NEWSLETTER OF THE FORT WAYNE RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPRING 2017

SHORT LINES



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NEWSLETTER OF THE FORT WAYNE RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SHORT LINES



The photographer's sons watch the 765 roar through Deerfield, last June.

2016: A Year in Review

By Bill Otter, President

transitioned away from the 21st Century Steam had to do something that is a true rarity for Program with Norfolk Southern and we set out to pursue new partnerships and venues for the primarily due to a very short window for sales. 765.

2016 saw us return to the Chicago area for our first public trips there in over 25 years thanks to Metra, the fourth largest commuter railroad operation in the country. Their support of the for that trip in the normal 90-day time frame 765 was second-to-none.

The 765 headlined a local festival in Franklin Park and operated an excursion from Glenview, Illinois to Janesville, Wisconsin with Metra as our primary partner. The logistics in putting the trip together also represented one of the biggest challenges we've faced, involving no more than four different railroads.

In the end, it worked out perfect and provided us the opportunity to operate the train at 70+ miles per hour. The 765 performed perfectly at that speed and provided a fine with Metra operation, we have been invited to testament to the abilities of our mechanical and operating crews.

planned that would have taken us from translates to well over 3000 visitors in three days. downtown Chicago to Galesburg, Illinois for If you attended, I don't have to tell you what

2016 represented a big change for us as we the town's Railroad Days. As you know, we our organization in that we cancelled the event

> I want to qualify that by saying that due to the incredibly detailed negotiations that were required to obtain all the necessary permissions, we were not able to start advertising ticket sales that we use. You can read more about this decision in last year's Short Lines available in our online members area.

> On a positive note, our operations model is so fine-tuned that we were able to make that decision with a clear conscious-knowing that the numbers simply were not working. Our primary responsibility is always the safety of our passengers, followed by good business decisions to protect the Society and its assets.

> As a result of the successful partnership return once again.

Our Open House broke all records last We had another weekend excursion year. We had over 2,600 caboose riders which

REVENUE

Operating Revenue - \$329,212 Donations and Memberships - \$61,552 Headwaters Junction Grants - \$50,000

EXPENSES

NKP 765 Repairs and Maintenance - \$228,917 Plymouth - **\$12,834** Building, Grounds and Track Misc. Expenses - **\$61,457**

2017 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

William Otter, President Kelly Lynch, Vice President Brian Christophel, Treasurer Rich Brinkley, Secretary Joe Knapke, Crew Chief & Volunteer Coordinator Rick Popp, Merchandise Manager Chuck Young, Assistant Operations Manager Wayne York, Excursion Manager Steve Winicker, Mechanical Manager **EX. OFFICIO MANAGERS** Zach Hall, Operations Manager Brad Morocco, Membership Manager Tom Nitza, Facilities and On-Site Operations Manager

the parking situation was like. We parked vehicles on every square foot of available ground and sold a record amount of merchandise.

We hosted our first ever Members Picnic on Saturday evening and it was a pleasure to host this inside the building on our new concrete floor. Being able to work on a flat, solid surface - let alone host an event like we did - has been something we have dreamed about for many years.

We finished the year back at one of our favorite venues, the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad (CVSR) in the Cleveland area. The trains were sold out with over 4,000 riders and we broke our previous record for merchandise sales over two weekends. Undoubtedly our souvenir sales are a major contributor to the organization's bottom line. CVSR remains a great partner for the 765 and we have something special planned for our return this year.

During our time there the 765 appeared as "767," paying homage to the number it wore on display in Lawton Park and two other milestones were met: Troy Kleman, one of our youngest crew members, proposed to his girlfriend (she said yes) and Operations Manager Rich Melvin made his last run at the throttle of the 765 and formally retired from our engineer roster after 30 years of service. We owe him a debt of thanks.

One very significant point that I need to make about our operations at CVSR is regarding how we got there. Historically we have headed east out of Bellevue on Norfolk Southern and arrived at the CVSR from the south via the Wheeling and Lake Erie. This year we wanted to simplify our deadhead move and accordingly we approached CSX to see if we could pass from Norfolk Southern to their railroad and arrive at the CVSR from the north. We were fortunate to have the blessing from the upper levels of CSX management to accomplish this move.

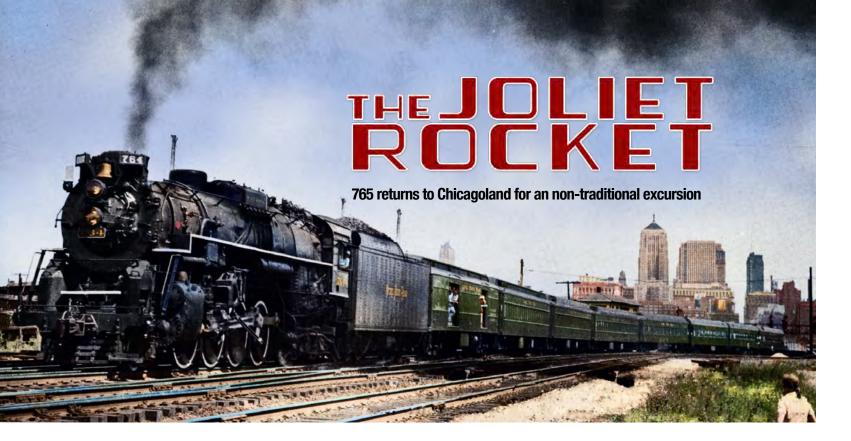
This year also saw an addition to our diesel fleet with making this year possible.

a 55-ton Plymouth diesel being donated to the Society. We moved the engine to our facility from the Delaware, Ohio area on a couple of flatbeds. Tom Nitza has been leading a crew in the effort to bring this locomotive up to spec by overhauling all of its various systems. It will be a great addition to our fleet and a solid backup to no. 1231, our center cab diesel switcher that has become our workhorse.

Last October, our newly formed Operations Committee met to begin planning 2017 and in mid-March we announced the first of the 765's trips for 2017. In addition to myself, Brian Christophel, Treasurer, and Wayne York, Excursion Manager, the team now includes new Operations Manager Zach Hall with Ray Kammer, Chris Lantz, and Chuck Young as Assistant Operations Managers; Brad Morocco and Greg Marck, Passenger Services Supervisors; and Kelly Lynch, Marketing and Event Planning. Of the 10 member team, well over half are under 40 years of age. This is very important to our succession plan.

During our annual election last November, Secretary Rich Brinkley was formally elected to the board of directors. Earlier this year, long time director Henry "Hank" German retired after serving over four terms on the board and Chuck Young was nominated in his place. We thank Henry for his many years of service as a director, volunteer machinist and friend.

These directors and managers will help our organization continue to achieve its goals this year. Integral to that success is your support. In the opening months of 2017, we received a record number of donations and membership renewals. For the first time in over a decade, we reached far back to welcome lapsed members back into the fold. We hope al of you can join us for our second annual Members Day on August 19th. For each of you reading this, we extend you a heartfelt thanks for helping support us last year and for



TRAINS Magazine has called it a "bold and risky, move" and we believe our upcoming trips between Ioliet, Illinois and Chicago's LaSalle Street Station is a natural next since 1967 and is step in the steam excursion industry.

On Father's Day Weekend, we'll be revisiting our partnership with Metra to operate four, high-speed roundtrips into downtown Chicago on June 17th and 18th. While operating in the area presents the usual assortment of hurdles, an event on one of the busiest commuter railroads in the country offers as many obstacles as it does rewards. Even with finely-groomed mainline trackage and copious stations and platforms, it's challenging to consider an all-day excursion like the ones we're used to. Unlike many of the markets in which we operate, train rides are not so much a novelty in the Chicago region, so we asked ourselves: what will make an excursion behind the 765 different? While the immediate answer is obvious, we wanted to go a little further. Any occasion that the 765 hits the road is a cause for celebration - all we needed was the right venue for the party.

Passengers will climb aboard our train at Joliet's developing Transportation Center, experience a photo runby, enjoy select open vestibules to see, hear and smell the 765 at speed, and arrive at LaSalle Street Station for a 2-hour layover featuring live entertainment, brunch or dinner themed appetizers, and craft cocktails specially prepared at the event.

As the station where the "red-carpet treatment" was enjoyed by passengers aboard the New York Central's 20th Century Limited, LaSalle Street is an ideal venue for a private party with the 765. We are extremely excited to partner with Metra and its supportive, standout employees once again. As a bonus, passenger will also have the opportunity to ride

aboard the 20th Century Limited's Pullman observation car, "Hickory Creek," which hasn't visited LaSalle Street Station

one of the finest preserved passenger cars around. Ain't we got fun?

As of this writing, over 1,300 tickets had sold in the first seven days first. Members were able to purchase tickets early and get a 10% discount on economy coach tickets. We have also revamped the way we advertise

these trips online and created a new section of our website specifically to better describe and visualize the experience for new and returning passengers. If you haven't already, visit excursions.fortwaynerailroad.org.

LaSalle Street was the main terminal for the New York Central, Rock Island and Nickel Plate Road and while its headhouse was demolished in the early 1980s, the station is still served by Metra's Rock Island District. As one of the few mainline excursions in the country featuring runbys, open vestibules and countless opportunities to enjoy the locomotive, we're eagerly looking forward to the opportunity to provide joy, entertainment and education to thousands

Improved Santa Train experience delights over 5,000 passengers

By Kelly Lynch, Vice President

Over the years, our Santa Train has become as popular as the excursions behind the 765. Thanks to the Saint Nick, we'll carry as many passengers aboard two historic cabooses as we will on our excursion trains. While the value of a ride with Santa is unchanged, we've come a long way from making passengers endure a two hour wait on a dirt floor.

Online ticketing has not only guaranteed immediate sell-outs for these trips, but has reduced wait times to barely ten minutes. The efficiency of these operations has been so smooth, we initially thought something was wrong due to a lack of a line.

A little ambiance and a few amenities went a long way to adding value for our customers. With some dramatic and selective lighting, a fog machine, Christmas lights and holiday cheer, we transformed our shop into Santa's Workshop. Complimenting the efforts were Bravas Food's hot dog cart and Mocha Lounge's coffee truck, which lived in the shop throughout the month and provided visitors with a variety of treats and refreshments. With the new concrete floor and additional ticketing and scheduling improvements, it was important to us that the Santa Train was more than "just a train ride." (If you're sensing a trend here, you're not wrong.)

As demand for tickets rose, we added three more operating days, (the first time we've operated these trips on Sundays) expanded the hours, welcomed over 5,000 passengers and raised over \$30,000. Reviews were overwhelmingly positive and our volunteers have only recently recovered.

2017 EVENTS

OPEN HOUSE - AUGUST 18th-20th MEMBERS DAY & PICNIC - AUGUST 19th AGE OF STEAM TOUR -SEPTEMBER 16th & 23rd PUMPKIN TRAIN - OCTOBER TBD **SANTA TRAIN DECEMBER 2nd-3rd DECEMBER 9th-10th** DECEMBER 16th-17th

of over 3,000 visitors, our events at home are steadily becoming major attractions in their own right. The success of these events means we're always in need of volunteers! Keep an eye out for a new type of operation this fall as we expand to offer a Pumpkin Train.

If you're interested in helping out this year, Following our record-breaking open house attendance please contact Joe Knapke at knapke@fwrhs.org.



Railroad Society intercedes for Nickel Plate sibling



Northwest Indiana is as rust-belt as it gets. Nestled in the shadow of Chicago and cozied up against a tangle of steel mills and railroads, it's as cold as Lake Michigan winters and as weathered as Hoosier Limestone. The only skyscrapers worth mention are smokestacks and there's not a place you can stand that is absent the quiet rattle of a freight train. In a town where railroading is as ubiquitous as dirt, a monument not unlike the 765 has lingered in a city park.

In 1955, the Calumet Railroad Community Committee published an open letter in the local newspaper to the Nickel Plate Road requesting a steam locomotive for display in the city of Hammond. At the time, steam still had a few years left in service, but traffic had slowed enough to warrant the retirement of some of the fleet. A candidate emerged: Nickel Plate Road *Mikado* no. 624. Built in 1922 and looking every bit like a smaller *Berkshire*, the 624 made an impressive display, albeit briefly. The novelty of the engine's display and open access subjected it to vandalism within a few months.

30 years later the vandalism and elements had taken their toll. A local effort was organized to refurbish the 624 and its asbestos was successfully abated and the locomotive and tender were repainted. By then the gauges, plates and headlight number board had been stolen. The windows and glass in the cab had also been broken the bell was soon removed for safe-keeping in the nearby Civic Center.

In 2007, the Northwest Indiana Railroad Preservation Society briefly took stewardship of the 624, but disbanded several years later. Railroad author Ron Ziel had famously written in the 1970s that the 624 looked like "200-tons of junk" - and in the 2000's, it was becoming increasingly harder to disagree.

In railroad preservation, there are the crown jewels of museums and tourist railroads, the stuffed-and-mounted and periodically maintained displays and then there are the locomotives living on the fringe, their futures uncertain if not dire. The 624 was rapidly earning its spot among the latter.

Late last September, we received word that the city was exploring options for the 624. Numerous informal inquiries had been made throughout the years and gone unanswered, but within days Hammond City Parks and Recreation Administrator Mark Heintz responded and a meeting was set up shortly thereafter.

In mid-October, Zach Hall and I met with Heintz at the display site to assess the condition of the locomotive. The disheveled 624, pushed to the end of its display track to accommodate a reefer and caboose added in the 1970s, had sunk flange-deep into the earth. Not fifteen minutes into our visit, Zach motioned to the steps of a dilapidated crossing guard tower that was on display.

There at the steps of the crossing tower on display sat the Mars Light, with a clean, black paint job and reflective plexiglass. Next to it, the Pyle National headlight. Both left out in the open.

I may have used colorful language.

We rapidly collected these items, found the numberboards in the reefer and stowed them away in Heintz's office.

I hadn't laid eyes upon the locomotive since 2013 during an earlier site visit with another Society member. Upon hearing the results of our recent visit, this member made an offer to sponsor a rescue mission for 624.



Our time in Hammond was brief, but within two weeks we secured over half a dozen letters of endorsement from numerous organizations and friends in the industry and wrote a formal proposal to the City of Hammond offering that our organization would facilitate the removal and renovation of Nickel Plate Road no. 624 and secure new homes for the South Shore caboose and Milwaukee Road refrigerator car.

Not long after, Zach and I returned to make a presentation to the city's Parks and Recreation board and were well received. The board relayed that numerous proposals had been floated for 624, including its relocation and inclusion in a brewery and railroad station renovation project that never materialized. While the previous proposals had been well-intentioned, they were generally start-up in nature with no cash flow and the 624 had only continued to languish. We could never guarantee the 624 would return to Hammond, but consensus was that with all the outstanding obligations the city had, there was no guaranteed respite for the "200-tons of junk" after 61 years. Heintz even mentioned a letter the city had received from the Nickel Plate in the early 1960s reminding the city that a condition of its donation was to keep the engine well maintained!

As the 624 had been transferred to the Hammond Parks Department, their approval and the blessing of Mayor Thomas McDermott was all that was needed to proceed. By the end of December, an agreement had been reached to remove the equipment by the end of the following year. While we can't be sure of it, this may have been one of the fastest arrangements of its type in recent preservation history.

As of this writing, the 624 has already been prepped for removal from the park, which will occur sometime later this summer. All of its major appliances have been removed and the engine and tender separated. After numerous offerings to area museums and preservation groups, the South Shore caboose was relocated to the home of John and Barney Gramling in Ashley, Indiana where the father-and-son team restore tank engines for use on tourist railroads. The reefer will remain with 624 and be utilized for parts and storage. Though the tires show a lot of wear, the smokebox was reportedly installed shortly before retirement.

We are extremely fortunate to have been able to far cry from Lake intervene on 624's behalf and have reached an agreement Michigan winters.

with the donor wherein they will take possession of the locomotive and manage its cosmetic or operational restoration pending a full mechanical assessment. In return, the Society will provide technical support and the locomotive will be made available for any educational, operational and display opportunities in the future.

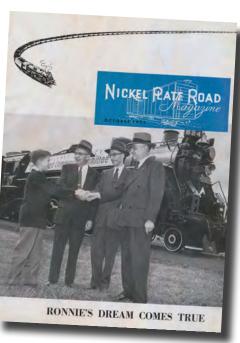
The restoration of 624 also means that Headwaters Junction will have a major steam artifact on hand for educational display and interpretive use when the 765 is out on the road. As our long time friends and supporters know, much of the revenue the Society generates is immediately re-invested into the 765 and this arrangement guarantees the 624's salvation will come expediently and without being a drain on the Society's resources or take up valuable realestate at our shop.

We extend our thanks to the City of Hammond, Mayor McDermott, Jr., Mark Heintz, and the Hammond Board of Commissioners. In addition, thanks are due to our numerous supporters in the railroad preservation community who wrote letters on the effort's behalf. You can view the letters online at nickelplate624.org where the project will be chronicled.

For the time being, our donor wishes to remain anonymous, though it goes without saying their sponsorship of this project has been absolutely critical. No inquiries, visits or proposals would have made without their generous backing.

We'll continue to keep you posted on the project through the Members Area on our website, e-mail newsletter updates and in *Short Lines*.

One day, the 765 and 624 may rest side-by-side in a roundhouse in Fort Wayne. For the 624, it will be a far cry from Lake Michigan winters.





earns grant from Steel Dynamics

By Chris Lantz, Project Manager

The Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society, Inc. has officially started Project 358, an effort to restore our historic SD9 class diesel locomotive. Already the project has earned a \$3,000 grant in January from Steel Dynamics, Inc. SDI is one of the Society's ongoing corporate sponsors and their contribution is a great way to kick off the project!

Our goal is to restore the locomotive's cosmetic appearance as it ran on the Nickel Plate Road and eventually return it to operational condition. Built in 1957 for the Nickel Plate Road by Electro-Motive, no. 358 was constructed to replace the Berkshires and other steam power for the Nickel Plate Road. With 16 cylinders and six axles, it was originally assigned to the W&LE district hauling coal, the engines were eventually found in all kinds of service. By the 1980's the engines were used in yard and local trains around Bellevue, Ohio. It operated for the railroad until the early 2000s and adapted for remote control use and later placed in storage. In 2010, it was donated to our organization. The locomotive requires about \$100,000 worth of mechanical work and replacement parts. You can donate directly to our project at fortwaynerailroad.org/donate.

The scope of work will include removing surface rust on the car body doors, cleaning, painting and installing door latches. Preliminary body work has already begun and initial inspections reveal the engine to be a good candidate for restoration. Between the 358 and the 765, we can now interpret the important story behind the transition from steam to diesel and the technological and cultural implications of both. In addition, it would provide us useful horsepower at our facility and on the 765's excursions when another locomotive is needed. We've made reasonable progress in the last several months and will continue to chip away until the 358's black and yellow stripes return. Please contact me if you're interested in working on 358 or donating to the project at lantz@fwrhs.org.





Inspired by art from the Nickel Plate Road's archives, the Project 358 shirt will help support the restoration effort. Get yours at fortwaynerailroad.org/gift-store

Headwaters Junction offers downtown identity

The Journal Gazette

Editor's Note: This editorial was written and published by the Journal Gazette editorial board on August 23rd, 2016. Our most recent studies demonstrate that the attraction could draw 140,000 visitors and stimulate over four million in economic activity a year.

Plenty of good ideas have surfaced as residents have brainstormed over Legacy Fund spending or offered suggestions for Regional Cities projects. But many of the ideas borrow from other communities – a water park or a San Antonio-style river walk, for example. But something unique – something intriguing – was missing.

Until now. The Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society's proposal for a new riverfront destination, Headwaters Junction, might be just the project to ramp up strong revitalization efforts already in the works and also become the kind of attraction visitors will point to with envy when they return to their own communities.

The railroad enthusiasts released concept drawings by Design Collaborative last week. They show a vintagestyle roundhouse between Harrison and Wells streets, just north of the proposed riverfront park on the north side of the St. Marys River. A rail yard park and train turntable would service an excursion railroad line to the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo. The roundhouse also would feature a 1940s-inspired restaurant and observation deck overlooking northeast Indiana's rich history. the rail yard and downtown Fort Wayne.

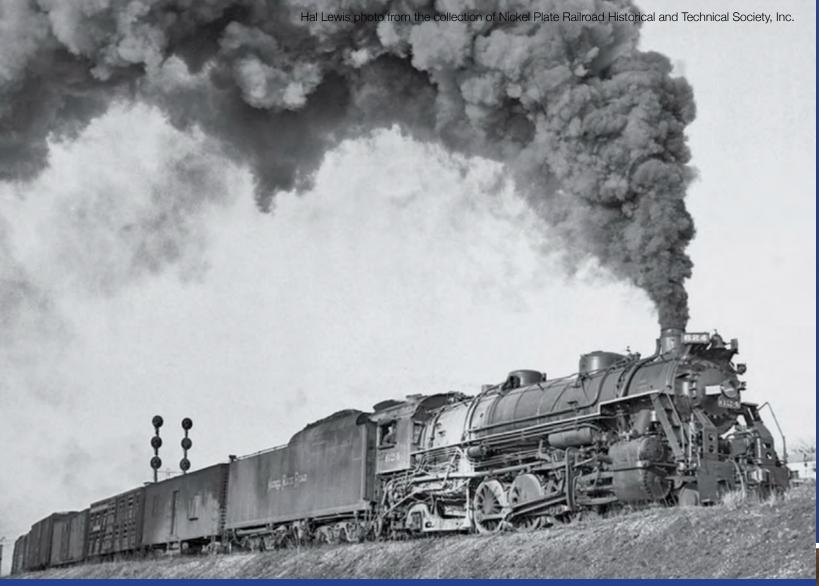
The historical society has programming ideas: regular excursions (Think "Thomas the Tank Engine"), holiday events (Think "Polar Express"), railroad camp, interactive displays, revolving exhibits and more.

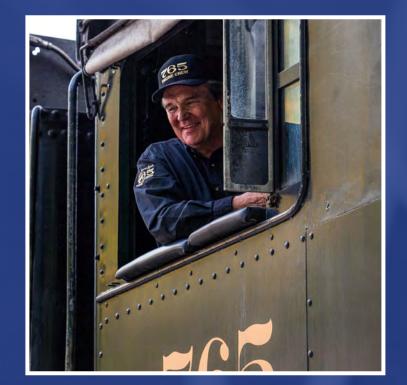
A preliminary study suggests Headwaters Junction could draw more than 140,000 visitors each year. Imagine the potential of marketing the city for conferences and regional travel if Visit Fort Wayne had a one-of-a-kind attraction to promote, particularly one linking downtown to the zoo – Fort Wayne's primary visitor draw.

Bold ideas often come with big price tags, of course. The project cost is estimated at as much as \$18 million – a daunting fundraising task for a nonprofit organization and one that must be considered in the context of other efforts already under way. But Headwaters Junction can make a strong case for support. The Railroad Historical Society's excursions on historic steam locomotive 765 sell out quickly, and the very sight and sound of the locomotive draws crowds from afar. Trains have broad appeal.

In Headwaters Junction, northeast Indiana might finally have an attraction as iconic as San Antonio's River Walk and as family friendly as a water park. Best of all, it could have an attraction unique to the region and true to









On September 25th, Richard Melvin (left) closed the curtain on 30 years of operating no. 765. Rich was involved in nearly every movement the 765 made in the last three decades and has helped establish an operating department and qualify new engineers in the process. Henry "Hank" German (right) retired from the board of directors earlier this year. Hank joined our organization during the 765's last overhaul in the early 2000s and has dedicated almost every weekend of his retirement at the shop since. We thank them both for their dedicated service and contributions to railroad preservation.

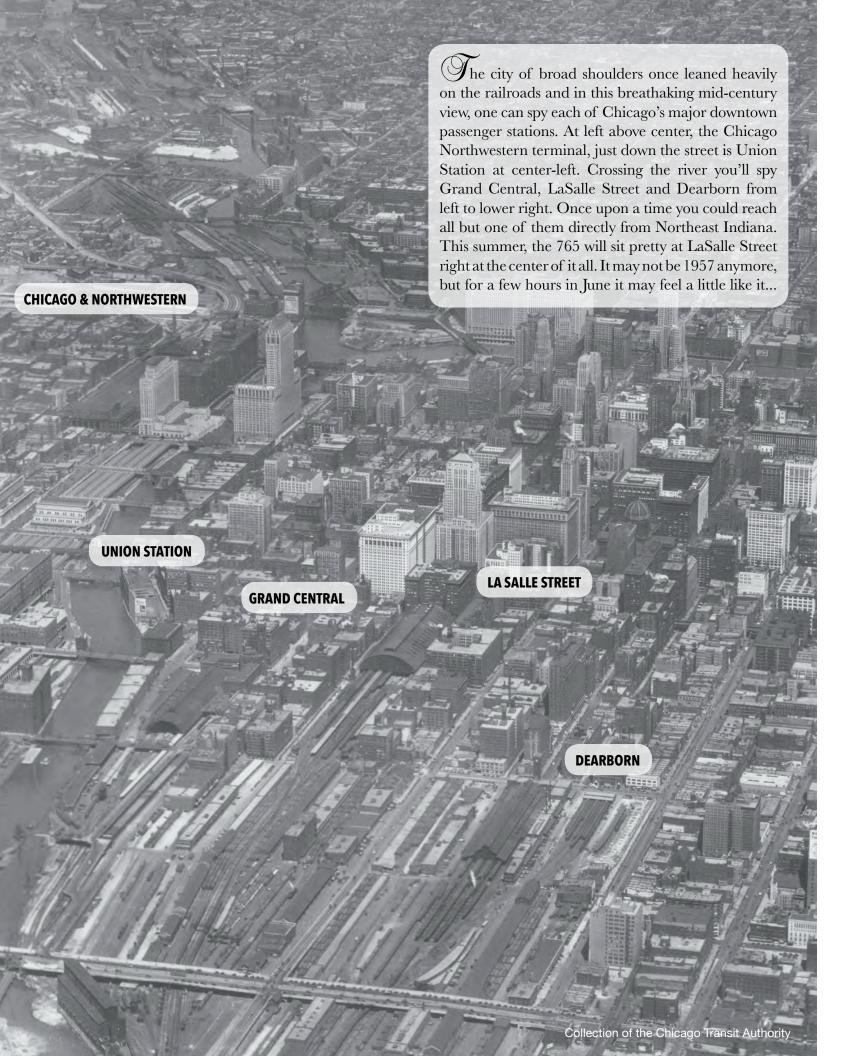




caught Nickel Plate no. 624 storming out of West Lafayette in happier days. 66 years later Zach Hall (left) works to separate the smokebox from the locomotive frame. Various other components including the smokebox door and smokestack (right) have been removed to make the engine lighter for transportation by truck later this year.



Our auxiliary tender has been out of service for 24 years and has received an extensive, wheels up renovation inside and out, including rebuilt trucks, brakes, renewed baffles, new paint and more. Having found the tool compartment in Norfolk & Western 611's "canteen" so convenient, we've installed our own (pictured above) and it'll be accessible via a small sliding door. The tender will carry 23,000 gallons of water and be numbered "767." The Society has spent over \$60,000 to restore the car and if you'd like to help us cover some of these costs, visit fortwaynerailroad.org/donate.



Positive Train Control could end mainline steam By Kelly Lynch, Vice President

Now that we have your attention, we want you to know how important Positive Train Control (PTC) is to the ongoing operation of the 765. Without it, our operating prospects grow incredibly slim. How slim? Simply put: the 765 will not operate a passenger train over Norfolk Southern, Metra or Amtrak lines without it. In addition, it likely won't be able to pull itself solo over Norfolk Southern territory just outside our shop as of July 1st, 2017.

PTC is designed to monitor the speed and location of a train and can override the controls, reduce the throttle and apply the brakes in an emergency in situations where a collision is imminent, the crew is incapacitated or a switch misaligned. This adaptation requires an on-board computer system, a wayside monitoring system and a server for information access. Per the Association of American Railroads, PTC has cost the railroad industry over \$7.9 billion in development and deployment costs.

While the 765 has a radar speedometer and cab signals, the implementation of the on-board system is relatively straightforward. Complications arise when you consider how to close the locomotive's manually operated throttle or shut off the flow of steam to the cylinders - on a steam locomotive. For a technology that is still maturing, PTC nonetheless prevents a major obstacle for our operations. Despite the uniqueness of our situation, relying on waivers is not a reasonable, long-term solution.

The Society has already shelved one weekend of trips this year because of PTC implementation. Addressing this federally mandated technological adaptation is no doubt critical to operation of the 765 and other mainline locomotives like Milwaukee Road no. 261, Norfolk & Western no. 611 and others. Our ongoing assessment of the scope and cost to outfit the 765 with PTC means that we are tasked with approximately \$220,000 for the parts, equipment and technical know-how to install. With this in mind, the Society has convened a retreat of mainline steam locomotive operators and advisors for July to discuss how to adapt PTC to steam.

Once the 765 returns from Chicago, our fundraising efforts will begin in earnest. We've identified several potential sources for partial funding, but it will be our responsibility to raise and allocate this major sum for the implementation of PTC in addition to satisfying our existing operational and mechanical costs.

If you'd like to pledge a donation, please contact me directly at lynch@fwrhs.org. We will absolutely need the support of every member if the 765 is to operate in 2018. **Can we count on you to help?**

CORPORATE MEMBERS





DEVELOPMENT



The Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne provides a 20% match for all donations to the Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society. This endowment is recommended for long term projects. Donations can be made online or by mail: 555 East Wayne Street Fort Wayne, Indiana, 46802

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FORT WAYNE RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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Publishing schedule may be adjusted to accommodate news releases. All photos by the editor unless otherwise noted. Visit us at fwrhs.org for breaking news and excursion updates. Board meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month and are open to members.

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