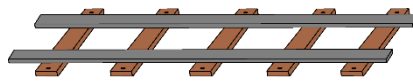


On Track



Vol. 4, Number 5, May 2025

If you are receiving this newsletter for the first time, welcome to the fold! We continue to catalog our visitor logs (some from several years past!), and your email appeared! If you wish to be taken off our list, just let us know, but we hope that you will stay with us, follow us online, and return as a visitor sometime soon. **Additional financial support will never be turned down (maintaining and operating a steam locomotive is expensive)!** Previous editions of this newsletter may be found on our [website](#). If you have comments on the newsletter, please send them to nmheritagerail@nmheritagerail.com or to your humble editor, [John Taylor](#).

FROM THE PRESIDENT:

With the generous support of our members and supporters, NMHR is making progress towards our goals, but we still need your help so that we can continue to attain the goals we have for the restoration site and the South Rail Yards. An inexhaustive, and growing, list of projects and costs include:



- PTC hardware \$20,000!
- ~~New driver brake shoes \$10,000~~ (a big Thank You to George T. for his generous donation that will cover this expense!)
- Concrete work at the Rail Yards for public safety \$5000
- Metal shipping container for secure on-site storage (i.e., a conex) \$6000
- Dumpster service \$2400/year (a big Thank You to John J. for sponsoring this for the first year!)
- ~~ADA concrete work at the restoration site \$2000~~ (a big Thank You to George D. and his volunteers, Chris R., Howard L., and Terry R., for jackhammering the old post footings, preparing the area, supplying the concrete and concrete finishing expertise to get this work done! It looks great!)
- Quincy compressor cylinder head repairs \$2000
- Parts/spare Dual-stage locomotive compressor \$10,000
- 14 New washout plugs \$10,000 (we are working to get these machined, but the bill will still have to be covered)

NMHR is just a few months out from our 3rd Annual New Mexico Railroad Days (NMRD3) and we are reaching out to all local (or at least nearby), active volunteers for a push to get 2926 ready! Our winter maintenance activities have taken longer than expected and we have many items to complete to make her railroad ready. We are working with Bernie Watts at Backshop Enterprises to rebuild the air-oil lubricator cups. We are also working multiple paths to replace or refurbish our 14 washout plugs (this is a critical need to get back on the rails!). The fireman's side compressor is making good progress with the help of the Altenbach's and their facilities and our volunteer team. The other items that need to be complete are the fireman's side sight-glass replacement, regrind the blowdown valve seats, replace the tender's leaking fuel shutoff valve, inspect and test the integrity of the 816 flexible staybolts, and a dozen or so items that are needed

to complete the FRA's required Form 3. In addition, we need to perform a hydrostatic test on the boiler before September. Please come down and help us complete this extensive list of tasks! Future work includes inspecting the rod-eye sleeves on side rod bearings. We will also have to separate the locomotive and tender to inspect the drawbars.

Last month NMHR signed the sweat-equity agreement with the San Bernardino Railroad Historical Society to work on two dormitory cars: Amtrak 2506 "Pine Peak" (former AT&SF 1639) and Amtrak 2523 "Pine Lodge" (former ST&SF 1636. They were both 10 room, 6 double bed sleeper cars build by Budd in 1950. They are on their way to track 173, which leads into the turntable, at the Albuquerque Rail Yards as we speak.

This past month I met with Craig Swan, GPRS, Inc., at the Rail Yards to discuss NMHR's interest in the property and to walk through the site and make test measurements. GPRS, Inc. specializes in performing ground-penetrating radar surveys. NMHR is now working with GPRS, Inc. to obtain a quote to perform a full survey of the south Rail Yards. We are trying to determine the extent and structure of the existing roundhouse foundation, service pits, and underground utilities. GPRS has cautioned us that the debris in the soil (primarily rocks and discarded metal) will create a challenge to measurement and interpretation. The cost of this will determine whether NMHR has the means to pursue this effort.

Mr. Ed Dickens, Steam Locomotive Operations – Executive for Union Pacific, was kind enough to put us in touch with Western Foundries, Inc. to fabricate new brake shoes. The original casting patterns, which were last used about a decade ago, were shipped to them from Durango, CO to Western Foundries in Longmont, Colorado. The patterns were mistakenly shipped to the Durango and Silverton Railroad after NMHR's original casting job was completed. NMHR will request a quote from Western Foundries once the brake shoe dimensions are finalized. Our own Dr. Frank Gerstle is working to finish the measurements and calculations to complete the information we need to successfully cast new driver brake shoes.

NMHR obtained a 20-ft conex from Maloy Mobile Storage. This will provide a for us to securely store miscellaneous cleanup and maintenance equipment and supplies. We hope that this is only the first of many we put down there. We also entered into a service contract with the city of Albuquerque's Solid Waste Department for a dumpster at the Rail Yards. We now have a 30-cubic-yard, roll-off dumpster to use, which, as pointed out above, the first year was generously funded by John J.

Mr. John Taylor has agreed to step into the Membership Coordinator position and he is working to come up to speed with the numerous responsibilities and people he will need to coordinate with. Wish John all the best. The duties of the position include:

- Tracking incoming new memberships by coordinating with the treasurer for mail-in applications, store personnel for in-person applications, and online (PayPal)
- "Welcome" new members with basic information and the New Member Handbook.
- If they desire safety training, finding out what the member is interested in and/or interested in doing.
- Encouraging new member to take one of the many needed positions detailed in the "Job Descriptions..." document.

- Coordinate with Henry Roberts to keep his MailChimp email addresses up to date so that he can send a New Member Welcome email.

And speaking of critical needs, we are still in desperate need of a Board Secretary. The duties of this position include:

- Responsible for the preparation and submission of notices of all meetings and other activities to the members;
- Responsible for keeping minutes from the Board of Directors and all membership meetings;
- Maintain a file of corporate correspondence and other records;
- Certify and keep at the principal office of the Society the original, or a copy, of the Bylaws;
- Keep a book of the minutes of all meetings;
- Be responsible for maintaining the current list of Society members;
- Provide administrative support for annual audits;
- And probably a few others.

This is one of many positions we need filled so please consider donating your talents to the organization so that we can continue to move forward. The following list gives you an idea of the people and skillsets we are looking for.

- Restoration site store manager and assistants
- Restoration site docents
- Online store manager (i.e., order fulfilment)
- Portable promotional poster designer/fabricator
- NMHR booth attendant at the Rail Yards Market (Sundays, 10-2, May through October)
- Hands-on educational model designer/fabricator
- Email communications coordinator
- Website manager/developer/coordinator
- Digital content coordinator
- Membership manager/tracker
- Volunteer coordinator/scheduler (John Taylor has stepped up to help NMHR with this)
- Marketing Director (Michael Martin has stepped up to help NMHR with this)
- Graphic designer

Capital Outlay Corner

The City of Albuquerque received updated costs for the turntable work from their selected contract bidder. The city requires that the contract be managed through one of their approved contractors, Facility Build. The total cost of the turntable repair/refurbish project now stands just under \$600k. Obviously the \$475k of 2023 Capital Outlay funds will not cover the total cost so I gave the city approval to use the \$120k of 2025 Capital Outlay funds to cover the difference to complete the project. The city's Rail Yards project manager told NMRD that the contractor is scheduled to begin work no earlier than August of this year. There is still no update on the \$200k of 2024 funding, which is being worked through the county and NMDOT as it involves work on the 1st St. grade crossing.

Profile of a member: He's the man with the money—the guy who writes the checks—your new best friend! He's our treasurer, Michael Castillo. Michael is Albuquerque born and bred, a Hornet from the Highland High class of 1975. He earned a BBA degree, with a concentration in Financial Management, from UNM in 1982.



After his schooling, he's had a series of interesting jobs, some in financial management and some far removed. He worked for First National Bank as a Credit Investigations Analyst, for Norwest Bank (now Wells Fargo) as a Loan Documentation Reviewer, and for Santa Fe Racing, Inc. (the overseers of the Downs at Albuquerque and Downs at Santa Fe) as a parimutuel teller, Money Room Manager, and Simulcast Manager.

More recently he worked for the City of Albuquerque as a SunVan driver and a meal delivery driver for the Senior Affairs Department. However, his most important job was being a stay-at-home dad for his daughter, Emily, while his wife, Cecilia, brought home the bacon as a software engineer.

Mike met Cecilia in 1982 while they were singing in the choir at Our Lady of Fatima. They were married in 1996. Due to superior home care from her dad, Emily is currently the assistant manager at Buffalo Exchange!

Mike first encountered the 2926 when it was moved out of the park in 2000 but was too busy with work and family to join our happy family. However, his interest was ignited and after he retired from the city in 2023, he decided to take the plunge and is now our Treasurer. So, the next time you see a big guy with prematurely grey hair, moustache, and goatee walking around, say hello. Who knows when you may need some cash!



A short historical note: The Luna family came to New Mexico in the late 17th century. By the mid-19th century, sheep husbandry had made them one of the richest families in the region. The village of Los Lunas was named in their honor, reflecting their vast power and influence in the central Rio Grande Valley. The Lunas had benefited from the coming of the railroad to Los Lunas in 1880 even before the first train arrived in their small community. The family's original *hacienda* lay on land that the Santa Fe Railway's construction subsidiary, New Mexico and Southern Railroad, wanted to use to build straight tracks through Valencia County. The family patriarch at the time was Don Antonio José Luna.



Original Luna hacienda



Original Luna Mansion



Luna Mansion today

As the story has long been told, the Santa Fe's representatives recognized where the power center in the family resided, so they told Don Antonio José's wife, Doña Isabel Nestora de Baca Luna, that they would take her anywhere in the country and let her look at homes, and that they would build her whichever home she chose on the family's property just west of the proposed right-of-way. The story continues that she admired the **ante-bellum-style** mansions in the South and chose that style for her new home.

It is a good story. However, the truth is a bit different. On March 8, 1880, Don Antonio José negotiated the sale of his *hacienda* for \$13,000, which he then spent to construct a **Victorian-style** mansion just west of the new tracks. In fact, it wasn't until the 1930s when one of the Luna descendants, Josefita Rebecca Salazar de Manderville de Armijo de Otero, better known as Pepe, added the ante-bellum features that exist today.

The Lunas used modern materials as well as traditional *terróne* bricks to construct their new home, from its wine cellar to its high-pitched roof. The railroad reportedly transported building materials, tools, and supplies to the Lunas, free of charge. Once it was built, the Lunas filled their eight-room mansion with opulent furniture and décor also transported by train. The mansion's large fireplace, for example, was built with marble quarried in Tennessee and transported over 1,200 miles by rail to Los Lunas. The Lunas reportedly lived "in regal style." One observer described the Lunas' finished two-story, 4,600-square-foot mansion as "a magnificent residence." Some have even called it New Mexico's Downton Abbey.

Unfortunately, Don Antonio died in late 1881 before the mansion was completed. His widow, Doña Isabel, lived in the large house until she moved to Santa Fe in the late 1890s. Her descendants in the Luna and Otero families resided in the house until well into the 20th century.

How Does It Work: From around 1840 onward, a bell was standard issue on steam locomotives traversing the American countryside. The bell was meant to alert people and animals (like the much-maligned bison) of an approaching train. On the open plains, where clearance wasn't an issue, the bell would be mounted to the top of the boiler or smokebox. If the train were outfitted for tighter quarters and rails, the bell could be repositioned to the front of the locomotive, tucked alongside the cab, or even stashed beneath the running board.

Railroads govern the use of bells on locomotives and mandate when they should be rung, such as at crossings, quiet zones, or meeting points. Locomotive bells' chief function is to warn pedestrians, crew, or others nearby that a train is moving or soon will be.

Steam locomotive bells were usually made from cast bronze or brass. Baldwin Locomotive Works did not make their own bells but contracted with local foundries. Although some of Baldwin's bells were made of iron, ours was not and is probably a bronze alloy, most likely about 80% copper and 20% tin.



Our bell (left) can be “operated” either manually, using the rope on the fireman’s side in the cab, or by using an air-operated bell swinger. Note that this is a bell **swinger**, not a bell **ringer**. The difference is that bell ringers moved the clapper while the bell stayed stationary, whereas a bell swinger, like ours, swings the entire bell assembly. Our bell swinger (center, looking up from below) has a Chicago air piston that moves a ball valve in the top-hat assembly up and down, allowing the piston to rotate as the bell swings. The piston is attached to a lever on the bell itself. The bell swinger’s operating valve is a brass pull-out located on the bottom right side of the brake stand (right) in the cab.

Just for fun:

A criminal named Artie was arrested for strangling people at the grocery store for a token payment. The headline reads “Artie Chokes Three for a Dollar in Produce Section”.

A man was sentenced for killing people using Granola. Since he’s a cereal killer, they gave him LIFE in prison.

Which is faster, hot or cold? Hot, because you can catch cold.

Can one bird make a pun? No, but Toucan!

My pet parrot, Nickel, just died. Now I have a Nickel-less cage.

What do lawyers wear to court? Lawsuits.

What’s small and red and has a rough voice? A hoarse radish.

Why can’t you trust the king of the jungle? Because he’s always lion.

What happened when Bluebeard fell overboard in the Red Sea? He got marooned...

Why aren’t Koalas actual bears? They don’t meet the koalafications.

I’m not hard of hearing. I’ve just heard enough.

Two parrots were sitting on a perch. One turns to the other and asks, “Do you smell fish?”

What did Spartacus say when a lion ate his wife? “I’m gladiator!”

“Dad, can you tell me what a solar eclipse is?” No sun....

How you can help and other tidbits: If you are interested in donating to our cause (because operating a steam locomotive is expensive!) go to our [GoFundMe](#) and [Venmo](#) links! Be sure to check out our [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), and [Instagram](#) pages as well! Other potential sites of interest: our friends at the [Wheels Museum](#) and activities at the [Albuquerque Railyards](#). Please see our Membership page to discover our other volunteer opportunities.

