



July Meeting

The April meeting of the Heart of the Heartlands was held on July 9, 2025 starting at 7:00 pm in the Webb Center at Carona, KS. There were 15 members present for this meeting. Minutes of the meeting can be found at the end of this newsletter. Members in attendance were: John Chambers, Jack Evans, Paul Morgan, Larry & Kathy Spahn, Jim McKeel, Jim Herriott, Rob McKnight, Brian Carlson, Mike & Connie Payton, John Randall, Michael Sheward and Ivan & Denzil Voorhees.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be at 7:00 pm, August 13, 2025 at the Webb Center in Carona.

Heartlands - YouTube

Check out our YouTube channel:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMlkqWyCxftDlf_ezgw3UyQ

Museum Director Report for June

Report by John Chambers

- We had 213 visitors during the month from the four state area plus Colorado, Illinois, New Jersey, Texas, California, Georgia, Idaho, Arizona, Ohio and New York.
- Still plenty of rain during the month but Watco started on the container project by getting the rock spread for the pad it will sit on.
- On June 4th Lon Smith the new Museum Director at the Great Plains Transportation Museum in Wichita visited. We had a nice talk about what they are now doing and how we might co-operate in any future projects that might come up. He has really been increasing the GPTM's exposure and activities. He is recently retired as the director of the Kansas Aviation Museum in Wichita.
- Don Creekmore a book author from Wichita visited on June 5th. He is doing research on Harry Houdini and one of his early tours in Kansas which included many stops in southeast Kansas. He was very impressed with our library and he emailed me the dates and stops that Houdini made in 1897 and 98 in our area. I will be helping figure out what railroads he used and maybe which trains he rode. He promised we would get a thank you in the book.
- Saturday June 7th the Green Country Jeep club from Tulsa arrived around noon with fourteen jeeps and fifty people on a back road tour of the area. They were supposed to let me know a week ahead but forgot and called me around an hour before they arrived. Consequently I was the only one here but it wasn't too bad. They used our picnic tables to have lunch and looked around the museum and grounds for about an hour and a half.
- Dave Calwell, his wife Pauline plus son Chris and sister in law Linda came down from Topeka on June 14th for a long visit and to show his collection. Dave sent a letter on the 20th thanking Larry and me for being available to show them around and he remarked how he

From our Past

In the spring of 2018, the Fredonia gate was being installed at the entrance to the museum. This gate guarded the crossing between the Frisco and the SantaFe at Fredonia.

- Larry Spahn photos



continues to be VERY impressed with how we have displayed the collection and relate it to the public.

- Mark and Debbie Springer from Wichita came by on June 21st for a nice long visit and Mark returned the cast iron Midland Valley Railroad "Station One Mile" sign that he had repaired and restored. It really looks nice without the four bullet holes plus fresh black and silver paint.
- Tyler Phillips, President and Phillip Bushdieker, Treasure of the Oklahoma Heritage Railway Association from Tulsa were here all day on June 21st. I showed them around the museum and we looked over and discussed the projects they have volunteered to do for us including the Mopac switch engine and the SEK 1716 caboose. We discussed timelines and other issues. Due to them having to travel from the Tulsa area both projects will more than likely last into 2026 before they can get completed. They are very impressed with our museum and are excited to be helping us out.
- Larry Hiatt the owner and editor of the local Columbus newspaper brought his family out for a tour on June 22nd.
- I have also been cataloging the artifacts and photographs that Jim McKeel delivered at the last meeting of the material from former member Bill Bailey. Many nice items of Mopac, Frisco and area short line railroads to add to our growing collections. Heartlands member and well known railroad historian Mike Sypult has already indicated he will be visiting in August to look through the new material for historic research purposes.

Train Shows Report

Report by Rob McKnight

Northwest Arkansas Train Show - Bentonville, AR

Attendance: ?? Sales: \$498

- Although I haven't receive the official attendance total, it appears to be way down from last year, but was still one of the better attended shows. Heat was the major factor.
- Temperatures were in the 90's, heat index in the upper 90's and the facility had no air conditioning.
- Sales were very good, with the donations from Paul and Ed being the majority of the sales.
- Most of the vendors shut down early because of the heat.
- Talked with lots of people about the museum until the crowd diminished when it got too hot.
- Rumor has it that the 2026 show will be held in a new venue that is climate controlled.

Heart of the Heartlands

Any questions, comments or suggestions, contact:

Brian Carlson

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620-820-9665 (leave message)

July 9, 2025 - Heart of the Heartlands - Minutes

The July 9, 2025 meeting of the Heart of the Heartlands was brought to order by President Larry Spahn at 7:00 p.m.

Minutes of previous meeting: John Randall moved to accept the minutes as mailed. Jim McKeel seconded the motion, the motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Brian Carlson presented the treasurer's report for the month of March. After the presentation of the treasurer's report, John Chambers moved and Paul Morgan seconded the motion to accept the treasurer's report. The motion was passed by the membership in attendance.

Old Business:

Update from Darrell Cave:

Darrel was not in attendance at the meeting but left an update with secretary-treasurer, Brian Carlson. In the update, one of the signs was printed incorrectly and he was awaiting the correction before installing them. The stickers and patches are in. He would like to order some blank hats and a heat press to install the patches on hats and save 50% of the cost. John Chambers moved to allow Darrell Cave to purchase a heat press. Jack Evans seconded the motion and it was passed by the members present.

New Business:

Charles and Bev Bennett Donation:

Jim McKeel reported on a recent donation from Charles and Bev Bennett. The donation included two boxes of books and another box of miscellaneous items. Some of the items included timetables, rule books, and Harvey menus from World War II era.

Monthly Museum and Visitors Report:

- John Chambers asked the club if he could send the Downes clock to Girard for cleaning. Jim McKeel moved to have John take the clock to Girard to have it cleaned. Paul Morgan seconded the motion and the motion was passed by the members present.
- Gave his museum report for June

Rob McKnight Train Show Report:

- Rob reported on the Northwest Arkansas Train Show that was held on June 21, 2025.
- He did not receive an attendance total. The temperatures were high with a heat index in the upper 90's and the facility did not have air conditioning so the turnout was low.
- Despite the lower turnout, Rob had a total sales of \$498.

Other Items:

- Jack Evans brought some insulators to the group.
- Jim McKeel introduced new member, Jim Herriott, to the group
- Larry Spahn read a letter from David Caldwell

Jack Evans moved to adjourn the meeting. Jim McKeel seconded the motion and it passed by the membership present.