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Dear Member:

A Summary of 2017

Dispatch 7, *A Transportation Miracle* has been awarded the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society's David P. Morgan Award for 2017. In August, we released Dispatch 8, *Chicago Surface Lines: Linking Chicago's Neighborhoods*. Richard F. Begley served as editor along with George E. Kanary and Walter R. Keevil. We also published four 80-page issues of *First & Fastest* over the past 12 months. We continue to receive rave reviews from our members and readers.

It's Time To Renew Your Shore Line Membership for 2018

Thank you for being a Shore Line member in 2017. We are pleased to announce that there will be NO increase in dues for 2018 memberships. As before, there is a \$5 incentive to pay your 2018 dues before December 31, 2017. Regular dues paid before December 31, 2017, are \$32. After that date, regular dues are \$37. Please renew early, as it is costly and time-consuming to mail individual copies of the magazine to those who pay dues later in 2018.

We also are encouraging all members to renew online. Shore Line is no longer charging a service fee for any online orders. Bank charges are increasing for handling checks; as a result, we wish to make it convenient for you to use our website for your transactions.

Thank You for Your Support of Shore Line in 2017

Shore Line is in the enviable position of having wonderful support from its members. Thank you to our 63 Page Sponsor members who sponsored 76 pages, an all-time record number! Since each *First & Fastest* is 80 pages, the financial value of page sponsorships is significant. Bottom line: our 63 Page Sponsors essentially paid for the fourth issue for the benefit of all members. Our challenge goal for 2018 is 80 sponsored pages — a complete issue!

In the Autumn 2017 issue of *First & Fastest*, we published the names of 492 members who are premium members of Shore Line for 2017. In addition, 205 members contributed to Dispatch 8, *Chicago Surface Lines: Linking Chicago's Neighborhoods*, and are recognized in that issue. Please consider becoming a premium member and/or making a contribution to Shore Line in 2018. We truly appreciate your continued support.

Your memberships and contributions provide Shore Line with a very successful financial model and the ability to keep the regular membership rate low. This allows us to sustain 80-page issues — more pages per issue than virtually all other railroad historical society publications — and provides significant funding for our Dispatch series. It is also worth noting that Shore Line, with almost 1,900 members, has one of the largest memberships among regional or single-railroad focused railroad historical societies.

Sustaining and Growing Our Membership

Perhaps the best news of 2017 is that Shore Line had more new members in 2017 than in any of the past few years. We think word of our publication quality is spreading. Welcome to our new members, and let's keep working together to continue this trend!

From an editorial perspective, there is a constant tension between historic topics that appeal to many members and current topics that, hopefully, could attract younger people to join Shore Line. As we have said before, balancing these competing interests is key to the long-term sustainability of Shore Line. It was jolting to some of us to realize that July 3rd marked the 60th anniversary of the cessation of Chicago Aurora & Elgin's passenger service.

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Shore Line Membership Letter (*continued*)

We have added editorial coverage of the light rail system in Minneapolis-St. Paul due to the success of the two lines now operating and the system's expansion plans. We are contemplating coverage of the Q Line in Detroit and the construction of the Milwaukee streetcar. There also have been successful streetcar starts in Kansas City, Missouri, and Cincinnati. We hope that coverage of more Midwestern properties and enhanced coverage of Metra will attract additional people to join Shore Line.

Our challenge, long-term, continues to be to attract young people immersed in electronic media to join and support Shore Line. Your ideas would be appreciated. In the meantime, we ask every member to encourage a family member or friend who might be interested in our publications to become a member of Shore Line and/or purchase an individual issue of *First & Fastest* or a Dispatch.

Our Publications Make Great Gifts

Gift memberships are a great way to attract new members to Shore Line and present a gift to a friend. They are a gift that keeps on giving over the course of the year. Any assistance that you can provide to increase our membership will be appreciated. We would truly like to return to having more than 1,900 members.

With the holiday season approaching, may we suggest that you consider Dispatches as gifts for family and friends? We have created special "bundles" of Dispatches at approximately a 50% discount for members:

- Bundle CSL: One copy each of Dispatches 6 and 8, member price \$21
- Bundle NSL: One copy each of Dispatches 4 and 7, member price \$27
- Bundle NSL+: One copy each of Dispatches 2, 4 and 7, member price \$36
- Bundle SS/NS+: One copy each of Dispatches 3, 4 and 7, member price \$42
- Bundle+Baldies: Add one copy of Dispatch 5, *The Baldies*, to any bundle for an additional \$5.

Please see the Shore Line website at shore-line.org for details. You may order by mail or online.

What Lies Ahead in 2018?

During 2017 John Nicholson joined the *First & Fastest* staff as Associate Managing Editor. Due to the Managing Editor's increasing business responsibilities, it became prudent to share the editorial and production work. John has considerable publishing experience professionally and in pursuit of his interest in railroads, and will be largely responsible for producing *First & Fastest* in 2018. Please welcome John to our team.

We are exploring topics for future Dispatches and ask that you support these efforts with your contributions. We hope to have another Chicago Surface Lines publication after 2018, as the response to Dispatches 6 and 8 has been astounding. Interest also is increasing in Chicago's commuter services past and present. We will keep you informed as our editorial projects develop.

The 2018 Membership Renewal Process

Again, for 2018, we ask you to specify how you wish to receive *First & Fastest*. You may choose either the traditional **PRINT** format, **DIGITAL** format, or **BOTH** print and digital formats. Members choosing Digital and Both Print+Digital formats must renew online. For instructions, please see our website at shore-line.org.

Thank you again for your ongoing support. We are excited about the upcoming year and dedicated to publishing the premier magazine in its field.

With best regards,
Your Shore Line Board of Directors

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