

The Chester Foundation www.ChesterRailwayStation.net
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NEWSLETTER

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Supporting members need to know that the organization they support is a vital one. The memberships are very helpful, not only financially, but also give us an idea of the level of community support for what we are trying to achieve. And, we hope they will generate feedback and suggestions.

One of the most exciting pieces of news in years is that we received a positive response from The Department of the Interior – National Park Service, concerning our inquiry on National Historic Landmark status for the Chester Railway Station and the two state-owned (Div. of Fisheries and Wildlife) abandoned Keystone Arches as resources of high integrity representing the Western Railroad, the first mountain railroad in the world.

During the year of 2013, the *Chester Foundation* completed a number of projects. The *Foundation* is becoming known for making headway with little more than goodwill and a strong desire to maintain and improve the Chester Railroad Station and the quality of area life. We treated 350 feet of platform which surrounds the station in 4 hours using member, local volunteer and Gateway Regional National Honor Society (NHS) workers.

NHS also helped with Chester On Track and a number of dinners at the station and can be seen on our Facebook page painting the tank car. Over the summer, we painted our 1919 wooden caboose and the 1929 tank car, with lettering on one side so far. Scraping and painting of the two 1929 wooden boxcars is slated to begin next

With a grant from Amherst Railway Society and the donated labor of a local Boy Scout working on his Eagle project, we will begin work on adding the correct roofwalks to the antique railcars on the premises as soon as the local Boy Scout Council approves it.

In 2014, we will be adding glass window inserts to the station to conserve energy while keeping the integrity of our original operational double hung windows. We have funding to begin construction of a climate controlled vault in the basement for the proper storage and care of photographs and printed material generously donated to the museum.

We placed the Chester & Becket Trail kiosk, officially opening that trail, on the J.J. Kelly Wildlife Conservation Area off Hampden St., Chester, with help from the Hampshire County Trial Court workers. Many visitors come to the *Chester Railway Museum* with questions on the Chester & Becket Railroad.

The *C&B Trail* is named for the railroad, remnants of which it will highlight. Walkers will be able to access the C&B Trail from the railroad station. It will traverse the newly refurbished Chester Town Park and culminate amid a cluster of ruins from of the C&B right-of-way and both the Hampden and Ashland Emery Companies.

The segment will give hikers an accurate picture of the infrastructure which supported the railroad, and the wild terrain it covered. It will also offer a number of scenic vistas on Walker Brook, often not appreciated driving along Route 20.

The Berkshire Land Trust requested a talk on the Chester & Becket Railroad which connected their Historic Granite Quarry to the finishing works in Chester. It was well-attended and later delivered to residents of the American Inn in Southwick at the station and residents of the General Sheppard Apartments in Westfield.

Please note, the station web site is now www.chesterrailwaystation.net and the Arch site has changed to www.keystonearches.com due to a glitch with the domain names. We also encourage you to follow and like us on Facebook.

We held our annual luncheon hosting the Chester Alumni Association. And with our sister organization, Friends of the Keystone Arches, hosted a visit to the station and hike with 75 Gateway Regional Jr. High students introducing them to some of the marvelous history in their own backyards.

We held events in concert with the Chester Theatre Company and a very successful Chester On Track The fall Hobo Harvest Dinner on Oct. 19, marked another great year. Despite the economic downturn, the year was filled out with a healthy number of private gatherings and caboose campers.

Many of you were among the crowds who greeted Santa Claus and the Mrs. at the station on Sunday, December 8th. The annual Christmas party is presented free to the community by the Foundation as a thank you for the ongoing support of our neighbors.

The 2014 season has already begun. Planning is well underway for Chester On Track 24 on May 17, 2013, Help is always appreciated for COT and dinners at the station. It's not totally without compensation, as workers are treated to the same fine cuisine as the guests for their services.

We are always on the lookout for new members, and if any of this sounds like fun to you, please give us a call to volunteer and of course, your comments and suggestions are always welcome.

Thank you all for your support,

Dave Pierce, President
The Chester Foundation, Inc.
Friends of the Keystone Arches, Inc.