

A TIME OF CHANGE

Western Maryland Scenic Railroad 2015



Courtesy of the Chesapeake and Ohio Historical Society

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The Western Maryland Scenic Railroad, heritage railroad of Cumberland, Maryland, is reinventing and updating on many levels. As their WMSR Foundation website www.movingfullsteamahead.com states; they are moving full steam ahead. The 2015 WMSR season will include an even larger variety of trains, the 2nd Annual Steel Wheels celebration and the Farewell (for now) to steam locomotive No. 734. What does this mean for the visitors of the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad? It means a different heritage experience each time you visit.

The trains and available activities for the 2015 season are better than ever. Beginning in June, Saturday night dinner trains have been re-branded as 'Saturday Night Specials' and include not only murder mysteries, but also musical



performances and wine tastings. MedExpress Urgent Care will be on board once a month and available in Frostburg with special children's activities which will include building first aid kits. Special photo sessions throughout the year featuring unique and heritage railroad scenes — diesels, steam locomotive No. 734, and other exclusive shop photo prospects will be suitable for novices, professionals, and anyone who likes to catch exceptional views with their camera.

On July 3, 2015, the WMSR Foundation and the Allegany County Historical Society will be celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the ending of the Civil War by partnering to offer a unique First Class excursion. Proceeds will benefit the Allegany County Historical Society and the Light My



Photo by Lance C. Bell

Facing page: No. 1309 was recently added to WMSR and is being rebuilt to replace the No. 734 (above). No. 734 will undergo a major rebuild and comprehensive inspection after this season, having been in service for 15 years.

Fire, 1309 (C&O 1309 steam locomotive restoration project). In May 2014, the WMSR acquired Chesapeake & Ohio 1309 from the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Museum. It was the last steam locomotive built by Baldwin Locomotive Works for a domestic railroad. Once C&O 1309 is restored, Cumberland, Maryland will be the home of the largest articulated steam locomotive in operation in the U.S.

The 2nd annual Steel Wheels celebration will be held September 11-13, 2015 and will include scenic excursions, Hand on the Throttle with 734, shop tours, Conductors Lunch Ride aboard a caboose, Twilight Dinner Diesel with photo opportunities, Saturday Night Murder Mystery, and a Western Maryland Transportation Heritage Banquet. Also included are special scenic and heritage bus tours of the Western Maryland Railway to Westernport and Iron Rail Days in Mt. Savage.

Now for the biggest story of the season...why "Farewell (for now)"? What is happening to Mountain Thunder No. 734? Steam locomotive No. 734 has been operating for 15 years at the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad

and will undergo a major rebuild after the 2015 season mandated by the Federal Railroad Administration. Steam locomotives must undergo several inspections at certain intervals in order to remain in service — the most comprehensive inspection is after 15 years or 1472 days of operation. After the 2015 season No. 734 will be out of service indefinitely. If you have not had a chance to ride behind 'Mountain Thunder' at the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad, this is the year to do it! For more information on Mountain Thunder's Farewell (for now), go to www.movingfullsteamahead.com/content/farewell.

Many other new things are happening with the renovations of the railroad including new paint and updates on some passenger cars, cleanup of our shop area and volunteer opportunities for the 2015 season. Mike Gresham, General Superintendent of the WMSR, stated, "This winter has seen many changes on the WMSR. Some will be easy to spot but other changes are more subtle, however, all are focused on making the WMSR into the premier excursion railroad east of the Mississippi."

Tickets are now available at www.wmsr.com.