

MAJOR EVENT AT THE MUSEUM: WINTER TROLLEYFEST

Over the weekend of February 28-March 2 our museum hosted over 170 people attending this year's Winter Trolleyfest. This is an annual event where active volunteers from trolley museums along the east coast of the United States and Canada gather at a hosting museum for fun, fellowship and riding and operating trolleys. This event began in 1990 at our museum but now rotates among the participating trolley museums. It is an opportunity for trolley museum volunteers to see old friends and meet new ones.

The Friends of the East Broad Top opened their Robertsdale Museum on Friday morning for our guests to see the southern end of the East Broad Top Railroad. The East Broad Top Foundation had tour guides to take our guests through the historic EBT shop on Friday afternoon and Saturday morning. The EBT also operated two special diesel powered trains on Saturday afternoon for our guests. Finishing the weekend on Sunday morning, the Bricktown Model Railroad Club opened their doors for interested visitors. Thanks to these organizations for helping to make our event a success.

We operated eleven different trolley cars, including the newly-returned-to-operation Philadelphia & Western car 162. Trips started Friday afternoon and operated into the evening. The Liberty Liner operated three trips including one on Friday evening, after which the first official trip on car 162 was made. Four lucky winners were able to operate the Liberty Liner under the supervision of one of our instructors. Tours were offered for our Car barn Two where our two newest acquisitions are stored. Informal tours of the shop were offered where open car 1875 is receiving new wiring and wood refinishing, and the restoration of Aurora Elgin & Chicago 315 is slowly being completed. Another highlight was the night photo session illuminating several of our trolley cars for completely different photos. 16mm movie films taken by Museum founder Louis Buehler were shown in the pavilion. These films highlighted the museum history and other trolley museums from the 1960's.

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Top left: Scranton snow sweeper, Bullet Car 205, Johnstown car 355, and Oporto 172 lined up at the brick platform. Car 163 is also seen in front of Car barn 1.

Top right: Liberty Liner running on Friday evening.

Bottom right: PCC 2743 was one of eleven cars running during the Winter Trolleyfest and was used for a night shoot on Friday evening.



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The Retriever is published four times per year for members and friends of Railways To Yesterday, Inc. to share news and events at the Rockhill Trolley Museum.

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Visit us online: rockhilltrolley.org

OTHER MUSEUM NEWS

AED introduction training - On Saturday November 16, 2024 we had a training session for an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) unit. New member and volunteer Ed Kompare led the class and arranged for the donation of the AED unit. There was a demonstration followed by a question-and-answer period. This AED is housed in the pavilion and hopefully will never be needed. Thanks to Ed for making this possible and to Shannon Turner for helping set it up.

Holiday Events wrap up - The 2024 holiday events were a busy time for our volunteers. We carried nearly 2,000 passengers during the 12 days and evenings we were operating. This year we tried a new take on our Santa's Trolley with a \$5.00 fare, operating two Saturdays only, which was popular. We had one family from the area tell us they appreciated the extremely reasonable price as they would not have been able to ride otherwise. There was a model train display in the pavilion that was well received by the visitors. The displays at Gingerbread Lane provided a stopping point for visitors to get off the trolley and walk through the festive area.

Our museum advertised the holiday events at the community event at Three Springs one Saturday afternoon and evening. The crank trolley was a huge hit for those attending this event!

Of course we could not have done it without the volunteers who contributed huge amounts of time to prepare for the event over the twelve days of operating. Preparing for an event of this magnitude is an enormous task. So thanks to everyone who made this event possible.

Additional crane projects - While the crane was in Rockhill Furnace, it was used to relocate a few other pieces of equipment. For years, a set of trucks for Philadelphia Bridge car 1009 had been stored along the narrow gauge track that used to branch off the main line near the ballpark. These trucks were craned onto a trailer and moved to the Car barn Two parts yard. And the rotary converter, stored in the back of the museum area, was moved to the rear of Car barn Two. Both of these projects will help with cleaning up their former storage areas.

Volunteer hours - For several years the museum has had a sign-up sheet for volunteers to indicate when they would be coming to the museum. The Operations Department makes the most use of this system, but we are especially pleased if all volunteers sign up for all departments online using VSP. This allows other volunteers to know who is going to be there to encourage group projects, or when volunteers are especially needed. It also tracks the number of hours our volunteers contribute, which is important when applying for grants. We documented over 11,000 hours for 2024, but we are sure there were many more.

WINTER TROLLEYFEST 2025 (continued from front page)

With over 170 people attending, keeping them fed was our volunteers' responsibility with a few prepared and catered meals, snacks and drinks. Can you imagine picking up 30 dozen donuts? The only way to receive an invitation is to become a volunteer and participate in one of the many activities at the Rockhill Trolley Museum. As always, contact us for how you can get involved and get your invitation to next year's event.

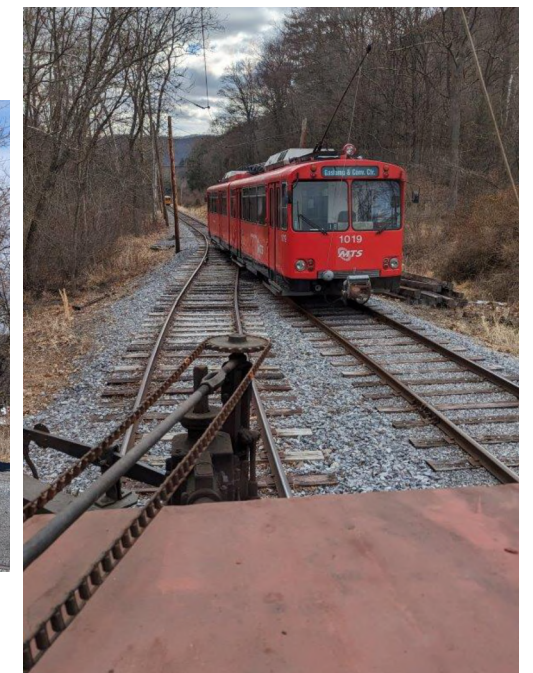
Thanks to the following volunteers for making the event possible: Rich Wingerd, Registration table and handling all issues to registering including name badges and tickets. Don Hamilton dispatcher, who kept all the trolleys operating smoothly. Trolley crew members, Lawrence Bielmiller, Nicholas Brightbill, Dave Brightbill, Jim Cohen, Asa Frantz, Calvin Gerhard, Rosemary Gerhard, Mike Kees, Eric Knepp, Henry Long, Carl Merson, Ron Rabena, Valerie Robbins Rice, Bill Rodgers, Joel Salomon, Philip Saurlander, Brendan Scherzinger, Shannon Turner, Fred Wagner, Fred Walter.

Food preparation, pavilion crew Cindy Brightbill, Pam and Larry Zilch, Bob Emery, Amanda Morgan, Jeff Morgan. Museum store, Chuck Kumpas, and Mike Seguin. Shop tour guide, Keith Bray, Car barn two tour guide Joel Salomon. Night lighting, Bill Monaghan and Tom Pawlesh. Church hall clean-up crew, Larry and Pam Zilch, Eric Knepp, Keith Bray, Jeff and Amanda Morgan.

Thank you everyone for helping to make the event a success.



Top left: The Liberty Liner meets one of the special EBT trains operated during the Winter Trolleyfest.



Top right: San Diego 1019 as seen from the back of the Scranton snow sweeper.



Bottom photos: Several cars were featured in a professional nighttime photo session along with costumed volunteers and a vintage milk truck. Bill Monaghan and Tom Pawlesh did a great job illuminating the museum yard.

LEWISTOWN AND YORK CARS ARRIVE AT THE MUSEUM

The museum has added two historic Pennsylvania trolleys to the collection. York Railways car 162 and Lewistown and Reedsville car 23 were delivered to the museum Friday morning January 17. Lewistown car 23 was unloaded first and placed on trucks for the first time since 1933. York car 162 was then unloaded onto museum rails, as it was transported on trucks.

Moving cars in the winter is always risky, but the goal was to get the cars there in time for viewing during the Winter Trolleyfest event at the end of February. Volunteers worked in Middletown on January 11 to complete the preparations. Lewistown 23 had to be raised to enable the trailer to be backed under the car the following Thursday. The cars had previously been shrink-wrapped by a contractor to ensure safe travel to Rockhill Furnace, about 80 miles from Middletown.

Loading took place in Middletown, where the cars were stored, on Thursday, January 16, in bitter cold and snow squalls, which fortunately did not create any significant accumulation. Unfortunately, the loading took longer than anticipated, so the cars spent their last night in Middletown on a trailer in a parking lot. Thankfully, the unloading weather was much better with temperatures above freezing. A huge thank you to the volunteers who took vacation days to help load the cars in Middletown and unload the cars at the museum site. Both cars add significance to the museum collection. Car 23 is especially valuable to us as Lewistown is less than 35 miles from the museum, and it is the only Lewistown car known to exist. It was constructed by the J. G. Brill Company in 1914 for the Jersey Central Traction Company, but was sold to the L&R just a year later. The car operated in Lewistown until trolley operations were

abandoned in 1933. The car was used as a summer home for decades and will need a complete restoration, which will involve locating the mechanical and electrical parts.

York car 162 is a sister car to our restored York 163, which has been operating at the museum for over 35 years. Both cars were built by JG Brill in 1924, they operated together in York until 1939, and then served as summer homes together until 1972. Car 162 was acquired by Wendell Dillinger of the Middletown and Hummelstown Railroad while our museum acquired York 163. Following Wendell's passing, the M&H de-accessioned several trolleys from their collection. We were fortunate to be able to acquire these two cars for our collection. When 162 arrived in Rockhill, the cars were reunited for the first time since 1973.

(Story continues on next page)

Photos on this page: Lewistown Car 23 and York Car 162 were loaded in Middletown, PA on January 17, 2025.



LEWISTOWN AND YORK CARS ARRIVE (Continued)

As funds and volunteer time permit, the museum plans to return York 162 to a summer home for visitors to see what often happened to trolleys after their service days were over. Visitors can then ride the same type of car. We may be the only museum to offer this experience. Lewistown car 23 has been generating a fair amount of coverage both in print and on the TV, which is wonderful to see. Links to the articles are below.

<https://www.lewistownsentinel.com/news/local-news/2025/01/historic-trolley-car-makes-it-back-home/>

<https://wjactv.com/news/local/huntingdon-county-museum-seeks-publics-help-to-restore-historic-trolley-car>

Our two recent acquisitions have generated a good amount of attention thanks to everyone who has contributed to moving them to the museum. However, we still have not covered the \$16,000 moving cost, but there is still time to make a contribution so the museum won't have to cover the remaining \$6,000 from general funds. Once the transportation costs are met, contributions will be placed in the funds for future restoration or stabilization work for each specific car. Thank you in advance for your support! <https://rockhilltrolley.org/contribute/donate-funds/>

Top right: Because it was already on trucks, Car 162 was rolled directly off the trailer and onto the RTM tracks.



Middle left: Keith Bray removes the protective covering from Car 23 after the body was placed on shop trucks.

Middle right: Lewistown car 23 waiting to be moved into Car barn 2 after being placed on steel wheels for the first time since 1933.



Bottom left: Lewistown Car 23 and York car 162 after being unloaded and unwrapped at RTM.

Bottom right: York cars 162 and 163 are reunited for the first time since 1973. We plan to restore 162 to look the same way it did when it served as a summer home in York County.

STRAFFORD CAR 162 OPERATES WITH TROLLEY POLES

Volunteers kept the secret in order to surprise attendees at the Winter Trolleyfest with an operating Strafford car. The museum acquired the car in early 1993, but after efforts to make the car operational around 2002 were abandoned, it sat in the back of the barn. The work included installing cleats, roofboards, and trolley poles onto the roof. With the secret revealed, it's time to recognize to the volunteers who brought Strafford car 162 back to operation.

The idea started with Nicholas Brightbill suggesting that we have a surprise for the Winter Trolleyfest. Last fall, several volunteers measured the roof for the size and shape of the roof cleats. Starting in late 2024, the cleats were cut out and prepared to be installed. Bob Emery was very helpful in getting the wood needed for the roof boards. These were painted in the clean room so they could dry properly with heat. In January, the cleats were installed. Two PCC car pole bases were dug out of storage by Nicholas and gone over by Joel to be sure they were in good working order. Bob led the effort to clean the interior of the car, scrubbing the seats to make them look like new.



It took a couple of late Friday and Saturday evenings working in the unheated carbarn to get car length of cleats and roof boards installed. Installing the bases followed, and when it was found that PCC pole hooks would be too tall, Keith Bray made shorter custom hooks. The wiring connected between the two pole bases, and the choke coil was made and installed by Nicholas and Keith. The wiring was run from the roof to the cabinet inside the car, and the very same hole that contained wire to power the trolley poles decades before

was used. The four traction motors were checked, and the running gear was lubricated before the car was powered up.

It was Saturday February 9th when the car was first powered up and it ran fine in one direction. However, it would not back up from either end of the car so Henry Long checked the reverser. David Gallagher, Keith and Nicholas. Turns out it was just a sticky reverser from years of inactivity. One very quick test trip was made on this day due to the ice storm that was fast approaching. Additional test trips were made before the big unveiling. Fred Walter and Bob Sass worked on getting the headlight circuit operating the day before Winter Trolleyfest.



The car was a hit at Winter Trolleyfest, and a total surprise to everybody. It is not nearly ready for public operation as it has no interior ceiling. However, it's great to have another operable car, and it runs very well and the ride is extremely smooth. Look for the car to run on Members Days and special events.



Photos on this page: Philadelphia & Western Strafford Car 162 goes on a test run before its surprise debut at the Winter Trolleyfest 2025.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Welcome to the following individuals who recently became members of the Rockhill Trolley Museum. Dennis is already involved with the Operations Department. We hope you can visit us soon!

Dennis Braun	Matthew White	Frederick Wadleigh
Holidaysburg, PA	Hershey, PA	Haeldon, NJ

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Thank you to the following donors that have recently made contributions to the development and operation of the museum.

General Fund

- Philip Dancause
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- Mark Sylvester
- Fred Maloney
- Cliff Beaver
- Eli Craveiro Frankel

Chicago 315

- Dann Chamberlin
- Bob Alkire

Track & Wire

- Fred Walter

Lewistown Car 23

- Edward Skuchas
- James Stanton
- Robert Savino
- Larry Zilch Jr.
- Larry Altoff
- Keith Latimer
- Ruth Rode
- Rex Johnson
- Casey Thomas
- Jack May
- Community State Bank
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- Thomas Morningstar
- Graham Buxton
- Paul Stump
- Fred Maloney
- Don Hamilton

Red Arrow 61

- Fred Walter
- Robert Ulrich

Johnstown 355

- Casey Thomas
- Albert Szejter

York Railways 162

- Larry Altoff
- Ruth Rode
- Casey Thomas
- Richard Freeze
- Bill George
- Joseph Heffron
- Doug Davenport
- Joe & Judy Kovalchick
- Thomas Morningstar
- Paul Stump



On this page: Scenes from our popular Holiday Events, held in late November and December 2024.

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WE NEED YOUR HELP! As you read in the articles about the progress made at the museum, all of it is possible only because of the dedication of many volunteers. We are always looking for additional volunteers to ensure this progress is maintained. Think about the fun that you would have helping to accomplish great things at the trolley museum. It is truly a special feeling of satisfaction that you can only get by volunteering! Contact Joel Salomon or any Department Head to learn how to participate.

PROJECTS IN NEED OF VOLUNTEERS

- Maintenance and restoration of our trolley and internal combustion fleet - mechanical, electrical, machining, painting, upholstery etc.
- Trolley operators - no prior experience needed! We will train you!
- Museum store staff
- Video production with members volunteering at the museum for use on Facebook and other marketing areas
- Building Maintenance - If you are handy with home repairs, we could use your help keeping our infrastructure in good repair.
- Help with the wiring in of new security cameras, outside door lights, energy management, additional light switches by the parts door for the tracks, substation energy management restoration, and back into operation, install the key fobs at CB two.
- Gardening - Do you have a green thumb? We have numerous flower beds that always need attention to keep them looking good.
- Help with PCC car and LRV maintenance