

DANVILLE FLYER

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September 18th Meeting at Jocko's

For the September meeting we will be at Jocko's Pizza on West Williams Street—date is Sunday 18th. Lunch will be around 1:00 PM with meeting and program, "Towers long gone" by Doug Nipper to follow.

Jesse Bennett—August 5, 2022

In May 1960, and a senior at Danville High School, my love for trains lead me to join the Illini Railroad Club in Champaign. The club, with Murry Klebolt as President, sponsored various rail trips but most were outside of Champaign. The group owned two IT cars and an ex-ATSF pullman, "Chief Illini", that are now at the Illinois Railway Museum near Elgin. Many of the trips they sponsored were steam trips out west and in 1960 they sponsored a Rocky Mountain trip and the "Chief Illini" was to be moved to Chicago and then to Denver for the trip. My parents took me to Champaign where we boarded the "Chief" attached to the rear of the "Seminole" for the trip to Chicago. There were only 10 to 15 on board and I was the youngest, as I remember. I met a fellow traveler, Jesse Bennett, for the first time and learning he was from Rossville was surprise. Being on the rear of the train, in an observation, was my first experience and Jess and I stood on the rear platform checking speed via mileposts and at one point, south of Kankakee, were hitting the 100 mph mark.



During the journey I learned he was a O Scale modeler and I was just starting into scale from my Lionel layout. The rest of the trip is a long story, a trip out on the CB&Q to Aurora, a trip to Danville via the C&EI late at night, a cab ride to Champaign with 5 of us and a ride with Jess back to Danville early in the following morning.



I was invited to Jess's house to see his O Scale layout and we became friends from that point on. Another O Scale, Herb Walsh in Hoopston, triggered my interest. When Herb passed away Jess and I removed the layout from Herb's attic and built a "portable" O

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SEPTEMBER 18TH, MEETING AT JOCKO'S PIZZA AT 1:00 PM.

OCT 16 SHERMAN, ILL. – 4TH ANNUAL SHERMAN SCALE TRAIN SHOW, SHERMAN ATHLETIC CLUB, 300 S. FIRST STREET. 10-3 TRAVIS@217-306-1685

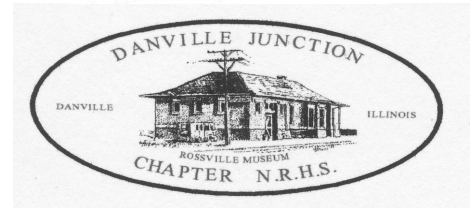
OCT 16 ST. CHARLES, ILL – 31ST ANNUAL CHICAGO RAILROADIANA AND MODEL TRAIN SHOW. KANE COUNTY FRGDS, 525 S. RANDALL ROAD. 10-3 847-358-1185

NOV 5 ROSSVILLE, DEPOT MUSUEM, FIRST FALL OPERATING SESSION BEGINNING AROUND 1 PM.

About Us

The DANVILLE JUNCTION CHAPTER, NRHS, is a not-for-profit corporation organized to preserve the history of railroading in Eastern Illinois and Western Indiana and operates a museum located in the former Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad depot on East Benton Street in Rossville, Illinois. The museum is open weekends from Memorial Day to Labor Day and features many railroad displays plus a large operating HO model railroad. Membership in the Chapter is open to anyone having an interest in any aspect of

railroading. Dues per year are \$30.00 for Chapter membership in addition to \$50.00 for NRHS membership. Rossville Depot Museum membership is \$30 per year. Meetings are held on the third (3rd) Sunday of each month (except June, July, August and December) at the Jocko's Depot Restaurant, Gilbert Street (Illinois Route 1) and Williams Street, next to CSX (former Conrail), in Danville, Il with lunch beginning at 1:00 PM Central Time followed by meeting and program.



Officers for 2022—our 54th Year

Henry Schmitt – President
 Doug Butzow – Vice President
 Dick Brazda– Secretary
 Doug Nipper– Treasurer
 Dave Sherrill – Programs
 – Historian
 Bob Gallippi – Museum Director
 Rick Schroeder – Editor & NRHS rep
 Cooke Wireless, LLC - Publisher & Distributor



Amtrak State-supported Operations

CHICAGO — Amtrak continues to have difficulty operating its full slate of state-supported trains from its Chicago hub, although the reasons for the issues vary.

On Sunday, train No. 364, the Blue Water to Port Huron, Mich., and Chicago-Pontiac, Mich., Wolverine No. 354 were combined between Chicago and Battle Creek, Mich. The trains departed Chicago at 6:31 p.m. — 2 hours, 31 minutes late for the Blue Water and 41 minutes late for the Wolverine — and arrived at Battle Creek at 10:38 p.m., 3 hours, 5 minutes late for No. 364 and 1:09 late for No. 354. The Amtrak Alerts Twitter account cites delays for both trains because of mechanical issues; Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari says combining the trains “is an uncommon practice needed because of a personnel shortage.”

The Blue Water eventually arrived in Port Huron at 2:41 a.m., 3 hours, 10 minutes late; the Wolverine reached Pontiac at 2:36 a.m., 1 hour, 18 minutes late.

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That move came after Illinois Zephyr trains to and from Quincy, Ill., were cancelled last week, beginning with the last-minute cancellation of Chicago-Quincy train No. 383 on Wednesday night, Aug. 17. Trains 380 (Quincy-Chicago) and 383 were both cancelled Thursday, Aug. 18, as was train No. 380 on Friday. Buses were substituted for those four trains.

Magliari told the Muddy River News website that those cancellations resulted after “we had an employee become unavailable about an hour before departure time on Wednesday.” He tells Trains News Wire that the Quincy situation “was similar, but not directly related” to the one involving the Michigan trains. Magliari also says Amtrak continues to plan to restore as of this Wednesday, Aug. 24, the Chicago-St. Louis Lincoln Service round trip that has been suspended because of “insufficient rolling stock”.

TRAINS News Wire 8-22

Rail Project Funding

More than \$332 million in FY 2022 RAISE (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) program grants will be distributed among 23 freight and passenger rail-related projects in 17 states, according to a U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) report released Aug. 11.

USDOT in January issued a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the RAISE program; grants are for planning and capital investments that not only support rail, but also roads, bridges, transit, ports or intermodal transportation.

This year’s allocations include more than \$2.2 billion for 166 projects—up from 2021’s \$1.0 billion for 90 projects. This is due to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act), which provides the RAISE program with an additional \$7.5 billion over five years, according to USDOT.

All projects were evaluated on several criteria, including safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, economic competitiveness and opportunity, partnership and collaboration, innovation, state of good repair, and mobility and community connectivity. Within these areas, USDOT said it considered how projects “will improve accessibility for all travelers, bolster supply chain efficiency, and support racial equity

and economic growth—especially in historically disadvantaged communities and areas of persistent poverty.”

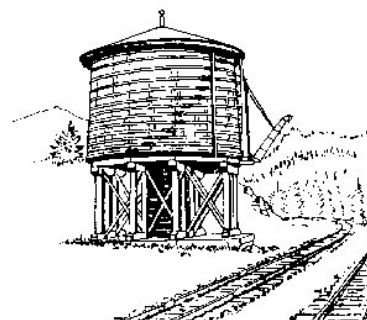
Additionally, half of the funding was designated for projects in rural areas, and half for projects in urban areas. The largest grant award was \$25 million, according to USDOT, which noted that per statute, no more than \$341.25 million could be awarded to a single state in this round of funding.

“We are proud to support so many outstanding infrastructure projects in communities large and small, modernizing America’s transportation systems to make them safer, more affordable, more accessible, and more sustainable,” U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said. “Using funds from President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, this year we are supporting more projects than ever before.”

The following Illinois projects received funding.

Illinois: HARVEY INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION CENTER — PACE SUBURBAN BUS DIVISION OF THE REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY: The \$20 million grant will be used to reconstruct existing bus transfer and rail station facilities into a “cohesive intermodal transit facility,” according to USDOT. It will reconfigure the existing bus facility to improve access to the Metra commuter rail station; construct 14 new bus bays for fixed routes and 4 layover bus bays; create a paratransit vehicle boarding area; and add a dedicated lane for riders disembarking. At the Metra station, the project includes modernizing amenities and replacing the existing elevated platform. The platform will be heated and extended by approximately 36 feet to allow all railcar doors to open. Also, two existing parking lots will be replaced with one 226-space lot, which will include more ADA parking and access.

Illinois: SPRINGFIELD RAIL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT — CITY OF SPRINGFIELD: The nearly \$20 million grant will be used to construct a new railroad grade separation underpass at North Grand Avenue over the Norfolk Southern and Illinois Midland rail lines.



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Standing left, Doug Nipper and Jess at Rossville

scale layout to take to the Urbana train show. Jess was still working, I was traveling as a Resident Engineer for an civil engineering firm and as such the maintenance of a layout was difficult and it therefore latted only a couple of years.

Jess became a member of the Family Model Railroad club like I did and in 1968 was one of the founding members of the Chapter. In 1962 he joined, along with 88 others, in forming the C&EI Historical Society. Jess was the contact for the Rossville museum and when someone would inquire at the village office about the museum they would direct them to Jess's house and he would open it so they could visit.

Jess organized many of our rail trips to the Chicago area when gaining access to a rail yard was still possible. We visited the ATSF Corwith yard, the BN facility in Cicero, the Rock Island in Blue Island in their last years, an eventful trip to Chicago and the South Shore along with others.

Over the years we have lost a number of friends and long time members of our group. Their names are listed on the plaques at Rossville. For me this has been a loss of a C&EI lover, a O Scale modeler and true friend that I first met on a observation car traveling at nearly 100 miles per hour on the Mainline of America.

Rest in peace Jesse.

Erase History? By Doug Nipper

In my last article for this newsletter, I pointed out there was a lot more history on the old Sidell-Rossville Jct. Branch of the C&EI than most people know about. But this one will focus on how the history of these places is being erased... And now it ties into the obituary of Jesse Bennett, who died on August 5th. You'll read more about him in this issue, but my comments are at the end of this article.

When the Internet got popular back in the mid-1990's, there wasn't really anything like Google maps to start with. You had start-ups like MapQuest and others, but once Google got into the game, it was about all over for the others. Map Quest is still out there, but not too many folks use it.

The neat thing about online maps in those early days of the Internet is that they seemed to use different physical maps for their data sources. So, you could see names for long-gone places along an abandoned railroad line. Places like Brothers and Bronson on the branch. But now, those names are gone on Google, Maps or Earth.

Another place I mentioned in my last article was Maizetown, just north of Sidell Jct. You can see that there was an elevator there one time, with the scrub brush area right next to where the tracks once were. It's a well-defined rectangle running north and south, with a rail siding arc on the north end. But Google has no name for this place.

I suspect over more time, even places like Sidell, Jamaica and Indianola might go away, once the baby-boom generation is gone. No one will be left to live in these tiny towns.

There is a spot north of 119/136 on Route 1 where the IC branch over to Alvin and ultimately W. Lebanon, IN crossed. A couple of houses are all that's left, and it used to come up with the name, Rayville, of an ancient railroad station. In the 1960's Route 1 even posted the name. But that too is gone now, at least from the major mapping services.

Close to Route 1 was Henning on the C&EI branch, where the IC once crossed. Next station south was Jamesburg, which still shows on most major maps. Just a small collection of houses. Then came Collison, and the elevator there was at the south end of the big sweeping curve that took the line from its southwest trajectory to one more due south. Recall that CSX once

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served Collison, and I have the photos to prove it! That's sobering, to think how long the amalgamation of Chessie System and Seaboard system has been around.

I know from very early C&EI timetables there was a place about behind my house called "Saunders Siding". Located at MP 119.5, that's almost directly behind my property. Of course, there is no way to know for sure, but the early timetables said it did exist at one time.

I recently passed through Veedersburg, IN, and what a railroad ghost town that turned out to be. From three lines to none. At least the Nickel Plate depot still survives.

My late friend and Chapter member Bob Barker always said it was like working for a funeral home when he started in 1949. The great bundling era of railroads was over, and economic survival meant cut, cut, cut. Towers and depots went away every year. And now, there are none in company service anymore, at least in this area. Now it seems that many places along the railroads or former lines are losing their names, even.

Now onto the Jesse Bennett connection. As a teenager, he fired for the EJ&E trains that made the circuit from Rossville Jct to Danville (North Yard), down the Westville District to the mines in that area, then over to Sidell Jct where they took the east leg of the wye there and traversed the entire distance back up to Rossville Jct. on the line I have written about here and the previous article. It was known as the Sidell Branch in 1945, and at that time the C&EI had three "cut off" segments to get from the Danville District over to the St. Louis District. Only one remains today as the UP's Villa Grove Sub. Of course, the Sidell District used the Westville District from Sidell westward...

But the fact we knew someone who had worked for the EJ&E down here very early in his life made Jesse a living history book. And I was always glad to hear his stories of that time. RIP, my friend...



Additional Passenger Service?

Rockford, IL to Dubuque, IA passenger rail feasibility study

Is it Feasible? A recent study commissioned by the Passenger Rail Committee (PRC) set out to evaluate the feasibility of a Rockford to Dubuque passenger rail extension. The East Central Intergovernmental Association (ECIA) serves as the Committee's lead agency. Making up the membership are more than a dozen additional agencies and municipalities, including Blackhawk Hills Regional Council, the cities of Dubuque, East Dubuque, Galena, and Freeport. Members further include the Dubuque Chamber of Commerce, Greater Freeport Partnership, Illinois DOT, NW Illinois Economic Development, Jo Daviess County, Region 1 Planning Council of Rockford, and Ride the Rail.

The study's primary goal was to understand whether passenger rail can be competitive with other common modes of transportation between Dubuque and Chicago, i.e., automobile, intercity bus, and commercial air. The study assumed two round trips per day, with trains leaving Chicago and Dubuque each morning and evening.

Limitations of the study included limited availability of information regarding infrastructure and operations; public engagement limited to interviews with focus groups; incomplete but ongoing Chicago to Rockford study.

Route Selection ... Of three possible routes between Chicago and Dubuque, the study selected Alternative A (Rockford-Freeport-Galena-Dubuque) as the preferred route and the basis for the study. The route was chosen due to its being the most direct and because it serves the largest population centers and tourist attractions in the region. Alternative A was also projected as requiring the least amount of capital and the shortest travel times of the three routes under consideration.

Of four possible service alternatives, the study selected the alternative limited to primary station stops and having a maximum speed of 79 mph on Canadian National track. (Canadian National is the host railroad for the majority of the preferred route.)

Estimated Costs for Alternative A ...

- Capital cost, including contingencies and professional services: between \$281,540,000 and \$380,907,000, based on ten

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Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) cost categories.

- Operating and maintenance cost, based on train miles, trains per day, estimated ridership of 108,200, and number of stations: \$7,180,000 to \$9,710,000.

Benefits ...The study identified four major categories of quantitative benefit:

1. Temporary job creation during construction (621 jobs)
2. Permanent operational-period job creation (20 jobs), with corresponding annual wage income regional benefit summary calculated at \$2,552,600.
3. Safety benefit resulting from highway accident reduction due to diverted automobile trips: \$5,153,000.
4. Monetary air quality benefit from diverted automobile trips: \$296,000.

The following additional benefits were identified: increased tourism; anticipated increase in local economic activity; potential for future transit-oriented development near stations; improved user productivity resulting from auto trips diverted to rail; reduced roadway congestion. These benefits may be quantified at later stages of product development.

Federal and State Funding Opportunities ... Federal grant funding is available through the Infrastructure and Jobs Act. Future phases of the Dubuque Extension project would be eligible for a number of these programs, including Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail, and Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement. Competitive grants are also available through the IDOT Statewide Planning and Research Funds.

Recommended Next Step ... Complete a more advanced study following FRA's service planning guidance to generate a Preliminary Service Development Plan, required for the use of federal funds.

[RIDE THE RAIL, August 2022 via the Brass Switchkey #26, v29, Sept 6, 2022-6a



Union Station Renovation

The Federal Railroad Administration will award \$3 million in funding to complete the design for planned renovations to the concourse at Chicago Union Station.

The federal grant will be matched with \$1.5 million from Metra, \$600,000 from the Chicago Department of Transportation, \$400,000 from Amtrak, and \$250,000 each from the Illinois Department of Transportation and Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways. Amtrak and Metra trains serve the station.

"With this federal funding, we can take the next step in Chicago Union Station's revitalization. As the nation's fourth-busiest Amtrak station, Chicago Union Station is worthy of this federal support and Illinoisans and travelers will benefit from this investment for years to come," said U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) in a press release.

The \$6 million concourse project will help support the growth of intercity passenger rail in the Midwest, said Jeannie Kwon, Amtrak's vice president of stations and capital delivery.

"Production of final design documents will allow Amtrak to quickly secure a construction contractor to execute a high-quality design," she said.

Progressive Railroading 8-18

Metra to Convert to Battery Power



Metra's board yesterday approved a plan to convert up to six of the Chicago commuter railroad's oldest diesel locomotives to zero-emission battery power.

The railroad's contract with Progress Rail Services Corp. calls for a base order of three locomotives, with options for three additional units, Metra officials said in a press release. The total cost for all six conversions — which will be completed at Progress Rail's facility in Patterson, Georgia — is \$34.6 million. The base order is expected to take three-and-a-half years to complete.

"This procurement puts Metra on the cutting edge of battery-powered technology and demonstrates our commitment to innovation and cleaner energy," said Metra CEO and Executive Director Jim Derwinski.

May Meeting Minutes

The May 15, 2022, meeting opened at 1305 at Jockos.

The secretary's minutes were accepted as printed. The report from the treasurer shows two payments during the month, depot liability insurance and an order for checks. Closing balance is \$8612.83.

On May 14 7 members and 2 guests visited the railroad viewing platform in Rochelle. 10 BNSF and UP trains were seen in 2 hours. There were many containers, but no coal hoppers. A stop was made at the Mendota RR museum where staff presented a detailed tour of the exhibits and rolling stock.

A trip and tour at the Hoosier RR Museum in North Judson, IN. are planned for June 18. Departure will be at 830 from the Rossville depot.

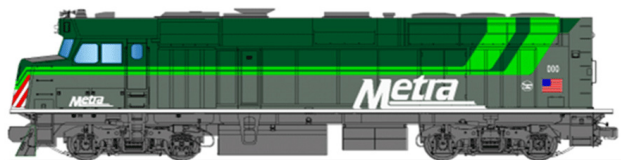
The opening day for the Rossville Museum will be May 28. Cleaning will be started at 900. Water and soda will be stocked in the refrigerator.

The September meeting will be at Jockos, rather than Monticello this year.

Erich Haley was introduced as a new member. Dave mentioned that the large NMRA show is in Indianapolis next weekend.

The meeting was adjourned at 1319. Dave showed a video highlighting the Norfolk Southern heritage locomotives.

Metra plans to test the new locomotives — which will have an estimated range of 150 miles per charge — on the Rock Island Line. Charging stations will be designed later and placed in the main yard and at a yet-to-be-determined outlying point.



The transition will help the railroad reduce its emissions footprint and improve air quality in the Chicago region, Metra officials said. The new locomotives will also be less noisy and have lower operating and maintenance costs.

The battery-powered locomotives might be painted in a green version of Metra's standard paint scheme to indicate the use of green technology.

Progressive Railroading 8-18

Monticello Railroad Museum

RAILROAD DAYS

September 17 – 18, 2022

Come enjoy unlimited rides on our vintage passenger and freight trains and motor cars. Visit museum displays, kids' games, food trucks, and more!

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We're on the Web!
www.danvillejct.org

Photo of the Month



The date is September 1966 and southbound C&EI #83, lead by geeps 237, 218 and 213, is passing Hoopeston tower in Hoopeston, Illinois. Frank March was the day trick operator and I used to visit when working on engineering projects in Hoopeston. Rick Schroeder photo