

South Shore #23



Type: Steel Interurban Car

Built - 1927

Modernized 1947

Seats - 80

Width - 10' 1"

Height - 13' 5"

Length - 78' 6"

Weight - 77 tons



Alex Hummel photo

During the early 20th century, electric interurban railroads provided fast service between cities and towns across the upper midwest. At this time, one could travel between Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin and upstate New York by sole means of interurbans and street railway lines. The Chicago South Shore and South Bend Railway was an important link in this route, being the only interurban line that connected those in Chicago with those in Indiana.

The "South Shore Line" operated fast interurbans between Randolph Street Station in downtown Chicago and South Bend, Indiana. The railroad also served towns along the line, including Gary and Michigan City. Completed in 1908 by a predecessor, the railroad was taken over and modernized by electric utilities magnate Samuel Insull in the early 1920s.

Insull built new stations and erected stronger overhead electrical wires. He also ordered new steel



Roger Puta photo

cars from the Pullman Car Company, which the railroad ran by on the south side of downtown Chicago. One of these cars was numbered #23, which was built in 1927.

23 was later lengthened and modernized in 1947. This did not happen to the entire South Shore fleet. The car received an updated interior. 23 also received larger sealed windows and air conditioning. 23 and the other "orange cars," were retired in 1983. Car 23 went to the National Park Service, which donated the car to the East Troy Railroad Museum in 2010. ETRM currently has identical cars #24 and #25 in good operating condition and refurbished as dining cars. Four other non-identical cars have also been restored.

Car 23 is currently awaiting restoration, along with South Shore car 6.

