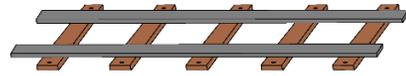


On Track



Vol 2, Number 10, October 2023

If you are receiving this newsletter for the first time, welcome to the fold! We are cataloging our visitor logs for the last few years, and your name and 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. 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](#).

Current Status: We have a lot of locomotive projects to take care of over the winter months (e.g., lapping valves, fixing leaks, adjusting a safety relief valve, repairing/replacing and adjusting the burner, etc.) while we plan our next event/outing. Work on the turntable has slowed to a crawl because of our travels on the rails and while we wait to complete the use agreement with the city so that we can access our state-appropriated funds. In addition, we continue to work with our local officials to extend our city-approved access to the south Rail Yards.

Accomplishments: Our recent and exciting accomplishment was a self-powered trip on the mainline for the first time in over 65 years! The NMHR operating crew and volunteers took the locomotive to the Albuquerque Railyards (actually the old BNSF freight yards) for our inaugural New Mexico Railroad Days! This trip was also the furthest she has travelled since 1956 – about 5-miles round trip! 2926 was on display with Amtrak's Operation Lifesaver and a BNSF locomotive. We were joined by informational booths and guests from Operation Lifesaver, Territorial Brass Band, New Mexico Transloading, WHEELS Museum, Train Collector Association, our local public school radio station - KANW, The Cumbres & Toltec, Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec, and Sky Railway. 2926 looked magnificent while on display to the public and operated beautifully on her trip from our restoration site and back. It was a great event, we hosted a few VIPs, and we received a boost in attendance from visitors going to the Sunday Rail Yards Market. A special night-time photo shoot, hosted by professional photographer Steve Crise, was a big hit for those who participated. (and the volunteers who modeled in period costume).

Profile of a member: Our Chief of Railroad Operations (CRO), Matt Casford, is the man in the engineer's seat whenever we move down the tracks. He and his family hail from Whittier, California. His family has always had a thing for trains. In fact, they have an operating 1/8-scale model of the 2926, and his father is the Risk Manager for the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad.

Matt graduated from California High School, home of the Condors (a large carrion-eating bird!!??!!) in Whittier in 1995. After high school, he attended Fullerton Junior College for a while but got tired of studying, so he went to work for his father's bulk mail service.



In 2004, Matt hired out in Los Angeles as a conductor on BNSF. In 2006 he changed over to engine service and attended six weeks of training in Overland Park, Kansas, followed by 3½ months of on-the-job training, all culminating in certification as a locomotive engineer. While in the Los Angeles area, Matt joined the

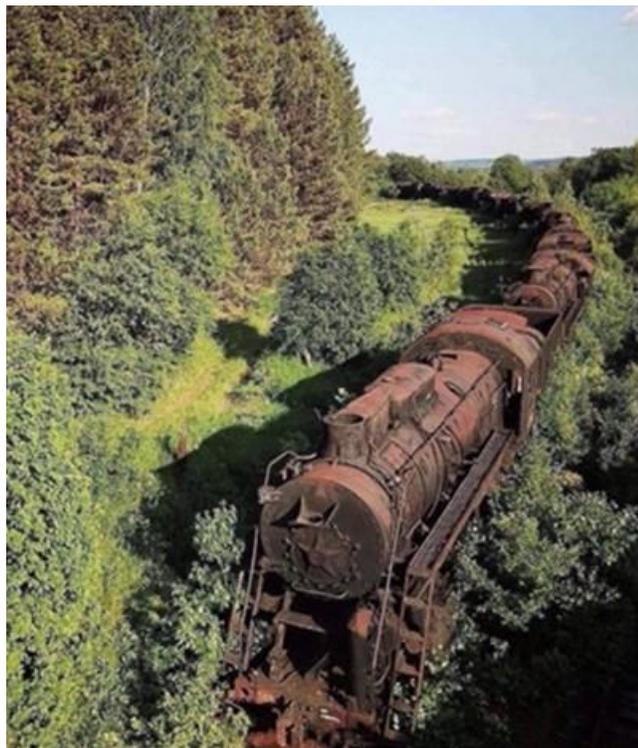
San Bernadino Railroad Historical Society, home of the ATSF steam locomotive 3751. He took his first trip as the engineer of the 3751 in 2007

In 2022, Matt left BNSF and joined AMTRAK, moving his wife and four children to San Antonio, Texas. While Texas was far from his California roots, the job was much more family-friendly and provided a higher quality of life because of the regular schedule and less time away from home. He works on the extra board three to four days a week, which for Matt involves pool work driving the Sunset Limited and Texas Eagle between San Antonio and Austin, Beaumont, and Alpine.

Matt has been a saxophone player since high school and even played in a Big Band named the Fabulous Esquires. The next time we steam up, we'll have him bring his horn—perhaps it would even work in place of our whistle!

Matt came to the 2926 in 2018 after the untimely passing of our previous CRO, Warren Scholl, just before our very first steam up. Bob Kittel, Chief Mechanical Officer of the 3751, suggested Matt as a replacement, and he's been our go-to engineer ever since.

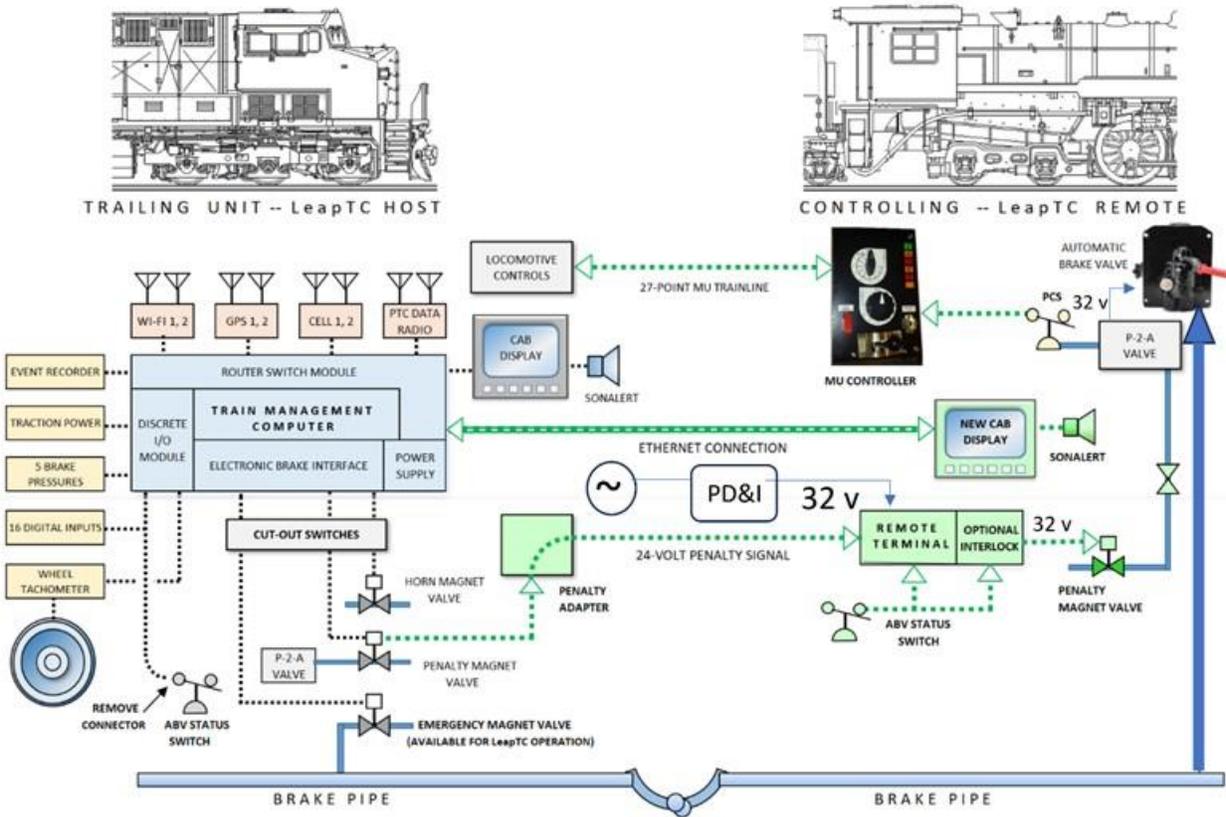
A short historical note: In Russia, during the Cold War, hundreds of old steam-engines were strategically parked on old tracks as a contingency plan in case the Russian electric grid faced any disruptions. The central Perm region of Russia is home to a unique sight - a train cemetery filled with dozens of steam locomotives from the 20th century, dating as far back as 1936 and as recent as 1956. Over the years, around 140 locomotives were stored there, but as technology advanced, steam engines were gradually replaced by electric power, rendering these reserve trains obsolete. As maintenance on the locomotives ceased, they fell into disrepair, succumbing to rust and overgrown vegetation. In recent times, some of the abandoned trains have been purchased and removed by Chinese owners, while others have been restored and transformed into exhibits at various museums and memorials.



This train cemetery remains as a testament to an era when steam locomotives played a vital role in Russia's transportation infrastructure during the Cold War.

How does it work: In the wake of several significant accidents and incidents involving Class 1 railroads, President George W. Bush signed the "Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008." Among other requirements, this legislation mandated the implementation of a system called Positive Train Control (PTC). According to the Association of American Railroads these systems "determine the precise location, direction, and speed of trains, warn train operators of potential problems, and safely bring the train to a stop if the operator does not act. They are specifically designed to automatically stop a train before certain accidents related to human error occur."

A PTC system consists of three main elements integrated by a wireless data communications system that must move massive amounts of information back and forth between the back-office servers, which monitor the location, direction, and speeds of all operating trains; the trackside equipment that monitors track conditions and switch positions; and on-board locomotive computers that can take over control of the throttle and brake systems if a dangerous situation appears imminent. On diesel locomotives, PTC can set brakes and shut the power off. However, because steam locomotives have manual throttles, they must be managed differently.



The system installed on the 2926 is called LeapTC™ and was designed and developed by crew members John Howard and Paul Baynes. It is slaved into the PTC control system of an accompanying PTC-equipped diesel to receive data and enforcement signals. To be PTC-compliant, the leading locomotive (the 2926) must have a PTC cab display. A separate cable carries the penalty braking system signal from the penalty adapter box on the diesel to a signal conditioning unit, colloquially referred to as the rocket, on the forward side of the Remote Terminal. The cable also carries the penalty braking signal for PTC enforcement. The Remote Terminal converts the 24-volt penalty signal to the full 32-volt operating voltage for the penalty magnet valve, automatically putting the locomotive and train brakes in the penalty position. The cab display activates an audible Sonalert to warn the engineer of the penalty enforcement. When the engineer hears the alarm, he shuts the throttle, stopping the train.

What's new in the store: CALLING ALL ARTISTS! The NMHR's site store and gallery is seeking a selection of railroad artists and artwork to help us promote our restored locomotive and surrounding local railroad historic locations. Art styles to be considered include 2D renderings in sketch, pastel, acrylic, watercolor, and photographic images and compositions as well as 3D renderings in various mediums. For consideration, please forward your information, your media, and your subject matter to nmheritagerail@nmheritagerail.com.



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 website and make a donation through [PayPal](#) and/or click on 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](#). The Board of Directors is soliciting a volunteer to act as a Webmaster for the organization. This person would need to be a member but could work remotely. Tasks would include maintaining the website, adding photos and photo captions, and adding other materials as needed (e.g., newsletters, advertisements for the store, etc.). If you are interested, please contact [John Roberts](#) or [Gail Kirby](#). Please see our Membership page to discover our other volunteer opportunities.

Happy Halloween!

