

# WHISTLE STOP

Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum

P. O. Box 432, Jonesborough, TN. 37659

(423) 753-5797

[www.wataugavalleyrrhsm.org](http://www.wataugavalleyrrhsm.org)



Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage

Volume 46 No. 9

September 2026



Northbound freight waiting on the main in Rockwood, TN looking for a clear signal to proceed north. Rockwood is west of Knoxville. It has a Virtual Railfan camera as we have. About 30 trains a day on this track. Great camera spot. Track speed is really fast. (Photo by Les Billings)

## August General Membership Meeting

The Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society and Museum will have our next General Membership Meeting at 6:30pm on Monday, August 24th, at the Chuckey Depot, 110 South Second Ave., Jonesborough, TN. Our program this month will be on the Clinchfield through the Breaks Park. This program will promise to be fun and informative.

# MEMBER NOTES

Please keep the following folk in your thoughts and prayers: Fred Phofl and Jack Maloney. If you wish for one of our members or family to be reported for various concerns in the *Whistle Stop*, email [wataugavalley.membership@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley.membership@gmail.com).

**NEW MEMBERS:** Peter Hanchar and Family (Laurie, Hayla and Troy) - Scottsdale, PA ; Harry Hanchar (brother) - Beaufonte, PA **WELCOME ABOARD!**

**Club Uniforms:** Kathy will be putting in a uniform (Shirts, Hats or Name Badges) order at the first of September. An email will be sent to everyone containing an order form with pricing. Be on the lookout.

**ADDRESS CHANGES:** If your address, phone number or email address has changed, please contact Les Billings at [wataugavalley.membership@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley.membership@gmail.com) for correction.

**MEMBERSHIP BROCHURES:** If you know someone who is interested in joining the Watauga Valley Railroad Museum, **new** brochures are available to hand out. Either go by the Chuckey Depot and pick one up or phone our office at (423) 753-5797.



## Helping Hands

We want to thank Les Billings' two granddaughters, Presleigh & Adi, for helping stuff the Membership Applications inside our new Watauga Valley Brochure. We had 3,500 to stuff and it saved a lot of time with their help. Maybe one day, they may become members.



## CHRISTMAS GALA

The Christmas Gala will be held on Saturday, December 12 at the Johnson City State of Franklin Food City. The speaker will be announced soon and the cost will be \$15.00 per person. Mark your calendar for the special event. More information will be in the November newsletter and reservation sheet will be mailed out with the election ballots.

# CHUCKEY DEPOT

Things are very busy at the Chuckey Depot with record attendance during the month of August. Please come by and enjoy the Clinchfield Exhibit. We appreciate all the WVRHS&M volunteers that host and make the museum happen.

## TRAINING FOR HOST AT THE CHUCKEY DEPOT

We getting ready to schedule host training sessions for anyone in the WVRHS&M who is interested in hosting at the Chuckey Depot. If you would like to attend one of the host training sessions, please call the WVRHS&M office at (423) 753-5797 or email [wataugavalley@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@gmail.com).

# IN THE NEWS ...

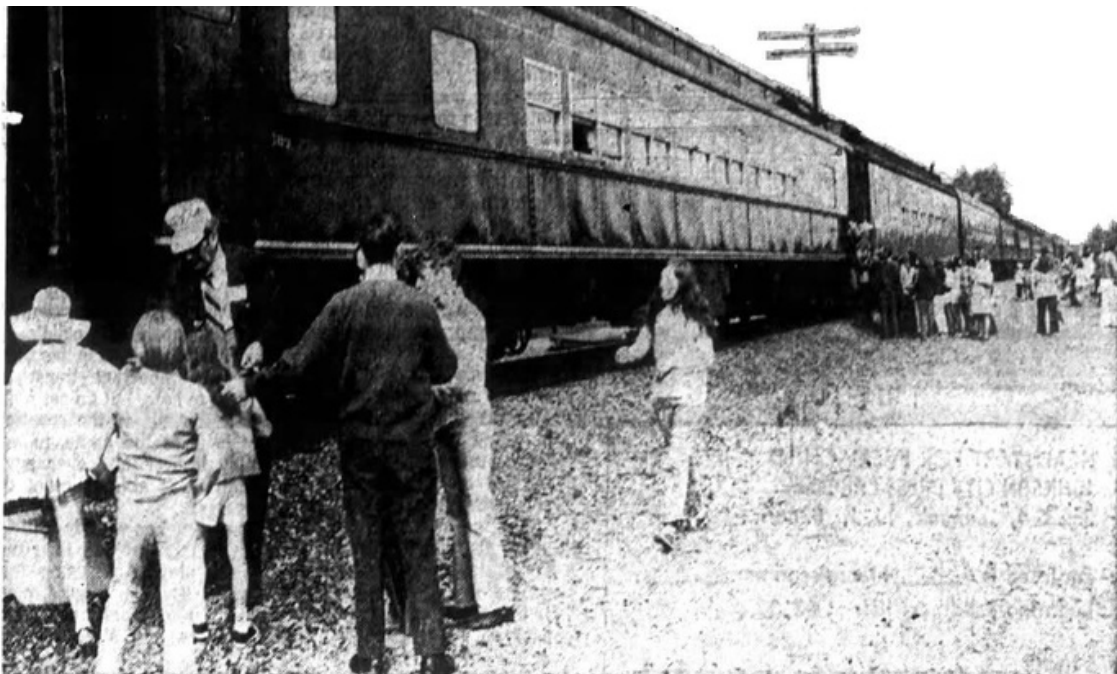
## Railroads, shipper organizations ask regulators to immediately reject UP-NS merger application

WASHINGTON - BNSF, CSX, and five major shipper organizations have asked the Surface Transportation Board to immediately reject the Union Pacific-Norfolk Southern merger application, saying it fails to address key aspects of the STB requirements for major mergers established in 2001.

The two railroads each filed motions for summary denial of the merger, while the five shippers' groups filed their motion jointly. A CPKC filing made similar claims that the application does not meet the prima facie, or first-impression, standard to support the merger, but that filing is presented as comments rather than a motion.

The shipper groups argue that the merger will increase the degree to which shippers are captive to a single railroad, eliminate competitive options, and leave them at risk of service deterioration.

"The benefits are negligible and the harms are substantial," contends the 59-page motion from the Alliance for Chemical Distribution (ACD), American Chemistry Council (ACC), American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers (AFPM), National Industrial Transportation League (NITL), and The Fertilizer Institute (TFI). The groups call the merger application "a document built on smoke and mirrors" that includes "unsubstantiated and overstated benefit claims, conclusions presented as facts, analyses that ignore reality, meaningless promises, and inherent contradictions. Conversely, it is bereft of competitive enhancements, meaningful service assurance standards, and effective conditions."



**The great excursion**

(Staff Photo)

Almost no students at King Springs School have ever ridden a train. But that was taken care of today as more than 500 students boarded a Clinchfield Railroad train at Greenwood Drive this morn-

ing for a trip to St. Paul, Va., and back. The student's - with help from adults - raised most of the money themselves.

# MECHANICAL REPORT

By art devoe

The Watauga Valley needs volunteers at the coach yard, especially with our new coach. Please call the WVRHS&M office at (423) 753-5797 if you're interested in working with the mechanical team.

**St Augustine** – At North Carolina Transportation Museum in service.

**Powhatan Arrow** – At Spring St Coach Yard in Jonesborough .

**Moultrie** - At Spring St Coach Yard in Jonesborough .

**Clinchfield 100** – At North Carolina Transportation Museum in service.

**Crescent Harbor** – At Spring St Coach Yard in Jonesborough for upgrades.

**Seaboard 6219** - At Spring St Coach Yard in Jonesborough for upgrades.



## UPCOMING RAILFAN EVENTS

### **WVRHS TOUR OF THE NS LOOPS**

The Watauga Valley Railroad Museum is planning a van excursion to the Norfolk Southern Loops. We are renting 2 or 3 vans to see the Famous Geyser and the high fill. Norfolk Southern has started running trains down the mountain after the Hurricane Damage. The tour director will be Chris Hamilton who lives on the loops. Date, time and cost will be in the next newsletter.

### **AUTUMN TRAIN EXCURSION THROUGH SMOKY MTNS. ALL ABOARD!**

On Saturday, September 26, 2026, the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society and Museum will sponsor a train excursion on the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad. This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate and enjoy the beauty of the early Autumn season while riding the rails in vintage passenger railroad cars.

The one-day excursion will cover most of the operating trackage of the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad. The track follows the route of the former Southern Railway's Murphy Branch Line, established in 1891, with its five percent grade and many bridges. Our scenic rail excursion takes us from the historic depot in Bryson City, NC, through the beautiful countryside of Western North Carolina, into the breath-taking Nantahala Gorge surrounded by the majestic Smoky Mountains, and back to Bryson City. Much of the route hugs the banks of the Little Tennessee and Nantahala Rivers.

More information can be found on our web site at:

<http://www.wataugavalleyrrhsm.org/excursions.php>

### **America 250 Locomotive Celebration!**

**August 28-30, 2026**

**8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.**

The N.C. Transportation Museum, Trains Magazine, White River Productions, Scale Trains, Virtual Railfan, and Jack & Audrey Harris are excited to present the America 250 Locomotive Celebration August 28-30 at the N.C. Transportation Museum in Spencer, NC!

Experience a once-in-a-generation railroading event as the N.C. Transportation Museum hosts the first and only gathering of commemorative locomotives from Class I, short line, and passenger railroads, all specially painted to celebrate America's semiquincentennial.

Set against the iconic Bob Julian Roundhouse, this extraordinary display of red, white, and blue locomotives is expected to create one of the most memorable railroad photography opportunities of the America 250 celebration.

Throughout this three-day event, visitors will enjoy:

Unique photo opportunities

Rotating locomotive displays on the Bob Julian Roundhouse turntable

Night photography sessions sponsored and coordinated by Railfan & Railroad Magazine

(Night Photo Session limited to 200 participants per night)

Train rides pulled by a museum diesel locomotive – included with admission price, based on availability.

Each day will feature a different lineup of locomotives and photography opportunities as equipment is rotated and repositioned throughout the event, ensuring a unique experience for returning visitors.

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Published Monthly by the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum

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**Watauga Valley RHS & Museum**

**P.O. Box 432**

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**TIME-SENSITIVE MATERIAL**

# FAMOUS AUTUMN TRAIN EXCURSION THROUGH THE SMOKY MOUNTAINS



## All Aboard

★ Saturday September 26, 2026 ★

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Passengers ride comfortably in First Class, Premium Open-Air Class, Crown Class, Tourist Coach, or Open-Air cars. All classes offer seating in classic antique restored passenger cars. There are restrooms throughout the train.



🍁 **FIRST CLASS:** \$165 Includes Meal - 21 & up only  
Cars are climate-controlled, feature large windows, lounge-car seating and served a meal by car attendants.

🍁 **PREMIUM OPEN AIR CLASS:** \$165 Includes Meal - 21 & up only  
Car features assigned seating in a car with unobstructed views, high-density walls, and a roof above to protect passengers from the elements. A meal is served by the car's attendant.

🍁 **CROWN CLASS:** \$120/Adult: \$87/child ages 2-12  
Cars offer large windows and climate control for passenger comfort.

🍁 **TOURIST COACH CLASS:** \$105/Adult \$86/Child  
Cars have ceiling fans and windows that open and close for fresh air viewing.

🍁 **OPEN-AIR COACH:** \$107/Adult \$88 /Child  
Cars are great for picture-taking and experiencing the ride and scenery.

CHARTERED BUS SERVICE OFFERED FROM JOHNSON CITY, TN

For tickets & more information go to: [www.wataugavalleynrhs.org](http://www.wataugavalleynrhs.org)



VINTAGE TRAINS ★ STUNNING SCENERY ★ LASTING MEMORIES

## COME CELEBRATE AUTUMN IN THE GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS!