



## January Meeting

The January meeting of the Heart of the Heartlands was held on January 10, 2018 in the Webb Center in Carona, KS. There were 18 members present. Minutes of the meeting can be found at the end of this newsletter. Members in attendance were: Jack Evans, Guy Ferguson, Joe Murphey, John Chambers, Tom Johnston, Jim McKeel, Michael Sheward, Brian Carlson, Kathy & Larry Spahn, Bryson Spahn, Darrell Cave, Bill Gillfillan, John Randall, Nicolas Ybarra, Theresa Singleton, & Steven Gardner.

## Slide Show

There will be a slide show at Carona on March 4 from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm. Bring snacks and enjoy. Bad weather will cancel the event.

## Former Frisco Signal Houses

The BNSF railroad donated two of the signal relay houses to the Heartlands. They were once used on the Afton sub-division and were replaced with new aluminum structures which is part of their signaling upgrades. The old houses are made entirely of concrete and reinforced steel, this includes the roof and floor and each weigh in at thirteen tons. All of the signal relays are still inside as well as the wiring diagrams and instructions. Although the donation had been in the works for over a year they had to be removed from railroad property in one day because a contractor was already removing all of the houses from Ottatwa, KS to Afton, OK.

After a conversation with the contractor that was removing the structures it was discovered that they were all going to be crushed and placed in a land fill. Larry called the owner of the Pike Construction Company the was responsible for the removal of the houses and worked out a deal with him. If the Heartlands agreed to take two of the houses, they would load and deliver them to Carona and unload them for us. This saved the Heartlands over twelve hundred dollars in crane and trucking costs. We now have the signal house that once controlled the gate crossing of the MoPac and Frisco at Cherokee and the other was used at a passing siding at Farlington, KS.

After it was decided where they would be placed, our neighbor Jim Oberbeck brought his tractor and built a pad out of the 16 tons of AB-3 rock that Freddy Van donated to the Heartlands for the project. A conversation with Mr. John Parsons, the owner of Mid-America Pipe, resulted in him providing a large fork truck and two of his personnel to put them in place. One house was placed between the picnic shelter and the new museum addition. It will do double duty as a display and a storm shelter for



*Photo courtesy of Bryan Carlson*



*Photo courtesy of Larry Spahn*

## What is it?



This is an item that is currently located in the Carona museum. What is it?

Answer next month

*Photo courtesy of Brian Carlson*

Last Month's picture was a portable baggage/express scale. It is marked MKT and may have been used at the West Mineral depot.

## Email Notifications

Since the vast majority of the membership have email addresses with us, we wanted to let everyone know that as certain things come up between newsletters, we will send email announcements prior to the next meeting or newsletter. If you would like to receive these announcements please email Brian Carlson at [bcarlson@ckt.net](mailto:bcarlson@ckt.net) and let him know. This will not change the status of having a newsletter mailed to you.

club members and any guests that might be visiting should severe weather threaten. The other house was placed in the area of our signal display. Hopefully one day we can actually operate the signals in our display using the relays in the building.

Many thanks to John Parsons, Freddy Van, Jim Oberbeck and Pike Heavy Haul Contractors of Ark City for making the preservation of these unique structures possible. These types of signal houses are rapidly being removed from service and destroyed and will likely never be seen again.



*Photo courtesy of Larry Spahn*

## 2018 Train Rides

It is the time of the year that we put our train ride list together and present it to Watco for their comments and approval. We are planning on having several rides in September — the Little Balkans Ride out of Pittsburg, KS on Labor Day, September 01, 2018 is questionable. Brad Snow has suggested that we skip a year or two as the number of riders has fallen off considerably. Dewey, Oklahoma has requested a ride on Saturday, September 22nd, 2018. The Chanute Artist Alley ride is always on the last Saturday in September, the 29th.



*Photo courtesy of Brian Carlson*

Fredonia has requested a ride in December but the exact date has not been decided as of yet. It will probably be on the 1st or 8th depending on when the Watco first graders ride will be which is usually during the week. The coaches will either go to or return from Fredonia for the ride. Brad Snow will let us know what is decided.

## Membership Renewal Information

If you wish to renew your membership please read through the options below. A annual single membership is \$25. A family membership is \$35 per year. Please send your check to:

Brian Carlson  
2209 S. Taylor St.  
Pittsburg, KS. 66762

OR

Heart of the Heartlands  
c/o Brian Carlson  
P.O. Box 211  
Scammon, KS 66773

## Announcements

- The annual safety meeting for passenger train rides will be held on March 10, 2018 at 1:00 at the Webb Center. Anyone interested in helping with train rides needs to attend this training.
- The next meeting will be February 14, 2018 at the Webb Center in Carona, KS. The meeting will start at 7:00 pm.

## Cherokee Gate

After the broken cast iron box was repaired by Burton Welding of Opolis, KS it was decided to go ahead and have him sand blast and prime and paint the box and signal base while he still has it. It appears that we will be able to use the concrete base that was removed when we added onto the museum. We have all of the pieces of this signal and it is unique. The Cherokee gate has been pretty much destroyed but there is a similar gate in Fredonia that may be available if we want to go and get it.

The Fredonia gate is pictured here. Plans are in the works in obtaining this gate for our museum complex. The railroad has approved our obtaining the gate but the details of exactly how to get it to Carona are being formulated at this time. Stay tuned for further updates in regards to this project!



*Photo courtesy of Larry Spahn*

## 2018 Motor Car Rides

Discussion about the 2018 motor car rides was held at the January meeting. It was the consensus of the membership present to continue offering rides this year. Jay Hastings will be working to put together some rides during the year. It was voted on by the membership to renew our 2018 membership to NARCOA in preparation for any upcoming rides. As rides are announced they will be placed on our website as well as an email announcement sent to all members currently signed up to receive the Heartlands' emails. The next newsletter after a ride announcement will also include any rides as well. We are excited about the possibilities for upcoming rides and will let you know all the specifics as soon as they are available. Thank you for your continued support.

## January 10, 2018 - Heart of the Heartlands - Minutes

The January meeting of the Heart of the Heartlands was brought to order by President Larry Spahn at 7:00 pm on January 10 at the Webb Center. There were 18 members present for the meeting.

**Minutes of previous meeting:** As there was no meeting in December of 2017, the minutes of the November 2017 meeting were approved as mailed. The motion for approval was made by Jack Evans and seconded by Nick Ybarra. It passed by the membership present.

**Treasurer's Report:** After presentation of the treasurer's report, Darrel Cave moved to accept the report, Nick Ybarra seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

### Old Business

Our Secretary/Treasurer, Brian Carlson has kept the membership up to date with our activities with a special December newsletter that he put together in his spare time, of which he has very little. We have had a lull in our meeting schedule for the holidays but we were still very busy. We had the Watco ride for the 332 first graders and then the KCS Holiday Express train that stopped in Pittsburg. Several Heartland members dressed up as elves and assisted with presenting the KCS Holiday Express train to the public.

**Empire ALCO engine:** Work is still progressing in moving the engine. The trucks have been removed and taken to Abilene. The locomotive remains on the trailer in preparation for the move. Weather could be causing some delays but there is also some concern on the strength of the trailer for the trip to Abilene. More information will be given as it becomes available.

**Motor Car Repair:** Joe Murphy reported that work on the KCS motor car was on hold till warmer weather. The use of Lexan for use as windshield was discussed.

**Cherokee Gate Signal Box:** After the broken cast iron box was repaired by Burton Welding of Opolis, KS it was decided to go ahead and have him sand blast and prime and paint the box and signal base while he still has it. It appears that we will be able to use the concrete base that was removed when we added onto the museum. We have all of the pieces of this signal and it is unique. The Cherokee gate has been pretty much destroyed but there is a similar gate in Fredonia that may be available if we want to go and get it.

### New Business

**Signal Houses:** The BNSF railroad has donated two of the signal relay houses to the Heartlands. They were once used on the Afton sub-division and were replaced with new aluminum structures which is part of their signaling upgrades. The old houses are made entirely of concrete and reinforced steel, this includes the roof and floor and each weigh in at thirteen tons. All of the signal relays are still inside as well as the wiring diagrams and instructions. Although the donation had been in the works for over a year they had to be removed from railroad property in one day because a contractor was already removing all of the houses from Ottatwa, KS to Afton, OK. A conversation with the contractor that was removing the structures said that they were all going to be crushed and placed in a land fill. Larry called the owner of the Pike Construction Company and worked out a deal with him. If the Heartlands agreed to take two of the houses, they would load and deliver them to Carona and unload them for us. This saved the Heartlands over twelve hundred dollars in crane and trucking costs. We now have the signal house that once controlled the gate crossing of the MoPac and Frisco at Cherokee and the other was used at a passing siding at Farlington, KS. After it was decided where they would be placed, our neighbor Jim Oberbeck brought his tractor and built a pad out of the 16 tons of AB-3 rock that Freddy Van donated to the Heartlands for the project. A conversation with Mr. John Parsons, the owner of Mid-America Pipe, resulted in him providing a large fork truck and two of his personnel to put them in place. One house was placed between the picnic shelter and the new museum addition. It will do double duty as a display and a storm shelter for club members and any guests that

might be visiting should severe weather threaten. The other house was placed in the area of our signal display. Hopefully one day we can actually operate the signals in our display using the relays in the building. Many thanks to John Parsons, Freddy Van, Jim Oberbeck and Pike Heavy Haul Contractors of Ark City for making the preservation of these unique structures possible. These types of signal houses are rapidly being removed from service and destroyed and will likely never be seen again.

**2018 Train Rides:** It is the time of the year that we put our train ride list together and present it to Watco for their comments and approval. We are planning on having several rides in September — the Little Balkans Ride out of Pittsburg, KS on Labor Day, September 01, 2018 is questionable. Brad Snow has suggested that we skip a year or two as the number of riders has fallen off considerably. Dewey, Oklahoma has requested a ride on Saturday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018. The Chanute Artist Alley ride is always on the last Saturday in September, the 29<sup>th</sup>. Fredonia has requested a ride in December but the exact date has not been decided as of yet. It will probably be on the 1<sup>st</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> depending on when the Watco first graders ride will be which is usually during the week. The coaches will either go to or return from Fredonia for the ride. Brad Snow will let us know what is decided.

**Jim McKeel's e-mail:** There is good news from Jim McKeel as he reports: *I have found a good ticket vendor for a ride out of Wichita which will be a round-trip to Yoder or Hutchinson and return. The Winfield Chamber is willing to help with ticket sales again this year, now that they have the Kansas Sampler Festival events of the last two years behind them. We will do two 3-hour round trips out of Winfield on a Saturday. The Hutchinson Downtown Development Director is also interested in doing something again this year but he will be meeting with his group next Wednesday to see for sure. He will call me as soon as possible after that meeting to let me know. If they are willing to help we will do two round trips to Yoder and back out of Hutchinson on a Saturday. I would like to avoid May and hope to have these sometime in April or late March. I'm putting final dates together now.*

**Amtrak Ride:** A train ride and overnight stay to Reno, Nevada and return is planned for departure April 21<sup>st</sup> and returning on April 26<sup>th</sup>. Seven members have already made their train and room reservations. Anyone interested is welcome to come along. Four members will leave from Osceola, Iowa on the Zephyr and three from Kansas City, MO on the Chief where they will make connections with the Zephyr at Galesburg. The group will arrive at 8:25 am on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, stay overnight in Reno and leave at 4:06 pm the next day. For more information contact Larry Spahn, 620-396-8594 after 5:00 pm.

**Motor Car Rides:** Discussion was held in regards to the future of motor car rides. The consensus was to continue motor car rides for another year. Efforts are in place to have more rides than the past couple of years. In that line, John Chambers moved and Darrell Cave seconded a motion to renew our NARCOA membership for 2018. The motion passed. Stay tuned for information on future rides!

**Correspondence:**

- March 3 or 4th, 2018 are possible dates for a spring slide show at Carona. More information when it is available.
- March 10, 2018 will be the annual safety meeting for train rides. It will begin at 1:00 pm at the Webb Center in Carona. Jim McKeel will do one in Wichita with a date and time to be announced later.
- Nick Ybarra moved to adjourn the meeting. Jack Evans seconded the motion, motion passed.