Mechanical Report - May 2026

This report of mechanical progress and equipment status as of April 23, 2026. This includes all changes since the November 2025 update.

Our newest mechanic, John Fastidio, joined us for several days during our spring work session. He worked well and it appears we did not scare him away, as he is currently planning to return June 6th to assist with 2873.

The new annual process yielded favorable results. With a few exceptions, we had all information, tools and consumables we needed readily available in logical order. There were some hiccups, as expected with any new process. Eric made a significant process change to our engine inspection and initial tune steps that reduced time from an average of 35 minutes per cylinder down to just 15 minutes. When multiplied across 16 cylinders, this is a huge time saver. I have updated our annual process documents to reflect all changes and corrections. Using this updated process with our current staff, I am now confident we should have the capacity to process three locomotive annuals, along with minor repairs, in two weeks time.

I had a total of 4 days of the mechanical session diverted to event work, and we lost a total of 3 days due to the storm that delayed Eric and John's arrival. Even with this challenge, we were able to complete the 1503 annual and make significant progress on 2873. Eric, John and I plan to return to the museum June 6th to resume 2873 annual.

Status Update

- There have been no changes in support fleet status. The Yale, Liftall and electric forklifts remain in service. I still have to call for a service on the electric forklift axle. The backhoe and light plants remain in service. The Telehandler remains out of service. We were unable to get to any maintenance of the support equipment, so that will be performed one by one as time allows during the operating season.

- **WP1503 - In service, all uses**
  - 2026 Annual inspection and maintenance has been completed and the locomotive is ready for service. There are some repairs that are awaiting parts, but they are not safety or service impacting. These repairs will be made as parts arrive and time allows.

- **SP2873 - Out of service - inspection**
  - Good progress was made on the annual inspection. We completed the time intensive engine cleaning, inspection and tune. We are on track to complete the full annual on June 7th. Placing the locomotive in service, however, will be dependent on the battery box weld repairs being complete before June 6th (to be performed by others)

- **QRR1100 - Out of service**
  - Scheduled to remain out of service in 2026 to allow for several repairs, for return 2027

- **WP707 - Out of service**
  - Head gaskets and liner seals are on hand, but work is on hold for now to focus efforts on 2873

- **WP165 - Out of service**
  - Don and I have a good handle on the present status of WP165, including the FRA concerns and the various issues around the 5 year inspection. We had hoped to have some detailed conversations with Ed Dickens while he was here, but we were unable to have more than a cursory talk where we were able to ask him for recommendation of a consultant to perform a third party evaluation, which he indicated he would give some thought to. I have asked Steve to reach out to Ed about a week after he completes the current tour, which would be sometime the week of May 4th

Finance

- I am thinking about holding off on any significant oil purchases until later in the year. We should have enough oil on hand to change 1100, but any in-service operation of 707 will be delayed

Shop

- I have (re)cleaned the wood shop. The table saw is out of alignment again due to lumber being placed across the fence rails and the table being used as a workbench. Roof leaks have also resulted in the need to remove rust and re-wax all surfaces. I will get to this later in the season. We will need to (re)address proper use of equipment, as I also found the edge sander table being used as a workbench in December

- The machine shop has now been cleaned and organized. Although we don't currently have a machinist, the equipment should be kept clean and orderly to preserve the investment

- Brian Waller and I will be working together on the next cleanup, which is the welding area behind the mechanics bay. We will also restore the shop sink to use

- I expect to begin cleaning and organizing the tool room this fall or next spring, at the latest

- I will be speaking with Brian regarding some roof repairs over the shop areas that I believe can be made at little cost and maximum effect. I will offer to perform these repairs and provide my own materials, should Brian approve

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