

# DANVILLE FLYER

A PUBLICATION OF THE DANVILLE JUNCTION CHAPTER, INC. NRHS

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The *DANVILLE FLYER* is published monthly by the **DANVILLE JUNCTION CHAPTER** of the **NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY** for its members and other interested persons.

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 \$17.00 for Chapter membership in addition to \$20.00 for NRHS membership. 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, in Danville, IL. with lunch beginning at 1:00 PM Central Time followed by meeting and program.

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Visit our Chapter WWW Home Page On-Line - <http://www.prairienet.org/djc-nrhs/>

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Some Blasts from Railroad Shows Past.. Your publisher was trying out a new slide scanner this month and came across a box marked "MR Shots 1978", so this had to be the show at the Village Mall from that year. In the shot at left, the late Bob Barnes tends his N-scale layout that he brought to many of the Chapter shows over the years. In the right image, I think that is Larry Prosser's and John High's first layout, or perhaps that of Mel Day and John Acton. Hard to imagine nearly 30 years have gone by since these events.

## Coming Events

### *February 18, 2007*

Danville, IL - We start our regular monthly meeting at Jocko's Depot Restaurant on West Williams at Gilbert Street at 1:00 PM with lunch followed by the meeting and program.

### *February 17 & 18, 2007*

Mattoon - Cross Country Mall Model Railroad Show, Sat 10-9, Sun 12-5.

### *February 24 & 25, 2007*

Hoopeston, IL Train Show at McFerren Park pavilion, 10-4 PM (check out the show before you come to the D&W session)

### *March 11, 2007*

Danville, IL - Note our regular monthly meeting at Jocko's Depot Restaurant on West Williams at Gilbert Street has been moved up one week due to the Urbana Train Show.

### *March 17 & 18, 2007*

Urbana, IL - Annual Train Show and Swap Meet at Lincoln Square Village 10-6, 11-5, admission free.

### *March 24 & 25, 2007*

Collinsville, IL - Greenburg's Treat Train Expo, Gateway Center 10-4

### *April 28, 2007*

Danville, IL - Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad Historical Society 25th Anniversary Meeting - Danville Community College. 9-9

## Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Sunday, February 18, at Jocko's Depot Restaurant, corner of Gilbert and Williams Street beginning at 1:00 PM. Remember, if bad weather that day we will probably cancel the meeting. Also note the March meeting is moved up one week due to the Urbana Train Show. With most of us attending and setting up sale tables the

meeting has been moved.

Winter is really here now, however, within about 30 days we will start seeing warmer weather and once the Urbana show is over we need to get into sorting more records. By April we need to have them moved out to the Vermilion County Museum. Former member Nate Horton, now living in West Virginia, has donated a collection of photographs and records from Roy Handall, his deceased father-in-law. We are making arrangements to pick up the records from his home. The collection includes a large number of C&EI photos, many that Roy, a photographer, copied from other collections. The collection will be used by both the DJC and the C&EI HS.

At this year's Urbana show the society will have our popcorn machine setup at our tables. We need to be sure we have volunteers all day to man the table and sell popcorn. The Lincoln Square Village has approved our sale of popcorn as a fund raiser since we do not compete with any other similar sales in the mall. Bob will probably be loading up the magazines and could use the help loading and for sure, unloading.

The program will be slides from Rick Schroeder's collection. Rick plans to dig out some of the "old stuff" that has not been seen for many years as the sides have been hiding in the closet in the basement. One set that may show us is are shots of depots and towers. These long gone structures are always an interest to all fans, especially if you can remember where you spotted them.

On Saturday, Feb 17, Rick and Chris Filler will be giving the Boy Scout Merit Badge training to 12 scouts in Hoopeston. After lunch we plan to bring them to Rossville. Bob G. will be helping and if anyone else is around after 12:00 they could stop by.



## Operating Sessions

### *Rossville Sessions - beginning at 1:00 PM on Saturday's*

March 3, 2007 Operators

April 7, 2007 Visitor

### *Danville and Western Railroad - Champaign, IL - on Saturday's beginning at 1:00 PM*

February 24, 2007 Operators only

March 31, 2007 Operators only

Spring is coming, note less sessions!

## BNSF sets coal tonnage record in 2006

Last year, BNSF Railway Co. loaded 287.2 million tons of coal, shattering its previous record of 259.2 million tons set in 2005 and increasing tonnage 10.8 percent year over year.

The Class I also set a monthly tonnage record in December, when the railroad loaded 25.3 million tons of coal. BNSF set the previous high-water mark of 25 million tons in October 2006.

In the Powder River Basin (PRB), the Class I's daily train loadings in 2006 averaged 49.7, a 10.4 percent increase compared with 2005 data. In December, BNSF averaged 51.7 train loadings per day in the PRB — a new monthly record.

Nationwide, coal stockpiles climbed 42 percent in October compared with October 2005 data, according to a report issued Dec. 21 by the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration. Stockpiles reached levels typically attained in spring, the agency said

## **Iowa DOT, Illinois County OK Funds To Improve Infrastructure For Proposed Ethanol Plants**

Iowa Department of Transportation and Kankakee County officials recently approved funds totaling \$994,500 to improve infrastructure associated with Alternative Energy Sources Inc.'s (AENS) proposed ethanol plants in Kankakee, Ill., and Boone County, Iowa.

The Kankakee County Board approved an \$850,000 grant to improve roads in the Kankakee Regional Industrial Park, where AENS plans to begin building a 110-million-gallon-capacity plant in late spring. To be completed in fall 2008, the facility will be adjacent to a Canadian National Railway Co. mainline.

Meanwhile, the Iowa DOT approved a \$144,500 grant and \$94,500 loan to help fund improvements to a Union Pacific Railroad line. In late spring, AENS expects to begin building a 110-million-gallon-capacity plant near Ogden, Iowa, that will be served by UP. The facility is scheduled to open in late 2008.

Last year, AENS also announced plans to build a 110-million-gallon-capacity ethanol plant in Greenville, Ill., adjacent to BNSF Railway Co. and CSX Transportation mainlines. To be served by Illinois Western Railroad Co., which interchanges with the Class Is, the facility might be completed next year.

AENS' projects are part of an ethanol boom in the United States. During the next 18 months, 63 plants will be built and eight facilities will be expanded, doubling the nation's ethanol production capacity to more than 10 billion gallons, according to the Renewable Fuels Association. Just yesterday, newly formed Cargill subsidiary Emerald Renewable Energy L.L.C. announced plans to build four 100 million-gallon-capacity plants in the Midwest.

Last year, the number of U.S. ethanol plants exceeded 100 and production surpassed 5 billion gallons for the first time, the association said. That's good news for railroads, which move about 75 percent of all ethanol-related traffic, including inbound materials, and outbound ethanol and byproducts.

*Progressive Railroading 1-9-07*

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## **Milwaukee 261 on the road this summer.**

The Friends of the 261 has announced that Milwaukee Road 4-8-4 No. 261 will pull an overnight round trip excursion from Minneapolis to Duluth, Minn., on June 2-3, 2007. Friends of the 261 is sponsoring the trip with the cooperation of Amtrak, BNSF Railway, and the Lake Superior Railroad Museum. The train will include air-conditioned coaches, first class cars, and premium service in ex-Milwaukee Road Skytop lounge observation car "Cedar Rapids" and former Milwaukee Road Super Dome No. 53.

The train will depart Minneapolis Saturday, June 2 at 9 a.m. and travel the former Great Northern Railway route between Minneapolis and Superior, Wis., then use a former Northern Pacific line into Duluth. The final destination will be the Lake Superior Railroad Museum at the former Union Depot in downtown Duluth, with arrival at approximately 2:30 p.m. The train will depart Duluth on Sunday, June 3 at 11 a.m. and return to Minneapolis at 4:30 p.m.

The Lake Superior Railroad Museum is sponsoring a luxury dinner train trip the evening of June 2 from Duluth to Palmers, Minn., on the North Shore Scenic Railroad. This train will include the Skytop and Super Dome from the 261 train, plus a dining car and former

Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range business cars W-24 and Northland from the museum collection. This trip along Lake Superior's North Shore will take approximately 2½ hours. For more information go to the group's new web site at [www.milwaukee261.com](http://www.milwaukee261.com).

*Via TRAINS On-Line*

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## **Buffalo & Pittsburgh crossing named for railfan**

Often railroads receive negative media coverage and are criticized for having little awareness of the communities it serves and citizens who live in them. But that is not always the case, as the Buffalo & Pittsburgh Railroad recently demonstrated. According to an article in the Punxsutawney Spirit, the Punxsutawney office of the B&P has erected a stone marker in honor of the late Kevin Heitzenrater, naming the Pine Street railroad crossing "Kevin's Crossing." Heitzenrater, who died in 2005 at 35, loved to watch trains at the Pine Street crossing, his mother said in an interview with the Spirit. "From the time he was small, there wasn't anything in the world he loved more than trains," Caroline Heitzenrater told the newspaper.

After Kevin graduated from school there were no jobs available for him, due to the fact that he was enrolled in special education courses in school, his mother said. He would stay with his grandmother on Pine Street next to the crossing and every time a train passed, would run outside to wave to the engineers. Eventually, B&P crews got to know Kevin and blew the horn for him. Caroline Heitzenrater said four B&P engineers took a great interest in Kevin. They were Jack Burkett, Rick Meenan, Joe Cianciotti and Jim Murdock. "We were kind of fond of him," Cianciotti told the Spirit. "That was always one of the bright spots on our run," Burkett said. "Kevin always had a smile and a wave."

At the end of the year, all the engineers on the B&P received new hats and calendars.

So each year, Ron Boston, a cab driver for the railroad, made sure that Kevin and his brother Brian had new hats and calendars, too. Boston also gave them coffee cups, patches and a toboggan. "He really appreciated it," Boston told the Spirit. "To him, to get that kind of stuff was like some kid getting a new car or a new bicycle." Burkett recalled that when Kevin found out he had retired, he brought Burkett a card and a doll dressed in a railroad outfit. "The card brought a tear to your eye," Burkett said. "And as he was leaving, he turned around and said, 'Thank you, Jack Burkett.'"

At some point, everyone did something special for Kevin, especially Meenan, Caroline Heitzenrater recalled. "Everybody at the railroad was wonderful to Kevin," Meenan told the Spirit. Kevin always considered the Pine Street railroad crossing "his crossing" and now thanks to the B&P, it really is.

*Via TRAINS On-Line 2-1*

## Indiana Transportation Museum receives grant

The Indiana Transportation Museum has been awarded a \$400,000 special project grant - \$200,000 for 2007 and 2008 - by the Hamilton County Convention and Visitors Bureau. The money will be spent on museum office management and visitor services, feasibility studies, and marketing and programming enhancements, the

## Urbana, Illinois Train Show and Swap Meet

*Lincoln Square Village  
March 17 & 18, 2007  
10-6 PM and 11-5 PM  
Admission Free*

Noblesville Daily Times reported. The HCCVB also will help support product development, business management, and marketing to help revenue, said Brenda Myers, the bureau's executive director. Representatives from the Indiana Transportation Museum and the Hamilton County Convention and Visitors Bureau also have announced a proposal to create a revenue stream for the museum and revitalize railroad tourism in the region.

"I just see such great potential for the train museum - both educational and for tourist purposes," Art Hall, chairman of the museum's board of directors, told the Times. "I see it being a magnet for bringing people to the area." Myers said community dialogue sessions were held beginning last fall, and the popular train tours scored well during product development testing with area residents. Also testing well was the idea that museum trains could connect five municipalities - Noblesville, Fishers, Cicero, Arcadia, and Atlanta - and make them unique destinations for visitors.

Myers said she approached the Hoosier Heritage Port Authority, the Noblesville Parks Department, and officials from the five communities, and they all showed interest in boosting the infrastructure of the Indiana Transportation Museum, which opened in its current Forest Park location in 1970. Hall admitted the organization's administrative sector has been lacking in professionalism in recent years, and he vowed that the museum would improve markedly in that area. "We don't have a revenue stream, business plan, or a marketing plan," Hall told the Daily Times. "We are going to create a master plan, and a lot of it has to do with the help of the Hamilton County Convention and Visitors Bureau."

Hall and Myers rolled out a list of goals with a completion range of two to 20 years. The board's chairman also said a potential \$300,000 grant should help with some of the organization's more pressing needs.

Some of the immediate plans include upgrading the current facilities, improving its technology, and removing and demolishing several boxcars languishing near Forest Park. Pat Reed, a parks board mem-

## 2007 Dues Renewal

The NRHS renewal statements were mailed to all members the end of November. The NRHS worked hard to get this renewal notice out earlier than in past years and we did beat the Christmas rush of mail this year. Please review the form, complete the ones noted to be mailed back to the Chapter, write your check and return to our treasurer Allen Cooke as soon as possible. As always, we really appreciate donations to the chapter to help with expenses at the museum.

Museum members renewals were mailed out with the December issue of the newsletter. Please return all renewals as soon as possible to Mr. Cooke.

ber since 1988, said he approves of many of the ideas, but said there is no logical reason that unattended and decaying railcars are sitting in a recreational area. "We're ashamed of what we have in the park because of this," Reed said. Hall agreed and said those cars are scheduled to be removed in the spring.

Long-range plans for the museum consist of resuming trolley rides in the park, developing an education and visitor's center, rehabilitating Hobbs Station, and replacing miles of railroad tracks, which would possibly connect the railway to downtown Indianapolis.

"It costs money to become more professional, and we wouldn't have been able to do it without the HCCVB," Hall said. "My philosophy behind it is, I think we have something just waiting to explode for the benefit of the community and people around the community," Hall told the Times.

The museum is the designated operator of 38 miles of ex-Nickel Plate Road track between Indianapolis and Tipton, Ind., owned by the Hoosier Heritage Port Authority. The Museum's best-known exhibit is ex-Nickel Plate 2-8-2 No. 587, built

in September 1918 by the Baldwin Locomotive Works. It was returned to service by the museum in 1988, but has been out of service since January 2003 due to federally mandated boiler work.

*Via TRAINS On-Line*

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## **Illinois utility fears monopoly.**

Power company Ameren Corp. fears it will be subject to a rail monopoly if BNSF Railway is allowed to pull out of the energy giant's Duck Creek Power Plant near Canton, the Peoria Journal Star reported. Ameren in 2003 acquired the coal-fired plant, which, at the time, procured its roughly 9,000 carloads of coal from BNSF. But Ameren Energy Generating Co., a non-regulated subsidiary of Ameren, wanted to spur competition for coal delivery rights to Duck Creek and lower transportation costs.

The company built a rail spur to the former Toledo, Peoria & Western tracks north of the plant in 2005. Keokuk Junction Railway operates the line under the name Peoria & Western. It connects to the Union Pacific in Hollis, Ill. Ameren solicited bids for coal delivery, and KJRY and UP won the contract, taking the business from BNSF beginning in February 2006. Now BNSF, without other clients on the 42 miles of track from Vermont to Farmington or a desire to find smaller shippers to reclaim the lost business, has decided to sell or lease the line. It offered the track to Ameren first, but the company declined. Then it opted to lease the line to Keokuk Junction Railway.

That's when Ameren protested to the Surface Transportation Board, the Journal Star reported. Ameren wants to block the lease because KJRY would control both tracks leading to the plant and the price for moving coal on them if the lease is approved. "That spur was built for only one reason: to have two-rail access," Leigh Morris, spokesman for Ameren told the Journal Star. Ameren attorneys, in filings with the STB, summed it up this way: "Contrary to KJRY's representations, the

transaction will radically change the competitive playing field, exposing Ameren to abuse of market power and increased rail rates."

However, some smaller shippers are caught in the middle, including United Paving Construction, Hitchcock Scrap Yard, and Central Illinois Energy, which is building an ethanol distilling plant near Canton. In letters to the STB written on KJRY's behalf, all three businesses implore the board to approve the lease so they can have rail rates more affordable than those offered by a major carrier like BNSF. Central Illinois Energy said in a letter to the STB, "Although CIE will not be in production until summer of 2007, CIE has equipment needed during construction that is to be delivered by rail. If we do not have direct rail service by March, our construction schedule may be delayed and the project put at risk."

Mike Hitchcock Sr. of the Hitchcock Scrap Yard paints a broader picture. He'd like to expand his business, which attracts in excess of 6,000 trucks a year, but can't without rail. He says he may have to move his operation if he wants to grow. "As far as trucking stuff out, we've reached our limit, and we need rail if we're going to expand in the future," Hitchcock told the Journal Star. "Any industrial growth around here is pretty much dead without it."

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## **Wheel Report**

Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific announced that they would jointly operate a new run-through intermodal train between Los Angeles, CA and the U.S. Southeast beginning February 19. The new service will allow sixth-morning delivery. NS and UP also announced that they will begin shifting some intermodal rail traffic to a new, shorter route via Shreveport, LA as early as the third quarter of this year, attendant with the completion of the first phase of improvements on Kansas City Southern's

Meridian Speedway line, which KCSR and NS are jointly funding improvements to.

The Illinois Department of Transportation has announced that it is pulling out of the project to develop and implement a new positive train control (PTC) system on the line between St. Louis, MO and Chicago, IL. The National Association of Railroad Passengers reported that the project, which was being developed in partnership with Lockheed Martin, was "fraught with technical problems." An IDOT spokesman said that it will next evaluate "off the shelf" PTC technology and remains committed to using such systems to speed up and make safer travel on the line.

The State of New Mexico announced that service on its Rail Runner Express commuter train would begin between Los Lunas, NM and Belen, NM on February 2. The service extension will complete service over a 50-mile route between Belen and Bernalillo, NM, serving Albuquerque, NM and its suburbs along the line. A state spokesman said that a third train would be put in service on the line, also on February 2.

Canadian Pacific Railway announced that it had been named "official rail freight services provider" of the 2010 Olympic Winter Games, which are to be held in Vancouver, BC that year. A CPR spokesman said that the designation includes sponsorship assistance to Canadian teams participating in the Beijing 2008, Vancouver 2010 and London 2012 Olympic Games.

## ***Class 1's Report year end results***

**CSX** - For the fourth quarter of 2006, CSX reported net income of \$347 million, up 46.4 percent from \$237 million in the fourth quarter of 2005. Revenues were \$2.396 billion, up 7.9 percent from \$2.219 billion in the fourth quarter of 2005. CSX's operating ratio was 78.9 percent, improved from 81.3 percent in the fourth quarter of 2005. For the full year 2006, CSX net income totaled \$1.310 billion, up 14.4 percent from 2005's total of \$1.145 billion. Revenues totaled \$9.566 billion, up 11.0 per-



cent from 2005's total of \$8.618 billion. CSX's 2006 operating ratio was 77.8 percent, improved from its 2005 operating ratio of 82.0 percent.

**BNSF** - For the fourth quarter of 2006, BNSF reported net income of \$519 million, up 20.7 percent from \$430 million in the fourth quarter of 2005. Revenues were \$3.882 billion, up 9.4 percent from \$3.550 billion in the fourth quarter of 2005. BNSF's operating ratio was 75.0 percent, improved from 76.8 percent in the fourth quarter of 2005. For the full year 2006, BNSF net income totaled \$1.887 billion, up 23.2 percent from 2005's total of \$1.531 billion. Revenues totaled \$14.985 billion, up 15.3 percent from 2005's total of \$12.987 billion. BNSF's 2006 operating ratio was 75.8 percent, improved from its 2005 operating ratio of 76.8 percent.

**CN** - For the fourth quarter of 2006, Canadian National reported net income of C\$499 million, up 16.0 percent from C\$430 million in the fourth quarter of 2005. Revenues were C\$1.942 billion, up 2.9 percent from C\$1.886 billion in the fourth quarter of 2005. CN's operating ratio was 61.1 percent, improved from 61.8 percent in the fourth quarter of 2005. For the full year 2006, CN net income totaled C\$2.087 billion, up 34.1 percent from 2005's total of C\$1.556 billion. Revenues totaled C\$7.716 billion, up 6.5 percent from 2005's total of C\$7.240 billion. CN's 2006 operating ratio was 60.7 percent, improved from its 2005 operating ratio of 63.8 percent. (NOTE: In comparing CN's operating ratio with U.S.-based railroads, please note that CN, by and large, does not pay health benefits for its Canadian employees, due to Canada's nationalized health care program. CN does pay health benefits for its U.S. employees. Also, CN's debt servicing obligations date mainly from the time of its privatization.)

**NS** - For the fourth quarter of 2006, Norfolk Southern reported net income of \$385 million, up 6.3 percent from \$362 million in the fourth quarter of 2005. Revenues were \$2.319 billion, up 2.7 percent from \$2.257 billion in the fourth quarter of 2005. NS's operating ratio was 73.5 percent, improved from 73.7 percent in the fourth quarter of 2005. For the full year 2006, NS net income totaled \$1.481 billion, up 15.6 percent from 2005's total of \$1.281 billion. Revenues

totaled \$9.407 billion, up 10.3 percent from 2005's total of \$8.527 billion. NS's 2006 operating ratio was 72.8 percent, improved from its 2005 operating ratio of 75.2 percent.

**UP** - For the fourth quarter of 2006, Union Pacific reported net income of \$485 million, up 63.8 percent from \$296 million in the fourth quarter of 2005. Revenues were \$3.962 billion, up 9.4 percent from \$3.621 billion in the fourth quarter of 2005. UP's operating ratio was 79.6 percent, improved from 85.3 percent in the fourth quarter of 2005. For the full year 2006, UP net income totaled \$1.606 billion, up 56.5 percent from 2005's total of \$1.026 billion. Revenues totaled \$15.578 billion, up 14.7 percent from 2005's total of \$13.578 billion. UP's 2006 operating ratio was 81.5 percent, improved from its 2005 operating ratio of 86.8 percent.

**NS wreck at Sadorus – 2-3-07** – From Dennis Wicks - It happened about 10:30AM. I heard what sounded like a crash shortly after the 122 whistled for the west crossing in Sadorus. By the time I got to a window where I could see the train was still going by but obviously in emergency as it was noticeably slowing down.

The front truck of a hi-cube went on the ground to the left/north of the tracks close to the west switch for the elevator track and ran on the ground through town for about half a mile until it jack-knifed and went off in the field on the north side of the tracks just barely east of the Illini-FS dealer. Had it happened that the car went off the tracks to the south it would probably have landed in the storage yard of FS where their big ammonia storage tank is and Sadorus would probably have been evacuated.

There was a total of four cars on the ground, one of which was re-railed. The other three were rolled over into the field to get them out of the way.

I haven't eye-balled it this morning yet (2/4), but it sounds like they have everything repaired. But, now it sounds like there is a broken rail somewhere east of Tolono. There is no joy on the NS Lafayette Division this morning!

## The President's Corner

I guess since I'm one of Rick's more prolific contributors to the newsletter, it shouldn't surprise anyone that I'm writing a column under the auspices of my new position as President. With a new Secretary as well who is "computer able", we may even get things like meeting minutes published each month. (I suspect that the Secretary will just dispense with the reading of the minutes at each meeting, and we will just call for corrections and additions to the printed version and then vote on it.)

I don't promise, however, that my column will be a monthly feature. Although it's much easier to compose something like this compared to when I was last in this office in the early 1980's, I have developed a bit of "keyboard dyslexia" in my old age and what I type very seldom resembles what I intended to say! Thank goodness for real time spell-check in Microsoft Word.

Then there's the matter of what to write about each month. Sadly, I've gotten to an age where it feels like all the good things about railroading I used to enjoy are consigned to the past. No more interlocking towers to hang out at, or a friendly yard crew willing to break a few rules and give you a ride on the switch run. I still have a few friends who work for the railroad, but seldom do I see them. Most of the people I spent time with in my Golden Era of Railroading have retired, or worse yet, passed on. Just in the last week I learned of the death of Cleo Sprauge, former C&E/L&N/SBD/CSX operator at Terre Haute's Haley Tower. The group that saved Haley and the other buildings at the Wabash Valley Railroader's Museum owe their beginnings to Cleo, and anyone who ever met him would come away with the impression that he was the nicest guy to ever work on the railroad. How do you replace a man like that?

But we struggle on, that being life and all. There are still a few things to look forward to, like our meetings and the Rossville museum. Since I have had to pull back closer to home base in the last four years, it forced me to re-focus on Rossville as my

“fix” of railroading. I don’t know if all people think that’s a good thing, but with Mark possibly gone this season it never hurts to have an extra body in case no one else shows up. Our Museum Director is awfully hard to please, but I do my best when I’m there. J

And then there was the startling way I got “drafted” for dispatcher at a couple of the operating sessions. Still don’t know if it’s really my thing or not, but the experience was kind of cool. Maybe I’m a closet authoritarian after all...

I’m sure you’ll see me pleading in future issues about getting help to man the museum this summer. We’ve done really well in recent years keeping the place staffed, and I’m hoping we can keep up the good work this year.

*Doug*

*Editor: We also just learned of the death of Don Wright, brother of member Bill Wright. Don was an engineer on the C&EI and both Doug and I rode with him several times on yard engines. He had a very deep voice and you always knew who was calling the dispatcher, or North Yard operator. Don was a member years ago and one time he and I took a trip to northern Indiana and Illinois – at a time when the E-L was still running through Judson, IN (does that tell you how long ago). Don had Lionel trains, went each summer to spend a week in a motel along the UP in Nebraska and was a great guy. Don, and his voice, will be missed.*

## Danville Chapter, NRHS

### January 07 Minutes

President Nipper opened the meeting.

Outgoing Secretary McCoy read minutes from the November meeting, which were approved.

Treasurer Cooke reported the checking account had a balance of \$1745.23 and the C.D. totaled \$4310.04. The accounts totaled \$6055.27.

#### Old Business

The Feb. 24-5 train show in Hoopeston was discussed. Popcorn sales will not be possible. Several members volunteered to work the show.

Popcorn will be sold at the Urbana show in March.

Larry Prosser reported on the U of I show held in December.

#### New Business

Mark Ziebart reported on his recent job interview with BNSF in Hot Springs, ND. They have made him a preliminary job offer. If the final hiring steps are completed, he may be starting the new position in the Plains states. That may mean a vacancy in the Chapter officers.

A mention was made of the unexpected passing of member Fred Hubbard. He was working on the legal documents for the Chapter as a non-profit entity. Another attorney is working to complete them.

Following adjournment, Mark provided a video program on rotary snowplow operation on the Cumbers & Toltec Scenic.

## Spring is coming!

### Pair “Taken for a ride”

EUGENE, Ore. - There is an old saying that says “no good deed goes unpunished,” and that certainly rang true for two good Samaritans who decided to help an elderly woman board Amtrak’s southbound Coast Starlight on Jan. 12. According to the Eugene Register-Guard newspaper, Suzette McNally and Destiny Chavez were seeing a friend off at the Eugene station when they noticed an older woman with a walker calling for help as she struggled up the steps of the train. When no Amtrak employees responded, McNally, 42, stepped aboard to assist her. Chavez, 17, followed McNally.

The passenger’s seat was on the upper deck of the Superliner equipped train, so the two helped her up the flight of stairs and got her seated. Then the train began to move. The pair found an Amtrak employee and asked him to stop the train, which was still along the Eugene platform. Instead, they were taken to the conductor who, according to McNally, didn’t believe her account. “He told us to go to the lounge while he decided how to deal with us, whether to press charges,” she told the Register-Guard. “I told him, ‘We want off - we don’t want a train ride, but he said he couldn’t let us off now, that there was no way we could have gotten on the train without sneaking on, that we had to be stealing a ride.’”

The conductor said they would have to ride to Chemult, Ore., before they could exit. Instead, the pair was put off in Oakridge, Ore., after calling police there. The conductor rebuffed other Amtrak employees’ efforts to give the pair blankets, since they’d left their coats inside their car parked back at the Eugene station. “They stopped beside this field - it was all snow. They pointed at some

buildings way down to the right and said, "That's the police station," the Register-Guard reported. They started walking when they were met by Oakridge police officer Stephan Ball. "At first he was all business because he'd been told that we'd tried to hop a train," McNally said. "But he warmed up after talking to us."

Ball eventually believed their account, Oakridge Police Chief Louis Gomez said, particularly after an Amtrak employee on the train called to say Amtrak officials had changed their minds about filing a "theft of services" complaint. The police officer let McNally use his phone to call relatives, and then drove them to a restaurant so they could stay warm while waiting for a ride back to Eugene. "Our experience with the police, who went up to us thinking we were criminals, was the nicest part of our whole trip," she said.

Amtrak spokesman Mark Magliari told the Register-Guard on Jan. 19 he was unable to reach the employees aboard the Coast Starlight that evening to ask about the incident. He said there obviously was confusion about how McNally and Chavez came aboard. "We're very sorry for the experience that this woman and her niece had," he told the Register-Guard. "We're looking into what happened there. And we appreciate the help of the Oakridge police in assisting these two people." The trip was McNally's first train ride.

## Iowa DOT, Illinois County OK Funds To Improve Infrastructure For Proposed Ethanol Plants

Iowa Department of Transportation and Kankakee County officials recently approved funds totaling \$994,500 to improve infrastructure associated with Alternative Energy Sources Inc.'s (AENS) proposed ethanol plants in Kankakee, Ill., and Boone County, Iowa.

The Kankakee County Board approved an \$850,000 grant to improve roads in the Kankakee Regional Industrial Park, where AENS plans to begin building a 110-million-gallon-capacity plant in late spring. To be completed in fall 2008, the facility will be adjacent to a Canadian National Railway Co. mainline.

Meanwhile, the Iowa DOT approved a \$144,500 grant and \$94,500 loan to help fund improvements to a Union Pacific Railroad line. In late spring, AENS expects to begin building a 110-million-gallon-capacity plant near Ogden, Iowa, that will be served by UP. The facility is scheduled to open in late 2008.

Last year, AENS also announced plans to build a 110-million-gallon-capacity ethanol plant in Greenville, Ill., adjacent to BNSF Railway Co. and CSX Transportation mainlines. To be served by Illinois Western Railroad Co., which interchanges with the Class Is, the facility might be completed next year.

AENS' projects are part of an ethanol boom in the United States. During the next 18 months, 63 plants will be built and eight facilities will be expanded, doubling the nation's ethanol production capacity to more than 10 billion gallons, according to the Renewable Fuels Association. Just yesterday, newly formed Cargill subsidiary Emerald Renewable Energy L.L.C. announced plans to build four 100 million-gallon-capacity plants in the Midwest.

Last year, the number of U.S. ethanol plants exceeded 100 and production surpassed 5 billion gallons for the first time, the association said. That's good news for railroads, which move about 75 percent of all ethanol-related traffic, including inbound materials, and outbound ethanol and byproducts.

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