



Kylie Bedel



Eilish Bennett



Aiden Drohr



Matthew Friar

For 2025, R&LHS awards a record of eight student scholarships

The Railway & Locomotive Historical Society has announced a record eight 2025 recipients of scholarships. Each award is worth \$4,000, up from \$3,000 in all previous years.

Scholarships are given in the names of those who endowed them: Edward Myers, Bruce Ward, and George Hilton.

This marks the sixth year of the program. In its first five years, the R&LHS awarded scholarships to 22 students. The highest number in any

one year before this was five scholarships, given in 2024.

A larger endowment amount this year – thanks to increased investment yields – allowed the panel to provide more awards.

Several of the students have participated in internships with Class 1 railroads – two with Norfolk Southern and one each with Union Pacific and CSX Transportation. This is an important milestone and achievement for R&LHS's goal of increasing visibility

in the railroad industry at large.

Undergraduates (second, third, and fourth year) and graduate students may apply. The program is open to those majoring in history, transportation, transportation logistics, engineering, or any other field with a demonstrated connection to railroad history, operations, engineering, or economics.

R&LHS President Robert Holzweiss said, "I want to thank the scholarship review panel for their thoughtful consideration and dedication throughout the selection process. Your commitment to recognizing excellence is truly appreciated.

"Congratulations to the eight scholarship recipients. Your exemplary achievements and demonstrated potential have earned this well-deserved recognition. I wish you continued success in your academic endeavors and encourage you to consider a career in the railroad industry or a railroad-related field upon the completion of your studies."

—Continued on next page

On Our Cover

On June 13, 2025, two Southern California Chapter members who helped to plan and carry out the 2025 Railway & Locomotive Historical Society annual meeting in Ontario, Calif., admire former Santa Fe Railway FP45-model diesel road unit No. 108 in full red-and-silver Warbonnet attire at the Southern California Railroad Museum in Perris, Calif. From left, they are chapter Vice Chairman Paul J. Guercio – who encouraged the museum to use No. 108 instead of a smaller unit for that day's be-



hind-the-throttle visitor experiences – and Roger Simon. For more about the annual meeting, see pages 8-9.

—Photo by Mike Matejka

All contents © 2025 The Railway & Locomotive Historical Society. Contact the editor for permission to reprint articles, which must give attribution to, and copyright notice for, the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society *Quarterly Newsletter*.



Aidan Kelley



John Keyser



Emerson Mitchell



Maddock Thomas

—Continued from previous page

Three students were repeat winners: Kylie Bedel, Aiden Drohr, and Maddock Thomas. The complete list follows:

Kylie Bedel

Kylie Bedel of Evansville, Ind., graduated from Purdue University in 2025 with a B.S. double major in agribusiness management and animal science, and is now pursuing an M.S. in agricultural economics at Kansas State University. A specific interest of hers is the symbiotic relationship between railroads and the producers of agricultural commodities. She has had two internships at Union Pacific in marketing and sales.

Eilish Bennett

Eilish Bennett of Centerville, Tenn., is working on an M.S. in transportation technology and policy at the University of California, Davis. She also holds a B.S. in agricultural and resource economics from the University of Tennessee and completed a Fulbright grant in the rural Czech Republic, where she experienced accessible rail travel firsthand. Currently, she is a graduate researcher at the National Center for Sustainable Transportation, working on a project involving best practices/ridership modeling for high-speed rail implementation in the United States.

Aiden Drohr

Aiden Drohr of Wentzville, Mo., is a student at Maryville Universi-

ty, where he is pursuing a B.A. in history. His lifelong fascination with railroads led him to his current job as a staff tour guide at the National Museum of Transportation in St. Louis. His career goals include obtaining an M.S. degree in museum studies and a career in rail preservation.

Matthew Friar

Matthew Friar of Portland, Ore., is working on an M.S. in civil engineering at the University of Texas at Austin. He holds a B.S. in engineering physics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He is a graduate assistant at the Texas Railway Analysis and Innovation Node, and was an undergraduate research assistant at the Illinois Rail Transportation and Engineering Center. He envisions a career working for government agencies in pursuit of improvement of rail passenger infrastructure.

Aidan Kelley

Aidan Kelley of Altoona, Pa., is working toward a B.S. in civil engineering at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. He has had several internships, including one in Norfolk Southern's Maintenance of Way Department. His career goal is to work in railroad operations, in management, engineering, or infrastructure planning.

John Keyser

John Keyser, of Middlebury, Ind., is a student at Purdue Universi-

ty, where he is working on a B.S. in agricultural engineering. He makes the connection how railroads are vitally related to agriculture and other industries. This summer he was an intern at Norfolk Southern, working in its Maintenance of Way Department.

Emerson Mitchell

Emerson Mitchell of Columbia, S.C., is working on a B.S. degree in civil engineering and railroad engineering at the University of South Carolina. He has an undergraduate research assistantship and is president of the campus chapter of AREMA, the American Railway Engineering and Maintenance-of-Way Association. This summer he worked as an engineering intern at CSX Transportation in the Bridges, Design & Construction Department. Beyond railroads in general he has a specific interest in public transportation.

Maddock Thomas

Maddock Thomas of Decatur, Ga., is a senior pursuing a B.A. degree in Urban Studies at Brown University. He has written a white paper, "Putting America Back on Track," and is now working on two manuscripts about the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad ahead of its bicentennial. Last summer, he worked in operations planning at MTA New York City Transit, and this summer he was with Keolis Commuter Services in Boston. He is currently applying for post-grad jobs in railroading/public transit, while also considering pursuing a Ph.D. in transportation.