



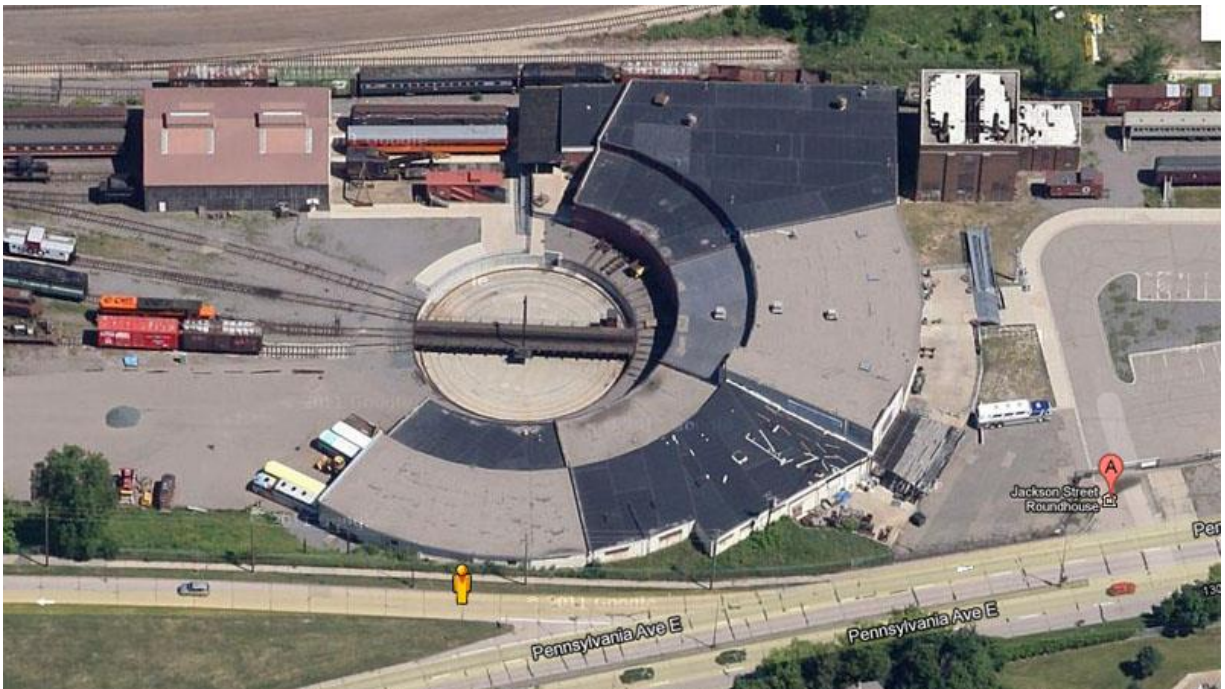
Historic Jackson Street Roundhouse

Restoration and Preservation

2024

Information for

Members of the Minnesota Legislature



193 Pennsylvania Ave E., Saint Paul, MN 55130

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Historic Jackson Street Roundhouse Restoration Information for Members of the MN Legislature

Organization:

Minnesota Transportation Museum

Specific Location:

193 Pennsylvania Ave. East
Saint Paul, MN 55130

Background Information:

The Jackson Street Roundhouse (JSRH), a vital component of Saint Paul rail infrastructure since 1907, requires major structural restoration in order to preserve the physical integrity of the historic facility. The JSRH was built by railroad pioneer and Saint Paul philanthropist James J. Hill to serve as the eastern-end maintenance and service facility for the former Great Northern Railroad. Today the structure is owned and operated by the nonprofit, Minnesota Transportation Museum (MTM). It is in a high-needs, low-income neighborhood on the east side of Saint Paul and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is part of Minnesota's legacy, culture, economy, and future!

MTM is the steward of the historic facility, and uses it as a museum that presents and interprets the railroad history that impacted the economic and cultural development of Minnesota, and U.S. westward expansion. MTM continues full railway maintenance operations at the JSRH as it was originally intended. Using thousands of hours of volunteer labor each year, MTM builds, restores, preserves, and operates historic railway equipment that was originally used on the 20th century railroads that served Minnesota. Commercial railroads, such as the Canadian Pacific Railway also use the facility for the training of railroad crew workers, and MTM provides training and hands on experience for workers in the railroad industry and skilled trades. MTM trainings are certified by the Federal Railroad Administration.

The JSRH is in urgent need of structural rehabilitation and restoration in order to preserve it and maintain its significance to Minnesota for future generations. At present, the aging roof has dozens of water leaks that threaten the integrity of historic rail equipment and the building itself. Water is pouring into the exterior walls, causing serious structural compromises. Ninety percent of the windows in the facility require replacement to keep out the elements and prevent further structural decay. This facility of great importance to the community and region will not be sustained without significant investments.

The MTM, a volunteer 501c3 nonprofit, has done its utmost to maintain the historic JSRH, but the increasingly compromised structure tallies a restoration cost well beyond the capacity of the organization or its primary funders. Architect estimates to replace the roof and windows to historic standards will cost over \$3.5 million, and other structural stabilization will likely exceed \$2 million. Only an investment of public resources can preserve this historic treasure that continues to bridge the past to the future for the purposes of enlightening the lives and developing the workforce skills of Minnesotans.

Total Cost of the Project:

Over \$5 million

Proposal for Use of Funds:

Public funds would be used for the infrastructure rehabilitation of the 80,000 square foot Jackson Street Roundhouse. Specifically, the funds would be used to replace the entire aging and unstable roof, replace over 100 windows that are compromised, conduct foundation stabilization and tuckpointing, HVAC improvements for energy conservation, door replacements, code upgrades, and mothballing of the historic Great Northern Power Plant for future restoration.

MTM has already spent approximately \$20,000 for complete engineering plans for the roof and eighty window replacements. The architectural firm, Collaborative Design Group, estimates that those restorations alone will cost more than \$3.0 million. It is estimated that the cost for the remaining windows and door replacements and other structural stabilization will cost up to an additional \$2.5 million. The high cost is due to two factors 1) Age and condition of the JSRH, 2) requirements to conduct this work to historical standards as approved by the National Park Service and Minnesota Historical Society.

This work must begin as soon as possible due to factors such as 1) safety of visitors, volunteers, and staff, 2) rapidly increasing pace of infrastructure deterioration, 3) need to stabilize and preserve the building prior to receiving an incoming priceless Minnesota exhibit within the next two years.

Description of Importance to Minnesota:

The JSRH is of major historic importance to our state and region, and is part of the legacy of railroad pioneer and philanthropist James J. Hill. Thousands of Minnesotans worked at the Jackson Street Roundhouse throughout the 20th Century. Residents of the Rondo neighborhood in Saint Paul trace the economic success of their families to their parents and grandparents who were employed at the Roundhouse or as porters in the Pullman Cars traveling the Great Northern Railway. The facility not only employed thousands of workers, but because of their work, Minnesota was able to generate commerce that built our economy, supported our families, and laid the groundwork for the success of Minnesota industry today.

It was the work that took place at the Jackson Street Roundhouse that enabled the Great Northern Railway to haul Minnesota products to international markets, and to bring goods from across the world back home to enrich the lives of our citizens. It was from this location that the trains originated to help grow the Pacific Northwest.

Today the JSRH preserves this history, continues to operate the roundhouse facility for the maintenance and preservation of the railway equipment that impacted Minnesota, provides educational programming that informs a workforce of the future (for example workshop on 3D industrial printing), and MTM provides workforce training in skilled labor such as welding, sheet metal and large engine repair, plus railroad operations training that qualifies for certification from the Federal Railroad Administration. Trained volunteers find good paying jobs in skilled labor or on railroads. Commercial railroads use the facility for their own employee training.

In addition, the museum houses a rare collection of railroad equipment and the archives of the Great Northern and Northern Pacific Railroads. The most valuable exhibit is currently under a \$1 million+ restoration. James J. Hill III, the great-grandson of the railroad pioneer and philanthropist, has purchased and donated James Hill's personal business coach to MTM. In this coach, James J. Hill conducted many of his business affairs that helped to develop the business climate of Minnesota. Following an estimated \$1 million complete historical restoration, this coach of great Minnesota significance will be on permanent display at the JSRH and periodically on display at Union Depot in Saint Paul. It will be operational. The MTM is mandated under contract with Mr. Hill to provide a secure and environmentally safe exhibit of the coach in a portion of the facility that will be dedicated to steam railroading. To address this mandate, we must address the compromised state of the building within the next two years. Mr. Hill has assured MTM of considerable matching dollars.

Once the building is rehabilitated, it will house the steam exhibit to include the James J. Hill Business Coach, and a collection of steam locomotives that are currently not available for public viewing. These include the Northern Pacific 2162 which was made famous as the backdrop for the old Casey Jones children's television show and for years was on display in Como Park, and the Northern Pacific 328 that was formerly operated and on display in Stillwater. Again, this is all a part of Minnesota legacy. From historic railroad preservation and interpretation, to early childhood programs, to workforce development, to the education of tomorrow's workforce, the Jackson Street Roundhouse continues to serve as an incubator of cultural and economic success for Minnesotans, as it has since 1907. Just as James J. Hill invested his resources to create the economic opportunities that spread from this facility, and Arthur Pew III and other Minnesotans donated millions of dollars to restore and maintain the roundhouse over the past thirty+ years, a major investment is needed today to preserve the facility to positively impact future generations of Minnesotans.

Description of Benefit to Local Community and Region:

An investment in the JSRH will benefit the local community by preserving an integral part of Saint Paul's legacy infrastructure that continues to impact our citizens today in the ways outlined above. In addition, a restored community facility will be a source of pride to residents on the East Side, which is home to many of Saint Paul's most economically challenged citizens. It is an area increasingly populated by some of the newest Americans to our State, immigrants from across the world.

The MTN has an ongoing partnership with the Hubert H. Humphrey Job Corp Center. As part of a formalized program, young adults who have faced adversity in their lives come to the JSRH for regular workforce and hands-on job training. Once the facility is further rehabilitated, Job Corps is interested in creating a formalized job training program at JSRH to train young workers in the welding trades.

Rehabilitation and restoration of the JSRH will be an investment that will strengthen the community, potentially increase neighborhood property values, and provide a gathering place for Minnesotans to learn, get trained, become involved, and be culturally enriched.

Organizations in support of this capital project:

Minnesota Historical Society
Saint Paul – Minnesota Community Foundation
Rondo Neighborhood Association
City of Saint Paul Historic Preservation Board
Collaborative Design Group, Inc (architects)
Marvin Windows, Inc
Hubert H. Humphrey Job Corps Center
Great Northern Historical Society
Northern Pacific Railway Historical Society

Four points to justify use of public funding:

- Saving and preserving a historic legacy site of significant regional importance
- Project will rehabilitate rail infrastructure
- Project will create immediate construction jobs and enable training of future workforce
- It will improve a high-needs neighborhood of Saint Paul
- The longer the project is delayed, the more the costs will increase

Additional Funding

MTM has limited cash and commitments of approximately \$800,000 at present, mostly in promised matching funds.

Sustainability of the Project

MTM has the capacity to sustain and maintain the Jackson Street Roundhouse through visitor fees and other earned revenues. A percentage of future earned revenues will go into a reserved fund for major repairs in the future.

Photos:

Jackson Street Roundhouse Restoration 1986-2001

(Below) Roundhouse after it was acquired by the MTM in 1986 and restored it to railway operations. The operational turntable was reinstalled in 2001 marking completion of the initial restoration. MTM members, volunteers and benefactors have invested millions of dollars in the restoration and subsequent maintenance of the historically designated landmark.

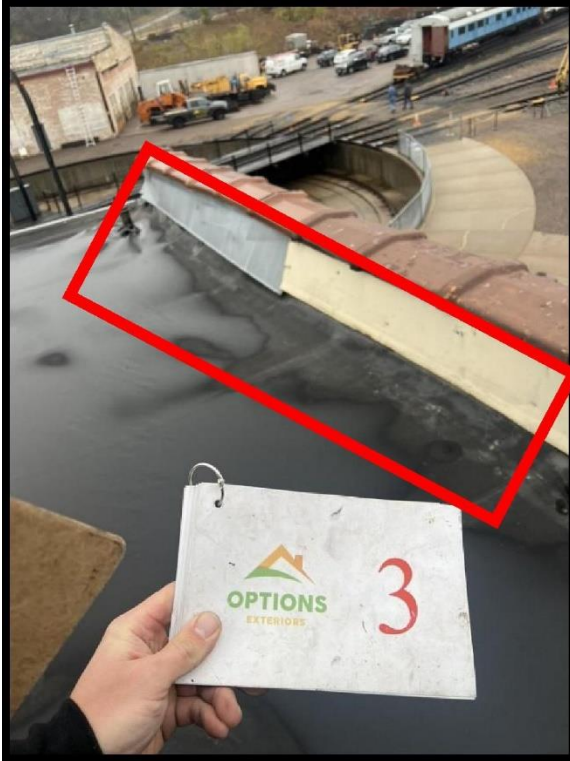
Beyond being an engineering wonder, the previous restoration project provided a unique value to the community and State of Minnesota, plus a commitment to preserving the history of railroading in Minnesota and being an educational resource to our people.

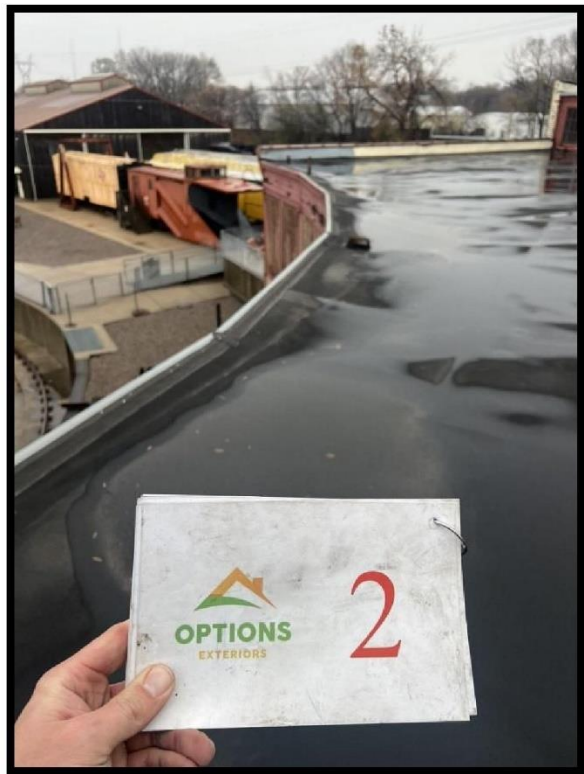


Condition of the Roundhouse Today



Severely Compromised Roof is Major Expense









Need to mothball the powerhouse for a restoration in the future



Crumbling Powerhouse



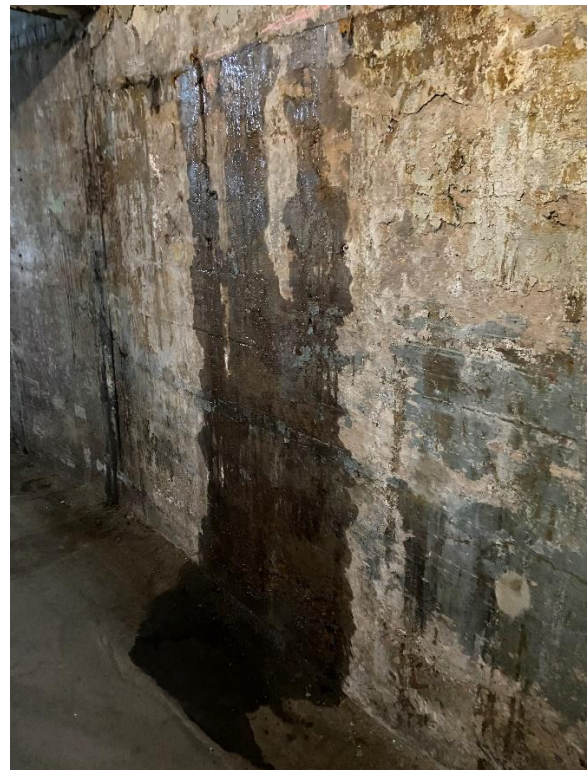
Water draining from roof into building



Posts supporting cracked beams



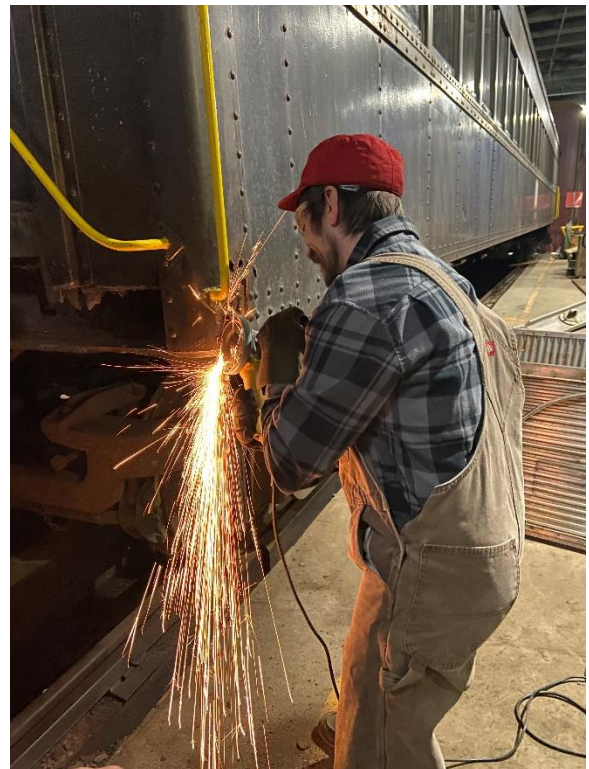
Compromised ceiling due to leaky roof



Water seeping through walls

Roundhouse Uses Today – A Resource for Minnesotans

History Museum / Jobs and skills training / Historic Restoration and Preservation / Family and Early Childhood programs / Home for Other History Organizations

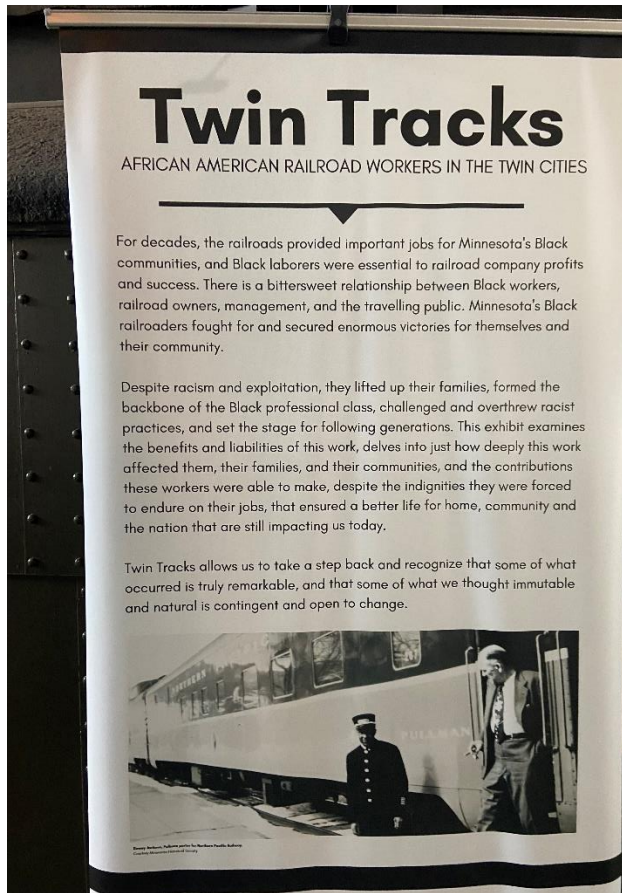












Please support funding to save and preserve the historic Jackson Street Roundhouse

It is an investment in:

Minnesota legacy and infrastructure,

Preserving the past and informing the future,

Urban revitalization near the State Capitol,

Improvements to a high-needs neighborhood,

Education, training, and jobs.

An investment that benefits all of Minnesota!

