

January–February 2026

the  **Blackhawk**  
RAILWAY HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY, INC. **SPIKE and TIE**

# LOOKING TO HIGHBALL INTO 2026



Renew your membership using form inside, or online at [blackhawkrailwayhistoricalsociety.org](http://blackhawkrailwayhistoricalsociety.org)



## BENEFITS OF JOINING THE NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### TAKING AN ACTIVE ROLE IN RAIL PRESERVATION

What is the one thing every member of the NRHS has in common? We love trains. And whether we love the history and romance of the rails or the actual, practical feel of steel and iron, of steam locomotives and diesel electric engines, there's something else we all have in common: what we love is in danger of becoming just a memory.

By adding membership in the NRHS along with your Blackhawk membership, you get to make a difference in rail preservation. Along the way, you may just get some opportunities that the public will never get, including exclusive member discounts and free admission to hundreds of railway attractions nationwide.

### LOCAL CHAPTERS: THE HEART AND SOUL OF THE NRHS

From the beginning, when two railfan organizations combined to become the first two local chapters of the Society, the NRHS has only been as strong as our Chapters make us. Individual chapters like Blackhawk are where we meet to share our love for the rails. Chapter activities include monthly meetings, field trips to historic rail sites, and rail excursions. Local Chapters even have their own newsletters exclusively for their members.

Local Chapter members have full voting rights in the National Society and full participation in all National events and receive subscriptions to National publications and advanced ticket purchase for the annual NRHS railroad convention.

### MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- Issues of the NRHS Bulletin as published each year.
- 6 issues of the NRHS News
- Membership Card
- Discounts to various rail attractions around the country
- Advanced ticket purchase to the NRHS Convention
- An, organized, safe, international network of railroading; an excellent opportunity to meet and socialize with other people who have similar interests in railroads, rail preservation, photography, writing, operations, restoration, and/or history.
- Recognition for continuous membership in our Membership Awards Program.
- Opportunities to contribute time and energy to local projects or national efforts that protect, educate, preserve, and promote the past, and present, and future of railroading.

NRHS's **Chapter Membership** is Affiliation with the National Society and one Chapter and costs \$50.00 per year (which does not include Blackhawk membership or Blackhawk's \$25 membership fee.) Additional family members living in the same household may also become NRHS members for just \$7.00 per year.

A discounted **Student Membership** at \$16 per year is offered to individuals who are 13 to 24 years of age (on January 1) and is intended to introduce the NRHS to the many young people who have an interest in one or more aspects of railroading, rail history and rail preservation. Does not include Blackhawk Chapter fees. The Student Membership has voting rights in the NRHS, and a parent or legal guardian's signature is required for membership.

Join or renew your NRHS membership here: [nrhs.app.neoncrm.com/forms/join-and-renew](https://nrhs.app.neoncrm.com/forms/join-and-renew)



## Membership Application/Renewal

Blackhawk Railway Historical Society membership includes:

- Informative twelve-page “**Spike & Tie**” newsletter, published in January, March, May, July, September, and November, and distributed via first-class mail to all current members.
- One free 8’ vendor table at each of our **railroad swap meets** in January, April, and October at American Legion Post 66 in Griffith, Indiana.
- Our **monthly meetings and programs**, held at 7:30 PM on the first Friday of the month (except July & August) at the Gladys Fox Museum, 231 E. Ninth Street in Lockport, Illinois. The doors are open by 7:00 PM and free parking nearby. Meetings include presentations by railroading historians, photographers, and railroad industry experts.

For further information about Blackhawk, or to join/renew online, go to

**[blackhawkrailwayhistoricalsociety.org](http://blackhawkrailwayhistoricalsociety.org)**

Membership dues for 2026 are \$25.00 for the year. All memberships run for the calendar year – January to December. Additional family members can join for \$3 each. Additional family members do not receive the newsletter or swap meet table.

To join, tear out and fill out the application form, attaching your check or money order, and send it to:

**Blackhawk Railway Historical Society**  
4644 E. 9000N Road  
Manteno, IL 60950-3111

Yes, I’d like to join the **Blackhawk Railway Historical Society, Inc.**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE # \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

# Blackhawk

RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## 2026 MEETING DATES

January 9*	April 10*	September 11*
February 6	May 1	October 2
March 6	June 5	November 6
		December 4

Monthly in-person meetings are usually held at **7:30 PM on the first Friday of the month (or second Friday – dates marked with an \*)** except July and August at the **Gladys Fox Museum, 231 East 9th Street in Lockport, Illinois.**

Limited free parking on Washington Street. PLEASE do not park in the spots designated for the neighboring houses. Meetings are open to the public and refreshments are available. No admission fee. A raffle of donated items is held at each meeting to help defray the cost of the hall.

## 2026 SWAP MEET DATES

January 18    April 19    October 18

Swap Meets are held at **American Legion Post 66, 132 N Wiggs St, Griffith, IN 46319.**

Hall opens around 8 AM for vendor setup. The scheduled opening to the public is at 10 AM, but many vendors will start selling before then. Selling is scheduled to run till 2 PM, although vendors may leave before 2 PM, so arrive early for best deals. A \$2 donation is requested at the door.

8' Vendor tables are \$20 each, and the first table is FREE to Blackhawk members, but ALL TABLES must be reserved in advance. ALL Swap Meet inquires and requests for vendor tables must contact John Eagan at **219-322-0997** or email at **hoosierhobbies@aol.com**

## CONTACTING BLACKHAWK

- E-mail: **blackhawknrhs@outlook.com**
- Website URL:  
**blackhawkrailwayhistoricalsociety.org**
- Social media:  
**facebook.com/BlackhawkRailwayHistorySociety**

## MEMBERSHIP

- **Regular - \$25:** Includes newsletter and one free vendor table at swap meets.
- **Additional - \$3:** For immediate family members. Does not include publications or swap meet table.

Mailing address for membership applications or renewals ONLY:

**Blackhawk Railway Historical Society  
4644 E 9000N Rd.  
Manteno, IL 60950-3111**

Join/renew through the **Store** on our website:  
**blackhawkrailwayhistoricalsociety.org**

## STAFF

- **Bill Molony** – President Emeritus
- **Dave Daruszka** – Vice-President, National NRHS Representative, Program Coordinator
- **Mike Riha** – Treasurer/Secretary, Webmaster, Newsletter Editor
- **John Eagan** – Director at Large, Swap Meet Coordinator
- **Bruce Haffner** – Director at Large
- **Peter Viall** – Membership Chair
- **Andrea Zoelle** – Chief Steward



The Blackhawk Railway Historical Society also serves as the Blackhawk Chapter of the National Railroad Historical Society (NRHS) and Blackhawk members are encouraged to join. To join or renew with the NRHS, go to **nrhs.com/membership/** for more information.

## ON THE COVER

SP-UP-C&NW's "CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO" streamliners boarding at Oakland Pier terminal in two sections on January 2, 1938, when the new 17-car train (left) was inaugurated to supplant the original 11-car train (right) which had been in operation since June 14, 1936. Both trains carried capacity loads of holiday travelers. *Photo by Southern Pacific Railroad Company, San Francisco, CA – public domain*



# Area Event Calendar

JAN/FEB/MAR 2026

*Blackhawk makes no endorsement or guarantees for non-Blackhawk events, freely providing this information solely as a public service.*

Have an event you want us to share?  
Email [blackhawknrhs@outlook.com](mailto:blackhawknrhs@outlook.com)

**Through January 25: Tinley Park-Park District Miniature Train Show, Wed-Sun, various days & hours.**  
Vogt Visual Art Center, 17420 S 67th Ct, Tinley Park, IL  
[tinleyparkdistrict.org/vogt-visual-arts-center/](http://tinleyparkdistrict.org/vogt-visual-arts-center/)

**January 4: Great Midwest Train Show, 9am-3pm.**  
DuPage County Fairgrounds, 2015 Manchester Rd, Wheaton, IL [trainshow.com](http://trainshow.com)

**JANUARY 9: BLACKHAWK RY. HIST. SOCIETY MONTHLY MEETING - 7:30 PM**

Gladys Fox Museum, 231 East 9th Street in Lockport, IL  
PROGRAM: TBD

**January 10: Elmhurst Model RR Club Swap Meet, 9am**  
Villa Park Masonic Lodge, 26 W. Central, Villa Park, IL  
**630-564-1099** [emrrc@comcast.net](mailto:emrrc@comcast.net)

**January 24: Chicago Terminal Chapter PRR Technical & Historical Society, 2 -5pm.** Historical Pullman District Visitors Center, 11141 S. Cottage Grove Ave, Chicago IL  
[ld\\_mlc43@comcast.net](mailto:ld_mlc43@comcast.net)

**February 1: Great Midwest Train Show, 9am-3pm.**  
DuPage County Fairgrounds, 2015 Manchester Rd, Wheaton, IL [trainshow.com](http://trainshow.com)

**FEBRUARY 6: BLACKHAWK RY. HIST. SOCIETY MONTHLY MEETING - 7:30 PM**

Gladys Fox Museum, 231 East 9th Street in Lockport, IL  
PROGRAM: TBD

**February 15: Peoria Train Fair, 10am-3pm.**  
Illinois Central College - East Peoria Campus, East Peoria, IL  
[rcmrrc@rcmrrc.us](mailto:rcmrrc@rcmrrc.us) [facebook.com/RCMRRC/](https://facebook.com/RCMRRC/)

**February 21-22: Mad City Train Show.**  
Alliant Energy Center, Exhibition Hall, Madison, WI  
[nmra-scwd.org/mad-city-model-railroad-show.html](http://nmra-scwd.org/mad-city-model-railroad-show.html)

**February 22: La Porte County Swap Meet, 9:30am-2pm.**  
La Porte County Fairgrounds Community Building, 2581 IN-2, La Porte, IN [trains86@myyahoo.com](mailto:trains86@myyahoo.com) (219) 778-3195

**March 1: Great Midwest Train Show, 9am-3pm.**  
DuPage County Fairgrounds, 2015 Manchester Rd, Wheaton, IL [trainshow.com](http://trainshow.com)

**MARCH 6: BLACKHAWK RY. HIST. SOCIETY MONTHLY MEETING - 7:30 PM**

Gladys Fox Museum, 231 East 9th Street in Lockport, IL  
PROGRAM: TBD

**March 10: Railway Age's Next-Generation Freight Rail conference.** Union League Club of Chicago, 65 West Jackson Blvd., Chicago, IL <https://www.railwayage.com/ngfr26/conferences@sbpub.com>.

**March 21-22: Rock River Valley Div. NMRA Train Show**  
Harlem High School, Machesney, IL (Just North of Rockford)  
[rrvd-nmra.com](http://rrvd-nmra.com)

## Winter Railroad Swap Meet

January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026

10:00 AM – 2:00 PM (Chicago Time)

at American Legion Post 66

132 N. Wiggs Street

Griffith, IN 46319

For information, call or email:

John Eagan 219-322-0997

or [hoosierhobbies@aol.com](mailto:hoosierhobbies@aol.com)

Sponsored by the

Blackhawk Railway Historical Society

a chapter of the National Railway Historical Society

<https://blackhawkrailwayhistoricalsociety.org>

Free Admission - \$2.00 donation suggested

8' Vendor Tables - \$20.00 each

*It's not just another toy train show!*

GALENA & CHICAGO UNION RAILROAD.											
JOHN B. TURNER, Pres and Supt., Chicago, Ill.											
CHICAGO To ELGIN.				From ELGIN To CHICAGO.							
Tr'n	1st	2d	3d	Tr'n	1st	2d	3d	Tr'n	1st	2d	3d
16	6:00	8:00	3:00	15	8:00	3:00		15	8:00	6:25	6:45
17	8:35	8:35	3:35	16	8:16	3:16		16	8:33	3:33	
18	8:56	9:04	4:03	17	8:33	3:33		17	8:54	3:45	
19	9:25	4:30		18	8:54	3:45		18	9:15	3:54	
20	9:54	5:00		19	9:15	3:54		19	9:36	4:03	
21	10:23	5:27		20	9:36	4:03		20	9:57	4:12	
22	10:52	5:54		21	9:57	4:12		21	10:18	4:21	
23	11:21	6:21		22	10:18	4:21		22	10:39	4:30	
24	11:50	6:48		23	10:39	4:30		23	11:00	4:39	
25	12:19	7:15		24	11:00	4:39		24	11:21	4:48	
26	12:48	7:42		25	11:21	4:48		25	11:42	4:57	
27	1:17	8:09		26	11:42	4:57		26	12:03	5:06	
28	1:46	8:36		27	12:03	5:06		27	12:24	5:15	
29	2:15	9:03		28	12:24	5:15		28	12:45	5:24	
30	2:44	9:30		29	12:45	5:24		29	1:06	5:33	
31	3:13	9:57		30	1:06	5:33		30	1:27	5:42	
32	3:42	10:24		31	1:27	5:42		31	1:48	5:51	
33	4:11	10:51		32	1:48	5:51		32	2:09	6:00	
34	4:40	11:18		33	2:09	6:00		33	2:30	6:09	
35	5:09	11:45		34	2:30	6:09		34	2:51	6:18	
36	5:38	12:12		35	2:51	6:18		35	3:12	6:27	
37	6:07	12:39		36	3:12	6:27		36	3:33	6:36	
38	6:36	1:06		37	3:33	6:36		37	3:54	6:45	
39	7:05	1:33		38	3:54	6:45		38	4:15	6:54	
40	7:34	2:00		39	4:15	6:54		39	4:36	7:03	
41	8:03	2:27		40	4:36	7:03		40	4:57	7:12	
42	8:32	2:54		41	4:57	7:12		41	5:18	7:21	
43	9:01	3:21		42	5:18	7:21		42	5:39	7:30	
44	9:30	3:48		43	5:39	7:30		43	6:00	7:39	
45	10:00	4:15		44	6:00	7:39		44	6:21	7:48	
46	10:30	4:42		45	6:21	7:48		45	6:42	7:57	
47	11:00	5:09		46	6:42	7:57		46	7:03	8:06	
48	11:30	5:36		47	7:03	8:06		47	7:24	8:15	
49	12:00	6:03		48	7:24	8:15		48	7:45	8:24	
50	12:30	6:30		49	7:45	8:24		49	8:06	8:33	
51	1:00	6:57		50	8:06	8:33		50	8:27	8:42	
52	1:30	7:24		51	8:27	8:42		51	8:48	8:57	
53	2:00	7:51		52	8:48	8:57		52	9:09	9:06	
54	2:30	8:18		53	9:09	9:06		53	9:30	9:15	
55	3:00	8:45		54	9:30	9:15		54	9:51	9:24	
56	3:30	9:12		55	9:51	9:24		55	10:12	9:33	
57	4:00	9:39		56	10:12	9:33		56	10:33	9:42	
58	4:30	10:06		57	10:33	9:42		57	10:54	9:51	
59	5:00	10:33		58	10:54	9:51		58	11:15	10:00	
60	5:30	11:00		59	11:15	10:00		59	11:36	10:09	
61	6:00	11:27		60	11:36	10:09		60	11:57	10:18	
62	6:30	11:54		61	11:57	10:18		61	12:18	10:27	
63	7:00	12:21		62	12:18	10:27		62	12:39	10:36	
64	7:30	12:48		63	12:39	10:36		63	13:00	10:45	
65	8:00	1:15		64	13:00	10:45		64	13:21	10:54	
66	8:30	1:42		65	13:21	10:54		65	13:42	11:03	
67	9:00	2:09		66	13:42	11:03		66	14:03	11:12	
68	9:30	2:36		67	14:03	11:12		67	14:24	11:21	
69	10:00	3:03		68	14:24	11:21		68	14:45	11:30	
70	10:30	3:30		69	14:45	11:30		69	15:06	11:39	
71	11:00	3:57		70	15:06	11:39		70	15:27	11:48	
72	11:30	4:24		71	15:27	11:48		71	15:48	11:57	
73	12:00	4:51		72	15:48	11:57		72	16:09	12:06	
74	12:30	5:18		73	16:09	12:06		73	16:30	12:15	
75	1:00	5:45		74	16:30	12:15		74	16:51	12:24	
76	1:30	6:12		75	16:51	12:24		75	17:12	12:33	
77	2:00	6:39		76	17:12	12:33		76	17:33	12:42	
78	2:30	7:06		77	17:33	12:42		77	17:54	12:51	
79	3:00	7:33		78	17:54	12:51		78	18:15	13:00	
80	3:30	8:00		79	18:15	13:00		79	18:36	13:09	
81	4:00	8:27		80	18:36	13:09		80	18:57	13:18	
82	4:30	8:54		81	18:57	13:18		81	19:18	13:27	
83	5:00	9:21		82	19:18	13:27		82	19:39	13:36	
84	5:30	9:48		83	19:39	13:36		83	20:00	13:45	
85	6:00	10:15		84	20:00	13:45		84	20:21	13:54	
86	6:30	10:42		85	20:21	13:54		85	20:42	14:03	
87	7:00	11:09		86	20:42	14:03		86	21:03	14:12	
88	7:30	11:36		87	21:03	14:12		87	21:24	14:21	
89	8:00	12:03		88	21:24	14:21		88	21:45	14:30	
90	8:30	12:30		89	21:45	14:30		89	22:06	14:39	
91	9:00	12:57		90	22:06	14:39		90	22:27	14:48	
92	9:30	1:24		91	22:27	14:48		91	22:48	14:57	
93	10:00	1:51		92	22:48	14:57		92	23:09	15:06	
94	10:30	2:18		93	23:09	15:06		93	23:30	15:15	
95	11:00	2:45		94	23:30	15:15		94	23:51	15:24	
96	11:30	3:12		95	23:51	15:24		95	24:12	15:33	
97	12:00	3:39		96	24:12	15:33		96	24:33	15:42	
98	12:30	4:06		97	24:33	15:42		97	24:54	15:51	
99	1:00	4:33		98	24:54	15:51		98	25:15	16:00	
100	1:30	5:00		99	25:15	16:00		99	25:36	16:09	

Circa 1850 G&CU RR timetable showing connecting services, including other railroads, river boats, lake steamers, and stagecoaches



# Observations

Blackhawk Chapter NRHS  
News and Business

## **STARTING 2026 WITH OFFICER VACANCIES AND QUESTIONS, BUT MEMBERS SAY THEY WANT BLACKHAWK TO CONTINUE**

### 2025 ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING REPORT

The Blackhawk Railway Historical Society held their annual business meeting and officer elections on Friday, December 5, 2025, at 7:30 PM at the Gladys Fox Museum, 231 E 9th Street, Lockport, Illinois.

Nominations were requested and officers were elected to the following positions:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Directors at Large

Bill Molony, the organization's longest serving President, was nominated for and unanimously elected a newly created position of *President Emeritus*. This position honors his contributions to Blackhawk and railroad history and preservation, but he is free from any obligation to perform tasks for Blackhawk, leaving Bill and his family to focus on his health.

Dave Daruszka will remain as Vice President and our National Representative to the National Railway Historical Society, along with scheduling programs for the in-person meetings and running the raffle at those same meetings.

John Eagan and Bruce Haffner continue as Directors at Large. John has also taken over the role of Swap Meet Manager.

Michael Riha will remain as Treasurer, as well as Newsletter Editor, Webmaster, currently handling our social media accounts, and storing many of Blackhawk's assets, including equipment used during our Lockport in-person meetings.

There were no nominations, and thus no one was elected, for the offices of President and Secretary, although a few members in attendance asked questions about the positions. Therefore, we go into 2026 with both positions open and anyone who expresses an interest in them should contact any current officer or email us directly at [blackhawknrhs@outlook.com](mailto:blackhawknrhs@outlook.com)

Because no new members have been elected to fill the open positions, the officers in attendance decided to continue operating Blackhawk in its current form as long as we are able to do so, in hopes that someone may emerge.

### MOVING FORWARD

There are several issues that Blackhawk needs to address and let me do a quick summary for the members to consider.

Membership has been steady over the past 20-plus years. That is both good for us, and a reason to be concerned. We are fortunate to have a loyal membership base, while many similar organizations steadily lost members over time until they were no longer able to survive. If 2026 renewals are at the same rate as previous years, we will be able to continue to operate. However, if there is a large enough drop off, we will have concerns. If you like what we do here, why not share it with your friends and encourage them to join.

Many have reached out and let me know that they like and enjoy the in-person meetings in Lockport. So, it would be obvious that Blackhawk should focus on continuing the meetings. We are fortunate to have a nice facility, and at a reasonable price compared to similar facilities. However, if something less expensive is available, we would want to look into it.

Live meeting attendance has been steady over the past few years, with some programs attracting many members and guests from across Chicago and the suburbs. However, the meetings are unavailable to our out-of-area members, and although it has been discussed, we are currently not able to share our meetings online...although we'd like to!

The Indiana Swap Meets in Griffith continue to remain popular, and these will continue under the management of John Eagan. American Legion Post 66 will continue to serve as the venue and vendor table demand always exceeds the supply. Will we need to move to a larger space?

The “Spike & Tie” newsletter will continue its current every other month schedule. Electronic distribution has been considered and is technically possible, however the Newsletter Editor’s commitments, both within and outside of Blackhawk, will keep this from being implemented for some time. Members are encouraged to submit material...as the editor doesn’t want to do all of this himself. Email stories, photos, and ideas to [blackhawknrhs@outlook.com](mailto:blackhawknrhs@outlook.com)

We need a way to convince people that a historical society like ours is a valuable resource for historical railroad information. While the Internet and social media are readily available, that can be either a blessing or a dumpster fire. Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) in its current stage isn’t helping the situation. Spend time online in search of historic railroad information, and you are likely to come up with as many fake photos or wrong information as much as actual accurate data and photographs.

Speaking of social media, smart use of this resource would be a great tool to grow our organization and its reputation. However, doing it well takes time and energy that the current staff isn’t able to fully commit to right now.

Should we consider other preservation or railfan activities? Our current officers already have their hands full. But new activities or projects could also attract more members. So, for Blackhawk to not only survive, but thrive, it would be in our best interest to investigate new activities or projects.

To summarize, it looks like the members want Blackhawk to continue. My hope is that 2026 renewals and new memberships will confirm that. We could always use some additional members to help “share the load” when it comes to running our current activities, primarily the monthly meetings.

Finally, we are still looking for someone who is willing to take on a leadership role, and to take on the challenge of increasing our membership and come up with a vision on where to take Blackhawk next.

I’m willing to stay on board to see where we go.

I hope many of you are too.

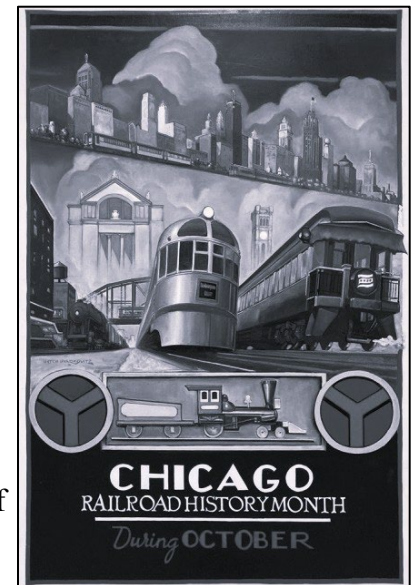
*Michael Riha*  
*Treasurer*  
*Blackhawk Railway Historical Society*

## CHICAGO R.R. HISTORY POSTER SALE

The project to have October be Chicago Railroad History Month and celebrate the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary marking the first run of the “Pioneer” leading the first train out of Chicago in 2023 didn’t turn out like we had hoped. So, when the current mayor stopped answering our requests for the annual proclamation, we put the project on the shelf...but may give it another go in time for the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2048.

The project’s fundraising poster, reproduced from the original painting by Mitch Markovitz, still looks great, and would look even better on your wall!

Featuring classic Chicago railroad landmarks, it would be a very nice 20”x30” reminder of Chicago’s great railroad history.



**NOW ONLY \$10 EACH!**

The only catch is that all sales must be in person at either our monthly meetings in Lockport or at our Indiana Swap Meets in Griffith. Check the 2026 Schedule earlier in this newsletter, or our website at [blackhawkrailwayhistoricalsociety.org/schedule.html](http://blackhawkrailwayhistoricalsociety.org/schedule.html)



## Freight News

### FOREST HILL FLYOVER OPENS,

One of the most anticipated projects in the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency, or CREATE, program has reached a major milestone and was celebrated by local politicians and railroad officials.

The Forest Hill Flyover, which carries CSX tracks of over lines used by Norfolk Southern, Union Pacific, the Belt Railway of Chicago (BRC), and Metra was marked with a ceremony on November 14, 2025.



This project — the 36<sup>th</sup> completed among the 70 on CREATE’s agenda — eliminates the operational nightmare created by a pair of diamond crossings that saw some 90 freight trains and 30 Metra trains most days. In her remarks at the November event, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle called it “a bottleneck that slowed freight and commuter trains, disrupted businesses, and affected the daily lives of thousands of our residents.”

With the completion of the Forest Hill Flyover, the next two significant parts of the 75<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor Improvement Project can begin.

The next step is the Belt Junction and 80th St. Junction Replacements, reconfiguring the BRC main tracks between the Dan Ryan Expressway and Belt Junction to eliminate a chokepoint affecting 90 freights and 30 passenger trains a day.

After that, the Rock Island Connection will build on the improvements realized in that previous project and let Metra route SouthWest Service trains to LaSalle Street Station instead of Union Station, thus increasing capacity at Chicago’s busiest passenger terminal.

*Adapted from Trains News Wire and 75<sup>th</sup> St. CIP*



## Passenger Rail News

### MORE FUNDING FOR AMTRAK QC TRAIN

The bill that Illinois Governor JB Pritzker signed to fund Chicagoland public transit also secured \$475 million for the Chicago to Quad Cities Passenger Rail project. “The governor’s signature today moves us one step closer to bringing Quad Cities to Chicago passenger rail to fruition,” Rock Island County Board Chair Richard Brunk said in a press release.

“With an estimated \$30 million annual impact to our region, it will mean tremendous things for our communities.” This money fully funds the almost \$900 million project, which will bring the Quad Cities closer to service that will improve regional connectivity, drive economic growth and expand transportation options across the state.



*The last regular service to the Quad Cities was run by the Rock Island, which never joined Amtrak. Service ended December 31, 1978.*

The planned Amtrak Illinois Service will operate between Chicago and Moline using BNSF trackage (also used by Amtrak’s *Carl Sandburg* and *Illinois Zephyr*) between Chicago and Wyanet. From Wyanet to Moline the train will use track owned by Iowa Interstate Railroad.

In 2023, local and state politicians from the Quad Cities area asked the Illinois Department of Transportation and Amtrak to request intervention from the Surface Transportation Board as they accused the Iowa Interstate Railroad of dragging out negotiations regarding the improvements needed on the Wyanet-Moline (former Rock Island trackage) section of the route.

*Adapted from KWQC and other sources*



## Chicago Area Commuter Rail News

### ILLINOIS FUNDS PUBLIC TRANSIT, METRA-UP “SPLIT” STILL TENSE

In December of 2025, Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker signed a bill passed by the Illinois state legislature to provide \$1.5 billion in funding through increases in sales taxes, increased tollway fees, and redirecting money from road funds. This bill will also include restructuring the Regional Transportation Authority to the Northern Illinois Transit Authority with more power over fares and scheduling. With the signing of SB2111, Metra, Chicago Transit Authority, and Pace avoided service cuts projected for 2026.



Meanwhile, Metra remained in a long-running legal battle with Union Pacific (UP) over service on the three former C&NW routes out of downtown Chicago’s Ogilvie Transportation Center. Operation of those lines was transferred from UP to Metra in May, but both sides were unable to agree on financial terms. Metra went to the Surface Transportation Board (STB) and gained trackage rights to ensure service could continue. Metra later asked STB to set financial terms since both sides were deadlocked.

UP later sued Metra over funds it says it is owed in the period before the trackage rights decision and has gone to court seeking to overturn that decision. Finally, Metra also won a \$19 million judgement in a case over fares that were not collected by UP crews during the pandemic. UP was likely to appeal that decision.

*Adapted from Trains News Wire*



## South Shore Line News & History

### WEST LAKE CORRIDOR PROJECT NOW OFFICIALLY “MONON CORRIDOR”, TESTING CONTINUES 2026 STARTUP

The South Shore’s website and other materials are formally referring to the new 8-mile southern extension from Hammond, Indiana to the end of line at the border of Munster and Dyer as the “Monon Corridor.” The existing (mostly original South Shore) main line will continue to be called the “Lakeshore Corridor.”

The South Shore Line decided to name the new extension the Monon Corridor in honor of the Monon Railroad, which historically operated on the rail corridor between Hammond and Dyer on this right-of-way from 1884 until 1971, when it was merged into the Louisville and Nashville Railroad (L&N). The L&N and its successor CSX continued service on this line until 1989 and the line was sold to a group consisting of the City of Hammond, the Town of Munster and the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD), who had future vision to use this right-of-way to build a new, electrified railroad line that would connect with NICTD’s South Shore Line near the Illinois State Line, with new stations, while preserving the recreational trail beside it.

Service is anticipated to begin in the first quarter of 2026, though this may be adjusted based on construction and testing progress. The South Shore Line will continue to share updates and keep communities informed as the “Monon Corridor” approaches its opening day. Before service begins, test trains will operate along the new route to ensure all systems are running safely and efficiently. These test trains will not carry passengers and will help train onboard crews and dispatchers in preparation for the start of service.

*Adapted from MySouthShoreLine.com*



## Area Rail History & Preservation News

### CHICAGO SUBURB TO HONOR ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH'S HERITAGE BY DISPLAYING CA&E INTERURBAN

On the heels of the Fox River Trolley Museum restoring their 1914-built Jewett-built Chicago, Aurora & Elgin (CA&E) car 316, the west suburban Chicago suburb of Villa Park, Illinois, along with several other organizations have announced they will be creating a display along the Illinois Prairie Path (IPP) featuring another car from that series, 321, which has spent years in the collection of the Illinois Railway Museum.

The CA&E was formally abandoned in 1961 (passenger service stopped in 1957, and freight service ended in 1959.) After abandonment, the IPP's volunteer founders worked to convert the abandoned railway into one of the country's first nature trails - the Illinois Prairie Path. This event is often mentioned as one of the starting moments of the US Rails-to-Trails movement.

Being several generations since the CA&E was active, a great number of current path users probably might know the trail was a former railroad but likely have little idea of the Roarin' Elgin's history or the role in the transportation of western suburbanites in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

CA&E 321 will be cosmetically restored and placed on display under a pavilion next to the former Ardmore depot in Villa Park, one of few surviving CA&E structures.

A presentation on the project can be found on IPP's website at <https://ipp.org/wp-content/uploads/Car-321-is-coming-home-to-Villa-Park.pdf>

*Adapted from Illinois Prairie Path social media*



*Photo of Rock Island's Silvis turntable and roundhouse in the 40s or 50s (Multiple dates and sources attributed)*

### GROUP TO INSTALL TURNTABLE, RECREATE ROUNDHOUSE IN SILVIS

The Railroading Heritage of Midwest America (RRHMA) has announced they plan to re-construct and install a turntable and roundhouse at their facility at the former Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific's Steam Erecting Shops in Silvis, Illinois.

This 90-acre facility at one time included a 45-stall roundhouse and 90-foot turntable. RRHMA plans to re-construct a 6-stall roundhouse and install the 135-foot turntable from the former Chicago, Burlington & Quincy locomotive facility in Cicero, Illinois. That turntable was donated by BNSF in 2024.

Once completed, the turntable will be the largest preserved and operating one in North America. The fully functional turntable will allow RRHMA crews to easily reposition locomotives and railcars. The 135-foot turntable will be appreciated when turning RRHMA's Union Pacific Challenger No. 3985.

The accompanying roundhouse-style building will serve as a living museum where visitors can experience historic railroad equipment in an authentic setting.

Since November 2025, local demolition contractors have been on the Silvis property carefully removing pieces of the original roundhouse foundation, so a brand-new foundation can be created.

For more about the project, or donate, go to <https://rrhma.com/roundhouse-project/>

*Adapted from RRHMA*

## ALCO'S FINAL SWITCHER OFFERING WAS A CHICAGO AREA REGULAR

A recently released HO scale model has sparked some excitement in the model railroading community and ten of these unique locomotives were seen frequently around the Chicago area during the Rock Island Railroad's final decade.

By the late 1960s, while making decent Canadian and international sales, ALCO was being squeezed out of the American locomotive market by EMD and GE.

A last attempt for attention, ALCO offered the C415, a large switcher/small road-switcher with a off-center cab (available in three heights) and a 1,500 hp 8-cylinder turbocharged Alco 251-F engine. The four-wheel (B-B) locomotives came with either AAR Type B standard road trucks or ALCO's high adhesion trucks. Only 26 were built from 1966-1968.

Ten C415s, numbers 415-424, went to work for the quickly unraveling Rock Island, with worried potential merger partner Union Pacific providing the financing.



The C415s landed in the Chicago area and were seen switching Burr Oak Yard or running transfer and local jobs in and around the Chicago Terminal. They appeared to last all the way to till shutdown and were returned to the Union Pacific who tried to sell them off. Worn-out from just over ten years of heavy use and just enough maintenance to keep them running, UP had most of them scrapped.

One Rock C415 did survive, RI 423, and after working for a shortline in South Omaha, it ended up on the all-ALCO Buffalo Southern in western New York, where it is believed to be stored, out of service.

*Spike & Tie*



## FORMER BICENTENNIAL UNIT WOULD LOOK GREAT IN PATRIOTIC COLORS FOR AMERICA'S 250<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY

Leading up to 1976, almost every American railroad, and countless industries with their own, celebrated the 200th anniversary of our nation's founding by decorating at least one locomotive in a special patriotic paint jobs.

With the celebration of the country's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary approaching in 2026, several regional, shortline and even tourist railroads (but no Class I's yet) have already painted locomotives for the semiquincentennial celebration.

Blackhawk's own John Eagan was contemplating this on his Facebook page a few months ago and noted that former Elgin Joliet & Eastern SD38-2 668 is still running, now working for Canadian National at Gary, Indiana, working the former EJ&E Kirk Yard pushing cars over the hump, currently wearing CN orange and black.

John wonders how receptive CN might be to returning 668 to its bicentennial colors? He notes "It's a unique opportunity both to honor the USA's 250<sup>th</sup> and also for a special locomotive that has done more than its share of work."

Blackhawk can't fund the special paint job and doesn't have any inside connections at CN. But maybe we can send an encouraging letter or find other ways to get the ball rolling?

What happens after the celebration is over and 668's career comes to an end? John finishes his post: "Who knows, maybe after (668's) long service history it will find a rightful place in a railroad museum!"

*Spike & Tie*



**Blackhawk Railway Historical Society**  
Newsletter Office  
1927 S Hamilton Street  
Lockport IL 60441-4323

## *Blackhawk's next events...*

**INDIANA SWAP MEET – 10 AM TO 2 PM, vendor setup 8AM (ALL CHICAGO TIMES)  
AMERICAN LEGION POST 66, 132 N. WIGGS STREET, GRIFFITH, IN**

- **Sunday, January 18, 2026**  
*Vendor tables are sold out!*

**MONTHLY MEETINGS – FIRST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH – 7:30 PM  
GLADYS FOX MUSEUM, 231 E 9TH STREET, LOCKPORT, IL**

- **Friday, January 9, 2026 – Program TBA**  
*Please note the date!*

