

South Shore #30



Type: Steel Interurban Car

Built: 1929

Seats: 48

Length – 62' 8"

Width – 10' 1"

Height – 13' 5"

Weight – 129,600 lbs.

Between the 1890s and the mid-1920s, electric interurban railroads were built at a rapid pace, with the speedy interurban cars providing fast and reliable service between cities and across the countryside. At one point, there were over 15,000 miles of mainline interurban tracks across the United States, predominantly in the upper midwest, and one could travel between Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin, and the Catskill Mountains of New York by the sole use of interurban railroads. A vital connection in this multi-day journey was the Chicago South Shore and South Bend Railway.

Beginning in 1901, what would become the "South Shore Line" began construction of the important interurban route between Chicago and northern Indiana. Construction was completed in 1908. In the early 1920s, an

electrical entrepreneur by the name of Samuel Insull bought the company and renamed it the Chicago South Shore and South Bend. In addition, he also improved infrastructure and built new stations. New all-steel cars were ordered in 1926 and 1929 to replace the older wooden cars. Car 30 was part of the 1929



Roger Puta photo

order of "orange cars." This order of cars was more modern and had a smaller, but more comfortable, smoking room.

The "South Shore Line" operated trains between Randolph Street Station in downtown Chicago and South Bend, Indiana. The railroad also served major towns such as Gary and Michigan City. In the southern suburbs of Chicago and Indiana, commuters used the cars every day to travel to work, and tourists relied on the railroad to visit the lakeshore and football games at Notre Dame.

Car 30 was used in active service on the South Shore for over 50 years, eventually being phased out in the early 1980s by more modern stainless-steel cars. The car was saved by the Wisconsin Trolley Museum, which has since become the East Troy Railroad Museum. The car underwent a restoration and continues its life as a regular operator at ETRM as one of the final fully operational "orange cars."

