

The Main Line



The Newsletter of the Friends of L&N Depot • Bowling Green, Ky • Volume 1 Issue 1 • April 1, 2006

Passenger Rail Service Returns to Bowling Green

Being that the issue date of this first newsletter of the Friends of L&N Depot is dated April 1st, we thought it fitting that we throw in a little *April Fools Joke* into the headlines. What better way to get attention of any true railfan! Although there isn't any moving action on the rails at the Bowling Green L&N Depot, there is a great amount of living history here. From the Depot itself, a wonderful example of mid-twenties architecture, to the four current railcars that are on display, to the Digital Library branch of the Bowling Green Library housed under the converted butterfly shed of the old passenger platform. All these things make the L&N Depot/Historic Railpark a destination for residents and tourist alike.



Festival of Trains is a Seasonal Hit

The 2005 Festival Of Trains, held December 10th and 11th, was well attended with over 900 persons taking guided tours of the rail cars given on both days. It is estimated that over 1200 people visited the Depot that weekend.

In This Issue

- News.....1,2
- Mail Sack.....2
- Events.....3
- Restorations..3

The sHOW Model Railroading Club from Bowling Green displayed their modular HO gauge layout in the main lobby while Dick Webber gave us a look at O Gauge vintage and antique model trains in the future museum/waiting room.

Santa Claus was also there to have his picture taken with children and accept orders on which particular train set they wished to find under the tree on Christmas Morning.

Welcome to our first Issue!

We plan on publishing this newsletter on a quarterly basis....keeping all those "Friends" up to date on what's happening at the Historic Railpark.

Historic L&N RPO #1107 on it's way to Bowling Green

I remember handing a letter to a clerk on No. 18's RPO late one night in Knoxville and later confirming that it was delivered the next day in Cincinnati. Not bad for an eight-cent stamp! - Lyle Key 1947

Railway mail service began in 1832, but grew slowly until the Civil War. In 1862, mail was sorted en route, as a train moved between two points. The idea proved to be exceptionally successful, and as the postal service decentralized its operations, it concentrated on sorting much of the growing volume of mail while it was being carried on the nation's rail lines.

In 1913, the Louisville & Nashville Railroad purchased their first 5 Railroad Post Office Cars, RPO's. In 1927 the railroad ordered 13 more cars, numbers 1105-1117. This number would grow to nearly 90 by the mid 40's. Of all those cars, there are only two of the heavyweights in existence today. RPO #1100 at the National Steamtown Railroad Museum and RPO #1107 which thanks to the generous grant provided by the Bowling Green Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, will soon arrive in Bowling Green. **See RPO Page 2**



The Friends of L&N Depot, Inc., a non profit organization dedicated to Railroad Heritage and Education has already rescued and restored the 1911 L&N Presidential Office Car #353, L&N Pullman Sleeper "Towering Pine", and the SP Diner "Duncan Hines".



L&N RPO #1107 sits awaiting transport and restoration. The car may be at the restoration site as soon as April of this year. The RPO will join the other cars at the L&N Depot following restoration.

L&N RPO #1107 once restored, will be filled with exhibits that illustrate the story of how the U.S. Mail moved rapidly across this country. A video kiosk will be placed aboard where the oral history of Ed Grimes, a local citizen and former RPO clerk tells his story of danger, intrigue, and making sure that the 'mail got through'. L&N RPO #1107, will help complete the total passenger train story that is currently available for interpretive tours at the Bowling Green Historic L&N Passenger Depot. Visit our website at www.historicrailpark.com.

The Mail Sack

It's a little hard to start out a column named the Mail Sack in the first issue of any publication. We intend to devote space in this newsletter to any mail (email or conventional mail) that we receive. We would like to ask for your input here. Those of you that have questions, comments, kudos, criticisms, accolades, requests, or general information that you wish brought to light, please send them to us. Please give your full name and contact information in case we need to clarify your correspondence. We do reserve the right to edit your letter for publication. You can mail them to:

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Where did Standard Gauge Come From?

There is a story that rail gauge was derived from the rutways created by war chariots used by Imperial Rome, which everyone else had to follow to preserve their wagon wheels, and because Julius Caesar set this width under Roman law so that vehicles could traverse Roman villages and towns without getting caught in stone ruts of differing widths. However, an equal gauge is probably coincidence. Excavations at the buried cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum revealed ruts averaged 4 ft 9 in (1448 mm) center to center, with a gauge of 4 ft 6 in (1372 mm). The designers of both chariots and trams and trains were dealing with a similar issue, namely hauling wheeled vehicles behind draft animals.

A more likely theory why the 4 ft 8 1/2 inch (1435 mm) measurement was chosen is that it reflects vehicles with a 5 ft (1524 mm) outside gauge.

In 1863, Abraham Lincoln designated 4 feet, 8.5 inches as the gauge for the transcontinental railroad, and it became clear that eventually all railroads would share this gauge. Since 1887, virtually all tracks in the United States have been this width.

New Officers Elected

A business meeting was held on March 25, 2006 for election of new officers.

Chairman - Rick Williams
rick.williams@insightbb.com

Vice Chairman - Larry Bailey
lnbailey@insightbb.com

Secretary - Dick Webber
dickwebber@insightbb.com

Treasurer - Rho Lansden
lostrivercave1@hotmail.com

Dick Webber - Restoration Chairman
dickwebber@insightbb.com

We would like to encourage you to contact any of these officers with questions or comments regarding the Historic Railpark. Volunteers are gratefully sought for a variety of tasks, so don't be shy!



Restoration Activities:

We will be retrofitting the restrooms on the Towering Pine to service the Duncan Hines Diner Car. Jim at Barren River Upholstery has offered to donate his labor to recover the cushions in the stewards quarters in the 353. We are seeking volunteers to paint the room as well. Upcoming projects will include caulking the rivets, preparation and painting of parking lot side of 353, and repainting the caboose.

Please contact Dick Webber dickwebber@insightbb.com if you wish to volunteer to help on either of these projects.

Upcoming Events

Docent Doughnut Dunk -
April 22 at 8:30 am in the Depot Meeting Room. Docent Refresher training to be given.

Railfest 2006 –
May 13 and 14 at the L&N Depot. Train car tours, Food, other attractions. Check local news outlets for updated times and details.

Docent Doughnut Dunk –
May 27 at 8:30 am in the Depot Meeting Room. Program to be determined.

Festival of Trains 2006 –
December 9 and 10. More details to come.

For more information on the Historic Rail Park at the Bowling Green L&N Depot, please visit our web site at www.historicrailpark.com. Here you will find information on the park, members of the Friends of L&N Depot, information on the individual cars, and activities held at through the year.

Consider the Depot For Your Next Event

By day, the L&N Depot is surely one of the most spectacular meeting venues for any discerning business person. The L&N Depot is even an ideal spot to host luncheons, picnics, or socials.

By night, it is subtly lit to be the most magnificent room for weddings, anniversaries, or formal dinners. Rehearsal dinners and birthday parties can even take on an added elegance when hosted in the L&N Duncan Hines Dining Car or in the Executive Dining Room on the Presidential Railcar.

The L&N Depot is home to four historic L&N railcars. Three of these cars are available for any special event. Arrange and schedule business meetings on the L&N



353 Presidential Office Car. For the ultimate experience organize a party of friends and family or even a rehearsal dinner on the elegant Duncan Hines Diner Car.



In addition, L&N railroad enthusiasts can be scheduled

to give tours of all the rail cars, making for an exciting time. The railcars are part of what makes the L&N Depot such a unique experience. To learn more about rates visit www.LandNDepot.org.



To learn more about the railcars at the L&N Depot, visit www.historicrailpark.org.

Call Operation P.R.I.D.E. at (270)745-0090 for availability and scheduling.