The Mountain State streetcar era

Before they reached the end of the line, trolleys helped towns grow and connect

By James E. Casto

Huntington's first electric streetcar began operating in December 1888. Traveling along 3rd Avenue, the single-track line connected the city's downtown with the Ensign Manufacturing Company's plant at 24th Street and the Guyandotte neighborhood.

By opening up new areas for residential development, and by connecting these isolated neighborhoods to the city center, streetcars became one of the most popular means of transportation for workers and their families. By 1919, just after World War I, there were more than 1,500 amusement parks around the country, and most of them were trolley parks, according to the National Amusement Park Historical Association. But some trolleys turned to what the streetcars and their parks failed to:

Trolley parks drew crowds of fun-seekers

By James E. Casto

Before today's giant theme parks with elaborate rides funded for cartoons, movies and superheroes, there were trolley parks. The parks were built by trolley companies at the end of the line in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as a way to attract riders and service established that connected the three communities of Catlettsburg and Ashland.

In 1899, Charles H. Shattuck, president of the Parkersburg Electric and Street Railway, built the Terrain Park Electric Power and Street Railway, built the Terrain Park — not a gambling house, but a multi-purpose building that included a 2,000-seat auditorium.

Charles West says ...

I propose a motion to bring horse-drawn streetcars back to West Virginia's towns. Do you vote Yay or Neigh?