

Wisconsin Chapter National Railway Historical Society

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January 2021

SPARKS AND CINDERS

Our purpose as members of Wisconsin Chapter—National Railway Historical Society is to gather, preserve and disseminate information, both historic and current, pertaining to railroading in Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest.

Since 1950

Preserving Wisconsin Railroad History for 71 Years

Visit the Chapter Webpage www.nrhswis.org



CN #3069 Wisconsin Central Heritage Unit leads a southbound potash train at Hwy D near Allenton, WI on a hazy morning December 5, 2020 Photo by Keith Schmidt

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Wisconsin Chapter Meeting Schedule



January 8, 2020 - Wisconsin Branchlines - Arlyn Colby (Note Date 2nd Friday in January)

Monthly meetings are usually held in the lower level of the North Shore Congregational Church in Fox Point, but for now, we are meeting virtually, via the Zoom platform, during the coronavirus pandemic. The virtual meeting room will open by 7:00 pm, and the meeting will be called to order at 7:30 pm. Zoom meeting connection details are shared with chapter members and other interested persons via email the day of the meeting, or before. To ensure you are made aware of this info, we must have a working email address on file - send yours to president@nrhswis.org. Appropriate notice will be given (in Sparks & Cinders, on the chapter's website, and through the chapter's email announcement list) when we resume in-person meetings. For the latest, check the chapter's webpage at www.nrhswis.org

If you have a program idea please contact Program Chair Dave Nelson at engine1385@aol.com

Dues are DUE !!

Please remit your Wisconsin Chapter dues today! If times were normal, you'd hand twenty bucks to our treasurer at our next meeting... but because we've suspended in-person meetings due to the public health crisis, the safest, most efficient way to renew is to send a \$20.00 check to Wisconsin Chapter NRHS, PO Box 070758, Milwaukee, WI 53207. Kindly include your name and address, NRHS member number (if known), phone number and email address. Please note, the NRHS national organization sends national dues renewals to all members; chapter and national dues are paid separately.

Sparks & Cinders is published by and for the members of the Wisconsin Chapter, Inc., National Railway Historical Society monthly except for July and August. The Chapter meets at the North Shore Congregational Church, 7330 N Santa Monica Blvd, Fox Point, Wisconsin, on the first Friday of each month, except June, July and August, at 7:30 p.m. The Wisconsin Chapter is a not-for-profit corporation, affiliated with the National Railway Historical Society and the Wisconsin Historical Society, organized to preserve the history of railroading in Wisconsin and the surrounding area. Additional information is available on the chapter's website, www.nrhswis.org.

Membership in the Chapter is open to anyone having an interest in any aspect of railroading who is also a member of the NRHS. Paying \$20 annually to the Chapter will entitle you receive Sparks & Cinders. Paying the National dues of \$50 to the NRHS will entitle you to membership and subscriptions to the NRHS Bulletin and NRHS News. Full NRHS membership is required to participate in chapter business discussions and to vote in annual chapter elections. All address changes should be sent to Mike Yugas president@nrhswis.org (or via USPS at PO Box 070758 Milwaukee, WI 53207).

Wisconsin Chapter officers are: Mike Yugas, President (president@nrhswis.org); Keith Schmidt, Vice-President; Tom Marcussen, Secretary; Tara Grudzielanek, Treasurer. Directors: Dan Grudzielanek, Ralph McClure, Andrew Roach, Cathy Wegner and Neal Wegner.

Contributions to Sparks & Cinders should be sent to Editor Keith Schmidt at editor@nrhswis.org (or USPS at PO Box 070758 Milwaukee, WI 53207) by the 15th of the month to be considered for the following month's publication.

All original material published in Sparks & Cinders may be reprinted in other railfan publications provided credit is given to "Sparks & Cinders, Wisconsin Chapter, NRHS." If an author is indicated for the item or article, credit must also be given to the author. The views, opinions, and comments published in Sparks & Cinders are those of the authors and do not reflect the policies of the Wisconsin Chapter or the National Railway Historical Society. Copyright ©2020, Wisconsin Chapter, Inc., NRHS.

Virtual Meeting Summary December 4, 2020

News from Informal Gathering Time

Canadian National heritage units have started appearing on the CN. We have sightings and reports of the Illinois Central and Wisconsin Central units.

East Troy Electric Railroad has nearly finished their restoration of North Shore Line car 761. They plan to operate it in 2021. It will be the first North Shore Line car to run there for many years.

New virtual attendees tonight included NRHS National Vice President Tony White, Al Baker, and Jeff Marker and his daughter Judy.

Introductions

President Mike Yugas started the "formal part of" the (virtual—via Zoom) meeting at 7:32 pm. We had 34 computers connected then. A few of those had two people watching. Others arrived later. Attendance increased to 43 connections. That number held steady through the presentation.

The three newest members were formally introduced: Dan Murray of Langhorne, Pennsylvania, Tom Williams of Monroe, and Jeff Wojciechowski of Cudahy.

Announcements

Forty-four members have sent in their renewal dues for 2021. Mike Yugas asked all others to do so as soon as possible.

We will hold our second virtual slide show (via Zoom) on Tuesday, December 15, at 7:30 pm Central Standard Time. We will have five presentations of about 15 minutes each.

We will have our next regular meeting on Friday, January 8, 2021. This will be the annual formal business meeting. Our program presenter Arlyn Colby will discuss and show images from now-abandoned branch lines in NW Wisconsin. Arlyn is working on his 7th book on that subject.

- meeting summary continued on Page 3

-meeting summary continued

Presentation

R. L. "Larry" Eastwood, Jr., the long-time President of the NRHS Philadelphia Chapter, took over at 7:41 pm. Our President Mike Yugas has known Larry since Mike joined the Philadelphia Chapter in 1985. Larry has been the editor of the Philadelphia Chapter's newsletter for 50 years. Larry worked for the South East Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) after retiring from the US Postal Service.

Larry's presentation, entitled "Montreal to the Maritimes," started at Windsor Station in Montreal and traveled east on the Canadian National. We took a side trip on the now-removed branch to the Gaspé Peninsula of Quebec. We returned to the CN main line east to Halifax, Nova Scotia. Then we returned back SW, going down the west coast of the lower part of Nova Scotia on CP subsidiary Dominion Atlantic, to Digby, and west across the Bay of Fundy by ferry to Saint John, New Brunswick. From there we went back west to Montreal via the Canadian Pacific eastern mainline that cuts across northern Maine. We finished up with a short side trip west to Ottawa, Ontario.

The main presentation ended at 8:29 pm. A short question and answer session lasted until 8:37 pm. Mike Yugas repeated the above announcements. He then adjourned the official meeting at 8:39 pm. An informal discussion group, covering a wide range of railroad topics, continued until about 10:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Thomas W. Marcussen

Wisconsin Chapter Secretary

From the Prexy

State of the Chapter message

What a year this has been! We managed to hold three in-person meetings at the beginning of 2020, and then the world turned wiggledy-waggledy.

At the January 2020 meeting (our annual business meeting), elections were held, with the only change being the retirement of Tom Hoffmann as Treasurer (a job he had held since the mid-1980s, hat tip to Tom!) and the election of Tara Grudzielanek as incoming Treasurer. Tom presented the program at that meeting, with his look back at some of the photos he took 50 years ago, in 1969. In February, James Wades kept us spellbound with his discussion of telegraphy in his program "Canst Thou Send Lightning." And in March, noted Milwaukee Road author Fred Hyde presented some of his photographs of lines east of Aberdeen over about a decade at the end of Milwaukee's existence.

We - and most of the rest of civilization - went dark in April as the world began dealing with the coronavirus pandemic. We quickly recovered in May with a virtual (online) meeting, featuring a hastily-arranged program of short presentations by five prolific photographer-members: Keith Schmidt, Dan Grudzielanek, Jerry Krug, Bob Gallegos, and Mike Yugas. Our annual banquet in June was canceled, but we held a well-attended online meeting instead, "A Night at the Museum" which featured presentations by representatives of three of Wisconsin's leading railroad museums, namely East Troy Railroad Museum, National Railroad Museum, and Mid-Continent Railway Museum.

Our summer hiatus took place as scheduled and we resumed meeting, virtually, in September, with our annual Members Favorite Slide Night. The 2020 edition of MFSN featured the work of ten photographers. Our October meeting featured a behind-the-scenes look at the Wisconsin Great Northern, of Trego, and an update of their restoration of the Mark Twain Zephyr trainset. Also in October we debuted our virtual slide show, which is detailed below. November's lively presentation found La Crosse native Eric Hendrickson, of CSX, discussing that railroad's special locomotives honoring veterans, first responders, and law enforcement. And the last formal meeting of the year showcased a presentation by Larry Eastwood primarily covering passenger trains between Montréal and the Canadian maritime provinces (see Tom Marcussen's summary elsewhere in this issue).

I've maintained that the virtual meetings are a great response to the pandemic, but an imperfect solution for a group whose name includes "Society." Lost are the one-on-one moments of fellowship before and after the meetings, but we've gained the ability to reach members (and others) who find the monthly drive to Fox Point burdensome or impossible. Many of these folks have chosen to affiliate with us, often spurred on by the excellence of our virtual meeting programs: since the pandemic started, we have welcomed twenty new members to our chapter.

Your board continues to show leadership in this difficult time. In July, it was decided to add online slide shows to our virtual event line-up. Right now, they're being held on the second Tuesday of even-numbered months, and will likely continue online even after normal Fox Point meetings resume. If you have any ideas on how these shows can be improved, please let me hear from you. Also be in touch if you'd like to present a 15-minute program - we've got openings in February and April.

When we do resume meeting in person, our goal is to be able to stream (simulcast) the event live for folks out of the area. We're investigating the equipment and technology required to make this a reality. It may take a while to get this in place, but rest assured that if you live outside of the greater Fox Point Metroplex, we'll have you covered, online, eventually.

Speaking of Fox Point, let me give a shout out to the staff and management of the North Shore Congregational Church, our meeting place for many years. They're experiencing the same challenges as everyone else as regards the public health emergency, but their commitment to the Wisconsin Chapter of the NRHS has never wavered. For that, we are grateful. We will return when all this is over.

Our January 8, 2021 meeting is the chapter's annual business meeting, and I hope you have the opportunity to "attend." (A reminder that as far as the NRHS is concerned, only people who have paid their dues to both the chapter and the national organization are considered members, and only members have a voice in our business meetings, or may run for elected chapter office.

If you have chosen not to affiliate with national, yet support the chapter as a Sparks & Cinders subscriber, thank you, we appreciate the commitment you have made to our local organization.) An agenda may be found on the chapter's website, www.nrhwis.org.

After our brief business meeting, Arlyn Colby steps in for a discussion of the history of seven abandoned branches in northwest Wisconsin. He's written books on six of these branches, and the seventh book is in the works. If you appreciate railroad history, you'll certainly enjoy Arlyn's presentation.

Thank you to all who support the Wisconsin Chapter. Please extend a warm welcome to the following members and subscribers:

Jeff Wojciechowski, Cudahy
Thomas Williams, Monroe
Daniel Murray, Langhorne, Pennsylvania
David Rasmussen, Glendale
Steven Glischinski, Shoreview, Minnesota
Richard Hawthorne, New Berlin
Michael Raia, Chicago

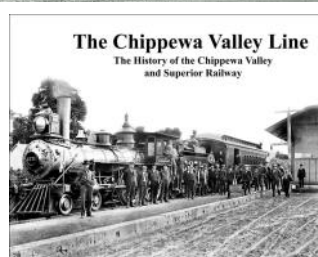
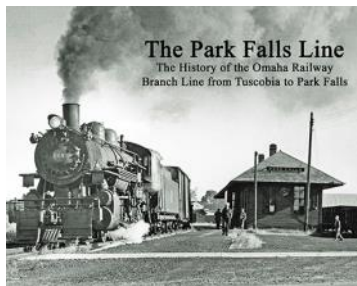
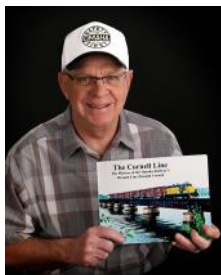
Happy new year! Let's hope 2021 brings you health and safety as the world deals with the devastating coronavirus pandemic.

Mike

Chapter Meeting Friday January 8, 2021 via Zoom

Arlyn Colby will provide a synopsis of each of the 6 books he has written about abandoned branchline railroads in West Central Wisconsin. Included will be a map of where each line was located, dates of the building and abandonment of the track, pictures of trains and depots along the lines, and interesting aspects of each of the lines. Arlyn will be happy to answer questions at the conclusion and remain afterward to talk to interested parties.

Arlyn Colby taught mathematics and coached for many years at Barron High School and graduated from Eleva-Strum Central High School and UW-Eau Claire. He has written six books about local abandoned branchline railroads: *The Mondovi Line*, *The Blueberry Line*, *The Chippewa Valley Line*, *The Cornell Line*, *The Park Falls Line* and *The Spring Valley Line*. He is working on a seventh book to be called *The Ellsworth Line*. For info, see www.wisconsinrailroadbooks.com.



2021 Chapter Election

At press time (mid-December), all incumbent board members and chapter officers have agreed to run for re-election. No other candidates have yet come forward. If you are interested in running for an elected chapter office, please make your intentions known by advising any board member or officer. There is no time limit, and nominations may be made from the floor of the annual meeting January 8, 2021.

The current (2020) chapter officers and board:

Mike Yuhas *President*
Keith Schmidt *Vice President*
Tara Grudzielanek *Treasurer*
Tom Marcussen *Secretary*

Directors

Dan Grudzielanek
Ralph McClure
Andrew Roach
Cathy Wegner
Neal Wegner

Please note that due to a provision in the NRHS national bylaws, only those who hold national NRHS membership may participate in chapter business. That means if you are a national member, you have a voice in our local chapter business meetings, you may vote in our elections, and you may run for elected chapter office (and if not, we still appreciate your support).

Due to our virtual meeting format, our election procedure is a little different than in previous years. Here's how it will work:

1. As people are admitted to the annual meeting, a chapter officer will compare the participant's name with the list of voting members. Voting members will be marked accordingly. This is why it's very important that the name used by Zoom reflects your actual full name.
2. When it's time for the election to begin, to ensure only eligible participants may vote, members identified in step 1 will be invited to a voting member breakout room.
3. Voting for officers and directors, and any other necessary chapter business, will take place in the breakout room.
4. At the conclusion of the voting, all will reconvene in the main meeting, where results of the election will be announced.

And Then There Were None

On Saturday December 5, 2020 a part of railroad history went away under the cover of darkness. The wig wag signals that protected Saemann Ave in Sheboygan, WI were removed. Word is that they are being preserved, but no more information on where they are going. From what I was told by other railfans there on a rainy November 25th these were one of only 4 sets of active wig wags east of the Rocky Mountains. The remaining ones are now in Marion, IL on the Crab Orchard and Egyption and on the BNSF at Dehli, CO.

The wig wag signal had its beginnings around 1910. At that time many crossings were protected by a watchman who would come out and swing his red lantern to warn motorists to stop for an oncoming train. It was thought that if a mechanical signal could mimic the same motion that it would be just as effective. So the use of wig wag signals became quite widespread.

The signals in Sheboygan were the familiar Western Railroad Supply Co (WRRS) Autoflag #5 Center Harp signals. The WRRS #5 was widely used by the Chicago & Northwestern and Milwaukee Road in Wisconsin. With the line through Sheboygan being former CNW these would have been very common. According to a 1962 CNW public timetable this line would have seen 3 daily passenger trains in each direction. Plus the various freight trains. As of now the line sees a local that usually runs on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Imagine the trains those signals protected.

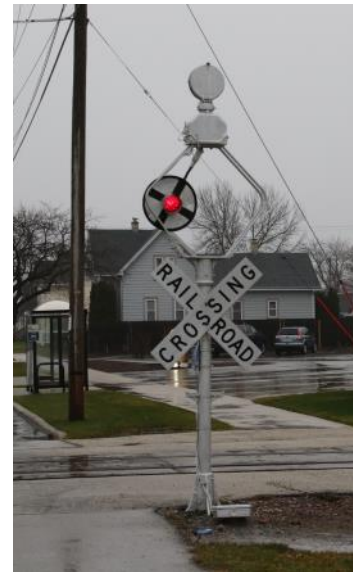
West of Sheboygan in Plymouth, WI another set of wig wags lasted into the 2000's. This set of wig wags last time I saw them in action weren't lit but were still wiggling and wagging.

There were other wig wag signals in Wisconsin that lasted into the 2000's. There was a set of wig wags on Lima Center Road in Lima Center, WI on the former Milwaukee Road line. This is now Wisconsin Southern. Those wig wags were in operation into the early 2000's.

Here's a collection of photos of other wig wag signals that were in Wisconsin.



On a rainy November 25, 2020 The wig-wag crossings at Saemann Ave in Sheboygan protected a shove with another disappearing railroad icon a caboose. This one still painted for Chicago and Northwestern. Photos by Keith Schmidt



A classic car waits at the wig wag at Saemann Ave in Sheboygan WI June 18 2004 Photo by Rich Peters



Here the wig wag worked but almost a little to late. Notice the back up lights on the car. This is Monroe Ave in Sheboygan Falls, WI June 18 2004. Photo by Rich Peters

Wig Wags of Wisconsin Photo Gallery



Wig Wag Signals in Plymouth, WI protect the movement of Soo Line #1003 in December 2008 during a Santa Train Movement. Photos by Dave Nelson



UP local approaching wig wags at Highland Dr in Kohler, WI Photo by Rich Peters



Wig Wag Signal stands sentinel in Baraboo WI with the CNW Depot behind photo by Rich Peters



The Milwaukee Road had wig wag signals too. Here the Soo #1003 passes a wig wag that protects Lima Center Road in Lima Center, WI in November 2008. Photo by Keith Schmidt

The BIG PICTURE

The Big Picture is your page!

We've changed the format of the Sparks & Cinders back page, giving us room to run a large photo. Member submissions are solicited! Please send one or two of your outstanding pictures to Keith Schmidt, editor@nrhswis.org.



From the Archives

January 1951 - 70 Years Ago (Special)

The first issue of Sparks & Cinders (although the publication did not have a name at the time) was published on January 2, 1951. One of the articles was by Jim Scribbins and recounted the last day of operation of the Port Washington interurban line, Easter Sunday, March 18, 1948. The equipment was articulated car no. 1198-1199. It left Port Washington at 4:59 p.m., less than 1/3 full. "On the East (South) side of the track between Port and Grafton steel power line towers were lying on their sides waiting to be put up on the abandoned ROW. At Grafton people stood in the street taking pictures of the interurban and we saw the Greyhound bus which had left Port about 10 minutes ahead of us. We saw it again at Cedarburg where a gang of kids swarmed into the cars. They got off at Highway 12 and Thiensville. Most of the way a boy about 15 years old handled the door and the signal cord while the conductor collected fares. At Thiensville, the motorman's relatives got off and took some more pictures and then departed in a car which was parked in the street alongside the station. Passenger stops were made at Good Hope Road and at Mill Road, one passenger getting on at each place. Entering the woods south of Wisconsin, a Milwaukee Road northbound freight train could be seen on the other side of the woods, but I was unable to identify the type of engine. It seemed to be a Mike."

January 1956 - 65 Years Ago

Steam News: Milwaukee Road: Six types are running in the Milwaukee area: 0-6-0, 2-6-2, 4-6-0, 2-8-0, 2-8-2, and 4-8-4. Burlington: They have been running a number of Northerns and 2-10-4s into Chicago and Galesburg. Get 'em while you can! Nickel Plate: Brewster, Ohio, was alive with 2-8-4s. Pennsylvania: Steam activity on the Pennsy is heavy, with Decapod 1-1s and 2-10-4s running up to Sandusky, frequent double-heading, and Consolidations doing yard chores. Norfolk & Western: Steam in profusion. Seen recently were 2-6-6-4s on freight, Mountains on passenger, and, once-in-awhile a 4-8-2 on a local freight. This road is by no means dieselized yet.

January 1961 - 60 Years Ago

Green Bay & Western took delivery on November 30 of the 310, the first Alco DL-640 road switcher delivered to any U. S. road. It is a 2400 hp locomotive and, while Alco has other road switchers, they are all equipped with 6-wheel trucks. The DL-640 uses 4-wheel trucks for added tractive effort, since all axles are powered and thus all the weight is on the drivers. This also means more pay for the crews, as their pay is partially determined by weight-on-drivers. The 310 is the largest unit on the GB&W, replacing a 12-year-old 1500 hp road freight unit. As of this writing, she had undergone shakedown runs Green Bay-Kewaunee, but no regular assignment had been given. A possibility is that it might handle time freights 3 and 4, Green Bay-Winona.

January 1966 - 55 Years Ago

This issue of S&C highlighted a continuing problem for S&C editors producing the January issue - it must be put together during the holidays. This issue consisted of just three pages (the back of the second sheet was blank). The new officers and the program content were listed but little else.

January 1971 - 50 Years Ago

The Soo Line has applied for abandonment of the Greenwood branch, running from Marshfield, and the Athens branch, running from Abbotsford....Editor Bob Adams reported on the C&NW's new jet snowblower. After seeing it in action the editor felt that perhaps while the contraption does the intended job, it may be a case of overkill. An editorial by Jerry Hilton about the proposed startup of Railpax (Amtrak), scheduled to startup on May 1st, questions the absence of Milwaukee from the list of cities to be served

January 1976 - 45 Years Ago

Note was made of the passing of Jay Maeder, the owner of the Speedrail system in the Milwaukee area in 1949 and 1950.... The Ann Arbor Railroad announced that carferry service between Frankfort, Michigan, and Kewaunee and Manitowoc, Wisconsin, would be suspended on February 26.... Mid-Continent Railway Museum is scheduling winter steam operations on January 17 and 18.

January 1981 - 40 Years Ago

Tom Hoffmann reports that the South Shore Line Little Joe electrics are living on borrowed time and recommends that fans get their photos as soon as possible.... Richard B. Ogilvie, bankruptcy trustee for the Milwaukee Road, will file a reorganization plan with the Court on January 15 for "Milwaukee II." He is also seeking authority to borrow up to \$54 million from subsidiary and escrow accounts for continued operation

January 1986 - 35 Years Ago

Bob Baker reports that work is well underway on the Chapter's proposed publication, the new "Railfan's Guide to Wisconsin".... Chris Burger has been appointed Vice President-Investor Relations of the C&NW and will be moving to Chicago....Dorothy Wiener is the new editor of Sparks & Cinders. Tom Hoffmann has retired the editor's green eye shade after 11 years.

January 1991 - 30 Years Ago

The Illinois Railway Museum at Union, Illinois, announced that the restored Electroliner, Nos. 801-802, will return to service on February 8, 1991, the 50th Anniversary of its inaugural run in 1941....Scenic Rail Dining is no longer operating over the WSOR, the equipment having been sold to a dinner train operator in California.

January 1996 - 25 Years Ago

Wisconsin Central ended 100 years of street running in Oshkosh on January 27 with a ceremonial last train and pulling of a spike to symbolize closing the line. Operations were shifted to the ex-FRV, ex-C&NW line running on the east side of Oshkosh....Metra is set to begin operations on a 41-mile segment of the WC. Metra will pay WC \$2.5 million per year for trackage rights

January 2001 - 20 Years Ago

The rail industry version of a soap opera continues to unfold in the battle for control of the Wisconsin Central between management and deposed CEO Ed Burkhardt. As of December 14, the proxies were 29.7% for Burkhardt and 19.8% for management. Amtrak has 85 new P42s arriving and some of them will be assigned to the Empire Builder. Some have already been observed on the Builder....UP is looking at the Rochelle area for a new intermodal terminal....In a memo to company personnel, CP has stated that all references to D&H and Soo Line will cease after December 1.

January 2006 - 15 Years Ago

Mid-Continent Railway Museum's 31st annual Snow Train™ is set to depart from the North Freedom depot during the weekend of February 17-19, 2006. All cars are heated either with steam or coal-fired stoves. The museum's 1944-built Alco S-1 diesel will again pull the trains. Trips will last about 50 minutes

January 2011- 10 Years Ago

Talgo Inc. will shut down its Milwaukee train manufacturing operations in 2012, leaving only a maintenance base, because plans for a high-speed rail line between Milwaukee and Madison have been abandoned, the company announced December 10. The Spanish-owned company acted after the federal government withdrew nearly all of the \$810 million in stimulus funding for the rail project. Union Pacific raised the speed limit on its ex-Chicago & North Western Adams Line between Milwaukee and Adams. The speed increased from 25 to 50 mph on the 112-mile line, which once hosted C&NW's Twin Cities 400 streamliner.

January 2016 - 5 Years Ago

Woodward Iron Co. Baldwin 2-10-0 No. 41 will be a giant Christmas present for the Age of Steam roundhouse at Sugar Creek, Ohio. The decapod was scheduled to be loaded aboard a heavy-duty flatcar Tuesday, according to Tim Sposato of Age of Steam. "We hope to see it at the roundhouse before Christmas," Sposato tells Trains. A precise arrival date is difficult to predict because the rail move is over several railroads, he noted. Sposato says the tender was trucked to Sugar Creek about a month ago. The tender body was on one trailer, while the frame and trucks were on a second rig. Age of Steam owner Jerry Joe Jacobson bought the locomotive in May 2015 from the Mid-Continent Railroad Museum in North Freedom. The locomotive, built in 1928 for the Alabama Tennessee & Northern, was acquired by the Woodward Iron Co. in 1948 and retired in 1959.

The Big Picture



UP #708 leads the local southbound at Saemann Ave in Sheboygan and the classic Wig Wag Signals. August 21, 2012. Photo by Rich Peters