

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE RED RIVER VALLEY RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

October, 2013

SHREVEPORT, LA

Our 32nd Year

Where Can You Take A Train Ride ?

Many people that visit our Shreveport Railroad Museum have never ridden on a passenger train, or have not ridden on one since they were a child. Since there has been no passenger train service in Shreveport for over 40 years, and not much chance that Amtrak will ever have a station here, they assume that they will never have that opportunity. However, there are several options for a “Day Trip” on a passenger train within 100 miles of Shreveport. Take advantage of our fall weather and make a few railroad memories!



(Texas State Railroad Photo)

As you may know, the **Texas State Railroad** is not owned by the State of Texas anymore. The state's parks and wildlife department successfully ran the railroad until the management was privatized with a contract with American Heritage Railways in September of 2007. In August of 2012 American Heritage Railways sold the Texas State Railroad to Iowa Pacific Holdings, the current owner.

Roundtrip steam train excursions are scheduled on Saturday and Sunday through November 10 this year. One of their historic steam engines depart from both the Palestine and Rusk depots at 11:00 a.m. and return at 3:30 p.m. The trip is 1 ½ hours each way with 1 ½ hours lunch layover at the opposite depot for a total 4 ½ hour experience. Box lunches are available for pre-order, or you may bring your own lunch. Beverages and snacks are available for purchase in the concession car. Also, there is now an option to ride “half-way”. You leave the depot at 11:00, ride for 45 minutes, then change trains and return to the depot from which you departed. The transfer takes place at the half way point where the two trains pass one another. This is a good option for young children because the total train ride is only 1 ½ hours. Your Editor did this with his 2 year old grandson recently and it was a great “first train ride”.

Last Saturday Texas & Pacific steam engine 316 (nee 201), a 4-6-0 ten-wheeler, was the Palestine-based engine, and 2-8-0 Consolidation engine 300 was the one from Rusk. Both looked and sounded great! The coaches and other facilities are in very good shape, and the staff is very friendly and helpful as usual.

Also, there is now an organization called the Texas State Railroad Society (www.tsrrsociety.org) that has a great museum/gift shop at the Palestine depot. Please consider joining that organization whose mission is to educate and preserve the history and the environment of the Texas State Railroad by supporting its function.

They are having a ***“Pumpkin Patch Express”*** on Saturdays and Sundays from October 5 through October 27th departing from Rusk only. Their website says: ***“Pick your own pumpkin, visit Trick or Treat Street, and enjoy a hayride, games, live entertainment and more! Kids don’t forget to wear your costumes! Lunches are not included for this event; a food vendor will be available at the pumpkin patch.”*** Call 1-877-726-7245 or go to www.TexasStateRR.com for all schedules, fares and reservations.



Surprisingly, you can go online and buy an **Amtrak** ticket from Shreveport to any of the more than 500 Amtrak stations across the United States! However, this example of a “day trip” will focus on Dallas Union Station as a destination. Other destinations can be hours or days away.

If you purchase a ticket from Shreveport to Dallas, the first leg will be a bus ride from the Shreveport Regional Airport to the Amtrak station in Longview, Texas. The bus leaves at 6:45 a.m. and arrives in Longview at 8:00 a.m. where you would board Amtrak Train 21 (the *Texas Eagle*) at 8:28 a.m. Scheduled arrival at Dallas Union Station is 11:30 a.m. You can spend about 3 hours “looking around” Dallas and then board Amtrak Train 22 back to Longview at 3:40 p.m., arriving at the Shreveport Regional Airport at 7:45 p.m. The cost for an adult ticket is \$23.00 each way, or \$46.00 total. Senior rates are slightly less.

Another option, which eliminates the bus ride and increases the length of the train ride is to drive to Marshall. This is the option that your Editor prefers. The photos above were taken from the Marshall Depot balcony. You can park free at the Amtrak Station/T&P Depot Museum and see Texas & Pacific Steam Engine No. 400 and a Union Pacific caboose which are on static display there. Amtrak Train 21 is scheduled to arrive Marshall at 7:50 a.m. daily on its way to Dallas, and at 7:01 p.m. on the return trip.

Schedules and costs must be verified by contacting Amtrak at 1-800-USA-RAIL or www.amtrak.com

Amtrak's reputation for not being on time is well known. However, it has improved significantly and you can check actual performance history by calling Amtrak or going to their website. Take a book to read, your camera and enjoy a day of train riding and people watching!



The **Historic Jefferson Railway** in Jefferson, Texas is great fun for kids and adults alike. Plus, Jefferson has many other attractions including a boat ride, many antique stores, a model train store and several restaurants. Their steam locomotive is currently undergoing extensive repairs so they have commissioned an antique gas-powered locomotive, the *Critter*, into service. The *Critter* is a gas-powered Plymouth locomotive built in 1964. The train ride takes you through the beautiful woods and wetlands along the Big Cypress Bayou. They are having a special event in October as described on their website:

For the ultimate Halloween experience, be sure to goblin' up tickets to the 12th Annual Runaway Fright Train each Friday and Saturday October 5-26, 2013 and Thursday, Halloween evening, October 31, 2013. The Runaway Fright Train and Halloween Festival is a family-friendly event for ages 2 to 92. This Halloween Theater on Wheels is professionally directed by East Texas Performing Arts and will feature "Warriors from Outer Space". As you ride through the dark woods in this 45-minute trip, the scenes and hauntings will keep you at the edge of your seat and give you a laugh now and then, too. For information call 1-866-398-2038 or go to www.jeffersonrailway.com

Fish Fry on October 19

Instead of having our regular meeting on Friday, October 18 we will have a short business meeting and a Fish Fry at the McNeill Street Pumping Station on Saturday, October 19. The address is 142 N. Common St. in Shreveport. You will be able to tour both the Shreveport Railroad Museum and the Shreveport Water Works Museum. We will have fish, shrimp, hush puppies, cold slaw, etc. The time is from 3 to 7 p.m., and we will eat about 5 p.m. The cost is \$8.00 per attendee, and you can pay when you get there. If you would like to bring a dessert or other dish, please call Gary at 631-9164. **Bring a friend!**

Upcoming Events

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| Oct. 4 | First Friday Railroad Photography Meeting – 7:30 pm at the Shreveport Water Works Museum/Railroad Museum – 142. N. Common Street |
| Oct. 12 | LSUS Pioneer Heritage Day – 10 am to 4 pm – RRVrHS will have a display set up |
| Oct. 19 | RRVRHS Fall Fish Fry at the Waterworks/RR Museum – 3 pm to 7 pm - \$8 per person |

The President's Message – October 2013

Hello Railfans !

Since our last meeting several events have happened. One of the things I reported to the members was that we received a letter from Jerry Huddleston and Robson Farms informing us that we would have to move the Caspiana Railroad Depot from their property. The depot has been stored on their property for the last 9 years rent free. They have done us a very big favor allowing us to use their land, but according to the contract that we signed we now have 90 days to move the depot. Dave Bland and I met recently with Mr. Huddleston out at the land to discuss the move. I asked if there was any way we could continue to store the depot there because we are expecting to move the building to the McNeill Street Pumping Station in a few months. Mr. Huddleston and 2 members of his group said they would discuss the possibility with the other members of Robson Farms. I have not heard a reply as of today. We have already made arrangements to move the depot to another temporary location in about 30 days if we still must move it.

Another matter is my sad duty to inform everyone that Bill Hashieder's wife Pat passed away Monday about 4 a.m. By the time you read this the services will have already occurred. Please keep Bill in your thoughts and prayers.

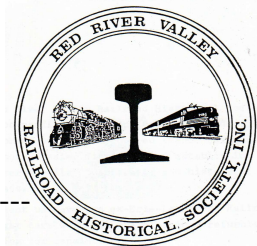
On a more pleasant point it is time for our annual Fish Fry which will be held at the museum on Saturday, October 19 from 3 to 7 p.m. We have a new room to eat in and it will be a very nice place to rest and eat fish. Please make plans to attend. We will be calling to get a head count about a week before the event. Hoping to see you there!

Happy Railroading!
Russell

RED RIVER VALLEY RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Shreveport, LA www.rrvrhs.org

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Note - Dues Will Be Increasing from \$16.50 to \$20.00 in 2014
(The date beside your name on the newsletter envelope indicates the latest year you have paid your dues)

Please send a check or money order for \$20.00 with this membership form to Bill Hasheider at 6813 Despot Road, Shreveport, LA 71108

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

If you would like to see the newsletter in color and save the Society money by receiving it through email instead of snail-mail, please notify your Editor at DDBland@aol.com