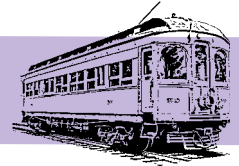


The Electric Times Newsletter

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



The Electric Times Newsletter is proudly all volunteer run and produced. For our members, by our members.

The 6000s Make Their Way Home To The Museum

A two-car set of historic 1951 Chicago subway cars from the Chicago Transit Authority has recently been acquired by the Fox River Trolley Museum and is now safely home on the rails in the

Chicagoland area for the first time since 1986. The cars, numbered 6069 and 6070, were part of the CTA's first major order of 6000-series rapid transit cars, built by the St. Louis Car Company beginning

in 1950 as part of an effort to replace hundreds of aging wooden elevated cars. Designed to operate as a semi-permanently coupled pair, the cars incorporated lessons learned from earlier experimental units, including all-electric propulsion and braking systems based on PCC streetcar technology.

These cars originally operated on both the elevated and subway lines of the famous Chicago "L" system from their introduction until 1987. Unlike later 6000-series cars, which reused components from retired streetcars, this early pair was constructed entirely with new materials and features distinctive flat side doors rather than the curved designs seen on later units. Their design proved highly successful, influencing Chicago rapid transit car construction for decades to come.

In 1987, the pair was sold to the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), where they were renumbered 476 and 477 and placed into service on the Norristown High Speed Line. They remained in operation there until 1994, helping to fill a temporary equipment shortage until new

Continued on page 3



Upcoming Events

All Aboard Days

Sunday, June 14

Father's Day

Sunday, June 21

July

FRTM's 60th Birthday Celebration

Saturday, July 4

See Page 7

Independence Day

Saturday, July 4

All Aboard Days

Sunday, July 12

Board meeting

Saturday, July 25

2:00pm @ Elgin Township Offices

August

Military History Weekend

Saturday, August 1

Sunday, August 2

See Page 5

All Aboard Days

Sunday, August 9

Fox River Ragtime Festival

Saturday, August 22

Sunday, August 23

See Page 7

All events take place at the main museum campus unless otherwise stated.

Get To Know Your Museum

These are the people who help keep each of these departments running. If you have questions, need support, or would like to get involved, they would be happy to hear from you.

Departments & Roles

2025 Board of Directors
President: Bernard Rohling
Vice President: Patrick Storm
Treasurer: Douglas Rundell
Secretary: Jeff Bennett

Operations Department
Operations Superintendent:
Patrick Storm
Trainmaster: Chris DeAngelis
Crew Caller: Damin Keenan
Museum Store Manager: Damin Keenan

Membership Services
Department
Membership Services Manager:
Kathleen Jamieson
Membership Activities
Coordinator: Jasmine Carlson
Membership Development
Coordinator: Vacant

Car Department
Chief Car Officer/ Manager:
Jeff Bennett
Asst. Chief Car Officer:
Andrzej Jurek & Dave Peterson

Fixed Plant Department
Chief Engineer/Manager:
Ralph Taylor
Chief Lineman: Vacant
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 & Social Media Relations
Coordinator: Ryan Prusinski
Webmaster: Jacob Goldberg
Asst. Webmaster:
Edward Konecki

Chief Technology Officer:
Edward Konecki
Community Relations Manager:
Jeff Bennett
Capital Development
Coordinator: Eric Zabelny
Curator: Joseph Hazinski
Publications Manager:
Kathleen Jamieson
Newsletter Editor:
Kathleen Jamieson
Archivist: Jasmine Carlson & Dave Peterson
Education Coordinator:
Fred Biederman

Museum Safety Department
Safety Coordinator: Ralph Taylor

AE&FRE Company Railroad
President: Art Lemke
Treasurer: Ralph Taylor
Secretary: Edward Konecki

Mission Statement

Education Through Demonstration

The Museum's mission is to preserve and interpret Chicago's electric transport era that began in the 1890s 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 that help relate the importance of electric transport in and around the Chicago Metropolitan Area, putting them in context with their surroundings and era.

The Electric Times Staff

Publication Manager—
Kathleen Jamieson
Columnist—Anderson Pries
Layout and Graphics—David Peterson

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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 undergoing a project. Contributors submit materials with the understanding that no monetary compensation is provided.

Changing your address? Send address changes to the museum's mailing address: Box 315, South Elgin, IL 60177 or Login online to update contact information.



The 6000s Make Their Way Home To The Museum



1994, helping to fill a temporary equipment shortage until new railcars could be delivered. After their retirement, the cars were purchased by the Middletown & Hummelstown Railroad in Pennsylvania, where they were stored for potential future use.

Following a change in ownership of that railroad, the cars were generously donated to the Fox River Trolley Museum in early 2026 and transported to the museum by truck in May. Upon arrival, the museum evaluated their condition and found them to be in remarkably good shape, making

them strong candidates for both historical and operational restoration.

The museum plans to restore the cars to their original CTA appearance and eventually return them to service. Their addition fills an important gap in the museum's collection, representing a key era in Chicago rapid transit history and further supporting the museum's mission to preserve and interpret the region's electric railway heritage.

Anderson Pries

HELP WANTED

As the holiday season approaches, preparations are already underway at the Fox River Trolley Museum for one of its most anticipated events of the year: Santa's Trolley Express. While December may still feel far off, organizers are encouraging community members to start thinking ahead and consider volunteering for this festive tradition that plays a vital role in supporting the museum's operations.

Santa's Trolley Express is more than just a holiday attraction. It serves as a major source of

funding for the museum, helping to sustain restoration projects, daily operations, and educational programming throughout the year. Bringing this magical experience to life, however, requires a dedicated team of volunteers willing to lend their time and energy during the busy holiday season.

The museum is seeking volunteers of all kinds to help create a memorable experience for visitors. Opportunities include actors and actresses to bring scenes to life, a Santa Claus to delight children, and elves of all heights

Guess The Artifact

The artifact in last edition's "Guess the Artifact" was Chicago Aurora and Elgin line car #11! Congrats to Fred Lonnes for winning once again!

Can you guess what this is?



Rules:

- Members may only submit ONE entry
- The first correct correct entry wins

Winners will be mentioned by name in the next newsletter

Good Luck!

Fred served the museum as our vice president for many years until retiring in 2024, and has been with the museum for more than 60 years now! In addition to volunteering and being a part of the membership of the museum, Fred also had a decorated, almost 40-year long career with the Chicago Transit Authority, where he worked as an Assistant Chief Rail Equipment Engineer, among other positions.



Contact Eric Zabelny for more information and to get involved:

Eric@frtm.org

to spread holiday cheer. Additional roles include phone operators, train operators, parking attendants, and general volunteers who are ready to greet guests with enthusiasm and a smile.

No prior experience is required to participate. The museum provides all necessary training and onboarding, ensuring that every volunteer feels confident and prepared in their role. Whether someone is looking to contribute a few hours or commit to multiple days, the program offers flexibility to fit a variety of sched-

ules.

For those looking to give back, meet new people, and be part of a cherished community tradition, Santa's Trolley Express offers a unique and rewarding opportunity. Volunteers are at the heart of the event's success, and their contributions help ensure that families can create lasting holiday memories year after year.

Kathleen Jamieson

Nature Thrives at Our Museum

Have you noticed the museum getting greener? That is the work of Ron and his fabulous Buildings and Grounds Department. They have been planting many berry bushes, as well as native plants and trees, around the main museum campus. These new additions can be found throughout the grounds, including near the substation and around the parking lot.

The museum also now has honey bees on the property. Their hives are thoughtfully placed in a secluded area that remains visible to visitors while providing the bees with the space they need to settle into their new home. Bees play a vital role in Illinois ecosystems by pollinating native plants, flowers, and crops, which in turn supports local wildlife by providing food



and habitat for birds, insects, and other animals. Without pollinators like bees, many of the plants that shape our natural landscapes would not survive. This initiative is part of a broader beautification effort aimed at enhancing the museum's public image and mak-

ing the campus more scenic than ever before. We hope you visit this season to see all of the exciting changes taking place at the trolley museum.

Anderson Pries

First Ever Open House A Success!

This April, many volunteers and members of the public came together for the Fox River Trolley Museum's first-ever Open House event. The public was invited to explore the museum and the work happening across the property, take guided tours, and ride our fleet of historic trolley cars. It was an event open to everyone, showcasing the behind-the-scenes effort required to operate a museum like ours, and volunteers took time to demonstrate the work their departments perform, such

as Jeff and Steven repairing the brake system of Car 4451 in the Car Department.

The Operations Department also ran Chicago, Aurora and Elgin 458, our sleek 1945 interurban coach, on scenic trips along the Fox River on our 1896 mainline every hour throughout the weekend, while offering guided tours of the grounds to provide historical context for many of our rare artifacts. For many visitors, it was their first time at the museum, and the opportunity to showcase

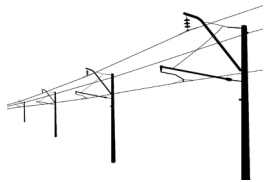
our mission, values, and collection was invaluable.

In addition to these demonstrations, the Track Department showcased how track is maintained using the mainline at Castlemuir, just adjacent to the substation. The Buildings and Grounds Department highlighted their work by planting flowers and trees around the property and continuing efforts to beautify the campus. Pieces of museum infrastructure were also open for supervised viewing, including the

Car Barn and the Substation.

Overall, the museum's first Open House was a tremendous success, marked by strong enthusiasm and attendance from both volunteers and the public. We hope you will join us this operating season to experience even more of what the museum has to offer.

Anderson Pries



Overhead Wire Project Update

In 2024, the museum undertook one of the largest projects on its campus to date: the extension of the 1984 "car barn." Although the structure was completed just in time for Members Day 2025, work outside the barn is still ongoing. The most significant remaining project is the installation of the electric overhead wire system that supplies the 600-volt DC power needed to operate our trolley cars. Once completed, this will allow our vintage equipment to move in and out of the new car barn under its own power while remaining protected from the elements. Progress is moving at a strong pace, with completion anticipated later this summer.

Anderson Pries

Visit Military History Weekend August 1st and 2nd

[Join Us For This Family Friendly Event All About American History](#)

Visitors will have the chance to step back in time this summer as the Fox River Trolley Museum hosts its annual Military History Weekend on August 1 and August 2, 2026. The event will run from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each day at the museum's main campus, offering an engaging and interactive look at America's military past.

The weekend will feature a wide range of living history displays, with reenactors portraying different eras of American history, spanning from early conflicts through the 1960s. Guests can expect to see historically accurate uniforms, equipment, and encampments, all presented by knowledgeable participants ded-

icated to preserving and sharing these stories.

Organizers say the event is designed to be more than a traditional exhibit. Visitors are encouraged to interact with reenactors, ask questions, and explore displays up close, creating a hands-on experience that brings history to life for both children and adults.

"This is a unique opportunity for people to connect with history in a personal way," organizers noted. "You're not just reading about the past, you're experiencing it."

In addition to the historical displays, food trucks will be on-site throughout the weekend, providing a variety of dining

options for guests as they explore the museum grounds.

Military History Weekend has become a popular summer event at the museum, drawing families, history enthusiasts, and community members alike. With its combination of education, interaction, and entertainment, organizers hope this year's event will continue to build on that tradition.

The Fox River Trolley Museum invites the public to attend and experience a weekend where history comes alive.

Kathleen Jamieson

"Tie-ing" it All Together

Following a gap year for tie replacement last year, the MOW Department has been hard at work keeping our historic 1896 mainline along the Fox River in great shape for our demonstration trains and trolley cars to operate. With the help of their railroad workhorse, Canadian Pacific "speeder" #7700-12, and the Case tractor, Roadmaster Ben Rohling and the track crew have been replacing difficult ties, as well as switch ties, which are much longer, at a staggering rate along the line from Castlemuir to Black-

hawk. In addition, a tie contractor has replaced approximately 300 regular ties this year in preparation for our 60th operating season at the museum. This work ensures that our mission of educating the public about the historic interurban and trolley era continues as we operate historic demonstration trolley cars along our main line.

Anderson Pries



A Curator's Reflections on the Centennial Car

Follow a Century of Change, Preservation, and Stewardship Through the Eyes of Its Curator

The museum's website notes that 715 was originally purchased by the Mid-Continent Railway Museum (MCRM) in North Freedom, Wisconsin, which is where I first encountered it. We tried to work on it but had little idea what to do, being teenagers. The roof was leaking, and the exterior paint was beginning to fail. When the MCRM WELLS traction committee evolved into the Wisconsin Electric Railway Historical Society, I was involved. As we worked to establish operations in East Troy, it came time to move 715, but trouble arose at North Freedom when the No. 1 end drawbar was pulled out during switching. The late Skip Lichter made welding repairs, and the car was moved closer to East Troy. The bottom of the No. 1 anticlimber was damaged but remained on the car. After obtaining North Shore cars 757 and 763, those became the first cars restored to operation at East Troy. Car 763's roof was recanvased, followed by 715, which was also sandblasted externally and primed.

Following the first bankruptcy, I left TWERHS and, at Fred Lonnes's invitation, joined RELIC, purchasing Tom Menard's shares as he was leaving the area.

In the interim at East Troy, 715 was painted orange and maroon, an idea I had proposed. The red frieze upholstery, badly damaged by the leaking roof, was replaced with solid green plush. The beige interior paint was stripped and replaced with varnish, and the car operated in improved condition. Then came the 1988 bankruptcy sale. The Fox River Trolley Association was able to purchase 715, TM interurban line car D-23, and one of the TM locomotives (likely L-8). The Soo Line car inspector declined to

approve the line car and locomotive for movement on their own wheels, so they were sold to Paul Averdung, who was working to revive trolley operations at East Troy and had additional rolling stock in North Prairie, Wisconsin. The Illinois Railway Museum acquired the majority of the remaining assets, including many refrigerator cars full of lumber and a pair equipped with half springs in one

with the No. 1 end drawbar pulled out again. I located a supermarket, used a payphone, and called Fred. Apparently, the Soo Line crew had attempted to pull 21 freight cars with 715, and the drawbar, which was never designed for such a load, failed again. Fred arranged for the Soo Line to move the car to a siding in Mundelein. He and the late Ken Ward recovered the drawbar using Ken's pickup truck.



Help keep this car on the rails for another 100 years.
Donate at Foxtrolley.org/donate.

truck each to allow cars 757 and 763 to be moved to Union on their own wheels.

With adapter knuckles, Fred Lonnes was able to secure approval from the railroads to move 715. During the move on the Soo Line, transportation was halted at the Leighton, Illinois, interchange with the Illinois Central. On my way home to Milwaukee from South Elgin, I found the car sitting on the interchange track

Fred had the tailpiece weld-repaired at Skokie Shops and then properly heat-treated. The drawbar was returned to Mundelein and reinstalled along with the air brake lines so the car could continue its journey to Coleman, this time only at the end of a train. By then, the damaged bottom portion of the No. 1 anticlimber had been removed. Fortunately, the electrical MU lines and coupler were preserved, though they have

not yet been reinstalled. With the acquisition of North Shore car 710 from Connecticut, it is hoped that a replacement anticlimber section can be sourced for 715.

At South Elgin, the car was repainted red and green, and the green plush upholstery, which had again deteriorated, was replaced in kind rather than with the original red frieze. Without functional window shades, crews must cover the seats to protect them from sun exposure during the week and in the off-season. The exterior was repainted again in 2018 using modern clear-coat paints, giving it an excellent appearance. However, a significant list of projects remains to bring the car up to the standards of CTA 4451 and CA&E 458.

Joseph Hasinski
Thoughtfully revised and edited
by Anderson Pries and
Kathleen Jamieson

Fun Fact

Did you know that you can work on 600-volt overhead wire while it is still electrified if you have the right equipment? It is true. Our Chicago Aurora and Elgin Line Car #11 was designed for that exact task. It has a fully insulated rubber roof that electric line workers would stand on to repair the live wire. This was essential for large railroads such as the CA&E to work on the overhead electric wire without cutting power to the entire railroad. Car #11 now sits in the barn and can be visited on a tour with an experienced volunteer.

FRTM to Celebrate 60th Anniversary on July 4

Celebrate and see what we have in store for this milestone!

The Fox River Trolley Museum will mark a major milestone this summer with its 60th Birthday Celebration, held in conjunction with a Fourth of July event on Saturday, July 4. The celebration will take place from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the museum, offering a full day of activities for visitors of all ages.

The event will honor six decades of preserving and

operating historic electric railway equipment, while also embracing the festive spirit of Independence Day. Guests can enjoy special trolley rides throughout the day, providing a scenic and historic experience along the museum's railway line.

In addition to the rides, a variety of food trucks will be on-site, offering a selection of refreshments and meal options. Attend-

ees will also have the opportunity to browse a special railroad memorabilia sale, featuring unique items that appeal to collectors and railway enthusiasts.

Museum organizers say the event is designed to celebrate both the organization's history and the community that has supported it over the years. The combination of historical experiences and family-friendly activities is

expected to draw both longtime supporters and first-time visitors.

The Fox River Trolley Museum invites the public to join in celebrating its 60th anniversary and enjoy a festive Fourth of July filled with history, community, and memorable experiences.

Kathleen Jamieson

Fox River Ragtime Festival

Join us August 22–23 at the Fox River Ragtime Festival for a trip back in time to the golden age of trolley cars, when Ragtime and Hot Jazz filled dance halls and city streets around the world. Throughout the festival weekend, the museum will host an incredible lineup of world-class musicians, including Grammy-winning artists, performing among and aboard our historic operating trolley cars.

Some of these beautifully preserved cars date back to the early 1900s, including Chica-

go Aurora and Elgin #20, built in 1902, the same year famed American composer Scott Joplin wrote "The Entertainer." The combination of authentic music, historic equipment, and the scenic Fox River setting promises a truly unforgettable experience.

Be sure to check the festival website, Facebook page, and Instagram page for schedules, artist announcements, and exciting updates as the event approaches.

Anderson Pries





Cut Here

Don't Forget to Renew For 2026

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		General Member	A single person (18+)
\$50.00		Family Membership	A general member & family
\$25.00		Youth Member	A single person (13-17 years old) with parental consent
\$45.00		Qualified Member	A single person (18+) with ≥200 Museum hours
\$50.00		Qualified & Family Membership	A qualified member & family
Optional Sponsorship Donation			
\$100.00		Sustaining	
\$500.00		Contributing	
\$1,000.00		Benefactor	
\$		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