

LSRHA Application Narrative

A. Summary LSRHA is requesting \$1,000 to fund the services of a local website technician to upgrade the website in order to list all the cataloged collection items, make these items available for searching, and to provide the means to market reproductions as part of our effort to increase public awareness of our preservation efforts.

B. Response to Questions

1. Documentation of need for the Project: What is the proposed project's significance to industrial heritage? The current website of LSRHA, www.lsrha.org, was constructed by one of our members. Unfortunately for LSRHA, this member lives in Iowa and the development of his career has taken him away from further construction of our website.

The ongoing vision of Lake States Railway Historical Association is to collect and preserve corporate archives and private collections of railroad documents and artifacts, with emphasis on endangered collections, and make these collections available to the public for viewing and research. The LSRHA mission statement in the bylaws states that the "principal focus of the collections shall be the Western Great Lakes Region of the USA during the 1880-1916 era."

The Association is dedicated to the highest standards of collection, restoration, preservation and scholarship and is committed to facilitating research, interpretation, and publication from its collections. The collections are being catalogued and preserved under climate-controlled conditions at the archive maintained as a research facility. The purpose of our organization is to make the archive and its collections available for researchers and the public and ensure that retrieval of specific collection items can be achieved readily using the full capacities of the PastPerfect utility. All of these collections will be available for research and teaching purposes. Blueprints and drawings of buildings, locomotives, railroad cars, hoist houses, loading docks, etc. will be valuable to community and railroad historians and industrial archeologists.

To date, over 100 private collections have been added to the LSRHA Archive. These donations include a major collection of original equipment drawings of the Chicago & North Western Railway and its acquired lines from the 1870's to the 1950's, numbering in excess of 20,000 items. The cataloging and preservation of these mechanical drawings are a one-time, one-year initiative of LSRHA, which obtained these drawings late in 2008. Approximately 3,000 drawings of the Copper Range Railway dating from the 1890's have been added to this project.

The Chicago & North Western drawings, dating from about 1870 to 1950, include most of the equipment drawings of the Milwaukee, Lake Shore & Western Ry. and Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Ry. passenger and freight cars. The MLS&W was acquired by the parent line in 1893 and the CStPM&O was part of the C&NW family from 1890 until it was fully absorbed in 1957. These drawings vary from 4x10-inch to 4x10-foot in size. They were obtained as flat sheets and rolls and are India ink drawings on starched linen, paper, and Vellum and include blueprint, Ozalid prints, and photographic reproductions.

The collection containing the Copper Range Railroad drawings that was donated to LSRHA also includes: various annual reports of the Copper Range Railroad from 1917 to 1969; 10 DVD tapes mostly on copper mines of Michigan; Copper Range Railroad Rules and Regulations of 1928 and 1941; Schedule Governing Hours of Service and Work Conditions of 1941; Rules of the Operating Department; Agreement of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Governing Hours of Service and Working Conditions of 1941; Mediation Agreement of the BMWE of 1951; Constitution and By Laws of the BMWE of 1949, 1952, and 1955; Agreement between Participating Eastern, Western, and Southeastern Carriers of 1954; Vacation Agreement of 1941; and Standard Code of Train Rules of January 1, 1900, among other items of interest.

2. What research methods will you employ: Each drawing is identified and properly stored for public access by qualified volunteers and cataloged with assistance of a contracted, part-time Data Entry Specialist and an intern. Cataloging involves data entry into our archival database using PastPerfect software. All of these collections will be available for research and teaching purposes once lists are added to our website. Our intent is to have blueprints and drawings of buildings, bridges, locomotives, railroad cars, hoist houses, loading docks, etc. digitized or microfilmed and available through computer access or microfilm readers for researchers.

The plan LSRHA is following involves engaging a local website technician to enhance the www.lsrha.org website by opening a PayPal or similar account, linking that account to a new bank account and the www.lsrha.org website, adding descriptive and searchable lists of collection items with or without thumbnail images, and building a search engine to search the lists for customer-desired collection items. The model LSRHA will be following is that of the Norfolk & Western Historical Society website www.nwhs.org.

The timeline is as follows. The website technician will be identified during the summer of 2011 and this identification will be based upon qualifications and skills, availability, and cost. The website construction will be scheduled during the autumn of 2011 and a feasibility study or test marketing of selected drawings will take place immediately after the website construction is completed, as per the Strategic Business Plan approved by the Board of Trustees. This feasibility study should identify what reproduction size is desirable and what cost is manageable by the public.

3. Who is responsible for your project? Don Ginter, Chairman of the Collections Management Committee, is responsible for the C&NW Technical Drawing Project. The Collections Management Committee establishes procedures and priorities for LSRHA and implements these upon approval of the Board. A board-approved Collections Management Policy is on file at the archive office in Baraboo. Chairman Ginter's resume is included in this package.

Ken Breher is Treasurer for LSRHA and he is responsible for following the account established for this project. Michael Harrington is Secretary for LSRHA and he resides in the same town as the bank where all accounts of LSRHA have been established. Mr. Harrington has authority to sign and mail checks only as directed by Richard Goddard, President of LSRHA. Mr. Goddard instructs Mr. Harrington by e-mail to write checks, copying Mr. Breher, and these e-mail notes are kept on file at the archive.

4. What tangible products do you expect to produce with this project? The first tangible product of this project will be the ability of LSRHA to advertise in the classified sections or paid advertisements in key magazines the availability reproductions of six to ten drawings on the LSRHA website. This first public disclosure will represent a feasibility study of the market population available to take an interest in this large drawing collection, what size or reproduction is desired, and what price is practical.

However, the most important, visible, and tangible product will be the ready availability of a list consisting of over 23,000 technical drawings of Chicago & North Western Railway; Milwaukee, Lake Shore & Western Railway; Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railway; and Copper Range Railroad locomotives, tenders, passenger cars, freight cars and other equipment and structures on the www.lsrha.org website by mid-2012.

The technical expertise provided by the website technician will not only allow these drawings to be available to the public but will also allow LSRHA to post catalogs of other items to be displayed and searched on our website. These other items include photographs of equipment, structures, and trackside views; regulatory documents; library catalogs; correspondences; and the like. The ultimate and long-range goals of LSRHA will be to achieve MARC cataloging of LSRHA collections and the ability of LSRHA to hire a professionally trained archivist who may be paid, in part, by revenue generated by the sale of reproductions of LSRHA drawings on its website.