

The Mission of the George L. Carter Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society is to preserve and promote the Legacy of the local Railroads that helped shape our past and to remember those who had a part in that legacy.



The Mission of the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders is to further the interest in model railroading and railroad history by supporting the Johnson City Railroad Experience.

JOHN, YOU THREW THE SWITCH THE RIGHT WAY DIDNT YOU?



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The Coal Road

George L. Carter Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society

Welcome to The Coal Road and The Signal Bridge

By Scott M. Stodola, President of the George L. Carter Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society

Welcome to the first issue of the newest edition of The Coal Road and The Signal Bridge.

After some time of not having a newsletter for both the George L. Carter Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society and the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders, here it is. New and improved, two in one.

This newsletter will be published quarterly and will only be able to be

published with your help. As the editor, I will provide

organizations and I will also need your articles and pictures. Each of you have interest in the prospective organizations and only you can share what you enjoy, whether its club activities, railfanning, going on the excursions, whatever it is, you can contribute to this newsletter.

This is your chance to contribute to YOUR newsletter.

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information about both

The Signal Bridge

Mountain Empire Model Railroaders



What It Takes To Be A Good Museum/Club

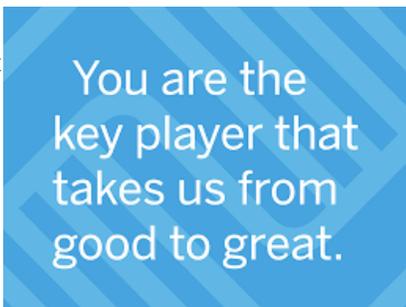
By Bob Grygotis, President, Mountain Empire Model Railroaders

In any and all organizations, it has been my experience that clear alignment on our mission or purpose is the start of a great museum or club.

The mission or purpose is to provide the goal and anchor of why we are here. Sometimes individuality gets in the way of this and it is up to the leadership to find ways to allow individuality within the purpose. The beauty of what we have done with this museum and club is the

ability of many to contribute

with different skills.



In our first year of operation, we have learned many lessons and achieved something of a rarity. Most clubs or museums do what we have, over many years. So this magnifies our work of over two years.

Our thanks to all who have given so freely of their time and passion for the hobby.

when they have entered the process at different times and

This IS WHAT MAKES A GREAT organization.

Norfolk Southern's Operation Awareness & Response Training Program for First Responders

It is no surprise that railroad training for hazardous material incidents has greatly improved over the last 50 years. This type of training is a result of unfortunate incidents that have exposed a lack of preparedness, which has led to the specialized training programs that we have today.

On November 4, 2025, I had the honor and privilege to witness first hand how this training is presented to first responders. I traveled to Harrisonburg, Virginia for the last training session of the year. I joined Battalion Chief McCommas, Fire Chief Tobia, and 21 men and women from the Harrisonburg Fire Department and Hazmat Team. Also in attendance were 1 Harrisonburg Police Officer, 1 representative from the Chlorine Institute, 1 volunteer from the Roanoke Chapter of the NRHS, and myself.



The Norfolk Southern Operation Awareness & Response (OAR) Program began in 2015 and has trained over 51,000 first responders since that time.

This programs main goal is to train first responders for rail-related incidents which involve hazardous materials. In April 2016, there was a specially equipped train put together specifically for training first responders. This train consists of 1 locomotive, 2 box cars converted into classrooms, 4 tank cars, and 2 flat cars equipped with various protection domes and valves which are used on tank cars today.

Norfolk Southern has provided this free hands on training to more than 5,000 first responders annually across its 22 state network.

Norfolk Southern has an Environmental Protection Team on call 24/7/365 and is ready to respond to any emergency. Through their in-house Hazmat Team experts, there are also consultants and contractors that are ready to assist in the event of any hazmat or environmental incident.



Training began inside a box car which had been converted into a classroom. Today's trainers included Travis Lindsey and Scott Gould, Managers for Hazardous Materials, and Justin Hahn, Vice President of Railroad & Industrial Services for Zero Waste.

We began with a safety briefing and an overview of what the day was to hold for us. The basic construction of tank cars was covered and the protection domes which cover the loading and



unloading valves, and also the pressure relief valves. Hazmat placards was covered and the importance of understanding what each placard means. Grade crossing safety was next up, and the main point was that when there is more than one track, do not assume that when the train clears the crossing, that there is not another train on the other track heading over that crossing. We watched several videos of first responders on

their way to an emergency call, both fire and police, begin to cross once the train clears the crossing only to be hit by another train. Never assume that crossing is clear until the gates go up.

After some classroom time, we split into two groups. One of the groups went to the flat car with the protection domes and valves, and the other group moved down track to the "tank car" classroom (a tank car which had 2 doors cut into the

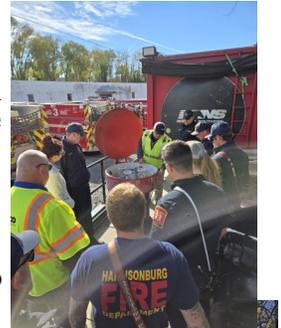


ends so that you can see what the inside of a tank car looks like, and its not like the outside, and it also had several types of valves that are used today). After a short time of instruction, both groups then switched to the other station.

After lunch, the training moved to simulation. Everyone left the classroom and headed down track. If this had been a real emergency, the first responders would have had their personal protective equipment (PPE) on already before approaching the scene. We were told to evaluate each "scene" by looking for anything out of the ordinary, vapor or leaks. In any train derailment, first responders will always look for the conductor as he/she will have first hand knowledge and access to the trains consist.



The first tank car that was encountered, showed vapor coming out of the protection dome. At this point, one or two of the firefighters began looking at one of the two specialized apps on their phones. They were using either Ask Rail which only approved first responders can get access to real time hazardous material information for specific railcars on a train, or the Emergency Response Guide. As this was happening, another firefighter was writing all of the information that was being gathered from the app onto what I am calling an Emergency Hazmat Response Sheet, I'm sure there is another name for it, but this sheet is vital to knowing what you are dealing with.



Continued on page 5, Hazmat

New, continued from page 1

We have been around now in the new museum for 2 years. We have worked hard to get to where we are at, and we could not have done it without you.

If you know me, you know that I have no problem getting the word out about not only the Carter Chapter and the MEMRR, but also the Johnson City Railroad Experience.

I live up to the award that I received at the JCRE Awards Night. I received the Conductors Star Award. You know what that means? I will talk about US every chance I get. Every time that I go to different places, whether in Tennessee, Georgia, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, wherever, I wear my Carter shirt and share what "WE" are doing.

Even when we chased the CSX Santa Train this year, I was able to not only give the train crew JCRE museum tickets in Dante, VA, but I was able to meet the engineer and the CSX Road Foreman in St. Paul, VA, and ask how "WE" can be involved next year.

Having pride in

something that you are involved in is priceless. Sharing what you are passionate about is priceless. There is an old saying, "you can't keep it unless you give it away."



little world, but when we share with others who do not know our world exists, you will see their eyes open wide because they are interested in something new.

We all have a part in this.



Each of us are passionate about what we love to do. Share it with others and you will see that this "hobby" will not die, it will create a new lifestyle in someone else.

I have seen past members come back to the club and get involved, and I have seen some leave because of change. Well you know what, I also see the new members that we are getting. Everything that I do and others do, makes a difference not only in our own happy

All myself or any of the other officers can ever ask for is this, we only ask for you to get involved. That's it. We are all in this together. I have said this before, and I will say it again and again. What we have grown into being is not that 10am to 3pm, Saturday only club. We are now under the umbrella of the Johnson City Railroad Experience, open 5 days a week from 10am to 4:30pm. We are not just a hole in the wall anymore. We have more people than ever coming to see us, and from all over the world.

WE have come a long way and now more than ever, we ask for involvement. If you haven't been to see us, come visit a while and see some old and new friends. We would love to see you.

Building the "Hoit Brothers Machine Shop"

By Jim Hoit

If your like me when I was 8-9 years old, I enjoyed building model kits. When I got my allowance for the month, I would head down to the hobby store and pick out something to put together.

As I got older, I got away from this idea until I joined the MEMRR club and received a Balsa wood kit from my sister some 13 years ago. I looked at what was in the package and what it was going to take to put it together and soon decided it was over my head to try to build this kit.

After being a member of this club for a couple of years, I asked Fred Alsop if there was anything I could do to help out on the ET&WNC. He said yes, we need to build the Hampton Railroad Station. So he handed me a book with plans and pictures, and I was like, oh,

ok. So I took it home, picked up some balsa wood and set to work. That was 11 years ago.

Now here we are, 1 year ago when I got out the model I set aside and began to work, first the drawing of the structure needed to be drawn out on the wood and then cut out using a single edge razor blade, make sure your fingers are out of the way (picture 1 & 2).



Next was to assemble the parts by



reinforcing the corners and then painting the project inside and out

(picture 3 & 4).

After checking the fit of the windows and filing some of them to fit, I glued them in place and began building out the rest of the details.

Continued, Hoit, page 4

Hoit, continued from page 3

Building the roof and installing the shingles, vent pipe, etc. Next was to add on the brick power house and covering the wall with brick paper sheeting.

At this point, I used color pencils to shade in a red brick color and attaching this to the main structure (picture 5).



Last step was to place this new structure into my N scale layout next to a rail siding (picture 6).



So the next time you feel like something is over your head, just jump in and give yourself a try and don't forget to have fun.



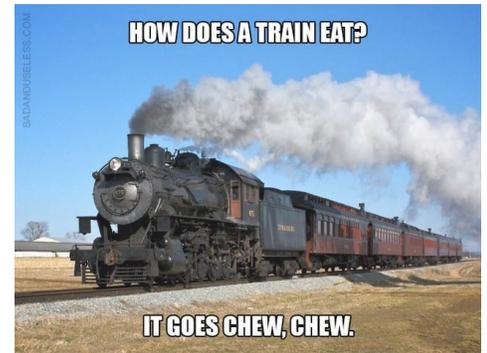
Submit Your Article Today

As you can see from this issue, your article can be as short as 4 paragraphs or as long as a couple of pages. If you are going to submit pictures, please attach pictures that are .jpg formatted.

You can either hand your article to me at the museum, place it in my mailbox in the breakroom, or you can email it to me at carternrhs@gmail.com.

Thank you and have a blessed day.

As you can see, any unused portion of the newsletter will have room for funnies.



Mother's Day Express Saturday, May 9, 2026



Hosted by the George L. Carter Chapter and the Johnson City Railroad Experience, join us as we celebrate Mother's Day with a leisurely drive on a private motor coach to Knoxville, TN, where we will board the Three Rivers

Rambler. Sit back as we travel through the scenic heart of Knoxville, the University of Tennessee, downtown, and historical sites to the "Three Rivers Trestle" where the French Broad and Holston Rivers join to form the Tennessee River.

We will continue to celebrate mom with lunch on board the Star of Knoxville, which is one of four authentic paddlewheel riverboats in the United States. We will enjoy a delicious meal while cruising the Tennessee River, past iconic downtown landmarks while you spend that special time with mom and enjoy some true southern hospitality.

Tickets will go on sale soon.

****As of now, motive pwer is undetermined. We may have a steam engine or a diesel. Motive power can be replaced for any reason and at any time.*



Hazmat, continued

Rail Car Initial and Number	Product Shipping Name	Hazard Class/Division	ID Number
OART 432077	PROPANE	2.1	UN 1075
Public Safety			
ERG Guide Page #: 115	Immediate Precautionary/Initial Isolation: 330 ft AIDIP		
Large Spill Downwind Evacuation: 600 m	Railcar Involved in Fire Evacuation: 1 mile		
Small Spill Protect Day/Night: 330 ft	Large Spill Protect Day/Night: 1/2 mile		
Hazard Analysis			
Flash Point: 156°F	LEL - UEL%:	Vapor Density: ~6 @ 20°C	
Spec. Gravity: 0.493	Solubility:	IDLH:	
Physical Description:			
Acute Exposure Symptoms:			

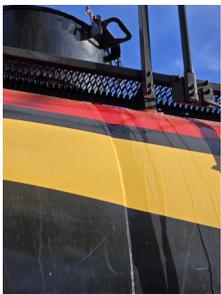
This sheet puts all of the information needed in one place and includes the rail car initial and number, public safety and Hazard Analysis such as a possible evacuation area, flash point of the product, and environmental hazards.



The Hazardous Material Placard showed 1075, flammable. It was determined through the app, that this car was carrying Propane. Public Safety factors and a Hazard Analysis was completed using the app.

Something that I learned many years ago was confirmed once again today. A liquid will follow its own path to the lowest point and things may not be as they appear.

On the next car we encountered a noticeable leak at the bottom of the car. We had to look at the side of the car to see that the liquid was actually running down from the protective dome area. Here is where confirmation came once again. Had



we have been on the other side of this car, we would not have seen the liquid running down the side of the car, only the leak at the bottom of the car. Because we were not on a level grade, gravity was allowing the liquid to run down our side of the car.

The Hazardous Material Placard showed 2055, flammable. It was determined once again by using the app, that this product was a flammable liquid, Styrene.



Rail Car Initial and Number	Product Shipping Name	Hazard Class/Division	ID Number
TLX 262785	STYRENE	2.1	UN 2055
Public Safety			
ERG Guide Page #: 187P	Immediate Precautionary/Initial Isolation: 50m		
Large Spill Downwind Evacuation: 1000ft	Railcar Involved in Fire Evacuation: 800m		
Small Spill Protect Day/Night:	Large Spill Protect Day/Night:		
Hazard Analysis			
Flash Point: 89.6°F	LEL - UEL%: 0.9% - 6.8%	Vapor Density: 3.6	
Spec. Gravity: 0.9	Solubility:	IDLH:	
Physical Description:			
Acute Exposure Symptoms:			



The last car that we encountered during this simulation period was a leak coming from the bottom of the tank car. This time, we also looked for liquid running down the sides and there was none, so the leak was at the valve. The

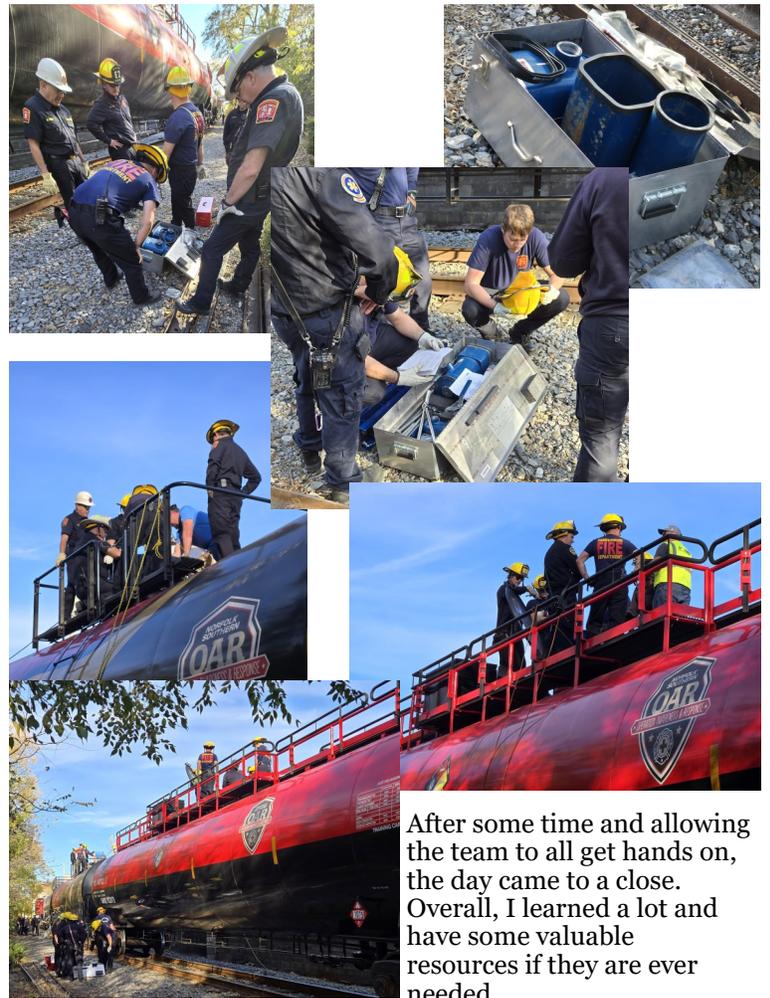


Hazardous Material Placard showed 1830, corrosive liquid.

This was determined once again by using the app, that this was Sulfuric Acid.

Rail Car Initial and Number	Product Shipping Name	Hazard Class/Division	ID Number
3393	SULFURIC ACID	8	UN 1830
Public Safety			
ERG Guide Page #: 137	Immediate Precautionary/Initial Isolation: 50m		
Large Spill Downwind Evacuation:	Railcar Involved in Fire Evacuation: 50m		
Small Spill Protect Day/Night:	Large Spill Protect Day/Night:		
Hazard Analysis			
Flash Point:	LEL - UEL%:	Vapor Density: 3.4	
Spec. Gravity:	Solubility:	IDLH:	
Physical Description:			
Acute Exposure Symptoms:			

After the simulation was completed, this gave the men and women of the Harrisonburg Fire Department and their Hazmat Team some valuable time to use their own equipment on the tank car where we saw the propane vapor.



After some time and allowing the team to all get hands on, the day came to a close. Overall, I learned a lot and have some valuable resources if they are ever needed.

I do know this, after today, the public should rest assured that Norfolk Southern is providing a training that is invaluable and all of the first responders that have gone through this training, have received the knowledge and resources to handle any railroad hazardous material incident.

Thank you to Norfolk Southern for allowing me this opportunity and to the men and women of the Harrisonburg, Virginia Fire Department, thank you. Thank you for your time and above all, your service.

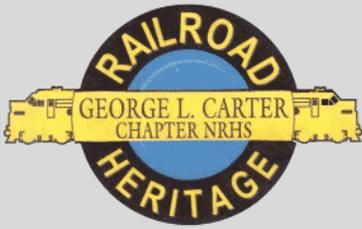
Written by Scott M. Stodola, President of the George L. Carter Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society



Dr. Fred J. Alsop III
Director

Johnson City Railroad
Experience
207 N. Boone Street
Suite 2000
Johnson City, TN 37604

423-631-5273



Scott M. Stodola
President

George L. Carter Chapter
National Railway Historical
Society

207 N. Boone Street
Suite 2000
Johnson City, TN 37604

423-557-7050
carternrhs@gmail.com



Bob Grygotis
President

Mountain Empire Model
Railroaders

207 N. Boone Street
Suite 2000
Johnson City, TN 37604

903-276-4617

Johnson City Railroad Experience



Dr. Fred Alsop III
Director



Carson L. Sailor, MA
Assistant Director

George L. Carter Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society Officers



Left to right, Scott M. Stodola, President; Gary Giddens, Vice President; John Dodge, Treasurer; Mike Tarter, Secretary

Mountain Empire Model Railroaders Officers



Left to right, Bob Grygotis, President; Scott M. Stodola, Vice President; Gary Giddens, Secretary; Mike Tarter, Treasurer

