

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

Sept. 3, 2024

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



The Gulf Wind Chapter's popular open house events at the historic Lloyd Depot are an opportunity for the organization to display its collection of vintage railroad equipment and related artifacts that were used throughout the station's many years of service. *Photo by Dave Hodges*

## Free open house Sept. 7 at historic Lloyd Depot

The Gulf Wind Chapter cordially invites railfans, history buffs and residents to our organization's community open house, a free event scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 7, at the historic Lloyd Depot in Jefferson County, FL.

A centerpiece of the Lloyd Historic District and Florida's oldest remaining train station, the depot was built in 1858 by the Pensacola & Georgia Railroad. The chapter's open house is a chance for the members to put numerous railroad artifacts and memorabilia on display and to discuss the building's historical significance.

The free event takes place from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. A free hot dog lunch will be served.

The Lloyd Depot was in service until the 1960s. When the building was closed by the Seaboard Air Line Railroad in 1966 and faced demolition, the railroad agreed to transfer the building to the Jefferson County Historical Association for preservation. The Gulf Wind Chapter assumed ownership of the building in 1975 and has carried out several phases of restoration work since that time.

For more information, visit the chapter website at [gulfwindnrhs.org](http://gulfwindnrhs.org). The depot is located at 8781 Old Lloyd Road, just east of State Road 59, next to the Lloyd Farmers Market.



Amtrak's passenger service extension east from New Orleans to Mobile can proceed, now that the Mobile City Council has voted in favor of the operating agreements that cover Amtrak's lease of local facilities and the necessary funding commitments for the service. *Photo courtesy of Amtrak*

## ***Mobile City Council approves passenger rail plans***

The Mobile City Council voted unanimously Aug. 6 to approve the funding and land use agreements with Amtrak which were needed for the planned construction of the train platform and additional track in the city and ultimately, the start of the passenger service extension from New Orleans east to Mobile.

The council's vote covers Mobile's three-year funding commitment to Amtrak of \$3.048 million, which matches the amounts promised by Louisiana and Mississippi. The contributions will help offset Amtrak's operating costs for the service, and Mobile's share is reduced somewhat by the Alabama Port Authority's pledge of \$1 million.

Amtrak proposes to run its trains daily, departing Mobile at 6:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., stopping in Pascagoula, Biloxi, Gulfport and Bay St. Louis and ending in New Orleans. Two trains departing daily from New Orleans would end in Mobile. The service extension is expected to be added during the first quarter of 2025.

According to a status report filed in June with the federal Surface Transportation Board, Amtrak, the port authority, and freight railroads CSX Corp. and Norfolk Southern indicated that a section of track must be constructed at the Mobile Station, which entails relocation of utilities, and that requires its own environmental review. The parties said this will affect the timing of the track construction in Mobile and the start of the expanded passenger service.

Passenger trains once stopped in Mobile and at other points along the Gulf Coast as part of Amtrak's *Sunset Limited* service, which ran from Los Angeles to Miami. Hurricane Katrina in 2005, however, wiped out the rail and related infrastructure. Thereafter, freight service was able to resume along the corridor, but passenger service has been delayed by lack of funding, questions over potential ridership and resistance from the freight railroads to Amtrak's plans.



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.

Dave Hodges

Editor  
Gulf Wind Chapter, NRHS  
davehodges55@gmail.com  
gulfwindnrhs.org