

BIG STEAM NEWS

NEW MEXICO STEAM LOCOMOTIVE & RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Quarterly Newsletter

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NEW MEXICO True



WHAT WE DID LAST SUMMER

Most adults remember their youth when the end of summer meant back to school. They may also remember an early assignment to write an essay describing their summer vacation. To the NMSLRHS volunteers, the word vacation doesn't quite describe their summer experience. Some might have thought it was like going back to school, because there was a lot of hard work and lessons learned. Much of that work was not on the locomotive itself, but on site infrastructure. In the latter, there were lessons learned, experience gained, and major progress toward the ultimate goal of bringing big steam back to action.

And yes, at times it was miserably hot. Yet, work continued. The iconic locomotive was under steam by midsummer. The summer then ended with another successful open house. The photos below, and activities described on the following pages, summarize an exciting summer—the 17th summer the 2926 team has labored to restore Santa Fe 2926. For additional details, photos and videos, go to <http://www.nmslrhs.org>. At the website, check Facebook and other links, or drop by at 1833 8th St. NW for a visit.

Summer activity began with a significant work redirection. Two unplanned tasks slowed restoration. They were track repair and construction of a new on-site store. Both resulted from the derailment of 2926 over the pit in early June. The old store had to be removed to bring in the caterpillars for re-railing the locomotive. Once the locomotive was back on its track, work began on reconstruction of the track supports in the pit and realignment of the rails. The pit and rail repair task was well underway when the summer began. Construction of a new store started shortly after. The following photos provide a glimpse of a hot summer with unplanned tasks, and the achievement of a major objective.

Photos: 1. Gandy Dancer's crew working on the final alignment of the tracks after the support structure was complete. 2. Construction of the new store. 3. Full face view of 2926 with first fire in more than half a century. 4. Using steam pressure to flush system. 5. The 2018 open house offered rides on the fully operational speeder.



(Continued on page 2)

(Last Summer, Continued)

RAIL REPAIR

Repair of the pit structure and rails was underway as the summer began. The Society's stellar welding crew, Danny, Rick, and Carlos spent a lot of time in the pit. In the photo at right, Danny, Carlos, with Gary on firewatch duty, are seen near completion of the improved support structure in the pit.

Once all the welding was complete on the new, stronger supports, it was time for help from some outside experts. Gandy Dancers, a professional railroad crew, came in to apply their expertise.

They assisted the volunteers with installation of track replacing the segments damaged in the derailment. In the two photos below, the forklift is bringing a new section of track to be installed on the new pit structure.

After Gandy Dancers assisted in the installation, they re-gauged the track to meet current railroad regulations as shown in the first photo on page 1. The result is that there is a much better siding on which to move the heavy locomotive.



BUILDING A NEW STORE

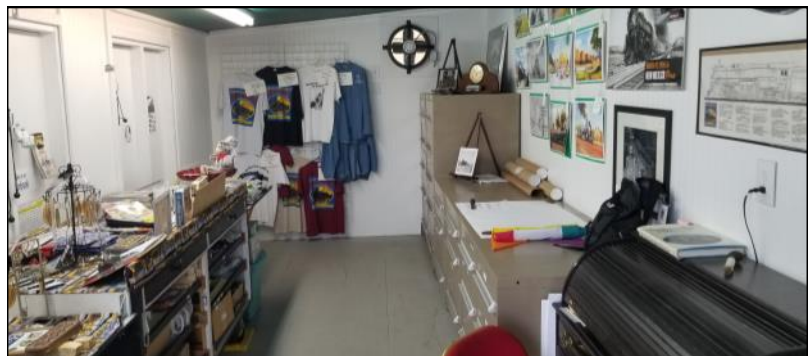
The Santa Fe 2926 "company store" is a proven valuable asset to the restoration of the iconic locomotive, and to New Mexico's rich rail heritage. From the beginning, the sale of T-shirts, caps, toys, books, and other rail memorabilia has been a significant benefit to the project. In addition to providing financial support for the restoration, it is a great way to note the historical importance of rail in New Mexico. The old store that was removed for the re-rail task was a simple shed attached to the side of a storage container. The new one needed more useable space, and to be free-standing to allow a move if necessary.



Above: Bilt-Wel crew assembles basic structure for new store .

While the pit and rail task was underway, the store display and operation consisted of tables under a portable canopy. That caused a lot of extra work setting up the store each workday. There was also the annual Open House coming up soon. A new store was needed ASAP. Storekeeper Rick moved very quickly. He designed the building, contacted portable building manufacturer Bilt-Wel Buildings, Inc., and received BoD approval to proceed apace. By mid-August, Bilt-Wel had the main structure assembled on site. Some of the 2926 volunteers then switched from locomotive mechanics to carpenters, electricians and painters to complete the task, (photos below left).

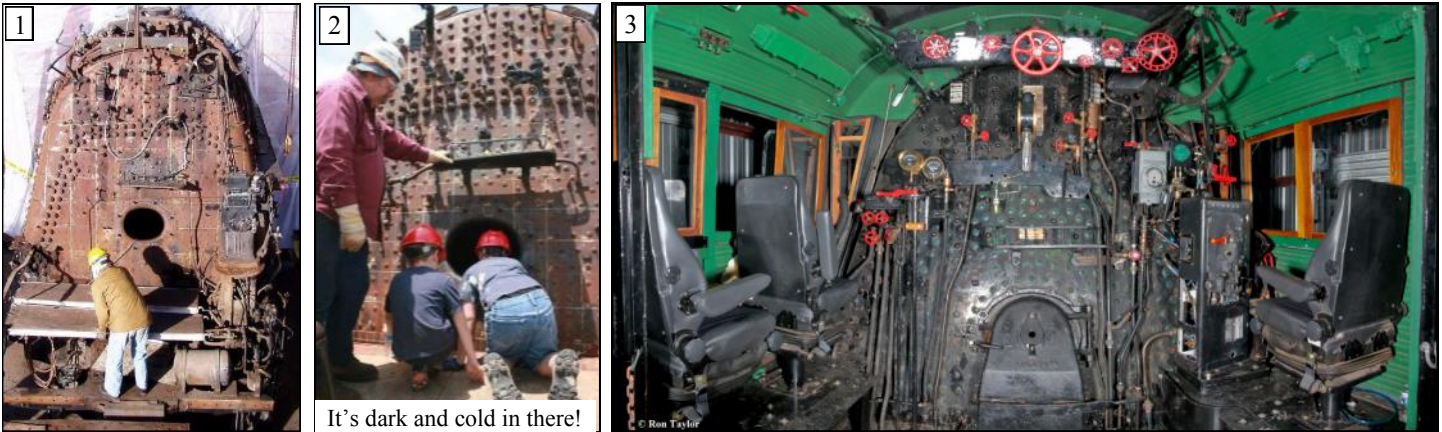
The result is a brand new well stocked store pictured at right. Everyone is welcome to come down and shop.



(Last Summer, Continued)

FIRST FIRE

Getting There: Early August 20, fire was lit in the huge firebox of Santa Fe Steam Locomotive Number 2926. For the first time in more than six decades, the iconic steam locomotive was about to produce steam. Photos 1 & 2 below show a rusty hulk ten years ago. Ron Taylor's panoramic cab interior photo (3) reflects hundreds and hundreds of hours of volunteer work. The first two pictures show the fully stripped backhead before work in the firebox and boiler began. Ron's photo depicts the 2926 crew's 'office' just prior to lighting the fire. A larger, digital image of Ron's photo can be seen on the Society's website, <http://www.nmslrhs.org/>. Close up pictures of the firebox door are shown in photos 9 & 10—**with the fire lit!**



It's dark and cold in there!

Fire: Final preparation for the first fire actually started on Sunday August 19. That is when Bob M. and Ron T. put heat into the firebox to cure the new firebrick. They removed the firebox door and placed a 400,000 BTU propane heater in the opening, to cure the firebrick (Photo 4).

Fuel and water loading tasks were quite different than they would have been many years ago when Santa Fe 2926 was still active. Fuel oil was brought to the site by truck, and about fifty feet of hose was used to transfer oil from the truck to the tender's fuel bunker.

Water delivery was slow and difficult as well as different. Operating water towers are no longer readily available, so water was drawn from a city water outlet on 8th St. Photo 6 shows part of more than 100 yards of fire hose required to deliver water to the tender.

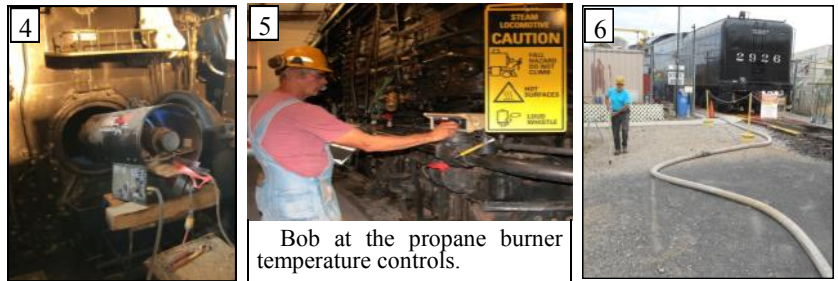
Once fuel and water were on board, crew members were briefed on their steam up assignments. That included Bob DeGroft's T-shirt warning "**Stand Back, This Could Get Awesome**". It was time to light the fire, (Photo 8). Scott A. had the honor of introducing fire to the firebox. After many years sitting cold, there was a 'fire in the belly' of Santa Fe 2926 again. Soon, there would be steam in the boiler.

Photo 9 is a view of the roaring fire just before the firebox door was closed. In the next photo, Henry R. watches the fire through the firebox door inspection hole as documentary photographer Kippi F. gets a close up view on camera.

Steam: Steam didn't appear instantly, but as temperature increased, the pressure gauge, (Photo 11) began to respond. By midday, there was sufficient pressure to begin cleaning, testing and inspection tasks.

A Federal Railway Administration inspector was on site for the testing and inspections. Steam was used to clean out the inside of the boiler and blast out decades of grit and dirt from all of the tubing, piping, and interior boiler space. With the pistons not yet installed, the flushing created considerable noise, and the huge steam cloud pictured on the first page of this newsletter. On Wednesday, August 22, the fire was killed, and the public was invited to tour the still warm locomotive.

During the years of restoration, thousands of pipe connections, valves, staybolts, gauges, etc. were restored and replaced. That provided an opportunity for leaks when steam was introduced. Thanks to a lot of earlier testing with air and water pressure, there were not as many leaks as might be expected when steam was applied. The leaks were corrected. The most challenging was a failed valve that required rebuild and rethreading. Not all appliances and related components were tested and inspected, so there will soon be another steam up to continue preparing the locomotive for operation.



Bob at the propane burner temperature controls.



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Web: www.nmslrhs.org

VISITORS WELCOME
9:00 AM-2:00 PM Wednesday & Saturday

LOOKING DOWN THE TRACK

After a long hot summer with a derailment, delays, unplanned work, and finally fire and steam in Santa Fe 2926 it is time to look ahead once again.

Though still facing the short siding on which it has rested for more than 16 years, a longer view on a different track is getting closer. There will soon be a second steam up to test additional appliances, connections, valves and related components.

Concurrent with final testing is a serious need for non-mechanical work. For NMSLRHS to take 2926 beyond its current boundaries there are many challenges.

The challenges derive from a number of organizations that populate the world of rail operations. They include local, state, and federal government organizations.

Add the corporate interests of railways, material and equipment suppliers, tourist facilities, etc, and relations with the outside world are intimidating.

The look down the track at this point reveals a significant need to increase marketing, public relations, and other decidedly non-mechanical tasks.

With that said, NMSLRHS is not the only organization facing current challenges. BNSF, Amtrak, the City of Albuquerque, and the State of New Mexico are entities that the Society must work with to operate the state's flagship steam locomotive. They too are facing change.

Amtrak is in a temporary situation with a one-year postponement of a decision to turn the operation of The Southwest Chief into a bus line between Garden City Kansas and Albuquerque

State government has a new administration. It may bring change in the Departments of Transportation and Tourism, including their responsibility for tourist rail operations.

The new City of Albuquerque administration is taking a close look at the long-playing issues regarding the Albuquerque Railyards, and related rail lines in the city.

The challenges facing all of the above may have significant effect on BNSF's decisions involving its tracks and operations in New Mexico.

With Santa Fe 2926 nearing operation, it appears that 2019 will be an interesting and very challenging year.

(Last Summer, Continued)

PUBLIC EXPOSURE

The Society has always welcomed visitors to the Santa Fe 2926 restoration site. For years, we have had an open house in late September to allow the public to view progress on the restoration of New Mexico's flagship locomotive. There have been other public events to mark specific restoration milestones, and there has been a steady stream of visitors from around the U.S. and abroad. This summer saw an increase in both events and visitors. August and September were especially busy in our relations with the public.

Breakfast With Steve: One very special event occurred on Wednesday August 22. It was triggered by the first steam up two days earlier. Wednesday was a normal workday. Even though there was an intermittent drizzle, the work crew began showing up well before daylight. They expected a busy day after the Monday steam up. The fire was killed, leaving the locomotive still warm, with caution signs attached.

With a few wisps of smoke still rising from the locomotive's stack, Steve Stucker, KOB Channel 4 weatherman, arrived at the locomotive site for a live television event. He wasn't alone. There were several additional visitors. And along with his camera crew he had additional helpers who brought a breakfast treat for the 2926 crew.

The work crew assembled next to the locomotive providing a backdrop for Steve as he interviewed John Taylor. John provided a brief on-camera overview of the restoration project for Steve's morning program. After the interview, Steve revealed the treat. The big boxes his helpers brought in contained green chili breakfast burritos and hot coffee from Blake's Lotaburger.



KOB's Steve Stucker with the 2926 crew before he revealed that he had breakfast burritos and coffee.



Above: In the photo at left, a wisp of smoke still rises from the locomotive's stack. In the second photo, Steve is pictured earlier, ignoring a brief drizzle, directing the cameraman to the smoke.

While the 2926 volunteers disposed of the breakfast treat, Steve visited with 2926 volunteers and visitors. He and his camera team recorded activity around the classic locomotive.

After the breakfast break and TV event, it was back to work on a damp day with bit of drizzle. Fortunately, the rain ended, the sun came out, and the 2926 volunteers recorded another productive work day.

(Continued on page 5)

(Public Exposure Continued)

SANTA FE RAILYARD CELEBRATION: One exciting event in which the New Mexico Steam Locomotive & Railroad Historical Society drew significant public attention was held September 14-16 in Santa Fe. It was the 10th anniversary celebration of the rededication of the Santa Fe Railyard.

The Railyard is a very important part of the growth and development of the city and the state of New Mexico. It is a property that on February 9, 1880 saw the arrival of an Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe (AT&SF) train at a new in the city of Santa Fe. Within a few years, other railroads arrived at the depot from both north and south. That generated more development of the railyard, and created a hub for rail travel to the capitol city. Railroads had already reached, or were arriving in other cities throughout the New Mexico Territory. The subsequent growth of statewide rail lines led to growth and development of the New Mexico Territory, and finally to statehood.

During the first half of the 20th century, the Santa Fe Railyard functioned as a state and national travel hub and an activity center for Santa Fe locals. That changed after WWII, when air travel and interstate highways began to replace passenger rail. By 1987 the depot and surrounding property was declared a blighted area requiring redevelopment. An overall city plan was begun the same year. Other priorities in the city plan delayed action on the railyard for years. In February, 2002 the Santa Fe Railyard Master Plan was approved—exactly 122 years after the first train pulled into the capitol of the New Mexico Territory. A Grand Opening in September 2008, celebrated the recovery of the historic property. A few weeks later, the first New Mexico Railrunner arrived at the Railyard. The railyard redevelopment has prospered, and the September 2018 event was to celebrate 10 years of success.

The Railyard 10th was more than just a Santa Fe celebration. Though focusing on the heritage of the Santa Fe Railyard, it drew attention to the importance of rail to the entire state. It also provided an example for other New Mexico cities where such heritage sites exist. In attendance were mayors from Albuquerque, Las Vegas, Santa Fe, and several other towns and cities that owe their existence, growth, and development to the arrival of rail transportation to New Mexico in the latter half of the 19th century.

Major elements of rail travel in the heyday of Santa Fe Railyards were the famous Harvey Houses. The displays and individuals at the Railyard 10th Celebration brought many memories of the chain of restaurants, hotels, and other travel hospitality businesses that existed along the railways of the west. Some, such as the La Fonda Hotel in Santa Fe have continued to exist and prosper since rail travel diminished. Others, such as the Alvarado in Albuquerque were razed.

Some existing, but seriously deteriorated, Harvey Houses are being restored. Winslow AZ, along with Las Vegas and Belen NM are examples. Allen Affeldt and his wife, artist Tina Mion restored Winslow's La Posada, and are doing the same with Las Vegas's La Casteñada. They were actively involved in the weekend Railyard events.

Two special people participating in the Railyard 10th had actually worked for the Harvey House Co. They were twins, Beverly and Bernette. In 1955, they were Harvey Girls. They worked at La Fonda, serving breakfast and lunch. At that time, they could not work the dinner shift because they were still too young to serve liquor.



Santa Fe Southern cars parked near the Violet Crown Theater.



Above: Allen Affeldt watches as the twins discuss their Harvey House experiences with Albuquerque Mayor Tim Keller.

The range of exhibits and displays at the Railyard was impressive. There were many outstanding model rail setups caught the attention of young and old alike.

Karl Ziebarth's Santa Fe Southern excursion cars (photo above) were parked on a siding for visitors to check out. Rail Runner equipment, rail handcars, and other current and historic rail materials were also on display.

The ten NMSL&RHS members who were in attendance at the celebration stayed busy working the crowd, relating the Santa Fe 2926 story, answering rail heritage questions, selling 2926 memorabilia, and making new friends who share our interest in New Mexico rail heritage.

Overall, the Santa Fe Railyard 10th was a success. It was a great example of people and organizations with varied backgrounds working together to preserve memories of our heritage. It should be a model for other cities, towns, museums, and related rail organizations.



L to R, NMSLRHS Members At Santa Fe Railyard 10th Anniversary: Ernie Robart; Chris Rosol; Pat Hepburn; Marsha Marsden; Marcia Baynes; Julie Tiedemann; Ed Burgraff; Doyle Caton; Rick Marsden; Paul Baynes

OPEN HOUSE 2018

For more than 15 years, the annual Santa Fe 2926 Open House has highlighted the restoration of New Mexico's Flagship Steam Locomotive. Each year at the end of summer, the 2926 volunteers have cleaned up the site and opened it to the public to view the progress in bringing the iconic steam locomotive back to operation. With assistance from entertainment groups, other heritage organizations, and numerous model rail setups, the annual event has celebrated progress of the volunteer's restoration labor. It is quite possible that the 2018 event will be the last restoration Open House. Our objective for the 2019 Open House is to highlight an operational Santa Fe 2926. Plan to attend an **OPERATION OPEN HOUSE IN 2019**.



The following photos depict the activity preparing and conducting another successful open house.

How to prepare for a successful open house.

Above: 1 & 2: The first step is a thorough cleaning of the entire site, and everything on it. That includes washing and waxing and enormous vehicle; **3:** Next, make sure there are plenty of tables and chairs for visitors to eat, relax, and enjoy the entertainment; **4:** Don't forget the food. Stuff the fridge and storage areas with hot dogs, chili, soft drinks and treats; **4)** Tune up and prepare that new special attraction, the fully restored speeder that will provide visitors with rides.

Below: 6 & 7: Setup time. Bring in and assemble the model train setups of various gauges and layout size; **8:** Set up the food and drink line; **9:** Refresh the display of 2926 T-shirts, hats, rail toys, books, and related railroad memorabilia.



A FUN DAY WITH NEW MEXICO'S FLAGSHIP STEAM LOCOMOTIVE

With a bit more hard work by the volunteers, and continued support from friends of Santa Fe 2926, perhaps there will be a couple of different features to the next Open House. Those differences will be an operating locomotive in a more crowd friendly location than our current work site. The photos below show just a few of the attractions at Santa Fe 2926 Open House 2018.



STAR OF THE SHOW
Santa Fe 2926 waiting to be rolled out of the engine house for Open House.

Popular Attractions Above: In the first photo is Los Radiators. Everyone enjoys their music. The second photo shows Scott A.'s impressive collection of whistles, gauges, and related steam devices. In the third photo, Operation Lifesaver, Amtrak, and Rail Runner joined forces this year to emphasize convenience, safety, benefits, and enjoyment of rail travel.

New this year was a mobile attraction. Several years ago, the rail speeder pictured above was rescued by Albert L. from a north valley yard. It was fully restored by Dick Downing and friends in Indianapolis, Indiana. For Open House 2018, it was fired up to provide rides for visitors. The two pictures directly above depict some of the ride action across 8th St to the switch and back.