

Whistle Stop



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

Volume 40 No. 2

February 2020



RailPictures.Net - Image Copyright © Kyle Korienek Collection

August 19th, 1971 excursion from Erwin, TN. to Altapass, NC run on behalf of NRHS East Tennessee Chapter; CLINCHFIELD "1 Spot" took the point with two coaches. The two men in the photo, Ed Hatcher, engineer, and George Hatcher, fireman, pose for this shot at Green Mountain, NC while servicing the locomotive prior to the train's return to Erwin. [Kyle Korienek collection posted on RailPictures.Net; photographer unknown]

January 27th General Membership Meeting

The Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society and Museum will conduct our monthly General Membership meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, January 27th, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. at the Johnson City Public Library, 100 West Millard St. This month's program will be provided by Gary Street, a video entitled "Steam to Chicago" featuring the 1993 "Independence Limited Excursion" from Knoxville, TN to Chicago, IL starring SOU #4501, N&W #611, NKP #587 and #765, and UP #3985. You will also learn about our Spring Excursion and have an opportunity to sign up as a car host. Bring a friend out for a relaxing evening with your fellow members.

Member Notes

by Edna Kay Carter, Membership Chairperson

Please keep the following in your thoughts and prayers as they deal with various health concerns. They are Nancy Jewell, Gary Price, George Ritchie, Sharon Slagle, Jim Bishop, Diana Brewer and Linda Modica. 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 number is (423) 753-5797 or call Edna Carter at (423) 571-4612.

Welcome to new members Jimmy, Brandy Balding and family.

LATE 2020 WVRHS&M DUES

If you have not paid your dues as of press time, your membership expired December 31, 2019. Please send in your dues to retain your membership and keep receiving the *Whistle Stop*. Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum dues are \$20.00 individual; each family member is an additional \$5.00. Dues should be sent to Membership, Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum, P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605. If you have any questions e-mail wataugavalley@gmail.com.

PROGRAMS NEEDED FOR 2020

Our program director, Megan Kegley, is looking for General Membership Meeting programs for 2020. Please call (423) 753-5797 if you have an interest in presenting a program or let us know at the next General Membership Meeting. We're looking for DVD and slide programs and also speakers who could present a railroad-related program.

LIBRARY DONATIONS FOR RAILROAD SECTION

Our Railroad Section at the Jonesborough Library is growing every day but we can always use new material. If you are finished reading or just want to donate, put your books to good use. Please bring your railroad book donations to any membership meeting or call our office at (423) 753-5797. We have plenty of room to add more books.

NEWSLETTER

We are still asking members to switch over to the electronic version of the *Whistle Stop*. The electronic version is in living color and the quality is so much better than the printed copy. Please try it! Call the chapter office (423) 753-5797 and give us your e-mail address; we'll tell you how you can get the October 2019 copy on line as an example. You will not go back to the printed copy once you see what you are missing.

WVRHS&M 2020 Spring Rail Excursion

For a complete description of our March 28th GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS RAILROAD excursion, including information on how to order tickets, go to our web site at <http://www.wataugavalleynrhs.org/excursions.php>

Mechanical Department Report

by Jim Magill

The Watauga Valley Mechanical Team is looking for more volunteers. We now have five operating passenger cars and it takes a lot of manpower to keep the equipment up and running. We need volunteers to help with all kinds of projects and you can help - even if you don't think you have the necessary experience. The Mechanical Team is composed of volunteers with different backgrounds. Some are retired and some are still working. The team is a great bunch of guys enjoying working together to keep our equipment up and running on the rails. If you're interested in helping, please call the Watauga Valley office at (423) 753-5797 and leave a message. Our work day is each Tuesday from 9 am to 5 pm. If you're tired of lying around the house during the winter months, please call; we will get you scheduled on a project.



Above we see the Team waiting out a rain storm in the Crescent Harbor. It's back to work as soon as the clouds dry up.

ROLLING STOCK

“Powhatan Arrow” coach (WATX 539), Moultrie” diner (WATX 400): Have been in excursion service at the North Carolina Transportation Museum over the past couple of months; will return to Jonesborough in April.

“St Augustine” coach (WATX 500): Has been in excursion service at the North Carolina Transportation Museum over the past couple of months; will stay at the NCTM until mid-February.

“Crescent Harbor” sleeper / lounge (WATX 2351): Has returned to Jonesborough after serving on the “CSX Santa” Train in November.

“Clinchfield 100” office car (WATX 100): The Mechanical Team has put in many hours in getting the interior of the car ready for the major upgrades coming soon.

Chuckey Depot and Rail Museum

The museum had 5,584 visitors in 2019 with 2,063.70 volunteer hours logged. It was another year of growth for the museum and its programs. Thanks to all the Watauga Valley volunteers at the Chuckey Depot who have made this happen.

As noted above, things at the Chuckey Railroad Depot Museum in Jonesborough are going great. We now have 85 volunteers trained to host at the Depot. Most volunteers are working one day a month. We will have another training session for hosts in late March. If you're interested in attending this session, please email wataugavalley@embarqmail.com or call the office at (423) 753-5797. We will also be changing out displays in March. If you have items related to area railroads that you would like to loan for display, please call (423) 753-5797 for information on how to do so.

2020 Railfan Event Calendar

	FEB 28-29: Asheville Train Show, WNC Agricultural Center. Info: http://www.asheville-trainshow.com .
	MAR 28: WVRHS&M Spring Rail Excursion, GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD, Dillsboro, NC.
	MAR Saturdays: "At the Throttle: Steam", NCTM, Spencer, NC. See https://tinyurl.com/sq88gfj

Megan's Manifest

by Megan Kegley

Megan is taking a break this month.

In the News ...



New NS Department Combines Communications, Signals, Locomotives

[trains.com/news from the National Railroad Construction and Maintenance Conference at the Hotel Del Coronado, CA]

NS communications restructuring: One unique aspect of Norfolk Southern's "reimagining" - its label for Precision Scheduled Railroading-style changes - is that it has spun off its communication and signals group, historically part of its engineering department, into a stand-alone department known as Advanced Train Control. Somewhat surprisingly - at least at first glance - it also includes locomotives and mechanical shops.

"While this might seem like an odd pairing," said David Becker, NS chief engineer, design and construction, "it's really very forward looking, given the level of integrated train-control technology found on a modern locomotive, and the potential opportunities to leverage the investments that have been made on PTC."

Virginia's \$3.7 Billion Rail Plan Called a 'Game Changer'

[Extracted from *The Washington Post* by Luz Lazo, Jan 11, 2020] Virginia closed 2019 with a bold pledge to significantly grow passenger rail service in the commonwealth this decade by building a new rail bridge over the Potomac River, adding new rail track in the Washington-to-Richmond corridor and buying hundreds of miles of passenger right of way from CSX.

The \$3.7 billion plan, announced Dec. 19, will put Virginia in control of rail service increases, allow Amtrak to double the number of trains operating in the state and expand Virginia Railway Express service to the nation's capital beyond peak rush hour within a decade.

New intercity and commuter train service could begin as early as this year, according to the proposal's timeline.

Environmental and rail advocates have called the plan a "game changer" that will transform rail transportation in the Washington region. A major chokepoint in the region's rail system would be eliminated, and a path toward separating passenger and freight trains - improving efficiency - would be established.

"It is going to allow us to control our destiny when it comes to rail service, commuter rail service, the performance of the service and the reliability," Virginia Transportation Secretary Shannon Valentine said.

Some details about how the plan will be carried out have yet to be finalized. The central deal with CSX still needs a sign-off, and funds still need to be raised, but here's what is known about the plan and what to expect this year:

The deal

Under an agreement with CSX, Virginia would build a new, \$1.9 billion rail bridge over the Potomac to expand capacity for passenger trains. The new span will run parallel to the existing two-track Long Bridge, the 115-year-old structure owned by CSX that carries all Amtrak, VRE and freight trains between the District and Virginia. The state also will purchase 225 miles of track and 350 miles of railroad right of way from CSX for \$525 million, including half the right of way between Washington and Richmond.

How is Amtrak service going to change?

The agreement with CSX will allow Virginia to double the number of state-funded Amtrak trains in the I-95 corridor, providing nearly hourly service between Washington and Richmond.

Today, Amtrak runs five Northeast Regional trains to Richmond. Officials anticipate adding six additional daily round trips to Richmond and two extended trains to the Hampton Roads area. A new round trip from Washington to Norfolk is planned to start late in 2020 or early next year. Two additional trains would be added - one ending in Richmond and the other in Newport News - by 2026, and three additional to Richmond would be added by the end of the decade.

[Space requirements limited how much of this article was reprinted in the newsletter. For the complete article, go to <https://tinyurl.com/wzsobm7>.]

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Published Monthly by the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum
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