

South Shore #107



Type: Steel Interurban Car

Built: 1926

Modernized in 1947

Seats: 68

Length – 77' 6"

Width – 10' 1"

Height – 13' 5"

Weight – 150,940 lbs.



Between the 1890s and the 1940s, electric interurban railways were one of the fastest and cheapest ways to travel between cities, towns, and farms across the upper midwest. The city of Chicago was a major hub for both the standard steam-powered railroads and the interurbans, with the Chicago Lake Shore and South Bend Railroad being built to the south and east to connect the other Chicago-area interurbans with ones in Ohio, Indiana, and Pennsylvania. After the construction was completed, it was possible to travel between Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin, and upstate New York by the sole means of electric railroads.

Samuel Insull (1859-1938) grew up in England and moved to America in the late 1800s to become the personal secretary of Thomas Edison. During the 1910s and 20s, he founded many electric utility companies across the Chicago area. During this time, he also bought up most nearby interurban and rapid transit lines, including the "Lake Shore Line."

Insull renamed the company the Chicago South Shore and South Bend Railroad, built new stations, improved the tracks and overhead wires, and ordered all-new steel passenger cars to replace the slow wooden cars in use. Most of these cars were standard coach cars, but 11 were built as combines. A combine car has a smaller passenger seating section, but a baggage area up front to handle packages and luggage. Car 107 is a combine built in 1926 by the Pullman Car Co.



On the "South Shore Line," there was a combine car on the front of most trains between Chicago and South Bend Indiana. During WWII, the South Shore experienced a huge increase in ridership. Due to wartime material restrictions, the South Shore could not build or order new interurban cars, but instead decided to cut some cars in half and insert around 20 feet in the center, lengthening the car and increasing the seating capacity. All of the South Shore combines received this treatment, as well as large sealed windows for better viewing, air conditioning, and a more modern interior.

For many years, Car 107 and the other "orange cars" provided fast commutes and travel around the south side of Chicago and towns across northwestern Indiana. When 107 was retired in 1983, it was received by the National Park Service due to its historical significance to the area and the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. In 2010, car 107 and five former-CSS&SB coaches were donated to the East Troy Railroad Museum. 107 is currently awaiting restoration

