



## March Meeting

The March meeting of the Heart of the Heartlands was held on March 12, 2025 starting at 7:00 pm in the Webb Center at Carona, KS. This was the first meeting of 2025 as weather cancelled the January and February meetings. There were 12 members present for this meeting. Minutes of the meeting can be found at the end of this newsletter.

Members in attendance were: Larry & Kathy Spahn, Jim McKeel, John Chambers, Jack Evans, Rob McKnight, Mike & Connie Payton, Michael Sheward, Brian Carlson, Darrell Cave, Paul Morgan, and Ed Brinkmeyer.

## Next Meeting

The next meeting will be at 7:00 pm, April 9, 2025 at the Webb Center in Carona.

## Heartlands - YouTube

Check out our YouTube channel:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMIkqWyCxftDlf\\_ezgw3UyQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMIkqWyCxftDlf_ezgw3UyQ)

## 2024 Year in Review

There are several noteworthy items from 2024. Some of those are listed here:

- Phone system for the museum. Phone number: **620-448-1065**
- Rob McKnight has provided a presence for the Heartlands at numerous train shows in the 4-state area. He has generated \$1,600 in revenue for the Heartlands.
- We participated in the Sunflower Summer Program this year. The program sponsored by the state of Kansas provided \$310 in revenue simply by visitors acknowledging us on the Sunflower app. We plan to participate this year if the program is available again. Currently legislative discussions are preventing it from being available at this time for this year.
- Boy Scout Troop camped out at Carona during Labor Day weekend working on their railroad merit badge. The group painted our motor car sheds as part of their work.
- For advertising and tourism related items and communications, we have decided to be referred to as the "Heartlands Railroad Museum". We still are and will always be the Heart of the Heartlands. We needed a more descriptive name for advertising and tourism needs.
- We added a new domain name. Our old domain name is still in operation but our new one is "heartlandsrailroadmuseum.org". Our new address for our website is: [www.heartlandsrailroadmuseum.org](http://www.heartlandsrailroadmuseum.org).
- We have added an online digital workspace for officers, board members and members to collaborate, share and work on information for the Heartlands.
- We now have email accounts specific to the Heartlands. We are working on moving away from using person email accounts when conducting Heartlands business. Currently we have three new email accounts and will add a couple more in the future. The new accounts are:

## From our Past

The "From our Past" section will return next month. Enjoy pictures from around the museum over the past couple of months.

- John Chambers photos

### Snowy day



- [curator@heartlandsrailroadmuseum.org](mailto:curator@heartlandsrailroadmuseum.org) - account for John Chambers to use while communicating with others on behalf of the museum.
- [secretary@heartlandsrailroadmuseum.org](mailto:secretary@heartlandsrailroadmuseum.org) - account for secretary related communications.
- [treasurer@heartlandsrailroadmuseum.org](mailto:treasurer@heartlandsrailroadmuseum.org) - account for treasurer related communications.
- Currently the secretary and treasurer accounts will be used by secretary-treasurer, Brian Carlson
- Whenever there is a change in personnel in one of these positions, the email account can be assigned to the new person without a loss of time or past communications.
- The online workspace will also provide, not only collaboration opportunities but also an area to store documents digitally, provide calendar services and possibly web based meeting capabilities.

## 2025 Train Shows

Rob McKnight has announced the train shows that he plans to attend for 2025. Rob donates his time to attend these events. He talks to attendees and educates them on what we have to offer at Carona. He also sells some souvenirs during the shows. We can't thank him enough for the time and help he give so the Heartlands. Here is his show schedule for 2025:

February 15	Heartlands Toy Train Assoc.	Stillwater, OK
April 19	Wichita Toy Train Club	Ark City, KS
April 25-26	Heartlands Toy Train Assoc.	Broken Arrow, OK
June 21	Northwest Arkansas Train Show	Bentonville, AR
July 12	Heartlands Toy Train Assoc.	Stillwater, OK
August 9	Joplin Train Show	Joplin, MO
September 19-20	Ozarks Model Railroad Assoc.	Springfield, MO
November 15	Joplin Train Show	Joplin, MO
December 6	Heartlands Toy Train Assoc.	Broken Arrow, OK

## 2024 Visitors - Total of 1,737

<b>Jan</b>	46	<b>May</b>	170	<b>Sep</b>	183
<b>Feb</b>	74	<b>Jun</b>	215	<b>Oct</b>	56
<b>Mar</b>	240	<b>Jul</b>	131	<b>Nov</b>	104
<b>Apr</b>	174	<b>Aug</b>	289	<b>Dec</b>	55

### Heart of the Heartlands

Any questions, comments or suggestions, contact:

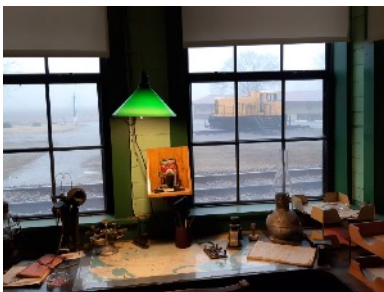
Brian Carlson

[secretary@heartlandsrailroadmuseum.org](mailto:secretary@heartlandsrailroadmuseum.org)  
620-820-9665 (leave message)



CPKC Bartlett shuttle train passing  
Carona depot

## Foggy Morning



# Museum Director Report for March

## Report by John Chambers

Visitor counts were down during the months of December, January and February with a total of 176 people from the four state region plus North Dakota, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, Iowa, Illinois, New Mexico and Massachusetts. We were closed nine days due to bitterly cold weather and snow with some large drifts in front of the museum building. The slide show in February had a low turnout of around twenty but everyone had a good time and we looked at some interesting railroads. Had a gentleman from the Enid, Oklahoma train museum visit and was taking a lot of pictures of our displays. I changed some exhibits around and added a few items. Tim Ren of Parsons is going to donate his extensive railroad photo collection which he has been taking over many years. All of the images have been scanned and catalogued so this will make it much easier to add to our archives.

Rob McKnight and I have been talking with officers and members of the Oklahoma Historical Railroad Association of Tulsa. This is a newly formed 501c3 group comprised of many younger people who are interested in railroad preservation. Last year they cosmetically restored a steam locomotive located at the Tulsa Fair grounds. They also help maintain the Frisco 4500 steam engine and train located in Sapulpa, OK. Their President, Dominic Korzelious visited on a Sunday and stayed until 7 pm. I showed him around and we discussed them coming up and helping with several projects at Carona. They want to volunteer for the experience and to help us out. As weather improves we will be having more conversations with them and hopefully this can work out to be a mutually advantageous relationship.

When I came to work on Tuesday January 27th I noticed a blue plastic tote had been left on the picnic table at the front of the museum. When I looked inside I found several railroad items and a hand written letter from Robert Ferguson, Jr. He wrote that the items were from his father Robert Ferguson, Sr. who had retired from the UP as a civil engineer. He had started with career with the T&P the later the MP and finally the UP. He was born in 1926 and passed in 2014. He worked at several locations including Coffeyville, Wichita, Osawatomie and ended in North Little Rock. I have called Robert Jr. and thanked him for his father's items and I have added them to a display case.

We have two school groups who are planning on visiting this spring. The Fort Scott Christian School will be at Carona on Thursday April 24th at 1:30 pm with a group of 37 3rd through 6th grade students. The Columbus Head Start will be here on Wednesday, May 7th at 10:00 am with around 14, 3 to 5-year olds. If you are free, we could use some help on those days

## March 12, 2025 - Heart of the Heartlands - Minutes

The March 12, 2025 meeting of the Heart of the Heartlands was brought to order by President Larry Spahn at 7:00 p.m.

**Minutes of previous meeting:** Darrell Cave moved to accept the minutes as mailed. Jim McKeel seconded the motion, the motion passed.

**Treasurer's Report:** Since there was no meeting in December of 2024, January and February 2025, Treasurer Brian Carlson presented the treasurer's report for the months of November and December 2024 and January and February 2025. After the presentation of the treasurer's report, John Chambers moved and Paul Morgan seconded the motion to accept the treasurer's report. The motion was passed by the membership in attendance.

### Old Business:

Mother Nature provided us some unusually difficult winter weather that caused the cancellation of the last couple of our monthly meetings. Fortunately, there was not a lot happening. The museum was also closed several days due to weather in January and February.

### **Watco Santa Claus Christmas Ride:**

The two rides were well attended with first grade student from area schools enjoying the rides and a visit with Santa Claus. Heartland members that assisted in the ride were Denzil and Ivan Voorhees, Jim McKeel, Rob McKnight, John Chambers, Connie and Mike Payton, Mike Sheward, Gary Brown and Kathy and Larry Spahn.

### **2024 Year in Review:**

Secretary-Treasurer Brian Carlson presented a Year in Review to those in attendance summarizing the things that had been accomplished in 2024. The items in the review included: security improvements, new phone service, train show work performed by Rob McKnight, Sunflower Summer Program, Boy Scout troop camp out, official name for tourism purposes, new web domain and a new online digital workspace including new email accounts and other future digital options.

### New Business:

#### **New Container for Motor Cars :**

Watco will be installing a new container for storage of Watco motor cars and other items that need to be moved for an upcoming renovation project. The container will be placed north of the current container when the weather allows for Watco to complete the installation.



**Train Show Report:**

Rob McKnight reported that he was at the Heartland Toy Train Association Train Show in Stillwater, OK on February 14 & 15th. Rob only attended on Saturday the 15th but there were 382 in attendance on that day versus 42 the day before. According to Rob, sales were slow with a total of \$137 but despite that, there was a lot of interest in the museum.

Rob then presented the list of eight other shows he has lined up for 2025. That will bring the total of shows for the entire year to nine. One of the train shows is scheduled for September 19-20 in Springfield, MO. Ed Brinkmeyer moved for the Heartlands to pay for Rob's motel room at that show. Jack Evans seconded the motion and the motion was passed by the members in attendance.

Rob also discussed metal train signs for souvenirs. After some discussion, Jim McKeel moved to begin with purchasing four (4) signs for each of the five (5) railroads that were in the Carona area. Connie Payton seconded the motion and it was passed by the members present.

**Museum and 1023 display lighting:**

The existing lighting in the first two parts of the museum building needs to be replaced. Replacing the current museum interior lighting with LED fixtures would cost between \$200-\$300. One, four foot, LED light fixture has been installed as an indicator of what the lighting produced would be like. After some discussion, Brian Carlson moved to purchase the LED fixtures to replace all of the fluorescent lights to LED. Darrel Cave seconded the motion and it was passed by the members present.

**Solar Panels:**

Darrell Cave spent time during January and February gathering information about the possible installation of solar panels on the roof of the museum. Darrell, along with Larry Spahn, met with a representative from CDL on Friday, February 7, 2025. After some discussion, it was agreed to wait a few months to see how the installation of the LED lights affected our electric bill.

**Driveway Alarm:**

The alarm for the entrance gate has arrived and installation would be done when the weather allowed for it. The hope is that this will help in letting John know when visitors enter the museum parking lot so he can meet them at the entrance door.

**Monthly Museum and Visitors Report:**

John Chambers gave his museum and visitors report:

- There were 65 people that were at the museum in December.
- There were 21 that came in January. Due to the weather in January, there were four days the museum was closed.

**Other Items:*****Brian Carlson***

- Mentioned that he had received a request from Janet Holden asking if it would be OK to have her 6 year old son's birthday party on April 19 at Carona. She is planning on using the picnic tables for the event.

- Read a letter received from Steven Pruitt. In his letter he mentioned how much he enjoyed a recent visit, and how he plans to come back again. He also joined the Heartlands.

Jack Evans moved to adjourn the meeting. Paul Morgan seconded the motion and it passed by the membership present. Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.