

Sheboygan #26



Type: Wood Interurban Car

Built: 1908

Seats: 44

Length: 45'

Width: 8' 10"

Weight: 28 tons

Restored: 2005



In the early 1900s, travel by electric rail was quick, stylish, and very popular. Electric Interurban railroads connected the big cities with towns and farms across the country, and streetcar systems plied the streets and alleys of most cities with a population of more than 10,000.

Sheboygan, being a large city between urban Milwaukee and the port city of Green Bay, quickly got its own interurban line, which also ran downtown as the streetcar system, in the form of the Sheboygan Light, Power and Railway Company. The line extended west from downtown Sheboygan, serving the communities of Kohler, Sheboygan Falls, Plymouth, and Elkhart Lake. In 1908, the Milwaukee Northern Railway reached Sheboygan from Port Washington, connecting the Sheboygan interurban line with Milwaukee. Because of this, one could travel from Elkhart Lake to the Catskill Mountains of New York by use of electric interurban railroads.

The Sheboygan Light, Power and Railway Co. originally operated with several open-air trolleys, but these soon proved inadequate due to the severe winter weather near Lake Michigan.

In 1908, the company ordered three new, enclosed (and with a coal stove) wooden interurban cars. One of these new cars was numbered 26. 26 and the rest of the enclosed cars operated to the end of the electric railway. The last segment of the line owned by the Sheboygan Light, Power and Railway Co was closed in 1938.

To cancel off some last-minute debts, the railroad decided to sell off the cars as cabins and summer cottages along lakes in the area. Car 26 was a summer cottage until 1988, when the family in charge of the property donated the car body and surviving parts to the East Troy Railroad Museum. Together, they funded and completed a complete operational and cosmetic restoration.



In 2005, the restoration was completed. A few years later, a period fender, a large metal grate on the front of the car designed so that animals wouldn't get run over, was reinstalled on the front of the car.

Now it is possible to experience a ride on a wooden interurban car, which originally ran in Wisconsin, now operating on the sole surviving segment of an original electric interurban line in Wisconsin.

