



MSM Operations Newsletter

Issue No. 25-3
June - 2025



MID-SEASON CHECK-IN

To me this is always an interesting, but often uneventful part of the operating season. Start-up activities (i.e., new operator training, recertification, implementation of new operating rules) are complete, the full schedule is operational, and the core of the special event activities is still well in the future. So how are we doing?

- We have an active roster of 113 qualified operating volunteers, including 12 new volunteers
- Promoted four new foremen
- Trained three new PCC operators
- Completed recertification at both locations
- Have 38 charters completed or booked
- 3 motorman charters and 67 season passes sold

These are all indicators of good performance. The roster is essentially the same as we have seen over the last few years. What is concerning, however, is that the participation rate (those volunteering for shifts) is down substantially for our Como-Harriet operations. Historically around 85% of our qualified personnel volunteer. We are seeing this at Excelsior, but at Como-Harriet only 70% of our staff have operated. This has put several of the scheduled shifts at risk of being cancelled due to staffing shortages. As Jim Vaitkunas mentions later in the document, if all operators volunteered two times a month all shifts would be covered. Please consider signing up for some shifts.

As always, I want to express a deep appreciation on behalf of myself and the Museum's leadership for your ongoing commitment and dedication to providing a safe and entertaining environment for our volunteers and guests.

NEW HIRE TRAINING – BILL PEKARNA

The MSM new operator training winding down its 2025 activities. Of the 17 Operator Trainees that began the training program back in April. 12 have qualified as operators, one has volunteered as a station agent, and others continue to finalize their training. Several of the new volunteers have also been contributing their skills and time with the shop crew, depot bench repairs and car cleaning

Thank you, new operating volunteers:

CHSL Operators

Scott Benson
Cooper Hancock
Sammy Kinzel
Ellie Maag
Andrew Parr
Daniel Phillips
Kaiden Schears
Dan Smerz
Margie Thompson
Derek Till

ESL Operators

Sarah Dibble
Steve Thomas

CHSL Station Agents

Allan Goldfarb

ESL Station Agents

The dedicated training crew did a fantastic job in helping prepare the new operators for (hopefully) a long and enjoyable association with the streetcar museum. The training team, led by Bill Pekarna, includes Katie Barron, Scott Denson, Jerry Betz, Pat Cosgrove, Anja Curtis, Marion Garcia, Andy Jacob, Karen Kertzman, Jim Kertzman, Ted Rich, and Linda Ridlehuber.

ENGINEERING/ MAINTENANCE/ MECHANICAL UPDATE

CHSL.

- Keith Anderson and Miles Anderson continue to replace worn-out ties along the mainline. Later this summer they plan to work on the station siding.
- Work on the station platform canopy continues but has been hindered by rain.
- Dennis Stephens has accepted the position of shop foreman
- Jerry Betz, Tony Lebda, and Bruce Gustafson cleared brush and weeds from the right-of-way making a more visually pleasing ride. Additional work will be done later in the summer – if you are interested in helping, please contact Jerry.

ESL

- ESL tie replacement: Railroad Specialties is scheduled to replace 72 damaged ties and complete contracted end of line rail work at Excelsior Boulevard. The work is scheduled over two days, June 23 and June 24. Work will begin at 7:30 a.m. and end at 3:30 p.m. Due to the proximity of the rail to the walking trail, ESL will provide volunteers onsite to monitor the work and keep the walkers/riders safe.
- Eric Werner volunteered to be the car cleaning foreman

STREETCAR CLEANING – LOUIS HOFFMAN

Streetcar cleaning is an essential element of the Museum's customer-facing presence. A dirty environment can create a bad experience for our customers. Once a month at both CHSL and ESL a group of dedicated volunteers cleans the cars and other areas accessed by our guests. Please consider volunteering for this event. If interested contact Louis Hoffman (CHSL) or Eric Werner (ESL).

SPECIAL EVENTS – KAREN KERTZMAN/ BILL ARENDS

Special events represent a significant portion of the Museum's operating revenue and venues to attract different categories of guests.

CHSL

- **Open Doors (5/17-18).** The museum again participated in the two-day event which provides visitors with the opportunity to get a guided tour of the carbarn. Visitors are not required to purchase streetcar rides but the museum sold almost 800 fares over the two-day period. Total sales for the weekend were ~\$4200, an increase of \$800 over the prior year.
- **Upcoming Events:**
 - PJ Party (June 17, July 15)
 - Independence Day celebration
 - Motorette First Hire
 - Find Waldo (July). The "Find Waldo" contest, sponsored by Wild Rumpus, is a scavenger hunt to find Waldo starting July 1 and running throughout July. Participants have a passport (or can get one at the depot) which is stamped once they find Waldo at participating locations. When a participant has gathered the required number of "sightings" (stamps) they are eligible for discounts at Wild Rumpus.

ESL

- **Farmer's Market:** The Excelsior Farmer's Market for 2025 is in the school parking lot, across the track from the ESL Platform. It was a slow start with only eight vendors, on a cold and cloudy day. ESL had 13 riders in a three-hour shift. We are hoping attendance at the market and on the trolley increases as the summer progresses.
- **Memorial Day,** 159 riders
- **Motorettes visit.** On June 2, twelve MSM Motorettes gathered at ESL, hoping to ride Duluth Street Railway No. 78 and visit the carbarn display and store area. A heavy downpour interfered with the streetcar ride, but the carbarn provided shelter for the visit. The Motorettes had a good time observing the ESL set-up while

exchanging information about the different streetcars, processes, and events on each line. We look forward to another Motorette gathering.

- **Excelsior Art on the Lakes**, 319 riders
- **Upcoming Events:**
 - June StoryTime Trolley; Theme of “Let’s Pretend” on June 24th
 - July 4th Independence Day celebration in Excelsior
 - Excelsior Crazy Days on July 19 and 20

OPERATIONS – RULE BOOK UPDATE – JIM VAITKUNAS

Special events represent a significant portion of the Museum’s operating revenue and venues to attract different categories of guests.

MSM Rule Book – Fifth Edition. As most of us know, over the winter and spring, the Operations Department did a comprehensive review and revision to MSM’s operating rules and regulations. Participants in this comprehensive review were representatives from the Operations, Training and Safety Departments. You can find a copy of the new rules and regulations on our website at our home page: <https://trolleyride.org/member-resources/operations-documents/> There are printed copies of the rule book in the George Isaacs and Excelsior carbarns.

The changes included clarifying language in some of the sections. There were several important additions that were made to the rules.

1. Operator qualifications section 2.0 included a new section 2.7. This section requires all operating personnel to do an annual self-assessment of their ability to operate our streetcars or motor cars. This can be done by reading a form that is found in appendix D of the rules and regulations and mentally checking each item. This requirement should be met at the beginning of the season, and the purpose is to ensure that our operations remain safe for both our visitors and our volunteers.
2. New sections 2.8 and 2.9 were added to formalize a procedure to assess Operator performance after an incident or accident has occurred. It also lists actions that may be taken after multiple accidents or incidents.
3. Section 13.11 now formally requires that when the Motorman leaves their position at the controller, they must remove the controller reversing handle (commonly called the key) and either keep it or hand it to another crew member.
4. Appendix C has been added to the rules and procedures. Titled “Streetcar Emergency Response Procedures,” this appendix lists critical immediate response actions to take when an emergency happens. Specific physical location information is also listed in this appendix to make it clear for emergency responders who need to come to the location of the emergency.

SAFETY TIP – JOHN DILLERY

We streetcar operators normally make repeated trips before being relieved and it is good to keep in mind that this creates a tendency to dull our perceptions somewhat. I might think I am being observant, but I may become less so after a while.

Be sure this isn't happening to you. Be extra deliberate about looking and listening as you move the car. For example: When approaching a grade crossing such as Morse Ave or 42nd St, don't stare straight ahead, but turn your head to the left, right, and left again to increase your field of vision - minimize the risk of being surprised by an approaching animal, person or vehicle.

HUMANITY/SHIFT PLANNING (H/SP) UPDATE – JIM VAITKUNAS

The Humanity dashboard and content is basically unchanged. Here are some reminders on the “new” and legacy Shift Planning.

- Dashboard remains essentially the same.
- You’ll still click on the Shifts Available button on the left side of your dashboard screen to sign-up for shifts.
- Do not rely on the “New” Shift Planning information; it still appears to be incomplete. Please go to the Shift Planning “Legacy” button on the far right on the top-colored bar for complete shift planning information.

- To see the full schedule and who's assigned to a shift, go to the old "legacy" ShiftPlanning which is on the far right of the top colored bar of the dashboard screen. On the far right click on the List View button that will show the full schedule for a day, week or month.
- Your profile page format is essentially unchanged. But we ask that you take a quick look at your profile and update it if necessary. Please insert your phone number if it's not there.
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IMPORTANT REMINDERS.

While all of us have gotten more-or-less used to using H/SP, if at any time you run into problems, or if you need any help, please contact Jim at jim.vaitkunas@trolleyride.org. There is a mobile smart phone app for H/SP that you can download onto your smart phone from the Google Play Store and use to check your schedule, sign-up for shifts, etc.

Finally, if you are forced to cancel your shift because an emergency has arisen, please let your shift Foreman know that immediately. If your shift is two weeks or more in the future, let Jim Vaitkunas know so the vacancy can be advertised. If your shift is scheduled for less than two weeks, let your Foreman and Jim Vaitkunas know but the burden is on you to try and find your replacement by either getting someone to take your place or by swapping shifts with someone.

Signing Up For Shifts. We ask that you look ahead two weeks and consider signing up for a shift in advance rather than waiting until 4-5 days before looking at the schedule. Doing this reduces the length of those Tuesday vacancy e-mails and reduces the anxiety of the Operations staff.

Signing Up as Operator vs Station Agent. If you are qualified as an operator, please sign-up first in the Operator position. Occasionally operators will sign up in Humanity in the Operator/Station Agent slot when all the Operator slots have not been filled. In doing so they may have prevented station agents who are not operators from filling the shift. I think it may be a good idea to remind operators to only fill the operator/station agent slot after all operator slots have been filled.

Ghosts on the Operating Roster. The Operations Department staff did a quick review of Humanity information and found a larger than usual number of personnel who recertified this year but have yet to sign up for a shift or have only done one shift so far with none in the future. If each volunteer Operator pulled two or three shifts a month during the "high season" of Memorial Day or Labor Day, we shouldn't have any problems filling those vacancies. So please help your museum out.

MECHANICAL DEPT UPDATE — DICK ZAWACKI

CHSL STREETCAR STATUS

TCRT 1300

The major offseason work on the flagship of our fleet focused on replacing the air compressor with a refurbished one. The new compressor is much quieter and cycles less often than the old one, providing a better ride for our passengers and operators. All annual maintenance was completed on the car. Repairs were made to the foot gong air line and electrical conduits that were recently damaged.

TCRT 322

All annual maintenance is complete on the car. The crew continues to make upgrades and improvements to the electrical system that were started as part of repairing the car's trucks.

TCRT 1239

Eight axle bearing journals were machined and sized for the two new trucks. New linkage arms for the trucks are now being machined. New bull and pinion gears are in process at an outside vendor.

ESL STREETCAR STATUS

DSR 265

All annual maintenance is complete on the car. A misbehaving intercom buzzer and several misaligned windows were repaired during the off season.

DSR 78

All annual maintenance is complete on the car. Several minor maintenance issues were resolved during the off season.

MVPS (WINONA) 10

The crew continues to work on improving the car's brake system. Once this is completed, the car will go through the checks needed to enter it into operational service. It is too early to determine a target completion date at this time.

OPERATIONS BULLETINS IN EFFECT

These ops and safety bulletins are also posted on MSM's website at: Operations Documents | Minnesota Streetcar Museum (trolleyride.org)

Both Locations

■ 25CE-1 - Cancellation of Operations Due to Excessive Heat

It is MSM policy operations will be cancelled when the heat index reaches a dangerous level. A shift should be cancelled if the heat index is 95 or greater, which is reflected by the green line in the heat/ humidity chart below.

As with other weather-related cancellations the Foreman will decide to cancel a shift. They should check local weather conditions using websites such as NOAA or Weather Underground to get the latest heat index info.

When the Foreman cancels a shift due to heat, the procedures are the same as a rain cancellation. Foremen are responsible to:

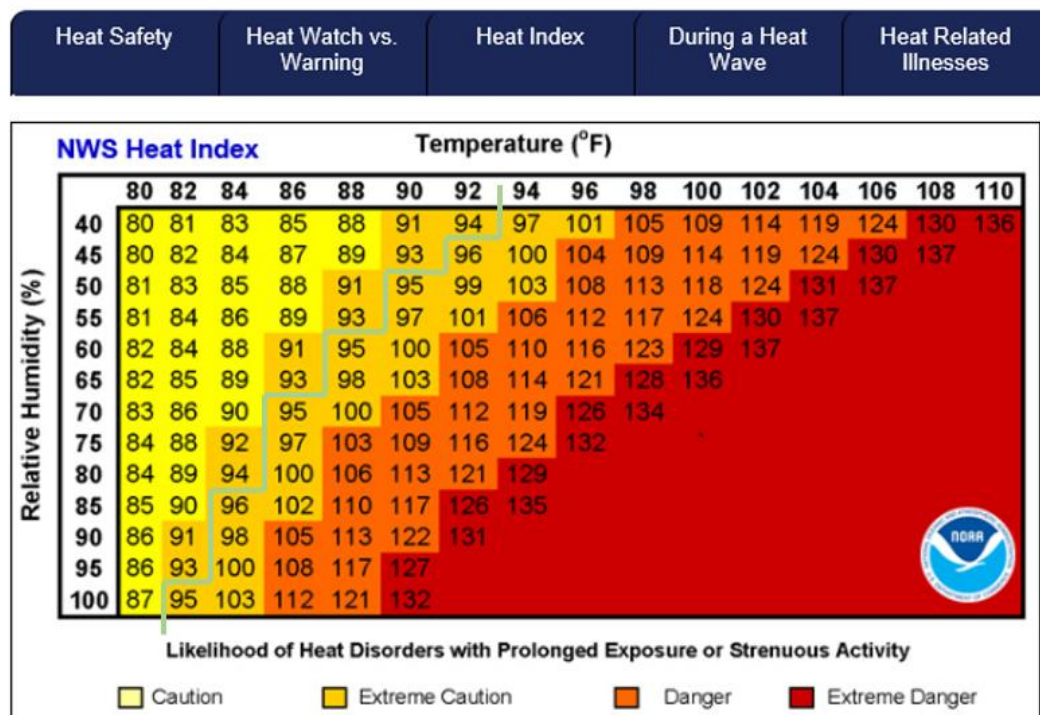
CHSL:

- 1) call your crew*
- 2) contact Jim Vaitkunas, Rod Eaton or Ben Franke to post the cancellation to our website*
- 3) if possible, place a sign in the depot door indicating the reason operations are cancelled*

ESL:

- 1) Call your crew*
- 2) Call Karen or Jim Kertzman*

When temperature and humidity rise, it is critical that volunteers drink plenty of water, slow down, and watch yourself and others for any signs of heat exhaustion.



CHSL

None at this time

ESL

- **25E-1 - Operation of All Streetcars in the Excelsior Car barn Yard**

The Foreman is the only crewmember authorized to operate a streetcar within the ESL car barn yard. The ESL car barn yard is defined as all track leading from the mainline switch into the yard lead with two left-hand switches, and all three yard tracks including the tracks inside the ESL car barn. Track #1 is defined as the track nearest the ESL mainline with the other two tracks numbered 2 and 3 in a southward direction.

While operating a streetcar within the ESL car barn yard, Foremen must observe the position of the switch points to ensure that the switch is correctly set for the track onto which the streetcar should go. After determining that the switch is set correctly, the streetcar can then proceed.

- **25E-2 - Movement of DSR Car No. 265 in/out of the Car Barn**

Extreme care must be taken when moving Duluth Street Railway (DSR) car no. 265 in or out of the car barn.

Movement to/from Track 1

- *When leaving the car barn on track 1 slowly proceed through the first frog to ensure that the trolley wheel goes through the frog successfully.*
- *When putting the car away the trolley wheel will follow the track 2 wire when going through the frog. To correct for this, the Foreman must STOP the car allowing the Conductor to MOVE THE TROLLEY WHEEL TO THE TRACK 1 wire. The crew should continue to monitor the car as it slowly moves toward the car barn.*

Movement to/from Track 2.

- *It is necessary when leaving the car barn on track 2 to STOP right before the Trolley wheel goes through the first frog (2 - 3') AND MOVE THE WHEEL TO THE TRACK 3 wire. Then slowly proceed forward and the wheel should go through the frog OK. IF this is not done the wheel WILL DEWIRE.*
- *When putting the car away the wheel will follow the track 3 wire when going through the same frog. STOP AND MOVE WHEEL TO TRACK 2 wire.*

- **25E-3 - Required Air Brake Test When Leaving the Car barn**

To avoid potential loss of braking power after the departure from the car barn for the Water Street platform, it is required that the operator conduct rolling brake test to ensure the air brakes are functioning properly.

This step is in addition to the current requirements of conducting a rolling brake test when changing directions.