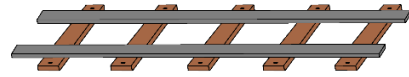


On Track



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If you are receiving this newsletter for the first time, welcome to the fold! We continue to catalog our visitor logs 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. **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:

Current Status: The organization is still looking for a board-member secretary and treasurer, volunteers to help record and track our volunteers' work hours and run and operate the restoration site store so that we can continue our forward progress. Please become an active member and help us out! Your skills and participation are valuable, and we need your help. Reach out to [John Roberts](#) and tell us how you'd like to help. The Bureau of Indian Affairs property immediately to the north of the restoration site is being leveled and the buildings that make up part of our northern perimeter are being torn down. We are actively working with them to make sure our site remains as secure as possible.



The board voted to spend Society funds to reconfigure, replace, and relay the section of track at the restoration site from the engine house to the pit in the belief that this will solve our problems with the locomotive traversing this portion of the track. The track team ordered all the required supplies, which were delivered at the end of December. We now have had the necessary concreted areas cut and removed and the track relay work with Mountain States Contracting was just finished. This effort will cost under \$100,000.

Capital Outlay Corner: We had a setback with the city of Albuquerque fiscal-agent Use Agreement. Although Mr. Roberts signed it last month, the city declined to sign it citing the need for additional clarification. Again, we wait as we have heard nothing as of this writing. Some members of the board have been talking with others in the city's ranks and they are aware of what we're trying to do with those funds but have not taken any action so far. There are lots of people to follow up with after everyone returns to the office after the holidays.

Accomplishments: Between the cold weather and the holidays, work on the locomotive's punch list continues at a relatively slow pace. The turntable crew did make progress and stripped all the hardware and ties off the turntable's deck this month. Kudos to the team and their hard work! We will probably have to wait for the 2023 Capital Outlay funds to continue the turntable restoration work. Work refurbishing the 2926's burner continues.



Profile of a member: Some may say that our organization is a ‘fly-by-night’ kind of group. Others (mostly ourselves) say that, like eagles, we soar to the heavens. Still others may say that we are just plane (yes, I know!) crazy. In any of these cases, we have a certified FAA inspector to chart our course. Obviously, that is our one and only Deputy Chief Mechanical Officer and occasional Assistant Safety Officer, John Cekala!



John is originally a California boy, born in Monterey Park, graduated in 1971 from Cantwell Sacred Heart of Mary High School (appropriately “mascotted” as the Cardinals) in Montebello, and got an associate degree in Aviation Maintenance in 1975 from Mt. San Antonio Junior College in Walnut—all in the Golden State.

He has been looking skyward for most of his life, characterizing his chosen career path as, “Wow! Airplanes!” Although his first degree was in maintenance, his interest was really in piloting, and he got his private pilot’s license in 1972. He worked in civil aviation right out of school and rose through the ranks to become a Senior FAA Inspector in 1978, a job he held until 2021, when he chose trains over planes.

John and his lovely wife, Linda, married in 1976 and they have two daughters, Cynthia Lynn and Kimberly Marie, and three grandchildren. John and Linda moved to Albuquerque in 1976 where he worked for Cutter Flying Service. He particularly remembers Grandma Virginia Cutter, the daughter of Richard Dillion the eighth governor of New Mexico, as the unquestioned boss of the outfit. By 1978, John was the senior inspector for Cutter.

When the economy went south in 2010, John decided to go back to school. He stuck with the aerospace industry, graduating *cum laude* from Emery-Riddell Aeronautical University in 2014 with a BS in technical management and minors in aviation safety and national security assurance.

Linda found out about the 2926 when it was still on the Menaul Blvd. siding and gave John a membership as a birthday present, and he has been a stalwart ever since. Most recently, in addition to his DCMO duties, he has been the steam turbine-driven-dynamo guru, making sure that those rather ancient devices purr like kittens and reliably deliver the 32 volts needed for our expanded electrical system. In addition, John has served on the Board of Directors and has taken a role in helping to chart our likely reorganization as we move from restoration to operations.



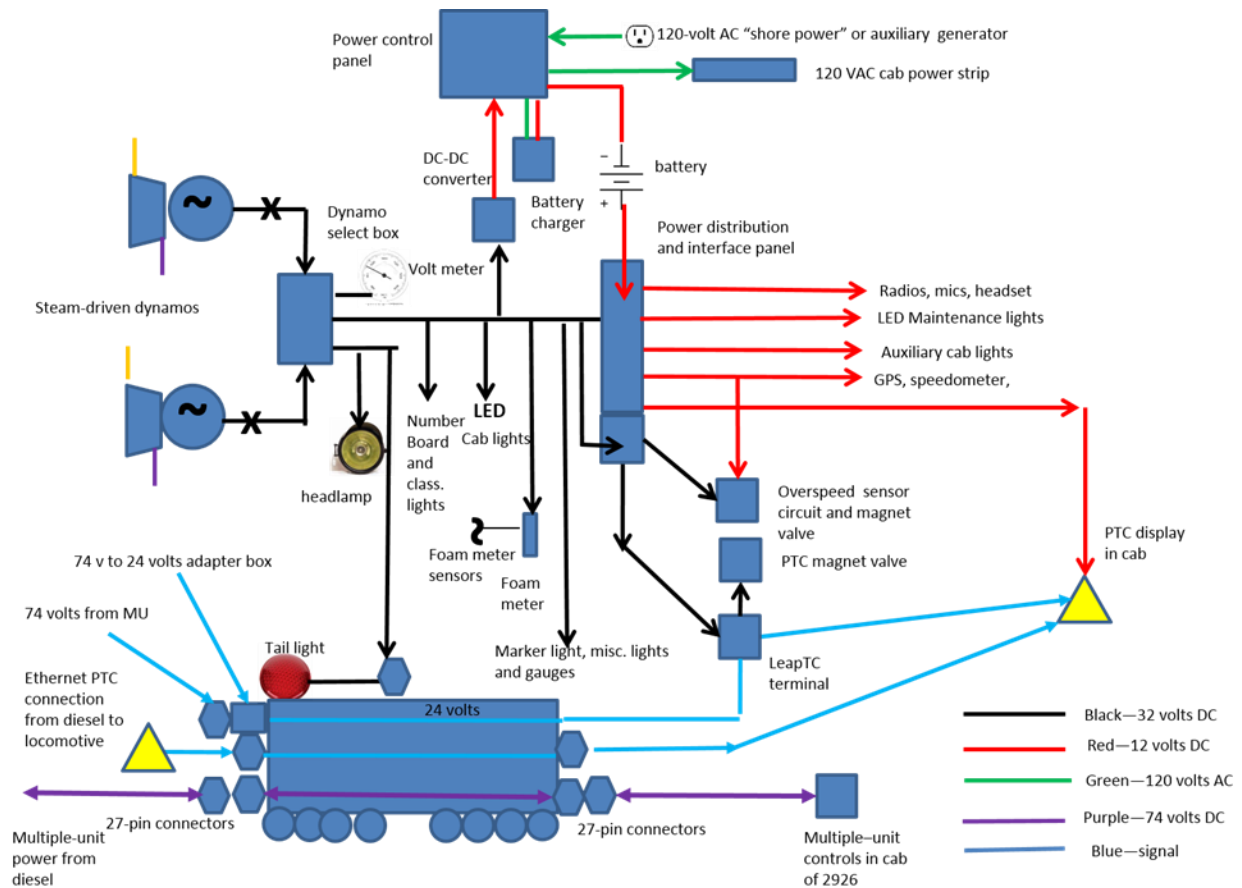
When not working at the 2926 or playing with grandkids, John is designing and constructing a solar-power drone. This remarkable plane has an almost 10-foot wingspan, a 14-inch foldable prop, and a 2.4 GHz computerized radio control system. All of this weighs in at just under five pounds, a remarkable achievement, at least from this author's point of view!

So, if you want a fascinating conversation on any number of topics, track him down (pun intended). A good place to look first is up on the fireman's side walkway, whispering sweet nothings to one or both dynamos!

How does it work: The electrical system on the 2926 when it was delivered in 1944 was relatively simple. There was a single dynamo providing 32 volts DC to run the headlamp, the taillight on the tender, number board lights, the foam meter, and various lights in the cab. All other auxiliaries were powered by either steam or air. Well, times have changed! We now have a much more complex electrical system that uses 32 volts, 12 volts, and 120 volts and must accommodate other voltages ranging from 5 volts for LEDs to 480 volts in the support car.

We added a second dynamo for redundancy, although we never run both at the same time. In addition, a portable 120-volt Honda generator and a standard car battery were added to provide 12-volt power in the absence of shore or dynamo power. If you want to delve more deeply into this system, feel free to check out the brand-new electrical manual which has photos and schematics of all the equipment or just corner Robert Gibson, Bill Reass, or Jerome Adams and they will get you whatever information you desire!

The figure shows a high-level block diagram of the system.



What's new in the store: The store has shirts, caps, books, and knick-knacks that are sure to please. Drop by and see what we have available. (We are working to get our online store up and running. Please be patient!)

A short historical note: One of the best known and most active stops on the eastern plains of New Mexico was and is Clovis. So, where did that name originate. Well, the railhead was originally named Riley's Switch. When a town began to form in the area, the daughter of one of the Santa Fe officials was given the honor of naming it. At the time she was studying medieval European history and had become much enamored with Clovis, the third king of the Merovingian dynasty and widely acknowledged as the first king of what would eventually become France. He unified a major part of what was then Gaul and ruled this part of western Europe from about 482 until his death in 511. He converted to Catholic Christianity and has been credited with converting the northern part of the Roman Empire to that religion.



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.

Happy New Year!

