

# Minnesota Streetcar Museum

## General Superintendent's Report

### MSM Annual Meeting

### March 20, 2025

#### I. GENERAL COMMENTS

- Staffing. 2024 followed two well-established patterns. 1) The Museum ended the year with 111 active operating volunteers, which is a comparable number that have operated over the last several years. The gains in new volunteers through a very effective recruitment and training process offset our annual losses. We are fortunate, however, that the majority of our volunteers serve for many, many years. 2) The second observable pattern is that a small cadre of volunteers supplies most of the hours. Year-over-year this group is also relatively stable with periodic exceptions due, generally, to aging out. We are again fortunate to have this group of dedicated volunteers.
- 2024 Performance. The results as captured by the POS system are shown in the following table. Total revenue of \$122,654 is, as expected, driven by ticket sales. As identified in previous reporting, what is notable is the significant impact resulting from special events. While we were fortunate to have good weather for our more popular events, the lack of a big car at ESL did have a negative impact on special events at that location. Merchandise also is a significant contributor to the overall revenues.

*(Note the table does not include online sales or sales made at the Union Depot Train Days).*

Category	MSM Items Sold	MSM Gross Sales	CHSL Items Sold	CHSL Gross Sales	ESL Items Sold	ESL Gross Sales
Charters	58	\$ 6,715	48	\$ 5,200	10	\$ 1,135
Donations		1,557	16	198	75	1,359
FARES *	19508	58,524	16630	49,890	2878	8,634
Passes	197	5,769	171	4,799	26	655
Merchandise		23,986		17,994		3,585
Special Events non-ticketed	2898	12,593	1967	10,455	931	2,138
Special Events ticketed	1343	13,510	1016	11,875	327	1,635
Total POS		\$ 122,654		\$ 100,411		\$ 19,141

\*Note: Approximately \$2,000 of special events related activities are picked up in the standard fare POS account

- 2025 Planning. The Operations Committee met on February 16 and while there remain some open issues that will be resolved prior to the season opening (May 3), listed below are some highlights:

- Recruitment/ Training. We have a large number of interested candidates such that no advertising will be done. Orientation will be the end of March with training and recertification to start in April.
- Schedule
  - CHSL.
    - To accommodate a large number of PCC operators and to address chronic challenges in filling the second shifts on weekends, we will test a second PCC shift on Sunday – so that both Sunday shifts will be PCC.
    - Halloween special events will move up one week in an attempt to boost attendance and to better address public interest
  - ESL
    - Schedule is being evaluated based on crew availability and timing of ticket purchases
- Rule Book. A sub-committee has been established to evaluate and update the Rule Book. Special consideration will be given to include a more robust policy on cell phone usage.
- Crew Issues. Given attrition, we are looking to increase the number of foremen at both locations. At ESL the number of operators has decreased to a point where (as noted above) the schedule may have to be adjusted. We will solicit CHSL operators for their interest in working at ESL.

## II. OPERATIONS

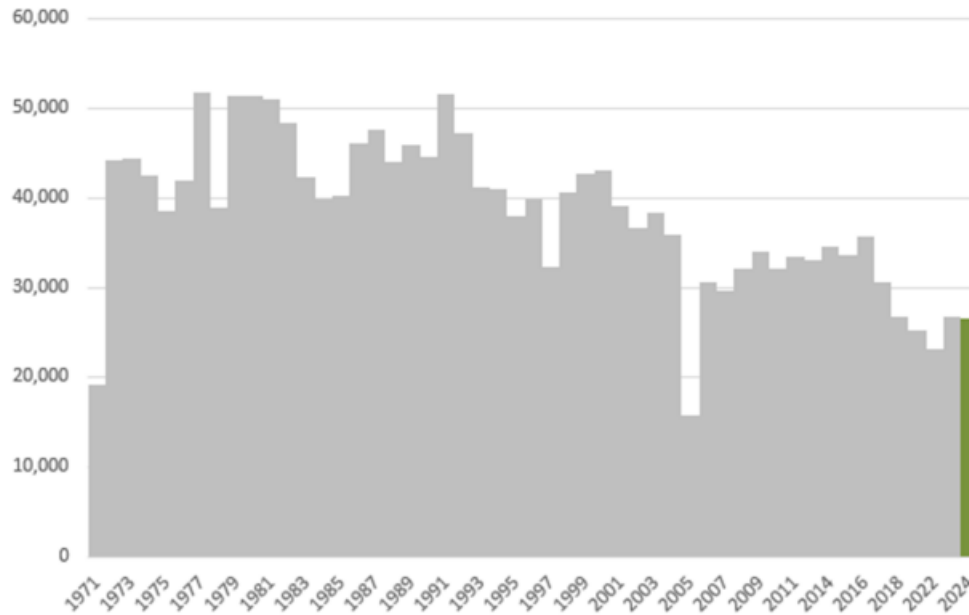
### RIDERSHIP

The following two charts show trip sheet ridership, so may under-represent special events, but nonetheless show 2024 in perspective. Note that 2020 (cancelled) is not shown and that 2021 is, as a result of COVID, a partial year.

### CHSL Annual Ridership

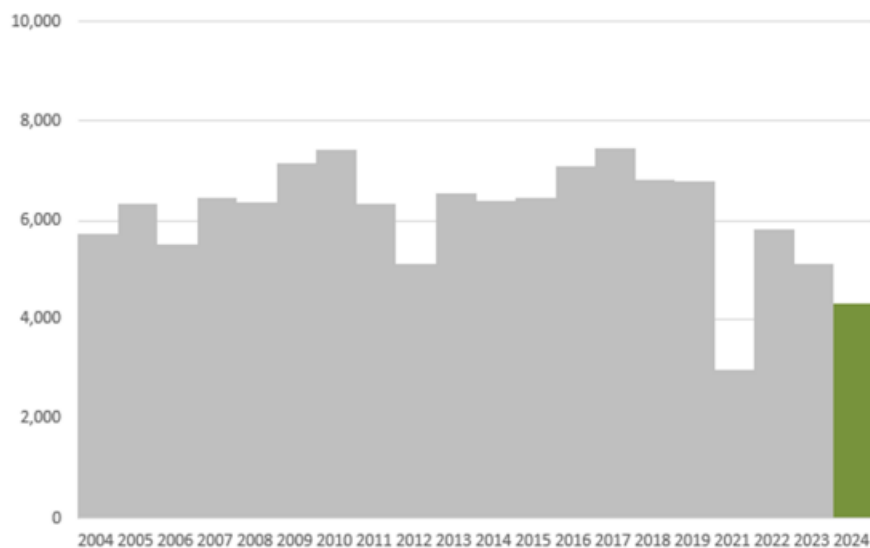
2024 had approximately 24,500 (trip sheet identified) riders, which as can be seen below, is comparable to the last several years.

*(NOTE: I am using trip sheet ridership to enable a year-over-year comparison. Some events are ticketed and not included in these counts. The intent is to show “regular schedule activity”.)*



### ESL Ridership

2024 had approximately 4,300 (trip sheet identified) riders, which due to the car situation and the lack of Farmer's Market volume is down slightly from prior years.



## SPECIAL EVENTS (2024)

The table below summarizes the annual special event activity for both CHSL and ESL. The impact of the car situation at ESL is most notable with the lack of activity for the Christmas related events. The success of the special events is shown with the significant bottom line contribution and the fact that most of the ticketed events sell out - many very quickly.

Two items of note:

1. Katie Barron has accepted the position as Special Event Manager and will be reviewing and coordinating the events for the coming season.
2. With low ridership and some neighbor complaints, the Operations Committee and Katie will be reviewing the Owl Service offering

		2024 Full Year					
		CHSL			ESL		
		No.of Events	Riders	Revenue	No.of Events	Riders	Revenue
Ticketed Events	PJ Trolley/ Story Time Trolley	6	365	\$ 1,825	6	219	\$ 1,095
	Streetcar Camp	1	18	882	-	-	-
	Summer Santa	2	107	535	-	-	-
	Streetcar Murder Mystery	4	166	3,156	-	-	-
	Spirits on the Streetcar	2	45	2,250	-	-	-
	Late Show/ Graveyard	3	133	2,347			
	Trick 'r Trolley/ Trolleyween	3	184	920	3	128	640
	Total	21	1,018	\$ 11,915	9	347	\$ 1,735
Non-Ticketed Special Events	Streetcar Named Expire		97	\$ 485		-	\$ -
	Owl Service		13	91		-	-
	Treat o' Trolley		-	-		803	1,606
	Ghost Trolley		-	-		108	432
	Pumpkins		282	1,974			
	Holly Trolley		1,394	6,970			
	Santa Story		136	680			
	Total	0	1,922	\$ 10,200	0	911	\$ 2,038
Special Events included in Fares	Pumpkin patch fares		637	\$ 1,911			
	Transylvania fares		291	873			
	All Aboard		147	441			
	Open Doors		703	2,109			
	Total	0	1,778	\$ 5,334	0	0	\$ -
GRAND TOTAL SPECIAL EVENTS			4,718	\$ 27,449		1,258	\$ 3,773

### III. ESL SUMMARY (Karen Kertzman)

Actual Ridership:

- |                   |       |
|-------------------|-------|
| • Regular service | 3,298 |
| • Charters        | 455   |
| • Special events  | 1,235 |
| Total:            | 5,618 |

DSR No. 78 was the primary streetcar for the 2024 operating season. With a capacity of 28 riders, it provided challenges on peak days when passengers were waiting in line to ride. Three different times the crew was able to safely board 44 to 58 passengers (lots of little ones) for a fun ride.

DSR No. 265 returned for service in time for the busy fall special events season.

- Minnetonka second grades annual charter to ride the streetcar and visit the Lake Minnetonka Historical Society Excelsior Museum. 134 riders
- Excelsior Apple Days. 482 riders
- ESL StoryTime Trolleyween special event. 159 riders
- Trick O' Treat in Excelsior. A total of 803 riders in 5.5 hours. A record-breaking ridership event for the Excelsior Streetcar Line.

The Ghost Trolley Event was brought back after a 5-year absence. Attendance was low, 106 riders over 3 hours, but there was a lot of fun. The event will be re-evaluated for 2025.

The Water Street ticket booth was repaired and painted during 2024, offering our riders a fresh look at the original ticket booth from the old Excelsior Amusement park that closed in 1973.

### IV. STAFF

#### QUALIFIED OPERATORS SYSTEM

The ending roster includes 111 active operators. This compares to 111 in 2023, 117 in 2022, 103 in 2021 and 117 in 2019. For the year, 89% of the certified operators volunteered contributing approximately 4,038 hours – which is comparable to the prior year. Two operators operated at both locations.

#### COMO-HARRIET

- At Como-Harriet we ended the year with 87 qualified operating personnel compared to 89 in 2023, 91 in 2022, 81 in 2021 and 90 in 2019. 76 operators volunteered time.
- A small group of volunteers contributed over 50% of the total operating hours. These included Bill Pekarna, Rod Eaton, Bill Arends, Bruce Allyn, Ted Rich, Katie Barron, Elizabeth Gray, Pat Cosgrove, Nick Orbe, Mike Buck, Louis Hoffman, Tom May, John Dillery, Andy Jacob, Griffin Lawrence, Anja Curiskis, and Aaron Isaacs.

#### EXCELSIOR

- At Excelsior we have 28 certified operating personnel compared to 28 in 2023, 34 in 2022, 27 in 2021 and 43 in 2019.
- Like CHSL a dedicated group of volunteers contributed 50% of the total operating hours at ESL. These individuals are Karen Kertzman, Jim Kertzman, Tim Gephart, Gregory Thomas, Mike Buck, John Knox, Rich Holz, and David Buckman.

## V. STATION / MERCHANDISE (Bill Arends)

The following table summarizes POS sales excluding special events, charters, and shipping fees (for online purchases) for the full year 2024. Merchandise sales (excluding passes/ membership) represent ~20% of the POS activity. Year-over-year, merchandise sales increased almost 20%.

	2024 Full Year							2023 Full Year	
	MSM	POS		Union Depot	Online Sales	MSM %		MSM	MSM %
		CHSL	ESL						
Children Merchandise	\$ 6,555	\$ 5,268	\$ 1,248	\$ -	\$ 39	27%		\$ 6,380	31%
Artifacts/ Historic Souvenirs	1,964	1,509	140	40	275	8%		1,660	8%
Books	4,347	2,185	411	339	1,412	18%		2,863	14%
Ornaments	2,952	2,123	732	-	98	12%		2,516	12%
Jewelry	1,860	1,860	-	-	-	8%		1,420	7%
Candy	1,265	1,265	-	-	-	5%		1,222	6%
Clothing	1,193	902	219	54	18	5%		905	4%
Other Merchandise	4,128	3,160	836	-	133	17%		3,382	17%
Total	\$ 24,263	\$ 18,271	\$ 3,585	\$ 433	\$ 1,974			\$ 20,347	
Passes	\$ 5,769	\$ 4,799	\$ 655	\$ -	\$ 315				
Motorman Gift Certificates	\$ 380	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 380				

(1) Does not include fares, special event, charters, or shipping fees.

### Online Sales

We continue to have robust online sales. Book sales (which are completely dependent on the inventory) were double the amount (\$700) received in 2023 for used books.

# **Minnesota Streetcar Museum**

## **Mechanical Department Report**

### **Dick Zawacki**

#### **CHSL CARBARN ACTIVITY AND STREETCAR STATUS**

In 2024 the CHSL Maintenance Crew reported 2292 volunteer hours in support of museum-related activities. Eighteen individuals contributed to efforts related to shop activities that keep our streetcars operational. It appears people are doing a better job of reporting their volunteer hours this year. There will always be personal interpretations of what constitutes “volunteer hours”, so I encourage people to account for all the time they spend in support museum-related activities while not at the carbarn (e.g., buying materials and parts at a local store, writing a museum-related e-mail at home, etc.).

The CHSL crew’s major efforts in 2024 focused on finishing the repairs to TCRT 322 following the accident of July 2023. These repairs focused on damage found to both trucks after the accident. With a generous donation of new torque arms from Bill Wall of Shoreline Trolley Museum, the crew was able to upgrade both trucks on the car and repair some of the effects that 78 years of wear and tear (e.g., broken ground straps, worn parts, accumulated dirt, etc.) had on the car. The PCC returned to regular service in May 2024.

In addition to the “routine” work of maintaining the streetcar fleet to support daily events during the operating season, the CHSL Maintenance Crew worked on several other projects during 2024. Here are some of those projects:

- Came in early on several mornings to fix/repair/replace/adjust a failed part in time to get the streetcar running and support the start of a scheduled charter or revenue operation for that day.
- Finished tear out and demolition of the old wooden passenger platform at the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Depot.
- Built the step boxes and railings for the revised 42nd Street Depot platform.
- Cleaned up and trimmed branches and vegetation close to our rail and overhead which interfered with cars operating safely on the line. (Thanks to the Minneapolis Park Board for their help when the crew couldn’t reach some branches.)
- Cleaned and prepared the shop and related areas and served as docents for the Open Doors Minneapolis event in May.
- Installed and removed the pumpkin patch fencing for Halloween events. (Thanks again to the Minneapolis Park Board for supplying the fencing.)
- Recovered and painted several seats on TCRT 1300.
- Designed and ordered gears for 1239’s trucks.
- Designed, procured, and started machining new journal bearings for 1239’s trucks.
- Installed, wired, and modified security cameras in the depot and car barn.
- Repainted several signs.

### ESL CARBARN ACTIVITY AND STREETCAR STATUS

In 2024 the ESL Maintenance Crew reported 3360 volunteer hours in support of museum-related activities. Thirteen individuals contributed to efforts related to shop activities that keep our streetcars operational. As at CHSL, the ESL crew is doing a better job of reporting their volunteer hours.

The ESL crew's major efforts in 2024 focused on finishing the repairs to DSR 265 following its accident in July 2023. Unlike TCRT 322, there was no damage to its trucks. Thus, repairing DSR 265 meant demolishing the rear vestibule structure down to the floorboards and completely replacing it. This included all electrical, pneumatic, and related lines. During the last few months of the project the crew scheduled two and sometimes three work sessions per week to speed up completion of the project. DSR 265 returned to service in September 2024.

In addition to the "routine" work of maintaining the streetcar fleet to support daily events during the operating season, the CHSL Maintenance Crew worked on several other projects during 2024. Here is a list of some of the major projects the crew accomplished and supported:

- Came in early on several mornings to fix/repair/replace/adjust a failed part in time to get the streetcar running and support the start of a scheduled charter or revenue operation for that day.
- Renovated (including repainting, repairing windows, upgrading the countertop, etc.) the historic Water Street ticket booth. This was done in cooperation with the Lake Minnetonka Historical Society.
- Cleaned up and trimmed branches and vegetation close to our rail and overhead which interfered with cars operating safely on the line.
- Built a new storage shed to store lawn equipment and other items that do not need to be stored in the cold shed.
- Replaced and repaired several exterior plywood panels and related trim on the warm barn with cement board panels.
- Replaced and strengthened the safety railing on the 2nd floor mezzanine in the car barn.
- Installed three new emergency exit lights inside the carbarn.
- Completely cleaned out the cold storage shed after the damaged east wall was rebuilt.
- Reorganized the equipment layout and materials in the cold storage shed.
- Completely cleaned out and reorganized equipment and materials in the shop.



# State of the Museum 2025



# SAFETY IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

Increased emphasis on preventing accidents

Policy No. 14:

New Safety policy adopted, including:

- Streetcar towing procedure
- Work on the tower car procedure
- Streetcar jacking procedure

# 2024 Como-Harriet

- Platform concrete repaired and extended
- Depot step boxes installed
- 587 tokens recovered
- Plans approved for depot canopy
- PCC 322 repaired and returned to service
- Most truck parts for 1239 created, axles and gears contracted
- 200 ties replaced
- New radios purchased
- 1300's air compressor replaced
- TCRT No Trespassing sign restored
- Car barn computer replaced

# 2024 Excelsior

- 265 repaired and returned to operation
- Car barn wall repaired
- Exterior storage shed built
- Car barn bathroom renovated
- New radios purchased
- Ticket booth repaired and repainted
- 800 pounds of copper scrap sold
- Mesaba interurban models purchased

# 2024 History Resources

- 2nd history intern
- Russ Olson papers scanned and online
- Jim Kreuzberger Duluth manuscript scanned and online
- 345 new photos and artifacts catalogued into the database. Total now is 14,724 (March 2025 total)
- Collections policy updated. Curator job created
- Over 1200 photos and drawings scanned
- Website history pages updated
- Streetcar history Zoom group started
- CHSL history signs replaced

# Personnel changes

- Special Events Coordinator: Pat Cosgrove to Katie Barron
- Facebook editor: Rod Eaton to Griffin Lawrence
- Mail pickup and forwarding/bank deposits: Bill Arends to Jim Ravell
- Katie Barron, Jerry Betz and Jerry Draeger to Streetcar Foreman
- Jerry Draeger to ESL Building and Grounds Foreman
- Leah Harp to Kid's Club Manager
- Brian Long to Historian
- Aaron Isaacs to Curator

# Recently retired operating volunteers

Art Abrahams

Ted Colburn

Pete Connors

John DeWitt

Tom Dulebon\*

Bill Graham

Scott Heiderich\*

Dave Higgins

Ron Neitzel

Jerry Olson

Steve Simon

Jim Vaitkunas

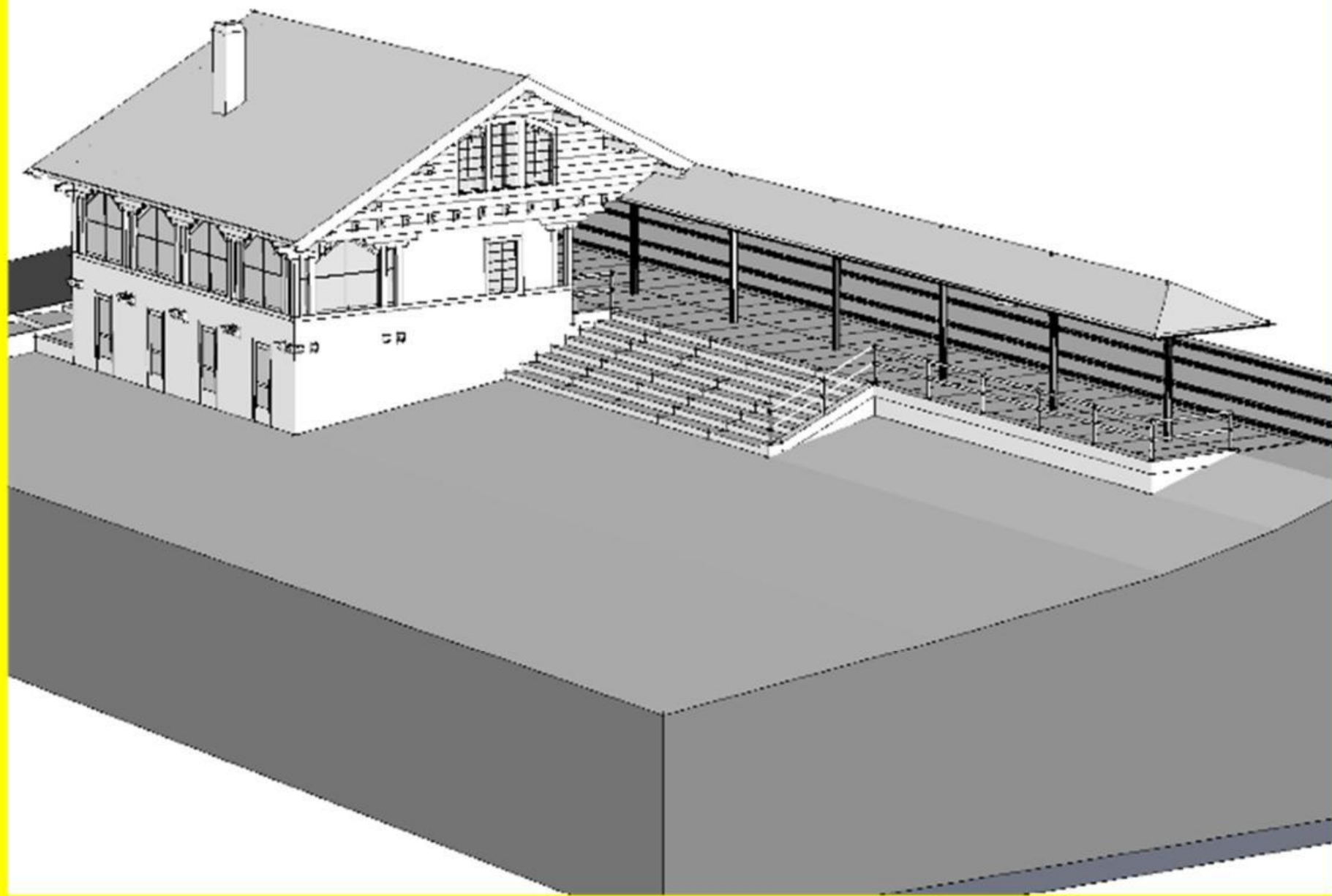
Bill Way

\*Deceased

# 2025 coming attractions CHSL

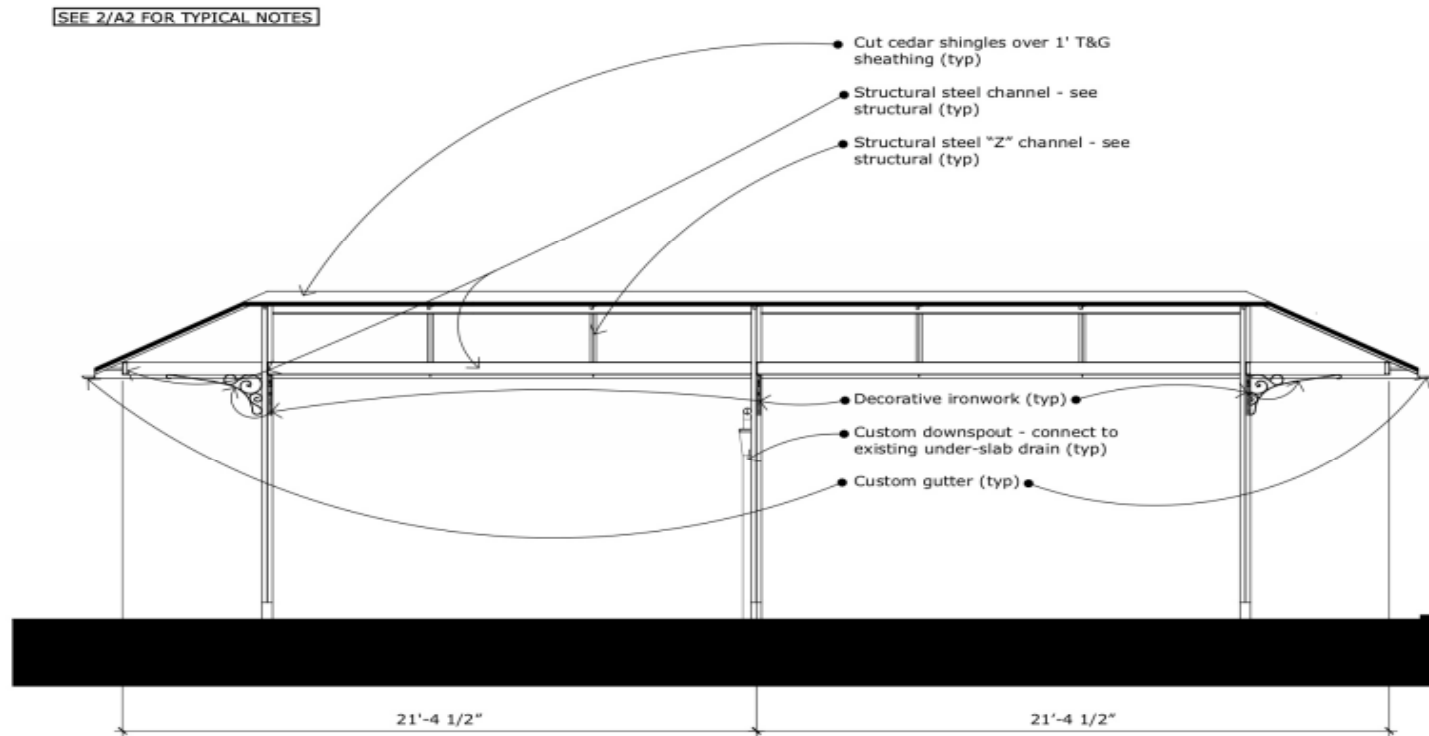
- Depot platform and canopy constructed
- 1239's first truck completed
- Depot computer replaced
- North end runoff completed
- New events: Military History Timeline and Trolley Path Tour







# Depot canopy



1/A4 North/South Section | 1/4" = 1'-0"

NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

# 2025 coming attractions ESL

- Winona 10 window shades installed
- Winona 10 in service
- ESL car barn lighting replaced with LEDs
- 100 ties replaced
- Electricity to Water Street ticket booth
- North wall car barn history display installed
- Express boat Minnehaha model installed