

Speeder, Jacks and The Mortgage



The donation of the White Train railroad cars came with some welcome, and unexpected, bonuses. The first was this gasoline-powered speeder (sometimes call a motorcar, handcar, or 'putt-putt') and two trailers (carts). This equipment allowed Pantex employees to move quickly around the property without having to use the larger diesel locomotives. The car was listed in the Pantex inventory as '74000011 Car, Railway Inspector's Car.' If we follow the numbering system Pantex used for the ALCO S2 this would be numbered 740-11.

Because the speeder and carts have pressed, rather than cast steel wheels, they have a very distinctive 'zinging' sound as the go down the track.



Left. Speeder and cart. The museum uses the equipment just as it was used at Pantex, to quickly get around the trackage on our property.

Right. The speeder controls look a bit daunting, but easy to use once they become familiar.



Left. The second cart we received is on display at the west side of the museum headquarters,



Additional materials included in the very generous donation included: joint bars, tie plates, and associated track materials, miscellaneous tools manufactured specifically for use on railcars, four left-hand switches, four-right hand switches, 6,000 LF track rail, five switch stands, and 3,000 railroad ties.

Not all of these materials were delivered on July 17th with the White Train cars. Trips were made to the Pantex site to retrieve materials.

Just for fun!



Left. A Missouri Pacific whistle post. How it got to Amarillo is a mystery.



Above. Brand New BNSF ES44C4, 10/30/2014.



Left. Where it really started. Our organizational meeting April 30th, 1990, was held at the Texas A&M Research and Extension Center on Amarillo Boulevard.

Right.





A second large bonus for the museum in the DOE/Pantex donation were four 35-ton Whiting hydraulic jacks that has been used to maintain the railroad equipment at the plant. This left us with a decision to make. Should we keep the jacks, waiting for a future shops in which to use them, or perhaps sell them and use the money for other things?



The decision was made to sell them and raise some cash.

On a rainy March morning in 2008 Tracy Ball, Guy Pigg, and maybe Earl Carrel wrangle the first of the jacks onto a trailer. Who needed four 35-ton hydraulic jacks?



After spreading the word around for a couple of years, Jerry Michels was contacted by the Nebraska Central Railroad (GP38mac 4202 pictured above). They wanted to buy the jacks! The Nebraska Central Railroad Company (NCRC) is a 340-mile network composed of five former Union Pacific Railroad branch lines and one former BNSF Railway branch line. Trackage rights include rights to 70 miles of UPRR main line between North Platte, Neb. and Omaha, Neb. NCRC, through its connection with Union Pacific (at Columbus, Central City and Grand Island) and BNSF (at David City), is an integral part of grain shipments in the region. To learn more about the NCRC visit [https://rgpc.com/railroads/nebraska-central-](https://rgpc.com/railroads/nebraska-central-railroad/)

[railroad/](https://rgpc.com/railroads/nebraska-central-railroad/).



After a long, wet road trip the jacks keep company with sister Nebraska Central GP38mac 4203 at the company's locomotive shop in an ex-Union Pacific freight house at Grand Island, Nebraska.

Both GP38mac's have since been retired.



Great news and a triumph for the museum!

The sale of the jacks allowed us to pay off our mortgage, and the Amarillo Railroad Museum owned the building and land debt-free. Tracy Ball burns our mortgage at a celebration party held at the museum on December 23rd, 2008.

What a Christmas present!

Retiring the mortgage fulfilled the goal the founders set eighteen years earlier to own a building and property that could never be taken away. We would never be at the whims or needs of land or building owners, local government taxes, or financial institutions. A lot of work had been done in 18 years, and a lot more was to come, but this could easily be considered our second birth.



At the back of the building, Tracy Ball grills steaks for the celebration going on inside, with Joe Sweeny looking on. Virgil Doyle in the foreground seriously contemplates the museum's next move.

Maybe not plush ambiance, but the museum members enjoyed the festivities in what was becoming the layout room. Lots of time to celebrate our milestone and be optimistic about the future of a museum that was now forever secure. To the left of the photo, the two sheets of the newly received layout plan is posted on a bulletin board. The view is looking east toward the helix, Amarillo will be built on the right.

