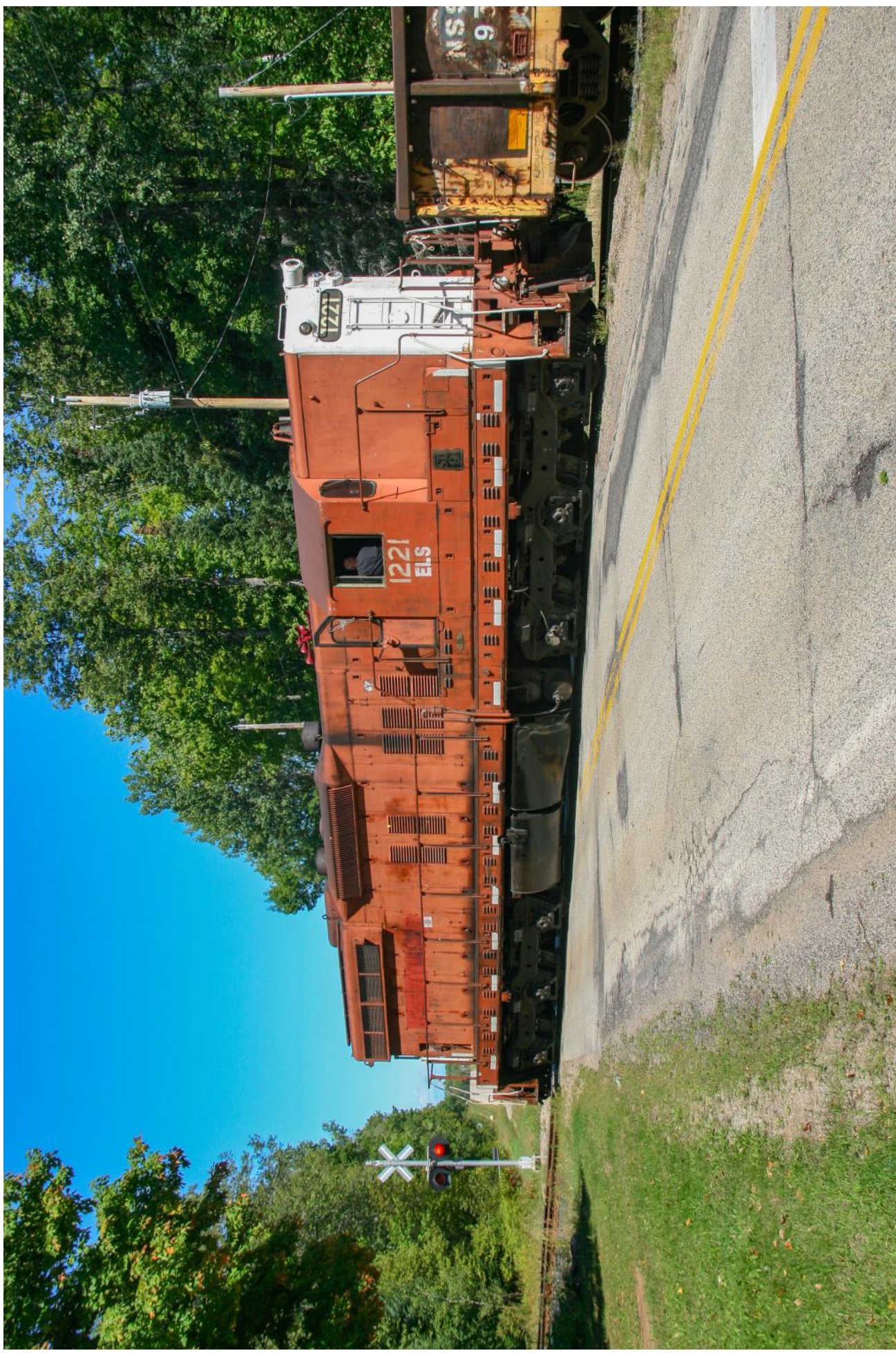
October 2016 — 10 Years Ago

Six freight rail projects in Wisconsin will benefit from \$37 million in state funding. Gov. Scott Walker recently announced the appropriations through the state's freight railroad assistance program. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation is distributing \$29.6 million in grants through the freight railroad preservation program and an additional \$7.4 million in loans will be distributed through the freight railroad infrastructure improvement program. Four projects on the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad will benefit from the state funding. The Port of Milwaukee has also received a \$1.7 million grant to reconstruct more than a dozen grade crossings within the port and replace rail within the grade crossings. The project will include replacing grade crossing surfaces and installing new 115-pound rail. The port is contributing more than \$440,000 to the project

October 2021— 5 Years Ago

On Friday September 10 2021 the chapter held it's first in person meeting since April 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. 29 people attended in person. The meeting was also livestreamed via the Zoom platform to a worldwide audience. There were 26 people attending via Zoom. The Chapter still livestreams the monthly meetings. The NRHS National convention was held in Milwaukee on August 24-28 2021. About 170 attended the convention. Attendees were able to visit Railroad Museum in Green Bay, East Troy Railroad and Illinois Railroad Museum. Several chapter members helped by being bus captains on the trips. Tom Hoffmann received his 50 year membership pin. Jerry Hilton received his 60 year membership pin. Congratulations.

The Big Picture



ELS SD9 No. 1221 crossing Hwy. O north of Pembine, WI on September 9 2026 Photo by Dan Grudzielanek