

# THE YELLA BOARD

Volume 41 Number 1

MONTICELLO RAILWAY MUSEUM

Where "I've Been Working On the  
Railroad" Becomes a Reality

June - July 2008



***"The Ghost of 401"*** is captured on film at the museum grounds, harkening back to an era when steam once gave it life. Although the cab appears to lack a crew, one could suspect the spirit of Monticello Railway Museum Traveling Engineer Charlie Daigh, (deceased) could very well be aboard, waiting for the completion of restoration. For an update on the progress of this steam powered giant, please turn to page 4.

Photo Courtesy of Ron Kempke

*THE  
CONSIST*

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**THE  
OBSERVATION  
PLATFORM**



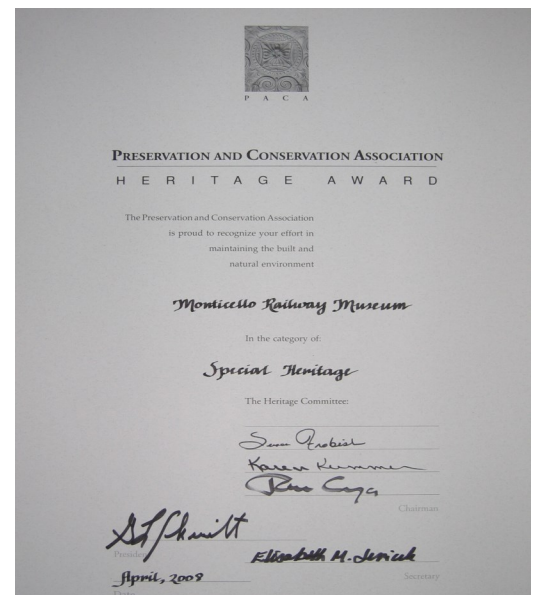
**Updates for 2008  
John Sciutto, Board Chairman**

The 2008 operating season is upon us and in preparation, we have a new website up and running at [www.mrym.org](http://www.mrym.org) with many more additions coming in the near future. We have already sold 50 online tickets for the Polar Express Thanksgiving Weekend! Board voted to de-accession NYC baggage car #8828, NKP RPO #356 and CTA 3-car set. These cars will be offered to other organizations who may need this type of equipment and will stand better chance of restoration. Wabash caboose #2824 was formally given to the Wabash Railroad Historical Society. They plan on restoration and maintaining the caboose at the museum. Board approved design of the new covered structure that will be built over the Nelson's Crossing display tracks #1 and #2. This structure will be steel post constructed with wood roof trusses and steel sheathing. The project is expected to cost \$130,000.00 and covered by donations. Construction on this project to begin after Little Engine That Could event in July with target of completion by Labor Day. This covered platform will be 40' x 250', protect even more equipment from the elements and enhance visitors experience. The platform will also be big asset for special events such as Railroad Days and Ghost Train. The museum received a very generous \$125,000.00 donation in 2007 and this will be used towards the building project. This building is part of overall improvements at Nelson's Crossing and part of the Master Planning of the museum. Board voted to annex portion of property north of Nelson's Crossing complex to City of Monticello. This annexation was required to facilitate utility access to the new Model Airplane Park being built adjacent to our museum. Property improvements continue. The NYC Baggage car and Wabash coach were moved to Terminal Main in the yard to improve the appearance the museum from I-72.

**PACA AWARD PRESENTED TO MUSEUM**

**Donna McClure, President**

The Monticello Railway Museum has been recognized by PACA (Preservation and Conservation Association) of Champaign. In early April we received a letter from PACA informing us that the Museum was selected to receive a 2008 Special Heritage Award. The letter states that the award is “in recognition of all the hard work the group has expended in rehabilitating both rolling railroad stock and also historic transportation buildings.” It goes on to say that our work “serves as an example to the local community of the value of preserving our cultural and historic environment.” The Museum was nominated by Lucia Wilkin of the Piatt County Historical Society. PACA’s annual meeting was held on Sunday, April 20 in the theater at Lincoln Hall on the University of Illinois campus. Donna McClure attended and accepted the award on behalf of the Museum.



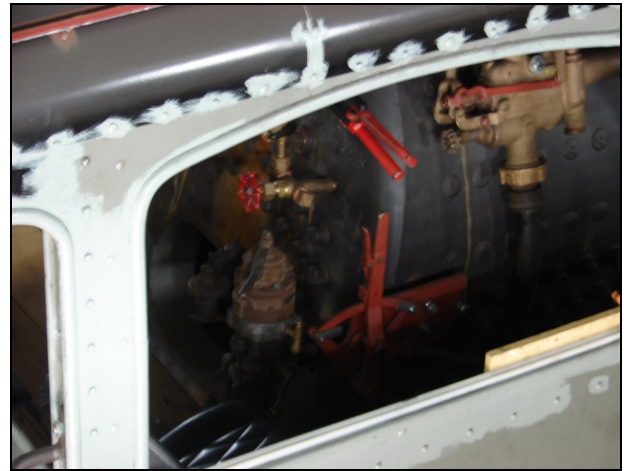


**THE  
RIP  
TRACK**  
By Kent McClure

The year 2007 was a year of much visible progress being made in the restoration of our ex-Southern Railway steam locomotive. This locomotive, built in December of 1907, was at the time a larger locomotive, built with simplicity in mind. It is a 2-8-0 wheel arrangement, with a total locomotive weight of 87 tons, spread over 4 pairs of driving wheels, and a two wheel leading “truck”. This locomotive was purchased by the museum in 1967 from Alabama Asphaltic Limestone, in Margerum, Alabama. It was then shipped on a flat car to Decatur, IL, arriving there in January of 1968. It was unloaded and stored at Decatur until October of 1971, when it and 12 other pieces of equipment were moved by rail to the Museum site in Monticello. It was towed on it’s own wheels from Decatur to Monticello in 1971. From 1971 to 1995, the locomotive was on display in our collection of equipment, with occasional work being done to stabilize and prevent further deterioration to the locomotive.

In 1995, a donor stepped forward with a proposal to return an operating steam locomotive to Monticello Railway Museum, one not having run here since 1987. To that end, a process was begun to identify what we felt was the best candidate for restoration. After considering several alterna-

**A new cab graces the frame of 401 which awaits the addition of its drivers , boiler lagging and accessories to come to life! Rebuilt from the wheel up, this locomotive will indeed be the crown jewel!!**



**A view thru the engineer’s window reveals that the controls are now in place and one more step closer to becoming a viable steam locomotive and ready for service.**

tives, it was decided to restore #401 to operational status.

After consultation with specialists in the steam locomotive industry, it was determined that to return #401 to a good state of repair and reliable operation would require a new boiler. There would also be extensive running gear work required. This work started in late 1995, by removing the wheels from the locomotive for specialized work to be done at the then Norfolk Southern Steam Shop in Birmingham, Alabama. At this same time, full disassembly of the locomotive, including separating the old boiler from the frame, was begun.

Now, we’ll jump ahead 10 years to find a new boiler was delivered in June of 2005, placed on the frame, and the job of reassembling was fully underway. The winter of 2005/06 saw the wheels placed back under the locomotive, and early 2007 saw a new cab built and installed, many steam appliances rebuilt and installed. Injectors (injectors supply the boiler with water as it’s used) were fitted and plumbed, valve lapping completed, dry pipe (the pipe that carries steam from the throttle valve to the cylinders) tested, ground into it’s steam tight joints, and reinstalled, riveting of the smokebox/front boiler course completed, and many other related tasks completed.

The tender (the tender is the “coal car” behind the locomotive, and carries the fuel and water for the locomotive) saw extensive work over the past year. The draft gear (draft gear connects the coupler to the frame, and absorbs the large shocks that can be present when coupling into cars) was removed, and inspection disclosed a cracked case, a condemning defect. A call was made to Miner Enterprises of Geneva, IL, who were very cordial and happy to help, providing us with a replacement gear and fol-

lower block in trade for the old draft gear at no cost. The draft gear yoke and drawbar were dye checked for cracks and found good. The draft gear pocket in the frame required a fair bit of work to bring the lug faces back perpendicular to the frame, and of the correct dimensions. After pocket work was complete, the yoke and new draft gear were reinstalled. A new striker plate was also fabricated to replace the too-thin original. New air and steam lines were run under the tender frame while it was still upside down as it's much easier to do at that time. The frame was then sandblasted and primed. On Railroad Days, we used the Bates and Rogers crane to turn the tender frame over, and place it on it's trucks. The frame/truck assembly was then painted gloss black. The tender frame then moved to the car/carpenter shop for application of the wood deck, and application of rear footboard brackets and handrails. With the tender frame rebuild complete, design work commenced on a new tender tank, and vendors located to fabricate the parts, with assembly of the tank taking place in the Museum's shop over the winter of 2008.

Machine work continues on steam chest parts and valve gear. New main air reservoirs, as well as a new emergency reservoir for the power reverse, were constructed by Stoystown Tank and Steel of

Stoystown PA. to conform to current rules and standards for locomotive main reservoirs. Brackets were then designed and applied, and the tanks attached to the locomotive. Our newly cast smoke box door has been completed, and was retrieved from the foundry, (Duplicast Metal Works of Indianapolis) this past fall. It was made using the crack-ridden original for a pattern, with additional metal added in several places to reduce the chance of future cracks,



**The 401 and tender are now taking on a new prospective view of becoming a viable, functioning piece of rolling stock and the crown jewel of equipment with a new, long, life expectancy! The restoration project has been spearheaded by Dave Marshall, Kent McClure and a group of dedicated steam enthusiasts.**

and to improve the door hinges. Branch pipes (they carry the steam from the "dry pipe" to the cylinder saddle, one for each side) had their sealing faces re-machined, ground into their respective seats, and are now installed. Air brake and steam plumbing work is now being done, as well as electrical system design. All of this work is being accomplished by a very dedicated group of volunteers who work every Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday, with a smaller number of retirees who can also work during the week. All are welcome to come out and get involved, all that is required is a membership and a willingness to work!

It is our hope, by later in 2008, for testing and shakedown runs to be underway. But, progress will depend on a number of things, not the least of which are the demands of maintenance of our other operating equipment. One question we hear frequently is: "What does it burn?" 401 was originally built to burn coal, but we are setting it up to burn oil, and our plan is to use biodiesel, or straight soybean/vegetable oil. Testing will determine what will work out best. The return of an operating steam locomotive is important, as it provides a window into the past. It provides a



**The tender of 401 has been equipped to use either fuel oil, biodiesel, or soybean/vegetable oil.**

tool for interpreting the lives our ancestors lived, and the conditions under which they worked, conditions that today, many would think intolerable, but were, just 60-70 years ago, the norm. It also will provide a platform for teaching skills that are fast fading from view, therefore preserving those skills and the knowledge they require. We hope you'll take the time during your visit to view our progress on this restoration effort by visiting our "backshop". It is located in our railroad yard to the south of the Nelson's crossing Depot, and is in the far southwest corner. It has two tracks going in the north end of the building, and is marked "Backshop" on a large sign in the front-center of the building, above the tracks. Thank you for visiting our museum, and we hope you will consider becoming a part of it by joining our organization!

**THE RIP TRACK**  
continued

**EQUIPMENT PROJECTS: COMPLETED OR UNDERWAY**



*Left:* Rock Island 2541 commuter coach received a new coat of paint and lettering.

*Right:* Illinois Central 8733, GP-11, received repairs and is now used in passenger service.



**Illinois Central Dining Car**

*Right:* Kitchen Galley

*Center:* Diner 4112

*Below:* Dining Area



*Above;* Illinois Central “GULFPORT” has been sandblasted and primer paint applied. *Left:* Illinois Central Combine 892 with new window sashes



**THE SIGNAL MAINTAINER**



One of the functions of an operating railway museum is to maintain and operate crossing signals at state highways and heavily traveled roads. In conjunction with this is the tests required by the Federal Railroad Administration that must be conducted monthly, quarterly and annually. The test can range from inspection of light bulbs to condition of underground cable. To comply with this federally mandated requirements, MRM members Neil Grant (right) and Jon Roma maintain and conduct required scheduled tests.



THE SECTION HOUSE



U of I 4th Annual Railway Outing Held April 19th

The University of Illinois in conjunction with the MRM held the 4th Annual Track Work Day on the museum grounds in the continuing "hands on" experience for railway engineering students. The approximately 24 students were assigned to duties of drilling rail bolt holes, replacing a broken angle iron and establishing proper cross level and minor lining of the IT main line; north of Nelson Depot.

In an effort to continually improve the appearance of the museum grounds and building, in addition to maintain that railroad atmosphere, MRM member Mark Barnett (left), (a brick mason by day and sign painter by night) poses with MRM Superintendent Rick Harper (right) at his namesake.

HARPER'S SIGN



THE TRAIN ORDER

ILLINOIS TERMINAL RAILROAD COMPANY Train Order form with handwritten entries for train numbers, dates, and destinations.



Above; Members attending the Annual Rules Class. Right: A tour group from Iowa "rides the rails"



Annual Rules Class Held

On April 26th, the MRM held the annual operating Rules Class to qualify members to work on track and equipment and operate both equipment and members motorcars.

School Children and Senior Citizens Annual Event Held

During the month of May, several charter groups consisting of both school children and tour groups of senior citizens "rode the rails" of the museum from Nelson Crossing to Monticello. For the children, this was their first experience to ride a train and for the seniors; many fond memories were rekindled and shared.

COME JOIN THE FUN.....VOLUNTEER!!

**Bridge  
&  
Building**



**DISPLAY TRACK CAR SHELTER TO BE BUILT**

One of the primary goals of the museum is the preservation and presentation of equipment for the purpose to educate the public of their various uses. To accomplish this, two display tracks were built to the north of Nelson Crossing Depot with equipment (page 9) placed on static display. This variety ranges from a baggage car housing museum “artifacts” to a caboose. To further protect the equipment from the elements of the weather, the Museum Board of Directors have approved the construction of a covered structure that will be built over display tracks #1 and #2. This structure will be steel post constructed with wood roof trusses and steel sheathing and will be 40' x 250'. The covered platform will also be a big asset for special events such as Railroad Days and Ghost Train. This structure is part of overall improvements at Nelson's Crossing and is projected to be placed in service by Labor Day - 2008.



**North End of Display Track No. 1 & 2**



**South End Display Track No. 1**

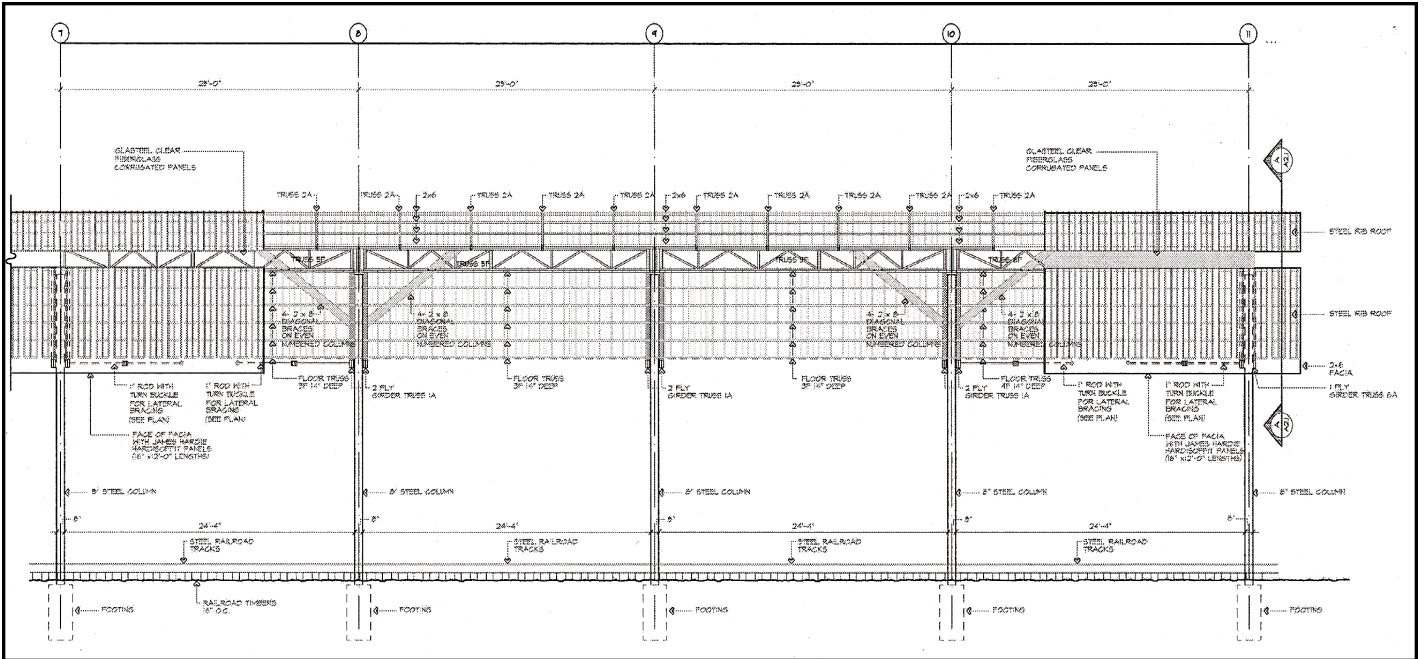


**South End Display Track No. 2**



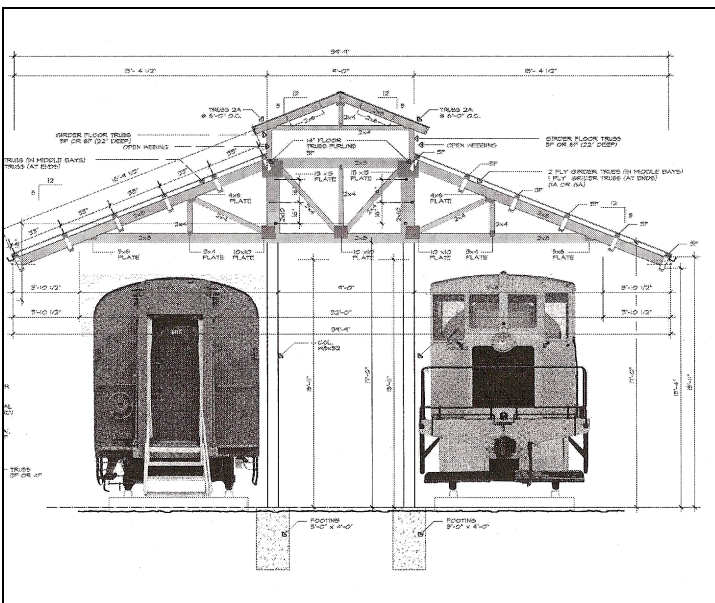
**North End Display Track No. 1**



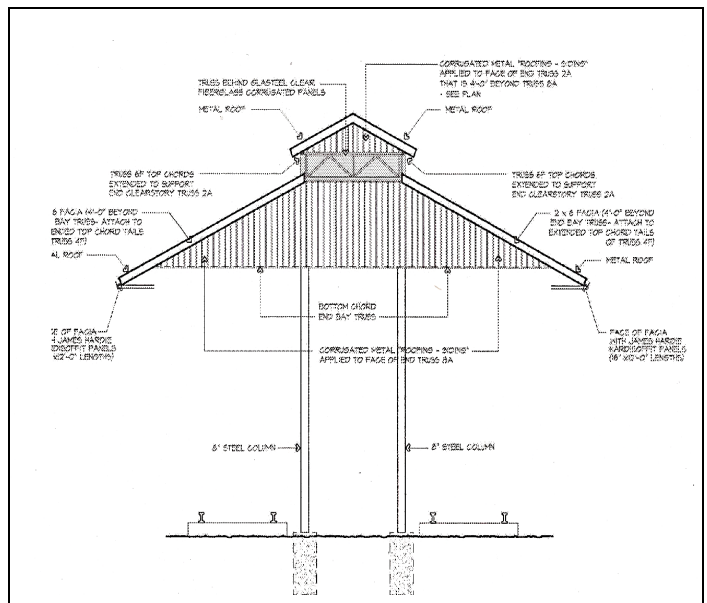


SIDE ELEVATION

<p><b>Lincoln Sand &amp; Gravel</b> 44 Ton Switcher</p>	<p><b>Illinois Central</b> Mail Storage Car</p>	<p><b>Illinois Central</b> Sleeper</p>	<p><b>Gulf Mobile &amp; Ohio</b> Caboose</p>
<p><b>Delaware &amp; Hudson</b> Display Car</p>	<p><b>Santa Fe</b> Sleeper</p>	<p><b>Nickel Plate Road</b> Railway Post Office</p>	<p><b>Illinois Central</b> Baggage</p>



END ELEVATION



END ELEVATION



## THE CREW CALLER

**“I asked what can I do...and they handed me a shovel”**

**Dave Mann**

The sounds of clanging shovels, spike mallets striking spikes and continuous laughter is the sure indication that Dave Mann is on the job; working on the museum's track. Until Dave's recent retirement, he has been a driving force of completing track projects under the title of Track Superintendent. Dave first came to the museum in 1972 when he read a newspaper article about the newly created Monticello & Sangamon Valley Railway. This piqued his curiosity and he went to explore this new venture. “I asked what can I do...and they handed me a shovel and from there I was hooked” Dave stated. His first project was to dig the foundation for the bathrooms, at the site of the new office building. The “Penfield Project” would



**MRM Retired Track Superintendent Dave Mann poses with the covenant “Golden Ballast Regulator” award.**

be his next encounter; removing rail and track material from an ICRR branch line and transporting it to the museum site. The Penfield rail was used to extend the mainline “up the hill” northward towards White Heath. To extend the track to and beyond the County Road crossing (and build a “run-around” siding), track was removed from the former IT “Bloomington Line”, south of Maroa which then extended the train ride past County Road. Until this time, the train started from what is now No.1 yard track to the base of the hill, return to Duvall Crossing, travel back to the hill and return to the starting point.

This was Dave's introduction to track work. Although employed professionally as a jet mechanic in Decatur, Dave would acquire new skills through on-the-job training and utilization of common sense. During the early years, manual labor with very little mechanical equipment was the order of the day. As in the case of the track projects, six to eight members would handle the rail by hand, lay ties, spike and tamp track. On one eventful weekend, while laying the rail for the IT main line, they were able to completely lay a section of track for five pole lengths; quite an accomplishment.

Of course minor disasters would occur which would lead to humorous results which occurred one Saturday morning. Pulling a “modified frame” of a former house trailer loaded with ties enroute to the museum; the rear axle came loose. This resulted in the wheel becoming bent at an angle, tire dismounted and the wheel hub dragging on the pavement. Solution; simple, keep going, it was raining which acted as a lubricant on the road's surface and Dave was leading the chorus of chuckling enroute to the museum.



**Work is underway to lay track northwards toward White Heath in the winter of 1973. Dave Mann and members are about half way up the “Hill” on the former IT right of way.**



*Left; Dave, in the company of his wife Barb (museum's curator) has invited her to join him on the "promenade" of their caboose NW 500836, during Railroad Days. He also owns Caboose NW 555047 and is in partnership in Alco locomotive IC 301.*

*Right; Dave Mann demonstrates the proper method to operate a "Manual Spike Puller" .*



A train can only travel as far as the track goes, which also applies to tracks leading to building to repair the equipment. Dave was involved in many projects to expand the railroad, which included the dismantling and reconstruction of the Quonset hut which would become the museum's first car shop. He would also oversee the construction of the additional yard tracks which would be built to the Locomotive Back Shop Building in addition to storage tracks. But his greatest challenge yet lay ahead.

The Illinois Central Gulf trackage between Monticello and White Heath would be closed due to a major abandonment and subsequent abandonment. The museum, prepared in advance, bought the line and immediately began going about to proclaim ownership. To first acknowledge ownership to the public, in August 1987, a three engine special would be operated to downtown Monticello. Dave noted on arrival in the residential area of the town, the main line was so overgrown with grass, "it looked like we were driving across these people's back yards". Of course one citizen was truly surprised by the approaching parade of locomotives; as he ran ahead to remove wooden boards that he had just painted and placed on the rail to dry. The museum had officially entered the city over track that suffered ten years of "deferred maintenance". A program was undertaken to begin tie replacement in addition to replace the well-worn 75-pound rail in the curve on the northeast end of town with 90-pound rail. Due to the extreme poor condition of this extensive curve, a professional track contractor would be utilized to correct the cross level-elevation of the curve, tamp and ballast-regulator the section of track. Of course the right of way was also a refuse dump for the area neighbors which resulted in a major effort to "improve the appearance" with a massive cleanup. The results were so impressive that the area neighbors began planting flowers where debris once accumulated.

Dave shared his humor and quick wit among the camaraderie of fellow members who would honor him with the title of "The Self Propelled Ballast Regulator" for cleaning up the appearance of the track, and was presented with the Golden Ballast Regulator Award; a leaf rake painted gold. On a weekend, Dave would be the Section Foreman who constantly was cracking jokes and one liners and leading a crew of members and friends; Dick Stair, Ray Goodling, Hank Brickman, Dave Marshall, Syl Keller and a host of dedicated members. Dave has made a tremendous contribution to the museum over the years and it is well documented that Dave is the "Track Star of the Monticello Railway Museum"

**Dave Mann resides in Decatur, Illinois and has retired from A. E. Staley's as their Corporate Jet Mechanic. He has served on the Board of Directors, is past president and has spearheaded several projects leading to the improvement of the museum grounds. His wife Barb is the Museum Curator and like Dave, very active in the museum's development and growth.**



**In the early years of development, the grounds of the museum were meager and the operation depended on "Little Dumpty" the Rock Island coach and an IC caboose.**

MONTICELLO  
RAILWAY MUSEUM  
P O BOX 401  
MONTICELLO, ILLINOIS 61856

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MONTICELLO RAILWAY MUSEUM

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ARRIVALS  
&  
DEPARTURES

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- [Father's Day Weekend](#) - June 14th & June 15th: Dads ride FREE when accompanied by their children!
- [Fireworks Special](#) - July 3rd: Ride the train from downtown Monticello to watch the fireworks.
- [Little Engine That Could™ I Think I Can™ Rail Tour](#) - July 12th & 13th and July 18th - 20th
- [Railroad Days](#) - September 20th & 21st: Come ride our vintage passenger and freight trains on the former Illinois Central and Illinois Terminal trackage.
- [Ghost Train](#) - October 18th-19th, 24th-26th: ALL ages can enjoy a train ride through Camp Creek Hollow with a stop at Cemetery Road... but only the BRAVE should check out our Haunted Boxcar!
- [The Polar Express™](#) - November 28th & 29th: Read along with the story as the train makes its round-trip journey to the North Pole.