



Preserving "THE FEATHER RIVER ROUTE"



The Train Sheet

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News from the Feather River Rail Society and the Portola Railroad Museum

Farewell to the Reno Branch

By Steve Habeck, FTRB Project Manager

The ex-WP Reno Branch, now the Reno Subdivision on the UP, is an interesting 33-mile piece of railroad which starts at Reno Junction on the ex-WP main line, 20 miles east of Portola, and runs 33 miles south into downtown Reno. This line, much of which was originally the narrow-gauge Nevada-California-Oregon (NCO), was the WP's access to Reno, and provided considerable business for the WP. With an intermodal facility set up at Parr Yard, 5 miles uphill from downtown Reno (and on a 1.8% grade!), and the industrial park at Stead, the Reno Local always had plenty of work to do. At the south end, in downtown Reno, the branch connected with the SP main line over Donner Pass via a set of very sharp reverse curves, which saw very little use. The WP, and, until recently, the UP, handled the Reno traffic via the mainline connection at Reno Jct, and rarely ventured downgrade below Parr Yard.

With the UP-SP merger, all that has changed. In late 2000, the UP rebuilt the lower end of the Reno Subdivision from the ex-SP connection to Parr Yard with concrete ties and heavy



Our caboose 428 will be repainted into the original Brown/Yellow scheme as shown above on #447. Photo by Frank Brehm

welded rail, including a major realignment of the trackage at the connection. Upon completion of this work, the Reno Local began operating out of Sparks, going up to Parr Yard and out to Stead, and returning to Sparks. Thus the majority of the branch, from Martin at MP 21 (junction with the line to Stead) to MP 0 at Reno Jct, became redundant to the UP. So far, one online customer at Bordertown (MP 13), has required

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FRRS Receives New Cordless Tools from Makita!

By Eugene John Vicknair

When I began working on the Zephyr Project, several members, including Frank Brehm, suggested approaching power tool makers requesting donations of tools. Several months ago, I was able to send out several requests and received an interesting proposal from Makita Tools in return. At the June BOD Meeting, I presented Makita's offer to the Directors. It was accepted and by the time you read this the brand-new power tool collection will be in use at the museum!

So now, thanks to Ted Hendricks of Makita, the FRRS has received a suite of cordless tools that should prove invaluable

on current and future projects. This is not a donation, however. These tools are being made available to the FRRS for free for six months. At the end of that time, they can be sold to members or purchased by the Society at a steep discount. If this plan works out well, it could be the first part of an ongoing program with Makita to provide tools for the Society as well as provide members with the unique possibility to personally own tools used to restore and repair the Silver Hostel, 805A, 921D and other artifacts in our collection.

Thanks again to Ted Hendricks and everyone at Makita!

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Farewell to the Reno Branch

continued from Page 1 that the line be kept in service to that point; but UP has already negotiated relocating this customer to the area below Martin in the near future. A red flag is planted between the rails near MP 11, plainly visible from US 395, preventing northward movement beyond that point. With sections of this line laid with welded rail that can be used elsewhere, its future as a railroad is in serious doubt. Fortunately, UP has been using the north end of the branch to store auto-racks, with nearly 200 of them sitting north of MP 3 since last fall. It will be difficult to tear up the track with cars sitting on it.

With the handwriting on the wall, the FRRS has stepped in with a plan to commemorate the Reno Branch prior to its demise. We are working with the UP and have come up with a plan for an excursion on the Reno Branch, to be called, "Farewell To The Reno Branch". As currently envisioned, this excursion would operate from Portola (adjacent to the Museum) to Sparks, lay over in Sparks, and return to Portola the second day. As Project Manager for this undertaking, I have drawn up a draft plan and budget for this project, and have received approval from the FRRS Board of Directors to proceed with plans to upgrade and paint various pieces of equipment from the collection for possible use on this venture. I cannot stress enough that we have not yet concluded discussions with the UP, and that final approval has not been given as yet! The work I have started on our equipment is such that the Museum will benefit from the upgrading whether the excursion runs or not. I have carefully chosen the equipment to be worked on, and the order in which it will be worked on, to minimize impact on daily Museum operations, yet provide improved appearance and use from this equipment as soon as it's completed.

Due to the ongoing negotiations with UP, and the fact that cars are still stored on the branch, no time frame for any excursion has yet been determined. If approved by UP, we will be reliant on the removal of the cars on the branch through the normal course of business prior to an excursion. I'm sorry that I can't be more detailed about this, but too much is still too tentative to be very specific. One thing I can state with authority is that we can use all the help we can get to get the FRRS and its equipment in shape for ventures such as this. Even though we are working under the FTRB banner, I'm hoping it's just a catalyst to spur excitement amongst you, the membership, to get involved, or get involved again, on projects that are definite in scope, approved and funded by the Board, and good for the Museum by improving appearance and functionality of our equipment. Whether we run an excursion or not, the Museum wins, and that's the bottom line.

For specific inquiries, you can E-mail me at chooch@psln.com or call me at the Museum, or at home, (530) 283-3396. **DO NOT** call the UP; they don't know any more than we do at this point. To avoid confusion, we have only one person designated as the contact with UP, and he is in contact with me as necessary. If it involves the FTRB Project, and you didn't hear it from me, or from official FRRS channels, it probably isn't right. I am committed to getting the word out as quickly and as accurately as possible as things move along. Thank you for your interest, and I hope to see many of you helping to take up the cause in Portola.

Minutes of Past Meetings

May 5, 2001

Interim President Hank Stiles called the meeting to order at 6:55 p.m. The following directors were present: Jim Murphy, Frank Brehm, Doug Morgan, Eugene Vicknair, Pat Brimmer, Hank Stiles, Ed Wagner (via telephone). Director Vic Neves and President Andy Anderson were absent.

Visitors Present: Rod McClure, Kerry Cochran, Bill Adamson, Steve Habeck, Don Nelson, Norm Holmes.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Zephyr Project Report, Headlight Report, Train Sheet Report, Gift Shop sales at WPRRHS Convention, WP OB cupola Caboose 630 Report.

Motion #01-05-01

Made by Frank Brehm, seconded by Doug Morgan to accept consent agenda reports. All directors present voted in favor. Director Neves and President Anderson were absent.

REPORTS:

TEA-21 Grant – Old Hospital

Eugene Vicknair presented and addendum to the TEA grant application for consideration. He explained that it had been reported that the Plumas County Transportation Commission was unsure if the proposed project fit into categories mentioned on the application, the addendum addressed which categories the project fit into. During the discussion it was determined that the addendum should place more emphasis on the projects link to transportation.

Motion #01-05-02

Made by Jim Murphy, seconded by Pat Brimmer to approve sending the addendum with the suggested added emphasis. All directors present voted in favor. Director Neves and President Anderson were absent.

MINUTES:

Minutes of the April 7, 2001 meeting.

Motion #01-05-03

Made by Jim Murphy, seconded by Frank Brehm to approve the minutes of the April 7, 2001 meeting as presented. All directors present voted in favor. Director Neves and President Anderson were absent.

OLD BUSINESS:

RENO EXCURSION: The Board reviewed the Reno Excursion Project plan drafted by Steve Habeck. Comments from Dan Brady regarding financing of the project were also reviewed. It was reported that Union Pacific had reviewed the draft plan and would cooperate with FRRS using Rod McClure as the liaison. Tickets will only be available to FRRS members due to liability concerns of UP, there can be tickets available to VIPs. Video taping of the excursion will be completed and there could be revenue from that portion of the project. The Board commended Steve Habeck on his work to draft a concise plan for consideration.

Motion #01-05-04

Made by Jim Murphy, seconded by Pat Brimmer to approve the Reno Excursion Project and add expenses to the upcoming budget. All direc-