



**Heart of the Heartlands Corporation**  
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**January 2017 Newsletter**  
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Welcome to the first Heart of the Heartlands newsletter for 2017! My name is Brad Bourbina and for as long as you will have me or until my appointment expires, whichever comes first. I do apologize for the delay in producing the newsletter; I've been quite busy this past week. I hope you can forgive the delay and can be patient as I get into the swing of things. I would like to extend a huge thank you to John and Linda Shomin for producing this newsletter for the last several years. I hope I can come close to filling their shoes in the months to come. As a side note, if I get anyone's name wrong in this or future newsletters, please let me know.

With all that being said, on to the news!

The January meeting was called to order by President Larry Spahn on 11 January at 7:00 PM with the following members in attendance: Jack Evans, John and Linda Shomin, Brad Bourbina, Denzil and Ivan Voorhees, Joe Murphy, John Chambers, Kathy and Larry Spahn, Bryson Spahn, Brian and Dawn Carlson, Brenda and Guy Ferguson, Bill Gillfillan, Mike and Connie Payton, Russel Parsons, and Michael Sheward.

**Minutes:** The minutes of the November annual meeting were approved as presented. (Jack Evans, John Shomin)

**Treasurer's Report:** The Treasurer provided two reports at the meeting. The first was a Checking Accounts Statement for the 2016 year, showing revenues and expenditures for all of 2016. The second was a statement of current deposits and expenditures for November and December 2016. The reports were approved as presented. (Michael Sheward, Joe Murphy)

The following items will be from Larry Spahn's meeting agenda with other notes on discussions that took place during the meeting.

**Donations:** Bob Still donated several pieces of Frisco china for display, and Frances Brown donated several ATSF/BN items for display as well.

#### **Old Business:**

**Gavilon Grain Engine:** I had several discussions with Gavilon Grain regarding a former CN&W GP9 locomotive the company was using to switch their facility in Wichita, KS. The engine was unique in that it still had the original high-short-hood and would have made a nice display piece at Carona. Unfortunately, Gavilon found a potential buyer who wanted to use the locomotive as a switcher, so the acquisition fell through. The gentleman from Gavilon, Scott Sorrows, did seem quite enthusiastic about our desire to preserve the locomotive and agreed to give me a call if any other candidates for preservation came to his attention.

The next few notes are from Larry Spahn:

**Empire District Electric Company Alco:** The Abilene and Smokey Valley Railroad, a 501-c-3 group has expressed an interest in the Alco engine which is part of the donation to the Heartlands from the Empire District Electric Co. John Chambers, Dave Parker and myself met with Joe Minick and several members of the group at the Asbury plant to view the site and inspect the engine in December. After discussing the disposition of the engine with Empire District officials as to our donating the engine to the Abilene and Smokey Valley group, they stated that they had no problems with the donation as the engine will be put to good use by the group. Joe Minick called after the visit and said that they were very interested in acquiring the engine and that they were looking at moving the engine to their location in Abilene where the Alco could be restored and possibly put back into operation as a backup engine at their railroad museum. Their plans are to come down in June with members of their staff and disconnect the trucks and traction motors from the engine body and move each component separately. More information to come as the project progresses.

**Watco Christmas Ride: First Graders Ride:** A “Polar Express” style train ride was provided to first grade students of Colgan and Pittsburg Schools. Over 350 students along with their teachers and aides arrived at Elm and Monroe Streets at 8:30am to board the Watco passenger train. The students were dressed in their pajamas and each had a “Golden Ticket” which kept members of the Heartlands, who were dressed as conductors, very busy punching their tickets. Watco employees passed out sugar cookies and a bottle of water to each student. Santa Claus was waiting along the tracks to wave at the students. He was in a bucket truck provided by Westar Energy so all of the students could see and wave back at him. Christmas music was heard in each of the coaches over the intercom system and everyone joined in singing along. The ride lasted for one hour and everyone had a great time. As the students got off of the train each one was given an “I Believe Bell” as a souvenir of the ride. Heartland members assisting in the ride were Jim McKeel, Denzil and Ivan Voorhees, John Chambers, Dave Parker and Larry Spahn. Several Watco employees also assisted in making the ride a fun experience that each student will remember for a long time.

**Kansas City Southern Holiday Express Train:** Several members of the Heart of the Heartlands volunteered to assist as elves for the train when it visited Pittsburg, Kansas on the evening of December 15<sup>th</sup>. The Southern Belle passenger train that pulls the Holiday Express is provided by the KCS. The train which is staffed by volunteers from the KCS Historical Society was parked on the Watco trackage at Monroe and Elm Streets. This area provides a well-lighted, paved area for the public to safely view and visit the train. Despite the cold and windy conditions over 1835 persons visited the train, the number is down from last year but was most likely due to several schools having their Christmas programs the same evening. Watco Companies are also a long time sponsor of the Holiday Train. Heartland members that dressed as elves were; Joe Carlson, John Chambers, Darrel Cave, Denzil and Ivan Voorhees, Nick Ybarra and his friend Theresa Singleton and Kathy and Larry Spahn. Heartland member, Bob Still, was aboard the KCS train from the starting point in Shreveport to the final destination of Union Station in Kansas City. That is a lot of train riding and a whole lot of work. **Thank you to all of these members who made time in their busy schedules to make the holidays a little brighter for a whole lot of people.**

**Storage Container Shelving:** Dave Parker, John Chambers and Larry Spahn have spent several Sundays at Carona working on getting the shelves built in the new storage container. They found that there was quite a bit of lumber stored in the MoP Boxcar which was left over from the new addition project. On each side of the forty foot container there are now twenty four feet of shelves. One side has two rows of shelves which are twenty four inches deep and the other side has three rows of shelves that are sixteen inches deep. This leaves fifty six inches of space between the shelves for easy access. This will provide us with a whole lot of storage area and will allow us unclutter areas that can be put to better use. John Chambers and Alan Chilton have already started moving paper items out of the reefer car and putting it in the container. Six sheets of wafer board had to be purchased for the shelves as well as six pounds of screws and four, twelve foot 2x4s were needed to finish the shelves. A big Heartland Thank You to these members who gave up their weekends to make this happen. They also saved the Heartlands a lot of money by doing this.

**Reefer Car:** John Chambers and Alan Chilton spent most of a Monday sorting through the magazines and other paper items that have been stored in the reefer car for several years. The table that they were stored on collapsed and quite a bit of the material that was damaged was burned, the rest is now stacked in piles in the new container. They need to be stored in plastic totes which will give them some protection. Hopefully this will be done at some time in the future.

**James Conrad Collection:** John Chambers has been busy cataloging the many items that James Conrad has brought out to display in the new addition. The latest display is the KCS, Flying Crow passenger train in O gauge, The Southern Belle passenger train in HO gauge and the 1976 Freedom Train in HO gauge. Jim built the walnut and plexi-glass case for the train display. He has also brought several other interesting KCS items that are now on display. John has been busy cataloging Charley Bennett’s latest donation of dining car menus, photograph albums and many other items. John is also working on a box of paper items donated by Tom Barclay, who is a member from Arlington, Kansas. Another interesting item that was recently donated by Marlene Spence is an inspection torch with the wick still intact and marked Santa Fe Railway and this has been added to our Santa Fe display.

**Empire Forty Ton BLH Engine:** The engine has come a long way since it was delivered to the museum by the Brian Jordan Company last fall. It has been sandblasted, primed and painted, all of the engine compartment door handles have been repaired, both of the front and rear step boards have been welded back on after they were completely rebuilt by Steve Parsons, a retired pipeline welder and neighbor that volunteered all of the materials and his time. Broken and cracked windows have been replaced, wooden steps installed on the east side to allow easier access, new oak planks installed on the step boards, side mirrors installed and broken mirror glass replaced. Vital Signs of Columbus, KS are making new logos and will be putting them on in the near future when the weather allows. The newly reupholstered seat has been installed and a broken gauge glass replaced. The glass was cut by the Keller Glass Company in Pittsburg, KS. Mr. Keller donated the mirror and gauge glass to the project, he also donated the new rubber seals for the windows that were replaced. A gallon of grey paint has been purchased and painting has started on the inside of the cab. This will really brighten things up when the work is completed. Any volunteers???

**Block Signal:** The double headed block signal that was located near Scammon, KS on the Afton Sub of the BN that was donated to the Heartlands recently will be installed in the very near future. The signal will be placed with the 1023 locomotive display. The site has been marked by Dig Safe and soon a twenty four inch diameter, four feet deep hole will be drilled into the ground. We are looking at trying to get a good used concrete signal well/base to mount the signal on. If we can't get one we will build a form and have re-bar and bolts installed in the poured concrete. It will be less expensive to use the signal well as concrete is around \$100.00/yard with a two yard minimum because of the long drive to deliver it. We could get everything ready and when Mid-America Pipe is having a concrete pour we could just buy a yard from them and have it poured at the time.

Back to my notes on the meeting:

#### Added to Old Business:

**Slideshow:** The November 19 slideshow was a rousing success, with approximately twenty attendees including presenters from as far away as Manhattan, KS, Newton, KS, and Hutchinson, KS. The next slideshow is tentatively scheduled for spring of 2017 with an exact date to be determined. If anyone has ideas for dates or material to present at the show, please contact me via e-mail!

#### New Business:

**2017 Passenger Train Ride Schedule:** An extensive discussion took place regarding the 2017 Passenger Train schedule.

Jim McKeel proposed two possible rides on the KO, one from Hutch to Yoder and another from Sterling west, with dates to be determined.

Winfield, KS is holding the Sampler Fest on or around May 6-7, and interest was expressed in having a ride there.

The Boy Scouts want to have a ride out of Clearwater, KS on or around May 13.

Both Bartlesville and Dewey are interested in having rides in 2017, and a discussion of dates followed. The current idea is to coordinate the rides with events taking place in each city. No dates have been determined.

Rides in Coffeyville (Dalton Defender Days) and Cherryvale (Cherry Blossom Festival) will not be scheduled in 2017 due to sharp declines in ridership.

Other annual rides, such as Chanute's Artist's Alley and Pittsburg's Little Balkan's Days, will remain on the schedule.

A conversation with Brad Snow at WATCO will need to take place in order to determine what rides the company will sponsor that require Heartlands members to assist with staffing the train.

The annual WATCO Safety Training will be scheduled after a more definitive train ride schedule is set. We are currently targeting a date in March for the Safety Training.

**2017 Motorcar Rides:** Jim McKeel proposed setting up motorcar rides for the 2017 season. We will need a GCOR-certified Watco employee along for any rides. No dates or ride locations have been determined as yet.

**2017 Souvenir Orders:** Kathy Spahn and Connie Payton will determine what souvenirs and shirts will need to be ordered for the 2017 ride season.

More from Larry Spahn:

**Membership Renewals:** I wish to thank everyone that has responded to our annual request for dues payments and to remind everyone that has been overwhelmed with the end of the year stresses to join us again for another year. I am aware that many of our members do not live close enough to attend our meetings but most do travel and stop by to see what projects we are involved with and all are impressed with what they see happening and know that they are all a part of it and thanks to our newsletter they are kept informed.

**PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY, WE NEED YOU!!!**

**Correspondence:**

We have received a box of various types of paperwork from Tom Barclay that John Chambers is cataloging.

We also received a Christmas card from Bill Bailey. Bill has been a longtime member of the Heartlands and he and his brother have made several very unique donations to the museum. Bill was also very active in the preservation of the KCS 1023 steam engine and provided the project with several items that were missing on the engine.

The meeting adjourned shortly after 8:00 PM (Linda Shomin, Connie Payton) for snacks and discussion.

This concludes the first Heart of the Heartlands newsletter for the 2017 season. If anyone has an idea or suggestion they would like to see incorporated into the newsletter (aside from getting it sent out SOONER. I got that one covered!) please do not hesitate to send them to me!

Thank you,  
Brad Bourbina  
Secretary, Heart of the Heartlands