



Whistle Stop

Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society
& Museum
P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN. 37605-0432
(423) 753-5797
www.wataugavalleyrrhsm.org

Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage



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The CLINCHFIELD RAILROAD's very first diesel locomotive, F-7A #800, is finally back in her original dress. The experts at CSX's Huntington Shop worked hard in restoring her to her original appearance. On November 18, #800 and "CRR" SD45 #3632, will lead the 75th running of the CSX Santa Train. WVRHS&M board member Tony King will be the engineer on the train this year with Chris Burton as his conductor. [Tony King photo.]

November 27th General Membership Meeting

WVRHS&M will conduct our regular meeting at 6:30 pm on Monday, November 27th, 2017 at the Johnson City Public Library, 101 West Millard St., Johnson City, TN. Our program this month, presented by Gloria Sims and entitled "CLIMBING TO THE CLOUDS", is on the Mount Washington Cog Railway. We will also be discussing our 2018 spring excursions.

Member Notes

by Edna Kay Carter

Please keep the following folks in your thoughts as they deal with various concerns. They are Bob Yapple, Kati Phelps, Nancy Jewel and Gary Price. As always, let us know of any member, friend 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.

Hope everyone will have a very nice Thanksgiving. It is a good time to count all of our blessings.

2018 OFFICER AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION

The 2018 WVRHS&M election ballots were mailed out in mid-November. All Ballots must be received by 12:01 am December 1, 2017. A ballot box will be available at the November meeting or you can mail to Nominating Committee, Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum, P O Box 432, Johnson City, TN. 37605-0432. The results of the election will be announced at the December 2nd, 2017 Christmas Gathering.

2018 MEMBERSHIP DUES

The 2018 Dues Notices have been mailed out or sent electronically via e-mail. Please get your dues and check back into the Membership Chairman Edna Carter ASAP by returning to Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum, P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605-0432. You can join the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum for \$20.00 individual and adding family members at \$5.00 each. For questions, e-mail wataugavalley@embarqmail.com.

Benefits:

- Member of the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum.
- Participation in all WVRHS&M functions.
- 12 issues of "*Whistle Stop*", Watauga Valley's newsletter.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AT THE SANTA TRAIN

The annual Santa Train Exhibit, sponsored by WVRHS&M and the Town of Jonesborough, will be held on December 9th from 2 pm to 6 pm at the Chuckey Depot Museum. Everyone is welcome to come out and bring their children (grandkids, too!) and come aboard the restored SOUTHERN Caboose X450 to meet Santa Claus.

We will need volunteers to help with the event, assisting visitors aboard the caboose. Please sign up at the November 27th General Membership meeting, e-mailing wataugavalley@embarqmail.com or calling 423-753-5797. This event is terrific publicity for us as we are expecting a lot of people to meet Santa aboard our "Beautiful Red Caboose".

NOTE: THE DECEMBER 2ND WATAUGA VALLEY ANNUAL GATHERING AND CHRISTMAS MEAL WILL BE OUR ONLY MEETING IN DECEMBER DUE TO THE HOLIDAYS.

Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report

by Jim Magill

GENERAL

The NORFOLK & WESTERN signal will be dropped soon and reworked and painted.

We are in need of volunteers on the Mechanical Team. We work every Tuesday and Saturday; if you're interested in helping out, please call (423) 753-5797.

ROLLING STOCK

"Crescent Harbor" sleeper / lounge (WATX 2351): Will be traveling to Middle Tennessee for an excursion.

"Moultrie" diner (WATX 400),

"Powhatan Arrow" coach (WATX 539),

"St Augustine" coach (WATX 500): All three cars will be at NCTM in Spencer for their "Polar Express" trains.

CLINCHFIELD #100 business car: CSX has asked us to bring the #100 to Kingsport, TN for the Santa Train event where it will be on display (exterior only). It will not run on the Santa Train but will be available for photo opportunities with other Santa Train equipment on Nov. 18th at 3 pm at the former CRR railroad station on Main and Broad St. in downtown Kingsport. This will be the first time the #100 has been in Kingsport in over 36 years; the #100 had served many years as the official "Santa Car" on the train. WVRHS&M is honored to have the car in Kingsport for this event and thanks CSX for the opportunity.

CLINCHFIELD box car #5586: Has been painted in beautiful, original box car brown. The logos will be applied soon.

CHESSIE "Safety Caboose": Is in the middle of painting and sanding; we hope to have it done before cold weather sets in.

Important Dates ...



DEC 2, 2017: The 2017 Watauga Valley Christmas Dinner will be held on Saturday, December 2nd at the Jonesborough, TN Visitors Center.



MAY 17-20, 2018: 2018 N&W Historical Society Convention, NCTM, Spencer, NC.



AUG. 7-12, 2018: 2018 NRHS Convention, Cumberland, MD.

In the News



The Southern Appalachian Railroad Museum SCL 2024 SD 45-2 is now CRR 3632; it will also power the Santa Train behind Clinchfield 800. The last SD 45-2 on the Clinchfield was 3631, so that is how the number 3632 came into being.



CHUCKEY DEPOT MUSEUM AT JONESBOROUGH

We have received over 500 visitors at the depot and over 160 volunteer hours since the Museum was opened on October 2, 2017. WVRHS&M wishes to thank all 35 volunteers that are trained to host at the museum. If you would like to be trained to host at the museum, please call (423) 753-5797 and leave a message. We are planning more training sessions in January. Everyone is having a good time at the museum - please come and volunteer one day a month for four hours.



GE LEAVING LOCOMOTIVE BUSINESS?

[*Trains News Wire*] A Wall Street Journal report published online Thursday [10/23] cites unnamed sources as saying the company is looking to "partner, spin off, or possibly sell" GE Transportation, which includes the storied locomotive business, as well as heavy-duty diesel engines, and mining equipment. All the products lines share similar components and operating environments. A GE Transportation representative tells *Trains News Wire* that the company does not comment on speculation. The rumors come in the same month that GE executives announced disappointing earnings in the third quarter while also saying they plan to slash \$20 billion in businesses in the coming two years. GE also recently appointed a new CEO for GE Transportation, Rafael Santana, who takes over Nov. 1 after serving years in the company's GE Latin America unit.

GE Corporate headquarters is in Boston. GE Transportation has its headquarters in Chicago, but makes locomotives at shops near Erie, Pa., and Fort Worth, Texas. The Erie location has produced GE locomotive and parts since 1911.

 *\$2.4 Billion Planned for AMTRAK Upgrades*

[AMTRAK Press release] AMTRAK is contracting with Alstom to produce 28 next-generation high-speed trainsets that will replace the equipment used to provide AMTRAK's premium Acela Express service. The contract is part of \$2.45 billion that will be invested on the heavily traveled Northeast Corridor (NEC) as part of a multifaceted modernization program to renew and expand the Acela Express service.

"AMTRAK is taking the necessary actions to keep our customers, the Northeast region and the American economy moving forward," said AMTRAK President & CEO Joe Boardman. "These trainsets and the modernization and improvement of infrastructure will provide our customers with the mobility and experience of the future."

The new trainsets will have one-third more passenger seats, while preserving the spacious, high-end comfort of current Acela Express service. Each trainset will have modern amenities that can be upgraded as customer preferences evolve such as improved Wi-Fi access, personal outlets, USB ports and adjustable reading lights at every seat, enhanced food service and a smoother, more reliable ride.

This procurement comes as demand for Acela Express service is as popular as ever, with many trains selling out during peak travel periods. The new trainsets will allow for increased service including half-hourly Acela Express service between Washington D.C. and New York City during peak hours, and hourly service between New York City and Boston.

"As more people rely on AMTRAK, we need modernized equipment and infrastructure to keep the region moving," said Chairman of the AMTRAK Board of Directors Anthony Coscia. "These trainsets will build on the popularity and demand of the current Acela Express and move this company into the future as a leader in providing world-class transportation." [Continued on next page.]

The new trainsets will operate along the Washington – New York – Boston Northeast Corridor initially at speeds up to 160 mph and will be capable of speeds up to 186 mph and thus will be able to take advantage of future NEC infrastructure improvements. Additionally, the trainsets use the base design of one of the safest high-speed trainsets. Concentrated power cars, located at each end of the trainset, provide an extra buffer of protection. The trainsets will also meet the latest Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) guidelines including a Crash Energy Management system.

“The next generation of Acela service will mean safer, faster and modern trains for customers throughout the Northeast,” said U.S. Senator Charles Schumer. “This investment will pay immediate dividends for businesses and travelers from Washington D.C. to Boston, and the fact that these new trains will be built in Upstate New York makes this project a win-win. These New York-made Acela trains will soon be zipping along the Northeast Corridor and – as a regular customer – I can’t wait for my first ride. “The Northeast Corridor is a national economic engine that carries a workforce contributing \$50 billion annually to the national GDP,” said U.S. Senator Cory Booker. “AMTRAK’s continued investment in modernizing its fleet will only serve to enhance this vital rail link between Boston and Washington D.C. while allowing for safer and faster travel at a time when passenger demand is expected to rise. Strengthening our nation’s infrastructure is essential to the economic growth of our region and the nation and this investment by AMTRAK will help ensure the reliable service travelers expect.” AMTRAK is funding the trainsets and infrastructure improvements through the FRA’s Railroad Rehabilitation & Improvement Financing program that will be repaid through growth in NEC revenues.

“AMTRAK is grateful for all of the support we have received from Congress, especially from Sen. Schumer and Rep. Reed who represents Hornell, New York – home of the Alstom facility,” said Boardman. “We would also like to thank Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Thune and Ranking Member Nelson and House Transportation Committee Chairman Shuster and Ranking Member DeFazio for their leadership on the FAST Act. Additionally, we appreciate the efforts of Senators Booker and Wicker for their support on the inclusion of the rail title, the first time AMTRAK reauthorization has been included in surface transportation legislation.”

In addition to the trainsets, AMTRAK is also investing in infrastructure needed to improve the on-board and station customer experience that will accommodate the increased high-speed rail service levels. AMTRAK will invest in significant station improvements at Washington Union Station, Moynihan Station New York, as well as track capacity and ride quality improvements to the NEC that will benefit both Acela Express riders and other AMTRAK and commuter passengers. AMTRAK will also modify fleet maintenance facilities to accommodate the new trains.

The trainsets will be manufactured at Alstom’s Hornell and Rochester, N.Y., facilities, creating 400 local jobs. Additionally, parts for the new trainsets will come from more than 350 suppliers in more than 30 states, generating an additional 1,000 jobs across the country.

The first prototype of the new trainsets will be ready in 2019, with the first trainset entering revenue service in 2021. All of the trainsets are expected to be in service, and the current fleet retired, by the end of 2022.

Photo Gallery

Four more Tony King photos on the fantastic restoration job performed by CSX on ex-CRR #800. (Upper right: Sevier, NC.) Additional pictures can be found on our facebook page.



THE SCHEDULE OF THE 75TH RUNNING OF



5:45 a.m. Shelby	10:08 a.m. Dante
6:20 a.m. Marrowbone	10:53 a.m. St. Paul
7:05 a.m. Elkhorn City	12:03 p.m. Dungannon
7:45 a.m. Toms Bottom	12:48 p.m. Ft. Blackmore
8:07 a.m. Haysi	1:48 p.m. Kermit
8:40 a.m. Clinchco	2:20 p.m. Waycross
9:08 a.m. Fremont	3 p.m. Kingsport



THIS YEAR'S SPECIAL GUEST
APPALACHIAN NATIVE & MUSIC LEGEND
RICKY SKAGGS

#SantaTrains75    
BEYONDOURRAILS.ORG/EVENTS/SANTA-TRAIN
Sponsored by CSX, Food City, Appalachian Power, Sales4Souls and the Kingsport Chamber of Commerce

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Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

TIME VALUE MATERIAL

WATAUGA VALLEY RHS&M



ANNUAL CHRISTMAS GATHERING & MEAL



SATURDAY,

DECEMBER 2nd, 2017

It's time for the WVRHS&M annual Christmas Meal; once again we plan to gather at the Jonesborough Visitors Center, 117 Boone St. Jonesborough, TN. WVRHS&M will provide meats, drinks, desserts and rolls. Members are asked to bring a vegetable and salad, 2 vegetables or 2 salads. Please bring enough food for yourself, for your guest(s), and for several others by 11:30 a.m. as the serving line will open at 12 noon.

To make reservations, please mail the form below to Watauga Valley RHS&M Annual Christmas Meal, P.O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605-0432. You can also call in your reservation to our office phone at (423) 753-5797, hand in your form at the November 27th General Membership meeting, or email wataugavalley@gmail.com.

There will be good food and good fellowship! Please have your reservations in by Monday, November 27th, 2017.

YOU'LL see US at the *Christmas Gathering!*

.....

Name _____ Number Attending _____

Address _____

City _____

Phone Number _____

Email _____

We will bring: 2 Vegetables ____ 2 Salads ____ Vegetable and Salad ____