

March–April 2026



**FINAL CALL TO RENEW FOR 2026**



**Use form inside or join/renew 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 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 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](mailto:hoosierhobbies@aol.com)

## CONTACTING BLACKHAWK

- E-mail: [blackhawknrhs@outlook.com](mailto:blackhawknrhs@outlook.com)
- Website URL:  
[blackhawkrailwayhistoricalsociety.org](http://blackhawkrailwayhistoricalsociety.org)
- Social media:  
[facebook.com/BlackhawkRailwayHistorySociety](https://www.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](http://blackhawkrailwayhistoricalsociety.org)

## STAFF

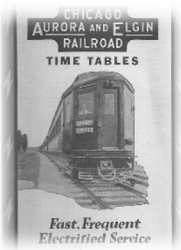
- **Bill Molony** – President Emeritus
- **Dave Daruszka** – Vice-President, National NRHS Representative, Program Coordinator
- **Mike Riha** – Treasurer/Secretary, Webmaster, Newsletter Editor
- **John Eagan** – Director at Large, Swap Meet Coordinator
- **Bruce Haffner** – Director at Large
- **Peter 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/](http://nrhs.com/membership/) for more information.

## ON THE COVER

In a scene from 50 years ago, the Rock Island Railroad is living on the edge of collapse. It is the Summer of 1976, and two freights slowly roll through UD interlocking and past Joliet Union Station. Meanwhile, in offices and courts, a final attempt is made to reorganize and save the railroad. Undoubtedly, the two crewmen, while attending to their current duties, are also wondering what the future holds. (*John T. Riha photo*)



## Area Event Calendar

MAR/APR/MAY 2026

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

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

**MARCH 6: BLACKHAWK MONTHLY MEETING -  
7:30 PM.** Gladys Fox Museum, Lockport, IL  
PROGRAM: "Railroading with Dave,  
30 Years Behind the Throttle".

**March 7: Model RR Show & Swap Meet, 9am-2pm.**  
Dubuque County Fairgrounds, Dubuque, IA  
[thesoutheasterndivision@gmail.com](mailto:thesoutheasterndivision@gmail.com) 563-663-0857

**March 15: Spring Field RR Society Train Fair, 9am-4pm.**  
Orr Building, State Fairgrounds, Springfield, IL  
[springfieldtrainfair.com](http://springfieldtrainfair.com)

**March 19-22: March-O-Scale-Meet.** Westin Lombard  
Yorktown Center, 70 Yorktown Center, Lombard, IL  
[marchmeet.net](http://marchmeet.net) 414-629-0030 [chicagomeet@yahoo.com](mailto:chicagomeet@yahoo.com)

**March 20: Railroad and Shortlines Club of Chicago  
meeting, 7:30-9:30pm.** Chicago Union Station,  
500 W. Jackson St., Room 107A, Chicago, IL 847 215-0180

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

**March 27: Central Electric Railfans' Association meeting,  
7-9:30pm.** 400 E Randolph St., Room 700, Chicago, IL  
[ceraoffice@gmail.com](mailto:ceraoffice@gmail.com)

**March 28: The All-American Railroad Show, 9am-5pm.**  
Lyons Township HS, 100 S. Brainard Ave., La Grange, IL  
[mwr-bmra.org/divisions/dupage/dupage.aarrs.html](http://mwr-bmra.org/divisions/dupage/dupage.aarrs.html)

**March 28: Davenport Model Railroad & Memorabilia  
Show, 9:30am-3pm.** Mississippi Valley Fairgrounds,  
Davenport, IA 563-508-7826 (after 8pm)

**April 4: Will County Model RR Association Swap Meet,  
9am-1pm.** Stone City VFW Post 2199, 124 Stone City Dr,  
Joliet IL [facebook.com/WCMRRA](https://facebook.com/WCMRRA) [swap@wcmrra.org](mailto:swap@wcmrra.org)  
815-485-8977

**April 4: Will County Model RR Association Open House,  
10am-4pm.** 2175 Oneida St, Joliet, IL 708-518-2840  
[facebook.com/WCMRRA](https://facebook.com/WCMRRA) [secretary@wcmrra.org](mailto:secretary@wcmrra.org)

**April 6: "Riding the Rails" Special Preview,  
meet & greet with WTTW's Geoffrey Baer, 8 pm.**

Landmark at the Glen, 1850 Tower Dr, Glenview, IL  
[secure.wttw.com/catalog/detail?productid=PRRP&standalone=1](https://secure.wttw.com/catalog/detail?productid=PRRP&standalone=1)

**APRIL 10: BLACKHAWK MONTHLY MEETING,  
7:30 PM** Gladys Fox Museum, Lockport, IL

**April 12: Great Midwest Train Show, 9am-3pm.**  
DuPage County Fairgrounds, 2015 Manchester Rd,  
Wheaton, IL [trainshow.com](http://trainshow.com)

**April 17: Railroad and Shortlines Club of Chicago  
meeting, 7:30-9:30pm.** Chicago Union Station,  
500 W. Jackson St., Room 107A, Chicago, IL 847 215-0180

**April 18: Ridge Model Railroaders Spring 2026 Open  
House, 10am-4pm.** Old Calumet High School,  
Ridge & Colfax, Griffith, IN [ridgerailroaders.org](http://ridgerailroaders.org)

**APRIL 19: BLACKHAWK SPRING RAILROAD  
SWAP MEET, 10 AM – 2 PM**  
American Legion Post 66, 132 N. Wiggs St., Griffith, IN  
219-332-0997 [hoosierhobbies@aol.com](mailto:hoosierhobbies@aol.com)

**April 24: Central Electric Railfans' Association meeting,  
7-9:30pm.** 400 E Randolph St., Room 700, Chicago, IL  
[ceraoffice@gmail.com](mailto:ceraoffice@gmail.com)

**April 25: Chicago Terminal Chapter of the Pennsylvania  
Railroad Technical and Historical Society meeting, 2-5pm.**  
Historical Pullman District Visitors Center, 11141 S. Cottage  
Grove Ave, Chicago, IL [ld\\_mlc43@comcast.net](mailto:ld_mlc43@comcast.net)

**April 25: Silvis Train Days & Classic Cars, 9am-4:30pm.**  
Railroading Heritage of Midwest America,  
1101 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. N, Silvis IL [rrhma.com](http://rrhma.com)

**April 25-26: Conversations 2026 – annual convention of  
the Center for Railroad Photography & Art.** Indiana  
History Center, 450 West Ohio Street, Indianapolis, IN  
[railphoto-art.org/conferences/conversations-2026/](http://railphoto-art.org/conferences/conversations-2026/)

**April 25-26: Pre-Season Open House, 11am-5pm.**  
Fox River Trolley Museum, 365 S La Fox St, South Elgin, IL  
[foxtrolley.org](http://foxtrolley.org) [info@foxtrolley.org](mailto:info@foxtrolley.org) 847-697-4676

**April 26: Model Train Swap Show, 9am-2pm.** Lisle Park  
District, 1925 Ohio St., Lisle, IL [lisletrainshow@gmail.com](mailto:lisletrainshow@gmail.com)

**Through April 26: Rieles y Raíces - Traqueros in Chicago  
and the Midwest, 10am-5pm.** National Museum of Mexican  
Art, 1852 W 19th Street, Chicago, IL  
[nationalmuseumofmexicanart.org](http://nationalmuseumofmexicanart.org)

**MAY 1: BLACKHAWK MONTHLY MEETING,  
7:30 PM** Gladys Fox Museum, Lockport, IL

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



## Observations

Blackhawk Chapter NRHS  
News and Business

### RENEWALS – RAFFLES – PROGRAMS

***THIS WILL BE YOUR LAST COPY OF THE  
“SPIKE & TIE”...***

...if you haven't renewed for 2026!

To see if you have renewed, check your name on the mailing label and look for a two-digit number after your name. If it shows ('26) you are current. If it shows ('25) you aren't. If it shows anything else, we like you and you are receiving our newsletter for free. A renewal form can be found earlier in this newsletter, or renew on our website at [blackhawkrailwayhistoricalsociety.org](http://blackhawkrailwayhistoricalsociety.org)

If you attend our monthly meetings in Lockport, Illinois, you already know about our monthly raffle of railroad books, memorabilia, and model railroad items. This raffle helps defray the cost of using the Gladys Fox Museum for our meetings that we rent from the Lockport Park District.

However, we DO need a continuing supply of materials to make the raffle happen. We have gone through most of our donated material and are quickly running out of items to raffle off. So, we are reaching out to you. Maybe you have collected a lot of railroad-themed material over the years and someday you may start wondering what you are going to do with all of it? You can try selling it at our Indiana Swap Meets (contact John Eagan for table rental), or you could donate it to our raffle. After all, you may have something that someone else has been looking for...and it will help pay our rent.

And speaking of our monthly Lockport meetings, we are always looking for programs to present. So, if you know of someone one who can present a program, or if you want to give a program, see Dave or Mike at the next monthly meeting, or email us at [blackhawknrhs@office.com](mailto:blackhawknrhs@office.com)

Finally, please send a card or letter, or visit Blackhawk President Bill Molony. He enjoys receiving mail and visitors.

**William J. Molony**

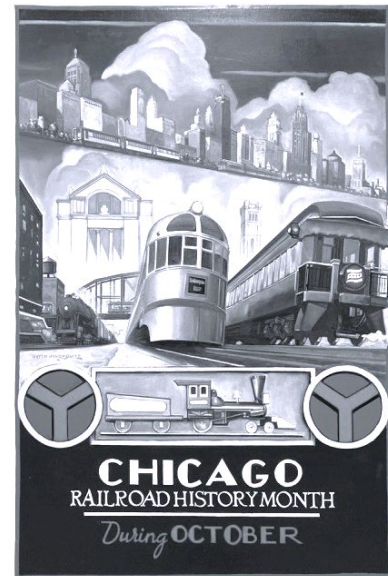
**StoryPoint Senior Living**

**605 Edwards Drive**

**Apartment #318**

**Romeoville, IL 60446**

## CHICAGO RAILROAD HISTORY MONTH POSTER CLEARANCE SALE



### NOW ONLY \$5 EACH!

This special price for the 20"x39" poster only available for in-person sales at monthly meetings in Lockport, or Swap Meets in Griffith. (Online price reduced to \$25 – includes shipping)

Check Blackhawk's 2026 Schedule in this newsletter, or on the Schedule page of our website at [blackhawkrailwayhistoricalsociety.org](http://blackhawkrailwayhistoricalsociety.org)



## Freight News

### BNSF TO EXPAND GALESBURG YARD

BNSF is expanding its former CB&Q/BN Galesburg (Illinois) yard with a second hump lead track and a connection track, increasing railcar switching capacity and improving terminal efficiency.

BNSF is Galesburg’s largest employer, with approximately 1,000 employees in the area. Ken Springer of the Knox County Area Partnership for Economic Development says the investment reinforces the region’s competitive advantage in transportation and logistics.



BNSF’s 2026 capital investment plan includes a \$4 billion investment in track, bridges, tunnels, locomotives, freight cars, technology, and facilities across its network.

BNSF operates one of the largest freight railroad networks in North America, with more than 32,500 route miles of track across 28 states and three Canadian provinces.

The Galesburg yard expansion is part of a broader effort to maintain and enhance its infrastructure to meet growing freight demand and improve service reliability..

*Adapted from WGIL*



## Passenger Rail News

### PLANS CONTINUE FOR HIAWATHA EXTENSION TO WISCONSIN STATE CAPITOL

Another attempt to get Amtrak service to Madison, Wisconsin is underway. Federal funding set aside in 2021 would be used to expand Amtrak's existing Chicago-to-Milwaukee *Hiawatha Service*.

As of January 2026, the “Hiawatha West” project is in the Service Development Plan phase, meaning that Amtrak is evaluating stop locations with local and state partners, according to Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari said.

After the Federal Railroad Administration approves the stops, the project will move on to preliminary engineering and environmental improvements. Then, the project will be ready to apply for federal funding for the final design and construction.

Amtrak is focusing on Madison, Watertown and Pewaukee for potential stops, based on spacing of the cities and ridership potential, though no selections are final until the end of the planning process.

For the initial service, Amtrak is looking to launch two round trips daily between Chicago, Milwaukee and the new stops. It is estimated the route could be in service by 2032, although some sources say service could start as early as 2029.

Wisconsin’s state capital lost regular passenger service with the startup of Amtrak on May 1, 1971, as all the surviving routes bypassed Madison.

An attempt to revive service by connecting Madison to Milwaukee was attempted in 2009 with Spanish manufacturer Talgo setting up a factory in Milwaukee to provide equipment. Partisan politics derailed the effort and after years of legal wrangling, the equipment was sold off overseas. The Talgo plant is currently refurbishing cars for Los Angeles’ Metrolink.

*Adapted from Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Wisconsin Public Radio, and other sources*



## Chicago Area Commuter Rail News



## South Shore Line News & History

### CSX FREIGHT DERAILMENT CUTS OFF METRA SOUTHWEST SERVICE

On February 11, 2026, Metra was forced to cancel all operations on its SouthWest Service following a CSX freight derailment in Chicago Ridge, Illinois.

The CSX train consisted of containers and trailers destined for CSX's Bedford Park intermodal terminal and it derailed on Indiana Harbor Belt (IHB) trackage where it crosses Norfolk Southern's (NS) former Wabash remnant to Manhattan, Illinois that Metra uses for their SouthWest Service.

The derailment occurred at approximately 4:45 a.m. and closed Ridgeland Avenue between Southwest Highway and Washington Street, and Central Avenue between 107th Street and Pleasant Boulevard. Reports say 10 to 12 intermodal cars had derailed. Dragging equipment also damaged several grade crossings approaching the wreck location. On Thursday morning, February 12, SouthWest Service resumed.

The crossing of the Wabash/Norfolk & Western/Norfolk Southern and the IHB at Chicago Ridge was staffed by a manned tower controlling a mechanical interlocking from 1890 to 1994, when it was closed. The tower was demolished in 1995 after a suspicious fire.

Metra's SouthWest Service had just over 976,000 riders in 2024, but ridership is still considerably below its pre-2020 pandemic levels (2.3 million in 2019.)

Separating the IHB/NS crossing in Chicago Ridge is planned as one of the many projects in the CREATE program of Chicagoland area rail infrastructure improvements, but the initial phase of environmental and preliminary engineering has yet to begin.

*Adapted from Trains News Wire  
and other sources*

### NICTD AIMS FOR LATE MARCH START FOR "MONON CORRIDOR"

With luck, the 2026 ribbon-cutting for the South Shore Line's new *Monon Corridor* route will be on St. Patrick's Day, but odds are it will be in late March.

The eight-mile-long branch between Hammond and Dyer, Indiana, connects with the South Shore's traditional east-west *Lakeshore Route* from Chicago to Michigan City and South Bend. A new station in Hammond serves as the transfer point for the two lines.

Service along the new route has been delayed for about a year and a half, most recently because three of the four transformers that provide power for the electric trains on the line failed when moisture got inside them. The replacement transformers are due by the end of February.

The failed transformers were yet another setback for the line whose construction has seen its share of spiraling costs and delays. The 77 employees hired for the new service are already on the payroll and are continuing their training or working other jobs on the railroad until they are needed.

The railroad plans to operate 28-29 trains a day, including weekends and holidays on the *Monon Corridor*. Non-rush hour passengers will have to transfer to *Lakeshore Route* trains at Hammond to continue trips into Chicago. Timetables are ready, ticket vending machines have been updated and tickets redesigned.

More information about the *Monon Corridor* can be found on South Shore's website at [mysouthshoreline.com/riders/monon-corridor-101/](https://mysouthshoreline.com/riders/monon-corridor-101/)

*Adapted from Post-Tribune and other sources*



## Area Rail History & Preservation News

### HOMEWOOD, ILLINOIS TO RENOVATE RAILFAN PLATFORM

The observation platform on Harwood Avenue on the east side of CN's former Illinois Central main line in Homewood, Illinois, is getting some work done.



At the January board of trustees meeting, the Village of Homewood approved a \$64,456 contract for concrete restoration, masonry repair, painting, pressure washing, and lighting. Work is expected to begin in late winter or early spring of this year, with new landscaping planned following the completion of the work.

This comes after Homewood and Metra finished a massive project updating platforms and access to the village's well-patronized Amtrak and Metra passenger stop. The 1923-built original Illinois Central mission-revival-style depot has been retained and a nearby display of an IC locomotive and caboos was moved a short distance to accommodate the project.

*Adapted from Trains News Wire*



*The Linden Depot Museum is asking for donations for a new paint job on their NKP bay-window caboos. (Photo by Jim Hammer/Linden Depot Museum)*

### RURAL INDIANA RAILROAD MUSEUM RAISING FUNDS TO REPAINT NICKEL PLATE CABOOSE

Located halfway between Lafayette and Crawfordsville in Montgomery County, along the former Monon Railroad mainline and U.S. 231, the Linden Depot Museum preserves and presents the railroad history of the town and surrounding area.

The depot sits at the former crossing of the Monon and the Nickel Plate (ex-Clover Leaf), which at one time was a major interchange point between the two railroads. The Nickel Plate line has been pulled up, but CSX still uses the former Monon tracks.

The Museum, whose website is [lindendepot.com](http://lindendepot.com), has launched a GoFundMe fundraiser to support the cosmetic restoration of their Nickel Plate Road bay-window caboos 497.

Caboos 497 has been displayed outdoors for years and has suffered weather-related deterioration. They aim to restore the caboos's exterior appearance, with work expected to begin in the spring and conclude by the end of 2026.

For more information or to donate, go to [gofund.me/41580a477](https://gofund.me/41580a477) or donations may be mailed directly to Linden Depot Museum, Project 497, P.O. Box 154, Linden, IN 47955.

*adapted from Linden Depot Museum*

## ICONIC STEAM LOCOMOTIVE WILL CELEBRATE 2026 IN FAMOUS EXCURSION PAINT SCHEME



*In 1973, Southern 4501 ran multiple excursions around Chicago and the Midwest, like this eastbound move through downtown Hammond, Indiana on Norfolk & Western's former Nickel Plate line. (John T. Riha photo)*

As Southern 4501's current owner notes, quite perceptively: "For many...the paint isn't just a color — it's a memory. It represents first train rides, family traditions, and the unmistakable presence of steam in motion."

To mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of 4501's extremely successful and popular excursion career, TVRM will be restoring the locomotive to the green and gold Southern passenger colors that it wore from 1966 to 1994.

Built by Baldwin in 1911, the 4501 was the first 2-8-2 "Mikado" type for the Southern Railway and it hauled freight trains until retired in 1948. It was sold to the coal-hauling shortline Kentucky and Tennessee Railway (K&T) in Stearns, Kentucky. When the K&T finally dieselized in 1964, 4501 was purchased by Paul Merriman for \$5,000 and in 1966 became part of the Southern's main line excursion steam program started by company president, W. Graham Claytor Jr.

In the summer of 1973, at the request of *Trains* magazine editor David P. Morgan and officials from the Chicago and North Western (C&NW), 4501 ran its first excursions away from Southern Railway trackage, with trips on the C&NW, the Milwaukee Road, the Illinois Central, the Rock Island, and the Norfolk & Western. 4501 provided the power on that year's Circus World Museum train from Baraboo,

Wisconsin to Milwaukee for that city's annual Great Circus Parade.

TVRM's plans to return 4501 back to standard Southern freight black livery in 2027.

In addition to the 4501 project, TVRM is raising funds to build a climate-controlled finishing facility as part of their shop complex in East Chattanooga. This will let the museum support multiple restoration projects by allowing painting and finishing work to be completed in a controlled environment.

Donations can be made through their website at [www.tvrail.com/support-4501-green/](http://www.tvrail.com/support-4501-green/)

*adapted from Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum*



### CN JOINS AMERICA 250 CELEBRATION

In the last issue, encouraged by a John Eagan Facebook post, we posited that former EJ&E SD38-2 668, due to its former appearance as the J's unit honoring America's Bicentennial in 1976, would make an ideal choice to honor America's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2026.

It turns out that CN, which bills itself as "North America's Railroad," has joined the dozens of American railroad companies painting locomotives to honor America's 250<sup>th</sup> birthday, as two plastic-wrapped locomotives marked CN 1776 and CN 2026 were recently seen in transit to Homewood, Illinois, home of the former Illinois Central's Woodcrest Shops and base for CN's U.S. operations. It is anticipated that CN will be revealing the specially painted locomotives soon.

As for 668? Hopefully the 1975-built EMD product continues to provide reliable to CN in and around Kirk Yard and when it does get retired, it would be a wonderful candidate for preservation by a group that is able to handle such a project.

*Spike & Tie*



## 80 YEARS AGO: TRAGEDY IN NAPERVILLE

April 25, 1946 – It had been seven months since Japan surrendered, and America was still recovering from years of war. That Thursday afternoon, tragedy struck when Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy’s train #39, the *Exposition Flyer* rammed into a stopped train #11, the *Advance Exposition Flyer*, just east of the Naperville, Illinois depot. 45 people were killed and 125 people were injured, including several military personnel. Nearby residents, employees at the Kroehler Furniture Factory, and students from North Central College descended onto the accident site to help the injured. Emergency workers traveled by car and train from neighboring communities to assist in recovery efforts.

Train #39’s engineer had noticed too late that train #11’s crew made an unexpected stop in Naperville to investigate a mechanical problem. #39’s lead locomotive, E5A 9910A “Silver Speed,” impacted the last car of #11, with the E5’s front truck detaching and sending the locomotive body plowing through three-quarters of a 68-seat heavyweight coach, killing most of those inside. Momentum kept the wreckage moving forward another 205 feet beyond the point of impact, pushing a heavyweight buffet-lounge into a pre-war Budd-built lightweight diner, folding the stainless-steel car into a “U” shape, resulting in more deaths. A Budd coach was also knocked on its side. #39’s engineer was initially blamed, but subsequent investigations found a variety of factors that led to the disaster, leading to several operational changes. (Photo credit Illinois State Museum/Naper Settlement.)



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

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

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

- Friday, March 6, 2026 – Program:  
"Railroading With Dave, 30 Years Behind the Throttle"
- Friday, April 10, 2026\* – Program TBA  
*\*Please note date change - Second Friday of the month*

**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, April 19, 2026 – *Vendor tables are sold out!*

