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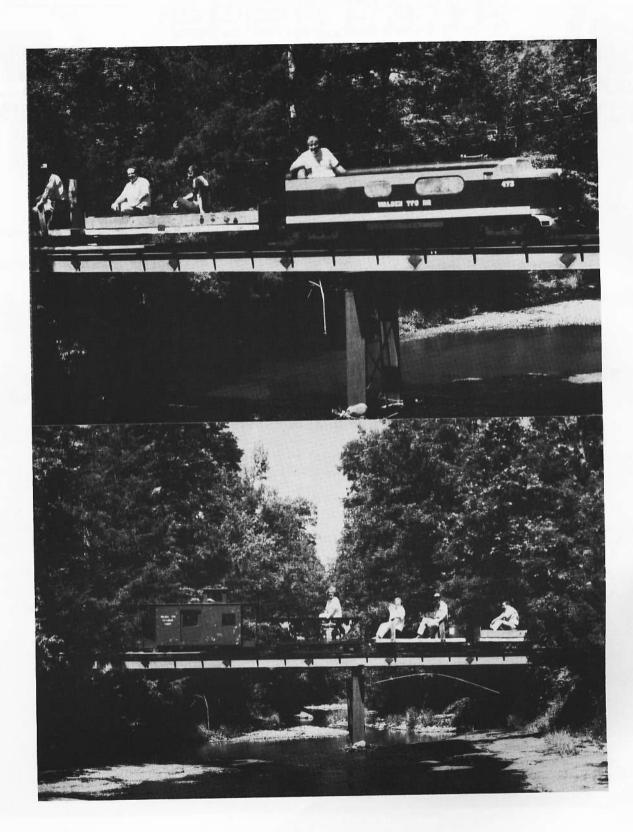
ARKARSAS RAILROADER



VOLUME 29 NUMBER 8 AUGUST 1998



First 43, Cotton Belt Blue Streak, first section, taking water at Camden, Arkansas back in 1938. Notice the engineer oiling around the engine. (P. B. Wooldridge photo)



Here are a couple of scenes of our club's May 16, 1998 excursion over the Walden Too railroad near Dover, Arkansas. Top photo shows the Walden Too's #473 over the east bridge, while the bottom photo shows part of our group riding. The Walden Too is owned by club member Ron Esserman. (Both photos by Peter Smykla, Jr.)



Scenes from the Arkanss Railroad club's 1998 Show & Sale held on June 27, 1998 at Robinson Center in Little Rock. Attendance, including children, was over 600 this year. (John Jones photos

1998 OFFICERS/POSITIONS OF THE ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB

<u>PRESIDENT</u> - Leonard L. Thalmueller, 21 Hanover Dr, Little Rock AR 72209-2159 (501-562-8231)
<u>VICE-PRESIDENT</u> - John Hodkin, Jr., 506 Gordon St, N Little Rock AR 72117 (501-945-2128)
<u>TREASURER</u> - Walter B. Walker, 8423 Linda Ln, Little Rock AR 72227-5983 (501-225-0826)
<u>SECRETARY</u> - Carole Sue Schafer, 103 Thayer St, Little Rock AR 72205-5951 (501-371-0034)
<u>EDITOR</u> - Ken Ziegenbein, 1023 Claycut Cir, N Little Rock AR 72116-3728 (501-758-1340)
<u>NRHS DIRECTOR</u> - Jim Bennett, 1002 South Leslie St, Stuttgart AR 72160 (870)-673-6753)
<u>PHOTOGRAPHER</u> - John C. Jones, 117 Cottonwood, Sherwood AR 72120-4011 (501-835-3729)
<u>TRIP ADVERTISING</u> - David P. Hoge, 3721 Idlewild, N Little Rock AR 72116 (501-771-1025)
<u>BOARD '98</u> - Robin Thomas, 10908 Rivercrest Dr #26, Little Rock AR 72205 (501-664-3301)
<u>BOARD '00</u> - Gene Hull, 3507 E Washington #31, North Little Rock AR 72114-6455 (501-945-7386)
<u>BOARD '01</u> - Tom Shook, 1716 Alberta Dr. Little Rock AR 72227-3902 (501-225-8955)
<u>BOARD '02</u> - Bill Bailey, 8318 Reymere Dr, Little Rock AR 72227-3944 (501-224-6828)

NEXT MEETING/PROGRAM

The next meeting of the Arkansas Railroad Club will be held on <u>SUNDAY</u>, <u>AUGUST 9</u> at our usual site, the Mercantile Bank on Main Street in North Little Rock, just across the street from the Riverfront Hilton. Time will be 2 p.m. JACK SCHNEDLER, assistant managing editor/Features at the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, who has ridden and photographed some of the world's more notable trains, will present our August program.

Jack can lay claim to having taken the world's longest train journey, on the Trans-Siberian Railroad from Khabarovsk to Moscow in 1976. Over the years, he also has traveled by rail around Japan on the Bullet Trains and slower lines and, in his words, "has sampled the distinctly mixed pleasures" of long-distance train travel in China. He has also taken the famous Blue Train between Cape Town and Pretoria, South Africa, and "experienced the decrepit" passenger rail system in Ecuador.

Add to those the "comfortable tourist trains" of Alaska and the "jaunty" Blue Mountain excursion run on Jamaica. He has "zoomed in" on France's TGV high-speed train, "chugged through the Alps" on Swiss lines and ridden the Chunnel Train beneath the English Channel.

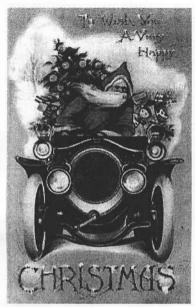
Jack served in 1994 as president of the Society of American Travel Writers (see story elsewhere in this newsletter on that agency's top 10 train journeys in the world - I had found this list before I knew Mr. Schnedler would be our speaker). He was travel editor of the *Chicago Sun-Times* before joining the *Democrat-Gazette* in 1994. There, he supervises a staff of two dozen reporters producing the 12 Features sections that appear in the newspaper each week.

Let's have a BIG turnout!

JIM BENNETT" was at the Baptist Rehabilitation Institute in Little Rock as of July 20. His condition was slowly improving. He could walk to his meal and was beginning to put words together. (He had not been able to speak coherently). As you know, he was hit by an out of control car at a Kroger parking lot in Stuttgart on June 24 and has been in the hospital ever since. His home address is: 1002 South Leslie St, Stuttgart AR 72160. The address of the institute is: Baptist Rehabilitation Institute, 9601 Interstate 630, Room 310, Little Rock AR 72205

<u>NOVEMBER TRIP</u> - Plans are underway for our club to rent the old Combine car of the A&M Railroad for a final trip between Van Buren and Winslow and return on November 14, a Saturday. This will be the last day of passenger operation by the A&M Railroad on the Alco line. Cost will be \$40, including the bus trip from Little Rock to Van Buren and return. Limited seats available. The bus would leave at 7 or 730 a.m., returning after 4 or 5 p.m. If interested, send \$40 to the Arkansas Railroad Club - Trip, PO Box 9151, North Little Rock AR 72119.

Volume XXIX, Number 8 - August 1998



<u>NOMINATIONS WANTED</u> - Know of any club member who has done an outstanding job in railroading, either present, past or in historical documentation? If so, we'd like to hear from you. They will be put in nomination for a deserving award for their accomplishments. Send any nominations to the Arkansas Railroad Club, PO Box 9151, North Little Rock AR 72119. Nominations due by October 15.

CHRISTMAS DINNER will be held Sunday, December 6. More details to follow.

<u>AUGUST BIRTHDAYS</u>: JOE A HALEY (8/01); STAN BOOTH (8/04); JAMES C BELL (8/08); QUIN S GODSEY III (8/10); DOW SIMERLEY (8/11); PETER SMYKLA, JR (8/12); JOHN W CORBETT (8/14); JIM BENNETT (8/15); ARTHUR D McCOY (8/17); JAMES E GARNER (8/18); JOSEPH DAREL CASON (8/20); WILBUR E JOHNSON (8/22); VAN PHILLIPS (8/22); EDWARD W NOEL (8/23); DAVE E NEWTON (8/24); MARY COHOON (8/24); LYMAN E HOLLER (8/27); P. B. WOOLDRIDGE (8/29); JOSEPH A WEBB (8/30); DAVID PHILLIPS (8/31).

1999 CALENDARS are ready! See order blank elsewhere.

<u>E-MAIL/PHONE NUMBER CORRECTIONS</u> - The following corrections should be inked into your 1998 club roster: Chuck Crisler's phone numbers should be 504-589-1092 at work or 504-419-1226 at home. --- Peter Ehrlich's e-mail address should be: <u>norcalrr@sprynet.com</u>. --- Dan Barr's email address should be: <u>dhbarrjr@mindspring.com</u>

WANTED : FOR SALE OR TRADE

The following is for those who want to find certain railroad-related items, information, or want to sell or trade such items with other railfans. We reserve the right to refuse listings if deemed inappropriate. The Arkansas Railroad Club is not responsible for misleading ads.

WANTED - Standard gauge hand car. Advise price, condition and location. Peter Smykla, PO Box 1892, Pine Bluff AR 71613 or call 870-535-4724.

FOR SALE - Authentic glass lenses for semaphores, made new from original molds. Prices start at \$20. Contact Thomas Ohnmeiss, 6221 Tonawanda Creek Rd, Suite 20, Lockport NY 14094 or visit their Web page on the Internet: http://www.semaphores.com or call 716-434-3562.

WANTED - HELP! Where can I find a videotape of "The Titfield Thunderbolt" (Ealing Studios, 1952)? "When a branch railway line is threatened with closure, the

villagers take it over as a private concern." (Halliwell, 3 stars). Contact Bob Oswald, 2511 Elizabeth, Fayetteville AR 72703-3710, 501-521-9714.

FOR SALE - Jack Royce's benchwork. Jack had 2 pieces of 4' x 6' plywood in an "L" shape layout over his benchwork. He paid over \$400 for the benchwork itself. Widder Fay Jean wants to sell the benchwork and two plywood pieces for \$150. There are pieces from the layout which would be included as a bonus. Please call Fay Jean at 501-228-9853, 501-661-0292 or 501-350-7779 to make an appointment to see it.

FOR SALE - The Arkansas Railroad Club's hardbound, 120-page book called *Railroad Stations and Trains through Arkansas and the Southwest* is ready for mailing. It was written by Clifton Hull with help from Tom Shook, among other club members. Kevin EuDaly of White River Productions did the graphic design and artwork. You can order from White River Productions, 24632 Anchor Ave, Bucklin MO 64631. Cost is \$29.95 plus \$4.50 postage and handling (total of \$34.45 if you're having it mailed). MasterCard or Visa accepted. You can call White River Productions at 816-695-4433.

FOR SALE - James R. Fair's new book The Louisiana & Arkansas Railway. This 176-page clothbound book has 80 black and white illustrations and covers the Louisiana & Arkansas Railway from its beginning to the modern era. YOU CAN NOW ORDER DIRECTLY FROM MR. FAIR. He'll even autograph it for you. Cost directly from him is only \$34 plus postage. His address is: James R. Fair, 2804 Northwood Rd, Austin, TX 78703-1630. Call 512-451-6194 or 512-471-3689. James Fair is and has been an Arkansas Railroad Club member for years.

FOR SALE - Collector quality Missouri Pacific Power book by Joe Collias. Contact T. B. Wilson, 19934 Sweetgum Cir #14, Germantown TN 20874 or call 301-601-0712.

WANTED - New members in the Morse Telegraph Club, Inc., Grand Chapter, Chicago, Illinois. Contact Keith LeBaron, Grand S/T, 550 N Greenfield, Freeport IL 61032 or call 815-232-2564. Dues are \$10 per year. The nearest local chapter to us is in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Bill Orr, 5812 S Pittsburg Ave, Tulsa OK 74135.

WANTED - Stories, photos and other information pertinent to women working on the railroad, both non-clerical and clerical. The period of WWII is of special interest, but all leads to employees or their relatives would be appreciated and followed up. Contact Frank Fabian, 8828 55th Court, Oak Lawn, IL 60453-1249.

RAILROAD ABANDONMENT PROPOSALS

The address of the Surface Transportation Board is: Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, Washington DC 20423. The STB phone number for abandonment procedures (Office of Public Services) is: 202-565-1592. If you contact them, it would be handy to use the Docket Numbers. Their Web address is: http://www.stb.dot.gov if you'd like the complete listings.

These abandonment proposals have been printed in the Federal Register or have come directly from the Surface Transportation Board. They will go in effect unless one of the following occurs: 1) an offer of financial assistance is received; 2) a request for public use of the land is received (for instance, rails-to-trails); 3) petitions to reopen the case is filed. Railroads, before they can file these "notices of exemption under CFR 1152 Subpart F," must certify that 1) no local traffic has moved over the line for at least 2 years; 2) any overhead traffic can be routed over other lines; 3) no formal complaint filed by a user is pending and; 4) environmental reports, historic reports, transmittal letter, newspaper publication, and notice to governmental agencies have been met. Even though approval is granted for the railroads to abandon, it may be months or years before track is actually taken up.

NEW YORK - BUFFALO & PITTSBURGH RAILROAD INC. - To abandon a line from m.p. 2.0 near Buffalo to m.p. 45.0 near Ashford Junction, New York, a distance of 43.0 miles and to abandon a line from m.p. 93.8 near Ashford Junction to m.p. 103.0 near Salamanca, New York, 9.2 miles. Towns included are: Lackawanna-South Park, Kellogg, East Hamburg, Orchard Park, Colden, East Concord, Springville, West Valley, Ashford Junction, and Ellicottville. Final decision by September 18, 1998. (STB Docket No. AB-369, Sub No. 3X, decided June 12, served June 19, 1998)

NEW YORK - ROCHESTER & SOUTHERN RAILROAD, INC - To abandon 10.41 miles from m.p. 83.39 near Machias to m.p. 93.8 near Ashford Junction, New York. Towns included are: Ashford Junction and Machias, New York. Final decision by September 18, 1998. (STB Docket No. 354, Sub No. 2X, decided June 10, served June 19, 1998)

WEST VIRGINIA - CSX - To abandon 0.87 miles of line known as the WVA&P Subdivision between m.p. 1.23 and m.p. 2.1 in Clarksburg, West Virginia. Final decision by September 25, 1998. (STB Docket No. AB-55, Sub No. 563X, decided June 18, served June 26, 1998)

PENNSYLVANIA - KNOX & KANE RAILROAD CO. - To abandon 9 miles of line between Station #3069+49 immediately west of milepost 86 and Station #3533+70 immediately west of milepost 95 in Clarion County, Pennsylvania. Effective July 29, 1998. (STB Docket No. AB-551X, decided June 19, served June 29, 1998)

MAINE - MAINE CENTRAL RAILROAD CO. - To abandon 18.97 miles of line on the Lewiston Industrial Track between Engineering Station 0+00 and Engineering Station 1001+81.6 in Androscoggin County, Maine. Effective July 31, 1998. (STB Docket No. AB-83, Sub-No. 16X, decided June 24, 1998, served July 1, 1998)

UTAH - UNION PACIFIC - To abandon three rail lines: 1) the Provo Subdivision between m.p. 799.0 and m.p. 800.26 (1.26 miles); the Passenger Line Industrial Lead, between m.p. 782.32 and m.p. 782.79 (0.47 miles); and the Provo Subdivision Running Track Passenger Line between m.p. 744.20 and m.p. 745.48 (1.28 miles), a total distance of 3.10 miles

Volume XXIX, Number 8 - August 1998

in Salt Lake City, Utah. Included are Grant Tower, Salt Lake City, and UP 9th St. Crossing. Final decision by September 30, 1998. (STB Docket No. AB-33, Sub-No. 116X, decided June 25, 1998, served July 2, 1998)

MICHIGAN - GRAND TRUNK WESTERN RAILROAD, INC. - To abandon a 0.73 mile segment of its railroad on the Cass City Subdivison between m.p. 0.72 and m.p. 1.72 in Pontiac, Michigan. Effective June 5, 1998. (STB Docket No. AB-31, Sub-No. 34X, decided June 29, served July 6, 1998)

TEXAS - SOUTH ORIENT RAILROAD COMPANY, LTD. - To abandon its San Angelo-Presidio line from m.p. 722 near Mertzon station south of San Angelo to about m.p. 945.3 at Alpine Junction and from m.p. 956.7 at Paisano Junction to the end of the line at m.p. 1029.1 on the International Bridge near Presidio, a distance of about 296.4 miles. Also, to discontinue trackage rights over the Union Pacific from m.p. 945.3 at Alpine Junction to m.p. 956.7 at Paisano Junction, a distance of 11.4 miles. Towns included are: Lake, Rankin, McCamey, Baldridge, Sulphur Jct., Fort Stockton, Belding, Hovey, Alpine, Alpine Jct., Paisano Jct., Paisano, Tinaja, Plata, Casa Piedra, and Presidio. Effective Written comments are due by August 3, 1998. (STB Docket No. AB-545, decided June 30, served July 8, 1998)

MICHIGAN - GRAND TRUNK WESTERN RAILROAD INC. - To abandon a 19.08 mile line on the Romeo Subdivision between Richmond and Washington from m.p. 0.42 to m.p. 19.50 in Michigan. Effective August 9, 1998. (STB Docket No. AB-31, Sub No. 35X, decided July 2, served July 10, 1998)

WASHINGTON - TACOMA EASTERN RAILWAY CO. - While NOT an abandonment, the City of Tacoma asked the STB to allow the discontinuance of service over 131.5 miles of line by the Tacoma Eastern Railway Company. This runs between m.p. 2192.0 at Tacoma and m.p. 1717 at Chehalis, Washington and between m.p. 2192.0 at Tacoma and m.p. 64.2 at Morton, Washington. Comments due by August 7. (STB docket No. AB-548, decided July 7, served July 13, 1998)

MINNESOTA - SOO LINE RAILROAD CO. - To abandon a .62-mile segment of its line on the Farmington Minnesota Line between m.p. 143.73 to m.p. 144.35. Effective August 16, 1998. (STB Docket No. AB-57, Sub No. 45X, decided July 13, served July 17, 1998)

ARKANSAS RAIL NEWS

TROLLEYS MAY RETURN

(Eureka Springs) - Electric trolleys are being talked about in the rustic town of Eureka Springs, Arkansas. It's curvy roads and Swis-like appearance would be the perfect place to re-install trolleys, according to the Community Electric Trolley Association. Federal money may be available from the newly passed \$203 billion highway and mass transit bill signed into law this June. (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, June 28, 1998 by Greg Harton)

A FIRST!

Gene Hull found the following clipping from the November 3, 1898 Arkansas Gazette (from the Newport News): "ELECTRIC HEADLIGHT - Quite a ripple of excitement was caused last night when engine 703 on the Iron Mountain came through. She carried an electric headlight, which throw rays nearly a half mile down the track. The dynamo is carried at the back of the light. There are two lights in the cab and eight around the engine which can be turned on at will so that the engineer can see every part of the machine in the night without the old-fashioned torch. Electricity is a wonderful thing and there seems to be no limit to its usefulness."

ANOTHER FIRST!

29 November, 1898 - Arkansas Gazette -"SOLID VESTIBULE TRAIN -Improvement in Iron Mountain Cannon Ball, Effective Today - "The St Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railroad, with their usual push and energy, have without display been quietly changing the cannon ball train into a solid vestibule. This service will begin with the cannon ball going south this morning and will be a regular thing in the future. The train will consist of two mail cars, one express, one baggage, one divided car, one chair car and three sleepers. The people of the state should appreciate the efforts of the Iron Mountain to give them good train service and up-to-date equipment. Their motto has been never to go backward but always be the leader in improved train service for its patrons. Today they have the best track and equipment, operating more and faster trains than any line south of the Ohio River."

NEW YARD

(Marion) - In mid-July, Union Pacific officially opened its new intermodal rail yard near Marion, Arkansas. Some 20-25 new yard employees are expected to be hired this year, but many will lose jobs after

the Memphis yards close. (Memphis Commercial Appeal)

BNSF TRACKWORK

BNSF closed 250 miles of track from Springfield, Missouri to Memphis, including track through Arkansas, from June 13 to June 17 to upgrade the entire line. Nearly 1500 people from all over the country helped. Red and white tents were set up at 4 a.m. to feed hundreds of workers along the line.

A&M PASSENGER TRAINS

(Springdale) - The final excursion passenger train actually run by the Arkansas & Missouri Railroad will run on November 14. However, there is a push by Van Buren and Springdale Chambers of Commerce to find another operator for the trains. The A&M has said it would provide the crew to run the train on a lease basis, but would no longer sell the tickets themselves. Also, the new management of

GENERAL RAIL NEWS

the A&M will be focused on freight, so any operator will have to stay with the current route schedule. (Morning News of Northwest Arkansas via Bob Oswald)

JOHN JONES reported at the July 12 meeting that UP's Jenk's Shops in North Little Rock recently painted 24 locomotives in 21 days.

AIRLINE MELTDOWN

Conte Nast Traveler Magazine in June 1998 had some interesting news regarding airline travel. Maybe there's hope for trains yet! To quote: "...the world's airline industry in on the verge of meltdown ... Traffic will double over the next decade or so, to more than 2.5 billion passengers a year. --- The National Civil Aviation Review Commission reported in December that our nation's aviation system will succumb to gridlock - it would be like a nationwide thunderstorm - if every flight in the U.S. is delayed by just seven minutes, the whole system stops working. --- In the Netherlands, an airport authority has suggested the possibility that some wouldbe flying passengers should be denied permission to fly -- if, for instance, they could just as easily take the train."

UP BLAMED FOR WRECK

Federal transportation investigators blamed UP dispatchers and their managers for the June 22, 1997 accident that killed four people near Devine, Texas. The NTSB said that Union Pacific managers "may have jeopardized safe dispatching operations by qualifying unprepared apprentice dispatchers and assigning less experienced dispatchers to territories of high-operating demands." It also said that the Federal Railroad Administration should develop dispatcher training standards. (Dallas Morning News, May 20, 1998 via Dan Barr)

UP CHANGES DEMANDED

(Houston, Texas) - Even though most congestion appears to be over on the Union Pacific, the Chemical Manufacturers Association, the Society of Plastics Industry, the Texas Chemical Council, the Texas Railroad Commission, the Kansas City Southern Railway and the Tex-Mex Railway presented a proposal to the Surface Transportation Board on July 8. Among the proposals was to make permanent some Houston-area trackage rights to Tex Mex, order sale to Tex Mex of a former SP line between Rosenburg and Victoria, Texas, allow Tex Mex to build a new line between Houston and Beaumont, and create neutral switching in Houston.

BNSF also has asked the STB to 1) grant BNSF permanent overhead trackage rights on UP's Caldwell-Flatonia-San Antonio and Caldwell-Flatonia-Placedo lines in Texas: 2) to allow BNSF to operate over both the UP line and former SP line between Harlingen and Brownsville, Texas; 3) to grant BNSF trackage rights on UP's Taylor-Milano, Texas line; 4) to order neutral switching on the former SP Baytown and Cedar Bayou branches and former SP Sabine-Chaison branches in Beaumont, Texas; 5) to order the Port Terminal Railroad Association to operate the UP Clinton Branch in Houston in order to eliminate delays caused by UP to BNSF's trains; 6) to grant BNSF trackage rights to enable BNSF to join the directional traffic on any UP line in corridors where BNSF has trackage rights over one, but not both, lines involved in the UP directional flow; 7) to grant BNSF trackage rights on UP on any clear Houston routes, so it could avoid delays; 8) to order coordinated dispatching over UP lines between Houston and Longview and Houston to Shreveport. (BNSF Press Release)

In the meantime, UP announced June 4 that it has spent nearly \$100 million so far this year in Texas on expanding track and adding facilities. It will also spend \$223 million more in 1998. So far, UP has spend \$64.8 million on rail and tie improvements, \$18.5 million on new construction projects, \$7.3 million on railyard improvements, and \$4.6 million on bridges. (Dallas Morning News, June, via Dan Barr and a UP Press Release, June 4 and BNSF Press Release)

STILLWATER EXCURSIONS?

(Stillwater, Oklahoma) - According to the July 9 Tulsa World, excursions on the former ATSF Pawnee-Stillwater branch would start July 11 and will carry 200 passengers from Stillwater to Pawnee and if succeeding Saturday trips are successful, it may turn into a tourist attraction. That first trip (on CoFC) was to use Watco's 3 Boise Budds, ex-B&M RDC's, and will carry passengers to Pawnee's Wild West Show at the Pawnee Bill Ranch. Tickets cost between \$25 and \$35. Reservations can be made by calling: 405-372-5573, the Stillwater Chamber of Commerce. (Via Dick Brundage on the Internet. I haven't confirmed the trips)

NEW SHORTLINE

(DeRidder, Louisiana) - BNSF announced June 24 that it had sold its 39-mile line

between Kirbyville, Texas and DeRidder, Louisiana to Timber Rock Railroad, Inc. The short line will also provide crews for the Georgetown Railroad's rock trains between Silsbee, Texas and DeRidder. Timber Rock is part of WATCO, which also owns several other BNSF and UP lines.

D&S NARROW GAUGE SOLD

The Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge railroad was sold by First American Railways, Inc. to a corporation controlled by Allen C. Harper, former chairman and CEO of First American Railways. Price was \$2.5 million. First American will still provide some marketing and support services to D&SNG for five years totaling \$1.5 million. Also, First American has a five year right of first refusal if the buyer sells the line. First American Railways also operates the Florida Fun Train. (Transport News, July 10, 1998)

D&H RAILWAY 175TH

The Delaware & Hudson Railway celebrated its 175th year on May 27, 1998.

TOY TRAIN STAMPS

(Chesterfield, Michigan) - The USPS unveiled a stamp honoring toy electric trains on May 28 at the home of Lionel Trains, Chesterfield, Michigan. About 1,000 people showed up. (Detroit Free Press, May 19, 1998)

NIKE SHOES STOLEN

(Memphis, Tennessee) - Thieves broke into 30 boxcars in a South Memphis railyard on June 12 and stole \$14,000 worth of Nike shoes. Ten suspects were charged that night. (Memphis Commercial Appeal)

FLEA-SIZE SHRIMP?

(Providence, Rhode Island) - Limmoria, shrimp like creatures the size of a flea, are eating out the insides of pilings of Pier 1 at the Davisville Port and Commercial Park in Providence. This is causing a needed \$4.7 million repair and lowering of load limits on trains and trucks. (Providence Journal-Bulletin, June 14)

ROYAL GORGE NEWS

The Georgetown Loop Railroad and a short-line carrier have teamed up to try to run trains over the Royal Gorge again. The line was shut down last year by Union Pacific. They plan to run tourist trains and freight trains along the line from Canyon City to Parkdale, Colorado. They would allow runbys. The Royal Gorge was built in 1878 and carried passengers until 1967. This gorge was created by the Arkansas River and there is a suspension bridge over the river. (Next time you cross the Arkansas River in Little Rock, think about the fact that that water originated somewhere near the Royal Gorge in Colorado). (Denver Post, June 9)

BEE STINGS

(San Antonio) - Several UP workers were stung by a hive of angry bees near San Antonio recently. They left their heavy equipment running and the doors wide open as they ran from the hive of several hundred bees. The bees were described as "very agitated."

LAST CONDUCTORS

(Winnipeg, Canada) - Tuesday, July 1 was the last day VIA passenger trains had conductors. From now on, tickets and beverage distribution will be done by a service manager. Conductors were the boss of all train staff and oversaw both the engineers and service staff, but no more. The move to eliminate conductors will save VIA \$175 million over 10 years. (Winnipeg Free Press, July 2, 1998)

400-MILE BIKE PATH

(Washington, DC) - With the new \$203 billion highway bill passed and signed, \$6 million of that will be set aside to help complete construction of a 400 mile recreation path between Pittsburgh and Washington. The path would use old railroad right of ways to run from downtown Pittsburgh to Cumberland, Maryland, where it would connect with the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Towpath to Washington. The trail would weave cyclists through farms, a river valley and old coalmining villages.

TRANS-SIBERIAN HALTED

Russian miners and other disgruntled workers who haven't been paid held up at least 11 freight trains on the Trans-Siberian Railway in the city of Anzhero-Sudzhensk on July 4. Thousands of unpaid railway workers also held up trains in June. (Washington Post via Thomas L. Wilson of Virginia)

AMTRAK FUNDING

The House and Senate have both agreed (through various committees) that Amtrak will continue to get operating subsidies of between \$555 and \$606 million in 1999. At one time it appeared that there would be no operating assistance at all. Amtrak President George D. Warrington said, that as of July 8, Amtrak has improved its bottom line by \$323 million, reduced costs

AMTRAK NEWS

by \$137 million, generated commercial revenue of \$150 million since 1994, and has increased ridership by nearly 7 percent this year.

Four of Amtrak's western trains, including the *California Zephyr, Empire Builder, Southwest Chief and Texas Eagle* contributed to a 15.6 percent growth in passengers in May 1998 over May 1997. The *Texas Eagle* carried 56.3 percent more passengers, due mainly to its adding a fourth train each week.

TEXAS EAGLE TIMEKEEPING

Timekeeping on the *Texas Eagle* and *Sunset Limited* have been rather rotten in June and July, according to various reports. Some days, due to freight delays, Amtrak equipment shortages, UP congestion in Arizona, etc, have meant 12 hours and

more late trains. Some congestions has also occurred in central Texas due to freight. A *Sunset Limited* train departed Los Angeles in mid-July nearly 24 hours late due to equipment shortages.

"Rail fell into the background for several decades," said Robert Suchan, Washington state's marketing director. "But with population densities increasing and traffic getting worse, it's now a critical part of our future."

THE RIGHT WAY

Bruce Boettler, owner of B&N Custom Model Systems, which creates train layouts for commercial businesses, such as at Great Train Stores, said the following in mid-June:

"We sat up all night. There's something so romantic, peaceful and even lyrical about train travel. It has to do with the rhythm of the wheels on the track and the feeling you get as you observe towns firsthand through the window."

When asked the reason why trains evoke nostalgia in so many, Boettler suggested that it may be a yearning for a back-tobasics kind of peace. "Trains represent a time when life wasn't filled with so much hustle and bustle." (St Charles, Missouri Post, June 15)

MORE COOPERATION?

According to the June 22, 1998 Journal of Commerce, Amtrak and the freight railroads made a sharp change in direction to work together instead of against each other, specifically on the handling of express. Even Union Pacific, Amtrak's most outspoken opponent, has had an apparent change of heart on the freight issue. "We do not contemplate appealing the STB decision" on allowing Amtrak to handle express, said Ed Trandahl, a UP spokesman. "We are now having cordial discussions."

ST LOUIS-KANSAS CITY STAYS

Amtrak will keep its trains running between St. Louis and Kansas City at least for another year. The Missouri Legislature will pay Amtrak \$4.7 million to operate these trains. Ridership has increased on the *Mules* 20% through May 1998. (St. Louis Post-Dispatch, June 26)

JAY LENO COMEBACK

In an appearance on NBC-TV's "Tonight Show" Whoopi Goldberg showed she travels by, and likes Amtrak's long-distance trains. Below "J" is program host Jay Leno and "W" is Whoopi Goldberg:

J: (after an earlier crude joke about Amtrak train plunging off a bridge) ... You just came out from New York, right?

W: Yes, by Amtrak, Jay (very pointedly) J: I still can't believe you came to LA by train.

W: I know you do not enjoy the train.

J: No, the train, I mean, to me, when you get there in four hours, why take eight days and crash or fall off the track? (Jay makes hissing steam and crash noises) pshhtt -- toot-toot - Hooperville! - phsst 'Zooperville - pshht - Pineville!

W: Now see here, honey, Pineville, Zooperville, Hopieville - Those are all the "villes" that watch YOU! ... Those are my people honey! You know the Amtrak folks, they take a lot of hits from you... They say, "What's wrong with Jay? Why don't Jay like us?" I said, "Because Jay doesn't understand. See Jay has that "Fly" car. Jay likes to drive" (does steering wheel turns) J: That's right. This is America... You drive!

W: You drive, AND you take the train...! (from the June 1998 NRHS News)

EXCURSIONS/SHOWS/EVENTS OF OTHER CLUBS

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS - September 11-13, 1998 - Rock Island Technical Society's Annual Meeting and Convention. This will be held at the Holiday Inn in Elmhurst. Full registration is \$35 before August 15. To register write to Steven Suhs, 28w692 Forest Ave, West Chicago IL 60185-3614.

LEADVILLE, COLORADO - Through October 4th - The Leadville, Colorado & Southern RR Co. is running 2¹/₂ hour round trips between Leadville (the highest incorporated city in the country) and the French Gulch water tower daily. Cost is \$22.50 adults. Write to Leadville, Colorado & Southern RR Co., 326 East 7th St, PO Box 916, Leadville CO 80461, or call 719-486-3936.

KANSAS CITY-MINNEAPOLIS -September 11, 1998 - The Camerail Club announced June 27 that it planned to run a steam passenger train from Kansas City to Minneapolis starting September 11 with an overnight stay in Sioux Falls. The price is \$259. Call 1-402-563-1624 for more information.

MICHIGAN AND ELSEWHERE -Various times of year - The Bluewater Michigan Chapter of the NRHS presents a series of historic rail and rail-related journeys this summer and fall. For a brochure, write to them at: Bluewater Michigan Chapter, PO Box 296, Royal Oak MI 48068-02966 or call 248-541-1000 M-F, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

WORLDWIDE TRIPS - Various times of year - Trains Unlimited Tours is offering rail tours across the world, anywhere from San Diego and Cumbres, to Alaska, South America and Siberia. For a brochure and pricing, write to Trains Unlimited Tours, PO Box 1997, Portola CA 96122 or call 530-836-1748.

THE LONGEST TRAIN

(Remembering the longest Rock Island train that was ever run between Booneville, Arkansas and Biddle Yard in Little Rock).

By: L. T. Walker, retired Rock Island conductor

This writer, L. T. Walker, had bid in a pool turn between Biddle and Booneville, Arkansas on the Rock Island (sometime in the 1960s or early 1970s). Almost all trains would handle 125 cars plus caboose, which was also in pool service.

Me and my crew had gone to Booneville on a train and we were second out. We got our rest and got up. An Oklahoma crew had come in with an eastbound train and had put it in the yard. They had 125 cars plus a caboose.

The first crew out was told to take the yarded train on east. But before they went on duty, another Oklahoma crew came in with 125 cars plus caboose. They came down the main line. When they got to the depot, they had a man I had never seen before. He introduced himself as Oklahoma Trainmaster. What to do? The yardmaster and dispatcher had a conference.

The yardmaster came out and told us the Oklahoma Trainmaster and dispatcher wanted my crew to combine both trains and take it to Biddle. The yardmaster said "I don't believe you will ever get to Biddle." I asked the trainmaster if he had ever been from Booneville eastward. He said no. I told him there were up and down mountains and all kinds of curves on the line. He said "you can make it with those eight big diesels."

Then my engineer came over, but we could not talk him out of it. He told us that he and the dispatcher were trying to save train miles.

So the first crew out deadheaded with us. The engineer and fireman said they wanted to ride the caboose with me and the flagman. They wanted to see how the engineer would handle such a long train.

We got the eight diesels hooked up and started to double the yarded train together. The yardmaster told us to leave the caboose in the yard. We only had radio on one caboose and engine. We used the depot radio to help get the train together. The flagman got on the caboose to let us know when the air came up. The flagman was Nillus Cauthron and our engineer was Charlie Cauthron, brothers.

Engineer Cauthron said to me, "Walker, I will do the best I can, but it may be a rough ride." He said he would try to hold it with the eight engines' brakes, because if I used the auto, we will tear it all to pieces. We had two crossings blocked so long, the chief of police came to make us cut the crossing. The chief was a man I had known all my life. I explained what we were up against and he said to get off the crossing as quick as you can. By knowing him, it saved me a fine.

We finally got started. It came by slow, so me and the deadhead engineer and fireman could get on the caboose. I would do my writing when we would be going up mountains. I had to switch lists to make for the 250 cars. Also I had a stack of wheel reports what had to be set out at Biddle.

It was a rough ride. The engineer had never used nothing but engine brakes. There never was a place you could see one end of the train to the other. There is 167 curves between Biddle and Booneville.

The deadhead engineer and fireman said they wish they had rode the front end.

Everything was going all right until engineer Cauthron had to set the auto brakes. We had lost the brakes as we were coming to the Hot Spring Junction close to Little Rock. The air on the caboose went bang. I got an air hose and wrench and started to walk up the train. About half a mile was a broken knuckle.

The Biddle yardmaster had the headend (front part) of the train yarded. He sent a switch engine out to get the rest of the train. The switch engine could not start it, so he sent out another switch engine. They both could not start the train, so switch crew just doubled the train into the yard.

The superintendent told me when he gets through with the trainmaster and dispatcher, they will want to go back to Kansas. I had been on a train of 200 cars and more for just a few miles, but not like this one was. I got some sore ribs out of the trip.•

LUGGAGE TAG HISTORY

The following comes from *Cinders from the Smokestack*, Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum. It is about an old luggage tag given to the group by George Caviness. The checked baggage tag was stamped: "Montgomery to TROUPE WofA-AC-V&M-M&T-M&LR-SL&IM-T&P-I&GN 125"

The chapters' National Director Bill Boone looked up the railroad names and came up with this possible routing: WofA (Western of Alabama), Montgomery to Selma; AC (Alabama Central), Selma to Meridian; V&M (Vicksburg & Meridian), Meridian to Jackson; M&T (Mississippi & Tennessee), Jackson to Memphis; M&LR (Memphis & Little Rock), Memphis to Little Rock; SL&IM (St Louis & Iron Mountain), Little Rock to Texarkana; T&P (Texas & Pacific), Texarkana to Longview; I&GN (International & Great Northern), Longview to Troupe.

Mr Boone asks if they made new baggage tags when required for each route or was this trip from Alabama to Texas so common to justify a set of permanent tags? He thinks the date of the tag was around 1882, since that's when some of those lines began merging. Imagine the paperwork involved in this routing.

Today Troup (the e was dropped since then) is a railroad junction near Tyler with a population less than 5,000. Was there any significance to the town 100 years ago?

BEST TRAIN JOURNEYS

500 writer/photographer members of the Society of American Travel Writers have selected the 10 most exciting train journeys in the world. Nearly 3 dozen trips were nominated. The 10 winners were:

1) Sierra Madre Express through Copper Canyon, Mexico 2) Glacier Express, Switzerland

- 3) Canadian Rockies, Alberta to Vancouver
- 5) Cuzco-Machu Picchu, Peru
- 7) Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge
- 9) TGV, Paris to Geneva

4) Venice Simplon - Orient Express6) Blue Train, South Africa

8) White Pass & Yukon

10) Nile Valley Express, Eqypt/Royal Scotsman, England (tie)



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Bangor & Aroostook Railroad Co 3,064
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Florida East Coast Railway
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Georgia Northeastern Railroad 2,265
Saulte Ste. Marie Bridge Co2,081
Atlantic and Western Railway L.P2,044
I&M Rail Link L.L.C
Sabine River & Northern Railroad2,032
Montana Rall Link
St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad1,737
Chicago, Central & Pacific Railroad1,662
Minnesota, Dakota & Western1,662
Mississippi Delta Railroad
Wheeling and Lake Erie Railway1,566
Iowa Traction Railroad
Columbia Basin Railroad Co. Inc 1,491
Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad
Waterloo Railway
Progress Rail Services Corp
Columbus and Greenville Railway1,252
Columbia & Cowlitz Railway
Paducah & Louisville Railway1,244
Yorkrail Inc

Apalachicola Northern Railroad1,216
Pittsburg & Shawmut Railroad1,197
Copper Basin Railway1,160
Texas Mexican Railway1,142
Twin State Railroad1,018
Caney Fork and Western Railroad992
Georgetown Railroad
St. Marys Railroad
Alabama Railroad
Little Rock & Western Railway L.P950
WCTU Railway
Chattahoochee Industrial Railroad916
National Railroad Passenger Corp863
Algoma Central Railway
Lamoille Valley Railroad
Carlolle Valley Halload
San Luis Central Railroad
Atlantic and Gulf Railroad
Joppa & Eastern Railroad745
Boston and Maine
Delaware and Hudson Railway
Missouri & Northern Arkansas
Bay Line Railroad
Terminal Railway Ala. State Docks722
Kyle Railroad
Arkansas & Missouri Railroad
M&B Railroad L.L.C
Cape Breton & Central Nova
Scotia Railway
Winchester and Western Railroad654
Colorado & Wyoming Railway648
St. Maries River Railroad
Ohio Central Railroad
Texas & New Mexico Div., Austin &
Northwestern Railroad
Chicago SouthShore & South Bend
Ontario Northland Railway
Iowa Interstate Railroad
Wisconsin & Southern Railroad
Escanaba & Lake Superior Railroad552
Hampton Railway Inc
Point Comfort & Northern Railway537
Western Rail Road
Georgia Southwestern Division
-
Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad510
Mississippi Export Railroad
New Orleans Public Belt Railroad494
Golden Triangle Railroad
South Carolina Central Railroad466
Mid-Michigan Rallroad463
Longhorn Railroad

Peoria and Pekin Union Railway
Fox Valley & Western
Mississippian Railway Cooperative439
Dakota Southern Railway
Gateway Western Railway436
Somerset Railroad
Twin Cities & Western Railroad416
Kankakee, Beaverville and Southern 406
Lake Terminal Railroad
Sandersville Railroad
Willamina & Grand Ronde Railway359
Central Oregon & Pacific
Railroad Co. Inc
K.W.T. Railway
Genessee and Wyoming Railroad
North Shore Railroad
Jefferson Warrior Railroad
Florida Central Railroad Co. Inc
Iowa Northern Railway
Brandywine Valley Railroad
Southern Railway of British Columbia301
Chicago Rail Link
Alaska Railroad
Laurinburg and Southern Railroad282
Lake State Railway
Central Kansas Railway Inc
Stockton Terminal and Eastern
Cedar Rapids and Iowa City
Tuscola and Saginaw Bay Railway259
Willamette & Pacific Railroad
Old Augusta Railroad
Sisseton Milbank Railroad
Philadelphia, Bethlehem & New Eng 213
Massachusetts Central Railroad211
Maryland Midland Railway
Apache Railway
Winifrede Railroad
Manufacturers Railway
Birmingham Southern Railroad191
Louisville and Radley Railway Co191
Georgia & Florida Railroad Co. Inc 175
Van Buren Bridge Co
Kiamichi Railroad
Dallas, Garland & Northeastern Railroad .164
McKeesport Connecting Railroad159
Cambria and Indiana Railroad157
Buffalo & Pittsburgh Railroad
R.J. Corman Railroad/Memphis Line 154

5-26-1998 1:55PM

Thanks to Don Weis

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Private CAR OWNERSHIP

GE Rallcar Services Corp	07
TTX Co	61
GATX	73
Union Tank Car Co	12
Procor Ltd	16
First Union Rall	13
Bailbox Co	82
ADM Transportation Co	25
CGTX Inc	30
HELM Financial Corp	52
Cargill Inc	45
PLM International Inc	83
Union Carbide Corp	39
Exxon Chemical Americas	24
Chicago Freight Car Leasing Co 6,1	96
Trinity Industries Leasing Co	83
Occidental Chemical Corp	06
Detroit Edison Co	31
CANAC International Inc	22
Southern Illinois Railcar Co	54
David J. Joseph Co	119
Chevron Chemical Co	290
Phillips Petroleum Co	186
GATX Capital Corp	582
Commonwealth Edison Co	555
American Electric Power Service	468
Mobil Oil Corp	416
Trinity Rail Management Inc	273
Ferroquadrum, S.A. De C.V	231
Celtran Inc	998
Solvay Polymers Inc	889
Progress Rall Services Corp	874
MHC Inc	815
Formosa Transrail Corp.	757
Formosa Transrail Corp	583
Nova Chemicals Inc	449
The Andersons	411
Montell USA Inc	340
Georgia Power Co	331
Arkansas Power & Light Co	275
Eastman Chemical Co. Inc	257
Scherer Electric Generating Facility2,	219
Wisconsin Electric Power Co	073
The CIT Group/Capital Finance Inc 2,	027
Transportation Equipment Inc	007
Ouantum Chemical - USI Division1, North American Chemical	995
NorRail Inc.	968
- IMC Global Operations Inc.	845
Department of Defense, Military Traffic	
Management Command	830
Southwestern Electric Power Co1,	622
Shell Oil Co	688
ACF Industries Inc.	644
PPG Industries Inc.	587
MidAmerican Energy Co	513
C.K. Industries Inc.	.505
Oklahoma Gas and Electric Co	495
Minn Corn Processors-Bulk Prod. Div 1,	478
Crystal Car Line Inc	444
GLNX Corp	429
Dow Chemical Canada Inc.	,408
PCS Phosphale Co. Inc.	,317
Georgia Gulf - Plaquemine Division1	.315
Rio Grande Chemical Sales Co 1 BASF Corp	279
BASF Corp1	273
CPLX Leasing Limited	.232
Chevron U.S.A. Inc.	,201
Central Sova Co. Inc.	,200
System Fuels Inc	,189
Baildon Co	.182
Herzog Contracting Corp	1/3
Amoco Oli Co	150

	and the second second second second
Northern Indiana Public Service Co	. 1,157
Greenhrier Leasing Corp.	1.150
City Public Service Bd. of San Antonio .	1.147
The GEON Co.	1 111
Northern States Power Co.	1 051
Exxon Co., U.S.A.	1 027
Western Resources Inc.	1 020
Western Hesources Inc	1.010
Louis Dreyfus Corp.	1.012
Pennsylvania Power & Light Co.	1,005
Farmers Commodities Transportation Co	0999
Sultran Ltd	
Shintech Inc	
Alberta Government	
Solvay Minerals Inc	
Fayette Power Project	954
Ag Processing Inc	
Wheelabrator Coal Services Co	
Public Service Co. of Colorado	
Caroll-Salt Division	816
ITG Inc	785
Vulcan Materials-Chemicals Division .	
JAIX Leasing Co	
GATX/GLC Leasing Corp	
Public Service Co. of Oklahoma	
HELM Locomotive Leasing	.750
Grand River Dam Authority	748
Mississippi Power Co.	744
Central Power and Light Co.	741
Nebraska Public Power District	720
Louisville Scrap Material	725
Louisville Scrap Material	710
Conoco	
Electric Fuels Corp	
GWI Leasing Corp	
Sid Richardson Carbon Co	
Columbian Chemical Co	
Cabot Corp	681
Kennecott Utah Copper Corp	680
Virginia Power	676
Fuel Supply Trust	663
CONDEA Vista Company	656
Swindell-Dressier Energy Supply Co.	645
Westvaco Corp	
General Chemical Partners (Soda Ash)	640
Railcar Ltd	632
Consolidation Coal Co	615
FPB Leasing Corp.	608
IES (Itilities Inc	
IES Utilities Inc Incoal Co.	.604
Unitrain Inc.	604
Gulf States Utilities Co.	597
Guil States Ounces Co	580
Citicorp Railmark Inc.	
Paxon Polymer Co, L.P. II An Exxon Chemical Affiliate	692
ECDC Environmental L.C.	
Indianapolis Power & Light Co Engineered Carbons Inc	
Engineered Carbons Inc.	
Bethlehem Steel Corp.	
HELM—Pacific Leasing Portland General Electric Co	
Portiand General Electric Co	
L.G. Everist Inc.	
Asarco Inc.	
Rex Leasing Inc	
Cryo-Trans Inc	
Alabama Power Co	
ACFA, Arrendadora de Carros de Ferri	ocarril,
S.A. DE C.V	513
Central Louisiana Electric Co. Inc	
Sunbelt Chlor/Alkali Partnership	505
International Paper Co.	
Arrendadora Nacional De Carros De	
Ferrocarril, S.A. De C.V.	
A.E. Staley Mig. CoIndustrial Produ	ICIS492
Tg Soda Ash Inc.	
Texas Railcar Leasing Co	491
Continental Carbon Co	
HELM-Atlantic Associates L.P.	
Orlando Utilities Commission	
Ohio Valley Electric Co	
Omaha Public Power District	
South Carolina Public Service Authorit	iy464
Ontario Hydro	
Northern Coal Transportation Co	460
Blue Circle Inc.	

Flex Leasing Corp.	.452
Freeport Sulphur Co	.452
Descent Chemical & Research Inc.	
Div. of Borden	.431
Rhone—Poulenc Basic Chemicals Co Vulcan Materials—Construction Materials .	.430
Tennessee Valley Authority	.426
J.M. Huber Corp	.425
Solutia Inc.	.417
Central Illinois Public Service	.413
EXCEL Railcar Corp	.404
Harvest States Cooperatives	.402
Coal Supply Corp	.394
BOC Gases, A Div. of the BOC Group Inc.	.388
Texas Utilities Mining Co	.387
Associated Electric Cooperative Inc	.376
APL Land Transport Services Inc.	.365
Relco Tank Line Inc	.361
TU Electric	.360
BHP Copper	.350
J.R. Simplot Co.	350
Western Farmers Electric Cooperative	348
Reynolds Metals Co Temple—Inland Forest Products	346
Huntsman Polypropylene Corp	345
Allied Chemical Co. (Allied Corp.) AMG Resources Corp.	340
Baver	329
OCI Chemical Corp	329
Allied Signal-Fibers	
Great Lakes Carbon Corp	324
AGRI Industries	315
Perdue Transportation Inc.	
Praxair Inc.	309
Suburban Propane L.P Dakota Gasification Co	306
Transenergy Grinding Inc	300
Arco Products	299
Mac Acquisitions L.P	299
PSI Energy Inc.	295
North American Salt Co	287
CITGO Petroleum Corp	. 278
Sun Refining and Marketing Co.	275
Intermountain Power Agency	273
The Scoular Co	268
Missouri Public Service	266
Coors Brewing Co	252
Other Tail Power Co	250
Ethyl Petroleum Additives Inc.	248
Dairyland Power Cooperative	244
Costain Coal Inc.	240
LaRoche Industries	225
Products Manufacturing Div	208
Sterling Chemicals Inc	208
Sunbelt Cement Inc.	206
Illinois Cereal Mills	200
Incobrasa Industries Ltd.	200
City of Lakeland	195
Degussa Corp	193
Zinc Corp. of America	
Sierra Pacific Power/Idaho Power	186
Saz Transportation Corp	185
Albright & Wilson Co. ,	183
Equipment Group	180
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The following illustrated pamphlets have been issued for free distribution :. "The Top of the Ozarks."

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Membership: **\$20.00** per year, Arkansas Railroad Club only; **\$37.00** per year if you join or renew National Railway Historical Society membership through our Club. Dues are payable/due by January 1 of each year. If we don't have your dues by March 1, you will be dropped from the membership rolls.

Membership in the Arkansas Railroad Club entitles you to a membership card and the monthly ARKANSAS RAILROADER newsletter. Meetings are held monthly, except December, on the second Sunday of the month. We usually meet at 2 p.m. in the Mercantile Bank main building on Main Street in North Little Rock, just north of the Arkansas River. Interesting programs are presented each month and refreshments (cookies, sandwiches) are served. We are a nonprofit organization and member of the NRHS. Officers are listed in each newsletter.

The Arkansas Railroad Club's 1999 calendar is Ready! It consists of 14 B&W photos of trains in Arkansas over the years - from modern locomotives to past steam. There's one photo for each month, plus a front and back cover photo.

Railroads included are: Ashley, Drew & Northern, Southern Pacific, Missouri Pacific, Kansas City Southern, Arkansas Midland, Louisiana & Northwest, BNSF, Rock Island, Warren & Saline River, Union Pacific, Amtrak, and the Arkansas & Missouri. Plus, there's a railroad map of Arkansas in the back of the calendar. Day of month numbers are large, and the calendar includes Arkansas Railroad Club member's birthdays.

LAST YEAR'S CALENDAR SOLD OUT, so order your 1999 calendar soon. As before, discounts apply for ordering more than one and price includes postage.

MAIL TO: Arkansas Railroad Club Calendar, PO Box 9151, North Little Rock AR 72119

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