

Mr. Ross Boelling
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We understand that the Kansas legislature will soon debate a measure to declare the Abilene & Smoky Valley Railroad Association (A&SV) the official tourist railroad association and Santa Fe #3415 the official steam locomotive of the state of Kansas. The A&SV operates track originally constructed in 1886 by the former Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad between Abilene and Enterprise in Dickinson County, Kansas to transport passengers and freight. This portion of the former Rock Island line was abandoned more than thirty years ago. The A&SV has operated the line as a tourist railway and is one of the premier tourist attractions in the Abilene area. Total ridership on the line increased from about 8,500 in 2022 to nearly 13,000 in 2023.

We at the Topeka Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society applaud the efforts of the A&SV staff and volunteers to celebrate the rich railroad history of Kansas. The development of railroads throughout Kansas in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century largely shaped the population and commercial growth of Kansas. The dedication and hard work by the A&SV staff and volunteers have added a wonderful living history museum to the many tourist attractions that are such a large part of Abilene's status as one of the premier tourist destinations in the central United States.

We support this recognition of the Abilene & Smoky Valley Railroad Association as the official tourist railroad association of the state of Kansas and Santa Fe 3415 as the official steam locomotive.

Bob St. John
President
Topeka Chapter,
National Railway Historical Society