

FOX RIVER LINES

m a g a z i n e



Come ride with us!

2023-1
SPECIAL ISSUE

news from
**UNDER
the wire**

RECENT FOX RIVER LINE HAPPENINGS

news from
**UNDER
the wire**

Our Latest Restoration

Chicago Aurora and Elgin Car 458



Edward Konecki photo

Part of the Fox Valley Community for the past 57-years, the Fox River Trolley Museum takes pride in connecting people to their past through the active demonstration and operation of antique electric trains- electric trains that performed that most critical of functions- taking people to work, to school, and to regional entertainment. The people of Elgin, South Elgin, Aurora, the Fox River Valley, Wheaton, the suburbs of DuPage County, the suburbs of western Cook County, and Chicago were connected to their jobs, their careers, and their families by the pioneering electric, green transportation system known as the Chicago Aurora and Elgin. People riding the train together built friendships, business relationships, and even romances as they used the electric trains of the Chicago Aurora and Elgin as the transportation of their daily lives.

The Fox River Trolley Museum gives our visitors a taste of living history by running the actual electric trains that ran on the Chicago Aurora and Elgin, the Chicago L, and other Chicago area based electric railroads. A star of our living history story is

Chicago Aurora and Elgin car 20 – the Oldest Operating Intercity electric trolley in the United States. Car 20 represents the start of the electric railroad revolution that came to the Chicagoland area at the start of the 20th century. Missing from the Museum, though, was a trolley that represented the end of the electric railroad revolution—especially a trolley that had significant meaning to our community. This is where the story of Chicago Aurora and Elgin car 458 starts.

Green Electric Transportation to the Fox River Valley

At the start of the 20th Century, investment in electric trolley railroads was like investing in the Internet in the late 1990s. You were bound to get rich, because the magic of electrically powered trains would draw customers far and wide from the alternative smoky sooty steam locomotive powered trains running throughout the Chicago area. Just like the Internet

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changed shopping, commerce, and social interactions, electric trolley railroads did the same thing back in early 1900s. Why? Electricity allowed a company to run a train with far fewer people than that needed for a steam locomotive powered train. Two people for an electric train versus five people for a steam locomotive powered train. The owner of an electric trolley railroad, because they needed three fewer people per train, could charge a lower price per ride while making more money per rider. And it worked too—for a while. The investors in the Chicago Aurora and Elgin went all in and built a high speed electric railroad that ran from the Chicago city limits (later extend to Chicago's Loop over the L) west to Wheaton where the line split - one line to Elgin and the other line to Aurora. Thirty, state of the art, high speed electric trolley cars were purchased by the company to start service. That group of thirty cars includes the Museum's car 20.



Nicki Burgess photo

Between 1902 and 1926, the Chicago Aurora and Elgin had so much business that they bought 62 new cars in order to have enough seats to get people to where they wanted to go. In 1941, the railroad needed additional seats, which meant they needed additional cars. The United States was coming out of the depression and World War II had not yet started so the railroad was in a financial position to expand its fleet to get more seats. And to get seats that were modern in every sense of the word.

Expanding the Fleet – The 451 Series of cars and Car 458

The Chicago Aurora and Elgin ordered its ten new 451 Series of cars in November 1941. Other than being compatible with the older steel trolley cars, the 451 Series was to be modern in every sense of the word.

- Lighter Weight – 9 to 15 tons lighter, which meant using less electricity which translates into keeping fares fair and putting some profit into the bottom line

- Modern, tasteful interiors – the latest colors for the interior, coral, blue, and grey, modern bucket seats in colors complimentary to the interior wall color, and a striking red and grey exterior paint job

- Modern heating, lighting, ventilation- everything except air conditioning

The order was placed in November of 1941 and the manufacturer, Saint Louis Car Company, was ready to go with the construction contract, but then World War II started on December 7, 1941. The construction of the new cars stopped dead as war production took precedence over building new railroad cars like 458.

Finally, late in 1944 and early in 1945, with the war winding down, materials finally became available to complete the ten new trolleys. On October 7, 1945, the first three of cars of the 451 series arrived at the Chicago Aurora and Elgin.

FOX RIVER TROLLEY ASSOCIATION

2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Edward Konecki, Jeff Bennett, Fred D. Lonnes,
Douglas Rundell and Patrick Storm

2022 OFFICERS

President - Edward Konecki
Vice President - Fred D. Lonnes
Secretary - Patrick Storm
Treasurer - Douglas Rundell

2022 COMMITTEES

Management Committee - Edward Konecki,
Fred D. Lonnes and Douglas Rundell

Nomination & Election Committee –
Laura Taylor (chair), Art Lemke, Damin Keenan

2022 MUSEUM DEPARTMENT LEADERS

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT:

Controller - Barbara Ann Stuenkel CPA

MUSEUM OPERATIONS:

Operations Superintendent - Patrick Storm

Trainmaster - James Tarbet

Museum Store Manager - Laura Taylor

Assistant Store Manager - vacant

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES DEPARTMENT:

Membership Secretary - Laura Taylor

Assistant Membership

Secretary - vacant

Membership Activities

Coordinator - vacant

Membership Development

Coordinator - vacant

MUSEUM SERVICES DEPARTMENT:

Museum Services Manager - Edward Konecki

Media Relations Coordinator - vacant

Curator - Joseph Hazinski

Archivist - vacant

Web Master - Open (Edward Konecki-Acting)

Education Coordinator - Bernard S. Kamenear

Capital Development Coordinators -

Edward Konecki and Douglas Rundell

Publications Manager - Edward Konecki

Newsletter Editor - Joseph Hazinski

Community Relations Manager - vacant

CAR DEPARTMENT:

Chief Car Officer - Jeff Bennett

Car Superintendent - Joseph Hazinski

FIXED PLANT DEPARTMENT:

Chief Engineer - Ralph Taylor

Chief Technology Officer - Edward Konecki

Roadmaster - Open (Fred Lonnes-acting)

Assistant Roadmaster - Patrick Storm

Chief Lineman - vacant

Building and Grounds

Superintendent - Fred Lonnes

Electrical Supply and Signals - Ralph Taylor

MUSEUM SAFETY DEPARTMENT:

Safety Coordinator - Ralph Taylor

Assistant Safety Coordinator - vacant

ADDRESS .. 365 S. LaFox St., P.O. Box 315, South Elgin, IL 60177
PHONE .. (847) 697-4676 **WEBSITE ...** www.foxtrolley.org

The next three cars arrived on November 13, 1945, and the final four cars, including 458, arrived on December 8, 1945. Car 458 and its sister cars were finally put to work full time on January 17th, 1946. By all judgements of technical quality and passenger comfort, the 451 series of cars were a tremendous success. But the 451 Series, and car 458, despite being the best and most modern electric railroad transportation in the Chicagoland area, could not reverse the change in American transportation habits after World War II. More and more people purchased automobiles and drove their cars instead of using the electric Chicago Aurora and Elgin. The railroad's plan to purchase 8 more cars like 458 were set aside as the Chicago Aurora and Elgin fell into a downward financial spiral. Money was running out, ridership was dropping like a rock, and on July 3, 1957, the Chicago Aurora and Elgin stopped operations around Noon, after bringing all the morning commuters into Chicago. After that date, car 458 never ran again on the Chicago Aurora and Elgin. In total, car 458 spent only a little over 11 years in actual service to the community before being prematurely retired.

458's Long Road Home: Wheaton to the Fox River Valley

It's only 18-miles from Wheaton to South Elgin, but it took car 458 over 49 years to make the trip. In 1961, the Chicago Aurora and Elgin finally went out of business and in 1962, sold its assets, including many of its intercity electric trolley cars. Many museums and individuals were interested in these wonderful cars, because the Chicago Aurora and Elgin, had hung on to many of its really old passenger cars to provide rush hour service. Those antiques were very much sought after, because in 1962, they looked old fashioned and nostalgic. Many museums, in their early days, focused on nostalgia to attract visitors to ride on antiques. The Fox River Trolley Museum embraced the nostalgia trend and managed to purchase four OLD trolleys from the Chicago Aurora and Elgin.

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Car 458 at Glen Oak on the Chicago Aurora and Elgin.



CA&E 458 at the CA&E's main Wheaton station between Main St. and Hale St. It was taken in 1956. Note on the left in the background a Cincinnati built car and on the right a Pullman built car.



MISSION

To preserve and interpret Chicago's electric transport era that began in the 1890s and peaked before 1950. The electric transport era is significant because electric railways, including interurban, rapid transit, and streetcars, helped the Chicago region grow to be one of North America's great metropolitan areas. The Museum strives to show that electric railways were more than convenient, they were and are a way of life for generations of people from all walks of life.

The Museum fulfills this mission by preserving, interpreting, and operating historic railway vehicles on its demonstration electric railway, over the Aurora, Elgin and Fox River Electric route at South Elgin, Illinois. Furthermore, the museum preserves, displays and interprets smaller artifacts, photos, oral histories, and documents which help relate the importance of electric transport in and around the Chicago Metropolitan Area, putting them in context with their surroundings and era.

These trolleys came to South Elgin in 1964 and starting giving visitors demonstration rides in 1966. Our Museum's original name was RELIC, so that we could tell people that they rode a relic at RELIC.

CA&E Car 458, along with three other members of the 451 group of modern trolleys, was purchased by a museum located just northwest of Cleveland, OH. Car 458 and its three sisters headed to Ohio in 1962 and stayed there until 2009. That year, due to a sad chain of events, the museum that owned CA&E car 458 had to divest it and the rest of its collection. In 2009, car 458 was not the beautiful representative of modern green electric railroad transportation. In Ohio, the car served a source of spare parts for its sister cars. It wore the same paint it had from its last paint job of February 1954 but much faded and washed out. A family of raccoons moved in to the car and destroyed the once beautiful interior. The car looked sad and only the most buoyant optimist thought it would have a future. And being incredible optimists (along with the results of our on site inspection), the Board of Directors of the Fox River Trolley Museum voted unanimously to buy 458 and bring it home to South Elgin. On October 2, 2009, the Museum was notified that we were now the owner of Chicago Aurora and Elgin car 458. Come and pick it up.

Bringing 458 Home and the Journey to Restoration

Moving CA&E 458 from Ohio to South Elgin was a big job – an 86,800 pound job to be exact. We could have not done it without the help of Silk Road Transportation, who had the people, equipment and know how to move the car to South Elgin. The car was loaded on a special trailer in January 2010 and taken to South Elgin.



Bill Vigrass photo

Original Fox River Trolley Museum Campus and Collection of Antique Trolleys- Left to Right, CA&E 317, 316, 20, North Shore 415 & 756, CA&E 11.



Joseph R Hazinski photo, January 10, 2020

CA&E 458 after purchase by the Fox River Trolley Museum. Waiting for transportation from Cleveland to South Elgin.



Joseph R Hazinski Photo – January 25, 2010.

Car 458 being loaded onto the Silk Road Trailer at Brook Park in Cleveland, Ohio for the journey to South Elgin.



Don MacBean photo

Car 458 passing through Saint Charles, IL on January 27, 2010 turning north on to IL-31 to head to the Museum campus. First time 458 ever went to Saint Charles.



Don MacBean photo



Don MacBean photo

When 458 arrived in South Elgin, it was realized that the car was facing the wrong way. Silk Road turned the truck around at IL-31 and Sundown Road and headed back south to the Museum.

Unloading Car 458 at the Museum in South Elgin, January 2010. Back home in the Fox River Valley after 40-years and hundreds of miles.

First Steps

The repair and restoration work of CA&E 458 began in 2010. Closer inspection of the car showed that very few parts were removed from it. Work over the summer and fall of 2010 replaced the most critical missing parts so that by November 1, 2010, it was possible, with a little luck, to move the car under its own power.

Restoration and Today

Years of neglect and decay, not to mention the destruction of the interior, meant that it would take a long time to restore the car so that the public could enjoy it. The museum has almost a 1000 pictures of the restoration, but here are a select few to show the 13 year transformation to today. Serious restoration work got under way in 2018. Inside the car, parcel racks were removed as where all seat frames. The ceiling and walls were stripped, primed, and painted. The old worn linoleum flooring was removed, and new in-kind flooring was installed. The car received a new roof in 2022. In 2023 season the rejuvenated parcel racks, and seat frames were installed after light fixtures and heater vents were put back in place. All the shades, original to the car, which had been removed, were washed, and eventually put back in place. Next came the seat backs and cushions which had been in storage since 2018 waiting for the day to be reunited with the car. Finally, the car was ready for its introduction to the public.

Edward Konecki



Don MacBean photo

CA&E Car 458 operated under its own power to the Jon Duerr Forest Preserve on November 1, 2010. Now comes the 13-year job of restoring the car.



Joseph R. Hazinski photo

Jump Seat appearance in 2010.

Reupholstery work started in 2018 under the guidance of Fred Lonnes.



Joseph R. Hazinski photo

Jump seat appearance after restoration.



Joseph R. Hazinski photo

Thee installed the shades after the interior repaint. Here Thee is demonstrating his technique of installing a shade by a "feel" method behind his head. All the shades are the ones that came with the car when it was sold in 1962.



Joseph R. Hazinski photo

Chief Car Officer and Project Manager, Jeff Bennett, is seen here working over the air brake system. Jeff has spent several hundred hours putting the brake system back together again.

Fun Facts – Chicago Aurora and Elgin Car 458

Original 1945 Price for the car: \$45,000. That's \$758,407 in today's money.

Weight: 86,600 lbs. **Length:** 55'-4"

Width: 9' 2" at the window sills and 8' 8" at the floor

Height: 12' – 3" **Seats:** 52.

Cars 456 – 460 had bathrooms so only seated 52 people.

Cars 451 – 455 did not have bathrooms so they could seat 54 people.

Motors: Four 100 horsepower General Electric motors

Restoration

Appearance Target: November 1954 after repainted by the Chicago Aurora & Elgin



Read More about CA&E Car 458 on our Website by Fox River Lines Editor and Museum Curator, Joe Hazinski.

Significant Donors and Contributors

A huge THANK YOU to everyone that put their time, knowledge, skill, and financial contribution into restoring Chicago Aurora and Elgin car 458.

Contributor

Involvement

Fred Lonnes

Lead Car Advocate, Everything

Joseph Hazinski, Fox River Trolley Museum

Assisted in acquisition of car and general helping hand overall

Cliff & Bill KRB Construction

Roof installation of insulation, custom carlines, tongue and groove roof boards

Chuck Galitz

Many things

Andre Jurek

Install luggage racks, reassemble bathroom, install many seat frames

Andre, Mike, & Jeff AJ Remodeling

Many things- regular volunteer on this project

Felix and Family

Install new seats, clean car for service

Leo Metz Fox, River Trolley Museum

Fabricated many misc. metal pieces

Connor Ladley, Fox River Trolley Museum

Many things- regular volunteer on this project

Barbara Bennett, Fox River Trolley Museum

Many things- regular volunteer on this project

Jeff Bennett Fox River Trolley Museum

Lead Car Restoration Manager

John Vanpaseuth

Many things, including all the hand lettering on the car

Thee Vanpaseuth

Lead Restoration Technician

Kyle Troll Tailored Custom Fab

Interior and exterior painting, multiple small part restorations

Nora Systems Inc.

Supplied very specialized flooring material

Rocky Lee Noland Sales

Professional installer of specialized flooring

John KraftWerks

Custom made carlines and tack molding entire roof

Peter Orum Midwest Groundcovers

Transport & Storage of excess material received from Cleveland

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Contributor

Dave Kloke Kloke Locomotive Works
Joseph Lazzara -Sedia, Inc. Upholstery company
Todd Haraty Silk Road
Bill Wall
Kathleen Jamieson Fox River Trolley Museum
Mike Gilles Fox River Trolley Museum
James Tarbet Fox River Trolley Museum
Joel, Norm, Randy Illinois Railway Museum
Rylee Bennett Fox River Trolley Museum
A B Kelly Co
William Wright
Ed Konopasek Eagle Fasteners
Bernie Kamenear Fox River Trolley Museum
Greg & Sue Chicago Window & Door
Steve Kezios One Source Glass
Fred Biederman Fox River Trolley Museum
Patrick Storm Fox River Trolley Museum
Ben Rohling Fox River Trolley Museum
Doug Rundell Fox River Trolley Museum
James Ham Fox River Trolley Museum
Accordion Mike
Nicky Whitney
Jerry Krawczyk South Elgin Police
Larry Jones South Elgin Village Manager - Retired
Donald A. MacBean Fox River Trolley Museum
Edward Konecki Fox River Trolley Museum
Ralph Taylor Fox River Trolley Museum

Involvement

Storage of components required for completion of restoration
Seat Reupholstory
Transportation from Cleveland to South Elgin
As it was relayed to me, Bill was the instrumental driver in FRTM getting 458 and 304
Many things- regular volunteer on this project
Many things- regular volunteer on this project
Many things- regular volunteer on this project
Gave us unlimited access to 460 to trace lettering and view mechanicals as a reference
Helped gut the car's interior old flooring
Sewed the canvas for the roof and assisted with shade repairs as needed
Organizing parts during restoration
Donated many different needed special fasteners for the project
Donated mobile compressor to work on small things off site
Assisted with glass needs
Donated many tempered safety glass panes
many things- regular volunteer on this project
Unloading, moving of car, Horn restoration
many things- regular volunteer on this project
Cleaning and Misc. help
Cleaning and Misc. help
Painted all step wells
Assisted in stripping paint on interior
Officer (now is Chief) who escorted delivery - assisted with turnaround of transport
Now retired - helped with details for delivery of car
Was contact with St Charles Police to assist travel thru their town
Handled liaison with various parties
Purchasing of CA&E 458
Research and Advice