

# CENTERS

## JANUARY 2024



### IN THIS ISSUE

FP7's #903 and 902 Delivered to SMS Rail.....Different Pages  
 PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS, by Frank Tatnall..... 3-5  
 Miscellaneous News.....6  
 Reading F Unit Heritage Roster.....8

Volume 85

Number 1

Newsletter of the  
 PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER  
 NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.  
 Post Office Box 7302  
 Philadelphia, PA 19101-7302

**Chapter Website: [www.nrhsphiladelphia.org](http://www.nrhsphiladelphia.org)**



**HAPPY  
 NEW  
 YEAR!!  
 They  
 Are  
 Here!!**



On the weekend of January 20-21, former Reading FP7's #903-902 were delivered to SMS Rail Service's yard and Shop at Swedesboro, NJ for overhaul for use on Woods-Town Central Railroad.

*Top photo: David McGuire, Philadelphia Chapter; Bottom: David Homer, West Jersey*

NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER, INC.  
Post Office Box 7302, Philadelphia, PA 19101-7302

*Founded 1936, incorporated 1973 as a 501c3 non-profit corporation*

**CHAPTER WEBSITE:** For current Chapter information, as well as vintage views of Chapter trips and activities, visit website: [www.nrhsphiladelphia.org](http://www.nrhsphiladelphia.org)

**CHAPTER OFFICERS (Elected)**

President.....R. L. Eastwood, Jr. (215) 947-5769  
[reastwood2@comcast.net](mailto:reastwood2@comcast.net)  
Vice President.....John Smith (215) 527-9380  
[jsmithsnf2012@gmail.com](mailto:jsmithsnf2012@gmail.com)  
Secretary.....Marie K. Eastwood (215) 947-5769  
[mkecat@comcast.net](mailto:mkecat@comcast.net)  
Treasurer.....Robert Young (215) 808-5136  
[Rob\\_young@verizon.net](mailto:Rob_young@verizon.net)  
National Representative.....William Welk (215) 681-1957  
[welk899@gmail.com](mailto:welk899@gmail.com)

**COMMITTEE CHAIRS (Appointed)**

Editor.....R. L. Eastwood, Jr. (215) 947-5769  
[reastwood2@comcast.net](mailto:reastwood2@comcast.net)  
Equipment Chair.....David R. McGuire (856) 241-8046  
[emd645e3@verizon.net](mailto:emd645e3@verizon.net)  
Membership Chair.....Sheila A. Dorr (610) 642-2830  
[sheiladorr@gmail.com](mailto:sheiladorr@gmail.com)  
Program Director.....Steve Ferrell (610) 812-1020  
[stfarrel@aol.com](mailto:stfarrel@aol.com)  
Webmaster.....Daniel Knouse (814) 631-9436  
[djknouse@hotmail.com](mailto:djknouse@hotmail.com)  
ZOOM Master.....Eric Dervinis (610) 613-2828  
[eric.dervinis@gmail.com](mailto:eric.dervinis@gmail.com)

**2023-24 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES:** Effective September 1, 2023, \$20.00 per person, which covers Philadelphia Chapter dues through December 31, 2024. (NRHS National membership dues for 2023 are \$50.00, billed directly by NRHS.) NRHS chapters bill their members separately for Chapter dues. Donation requests for Philadelphia Railfriends will be mailed during October, 2023 via separate mailing from *Cinders*. Anyone interested in becoming a member of Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS should forward remittance, payable to **Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS** in the amount of \$20.00 to Post Office Box 7302, Philadelphia, PA 19101-7302. Please be sure to include name, valid mailing address, telephone number and E-mail address, as applicable.

**ADDRESS CHANGES:** Send to Editor Emeritus at Post Office Box 353, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006-0353. (Include your **CURRENT TELEPHONE NUMBER** and **E-MAIL ADDRESS** so our records are complete.) Beginning in early 2023, we will effect electronic delivery of *Cinders* to those who elect to receive same.

*Cinders* is published 11 times a year by Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS, Inc. Correspondence regarding *Cinders* should be directed to the Editor at P.O. Box 353, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006-0353. **EXCHANGE newsletters should be sent to:** R. L. Eastwood, Jr., Editor, P. O. Box 353, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006-0353, or by electronic mail to [reastwood2@comcast.net](mailto:reastwood2@comcast.net).

**WANTED!! Members are invited to submit short railroad or traction history articles (up to one page) for publication in *Cinders*. Please contact R. L. Eastwood, Jr., Editor with complete details on Articles to Post Office Box 353, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006-0353 or by E-mail to [reastwood2@comcast.net](mailto:reastwood2@comcast.net)**

## Philadelphia NRHS Cancels January 18 Meeting; January *Cinders* Delayed

Because of extreme cold and threatening snow forecasts, Philadelphia Chapter cancelled its meeting on Thursday, January 18 in an effort to avoid potential harm to our members. We expect to be able to reschedule Mitch Dakelman's program as weather improves.

This issue of *Cinders* has been delayed as well. The January issue is expected to be sent to the printer on Monday or Tuesday, January 22 or 23, with mailing on Friday, January 26. As a result, the February issue of *Cinders* will be a simple mailing flyer, with our next issue will be prepared for March.

Elsewhere in this issue you will receive the good news that former Reading EMD FP7's #903 and 902 have successfully been delivered to SMS Rail Services.shop and yard in Swedesboro, NJ at the end of the week of January 27.

### If your *Cinders* Arrives in Damaged Condition

If your *Cinders* arrives damaged or with pages missing, contact Editor Larry Eastwood at 215-947-5769 or [ayrestower@comcast.net](mailto:ayrestower@comcast.net) and a replacement copy will be promptly sent to you. The incidence of damage has been virtually eliminated through the use of envelopes for mailing each issue, although there is an additional cost involved.

## 2024 Dues Bills Mailed December 30; 120 Members Renewed by January 19

At the end of 2023, there were 158 regular Philadelphia Chapter members. In addition, there were 28 bills mailed to "Additional Chapter" members and donation requests were sent to 23 supporters of Philadelphia Chapter in the Philadelphia Railfriends category.

As of January 19, 2024, 120 of 158 members were renewed. Letters acknowledging support above and beyond the normal \$20. Dues level for regular members will be sent to them during the week of January 23.

The Chapter's officers are grateful for the generosity of our members.

### February and March *Cinders* Combined

Because of the lateness of this issue of *Cinders*, the February and March issues of *Cinders* will be combined, and may be expected to be mailed near the end of February. Weather and other logistical issues have combined to make normal issuance of this newsletter a bit challenging this year. On Page 6 of this issue, you will find out how to receive *Cinders* electronically each month. Since the mailing price to mail *Cinders* to each member has risen again, this time from 66 cents to 68 cents per copy, it helps your Chapter. This will help Philadelphia Chapter hold the line on costs.

# PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS



FRANK G. TATNALL, JR.

## SEPTA System

SEPTA's longtime chairman Pasquale T. (Pat) Deon, Sr. has decided to retire from the board when his current term expires on February 1. Deon has represented Bucks County for 24 years, and though a Republican on a board dominated by Democrats, he was widely respected and his leadership highly valued. Over the years his close ties with numerous GOP leaders in the State Legislature and elsewhere in government have been of great value to SEPTA.

The mid-December strike by SEPTA's 170-member police force lasted less than three days. When an agreement was reached with the police union on Saturday the 16<sup>th</sup> the officers quickly returned to work, and they ratified the new-three-year contract the following week. SEPTA board members gave it their stamp of approval on December 21.

While employment in the City of Philadelphia is now 2.4% higher than it was in February 2020, the number of non-resident workers (i.e., commuters) is less than three quarters of what it was then. The Center City District, which represents downtown business interests, says that the major part of the decline of non-residents is due to a reduction in the number of office workers, while the healthcare and social service sectors are seeing increases in employment. The *Inquirer* reports that the CCD is recommending that new Mayor Chelle Parker address the city's tax policies and public safety programs while cutting the high poverty rate by creating better employment opportunities. Some former SEPTA riders apparently are staying away from the city due to the wage tax and safety issues. SEPTA ridership now has reached just 68% of pre-pandemic levels.

In early December SEPTA launched its new, improved website, which is said to be much more user-friendly (see October *Cinders*). While somewhat confusing at first glance it is easy to check schedules, fares, service status and current news events. It's noted that the sections containing schedules, fares and service alerts are subdivided into a new "Metro" category which contains subway-elevated and trolley information, then "Bus," "Regional Rail" and "CCT." All of this is easily accessed by clicking on [SEPTA.org](http://SEPTA.org).

SEPTA has performed a "final" redesign of the ambitious project which it likes to call the "Bus Revolution." After many public hearings and revisions the goal now is to implement the plan by the late summer of this year. According to SEPTA publicity the makeover of the system is "designed to work better for more people." The number of routes will be reduced from 125 to 106 but the number of frequently-operating routes with 15-minute or less headways will increase from 33 to 43, the intention being to bring faster and better service to larger numbers of riders.

A front page article in the January 7 *Inquirer* examines the quandary in which SEPTA finds itself, now that Federal COVID relief funding is about to run out. With a \$240-million deficit facing it in the next fiscal year the Authority is already looking at an emergency plan to eliminate that deficit through fare hikes and the slashing of up to 20% of its service. An effort to have the

Legislature increase the share of the state sales tax dedicated to public transit failed in the recent session, which would have brought SEPTA an estimated \$290 million in additional revenues each year. Now, "SEPTA's shaky finances present a leadership test for Governor Shapiro," who previously served as a Montgomery County commissioner, as well as for new Philadelphia Mayor Parker.

SEPTA's 30<sup>th</sup> Street subway station is getting a new name. In the Authority's latest naming rights agreement the station henceforth will be known as "Drexel Station at 30<sup>th</sup> Street." Drexel University, which is prominent in the area, will pay SEPTA \$3.1 million for exclusive rights to the station name for the next five years. The facility is in the midst of a multi-million-dollar renovation, made possible with the help of a \$15-million Federal grant secured in 2018. While the main entrance on the northwest corner of 30<sup>th</sup> & Market Streets is still closed for construction, the entrance at the southwest corner was partially reopened in December. Other entrances are in midblock between 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Streets on the north side of Market Street, and another entrance with elevator at 31st Street. The station is heavily used, providing a gateway to the University City area. It's located just across the street from AMTRAK's 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station.

SEPTA says that its historic green-and-cream PCC cars definitely will return to the rails on Route 15-Girard Avenue sometime during this quarter. It will be recalled that the recently-restored 75-year-old cars were originally scheduled to come back last September, but employee turnover since the cars were removed from service in 2020 resulted in not enough available operators and too few cars for the service. Operators must also be trained to drive buses.

Route 15 will eventually become Route G, under SEPTA's developing "Metro" plan to assign letters to all trolley routes instead of numbers. The Broad Street and Market-Frankford Lines also will be designated as the "B" and "L" routes respectively.

Incidents of violence continued to occur on the SEPTA system during late November, in December and early January. Among the most notable was the shooting by SEPTA police of a man suspected of stabbing two passengers and a private security guard at the Walnut-Locust station of the Broad Street Line on the evening of Monday, November 27. Both the victims and the suspect were treated at Jefferson Hospital. Then on Tuesday morning, December 12, a man was arrested in the stabbing of another man about 9 AM at 69<sup>th</sup> Street Transportation Center. The suspect was captured near the 51<sup>st</sup> Street station after he fled aboard a Market-Frankford train. SEPTA operated shuttle buses to and from 69<sup>th</sup> Street Terminal until train service was resumed about 12:30 PM.

An even worse incident which resulted in death occurred at the 34<sup>th</sup> Street station of the Market-Frankford Line around 4:40 PM on Thursday, January 4. An altercation had broken out between two

(Continued on Page 4)

# PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

(Continued from Page 3)

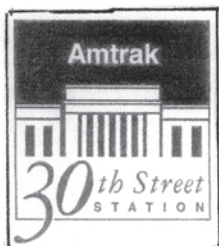
men on the platform. One of them, an apparently homeless man, knocked the other person off the platform and onto the track, where he was struck and killed by an eastbound train. The assailant was quickly arrested by SEPTA police on a nearby street. For a time, train service was suspended and shuttle buses used between the 30<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> Street stations.

A new State law will take the prosecution of crimes committed on or near SEPTA property in Philadelphia out of the hands of District Attorney Larry Krasner. Governor Shapiro signed the legislation as part of a deal to finalize the new State budget. Krasner often has been accused of being too lenient on prosecuting criminals, so now crimes covered by the new law will be handled by the State attorney general, who is given priority to appoint a special prosecutor to investigate and prosecute each case rather than the city's DA. If the State decides not to handle a given case then it will be referred back to Krasner's office.....A Federal Transit Administration proposal would require transit agencies to assess the risks facing their workers and identify strategies to improve worker safety. The proposed rule would cover all transit employees, not just police. "Assaults on transit workers are unacceptable," Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said in a press release (*Trains*).

For some time SEPTA has been planning to replace its Willow Grove station on the Warminster Line, but there have been numerous delays. As mentioned below, it appears that work will soon begin, requiring substantial changes in train schedules due to the fact that the line is single track in this area and the passing siding just north of the station will be taken out of service.

All Regional Rail timetables, except for Cynwyd, were reissued effective Sunday, January 7. Most showed only minor schedule changes, except for Chestnut Hill East, where six midday trains were added to provide hourly weekday service, Warminster which has numerous schedule changes due to construction at the Willow Grove station, and Wilmington-Newark with several adjustments to accommodate AMTRAK bridge work in the Chester area. Systemwide Regional Rail service now is at 77% of pre-COVID levels, while ridership remains at about 58% of pre-pandemic ridership.

A novel self-propelled vehicle known as the "Pop-Up Metro" has been proposed to offer passenger rail service along nine miles of the SEPTA-owned line between West Chester and the SEPTA terminus at Wawa. The lightweight battery-powered vehicle has made successful demonstration runs elsewhere and is supported by the West Chester Borough Council (see October *Cinders*). Of course, SEPTA's willingness to grant trackage rights to Pop-Up Metro is necessary for the operation to get underway, but Chapter Member Henry Posner who chairs the Metro group says that SEPTA has not agreed to grant those rights.



## AMTRAK

Sunday morning December 31 was a bad time to travel the Northeast Corridor. Computer issues caused widespread signal malfunctions, which in turn forced AMTRAK to cancel several trains while others were delayed for up to two hours. Among the cancelled trains were Acelas #2248, 2271 and 2290 and Regional trains #151 and 160. NJ TRANSIT service to and from Trenton was completely disrupted as was the Atlantic City Line, while SEPTA suspended service on its Airport, Chestnut Hill West, Trenton and Wilmington-Newark lines. Shuttle buses were operated between 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station and the Airport during the rail outage. Due to the New Year's weekend, train travel was likely heavier than on a regular Sunday. Normal service was restored on all lines by 11 AM, but with residual delays.

A rare but nasty midwinter rain and windstorm struck the East Coast on Tuesday, January 9, causing numerous disruptions to SEPTA and AMTRAK service. More than two inches of rain were dumped on Philadelphia resulting in river and highway flooding, and the high winds caused more than 300,000 electric customers in the city and suburbs to lose power. Regional Rail suffered many delays and on Tuesday all Paoli-Thorndale trains ran only from Malvern due to fears of flooded track to the west of Malvern. Shuttle busing arrangements were announced. But storm damage including fallen trees then forced SEPTA to cancel *all* Paoli-Thorndale service until early Wednesday afternoon the 10<sup>th</sup>. AMTRAK did manage to operate a few of its Philadelphia-Harrisburg Keystone trains on Wednesday, with delays, as well as *Pennsylvanians* #43 and 42.

SEPTA offered additional service on the weekends of January 13-14 and 20-21 for the Philadelphia Auto Show at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. Extra trains were to be operated on several lines, Chestnut Hill East, Fox Chase, Lansdale-Doylestown, Manayunk-Norristown, Media-Wawa and Paoli-Thorndale.

AMTRAK in December issued a formal request for proposals to replace its aging fleet of Superliner bilevel cars. This is expected to generate a multi-billion-dollar order for equipment that is projected to enter service in the early 2030's. The document outlines Amtrak's requirements for coach seating, sleeping cars, food service and accessibility in its long-distance intercity equipment (*Trains*).

The Federal Railroad Administration has released a list of routes selected for the first step in its Corridor Identification & Development Program. The list includes 69 potential future AMTRAK routes, possible extensions of present routes, and future high-speed rail systems. Most of the possible routes are corridor services that would require state support, but also included are the tri-weekly New York-Washington-Chicago *Cardinal* and the New Orleans-Los Angeles *Sunset Limited* which would be operated with more frequency.

This new list is only the first phase in a process that could take seven to ten years before service might begin on any of the new lines. Among local area routes included in the FRA list are Wilmington-Dover, DE to Salisbury-Berlin, MD, as well as two others that have been in the works for years: Reading-Philadelphia-New York and Scranton-New York. Both of the latter routes have active local groups promoting them. In fact, the Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority, which is charged with restoring train service between Reading and Philadelphia, has hired the consulting firm AECOM to begin preparation of a service development plan for the route. This study would be part of the FRA's requirement to produce plans for any of the routes included in the corridor development program (see above) and comes with a \$500,000 grant (*Trains*).

(Continued on Page 5)

# PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS (Continued from Page 4)

AMTRAK engineers who belong to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen voted in December to ratify a new seven-year contract which provides a 30% general wage increase and numerous other benefits. Amtrak has more than 1,400 locomotive engineers over its 46-state system.....AMTRAK has tried out one of its retired HHP-8 ex-electric locomotives to serve as cab car on a Harrisburg train, as a possible replacement for the old Metroliner cab cars. The pantograph on the HHP-8 has been removed. The 15 units were built by Bombardier-Alstom in 1998-99 but all were retired during the following decade due to reliability problems. The existing cab cars were built by Budd in the late 1960's.

AMTRAK issued a long list of train cancellations for January 9 and 10 due to the severe storm that slammed into the East Coast (see above). Included in the cancellations were two Keystone round-trips between Philadelphia and Harrisburg on Tuesday the 9<sup>th</sup> and ten round-trips on Wednesday. On the Corridor Amtrak's list of cancellations on Tuesday included two Acela trips in their entirety and two partially cancelled. On Wednesday two Acelas were cancelled entirely and another scrubbed from Boston to New York. One Northeast Regional train was completely cancelled, one other partially cancelled and three other northbound trains cancelled only within Virginia.

CSX has unveiled its 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Heritage locomotives painted in the colors of predecessor railroads. CSX #1871 sports Atlantic Coast Line's classic aluminum and Royal Purple scheme, while #1853 is a salute to the New York Central Railroad's lightning stripe scheme. The unit numbers reflect the years in which the railroads were founded (*High Green, Trains*).

CONRAIL ran a special Santa Train from Camden to Haddon Heights, NJ on Saturday, December 16, over its ex-Reading Clementon branch. With equipment borrowed from Bennett Levin's JUNIATA TERMINAL, the train consisted of JTCX MP15AC #9615, parlor car *Warrior Ridge*, office car *Pennsylvania* 120 and on the north end famed E8A #5711 in full Pennsy livery.

Five passengers were taken to the hospital after an NJ TRANSIT bus was struck by a light rail train near the Walter Rand Transportation Center in Camden on the morning of Thursday, December 7. The bus, enroute from Atlantic City, had 50 passengers on board while the train had no passengers (*Trains*).

READING & NORTHERN has announced that it moved more than one million tons of coal in 2023, reaching that goal for the first time in 38 years. While the burning of coal in the U.S. is way down from what it was in past years, due to economic and environmental pressures, it should be understood that R&N hauls anthracite coal from Pennsylvania's large deposits of this mineral that contains a much higher carbon content than bituminous or "soft" coal. Anthracite is not used for power generation but mainly for industrial purposes such as steel and other metals production. It represents only about 1% of all coal mined in the U.S., and much of it is used overseas, which accounts for the heavy flow of coal from R&N origins to the Port of Baltimore.

The East Broad Top steam tourist railroad will be in regular operation this season, but due to maintenance demands on its only operating steam locomotive EBT will not hold its popular Winter Spectacular in February. Still, Baldwin-built 2-8-2 #16, currently EBT's only operating locomotive, will be ready for Easter Train

service in March, and for the regular season beginning in May. The railroad will begin restoration work this year on one of its five other stored Mikados. The narrow-gauge EBT, based at Rockhill Furnace, PA, was reopened in 2019 after it was acquired by the non-profit EBT Foundation. The railroad operates over about five miles of its former 33-mile right-of-way but is planning to open more mileage for train operation.

The Woodstown Central tourist line in South Jersey now has Alco-built 0-6-0 steam locomotive #9 certified for operation this season. The ex-Virginia Blue Ridge locomotive has been based during the winter at the SMS Rail Services shop near Bridgeport. SMS, famed for its large fleet of Baldwin diesel locomotives, has taken over part of the former PRSL Salem branch for its passenger operations (*High Green*).....Famed ex-Norfolk & Western J-class 4-8-4 #611, which recently visited the STRASBURG RAIL ROAD, has been honored with a listing on the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places. The celebrated locomotive is owned by the Virginia Museum of Transportation in Roanoke.

The thousands of people who over the past 84 years have helped write and edit Trains Magazine can now be recognized for the outstanding job they have done. The occasion is publication of the February issue of *Trains*—which is Issue #1,000 of the magazine. It was founded by Al Kalmbach in 1940. A special expanded edition is promised for this milestone event, including a review of major happenings in railroading over the long life of the magazine. Said Editor Carl Swanson, "I'll leave you with this thought. Very few magazines make it to 1,000 issues. Perhaps as few as 50 magazines have ever reached this number. Kalmbach Media now has two of them. Thank you for being part of our success story." (The other long-lived Kalmbach magazine is *Model Railroader*.)

NORFOLK SOUTHERN reports that it partnered last year with many different customers to complete 62 new industrial development projects along its lines. NS provided a list of some of the new customers locating on its railroad, including Scout Motors which will invest \$2 billion in a new state-of-the-art plant in South Carolina to build electric automobiles. Several new EV battery plants are being located on NS in South Carolina, Indiana and Michigan by General Motors, Ford and Samsung. A variety of other facilities making everything from cat litter to cement to lumber are also being planned along NS lines (*Trains*).

## Important Phone Numbers

*Cinders* lists below the telephone numbers which should be used to report suspicious sightings, emergencies or other conditions affecting rail operations, including trespassers, vandalism, fires, defective equipment, etc.

<b>AMTRAK</b>	<b>800-331-0008</b>
<b>CSX</b>	<b>800-232-0144</b>
<b>CONRAIL Shared Assets</b>	<b>800-272-0911</b>
<b>NJ TRANSIT (NJ only)</b>	<b>800-242-0236</b>
<b>NORFOLK SOUTHERN</b>	<b>800-453-2530</b>
<b>PATCO Transit</b>	<b>856-963-7995</b>
<b>SEPTA</b>	<b>215-580-8111</b>

(Members may wish to photocopy and or clip this notice and keep a copy in your wallet as you are out watching or riding trains. Please send corrections to the Editor.)

**SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING!**

## DO WE HAVE YOUR CURRENT AND/OR CORRECT E-MAIL ADDRESS?

*More and more Chapter members have changed their monthly delivery of CINDERS to electronic delivery. As of this issue, more than 87 members have signed up for eCINDERS.*

*You are hereby notified that, for the second time in less than a year the United States Postal Service has increased the price of a First Class stamp to 68 cents for the first ounce, First Class, effective on Sunday, January 22, 2024. This follows the increase from 63 cents to 66 cents which took effect on Sunday, July 9, 2023 .*

*It is more important now that we have on file your CURRENT and CORRECT E-mail address. To that end, we would ask that you E-mail your correct and current E-mail address to [mkecat@comcast.net](mailto:mkecat@comcast.net) upon receipt of this issue of CINDERS.*

*We need to control the cost of mailing CINDERS to both members and, more importantly, to "exchange" newsletter recipients, from whom we have no revenue source.*

MARIE K. EASTWOOD, Secretary  
Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS  
January 22, 2024

## Program Director Steve Ferrell Seeking to Update 2024 Chapter Update Meeting Programs

**As we enter our 2024 Chapter Meeting Program year, Program Director Steve Ferrell is updating his program schedule for 2024. Please get in touch with him to confirm your program availability for this Year. Contact Steve as follows:**

**Steven Ferrell, Chapter Program Director  
Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS  
315 Gwynedd Court  
EXTON, PA 19341-1498**

**610-812-1020  
[stferrel@aol.com](mailto:stferrel@aol.com)**

## PHILLIP BROOKS BUSH II January 13, 2024

Captain Philip Brooks Bush II (Retired), 93, of Washington, DC dies on Saturday, January 13, 2024 at Brighton Gardens of Friendship Heights in Chevy Chase, MD. Known as Phil in his Washington circles and as Brooks among friends and family in his hometown of Lenoir, NC.

He was a graduate of Central High School Lenoir), Lenoir-Rhyne College (Hickory, NC) and Georgetown University) (master's degree). In high school, he was proud to have been in the Young Republicans Club with future U. S. Senator James T. Broyhill. Phil served honorably in the U.S. Navy, retiring as a Captain in the U. S. Naval Reserve. In civilian life, he served as chief budget officer for the Navy at the Pentagon, retiring at 55 in 1986, but not before his final budget was complete.

Retiring was when the fun really took off. No one loved trains and railroads more than Phil. His lifelong hobby took him all over the continent collecting thousands of miles on Amtrak rail lines and enjoying hundreds of excursions on steam trains, diesel engines and electric-powered locomotives.

In the process, he made many friends and associates on adventures all over the United States. It was a glorious sight to see them all racing around to get the best possible picture angles when the special trains would stop to let everyone off, backtrack and then race by for close-ups. He took his brother and nephew with him in 1994 for the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the driving of the Golden Spike at Promontory Point in Utah. His very last train adventure included a trip on a Sugar Cane plantation rail line in Florida as well as a ride on AutoTrain.

## VRE Budget Approved; Saturday Service, Fare Increase

The Virginia Railway Express Fiscal Year 2025 budget received final approval on January 11, 2024 as the second of its to parent commissions voted to adopt the budget and accompanying six-year capital improvement program.

VRE's FY 2025 operating budget totals \$119.9 million, which includes operations, maintenance and existing debt service. This is an increase of \$11.0 million or 10 percent over the FY 2024 operating budget. The budget includes increases to fares of 5 percent and jurisdictional contributions of 14 percent. Both take effect July 1 VRE's last broad based fare increase was 3 percent in FY 2020.

The budget allows for the first ever operation of VRE Saturday service, eliminates fares for those ages 18 and under, and simplifies fare payment options. Agreements with VRE's host railroads – Amtrak, CSX Transportation and Norfolk Southern – must be reached before Saturday service can begin.



READING COMPANY FP7A DIESEL LOCOMOTIVES #900-901 NEW AT ELECTRO-MOTIVE DIVISION OF GENERAL MOTORS CORPORATION AT LA GRANGE, ILLINOIS, MAY, 1950



## Information About the Reading Company's "F" Units

The development of the "F" unit by the Electro-Motive Division of General Motors was the key to the mass dieselization of America's railroads. The Reading Company, which was one coal-hauling railroad to sample dieselization early, bought its first F units in 1945, when it purchased 10 EMD FTA and 10 FTB units for use in freight service. These first road diesels were acquired by the Reading to increase freight tonnage, as well as eliminate expensive steam helper locomotives which were used along the route we will follow today, west of Tamaqua.

In 1948, the Reading purchased 6 each EMD F3A and F3B units to assist in the program which ultimately would lead to complete dieselization, except for the retention of a few steam locomotives for peak traffic periods. In May, 1950, 24 more units were obtained (18 F7A units and 6 F7B units), all for use in freight service. In May and June, 1950, the units you are riding behind on our excursion today were acquired for exclusive use in passenger service. These units were EMD FP7A's, developing 1500 horsepower each, geared for a top speed of 89 miles per hour, and containing a steam generator in each unit for supplying train heat. The six units acquired during these two months were followed by two more FP7A's in September, 1952. This permitted the Reading to use these high-speed locomotives on their premier passenger trains in order to afford the traveler the ultimate in speed and comfort.

Of a total of 64 EMD F units built for the Reading, all but three have been turned in on newer, higher horsepower, second generation freight diesel locomotives to provide fast schedules for moving today's products to their marketplaces. Two are used daily on a passenger round trip between Reading and Philadelphia (Trains 4 and 7), with the third unit acting as a replacement when servicing is needed.

The Philadelphia Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society salutes these veterans of thousands of railroad miles as we ride behind them on our journey today.

## Roster of the Reading Company's Electro-Motive Division "F" Units

Railroad Class	Roster Numbers	Model	Horse-power	Weight	Manufacturer's Builder #	Date Built	Remarks
DF-1	250A-259A	FTA	1350	230,500#	2807-2816	1-2/1945	All turned in on GP30's 3600-3619
DF-1	250B-259B	FTB	1350	227,200#	2817-2826	1-2/1945	All turned in on GP30's 3600-3619
DF-2	260A-265A	F3A	1500	246,100	6182-6187	11/1948	All turned in on GP35's 3620-3625
DF-2	260B-265B	F3B	1500	246,100	6188-6193	11/1948	All turned in on GP35's 3626-3655
DF-4	266A-283A	F7A	1500	247,400	9802-9819	5/1950	All turned in on GP35's 3626-3655
DF-4	266B-271B	F7B	1500	247,400	9820-9825	5/1950	All turned in on GP35's 3626-3655
DP-1	900-905	FP7A	1500	255,100	11387-11392	5-6/1950	901 turned in on new unit in 1970; 904, 905 retired in 1965-66
DP-1	906-907	FP7A	1500	255,100	16681-16682	9/1952	906 retired, turned in on an 7600-series SD45 in 1967; 907 retired, turn in to EMD 1970.

SOUVENIR OF THE "KING COAL SPECIAL," FROM READING TO SHAMOKIN, PENNSYLVANIA  
VIA READING RAILROAD, SUNDAY, MAY 21, 1972

