

“All Hands on Board!”



John Garner, Operations Manager; Jim Montague, Brakeman; Gene Cave, Chief Operating Officer; Nicole Kudrick, Onboard Narrator; Jim May, Conductor; and Mike McMarlin, Engineer.

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The Western Maryland Scenic Railroad’s new slogan aptly describes the work that is currently underway and a vision for the upcoming operating season. John Garner, WMSR Superintendent, loves the new slogan and sees nothing but green lights ahead.

“Despite the recent landslide challenges we faced, the WMSR is still operating and receiving generous support from Allegany County officials,” stated Garner. “We have a number of ongoing projects that highlight our partnerships with local officials and businesses.”



Mary Ann Weimer, Dining Car Service Manager behind the bar in the dining car.

One plan calls for the creative adaptive reuse of old city bus shelters along the Cumberland-to-Frostburg route. “We plan to paint and refurbish the bus shelters and place them at strategic areas along the line over the next several years. This will increase the number of station stops, while providing more opportunities for our guests. Six picnic tables have already been provided for the initiative. Guests may choose to stay at one of the stops, and then catch the next train. We are grateful for the support from officials,” noted Garner.

More local businesses are coming onboard with the WMSR. “Several business owners have approached us about sponsoring events. These partnerships are continuing to grow and provide our guests with the best experiences possible. We also encourage guests to stay at local hotels and shop locally—everybody wins.”

WMSR guests will now be treated to onboard food services. According to Garner, “We re-evaluated our dining options and decided to upgrade. The kitchen car has been refurbished with a new floor, appliances, and other amenities. A new Dining Car Service Manager has been hired, Mary Ann Weimer, who prepares, cooks, and serves from the new kitchen car. For our guests who desire a more upscale option, a private lounge area in the dining car is available. The upgrades fit perfectly into our mission statement, “When Service Mattered.”

Guests will also be offered an increased number of special events. In keeping with the decision to operate year-round, two New Year’s Eve trips and a Valentine’s Day run will complement the already popular Dinner with Santa, North Pole Experience, and Murder Mystery trains.

Whistle Tix, a new vendor that links customers’ ticket purchases with the WMSR website, will improve service and guest experiences. The company is well known in the railroad museum and tourist railroad industry.

Rolling stock improvements continue to progress. The former #1309 Chesapeake & Ohio articulated engine and last commercially built steam locomotive in the United States is moving toward full service. All parts have been sent out for replacement or refurbishment and are expected soon. “In early 2017, we will have a big surprise for steam locomotive fans across the United States,” stated Garner.

The #501, a heritage GP30 diesel built in the 1960s, is currently in service until the #1309 steam locomotive is operational, while the accompanying #502 GP30 remains out of service for the foreseeable future.

Western Maryland Railway fans continue to express an interest in the #204 Business Car that was acquired several years ago. According to Garner, “Right now, all efforts are directed toward getting the #1309 running. Once that



For a more upscale option, a Private Lounge Area can be reserved any time or for that special occasion.



Right: Guests will now be treated to onboard food services from the refurbished kitchen car.

goal is accomplished, we will focus on restoration of the #204.”

Garner is quick to credit his team for the WMSRs successes. “Our new team has embraced the Golden Age of Rail-roading mission statement and staff is dressed in matching shirt and tie uniforms that look really sharp! This is the best team that I have ever worked with. To staff, the WMSR

is not just another job. Team members have made it known that they are willing to do whatever it takes to present a quality product for our guests. Everyone is looking forward to the 2017 operating season.”

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