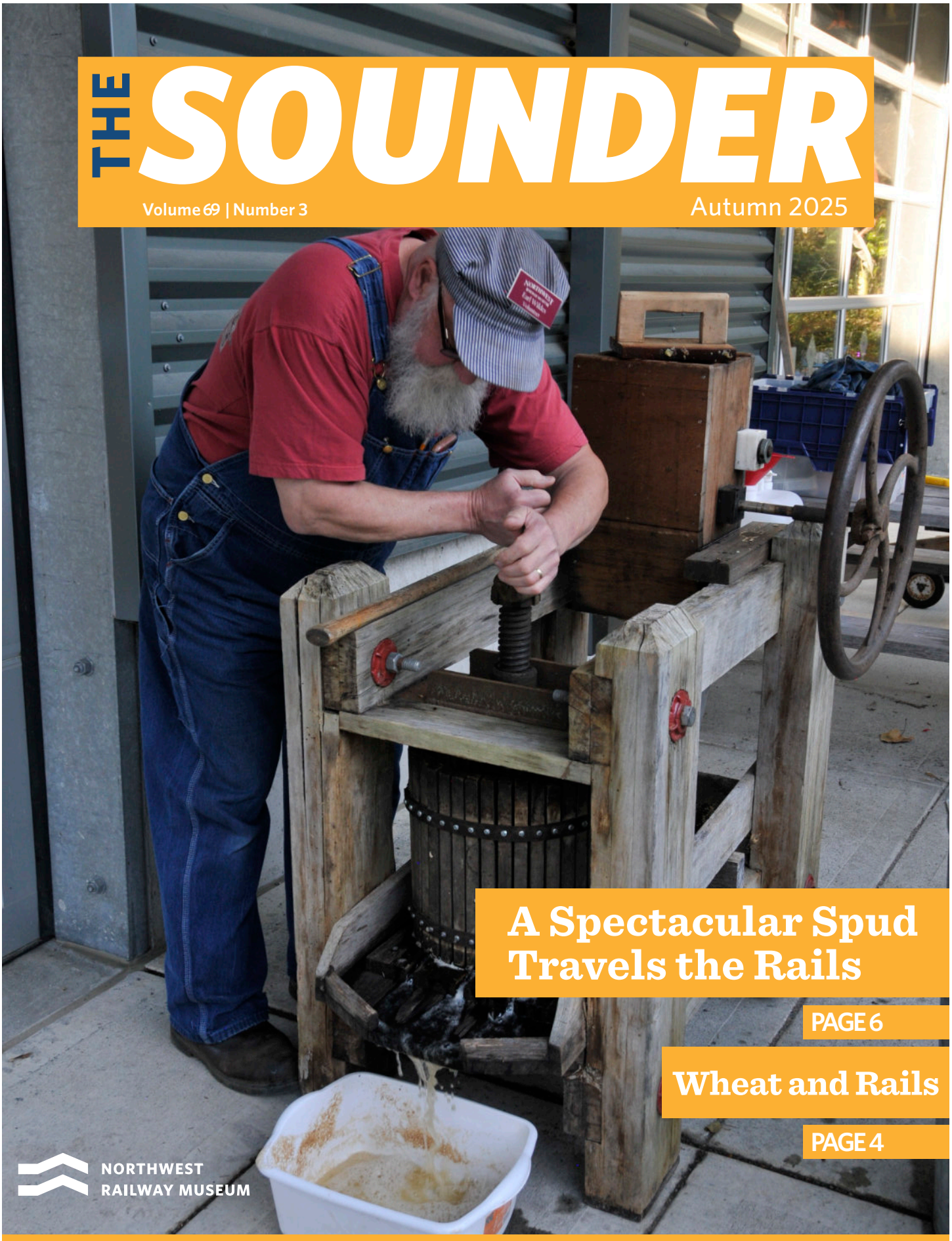

THE SOUNDER

Volume 69 | Number 3

Autumn 2025

A Spectacular Spud Travels the Rails

PAGE 6

Wheat and Rails

PAGE 4

NORTHWEST RAILWAY MUSEUM

Preserving Railway History Since 1957

IN THIS ISSUE

3 **A Note From the Executive Director**
4 **From the Archives**
5 **In the Workshop**
6 **A Spectacular Spud Travels the Rails**
8 **Special Events**
9 **Events & Exhibits**
10 **Volunteer News**
11 **Jr. Sounder**
12 **Stay Connected**

The Northwest Railway Museum acknowledges it is built on the traditional lands of the Snoqualmie Tribe and other Coast Salish peoples. The Museum's railway runs through land and features considered sacred to the beliefs, values, and heritage of the Snoqualmie Tribe and other First Nations.

Autumn Train Schedule

Saturdays & Sundays — April 2025 - October 2025

North Bend

10:30am	**12:30pm**	**2:30pm**

Snoqualmie

11:00am	**1:00pm**	**3:00pm**

** Prices and schedule may vary on special event dates, visit TrainMuseum.org for more details.*

CONTACT US

Have questions or feedback? We'd love to hear from you.

You may contact us at: info@TrainMuseum.org or 425-888-3030 ext. 7202.

The Museum gratefully acknowledges funding and support received from:

Snoqualmie Tribe · 4Culture King County Lodging Tax · City of Snoqualmie Lodging Tax Fund · King County · Washington Trust for Historic Preservation · dahp

and the many individuals and businesses who give generously each year.

If you wish to give a gift, please visit TrainMuseum.org/Support

THE SOUNDER

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THE SOUNDER STAFF

Editorial

Kacy Hardin

Richard Anderson

Emily Boersma

Michael Hughes

Aiden Shields

Photography

Northwest Railway Museum Staff

Cover Photo:

Kacy Hardin

Graphic Design & Layout

Kacy Hardin

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THE NORTHWEST RAILWAY MUSEUM MISSION

To operate a nationally significant museum and heritage railway where the public experiences captivating exhibits and educational programs that confront the impactful and challenging history of railways in shaping the Pacific Northwest, actively engaging the community and inspiring future generations to preserve this transformative heritage.

The railway changed everything

NORTHWEST RAILWAY MUSEUM

A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Preparing the Museum for An Expanded Audience

The Northwest Railway Museum's audience is expanding. Last year regular programs served more than 60,000 visitors, and more than 200,000 individuals visited at least one of the Museum's exhibits in historic downtown Snoqualmie. Attendance is approaching capacity for many of the more popular dates and times, and continues to grow. Here are a few of the things currently in the works that will allow the Museum and local community to serve a larger audience:

More track maintenance - to better maintain the track and right of way, this summer the Museum acquired a new ballast regulator. This is a self-propelled machine that spreads crushed rock along the tracks, redistributes crushed rock, maintains ditches, clears snow, and more. It was retired from service on a major railway in July and has immediately gone to work for the Museum maintaining track embankments along the main line.

Expanded parking lot – the Railway History Campus is getting an additional 33 parking stalls. As I write this, work is underway to install permeable pavers similar to the existing parking lot. This additional parking will benefit weekday programs and will allow more people to begin or extend their Train Museum experience at the RHC.

Turntable – the design team that includes civil and structural engineers is working on a foundation design to install an 85-foot turntable at the RHC. This work is more tedious and complicated than first expected because the Museum is in a higher risk seismic zone (we get earthquakes), the soil conditions are particularly poor, and there is a high seasonal ground water table. However, a completed design is expected later this fall.

Crossing upgrades – Museum staff are working with both the Cities of Snoqualmie and North Bend to design and implement improved crossing safety features at six railway crossings. This project will replace the rail within the crossing limits and install constant warning devices in an effort to improve safety and reduce delays at signalized intersections. In the last 30 years, the population living within five miles of the Museum's railway has increased tenfold.

Richard R Anderson

Executive Director

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Wheat and Rails

Emily B., Collections Registrar

Fall is planting or harvest season for many crops in Washington State, including wheat. Washington is among the top five wheat-producing states in the country with the majority of the crop grown in Eastern Washington, specifically in the Columbia Plateau and Palouse regions. In the 1880s, with the expansion of railways across the state, wheat was more easily exported from Washington to the rest of the world. The Walla Walla & Columbia River Railroad was completed in 1875, primarily to facilitate wheat export. The line operated between Walla Walla and Wallula, connecting the Columbia and Walla Walla rivers. This rail line transported wheat from the Walla Walla Valley across the state, making transport more efficient than shipping by wagon or steamboat.

By the 1870s, wheat exports overseas to Europe and Asia increased. Thanks to the railway, trains could transport wheat to the company steamships, which continued the journey across the oceans. Today, Washington exports about 90% of its wheat overseas, continuing to use a combination of rail and barge efficient means of transportation.

This early 20th century colorized postcard, pictured below, shows workers thrashing [sic] wheat, removing the grain from the straw, and gathering the grain in sacks. To learn more about how the railway impacted agriculture in Washington State, visit the Train Shed Exhibit Hall.

Scan from Northwest Railway Museum Library & Archives (2025.034.002).

Two Kinds of Locomotion in Progress

The new Interurban 523 side sill, fabricated by Museum shipwright, Glenn W. Note the carefully cut angles on the car-side of the beam.

Aiden S., Collections Care Assistant

The Conservation and Restoration Workshop is abuzz with activity. Several projects are making headway, supported by the Museum's capable volunteers and staff.

The latest major development is the Puget Sound Electric Railway Interurban 523. Previously stored in the Train Shed Exhibit Hall, the car moved into the shop at the end of May for more active restoration work. The ongoing work ranges from historical archaeology to structural repairs of the car's wooden frame. A key piece of these repairs is the replacement of a portion of one of the car's two wooden side sills. This sill was badly water damaged. Part of the wall above the sill had been cut out around 1930 and turned into a doorway for the car's time spent as a house. The car later spent time in storage under a tarp before the Museum acquired it. While a tarp can keep rain off of an object, it also traps moisture underneath and can cause further problems when used for long-term storage, especially storage of a wooden structure!

Work also continues on the restoration of Northern Pacific #125, a 1940 built ALCo. HH660. Much of the ongoing progress moves the project towards a hopefully successful test start in the coming months.Inspection of the locomotive's electrical equipment, air brake system, and the McIntosh & Seymour 538 prime mover are all key steps that must be taken before the first start.

One of the Museum's newer volunteers, Kevin R., was fortunate enough to visit the archives of the American Locomotive Company this month. This visit revealed important technical documentation that will be key to operating and maintaining this piece of history.

One of the six high-pressure fuel injectors, removed for testing.

A Spectacular Spud Travels the Rails

Michael H., Educator

As passenger trains in North America developed into the 20th century, each railway sought to provide amenities to encourage the public to choose their passenger train service over the competition. Dining was one such focus. Railways prided themselves on excellent service with stupendous food cooked fresh on board. Regional specialties and ingredients were key.

For the Northern Pacific, their biggest dining claim to fame was a rather large spud.

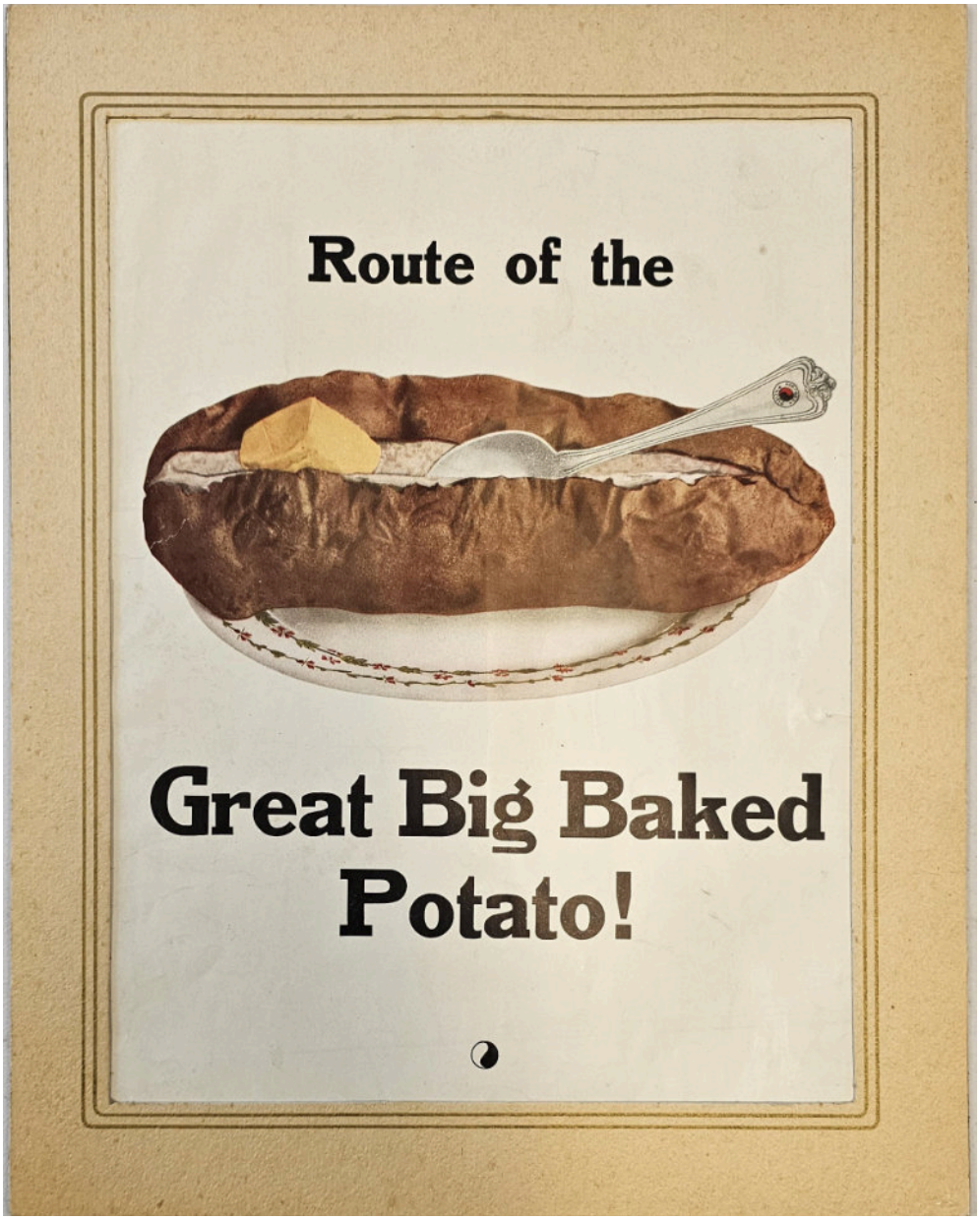
In 1908, the Northern Pacific Railway named Hazen Titus as their Superintendent of Dining Cars. To familiarize himself with the route and what it had to offer, Titus began making trips across the NP system. On one of his trips through Washington aboard the North Coast Limited, he overheard two Yakima Valley farmers lamenting about the lack of market for the immense potatoes they were growing.

Titus broached the conversation and learned that these potatoes often weighed between 2 to 5 pounds. Potatoes of this size were difficult to cook, and customers passed them up for smaller potatoes. As a result, most were sold at a loss as cheap animal feed. Realizing that large spuds at a low cost could be a boon for the NP, Titus ordered several bushels. Taking them with him to the main commissary in Seattle, he set about with one goal: develop them into a special dish.

Northern Pacific Great Big Baked Potato letter opener.
Northwest Railway Museum Collection 2025.002.002.

Artwork depicting the Great Big Baked Potato complete with pad of butter and large spoon.

Northwest Railway Museum Collection 2024.023.001



Initial results proved the farmers right - cooking the whole spud required heating the potato for so long that the outside turned into a burnt mess!

Eventual refinements brought about using two-pound potatoes and a metal kebob skewer to distribute low heat evenly through the whole potato. Terming their creation, "The Great Big Baked Potato", the NP offered these large potatoes for sale aboard their trains. Served with a pad of butter, a large spoon, and priced at 10¢ (roughly $3.50 today), their popularity quickly took off.

Railways prided themselves on excellent service with stupendous food cooked fresh on board.

So popular were the spuds that the Northern Pacific began advertising themselves as "The Route of the Great Big Baked Potato." The roof of the Seattle Commissary even installed a 40-foot baked potato advertisement, complete with lighted pad and twinkling potato "eyes". Capitalizing on their success, Titus had postcards and souvenirs made, developed a "Great Big Baked Potato Booster Club", and even commissioned a song!

SPECIAL EVENTS

Seasonal Trains Arriving in Station!

Both years' long Museum traditions, Halloween Train and Santa Train are just around the corner!

You never know what you might encounter on a Halloween Train excursion. Tiny pumpkins, giant bats, debatably-living conductors, dragons, even Weird Al Yankovic himself? All just a small sampling of the fun characters you may meet when you ride the train or visit the Train Shed on Halloween Train weekends. Learn about one of Washington state's biggest exports, apples, and try your hand at using traditional tools to peel and core the fruit yourself! While you visit, take a peek at the model railway exhibit in the back of the building. The model train may not be running at the time, but the static exhibit is still an impressive diorama illustrating the agricultural landscape of the Pacific Northwest.

Just after Halloween wraps up, it will be time to deck the halls. If you are looking for volunteer hours, November and December are the perfect months for it!

Earl, one of the Museum's Keystone Kops, waves to the train on a foggy Yuletide Express morning.

Zombie conductor Vic B. could use a hand, the kids keep making off with one of his!

Interested in Volunteering?

Contact Volunteer and Program Coordinator, Matt at **Matt@TrainMuseum.org**.

Have you ever seen volunteers at the train depots dressed as old timey cops during Santa Train? One of the long-standing traditions of NRM's Santa Train is the presence of the Keystone Kops. They are characters from slapstick comedy silent films from the early 1900s, known for being bumbling and incompetent. Thankfully, the Museum's volunteer Kops are much more competent - they answer questions, direct visitors where they need to go, and help keep everyone safe around the moving trains.

If these volunteers have ever captivated you or your family and you find yourself interested, the Museum would love to find another person or two to take up the mantle. Reach out to Volunteer Coordinator Matt to ask about this or any other volunteer opportunities!

Halloween Train

October 11-12, 18-19, & 25-26

All aboard for some slightly spooky, family friendly fun! Halloween Train is a harvest time excursion that includes hot cider, cider press demonstrations, live music, and hands-on apple coring! Costumes encouraged for visitors of all ages!

Santa Limited

November 29-30
December 6-7, 13-14, & 20-21

Celebrate the holidays with the NRM on this 2-hour round trip excursion. Board in North Bend to ride up to the Railway History Campus, visit Santa in the restored Chapel Car, enjoy cookies and cocoa, and plenty of photo opportunities! More info & tickets available at TrainMuseum.org.

Story Time

1st, 3rd, & 5th Wednesdays at 11am

Enjoy an afternoon out at the Museum's Train Shed Exhibit Hall, meant for rail fans of all ages. Listen to 1-3 stories together, experience a hands-on craft, and take the time to explore what this Museum location has to offer.

As always, Story Time is completely free!

Yuletide Express

November 29
December 5-6, 12-13, & 19-20

A shorter holiday option departing Snoqualmie Depot, great for families who cannot do a 2 hour excursion. Santa rides aboard the train and visits with every family during the ride to and from the top of Snoqualmie Falls. More info & tickets available at TrainMuseum.org.

VOLUNTEER NEWS

Volunteer Spotlight

Volunteers contribute in so many different ways at the Northwest Railway Museum, sometimes for many years. This Sounder features the Museum's volunteers and their stories of connection with and passion for the Museum.

Left: Nolan D. in a General Electric Company locomotive cab.

PERKS

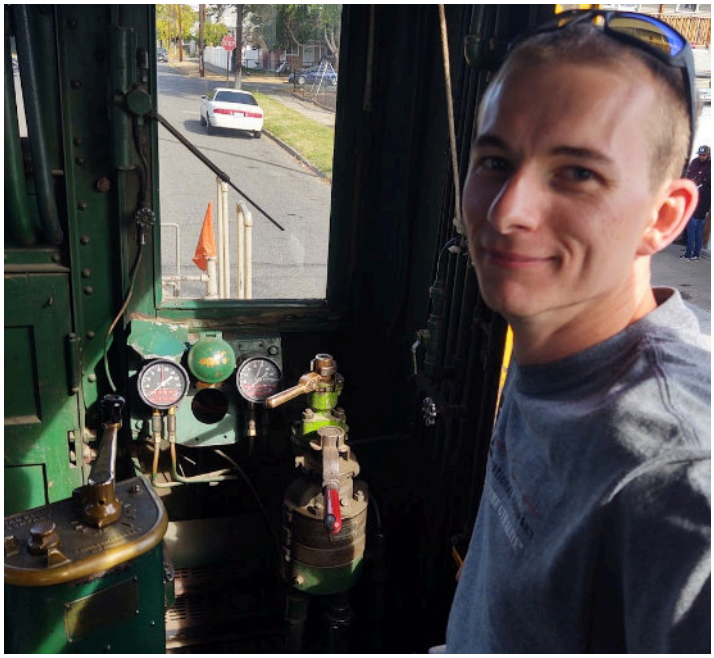
- **An invitation to the annual volunteer appreciation BBQ in June**
- **10% discount in the Museum's stores**
- **Reciprocal free admission to regional museums during National Volunteer Week in April**
- **Further training and educational opportunities**

Ready to Volunteer?

If you are interested in joining the Northwest Railway Museum's volunteer team, please visit: TrainMuseum.org and fill out an application under the Volunteer tab.

Questions?

Contact the Volunteer Coordinator, Matt, at Matt@TrainMuseum.org



Nolan D.

Nolan started out as a volunteer in the Conservation and Restoration Workshop when he was in middle school. He primarily helped with simple tasks during the restoration of coach 218 and occasionally assisted with the Chapel Car restoration.

Last June, two of the Museum's board directors had the future model railway exhibit concepts on display at the 4th Division National Model Railroaders Association Spring meet. They were looking for volunteers and Nolan was happy to oblige.

With an interest in the electrical aspect of model railways, Nolan offered to help the Museum with wiring up the track and control system.

His favorite parts about working on the Foodways layout are getting to plan and install all of the track wiring and related hardware and getting experience working with Layout Command Control (LCC) block detection and logic. LCC grants advanced levels of control over the trains operating on a layout including block detection for accurate behavior of signal crossings.

Jr. Sounder

Potato Stamping

People have been growing and using potatoes for thousands of years. But a potato is more than just a source of food. It can be used for fun as well! A potato can be turned into a stamp, which can make artwork, cards, or even wrapping paper. The only limit is your imagination! Remember to have a responsible adult help with cutting the potato.

<u>Supplies</u>

Potatoes

Knife

Cookie cutters (optional)

Towel

Craft paint

Paper

1. Cut the potato in half. Which way to cut depends on the design wanted; small designs are best suited for width-wise, while words or long designs are best for length-wise.
2. Design your stamp! Use a knife to cut away excess portions of the potato, leaving a raised portion for the paint to adhere to. Remember that words will need to be carved backwards!
3. Cookie cutters can be used to create the initial stamp. Simply push the cutter into the potato, and then use the knife to cut away the excess around the stamp.
4. Use a towel to blot away moisture from the stamp. Otherwise the paint will not adhere.
5. Dip your stamp into craft paint, and begin stamping your paper!

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