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INTERURBAN RAILROAD RUNS AGAIN IN MEMORY
AT S/D HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S MAR. 12 PROGRAM

FEB. 25, 2014 -- Our area's interurban railroad service will be remembered in stories and photos at the next monthly public Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society program on Wednesday, March 12, in the Old School House History Center, 130 Center Street, Douglas, at 7 p.m. Admission is free and refreshments will be served.

Titled "Last Stop, Saugatuck-The History of the Interurban", presented by historic-railroad enthusiast and author Norman Krentel, the program revisits the era of local electric rail transportation and its importance to West Michigan communities. While nostalgia often highlights vacation and Pavilion traffic, he notes, freight shipping also was vital to local businesses, and some examples of those facilities will share the program's attention.

Focusing on the Saugatuck-Holland-Macatawa Park link with maps and photos, Krentel will show where two routes had been located in Saugatuck and why a second route was needed. He also will overview the vast Michigan Railway System, headquartered in Jackson, which once linked our area by electric trains through Grand Rapids to a statewide network extending as far as Detroit, Flint and Bay City.

A native of Lansing, Krentel currently resides in Geneva, IL. Now retired from an engineering position with A.T.&T., he is a longtime active volunteer at the Illinois Railway Museum near Union, IL (www.irm.org), largest museum of its kind in the U.S. with some 450 pieces of prototype equipment. His current focus is restoration of Michigan Railway's Car #28, a rare 61-ft. steel interurban car that he believes visited Saugatuck many times. Car #28 had been masquerading as a cottage at Duck Lake (east of Battle Creek) since 1929, he says, and will be returned to running condition.

The Railway Museum, he adds, features a 10-mile round trip interurban railway ride for the public, in addition to steam and diesel locomotives and a large collection of electric trolley and railway cars.

Krentel, with co-author Dave Kindem, also is writing a history of Michigan Railway Company, with some portions still in the research stage.

For more information about the Saugatuck/Douglas Historical Society, its Museum and Old School House History Center, or its activities planned for 2014, visit www.sdhistoricalsociety.org.

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Photo from the SDHS archives shows an interurban electric freight train stopped at Saugatuck's North Street to load barrels of apples.