

Whistle Stop



Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum
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Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage

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Mike Pierry, Jr. found GSMR 2-8-0 #1702 steaming well as it leads a tourist train across the Tuckasegee River on its way to the Nantahala Gorge. [ED. NOTE: The #1702 went out of service shortly after this photo was taken. Call ahead to find out when/if it's running.]

August 22nd Membership Meeting

Our next General Membership Meeting will be held August 22nd 2016 at 6:30 pm at the Johnson City Public Library, 100 West Millard St., Johnson City, TN. This month's program, presented by George Holley, will be on the CLINCHFIELD RAILROAD. George worked for the railroad during the steam days and has a great program about the mighty CRR. Come out, bring a friend, and enjoy a great night of railroading.

Member Notes

By Edna Carter

Don't forget school has started. Watch out for our students!

As always, let us know of any members, friends, or family to whom a card might be sent or a phone call made. The office phone number is (423) 753-5797 or call Edna Carter at (423) 571-3226. Your help is needed and appreciated.

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN SUMMER TRAIN EXCURSION A BIG SUCCESS

This year Great Smoky Mountain Railroad and the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum teamed up to put together the largest excursion train every run on the GSMR. Experiencing a very fast sell out, we had 8 bus loads traveling to Bryson City, NC with nearly 500 passengers, requiring 16 cars plus three locomotives on the train. Excellent weather stayed with us all day. WVRHS&M wants to thank our volunteer hosts on the buses and train who helped make this an enjoyable and memorable event for all.

WATAUGA VALLEY GETS GRANT WITH THE EMERY RAIL HERITAGE TRUST

WVRHS&M was recently notified that we received the Emery Rail Heritage Trust Grant for the restoration and upgrade of the kitchen in our dining car (Moultrie). Work includes replacing ranges, ovens and adding other upgrades. This is a matching grant and we're accepting donations for this project. Also, all volunteer labor hours are counted toward the matching grant, so please call (423) 753-5797 to volunteer at the Spring Street Coach Yard.

BOARD MEETINGS DATES WILL BE CHANGED

This is notice to the General Membership that the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum Board of Directors meeting will be changed from the 3rd Friday of each month to the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Meeting time and place remains the same: 6:30 pm at the Jonesborough / Washington County Library, Sabine Drive, Jonesborough, TN.

WVRHS&M UNIFORMS AVAILABLE IN SEPTEMBER

Due to our supplier selling out to another company, we have not been able to purchase WVRHS&M uniforms. We now have an agreement with the new company and will have a uniform order form available at the next meeting and in the September Whistle Stop.

MODEL OF CRESCENT HARBOR PRESENTED BY BILL HEATON

WVRHS&M member Bill Heaton has done a great job in building an O Scale model of the Crescent Harbor. The model was displayed at the last meeting and all we can say that it's beautiful. Thanks Bill for bringing the Crescent Harbor to the meeting. Look for a photo and more information on this wonderful model in next month's newsletter.

Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report

by Jim Magill

GENERAL

After 2-1/2 months of work, the Yard extension was completed the last project to completed on August 13 with the fence being installed. We have a room now for all our equipment being place in the yard at the same time. The photo at least shows Clinchfield 100 with our restored Southern Caboose 9 ft "in the air".



ROLLING STOCK

"Powhatan Arrow" coach (WATV 539): is getting a new air conditioning condensing unit.

"St Augustine" coach (WATV 500): is getting some upgrades.

"Moultrie" diner (WATV 400): major

kitchen improvements are ongoing in the diner with a restored range / oven and installation of holding ovens and convection oven.

"Crescent Harbor" sleeper / lounge (WATV 2351): work on new window sills along with air conditioning upgrades is going on in the car.

"Clinchfield" business car (WATV 100): The mechanical team is still looking for another set of trucks to go under the 100 to meet AMTRAK requirements.

SOUTHERN caboose (X450): restoration project is complete; we hope to have the caboose moved to the Chuckey Depot and Museum by November for display.



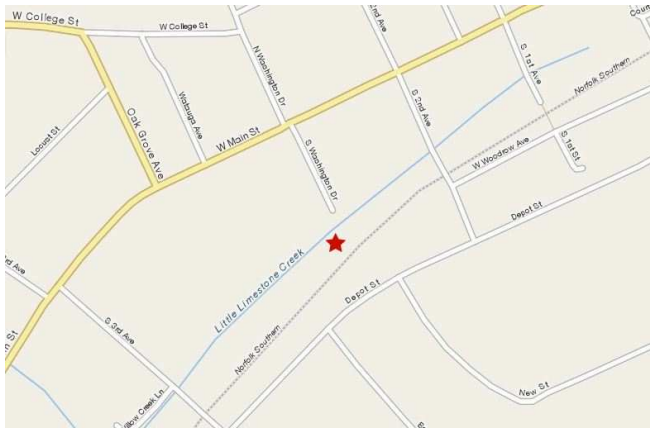
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AT COACH YARD

With all the activities at the coach yard, we need you on a Tuesday or Saturday to volunteer to help; we have a project for everyone. Come on down to Jonesborough one of the two days or call the office at (423) 753-5797 and let us know your interest.

In the News



CHUCKEY DEPOT AND MUSEM AT JONESBOROUGH



Progress is going well on the restoration of the depot. The exterior is about 95% complete and the interior is about 90% complete. The building completion date is planned for late September and the opening of the museum with the displays will be up and running the first part of next year. If you would like to add your name to the list of volunteers at the museum on certain days, please call (423) 753-5797 and leave a message. Everyone is welcome to drive by and see the exterior. Directions: turn off of

Jackson Blvd (11E) at Ace Hardware onto 2nd Ave., cross Main St. until you come to the railroad crossing; the museum is on the right.



WMSR Gets Grant to Restore Steam Engine

The WESTERN MARYLAND SCENIC RAILROAD's restoration project to return the 2-6-6-2 CHESAPEAKE & OHIO #1309 to steam has received a \$400,000 boost from a State of Maryland grant program that requires the railroad to match State funds. Railroad Superintendent John Garner tells *Trains News Wire* that he and Chief Mechanical Officer Kevin Rice along side other officials are in the process of restarting the restoration work cycle for C&O #1309 and will pre-order stay bolts and other materials needed to move the restoration forward. The project has been at a standstill for the past 6 to 8 weeks as crews work on preparing diesel locomotives and passenger cars for the 2016 operating season. Shop crews will soon concentrate their efforts on C&O #1309's restoration with stay bolt purchases, additional wheel work, in-cab improvements, and electric work comprising some of the additional key projects remaining. According to Garner, "All of the big ticket items were bought and paid for in advance - now we are just down to reassembling the locomotive once we get the stay bolts back in." Garner currently projects that C&O #1309 will be completed sometime between the end of the 2016 season and the start of the 2017 season now that additional funding has been secured. [*Trains News Wire via Potomac Rail News*]



Swiss Open World's Longest Rail Tunnel

On Wednesday, June 1, Switzerland inaugurated the 35.5-mile (57-kilometer) long Gotthard Base Tunnel, a major railway engineering achievement constructed during the past 17 years, deep under snow-capped peaks. Built at a cost of \$12.5 billion, this twin-bore railway tunnel is a record-setter, now eclipsing Japan's Seikan Tunnel as the world's longest rail tunnel. Approximately 1500 guests celebrated the opening event at both ends of the tunnel. A show depicted the history of the Alps and Gotthard Mountain, an alpine horn orchestra played at the foot of the mountain and the Swiss Air Force flew in formation over the mountain. About 325 freight and passenger trains will pass through the Gotthard Base Tunnel each day. The current four-hour trip between Zurich and Milan, Italy, will be cut by about an hour. [*Interchange, Baltimore NRHS*]

FRA to Put Amtrak Routes Up for Bid

AMTRAK's 45-year near monopoly on overnight passenger trains could end based on a proposal announced by the Federal Railroad Administration to introduce a pilot program allowing independent entities to run long-distance trains on as many as three current AMTRAK routes.

Citing its rule-making authority, the FRA says its proposal is a response to the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, or FAST Act, of 2015, in which the Department of Transportation is directed to implement a program "for selection of eligible petitioners in lieu of AMTRAK to operate not more than three long-distance routes."

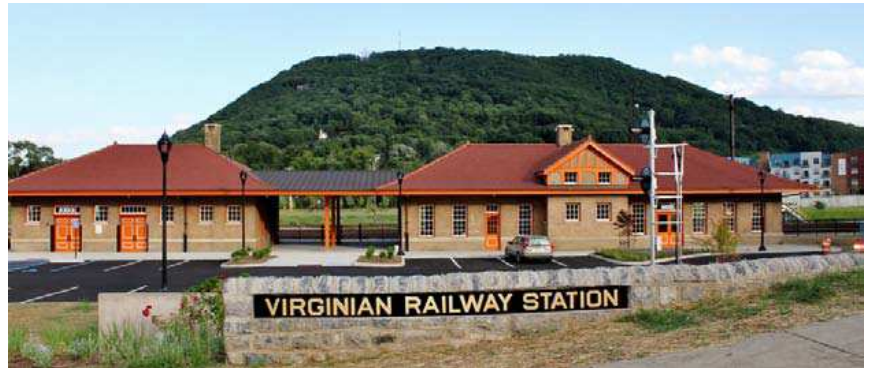
The filed docket filed offers no information about likely long-distance routes of interest to outside parties. It does say that AMTRAK would be allowed to bid to continue operating certain trains "if AMTRAK chose to do so." It also opens the field to a wide range of potential bidders, from Class I railroads to short lines to state-sponsored consortia. [*Trains News Wire*]

Virginian Station Update

The Roanoke Times of June 16 had a front page story on the almost-completed restoration of Roanoke's VIRGINIAN RAILWAY passenger station. A grand opening celebration will be held once everything is finished, including the certificate of occupancy from the city of Roanoke. Fire almost destroyed the building in January 2001. Here is the link to the Roanoke Times story: <http://tinyurl.com/jckqoc2>.



2001 (Kevin Smith photo)



2016 (Skip Soloman photo)

UP No. 844 Returns to the Rails

UNION PACIFIC's #844 steam locomotive returned to the rails in July, making several public appearances in Colorado and Wyoming, pulling The Denver Post's "Cheyenne Frontier Days" train on Saturday, July 23, between two important UP communities, Cheyenne and Denver. In conjunction with the trip, [continued on next page]



UP Photo

public displays were offered in Greeley, CO, and Cheyenne, WY.

#844, the last new steam locomotive built for the UP in 1944 and categorized as “never retired” since 1962, has been out of service since 2013. After working to fix a problem with over-rolled tubes at UP's Steam Shop in Cheyenne, WY, additional work was necessary. The restoration crew then decided to complete a 1,472-day inspection on the locomotive. In between all of this, UP acquired “Big Boy” #4014 and gave the Cheyenne shop a makeover. [UP Press Release and *Trains News Wire*] For more information on the locomotive's restoration, go to <http://tinyurl.com/j5q3jml> (scroll down page to read article).



KANAWHA RIVER RAILROAD to Operate in Ohio & West Virginia

[RailResource.com] Watco Transportation Services, a subsidiary KANAWHA RIVER RAILROAD (KNWA), has reached a definitive agreement with Norfolk Southern Corporation to lease and increase operations on 309 miles of rail line in Ohio and West Virginia.

KNWA is seeking approval from the Surface Transportation Board and plans to begin operations in July of 2016. The lines run from Refugee, Ohio, to Alloy, W.Va., and from Cornelia, W.Va., to Mullens, W.Va.

In early 2016, NS suspended operations on part of the line in Ohio because of declining rail traffic volumes, and the company rerouted traffic on other routes. KNWA plans to return the entire main line between West Virginia and the Columbus area to daily operation.

Ed McKechnie, Watco chief commercial officer, stated, “The Watco Team is excited to serve the customers in Ohio and West Virginia. Our team is prepared to offer our new customers in the agriculture, energy and chemical industries the transportation service product they need to move their product to their end customer.”

KNWA, which will be the 36th short line railroad operated by WTS, will name its general manager and marketing officer in the weeks ahead.

“Our growth in Ohio and West Virginia will provide us the opportunity to serve new customers and build lasting relationships with local communities along the lines,” said Rob Thrall, vice president of business development for Watco Companies. “The team we will assemble to operate the KNWA will make sure that our Customers' transportation needs will continue to be met every day. Following Watco's Customer First Foundation Principles, we will strive to value our customers, value our people, and safely improve every day.”



NS Pours Capital, Sweat Equity into its new Premier Corridor

[*Progressive RAILROADING*] The Crescent. The Heartland. The MidAmerica. The Patriot. Norfolk Southern Corp. has developed a number of corridors over the past few decades, either on its own or with other railroads. But the aptly named and recently introduced Premier Corridor might be its pre-eminent one. Stretching about 900 miles across three NS operating divisions between Chicago and northern New Jersey, the double-tracked corridor is one of the busiest and fastest links in the Class I's 22-state network. The railroad created it earlier this year by tying together more than a dozen key districts and routes — including the Chicago, Cleveland, Fort Wayne, Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, Lehigh and Port Road lines — and branding it as the Premier Corridor. As many as 230 intermodal, bulk commodity and general merchandise trains now use some portion of the Premier daily. NS trains pick up or deliver freight at more than 140 facilities that serve over 800 merchandise shippers. To read this informative article in its entirety, go to <http://tinyurl.com/jkqnw9k>

Photos ...

A picture is worth a thousand words, which is why the following are offered as evidence of the great time all had on our recent GSMR Summer 2016 Excursion. These shots and many more can be found on our facebook page. To find us, search for "Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society and Museum".



Upcoming Events



AUGUST 27 & 28: "Railroad Heritage Weekend 2016", Tweetsie Railroad, Blowing Rock, NC. Info: <http://tinyurl.com/goffddj>.



SEPTEMBER 3 & 4: RAILFEST 2016 at the Steamtown National Historic Site, Scranton, PA 18503-2018. Info: <https://www.nps.gov/stea/index.htm>



OCTOBER 15, 22, 29: "Super Fall Foliage Trips", TCRM, Nashville. Info: http://www.tcry.org/pass_ops.htm.



OCTOBER 15, 16, 22, 23: "New River Train", 50th Anniversary Celebration. Info: <http://www.newrivertrain.com/nrtOrder.shtml>.



OCTOBER 29 & 30: "Virginia Autumn Special" excursion from Spencer, NC to Charlottesville, VA and the "Georgia Autumn Special" excursion from Spencer to Toccoa, GA. Info: <http://tinyurl.com/jbsgpsk>.



NOVEMBER 12 & 13: "Summerville Steam Special", TVRM, featuring #630 and #4501 double-heading. Info: <http://tinyurl.com/zwr2rjm>.

#611 Movements

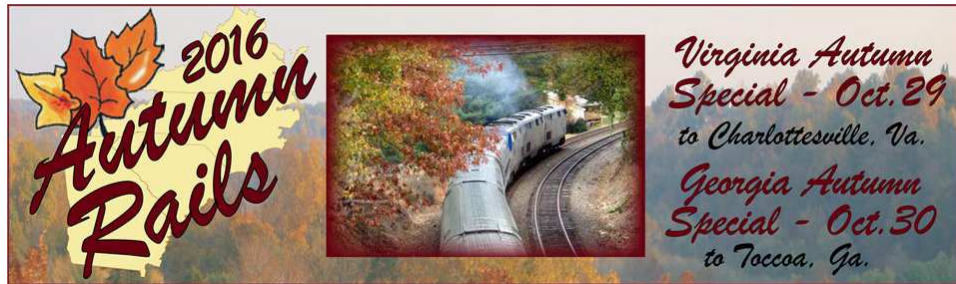
N&W #611 is scheduled to make the following non-excursion moves during the remainder of the year:

- Early September. Returning to NCTM for special events and maintenance.
- Sept. 24-25. Traveling to Danville, VA to be featured during *Danville Rail Heritage Days*.
- Fall. Returning to Roanoke after the NCTM events conclude.

Check <http://fireup611.org/special-events/> for exact dates.



WVRHS&M member John Livingston caught NS SD70Ace "Savannah and Atlanta" Heritage diesel passing our Spring Street Coach Yard on August 4th. [Photo posted to our facebook page.]



For the past 10 years, the N.C. Transportation Museum and Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum have offered scenic day trips that combine railroading, history, travel, shopping, dining and fun. Traveling by train, excursion passengers can experience one of the finest pedestrian malls in the country with a trip to Charlottesville, VA on Oct. 29, or harvest festival delights during the Oct. 30 trip to Toccoa, GA. Both trips feature sights only seen when traveling by rail, at a time when the vibrant colors of fall are at their peak.

The “Virginia Autumn Special” / Charlottesville, VA – Saturday, Oct. 29



Unique shopping, dining and sightseeing opportunities await those traveling aboard the “Virginia Autumn Special” to Charlottesville, VA. Departing from the N.C. Transportation Museum in Spencer with additional pick-up at the Greensboro AMTRAK Station, passengers will experience beautiful views of the Piedmont, the rolling hills of the Carolinas and the western part of Central Virginia. Spectacular views of the Dan, Roanoke and James Rivers will be seen as the train crosses above. At noon, the “Virginia Autumn Special” will arrive in Charlottesville, home of the University of Virginia. Here, travelers will have nearly three hours to explore the historic downtown area. A short walk takes you to the [Historic Downtown Mall](#), considered one of the most beautiful and successful pedestrian malls in the nation. Unique shopping and dining opportunities can be found in

boutiques, specialty wine, coffee and tea shops and outdoor dining spots. Departing Charlottesville at 3 p.m., the train will arrive back in Greensboro at 6:45 p.m. and Spencer at 8 p.m.

The “Georgia Autumn Special” / Toccoa, GA – Sunday, Oct. 30

The “Georgia Autumn Special” will depart from Spencer, with additional passenger pick up at the Spartanburg, SC AMTRAK Station. Nestled in the foothills of the Southern Appalachian Mountains, the historic town will be bustling with activity during the [40th Annual Harvest Festival](#). Passengers will have approximately three hours to enjoy the festival, which features handmade, handcrafted and home-grown items from more than 200 vendors, as well as delicious regional foods, live entertainment, children and youth activities, buggy rides and much more. Toccoa Falls, named for the Cherokee word “Toccoah,” meaning beautiful, is a must see. Located on the campus of Toccoa College, the 186-foot falls are 26 feet taller than Niagara Falls. Shuttle buses will be making a continuous loop between downtown Toccoa and Toccoa Falls. Departing Toccoa at 3 p.m., the train will arrive back in Spartanburg at 6:15 p.m. and Spencer at 8 p.m.



For more information and tickets, go to : <http://tinyurl.com/jbsgpsk> or call NCTM at (704) 636-2889 ext #224 or #237. These one-day trips are presented by the N.C. Transportation Museum Foundation and the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society and Museum and act as fundraisers for both organizations.

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Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



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