

Omaha's Zoo Railroad

Equipment

Passenger Cars: 11 open-air coaches (handicap accessible) and one caboose.

Steam Locomotives: No. 119, a 4-4-0 American type, built in 1968 by Crown Metal Products and No. 395-104, a 0-6-2T, built in 1890 by Krauss in Linz, Austria.

M.O.W. (Maintenance Of Way): Ballast Maintainer; Fairmont MT 14 motor car.

Signals: Two "Magnetic Flagman" wigwags; one pair of crossbucks and lights; one semaphore with dual flags.

History

Construction was completed in 1968 on a little railroad contained within the grounds of Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo. The two and one half miles of 30 inch gauge track were laid with 70 pound rail by Union Pacific Railroad. Union Pacific Railroad also assisted in upkeep involving track work, signals, locomotive and equipment maintenance.

Originally there were two Wye tracks which allowed for the operation of running figure eights within Omaha's Zoo. As ridership increased, the figure eights gave way to running a simple oval of a little over 1 ¼ miles. In the late 1970's a fifth coach and a caboose were added to the original four coach train set to operate on weekends due to the ever increasing ridership. In late 1991, construction began on a 120' by 40' two-stall engine house replacing the two small sheds and an outside pit. This was done with the assistance of Union Pacific Railroad, which greatly enhanced the care and storage of the equipment. The engine house was opened in the spring of 1994 and was dedicated in July of that same year.



In 2003 an additional seventh coach was added to assist with the railroad's passenger capacity. In the summer of 2010, four additional coaches were added as a second train set to further assist with the weekend capacity.

Steam Locomotive History

No. 119 was built by Crown Metal Products in Wyano, PA in 1968. It is a narrow gauge replica of Union Pacific's 119, a venerable American type 4-4-0, that met at Promontory, Utah for the driving of the "Golden Spike" at the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad on May 10, 1869. To date Omaha's Zoo No. 119 is the only 30 inch gauge true Steam Locomotive built by Crown.

No. 395-104 was built by Krauss in Linz, Austria in 1890. The locomotive, a 0-6-2T, is named Riva and is one of three sister locomotives built in 1890 for the Mori Arco Riva del Garda Tramway (M.A.R.) located on the southern edge of the Austrian Empire at Lake Garda (now Italy). She worked there until 1915 when the rail line was heavily damaged due to the war. She was turned over to the K&K Feldbahn and served on the military railways during World War I stationed at Stryj in Galizien, now Ukraine, until 1939. In the mid 1930's, at the beginning of World War II, the area was taken over by Russia. In 1939, Germany captured the area and brought Riva to Siebenburgen, then part of Hungary, renumbered as 395-104 and worked the Magyar Allamvasutak (M.A.V.), Hungarian State Railways, until 1944 when the area fell to Rumania. She finished out her days on the Caile Ferate Romane (C.F.R) working on the Alba Iulia Zlatna line until retirement in 1968. From 1968-1973 Riva was owned by Plasser & Theurer of Vienna, Austria. With the help of Union Pacific Railroad, Joseph Theurer, President of Plasser & Theurer, donated the locomotive to Omaha's Zoo in 1974. Union Pacific's Omaha shops rebuilt parts of the locomotive to bring the Riva up to U.S. operating standards. By 1976 the locomotive was chuffing along pulling coaches full of delighted passengers once again.