



Semaphore



Minnesota Transportation Museum • Vol. 10 No.7 • July 2023





Scott's Perspective



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Museum Corporate Office**
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**Osceola & St. Croix Valley
Railway**
PO Box 176
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Osceola, WI 54020
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Roundhouse**
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Minnehaha Depot
Minnehaha Depot c/o MTM
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Newsletter Editor
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Osceola & St Croix Valley Railway
is a division of Minnesota
Transportation Museum.

Visiting information

Wednesday 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Admission \$7 to \$11.

Saturday 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Admission \$9 to \$15

Saturday activities feature 20 minute train
rides which is included in the admission
fee

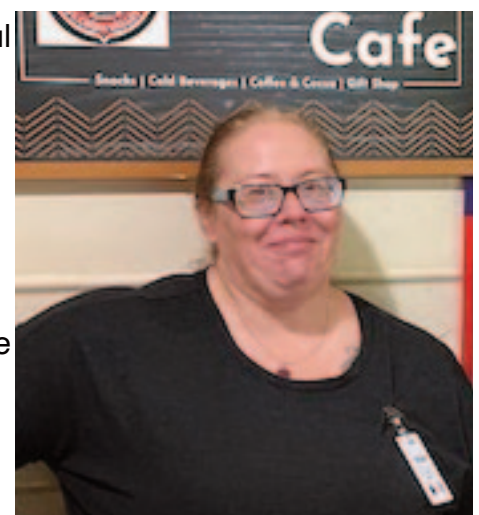
On the cover:

**Making memories for our future is
what we do. Here the BN 6234 runs
around our train at Marine on the
St. Croix.**

Greetings to all of you from the sands of Miami Beach. I have been away for the past few weeks on a bit of a personal health retreat. While away, I am grateful to those of you who have been in touch, and especially to those of you who have been filling in for me.

To each of you who volunteer so much of your time for MTM/OSCVR, please know how much you are appreciated. I know that your work is hard, long, and sometimes hot. I also know that things don't always go as smoothly as we would like. Let's all be reminded that MTM is largely staffed by you -- volunteers. You take on the roles that would be paid staff in most nonprofit organizations. While that is noble and honorable, it can also make for confusion or conflict at times. While paid staff are fully accountable to their bosses, volunteers are really accountable to each other and to the larger MTM mission. Most nonprofits have more paid staff than does MTM, and usually paid staff help coordinate volunteer activities. At MTM, we haven't had the resources to hire staff to fill that important role.

With that being said, I am grateful to Billie Rocarek and her new team for taking on management at the Osceola Depot. Under our current organizational structure, Billie is the only regular staff person who reports to me. I have desperately needed some additional help. Many of you have been asking for more hands-on management of the Osceola operation, and that's what Billie brings to MTM. We very much



needed help to take on management of Osceola depot operations, customer service and marketing matters. I invited Billie to take charge and bring new and innovative ideas to our operation. I know she has been trying to do that, and I appreciate her extra efforts in my absence. Thank you all for working with Billie and being open to her ideas. Just as I offer thanks to each of you, please show Billie your gratitude for all she is doing to manage a complicated operation.

I also want to thank you for keeping an eye on costs. Earlier this year the Board made a decision to spend as little as possible on what we might 'want' and spend only on what is most 'needed.' That decision was made because MTM needs to devote every last dime to our most critical priorities. If we want a new roof on the roundhouse and working air-conditioners on the train, then we need to minimize incidental costs. Small costs can add up to big dollars, and our needs are big expenses.

Kudos for your great public policy efforts with the Legislature. We made some modest gains, and expect larger resources in the future. I honestly believe that MTM is on the right path for getting the roundhouse restoration under way. We are working with Collaborative Design Group to update the restoration plans and perhaps get things rolling yet this year.

Lastly, please remember that we are all in this big MTM/OSCVR effort together. Each of us brings our gifts, talents, skills, and dedication. But each of us have our own personalities and agendas as well. Let's all work together, be patient, respect each other, learn from one other, be open to new ideas, and know that together we are contributing to an amazing organization and mission. Sometimes that means taking a deep breath!

Thank you all for what you do, what you bring, and for who you are!

Scott

Here are 2023 MTM committee chairs

Finance - Deb Wood

Personnel - Bob Puelston

Education and Training - Morten Jorgensen

Collections - Todd McGonagle

Equipment Maintenance - Bob Puelston

Museum Membership and Volunteer Development - Wayne Merchant

Building and Grounds - Garry Yazell

Public Relations and Marketing - Barb Loida

Introducing MTM's New Fundraising Lifetime Membership Program

MTM now offer four new lifetime memberships:

Platinum \$25,000

Silver \$15,000

Gold \$10,000

Bronze \$5,000

As a Lifetime member at these contribution levels, members will be asked to hold and attend fundraising events, invite colleagues to join or contribute and provide resources to MTM.

Please contact Wayne Merchant for more information at waynem@trainride.org

CHAIRMAN'S DISCUSSION

1. I wish to take a moment to remember Scott Heiderich. Sometimes Scott played the crabby old man, but really, he was very kind and friendly. I watched in awe when he would get down at eye level with the kids in the mail and explain how the mail was sorted. He was wonderful with the guests and would do anything to make their experience better. Scott was hardworking and committed to MTM. Scott will be genuinely missed!
2. In case you don't already know, Scott Hippert has taken a leave of absence to get some well-deserved R & R and he will be back after the July 4th holiday. I have spoken to him only once, I am doing the best I can to let him enjoy his time off.
3. The Minnesota legislative session has ended for the year and there is good but not great news to report. Of the \$3.5 million in support that MTM requested to restore and preserve the roundhouse and power plant, the Legislature appropriated \$200,000. That is split between \$100,00 for construction planning, and \$100,000 for roundhouse programming or operations. While the level of support isn't what is needed to save the historic buildings, they are a beginning. This is the first time that MTM has been included in Appropriations. It is common for the Legislature to appropriate a modest amount in first time funding. In coming weeks, MTM leadership will meet with our engineering consultants from Collaborative Design Group to determine how much we can accomplish over this next year by using the appropriated funds, promised matching funds, and contributions that have been raised over the past year. We will begin making progress! Additional funding is possible from other sources. MTM has requested \$500,000 in "Congressionally Directed Spending." Both Senator



Klobuchar and Senator Smith have included this request on their funding priority lists to the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee. Everyone who cares about MTM's historic building must continue contacting Senators Klobuchar and Smith to ask that this funding request be approved. MTM will also be making a \$500,000 grant request to the Minnesota Historical Society. Their large Legacy grant proposals are revised in the Fall with funding approved before the end of the year. In coming months, you may be asked to advocate for this funding as well. No one person can raise the needed funds to preserve MTM's historic properties. It takes each of us to do our part. Thank you for what you have done, and please keep up the effort!

4. Osceola Update. Sales for the first three weeks in June compared with last year are up 24%! "I also pulled Dresser out because the biggest change was in that trip. Amazing what an ice cream sammich and putting Credit Card service on the train will do!" says Barb Sheldon. Great Job everyone!

See detailed sales numbers on page 13.

(Continued on next page)

5. There are many more great things happening at JSR and Osceola that would add pages to the Semaphore if I listed all of them. All of our accomplishments are because of the teamwork and dedication of our volunteers despite the dry and hot Minnesota spring season. I understand that the days are long and hot. Things don't always go the way we would like them to. We all need to be respectful and kind to each other. Many times, we have different ideas about a task and one might be a little better option but several options may get good results. Through communication, cooperation and teamwork, this organization can move mountains (or maybe trains). After all we all want the same thing....to move trains!

Thank you to all the volunteers, members and staff that make MTM the great organization that it is!

Wayne Merchant

Board Chair

SPECIAL MEETING NOTICE

Bylaws

Informational Meeting

On Thursday, July 13th at 6:30, Wayne Merchant will host a meeting at JSR to discuss the new bylaws proposal with Q & A session. This meeting will be in person and a zoom meeting will be available also.

All members are invited and will receive a copy of the bylaws and the zoom meeting invitation by Constant Contact.

Executive Director Search committee members needed!

The board has approved the forming of the Executive Director candidate search committee. If you have HR, employee search experience or want to be a part of this committee please contact Wayne Merchant at: waynem@trainride.org



Overhead crane back in service and other rumblings around the roundhouse.



The overhead crane in bay C has been inspected and will see final repairs scheduled for July 5. Just new wire rope is all that is needed. The inspection showed everything works. It will then be operational. That will allow the steam locomotive Northern Pacific 2156 to be placed back on it's wheels and moved into a new space.

Rumor has it the CF-7 will be leaving by rail in July. No comitment on SOO Line sleeper W-30 on when it will leave Jackson Street Roundhouse.



New ADA bathroom plans are moving forward. Renderings were presented at the June Board meeting. New ada bathrooms will be built with a 100,000 grant in bay a. New heating equipment is coming to the compressor room.



Meet our youngest docent in training Victoria Rose Maki.

Victoria has been giving tours recently with the guidance of other docents. If you see her please introduce yourself and give encouragement. Her grandmother Lindsay Wessling will also volunteer. By the way she is just short of twelve years old! You're welcome, she is trying to get her friends to volunteer too!

-Garry Yazell



Bob Brown
June 4 at 1:19 PM ·

Two new 120 volt a/c HVAC fans mounted in ceiling of 1215. Ready for flexible boots to evaporator housing. Wiring completed too.

We run a railroad!

-Barb Sheldon

Jack and I started out our MTM life about 20 years ago when I was looking for something to do together, separately, when I retired. Jack didn't drive so I knew anything he wanted to do, I'd need to take him there and either sit around waiting or do something. Living on the east side of St Paul, I didn't want to drive across how many cities to get to the boat or trolley when I could drive the same distance with better scenery and go to Osceola. We both like trains, 'nuf said.

We started out as car hosts but, as now, rolling store cashiers were in short supply, so I migrated to that while Jack enjoyed talking to people in the cars. We both learned a lot the more we worked and only saw each other on the commute. Great stuff!

Management changed over the years and we ended up staying at Jackson Street and I slowly worked into the office manager. Jack passed in 2019 and I'm still here.

One of the things I always enjoyed in Osceola was the radio traffic. Years ago CP ran rock trains out of the Dresser Trap Rock quarry and we had to share our right-of-way once in a while. We usually knew when one was expected, but not always, and had to get a joint warrant to be on the track with them. A warrant was obtained from the railroad dispatcher in Stevens Point at the beginning of the day so the host railroad knows who is on the track and when.

I was sitting in the depot and listening to our engineer and the CP engineer who was following us back from Marine that day. The joint warrant had already been obtained. When we were sitting in Marine, CP came on the air and we heard how far behind us they were. It went something like this:

'MNTX 559, this is CP 6789 at milepost 29.'

'CP 6789, this is MNTX 559, CP 6789 is at milepost 29.'



And so it went every couple of miles until we returned to the depot and unloaded the passengers. We moved to the siding while the rock train went past, watching the platform very carefully to keep our passengers safe. The platform was full of gaping folks watching as 80-some cars thundered by. I also watched the rail in front of me fluctuate 2 inches up and down as the empty hoppers rumbled over it. Once it was past, our consist came back 'out of the hole', loaded up and followed CP 6789 up to Dresser. By the time we got loaded and moving, the rock train was far enough ahead that the engineers didn't need to monitor their respective locations.

Jack and I commented on the way home. WOW, we run a railroad!

Many years later, I'm sitting at my desk watching the security cameras in the backyard as a very big tow truck came through the back gate with our donation of a 35-tonner on a very big flatbed trailer. On the second track over, the Job Corps kids were learning how to connect up a consist.

A switch engine, boxcar and caboose were being run back and forth 50 feet down the south lead as each student practiced coupling the cars, along with appropriate hand signals of course. A very big rotator came and, between two tow trucks, lifted the 'Critter' off the flat bed and gently set it onto track 8 next to the parking lot.

Watching this as I answered the phone and took reservations, again brought home - we run a railroad. Unless you actually work on the train, most of our members don't really think about this. Our operating crews must learn and regularly be tested on the same rules and regulations as BNSF, CP, CN, or UP.

That training must be approved by the Federal Railroad Administration. Our equipment must pass the same standards as Amtrak and is reported to the FRA. We do not play with trains, we run a railroad. It may be a lowly Class 3 on a dead end sub, but WE RUN A RAILROAD.

And, to the best of my knowledge, the Osceola & St. Croix Valley Railway is the only regularly scheduled tourist railroad in the country that runs on Class 1 track. A few years ago we celebrated the fact that the Osceola & St. Croix Valley Railway has the last operating mail car in the country. All the rest have been relegated to static museum displays.

The Minnesota Transportation Museum can be proud of its heritage, its volunteers and its operations. We run a railroad! With all volunteers on a limited budget.



Barb Loida attends to our MTM booth at Union Depot Train Days in June. Thanks to you Barb for keeping us in the public eye!



Also in June we hosted the monthly business to business lunch of the Osceola Chamber of Commerce. Great fun. Bring your group for a catered train excursion!



Mike Williams from JobCorps was spray painting the leading truck frame of NP 2156 last week at the roundhouse.

"SUMMER PROJECT: REBUILD BOTTOM OF KITCHEN-SIDE WALL"

- Eric Hopp

It seems the shortest sentences describe the largest projects. In this case it's true. Replacing the side sills of 1146 has been in the works for over ten years.

What is the problem? 1146 is made of low-alloy high-tensile weathering bridge steel: US Steel's "Cor-Ten" brand. This steel is known for forming a protective layer of iron oxide if left unpainted. In fact, there is a skyscraper in downtown Des Moines, Iowa which is clad with unpainted Cor-Ten. It started out shiny silver, quickly turned bright orange, then settled into a rich chocolate brown. For this to work, Cor-Ten must be able to dry. However, the insulation in 1146's walls, coupled with the stainless-steel underside, holds water in the walls and floor. In this wet environment 1146 suffered dramatic rust perforation of both wall and floor structures. The water came from leaking window gaskets, steam heat, water in the restrooms and kitchen, rain and snow, air conditioning condensate, and even atmospheric condensation (dew).

Trivia: Coach 1213 and recently donated RPO-Baggage car 41, both from the 1951 Empire Builder, are siblings of 1146 and actually share some shop blueprints. All were built by American Car & Foundry in St Charles, Missouri. 1213 & 41 have been maintained and are in much better condition than 1146.

So what is the project plan?

1. Have structural engineering done. (Completed).
2. Remove exterior skin along bottom edge to gain access. (Completed).

3. Replace the web of the original Z-channel side sill. (Kitchen side completed last summer. Hallway side planned for next summer.)
4. Fabricate a 79 foot long 3" x 4" box tube of 3/8" thick Cor-Ten. (50% complete). Splitting 3" x 3" square tube and reassembling is a work-around for the specified material not being obtainable.
5. Weld the box tube to last summer's new Z-channel web. This is the new side sill.
6. Jack as needed to establish the proper camber (bridge-like arch). The camber was built into the walls at the factory and is intact on the top edge of the blue hallway side. We will use a laser level to get measurements and duplicate them in the new side sill.
7. Jack the wall as needed to match. The kitchen side is structurally two independent girders, 3" thick, eight feet tall and almost forty feet long, separated by the kitchen commissary door. Once attached to the new side sill, they will again be a single 79 foot long girder with structural integrity.
8. Put new bottom ends on all the vertical wall posts and rebuild the reinforcing structure under the kitchen commissary door.
9. Apply new 1/8" thick Cor-Ten sheet metal skin.

This will be a major milestone when complete. The side sill work has held up: Hanging new 26-C brake valves, hanging transformers which will drop 480-volt trainline to 208/120 lighting voltage, rebuilding the floor in the coach section and restrooms, and finishing the vestibule steps.

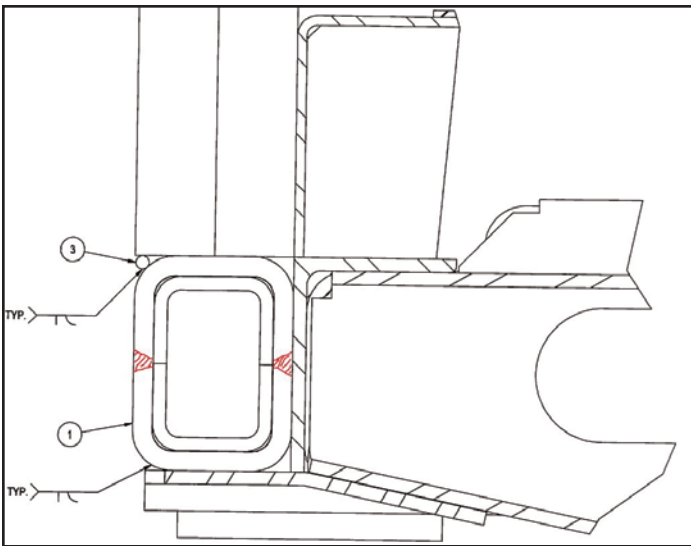
For extra credit, there are some known leaks on certain windows and along the roof eave. I would like to make them water-tight above the new side sill.

To date, John Peters, Larry Paulson and Tim Grube have been helping with the work. All told, the engineering work, hired labor to remove the

original skin, and the cost of materials will be in the \$35,000 - \$45,000 range and there will be hundreds of hours of labor.

My reward will be seeing children (of all ages) enjoying meals and snacks in this dining car, and the joy of accomplishing the impossible. To paraphrase JFK, "We choose to restore 1146 in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard."

Eric



1146 is getting a common side sill replacement: Rectangular tube. My engineer specified 3" wide x 4" tall ASTM A847 (Cor-Ten) with a 3/8" wall thickness.



I ran into the small issue of not finding anyone who sells such. So I proposed welding two cut-down 3x3 square tubes together. My Engineer gave his blessing.



The inner tube was a connector pin to splice 20' sections together. Since I'm building up from 24' lengths, I'm just going to stagger the joints.



The jig set up to support the side sill construction and placement.



A completed section of side sill with the cut 3 x 3 square tubes joined to make the specified 3 x 4 dimension.

Mail by Rail



The Post Office Department recognized the value of rail to move mail as early as November 30, 1832, when stagecoach contractors on a route from Philadelphia to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, were granted an allowance of \$400 per year "for carrying the mail on the railroad as far as West Chester from December 5, 1832."⁽¹⁾

Post Office Department officials enthusiastically embraced this new mode of transportation. In 1834, when railroads were still short, isolated lines and the locomotives that ran on them were sometimes slower than stagecoaches, Postmaster General William Barry spent one whole page of his five-page annual report discussing their prospects and progress. In 1835, when railroads accounted for only one percent of mail transportation and connected only two major cities – Washington and Baltimore -- Postmaster General Amos Kendall predicted that "the multiplication of rail-roads will form a new era in the mail establishment."⁽²⁾

Although the Department apparently awarded several contracts for rail transportation as a part of stagecoach routes in the early 1830s, the Postmaster General listed only one railroad company as a contractor during the first six months of 1836, for Route 1036 from Philadelphia to Mauch Chunk, Pennsylvania.

The Department appointed the first route agent, John Kendall, nephew of Postmaster General Amos Kendall, to accompany the mails between Albany and Utica, New York, in 1837. An Act of July 7, 1838, designated all United States railroads as post routes, and railroad mail service increased rapidly.

In June 1840, two mail agents were appointed to the Boston-Springfield route, "to make exchanges of mail, attend to delivery, and receive and forward all unpaid way letters and packages received."⁽³⁾ The route agents opened the pouches from local offices, separated mail for other local points on the line for inclusion in the pouches for those offices, and sent the balance to distributing Post Offices for further sorting. Gradually, the clerks began to make up mail for connecting lines and local offices, and the idea of sorting mail on the cars evolved.



In 1862, William A. Davis, head clerk of the St. Joseph, Missouri, Post Office, began the first experiment in distributing mail in railroad cars on the Hannibal-St. Joseph run. Although this practice expedited the connection with the overland stage at St. Joseph, it was discontinued in January 1863. On August 28, 1864, the first U.S. Railway Post Office (RPO) route was established

officially when George B. Armstrong, Chicago's assistant postmaster, placed a car equipped for general distribution in service between Chicago and Clinton, Iowa, on the Chicago and North Western Railroad. Similar routes were established between New York and Washington, D.C.; Chicago and Rock Island, Illinois; Chicago and Quincy, Illinois; and New York and Erie, Pennsylvania.

When railway mail service began, the cars were equipped primarily to sort and distribute letter mail. By about 1869, other mail was being sorted. Parcel Post service, added in 1913, soon outgrew the limited space aboard trains. Terminals, established adjacent to major railroad stations, allowed parcels to be sorted then loaded into mail cars and RPOs for transport to cities and towns.

In 1930, more than 10,000 trains moved mail. Following passage of the Transportation Act of 1958, which allowed the discontinuance of money-losing passenger trains, mail-carrying passenger trains began to decline rapidly. By 1965, only 190 trains carried mail, and by 1970, the railroads carried virtually no First-Class Mail.

On April 30, 1971, the Post Office Department terminated seven of the eight remaining routes. The last Railway Post Office, which operated between New York and Washington, D.C., on Penn Central/Conrail, made its final run on June 30, 1977.

Highway and air congestion and an increase in the weight of catalogs and advertising mail during the 1980s led to renewed rail use. Amtrak carried mail on many trains, and freight trains pulled flatcars holding trailers full of mail. In 1993, Amtrak and the Postal Service reintroduced the RoadRailer®, special intermodal equipment that could travel on highways and on rails without having to be hoisted onto a railroad flatcar.

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, rail transportation of mail helped close the gap caused by temporary disruptions to commercial air service.

Although Amtrak stopped carrying mail in October 2004, the nation's freight railroads continue to carry mail through their intermodal service.

Endnotes:

1. U.S. Post Office Department, *History of the Railway Mail Service; A Chapter in the History of Postal Affairs in the United States* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1885), 28.
2. *Annual Report of the Postmaster General*, 1835, 394.
3. U.S. Post Office Department, *History of the Railway Mail Service; A Chapter in the History of Postal Affairs in the United States* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1885), 4

HISTORIAN
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
AUGUST 2008



Sales comparrison for May and June 2022 - 2023

May 2022			May 2023	
Train store	\$ 180.25		train store	\$ 4.22
receipts	\$ 36.25		receipts low	\$ 37.91
	\$ 199.25		learning	\$ 299.00
cash only	\$ 237.75		POS program	\$ 210.00
			on the train	
	\$ 653.50			\$ 551.13
June 2022			June 2023	
Train store	\$ 513.25		train store	\$ 545.25
receipts	\$ 193.50		receipts	\$ 151.75
	\$ 60.50			\$ 133.25
	\$ 148.25			\$ 173.00
POS system	\$ 51.50			\$ 395.00
added to	\$ 277.26			\$ 100.75
train store	\$ 240.66			\$ 180.25
	\$ 193.50			\$ 310.50
	\$ 312.75			\$ 426.50
	\$ 82.00			\$ 307.75
	\$ 2,073.17			\$ 2,724.00
Dresser 2022			Dresser 2023	
May	62		May	137
June	115		June	273
Total OSCVR				
May 2022	325		May 2023	803
Jun 2022	1352		Jun 2023	2297

Coming Events

6/30/2023

7/1	1330	JSR Mangan b'day	10/26	1100	OSCVR Eagan P&R PIZZA 26
7/5	1030	JSR Tots 'n Trains			
7/8	1030	JSR Schmitt b'day	11/1	1030	JSR Tots n' Trains
7/12	1000	JSR Make-a-wish with ride	11/15	1030	JSR Tots n' Trains
7/15	1030	JSR Crenshaw b'day	11/29		JSR \$5 on the 5th
	1330	JSR Whitehurst b'day			
7/19	1030	JSR Tots 'n Trains			Santa's Train Shop 12/2 – 12/17/23
7/22	1030	JSR Bohn b'day			
7/26	1230	JSR Stlwtr Advntr Club 40 gr K-1			
8/2	1030	JSR Tots 'n Trains			
		8/13 1100 OSCVR A11 grp 20			
8/16	1030	JSR Tots 'n Trains			
		8/26 1100 OSCVR A11/1097 grp 60			
8/30		JSR \$5 on the 5th			
9/6	1030	JSR Tots 'n Trains			
		9/11-12 OSCVR Trains Magzn photo charter			
		9/16 1530 OSCVR Octoberfest			
9/20	1030	JSR Tots 'n Trains			
		9/21 1100 OSCVR Chip Valley Srs 100 Coach			
		IHM church 56 Coach			
		9/23 1530 OSCVR Octoberfest			
		9/28 1100 OSCVR Owatonna PIZZA 56			
		1400 OSCVR Tour grp 56 coach			
10/4	1030	JSR Tots 'n Trains			
		10/5 1100 OSCVR MLTours BOX LUNCH 55			
		1100 ACTours BOX LUNCH 56			
10/12	1100	OSCVR MLT FLAR BOX LUNCH 55			
		1100 OSCVR SLP P&R PIZZA 56			
		1100 OSCVR Leisure Tours BOX LUNCH 110			
		1400 OSCVR Valley Tours BOX LUNCH 56			
		10/14 1030 OSCVR grp coach 35			
		1030 GetKnit A11&1097 45			
10/18	1030	JSR Tots 'n Trains			
		10/20 – 10/22 OSCVR Pumpkin Express			