September–October 2026

the Blackhawk RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

SPIKE and TIE

Meetings resume: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11 (pushed back one week by Labor Day weekend)
Gladys Fox Museum, 231 East 9th Street in Lockport, Illinois – 7:30 PM

Program: WHAT DID I DO THIS SUMMER?
Bring a USB drive with 10 minutes of photos from what you did this Summer of 2026

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**

CONTACTING BLACKHAWK

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

MEMBERSHIP

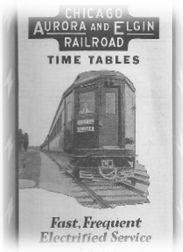
- **Regular - $25:** Includes newsletter and one free vendor table at swap meets.
- **Additional - $3:** For immediate family members. Does not include publications or swap meet table.
- Mailing address for membership applications or renewals ONLY:
  Blackhawk Railway Historical Society
  4644 E 9000N Rd.
  Manteno, IL 60950-3111
- Join/renew through the **Store** on our website: **blackhawkrailwayhistoricalsociety.org**

STAFF

- President - *Vacant*
- President Emeritus **- Bill Molony** (dec.)
- Vice-President - **Dave Daruszka**
  National NRHS Representative
  Program Coordinator
- Secretary - *Vacant*
- Treasurer - **Mike Riha**
  Webmaster and Newsletter Editor
- Director at Large - **John Eagan**
  also Swap Meet Coordinator
- Director at Large - **Bruce Haffner**
- Membership Chair - **Peter Viall**
- Chief Steward - **Andrea Zoelle**

NRHS
National Railway Historical Society

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.



Event Calendar

SEP-OCT-NOV 2026

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

August 28-September 2: Electric Railroaders Association 2026 Annual Convention Hotel in Evanston, Illinois. Tours to Milwaukee, East Troy, Kenosha, Fox River, CTA "L", South Shore, and IRM. **erausa.org/conventions/2026/**

August 30: Monon Railroad Historical-Technical Society Swap Meet Hyatt Place, 9420 Calumet Ave., Munster, IN **monon.org**

September 4-December 20: "Lina Bertucci: Railroad Voices—The Milwaukee Road, 1974–1977" photo exhibition Grohmann Museum 1000 N Broadway, Milwaukee, WI **msoe.edu/grohmann-museum/exhibitions-events/**

SEPTEMBER 11: BLACKHAWK MEETING, 7:30 PM Gladys Fox Museum, 231 E 9th St., Lockport, IL.

Program: "WHAT DID I DO THIS SUMMER" – Blackhawk members (and if there is time guests) share what they did this summer. Digital photos please. Bring your photos on a USB drive. Questions? **blackhawknrhs@outlook.com**

September 12: Elmhurst Model RR Club Swap Meet, 9am-Noon Trinity Lutheran School, 1165 S. Westmore-Meyers Rd, Lombard, IL **Don Fisher: 630-564-1009**

September 13: Great Midwest Train Show, 9am-3pm DuPage Event Center & Fairgrounds, 2015 Manchester Rd., Wheaton, IL $8/kids FREE **trainshow.com**

September 21-25: 2026 NRHS National Convention Cleveland, Ohio. Tours to Marion Jct., Mad River & NKP RR Museum, Cuyahoga Valley Scenic RR, Midwest Railroad Preservation Society, Age of Steam Roundhouse Museum, Wabtec (former GE) factory in Erie, PA. **nrhs.com**

Saturday 26: SOO 1003 public run celebrating America's 250th Birthday Hartford to Burnett, WI (round trip) **steamlocomotiveheritage.org**

September 26 & 27: Railroading Heritage of Midwest America's "Liberty Rocket" excursions from Silvis, IL to West Liberty, IA (9/26) and Bureau Jct., IL (9/27) behind ex-UP DD40AX 6936 and ex-ATSF "Super Fleet" B40-8W 537 **rrhma.com/liberty-rocket/**

OCTOBER 2: BLACKHAWK MEETING, 7:30 PM Gladys Fox Museum, 231 E 9th St., Lockport, IL. Program: TBA

October 4: Great Midwest Train Show, 9am-3pm DuPage Event Center & Fairgrounds, 2015 Manchester Rd., Wheaton, IL $8/kids FREE **trainshow.com**

OCTOBER 18: BLACKHAWK INDIANA SWAP MEET, 10 AM-2 PM American Legion Post 66, 132 N Wiggs St, Griffith, IN 46319.

ALL Swap Meet inquires and requests for vendor tables must contact John Eagan at 219-322-0997 or email at hoosierhobbies@aol.com

November 1: Great Midwest Train Show, 9am-3pm DuPage Event Center & Fairgrounds, 2015 Manchester Rd., Wheaton, IL $8/kids FREE **trainshow.com**

NOVEMBER 6: BLACKHAWK MEETING, 7:30 PM Gladys Fox Museum, 231 E 9th St., Lockport, IL. Program: TBA

November 7 & 8: Trainfest 2026, 9am-4pm Baird Center, 400 W Wisconsin Ave, Milwaukee, WI **nmra.org/trainfest-2026**

November 14: Lake Shore Model Railroad Fall 2026 80th Anniversary Open House, 11am-4pm Calumet Park Fieldhouse basement, 9801 South Avenue G, Chicago, IL **cwgreg@yahoo.com http://www.lakeshoremodelrr.org**

Also, local tourist railroads and museums are still open various dates throughout September, October, and November with many scheduled excursions and special events. Support local railroad preservation!

blackhawkrailwayhistoricalsociety.org/tourist-railroads-and-railroad-museums.html

Blackhawk Chapter News and Business

BLACKHAWK MOURNS LOSS OF ARTIST MITCH MARKOVITZ

Mitch Markovitz, father, artist, and railroader, passed away at the age of 75 at his home in Knox, Indiana on July 14, 2026.

Born and raised on Chicago's South Side, Mitch was mentored by his father, Bob Markovitz, a career freelance illustrator in Chicago advertising. Mitch went on to study art in Chicago and Milwaukee.

Mitch also fell in love with railroading and began his railroad career with the Chicago and Northwestern as a trainman, conductor, and ultimately engineer. He also worked for Amtrak, The Milwaukee Road, and finally retired from the Chicago, South Shore & South Bend as an engineer.

His last ride at the controls was June 14, 2026, on North Shore car #749 at the Illinois Railway Museum with his son, Matthew.

While with the South Shore, Mitch also served as the advertising director and chief illustrator and was their first Art Director and reestablished the famous South Shore's advertising posters based on hand-painted scenes of Northwest Indiana, inspired by similar posters issued by the railroad in the 1920s.

Mitch was highly regarded as an artist, and his paintings earned him many awards and commissions. Blackhawk commissioned Mitch to create a poster for the Chicago Railroad History Month project and he responded with a dazzling original work featuring several key elements from Chicago's 175-plus years of railroad history.

Mitch's legacy will live on in his railroad art and the memories he made with his friends and acquaintances in the railroad and railfan fields.

MEETINGS, SWAP MEETS RESUME

Our summer break is coming to an end with our next Lockport, Illinois meeting on Friday, September 11. We believe the street construction around the Gladys Fox Museum will be finished by our meeting date.

Our next Giffith, Indiana swap will be on Sunday, October 18 and we would like to remind EVERYONE that ALL Swap Meet inquires and requests for vendor tables MUST contact **John Eagan at 219-322-0997** or email him at **hoosierhobbies@aol.com**

ALSO, even though Blackhawk members get ONE free table with their Blackhawk membership, THAT TABLE IS STILL SUBJECT TO AVAILABLITY and ALL table reservations still have to be made with John.

If you have any questions about the above policy, reread the above paragraphs.

If you have any other questions,, go ahead and send an email to **blackhawknrhs@office.com**

Spike & Tie staff

Passenger Rail News

AMTRAK RIDERSHIP GAINS SUBDUED BY EQUIPMENT PROBLEMS

Amtrak is performing well nationally, according to Chris Koos, mayor of Normal, Illinois and a member of the Amtrak board. However, Amtrak's Illinois numbers were not as impressive.

"Ridership is at an all-time high in the United States. We've had…somewhere like nine months out of the last fiscal year record ridership and revenue on Amtrak, and it's continuing to grow. It's a problem, but it's a good problem to have because the demand for rolling stock and more trains is as high as it's ever been," said Koos talking to WGLT Radio.

The most growth in ridership happened on the Northeast Corridor where Amtrak put the new generation of Acela higher speed trains into service. Illinois ridership increased over 2024 numbers but still lagged behind each of the five years before the pandemic.

Illinois' passenger figures were held back by maintenance issues both older equipment and newer Venture cars and Charger locomotives.

Amtrak has faced numerous equipment problems this summer. For example, the *City of New Orleans* had three trainsets in which they found significant wheel damage. Amtrak, Canadian National, and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) working together could not find the cause of the damage along the route. Amtrak has had to change 31 wheelsets in New Orleans and Chicago, and one entire train's axles in Jackson, Mississippi.

On-time performance continues to be mixed: *Lincoln Service* trains from Chicago-to-St. Louis arrived on time 65.1% of the time, below Amtrak's goal of 80% on-time performance.

Long-distance trains running through multiple states record lower than average on-time performance because delays build over the length of the route. The Chicago-to-San Antonio *Texas Eagle* had an on-time performance of 46.7%.

The *City of New Orleans* was one of only four long-distance routes in the nation to hit the on-time performance target for longer routes of 70%.

Amtrak uses commercial railroad tracks for its routes and the main contributor to passenger delays is interference from freight haulers. That is even though freight rail companies are required by law to give Amtrak right of way. Freight trains are the leading cause of delays for Amtrak passenger trains.

Amtrak records show Canadian National and Union Pacific, which own the tracks used by the *Lincoln Service, Illini, and Saluki* trains through Central Illinois are significant contributors to delays. However, Amtrak executives said relations with host railroads are healthy. Several disputes were settled last year, including one that had lasted a decade.

Adapted from Amtrak Media, Trains Magazine, and WGLT

ILLINOIS SEEKS ANOTHER EXTENSION FOR CHICAGO-MOLINE FRA GRANT

In June, Illinois Senators Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth, along with Representative Eric Sorensen, sent a letter to DOT Secretary Sean Dufy and FRA head David Fink asking for an extension of an FRA grant for the Quad Cities Amtrak project. The letter says that the project is finally ready to proceed, and that the Iowa Interstate Railroad has agreed to the scope of the project. The grant expired on July 31st and was originally for $177 million, although documents from Illinois DOT show that much of the funds have been spent already.

The Iowa Association of Railroad Passengers board sent letters of support for the funding extension specifically calling for the need for the Moline section to be completed in order for expansion of service into Iowa.

Adapted from Iowa Assoc. of Railroad Passengers press release

AMTRAK GETS FUNDING, STRIKES DEAL WITH FUTURE WHITE SOX OWNER ON NEW CHICAGO SERVICE FACILITY

Several long-desired Chicago Amtrak projects were the big winners in August 2026's announcement of National Railroad Partnership Program grants, including funding for a new maintenance facility and awards for bridge and viaduct work.

The half-billion-dollar Midwest Maintenance Facility will be built at the former Union Pacific Global I intermodal facility. Amtrak says a new facility will allow for more efficient servicing of equipment while reducing service disruptions and turnaround time.

Seventeen national and regional Amtrak routes rely on Chicago for maintenance, and the current facilities no longer provide the space, configuration, or modern capabilities to support today's fleet or anticipated future growth.

"By committing substantial private capital and standing behind the delivery of this project, we are investing in the South Side, creating union jobs, and building infrastructure that will strengthen Chicago and the national rail network for generations," said Justin Ishbia, controlling shareholder of Canal Edge LLC, which will lead construction of the facility.

The new project will clear the way for the site of Amtrak's current yard and shops to change hands. Ishbia (who is also putting over $125 million of personal capital into the project) and his private equity firm, Shore Capital Partners, are seeking to buy that land as a site for a new ballpark for the Chicago White Sox. Ishbia also holds an option to buy the Major League Baseball team in 2029.

Pennsylvania RR's South Branch Chicago River Bridge, east of Canal Street (Library of Congress photo)

The shop relocation adds to the significance of the second grant for $37.2 million to rehabilitate the 110-year-old South Branch Bridge over the Chicago River, since traffic to and from the new facility would use that bridge. The current bridge has "significant reliability issues and maintenance needs" and has been known to have problems in closing properly during high temperatures.

A final grant for $87 million will rehabilitate or replace 17 bridges or viaducts and related structures in the area between Cermak and Pershing Roads south of Chicago Union Station (CUS).

The current Amtrak yard and shops are built on the former Pennsylvania Railroad passenger car facilities south of CUS.

Adapted from Trains Magazine, Crain's Chicago Business, Chicago Sun-Times, and others

Chicago Area Commuter Rail & Rapid Transit

METRA RESCHEDULES TEMPORARY WEEKEND ROCK ISLAND LINE CLOSURE

Delays caused by severe storms are forcing Metra to delay a previously announced closure of its Rock Island Line to the weekend of August 28-30.

The closure will begin Friday night, August 28. The last outbound Rock Island mainline train from Chicago to Joliet (Train 511) will depart LaSalle Street Station at 8:25 p.m., Friday, August 28 making all stops, except for 95th Street/Longwood, 103rd Street/Washington Heights on the mainline and 123rd Street and Prairie Street on the Beverly Branch.

Inbound, the last train (Train 512) will depart Joliet at 6:25 p.m. Service is scheduled to be restored in time for the Monday morning rush on August 31.

The shutdown is necessitated by the construction of the new Auburn Park Station at 79th Street in Chicago. As part of the new station project, the Metra bridges above the Norfolk Southern freight tracks at 79th Street need to be raised.

The shutdown will enable the first phase of this bridge lift. Future outages are required to complete this project and will be announced later.

With the Rock Island Line closed for the weekend, Metra is recommending commuters use the Metra Electric Line and the CTA's Red Line, along with connecting Pace and CTA bus routes.

Riders can plan a trip that meets their specific needs by using the RTA trip planner at **rtachicago.org** or by calling RTA Travel Information at 312-836-7000.

Adapted from Metra

Metra

METRA TO IMPLEMENT "REGIONAL RAIL" ON THE ROCK ISLAND LINE IN 2027

"Regional rail" is an industry term for service that runs more often throughout the day in both directions, as opposed to "commuter rail" that emphasizes service for 9-to-5 commuters and has less service in off-peak periods and directions.

Dealing with significant losses in funding and ridership since the pandemic, Illinois lawmakers passed legislation to reorganize Chicago-area public transit under the Northern Illinois Transit Authority (NITA), of which Metra is a part. A provision of the new law mandates that Metra launch a regional rail pilot on the Rock Island District by 2027.

Metra CEO Jim Derwinski described Rock Island schedule changes that started on June 1 as "Phase 0.5" of the pilot. This schedule expands weekend service, addressed gaps in weekday service, and changed some off-peak trains to better reflect ridership patterns and travel times. The next phase will be to separate Beverly branch service from mainline service, resulting in 30-minute service or better at mainline stations in Chicago.

Phase 2.0 will be to implement 30-minute service to the Tinley Park/Mokena area and hourly service south of there. Phase 3.0 would be 30-minute service to Joliet service, but that will take some massive (and so far unfunded) infrastructure improvements, including a flyover where the Rock Island crosses CN's ex-EJ&E line in East Joliet.

Metra has no timeline for Phases 2 and 3.

Adapted from Metra,
High Speed Rail Alliance and others

Freight News

CN AND UP REACH SETTLEMENT ON UP-NS MERGER

On July 22, 2026, the Union Pacific and CN announced they have signed a binding Memorandum of Understanding establishing a framework for CN to secure competitive access in connection with the proposed transaction between Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern.

Both railroads say that the agreement preserves customer options and resolves terminal railroad ownership issues, while expanding CN's presence in the Midwest and reaffirming gateway protections for all customers and railroads.

In that agreement, which is contingent on STB approval of the UP-NS merger:

- CN gains access to any shippers where Class I railroad options would be reduced from 2-to-1 or 3-to-2, where feasible.
- CN acquires Norfolk Southern's ownership interests in the Kansas City Terminal Railway Company (KCT) and the Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis (TRRA).
- CN gains access in the Midwest through overhead rights between Tuscola, Illinois, and East St. Louis, Illinois (former MP/C&EI), and rights to serve customers between St. Louis, Missouri, and Kansas City, Missouri. For the first time, CN will have a footprint in the heart of Kansas City, with usage of UP's Neff Yard.
- CN will not oppose the Union Pacific-Norfolk Southern merger. Both parties will collaborate through the STB process to ensure that this agreement takes effect.

UP CEO Jim Vena said. "From day one, we've said our merger with Norfolk Southern will preserve and enhance competitive options and create a stronger railroad industry that delivers better service for customers."

In addition, the two Class Is also agreed:

- UP will gain rights over CN's former Elgin, Joliet & Eastern, which will give UP a congestion-free route around Chicago to reach Norfolk Southern's former New York Central "Chicago Line" line leading to points in the East.
- CN will also gain operating rights over UP between Memphis and the Eagle Pass, Texas, gateway to Mexico, improving their position against rival CPKC, which can provide single-line service between Canada and Mexico.

UP CEO Jim Vena, who served as CN's chief operating officer from 2013 to 2016, noted that the EJ&E is the fastest route around Chicago. CN acquired the former U.S. Steel/Transtar railroad in 2009.

According to Vena, CN trains can make their way across "the J" in 12 hours or less compared to the average Chicagoland transit time of 35 hours.

"I've seen the benefits first-hand of what the EJ&E route around Chicago can do for a railroad, and we look forward to having access to the quickest way around Chicago," Vena said in a statement.

UP and CN want to move forward with the Mexico and EJ&E deals as soon as possible. Those agreements are not contingent upon the UP-NS merger gaining regulatory approval.

Adapted from UP and CN Press Releases, Trains Magazine, and others

History & Preservation News

Ex-C&NW FREIGHT DEPOT TO BE REVAMPED AS PASSENGER RAIL RETURNS TO ROCKFORD

An almost 125-year-old former railroad freight station from Rockford, Illinois' past is set to be resurrected to serve the expected return of passenger trains.

Kee Solutions, a local general contractor and construction company, is planning to renovate the old Chicago & Northwestern Freight Station at Cedar and South Church streets, along the rail line where the state plans to have its Rockford passenger stop.

The city-owned brick building would have 21-22 apartments, a restaurant and two other storefronts under the plan. The design incorporates a walk-through space for passengers getting off the train, as well as a bus drop-off and additional parking.

"This is a welcoming point to our city." said Luther Rainer, chief financial officer and co-owner of Kee Solutions. "We want it to be as welcoming and inviting as possible to people who come to our city."

"We are ecstatic that a train is coming to Rockford. We have worked on it for a long period of time, and we want to be prepared for it," Mayor Tom McNamara said. "This would be an opportunity to keep those buildings, make them productive, and also be an entryway to our community while providing housing and commerce."

There is still work to do before the project moves forward, including finalizing the plan with Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and presenting a redevelopment deal to City Council for a vote. Kee Solutions estimates total costs will be roughly $14 million.

Plans to return passenger rail service to the city have been talked about for roughly a quarter century, with three different governors promising to push the Chicago to Rockford passenger rail connection forward.

The latest came in July 2023, when Illinois Governor. J.B. Pritzker (D) came to town to announce passenger rail service in Rockford for the first time since 1981. Pritzker said at the time that the first trains operated by Metra on existing rail lines would depart by the end of 2027. IDOT told the Rock River Current that the timeline has not changed.

"The project team is fully engaged with Metra and Union Pacific to complete several agreements needed to move the project forward," IDOT said in response to questions from the Current. "We are hopeful to have a more detailed project schedule released later this year."

The two-story brick structure was built in 1902 as a freight depot, occupying the entire 400 block of Cedar Street. It was designed by Frost & Granger of Chicago, and was built by Charles W. Guidele & Co.

This building is one of two remaining railroad freight depots from the Rockford's railroad heyday, with the other in the Seventh Street Historic District.

In a historic moment for the property, the freight depot was the site of massive crowds that filled multiple city blocks on Nov. 5, 1932, when President Herbert Hoover stopped in Rockford.

"Clearly, having the train come to Rockford and having it stop next to a vacant building owned by the city of Rockford is not ideal," City Administrator Todd Cagnoni said. "Recognizing it has historic significance, if we can put a financially responsible project together, we'd like to advance it forward to City Council."

Adapted from Rock River Current

NS publicity photo

UNIQUE INTERMODAL EQUIPMENT PRESERVED AT MICHIGAN RR MUSEUM

Southern Michigan Railroad Society (SMRS) volunteers have built a display for their *Triple Crown Services* RoadRailer "Mark V" trailer, Bogie, and CouplerMate. These three pieces are assembled and on display at SMRS's museum in Clinton, Michigan.

RoadRailer was an intermodal equipment system that could be hauled on roads like a standard semi-truck and then operate in a train on railways. With RoadRailer, trailers were pulled in trains without the use of flatcars, attaching trailers directly to bogies/trucks.

RoadRailer was originally developed by the Chesapeake & Ohio in the 1950s and reintroduced in the early 1980s by the Bi-Modal Corporation. In the 1990s, under trailer manufacturer Wabash National, the concept finally evolved into the "Mark V" equipment represented in the display.

RoadRailers eliminated the need for the overhead or side loading cranes. Trailers could be driven in place with rails located in the pavement. Trains of up to 150 trailers could be assembled and ready to depart in less time than loading trailers in flatcars. With no rail cars, less weight is involved. With no gap between cars, wind drag is reduced which results in reduced fuel consumption. RoadRailer trains usually operated with one locomotive.

Conrail and Norfolk Southern (NS) had the most success using RoadRailers and became their biggest proponents. Other North American railroads tried the technology to various degrees but never fully embraced it. World railroads also sampled the technology and tried to implement it.

With the RoadRailer trailer fleet reaching its end of useful life and needing replacement, NS decided to finally pull the plug. The last runs between Detroit and Kansas City occurred in August of 2024.

Adapted from Southern Michigan Railroad Society and other sources

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INDIANA HERITAGE RAILROAD NEARLY WIPED OUT BY HISTORIC FLOODS

In the early morning hours of August 13, 2026, the West Fork of the Whitewater River crested at over 21 feet, decimating the towns of Connersville, Laurel, and Metamora in southeast Indiana.

Opened as a canal in 1845, the route was so damaged by floods in the 1850s that residents petitioned the state to sell the right of way for a railroad.

In 1863 the Indianapolis and Cincinnati Railroad built a line on the old towpath. The I&C eventually fell under the New York Central's "Big Four" system. As the rail network rationalized throughout the 60s and 70s, service wound down and Conrail sold the line between Metamora and Connersville to the non-profit Whitewater Valley Railroad in 1984.

Since then, volunteers with Whitewater Valley have slowly built a tourist railroad that attracted people and dollars to their community.

The August 2026 floods severely impacted their facilities, including the engine shop, the South Connersville base of operations, equipment, structures, and the track which suffered thousands of washouts. Early estimates indicate that total damages will reach into the millions of dollars.

All operations have ceased and they currently expect the rebuilding to last through most of 2027. To support the recovery and restoration efforts, please visit them on the web at **whitewatervalleyrr.org**

Adapted from Whitewater Valley

MILW 101-A, wearing UP passenger yellow, crosses the Soo Line at tower B-12 in Franklin Park, IL back in 1969 (John Riha photo)

IOWA TOWN ASKING FOR DONATIONS TO RESTORE MILWAUKEE ROAD FP7

Residents of Cresco, Iowa are coming together to preserve a piece history with the restoration of Milwaukee Road 101-A, an EMD FP7 built in LaGrange, Illinois in 1951. It was the first FP7 delivered to the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific. Purchased in 1984, 101-A was restored and put on display in Cresco's Beadle Park in 1985.

The restoration project is being carried out in three phases: replacing railroad ties and adding rock to the foundation, community fundraising campaigns and sponsorship opportunities, and finally a repaint and full restoration to its as-delivered appearance.

The original Milwaukee Road line through Cresco was abandoned in 1984, but the town still embraces its railroad history. According to local sources, in 1934 a class from St. Joseph Catholic School won a contest held by the Milwaukee Road to name their new passenger streamliner. The winning name, "Hiawatha," was chosen and the railroad brought the new streamliner to Cresco for a brief visit in 1936.

To make a donation, volunteer, or find out more, go to **www.crescochamber.com/BeadleParkTrain**

Adapted from Cresco Chamber of Commerce and Cresco Times Plain Dealer

SOO LINE 1003 TO CELEBRATE AMERICA'S 250th BIRTHDAY WITH SPECIAL RUN

On Sunday, September 26, 2026, the Steam Locomotive Heritage Association (SLHA), along with the Wisconsin Chapter of the NRHS, and the Soo Line Historical & Technical Society have announced a special run of Soo Line 2-8-2 #1003 between Hartford and Burnett, Wisconsin over Wisconsin & Southern tracks.

From a press release put out by the sponsoring groups: "the trip is free for the public to enjoy from designated public viewing locations along the route. Spectators are encouraged to bring their families and cameras to witness this rare opportunity to see living railroad history in operation."

The train pulled by the 1913-built Alco is scheduled to leave Hartford at 8:30 a.m. and get to Burnett at 10:30 a.m. where it will take on coal and then head back to Hartford.

The Steam Locomotive Heritage Association restored #1003 in September 2012, and the locomotive makes a limited number of public appearances every year. #1003 is stored, serviced, and available for viewing at the Wisconsin Automotive Museum, also in Hartford, Wisconsin.

Adapted from Steam Locomotive Heritage Association

the SPIKE and TIE

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

Blackhawk's next events...

MONTHLY MEETINGS – 7:30 PM
GLADYS FOX MUSEUM, 231 E 9TH STREET, LOCKPORT, IL

- **Friday, September 11, 2026***
  Program: WHAT DID YOU DO THIS SUMMER?
  Bring a USB drive with 10 minutes of what you did this summer.
  **Note meeting moved to 2nd Friday for this 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, October 18, 2026**
  Email **hoosierhobbies@aol.com** for more information