

THE SEMAPHORE

FOR FRIENDS AND MEMBERS OF THE ROCHESTER CHAPTER NRHS



MARCH 2009
VOL. 51 No. 6

NEXT CHAPTER MEETING:

March 19

Rochester Street Cars

Presented by Charlie Lowe

Bring your streetcar-related photos,
artifacts and models to share!



NEXT STOP, INDUSTRY! Excited visitors attended Winterfest 2009 at the New York Museum of Transportation, a gathering of trolley preservation and museum individuals from around the country. Passengers are boarding Car 168 at Midway Station, the current end-of-wire on our joint railroad. The Rochester Chapter NRHS Board of Directors has approved extension of the overhead wire all the way down to Industry by 2010. This move will benefit both organizations, giving the trolley ride a true destination as well as offering greater capacity and added interest to our two museums. PHOTO BY DAVID SCHEIDERICH

2010: Destination Depot

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As mentioned in a September 2008 issue of THE SEMAPHORE, the Rochester Chapter NRHS Board of Directors voted in June to approve an engineering study by Charlie Lowe of NYMT to extend the overhead wire from its current end all the way south to the bumping block at Industry depot. Extension of the trolley ride would give us an all-weather option to transport many more visitors between our museums, increasing our appeal and potentially attracting more visitors. But it won't happen overnight.

During the remainder of 2009 we plan to set the poles needed for the next 1,000 feet of mainline overhead running south from Midway Station to about 200 feet north of Switch 6. These poles will be placed on the

west side of the railroad, which is a sharp dropoff. Fill from around the property may be dumped around these poles in an effort to strengthen the bases. We will let this consolidate over the winter of 2009-2010 and keep running poles southward.

We are currently working with Niagara-Mohawk successor NationalGrid to have the high-voltage lines that cross our railroad raised to a sufficient height to clear our proposed electrification. Should the power line not yet be raised as needed in 2010, we could string wire over the prepared 1,000 feet from Midway to Switch 6. The preferred course of action is to get all the needed poles and ground anchors in place for the whole run to Industry depot before stringing (Continued on page 5)



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TRAIN BULLETIN

SHORT NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS REGARDING THE ROCHESTER CHAPTER NRHS

UPCOMING CHAPTER PROGRAMS

We have many interesting and varied programs scheduled throughout the year as part of our monthly membership meetings. If you are interested in giving a presentation on any railroad subject at an upcoming chapter meeting, please contact Harold at haroldrussell@juno.com.

March 19, 2009 - "Rochester's Street Cars by Charlie Lowe." Bring your streetcar-related photos, artifacts and models to share with our members!

April 16, 2009 - "The Dansville & Mount Morris Railroad" by Douglas Morgan. This local shortline was merged into Genesee & Wyoming in 1985.

May 21, 2009 - Members' Slide Night and Chapter Elections. Everybody is Welcome! Please bring your edited slide show (in a carousel, no loose slides please) or digital show (on CD-ROM or flash drive) ready to present.

June, July and August, 2009 - Join us at the Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum for our monthly meetings! Take this opportunity to enjoy a ride on our museum demonstration railroad and see the results of our hard work! As always, bring a friend and encourage them to attend!

CHAPTER LIBRARY REPORT

The library has been relocated to a space leased to us by the American Legion, at the 40 & 8 Club on University Avenue, where we meet once a month. The library will be open during the next chapter meeting starting at 6:30 for one hour before the regular meeting, and again during the intermission. If anyone would like to help out with the Library Committee, please contact Library Chairman Bob Fleck at Rfleck@rochester.rr.com.

CHAPTER SPONSORED AMTRAK TOURS

Join our Chapter tour guides Jim and Dianne East for another exciting year of chartered rail tours. Take Amtrak from Rochester to the heart of New York City for dining, shopping and a Broadway show. Or consider a Bermuda cruise departing Boston, or

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Annual Dues: \$54.00

Rochester Chapter NRHS
P.O. Box 23326
Rochester, NY 14692-3326

an exciting vacation in New Hampshire's White Mountains? Don't wait, make your reservation now! For price details and detailed information, contact Jim East at (585) 377-5389 or email at raileast@aol.com.

Pre-Christmas Escorted New York City Trips

Thursday, Dec. 3-Saturday, Dec. 5

Friday, Dec. 11-Monday, Dec. 14

Take Amtrak to New York City, enjoy shopping and dining before you take your orchestra-level seats for the Christmas Show at Radio City Music Hall.

Bermuda Escorted Cruise, Departs Boston

Friday, May 8-Friday, May 15

Motorcoach to Boston, 7 days cruising aboard NCL *Spirit*, then Amtrak from Boston back to Rochester.

White Mountains Escorted Fall Foliage Tour

Friday, October 12-Tuesday, October 20

Amtrak to Albany, then motorcoach to Laconia, NH. Escorted tour includes rides on the well known Conway Scenic, Mt. Washington Cog Railway, and Hobo Railroad. Motorcoach back to Albany, then Amtrak to Rochester.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

If you have not renewed your membership, the April issue of The Semaphore will be your last. Please continue to support one of the oldest and most active NRHS Chapters in the nation—Send in your renewal now!

We are in the planning stages for an open house for prospective New Volunteers Open House to be held on Saturday May 9, 2009, which is "National Train Day." Tentatively, the open house will run from about 10:00am-12:30pm and will incorporate tours of the museum(s), projects, and end with some train operations/train ride and lunch. Our research has found that some other museums have been offering similar open houses with outstanding results for attracting new volunteers. The Membership Chair is working with Development Committee Chair, Chris Hauf, on the project, more details will be available soon.

—Sam Rosenberg,
Membership Chair

PLAN AHEAD: Next Meeting:

April 16

7:00 PM at 40&8 Club



ROCHESTER & GENESEE VALLEY RAILROAD MUSEUM

VISIT OUR WEB SITE: WWW.RGVRRM.ORG

MUSEUM MANAGER

Dave Luca

(585) 288-0318 daveluca@frontiernet.net

TRACK CAR OPERATIONS

It's not over yet! We still need trained Track Car Operators for the 2009 Museum Season. All classes will be held in the NYMT Gallery as in the past. A makeup session will be held sometime in early May for those who can't make their assigned class. Track Car training for 2009 will be held as follows:

Saturday, April 18: For people with last names beginning with the letters A-D: Class 9:00-10:00AM, Hands-on 10:00-12:00 noon. For people with last names beginning with the letters E-L: Class 1:00-2:00PM, Hands-on 2:00-4:00PM.

Saturday, April 25: For people with last names beginning with the letter M: Class 9:00-10:00AM, Hands-on 10:00-12 noon. For people with last names beginning with the letters N-Z: Class 1:00-2:00PM, Hands-on 2:00-4:00PM.

*—Bob Achilles and Harold Russell
Track Cap Operations*

MOTIVE POWER DEPT.

EK 6: With some milder weather early in the month, the motive power group was able to accomplish a few chores. Ron Amberger, Dave Scheiderich, and Joe Nugent completed EK 6's oil change. This locomotive now has fresh oil and clean filters. We will carefully monitor the condition of the oil as we operate this year. Any signs of crankcase oil contamination could indicate a problem with the surviving engine on this locomotive.

USA 1843: The independent brake stand for the 1843 was removed and sent to Pittsburgh Air Brake for rebuilding. Thanks to Ron Amberger and Luther Brefo for removing the stand, Bob Mader for building a wooden shipping box for it and Ron Amberger and Dave Scheiderich for donating time and funds for shipping it off.

BURRO CRANE: Norm Shaddick and Bob Mader fabricated and installed an air cleaner, made from found parts, for the



TROLLEYFEST AT NYMT: TOP: Sweeping off the remains of a late winter snow, Chapter volunteers prepare 1654 for service during NYMT's Winterfest event. Diesel trains shuttled visitors from Midway to Industry and back again. PHOTO BY DAVID SCHEIDERICH ABOVE: Visitors aboard NYMT Car 161 prepare to roll out of the new carbarn and onto the mainline. The weekend event drew museum volunteers from around the country, curious to learn about our sister operation to the north. Donations from the weekend will go towards future electrification. PHOTO BY CHRIS PLAYFORD



MUSEUM NEWS

CONTINUED

Detroit diesel engine in the Model 40 Burro crane.

STEAM TEAM: A special meeting of the steam interest group was held at RIT on the evening of February 25 to discuss the future of the steam program. The outcome of the meeting was that the group is sending a motion to the board to move that the chief motive power officer of the Strasburg Railroad be hired to come and do a thorough inspection of the boiler on our Brooklyn Navy Yard Vulcan #12 and provide expert opinion on either repairing the existing boiler or the necessity of fabricating a new boiler. Ron Amberger and Peter Gores made some ultrasonic measurements of metal thicknesses on the tank engine's boiler shell so that Ron could make calculations to determine its allowable working pressure.

The motive power department has decided to purchase run-hour meters for all of the museum's locomotives. These meters will record diesel engine run time. The data obtained from the meters will assist with maintenance intervals and general record keeping. Thank you to all of the members who donated funds to help pay for a meter.

Don't forget that we hold our motive power meetings on the first Saturday of every month, 12 noon at Industry Depot. We hope to see you there!

—Ron Amberger

Thanks to Joe Nugent, Joel Shaw,
and Norm Shaddick

OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT

Mike Dow, Mike Roqué, and Dave Scheiderich held the first of our 2009 operating rules and air brake classes on the campus of RIT on Sunday, February 8th. Thanks to Super Dave, this year's classes featured a comfortable, modern multimedia room.

The next classes will be held on Saturday, March 7th at 9:00AM, and a final class is tentatively planned for Sunday, May 3rd (if needed). The March classes will be held in room A-400 of the RIT Wallace Library (Building 5). The operating rules class will be held from 9AM to 11:30AM, and the air brake/train handling class will be held from 12:00PM



STARSHIP ENTERPRISE: Operations Department instructor Mike Dow explains important safety procedures with the aid of a sophisticated classroom borrowed from nearby RIT. PHOTO BY MIKE ROQUE

to 2:00PM. The best option for parking is in U Lot, located on the south side of the campus near the Library.

For each type of class (operating rules or air brake), you only need to attend one classroom session. You're certainly welcome to attend all the classes if you like, but once you've passed a particular class, you don't need to attend that same class again. So if you're planning to be involved in operations in any capacity this year, you only need to attend one operating rules class and pass the required exams. If you'd like to become a Conductor and/or Engineer, you must also attend one air brake class.

All volunteers who plan to participate in train operations at the museum must pass the operating rules class. Engineers, Fireman, and Conductors must also pass the air brake/train handling class. Please bring a pen, paper, and your current rulebook or a three ring binder with rings no smaller than 1" to hold the rule books and bulletins that you will receive. If you have the current rule book, please bring your copy, but rule books will be available if you don't. Class sizes will be limited, so if you plan to attend, please RSVP to Mike Dow at opsdept@rgvrrm.org or (716) 474-2833 as soon as possible.

—Mike Roqué

Railroad Operations Department

NEW MUSEUM WEB SITE AND BLOG

Museum Webmaster Mike Roqué has launched a new website for the museum at <http://www.rgvrrm.org> as well as a new blog at <http://rgvrrm.blogspot.com> and a "friends of the museum" electronic mailing list. The new site features news stories from our blog, a listing of events, description of our exhibits and our railroad collection, and much more. Thanks to Jessy Stallone for web development and Chris Hauf and Otto Vondrak for significant content submissions. We're always looking for clear, sharp roster photographs of our equipment, and we love getting bright photos of people visiting our museums. If you have items to contribute, please let us know. Contact Mike Roqué for details.

EXCURSION COACHES

Work continues on our ex-New York Central Budd-built stainless steel excursion coaches. One of the coaches which has been brought inside of the museum's restoration shop for some interior work including replacement of some of the wall panels. Original steam heating is in the process of being replaced with electric. Additionally, upholstery repairs are on the slate as well. Don Wawrzyniak has been hard at work on some new seat covers using our industrial sewing machine. Work continues through the winter months. ■

LOCAL LINES: The "Cyclotron & Southern"

"FIRST LOAD ON C&S"

A special "branch" of the Erie Railroad had to be built into the University of Rochester campus in order to deliver the massive magnet forgings for the university's new 1200 ton super atom smasher.

Known as the "Cyclotron & Southern Railroad," the 473-foot spur was specially laid by the Erie to bring ten forgings, such as the 157-ton giant shown here, directly to the emplacement site where the machine will be assembled and its building constructed.

The individual forging loads are said to be among the heaviest ever handled, the largest being equivalent to roughly three times the average heavy car lading. Heavy duty 16-wheel flat cars are required, and special precautions observed in transit. The cars bearing the forgings must be located at least four distant from the locomotive, to prevent excessive loading of bridges and road bed. Empty cars weighing under 100,000 pounds each are required at either side of the special flat cars to act as buffers.

When the forgings are set in place, the cyclotron magnet will be 26 feet long, 11 feet thick and 17 feet high. Magnet pole pieces will be 130 inches in diameter. High dirt embankments extending above the ravine in which the cyclotron is located will serve as a radiation shield.

The concrete piers that will support the magnet are eight feet thick and themselves are set on concrete piling. Special hoisting rigging with 50-foot high "gin" poles had to be imported to Rochester for the job of lift-



A delivery is made to University of Rochester's atom smasher on the temporary "Cyclotron & Southern" branch built by the Erie in 1947 to bring in materials for construction of the atom smasher. **ERIE RAILROAD PHOTO**

ing the massive forgings from the railroad to the concrete emplacement.

It is hoped that the giant atom smasher, second largest in the world, will be in operation some time next summer. It will produce particles of 250 million volts, 16 times the maximum energy of any previously produced, and it is considered likely that atomic discoveries of first importance will come from the greatly-expanded research in basic nuclear physics made possible by the apparatus.

The project is being sponsored by the US Navy Office Research and Invention, but its construction and operation for basic research in nuclear physics will be under the direction of the University of Rochester's physics department. Dr. Stanley W. Barnes, professor of physics, is in charge of the project under Dr. George B. Collins, head of the physics department.

— Erie Railroad Magazine,
February 1947

DESTINATION DEPOT - continued

any more wire on the mainline, since it is most efficient to do all the wire at once.

Visitors attending the recent Winterfest event at NYMT raised \$1,000 toward the "Destination Depot" fund. That is perhaps a third or a half of the cost of what is needed for buying the materials we need for the next 1,000 feet of mainline overhead. More fundraising will take place to cover the remaining costs of extension.

There is also a plan to rebuild and electrify the Loop Track at NYMT. Wiring the Loop Track will not only reduce the dis-

tance from our power source by 1,400 feet, it will also permit us to turn the cars to equalize wheel wear. Some track work will be needed before we can consider running here with the public.

The trolley extension will bring many benefits to both NYMT and R&GVRM. With the track cars becoming increasingly difficult and expensive to operate, and the greater passenger capacity the electric trolleys offer, we can reduce our joint operating costs. Second, we won't be running a trolley out to some odd point in the middle of the woods like nearly all other museums in the country. We will be operating a real

transit service between two points on our joint museum campus. Just as the trolley extended the reach of the steam railroad network, someday the trolley could offer connections to a Chapter-operated excursion train that stops at Indstry depot. We would be reproducing on a grand scale what was once typical transportation in many communities almost 100 years ago.

Exciting times are head! Our two museums will soon be able to reap the benefits of this exciting and important project. Watch these pages as we prepare to outline the full details of this joint project.

—Charlie Lowe, with Otto M. Vondrak

MDT 14053

REEFER MADNESS

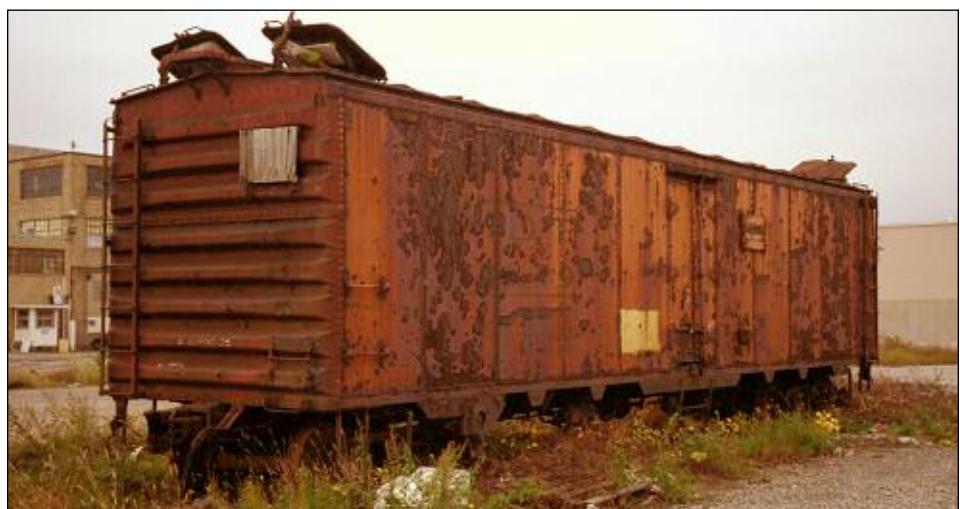
MDT 12549

The nearby community of East Rochester was once home to Merchants Despatch Transport, builder and operator of leased refrigerated freight cars. The long history of this town's development stretches back to 1897, when MDT began construction of a new car construction shop in some grassy fields outside of Penfield. The first railcar to emerge from this complex rolled in 1898, thus beginning 72 years of manufacturing in East Rochester. By 1899, more than 700 workers were employed in the growing facility, which was used by MDT to manufacture and maintain its line of leased freight cars. The Despatch Shops eventually became a subsidiary of the New York Central, and was shut down by successor Penn Central in 1970. However, the MDT name would survive until the present day as a transportation lessor.

MDT 14053 was built by Pacific Car & Foundry in Renton, Washington in 1958, as part of a lot of 150 cars for Northern Refrigerator Car. Built as NRC 20065, it became MDT 14053 after Northern Refrigerator was merged into MDT in March 1962. Measuring 45 feet, the ice-cooled car uses with Equipco Model 54-6 electric air circulating fans powered by an axle generator. This particular car has a combination of a 4' sliding door and a 2' plug door on both sides.

In later years, the reefer was used as an MDT support car at Pennsy's Enola Yard. The car was amazingly well kept, inside and out, and retained its mid-1960s appearance. MDT donated the car to Rochester Chapter, and it was delivered to Industry on October 18, 1993. The reefer traveled on its own wheels, using an all-Conrail routing. The ice-cooled reefer is currently on display in the yard at Industry, and houses an popular exhibit about East Rochester and Despatch Shops.

Our second MDT reefer came from nearby Buffalo, New York. While its cos-



The museum is fortunate to have two Merchants Despatch reefers in its collection, further strengthening our ties to East Rochester, once home of the sprawling MDT shops. TOP: MDT 14053 is in somewhat better condition, and currently houses an exhibit about East Rochester. ABOVE: MDT 12549 was stored at the Niagara Frontier Food Terminal for many years. PHOTOS BY CHRIS HAUF

metic appearance may not be museum quality, this car is certainly worthy of preservation. MDT 12549 was built by Despatch Shops in East Rochester in September 1953. Like its West Coast twin, this car is ice cooled, using Equipco Overhead M-29-3 electric air circulating fans powered by an axle generator. Measuring 42'-6 over the couplers, MDT 12549 was equipped with dual 2' plug doors, and has the unique "DSI" car ends. At the time, the average cost to construct cars like these was \$9871.22.

After a long career of transporting produce around the country, this reefer came to rest at the Niagara Frontier Food Terminal in Buffalo, where it was used as a support car. It was donated to Rochester Chapter by MDT in November 1996, and moved to the museum by Silk Road Transport in 1997. Currently this car is stored at Industry awaiting cosmetic restoration by our volunteers. When completed, this steel car will be an integral part of our proposed "farm to market" museum display.

—Thanks to Chris Hauf

AT A GLANCE

Road/Number: MDT 14053

Builder: Pacific Car & Foundry

Built: 1958

Cap'y: 70,000 lbs.

Acquired: 1993

AT A GLANCE

Road/Number: MDT 12549

Builder: Despatch Shops Inc.

Built: 1953

Cap'y: 70,000 lbs.

Acquired: 1996



IRON STEEDS DOOMED TO RAILROAD BONEYARD: "First slated to the scrap pile in 1932, these veteran switch engines were resurrected for World War II service. Now, worn out and broken down, they will be scrapped as soon as possible, according to Walter H. Harris, New York Central Rochester Division trainmaster. Boys of the neighborhood of the Atlantic Avenue siding where they stand will soon no longer have them for playing engineer." This view is dated May 4, 1948. PHOTO COLLECTION OF ROCHESTER CHAPTER NRHS

Editor's Corner

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What a winter! As I write this, February snows are melting and it's nearly spring in Westchester County. While turning the calendar over to March brings thoughts of springtime down here, I know that it can still mean inches of fresh snowfall up in Rochester! Uncooperative weather in March and April can make preparing for our upcoming museum operating season difficult. There are many projects to be completed before we are ready to welcome guests once more. Can you offer a couple hours of your time to help us get ready? Maybe this is the year you decide to get involved in train operations. With our plan to operate more trains this year, we'll need as

many qualified crews as we can get!

This January I headed up to Springfield, Massachusetts for the annual Big Railroad Hobby Show sponsored by the Amherst Rail Society. Proceeds from the show are donated to various preservation groups throughout the northeast, so not only are you attending the biggest train show in the region, you're helping a good cause!

On the way back from Springfield, I chased the former Boston & Maine mainline west towards home. With all of the uncertainty in the rail industry and our economy, it was a pensive scene to see four matched Guilford units (a symbol of the 1980s) pass the aban-



doned junction tower at Johnsonville, New York (a symbol of the 1950s). Wonder what will pass by here in the 2010s?

—Otto M. Vondrak,
Editor, *The Semaphore*

EDITORIAL SUBMISSIONS: Any materials related to the activities of the Rochester Chapter, the Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum, as well as the history of Rochester's railroads are welcome for publication in the *Semaphore*. All written materials should be submitted as Microsoft Word or plain text documents, and all photographs as high-resolution JPEG files. Materials and inquiries should be emailed to the Editor at ovondrak@yahoo.com or call (585) 820-2341.

THE SEMAPHORE

ROCHESTER CHAPTER

NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Chapter Meeting:

March 19

7:00 PM at The 40&8 Club

933 University Ave., Rochester

Next Chapter Meeting:

April 16

7:00 PM at The 40&8 Club

933 University Ave., Rochester

Off the Train Wire

—Compiled by Rand Warner

NYMT WINTERFEST: On February 20-21, the New York Museum of Transportation hosted the annual Winterfest get-together of like-minded trolley museum volunteers from around the country. Turnout was better than expected, with many visitors getting time for instructional running on NYMT's fleet of ex-Philadelphia & Western "Strafford" cars. Charlie Lowe coordinated the event, and enlisted the help of volunteers from the R&GVRRM. Our volunteers operated several diesel shuttle moves from Midway to Industry, allowing visitors to sample the dual-museum experience.

BURRO CRANE: Bob Mader and Norm Shaddick are rigging up an intake air filter for the Detroit diesel prime mover on our Model 40 Burro Crane. Next we need to find and install a muffler on the exhaust.



TRACK DEPT.: The Livonia, Avon & Lakeville will be replacing the switch leading to our yard this April. They will be relocating the switch approximately 40' north of the current one, allowing for a gentler curve and easier entrance into our private yard and sidings.

Matt G., John Redden, Rand Warner and Chad Timothy are working on the straight rail connection to Switch #2, and it should be complete by the time you read this.

Mike Dow and Chad Timothy & co. are sorting and stockpiling rail hardware and switch parts to increase efficiency of our many track construction projects. We need some more wire baskets on pallets to complete this inventory job.

Scott Gleason, Dan Waterstraat, Chad Timothy, Dave Scheiderich, Ron Amberger, Rand Warner and Jeremy Tuke are working on clearing space on the west side of the LA&L tracks so we can continue extending the West Siding southward to accomodate our excursion coaches.

WATER SUPPLY: We have been advised by the site engineer for the New York State Office of Children and Family Services water and sewer reconstruction project that

our water will be turned off in May 2009. The Chapter Board of Directors has plans for a well to be sunk near the southeast corner of our restoration building and has obtained quotes from three contractors. In addition to the well, we will require a significant run of underground piping to reach the depot. Depending on water quality, we may also need a treatment system to permit safe usage.

NYCSHS CONVENTION

The New York Central System Historical Society (NYCSHS) will be holding their 2009 Annual Meeting on April 17-19 in Geneva, New York. We will have staff present at the museum on Friday, April 17 to greet any visitors who may be travelling on their way to Geneva for the convention. We can extra hands for tour guides and depot guides as we are not planning on running trains. Anyone interested in travelling to Geneva on Sunday April 19 is welcome to attend the train show and special historical presentation being offered that day free of charge. These activites will take place at the convention hotel, the Ramada Lakefront. For more information, please visit www.nycshs.org.