

# THE SEMAPHORE

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCHESTER & GENESEE VALLEY RAILROAD MUSEUM

VOL. 59 No. 10  
JUNE-JULY 2016

**NEXT MEETING:**  
**August 18**  
**INDUSTRY DEPOT:**  
*Enjoy a train ride  
on your museum railroad*



**A TRIBUTE TO THE ERIE RAILROAD:**The tracks that run past our museum were built by the Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad in the 1850s, later becoming the Erie Railroad's Rochester Division. After fifteen years on the property, it was decided to transform former U.S. Army GE 80-ton switcher No. 1654 in R&GV No. 54. The simple repaint has really improved the looks of our workhorse locomotive. See page 5 for details.

# Upward, Onward

## **INSIDE**

<b>2016 Schedule . . .</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Museum News . . . .</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Subway Tour . . . . .</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>R&amp;GV No. 54 . . . . .</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Museum Photos . . .</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Diesel Days . . . . .</b>	<b>7</b>

Our opening weekend on June 18 and 19 was a huge success! We experienced a 50% jump in admission over last year, thanks to the hard work of our volunteers. Attendance in July was steady, with hot and humid weather playing a factor. Local newspaper and television has been giving us great coverage, helping boost our message and spread the word about us.

Now is not the time to rest on our laurels, however. We only have five more weekends in our operating season and we have to make every one count. This is where the majority of our operating funds come from; the funds that pay for things like ongoing equipment maintenance and our short list of approved projects.

We need your help to introduce new faces to our volunteer ranks. We have so many opportunities available, yet many are

reluctant to step forward. Help us reverse this trend. Contributing a few hours during our operating days helps tremendously. Don't be afraid to accept the challenge and help your museum grow.

Our next operating weekend is August 20-21 Diesel Days Weekend. We will have multiple trains running, and we will need your help everywhere from the ticket window to train crews to museum guides.

I also want to ask for your ideas on new events we could add to our calendar this year and next. As we move into our next stages of development and expansion, your support will be most important. Would you like to help out and not sure where to start? Please contact me at (716)474-2833 or [mdow@rochester.rr.com](mailto:mdow@rochester.rr.com). I'd like to hear from you!

—Mike Dow, Museum President



[www.rgvrrm.org](http://www.rgvrrm.org)

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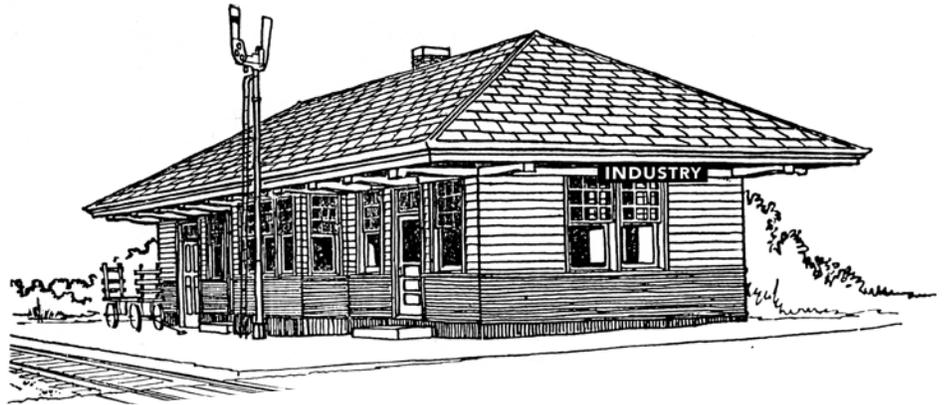
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# 2016 Museum Schedule

Enjoy a mile-and-a-half round trip train ride behind vintage diesels, while you tour the largest collection of historic trains in New York State! Industry Depot is located at 282 Rush Scottsville Road, Rush NY 14543. We're just 20 minutes from downtown Rochester, easy to find from Exit 11 off I-390 in the Town of Rush off Route 251 West. Your ticket is good for museum admission and unlimited round-trip train rides (space permitting). Visit [www.RochesterTrainRides.com](http://www.RochesterTrainRides.com) for details.

**August 20-21 - Diesel Days Weekend**

**September 17-18 - RG&E/Kodak Weekend**

**October 1-2 - Pumpkin Patch Trains**

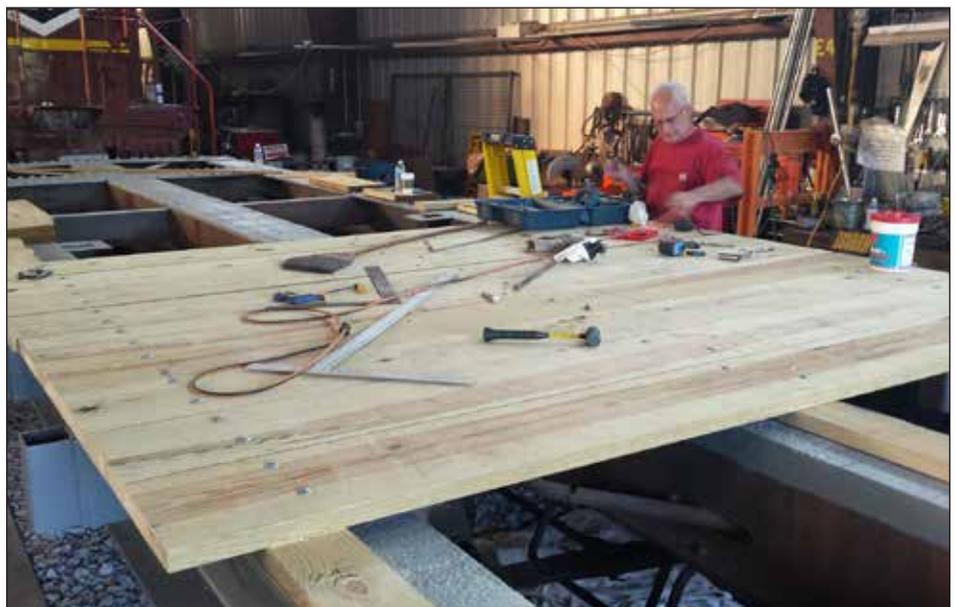
**October 15-16 - Pumpkin Patch Trains**

**October 29-30 - Pumpkin Patch Trains**

TICKETS: Adults: \$10.00, Youth/Seniors/Military: \$8.00

*Trains depart Industry Depot every half-hour from 10am-5pm*

*Free parking located off Route 251. Refreshments and food available.*



**Rob Burz is heading up the project to transform our former Army 40-foot flatcar into an open-air passenger carrier. Several volunteers helped prep and prime the steel frame before the first wood decking was applied in mid-July. Once the deck is complete, the benches, sides, and roof will be installed. Thanks to David MonteVerde for his significant donation towards the deck lumber.**

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**MONTHLY PROGRAM**

**SPECIAL NOTICE:** Our monthly museum meetings move to **Industry Depot** on **June 16, July 21, and August 18**. Following our brief business meeting at 7:00 p.m., enjoy free rides on our museum demonstration railroad. Bring your friends!

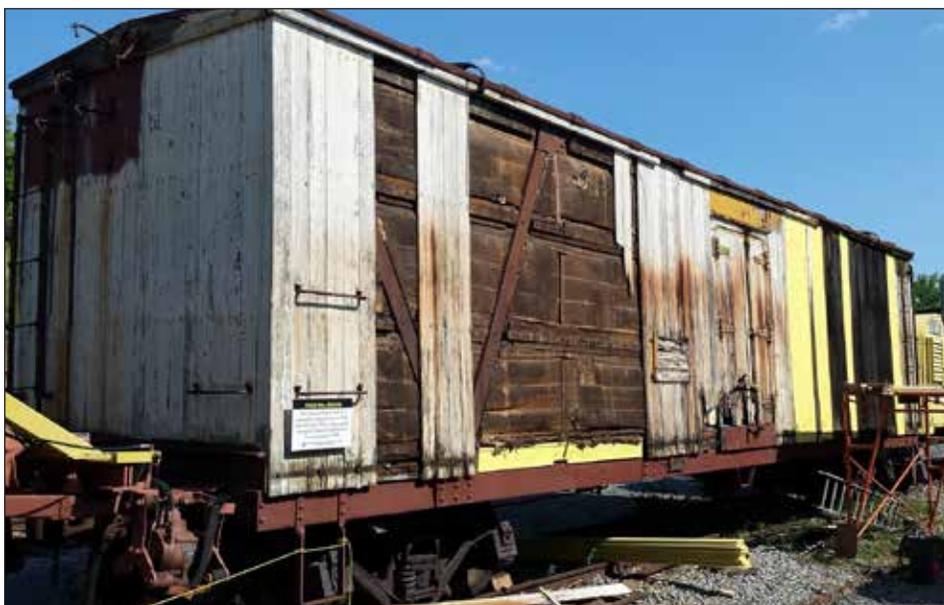
—Adam Lloyd, Program Chair

**STABILIZING OUR  
FRUIT GROWER'S EXPRESS CAR**

Dave Petersen has nearly completed the stabilization efforts on our 1926 wood-bodied Fruit Growers Express (FGEX 50220) refrigerator car. The worst of the siding on the west side has been replaced, and all sides now have a fresh coat of paint. Some repairs to the door on the west side need to be completed. Thanks to **Rand Warner** and **Dave Luca** who matched a contribution from the museum's Freight Car Fund to complete the work.

**BUY-A-PLANK FUNDRAISER  
FOR ARMY FLATCAR**

Rob Burz is heading up this project which will help us add critical capacity during our busiest weekends this coming fall season. A small army of volunteers attacked this former military-service



Significant work took place throughout the month of June to remove rotten siding from the west side our Fruit Growers Express refrigerator car. Work was in progress on June 24 (TOP) and was nearing completion on July 13 (ABOVE). The car will get a fresh coat of paint and then placed on display on Track 6 in the upper yard. Thanks to David Petersen and his volunteers for completing this important work to stabilize this wood-bodied freight car.

flatcar, needle scaling the body and applying primer. Rob has overseen the installation of new wood decking that will form the foundation of our new open-air rider car. Thanks to **David MonteVerde** for his generous donation that helped close the fundraising gap for the new wood deck.

**REFRESHING OUR  
CATERPILLAR DISPLAY**

Dan Waterstraat has volunteered to help clean up our Caterpillar bulldozer display currently located in our parking lot. He has constructed a new seat so that kids

can climb aboard and “work” the controls. Dan also repaired some body damage up front, constructed a faux radiator grille, and applied a fresh coat of yellow paint. Our Caterpillar Fifteen was built between 1929-1932 and were used for logging and other industrial purposes where a small tractor was needed.

**LACKAWANNA BAGGAGE CAR  
DOOR REPAIR**

Volunteer **Charlie Marks** has been hard at work repairing the large door on the west side of our Lackawanna baggage car. The

new door was installed in June, and a coat of primer was applied in July. The new door makes our baggage car resistant to weather and critters that might damage the displays inside.

**RTS VINTAGE BUS DISPLAY AND SUBWAY BUS TOUR**

Regional Transit Service helped kick off our 2016 opening day in style. The 1957 GM Transit Bus restored by RTS was on display inside our Restoration Shop on June 18 and 19, right next to Rochester Subway Car 60. Car 60 was built in 1916 and retired in 1956 when the subway shut down. The bus on display took over the following year, making for a great display in of transit technology and local history.

We were visited by local television

stations to help mark the anniversary of the shutdown of the subway, and our efforts to restore Car 60.

The help from RTS did not end there, however. A special trip was organized on June 25 to follow the route of the Rochester Subway using the vintage bus. The tour was organized and hosted by **Otto Vondrak**, and started from Pittsford Plaza. The bus made a stop at the site of Rowlands Loop, and then made a highway-speed run on I-590 and I-490 (built in the bed of the Subway) to Clinton Avenue. We visited the site of Court Street station, and also talked about the history of the Broad Street aqueduct. From there we followed the Subway along city streets, stopping at the site of Lexington Avenue station. Two railroad bridges cross the filled-in Subway

at this location. The last stop was the site of General Motors loop, where the last piece of Subway track is now a freight spur served by Rochester & Southern.

Our bus tour then traveled to the new RTS Transit Center, where we were given a special behind-the-scenes tour. This was also the first visit to the transit center for the 1957 vintage bus! We returned to Pittsford Plaza in the afternoon.

The trip was organized as a fundraiser for Car 60, and tickets were \$60.00 each. The trip raised more than \$1500.00 for Car 60, which has already been applied to metal repairs on the car body. Thank you to everyone who supported the tour. **Rand Warner, Dave Luca, Jim Moore**, and others have put together a suggested plan of action to continue restoration efforts.

**RIGHT:** Thanks to Regional Transit Service, the 1957 GM Transit Bus was available for display inside our Restoration Shop on June 18-19. The concrete floor had just been completed weeks before, allowing this display to take place. The bus on the left is nearly 50 years old, the trolley on the right is 100. **BELOW:** To mark the 60th anniversary of the shutdown of the Rochester Subway, R&GVRRM sponsored a special bus tour visiting various locations along the old Rochester Subway on June 25, 2016. Our tour group prepares to depart from Pittsford Plaza on a bright summer morning. **BELOW RIGHT:** Our vintage bus looked right at home on the modern city streets of Rochester, seen here on the corner of Court Street and South Ave.



The transformation of U.S. Army No. 1654 was something that has been discussed for nearly 15 years since the locomotive first arrived at the museum. Otto Vondrak spearheaded the project which involved removing the old Army lettering, applying fresh black paint to selected areas, masking off and painting new stripes. The idea was to pay tribute to the Erie Railroad and follow their design for center-cab switchers. Welcome the new R&GV No. 54!



**THE "NEW" R&GV 54  
MAKES ITS DEBUT**

Ever since U.S. Army GE 80-ton switcher No. 1654 arrived at Industry at the end of 2001, we had talked of repainting it into something representing the museum. Since the locomotive had no historic ties to our area, and was purchased strictly as a utility engine, repainting seemed like a natural idea. The plan was discussed on and off over the years, but the paint project was often passed over in favor of more pressing matters.

The idea was revived again in 2015, but all resources were focused on rebuilding the museum and opening for our first season of independent operation. After enjoying a very successful year, the time seemed right to finally create the first locomotive lettered for the Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum.

Otto Vondrak led the efforts to transform the old Army workhorse. Since the Army finish was still in good shape, the plan was to do as little repainting as possible. The road number was sanded off from the sides of the cab, and a fresh coat of Rustoleum gloss black was applied. Rick Bohn applied a coat of gray primer to the hazard stripe on the frame before two coats of yellow were painted on. Otto masked off the hood and applied two coats of yellow to create the 2" stripe.

The graphics were designed to mimic the decoration applied by the Erie Railroad to their fleet of 44-ton switchers. They were painted black with a yellow frame stripe and a 2" stripe around the top of the hoods. The yellow handrail stanchions



were painted black, but the horizontal and vertical handrails were left yellow for safety. The major difference in body style is that 1654 lacks shrouds around the fuel tank, so the road number was placed on the battery box doors. With the blessing of the Motive Power Dept., the locomotive was officially renumbered "54" to match the Erie style, and also reduce confusion with our other locomotives. The traditional Erie logo was re-imagined with "R&GV" initials instead. Road numbers were also applied to the cab face, completing the Erie tribute. The graphics were cut in-house and applied by Jim Otto.

The "new" R&GV No. 54 debuted in time for our June opening weekend to rave reviews from visitors and volunteers alike. We hope you'll consider R&GV 54 a tribute to all of the hard working volunteers who do so much to keep our museum running smoothly day after day.



**CASHIER TRAINING**

Volunteer Heather Dow has stepped forward to help with cashier training for the ticket window. Since 2015, we have used a point of sale system based on PayPal Here, which runs on an iPad connected to a cash drawer and a receipt printer. The system is very easy to use, and Heather has been writing a simple training manual that outlines how to open, operate, and close the system for a full day of operation. Heather is happy to offer training any weekend so that we can get more cashiers working the ticket window. Anyone can be trained quickly to use the register. Please email [psychlady08@gmail.com](mailto:psychlady08@gmail.com) for details.

**WELCOME DAVID KAISER**

Please welcome David Kaiser to the Board of Trustees, nominated by the board to fill a recent vacancy left by the untimely passing of Dave Boswell. 📧



**ABOVE:** These folks were enjoying their first visit to our train museum in July after their friends told them about the good time they had. **RIGHT:** John Kucko from WROC-8 paid us a visit in July and put together a nice video about his visit on his evening newscast. **BELOW:** This gentleman is pointing to the building he worked in at Despatch Shops in East Rochester. This 1941 map has been installed in the MDT reefer, thanks to a donation by member Chris Hauf (from the collection of Bill Chapin).



We welcomed high-than-average crowds to the museum during our July 16-17 Caboose Rides Weekend. **LEFT:** Volunteer Jeremy Tuke displayed his 1940 Buick outside the depot in July while he was working his shift as engineer (**BELOW LEFT**) aboard R&GV No. 54. Our Lehigh Valley and BR&P caboose projects were open for tours on July 16-17, (**ABOVE RIGHT**) and our visitors really enjoyed seeing the progress on our restorations. Lehigh Valley No. 211 was also parked in the shop for the weekend, and visitors had great questions for the volunteers about diesels and the work being performed on them. Our shop is a working shop, and our visitors appreciate seeing our volunteers at work preserving Rochester's rich railroading history. Rochester Gas & Electric No. 1941 was temporarily placed on display on Track 3 for the month of July (**BELOW RIGHT**) so that visitors could get an up close look at the colorful restoration.



*Three Trains... Two Days... One Location*

# DIESEL DAYS

**AUG. 20-21 10AM-5PM**

**Real Trains.  
Real Fun!**



## See, hear, and ride behind vintage diesel locomotives!

Up to three vintage diesel locomotives spanning 75 years of technology will be operating throughout the weekend. Tour the largest collection of historic trains in New York State! Ticket price includes museum admission.



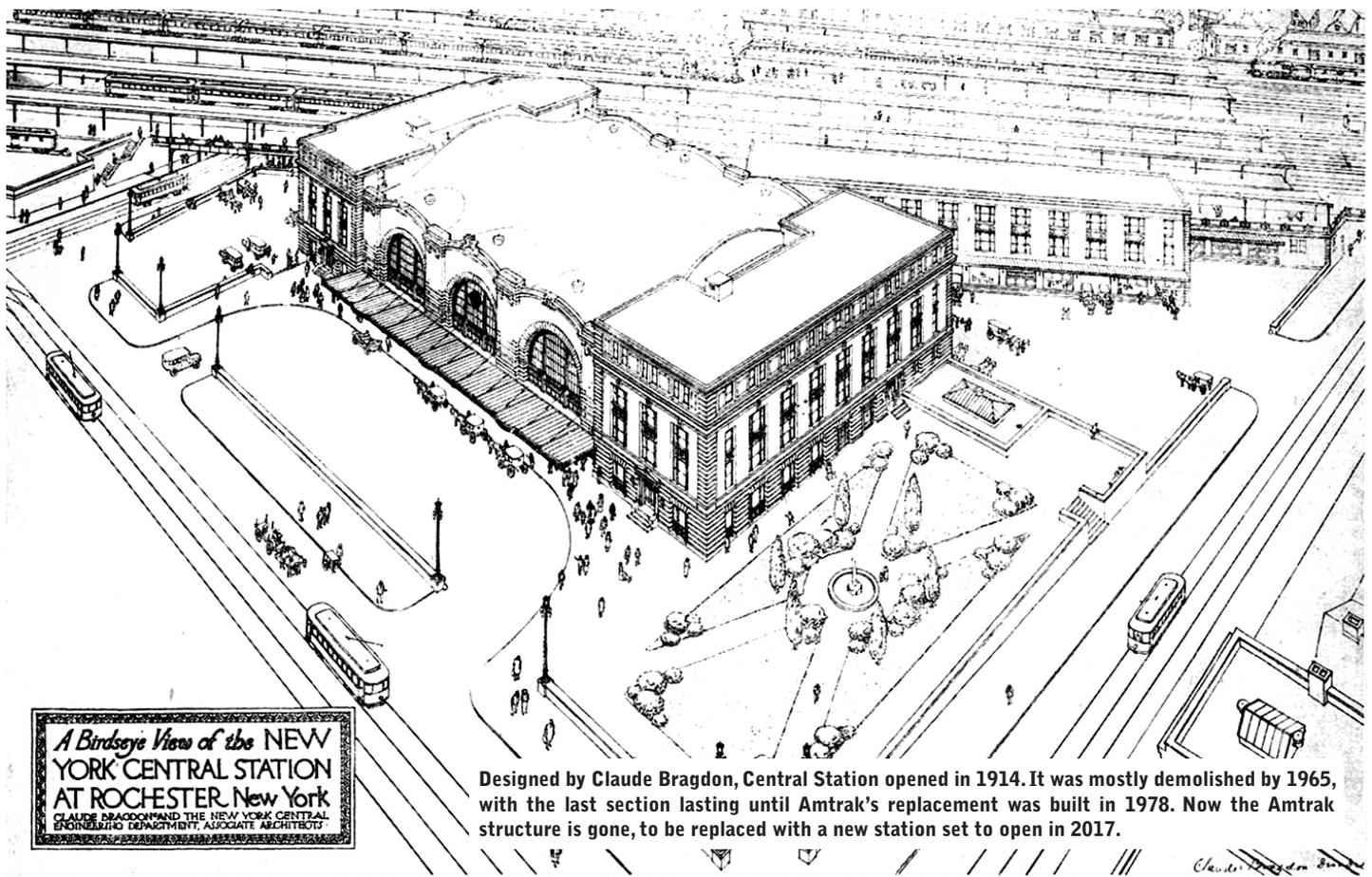
**Adults \$10 • Youth/Seniors \$8**  
**AGE 4 AND UNDER RIDE FREE!**



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*A Birdseye View of the NEW YORK CENTRAL STATION AT ROCHESTER, New York*  
 CLAUDE BRAGDON AND THE NEW YORK CENTRAL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT, ASSOCIATE ARCHITECTS

Designed by Claude Bragdon, Central Station opened in 1914. It was mostly demolished by 1965, with the last section lasting until Amtrak's replacement was built in 1978. Now the Amtrak structure is gone, to be replaced with a new station set to open in 2017.

*Claude Bragdon*