

About Yakima's Trolleys



Yakima's first trolleys made their inaugural run on Christmas Eve, 1907. They ran on the tracks of the newly formed Yakima Valley Transportation Company (YVT). The YVT began as a three-mile long electric street railway along Yakima Avenue. By 1910 it had extended its lines to Wiley City and Henrybro in the west and by 1913 it had also built north to Selah and beyond. It ultimately reached a length of about 44 miles.

Freight traffic (primarily in the form of fruit and perishables) became YVT's mainstay while passenger service slowly died. In 1935 passenger service to Wiley City, Henrybro, and Selah was withdrawn. In 1947 the remaining Yakima city passenger service was curtailed. Freight service continued with electric locomotives on the YVT until 1985.

In 1974 two trolleys from Oporto, Portugal were obtained to reopen passenger service on the YVT. Restoration of trolley service became the official Bicentennial project of the City of Yakima. This time the operation was aimed more at tourism than at public transit. The cars from Portugal are copies of U.S. design and are built with components from the Brill Company. They are nearly identical to the cars that opened the service in 1907 and they have become the mainstay of today's trolley operations.

In 1989 two Brill Master Unit streetcars were brought back to Yakima after being gone for 42 years. They were originally built for Yakima in 1930 and were the last new streetcars obtained by the YVT. One of them is still in operating condition today while the other is being restored.

The YVT railroad track, overhead wire system, Car barn and Powerhouse remain the same as they were in the first decade of the Twentieth Century. They are a living museum of early American electric railroading. In addition to the trolleys, the museum also contains two original YVT locomotives. One was built for YVT in 1909 and the other in 1922. Both are operational.

Because the YVT railroad has run continuously and without major change since 1907, it and the entire historic collection of rolling stock, buildings and machinery were placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1992 as the last intact early Twentieth Century electric interurban railroad in America.

Rides on the Yakima Valley Trolleys begin at the YVT Powerhouse on the corner of Third Avenue and Pine Street. Inside the Powerhouse and Car barn guests can see parts, machinery and cars from days gone by being lovingly restored and maintained by members of the Yakima Valley Trolleys association. New volunteers are always welcome! Trolleys operate on weekends and holidays during the summer and can also be chartered any time of the year.

More information about the Yakima Valley Trolleys can be found on our website:
www.yakimavalleytrolleys.org