

**NRHS**

Northstar News

Publishers of the Minnesota Rail Calendar

#261 Fall Excursions – Photos by Dawn Holmberg



Train Entering Kandiyohi MN (trip to Wilmar)



Train at Cedar Creek MN (trip to Superior)



Train at Viking Blvd

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Meeting Notice

Next business meeting will be held on

Saturday November 21, 2015 6:30 pm, at Roseville Lutheran Church at 1215 Roselawn Avenue, midway between Lexington and Hamline Avenues in Roseville. See map on page 2.

Program after the meeting –

Last of South African steam and some Local Railroad Slides by Ross Hammond..

Also, bring in a few (no more than 5 !!!!) of your pictures, or slides for consideration for inclusion in the 2017 Calendar.

There will be a pre-meeting get-together October 17, 2015 at the Keys Cafe and Bakery at the northeast corner of Lexington and Larpenteur starting about 4:45 pm. PLEASE CALL Bob Clarkson at 651-636-2323 and leave a message with your name and the number of persons coming with you.

Thanks to Robert Ball, one of the premier railroad photographers in the Twin Cities for his excellent slide show on vintage and current Minnesota railroads.

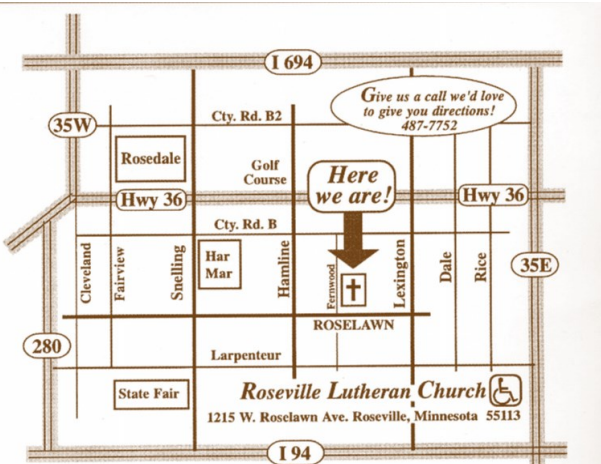
Northstar Chapter Officers

President	Richard Tubbesing	Tubbesing261@yahoo.com	763-757-1304
Vice President	Dan Meyer	dan@meyer-family.net	763-784-8835
Past President	H Martin Swan	hmartinswan@msn.com	612-961-1684
National Director	Jim McLean (thru Dec 2015)	genrrserv@aol.com	612-747-8541
Treasurer	Russ Isbrandt	rmisbrandt@comcast.net	651-426-1156
Secretary	Dave Norman	nevad11@hotmail.com	612-729-2428
Trustee	Gary Rumler	nlcdrumler@gmail.com	651-385-8752

Staff

Program Chairman	John Goodman	Jhgoodman2001@yahoo.com	612-839-0905
Newsletter Editor	Committee: Richard Tubbesing, Dawn Holmberg	Tubbesing261@yahoo.com dawn@dholmberg.com	763-757-1304 763-784-8835
Newsletter Distribution	Richard Tubbesing	Tubbesing261@yahoo.com	763-757-1304
Calendar Committee	John Goodman Dawn Holmberg Russ Isbrandt	Jhgoodman2001@yahoo.com dawn@dholmberg.com	612-839-0905 763-784-8835
Trip Director	John Goodman	Jhgoodman2001@yahoo.com	612-839-0905
Chapter Librarian/ Historian	John Cartwright	stationman86@yahoo.com	651-481-8479
Web Master	Dan Meyer	dan@meyer-family.net	763-784-8835
Chapter Mailbox	Northstar Chapter NRHS	PO Box 120832	St Paul MN 55112
Library Data Base Administrator	Russ Isbrandt	rmisbrandt@comcast.net	651-426-1156

Meeting Location: From the east or west take MN 36 to Lexington Avenue. Drive south on Lexington Avenue to Roselawn Avenue and turn right. The large lighted parking lot is on your right as you travel west on Roselawn. Use the lower entrance to the church and turn left through the commons area. We'll be in room 40, The Diamond Room.



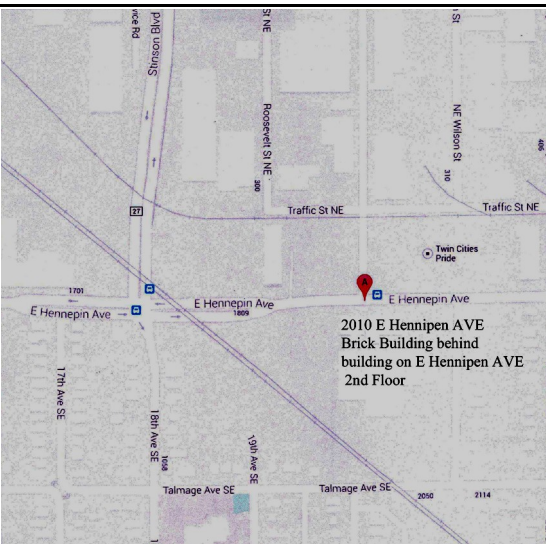
From the Publisher:

The Holiday Season is almost here. For our Holiday Banquet, John Goodman has again gotten us a fabulous speaker in George Fore-ro. He is a long ago member of our chapter when he worked for the Soo Line in Minneapolis. He photographed the station inside and out, including Amtrak trains under the shed. He did this before Amtrak moved to its' new, 'temporary' station outside the shed where it stayed for 20+ years. Turn to page 13 for more details and order form you can print. Orders need to be sent in by [December 1 2015].

Again, The 2016 Minnesota Rail Calendar is now available. We have reduced the size and price of the calendar but still retains it's excellent quality. You can purchase the calendar at our monthly meetings from Dawn Holmberg.

LIBRARY OPEN HOUSE

The Northstar Chapter NRHS Library will have an open house from 2pm to 4:30pm Saturday November 21, 2015. The library is at 2010 East Hennepin Avenue, the Central Research Building Room 226. (The Building behind the building fronted on Hennepin Ave) From the west take I-35W north to the Hennepin Ave exit and drive east just past Stinson Blvd. From the east take I-35W South / MN 36 West to Stinson Blvd. Turn left on Stinson to Hennepin Ave just under the railroad overpass, turn left. From either direction take the first driveway to enter the parking lot. We probably will have retired North Western / UP engineer Gary Rumler present some of his slides. Gary ran everything from local switch jobs to North Western's intercity passenger trains to piloting the UP 3985. At 4:30pm we will adjourn to Keys Restaurant at Lexington and Larpenteur. Drive straight east on Hennepin / Larpenteur to Lexington. Please join us as the Wednesday afternoon bull session will take place on a Saturday this time. There should be plenty of live action on the BNSF St. Paul Sub.



Chapter BOD meeting October 18 2015.

A meeting was held at the Society Library on Hennepin Ave at 1PM with all BOD members present. Membership for 2016 was discussed and it was decided that dues are \$18 per person in addition to the NRHS membership fee of \$50. If not a member of the NRHS, there is a Subscriber category (as in the past) for \$21 which includes receiving the Newsletter, but has NO voting rights. Invoices for chapter membership for 2016 will be sent out in the December or January Newsletter. The NRHS will handle Invoicing for NRHS Dues for 2016. Possible trips for 2016, as well as possible programs for meetings were discussed, but not decided. We will survey members at meeting early in 2016. Calendar production scheduling was also discussed and we will have a July 1 deadline for availability. We also would like more volunteers for Programs in the coming year. The current meeting location at Roseville Lutheran Church will continue, at least through May 2016. The Chapter will not have a Representative to the NRHS in 2016, unless someone Volunteers, due to Jim McLean being unable to continue in this role.. Meeting for January will be the 2nd Saturday in January : Jan 9th 2016. Meeting was Adjourned at 3:30 PM.

May 16 2015 Membership Meeting

The meeting was called to order a 6:30pm in the Roseville Lutheran Church with 23 members and quests present by chapter President Richard Tubbesing. Members and others were asked to introduce themselves. Initial remarks by Richard Tubbesing a tribute to late member Joe Stark who Dies a few weeks ago. He did a lot for the chapter. A moment of silence was called to remember him. Motion to approve meeting minutes as published in the May issue of the Northstar news was carried. Russ Isbrandt reported on membership and finances and calendar summary for the 2014 Calendar. John Cartwright reported on a library project to create DVD from 8mm films in our collection. Russ Isbrandt had information on tourism brochure and Richard Tubbesing reported on scanning of some of Kurt Peterson's slide collection. Dawn Holmberg reported that the 2016 calendar pictures have been decided and to go with White River Publishing to print the calendar. John Goodman reported on the NRHS Convention for 2015 and is working on the NRHS Convention for 2016. John Goodman reported that we need more members and quests to sign up for our bus trip to North Freedom WI to break even. Several people in the Audience indicated they planned to go. Flyer for sign-up on the North Freedom Trip was sent in the May 2015 newsletter. People were informed that the D&NE #28 will not be ready at the LSRM this year. John also reported the details of our planned trip on the Metro Light Rail and Northstar Commuter train, and the annual picnic at Maiden Rock WI. John Goodman reported that we programs lined up for meetings thru December 2015 and have a tentative agreement for a speaker for our Holiday Banquet, and that he will look at other Restaurants before a final decision is made. Richard Tubbesing reported that Flea Markets we attended were slow and we made a small profit. We will be more selective in the Flea Markets we attend in the future. Dan Meyer reported our website and other Web related things. Cheer committee H Martin Swan, we lost Mrs. Doug Johnson, wife of the late member and former officer Doug Johnson. Old Business, RR Video DVD's are now available. And will be eventually available on our website. New Business; We need a nominating Committee to select candidates for all BOD positions for next year. Bill Dredge, Dawn Holmberg volunteered, and Richard Tubbesing. Motion to adjourn was made with Russ Isbrandt seconding the motion. After a short break, a Program on the History of the Illinois Railway Museum and Pullman Porters was presented by Russ Isbrandt. Respectfully submitted by Dave Norman, Secretary.

Sept 19 2015 Membership Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 6:45 PM in the Roseville Lutheran Church with 23 members and quests present by chapter President Richard Tubbesing. Members and others were asked to introduce themselves. President Tubbesing asked that all Cell Phones be turned off during meetings. Previous Meeting minutes will not be approved until Richard Tubbesing gets them from the secretary to be published in the newsletter. Russ Isbrandt gave a report on chapter membership. The Nominating committee was not ready to give a slate BOD candidates for 2016, and the Committee only can have on BOD member on it. Richard Tubbesing resigned and another non-BOD member will be appointed by the President. The Slate of Candidates will be presented at the Oct 2015 meeting. Russ Isbrandt gave the treasurer's report. This included sales at the Fair Grounds Train Show. Jim McLean gave a report on the NRHS, and the NRHS should be in the Black this year. John Goodman gave a report on the bus trip to North Freedom WI. We will plan a bus trip to the LSRM when Steam engine #28 becomes ready next year. Richard Tubbesing gave a report on Flea Markets to be attended this fall. Dan Meyer gave a report on our website. H Martin Swan asked that speakers come up to the front so he can hear them give their reports. John Goodman reported on programs for 2015. Tonight will be a program on RR RPO by David Thompson, a slide show by Robert Ball in October, a slide Show by Ross Hammond in November. Amtrak Officer George Ferraro will be the guest Speaker at our Holiday Banquet.

Also, at the November meeting, we want Minnesota RR pictures submitted by members for consideration for the 2017 Calendar. Cheer committee, by H Martin Swan, Dawn Holmberg broke her leg, and member John Hotvet lost his wife Barbara Jo Durfee in June. Terry Warner knows someone who might become a member and is welcome to come to our next meeting. Jim McLean announced he is resigning from chapter representative to the NRHS after the end of this year. We are looking for a person to this open BOD position next year. Dawn Holmberg reported that the 2016 calendar is now available and we have sold a number of calendars to date. Motion was carried to end the meeting. After a short Break, Dave Thompson gave a great program on railroad RPO's. Respectfully submitted Dave Norman Secretary.

Oct 17 2015 Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 6:45 pm by chapter President Richard Tubbesing at the Roseville Lutheran Church with 24 members and guests present. Richard Tubbesing asked that Attendees introduce themselves. Russ Isbrandt gave the membership and treasurer's report. We are projected to lose money this year depending on Calendar and DVD Sales the rest of this year. Dawn Holmberg of the Nominating Committee, with John Cartwright replacing Richard Tubbesing, gave a list of BOD candidates to be voted on at the November 2015 meeting. We have an open slot for NRHS Representative. Jim McLean reported that the NRHS Finances are improving and have money in the bank. The NRHS lost some members that seemed bad, but will be invited to join for next year. John Goodman reported that D&NE #28 at the LSRM is being restored and be ready to run next summer. Other possible trips were discussed. John Goodman reported that Ross Hammond will present a program on South African Steam and some local RR photographs at the November Meeting, and George Ferraro of Amtrak will be the guest speaker at our holiday banquet. Flea Markets we will attend will be the Great Train Show at the Canterbury Downs and the St Cloud Train Show in November. Anyone who will like to help staff the flea markets is invited. Cheer Committee, H Martin Swan. No one reported sick or injured. Dan Meyer reported on the web site, and that the 2016 calendar is now posted. Richard Tubbesing wants people to be able to order Calendars and DVD's directly on our web site. Dan Meyer says he can do this. The Fall BOD meeting will be held on Sunday Oct 18. Dawn Holmberg reported that 2016 calendar sales are brisk and increasing. We have a write up on our calendar scheduled to be in Railfan and Railroad Magazine. We need to look at more global advertising for our Calendar and DVD's to generate more revenue. We need to look at costs for advertising in magazines like Trains and Classic Trains Magazines as well as other Web sites. No New Business. There was a motion to close the meeting,

Obituary Mark Braun Former President and long-time member.

It is with great sadness that I report the death of Mark Braun, longtime member of Luce Line Railroad Club in Hutchinson and National Model Railroad Association member, and former president of the North Star chapter of the NRHS. I believe he also was a member of the Minnesota Transportation Museum and was a qualified fireman having worked on various steam engines in the upper Midwest. He also was a avid skydiver and had an interest in experimental aircraft. Braun, Mark age 58, of Hutchinson, passed away Oct. 26, 2015 at St. Cloud Hospital in St. Cloud, Minnesota. Survived by his brother, Robert (Pam); sister, Michele. A Mass of Christian Burial was held 2:00 pm Mon., Nov 2nd, St. Anastasia Catholic Church, 460 Lake St. SW, Hutchinson. A Gathering of Family and Friends was held Sun., Nov. 1st, 5:00-8:00 pm and Mon. 8:00-11:00 am, Rosary 7:00 pm Sun., Dobratz-Hantge Funeral Chapel, 899 Hwy 15 S, Hutchinson, & one hour prior to service at church. 1-800-937-1728 www.hantge.com (Thanks to Terry Davis for this report)

Metro News - Where The Oil Trains Are Going -from Rick Krenske

The number of rail cars carrying crude through Minnesota has slumped. A year ago, up to 58 oil trains — each with about 110 cars and carrying 80,000 barrels of oil — traveled across Minnesota each week. This month, Minnesota officials said that figure dropped to 47 a week. The train decline was modest because for the most part North Dakota wells continue to pump oil, even if new drilling is slowing. However, the distribution of trains changed this summer and fall as BNSF Railway construction projects diverted some oil trains through Willmar, then through downtown Minneapolis, including under Target Field, home of the Minnesota Twins. The state released a new map showing where oil trains traveled in October:

- Up to 19 trains a week took the traditional BNSF track from Moorhead to the Twin Cities through St. Cloud. Up to 44 trains took that route a year ago.
- Up to 23 trains now go through Willmar, then most head to the Twin Cities. Up to eight trains go southwest from Willmar. A year ago those that go south to the Gulf Coast were the only ones traveling through Willmar.
- Once through the Twin Cities, trains go south along the Mississippi River, up to 33 on the Wisconsin side and five in Minnesota. Some oil is used by two Twin Cities refineries. Once BNSF wraps up its construction work for the season, most of its oil train traffic again will go through St. Cloud, MnDOT's Peter Dahlberg said, though some may continue through downtown Minneapolis. About 60 percent of Bakken oil heads to East Coast refineries, mostly through Minnesota via rail or pipeline.

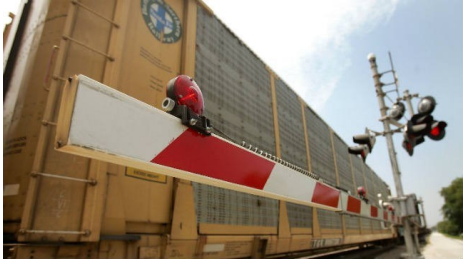
NRHS BOD Meeting by Jim McLean

Here is a brief overview of the subjects that were discussed at the Chapter Representatives meeting at the NRHS national BOD meeting.

1. The first discussions were basic house keeping; approval of summers meeting minutes in Vermont, an affirmation of the continued improvement in the National's financial footing, the success of this summers Rail Camp and the improving of the internal workings of the National.
2. The subject of email addresses and the need to have all member's addresses for National to be able to get information to the members in a quick and efficient manner. Options were discussed for those members who don't have or use computers.
3. The major discussion was the matter of chapter memberships for those who did not want to be a National member. After discussion, a motion was proposed for delivery to the National BOD.

Lawmakers agree to extend automated train deadline by 3 years (The Hill Website) from John

Goodman **By [Keith Laing](#) - 10/21/15 09:33 AM EDT** Lawmakers in the House and Senate have reached an agreement to extend for three years a federal deadline for a new automated train system, possibly avoiding a partial railway shutdown. The agreement calls for moving a Dec. 31 deadline for railroads to install an automated train navigation system known as Positive Train Control (PTC) to the end of 2018 at the earliest.



The system, which regulates the speed and track movements of trains, has been touted as a game changer for train safety, but railroads have complained it is difficult to implement. Under the new agreement, railroads would have an extra three years to work on the automated train conversion.

They will also have the option of requesting an extra two years to work on the installation if they submit plans for doing the work by Dec. 31, 2018.

The requests would have to be approved by the Department of Transportation on a case-by-case basis. Critics have complained the agreement will result in a "blanket five-year" extension for railroads to install technology that has been touted as a life-saver that can prevent deadly train accidents.

The extension will be added to a highway funding bill that is being considered this week by the House, according to officials with the chamber's Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. "The #STRR Act includes language bridging the House & Senate approaches to extending #PTC implementation deadline," the panel tweeted about the highway bill, which is known as the Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2015.

The December deadline for automated trains was set under a law passed in the aftermath of a 2008 commuter rail crash in California. Lawmakers have moved to extend the deadline at the behest of freight and commuter rail companies, but the effort stalled after a [deadly Philadelphia Amtrak crash](#) in May that killed eight passengers.

A highway funding bill that was passed by the Senate in July included language that would change the mandate for railroad companies to implement the automated train system by year's end to a requirement that they submit plans by that date for installing the technology in the near future.

The House, meanwhile, had introduced a bill in the lower chamber that would push back the deadline for most railroads to install automated train technology until December 2018. The House measure would have also allowed the Transportation Department to grant exemptions to the automated train deadline beyond 2018 to individual rail companies on a case-by-case basis.

The provisions that have been added to the highway bill are being touted as a compromise between the two chambers' approaches to the automated train extension. Critics of giving railroads more time to implement the automated train system are unimpressed with the details of the compromise proposal. "This five year extension of life-saving technology is way too long, with way too little guarantee that PTC implementation will get done," Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) said in a statement. "A short-term patch of highway funding should not be the vehicle for such a profoundly important measure," he continued. "I will work for a reasonable measure that provides adequate time but holds railroads accountable through year-by-year review of progress toward fully-implemented PTC."

Lawmakers have been feeling pressure to move the automated train deadline because several railroad companies, [including Amtrak](#), have threatened to [shut down service](#) at the end of the year unless Congress relents on the mandate.

"If Congress fails to extend the deadline, freight and passenger railroads may have little choice but to suspend commuter service and sharply curtail freight shipments," the Washington, D.C.-based American Public Transportation Association (APTA) and the Association of American Railroads (AAR) said this week. "This would affect the 26 commuter rail systems providing 1.7 million trips daily and 90 freight railroads that provide essential goods to communities across the country." Supporters of extending the deadline have cited the threats of a shutdown of the nation's train services. "I believe, absent Congressional action, we will begin to see the effects of the deadline four to six weeks prior to the December 31st deadline as railroads begin to cycle traffic off their lines,"

Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.), who is chairman of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, said during a recent confirmation hearing for the Federal Railroad Administration's Acting Administrator Sarah Feinberg. Critics such as Blumenthal, meanwhile, have complained that a "blanket extension" of the automated train deadline lets railroads off the hook for improving safety for passengers.

"It has been more than 45 years since the National Transportation Safety Board first urged railroads to implement positive train control — an unacceptable delay in implementation of this critical, life-saving technology that has allowed numerous, preventable tragedies," Blumenthal said in a statement after the House PTC extension measure was introduced in September. "Extensions should be granted only to railroads that have demonstrated diligent, good faith efforts to meet the mandate," he continued then. "Only by holding railroads' feet to the fire will this critical, life-saving technology finally be implemented." Transportation Department officials in the Obama administration have told lawmakers they have little choice but to enforce the law that Congress passed. "The reality is without Congress doing something, we've got a deadline coming up and we're going to have to enforce that deadline," Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx told reporters earlier this month.

Price tag increases by almost \$500 million for Bottineau Blue Line LRT -From Rick Krenske

By [Janet Moore](#) Star Tribune October 29, 2015 —

The price tag for the next light-rail transit project in the Twin Cities, linking Minneapolis to the northern suburbs, has increased by nearly \$500 million and now stands at \$1.48 billion.

Members of a Metropolitan Council advisory committee will be briefed Thursday on the new cost of the 13-mile Bottineau Blue Line Extension, which would run from Target Field to Brooklyn Park.

Metro Transit officials have long maintained that the initial \$1 billion cost estimate would increase as more details became available in the planning process.

But Met Council Chairman Adam Duininck acknowledged Wednesday "there might be an immediate reaction to the number."

He added, however, "But I do think as people process the information and talk about the value of the line, it will make the case for itself."

Last spring, a firestorm erupted when the Met Council revealed that the cost of the controversial Southwest light-rail line linking Minneapolis to Eden Prairie ballooned by \$341 million to nearly \$2 billion. The news prompted blowback from Gov. Mark Dayton, provided fresh fuel to transit critics and left Duininck questioning whether the line should even be built.

Since then, communities along the Southwest line agreed to substantial cuts, and contributed more local funds to keep the project afloat with a new \$1.77 billion price tag.

But Duininck says the Bottineau cost hike is not a case of transit déjà vu.

"There are a lot of big differences between the two projects," he noted. "We've tried to learn important lessons from the [Southwest] project, and take some of those lessons and apply them to Bottineau."

Hennepin County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin said Wednesday the Bottineau budget revelation is not equivalent "in any way, shape or form" to Southwest's price surge. The \$1.48 billion figure for Bottineau "is still a reasonable number, it still keeps us competitive for federal dollars," he said.

How costs added up

The cost increase for the Bottineau line crystallized after Metro Transit staff and consultants completed 15 percent of the engineering and environmental work. A Plymouth Avenue station was added near north Minneapolis, as well as seven additional bridges — infrastructure that is a significant cost driver in transit projects.

In addition, wetlands located primarily on the southern stretch of the route will add to the cost because they require additional pilings, piers and bridges to support the 200-plus light-rail trains using the tracks daily.

Contaminated soils — mostly along rail tracks that Bottineau would share with BNSF Railway freight trains — would have to be mitigated, as well, said Mark Fuhrmann, Metro Transit's deputy general manager.

Because Metro Transit wanted light-rail trains to run every 10 minutes, two additional light-rail cars are needed, and each car costs about \$4 million. The trip from downtown to the final stop at Oak Grove Parkway, near Target Corp.'s Brooklyn Park campus, is expected to take about 30 minutes.

Metro Transit's decision to overhaul Olson Hwy., where the line will run from downtown Minneapolis to Golden Valley, was another factor in the Bottineau price increase. In addition to repaving the highway, underground utilities that currently run down the middle of the busy six-lane thoroughfare will have to be relocated, Fuhrmann said.

The Bottineau project still faces significant unknowns that could further push up the price.

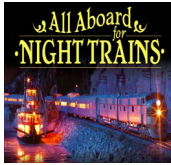
Additional engineering could reveal more construction issues, and substantive negotiations with BNSF over the use of the railroad right of way have yet to begin.

Cities along the line — Minneapolis, Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Crystal and Brooklyn Park — could fail to approve the project, although Met Council officials say that's unlikely.

And, there's the dogged issue of funding. Currently, the Federal Transit Administration is expected to pay 49 percent; the Counties Transit Improvement Board, 31 percent; with Hennepin County and the state each contributing 10 percent.

It's unclear whether state lawmakers will fully support both the Bottineau and Southwest projects.

The Southwest project will likely be part of a request for state bonding dollars during the 2016 legislative session, and Duininck supports a metro-area sales tax to support transit projects. "If that doesn't happen, then we'll have to figure out what to do in 2017," he said. All of the transit projects are part of a broader system, he added, and "they rise and fall together."



Twin City Model Railroad Museum looking for new home

81-year-old institution facing eviction from Bandana Square home

By Tad Vezner tvezner@pioneerpress.com

It turns out even 150 volunteers may not be able to keep the trains running, on time or otherwise.

After multiple moves and flagging funding, the Twin City Model Railroad Museum is now facing an eviction notice with nowhere to go.

Officials with the St. Paul-based nonprofit — which relies largely on attendance fees — say they have a court summons for Oct. 26, though they hope to negotiate extra time.

Brandon Jutz, the museum's vice president of marketing, said attendance has been on the rise over the past several years — to just over 30,000 last year.

"We just committed ourselves to a lease that we were unable to afford," Jutz added, noting just over half of the museum's expenses are rent. Last fiscal year, the museum's total revenue, including admissions, events and donation totaled \$178,000. Still, they wound up \$30,000 shy in rent money over the past summer.

Staff — comprised of volunteers and one half-time paid employee — hoped to make the museum a cross-generational attraction for all ages, with model trains built as early as the 1930s still running on over a dozen tracks.

"It's fun watching the kids come in — boy, their eyes get big as saucers," said Arnie Hochhalter, 82, a former computer programmer and analyst from Shoreview who has been volunteering for 15 years.

"I can repair the diesel engines, but I stay away from the steam ones, they're a little too complicated," Hochhalter added with a laugh, noting that some of the models on display were his own.

Whoops, you got Hochhalter talking about trains. "Many of these trains were scratch-built by former club members. The Hiawatha, ran between Chicago and Minneapolis, built in 1939. Stopped in St. Paul, of course. That model still runs, but we don't run it as much. It's getting a little old and we can't repair it. Made it in about six hours to Chicago. They kept their schedules. In those days the passenger trains had priority, they were clocked going 100 mph."

Added Jutz: "I'm looking at it cross three generations — we see grandparents and kids all the time passing stories down about having a toy train."

The museum kicked off in 1934 when a bunch of enthusiasts created an "O-gauge" model railroad under the name of the St. Paul Craftsman Club. O-gauge models were defined by tracks with rails that were typically 1.25 inches apart, and some of the trains built by the first club members are still running on display. It started in a small space on Grand Avenue, then moved a couple times before finding a long-term home in the old Union Depot in 1939.

It lasted there until 1978, when it essentially became a mobile museum that only attended events. Finally in 1984, it moved into the newly redeveloped Bandana Square, where it stands today. "We didn't really pay rent, and admission was a free-will admission box," Jutz said.

The club officially became a museum in 1998 and began charging admission. But in time the surrounding space changed and is now a mixed-use office space and medical complex. "It changed over time, and we really didn't change with it," Jutz said. "For the membership the thought of moving was really a burden, but it was put off too long."

The museum occupies two buildings, one owned by Wellington Management and the other — containing a toy train museum — by an individual. Jutz stressed that the museum's landlords have hardly been mustache-twirling villains, strapping them to tracks with dynamite. "Our landlords have been incredibly accommodating," Jutz said, noting that the individual owner "has really underwritten our operation in Bandana, but he's in a position to sell. He needs us out to make renovations."

The Toy Train museum, in the second building, was not part of the October court order; it will likely close Nov. 15, Jutz said. The museum's main area depicts the Twin Cities in the 1940s and 1950s, when the area was transitioning from steam to diesel power. Landmarks include the Stone Arch Bridge, Bandana Square Complex — and a playfully added scene from Grumpy Old Men. A second building, also in Bandana Square, contains 17 additional displays. Some of it is hands-on, with children able to play with both electric powered and wooden models. Several advocates of the museum — including St. Paul city council candidate Bill Hosko — have suggested moving the museum back into Union Depot.

Both museum and depot officials said they've talked about such an arrangement and found that the space simply wasn't large enough. "We love them; it would be awesome, but it wasn't a good fit, literally," said Depot spokeswoman Deborah Carter McCoy. Jutz said the museum would like to remain in the Midway area and has a letter of intent with a space there. He declined to give the exact address. "We're all ears for other options," Jutz said.

At the bare minimum — to keep the main historic display — the museum would need an open 5,000 square foot space. Ideally, they'd like to have 11,000 square feet for all of the displays. *Tad Vezner can be reached at 651-228-5461 or follow him on Twitter@SPnoir.*



Denver Colorado Light Rail A Line to the Airport OPENING APRIL 22, 2016

FROM JOHN GOODMAN

The A Line (referred to as the East Rail Line during construction) will open for service on April 22, 2016, providing easy, affordable and reliable connections between downtown Denver and the airport. The A Line brings RTD train service into new neighborhoods and employment areas along Interstate 70. We look forward to providing great service to the residents of River North, Cole, Elyria-Swansea, Clayton, North Park Hill, Stapleton, Morris Heights, Gateway, Montbello and Green Valley Ranch. (23 miles, 8 Stations, 6 Park and rides) (Denver is the 2016 NRHS Convention site)



It's official: Feds OK \$10 million for Willmar railroad bypass

By [Tribune News](#) on Oct 28, 2015 at 9:28 a.m.

WASHINGTON — U.S. Senators Amy Klobuchar and Al Franken, Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton, and U.S. Rep. Collin Peterson announced Tuesday that the U.S. Department of Transportation has awarded a \$10 million Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery grant for Willmar's rail connector and industrial access wye project. Local officials unofficially announced the grant Monday. Lawmakers said there is a significant bottleneck in the current regional rail network that blocks rail crossings and halts traffic in Willmar. The grant will be used in a \$48.83 million collaborative public-private project to construct approximately 10,000 feet of track between two Burlington Northern Santa Fe main lines and bypass train traffic west of Willmar. Other project partners are the city of Willmar, Kandiyohi County, Minnesota Department of Transportation, and the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission. Officials said the project will alleviate congestion, expand rail capacity and improve safety in the region by updating Willmar's rail infrastructure. The benefits of this project will extend throughout Minnesota and region as it enhances accessibility, efficiency and reliability of the state's entire transportation system, they said. "With the increase in freight rail traffic in Minnesota, it's absolutely critical that we invest in our rail infrastructure to ensure rural businesses can get their goods to market while improving safety for communities along rail routes," Klobuchar said. "That is why I worked to help secure a TIGER grant for the Willmar rail connector project, which will help alleviate congestion, boost economic opportunity and improve safety in Willmar." Franken said investing in Minnesota's transportation infrastructure not only strengthens the economy but also makes families and communities safer. "I worked together with state and local officials to get federal support for the Willmar wye project because we know how important it is to the region. This funding means fewer trains in downtown Willmar, safer roads, and new possibilities for economic development," Franken said. Dayton said the funding will help make essential improvements to reduce traffic congestion, support area businesses, and enhance the public's safety. Dayton said he worked with the Legislature last session to invest \$3.77 million in the project, and urged the federal transportation secretary to provide federal support. "I thank Congressman Peterson, and Senators Franken and Klobuchar for their efforts to secure this additional federal investment," Dayton said.

September 2015 James J Hill Days Celebration at the Wayzata Depot. Pictures by Brandon Smith.

Special Train operated by BNSF and cars supplied by the Friends of #261.





Officials want better communication with railroads

By [Don Davis](#) on Sep 2, 2015 at 11:28 p.m.

MINNEAPOLIS — Communications is a key in preventing and battling oil train disasters, two U.S. senators learned Wednesday from public safety officials.

A forum convened by U.S. Sens. Al Franken of Minnesota and Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin, both Democrats, produced requests for railroads to communicate better with officials and the public and to allow public safety personnel to better communicate via radio with each other. Much of the discussion followed the lines of what Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton heard last year during a series of oil train safety meetings, centering what local officials said is the need for money to separate roads from railroads so public safety personnel are not forced to wait for trains blocking crossings.

Baldwin said it is a fiscally tough time, so communities should not expect money to flow to them for railroad crossing improvements. But she and Franken said Democrats and Republicans in Congress are working on ways to improve railroad safety.

“We don’t want this all to depend on luck,” said Franken, after reminding the forum that North Dakota, Minnesota and Wisconsin have avoided major injury-causing oil train derailments like have happened elsewhere.

Rail safety advocates reminded the senators that ethanol is in the same volatility class as crude oil being shipped from western North Dakota. They said many hazardous materials are shipped by rail, but oil trains carry so much that they basically are pipelines on wheels. Franken’s staff set up the meeting with Baldwin, experts and the public at the Minneapolis Firefighters Hall and Museum, a few yards from a railroad track. Railroad representatives were not invited to the meeting. Franken did not wait to talk to railroads to say that he wants them to release bridge inspection reports. “They may be companies that are looking for the biggest returns on their bucks, but they have a responsibility to the public,” Franken said. “I believe those bridge inspections should be public.” As it is, railroads inspect their own bridges, but keep those reports secret. Railroads also are not sharing with the public what could happen in a worst-case scenario oil train accident. “A majority of communities in west-central Minnesota are affected by this train traffic,” Calvin said. “The faster we can get them through our communities, the better for us.”

The Federal Railroad Administration announced Wednesday it is accepting applications for \$10 million from communities along oil and ethanol train routes to improve crossings. “These funds will allow states to design programs to improve rail and highway safety along routes moving crude by rail,” U.S. Rep. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D., said. Baldwin and Franken said Republicans and Democrats are working together to improve rail safety and after the House passes its version of a six-year transportation funding bill, lawmakers may insert more rail safety measures before it heads to the president.

They said first responders such as firefighters need better training. As Cleveland said: “These are usually once-in-a-career events. We have one chance to get this right.”



More Pictures from the #261 trips to Superior and Wilmar Oct 10 and 11th 2015 by Dawn Holmberg, Brandon Smith, Terry Reddecker



Dawn Holmberg: Train to Wilmar Approaching Cokato on the Wayzata Sub



Train to Superior, Cedar Drive Crossing



Dawn Holmberg: Train at Wilmar MN



Cokato MN Switcher and #261 Train



Northern Pacific Dome



Brandon Smith: -Engine on Wilmar Turntable



-Joey, the #261 chef in the Super dome



Engine in Wilmar MN



Terry Reddecker (from Facebook) Train to Superior (near Brook Park?) and EB Wilmar train



Event Paid tribute to area railroaders, locomotive that welcomes public to county museum

By [Dan Burdett](#) on Oct 8, 2015 at 7:51 a.m.

For five decades, a jumbo, green locomotive known as Engine 2523 has been a staple of the Kandiyohi County Historical Society, welcoming visitors to its homey museum on Willmar's northeast side. And this weekend, the historical society will celebrate the engine during a ceremony to mark the 50th anniversary of its Oct. 17, 1965, dedication. Dubbed Engine 2523 Day, the event Saturday is free to the public and will feature entertainment by performers from the Choo-Choo Bob Show, a railroad-themed, Minneapolis-based children's variety TV program, and will also act as a homecoming for current and former railroad employees.

"The railroad is an important entity and has a long history not only in Willmar but Kandiyohi County," said Jill Wohnoutka, executive director at the historical society. "The engine is a testament to the past and we want to celebrate that. Plus, not every museum has a steam locomotive parked in front of it." In fact, Wohnoutka said, Engine 2523 is one of just two P2 Mountain Class 482 locomotives that remain in the nation; the other is preserved in Washington State. Built by Baldwin Locomotive Works and commissioned in 1923, Engine 2523 was part of a Great Northern Railway fleet, running passengers and occasional freight east and west through Willmar on the lines now operated by Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway. A powerful but zippy locomotive, the P-2 class could reach speeds in excess of 75 mph and was controlled by a three-man crew: the brakeman, who operated track switches, and coupled and uncoupled the freight cars; the fireman, who fed coal into the furnace and tended to the boiler; and the engineer, who drove the train. Two other crew members rode the caboose, a car typically attached to the rear of the train.

Engine 2523 was officially decommissioned in 1958, and sat unutilized at what is now the BNSF depot until 1965, when Great Northern donated it to the historical society, Wohnoutka said. A temporary track was constructed to move the engine across what is now High Avenue Northeast to the museum site, and in the process, two hills were dug out and a ditch was filled.

Today, the engine faces north on a nearly 100-foot strip of track built to Great Northern main-line specifications. The creosoted ties, per the historical society website, are supported on a sub-ballast consisting of 6 inches of rock chips and a ballast of 6 inches of crushed granite, shipped from Granite Falls. "It really is a great historical piece," Wohnoutka said of the engine. "So much of the railroad's past can be linked to important times in history: the birth of the steam engine, The Industrial Revolution." Saturday's event will begin at 10 a.m. in the museum parking lot, with the Choo-Choo Bob performances scheduled for 10:30 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. A rededication will then take place at 2 p.m. During the 1965 ceremony, a champagne bottle containing water from the Pacific Ocean, Lake Superior and the Mississippi River was smashed against the train, mirroring a tradition often reserved for ships as they launch on their maiden voyage. A new bottle has been filled with water from each of those bodies, but will instead be mounted in tact in the museum to mark this year's event. A welcome table for all current and former railroaders will also be set up as a meet-and-greet area. For more information on the event, call 320-235-1881. The Kandiyohi County Museum is located at 610 Highway 71 Service Rd., across from Willmar Lake and opposite the National Guard Armory.

Twin Cities and Western Railroad -Minnesota Prairie Line Train in May 22 2015

Photos by Roger Libra



Approaching Arlington MN



Leaving Gaylord MN



Entering Arlington MN



Train Entering Green Isle MN



Train entering Hamburg MN



Train between Hamburg and Norwood MN



Train entering Norwood MN, TC&W main Line



Train heading East at Norwood MN and heading to Cologne MN



UP power waiting next unit grain train Assignment in Glencoe MN



Northstar Railway Historical Society



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George Forero, Amtrak District Manager of Operations, Retired

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Social hour begins at 4 pm; cash bar. Dinner will be served at 5 pm followed by the program at 6 pm

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Guest _____

Telephone _____

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White Bear Lake, MN 55110

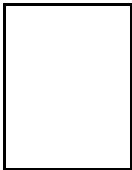
Metro News - State Rail Line Inspections –From Rick Krenske ,by Patrick Condon • 651-925-5049 Oct 23, 2015

Governor Mark Dayton said the state has little recourse to prevent BNSF from such rerouting decisions. “They own the tracks,” he said. But he said he’d renew his push at the Legislature next year for a property tax increase on the railroads, to raise state funds for more inspections and emergency response measures in affected communities. The increase in oil trains between Willmar and the Twin Cities started in July and has-tened further in September, according to traffic reports that the Star Tribune obtained and reported earlier in October. Previously the large share of oil train traffic through the Twin Cities came via Moor-head, through St. Cloud and into Minneapolis through Anoka and Coon Rapids.

Railfan Events (Thanks to Cy Svobodny, Russ Isbrandt)

Great American Train Show	November 7th, 2015 November 8th 2015 10 AM -5 PM	Canterbury Downs Expo Center Shakopee MN	\$7 Kids under 5 Free
Lakes and Pines Train Collec-tors Association Train Show and Swap Meet	November 8th, 2015 12:15 PM to 2:30 PM	John P Murzyn Hall 530 Mill Street NE Columbian Heights MN	\$2 Kids under 12 free
Granite City Train Show and Flea Market	November 14th 2015 9 AM - 3 PM	1710 Veterans Dr., St. Cloud, MN	\$6, Children under 12 free
Trainfest (Model Railroad Ex-position)	November 14, 15 2015 9:00 AM – 5:30 PM	Wisconsin Exposition Center at Wisconsin State Fair Park 8200 W. Greenfield Avenue West Allis (Milwaukee), WI 53214	Adults \$11 Children \$2
North Metro Model Railroad Club Flea Market	Saturday December 12 2015 9 AM - 2 PM	Coon Rapids VFW Coon Rapids Blvd Coon Rapids MN	\$5 (unconfirmed)
Twin Cities Model Railroad Club Night Trains	Every Saturday Nite November 7th 2015 to February 27 2016 6 PM—9 PM	Bandana Square 1021 Bandana Blvd E Suite 222 St Paul MN	\$10 Children under 4 free

Northstar News
1515 Creek Meadow Dr NW
Coon Rapids MN 55433 3768
Address Correction Requested



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Youtube (link —> <https://youtu.be/4ErQ2iQcAB0>)

Also, the 2016 Minnesota Rail Calendar is now Available.