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February 2025

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From the Editor

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The steam locomotive, the defining symbol of the Industrial Revolution, ruled the rails from the 1804 introduction of Richard Trevithick's first practical locomotive until they were phased out in the mid-20th century — done in by the rise of diesel locomotives.

Starting in the mid-1950s, *Trains* Magazine chronicled the end of the era in the memorable Steam in Indian Summer essays.

Of course, some steam locomotives escaped the torch — and more than you may think. Our guide to operating steam locomotives for 2025 totals an impressive 178 locomotives expected to be in operation this year.

A state-by-state list begins on page 18. This year in steam will be a memorable one.

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G&W CEO says rail industry needs to innovate

Miller: Railroads must do more to embrace technology and catch up with trucking

▲ **Train Y115 of Genesee & Wyoming's Georgia Central rolls eastward through Pooler, Ga., toward Savannah with wood chip hoppers on July 20, 2024. G&W's CEO says railroads need to embrace technology.** Zane Williams

GENESEE & WYOMING CEO Michael Miller delivered some tough love to a packed house at the annual RailTrends conference in November. Railroads, he said, need to catch up with trucking technology — and in a hurry.

"When you look at our competitors, they're much more advanced than we are," Miller said. Take Uber, for example. In the past five years, Uber has gone from losing $2 billion a year to making a $4 billion profit. The fast-growing company is known for its mobility ride-hailing service and its delivery business. Less known is its newest venture, Uber Freight, which with $5 billion in revenue ranks among the top 20 trucking companies in the U.S.

"I hope like hell they don't grow like mobility. I hope like hell they don't grow like delivery. Because if they do, we've got a problem," Miller says.

Uber has seen explosive growth because it's so easy to use. "That's where we have to focus our energy. As an industry, how do we make it easy to do business with the railroad? I think that's one of the principles that will propel us. I think everybody in this room agrees we have to embrace change and embrace technology," Miller said. "What I want to challenge this room is to get off our ass."

Railroads are not moving nearly fast enough to adopt technology that customers have come to expect, Miller says. G&W is a founding member of RailPulse, the GPS-based telematics joint venture that aims to be the first one-stop shop for real-time car location and condition information. Currently rail customers have to bounce between individual railroad online portals to find out where their cars are and when they will arrive, and AEI readers don't necessarily provide location data that's current or precise.

"We're four years in and we've got 12,000 cars equipped. That's a great, great outcome. There's 1.6 million cars in our fleet, less than 1% equipped. Every truck that runs down the highway has GPS on it," Miller says. "We have to accelerate the pace of change."

The Class I railroads have been touting their new online customer tools and apps, as well as artificial intelligence systems that can predict when cars will arrive or alert customers when they're late. But these efforts don't go nearly far enough, Miller says, arguing that railroads should create a single, industry-wide system to make life easier for customers.

"Change happens faster when we work together. I think we need to innovate together. And most importantly, we've got to stop thinking that our individual solutions create a customer solution individually," he says. "We don't create anything but a headache for our customers. We have to work together to create a solution and a service product for our customers."

Miller would love to see Class I railroads, short lines, customers, and technology companies get together to brainstorm ways to reinvent railroading. "What if we could unwind everything we've built over the last 150 years," Miller says. "How do we do it today?" — *Bill Stephens*

CSX works to increase car handling ability at crucial hump yard in Waycross, Ga.

Rice Yard, railroad's busiest, is readied for expected growth of carload traffic

RICE YARD IN WAYCROSS, GA., is an operations crossroads for CSX Transportation.

The railroad's largest and busiest hump yard sits at the junction of the main corridors to Chicago, New York, Florida, and New Orleans. And its role as a key cog in the Southeast will become even more critical with CSX expecting a wave of merchandise traffic growth.

At its November investor day in Amelia Island, Fla., the railroad projected that major industrial development projects coming to fruition in the next three years should produce merchandise volume growth 1% to 2% above the rate of industrial production. That could add between 150,000 and 300,000 carloads annually by 2027.

So improving how much traffic Rice can handle is crucial.

"No manifest trains run around Waycross. It all comes in here," Terminal Superintendent Arthur Clark said during an investor day tour. The yard builds 17 road freights per day for destinations across the system, plus five locals that serve customers in Georgia and Florida. It receives a like number of trains.

A drone awaits the call to perform a track inspection at Rice Yard. The autonomous devices can find defects without shutting down a track.

Waycross currently handles up to 3,000 cars per day, but CSX operating officials aim to boost that processing capacity to 3,300 by tweaking how trains and cars move through the yard.

First, CSX has slowly increased the speed of hump shove moves to a fixed 2.5 mph, a 15% improvement over the past year, Clark says. "We think there's a little bit more we can still tweak, but we do it incrementally so as to not cause any misroutes," he says.

A car that's misrouted onto the wrong track in the yard's 64-track classification bowl takes crews 15 to 20 minutes to fish out. Since 2021 the misroute rate has been cut in half, to two out of every 1,000 cars that roll over the hump.

Second, to turn yard inventory more quickly, CSX is raising track speeds in the bowl pullout and 14-track departure yard to 15 mph, up from 10. "To get a 50% improvement in speed, it's going to be significant," Clark says.

Third, the 10-track local yard can be used as surge switching capacity that can help the railroad recover from a hurricane or simply keep up on higher volume days. "That helps us switch about 150 extra cars a day when we do get heavy," Clark says. "So it's kind of like a relief valve."

Elsewhere, CSX now has three tracks (up from one) that allow maintenance forces to expedite car repairs without having to send the cars to Rice Yard's shop. "These are defects that we can get turned around within a matter of minutes to get that train back out," Mechanical Superintendent Ronnie Potts says.

One of two yardmasters on duty monitors the action at CSX's Rice Yard in Waycross, Ga. The railroad is taking a number of steps to improve the facility's car handling. Two photos, Bill Stephens

Looking longer term, CSX aims to reduce inspection-related track closures by deploying autonomous aerial drones that can spot defects such as broken rails, joint bar problems, and switch point gaps. CSX is now using the technology at Waycross and a dozen other yards.

For now, the drones allow CSX to inspect track more frequently than the minimum 30-day intervals required under Federal Railroad Administration regulations. When a track is clear, the drone automatically launches from its base near the hump tower, trains its high-resolution camera on a track below, and returns to its base. Its inspection data is then downloaded and its battery is changed robotically in about 4½ minutes. If any defects are found, the yardmaster is notified automatically.

Ultimately, CSX hopes for FRA approval to allow drone inspections to replace those by human track inspectors. The traditional visual inspection can shut down a track for an hour or two, while a drone inspection can be conducted without restricting operations. It's another way CSX hopes to wring more productivity out of Waycross and other yards.

Rice Yard also is home to CSX's largest locomotive and car shops, as well as the paint shop that has produced the railroad's heritage locomotive fleet. In all, 428 people work at the 700-acre yard that's nearly 5 miles long.

Classification relies on a pair of single-person, remote-control locomotive assignments that use the dual hump leads. At the other end of the bowl, CSX assigns three two-person remote control jobs that build trains and pull them to the departure yard. Overseeing it all: Two yardmasters stationed in the yard tower overlooking the hump. — *Bill Stephens*

Residents of the Erwin, Tenn., area gather for food, gifts, and music as part of CSX's special "Holiday Express"' event in the community on Nov. 21, 2024. Ron Flanary

CSX brings holiday event to area hit hard by Helene damage

'Holiday Express' visit to Erwin precedes Santa Train

THE EXCITEMENT WAS PALPABLE. With the first sound of the air horn on its Clinchfield heritage unit, children screamed, anticipating the arrival of the CSX Holiday Express train in Erwin, Tenn., on Nov. 21, 2024.

Preceding the 82nd running of the famed Santa Train between Shelby, Ky., and Kingsport, Tenn., on Nov. 23, the Erwin event was meant to bring Christmas cheer and hope to the many families to the south, along the Nolichucky and Toe Rivers, an area decimated by Hurricane Helene in late September. The 40-some miles immediately south of Erwin through the Nolichucky Gorge and upstream on the Toe River to Spruce Pine, N.C., suffered damage that is difficult to fathom. Miles of track through the gorge south of Erwin were draped into the river, the roadbed and subgrade gone.

CSX's former Clinchfield has been through some rough patches the past 10 years. With the decline of thermal coal, CSX made the difficult decision in 2015 to mothball the railroad as a through route. While a later management regime returned through freight service, COVID annulled the Santa Train in 2020 and 2021, and the 2022 run was to be canceled, too, until Joe Hinrichs was named CEO. One of his first moves was to announce the Santa Train would return.

In Erwin, the Holiday Express stopped beside a field at the yard's north end that had been transformed. A huge tent with thousands of Christmas lights had been erected, along with a stage with lighting and sound. The Clinchfield heritage unit and CSX's three "executive" F40s were accompanied by four boxcars with lighted Christmas graphics and "CSX Holiday Express" lettering. At the rear was the Santa car; when the train stopped, Saint Nick and Hinrichs got off.

On stage, Hinrichs said, "When the hurricane destroyed over 40 miles of this railroad, naturally everyone wondered if CSX would rebuild. As you know, work is ongoing now, and CSX will bring back this railroad bigger and better than ever!" He didn't mention the enormity of the task, currently pegged at $200 million.

Nonetheless, CSX and partners pulled out all the stops. Chick-fil-A sandwiches (5,000 in all), hot dogs, refreshments, and gift bags were distributed. Checks for $5,000 were presented to five local organizations assisting in flood relief efforts, and singer/songwriter Drew Holcomb performed.

Bryan Tucker, CSX vice president of stakeholder engagement and sustainability, said employees had appealed to top management to do something for Erwin. "We feel so privileged to be able to help this community," he said. "We've been here for well over 100 years, and we're here with them now for the next hundred to make sure we rebuild the railroad and the communities together." — *Ron Flanary*

NEWS BRIEFS

Caltrain sends equipment to Peru

CALTRAIN will send 19 F40 diesels and 90 gallery coaches to Lima, Peru, which launch a new commuter rail service. Caltrain will receive $6 million in a deal that also involved the U.S. State Department and Department of Commerce, and required a waiver from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District to allow the locomotives to remain operable rather than being scrapped. Caltrain also announced that October 2024, its first full month of electrified operation had seen a 54% increase in ridership over the same month in 2023.

The **FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION** awarded $1.5 billion for 19 Northeast Corridor infrastructure projects, including more than $705 million for five projects aimed all or in part at addressing aging catenary structures and power systems. Also included: funding for improvements or expansion planning at Washington Union Station, Baltimore Penn Station, and New York Penn Station.

NORFOLK SOUTHERN moved to shed the long-inactive Saluda Grade, filing an abandonment notice with the **SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD** for 31.3 miles between Zirconia, N.C., and Inman, S.C. Idle since 2001, the former Southern Railway route was once the steepest mainline grade in America — 4.7% with a brief stretch at 5.1%. The **SALUDA GRADE TRAIL CONSERVANCY**, which seeks to turn the route into a hiking and biking trail, announced in August it had signed a contract to purchase the line, and had 12 months to raise the money to complete the transaction.

Newly formed **RJD AMERICA LLC,** a group of railroaders and business owners with ties to the engine, have purchased former Chesapeake & Ohio 4-8-4 No. 614 and plans to return it to operating condition. The locomotive, restored for systemwide use with the Chessie System's *Chessie Safety Express* in 1980-81, was last fired in 2001. Acquisition — from longtime steam operator and American Freedom Train Foundation founder Ross E. Rowland Jr. — and restoration are fully funded, the group said. The locomotive will be moved from Clifton Forge, Va., to the **STRASBURG RAIL ROAD** shops in Pennsylvania early in 2025 to begin its overhaul.

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What will happen if railroads can't grow?

Wall Street eventually will demand deep cost-cutting

Bill Stephens
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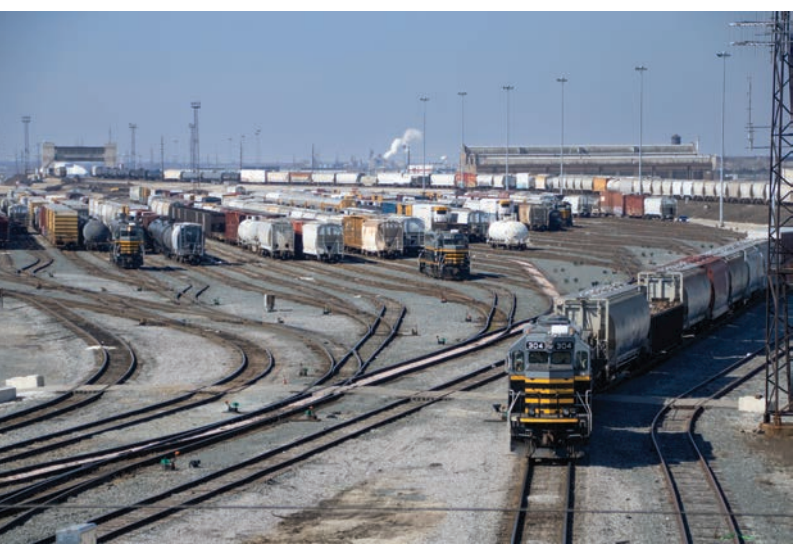
Analysis: Trains.com

Let's suppose, for the sake of argument, that the Class I railroads cannot successfully shift into growth mode. What happens then? Carload business will slowly wither away, except for the few bulk and dangerous commodities that have no other way to move. Intermodal will remain stuck in neutral, with domestic container and trailer traffic unable to break through a ceiling they hit in 2017. And no matter what railroads do, the onetime torrent of coal traffic will become a trickle.

Sure, there will be pockets of growth here and there. But they won't make up for the overall downward trajectory. The irony is that the Class I systems are incredibly profitable despite hauling less freight today than they did two decades ago. They're a financial success story driven by higher productivity and higher rates.

In order to continue to crank out 10% earnings growth year after year — something that Wall Street has come to expect — ideally the railroads need to do three things: Gain volume, raise rates faster than inflation, and reduce costs. Analysts say the railroads' annual rate-increase strategy is nearing an end and traditional cost-cutting is producing diminishing returns. So railroads will have to push harder on the volume lever.

At the Surface Transportation Board's September hearing on the lack of carload growth, railroads optimistically sketched out their plans to regain volume. Shipper groups made it clear that while they want to ship more via rail, they are instead sending more of their business to trucks due to railroads' unreliable service, inflexible rates, and lack of rail competition. A look at the direction of the freight car fleet, which is predominantly owned or leased by shippers, backs this up: Excluding coal equipment, cars are being retired at about the same rate they're being built. This combination of shipper sentiment and stagnant fleet size casts serious doubt on the Class I railroads' ability to grow.



A Belt Railway of Chicago crew shoves cars over the Clearing Yard hump on March 2, 2024. If rail volumes continue to shrink, yards could be sold or downsized, making room for truck-fed facilities. David Lassen

Absent more traffic, the only way railroads will be able to make their investors happy is by resuming cost-cutting with a vengeance. You may say that there's nothing left to cut. Why, look at how Precision Scheduled Railroading has shrunk locomotive fleets, shuttered shops, closed hump yards, reduced local service, pruned intermodal networks, gutted headquarters, and cut overall employment levels. All this is, of course, true.

But with too much track and not enough traffic to support it, the Class I railroads eventually will be forced to find ways to wring out even more costs. None of them will be good for the industry.

Railroads can reap operational savings by slowing trains to 40 mph. It would save fuel, require fewer locomotives, and reduce track maintenance costs.

Count on Class I railroads ripping up underutilized yards in prime locations and then selling the property to make way for, say, a truck-served Amazon warehouse. The old yard's switching work can always be moved to smaller, outlying yards.

Main lines won't be immune. In corridors where two railroads operate parallel routes, they can decide to downgrade or spin off one main line while sending all their trains over the superior main. Sharing main lines would further reduce track and signal maintenance costs while creating a golden real estate opportunity. In traffic-clogged metropolitan areas, it's not a stretch to imagine the conversion of redundant railroad rights-of-way into congestion-free toll roads for trucks.

This is a dark scenario for those of us who are champions of steel wheels moving on steel rails. No one wants to see more freight hauled by Peterbilt rigs and less coupled behind Wabtec locomotives. Yet it is a future that may await thanks to Wall Street pressure, intense truck competition, and a rail industry that's slow to change.

Wall Street's demand for operating ratios around 60% means that railroads can't go after freight that might come with a profit margin of 25% or 30% but is otherwise perfectly suitable for rail. At the STB hearing, shippers and regulators questioned whether this focus on only the most profitable traffic was a violation of the railroads' common carrier obligations.

It's a fair question — and sign that they believe the industry is heading in the wrong direction. I

Good neighbor

When people suffer, railroads might make a real difference

▲ **This postcard view shows a stranded Baltimore & Ohio train a month after the Great Flood of 1913 devastated the Wabash River Valley in southwestern Indiana. Here at Vincennes, the river crested 24 feet above normal flow and sprawled to 7 miles wide across the flat prairie. Thousands of pieces of rolling stock required varying degrees of rescue and rehabilitation.**
Two photos courtesy John Hankey

IN THE RUN-UP TO the weather disasters that befell the interior South and Florida Gulf Coast last year, I knew that railroads in the region had excellent forecasting services and contingency plans in place. I hoped they would be willing to help with the major, long-term recovery efforts. In the immediate aftermath, the NS and CSX donations of cash to the Red Cross were a welcome gesture.

Over the last two centuries, railroad companies often found themselves in the thick of natural and man-made disasters, and usually responded quickly, creatively, and without ulterior motives. Crises of that nature involve many communities, and railroading used to be very much part of that mix.

Is it even legitimate, at this point, to wonder if railroads have any real or perceived obligations to the communities through which they run?

Precedents abound. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, one of the arguments in support of Amtrak was that it would be prudent to have rail transportation options in cases of national emergency. That was understood to mean confrontation with the Soviet Union. We were at the height of the Cold War. Having even a rudimentary passenger train network in place seemed like a good idea.

A little later but still many years ago, I was involved with the national defense program of special trains carrying Minuteman ICBMs. My work included exploring railroads' roles in moving people out of harm's way, delivering supplies and disaster response, and protocols for quickly adapting railroad resources.

The fall of the Soviet empire rendered the Peacekeeper Rail Garrison Program obsolete. But those lessons stayed with me as Hurricane Katrina inundated parts of New Orleans in 2005 and Hurricane Ike made landfall at Galveston Island in 2008. In both cases, it seemed plausible to imagine evacuations by rail beforehand, and timely delivery of relief afterward. Neither happened. Images of desperate survivors huddled on elevated railroad rights-of-way near the New Orleans Superdome were tough to watch.

A MATTER OF WILL

Rendering some measure of aid in those two storms would not have been impossible. It would have required advance planning, staging assets, and coordination among Amtrak, freight carriers, and governments at all levels. Most critical of all would be the will to do it.

Positioning railroads for involvement in disaster response will involve initial and ongoing expense. How much would be needed, especially in relation to the amount of good it might do? I am not aware of any studies exploring those possibilities.

One would think that relevant officials with railroads and in threatened regions would at least be curious.

In the last five years alone, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration documented an average of 20 severe weather events each year with an average combined yearly price tag of $123 billion.

More to the point, the death toll over that 5-year span was roughly 2,000, not counting injuries and the extended suffering that follows a disaster. The relatively modest costs of railroad preparation and participation might, in fact, save both lives and money.

In questions like these, the historian's perspective is as valid as that of the economist,

politician, or Wall Street overlord. In railroading's history, there have been two roughly equal periods in which the industry was broadly conceived as a public utility and shared project, and two roughly equal periods in which it regarded itself as a strictly private enterprise primarily serving its shareholders and lenders.

William H. Vanderbilt's 1882 observation that "The public be damned" was almost certainly twisted out of context. Yet it nicely encapsulated what many people then understood as the attitude of corporate America. Frank Norris's 1901 novel *The Octopus* detailed the evils perpetrated by a fictional version of the Southern Pacific Railroad, and was a best seller. The larger railroads by that time were ruthless enterprises focused on profits and power — not unlike Big Tech today.

By the end of World War I, the situation was markedly different. The railroad industry had overreached in many ways, with predictable pushback. States and the federal government created webs of sometimes stifling regulation, but also instituted many protections. Labor organizations were growing in power. Railroads had to compete on the basis of service — and pay greater heed to public opinion.

What emerged (and prevailed for nearly five decades) was a shared understanding of railroading as a public utility and not strictly private enterprise. The literature of the early-to-mid 20th century is thick with the idea that railroads existed "to serve the public."

PUBLIC SERVICE TEST

A test of that consensus was The Great Flood of March 1913. A vicious storm swept the continent from the Rocky Mountains to the Atlantic seaboard. Railroads at that time were the nation's primary transportation network. Telegraph and telephone lines paralleled railroad lines, which often followed rivers and valleys where the storm damage was most intense. In the Midwest, every east-west main line was severed, save the Lake Shore & Michigan route hugging the Great Lakes. Communication was sparse and unreliable.

Flooding and winds killed almost a thousand people (the number is uncertain), caused widespread destruction, and isolated large swaths of the Midwest for weeks. Tens of thousands were left homeless and often destitute. Adjusting for inflation, the damage exceeded $9 billion in today's dollars. We had no reliable national weather agency or forecasting ability, so many people were caught unawares.

Government response at all levels was feeble because government itself was feeble. Disaster relief was local, mostly charity-based, and pretty much every man for himself. There were no real safety nets. Relatively few individuals and companies had insurance.

Railroads immediately stepped in to assist with every resource at their disposal. That was to be expected, given the complete integration of railroad mobility in almost every aspect of American life and its economy. To be sure, there was self-interest involved. At the same time, there was widespread expectation that railroads shared obligations to the people and businesses in their territories.

A few years after that storm, the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad issued a public policy statement. It was composed by Daniel Willard, the company's president, and went out over his signature. It read in part:

"It is our desire that people living along our lines should feel that The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad is a good neighbor. For instance, if they are visited by fire, flood, or epidemic, etc., they should instinctively call upon us first for assistance, because of our potential strength and our willingness to help them."

That was in 1916. Can you imagine a major American corporation today issuing that kind of blanket invitation? And then reminding the public of the policy for the following 25 years?

Still, things may be changing. Governments at all levels are investing billions of dollars in both passenger and freight railroading, and expecting a more nuanced understanding of public-private partnerships and mutually beneficial outcomes. In many ways, these evolving attitudes are not unlike the business and political climate of the 1820s through the 1870s.

HINGE MOMENTS

Sometimes, stress and trouble are the basis for real change — or at least, an opportunity to open conversations that otherwise wouldn't seem possible. Historians often call them "hinge moments."

Is this a useful inflection point — an opportunity to take a broad view of how railroads at many levels might play constructive roles in future emergent situations?

Practical responses might take many forms. An otherwise obsolete DOT-111 tank car with 35,000 gallons of potable water spotted as close to a disaster site as feasible could make a big difference to a large group of people. With modifications, a diesel locomotive can generate a great deal of usable electricity. Do you recall steam locomotives pressed into service as emergency steam plants? Or the portable substations that interurbans and trolley systems often used?

Baltimore & Ohio's yard at Zanesville, Ohio, in the aftermath of the Great Flood of 1913. The B&O would devote considerable resources to aiding communities.

Diversions of freight car loads were common a hundred years ago. Working with cooperative shippers, maybe carloads of building materials or fuel could be quickly reconsigned to disaster sites. The bills could be settled later, especially if there were prenegotiated agreements.

Instead of scrapping the hundreds of functionally sound Amfleet cars, what would it take to stage sets of them at strategic locations, ready to be deployed as rescue trains?

Some people will find these sorts of ideas impractical, ideologically abhorrent, or theoretically impossible. But let's not underestimate what good old-fashioned railroad common sense has to offer. Again, there are abundant precedents. The price tag might represent a bargain in the long run.

Most critically: Is there even a hint of interest in exploring these possibilities?

Ideas are easy. Execution is hard. But so is watching the struggles of so many people in situations where a bit of creative railroading might make a difference. We have seen that kind of good work before. Hopefully, we will see it again.

— *John Hankey*

A first for the Santa Fe

Coal demand kickstarted the nation's first point-to-point single-railroad unit train

Story and photos by Steve Patterson

Why would anyone establish a steel mill in California's Inland Empire? Possibly because in the early 1940s — the World War II years — land was plentiful and cheap, and raw materials were not too distant.

Henry J. Kaiser established just such a mill, as his huge, thick, steel ship plates were needed in the war effort at the nearby ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.

Initially, to keep his blast furnace and coke ovens supplied with coal from Price, Utah, the Denver & Rio Grande Western and Union Pacific handled the commodity in regular trains. The Santa Fe received the cars at Barstow, Calif., and delivered them to Kaiser's steel mill at Fontana, Calif. Kaiser's demand for coal grew so much that UP began to devote entire trains to the business, shepherding the tonnage up and over California's Cima Hill. Santa Fe crews sharpened their skills lifting the coal up the backside of Cajon Pass and then nursing it all the way down the west side to Fontana at 1,350 feet above sea level. Think steam locomotives and no dynamic braking.

Ultimately, in August 1955, Kaiser obtained over a half-million acres of coal land or rights to coal on the ancient Maxwell Land Grant, about 35 miles from Santa Fe's track at Raton, N.M., at the foot of Raton Pass. Surveyors with their tripods and equipment set about finding the best pathways to York Canyon's black honeyhole, beginning at French, N.M., a point on the main track. The first 18 miles were a snap, laying track on an abandoned Southern Pacific right way. It had served the mining town of Dawson, N.M., until 1950, when natural gas became cheaper than coal for the copper smelter customer in El Paso, Texas.

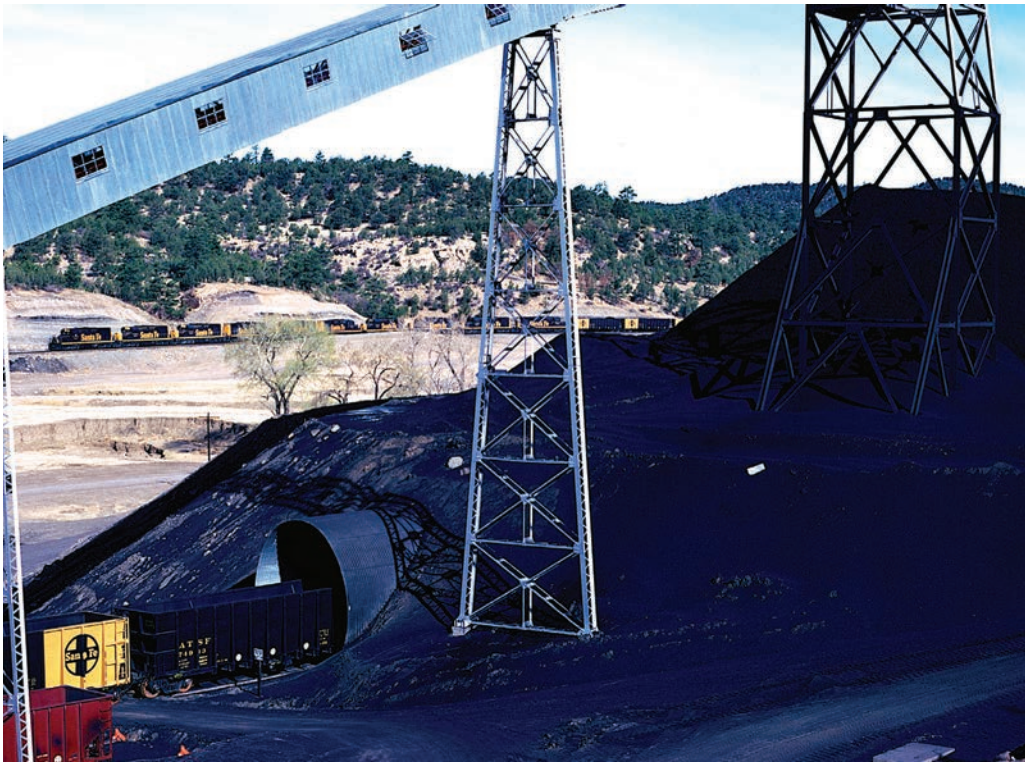
On Sept. 28, 1968, the Santa Fe diesel roster listed 50 Alco RSD15s, 2,400-hp locomotives. From the air, we can see 10 of them powering a unit coal train on the York Canyon Branch — six at the front (14,400 hp), four as the mid-train DPU (9,600 hp). The branch was closed in April 2003.

The York Canyon Mine was designed with a loop track for handling the unit coal trains. On May 9, 1967, 10 Santa Fe Alco RSD15s lug a string of gondolas around the loop for loading. Before departing, four locomotives will be moved to a mid-train position.

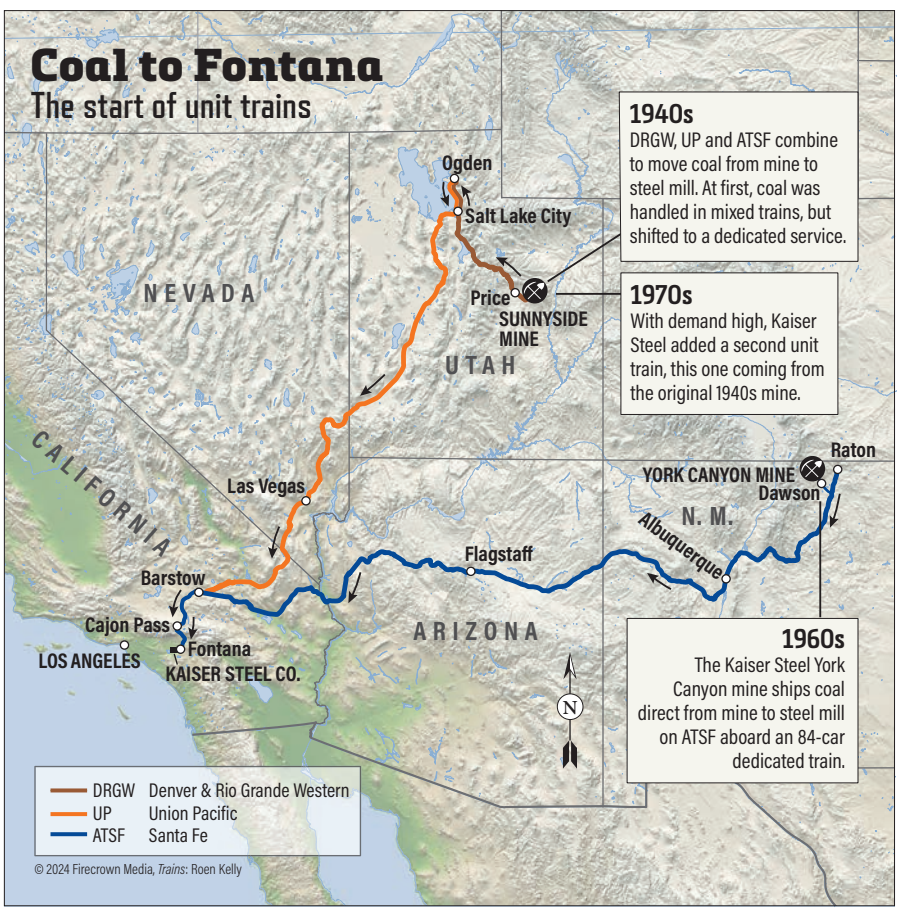
Santa Fe's coal gondolas pass through the load-out facility at the York Canyon Mine on May 9, 1967. The railroad had purchased 11 EMD SD39s to handle these unit trains, however, as of May 1967, they had yet to make an appearance in York Canyon, leaving the Alco RSD15s in charge.

The York Canyon quality bituminous coal mine was dedicated on Sept. 28, 1966, when special Santa Fe trains arrived, one from Chicago and the other from Albuquerque, N.M. They carried the presidents and directors of the Santa Fe and Kaiser Steel Co., as well as New Mexico's governor.

For this new unit train service, the first in the nation scheduled over one railroad from one point to another single point, Santa Fe had purchased 11 new EMD SD39s, as well as 101 gondola cars, black with yellow ends. These looked like hopper cars, but without any doors underneath, just solid bottoms. The railway intended to make the 2,164-mile round trip with 84 cars from York Canyon to Fontana every four days. The schedule called for the 11,000-ton trains to cover an unrealistic 541 miles daily, allow for both loading and unloading the train, as well as fueling the diesels at Albuquerque — a process for



At the York Canyon Mine, to load the dedicated coal gondolas the train was pulled around a loop track that included a tunnel passing under the storage pile. The cars emerged from the tunnel — to the right of this image — fully loaded.



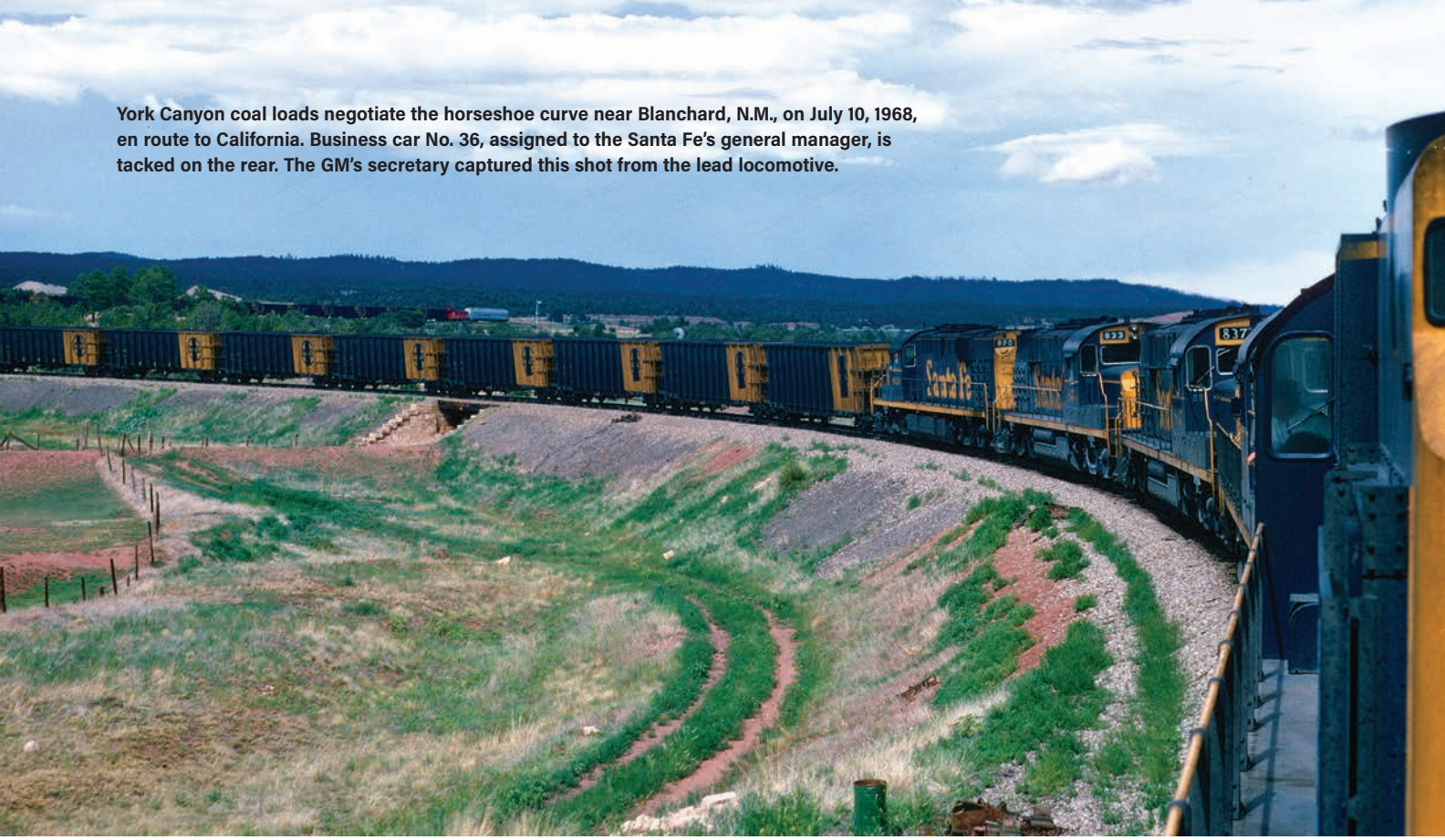
which locomotives were cut off the train and sent to the roundhouse area.

So, what did Kaiser and the railroads do? In January 1969 they added a second unit train running from the original Sunnyside mine in Utah. The D&RGW had improved the facility with 21 miles of new track, enabling unit-train operation. D&RGW conveyed the coal to UP at Ogden, which, in turn, hauled it to the Santa Fe at Barstow. Allowing 12 hours to unload at Fontana, this train was run on an 84-hour schedule, delivering 700,000 tons of coal per year. Were those schedules really sustainable?

With the introduction of remote-controlled — known as "distributed-power" — locomotives in York Canyon to California service, Santa Fe increased the train's gross tonnage. Fortunately, the steeper ruling grades, Glorieta and Cajon, were downhill for the loads. The spread-out length of the Arizona Divide was more moderate.

The big coal basin

As *Trains* reported in 2001 [see "Black diamonds … ," January 2001] it was May 1,



York Canyon coal loads negotiate the horseshoe curve near Blanchard, N.M., on July 10, 1968, en route to California. Business car No. 36, assigned to the Santa Fe's general manager, is tacked on the rear. The GM's secretary captured this shot from the lead locomotive.

1969, when the first unit train of Peabody coal left the Powder River basin on the Northern Pacific Railway. Unit trains and the astounding Powder River coal bed were made for each other. Such trains became the normal way for all that inconceivable coal just beneath the sod to leave that prairie [see "Storm clouds gather," March 2021]. Over time the black nuggets were shipped to 24 states, from Washington to Georgia, with more than 460 million tons riding the rails in pinnacle year 2008. Today the annual shipments and trains are less than half that, as more electricity producers turn away from coal. The Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis reports that for the first four months of 2024, less than 15% of our electricity comes from coal.

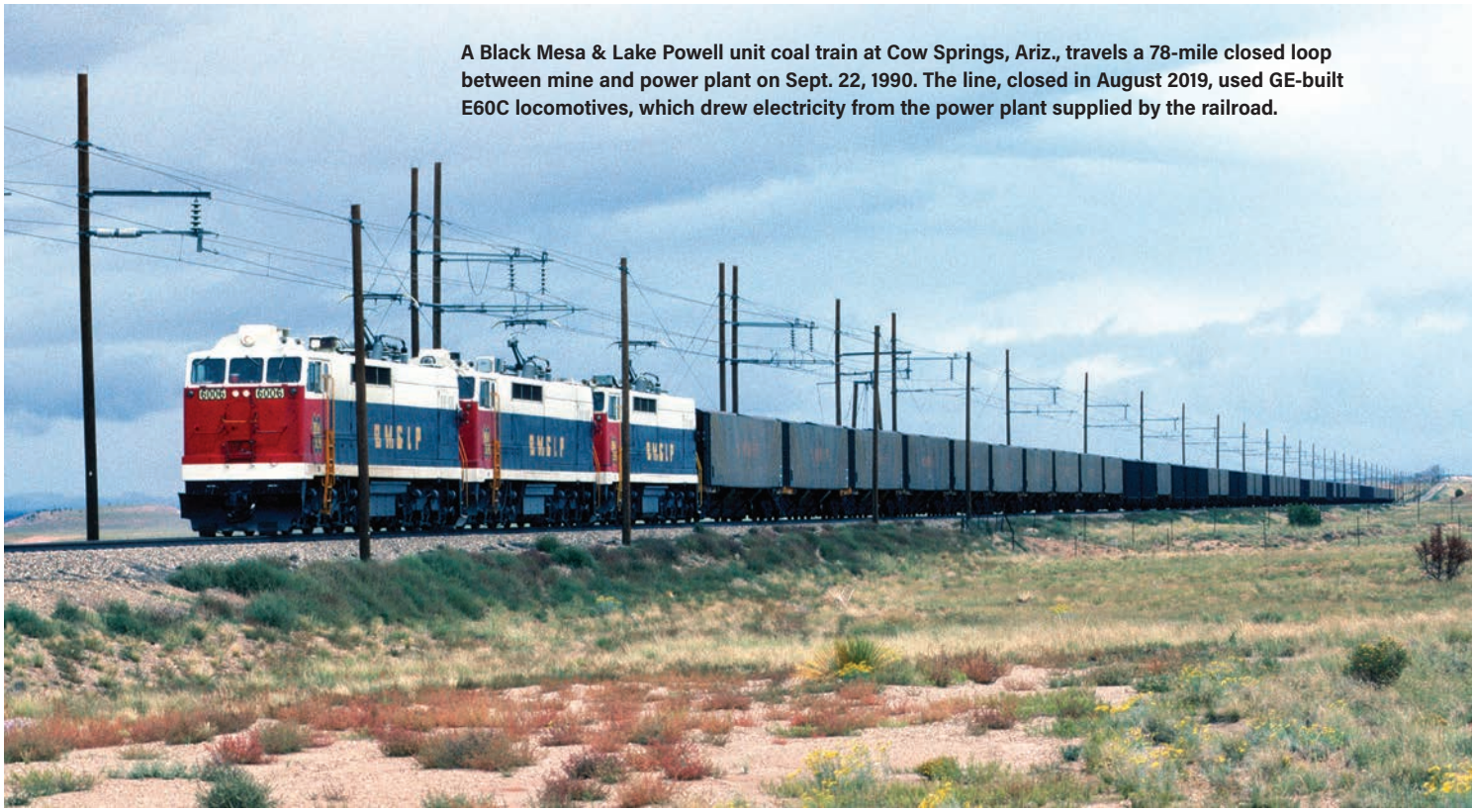
In what may seem like an unusual move, Santa Fe's eastbound No. 18, the *Super Chief,* bows to a heavy unit coal train, taking the siding at Blanchard, N.M., on July 10, 1968. Note the *Super Chief's* rear brakeman waving from the vestibule at the front of the last car.

Other unit coal train operations

Arizona's isolated and captive 73-mile Black Mesa & Lake Powell electric railroad began running its unit trains of Peabody coal in March 1974. It shut down after its final train on Aug. 26, 2019, because of "competition from cheaper energy sources," according to the railroad's obituary.

Another captive carrier, not widely known because it's within Navajo Nation lands, is the secluded 14-mile Navajo Mine Railroad, 20 miles southwest of Farmington, N.M. It began in 1974 with diesels, but a decade later converted to electric power from catenary with used GE E60s from the Northeast Corridor. It is capable of running 12 round trips in 24 hours, with two 21-car trains traveling the 14 miles between the mine and Four Corners Power Plant. While one train is unloaded, the other is loading. Front-end loaders fill the cars, some of which came from the BM&LP.

In 2017, the delivery of two GE ET44AC locomotives prompted the Navajo Mine Railroad to shift away from electric motive power. While the railroad continues to operate with diesels, three of the five generating units were closed in 2013, reducing the coal need. Plans call for the last two generators to operate through 2031.



A Black Mesa & Lake Powell unit coal train at Cow Springs, Ariz., travels a 78-mile closed loop between mine and power plant on Sept. 22, 1990. The line, closed in August 2019, used GE-built E60C locomotives, which drew electricity from the power plant supplied by the railroad.

In Colorado's northwest corner is the segregated, 33-mile-long Deseret Power Railway, hauling coal to the Bonanza Power Plant in northeastern Utah from its underground mine in Colorado's Rio Blanco County, north of Rangely. Currently, the railroad, which runs GE E60C electric locomotives, operates a 45-car train one or two times daily, Monday through Thursday, depending on demand. Occasionally, a third trip is made overnight. The standard power assignment is three locomotives per run.

Before it was nearly chased out of the city by public outcry, the Colorado Springs Department of Public Utilities coal-fired power plant patently and obnoxiously sat in view of too many city residents trying to see majestic Pikes Peak behind it. CSDPU had its own hopper cars running as a unit train over the D&RGW from Colorado mines to the downtown plant. The plant converted to natural gas a few years ago. A sister operation, about 15 miles south, still receives coal via the UP, but will also be converted to natural gas in the near future.

While recent discussion of unit coal trains lean toward the massive numbers emanating from the Powder River Basin, let's not forget the pioneer coal haulers in the east — Norfolk & Western, Virginian, and Chesapeake & Ohio, which expedited Appalachian coal to Virginia's tidewater around Norfolk for export. They performed successfully for decades, reflecting positively in company annual reports before there was any notion of Powder River Basin coal. These were the forefathers of entire coal trains routed from mine to a single destination, unload and repeat. But because those loads originated at multiple mines in the Appalachian Mountains, can we call them unit trains?

The disappearing coal trains

Today, nothing exists of Santa Fe's York Canyon branch, where this story began. Some prime land owners in New Mexico's Colfax County probably rejoiced with the railroad's abandonment of the branch. Trespassers took to hiking the old right-of-way, now owned and managed by hunting clubs, which charge for game expeditions.

In the lowlands of California's Inland Empire, the complexion of what was the Kaiser Steel mill has changed dramatically. What once was a steel-producing facility — consuming millions of tons of coal, and emitting a significant amount of smoke into California's environment — was closed in 1983. Economic conditions in the steel market made the old plant obsolete and not a candidate for upgrades. In 1984, California Steel Industries took over the plant and converted it into what is today — one of the largest steel rolling mills in the western United States. The mill is still rail served; however, coal and other raw materials have been replaced with inbound raw steel and outbound finished rolled steel.

Never known as a major coal transporter, like the Pennsylvania, Illinois Central, Norfolk & Western, Virginian, C&O, B&O, Western Maryland, the L&N or Clinchfield, the Santa Fe started the unit coal train movement in fall 1966, not realizing at the time it was creating history. But this was almost nothing compared to uncovering the colossal and cleaner Powder River coal deposit in 1969. After the ultimate merger of James J. Hill lines — the Burlington, Great Northern, Northern Pacific and the Spokane, Portland & Seattle — on March 2, 1970, to form the Burlington Northern, Powder River Basin coal became a staple for the new line.

Coal has been the largest revenue driver in railroad history. Moving coal has dwindled, with the word "coal" garnering dirty-four-letter-word status in environmental conversations.

Regardless of environmental and political ramifications and complexities, coal was a principal energy foundation of the United States, which holds some of the largest coal reserves in the world. And, railroad unit trains were there to move it.

Steam Update

Who's Hot and Who's Not?

Story and photos by Kevin Gilliam

Canadian Pacific No. 2816 leads the Final Spike Anniversary Steam Tour near Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada, on Day One of the engine's 2024 trip across the CPKC system to Mexico City.

▲ Norfolk & Western No. 611 steams through Swoope, Va., on Virginia's Buckingham Branch Railroad. The engine operated a series of sold-out excursions during the fall of 2023, but never saw a fire in 2024.

Another day, another year in steam preservation. Some predictions for 2024 were proven right, some were wrong, and some are yet to be determined as of this writing. Let's take an overview of the U.S. steam scene as we move forward into 2025, looking over highlights of the past year, and taking some sneak peaks into the future.

In the U.S., most engines are subject to the Federal Railroad Administration, and regulated by the 1,472-day/15-year inspection. This gives you 1,472 days under pressure or 15 years, whichever comes first. The effort in both time and money to keep engines certified makes for an ever-changing steam scene operating across the country.

REIGN OF THE MAINLINE LOCOMOTIVES

Would you believe the biggest event for U.S. steam in 2024 was an engine that wasn't even based in the U.S.? Instead, it was Canadian and based out of Calgary, Alberta. Canadian Pacific 4-6-4 No. 2816 put more miles on U.S. mainline rails in 2024 than any other engine with the exception of Union Pacific No. 4014. No. 2816 hauled a train all the way to Mexico City in the late spring and summer of 2024, commemorating the merger of Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern to form CPKC. The 2816 left Calgary on April 26, and crossed into the U.S. at Portal, N.D., on April 29. The Hudson headed east through Minneapolis to Chicago and Kansas City, before turning onto former Kansas City Southern trackage to another border crossing at Laredo, Texas, on May 29. Returning to Laredo on June 11, No. 2816 crossed into Canada on July 4, and returned to Calgary on July 10. In between, the CPKC steam crews put almost 10,000 miles on the engine over some rare mileage with the Final Spike Anniversary Steam Tour.

Restored to operation in 2002, No. 2816 operated over the Canadian Pacific main line for 10 years, including several ventures into the U.S. After more than a decade in storage, CEO Keith Creel reactivated No. 2816 for this Mexico excursion.

QUIET YEAR FOR THE NORTHERNS

On the flip side, it would appear the biggest surprise for 2024 was the Virginia Museum of Transportation's famed Norfolk & Western class J No. 611, which never saw a fire. After a successful 2023 season of sold-out excursions operating on the Buckingham Branch Railroad between Goshen and Staunton, Va., hopes were high for an encore performance in 2024. That didn't factor in the mid-summer resignation of several people from the museum's board, including the president, which effectively curtailed any operations in 2024. We'll leave No. 611 on the list, hoping for a better outcome in 2025. This situation with No. 611 highlights just one of many instances that goes to show the uncertainty of writing clairvoyant predictions, the difficulty of operating large mainline engines on short lines, and the benefits of owning your own track to ensure future operations.

Actually, the 4-8-4s just didn't have a good year, period. Despite a hotspot or two, as of the winter, Southern Pacific No. 4449 and Union Pacific No. 844 remained cold, even though they are theoretically able to run. Milwaukee Road No. 261, which occasionally operates excursions on the Twin Cities & Western and for local Santa Trains in the Minneapolis, Minn., area. The same goes for Southern Pacific No. 4449. Although technically operable, the Oregon Rail Heritage Center is now running its train rides over the neighboring Oregon Pacific Railroad with smaller power. The 2024 holiday trips are expected to have Polson Logging 2-8-2 No. 2, in operation. So, where does this leave No. 4449? For now, all dressed up and nowhere to go.

A similar situation exists with No. 4449's stablemate, Spokane Portland & Seattle No. 700. While the Pacific Railroad Preservation Association is moving forward with an overhaul, it is presumably waiting until prospects for operation become more favorable, instead of installing the tubes and flues, which will start the 15-year clock on boiler time.

In Cheyenne, Wyo., Union Pacific 4-8-4 No. 844 remains cold. While the engine is serviceable, and ready to have a fire lit any time should Big Boy 4-8-8-4 No. 4014 develop an issue, it should come as no surprise that UP's management in Omaha, not the Cheyenne-based steam crew, calls the shots. Right now, management wants the Big Boy running, so No. 844 waits, ready for a call to active duty, although prospects for operation remain somewhat cloudy for 2025.

In Albuquerque, N.M., Santa Fe 4-8-4 No. 2926 is operable and has steamed in 2024, but the engine has yet to move more than a few miles from its shop facility. There hasn't been an extended break-in run, and prospects for seeing the engine under steam outside of the Albuquerque city limits, so far, have not come to fruition. If that changes, it will be a huge story in steam preservation.

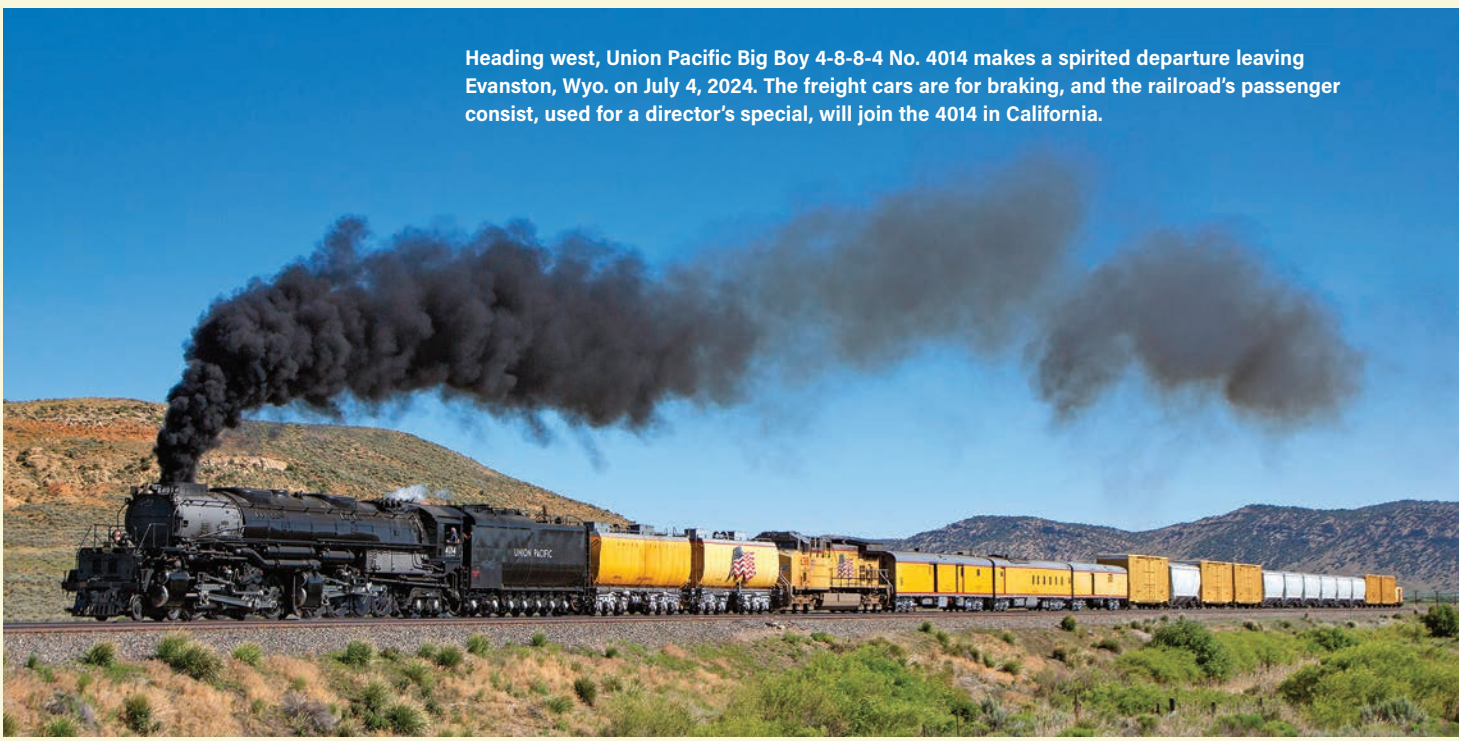
STEAM HOTSPOT IN PENNSYLVANIA

This leaves Reading & Northern T-1 No. 2102 in Pennsylvania to shoulder the load for the Northern class. Reading & Northern returned the big T-1 to steam in 2022, and since then, No. 2102 handles day-long excursions over the R&N system each summer and fall. The year 2024 brought some new mileage for the engine, with trips departing from the new Nesquehoning depot up the Lehigh Gorge to Pittston and Tunkhannock. With long and heavy trains, No. 2102 gets a workout, and when the T-1 is working hard, the Reading & Northern provides the best steam show in the country right now. Pick a spot on the grades near Jim Thorpe, Pa., and bring your earplugs. The T-1 is deafeningly loud when under a heavy throttle, and No. 2102 gets that chance to work hard on a regular basis.

Speaking of the Reading & Northern, the railroad also rosters 4-6-2 No. 425, which last steamed in 2022. The R&N crews are working on returning it to steam on a time-available basis. We thought No. 425 might return for 2024, but no such luck. We're opting to leave it on the list for 2025, and might be proven wrong yet again, but it's close.

BIG BOY ON TOUR

In UP country, Big Boy 4-8-8-4 No. 4014 remains the talk of the town wherever it goes. After a quiet year in 2023 as Union Pacific changed its CEO, No. 4014 was out and touring the system in 2024. The engine started off operating without the normal diesel assist for two days on the main line west of Cheyenne en route to California. Then, on the way back, it was the battle of titans: Big Boy vs. Donner Pass. It would be hyperbole to call it a battle; a tumble would be closer to the truth. A tree won … temporarily. After having its path fouled and con-



Heading west, Union Pacific Big Boy 4-8-8-4 No. 4014 makes a spirited departure leaving Evanston, Wyo. on July 4, 2024. The freight cars are for braking, and the railroad's passenger consist, used for a director's special, will join the 4014 in California.

verting a large steam engine into a mobile buzzsaw, the train was stopped, and the steam crew retrieved the big tools to untangle the downed tree and No. 4014. Some repairs and several hours later, Alco's ultimate throttled up and conquered the hill without further issues. It had a diesel helper by this point, and wasn't at full tonnage, either, but it was an impressive show … and No. 4014 did its fair share of the work. I don't think anyone trackside who waited went home disappointed.

In fall 2024, No. 4014 went for an eastern romp, hitting Chicago, St. Louis, Texas, and Kansas City before heading home to Cheyenne in late October. There was some new mileage for the engine with this tour, with operations down the former Missouri Pacific south of St. Louis and an interesting reverse move to get back to Cotton Belt trackage near Dexter, Mo.

EAST COAST

Western Maryland Scenic's ex-Chesapeake & Ohio 2-6-6-2 No. 1309 missed all of 2024 with a mechanical issue. Barring further unforeseen issues, No. 1309 should be ready to go this season. The compound articulated puts on a great show, especially on the 3% grades up near Frostburg, Md., and if you're lucky, you might just get a chance to hear the engine switch from compound to simple while under load at slow speed. The railroad also wants to return longtime power 2-8-0 No. 734, last under steam in 2011, to service, but this will be a long-term project.

At Pennsylvania's East Broad Top, 2-8-2 No. 16 spent most of 2024 with a cracked driving-wheel center, but returned in the fall as the railroad pushed new track south from Orbisonia towards Pogue. Next, 2-8-2 No. 15 is in the shops to be restored.

In New Jersey, two engines will debut in 2025. Woodstown Central 0-6-0 No. 9 returns to operation in Woodstown at the new Woodstown Central, and New York, Susquehanna, & Western's Chinese SY class 2-8-2 No. 142 returns to the Belvidere & Delaware River Railway in Phillipsburg after being down since 2017.

SOUTH

In Tennessee, you'll find a changing of the guard at Knoxville's Three Rivers Rambler excursion operation. Southern Railway 2-8-0 No. 154 debuted in 2010, and has been the primary engine for several years. This year, that will change. Washington & Lincolnton 2-8-0 No. 203, last operated in 2015, will re-enter service. In the meantime, the crews will work on No. 154's rebuild and a new engine, two-truck Shay No. 112. Ending service at the Conasauga Lumber Co. in Tennessee, the Shay was sold into preservation at North Carolina's Graham County

▲ **Restored to operation in 2022, Reading & Northern T-1 Class 4-8-4 No. 2102 departs the North Reading, Pa. station with an excursion to Jim Thorpe.**

Railroad, handling both freight and tourist runs — and painted red. You know that there's a rule about all 1960s tourist trains requiring bright colors, don't you? After the first of several Graham County shutdowns in 1970, the Shay headed west to the Oregon Pacific & Eastern, and later found its way to Texas. Last residing at the Galveston Railroad Museum, the Three Rivers Rambler purchased the Shay in 2020, and plans to return it to operation in Knoxville.

Continuing south, we come to Florida and the U.S. Sugar operation. The sugar giant and its common-carrier railroad, the South Central Florida Express, runs an impressive operation in Clewiston, Fla. With a 40-mph main line, an ever-expanding fleet of passenger cars, and an auxiliary water canteen last used by the New Georgia Railroad in the early 1990s, the Sugar Express is quickly building up a reputation for mainline steam runs. Former Florida East Coast 4-6-2 No. 148 returned to steam in 2020 and was backdated to the FEC livery for a photo special in early 2024. More expansion is planned for the future. U.S. Sugar acquired Atlantic Coast Line No. 1504, a USRA Light Pacific long displayed in Jacksonville, Fla., and shipped it to Chattanooga, Tenn., for restoration. That rebuild has been on hold as other needs were attended to, but now that the Florida operation is on steady ground, word is that the No. 1504 rebuild will be proceeding again. The return of No. 1504 will take some time, though, so don't get excited just yet.

MIDWEST

The Railroading Heritage of Midwest America in Silvis, Ill., is a place to remember. Following a donation by Union Pacific as the Class I pared down its heritage fleet in 2023, the RRHMA is rebuilding both UP 4-6-6-4 Challenger No. 3985 and 2-10-2 No. 5511. The Challenger is the further along of the two, and I wouldn't be surprised if we have this conversation next year and the story has changed. The return of No. 3985, operated in the Union Pacific program from 1981 until 2010, will be well received by many.

Not to be forgotten is the Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society's partnership with the Indiana Northeastern Railroad to create the Indiana Rail Experience. Nickel Plate Road 2-8-4 No. 765 has been racking up the miles with a variety of trips from short excursions to daylong outings in the tri-state area. Also hosting the Little River Railroad in Coldwater, Mich., itself with two operational steam engines, the Indiana Northeastern is fast becoming a regional hotspot for steam fans.

WEST COAST

In Nevada, the Virginia & Truckee is rebuilding Santa Maria Valley 2-8-2 No. 100, which last steamed in Utah in the early 1980s. It's looking like 2025 will be the year. Meanwhile, McCloud River 2-8-2 No. 18 keeps the fires burning hot in Virginia City as 2-8-0 No. 29 undergoes a rebuild.

Elsewhere, Nevada Northern 2-8-0 No. 93 held down the fort in 2024, but the railroad expects both 2-8-0 No. 81 and 4-6-0 No. 40 to be operational in 2025, giving it three engines for the first time in the tourist era.

Moving farther west, Washington's Mount Rainier Scenic Railroad roared back to life with Polson Logging 2-8-2 No. 70 operating a full schedule in 2024. Now, the railroad has moved Port of Gray's Harbor 2-8-2 No. 5 into the shops. No. 5 was a regular on the Mt. Rainier Scenic, but last steamed in 2003. Worn out and tired when it was removed from service, a familiar face may once again grace the rails around Elbe, Wash., and in the not too distant future.

All in all, 2024 was a good year for steam. Let's hope 2025 brings more of the same. See the following table of locomotive restorations for engines out of service for at least 10 years, followed by our predictions of what we think will be operable this year. Note that changes may occur. 1

Full steam ahead

In order to qualify for the active steam list, a steam locomotive must fit the following criteria:

- Be 2-foot gauge or larger.
- Operate in a public venue at least one day each year or be capable of running in a public capacity.
- Have some sort of prior life in regular service. However, replicas of historical significance are recognized.

Locomotive restorations – 10 years or more inactive

OWNER (RAILROAD)	TYPE	NUMBER	LOCATION	BUILDER	YEAR	GAUGE
ALASKA – 1						
Engine 557 Restoration (Alaska)	2-8-0	557	Wasilla	Baldwin	1944	Std.
CALIFORNIA – 2						
Niles Canyon (Southern Pacific)	2-6-0	1744	Sunol	Baldwin	1901	Std.
Orange Empire Railroad Museum (Grizzly Flats)	2-6-0	*2 Emma Nevada*	Perris	Baldwin	1885	Narrow
FLORIDA – 1						
U.S. Sugar (Atlantic Coast Line)	4-6-2	1504	Chattanooga, Tenn.	Alco	1919	Std.
ILLINOIS – 2						
Railroading Heritage of Midwest America (Union Pacific)	4-6-6-4	3985	Silvis	Alco	1943	Std.
Railroading Heritage of Midwest America (Union Pacific)	2-10-2	5511	Silvis	Baldwin	1923	Std.
INDIANA – 1						
Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society (New York Central)	4-8-2	3001	Elkhart	Alco	1940	Std.
KENTUCKY – 2						
Kentucky Railway Museum (Louisville & Nashville)	4-6-2	152	Ravenna	Rogers	1905	Std.
Kentucky Steam Heritage (Chesapeake & Ohio)	2-8-4	2716	Ravenna	Alco	1943	Std.
MAINE – 2						
Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington	2-4-4T	11	Alna	WW&F	New Build	Narrow
Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington	0-4-4T	10	Alna	Vulcan	1904	Narrow
NEW MEXICO – 1						
Cumbres & Toltec Scenic (Rio Grande)	2-8-2	492	Chama	Baldwin	1902	Narrow
NORTH CAROLINA – 1						
Great Smoky Mountains (Southern)	2-8-0	722	Strasburg, Pa.	Baldwin	1904	Std.
OHIO – 3						
Age of Steam (McCloud River)	2-8-2	19	Sugarcreek	Baldwin	1915	Std.
American Steam (as American Freedom Train No. 250)	4-8-4	Reading 2100	Cleveland	Reading	1945	Std.
Pennsylvania Railroad T1 Trust (Pennsylvania)	4-4-4-4	5550	Dennison	Undetermined	ETA 2030	Std.
OREGON – 2						
Oregon Rail Heritage Center (Oregon Railroad & Navigation)	4-6-2	197	Portland	Baldwin	1905	Std.
Pacific Railroad Preservation (Spokane, Portland & Seattle)	4-8-4	700	Portland	Baldwin	1938	Std.
PENNSYLVANIA – 3						
East Broad Top	2-8-2	15	Rockhill Furnace	Baldwin	1914	Narrow
Railroaders Memorial Museum (Pennsylvania)	4-6-2	1361	Altoona	Juniata	1918	Std.
RJD America (Chesapeake & Ohio)	4-8-4	614	Strasburg	Lima	1948	Std.
TENNESSEE – 2						
Nashville Steam Preservation (NC&StL)	4-8-4	576	Nashville	Alco	1942	Std.
Three Rivers Rambler (Conasauga Lumber/OP&E)	2T Shay	112	Knoxville	Lima	1923	Std.
WASHINGTON – 1						
Mt. Rainier Scenic	2-8-2	5	Mineral	Porter	1924	Std.
WISCONSIN – 1						
Mid-Continent Railway Museum (Chicago & North Western)	4-6-0	1385	North Freedom	Alco	1907	Std.
TOTAL: 25						

Operational steam engines in 2025

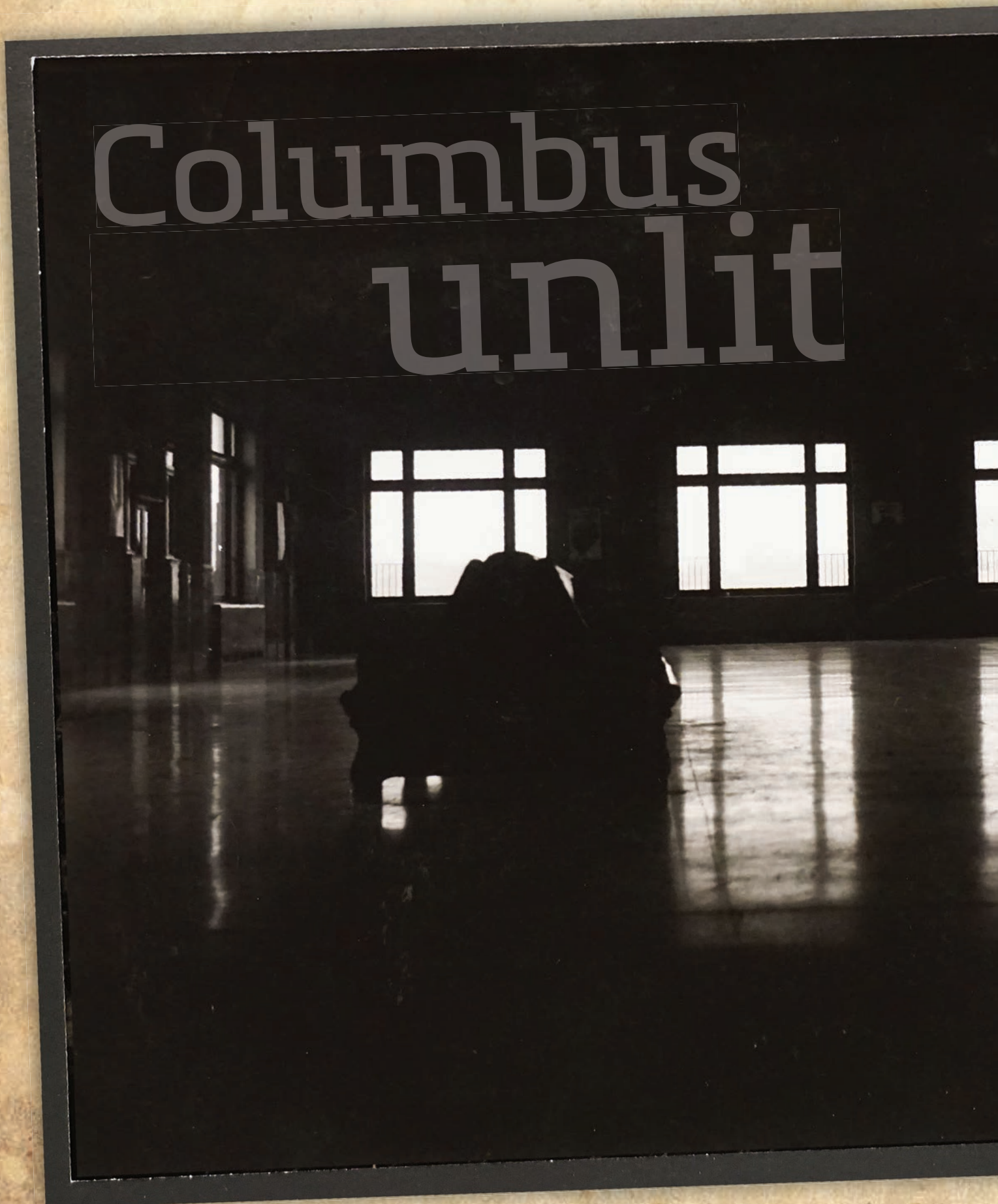
OWNER (RAILROAD)	TYPE	NUMBER	LOCATION	BUILDER	YEAR	GAUGE
ALASKA – 2						
Pioneer Park	0-4-0T	1	Fairbanks	Porter	1899	Narrow
White Pass & Yukon	2-8-2	73	Skagway	Baldwin	1947	Narrow
ARIZONA – 1						
Grand Canyon	2-8-2	4960	Williams	Baldwin	1923	Std.
CALIFORNIA – 27						
San Bernardino Railroad Historical Society (AT&SF)	4-8-4	3751	Los Angeles	Baldwin	1927	Std.
Disneyland	4-4-0	*1 C.K. Holliday*	Anaheim	WED Enterprises	1955	Narrow
Disneyland	4-4-0	*2 E.P. Ripley*	Anaheim	WED Enterprises	1955	Narrow
Disneyland	2-4-4T	*3 Fred Gurley*	Anaheim	Baldwin	1894	Narrow
Disneyland	2-4-0	*4 Ernest S. Marsh*	Anaheim	Baldwin	1925	Narrow
Disneyland	2-4-4T	*5 Ward Kimball*	Anaheim	Baldwin	1902	Narrow
California State Railroad Museum (Granite Rock)	0-6-0T	10	Sacramento	Porter	1942	Std.

OWNER (RAILROAD)	TYPE	NUMBER	LOCATION	BUILDER	YEAR	GAUGE
Nevada County	2-6-0	5	Nevada City	Baldwin	1875	Narrow
Knott's Berry Farm (Rio Grande Southern)	2-8-0	41	Buena Park	Baldwin	1891	Narrow
Roots of Motive Power	2T Heisler	1	Willits	Heisler	1916	Std.
Roots of Motive Power	2-6-2T	2	Willits	Baldwin	1910	Std.
Norgrove Railway	2-6-2T	5240	Arroyo Grande	Davenport	1918	Narrow
Norgrove Railway	0-4-0T	6 *Buckeye*	Arroyo Grande	O&K	1934	Narrow
Norgrove Railway	0-4-0T	*8*	Arroyo Grande	O&K	1938	Narrow
Santa Margarita Ranch (Pacific Coast)	2-4-0	*Roger Lynn*	Santa Margarita	Vulcan	1922	Narrow
Santa Margarita Ranch (Pacific Coast)	2-6-2	3 *Melodia*	Santa Margarita	Porter	1964	Narrow
Santa Cruz Portland Cement Stathi Pappas (at California Western)	0-4-0T	2 *Chiggen*	Fort Bragg	Porter	1909	Std.
Poway-Midland	0-4-0	3	Poway	Baldwin	1907	Narrow
Roaring Camp & Big Trees	2T Shay	1 *Dixiana*	Felton	Lima	1912	Narrow
Roaring Camp & Big Trees	2T Heisler	2 *Tuolumne*	Felton	Heisler	1900	Narrow
Roaring Camp & Big Trees	0-4-2T	3 *Khuku*	Felton	Baldwin	1890	Narrow
Sierra (Railtown 1897)	4-6-0	3	Jamestown	Rogers	1891	Std.
Chris Baldo (at Niles Canyon)	2-4-4-2	7 *Skookum*	Sunol	Baldwin	1909	Std.
Niles Canyon (Clover Valley)	2-6-6-2T	4	Sunol	Baldwin	1924	Std.
Niles Canyon (Robert Dollar)	2-6-2T	3	Sunol	Alco	1927	Std.
Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine	3T Shay	10	Fish Camp	Lima	1928	Narrow
Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine	3T Shay	15	Fish Camp	Lima	1913	Narrow
COLORADO – 12						
Colorado Railroad Museum (Denver & Rio Grande)	2-8-2	491	Golden	Denver & Rio Grande Western	1928	Narrow
Colorado Railroad Museum (Rio Grande Southern)	4-6-0	20	Golden	Schenectady	1899	Narrow
Cumbres & Toltec Scenic (Denver & Rio Grande)	4-6-0	168	Antonito	Baldwin	1883	Narrow
Cripple Creek & Victor	0-4-0	2	Cripple Creek	Henschel	1936	Narrow
Cripple Creek & Victor	0-4-0	3	Cripple Creek	Porter	1927	Narrow
Durango & Silverton	2-8-2	473	Durango	Alco	1923	Narrow
Durango & Silverton	2-8-2	476	Durango	Alco	1923	Narrow
Durango & Silverton	2-8-2	480	Durango	Baldwin	1925	Narrow
Durango & Silverton	2-8-2	481	Durango	Baldwin	1925	Narrow
Durango & Silverton	2-8-2	493	Durango	Baldwin	1925	Narrow
Georgetown Loop	2-6-0	40	Silver Plume	Baldwin	1920	Narrow
Georgetown Loop	2-6-0	111	Silver Plume	Baldwin	1926	Narrow
CONNECTICUT – 4						
Hawaii Railway (Connecticut Antique Machinery)	2-4-2	5	Kent	Baldwin	1925	Narrow
Valley Railroad Co.	2-8-0	97	Essex	Alco	1923	Std.
Valley Railroad Co.	2-8-2	3025	Essex	Tangshan	1989	Std.
Valley Railroad Co.	2-8-2	40	Essex	Alco	1920	Std.
DELAWARE – 2						
Wilmington & Western	0-6-0	58	Wilmington	Baldwin	1907	Std.
Wilmington & Western	4-4-0	98	Wilmington	Alco	1909	Std.
FLORIDA – 4						
U.S. Sugar	4-6-2	148	Clewiston	Alco	1920	Std.
Walt Disney World	4-6-0	1 *Walter E Disney*	Lake Buena Vista	Baldwin	1925	Narrow
Walt Disney World	2-6-0	2 *Lilly Belle*	Lake Buena Vista	Baldwin	1928	Narrow
Walt Disney World	4-6-0	3 *Roger E Broggie*	Lake Buena Vista	Baldwin	1925	Narrow
GEORGIA – 2						
Georgia Museum of Agriculture (Vulcan Steam Train)	0-4-0T	5	Tifton	Vulcan	1917	Narrow
Coastal Heritage Society	0-4-0T	30	Savannah	Alco	1913	Std.
HAWAII – 2						
Grove Farm Museum	0-6-2T	*Kaipu*	Lihue	Baldwin	1925	Narrow
Grove Farm Museum	0-6-2T	*Wainiha*	Puhi	Baldwin	1915	Narrow
ILLINOIS – 4						
Illinois Railway Museum (Frisco)	2-10-0	1630	Union	Baldwin	1918	Std.
Illinois Railway Museum (J. Neils Lumber)	3T Shay	5	Union	Lima	1929	Std.
Monticello Railway Museum (Southern)	2-8-0	401	Monticello	Baldwin	1907	Std.
Silver Creek & Stephenson	2T Heisler	2	Freeport	Heisler	1912	Std.
INDIANA – 7						
Gramling Locomotive Works (Jeddo Coal Co.)	0-4-0T	85 *Mack*	Ashley	Vulcan	1928	Std.
Gramling Locomotive Works (Lehigh Valley Coal Co.)	0-6-0T	126 *Sadie*	Ashley	Vulcan	1931	Std.
Hesston Steam Museum	2-6-0	2	Hesston	Porter	1909	Narrow
Hesston Steam Museum	0-4-0T	125	Hesston	CKD	1940	Narrow
Hesston Steam Museum (New Mexico Lumber)	3T Shay	7	Hesston	Lima	1929	Narrow
Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society (Nickel Plate Road)	2-8-4	765	New Haven	Lima	1944	Std.
Privately owned Bock Lumber Co.	0-4-4T	1	Hoosier Valley Railroad	Baldwin	1908	Std.
IOWA – 3						
Boone & Scenic Valley	2-8-2	8419	Boone	Datong	1989	Std.
Midwest Central (Surry, Sussex & Southampton)	2-6-0	6	Mount Pleasant	Baldwin	1891	Narrow
Midwest Central (West Side Lumber)	3T Shay	9	Mount Pleasant	Lima	1923	Narrow

OWNER (RAILROAD)	TYPE	NUMBER	LOCATION	BUILDER	YEAR	GAUGE
MAINE – 4						
Boothbay Railway Village (S.D. Warren Co.)	0-4-0T	2	Boothbay	Baldwin	1895	Narrow
Boothbay Railway Village	0-4-0T	6	Boothbay	Henschel	1934	Narrow
Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington	0-4-4T	9	Alna	Portland Co.	1891	Narrow
Maine Narrow Gauge Museum (Bridgton & Saco River)	2-4-4T	7	Portland	Baldwin	1913	Narrow
MARYLAND – 1						
Western Maryland Scenic	2-6-6-2	1309	Cumberland	Baldwin	1949	Std.
MASSACHUSETTS – 2						
Edaville	0-4-4T	3	South Carver	Vulcan	1913	Narrow
Edaville	0-4-0	11	South Carver	Porter	1925	Narrow
MICHIGAN – 8						
Buckley Old Engine Show	0-4-0T	7	Buckley	Army	1918	Std.
Henry Ford	4-4-0	*1 Edison*	Dearborn	Rouge	1932	Std.
Henry Ford	0-6-4T	3 *Torch Lake*	Dearborn	Mason	1873	Std.
Henry Ford (Detroit & Lima Northern)	4-4-0	7	Dearborn	Baldwin	1897	Std.
Crossroads Village & Huckleberry	4-6-0	152	Flint	Baldwin	1920	Narrow
Pere Marquette	2-8-4	1225	Owosso	Lima	1941	Std.
Little River	0-4-0T	1	Coldwater	Vulcan	1926	Std.
Little River	4-6-2	110	Coldwater	Baldwin	1911	Std.
MINNESOTA – 4						
Milwaukee Road	4-8-4	261	Minneapolis	Alco	1944	Std.
Western Minnesota Steam Threshers Reunion	0-4-0T	3	Rollag	Porter	1924	Std.
Western Minnesota Steam Threshers Reunion	0-6-0	353	Rollag	Alco	1920	Std.
Lake Superior Railroad Museum (Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range)	2-8-0	332	Duluth	Alco	1906	Std.
MISSOURI – 3						
Frisco Silver Dollar City	0-4-0T	14	Branson	O&K	1938	Narrow
Frisco Silver Dollar City	0-4-0T	43	Branson	O&K	1934	Narrow
Frisco Silver Dollar City	0-4-0	504	Branson	Kolben-Danek	1941	Narrow
NEBRASKA – 1						
Henry Doorly Zoo	0-6-2T	395-104 *Riva*	Omaha	Krauss	1890	Narrow
NEVADA – 9						
Dan Markoff (Eureka & Palisade)	4-4-0	4 *Eureka*	Las Vegas	Baldwin	1875	Narrow
Nevada Northern	4-6-0	40	Ely	Baldwin	1910	Std.
Nevada Northern	2-8-0	81	Ely	Baldwin	1917	Std.
Nevada Northern	2-8-0	93	Ely	Alco	1909	Std.
Nevada State Railroad Museum	2-6-0	1 *Glenbrook*	Carson City	Baldwin	1875	Narrow
Nevada State Railroad Museum (Virginia & Truckee)	4-4-0	22 *Inyo*	Carson City	Baldwin	1875	Std.
Nevada State Railroad Museum (Virginia & Truckee)	4-6-0	25	Carson City	Baldwin	1905	Std.
Virginia & Truckee (McCloud River)	2-8-0	18	Virginia City	Baldwin	1914	Std.
Virginia & Truckee (as V&T 30)	2-8-0	Santa Maria Valley 100	Virginia City	Baldwin	1926	Std.
NEW HAMPSHIRE – 4						
Clark's Trading Post (White Mountain Central)	3T Climax	6	Lincoln	Climax	1920	Std.
Loon Mountain (J.E. Henry)	0-4-0	*42*	Lincoln	O&K	1934	Narrow
Mount Washington Cog	0-2-2-0	9 *Waumbek*	Bretton Woods	Manchester	1908	Cog
Mount Washington Cog	0-2-2-0	2 *Ammonoosuc*	Bretton Woods	Manchester	1875	Cog
NEW JERSEY – 2						
New York Susquehanna & Western Technical & Historical Society (Belvidere & Delaware)	2-8-2	142	Phillipsburg	TangShan	1989	Std.
Woodstown Central	0-6-0	9	Woodstown	Alco	1942	Std.
NEW MEXICO – 7						
New Mexico Steam Locomotive & Railroad Historical Society (AT&SF)	4-8-4	2926	Albuquerque	Baldwin	1944	Std.
Cumbres & Toltec Scenic	2-8-2	463	Chama	Baldwin	1903	Narrow
Cumbres & Toltec Scenic	2-8-2	484	Chama	Baldwin	1925	Narrow
Cumbres & Toltec Scenic	2-8-2	487	Chama	Baldwin	1925	Narrow
Cumbres & Toltec Scenic	2-8-2	488	Chama	Baldwin	1925	Narrow
Cumbres & Toltec Scenic	2-8-2	489	Chama	Baldwin	1925	Narrow
Durango Railroad Historical Society (Denver & Rio Grande)	2-8-0	315	Chama	Baldwin	1895	Narrow
NEW YORK – 2						
Arcade & Attica	2-8-0	18	Arcade	Alco	1920	Std.
Scott Symans (Viscose)	0-4-0T	6	Syracuse	Baldwin	1925	Std.
NORTH CAROLINA – 3						
Great Smoky Mountains	2-8-0	1702	Bryson City	Baldwin	1942	Std.
Tweetsie	4-6-0	12	Boone	Baldwin	1917	Narrow
Tweetsie	2-8-2	190	Boone	Baldwin	1943	Narrow
OHIO – 7						
Age of Steam (Morehead & North Fork)	0-6-0	12	Sugarcreek	Baldwin	1907	Std.
Cedar Point & Lake Erie	2-4-0	1	Sandusky	Davenport	1927	Narrow
Cedar Point & Lake Erie	2-4-0	4	Sandusky	Porter	1942	Narrow
Cedar Point & Lake Erie	2-4-0	22	Sandusky	Vulcan	1922	Narrow

OWNER (RAILROAD)	TYPE	NUMBER	LOCATION	BUILDER	YEAR	GAUGE
Cedar Point & Lake Erie	2-4-0	5	Sandusky	Vulcan	1923	Narrow
Hocking Valley	0-6-0	3	Nelsonville	Baldwin	1920	Std.
J&L Narrow Gauge	0-4-0T	58	Youngstown	Porter	1937	Narrow
OREGON – 6						
Oregon Coast Scenic (McCloud River)	2-6-2	25	Garibaldi	Alco	1925	Std.
Oregon Rail Heritage Center (Mount Emily)	3T Shay	1	Portland	Lima	1923	Std.
Albany & Eastern (Polson Logging)	2-8-2	2	Lebanon	Baldwin	1912	Std.
Albany & Eastern (Santa Maria Valley)	2-6-2	205	Lebanon	Baldwin	1924	Std.
Friends of SP 4449 (Southern Pacific)	4-8-4	4449	Portland	Lima	1941	Std.
Sumpter Valley (W.H. Eccles)	2T Heisler	3	McEwen	Heisler	1913	Narrow
PENNSYLVANIA – 16						
Bucksgahuda & Western	0-4-0T	1 *Otto*	St. Mary's	Henschel	1939	Narrow
East Broad Top	2-8-2	16	Rockhill Furnace	Baldwin	1916	Narrow
Everett	2-6-0	11	Hollidaysburg	Alco	1920	Std.
New Hope & Ivyland	2-8-0	40	New Hope	Baldwin	1925	Std.
Northern Central	4-4-0	17 *York*	New Freedom	Kloke	2013	Std.
Pioneer Tunnel Coal Mine	0-4-0T	1 *Henry Clay*	Ashland	Vulcan	1927	Narrow
Railway Restoration (Central of New Jersey)	0-6-0	113	Minersville	Alco	1923	Std.
Williams Grove Historical Steam Engine Association (Pennsylvania)	0-6-0	643	Mechanicsburg	Altoona	1901	Std.
Steamtown (Baldwin plant switcher)	0-6-0	26 *Rover*	Scranton	Baldwin	1929	Std.
Strasburg	0-6-0T	*Thomas*	Strasburg	Porter	1917	Std.
Strasburg (Canadian National)	2-6-0	89	Strasburg	Canadian	1910	Std.
Strasburg (Norfolk & Western)	4-8-0	475	Strasburg	Baldwin	1906	Std.
Strasburg (Great Western)	2-10-0	90	Strasburg	Baldwin	1924	Std.
Reading & Northern	4-6-2	425	Port Clinton	Baldwin	1928	Std.
Reading & Northern	4-8-4	2102	Port Clinton	Reading Shops	1945	Std.
Stone Gables Estate (Harrisburg, Lincoln & Lancaster)	4-4-0	331 (formerly *Leviathan*)	Elizabethtown	Kloke	2009	Std.
SOUTH DAKOTA – 5						
Black Hills Central (1880 Train)	2-6-2T	104	Hill City	Baldwin	1926	Std.
Black Hills Central (1880 Train)	2-6-6-2T	108	Hill City	Baldwin	1926	Std.
Black Hills Central (1880 Train)	2-6-6-2T	110	Hill City	Baldwin	1928	Std.
Prairie Village	0-4-0T	11	Madison	Alco	1924	Std.
Prairie Village	0-6-0	29	Madison	Lima	1944	Std.
TENNESSEE – 5						
Dollywood	2-8-2	70	Pigeon Forge	Alco	1920	Narrow
Dollywood	2-8-2	192	Pigeon Forge	Baldwin	1943	Narrow
Tennessee Valley (Southern)	2-8-0	4501	Chattanooga	Baldwin	1911	Std.
Tennessee Valley (Southern)	2-8-0	630	Chattanooga	Alco	1904	Std.
Three Rivers Rambler (Washington & Lincolnton)	2-8-0	203 *Lindy*	Knoxville	Baldwin	1925	Std.
TEXAS – 3						
Six Flags	2-4-2	1 *Mary Ann*	Arlington	Cooke	1901	Narrow
Six Flags	2-4-2	2 *Lydia*	Arlington	Porter	1897	Narrow
Texas State	2-8-2	30	Rusk	Baldwin	1917	Std.
UTAH – 2						
U.S. National Park Service (replica of Union Pacific)	4-4-0	119	Promontory Summit	O'Connor	1979	Std.
U.S. National Park Service (replica of Central Pacific)	4-4-0	60 *Jupiter*	Promontory Summit	O'Connor	1979	Std.
VIRGINIA – 1						
Virginia Museum of Transportation (Norfolk & Western)	4-8-4	611	Roanoke	N&W	1950	Std.
WASHINGTON – 2						
Northwestern Railway Museum (Northern Pacific)	0-6-0	924	Snoqualmie	Rogers	1899	Std.
Mount Rainier Scenic (Polson Logging)	2-8-2	70	Mineral	Baldwin	1922	Std.
WEST VIRGINIA – 6						
Cass Scenic	3T Shay	2	Cass	Lima	1928	Std.
Cass Scenic	3T Shay	4	Cass	Lima	1922	Std.
Cass Scenic (Western Maryland)	3T Shay	6	Cass	Lima	1945	Std.
Cass Scenic	3T Climax	9	Cass	Climax	1919	Std.
Cass Scenic	3T Heisler	6	Cass	Heisler	1929	Std.
Locust Heights & Western	Class A Climax	1	Clarksburg	Mason	1974	Narrow
WISCONSIN – 3						
Camp 5/Lumberjack Steam Train	2-6-2	4	Laona	Vulcan	1916	Std.
Rock River Thresheree	0-4-0	3	Edgerton	Henschel	1944	Narrow
Steam Locomotive Heritage Association (Soo Line)	2-8-2	1003	Hartford	Baldwin	1913	Std.
WYOMING – 2						
Union Pacific	4-8-4	844	Cheyenne	Alco	1944	Std.
Union Pacific	4-8-8-4	4014	Cheyenne	Alco	1941	Std.
TOTAL: 178 (Note: Listings may change due to unforeseen circumstances.)						

Columbus unlit



By 1974, this station was a fascinating urban relic

By Bill Buchanan

Perhaps former Trains Editor David P. Morgan wouldn't mind if I repeat a photo pitch that he politely turned down 50 years ago. Time has made the images more vivid.

For Christmas 1974, my brother and I were visiting family in Columbus, Ohio. I was a high school senior from California learning photography, and during the break I needed to shoot some photos for my final class project in January.

My two cousins and brother were game to help me find good locations, and we had a few hours free on Christmas Eve. So we headed to Columbus Union Station, built in 1897 and barely functioning by the end of 1974. I like traveling by train; I was glad to explore the station.

When my photography teacher Jim Hatfield saw these images a few weeks later, he said he was happy I wasn't mugged. He told me the station looked abandoned.

It wasn't, nor had we felt unsafe, although I don't remember seeing anyone else there. The station served one last passenger train, Amtrak's New York/Washington-Kansas City *National Limited*, which in late 1974 stopped in Columbus about 3 a.m. daily, both eastbound and westbound. We were there in the afternoon.

The timing of the *Limited* let us walk around in a fascinating urban relic without trespassing or bothering anyone.

Part of the story is what you don't see in these photos: the holiday travelers who would have thronged these rooms and platforms in earlier decades. Twenty years previously, about three dozen trains stopped at Columbus Union Station. The trains had vanished with the passengers.

But even in the station's forlorn final years, what a great place.

If I could return, I would take more photos. I didn't shoot the exterior, for example, or most of the interior. The cost of film limited me. I also didn't have a flash. On the plus side, my friend Richard Neumann had lent me his twin-lens Rolleiflex that used 120 film. I had a tripod, so I could get sharp images even in low light.

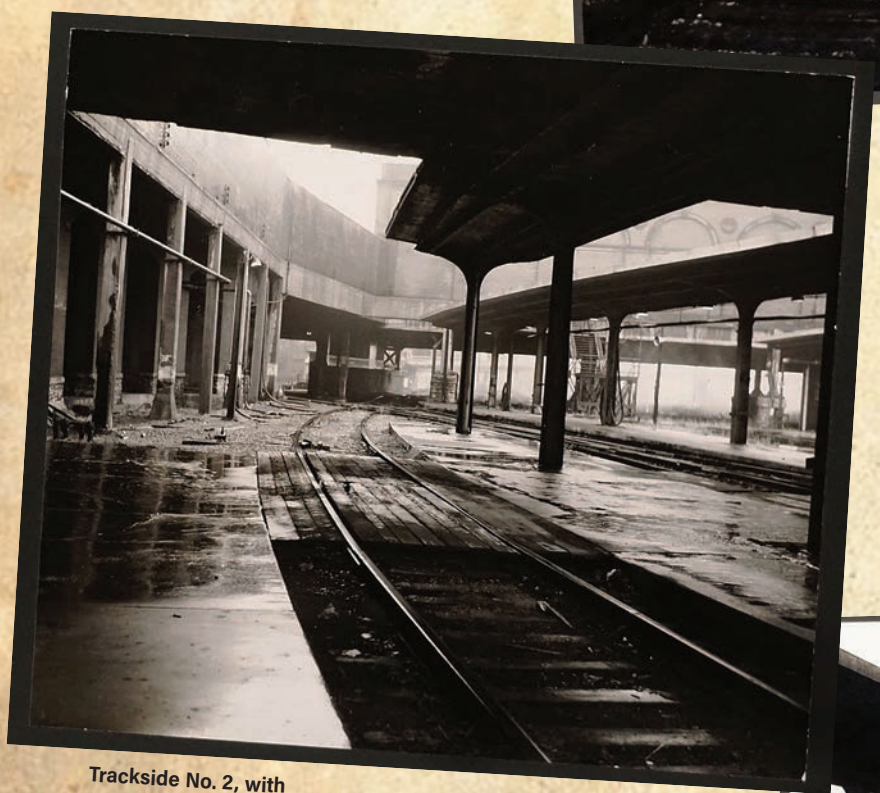
At first I tried different angles and exposures, like in the waiting room above the tracks, which was unlit but not as dark as you see here. For this shot I set the exposure for the gray light outside the windows, which cast the space into deep gloom. Still, you can see enough to interpret a few things. The polished floor suggests pride of care, and maybe lack of foot traffic. The single set of back-to-back benches suggests obsolescence.

Once we went down

to the tracks, I stopped experimenting. The ghost-town aura was strongest here. All I wanted was to show what I saw. If these photos had sound you'd hear drips of water, occasionally our voices, and eventually a passing freight in the distance. But mostly silence.

Also notice the near-absence of litter — few people means few cigarette butts or crumpled wrappers dropped on the ground.

The main trackside photo, with the support post on the left fading up into gloom; the worn phone box (if that's what it is) on the opposite post; the gravel on the pavement; the track curving away in the distance ...



Trackside No. 2, with water sheening on the platform, rails, ties, and dirt.

Trackside No. 3, which looks less derelict. That might be a type of luggage cart on the farther platform, and maintenance-of-way cars in the background.

. . . A Penn Central freight bypassing the platforms.

And a shot in the ornate men's bathroom, which had a mirror large enough to fit us all into a photo. My brother Jim Buchanan is on the left, then my cousins David Quist and John Quist. I'm the reflection.

We're all still alive, by the way. But, you know, add five decades.

I took the film back to my school's darkroom, developed the negatives and printed the photos, and wondered if the results were good enough to share. I read *Trains* and had ambitions to write for a living. So I mailed the photographs to the magazine.

David P. Morgan returned the photos with a short letter — I have it somewhere. He thanked me for the offer, and if I remember correctly, explained that he had already committed to station photos of some other kind. I've since worked as an editor and writer, and it can sting to offer work and never hear back. He sent and signed a personal note. That was class.

Columbus Union Station, designed by architect Daniel Burnham, was demolished starting in 1976. The *National Limited* moved to a temporary prefab station in April 1977. The train ended during the 1979 Amtrak cuts, and passenger trains have never returned to Columbus, Ohio.

Five decades have passed since I took these photos on Christmas Eve. The prints and negatives ended up in folders and boxes.

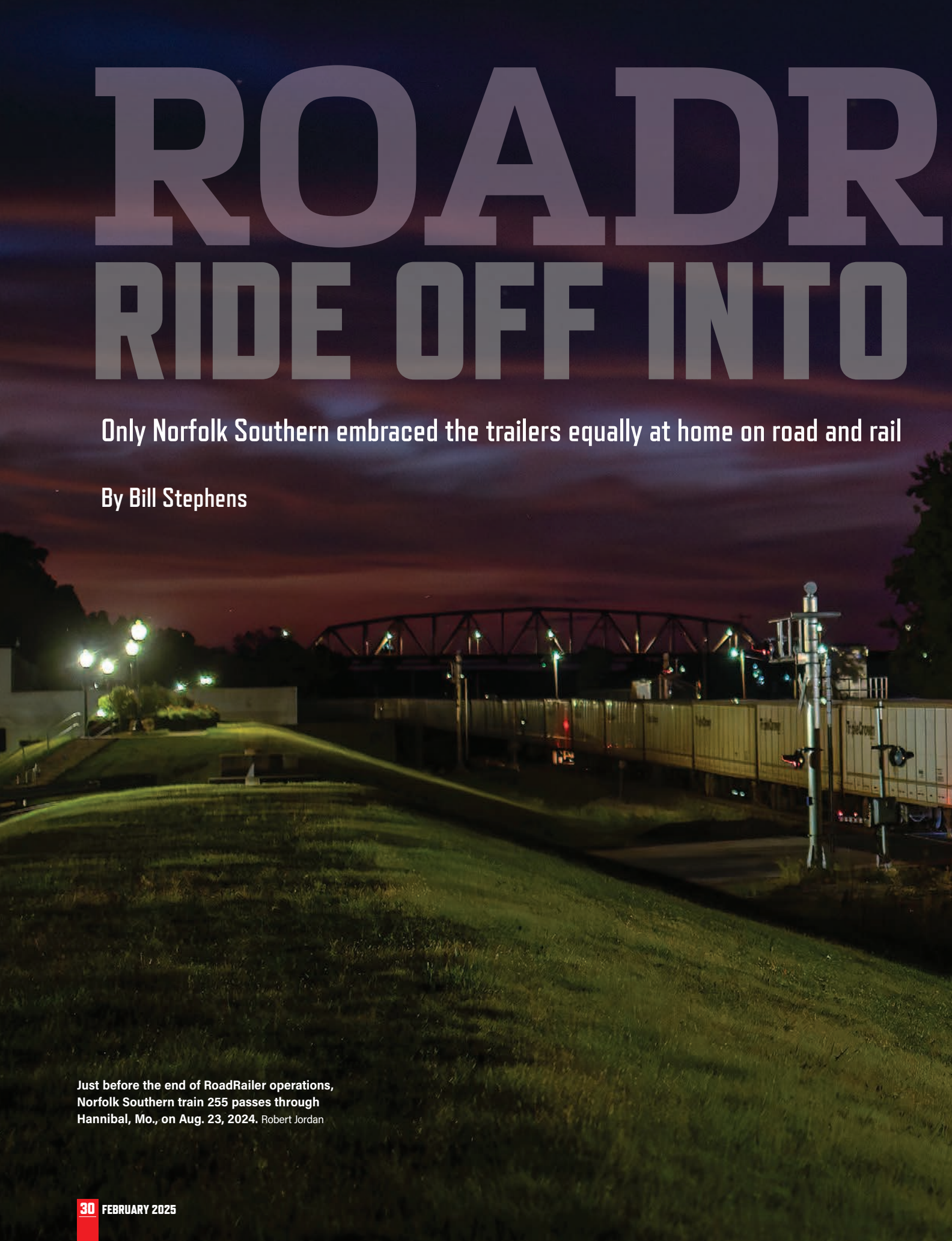
If I had been able to approach *Trains* in 1974, saying, "Dear Mr. Morgan, I wrote to you when I took these photos 50 years ago … if they weren't right for publishing then, maybe they are now."

He might agree. A half-century after these photos were taken, the shadows are longer. More substantial. More interesting. T

ROADR RIDE OFF INTO

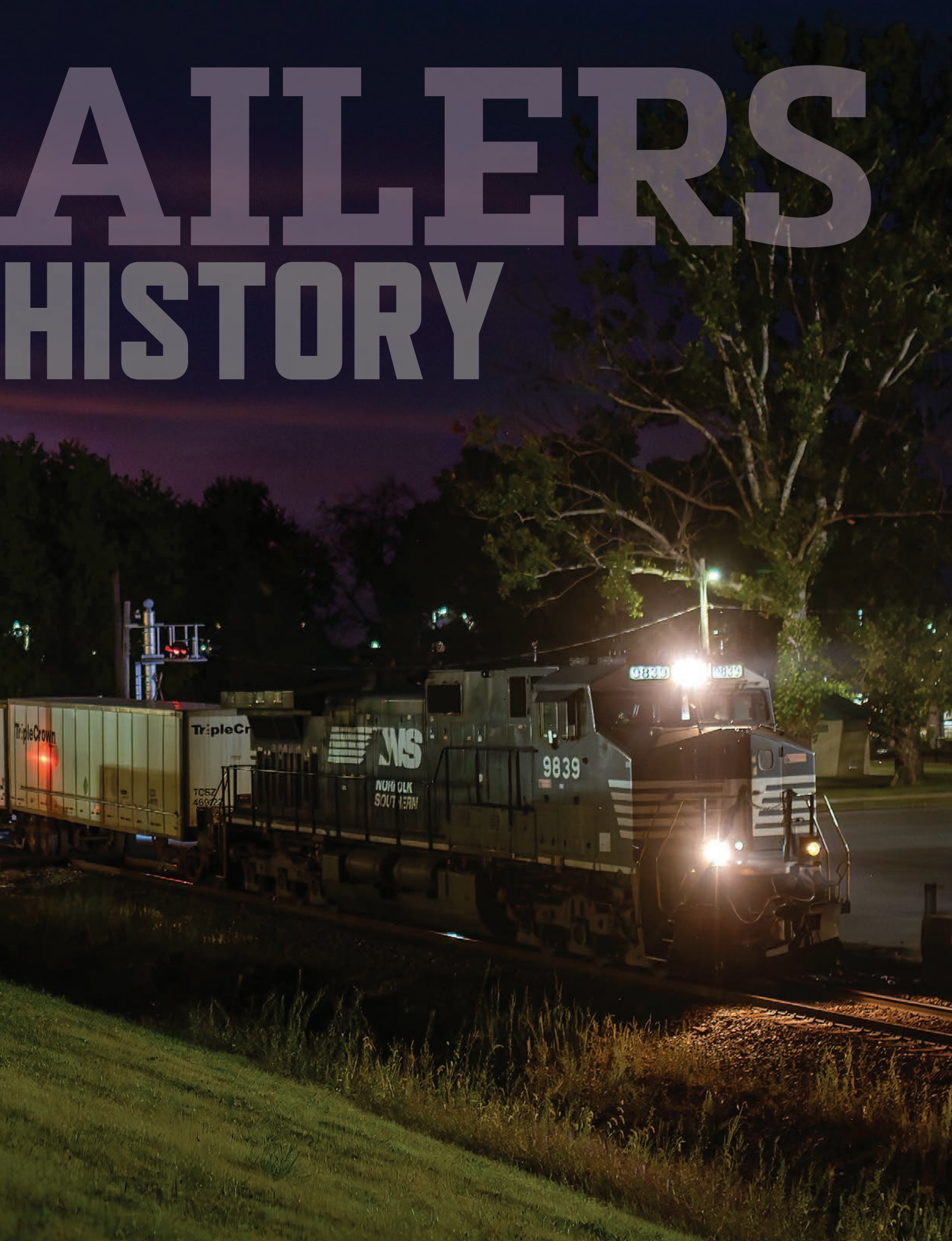
Only Norfolk Southern embraced the trailers equally at home on road and rail

By Bill Stephens



Just before the end of RoadRailer operations, Norfolk Southern train 255 passes through Hannibal, Mo., on Aug. 23, 2024. Robert Jordan

AILERS
HISTORY



Norfolk Southern hotshot No. 255 has a 2:20 a.m. date with destiny. It's the last departure — ever — of a Triple Crown RoadRailer train. In the Detroit terminal adjacent to Oakwood Yard, crews have 95 of the bimodal trailers staged on three tracks, ready to be assembled into tonight's train for the 715-mile run to Kansas City.

At half-past midnight on this warm Sunday, Aug. 25, however, it's looking like destiny may have to wait.

Things started off well enough. On terminal track 18, the last trailer was mounted and pinned onto its bogie at 11:40 p.m., an occasion that prompts fist bumps and handshakes among the terminal crew. Fifteen minutes later, nearly 24-year-old NS C44-9W No. 9936 couples onto the lead cut of 33 trailers on track 15. At 12:31 a.m. the old warhorse pulls forward to double the train over to track 17.

But there's a problem on the shove move and train 255 comes to a stop. The loud hiss coming from beneath TCSZ No. 468883 is a telltale sign of an air leak. The terminal crew swarms the trailer, inspects the line, and tightens a connection with a wrench — but to no avail. It's still leaking. They swap out the offending section of rubber hose. That doesn't work either.

No one wants a late departure. Not for the RoadRailer finale after a 38-year run on NS. And certainly not for the loads in those 95 trailers, which are scheduled to arrive at the Kansas City terminal at 2:45 a.m. on Monday. Among them: Auto parts bound for the Ford Kansas City Assembly Plant that builds F-150 pickups and Transit Connect vans.

With nearly four decades of building RoadRailer trains under their belt, the Road & Rail Services terminal crew has seen this before. They scramble off in their orange Kubota utility vehicle and return with the prize: A bypass hose. In the span of 6 minutes it's unspooled, zip-tied to the bottom of the trailer, and snugly connected to air lines at either end of TCSZ No. 468883. The air flows again and this time the pressure holds. The train is deemed good to go at 1:05 a.m.

Engineer P.G. Green pulls 255 into the clear and waits for

▲ **1 Terminal crewmen position the final trailer for the last RoadRailer train at 11:40 p.m. on Aug. 24, 2024. 2 Inspecting a brake-line problem threatening an on-time departure are, from left, Saemos Hancock, Dave Greene, and Manuel Torres. 3 The Road & Rail Services terminal crew poses with the last trailer. From left are Curtis Ellis, Donovan Hancock, Greg Reynolds, Saemos Hancock, Mike Williams, Austin St. Pierre, Ismael Siddique, Dave Green, and Triple Crown's Mike Theisen.** Four photos, Bill Stephens

1,250 TRAILERS REMAINED OUT OF A TRIPLE CROWN FLEET THAT ONCE TOPPED 7,000

conductor N.A. Noftsger to line the switch to track 18, where the last cut of 26 RoadRailers awaits. The hitch is made at 1:27 a.m., bringing No. 255 to a sleek 2,817-ton train that stretches 5,176 feet. The brake test is a success. And train 255 inches forward at 1:49 a.m., with its official departure time recorded as 1:50 a.m. — precisely 30 minutes ahead of schedule.

Current and former terminal employees quietly watch 255 ease out of the yard, with some using their phones to record the event for posterity. It's the end of an era.

A LONG SUNSET

It was no secret that RoadRailers — 1,250 trailers remaining out of a Triple Crown fleet that once topped 7,000 — were living on borrowed time. In 2015, NS decided that Triple Crown's razor-thin profit margins didn't justify the acquisition of additional RoadRailer equipment. And so the railroad pared the Triple Crown network from 13 terminals to just Detroit and Kansas City, where the RoadRailers would roll off their final miles before their inevitable retirement.

NS pulled the pin on RoadRailers in 2024 due to reliability concerns about the aging equipment and its increasing maintenance needs. As if to prove this point, the final train 255 encountered brake issues en route at Bluffs, Ill. The train arrived in Kansas City 4 hours, 19 minutes behind schedule on Aug. 26.

The same day, NS debuted the RoadRailers' successors: Trains 251 and 252, which link Toledo and Kansas City using Triple Crown 53-foot domestic containers that ride double-stacked in conventional well cars. To support the shift to Toledo, NS made nearly $30 million worth of terminal improvements that include 6,200 feet of additional pad tracks, 300 more parking spaces, three more cranes, and automated gates. Trains 251/252 are the first trains scheduled to originate or terminate at Toledo.

The 251/252 stack service uses Norfolk Southern's former New York Central Water Level Route between Toledo and Butler, Ind., where there's a connection to the former Wabash Detroit-Kansas City main line. The new route is 38.2 miles shorter, and train 251's schedule is an hour faster than the RoadRailer it replaces; 252's schedule is 50 minutes longer. Keeping the schedules roughly the same as the RoadRailers was essential. "It has to be, right? The automakers demand it," says Stefan Loeb, Norfolk Southern's vice president of business development and first and final mile markets.

Retaining the RoadRailer freight is a turnabout. When the Triple Crown network was truncated in 2015, all the loads in the closed lanes went back to the highway — underscoring the fact that RoadRailers enabled Triple Crown to operate a hub-and-spoke network that was not duplicated by conventional intermodal service.

▲ **Norfolk Southern C44-9W No. 9936 couples onto the first string of train 255's RoadRailers on track 15 in the Triple Crown terminal adjacent to Oakwood Yard in Melvindale, Mich., on Aug. 24, 2024.**

"This was a very transformative technology that worked," Loeb says. "And the real beauty of it is it allowed us to keep a business that a lot of railroads lost or struggled with over the years.

"I know a lot of people will see the sadness of it going away," he adds. But because RoadRailer lasted as long as it did, it gave Triple Crown a bridge to a new growth-oriented era on NS. "It's given us the opportunity to go back to its original plan, which was door-to-door auto parts across our network," Loeb says.

By transitioning Triple Crown to domestic containers, NS now can offer automakers dock-to-dock service anywhere on its 19,335-mile system, rather than just the Detroit–K.C. lane it served with RoadRailers.

FROM RAILVAN TO MARK V

The RoadRailer concept traces its roots to — of all things — passenger trains.

▲ **The last train 255 makes its way west at Oakley, Ill., on Aug. 25, 2024. Brake issues west of here would lead to arrival in Kansas City more than 4 hours late.** Bruce Harmon Bird

▲ **The trailer-on-rail concept began with C&O's Railvan, 27-foot trailers designed to carry mail and express behind passenger trains. The prototypes debuted in 1959; trailers ran in Chicago-Detroit service into the late 1960s.** Chesapeake & Ohio ▶ **The trailers were renamed RoadRailers in 1961.** John B. Corns

Chesapeake & Ohio's varnish was bleeding red in the 1950s as Americans yearned for the open road and got behind their steering wheels. To stem the losses from empty coach seats, C&O came up with a novel idea: Why not haul profitable mail and express in trailers behind passenger trains?

Its solution was Railvan, a 27-foot pup trailer that could operate on rails or road to reach facilities beyond the tracks. The equipment carried an axle with rubber tires and another axle with a pair of flanged wheels. An air-spring suspension system raised or lowered the correct wheelset to operate on pavement or steel. When on rails, the trailer's kingpin connected to an adapter truck.

The first three prototypes entered service in 1959, followed by 60 Railvans built in C&O's Grand Rapids, Mich., shops and others built by Visioneering Co. of Cleveland. The name was changed to RoadRailer in 1961, and they ran on the former Pere Marquette Detroit-Chicago corridor until the late 1960s.

RoadRailer would have been a mere footnote in rail history if not for Robert Reebie. A World War II pilot with an MBA from MIT, Reebie was a veteran of the New York Central marketing department during its FlexiVan days. Later, as a transportation consultant, Reebie authored the Federal Railroad Administration's 1976 National Intermodal Network Feasibility Study.

BIMODAL CORP. SET OUT TO CREATE A MODERN VERSION OF C&O'S RAILVAN

Reebie didn't believe that piggyback — carrying two 40-foot trailers on an 89-foot flatcar — would be a viable competitor to trucks. "The only time people used intermodal was if you had something that you didn't care when it got there, you couldn't break it, and you wanted to save a buck," says intermodal analyst Larry Gross, who worked with Reebie in 1979 and went on to become RoadRailer's most devoted champion.

Reebie formed Bi-Modal Corp., whose parent company acquired the C&O patents. Working with the original C&O engineers Kenneth A. Browne and Alan Cripe, his team set out to create a modern version of the Railvan. What emerged was the Mark IV RoadRailer, a 45-foot trailer with double highway axles. At the rear, it carried a set of rail wheels. At the front, it sat on a single-axle rail bogie with a long tongue that coupled to a slot in the trailer in front of it.

The system had several advantages over TOFC and, eventually, the domestic container. Because the low-slung RoadRailer eliminated the use of heavy flatcars, the trains required half the horsepower of a conventional TOFC train, and the diesels burned 50% less

fuel. Ride quality was superior because the RoadRailer train had virtually no slack and the trailers were never lifted. Plus, they were theft-resistant because the trailers were just 12 inches apart when coupled together on rails.

The RoadRailer terminals were low-cost, no-frills affairs: Spread gravel and dirt around a yard track and — presto — you've got a terminal. There was no need for expensive trailer-lifting equipment or for chassis and the complications they bring. And expansion was as simple as adding another tractor, or, for the Mark V RoadRailer, another forklift.

Bi-Modal Corp. ordered 250 Mark IV trailers from carbuilder Budd Co. Beginning in 1980 the 45-foot RoadRailers went on a barnstorming test tour on an alphabet soup of Class I railroads: AT&SF, B&O, BN, CN, C&NW, ICG, RF&P, SCL, SP, UP, and WP. On Sept. 28, 1981, Illinois Central Gulf became the first to put RoadRailers into revenue service. The trains, with four-person crews, operated on a 16-hour overnight schedule on its winding, 370-mile route between Louisville, Ky., and Memphis. They were dropped a year later due to a recession and the failure to negotiate a three-man crew deal.

The ICG service revealed Mark IV's several shortcomings. Its two-pipe brake system, which supplied air to the train line as well as the suspension system that raised and lowered wheels, was unreliable and incompatible with conventional systems. On the road, the trailer was heavy, which limited its carrying capacity. This problem was magnified by the position of the permanently attached rail wheels at the rear of the trailer.

"The weight distribution was all wrong," Gross says. "So not only do you have an 80,000-pound limitation on the rig, but you have a 4,000-pound limitation on the tandem at the back. And having all of this weight hanging beyond the tandem, that meant that you got to that limit really fast. So it was bad."

▲ **An Illinois Central Gulf RoadRailer train is assembled at Johnston Yard in Memphis, Tenn., on April 1, 1982. Two company rebuilds are involved: SW14 No. 1430 is putting together the train; the road unit, No. 8732, is a GP11. The ICG operation made clear the shortcomings of the Mark IV trailers, which included their weight and the system that provided air for train brakes and to raise and lower wheels.** Chuck Hinrichs

The design eventually was modified with a split-tandem arrangement that put the rail wheels between spread highway axles.

FITS AND STARTS

Unable to snare a rail customer, Bi-Modal set up a subsidiary to provide RoadRailer service over Conrail between Buffalo and New York City. The Empire State Xpress service ran from November 1982 to July 1984, operating 800 trains and carrying 19,000 revenue loads. But it was done in by a lethal combination of high costs and low revenue. Conrail used three-person crews over three crew districts between the Bronx and Buffalo, while a traffic imbalance with few westbound loads crimped revenue.

Complicating matters, Bi-Modal's parent company went bankrupt in December 1984. A year later Bi-Modal was acquired by the parent of freight-car manufacturer Thrall Car, which renamed its new subsidiary RoadRailer. Although the Empire State Xpress proved the equipment was sound, there were no orders for the trailers. Burlington Northern leased 220 Mark IVs from Bi-Modal's original order. Those trailers would go on to haul GM auto parts from Detroit to St. Louis to feed its assembly plant in nearby Wentzville, Mo., beginning in January 1986.

▲ **Later versions of the Mark IV trailer improved weight distribution by moving the rail wheel from the end of the trailer to a location between the two highway axles.** Doug Koontz

Grand Trunk Western participated in test moves from Detroit to BN interchange in Chicago but decided not to pursue revenue service. So BN trucked the loads from Detroit to Chicago, which added tremendous cost. GM then approached NS about running the trains on the former Wabash direct Detroit-St. Louis route. BN waved the white flag, NS leased the RoadRailers, and launched the first Triple Crown service in July 1986. NS replaced them with new Mark IV 48-foot RoadRailers. A second lane, linking Detroit and Atlanta, came in August 1987.

Meanwhile, other railroads were dabbling in RoadRailer. CSX gave TCS competition in the Detroit-Atlanta market with its XpressRail service and initially assigned F units to power the train. Union Pacific, the first user of the Mark V, gave Chicago-Dallas a try. Neither service lasted.

Amid this experimentation and growth at Triple Crown, in 1991 truck trailer manufacturer Wabash National purchased RoadRailer. "And then Wabash set out to take what was a railcar that could run on the highway and turn it into a trailer that could run on the rail — which sounds like the same thing, but is not the same thing," Gross says. "And so they took a bucket

▲ **A 48-unit RoadRailer train is westbound on Burlington Northern in the Chicago suburbs en route to Seattle on July 17, 1981, during Bi-Modal's barnstorming test tour. BN's short-lived Detroit-St. Louis RoadRailer auto parts service was scooped up by NS in 1985.** Bi-Modal Corp.

load of weight out of the trailer and just really refined it."

The much-improved Mark V system debuted in 1994. The 53-foot trailer was just 800 pounds heavier than a standard highway trailer. The permanently attached rail wheels were given the heave-ho. Instead, the trailers would ride on standard rail bogies. The trailers and bogies used a single, standard-diameter brake line that eliminated reliability problems. Plus, the stronger Mark V system meant railroads could string together 125 trailers, up from 75. Ultimately, the FRA approved RoadRailer trains of up to 150 trailers.

INTERMODAL UNICORN

Paradoxically, what made RoadRailer unique — operating in a parallel network with equipment that was never allowed to mix with conventional intermodal trains — was both the key to its success and is ultimately what led to its demise. As domestic intermodal service and equipment evolved over the past four decades, RoadRailer became more and more of a unicorn. To understand why, you have to go back to Triple Crown's beginnings.

When TCS RoadRailer service began in 1986, the NS board was concerned about the survival of the railroad industry. It saw intermodal as the future — and Triple Crown as a ticket to intermodal growth on a system cursed with short hauls and outdated terminals.

NS wanted to create a truck-like product and took a risk with RoadRailer. It was a better tool than TOFC, and the domestic container was still on the horizon. Some boxcars that carried auto parts for Ford, meanwhile, were reaching their retirement ages, and RoadRailers offered a way to transition the business to intermodal.

After scooping up the GM business from BN, Triple Crown expanded rapidly. By 1989, the network included Detroit-St. Louis, Detroit-Atlanta, Chicago-Fort Wayne, Fort Wayne-Buffalo, N.Y., Alexandria, Va.-Atlanta, and Atlanta-Jacksonville, Fla., routes.

Later TCS would add a route to Kansas City, plus off-NS service to Minneapolis via Union Pacific; Fort Worth, Tex-

▲ **CSX competed with Norfolk Southern's RoadRailer service between Detroit and Atlanta with a service it called Xpress Rail, shown here at Jacksboro, Tenn., on May 4, 1988. It became a railfan favorite because of railroad's decision to assign F units as power.** John M. Uhelski

WHAT SET TRIPLE CROWN APART FROM OTHER ROADRAILER USERS WAS THAT IT OPERATED A TRUE NETWORK, NOT JUST A LANE HERE OR THERE

▲ **A pan shot of the last run of train 255 highlights the final RoadRailer design, the Mark V that replaced the rail wheels on the trailer with standard rail bogies.** Steve Smedley

as, via BNSF; and Toronto, first via Canadian Pacific and later on Canadian National. (TCS would go on to link its network with CN's own Toronto-Montreal service that ran from 1999 to 2004.) In the years after Conrail became a Triple Crown partner in 1993, service was extended to terminals in Sandusky, Ohio; Rochester, N.Y.; Harrisburg and Bethlehem, Pa.; and northern New Jersey.

What set Triple Crown apart from other RoadRailer users was that it operated a true network, rather than just a lane here or there. And the key to it all was the Fort Wayne hub. Each night, RoadRailer trains from Chicago/Twin Cities, St. Louis/Kansas City/Fort Worth, Detroit, Atlanta/Jacksonville, Harrisburg/New Jersey would converge on Hugo Yard. There Triple Crown would orchestrate block swaps among all the trains. In some cases, single or just pairs of trailers would move from one train to another. On a typical night, 800 trailers would arrive at Fort Wayne and depart on different trains.

Another distinguishing factor was that Triple Crown spanned the so-called watershed, the area within a couple hundred miles of the Mississippi River and Chicago, the de facto dividing line between the Eastern and Western railroads. In this intermodal no-man's land where short hauls meant railroads couldn't compete with trucks, Triple Crown was able to offer single-line service by inking operational contracts with Western railroads, just as it did with NS. "We could take that 400-mile haul from the Twin Cities to Chicago and that would be part of a 1,000-mile haul," says Jim Newton, who served as Triple Crown's president from 1997 to 2015.

In the early 2000s, it appeared as though a fledgling North American RoadRailer network was emerging. Swift Transportation was using RoadRailers in the Interstate 5 Corridor. BNSF launched weekly Ice Cold Express perishables service from California to Chicago, and on to New York City in conjunction with CSX. CN was handling decent overnight volume between Toronto and Montreal, and linked its trains with Triple Crown at Toronto. Triple Crown hauled trailers over the highway between Fort Worth and Laredo, Texas, where they'd cross the border and hitch a ride on the back of TFM trains to Monterrey and Mexico City. Amtrak even got into the act, making RoadRailer trailers a part of its Mail and Express strategy.

"We really had the start of a national network at that point. And that was kind of the high-water mark," says Gross, who sold more than 10,000 trailers while head of sales at Wabash.

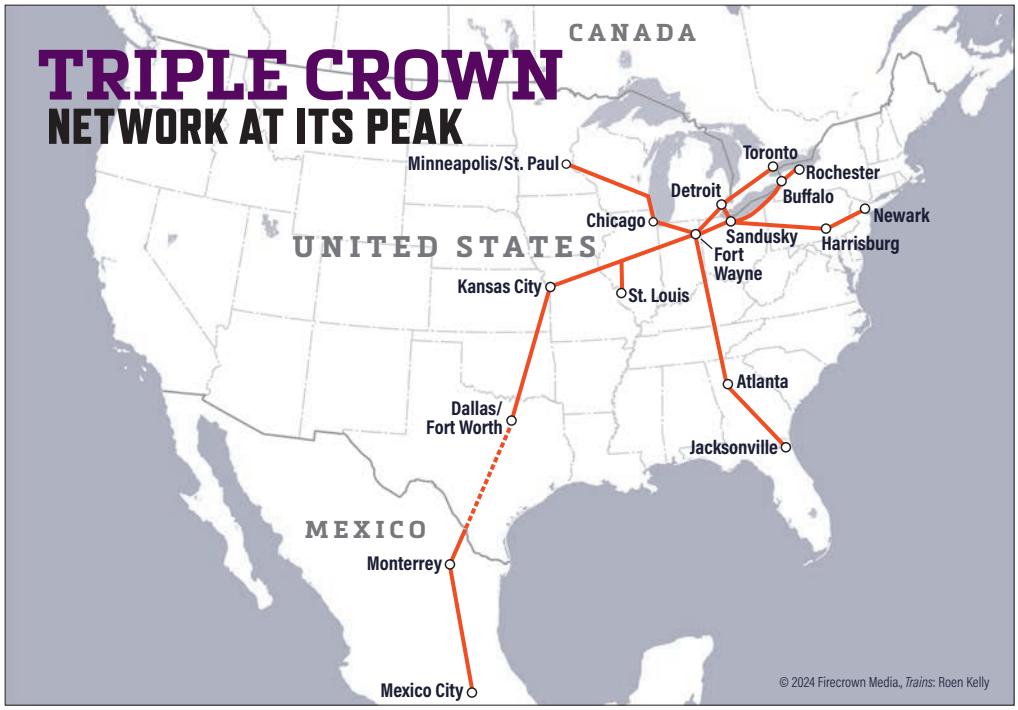
But one by one the dominoes fell. BNSF couldn't generate enough volume to justify a second weekly train. The FRA would not allow RoadRailers to co-mingle with conventional equipment, so BNSF simply began hauling its trailers TOFC style. CN killed off its service after a 2004 strike. Amtrak decided Mail and Express carried too much operational baggage, with prolonged switching moves delaying passengers. Swift converted to containers.

No other new customers emerged. And with Triple Crown expanding its fleet by acquiring the castoff equipment, Wabash's RoadRailer order book dried up.

TRIPLE CROWN'S RISE AND FALL

By any measure, Norfolk Southern took a patient, long-term approach with Triple Crown. The trucking subsidiary didn't turn a profit until 1993, the year Conrail became

▲ **Eastbound train 256 is at Sangamon, Ill., on Aug. 12, 2024, less than two weeks before the final run. The 2015 decision not to replace the aging trailers meant that the RoadRailer service has been living on borrowed time for years.** Bruce Harmon Bird



THE LEVEL OF TRIPLE CROWN'S PROFITABILITY WAS DEBATED WITHIN NS

a partner. "The years of start-up losses prior to achieving profitability is something that's hard to imagine in the context of current Wall Street pressure on the railroads," says Rick Paterson, an analyst for Loop Capital Markets.

Conrail was not exactly an enthusiastic partner. It acquired a half interest in Triple Crown as a defensive move. The assumption: If Conrail didn't participate, the RoadRailers would get to the New York City area anyhow via the back-door route east of Buffalo over the Delaware & Hudson and New York, Susquehanna & Western. As a partner, it could have a say in Triple Crown's expansion and learn how its service may compete with its own intermodal offerings.

Triple Crown became a wholly owned NS subsidiary again after CSX and NS split Conrail in 1999. Its top year came in 2007, when it hauled 294,000 loads and earned just under $400 million in revenue. That was enough to rank Triple Crown among the top 20 dry van full-truckload carriers in the U.S., just two decades after hauling 5,000 loads in its first full year of operation. Triple Crown's operating ratio was around 90%, which was typical for a trucking company but well below the 72.6% that Norfolk Southern posted in 2007.

"NS took the time to let the network develop and to grow to critical mass," Newton says. "By 2007, it's performing quite well. They're giving us great train service. We were growing. The customers liked it and it was starting to show its potential."

But trouble was lurking around the corner. Despite efforts to diversify its customer base, Triple Crown remained highly dependent on auto-parts shipments. Half of its volume, in fact, was auto-related. So when the Great Recession hit in 2008 and 2009 — drying up car sales, forcing assembly plant closures, and pushing General Motors and Chrysler into bankruptcy — it was a devastating blow. "We got battered in the recession," Newton says. The company was in the red for three years, and had only marginally profitable years after the economic recovery.

Kathryn McQuade, who served in various financial roles at NS for 25 years and was the railroad's executive vice president of strategy and chief information officer from 2004 through 2007, is surprised the RoadRailer network lasted as long as it did. "It was almost shut down many times in the past," she says. "Profitably was always a struggle and other rails didn't cooperate or like the technology."

The level of Triple Crown's profitability was hotly debated within NS, as was its role within the railroad. Some executives advocated expanding the network. Others wanted to convert the equipment to containers. And some just wanted to get rid of TCS because its retail intermodal operation sometimes competed with the railroad's other domestic intermodal customers. "We weren't very popular with the NS

▲ **Norfolk Southern RoadRailer trains make a crew swap at Reidville, N.C. Southbound train 248, facing the camera, is running several hours late after a locomotive failure near Manassas, Va.** Doug Koontz

▲ **Conrail was a reluctant partner in RoadRailer, acquiring a half interest in Triple Crown to have a say in the operation's expansion. Conrail power handles NS RoadRailer train 266, bound for Enola Yard near Harrisburg, Pa., at Pelham, N.C., on May 29, 1993.** Curt Tillotson Jr.

marketing people, and I understand why," Newton says.

The operating department wasn't a fan of Triple Crown, either. It sometimes treated the RoadRailers like a red-headed stepchild. Other trains might be given priority on the main line or be higher on the pecking order when crews were in short supply and a train had to sit at a terminal. Part of the reason why: RoadRailers could delay trains that produced more revenue and profit. "Dedicated hotshot trains played havoc with the network," McQuade says.

By the time 2015 rolled around, Norfolk Southern was feeling investor pressure to reduce its back-of-the-pack operating ratio. New CEO Jim Squires did a top to bottom review of the company's operations and began trimming. Triple Crown made an easy target.

"Technologically, Triple Crown was a real innovation. … and it worked very well for a while," Squires says. "The problem was it wasn't profitable. And it was a revenue generator and it did contribute significantly to our top line, but when you really started to dig into the cost, both the variable and the fixed cost associated with the assets we used in that business, it just wasn't a money maker for us."

He adds: "We had invested heavily in Triple Crown and were sorry to see it go, but it had to happen."

The intermodal world also had changed since Triple Crown's introduction. Domestic containers had become the industry standard. The ability to stack them meant that railroads could double the revenue in a train of the same length as a RoadRailer. "The efficiencies associated with double-stacked, 53-foot containers in a big train are just compelling in comparison to what you can pack into a Triple Crown train," Squires says.

Newton says this was the right decision from the NS perspective. "If you're the CEO of NS, and you're trying to get a 60% operating ratio, Triple Crown was not going to get that for you," he says.

▲ **The era of Triple Crown RoadRailer service is nearing its end as SD70M-2 No. 2770 handles Kansas City-bound train 255 on March 10, 2024.** Steve Smedley

ROADRAILER EPITAPH

Railroad history is filled with could have, should have, would have beens, including mergers that didn't happen, routes that were never completed, or milestone decisions like replacing steam power with diesels instead of catenary and electric locomotives. Now you can add RoadRailer to that list.

RoadRailer navigated several significant turning points over the past four decades. Had any or all of them turned out differently, perhaps RoadRailer would have thrived. The inflection points include:

• The flawed design of the initial Mark IV trailer. "If we

▲ **RoadRailer replacement train 252 is eastbound at Angle Crossing Road in Oakley, Ill., on Sept. 26, 2024. Keeping the traffic is a change from the fate of most other RoadRailer business.** Bruce Harmon Bird

had come out of the gate with the Mark V instead of the Mark IV, we might have had the runway to make it work," Gross says. "The Mark IV was a mistake."

• Aside from NS, no railroads set up separate subsidiaries to handle the commercial side of RoadRailer. Equipment, no matter how innovative, will only get you so far. Triple Crown was a trucking company that happened to use rail for the long haul, and was adept at marketing, sales, and providing door-to-door service.

• Norfolk Southern's decision to curtail the RoadRailer network rather than selling Triple Crown. "Triple Crown could have done quite well as an independent company," Newton says. Being a standalone would have offered several advantages. Among them:

> "TRIPLE CROWN COULD HAVE DONE QUITE WELL AS AN INDEPENDENT COMPANY," SAYS FORMER PRESIDENT JIM NEWTON

Not having to share revenue with a parent company and being able to reinvest profits in new equipment; the ability to negotiate service agreements with any railroad; and having investors who would be content with the 90% operating ratio of a trucking firm.

Newton believes Triple Crown would have been able to expand to serve Denver and places like central Iowa and central Wisconsin, which are relatively small markets that sit too close to Eastern interchanges to draw interest for interline moves with Western railroads. But they would have fit right into the TCS hub operation at Fort Wayne, where they could connect with other points in the RoadRailer network. "That is a market that's still there, and that's just a juicy plum waiting for the industry to pick when it can figure out how to do it," Newton says.

Double-stack is "absolutely killer" for handling large volumes long distances between city pairs, Newton says. But it's not the right tool for this job. "These markets I'm talking about don't have train-size volumes or even big intermodal block-size volumes going from A to B," Newton says. "They have three trailers going to Harrisburg, four trailers to Toronto, six trailers going to Jacksonville, that kind of volume. But going through a hub gives you enough volume to have critical mass and be able to run decent-sized trains."

• The FRA's refusal to allow RoadRailers to tag along coupled behind conventional intermodal equipment. That would have been a game-changer, Gross says, because it would mean RoadRailer could go anywhere. "With the FRA, it was always more testing data, more testing data, more testing data,"

Gross says. "And it was just never enough."

• The big fish that got away. RoadRailer could have become a national network if one of two things had happened. TIP Group sought to build a consortium of truckload carriers that would use RoadRailer to compete against top dog J.B. Hunt. And Schneider, the No. 2 truckload intermodal carrier, tested a batch of orange RoadRailers but ultimately decided to go with domestic containers.

"Some of the saddest words are what might've been, what could have been," Gross says. "It will forever be a sad thing for me that we came so damn close." T

▲ Norfolk Southern's Nickel Plate Road heritage unit, ES44AC No. 8100, handles train 256 as it exits a tunnel and crosses the Mississippi River at Hannibal, Mo., on Aug. 24, 2024. Joshua Clark

No thanks, I don't smoke

A road grader tests the conductor's willpower

by Andy Cummings

Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern SD40-2 No. 6363 rolls through the Minnesota countryside on a beautiful fall day. A locomotive like this, with the cab-roof-mounted horn, played a role in testing the conductor's non-smoking willpower. Craig Williams

SMOKING IS A HABIT THAT'S NEVER APPEALED TO ME. No smoking for me. During my time as conductor for the Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad, many of my engineers smoked. There was no choice for me but to grin and bear it. I never got used to it, but as long as they kept the window on their side of the locomotive open, I'd keep my dislike of smoking to myself, and that seemed to work. Still, I'm sure they all knew I wasn't fond of sucking in secondhand smoke.

One afternoon I departed Waseca (Minn.) Yard with an engineer we'll call "John" and a student engineer, sitting in front of me in the brakeman's chair — "Bill." We were making an Austin Turn on one of those fantastic fall days that give Midwesterners bragging rights for the best weather around for, oh, about two weeks of the year.

We were approaching what was known locally, and on the railroad, as the "schoolhouse" crossing a few miles east of Waseca at 25 mph, track speed. My engineer was blasting his horn with particular vigor, and starting quite early, at this crossing. Our lead SD40-2 had a cab-roof-mounted horn, so my brain was on the verge of shaking from this continuous racket.

I looked over at my engineer, and saw an expression on his face telling me something was terribly wrong. Looking ahead, and off to the left, a Waseca County highway department road grader was ambling toward the grade crossing at a few miles an hour, oblivious to our loud presence. As the grader's front wheels passed the crossbuck at the edge of the crossing, out of the corner of my eye, I saw John shove his automatic brake handle hard to the right. He was putting us into emergency braking. This was going to be close.

Seconds before we entered the crossing, the long front part of the grader was between the rails, and I could see a collision was, by now, almost unavoidable. I threw myself to the floor of the locomotive and grabbed onto the handrails leading up from the toilet compartment and shut my eyes, bracing for impact. A few seconds passed and I felt nothing. How had we not hit him?

I pulled myself back into my chair in time to see the side of our locomotive clear the grader. The driver must have thrown the thing in reverse at the last possible nanosecond and gotten clear of the crossing. I stuck my hand out the window, pointed it at the driver, and extended a finger that shall remain unidentified, as I felt the train's brakes grip and slide us to a stop — a good four or five car lengths past the crossing.

Bill asked me a question that, for the life of me, I can't recall. To be honest, I don't know if I even processed the question at the time. I must have been as white as a ghost. John let out a laugh at the sight of me and told Bill, "I think Andy's got to swallow his heart back down into his chest before he can answer." Then John pulled a pack of cigarettes out of his shirt pocket, pulled one out, and put it between his lips. As my breathing began to return to normal, John reached over to me with his pack of cigarettes. "You want one?" he asked, knowing full well I didn't smoke. For a second I forgot all about that junior-high demonstration of what smoker's lungs look like and considered his offer, then held up my hand, and managed to get out, "No, thanks."

John smiled as he lit up. "Now maybe you understand a little better why so many of us out here smoke." — *Andy Cummings*

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GREAT RAILFAN ROADS

LONE STAR ACTION

U.S. Route 287 follows the BNSF almost the entire way between Amarillo and Fort Worth

By John Friedmann • Photos by Blair E. Kooistra

BNSF RAILWAY'S ROUTE from Amarillo to Fort Worth has been twice reinvented — a secondary route rebuilt into a unit coal train conveyor, then repurposed to a primary California-Texas intermodal route. Broad vistas, interesting topography and about 20 trains per day, easily viewable from a closely paralleling highway, make the line a great railfan road.

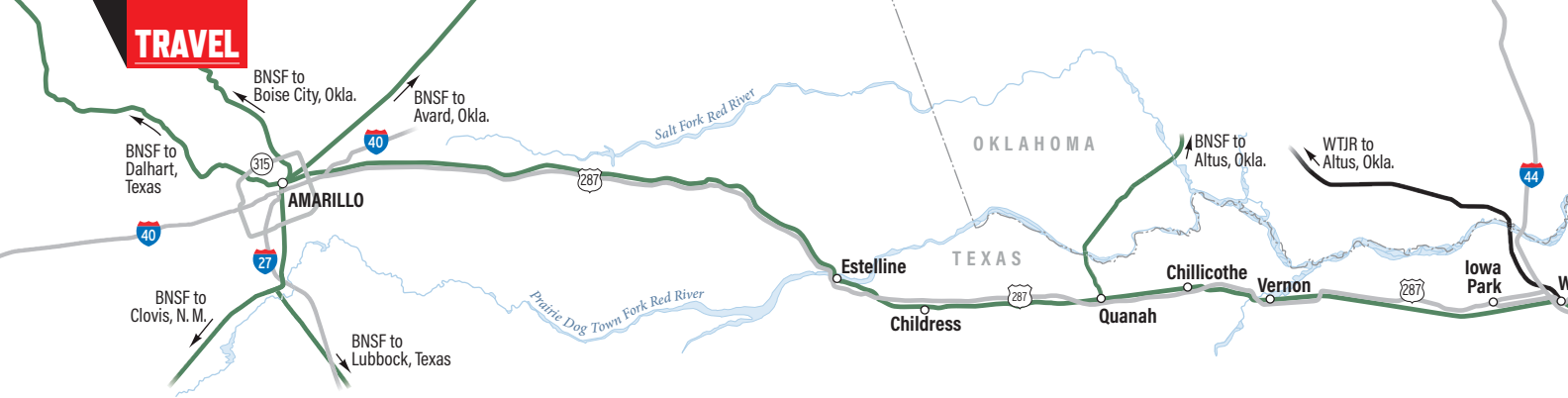
Born in the 1880s as the low-density main line of Burlington Route subsidiary Fort Worth & Denver (FW&D), the Amarillo-Fort Worth route was primarily known for hosting the streamlined *Texas Zephyr* between Denver and Dallas. Soon after passenger service ceased in 1967, Wyoming's Powder River Basin started to boom and the line became Burlington Northern's primary coal conduit to Texas power plants. As coal ramped up, BN invested in the line with improved signaling and sidings. While coal ran heavy through the first decade of the 2000s, the 1995 BNSF merger set the stage for the route's intermodal third act. Santa Fe built and BNSF expanded a brand-new intermodal terminal at Alliance on Fort Worth's north side, and the former BN Fort Worth-Amarillo route provided the terminal's West Coast outlet. Intermodal

grew as coal retreated, creating new value from the upgrades and capacity installed since the BNSF merger. BNSF continued to invest for intermodal, including full CTC signaling and strategic siding extensions that allow the route to handle 10,000-foot trains.

U.S. Route 287 follows BNSF almost the entire way between Amarillo and Fort Worth, usually right next to tracks. And U.S. 287 is fast. A car can cover the 339 miles in about 5 hours, downtown to downtown. Points of interest, railroad and otherwise, will slow you down, but the drive is doable in a day's time.

Amarillo is a major hub for BNSF, the junction of six subdivisions converging from all directions. The busiest route is BNSF's former Santa Fe transcon, an intermodal pipeline between California and Chicago, and part of that traffic from California turns at Amarillo and heads for Alliance down

The 3-mile descent from Bellevue, Texas, on a series of hogbacks with gradients of around 0.7%, are known as the "whoop-de-dos." They are a remnant of the cheap construction and surveying done by crews of the Fort Worth & Denver City in the 1880s. This eastbound is kicking up dust from the ballasting program on July 31, 2020.



In 2022, a westbound empty coal train cruises past the siding at Dickworsham, Texas, passing the gate for the Blake Brothers Ranch, whose road uses an abandoned section of US 287.

the FW&D. Almost all trains through Amarillo pass through East Tower, where the Santa Fe and FW&D crossed. The junction has been reconfigured to eliminate the diamonds, but volumes are still high. BNSF's Red River Valley Sub starts here, which U.S. 287 follows to Wichita Falls.

Be sure to see Amarillo's still-grand Santa Fe station, but don't bother hunting down the former FW&D depot: the once-handsome station was "beheaded" when the Pierce Street overpass was built over the building and now is an awkward one-story structure.

Leave Amarillo on SE 3rd Avenue and BNSF's Red River Valley Sub will soon appear on the left. Two miles later, the connection to the former Santa Fe Boise City Sub is also on the left. North of Amarillo, the BNSF Dalhart (ex-FW&D) and Boise City Subs are used directionally, so look for southbounds joining the Red River Sub here. Navigate the Interstate 40 interchange to U.S. 287 south, which follows BNSF about 300 miles to Fort Worth.

Along the Red River Valley Sub en route to Wichita Falls, U.S. 287 varies between two-lane, four-lane and limited access but even with the varying highway configuration the road stays right next to BNSF almost all the way.

BNSF's Red River Sub generally runs downgrade off the high plains from Amarillo until it reaches its namesake river valley about 100 miles southeast near Estelline (beware of the speed trap!), and keeps descending as it follows the Red River Valley toward Wichita Falls. BNSF crosses the broad Red River Valley on a long (almost a half-mile), low bridge that runs right next to U.S. 287. If you spot a train, there is a pull-off area from northbound lanes just north of the bridge.

The former railroad shop town of Childress, Texas, is 20 miles east of the river crossing. While no railroad structures remain except a disused railroad YMCA, FW&D Pacific No. 501 is nicely displayed on Main Street just north of the tracks. BNSF west coast intermodal trains change crews here (districts extend to Clovis, N.M., to the west and Fort Worth on the east). Other trains change crews at Wichita Falls.

Quanah is the most significant railroad point between Amarillo and Wichita Falls. Quanah was the headquarters of the Quanah, Acme & Pacific Railroad (QA&P, "The Quanah Route"), an independently-operated subsidiary of the St. Louis-San Francisco Railway that served as a fast-freight connection between Frisco and Santa Fe routes. The line's handsome Spanish Colonial Revival-style depot and headquarters in Quanah is now the Hardeman County Historical Museum, covering diverse subjects ranging from Native Americans to NASA. QA&P's tracks around Quanah are still used by BNSF to serve local customers, and the route north of Quanah is part of BNSF's Chickasha Sub to Altus, Okla. Look for BNSF local power near the wye east of the former QA&P depot.

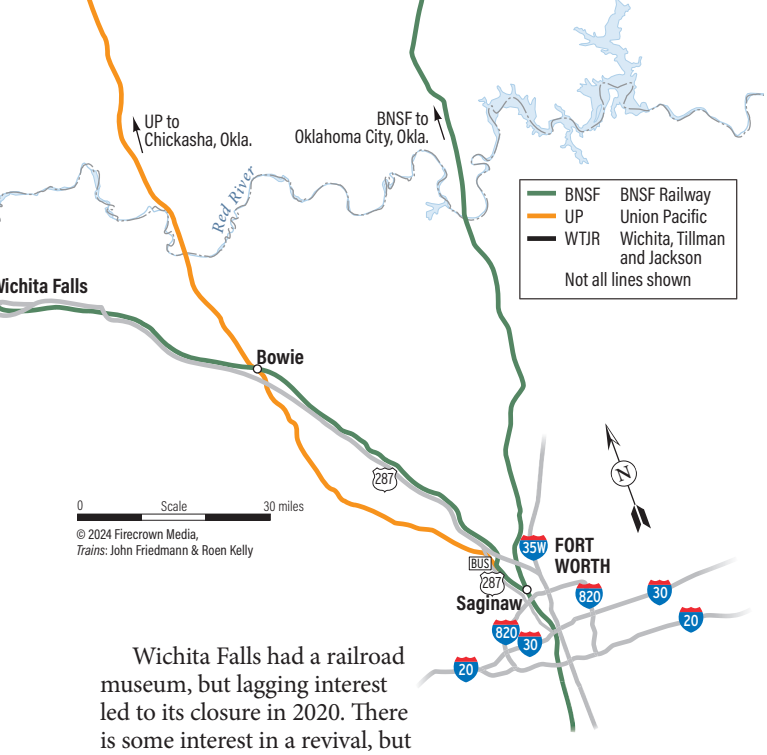
Along U.S. 287 just east of Quanah, shed a tear as you pass the closed Medicine Mound Depot Restaurant, a combination of the Quanah and Chillicothe depots that was a prime stop for chicken-fried steak.

Farther east in Chillicothe, BNSF has a loop track to serve Hardeman Grain and Seed. Hardeman has several first-generation Geeps and nearby Lone Star Grain also has its own locomotive — a former Santa Fe B40-8W.

U.S. 287 is generally close to the railroad, but deviates to circle around the towns of Vernon, Quanah and Electra. Turning onto Business 287 at Iowa Park will keep you alongside BNSF into Wichita Falls.

Wichita Falls (population 102,000) is the largest city on-line between Amarillo and Fort Worth, and some BNSF trains still change crews here. FW&D was always the major railroad in town, but the Missouri-Kansas-Texas also served Wichita Falls via a secondary route. Today, the MKT is Rio Grande Pacific's Wichita Tilman & Jackson (WT&J), based in Wichita Falls' former Katy yard.

Union Pacific has rights over both BNSF's Wichita Falls and Red River Valley Subs, but its most reliable appearance is a turn from Fort Worth to Wichita Falls and back to interchange with the WT&J.



The conductor of a loaded coal train opens the switch control box as the DPU of an empty clears the switch at Herman, Texas. Dispatchers now control the switch since CTC was installed. Tom Kline

Wichita Falls had a railroad museum, but lagging interest led to its closure in 2020. There is some interest in a revival, but for now you can see the museum's equipment where 9th Street meets BNSF on the site of the city's Union Depot. FW&D 2-8-0 No. 304 and MKT NW2U No. 1029 represent both of Wichita Falls' major railroads, and other freight, passenger and traction equipment rounds out the collection.

Heading east from Wichita Falls, BNSF turned 4 miles of the former MKT into a second main line for the adjacent FW&D. While the MKT line is fairly flat, the legacy FW&D main undulates through small hills and dips, a preview of what's to come farther east. At Control Point Rhea (adjacent to where Business 287 meets U.S. 287), all traffic shifts back to the FW&D right of way.

A meet between intermodal trains at Carter siding, west of Bowie, Texas, in 2022. Longer trains have caused headaches for dispatchers expediting hot intermodal trains such as the eastbound Z train disappearing over the rise.

The Wichita Falls Sub is short (114 miles), but is a big train-handling challenge due to the numerous "hogbacks" along the route. In less than 15 miles (roughly Bellevue to Bowie, Texas), the grade direction changes 25 times — virtually guaranteeing that today's 10,000+ foot trains are always going uphill and downhill at the same time! Distributed power helps, but engineers have to work hard to keep their train in one piece. While BNSF speed limits are up to 60 mph (45 for heavier trains), the line's sawtooth profile and need to control slack can keep speeds slower.

The engineer's nightmare is the photographers dream, however. U.S. 287 is right next to the Wichita Falls Sub to the outskirts of Bowie, providing ample opportunity to magnify the ups and downs with a telephoto lens.

At Bowie (appropriately, home of the world's largest Bowie knife, located close to trackside), BNSF crosses Union Pacific's ex-Rock Island Duncan Subdivision. Both routes head to Fort Worth, initially far separated and then coming together near Hicks. Business 287 follows BNSF and UP to the railroad hot spot of Saginaw, which also hosts BNSF's Fort Worth Subdivision (former Santa Fe main line from Oklahoma City) as well as the Wichita Falls Sub and Union Pacific. Intermodals to Alliance use the BNSF-built Trinity Connection (named for a nearby railcar manufacturer) that leaves the FW&D 2 miles north of the Saginaw diamonds at CP 11.

Saginaw's railroad attraction comes from the volumes at its diamonds (including Amtrak's *Heartland Flyer* on the former Santa Fe) and the industrial scenery includes several of the state's largest grain elevators and a pair of Trinity railcar manufacturing plants. U.S. 287 follows BNSF's Fort Worth Sub and UP south of Saginaw, passing between the former Santa Fe Saginaw Yard and Fort Worth's Meacham Airport (home of the Vintage Flying Museum) before separating from the railroads near the famous Fort Worth Stockyards.

Fort Worth doesn't lack railroad attractions — the downtown site of Tower 55 may be the busiest rail spot in the state, Union Pacific maintains its large Centennial Yard west of town, and commuter, tourist and Amtrak passenger operations are easy to find. But follow Highway 287 to Amarillo if you'd like to get on the open road for some interesting and easy railroad action.

WORTH STOPPING FOR

- Wichita Falls: this city has the most varied rail action along the route (BNSF main line, WT&J short line, and UP trackage rights trains). In addition, Eagle Railcar has a large shop along a remnant of the former Wichita Valley railroad southwest of downtown.
- Saginaw: For volume, Saginaw is one of the best train watching spots in Texas, and the grain elevators add interesting backdrops for photographers. Ardent Mills, Attebury Grain, Trinity Railcar and Viterra grain all have their own industrial units which add to the variety. (See *Trains*' July 2004 issue for an in-depth profile of Saginaw's rail scene).
- Claude and Estelline: Not necessarily worth stopping, but these towns are notorious speed traps. Many of the towns along the route generate revenues from issuing tickets to drivers, so keep an eye out for sudden drops in speed limits.

IF TIME IS SHORT

Make a quick round trip toward Wichita Falls from Fort Worth. The trip is less than 120 miles one way and features the line's interesting hogbacks.

BESIDES THE RAILROAD

Amarillo's Big Texan Steak Ranch features the 72-ounce steak challenge: it's free if you can eat it all in an hour.

Don't miss Wichita Falls' Newby-McMahon Building. The "world's littlest skyscraper" is a product of a con artist who built to a height of 480 inches (40 feet) instead of 480 feet.

The art of changing trains

Opportunities for photos, but don't miss your connection!

▲ **In summer 1981, a change of trains at New Haven, Conn., gave the author an opportunity to photograph and travel on new Budd SPV-2000s — a disappointment at the time, since he had been hoping for 1950s-era Budd RDCs.** Brian Solomon

RAIL TRAVEL OFTEN INVOLVES changing trains. I've always delighted in the transition from one train to another. These can be great moments to observe the railroad in action, make photos, and perhaps chat with railroaders and fellow passengers. I've sometimes planned changes to include a short layover.

For many travelers, changing trains represents unwanted stress and produces a host of anxieties. Will you make your connection? Which platform should you be on? What if the connecting train is late? Connections can be further complicated when you are traveling in a group or carrying a lot of luggage. The joy embraced by that veteran rail rider who casually saunters to the head end to capture photos is lost on the traveler fearful that an oversight might result in a night on a bench on some forsaken railway platform.

I learned the art of changing trains at New Haven, Conn., where as youths, my brother and I would make a connection. Typically, we'd change between a Budd RDC that worked the shuttle from Springfield, Mass., to a through train on the Northeast Corridor. We made this journey several times a year to visit my grandparents in New York City. On one occasion, about 1979, we were traveling northbound with my mother. When we alighted from the Boston-bound train, I was delighted to find a two-car RDC set where the leading car was still lettered for the defunct New Haven Railroad. Most passengers were focused on boarding the trailing car, I said, "Let's ride the New Haven car!" My mother acquiesced and we happily boarded the Budd antique, only to find that most of the remaining passengers had followed our lead. Clearly that 12-year-old knew where to go!

I'm not immune from train-change anxieties and missteps. More than 20 years ago, on a trip across Silesia in Poland, I was waiting on a crowded platform for my late-running connection when an announcement was barked over the public address system. Not being fluent, I didn't catch a word, but became alarmed when most of the other passengers hastily moved toward the stairs. I wondered if I should stay the course and continue waiting where I was, or follow the pack? I followed, and rushed to reach my train as it squealed to a halt on the opposite platform.

On another occasion, I was changing from a local train to the Zaventem Airport train at Bruxelles-Nord/Brussel-Noord. Normally, the airport train runs every 15 minutes. I was already a bit tight on time, and

A set of new Siemens Desiro ML railcars navigate the maze of tracks approaching Bruxelles-Nord/Brussel-Noord (Brussels North station) on Aug. 16, 2013. Traveling by rail in Europe often requires a change of trains, and while this offers an opportunity for photographs, be sure you leave ample time to make your connection. Brian Solomon

when I scanned the departure boards found no platform listed for the airport train. Staff of SNCB (National Railway Company of Belgium) are easily identified by their distinctive and smart-looking uniforms. I approached the nearest railroader and asked in English, "What platform for the airport train?" He gazed at the departure boards, then studied his portable device and said, "Oh! There is a problem. Follow me." He led me to platform 8. "You will wait here. The first train, it is canceled; but I assure you, the second train, it is running." I waited 20 minutes before a new Siemens Desiro Main Line railcar glided gracefully along the platform. I boarded quickly along with a crush of similarly anxious airport-bound passengers. I made my flight, but it was very close.

In 2016, I crossed northern France by riding a series of local trains. I began the morning in Basel, Switzerland, and changed trains at Strasbourg, Metz, and Charleville-Mezieres among other places. I had a hotel waiting for me at Valenciennes and my final change was at small station. The connection was tight. If I missed this train on the final leg of my journey, I'd be on that platform bench!

When the ticket checker came through the carriage, I voiced my concern. She said, "Don't worry, that is my train too. You will follow me and we will make it, but we must run." Our train kept losing time; the 7-minute connection, dropped to 5, 4, and then a mere 3 minutes. I waited anxiously in the vestibule. Before the train had come to a stop, the ticket checker opened the door and we hit the platform running. We darted down the first flight of stairs, sprinted underneath the tracks and up the stairs to an adjacent platform.

I could hear my train stopping as I dragged my wheeled bag up the stairs, and then jumped aboard as the doors closed behind me. No bench for me, just a lesson to not cut it too close between trains!

— Brian Solomon

WRM receives legacy BART cars

Cars will be part of new Rapid Transit History Center

▲ **BART "A" car No. 1164, with its slanted-nose operator's cab, is unloaded by two 50-ton cranes at the Western Railway Museum in Suisun City, Calif. The car was among the original 1970s rolling stock order and served as an equipment laboratory when it began its service life.** Two photos, Western Railway Museum

"A" car No. 1164, with its 5-foot, 6-inch track gauge, is being lowered onto a conversion dolly so it can be moved to the Jensen Car House on the museum's standard gauge track.

ON SEPT. 11, 1972, THE BAY AREA RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM, BART, made its first revenue trips in the San Francisco Bay area. In April 2024, 52 years later, the last "legacy fleet" cars from the original designs made their final revenue trips. As the "fleet of the future" new cars were phased in, BART began grappling with the disposition of 669 legacy vehicles.

Anticipating the retirement, Western Railway Museum officials met with BART directors on Jan. 20, 2019, requesting a number of the original-design cars be donated to the organization. After six years of work, the last of three cars arrived at WRM in October 2024.

The museum, located in Suisun City, Calif., 55 miles east of San Francisco, tells the story of electric railways in northern California and the western United States. The BART cars speak to recent urban transportation.

The BART system was a groundbreaking concept when developed in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Using new technology, innovative engineering, and emerging construction techniques, the system was to be the world's first fully automated rapid transit system. Engineers followed the mantra "if we can put a man on the moon, we can build an ATO (automatic train operation) rapid transit system." Ironically, at the time, man had yet to land on the moon.

The new system was designed with 90-mph track geometry, a planned top speed of 80 mph, and an average speed of 45 mph. Part of the new BART technology enabled trains to automatically stop within inches of designated platform points.

The first 454 "A" and "B" cars were fabricated by Rohr Industries of Chula Vista, Calif. The A cars have the distinctive BART slanted nose operator's compartment and could be used at either end of the train.

Sandwiched between two A cars were the B cars, which have no operating controls. An imbalance between A and B cars and system needs led to the development of a "C" car, which could run mid-train, but also had operational controls. The C cars were manufactured by Alstom and Morrison-Knudsen.

WRM received A No. 1164, B No. 1834 and C No. 329, which will be exhibited in a climate-controlled car house. The 75-foot-long cars each weigh a bit under 64,000 pounds. Combined, all three cars traveled more than 15 million miles while in service. When unloaded at WRM, each axle was placed on a conversion dolly. These cradle-like units support the 5-foot, 6-inch BART axles, allowing movement on the museum's standard-gauge track. BART also donated early system artifacts and engineering documents, some of which will be displayed with the cars in a new Rapid Transit History Center, telling the BART story.

For more information on the Western Railway Museum and the RTHC exhibit, visit: wrm.org. — *Bob Simon, Bob Lettenberger*

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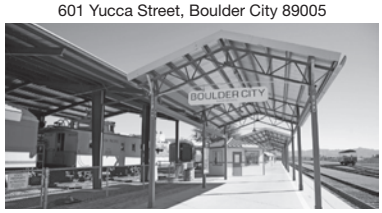

The Nevada State Railroad Museum, Boulder City, is a showcase of the regional railroad lines that built Hoover Dam and other indelible parts of Southern Nevada. Visitors can experience railroading through train rides, exhibits, and learning opportunities. For more information, visit boulderrailroadmuseum.org.

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FEBRUARY 1-2, 2025: Monticello 2025 Train Show. Saturday 10am-4pm and Sunday 9am-2pm. Berndes Center, 766 N. Maple St., Monticello, IA 52310. Tables $30. Admission: $5, children under 12 free w/paid adult. Monticello RR Club, PO Box 169, Monticello IA 52310 or email Ron Ackermann: rack6@gmail.com

FEBRUARY 15-16, 2025: Mad City Model Railroad Show. Alliant Energy Center, Madison, WI. 100,000 square feet of layouts, clinics, exhibits and vendors. Adults $14, Seniors $13, Children (5-15) $6, under 5 Free. Two-day pass $18. Saturday: 9am-5pm, Sunday 9am-4pm. Ticket deals: nmra-scwd.org

FEBRUARY 22-23, 2025: 29th Annual Train Show. New Bern Riverfront Convention Center, 203 S. Front St., New Bern, NC 28560. Saturday 9:00am-5:00pm; Sunday 10:00am-4:00pm. Admission $10.00 (good for both days), under 12 free w/adult. Operating layouts, 90+ vendor tables, food concessions. George Creathorne, 201-213-6907, or CarolinaCoastalRailroaders.org

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Woven into the landscape

Industry feeds railroads, as illustrated in heavily industrialized Hamilton, Ontario — Canada's "Steel City." Weaving its way north on Jan. 20, 2015, along the former Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo Railway belt line is Canadian Pacific train No. TH21, passing the homes of steelworkers with the huge ArcelorMittal Dofasco steel mill in the background.

Engineering a hockey game

As Canadian National train No. 422 passes a frozen pond outside Bayview Junction, Ont., on Feb. 20, 2021, Joe Queiros (left) and Allie Bastet, GO Transit engineers, enjoy a private hockey game. How did they find this location? They saw it from their trains and decided to check it out in their leisure time.

Oh so high above me

Norfolk Southern train No. 309 passes over the Letchworth State Park Trestle on Aug. 3, 2015. The trestle has since been replaced with an arch bridge. Nature's fury, in the form of erosion, cut a cave into the water's edge, from which is seen the train and trestle reflected in the Genesee River.

New York round table

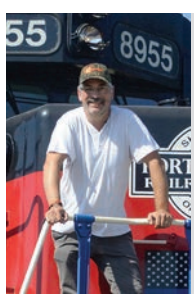
The Western New York & Pennsylvania Railroad shop in Olean, N.Y., is a place for work and rest. Resting in the shop on Oct. 22, 2015, is Alco C430 No. 432, while the table and chairs in the foreground will soon become the workers' rest spot, as the lunch bell will ring in less than a half hour.

A colorful frame

A blaze of autumnal color frames Canadian Pacific train No. 234 as it passes through the Ontario countryside on Oct. 13, 2020. A pair of SD70ACUs handle the train — No. 7033 leading, along with heritage unit No. 7018.

Behind the plow

Vantage point: Hanging out the conductor's side window aboard the cab of Ontario Southland FP9A pushing a plow extra on the Port Burwell Sub. The action: The train is nearing 40 mph. The fury of snow flying by was a drift over the tracks moments ago. It's Feb. 13, 2015.



Steve Host is a professional engineer from Guelph, Ontario. After college, free time found him camera in-hand pursuing his railroading passion by capturing images of favorite locomotives. Steve's rail interests placed him on the Guelph Junction Railway board of directors for 7 years, where he rose to vice chair. He is now Guelph Historical Railway Association president. Steve's favorite rail subjects are the dirt and grime found in industrial operations or unusual subjects that are largely ignored, but just about anything that catches his eye will get lensed. He also built and helps run a photography site called railpictures.ca. Michael Buzanowski

The day is done

With the day's work completed, an Ontario Southland crew guides a pair of locomotives into the enginehouse at Guelph Junction, Ontario, on April 23, 2016. Leading the pair is No. 1591, one fifth of the railroad's GP9 roster.

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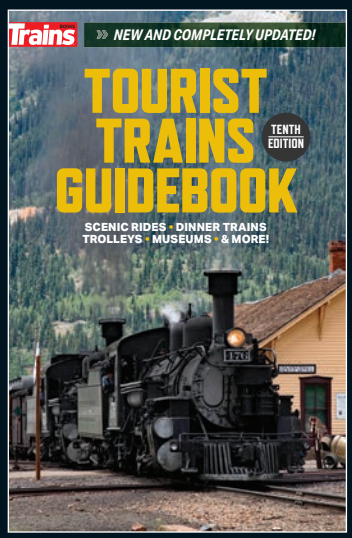

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