

The Buzz Box

VOLUME 9 ISSUE 2

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR
GREAT LAKES RAILCARS

Notes from the Chief Mechanic

Inside this issue:

Notes from the Chief Mechanic	1
Notes from the Chief Mechanic continued	2
Confirmed Excursions	3
Confirmed Excursions Continued	4
GLR T Shirt Offer Note from the C.M	5
GLR 2006 Registration Form	6

I've been on two weekends of motorcar trips so far this year. I've got a few more planned, including riding with Stan next week on his nearly 600 mile trip in Canada on the Algoma Central. Later this month, Great Lakes Railcars will be hosting excursions on the Whitewater Valley and the Indiana Transportation Museum (see the announcements elsewhere in this newsletter).

I missed Bruce Carpenter's trip on the South Shore last month. I heard things went extremely well, that the railroad was very pleased with the motorcars' operations. It sounds like we'll be invited back. I couldn't make it because my experiment with having my wheels plated is a failure. I haven't said much about this, but now might be the time to go public. I've been having my used wheels electroplated with industrial Chrome by a firm in Toledo. This all came about from an invitation early last year for me to make an inspection of their plant & operations. This was the initial phase of the process for insuring them as part of my professional job as a commercial property & casualty insurance underwriter. I have basic knowledge of metal working, from my high school & college shop classes. I've been through lots of them, but I've never worked in a machine shop or other factory environment.

At the plating firm, I learned Chrome is an extremely hard metal. It can increase by as much as three times the life to molds, dies (and other industrial applications) with a layer as thin as .001". The owner of the firm said in quantity he could plate our wheels for about \$50 each. I thought here is a solution to our wheels wearing out. Well, so far, I've had my used wheels plated three times (each a different set of variables for the plating). All three have flaked or rubbed off in the flange – the area of most critical wear. Additionally, the flat braking surfaces have failed as well. I purchased new wheels this year, and (at the behest of the electroplater) and took them to be plated too. They weren't ready in time for the South Shore trip. I thought my old wheels would be okay, but double checking them at the last minute found one to be only 3/32", less than the 1/8" we require for running in a NARCOA excursion. I've since run two of the new wheels at North Judson. The plating on them has failed as well. If anyone has any ideas or suggestions about electroplating wheels, let me know.

Speaking of North Judson, I participated in their Mint Festival excursions, and public rides last month. In the past, we've had problems with the hyrail escort

Great Lakes Railcars
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from the operator of the railroad running very slow, less than 15 mph. However, for this event, the excursion coordinator, Jon Schmidt worked it out that we ran without them. We had to stay off the operator's portion of the railroad, meaning we didn't go north or west of LaCrosse. However, it's about 10 miles of the smoothest rail you'll ever ride on (Amtrak used to run on it). We averaged just over 22 mph which was just right. The public rides on Saturday went very well, but the rains on Sunday (as John Fetter will at-test) washed things out.

Another excursion I had the opportunity to ride on was Stan Conyer's trip in the Hoosier Railway Museum's former Southern rail line south out of French Lick (and the next day on the Hoosier Southern's line north from Tell City). Like we did in 2004, we ventured south from Cuzco Corners. The grass & weeds weren't nearly high as last time. Additionally, instead of walking our cars over the grade crossing's section of track the county had paved over, we elected to dig out the flange ways. Yep, that's me wielding a pick axe. We got as far as the new turkey feed processing plant at DuBois. There, a hopper car blocked our path.



From emails and notes I've received, this may be our last trip on this line. With the casino opening at the old French Lick Spa Hotel later this month, the town is expected to be over run with gamblers. With virtually no place for them to stay (or park), there's talk of starting up an excursion service from Jasper, and running trains north to the casino & back. The town of Jasper has done a magnificent job of rebuilding their depot. They've also purchased an old engine (an Alco S1?) & cars. Here are pictures from 2004 of their newly purchased equipment and their restored depot. This line may become too busy to allow future motorcar trips. That would be an interesting turn of events.



I apologize for the delay in getting this newsletter published and out to you. These aren't that difficult for me to do, just time consuming. It's pretty much an all day project. Lately, I've simply been much busier than usual. See you on the rails and remember to keep safety your most important consideration whenever you're on railroad property.

Take Care

Chuck

CONFIRMED EXCURSIONS

Monday July 10 -Thursday July 13, 2006

Algoma Central Railway, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada

GLR is excited to again sponsor a four day excursion over the Algoma Central Railway July 10-13 2006. Participants will travel 590 miles round trip in four days between Sault Ste. Marie and Hearst, Ontario, Canada. The trip will be thru some of the best rail scenery east of the Mississippi and may not be repeated next year. If you haven't done the entire line yet, do it while you can. Inspections will be Sunday July 9 with departure Monday July 10 from Sault Ste. Marie. Our group will spend two nights in Wa Wa and one in Hearst, Ontario. Fee is \$400 and includes the railroad fee, gas, and transportation. Fee may have to be adjusted depending on exchange rate and the cost of gas. Meals and hotels are arranged but cost extra. NARCOA safety rules and insurance are required. Additional safety equipment include seat belts, and (safety vest or shirt, hard hat and safety glasses are required by the Canadian National Railroad). Send a check made out to Great Lakes Railcars for \$400 along with your car information, including car number, your address, and e-mail address to; Stan Conyer, 9333 W. St. Rd. 46, Columbus IN. 47201. E-mail stanconyer@hotmail.com

SATURDAY - JULY 29, 2006

Whitewater Valley Railroad, Connersville, Indiana

GLR will be hosting a day of operation of nearly 40 beautiful round trip miles of the former New York Central line in southeastern Indiana. This route features historic towns at each end of the line, and travel along the famous Whitewater Canal. Plans are to set on in Connersville and operate to Metamora. After meeting the excursion train at the siding north of Metamora, we'll proceed north for about 10 miles, then back towards Metamora, before returning to Connersville. Set on time will begin at 8:00 am local/EDT. After our safety meeting, departure will at 9:00 am local/EDT. These plans may change, so if you're planning on coming, be sure to pre register. Don't wait to contact the excursion coordinator at the last minute. This is a NARCOA insured event. All NARCOA rules apply. Seat belts and Gas Tank guards are strongly recommended. If you register by 7/23, an information packet with your safety inspection form, NARCOA release, and other items, will be sent to you. Sorry, but the railroad does not permit any Fairmont A series cars (or larger). Please use the 2006 registration form at the back of this newsletter. Fee per car is \$55. Make checks payable to GLR. Send to GLR, P.O. Box 162, Leo, IN 46765. Info/Excursion Coordinator: Chuck White 260-760-1666 or email to: railcarman@gmail.com

Confirmed Excursions Continued**SUNDAY - JULY 30, 2006****Indiana Transportation Museum, Noblesville, Indiana**

Great Lakes Railcars will be hosting an EARLY BIRD excursion with nearly 60 miles of former Nickel Plate Road trackage in central Indiana. Join us for a day of operation as we will initially head south operating as far as Fishers (96th St) and beyond, as possible, automobile traffic permitting. Then, we'll proceed north to Tipton for lunch, meeting the ITM's train at Atlanta on the way back to Noblesville. Our set on point will be from the gravel parking area several blocks south of downtown. Locate the tracks downtown and follow them south. You can't miss us! We'll begin setting cars on the rails at 6:00 am EDT with departure planned for no later than 7:30 am EDT. Again, if you're planning on coming, please don't wait until the last minute. If we believe everyone registered is ready to leave as early as 7:00, we'll depart as soon as our safety meeting is concluded. This is a NARCOA insured excursion. All NARCOA rules apply. Seat Belts and Gas Tank guards are strongly recommended. If you register before July 23, an information packet, including safety inspection form and NARCOA release will be sent to you. The fee for this excursion is \$45 per car. Please use the 2006 registration form at the back of this newsletter. Make checks payable to Great Lakes Railcars. Send to GLR, P.O. Box 162, Leo, IN 46765. Info/Excursion Coordinator: Chuck White 260-760-1666 or email to: railcarman@gmail.com

SUNDAY - August 6, 2006**Coopersville and Marne Railway, Coopersville, Michigan**

Great Lakes Railcars is pleased to sponsor a one-day run over the Coopersville and Marne Railway on August 6, 2006 starting at noon in downtown Coopersville. Participants will travel approximately 42 miles in 3 round-trips between Coopersville and Marne, MI. Trip fee is \$25.00 per car, and will include all railroad costs.

This is a NARCOA insured excursion and all NARCOA rules will apply. For trip details contact Jeremy Winkworth, 1701 West B Ave, Plainwell, MI. Tel: (269) 388-5058 evenings or email: jeremy@winkworth.us

SUNDAY - October 1, 2006**Coopersville and Marne Railway, Coopersville, Michigan**

Great Lakes Railcars is pleased to sponsor a one-day run over the Coopersville and Marne Railway on October 1, 2004 starting at noon in downtown Coopersville. Participants will travel approximately 42 miles in 3 round-trips between Coopersville and Marne, MI. Trip fee is \$25.00 per car, and will include all railroad costs.

This is a NARCOA insured excursion and all NARCOA rules will apply. For trip details contact Jeremy Winkworth, 1701 West B Ave, Plainwell, MI. Tel: (269) 388-5058 evenings or email: jeremy@winkworth.us

GLR T-Shirt Offer

Great Lakes Railcars is proud to offer OSHA Orange T-shirts with reflective stripes on the front, X on the back, and our motor car logo embroidered on the front. These shirts are being offered at our cost in a effort to increase our visibility and enhance safety at our excursions. The shirts are Jerzee brand which will hold up and continue to look good after repeated washings. The shirts are sizes S-3XL \$20 each plus \$3.85 for Priority Mail.

Also we are offering denim long sleeve shirts with the motor car logo on the right chest, no reflective stripes. The shirts are 7oz 100% cotton and available in sizes XS-8XL. The price for the shirts is XS-XL \$25.00, 2X \$27, add \$2.50 for tall, plus \$3.85 for Priority Mail.

Please have your order to me by June 1 so we can order the shirts and get them back to you in time to use them this ridding season. To order please call Stan Conyer, 812-342-0565, or e-mail at stanconyer@hotmail.com.

NOTE FROM THE CHIEF MECHANIC

Zero Issues Remaining

If you see a zero on the front of your envelope, this will be the last issue you will receive via regular US Mail, what I've been calling "Snail Mail." If you're not receiving this newsletter via email and would like to continue to receive it (and save \$10), please send your email address to: railcarman@gmail.com.

I would encourage everyone who can, to subscribe to this newsletter electronically.

Thanks.
Chuck White, Editor & Publisher

Great Lakes Railcars

A NARCOA AFFILIATE

2006 EXCURSION REGISTRATION FORM

Railroad: _____

Excursion Date: _____

Set On Location: _____

OPERATOR'S NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY _____ STATE ____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

MAKE & MODEL _____ CAR # _____

NARCOA RULE BOOK CERTIFICATION CARD # _____

NARCOA INSURANCE NUMBER (if applicable) _____

EXPERIENCE: YEARS ____ NARCOA RUNS AS AN OPERATOR ____

IF YOU ARE NEW, NAME OF YOUR NARCOA MENTOR _____

AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____ TODAY'S DATE _____

Send this form with your check to the Excursion Coordinator. Do not send Cash