NEWSLETTER OF THE FORT WAYNE RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SUMMER 2016

SHORT LINES



IN THIS ISSUE

- 765 in Chicagoland Open House breaks records The "767" returns
- Society acquires Plymouth locomotive New membership manager

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765 simmers in Metra's Western Avenue yard the night of June 11th.

The highest highs, lowest lows and a nickel plated lining By Kelly Lynch, Vice President

There's a saying in railroad preservation: a steam locomotive can be the source of your highest highs and lowest lows - sometimes all in the same day. Perhaps the sentiment is common in any industry or hobby where passions run high and our profession is no exception. With that said, let's touch upon the highs first.

The journey to Chicago began late last year when the railroad historical society engaged BNSF and Amtrak - both new railroads for the 765 - about bringing the locomotive and train to the Galesburg Railroad Days. Early in 2016, plans for the 765 to operate out of Chicago's Union Station were followed up by an invitation from Metra, the largest commuter railroad in the United States to bring the 765 to town for an appearance at the annual Franklin Park Railroad Festival and to operate an excursion on Metra. These trips were special for a variety of reasons: new railroads and partners, high-speed running on track maintained for passenger trains, the potential to conduct runbys and the ability to offer open vestibules for passengers to see (and smell) the power of the 765 at speed.

Logistics and planning for excursions

always experience a certain ebb and flow influenced by countless factors - railroad traffic, employee vacations, passenger car availability, contracts, fuel arrangements, securing movements. Our operations management team scouted yards, met with officials, explored routes and negotiated a way for the 765 to penetrate the hive of Chicago railways. Operations Manager Rich Melvin details this on page 4.

Six months of work and the involvement of three railroads including the Indiana Harbor Belt and Norfolk Southern found the 765 as the star of the festival in Franklin Park on June 11th. On June 12th, the engine's speedometer cracked 70MPH for the first time in well over 20 years. By the end of the day on June 12th, over 600 people had ridden the 765 between the suburbs of Chicago and Janesville, Wisconsin and had the opportunity to watch the 765 rocket in and out of lineside towns, capped with a thunderous, exiting runby from Glen of North Glenview.

Something else made the trip to Janesville, dubbed *The Varsity*, and the Galesburg trips different, too. We announced the trips

separately, began ticket sales inside of our normal 60-day window and with no teaser announcement. While the sales increased after the Varsity, the data painted an interesting story.

Despite over 6,000 unique visits to our ticketing page, hundreds of thousands of impressions earned from social media and traditional newspaper advertising and the 765's presence on 33 billboards in the Chicagoland area, the *Galesburg Special* struggled to crest the hill.

Even with the prospect of high-speed running and open vestibules, our conclusion was that there was no shortage of interest in these trips, but that our shortened sales window had excluded people who had already made their summer plans. The average daily sales rate meant that we needed exactly 59 days to break even - let alone sell out. Our management team conducted numerous conference calls in the days after *The Varsity* to discuss the options, of which there were three:

- 1.) Reduce the number of excursions to one, which reduced costs by a small percentage. This still required a 100% sell-out rate for Saturday, which could not be guaranteed with 9 days left.
- 2.) Run both trips both days at a loss, hoping for some recuperation in our popular souvenir sales and last minute ticket sales. This option, however, would have minimized the Society's start up capital for the next year.

3.) Cancel the trips.

While taking care of our passengers and supporters is central to all of our operations, we couldn't rationalize the risk - our stewardship of the Society and the 765 come first.

In our 44 years, we've cancelled fewer than a half dozen excursions. As far as cancellations go, we were fortunate that there was no mechanical or logistical reasonit was simply a matter of timing and one that reinforced our long-held standards for announcing, marketing, selling and executing passenger excursions. There is indeed a method to the madness and time was not so forgiving.

We spent the next two weeks refunding over 400 passengers and offered a discount on future excursions. We've been doing our best to reach out to passengers whose hotel and flight plans were not refundable.

A silver - or nickel plated - lining is that our operational plans for Chicago remain in place and we've already informed our partners that we'll be revisiting the trips once again with the desire to announce early next year. We'll let our Galesburg passengers have the first opportunity to purchase and we're already engaged with Metra on how to make the most of the 765's presence in Chicago in the future.

Though some may consider it melodramatic to say hearts were broken at the cancellation, the heaviest among them were our own.



By Rich Melvin, Operations Manager

It was a busy morning in early March 2016 at my O Gauge Railroading magazine office. I was just about finished with my morning email when my cell phone rang. I answered the phone, and the voice on the other end asked if I had time to talk a little steam locomotive business. I told him, "Certainly! I always have time for that!"

The gentleman on the other end of the line introduced himself as Rob Conway, Senior Trainmaster with Metra, the Chicago area rail commuter organization. Rob wanted to know if we could bring the 765 to Chicago to help Franklin Park with their Railroad Day event and to maybe run a trip or two on their lines. He went on to tell me how he had become aware of our organization via the work we have been doing with Norfolk Southern. Rob also told me that there was a lot of enthusiasm at Metra to make this happen.

On Monday, April 4, I attended a meeting in Chicago along with two other members of our Operating Department, Zach Hall and Chuck Young. We met Rob along with a few other members of the Metra staff at their Western Avenue Yard, just a few miles out of downtown Chicago. The meeting was to be at their downtown office, which is just across the street from Chicago Union Station. Parking was much easier at Western Avenue, so we met there and planned to ride one of their commuter trains into town. After confirming that the track where Metra planned to spot the 765 for water and coal would work OK, we moved to the Western Avenue Station to board our train to downtown. We were on the "wrong" side of the tracks to reach the platform, so we had to walk cross the tracks to get there. However, this railroad is so busy that we had to wait for three trains before we could just walk across the tracks! When I commented to Rob about how close together the trains were, he told me they run 704 trains per day and carry 301,000 passengers every week! I can't get my head around numbers like that!

The meeting convened in the Metra conference room with about a dozen staff from Metra, along with reps from Iowa Pacific and the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad. Presiding over the meeting was Pete Zwolfer, Deputy Executive Director of Operations for Metra. We were only a couple of minutes into the meeting when Pete turned to me and asked, "Can you guys run 79 mph?" I replied that we could run 79 if we had to, but we'd be more comfortable at 65 to 70 mph. He thought for a moment and then said that would be OK because we would not be making any stops. After about 90 minutes, we had worked out a preliminary operating plan that worked on paper. Now we had to make it work for real.

Taking the 765 to Chicago presented some of the toughest operational issues we have ever had to solve. It

took over 6 weeks to work out the route the 765 could take to get to Metra at Western Avenue.

The first part of the move was easy. Fort Wayne to Calumet on the former NKP main got us to the outskirts of town. The shortest route from Calumet to Metra was to go west out of Calumet, into downtown Chicago, through Union Station and out the north side of the station to the Metra Western Avenue Yard. On the map, this was an easy, 18 mile move. However, Chicago is loaded with small, deck girder bridges which go over the surface streets. And the 765 would not clear most of those bridges. The width across the cylinders was the problem. We had to find another way.

I talked with the Belt Railway of Chicago, hoping they could help with an "inside" route to Western Avenue. While they wanted to help, their routes were also too constricted and the 765 would not clear any route on their railroad. Senior General Foreman Bob Saxtan at Norfolk Southern suggested I call the Indiana Harbor Belt (IHB) and talk with them. He told me that NS ran all their high and wide loads around Chicago via the IHB. He also gave me a contact there...Carl Barneyback. I decided to give Carl a call.

Working with Carl and the IHB proved to be a very pleasant experience. Carl had heard we were coming and had already figured out a route that would get us to Metra. However, instead of an easy 18 miles, this was a 46 mile route around the south side of Chicago! It sounds crazy, but this was the only route that the 765 would clear. So we made the appropriate arrangements with Carl and the IHB to make this move.

In the meantime, lots of planning was going on at METRA. There were turning moves to consider to get everything pointed the right way. The 765 had to be facing east for Frankin Park's event, but she had to face west for our excursion. There was coal to spot for loading, fire hydrants to check out and one more wrinkle that was a first for us. Once we got the train to the yard, Metra ran the whole thing through their wash rack! The train had just come from several weekends behind the 611 and was dirty from those runs. But there was no time for VMT or NS to clean the train in Virginia before it had to move to Chicago. This was just one more little detail that comes up in planning an excursion like this.

The big weekend rolled around and on Saturday we moved to Franklin Park, Illinois for a day on static display there. Franklin Park holds a Railroad Day celebration every year, and the 765 was a huge draw. The crowds were large as hundreds of folks used the steps placed by the cab so they could get a look inside the 765's cab. Barrett F. Pederson, Mayor of Franklin Park, was very helpful on



this project. He arranged for a sizable donation to the Society from the various corporate sponsors of the event to cover our costs for this static display day.

On
Sunday we ran
an excursion
on Metra to
Janesville,
Wisconsin.
However, the
railroad in
Janesville is not

Metra, it is the Wisconsin & Southern, a Watco property. Zach, Chuck, Wayne York and I traveled up there on our trip to Chicago to scope out that area and confirm we could get around the wye there. We also determined that the railroad layout was suitable for getting lunches on board for everyone while there. Iowa Pacific has an ongoing business

765

relationship with the Wisconsin and Southern Railroad which permitted us to use the line.

Metra runs commuter trains on the weekends, but on very precise schedules. If one of their trains is late by even a minute or two, problems are created. Our excursion schedule was planned out to the minute. I'm proud to say that the entire 765 crew worked together to keep us on schedule, all day. In order to stay on schedule, the 765 had to stretch her legs just a bit, running at 70-72 mph for several stretches on this Metra main. Our Magnificent Machine lived up to her reputation, handling that 19-car train at 70+ mph with ease.

Running these trips on Metra was a very unique experience. Everyone we worked with at Metra was 100% focused on making these trips a success. It was an opportunity for us to make some new friends in the industry and sewed some seeds for the future. In his report to Metra corporate management, Senior Trainmaster Rob Conway said, "The 765 performed flawlessly and handled the 19 car train with ease. The Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society maintained their reputation for their commitment to professionalism and safety."

This was a tough, demanding weekend, yet our crew came through as real pros...as they always do. Here's a tip of my hat to all my 765 crew mates, our excursion staff and the souvenir sales staff for a job very well done.

4



A number of events during the last operating season left us with a lot of work during the past winter. An increasingly stressed and worn left side sheet was providing more leaking stay bolts each season. In Pennsylvania a flue began to leak seriously and was replaced but left us wondering if there were others. Upon consideration of these facts we decided to replace much of the left side sheet (a project that was last done in the 1980's) and inspect the flues. While no additional likely leaks were noted in the flues a couple of the tubes looked a bit suspect. These tubes had been over rolled during past efforts to get them to stop leaking and had some other issues. In any case replacing them and beginning the 1472-day inspection process was deemed the safest course. To replace the flues the super heater units needed to be removed and as long as they were out we took the time to carefully re-inspect and repair the units in need of repair.

First, however, we put a much needed floor in the building. This has proved to be a great benefit and even though it slowed and made the 765 repair work a bit more stressful it will be a great benefit.

The side sheet work started just after Christmas. The suspect area was cut out and the surrounding area inspected. After several revisions of just what we wanted to replace staybolts were ordered, new side sheet material was obtained and tools were dug out of storage or ordered. Gary Bensman directed the work which involved laying out and forming the new sheet. Holes were drilled for staybolts and stay tubes then the sheet was welded into place. Staybolt holes were tapped, new bolts screwed in and driven up, stay tubes rolled in and at the bottom rivets were driven to hold the sheet at the mud ring. Most winters that would have been a major project and accomplishment.

Then we started on the flues. The first step was removing the superheater units followed by the flues and tubes. The interior of the boiler was sandblasted cleaned and inspected. New flues and tubes ordered. The new floor allowed us to stack the flues and superheaters in the building but left not enough room to work on both.

The first part of the project was a bit of a change in the rear flue sheet itself. When we made this piece during the last 1472-day inspection some of the tube spacing was a bit close. We were able to swedge some tubes reducing the hole size in a portion of the sheet making the area between holes a bit larger and stronger. Once this was in place the flues and tubes were measured, cut and inserted in the flue sheets and rolled into place. Due to careful management of the project we ended up with the same number of holes in We also started working on the rods and valve gear. Several bearings were worn and needed to be replaced. Some bearings were loose in the valve gear and some of the bearings were failing. This project was supervised and largely done by Jason Sobcynski. The original roller bearings in the valve gear were not available any longer, so Jason made up plain bearing substitutes, following old railroad practice. Jason spent a lot of time working on truing up the pins on the drivers to make the new bearings fit correctly. The result was that the engine's rods and valve gear worked much better than it has for years with little heat generated in running and less noise.

Once the flues were in the superheater rebuild project got underway concurrently with some finish work in the firebox, and the rod work. Units were carefully inspected, bad sections of piping replaced, then the units were hydro tested to insure there were no leaks. About three full weeks of inspection and testing were needed to complete this project. All were reinstalled in the engine over a couple of weekends. Eventually the front end of the locomotive was put back together, sealed up and then we put a fire in the firebox. For the first time since last fall the 765 began raising steam pressure.

The test fire went well with only a few tweaks to the items worked on this past winter needed. A test run was made to Leipsic, Ohio to test out the running gear work. That also went off without a hitch. With the repairs and tests behind us the 765 was ready to make a splash in Chicago.

Many other small projects were completed and progress on others is needed. We will be doing a lot of work this coming winter. The flue installation started the clock on our next 1472-day inspection, but there is more work to do to complete that process. This will give the engine another 15 years, starting June of 2016, of operating license; with proper maintenance of course.



7



The Society recently added a new locomotive to its collection: a 50 ton Plymouth diesel electric. The locomotive was donated to the Society by the estate of a Richard Nourse who lived in Delaware, Ohio, just north of Columbus. His passion was trains, but he was not content to simply operate the large collection of Lionel equipment that he had housed in an old Big Four freight house. So, he decided to acquire some full size equipment.

His collection included a business car, diner, coach, caboose, 50 ton Plymouth, and also a smaller Plymouth. He was able to operate the equipment several times each year on about 1,000 feet of industrial track that served an agricultural supplier. The annual Christmas event was a big hit with the children because they not only got a train ride but a small present as well.

Wayne York became aware of the impending sale from Derek Thomas of Stout Auctions and told them that we would take the locomotive as a donation if it didn't sell, which it did not. Earlier this year Tom Nitza and Dave Cox went to Delaware to assess the condition of the locomotive. The locomotive was basically intact but was missing the bell and horn. About ten years ago the low voltage wiring was completely replaced and it was in great condition. In short order, we came up with a two page "to do" list.

The move to Fort Wayne cost \$11,000 and went smoothly. R. J. Corman, a company that normally does railroad wreck clearing, did the lifting at origin to get the locomotive on a truck for transportation. A second tractor trailer hauled the locomotive trucks. In Fort Wayne Martin International provided the two cranes to unload the locomotive and place it on our track.

Right now the locomotive is in the shop and we're completing the items necessary to start the diesel engines and run the locomotive under its own power. Once that's



completed we'll complete work as time and funding permits. In the future there is one item on the check list that will be expensive: getting all eight wheels turned to restore the flanges to proper thickness. Over the years they've worn and are fairly thin but are still acceptable for occasional light use. Although it might be possible to turn them while they're on the locomotive, the design of the trucks may prevent that. But, that's a project for another day.

The Plymouth Locomotive Company began production in 1910 under a different name. They originally produced trucks and cars. The first locomotive was built in 1912 and soon after that they ceased automobile production and concentrated on locomotives. Later, the Chrysler company bought the rights to the Plymouth name. The company was sold in the late 1990's and moved to Bucyrus, Ohio, where production ceased in the early 2000's.

The company built over 7,500 locomotives, most of them fairly small and with a mechanical drive. In later years they did build some diesel electrics, like the one that we have, but the single traction motor on each truck drives a gear box which in turn powers a chain to each axle. Our unit is a model DE 50: Diesel Electric, 50 tons. The largest locomotive built by Plymouth weighed in at 120 tons.

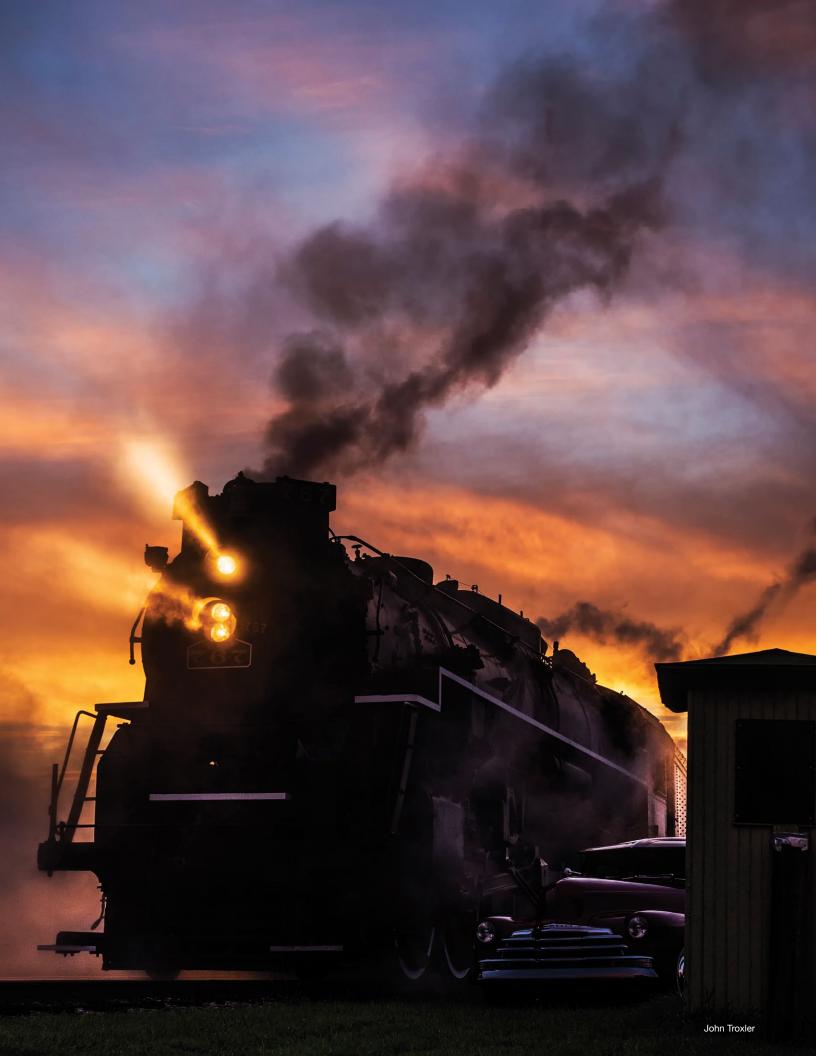
We'll use the Plymouth as a shop switcher and backup for our Davenport. Although the Davenport has proven to be reliable, we would lose a great deal of income if we were unable to run all the Santa trips because of a break down. Now, we have an alternate locomotive, and one that comes from a company with an interesting history. We don't know who the locomotive was originally sold to but we're continuing to research that. The Plymouth earned its stripes in helping our 44-tonner 1231 re-rail the steam locomotive in August proving you can never have too many diesels in the stable.

REEFERS, COME HOME: Jim Lesiak, member, and owner of Over The Top Construction, spent much of this year preparing and moving our vintage refrigerated cars from Ryan Road to trackage near our facility. Landlocked since the 1990's at the 765's original restoration site, these cars will be cosmetically restored and used for storage. The cars were finally brought to live rail again in mid-August, in the rain. These "yellow-bellies" were what helped the Nickel Plate turn a profit in the 1940s and 50s and will look at home behind the 765.









2016 Open House yields surprises big and small By Kelly Lynch, Vice President

There wasn't any one particular moment in the planning for this year's open house that promised it would be nearly the biggest event that we've ever had. We just knew it would be a little different.

The first change saw that the picnic typically held for members expanded into an all-day affair that we called Members Day. Our members would be welcomed to attend the event, get access to the 765 or 1231 for cab rides, attend a night photo session, enjoy dinner in our newly upgraded shop, get in a group photo session and more. In the past, we've had an average of 80 register for the picnic. This year, we had 252 people attend!

The second change is obvious when you look at the 765 - the Mars Light has returned. Though lauded by some and detracted by others, the early 1950s appliance hasn't been used on the engine in over 20 years. While the board had approved its reinstallation years ago, the project was never a high priority. We had thought to apply the Mars Light to the 765 for its Chicago runs, but mechanical projects that actually enabled the operation of the engine were far more important.

In July, we determined that if the Mars Light was going to return later in 2016, it would be the first time in many years that another cosmetic alteration could be made: turning the 765 *back* into 767.

Though many are aware that the 765 carried an alternate number during its years on display in Lawton Park, we knew that everyone who asked would learn an extra history lesson. We've posted a detailed story about the 767's career on our website (http://fwrhs.org/2016/08/ the-return-of-the-767) but the short version is that the City of Fort Wayne had asked for the 767, but the 765 had been kept indoors for most of its retirement and was selected instead. The order came to discretely renumber both locomotives and Fort Wayne got the "767" - when in reality it was the 765 in disguise. The original number was returned in 1975 during the engine's first overhaul and since then, the 767 - scrapped in 1964 - has been nothing more than a footnote. Wayne York, our excursion manager and last active founding member, had considered the intertwining stories of the two engines and realized it was the prime opportunity to briefly renumber the locomotive.

Shortly after the decision was reached, plans for a press conference were set in stone. While many could have (and some did) guess the return of the Mars Light, the number change was the biggest surprise of all. Keeping any sort of secret in rail preservation can be nothing short of a miracle.

Hosting the expanded Members Day meant we could gather as many supporters as possible into the property to be some of the first to see the engine in its temporary guise. With three days of front-page news coverage, we experienced records crowds of over 3,000 people during the open house, including 2,679 caboose riders! Our regular and overflow parking were quickly overtaken and many visitors had to park along Edgerton Road. The crowds were so extensive on Sunday that we stayed open an additional hour to accommodate caboose riders. Quick thinking by our volunteers kept traffic moving, caboose rides caboosing, and all manner of visitors through the vintage passenger cars on display and around the "767" to enjoy periodic locomotive demonstrations. We also made some noise about the Headwaters Junction project which we'll touch upon in the next newsletter.

Just as the opening article in this newsletter touched upon, the Open House was cause for both celebration... and the opposite. Just before noon on Sunday, the "767" walked off the curve of our north track and derailed all but one driver due to a broken gauge rod between the ties. Our crew quickly banked the fire, shut the engine down, separated the engine and tender and set about preparing the engine to be re-railed. As we gathered wood blocks and tools, we explained the finer points of re-railing to the constantly present crowds. The cause was a broken gauge rod in the curve - one of the last places you'd hope to derail four driving wheels and an engine truck. (The editor would like to politely remind commentators who think the number 767 is bad luck be reminded that the 765 has managed to derail a time or two on other railroads due to similar track conditions.)

The crew worked into darkness Sunday evening, having waited for the storied diesel no. 1231 to come to the 765's rescue. Adding the newly acquired Plymouth locomotive to the mix did little to help as the process simply chewed up our less-than-satisfactory wood cribbing. The decision was made to revisit the engine the following Saturday with new materials and plenty of manpower.

The next weekend, a crew of a dozen volunteers descended back on the stranded locomotive. The effort was aided by equipment on loan from Midwest Railway Preservation Society and assistance from Over The Top Construction. Between 8AM and 2:30PM, our members endured heat, rain and soggy donuts to guide the locomotive back onto high ground.

Gravity and the curve re-railed and derailed the engine truck three times during the process, but with some huffing and puffing from the diesel doubleheader and our brave crew, the "767" was back in the shop and over the pit by 3:00PM. An inspection revealed a few sanders and a safety bar for the brake hangers needed adjustment. All-inall, these few days in August were tremendously successful, challenging and rewarding for all concerned.



1955 (AND 1964) ALL OVER AGAIN

From the left, the 767 breaks the ribbon opening up the Nickel Plate elevation in 1955 and 61 years later the number reappears for the second time on 765 to honor the engine's borrowed identity from its time on display in Lawton Park. James Donohue and Andrew Wartman reveal the new number and Mars Light to the public for the first time, Bill Otter, President, welcomes the crowd during the press conference, Kelly Lynch, Vice-President shares the history lesson of the number change and how it lead to the 765's preservation, and John Urbahns, Executive Vice-President of Greater Fort Wayne, breaks a bottle of champaigne over the engine's coupler. At immediate left, two visitors pass the engine under Zach Hall's watchfull eye before the "767" magnet is applied to the cab wall. Opposite below, members gather for the family photo during our first Members Day.





New Membership Management

By Kelly Lynch, Vice President

When you begin life as a grass roots organization, you tend to not mind working in the dirt. That changed this year with our organization's new floor, but improvements are also being made elsewhere.

Over the years we've welcomed thousands of members into the railroad historical society, with countless donating their time and treasure throughout the years. While our regular volunteers number between 50-70 people, our nearly 1,000 members and donors often help our heavy lifting from afar. Since the New River Days, we've been growing a master mailing list of over 20,000 people, and in recent memory an email list of nearly 30,000. In the past several years we've made a concentrated effort to gather member emails and better refine our membership and donor records.

For well over a decade, Mike Guptail has handled processing memberships while also administrating our finances. In 2014, Mike handed the treasurer duties to Brian Christophel. In 2016, membership management has become a full-time job under member Brad Morocco. For a while, Mike was doing triple-duty among his responsibilities as treasurer, membership manager and souvenir sales and we owe him a great debt of thanks for handling these tasks. You'll continue to find him selling our popular wares in souvenir tents and concession cars at an excursion near you.

Brad joined the FWRHS in 2012 and has since joined our ranks as a car host and engine crew – performing both duties at least once in the same 12-hour span. Brad brings to our organization a background in customer service and a strong desire to help update and elevate our membership engagement.

Beginning later this year and in 2017, you'll start to see numerous changes in how we process new memberships and renewals and communicate with donors and members. We've maintained a reasonably updated Members Area on our website and will begin updating this more frequently and improving our records to collect better data on member and donor retention and overall develop a better way of involving our members in our preservation and operation work among other things. You can check out the revamped Members Page now at fwrhs.org/members-area.

There are many administrative duties performed daily behind the scenes of the railroad historical society and if you've had an interest in helping behind the scenes, in the shop or during trips, we encourage you to fill out our Volunteer Orientation Form at fwrhs.org/volunteer.

Additionally, if you have suggestions, comments and feedback for us, you can send them digitally at lynch@ fwrhs.org or by letter at our mailing address. You can also welcome Brad or direct questions about your membership via morocco@fwrhs.org.

Before we got: a reminder that our Annual Meeting will be held on November 5th, so mark your calendars and send those overalls to the dry-cleaners. We'll be sending invites soon.

CORPORATE MEMBERS





DEVELOPMENT



The Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne provides a 20% match for all donations to the Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society. Donations can be made online or by mail:

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FORT WAYNE RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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Visit us at fwrhs.org for breaking news and excursion updates.

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