

## NEWSLETTER Preservation Restoration Interpretation

### Volume 4, Issue 12

## December 2023



*The west face of the Storehouse poses under a late fall sky after FEBT volunteers installed and painted new trim during the November Work Session. – Dave Bulman photo* 

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No. 16 builds steam pressure in the Rockhill Yard ahead of pulling Christmas in Coal Country trains on November  $25^{th}$ . – Doug Davenport photo

## FEBT NOVEMBER ROCKHILL WORK SESSION SUMMARY

We had a very successful November work weekend in Rockhill on November 4 and 5. The weather cooperated and we had a good turnout with 29 volunteers on Saturday and 15 on Sunday. Good progress was made on multiple projects.

Combine 14 moved forward on multiple fronts, including paint prep on the baggage compartment ceiling and platform step painting.

The Boxcar 174 crew continued milling new oak boards for the floor.

The Storehouse crew restocked the large lean-to bin, installed the lean-to back window and exterior trim, and painted the window trim on the Storehouse west side.





In the Car Shop, the team installed the new wood floor at the north end of the building.

The window crew continued repairing and reinstalling window sashes, including several in the Roundhouse.

Finally, the track crew continued restoring track south of the Oddfellows Cemetery Rd crossing, installing 120 additional ties. Read more in the article on Page 8.

If you'd like to help with these and other projects to restore the EBT, please come out and join us! Information on volunteering with us can be found at <u>https://febt.org/volunteer/</u>. – *Dave Bulman* 

*Top: Mike Wahler continues prepping the Combine 14 baggage compartment for paint. – Al Gallo photo* 

Above: Victor Booth and Craig Confair install new floor boards in the north end of the Car Shop. – Al Gallo photo

Right: Andy Van Scyoc, Bill Adams, and Christian McCann prepare another restored window sash for installation. – Al Gallo photo



## **COMPANY STORE ITEM OF THE MONTH**

This calendar features pictures of the East Broad Top railroad taken from 2020 through August 2023. They show images of the railroad's revival, including steam locomotive #16, brought back to service after 67 years. 11x17 inches, 12 month calendar.



Image titles include:

First Winter Spectacular in Many Years

EBT Southbound

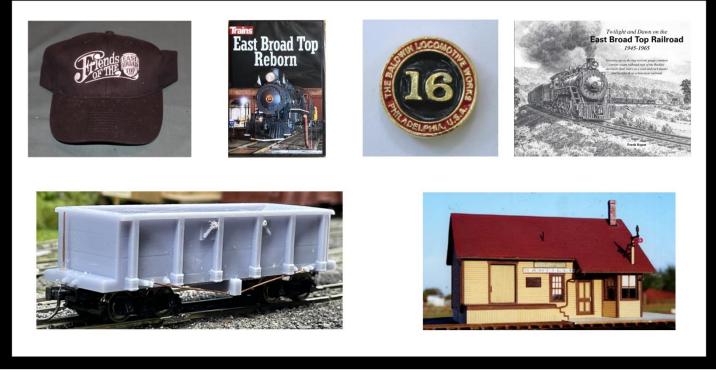
Getting Ready to leave Rockhill

The Machine Shop

\$19.99 Member Discount Applies Shipping \$6.25

Order on-line through the FEBT Company Store website at store.febt.org, using your account or create an account. PayPal, major credit cards, and personal checks payable to FEBT Company Store are accepted. *Money orders cannot be accepted and will be returned to sender. Mail orders, regardless of payment method, are no longer accepted.* 

## FEBT COMPANY STORE FOR EAST BROAD TOP HOLIDAY SHOPPING



## **ARCHIVES PROGRAM RECEIVES NEH GRANT**

This August, the National Endowment of the Humanities (NEH) Division of Preservation and Access awarded the EBT Foundation a \$10,000 Preservation Assistance Grant for Smaller Institutions supporting the East Broad Top Railroad Archives and Special Collections. A collaboration between the Foundation and the Friends of the East Broad Top, the grant funds an 18-month Disaster Response Planning and Environmental Monitoring Project, which provides emergency response planning and training for cultural heritage institutions and first responders along the EBT's historic right-of-way.

In addition to the East Broad Top Railroad Archives and Special Collections, the participating cultural heritage organizations include the Mount Union Historical Society, Bricktown Model Railroaders Association, Fort Shirley Heritage Association, Orbisonia-Rockhill Furnace Historical Society, Three Springs-Saltillo Area Historical Society, and first responders from Mount Union, Orby-Rockhill, Three Springs, and Robertsdale-Wood Fire Departments.

Each participating cultural heritage institution has East Broad Top-related archival materials not duplicated within the holdings of the railroad or the Friends of the East Broad Top, and unique and valuable collections representing their communities. The goal is to create a comprehensive, inclusive, community-wide cultural heritage emergency response program.

Funding also helps the Archives establish an environmental monitoring program to protect the archival collections of the East Broad Top Railroad. To initiate the environmental monitoring program, the project team will install data loggers for the Orbisonia Station and the FEBT Robertsdale Museum in December. The team, then, will be ready to analyze and report data captures by the end of the year.

EBT Archivist Julie Rockwell serves as the grant project director, leading the FEBT-EBTF support team. The team comprises Scarlett Wirt, Lee Rainey, Brad Esposito, James Roslund, and Archives Technician Sammy Bellin.

In November, Rockwell visited board meetings of five of the organizations to introduce members to the project and will see two more in December. In January, the support team will visit area first responders to familiarize them with the grant and upcoming training and collaboration opportunities.

The Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts, Philadelphia, Pa., will conduct a two-part *Disaster Recovery and Response* workshop with an online presentation and hands-on training on April 22 and May 6, 2024. The project support team will attend a two-part webinar *Writing a Disaster Plan* course in June 2024, conducted by the Northeast Document Conservation Center. The project team will then support writing a community-wide disaster plan and help the other organizations develop and write their own tailored plans. The project also aligns with the Central PA Alliance for Response, whose steering committee Rockwell is a member of, and will support regional cultural response and recovery initiatives.

These critical activities will better prepare EBTF-FEBT staff, volunteers, and first responders to protect EBT's unique collections and ensure that the approach to disaster response and recovery is a collaborative effort to protect the heritage of the Southern Huntingdon County rural areas.

The Archives is generously supported by a grant from the Friends of the EBT Annual Campaign. – *The East Broad Top Railroad & Coal Company Archives & Special Collections Program team* 

#### ABOUT THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES Created in 1965 as an independent federal agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities supports research and learning in history, literature, philosophy, and other areas of the humanities by funding selected, peer-reviewed proposals from around the nation. Additional information about the National Endowment for the Humanities and its grant programs is available at: www.neh.gov.

## **ROBERTSDALE NOTES FROM NOVEMBER**

On 11/4 Bill Reynolds and Rick Rourke were leaders of a work session mostly centered on doors. Those nice new doors on the Old Post Office swell and shrink with humidity. Two of them had swollen so much that they didn't want to close anymore. When it gets to that point it means that each use is damaging the door, the door frame, or both. So, it was time to fix it. Fixed and the affected areas repainted, so hopefully there's less of this issue in the future.

11/25 saw Friar Tuck and six members of his track work team making improvements to several sections of track in Robertsdale. Thanks for the efforts of Gene Tucker, Jack Fornadley, Daniel Lane, Dave Johnson, Rick Rourke, Matt Wall, & Steve Jackson!



Several volunteers have off-season projects. For example, the replica station sign needs replication. Suzanne Nivers is going to make a new one. Speaking of doors, Roy Burnham has the materials in hand to make new doors for the station, too. Matt Wall has accepted the challenge to make a virtual Robertsdale tour, so maybe some day you'll get to ride a rail bike through the active 1912 mining area!

We'll have the museum open on 12/2, 12/9, and 12/16. We hope to see you there! – *Pete Clarke* 



Above: Bill Reynolds and Rick Rourke make adjustments to the doors at the FEBT Museum in Robertsdale. – Jane Clarke photo Left: Track crew members improve your handcar and railbike tour experiences by adjusting the gauge of the main line just south of the Company Square. – Gene Tucker photo Below: Museum volunteers measure the station sign for Robertsdale in preparation to make a replacement one. – Jane Clarke photo

Guests came on the 25<sup>th</sup> and pointed out that Christmas in Coal Country trains are all running in the late afternoon and evening. So, the remaining days we are open may be the best time to visit, you have most of the day available to you to see all the displays, take a walking tour, then take a rail bike tour as well – and still have plenty of time to get to your train (and don't forget a trolley) ride.



**FEBT Newsletter** 

## PRESIDENT'S HOLIDAY MESSAGE

2023 has been yet another banner year for FEBT. Our membership continues to grow, our fundraising continues to shatter expectations, our museum keeps getting better, and our volunteers are doing more and more. Just 2 months ago, No. 16 ran to the Odd Fellows Cemetery crossing, marking the beginning of a long sequence of reopening segments of track to operation for the first time since 1956. All of this couldn't happen without you. As Thanksgiving just passed and the December holidays approach, take time to reflect on what you have accomplished. As I reflect I find myself thankful and honored to be a part of such an amazing team including our partners The EBT Foundation and the Rockhill Trolley Museum. Thank you and Happy Holidays to all of you! May 2024 bring us all more good fortune! – *Andy Van Scyoc* 

## FALL REUNION 2024: NEW YEAR, NEW TIME, SAME AMAZING EVENT

As the 2023 Reunion fades into the past, it's a good time to begin looking ahead to all that 2024 signifies and has to offer. 2024 marks a significant point in the East Broad Top Railroad's history as it marks 150 years since the completion of construction all the way to Robertsdale.

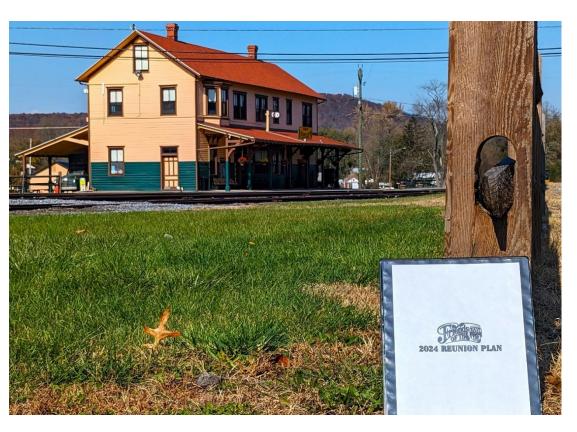
While many details are still in the planning stages and are not ready to be revealed at this time, one thing that can be revealed is the dates for the 2024 FEBT Fall Reunion.

Mark your calendars on **October 4th, 5th and 6th** for the exciting 2024 edition of the FEBT Fall Reunion. This is a departure from prior years, with Columbus Day weekend being the traditional reunion weekend, however this change will lead to a more stable date range for the Reunion going forward.

Next year's Rockhill Volunteer Session Schedule has also been released (see Page 11), offering a unique opportunity for members of the FEBT to have a direct part on the restoration efforts at the East Broad Top Railroad and many are already looking even further ahead to the FEBT Fall Reunion.

There are several exciting activities in the works to build on the success of all of the Reunions to come before but it is certainly hoped that we can still produce some fun surprises that can be revealed over the coming months. Questions and comments can be sent to Al Gallo at <u>febtreunion@gmail.com</u>. – *Al Gallo* 

Planning is already underway for a fun 2024 reunion event. – Al Gallo photo



## **RENEWING AND RECREATING:** THE TRACK GANG'S WORK THIS MONTH

27 FEBT personnel assisted in the work of the track gang this month. Part of our efforts were focused on renewing the track north of the Orbisonia Station, in the area between the north wye switch and the Blacklog Creek bridge. The other focus was on the work to recreate the track south of the IOOF Cemetery Road crossing.

It's never a bad idea to back up and address the needs of trackage that were deliberately set aside during the initial phase of track renewal between the Orbisonia Station and Colgate Grove. That's a fair description of what happened when track rebuilding got going following the EBT Foundation's purchase of the railroad in early 2020: The needs of the track immediately north of the station were set aside until other, more urgent, work could be done.

Now, however, the railroad's track forces (the EBT Foundation's fulltime staff and the FEBT's volunteers) have been able to turn their collective attention to the section of the track immediately north of the Orbisonia Station.

In this reporting period, over 70 ties were installed in the main track (Track 2) between the north wye switch and the Blacklog Creek bridge. In addition, ties were installed in the switch leading from Track 2 to Track 1 (the track closest to the station).

Raising the track significantly was part of this work. Ballasting, surfacing and tamping followed. Some alignment of the track was also applied to the track.

The adjacent Pinmill Track (Track 3), also received some surfacing, since it is now in regular use by southbound trains as they return from the Grove.

#### Upgrading Track Currently in Use



FEBT Track Crew members assist EBTF personnel with maintenance on Tracks 2 and 3 at the north end of the Rockhill Yard. – Gene Tucker photo

#### Rebuilding (and Reclaiming) Out-of-Service Track

Much of the focus, these days, is on the march southward toward Pogue, Three Springs and Saltillo. The railroad's track personnel were able to rebuild more track south of the IOOF Cemetery Road crossing this past month. During the November Work Weekend on Saturday, November 4<sup>th</sup>, fourteen FEBT personnel inserted 120 ties in the track south of the

crossing (I think that's a new, one-day record!). Spiking up of those ties followed. As a result, the basic reconstruction of the track has now progressed to a point about 660 feet south of the crossing. We are currently about 1,900 feet from the PA 475 crossing. Some ballasting took place in this area once the spiking was complete.



FEBT Track Crew members insert ties into the main line between Oddfellows Cemetery Road and Maddensville Pike grade crossings. – Al Gallo photo

We've known for awhile that each joint in this area requires dismantling, cleaning, relubricating and re-assembling, if we are to avoid problems as the weather gets colder or hotter. See last month's column for a description of this phenomenon. Our approach to this process involves dismantling the rail five joints south of the previous joint that was dismantled. Then, the work train is used to pull five rail lengths northward (on average, four or five inches) so that the joints are properly situated. To make the movement easier, any schmutz that is in front of the ties that will move is removed. Then, once the track has been pulled up against the previously-serviced track, each joint in between receives the dismantling, cleaning, re-lubing and re-assembling procedure. This work has progressed about 165 feet south of the track's reconstruction, or to a point about 825 feet south of the crossing.

As part of this overall effort, we did some brush cutting and tree removal from the PA 475 crossing northward. This work will enable machinery to come in and redo two culverts in advance of our efforts to rebuild the track.

#### We Appreciate Your Support and Your Interest!

Thanks to the donations and support of so many, FEBT has been able to underwrite the purchase of much of the materials we are using. To cite but one example, during the week of November 13<sup>th</sup>, about 1,000 ties were delivered to the railroad. As a result, there's a mighty stack of ties in the Boney Pile awaiting installation in the track. The cost of this supply of ties was entirely underwritten by contributions to FEBT.

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Those resources wouldn't be available, absent your support. Thank you so much! - Gene Tucker

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## **NOVEMBER VOLUNTEERS**

The following members volunteered in November in Rockhill Furnace, Robertsdale, and/or with the track crew. Thanks to all FEBT volunteers for their dedicated efforts to preserve, restore, and interpret the EBT.

Bill Adams Roy Burnham Craig Confair Van Cresswell Al Gallo Tom Hesketh Tom Jordan Doug Linebaugh Joel Myers Bill Reynolds Jason Smierciak Gene Tucker Chris Wenger Donald Barton, Jr. Wayne Cass Kevin Conklin Dave Ebright Jackson Ganser Steve Jackson Greg Kifer Christian McCann Tom Perman Ryan Rimshaw Matt Stark Andy Van Scyoc John Widmeyer

Victor Booth Jane Clarke Alex Cook Jack Fornadley Andrew Greene Steve Jacobs Wyatt Kindler Jim Milheim John Quinn Rick Rourke Roger Stier Mike Wahler Norm Wilcox Dave Bulman Pete Clarke Phil Coyle Larry Fuchs David Hart Dave Johnson Daniel Lane Jonathan Miller Mark Reese Tim Schindele David Syiek Matt Wall Charlie Wootton

#### **MEMBERSHIP BOX SCORE**

The Friends of the East Broad Top membership is up to 2085

## UPCOMING ROCKHILL FURNACE VOLUNTEER SESSIONS

The dates for the 2024 Rockhill Furnace work sessions are now set and are listed on Page 11. These are also posted on our website at <u>https://febt.org/volunteer/</u>, along with information on projects and how you can participate.

The next Rockhill volunteer session will take place Saturday and Sunday, January 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. Please consider coming out for one or more of the sessions to help us continue to preserve and restore the East Broad Top. If you are interested in participating in the Rockhill Furnace volunteer sessions including track work, and are not on the current signup distribution, please contact Charlie Wootton, the Rockhill Furnace volunteer coordinator, at <u>rhrestoration@febt.org</u>.

If you have questions about volunteering, or have suggestions for our volunteer recruiting efforts, please email me at  $\underline{dbulman115@gmail.com}$ . – *Dave Bulman* 

## FEBT MUSEUM SCHEDULE



Hours: 10 AM to 4 PM December 2, 9, 16

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

Date	Host	Event
December 1-3, 8-10, 15-17, 22-23	EBT	Christmas in Coal Country
December 1, 2, 8, 9, 15, 16	RTM	Lights, Camera, Christmas Trolleys!
December 2, 9, 16	RTM	Santa's Trolley
January 6, 7	FEBT	Rockhill Work Session
February 3, 4	FEBT	Rockhill Work Session
March 2, 3	FEBT	Rockhill Work Session
April 6, 7	FEBT	Rockhill Work Session
May 18, 19	FEBT	Rockhill Work Session
May 20-24	FEBT	Rockhill Spring Work Week
June 15, 16	FEBT	Rockhill Work Session
July 6, 7	FEBT	Rockhill Work Session
July 27, 28	FEBT	Rockhill Work Session
August 17, 18	FEBT	Rockhill Work Session
September 14, 15	FEBT	Rockhill Work Session
September 16-20	FEBT	Rockhill Fall Work Week
October 4, 5, 6	FEBT	FEBT Fall Reunion
October 26, 27	FEBT	Rockhill Work Session

Hosts:	FEBT	Friends of the East Broad Top	www.febt.org
	EBT	East Broad Top Railroad	www.eastbroadtop.com
	RTM	Rockhill Trolley Museum	www.rockhilltrolley.org
	BTACMHS	Broad Top Area Coal Miners Historical Society	broadtopminersmuseum.com

### HOLIDAY EVENTS IN EBT LAND





# **Bricktown Museum**

Mount Union, Pennsylvania

## 300 West Small Street Mount-Union, PA Sunday, December 9

10am - 4pm

House

# Local History Exhibits Model Railroad Train Display

## WANTS AND NEEDS

We have some specific volunteer roles we want to fill. Please consider if you could help with these.

<u>FEBT Youth Volunteer Leader</u> – FEBT intends to create a young volunteer program for EBT enthusiasts under age 18. We need someone to organize and lead this program, with help and support from FEBT leadership. The FEBT Youth Volunteer Leader will help to create the next generation of FEBT volunteers. If interested or for more info, please contact Dave Bulman at <u>dbulman115@gmail.com</u>.

## NOVEMBER FUNDRAISING UPDATE

Wow, what a month for our 2024 Campaign! Your tremendous response and financial support set new records for monthly donation amount and number of donations. Your donations totaled \$104,455 from 370 donors. Donations during the November 1-14 matching grant period more than tripled the \$15,000 match threshold. A huge thank you to all that contributed to support the FEBT mission to restore, preserve, and interpret the East Broad Top Railroad.

**2024 Campaign Goal:** \$220,000 **October Donations:** \$104,455.00 **Campaign Total:** \$135,610.00 - 61.6%

November donors\*:

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These ties are awaiting spiking in the main line are installed as part of the March to Saltillo. This progress is made possible by the financial contributions of our donors. Thank you for each donation! – Dave Bulman photo

**FEBT Newsletter** 

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In Memory of Nathan Kline: Michael Kline

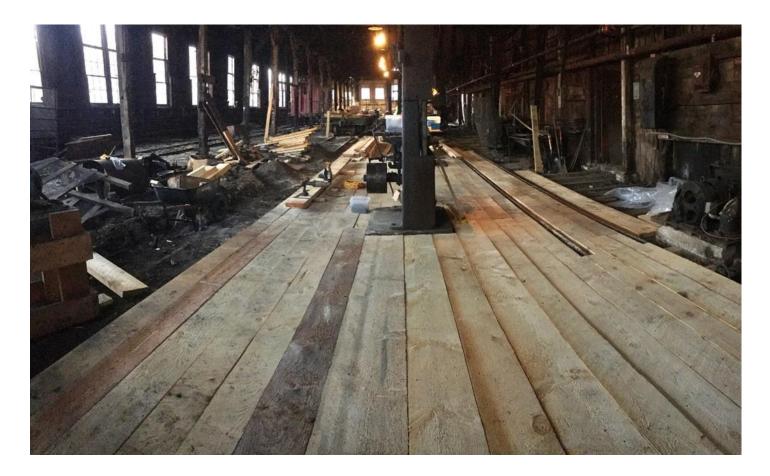
\* - All donors listed represent donations received between October 22, 2023 and November 21, 2023. Donations received after November 21 will be reported in the January 2024 issue due to press time constraints.
- Karen Bulman and Dave Bulman



A portion of the 3000 ties funded by the FEBT 2023 Campaign await installation to continue the March to Saltillo. Dave Bulman photo.

## **ABOUT THIS ORGANIZATION**

Friends of the East Broad Top, Inc. (FEBT) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, historical, and educational society dedicated to the preservation, restoration, and interpretation of the East Broad Top Railroad National Historic Landmark in Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania. It was organized in 1983 and now boasts over 2,000 members. FEBT publishes an award-winning magazine, *Timber Transfer*, and a monthly e-newsletter, and operates a museum in Robertsdale PA, the EBT's southern terminus. See <u>febt.org/</u> for more information.



*Newly installed wood flooring in the north end of the car shop installed by Craig Confair, Victor Booth, and Brad Esposito. Note the 2 foot gauge material transfer track on the right. – Brad Esposito photo.* 

### **ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER**

The Friends of the East Broad Top Newsletter is a monthly digital-only periodical. Started in 2020, it is intended to keep members and donors apprised of what the organization has done and will be doing. The FEBT Newsletter is distributed by email to the current list of members and donors, and is a privilege of contributing to the FEBT's cause of preserving, restoring, and interpreting the East Broad Top Railroad for current and future generations. The editor can be contacted at <u>Newsletter@febt.org</u>. Previous issues of the FEBT Newsletter may be found at <u>febt.org/newsletter</u>. Press time for information submitted is 8:00 PM Eastern time on the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month. Events occurring after the 25<sup>th</sup>, such as donations and memberships, will be considered part of the following month's information.