



Reminder to members: Please be sure your dues are up to date. They are due on Jan 1. If you have not renewed you can pay online, or download a membership form, at <http://oregontrolley.com/join>

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Yakima Trolley Sojourn

By Mark Kavanagh



Restored Yakima Valley Transportation Co. Brill Master Units 21 and 22, the “Bob Hively,” in the Yakima car barn in December 2025. No 21 is operational, but had an air brake system issue during our visit. (Mark Kavanagh photograph)

In late December 2025, Yakima Valley Trolleys (YVT) announced troubling news: the City of Yakima did not plan to renew its operating agreement for 2026. Without that agreement, YVT would lose access to the car barn, powerhouse, and even the trolleys themselves — facilities and equipment owned by the city.

In response, YVT organized what many feared might be the final day of operation on New Year’s Eve. The goal was twofold: celebrate the system and demonstrate public support ahead of the mid January City Council meeting. YVT committed to running every operable piece of equipment and offered ticketed rides throughout the day. *Continued on page 3*

Oregon Electric Railway Historical Society

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|----------------|------------------|
| President | Eugene Fabryka |
| Vice President | Richard Thompson |
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| Gift Shop Manager | Suzi Jones |
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Membership

Membership is based on a calendar year. All memberships expire on Dec. 31st, with renewal due by January 1st. The OERHS is a non-profit 501-C-3 corporation, so dues are tax deductible.

| Categories | | | |
|--------------|-------|------------|---------|
| Active | \$ 30 | Sustaining | \$ 250 |
| Family | \$ 60 | Life | \$ 500 |
| Contributing | \$ 75 | Benefactor | \$ 1000 |
| Supporting | \$100 | | |

Mission Statement

The mission of the Oregon Electric Railway Historical Society, Inc. is to preserve the regional heritage of electric railway transportation as a living resource for the benefit of the present and future generations.

To fulfill this mission the Society will promote:

- The study of electric railways, their physical equipment, properties, and operations, devoting special attention to the electric railways of western Oregon.
- The procurement and preservation of historic electric railway equipment, materials, and property.
- The display, interpretation, and operation of surviving historic equipment, materials and properties.

By Laws, Article II, 11/14/20

Official Notice

The Transfer is published quarterly as the official publication of the OERHS, a state and federally recognized not-for-profit institution and operator of the Oregon Electric Railway Museum at Brooks, Oregon and the Willamette Shore Trolley between Lake Oswego and Portland.

The views expressed herein are solely those of the individual writers identified and of the editor only and may not represent the views or policies of the Society, its Board of Trustees, Officers, or Members.

Articles, photos, and letters for publication are always welcome. Please email to either transfer@oerhs.org or trolley503@frontier.com

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www.oregontrolley.com

Do you want to drive a trolley?

You can be a Motorman, Conductor, Tour Guide, help restore trolleys or participate in more great activities. Want to learn to operate a 100-year-old trolley or an electric locomotive? If you are interested in training to be a motorman, conductor, or station agent at the museum contact Mark Kavanagh at (480) 334-2352. If you wish to volunteer for the Willamette Shore Trolley, call David Harold or Jan Zweerts at (503) 697-7436. No experience is necessary just a passion for trolleys! We can train you in any volunteer position that meets your interest.

How we deliver *The Transfer* and *The Monthly Pass*

Our quarterly newsletter *The Transfer* is published electronically in full high-resolution color. Members can view and download current and previous issues at the OERHS website: oregontrolley.com/transfer. You will also find an archive here of previous issues going back to the 1970s. It is easy to print copies on your personal color or black & white printer. By default, members receive email notification as soon as an issue is available. We believe you will appreciate the higher quality pictures that this process will provide to all the interesting photos that accompany our articles.

For those who prefer a printed copy of *The Transfer* a black and white version will be mailed to your home address by request. Please send this preference to Secretary Mark Kavanagh, Oregon Electric Railway Historical Society, 3995 Brooklake Rd. NE, Brooks, OR 97303 or send him an email at mark@oerhs.org.

When needed, the OERHS also updates members on events at the Oregon Electric Museum and the Willamette Shore Trolley in a short email newsletter called *The Monthly Pass*. We must have your correct email address for distribution of both newsletters. We respect your privacy and will only use your email address to send a single notification when the latest issue of *The Transfer* is ready. We do not send promotional material or advertising.

Yakima Trolley Sojourn

continued from p. 1

A Brief History of Yakima's Streetcars

Yakima's electric railway story began in 1907, when the Yakima Valley Transportation Company started construction. The first official run took place on December 24 of that year, using rented Tacoma streetcars for a dignitary trip.

Growth came quickly:

- 1908: YVT received three new streetcars and returned the borrowed Tacoma cars.

- 1909: Expansion continued with orders for two more streetcars and three interurbans. YVT was acquired by the Oregon Railway & Navigation Company (later Union Pacific).

- 1910: The Fruitvale line opened, four additional streetcars were ordered, and the present car barn at 3rd and Pine was built.

- 1911: The powerhouse beside the car barn entered service.



No. 4, one of Yakima Valley Transportation's first trolleys, is seen at an unknown location. (Yakima Valley Trolleys).

- 1913: The Selah line opened, accompanied by the arrival of three more interurban cars.

By 1920, the system had reached its peak with 48 miles of track serving Yakima and the surrounding valley. In 1922, Locomotive "A" was outfitted for overhead work, and GE Steeple Cab No. 298 joined the roster.

Decline began in the late 1920s. Cars No. 1 and 2 were scrapped, and although three modern Brill Master Units arrived in 1930, the remaining single truck cars were retired. Interurban service ended in 1935.

Buses arrived in 1940, and streetcar service ceased entirely in 1947. The three Master Units were sold to Portland Traction Company for use on the Oregon City and Bellrose lines, while electric freight operations continued to thrive for several more decades.

The 1970s brought renewed interest in heritage streetcar service. Two cars imported from Porto, Portugal began operating in 1974. They were numbered 1776 and 1976, to commemorate the upcoming U.S. Bicentennial.



Yakima Valley Transportation Maple line trolley No. 8 meets a Selah interurban at 6th and Fruitvale in 1917. (Yakima Valley Trolleys).



Car 21 was renumbered 4009 after sale to Portland Traction Co. in 1948. It is seen in Bellrose Line service during the 1950s.

In 1984, as freight traffic dwindled, the Union Pacific Railroad moved to abandon the YVT. The railway and most rolling stock were transferred to the City of Yakima after a final freight run in November 1985. The carbarn property remained with the UP until the city purchased it in 2008.

Two of the Yakima Master Units returned in 1989 under lease from owner Bob Hively, and in 2017 the third Master Unit, No. 20, also came home.

A New Year's Pilgrimage

On December 31, 2025, ten OERHS members made the early morning trek from Salem and Portland, following the Columbia Gorge and then Highway 97 into Yakima. The groups arrived within minutes of each other, ready for a full day of trolley operations. The only disappointment was that Master Unit No. 21, originally scheduled to run, was sidelined by an air compressor issue.

The morning featured Oporto No. 1976, a single truck Brill style car similar to our museum's Porto 210, though without extended vestibules. Built in 1928–29 as STCP No. 254, it

- along with sister car 1776 - marked the return of streetcar service to Yakima in 1974, 27 years after the original system shut down.

After the morning ride, the group enjoyed lunch at the Yakima Steak Company, a local business known for supporting YVT. Two Seattle area trolley fans joined our gathering.

Showcasing the Workhorses

Following lunch, YVT rolled out its non passenger equipment:

- GE Steeple Cab No. 298 (1922): Once a vital part of Yakima's **freight** operations, donated to the city after the UP ended service in 1985.
- Line Car A (1909): A Niles built original Yakima car, still equipped for overhead maintenance.

Both pieces operated up and down Pine Street, much to the delight of visitors.

YVT also opened the yard and carbarn, giving the Oregon contingent a chance to see the full collection, including all three Yakima Master Units. Oporto No. 1776 was in the barn. It was connected to a towed generator because the 6th Avenue overhead remains out of service following copper theft.

The historic powerhouse was open as well. While the original motor generator sets remain in place, modern equipment now powers the overhead.

A Future Still in Question

Visitors hoped this would not be the final day of trolley operation. Without YVT, at least a dozen out of town visitors - including our group - would not have spent the day (and their dollars) in Yakima. The trolleys



YVT steeplecab No. 298 operating for our group in December 2025. (Mark Kavanagh photograph)

represent a distinctive heritage attraction and are a meaningful part of the city’s identity.

Fortunately, at the January 2026 City Council meeting, the city approved a new five year operating agreement with YVT. It ensures continued service on Pine Street - for now.

The next challenge will be far larger: the reconstruction of Sixth Avenue, which carries the tracks leading to the private right of way toward Selah. The city is unwilling to fund the additional \$5–7 million required to rebuild the street with trolley tracks. YVT has roughly 14 months to secure the required funding.

YVT has been pursuing Historic Landmark status, and the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation has listed the system as one of the state’s Most Endangered Places due to the uncertain future of the Selah line. The Selah line is the last segment that preserves the original interurban character of the Yakima system.




YVT Porto car 1776 is seen in the car barn with the tow-along generator made necessary after thieves stole expensive overhead wire on Sixth Avenue. (Mark Kavanagh photograph).

Looking Ahead

We hope the Yakima City Council and the broader community recognize the cultural and economic value YVT brings to the region. With support, the

Selah line - and Yakima’s remarkable electric railway heritage - can continue into the future.

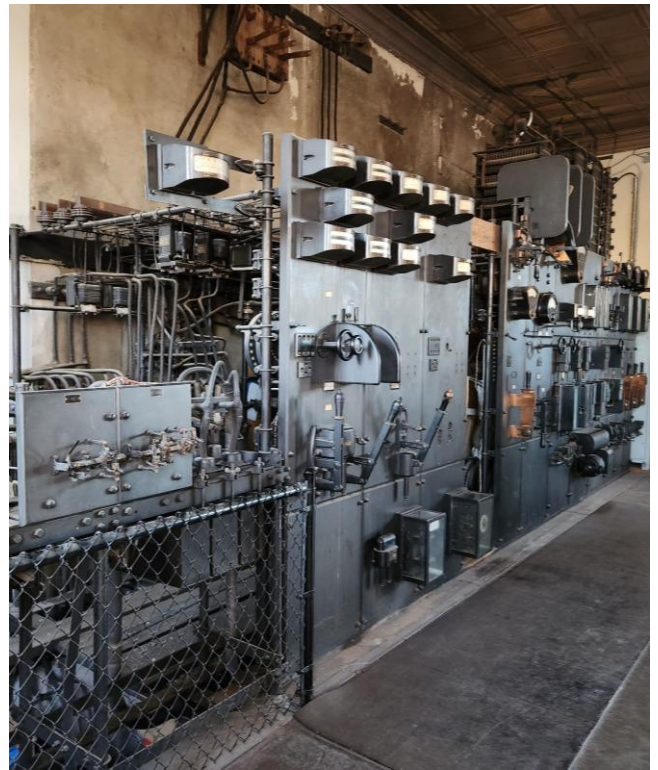
To learn more, or support YVT’s preservation efforts, visit <https://yakimavalleytrolleys.org/> 



YVT Porto car 1976 is decorated for Christmas as it rolls past the car barn on Pine Street in December 2025. (Mark Kavanagh photograph).



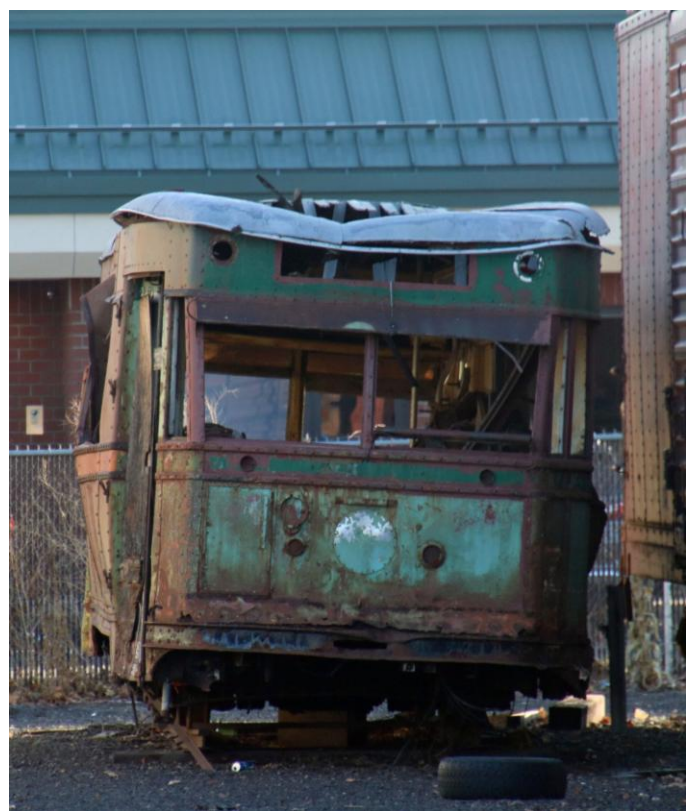
Operator's chair and controls in YVT No. 22 (Mark Kavanagh photograph)



Powerhouse control panel at Yakima Valley Trolleys Museum (Mark Kavanagh photograph)



YVT Steeplecab 298 is behind venerable line car A on Pine Street in December 2025. (Mark Kavanagh photograph)



Although battered and forlorn YVT Brill Master Unit No. 20 has returned to join its two sisters in Yakima. (Mark Kavanagh photo)



An elegant Portland Railway Company open cable car is seen on the turntable at SW 18th Ave. and Jefferson St. during the summer of 1902.

What Else is in This Picture?

Richard Thompson

Colorizing old photographs does more than bring old pictures to life; it reveals fascinating details that might otherwise go unnoticed. I will revisit the “What Else” theme begun by John Nagy in a similar article five years ago to share what I learned of 1902 food and culture from the above picture.

A lot can be gleaned from this photograph of an open cable car on the turntable at what is now SW 18th Avenue and Jefferson Street. But, first, the technical details from histories and surviving records. The vehicle in this scene was one of ten open cars built by the Stockton Combine, Harvester and Agricultural Works in California and delivered to the Portland Cable Railway Company in 1890. By the time this picture was taken the car had become part of the first Portland Railway Company, which had electrified all cable lines in 1896, except for the steep ascent to Portland Heights. After that, several cars became hybrids equipped with both cable and electric

trucks. Most Portland cable cars were eventually entirely electrified. They were retired by 1910.

Now, what more can be learned by examining the photograph? The J. Schmitt store in the background selling cigars, tobacco and ice cream is typical of the tobacco and candy shops located at the end of many Portland carlines.

More period detail, much of it offensive today, is revealed in the popular entertainments advertised on billboards behind the car. The billboard on the left is for the Richards & Pringles Minstrel show, which performed at Cordray’s Grand Theatre on SW 3rd and Yamhill, from September 7-9, 1902. Minstrel shows were a popular form of theater in which performers (usually white) in black face reinforced the racial stereotypes of the time.

Cordray’s was one of Portland’s first theaters. It was built in 1889 and would later be owned by Mayor George Baker, who renamed it the Baker. It was demolished in July 1910.

The poster on the far right promotes the August 20th opening of “Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” also at Cordray’s Grand. “Tom Shows” were travelling theatrical productions popular in the U.S. from the 1850s through the early 20th century. Loosely based on Harriet Beecher Stowe’s 1852 novel of the same name, they often featured racist, comedic minstrel-style performances utilizing blackface actors. 🎭

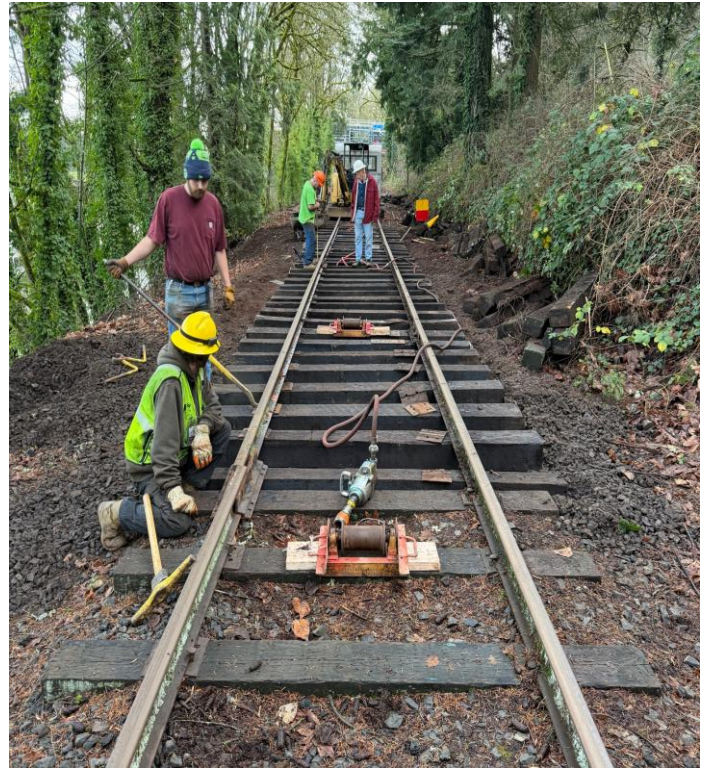


Above, a c. 1893 side view of Cordray's Theater and Musee with Mt. Tabor line car 33 and trailer 13 waiting at the terminal on SW 3rd and Yamhill. No. 33 was said to be the first double truck streetcar west of the Mississippi River. Below, a view of the theater around 1905 after it became The Baker Theatre. Posters promote upcoming Baker Stock Company productions of "The Girl of the Golden West" and "Sweet Kitty Belais."





A view of the maintenance of way work train taken from the Sellwood Bridge. (Cynthia Stowell photograph)



Section foreman Harmon Whipple inspects the alignment of rail in preparation for spiking. Note 30 new ties. (Gage Geist photograph)

Winter Maintenance of Way on the WST

Gage Geist

This winter the Willamette Shore Trolley maintenance crew has been hard at work replacing nearly 200 ties in Powers Marine Park. Our team took a well deserved break in March, and will finish the job before the start of spring operation. With the use of section foreman Theodore Clarke’s recently acquired excavator we were able to get 30 to 40 ties changed out in about six hours.

We have been renting a 185 CFM air compressor from Star Rentals to run our many pneumatic track tools. We load it onto a rail car and take it along with us to each work site. We hope to have our own compressor in the future but the folks at Star



Clayton Geyman, Jack Higgins, Ethan Perkins, and Chris Cox are ready to take the MOW work train out for another day's work. (Gage Geist photograph)



MOW crew shovels and tamps ballast under a raised frog on the Willamette Shore Trolley. (Gage Geist photograph)¹

Rentals have been a great help by giving us a discount on long term rentals since we are a non-profit organization.

In addition to tie replacement, our crews have been hard at work keeping drainage ditches clear following several rain storms encountered last winter. We have also been busy blowing leaves off our six miles of track. Crews even repaired a rough joint at the North Sellwood siding switch, which involved raising the track six inches and doing a lot of tamping to keep it in place.

The next few months will mostly entail brushing the line to prepare for opening weekend in late May. We have a solid team of MOW workers and always welcome newcomers. If you are interested we would be happy to have you! 🚆

Floating Bridge a Light Rail First

Mark Kavanagh

On Saturday, March 28, 2026, the Pacific Northwest added a remarkable chapter to its transit history. Sound Transit

officially opened the long-awaited Link Line 2 extension, carrying light rail trains from South Bellevue, across Mercer Island, and into downtown Seattle, where it joins Line 1.

What makes this opening truly historic is the engineering behind it. This is the first light rail system in the world to operate over a floating bridge. Because Lake Washington’s floor is exceptionally deep and composed of soft, silty material, a

traditional fixed bridge was never an option. Engineers converted the existing I-90 floating bridge HOV lane structure, which can rise and fall with the lake while still supporting the weight and precision requirements of modern light-rail vehicles. Automobiles have crossed the I-90 floating bridge for decades but adapting the structure for rail was a feat of innovation worthy of recognition.

Opening day drew enthusiastic crowds, with trains packed full of riders eager to experience the new connection. Two new stations debuted as part of the extension: one on Mercer Island and another at Judkins Park in Seattle, improving access for neighborhoods long underserved by high-capacity transit.

With this addition, Link Light Rail now spans more than 62 miles, edging past the Portland MAX system’s nearly 60-mile network. For commuters, the new line offers a welcome alternative to the often-congested I-90 corridor, a reminder of how transformative reliable rail service can be for a region. 🚆



Link Light Rail train from Seattle arriving at the crowded Mercer Island Station on opening day. (Mark Kavanagh photograph)

DONATION REQUEST (Tax deductible receipt will be mailed to you)

Remember the OERHS in your Will or Trust. Even a small bequest can help the museum grow!

Did You Know?

Members 70.5 years or older can make tax free donations to the OERHS from their 401(k) that count towards the mandatory percentage 2.5% that they need to take out of their IRA anyway. Consider making a donation today!

Donation Opportunities

| Endowment Fund | <u>Items</u> | <u>Description</u> | <u>Amount</u> |
|---|----------------------|--|------------------------|
| | Endowment Fund | <i>Helps create an endowment fund to support operations, staff (future) and general projects</i> | \$ _____ |
| Board Fund | Unrestricted Funds | <i>Allows Board to allocate funds as needed (Projects, events, car acquisition, etc.)</i> | \$ _____ |
| Capital Projects | Phase 1 Yard Project | <i>Build a permanent switch yard (~11k)</i> | \$ _____ |
| | Carbarn #2 | <i>Build the 2nd carbarn (will also be the temporary restoration shop) – (~\$450k)</i> | \$ _____ |
| | Mainline Loop | <i>Complete the loop for multiple car operation and operate single-ended cars. Adding ~ 2000 additional feet will complete the loop. (~\$45k)</i> | \$ _____ |
| | Interpretive Center | <i>Flooring, archives, displays, and exterior landscaping (sidewalks, platforms, etc.)</i> | \$ _____ |
| | Buy A Tie | <i>\$55 buys us a new fir tie to replace worn out ones (we need about 2000 of them so every single tie is a great help)</i> | \$ _____ |
| Restoration Projects | Buy Concrete | <i>~\$120/yd³ for track, curbs, platforms, etc.</i> | \$ _____ |
| | PRL&P #1067 | <i>Help refurbish the running gear we obtained from the NWRM to restore this car</i> | \$ _____ |
| | Car Restoration | <i>All our cars need love & care, and many are awaiting restoration. Donate to the car fund or specify a car. Some of the projects underway are: 813 (Broadway car), 1159 (PCC), 1455 (snow sweeper) & locos 254 & 401</i> | \$ _____ Car: _____ |
| Specific Items: <i>(Donate items or \$)</i> | Uniform Parts | <i>Hats, pants, vests & jackets for volunteers</i> | \$ _____ |
| Name Your Project | | <i>Do you have an idea you would like to see done? Tell us about it!</i> | \$ _____ |
| TOTAL | | | \$ _____ |

To: OERHS, 3995 Brooklake Rd, Brooks, Oregon 97303

Name _____ Date _____ Cash \$ _____ Check \$ _____

Credit Card: \$ _____ Visa MasterCard American Express Discover

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THANK YOU!