

High Bridge/Low Bridge

by Katharine Dokken

The annual High Bridge/Low Bridge Steam trip of the Osceola & St. Croix Valley Railway Association runs from Osceola to New Richmond Wisconsin passing over the scenic St. Croix River 4 times, twice across the Cedar Bend Draw Bridge and twice across the Arcola High Bridge near Somerset Wisconsin, during the day long excursion to New Richmond and back to Osceola, Wisconsin.

The Arcola High Bridge is 196' from its surface to water level, spans one mile, and was built in 1937. The Cedar Bend Draw Bridge was built in 1887 and is now stationary. The view from the High Bridge is spectacular, you can see down the scenic St. Croix River Valley for miles!



Since this run is so popular a mix of special equipment is used by the Osceola & St. Croix Railway to meet the demand for passenger seating. Some owned by the Railway and some specially leased for the occasion. A total of eight cars are pulled by the Soo Line #1003 steam engine.

The first two cars of the consist are First Class Domeliners. First a Northern Pacific Vista Dome coach built in 1954 by the Budd Company constructed out of all stainless steel for the "North Coast Limited" run from Chicago to Seattle, through St. Paul, and currently privately owned.



Second in the line up is the Union Pacific #7003 Dome coach built in 1955 by American Car & Foundry, it originally ran on the Union Pacific from Los Angeles to Portland. This car is all aluminum and is also privately owned.

Next on the train is the Triple Combine Car #1102, built in 1914 by Pullman Standard as an 86 passenger car coach. The interior of the car is divided into three sections, a Railway Post Office, a baggage/express compartment, and a 20 seat passenger compartment.

Followed by two new Chippewa Valley passenger cars owned by the Locomotive Tower Preservation Fund and originally built by Canadian Pacific Railway, running on the Algoma Central Railway through Agawa Canyon. These cars ran on the "Mountaineer" route from St. Paul to Vancouver, passing through Banff.

Next are the two maroon passenger cars #711 and #713, Louisville & Nashville, built in 1946 of aluminum construction, now owned by North Star Rail. They originally ran on a route called "The Hummingbird" from Cincinnati to New Orleans, and then also running from Chicago to Atlanta.

Then followed by #2322, "The Mighty Limited" passenger car from The Osceola Ry's regular stock of equipment.

Our journey started in Osceola where we set off for the first trip across the Cedar Bend Draw bridge and then the High Bridge passing picturesque small farm communities, red barns, and horses in their grassy pastures, pulling into New Richmond for a short lunch break and then our slow return trip back to Osceola across both bridges again seeing many white tailed deer along the tracks. Passing fields filled with tall corn and lazy brown cows laying in the shade before our late afternoon arrival back in Osceola.