

# THE MARKER LIGHT

NUMBER 31

THE PORT HURON & DETROIT RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Fall 2017

## FROM STEAM TO DIESEL: BUYING #52



**Scouts Visit the Wye**

**UPDATES: Engine #52; Display Track Extension  
FROM THE ARCHIVES: The Marine City Extension**

**#52 POSTER**

**2017 - 2018 CALENDAR**

**CARRY YOUR CARD!**

**JOIN TODAY!**

**PURPOSE**

**ENGINE #52**

**Cover:** *Engine #52, shortly after delivery, 1945. Old time steam engineer Ben Reed at the throttle.*

**PG. 2: From Where I Sit; Scouts Visit the Wye**

**PG. 3: UPDATES: ALCO #52; Display Track Extension**

**PG. 4: FROM STEAM to DIESEL: Buying #52**

**PG. 5: (Cont.)**

**PG. 6: FROM THE ARCHIVES: The Marine City Extension**

**PG. 7: (Cont.)**

**PG. 8: 2017-8 Calendar; Engine #52 Poster; Carry Your Card; Join; Purpose of the Society; Board of Directors**



### FROM WHERE I SIT

Dear Friends of the PH&D:

This has been quite the year for your Society! We've acquired a rare Grand Trunk Western refrigerator car, extended our display track, and await the spring delivery of our beloved ALCO engine #52. We've reinstalled the stairway leading to the second floor, and are contemplating installing a live feed camera set up, so that railfans can log in and watch the yard action, as trains come in and leave in front of the building.

Next spring, we expect to announce the arrival of our engine, with a grand celebration. As members, you'll be the first to know when that delivery date will be, so you can plan on being on site. It is a huge deal to reunite a first generation ALCO S1 switcher with its originally-assigned caboose!

At this year's Holiday Luncheon, we have a special presentation. It's called "A Community Prospectus For the Tunnel City Railway Heritage Center". It will focus on ideas on expanding and developing the land near the Society and highlighting our city's history with the railway tunnel under the St. Clair River. Board member **Chad Thompson** has given much thought to this and brings a great example of "thinking outside the box." So come on out! The crew at the Dorsey House never disappoints and we always look forward to the lunch and their menu.

Like to welcome new member **Steve Harvey** to the board. Not only does he bring significant hands-on experience with railroad equipment, he is well-versed in all things technical. He's leading the project to install cameras mounted on the building, facing east and west, directed at incoming and departing trains. We join the systems similar to those at Durand and other trackside locations. Railfans will be able to track west-bound trains and then catch them later as they arrival at Durand. And using this monitor, they'll discover the PH&DRR Historical Society.

So you can see, we have some exciting things happening for 2018! Take the opportunity at the luncheon to renew your membership. We have a lot going on next year on site and you'll want to be a part of it. Having an up to date membership card will ensure access year round to the wye and keep you informed about the events planned as well. And, you'll keep on receiving our newsletters, which feature articles on PH&DRR history.

Hope to see you and your family at the Dorsey House!

**Sandy Duffy**

### BOY SCOUTS VISIT THE WYE

The Society recently welcomed Boy Scout Troop #106/169, Water & Woods Council, Black River Basin, to the wye in October. The boys and their fathers came in and set up tents for an over night. Former Silver Trails Ranger **Jerry Deeg** arranged the event, which brought the boys in to learn about our Michigan Shortline.

Part of the scout's requirements toward earning badges is to focus on specific interests. One of these badges is about railroading. Earning this badge includes volunteering to help non-profits with local projects.

The Society is excited to partner up with this troop and looks forward to working on projects with them. Our thanks go to Mr. Deeg for reaching out and offering to help us!





### UPDATE: ALCO #52

The latest news regarding our beloved engine #52 is that the arrival has been moved up to the spring of 2018. According to **Rick Rowlands**, who is managing this project, efforts have been successful in arranging routing from Knoxville on the Norfolk Southern. Connecting with CSX is still being developed. Part of that task is to establish a destination point as no industry exists on our end.

Mr. Rowlands, who has impressive experience in moving historical equipment, has contacts with companies which supply special flat cars upon which our engine will be placed at the Knoxville Locomotive Works, where it currently sits. KLV is a leasing and repair subsidiary of the Gulf & Ohio Railroad, whose headquarters are in downtown Knoxville in one of the city's oldest restored buildings.

Thanks to generous donors and our online fundraising efforts, we have raised most of the nearly \$22,000 transportation cost!

The Society will keep everyone informed using emails as more news develops.

### UPDATE: DISPLAY TRACK EXTENSION

After the successful arrival of GTW #296447, the board decided to add extensions to both ends of the display track. Thanks to a major donation, the work was completed in October. Raymond Excavating's **Dave Burgess** brought in his crew along with more ballast to prepare the roadbed. Heavy equipment operator, **Patrick White**, from Harbor Beach, donated his time, for which we deeply appreciate.

Dave called in the crew from Armond Castle, who performed the original installation. As usual, it took them just a day to add approximately 20 more feet, about 10 feet on each end. Members of the Society finished the job or "dressing" the track, making it presentable.



*The crew from Armond Castle are preparing to spike each tie plate on the western extension of the display track.*



*Pat Mike brings in several loads of ballast before the crew lays the ties.*

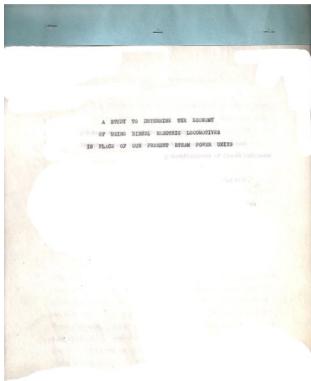


*All dressed up and no place to go!*



*The track has been extended to the east right up to the edge of the parking lot. All that remains is more ballast.*

## FROM STEAM TO DIESEL



Assistant General Manager George Duffy had only been at the railroad two years when he and Chief Engineer William Boyd decided to collaborate to produce a study for management, comparing the annual costs of steam engines versus the new diesel-electric engines. By 1938, when they began the study, first generation diesel engines had begun to appear on American railroads. In spite of the opinions of die-hard steam proponents, they began to prove their efficiency. In fact, some steam engine manufacturers, such as the American Locomotive Company and the Baldwin Locomotive Works, had expanded their facilities to produce diesel-electric engines for both road and yard.

During that year, Boyd and Duffy visited several diesel engine manufacturers, such as the American Locomotive Works, Baldwin Locomotive Works, Fairbanks-Morse, and the Electro-motive Corporation. Their pre-arranged visits included not only meetings with management but also rides in the diesels which allowed them to interview the engineers and maintenance personnel. Their focus was on switching engines.

With the beginning of 1939, they had an entire year of steam operations for 1938 to review. The study was comprehensive. It included salaries of crews, hostlers, and Superintendents, repairs to shop machinery and locomotives, including labor, fuel, water, and lubricants. Finally, interest and depreciation costs, as well as insurance and taxes were noted. This covered all six steam units on hand.

Then they examined the projected and actual costs of diesel engines, provided by engine manufacturers, as well as some railroads. Those figures then had to be arranged to match the annual steam costs.

By May of 1939, they had completed their report and presented their findings to President James E. Duffy, and James E. Duffy, Jr., Vice President. It was a twelve page document called "A Study to Determine the Economy of Using Diesel Electric Locomotives in Place of Our Present Steam Power Units", and divided into nine sections:

1). Introduction, 2). All Inclusive Cost of Steam on the PH&D, 3). Readjusted Cost of Steam, 4). Estimated Cost of Diesels from Builders, 5). Estimated Cost as Per Hour from ALCO & EMD, 6). Actual Costs Per Hour From GTW, Beltline RR., and Massena Terminal RR, 6). Annual Cost of Two Diesels, 7). Annual Cost of One Steam Unit, 8). Retirement of Steam Units; Use & Training of New Diesel Units, and 9). The Statistics of Hourly Costs from Manufacturers and Other Railroads.

The opening paragraph of the Introduction was succinct: "The Operating Department of the Port Huron & Detroit Railroad has, under proper advisement, undertaken a study of the comparable costs of substituting Diesel Electric motive power units in place of the present steam locomotives, with a view in mind of ascertaining whether or not there would be an economy, and, if so, how much, from a cost standpoint, in making such a change."

At the time the report was presented, the railroad had six steam engines: #34, #35, #36, #37, #40, and #41. The study revealed the annual, all-inclusive costs of these six engines, which totaled \$40,563.76. They included the cost to the railroad in engine hours, which amounted to \$9.11 per hour.

Next, were the totals of two diesel-electric switch engines from manufacturers and builders. This included Maintenance and Repairs, Crews, Fuel, Water, Lubricants, Other Supplies, Interest, Depreciation, Insurance, and Taxes. This cost totaled \$26,837.14 annually, with a cost of \$6.03 per hour.

The bottom line comparison found that the railroad would realize a savings of \$13,726.14 annually. In other words, six steam engines cost \$40,000 a year as opposed to two diesels at \$25,000!

Additionally, they recommended the railroad retain one steam engine as backup, which they estimated would cost \$1,576.00 per year. With this in mind, the total cost per year of two diesel-electrics and one steam engine would cost the company a yearly amount of \$28,413.14, saving the company \$12,150.62 a year.

Lastly, they recommended the sale and disposal of the other five steam engines, which would bring in an additional amount of \$15,000 to \$25,000. This could be applied to the purchase price of the diesels. In 1939, an ALCO engine was estimated to cost around \$50,000. In 2017 dollars, this would amount to \$862,000 with inflation.

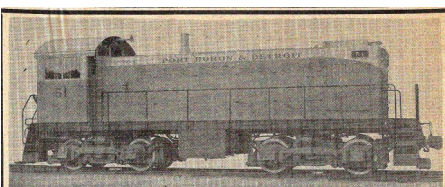
Although the results of the study were impressive, inclusive, and worthy of a favorable decision to replace steam for diesel, management turned down the recommendation. Two major reasons may have influenced their decision. In 1939, the railroad was still paying on a \$500,000 bond, issued during the Handy Brothers' era. Additionally, each engine cost over \$50,000. Management must have balked due to the cost of two engines and the amount of bond indebtedness. Both Boyd and Duffy were certainly disappointed. The multiple page document took a year to produce and involved meetings and appointments and travel by Pullman to gather the data.

In 1942, Duffy entered the army and eventually sent to the jungles of India to help rebuild an 800 mile long tea plantation railway. While he was away, management decided to purchase two diesels from American Locomotive Company, which were delivered to the railroad in September of 1945, numbered #51 and #52. Each cost approximately \$62,000. In 2017 inflation adjusted dollars, this would be \$840,942 each. At the time of the purchase, the PH&D had seen a substantial rise in income from war-related carloads, after nearly 4 years of war. This new income may have prompted the decision. To say the least, it must have been a rude awakening for the First Lieutenant to learn they had been purchased and delivered. before he had left India.





*Engineman Ben Reed stands next to Engine #36 not long before its retirement. ALCO diesel trainers came on site to train Reed and others with the new locomotives.*



ONE OF OUR NEW DIESEL ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVES

**PORT HURON & DETROIT SETS A RECORD!**

**100% AVAILABILITY OF MOTIVE POWER FOR FIRST YEAR OF EFFICIENT DIESEL OPERATION**

The shops have been remodeled and new facilities added for the upkeep of these locomotives.

This greatly adds to the efficiency and service to our customers.

The Port Huron & Detroit Railroad Operates for Freight Service Between Port Huron, Marysville, Saint Clair & Marine City

*Here's a Christmas 1945 ad announcing the change from steam to diesel. The road made a big deal out of being the first railroad completely dieselized.*

**PH&D** <sup>H6</sup>  
**Uses Diesel Power Only**

One of the most progressive short line railroads in the country, the Port Huron and Detroit, operates on a daily schedule between Port Huron and Marine City.

The P. H. & D. serves a large number of industries in the St. Clair River District. Freight terminals are located in Port Huron, Marysville, St. Clair and Marine City. The line connects with the Algonac Transit Company line at Marine City.

In the last few months the P. H. & D. has converted entirely to diesel power and has completely remodeled its shop and roundhouse to handle this type locomotion. The shops have attracted wide attention in the industry and railroad men from distant points have come to Port Huron to look over the facilities.

*This piece from a 1946 Port Huron Times Herald cites the conversion of the roundhouse from steam to diesel and proudly notes that the new upgrades have attracted attention from other roads.*

**Big Cog In Area Economy**  
**Little PH & D Railroad Packs A Wallop**

The products of some industries, such as railroads, are intangible but are of vital importance to other industries and the community. Freight service is the product of Port Huron & Detroit railroad, one of the shortest but busiest railroads in the country. Its right of way extends from Port Huron to Marine City, serving River District industries as far south as Algonac through its Marine City connection with the Algonac Transit Company, hauler of Algonac-Saint Clair-Clio boats. First Michigan railroad to be completely diesel equipped, Port Huron & Detroit has three modern oil-burning locomotives. George T. Budy is general manager and treasurer, and William N. Boyd is general superintendent and chief engineer.

*In this 1950 shot, the new edition has rearranged the parking lot.*

**PH & D's New Diesel On The Job** <sup>6/52/49</sup>

—Photo by Russell E. Sawyer

New Diesel locomotive of the Port Huron & Detroit railroad moves into the yards here pulling 50 freight cars.

*In 1949, management found that they needed a engine with more horsepower and purchased ALCO #60, an S2 with 1000 hp, shown here with its new awnings. We also see the brand new office addition.*



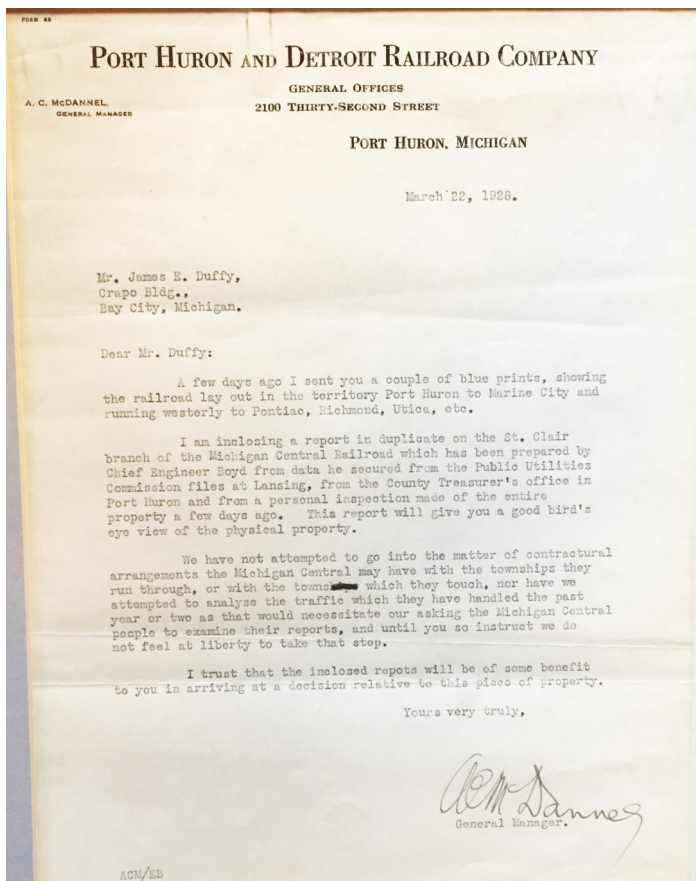
## FROM THE ARCHIVES: PROPOSED Marine City Extension

In 1928, the corporate office of the Port Huron & Detroit Railroad was located on the second floor of Bay City's Crapo Building, in the office of attorney James E. Duffy. The building was owned by the Bay City Bank, and, at the time of its construction in 1890, deemed the most expensive structure in town. That spring, General Manager A.C. McDannel and Chief Engineer William Boyd had been asked to come to Bay City to discuss a possible western extension of the railroad from Marine City. Specifically, they were asked to look into the possibility of connecting with the Grand Trunk Western Railroad and the Michigan Central Railroad. McDannel and Boyd returned to Port Huron and began to explore the lands and properties west of the Marine City depot.

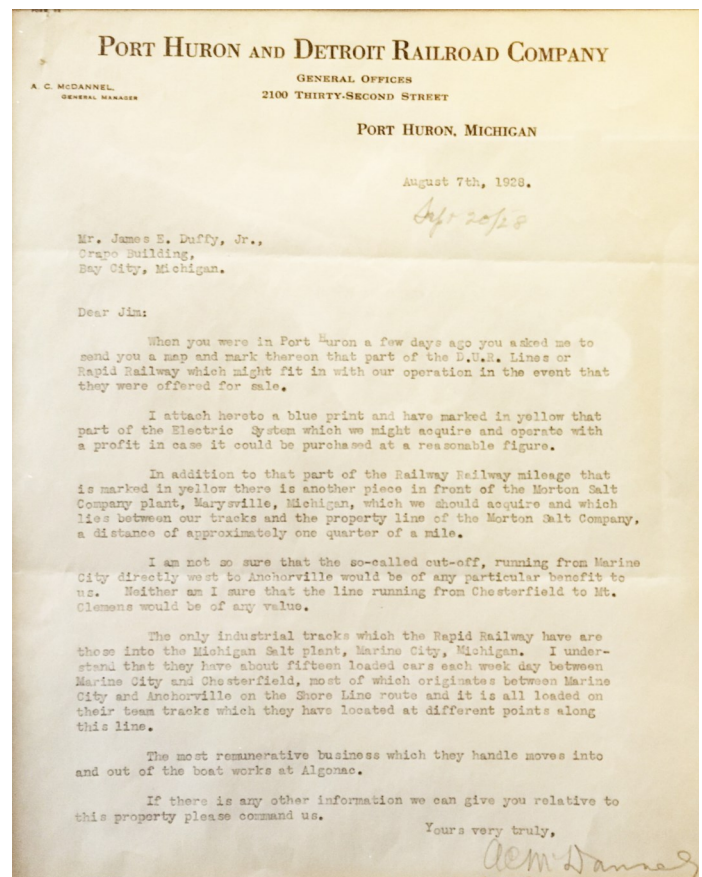
They surveyed the parcels along the route which paralleled the Detroit United Railway, also known as the Rapid Railway. This was an interurban line running from Detroit to Anchor Bay and north through Marine City, St. Clair, Marysville, and ending in Port Huron. The route envisioned by Boyd, who was the lead planner, followed the DUR virtually the entire way west with only a mere 50 yards between the right of ways. As you will remember, Boyd had built the PH&DRR south from Marysville back in 1917.

Boyd's plan was to reach the County Line Road which marked the beginning of the City of Detroit, and enter into a modest rail yard, to make connections on the east end with the Grand Trunk and with the Michigan Central to the west. This western end also connected with two other roads, the Detroit Terminal Railroad and the Pennsylvania Terminal Railroad.

The transfer track with the Grand Trunk was to use one siding on the southern end of the proposed yard while the transfer tracks with the other roads used the northern-most passing siding. In effect, the PH&DRR would make connections with four railroads!

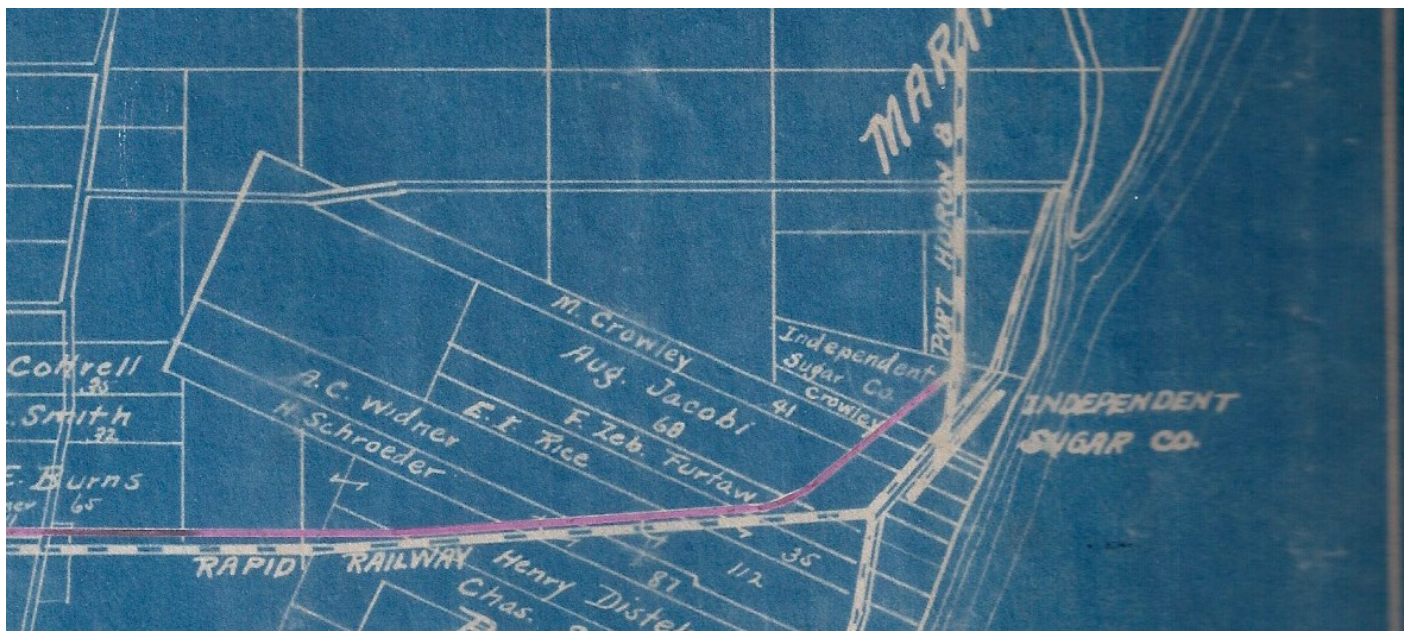


*Dated March 22, 1928, this letter notes the blueprints detailing the western extension from Marine City. Interestingly, it also refers to the Michigan Central line running west from St. Clair to Richmond. Boyd had done his usual diligent survey and concluded that that line, which had been unused for some time, had fallen into disrepair. The condition of the ties was poor, the roadbed in need of ballast, and several culverts were questionable. Management passed on both.*



*Letter dated August 7/September 20, 1928. The DUR by now was in tough times. Duffy, with his usual foresight, was thinking that part of that system could be obtained and used to add to the PH&DRR, if profitable. McDannel observed that a portion of the D.U.R., running parallel to the PH&D in front of Morton Salt should be purchased. He advised against the Marine City west line as it wasn't worth the investment. Management absorbed the Morton track.*





*Here is the extension running west from Marine City. The depot lies just north of the Sugar Company property. The extension led away from the main line using the Sugar Company lead. Going west, each property owner is designated. Every one of these would have to be negotiated for purchase. It went on for about a half mile until it reached the D.U.R. line, and then followed it in parallel westward. McDannel correctly advised that, even with the loads from the Michigan Salt Company, the only viable customer was with Chris Craft boat loads, brought up via their subsidiary, the Algonac Transit Company.*



*Here is the genius of Bill Boyd at its best: how to connect with four railroads and include a decent sized rail yard for storage and transfer? The line approaches from the east running parallel to the Grand Trunk Western main line. Here, he uses his southern most yard siding to make the transfer. At the western and northern end of his yard, he uses his yard throat and, within a half mile, immediately makes a connection with the Pennsylvania. Curving toward the southwest, he creates a trailing switch onto the Michigan Central, and ends with a transfer track onto the Detroit Terminal Railway. What could have been!*



**2017 - 2018 CALENDAR**

Dec 9 Holiday Luncheon, Dorsey House Noon - 3:00PM  
 Jan 1 Annual Budget Session, 32nd St. 9:00AM  
 Feb 10 Board Meeting, 32nd St. 9:00AM  
 Mar 10 Board Meeting, 32nd St 9:00AM

All members are welcome to attend monthly board meetings.

**Saturdays at the Wye** will resume May 5th. Check the website for updates and schedules. [phdrailroad.com](http://phdrailroad.com)

If you'd like to come up on a Saturday and spend time watching and photographing trains, make sure you have a paid-up membership card which allows you unlimited access to the Society-owned half of the "wye" property, marked by the yellow stripe. You may park along 32nd Street and the west side of the stripe.



PH&D RR ENGINE #52 AMERICAN LOCOMOTIVE COMPANY S-1 #73578  
 PORT HURON & DETROIT RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
[phdrailroad.com](http://phdrailroad.com)

**#52 POSTER**

*Prior to the arrival of #52, we offer this exquisite poster featuring the work of master rail photographer, Charlie Whipp. We'll have it for sale at the luncheon, 10.00.*

**PH** PORT HURON and DETROIT RAILROAD CO.  
 - St. Clair Blue Water Route -

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**D** PORT HURON & DETROIT RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**MEMBERSHIP CARD**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

JOINED: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ MO/YEAR

Regulations covering access to U.S. rail yards are in effect, administered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and enforced by local enforcement agencies. Accordingly, those with PH&DRRHS membership cards must, if requested, present their cards to authorized personnel from either CN, CSX, or St. Clair County Sheriff's officers. When visiting, please stay on the west side of the yellow line (PH&DRRHS property).

The purpose of *The Port Huron & Detroit Railroad Historical Society* is:

*To collect, archive, preserve, and present, all for the education of the community, historical documents, photographs, drawings, artifacts and equipment relating to The Port Huron & Detroit Railroad Company and its predecessors, The Port Huron Southern Railway and The Detroit Bay City & Western Railroad, as well as the Grand Trunk Western/Canadian National, and the Pere Marquette/Chesapeake and Ohio.*

*To obtain, restore and maintain the roundhouse at 32<sup>nd</sup> Street for use as a museum, as well as other structures, artifacts, and rolling stock, as they may become available;*

*To accumulate, conserve, and index all data relating to the above-named railroads for the use of scholars, rail fans and scale modelers.*

**JOIN NOW AND GET ONBOARD!**

The *Port Huron & Detroit Railroad Historical Society* needs your talent! We invite you to join committees, contribute your time with hands on restoration projects, and be on board at this early, critical stage.

Membership, publicity, web design, resource development, lawn mowing, and acquisitions, are just a few of the areas that you can help out with.

For only \$30 a year, you'll receive 4 nifty newsletters, a chance to be a part of creating the area's first railroad transportation museum complex, have exclusive access to the "wye", and learn more about this historic Michigan short line!

Mail to: PH&DRRHS, P.O. Box 315, St. Clair, MI 48079.

**BOARD of DIRECTORS  
 FALL 2017**

- Jack Allison**
- Thomas Boswell**
- Jo Burgett**
- George Y. Duffy, Jr.**
- T.J. Gaffney**
- Steve Harvey**
- Bruce Sawdon**
- Chad Thompson**

**Have a railroad-related artifact? We appraise for free!**

**(Donations greatly appreciated!)**

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR LATEST NEWS!**

[phdrailroad.com](http://phdrailroad.com)