LANCASTER DISPATCHER

1935-2025

LANCASTER CHAPTER, INC., NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 58 NUMBER 6 DISTRICT 2—CHAPTER WEBSITE: WWW.NRHS1.ORG JUNE 2025

Railway News Flash

June, 2025

By Steve Ferrell

Gathered from press releases and revised for this publication

Amtrak has returned the Mount Bachelor Talgo Series 8 trainset to service. It has been out of service since its cab car was impaled by a tree in a storm this past November. It will pair with another Talgo set linking Vancouver, Canada with Eugene, Oregon.

Amtrak on May 14th provided an update on improvements and repairs at Lancaster, PA Station. Improvements including replacing existing platforms and foundations. The south platform reconstruction was finished in November 2024 and the new North platform is anticipated to return to service in January 2026. All repair work to the existing pedestrian overpass and station building is expected to be completed by March 2026.

Governor Kathy Hochul and Amtrak are going back and forth about the viability of the East River Tunnel Rehabilitation Project. The Governor would like to have Amtrak work on the tunnels while they are still open rather than closing one at a time and totally rehabilitating it. Amtrak and its partners (NJT, LIRR,) prefer the latter plan.

A large fire in a Baltimore warehouse disrupted Amtrak and MARC service on the Northeast Corridor on Monday, May 12th. The fire's closeness to the tracks, and the possibility of the building collapsing onto the tracks were major concerns. Checking Amtrak service, as of May 14th, showed multiple delays and some cancellations of trains along the corridor.

Woodstown Central Railroad debuted its FP-7-902 on Saturday, May 10th. This beautifully restored locomotive will be joined by its sister locomotive 903 later this summer. The 902 was leased to SMS for operation by its tourist railroad subsidiary, the Reading Company Technical and Historical Society in 2023. It had been previously stored at Steamtown in Scranton. Beforehand, it was owned by the Lancaster Chapter of the NRHS. The locomotive began service in 1950 on the Reading Company and later operated until 1981 on SEPTA commuter operations.

The NRHS donated through the John H. Emery Rail Heritage Trust $8,800 to the District of Columbia Chapter. The award will assist in the funding of work on their Pullman rail car, Dover Harbor. The work includes rebuilding and reupholstering the banquette seats in the car's lounge.

The coal-fired steam locomotives of the Mt. Washington's Cog Railway will have their 2025 season debut delayed. Pre-season preparations revealed the need for reduced steam pressures in the remaining operating steamers: no. 2 and 9. Meanwhile, service will be provided by the modern biodiesel locomotives.

In early April, Strasburg Rail Road released its No. 90, 2-10-0 Locomotive back on its main line through Amish country. Now mechanically fresh from the mandated 1472-day boiler inspection that started in early 2024. This locomotive was built by the Baldwin Locomotive Works in 1924, for the Great Western Railway's freight service in Colorado.

PRR, PRSL & LIRR EVENTS IN JUNE

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

June 25, 1916 PRR and LV inaugurate Lehigh-Pennsylvania Express, through day passenger train between Phillipsburg, N.J., and Pittsburgh via Mt. Carmel, Sunbury, Lock Haven and Tyrone; introduced on initiative of Pres. Samuel Rea to serve businessmen, including officers of Bethlehem Steel, traveling to Pittsburgh and western Pennsylvania properties acquired with Pennsylvania Steel Company.

June 30, 1921 W.S. Murray, et al., of the U.S. Geological Survey issue report to Secretary of the Interior Albert Fall on A Superpower System for the Region between Boston and Washington; recommends intensifying electrification of industry and transportation, including PRR in Northeast Corridor.

June 30, 1926 PRR Board authorizes purchase of 60 new MP54 MU cars, plus conversion of 68 P54's to MU's; also purchase of 8 electric locomotives.

June, 1931 PRR begins operating solid “Strawberry Specials” from Painter, Va., on the Delmarva Peninsula to Jersey City on an 11:00 schedule, with connections to New England and western points; the fastest such service yet offered.

June 19, 1931 PRR announces extension of plan whereby passengers may ship automobiles on fast freight trains to be delivered 24 hours after arrival for five passenger fares, which includes travel for two passengers, to whole PRR system.

June 15, 1936 PRR contracts with Lehigh Valley Railroad permitting LV to use its new Newark, N.J., station.

June, 1936 PRR places second behind the International Business Machines Corporation in Forbes magazine’s “Industrial Modernization Contest.”

June 18, 1941 PRR announces $23 million equipment order including 15 GG1's, 6,020 freight cars, 50 cabin cars, and 12 long-distance tenders.

June 14, 1946 Last steam locomotive built by PRR, T1 No. 5524, outshopped at Altoona.

June 13, 1951 Class E2b electric No. 4939-4940 makes first test run between Enola and Morrisville with 95-car train.

June 21, 1951 PRR announces last delivery of 62 freight and 9 passenger road diesels, plus 111 switchers ordered in August 1950; 79% of passenger service now dieselized, 56% freight, and 76% switching.

June 13, 1956 Publicity run of The Keystone, the "tubular" lightweight, low-center-ofgravity train built by The Budd Company; consists of seven coaches and a head-end-power/kitchen car; tubular cars cost $2,000 per seat, vs. $3,000 for Congressional type car and $1,000 for "Aerotrain".

June 19, 1961 PRR announces it will install 25-cent meters at station parking lots between Overbrook and Paoli.

June 12, 1966 PRR discontinues the westbound Clevelander east of Pittsburgh and combines with The General; establishes "ghost train" with a single coach on schedule of westbound Clevelander between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh as Pennsylvania PUC refuses to authorize discontinuance; head end traffic formerly on Clevelander placed on New York-Pittsburgh mail train No. 17; on the same date, the ICC denies an application to discontinue Nos. 37, 39 and 635.

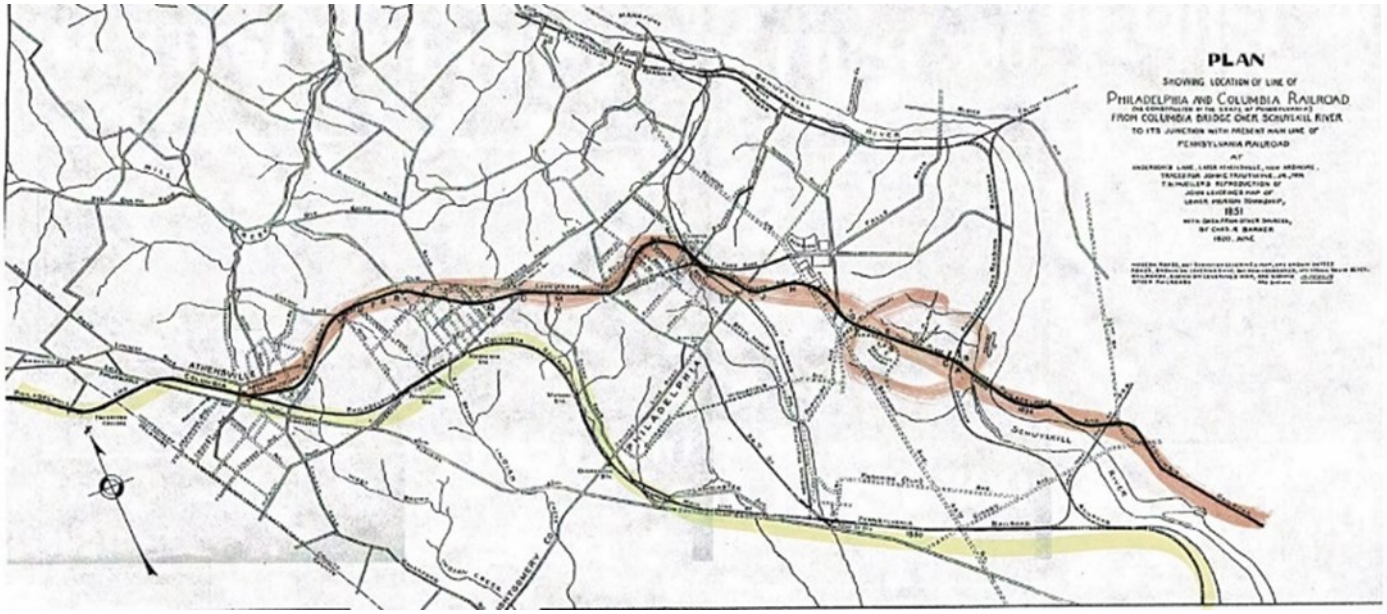
June 18, 1971 City of Philadelphia unveils airport plan calling for a direct rail link to Center City.

June 7, 1976 Conrail transfers 1,800 maintenance-of-way employees to Amtrak for work on Northeast Corridor and other lines.

Take a ride on the Paoli Local! – Part One, the early years…
By Steve Ferrell

Often throughout my life, I have traveled on the Paoli local for either work or on rail fan trips. It is a remarkably interesting line with a rich history. It was the first line to be electrified with AC overhead catenary wires in 1915. Now part of SEPTA (Southeast Pennsylvania Transportation Authority), it is also part of Amtrak's Keystone service line to Harrisburg and beyond to Pittsburgh.

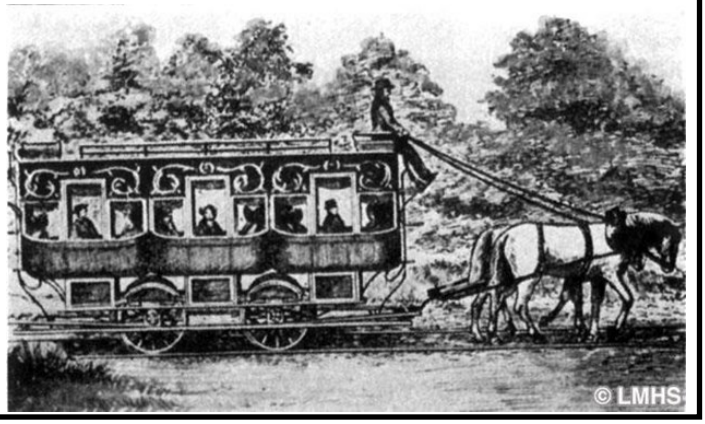
The original operator of the line to Columbia, the Philadelphia and Columbia became operational on September 20, 1932, using flange-wheeled carriages pulled by horse power over iron topped wooden rails between Broad and Vine Streets in Philadelphia and the Green Tree Inn, located between present-day Paoli and Malvern, PA. The original track gauge was 4' 9", later standardized by the Pennsylvania Railroad to 4' 8 ½".



An 1851 map of both the early Pennsylvania Railroad and the Philadelphia and Columbia Railroad (after the 1851 acquisition of the P&C by the PRR). Yellow is the PRR and Orange is the Philadelphia & Columbia. I circled the location of the former Belmont Incline Plane. The two lines met at Athensville, now called: Ardmore, PA

A railroad trip to Paoli was a difficult process in the late 1830's. Riders would depart from Broad and Vine Streets (in the then outskirts of the countryside of the city) on horse-drawn rail coaches and head north and then east and cross the Schuylkill River on a wooden bridge and head toward the base of the Belmont Plain. At that location, the carriage would be connected to a stationary steam engine driven incline plan to be hauled up on the severe grade to the top of the Belmont Plane (This was dangerous for passengers as occasionally the connecting rope snapped!).

Right: The original "Paoli Local" starting in 1832, the motive power was horse drawn coaches! - Image from the Collection of the Lower Merion Historical Society, Inc.



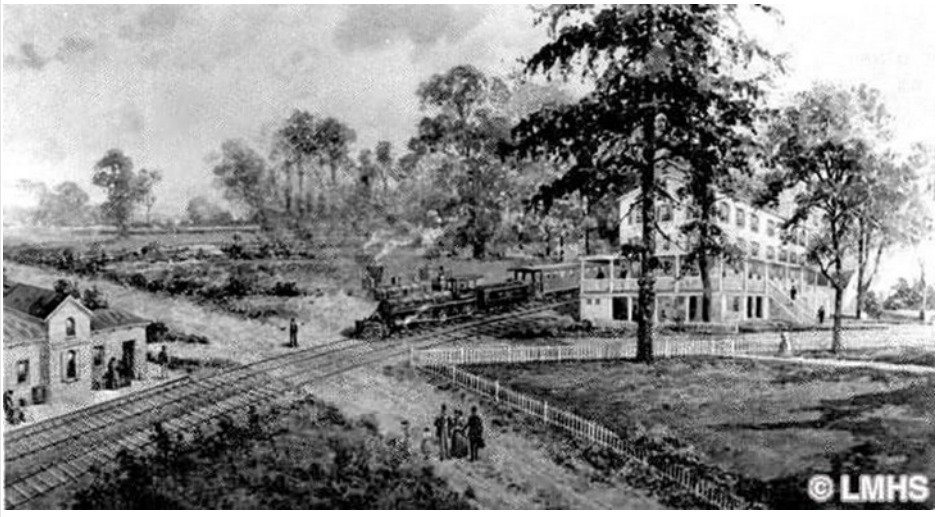
Take a ride on the Paoli Local! – Part One, the early years… (continued)

After successfully surmounting the Belmont Incline plane, the train would be attached in 1832 to a horse or horses. By the mid 1830's steam locomotives gradually replaced horses as the motive power. It is interesting to note that the railroad was unrestricted access. This meant that any business could operate its trains on the line for a fee. So, this became chaotic for operations and scheduling. During the mid-1830's, and for a while after, there was a combination of trains under steam or horse motive power. By 1844 though, horse-drawn movements were finally banned for traffic on the line.

On July 10th, 1836, the steam locomotive, the "George Washington" (built by Philadelphia based Norris Locomotive Works) stunned onlookers by climbing the Belmont Plane on its own power! It was considered so incredible at the time that 9 days later, they had to demonstrate this accomplishment for folks who missed the first demonstration as they were so disbelieving in its authenticity.

During early steam locomotive operations, arriving at the top of Belmont Plane, the train was attached to a locomotive to take riders to Paoli, Lancaster and beyond to Columbia on the Susquehanna Canal. It should be noted that on the Westbound schedule, Paoli is listed as a meal stop and the trip from Philadelphia took 2 hours and 20 minutes. This was slow running by modern standards but fast considering that prior to this travel was by either stagecoach and/or canal boats.

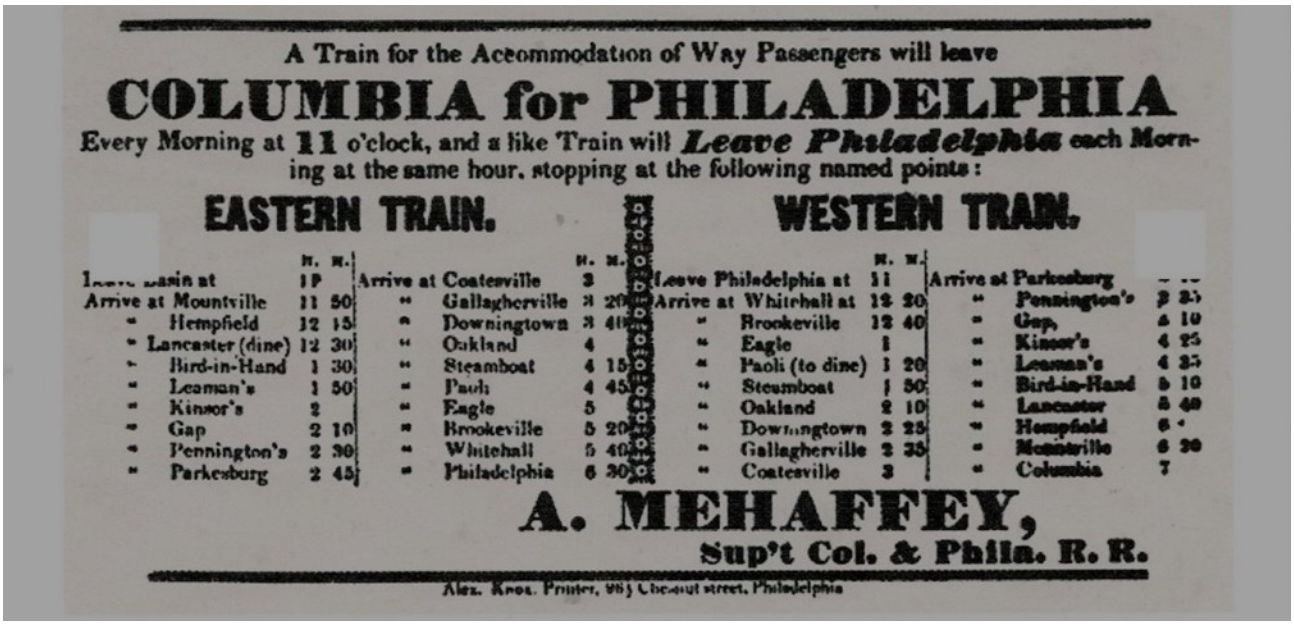
Right: Passenger Coaches ascending the Belmont Incline Plane – Image from the Collection of the Lower Merion Historical Society, Inc.



Left: A view of the Whitehall station stop (now part of Bryn Mawr), with the White Hall Hotel (near where the Bryn Mawr Hospital Thrift Shop is located today - Image from the Collection of the Lower Merion Historical Society, Inc.

The line to Columbia, Pennsylvania was completed in 1838. A relocation of the Philadelphia and Columbia to bypass the cumbersome and dangerous Belmont Plane by using the western extension of the City Railroad opened in 1850 and by 1851, the old Belmont Plane route was closed. This eastern section was then sold to the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad.

Take a ride on the Paoli Local! – Part One, the early years… (continued)



A Train for the Accommodation of Way Passengers will leave

COLUMBIA for PHILADELPHIA

Every Morning at 11 o'clock, and a like Train will *Leave Philadelphia* each Morning at the same hour, stopping at the following named points:

EASTERN TRAIN.

	P. M.		P. M.
Leave [illegible] at	1 P	Arrive at Coatesville	3
Arrive at Mountville	11 50	" Gallagherville	3 20
" Hempfield	12 15	" Downingtown	3 40
" Lancaster (dine)	12 30	" Oakland	4
" Bird-in-Hand	1 30	" Steamboat	4 15
" Leaman's	1 50	" Paoli	4 45
" Kinsor's	2	" Eagle	5
" Gap	2 10	" Brookeville	5 20
" Pennington's	2 30	" Whitehall	5 40
" Parkesburg	2 45	" Philadelphia	6 30

WESTERN TRAIN.

	P. M.		A. M.
Leave Philadelphia at	11	Arrive at Parkesburg	[illegible]
Arrive at Whitehall at	12 20	" Pennington's	3 35
" Brookeville	12 40	" Gap,	3 50
" Eagle	1	" Kinsor's	4 25
" Paoli (to dine)	1 20	" Leaman's	4 35
" Steamboat	1 50	" Bird-in-Hand	5 10
" Oakland	2 10	" Lancaster	5 40
" Downingtown	2 25	" Hempfield	6 [illegible]
" Gallagherville	2 35	" Mountville	6 20
" Coatesville	3	" Columbia	7

A. MEHAFFEY,

Sup't Col. & Phila. R. R.

Alex. Knox, Printer, 98 Chestnut street, Philadelphia

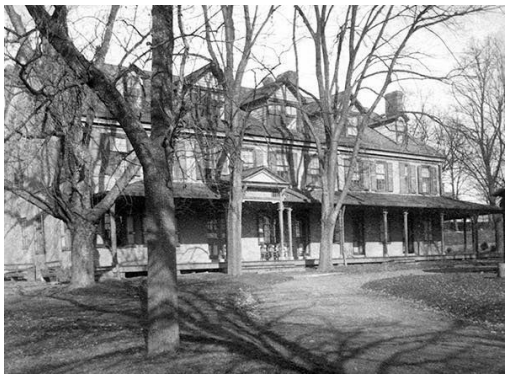
Above: The schedule of the Philadelphia and Columbia (date unknown, but around the 1840's). Note that on the Western Train, Paoli was listed as a meal stop. Also notice that it took 4 hours to get to Coatesville from Philadelphia!

On the Philadelphia and Columbia in the early to mid-1800's, most of the passenger stations were Inns or Hotels located in each town. This allowed passengers to have quick rest and meal stops. At Paoli, the locomotive took on water and wood, so this stop was longer than most others. Some station breaks were just five minutes and passengers had to rush into the inn to purchase food, coffee, and then run back to their train!

The General Paoli Inn, a local landmark, served as Paoli's railroad station from the 1850s until the 1883 passenger station was built by the Pennsylvania Railroad. Prior to the 1850's the Inn served unofficially as a combined station and meal stop. The inn was located just west of the today's station site, on the other side of the North Valley Road bridge, near the current Post Office.

In late 1846, Paoli Inn owner, John D. Evans, broke ground east of the old Inn for a stand-alone structure next to the tracks to serve as a station that was called the Paoli Hotel. The Paoli Hotel would serve for years as the local post office. It included a counter for selling lunch and drinks, plus an exceptionally large bar for alcoholic beverages.

Sign at the location of the General Paoli Inn, located west of the present station, near the location of the current Post Office and shopping center – Photo courtesy of the Tredyffrin-Easton Historical Society



1888 Photograph of the General Paoli Inn – Photo courtesy of the Tredyffrin -Easton Historical Society

Take a ride on the Paoli Local! – Part One, the early years… (continued)

In the 1850's the rolling stock and facilities of the Philadelphia and Columbia Railroad suffered greatly and became quite dilapidated due to lack of repairs. They had little or no help with the cost of improvements from the State of Pennsylvania which oversaw the Public Works system that included railroads and canals. The State system was beset by patronage problems plus corrupt and incompetent officials. It was also realized that the Baltimore and Ohio's route was becoming the more dominant and successful route. Something had to be done!

Enter the Pennsylvania Railroad. In 1846, the PRR was chartered to build a rail line from Harrisburg to Pittsburgh. This was to replace the tortuous state-owned canals and the Allegheny Portage Railroad between Hollidaysburg and Johnstown. Soon Pennsy's managers recognized the value of the Philadelphia and Columbia and the privately owned railroad that ran from Lancaster to Harrisburg. Acquiring these lines would provide an uninterrupted route from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh.

The Pennsylvania Railroad completed their line in 1854. In 1857, they purchased the State of Pennsylvania's rail and canal interests (the Main Line of Public Works which included the Philadelphia and Columbia Railroad) and leased the Lancaster to Harrisburg line. Now the PRR had a line that ran from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh – a total of 353 miles!

Author's quest for more information: In all my research, I could not find a date or any details about when this line was converted from the original 4' 9" gauge to the standard 4' 8 ½ ". I would appreciate any data on this subject. Send any information to the author at - stfarrel@aol.com.

Coming Soon – Part two, "The Pennsylvania Railroad years."

Sources

Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania – images

Lower Merion Historical Society – Images

Tredyffrin-Easton Historical Society – Images

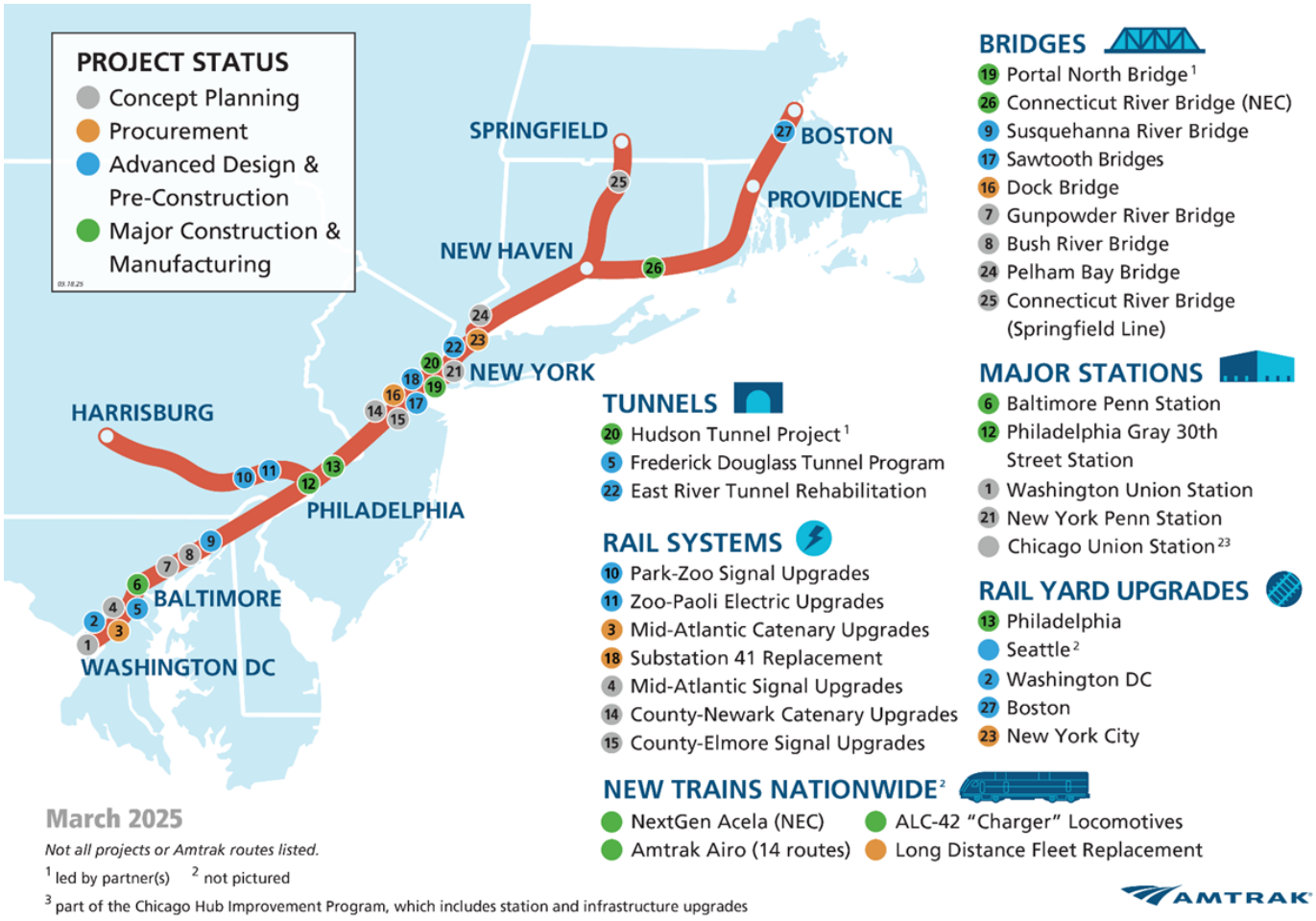
Frank Tatnall with Roger D. Thorn, "The Main Line to Paoli: A Railroad or a Place." Published by the Tredyffrin-Easton Historical Society. 2018.

James J.D. Lynch, Jr., "The Route of the Paoli Local," The Main Line from Overbrook to Paoli. Published by the Philadelphia Chapter of the Pennsylvania Railroad Technical and Historical Society, the Philadelphia Chapter. The High Line Magazine, 1997.

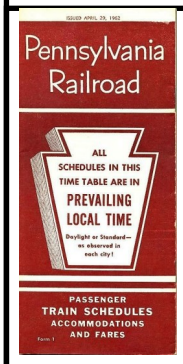
The History of the Paoli Train Station, booklet published by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), 2017(?)

Right: From the Lancaster Dispatcher May, 2025 cover - Penn Central Paoli Local, Strafford, PA in 1970. Chapter member Fred Schneider III photo.

Amtrak Northeast Corridor Project Status



Map last updated: March 18, 2025 | Page originally published: February 19, 2025



Time Table 6-24
PENNSYLVANIA
EXCURSION
RAILROADS
AND MUSEUMS

For Lancaster Chapter news, see
"INSIDE THE BACK PAGE"

Railroad Museum of
Pennsylvania
300 Gap Road, Rt.741
Strasburg PA 17579
www.rrmuseumpa.org

717-687-8628
The Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania will be open Wednesday thru Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and Sundays from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00.

Strasburg Railroad.
301 Gap Road, Ronks, PA 17572
www.strasburgrailroad.com
866-725-9666
Operating daily in June and July.

Reading Blue Mountain & Northern
Reading Outer Station:
3501 Pottsville Pike
Reading, PA 19605
www.rbmnrr-passenger.com
610-562-2102
Excursions to Jim Thorpe on Saturday's and Sunday's in June and July.

Everett Railroad
244 Loop Road
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648
https://evertrailroad.com 814-696-3877
Train Ride events on June 14, 18, 25 and 29

Stewartstown Railroad
21 W. Pennsylvania Ave.
Stewartstown, PA 17363
717-746-4998
https:/stewartstownrailroadco.com
Train Rides on June 7, 8, 14 and 21

Wanamaker, Kempton & Southern
42 Community Center Dr,
Kempton, PA 19529
www.kemptontrain.com 610-756-6469
Regular Train Ride on Sundays in June

Allentown & Auburn
232 Railroad Street
Kutztown, PA 19530
570-778-7531
https://allentownandauburnrr.com/
Picnic Train June 15th

West Chester Railway
230 E. Market Street
West Chester, PA 19380
www.wcrailroad.com
Train Rides every Sunday in June

Wilmington & Western Railroad
2201 Newport Gap Pike,
Wilmington, DE 19808
www.wwrr.com
302-998-1930
Closed — Re-opening in the fall

East Broad Top Railroad
421 Meadow Street
Rockhill Furnace, PA 17249
info@eastbroadtop.com
814-998-1930
Operating everyday but Monday's and Tuesday's in June.

Colebrookdale Railroad
64 S. Washington Street
Boyertown, PA 19512
www.colebrookdalerailroad.com
610-367-0200
Train Ride Events on Saturday's and Sunday's in June

The Stourbridge Line
812 Main Street
Honesdale PA 18431
www.thestourbridgeline.net
570-470-2697
Train Ride Events on Saturday's and Sunday's in June

New Hope Railroad
32 West Bridge Street
New Hope, PA 18938
www.newhoperailroad.com
215-862-2332
Train Ride Events on all Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays in June

The Reading Railroad Heritage Museum
500 S. Third Street,
Hamburg, PA 19526
www.readingrailroad.org
610-562-5513
Saturdays 10 AM - 4 PM,
Sundays Noon - 4pm.

Northern Central Railway
117 N. Front Street
New Freedom, PA 17349
717-942-2370
www.northerncentralrailway.com
Trains operate Saturdays and Sundays

Middletown & Hummelstown
136 Brown Street
Middletown, PA 17057
https://www.mhrailroad.com/
Train Ride Events June 14, 21, 28, 29

ANNUAL CHAPTER "AWAY" MEETING AND TRAIN RIDE

SUNDAY, JULY 27th 2025

In lieu of a July formal meeting, the Lancaster NRHS Chapter invites our members to a visit to the Colebrookdale Railroad.

Members will drive / carpool to the Colebrookdale Station in Boyertown and meet at the train station. Boyertown is just one hour, 10 minutes from Lancaster City.

Colebrookdale Railroad
64 South Washington Street
Boyertown, PA 19512

The schedule and fares are as follows:

Train Ride at 1:00 pm Fare: $ 30.00 (1 Hour) Plan to arrive 30 minutes before departure.

The Chapter is arranging to purchase tickets. Please use this page as an order form and mail your request to Richard Rutledge or bring with your check to the Monday, June 16th Chapter Meeting.

Member Name: _____

Guest Names: _____

_____

Street Address: _____

State, Zip Code: _____

Number of Train Ride tickets requested: ____ **@ $30.00 = $** _____

Total amount enclosed with order: **$** _____

Make check payable to: Lancaster Chapter, N.R.H.S.

Mail your ticket request and remittance to:

Richard Rutledge
2935 Woodshead Terrace
York, PA 17403-9752

In order to make reservations at The Colebrookdale Railroad for the entire Chapter group, please reserve as early as possible.

"INSIDE THE BACK PAGE"

UPCOMING LANCASTER CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

JUNE 16th, 2025 - MONDAY, 7:30 PM CHAPTER MEETING AT CHRISTIANA FREIGHT HOUSE
10 RAILROAD AVENUE, CHRISTIANA, PA 1750
BOARD MEETING AT 7:00 PM

JUNE 21st, 2025 - SATURDAY, 9:00 AM - NOON CLEANUP DAY AT CHRISTIANA FREIGHT HOUSE (INDOOR)
NOON—4:00 PM CLEANUP DAY AT CHRISTIANA FREIGHT HOUSE (OUTDOOR)

CHAPTER MEETING MINUTES
Monday, May 19, 2025

The May Meeting of the Lancaster Chapter, National Railway Historical Society was held at the Christiana Freight Station, Christiana PA on Monday, May 19th 2025.
Tom Shenk was not present so VP Harold 'Smoke' Shaak called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm and lead the Salute to the Flag. 26 attended.

Glenn Kendig made a motion to approve the April minutes and Tom Steckler seconded. The motion carried.

TREASURES REPORT:
The Treasurer Richard Rutledge presented the current monthly report as usual. Thanks again for your hard work, Richard!.

Other:

The All New Hershey's Restaurant is the location for the November 21st annual banquet. 6pm start time with family style service!

June 21st 9am is clean-up day at the Freight House. Please come and lend a hand.

Glenn Kendig announced that our July meeting will be held on the 20th on the Colebrookdale Railroad in Boyertown PA. Members are to meet there in advance for an anticipated 1pm ride. Glenn is currently working on pricing for group.

Glenn also announced that 2027 will be the last year for the Chapter to receive Tickets from the Strasburg Railroad, as per agreement with the Railroad.

Helen Shaak went over some information from our National Headquarters regarding falling memberships, dormant Chapters and so on.

Election of Officers: Stay Tuned...New faces and ideas are always welcome!

Adjournment:
The meeting was adjourned at 8:18pm.
After the meeting Glenn Kendig projected a brief you-tube video of the Colebrookdale Railroad for the group. Another big thanks to Glenn!

Respectfully submitted by Tom Fluck, Secretary

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COPY EDITOR:	JANE FERRELL		

NEXT CHAPTER MEETING

LANCASTER CHAPTER, INC., N.R.H.S.
JUNE 16, 2025 - MONDAY, 7:30 PM
CHAPTER MEETING
CHRISTIANA FREIGHT HOUSE
10 RAILROAD AVENUE
CHRISTIANA, PA 17509

LANCASTER CHAPTER, INC.
NATIONAL RAILWAY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
10 RAILROAD AVENUE
CHRISTIANA, PA 17509-1416
PHONE: 717-917-5137
CHAPTER WEBSITE: WWW.NRHS1.ORG

THE LANCASTER DISPATCHER IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY AS THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LANCASTER CHAPTER, NRHS, AND IS E-MAILED TO EACH MEMBER OF THE CHAPTER AS ONE OF THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP. ANNUAL LANCASTER CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE $ 20; FAMILY MEMBERSHIP : $2; STUDENT: $10; YOUTH: $5. IF YOU DESIRE A MAILED NEWSLETTER: $12. NATIONAL NRHS DUES ARE MAILED SEPARATELY. OPINIONS AND POINTS OF VIEW EXPRESSED HEREIN ARE THOSE OF THE EDITORS, STAFF OR CONTRIBUTORS AND ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE MEMBERSHIP, OFFICERS, OR THE NRHS. THE DEADLINE FOR ALL ITEMS SUBMITTED IS THE THIRD MONDAY OF THE PRECEEDING MONTH. ADDRESS CHANGES OR CORRECTIONS SHOULD BE SENT TO: HAROLD SHAAK, P.O. BOX 813, ADAMSTOWN, PA 19501-0813 OR EMAIL: HSHAAK@DEJAZZD.COM.

FIRST CLASS MAIL
PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY

Forwarding and Address Correction Requested

LANCASTER CHAPTER, INC., N.R.H.S.
10 RAILROAD AVENUE
CHRISTIANA, PA 17509-1416