

# Whistle Stop



Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum  
P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN. 37605-0432  
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[www.wataugavalleynrhs.org](http://www.wataugavalleynrhs.org)



Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage

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CSX #1869 shows off its Heritage paint scheme honoring CSX legacy line *Chesapeake and Ohio Railway*. The locomotive, a GE ES44AC-H, was renumbered 1869 from 3061 to recognize the year that the C&O was formed. [CSX photo posted on Facebook.]

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## *August 28<sup>th</sup> General Membership Meeting*

Our next General Membership meeting will be held on Monday, August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 6:30 pm at the Chuckey Depot / Railroad Museum, 110 South Second St., Jonesborough, TN (at the railroad crossing). Our program this month will showcase the East Broad Top Railroad. Bring a friend out and enjoy a great evening of railfanning.

## *Member Notes*

Please keep Gary Price, Lois Tilley, Jack Maloney, Bob Mushet, Fred Phofl and Jim Calhoun in your thoughts and prayers for various reasons.

If anyone knows of a member that needs a card, thoughts for various concerns, or to request that one of our members or family be reported for various concerns in the *Whistle Stop*, email a request to [wataugavalley@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@gmail.com) or [railfan04041961@gmail.com](mailto:railfan04041961@gmail.com).

*Welcome Aboard!* - New Member: David Hulburt, Vilas, NC.



If you have a friend or know of someone interested in railroads, please hand them a New Membership Brochure. We have the brochure available at the general membership meetings.

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### **WATAUGA VALLEY UNIFORMS NOW AVAILABLE**

The Watauga Valley uniforms are available. Order your new uniforms now for these beautiful uniforms. If you want an order form sent to you, please email [wataugavalley@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@gmail.com) requesting one.

### **PROGRAMS NEEDED FOR 2023**

Howard Orfield and Brad McCroskey, WVRHS&M program directors, are looking for General Membership Meeting programs for 2023. Please call (423) 753-5797 or email [wataugavalley@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@gmail.com) if you have an interest in offering a program this year. We are looking for speakers interested in

### **LIBRARY DONATIONS**

Our library collection in Jonesborough is growing fast. We appreciate all the donations that have been made. Please bring your railroad book donations to any membership meeting or call the our office at (423) 753-5797. If you are finished reading or just want to donate, put your books to good use. We have plenty of room to add more books!

## *WVRHS&M Steam Train Excursion*



*September 16<sup>th</sup> tickets  
have **SOLD OUT!!!***

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**TRAIN TRIVIA:** When was the privately-owned Washington, DC area to Florida “Auto Train” first operated? a.) 1970 b.) 1971 c.) 1972 d.) 1973. Answer on page 3.

## *Mechanical Department Report*

*by Art Devoe*

### GENERAL

THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING FOR ALL YOUR HARD WORK in keeping our equipment operating and in fine condition: Art Devoe, Don Findley, David Denny, Jan Edwards, David Billings, Cline Knowles, Frank Gricus, Bob Mushet, Mike Tilley, Jim Sutterlin and Gary Lombardi. Thanks also to Terry Worley for his signal work.

If you would like to help at the Jonesborough Coach Yard on Tuesdays between 9 am to 5 pm or Saturdays 9 am to 12 noon, please call our office at (423) 753-5797 or email [wataugavalley@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@gmail.com).

### ROLLING STOCK

**“Moultrie” diner (WATX 400):** at the Spring St. Coach Yard receiving upgrades.

**“St Augustine” coach (WATX 500):** at the Spring St. Coach Yard receiving window repair.

**“Powhatan Arrow” coach (WATX 539):** at the North Carolina Transportation Museum in service.

**“Crescent Harbor” sleeper / lounge (WATX 2351):** at the Spring St Coach Yard receiving upgrades.

**“Clinchfield 100” office car (WATX 100):** at the North Carolina Transportation Museum receiving new wheels and bearings.

## *Chuckey Depot / Museum*

### TRAINING SESSION IN THE PLANS FOR THE CHUCKEY DEPOT

Plans are to have another Chuckey Depot/Museum Host Training session which last about 1 hour later in the year. If you would like to host at the Chuckey Depot one day a month, please e mail Mike Tilley at [wataugavalley@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@gmail.com) stating you would like to get trained. When a date has been set for the training, we will call you to get everything confirmed.

The museum will be closed on Monday, August 21<sup>st</sup> until Wednesday, August 30<sup>th</sup>, while a new exhibit is being set up, reopening Thursday, August 31<sup>st</sup>. A big exhibit reception day is planned for Saturday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>.

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### TRAIN TRIVIA ANSWER:

b.) 1971. Privately-owned Auto-Train Corporation began operations on December 6, 1971, between Lorton, VA, and Sanford, FL. Lack of success from a Louisville, KY expansion, high crew costs, and several accidents ultimately put the company into bankruptcy. Auto-Train Corporation ended its services in late April 1981. After a gap of almost two years, service was revived by government-run Amtrak as their “Auto Train” service. [source: *Wikipedia*]

## *In the News ...*

### *N&W 611 to Run on Virginia Scenic Railway*

[trains.com] Norfolk & Western No. 611 has a new place to run.

The Virginia Museum of Transportation and *Virginia Scenic Railway* — the excursion operation of the short line Buckingham Branch Railroad — have announced the Class J 4-8-4 will run weekend excursions this fall on the *Virginia Scenic Railway*.

The steam-powered *Shenandoah Valley Limited* will offer twice-daily trips during peak fall foliage in October and November, departing from Goshen, Va. Trips will operate through the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests into the Shenandoah Valley, where it will pause to be joined by a pair of diesel locomotives for the return trip to Goshen.

Trips will operate Oct. 6-8, 13-15, 20-22, and 27-29, as well as Nov. 3-5, with departures at 9 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. each day.

“We are delighted to help make this run possible,” Steve Powell, President of the *Virginia Scenic Railway*, said in a press release. “We love trains and railroad history, and we look forward to partnering with the Virginia Museum of Transportation to host the legendary 611 and bring the steam engine roaring to life in the Shenandoah Valley. This is one of the prettiest routes around, and we are excited to share it.”

Tickets will go on sale in mid-August at the *Virginia Scenic Railway* website. Those signing up for the railway’s newsletter will be informed when tickets become available. Tickets, priced from \$99 to \$249 each, will be offered in coach, premium coach, first class, and dome class.

“We are excited for the opportunity to partner with *Virginia Scenic Railway*,” said Mendy Flynn, executive director of the Virginia Museum of Transportation. “These excursions will have a major tourism impact on the region and showcase Virginia’s Rail Heritage to visitors near and far.”

The locomotive recently returned to the Virginia Museum of Transportation in Roanoke after an extended stay in Pennsylvania including operations at the *Strasburg Rail Road*.

Buckingham Branch began operating its *Virginia Scenic Railway* excursions last year, rapidly selling out its initial season and expanding its offerings this year. The railroad’s regular operations include two routes — and both are sold out for all of August and much of September.

[ED.NOTE: The BBRR is a 275-mile short line operating over ex-CSXT (C&O) trackage in Central and Western Virginia.]

### *CSXT Santa Train Scheduled to Run November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023.*

### *AMTRAK Update: Asheville to Salisbury*

[By Kimberly King, WLOS-TV, August 9<sup>th</sup>] It’s been years in the making and now some state [NC] leaders are cautiously optimistic Asheville, this fall, could get approved for major federal funding for an estimated \$665 million passenger train project.

The 139-mile route would connect Asheville to Salisbury and Amtrak lines across the U.S.

"It is a competitive process," said Jason Orthner, North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) railroad division director.

The state's railroad division recently published a 38-page draft feasibility study tied to the federal grant application. The project, if approved, would have 80% covered by federal funds and 20% by local and state funds.

"The fact that our state DOT is finally on board with it is huge," said Democratic State Senator Julie Mayfield. The program developed under the Biden administration is the first time in decades that the federal government has set aside millions for rail line expansions.

"The route being looked at is an existing freight route," said Orthner. He estimated it would take seven to 10 years before the rail line was complete.

While state leadership at NCDOT support the proposal, Republican U.S. Congressman Chuck Edwards (NC-11) issued a lukewarm endorsement of any future rail line to Asheville.

"While I can certainly support the request for a feasibility study, I am skeptical that the results would prove worthy of a new passenger rail from Asheville to Salisbury," Rep. Edwards emailed News 13. "I'm open to further discussion with local NCDOT leaders regarding how this would impact our communities."

The state already owns a lot of land adjacent to Biltmore Village where a station could be built, but NCDOT staff said public input requests included the station go in the River Arts District (RAD) which has a large train exchange set of tracks. In its feasibility report, NCDOT stated putting the station in the RAD would cost \$5 million more.

The state will learn if a grant is approved this fall.

## *Train Numbers for NORFOLK SOUTHERN*

A plan was in place to reprint a system-wide list of the latest NS train numbers from past newsletters, but your editor uncovered a fantastic, comprehensive list and descriptions at this site: <https://www.jreb.org/ns/index.php?topic=11774.0>.

## *NS to Restore its Popular Heritage Locomotive Fleet*

[trains.com] Norfolk Southern's Heritage locomotive fleet will get a refresh in the coming years, the railroad announced when it shared a video of a shiny Virginian SD70ACe No. 1069 rolling out of the paint shop at Juniata, Pa.

"Drumroll pleaseeee..... the Virginian restoration is complete! It took 10 carmen 550+ hours to restore and repaint NS 1069. Over 72 gallons of primer, paint, and clear coat were used. Thank you to our team at Juniata Locomotive Shop for their incredible work," NS said in social media posts last week.

"Over the next few years, all 20 of our Heritage locomotives will be getting a fresh coat of paint in the color schemes of our predecessor railroads," NS said.

The program began as part of the railroad's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in 2012.

## *Display in the Block*

### *By Les Billings*

Hope everyone is having a good Summer. It won't be long before Fall will return, and cooler weather will ensue. Fall is always a good time for Railfanning with the leaves turning orange and red. But in the meantime, we will return to Spring and early Summer. I try to venture out most anytime a train is in the area. Below are a few examples of some shots I would like to share this month.

[Right] It is always a treat to see and photograph a Heritage unit. As we see here, the Illinois Terminal Railroad locomotive # 1079 is headed west just outside of Jonesborough. I was standing in the bridge on the Old Jonesborough Hwy. This was NS 127, and it was a long train that afternoon as it had 2 mid DPUs.



[Left] On Saturday July the 15<sup>th</sup>, around 4:30 I found myself running down NS 279 on its westbound travels. He was heading uphill out of Johnson City. It just happened to have the Monongahela Railway Heritage unit. 8025 was on point of a 3-unit double stack. The Monongahela unit was the 20<sup>th</sup> Heritage that NS produced. It was painted in the shop in Chattanooga. It seems to be rare in these parts as this is the only time, I had seen it.

[Right] On the way back home from a Board meeting at Chuckey Depot in Jonesborough in June. I heard a CSX train clearing the signal in Johnson City on my scanner. I knew I had time to park near the Walnut St. overpass and catch a northbound heading toward Kingsport. After a short wait, he appeared around the corner.



[Above] After observing NS 278 passing by the Chuckey Depot Webcam in Jonesborough, I wanted to catch the Ferromex new paint scheme. It was the 2<sup>nd</sup> unit. So, I waited about 15 minutes and ran out the back of work and snapped away.

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**TIME-SENSITIVE MATERIAL**