



THE MAIL POUCH

VOLUME 36

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February 2024



MEETING NOTICE

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, February 8th, 2024. The meeting will begin promptly at 7:00pm and will be held at The Museum's East Annex. For directions or additional information, please contact James Taylor at (540) 295-2974.

February Meeting Agenda

- Brief Update on recent progress at the Museum's cars and displays.*
 - Discussion of upcoming Projects.*
 - Entertainment TBD.*
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Cover Image: Eastbound Chesapeake & Ohio Railway passenger excursion train led by steam locomotive no. 614 in balcony falls VA, on October 11, 1980. Photograph by John F. Bjorklund.

A monthly publication of the Rappahannock Railroad Museum

Opinions expressed in *The Mail Pouch* are those of the editor and contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Rappahannock Railroad Museum, Inc.. Please send all correspondence to the following address:

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Web Site: www.RRMuseum.org

THE PRESIDENTS PAGE

Greeting Members and Friends: The Rappahannock Railroad Museum, Inc. seems to be off to a good start for 2024. Most all Members renewed for 2024 and we have added a good number of new Members. Thru the winter months and first of January we were very busy with many new projects that included discussions with Spotsylvania Co., CSX and several outside local contractors. The very cold weather was trying at times but Museum open every Saturday and dedicated members worked together improving Museum and also having fun.

Members are very active preparing for busy Spring to show off our new and improved displays and operations of “Living History”.

I am looking forward to enjoying time with our Museum Family and Meeting new and repeat visitors. I hope you will pay us a visit.

James (Jake) Taylor
President
Rappahannock Railroad Museum

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Museum and the Editor can use your help to fill the pages of the Mail Pouch. If you have a subject you would like to share, photos or just about any other information, please consider submitting it for publication in our Mailpouch. There are a lot of exciting things happening at the Museum, I would be glad to publish personal notes from those who are making the changes and updates at the museum. All submissions will be included in the Mail Pouch (unless restricted by copywrite laws).

Thank you all for your support.

Jim Keehner
Editor
Rappahannock Railroad Museum



Left: 1 Jan. 4, 2014 , Right Jan. 7, 2024 look how we have grown in ten years . Members what will scene look like on Jan. 7, 2034 with your help.

“Promoting Railway History and Preservation”

UPCOMING EVENTS

Rappahannock Railroad Museum EVERY SATURDAY MORNING TRAIN RIDE – EXCURSION. Ride the rails along Historic Deep Run Creek in Spotsylvania Co. on open rail maintenance cars and experience how the railroad workers of the mid 20th century rode to their worksites. Every Saturday 9AM to Noon – weather and conditions permitting. To ensure you get aboard the last train run, please be at the museum by 10:30AM. We attempt to board all parties on a first come basis but boarding is conducted on the platform by our station conductor and train crew so first come first aboard may not always occur. All children under 12 or those needing intensive supervision must be accompanied by a responsible adult. They must be seated together. Departing from the Rappahannock Railroad Museum, 11700 Main Street, Fredericksburg, Va. 22408. Donations accepted.

Monthly Meetings:

Feb. 8, 2024

Mar. 14, 2024

April 11, 2024

NMRA NATIONAL CONVENTION

2024 Long Beach August 4 - 11, 2024 Westin Long Beach 333 East Ocean Blvd Long Beach, CA USA. <https://surfliner2024.org/>

NATIONAL NARROW GAUGE CONVENTION

44th National Narrow Gauge Convention September 11-14, 2024 — Pittsburgh, PA. <https://www.44nngc.com>

GREENBERG TRAIN SHOWS

Feb 24-25 - Wilmington, DE

Mar 9-10 - Edison, NJ

Mar 23-24 - Wilmington, MA

Prince William County Model Railroad Club Schedule - PWMRC.org

1st Saturday of each month - Open House Quantico Railroad Station

RAPPAHANNOCK MODEL RAILROADERS

February 10-11 FXB Kid Fest, Fredericksburg Expo and Conference Center

March 9-10 Boy Scout Troop 964 Show, Lake Ridge Middle School

April 27 Ashland Train Day, See website

May 18 Open House, 406H Hudgins Rd Fredericksburg VA 22408

July 26 - Aug 4 Fredericksburg Agricultural Fair, Fairgrounds Home Economics Building

September 14 Open House, 406H Hudgins Rd Fredericksburg VA 22408

October TBD Historic Appomattox Railroad Festival, (N gauge only), See Festival Website

October 14 - 15 National Museum of the Marine Corps, 1775 Semper Fidelis Way, Triangle VA, See USMC Museum website

October 26 Shannon Harvest Festival Fly-in, Shannon Airport See 10th Annual Harvest Festival Fly In at Shannon

November 9-10 Spotsylvania Towne Centre, Next to the Food Court

November 22-24 46th Annual Model Railroad Show, Science Museum of Virginia (N gauge only), See WRIC publicity for event

December 7-8 Annual Train Show, Fraternal Order of Eagles Lodge #4123, See 2023 RMR Christmas Train Show highlights

Editor's Note: *If anyone has any other Organizational information that they would like to see in the "Upcoming Events", please forward that information to the Editor for inclusion. I try to get a spread of regional and National events, but I cannot research every organization that is out there, so if you belong to or are interested in something that is not included here, please send me the information.*

"Promoting Railway History and Preservation"

MONTHLY RECAP

01-06-2024 - LOTS OF RAIN AND COLD! Cold Saturday to start 2024. We did have 10 members in attendance, open museum but no visitors. Members present did discuss many projects that we are working with and the Board did hold their scheduled meeting.

The board will give a report at next monthly meeting. NOTE one thing they felt important was for members to try and arrive at 8:30 on Saturdays so museum can be ready for visitors AT 9:00, due to visitors arriving at 9:00. Train should be in position at station and ready to leave no later than 9:15. and work with visitors who arrive near 12:00, within reason. All members should be ready to help train crew put train away especially if train making last minute trip. There is some discussion about extending operating hours a little at start of Spring. Let's talk about it.

Monthly Meeting this Thursday Jan. 11, 2024 at 7:00 in east annex. Reports will be given on progress made during 2023 and our plans for improving operations in 2024. Alan will also present a short program on railroading .

Security: Our cameras are working very well, if you drive or walk in the area, someone will be able to see you NOW. This system is still improving as more cameras will be add and monitored. Members You can still visit museum as you always have any time. RENEW FOR 2024, Most have already,why haven't you? WE HAVE HIGH GREEN INTO 2024 !

01-13-2024 - WINDY JANUARY DAY. The 13th was a good day for us, yes it was windy and chilly but we had 17 members stop by and give visiting families enjoyable tours of Museum, we had an est. of 47 visitors and made three trips to Main line with LYT.

With 17 members attending we were able to get a lot done. We looked over the new wiring drop for containers 3&4, now waiting for county inspection and power company inspection then they will connect us. Some repairs and updates to our model layouts, did test roll on Fairmount crane, did not see any problems, Pulled Maintenance on the 401 and installed cameras in north and east annexes' and the B60. So a lot of catch up was done and members had a good time doing other projects together.

The last couple of weeks have been very busy at Museum during the past couple of weeks as we resurfaced our parking lot, installing new electric feed, business meeting and security project update. Several members have put in a lot of time working and observing work. THANK YOU FOR YOUR EXTENDED TIME AT MUSEUM, ON PHONE, COMPUTER TIME , MEETING AND TRAVEL.

We are making a good start to 2024, and a I see a really exciting year ahead as we ALL enjoy time together helping at your Museum and sharing your talents in our planned projects for this year. Remember the little engine saying " I think I can" then saying "I knew I could". Well I "Know we can", If we pull TOGETHER. Enjoying preserving History with others.

01-20-2024 - SUPPER COLD BUT WE were OPEN! Cold morning (18 degrees) with wind COLD but museum was opened by 9 members and we had 9 visitors. Right, no LYT runs today, all projects worked on inside. Planning on HO layout, continued checking out security systems, did corrections on insulation in B-60 and several other small projects. Members enjoyed time with their favorite part of hobby. BIG THANKS to members who braved the cold and made a good day !

NOTE: PLEASE BE AWARE OF OPEN DOORS ESPECLELY DURING THIS COLD TIME. Our electric bill went thru the ceiling. Please do not stand in open door and talk , invite visitors in quickly, But politely. Thermostats are programmed to come on and off at set limits and times. Please do not try to adjust.

Membership for 2024, If you have not renewed for 2024 , please do so quickly. Grace time ends January 31. New mailing list will be put in effect then for "Updates" , "Mail Pouch" and member privileges will end. Most have already renewed for 2024 and are looking forward to an exciting year. Don't be left at station! Stay warm, dry and safe see you Saturday.

01-27-2024 - NICE DAY AT MUSEUM. We had a good number of visitors stop by at start of morning and the LYT was ready to leave station on time. We ended morning with two trips to CSX Main line and one trip to Tidewater trail. ending with estimate of 37 visitors for the day.

Our membership continues to grow as we have added several members in January. Today I logged 19 members in attendance. So we were able to get a lot done. The 401 had several repairs done and then made successful check out runs. Displays in B-60 and cabooses added, Our HO layout was modernized with "DDC" power (read alert below).

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MONTHLY RECAP

Elec to containers 3&4 continue , contractor to correct inspection concerns Monday. We now have a drop box at museum by steps to east annex. It is not secure yet but weather proof that guest or members may use during the week, our cameras cover box actively.

New members are being given instructions on our operations, Please make new members feel part of Museum and free to help where their talents direct. But watch and teach SAFETY! New members feel free to join in on any project just ask project leader how you can help.

Note HO layout ALERT: Museum members, the HO display has been converted to full DCC operation. Please do not attempt to operate the layout without checking with Phil Miller or James Keehner. There are new safety protocols that must be followed to avoid damage to regular DC powered equipment. The DCC system will accommodate regular DC powered equipment, but special direction is needed for operation. Also, the DCC system must be initialized in a specific manner to operate correctly, so again check with Phil or Jim before attempting to run a train. We still encourage any member to take part in our model operations that you enjoy. Just follow protocol set by leader.

Rappahannock Railroad Museum web site has been updated and is looking very good. Take a look at it and remind friends to check it out. It should spark more interest in visiting and supporting our Museum.(rrmuseum.org.)

I will be using 2024 email file next week for Updates. If you do not get an Update next week and have renewed for 2024 Please drop me and email. Picking up steam for a exciting 2024 year, presenting history and enjoying time with our Museum.



House Paving Co. installing new surface on parking lot 12/12/2023

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RAILROAD NEWS

Virginia will break ground on several long-awaited rail projects and has started to announce construction partners. Virginia's investment in its passenger rail infrastructure aims to reduce chronic traffic, decrease its carbon footprint and catch up to states with a competitive state-run passenger rail service, such as New York and Illinois. The new focus on investment comes after decades neglect. In late March of 2021, at Alexandria station, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg sat on stage as then Governor Ralph Northam announced a \$3.7 billion investment in the state's passenger rail over a 10 year span. Fast forward two years, and 9 of the initial 15 projects overseen by the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA) will soon leave the station. The VPRA oversees all state-supported passenger rail services. The General Assembly created the agency in 2020 to keep up the momentum and shield the public infrastructure projects from wavering political sentiment.

DJ Stadtler, VPRA Executive Director worked with Amtrak for 12 years in various executive roles prior to his work with VPRA. He is VPRA's first and only executive director. Amtrak is partnered in some VPRA efforts to transform rail service in Virginia. "When you're looking at adding infrastructure, Virginia is actually way ahead of the game," Stadtler said. "we've got the projects that are ready; they are being designed now."

Coming down the line: none projects are in different states of preliminary engineering. That includes projects to the under-served but growing region in Southwest Virginia and along the heavily trafficked Interstate 95 corridor between Richmond and Washington D.C. At least 1 million passengers and millions of tons of freight ride the rails there annually.

on December 27th, the VPRA announced selection of three construction partners for two major projects. One is the northern part of the Long Bridge project. The current long bridge - a two-track, 119 year old piece of infrastructure owed by CSX - has become a choke point for passengers and freight trains. It operates at 98% capacity during peak travel hours. A two-track railroad bridge dedicated to passenger rail will be constructed next to the old Long Bridge. CSX will retain ownership of the original bridge and use it for freight traffic exclusively.

Skanska USA and Flatiron Corp. were announced as the companies that will move the project from design to completion, with prep work starting in 2024 and full construction beginning in early 2025. Skanska worked on the Moynihan Train Hall at New York Penn Station. Flatiron worked on the completed sections of the California High Speed Rail project. The new bridge will double rail capacity over the Potomac River and allow for almost hourly service between Washington DC and Richmond when completed in 2030.

The south part of the Long Bridge project will create a two-track passenger rail bridge over the Potomac River, and an adjacent bicycle and pedestrian bridge that connects trails and parks in Arlington to those in Washington DC. The VPRA will consider requests for those proposals in February.

The entire Long Bridge project is projected to cost 2.3 billion. Flatiron and Herzog Contracting Corp. will work on the Franconia Springfield bypass, the VPRA announced on December 27th. Herzog worked on the Brightline expansion of rail service in Orlando Florida. Bypass work will create a dedicated passenger rail bridge under a mile long, south of the Franconia Springfield Metro Station. The area is one of the most congested points in Virginia, according to the VPRA. A \$100 million grant was awarded for this project in September. It is slated to cost approximately \$405 million. Full constructions will start in March and last two years.

There are multiple phases of the work the VPRA will do along the I-95 corridor, with varied completion dates. The first two phases will add a combined 37 miles of additional track. Eventually, passengers will gain access to additional Amtrak round trips along I-95, and additional round trips and weekend service on the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) Fredericksburg line.

Other capital projects include increased service to Newport News and Norfolk, Expansion of the rail service to the New River Valley for the first time since 1979, and improved service between Richmond and Raleigh, North Carolina. Last month, North Carolina announced a \$1 billion U.S. Department of Transportation grant towards the Richmond to Raleigh project. That southern route will create a faster, more direct route between the cities.

In a broader sense, the Long Bridge connects Washington DC to the entirety of the southeastern US. All northbound passenger trains from this region terminate in the nation's capital. "we're strong partners with other states like North Carolina," Stadtler said. "They know that all of the infrastructure that they're investing in is useless unless we deliver the Long Bridge because that really opens the capacity for everybody."

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RAILROAD NEWS

VPRA led work appears to have increased interest in passenger rail. A record 1.26 million people rode Amtrak or VRE in the last fiscal year. The all-time monthly ridership record of 119,280 passengers was set in August of 2022.

Erika Olivo-Espinoza is a college student who regularly takes the train between her Northern Virginia home and school in Richmond. Amtrak has pretty good diversity among its Virginia ridership, she said. "I've seen a lot of students use Amtrak to go home as well," Olivo-Espinoza said. "I've also seen a lot of older people who can't drive and also some families." Olivo-Espinoza prefers Amtrak to other methods of transportation, like the bus, due to its speed, frequency and amenities. "I took the train because I didn't have a car, it was just the most convenient thing for me, and it's not a long ride and they do have WiFi," Olivo-Espinoza said. "They have good service."

The Freight Problem: Countries overseas have, for the most part, dedicated railways for passenger travel, according to Stadtler. American passenger rail competes with freight railroads, which own the vast majority of trackage in the US. Freight trains stacked with cargo are long and slow moving. Passenger trains need to go a lot faster. The two often get in each other's way.

"Historically in our country, whenever we wanted to add passenger rail, the freight railroads have said, 'well, it's our track; we're not going to do that,'" Stadtler said. The US standard is to negotiate track sharing agreements with the freight railroads, but the VPRA knew a different approach was needed to expand passenger rail. "Let's go to the freight railroads," Stadtler said. "Let's find out where we need to add capacity so we can literally put passenger trains on different tracks."

Virginia bought hundreds of miles of track from private freight railroads such as CSX and Norfolk Southern at a total cost of \$563 million. This investment will give passenger trains the right of way, make improvements to the neglected rail infrastructure and increase train frequency.

Redesigning Rail safety: New rail infrastructure projects, especially along the I-95 corridor, will increase safety through design. Railroads will be routed above roadways via bridges, and streets will be redesigned.

Virginia ranked 13th in the US. railroad crossing collisions, according to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). Almost all US. railroad fatalities are a result of either pedestrians trespassing or collisions at railroad crossings. "So when you close crossings, you eliminate entrances, or you know passageways across the track," said Margaret Cannell, State Coordinator for North Carolina Operation Lifesaver.

Cannell pointed out that in Japan, there are few instances of vehicles or pedestrians hit by trains. High speed trains in Japan travel up to 200 mph. In Virginia, Amtrak trains move at speeds up to 79 mph, but on average at 50 mph. "It's because the train tracks are separated from vehicles and from people," she said. "They're elevated, or they're completely separated so that those paths don't cross." North Carolina engaged in a series of rail improvements in the late 2010s called the Piedmont Corridor project. It was similar to the improvements Virginia is undertaking now. Over 48 North Carolina crossings were closed Cannell said.

North Carolina Department of Transportation and the VPRA are working closely together on projects, according to Cannell. "They're fully invested in making sure that it's the safest that it can be and that the number of crossings that have to exist are minimal and they're as safe as they can be," she said.

Cannell saw how impactful the North Carolina improvements were and said Virginia's New focus is "a big Deal" - a "legacy" program. "It's a big thing to be doing and the cooperation of CSX and VDOT has ... Just completely made this a really great project - one that people will be talking about using for many, many years to come," she said. (Richmond Times Dispatch)

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PHOTOS



Top Left: Electric Contractor installing new elec drop for containers 3 & 4 on 1/8/2024.

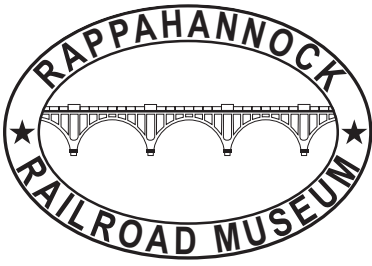
Top Right: cold day waiting for train at Deep Run Station.

Center Left: looking south cold light snow, most of 2 to 3 inches melted.

Center Right: In Nov 2022 during covid we were still operating and planning for time that covid when covid would be controlled, TKS Joe for scene.

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



Membership Application/Renewal Form

Rappahannock Railroad Museum, Inc.

Please type or print legibly

New _____ Renewal _____ if renewal Updated information Y N

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Family Membership(S) if Joining: _____
Membership

Regular \$15.00 _____

Family \$1.00 each _____

Museum Donation _____

Total: _____

Please mail to the following address or hand in at meeting.

Rappahannock Railroad Museum, Inc.
P.O. Box 9088
Fredericksburg, VA. 22403-9088

I agree to be a member in good standing and follow safety rules of
the Rappahannock Railroad Museum, Inc.
Membership dues for January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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FEBRUARY MONTHLY MEETING AGENDA

- Saturday February 3rd Meet at our Museum Site 9:00am to 12:00pm for tours and train rides, construction and upgrades(weather permitting). Members continue to improve displays and area.
- Thursday February 8th **MUSEUM MONTHLY MEETING IN THE EAST ANNEX.** Monthly meeting starting promptly at 7:00pm. Important discussion on Museum future activities.
- Saturday February 10th Meet at our Museum Site 9:00am to 12:00pm for tours and train rides, construction and upgrades(weather permitting). Members continue to improve displays and area.
- Saturday February 17th Meet at our Museum Site 9:00am to 12:00pm for tours and train rides, construction and upgrades(weather permitting). Members continue to improve displays and area.
- Saturday February 24th Meet at our Museum Site 9:00am to 12:00pm for tours and train rides, construction and upgrades(weather permitting). Members continue to improve displays and area.

Additional work days may be scheduled on an as needed basis.

11 months to go with 1 month down,
Spring will be here soon, it's not messing around;
Our Museum membership continues to grow,
The Little Yellow train still steals the show.

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SUBMISSIONS NOTE: Any items that you wish to have published in *The Mail Pouch* must be submitted as a complete package, articles must have all supporting images and diagrams at time of submission. Items to be published that are “borrowed from other publications” must have the proper credits noted to avoid copyright violations. Any items that you wish to have published in *The Mail Pouch* must be submitted to the Editor in electronic format (Text Files for articles and separate Digital Photos) prior to the **20th** of the proceeding month. Items not in an electronic format (items needing scans or typesetting) must be submitted prior to the **15th** of the proceeding month. Articles, Photos and other items may be submitted in person on Saturday mornings at the Museum, or electronically at jkeehner67@hotmail.com, **subject line EDITOR.** *All items submitted after the deadlines of the month will be held for publication in the following months Newsletter.*