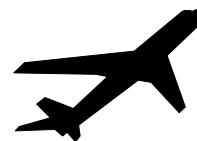


# THE FOUR STATES TOUR

(ANOTHER COMPREHENSIVE STARS U.S.A. TOUR)  
Thursday 6th to Thursday 20th September, 2012



## COST ELEMENTS

**Base Cost - £877.50 (Mandatory)**

**Includes all Accommodation,  
Road and Rail Transportation Costs during our Tour.  
Hotel Single Room Supplement - £335.00 (Optional)**

**To ensure that you and your fellow members have the maximum  
Time available to find and arrange low cost flights –  
Please book by 3 February, with a Minimum Deposit of £100.  
The balance must be paid by 27 July**

At last we are pleased to reveal this latest STARS tour to the U.S.A. It has been held over from last 2011 in order that participants could be given every chance of booking a bargain air fare. The date has also been altered to facilitate the inclusion of the North Platte Rail Fest, one of the world's most famous annual rail extravaganzas, further enhanced in 2012 by the 150th anniversary celebrations of the Union Pacific Railroad. Not only are the Rail Fest organisers making special arrangements for the STARS group, but they are willing to assist with arrangements to other facilities and workshops included on this tour.

As the title suggests we cover the States of Kansas, Nebraska, Wyoming, & South Dakota, and also included is the rail super centre that is Kansas City, along with freight (particularly coal) watching in the Powder River basin.

Every day we are on the road we will visit line side locations we have extensively researched to ensure that your photographs are enhanced by the backdrops and scenery around them. This was an area where we did so well on the Southern California tour in 2010 and, if you have seen the photographs of that tour, you cannot fail to have been impressed by the locations we found. If you missed out before make sure you don't a second time. Book on this one and you too can have your share of magnificent photographs and between 2 and 3,000 numbers.

**Note.** We regret that we are unable to arrange you flights to and from the States but we can offer advice if required

**Your fare includes** 14 nights Hotel accommodation, including taxes and breakfast, Road Transportation charges including fuel and taxes, costs involved in providing visits (including refreshments), and all admin charges.

**Not included in your fare** are Air Fares and costs incurred in joining and leaving the tour. Also excluded are Hotel Restaurant, Room Service, Bar or Telephone; and Rail Transportation charges.

## ITINERARY

### Day One - Thursday 6th September

Arrive at Kansas City International Airport either by direct flight or via Chicago. The first task will be to collect the people carrier(s). Our transport will depend on the final numbers but from past experience we will ensure that vehicles will not be loaded to full capacity. We then check into the hotel for a good nights sleep ready for an early start in the morning.

### Day Two - Friday 7th September

Drive to **Lincoln** Nebraska is a long one but should be completed by mid day with stops on route. What awaits us is well worth the drive as the **Hobson Yard Facility** (where we hope we can secure a full visit) and the **West fuelling point** will produce much. We hope the small dump at **old Town Station** will still be waiting for us and we must also make time in the afternoon for photo opportunities at **Emerald**. We overnight in Lincoln.

### Day Three - Saturday 8th September

The beginning of two days outstanding line-siding, but before we get on our way 'proper' we will call at **Lincoln Transport Museum**. The major location of the day is **Ravenna** which is a crew change and fuelling point, but we will pause on the way for photo opportunities at **St Michael**. After a substantial break at Ravenna we continue to **Broken Bow** where we stop for the night. On route there are excellent photo opportunities either side of **Lichfield**, including grain elevator backdrops.

### Day Four - Sunday 9th September

Leaving Broken Bow the photo opportunities multiply. Our route takes us through **Merna** and **Anselmo** (will you be able to get the English style Church into your photos?). At Anselmo the single line working begins. We continue to **Dunning, Halsey** and **Theford**. The time zone changes at Norway which is just prior to **Seneca**. Seneca is a very historic location where the watering of steam locomotives took place. Today it is the scene of much line work, but it is double tracked. As we continue more and more stops will be made to capture the idyllic backdrops which will feature water windmills and small lakes. The route is **Hyannis, Ashby, Bingham, Ellsworth Holding Loops, Lakeside, and Antioch**. Our overnight stay is **Alliance**. We will probably not be able to resist a look at the yards before checking in at our hotel.

### Day Five - Monday 10th September

The day will be spent entirely in Alliance. Both **Alliance Facility & Yards** will command our intensive attention.

### Day Six - Tuesday 11th September

We leave Alliance and our first call will be the over bridge at **Belmont** where we will have good views of trains both ways, and also the 'Y' used by the 'helpers'. We continue into **Crawford** where one or two coal trains will be awaiting 'helpers'. We then follow the line past Toadstool National Park to another outstanding photographic location at **Orella**. The small yard at **Edgemont** will be next. We then enter the Dakota Black Hills to get to grips with **Newcastle** (Why-aye!). The bridge at MP516 gives an excellent view of the curve leaving the town. There is also a small yard, well worth a visit. Leaving Newcastle we pause at **Upton over bridge** for more shots. Interest escalates as we pass the main coal yards of **Rozet** and **Donkey Creek**, and we should see several trains 'stacked' on the line from

**Cabella Mine.** Our overnight stay is **Gillette**, one of the principal Cities of the Powder River Basin.

### **Day Seven - Wednesday 12th September**

Leaving Gillette and travelling south, our first call will be **Lawyers Road Bridge** which is an excellent vantage point for another photogenic curve. Following the Railway we come upon **Black Thunder** and **East Thunder Mines** where the MGR traffic will be interesting. Further on is another over bridge location, **Steckley Road Bridge**, where 4 tracks (2 BNSF and 2 UP) pass under. We may devote much time here as the expectation is a train every 14 minutes. We carry on to **Bill UP Facility**. As we approach Douglas we will pause at **Flat Top Road**, another over bridge which gives a wonderful view of the curve and gantry. We may see trains on the fuelling point on **Casper Line** just before we enter **Douglas**. We continue to **Orin Junction** where we follow the line to **Glendo**. **Guernsey Facility** will follow and we hope to arrange a full visit. If not the facility is easy to view from main roads on both sides. After a further drive of about 30 minutes we reach our overnight stay in **Torrington**.

### **Day Eight - Thursday 13th September**

We are now wholly in Union Pacific Territory. After a lengthy journey we arrive at **North Platte** with the extensive **Bailey Facility and Yards**, and on the eve of one of the world's most spectacular railway festivals. Over the next three days the whole area becomes a 'Mecca' for the railfan as Union Pacific 'throw open their doors' with on-site events, tours and exhibitions, the like of which has to be seen to be believed. The 2012 Rail fest promises to be even more spectacular because it coincides with the 150th anniversary of the Company. For today we concentrate on the comings and goings of the trains that cannot be halted by the festival. Later in the day, we have a good steak house earmarked at Hershey 'X'ing – (very convenient).

### **Day Nine - Friday 14th September**

Today we will spend the entire day at **North Platte Rail fest 2012**, and be assured we will need the entire day, for something that will make both the photographers and number crunchers 'purr' **The organisers have already offered an exclusive visit for the STARS Group.** On arrival we will be taken to the impressive **Golden Spike Tower** from where we will have the most magnificent view of the whole complex including the locomotives. Thankfully an elevator takes you to the top. We will be taken by bus on a tour of the extensive yards, stopping off for photographs when opportunities arise. We will spend time touring the **locomotive shops** and, at some point, we will break for lunch. There is also **Cody Park Museum** which is well worth a visit. The celebrity steam and heritage locomotives will be announced when they are confirmed, but will include the Union Pacific 'Big Boy'.

### **Day Ten - Saturday 15th September**

Refreshed after a good nights sleep and 'on a high' from the experience of yesterday, we depart from North Platte to another 'bumper bag' of sightings. In no time at all we call at **Maxwell, Brady, West Farr Bulwark Curves** and **Gothenburg**, all locations where we expect sightings. It is a long way back to Kansas City, too far for a day's travel and so we shall break our journey at **Lincoln**, and more views of **Hobson Yard**, are unlikely to be resisted.

### **Day Eleven - Sunday 16th September**

On this final leg of the road Tour, we will call firstly at the small **Marysville UP Facility**. We continue to one of the most famous names in American Railroading history, **Topeka**. Here we call at **North West Norris Street**, and **North East MacVicar Avenue** in addition to the **Station and Yards**. Next is our final destination, **Kansas City**, which will be 'home' for the next 3 days.

### **Days Twelve to Fifteen –**

#### **Monday 17th to Thursday 20th September**

After 10 days on the road, just one 'base' will be a welcome change. As far as 'Hot Spots' are concerned we are so spoilt for choice because there are so many vantage points where moving trains can be observed. However, as is the STARS way extensive research has taken place on each location and we can tell you what you are likely to see, quantity and train frequency, and security/safety advice. The locations are too numerous to visit all but we will apply complete flexibility in order that participants can make an informed choice as to where best to go. The locations are as follows (daily quantity of trains in brackets):

**Kansas City Union Station** (120+), **Santa Fe Junction** (150+), **West Bottoms** (60-80) **Southwest Boulevard** (30-50), **Kemperer Stadium** (?), **Turner Yard (42nd Street)** (?), **Fairfax** (30-50), **Armourdale** (45-55), **North Kansas** (20-30), **Murray Yard (10th & 14th Avenue)** (?), **Atlantic Street** (?), **Parkville** (50-70), **Liberty** (15-25), **East Bottoms** (60-80), **Sugar Creek** (120+), **Rock Creek Junc.** (up to 100), **Independance Avenue** (120+), **Independence Amtrak Station** (50-60), **Lee' Summit Amtrak Station** (50-60), **Harris Park** (50-60), **Dodson** (30-50), **Grandview** (20-30), the Shortline **BG & KC** (Belton, Grandview and Kansas City Railroad), **Lenexa** (30-50), **Olathe** (30-50), the Rock Island Line - **Muncie, Edwardsville & Bonner Springs** (50-60) with vantage points all along Highway 32.

One thing is certain. We will not ignore the extensive **Argentine Yard**, and intend to arrange a full visit there.

This is an outstanding Tour and we have been able to advertise it with nearly 9 months notice. Please commit to it early in order that we can confirm the Tour as running. The earlier we can confirm the better chance everyone has of arranging the best deals on flights. The tour is already outstanding value for money – let's add a really low air fare as 'icing on the cake'.

**Remember - Do Not Book Your Flight Until We Confirm The Tour As Running**