

# Snowshed

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## Society Mission:

To preserve, interpret, and educate the public about railroading life and history in the Truckee region including its contribution to Truckee and the Nation. Specifically, to depict railroad involvement in local industry through the acquisition, preservation, and restoration of relevant equipment, documents, and artifacts all to be part of a permanent museum facility in downtown Truckee.

## Presidents Letter

### Jerry Blackwill

At last, there seems to be a light at the end of the long COVID-19 tunnel. Our docents are beginning to get vaccinations and we can initiate discussions of reopenings. Our caboosé railroad museum is one of the most difficult to reopen. Because it's long and narrow it is impossible to maintain social distancing within the caboosé. We are exploring alternatives for a modified reopening perhaps this summer.

We are also exploring ways to operate the Truckee River Railroad in the Truckee River Regional Park this summer. Again, the problem is social distancing, but in this case it's on the trains themselves. Ways of running longer trains with empty cars between affiliated groups are being discussed.

If we can reopen one or both of these, we will announce reopening dates on our website at <https://www.truckeedonnerrailroadsociety.com/> and our Truckee Donner Railroad Society Facebook page.

I'm sorry to announce that our former President – Jim Hood passed away recently. Also, Carolyn Dee has resigned from the board. As a strong supporter of the society, she was instrumental in acquiring our rotary snowplow and pullman car. Her in-depth understanding of Truckee politics and her connections with the California State Railroad Museum have been most helpful in the society's endeavors.

Thanks to our members who donated funds and support for the restoration of the rotary snowplow. We still need funds for the railroad wrecking crane. If you can spare some money, please send it to the Truckee Donner Railroad Society, P.O. Box 3838, Truckee, CA 96160.

Jerry Blackwill

## The Truckee Depot

### Ed Czerwinski

The Truckee Depot is an iconic structure in downtown Truckee. It was placed on the California List of Historic Landmarks in 1976. But few know of its long history. Nor that it was not the first train station in Truckee.

The first passenger depot was built just west of the present depot, but on the south side of the tracks.

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## The Truckee Depot (continued from Page 1)

### Ed Czerwinski

Shortly after the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869, the passenger depot and ticket office moved to the ground floor of J. F. Moody's Truckee Hotel, which was just east of the present depot on the south side of the tracks. This arrangement between private businesses and the Southern Pacific Railroad (SP) was quite common. The Truckee Hotel also operated daily stage coaches to Donner Lake, Tahoe City and Sierra Valley. The hotel was widely advertised as a luxury accommodation and was visited by several U.S. presidents, including Ulysses Grant and Rutherford Hayes.



J. F. Moody's Truckee Hotel (photo courtesy of Truckee Donner Historical Society)

The Truckee Hotel, with the passenger depot, burned down in the early spring of 1900 and during the summer of 1900 the present structure was built. To this day the Truckee Depot is one of the few depots of its type remaining in use as a depot in California. The design is SP's standard One-Story Combination Depot No. 23. The structure has not been modified except for minor changes in the roof when the railroad ceased using the semaphore signal system. It is still the original 25 feet wide by 146 feet long. The only



Truckee Train Station (photo taken before October 1934)

change is that the original color of the outside was changed to a light green with white trim in the late 1960s. The Truckee Depot housed the district railmaster's office and functioned as a ticket office until the beginning of the Amtrak era in the 1970's. Beginning May 1, 1900 the Lake Tahoe Railway and Transportation Company (LTR&TC) ran narrow gauge trains between Truckee and Tahoe City on the north shore of Lake Tahoe. SP purchased the LTR&TC and converted it to standard gauge in 1926. From May 1900 until November 1943, the depot also served as the ticket office for the LTR&TC and SP trains.

In 1985 the station was sold to Nevada County and remodeled into the present-day Transportation Center for Amtrak, Greyhound, Tahoe Area Regional Transport, and Truckee Public buses. The outside colors were returned to the original yellow with green trim. However, the interior has been radically redesigned. Walls were moved or removed to accommodate the Visitor Information Center and Chamber of Commerce room, a local history museum, retail areas, restrooms and a small waiting room containing an historic safe. Today, tickets and train information can only be obtained online, not at the station. The waiting area is available during the day for passengers waiting for the California Zephyr trains. Presently, the California Zephyr trains (Amtrak) stop at Truckee; Train No. 5, west bound Mo-We-Fr at ~9:37 a.m. and Train No. 6, east bound Tu-Th-Sa at ~2:38 p.m.



Truckee Train Station (Photo taken May, 2020 by the author)

## History of the Steam Crane

### Chip Huck

Now that we're putting the finishing touches on the aesthetic restoration of the 1937 ALCO Rotary Snowplow, we are turning our attention to the 1930 Bucyrus Erie Steam Crane, its neighbor in the Railyard pocket park. Here is a brief history on the crane.

The crane was completed (B-E 10985) by the Bucyrus-Erie Company of South Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1930, with a weight of 268,800 lbs. and a capacity of 160 tons. The design included a rotating body which supports the boom and an operator's cabin with the necessary lifting & operating mechanisms and steam engine. Outriggers were also included in the design, to stabilize the crane during heavy lifting. The crane is equipped to be moved by a locomotive. In addition, a self-contained steam power engine enables it to self-propel and pull a few train cars at low speeds of 5 to 10 mph. The crane also utilized an idler flat car (boom car) at the front to support the boom during transport and to carry fuel and additional equipment.

On July 10, 1930 B-E shipped the crane to Southern Pacific Railroad at Sparks, Nevada, as SP MW No. 691. Like most major railroads, SP kept locomotive cranes and emergency accident "relief" trains positioned at key division points on their system, and at the ready in case of a derailment or wreck. The crane was used to help lift both steam and later diesel locomotives back onto the tracks. During its service life, SP renumbered the crane from No. 691 to No. 7011, No. 7007 and to its final number, No. 7050. Surviving historical records indicate the No. 7050 experienced heavy service. And that it spent most of its career operating in SP's Sacramento and Salt Lake Divisions in northern California, northern Nevada, and western Utah.

By the late 1980s, the railroad had advanced to using larger cranes with larger capacities up to 250 tons. As a result, smaller cranes were placed in a stand-by status to play a support role. No. 7050 was moved to Truckee, California – a strategic location for staging accident, relief and snow fighting equipment – where it was kept on active tracks in the event it was needed to augment SP's larger and more modern wreck cranes.



Steam crane in the Truckee Pocket Park. Photo by Chip Huck.

The last visible SP in-service date in the crane is February 13, 1988. In 1996, Southern Pacific was sold to the competing Union Pacific Railroad. In 1998, Jim Dobbas Inc. of Newcastle, California, a company which specializes in contract clean-up of major derailments, acquired the historic steam crane with a desire to see it preserved. Jim Dobbas Inc. donated the Crane to The Truckee Donner Railroad Society in 2011 for restoration and preservation. In 2018, the crane was relocated to the Railyard Pocket Park. The Society anticipates completing the aesthetic restoration late this Fall.

As part of our efforts in sharing the story of the crane, we continue our historical research efforts. I would also like to acknowledge Stephen E. Drew, who in 2011 completed a report on the crane providing us with a strong historical basis. Please be a part of the cranes history today by donating to the restoration fund.

# Truckee Donner Railroad Society

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## Truckee Railroad Museum

*Keeping Truckee railroads alive!*

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 coming into town, to whistles of lumberjacks in the mountains, to the crack of ice being loaded in the reefers, and tourists flocking to share the beauty of the area, the Truckee Railroad Museum tells the story.

A place to Discover

A Place to Interact

A place to Enjoy

[www.truckeedonerrailroadsociety.com](http://www.truckeedonerrailroadsociety.com)  
501(c) 3 non-profit organization

## Volunteer!

You can help TDRS and serve the community by volunteering for one of our projects or ongoing operations:

- ♦ Snowplow & Crane Restoration
- ♦ Truckee River Railroad Operations
- ♦ Museum Docent

Contact our volunteer manager [volunteer\\_manager@truckeedonerrailroadsociety.com](mailto:volunteer_manager@truckeedonerrailroadsociety.com).

## Donate!

You can also help by donating at our website, [truckeedonerrailroadsociety.com](http://truckeedonerrailroadsociety.com), at the bottom of the home page.

Truckee Donner Railroad Society  
P. O. Box 3838  
Truckee, CA 96160

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