

POTOMAC RAIL NEWS

POTOMAC CHAPTER, NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 235, KENSINGTON, MARYLAND 20895-0235

MARCH 2024



A PROFITABLE ROUTE. Amtrak's Auto Train is one of its three routes that are profitable. Amtrak's north bound Auto Train soars across Powell's Creek on CSX's RF&P Sub on a clear April 9, 2011. Photo by: Alex Mayes; more details on page 2.

PROGRAM: "Shortlines and Regionals." A digital presentation covering a selection of shortline and regional railroads in the eastern half of the U.S. will be shown by Alex Mayes. The program will include all-Alco railroads Arkansas & Missouri; Western New York & Pennsylvania; Livonia, Avon & Lakeville; Bath & Hammondsport; Burlington Junction; and Delaware-Lackawanna. A few shortlines and tourist lines that use first-generation EMD diesels and steam power will also be included, as well as a few scenes of Class 1s. The presentation also includes scenes of the Iowa Traction Railroad, the last electric-powered common carrier railroad in the U.S.

MEETING: March 19, 2024 at 8PM. The in-person meeting will be held in the Lecture Hall of the [Stella Werner Council Office Building](#), 100 Maryland Ave, Rockville, MD. Those unable to attend may view the program via Zoom video conference. ZOOM LOGIN LINK ON PAGE 2.

NEXT MEETING DATE: April 16, 2024

DEADLINE FOR APRIL ISSUE: March 29, 2024. Send news items to Clay Moritz, Editor, Potomac Rail News, at c.moritz@comcast.net

INFO ON CHAPTER ACTIVITIES: <http://potomacnrhs.org/>

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THE CHAPTER FAMILY

If you know of a Chapter Member who is sick, has lost a loved one, or has a new birth in the family, please contact the editor at: c.moritz@comcast.net

ZOOM TOPIC: POTOMAC CHAPTER MARCH MEMBERSHIP MEETING:

Time: Mar. 19, 2024 08:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81672625788?pwd=MHptaXJpL1RUalhEcDFwZk5vaGREdz09>

Meeting ID: 816 7262 5788

Passcode: 547873

One tap mobile

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+13017158592,,86741529997#,,,,*653332# US (Washington DC)

THIS MONTH'S COVER PHOTO: Amtrak's north bound Auto Train soars across Powell's Creek on CSX's RF&P Sub on a clear April 9, 2011. This location is on the former Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad near Dale City, VA. At the time this photo was taken, Amtrak had assigned six recently rebuilt General Electric P40s to the Auto Train. The six P40s, Nos. 814, 818, 830, 831, 832 and 835, were rebuilt with funds acquired through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. A total of 15 P40s were rebuilt for long distance service, which included overhaul or replacement of all main components, including the auxiliary generator power contactors, voltage regulator, batteries, trucks and air brake systems. This work was done at Amtrak's Beech Grove, Indiana shops. Amtrak purchased 44 P40s from GE in 1993; after being in service for many years they were removed from service and stored. Each Auto Train was powered by a pair of the P40s, the other two were kept at their facility at Sanford, FL. This train was powered by rebuilt P40s Nos. 818 and 831. - Alex Mayes

IN MEMORIAM. With sadness we note the passing of Mallory Hope Ferrell, Prolific Railroad Author. Mallory Hope Ferrell, a photojournalist, aviator and prolific railroad author, died on December 25, 2023. He was 88 years old.

Ferrell had a wide-ranging career - from flying combat missions in Vietnam to working as a photojournalist for Life Magazine - but it was his books that he will be most remembered for within the railroad community. Over the decades he wrote 21 titles, mostly focusing on narrow gauge pikes in the American West. Among them are some of the foremost titles on their subjects, including "Silver San Juan: The Rio Grande Southern" published in 1973 and "Southern Pacific Narrow Gauge" in 1982. Among his last would be "Denver & Rio Grande: The Early Years" published by White River Productions in 2018.

Ferrell was born in Virginia in 1935. He joined the Air Force and became a pilot in the late 1950s, flying missions during the Cuban Missile Crisis and Vietnam War. He received multiple awards for bravery during those tours. He later became a commercial pilot for Delta Air Lines. He also worked as a photojournalist, working for his local newspaper, the Virginian-Pilot, and Life Magazine.

But it was his family he was most proud of. He is survived by his wife Gloria, four children, five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. (Railfan & Railroad) The Potomac Chapter extends its Deepest Sympathy to Mal's family and friends. You are in our Thoughts and Prayers.

RAIL NEWS

ALEXANDRIA AMTRAK STATION IS THE SECOND BUSIEST IN THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES. Amtrak said last year was one for the books for train travel around Virginia and the Alexandria station had the state's second-highest ridership in the southeastern United States. Just behind Richmond at 424,617 riders, Alexandria Union Station had 327,285 riders in 2023.

"The tremendous growth in ridership is a result of the substantial investments North Carolina and Virginia are making to expand and improve passenger rail," Amtrak Vice President Ray Lang said in a release. "Customers are taking advantage of a sustainable way to travel to the many destinations our network offers."

The third-highest ridership in the region was in Charlotte, North Carolina, with 281,220 riders. The next highest in Virginia was the Norfolk station at 232,530 riders.

"Richmond is not just the capital of Virginia, it's the epicenter of the East, connecting the Southeast and the Northeast by rail," DJ Stadtler, Executive Director of the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA), said in the release. "All three of these stations, Richmond-Staples Mill, Alexandria, and Norfolk offer Virginians access to rail service connecting the Commonwealth with the rest of the east coast." (ALX Now)

FEDS TO HOLD HEARING ON G&W PLAN TO USE AUTONOMOUS RAIL CARS. The Federal Railroad Administration is planning on holding a public hearing on March 12, to consider a proposal by Genesee & Wyoming to use autonomous rail cars on two Georgia short lines.

In 2023, G&W asked the FRA for permission to test technology developed by Parallel Systems on the Georgia Central Railway and Heart of Georgia Railroad. G&W wants to use the technology on short sections of track initially with oversight by the FRA. Proponents of the battery-powered rail vehicles have said it could provide short lines with an easier (and cheaper) way of providing service to local customers. Proponents have said it would also allow more freight to be moved by rail instead of on highways. (Railfan & Railroad)

EBT'S 'MARCH SOUTH' CONTINUES. The East Broad Top Railroad's "March South" continues as workers rehabilitate narrow-gauge right-of-way between Rockhill and a mile south of the Pogue Bridge.

In a February 7th conversation with the EBT Foundation's General Manager Brad Esposito and Jonathan Smith, the railroad's Director of Sales and Marketing, it was announced that planning and implementation of several EBT projects and activities are eyed for 2024.

"We are looking at continued right-of-way clearing and rehabilitation work this year by Foundation employees and volunteers from the Friends of the East Broad Top (FEBT)," said Esposito. "Our initial destination will be Three Springs and Saltillo." Further restoration south to the Robertsdale/Wood area is expected in later phases of the massive reconstruction project.

Since last fall and the winter of 2023-24, workers have cleared right-of-way from the Route 475 railroad crossing to nearly a mile south of the Pogue Bridge, in preparation for subsequent rehabilitation of right-of-way and the relaying of the rails.

Also, it was noted that over the past few years, the work crew completed restoration of over a mile of right-of-way from Rockhill south to Route 475.

"The Foundation is coordinating plans with PennDOT to reinstall the railroad crossing over the highway," explained Esposito. "We are also in the process of finalizing the bidding work for the refurbishment of the Pogue Bridge."

The General Manager noted that the bridge's steel work is in "good shape," while some stonework will be needed. No immediate timetable for the completion of the rehabilitation project has been set, Esposito added.

With the restored steam locomotive No. 16 gearing up for another busy season this year, plans are in the mix for the rehabilitation of No. 15, with preliminary work already in progress, noted Esposito. Earlier, the Foundation was looking at restoring locomotive No. 14, but it was decided to revitalize No. 15 for future use, with No. 14 next in line for restoration. No timetable was fixed for the completion of the No. 15 restoration project.

Other activities eyed this year are the opening of the Coulter One Room School, which was moved last year from the campus of the Southern Huntingdon County High School to Rockhill. Some minor exterior work remains before the iconic educational attraction opens sometime this summer.

All the items located in the school are in storage and will be placed back in the school. Initially, tours will include school field trips and other special activities still in the planning stages. Members of the Southern Huntingdon County Education Foundation are expected to handle tour planning and related activities, Esposito said.

This year, EBT activities at Rockhill will include extended tours of the railroad repair shops complex, including the master mechanic's facility, Esposito remarked, adding that the tours will also involve an introduction to the railroad's on-going archives and special collections project, managed by Julie Rockwell, EBT Archivist and Project Director.

"There is a lot of interest in the EBT railroad shops," added Smith. "The unique shops are the most visible to the visitors."

At Saltillo, site survey and preliminary architectural drawings have been completed for the erection of a railroad station like the original structure. The project is being spearheaded and funded by the FEBT.

At Robertsdale, additional restoration work is on tap this year and includes the first phase of planning for the erection of a replica of the EBT engine house that once stood on the western side of the Ruth George Playground.

Also, on the itinerary are plans to clear additional railroad right-of-way north of Robertsdale to the EBT railroad bridge situated just north of the former coal mining village.

Also planned is the clearing of the famous Robertsdale wye, where trains were positioned for the trip north to Rockhill and Mount Union. This work is scheduled for this year and will enhance visitors' activities at the FEBT Museum Complex, situated on Robertsdale's "company square."

Esposito also reported that some additional repair work is planned for the two-story coal company office building, which houses Robertsdale's post office on the first floor. Included in the project is the installation of several entrance overhangs.

The Foundation also envisions revitalizing part of the former playground and will work closely with members of the Robertsdale Community and Heritage Days planning committee, said Esposito.

Also, some thought has been given to repairing or replacing a foot bridge across Trough Creek, which connects the Broad Top Area Coal Miners Museum with the FEBT Museum Complex. If agreed to, the proposal would involve assistance from the Broad Top Area Coal Miners Historical Society and the FEBT.

Smith reported that the railroad continues to see increased ridership and railroad shop tours.

"In 2022, we saw 20,000 visitors, which grew to 35,000 last year. For 2024, the EBT hopes to attract at least 40,000 to the National Historic Site," Smith added.

The opening of regular train service is Memorial Day to Labor Day, when the

EBT will operate Wednesdays through Sundays. From May to Memorial Day, and Labor Day to the end of October, the railroad will be open Fridays through Sundays. Steam rides will leave the Orbisonia Station at 11 a.m. and 1 and 3 p.m.

On March 23-24 and March 30, "Easter on the Rails" excursions will take place at the EBT. The excursions will rely on a diesel engine, announced Smith. Several other year-round events are scheduled for 2024, which will be announced later. (The Daily News - Huntingdon County, PA)

PRESERVATION NEWS: 'FLYING YANKEE' UP FOR SALE AND MICHIGAN CENTRAL STATION REOPENING. The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) is reviewing bids for the Flying Yankee, the diesel-electric streamliner built in late 1934 by the Budd Company for the Boston & Maine. Also, Detroit's historic Michigan Central Station will reopen in June, following a five-plus-year restoration effort by the Ford Motor Company.

Among the bidders for the Flying Yankee is the Nashua, N.H.-based Flying Yankee Association, which was established in 1996 to help the State with fundraising for and restoration of the B&M #6000.

The NHDOT, through early last month, was accepting proposals for the purchase, relocation and "encouraged" restoration of the three-car articulated Flying Yankee, the contemporary of the Burlington's Zephyr, later renamed the Pioneer Zephyr. The Flying Yankee, located in Lincoln, N.H., was purchased by the State in 1997.

According to a February 18 Concord Monitor report, the Department is now reviewing the proposals and "will be posting details and requesting permission from the governor [Chris Sununu] and Executive Council 'in a few weeks,' said DOT spokesman Richard Arcand."

The Flying Yankee Association told the newspaper that its goal is to restore the train and run it rather than putting it in a museum. "We'll try to use the original parts, as we can," said Jacob Eidsmoe, Marketing Director for the Flying Yankee Association, according to the Concord Monitor. "Some we can't - it will need new windows, new electrical to meet requirements and codes - but many we can," he said. For example, "the chairs, we want to keep them as close to 1935 look and feel as possible.'" The train, Eidsmoe said, would remain in New Hampshire.

The Flying Yankee was built for the B&M, thanks to a loan from the Public Works Administration, according to the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance. Replacing a conventional steam-powered train with that same name, the Flying Yankee was a significant departure from trains at the time, according to the Flying Yankee Association. "While period-typical passenger cars could weigh 120 tons, the entire three-car trainset weighed only 113 tons and featured the newest technology available at the time," the Association said on its website. "Nearly the entire carbody was constructed from stainless steel, made possible by an innovative construction method called 'shot welding' developed by the Budd Company."

The Flying Yankee carried passengers and freight throughout the Northeast and was maintained at B&M's South Concord Shops, according to the Concord Monitor. Following 22 years of service and running just over 2.7 million miles, it was retired May 7, 1957. The trainset spent years at the Edaville Railroad Museum in Carver, Mass., the paper reported, before moving to the Plymouth and Lincoln Railroad, which is now the Patriot Rail-owned Hobo Railroad. Much of the Flying Yankee's route is currently operated by Amtrak's Downeaster.

Meanwhile, Fox 2 on February 20th reported that the historic Michigan Central Station will reopen June 6, though it will no longer be served by intercity passenger trains. The Ford Motor Company in 2018 bought the more than 100-year-old building, which was in a state of disrepair, and has been transforming it in

phases—from gutting, stabilizing, and winterizing work to replacing the mechanical and electrical systems, restoring the exterior masonry, and restoring and finishing the interior, the media outlet reported.

Michigan Central Station will now feature restaurants, public art, and community gathering spaces, and serve as the centerpiece of the new Michigan Central “mobility innovation district” located in Corktown, Detroit’s oldest neighborhood, according to Ford Motor Company. The district, it said, will be where “mobility innovators and disruptors from around the world will develop, test, and launch new urban transportation solutions.” The 30-acre, walkable district includes 1.2 million square feet of commercial real estate, work-spaces for 5,000 workers, maker labs, high-tech connected infrastructure, open spaces, and a state-of-the-art testing environment, according to the company.

Built for the Michigan Central Railroad, the station replaced the original depot in downtown Detroit, which was shuttered after a major fire. It was designed by Warren & Wetmore, architects of New York City’s Grand Central Terminal. It was formally dedicated in 1914, and at its peak in 1940, served more than 4,000 travelers per day and housed more than 3,000 office workers. It remained in operation until the cessation of Amtrak service on January 5, 1988. (Railway Age)

PRESERVING HISTORY - SOUTHERN RAILWAY RECORDS NOW AVAILABLE. January 23, 2024
Atlanta History Center www.atlantahistorycenter.com

Atlanta History Center is pleased to announce the opening of Southern Railway records. Donated by Norfolk Southern Corporation in 2021, these records document the inner workings of Southern Railway, and its predecessor railroad lines from 1828 to 2007.

The records, which span nearly 250 linear feet include annual reports, inspection trips, speeches by executives, construction contracts, correspondence, company publications and rule books, passenger train brochures, tickets, railway passes, timetables, records of employee associations, and meeting minutes and subject files of predecessor lines.

The records contain over three thousand construction contracts illustrating the company’s history through the construction of train depots, grading and track laying, bridges, equipment and materials delivery, machinery installation, and yard offices and structures. The construction contracts provide researchers with a conceptual understanding of the company’s overall goals by showcasing the change in operational and structural needs during different periods in time, as well as the shift in geographic locations as the company continued to grow and acquire additional railroads and companies.

Annual reports detail the yearly operational and financial progress of the railway as a presentation to the stockholders and president. These records provide a more in-depth explanation of why structures were built, why railroads were acquired, and how technological and physical changes benefitted the railway.

More than one hundred predecessor railroads and companies are documented in these records, including South Carolina Canal and Railroad; Richmond and Danville Railroad; East Tennessee, Virginia, and Georgia Railway; Louisville, Evansville and St. Louis Consolidated Railroad; Central of Georgia Railway; and Cincinnati, New Orleans, and Texas Pacific Railway.

The predecessor records provide the researcher with a clearer understanding of how these separate railroad companies operated and what led to their incorporation, consolidation, and termination through their stockholder and board of director minutes. They also provide a glimpse at their financial standings and pitfalls through their annual reports and general daily operations, communications, and involvement with other railroads and companies.

Southern Railway records are open to the public by appointment beginning

January 23. To request an appointment, please call 404.814.4040, or email reference@atlantahistorycenter.com. Kenan Research Center is open by appointment, Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00am-5:00pm.

In addition to the records, Atlanta History Center has digitized over 11,000 photographic images from the collection. These images will be added to our website throughout 2024. Over 2,000 are now available. (Atlanta History Center)

NORFOLK SOUTHERN DONATES NORFOLK AND WESTERN RAILWAY ARCHIVES TO THE VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF HISTORY & CULTURE. Richmond, VA. (April 6, 2022) - Norfolk Southern Corporation donated the complete collection of historical documents and archives from predecessor company Norfolk and Western Railway to the Virginia Museum of History & Culture (VMHC).

The collection dates to the 1840s and includes thousands of photographs and glass plate negatives, as well as business records, annual reports, blueprints, plans, bridge drawings, advertisements, portraits, and three-dimensional artifacts from predecessor railroads that together provide a fascinating look into the growth of rail transportation across the eastern United States.

Norfolk and Western originated as a nine-mile single-track line in 1838 to connect Petersburg and City Point (now Hopewell), Virginia. In the years to follow, more than 200 railroad companies were built, merged, reorganized, and consolidated until the company merged with Southern Railway in 1982 to create Norfolk Southern. Since then, Norfolk Southern has grown to become one of the nation's largest freight railroads and premier transportation companies. In total, the archives represent the history of Norfolk and Western and its predecessor companies.

"Railroads have played a critical role in the expansion of both passenger travel and commercial transportation in the United States," said VMHC President & CEO Jamie Bosket. "With the addition of the Norfolk and Western collection, the VMHC now houses one of the most significant railroad archives in the U.S. We're thrilled to preserve this iconic history and to make it publicly available to students and teachers, researchers, and railroad enthusiasts."

A \$750,000 grant by Norfolk Southern allows the VMHC to digitize, catalog and preserve the collection. As part of the donation, Norfolk Southern created a special fund to allow the VMHC to hire interns from under-represented communities to support the museum's work annually for the next five years, beginning the fall of the 2022 academic semester.

Among the historic materials in the archives are publicity materials including radio program scripts and posters, timetables, and rolling stock records as well as advertisements, contracts, an extensive collection of photographs, and construction plans for rail stations and yards.

The Virginia Museum of History & Culture is owned and operated by the Virginia Historical Society - a private, non-profit organization established in 1831. The historical society is the oldest cultural organization in Virginia, and one of the oldest and most distinguished history organizations in the nation.

For use in its state history museum and its renowned research library, the historical society cares for a collection of nearly nine million items representing the ever-evolving story of Virginia. The Museum is located at 428 N Arthur Ashe Boulevard, Richmond, Virginia 23220. Galleries, Store, & Café are open daily 10:00 am-5:00 pm; the Research Library is open Monday-Saturday, 10:00 am-5:00 pm. Contact Us: EMAIL: Info@VirginiaHistory.org CALL: 804.340.1800 or 800.358.8701; MAIL: PO Box 7311, Richmond, Virginia 23221. Source: (VMHC)

On February 20, MEMBERS OF MARYLAND'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION announced a \$213 million Federal grant (Federal infrastructure funds) to replace all MTA Light Rail trains with new modern railcars. (WBAL TV)

POTOMAC RAIL NEWS is published monthly by the Potomac Chapter, National Railway Historical Society, Inc., P.O. Box 235, Kensington, Maryland 20895-0235 Website: www.potomacnrhs.org

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