



Quarterly Newsletter of the Truckee Donner Railroad Society

Snowshed

Keeping Truckee's Railroad History Alive!

This Issue

<i>President's Letter</i> by Dan Cobb	p. 2
<i>Truckee River Railroad</i> by Bob Bell	p. 2
<i>Big Boy Tour</i> by Steve Edelman	p. 3
<i>Truckee 1927 Modular Railroad Finds a New Home on Wheels</i> by Jay Jacobs	p. 3
<i>Pledge Drive for New Railroad Museum</i> by Dan Cobb	p. 4
<i>Carson and Tahoe Lumber and Fluming Company</i> by Steve Edelman	p. 5
<i>Volunteer Opportunities</i>	p. 6

Event Calendar

TDRRS Board of Directors Meeting	March 4
Model RR at Flying A	April 11-12
Big Boy whistle stop (time TBD)	April 12
First Run of the Truckee River Railroad	May 16

President's Letter

Dan Cobb

Winter is traditionally a quiet time for the Railroad Society, but there's a lot going on.

Our "Truckee 1927" historical model railroad exhibit wrapped up in January and is safely stored away in its new trailer (see Jay Jacobs's article in this issue). The Truckee Donner Regional Park District has invited us to set up the layout again next fall, September through January. We're working several improvements during the "off season" including the Verdi Lumber mill and pond and a new Brickelltown module.

Union Pacific has announced a 2026 tour for the Big Boy locomotive, beginning in early April and will make a "whistle stop" in Truckee on April 12. Engel and Volkers has offered their "Flying A" showroom for a brief model railroad exhibit that weekend, so we'll be running trains downtown on April 11 and 12.

Bob Bell has set the summer run schedule for our Truckee River Railroad riding train in the regional park. We're planning 14 run days in 2026, starting with a "shakedown cruise" on May 16th and wrapping up on October 3rd. Weather permitting, we'll also run our annual "Santa Train" in late November or early December.

We're also planning our Trestle Tours for next summer. We're looking forward to doing another tour of the Donner Pass railroad tunnels, a tour of Hobart Mills and the Hobart Estates trestles, and a late-season tour of the Carson & Tahoe Lumber & Fluming Company grades in Slaughterhouse Canyon and Spooner Summit. Additional tours may be added if we have volunteers to lead them.

Finally, we're excited to kick off our fundraising effort for the new railroad museum in the Truckee River Regional Park with a member pledge drive. See the article in this issue for more detail and expect an email soon explaining how to make a pledge.

As always, we welcome new volunteers to help run the riding train, staff the caboose museum, build and run the model railroad, and maintain the railroad equipment displays in the Railyard pocket park. To see how you can help, see tdrrs.org/volunteer.

Truckee River Railroad

Bob Bell

We had a great Santa run to end our season. Santa's schedule is getting longer each year but we were able to get Santa to visit Truckee on the Saturday after Thanksgiving and Truckee weather cooperated with a clear but chilly sky. 539 kids and parents rode around our full track with Santa on November 28 with Durk Stelter heading the operation as Trainmaster assisted by our crew of Bobby Carter, Mike and Roxanne McNab, Edith Arrowood, and Greg Zirbel. Our schedule for 2026 is reproduced here and on our website. Please put some of the dates on your calendar and sign up to help on our

<u>2026 Schedule</u>	
May 16 (Sat)	July 25 (Sat)
May 23 (Sat)	August 1 (Sat)
June 6 (Sat)	August 15 (Sat)
June 21 (Sun)	August 22 (Sat)
July 5 (Sun)	September 5 (Sat)
July 11 (Sat)	September 19 (Sat)
July 18 (Sat)	October 3 (Sat)

Signup Genius or send me a message. We look forward to the opportunity to get more of our members involved.

Big Boy Tour 2026

Steve Edelman

Union Pacific will join the nation in celebrating 250 years of American independence and innovation this year with its first-ever coast-to-coast steam tour led by the legendary Big Boy No. 4014. The first leg of the tour starts Sunday, March 29, with the Big Boy and several historical passenger cars from Union Pacific's Heritage Fleet traveling west to California from Cheyenne, Wyoming, the locomotive's homebase. The first leg of the tour ends Friday, April 24, back in Cheyenne. Two major public display days are set: Friday and Saturday, April 10-11 at Roseville, California, and Saturday and Sunday, April 18-19 at Ogden, Utah. **The Big Boy will come through Truckee on April 12!**

Big Boy No. 4014, the world's largest operating steam locomotive, will be joined by two commemorative locomotives, including the railroad's newest locomotive: No. 1776 – America250. This new commemorative locomotive pays tribute to the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the founding of this nation. The locomotive will feature the emblem of the America250 Semiquincentennial Commission, the national nonpartisan organization established by Congress to lead the nation's 250th anniversary. For more information visit <https://www.up.com/about-us/history/steam/schedule>.



The Big Boy is a 4-8-8-4 articulated locomotive. Photo by Union Pacific Railroad.

Truckee 1927 Modular Railroad Finds a New Home on Wheels

Jay Jacobs

The Truckee 1927 modular model railroad wrapped up a highly successful public display at the Truckee Rec Center in January. Once the show ended, the team faced a familiar challenge: finding space to store the 15 modules that make up the layout. For the past three years, the modules have been tucked away in garages scattered around the Truckee area. One member generously housed several sections in a spare room, but with the upcoming sale of that home, the group needed a more permanent solution. The team decided to invest in a

6' x 14' enclosed trailer dedicated to storing and transporting the layout. Durk Stelter, Jay Jacobs, and Dan Cobb designed and built a custom rack system inside the trailer to hold all 15 modules along with the project's miscellaneous components.

The result is an efficient, secure, and centralized storage system that also streamlines transportation. Instead of coordinating multiple trips with pickup trucks and SUVs, the team can now simply roll the trailer up to the venue door and begin setup. It's a practical upgrade that supports both the preservation and the continued public enjoyment of the Truckee 1927 railroad.



Durk Stelter, Jay Jacobs, and Dan Cobb worked on the new trailer for the Truckee 1927 modular model railroad.

Pledge Drive for New Railroad Museum

Dan Cobb

We are initiating a member pledge drive to kick off our fundraising for the new railroad museum. As we've mentioned in the past several issues, the Railroad Society is working to build a new, 2,100 square foot railroad



Rendering of the future Truckee Railroad Museum in the Regional Park (rendering by Megan Jost, architect).

museum in the Truckee River Regional Park, with an expanded "Truckee 1927" model railroad as its centerpiece, artifacts and exhibits commemorating our local railroad history, and a multi-purpose room for youth and adult workshops and events. The new railroad museum will commemorate and promote Truckee's rich history as a railroad town, as well as providing an important educational and entertainment venue for locals and visitors.

We have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Recreation and Parks District, architectural plans have been drawn up, and engineering

specifications and drawings have been done. Initial construction estimates are between 1.0 and 1.3 million dollars. Actual cash requirements may be reduced by in-kind donations of volunteer labor and/or building materials from major donors.

We're beginning the fundraising effort with a member pledge drive. In the next couple of weeks, members will receive an email explaining how to make a pledge. Members will be asked to contribute the pledged amount only when the total of donations and pledges toward the project reaches 80% of the then-current cost estimate.

We hope you'll join us in building the museum by making a pledge.

Carson and Tahoe Lumber and Fluming Company (Glenbrook)

Steve Edelman

The story of the Carson and Tahoe Lumber and Fluming Company (C&TL&F) began in 1863 when Augustus Pray built a sawmill at Glenbrook, Nevada, and used a paddle wheel tugboat to tow rafts of logs to the sawmill from



Example of V-shaped flume at an interpretive display at Spooner Summit.

logging camps around the shores of Lake Tahoe. From Glenbrook, logs were hauled by animal-drawn wagons over the Carson Range via Spooner Summit then down to Carson City and the lumber-hungry Comstock Lode. Over the next several years operations were expanded to include additional steam boats and mills at Glenbrook and a V-shaped wooden flume to float the lumber from Spooner Summit down 2,300 vertical feet to Carson City. In 1872, Duane Bliss formed the C&TL&F to purchase the boats, mills, and flume and to build an 8.75-mile narrow-gauge railway up the hill from Glenbrook to Spooner Summit, to replace the animal-drawn wagons entirely. Motive power was provided by two narrow gauge 2-6-0 locomotives built by Baldwin Locomotive Works and named *Tahoe* and *Glenbrook*. Either locomotive

could pull six flatcars of lumber to the summit, and trains sometimes used twelve cars with one locomotive pulling and the other pushing.

Production increased significantly when the railroad was completed in 1875. The flow of lumber began at



The narrow gauge 2-6-0 locomotive *Glenbrook* is in fine condition as it steams up for operation at the Nevada State Railroad Museum in Carson City. Its sister locomotive, the *Tahoe*, is in operating condition at the Nevada County Railroad Museum in Nevada City, California.

various tracts of land around Lake Tahoe where logs were cut and brought down to the Lake Tahoe shore. From there the logs were loaded on steamboats and floated to Glenbrook, where the logs were processed and loaded onto railcars. The railroad climbed 910 vertical feet via two switchbacks to reach Spooner Summit where a 487-foot summit tunnel allowed the railroad to move from the Lake Tahoe drainage basin to the Carson River drainage; this was necessary because the head of the flume had to be in the Carson River drainage in order for water at the head of the flume could flow downhill for the entire length of the flume. A transfer yard was built on the east side of the tunnel, where the track split into several sidings, each with a parallel flume branch into which the logs were loaded from the train. Then, the logs

floated 12 miles to south Carson City at the terminus of the flume. There, logs were transferred from the flume to a short branch line of the newly completed Virginia & Truckee Railroad, which then carried the logs to the Comstock Lode. The Lake Tahoe basin became logged out in the 1890's and the C&TL&F was dismantled in 1898. The railroad equipment was moved across the lake to Tahoe City and used to construct the narrow gauge Lake Tahoe Railroad, which connected Tahoe City with Truckee. Today, evidence of the of the C&TL&F include the railroad grade in Slaughterhouse Canyon where two switchbacks were needed due to the steep terrain and the tunnel and grades at Spooner Summit. We're planning a Trestle Tour of the C&TL&F for next summer.

Volunteering and Membership

The Railroad Society could use your help in the following areas:

Truckee River Railroad (ride-on train) – Issue tickets, load the train, run the crossing gates, operate the trains as engineer or conductor, and help keep our riders safe. Training is provided and new volunteers are always welcome.

Museum Volunteer – Learn and share your knowledge of Truckee’s history and local railroading in the Truckee Railroad Museum (caboose) or the Museum of Truckee History. Volunteers work as individuals or pairs in three-hour shifts. Training is provided.

Newsletter Contributor – Contribute articles on local railroad history or other topics of interest for publication in our *Snowshed* newsletter.

Cosmetic Restoration of Railroad Equipment – We’ll hire professionals to do hazardous materials abatement and retore our wrecking crane to its full mid-century glory, but we can use some help with detailing and ongoing maintenance of the crane and the rotary snowplow.

Model Railroad – We need additional railroad modelers and builders to design and build structures, create scenery, run trains, and talk with visitors about Truckee’s railroad history. Join our committee and build “Truckee 1927”!

To volunteer, drop us a line at info@tdrrs.org. Memberships are open to anyone interested in preserving Truckee’s railroad history and supporting the ongoing activities of the society. To join, renew your membership, or make a donation to the society, visit our website at <https://tdrrs.org/membership> or scan the QR code.



<p style="text-align: center;">Board of Directors</p> <p>Dan Cobb — President and Historian Bob Bell — Executive Vice President and Treasurer Jerry Blackwill — Vice President and Museum Manager Steve Edelman — Newsletter Editor Jay Jacobs — Webmaster Tom Smith — Truckee River Railroad Bill Ramsey – Secretary Durk Stelter – New Railroad Museum</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Our History</p> <p>Railroads of the Truckee area played a significant role in founding and developing the town of Truckee. From the blasting of black powder in the granite over Donner Lake, to the hissing of the first steam engines coming into town, to the whistles of lumberjacks in the mountains, to the crack of ice being loaded in the reefers, to the tourists flocking to enjoy the beauty of the area, Truckee’s story is very much the story of its railroads.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Our Mission</p> <p>Our mission is to preserve and celebrate Truckee’s colorful railroad history and to educate residents and visitors about the important role of railroads in making Truckee what it is today. We strive to enrich the experience of residents and visitors through railroad-related entertainment and education.</p>
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The Truckee Donner Railroad Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, tax-exempt organization. EIN 91-1917864.