

2026 Spring Conference -- The Journey, The Event and The Legacy

By Elizabeth Guenzler, Associate Editor and Central Coast Chapter Representative.

News of the spring conference location and details were announced in February and I was happy to learn that we would be returning to Salt Lake City, with our host being the Promontory Chapter. This would be a much more relaxed visit (at least for the delegates) without a major event, such as Spike 150 during the 2019 convention. Moreover, the Promontory Chapter is celebrating their 60th anniversary this year.



The timing of the conference (May 29th and 30th) also made it possible for my husband and me to drive from Salt Lake City to Romulus (Detroit), Michigan for the Railroad Station Historical Society convention which commenced June 3rd. But I digress

The route we chose from Columbia, Missouri took us into a small corner of Iowa, then across Nebraska and Wyoming into Utah. A few stops were made along the way.



Union Pacific 2-8-0 407, nee Union Pacific 1627, built by Baldwin in 1900 on display at Legion Park in Sidney, NE along with Sidney and Lowe Railroad boxcar 10002 and Burlington Northern caboose 11357.

NRHS NEWS - 2026 SPRING CONFERENCE ISSUE

This issue written and compiled by Elizabeth Guenzler, Associate Editor. Photographs by the author unless otherwise credited.

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Notes:

1. Some of the information in this document is taken from the organization's websites or other online sources, in order to give readers a more full history of the item(s) pictured.
2. Spelling used is the British version, a nod to the heritage of the author.



Union Pacific 8446
North in Weber Canyon
as seen from the
opposite side of the bus
en route from Ogden to
Heber City.

May 28th included a stop in Laramie, Wyoming to see the displayed equipment at Depot Park, the station and the pedestrian walkway over the Union Pacific yard.

Founded in 1868 upon the arrival of the Union Pacific Railroad, Laramie was named after the fur trader Jacques LaRamie.



Top left: Union Pacific combination station built in 1924 to replace a former station and hotel, which burned in 1917. The passenger portion was closed for an event but the freight portion, housing many displays and a gift shop, was open.

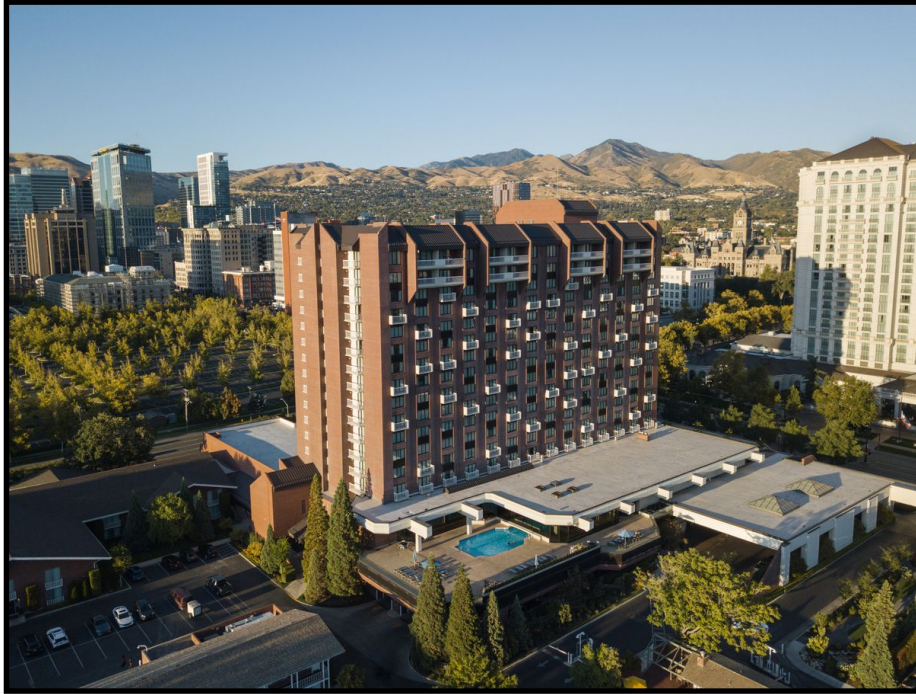
Top right: The Overland Route herald; this version lasted from 1914 to 1933.

Bottom left: Union Pacific caboose 25232, nee Union Pacific 3932, built by the railway in 1959 and retired in May 1986. Part of the display at Depot Park.

Bottom right: The pedestrian bridge over the yard, built in 1924, which was extremely empty this day.



We arrived in Salt Lake City mid-evening May 28th and upon entering the Little America Hotel, could not believe the beautiful spacious lobby, its grandeur and elegance. What a place and a very unexpected pleasure!



Top: The Little America hotel in the foreground with the Grand America Hotel in the background. Photo from their website.
Bottom: The Little America Hotel lobby. Photograph courtesy Dawn Holmberg.

Now ... for some words from the President of the Promontory Chapter, Edward "Ted" Itchon:

"Well, I started in November of 2025, when I called Tony White and offered the Promontory Chapter to do a spring conference for the National. I continued to tell him the chapter will be celebrating its sixtieth anniversary as a member of the NRHS. He accepted the offer and told me to contact Bob Bitzer for guidance on the matter. It took him some time to get back with me but we did discuss the venue and the matter of scheduling.

In the meantime, I started with going to the City's conference group to find a hotel to hold the conference. I filled out the questionnaire, telling them that I needed a hotel to host the conference, the number of rooms, meeting space and such. You would not believe the number of hotels that I was sent to which did not match the criteria I had specified.

So, I again sent them another request and by this time, it was December 2025. I was frantic trying to find a hotel to host the conference and that was when Tony told me of a group that assisted in locating the hotel in Milwaukee. I contacted Erica and she said she can do this and told me what she will do.



Hotel bar area, off the lobby. Photograph courtesy Dawn Holmberg.



One of the chandeliers above the grand staircase. Photograph courtesy Dawn Holmberg.

With that item now off the plate, I then worked on a plan to get the membership to visit the Ogden City Depot and the Heber Valley Railroad. It was getting later in the month of January and I did not hear from Erica. So, in late in January, I talked to my wife Ann and asked her to go with me to Little America to talk to them about hosting the conference.

When my wife and I went to the hotel, we met Shane who told me that that he just completed the information for the meeting for May 27 through May 30, 2026 for the venue. I was greatly relieved, knowing that she delivered what she said she would do. The rest is history. "

**LITTLE
AMERICA**
— *Hotel* —
SALT LAKE CITY

Friday, May 29th: Ogden Union Station / Utah State Railroad Museum Visit and Tour

The first of three days of breakfasts in the Coffee Shop dining room was the only way to start the day, and TRAX, Salt Lake City's light rail system, passed frequently outside the restaurant's windows.

After a little wait for the motor coach, we settled in for the drive to Ogden and our destination of Union Station. The city, located thirty-five miles north on the banks of the Weber River, is unlike most other Utah communities, which Mormon pioneers originally settled. Ogden had its start as Fort Buenaventura when a fur trapper named Miles Goodyear (1817-1849)

established the fort in 1844, the first permanent Anglo settlement in this region of Utah. The Weber River runs through a valley known as Ogden Valley and the valley had been given its name much earlier in honour of a British-Canadian fur trader and explorer Peter Skeen Ogden (1790-1854). The Mormon pioneers did not enter the area until 1847 and they purchased Fort Buenaventura then founded a city three years later that they named Ogden, after the valley in which it is found. The Fort still stands and is a state park.



In the early twentieth century, Twenty-fifth Street was the center of activity in Ogden. Perhaps the most important part of this section was the Union Station Depot at the junction of Twenty-fifth Street and Wall Avenue. In 1869, the transcontinental railroad was completed near Promontory. Four cities near this location competed with each other for the opportunity to house the train station that would be the junction for railroad travel in the Intermountain West -- Corinne, Promontory, Uintah and Ogden.



Promontory and Uintah were quickly eliminated from the competition as they lacked the resources necessary to house the station. This left just Corinne and Ogden. Both cities built depots in anticipation that their city would house the station. Brigham Young, President of the Mormon Church, donated land in Ogden for the erection of a train station, and the Ogden City Council appropriated money for its construction. With this money and

donated land, Ogden was able to build a fine train station depot at the corner of Wall Avenue and Twenty-fifth Street. Because Ogden was a well-established center of businesses and Corinne was basically unknown, Ogden was adopted as the official station of the transcontinental railway. Nothing became of the depot constructed in Corinne and it became a ghost town.

At this same time, a new line of rails was built from Franklin, Idaho to Ogden, which became the Utah Northern Railroad. The Ogden Union Station Depot became the station for both the Utah Northern Railroad and the transcontinental railway that had just been completed near Promontory.

In addition to the UP and Central Pacific, this station also became the terminal for the Utah Central Railroad that connected with the territorial capital of Salt Lake City to the south, the Utah and Northern Railway which ran into the northern regions of the territory (present-day Idaho), and the Denver and Rio Grande Western, which ran farther to the south before connecting across the mountains to Colorado. This quickly established Ogden as the major transit hub for all of the Intermountain West, as travellers coming from the East or West Coast could now transfer to trains that would take them to most other populated areas throughout the region. Ogden, and Utah in general, would eventually earn the nickname "Crossroads of the West" for this very reason.

The construction of the current building was completed in 1924 in the Spanish Colonial Revival (also known as Early Christian/Byzantine) style and is built on the foundation of the earlier building and was dedicated on November 22nd of that year.



The ceiling of the Grand Lobby, taking up the center portion of the building, has a height of 56 feet and extends to the roof.

The trusses were originally painted in bright colors with geometric designs, but have since been painted over with a faux wood grain. Murals of the construction of the transcontinental railroad were painted on the north and south end of the lobby.

At its height, it had 13 passenger tracks with platforms, a commissary that provided food and supplies to long-distance trains, a laundry building that washed linens for most of UP's rail network, a large United States Postal Service annex that served mail trains, and serviced more than 60 passenger trains each day

In 1995, UP and SP merged, resulting in Union Pacific being the sole operator of the remaining rail facilities that served the station, and owner of the land around the station building.

On May 11, 1997, the final Amtrak Pioneer train departed eastbound from Union Station at 7:38 AM. The route was discontinued after this date, and along with it ended all passenger rail service at Ogden's Union Station. When the Utah Transit Authority constructed their FrontRunner commuter rail service between Ogden and Salt Lake City in 2008, suitable plans to bring rail service back to the station building could not be worked out between the city, UP and UTA. The decision was made to build a new commuter rail station just to the north of Union Station at the Ogden Intermodal Transit Center (now known as Ogden Central Station). There is currently no direct access for passengers between the FrontRunner station and Union Station.



The 50-year lease on the land under and around the station building was set to expire in 2027. In anticipation of this, UP offered to sell the land outright to Ogden, and in December 2022, the city entered into a purchase agreement with UP for \$5.5 million. Ogden City fully owns both the station and the land that it sits on, and has plans to develop the area.



Union Station is home to the Utah State Railroad Museum, John M. Browning Firearms Museum, The Browning-Kimball Classic Car Museum, the Utah Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum, as well as a library and archives.



Conference attendees learning about the station's history, and the importance of Ogden, before going outside to the preserved equipment of the Utah State Railroad Museum. Photo courtesy Doug Scott.

The museum at Ogden Union Station, officially opened on October 22, 1978 and was designated by the Legislature as the Utah State Railroad Museum on February 26, 1988. Following is a sampling of the collection.



Klarr Industries GP35
2500, ex. Union
Station Foundation
2500 2022, exx.
Arkansas Midland
Railroad 2500 2003,
exxx. San Joaquin
Valley Railroad 2500,
exxxx. Union Pacific
783 1984, nee Western
Pacific 3002, built by
Electro-Motive
Division in 1963.

It underwent cosmetic
restoration to its
original Western
Pacific livery and
arrived on May 10,
2024.



Union Pacific 4-6-0 4436, built by Baldwin Locomotive Works as a coal-burner in 1918. Originally equipped with a sloped-back tender, it gained the Vanderbilt tender between January 1938 and January 1943 and was probably converted to oil at that time. After working in Nebraska until World War II, it was moved to Portland, Oregon then moved again to Evanston, Wyoming after 1949. It was still in operation there in October 1957 and was likely the last steam locomotive assigned to Evanston. Retired in February 1958, it was donated to the City of Ogden and displayed at Affleck Park (with Southern Pacific 0-6-0 1297) then moved to Union Station in 1993.



Western Pacific caboose 438, built by International Car Company in 1956, was another new acquisition, having been acquired from the Inland Northwest Museum's collection in Reardan, Washington. It arrived in June 2025.

This was one of seven WP cabooses that UP painted in their livery after the merger, and was retired on March 15, 1986. It complements the GP35 shown on the previous page.



A combination of motive power for the ages. Left to right: Union Pacific 4-8-4 833 (built in 1939), Union Pacific DDA40X 6916 (built in 1969), Denver and Rio Grande Western SD40T-2 5371 (built in 1975), Southern Pacific SD45R 7457 (built in 1966) and Union Pacific gas turbine X-26 (built in 1961).

A January 2024 acquisition by the Promontory Chapter was Denver and Rio Grande Western SW1200 133, built by Electro-Motive Division in 1965. It was acquired by UP during the merger, and retired in 1998. It found its way Farmers Elevator in Beresford, SD and was moved from storage in Iowa. It spent much of its career on the Rio Grande working locals out of Roper Yard, as well as some time switching Rio Grande's Ogden Yard.





Union Pacific postal storage car 5819 built by American Car and Foundry in 1960. It saw service on the Oregon Short Line, delivering mail through southern Idaho then moved to maintenance-of-way service, becoming 903680 in 1970 and was repainted green. It has now been restored by the museum to the original yellow and gray livery with its original number.



Utah Transit Authority's FrontRunner has just departed Ogden Central Station and is passing the Utah State Railroad Museum before going over the flyover as it starts the 83 mile journey to Provo. FrontRunner operates in push-pull mode; this is cab car 120 built by Bombardier and MP36PH-3C 2 built by Motive Power Industries



UPP Olympic Torch Relay Cauldron Car 2002, which had been refurbished with a new design from the original used in the 1996 Summer Olympic Games. This brought up the rear of the 17 car train which travelled over 3,200 miles in eleven states.

Photographs courtesy Doug Scott.





There was plenty of time to wander through the engaging and impressive displays inside the Utah State Railroad Museum, which included this relief map of the Transcontinental Railroad and accompanying information boards.

Lunch was at Yu's Maple Garden, a Chinese Restaurant inside the station, which was a change from the original plan, but conveyed to all a few days in advance. However, there was some confusion on the restaurant's end, which resulted in a longer-than-expected meal break, although the menu was plentiful and the food of good quality and ample portions.

Friday, May 29th: Heber Valley Railroad

Back on the bus, we were taken to Heber City for a ride on the Heber Valley Railroad. Arrangements had been made for our group to be treated to a first class experience with a business car and two dome cars, a lovely surprise.

There was time to browse the gift shop and photograph the train, as well as other rolling stock and locomotives around the grounds.



Top: The Heber Valley Railroad logo on the floor of the ticket office/gift shop.

Bottom: A unique chandelier in the station.



United States Steel 0-6-0 300, ex. United States Steel Corporation 300 1953, exx. United States Steel Company 300 1951, exxx. Geneva Steel Company 300, nee Columbia Steel Corporation 300, built by Baldwin Locomotive Works in 1925.



The original neon sign, a fixture atop the Rio Grande station in Salt Lake City for decades, was acquired by the Heber Valley Railroad, restored and installed on top of their shop building in June 2025.

The three first class cars were duly photographed before boarding commenced.



Heber Valley Railroad dome car 4729 "Silver Scene", ex. IFE Leasing as MRLX 9544 "Silver Scene" 2004, exx. Rail Quest America 9544 "City of Livingston" 2002, exxx. lease to American Orient Express/Montana Rockies Rail Tours/American Spirit, exxxx. Wyoming and Pacific WPRX 9544 1998, exxxxx. Montana Rockies Daylight, BKSX 9544 1994, exxxxxx. Bill Brommer as WKMR 800269, exxxxxxxx. Project 2472 1984, exxxxxxxx. Esprit de Corps Sportswear 1984, exxxxxxxx. Amtrak 9544 1971, exxxxxxxx. Burlington Northern 5484, nee Chicago, Burlington and Quincy 4729, built by Budd Company in 1947. It is Heber Valley's first dome car, acquired in February 2023.



Heber Valley Railroad buffet-lounge car 1291 "Royal Gorge", ex. Amtrak 3361, exx. Penn Central 4448, exxx. Pennsylvania Railroad 1448, nee Denver and Rio Grande Western 1448, built by Pullman-Standard in 1950.



Heber Valley Railroad dome-lounge 503 "Plaza Santa Fe", built by Budd Company in 1950 as a Pleasure Dome for the Super Chief and featured the Turquoise Room under the dome and parlour car-style revolving seats in the dome. While the name "Plaza Santa Fe" was given later in its life, it was never applied to the car during Santa Fe ownership. It became Amtrak 9353 then in 1981, was bought by California Rail Tours to be leased for charters.



Heber Valley Railroad GP9 5926, ex. Boston and Maine 52 1983, exx. Boston and Maine 1826, nee Boston and Maine 1726, built by Electro-Motive Division in 1957. It entered service in December 2018 then more recently, was painted in this Rio Grande-inspired livery and re-numbered with matching last two digits of its original number, entering service on July 3, 2023.



Richard Shulby, Advisory Council Chairman and National Representative for the Baltimore and Piedmont-Carolina Chapters, enjoying his ride and the experience of riding in Santa Fe's Pleasure Dome 503 "Plaza Santa Fe". Dawn Holmberg, Cora Sowa, Dan Meyer and Cliff Kierstead also pictured.



A double lower quadrant semaphore signal as seen from the dome car, just beyond the yard.



The Turquoise Room of "Plaza Santa Fe".

Santa Fe publicity promoted the Turquoise Room as "the only private dining room on rails." After 1954, when Union Pacific included a private dining room in the dome-diners of the City of Los Angeles and City of Portland, this changed to "the first private dining room on rails."

The Turquoise Room was decorated with light woods and a brilliant turquoise mosaic on one wall. Zuni Indians hand-fashioned the sterling silver medallion inlaid with specially selected turquoise. This medallion was replicated on the room's menus, in advertising and on ash trays that the railroad sold to customers for a nominal cost. Turquoise was particularly appropriate to use on the Super Chief as it is not only used for distinctive Southwest Indian jewelry, it is sometimes called the traveller's stone that is said to "possess healing and protective powers."





Above: rounding one of the curves around Deer Creek Reservoir as seen from the vestibule.
Below: The passing track at Decker Bay.





Heber Valley Railroad GP9 5926 switching ends at Decker Bay for the return journey, as seen from dome car "Silver Scene". Photograph courtesy Christopher Guenzler.



Heber Valley Railroad GP9 5926 leading the train back Photograph courtesy Christopher Guenzler.



Part of the first class experience included fruit, cheese and crackers and a selection of cookies and delicious desserts, including chocolate éclairs.



The Rio Grande Bar was well-stocked and patronized throughout the afternoon.



The lounge area of Heber Valley buffet-lounge car 1291 "Royal Gorge".

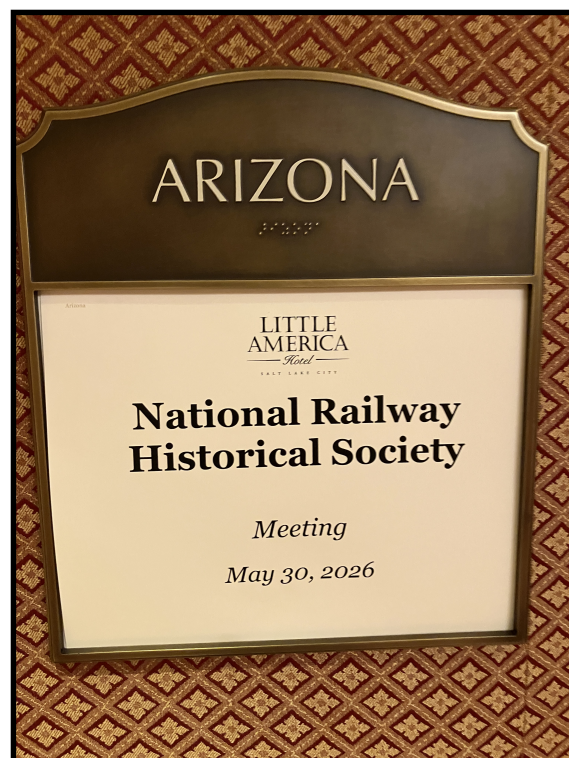
Upon return to Heber City, there was time to look around a bit more before the bus returned us to Salt Lake City and everyone had the evening to themselves.

Saturday, May 30th: Society Meetings

The spring and autumn conferences usually feature a day of train riding, a tour or some combination thereof, then a day of meetings which strikes a worthy balance of the chapter showcasing rail-related attractions in the area and the business of the society.

After another excellent breakfast, those in person and those attending via video conference gathered in the Arizona room for the plenary session and reports discussion. The audiovisual component had been, as usual, organized and set up by Dan Meyer.

Once the reports discussion was finished, the Advisory Council convened, led by Richard Shulby, Chairman, and Elizabeth Guenzler, Secretary. That meeting was finished just before noon and there was a one-and-a-half hour lunch break before the Chapter Roundtable.





Chris and I used part of the lunch break to ride a portion of TRAX to Salt Lake Central station, but I returned to the hotel after this to prepare for the first of this afternoon's meetings.



The Arizona Room ready for the Chapter Roundtable and the Board meeting. The lone figure is Al Weber, who was using the down time to catch up on some work.

After the Roundtable, a break ensued, then the Board meeting commenced. A highlight of the meeting was an initiative introduced by Larry Pearlman to strengthen the society's engagement with younger members and build the next generation of participation. The Board passed a motion for a Youth Photo and Media Contest.

A small number of volunteers were sought for this project and the chapters, through their National Representatives (and Presidents), were solicited for individuals to join, with an e-mail being distributed in follow-up.



General Counsel John Fiorilla, President Tony White, Secretary and Director Ellen Scott, Director Mike Yuhas, Director Jon Baake and Director Larry Pearlman. Other directors joined remotely.



The Promontory Chapter's 60th anniversary banquet was held that evening in the hotel. A most unexpected and very nice surprise was a commemorative glass at everyone's place for all to take home.

The salad, vegetables, chicken and salmon were delicious and there was a large prime rib which many enjoyed throughout the evening. Since I like my steak well-done, I did not sample this.

The hotel's wait staff were attentive and it was a nice, intimate setting for the event.



NRHS President Tony White congratulating the Promontory Chapter for 60 years, in front of some of the conference delegates. Photograph courtesy Dawn Holmberg.



Promontory Chapter Vice-President Keith Osojnak, President Edward "Ted" Itchon and NRHS President Tony White with the 60th Anniversary certificate of recognition. Photograph courtesy Dawn Holmberg.



The dessert table and the server. Photograph courtesy Dawn Holmberg.

That brought an end to the banquet and the spring conference. Such conferences are so useful for networking and chatting with fellow members, directors and representatives in a smaller setting than a convention.

However, we are not quite finished. Doug Scott had an opportunity the following day to visit the chapter's business car where their meetings are held in the summer months.



Promontory Chapter business car "Janice L", ex, Union Pacific club-dormitory 1535 1954, exx. Union Pacific club-lounge 1535 "Colorado Club" 1930 for Columbine service, nee Union Pacific club-dormitory 1535, built by Pullman Company in 1923. It was retired in 1968 and sold to a private party in Denver, then named "Janice L" in 1970. The partially-open observation platform modification was added in 1982. PPCX 800225. Photograph courtesy Doug Scott.



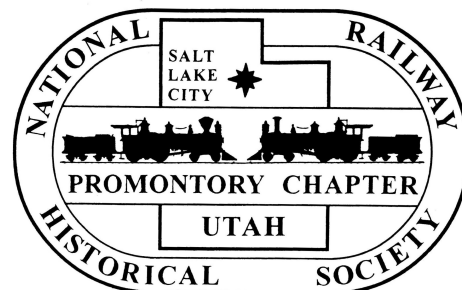
Interior of "Janice L". Photograph courtesy Doug Scott.



The Promontory Chapter drumhead. Photograph courtesy Doug Scott.



Utah Transit Authority's TRAX light rail trains passing very outside the Little America/Grand America Hotels. Photographs courtesy Doug Scott.



COMING ATTRACTION -- **Ohio 2026: The NRHS Railroad History Tour**

Preliminary information as of June 28th, 2026:

- ♦ Monday, September 21: NRHS business meetings (daytime), followed by a gala opening reception, featuring a compelling speaker discussing a relevant railroad topic. Hors d'oeuvres, beer/wine.
- ♦ Tuesday, September 22: Board our bus for the ride to Marion, where we will spend a couple hours watching Norfolk Southern and CSX trains on the three mainlines that cross here. After lunch, it's off to Bellevue for a visit to the Mad River & NKP Railroad Museum.
- ♦ Wednesday, September 23: Our day begins with a Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad excursion from Cleveland to Akron and return, with lunch on the train. Afterward, we'll visit the shop of the Midwest Railroad Preservation Society, where we will observe the progress on GTW 4070 and Reading 2100 (American Freedom Train 250) and others.
- ♦ Thursday, September 24: No visit to Ohio would be complete without a tour of the Age of Steam Roundhouse Museum in Sugarcreek! We've arranged for access to areas not normally seen by the public. One of their locomotives will be fired up, and we'll ride a short distance behind it. We'll enjoy a buffet at a nearby Amish restaurant.
- ♦ Friday, September 25: Our group will be immersed in a rare behind-the-scenes tour of the Wabtec (former GE) locomotive factory in Erie, Pennsylvania. Lunch included. *Note: attendance for this activity is limited, so be sure to sign up early!*
- ♦ Most evenings will feature seminars presented by noted historians and photographers.
- ♦ *All events are subject to change.*