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Route 15 Revival

HISTORIC PCC TROLLEYS RETURN TO PHILADELPHIA STREETS • PAGE 26



ALCO ANNIVERSARY:

Livonia, Avon & Lakeville at Milepost 60

P. 34

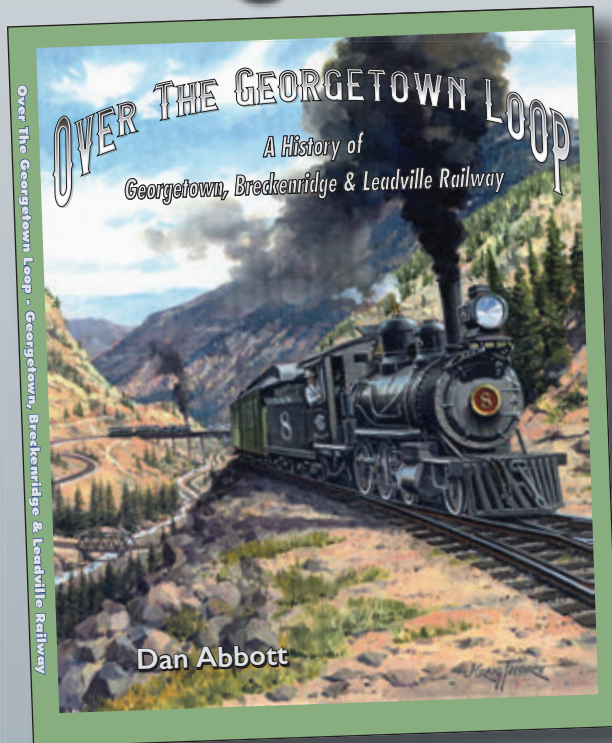
PHOTO: BILL MONAGHAN JR.



INSIDE:

- The Illinois Railway Museum Story
- Alaska Railroad: Chasing the Light
- Riding VIA Rail Budd RDCs in Northern Ontario

Over the Georgetown Loop



A HISTORY OF GEORGETOWN, BRECKENRIDGE & LEADVILLE RAILWAY

Georgetown, Breckenridge & Leadville Railway was incorporated in 1880 to merge with Colorado Central Railroad, build west to the mining camps in the Colorado mountains, connect with Denver, South Park and Pacific, and compete with the larger Denver & Rio Grande. Built in 1883, the Loop was an engineering marvel of the day, solving the problem of linking the towns of Silver Plume and Georgetown (only two miles apart, but with more than 600 feet in elevation difference). The Loop was more than 4.6 miles of track, including two hairpin turns and a viaduct where the route looped 100 feet over itself within the narrow mountain valley. This allowed the railroad grade to be traversed by conventional trains. In

addition to serving the mines, the line proved a popular tourist destination. Indeed, the rebuilt Loop has hosted tens of thousands of riders each year since 1974. This new book details the history of the line until its abandonment in 1938.

Over the Georgetown Loop - A History Of Georgetown, Breckenridge & Leadville Railway

Historian Dan Abbott (author of *Stairway to the Stars: Colorado's Argentine Central Railway*; *Colorado Central Railroad: Golden, Central City, Georgetown*; *Colorado Midland: Daylight Through the Divide*; and *Railroads of Golden*) has compiled an inclusive history of GB&L Ry., from incorporation in 1880 until its final abandonment under Colorado & Southern. Lavishly illustrated with vintage photos, maps, drawings, and diagrams for this new volume, the book details the building of the line, the efforts by the Colorado Historical Society to preserve and eventually rebuild the line after abandonment, and photographic galleries of Colorado Central, Union Pacific, Denver & Gulf, and Colorado & Southern, along with extensive appendices. No fan of Colorado history and railroads will want to miss this book.

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ON THE COVER

Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority PCC-III car 2325 glides east on Girard Avenue as a Silverliner V leads a northbound Regional Rail train along the viaduct over 9th Street in Philadelphia on October 4, 2019. SEPTA pulled its Route 15 PCC cars from service three months later amid concerns about corrosion and other safety issues. Read about their return to service beginning on [page 26](#).

PHOTO BY BILL MONAGHAN JR.



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SEVEN DECADES OF PRESERVATION IN THE MIDWEST

The IRM Story

LOU GERARD/PHOTOS AS NOTED

ILLINOIS RAILWAY MUSEUM has preserved the story of railroading in the crossroads of America for seven decades. In 1953, 10 men, headed by North Shore Line motorman Howard Odinius, put up \$100 each to purchase Indiana Railroad interurban car 65, then owned by Cedar Rapids & Iowa City (which was winding down its own passenger operations at the time and converting to diesel power). It was then that the Illinois Electric Railway Museum was born. At that time, the museum was located on the grounds of the Chicago Hardware Foundry in North Chicago owned by Frank Sherwin. The foundry grounds were across the fence from North Shore Line's Pettibone freight yard. Historic railway preservation was still in its infancy but quickly

gained momentum in the postwar era as railroads worked quickly to modernize their fleets and traction and transit operations shut down or upgraded their equipment. Sherwin was responsible for acquiring several cars including North Shore 354, the only remaining example of a streetcar from the railroad's local operation. In 1961, the name changed to Illinois Railway Museum as the scope changed when some "steam road" equipment was acquired.

As more equipment began to arrive — such as Chicago, Aurora & Elgin cars and a large number of cars from the recently abandoned North Shore Line — a larger location with room to grow was needed. After considering several locations, the museum settled on a site about 50 miles

northwest of Chicago at the small town of Union which had the abandoned right-of-way of the Elgin & Belvidere interurban; this gave the museum a chance to establish an operating demonstration railroad.

The museum had paid back taxes on the property at Union in the late 1950s, but it was not their first choice, but the foundry's sale definitely made a move to Union imperative. The right-of-way was lined with many trees, as the E&B was abandoned in 1930, and farmers had extended their property fences up to the parallel Chicago & North Western right-of-way. The volunteers had a lot of work ahead of them before the first rails could be laid.

Preparations were made to get the



OPPOSITE: The Illinois Railway Museum is a busy place on the afternoon of June 14, 2024. A photo freight led by a Rock Island GP9 waits in the clear while two Chicago, Aurora & Elgin cars pass on the main line and a Shay-powered steam excursion waits at the Union depot platform. JUSTIN FRANZ PHOTO

ABOVE: Museum founder Howard Odinius poses on restored Indiana Railroad car 65, the first car to join the museum collection. BOB KONSBRUK PHOTO, JOHN NICHOLSON COLLECTION

ABOVE LEFT: The car that started it all, Cedar Rapids & Iowa City 120 (IRR 65), arrives at the Chicago Hardware Foundry property in 1953, forming the genesis of what was then known as the Illinois Electric Railway Museum. BOB KONSBRUK PHOTO, JOHN NICHOLSON COLLECTION

LEFT: A trestle is under construction on the museum demonstration line in Union in 1966. The railroad was built on the right-of-way of the original Elgin & Belvidere interurban. SCOTT GREIG COLLECTION

BELOW LEFT: Chicago Rapid Transit gate car 1024 is in service as a trailer at IRM in September 1970. Built by Pullman in 1898, it served until 1958. It has recently been restored as Northwestern Elevated 24. LOU GERARD PHOTO



museum's collection ready for the move. The larger interurbans and Chicago elevated rapid transit cars would be moved on their own wheels by C&NW, with streetcars and smaller equipment moved by truck or flatcar. On May 24, 1964, the first equipment departed North Chicago. It took about five months to make the move and prepare the land. Used rail was acquired from various sources, with some salvaged from the foundry. As groups of

cars left North Chicago, the rail and ties they were on were taken to Union and laid before the cars would arrive — a truly Herculean effort. On August 24, the last of the museum equipment arrived at Union, ending the five-month move. The line of equipment stretched from the edge of downtown Union to Olson Road.

Work commenced on building a main line east of Olson Road. Track was constructed, overhead wire hung, and on July 17, 1966, Illinois Terminal 415 (St. Louis Car Co., 1924) was the first car to operate on the new line. IRM was now an operating museum!

Steam Collection

J. Neils Lumber Co. Shay 5 (Lima, 1929) arrived at Union in 1965 and became the first steam locomotive to operate at the museum. The first conventional tender engine to come along was Commonwealth Edison 0-6-0 5 (Baldwin, 1922), followed by Tuskegee 2-6-2 101 (Baldwin, 1924); the three engines

tripleheaded on Members Day in 1971. Then Frisco "Russian" Decapod 2-10-0 1630 (Baldwin, 1918) arrived from Eagle Pitcher in Oklahoma and was rebuilt for operation. Both 1630 and Neils 5 are the mainstay of today's museum steam operations.

The collection of steam now ranges from Public Service of Northern Illinois 0-6-0 tank engine 7 (Baldwin, 1926), which was the first steam engine acquired by the museum in the North Chicago days, to Norfolk & Western Y3 Mallet 2-8-8-2 2050 (Alco, 1923), which is the largest steam engine on the property. It was rescued from the Armco Steel Mill in Middletown, Ohio, where it had been used as a stationary boiler. Santa Fe 4-8-4 2903 (Baldwin, 1943), which came to the museum after the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry had refreshed several exhibits and the big engine was not included, as well as Burlington 4-6-4 Hudson 3007 (Baldwin, 1930) are prized pieces in the collection



ABOVE: Frisco 2-10-0 1630 leads an excursion past Spaulding Tower on June 14, 2024. The tower was built by Elgin, Joliet & Eastern in 1891 to protect a crossing with The Milwaukee Road at Elgin. Today, the tower hosts IRM's busy dispatcher's office. JUSTIN FRANZ PHOTO

RIGHT: The museum was a busy place over Labor Day weekend in 2019. Shay 5 powered excursions, along with Frisco 1630 and the Burlington *Nebraska Zephyr*. Passengers mill about the platform at East Union (the former C&NW Marengo, Ill., depot) awaiting the next departure. JEFF TERRY PHOTO



— just about all wheel arrangements are represented.

Diesel and Electric Collection

In total, the museum has 500-plus pieces of equipment — steam, diesel, and electric, including passenger and freight cars. There are several premier pieces, notably North Shore's streamlined articulated *Electroliner* and Burlington's *Nebraska Zephyr*, powered by the only remaining EMD E5 clad in stainless steel. South Shore Line 803 is a member of the 20 General Electric locomotives originally built for Russia but not sent due to Cold War restrictions; it is also a cousin to the 12 units purchased by The Milwaukee Road, which called them "Little Joes," and another five that went to Brazil. CSS 803 is in operating condition and does get out from time to

time. The collection of main line electric locomotives stretches from Pennsylvania Railroad GG1 4927 (Altoona, 1942), in Brunswick Green and pinstripes, to the modern Amtrak AEM-7 945 (ASEA/EMD, 1982).

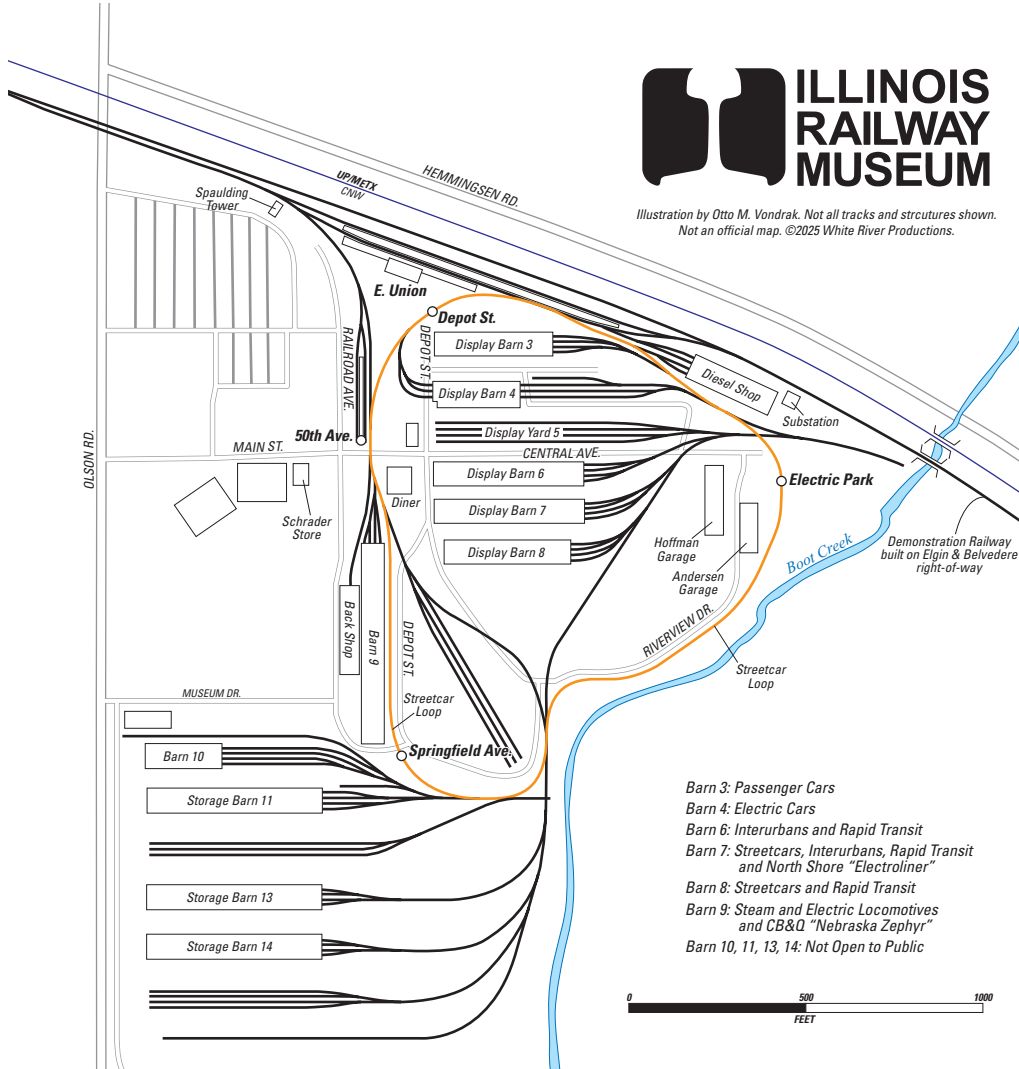
Originally, the museum's Chicago streetcar collection numbered only one, Chicago Surface Lines Pullman 144. The addition of the Chicago streetcar collection of the former Electric Railway Historical Society in 1973 took care of that shortfall. The collection, which comprised of 11 streetcars and one trolley bus, was stored on a farm near Downers

Grove. When the farm was sold, IRM became the recipient of the collection. Four of the ERHS cars have been restored to operating condition, including Chicago & West Towns 141 (McGuire-Cummings, 1924), which took many riders to the famous Brookfield Zoo, and Chicago Transit Authority PCC "Green Hornet" 4391 (St. Louis, 1948), the only survivor of 600 postwar Chicago PCC cars.

There are more than 50 diesel locomotives in the collection, including a few one-offs and firsts. The collection encompasses everything from a four-wheeled GE to giant Union Pacific DDA40X 6930

ILLINOIS RAILWAY MUSEUM

Illustration by Otto M. Vondrak. Not all tracks and structures shown. Not an official map. ©2025 White River Productions.



TOP: IRM has been actively developing its Main Street scene to include structures and exhibits typical of Midwestern towns and small cities. The Schroeder Mercantile store was moved from downtown Union to the museum campus and now serves as ticket office and gift shop. Streetcar tracks were under construction in this 2016 view. IRM PHOTO

ABOVE: 50th Avenue Station was built in 1910 for the Metropolitan West Side Elevated, and was a surface station located where the Douglas Park Branch crossed 50th Avenue in Cicero, Ill. It was closed in 1978 and brought to the museum campus, where it was restored as an "L" station allowing boarding of rapid transit cars. OTTO M. VONDRAK PHOTO

LEFT: An aerial view shows a portion of the 108-acre museum campus and its many storage barns. ROBERT SCHREINER AERIAL PHOTO



A streetcar loop circles the campus and makes many stops along the way; it connects all the display barns, connects with trolley coaches at two locations, and connects with main line trains at Depot Street.

The main line and streetcar loop are fully signaled with an extensive signal system — probably the most extensive of any museum. The dispatcher in Spaulding Tower has control over some heavily used switches and signals. The tower was built in 1891 to guard the junction of The Milwaukee Road and Elgin, Joliet & Eastern near Elgin, Ill., and was moved to IRM in 1988.

Expansion to the east toward Huntley is still possible, but the construction of a very expensive bridge over the Kishwaukee River has put those plans on hold.

(EMD, 1970). A Minneapolis Northfield & Southern Baldwin centercab transfer unit and Burlington E5 9911-A are the only ones of their kinds extant. Also in the collection are Fairbanks-Morse's very first diesel, Milwaukee Road H10-44 760; the first EMD GP7, C&NW 1518; and the first SD7, Southern Pacific 1518. A recent addition is ex-C&NW SD50 7005 purchased from National Railway Equipment by generous benefactors. Also in 2023, one of only two EMD RS1325s, both built for Chicago & Illinois Midland, came to the museum. In September 2022, the museum ran an A-B-A E8-E9 consist

shortly after Iowa Pacific E8 515 arrived. The 515 is ex-C&NW 515 and will eventually be restored to its yellow and green to join F7 411 and a set of C&NW bi-level gallery cars.

The Museum Campus

The main line has been expanded many times over the years, complete with a trestle over a creek just east of the main campus. It is now 4.5 miles in length with two passing sidings. The speed limit for electric cars is 40 mph and 30 for steam and diesel, with track maintained at FRA Class 3 standards.



Barns are of the utmost importance to protect the collection from the elements. There are 11 barns on the property, not counting one for trolley buses and one for motor buses. Some are restoration barns and are not open to the public. There are more than three miles of track under cover and over 300 pieces of equipment in the barns; more are planned.

Many buildings now grace the property including a full-service, climate-controlled cafeteria and rest-room building called the Central Diner, with an actual

ABOVE: Some pieces of equipment are stored and displayed outside as exhibits rotate through the campus. In this view looking west are Chicago & North Western Alco RSD-5 1689, C&NW EMD SD40-2 6847, Burlington Northern "Executive" F9A BN-1, Metra Highliners, and more. JEFF TERRY PHOTO

RIGHT: This after-dark line-up of cab units includes CB&Q E5 9911A, C&NW F7A 411, Metra F7A 308 (ex-C&NW 414), Iowa Pacific 515 (ex-C&NW 515), BN E9Au BN-3 (ex-BN 9919), and BN F9A BN-1 (ex-NP 6700).

ROBERT SCHREINER PHOTO



LEFT: Chicago, Burlington & Quincy's *Nebraska Zephyr* was built by Budd in 1936, with the original shovel-nose diesels replaced by EMC E5 9911A *Silver Pilot* in 1940. The train was retired and donated to IRM in 1968, and remains in regular operation at the museum and on rare off-campus outings. The stainless steel gleams in evening light as a storm approaches the museum campus on August 30, 2013.

MIKE RAIJA PHOTO

BELOW: Union Pacific turbine 18, Milwaukee Road caboose 992300, Amtrak AEM7 945, and UP rotary snowplow 900075 are just some of the outdoor exhibits that greet visitors at IRM. Much more of the collection is stored under cover in a series of barns. OTTO M. VONDRAK PHOTO



porcelain-clad roadside diner from Salem, Ohio, built into it. The Main Street block also includes the Schroeder Mercantile Store, which houses the museum's gift shop and ticketing. The original structure was built before the turn of the century, relocated from downtown Union in the 1980s, and placed in its current location in 2017. As part of the museum's plan to expand Main Street, new structures with period-appropriate facades were constructed. One houses The Milwaukee Road Historical Association archives, the Post Office Gallery for rotating exhibits, the Hobby Shop



and model railroad, and the Pullman Library, which contains a large collection of drawings and other pieces of history from the Pullman Co. collection. The Chicago & North Western Historical Archive building is the newest and is a stand alone building. Additional structures are planned to house the museum's visitor center and to create a backdrop for streetcar and bus demonstrations.

The museum also maintains the Strayhorn Library in nearby Marengo. It is a depository for many historical records, publications, photographs, negatives, and more. The library is open on Wednesdays from 10:00AM to 2:00PM and researchers are welcome by appointment.

Two stations grace the property. The former C&NW depot from nearby Marengo, Ill., was built in 1851 and moved to the IRM campus in July 1967. It was cut in half and moved by highway trailer. The depot, now called "East Union," is the center of activity and can get very busy with departures on multiple tracks every 15 minutes or so during peak tourist season. The CTA 50th Avenue "L" station dates to 1910 and came from the ground level Douglas Route; it arrived at Union in 1978 and handles many elevated cars, North Shore, and CA&E trains from a spur off the main line.

The collection boasts many signs and entablatures, and visitors are greeted by

a big neon North Shore Line neon sign. A neon sign from the Gary station of the South Shore Line has also been restored. A neon sign from Chicago, Aurora & Elgin graces the front of one of the barns. The iconic Santa Fe sign from the top of the Railway Exchange Building in Chicago is on display near the parking lots. There is also a very large display of railroad signals between two of the barns, with many operating.

IRM has an operating trolley bus line, the only one at a museum in the country. The collection of trolley buses is large, with very modern additions from Boston, Seattle, and even Dayton, Ohio. Among the operating coaches are two CTA Marmon Herrington coaches, which were the very last to operate in Chicago, along with a Milwaukee Transport Co. Marmon coach and 1940 Twin Coach 633 from Seattle. Also, a large motor

BELOW: Originally part of an order built by General Electric in 1949 for export to the Soviet Union, South Shore 803 is the largest operating electric locomotive in North America. It came to IRM in 1981 after retirement, and posed with a set of restored South Shore interurbans during a night photo shoot on August 30, 2013. MIKE RAIA PHOTO

BELOW LEFT: An animated neon sign was saved from the South Shore Line station in Gary, Ind., restored, and placed on display at the museum. LOU GERARD PHOTO

BOTTOM: Illinois Terminal "Class B" boxcab motor 1565 leads a photo freight at the museum on April 27, 2024. Home-built in 1910, the freight motor served 50 years before it was acquired by the museum in 1960. LOU GERARD PHOTO





ABOVE: A restored North Shore Line neon sign is on display at IRM. OTTO M. VONDRAK PHOTO

LEFT: The North Shore Line lives at IRM! *Electroliner* set 801-802 is on an outing in February 1991 for the 50th anniversary of its inaugural run. One of two sets built in 1941, the *Electroliners* were sold to Philadelphia Suburban Transportation in 1963 where they ran on the Norristown High Speed Line until 1981. This train is currently undergoing a multi-year restoration.

BELOW LEFT: A four-car North Shore Line train (251, 757, 714, and 160) operated during the museum's *Electroliner* 50th Anniversary event in February 1991. This consist was typical of Milwaukee-bound trains, with older cars trailing the newer rebuilds. LOU GERARD PHOTOS



tavern-lounge car now in progress. Several wooden Chicago "L" cars have been painstakingly restored to operation over the years. The jewel of the fleet is North-western Elevated Railroad car 24, an open platform car built by Pullman in 1898. The museum has a large collection of passenger cars — heavyweight and streamlined — and freight cars. Several have been beautifully restored and are used on many photo charters and events.

The museum hosts several special events throughout the year. The Museum Showcase Weekend is a big event in September when many cars that don't see regular service come out for public rides. Included are the museum's first car, Indiana Railroad 65; Illinois Terminal Alton car 101; and Shaker Heights 18, to name a few. Another event for the 70th anniversary in 2024 was around-the-clock operation during the Showcase weekend of September 16-17. Despite overnight rain, steam, diesel, and electric trains ran all day Saturday through Sunday afternoon, which also included dinner and breakfast trains on the *Nebraska Zephyr*. The star of Saturday evening was the operation of Indiana Railroad 65, the car that started it all.

Steam Days is another busy time, with Shay 5 and Decapod 1630 going through their paces; many engines in the collection are brought outside for display. Visiting steam included 4-4-0 *Leviathan* and Lehigh Valley Coal Co. 0-6-0T 126, both of which pulled the museum's steam train over the main line while attending.

The yearly Trolley Pageant over the

bus collection has its own barn, housing a dozen buses. One notable motor bus is CTA 9799, the last "New Look" or "Fish-bowl" bus built by GM at Pontiac, Mich. (Fishbowls continued to be built by GM in Canada until 1986.) Bus Day in September is always a big event, when all operable trolley coaches and motor buses run on a rotating schedule, along with electric cars and steam and diesel trains.

The museum owns 508 acres, with 108 covering the main campus. The rest is buffer land and the main line. Suburban sprawl and development have started to come to the area, so the museum buys land near its property whenever it becomes available. The land that's not immediately used by the museum is leased to local farmers, which becomes additional income. The land isn't purchased as investment, but for insurance against civilization coming too close to the museum property.

Operations and Events

As the largest railroad museum in the U.S., IRM enjoys a large volunteer base, which is its lifeblood. Well over 200 people are regular volunteers with many under age 30; this is also reflected on the board of directors, which will ensure the museum's continued survival. There are still a few members from the "old guard" involved, and one is Executive Director Nick Kallas. Nick has been with IRM — it seems — forever. He was with the museum in the late 1950s as a teenager at North Chicago, and was also involved with ERHS when it was in Downers Grove.

Among many restorations of note is North Shore coach 749, built by Pullman in 1928, which underwent a painstaking 15-year restoration completed in June 2010. The *Electroliner* is now going through a thorough interior restoration, with the "A" car finished and work in the



ABOVE: IRM's "patched" Rock Island GP7R passes a preserved emblem on display on June 14, 2024. Many photo opportunities present themselves for the visiting railfan throughout the museum campus. OTTO M. VONDRAK PHOTO



ABOVE RIGHT: An aerial view of Barn 9 shows the *Nebraska Zephyr* alongside Southern Pacific 2-10-2 975. The museum presently has 11 barns covering its collection, but only some are open for touring. JEFF TERRY AERIAL PHOTO

RIGHT: J. Neils Lumber Co. 5 was acquired in 1965 and became the first steam locomotive to operate at IRM. Built in 1929, the Shay geared locomotive had a long career working timber lines in the Pacific Northwest. It was fired up for a special event on June 14, 2024.

OTTO M. VONDRAK PHOTO



July 4 weekend was a special one for the 70th Anniversary — it was billed as “70 cars for 70 years.” Just about everything that would roll was operated or pulled along for the event.

For diesel fans, Diesel Days brings every operational locomotive out on the line with some pretty impressive consists of four or five units. Others are on display throughout the campus.

On January 21, 2023, the museum recognized the 60th anniversary of the abandonment of the North Shore Line. All operational North Shore cars were run, with different consists switching all day. Even the rare Merchandise Despatch motor 229 was operating, and rides were available in its small cabs. The *Electroliner* was on display, still undergoing interior restoration, along with line car 604. North Shore streetcar 354 made trips around the streetcar loop all day. It was even operated for several trips by the late Tom Jervan, who was a North Shore employee. Sadly, Tom passed away on March 31, 2023, but he had the joy of operating a car he rode and ran as a kid growing up in Waukegan, Ill. Also, the Electric Speed Trophy, of which North Shore won permanent possession of in 1933, was on display. It was donated by the son of the last president of North Shore Line, Harold G. Mason. The event concluded with an after-dark operation of a five-car train. Almost 600

people participated in the event, coming from as far as New York and even other countries.

Another very popular yearly event is the Vintage Transportation Extravaganza in August. Hundreds of vintage vehicles of all types are on display around the campus. Chicago streetcars operate around the streetcar loop as a shuttle service to all the displayed vehicles. The Bunny Hop Trolley, Pumpkin Patch Trolley, Day Out with Thomas, and *Polar Express* trains are all very popular and sell out quickly.

Operating equipment from other railroads has made appearances on the museum grounds over the years, dating back to the early days in North Chicago when North Shore cars would visit the foundry property on fantrips. At Union, C&NW's F-units and business cars brought employees to the museum for an employees' day on a few occasions in the 1980s. Union Pacific's E9s, C&NW and Missouri Pacific heritage units, and passenger

cars have visited when they pulled museum-sponsored excursions to Belvidere.

On Labor Day weekend 2022, a special operated by the American Association of Private Car Owners visited the property with a seven-car train pulled by Metra's C&NW heritage F59PHI 90 and F40PH-3 104 painted to honor the City of Chicago. The AAPRCO special on the UP's Belvidere Sub ran side by side with IRM's C&NW push-pull train on the museum main line. The special then proceeded to Belvidere where it was wyeed, came back to Union, entered museum trackage, and posed with the C&NW push-pull train at the depot.

In August 2022, Electro-Motive Diesel celebrated its 100th anniversary and had an employee day at the museum. A yellow SD70ACU demonstrator pulled excursions over museum trackage with museum passenger cars. Also, a rebuilt Canadian Pacific SD40-2F was displayed along with other EMD products from the IRM collection. Several EMD locomotives



in the museum's collection were out, including the very first GP7, C&NW 1518.

IRM has also operated many off-campus excursions over the years. The "Snowflake Special" is a regular excursion over CTA's Rapid Transit lines. In 2012, Burlington E5 9911-A and the *Nebraska Zephyr* made two sold-out round-trip excursions to Galesburg and Quincy, Ill., over BNSF. The streamlined E5 and train were operated at speed while on home rails, just as they had when in service for Burlington.

Planning Your Visit

Union is about an hour's drive from Chicago, and located about 15 minutes from the Woodstock station on Metra's Harvard line. Admission to the museum is a flat rate and covers unlimited rides on whatever steam, diesel, and electric trains and buses are running that day. Some special events cost extra. See irm.org for the full calendar of events and details. IRM is a magical place and ever-changing. It is a must-visit destination — and one visit won't cover it! 📍

The author thanks Nick Kallas and John Nicholson for their help preparing this article.

TOP LEFT: Chicago Transit Authority 3142 pauses at Depot Street shelter on September 30, 2023. The streetcars operate in a loop around the museum campus, making several stops along the way. LOU GERARD PHOTO

LEFT: Chicago & North Western GP7R 4160 (ex-Rock Island 4506) leads a freight past the SANTA FE sign that once sat atop the Railway Exchange Building in downtown Chicago. While the GP7 usually wears its Rock Island identity, it was patched for CNW in spring 2024 for an event. JUSTIN FRANZ PHOTO

BELOW: Conjuring up images of Chicago rush hours of the 1970s and 1980s, C&NW 411 accelerates down the museum railroad with an authentic consist of bi-level gallery cars on August 31, 2024. Recreating scenes from the past is an important mission of the museum. LOU GERARD PHOTO





Parting Shot

PHOTO BY PETE SWANSON

Reading & Northern 4-8-4 2102 makes a rare winter appearance, blasting upgrade at East Mahanoy Junction, Pa., on February 8, 2025. The ex-Reading T-1 is on its way to Jim Thorpe, Pa., with a trip that originated in North Reading. Massive crowds were out to enjoy the cold-weather steam show.



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