



THE FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX

The Newsletter of the McNeill Street Pumping Station Preservation Society

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Summer 2021

Finally....Railroad Day!

The party planned to celebrate local railroading history was delayed twice last year by the Covid-19 attack but finally happened recently on May 15, and what a fun day it was. So what does the community's historic water plant have to do with railroads? Quite a bit, actually. Examples: the water plant's site was purchased from Texas & Pacific Railroad by Shreveport Water Works Company, for decades both the water plant and railroads used steam for power, the Shreveport Railroad Museum has made its home on the grounds, and the Union Pacific Railroad Foundation has been financially supporting preservation work on site. That's definitely a good enough list for a railroad party!



We had live music, food trucks, pumphouse tours (always popular), lectures on railroad topics, and (to the delight of all) a model railroad set up, plus crafts and souvenirs for sale. The weather even turned out nice. The music was provided by the Joanitones, who played their hearts out the whole time and kept toes a-tappin' in the picnic area under the spacious live oak while visitors dined on their selection from the food trucks.

And, people love trains with more than 350 visitors coming out to learn more about them, see them, and, especially, admire the model trains. The railroad museum always has two model layouts and another Lionel model was set up in the big meeting room, which was a particular hit with the kids (and the kids-at-heart). Thanks go to Randy Guy for bringing his trains out and setting them up for the day. Speakers were Dave Bland who talked about railroad history in the Shreveport area (overflow crowd for this), followed by Don Kimmel describing Operation Lifesaver (railroad crossing safety) and David Colvin telling about "virtual rail fanning". Another interesting activity was Warren Cailleff's display of an outstanding collection of b&w railroad photographs. Railroad Society members Frank Head and Jim McClure were also on hand to show visitors around and tell them about the local Railroad Society. Tour guides Kevin Haines, Christopher Tonnies, Charlie Johnson, Dale Ward, and Paul Williams worked, worked, worked showing visitors through the Water Works Museum, and Keith Tonnies volunteered to do the not- much-fun but very necessary job of directing traffic at the end of the driveway. Cathy Ward, Sandy Jones, and Linda Tonnies pitched in to help with souvenir sales and engaging young tourists in a game for their entertainment. Thank you very much to all these folks who worked to help visitors enjoy themselves. Special thanks also to Liz Swaine for getting the whole thing organized.

Everything just came together to create a pleasant all-around day; a great way to introduce/show off our wonderful museums and grounds. This was all so much fun that our organizer-in-chief Liz Swaine is already considering making it a yearly happening.

For our unlucky readers who weren't able to come themselves, here is a collage of pictures for you:



Left: Frios gourmet popsicles were the real deal! Delicious!



Right: Randy Guy (wearing cap) shows visitors his trains



Above: Joanitones hard at work Below: Standing room only in Railroad Museum



Above: Sandy Jones(L), Cathy Ward(C), and Hannah McGuire(R) preside at souvenir market.



Below: Dave Bland speaking to crowd on history of railroading in Shreveport



Left: How do we know how many came to Railroad Day? Because Peyton Deblieux and Claire Browning counted them!



Below: Frank Head and his young bell ringer both seem to be having fun!



Give For Good

This year's Give For Good online fundraising event happened on May 4 and it was a great day for the Preservation Society. We received more than \$7,000 from 43 donors and the Community Foundation added another \$866 from their Lagniappe Fund to bring the grand total to \$8,036. This surpasses last year's \$7,766 and is almost a record but not quite, as we raked in \$8,753 in 2017. But, record or not, this is a great result that will provide a welcome boost to the money available to operate Shreveport Water Works Museum and work on preservation of the site. Thank you very much to all the generous supporters of the Preservation Society and to the Community Foundation for making it possible.

Special Gifts

The Nuttall family has made a donation in memory of Jim Nuttall, who was a special friend of the Pumping Station and who is still greatly missed by all who knew him. Thank you very much to the Nuttalls for this thoughtful remembrance.

The William B. Wiener, Jr. Foundation has made a generous donation to McNeill Street Pumping Station Preservation Society. Bill Wiener is another very long-time friend of the site who was instrumental in getting the Pumping Station named a National Historic Landmark back in 1983. Thank you very, very much to Bill for his continued support of a truly unique historic place that we are fortunate to have in Shreveport.

And, speaking of money, it's looking like we will be "in the black" for 2021 with income more than outgo if regular donations and income from museum visitors continues for the rest of the year at a normal pace. Every year is a new challenge financially speaking, and we are grateful that this year is looking like it will be one of the good ones after a stressful 2020. We made it in 2020, too, but only by cutting expenses that didn't need to be cut.



Jim Nuttall at work on pump in pumphouse

Ice Storm Redux

The last edition of your newsletter reported that there had been damage to gutters and numerous window panes from the ice storm in late February. Follow-up information is that the city has taken on the repair of this, with the gutters done and windows still on the wait list. The city owns the site, of course, but it's always nice to be reminded they haven't forgotten about us!

VISITORS COMING AGAIN

People have been hitting the road as Covid-19 restrictions have lifted and visitor traffic has been steadily trending up as the year progresses. The museum has already almost surpassed all of 2020 and is on track to perhaps be almost as much as in 2019. This is very nice since showing off the museum is what we do for fun and because visitors bring money that we use to keep the doors open for more visitors!

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P.O. Box 957
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You Can Help.....Make A Donation!

The Preservation Society needs money for restoration and operation of the museum. Your donation can be put to good use!

Name _____

email _____
(If you provide your email address, we can send you occasional updates on activities)

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail to MSPSPS, P.O. Box 957, Shreveport, LA 71163. Checks payable to MSPSPS.