



## AMERICAN PASSENGER RAIL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

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# ONBOARD EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS ON THE SOUTH SHORE LINE



*Want to know what is out your window when traveling between Chicago and South Bend on the train?  
Then join the APRHF Rail Rangers for onboard educational programs this spring and summer!*

**(CHESTERTON, IN)** – This spring and summer will definitely be a busy one for the American Passenger Rail Heritage Foundation's Rail Rangers program. Volunteer Interpretive Guides with our 501(c)(3) non-profit organization will be presenting more than one dozen on-board educational programs on the South Shore Line between the months of April and August 2018. Get your calendar out and plan to join us for a trip or two! The best part is... there is no extra cost above your regular train ticket to participate. One-way adult fares are \$13.50 or less... making it extremely affordable for families to travel and learn about the people, places, and history right outside their window between Chicago and South Bend. There's no reservations needed either — just hop on and off where you want.



For the past eight months now, volunteers with the APRHF Rail Rangers have been riding the South Shore Line between Chicago and South Bend, Indiana, on select weekend dates, sharing interesting facts with passengers about what they are seeing out their windows. The South South Line is one of the very last electric interurban railroads left anywhere in the United States; it connects Downtown Chicago with communities such as Hammond, Gary, Dune Park, Beverly Shores, Michigan City, Hudson Lake, and South Bend. The train line is quite scenic, passing through (or very close to) four National Park Service units — including the Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor, Pullman National Monument, Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, and the Kankakee River National Water Trail.



Rail Rangers Executive Director Robert Tabern says, “The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District, who runs the South Shore Line, has been incredibly supportive of having APRHF Rail Rangers Interpretive Guides aboard. Their management team received such positive feedback from passengers about our programs that our initial six-month test period was extended into 2019 now. We are so glad the NICTD agrees with us — that passengers get so much more out of their rides when they know about the cool things out their window.”

Interpretive Guide Kathy Bruecker, who has narrated on several South Shore Line trips for the APRHF Rail Rangers adds, “I really enjoy telling people about the lesser-known stories along the route. In Michigan City, the route of the South Shore crosses where President Abraham Lincoln’s Funeral Train passed through on May 1, 1865. Residents of the town turned out by the thousands and built a giant arch to commemorate the slain leader. A bit down the line, there is a small lake that contains jelly fish. People don’t expect that in Indiana. These jelly fish are just about the size of nickles and contain very small stingers. No one really even know how they got there. There are even swamps we pass by in St. Joseph County that contain carnivorous plants. Even regular South Shore Line riders are stunned at some of the things out there they didn’t know about.”

Passengers can learn about these stories and much more by riding with the APRHF Rail Rangers this coming spring and summer on the South Shore Line.



Interpretive Guides typically ride one round-trip between Chicago-Millennium Station and South Bend-Airport Station two to three weekends per month. Eastbound trips leave Downtown Chicago at 8:40am Central Time and arrive in South Bend at 12:10pm Eastern Time. Westbound trips leave South Bend at 1:05pm Eastern Time and return to Downtown Chicago at 2:40pm Central Time. Programs are presented on one car of the train – just look for the yellow Rail Rangers signs to see what car Guides are in. Seating is on a first come, first serve basis... no reservations are taken.



Upcoming Spring/Summer 2018 Program Dates are below:

**APRIL:** April 7\*, April 14 & April 28

**MAY:** May 5\* & May 19

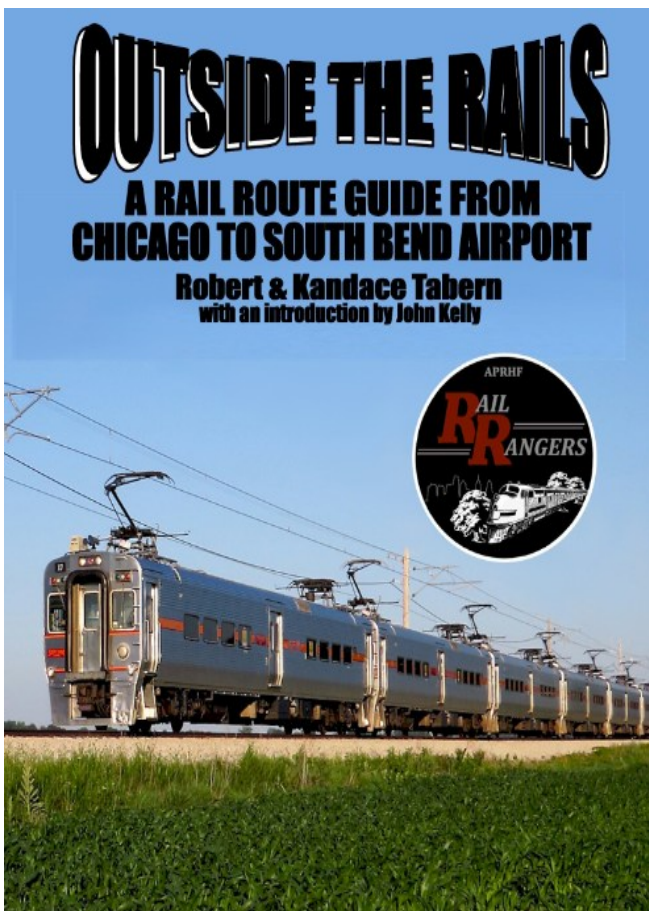
**JUNE:** June 3\* & June 16\*

**JULY:** July 8\* & July 14

**AUGUST:** August 11 & August 25

(Dates with an asterisk indicate our 'enhanced' programs that feature our Junior Rail Rangers program and our APRHF Passport Program Cancellation Stamps)

Chicago Coordinator Kandace Tabern says, "We are really excited about the positive response travelers have had to our programs. We have even got contacted by several private travel groups in the past couple of months that want us to narrate for them. In March, we did a special private program for more than 40 members of the Duneland Seniors organization. At the end of August, we are doing another special private program for Farmers on the Bum, a group of friends from Appleton, Wisconsin who travel together every year somewhere. It's really cool they heard about the Rail Rangers and want to check out the amazing South Shore Line."



Passengers who travel on other South Shore Line departures when Interpretive Guides are not aboard, can still learn about the sites out their window through a route guide book written by the Rail Rangers. "Outside the Rails: A Rail Route Guide from Chicago to South Bend, IN", which contains more than 100 pages of information, is available online at **MidwestRails.com** as both a regular hard copy book (\$20) and a downloadable e-book PDF file (\$15). We're told a podcast version is even in the works for later this summer! Proceeds from the sale of route guides go toward funding the APRHF Rail Rangers' program on the South Shore, including expenses for route guide sheets and other handouts, a wireless speaker system, and the insurance required by the NICTD. A limited number of route guidebooks are sometimes for sale on select South Shore Line excursions, too.

The American Passenger Rail Heritage Foundation began its on-board educational programs in 2012, co-sponsoring an Amtrak/National Park Service Trails & Rails route through Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri. In 2015, the APRHF's Trails & Rails program transitioned into the APRHF Rail Rangers. The organization's main focus is providing on-board educational programs on private rail excursions on historic private rail excursions across the Upper Midwest. Public programs on the South Shore launched on August 5, 2017.

For more information about the APRHF Rail Rangers, check out their websites, **DunesTrain.com** and **RailRangers.org**, or drop their management team an e-mail at **vp@aprhf.org**. You can also connect via Facebook and Twitter.











