Good morning,

My name is Lon Smith, and I am the director of the Great Plains Transportation Museum in downtown Wichita, Kansas. We are located at 700 E. Douglas Ave and are part of the historic Union Station complex and our museum is adjacent to a dual mainline that boasts some fifty trains a day of the Union Pacific, BNSF, and the K & O.

I'm here today to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 2607 which would establish the officially recognized Kansas Railroad Hall of Fame within the Great Plains Transportation Musuem. The museum has operated for the last 44 years, being completely volunteer run until about a year ago. The museum hosts an impressive array of local and regional artifacts representing heritage from the Santa Fe, Frisco, Union Pacific, and more. We also possess two iconic locomotives within our collection, the Santa Fe 3768, a Northern 484 steam engine which began operation in 1938 and the Santa Fe 93 that was commissioned in 1967 and is currently under restoration in Kansas City. Both pulled the iconic Super Chief, passenger service from Chicago to Los Angeles, routed through Kansas.

It is our belief that the Great Plains Transportation Museum is the best location to host the railroad hall of fame given its location in the most populous city in the state of Kansas and as an active participant in the thriving resurgence of downtown Wichita as a key tourist destination. Not only would the railroad hall of fame provide another fantastic exhibit to add to our existing collection, it would also provide an opportunity to spotlight and praise the many Kansans whose work and service have supported the state and its railroad infrastructure development for decades. We respectfully call upon you to support this bill and establish, for the first time ever, an official state Railroad Hall of Fame at the Great Plains Transportation Museum.

Respectfully,

Lon Smith, Director
Great Plains Transportation Museum

THECHAMBER
WICHITA REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

December 11, 2025

Kansas State Legislature
Kansas House of Representatives and Kansas Senate
300 SW 10th Avenue
Topeka, Kansas 66612

Subject: Kansas State Railroad Hall of Fame

Honorable members of the Kansas State House and Senate,

On behalf of Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce, I am writing to express our support for establishing the Great Plains Transportation Museum as the official Kansas State Railroad Hall of Fame.

Rail has played a central role in growing jobs, innovation and economic development in Wichita and across Kansas. The Great Plains Transportation Museum preserves that legacy and is well positioned to expand its impact. The Kansas Railroad Hall of Fame would honor individuals who advanced rail in our state while also strengthening educational programming, fundraising and tourism activity.

From a Chamber perspective, this designation supports economic development, talent attraction and quality of place.

We encourage you to support a bill that would establish Great Plains Transportation Museum as the official Kansas State Railroad Hall of Fame and look forward to celebrating the continued growth of this important community institution.

Sincerely,

John Rolfe
President & CEO
Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce

December 4, 2025

Honorable Members of the Kansas State House and Senate
State Capitol Building
300 SW 10th Avenue
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Honorable Members,

On behalf of Visit Wichita, I am honored to express our support for the effort to establish the Great Plains Transportation Museum (GPTM) as the official Kansas State Railroad Hall of Fame.

The Great Plains Transportation Museum is a vital institution within Wichita's cultural and historical landscape. As the steward of our city's rich railroad heritage, the Museum plays an essential role in preserving and presenting the story of rail in Wichita and throughout the State of Kansas. Its location in the heart of downtown Wichita, adjacent to major tourism assets such as INTRUST Bank Arena, Century II, and multiple museums, positions GPTM as a natural anchor for both local and statewide tourism development.

The proposed Kansas State Railroad Hall of Fame will meaningfully elevate the Museum's mission and visibility. This designation will help recognize individuals whose contributions were instrumental in shaping rail service in our region and across Kansas. In addition, the Hall of Fame will serve as a powerful tool for strengthening GPTM's fundraising efforts, supporting continued growth and enhancing Wichita's thriving downtown. Importantly, the Hall will also educate both residents and visitors about the broad impact rail has had on Kansas' economic and cultural development.

The Hall of Fame's proposed administrative structure, managed by GPTM with an annual nomination and selection process involving museum leadership, board members, state preservation experts, and state-appointed representatives, ensures a credible, well-rounded approach to this important recognition. The installation of durable outdoor signage honoring inductees will also create an accessible, engaging display overlooking downtown Wichita.

Visit Wichita strongly supports the establishment of the Great Plains Transportation Museum as the official Kansas State Railroad Hall of Fame. This designation will contribute significantly to tourism growth, heritage preservation, and statewide storytelling. We encourage your full support in this effort and stand ready to assist however needed.

Sincerely,

Susie Santo
President & CEO

DOWNTOWN
WICHITA

December 18, 2025

Kansas State Legislature
300 SW 10th St.
Topeka, KS 66612

Re: State of Kansas Railroad Hall of Fame

Dear Kansas State Legislature,

Downtown Wichita is pleased to offer its enthusiastic support for designating the Great Plains Transportation Museum (GPTM) as the official State of Kansas Railroad Hall of Fame.

Wichita is the largest city in Kansas, and its growth and economic development were directly shaped by the railroad system, which connected communities, industries and markets across the state. That legacy is still very much alive today. Each day, commercial rail activity runs through the heart of downtown Wichita, with BNSF trains transporting everything from consumer goods to large-scale industrial components, an everyday reminder of the vital role rail continues to play in Kansas' economy.

The GPTM provides a unique and authentic connection to this living history. Located directly along an active rail line and across from the historic Union Station, the museum offers visitors a clear and tangible understanding of how rail transportation helped build Wichita and continues to shape the region today.

Downtown Wichita is also exceptionally well-suited to support the State of Kansas Railroad Hall of Fame. The museum is surrounded by hotels, restaurants, entertainment venues, and cultural attractions, all within walking distance. This allows for educational programming, tourism and annual induction events, while enhancing public engagement with Kansas' rail heritage.

We deeply appreciate the dedication of local railroad enthusiasts, historians, and industry leaders, who have long supported public education on the past, present and future role of rail in Kansas. Designating the GPTM as the official State of Kansas Railroad Hall of Fame would honor the individuals who built and sustained this vital industry and ensure their contributions are preserved and celebrated for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Heather Schroeder
Executive Director
Downtown Wichita

505 E. Douglas Avenue
Wichita, KS 67202
316.264.6005
downtownwichita.org