

September–October 2025

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

UP and NS Propose Merger to Create Transcontinental System What Does This Mean for Chicago?



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

- EJ&E caboose and box car on the auction block
- Bar Cars returning to Metra?
- “Abraham Lincoln” comes home to celebrate the 163rd anniversary of the Pacific Rail Act

Blackhawk

RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2025 REMAINING MEETING DATES

September 5
October 3
November 7
December 5

Monthly in-person meetings are held at **7:30 PM on the first Friday of the month** (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. If there is no wake or service in progress, parking in the lot of the Goodale Memorial Chapel next door is allowed.

Meetings are open to the public and refreshments are available. There is no admission fee. A raffle of donated items is held at each meeting to help defray the cost of the hall.

Fall Railroad Swap Meet

October 26th, 2025

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

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!

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

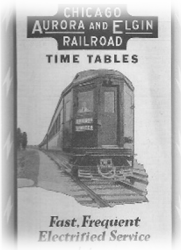
BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

- **Bill Molony** - President
- **Dave Daruszka** - Vice-President,
National Representative
- **Mike Riha** - Treasurer, Webmaster, Editor
- **Bruce Haffner, John Eagan** -
Directors at Large
- **Peter Viall** - Membership Chair

Special thanks to **Andrea Zoelle** for handling the refreshments at our monthly meetings.

NRHS
National Railway Historical Society

The Blackhawk Railway Historical Society serves as the Blackhawk Chapter of the National Railroad Historical Society (NRHS). To join or renew with the NRHS, go directly to the **Membership** section of the NRHS website (**nrhs.com**) for more information or to pay dues.



Area Event Calendar

AUG-SEPT-OCT 2025

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

August 29-September 1: 69th Annual Hesston Steam & Power Show, 10am-5pm Hesston Steam Museum, 1201 E 1000 N, La Porte, IN hesston.org/showtime

August 30th: Vintage Voltage Limited, 8:30am
Excursion benefiting Fox River Trolley Museum and CTA's Historical Fleet Program w/6000-series "L" cars, Dempster/Skokie Station, 5001 W Dempster St, Skokie IL <https://foxtrolley.org/visit/special-events/vintage-voltage-limited/>

SEPTEMBER 5: BLACKHAWK MEETING, 7:30 PM

Gladys Fox Museum, 231 E 9th St., Lockport, IL
Program: **Mike Blaszak** presents
"1985: Railroading 40 Years Ago"

September 6: Elmhurst Model RR Club Swap Meet, 9am-Noon. Villa Pk. Masonic Lodge, 26 W. Central, Villa Park, IL **630-564-1099** emrrc@comcast.net

September 7: Great Midwest Train Show, 9am-3pm
DuPage Event Center & Fairgrounds, 2015 Manchester Rd., Wheaton, IL \$8/kids FREE trainshow.com

September 9: Center for Railroad Photography & Art online presentation "Lynchpin: The Long Road to the Opening of the Stockton & Darlington Railway", 7pm CT.
About the world's first railway to operate freight and passenger service with steam traction. Register for Zoom presentation through railphoto-art.org

September 16-20: Union Pacific Historical Society Annual Convention Silvis shop tour, Illinois Railway Museum trip. Holiday Inn, 226 17th St., Rock Island, IL uphs.org/conventions/current-convention/

September 19: Railroad & Shortlines Club of Chicago Monthly Meeting, 7:30pm Chicago Union Station, Room 107A, 500 W Jackson Blvd., Chicago, IL **312-725-0432**

September 19-21: Wabash Railroad Historical Society 2025 Annual Meeting Durand, MI <https://www.wabashrhs.org/p/annual-meeting.html>

September 20: FREE Rides and Illinois Operation Lifesaver Presentations, 10am-3pm. Fox River Trolley Museum, 365 S La Fox Street, South Elgin, IL <https://foxtrolley.org/>

September 20-21: "The Quad Cities Rocket" excursions by Railroading Heritage of Midwest America. Pulled by UP

DDA40X 6936 from Silvis, IL-Wilton, IA (Sat) and Silvis, IL-Bureau Jct., IL (Sun) <https://rrhma.com/quad-cities-rocket/>

September 20-21: Railroad Days, 10am-5pm Monticello Railway Museum, 992 Iron Horse Pl., Monticello, IL mrym.org

September 20-21: Museum Showcase Weekend, 10am-5pm Illinois Railway Museum, 7000 Olson Road, Union, IL **815-923-4391** irm.org

September 21: "Tee Up for Hollins" Charity Golf Outing and Train Trip, 8:30am-5pm N&W Business Car 300 fundraiser. Zollner Golf Course, Trine University, Angola, IN tee-up-for-hollins.perfectgolfevent.com

September 27-28: Vintage Rail Car Tours, 10am-5pm Guided tours of restored cars and shop. Mid-Continent Railway Museum, E8948 Museum Road, North Freedom, WI **800-930-1385** midcontinent.org

OCTOBER 3: BLACKHAWK MEETING, 7:30 PM

Gladys Fox Museum, 231 E 9th St., Lockport, IL
Program: **TBA**

October 4-5: Steam Into Fall, 10am-5pm Illinois Railway Museum, 7000 Olson Road, Union, IL **815-923-4391** irm.org

October 5: Great Midwest Train Show, 9am-3pm
DuPage Event Center & Fairgrounds, 2015 Manchester Rd., Wheaton, IL \$8/kids FREE trainshow.com

October 5: Heritage CTA Train Tour with WTTW's Geoffrey Baer, 10:30am & 12:45pm. Washington/Wabash CTA Station, 29 N. Wabash Ave., Chicago IL. Fundraiser using 4000-series "L" cars. <https://www.wttw.com/events/>

October 9-11: Burlington Route/MoPac/C&EI Historical Societies Joint Annual Meeting Marion, IL https://burlingtonroute.org/BRHS/annual_meetings/index.php

October 17-19: Fall Colors Steam Special w/NKP 765, 9:30am-6pm. 1469 West Main St., Pleasant Lake, IN <https://www.indianarailxperience.org/>

October 19: 34th Annual Chicago Railroading (Railroad Collectables) & Model Train Show and Sale, 10am-3pm. Kane County Fairgrounds (Front Building), 525 S. Randall Rd., St. Charles, IL **847-358-1185** RussFierce@AOL.com

OCTOBER 26: INDIANA SWAP MEET, 10 AM-2 PM

American Legion Post 66
132 N. Wiggs Street, Griffith, IN 46319

October 26: Soo Line 1003 Photo Charter, 7am-4pm. Wisconsin Automotive Museum, 147 North Rural Street Hartford, WI <http://steamlocomotiveheritage.org/>



Observations

Blackhawk Chapter NRHS
News and Business

BLACKHAWK DONATES HISTORIC EJ&E FILMS

In the Summer of 1972, a crew attached a professional 16mm film camera to the top of a hi-rail truck and took movies of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern right-of-way all the way from Waukegan, Illinois to Gary, Indiana, along with the branches to South Chicago, Illinois and Porter, Indiana.

The reason for these films has been lost to history, but theories include everything from a property survey to images to be used in a locomotive simulator for engineer training.

The films were set off to the side and were going to be disposed of, but thanks to EJ&E employee and Blackhawk member Steve Tharp noticing them, they were saved.



A scene from one of the EJ&E films.

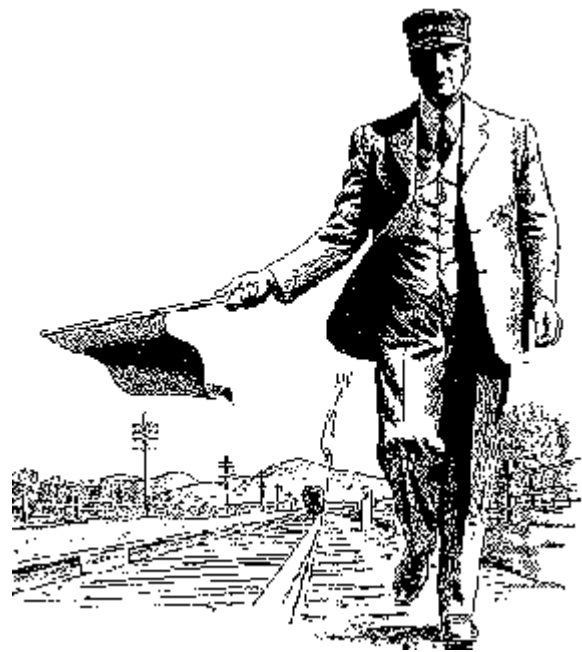
View a 6-minute clip at youtu.be/tqP-2dl866c

Blackhawk had these 16mm films transferred to DVD and offered them for sale to recover the cost of the transfer and packaging. Blackhawk no longer has these DVDs for sale, but they are available at TrainVideoDepot.com

In August 2025, Blackhawk donated the original film reels and a projector to the Illinois Railway Museum's Strahorn Library.

**DO YOU HAVE SOME SERIOUS
RAILROAD KNOWLEDGE
YOU HAVE BEEN
WANTING TO SHARE?**

**DO YOU HAVE SOME
INTERESTING TRAIN PHOTOS
YOU WANT TO SHOW TO AN
APPRECIATIVE AUDIENCE?**



**THEN BLACKHAWK
IS LOOKING FOR**

YOU!

We are looking for live presenters for our first-Friday monthly meetings in Lockport, Illinois. We can provide a laptop with USB ports or a DVD player and an enthusiastic audience that will probably applaud loudly when you are finished. Talk to us at the next meeting or send an Email to blackhawknrhs@outlook.com



Passenger Rail News

MICHIGAN BREAKDOWN SPOTLIGHTS ISSUE IN AMTRAK MIDWEST CHARGERS

Riders were stuck on a train for almost five hours after a faulty sensor inside the Siemens Charger locomotive malfunctioned – a part that Amtrak is apparently waiting for the parts to fix.

Eastbound Amtrak Train 352 left Chicago 15 minutes late on Friday, August 15, 2025, due to a “mechanical assessment” and stopped east of Battle Creek around 7:15 pm. The train was in a rural area, and passengers didn’t have cell service. Without air conditioning, passengers said they were left in sweltering heat as power and plumbing was shut off while they waited for buses to rescue them.



A Chicago-bound “Illinois Zephyr” stops at Plano in June 2023. This first order of Siemens Chargers are regular power on this and similar trains throughout the Midwest.

Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari confirmed the local news reports on the incident was “generally accurate,” but refused to address questions about the sensor involved, how long Amtrak has been aware of the problem, the measures being taken to address it, and a timeline to repair the locomotives.

Magliari did say the locomotives will continue to operate until the sensors can be replaced, and that delays caused by the problem are not frequent.

The Charger locomotives, 4,400-hp units powered by a 16-cylinder Cummins QSK95 diesel engine, are built by Siemens in Sacramento, California, and began entering service in 2017.

Adapted from MLive.com and TrainsPRO



“Borealis” at St. Paul Union Depot (Amtrak photo)

AMTRAK AND STATES CELEBRATE BOREALIS REACHING 250,000 RIDERS

Amtrak announced it carried its 250,000th guest on its state-sponsored *Borealis* trains between the Twin Cities and Chicago over the Independence Day 2025 holiday weekend.

“Thanks to the support of our partners, we’re honored to have more than a quarter-million customers, and counting, travel on the *Borealis* train this past year,” said Amtrak President Roger Harris. “Some of these guests have never used Amtrak.”

Operated daily by Amtrak under contracts with the Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois state transportation departments, guests and officials have been celebrating a comfortable and reliable service that has routinely exceeded expectations since the daily service began in May 2024.

Borealis trains originate from St. Paul at midday and Chicago in the late morning and offer café service featuring regional items and views of the Mississippi River between St. Paul, Minnesota and La Crosse, Wisconsin using Superliner equipment replacing the Horizon cars that were taken out of service with corrosion problems in March 2025.

The *Borealis*, along with Amtrak’s *Empire Builder* used CPKC’s ex-Milwaukee Road line from Chicago to St. Paul. Amtrak recently presented CPKC with “Best Host Railroad” award for 2024 for being the best freight railroad at keeping Amtrak intercity passenger trains running on time. It is the ninth straight year CPKC (and Canadian Pacific before it) earned the industry-leading “A grade.”

Adapted from Amtrak and CPKC press releases



Chicago Area Commuter Rail News

COMMISSION PROPOSED TO EXPLORE PASSENGER RAIL BETWEEN MILWAUKEE, RACINE & KENOSHA...AGAIN!

In Wisconsin, 14 years after the last serious exploration into passenger trains connecting Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha, a commission has been proposed to re-explore the concept.

The Milwaukee-Area-Racine-Kenosha (MARK) Passenger Rail Commission is still in a conceptual phase and needs to be approved by each city. It is the latest attempt to analyze passenger rail on the former C&NW (now UP) line along the lakefront.

Southeast Wisconsin is currently served by Amtrak's *Hiawatha* and *Borealis* services, running inland on CPKC's ex-Milwaukee Road route, connecting Milwaukee to Chicago with stops at Mitchell International Airport and Sturtevant. Discussions on extending the *Hiawatha* to Madison are ongoing.

In 1998, the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission decided a 33-mile rail service through Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha was "feasible."

In 2005, the state created a transit authority covering the three cities for stewarding the project, but it did not have authorization to operate or construct the proposed service.

In 2009, the Wisconsin Legislature approved the development of regional transit authorities in Wisconsin, creating the Southeast Wisconsin Regional Transit Authority (SERTA), which was then dissolved in 2011.

Since then, Racine received a \$5 million grant in 2022 to look at updates to the plan, and WisDOT has quietly requested federal funding to implement a service and also includes passenger rail between the cities in its Wisconsin Rail Plan 2050 report.

Adapted from WTMJ



A preview of what a new café car might look like when Metra and Active Transit Alliance hosted a "Commuter Coffee Rave" in a car parked at La Salle Street station on June 27, 2025. (Metra photo)

METRA BRINGING BACK BAR CARS?

Next time you hop on Metra, you may not need to stop for that cup of coffee before you board as they are considering reviving an old concept – a café car.

Metra hopes to drive up ridership and keep riders from running late by turning one car into a full-service café. The café car will have its top seats removed, and beverages and treats will be served. Metra is considering the idea as it tries to attract more riders.

Until August 2008, Metra operated bar cars on some lines that offered beer, wine, mixed drinks, and snacks on its trains, sold out of a booth in a sealed gallery car vestibule. But Metra said its café car concept is new.

Metra Executive Director Jim Derwinski reportedly commented on the idea at a board meeting Wednesday, noting that riders have expressed a desire for the cars to make a comeback. While the café car concept could include refreshments, it's unclear whether alcoholic beverages will return to the menu.

Metra reportedly plans to gather feedback on the café car concept from riders at local train stations. If riders express widespread enthusiasm for the revival of the concept, a recommendation could be made to the Metra board.

*Adapted from CBS News,
Daily Herald, and Secret Chicago*



South Shore Line News & History

LONG BEFORE MONON CORRIDOR SOUTH SHORE & MONON HAD AN INTERESTING AFFAIR

While the opening of NICTD's new Monon Corridor is delayed, it is worth looking back and noting that this would not be the first time two of Indiana's most unique railroads, the South Shore and the Monon, would find their paths intertwined.

By the early 1960s, post-war posterity was rapidly disappearing in the rear-view mirror, airline and highways were siphoning off traffic, and other economic and regulatory challenges were facing America's railroads. Railroads were looking at mergers and acquisitions to survive.

In 1964, the Monon, under President William Coleman quietly acquired 20% of the stock of the South Shore as an "investment." There were discussions about joint operations, and the South Shore appeared as a line on the map in Monon's 1963 Annual Report, leaving little doubt about Monon's intentions.

At first, the 90-mile Chicago-to-South Bend line would seem to be an odd addition to north-south Monon – especially with the aging, money-losing passenger service as part of the package. But in Coleman's plan to have Monon access the industries and steel works along the base of Lake Michigan, it made sense. South Shore, however, would prove to be a less-than-willing partner.

The interurban was actively seeking a significant other on its own, and its 1963 Annual Report had maps showing how South Shore would fit into three major eastern roads. South Shore refused to seat a Monon director on its board and filed for a restraining order in U.S. District Court to prevent Monon from buying more stock. South Shore also believed parties friendly to the Monon were in

possession of an additional 20% of South Shore stock.



*South Shore and Monon freights in the mid '60s
(John T. Riha photos)*

By March 1965, Monon's feelings for the South Shore were growing cold. An expanded Chesapeake & Ohio became the major South Shore stockholder and applied to the ICC for control. Finding the "sugar daddy" it wanted, the South Shore backed C&O's proposal and waited for the Monon's next move.

Monon called for an investigation of all C&O stock purchases, and by April 1965 both railroads were under investigation by the ICC. Knowing the love triangle couldn't last, a truce was called and Monon agreed to withdraw in exchange for trackage rights over the South Shore, which in the end were hardly exercised. The Monon sold off its South Shore stock to C&O.

After eloping to avoid the Monon, the South Shore never became part of the C&O, or the later Chessie System. Chessie would send over some used diesels and then finance new EMD GP38-2s to replace South Shore's aging electric freight motors. Passenger operations would be picked up by the new Northwest Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD). CSX would sell freight operations to shortline holding company Anacostia & Pacific in 1990.

By 1971, Monon, stymied in its attempts to expand, accepted merger into the Louisville & Nashville, becoming L&N's second route into Chicago (the first being the former Chicago & Eastern Illinois.) In time, L&N would become part of the giant CSX system...of which one of the main predecessors is, the Chesapeake & Ohio.

*Adapted from "Monon, The Hoosier Line"
by Gary & Steve Dozall
(1st ed., Interurban Press, 1987,
ISBN-13978-0916374785)*



Freight News

HOT METAL TRAIN UPDATE: CLIFFS CONSIDERING SELLING IDLED SITE IN RIVERDALE, ILLINOIS

In an article by Brian Taylor, published August 6, 2025, in *Recycling Today*, the chief financial officer (CFO) of Cleveland-Cliffs says the steelmaking firm is exploring the sale of properties that are currently idle facilities.

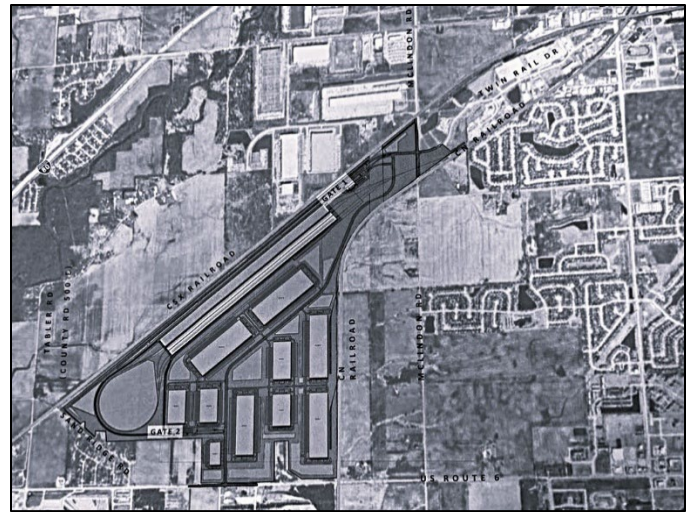
In a late July conference call with securities analysts, Celso Goncalves, the CFO of the Cleveland-based company, said Cliffs was working with banking firm JPMorganChase “to explore the potential sale of certain non-core operating assets.” Those assets include the idle blast furnace/basic oxygen furnace (BOF) complex in Riverdale that Cliffs acquired from ArcelorMittal in 2020.



Riverdale-bound hot metal train at Dolton in November 2018 (M. Riha photo)

Goncalves says “These sites...have what data center developers are looking for: access to power and water with the infrastructure already in place.” The CFO also says selling to data center operators is not final, “While these properties are idled, if opportunities don't arise that justify restarting, they have good value, and the amount of interest we have received in these properties so far is reflective of this.” Cliffs has struggled to make profits in the past year, including having lost about \$470 million in the second quarter of 2025.

Adapted from Recycling Today



CN CHANNAHON LOGISTICS HUB TO BEGIN CONSTRUCTION SOON

Canadian National Railway is preparing to begin construction on its new Chicago Logistics Hub intermodal facility, planned north of U.S. Route 6 in Grundy County, Illinois. The facility extends southwest from an existing industrial park in Minooka, nestled between CSX’s former Rock Island tracks and CN’s former EJ&E Illinois River Line (built in 1891 as the Gardner, Coal City & Northern.)

The first phase, a train-truck intermodal facility serviced by CN, falls under federal regulation and is not subject to local permitting. Earthwork and drainage are set to begin in late 2025, with full construction in 2026 and operations starting in 2027.

The second phase, a logistics and business park, will undergo the Village of Channahon’s standard review, including public meetings and approval by the Village Board. No construction date has been set.

Most of the site is within Channahon’s boundaries and zoned “I-2 Intensive Industrial” for over 25 years; other portions are in unincorporated Grundy County with industrial zoning. Traffic impact studies are underway, with input from village consultants and the Illinois Department of Transportation.

Public meeting notices will be posted online, at Village Hall, and on social media. Citizens can also contact the Village of Channahon for information at 815-467-6644.

Adapted from Morris Herald-News and WCSJ



*Burlington Junction power switches
a refrigerated warehouse in Rochelle, Illinois.*

BURLINGTON JUNCTION TURNS 40

Burlington Junction Railway (reporting marks: BJRY) is a Class III short line railroad chartered in 1985, which began operating three miles of the former Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Railway mainline, and has grown to have operations in eight cities in three Midwest states.

BJRY was founded by Steven Hoth (1941-2017), who grew up on a farm in northeast Iowa and in the 1960s moved to Burlington, Iowa, with his wife JoEllen, who became a family physician.

Steve, a practicing attorney, had a strong entrepreneurial spirit and a keen eye for opportunity and despite having no prior railroad experience, bought three miles of track out of the Rock Island 1980 liquidation, described as “an old spur half covered with Mississippi River mud and still serving a few customers.”

BJRY has been recognized three times as BNSF’s “Shortline of the Year” and is also a member of BNSF’s “Shortline Select” program.

Adapted from Burlington Junction website



Burlington Junction’s locomotive roster has a few surprises on it, like this MLW-built former CN S13.

PROPOSED UP-NS MERGER RAISES MANY QUESTIONS

Union Pacific operates 32,000 miles of track in the central and western U.S. Norfolk Southern stretches from the Midwest to the East Coast with 19,000 miles. And both railroads have a major presence in the Chicago area and Northern Indiana, with multiple routes, massive yards, and large intermodal facilities. “This could be either good (or) bad for the Chicago,” says DePaul University transportation Professor Joseph Schwieterman.

UP and NS both promote the merger as an opportunity to create a transcontinental system offering faster service across 43 states, competing more effectively with the two Canadian railroads (CN and CPKC).

The Village Manager of Winfield, Illinois, Evan Summers, has been in contact with neighboring municipalities along the ex-C&NW UP Geneva Subdivision running through the western suburbs. Evan told the Daily Herald, “We have a long history of banding together to protect the interests of our residents and businesses alike. We will closely monitor this merger.”

“A key question is how the flow of freight from east to west of our region will change. Even small shifts could have large ripple effects,” Schwieterman said.

If approved, the merger could lead to the remaining major railroads, BNSF and CSX, combining. Under new Surface Transportation Board (STB) rules, UP/NS would have to show how the merger would enhance competition.

Also to be considered is how regional railroads and shortlines will be affected. For example, Iowa Interstate hauls ethanol trains to NS connections from Cedar Rapids, Iowa – a town also served by UP.

Metra opposed the recent CP/KCS merger but had no comment on this proposal. Metra is in ongoing negotiations with UP to take over the former C&NW commuter service, which UP no longer wants to be responsible for.

*Spike & Tie staff,
adapted from Daily Herald article by Marni Pyke*



Area Rail History & Preservation News

PULLMAN-BUILT SLEEPER TO BE DISPLAYED AT NATIONAL PARK

Through a generous gift from Robert Menzies, Chairman of the Aberdeen, Carolina & Western Railway, the GLEN AYR, a 1928 all-steel Pullman heavyweight 6-compartment, 3-drawing room sleeping car with ties to Chicago has been acquired for eventual restoration and public display at Pullman National Historic Park.



Pullman builder's photo of another car in the same lot as GLEN AYR, the GLEN FALLS.

Built for the Chicago & North Western Railroad, GLEN AYR operated on the North Western Limited between Chicago and the Twin Cities. Sold in 1948 to the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, the sleeper was used on Florida trains during heavy winter demand.

After being demoted to maintenance-of-way service, and surviving both the Seaboard Coast Line and Seaboard System mergers, GLEN AYR was donated in 1986 to the North Florida Chapter of the NRHS and eventually became part of the Jacksonville-area North Florida Railway Museum before Mr. Menzies and the AC&W was able to purchase it.

The car will be moved from Jacksonville, Florida, to a secure facility in Silvis, Illinois, (thanks to RJ Corman and CSX) where it will be stored while plans for its full restoration and display move forward.

Late last year, another car built at the original Pullman factory, the 1899 wooden parlor car Rock Island 699 was also gifted to the Pullman site.

Restoration of the GLEN AYR and creation of an appropriate display infrastructure will take several years.

Adapted from Historic Pullman Foundation

JOLIET PARK DISTRICT OFFERED EJ&E CABOOSE AND BOXCAR FOR SALE

On U.S. Route 6, in the far southwest corner of Joliet, just west of the power plant and next to the riverside casino, the Joliet Park District built and operated a water park from 2002 to 2018, when declining attendance and revenues led to its closure. Despite hope by local fans for a reopening, COVID and changing land use trends sealed the park's fate.

When building the water park, the Joliet Park District decided to honor the city's railroad heritage by naming it "Splash Station" and giving the park something of a railroad theme. They secured the donation of a boxcar and caboose from the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway and they were displayed on a hill at the entrance to the park.



The caboose is one of the 1956 International Car Co.-built steel cars, while the steel 50-foot boxcar, EJ&E 62069, is one of the last remaining built in the Joliet shops and had gained the attention of the Illinois Railway Museum before it was donated to the Park District.

With demand for new warehouses and data centers exploding in that part of Joliet, the water park is now being dismantled and the land, and everything on it, is being sold off.

In late July of 2025, the Joliet Park District placed both cars for sale on a government auction website. It is unknown to us if either car found a new owner. We will update this story when we discover what happened to both cars.

Spike & Tie staff



(Hoosier Valley Railroad Museum photo)

MUSEUM ACQUIRES ADDITIONAL COACH IN TIME FOR FALL AND WINTER TRAINS

The Hoosier Valley Railroad Museum (HVRM) in North Judson, Indiana – faced with a growing number of passengers for their popular Pumpkin Trains and Santa Trains – has received a refurbished former Montreal commuter coach to bolster their fleet.

Ohio-based AMC Rail, a railroad contractor, reached out to HVRM with an offer of a passenger car available to lease. Extra capacity has been needed in the last few years with the increasing popularity of their family-friendly Pumpkin Train and Santa Train events, with some trips sold out weeks or months in advance. This car will add over 50 additional seats and features open windows for the warmer months as well as heat for the cooler months.

"The additional capacity this car will provide to some of our special events will make a tremendous impact on our operations, and we are grateful for the opportunity AMC Rail has given us", stated Todd Flanigan, President of HVRM.

The new coach joins a former Long Island Railroad commuter coach that has been HVRM's primary enclosed passenger car for years, in addition to some cabooses and modified flat cars. AMC Rail painted the Montreal car in a Monon-inspired gray and red scheme to match their Monon Business Car #2.

For more information about Hoosier Valley Railroad Museum, their operating schedule, or to book a future trip, go to their website at hoosiervalley.org

*Adapted from
Hoosier Valley Railroad Museum Facebook page*

UNION PACIFIC CELEBRATES BIRTHDAY IN PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S HOMETOWN



UP 1616 "Abraham Lincoln" rolls by the Illinois State House.

Union Pacific Railroad celebrated what it considers its 163rd birthday on July 1, 2025, in the hometown of President Abraham Lincoln with the help of numerous politicians, dignitaries, and their latest commemorative locomotive.

President Lincoln founded Union Pacific with the signing of the historic Pacific Railway Act on July 1, 1862, authorizing construction of the nation's first transcontinental railroad.



A Lincoln reenactor looks forward from the front porch of SD70M 1616

"It is an incredible honor for Springfield to host Union Pacific Railroad on this historic milestone and to welcome the Lincoln Locomotive to the hometown of our 16th president," said Springfield Mayor Misty Buscher.

UP 1616, an EMD SD70M, built in 2000 and previously number 4015, was unveiled earlier in 2025 and its red, maroon, and gray paint is based on colors used on steam locomotives in the 1860s. It has made several special appearances this year across the UP system.

Adapted from Union Pacific press release



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 60441

- September 5, 2025
Program: Dave Daruszka shares historic railroad films
- October 3, 2025
Program: Paul Janecke looks at IC's Central Station

INDIANA SWAP MEET – 10 AM TO 2 PM (CHICAGO TIME)
AMERICAN LEGION POST 66, 132 N. WIGGS STREET, GRIFFITH, IN 46319

- October 26, 2025 (All tables sold out!)

