

KEEPING TRACK



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE IOWA RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FEBRUARY 2009 VOLUME 26, NUMBER 1



LOOKIN' GOOD!

In 2008, 8419 made her first-ever appearance at the Boone County Fairgrounds during Boone's Pufferbilly Days celebration. Here she is crossing Story Street with one of the day's Fraser excursion trains. Photo by Scott Stephens

E-NEWSLETTER

More and more people are continuing to switch to the new electronic edition of our newsletter. We hope that you might consider doing the same. Not only does the electronic version eliminate printing and postage costs, but it allows us to offer you more features, more content, and full color! Sign-up now by contacting Loren at: loren@bsvrr.com. Thanks!

IRHS REPORTER

ANNUAL MEETING AND DINNER

Less-than-favorable weather conditions weren't enough to deter more than 150 members and volunteers of the Iowa Railroad Historical Society from attending this year's annual meeting, which was held at the Boone County Fairgrounds on January 10. Attendees were brought up to speed on events affecting the railroad by Fenner Stevenson, General Manager of the Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad & Museum. Slideshows provided a glimpse at some of the year's highlights, including 8419's May debut after its five year inspection, RS-1 244's restoration and subsequent return to service, and a look at some of the many volunteers which help to keep the doors of the Iowa Railroad Historical Society open. Also shown were photos of the year's major lowlight, the flood damage on the west end of our line.

The results of this year's IRHS Board of Directors election were also announced at the meeting. Elected to the board were: Bryan Anderson, Ken Barkwill, and Alan Schroeder.

Officers are as follows:

Dean Briley, President
Wayne Paterson, Executive Vice President
Gary Stasko, Vice President of Finance
Ken Barkwill, Vice President of Operations
Dale Mount, Treasurer

IOWA OPERATION LIFESAVER

In 2008, the Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad & Museum was presented with a certificate of appreciation from Iowa Operation Lifesaver. We must extend a big thank you to Justin Moreland and Dale Mount who were both instrumental in educating several groups about railroads and grade crossing safety through their Operation Lifesaver presentations.

2008 RIDERSHIP STRONG

A review of the pages of the guest register in the depot lobby seem to indicate that high gas prices didn't keep people from all parts of the world from visiting our railroad in 2008 after all. Aside from the District of Columbia, we had guests from all fifty states. Some of the countries found in our guest register include: Japan, Turkey, Sweden, Brazil, Latvia, Zimbabwe, and Iran.

Overall, ridership numbers this year were quite strong, with 39,009 passengers on our excursion, dinner, dessert, and picnic trains. This figure does not include our Thomas trains, which carried more than 12,500 riders. These are the best numbers that we have seen since 2002, with ridership up substantially over 2007.

SANTA EXPRESS: A SUCCESS!

Story and photos by Annie Longnecker

This year, the Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad operated 19 Santa Express trains between November 29, and December 13. This most-loved event drew over 5500 excited children and parents through our doors. On their adventure to the North Pole, families on the train were treated to a reading of *The Polar Express* storybook, as well as fun activities including trivia, jokes, and holiday songs. Once at their destination, passengers were greeted by chefs serving hot cocoa and sugar cookies. Then came a surprise visit from jolly ol' St. Nick himself, when each child received from him their very own first gift of Christmas, a silver bell.



A new opportunity offered this year was advance ticket sales to members of the Iowa Railroad Historical Society. Any member could purchase their tickets starting October 20, this encouraged many people to actually become members while placing their orders as well. Ticket sales for the event were further bolstered by the incorporation of online sales into the new ticket system. Pre-sales opened to the public on November 1 resulting in an astounding 2,300 tickets sold online that very first day!

The gift shop seemed to be busy throughout the event, featuring hard cover editions of *The Polar Express*. Nearly 150 books were sold, of which over 70 were ordered in advance to be picked up before each departure. Other popular items included holiday ornaments, puzzles, t-shirts, and flashing shirt pins.

We wish to thank all of the volunteers who helped make 2008's Santa Express trains a success! Each day's activities required more than 30 people cooperating to run and staff each train, and the various positions in the depot, including the gift shop and ticket window. Thank you all for giving your time. We could not do it without you!

Look for more fun for the entire family with our Easter Bunny Express, April 4, 2009 at 12:30 PM. Tickets are on sale now! Call or stop by the depot to make your reservations, Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM until 4:00 PM. Seating is limited, so make your reservations today!



WE'D LIKE YOU TO MEET

BILL HASSTEDT
MEL NEWTON



This time around, I would like to shine the spotlight on two individuals who work diligently behind-the-scenes to help keep our equipment in a state of good repair.

On one trip to the shop, you may find Bill and Mel working on the exterior of a car. The next time around, they may be tracking-down an electrical issue with a locomotive. Their versatility, strong work ethic, and ingenuity make them true assets to the society.

The next time you fire-up a locomotive, and make a successful trip, keep in mind that these two men have played a part in making it all come together.

Photo by Loren Karr

Thanks, guys, for all of the time and effort that you put into helping to make sure that things run smoothly around here. Your efforts truly do make a world of difference.

2008 THOMAS WRAP

Our Day out with Thomas event continues to draw massive amounts of youngsters, and their families, from across the region to our museum. This year, more than 12,500 passengers rode behind the little blue engine.

Thomas is slated to return to the Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad & Museum again this fall. The dates for the event are September 19, 20, 25, 26, and 27. Keep in mind that events such as this require a great deal of help from our volunteers. Information on how you can help will be published in an upcoming edition of the newsletter.

Thank you to all of those who helped to make our 2008 event a tremendous success!



SHOP, MECHANICAL, AND TRACK NEWS



Work continues on Chicago & North Western RPO 8646. The picture on the left shows the car being moved into the shop. On the right, Lowell Diersen rides the side of the car as it emerges from the shop in January, 2009 after undergoing much body work, receiving a new roof, and fresh coat of paint. It's good to see another piece of equipment, which had been deteriorating, undergo such a transformation. Thumbs up to the shop crew for bringing another car back back to life.



Photo by Loren Karr

TIES THAT BIND: (RIGHT) During the month of September, the Iowa Railroad Historical Society took delivery of 600 relay ties from the Union Pacific Railroad. The ties were obtained with the assistance of IRHS Foundation Board member George Maybee. Photo by Travis Stevenson



EXTRA: **LOOKING BACK** *Dean Briley collection*

In 1905, a branch was completed from Goddard to Colfax allowing for access to coal mines, and the Hot Water Springs Hotel.



In 1906, the Fort Dodge, Des Moines & Southern was formed. Construction of the power plant at Fraser got underway. \$2.5 million electrification started. Line built from Hope to Fort Dodge, and Midvale to Des Moines.



In 1907, the power plant at Fraser was finished. First interurban trip from Des Moines to Kelley on May 31. First electric locomotive order placed. Built seven miles of trackage from Kelley to Ames.



Top photo: FDDM&S President A.P. Wheelock on the platform of a FDDM&S caboose.

Middle photo: 1954 flooding as viewed from the Bass Point Creek High Bridge.

Bottom photo: Upstream from the bridge, floodwaters overtake the power plant at Fraser.

BOONE HOSTED THREE ELECTRICS

By Charles Mischke

Before the Fort Dodge, Des Moines & Southern interurban strung wire through Boone, Iowa in 1907, the town was already at work. Beginning with the Boone and Boonesboro Street Railway Company, a narrow-gauge horsecar line opened in 1883 between Boonesboro and the Boone Chicago & North Western depot. In 1895, two 10-passenger capacity horsecars were built in St. Louis for \$800.

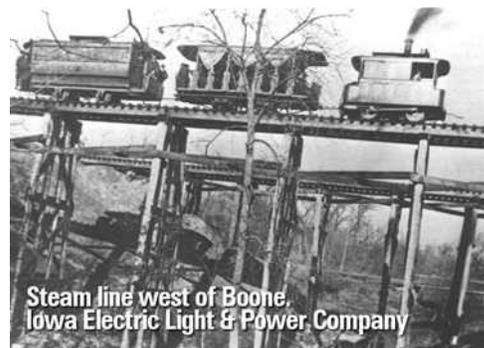


Two-horse streetcar in Boonesboro in 1897.
Edward S. Meyers collection

The line was soon standard-gauged, and heavier two-horse vehicles were obtained. On November 14, 1897, the road was electrified. By 1924, it had five motorcars (all one-manned), 2.6 miles of track and 0.2 miles of sidings, of which 2 miles was in paved street. It also had three motor service cars, and two trail service cars. Schedules were on 20-minute headway, with opposing cars meeting on 6th Street at the passing siding between Greene and Carroll Streets. Cash fares were 10 cents, with 16 coupons for a dollar. The line was abandoned on May 19, 1934.

A steam dummy line was built out of Boonesboro westward in 1885, but it lasted only a year.

Three miles west of Boonesboro along the Des Moines River there developed communities known as Shepardstown, Logansport, and Incline. In 1899, L.W. Reynolds, an owner of Boone Electric, organized the Boone Suburban Railway as a private venture. It was built through the brick plant and coal mine areas to an amusement park known as Pilcher's Park near the Des Moines River. In 1900, the line was extended to what was to be the east abutment of a new Chicago & North Western bridge to be later known as the Kate Shelley Bridge, whose construction was undertaken in 1901. After a few years, everyone had seen the bridge in operation, and excursion traffic waned. The extension was removed back to its bridge over the Chicago & North Western. Shortly after World War I, the Shepardstown suburban line was abandoned. The line never obtained permission to enter Boone.

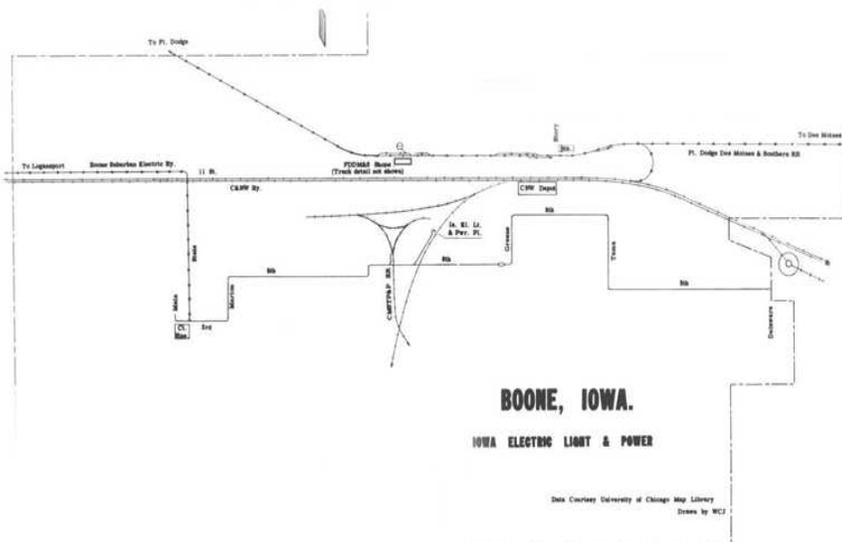


Steam line west of Boone.
Iowa Electric Light & Power Company

The Boone Street Railway was absorbed by Iowa Railway and Light Company as it's Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Railway Department with general offices in Cedar Rapids, joining Marion Light, Heat and Power Company, Marshalltown Light, Power and Railway Company, Tama and Toledo Electric Railway and Light Company. The Boone Street Railway Company maintained offices at 909 8th Street and it's repair shop at 3rd Street , West Boone (Boonesboro) across the street from the Boonesboro courthouse.

References:

1. Iowa Trolleys, Norman Carlson, Ed., Robert J. Levis, Resource Coordinator, Bulletin 114, Central Electric Railfans Association, Chicago, 1975.
2. Electric Railways of Iowa, Bulletin 100, Central Electric Railfans Association., F.J. Misk, Ed., Chicago, 1957.
3. McGraw-Hill Electric Railway Directory 1924, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1924.
4. Transportation in Iowa, William H. Thompson, Iowa Department of Transportation, Ames, 1989.



IOWA RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PO BOX 603
BOONE, IOWA 50036-0603

NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO.15
BOONE, IA



KEEPING TRACK

FEBRUARY 2009 VOLUME 26 NUMBER 1

KEEPING TRACK

The Iowa Railroad Historical Society publishes Keeping Track four times each year.

Editor: Loren Karr
Iowa Railroad Historical Society
PO Box 603
Boone, Iowa 50036
515-432-4249 Extension 13

ON THE INTERNET

<http://www.bsvrr.com>

INCORRECT ADDRESS? MOVING?

Make sure that the delivery of your newsletter is not delayed. Please e-mail your address corrections to: loren@bsvrr.com, mail them to: Iowa Railroad Historical Society, PO Box 603, Boone, Iowa 50036, or call 515-432-4249.

RECEIVE KEEPING TRACK VIA E-MAIL!

Help us cut postage costs, and receive your newsletter in a more timely manner by signing-up to receive Keeping Track and Keeping Track Updates via e-mail. The electronic version features **COLOR PHOTOGRAPHS**, and **MORE CONTENT**, with much more to come! To subscribe, send an e-mail to: loren@bsvrr.com.

INSIDE THIS EDITION...

- SANTA EXPRESS: A SUCCESS
- 2008 RIDERSHIP
- LOOKING BACK
- SHOP NEWS

