

THE TRACK AHEAD...

SWITCH TOWER PROJECT

The construction of the replica switch tower will be only partially funded by the PA DCED grant. Additional funds are needed to complete the interior, electrify the control panel, and provide educational exhibits including an informational video.

Your help is needed!

Contributions may be sent to:

RCT&HS

PO Box 15143

Reading, PA 19612-5143

Or contact us at museum@readingrailroad.org

2020 RCT&HS Board of Directors:

Duane Engle, president

Tom Brown, first vice president

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John Brown, director

Donald Crabtree, director

Stephen Gilbert, director

Michael Huber, director



ANNUAL REPORT

2021



Ribbon cutting at the new rail car protection building
at the Reading Railroad Heritage Museum on September 18, 2021

The mission of the Reading Company Technical and Historical Society is to document, collect, preserve, exhibit, and interpret equipment, artifacts, archives, and history related to the Reading Railroad, its predecessors, successors and subsidiaries and the communities it served for the education, safety awareness, and enjoyment of its members and the public.

The Reading Railroad Heritage Museum
500 S. Third St.
Hamburg, PA 19526
www.readingrailroad.org



The Reading Railroad Heritage Museum, a nationally recognized resource, is the educational and interpretive center for the extensive collections of the Reading Company Technical and Historical Society. Displays, video, hands-on experiences, and events illustrate the impact of the Reading Railroad on southeastern Pennsylvania and beyond from its beginning in 1833 until the end of its era in 1976. The Museum is operated entirely by the RCT&HS, an all-volunteer non-profit corporation, whose efforts have assembled the collections and built the museum.

Museum visitors can go outdoors to see over 70 pieces of historic Reading Railroad locomotives, freight and passenger cars, one of the largest collections in the U.S. pertaining to a single railroad. The exhibit building features tools, machines, documents, uniforms, and many other items used by Reading Railroad workers. Model trains and a re-created station agent's office are popular attractions. Exhibits on a variety of railroad subjects change seasonally. A 15-minute video, "The Reading Railroad Shaped Communities", is shown in the Museum theater. Books, clothing, model trains, children's toys, and treasures for rail enthusiasts of all ages are available at the Museum store. The Museum is open Saturdays from 10 AM to 4 PM and Sundays from noon to 4 PM. Weekday tours for school and community groups are available by appointment. Researchers may study by appointment in the extensive archive of Reading Railroad maps, photos, and documents.



The RCT&HS by the numbers

Membership 2021:

Individual: 494 Family: 97
 Contributing: 104 Sustaining: 88
 Corporate: 15 Full-time Student: 4
Total memberships: 802

All members received 12 monthly newsletters, *The Crusader*.

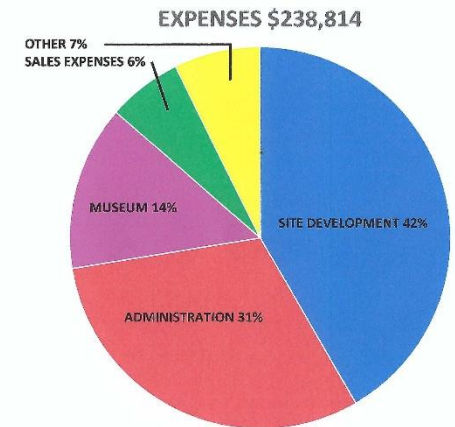
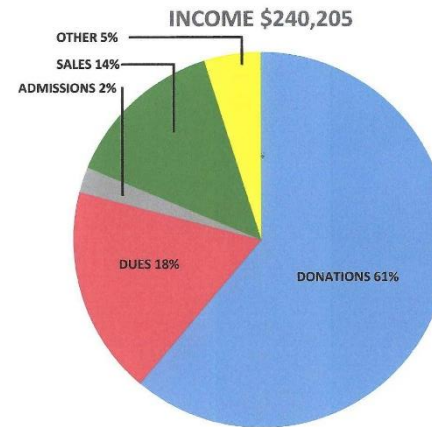
Service:

Although the Museum was closed for 5 months during 2021, more than 60 volunteers gave at least 8,500 hours of service.

Visitors:

189 guests visited the Museum between June 5 and December 31, 2021.

Finance: Donations exceeding membership dues were received from 395 individuals, families, and businesses.



Museum Building Committee had two primary areas of focus in 2021:

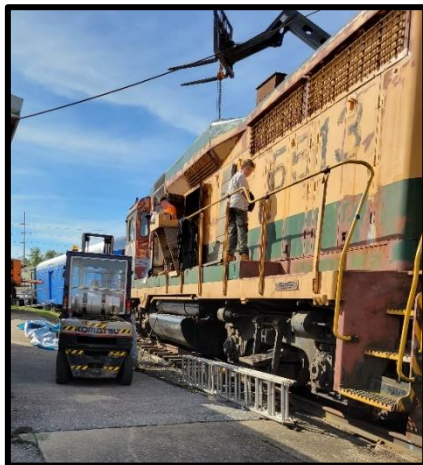
1. Completion of the upgrades to the Modular area including new windows and doors, weather stripping, and new heating and air conditioning systems.
2. Completion of the new railcar protection building including drain piping from the rain gutters, installing concrete walkways, adding exit lighting, and fire extinguishers. Some concrete walkways remain to be completed when the track is complete thru the door openings.

Don Crabtree, chair

Track and Grounds spent much of 2021 working around the new Rail Car Protection Building. Grading and finishing work was done as well as installing drain pipes for roof run-off. We also worked to connect the tracks that were in the building to the track in the yard. With the tracks connected, we were able to roll 4 pieces of equipment into the building. Regular grounds upkeep was done throughout the year with additional grounds improvements. Our plans for 2022 include completing the construction of all the track in the new building and continuing with additional track in the yard.

Duane Engle, chair

Motive Power and Rolling Equipment: Restoration work was on the back burner in 2021 with staff redirected to work at our new storage building and to improve security around the equipment. A custom, railcar-focused security solution was developed, with a goal of expanding it to our most critical locomotives in 2022 and 2023. Some work was done in 2021 on loco #5513, and in 2022 we will install 2 rebuilt power assemblies and 16 new or rebuilt injectors. Work will also restart on repairing or replacing exterior panels. As part of routine maintenance on our GP39-2 #3412, we are removing the many additions, with the goal of getting it back to its "as delivered" state. One M-U car received luggage rack restoration and the interior of another was repainted into its original pale pink and rose Reading Company colors. We are seeing our volunteer staff increasing again, now that COVID is not holding us back.



Mike Huber and Paul Payne

Full Steam Ahead! Not even a pandemic could stop forward progress at the Reading Railroad Heritage Museum. The Museum re-opened on June 5, 2021 after 15 months of closure.



In late 2021, the RCT&HS was approved to receive a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Economic Development for \$100,000. The funds will be used for three projects.

Ties and timbers: acquisition of materials for 850 feet of track and 2 track switches so that RCT&HS volunteers can install track into the new railcar protection building.

Restroom acquisition: a self-contained restroom will allow for accessible visitor comfort during attendance at events, tours, and educational events taking place in locations away from the exhibit building.

Switch tower construction: partial funding for the construction of a building resembling the Reading Railroad's Race St. switch tower to display and interpret artifacts from that building. Visitors will learn how trains were controlled safely.

Museum Operations: Due to the Covid 19 pandemic the museum was closed the first half of the year. As a precaution, the Museum was open only on Saturdays from the beginning of June until the Christmas Season. From the beginning of December until the middle of January 2022 we opened both days each weekend and were pleased with the attendance. The "Unseen Engineers of the Reading" exhibit was retained until mid-January.

Dale Woodland, chair

The **Archives** received 48 donations of photos and documents during 2021, the most notable of which was a collection of over 3,000 digital copies of drawings of Reading Railroad structures dating back to the 19th Century. Work continued on organizing our archival holdings, and on scanning our drawings of steam locomotives and other rolling stock. More than 80 research requests and researcher visits were handled, and historical information was provided to other RCT&HS committees to support their projects. Six different volunteers helped out at various times in the Archives.

Rick Bates, chair

The **Museum exhibit**, "The Unseen Engineers of the Reading Railroad", re-opened in June, showcasing thirty reproductions of vintage maps and drawings of stations and structures drafted by the innovative architects and planners of the Reading Railroad. Some drawings were acquired from the Smithsonian. Photos and models were also displayed. Because of the COVID closure, the 2020 exhibit was extended through January 2022. The exhibit sponsor was Masano Architects Group, Inc.



The **Sales Committee** attended only a few off-site shows during 2021 due to Covid restrictions. The shows were staffed with the help of 10 Society members. The museum store was open on a limited schedule until the museum operating season when it was again staffed by the museum docents. We continue to look for new Reading Lines items to sell as well as general railroad related items that would do well on our sales tables.

Duane Engle, chair

Car #15 - Thank you to all those who assisted us in 2021. The Facebook page followers grew by 29 members to 159. A hasp set was fabricated and installed on the motor generator set cage to secure the machinery. A detailed inventory of all underbody electrical cables, between car jumpers and associated receptacles was made. Window leakage has become a bigger issue due to sash and glass seal failure. A fund drive was begun in May for roof repairs and we appreciate all the donations that were submitted. Roof leakage has been very minimal through 2021 with spot patching done as needed.

Kevin Painter, chair

The **Modular Committee** has been weathering the covid storm rather well. In 2021, we were able to attend two shows: Greenberg's in August and the PA Christmas Gift Show in December. Both shows were successful.



The time between shows has been filled with restoring and upgrading individual scenes on the layout. In early 2021, we were able to work in the exhibit area of the Museum. As the Museum reopened, we returned to our workroom which had been fitted with environmental controls and new LED lighting. We are delighted to have this wonderful work space. Improvements include: two new four-foot modules so we can increase our width to

18 feet and upgrades to West Cressona, East Penn, and Dana; also the never-ending maintenance for the entire layout.

Karen Confer, chair

Reading Railroad Modelers Meet was an in-person event in 2021, after hosting a virtual event in 2020 due to the covid pandemic. Our 2021 event was well attended with 65 attending and a record number of vendors. Our clinics were well-received but layout tours suffered from lingering covid concerns.

Sponsors donated many great products for our raffle prizes. So, the event was a success!



Planning for the 2022 big MEET X is underway. We hope you are planning to attend!

Barry Hensel, chair