



## December Meeting

There was no December Meeting of the Heart of the Heartlands. At the annual meeting in November, it was voted on to not have a December meeting due to the busy schedules of the members in December. The next meeting will be January 10, 2018 at 7:00 pm in the Webb Center in Carona, KS.

## Reader's Guide

Vice-President, John Chambers, is going to be working on a reading list of sorts. The idea is that he is going to create a list of books to read in regards to a certain topic. For example, if you would like to learn about the railroads that served the mines in the 4-state area, read the books on this list. If you wanted to learn more about the J&P, read these books, etc. Look for that over the next few months.

## Watco Christmas Express

Watco Companies, LLC had their annual Watco Christmas Express ride for the 1st grade students in Pittsburg, KS on December 6. There were 332 passengers, students and teachers on the 10:00 am ride that enjoyed the one hour trip. Despite the chilly weather, most of the students arrived to ride the train wearing their pajamas. Watco employees served each of the students a bottle of water and a big sugar cookie during their adventure.



As the train passed Westar Electric Company on its way out of town, Santa Claus himself was there in a bucket truck waving at the students. Each student had their "Golden Ticket" punched by a Heartland conductor. For one student, getting her ticket punched was an exciting time. Right after her ticket was punched, she excitedly asked her teacher "what did it say?". Upon exiting the train, each student also received a Christmas bell, like the one in the Polar Express movie. Smiles were abundant and the lasting impression of a trip on the train were bonus gifts for all.

A Special thanks goes out to those Heartland Members that took time from their normal weekly duties to staff the train. Members on the train were Jim McKeel, Guy Ferguson, John Chambers, John Shomin, Dave Parker and Kathy and Larry Spahn. A special thanks goes out to Watco for the annual ride. Each year the joy on the children's faces makes the world feel just a little bit better.



### What is it?

This is an item that is currently located in the Carona museum. What is it?



Answer next month

Photo courtesy of Brian Carlson

Last Month's picture was the Union Pacific Herald that was on the UP depot in Manhattan, KS. Dave Parker donated it to the Heartlands after saving it from the scrap heap during the remodeling of the depot. Dave and Larry Spahn made the wood frame for the herald. Being made of concrete, the fixture weighs in excess of 200 pounds.

### Membership Renewal

Thanks to all of those members that have renewed their membership for the upcoming 2018 year. If you have not paid your membership for 2018, and you wish to remain on our active membership roll, please do so. Renewal information is located later in this newsletter.

## KCS Holiday Express

On December 13, the Kansas City Southern Railroad had their Holiday Express in Pittsburg, KS. It had been in Joplin, MO the night before. This is an annual stop for the train and Pittsburg has a good place for it to be on display. The KCS uses the tracks of the SKOL under Watco Companines, LLC, permission to setup



Photo Courtesy of Larry Spahn

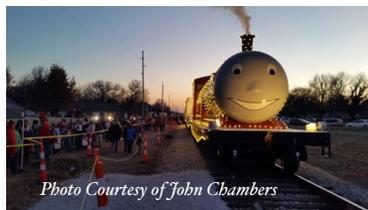


Photo Courtesy of John Chambers

the express train. This provides a rather convenient location for people to line up and board the train without being next to the KCS's active train traffic. Since the train sets up at Monroe and Elm streets, there is plenty of safe areas

for people to walk and move around while enjoying the train.

Temperatures were very mild this year starting out in the mid to upper 50's and dropping to the upper 40's by the time the event was over.



Photo Courtesy of Larry Spahn



Photo Courtesy of Larry Spahn

In previous years, the weather has been rather cold and bitter so this year was a nice change. There were 2606 children and adults that went through the train this year from about 4:00 in the afternoon to 7:30.

Heartland members who were elves on the train and assisted people were Nick Ybarra, Don Richardson, Darrell Cave, John Chambers, Joe Carlson, Kathy & Larry Spahn, and Chase and Brian Carlson.



Photo Courtesy of Larry Spahn

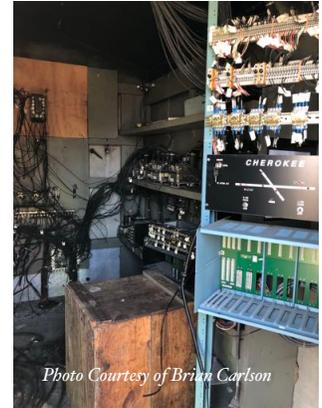
## Online History Activity

For our members that work online from time to time, be looking for an upcoming online history activity. If you are a member and have given us your email address, you will receive an email about the Heart of the Heartlands online history activity. The activity will be very simple, you will be asked a question and given choices for the correct answer. Based on what answer you choose, you will be guided to the correct answer and be given some historical information as it relates to the question. If you are a member that normally does not receive a digital copy of the newsletter but are interested in this activity, drop me an email at [bcarlson@ckt.net](mailto:bcarlson@ckt.net) and I will send you the link as well.

Note: In regards to online safety, the link you will receive will be in an email containing the Heart of the Heartlands Logo.

## Signal Houses

President Larry Spahn received a phone call from Stan Hanley from the BNSF on November 15 in regards to the concrete signal house that had been at the interlocker south of Cherokee. This interlocker was the one with the Frisco and Missouri Pacific that is now with the BNSF and the SKOL. The news was that the BNSF would be donating the signal house that was at Cherokee but it had to be moved that day! With a few hurried phone calls, Larry was able to secure placement of the Cherokee signal house at Carona shortly after nightfall that day. Good work Larry! In addition to the Cherokee signal house, we also acquired a signal house that sat in Farlington, KS. As you can tell in the photo above, all the original signal equipment remains in each signal house. Keep in mind, these buildings are made entirely of concrete and come in weighing 12.5 tons. In the picture of the two signal houses, the one from Cherokee is on the left. More details to come.



*Photo Courtesy of Brian Carlson*



*Photo Courtesy of Brian Carlson*

## Boston Depot Repair

Russ Green has continued the work on the repairs to the Boston Depot. He has removed and replaced all the damaged shingles on the peak of the roof as well as the south end of the west side of the depot. So far, all the woodpecker holes in the sides, soffits and peaks have been repaired and the majority of the roof has been repaired. The plan is for him to pressure wash the building and then apply a good oil base primer before painting the building and trim. More details to come as this project continues to progress.



*Photo Courtesy of Larry Spahn*

## Membership Renewal Information

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If you wish to renew your membership please read through the options below. A annual single membership is \$25. A family membership is \$35 per year. Please send your check to:

Brian Carlson  
2209 S. Taylor St.  
Pittsburg, KS. 66762

OR

Heart of the Heartlands  
c/o Brian Carlson  
P.O. Box 211  
Scammon, KS 66773

## Announcements

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- The next meeting will be January 10, 2018 at the Webb Center in Carona, KS.

# Empire Alco Engine Donation

The Abilene & Smoky Valley Railroad has been busy working on getting the Alco from the Empire District Electric plant in Opolis, KS moved to their yard in Abilene, KS. The Alco was originally donated to the Heart of the Heartlands, but we were unable to move the Alco to our museum complex. We thus donated it to the A&SV RR



*Photo Courtesy of Larry Spahn*



*Photo Courtesy of Larry Spahn*

instead of sending it to the scrap heap. The Smoky Valley has been building a special trailer to transport the locomotive to Abilene where they plan to repair it and use it in operations of their railroad. Here the Alco is being secured to the trailer in preparations for the road trip north to Abilene. There will be more on this next month.