



## **Toledo, Lake Erie and Western Railway & Museum, Inc.**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **LOCAL RAILROAD VOLUNTEER RECEIVES LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

Waterville, OH; Grand Rapids, OH – Mr. William Linebaugh of the Toledo, Lake Erie and Western Railway & Museum, Inc. (TLE&W), located in Waterville, Ohio received The Lifetime Achievement Award and honors from the Ohio Rail Tourism Association (ORTA). The award was presented at their 2004 Annual Conference. The conference was hosted by TLE&W April 16, 2004 through April 18, 2004 in Waterville and Grand Rapids, Ohio.

This special ORTA award is presented upon the recommendation of the ORTA Awards Committee to a member, employee, or volunteer of an Ohio Rail Tourism Association member organization who has established repeated and continued exceptional contributions to the Ohio Rail Tourism Industry. (ORTA consists of over 26 member railroad tourism organizations individually located throughout the state of Ohio.)

Mr. Linebaugh was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award for his lifetime achievements towards the Rail Tourism Industry. His accomplishments include countless leadership contributions to the Berrien County Model Railroad Club in Michigan; the Ada Model Railroad Association in Ohio; The Village of Ada Ohio - Pennsylvania Caboose Preservation Project; the Project 1225 Berkshire Steam Engine Restoration Project; and most recently, the Toledo, Lake Erie and Western Railway and Museum of Waterville and Grand Rapids, Ohio.

Mr. Linebaugh joined the Toledo, Lake Erie & Western Railway Fourteen-(14) years ago. Approximately six years ago, TLE&W was a state of extreme distress. Amongst financial, political and administrative difficulties, he assumed the leadership of the company as President and began an aggressive plan to renovate, reorganize and rebuild the organization. These efforts included rebuilding the company's public image, treasury, railroad infrastructure and corporate framework.

It's primarily due to his contributions and leadership that today's TLE&W railway continues to preserve and operate the last remaining historic twelve miles of railroad that was once part of the historic Nickel Plate Railroad. This includes the restoration and continued operation of the original 125 year-old Waterville Train Depot and Station. Today this station endures as the only remaining original operational train depot in Northwest Ohio.

Mr. Linebaugh was selected for the award due to these and other gallant efforts toward the continued preservation of the historic TLE&W rail line that was once part of the historic Nickel Plate Railroad.

Today, The TLEW railway remains one of Ohio's main-rail-tourism attractions more often than not because of Mr. Linebaugh's outstanding contributions. It's efforts such as what Mr. Linebaugh has demonstrated that sustains the historical preservation and continued visibility of Ohio's Rail Tourism Industry.

ORTA is a 501(c) 3 not-for-profit organization whose purpose is to bring together all Ohio rail tourism operators and excursion sponsors, railroad companies, historical societies, related companies and assemblies of individuals to promote and promulgate the Ohio rail tourism industry. ORTA's board of directors consists of 4 officers and six trustees. One trustee position is a permanent position appointed by the Ohio Rail Development Commission. Additional information regarding ORTA can be found at [www.ohiorailtourism.org](http://www.ohiorailtourism.org).

The TLE&W is a 501 (c)3 not-for-profit organization who's charter is to maintain and operate, for educational and historical purposes, an excursion railroad on the last remaining twelve miles of track between Grand Rapids and Waterville, Ohio. This rail line was originally part of the Toledo to St. Louis rail line that was built in 1875. Known as the Toledo, St. Louis and Chicago Railway and later part of the famous Nickel Plate Railroad. TLE&W provides passenger excursions between Grand Rapids and Waterville, Ohio on this line between the 1<sup>st</sup> weekend of May through the 1<sup>st</sup> weekend of November. Additional information regarding the TLE&W can be found at [www.tlew.org](http://www.tlew.org).

Mr. Linebaugh was additionally honored for his achievements at the May 13, 2004 Ohio Rail Development Commission's meeting in Columbus, Ohio where the ORDC Chairmen Mr. James E. Betts and Executive Director Jim Seney officially presented the ORTA 2003 Lifetime Achievement award to Mr. Linebaugh. Pictures of Mr. Linebaugh's award presentation can be obtained by emailing [info@tlew.org](mailto:info@tlew.org)