

“Seven point four” is the newsletter of the Friends of the Stewartstown Railroad, Inc.. A Pennsylvania non-stock, not for profit organization, tax exempt under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code.



**President’s Message**

Greetings, Friends of the Stewartstown Railroad! Welcome to this issue of 7.4. As summer ends and autumn begins, we hope that you and yours are doing well. Here are some quick updates on what I hope is your favorite little railroad.

Annual Meeting: On August 19th we held our annual meeting in person at the railroad’s headquarters building, and online via Zoom. All the members were invited. We reviewed our accomplishments over the last year, our plans for the future, and areas of special focus.

In June we ran the entire line and had it sprayed for weeds. Because the spray truck is larger than our motorcars, we had to send a crew out with the weed sprayer and take care of as many branches and trees that were impeding on the

truck’s passage across our right of way. The weed spray helps tremendously in keeping our tracks clear.

In July, just after the Independence Day holiday, our volunteers were working on extending the class 1 track, removing bad ties and installing new ones past the Picnic Ground. We were also able to do some erosion control near the Elm Street and Mount Airy Road crossings. However, starting around this time, we also began finding that some person or persons have been committing some serious vandalism on the various railroad equipment. Caps from fuel and hydraulic tanks were stolen, fuel filter drains were opened up, water was put into fuel tanks, the horn was stolen from locomotive number 10.... dangerous and damaging actions. The police were contacted, reports were taken, and new surveillance cameras were installed. It’s a sad commentary that a railroad like ours that tries to do so much good for the community is being targeted like this.

In August a series of damaging storms came through Southern York County, and the Railroad was badly impacted. Trees and branches were down all across the line. All the planned work for the August work weekend went right out the window and our volunteers cleared the line and opened it from Stewartstown to milepost 4.5, past the end of class one track, and past where the railbikes turn around. In early September another crew went out and started working from milepost one towards milepost 4.5. As of this writing, there are still large trees down. We just

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## 2022-2023 Friends Officers

**President - Mike Ruane**

**Vice President - Dave Watson**

**Treasurer - Donna Kuhlman**

**Secretary - open**

**Assistant Secretary - open**

**Director-At-Large - Larry Morgan**

**Director-At-Large - Jim Kuhlman**

**Director-At-Large - Miles Weaver**

**Director-At-Large - Jim Whipple**

**Director-At-Large - Ken Bitten**

**Newsletter Editor - Joe Krepps**

*(President's Message, cont. from page 1)*

don't have enough volunteers or equipment to get it all cleared quickly.



Dave Watson and his crew have been making great progress on Coach 1158, and I'm sure he can use any and all volunteer help – if you can paint, or sand, or sweep, or weld, or do electrical work, we could really use your help. Many hands make light work; we'd love your help. Thanks again for your support and encouragement. The railroad enters its busy season soon, with Halloween and Christmas trains. If you'd like to come out to the railroad and help with these trains, or if you'd just like to come out and ride, we'd love to see you!

Mike Ruane

### Work Session July 8,9

On Friday, we had motorcar engine problems along with near constant rain.

On Saturday, we worked East of Five Forks Road. We installed 16 ties, cleaned out the king angled culvert, cut a fair bit of brush and trees back.



Patrick Tyrell graciously brought his excavator out and cleaned all the dirt out from between the rails and dug some shallow ditches (tie depth) on both sides of the track down to the concrete catch basin so that we can do future tie work there and to control the water going down the track.



Mike Ruane ran the tie inserter. As you can see the track is in poor condition here with dirt and no ballast and all of the ties are rotten with no spikes holding the rail.

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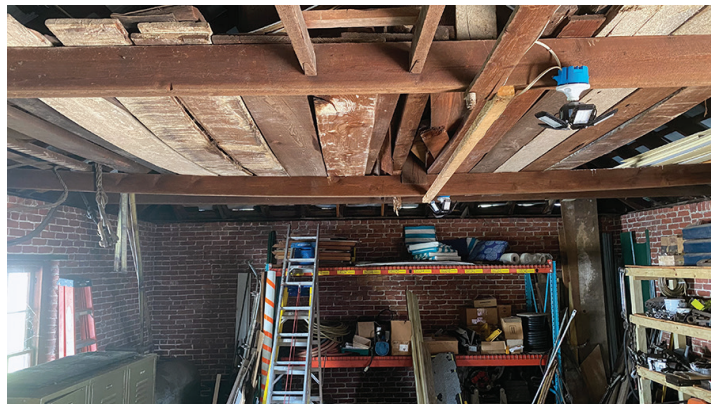
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On Sunday, we replaced a broken joint bar east of MP6, replaced numerous loose track bolts, dug out another culvert (by hand), and slushed 17 ties down by the old pumpkin patch.



And got chased back to town by ANOTHER thunderstorm. After cleaning up and putting the equipment away, Chris Lutz and I worked at getting more lights in the enginehouse working, while it was storming. We discovered a leak in the enginehouse roof that will need repaired in the future, before the winter rain and snow.



### Coach 1341 Update

With the bank side roof repairs complete, work is now underway to repair the station side of the car. Unfortunately, this side of the car is much worse than the other side. The main culprit, Bondo, was used more than 10 years ago to fill in many holes along the roof edge. Water managed to get in behind the Bondo and caused additional rust damage. The contract welder is using two sheets of sheet metal to match the original curve. First a piece of sheet metal that is relatively flat is welded in along the edge. Then, a second piece is welded above the first piece to match the original curve. These pieces are finally blended together to hide the welding seams. We would like to thank our generous donors that helped to make the restoration to 1341's roof possible.



## Coach 1158 Update

We have some good news to report. The friends of the Stewartstown Railroad were awarded a generous \$10,000 grant from the Powder Mill Foundation of York. These funds will be used to complete the floor, ceiling, and external painting.



Work continues on 1158. Our progress slowed down a little bit over the summer when some resources had to be diverted over to work on 1341's roof edge. The steel floor in 1158 is now finished and awaiting concrete. Issac and John spent many hours welding the sheet metal together, as well as welding in the C channel supports that give the floor additional support.



Additionally, all the seat frames have been painted. The arm rests are being placed back on, too.



Despite our best efforts to obtain Imron 3.5 in to finish painting the car, we were unable to procure it from anywhere. Unfortunately, we are now being forced to wait until Spring 2024 to purchase paint and complete the external painting, rather than purchase a lesser quality paint. Our Imron paint supplier continues to try and obtain the paint we want. Hopefully they can get it in soon.

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## Growth In Stewartstown Will Impact Our Railroad

By Bill Histed

Of late, there has been a spurt of growth in Stewartstown and New Freedom that will in the future impact our railroad operations. This growth may be good or it may be bad. Growth in Stewartstown will impact us more than growth in New Freedom, but we have "franchises" in both communities.

For a positive thinker, growth in population along our railroad potentially means more passengers and more people to support the historical gem called The Stewartstown Railroad.

For a negative thinker, it means more people who locate their homes in a railroad town knowing there are tracks there who in a few months start complaining about train horns or crossings. More traffic means more wear and tear and repairs on our crossings which the commonwealth makes us pay for. It doesn't matter that the railroad was here before paved roads, the state charges us with repairing cross-

ings. It doesn't matter that the railroad was here for 139 years making noises....some newcomers will complain about the noises similar to the ones our trains have been making in the community for 14 decades.

### More Growth Than I Had Imagined

For purposes of writing this article on growth, primarily in Stewartstown our namesake town, I did a lot of research of U.S. Census records for Stewartstown, New Freedom, York County and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

All four government entities grew more in recent decades than I had imagined. Often, we hear about the decline of a number of Northern states, but Pennsylvania has, indeed, shown moderate growth since 1950. To hear it told by some, you would think everyone and his brother is flocking down to Florida to live. Federal figures show Pennsylvania's population at 10,500,000 in 1950; 13,002,700 in the 2020 census....70 years later. That's roughly a quarter increase, even if over 70 years. It's still an increase.

York County has done even better if you like population increases. Federal census figures put York County's population at 202,737 in 1950, at 312,963 in 1980 and 456,438 in the 2020 census. This means that York County's population has more than doubled since 1950.

### Stewartstown's Population Growth

I found particularly interesting the census figures for Stewartstown which was first recorded in 1860 near the dawn of the War Between The States. It was just 189 souls then.

At about the time the Stewartstown Railroad was chartered and built in 1884-85, Stewartstown's population was between 300 and 400 people according to census figures. In the 1880 U.S. Census, Stewartstown had just 303 hearty souls.

That makes the story of the founding of our railroad even more interesting. How many towns of 300 plus people were deeply involved in creating their own railroad, from soup to nuts? Back in

the 1880s, it was more difficult physically to build a railroad from scratch....station(s), engineer and clear right of way, engine house, fuel facility and all of the rest. But for such a small community to spearhead such a project!

Here are the U.S. Census figures for Stewartstown's population over the years. Please note that since 1980, Stewartstown's population has nearly doubled, from 1,072 in 1980 to 2,125 in the 2020 federal census. Not too many towns have doubled in population in 40 years.

This research disabused me of my previous assumption that Stewartstown's population has pretty much stood still in recent years. This is why I like to write....I end up learning as much as anyone.

Here are the census figures for Stewartstown over the years: 1860, 189; 1870, 212; 1880, 303; 1890, 441; 1900, 573; 1910, 674; 1920, 718; 1930, 863; 1940, 985; 1950, 1,133; 1960, 1,164; 1970, 1,157; 1980, 1,072; 1990, 1,308; 2000, 1,752; 2010, 2,089; 2020, 2,125 and 2022 estimate, 2,153.

### New Freedom Grew By Even More

New Freedom, which our railroad also has a stake in, has two and one-half times the population of Stewartstown, the 2020 census figures show. New Freedom has a estimated population of 5,090 in 2022, government figures show.

But at one time, early on, Stewartstown had a larger population than New Freedom. The first federal census figures I could find for New Freedom was the 1880 federal census of 324 people, just a bit more than Stewartstown's. The 1890 census put New Freedom's population at 364, smaller than Stewartstown's 441. The last census that showed Stewartstown with a larger population was in 1900 with 550 New Freedom residents to 573 in Stewartstown. In every federal census after that, New Freedom led in population growth.

Why these figures are necessary, I think is to show that while Stewartstown and New Freedom are not metropolises, growth has not been a

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stranger to them over their history. So why should the current spurt of growth be of any surprise at a time many Northern and Midwestern cities are posting population declines.

### Which Gets Us To The Current Discussion

The current growth in Stewartstown is probably of more concern to us than the growth in New Freedom, but we own both.

One of the things I have noted in Stewartstown is that in the recent decades, much of the commercial growth in Stewartstown has been along our railroad operations. I suspect a lot of it has to do with companies and real estate investors wanting along the state highway entrance to town.

By contrast, go “up the hill” I call it from the Stewartstown station and there has not been that type of growth in the “old downtown” or on the opposite end of town out by Saubel’s Market.

Along our railroad in modern history we have had all of the condos of Bailey Springs, the Bailey Springs Plaza shopping center and other buildings nearby, the Dollar General Store, Rutter’s, and now low and behold a new building along our tracks that is in some legal dispute with the local authorities.

You may see this large new multi-story building along our tracks in the Bailey Springs sections. It is under construction but its legal status is in question. The original construction permit was for an extended stay hotel-something I believe that Stewartstown could use, especially near our railroad. But the development company from out of town changed course and wanted to turn the building into 31 apartments.

This story has been reported on at least two TV stations and in newspapers in York and Delta.

Recently, the Stewartstown Borough had a meeting on the appeal by the developers to change the type of business to be housed there. There was a huge uprising of opposition against changing the building from a hotel to apartments. The Star Newspaper out of Delta attended the meeting and said the place was packed by at

least 60 residents and was standing room only. One person fainted and was carried out by the emergency medical service. The local board rejected any change in the zoning and purpose from the original extended stay hotel.

Among complaints against changing the zoning use to allow apartments, some attendees noted lack of parking and said people would be parking in the Bailey Springs Plaza parking area. Others noted other issues and did not like the idea that the developers decided to change land use after they had gotten permission for a hotel. It should be noted that The Stewartstown Railroad took no position in the controversy.

Despite neighborhood opposition to this project, there is an even larger apartment project being talked about near the railroad in Stewartstown. This is a large old factory building that some developers are talking about putting a huge apartment project. I don’t believe anything has been finalized on this even larger apartment project at the old factory area, but I heard some neighbors already have concerns, saying that area of Stewartstown is congested now. It would have times over the apartment units of the contested project already under construction.

How much more growth can Stewartstown tolerate in the area where there have already been some parking “issues?”

### The Cost Of Growth To The Community As A Whole

I am a small town boy reared in Ohio, and I know the pros and cons of growth. Many small towns stay that way because they have not been interested in growing. Others fear the changes and the real costs to the local government of growth. As the population grows, there are new demands for water and sewer, street maintenance costs, schools, recreation facilities and the like.

In Florida, many cities and states made developers pay for the costs of growth rather than expect the existing population to pay for it. These are called “impact fees.” Even expanding a water treatment plant or wastewater treatment plant may cost in the seven figures.

The city manager of Mulberry, a central Florida city I have a business in, says many of the developers either are from out of the city or they plan to flip the property to other investors from out of the area. That city has various “impact fees” for new developers to help ease the cost of growth. The city commission there would rather developers pay for growth than to suddenly raise water and sewer bills of residents already there who have already paid for the limited capacity that they use.

There is probably not much we can do about future growth as a railroad but to stay VERY ALERT and to continue to protect our right of way and other rights. Once a building is built, it is done. Most local government boards will not require a developer to tear off part of a building if it extends on an adjoining property or right of way by a few feet.

The Stewartstown Railroad is very limited into right of way growth, so we have to be on guard at protecting what we have.

Also, please keep your ears and eyes open for any once in a lifetime opportunities to buy a property near the railroad. I can’t speak for the day to day operations as I am not an officer of the railroad, but you never know when someone might give us terms. Or maybe the railroad can start buying a lottery ticket a week, hoping we hit the jackpot. I am joking, of course. But I think I know a winning number: 74747474.

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### Work Session, Sept. 9,10

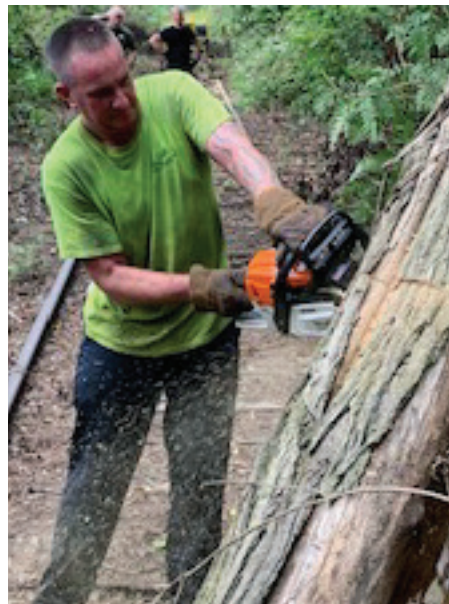
We cleared fallen trees and branches from New Freedom to the Hungerford Station, about 1.7 miles. As we worked along, we also cleared offending trees branches and vines that hit the spray truck. Thanks to Mark Koppenhaver, John Pope and Paul Crouse for coming out and helping, and to Mark for bringing out his Fairmont A-6 motorcar for transport.



We also get a lot of “leaner trees” that fall over and then get hung up in other trees. They are always a challenge due to gravity and unpredictability as to where they will fall as they come down. You can see one of the leaner trees behind Mark, also how clogged the cut is behind Mann

and Parker, it will need some serious ditching as we get out there with restorative track work.

Even after battling two wasp nests and a sunny



85 degree day, we did get A LOT done. However, the line from Hungerford Station east to at least MP 4 past Deer Creek Bridge still needs to be cleared, so we will need to schedule another day to deal with that additional 2.3 miles.

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### Upcoming Trains:

Pumpkin Patch Express

Oct. 7,8 & 14,15 10:00am, 11:45am, 2:15pm

Villains’ Express

Oct. 21, 10:00am, 11:45am, 2:30pm

Halloween Costume Special

Oct 28, 4:00pm, 5:15pm, 6:30pm

Fall Foliage Express

Nov. 4, 10:30am, 11:45pm, 1:30pm

Red, White, and Blue Salute to Veterans

Nov 5 11:30am, 12:45pm

Santa Claus Express

Nov 25,26 & Dec. 3, 16, 17, 23

10:30am, 12:00pm, 2:15pm



Friends of the Stewartstown Railroad, Inc.  
 P.O. Box 456  
 Stewartstown, Pa. 17363-0456

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## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_



The Friends of the Stewartstown Railroad, Inc. invites all who are interested in preserving the Stewartstown Railroad to join the Friends organization. The railroad was founded in 1884 and opened in 1885.

One of the goals of the organization is to support our members as they perform their volunteer work on the railroad upgrading and maintaining the railroad's properties. Our volunteer's efforts help the railroad continue its operations over its 7.4 miles of track between Stewartstown and New Freedom, Pa., via the Deer Creek Valley. The Friends organization is a Pennsylvania non-stock, not-for-profit organization. The Friends organization is tax-exempt under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. The Friends organization owns a minority equity interest in the Stewartstown Railroad Company.

Please send completed form and check to:  
 Friends of the Stewartstown Railroad, Inc.  
 P.O. Box 456  
 Stewartstown, Pa. 17363-0456

### Membership Classifications & Dues (Full year, Jan.-Dec.)

- Individual Membership** ..... \$20.00  
 Show your membership card and receive a \$2.00 discount on one regular Stewartstown Railroad train ticket, courtesy of the Stewartstown Railroad Company.
- Family Membership (all members at same address)**..... \$100.00  
 Show your membership card and receive a \$2.00 discount on up to four (4) Stewartstown Railroad train tickets, courtesy of the Stewartstown Railroad Company.
- Corporate Membership (business/organizational)** ..... \$300.00  
 Corporate members receive five (5) complimentary Stewartstown Railroad ticket coupons from the Friends organization.
- Optional: General Fund donation** ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Optional: Endowment Fund donation**..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Optional: Equipment Fund donation** ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Optional: Right of Way/Track Fund donation** ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Optional: Other donation, please specify** ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(You may specify a specific project on the line above for your optional donation, if you wish.)

- Optional: Check here to receive only electronic copy of "7.4" newsletter**
- Total enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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