



MRHC Newsletter

Milwaukee Road Heritage Center
301 State Road Suite 1, Montevideo, MN 56265
montevideomrhc.org

June 2007

FIRST ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE DURING FIESTA DAYS

SATURDAY JUNE 16, 2007
12PM TO 3 PM FIESTA PARADE AT 4 PM

Pop, hotdogs, dilly bars will be available for sale. Depot, model railroad building and rail yard will be open to the public.

Souvenirs and gift items will be available for sale.

DRAWINGS for the proceeds to the roundhouse building fund will be Sunday June 17, 2007 at 2pm. Need not be present to win. I have copied a ticket drawing below if you would like to purchase a ticket just send in your address stub along with the \$10.00 per ticket.

Name _____
Address _____
Phone _____

"Hobo" Sweepstakes
Proceeds to Roundhouse Building Fund

1st PRIZE: CHILDREN'S PLAYHOUSE
8'X8'

2nd PRIZE: \$100.00

3rd PRIZE: \$50.00

Drawing on Sunday, June 17, 2007
2:00 pm at Milwaukee Road Depot

001-3CMRHC

REMINDER KEEP IN TOUCH WITH UPDATES AT www.montevideomrhc.org

From the President's Desk
John Givan

Greetings from sunny, unseasonably warm Montevideo.

As I sit down at my computer to write this column, the mercury has climbed into the upper 80s here on the H&D Division. Summer is upon us, it would seem.

We have many projects on our "to do" list this summer. The control house on the turntable needs repainting, the interior of our 200-ton crane X-19 needs to be cleaned up and painted, the grounds around the roundhouse need to be cleaned up, track needs to be laid from the turntable to the sand house, and on and on. We need some strong backs and strong arms, so those of you who live within a reasonable distance of Montevideo are more than welcome to show up and lend a hand.

Wednesday nights are work nights, beginning around 6 p.m. How much we get done depends on how many show up to work. Saturday work days might be something we will consider, although the summer is busy for many of the

board members and weekends are reserved for families. Any thoughts out there?

The model railroad is making progress slowly but surely. We have laid much of the track on the lower level and are proceeding with the two helixes that will allow the mainline to spiral up to the top level where Montevideo in the fall of 1953 will be recreated (as closely as possible). This is a project that will take a couple of years, but should be well worth the time and expense that goes into it. It will be a nice attraction for the public.

Speaking of public attractions, we will host an open house Saturday, June 16, during Fiesta Days. The Grande Day parade is scheduled for 4 p.m. and there should be a lot of people in town. We will have a “train” in the parade. Board members (and any other volunteers) will be at the depot and in the yard between noon and 3 p.m. to give tours and tell people about our museum project. I would like this to become an annual event.

By the 16th we hope to have the newest addition to our collection on hand. Xcel Energy (formerly Northern States Power Company) is giving us an SW-1 switcher. It is in operating condition and will be a great addition. Also, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway is donating a half-cab training unit to us. The unit is in Kansas City and is used to train locomotive engineers. We plan to have it shipped from Kansas City to Montevideo sometime in June.



Right Front view of the half cab.



Inside view of the half cab.

Current plans are to place the half-cab in the roundhouse. We have cleaned out several pits in the roundhouse and plan to do additional concrete work. We are also going to lay in some plumbing for bathrooms. Our roundhouse restoration fund has nearly \$19,000 in it, although that will decrease considerably once we start the concrete work. Donations are always welcome. We are working with a grant writer to pursue the “big bucks” we are going to need to erect a building. It is an exciting prospect to look forward to.

As always, we appreciate the support of our members. We are embarked on a tremendously worthwhile undertaking here in Montevideo, one that has the potential to become a major attraction in the future. With your continued assistance, we are confident that future will be here sooner rather than later. New members are vital if we are to continue what we are embarked upon, so please put in a good word for us among your friends, family and business associates

The picture to the right is a loader placing a container filled with identity-preserved soybeans on a railcar at the North Star Rail Intermodal facility located in the former rail yard at Montevideo. The North Star facility is designed to load agricultural products into empty containers for shipment to overseas markets. Ag products are expected to come from throughout western Minnesota and the eastern Dakotas.



Speaking of the future, there is reason to believe the future will be very bright for a new business that has started up on the site of the former rail yard here. North Star Intermodal LLC began operations in early April, shipping containers loaded with agricultural commodities to the West Coast. The Twin Cities & Western Railroad has been taking at least one train a week to the Twin Cities for interchange with CP Rail. Expectations are that this traffic will eventually grow to at least five trains a week within a couple of years. Montevideo has not seen so much rail activity in many years. This could prove to be a huge benefit for the community and the MRHC.

And finally, the MRHC will be in attendance at the MRHA convention in Elgin, Ill. Bob Lark will be there with membership information as well as a few items to sell. I would love to be at the convention, but my wife has informed me that our niece's wedding in Des Moines that weekend takes precedence.

A TRIP I SHALL NEVER FORGET

By Jerry Ross

On July 31, 1947, I made my seniority date as a locomotive fireman on an L-2r 2-8-2 steam locomotive, no. 607, with engineer Fred Happy on the Milbank, S.D., helper job to Summit, S.D.

A lot of snow fell during the winter of 1947 and 1948. In early spring 1948 the snow was melting quickly. We were called for 6 a.m. With engine no. 1173, a G-6 4-6-0 hand-fired steam engine.

We proceeded from Milbank down the eastbound main 11 miles to Ortonville, Minn., then north to Fargo, N.D., some 118 miles away.

With 18 cars and a combination car on the tail, we doubled our train to the top of the hill out of Ortonville to the doubling track 1 mile out of town. Then we went back for the rear cut and returned to pick up the head end cut and we were on our way, stopping at every station.

We spent two to three hours switching at Wahpeton, N.D., where there was a coal plant. We lined up a string of empties on the south leg of the wye to be picked up going south the next day.

The last station before Fargo was Wild Rice, N.D., where we would pick up the U.S. Mail.

I should mention that the throttle on a steam engine was sacred to an engineer, especially when they had a young kid as a fireman.

When leaving Wild Rice at 7 p.m., I could not help but think what a warm and nice day it was. I had just got done throwing in 10 shovels of coal in the firebox, looking at the steam gauge showing 180 pounds of pressure, which is what that engine carried. Then I heard the engineer setting the air and wondered, Why? As I climbed up on the seat box and looked out the window, I knew.

Around the curve on the engineer's side, we stopped short of a 16-foot-high trestle. I saw water rushing across the ball of the rail; a stream 100-feet wide.

The engineer (I would say he weighed about 160 pounds) stopped and said, "Jerry, I'll walk across and see that the ties are all in. Then, when I walk across, I will give you an easy sign. You then release the brakes and just crack the throttle."

I was young and naïve, and I did what I was told. So here I was my first time with my hand on the throttle with an engineer on the other side giving me a signal to come ahead easy.

So with water splashing against the drivers and train wheels of a 125-ton locomotive and 15 cars, I was on my way. Yes, I was on my way on a day I shall never forget. When I got to the other side, he boarded the engine, said I did a good job, and off the seat I went, back to shoveling coal.

Three hours later we were done switching Fargo.

I can never remember him ever letting me run an engine for him again, steam or diesel, although I think he was a good person.