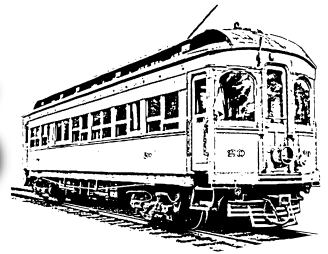


# The ELECTRIC TIMES

newsletter



2025-2

Official Publication of the **Fox River Trolley Museum**  
Serving The community of South Elgin



**Come Ride  
With Us!**

news from  
**UNDER  
the wire**

## RECENT FOX RIVER LINE HAPPENINGS

news from  
**UNDER  
the wire**

# ★ ★ Success of the WWI Reenactment for 2025 ★ ★



On June 7th and 8th, 2025, the museum hosted the popular event RAILS TO VICTORY. This World War II reenactment weekend featured several main attractions, including a replica WWII military camp located adjacent to the main museum parking lot at Castlemuir, as well as reenactment stops positioned at various locations along the main line as the train traveled southbound. The Saturday reenactment trains were completely sold out, with every single seat filled.

For 2025, the event also featured a special celebration of life and service honoring two local WWII veterans, Bob Marshall and Duane Stevenson, who are 100 and 101 years old, respectively. They were nationally recognized by the office of Illinois Senator Tammy Duckworth during a special flag ceremony at the event.

**Continued on Page 3**

# Grant Donations

Dear Friends and Supporters,

On behalf of our entire organization, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the following generous donors whose contributions have significantly advanced our mission and ongoing projects. Your support plays a vital role in preserving our local transit history.

We sincerely thank:

- The Hoffer Foundation for their generous \$5,000 donation to help preserve local transit history.
- The John H. Emery Rail Heritage Trust for a generous \$10,000 contribution toward the installation of new seats for CA&E 316.
- The National Railway Historical Society for their \$3,561 grant supporting the restoration of the SOO Line Caboose 130.
- Ozinga for the donation of \$3,360 worth of concrete (10 yards), enabling the construction of approximately 80 feet of new sidewalk.
- Holcim for the incredible donation of 500 tons of gravel, valued at \$27,500, supporting foundational infrastructure and site improvement.
- The Soo Line Historical Society for their \$1,000 donation for the restoration of Soo Caboose 117.

We are deeply grateful for your partnership and belief in our mission.

With sincere appreciation,

All of us at the Fox River Trolley Museum

## 2025 Election Candidacy is Open

Dear Member,

The selection process for candidates has officially commenced for the 2025 Fox River Trolley Museum Election, during which two board directors will be elected. The elected directors will serve for a term of two (2) years and will be chosen by our valued Voting Members. We encourage all members to consider this opportunity to actively participate in shaping the future of our beloved museum.

To be eligible for nomination, individuals must meet specific qualifications:

- Must be Qualified Members
- Have paid their dues for the calendar year
- Have contributed at least two hundred (200) recorded work hours to the corporation since their membership initiation
- Must have completed a minimum of ten (10) work hours within the twelve (12) months leading up to the election

**DEADLINE to nominate yourself: July 17th 2025**

If you're eager to join the Fox River Trolley Museum's Board of Directors, don't just sit on the sidelines. This is your opportunity to participate. Wondering if you meet the eligibility criteria?

Contact Kathleen Jamieson in person, at [Kathleen@frtm.org](mailto:Kathleen@frtm.org) or by mail for details.

Mail should be addressed sent to:  
Nominating Committee  
P.O. Box 315  
South Elgin, IL 60177-0315

**Ballots will be mailed to the address we have on file and only to those with active 2025 memberships. To ensure we have the correct information login to your member portal today!**

# FOX RIVER TROLLEY ASSOCIATION INC.

## 2025 Board of Directors

**President:** Bernard Rohling  
**Vice President:** Patrick Storm  
**Treasurer:** Douglas Rundell  
**Secretary:** James Tarbet  
**Director:** Chris Nelson

## Operations Department:

**Operations Superintendent:** Patrick Storm  
**Trainmaster:** James Tarbet  
**Asst. Trainmaster:** Chris DeAngeles  
**Crew Caller:** Damin Keenan  
**Museum Store Manager:** Damin Keenan

## Membership Services Department:

**Membership Services Manager:** Kathleen Jamieson  
**Membership Secretary:** Laura Taylor  
**Asst. Membership Secretary:** Vacant  
**Membership Activities Coordinator:** Jasmine Carlson  
**Membership Development Coordinator:** Vacant

## Car Department:

**Chief Car Officer:** Jeff Bennett  
**Asst. Chief Car Officer:** Dave Peterson  
**Car Superintendent Emeritus:** Joseph Hazinski

## Fixed Plant Department:

**Chief Engineer:** Ralph Taylor  
**Chief Technology Officer:** Edward Konecki  
**Chief Lineman:** Jerry Saunders  
**Roadmaster:** Bernard Rohling  
**Asst. Roadmaster:** Patrick Storm  
**Buildings and Grounds Superintendent:** Ron Ruhl  
**Electrical Supply & Signal:** Ralph Taylor

## Museum Services Department:

**Museum Services Manager:** Bernard Rohling  
**Media Relations Coordinator:** Lorrie Nevens  
**Webmaster:** Jacob Goldberg  
**Asst. Webmaster:** Edward Konecki  
**Community Relations Manager:** Lorrie Nevens  
**Capital Development Coordinator:** Eric Zabelny  
**Curator:** Joseph Hazinski  
**Newsletter Editor:** Kathleen Jamieson  
**Fox River Lines Magazine Editor:** Joseph Hazinski  
**Archivist:** Vacant  
**Education Coordinator:** Fred Biederman

**2025 Nominating Committee:** Kathleen Jamieson, Eric Zabelny, Jasmine Carlson

## Museum Safety Department

**Safety Coordinator:** Ralph Taylor

Continued from Page 1

# Success of the WWII Reenactment for 2025

The celebration was planned by museum member and volunteer Ron and became a major highlight of the weekend. Scouts performed bugle calls, the American Legion provided a 21-gun salute, and a ceremonial cannon shot honored the two centenarian veterans. The museum is



now receiving national recognition for this event, and several representatives—including Ron—will travel to Washington, D.C., to be honored at a national banquet on June 26th. When Electric Times staff asked Ron what he thought about the national recognition, he simply said, “You just never know where life will take you.”



Sandi Visser

Museum Treasurer Doug Rundell shared the following reflection on the event:

“At the Saturday opening of Rails to Victory 2025, we honored two veterans of World War II—both centenarians. Member Ron had communicated the date and timing of the ceremony to the French Consulate in Chicago. While they were unable to attend in person, they sent a heartfelt note of gratitude:

“The commemoration of D-Day remains a solemn and powerful reminder of the courage, sacrifice, and unity displayed on the beaches of Normandy. For the French people, this day stands as a



Tracey Stewart

symbol of the liberation of our country and the enduring bonds of friendship between our nations. The memory of those who fought and gave their lives for our freedom is a legacy we are committed to preserving. Events such as yours play a vital role in keeping this history alive and ensuring that future generations understand the true cost of peace and the value of our alliance.”



Sandi Visser

Continued on Page 4

Continued from Page 3

Numerous organizations were present to support and participate in the ceremony, including Scouting America Troop 237 from Frankfort Square, IL, led by museum member and Senior Patrol Leader Anderson Pries; American Legion Post 974; a few U.S.



Valerie Williams



Marines; an Army Chaplain; and a representative from the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, who fired a ceremonial cannon during the proceedings.



Sandi Visser



Sue McCarthy

## Santa's Trolley Express Tickets on Sale!



Tickets are officially on sale now for our most popular event of the year. Celebrate the season with a heartwarming holiday train ride that's bursting with nostalgia, joy, and festive wonder! Climb aboard our beautifully decorated 1950s vintage elevated cars and journey down an authentic train line dating back to 1896—an unforgettable adventure your entire family will cherish. Bring your loved ones, create magical memories, and start a new holiday tradition! With so many joyful moments to capture, this is an experience you and your family won't want to miss. Limited seats available—reserve right away to secure your spot for this one-of-a-kind holiday experience!

# Volunteer of the Year 2024-2025

Do you know a museum volunteer who has been working tirelessly to achieve amazing things at the museum lately? If so, nominate the volunteer you believe is most deserving and who has made a significant contribution to railway preservation during the 2024/2025 season!

All nominations will be reviewed, and a winner will be selected by The Electric Times Newsletter Staff after the nomination period closes. The winner will be announced on Members' Day and will receive a plaque in recognition of their hard work. Get your votes in!

Please submit your nominations for this prestigious award to Anderson Pries at [Anderson@frtm.org](mailto:Anderson@frtm.org) by August 31, 2025. Please note: You may not nominate yourself or nominate the same person more than once. However, you may submit as many different nominations as you like. Nominations may be submitted by all members, volunteers, and the public.

## Fox River Trolley Museum Goes Live On Air!

On May 27th, one of our extremely dedicated volunteers, Jeff Bennett, appeared live on WRMN 1410 AM to talk about the Fox River Trolley Museum! The interview took place on Chamber Chat, a radio show hosted by Elgin Area Chamber of Commerce President & CEO Carol Gieske. The show airs on the fourth Tuesday of every month from 9:05 to 10:00 a.m. and features conversations about Chamber and community programs, local business issues, and updates on the greater Elgin business community. Jeff shared the mission, story, and history of our museum with a wide audience—many of whom may not have known about us otherwise.



Kathleen Jamieson

## Tales Along the Fox River!

One day while museum crews were hard at work constructing the car barn lead to connect the newly built car barn extension to the rest of the museum's trackage, a passerby happened to be out for a hike on the nearby Fox River Trail. As it turns out, he had worked in Maintenance of Way (MOW) during his college years—building and maintaining railroad tracks and infrastructure. He generously offered his time to relive old memories and jumped in to help with the construction of this crucial stretch of track for the museum.

Have a story to share about your time at the museum? Now's your chance! Email your memories to newsletter contributor Anderson Pries at [Anderson@frtm.org](mailto:Anderson@frtm.org)—every story is welcome!



# Progress on the Restoration of SOO Line #117

On October 27th, 2023, SOO Line caboose #117 was generously donated and delivered to the museum by Marty Maggio of Maggio Towing and Trucking Company, based in Rockford, IL. Built by the International Car Corporation in 1973, the caboose served in mainline operations on the SOO Line and later the Canadian Pacific Railway until its retirement in May 2023. Since its arrival, it has been positioned on Track 3 North, between the Pedestrian Crossing and Switch 33.



The caboose is being restored to its original SOO Line paint scheme—an all-white body with bold red “SOO” lettering. Leading the restoration effort are museum member and volunteer Ron, along with his sons Mike and Walter. The goal is to return the caboose to full operational condition in time for use in a two-car caboose train—paired with Illinois Central #9648—during the museum’s Caboose Days event in September. As of this edition of *The Electric Times*, the interior restoration is nearly complete. A few extra seats have been installed, salvaged from a nearly identical caboose, which not only increases seating capacity but also enhances historical accuracy.

## Members’ Day Model Show!

Members’ Day is a special event dedicated to thanking our members for their continued support. It’s a day filled with exclusive activities, free rides, and behind-the-scenes access at the museum.



We know that a lot of our members have great models, so we would like to showcase them and invite every one of our members to loan a model for display in the museum’s new car barn extension during Members’ Day 2025!



Feel free to bring a folding table as well to help hold and display your magnificent models!

# Museum Treasurer Gives Talks at a Memory Care Cafe

While the museum continues to preserve and operate historic electric railcars, some of its most meaningful work also happens far from the tracks. Recently, museum member Doug Rundell gave two special presentations to memory support groups in the South Elgin



Highlighting a 1902 drawing of the proposed Aurora Elgin & Chicago electric trolley line area, sharing the story of electric interurban trolleys and how the Fox River Trolley Museum came to preserve that rich legacy. The initial request came through a simple email to the museum's



Doug with all the supporters of the Dementia Café

general inbox: "Could the Museum provide a speaker to talk about its history?" Doug stepped forward—and brought history with him. To connect with the audience, Doug opened his talk with flair. "I started off channeling a late-night TV infomercial host," he said, smiling. "I told them they could get fabulously rich—if they invested in a gold-based bond from the Aurora, Elgin & Chicago Railroad!" He then passed around a real 1901 gold bond, framed and still promising 5% annual interest over 40 years. "That bond helped construct this wonderful new trolley railroad," he explained. "The trolley line could take you out from the City of Chicago to enjoy the beauty of the Fox River Valley." The presentations sparked powerful reactions. Some audience

members reminisced about riding the trolley through Wheaton or watching coal cars rumble by in Elgin during their youth. "One gentleman's smile could've lit up the whole room when he saw a photo of the beautifully restored Car 458 in its CA&E colors," Doug



Doug with the two main organizers for the Dementia Café

recalled. "It brought back vivid memories of his hometown and earlier days." Another attendee shared a childhood story of clinging to a slow-moving coal car for a free ride—and later witnessing a milk truck roll downhill and flip onto the tracks. "He said he never told his parents," Doug said, laughing.

One of the talks took place at Dementia Café, a program held at the South Elgin Public Works building. It's a broad coalition of caregivers, first responders, the Gail Borden Library, and local organizations offering resources and support for individuals with memory challenges and their families. Doug's wife attended and photographed the event, taking care to preserve attendees' privacy. Two South Elgin police officers also spoke, explaining how they are trained to locate Alzheimer's patients who may wander off. It was a collaborative, community-centered day—one that resonated far beyond the presentation itself.

Doug explained why the opportunity meant so much to him personally. "I've known friends who have suffered age-related memory declines," he said. "And when she was alive, my mother-in-law had a friend, Stephanie, whose short-term memory was largely gone. But she could play the harmonica—and if you asked her to play any old-time tune, she'd belt it out perfectly." He continued: "Many of these people still retain long-term memories. They want to socialize, carry on conversations, and be connected with others—not just be plunked in front of a TV set to sit half the day. So this was a great opportunity to showcase the Museum and to provide a good experience to these patients and their supporting families."

Continued on Page 8

Continued from Page 7

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Doug with the gold backed Aurora Elgin & Chicago bond, promising to pay 5% a year for the next 40 years

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Dave Peterson

An ad run by the AE&C inviting people to ride the railroad out of Chicago and come visit the beautiful Fox River Valleys

## Feed Valve Issues on CA&E #458

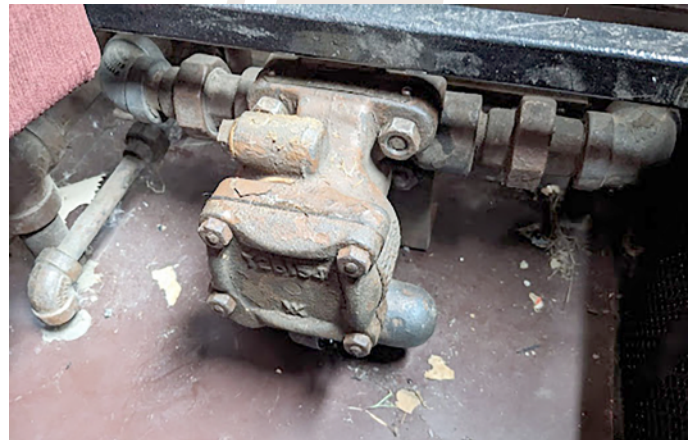
CA&E #458 is turning 80 this year—and it's running extremely well! However, many of its components are antique and original to the car.

Late last year, Chicago, Aurora & Elgin #458 was taken out of service due to an issue with its feed valve. This valve is a crucial part of the trolley car's air brake system, and without it, the car cannot operate. As a result, #458 remained out of service through the end of the 2024 regular operating season and into 2025.



Dave Peterson

As Opening Day for the 2025 season approached—on Mother's May 11th—the car department sprang into action and successfully repaired the feed valve just in time for the car's return to service. Just another day's work for our incredible car department, which is always in need of more volunteers!



Jacob Goldberg

If you'd like to help maintain our historic, one-of-a-kind rail equipment, please see Jeff in the car barn or email Kathleen at [Kathleen@frtm.org](mailto:Kathleen@frtm.org).

# Progress on the Car Barn Extension!



Since November 2024, nearly every department and volunteer at the museum has been hard at work on a major project to create covered housing for three additional trolley cars. This expansion is vital to protecting our collection—especially the wooden and open cars, such as Rio de Janeiro #1719 and Chicago, Aurora & Elgin #317, which are still stored outdoors and exposed to the elements.

The new barn extension features a full concrete floor, modern sliding (garage-style) doors, and the early stages of a pathway that will eventually connect back to the main museum grounds. As of this issue of *The Electric Times* (June), track for the barn lead has been fully installed, though line poles and overhead wire have not yet been constructed. You can help bring this project to completion! The GoFundMe for the barn extension is still live and accepting donations. Visit our website at [www.foxrolley.org](http://www.foxrolley.org) to learn more and contribute. Every dollar helps protect these historic cars for future generations!



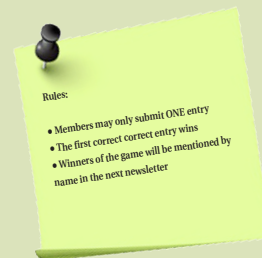
## Fun Fact

Did you know that AE&FRE #304 and AE&FRE #5 are the only two surviving relics of the Aurora, Elgin & Fox River Electric Company Railroad that still operate on their original home rails? It's true! AE&FRE #304 was built in 1924 specifically for the line our museum trains now run on, and it was retired from service on the Fox River Line in 1935. AE&FRE #5, on the other hand, operated on the Fox River Line from its construction in 1945 until the line was closed to freight service and sold to the museum in 1973. During that time, AE&FRE #5 served as the railroad's sole workhorse, hauling coal from the interchange with the Illinois Central Railroad at Coleman Siding to the State Mental Hospital in Elgin.



## Guess That Artifact!

Once again, this is a game where YOU guess which one of our historic artifacts is portrayed in the photo below!



- Rules:
- Members may only submit ONE entry
  - The first correct correct entry wins
  - Winners of the game will be mentioned by name in the next newsletter



What artifact do you think it is? Send newsletter contributor Anderson Pries an email with your answer at [Anderson@frtm.org](mailto:Anderson@frtm.org) now!

The person to guess this next artifact correctly, will win a free ticket for a speeder ride with our very own FRTA President Ben Rohling on our Canadian Pacific speeder #7700-12! If you win our game, please reach out to [Anderson@frtm.org](mailto:Anderson@frtm.org) to schedule your speeder excursion! And now the moment you have all been waiting for...

Last issue's mystery artifact was Chicago, Aurora & Elgin #20, built in 1902 by the Niles Car and Manufacturing Company. Once the oldest operating interurban car in the U.S., it now awaits new wheels and a fresh concrete pad in the car barn extension. If you would like to donate to the restoration of this once-great silverliner, email [Kathleen@FRTM](mailto:Kathleen@FRTM) now!

The winner of the last issue was...

### Jacob Goldberg

Jacob is one of our volunteers who has been with the museum since 2022. You can often find him in the motorman's cab operating the train or with the passengers as the conductor. In addition, Jacob works behind the scenes as our webmaster, having overseen a slew of improvements to our online presence. Chicago is Jacob's home, where he works during the week as a software engineer, and he is a regular rider on the CTA Red Line and Metra Milwaukee District West Line. His railroad interests are primarily centered around urban mass transit, though he always appreciates a good Amtrak trip. Between 2019 and 2025, he visited and photographed all 400+ stations on the Chicago L, Metra, and South Shore Line.



Dave Peterson

# Restorations of Many Baggage Carts and a Chicago Tunnel Company Ash Car!

Throughout the last year some of our faithful volunteers, Ron and his two sons Mike and Walter, have been hard at work restoring many pieces of former equipment around the museum. Some of this work includes the newly restored fresh-looking baggage carts all around the museum and the historic Chicago Tunnel Company Ash Car #788.

Baggage carts are located throughout the property. You'll find one next to Illinois Central Caboose #9648, another near the Wayne Shelter, one in front of the museum's Castlemuir Depot, and one at Blackhawk Station in the Jon J. Duerr Forest Preserve.



The cart that is located at Blackhawk in the forest preserve is historically a Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy (Burlington Route) baggage cart, and is from museum member and volunteer Ralph Taylor's personal collection. The cart is located right next to the auxiliary stairs at Blackhawk, and really helps create the historical look and feel we hope to achieve when members and visitors stop by.



Continued from Page 10

The Chicago Tunnel Company car #788 is located just behind the museum's historic CA&E Wayne Shelter (an original flag stop building from the Chicago, Aurora, and Elgin that was located in Wayne, IL).

Though unassuming, the car is historic because it worked on the relatively unknown Chicago Tunnel Company. The company operated a freight subway railroad under downtown Chicago that had locomotives and rolling stock like a mining railroad. Special thanks once again to our faithful volunteer Ron for leading the charge to get these magnificent pieces of railroad history in tip-top shape.



## Electric Times Staff

**Publication Manager**—Kathleen Jamieson

**Columnist**—Anderson Pries

**Layout and Graphics**—David Peterson

Thoughtfully proofread by Hilary Pries

Electric Times is the official publication of the Fox River Trolley Association, Inc., an Illinois not-for-profit corporation. It is published for distribution to members and friends of the Fox River Trolley Museum. Reproduction of the Electric Times, either in part or in its entirety, is strictly prohibited without prior permission from the editorial staff or the FRTA Board of Directors. Entire contents Copyright© 2025 Fox River Trolley Association, Inc.

**Submissions:** Submission of stories from members and others is necessary in order to publish the Electric Times. Feature length articles are welcome and considered as are photographs and illustrations.

Please contact the staff before taking on a project. Contributors submit materials with the understanding that no monetary compensation is provided.

**Address change:** Send address changes to the museum's mailing address: Box 315, South Elgin, IL 60177.



**FOX RIVER  
TROLLEY  
MUSEUM**

## MISSION

To preserve and interpret Chicago's electric transport era that began in the 1890's and peaked before 1950. The electric transport era is significant because electric railways, including interurban, rapid transit, and streetcars, helped the Chicago region grow to be one of North America's great metropolitan areas. The Museum strives to show that electric railways were more than convenient, they were and are a way of life for generations of people from all walks of life.

The Museum fulfills this mission by preserving, interpreting, and operating historic railway vehicles on its demonstration electric railway, over the Aurora, Elgin and Fox River Electric route at South Elgin, Illinois. Furthermore, the museum preserves, displays, and interprets smaller artifacts, photos, oral histories, and documents which help relate the importance of electric transport in and around the Chicago Metropolitan Area, putting them in context with their surroundings and era.

**Correction:** In Newsletter 2025.2, The Electric Times incorrectly listed CTA cars 40 and 43 as "un-powered trailers," though both were motorized, with one receiving power from the overhead wire for the pair. We regret the error and thank our knowledgeable museum curator, Joe Hazinski, for bringing it to our attention.



## Still Need to Renew or Know Someone Who Should Apply?

Museum Regular Membership Renewal & Application Form

**Please Mail This Membership Renewal Form and Your Check to:**

Fox River Trolley Museum  
P.O. Box 315  
South Elgin, IL 60177

**1. Please fill out the following contact information:**

**2. Check the appropriate membership level and calendar year for which you would like to apply or renew below:**

I would like to renew my membership for calendar year **202[ ]**

\_\_\_\_\_  
First Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Last Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address 1

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address 2

\_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mobile Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email

Price	Please Select	Membership Level	Description
\$35.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	General Member	A single person (18+)
\$50.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	Family Membership	A general member & family
\$25.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	Youth Member	A single person (13-17 years old) with parental consent
\$45.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	Qualified Member	A single person (18+) with ≥200 Museum hours
\$50.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	Qualified & Family Membership	A qualified member & family
<b>Optional Sponsorship Donation</b>			
\$100.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sustaining	
\$500.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	Contributing	
\$1,000.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	Benefactor	
\$	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other amount	
Total =			

Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ payable to ***the Fox River Trolley Association.***

Please Mail This Membership Renewal Form and Your Check to:  
Fox River Trolley Museum, P.O. Box 315, South Elgin, IL 60177