

# SHORT LINES

NEWSLETTER OF THE FORT WAYNE RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY | SUMMER 2018



## IN THIS ISSUE

• 2017: Year in Review • The Joliet Rocket • Positive Train Control task force assembled  
• Remembering Tom Stephens and Jerry Jacobson • Progress on Project 358



# SHORT LINES

The Rock Island Line was “a mighty fine road” once again thanks to our car attendants and train crew, enjoying a brief moment of downtime shortly before departure of the last trip of the weekend.



## Now Boarding on Track Number 7...

By Bill Otter, President

“Now boarding on Track No. 7, The Joliet Rocket!” A sound that had not been heard at the LaSalle Street Station for many decades was heard in downtown Chicago last year.

The Joliet Rocket let us recreate a piece of history with our wonderful time machine. Big Band music, period costumes and a famous station setting formed the background.

This operation represented a different approach to how we have traditionally done things in the past. We were able to provide a memorable experience and I would say it is a safe bet that we converted a few folks to join our ranks as avid fans and members.

Our Operations staff, Excursion staff, and everyone else involved in the planning and execution of this event set a new standard – even for us. From organizing the intricate moves through Chicagoland’s maze of railroads to making sure our car attendants and other support personnel performed their duties well, it was an

extremely successful undertaking. Whether you run one trip or ten, the amount of preparation, training, maintenance, expense and dedication remains constant for our volunteers.

We received nothing but compliments from Metra as to the professionalism of our total operation. This is something to be proud of coming from a massive commuter railroad like Metra. We have been invited back for 2018 and ticket sales are underway.

2017 also saw our return to one of our favorite venues, the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad (CVSR). This was our sixth successful year of operations in the Cuyahoga National Park. We pulled eight sold-out trains over two weekends and created somewhere in the area of 3000 smiling faces. The weather cooperated perfectly and the ridership numbers showed that our engine has excellent drawing power with the public.

Along with our regular passenger

### REVENUE

Operating Revenue - **\$438,944**  
Donations and Memberships - **\$72,853**

### EXPENSES

NKP 765 Repairs and Maintenance - **\$33,864**  
Track Repairs - **\$31,571**  
Buildings and Grounds - **\$23,741**  
Misc. Expenses - **\$61,457**

### 2018 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, Senior Excursion Manager  
Steve Winicker, Mechanical Manager

### EX. OFFICIO MANAGERS

Zach Hall, Operations Manager  
Ray Kammer, Excursion Manager  
Brad Morocco, Membership Manager

operations on the CVSR, we offered one of the most comprehensive Throttle Time experiences of big steam available anywhere to the public. Over two days, we were able to let 30 people pull the throttle and fire the engine over about six miles of welded rail. This involved obtaining a special waiver from the FRA and of course permission from the CVSR and the National Park System. Our waiver is good for a total of five years and needless to say, we will be offering this once-in-a-lifetime experience again.

The landscape for big steam operations continues to evolve and our organization is adapting well to the new reality of operating successful steam excursions in today’s environment.

One of the biggest challenges facing us in the future is the implementation of PTC. This is a

government-mandated system that is intended to prevent trains from colliding with each other. It will be present on all Class I railroads in the near future. Although the complete details are still being defined, it will require us to outfit the 765 with approximately 200k worth of hardware (both electronic and mechanical) to be able to operate on any railroad so equipped. This is an ongoing effort that will need to be solved if big steam is to survive as we know it.

Our challenges grow every year but we welcome change as an opportunity to evolve and develop our organization and its members. As always, the Society is as good as its volunteers and supporters, and we could not be more grateful of all of you for your continued support. You are all members of a first-class railroad preservation and restoration operation, be proud of it!





# THE JOLIET ROCKET

Experience-driven excursion model lifts off in Chicago and will return again in September

By Kelly Lynch, Vice President



Matthew Malkiewicz

## AN OPPORTUNITY AND A CHALLENGE

Last summer - and for the first time in over 30 years - a steam locomotive pulled into LaSalle Street Station. Thanks in no small part to Metra, its employees and our dedicated volunteers, the 765 spirited nearly 3,000 people to and from the heart of downtown Chicago during Fathers Day Weekend.

As the first event of its kind and over half a year in the making, the weeks leading up to it were a constant flurry of preparation and white-knuckle logistical hurdles. Our relationship with Metra has provided the Society with an extremely valuable opportunity and great teamwork, but also some unusual operating and marketing challenges. To name a few:

- Chicago is a massive market, but one where demands for your dollar are everywhere.
- You can ride a train just about 24/7 at any time of the year throughout the region.
- The available railroad that Metra owns is

limited compared to their entire network, which is shared with BNSF and Union Pacific.

While our 2016 *Varsity* trips north of Chicago were well attended, the high-speed highlights of the trip bookended an otherwise eight-hour plod with copious speed restrictions. There was no destination or layover and the boxed lunches left some to be desired. The passenger experience overall was just fair. Open vestibules were a plus.

When you're operating a regal mainline time machine with some of the best vintage cars in the country, "fair" may is not the standard you work for. Fair doesn't win repeat customers. Fair does not provide full value.

The only other route we could conceivably explore was on was the Rock Island District. The problem? The route is just 46 miles and there's no logistically feasible way turn the train. At 60-70MPH, a trip on the Rock is over relatively quickly.

During an October conference call with Rob

Conway and Tim Pitzen, our two primary stewards at the railroad, the question was posed: what if we could create a destination event at LaSalle Street Station and make the 765 the star of the show?

The Rock Island's Rocket trains were marketed as some of the premier first-class trains of their kind. While they were all diesel powered, the idea of taking passengers to the same terminal once shared by the Rock Island, Nickel Plate Road, and New York Central had a lot of appeal. It was the perfect opportunity to highlight the fact that the railroads invented the red-carpet experience - and at the same spot where the railroad's invented it! And that's how *The Joliet Rocket* was born.

## THE ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS

To thrive in the 21st Century, steam locomotive operators like us must realize that we in the entertainment business. With this in mind, we set forth making the entire operation more than just a train ride.

We asked customers to dress for the period, hired a jazz band, populated the train with WWII re-enactors and made sure to include craft cocktails and

appetizers inspired by the era in the ticket price. With \$40,000 budgeted towards event costs alone, *The Joliet Rocket* was starting off as a bit of a gamble.

Our first step was to study where our previous customers had come from. We mapped out the zip codes from *The Varsity* and the mothballed Galesburg trip with Amtrak. 40% of those customers were from the immediate Chicago region and the rest were from the tri-state area and beyond. Being able to capture 40% or greater of that audience, with several months of lead time improved the operating prospects immeasurably.

Steam engines and passenger cars are costly endeavors whether you're going ten miles or 100, which meant we had to operate several trips during the weekend to make a profit. Instead of trying to sell out just one or two trains, we had to sell out four!

We employed an aggressive digital marketing campaign, relying heavily on video marketing, our email newsletter, and social media to average \$10-\$14,000 in ticket sales every week. We completely re-approached the way tickets were sold online and created a new web page for the event to help evoke the





essence of the trips. Past ticketing pages had offered a breathless wall-of-text with minimal visuals. At 60 days out from the event, we could start to breathe a little easier.

As part of our event permit, we were able to carve out a 150 x 80-foot portion of the station pavilion and get the necessary clearances for security, food and alcohol sales and more-or-less segment the area off for passengers only.

While event planning was continuous, so too were negotiations for the use of vintage passenger cars, positioning moves, and other arrangements.

As the hours wore down towards Fathers Day weekend, the weather forecast promised rain and thunderstorms while Murphy's Law entangled itself in last minute contractual needs, potentially late passenger car arrivals, an inoperative crane for loading coal and even a bit of locomotive re-railing and track work. (We'll save *those* stories for another time.)

After a brief, but celebratory test run from Metra's 47th Street Yard to LaSalle Street Station in the early hours of Saturday, June 17th, it was finally time for lift off.

The first trip of any excursion series always serves as an acid test. What was overlooked in the countless hours of planning, communications, and training? Were directions and pre-trip information clear and detailed enough for passengers and crew? Would our trains stay on schedule?

Operationally speaking, the trips went off extremely well and we quickly adapted to challenges as they arose. After departing shortly behind schedule from Joliet, we had to scrub the planned runby in order to keep our tight, commuter train timetable. Rather than eliminate the opportunity to experience the 765 up close and under power, we came up with an alternative: "the dramatic entrance."

For this, we pulled the 765 out of LaSalle Street near the end of each layover and marched the train in, making plenty of noise and putting on a show. There was audible applause each time. While we pulled off one runby the entire weekend, a big kudos is owed to Metra for seeing the value in replacing the photo runby with something a little different.

During the layover, passengers could tour the 765 and train, get their portrait taken, listen to the band and eat, drink and be merry.

Aside from making up for the photo runby, our biggest challenge was something that we thought we had planned for. While there had been numerous meetings, on-site visits, diagrams and discussions, our food and beverage vendors were not immediately prepared to serve 600 people at once - something the Rock Island itself probably never had to plan for.

There was palpable excitement and the well-dressed crowd and handsome passenger train made an incredible sight against the city and station. The 765's whistle was enough to open more a fair share







Daniel Marinellie



of windows in the city's adjacent condos and apartments.

As the train hustled back to Joliet, our car attendants handed out souvenir tickets and our thanks for riding.

Throughout the weekend, the Chicago region was encircled in a line thunderstorm, but we saw nary a drop until the 765 pulled out of Joliet on Saturday night and dramatically raced to 47th Street amid sharp rain and lightning.

We look forward to an encore presentation of The Joliet Rocket in just a few weeks and hope to see you there.

As we're fond of saying, the 765 is not so much powered by coal and water as she is the men and women who support her. Here the engine crew takes a brief moment during Sunday's trip for a group photo. From left to right Tim Shivley, DJ DePanics, Tyler Kester, Joe Knapke, Brian Smith, Daniel Kester, Brian Christophel, Chuck Young, Carl Llyvers, George Kester, David Popp, Zach Hall and Metra's Rob Conway. During events like The Joliet Rocket, these and others work around the clock to keep our celebration of railroad history rolling.



John W. Barriger Library



Mark LLanuza

At left, two Dreyfuss Hudsons pose at LaSalle Street Station in 1933 with the Chicago Board of Trade building almost visible through the haze of industry. By 1975, the Central's 20th Century Limited was a memory and the the Rock Island would only outlive the station's other tenants until 1980.

## Remembering Tom Stephens

By Wayne York

On June 7th, 2018, the Society lost a great friend. Former chief mechanical officer and engineer Tom Stephens had shepherded the Society through a decade of operations with the 765 - a period that included the 765's participation in the Southern's steam program and New River Trains between the early 1980s and 1990s.

Long bitten by the steam bug, Tom first appeared at Ryan and Edgerton Roads in 1978 and together with his wife Liz became an integral part of our organization, managing everything from the 765's maintenance, souvenir sales and the ownership of three passenger cars which provided the Society with valuable revenue.

As part of Tom's contributions, he planned and executed a critical superheater rebuild in 1981, negotiated the lease and restoration of Chesapeake & Ohio 2716 in 1995 and could be typically found in the right hand seat during the New River Trips in West Virginia, where track speed for passenger trains on CSX was an astonishing 79 miles an hour.

During one particular weekend, the crew discovered a number of leaking staybolts that threatened to sideline the locomotive on the morning of a Sunday trip. Not wanting to dump the fire and recalling a standard steam-era practice for solving this problem, Tom decided it was time for surgery.

Near midnight, the boiler pressure was dropped to 100PSI. The fire was dumped on the side of the firebox nearest to the problematic leaks.

Next, the draft valve was cracked open to draw cool air from under the engine through the grates and past Tom. Oak coal boards were thrown on the grates to lay



on and then Tom put on all the clothes he could and slid in through the firebox door. He took in two ball-peen hammers and after pounding on the leakers, they "took up" and quit leaking.

Eager to tackle challenges like this, Tom also earned a reputation for being a perfectionist and was very active in the Society until health problems started to surface in the mid-90s.

At 87 years old, Tom lived a good, full life and leaves behind a loving family – and an appreciative crew.



2017 Volunteer of the Year: John Jaress

By Steve Winicker, Mechanical Manager

Each year since 2010 we’ve recognized one outstanding volunteer in our ranks. In 2017, John Jaress exemplified everything the board looks to for *Volunteer of the Year*.

While John is a relative newcomer in the last few years, he has been a regular at the shop and spent long hours boring brake part levers and parts for the auxiliary tender last year. John has been willing to do any job from cleaning to machining and we’ve been able to put his talents to good use.

John is a fan of “old time stuff” and maintains a 1935 street rod and collects and restores antique brass blow torches in his free time. He started out as an apprentice tool and die maker and spent four years in the Navy as a machinery repairman. After his service, John got an engineering degree and worked for 28 years as a manufacturing engineer at Bluffton Motorworks where he tended the company’s CNC machines.

“The first trip I made with the 765 was during a test run to Leipsic,” he shares. “It was interesting because of all the people that come out and are waving to you on the train. Being involved and knowing you’re a part of what brings people out is enjoyable.”



Society volunteers recognized for “going the extra mile”

By Kelly Lynch, Vice President

During deliberation for the *Volunteer of the Year Award*, several names are often nominated by board members. Each year it becomes clear that the Society enjoys a number of dedicated, passionate people worthy of recognizing. With this in mind, we asked our volunteers to help us recognize these of these outstanding men and women and created *The Extra Board Award*.

This award recognizes individuals who have demonstrated remarkable qualities or made meaningful contributions, displayed acts of stewardship worth emulating, or who have gone the extra mile to support the mission and vision of the Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society. The winners are as follows:

**DJ DePanicis.** For his positive attitude and dedication to the FWRHS, but specifically for acting as the Society’s ambassador during several trips on the Cuyahoga Valley Railroad. His interactions with passengers there played a critical public relations role and his participation was so good as to also be recognized by the President of CVSR. *DJ was nominated by Steve Winicker.*

**Staci Brown.** For her eagerness and interest in learning and participating in our operations and service as a car host, but most importantly: her support of her son Brody’s passionate interest in the 765. Together Staci and Brody have worked numerous weekend work sessions and Staci accompanies Brody so that he can participate. *Staci was nominated by Kelly Lynch and Bill Otter.*

**Carson Miller.** For the past year Carson, age 14, has spent hours scraping, needling, cleaning sweeping, sanding, cutting, grinding, painting and crawling all over SD9 358 and with Brody Brown was one of our youngest car hosts. In Carson’s nomination, the Society’s encouraging atmosphere was credited for helping him get to work. *Carson was nominated by Chris Lantz and his father, WD Miller.*



**Sandy Wagner and Dorothy Ruhlman,** for their unfailing work in the “bling and swag department.” The two “make a great team” and are a huge help to our merchandising efforts where our volunteers have to juggle hundreds of orders and interactions with members of the general public. *Sandy and Dorothy were nominated by Mike Gupta.*

**Michael Toney,** for his selfless donations of \$20.00 a week nearly every week since joining the organization in 2016. These contributions mean that in over a year, Michael has donated nearly \$2,000 through these consistent, small gifts. *Michael was nominated by Kelly Lynch.*

**Bill App.** For his extraordinary generosity in providing numerous photographs that the Merchandise Department has been able to turn into thousands of dollars of sales. *Bill was nominated by Bill Otter.*

**George Kester.** For his devotion to volunteering, willingness to do “whatever it takes,” but in particular for the hand made gifts he presented to children both on the train and in the crowds: a small coal shovel. George would present dozens of these shovels to grateful children - and some engine crew members alike!

George and his family are previous winners of the Volunteer of the Year Award. George was nominated by Brandon Willis, Brian Smith and DJ *DePanicis*.

Following historical railroad practice, the winners of this award will receive a special service pin. Our organization is so fortunate for the thoughtful contributions of these and all of our members.

If you see someone wearing their service pin, be sure to thank them, too.



John Troxler’s quick thinking has framed the 765’s passing outside a Metra commuter train. How many commuters were caught unaware that weekend and of them, how many looked on in wonder like this one?

“As we were waiting to leave Fitzwater one morning, George Kester pulled out a small bag. I couldn’t tell what was inside. I asked and he said that they were tiny shovels that he made in his shop. He said that he made these to give to the kids that had come out to see the 765 or asked questions about shoveling coal. He asked me if I wanted one, and of course I said “yes!”

To see a child light up and hear them say “WOW” is amazing - and thanks to George and his shovels, dozens of people that we encountered have something to remember their experience by. Something that is clean, unlike a lump of coal, and has significance to the locomotive. I still have my shovel and will always remember him giving them out.

The fact that he made something specifically to give to children is worth commending. I think it almost brings me back to my childhood, when I was completely in awe of trains and steam locomotives and would have loved to receive something like that.”

- DJ DePanicis’ nomination letter for George Kester





# Project 358 raises over \$7,000 and support from Progress Rail

By WD Miller, Co-Project Manager



Following a \$3,000 grant from Steel Dynamics, the Society has dedicated an additional \$2,500 toward the Project 358, which will bring new life to our historic Nickel Plate diesel. In addition, Project 358 has earned significant support from Progress Rail, successor to diesel locomotive builder Electro-Motive Diesel Inc.

Earlier this year, the Society approached Progress Rail with an opportunity to sponsor the 1957 EMD locomotive. Progress Rail responded enthusiastically and invited the Society to their plant in Mayfield, Kentucky where the company performs complete locomotive rebuilds and retains an impressive array of parts for older EMD products.

To-date, over \$7,000 has been raised for the \$35,000 project. Volunteers WD Miller, Carson Miller, Chris Lantz, Brandon Willis, David Collar, Jon Jaros and others have invested over 1,200 hours into Project 358.

Through a number of individual monetary donations, many historic or replacement components have been purchased and acquired, including the historically correct headlight bezels, class lights, various electrical components fasteners and a complete set of gaskets. Additionally, an accurate bell, controller, auxiliary generator and a 36" cooling fan have been donated and several components of a Mars Light were supplied as a parts source. A full parts list is available online at [fortwaynerailroad.org/project-358](http://fortwaynerailroad.org/project-358).

Progress has been steady with carbody repairs and recently the fireman's side cab corner was replaced. This included replacing rotted areas along the cab roof down to the cab side wall, and to the rear of the fireman's window. The cab roof piece was especially tricky as it has a compound bend to it that transitions from the curved roof of the cab, down to the side wall of the cab itself. Much care was taken to get this bend right, and the fit was right on. We couldn't be any happier with the way the repair turned out.

Next up for the carbody are to finish repairs on both

battery boxes on either side of the locomotive, and a couple of doors on the sill box. A matching set of four class lights has been secured and will be prepped for installation later this year.

Progress has been made on the electrical systems as well. Most of the low voltage control wiring has been traced, visually checked for worn insulation, cracked wires, loose connections, and labels renewed on some of the circuits. A few minor repairs are needed on the low voltage side, but nothing like what is needed on high voltage system, which is the need for traction motor cable. A GyraLight has been secured and installed on the short hood nose and will be wired into the control stand soon.

A set of batteries have been secured which will allow the project team to electrify the locomotive and complete testing. Having a set of batteries will also allow the locomotive to be started.

Donations are still needed to finish out this project and can be made quickly and easily online at [fortwaynerailroad.org/donate](http://fortwaynerailroad.org/donate). Donations of \$100 or more in 2018 will receive a Project 358 Donor Plate.

Project 358 is always looking for volunteers to help with various projects. Volunteers who have welding and grinding experience are always welcomed, or if you just like to turn wrenches in general, we have plenty of that work to do as well. Project 358 is lead by co-project managers Miller and Lantz, who can be reached at [miller@fwrhs.org](mailto:miller@fwrhs.org) and [lantz@fwrhs.org](mailto:lantz@fwrhs.org).

## Progress Rail

A Caterpillar Company



ABOVE: The 765 storms past the photo line at Boston Mills during the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad's Annual "Steam in the Valley" event. A look at the young and old in attendance is evidence of steam's transcendent appeal. LEFT: Our 16th Annual Santa Train welcomed over 5,000 visitors - including this family which purchased a private Santa Charter. BELOW: Jerrad Bennett's long hours painting the tender and locomotive will make the 765 shine this year and beyond.





# Society convenes industry leaders to confront Positive Train Control technology and costs

By Kelly Lynch, Vice President



The deadline for Positive Train Control (PTC) looms large over the entire railroad industry. Designed to automatically stop a train before certain accidents occur, PTC uses an onboard computer system that monitors the train’s location, track data, routing, speed limits and other factors. The system is intended to prevent train-to-train collisions, and derailments due to excessive speed or misaligned switches, but it will not prevent all railroad related accidents or derailments and can never eliminate human error from the equation.

PTC qualified railroads have grappled for years with the tall order of updating their locomotive fleets, signals, and lineside technology to become compliant, in addition to setting up their own back-office servers and IT staff and training transportation employees on the evolving tech.

If a challenge as robust as PTC has forced the industry to so heavily invest and innovate, it will no doubt force historical organizations to do the same.

In 2017, the Society convened a gathering for steam locomotive operators, representatives from Class 1 and commuter railroads as well as the Emery Rail Heritage Trust to consider the mechanical implications of the safety system. Included in the meeting and subsequent conversations were including Norfolk & Western 611, Southern Pacific 4449, Alaska Engine no. 557, Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis Railway No. 576, and Pere

Marquette no. 1225, among others. From this meeting, the group determined that it was wholly feasible to adapt the technology to work on individual locomotives, agreed to share technical resources and systems and work with the Federal Railroad Administration on implementing the technology on historic equipment.

Earlier this year, the Emery Rail Heritage Trust announced \$30,000 in grants to fund the effort respective efforts on Milwaukee Road no. 261 and Nickel Plate Road no. 765. The \$30,000 grants will kick off fundraising to cover the estimated \$120,000 needed for implementation on each locomotive.

“As an organization dedicated to insuring that historic rail equipment is enjoyed by future generations, we felt it was critical to support the team effort by these operators. Steam locomotives like the 261 and 765 educate and engage thousands of people each year and PTC is a significant obstacle for these organizations,” said Jim Fetchero, Advisory Committee member for the Trust.

Like many of our sister organizations, the Society needs PTC to operate on much of the general railroad system. Our goal is to underscore that mainline steam locomotives can continue to be compliant with the modern railroad system with little deviation from the intent or purpose of PTC on any modern locomotive.

“We are grateful to The Emery Rail Heritage Trust for this very kind contribution. It will kickstart the 261’s efforts to begin the process of designing and installing PTC on 261. We look forward to working with the Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society and sharing information on how best to solve this challenge facing our non-profit groups,” said Steve Sandberg, President & Chief Operating Officer of Friends of the 261.

Mainline steam locomotive groups are similarly grappling with other operational and logistical challenges, including changes in Amtrak’s policy regarding charter trains.

In addition to researching the applicable technology, FWRHS and its sister organizations have, with Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) guidance, submitted language to the FRA to balance the safety features of PTC with the historic nature and unique characteristics of steam locomotives. While we have no timeline for the installation of PTC on the 765, we are watching how the railroad industry at large grapples with teething issues and implementation overall.

The Emery Rail Heritage Trust is to be commended for helping us lead the way to make sure our valuable railroad history can continue to enrich people’s lives.

## Nickel Plate 624 relocated; inspection yields positive results

By Kelly Lynch, Vice President

As reported in our last issue, the Society negotiated the donation and relocation of Nickel Plate Road no. 624, a 1922-built Mikado, from its display site in Hammond, Indiana. On display since 1955, the Society was able to intervene for the engine with the help from a major donor.

In late October, the 624 and a vintage “reefer” car were transported by truck to a private facility in Wabash, Indiana where the locomotive will sit in a disassembled state until restoration work can begin. Ultrasound tests conducted in March demonstrated that proactive asbestos removal in the 1970s by concerned citizens and railroad

fans kept the boiler in remarkably good shape. Readings indicate the locomotive may have had some major work done in the early 1950s, as the firebox and boiler thicknesses are comparable or better than the 765’s! While a full mechanical evaluation is still pending, these early results are promising and work on the 624 will occur as time and finances allow.

For a full history on the engine and updates, visit [fortwaynerailroad.org/nickel-plate-624](http://fortwaynerailroad.org/nickel-plate-624).

**Wesley Heinz (right) checks the boiler thickness during a work session last March. Below, the 624’s frame and drivers await construction of a private railroad lead that will tie into a local rock quarry. The quarry’s owner has been a major supporter of the Society’s work since 2007.**







cathedral-like windows and rows of tools and 1940s Coke bottles, one cannot help they’ve stumbled upon something truly special and we look forward to our next organized tours.

While the structure itself is a recreation - it is fully operational and the roundhouse crew has turned out a number of cosmetic and operational restorations since completion of the complex.

The historically inspired 34 acres also includes a small yard, water tower, ash pit, and numerous historic “props” and accouterments, to say nothing of the massive back shop, a recreated freight house (for parts storage) and passenger station (the office building.)

Our tours with nearly 300 Society members may have been tinged with melancholy, but there is no doubt that Jerry’s vision has already inspired and educated another generation. For evidence, one need look no further than at the 765 itself.

Our locomotive crew includes several former Ohio Central employees, including myself, Operations Manager Zach Hall, and engineer Chris Lantz. Jerry offered all three of us our first full-time jobs on a railroad and on the Ohio Central’s steam department. In addition, the railroad also employed Gary Bensman, Rich Melvin and Age of Steam now employs 765 crew member Nick Taylor full-time as a machinist.

Decades ago, the crew aboard the Baltimore & Ohio locomotives instilled in Jerry a lifelong love and appreciation for the power of the steam locomotive. It’s our hope every time we operate the 765 that we can help inspire the very same.

For more images and information, visit [ageofsteamroundhouse.com](http://ageofsteamroundhouse.com)

## Jerry Jacobson passes on eve of roundhouse tours

By Kelly Lynch, Vice President

Railroad entrepreneur and steam locomotive advocate Jerry Joe Jacobson passed away on September 13th, 2017, just days before the Society’s planned group tours of Jerry’s ultimate dream: the Age of Steam Roundhouse.

Inspired by a series of life-altering visits to the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad as a child, Jerry later came to own and operate numerous successful Ohio short lines under the Ohio Central System. It was in Sugarcreek, Ohio that the railroad’s burgeoning steam program would come to include a motley crue of operating steam locomotives, passenger cars, and historic diesels.

Jerry later sold the railroad to Genesee & Wyoming in 2008 but retained the steam locomotives and a variety of historic equipment and construction of the roundhouse began a few years later. When completed in 2010, it was the first complete, working roundhouse built in the country since 1951 and is now home to over 20 steam locomotives from around North America, including Nickel Plate Road no. 763.

The 22-stall, 48,000 square foot roundhouse and back shop complex would be the envy of any mainline steam railroad at the dawn of the 20th Century. A walk through the immaculate brick and timber building is as almost a religious experience in and of itself. From the 120-foot turntable to the vintage telephones, the



**HOW THREE STEAM CAREERS WERE STARTED:** From left to right, Kelly Lynch, Zach Hall, Mark Perri (CVSR Engineer and Age of Steam volunteer), and Chris Lantz pause at Akron, Ohio last fall. All three 765 crew started their steam railroading careers on Jerry Jacobson’s Ohio Central railroad. In addition to carrying Jerry’s name, the 765 also wore an American Flag and one representing Jerry’s service in 82nd Airborne.

Zach Hall





Hailey Enoch

# An early morning miracle in the Windy City

By Kelly Lynch, Vice President

At around 2:30 in the morning on June 17th, something short of miraculous played out in the heart of the nation’s third largest city.

As Chicago slept, a 70-year old steam locomotive crept its way past skyscrapers and condominiums. Its destination was LaSalle Street Station.

17,000 commuters had passed through the station earlier that day, but by now the place was deserted. Anyone waking up to the soft patter of locomotive exhaust, as it lingered among the concrete and steel, would have thought the scene an apparition.

But there we were, bell softly sounding, turbogenerators whispering, Mars Light seeking out the path ahead. Our eyes were glued to the railroad and luminous skyline. The locomotive had no earthly business being there – but in a way had every right to be.

The 765 stopped just short of the platform, allowing her crew to disembark and triple check its clearances. Though they had been reviewed and approved months earlier, everyone present wanted to insure that the 765’s arrival at LaSalle Street the next morning would go as planned.

As the engine prepared to move ahead, two mellow, lingering blasts of the whistle caressed the surrounding buildings. The 765 walked down the length of Track no. 7 and despite her 19th-century origins looked strangely at home against the backdrop of the Sears Tower. Two icons of a country - one 400 tons, the other 110 stories.

Though the weekend’s excursions would begin in just a few hours, the unceremonious arrival of the 765 offered a special gratification to the weary in attendance. While countless days and hours had been spent to make the weekend possible, there was something extra special in the air. This had been an unexpected, b-side blessing; a kind of tranquil warm-up bonus before the real show could begin.

There were many relieved handshakes and delighted embraces on Track 7 that morning and it seemed fitting that amid a city of millions, the 765 played her song for just an audience of ten.

For a while the crew just lingered to take in the sight, but it didn’t last long. It couldn’t. In the coming hours, the engine would be coaled, serviced and spurring a trainload of passengers to this very spot to bask in an event that would evoke the magic from the previous night - and an era six decades before.

## CORPORATE MEMBERS



**NORFOLK SOUTHERN**

*One line, infinite possibilities.*

**Progress Rail**  
A Caterpillar Company



## DEVELOPMENT



**COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION**  
of Greater Fort Wayne

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**

**SPONSOR, SUPPORT OR DONATE DIRECTLY**  
[fortwaynerailroad.org/support](http://fortwaynerailroad.org/support)

# FORT WAYNE RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

**SHORT LINES** is now a bi-annual publication, with combined Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter issues.

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

### EDITOR

Kelly Lynch - [lynch@fwrhs.org](mailto:lynch@fwrhs.org)

### MEMBERSHIP MANAGER

Brad Morocco - [membership@fwrhs.org](mailto:membership@fwrhs.org)

### MEMBERS AREA & PAST ISSUES

[fortwaynerailroad.org/members-area](http://fortwaynerailroad.org/members-area)

### RESTORATION SHOP

15808 Edgerton Road  
New Haven, Indiana 46774  
260-493-0765

### MAIL

PO Box 11017  
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46855  
[contact@fwrhs.org](mailto:contact@fwrhs.org)



**MAGIC CARPET MADE OF STEEL:** The Hickory Creek rests against the bumper at LaSalle Street Station for the first time in 52 years after the conclusion of The Joliet Rocket. The heels Chicago's commuters now beat where red carpet once laid.  
*Brad Morocco.*

