



### January Meeting

The January meeting of the Heart of the Heartlands was held on January 10, 2024 in the Webb Center at Carona, KS. There were 13 members present. Minutes of the meeting can be found at the end of this newsletter. Members in attendance were: John Chambers, Jack Evans, Don Richardson, Kathy & Larry Spahn, Darrell Cave, Rob McKnight, Ethan Lawrence, Brian Carlson, Jim McKeel, Nicolas Ybarra, and Mike & Connie Payton

### Next Meeting

The next meeting will be February 14, 2024 at 7:00 pm 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)

## Watco Christmas Express

The annual Watco Christmas rides for the Pittsburg Schools were held on December 7th. The first train left at 9:30 am with 345



passengers aboard and the other at 11:00 am with 248 for a total of 593. This year, not only were first grade students from Pittsburg invited to join the express, but all of the first graders in Crawford County were on hand to enjoy the rides.

Students from Pittsburg public schools, with the exception of Meadowlark Elementary, were joined on the first ride with students from St. Mary's Elementary Catholic school, Southeast and Northeast. Meadowlark Elementary students were joined on the second ride with students from Girard and Frontenac. Also on the



second ride were the special needs students from Pittsburg.

Both rides featured Santa Claus and his elves talking to all of the children during the rides. Each student received a sugar cookie and a bottle of water during the ride and a bell as they departed the train. For many, this was the first time they had ridden a train, including the adults in attendance from the schools.

Heartland members on hand to help the youngsters were Jim McKeel, Connie and Mike Payton, Ivan and Denzil Voorhees, Kathy and Larry Spahn, Rob McKnight, Dave Wallace and Brian Carlson.



- Photos by Brian Carlson

## Missouri Pacific Emblem

The emblem that was removed from the Missouri Pacific office in Coffeyville was discussed. The emblem has been in storage in the warehouse in Pittsburg. The plan is to have all the old bricks and concrete removed so it can be placed on display at Carona. This will be a tedious and time consuming task as the emblem itself appears to be made of terra cotta material that is very fragile.

## From our Past

We will be featuring photos from our past for awhile.

*This photo is from the 2012 Little Balkans Days train ride on Sunday out to Carona. This was a special ride where a max of 100 passengers rode from Pittsburg to Carona and enjoyed a catered chicken dinner before returning to Pittsburg. Photo is from the Larry Spahn collection.*



## Announcements

- Plans are in progress for the museum to have its own telephone number. Look for the completion of this project soon!
- The new rack cards have been printed and are now ready for distribution! Plans are to get them out to local motels and museums in the next few weeks, prior to the tourist season.

### Heart of the Heartlands

Any questions, comments or suggestions, contact:

Brian Carlson

[bcarlson@ckt.net](mailto:bcarlson@ckt.net)

620-820-9665 (leave message)

## Museum Director Report for November and December

Even though our attendance has dropped due to the weather and the non-tourist season, we still had 132 visitors for the months of November and December with 20 people visiting on December 16th. Those coming to our museum were not only from the four state region but Texas, Nevada, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Hawaii. There were also visitors from Venezuela and the Netherlands. There was a couple from the Netherlands who are touring the United States this year visiting every state by camper van. They stayed for several hours and were very interesting to talk too. In addition, an Amtrak signal maintainer who works on the Northeast Corridor toured the museum with his family. Member Mike Sypult from Arkansas came up and spent almost the entire day doing some KCS research. During these two months, work was spent putting up several oversize prints and calendars in several areas of the museum as well as rearranging of displays.

## Steps for the 1023, Empire Engine

The steps for the KCS 1023 and the Empire Engine were delivered and set in place on January 10, 2024 by John Parsons and his crew. The old steps were falling apart and were becoming an issue for people entering these two locomotives. The steel steps should last many, many years and their construction and donation is greatly appreciated by the Heartlands. A tremendous thank you goes out to John Parsons and his crew.

## Heartlands - Planning for the Future

After looking at the numbers from the past ten months and after many discussions, long range planning for the Heart of the Heartlands has begun. We are currently working on creating a 1-year, a 3-year and a 5-year plan of projects. Currently we are wrapping up the brainstorming phase and will move to prioritizing the ideas. From there they will be placed in one of the three plans. There is still much to do to get this all put together, but we hope to have it accomplished very soon. We would like to get started on things this spring, but we need to get our goals and direction set first. Stay tuned for more information in this area. Hopefully everyone can help out in some way, large or small, in helping us accomplish our goals.

### Editors Note

This section describes some interesting things that we have in our growing collection. Some of them have been forgotten while others are just now being able to see the light of day again. Hopefully in the near future, this section of the newsletter will grow and become a regular part of the newsletter. The information in this section was compiled by John Chambers and modified to fit the newsletter by Brian Carlson.

# Train Orders...

Recently while working in the library several items were located that had been forgotten that they were here. One of the items is a nice scrap book of newspaper clippings that former member Ron Morgan had put together going back into the 1950's. One article out of the Pittsburg paper shows the KCS 1023 being moved into Schlanger Park in 1957. Another is a photo album from Wallace Clark of Pittsburg who worked for the KCS. It includes several vintage pictures of the KCS shop complex in Pittsburg that had never been seen by our members. There were several other pictures of KCS and other local railroads. An ATSF railroad Tulsa Trainmaster Instruction book from 1981-82 which came with the Frank Tribbey collection donation was discovered. It contains all of the company special instructions and other communication used by the Santa Fe trainmen for the Tulsa area during that year and is very interesting to read through. The last items were donated in December by Ron Wagner of Ardmore, Oklahoma. He contacted us through Facebook and asked if we had a couple of Northeast Oklahoma Railroad blueprints which we did not. He then graciously mailed them to us. These items are



Blueprints - Railway Station - NEO South Division

NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA RAILROAD COMPANY	
DISPATCHER'S RECORD OF MOVEMENT OF TRAINS	
DATE	TIME
SOUTH BOUND	
Train	Time
Engine	Time
Car	Time
STATIONS	
10:00	CAROLINA 10:00
10:15	10:15
10:30	STAPFVILLE 10:30
10:45	10:45
11:00	11:00
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NEO Dispatcher Sheet

blueprints of a NEO passenger station and a NEO freight stations. Included was also a NEO dispatcher sheet for Dec 27-28, 1960. This sheet is filled out by the dispatcher and shows what trains operated that day and includes other information.



Moving the 1023 to Schlanger Park

## From the Conductor's Desk

*From the editor, Brian Carlson-*

As I write this on a rather cold January evening, I have been thinking of the Heart of the Heartlands and its rather rich history. In 1988, Dick Webb brought a group together with the idea of running excursions on the SEK which he had purchased in 1987. The name, Heart of the Heartlands was adopted as several of the original members had been in a group with that name, which they had already incorporated with the state of Kansas. However, that original group had become dormant. So the name was chosen, a small fee was paid, a form filled out and the Heart of the Heartlands that we know was brought to life! The application was signed by six people, Victor Boccia, Gary Misch, Bernice Rohmiller, George Washburn, John Chambers and Rob Freeman on March 21, 1990. The official letter from the Governor's Office concerning our incorporation was signed on April 25, 1990.

In the beginning, the corporation was formed as a non-profit to receive donations then redistribute them to other non-profit tourist groups in this area for worthy projects. To promote tourism and to help with excursion rides on the SEK were the goals of the Heartlands when we started. The first meetings were held in the city hall at Chetopa, KS. One of the first projects the group tackled was the restoration of the Santa Fe Depot in Cherryvale, Kansas. Once completed, the group moved their meetings to the depot. A few years later, in 1996, the Carona Depot was rescued from a life as a hay storage building and moved to its present site and restored. The group then moved their meetings to the Carona Depot as the Cherryvale Depot was now going to be used by the railroad.

Things picked up after the turn of the century. A grant was received to fund the 2003 construction of a 40' x 70' building to be used as a meeting place and to house some of the items the group had collected. An opportunity arrived in 2005 when the Boston, MO, depot was transported to Carona and restored. Then, in 2011, a monumental project presented itself and the group dove in with enthusiasm. The following year, the KCS 1023 was moved from Schlanger Park in Pittsburg, KS to the Carona museum site. Over the next couple of years, the last remaining steam locomotive of the Kansas City Southern Railroad was restored. During 2014, another 40' x 70' building was added to the original building, doubling the size of the museum. Again, space was needed to house the increasing railroad donations that were being received. In 2019, construction was started on a third addition, later to be called the Morgan Addition, in honor of longtime member Ron Morgan. This 30' x 50' addition now houses the lifetime collection of David Calwell. This collection features mostly Santa Fe items, but there are other items as well in the collection.

Donations and grants helped fund these projects. Also, money collected on numerous motor car rides and train rides helped to make the big projects possible. We are very appreciative of the donations from Watco, Heartland members, and outside donations that have come our way throughout the past three decades. Each large project took planning and a "leap of faith" to proceed. Thankfully, through the hard work of all the members past and present, each of these things were accomplished.

Over the past 34 years, there have been numerous events that members have participated in and shared memories with one another. During that time, we have had members come and go. We have also lost many, many friends over the years as they completed their time here with us. But we have also added members over the years as well. We have made new friends, new memories and accomplished new projects. There are members from all across the Midwest as well as farther places such as North Carolina. Although not able to share directly in our projects here at Carona, each and every member has and does play a vital role in our group.

The last three to four years has been a bit rough for the Heartlands. A global pandemic hit everyone and brought most of our activities to a halt. It has been difficult to regain our footing; to find our purpose, to find a direction during this time. Recently, we have been in discussions about what the future looks like for the Heart of the Heartlands. We have grown into the most extensive collection of railroad artifacts in the four state area. Going forward, the development of the museum will be our next big project. As with all of the projects in the Heartlands past, this next project will also require a leap of faith and hard work to bring this undertaking to fruition.

I joined the Heart of the Heartlands in February 2012, thanks to my wife encouraging me to work the KCS Holiday Express in December 2011. During this event I met a young lady that invited me to a meeting. Kathy Spahn and I joke about that day from time to time when I first learned about the Heartlands. Thanks to her simple question, "Would you like to join us?", I became a member. I have enjoyed every minute I have been with the group as I learn things, hear about past endeavors, and enjoy many new friendships. Often I find myself thinking about how nice it would have been to be a part of all those past activities. But, the time for me was not then, the opportunity for me was on that December evening in 2011.

As I wrap up my long story, I think this is a great time to be a member of the Heart of the Heartlands! We are making another leap of faith. There are exciting things we have in mind for this year and years to come. As new members have started to join, previous members returning, and with our lifelong members leading the way, great things are coming. Just like before, all of our members are important to us. If you are in the area and can lend a hand, we would love to have you come in as we work on projects going forward. If you live too far away or are just not able to physically help, let your friends know about us. Tell your neighbors, friends, family members, anyone that might be interested in helping a unique, and special group of individuals work to preserve the railroad heritage of the four state area. We are ready to go and would love to have them come with us. Time for me to go. I am headed off to our next project. Would you like to join us?

## January 10, 2024 - Heart of the Heartlands - Minutes

The January 10, 2024 meeting of the Heart of the Heartlands was brought to order by President Larry Spahn at 7:00 p.m.

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

**Treasurer's Report:** After the presentation of the treasurer's report, by treasurer Brian Carlson, Darrell Cave moved, Jim McKeel seconded the motion to accept the treasurer's report. The motion was passed by the membership in attendance.

### **Old Business:**

#### **New Brochures :**

Secretary-Treasurer Brian Carlson mentioned that the rack cards were sent to PSU Printing & Design to be printed. They went on Christmas break before the cards were printed. As of the meeting, they were back to work with the rack cards expected to be ready at anytime. John Chambers mentioned that a place in Iola would like to have some of the rack cards to display at their location.

#### **Monthly Museum and Visitors Report :**

John Chambers gave his museum and visitors report.

- He said the number of visitors were down during the past couple of months. This was expected for this time of year. Among the visitors that toured the complex were a couple from Denmark as well as a lady from Venezuela. Another visitor was a signal maintainer for Amtrak in the northeast corridor of the United States. He was here with his family.
- John came across a scrapbook that belonged to longtime member Ron Morgan. One of the items in the scrapbook was an article from the newspaper written about moving the KCS 1023 to Schlanger Park in Pittsburg.
- Frank Tribbey sent us Santa Fe train master instructions from 1980.
- John mentioned that he had located a list that described the items on loan from Dick Webb.
- John also remarked that more guests are bringing smaller children. Perhaps we should look at an area for smaller children to enjoy.

### **New Business:**

#### **Security System:**

Due to the age of our present system and the expansion of our museum buildings, it has been brought to our attention that we should have our alarm system evaluated to see if any changes or modifications should be made to update our current system. Uplink, a security system company headquartered in Pittsburg, KS was contacted. An arrangement to meet at the Webb Center with a representative of Uplink was setup for January 9, 2024. Larry Spahn and Brian Carlson met with two Uplink representatives at

1:30 on the 9th. After checking the components of our system to see what could be used and if any changes might be needed, a preliminary assessment was made. It appears that an update of our present system can be made cost effectively. Shortly before the monthly meeting, Uplink sent a quote and it was discussed at the meeting. After some discussion, it was agreed to add up to four additional smoke detectors. Jim McKeel moved to spend up to \$1,400 to include up to four additional smoke detectors. John Chambers seconded the motion. Motion was passed by the membership present. Jim McKeel then moved to purchase the monthly monitoring service from Uplink. Don Richardson seconded the motion and it was passed by the membership present. Secretary-Treasurer, Brian Carlson would contact Uplink for a revised quote.

### **New Phone for Museum:**

Brian Carlson presented a proposal to add a phone to the museum. The proposal would provide a phone number for the museum, a hosted management system, and an IP digital phone for the museum. The proposal included several features with two being the ability to set a recording to receive voice mails and also the ability for those voice mails to be emailed to designated individuals. During a lengthy discussion, a cordless phone was brought up to have for better coverage at the complex. Other options were also discussed as possibilities to look at. It was agreed that other options would be have a hard time beating the cost of the current proposal. Jim McKeel moved to accept the proposal presented from ParCom and directed Brian Carlson to setup the phone service to avoid installation costs. Kathy Spahn seconded the motion and the motion was passed by the membership present. Brian would also reach out to ParCom about acquiring a cordless phone.

### **Missouri Pacific Emblem:**

The emblem that was removed from the Missouri Pacific office in Coffeyville was discussed. The emblem has been in storage in the warehouse in Pittsburg. The plan is to have all the old bricks and concrete removed so it can be placed on display at Carona. This will be a tedious and time consuming task as the emblem itself appears to be made of terra cotta material that is very fragile.

### **Plans for the Future:**

We are in the beginning phase of a one, three and five-year plan of what we foresee the future and growth of the museum complex to be. This will include work on buildings, rolling stock and other items that are on display.

### **Steps for 1023 and Empire Engine:**

John Chambers announced that the steps donated by John Parsons were delivered and set in place earlier in the day, January 10, 2024. These steps replaced the wooden steps that were falling apart leading to the KCS 1023 and the Empire Engine. After a brief discussion about all of the help and donations that John Parsons has provided over the years, Don Richardson moved to give John Parsons a lifetime membership to the Heart of the Heartlands. Jim McKeel seconded the motion and it was passed by the members present.

**Communications, Announcement, Additional Items:**

- Rob McKnight mentioned that he would like to go to train shows and setup a table for Heart of the Heartlands. He also would cover the museum for John Chambers to attend train shows if that was a desired option.
- John Chambers reminded the group that the motion detector for the front gate had not been acquired and hence installed yet. Brian Carlson would be acquiring the detector to be installed.

Jack Evans moved to adjourn the meeting. Jim McKeel seconded the motion and it passed by the membership present.