

DANVILLE FLYER

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SUNDAY APRIL 27TH, REGULAR MEETING AT JOCKO'S PIZZA AT 1:00 PM.

SATURDAY MAY 3RTH, OPERATING SESSIONS IN ROSSVILLE AT 1 PM.

MAY 24-26 OPENING WEEKEND FOR THE ROSSVILLE MUSEUM.

April Meetings at Jocko's

The meeting will be at Jocko's Pizza on West Williams Street —date is Sunday the 27th. Lunch will be around 1:00 PM with meeting. Rick Schroeder will present the program, the towers of the New York Central to Conrail plus a few others.

Amtrak New Color-Coded System

A new color-coded system is making it easier for Amtrak passengers to find boarding locations at a glance, the company recently announced. The first trains featuring the new design rolled into service from the Bear, Del., Maintenance Facility on March 3, marking the debut of Amtrak's new wayfinding system. The new color-coded system includes red (first class), blue (business class), and green (coach class).

"One cohesive, future-forward look makes Amtrak instantly recognizable no matter what train is on the tracks, and with colors appearing near boarding doors—wayfinding will be a breeze," the company said in a release.

This, Amtrak says, is just one of the many steps the company is taking to "deliver a world-class passenger rail experience, which aims to encourage even more customers to reimagine their approach and retrain travel."

According to Amtrak, the company achieved "remarkable growth, set new ridership records, expanded services, and made significant infrastructure investments." This includes investing \$4.5 billion into major infrastructure projects and achieving an all-time ridership record with 32.8 million customers. These efforts, the company says, support Amtrak's goal of doubling ridership to 66 million by 2040.

With "historic investments, transformative projects, and a renewed commitment to customer

service," Amtrak says it is building new bridges, tunnels, trains, and more to "deliver a world-class passenger rail system. These efforts aim to further increase the demand for train travel while strengthening connections between communities and driving eco-

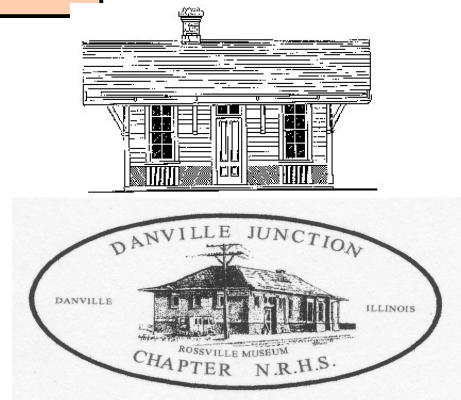


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About Us

The DANVILLE JUNCTION CHAPTER, NRHS, is a not-for-profit corporation organized to preserve the history of railroading in Eastern Illinois and Western Indiana and operates a museum located in the former Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad depot on East Benton Street in Rossville, Illinois. The museum is open weekends from Memorial Day to Labor Day and features many railroad displays plus a large operating HO model railroad. Membership in the Chapter is open to anyone having an interest in any aspect of

railroading. Dues per year are \$30.00 for Chapter membership in addition to \$50.00 for NRHS membership. Rossville Depot Museum membership is \$30 per year. Meetings are held on the third (3rd) Sunday of each month (except June, July, August and December) at the Jocko's Depot Restaurant, Gilbert Street (Illinois Route 1) and Williams Street, next to CSX (former Conrail), in Danville, IL with lunch beginning at 1:00 PM Central Time followed by meeting and program.



Officers for 2025—our 57th Year

Henry Schmitt – President
 Doug Butzow – Vice President
 Dick Brazda– Secretary
 Doug Nipper– Treasurer
 Dave Sherrill – Programs
 – Historian
 Bob Gallippi – Museum Director
 Rick Schroeder – Editor & NRHS rep
 Doug Nipper - Publisher & Distributor

Historic Railroad Awards

NEW YORK and ATLANTA —The National Railway Historical Society has kicked off its third annual recognition of a railroad's historic preservation efforts. NRHS is again partnering with Railway Age and Railway Track & Structures to present the Outstanding Railroad Historic Preservation Award in recognition of a working common-carrier railroad for its efforts to preserve railroad history in the United States, Canada or Mexico.

With the dizzying pace of life in railroading today, it's easy to lose sight of the rich history of our industry. While there are a number of railroad history grant, award, and recognition programs, one of the best known is the annual National Railway Historical Society Outstanding Railroad Historic Preservation Award. This is the third year that Railway Age and Railway Track & Structures have partnered with the NRHS to solicit nominations for and choose the winner of the award.

Criteria for the Outstanding Railroad Historic Preservation Award:

Projects may include locomotives or any type of rolling stock, buildings, stations, a rail line, or a significant rail line feature such as a bridge, viaduct, tunnel, etc.

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conomic growth," the company said.

During the past 50 years, Amtrak has continually evolved the look of its trains, with each era defined by a distinct "phase." More about the company's livery history is available.

Amtrak will soon introduce its Phase VII, which, the company says, "seamlessly adapt to various train car designs" —some featuring full body-paint, and others stainless steel with areas of graphic treatment. As part of Amtrak's regular livery renewal, existing trains will be updated with Phase VII for "a more consistent and unified look across its fleet," the company noted.

Railway Age 3-10

Projects that result in returning the asset to use as originally intended will be prioritized vs. a static display or non-operational asset.

Projects accessible to the public will be prioritized for recognition (for example, periodic operation of historically significant railroad equipment, scheduled excursion train service, publicly accessible historically preserved railroad stations, or buildings and/or museums displaying historic railroad artifacts).

Historic railroads, tourist lines and museums not operated by common-carrier railroads are ineligible for this award (instead, see NRHS Heritage Grants).

The award winner will be announced at Railway Interchange 2025 in Indianapolis.

"Railway Age has been chronicling the rail industry since our founding in 1856," said Editor-in-Chief William C. Vantuono. "It's fitting that we and RT&S continue to partner with NRHS on a preservation award. We've seen several railroads celebrate their histories recently, in many different forms. We are eager to honor an outstanding example of this commitment to historic preservation."

David C. Lester, Editor-in-Chief of Railway Track & Structures said "Much of railroad history focuses on the history of technology. RT&S covers modern railroad technology and engineering primarily in the areas of maintenance of way, infrastructure, and communication. We are pleased to partner with Railway Age and the NRHS to honor historic preservation efforts that should be celebrated in their own right, and to help everyone realize how much rail technology has evolved since the first turn of a wheel on a rail."

"NRHS solidified its interest in historic railroad preservation through the Heritage Grants program and by saving and sharing railroad-related media," said NRHS President Tony White. "We are delighted to continue our partnership with Railway Age and RT&S to recognize a significant North American railroad preservation project. As our mission is to preserve railroad history in all its forms, we developed this award to honor a railroad for its preservation efforts. I look forward to hearing from our members—and Railway Age and RT&S subscribers—about what they think best exemplifies the spirit of railroad preservation today."

The nomination period is open through March 31. For more information on the award, and to nominate a railroad preservation project, see the NRHS website.

Mark Ziebart

Mark David "Zeke" Ziebart, 52, of Milford passed away on Saturday, April 12, 2025 at the Iroquois Memorial Hospital in Watseka. Mark was a 30 year member of the Chapter. Mark always wanted to work for a railroad and finally got a job for several years with BNSF working on various track gangs. Mark was a main stay on weekends helping Skylar with running trains for visitors to the Rossville Depot Museum. Mark never came away from a train show empty handed as he had a verity of motive power and freight equipment on the layout each time he came to operate. He was a member of our "operating crew" on the first Saturday of each month in the winter.

St Anne Elevator

New Illini Grain Business A new unit train loadout is being added to FS Grain's elevator complex in St. Anne, Ill. Located roughly 70 miles south of Chicago, St. Anne a 1.5 mile is on the Chicago-Woodland Junction portion of the former Chicago & Eastern Illinois owned by the UP, (*Editor: the line is a joint ownership with UP dispatching*) but also used by CSX. Having access to both railroads is a big win for FS Grain, as it can transform its elevator into a multimodal grain hub providing area farmers access to new markets in the southern U.S. and Mexico. Headquartered in Morris, Ill., FS Grain provides grain services at 19 locations in northern Illinois. Its new unit train loadout will feature a 1.5-mile oval loop track, with facilities designed to unload up to 450 trucks and load up to one, 120-car unit train in an eight-hour period. Look for the new expansion to begin operations in late 2025.

Railfan & Railroad (March) Via Midwest Rail Scene Report



BNSF and Cold Weather Issues

FORT WORTH — The BNSF Northern Transcon is seeing a disruption of operations due to a winter weather blast that has brought temperatures down to 20 degrees below zero.

The National Weather Services describes the weather in the area as follows: “A winter storm will produce heavy snow from the Central Plains into the Great Lakes today and into New England tonight into Friday. A wintry mix of snow, sleet, and freezing rain will be south of the snow. Heavy rainfall and thunderstorms will bring concerns for flash flooding and severe weather over parts of the Lower Mississippi Valley and the Southeast.”

BNSF has released a customer service advisory containing the 2-18

Editor: Even Amtrak canceled the Empire Builder due to the severe weather across the north region. BNSF experienced a derailment in Montana due to a broken rail because of the low temperature. With heavy snow, 20 below zero and high winds I assume they felt that the chance of getting a train stranded was high and canceled the train in each direction.

Another Auto Plant Rail Served

Hyundai Steel Co. (HSC) is investing \$5.8 billion in a new steel manufacturing facility in Louisiana to boost automobile production in the United States.

The facility will be located in the existing RiverPlex MegaPark in Donaldsonville, which offers access to a Union Pacific Railroad mainline, Louisiana government officials said Monday in a press release.

The RiverPlex MegaPark sits on 17,000 acres within 10 miles of Mississippi River frontage between New Orleans and Baton Rouge. To attract HSC to the park, the state offered an incentives package. The state will continue to invest in infrastructure updates at the MegaPark for both the new Hyundai plant and other future developments.

“The effort to attract and secure Hyundai Motor Group in Louisiana is the most recent example of how our whole-of-Louisiana approach is making our state more competitive by fostering an economic ecosystem that provides an ease of

doing business,” said Louisiana Economic Development Secretary Susan Bourgeois.

HSC will partner with the Port of South Louisiana to build a deep water dock to accommodate steel and materials shipments, Louisiana government officials said. The facility is expected to import 3.6 million tons of iron ore annually. Completed coils will be shipped out via rail and truck to customers, namely Hyundai vehicle manufacturing plants throughout the United States. The company expects to produce 2.7 million metric tons of steel annually.

Hyundai anticipates construction to begin in third-quarter 2026, Louisiana officials said

Progressive Railroading 3-26

BNSF and Wind Issues

FORT WORTH, Texas — BNSF reported this week (3-24) that much of its network, particularly the Southern Transcon which runs from Los Angeles to Chicago, has been affected by “excessive and extended winds” that often exceed 75 m.p.h.

The railroad reported that the high winds have “impacted service consistency, alongside unexpected service incidents. Regardless of the challenges, BNSF says that “we are dedicated to restoring network fluidity as soon as possible and we have implemented a series of strategic actions and resiliency measures to ensure a swift recovery and minimize disruptions:

Enhanced Resource Allocation: Leveraging

our recent improvements in crew and resource management that are driving quicker recovery. Repositioning Additional Resources: Positioning locomotives from our surge fleet to support the recovery efforts and combining and consolidating trains where opportunities arise to streamline operations.

AI Wind Technology: We continue to leverage advanced AI wind technology to proactively manage crew availability and optimize network operations.”

On the western side of the railroad, BNSF said it is focusing on improving fluidity through Los Angeles and San Bernardino, and expects improvements in the (easterly) Chicago area as the weekend progresses.



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Last year, RT&S reported on the railroad's installation of a wind fence next to its line in New Mexico's Abo Canyon, one of several BNSF has installed in wind-prone locations. More information about railroad operations in strong winds was shared in a BNSF LinkedIn post last year, which said:

"Railcars are held together by gravity, in conjunction with the heavy weight of the container and the cargo. A light breeze isn't likely to have an impact, regardless of what the railcar is carrying. But when winds exceed 50 miles per hour, things get tricky.

"Knowing the power of Mother Nature, BNSF has wind stations throughout our network to measure wind speeds, direction, temperature and more. These stations notify our weather forecasting services and serve as a way to communicate wind events throughout the network.

"Traditionally, trains affected by high winds must significantly reduce speed or stop entirely until the high wind warning passes. But as technology has further developed, we've become more prepared and more efficient when high winds pick up."

RT&S 3-25

BNSF and NS New Service

BNSF Railway Co. and connecting partners Norfolk Southern Railway and



the Northwest Seaport Alliance (NWSA) yesterday announced a collaboration to redesign and develop a three-day faster service product for inland point intermodal traffic from the Pacific Northwest to Chicago.

The redesigned plan will encompass the NWSA building trains in less than two days dwell off the dock with the density to seamlessly connect to and through Chicago. The seamless hand-off across BNSF's Northern Transcon route enables faster transit and better consistency for cargo shippers, according to a joint press release issued by BNSF.

The new service is effective immediately.

"This service product collaboration was an outcome of listening to our joint customers, who emphasized the desire to use

more rail, but would need to also reduce inventory carrying and total landed transportation costs out of their networks in 2025," said Jon Gabriel, BNSF group vice president, consumer products.

The NWSA Seattle/Tacoma port complex reported the lowest rail dwell in the country so far this year as a result of operational changes emphasizing rail loading, according to BNSF.

With reduced on-dock dwell and faster transit, results will be three days faster, with the total time from ship to Chicago at six days.

NS and BNSF will deliver all interchange traffic to one location (NS-Ashland), for a single crew swap, then move toward inland markets in Ohio, Pennsylvania and more, NS and BNSF officials said

Rail News 3-3-25

Class 1—Shortline Solution?

DENVER — There's a pachyderm of a quandary haunting the executive conference rooms of Class I railroads, and short lines may be the solution.

Carload volumes have been falling since 2008-2009, almost a generation's worth of declines that began with the global financial crisis and accelerated during the fall of coal and the hollowing out of the American manufacturing base.

The current environment represents nothing less than a service crisis for the largest carriers. It's a crisis that has been intensified by the impact on and of regulators such as the Surface Transportation Board and Federal Railroad Administration, as well as legislators, said independent analyst Anthony B. Hatch in a presentation at the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRA) conference.

There is a new focus on carload service thanks to comprehensive data on pickup and delivery of individual freight cars, the labor-intensive switching known as "first mile/last mile," "and it ain't pretty," said Hatch, whose trademark salty analysis belies a Harvard degree.

Service failures, he said, are "manna" to the STB, which is concerned with rail market power and rate pricing. "The STB has used common carrier obligations as a lever, such as in the case of Union Pacific/Foster Farms, to focus on weekly switch-

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ing.”

In that 2022 case, the STB ordered UP to run trains to a California poultry producer after the shipper filed petitions for emergency service orders when it faced significant disruptions in delivery of feed and other supplies by rail. [See “Union Pacific hit with STB emergency service order ...,” *Trains News Wire*, June 17, 2022].

The solution to these service issues, Hatch said, is increased use of or even the creation of short lines, which have consistently outpaced Class Is in carloads.

(One attendee agreed, telling *FreightWaves*, anonymously, how a Class I railroad suddenly withdrew service to a local lumber supplier. The company promptly bought the line and started its own railroad to maintain its connection to the national rail network.)

Hatch emphasized the service aspect of short lines and how their flexible corporate structures make them well suited as the entrepreneurs of railroading.

“Short lines offer tailored, customizable switching services, have better work rules and less severe labor shortages,” he said. “Short lines are also looked upon quite favorably by regulators and legislators.”

Hatch offered as a shortline success story Watco’s launch of the Dutchtown Southern Railroad, which since 2021 has leased and operated 1.76 miles of Canadian National Railway trackage in Geismar, La. [See “New Louisiana short line ...,” *News Wire*, April 30, 2021].

Watco “increased switching to seven [days a week] from three to five times per week and grew carloads by more than one-third in the first year of operations,” said Hatch. “That’s a win for the customer who gets more switches, a win for Watco with new business and a win for the Class I partner CN, which gets more cars for its long-haul business.”

However, Hatch said that success has raised a contradictory question of why the recent momentum of Class I strategy seemingly is to buy or retake short lines. He pointed to then-Canadian Pacific’s acquisition of the Central Maine & Quebec in 2020; Pan Am’s sale to CSX in 2022 and the 2024 deal that saw BNSF acquire Montana Rail Link.

Hatch said he supports the “feed the beast” strategy on the part of Class I railroads to extend market reach, such as by CN

from 2018-2021.

“However, that should not preclude thoughtful Class I-shortline partnerships that solve customer problems,” said Hatch. RailPulse, for instance, is a freight car database owned by a coalition of car builders, lessors, Class I railroads and short lines.

Nonetheless, Hatch told the session, he has seen no evidence of Class I leadership taking steps toward more such partnerships. But he did acknowledge more meetings and discussions taking place between Class Is and short lines, facilitated by ASLRRA.

— This article originally appeared [at FreightWaves.com](https://www.freightwaves.com)

Via *TRAINS* Newswire 4-12-25

Metra 2025 Program

Chicago commuter railroad Metra yesterday announced its 2025 construction program includes improvements to 52 out of 243 stations and the replacement of 43 grade crossings.

The 2025 capital program allocates \$34.9 million for station and parking improvements, \$48.1 million for track maintenance, \$46.2 million for bridge projects, \$5.9 million for rail crossing replacements and \$39.2 million for signal, electrical



and communications maintenance and upgrades, Metra officials said in a press release.

Metra also is continuing its replacement program for 11 bridges that are over 120 years old. The multiyear \$337 million

bridge replacement program will also replace 4 miles of track structure and nearly 2 miles of retaining walls, Metra officials said.

Metra will replace its 124-year-old 16th Street Tower on the Rock Island Line, and will upgrade crossing technology to enable remote monitoring of crossing devices. Platform announcement systems and electric signage will also be replaced in 2025.

Among the planned station improvements are platform re-

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March Meeting Minutes

The March 16, 2025, meeting opened at 1300 at Jockos.

The secretary's minutes were accepted with corrections noted to the Treasurer's report.

The treasurer reported no expenses for the month. The only significant Income was utility donations. Current checking account balance is \$4471.65.

Due to several conflicts, the April operating session will be held on Sunday, April 6, rather than the 5th.

The Urbana show is on March 29 & 30. Popcorn will be sold as well as various rail materials. Saturday hours are 10-1800 and Sunday 11-1600.

The April meeting will be on the 4th Sunday, April 27. Rick will present a program.

On March 20 Dale Jenkins will present a program about the Illinois Terminal RR at the Vermilion County Museum at 1730. Rick noted that the C&EHS annual meeting will be held April 12 at the Vermilion County Museum. Dave Forbes will present a program about passenger service, while Rick will present a program on Oak Lawn shops.

Ideas were solicited for a field trip for the chapter.

Dave reported that the Springfield train show was good. He also said the June Galesburg show was going to be HO and N gauges only.

The meeting was adjourned at 1310.

Dave presented a video on Michigan short lines

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placements and repairs, including at the 115th Street/Morgan Park Station, which will also receive new parking services and warming shelters, Metra officials said.

Stations and viaducts along the Metra Electric Line will be repainted and power washed. Smaller projects such as accessibility upgrades and state of good repair will be implemented at 26 stations. These projects are scheduled to begin this year and continue through 2026.

Metra and its railroad partners plan to replace 117,000 rail ties this year, Metra officials said. On the Rock Island Line, workers are about to begin replacing over 16,000 ties and over 22,000 feet of rail between Mokena and Joliet. Infrastructure work is continuing in preparation for the installation of a fourth track on the Metra Electric Line, Metra officials said.

The planned 43 grade crossing improvements will take place across the system on the Milwaukee District North Line and West Line, Metra Electric Line, BNSF Line, and Union Pacific lines.

Progressive Railroading 3-19

Urbana Train Show—2025

Here is the Danville Junction Chapter display at the Urbana Train show, 3/29 & 30. Thank you to Skylar Brown, Dave Sherrill, Danny Honn, and Henry Schmitt for working the popcorn machine and display tables. It was nice to see all the chapter members who visited the show. Sales were better than the last two years.



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We're on the Web!
www.danvillejct.org

Photo of the Month



The date is July 6, 1967 and the Missouri Pacific repainted the first C&E boxcar of many that would move to the MoPac roster. In October 1969, after the L&N acquisition of the Woodland Junction to Evansville segment, the L&N repainted the first boxcar that moved to their roster. Ray Curl photos.