

## North Texas Chapter – National Railway Historical Society



### May Chapter Meeting: Burlison Visitor’s Center and Interurban Museum



When: Tuesday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> @ 7:00 pm  
Where: Burlison Visitors Center (Historic Interurban Depot), Burlison, TX  
Program: Tour of the Historic Interurban Depot and Interurban Cars  
Location: 124 W. Ellison St., Burlison, TX 76028 Phone: 817-447-1575  
Directions: <https://www.mapquest.com/us/texas/interurban-in-burlison-historical-marker-461255640>

The City now has 2 cars on display in Burlison. Rail Car #330 (built in 1903) is the oldest remaining interurban car of any type in Texas. It was placed beside the [Burlison Visitors Center](https://www.burlesontx.com/591/Burlison-Visitors-Center), the last remaining Interurban Station on the Fort Worth to Cleburne line, in 2010. Car #330 faithfully served the interurban station 3 times a day until the line closed. Parlor Car #411 is one of the last of the classic wooden cars of that same era. This unique set gives the City of Burlison the largest single collection of cars from the great Interurban Railroad that served 7 counties in North Texas for nearly 50 years. Source: <https://www.burlesontx.com/591/Burlison-Visitors-Center>

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# Texas Electric Railway Company 501

*The Life and History of the first freight motor car of the Texas Electric Railway  
Company*



**Written by**

*James P. Dolande*

**Note - Edited for Clarity and Content**

03.8.2023

For educational and private review purposes only.

### INTRODUCTION

Back in the late 1910's, the Texas Electric Railway was struggling to keep its profit margins above the red line on its stock. The automobile had not yet turned into the deadly rival that it eventually would become in the 1930s, but T.E. needed money and it needed it *FAST!* The key to this problem was freight. Other lines had limited service hauling single cars worth of freight, but the T.E. would be the only one to go all out and have a dedicated interurban freight and exchange service.

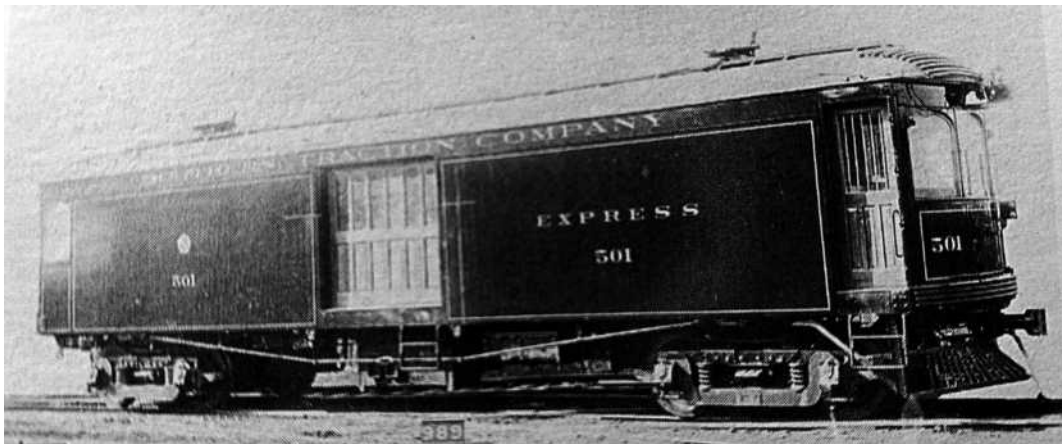
### IN THE BEGINNING

All express business was handled at the Texas Traction's depot at 1316 Commerce Street and the North Texas Traction Company at Commerce and Saint Paul. Originally, two express trips operated both ways from Dallas and Fort Worth on the Texas Traction's run to Sherman. In 1909, runs were extended over the Denison-Sherman Railway into Denison.

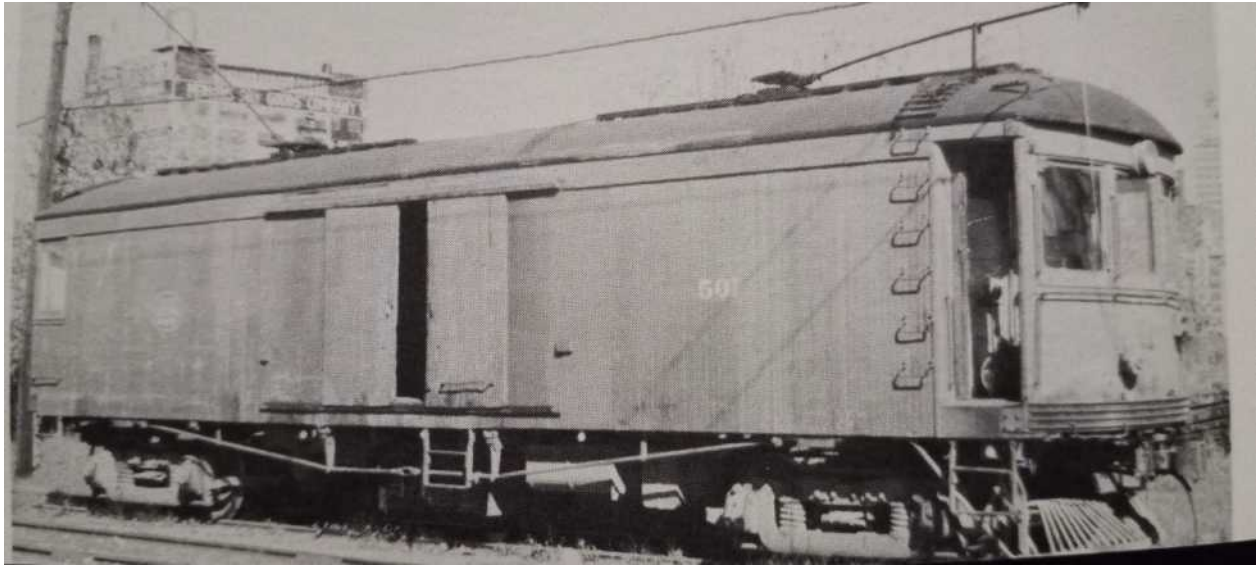
Southern Traction began operations October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1912 with the then newly acquired Dallas Southern Traction company line to Waxahachie. Four days later, Southern Traction started express service to Waxahachie with Osgood Bradley built motor number 1. Two round trips operated with Dallas departure times of 8:45 a.m. and 8:15 p.m.

A new company, the Electric Express and Baggage Company organized by Jay F Strickland, incorporated on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1913, was set up to handle baggage and express on Strickland's lines. Texas Traction and Southern Traction replaced the previous arrangement with North Texas Transfer Company, but built a small brick express terminal on the northwest corner of Jefferson and Wood streets in Downtown Dallas. The Interurban Express continued to handle services on the Northern Texas Traction's Dallas to Fort Worth line and on their subsidiary line the Tarrant County Traction Company's Fort Worth to Cleburne line. (ABOVE EXCERPT FROM C.E.R.A BULLETIN 121 TEXAS ELECTRIC RAILWAY BY JOHNNIE J. MYERS)

### CAR 501



501 was built by The American Car Company in 1913, batch Order #989, as Southern Traction Co 501. It became Texas Electric Ry 501 in 1917 and worked until the abandonment of 1948.



SERVICE AND SELLING



501 on the right in the Dallas Freight Terminal in the early 1940s.



Car 501 would spend the next 40 plus years going from Denison to Dallas and as far down as Waxahachie and Waco. Car 501 continued to provide faithful freight service until the Texas Electric Railway closed for good on December the 25<sup>th</sup>, 1948.

In 1949, the car was sold for scrap. A fate that the car would endure twice in its life after the Texas Electric Railway. Luckily, it was bought by a farmer and moved to Plano with 2 other freight trailer cars. For yet another 40 years, car 501 enjoyed a peaceful retirement in a barn with its old running mates.



501 and two unidentified freight trailers in retirement. Photo by Larry Paul

### TO VAN ALSTYNE WE WILL GO

Fast forward to the 1980s and car 501 once again is being sold for scrap. The farmer that kept it in Plano could no longer afford to keep the cars, as he had no more use for it or the other 3 cars that were on the property.



501 Being removed from the barn. Photo by Larry Paul



501 after being lifted away from the barn and trucked to Van Alstyne. Photo by Larry Paul

It would be around this time that the City of Van Alstyne would take interest in the old box motor and buy it. The only problem was, "who knew how to fix an old Interurban car?" Enter Johnnie J. Myers, who would just a few years later, publish his now famous book on the Texas Electric Railway. He offered to help fix the car and that he did! The car would go on display in the early 1990s.



501 Photo by Larry Paul

### 30 YEARS ALONE

Even though the old car had been fixed up and put on public display, it would be all the city would take interest in. A few times, the car was offered back to Johnnie, but he couldn't convince the city of Plano to take it like they did with car 360. This is very ironic since the car spent practically 80 years in Plano, both in and out of service of the Texas Electric Railway.

And so she sat alone for the next 20 years until a second car would be added, former Texas electric Railway trailer car 608, the only home built Monroe shop car.



### THERE WAS...AN ATTEMPT

From 2018, through 2022, the city of Van Alstyne took interest in restoring the car once again, but not for the right reasons.



Texas Electric Ry 501 at Van Alstyne, TX, 24 June 2007

by Ron Maxfield

501 in 2007





The city once again attempted to restore the old rail cars. As they had rebuilt a park named Interurban Park, fitted it with an amphitheater for public venues, shows and wanted to use the cars. But in their current condition they were unusable and deemed hazardous to public safety and had to either be restored or removed entirely.

So the restoration attempt began, this originally had a plan to have a single passenger car with a protective roof cover/walkway to be installed so people would be allowed to go inside the car and tour it much like the museums in Plano, Burleson and Fort Worth. But the plan altogether was rejected. They still wanted an interurban car but not the two they had. An "interesting" scheme was launched to take both cars completely apart and piece them back together into a half freight half passenger Frankenstein car with the left side looking like the freight motor and the right like a passenger car.



501 seen dismantled with 608 in the back awaiting the same grim treatment.



### NORTHERN TEXAS TRACTION CLUB TO THE RESCUE!!!

Alerted to the car's current predicament via social media, the Northern Texas Traction Club sprang into action and offered to assist in the "restoration" of the car and promptly put the brakes on the entire project (pun fully intended). After getting in contact with city officials and the project manager and explaining the historical significance of the 501 to the city, it was then decided that the car would not be further dismantled. However, due to its incredibly deteriorated condition, it would soon be thrown out as scrap.

The Northern Texas Traction Club made repeated offers to accept the car as a donation and restore it under the auspices that the club would own the car afterwards and assist in restoring the 608, which would remain in the city. For nearly 4 months, the project went silent and it seemed all hope was lost, 501 would be destroyed and 608 mangled.

The property the cars sat on is owned by a local church and as such they had changed their minds about having the cars be on the property and wanted them out.

They made this abundantly clear by placing a wrecker truck in the adjoining parking lot and giving an ultimatum that everything must be moved before the 12th of March or risk being demolished.

Finally, in February of 2023, the Northern Texas Traction Club was given permission to take the remains of the 501 into ownership. One month later, on the 11th of March, 2023 the car was picked up and then trucked down to Lancaster TX to be stored temporarily before awaiting future restoration.



Northern Texas Traction Club members preparing to load remnants of 501 onto a truck.



Remnants of 501 being loaded into a rented truck for its move to Lancaster.

At this point in time, the Northern Texas Traction Club is working on acquiring a small restoration grant to fix what is left of the car for display later in 2023 or 2024.

Eventually another grant will be applied for in hope of fabrication of a new body for the car and possibly adding running gear to make the car fully operational again.



**\*Disclaimer – The North Texas Chapter of the NRHS is not affiliated with the Northern Texas Traction Club. Texas Electric Railway Company 501 is reproduced here as a courtesy to NTTC, and no endorsement is made. Northern Texas Traction Club is solely responsible for the content.**



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## Tower 55 Bricks Salvaged by North Texas Chapter Volunteers

Photographs by Elden Baker, Steve Grabman and Wayne Smith

Thanks to our friend Ken Fitzgerald (and permission of UPRR), volunteers from the chapter gathered on Sunday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, to salvage over 200 bricks from the recent demolition of Tower 55. The North Texas Chapter plans to use the bricks for a fundraising campaign and we are currently working on a letter of authenticity. Chapter volunteers included Skip Waters, Elden Baker, James Dolande and Wayne Smith. Many thanks to Skip Waters for supplying the trailer used to haul the bricks and also for using his warehouse to store the bricks. Multiple trains rumbled through the diamond as we sorted through bricks. Pictures below are a sample of trains passing as we worked including Amtrak, Union Pacific and BNSF. It must be noted that the majority of the bricks were not intact and finding whole bricks was a challenge.



Standing in front of a mountain of bricks is a crew of volunteers including (left to right) James Dolande, Skip Waters, Ken Fitzgerald, Elden Baker, Wayne Smith and Troy Minnick. Photo by Steve Grabman.













Above: Ken Fitzgerald (left) and Wayne Smith (right) are pausing to take pictures and keep a count of bricks as they are being loaded onto a trailer to be moved for storage. Below: Skip Waters proudly poses with our stash of Tower 55 bricks.



Below: James Dolande is seen stacking bricks in Skip Water's warehouse for temporary safekeeping.





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### April Meeting Minutes

The April North Texas Chapter meeting was held Tuesday, April 4th, 2023 at the Grapevine Founder’s building. There were 14 attendees and the meeting was called to order at 7:29 by President Wayne Smith.

Wayne announced that the next meeting will be held at the Burleson Interurban Museum and is scheduled to begin at 7:00 pm. We will have access to both cars and the old Interurban Depot, which is now a Visitor’s Center and Museum and includes a gift shop. We will start the evening with our business meeting in the parlor car. A tour will be provided at the conclusion of the business meeting. The facilities are 100% handicapped accessible for all of our members with mobility issues.

VP Jon Shea announced that the June meeting will be at Sokol Hall in Dallas and the program will be a video entitled, “Pikes Peak by Rail” and includes the cog train. Because the first Tuesday in July is the 4<sup>th</sup>, it was decided that the July meeting will be held on the second Tuesday, which is the 11<sup>th</sup>. Meeting location and program is to be determined. The August meeting will be held at the Grapevine Founder’s Building again.

A question came up about the cost of the use of the Founder’s Building, which is \$100.00 per meeting. Chapter Treasurer Bob Kennedy reported that the chapter pays for most meeting places and it ranges from \$30.00 to \$100.00 per location, although the Anna Depot was free.

Clint Tennill Jr. donated 40 Dream/Plan/Build videos to the chapter and Sam Metzger bought them all for \$100.00, which went into the Chapter’s Treasury.

Bill Long, National Representative, gave his report on the March 10, 2023 Advisory Council Meeting:

*Video Meeting Friday March 10, 2023 Advisory Council Meeting Report*

**NOTES:**

*This meeting was an unusual situation. The Advisory Council has the duty to meet before every NRHS board meeting. The president of the NRHS board Tony White called an unscheduled meeting to elect an NRHS vice president and an NRHS board member due to unexpected vacancies. Also there was an issue of conflict of interest and confidentiality forms that needed to be resolved. Therefore the Advisory Council met before the board meeting, i.e. Advisory Council met on Friday, and the NRHS board met on Saturday.*

*Meeting lasted 2 1/2 hours (attended via laptop video).*

- 1) President (Richard Shulby) and secretary (Elizabeth Guenzler) ran the meeting.*
- 2) Since the meeting was called on short notice, most of the reports were written and sent in before the meeting.*
- 3) RailCamp for 2023 is going forward. The locations are in the east Delaware (June 25 – July 1 and in the west Tacoma, WA (June 18-25). RailCamp is available to high school students. Application deadline is April 1. Scholarships are available.*
- 4) Conferences: The 2023 NRHS board meeting Spring Conference (Advisory Council meets May 21, 2023) will be combined with the R&LHS (Railway & Locomotive Historical Society) annual meeting*

*in Sparks, Nevada. Also the Southern Pacific Railroad History Center will be involved. Note, this is just a combined meeting; there is no talk of the two societies merging. Since it is a primarily an R&LHS meeting there is low NRHS turnout.*

- 5) *Grants for 2022 by the NRHS have been made. Grants for 2023 will be decided by April 1, 2023. The grant acceptance period closed 1/31/2023. 50 grants requesting in excess of \$300,000 were received. The committee will choose around 20 of these for a smaller amount.*
- 6) *Membership: The NRHS had 5200-5300 members in the fall. So far this year (March) we have 3,675 members who have renewed compared to 4,449 last year at this time. Note it is possible to renew NRHS dues for multiple years.*
- 7) *Film Library: The NRHS has a film library of old 8mm, 16mm, VHS tapes, and slides, that need to be organized, and then made available to the membership via NRHS website. This effort has been on-going for several years. The Advisory Council sent a request to the board to provide financial and editor support for this.*
- 8) *Website: The chapter listings have been updated.*
- 9) *Future Conventions:*
  - a. *2023 South Florida Fort Lauderdale in September 1-6*
    - i. *Actual location Deerfield Beach*
    - ii. *Hotel Doubletree with rate \$129.00 per night.*
    - iii. *Friday Sept 1, Registration*
    - iv. *Saturday Sept 2, Meetings – Advisory Council, Board, General Meeting*
    - v. *Sunday Sept 3, Brightline trip Miami to Orlando and back*
    - vi. *Monday Sept 4, U.S. Sugar steam locomotive trip*
    - vii. *Tuesday Sept 5, Henry Flagler home and museum tour. Banquet in the evening*
    - viii. *Wednesday Sept 6, Tri-Rail to Magonia and Gold Coast Railroad Museum*
  - b. *2024 Harrisburg PA*
- 10) *Chapter Engagement Committee*
  - a. *Chapters and officers are being identified. Have heard from 74 chapters and are following up with others.*
  - b. *Chapter Survey*
    - i. *This is under consideration.*

*The Above Reported and Submitted by Bill Long (North Texas Chapter national representative)*

Skip reported that 24 Hours is a go. There will be no building access. We will once again rent a tent and porta-potties. Skip reported that Big Sandy is about a two hour drive from DFW and will not interfere with 24 Hours@ Saginaw.

Skip presented a check for \$100.00 to the Chapter for Clint's donated videos as noted above.

Bob Kennedy showed the original NTC logo and Chapter Charter (Original Charter - June 21, 1996, NTC was incorporated). The documents were mailed to Bob from former board member Claude Doane, who had moved to New York a few years ago.

Wayne's church donated a more compact and portable movie screen.

Wayne reported that chapter volunteers Skip Waters, Elden Baker, James Dolande and Wayne Smith collected over 200 bricks from the demolition site of Tower 55. Editor added the following – This was all possible due to Ken Fitzgerald and his connection to the Union Pacific Railroad. Ken obtained permission from the UP to be on their property. Ken also participated in the collection of the bricks. These will be for sale at a later date.

Skip introduced the Great Locomotive Chase (the evening’s program) that happened on April 12, 1862. It is a Walt Disney movie made in the 1950’s. The movie was shown to recognize the 151<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the event. The movie began at 8:07 pm and ended at 9:36 pm.

The meeting ended at 9:40 pm.

Submitted by Clinton L Tennill Jr., Acting Secretary

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## A Visit to the New Braunfels Railroad Museum

Story and Photos by Wayne Smith

The International & Great Northern, later becoming the Missouri Pacific, built through New Braunfels in 1880. For unknown reasons, a replacement depot was built in the same spot around 1900. The Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railroad, a.k.a. MKT or Katy, built its own tracks from San Marcos to San Antonio through New Braunfels in 1900. The Union Pacific now owns and controls both the IGN/MP and Katy lines in New Braunfels. Union Pacific maintains a small crew depot a couple of blocks from the old IGN/MP depot, which is now the New Braunfels Railroad Museum. The old IGN/MP line is used for southbound trains and the old Katy line for northbound trains.





The New Braunfels Railroad Museum is housed in the former International & Great Northern Depot. Displays include a rare velocipede from the late 1800's; several restored baggage carts, a complete telegraphy system and its history; a history of "standard time" (developed 20 years prior to its adoption by the Federal government); area specific railroad photos; and lanterns, timetables, passes, uniforms, and other "tools" required of the railroad employee to get his job done. The museum also includes model layouts, small steam engine, caboose, box car, dining car and other railroad exhibits.



A 0-6-0T Porter Locomotive is on display at the New Braunfels Railroad Museum. See a detailed description on the next page.



THIS STEAM LOCOMOTIVE WAS BUILT BY THE H.K. PORTER COMPANY, INC. IN JULY OF 1942. IT IS CLASSIFIED AS A 0-6-0T ENGINE, WHICH MEANS IT HAS NO FRONT TRUCKS, 6 DRIVING WHEELS AND NO REAR TRUCKS AND NO TRAILING TENDER. THE FUEL OIL IS CARRIED IN THE CONTAINER ACROSS THE BACK OF THE ENGINE AND THE WATER IS CONTAINED IN THE SADDLE TANK OVER THE FRONT OF THE ENGINE. IT WEIGHS 138,000 POUNDS AND DEVELOPS APPROXIMATELY 1500 HORSE POWER. CYLINDERS ARE 19X24, BP: 180, DD: 44, TE: 30,125.

THIS ENGINE WAS BUILT FOR THE PORTLAND CEMENT COMPANY OF BROOKSVILLE, FL. IT WAS USED TO MOVE CARS AROUND THE CEMENT PLANT AS NEEDED AND TO SET THE CARS ON PICK UP SIDINGS FOR MAINLINE RAILROADS TO HAUL TO OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY.

NUMBER 7 WAS SOLD TO KEITH MACKEY OF FT. LAUDERDALE, FL., LEASED AND LATER SOLD TO THE TEXAS TANK CAR WORKS IN SAN ANGELO, TX. THE NEW BRAUNFELS RAILROAD MUSEUM PURCHASED THE ENGINE IN 1995.

This sign was on display at the museum giving a detailed description and history of #7.



Missouri Pacific rolling stock can be seen while visiting the New Braunfels Railroad Museum.





The exterior and interior of this MP caboose has been beautifully restored.







Above, below and last page: Mannequins are strategically placed to show where the Conductor and Brakeman may have been positioned in the caboose.





The Doyle P. Bond Pullman Dining Car is on display and open to explore. It was converted to a “table car” at some point before obtained by the museum. It can be rented out for special events or occasions. There’s also a display of dining car china and silverware in a display case at one end of the dining car.



A photo of the former Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railroad Depot in New Braunfels is also on display.





As mentioned above, Union Pacific has a small crew depot and a small locomotive facility in New Braunfels. If you stand at the front of the museum (street side) and look straight ahead, you can see the facility in the distance. It is straight down Hill Ave. This author saw three locomotives sitting at the facility and went to take a picture. However, the three locomotives started moving toward the museum. The author whipped around quickly and got a photo of the three UP locomotives as they passed. It turned out that the museum was also caught in the photo of the locomotive movement. As a bonus, to the right of the author in his vehicle was a small New Braunfels Fire Museum. See the plaque below.



A small fire museum can be found in the old New Braunfels Central Fire Station on Hill Avenue.



**Chapter Directory**

North Texas Chapter Officers, 2022

- \*President, Wayne Smith, 940-300-4407
- \*Vice President/Programs, Jon Shea, 972-948-2413
- \*Vice President/Trips and Events, Skip Waters, [wgcrush@swbell.net](mailto:wgcrush@swbell.net)
- \*Vice President/Communications, Vacant
- \*Secretary, Jerry Nunn
- \*Treasurer, Bob Kennedy
- \*National Representative, Bill Long
- \*Webmaster, Kim Hays, [kimhays516@gmail.com](mailto:kimhays516@gmail.com)
- \*Zephyr Editor, Wayne Smith

Chapter Business Address: North Texas Chapter, NRHS, P.O. Box 600304, Dallas, Texas 75360

Chapter Email: [northtexaschapternrhs@gmail.com](mailto:northtexaschapternrhs@gmail.com)

North Texas Chapter site: <https://ntxnrhs.org/>

Facebook Page: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/409467244127/>

North Texas Zephyr (current issues): [The Zephyr Newsletter - North Texas Chapter, NRHS \(ntxnrhs.org\)](http://www.ntxnrhs.org/)

Zephyr Archives: [Rail History Newsletters \(gogeocaching.com\)](http://www.gogeocaching.com/)

**North Texas Chapter History**

Founded and chartered in 1996, the North Texas Chapter is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) educational organization incorporated under the laws of the state of Texas. Emphasis of the chapter is activity, history, and enjoyment of railroading past and present. Meetings are usually held 7:30-9:30 PM, the first Tuesday of each month. Visitors and newcomers are welcome.

Chapter membership includes our monthly chapter newsletter, the North Texas Zephyr. Currently, chapter dues are \$16, plus \$2 per additional family member. Payment may be made by check or paid online. By check - Mail a check payable to "North Texas Chapter NRHS" for \$16 (individual) or \$18 (family) and mail it to North Texas Chapter NRHS, PO Box 600304, Dallas TX, 75360. If your check does not clearly indicate who the member is, please add a note with the member's name.

Online - Visit the chapter's on-line store at <https://ntxnrhs.org/store> to pay by credit card or PayPal. A small service charge (50 cents for individuals, 75 cents for families) is added to your dues payment to cover processing fees.

Learn about the National Railway Historical Society at [www.nrhs.com](http://www.nrhs.com)

*Doodlebug News Briefs*



MKT doodlebug M10

**Tuesday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> Chapter Meeting – Burleson Visitor's Center/Interurban Museum. Meeting begins at 7:00, not 7:30. See first page for details.**

**Saturday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, National Train Day Celebration at Anna Depot and Museum, Anna TX. Details TBA.**

**Tuesday, June 6<sup>th</sup> Chapter Meeting – Sokol Hall, Dallas. Meeting begins @ 7:30. Video: "Pikes Peak by Rail".**

**Second Tuesday, July 11<sup>th</sup> (Not July 4<sup>th</sup>) Chapter Meeting – Grapevine Founder's Meeting @ 7:30, Program TBA.**

**Tuesday, August 1<sup>st</sup> Chapter Meeting – Grapevine Founder's Building @ 7:30, Program TBA.**

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