

South Shore #9



Type: Steel Interurban Car

Built: 1926

Seats: 54

Length – 60' 0"

Width – 10' 1"

Height – 13' 5"



From 1890 to the mid-1920s, America was hit by a massive craving for fast, reliable electric trains, dubbed “interurbans” that ran between cities, towns, and farms all over the country. In 1920, there were over 15,000 miles of interurban tracks, and one could ride all the way from Elkhart Lake, WI, to upstate New York on interurbans. One of these interurban railroads was the Chicago South Shore and South Bend Railroad.

The CSS&SB, often known as the “South Shore Line,” was an interurban railroad that served the beaches and towns between downtown Chicago and South Bend, Indiana. The company was responsible for moving thousands of people every day: mostly commuters, but also tourists headed for the sand dunes and football games at Notre Dame.

Originally, the railroad operated with wooden interurban cars bought mostly from predecessors, but in the early 1920s, electrical and utility entrepreneur Samuel Insull bought the company and ordered new all-steel cars to modernize the company and offer faster trains. Car 9 was part of an order built in 1926 by the Pullman Car Company. These cars served the South Shore well, operating for over 50 years before being retired in the early 1980s, when they were replaced by state-of-the-art stainless steel cars.



For decades, the iconic “orange cars” carried hundreds of tourists to the dune-strung beaches along the Lake Michigan shoreline. When the South Shore retired the cars, it was only fitting that the National Park Service preserve some of them. The NPS ended up saving over a dozen “orange cars.” Restoration on the cars was slow, resulting in several cars, including #9, ending up at the East Troy Railroad Museum. Car 9 was restored by ETRM’s dedicated volunteers in 1993, joining several other “orange cars” at the museum. The car is usually attached to fellow car #13 when operating and is a prime example of a South Shore Line “short coach” (it was never lengthened or modernized during the 1940s, unlike #13).

