

Dues ARE Due NOW. Please send in the invoice you received in the mail.



Saturday, December 1st, Iowa Northern 4002 heads up a brace of former Metra gallery commuter cars at the end of the 4pm trip between Manly, Iowa and Rock Falls, Iowa for the benefit of the Manly Junction Railroad Museum. See page 7. **Photograph by Dawn Holmberg**

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Meeting Notice

The December meeting was the annual banquet at Tinucci's Restaurant, Sunday, December 2nd. Hope you had fun.

The next meeting will be at the Twin Cities Model Railroad Museum at Bandana Square on January 12th, **ONE WEEK EARLIER THAN USUAL** due to participation of members in the Railroad Passenger Car Alliance in Duluth January 18th-20th. See page 2 for detailed directions.

Meanwhile **HAPPY HOLIDAYS!** If you are traveling, may your journey be a pleasant one!

Northstar Chapter Officers

Board of Directors

Office	Name	Email	Phone
President	Mark Braun	<i>mkbraun@hutchtel.net</i>	320-587-2279
Vice President	Dennis Louden	<i>bnsf@comcast.net</i>	651-698-8559
Past President	H. Martin Swan	<i>HMSwan@webtv.net</i>	612-961-1684
National Director	Doug Johnson	<i>djoh322721@aol.com</i>	612-825-6458
Treasurer	Dan Meyer	<i>treasurer@northstar-nrhs.org</i>	763-784-8835
Secretary	Dave Norman	<i>nevad11@hotmail.com</i>	612-729-2428
Trustee	Bill Dredge	<i>trustee@northstar-nrhs.org</i>	952-937-1313

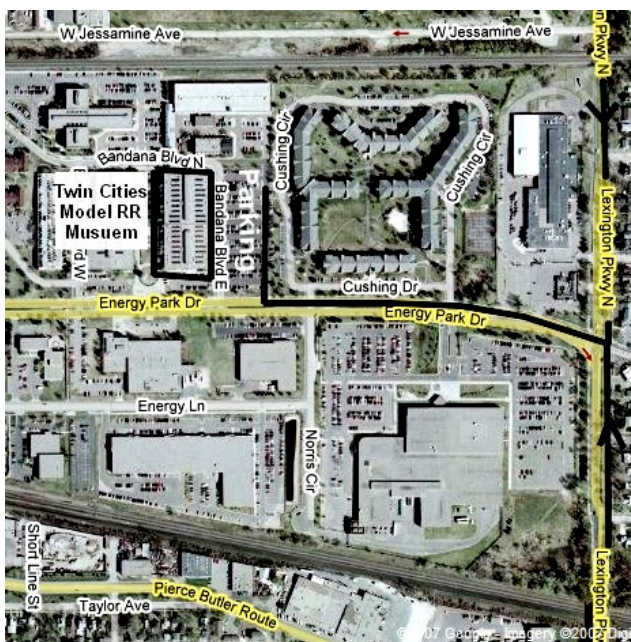
Staff

Program Chairman	John Goodman	<i>jhgoodman2001@yahoo.com</i>	
Newsletter Editor	Russ Isbrandt	<i>risbrandt@comcast.net</i>	651-426-1156
Webmaster	Dan Meyer	Website: <i>www.northstar-nrhs.org</i>	
Chapter Mail Box	Northstar Chapter NRHS	PO Box 120832	St. Paul, MN 55112

NOTE: Consult the website for any announcements regarding chapter activities including cancellation of any meeting for any reason, including weather.

Membership Information

Dues are \$45 (\$33 for the National dues and \$12 for the local dues). Family memberships are \$5 per person additional. The student rate is \$22 (\$16 for the National, \$6 for the Northstar Chapter). If you want to join, an application is available at <http://www.northstar-nrhs.org/>. Print out this application and send it with a check made payable to "Northstar Chapter NRHS" to Northstar Chapter NRHS Membership Services, P.O. Box 120832, St. Paul, MN 55112.



Directions to the Twin Cities Model Railroad Museum

Exit I-94 at Lexington Parkway and travel north to Energy Park Drive, first light after crossing over the first set of BNSF tracks. Turn left to the third driveway leading into the Bandana Square parking lot. Enter the middle door on the east side of the building. Go up the escalator. Go to the northeast corner of the building and go through Twin Cities Model Railroad Museum door. **DO NOT PAY THE ENTRANCE FEE UNLESS YOU ARE ALSO GOING TO THE NIGHT TRAINS DISPLAY.** Inform the attendant that you are there for the Northstar NRHS meeting.

Editorial

By
Russ Isbrandt

The following is the opinion of the editor and in no way

reflects any policy or official opinion of the Northstar Chapter.

The Monday, November 19th *Wall Street Journal* had a headline "Oil Officials See Limit Looming on Production". Basically what used to be considered alarmist projections from industry outsiders and academics is now being accepted by a number of oil industry insiders. The cause won't necessarily be due to the earth running out of petroleum, but rather access to it. What available oil is found will be much harder to extract, companies have already under spent on production capacity and there is a lack of engineering talent.

While there have been many dire predictions that have failed to come true in the past, the fact the people in the oil industry are beginning to be concerned about meeting world demand, and the resulting sky rocketing prices that would result as countries bid up the price of oil should demand exceed production capacity, ought to be weighing on the minds of those setting US transportation policy. Can we really count on non-petroleum-based transportation technology like fuel cell powered cars to head off this crisis?

Already transportation columnists like Don Phillips of *Trains Magazine*, *Railway Age* and executives of container shipping companies are concerned about railroad capacity. Add to the lack of investment in transportation infrastructure the mix of very much higher fuel prices, the fuel efficiency of rail freight and passenger service needs to be exploited now. Politicians trying to please the "No New Taxes" crowd are sending us into a potential economic catastrophe where the costs of government services and consumer goods go through the roof thanks to transportation costs. Whiners about high taxes will have plenty to cry about as income, sales and gas taxes shoot up to accelerate the infrastructure capacity (read rail) investment. Investment that should be taking place now will have to be accelerated dramatically the longer these investments are delayed. As an article from *Railway Age* elsewhere in this newsletter indicates, there is already serious deterioration and inability to fund major repair and capacity investment in the nation's subway systems. As the old saying goes, "Pay now or pay later."

Synopsis of A Tale of Twin Cities From *Railway Age* November 2007

The November issue of *Railway Age* featured a 4 page article by Julian Wolinsky on passenger rail developments in the Twin Cities.

The article gives a brief history of the development of the Hiawatha Corridor, mentioning the original busway plan and morphing into a light rail line. Currently the line runs a fleet of 27 Bombardier cars serving an average of 28,000 passengers week days, surpassing the projection of 2020. As of the writing of that article, 24 two car trains on a 7.5 minute headway were running at rush hour. Bob

Gibbons, Director for Customer Service, indicated that at least 12 additional cars are needed for continuing growth, though no money is available for those cars. The critical parking shortage has been partially relieved by a new 1500 car parking structure at the 28th Avenue station. The city of Bloomington is adding a planned, but not built, stop at 18th Avenue and American Blvd. A platform lengthening for 3 car trains is planned for completion by the end of 2009.

The Central Corridor plans are also mentioned. The three main bus routes currently serve 25,000 passengers on weekdays. The LRT projection is for 43,000 daily riders by 2030. The project cost must be cut by \$200 million to meet the Federal Transit Administration's cost benefit requirements. Elements up for cuts are the tunnel under UM, and the St. Paul Union Depot terminal platform. The latter is involved in a political battle with Ramsey County Railroad Authority's chairman, Rafael Ortega, threatening to withhold that agency's share of the capital funding if the Union Depot is by-passed. Just looping the tracks in front of the depot didn't appear to improve the cost effectiveness. Officials hope the cost problem can be resolved in the next six to nine months during the preliminary engineering phase to keep the line viable. The bipartisan comprehensive transportation bill for funding was vetoed by Gov. Pawlenty.

The line will initially need 31 cars. Initial thinking is to build 2 car platforms, with provision for easy expansion to 3 car platforms if ridership required it. Another maintenance facility would also have to be built. Completion should be 2014.

Two other high capacity transit lines are in the very early stages of planning. While the mode hasn't been determined, the success of the Hiawatha light rail line has built support for using light rail. One project would be to expand the Central Corridor east along I-94 to Lakeland. The other would be to build south to Rosemount from Union Station along the Robert Street corridor. A feasibility study for this began this year. (Editor's note: This is the first I've heard of any plan to build east.)

An application for a \$156 million federal Full Funding Grant Agreement for Phase I of the Northstar Commuter Rail line was cleared by the U.S. Department of Transportation and Office of Management and Budget October 12th. It's in the hands of Congress now for a 60 day review period. If no negative comments are received, it should be signed by the end of the year. Funding from the state and the three counties to be served is in place. Until the feds come through with the money, local governments are issuing loans to get work started including a four block extension in downtown Minneapolis and a maintenance base and yard in Big Lake.

Revenue service is to start in November 2009 with four Motive Power MP36 locomotives to be delivered next year, and there are plans to buy a F40PH for backup power. Responses have been received for Request for

Proposals for 12 new double deck coaches and five cab cars. A winning bidder should be known by the end of the year.

Negotiating an agreement with the BNSF for right of way use was particularly difficult. The railroad insisted on a significant increase in track capacity for the busy freight line. The Northstar timetable calls for five weekday and three weekend round trips mornings and evenings. There will be one reverse commute train in each time period. No midday runs will be permitted because the railroad needs the track capacity for freight. Instead of an agreement allowing access to the tracks in exchange for publicly funded improvements and some form of operating fee, for \$107.5 million the Northstar Corridor Development Authority will be granted perpetual easement permitting a fixed number of passenger trains.

BNSF will add crossovers to increase flexibility and enhance the signal system of the all CTC line to allow commuter rail schedules to be met and passenger trains to have priority.

After the original plans were cut back from Rice to Big Lake, the extension was converted to Phase II. (Editor's note: Recently Benton County declined to finance its portion of the line jeopardizing the second phase and even the proposed bus connection.) Part of the problem was that a study completed in late September showed only 265 daily riders would use the line and that the trains would have to be financed locally. Some of the line would have to be doubled tracked at a cost between \$62 and \$156 million.

Two other commuter lines under study are the Red Rock line to Hastings and Rush line to Rush City, included in the Met Council's 2030 plans. Starting service on both lines as bus service is being considered to develop the market and measure ridership potential.

The Anoka County Regional Rail Authority is spearheading an effort to restore intercity service to Duluth. Some officials estimate service could start in four years. (Editor's note: *The Junction*, the publication of the Lake Superior Transportation and Lake Superior Railroad Museum, has had periodic mention of strong interest in Duluth on the restoration of Twin Ports – Twin Cities passenger service.) There is strong political support. Four counties along the line have pledged financial support, while both BNSF and Amtrak have expressed interest. Officials agree that the track speed on the line must be increased from the current 50 mph to at least 79 mph and possibly even 125 mph. Some sort of decision is expected by December. There would have to be extensive right of way and signal improvements costing around \$120 million. BNSF has been receptive because the improvements would also be beneficial to freight traffic. Once a joint powers board comprising up to eight Minnesota counties and one in Wisconsin is formed, work will begin on a technical feasibility study to obtain more precise cost estimates.

Book Review

Streamliner Memories

Streamliner Memories by Mike Schafer, MBI Publishing Company, 1999, \$14.95, 96 pages.

There are a lot of books covering the American railroad's streamliner era, many featuring fine photographs, period advertising, and public relations shots both of exterior and interiors. This book is a little different. It still has plenty of excellent color photographs, both of exteriors and interiors. It is a little bit more limited in scope however. That's because this book covers memories of the author's rides aboard the trains he describes. The book is divided into chapters on the first streamlined trains, principally the *Pioneer Zephyr*, the author's hometown streamliner, Illinois Central's *Land O' Corn* memories of rides east and west of Chicago, some of the western transcons, dining car memories, southern streamliners and regional streamliners including the North Shore Line's *Electroliner*.

For those of us who actually rode streamliners before they faded into one or two car stub runs following the death of the Railway Post Office (RPOs), these recollections bring back one's own fond memories. This book may appeal to veteran train riders, but may leave a wistful feeling with those born in the Amtrak era.

My only nit pick is that Mike Schafer got there too late for some trains. Most of his rides took place post 1965, after which the service quality on some lines had begun to decline. For example, his ride aboard the *California Zephyr* took place even as the Western Pacific was attempting to discontinue its segment. While he doesn't mention it, by this time the train began to have a shabby look as deferred maintenance began to take its toll.

Now we need someone who rode in the '50's to write a similar book. This reviewer as editor of the Northstar News will endeavor to fill that void with periodic articles from a variety of authors of rides in the '50s and early '60s.

US Subways in Dire Need of Repair

From Railway Age Breaking News

November 21, 2007

Industry watchers say the nation's oldest subways are in dire need of repairs and upgrades to fix everything from decades-old track in Chicago to serious overcrowding in New York, but don't have enough money to keep up, according to an AP report.

The National Transportation Safety Board in September blasted Chicago's inspection and maintenance procedures, concluding that the immediate cause of a 2006 accident was rotted wooden ties and corroded bolt-like fixtures that failed to hold the rails in place. Investigators said the accident should be a warning to other cities.

Federal, state and local spending on mass transit is around \$40 billion a year, and that should be increased by \$25 billion to properly repair and upgrade U.S. networks, the research firm Cambridge Systematics has concluded. Others have suggested doubling or tripling what is spent now.

Transit officials say problems abound:

* New York City's subway system, the nation's largest, is chronically overcrowded even though the city has spent more than \$50 billion since 1982 to rescue its mass-transit network.

* In Boston, about one-third of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's operating budget goes toward paying interest on a \$5 billion debt, the largest of any U.S. transit agency. The agency can afford only to maintain things, not to upgrade them, MBTA General Manager Daniel Grabauskas said.

* In Washington, booming ridership has outstripped piecemeal improvements of the Metro subway, which has struggled to find money to buy enough new trains to ease overcrowding.

* Nearly 25 percent of the Chicago Transit Authority's 242 miles of track -- some of it elevated, some of it underground -- is so shoddy that in some stretches, trains designed to travel more than 50 mph must plod along at 5 mph -- about the pace of a horse at trot. The average rail car is 23 years old, and nearly one-third exceed the 25-year maximum recommended by federal authorities.

Since last year's accident, the CTA says it has replaced the worst stretches of track and improved inspections, but says it still needs more than \$4 billion to fix or replace track, bridges, signals and stations, as well as to buy new trains. City and state lawmakers are discussing a possible regional sales tax or casino gambling to pay for improvements.

Canadian Pacific Christmas Train Schedule

Monday, December 10:

Winona - 5-6 p.m. - Amtrak depot, 65 E. Mark St.
Benefits Winona Volunteer Services.

Wabasha - 7-8 p.m. - Gambia Avenue railroad crossing near Bruegger Park.

Benefits Wabasha-Kellogg Food Shelf.

Lake City - 8:45-9:45 p.m. - Hearth Technologies, 800 W. Jefferson St.

Benefits Lake City Food Shelf.

Tuesday, December 11

Hastings - 4-5 p.m. - CPR depot, 500 E. Second St.
Benefits Hastings Family Service.

Cottage Grove - 5:30-6:30 p.m. - West Point Douglas

Road, South of Seiben Bridge in front of the Youth Service Bureau.

Benefits Friends in Need Food Shelf.

St. Paul - 7-8 p.m. - Upper level of Central Parking System ramp at Broadway & Kellogg under the Lafayette freeway bridge and east of old post office.

Benefits Second Harvest Heartland.

Minneapolis - 9-10 p.m. - Canadian Pacific Railway's Shoreham Yard, 2800 Central Ave. NE.

Benefits Eastside Neighborhood Services.

Thursday, December 13

Loretto - 4:15-5:15 p.m. - Hennepin County Road 19 railroad crossing/Chippewa Trail.

Benefits Hanover Area Food Shelf.

Buffalo - 5:45-6:45 p.m. - 612 NE Third Ave., behind McDonald's on Highway 55.

Benefits Buffalo Food Shelf.

Annandale - 7:15-8:15 p.m. - West side of downtown park over Oak Avenue railroad crossing.

Benefits Annandale Community Food Shelf.

Eden Valley - 9:00-10:00 p.m. - Main Street railroad crossing (state Highway 22).

Benefits Food Shelf.

Friday, December 14

Alexandria - 1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m. - Eighth Avenue East railroad crossing by Hubbard Feed Mill at 8th & Nokomis.

Benefits Outreach Food Shelf.

Detroit Lakes - 4:15-5:15 p.m. - Holmes Street railroad crossing near the Detroit Lakes Community and Cultural Center, 826 Summit.

Benefits Becker County Food Pantry.

Thief River Falls - 8-9 p.m. - Depot/City Hall, 2017 Highway 59 SE.

Benefits Thief River Falls Area Food Shelf.

Saturday, December 15

Elbow Lake - 4:30-5:30 p.m. - Main Street railroad crossing.

Benefits Grant County Emergency Food Shelf.

Minutes of the November 17th Meeting

The meeting was called to order in the Historic Como Park Streetcar Station at 7:18 p.m. by chapter president Mark Braun with 31 members and guests present. There was a motion to approve the minutes of the October 20, 2007 membership meeting, as printed in the November 2007 issue of Northstar News. The motion was seconded and carried. The treasurer was out of town and not present to give a report. National director Doug Johnson reported that John Goodman had attended the fall NRHS Board of Directors meeting in his place, as John is a member of the committee planning future national conventions. There will be a mid-winter BOD meeting in January. John reported on some of the matters discussed at the meeting. Among the problems the NRHS faces is the need to move the national headquarters out of the office space it presently occupies, as the building has been sold. They are cleaning out the office. They are selling duplicate items and unimportant items.

They had a two hour meeting on Saturday at the BOD meeting, plus a three hour meeting on Sunday. They talked about reaching out to other rail-oriented groups and the importance of educating the public about the railroad industry. They talked about a strategic plan for the organization. This is one of the things that they are working on with Fernley and Fernley. The NRHS national convention, held this past summer in Chattanooga, had a profit of about \$95,000. The issues of the NRHS Bulletin that were behind schedule are now being sent out. It was suggested that more chapters should sponsor attendees to Rail Camp. There is concern by some that perhaps Rail Camp is just serving as a training program for the railroad industry, rather than creating more railfans. Next summer's national convention will be in Ft. Worth, the 2009 convention will be in Florida, and the 2010 one will be at Steamtown. The election went without any alternate choice for any office. There was a discussion about the possibility of a future NRHS national headquarters which would incorporate displays. Trip director John Goodman reported that there will be a special train in Iowa that will operate two trips (at 1 and 4 p.m.) on Saturday, December 1. The train will have 1,000 seats. The trips will be fund-raisers. Marty Swan reported for the Cheer Committee - he knows of no one who has problems. Newsletter editor Russ Isbrandt said that he needs articles. He particularly suggested articles on pre-Amtrak passenger trains. Housing chair Mike Mackner said that he had talked with the board of the Twin City Model Railroad Museum. He needs a letter from us with the dates of our planned membership meetings. He emphasized that this should be a regular letter, not an e-mail. We would be expected to pay in advance. He talked about a "memorandum of understanding," rather than a formal contract. There will be new chairs in the meeting room. The museum needs to know what audio-visual equipment is needed for each meeting. The building is normally locked up on Saturday evenings, but there will be two people from the museum there, one of whom will be at the door to let people in. Dennis Loudon reported on plans for the Holiday Party. It will be held Sunday, December 2nd at Tinucci's. There will be a social half-hour from 11:30 a.m. to noon, with dinner from noon to 1 p.m., followed by the program, which can last until 3:30 p.m. The price for the party is \$21, which does not include alcohol. The deadline for reservations for the party is November 30th. The program will be presented by Bill Graham of the Minnesota Streetcar Museum. A question was asked as to whether we are going back to Mancini's next year. We will wait to decide. There was also a suggestion about another possible place for a future Holiday Party. John Goodman said that he needed a program for the January meeting, plus we will have to have a new map to our new meeting place. Bill Dredge will do the program at the January meeting.

Elections - All incumbents are running for re-election. President Mark Braun called for nominations from the floor for each of the offices. There were none for president, so it was moved, seconded, and carried that nominations for president be closed. The same procedure was followed for the other offices - vice president, secretary, treasurer, national director, and trustee. All the incumbents were declared re-elected for another year in office. There was a call

for any other Old Business. The Rail Passenger Car Alliance conference was discussed. It will be held in Duluth, January 18 through 20, (Friday through Sunday.) The BNSF was not willing to run a special passenger train in the wintertime. More information can be obtained from the RPCA or Northstar Chapter websites. If you register before December, it is \$99 including dinner, meetings, lunch, etc. People from all over the US, Canada, even Great Britain will be coming. There was a discussion about the fact that we had voted last month to move our January meeting to one week earlier than usual to avoid conflicting with the RPCA conference. Do we need to hold a January membership meeting at all? Getting back to the RPCA conference, the question was asked, how many people do they need to staff the desk? Doug Johnson said that he had registration blanks and descriptions of the events. He noted that a person can book the hotel and pay the registration fee for the convention through PayPal. Dave Norman made a motion that we cancel the January membership meeting. Marty Swan seconded the motion. On initial voting, there were 11 in favor of the motion and 11 against. There was one additional vote against the motion, so it failed. Dennis Loudon said that he had gotten no response to his request for help in his project to update the display used to recruit people to join the chapter. There was a question about re-voting on the motion not to have a January membership meeting. The by-laws were consulted. Any other Old Business? John Cartwright had copies of a list of items (books, timetables, Official Guides, slides, photo albums, etc.) belonging to the chapter that he had been storing at his home.

New Business - The University of Minnesota Press will be reprinting Dick Prosser's book, *Rails to the North Star*, with updates and a new forward. Does the chapter want to order copies for sale to members? John Goodman said that he will order 15 copies - some for banquet prizes, some for various members who are interested. There was a question about the chapter library. It was noted that it would be a reference library, kept in a locked case, not a circulating library. There was discussion about the library. There would be no duplication from one part of the library to another. We hope to know how many books are involved by the January meeting. It was estimated that there might be about 500 books. There was a request from treasurer Dan Meyer - everyone should have gotten a second dues renewal notice with the correct address to send their payments to the chapter's post office box. Mark Braun asked if we have any visitors at the meeting. Member Bob Koetz is at the meeting for the first time in a number of years, as he has been unable to attend meetings due to health problems. Visitors were John Kennedy and a former C&NW employee.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made, seconded, and carried at 8:27 p.m. After a break, the program was presented. It was a member's night, with various members presenting electronic images and color slides.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Norman, Secretary

Northstar Chapter NRHS

Seen Around Town



Train H-PASIH B Pasco to the Indiana Harbor Belt passes through Anoka November 9th with a new Kansas City Southern SD-70ACe in the lead followed by a Norfolk Southern C40-9. Photo by Chris Laskowski, C Vision Productions

The Rock Island Rolls Again



Saturday December 1st, the Holiday Hawkeye Express prepares to depart Manly, IA behind a "Rock Island" FP-40. Photo by Dawn Holmberg

On Saturday December 1st, members Dan Meyer, Dawn Holmberg, John Goodman and Glen Holmberg traveled down to Manly, IA for a rare mileage trip over the former Rock Island.

The Manly Junction Railroad Museum and the Iowa Northern Railway Company ran the *Holiday Hawkeye Express* for two round trips between Manly and Rock Falls on Saturday, December 1st.

The Iowa Northern's double-decker, six car, black and gold *Hawkeye Express*, primarily used between Iowa City and Coralville to move fans between Kinnick Stadium and satellite parking lots during Hawkeye Football home games,

was used to offer children both young and old, an opportunity to experience a passenger train ride - with a little holiday flavor.

"The trips were an effort to raise funds and awareness for the planned Manly Junction Railroad Museum," said Manly native Dan Sabin, President of the Manly Junction Railroad Museum, Hawkeye Express Company, and the Iowa Northern Railway Company. "We're excited to see a passenger train operate again in Manly, which used to see over twenty trains each day. Plus, I can't think of something more enjoyable than a train ride around the holidays."

The train featured a locomotive painted in traditional Rock Island passenger colors as a tribute to the deep heritage of Iowa Northern Railway and the Town of Manly.

The museum is also looking for additional individual donation bids, in addition to ticket donations, with the two highest bid donors being awarded two spots each on the locomotive on one of the two trips for an experience from the best seats on the train.

The train departed downtown Manly, near the intersection of Todd Avenue and Spring Street, at 1:00 pm and 4:00 pm. Passengers did not detrain in Rock Falls and the total 17 mile round trip ran approximately 1 hour 15 minutes.

The Manly Junction Railroad Museum requested a \$12 donation for adults and a \$6 donation for children under 12. Each trip could accommodate approximately 1,000 people.

Prior to departure passengers enjoyed complimentary hot chocolate and holiday treats at the Manly "Whistle Stop" Senior Center just down the street. Additionally, holiday music was provided by the Central Springs High School Band and Choir. Santa himself was also scheduled to ride the train and visit with children along the way.

The *Holiday Hawkeye Express* equipment was former Chicago Metra commuter gallery cars with limited restroom facilities and walkover bench seats. Dawn reported that she had heard that approximately 800 had ridden each run.



The Holiday Hawkeye Express near Plymouth Junction. Photo by Dawn Holmberg



The Manly Junction Railway Museum Special approaching Rock Falls, IA, December 1. Photo by Dawn Holmberg



Sunday, December 2nd, approximately 30 members and guests of the Northstar Chapter gathered at Tinucci's Restaurant for the chapter's annual holiday banquet. Bill Graham of the Minnesota Streetcar Museum presented a program of vintage photographs of Lake Minnetonka express boats and ferries, Twin Cities Lines streetcars, of course, and local railroads. Photograph by Dawn Holmberg

Northstar News
Northstar Chapter
National Railway Historical Society
4036 Birch Knoll Drive
White Bear Lake, MN 55110

Address Correction Requested



Chris Laskowski wasn't the only one to catch H-PASIBH November 9th. Jeff Comfort was down at Dayton's Bluff and at an overpass further down the line to catch it again. Photos were sent by Greg Smith



**Center picture: Near Plymouth Junction.
Right: Loading at Manly.
Bottom: At Rock Falls. Three photos by Dawn Holmberg**



Top: A the end of the run at Rock Falls, IA showing Iowa Northern power.
Bottom: End of the last run at Manly, IA. These are former Chicago Metra , former Chicago and North Western coaches. Both photos by Dawn Holmberg