

REPORTS FOR THE 2025 SPRING CONFERENCE
MAY 3, 2025



Report of the convention committee

Submitted by Eric Fogg and Mike Yuhas • May, 2025

The convention will be headquartered in Lansing, Michigan, in July. Lansing was chosen for a couple reasons:

1. It is central to the venues of our daily excursions
2. It is a college town, which suggested a large inventory of hotel rooms
3. It is served by Amtrak

Meeting Solutions, our meeting consultant, obtained aggressive proposals from five hotels in town. We ultimately chose the Graduate (by Hilton), which is directly across the street from the campus of Michigan State University. Sleeping room rate is \$134 per night, plus taxes; free valet parking is included. The hotel opened in 2021.

The tentative convention itinerary:

- Saturday, July 12: Opening reception, featuring a compelling speaker discussing a relevant railroad topic. Hors d'oeuvres, beer/wine.
- Sunday, July 13: Diesel-powered excursion over Great Lakes Central, operated by Steam Railroading Institute between Clare and Owosso.
- Monday, July 14: Steam-powered excursion operated by Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society, Coldwater, Mich., to Ray, Ind., on Indiana Northeastern.
- Tuesday, July 15: A three-for in Elkhart, Ind.: visit to the National New York Central Museum; tour of Norfolk Southern's Elkhart Yard; tour of the Adams-Westlake factory.

- Wednesday, July 16: Visit to Greenfield Village including a screening of the giant screen movie “Train Time,” and a tour of the restored Michigan Central depot in Detroit.
- Thursday, July 17: NRHS business meetings!

A “save the date” email was sent to all members on February 23, followed by an email with more detail on April 18. We are working with Choose Lansing (the local C&VB) to design, print and mail a postcard to all members. After all contracts have been signed, and event pricing confirmed, we’ll begin relentless promotion via email and the NRHS website.

The committee recognizes that many members have definite ideas on the types of trips and activities offered in a convention. We would like to hear from you. Please send your thoughts to both foggstation@yahoo.com and mike@mikeyuhas.org. We would especially like to hear from members who wish to volunteer for the committee, from members in Michigan who are familiar with nearby railroad attractions, and from people who represent a company that would like to sponsor the convention.

*Sun-drenched tracks on a July day,
Historians gather, cameras play.*

*Michigan’s lines, Indiana’s too, Stories
shared in vibrant hue.*

*Clicking shutters, whispers low,
Railroad tales begin to flow.*

*A past revived, a future bright,
Convention trips are a joyful sight.*

NRHS Heritage Grants Committee, report for spring, 2025 Conference.

1. 2025 Program deadline was January 31, 2025
2. Registrar George Hickok received, collated and responded to 45 applicants.
3. Total requested \$357,939.04.
4. Total budgeted \$150,000

There is an incredible need for railroad historical preservation.

Our committee members are in the process of reviewing the applications.

Committee members:

- George Hickok
- Joe Maloney
- Bob Brewster
- Val Hoski
- Kevin Feeney
- Walter Zullig
- Patti Webb
- Patrick Malloy
- Doug Scott
- Ed Berntsen
- Charlie Webb

Submitted by Charlie Webb, Chair, April 16, 2025

Film and Slide Preservation

The Film and Slide Archival Committee consists of just three members ... Mitch Dakelman, Tom Coughlin and Marlin Taylor. It has been functioning more or less behind the scenes for several years until recently, when we were finally in a position to begin offering the results of our efforts to members and the rail-loving public. This, of course, was the launch of our Photo Gallery via the NRHS website, followed more recently by establishing the Society's YouTube channel.

The Photo Gallery now offers more than 3,000 individual photos, all easily searchable by era, geographic area, etc. – thanks to the never-ending hard work of Mitch Dakelman. With each photo, its location is noted as well as when taken by name of photographer when known, and picture quality improved as much as possible, based on the original. He also is the person who cleans, repairs and edits where appropriate all the films prior to they being digitally scanned.

Our YouTube channel currently offers 61 films and has 1,500 subscribers. One film that was added just in January - a 1968 film of the Santa Fe Railroad, as shot by a NRHS member - has been viewed 8,800 times. The Society's YouTube channel is handled by Tom Coughlin ... for each 16 mm and 8 mm film, Tom does any needed editing and writes and adds an appropriate narrative prior to uploading the film.

One of the concerns Tom regularly expresses is having a protection backup copy of all of our digital files ... which we do not have at this time. Accomplishing this was recently advanced through our being donated what is known as a Synology network accessible storage server. Tom is in the process of acquiring the hard drives needed for it and expects to begin the backing up process over the next several weeks.

The NRHS has dozens of reels and hundreds of slides – likely it's hundreds of reels and thousands of slides, we haven't counted recently - which have been donated over the years, and we regularly receive new donations of large and small collections, having received several from members and non-members alike in recent months. So, our library of materials is constantly growing.

From time to time, we hear the question, "why aren't we able to see more of what's in the archives?" There is nothing more that the Committee members and your leadership would like than being able to double the number of slides and films available via our website – so why is that not occurring? Very simply ... MANPOWER! The NRHS is an all-volunteer organization, so we rely on our three-person committee to do the job, with zero outside help. As you've read above, it's not so simple as "scan and throw it up on the website" as someone suggested – real work in preparation is required! Hence, if you have any skills related to what's been described above ... would you consider donating them a few hours a week or month for the good of your *Society*?

We also receive requests from time to time to use a photo or film clip. Recently, German model train maker *Marklin* began offering a model of Western Maryland shay locomotive #5 ... photos of the real locomotive were included in their advertising, all coming from the NRHS archives. A contract has just been signed with a documentary film maker for use of film clips of train scenes from downtown Baltimore in 1955, taken from a film which the producers found on our YouTube channel.

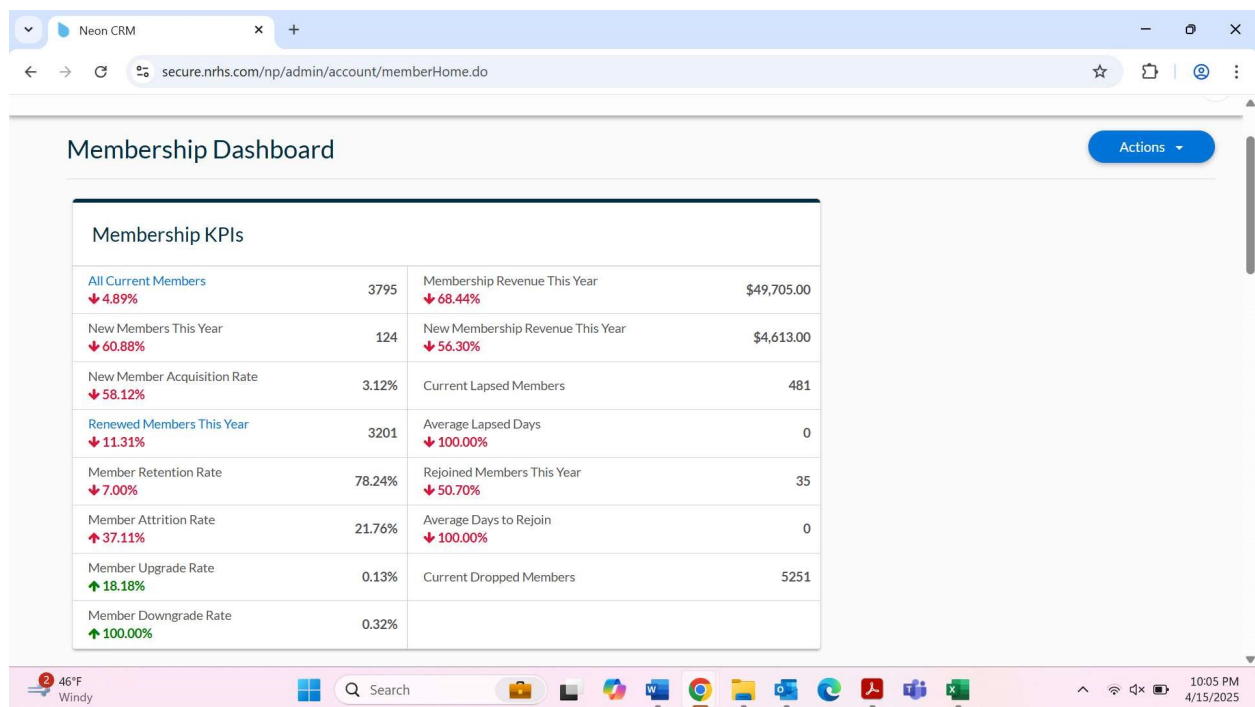
Finally, in case you have no clue ... since 2008, when the NRHS offices in Philadelphia were closed, our film and slide libraries have been housed in the historic railroad station in Phillipsburg, New Jersey, situated in the banks of the Delaware River just across from Easton, Pennsylvania.

Marlin R. Taylor
Co-Chairman

NRHS MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT MAY 3, 2025, JOHNSON CITY, TN CONFERENCE

Membership Statistics

Total Membership as of 4/15/2025: 3,795 (decrease of 4.89% since 2024)



Membership Committee Members

Patti Webb, Chairperson
Mike Yuhas
Tony White
Becky Gerstung
Steve Siegerist

A special thank you to the Membership Committee for your continued efforts and dedication to the NRHS members.

Membership keeps the NRHS on track for the future!

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Webb

NRHS Membership Committee Chairperson

2025 MEMBERSHIP AWARDS:

This year we are awarding 125 members for longevity in the NRHS.

70 years ~ 1

60 Years ~ 12

50 Years ~ 36

25 Years ~ 76

The awards began shipping in Mid-April. Thank You to all who responded to Elizabeth's email request concerning where to send the certificates and pins. I will be following up with non-respondents as I complete the certificates for their respective chapters. IF I cannot contact an AC Rep or Chapter president, the awards will be sent directly to the recipient.

Doug Scott

Membership Awards Committee

Deraildh2@aol.com

Membership Brochures Report

Every winter Wes Ross contacts RR attractions and museums to determine if they will provide discounted admissions to NRHS members. In that mailing he also asks if they would be willing to display NRHS membership brochures, and if yes, how many would they like us to send. He forwards the list to me, and I get the brochures mailed out. That usually results in requests for more than 10,000 brochures from more than 150 organizations. I am ready to start sending out brochures when I receive the list from Wes sometime in May. I also send out approximately 5000 brochures annually to chapters and other organizations that request them and have them available for pickup at conferences and conventions. Requests for NRHS membership brochures may be sent to jbaake@outlook.com.

Jon Baake

April 15, 2025

RailCamp

RailCamp is off and running. We have 36 kids accepted to the program this year. We only have one girl. We were informed that this year will be the last year for Tacoma Rail. We will wait and see what happens this year with new people in charge. RailCamp Northwest may have to change some of their activities.

As you know RailCamp is one of the most successful programs we offer. This is entirely thanks to the men and women who have given of their time, knowledge and energy to provide this unique opportunity. We will be looking for a new East director and some more counselors. If you have an interest in becoming part of this activity let me know.

Once again this year we have 14 scholarships to award. RailCamp tuition has remained the same for the past few years. The future is uncertain. If your chapter, other organization or individuals would like to provide assistance, please let me know. The application goes out January 1st and we need to know at that time if you are willing to help. Sponsored campers receive priority consideration. They also have an earlier deadline. Let me know and I will send you the sponsor guidelines.

Becky Gerstung
RailCamp Program Director

To: NRHS Advisory Committee and NRHS Board of Directors
From: Mike Yuhas
Subj: Report of the NRHS Preservation Award Committee
Date: April, 2025

In late 2022, a small cohort of NRHS members developed the concept of an award to recognize a common carrier railroad for its historic preservation efforts. We reasoned that there is not a compelling business case for railroads to invest in preserving their history; our annual award gives an attaboy to a railroad that did just that.

Unlike the long-running NRHS Heritage Grants program, museums and tourist railroads are ineligible for this award. The preservation award honors *only* common carrier railroads that have undertaken significant historic preservation projects. Additionally, there is no financial component to this award.

Railway Age and Railway Track & Structures were recruited as our partners to increase the program's visibility into the railroad industry. The media support they have given has been robust, and welcome.

The 2025 award honoree has been selected. The award will be presented at the Railway Interchange trade show in Indianapolis on May 21.

The committee consists of NRHS members R. Victor Varney, Edward M. Berntsen, Larry Pearlman, Tony White, and Mike Yuhas; plus Bill Vantuono and David Lester from Railway Age and RT&S, respectively. The committee gratefully acknowledges the support of Dawn Holmberg and Trishah Woolley for their help in publishing the nomination forms on our website, and the enthusiasm of NRHS members who submitted nominations.

Previous honorees

2023 – Iowa Traction Railway, in recognition of their daily use of century-old electric locomotives and infrastructure

2024 – Union Pacific Railroad, recognizing the railroad's preservation and operation of historic steam and diesel locomotives to promote the railroad's heritage

Queries may be directed to mike@mikeyuhas.org.

Report of Historic Plaque Committee

The Historic Plaque Committee has been quite busy since our last report.

First, we have approved the proposal for a plaque at Tunnel #6 on Donner Summit. We had a little delay with this project as once the language had been agreed upon and we were ready to place the order we discovered that our long-term plaque manufacturer in Pennsylvania had just gone out of business. After a search we located a manufacturer near Chicago. The plaque now has been manufactured and shipped to an officer of the Donner Summit Historical Society in Truckee, CA. The dedication is expected to take place during mid-June.

The second project was a plaque for a relocated turntable for the Oregon Rail Heritage Center in Portland, OR. The turntable had been at the former SP roundhouse in Brooklyn, OR, near Portland and was donated to the ORHC by Union Pacific. The turntable's 100th Anniversary was observed last year. The Pacific Northwest Chapter sponsored the plaque and agreed to pay half the cost of manufacture and shipping. The plaque is being manufactured and the dedication is planned for May 10, 2025.

We also have had a plaque request from the new Wichita Valley Chapter in Texas. The subject is two large historic urns that had been at the entrance to the former railroad station at Wichita Falls, TX. At present we are reviewing this matter with Chapter officers.

Respectfully submitted,
Walter E. Zullig Jr.
Chair, Historic Plaque Committee

2025 Directory of Rail Attractions

By Wes and Shirley Ross

The 2025 edition of the NRHS Directory of Rail Attractions will be released electronically and posted on the NRHS Web Site in May. This edition will be the 26th that Shirley and I have produced since 2000. This year's edition contains over 170 rail attractions and museums across the country. We begin this process in January, by sending out invitations to a large mailing list of attractions. Each one is asked if they would like to be listed, at no charge, and if they would be willing to offer NRHS members a discount. All attractions that respond are listed, whether, or not, they offer a discount. Attractions that offer a discount, or are free, are listed in BOLD FACE type. All attractions that are related to NRHS Chapters are identified.

This list serves two major functions for the NRHS. Both of these functions are important, and they relate to two separate areas of our organization. The first function is that the directory provides members with a listing of many attractions, across the country, which they may chose to visit during the year, and even, possibly receive a discount. The second reason is less apparent; but very useful to our organization. In our invitation, we ask each attraction if they would be willing to display our NRHS brochures at their site. Over the past few years, over 350 different sites have requested brochures. Jon Baake, has volunteered to send brochures to each attraction, each year. This is a great way for the NRHS to be introduced to new and different audiences. This year, participating organizations have requested over 8,500 brochures. These brochures will be distributed by Jon Baake in late May or early June. This year, a total of 31 new sites have requested brochures that have not previously handled them. This is a great way for us to publicize the NRHS.

Report of Inspector General

Only one matter has required attention by the IG since the last report.

A letter was received from a chapter advising of a reorganization that raised numerous questions, including but not limited to the status of a \$4000 grant from NRHS for rehabilitation of a former Boston & Maine RR prewar "American Flyer" coach. The chapter's CEO replied and requested yet more time to complete the work. Meanwhile we learned that only a few chapter members are National members. This matter remains pending.

Respectfully submitted,

Walter E. Zullig Jr.
Inspector General

Report of the General Counsel

On February 21 and 22 the General Counsel hosted a meeting of the officers at his office in Riverton, N.J. Tony White, Ellen Scott, Bob Bitzer and Bob Ernst attended in person. VP Scott Andes attended by zoom. Mike Yuhas, Eric Gogg and Ward Wells gave reports on zoom as part of the meeting. VP emeritus Joe Maloney also attended by zoom. The meeting discussed policy issues to be discussed with the Board at the upcoming meeting in Johnson City and the proposed convention for later in the year.

General Counsel also continued to give advice to the President Tony White and NRHS Fund President Bob Ernst on a number of issues which arose since the last meeting.

General Counsel also fielded questions from Chapters with legal issues and helped them to obtain local counsel if that was necessary.

April 21, 2025

John K. Fiorilla

General Counsel