

Fredonia, Kansas on the Frisco

In the March 2014 issue of *The Great Plains Dispatcher* was an excerpted story about some Wichita Chapter railfan activities and train travels as outlined in the March 1964 issue of *The Dispatcher*. Also in this same 50-year-old issue was a story concerning frequent burglaries of the joint Frisco/Santa Fe depot in Fredonia, Kansas. There was a photo of a portion of the old depot in the March 2014 *'Dispatcher.'*

“The Fredonia, Kansas depot is shared by the AT & SF Ry and the SL & SF Ry., and has been for many years. This was no problem in itself, but almost every month the depot was robbed by late at night sneak thieves. After enjoying the freedom of robbery, the thieves became sure of never being caught in their act of burglary, and the Fredonia force did not have a Dick Tracy serving in its ranks either. But as every dog has his day, the day arrived when a man who had invented the better mouse trap finally appeared to see that justice was done. This man was Mr. Ray Reinbolt, who was to be the Frisco Assistant Agent to Agent Rustenback. This was a good working team, as Mr. Rustenback dabbled in radio, and Mr. Reinbolt was of the necessary inventive mind to put their plan of electric burglar detection in action. Boring a hole in the depot floor and inserting a contact nail to

an electrical circuit wired into the town's telephone office, and placing a chair leg on the exposed nail proved to be a real alarm. When the thieves entered the depot they had to move the chair in their path, and when they did this the nail made contact under the depot floor, and in due process lighted up a signal in the telephone office.

“It wasn't long until the burglars entered in the dead of night, and the electrical device worked perfectly. The operator called out the trusty police department but alas, the officials of law and order arrived too late, or simply could not outrun the culprits. Anyway, even though no capture was made, the thieves knew they were dealing with more than local police and never again broke into the most –robbed depot on the Frisco line.”

This story concludes by saying: “As far as Mr. Reinbolt knows this device is still protecting the shippers and the company in the Fredonia depot.”

Mr. Bill Bain, an early Wichita Chapter NRHS member, and author of the book Frisco Folks, provided the details of the above story. This one was not in his Frisco book.

The March 1964 DS also stated that the old Frisco depot had been torn down and a steel building was in place of the old structure.