



THE Lantern

November 2024

Volume 29 Number 11

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BBMRA meets Tuesday, November 19, 2024, at 7:30 p.m. through Zoom.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87359055848?pwd=WTVtUDhBUmhXVFp3RkY4WWNnZ2NXdz09>

BBMRA Zoom: Go to Zoom Program or Internet site and use these codes.

Meeting ID: [873 5905 5848](#), Password: [BBMRA2022](#)

Linda's Christmas Holidays Reception December 14, 3 p.m.

From Sam Miller:

BBMRA Providing Turkey, Ham; You Bring Side Dishes or Xmas Desserts. Members, Spouses and Model Railroading Friends All are Invited

Linda Medlin and I are resuming our holiday open house with the BBMRA after several years hiatus. This is the club's first in person meeting, in effect, since the initial COVID. Formally sponsored by Andy Zimmerman and BBMRA, this is planned for Saturday afternoon, December 14, from 3 to 5 p.m., although we won't be pushing anyone out the door at 5. For those who don't know already, we live in Woodgate, at 3008 Stillwood Court.

We decided against resuming on a Friday night. If the weather is good, we will set up a canopy with tables and chairs on the driveway, so, things will be less crowded.

With the help of the club, we will provide a turkey and ham, drinks and paper goods. We ask that BBMRA friends bring side dishes and desserts. Please text or call me at (850) 459-3012 if you have questions. Our garage O Gauge layout has been expanded during the last few years and there is lots to show off. New Christmas rides and buildings were rolled out at Michaels and Lowes this year and I have several of them. And the reception will inspire me to rejuvenate the much-neglected HO layout.

This Christmas party had become a holiday tradition for Linda and me before COVID and we are delighted to have it back. We hope to see you!





One of the Christmas scenes from Sam's O-Gauge exhibit.

Holiday Trains at Tallahassee Senior Center & Gadsden Arts Center in Quincy

BBMRA will run Christmas holiday trains at the Tallahassee Senior Center for the fourth straight year and, for the first time, during Family Festive Day at the Gadsden Arts Center & Museum on the Courthouse Square in Quincy. The Senior Center event is Thursday, December 19, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. The new Gadsden Arts Center event is Saturday, December 7, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The operating session at the Senior Center, 1400 North Monroe Street, is from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., December 19, in the auditorium on the second floor, as in the past. This has become a regular event around Christmas for seniors, grandparents, and their grandchildren.

Set-up begins at 4:30 p.m. We have the entire auditorium on the second floor and will be bringing several layouts - two O Gauge layouts, Walt Disney, and Thomas the Tank Engine; a large HO T-Trak layout and maybe Neal Meadows' N Scale holiday layout. There may be an N Scale T-Trak set-up as well. The club will also display the Hannukah House constructed by Barbara Donner.

A special announcement from Maureen Haberfeld, Senior Center Lifelong Learning Coordinator: "Toy trains are a big part of many of our holiday memories. Come to the TSC and celebrate the holiday season with the Big Bend Model Railroad Association. Four model train layouts, including a Disney set, will be on display in the Tallahassee Senior Center auditorium and members of the club will be available to answer questions. \$5 donation for adults, kids are free. Holiday refreshments will be served. Kids are welcome so bring the grandchildren. Pre-registration is not necessary.



Tallahassee Senior Center on North Monroe St.

The operating session at the Gadsden Arts Center is 10 days earlier, on Saturday, December 7, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Set-up will be Friday, December 6, at 10 a.m. The arts center is in the old Bell & Bates Hardware Building, 13 North Madison Street, “on the Square” in Quincy. If you are driving U.S. 90 into Quincy, take the first right at the Courthouse and the museum is on that corner.

The club is bringing the Disney and Thomas O Gauge layouts and an N Scale T-Trak set-up directed by Stacey Elliott. Neal Meadows may have his N Scale Christmas display as well.



Gadsden Arts Center & Museum

HERE is a note from Kaiyla Thompson, Gadsden Arts Museum Educator: “We are excited to announce our Family Festive Day at the museum on Saturday, December 7, from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (BBMRA will begin its breakdown at 4 p.m.). This event will take place primarily in our Art Zone, where families can engage in holiday-themed activities and create personal gifts to celebrate the season. We would love to incorporate a train model setup in our Woodell Family Studio near our reading corner. This will surely enhance the festive atmosphere and provide a wow factor for the families that visit.”

Tom Friedman, a retired FBI official and artist, is on the Gadsden Arts Board as well as serving as chairman of the Tallahassee Senior Center Board. BBMRA Small Scale Coordinator Bob Feuerstein is on the Senior Center board and introduced the Sunday Group to Tom. That led to this new operating session.

Gadsden Arts Center & Museum, 13 North Madison Street in Quincy. <https://www.gadsdenarts.org>



Marvelous HO T-Traks from the 2023 Tallahassee Senior Center event.

VMRR Trains in Bristol Suspended for Trestle Repairs; No Polar Bear Express This Year

From the Veterans Memorial Railroad Internet Site, <https://www.veteransmemorialrailroad.org/>



Veterans Memorial Railroad, Inc. sadly announces that we will not be able to hold the annual Christmas event, *"Polar Bear Express"* this year due to repairs required for the trestle. It was hoped that the repairs would have been completed in time to prepare for the 2024 Christmas event. Unfortunately, this was not possible.

As you may know, VMRR has been providing the Christmas train(s) since 2003 and this year will be only the second time we have cancelled the event. We will continue to post updates after the first of the New Year

on the progress of the repairs. We look forward to announcing the reopening of the Railroad for families throughout the Panhandle to include Free Public Run Days, Special Reservations as well as the 2025 "Polar Bear Express."

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING VETERANS MEMORIAL RAILROAD, INC.

Here is an earlier post:

Repairs Must Be Done Before Anyone Can Ride Our Train!

We have just found out that repairs must be made to the trestle through the woods! We have no choice but to cancel all train rides until this can be properly addressed. We do not have a timeline for when repairs can be started or completed. Watch this website or our Facebook page for repair updates. We are very sorry for the cancellation, but the safety of all those who come to ride is extremely important to us.



BBMRA Important Events in 2024!!



Help us build this calendar. Email sammiller61113@outlook.com. Please confirm that an activity is still on before you travel to it. We are listing Internet links whenever possible.

Here is a terrific national calendar:
https://www.railserve.com/events/train_shows.html

BBMRA meetings are the third Tuesday of each month through Zoom.

BBMRA Zoom: Go to Zoom Program or Internet site and use these codes.

Meeting ID: 873 5905 5848, Password: BBMRA2022

Lionel Interest Group Operating Sessions: most Sundays at 1:30 p.m. at Sam Miller's house in Woodgate. Call (850) 459-3012 for further information.

December 7, 2024: BBMRA Trains at Family Festive Day at the Gadsden Arts Center & Museum on the Courthouse Square in Quincy. The set-up will be Friday, December 6, at 10 a.m. The arts center is in the old Bell & Bates Hardware

Building, 13 North Madison Street, “on the Square” in Quincy. The club is bringing the Disney, and Thomas O Gauge layouts and an N Scale T-Trak set-up directed by Stacey Elliott. Neal Meadows may have his N Scale Christmas display as well.

December 14, 2024, a Saturday, Linda Medlin and Linda Medlin’s BBMRA Holiday Open House: from 3 to 5 p.m., although we won't be pushing anyone out the door at 5. Good to have this going again.

December 19, 2024: BBMRA Holidays Trains at the Tallahassee Senior Center, 6:30 to 8 p.m. Set-up begins at 4:30 p.m. We have the entire auditorium on the second floor and will be bringing several layouts - two O Gauge layouts, Walt Disney, and Thomas the Tank Engine: a large HO T-Trak layout and maybe Neal Meadows’ N Scale holiday layout. There may be an N Scale T-Trak set-up as well.

December 2024: Polar Bear Express Holiday Trains, Veterans Memorial Railroad, Bristol, are suspended this year because of necessary trestle repairs.

January 9-11, 2025: 2025 Prototype Rails RPM Meet, Cocoa Beach Hilton: This is an NMRA Sunshine Region sanctioned event with a wide variety of model railroading workshops and presentations. Featuring O, HO and N. The registration fee is \$50 before December 31 and \$60 after that. Checks payable to Prototype Rails and must be sent to Tom Meyer, 2321 Kumquat Drive, Edgewater, FL, 32141.

<https://prototypetrails.com>

<https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/ccbchhf-hilton-cocoa-beach-oceanfront/>

January 10, 11 & 12, 2025: Florida Panhandle Toy Expo, Central Panhandle Fairgrounds, 2230 15th Street, Panama City, FL. 12-4, Friday and 8-4 Saturday and Sunday. This is an established show for Hot Wheels, Matchbox and other toys and collectibles. It is being expanded for the first time to include model trains, featuring Sam Miller of Tallahassee, Rick Heilman, Lynn Haven and Jason Mueller, Baton Rouge, LA, and possibly other vendors from the Tallahassee model train show.

February 1-2, 2025, The Villages Model Train Show: Savannah Regional Center, 1545 N. Buena Vista Blvd., The Villages, FL, 32162. Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Sunday, 10 am. To 3 p.m. Admission \$7; children under 12 free.

February 8, 2025, 46th Annual Jacksonville Train Show & Sale: 9a to 4p, Admission, \$13; children under 12, free. Prime Osborne Center, 1000 Waters Street, Jacksonville, 32204. Golden Spike Enterprises.

June 21-22, 2025, 34th Annual Tallahassee Model Railroad Show and Sale, North Florida Fairgrounds, 441 Paul Russell Road, Tallahassee, 32301. **9 a.m. to 5 p.m.**, Saturday and Sunday. The set-up is Friday, June 20. Kids 12 and under get in free; ages 13 to adult, \$10.



Minutes from the October 15, 2024 2024, Meeting of BBMRA

Submitted by Sheldon Harrison

President Andy called the meeting held on October 15, 2024, via Zoom to order at 7:33 pm. There were 12 participants present at maximum. Before the meeting got underway,

President Andy shared news of a heartbreaking personal tragedy in his family. Members in attendance shared and expressed their sincere sympathy with the situation.

Minutes – The minutes from the September meeting were discussed. Bob Ruggles moved to accept the minutes and Sam seconded. The minutes passed without objection.

Treasurer's Report – The report was shared onscreen by President Andy. There was discussion of a few receipts received including one from the Tallahassee Democrat. As is customary, the actual financials are not disclosed in the minutes, but club members are free to request the details if needed. Phil moved a motion to accept the report as presented by Neal and Bob Ruggles seconded. The motion passed without objection.

Division Reports

Small-Scale – Stacey mentioned he is putting together plans for a Christmas T-Trak switching layout and is aiming for Christmas of 2025 for it to be ready. It is likely to be a large layout. He mentioned that because of its configuration, realistic operations running should be a possibility.

Large-Scale – Sam mentioned that the Senior Center event date has been confirmed for Thursday the 19th of December. He mentioned that HO will also be there as well as the Disney layout. Sam also mentioned that he will be hosting a Christmas open house and additional details will be forthcoming. He also mentioned the Woodgate Neighborhood model train open house will also be held in November. He also mentioned plans for a work session, location to be determined.

HO-Scale – Phil described that he has contacted folks who are working on / will be providing modules for the 2025 show.

NMRA – President Andy mentioned the election process for NMRA Sunshine Region including the number of ballots etc. He was voted in as president in this round. He also stated that a new Southern Division superintendent and other positions were voted in. Many officers were also reelected to their positions. He continued to mention the event in Kingsland, GA that will likely occur next Spring and a dinner train or pizza train are among the ideas touted. He mentioned the Medicare protocol about reduced rates for members of the NMRA owing to studies indicating enhanced longevity and cognitive function amongst model railroaders.

New Business – There was discussion about in-person meetings again, perhaps at the Senior Center once a month as a general get together. It could be in addition to the regular business meeting. President Andy also mentioned the possibility of a breakfast meeting or other restaurant options. Basically, lots of ideas were perused to get the camaraderie / fellowship of the club back to what it used to be.

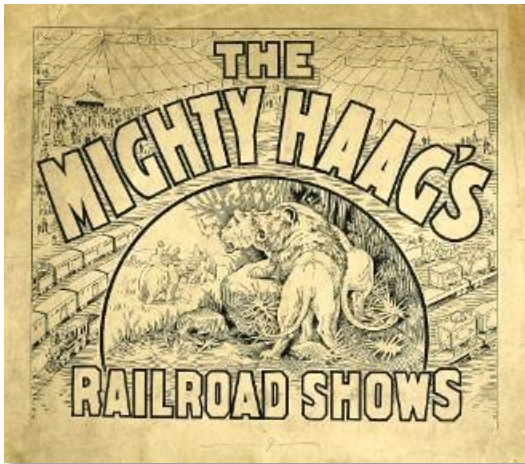
Switching Layout – Joe was absent.

Good of the Group

Ed had a question regarding placing ballast on track. President Andy gave some suggestions, such as using Modge Podge. There was then general discussion of ballasting, scenic laying etc. using rubbing alcohol to reduce surface tension that aids in the glue work, among other items. Andy Millott then chimed in regarding the layout tour and also raised the issue of the potential conflict with the NMRA Kingsland train event that may occur in the same time frame. The meeting concluded at about 8:47 PM. There was a last-minute question from Craig Mathews regarding getting set up on the club contact list to receive emails.

MEMORIES OF THE MIGHTY HAAG CIRCUS AND THE RINGLING BROS. & BARNUM AND BAILEY CIRCUS PART 2 BY: NEAL MEADOWS, ED.D.

Back in September, I wrote an article about these two circus entities as part one. In part 2 I want to share some information that was published in the Jackson County Times newspaper that I subscribe to from my hometown – Marianna, FL. I mentioned about the incidences that led to my discovery of the old circus wintering grounds of the Mighty Haag Circus. I wanted to share some of the information that was published in two different weeks. The first part was originally written by Margaret Miller Curtis, a Marianna native who has written many articles for the paper related to her upbringing and her stories of her somewhat famous mother Retilla Miller, who was the first woman reporter for the Jackson County Floridan newspaper that was published daily in Marianna. The second article was originally published by the Times Editor Shelia Mader, another Marianna native. I have shared the first article in this issue with permission from the newspaper. The other will be in a future issue.



THE MIGHTY HAAG CIRCUS WINTERS IN MARIANNA

By: Margaret Miller Curtis

First published in the Jackson County Times June 29, 2017.

I am a history fan and find it disappointing that schools rarely teach kids the histories of their own hometowns. We learned a lot about the Civil War in Marianna, but our hometown has many more stories that can be told. When I was a teenager, I danced to the tunes of the famous bandleader, Harry James, never dreaming that he had any connection to Marianna, yet he most likely spent winters in Marianna when he was a child.

Mother preferred local history, and wrote about it in her newspaper column, “Circulating with Tillie.” Rummaging through her old columns recently, I discovered that Marianna had been the winter headquarters of what was once a well-known circus, the Mighty Haag Circus.

It was no “two-bit” circus; it was huge. It had its own zoo of exotic animals, and a lengthy list of employees, including Marguerite Davis, a sword swallower. It had its own band, led by Robert James, the father of Harry James. Harry’s mother, Myrtle Maybelle (Stewart) James did stunts on the backs of horses and elephants and performed as an acrobat on the high wire as well. The couple honored their employer, Ernest Haag by naming their son Harry Haag James. Harry was born when the circus was performing in Albany, Georgia. Ernest Haag was born in Indiana to parents who migrated there from Bavaria. Maybe he didn’t like cold



weather, because he literally ran away from home to join a circus that was headed South. After learning the circus business from the ground up, he ended up in Shreveport, Louisiana. There, he ventured into the entertainment business by purchasing a flat bottom boat, which he loaded with various types of entertainment.



He toured first on the Red River in Louisiana, then on other rivers in the South. His profits enabled him to buy carts, wagons and whatever else he needed to take his Big Show off the rivers and into towns within Southern states.

After touring for ten years, he'd profited enough to buy railroad cars and cages for his animals, a calliope, and to hire a larger cast of characters. The Big Show evolved into a much larger production, The Mighty Haag Circus, which traveled throughout the country. In its time, it was as well-known as was the Ringling Brothers or the Barnum and Bailey Circuses. As a teenager, Mother was thrilled to see the circus parade progressing through downtown Marianna. She loved the gaily painted wagons, the calliope music and the antics of the clowns. She was watching when an elephant threw his trunk over a garden fence, pulling up a turnip and eating it without missing a step.

Folks from all over the county came to see the circus perform. They included my Aunt Nannie, who grew up in nearby Graceville. In 1915, a circus ticket cost only 35 cents, which would be ridiculously cheap now, but seemed a more formidable sum then. Her father woke his children at four a.m., loaded them into a wagon, then allowed the family to spend a full day at the circus, returning home at night. She would have been shocked to know that someday, she would have a home on the very ground where she spent that wonderful day.



Years later, she married my uncle, Chester Miller, who had purchased part of the land where the circus had been quartered. The circus left behind some artifacts which she showed Mother. They included an old drum on which one of the elephants performed, and an old watering trough used by the animals.

History lovers tend to also enjoy tracing genealogy, but as my maiden name, Miller, is so common, I ran into several brick walls. I knew that people tend to meet and mate with people in places they visit or live temporarily, so I wondered if any of those circus folks might have married Jackson County residents. I searched the list of circus employees, and noticed the name, Frenchie Miller, a clown. "What a coincidence!" I e-mailed our daughter. "That might explain the antics of your brother, David."



Harry Haag James & Ernest Haag at the ticket booth



The acrobats



Elephant Shenanigans



1927 Haag Shows

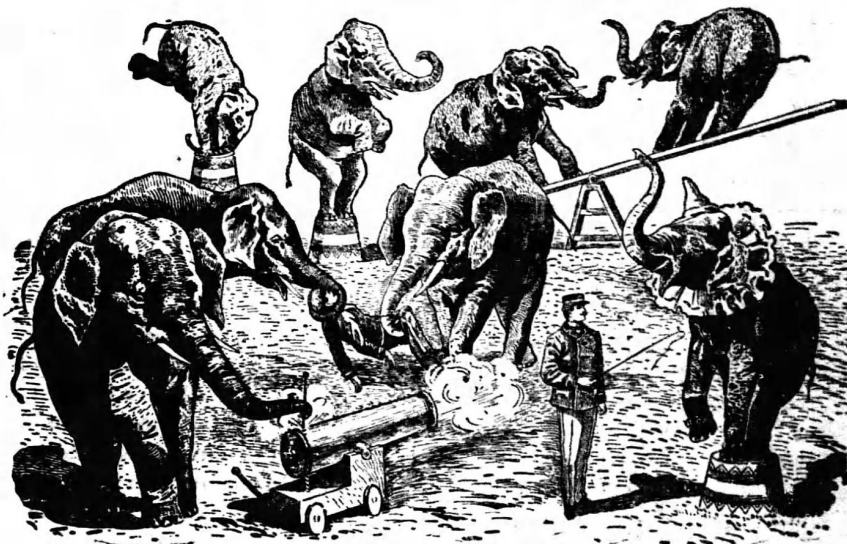


1928 Haag Shows



One of the Warren Circus Flat Bed Cars that was used to transport circus wagons and equipment.

Haag's Mighty Shows



THURSDAY, MARCH 9th

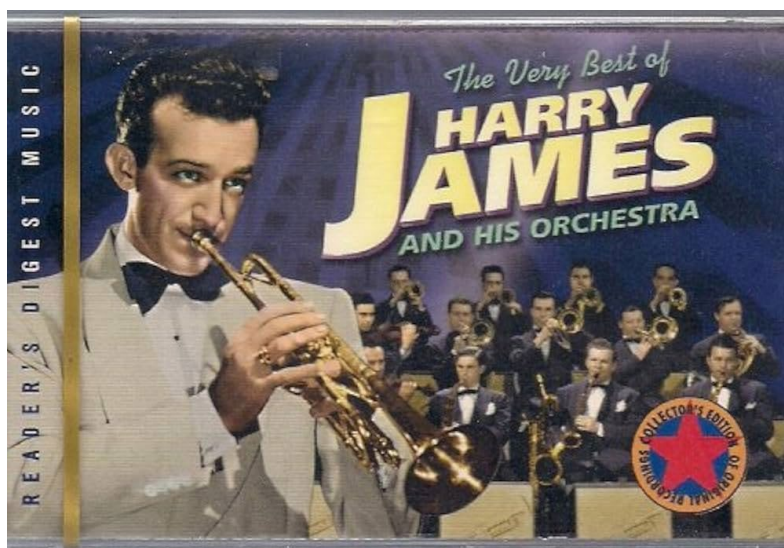
TWO PERFORMANCES, AFTERNOON & EVENING.

Old Fair Grounds.

GRAND PARADE 1 P. M.

ADMISSION

Reduced for this date only, 25c & 35c



Pay Your 2024-25 Dues – *Not Paid? Get your dues paid quickly – Use PayPal!*

The BBMRA now has the option for new and current members to pay their dues online by using the PayPal link on the BBMRA.ORG website. It is under the Membership menu item. When you select the PayPal button you will get the option to use your PayPal account if you have one or use a credit/debit card. The dues are \$21.25 using this method, 2 years for \$42.00.



BBMRA dues are \$20 a year and must be paid by July 30, under club bylaws. Over the years, however, we have not considered dues delinquent until the end of August, BBMRA President

Andy Zimmerman says.

If you want to mail a check, please mail it directly to Neal Meadows at 2812 Whittington Dr. Tallahassee, FL 32309. This will expedite the process since the mailbox only gets checked about twice a month during this time.

"The LANTERN" is the official publication of the BIG BEND MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION, INC. and is published monthly just prior to each regularly scheduled meeting. Subscriptions are included in all members' dues. The deadline to submit materials for publication is the first day of each month sent in c/o Secretary/Editor. P.O. Box 3392, Tallahassee, FL 32315-3392. Items may also be forwarded to the Editors via email attachment: (Neal Meadows) meadowsn1956@gmail.com or (Sam Miller) samthetrainmanmiller@gmail.com.

First U.S. hydrogen-powered trainset enters Phase II of testing in California

By Chase Gunnoe | November 10, 2024

Contributed by Ed Schroeder



Stadler's hydrogen-powered FLIRT trainset, built for San Bernardino County's Arrow service, is displayed at InnoTrans in Berlin in 2022. After extensive testing in Europe and Colorado, the train is beginning the second phase of testing on the 9-mile Arrow route. Keith Fender

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. — North America's first hydrogen-powered passenger trainset planned for regular use is getting closer to entering service in Southern California. The San Bernardino County Transportation Authority's zero-emission multiple unit trainset, which the agency is promoting as

ZEMU, will enter its second phase of testing next week.

After several months of tests between the ZEMU's communication technology and grade-crossing warning systems, the agency is moving into its next phase of tests. Beginning Nov. 12, the agency will conduct overnight vehicle testing to measure the operational performance of the hydrogen-powered trainset on Metrolink's 9-mile Arrow Corridor on its San Bernardino line between San Bernardino and Redlands, Calif.

Tests will operate on weekday nights between 9 p.m. and 4 a.m. and with grade crossing validations complete, the trainset will operate through grade crossings without flaggers as normal commuter trains. These tests will continue until the end of January 2025.



Trains News Wire contacted the SBCTA to learn the key testing differences between the new hydrogen trainset and conventional diesel-powered equipment.

A conventional diesel-powered Arrow trainset approaches the Esri station in Redlands, Calif. The Arrow service's hydrogen-powered trainset will begin testing on the 9-mile line on Nov. 12. David Lassen

“Generally speaking, testing for the ZEMU is consistent with what was performed when we introduced the [Diesel Multiple Units] to the Arrow service area,” says Tim Watkins, the chief of legislative and public affairs at SBCTA. “There are some subtle

vehicle size and weight differences that will be addressed in this round of testing and warrants taking a thorough look at vehicle performance before offering it to public service.

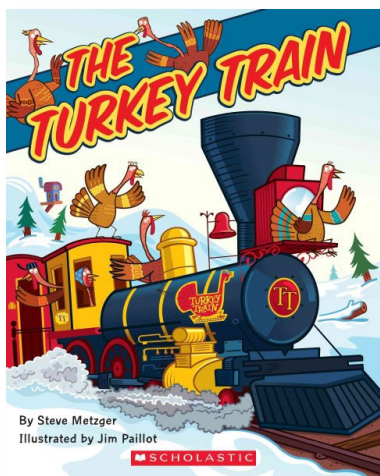
“Additionally, modifications to the existing Arrow Maintenance Facility are required to accommodate a hydrogen storage and fueling station to support the operations of the ZEMU. SBCTA’s new hydrogen storage and fueling facility will be the first hydrogen fueling station for rail vehicles in Southern California.”

The ZEMU uses a combination of hydrogen fuel cells and batteries to propel the train. Hydrogen fuel and oxygen helps generate electricity to power the train’s propulsion system. The only emissions are water vapor.

The SBCTA’s decades-long vision to develop zero-emissions rail transit technology was designed in partnership with Swiss train builder Stadler. The agency entered into a contract with the company in 2019 and the blue-and-white hydrogen train, a FLIRT (Fast Light Intercity and Regional Train) H2, arrived in the U.S. from Europe in summer 2023. The trainset underwent extensive testing at the Federal Railroad Administration’s Transportation Technology Center in Pueblo, Colo., before arriving in southern California in June 2024.

The agency anticipates the zero-emission trainset will enter service in early 2025.

While the SCBTA train will be the first hydrogen-powered passenger train to run in the U.S., similar hydrogen fuel-cell equipment operated in Quebec in a three-month trial last year [see [“Alstom’s hydrogen passenger train to debut ...”](#) *Trains News Wire*, Feb. 3, 2023]



TURKEYS & TRAINS

Did you know that the history of freight railroads transporting turkeys is closely tied to the development of the American railroad system and the growth of the turkey industry? According to the National Turkey Federation, the turkey industry provides more than 385,000 American jobs and has a direct financial impact of \$36 billion, which increases to a total economic impact of \$103.4 billion.

Here’s a look at how railroads have supported this vital customer over the years. Learn more about freight rail’s support of the agricultural industry [here](#).

Early 19th Century: The construction of the early American railroad system began in the 1830s. At this time, turkey farming was already a significant agricultural activity, especially in the Midwest and the East Coast.

- **Mid-19th Century:** As the railroad network expanded, it became an increasingly efficient mode of transportation for goods, including livestock and agricultural products. Turkeys were transported live in crates, primarily during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday seasons.
- **Late 19th Century:** By the late 19th century, the transportation of turkeys by rail had become a well-established practice, especially for long-distance shipments. Railroads developed specialized cars equipped with coops or crates to accommodate live poultry, including turkeys.
- **20th Century:** The early 20th century saw further improvements in transporting live turkeys by rail. Refrigerated cars became more common, transporting dressed (but not yet frozen) turkeys. This enabled a longer shelf life for turkey products and expanded the market reach of turkey farmers. In the mid-20th century, the transportation of frozen turkeys became more prevalent as advancements in refrigeration technology allowed for long-distance shipping without the need for live birds. This made turkey products more accessible and contributed to the growth of the turkey industry.
- **Modern Era:** Today, freight railroads are crucial in transporting turkeys and turkey products. Refrigerated rail cars and improved transportation logistics ensure that turkeys and turkey-related items can be efficiently distributed across the country, particularly during Thanksgiving.



▪ Source:

Happy Thanksgiving!