

AT&SF 2926 Is...

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# BIG STEAM NEWS

NEW MEXICO STEAM LOCOMOTIVE

&

RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Restoration Site: 1833 8th St NW, Albuquerque, NM



## SPECIAL ISSUE

### *A Year Of Change For 2926, The Volunteer Work Crew, Rail Fans And Even This Quarterly Newsletter*

August 2015 will mark 20 years since Ed Bukove hosted a meeting at The Shores Townhomes Clubhouse in Albuquerque's northeast heights. Ed's purpose—to begin an effort of rescue and restoration. The object of his rescue effort was AT&SF Steam Locomotive No. 2926. An icon of New Mexico's rich rail heritage, the huge locomotive had been rusting away in the park at 2<sup>nd</sup> St. and I-40 for almost 40 years. Ed wanted to restore 2926 to operating condition.

May 2<sup>nd</sup> of this year will mark 13 years since BNSF Unit #2625, still wearing Santa Fe colors, escorted AT&SF 2926 onto the restoration site at 1833 8<sup>th</sup> St NW. Change had come slowly. It took 7 years to establish the organization, overcome doubt, generate support, acquire 2926, remove it from the park, and find a place to begin the restoration. That seven years of bit-by-bit change resulted in another fixed location—the restoration site where the volunteers have labored for the past 13 years.

The ensuing 13 years have seen a lot of changes for the venerable locomotive. Though positive, the changes have been mechanical in nature, and in that same fixed location. Late this year, if the current schedule holds, 2926 will begin to show signs of life, preparing to leave the 8<sup>th</sup> St. site under its own power—first for testing and shakedown runs. Then, **the real big change** that volunteers, 2926 supporters, and rail fans everywhere have been waiting for. It will be a change from 60 years of inaction to full operation. It will take to the high rails to pull classic passenger cars on excursions allowing riders to experience travel as it once was.

In recognition of the coming changes, the newsletter has a new masthead, and our members an expanded role. They are:

1. A title—**BIG STEAM NEWS**, for the newsletter, descriptive of its purpose.
2. An inclusion of the brand, **New Mexico True** linking AT&SF 2926 to the New Mexico Tourism Industry.
3. A slogan acknowledging our historical link to US Hgwy. 66, 'The Mother Road', often paralleling or crossing 2926 routes.
4. An expanded public role for Society members as owners/operators of a mobile tourist attraction.

## RESTORATION MILESTONE

### Boiler Work Advances. Flue Tubes Are Hoisted Through Smokebox And Installed

If a steam locomotive has a heart, it must be the huge boiler that produces the steam to power the big beast. The center of the boiler body is stuffed with the flue tubes and superheater pipes. Graphics and photos in this article provide a view of those internal elements.

There is more boiler work yet to do, but for the 2926 restoration crew, the new year began with a long awaited milestone completed. That was installation of the boiler's 272 flue tubes—all sponsored by 2926 fans.

Those who have done such restorations, and others with steam locomotive knowledge will understand why the 2926 crew members are happy to see the flue tube task done.

It did represent a major restoration milestone. That fact alone was worth a celebration. But it also represented the end of a major learning experience, and a lot of hard labor.

The 'tube toting and shoving' crew had diverse backgrounds and possessed broad knowledge and experience. *But* they had minimal exposure to boiler maintenance. Few, if any possessed previous experience with steam locomotive boilers. *And* the labor was all performed outside with a minimum inventory of mechanical equipment and tools.

The crew can now add that boiler experience to their resumes.

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**It's a start!** The inside team, Henry, Martin, and Anthony stand inside the boiler next to the rear flue sheet at the start of the flue tube insertion. Their job was to take the tubes pushed to them by the smokebox team, pull them through the boiler, and feed them into a matching rear sheet hole. Most tubes pictured are the smaller ones. The space in which the team is standing grew smaller and smaller as additional tubes were inserted. The last tubes at the very top were guided through by the workers either lying in the tight space above the tubes or reaching through from the manway 'entry hatch' on top of the boiler.

(Continued from Page 1)

For all 2926 fans, and especially for those who may not be familiar with the design, performance and maintenance of steam locomotives, this article and photos will serve as: 1) A progress report on the efforts of the 2926 volunteers to bring an important steam era icon back to operation; and, 2) A sincere thanks to all 2926 supporters who stepped up to sponsor flue tubes. One hundred percent of your donations went to the cost of the flue tubes, and sponsorship records are kept in the Society's files.

For those interested in more technical detail and specific challenges that were encountered in this central part of the restoration of 2926, i.e. all boiler work from disassembly to tube reinstallation, check the insert in this newsletter. Starting with the first peek inside the boiler, it provides an entire sooty, seven year saga of the boiler renovation, told by guys who got so-o-o-o dirty.

### Heart Of The Beast—The Flue Tubes

AT&SF 2926, among the last big, main line, high speed steam locomotives built, is superheated. Thus, it represents the pinnacle of high speed steam power. The secret to that power lies in superheater pipes residing in the boiler's flue tubes.

The flue tubes are located in center of the boiler, between the firebox and the smokebox, a distance of about 21 feet. Their basic purpose is to move hot exhaust gases from the firebox in the rear to the smokebox at the front. In a superheater system, there is an important secondary purpose. Heat from the gases in the flue tubes is used to increase power in the following manner.

Saturated 'wet' steam is collected in the steam dome on the boiler roof. It is then carried through the large pipe at top center of the image at right, to the inlet side of the manifold in the smokebox.

At the manifold, the steam enters the small pipe loops through the flue tubes, and back to the outlet side of the manifold, (Drawing C below). Circulating the steam through pipes surrounded by hot gases increases the steam temperature of about 400°F to more than 700°F. That increase converts the incoming steam to very dry superheated steam.

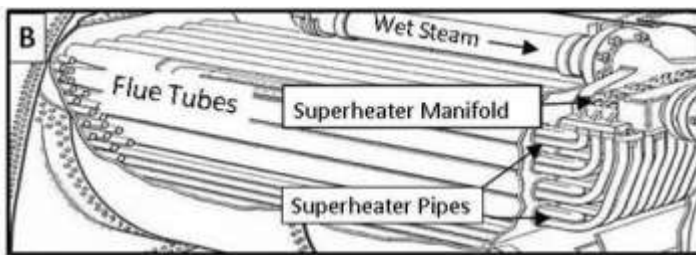
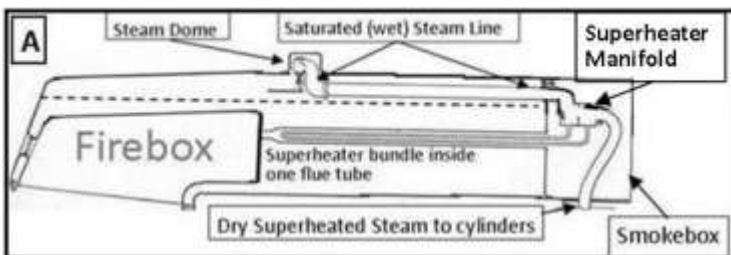
The result is a large increase in energy available to the cylinders to power the locomotive. The superheating technology places the big 2900 in an elite class of high speed steam locomotives.

In 2926, there are two sizes of flue tubes—220 large tubes, (3.5 inch outside diameter), and 52 small, (2.25 inch outside diameter). The drawings below provide a general description of superheater design, showing the location of the flue tubes and related components. Drawings A and B provide a design view of the heart of a typical superheated steam locomotive.

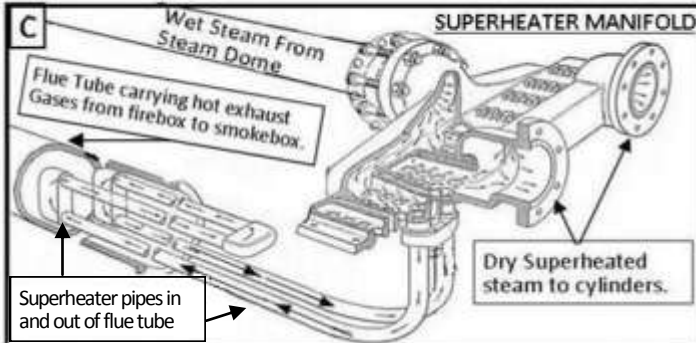
Rebuilding the superheater pipes, and assembling them into bundles for reinsertion has been underway for weeks. The 2926 superheater crew, led by super welder Carlos Osuna in nearing completion. The superheater bundles will be hydrostatically tested before installation. Superheater pipe restoration and installation in the flue tubes will be included in a future issue of the newsletter.



**Inside The Heart Of The Beast:** Photo art by Ron Taylor. This image was produced by processing seven exposures into a single image using High Dynamic Range software. The view is from a top center flue tube hole in the front flue sheet, looking to the rear flue sheet at the firebox. The cluster of bright spots in the center of the rear flue sheet is natural light entering through the open firebox door on the cab side of the firebox. Copies of this and other examples of Ron's digital art, merging old steam and new digital technologies, and suitable for framing, can be purchased at the 2926 Site Store. Proceeds go to the completion of the 2926 restoration.



**A:** This simplified drawing depicts layout of a typical superheated system. The dotted line represents the water level. Steam accumulated in the space above the water is collected in the **steam dome, and piped to the superheater manifold.**  
**B:** The core of a typical superheated boiler, showing the relationship of tubes, superheater pipes, and related components and their relationship in the boiler.  
**C:** This drawing traces the flow of wet steam into and through the superheater header, to the superheater pipes, then into and out of the flue tubes. The dry, superheated steam then passes back through the manifold and out to the cylinders.



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### Getting The Tubes In Place

In the previous issues of this newsletter, we prefaced the preparation of the flue tubes with photos of the measuring and cutting part of the tube reinstallation process. The tubes were pulled from storage, measured, cut to exact length, and racked near the front of the locomotive. To allow straight insertion through the smokebox, a long scaffold was set up in front of the smokebox. As shown in the photos below, the tubes were lifted one at a time to the scaffold. They were then handed through the smokebox, and pushed through a hole in the front flue sheet to the team inside the boiler, (Photo page 1) and then to a matching hole in the rear flue sheet. Once all the tubes were in place, boiler specialists from Welch's Boiler Service arrived with tools and equipment to finish the job.



**Above Left:** With work underway on the 2926 cab under the canopy in the background, members of the flue tube crew prepare and rack flue tubes before beginning insertion into the boiler. **Above Right:** Lifting the tubes one at a time to team members on the scaffold next to the smokebox. **Below Left:** Scaffold team member Martin Sanchez steadies a flue tube on his shoulder while team inside smokebox inserts it into front flue sheet. **Below Right:** Task complete. Members of the scaffold team sign the last tube before passing it to the team in the smokebox.



The photo on the front page and those above show the lifting and shoving involved in getting the tubes into the boiler and in place to be secured.

### Finishing The Job

*March 19, the last day of winter:* Spring is early—a nice day for working outside. Crew members sign the last flue tube and slip it into place. The prepping, lifting, and shoving of the flue tubes was done. The volunteers were tired, but pleased to have the job behind them. It was time to stand by and provide support to the Welch professionals.

With completion of the flue tube rolling and welding, the boiler will be prepped for a hydrostatic test using water pressure to check for leaks prior to installation of the superheater pipes.

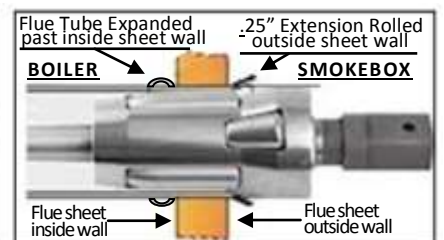
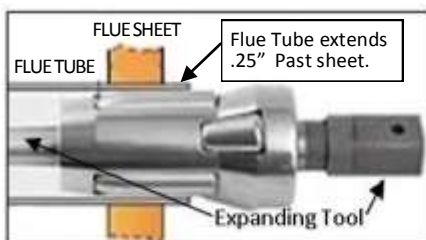
Attachment points for the pipes to the superheater manifold, (U-shaped clamps, top of Photo 1) are plugged off for the boiler hydrostatic test. Each bundle of superheater pipes will receive individual hydro tests before reinstallation into the flue tubes and attachment to the manifold.

Welch's boiler specialists showed up with an array of special equipment and tools, including those shown in the drawings at right. They went to work on the tubes.

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**Welch boiler specialists at work:** Photo 1, rolling tubes on the front flue sheet. The U-shaped devices at top are Superheater clamps. Photo 2, rolling tubes on the rear flue sheet. Ernie RobartPhotos:



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Their first step was to ensure that the tubes were securely fixed at both ends. That meant expanding all flue tubes to a tight fit at both flue sheets. The tube expansion forced the walls of each flue tube tightly against the inside of the flue sheet hole. The expansion extended inside and outside the wall of the flue sheet on each end of the tube. On the inside a ridge was formed increasing overall boiler strength. The 1/4 inch tube extension on each end was then rolled. The tool drawings on page 4 show the expanding and rolling procedure.

After they were expanded and rolled on both ends, a seal weld was placed on each tube end facing the firebox. The purpose of the weld is twofold. It protects the exposed end of the tubes from the intense heat in the firebox, and from abrasion by the sand thrown into the firebox by the fireman from the cab to clear soot from the flue system.

In Photos 1 & 2, on the previous page, Welch's crew members are seen at work expanding and rolling tubes. The clamps in Photo 1 are currently holding plugs placed on the outlet side of the manifold during the upcoming hydro test. The plugs and spacers used in the process were produced by the 2926 machinists.

In Photo 3 at right, the huge siphons in the firebox create a cathedral-like appearance framing the welder as he works on the seal welds. As the photos reveal, the siphon next to the rear flue sheet required a bit of contortion on the part of the crew members rolling and welding the tubes.

The hydrostatic test of the boiler may be done as soon as late May. Once it is completed and any leaks corrected, the superheater pipes will be installed. The superheater pipe bundles will receive hydrostatic test individually before installation.

Results of both the hydrostatic tests and superheater pipe installation will be subject of articles in future issues of the newsletter.

## PROGRESS ON OTHER TASKS

### Boiler Work Is Not All. There Is A Lot Of Progress At The 2926 Site

The boiler milestone is important, but it is far from being the only task that has experienced significant progress during the past few months. Several larger tasks, such as rebuilding the brake system, refitting the cab, and reconstruction of superheater pipes have been underway for months. Each has numerous time consuming subtasks. There are weather problems, long waits for parts or materials, making parts that cannot be purchased off the shelf, and other factors that drag the process on longer than we would like. Then there is the important fact that we are all volunteers who have personal lives that sometimes interfere with our avocation.

Despite all that, there is major progress in the overall effort to bring our big locomotive back to life. Here are a couple.

#### Brake System

We have had a lot of help acquiring parts for the brake system, and are proceeding apace. Some parts, i.e. brake shoes, were purchased new, ready to install. Other parts, bought used from various sources, will require disassembly, clean up, repair if needed, inspection, and reassembly.

Trains Magazine's grant (last newsletter) for the modern 26L brake control met a critical need. Sponsorship of specific parts such as brake shoes by 2926 supporters has been very helpful. Clean-up, testing, and assembly of the parts pictured at right is proceeding quickly.

With most of the necessary parts now on site, work is advancing. The brake stand at far right is being adapted to the required new control system.

Some important parts that had just arrived and were described in the last newsletter have already been installed (see pictures below). For supporters who sponsored brake shoes, here is evidence of your support.



A firebox cathedral. Photo by Ron Taylor.



These pictures show just some of the brake parts. The table in the picture above holds an array of brake components. The parts will all be cleaned, tested, and assembled in the coming weeks. The brake stand at right is currently being modified to fit modern components. **Below left:** Some of the new cast iron brake shoes as they were unpacked on arrival. **Below:** Two views of new shoe installed on engineer side front drive wheel.



(Progress—Continued on Page 5)

## Cab Tasks

Like other tasks not drawing as much attention as the boiler work, the cab restoration is progressing in the background. The cab was a bit of a mess, to say the least. It had rotted floor, window frames, and other woodwork, severely rusted lower cab sides, uncountable layers of peeling black paint, and damaged or missing electrical parts. It was not a pretty sight when we began. After years of neglect and abuse on the park, it was no longer suitable for display or occupation by a steam crew. A major rebuild was needed.

For an inanimate object, the cab has been quite mobile—moving about the site as its restoration proceeded, or when it was in the way of other activity. After removal from the locomotive in September 2007, the cab was set aside. It needed replacement of all wood, and a lot of metal restoration would be necessary. The late Jim Hills took on the task of rebuilding the metal deck and rusted out portions of the cab when he was free of other tasks. The many layers of paint were stripped and all the rotten wood was marked to be used as patterns for replacement. Rusted metal portions were rebuilt, and the cab was sandblasted and primed. It was put on rollers and often travelled about the site when other tasks or onsite events dictated. It was repeatedly placed back on the locomotive and removed—for adjusting, fitting, and for special events such as our annual Open House.

Finally, it came time to begin replacing the woodwork, wiring, electrical, etc. In stepped Randy McEntire and crew. During the past three or four years, the woodwork has been replaced and painted the original Cascade Green—well, that is all except the thick wood floor. Randy couldn't find the cheap pine that was in the original floor. Somewhere, he came up with some high quality walnut lumber. There are rumors that the new walnut floor will have a fine finish, and we will have to remove our shoes to enter the cab when Randy is finished with it.

The pictures below show the progress the cab crew has made to change the cab from derelict condition to display quality.



**Looking better:** The much traveled—around the site—2926 cab. Less mechanical work than the rest of the project, but still a challenge that required skills in metal repair, woodworking, electrical, painting, glazing, etc. When this is finished with the nice new seats installed, it will be a suitable office space for any engineers and firemen who wish to climb aboard. Now, how about that walnut floor Randy?

**Photos:** 1) First view on the park; 2) Removal Sept. 2007; 3) Paint removed parts labeled for removal and use as patterns; 4) Jim Hills applying the same loving restoration skills he used on his 1931 Farmall-30 tractor that his family gave to the Society after his passing; 5&6) Just two of the on and off exercises with the cab.

**Below:** Current inside view of the cab showing woodwork, electrical, and the partially open sunroof on the fireman's side of cab. Visitors can view the cab under a canopy in a corner—unless they have to follow it to another part of the site.



# ‘WAR BABIES’ REDUX

## Two Machines Born In WWII Will Return To Action

**Lil Twister**, a Douglas Aircraft A-26 Invader, and Baldwin Steam Locomotive **AT&SF No. 2926** entered action at almost the same time. That was during the frantic final days of WWII. Because both were built to meet the demands of war, they were termed ‘War Babies’.

The two machines were considered among the best in their respective areas of operation at the time. The A-26 Invaders were often referred to as the fastest US bombers of WWII. (That was before the era of jet aircraft.)

The AT&SF 2900’s were the largest 4-8-4 locomotives ever built, and among the fastest steam locomotives ever built. The two machines represented the best ‘cutting edge’ technology of the era.

They had much more in common, But did the two famous ‘War Babies’, ever meet?

They could have, but probably not. The time frame, geography and many other facts certainly match. But it was a hectic time, and any meeting cannot be proved. However, there are some great tales told by the people who knew the historic machines—some may even be true.

Whether or not they ever met during the middle of the last century, they may be able meet in the next few years. Both are nearing completion of years-long restoration by dedicated volunteers.

Built to meet the demands of war, the two relics were products of that ‘crucible of combat’. They were built under the auspices of the U.S. War Production Board, a government agency created in 1942 to oversee the production of billions of dollars worth of weapons, equipment and supplies.

The two machines would have been seen throughout Oklahoma and adjacent states. They also had links to yet another famous transportation icon—U.S. Route 66. In many long stretches, the Mother Road and the railway ran parallel. With a cruising speed of more than 90 MPH, the huge locomotive could quickly outpace Rt. 66 automobile traffic.

The A-26 aircraft’s link to the Mother Road was different. Many of the A-26’s were built in Tulsa. From there, they were ferried to military facilities worldwide. Also, many A-26 pilots were trained in Oklahoma. Thus, the twin engine aircraft were regularly seen in the airspace above the Mother Road and the Santa Fe rail routes.

Douglas built 2452 A-26’s at two plants—Long Beach, California and Tulsa, Oklahoma. The versatile aircraft were used throughout the U.S. and abroad. Baldwin Locomotive Works in Pennsylvania built thirty 2900 class steam locomotives for the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad. They began service on the AT&SF system between Kansas City and the U.S. West Coast.

After the war, unlike many machines of the era, both avoided the scrap yard. Many aircraft and steam locomotives were scrapped and reincarnated as aluminum cans and razor blades. Lil Twister and 2926 were saved from such fate by groups of volunteers who knew and appreciated the roles of Lil Twister and 2926 in our nation’s defense and transportation heritage.

Like the two objects of their restoration efforts, volunteers currently involved in restoring the two icons of that earlier era also have a lot in common. The commonality begins with the fact that a number of the volunteers are old enough to have seen both types of machine in operation. Others have resumes showing involvement with, or extensive exposure to, both air and rail transportation. A current or historical military background is a characteristic often found in both volunteer organizations.

**And** there are interesting tales of the relationship between the Douglas A-26 aircraft and Santa Fe high speed locomotives

The tales of aircraft-locomotive interaction grew from pilot memories. Ferry pilots stated that they often used ground transportation routes as roadmaps. The student pilots tales may have been born of boredom and adventurism. Regardless of the source, the tales reveal fascinating relationship among modes of transportation. It might have been defined by the pilots as ‘**unofficial close observation maneuvers**’,—buzzing ground-based transportation. Some of those memories are the genesis of the art pictured above.

Navy Veteran Jack Ostrum, an Albuquerque artist, and long time friend of 2926, heard the oft told tales of the aircraft-locomotive relationship. A few years ago, one story with just a bit of embellishment and hyperbole, caught Jack’s attention. He put the story on canvas, featuring Lil Twister and Santa Fe 2926.

When Jack produced the art, we told the story behind the his work, but it deserves mention here, along with an update on the progress of the Commemorative Air Force restoration team in Oklahoma City. We have stayed in touch with the ‘Lil Twister’ restoration team. Both machines are coming back to life and will soon return to operation. Prints of the art suitable for framing proved to be very popular, and are still available for purchase at the 2926 store.

**The story in a nutshell:** **LIL TWISTER** rolled out of the Douglas factory in Tulsa, and AT&SF 2926 was delivered to the AT&SF Railway within a few months of each other. When Lil Twister rolled out in Tulsa, 2926 was beginning operation between Kansas City and the west coast west. Both were supporting the nation’s war effort. The newly designed 2900’s were busy hauling military hardware, supplies and soldiers throughout the AT&SF system between .

It was a busy time. The big 2900s and other high speed steam locomotives were ‘burning up the rails’ carrying war materials. The A-26 ferry pilots were busy delivering aircraft, and young pilot trainees were learning all about the A-26 aircraft. The pilots, often using the railroads and highways as roadmaps would spot a fast moving train. The locomotive’s long trail of black smoke made an inviting target for adventurous or bored pilots. There is little doubt that the young A-26 trainees and even seasoned ferry pilots would get a charge out of buzzing the speeding locomotives and maybe startling the engine crew.

Jack did a great job painting just such a possibility. Maybe Lil Twister and Santa Fe 2926 didn’t cross paths more than half a century ago—or maybe they did. At any rate, they may be able to meet for a photo op in the not so distant future.



*Photo of Artist Jack Ostrum’s painting depicting Lil Twister buzzing AT&SF 2926 west of Los Lunas when both machines were in their prime. Kirtland Air Force Base was a regular stop*

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**Lil Twister update:** After checking the website, reading newsletters, and visiting Tom Parsons from the CAF *Sierra Hotel A-26 Invader* group, the Lil Twister status appears to be a lot like our own. Both teams (A-26 and 2926) are optimistic, and working hard. There are still a lot of folks providing support.

Tom reports that Lil Twister recently received a donation that will significantly boost their efforts. They are not 'out of the woods' yet, and help is still needed. Likewise, the 2926 project has received continuing support, and the future looks encouraging, but to make the jump from restoration to operation, support is still necessary. To all those folks have been so generous in supporting these two heritage projects, don't let up now.

We won't even venture a guess as to which machine will be operational first. Such projects can be fraught with surprises that result in unexpected delays. However, both groups are nearing their objectives, and running strong. Suffice to say that in the next year or two, there will be historic air and rail action in the American Southwest regardless of any delays. Both groups are now planning ahead for operations that will provide everyone a look at a part of our heritage. Hopefully, 2926 and Lil Twister will be able to meet somewhere along the tracks.

Follow the A-26 team at:

[http://www.contrails.us/CAF Sierra Hotel A-26 Sponsor Group/index.htm](http://www.contrails.us/CAF%20Sierra%20Hotel%20A-26%20Sponsor%20Group/index.htm)



*A Little Help:* It is not unusual to see an aircraft towed, or a locomotive 'deadheaded', but for several years that has been the only option for the two classics. That will change soon when they begin to move under their own power. Stay tuned for action on two fronts.



\* \* \* \*

## SUPPORTING 2926 AS YOU SHOP

### Have the Places You Shop Join You In Supporting 2926

**Cause Marketing:** *When a nonprofit corporation and a for-profit corporation join in an effort to advance the objectives of both.*

This procedure makes it possible for friends of 2926 to support the restoration as they shop. It is a marketing technique that an increasing number of businesses are using.

Marketing cost is a significant portion of the budget for any business, whether it is the Marriott Corporation, the company that initiated cause marketing in 1976 with its March of Dimes campaign, or a small 'Mom and Pop' local business. They have discovered that supporting their customers favorite causes is a good way to advertise—often with better results than using mass media or doing direct contributions without involving their customer base.

Many of the retail businesses that most of us shop with regularly use cause marketing. We are currently registered with two companies, one local and one online. They are Smith's Food & Drug, and Amazon.com, Inc.. Utah based Smith's has many locations in the west, with many cities having several Smith's neighborhood locations. We plan to register with other reputable companies that cooperate with their customers in supporting good causes.

There is great variation in cause marketing programs. Some have one or more predetermined target causes. Some target specific geographic areas. But many allow the customer to choose the cause or location they wish to support. In most of the latter, the customer pays no more for a given product than they would elsewhere.

The Amazon program is typical. It is described as follows: "*Support your charitable organization by starting your shopping at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com). The company will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service.*"

Anyone who shops at Amazon can go to <http://smile.amazon.com/> and find all the details. Some friends of 2926 have already done so. The Smith's Stores program called Community Rewards utilizes a Rewards Card technique. Anyone shopping at Smith's can check for details online or at their neighborhood Smith's.

\* \* \* \*

## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

**NOTE:** *In the last issue we listed a National Train Day event for May 9. We have been informed that Train Day will be held in only a few cities nationwide. Albuquerque is not included and will not have a Train Day event this year.*

**Below are a few events that may be of interest to rail fans and travel interests.**

**April 18-19—The AAPRCO Special Train "The Texas Special".** To be assembled on 4/18 near the Alvarado Center, the special train will consist of classic/antique rail passenger cars pulled by Amtrak. It will depart Albuquerque on April 19 for Lubbock-Houston-San Antonio. For details on this rail heritage event, check the AAPRCO web site: [www.aaprcoco.com/Travel\\_Opportunities/Postings.html](http://www.aaprcoco.com/Travel_Opportunities/Postings.html)

**April 27, 10-11:30 AM—Regional Tourism Program,** Santa Fe Convention Cen., NM Tourism Department's six regional boards are coming together with Travel and Tourism Industry Professionals to kick off the next fiscal year. Secretary Latham will be present to provide an update on the Regional Program. This meeting is open to the public.

**April 27, 28, 29—New Mexico Governor's Conference on Hospitality.** Santa Fe Convention Bureau. *Info at <http://tanm.org/>*

**June 13, 12:00 Noon—WHEELS Museum Annual Fund Raising Gala.** Albuquerque Transportation Center and Belen Harvey House Museum. Leave ATC via Rail Runner at 12:12 PM for an afternoon of food and fun in Belen. Return via Rail Runner. For info., check WHEELS web site: <http://www.wheelsmuseum.org/UpcomingEvents.html>

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## LOOKING DOWN THE TRACK

### The View Is Improving. Let's Bring It Into Focus

The "WHY?" article on this page really defines our purpose. It's all about our heritage.

May 2 will mark 13 years since we rolled 2926 onto the 8th St. site. August will mark 20 years since our founder, Ed Bukove called that first meeting with a dream of saving 2926.

Since then, I have had the opportunity to discuss our project with an wide range of individuals. There were visitors—old and young—from all states and 15 foreign countries, as well as many supporters who have yet to visit.

Yet, have we clearly stated our purpose?

Maybe not. Maybe in our enthusiasm, we appeared to many observers to be hobbyists—just 'big boys' playing with a very large toy.

My view is that a focus on the machine itself, and the work at hand, was very necessary. Without it we would not have reached the point where we can look down the track and begin to focus on Mike and Teddy's "WHY?"

That doesn't mean an end to 'playing with a big toy'. Operating the world's largest steam passenger locomotive will require regular maintenance tasks, with lots of opportunity for our crew to focus on the big locomotive itself.

Now, it's high time we bring the broader purpose into focus. We must clearly define the 'WHY' and set a course down the track.

It means an expanded role. No longer are we just a tool toting work crew. We are owners of a major tourist attraction. Under steam, pulling classic passenger cars, 2926 will be a mobile tourist attraction—a rare item in our state.

In the new role, we must work closely with other tourist sites and organizations throughout New Mexico and beyond. Currently, we are taking steps to bring that new role into focus.

Step One is to build relations with other tourist interests, public and private. Three years ago, we began regular contact with such organizations throughout New Mexico.

This spring, we will increase such liaison by hosting members of the American Association of Private Rail Car Owners, (AAPRCO), the office of the New Mexico Secretary of Tourism, and the Hospitality Association of New Mexico at the site. The view down the track will soon come into focus. It is world class rail heritage tourism activity—a role quite different from the past dozen years.

Step Two is to seek additional support to finish the restoration, perform tests, and improve the site as a home where 2926 can operate safely and be secure from the elements.

Watch our web site and this newsletter for further information.—*Editor*

## Why?

by Mike Hartshorne

In the Catholic counting it is the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment. If you are Jewish or Protestant you might call it the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment. Either way it is "Honor thy Father and Mother". And it happens to be a good answer to the most important question about the efforts of the New Mexico Steam Locomotive and Railroad Historical Society. When I was a kid I thought the commandment meant that you were supposed to do what your parents told you to do. I have come to believe that it means so much more.

The 'why' question was posed to me after I agreed to be interviewed by Teddy Becker, one of our youngest workers. Teddy is working on a railroad related project for her Media Arts Charter High School here in Albuquerque.

She said the interview would have one question only: **Why is it important to restore AT&SF 2926?**

I was really impressed by that. I have been in the (medical) teaching business for more than 35 years and over and over again I tell my residents that the 'how' questions are easy and the 'why' questions are much harder and more important.

So what could I tell Teddy? Simple. Restoring the locomotive with our hands is the best way to honor our fathers and mothers and all those who worked so hard to get our country and our families where they are today. In comparison with folks who labored to feed their families the first 200 years of the Union we have it easy. Ken Dusenberry, a veteran member of our Society, reminds us that before railroads everything in our country moved at the pace of a walking horse or man. Coast to coast trips took weeks, months or years.



*Teddy Becker, one of the youngest members of the 2926 volunteers wanted to know WHY?*

Going any distance was a big deal. Farming and industrial efforts were heavily dependent on human and animal labor. Just about everyone who could worked long hours to stay alive. If the sun was up there was work to do. And that all began to change when railroads sped up movement of people and goods around the country. Immigrants could move west in days instead of months. Fuel could come from afar at small expense to heat and light homes. Food could be shipped thousands of miles without spoiling. Cattle drives overland shortened as meat moved to market on rails. Fresh Oysters could be eaten a thousand miles from coastal waters. Grain could ship quickly to urban areas. Railway Express delivered goods cheaply to small communities in days that wagons and animals previously managed in weeks. My Grandmother used to tell us kids that before the Santa Fe Railroad, you could get from Las Vegas, New Mexico to Flagstaff, Arizona in six weeks if you had good mule skinnners.) The list of examples goes on and on. Like it or not the railroads were at the center of everyone's life.

Life was still hard after the railroads came. If the sun was up there was work to do. Most folks scratched out a living with little time for recreation and vacations, few luxuries, and lived in simple homes. But as our parents and grandparents labored things got slowly better (with occasional economic and military upheavals turning their families upside down). Their work put our society in position to offer those who live now an easier life with better and better food, clothing, shelter, education, and health care as well as all the luxuries we enjoy. How do you tell any of that to someone who was born after, say, World War II? Or after Korea or Vietnam, or the Y2K? You tell them the story best by telling them and their parents of the hard work the members of the Society are doing to put 2926 back into service.

Then listen. This is what your Grand Dad rode behind to join the Army for the Great War. This is how your Great Grand Mom came west from Boston when she was a young teacher. This is how my Mom got to Denver when she was a little girl to have her tonsils out. This is what your Uncle did working for the Santa Fe. Shake any family tree that goes back for a few generations and railroad workers and their stories will fall out of the branches. Honor thy Father and Mother!

When back in steam, the historic story 2926 tells will get even more dramatic. The sun is up and there is a lot of work to do on the restoration. Thanks, Teddy, for getting me to think about this again.