

## Welcome to Willmar Railroad Days 2021

We are so glad you are here! Your attendance matters very much to us at the Kandiyohi County Historical Society. Thank you for your support. KCHS exists to.... and with your help, that effort will continue. Please consider a membership with us at KCHS!

This weekend of events and tours focuses primarily on the history of how the railroad has contributed to Willmar and the surrounding areas in Kandiyohi County. We hope you can take in all the options this weekend has to offer. Highlights include:

- Presentations (Saturday from 8:00 am – 5:00 pm)
- RailFair (Saturday from 8:00 am – 1:00 pm)
- BNSF Train Simulator (Saturday at the W.C.C.)
- Sperry House (walking tour)
- Kandiyohi County Historical Museum (GN #2523)
- Silent Auction (Saturday at Kandiyohi County Museum)
- Saturday evening Dinner (at Green Mill Restaurant)
- Willmar Slide Show (Saturday evening @ 6:30 pm at the Willmar Conference Center)
- Bus Tours of today's BNSF (Sunday afternoon)

At the core of Willmar Railroad Days 2021 is our presentations. They will take place in main hall of the Willmar Community Center. Our presenters have a vast knowledge of how the railroad created the city of Willmar. Hear from former employees of the Great Northern and current employees of today's BNSF. Find out what it was like growing up in a Willmar railroad family. Step back in time with two special photographers that captured the railroad action in and around Willmar. Also included is a "virtual tour" of a large HO scale model railroad based on the Willmar Division.

## Presentations

### SATURDAY

8:00 am - 8:50 am - **Early Railroad History**

(Steve Eckman)

9:00 am - 9:50 am - **Growing up in Willmar**

(David Block & Elroy Olson)

10:00 am - 10:50 am - **A 42 Year Railroad Career starts in Willmar**

(Gary Nelson)

11:00 am - 11:50 am - **Willmar Legend – Great Northern P-2 #2523**

(Cal Miner)

**(12:00 pm – 1:00 pm - LUNCH )**

1:00 pm - 1:50 pm - **Modeling the Willmar Division in HO scale**

(Joel Weeks)

2:00 pm - 2:50 pm - **Gary Lenz Photo Collection**

(Gary Lenz)

3:00 pm - 3:50 pm - **The Kandiyohi County Historical**

**Society & Museum** (Jill Wohnoutka)

4:00 pm - 4:50 pm - **Green Lake, Spicer & Icing the Great Northern**

(Dr. Carlton Erickson)

5:00 pm - 6:30 pm - **Dinner on your own**

6:30 pm - 8:00 pm – **Willmar Through the Lens of Howard Patrick**

(Slideshow by Stu Holmquist & Mr. Patrick)

8:45 pm – 10:00 pm – **Terry Davis Slide Show**

(Select photos of BN late 80's thru today's BNSF)

## **BNSF Tours and Presentations**

### **SUNDAY**

10:00 am – 11:50 am – Willmar “Then and Now”  
(Steve Eckman)

11:00 am – 11:50 am - **The BNSF today**  
(Ben Griffith – Regional Mgr. BNSF)

**12:00 pm – 1:00 pm - LUNCH**  
Raffle & Silent Auction winners announced

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm – **BNSF Bus Tours**

**3:00 pm Willmar Railroad Days 2021 Concludes**

### **Other Events**

#### **RailFair**

Nearby vendors and supporters of KCHS will be at the Willmar Community Center selling a variety of memorabilia, books, and model trains. RailFair will only take place from 8 am – 1 pm on Saturday. Make a point to walk the tables to see if a special item has a place in your collection.

#### **Kandiyohi County Museum**

The Kandiyohi County Museum will be open to all attendees. Take a visit there and view the vast collection of books and photos that depict the history of this county. Be sure to climb aboard the Great Northern P-2 steam locomotive #2523 and check out its new coat of paint.

#### **Silent Auction**

There is a silent Auction located at the Kandiyohi County Museum. This auction is open from 8:00 am thru 5:00 pm on Saturday. Many items of railroad interest can be found. All dollars raised for this portion of Railroad Days will go to the Kandiyohi County Historical Society.

#### **BNSF Train Simulator**

Stop by the Train Simulator found in the Willmar Community Center. See simulated BNSF power tackle Marias Pass skirting the boundary of Glacier National Park in Montana. Kids from ages 6 to SIXTY will experience what a BNSF engineer must do to pull thousands of tons over the Continental Divide.

#### **Sperry House**

Please consider a trip to the Sperry House. It will be staffed from 9 am – 3 pm on Saturday. Hear how the railroad.... The Sperry House is located.....

#### **Howard Patrick Photo Collection**

Saturday evening you will be treated to a vast collection of photos taken by Howard Patrick. Mr. Patrick was a frequent visitor to Willmar during the years of 19xx-19xx. Many of these images have never been seen or published before! Stuart Holmquist will present these treasures after dinner (beginning at 6:30 pm) on Saturday at the Willmar Conference Center – part of the Best Western Plus Hotel.

#### **BNSF Bus Tours**

You will want to stick around until Sunday, when attendees are treated to a 90-minute bus tour of today’s BNSF yard, facilities and special equipment brought to Willmar specially for Railroad Days. There is an extra fee of \$10 per person to cover the cost of the transportation. Buses tours will be narrated by Ben Griffith – BNSF Regional Manager.

