

Lehigh Valley Railroad Passenger Service Came To Icy End 25 Years Ago The Maple Leaf's Snowy Last Run

BY RON DEVLIN, THE ALLENTOWN MORNING CALL - FEBRUARY 2, 1986

It was purely coincidental that Paul Falstich was aboard the *Maple Leaf* passenger train as it made its way through a blinding snowstorm from Buffalo toward Allentown on that Saturday - February 4, 1961.

A driver for Howard Sober Inc. of Allentown, Falstich had delivered two new 1961 Mack trucks to Toronto and ended up making the trip back aboard the Lehigh Valley Railroad's (LVRR) eastbound passenger train.

He had done the same thing many times before - so many times that he had routinely purchased his return ticket to Allentown without even realizing he would be riding the *Maple Leaf* as it made its final run.

That trip, a treacherous journey down icy mountain grades and across windswept fields that must have looked like an Arctic landscape, was the LVRR's last regularly scheduled main line passenger run.

Although two self-propelled Budd passenger cars would continue operating between Lehigh and Hazleton for several more days, the *Maple Leaf's* last run officially ended the LVRR's 105-year history of railroad passenger service.

The final trip of the *Maple Leaf*, which was made 25 years ago Tuesday, was the beginning of the end of passenger service in the Lehigh Valley. The Central Railroad of New Jersey and the Reading Railroad would follow the LVRR and drop their passenger trains in the years that followed.

Falstich, who is one of the few remaining people who made the historic trip, still talks about it with a tinge of sadness in his voice.

"It was pretty decent service. You made good time," the now-retired truck driver says. "I hated to see it go."

The Lehigh Valley Railroad may be best remembered for carrying anthracite from the coal fields of Schuylkill and Carbon counties to the burgeoning 19th century industries of the Lehigh Valley and Philadelphia areas.

But by June 1855, within nine years of its founding by industrialist Asa Packer, the Lehigh Valley's four locomotives were carting passengers between Easton and south Allentown. And only a few months later, the run was extended to Mauch Chunk.

Packer, who operated the railroad in its early years, observed in October 1855 that receipts from the passenger division were "very satisfactory, in fact, larger than anticipated."

Robert Sayre, who did much of the original engineering and planning work, reported that in its first full year of operation, the line carried 128,158 passengers at 60 cents each.

In 1860, company records show, a "commodious and handsome brick station house" was built in Allentown, providing "a very general satisfaction to the citizens as well as the traveling public."

But a century later, when it asked the Interstate Commerce Commission for permission to discontinue what was left of its passenger service, the Lehigh Valley was losing more money on passenger service each year than it took to build the railroad in 1846.

In the first seven months of 1960, the railroad reported losses on its passenger service of \$1.3 million, about \$100,000 more than it took to build the line.

Lehigh Valley executives blamed the automobile, the airplane and relatively inexpensive bus transportation for the

demise of the passenger train. And they claimed that the federal government, with its subsidies of highway and airport construction, drove the nails into the passenger trains' coffin.

Whatever the reason for its demise, the ICC eventually agreed that the burden to the LVRR outweighed the public's interest in maintaining the service.

In May 1959, the LVRR discontinued its most famous passenger train, the *Black Diamond Express*, when the ICC allowed the line to reduce its passenger service to four trains - daily runs to and from New York City to Buffalo and New York City to Lehigh.

But two years later, the ICC cleared the way for the railroad to discontinue the remaining passenger runs. Although the ICC called for a 30-day waiting period, the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) gave the LVRR permission to discontinue service as of midnight on Feb. 4, thereby setting the date for the end of an era.

It was, perhaps, fitting that the *Maple Leaf* would make its last run in the worst snowstorm in years.

The real storm was symbolic of the financial and regulatory climate that had pelted the railroads for decades.

Battered and slowed but not stopped, the train seemed determined to show that it could take on even nature at its angriest. It was like the last charge of a wounded animal - nothing could stop it.

When it pulled into the Union Station at Bethlehem nearly eight hours late, the tip of its engine barely visible amid the blowing snow, the *Maple Leaf* had the eerie look of a ghost train.

A wall of snow and ice several feet thick covered the front of the lead ALCO-PA diesel, a late 1940s model built by the American Locomotive Co. and General Electric in Schenectady, N.Y.

Icicles a foot long hung from the sides of the two 2,000-horsepower diesel engines, eight passenger cars and baggage car that made up the train. The engine and cars were entirely white with snow, except for a few blotches of Cornell red, the color of the LVRR passenger cars.

G. Comegys, a Lehigh Valley railroad enthusiast better known as Choo Choo Charlie, remembers the train as "a slowly rolling snowball coming down the tracks."

One of the few people who greeted the train, he trudged through snow up to his knees to make it to Union Station, where he waited for several hours until the train arrived at 1:47 p.m. It had been due at 6:26 a.m., according to the LVRR's last Schedule of Trains.

"I expected to see more color," he says. "But I couldn't see anything - not the wheels, not the rails. This thing was just creeping down the tracks."

With a tiny Kodak Brownie Hawkeye, the Liberty High School student took what are among the few remaining photographs of the *Maple Leaf* on its final run.

"I miss those diesels," he says now. "They were honorary steam engines."

Choo Choo, who worked on the LVRR at Buffalo in the mid-1960s, says the old diesels smoked like a steam locomotive and made a lot of noise.

"They were smooth, but loud," he recalls, explaining that the engines started slowly but then took off quickly. "They reminded me of a 1955 Buick."

The *Maple Leaf* left Buffalo for the last time at 10:50 p.m. February 3rd.

Actually, there were two *Maple Leaf* trains - the No. 7 train ran westbound between New York City and Buffalo; No. 8 ran eastbound.

The train, which began the run in 1925, was so named because of an arrangement with the Canadian National Railway (CNR). The westbound run contained LVRR cars that were destined for Canada and the eastbound had CNR cars headed for New York City. The passengers stayed aboard while the cars were exchanged at DePew, N.Y.

That's how Paul Falstich, who boarded the CNR in Toronto, happened to be on the *Maple Leaf's* last run.

"It was a rough ride. We bounced around a lot," the Allentown man recalls.

With about 90 passengers aboard, the train battled drifting snow from the time it left Buffalo. It lost time progressively, but suffered its most severe encounter in a huge snowdrift that covered the tracks at Coxtown, south of Wilkes-Barre.

The lead engine, No. 603, stalled in the drift. It took three extra diesel motor units to pull the train over the Mountaintop grade and send it on its way south to Lehigh.

The train was about six hours late when it pulled into Lehigh, where a fresh crew took over.

Franklin Begel, who took over as conductor, says a club car was added at Lehighton. He says the train was about three-quarters full.

"I didn't think it was possible that they would ever discontinue passenger service," says Begel, a Lehighton man who retired from the LVRR in 1979 after 38 years of service. "There was a lot of business."

Among those who took the last ride was Carl Baker, LVRR vice president for operations, who, *The Morning Call* reported, took the ride for "sentimental reasons."

It was a happy ending for C.A. Brigham, the conductor, who retired after he was relieved by Begel in Lehighton. *The Sunday Call-Chronicle* reported that Brigham, who had been with the LVRR for 52 years, threw his conductor's hat into the railroad office in Lehighton and announced his retirement. "I'm tickled to death that this is my last run," the paper quoted Brigham as saying.

Begel, who is 70, recalls that Brigham got a ride to Stroudsburg and boarded a train to his upstate New York home. He died some years later, Begel said.

The trip turned out to be less than memorable for James J. O'Connell Jr., a writer for the *Chicago Tribune* Syndicate. It came to a premature end when he took time to shave at Union Station and missed the train when it pulled out of Bethlehem at 2:30 p.m.

William Mackey, then the ticket agent at Bethlehem, was quoted in *The Morning Call* as saying about 35 to 50 persons left Bethlehem on that bone-chilling winter morning in 1961.

The *Maple Leaf* never did complete its final run, which was to end in the Pennsylvania Station in Manhattan.

Begel says that when it arrived in Newark, the Pennsylvania Railroad refused to take the LVRR passenger train into New York. Instead, its passengers boarded a Pennsy train for the final leg of their historic journey.

Begel, who still lives in Lehighton, said the *Maple Leaf's* engine derailed on a service line in the icy Newark yards. It was not damaged. Eventually, it was returned to the LVRR shops in Lehighton for storage.

It is not known what happened to the *Maple Leaf*.

On Feb. 3, *The Morning Call* quoted Baker as saying the LVRR would sell its 14 locomotives and 100 passenger, dining and baggage cars within 30 days. He said American railroads would be given preference, but indicated that Canadian and Mexican lines would also be offered the equipment.

Choo Choo Charlie says some of the passenger cars were sold to Mexican railroads. He doesn't know the specific fate of No. 603, but said the ALCO-PA diesels were used to haul freight after the passenger service was discontinued. About 1964, the LVRR traded in its remaining ALCO-PA units on newer freight engines known as C-420s.

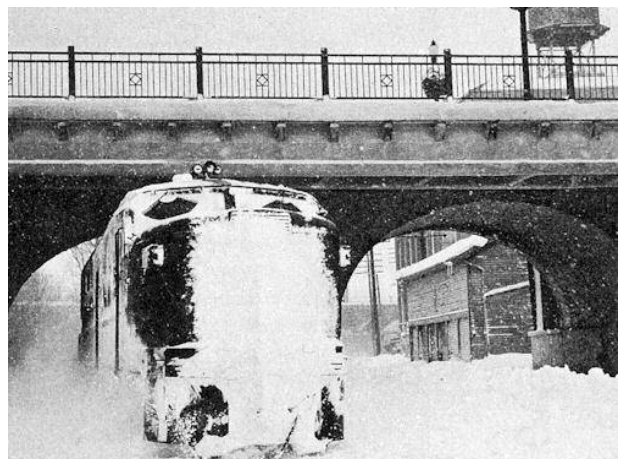
C.A. Major, LVRR president, lamented the passing of the *Maple Leaf* as "one of the saddest things that has happened in our 115-year history."

Major chastised the government for failing to recognize that railroads needed help in competing with other modes of transportation.

But Major remained confident that the LVRR, indeed all railroads, would return to their once-prominent role in the nation's transportation system. He expressed hope that President John F. Kennedy, who had taken office only a month before the LVRR discontinued passenger service, would do something to help the railroads.

"Passenger service may someday return," he said.

LEHIGH VALLEY No. 603, AN ALCO MODEL PA1, POWERS THE LAST EASTBOUND MAPLE LEAF AT ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA ON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1961





THE POWER DIRECTOR

“NEWS FROM THE RAILROAD WIRES”



AMTRAK STREAMLINES CORPORATE STRUCTURE

WASHINGTON, Jan. 5, 2017, *Railway Age* - Amtrak announced Jan. 4 several significant management and organizational changes instituted by President and CEO Wick Moorman.

Effective immediately, Moorman reduced by half the senior management team into six direct reports: Operations - Scot Naparstek, Chief Operating Officer; Marketing and Business Development - Jason Molfetas, Executive Vice President; Finance - Jerry Sokol, Chief Financial Officer; Law - Eldie Acheson, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary; Administration - DJ Stadtler, Chief Administrative Officer; Planning, Technology and Public Affairs - Stephen Gardner, Executive Vice President

“Since joining the Amtrak team in September, I’ve been impressed by the dedication and passion of our employees and leadership team,” said Moorman. “This new structure aligns with our focus on improving the way we do business, modernizing and enhancing the customer experience, and investing in the future.”

Also, train operations will be managed regionally through three general managers and supported by Mechanical, Engineering, Network Support, Police and Security organizations.

A new Administration group will manage key administrative and support functions including Human Resources, Labor Relations, Procurement and Enterprise Project Management.

Certain corporate planning, IT and station and facility functions, as well as the Government Affairs and Corporate Communications division, will be transferred to the new Planning, Technology, and Public Affairs group.

Amtrak says “the changes will also allow Amtrak more organizational flexibility to fully comply with the new account structure created in the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act), and will provide greater transparency to Amtrak’s customers and stakeholders. Congress included Amtrak reauthorization for the first time ever in the 2015 surface transportation bill, affirming the importance of Amtrak’s network of service that connects more than 500 rural and urban communities in 46 states.”

These changes arrive before Amtrak plans to relocate its headquarters. After 30 years in Washington Union Station, Amtrak is looking to move its main offices to another location in Washington D.C.

Additional details on the reorganization are in a letter (edited) that Moorman sent to Amtrak senior executives:

We are consolidating the senior team into six direct reports to the CEO, effective immediately. This change will streamline decision-making, increase alignment between departments, and establish clear areas of accountability.

These six groups and their respective Executive Vice Presidents are:

- Operations: Scot Naparstek, Chief Operating Officer (COO). The Operations group will be reorganized to strengthen our focus on safety, service delivery, productivity and capital project execution. The product development, planning, and contract management functions of the current Business Lines, certain customer service functions and some onboard service personnel for certain products will be transferred to the new Business Development and Product Support and Management organizations within the Marketing and Sales group. Train operations will be managed regionally through Vice Presidents of Operations and supported by Safety, Compliance and Training; Mechanical; Engineering; Network Support; Amtrak Police; and Corporate Security organizations.

Additionally, certain planning and station and facility functions will be transferred to the new Planning, Technology and Public Affairs group.

All departments and functions currently within Operations will continue to report to Naparstek until Feb. 1, 2017. At that time, the following new and existing departments and functions will report directly to him, and all previous organizations will be merged within this structure or transferred to other groups:

- Operations, East: Michael DeCataldo, Vice President.
- Operations, Central: To be announced.
- Operations, West: Jay Commer, Vice President.
- Mechanical: Mario Bergeron, Chief Mechanical Officer.
- Engineering: Rodrigo Bitar, Chief Engineer.
- Safety, Compliance and Training: Dave Nichols, Vice President.
- Network Support: Robin McDonough, Vice President.
- Amtrak Police: Neil Trugman, Chief and Assistant Vice President.
- Corporate Security: Susan Reinertson, Assistant Vice President.

Further details regarding changes within the Operations organization will be announced later.

- Marketing and Business Development: Jason Molfetas, Executive Vice President. The newly formed Marketing and Business Development group will be expanded from the current Marketing and Sales department to create greater focus on the development and management of our key products and streamlined to align this work with Amtrak’s broader marketing and branding efforts. The product development, planning, and contract management functions of the current Business Lines and customer service functions within Operations, together with certain staff from the Government Affairs and Infrastructure and Investment Development groups, will be transferred to new Business Development and Product Support and Management organizations within this group. All departments and functions currently within the Marketing and Sales organization will continue to report to Molfetas until Feb. 1, 2017. At that time, the following new and existing departments and functions will report directly to him and all previous organizations will be merged within this structure:

- Northeast Corridor Business Development: Mark Yachmetz, Vice President.
- State Supported Services Business Development: Joe McHugh, Vice President.
- Long Distance Services Business Development: Mark Murphy, Vice President.
- Passenger Experience: Tom Hall, Vice President.
- Product Support and Management: To Be Announced.
- Marketing: Rob Friedman, Vice President.

In addition, a newly formed group for Commuter and Ancillary Services Business Development has been created, and will be led by Paul Vilter, Assistant Vice President. Vilter will report to Mark Murphy. Further details regarding changes within the Marketing and Business Development organization will be announced later this month.

- Finance: Jerry Sokol, Chief Financial Officer (CFO). The Finance department will continue to report to Sokol, with further organizational changes to come within the department over the coming months. Procurement will now report to DJ Stadtler, CAO, effective immediately.

• **Law:** Eldie Acheson, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary (GC). All departments and functions currently reporting to the Law Department will continue to report to Acheson.

• **Administration:** DJ Stadtler, Executive Vice President, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). As the new CAO, Stadtler will be responsible for a newly-named Human Resources department. The new HR department will be developed from the current Human Capital organization and led by Byl Herrmann, Vice President, effective immediately. Herrmann will assume this role from Barry Melnkovic, who is retiring from the company. I want to thank Barry for his years of service and dedication to Amtrak. Joining Human Resources in Administration will be Labor Relations, led by Charlie Woodcock, Vice President; Procurement, led by Bud Reynolds, Assistant Vice President; and the Enterprise Project Management Office (ePMO), led by Sarina Arcari, Assistant Vice President, effective immediately. Further details regarding changes within the Administration organization will be announced later this month.

• **Planning, Technology, and Public Affairs:** Stephen Gardner, Executive Vice President. The new Planning, Technology and Public Affairs group will bring together the network and corporate planning, infrastructure access, government affairs and corporate communications and strategy groups. It will also include fleet planning, real estate, and various station and facility management, maintenance and development functions to better coordinate the long-term development of the company's key assets and services. In addition, IT will be integrated into this group, as it is an essential function for our current operations across the country, as well as a driver of our future success. All departments and functions currently reporting to Gardner will continue to do so, with IT now reporting to him as well, effective immediately.

On Feb. 1, 2017, Gardner's new organization will include the following:

- **Planning:** To be announced.
- **IT:** Ghada Ijam, Chief Information Officer.
- **Government Affairs and Corporate Communications:** Caroline Decker, Vice President.
- **Real Estate, Stations and Facilities:** Bart Bush, Vice President.

Further details regarding changes within the Planning, Technology and Public Affairs organization will be announced later this month.

Additionally, as part of these changes, we will simplify our titling for senior officials by adopting a three-level titling structure of Executive Vice President, Vice President and Assistant Vice President to apply to all such positions. I understand that many of you will have questions about these changes. We will follow this announcement up with more information as it becomes available, and I'd ask for your patience, continued focus—especially on safety—and dedication to our mission as we work through this transition. On behalf of our entire leadership team, I want to thank you for everything you've done so far to make Amtrak successful. You are an important part of our continued success and I'm excited for the journey ahead of us, starting with the launch of this new organization.



UPGRADES TO ALLOW FOR MORE FREQUENT, RELIABLE AND FASTER RAIL SERVICE ALONG THE NORTHEAST CORRIDOR RECOMMENDED

WASHINGTON, Dec. 16, 2016, [FRA Press Release \(Edited\)](#) - After four years of working with the Northeast states, federal and state partner agencies and dozens and dozens of public meetings, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) today recommended a vision to build a better and stronger Northeast Corridor (NEC) over the next 30 years.

In 2012, at the urging of Congress, all Northeast states and the Federal Railroad Administration began working together to develop a vision that would help guide and coordinate planning and investments. For more than four years, and including numerous agency and public meetings, the Northeast states and FRA have engaged stakeholders about their ideas,

hopes, recommendations and concerns about the future of the NEC. The extensive outreach has included broad stakeholder engagement from individuals, elected leaders, civic organizations in small townships and business leaders.

What quickly became clear, and was universally agreed, is that the corridor's current capacity is vastly inadequate. Today's NEC simply cannot meet the demands of today—or tomorrow.

The recommendation announced today by the FRA would increase reliability and provide more options by:

- Adding new tracks to increase the Northeast Corridor to four tracks in most locations, which would allow for more frequent and faster service. Additional tracks would be added to areas with greater demand.
- Providing intercity access to Philadelphia Airport so that passengers do not have to change trains at 30th Street.
- Adding direct and frequent service to Hartford, Conn., and Springfield, Mass.
- Increasing, and in some cases doubling, the number of regional trains and providing up to five times more intercity trains.

The recommendation would improve travel times:

- Travel from Boston to New York City would be 45 minutes faster (total time of 2 hours, 45 minutes).
- Travel from New York City to Washington, D.C., would be 35 minutes faster (total time of 2 hours, 10 minutes).

While the recommendation made today would grow the role of rail along the Northeast Corridor, it prioritizes bringing the current corridor back to good condition, or a state of good repair, first.

With the corridor returned to good condition, the recommendation includes projects that will allow for even faster and more reliable service, along with more options for commuters and travelers. The recommendation is also projected to create 47,000 jobs each year, for 30 years.

The recommendation FRA released today is just that – a recommendation for what FRA believes the Northeast Corridor could be in the future. In fact, it will now be up to states, cities and railroads to take next steps and decide whether to move forward with any specific projects. Each individual project, just like any other infrastructure project in this country, will require more review and more environmental studies, as well as significant funding.

FRA believes that today's recommendation is a strong one and should move forward. To do that, it will require the business community, railroads, states, Congress and the millions of people who use the NEC every day to make it clear that this is a necessary and worthy investment.



FIRST SIEMENS BRIGHTLINE TRAINSET DEPARTS SACRAMENTO

SACRAMENTO, CA., Dec. 14, 2016, [Railway Age & Siemens](#) - Siemens announced Dec. 14 that its first Brightline trainset, comprised of two locomotives and four coaches adorned in Brightline Blue, is complete and has left the company's manufacturing hub in Sacramento, Calif. Prior to its departure, hundreds of Siemens employees who worked on the trainset gathered alongside to commemorate the completion and say "bon voyage," shown in the photo below.



The first trainset is approximately 489 feet long and is being transported across the country via rail, journeying 3,052 miles from Sacramento to Florida. Construction on the first car shell began in July 2015. Four additional trainsets for

Brightline's first phase are being built at Siemens. Brightline expects delivery of these additional trainsets in four additional bright hues: pink, red, orange and green, by the end of March.

Brightline's trains are built as integrated trainsets, comprised of two diesel-electric Siemens Charger locomotives and four stainless steel coaches. Siemens says "these clean diesel-electric locomotives will meet the highest emissions standards set by the federal government. The integration improves ride quality and makes for a much quieter ride. There is a locomotive on each end, for high reliability and redundancy." A Cummins QSK95 high-speed (1,800-rpm) EPA Tier 4-compliant diesel engine powers each Charger locomotives

The trainsets, 100% Buy America compliant, are being built by 1,000 employees at Siemens' 60-acre rail manufacturing hub.

"Having our first Brightline trainset completed and on its way to Florida is a major accomplishment and brings us one step closer to the introduction of our innovative new train service," said Michael Reininger, president of Brightline. "Once in Florida, our operations team will begin the required testing as we ready to launch Brightline between Miami, Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach next summer."

Florida East Coast Industries subsidiary All Aboard Florida developed and will operate the Brightline service, using shared right-of-way with the Florida East Coast Railway.



FIRST TRAIN RUNS THROUGH NEW VIRGINIA AVENUE TUNNEL

CSX Double-Stack Clears Rail Corridors Between Mid-Atlantic Ports and Midwest Destinations

WASHINGTON, D.C., Dec. 23, 2016, [CSX News Release](#) (Edited) - CSX today announced the on-time completion of the first phase of the new Virginia Avenue Tunnel project in Washington, D.C., clearing the way for trains to transport double-stacked intermodal freight between Mid-Atlantic seaports and the Midwest on CSX's railroad network.

The Virginia Avenue Tunnel is the last of 61 clearance projects that comprise the \$850 million National Gateway Initiative, an innovative public-private partnership announced in 2008 to create more-efficient pathways for rail freight between key U.S. markets through investment in critical transportation infrastructure.



RAIL OFFICIALS GREETED TRAIN Q135-22, POWERED BY CSX ET44AH No. 3319, AS IT EXITED THE TUNNEL ON THE MORNING OF DEC. 23 - EDWARD KERNS II PHOTO.

completed on schedule in mid-2018.

When both tunnels are complete, the Virginia Avenue Tunnel project will relieve a significant Mid-Atlantic rail bottleneck that impacts freight and passenger service in the region as the growing volume of rail traffic has consumed the capacity of the existing infrastructure.

In addition, truck traffic, carbon emissions and wear-and-tear on the region's highways will be reduced as shippers take advantage of the more-efficient and environmentally friendly rail service made possible by the project. The project is replacing an existing tunnel, portions of which were first constructed in 1870, that does not provide sufficient vertical clearance for double-stack intermodal containers and is not wide enough to allow a two-track rail configuration.

The first CSX freight train passed through the new southern tunnel of the two-tunnel project at 8 a.m. today, carrying double-stacked intermodal freight containers between Portsmouth, Va., and North Baltimore, Ohio. Work on the northern tunnel has already begun, and the entire project is expected to be

Nationally, the award-winning National Gateway Initiative is expected to create more than 50,000 jobs and deliver a host of benefits including reduced fuel consumption, lower emissions, improved safety, lower highway maintenance costs and reduced shipping costs. The project is expected to deliver more than \$10 billion in public benefits in its first 30 years of operations – a return of \$36 in public benefits for every \$1 of public money invested.

The National Gateway Initiative has been supported by the District of Columbia, Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia, as well as a diverse group of 336 public and private-sector organizations and individuals, including Big Lots!, UPS and The Limited.

On December 15, Maryland submitted an application for a U.S. Department of Transportation FASTLANE grant to double-stack clear the Howard Street Tunnel and ten highway/rail crossings in Baltimore, which would remove the final impediments to a fully double-stack cleared rail corridor between Florida and New York. The Howard Street Tunnel project, if funded, will generate competitive advantages for the Port of Baltimore, remove additional trucks from the nation's highways and create more than \$640 million in benefits to 25 eastern states. CSX has committed to contribute \$145 million of the funding required to complete the project.



a Genesee & Wyoming Company

GENESEE & WYOMING DEBUTS NEW PROVIDENCE & WORCESTER LOGO

By Scott A. Hartley, Jan. 5, 2017, [Trains News Wire](#)
DARIEN, Conn. — The "i"s are dotted, the "t"s are crossed and the Providence & Worcester Railroad now has a new logo to mark its entry into the Genesee & Wyoming family of railroads.

The Surface Transportation Board granted authority for G&W to buy the Class III railroad on Dec. 15. And G&W executives began further integration on Jan. 3 confirming that the famed New England short line will be part of G&W's North American Northeast Region, with headquarters in Rochester, N.Y., and unveiling P&W's new logo on their website.

The logo outlines P&W's original route in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, accented with the railroad's 1844 charter date. P&W's largest presence is in Connecticut and it operates in New York, as well, but the new logo recognizes the railroad's original Providence, R.I.-Worcester, Mass. route, according to Michael E. Williams, G&W corporate communications vice president. The design was specified and chosen by P&W employees, Williams tells [Trains News Wire](#).



LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD TRAIN DERAILS, MORE THAN 100 INJURED

NEW YORK, Jan 4, 2017, [Trains News Wire](#) -



A Long Island Rail Road train has derailed Wednesday morning at the Atlantic Terminal station in Brooklyn. The [New York Times](#) reports that more than 100 people are injured, but that none of the injuries appear to be life threatening.

According to the Metropolitan

Transportation Authority, the cause of the incident is under investigation. The MTA has been in contact with the Federal Railroad Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board is en route.

The incident involved train No. 2817, scheduled to depart from Far Rockaway at 7:18 a.m. and due into Atlantic Terminal, Brooklyn, at 8:11 a.m. The train was six cars long and carrying about 430 passengers.

Atlantic Terminal has six tracks and three platforms. There have been no delays this morning as result of the incident, and no delays are expected

during evening rush hour service. The underground terminal was formerly known as Flatbush Avenue.

Photos from the area show broken glass and debris around the station area and several passengers trying to de-train.



UNION ASKS FEDERAL REGULATORS TO STOP LEASE OF NORFOLK SOUTHERN DELMARVA SECONDARY

WASHINGTON, D.C., Dec. 15, 2016, *Trains* News Wire - A rail labor union has asked the Surface Transportation Board to halt Norfolk Southern's lease of its Delmarva Secondary to a new short line, the Delmarva Central Railroad.

"This impending lease has many economic and safety considerations that should be investigated by the board prior to final approval," officials with the Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, and Transportation workers union's Transportation Division said in their filing with the STB. "This petition is filed with hopes that the STB will revoke the authority to acquire and lease operations."

NS plans to lease 162 miles of track to the Delmarva Central, a Carload Express short line, as part of its system-wide cost-cutting initiatives. The line includes trackage in Delaware and Maryland.

Rail labor claims that the short line would not have the financial resources necessary to properly maintain three major bridges on the route, including a swing bridge that the union says was unable to turn for 30 days due to unspecified problems.

SMART's letter also raised concerns about replacing the line's union members with, "untrained and unfamiliar employees" who will earn less than Class I railroad employees.

An NS spokesman said the railroad would file a response to the union's letter with the STB.



GOTTHARD BASE TUNNEL OPENS

By William C. Vantuono, Editor-in-Chief, *Railway Age*

Sunday, Dec. 11, 2016 was the opening of one of the world's engineering marvels: the Gotthard Base Tunnel under the Swiss Alps, the world's longest and deepest railway tunnel.



EURO CITY AT THE SOUTH PORTAL OF THE GOTTHARD BASE TUNNEL - ALL PHOTOS FROM PRNewsFoto, SWISS TRAVEL SYSTEM AG

The 35.3-mile-long (57 km) double-track tunnel will enable passengers to speed under the Alps in some 17 minutes, bringing northern and southern Switzerland closer together, reducing travel time by 30 to 40 minutes between German-language and Italian-language Switzerland. It is 7,546 feet (2,300 meters) beneath the Gotthard massif at its deepest point. The Swiss Federal Railways (SBB) has

now finished exhaustive safety and technical tests.

Why construct the Gotthard Base Tunnel? "The mobility requirements of Switzerland's growing population have increased greatly over the past 100 years," say officials. "Current forecasts indicate that the country's transport sector will continue to expand. In addition, Switzerland's strategic location at the crossroads of the continent makes it a highly important hub for European goods traffic. Swiss government policy is to ensure sustained mobility by increasing the public transport share of overall traffic and providing reliable basic services nationwide. Within this long-term program, protection of the environment and the population has been accorded high priority.

"The NRLA (New Railway Link through the Alps) is one of four ambitious

projects undertaken by the government, of which the Gotthard Base Tunnel is the flagship focal point. As a level transalpine railway link with few gradients, the tunnel complements Switzerland's existing mountain rail routes. It will also enable higher traveling speeds and permit the use of heavy freight trains."

Construction of the Gotthard Base Tunnel was financed initially through a nationwide vote in 1998, when the Swiss electorate approved funding for the construction of the NRLA. Voters backed the "Finöv" program for the long-term funding of public transport, through revenues generated by Value Added Tax (VAT), a performance-linked levy on heavy traffic, and a mineral oil tax.

Wholly owned SBB subsidiary Alp Transit Gotthard constructed the Gotthard segment of NRLA. A general contractor was tasked with installing the railway systems and above-ground sections. The Transtec Gotthard Consortium (Alpiq, Alcatel-Lucent/Thales, Renaissance and Balfour Beatty Rail) handled planning, installation and commissioning of the railway systems. The construction work and installation of the railway infrastructure were completed by early June 2016. Alp Transit Gotthard then handed over the tunnel to the government and to operator SBB for final test runs.

It has taken 23 years to construct the Gotthard Base Tunnel. The first examination of the geological fault zone in the Gotthard Massif was carried out in 1993 with the construction of an exploratory tunnel. The second NRLA construction site was opened three years later. The first drill-and-blast operation was undertaken in 1999. The first breakthrough in one of the tunnels was in October 2010, and 2011 saw excavation completed. Work on the infrastructure (including track, catenary, electricity supply, telecommunications and safety systems) ended with the handover to SBB on June 1, 2016 for the operational testing phase.

With the construction of the Gotthard Base Tunnel, Switzerland implemented one of Europe's most ambitious environmental protection projects. From concept to completion, construction was carried out as environmentally compatible as possible. Measures were taken to reduce the impact on people, wildlife, water and air. Alp Transit Gotthard said it "was in constant dialogue with environmental authorities in finding workable solutions." Measures included environmentally compatible material transport to ensure clean air, strict guidelines concerning waste water, dust and noise protection, protection of flora and fauna as well as sustainable use of the stone extracted from the mountain.

"The Gotthard Base Tunnel's top priority is passenger safety, necessitating implementation of a modern safety concept," officials said. "The tunnel system consists of two directionally separated single-track tubes connected by cross passages located every 1,066 feet (32 meters). In an emergency these would serve as rapidly accessible evacuation routes into the other tube. At the one-third-way points of the tunnel at Faido and Sedrun, emergency-stop stations in both tubes are connected to the parallel tube through six connection tunnels. The way to these tunnels is indicated by signs, emergency lights, and handrails. In the event of evacuation, trained railway personnel will provide assistance. Overpressure ensures that the air remains smoke free. Fans provide fresh air in the emergency stop stations; hot fumes are sucked out through extraction openings. Travelers can then be collected in the opposite tube by an evacuation train."

The Gotthard Base Tunnel reduces travel times by 30 to 40 minutes, compared to the existing Alpine railway link over the Gotthard. Travel between Milan and Zurich, for example, is reduced from 4 hours, 3 minutes to 3 hours, 33 minutes. The existing Alpine railway link with its numerous bridges, loop tunnels and summit tunnel (built in 1882) will continue in service, but reduced to an hourly schedule, with a RegioExpress connecting with intercity trains in Erstfeld, Bellinzona and Lugano.

The other piece of the NRLA is the Lötschberg Base Tunnel, which became operational in December 2007. Today, some 50 passenger trains and up to 60 freight trains operate through the Lötschberg tunnel each day. By comparison, figures for the Gotthard Base Tunnel are up to 160 freight trains and 50 passenger trains daily.



SEPTA, BLET, SMART-UTU JOIN FRA CLOSE CALL REPORTING SYSTEM

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 13, 2016, **Railway Track & Structures (Edited)** The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET),

SMART United Transportation Union-Local 61 (SMART-UTU) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) signed an Implementing Memorandum of Understanding (IMOU) on Dec. 12 to join the Confidential Close Call Reporting System (C3RS).

C3RS is described as an FRA-sponsored, voluntary and confidential program that encourages transparency and allows railroad carriers and industry employees to report close calls. The program aims to facilitate a safe environment for reporting hazardous instances and conditions. The program protects reporting employees from disciplinary actions against them and from FRA enforcement, and railroads are protected from FRA enforcement for reported risks, as well.

SEPTA employees will now have the ability to anonymously report safety risks without fear of consequences. As a C3RS site, SEPTA is among carriers including Amtrak, New Jersey Transit, Metra, MBTA, Long Island Railroad and Metro North.

The C3RS system will allow SEPTA conductors and engineers to submit notices of safety concerns online or by U.S. mail to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The program uses NASA as an independent third party federal agency to analyze all C3RS data, redact employee names and contact information and return the reports to a peer review team including SEPTA managers, the unions and FRA officials for review.

Knueppel added that the C3RS program, paired with the implementation of positive train control, is expected to significantly improve SEPTA's safety.

THIS MONTH ON THE PENNSY

PRR, PRSL & LIRR EVENTS IN FEBRUARY

Feb. 14, 1906 - PRR tests Strang gasoline-electric railcar *Ogerita* on Frazer-West Chester line and Downingtown & Lancaster Branch; the *Ogerita* was built by the J. G. Brill Company with power plant by the Strang Electric Railway Car Company of New York City.

Feb. 13, 1910 - PRR announces it now has 324 all-steel passenger cars in service: 245 coaches, 21 combines, 10 diners, 29 baggage cars, 18 postal cars and one office car.

Feb. 14, 1915 - First position-light signals placed in service between Overbrook and Bryn Mawr; designed to provide high-visibility replacement for semaphores in electrified territory; eventually adopted as PRR standard.

Feb. 27, 1921 - PRR announces a new system of dedicated telephone lines to inform commuters on the Paoli Line of delays to trains; lines run from Broad Street to all station agents, who are equipped with bulletin boards to post any delay over 15 minutes.

Feb. 24, 1925 - Seven-car Philadelphia local rear-ends 10 car southbound Atlantic Coast Line express standing in Manhattan Transfer station; blamed on partially closed angle cock in brake line; 3 killed, 32 injured.

Feb. 27, 1930 - LIRR places ad in papers stating its intent to order new cars and increase train length to 11 and 12 cars; has equipped five cars with 3-2 seating as an experiment.

Feb. 6, 1935 - GG1 No. 4800 and modified P5a No. 4775 placed on display at Philadelphia prior to start of revenue electric service to Washington.

Feb. 12, 1940 - PRR completes cab signal system without wayside signals between "JD" Conpitt Jct. and "AJ" Kiski Jct. on Conemaugh Division.

Feb. 21, 1945 - H. W. Jones, John V. B. Duer, Carleton K. Steins and J. S. Stair of the PRR meet in Philadelphia with representatives of Baldwin Locomotive Works and Westinghouse Electric & Manufacturing Company and agree that they will develop and build a prototype Class V1 coal-burning direct-drive turbine locomotive on the same terms as they have built the Class S2 No. 6200; Westinghouse will design the turbines, gearing and drives, Baldwin the locomotive, and the PRR only the driving and guiding trucks; this has the effect of raising the costs of the locomotive from \$750,000 if built at Altoona, to \$975,000.

Feb. 3, 1950 - PRSL Executive Committee authorizes retiring the shelter sheds at the old Atlantic City Railroad (RDG) station at Atlantic City.

Feb. 1955 - PRR announces it will remove Track No. 3 between Parkesburg and Lancaster; not used much since World War II.

Feb. 14, 1960 - PRR places single MU car on former schedule of No. 601 between Lancaster and Harrisburg.

Feb. 21, 1965 - PRSL Atlantic City Station closes; replaced by small depot in former yard area; approach to old station is abandoned for use by the Atlantic City Expressway; PRSL abandons line between Atlantic City and Pleasantville for the Expressway. Building used as the terminal for Public Service Coordinated Transport buses.

Feb. 1, 1968 - Pennsylvania Railroad Company absorbs New York Central effective 12:01 AM; renamed Pennsylvania New York Central Transportation Company; at 12:04, name "Penn Central" is unveiled on Perلمان's business car parked in Suburban Station.

CHRISTOPHER T. BAER, HAGLEY MUSEUM AND LIBRARY VIA PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER, PRRT&HS - USED WITH PERMISSION



TIMETABLE 02-17

FOR LANCASTER CHAPTER NEWS,
SEE "INSIDE THE BACK PAGE"

Saturday, Feb. 4, 2017

Super Saturday Streetcar Special XXIV will use a PCC-II on Route 15 and rare mileage on diversion routes. Info and Tickets: <http://www.railroadphotographer.com/Wilmington-n-Chapter-Trips/Upcoming-Trips>

Saturday & Sunday, Feb. 4-5, 2017

Great Scale Model Train and Railroad Collectors Show & Railroad Marketplace at the Cow Palace, Maryland State Fairgrounds, 2200 York Rd. Timonium, Md 21093. Info:

[www.http://www.gsmts.com](http://www.gsmts.com)

Saturday, Feb. 11, 2017

Philadelphia Chapter, PRRT&HS meeting at the Drexel Hill Methodist Church, 600 Burmont Road, Drexel Hill, Pa. Modeler's Meeting: "GG1's - Paint & Colors." Feature Presentation: "Over The Hill (.....and Around The Curve!!)" by John Kilbride. Info: www.philaprrths.com

Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2017

♥ Valentine's Day ♥

Saturday & Sunday, Feb. 25-26, 2017

Spring Thaw Train Meet at the Allentown Fairgrounds Agricultural Hall, 302 N. 17th St., Allentown, Pa.. Info: www.allentowntrainmeet.com

Saturday, March 11, 2017

Harrisburg Chapter, NRHS Railroad Show & Collectors Market at the First Church of God, Fellowship Hall, 245 West High St. Middletown, Pa. 17057. Adm: \$5.00, children under 12 free. Info: www.harrisburgnrhs.org

Saturday & Sunday, March 11-12, 2017

Greenberg's Train and Toy Show at the Chase Center on the Riverfront, 815 Justison St., Wilmington, DE 19801. Info: <http://trainshow.com/delaware/>

Friday & Saturday, March 24-25, 2017

East Coast Large Scale Train Show at the York Expo Center, 334 Carlisle Ave., York, Pa. 17404. Info: <http://www.eclsts.com/about-the-show.html>

Thursday - Saturday, March 30-April 1, 2017

2017 NRHS Spring Conference Advisory Council and Board of Directors' Meetings, Claymont, Del. Info: www.nrhs.com

Saturday, April 8, 2017

Harrisburg Chapter, NRHS Banquet at Boomerang's Banquet facility (former Doc Holiday's) along I-83 at the New Cumberland Exit. Program by Steve Barry. Info: www.harrisburgnrhs.org

Saturday & Sunday, April 8-9, 2017

Great Scale Model Train and Railroad Collectors Show & Railroad Marketplace at the Cow Palace, Maryland State Fairgrounds, 2200 York Rd. Timonium, Md 21093. Info: [www.http://www.gsmts.com](http://www.gsmts.com)

Saturday, April 22, 2017

Railfan RDC Excursion Special. Reading and Northern Budd Cars 9166 and 9168 between Saint Clair, Pottsville Jct and North Reading over historic trackage of the former Reading Railroad. Info: James Danner 610-704-7738

Saturday, April 29, 2017

Philadelphia Chapter, PRRT&HS meeting at the Drexel Hill Methodist Church, 600 Burmont Road, Drexel Hill, Pa. Info: www.philaprrths.com

Saturday, May 6, 2017

The Great Lehigh Valley Train Meet at Merchants Square Mall, 1901 South 12th Street, Allentown PA 18103. Info: www.lehighvalleytrainmeet.com

Friday - Sunday, May 12-14, 2017

2017 Transportation History Expo - Key Lock & Lantern Convention at the Radisson Lackawanna Station Hotel, 700 Lackawanna Ave., Scranton, Pa. 18503. Info: <http://www.klnl.org/pgConvention.htm>

Wednesday - Saturday, May 17-20, 2017

PRRT&HS Annual Meeting at the Radisson Penn-Harris in Camp Hill, Pa.

Saturday, May 20, 2017

South Jersey Model Rail Expo at the Grace Episcopal Church, 7 East Maple Ave., Merchantville, NJ 08109. Info: John P. Dunn, Sr., 609-432-2871 or jdunn8888@hotmail.com



DECEMBER, 2016 CHAPTER MEETING MINUTES

There was no formal Regular Membership Meeting in January. Therefore, there are no Membership Meeting Minutes to report. Following are the "Christmas" Membership Meeting Minutes for December, 2016.

CALLED TO ORDER: The "Chapter Christmas" Membership Meeting of the Lancaster Chapter, National Railway Historical Society was held at the Christiana Freight Station, Christiana, Pa. on Monday, December 19, 2016. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by President Tom Shenk with 36 members present.

MINUTES: President Tom Shenk asked for a motion to approve the October Membership Meeting Minutes. Fred Kurtz approved the motion and Helen Shaak seconded the motion. The October membership minutes were approved as printed in the *Lancaster Dispatcher*.

TREASURER: Treasurer Richard Rutledge gave the Treasurer's Report for the month of November.

COMMITTEE RECOGNITION: The December Chapter Membership Meeting was to recognize Chapter Members who take care of our Chapter home and all the duties involved to keep the Christiana Freight Station functioning smoothly through out the year.

- > Christiana Freight Station Rentals: Glenn and Cindy Kendig.
- > Christiana Freight Station Maintenance: Snow Removal-Mowing-and General Maintenance: Glenn Kendig, Doug Henry, Steve and Linda Himpsl.
- > Deck Painting at the Christiana Freight Station: Glenn Kendig, Tom Shenk, Doug Henry, Lewis Hauck, and John Bosley.
- > Lancaster Chapter Public Relations-Advertising-Library-Sales Table: Linda Himpsl.
- > Caboose: Steve Himpsl.
- > Lancaster City Historic Markers at Janice Stork Park: Tom Shenk, Steve Himpsl.
- > Publish a book for the Chapter Dedication of Conrail caboose No. 21153 on Saturday, September, 24 entitled "Restoration Project the Conrail Caboose." - Linda Himpsl.
- > Assemble Newsletters: Helen Shaak, Barb Husted.
- > New Membership Roster for 2016: Helen Shaak, Linda Himpsl.
- > Editor of the Chapter Newsletter: Ed Mayover. Richard Lundgren said it is the best newsletter with very good articles, very well put together.
- > Dues Notices, Chapter Website, Posts the Newsletter, Emails: Fred Kurtz.
- > Third Annual Vendors and Craft Show – Christiana Freight Station-Saturday, October 22, 2016. The show raised \$1,020.26 for the Chapter.
- > Advertising and Promotions: Steve and Linda Himpsl.
- > Money Donations: Mary Kerschner, Joann Irwin, Steve and Linda Himpsl.
- > Food Donations: Jane Rutledge, Ginny Rettew, Cindy Kendig, Donnie and Lorrie Steffy, Toady Kennel, Sandy Jones, Donetta Eberly.
- > Volunteers who worked the day of the Vendor and Craft Show: Ginny Rettew, Toady Kennel, Jane and Richard Rutledge, Doug Henry, Glenn and Cindy Kendig, Steve and Linda Himpsl, Drew Schlecker, Donetta Eberly.
- > Next year's Vendors and Craft Show will be Saturday, October 21, 2017.
- > Annual Chapter Banquet Friday, November 18, 2016: Tom Shenk.
- > Door Prizes for Banquet: Linda Himpsl.
- > Christmas Decorations put up at the Christiana Freight Station-Thursday, December 1, 2016: Glenn and Cindy Kendig, Steve and Linda Himpsl, Richard and Jane Rutledge, Donnie and Lorrie Steffy, Tom and Kathy Steckler, Toady Kennel, Doug Henry, Drew Schlecker.
- > Volunteers at the Holiday Open House Saturday, December 17, and Sunday December 18 at the Christiana Freight Station: Glenn and Cindy Kendig, Steve and Linda Himpsl, Toady Kennel, Dave Stambaugh, Katelyn Harro.

President Tom Shenk thanked everyone who has helped by volunteering their time. If anyone has helped and was not mentioned, the Chapter thanks you for your help.

The Holiday Open House on Saturday, December 17 total donations were \$226.00. The Chapter always splits the donations with the Lions Club who contribute and help the chapter at the open house. The Lions Club split \$140.00 and the chapter received \$86.00. For the two day open house the chapter had donations of \$110.00. Strasburg Rail Road ticket sales for both days were: \$189.00. Railroadiana for both days was: \$59.00. The total donations for both days: \$358.00.

UPCOMING DATES: Monday, January 16, 2017: Take down and put away the Chapter Christmas decorations. Board Meeting Monday, February 13, 2017. No February Chapter Membership Meeting. March 19, 2017 will be our Sunday Chapter Meeting in the afternoon.

ADJOURNMENT: The Chapter Meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m. for the Chapter's annual "Christmas Party."

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY DONETTA M. EBERLY, SECRETARY



LESS THAN CARLOAD SHIPMENTS LOCAL AND NATIONAL NEWS

VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF TRANSPORTATION ANNOUNCES 2017 SCHEDULE OF NORFOLK & WESTERN CLASS J 611



ROANOKE, VA, Dec. 21, 2016, VMT Press Release - The Virginia Museum of Transportation (VMT) is pleased to announce that the Norfolk & Western Class J 611 steam passenger locomotive will return to the mainline in 2017 with an exciting schedule of public excursions.

611's EXCURSION SCHEDULE

- April 8, 2017 – The Virginian, Spencer, NC to Lynchburg, VA
- April 9, 2017 – The Charlotte Special, Spencer, NC to Charlotte, NC
- April 9, 2017 – The Piedmont Limited, Spencer, NC to Greensboro, NC
- April 22, 2017 – The Roanoker, Greensboro, N.C. to Roanoke, Va.
- April 23, 2017 – The Roanoker, Greensboro, N.C. to Roanoke, Va.
- May 6, 2017 – The Cavalier, Lynchburg, Va., to Petersburg, Va.
- May 7, 2017 – The Cavalier, Lynchburg, Va., to Petersburg, Va.
- May 27, 2017 – The Powhatan Arrow, Roanoke, Va., to Lynchburg, Va.
- May 27, 2017 – The Pocahontas, Roanoke, Va., to Walton (Radford), Va.
- May 28, 2017 – The Powhatan Arrow, Roanoke, Va., to Lynchburg, Va.
- May 28, 2017 – The Pocahontas, Roanoke, Va., to Walton (Radford), Va.
- May 29, 2017 – The Powhatan Arrow, Roanoke, Va., to Lynchburg, Va.
- May 29, 2017 – The Pocahontas, Roanoke, Va., to Walton (Radford), Va.

Tickets will go on sale to the public January 12th at 12:00 PM/Noon Eastern Standard Time. For excursion information and to sign up for email notifications, visit www.FireUp611.org.

THIS MONTH'S BANNER PHOTO

To celebrate the Penn Central's 49th anniversary, we have Penn Central No. 5049, an EMD FL9, at Katonah, New York.



OPERATION LIFESAVER REMINDS YOU...

About every 3 hours, a person or vehicle is hit by a train.



NRHS CHAPTER TO HOST BUDD CAR EXCURSION ON READING & NORTHERN

PORT CLINTON, Pa., Jan. 9, 2017, *Trains* News Wire - Rail enthusiasts will have the chance to ride Reading & Northern Budd cars Nos. 9166 and 9168 this spring during a

photo excursion on the Reading & Northern Railroad.

The Lehigh Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society is hosting the April 22 excursion. The trip will leave from the railroad's Port Clinton station promptly at 8:30 a.m. and will operate between Saint Clair, Pottsville Junction, and North Reading. The excursion will also operate on freight-only sections of the railroad's Saint Clair line through Yuengling Junction.

The excursion will feature several photo runby stops and additional tours of railroad facilities, including its engine shops, dispatching center, corporate offices, and other train stations.

Tickets are \$49 per person and must be reserved before March 15. If interested, checks must be mailed to James Danner, 840 Point Phillip Road, Bath, Pa. 18014. Phone: (610) 704-7738.



'GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH' ENDS IN MAY

By Chase Gunnoe, Jan. 16, 2017, *Trains* News Wire

ELLENTON, Fla. — When the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey circus drops its big top for the last time in May, the classic passenger cars and equipment it moves by rail will return to Florida to face an uncertain future. In a late Jan. 14 news release, managers with Ringling parent company Feld Entertainment say high operating costs and declining ticket sales are forcing them to stop both "Red" and "Blue" tours of the circus in May. The company's Red unit will make its final performance in Providence, R.I., on May 7 and the Blue unit will finish up in Uniondale, N.Y., on May 21.

Stephen Payne, vice president of corporate communications at Feld Entertainment, tells *Trains* News Wire that both the Red and Blue trainsets will be deadheaded to Florida at the end of their tours. Payne says a final disposition for the trains and associated equipment has yet to be determined.

The Red unit consists of 54 cars: 34 coaches and 20 flat cars. The Blue unit includes 35 coaches and 21 equipment flat cars. Each unit travels independently across North America.

In addition, the company has five equipment flat cars and three passenger coaches in storage, while six stock cars previously used to haul elephants and other animals are also in storage near the company's headquarters in Palmetto, Fla.

The company owns and operates more than 120 railcars and is among the largest passenger car operators in North America. The cars operate under "RBBX" reporting marks.

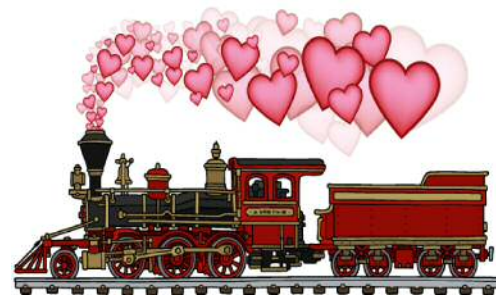
Between 250 and 300 performers and other circus workers travel on each of the two circus trains for more than 40 weeks each year.

Both trains recently started their 2017 tours. The decision to eliminate both circus trains comes in the wake of the circus' 2016 announcement to stop using elephants in shows. The elephant stock cars have been in storage in Florida since being removed from the train last summer.

The circus, which owners have billed the "Greatest Show on Earth," has roots in Delevan, Wis., that date to 1875 with a traveling circus headlined by P.T. Barnum; and a separate circus started by Baraboo, Wis.'s Ringling Brothers in 1884. The Ringlings bought Barnum & Bailey in 1907 and officially merged the operations in 1919. The Circus World Museum in Baraboo, Wis., displays circus and railroad artifacts from the early years of circus entertainment.

On Sunday, Circus World Museum Executive Director Scott O'Donnell fielded a continuous stream of media queries. In an interview, he said the museum would welcome rolling stock from the current circus trains.

"This comes as an absolute surprise," he said about the decision to end the show. "It's not only the end of an American institution, it's also the end of an American brand that's been around longer than baseball, and around longer than Coca-Cola. They're all iconic American imagery."



THE VALENTINE'S DAY SPECIAL

"INSIDE THE BACK PAGE"**UPCOMING LANCASTER CHAPTER ACTIVITIES****FEBRUARY 13, 2017** - MONDAY, 7:00 PM - CHRISTIANA FREIGHT STATION - CHAPTER BOARD MEETING**MARCH 12, 2017** - SUNDAY, 2:00 AM - DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS. TURN CLOCKS **AHEAD** ONE HOUR**MARCH 19, 2017** - SUNDAY, 2:00 PM - CHRISTIANA FREIGHT STATION - REGULAR CHAPTER MEETING**APRIL 17, 2017** - MONDAY, 7:30 PM - CHRISTIANA FREIGHT STATION - REGULAR CHAPTER MEETING**MAY 15, 2017** - MONDAY, 7:30 PM - CHRISTIANA FREIGHT STATION - REGULAR CHAPTER MEETING**JUNE 19, 2017** - MONDAY, 7:30 PM - CHRISTIANA FREIGHT STATION - REGULAR CHAPTER MEETING**CHAPLAIN CONTACT INFORMATION**DAVID STAMBAUGH EMAIL: CHAPLAIN@NRHS1.ORG PHONE: 717-292-1726 OR CELL: 717-683-3053

IF YOU KNOW OF A CHAPTER MEMBER WHO IS SICK, LOST A LOVED ONE OR HAS A NEW BIRTH IN THE FAMILY, PLEASE CONTACT DAVID

INCLEMENT WEATHER NOTICE

If a Chapter Membership Meeting must be cancelled due to inclement weather, there will be a recorded message on the Christiana Freight Station's answering machine advising this information. Please call 610-593-4968 for the latest Meeting status information. If there is the slightest possibility of ice or snow on the roads, please follow the safe course and stay in the comfort and safety of your home!

2017 MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE DUE NOW!

Don't miss the train! Please remit your 2017 National N.R.H.S. dues payment before the March 31, 2017 deadline. If your dues payment is not received and properly recorded before March 31, 2017, your membership in the N.R.H.S. will be terminated. Renewals submitted after April 1, 2017 will be processed as a new member. Lancaster Chapter dues are no longer included in your National renewal and must be paid directly to the Chapter. Thanks for your continued and loyal support.

SOMETHING TO WARM YOU. . .

**ORANGE
BLOSSOM
SPECIAL**



LANCASTER CHAPTER BOARD of DIRECTORS

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MEMBERSHIP MEETING NOTICE

A BOARD MEETING OF THE LANCASTER CHAPTER, N.R.H.S. WILL BE HELD AT THE CHRISTIANA FREIGHT STATION ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2017, STARTING AT 7:00 PM. NO REGULAR CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP MEETING.

**LANCASTER CHAPTER, INC.
NATIONAL RAILWAY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
10 RAILROAD AVENUE
CHRISTIANA, PA 17509-1416
PHONE: 610-593-4968**



CHAPTER WEBSITE: WWW.NRHS1.ORG

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