

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE RED RIVER VALLEY RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Web Site: WWW.RRVRHS.ORG

On Facebook: [Shreveport Railroad Museum](https://www.facebook.com/ShreveportRailroadMuseum)

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June, 2017

SHREVEPORT, LA

Our 36th Year

Texas State Railroad Saved by The Western Group



It looks like the Texas State Railroad has survived another potential shutdown. A former deal with Iowa Pacific expired in May with Iowa Pacific reportedly owing about \$2 million to both Rusk and Palestine. The future of the railroad was brought into question in late December after an email was sent out stating the railroad was being closed.

After months of uncertainty, the Texas State Railroad now has reached a deal with a new operator. According to TSRR Board President Bob Goldsberry, the board and The Western Group finalized and signed the terms of the agreement on May 3rd. "We don't want to just be known as the new operator with new ideas but rather as the right operator with determination to give this railroad the exposure and recognition it deserves," said Teresa Propeck, vice president of passenger train services in a press release. The Western Group will now run operations on the historic train that covers a 25-mile long track between Rusk and Palestine. One of Western Group's affiliates is Verde Canyon Railroad, a successful excursion operation in the Verde Valley of Arizona, operating on a historic line built in 1912. Since 1990, Verde Canyon Railroad has built a heritage rail line, and many of their successful methods and concepts will be implemented on the Texas line. "The bones of a great railroad are here," says Propeck, "Our goal is to make Texans excited about their Official State Railroad when they come to ride." For the past 10 years, operators have focused heavily on special event trains. The goal of The Western Group is to build upon this foundation and bring even more passengers to ride through the picturesque Pinye Woods. Some will come for the pure thrill and enjoyment of riding in antique rail cars, others to see the vintage steam and diesel engines, but all will be impressed by the railroad associates who pamper travelers from the first moment they arrive on property, through the unparalleled on-board service, to the last wave goodbye upon arrival back at the depot. The Western Group plans to have improvements completed by mid-June with the

exception of the new rolling stock museum located in Palestine. "This project may take a little more time," said Propeck, "but the ability to stand right next to these mammoth steam locomotives and tour a late-1890 wooden-frame presidential car in mint condition will be worth the wait." Original locomotive mechanical drawings will be incorporated into the exhibit with other museum-quality memorabilia. Included in the planned upgrades are coach car renovations, new interiors for cabooses, and the makeover of unique parlor observation car #1511 which has seated Texas governors and U.S. presidents dating back to Lyndon Johnson. For more information, call 855-632-7729 or visit their new website www.texasstaterailroad.net

For information regarding their new sister railroad, the **Verde Canyon Railroad** in Clarkdale, Arizona, see www.verdecanyonrr.com Their website says they average 90,000 people per year. I like their slogan: "... it's always a good day when you're on a train".

Upcoming Events

June 16 – RRVRHS Meeting – 7 p.m. - Shreveport Water Works Museum – 142 N. Common St. - Call (318) 458-3123 for information.

July 7- First Friday Railroad Photography Meeting – 7:30 p.m. at the Shreveport Water Works Museum – 142 N. Common St. – Call (318) 458-3123 for information.

The President's Message

Hello Railfans!

Since our last meeting, several things have happened that you need to know about. On Sunday, June 11 I attended a meeting at the DDA office on Cotton Street that included members from all the historic preservation groups of Shreveport. We all presented our plans for each group. We discussed our need for funding and how each group could support the other groups. One thing that was proposed was joint dues that would include all groups. This did not get much support as we could not agree on how the money would be divided. I also found out that the agreement between the City and the Water Works museum was only for 6 months. There were a lot of good suggestions that came out of this meeting.

I was able to talk to the engineer at Mohr Associates about the plan for our museum and it appears that the water retention pond is not as big a problem as we first thought. Also, I learned from City Councilman Jeff Everson that the requirement for parking at the museum has been reduced to the point where it is no longer a problem. We will have plenty of parking spaces even if both museums are considered as a joint museum. This eases the burden of parking and both museums using the same facilities.

Well, that's about all at this time. Hoping to see all of you at the next meeting.

Happy Railroading!

Russell

Are You Paid Up on Your Dues ?

Please send a check or money order for \$20.00 with this membership form to Bill Hasheider at 6813 Despot Road, Shreveport, LA 71108

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Red River Valley Railroad Historical Society
3012 Nottingham Drive
Shreveport, LA 71115

Next Meeting
June 16