

La Crosse #56



Type: Streetcar

Built: 1916

Seats: 46

Length – 42' 0"

Width – 8' 9"

Height – 11' 4"

Weight – 38,900 lbs.



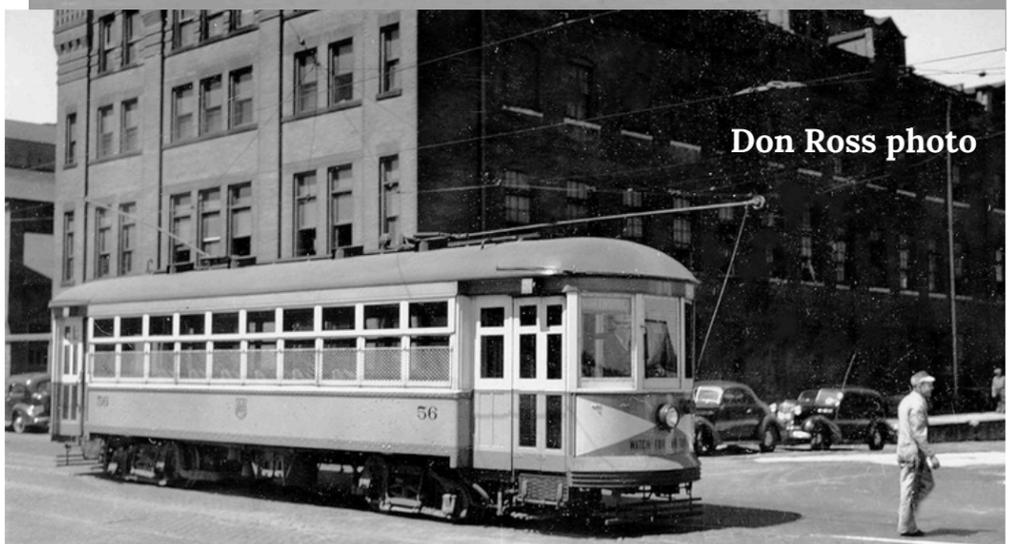
During the early 20th century, extensive streetcar systems plied the streets of most cities in the United States with a population of more than 10,000 people. Many notable cities across the upper Midwest, such as Chicago, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis, has extensive streetcar and rapid transit systems which ferried thousands of people around both their urban and suburban areas each day.

La Crosse, Wisconsin, being a small town along the Mississippi River, had a much smaller system (only three lines), but it still had a lasting impact on the development of the town. The lines were built by the Wisconsin Railway Light and Power Company, which also controlled the lines in even smaller Winona, across the Mississippi River in Minnesota.



Victor Vincent DuBrutz photo

Operating with small streetcars, the company ordered seven new state-of-the-art streetcars with 46 seats in 1916 (nos. 51 - 57). That same year, the company became the Mississippi Valley Public Service Company.



Don Ross photo

Car 56 served the company until buses replaced the trolley cars in 1945. That year, it and five of the other cars in its order were sold to a local farmer, who used them as housing for birds and storage.

Car 56 was forgotten until 1970, when it was the only surviving car from the original lot and the farmer's family sold it to a streetcar fan in the Milwaukee area. Unfortunately, the fan died before he could restore it, and his family donated the car to the East Troy Railroad Museum. In 1989, the museum gave the car to a volunteer, who planned to restore it in his yard. Unfortunately he was also unable to complete the restoration. In 2022, the car arrived back at ETRM, where volunteers have determined the car to be in restorable condition.



Victor Vincent DuBrutz photo