



2020 National Garden Railway Convention

Nashville, Tennessee

May 31 to June 6, 2020

Finally! Spring is starting to arrive in central Tennessee. Temperatures have moderated to the 60s and low 70s for daytime highs, the Japanese Cherry and Bradford Pear trees have started blooming. Even the trees on my garden railroad are starting to push out their leaves. Unfortunately, along with spring comes our tornado season as we experienced in the very early morning hours on March 3rd.

The countdown clock shows the start of the 36th National Garden Railroad Convention is now less than 82 days away. With each passing day our excitement about hosting the 2020 National Garden Railroad Convention increases as does the realization the convention will soon be here. In this newsletter we will update you on two items which have made news headlines in the last two weeks; tornado outbreak in central Tennessee and the Coronavirus infection. Also, in keeping with the same format with previous newsletters we will give a brief update on convention registrations and activities.

In our January 2020 newsletter we showed two pictures of the custom painted CSX SD70 AC locomotives that will be given to three lucky winners at the banquet on Friday June 5th. A fourth locomotive will be raffled off on Saturday June 6th at noon. We mentioned in the last newsletter the convention hopper cars produced by PIKO were headed to San Diego, CA. Two large pallets of boxes containing the convention cars have now arrived in Nashville. In this newsletter we will show a picture of the actual car.

The Convention Organizing Committee has decided to wave the late registration fee for all vendors. If you are considering being a vendor at the convention, we would love to have you come to Nashville to promote your business and meet in person with your customers and potential new customers.

Finally, many people attending the convention are within a reasonable driving distance of Nashville and are starting to map out their trip plans. We wanted to call your attention to two railroad related activities you might want to visit on your way to the convention or on your return trip home.

TORNADO UPDATE

As you have likely heard, there was an outbreak of tornadoes in central Tennessee in the very early morning hours of March 3rd. A total of nine tornadoes were confirmed with the largest tornado hitting the northwest side of the Nashville metro area as an EF-3 tornado and traveled 61.2 miles to the east along Interstate 40. By the time the tornado reached the Baxter and Cookeville areas, it had increased in strength to an EF-4 with wind speeds estimated at 200 mph. In these two communities the destruction was massive and many people have lost everything they own. We mourn the 25 fellow Tennesseans that lost their lives during the tornadoes and offer our support for to those who suffered extensive damage from these storms.

We want you to know all the members of the Nashville Garden Railway Society are safe. Our club President had damage to his garden railroad due to falling trees and branches. Club members along with volunteers from various organizations pitched in over a four-day period and have about 90% of downed trees and limbs cleaned up and repairs to the railroad can soon begin. We are confident his railroad will be operational again by the time the convention begins. Fiddler's Grove, which is a stop on the Tuesday tour also received significant damage to several of the historic buildings at the location. We are trying to determine if adjustments to our plans are warranted.

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

At present, there are no events or plans that are impacted by the COVID-19 virus. With roughly three months to the start of the 2020 convention, the outbreak could be completely contained or risk reduced with warmer weather by the time June comes around. So, we want you to understand the risk to the show is minimal, but we will take every precaution possible for your safety.

The CDC (www.cdc.gov) has guidelines posted on their website outlining safe practices including thoroughly scrubbing your hands and more. Feel free to practice "Social Distancing" between now and the convention to reduce the risk to yourselves and others.

Know that the 2020 NGRC Convention Committee will have hand sanitizers or hand wipes located at numerous popular and / or strategic locations during the convention. You are welcome to use these items and any that you plan to bring. Bear in mind, it is almost 12 weeks until the convention starts. Plenty of things can change in the country, though we do not expect them to impact the convention. Nevertheless, we will do our best to keep you informed as things progress.

REGISTRATION

The Nashville Garden Railway Society is pleased with the expected turnout for the convention. We are most appreciative of the efforts everyone has made to attend our convention. There are still plenty of rooms available in our hotel block at our reduced convention room rate. Don't forget our special offer for a free convention car for the first 200 registrations with a five-night stay at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel and Resort. We are approaching the first 200 registration limit.

Tickets are still available for the Tuesday night Grand Ole Opry performance (13 for main floor and 33 in the balcony). If you would like to attend this performance, tickets can still be purchased on line from

the convention website: www.ngrc2020.com. Any unsold tickets in our block will be returned on May 1 for sale to the general public. CMA Fest overlaps with our convention, so who knows what famous country music star or stars will make an unannounced visit to perform at the Tuesday night Opry. It has been known to happen in the past. It could be a night to remember for those in attendance.

There are only 65 tickets remaining for the General Jackson riverboat performance and dinner on Wednesday night. For the daytime trips on the General Jackson, 6 and 14 tickets are available for Tuesday June 2nd and Wednesday June 3rd, respectively. As with the Grand Ole Opry tickets, any unsold tickets from our blocks will be returned on May 1 for sale to the general public. If you are interested in this activity don't delay in purchasing your tickets on the convention website.

Our convention BBQ will be held at the iconic Wild Horse Saloon in downtown Nashville. With only 10 tickets available to be sold we are approaching a complete sell out for this event. Come join us for some great southern barbeque and don't forget your dancing shoes.

Several people have written to us about the backstage Opry tours and how much time to allow for the tours. Generally, the tours last about 60 to 75 minutes. There are ample tickets available for the backstage Opry tours on both Friday (1:30 pm) and Saturday (10:30 am and 1:30 pm) time slots.

We have only 42 tickets remaining for the tour and sample tasting at the Jack Daniel's distillery in Lynchburg, TN. A valid photo ID is required and the sampling is available only to those older than 21 years of age.

Youth Clinics

For the first time at a national garden railroading convention, we are offering two youth clinics and a modeling contest. What better way to encourage your children's or grandchildren's interest in the model railroading hobby and specifically in garden railroading than having them participate in a clinic and modeling contest? Youth younger than 17 years of age can participate in "make and take" clinics and their projects can be entered in the youth modeling contest. Winner of "Best of Show" in the youth modeling contest will receive a wonderful gift at the convention banquet on June 5th to recognize their achievement. The youth clinic for decorating a flat car is on Thursday June 4th from 2:00 to 3:00 pm in the Vendor Hall. Beginning at 3:00 to 5:00 pm on June 4th, also in the Vendor Hall, is the Youth clinic to decorate a wood building. Supplies needed for both clinics will be provided or you may bring your own flat car loads. There is a nominal charge for the flat car and wood building that applies. See the Convention website (www.ngrc2020.com) for details and to register for these exciting clinics.

Modeling Contests

Unlike previous conventions there will be two divisions in the modeling contests; an adult division as in the past and for the first time a youth division for youth 17 years of age and younger. Categories for the youth modeling contest are:

- G-scale building decorated in the youth clinic (requires registration for youth building clinic)
- G-scale flat car and load from youth clinic (requires registration for youth flat car clinic)
- Trackside (non-building) scene in any scale (O, HO, N, etc.). Scale must be listed on entry form.
- Outhouse in any scale. The scale must be listed on entry form.

Categories for the adult division modeling contest are:

- Scratch built structure
- Rolling stock including locomotives
- Diorama
- Outhouse

If you or your children are planning on entering either model contest, we would appreciate receiving an email from you indicating your plans to do so and which categories you will have entries so we know how much table space to allow for in the vendor hall. You may submit entries in more than one category. The convention email address is: ngrcnashville@gmail.com.

Convention Car



The waiting and anticipation of seeing the 2020 National Garden Railroad Convention is finally over! Two pallets of boxes containing the convention cars have arrived in Nashville. We think you will love the cars as much as we do! The design includes famous Nashville landmarks including the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis 576 steam locomotive, the historic Union Station in downtown Nashville, the Nashville skyline and its reflection on the water of the Cumberland River and the sign outside of the famous Honky Tonk Central bar along with fireworks exploding over the Nashville skyline are depicted on both sides of the car. The quality of the graphics PIKO was able to paint on the cars is remarkable.

Vendors

For those people debating whether to rent a booth and vending at the convention, there are plenty of booth spaces available in the vendor hall. The Convention Organizing Committee has decided to wave the March 1 late vendor registration fees. **There will be no price increase**, but we need to know if you are planning on setting up so we can notify the pipe and drape company and to get a sign printed to hang in your booth.

For those attending the convention, we will be posting on the convention website the names of the businesses that will be vendors at the convention in the near future.

Historic L&N Rail Park and Museum

401 Kentucky St., Bowling Green, KY 42101

(270) 745-7317

www.historicrailpark.com



For those traveling to the convention from the Midwest, you might have interest in visiting the historic L&N Rail Park and Museum located in Bowling Green, KY. Just three miles west of Interstate 65 the L&N Depot, built in 1925, is alongside CSX track (previously owned by the L&N railroad) and is an excellent location for railfanning. The depot houses a museum containing artifacts and displays of regional and national cultural, historic, and social-economic interest. Outside the depot in the rail park where on static display are:

- L&N 796 E8 diesel locomotive
- L&N 1107 RPO (rail post office) car
- Duncan Hines dinning car (delivered to L&N railroad in 1944)
- Towering Pine 3467 sleeper car (purchased in 1953 by L&N railroad)
- L&N President's car (oldest surviving passenger car built by L&N railroad in 1911)
- L&N caboose (Chessie class C-27 caboose. Built for the C&O railroad and donated to rail park by CSX railroad)
- WWII hospital car (used to bring wounded troops home during WWII; currently under restoration)

The museum and rail park are closed on Monday and open from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm Tuesday through Saturday and from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm on Sunday.

Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum

4119 Cromwell Rd
Chattanooga, TN 37421
(423) 894-8028 Ext. 0
www.tvrail.com



Unlike many railroad museums, the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum, located in Chattanooga, TN (146 miles southeast of the Gaylord Opryland Hotel and Resort), has a mission to collect for preservation, operation, interpretation, and display railroad equipment from the “Golden Era of Railroading” to educate the public about the role railroads played in the country’s economic development. This is a “must see” stop for convention attendees living in the Southeast and East Coast regions. Railroads such as the Southern Railroad donated obsolete rolling stock to the museum in the early 1960s. In addition, the Southern Railroad donated the original East Tennessee, Virginia and Georgia track for which the museum could operate on, including the Missionary Ridge Tunnel which is on the National Register of Historic Places. The tunnel was built in 1858. There are weekend train excursions of about one hour in duration over the East Tennessee, Virginia and Georgia track from Grand Junction Depot to East Chattanooga. The train crosses Chickamauga Creek and passes through the Missionary Ridge tunnel. Cab rides are available for \$10 on trains headed by diesel locomotives and for \$20 for cab rides on steam locomotives. Tours to East Chattanooga includes a turntable demonstration and a visit to the restoration shop. Throughout the year there are also special excursions such as the Summerville Local, Hiwassee Loop, Chickamauga Turn, and Copperhill Train. See the Tennessee Valley Museum website (www.tvrail.com) for dates, times and prices for these special train excursions. The author of this article took the Copperhill train excursion a couple years ago and it was a fantastic trip!

The museum has a large collection of steam and diesel locomotives including:

- **4501:** 2-8-2 Mikado built for the Southern Railroad in 1911. Sole survivor of 435 Mikado locomotives owned by the Southern Railroad.

- **630:** A 2-8-0 “Consolidation” locomotive built by American Locomotive Company (ALCO) in 1904. This locomotive was one of 630 Consolidation locomotives owned by the Southern Railroad.
- **610:** This locomotive was built by the Baldwin-Lima-Hamilton Company in 1952 for the US Army. Currently out of service for an overhaul.
- **5288:** Built in 1919 this 4-6-2 “Pacific” class locomotive was built in 1919 for the Canadian National Railroad.
- **2594:** A GP30 built in 1962 by General Motors Electro-Motive Division for the Southern Railroad.
- **1824 and 1829:** GP7 locomotives built by GM’s Electro-Motive Division for the U.S. Army.
- **8669:** A RS-1 locomotive built by ALCO for the U.S. Army and later used by the U.S. Air Force. Currently out of service for electrical and mechanical repairs.
- **710:** GP-9 diesel-electric locomotive built in 1950 for the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis railroad.
- **5000:** This was the first 2000 horsepower GP38-2 locomotive purchased by the Southern Railway.
- **5044 and 5109:** Built in 1973 and 1974, respectively for the Southern Railway. 5044 operates on the Hiwassee River Railroad out of Etowah, TN.
- **109:** A RS-3 locomotive built in 1950 for the Central of Georgia Railway. Currently in storage with no plans for restoration.
- **913:** Built in 1950 by ALCO, this RS-1 locomotive was run by the Atlanta & St. Andrews Bay Railroad. Mechanical issues forced its retirement.
- **80:** A GP38 locomotive with 2000 horsepower built for the Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia Railroad in 1968.
- **606:** This SW-1200 switching locomotive was built in 1954 by EMD for the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific railroad.

A very extensive collection of cars commonly included for passenger train service, including coaches, a RPO car, and dining car, are also part of the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum. Many of these cars are used on the various train excursions hosted by the museum. Below is a list of the cars at the museum:

- **1000 and 1688:** Both cars were built for the Southern Railroad in 1925 by the Pullman Company.
- **906:** Built in 1924 by Pullman Company for the Central of Georgia Railroad.
- **907:** American Car and Foundry built this car for the Central of Georgia Railroad in 1947.
- **98:** Built in 1917 by the Pullman Company and was used as Baltimore and Ohio Railroad as the president’s car. A kitchen, crews’ quarters, dining room, three staterooms, and a lounge are included in the car.
- **Clover Colony:** This sleeping car was built by the Pullman Company in 1920 for the Southern Pacific Railroad.
- **3158:** A dining car built by the Pullman Company in 1924 for the Southern Railroad.
- **857:** A 52-seat coach built in 1947 by the Edward G. Budd Company for the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad
- **661:** Built in 1947 by the American Car and Foundry in 1947 this 56-seat coach was used by the Central of Georgia Railroad.
- **829:** A 52-seat car built in 1949 by the Budd Company for the Southern Railroad. This car was used on famous trains such as “The Southern”, “The Tennessean”, “The Royal Palm” and the “Crescent”.

- **832:** Similar to car 829 and ran on “The Southern”, “The Tennessean”, “The Royal Palm” and the “Crescent” trains. This car is currently undergoing a complete restoration so it can return to service.
- **RPO 40:** Railway Post Office car built in 1922 for the Southern Railroad by the American Car and Foundry. The car is on display at the East Chattanooga show while awaiting restoration.
- **899:** A dining car built in 1954 by the Pullman Standard Company for the Grand Trunk Western Railroad.

We look forward to seeing everyone in June.

