

# The “Big Bend Ties” monthly newsletter of the Gulf Wind Chapter, NRHS

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*Big Bend Ties* is a monthly publication of the Gulf Wind Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society.



Young Depot Day visitors check out the Gulf Wind Chapter’s 1938 Fairmont S2 heavy-duty section car, one of the exhibits May 20 at the annual open house at the historic Lloyd Depot in Jefferson County, FL.

*Photo by Bob Feuerstein*

## Depot Day marks chapter’s 50th anniversary

Railfans and residents from throughout the Big Bend converged on Lloyd, FL, on May 20 to attend the Gulf Wind Chapter’s annual Depot Day open house at the historic Lloyd Depot and help celebrate the chapter’s 50th anniversary.

“What made our event so memorable was the public’s support and the fact we had so many attendees this year who were seeing Florida’s oldest train station for the very first time,” said Dave Hodges, chapter president. “For our anniversary celebration, we added a display on how our organization got started in 1973, and of course, there was plenty of birthday cake.”

Through the efforts of founders Irv Lipscomb, Edward Mellon, Walter S. Richardson II and Ted Kiper, the Gulf Wind Chapter became an official nonprofit organization based in Tallahassee and received its charter May 12, 1973, from the National Railway Historical Society. The small group back then was committed to helping preserve railroad history, and that mission continues today, said history professor and chapter member Richard Hall, who gave a brief keynote address during Depot Day on the chapter’s founding.

The Gulf Wind Chapter's principal activity is the ongoing renovation and upkeep of the Lloyd Depot, which is a centerpiece of the Lloyd Historic District. The depot was built in 1858 by the Pensacola & Georgia Railroad, and Depot Day is an opportunity for the chapter to put numerous railroad artifacts and memorabilia on display and to discuss the building's historic significance.

At lunchtime, chapter members grilled hotdogs for the guests, who also got to see member Larry McPherson's G-scale model train layout - complete with miniature Lloyd train station.

The Lloyd Depot was in service until the 1960s. When the building was closed by the Seaboard Air Line Railroad in 1966 and faced demolition, the railroad agreed to transfer the building to the Jefferson County Historical Association for preservation. The Gulf Wind Chapter assumed ownership of the building in 1975 and has carried out several phases of restoration work since that time.



Formed in May 1973, the Gulf Wind Chapter is the Tallahassee area affiliate of the National Railway Historical Society. Depot Day doubled as a celebration of the chapter's 50th anniversary -- with plenty of cake. *Photo by Bob Feuerstein*



Gulf Wind Chapter member Larry McPherson provided a G-scale model train layout for Depot Day, complete with a miniature Lloyd train station. The depot's freight room provides space for this and other exhibits. *Photo by Dave Hodges*



Operating layouts like this one are among the featured items of the BBMRA's annual Model Train Show & Sale, which this year will have more exhibits and vendors than ever before. *Photo by Dave Hodges*



## ***Association plans annual model train show June 24-25***

A summertime highlight in Tallahassee is the annual Model Train Show & Sale hosted by the Big Bend Model Railroad Association the weekend of June 24-25.

The 32nd annual event takes place at the North Florida Fairgrounds, 3421 S. Monroe St. in Tallahassee, and is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday. The show will be housed in buildings 2 and 4 and will occupy some 24,000 square feet of exhibits and displays.

The exhibitor lineup is impressive. According to Andy Zimmerman, association president, at least 127 display tables have been reserved by various vendors, collectors and organizations. Visitors will see operating model train layouts, including the T-Trak modules than association members and their children have built which are fastened together to make stunning layouts.

There will be plenty of model trains, supplies, parts and accessories for sale in all the various gauges. The event attracts exhibitors from throughout Florida, Georgia, Alabama and beyond.

Tickets are \$10 for adults and children age 13 and older. Scouts in uniform and youngsters age 12 and younger are admitted free. Parking is free, and overnight parking for RVs is available at the fairgrounds for a fee. A food truck, Taste of Heaven BBQ & More, will be on site both days with various lunch offerings.

For more details, visit <http://bbmra.club>



Developed to meet the needs of commuters in Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties, Tri-Rail operates on a 73.5-mile network. *Photo courtesy of the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority*

## **Tri-Rail operator awarded grant for railcar replacements**

The South Florida Regional Transportation Authority, the agency that operates the Tri-Rail passenger system, is one of six recipients nationally who have been awarded a federal grant to replace aging railcars in their fleets as part of a program to modernize rail transit service.

Funded under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law that Congress passed in 2021, the grants were awarded by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration and total \$703 million under the Rail Vehicle Replacement Program.

The SFRTA's share of the award is \$71.7 million, which will be used to replace 24 coaches and locomotives that have reached the end of their useful life. Commissioner Raquel Regalado, chair of the authority's governing board, said the grant funding marks "a momentous occasion for the future of this agency."

"We will not only be better prepared to expand the system, but our regular passengers will have a much-improved passenger experience when we procure new equipment with state-of-the-art technology," he said in an announcement on the grants.

As Tri-Rail's railcars aged, they tended to require more maintenance, which meant an increase in the number of days they were out of service, according to the authority. The 24 units being replaced represent 32 percent of Tri-Rail's fleet. The federal grant will be matched in part with funds from the Florida Department of Transportation and the authority's own reserve funds on hand, as well as additional federal dollars. The total replacement cost is estimated at \$179.2 million.

Tri-Rail began serving South Florida communities in 1989 and operates along 73.5 miles of track, from the Mangonia Park station just north of West Palm Beach down to the Miami Airport station, which has Metrorail service to additional points in the Miami area. Tri-Rail has 11 train sets, consisting of 21 locomotives, 19 cab cars and 29 coaches.

Other local rail transit systems receiving the FTA grants are Chicago, Cleveland, St. Louis, Salt Lake City, and Sacramento.



Keep in touch! You can follow the Gulf Wind Chapter on Facebook at [facebook.com/GulfWindNRHS/](https://facebook.com/GulfWindNRHS/). Be sure to "like" us. Our web site is [gulfwindnrhs.org](https://gulfwindnrhs.org). The chapter's mailing address is P.O. Box 3464, Tallahassee, FL 32315-3464.



The Gulf Wind Chapter of the NRHS joins Operation Lifesaver, Inc. in reminding rail fans and pedestrians to stay safe around railroad tracks and to always obey signals and crossing gates. For more information on rail safety, visit [oli.org](https://oli.org).



The Gulf Wind Chapter is the Tallahassee area affiliate of the National Railway Historical Society, an organization that is committed to preserving and promoting railroad history in the United States. For details, visit [nrhs.com](https://nrhs.com).

All tax-deductible donations we receive help fund the Lloyd Depot's ongoing restoration. Thank you for supporting one of the Big Bend's most notable historic sites.

If you have rail history or railroad news for “Big Bend Ties,” send it to us at the e-mail address below.

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Editor

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