The Bluegrass Railroader

November 2026

Volume 54 Issue #11

Bluegrass Railroad Club
October Meeting
October 9, 2026

The October meeting of the Bluegrass Railroad Club was called to order by Acting President Joshua Johnson at 7:45pm, at the Midway Museum, Midway. The meeting was started late due to unavoidable circumstances. There were 23 members in attendance and 7 on Zoom. Acting President Johnson welcomed everyone to the new meeting place at the Museum. The minutes of the September meeting were approved. There was no Treasurer's Report due to the fact that the Treasurer had been on vacation. A new member, Jackson O'Neil was introduced.

Joshua Johnson reported that the Club will be displaying the Lionel Layout in the visitors Information Center at the Kentucky Horse Park, during Southern Lights this year. A sign-up sheet will be available on the Internet. The Club will move the layout in on Saturday morning November 21, 2026, at 9:00am. The Club will operate the layout that evening for a special event and from November 27, 2026, through December 31, 2026, except for Christmas Day. There being no further business, Wes Ross made the motion to adjourn the business portion of the meeting. The motion was seconded by John Stokes at 7:52pm, and approved. (Continued on Page 2)

November 13, 2026 Club Meeting
Attend In-Person or via Zoom

The November meeting for members and guests is scheduled for Friday, November 13, 2026, at 7:30pm at the Midway Kentucky Museum. Members and guests can attend online by using the following Zoom address, as the general Club Meeting link. You may also join by phone as listed below

Zoom meeting link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81043378428?pwd=Z2R3a2hXNlovN3MxZDdsSFloV1RiQT09

Meeting ID: 810 4337 8428

Passcode: 873302

Dial by your location +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

Passcode: 554683

November Meeting At The Midway Museum

The November meeting of the Bluegrass Railroad Club will be held at the Midway Museum, 101 East Main Street, Midway, on Friday evening, November 13, 2026, at 7:30pm, and on Zoom. The program for the evening will be presented by Club Member Tom Hornsby on DCC 201. The meeting will be a continuation of the DCC topic with more advance items: 1) reversing loops; 2) programing CV register; 3) various decoders and 4) sounds and programing.

Board of Directors Minutes
October 26, 2026

The October meeting of the Board of Directors was held on Monday evening, October 26, 2026, via Zoom. The following Officers and Directors were present: Tony Gutteridge, Larry Mitchell, Kevin Ellis, Joshua Johnson, Wesley Ross, Jerry Gorez, Tom Hornsby, James Chapman, Larry Smith, and Shelby Jett. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm by President Tony Gutteridge. Tony welcomed everyone to the meeting. The minutes of the September meeting of the Board were approved, with the motion of Joshua Johnson, and the second by Larry Mitchell. Treasurer Shelby Jett presented a combined September and October Treasurer's Report. The main transaction during the period was the purchase of the trailer. A copy of his report appears in the November issue of the *Bluegrass Railroader.* This report was accepted by a motion of Larry Mitchell, and a second by Tom Hornsby. (Continued on Page 2)

IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR 2027 MEMBERSHIP

DUES FOR 2027 ARE $20.00 FOR MEMBERS RECEIVING *THE RAILROADER* BY E-MAIL OR $30.00 FOR MEMBERS RECEIVING *THE RAILROADER* BY US-MAIL DUES CAN BE PAID BY CHECK, ZELLE, OR VENMO.

Mailing address:

Shelby Jett, Treasurer

P.O. Box 66, Cox's Creek, KY 40013-0066

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO THE *BLUEGRASS RAILROAD CLUB, INC.*

Club Minutes (Continued from Page 1)

The program for the evening was presented by Joshua Johnson on the use of DCCinm operating locomotives on your layout.

Respectfully submitted,

Wesley Ross, Secretary

Treasurer's Report
Monthly Transactions: August 31, 2026 –October 20, 2026

INCOME	
Dues	$177.50
TOTAL INCOME	$177.50
EXPENSES	
Railroader Newsletter	$12.10
Mail Chimp	$26.00
Zoom	$169.90
HO Modules	$239.68
Trailer	$7,875.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	$8,322.68



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2026 - 2027 Club Officers

President	Tony Gutteridge	859-333-1155
Vice President	John Hymer	859-317-1850
Secretary	Wes Ross	859-293-0807
Treasurer	Shelby Jett	859-396-1194
Past President	Jerry Goerz	859-255-4013

2026-2027 Club Directors

Larry Mitchell	(2027)	859-358-2002
Kevin Ellis	(2027)	859-469-3866
James Chapman	(2028)	859-753-5590
Larry Smith	(2028)	502-839-8627
Joshua Johnson	(2029)	859-539-8211
Tom Hornsby	(2029)	859-309-2581

Board of Directors Meeting (Continued from Page 1)

November meeting will be held at the Midway Museum, 101 E. Main St., Midway. Tom Hornsby will present the November program on DCC, following up on Joshua Johnson's September program.

There will be no December meeting as members are urged to participate in our railroad display at Southern Lights. Kevin Ellis will present the January program as a workshop on making trees for your layout. Programs are open for the rest of the year. Any member with an idea for a program is asked to contact one of the Officers with the idea.

Larry Mitchell reported that the paperwork has not been signed for the 2027 Summer Show. He has recommended and the Board of Director's has approved the dates of July 16, 17, 18, & 19, 2027, with the Show being held on July 17 and 18, 2027.

Joshua Johnson reported that the Lionel Layout will be displayed at Kentucky Horse Park, during the Southern Lights Program. The layout will be in the Visitor Information Center. The sign-up list is on the Internet; however, very few Chapter members have signed up. At least two operators are needed each night. Southern Lights will be open November 27-December 31, 2026 (Closed on Christmas Day.) Set-up for the layout will take place on Saturday morning, November 21, 2026, at 9:00am. Southern Lights will be open that night for a special event and they have requested that the layout be operational that evening. The layout will be in a public area, so security during the day will be an issue. A number of different approaches were discussed at the meeting; however, the final decision for covering the layout will be made on Saturday morning.

Kevin Ellis reported that he is working on the Website and is making some progress in making the site more informative and interactive. He wants to have a library of past newsletters, as well as the current one, on the site.

Treasurer Shelby Jett reminded the Board that dues for the new year are due. He asked that an ad be printed in the *Railroader*. Concerning the dues. Dues are payable to the Club by cash, check Venmo, or Zelle.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed on the motion of Joshua Johnson and the second by Tom Hornsby at 7:53pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Wesley Ross,
Secretary



WHAT HAPPENED TO THE KINGS ISLAND MONORAIL

By Wes Ross

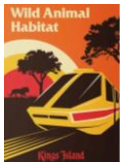
The title of this article will elicit very differing reactions from our readers, primarily based on age. Our younger readers probably never knew that there was a monorail operation at Kings Island; while many of our older readers have memories of journeys on those monorails.

Our story begins on September 14, 1972, when Kings Island announced a partnership with Lion Country Safari, Inc. The later company operated drive-through safari experiences with locations in Florida, Georgia, California and Texas. The Lion Country Safari would open at Kings Island in 1974.

Riders aboard the monorail's trains were initially able to see animals including elephants, rhinoceroses, giraffes, lions, hippopotamuses, ostriches, zebras, and antelopes. The animals were split between three large sections – Umfolozi Reserve (large animals), Serengeti Plains (lions), and Tsavo Park (grazing animals). The sections were divided by fences, often hidden by trees and hills.

The safari underwent massive renovation in 1976, reseeding all grassy areas and clearing underbrush. 13 tigers and 50 olive baboons were planned to be added, but the baboons escaped before the park opened for the season. After rounding up all the baboons, the park elected not to host them.







Also in 1976, a 20-year-old safari worker was mauled by a lion on July 24. The ranger had left his jeep for an unknown reason and was found by his coworkers after he failed to answer a radio call. Following the baboon escape and ranger's death, Kings Island chose to sever ties with Lion Country Safari, Inc., and took over the operation of the area. The attraction was renamed the Wild Animal Safari, and the monorail became the Wild Animal Safari Monorail. Encyclopedia Britannica began sponsoring the monorail in 1978. In 1983, the Wild Animal Safari was renamed, Adventure Village and the monorail became the Wild Animal Habitat Monorail. Despite starting off as Lion Country Safari, the lions were removed from the attraction in its later years.

The Adventure Express roller coaster was added to the park in 1991. The monorail crossed over and under its track. Two years later, when Top Gun (today known as The Bat) opened, park guests had to walk around the monorail's station to access the new roller coaster. Nearly 20 years later, after Paramount purchased the park, the monorail made its final run on November 2, 1993. In retrospect, the monorail was one of King's Island's most successful and popular attractions, welcoming over 15 million guests. After its closure, the animals were sent to other zoos around the country. In 1994, King's Island removed the the monorail from its location in the safari park, moving the monorails into storage where they would remain during the coming years.

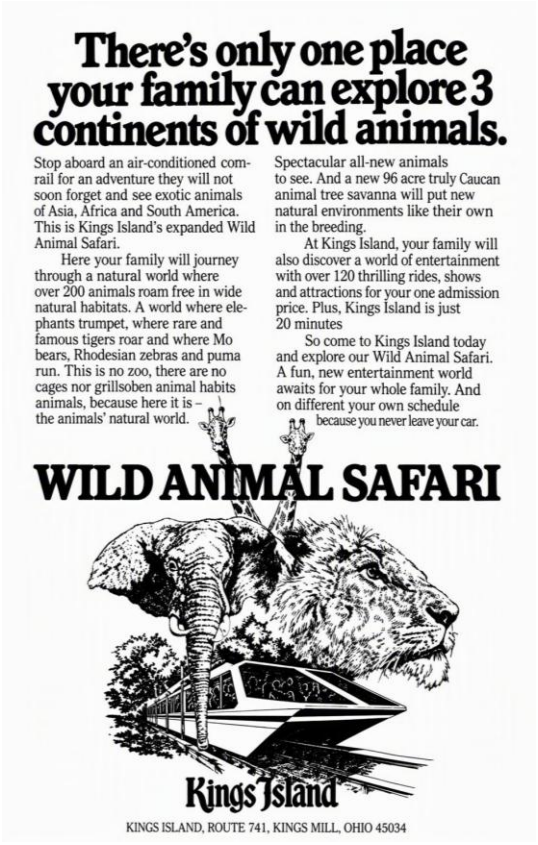


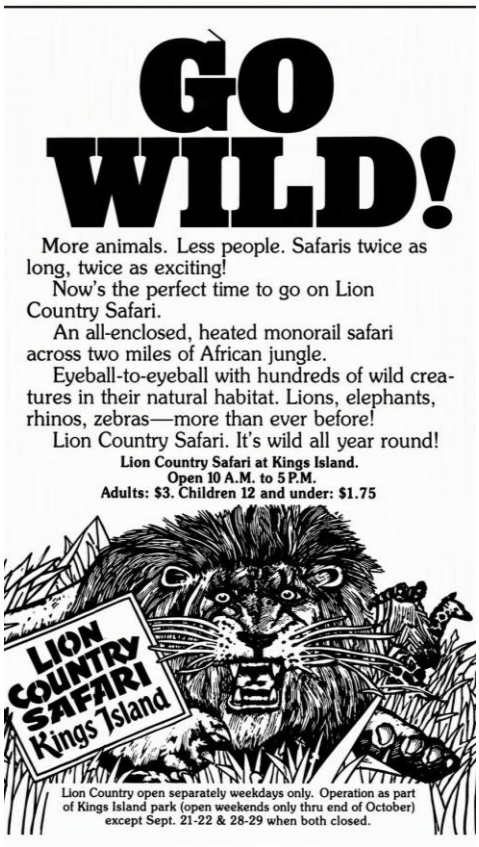
KINGS ISLAND MONORAILS

The monorail was constructed by Universal Mobility Incorporated ("UMI") based in Salt Lake City, Utah. UMI would later be acquired by the Canadian conglomerate Bombardier's Transportation Group, which for a period was onc of the leading manufactures of commercial rail vehicles.

It is interesting to note that this monorail was not actually a monorail, because it ran on two tracks. A total of Seven trains with nine cars per a train were purchased. Each car could hold 12 passengers.

The "Tourister Type II" monorail made its debut at an amusement park on the North Carolina/South Carolina border known as Carowinds in 1973 (Carowinds itself would eventually come to be owned by Kings Island's Cincinnati-based Taft Broadcasting owners in 1974). Kings Island's installation was the second incarnation of the system, followed by a third at its new sister park outside of Richmond, Virginia, Kings Dominion, in 1975. The track was constructed low to the ground in order to give guests the best possible view of the animals (as opposed to well above ground at other amusement parks of the time).





In 1998, Jungle Jim's International Market, a massive theme-park-style grocery store with two locations in the Greater Cincinnati area was looking for a "wild" centerpiece for its expansion project. Jungle Jim's purchased all seven of the train car sets for $1 plus the cost for relocating the vehicles.



The trains were taken to the Fairfield, Ohio market location where they sat in a back storage area for over a decade while Jungle Jim's team worked to design the track layout, secure funding and overcome engineering challenges. One complete train was set up on an elevated piece of track outside of the store near the main road.

What became of Jungle Jim's Monorails?

By 2008, a small section of track had been built, and the plan moving forward was to have a two-train operation, with passengers disembarking and loading at the maintenance facility (Station 1) and the Banquet Center (Station 2). One of the biggest engineering challenges was converting the trains from the high voltage electrified track to run on Kohler Clean-Aire biodiesel generators. By 2011, the conversion was complete and the monorail began accepting passengers during special events, including Jungle Jim's annual Weekend of Fire.

The two-train set-up would be a necessity as the track is not a loop. Two trains could alternate back and forth crossing each other at the two-track covered maintenance facility. A transfer table allowed for the two trains to enter the separate bays.



One of the operating monorails on the transfer table coming out of the maintenance facility.



The same monorail shot from the other direction showing the train entrance to Oscar Station.



One of the trains is now a static sign welcoming patrons to the flagship store located at 5440 Dixie Highway in Fairfield, Ohio. This is also the location of the operable monorails and the maintenance facility.



In 2012, Jungle Jim's opened a second location in the Eastgate area of Cincinnati. Another of the seven trains was permanently placed on top of the entrance to welcome shoppers.



An unadorned monorail rests on the side of Jungle Jim's Monorail maintenance Building at the Fairfield location.



One of the two operating trains making the ascent from Oscar Station to to elevated Monorail Terrace at the Oscar Event Center.

Jungle Jim's Monorail Today

Fast forward to 2019. Jungle Jim's completed a massive renovation which saw the original monorail maintenance bay and transfer table into the Oscar Station, a bourbon bar. The monorail then commenced running between the ground level Oscar Station and the second level of the Oscar Event Space where the train has its own covered "monorail terrace." Incidentally, Oscar is the middle name of owner, James "Jungle Jim" Bonaminio. The monorail only operates during special events taking place at either of the Oscar facilities.



This photograph above is of one of the operable monorails that is located in front of the Oscar Station, awaiting a trip to the Oscar Event Center. The photo below shows the other end of this monorail.



The Oscar Event Center can accommodate up to 750 guests, and hosts events ranging from corporate get-togethers to weddings.



Oscar Station



Jungle Jim's is worth a trip even if you don't get to ride the monorail. Both locations are open daily from 8:00 am to 10:00 pm. There is ample parking and lots to see. In addition to the monorail, Jungle Jim's is famous for its animatronics that are featured throughout the properties. There really is not another grocery store anywhere quite like Jungle Jim's.

STEAM NEWS

John Biehn

Steam in New Mexico…The Santa Fe 2926 was built by the Baldwin Locomotive Works in 1944 and hauled fast freight and passenger trains across the Southwest for only nine years before it was retired. In 1956, after three years of storage, the locomotive was donated to the City of Albuquerque and displayed in Coronado Park until 2000 when the now-named New Mexico Heritage Rail relocated the locomotive to be restored. That restoration was completed in 2021. The 2926 is now on the largest operating 4-8-4 in North America. Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe 2926 has made successful test runs between Los Lunas and Bernalillo, New Mexico over the former Santa Fe main line that is now owned and maintained by the State of New Mexico. The Albuquerque-based locomotive first operated a fundraiser dinner train on Friday, September 25 from its restoration site roughly three miles to the South Rail Yards where it would be displayed for New Mexico Railroad Days, September 26 and 27. After being displayed on Saturday, September 26, it operated north to Bernalillo late that evening, and returned to the display site early Sunday morning. That evening, it ran south from Albuquerque to Los Lunas and back. The engine covered a total of eighty miles during the weekend. During an upcoming Lerro Photography charter, the engine will operate at speeds up to fifty miles per hour on the same track. New Mexico Heritage Rail was approved last year by the New Mexico Department of Transportation to operate the locomotive on the 40-mile stretch between Bernalillo and Los Lunas. (Thanks to Nick Stewart)

Union Pacific Steam…After a six-year hiatus, Union Pacific's Living Legend No. 844 is returning to the rails. The legendary steam locomotive will join Big Boy No. 4014 for Union Pacific's historic holiday tour this November, marking the first public excursion for No. 844 since the pair traveled together in 2019 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the driving of the Golden Spike in Utah. The two steam locomotives will run as a "double header' during a fundraising excursion from Greeley to Denver, Colorado on November 21, for the Make-A-Wish Foundation. The steam duo will then be on display later that day at Denver's Union Station, with Santa Claus and his elves handing out limited-edition gifts. Admission is free and open to the public. The return of No. 844 marks the long-awaited comeback of the railroad's famed high-speed passenger locomotive. Built in 1944, 4-8-4 No. 844 hauled some of Union Pacific's most recognizable passenger trains. Tickets will be available online beginning October 16 for patrons of the Union Pacific Railroad Museum for a one-way excursion behind these locomotives from Greeley to Denver. Any remaining tickets will e available to the general public on October 19. Tickets are for adults only, but families are invited to Denver's Union Station to view the locomotives. For tickets, go to https://www.uptraintix.org/travel-details.html) (Thanks to Union Pacific Railroad)

Steam in Pennsylvania…Patriot Rail's Gettysburg Railway is partnering with the Lincoln Fellowship of Pennsylvania and Northern Central Railway of York to bring steam railroading to Gettysburg this November, recreating Abraham Lincoln's 1863 visit. This is another event to help celebrate the nation's 250th anniversary. As part of Lincoln at Gettysburg "Shall Not Perish," Northern Central Railway steam locomotive No. 17 will travel to Gettysburg and pair with Gettysburg Railway passenger cars for a recreation of Lincoln's arrival and three days of public excursions. On Wednesday, November 18, the locomotive will pull approximately 200 invited passengers into Gettysburg, recreating Lincoln's 1863 arrival. A Lincoln actor will then retrace Lincoln's route to the David Willis House. From November 19-21, Gettysburg Railway will offer public one-hour steam excursions through the Gettysburg area. Northern Central Railroad No. 17, named "The York," is a custom built 4-4-0 "American" type steam locomotive. It was built in 2013 by the Kloke Locomotive Works of Elgin, Illinois. It is a reproduction of an American locomotive, a type common on North American railroads in the mid to late 19th century. "Gettysburg is a place where history surrounds us, and the railroad is an important part of that story," said Amy Welsh, General Manager of Gettysburg Railway. "We're proud to help bring this commemoration to life and give the public an unforgettable opportunity to experience steam railroading." For more information or order tickets, please visit https://share.google/hlk8Xrj1ePUWOYwqD. (Thanks to Patriot rail via Alex Mayes)

Future New York Central Steam…On an overcast September day, New York Central No. 3001 had a morning departure from its long-time home at the National New York Central Museum in Elkhart, Indiana. On September 15, the big Alco was bound for its new home at the Ft. Wayne Railroad Historical Society's restoration facility in New Haven, Indiana. Two years of preparation work after acquiring the Mohawk type locomotive in 2024, culminated on that day with the society's carefully coordinated move over Norfolk Southern with that railroad's NYC heritage unit No. 1066 appropriately leading. On its first mainline outing in more than forty years, several brief inspection stops were made to examine the Mohawk's components and bearing temperatures. By the afternoon, the 4-8-2 was backed into the Ft. Wayne Railroad's shop building, ready to begin its estimated $ 4 million restoration, which aims to return No. 3001 to operation. (Thanks to Dutch Tubman via Tom Schultz)

Steam in North Carolina…Restoration of Denton FarmPark's 1942 steam locomotive No. 9 has reached the heart of the engine: its boiler. "Our crew has been hard at work and we have a new update on Locomotive No. 9's Restoration Project," the FarmPark announced in its Handy Dandy News newsletter. After a boiler engineering analysis, the crew compiled a list of repairs. The next step is removing the cab and appliances, such as the air compressor, to gain access to the side sheets and wrapper sheet. The inspection brought mostly good news. The boiler sheets were in good condition, minus a few small areas of localized fire-side-thinning that will also be addressed.

The staybolts, which tie the firebox to the boiler's outer shell, did not fare as well. The boiler's staybolts were badly worn and a decision was made to renew all of the crown staybolts. The FarmPark has set a $500,000 goal for the restoration. The restoration timeline can only go as quickly as the funds will allow. Donations can be made at https://dentonfarmpark.com. No. 9 is a 50-ton 0-4-0 steam locomotive built in 1942 by the H.K. Porter Locomotive Works in Philadelphia. She first worked at a Baltimore shipyard before the Navy put her to work at the Norfolk Naval Base during World War 2. Locomotive No. 9 eventually ended up in Denton around 1979 and FarmPark staff and volunteers restored the engine and laid the track by hand. No. 9 first ran at the 1980 Thresher's Reunion. In 1982, she was converted from oil to coal and given a tender, three passenger cars and a caboose. The Handy Dandy Railroad officially opened that year on its 1.5 mile loop around the park. The engine ran at every reunion until a routine inspection after the 2019 event found she needed major boiler and firebox work. Since then, the park's 1948 diesel, No. 202 has kept the Handy Dandy Railroad running. (Thanks to the Davidson Local via Tom Schultz)

Union Pacific 5511 Progress Report…Railroading Heritage of Midwest America says that while all has been quiet on the progress of steam locomotive No. 5511, they are now closer than ever in bringing the 2-10-2 back to steam again for the first time in 70 years. As of last month, UP 5511 successfully passed its FRA Hydrostatic Pressure Test. After countless man-hours and elbow grease, No. 5511 had water put in its boiler for the first time in seventy years. Upon being filled and pressurized, no leaks were found and preparation for the FRA Hydrostatic Test began. Over the course of four days, the boiler was heated using electric and propane heaters to 120 degrees and filled to the top of the steam dome with water. The pressure was slowly brought up over time to 250 psi and held while the steam restoration crew inspected the boiler for any leaks. Normal operating pressure for 5511 is 200 psi, however, for a FRA Hydrostatic test, the pressure is required to be approximately 1.25 times the maximum allowable working pressure. Once satisfied, RRHMA scheduled the Hydrostatic Inspection and successfully passed the pressure test. With a successful hydro test, the FRA has granted RRHMA permission to begin the process of preparing for a FRA-witnessed live steam test. While there is still lots of work on moving forward before the test, RRHMA intends to be prepared to execute the steam test within the upcoming winter season. Union Pacific No. 5511 was built by the Baldwin Locomotive Works in September, 1923 as part of UP RR's TTT-6 class. It is the last surviving 2-10-2 of 144 units operated by the Union Pacific from 1917 to the end of steam in 1959. The locomotive was initially assigned to pull heavy freight trains over the steep grades of the Wasatch Mountain Range between Ogden, Utah and Green River, Wyoming. (Thanks to RRHMA)

Cotton Belt 819 News…For the first time in more than three decades, one of Pine Bluff's most recognizable pieces of railroad history rolled out of the Arkansas Railroad Museum, a few weeks ago. Cotton Belt steam locomotive No. 819 was moved outside on September 22 as part of a formal inspection intended to answer a question railroad enthusiasts have been asking for years. What would it take to make the historical locomotive operational again? Previous unofficial estimates surrounding the locomotive's restoration have climbed as high as $3-5 million. After beginning a more detailed evaluation however, the museum has developed a preliminary budget suggesting No. 819 could potentially be returned to service for less than $1 million. That figure remains preliminary. The museum has not committed to restoring the locomotive, established a construction schedule or determined exactly when-or if- No. 819 will operate again. "We pulled 819 out of the shops and it was part of an inspection to identify what would be needed to return the locomotive to operation, "said an approved statement by the museum's board of directors. The evaluation is intended to determine what repairs would be required, what those repairs would cost and how a restoration project might ultimately be accomplished. No. 819's connection to Pine Bluff stretches back more than 80 years. The locomotive was constructed at the Cotton Belt's Pine Bluff shops during WW2 for the St. Louis Southwestern Railway, commonly known as the Cotton Belt. The locomotive spent approximately a decade hauling freight and passengers before eventually being retired. It later spent nearly 30 years on outdoor display in a Pine Bluff city park. Philip Bushdiecker, who was at the Arkansas Railroad Museum when 819 was moved outside for the inspection, said the locomotive's condition offers reason for optimism if an operational restoration is eventually pursued. He stated that the work completed during the locomotive's restoration in the 1980s, combined with more than three decades of indoor storage, has left No. 819 in very good condition and made it a very good candidate for an operational restoration, should the opportunity arise, Where would it run? Museum officials said they have held "very informal conversations" with UP about the possibility of eventually using its tracks if 819 returns to service. One possibility could involve ferrying the locomotive over UP tracks to other locations where excursions could be operated. That idea would be to eventually make limited trips possible. There is another major logistical issue: passenger equipment. Museum officials estimate an excursion would require at least twelve passenger cars, and the Arkansas Railroad Museum does not currently own them. That means a successful restoration would still leave additional financial and operational hurdles before the public could once again board a train pulled by No. 819. For now, the objective is determining whether restoring the locomotive is achievable. For the immediate future, No 819's story remains one of investigation rather than restoration. There is no timetable for work to begin. There is no guarantee that it will return to service. There is no agreement determining when it would run if it does. But after more than 30 years largely confined to the museum, the locomotive's trip in the daylight represents something that has been missing for a long time-a serious effort to determine what it would take for Cotton Belt 819 to move under its own power again.
(Thanks to Luke Matheson, The Pine Bluff Commercial, via Darrel Cason).