

IOWA RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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KEEPING TRACK

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RIDERSHIP BY THE NUMBERS

Most Recent Event	Ridership	% Change
Pumpkin Express	1,193	+56.8%
Santa Express	10,759	+11.3%
Valentine Trains	321	+44.6%

SPECIAL EVENTS DO MAKE AN IMPACT By Travis Stevenson

How important are special events? It seems like I am asked that question at least once every week. I knew they were important, but I decided to dig in and find out just how much of an impact they make to our operation. Thankfully, I had Bonnie willing to do some digging as well, and the numbers we came up with may surprise you. In 2016, special events made up a little over 45% of our train fare income. This trend is consistent throughout the tourist railroad and museum industry. Organizations that are holding special events, such as Day Out With Thomas, are strong. Meanwhile, organizations that continue the ideology that they exist only to run a train down the track are finding business to be tapering off. This is due in part to our evolving expectations. We don't go somewhere expecting only a ride, we expect an experience. As we move forward we will continue to use this vision to shape not only new special events, but also to tweak our standard train operations so that customer satisfaction remains high. The following tables provide a clearer picture.

Fares By Train Type

Special Event Trains	45.4%
Basic Excursion Trains	31.9%
Wolf Trains (Dinner, Dessert, Picnic)	22.7%

Fares By Special Event

Santa Express Trains	50.4%
Day Out With Thomas	41.3%
Chuggington	4.4%
Pumpkin Express Trains	4.0%

Overall Fares By Train

Santa Express Trains	22.9%
Dinner Trains	18.8%
Day Out With Thomas	18.7%
Weekend Excursion	17.1%
Weekday Excursion	14.7%
Chuggington	2.0%
Dessert Trains	2.0%
Picnic Trains	1.9%
Pumpkin Express Trains	1.8%

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We have a diverse mix of train rides that fund our operation, with the Santa Express, Day Out With Thomas, and the Dinner train as our top three. While this mix is great, it can also challenge our thinking, as special event attendees are here looking for clean passenger cars, operational restrooms, and clear speakers. They are less concerned with the history of the equipment, the heritage of a whistle, or the horsepower of the locomotive. For example, our special event trains are geared to children ages 2-10, and if they aren't having fun the parents won't be either. 30 years ago who would have thought that the satisfaction of children in that age group would be so important to the success of our railroad. The diversity of our train rides helps us attract visitors of all ages and backgrounds, all looking for a slightly different experience with one thing in common - a ride on one of our trains.

ELECTRIC WEEKEND

2017 adds another new event to our schedule, one designed to showcase our growing collection of diverse electric equipment. An "Electric Weekend" will be held on June 3rd and 4th. Look for various pieces of equipment from the electric department to be in operation and on display. Watch our website, or our Facebook page for more information as the event approaches.



SILENCE: THE SEASON IS OVER

Sitting in the depot alone, it is so quiet.
The silence is deafening. It is a riot.

All the Santa trains have been completed.
Thank goodness! The sugar cookie supply is depleted.

It is snowing outside and turning everything white.
Only a few days until the Christmas season is bright.

The train ran all the way to the North Pole.
Hopefully we touched each child's soul.

It's not always about tickets and a money sale.
For the children, all other reasons are pale.

To run the trains many people form special teams.
Remember our job is to create children's hopes and dreams.

Listen: I don't hear the engine bell ringing,

Or railroad cars filled with people singing.

It is winter, our cheeks are as red as the platform bricks.
Shoveling snow is another one of Mother Nature's tricks.

Green leaves and hot sun,
Then beautiful colors and now snow tells us we're done.

The depot filled with people tells us we are successful.
Even the waiting room deserves time to be silent and restful.

We tried our best to run it with perfection.
Sitting here quietly with pleasant reflection.

It is quiet now the season has diminished.
Our 33rd year is now finished.

John Vilmain
December, 2016

MUSEUM NEWS By Mike Wendel

The James H. Andrew Railroad Museum's 2017 speaker series continues with the following speakers:

Saturday, March 18 at 2 PM
Doug Nebbe - Depots of Iowa

Saturday, April 15 at 2 PM
Wes Bender - Midwest Iowa Trolleys

All speaking events held in the James H. Andrew Railroad Museum and History Center.

Streamliners Through Iowa: The Iowa Railroad Historical Society/James H. Andrew Railroad Museum and History Center has received a grant award of \$5,000 from Humanities Iowa, a state-based affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, in support of a future project called Streamliners Through Iowa which will open May 10, 2017.

The exhibit will focus on what streamline trains were, how they originated, and their importance during tough economic times in the United States. Streamliners Through Iowa will also have an interactive touch-screen component with several kiosks, a dozen banners supplying little known information as well as streamliner models and artifacts. Rarely, or never seen before photos of various streamline train sets from different railroads will be included.

For more information call the James H. Andrew Railroad Museum at the Boone and Scenic Valley Railroad at 800-626-0319 or e-mail mike@bsvrr.com or see our website: www.bsvrr.com.

THE BONDURANT GRAIN EXPRESS

By Travis Stevenson



Many of you have noticed the blue and white locomotive sitting on the museum display track. Number 5202, known as the Bondurant Grain Express, is an EMD model NW-2, similar to our locomotive #1003. It was built in August of 1949 for the C&O Railroad. Here is the story of how it came to Boone. On May 17, 2010, one of our volunteers, Rory Murchison, who made a regular commute from his home in Kewaunee, IL, stopped at the Farmer's Cooperative (FC) location on his way home to see the locomotive and then talked to FC's Jason Lemmert about the possibility of having it donated to the museum. While no answer could be given at that time, the ball was rolling. On June 7th, 2010, FC graciously approved the donation and we started the process of trying to figure out how to get it moved to Boone.

Initially we contacted the Union Pacific RR (UPRR) to see if they would be willing to move the locomotive on the rail from Bondurant to Des Moines before the rail was torn up. After some discussion, they agreed to move it to Des Moines, and then on to Boone via rail. On September 29, 2010, they contacted us and said the move would happen the following week, and that we should get everything on the locomotive ready to move as soon as possible. The next day, Fenner Stevenson and Travis Stevenson traveled to Bondurant and spent most of a day servicing the journal boxes and traction motors on the locomotive so that it was ready to roll. After performing the work, they left and decided to follow the railroad line from Bondurant to Des Moines so they could see if there were any trees that needed to be removed before the move. As they made their way to Des Moines, they were shocked to find a salvage crew cutting the rail out at the crossings. After a frantic call to the UPRR, the contact person knew no reason why the rail would be coming out. After a few days, they were told that the real estate department of the UPRR had sold the railroad track to a scrapper, and that the crossings were the first to be removed. At this point, the UPRR gave up on it, and we were forced to try to find another method.

From October 2010 to January 2012, we contacted more than a dozen heavy-haul and house moving companies to attempt to get the locomotive moved. Several looked it over, only one gave a ballpark bid, which was over \$80,000, and they never did follow through with anything in writing. In January 2012 Travis Stevenson contacted Wasatch Railroad Contractors (WRRRC) based out of Cheyenne, WY. They had done a couple other railroad projects for us here in Boone, and it was now or never for us to get this locomotive. They were very receptive, and by March we had a written contract. Our board of directors approved the funding, and on April 16th a representative from WRRRC arrived in Bondurant to look over the locomotive and the loading area, and then came to Boone to look at possible unloading sites.

Delays arose due to crane and heavy haul track availability, but on June 13th everything came together at the FC Elevator in Bondurant. We started working at 7:00 am, and by 4:00 pm thought the locomotive was ready to load on to the special 138-foot long trailer. Unfortunately, after hoisting the locomotive into place, it became apparent that the air and fuel tanks would have to be removed from the locomotive so it would fit. A crew started in on it, and by 1:15 am they were done and ready for a few hours of sleep. At 6:00 am the next day, we once again began to get things ready to load. The locomotive, with the tanks now off, was loaded onto the trailer and a few adjustments made. The tanks and wheels (track assemblies) were loaded onto another trailer and at 10:56 am on June 14, 2012, the Bondurant Grain Express left Bondurant for the final time.

The locomotive traveled north from Bondurant on highway 65, then west on highway 210, and north on highway 17 into Boone. Along the way it passed through towns like Maxwell, Slater, and Madrid, towns that hadn't seen a railroad locomotive go through (at least on rail) for many years. Upon arriving in Boone, the locomotive unloaded onto a spur track at PDM with little delay. By 9:00pm, everything was unloaded, tools picked up, and the locomotive was once again sitting on its own wheels. The next morning it was moved down the tracks by two BSVY locomotives, to a temporary storage spot in the yard.

The locomotive now sits on the museum display track, with plans for some signage explaining its history in the works. Beyond that, we are going to apply for a grant to cover the cost of repainting the locomotive, in its current Bondurant Grain Express paint scheme, and construct more interpretive signage and displays to teach museum visitors the important role that railroads play in agriculture as food travels from farmers' fields to the dining room table. An initial mechanical inspection was made in the fall of 2015. The locomotive is now waiting for a more in depth electrical inspection and usable batteries before an attempt can be made to start it. Once that happens, the future of the Bondurant Grain Express will become more clear. Hopefully, if things go well, in the not so distant future we might see it shuffling freight cars out east or occasionally pulling the passenger train back home from Fraser.

STEAM PRINTS



Beginning in October, 2017, our steam locomotive will begin to undergo its 1472-day inspection. This is a major undertaking, costing an estimated \$100,000 to perform. Various fundraising efforts are underway, or are on the drawing board. One such effort is the sale of these mounted 11" x 14" prints. The prints are selling for \$50, and are available in our gift shop, or at www.bsrr.com. Again proceeds go toward the 1472-day inspection of 8419.

2017 EVENTS

Conductors Meeting: Saturday, March 25

Rules and Safety Class: Saturday, April 1

Spring Motorcar Day: Saturday, April 29

Electric Weekend: June 3 & 4

Tom Crooks Mem. Auto Show: Sunday, July 9

Day Out W/Thomas: Sept. 16, 17, 22, 23, 24

Pumpkin Express Trains: October 7, 14, 21

Fall Motorcar Day: Saturday, November 4

Santa Express: Fri., Sat., Sun., Nov. 24-Dec. 17

TRAINS NOW AED EQUIPPED

By Travis Stevenson

The remoteness of our rail line can make it difficult for emergency responders to get to the train in an emergency. We now have Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) located on both of our trains. Thanks to a generous grant from the Boone County Community Endowment Fund and funding from the Fenner Stevenson Memorial Fund, we were able to purchase two new AEDs and cabinets. On the dinner train, it is located at the east end of 4810 near the rest-room, and on the excursion train it is located in the east end of the concession car. We have a handful of volunteers and staff trained on these devices, with more training opportunities to come in the future. These devices can save lives when seconds count. The Red Cross states that for every minute defibrillation is delayed, the survival rate drops 10%. With portions of our rail line so remote that it can take emergency responders 20 minutes to arrive, the access to an AED is even more important. While we

hope we never need to use one, it provides peace of mind to know that we will be ready if the need arises.

THOMAS TICKETS ON SALE



Thomas The Tank Engine returns to Boone on September 16, 17, 22, 23 and 24. Right now it seems like it's well into the future, but it will be here before you know it. Tickets for this year's event are on sale now by calling 1-800-626-0319, or by visiting our website: www.bsrr.com. As in years past, tickets are \$19 per person - \$17 for Friday, September 22nd.

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DIERSEN RECEIVES VERSATILE VOLUNTEER AWARD



At the IRHS annual meeting, Lowell Diersen was presented with the Fenner H. Stevenson Versatile Volunteer Award for his dedicated volunteerism. Lowell has been volunteering since 1996 in all areas of the organization. He takes care of mowing, leads the freight switching crews, and is our head Brakeman. He does all this in any weather with a smile on his face. Any volunteer that has become a member of the operating crew in the past 20 years has made at least a few student runs under his guidance. **Thank you, Lowell!**