



**NRHS**

# Northstar News

Publishers of the Minnesota Rail Calendar

## Winter is Still here !



Cumbres & Toltec  
Scenic Railroad

Steam in Oct 2015

Photos by

Roger Libra



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### Meeting Notice

Next business meeting will be held on

**Saturday February 20th 2016 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 –

Cumbres and Toltec Triple Header Steam Special in October 2015 by R Tubbesing. .

There will be a pre-meeting get-together January 9, 2016 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 Members for bringing in their slides (Pictures) for consideration for inclusion for the 2017 Calendar. And also to Bob Ball for showing more of his excellent photos's!!!

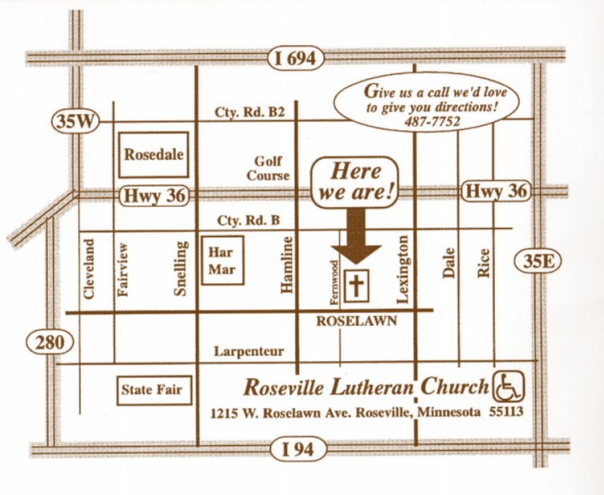
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Meeting Location: From the east or west take MN 36 to Lexington Avenue. Drive south on Lexington Avenue to Roselawn Avenue and turn right. The large lighted parking lot is on your right as you travel west on Roselawn. Use the lower entrance to the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



From the Publisher:

Our 2016 Calendar is now ***sold out***. ! Get your orders in earlier for next years calendar.

**2016 Dues are Due!** Membership for 2016 is \$18 for NRHS membership (+NRHS membership dues of \$50, billed separately) and \$21 for subscriber. NRHS dues for 2016 can be paid online by credit card. If you are a current member of the NRHS and the NRHS has your email address, you should have gotten an Email from 'Amelia.com' to renew your NRHS dues via secure payment by credit card. If the NRHS does not have your email address, you should have by now received a letter in the mail to renew your dues. If you have received notification by either method, please renew your NRHS dues promptly. The NRHS is now in the black due to great leadership which has turned around this organization from debt ridden status. **If you do not renew by March 1 2016, You will be dropped from the Newsletter distribution list.**



## Student Educational Tour by H Martin Swan



In 1965 I was working for the GN in Seattle when I was advised that I was to participate in the GN's Educational Tour for new or recently hired non-union employees. It turns out that once every 2- 3 years the GN gathered the new hires together to tour the system and meet the various people that run the railroad and whom we might come into contact at various times. The GN ran two tours in 1964 and I was selected to go on the second one in October. On Friday Oct 8 I boarded the Western Star to head for the starting point for the tour, St. Paul, MN.

The group consisted of Sales and Pricing employees of all descriptions. There were 12 of us and we came from such places as Seattle, Great Falls, Billings, Detroit, New York, Denver and other places that I can no longer remember. Continued on page 3

*Continued from page 2:* The Western Star by this time was back to its offseason consists i.e.: 2 coaches, a coffee shop car, one 16/4 Pullman out of Seattle, plus one additional coach and Pullman out of Havre (from Great Falls) and many head and tail in cars. The two attendees from Billings and Great Falls were in the Great Falls Pullman and we eventually figured out that we were together.

Arrival in St. Paul was Sunday Oct 10. We have been advised to go to the Hotel St. Paul where rooms were made available. We each had our own room, no doubling up. My Mom came up from Lincoln to see her eldest son so I spent Sunday afternoon and evening with her and my sister.

Bright and early Monday Oct 11 we all reported to the General Office Building (GOB) and went to the Office of Mr. Art Tein, General Freight Agent (GFA) Rates & Divisions. Mr. Tein was the coordinator of the tour. We were given packets which contained all sorts of GN information and also our Pullman sleeping car tickets and special passes to ride the Empire Builder for three segments of the trip. We all had GN Passes so we only needed the Pullman tickets. Hotels would be furnished by the various Agents where we would be visiting. We were expected to pay for breakfast and lunch (except where an Agent would include them in their tour) and we could turn in expense accounts to recover those costs. We were admonished to be on time, dress in business attire (coat and tie), be courteous, pay attention and do nothing to bring shame to us or the railroad, that last point would come into play.

After which we were given a tour of the GOB. We had lunch on the 13th floor in the cafeteria operated by the NP but open to all employees at the GOB. Next we were herded into automobiles and given a tour of all GN facilities in St. Paul and the location of the “important” customers.

That evening we gathered in a banquet room for an excellent steak dinner with all the trimmings hosted by the rate department. Various high ranking GN Officers who work rates and divisions spoke. The highlight was when Vice President Traffic Mr. Vincent P. Brown spoke. He was the person who hired me. Mr. Brown told us how we at GN are family, we actually spend more time with our railroad family than our own families and that we should all work together as a unit to benefit the GN Railway. He also talked about how rate making was like a narrow road with deep ravines on either side; one side was rates too low, thus not maximizing revenue and the other side was rates too high so that they weren’t used.

Afterwards all but one of us gathered around Mr. Brown to talk and gleaned as much information that we could. The one that didn’t visit Mr. Brown went out someplace on University Ave. found himself a “lady” and partook in the oldest profession---and was rolled. The fool reported this to the police and gave Mr. Tein’s name as a contact. The police did contact Mr. Tein. This person who had now just sacrificed his carrier with the GN had to beg for an advance since all his money was gone. If, Heaven forbid, I would have done the same thing, there would have been no police report and I would have called my Mom to wire me money, but no way would I let Mr. Tein know what had happened. This individual did bring shame to himself and by extension to the GN.

It was too bad. For the rest of the tour we avoided him like he had leprosy. Months later we found out, through the grape vine, that the GN told him that they were not going to fire him but he would never be promoted. He quit the company about a year afterwards.

The next day we were taken over to Minneapolis and toured the GN’s facilities and met GN employees. That evening it was back to the banquet rooms for a excellent steak dinner with all the trimmings. The featured speakers this evening was AVP Mr. G. D. Johnson (General Freight Traffic Manager-Sales and Service) and Vice President Traffic Dept. Mr. C. E. Finley. Mr. Finley ruled the Traffic Dept. with an iron hand. Basically when Mr. Finley approached, you had to treat him like a King. This is a bit of an exaggeration of course, but still Mr. Finley was a very powerful man and it didn’t do anybody any good to get on his bad side.

After dinner we are told to meet again at SPUD the next morning for the departure of the Western Star. DO NOT BE LATE AND MISS THE TRAIN! When we boarded the Western Star we were directed to the Great Falls sleeper where we had a bedroom Suite reserved for us. We were joined by the Traveling Rate man who lectured us on grain movements and pointed out various places where grain such as wheat was stored. He also told us the story of an earlier Educational Tour when two men did miss the train. They went out to the airport and flew to Fargo. When the Western Star got to Fargo (summer edition), the two walked back to the Mountain Obs car and casually stated “Oh, here you are we couldn’t find you”. Nice try—but it didn’t work!

*Continued on page 4*

*Continued from page 3.* We arrived in Minot at around 6:30 pm. We were greeted by the local Agent, Mr. Hoffman. Mr. Hoffman offered us a choice. We would go to our hotel and check in, after that we would go to a Country Club for an excellent steak dinner with all the trimmings, then we could either go back to our hotel to rest up for the next day, or we could go out and tour Galvin Yard and then the next morning we could go on the tour of Minot and then have the afternoon off to watch the 7<sup>th</sup> game of the World Series between the Twins and the Dodgers. We chose to tour Galvin Yard that evening and watch the game Thursday afternoon. As always at the evening dinner we met and exchanged business cards with the local Operating and Pricing and Sales people then it was off to Galvin Yard.

Galvin Yard was a fascinating place; it was state of the Art with no expense spared to provide the most updated facilities possible. We visited the locomotive and car service areas, visited the new LCL freight transfer building. Less than carload traffic came into the Yard and was unloaded and then consolidated into other cars providing full carloads of many LCL shipments all going to the same place, sadly it was a waste of money. While it helped LCL shipments for a while, the business was lost totally and completely to the trucks within a few years. Finally it was time to go to the Tower. To get up there GN had installed a vertical conveyor belt elevator. You had this vertical conveyor belt that appeared to be moving very fast, from the conveyor belt at various points would be a small metal footstep and there were hand holds at the around 6 feet above the footstep. One was supposed to grab a hand hold, put ones foot on the footstep and be whisked up to the next several levels. Getting on wasn't that much of a problem, the big problem seemed to be getting off without finding yourself flying into the room or going up and over the conveyor belt. Luckily a couple of large strong men were placed at the top where they would grab us and to glide us safely off the belt.

I do have to say that the nighttime view from the Tower is amazing. All those cars moving over the humps, the scurrying of the yard engines, the departure or arrival of various freight trains. The operators spent quite some time educating us on their jobs and the importance of this yard to the GN. Finally the tour was over and now we had to go down the vertical conveyor belt elevator. Actually there were stairs and a goodly portion of our group, including yours truly decided to use them. After that it was back to our hotel.

The next morning, we were picked up and we toured the Minot area, viewing the track and noticing the various industries, then it was back to the hotel for lunch and checkout. Once our bags were stored, we retired to the hotel's bar to watch the 7<sup>th</sup> game of the World Series. We, of course, had a beer or two or three etc... One of our group (Sam) wasn't feeling too good and nursed just one "cold one 'Sadly', the Twins lost the game.

We were picked up and taken to the Minot Depot to catch 27/3 the Great Falls section of the Western Star. There wasn't much other business on the car this evening but to be fair we took up 12 of the duplex roomettes. This car would be discontinued in about a year and half. We were all feeling pretty good, supper was in the Coffee Shop Car. We then "partied" in the lounge section of the car, consuming some "adult" drinks except for Sam. He went to bed. I was feeling pretty good but around 11:00 pm decided it was time to go to bed. Just as I got into my duplex roomette, the door opposite me opened up and Sam leaned out and emptied the contents of his food consumption for the day. The Porter was furious; he figured he was just a drunken fool that couldn't hold his liquor, our efforts to explain that he was truly sick, not drunk, fell on deaf ears. "Clean this mess up yourself" said the porter and stalked away he did throw a bundle of towels to us. So we cleaned the mess up which calmed the porter down a bit. We went to bed and as always the case with the GN switching, were rudely awakened at Havre (3:00 am) when the coach and sleeper were removed from the train and put on #3. The GN switching crews were the only bad thing about GN passenger service: it was impossible to sleep through Havre and Spokane.

Arrival at Great Falls was at 6:20 am and we were met at the depot Mr. J. J. Heimes, Assistant General Freight & Passenger Agent. We were taken to our hotel, told to check in, get some breakfast and he would be back a 9:00 am for our tour. Sam was allowed to sleep in and not go on the tour. The tours were now starting to be of more interest to me. Great Falls was the dividing line where the rate work, motor application cases etc was sent to me instead of going to St. Paul. I knew Mr. Heimes through many phone calls and I was interested in meeting the operating officers that I many times talked to getting information for my work. The tour was the usual, where we visited the industrial sites and were advised about the many customers that the GN had in the area.

That evening the banquet was held in the hotel. Sam felt well enough to join us and we had an excellent steak dinner with all the trimmings. As usually various Pricing, Sales and Operating personnel spoke and as usual we exchanged business cards (I was getting quite a large collection of business cards by this time; I still have them somewhere). *Continued on page 5*



*Continued from Page 4.* The next morning we were going to going to Shelby where the greatest of all treats would be awaiting us. I was hoping we would ride the RDC car but no such luck, we were driven in a caravan up to Shelby.

The Empire Builder was Mr. Finley's baby. It was kept in immaculate condition, it had BETTER run on time and nobody, nobody rode that train at anything but the full fare. Only if you had a specific pass, which was personally signed by Mr. Finley, could you get on that train without a full fare ticket. We had such a precious piece of paper. #31 rolled in on time and we were all herded to the Great Dome lounge. Dinner that night was in the Empire Builder's dining car; GN didn't sell too many steak dinners to our group. At Whitefish we were joined by Mr. Clyde Speaks (Traveling Agent) who lectured us on the lumber industry. *To be continued next month*

## RPCA Conference January 2016 Tyler Texas -Article by Dan Meyer Photos by Dawn Holmberg



*Excursion on the Texas State Railroad Palestine Texas. T&P Engine #610 noted for pulling a segment of the American Freedom Train in 1975 (not operational), Observation car on the excursion trainr, and the excursion steam engine that pulled it.*



It pays to be flexible. When traveling, things don't always go as planned. In the past, we have traveled and had our train home cancelled, arrived at a hotel only to find we booked the room for the night after we arrived instead of the night of our arrival, missing connections and lot of other inconveniences. Somehow things always worked out. Our biggest issue today was when we arrived at the hotel-the desk clerk told us that we had already checked in. It turned out that they had given our room to someone with the same last name as me. It took a few minutes and a phone call or two, but the hotel worked it out and ended up giving us a very nice room on the top floor of the hotel! Tomorrow promises to be a very big day. Our bus leaves at 7:00 am, and we return at 10:00 pm. Thank goodness nothing is planned early on Friday.

Thursday was a really big day. Some might call it a 'death march'. We were up at 6 am and the bus left the hotel at 7 am with our first destination being the GE locomotive plant, a 2 1/2 hour drive away. We encountered very bad traffic in Dallas that delayed us about 30 minutes, and caused me to re-think our departure time to the airport Monday. The locomotive plant tour was really interesting. It was explained that it takes about 21 days from the time they start cutting and welding metal, performing precision alignment of diesel engines and alternators, fabricating locomotive frames and putting it all together and everything else needed to create a locomotive. The production rate is about 2 locomotives per day. No Cameras or cell phones are allowed in the production areas, so we have no photos of this. The tour guides did take group photos in front of the finished locomotives, though.

Our next stop was the BNSF headquarters, and on the way we ran into more bad traffic and also had lunch. The BNSF headquarters is big. They have 240 acres for their campus, and we only saw a small part of the facilities. We each received a visitor pass in the reception area that was also a mini-railroad museum that has artifacts related to the BNSF. Once we had our visitor's badge, we were escorted back outside to tour some of the railroad's passenger cars that are now used for meetings and entertaining important visitors. The cars appear to be in very good condition, with the fluted sides being immaculately shiny with no dents and the rest of the exterior being very impressive as well. The interiors were very luxurious; I have seen no nicer cars anywhere. All interior furnishings were varnished wood. One car was set up as a bar/lounge and the other was a dining car. There are two more cars in the same area, but they were already booked for meeting. There is one more dome car on campus that is used as a snack bar, but it was not available for us to see. Sadly, all cars are only on display tracks instead of live rail.

Next we were ushered into a small theater with a capacity of about 150. The seating area was quite wide, but only 4-5 rows deep. With only 50 people in our group it was spacious. A screen came down and we viewed a short video about the BNSF railroad. When the video was complete, the screen was retracted into the ceiling and the curtains on the wide wall behind the screen opened to show us the BNSF operations center below. It was very impressive! Almost all the dispatchers and support personnel occupied the floor, and there were several large video screens displaying up to the minute metrics showing how well the railroad was performing. Average miles per locomotive per day, average speed of the various types of freight trains, Amtrak and commuter incentive performance measures and more were displayed. It was really impressive! *Continued on page 6*

*Continued from page 5:* The final part of the tour was a visit to their company store. It seems most folks bought something. Items for sale range from the usual caps, can coolers, thermos containers, shirts, sweatshirts, pens to expensive leather duffle bags and glassware; all with the BNSF logo. All items are available on-line and are reasonably priced. .

Next order of business, a 2 hour bus ride from Northwest Fort Worth to Palestine, TX. We left the BNSF around 4 pm, and arrived at the Texas State Railroad around 7 pm. So what I expected to be a 2 hour ride ended up being 3 hours due to road construction. Having said that, it was an enjoyable ride. Sunset over East Texas was beautiful, and the company on the bus was a lot of fun. We met folks from Perris, California and French Lick, Indiana and talked about railroads, railroad museums and promoting the museums and events to the public. Arriving at the Texas State Railroad we board the dome car for dinner. We departed in just few minutes, and in the pitch dark outside it was hard to know that you were actually moving. The food was very good, and crème cake desert was wonderful.

We arrived at Rusk around 9 pm, and rode the bus back to our hotel in Tyler, arriving around 10 pm, exhausted but smiling!  
*To be Continued next month.*



## BNSF 2016 CAPEX: \$4.3 billion January 26 2016

From John Goodman

**BNSF Railway Company (BNSF)** on Jan. 26, 2016 announced a \$4.3 billion 2016 capital expenditure plan that “will focus on helping to ensure the company continues to operate a safe and reliable network this year and beyond. This year’s capital program reflects BNSF’s success in adding capacity to support customer demand while bringing investment more in line with current volumes,” the railroad said.



The largest component of this year’s plan is approximately \$2.8 billion “to replace and maintain BNSF’s core network and related assets to keep our railroad infrastructure in top condition,” BNSF said. “These projects will go toward replacing and upgrading rail, rail ties and ballast. Keeping the railroad well maintained helps ensure trains can run safely and helps limit the need for unscheduled service outages that can slow down the rail network and reduce capacity.”

While this year’s overall plan is \$1.5 billion less than what was spent in 2015, it includes more than \$300 million for continued implementation of positive train control (PTC) and more than \$600 million for locomotives, freight cars and other equipment acquisitions. Approximately \$500 million is for expansion, including a continuation of projects that were started in 2015, such as installing a new bridge and second track to cross the Pecos River, and double track near Fort Sumner, N.M. This year’s projects also reflect various other double-track work and additional Centralized Traffic Control (CTC) signaling that will add capacity and improve efficiency in constrained parts of the network.

“Our railroad is in the best shape it has ever been,” said Carl Ice, BNSF President and CEO (*Railway Age’s* 2016 Railroader of the Year). “Each year, our capital plan works to balance our near term need to regularly maintain a vast network that is always in motion with the longer term demand outlook of our customers. While our customers’ demand outlook has softened in a number of sectors, regular maintenance of our network continues to drive the majority of our annual investments and helps ensure we continuously operate a safe and reliable network.”

### Amtrak Empire Builder Schedule Modification:



Amtrak schedules at SPUD effective 1-16-16 Train 8 is due into SPUD 7:43 am  
Depart 8:00am Train 7 is due into SPUD 10:03pm Depart 10:20pm



## S. Minnesota Train Derailment Sends 6 Cars into Mississippi

January 28, 2016 By [Paul Walsh](#) Star Tribune (from Rick Krenske)

A freight train derailed late at night in southeastern Minnesota, sending six cars into the Mississippi River, authorities said Wednesday. The derailment of 15 cars in total from the southbound Canadian Pacific train occurred about 10 p.m. Tuesday near Reno in Houston County, a CP spokesman said. "None of the cars in the river contained dangerous goods, and it does not appear that any have leaked," spokesman Andy Cummings said. One of the cars that derailed and remained on land lost a saltlike product known as sodium chlorate, a material that is classified as dangerous, Cummings said. "A very small amount of this product leaked when a cap fell off a railcar," he said, "but none has reached the river." Also on some of the derailed cars was vegetable oil, which did not leak, according to a county official. A hazardous materials teams remained at the scene as daybreak arrived. The tracks run parallel to the river and Hwy. 26, which was closed for a time overnight and later reopened but limited to one lane being shared by traffic in each direction under the supervision of flaggers as of late Wednesday morning.

## IDLED RAILROAD CARS A NONSTOP HEADACHE Jan 21, 2016 From Rick Krenske

By EMMA NELSON [emma.nelson@startribune.com](mailto:emma.nelson@startribune.com)

Lakeville neighbors worry that storage near their homes is a safety hazard. For seven years, the floor-to-ceiling windows at the back of Pam Steinhagen's Lakeville house have often been filled with an unlikely view: a long line of parked railroad cars. In warm weather, some of the cars have filled with stagnant water, attracting swarms of mosquitoes. When they're moved from one stretch of track to another, they can block the neighborhood's only exit. And teenagers often test their luck climbing up to sunbathe or running down the line of cars, jumping the gaps as they go. "Basically, this is a rail yard," said Theresa Johnson, Steinhagen's neighbor. "It's just a matter of time before someone gets hurt or killed." Across the country, lessened demand for products like frac sand has taken freight trains out of commission. In 2015, total U.S. carload traffic was down 6 percent from the year before, according to the Association of American Railroads. The group credits that drop, in part, to declines in the energy and manufacturing industries. With less demand for trains, rail yards fill up and companies turn to unused stretches of track like the one behind Steinhagen's house for long-term storage. The practice has raised concerns among locals about everything from aesthetics to environmental impact. The track in Lakeville, which at one time was targeted for a potential county greenway, is owned by Canadian Pacific but operated by a Lakeville company called Progressive Rail. Dave Fellon, the company's president, declined to comment. In 2012, he told the Star Tribune that a sluggish economy was keeping the cars parked. Railroads fall under federal authority, but there are no safeguards to keep unused cars from languishing in one spot. Minnesota's U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar and U.S. Rep. John Kline introduced bills this session that would require rail carriers to have a storage plan approved by the Surface Transportation Board, but neither measure has moved out of committee. "Federal law just pre-empts this entire field of law, leaving individual citizens and communities completely helpless to railroads that are largely unresponsive to local concerns," said Anders Blewett, an attorney and former Montana legislator who fought against rail car storage along the Missouri River. Blewett introduced a joint resolution in 2009 publicly censuring the BNSF Railway for storing cars indefinitely along the river. Though the resolution didn't pass, public opposition finally got the approximately 1,000 cars moved in 2010 — about three years after they arrived. A similar outcry arose in New York state, when Iowa Pacific Holdings made plans to store oil tankers on tracks running through protected land in the Adirondack Mountains. Faced with continued opposition from environmental preservation advocates, the company backed down this fall. In Lakeville, long-term rail car storage has been on the city's legislative agenda for years. But there's not much the city can do beyond supporting measures at the federal level. "Ideally, we'd like to see them not there at all," said City Administrator Justin Miller. "But even if there was a time limit, I think that would be a good first step." For now, those closest to the tracks are still worried. They're anticipating diminished property values or not being able to sell their houses at all. They've noticed oily residue dripping from the cars to the ground, and have wondered whether it's safe. Steinhagen, who runs a day care out of her home, said she and her neighbors feel responsible for "policing" the cars for trespassers and graffiti. "We didn't purchase our properties knowing there would be rail storage in our own backyard," said resident Jeff Vanden Busch. "We've taken it for seven years, and it's time something happened." Emma Nelson • 952-746-3287





## Twin City Model Railroad Museum set to move, but stay in St. Paul

By [Beatrice Dupuy](#) Star Tribune January 23, 2016 — From Rick Krenske

The Twin City Model Railroad Museum features a scale model of the Minneapolis riverfront skyline, with a Northern Pacific passenger train heading across the Stone Arch Bridge. Twin City Model Railroad Museum volunteers can let off some steam now that the St. Paul museum has found a new home.

Volunteers began searching for a new home last fall when the museum could no longer afford to stay in Bandana Square. Now it's on course to move its miniature train displays to 652 Transfer Road near the former Amtrak Depot in St. Paul. It will remain at Bandana Square until Feb. 28.

"We're really excited to continue our legacy in St. Paul," museum spokesman Brandon Jutz said Friday.

Once word spread that the museum could close, financial support poured in, he said. Volunteers raised more than \$70,000 to help with the move. "I'm overwhelmed by the response of the public," said museum treasurer Oscar Lund.

The new hub, which could be the museum's home for the next 10 years, is a better fit than the medical plaza that Bandana Square had turned into, Jutz said.

The new location, next to Buttercream Cakes & Desserts and Chocolat Céleste, near the intersection of Cleveland and University avenues, offers more space for interactive programs and birthday parties.

At Bandana Square, the museum was split between two buildings with two landlords. Facing eviction, volunteers considered closing the museum. An extension was worked out through the holidays.

The problem now will be moving, volunteer Peter Southard said. "Moving that big layout will be quite a challenge," he said.

It will be the second time the museum has moved since its founding in 1934. It moved from the Union Depot to Bandana Square in 1984. Bandana Square became a largely medical plaza in 2003.

A grand opening event will be held in the spring.

## Light-rail rides up, buses down Jan 23, 2016 By JANET MOORE [janet.moore@startribune.com](mailto:janet.moore@startribune.com) (from Rick Krenske)

Metro Transit said use of Blue Line was up about 12 percent. Overall use of public transit in the Twin Cities was at its highest level in more than three decades, with more riders than ever opting for light rail. But figures released by Metro Transit indicated that fewer people took the bus last year. The transit agency reported Friday that ridership on buses, the Green and Blue light-rail lines, and the Northstar commuter rail edged upward by 1.4 percent to nearly 86 million rides in 2015. That's the highest level since 1981. "We've really turned a corner when it comes to transit in the Twin Cities," Metro Transit General Manager Brian Lamb said in a statement.

The star performer of transit last year was the Blue Line light rail, which connects Target Field in downtown Minneapolis to the Mall of America. The line set a ridership record with 10.6 million rides, the highest since the line opened in 2004. That's about an 11.9 percent increase over the 9.5 million rides provided in 2014. But overall bus ridership slumped by 8.6 percent, "reflecting a transition from buses to light rail and construction that led to prolonged detours on multiple routes," Metro Transit said. The transit agency, a division of the Metropolitan Council, said efforts to boost bus ridership will continue in 2016 with the opening of the region's first arterial bus-rapid transit line on Snelling Avenue in St. Paul this spring, new bus stop signs, more shelters and a new mobile app. "With two light-rail lines, more than 100 bus routes and a commuter rail line, the Twin Cities is more connected than it's been in a very long time," Lamb said.

Ridership on the Green Line light rail was about 12.4 million last year, compared with 6.5 million in 2014 — the line opened in June 2014. Average weekday ridership on the line, linking the downtowns of Minneapolis and St. Paul through the University of Minnesota, was 37,400 — just under the 2030 forecast of 41,000, Metro Transit said. The Northstar commuter line, linking Minneapolis to Big Lake, saw an increase of 1,423 rides in 2015 to 722,637. It was unclear Friday whether Northstar is performing to expectations. Metro Transit spokesman Howie Padilla said the agency is still reviewing the numbers to assess transit trends. He did note that Metro Transit began installing automatic passenger counters on trains last year to track passenger boardings. These overhead sensors inside the train measure movement into and out of light-rail cars, and are more efficient than recording ridership manually. Metro Transit's report also noted that 55 percent of its customers pay their fares with a Go-To card or some other "automatic fare product." And 575,348 rides were provided to and from the State Fair in St. Paul, the highest express and regular route ridership ever. Janet Moore • 612-673-7752





## BNSF's Bakken oil trains find route around downtown Minneapolis.

From the TRAINS Newswire January 12, 2016 From Rick Krenske

MINNEAPOLIS – Trains carrying crude oil from North Dakota to eastern destinations no longer cut through downtown Minneapolis or its western suburbs, the Star Tribune reports. The railroad told state officials last month that crude traffic would be routed back to a route that travels via Detroit Lakes and St. Cloud and then northeast of Minneapolis.

The switch comes after the railway had invested \$326 million in the state to improve its tracks and infrastructure. During the summer when construction was being done on the regular route of the oil trains, locations such as Willmar, St. Louis Park, downtown Minneapolis, and Target Field saw 11 to 23 such trains a week.

This had many government officials worried about the safety of the route including Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton.

The railroad said that oil trains using that route have dwindled since October, and no longer pass through those areas. The report also mentioned that 28 to 48 oil trains pass through the state each week on BNSF tracks, a figure that remains unchanged since last spring.

The majority of oil trains that pass through Minnesota head to the East Coast for refineries.



A late running Empire Builder arrives at Staples, Minn., in October 2014.

Steve Glischinski

## BNSF Foundation Boosts Northern Pacific Depot Restoration.

From the TRAINS Newswire: By [Steve Glischinski](#) | January 13, 2016

STAPLES, Minn. – The BNSF Railway Foundation has donated \$25,000 to the Staples Historical Society for the restoration of the former Northern Pacific Railway depot here. The city was once a division point and the two-story building served as offices in addition to a passenger depot. NP constructed the Classical Revival-style building in 1909. In 2008, BNSF transferred ownership of the depot to the society.

Since obtaining the depot, the society has worked to replace the roof and modernize the plumbing, electrical, and cooling systems. In the summer of 2009, the depot received a new roof at a cost of approximately \$200,000.

It was funded by the Minnesota Department of Transportation as part of a mitigation effort that allowed the agency to demolish the nearby NP hospital in order to widen Highway 10. Although asphalt shingles were used, they resemble the look and texture of the original dark gray slate that was laid down in 1910. During the roof replacement, historic preservation architects discovered the original brown paint scheme used on exterior wooden elements such as the soffits and window frames.

As part of the MNDOT project the brick pavers around the depot were repaired. Sections were removed so that the ground could be leveled and then the pavers were reinstalled; damaged pieces were replaced in kind.

A SHS volunteer and former Staples mayor systematically rehabilitated the original double-hung sash windows, which number over four-dozen. To support the work, the society was awarded \$49,400 in 2011 through the Minnesota Historical and Cultural Grants Program.

The society hopes to convert the second floor of the depot into a museum. In mid-2012, the Staples-Motley Chamber of Commerce moved into the renovated ticket office.

The building still serves its original purpose as a passenger station, with Amtrak's Empire Builder making stops at the station twice daily. In the 1950s and 1960s, the station was a stop for the transcontinental North Coast Limited and Mainstreeter. Rail Diesel Car service connected with both trains at Staples and operated to Duluth, Minn. allowing Twin Ports passengers to easily travel on NP's streamliners. RDC service lasted until 1969.

Staples remained a crew change point between Minneapolis and Dilworth well into the Burlington Northern era, but crews run now through without changing. The city still serves as a junction point for the busy Staples Subdivision, part of BNSF's Northern Transcontinental route, and the Brainerd Subdivision to Carlton, Minn., where it connects with the Lakes Subdivision to Superior, Wis.

### Signals along the Santa Fe Way, on Amtrak's SW Chief in NE New Mexico Photos by R Tubbesing



### Depots along the Santa Fe Way, Raton and Santa Fe New Mexico Photos by R Tubbesing



**CANADIAN  
PACIFIC  
RAILWAY**

### Canadian Pacific Jumps on Speculation It May Drop Norfolk Bid

by [Frederic Tomesco](#) January 22, 2016 from John Goodman —

Canadian Pacific Railway Ltd. surged the most in more than two years as speculation mounted that the company may drop its attempt to purchase Norfolk Southern Corp. Canada's second largest railroad gained 9.6 percent to C\$164.16 at 12:06 p.m. in Toronto. Shares rose as much as 11 percent earlier, their biggest intraday gain since October 2013. Faced with growing political and shipper opposition to the deal, Canadian Pacific may need to adopt a different strategy, Chief Executive Officer Hunter Harrison said Thursday without being specific. His comments may open the door to Canadian Pacific ending its pursuit of the No. 2 railroad in the eastern U.S., according to analysts from at least eight firms.





Three Pullman Rail Journeys cars pass through the drawbridge at Pass Manchac, La., on Nov. 2, 2014, on the rear of Amtrak's *City of New Orleans*. Amtrak and Pullman Rail Journeys have yet to come to an agreement for 2016 trips.

### **Pullman Rail Journeys Trips Over Amtrak in Doubt in 2016**

By [Bob Johnston](#) | January 4, 2016 *Trains Newswire* Provided by John Goodman

CHICAGO — Iowa Pacific Holdings' Pullman Rail Journeys has notified passengers booked on its premium sleeping and dining car service on the rear of Amtrak's *City of New Orleans* that effective immediately, all trips are cancelled and money will be refunded.

The company had been operating south from Chicago on most Thursdays and north from New Orleans on Sundays, and had accepted reservations through 2016. The final trip slated for New Years Eve ran instead on the *Cardinal* to Washington, D.C., Northeast Regional train No. 66 to Boston, and back to Chicago on the *Lake Shore Limited*, when last week's flooding caused cancellation of the *City of New Orleans* between Carbondale, Ill., and Memphis, Tenn.

Iowa Pacific President Ed Ellis tells *Trains News Wire*, "At this point, we are not able to operate Pullman Rail Journeys' regular service between Chicago and New Orleans, but we are hoping to come to an agreement with Amtrak to resume service."

Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari confirms, "We do not have an agreement with Pullman Rail Journeys to operate its equipment on the *City of New Orleans*, but are open to further conversations."

The service began in November 2012. Pullman's plan was to run several times per week in each direction with up to five cars, which initially included a full-length dome car serving high quality meals. One-way pricing with meals included has ranged from as low as \$600 for an upper or lower berth in a section to over \$2,200 for two in a master room.

Running more than two cars, however, triggered the substantial extra cost of another locomotive, so more recently Pullman chose to limit capacity by operating a lounge observation car serving meals along with a second sleeping car. Most trips sold out or had very limited availability, as was the case in November and December.

Getting sleeping car space on Amtrak's *City of New Orleans* has also been a challenge. A *Trains News Wire* analysis of south-bound trips in November reveals that bedrooms are sold out on half of the dates and roomettes were unavailable on eight of the month's 30 days. Amtrak assigns no more than one Superliner sleeping car with 13 roomettes and seven bedrooms (including a family room and accessible bedroom), with an additional four to eight roomettes available for sale in a transition sleeper if demand warrants.

*Trains News Wire* will be monitoring the situation for further developments.

## Northfield's Last Rail Depot Moving to a New Home.

Sun, Jan 3, 2016 provided by Rick Krenske

Northfield's last rail depot moving to a new home. The depot, built in 1888, was saved from demolition by a group of concerned residents.

By JENNA ROSS [jenna.ross@startribune.com](mailto:jenna.ross@startribune.com)

This week, Northfield's last standing railroad depot will move — so that it can stay. The old brick train station, built in 1888, will be slowly, carefully wheeled to its new home across the street, capping years of work to save it from decay and demolition. The nonprofit in charge of that effort, Save the Northfield Depot, is heralding the short trip as a huge step. “If we did not move it off the property, it was going to be destroyed,” said Alice Thomas, a board member for the group. “The community now has the opportunity to complete the depot transit hub complex.” About 4,000 depots once dotted Minnesota's cities and countryside, said Bill Schrankler, author of “Shadows of Time ... Minnesota's Surviving Railroad Depots.” Today, just 400 remain. “They're disappearing,” Schrankler said. “So I'm really happy that the folks down there who have worked so hard are able to preserve that one.” Northfield once had five depots as part of a rail network that transported products and people, including students to and from St. Olaf and Carleton colleges. In 1908, presidential candidate William Taft made a campaign stop at the depot that's still standing. Dwight Eisenhower's campaign train stopped there in 1952. Keeping the depot means “preserving a lot of history and heritage,” said Mayor Dana Graham. But it also could jump-start a project for Northfield's future, he said. The city envisions the depot becoming a visitor and information center of sorts — part of a bigger complex, with a pavilion and baggage room, based on a 1917 proposal drawn up by Milwaukee Road but never built. It also could become a transit hub, the home base for a passenger rail line that would run between Minneapolis and Northfield. The development of that line remains under debate. “I do believe that eventually, if we can get passenger rail going again, it's going to be extremely important to the growth of Northfield,” Graham said. The effort to save the railroad depot began in 2008, when a few residents found out that the building was in jeopardy: Canadian Pacific had asked the city whether the fire department might want to burn it down for practice. The residents formed a nonprofit, Save the Northfield Depot, and held public meetings in 2010, asking three questions: Is the depot worth saving? Where should it go? How should it be used? “All three of the answers were pretty clear,” Thomas said. After hearing support for saving the building, the group spoke with the city about a long vacant, blighted piece of land between 2nd and 3rd streets. The city agreed to sell the depot for \$1 once the group had raised enough money to repair and move it. The nonprofit closed on the property in October. The city is now debating whether to support the project through tax increment financing. In December, the Northfield Economic Development Authority recommended that the City Council provide \$99,000 in such funds for a parking lot, sidewalks and lighting, among other things. Save the Northfield Depot has raised almost \$300,000 for the project. The EDA and other local and state agencies have given about \$50,000 in grants. But more than half the total came from individual donors: \$157,000 from more than 1,000 people. About 60 of Minnesota's remaining depots are on the National Register of Historic Places, Schrankler said. Another 115 are being used as museums, businesses or homes. Some are tucked away on farms. Others are being used for storage. “I had a hard time finding some of them,” he said. The Northfield depot will be set just 15 feet from the railroad tracks, Thomas said, on a block where the other depots once stood. “So this is going back home in some sense.” The effort to save the Northfield Milwaukee Depot started in 2008.



Early 1960's

C&NW Pictures



In Winter in the NE  
Mpls Coach Yard

Photos by

Barney Olson





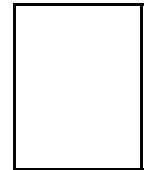


BNSF, CP

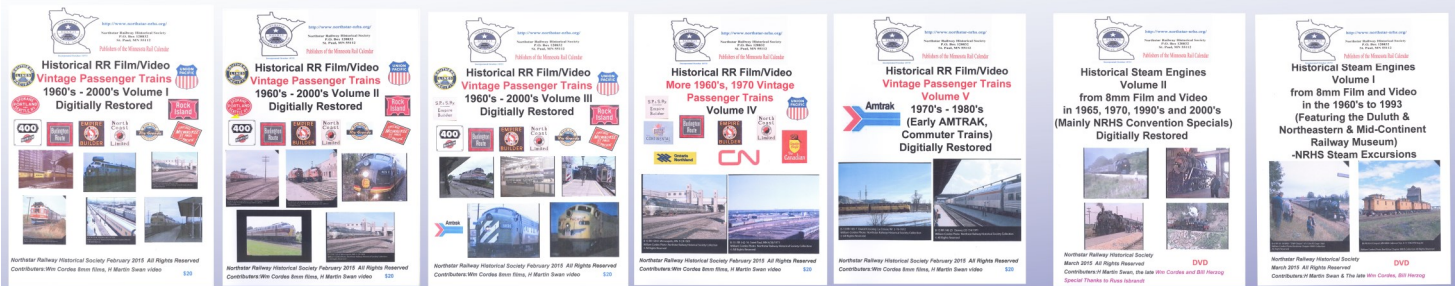
Pictures from R  
Tubbesing video**Railfan Events** (Thanks to Rick Krense, Cy Svobodny, Russ Isbrandt)

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
Greater Upper Midwest Train Show & Sale	February 6 2016 and April 2 2016 9AM—2PM	Century College West Campus 3300 Century Ave N White Bear Lake MN	\$5
World's Greatest Hobby On Tour	February 6, 7 2016 Sat 10AM—6PM Sun 10AM—5PM	St Paul River Centre, 175 West Kellogg Boulevard, St Paul, Minnesota	\$13.95 for both days \$12.95 for Saturday \$10.95 for Sunday
Railroad Modeler's Retreat	February 26, 27 2016 Friday 6PM—10PM Saturday 9AM—4PM	Mount Olivet Lutheran Church of Plymouth 12235 Old Rockford Road, Plymouth, Minnesota	Admission \$10 for both days
Granite City Train Show	April 9 2015 10AM—3PM	National Guard Armory, 1710 Veteran's Drive, St Cloud, Minnesota	\$6
SPUD 50th Anniversary	April 29, 30, May 1	St Paul Union Depot St Paul Minnesota	???

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**The 2016 Minnesota Rail Calendar is SOLD OUT!.**