



The Dispatcher April 2020



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Upcoming Events

All May events have been cancelled due to the current Covid-19 Crisis.

We plan on resuming in June and are currently working on re-opening protocols to keep our volunteers and visitors safe. We will keep you updated on our schedule.

**Softball World Series Parking has been cancelled.
Member's Picnic June 13th Cancelled see below info on new meeting.**

2020 Upcoming Events Regular Train Run: June 6th,

2020 Member's Picnic: CANCELLED

Regular Train Run: June 20th, 2020 Fourth of July Train Ride: July 4th, 2020 If you would like to volunteer for any of these events, please contact our volunteer coordinator, Amanda, at amanda@oklahomarailwaymuseum.org



Volunteer News

We want to update you on the museum status. Anne and Amanda have returned to the museum and are working on reopening protocols.

Volunteers can return in May to work on projects and help to prepare for reopening. Volunteers are required to wear masks during open museum days and when working in close proximity to other volunteers. Please observe social distancing protocols.

Our goal is to reopen the Museum, Museum Store, and train rides starting June 4th with rides on June 6th and 20th. Birthday parties and tours will not be happening in June. We will be changing the lay outs of the gift shop, ticket office and train cars for social distancing.

The Member's Picnic on June 13th will be changed to a virtual member's meeting on the same date. Details on this will follow.

When we reopen, we will have a number of new health and safety measures in place to protect our visitors, staff, and volunteers to help everyone feel more comfortable returning to a communal public setting. We are going to measured in our process, and are working on special ways to protect senior citizens and other vulnerable visitors. Our reopening will occur slowly, as we welcome guests back to our grounds and our facilities

Happenings

Museum Update-Drake Rice



The museum has been closed and will reopen June 4th. ORM staff has been working on reopening and social distancing protocols for our passenger cars and ticket sales in preparation for the first trains on June 6th. It's going to be hard to accomplish, but we have good guidelines from the Heritage Rail Association on what other are going around the country and they have been hosting informational webinars for the member railroads.

Work has really slowed although some have continued to do a few things, keeping social distance. Charles Price and Bob Cossairt have been mowing on the right of way getting the weeds and grass under control. With all the rain, it will be a continuous battle this summer. We will need to keep on top of mowing the museum grounds. Jerry Gore and Paul Pennell have been mowing this past month but can use some help.

Tony Chamberlin, Harry Currie and Armando Castillo finished repairs to the side walk by the Yard office that had sunk down. It is much smoother for walking now. Charles Price, Bob Cossairt, Harry Currie and a few others have been working on completing the installation of exterior siding and trim on Le Flore Depot to get the project underway again so we can finish it and get it into service as the museum office and store. It would be a great help during these times if we could use it. Next steps will be to paint the exterior and start on the interior rehabilitation. Bob Hussey and Company have been addressing the many washouts south of Grand Blvd that occurred in the 4 plus inch rain in March.

As everyone probably knows, the museum has purchased the two Farmrail Passenger Cars, which will be a nice addition to the passenger cars we have. It will provide some options for us that we have not had. The board of trustees at the last meeting visited with the Polar Express folks and everyone is still expecting to have the event in November and December this year. So plan on helping where you can.

Also, remember to mark your calendar to help with the OKC Train Show this first weekend in December. Bob Cook will be leading the event again this year and we hope members will also sign up to help.

The virus has cost the museum income. We hope you will respond to the donation request that staff has been sending out. It will be very important that we all pitch in to help this year both with your time and money. As always, we look forward to seeing you back at the museum in June.



Donation Box

Because of closings and cancellations, we are in need of donations more than ever before! Brick purchases and donations will make a real difference during this difficult time.

The museum is also in need on a box blade for our tractor. The one we have is worn out and beyond repair. If anyone has one to donate or funds toward a new one, it would be greatly appreciated.

Please visit our [website](#) if you are able to give!



Articles

Train History: The White Trains: Nuclear Transport

Amanda Resnick

Transportation has always been the weak link in the chain of nuclear security. Since the United States has had nuclear weapons, we have struggled with a secure way to move them around the country. Now they are moved on armored trucks, but from the 1950s to the 1980s they were transported by rail on so called "White Trains." The Department of Energy referred to them as "Safe, Secure Railcars" or SSRs.

In 1941, The United States built the Pantex Plant outside of Amarillo Texas as an ammunitions plant. In 1951, the plant became the nation's only assembly point for nuclear weapons. Supplies were shipped from all over the country assembled and completed weapons were rolled out on the White Trains.

These trains looked mostly normal. Several heavily armored boxcars rode between turreted cars which housed armed DOE guards. They moved very slowly, maxing out at 35mph, meaning a very long cross- country trip for the seven-man crews. The most common routes were from Texas to Bangor, WA or Charleston, SC to deliver warheads to the submarine bases there. These trains ran for nearly 30 years without any major incidents.

In the early 1980s the anti-nuclear movement gained more support in the United States. Activist Jim Douglass and the Ground Zero Center for Non-

Violent Action lead a fight to stop the White Trains. They figured out the most likely train route between Amarillo and Washington, and then contacted activist groups along the route to have protests and vigils. Some protesters even laid down on the track, and a train came within inches of hitting a Nun standing on the tracks.

These protests didn't just bring bad press but posed a serious security risk. The train was supposed to be classified, and the DOE feared someone would learn the routes and hijack a train. At first, they tried to reroute the trains, but they were always quickly found by protesters.

They then tried repainting the trains, but they were given away by their security turrets. In 1985, 185 protesters were arrested during one train run and charged with trespassing and conspiracy. They were all found not-guilty an al arrests of nuclear protesters stopped. The SSR system was dismantled in 1987 and all nuclear transport was transferred to Safeguard Transporters (armored semis) which continues today. The Amarillo Railroad Museum has an 11 cars of a retired White Train in their collection.

Photo courtesy of amarillorailmuseum.com

Around the Museum

Le Flore Depot siding and trim project.

