

TMER&L D23



Type: Interurban Line Car

Built: 1907

Modernized 1929

Seats: n/a

Length – 40' 0"

Weight - 30 tons



During the early 1900s, electric interurban rail lines connected hundreds of cities, towns, and farms together across America, predominantly in the upper Midwest. Usually powered by electrified wires strung above the tracks, these trolley lines were fast and efficient. Many a person would disembark an interurban car before watching the car head off into the night, sparks occasionally flying from the overhead catenary wires. All of this wear and tear on the overhead systems meant the wire constantly had to be fixed and replaced.

The Milwaukee Electric Railway and Light Company (TMER&L) operated approximately 130 miles of fast interurban lines in southeastern Wisconsin around this time. Car #D23 was built in 1907 in TMER&L's Kinnickinnic Shops. D23 is a "line car," an electric locomotive with an insulated platform on top, which swings out, on which several people can stand and service the live 600v wires. There is also another controller on the roof, so that one could operate the car from up top.

Inside the car, there is a trolley wire dispenser and tools for wire service, brush cutting, and light track maintenance. D23 was built on top of passenger car trucks, enabling the car to respond to interurban wrecks and breakdowns.



D23 was originally built in 1907. In 1938, the TMER&L became the Milwaukee Electric Railway and Transport Company, and D23 was renamed D3 in 1944. In 1963, after the abandonment of interurban service on the TMER&T and later operating company Speedrail, D3 was moved to the Wisconsin Electric Power Company's Lakeside Power Plant, where many other pieces of ex-TMER&L equipment were kept. Several years later, D3 was donated to the Wisconsin Electric Railway Historical Society, and ownership was transferred to the East Troy Railroad Museum in 1989. Since then, the car has remained at East Troy, servicing the overhead systems on the last surviving segment of TMER&L trackage, beautifully restored and still in service as a rare line car.

