

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

April 4, 2026

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



A free event sponsored by Tallahassee State College, the Tallahassee History Festival takes place on the college's campus Saturday, April 11, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

## **Fifth Annual Tallahassee History Festival is April 11**

The Fifth Annual Tallahassee History Festival takes place at Tallahassee State College on April 11 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., a free program that highlights historical and cultural aspects of Leon and surrounding counties.

A project of TSC, the festival is a community event and will be located at the college's intramural field and Workforce Development Building. Parking is free and available in any of the student lots on campus. The college is located at 444 Appleyard Drive in Tallahassee.

The festival will have more than 100 exhibits by museums, historical societies, churches, academic and research programs, and nonprofits involved in historic preservation. According to TSC, there will be something for guests of all ages and unique ways to learn more about history, archeology and the humanities.

Among the exhibitors will be the Gulf Wind Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, Inc., with a display of railroad artifacts and memorabilia.

After the festival concludes, there will be a free movie, "The Last of the Mohicans," shown in the Workforce Development Building.

Visit <https://www.tsc.fl.edu/academics/academic-divisions/social-science/tallahassee-history-festival/> for more information.



Atlantic Coast Line No. 1504, shown here on display in Jacksonville, FL, is now officially a part of the locomotive collection at the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum. No. 1504 was built in 1919 by the Richmond Locomotive Works. *Photo courtesy of U.S. Sugar*

## ***U.S. Sugar donates historic steam locomotive to museum***

Venerable steam locomotive No. 1504 of Sugar Express LLC has a new home at the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum in Chattanooga, the company announced March 25.

A light Pacific type steam locomotive, No. 1504 was built in 1919 by the Richmond Locomotive Works for the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad. It was placed on public display in Jacksonville in 1960 before being acquired by U.S. Sugar, whose Sugar Express enterprise offers steam excursions in south central Florida.

The company made the decision to continue Sugar Express excursions out of Clewiston,

FL, using steam locomotive No. 148 and to seek an alternative for the long-term preservation of No. 1504.

“After evaluating our long-term operational needs, we determined that No. 148 is fully capable of meeting the strong and growing demand for our scenic excursion trains, which operate through the heart of Florida’s agricultural communities,” Sugar Express railroad superintendent M. Scott Ogle said in announcing the donation. “In light of this – and in consideration of rising material and labor costs – we have made the decision not to pursue restoration of Atlantic Coast Line locomotive No. 1504.”

Penelope Soule Gault, senior director of marketing, communications and guest experience at TVRM, said the museum is honored to add No. 1504 to its collection.

“While plans for display or potential future operation are still under evaluation, the locomotive and its components will be stabilized and placed into secure storage as we begin a thorough assessment,” Gault said on behalf of the museum. “TVRM will share further updates once that process is complete and next steps are determined.”



A workhorse on the Southern Railway's *Southern Crescent* passenger service between Atlanta and Washington, D.C., for many years, No. 6901 has been fully restored and will be the focal point of a celebration starting May 1 at the Southeastern Railway Museum.

## **May 1 event celebrates restored Southern No. 6901**

Years of hard work and commitment come to fruition May 1 in Duluth, GA, as the Southeastern Railway Museum celebrates diesel locomotive No. 6901’s successful restoration, the organization has announced.

The museum will be “celebrating in style” beginning that Friday with an evening reception and a full weekend of activities for all ages – plus train rides the entire

weekend, said Kelley Cody-Grimm, the museum's development director.

The Friday evening reception starts at 6 p.m. and includes music, heavy hors d'oeuvres and beverages, photo opportunities, a silent auction and train rides. The museum says many of the project's volunteers will be on hand to talk about the restoration work and the historical significance of No. 6901, an E8A diesel manufactured by General Motors' Electro-Motive Division which was owned and operated by the Southern Railway as part of its *Southern Crescent* passenger service between Atlanta and Washington, D.C. It has been a part of the museum's collection since 1979.

Reception tickets are \$30 each and can be purchased online at <https://southeasternrailwaymuseumthundertix.com.thundertix.com/events/262242>.

The Southeastern Railway Museum is located at 3595 Buford Hwy., Duluth, GA 30096, and is Georgia's official transportation history museum.



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](http://gulfwindnrhs.org). The chapter's mailing address is P.O. Box 3464, Tallahassee, FL 32315-3464.

**We support . . .**



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](http://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](http://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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