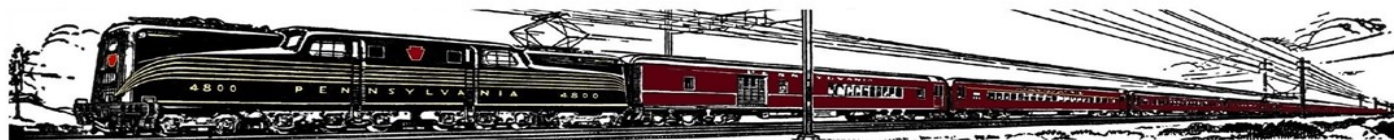


LANCASTER DISPATCHER

1935-2026

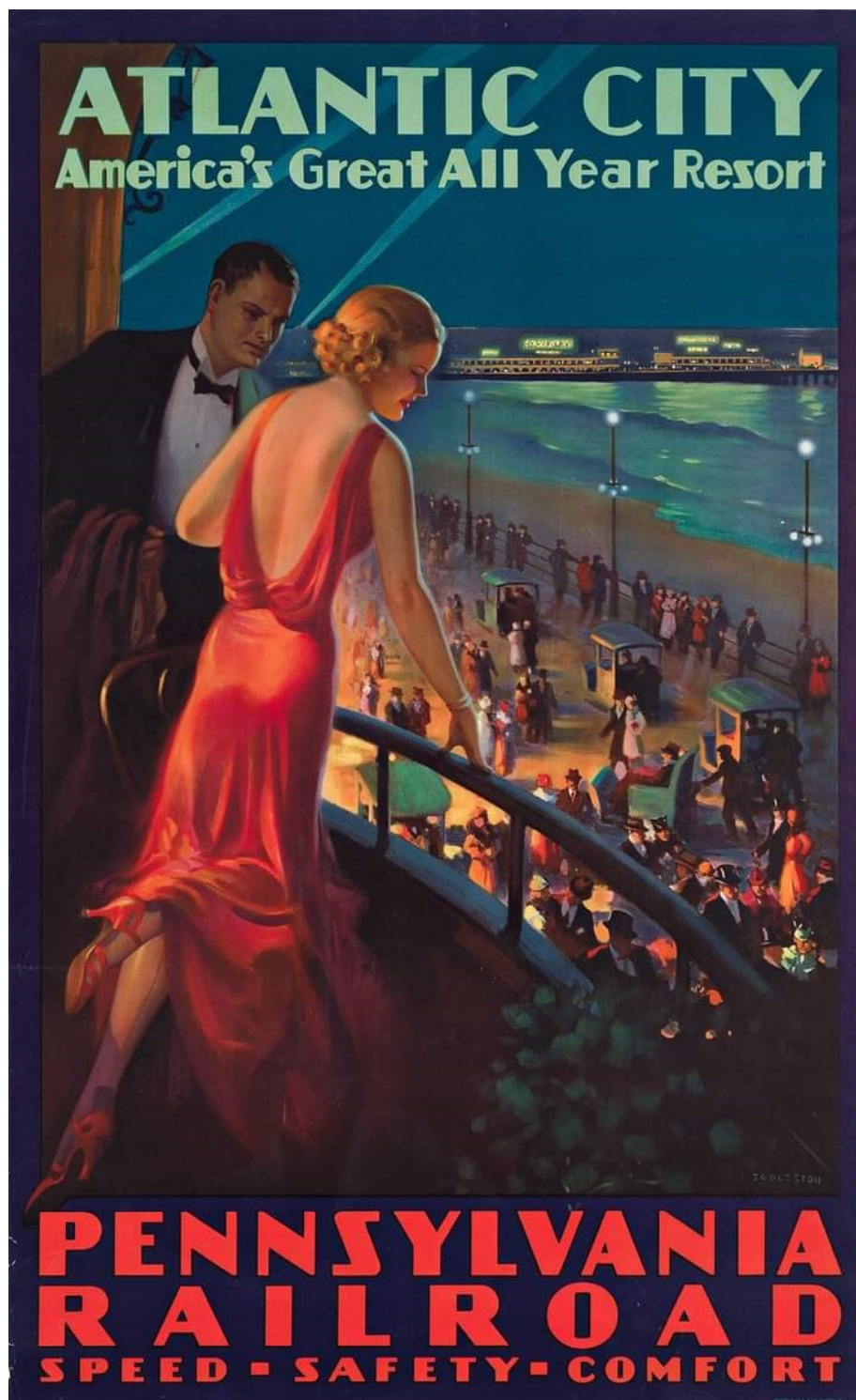


LANCASTER CHAPTER, INC., NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 59 NUMBER 7

DISTRICT 2—CHAPTER WEBSITE: WWW.NRHS1.ORG

JULY 2026





Railway News Flash July, 2026

By Steve Ferrell

Gathered from press releases
and revised for this publication

- Amtrak reported that the first Northeast Regional Airo Trainset has been manufactured. The new Airo trainset has officially departed the Siemen's Sacramento facility. The consist is now heading to Pueblo, Colorado for testing. It is expected to start revenue service during 2027.
- On Saturday, June 6th, Amtrak Northeast Corridor service between Baltimore and Philadelphia was severely disrupted after a barge struck the Susquehanna River Bridge between Perryville and Havre De Grace, Maryland. Bridge inspection after the incident caused delays of up to two hours.
- On a busy Friday on May 29th an early-morning fire caused the suspension of Amtrak service south of Penn Station. This is the second of this type of incident within two weeks at Penn Station. The cause of the fire was involved an Amtrak work engine and caused overhead wire damage. During the day, Amtrak, Long Island Railroad and New Jersey Transit were all reporting service disruptions, delays, and cancellations. This incident follows a May 14th fire in the #4 tunnel between Penn Station and Queens (East River Tunnels) that led to suspension of most Long Island Railroad and New Jersey Transit services for two days!
- Alstom will develop a new maintenance facility in Delaware to service the Next Gen Acela's. The facility will play a key role in fulfilling its technical support agreement with Amtrak. The new facility is scheduled to open in 2028.
- The surface approach contract for the new Hudson (River) tunnel project has been awarded by the Gateway Development Commission. This covers about 1.5 miles of infrastructure to connect the new tunnel to the existing Northeast Corridor. Construction is expected to start during this year.
- Renovation and expansion plans were put on hold at Baltimore's Penn Station after Amtrak and the Projects construction consortium decided to restructure their partnership. Exterior renovations to the structure have been completed. Amtrak will address the restoration of the interior and has already completed the installation of one high-level platform. Another should be completed this year. Plans have been halted for a second station building that would have included baggage, ticketing, and a connection to the main headhouse via a pedestrian bridge.
- Metro-North is seeking companies to build 252 new passenger coaches. This includes the option to purchase 377 more, should the MTA consider future expansion of Metro North Territory. The base order would replace coaches on the Harlem and Hudson Line.
- Ohio's age of Steam completed their ten-stall roundhouse expansion. This is in addition to their existing 18 stall roundhouse. While it will not be open to the public, the equipment will be rotated with that on display to the public in the main roundhouse.
- Debating on May 30th, Norfolk and Western's 611 has received a patriotic makeover for the 250th anniversary of the United States. The red, white, and blue colors and design resemble an artists rendering for it when the locomotive was a candidate to head the American Freedom train in the 1970's.

THIS MONTH ON THE PENNSY**PRR, PRSL & LIRR EVENTS IN JULY**

Source: Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society (permission of Christopher Baer, PRRT&HS).

July 1, 1917 PRR imposes major cuts in passenger service, 102 trains east of Pittsburgh totaling 6,500 train-miles daily to free lines for war traffic and cars for troop trains; also withdraws many parlor, restaurant, sleeping, club and observation cars; Lines West withdraws 34 trains, including 10 suburban trains out of Pittsburgh.

July 1927 "College of Cookery" opens at Columbus; instructors are German or English; most students are African-Americans; classroom features a working dining car kitchen with one side wall cut away and a gallery for student spectators.

July 8, 1927 LIRR completes 11,000-volt A.C. electrification on freight line between Fresh Pond Jct. and Bay Ridge; electric freight service with New Haven locomotives begins between Bay Ridge and Port Morris via Hell Gate Bridge.

July 23, 1927 Susquehanna River floods close PRR between Harrisburg and Williamsport for 12 hours; No 575 stalled for eight hours when caught between two landslides at Millersburg and Halifax.

July 4, 1937 LIRR inaugurates the Long Island Seabreeze, a summer Sunday-only excursion train from Penn Station to Montauk with a two-hour sail to New London and back on The Yankee; \$2 round trip fare; runs through Sep. 6.

July 18, 1937 PRR runs "Off the Beaten Track" excursion with Western Maryland, Philadelphia to Baltimore, then over WM to Pen Mar, York, Gettysburg, and Columbia, returning via Lancaster.

July 6, 1942 PRR announces it will make all seats in observation and lounge cars reserved revenue seats, mostly for short-distance travelers; only exceptions are seats in café sections.

July 29, 1947 PRR announces it has completed a new X-ray lab at Altoona Test Plant to detect metal flaws using technology developed for aircraft during war.

July 11, 1952 Freight service dieselized on West Chester Branch.

July 21, 1952 PRR announces that it has established trainphones over 2,000 miles of main line between New York and Chicago and St. Louis; 1,300 trainphone units; 916 locomotives and 230 cabin cars equipped.

July 9, 1957 PRR handles biggest peacetime special movement for 4th National Boy Scout Jamboree at Valley Forge; requires 18 months planning; 50 special trains and extra cars on regular trains; trains arrive at Norristown July 9-11 with scouts ferried to Valley Forge Park by bus; those traveling in less than full trainloads change at Paoli.

July 6, 1962 PRR places 42nd Class E44 No. 4460, first U.S. electric locomotive with silicon diode rectifiers (solid-state electronics), in service; previous 41 E44's used ignitron rectifiers.

July 1962 PRR retires No. 4749, last "modified" P5a electric.

July 28, 1962 Five cars of nine-car baseball special bound from Harrisburg to a Phillies night game in Philadelphia derail at 70 MPH at Steelton, Pa.; 19 killed, 116 injured; blamed on track being out of alignment because of heat expansion.

July 15, 1967 Northeast Corridor Demonstration Project runs a test with a GG1 geared for 100 MPH operation, 9 Congressional cars and one Keystone tubular car to simulate the weight of the passengers from Philadelphia to New York and return; north-bound, the train makes several round trips on test track No. 3 between "MILLHAM" and "COUNTY"; returns direct from New York to Philadelphia in 1:15.

July 2, 1972 Center 6 of 28 spans of Shocks Mills Bridge over Susquehanna on Low Grade Line finally collapse in early AM after being weakened by floods.

July 7, 1972 Penn Central announces it will lease 100 2,000 HP locomotives from GM and 50 2,250 HP locomotives from GE along with 402 special box cars from North American Car Corporation.

Plans for Development of Penn Station

With Moynihan Station opening during covid and becoming a fine station, and then the redevelopment of the Long Island Railroad concourse, plans are being developed for the remodeling of the Penn Station concourse. The New Jersey Transit concourse has also been remodeled. So, the one area remains to be developed, the lower level of the original Penn Station under Madison Square Garden, for a long time a stuffy area with low ceilings and poor ventilation and air conditioning.

Dave Homer, President of the NRHS West Jersey Chapter posted this link showing some artist conceptions of the planned improvements. Here follows those images...



Right, above and below are views of the interior, note the elimination of tight hallways with expansive and easily navigable concourses with modernized retail spaces. Also note the much higher ceiling giving the concourse a more “open” look. Also included in the project is expanded track capacity to eliminate traffic congestion of trains into and out of the Penn Station Complex.



The project's timeline has advanced steadily since USDOT and Amtrak assumed control of the project from the Metropolitan Transit Authority. Groundbreaking for plan is expected to start in 2027.



Amtrak Plans for a new long-distance fleet of coaches, a replacement for the ageing Superliners

By Steve Ferrell

Replacing the Superliners has been a long-term goal for Amtrak. While they are well liked and have been well maintained and rebuilt over the years, they truly need replacement.

Amtrak first proposed replacement of these venerable coaches, the plan now on the table is to replace these consists with single-level cars.

The procurement process for single-level cars has been started with the car builder to be selected by the end of 2027. Delivery is expected in the early 2030's. The reason for this transition from double-decker cars on long-distance routes is the technical complexity, excessive costs, and supply chain limitations.

Per ADA compliance, the new bi-level cars would have to be equipped with elevators. Because single-level coaches hold fewer passengers than the double-decker Superliners, new long-distance trains are expected to have longer consists. This will eventually require longer station platforms across Amtrak's rail network.

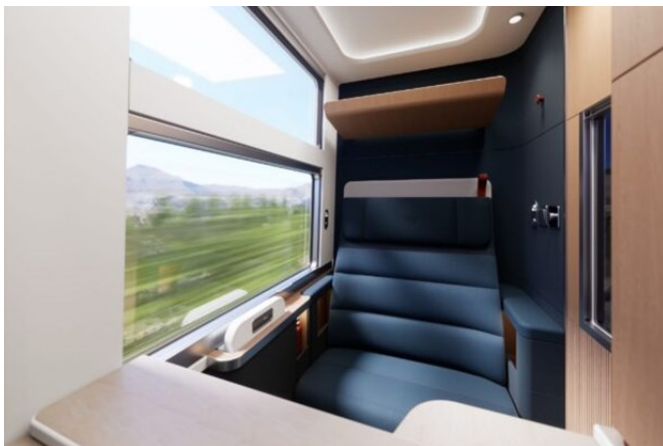
The concept designs feature updated coach seats with solo suites, accessible rooms and premium 2x1 seating arrangements. Also attached to the train will be a modern café car and a dining/observation car.



A conceptualization of a single-level coach interi-



Amtrak workers at Beach Grove Indianapolis rebuild a Superliner dining car in 2026.



New solo cabin concept



Concept of lounge/observation car.

A Wreck at Christiana

From the Philadelphia Times, December 31st, 1881

The Dead of a Collision Three Men Killed on the Railroad

Three Freight Trains Wrecked on the Pennsylvania Road and Eighteen Cars and Two Engines Demolished - The Wreck in Flames and a Serious Blockade the Result
Special Dispatch to THE TIMES

Christiana, PA, December 30.

Three men lost their lives by a railroad accident last night. A number of cars were wrecked and burned and trains have been delayed to-day in consequence. One mile east of this place is a deep cut. The point is called north bend. In this cut, just before midnight, the collision occurred. There was a fog at the time and objects a short distance away could hardly be discerned. Freight engine No. 213 was running slowly westward with a long train. At the point named, the train departed. The forward section ran back to repair the broken coupling and was again under way when another freight train, drawn by engine 253, coming behind, ran into it. The engine of the front train and a number of cars attached to it were thrown upon the south track, piling up and causing an ugly blockade. Just as the accident occurred an east-bound freight train, drawn by engine 82 was due. Before a flagman could be sent ahead it was rushing through the cut. In a second there was a crash and the cars were piled up in indescribable confusion.

A Terrible Crash

The crash is described as a terrible one. The engine of the East-bound train was badly demolished and a number of cars loaded with glass and merchandise were split up into kindling-wood. The fire from the wreck engine quickly communicated to the broken cars and for hours raged with the utmost fury. The engineer and the fireman of the East-bound train, when they saw the crash was inevitable, leaped from their engine, but both were fatally injured. The former, George Diffenderfer, of Harrisburg, was so badly scalded by the escaping steam that the flesh fell from his limbs. Samuel Craig, the fireman, also of Harrisburg, attempted to get out by climbing upon one of the cars, but was caught between some heavy timbers and held until assistance came to him. One of his hips was fractured and his arms, body and face were badly scalded. The men were placed on a special train as soon as possible and forwarded to Harrisburg, but both died en route. Charles Frownfelter, of Harrisburg, a brakeman, also attached to the East-bound freight, was buried under the mass of burning debris, and after hours of hard work his charred remains were drawn out from beneath the ruins, an indistinguishable mass.

None of the men on the West-bound trains were seriously hurt, though some were burned and scalded by the escaping steam and by the flames, which raged furiously far into to-day.

A Fire Engine at the Wreck

A fire engine from Lancaster was dispatched to the scene of the disaster and played on the seething mass of molten glass, iron and blazing wood-work, which formed a weird scene, lighting up the country for miles around. Traffic in both directions was interrupted and a large force of wreckers were at work all day clearing debris. The railroad tracks were badly twisted, the ties destroyed and the loss on the cargo, though not estimated, is conceded to be very heavy, and the accident is the most disastrous that has occurred on this division of the road for many years. Passengers were transferred around the wreck this morning. Late this afternoon the tracks were cleared and to-night trains are running as usual. Eighteen cars in all were demolished, most of which were loaded, including two carloads of grain and a car filled with cotton. The others were loaded with glassware, nails, iron and general merchandise.



Editors note: This article is a reprint of the newspaper report of the accident. The writing style of the day in 1881, especially in headlines, lent itself to melodramatic prose. There are no misprints from the original.

**Gallivanting to Gladstone!
Or the search for the disappearing horses!**

By Steve Ferrell

I promised great bucolic views and lots of horses for this Ride with Me Steve Trip to Gladstone and the Gladstone Tavern. It was rainy and misty on the trip outbound and nobody saw any horses. It is indeed horse country in the northwestern New Jersey mountains where wealthy executives from New York City built their summer estates and established horse farms for their show and racing horses. Alas, no horses. One rider did spot one on the trip back! Regardless of the vanishing horses, the scenery was beautiful and the trip was quite a pleasant journey into the north-west Jersey countryside. Our group traveled from Southeastern Pennsylvania to Newark Penn Station. Then we boarded the Newark Light Rail for the short trip to Newark Broad Street Station.



Light Rail departing Broad Street Station. Prior to these modern cars, the Newark Subway was operated with PCC trollies. Photo by Jim Donohue



On the Newark Light Rail – image by John Smith

After exploring the historic Broad Street Station, we boarded the train to Gladstone. Passing through the inner suburbs of New York City/Newark metropolitan area to the outer suburbs and countryside. At Summit, a vintage station where the tracks are built into a large gulch or cut with the station over top. Leaving Summit our train worked its way over to the far left-hand track (of a four-track line) to enter the Gladstone Branch. The Gladstone branch was part of the former Lackawanna Railroad's network and is now part of the New Jersey Railroad's commuter system.

Along this branch we traveled through the bucolic countryside and stopped at interesting little towns along the way. After stopping at Peapack, we arrived at the end of the line at Gladstone.



Newark Broad Street Station, image by Anne DiSerio

Gallivanting to Gladstone! (continued)

While we were waiting for another rider to arrive on the next train, we took pictures of the Gladstone station and walked over to the Gladstone Tavern and sat on the porch with the large horse statue at the Restaurant. It was quite pleasant and cool for a day in May and I believe we could have stayed out there all afternoon.



Our train at the Gladstone Station – image by John Smith



Left: Group at Gladstone Station – image by Dan Murray



Right: End of the line at Gladstone – image by Dan Murray

Around noon, the group went inside and ordered drinks and appetizers and soon the one remaining member arrived. Our appetizers were amazing and the drinks were fantastic! When our entries were delivered by our attentive waitress, we were amazed at the quality of the food! I had the jambalaya and others had steak and eggs, burgers, and other various tasty dishes!

Gallivanting to Gladstone! (continued)

After the delectable desserts (warm apple pie a la mode) we walked back to the train station and caught our return train. Switching at Summit to the New York bound train (our train went on to Hoboken), we soon were asleep all the way to Penn Station in New York.



Above: Gladstone Tavern, image by Anne



Above: Despite being in New Jersey "Horse Country," this was one of the few equines seen all during the trip!



Left: Our group at Gladstone Tavern – image by John Smith

Gallivanting to Gladstone! (continued)

We had over an hour until our return Amtrak Keystone train to back home, this allowed many of us to enjoy a decadent ice cream treat at the craft ice cream kiosk (Davey's, a local legend) in Moynihan Hall.

On the return train most of us dozed. It was a memorable trip for all, and everyone expressed a desire to return to the Gladstone Tavern and search for the horses!

Below is our trip up highlighted in yellow:



"INSIDE THE BACK PAGE"
UPCOMING LANCASTER CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Sunday, July 19th -- Chapter Away Meeting at Manheim Train Station
210 S. Charlotte Street Manheim, PA 17545

1:00 PM to 4:00 PM Manheim Station Open House – trolley, model trains and caboose

2:00 PM to 3:00 PM Manheim Historical Society program

3:30 PM to 4:00 PM Lancaster Chapter, NRHS Meeting

Sunday, August 16th -- 4:00 PM Strasburg Rail Road Annual Chapter train ride and meeting.
Train (last open car) . Tickets \$ 10.00

Saturday, September 12th — Christiana Heritage Days (175th Anniversary of the 1851 Christiana Resistance)

Sunday, September 20th -- 3:00 PM Chapter Picnic Please bring a covered dish to share
2:00 PM -- Board Meeting

Sunday, September 20th -- 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM Manheim Historical Society, Manheim Station celebrating 100th anniversary of the Trolley Car. The Trolley was initially purchased by the Lancaster Chapter to save it from being scrapped.

Friday, November 13th — 6:30 PM Chapter Banquet.
Dinner at the Gathering Place, 6 Pine Street, Mt. Joy, PA

CHAPTER MEETING MINUTES

Monday, June15th, 2026.

Meeting opened at 7:30 PM.

Richard Rutledge gave the financial report.

Steve McClellan agreed to assume the responsibilities of the Secretary's position.

Steve Himpsl reported on donations.

Steve also advised of 2027 Chapter Bus Trip to Central Virginia. Plans being drawn up now.

Jerry Futej, NRHS member since 1974 and Railfan Photographer presented "Chasing the Bicentennial Freedom Train (AFT)."

Meeting was closed at 9:15 PM.

Donations Received:

From the estate of Fred W. Schneider III—additional donations and books.

Bob & Norma Cordora Heap: magazines, photos, binders on model railroading.

Edward Mowery: Pullman wool blanket, 2 Grif Teller calendars and books.

Chapter Donations: As per an agreement with Edward Mowery, the Pullman wool blanket was donated to Richard Stewart, owner of the "Francis L. Suter" pullman car.

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NEXT CHAPTER MEETING
LANCASTER CHAPTER, INC., N.R.H.S.
JULY 19th, 2026 - SUNDAY, 3:30 PM
CHAPTER AWAY MEETING
MANHEIM TRAIN STATION

LANCASTER CHAPTER, INC.

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