

Chapter Annual Reports for 2010

January 24, 2011

Recently, the NRHS National Office has received several inquiries about submitting chapter annual reports for the *2010 Yearbook*. The purpose of this report is to review the status of this project.

Summary

The NRHS believes that it is important to record the history of the NRHS chapters, especially their accomplishments in rail history preservation. At this point, however, the Society has no plans to publish such information either in print or electronically.

The NRHS no longer publishes the annual *Yearbook*. There may be an electronic archive of chapter historical material available in the future, but the Society has not approved either the concept or funds to implement this project. Such a product is at least two years away.

NRHS urges its chapters to continue to record their history and is working to provide an interim repository to store such reports until a future direction is determined.

History and Background

As has been reported previously on several occasions, the NRHS Board of Directors ordered in October of 2009 that the printed *NRHS Yearbook* be discontinued, starting with the *2009 Yearbook*. The actual motion that was passed directed the reduction of the 2010 *Bulletin* budget by a dollar amount estimated to be the publication cost of the *2009 Yearbook*. The Board took this action over the objections of NRHS management and several directors who expressed concerns about a reduction in membership services after the 2010 dues renewal process had already started. This objection did not prevail, however.

Subsequent to the Board's action, the *Bulletin* staff was able to find sufficient funds within the approved budget to do the editorial and layout work necessary to produce the *2009 Yearbook* as an electronic PDF file. Arrangements were made with a commercial on-demand publisher to permit members the option of ordering a high-quality printed copy at additional cost.

NRHS management developed a plan to implement the Board's directives regarding the *Yearbook*. This plan was presented at the June 2010 meeting and was endorsed by the Board of Directors at that meeting. The endorsed plan included the following provisions, quoted from the approved minutes:

"The *2010 Yearbook* will not be published in either electronic or paper format. Chapter reports for the *2010 Yearbook* will be collected and stored, but not published until a new web-based reporting system is established in 2012 or later."

Later in 2010 the electronic system for submitting *Yearbook* chapter reports was deactivated. The system as it then existed could not be transferred to a new host during necessary website security upgrades, and therefore was simply removed.

It should be noted that the future web-based reporting system has been discussed as a concept, but it has not yet been endorsed or funded by any action of the Board of Directors. The chapter reporting product still appears on NRHS strategic planning proposals for implementation in 2012 or 2013 after other more important work is completed. At this time, work on the new NRHS website has been suspended following other actions of the Board in November, 2010 unrelated to the *Yearbook* issue. We expect to reactivate the website project later in 2011.

Report Submissions for 2010

Chapters are encouraged to assemble reports on their activities for 2010 and following years in order to preserve the historical record of the Society. Since the design for a future reporting system has not been started, we recommend that the format and length be similar to what was submitted for 2009 and earlier.

At this point, NRHS is still trying to determine the best option for storage of chapter reports and photographs. We expect to make a separate announcement about this in February, following the next Board of Directors meeting. In anticipation of a centralized archive file, chapters should save their reports as Word documents (.doc files) using Windows 95-2007 or newer software.

Policies regarding access to and dissemination of this information will be developed later as part of the website upgrade project. Please note that the design and marketing focus of the new website will be different than the current NRHS website, but the specific plans have not been developed. NRHS can make no commitment that the material submitted about 2010 activities will be published or reproduced exactly as submitted.

NRHS News

Please remember that the *NRHS News* is looking for interesting stories about preservation projects and other activities and accomplishments by NRHS chapters. If your chapter is engaged in an activity or project that may be of interest to other NRHS members, please consider sharing that information now by developing a story for the *NRHS News*. For further information about submitting stories and photos for the bi-monthly newsletter, please contact the editor, Charles Williams directly through:

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or through the NRHS national office:

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