



WHITMAN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 53, No. 3 – Summer 2026



Fun at the Fair!

Once again Whitman County Historical Society manned the Jones Schoolhouse and the Blacksmith Shop at the Palouse Empire Fair, September 10-13. Mini-lessons and docent-led tours of the schoolhouse were held all four days.

On the first day of the fair, Thursday, September 10, visiting third-graders enjoyed re-creations of lessons from 1895, the year the school opened near Dusty. Docents and teachers who assisted schoolmarm **Krista Boyd** were: **Janet Barstow, Mark Clinton, Nancy Cochran, Jill Gfeller, Val Gregory, Sharon Hall, Greg Harazin, Carol Larson, Marj O'Dell, and Kim Williams.** They

hailed from Almota, Colfax, Steptoe, Thornton, and Palouse. On Friday, Schweitzer Engineering (Pullman) presented two lessons on electricity.

Meanwhile, the Blacksmith Shop featured vintage farm tools and machinery—visitors could take a self-guided tour. Most items were labeled, with brief descriptions of their use.

Completion of Electrical Upgrades at the Pullman Depot, from *Tracks, Pullman Depot Heritage Center News & Notes* (August 2026)

Over the past year, extensive electrical upgrades required trenching around the building to install conduits for new equipment, including meters, panels, and a power transformer. This season, the project will be completed by restoring areas undisturbed by those essential improvements.

On the northeast side of the site, the herringbone sidewalk will be repaired, and the historic vault lights will be restored with replicas. In addition, asphalt will be patched and a rock retaining wall will be completed. Our thanks go to a generous donor for supporting the electrical upgrades project, which improves the safety, functionality, and efficiency of the building.



Clean-up at the Depot!

On July 12, seven enthusiastic volunteers met at the Depot to weed and rake the grounds and to clean the exterior of the building. It looks great! Thank you to all those who participated: (left to right) **Charley Gaskins, Jamie Whitman, Dawna Engler, Brandon Burch, Linda Hackbarth, and Kathleen Ryan.**

Annual Meeting, Sunday, October 11

Location: The Center (next to the Colfax Library)

Time: 2:00 PM

The program will be an update on the Barron Flour Mill in Oakesdale



Another Successful Depot Days!

Dozens of people enjoyed a variety of activities at the Pullman Depot Heritage Center on Saturday, August 22. This year's theme was "Hop on board!"

The day began at 7:30 AM with the Tase T. Lentil Fun Run, which is sponsored by the Pullman Chamber of Commerce. It began in the Depot parking lot. It has

been a part of the Pullman Lentil Festival for many years. (The Lentil Festival and Depot Days run concurrently each year.)

Exhibits and displays were put on by 3 Forks Bikes, the Community Action Center, the WSU Sensory Science Center, and the Pullman Chamber (which also lent the Lentil Express to the festivities). Cookies and breads made from locally grown grains and pulses were on hand for visitors to sample, with recipe cards available. Once again, **Maddie Farnworth** demonstrated her collection of train horns. New this year was music by several members of the Washington-Idaho Symphony. Finally, a big thanks to docents **Jenny Carlson, Dawna Engler, Kelly McGee, and Jamie Whitman.**

Did you know? Colfax, the county seat of Whitman County, was named after Schuyler Colfax, Speaker of the House (1863-1869) and Vice President of the United States (1869-1873) under President Ulysses S. Grant. The town was first named Belleville, after the girlfriend of an early resident named Jared Berarducci, but he changed the name when it was incorporated on November 29, 1873.



Pullman Walk of Fame at the Depot

The Pullman Chamber of Commerce honored six new inductees to the Pullman Walk of Fame on Thursday, August 20. Established in 2003, each year during the Lentil Festival, Pullman honors individuals who have served or brought acclaim to the city. This year, approximately 100 guests attended the ceremony; many of whom enjoyed the displays in the Freight Room.

Those honored were:

- Alice and Rex Davis, longtime Pullman volunteers. Rex coached tennis at WSU.
- Roger Johnson, owner of Rico's and supporter of Pullman's downtown revitalization.
- Allison and Mike Levenseller, volunteers for numerous Pullman organizations. Mike was a star football player for WSU and later assistant coach for the Cougars.
- Frances McSweeney, recipient of WSU's lifetime service award for her excellence in psychology research, teaching, and academic leadership.



Update on the Rolling Stock Restoration

by Debbie Sherman

Trains are an integral part of Whitman County's rich history, and the Pullman Depot Heritage Center strives to show visitors how rail transportation drove the early development of Whitman County farming, commerce, and Washington State College (now

University). The restoration of the passenger car and the caboose will give residents and visitors a close look at the past that is defining the future.

The exterior restoration of the passenger car encountered an unexpected delay when the contractor moved out of state. A local contractor has now removed the tarp and is salvaging the timber. The next step is to remove the layers of paint and rust. The scope of work, however, remains the same—an authentic restoration of exterior finishes, with railroad insignia and replacement of windows on the passenger car, which are currently historically incorrect. The campaign to sponsor each of the passenger car's 36 windows has received excellent support, with only 7 awaiting your backing!

In addition to donations, the project has received grants from the Port of Whitman County, the Avista Foundation, the National Railway Historical Society, and the Amherst Railway Society. Additional grant funding, and community support is still being sought.

At this time, completing the railcar refurbishment is the top fundraising priority of the Whitman County Historical Society and PDHC. Join us by making it your top priority, too! Your donation is tax deductible, with every dollar contributing to Pullman's ongoing community revitalization.

Neighboring Museum: Dayton Historic Depot

Address: 222 E. Commercial Ave. Dayton, WA 99328.

509-382-2026 info@daytonhistoricdepot.org

Hours:

May–October: Wed. through Sat., 10 AM–5 PM

November–April: Wed. through Sat., 11 AM–4 PM

Closed holidays and the month of January



The oldest of Dayton’s six museums, the Dayton Historic Depot was built in 1881 by the Oregon Railway and Navigation Co., primarily to transport agricultural products to market, although it soon served passengers as well. It was originally located at the base of Rock Hill, beside the Touchet River; but it was moved to its present site in 1899. Built in the Eastlake style, it was beautifully restored in the 1970s and is now the oldest surviving passenger depot in the state of Washington.

The main floor is little changed since its construction. It is occupied by the freight room, one of the original ticket windows, the station agent’s office, and the waiting room—and many rooms contain their original furnishings. The second story, which housed the station agent and his family, features a restored master bedroom, kitchen and butler’s pantry, and living and dining room. A gallery for rotating exhibits is also located upstairs.

*Note: The privately owned Lost Highway Museum, in Pomeroy WA, was originally slated for this spot, but due to the recent death of its owner, David Webb, it was never been opened to the public.



Jenny Carlson has been volunteering at the Pullman Depot Heritage Center since 2018. She currently serves on the Education and Events Committee, works as a docent, and is in charge of the Palouse Pocket Prairie Project on the bank above the parking lot. Artistic and creative, she created the postcards that are for sale at the



Depot, makes Christmas ornaments for the Holiday Train Car Bazaar every December, and is very active in putting on the annual spring Vintage Quilt Show. Last fall she organized the first ever Palouse Prairie High Tea.

Jenny has a master’s degree in Botany and is a research lab manager for the USDA at WSU. Originally from Riverside CA, she and her husband Bryan met while graduate students at WSU. They have two children, Lily and Finn. The whole family often volunteers at events at the Depot.

When asked why she devotes so much of her time volunteering for WCHS, Jenny said, “I love Pullman, and the Depot is the central part of the town. It is the perfect platform for me to use the skills I have to give back to the community.”

Send us your Stories! Newsletter editors Debbie Sherman and Kathy Meyer sometimes get complaints that some WCHS projects don't get as much coverage in this newsletter as others do. This is true—but keep in mind that neither of us is Lois Lane. We do not, and cannot, run around Whitman County trying to hunt down stories about WCHS activities and projects. If you have an article in mind for this newsletter, contact us! Debbie: jdjshe@man.com or (509) 334-7389. Kathy: klemeyer@gmail.com or (509) 432-1336.

Please Renew Your Membership! If you haven't done so already, please respond to the membership renewal request you may have recently received in the mail. Or, consider membership as a gift for a friend or loved one—and remember, Christmas is only a little more than three months away! Fill out the form below and mail it to the address at the bottom, or go to the WCHS website (whitmancountyhistoricalsociety.org).

MEMBERSHIP: Become a part of the exciting future of Whitman County Historical Society!

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|---|-------|---|---------------|
| ☐ Basic Membership | \$50 | ☐ Sustaining Membership. | \$75 |
| ☐ Patron Membership | \$100 | | |
| ☐ Business Membership. | \$60 | ☐ Life Membership | \$500 or more |

Name of continuing or new member, or gift recipient:

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

_____ Zip: _____ E-mail: _____

Name of giver, if applicable: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

_____ Zip: _____ E-mail: _____

I'd like to make an additional donation: ☐ \$25.00 ☐ \$50.00 ☐ \$100.00 ☐ other \$ _____

Please direct my donation to:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Greatest Need | ☐ Roy Chatters Newspaper and Printing Museum |
| ☐ Holy Trinity Chapel | ☐ Pullman Depot Heritage Center |
| ☐ Perkins House and Cabin | ☐ WCHS Archive |

Note that WCHS is a 501c 3. Your gift is tax deductible. Total Amount Enclosed: _____

Send to: WCHS Membership Chairman PO Box 67 COLFAX WA 99111

2026 Calendar

Oct. 11	Annual Meeting, The Center, Colfax, 2:00; program on Oakesdale's Barron Flour Mill
Nov. 18	Executive Meeting, Pullman Depot, 6:00 WCHS Board Meeting, Pullman Depot, 7:00
Dec. 16	WCHS Board Meeting, ZOOM, 7:00
Dec. 5, 12, 19	PDHC Train Car Bazaar (times TBA)
Dec. 12	Colfax Winterfest