

# Snowshed

December 2010

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## TDRS Museum Report

Don Davis

Since our opening in May, we are successfully meeting our objectives. Over 4500 visitors from all over the United States and many foreign countries have visited our museum. Twenty seven percent of the visitors are Truckee residents, an important statistic in our effort to build support for our envisioned World Class museum. While most of the visitors are in Truckee for other reasons, the Museum is causing them to stay downtown longer, a fact that the downtown merchants have noticed. We are beginning to see a few visitors who have come to town specifically to visit the Museum. Monetarily, donations are covering operating expenses and we are generating some funds to support rolling stock restoration efforts and expenses encountered in our efforts to market and raise funds for the future museum.

We have learned a bit about what works and what doesn't work, both in the displays and in operating the museum. We're tweaking a few of the displays and, thanks to the modeling skill of Ron Mason, are adding a new

Cont. on Page 2.

## President's Message

Jim Hood

As 2010 comes to a close, I would have to say that it has been an excellent year for the Tahoe Donner Railroad Society. We opened our Interim Railroad Museum on May 8th with much fanfare and have entertained over 4,500 visitors since. The completion of the museum was accomplished with the combined effort of many people and organizations but I would like to thank those 5 or 6 people who accomplished the vast majority of the physical work to transform our old caboose into an excellent little museum.

We are now starting the process of establishing a significant, permanent Railroad museum in Truckee. This is a multiyear project and we have set an objective of opening the new museum on the 150th anniversary of the first train arriving in Truckee from Sacramento on the Transcontinental Railroad. That anniversary will occur in 2018. The entire Board of Directors is involved in the strategic planning to make that objective come to fruition. As our plans become more definite, we will be asking for many volunteers to work on selected parts of the plan. I would like to announce that Ted Owens, Supervisor, Fifth District of Nevada County has recently joined our Board of Directors. Ted brings

Cont. on Page 2



### News Flash!

- Truckee Railroad Museum Exceeds Expectations
- Ted Owens joins Board of Directors
- Endowment effort has yet to meet goal

### Inside

Presidents Message 1

Society Seeks Web Master 3

Docent Seminar Scheduled 3

Society strengthens Mission and Vision Statements 4

## TDRS Museum Report Cont.

display to tell the story of the Donner Summit Tunnels. There are still a few unfinished items from the original plan that haven't been completed, primarily because of the workload of key people. Although we originally planned to be open weekends and holidays, we've learned to modify that goal slightly. Inclement weather and holiday timing often result in no one being downtown which in turn, results in no, or very few, visitors.

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to our staff of volunteer docents especially the few who have shouldered the bulk of the load. While often just in time, we've managed to staff every planned shift except for one. To relieve the load on these few, we need to both add some more names to the list and make it easier to find a convenient date. Toward this end, we now have a computer based calendar signup system that allows all docents to view the schedule months into the future and sign up for shift vacancies compatible with their personal schedules. This enables those who are not full time Truckee residents to find a date compatible with their schedule. If you haven't volunteered because you feel uncertain of your expertise, you needn't worry. We have a comprehensive docent manual covering the nuts and bolts needed for opening and closing the museum and exhibit background information to answer most of the questions asked by visitors. Either Phil Langley or myself will walk you through the process and perhaps share a shift or two to get you started. We have also begun a program of expert lectures especially for docents to provide in depth background information on topics related to the museum. All that is really required is the willingness to open a friendly conversation with the visitor and make him feel welcome.

If you live within an hour or so from Truckee, or are here part time and would like to give it a try, contact Phil Langley ([pjlangley@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pjlangley@sbcglobal.net)) or myself

([ddavis@ltol.com](mailto:ddavis@ltol.com)). We will send you a docent manual and the information needed to access the schedule. We will also arrange a mutually convenient time to share a shift or two in order to get you started. If you are not comfortable with the computerized sign up procedure Phil or I will sign you up by e-mail or telephone.

## Presidents Letter Cont.

with him a wealth of experience in getting projects accomplished in our geographic area and huge enthusiasm for everything he tackles. We look forward to working with Ted on our future programs.

I appreciate that virtually all of our members contribute to the success of the Tahoe Donner Railroad Society and so I am generally hesitant to point out the accomplishments of specific individuals. However, I think that it is appropriate to recognize the huge amount of time and hard work that Steve Disbrow, Don Clukey and Bob Williams put in to stabilize the exterior surfaces of our Pullman Car. Our car was taken out of active service in 1969 and has been largely neglected since. The work that Steve, Don and Bob accomplished this year involved removing rust and old paint from the roof and sides of the car and giving it a coat of new paint. They did a tremendous amount of hard work in less than ideal conditions. Their work will go a long way to protecting the car from further deterioration until we are able to do a proper restoration.

## Endowment \$1,500 Behind Target

Our endowment contributions currently stand at \$8,641, approximately \$1,500 short of our \$10,000 target. Please support this effort. An endowment demonstrates our commitment to the organization and our mission of building a world class museum in Truckee!

## TDRS Needs a Webmaster!

Jeery Blackwill

We are looking for a webmaster to help tell the story of our society and museum. Our website currently describes the museum, the railroad society's education programs, tour programs, and Truckee's railroad history. It also has a section describing how to join the society and how to purchase railroad books. You can view the website at

[www.truckeedonnerrailroadsociety.com](http://www.truckeedonnerrailroadsociety.com).

We would like the webmaster to expand the section on the new museum and make other changes as appropriate. As websites go, it is relatively simple to update and maintain.

The webmaster should have some basic computer skills to build and maintain web pages. We are currently using Dreamweaver CS3 for updating our website, but any good web development tool should work. Skills that would be helpful are: understanding of HTML, some understanding of CSS formatting, and the ability to use web page table layouts. While Javascript is not required, it would help if you are at least able to recognize it and understand how it fits in pages. And, of course, you need to have your own computer, access to the internet and a web development program.

Jerry Blackwill will be available to help you get up to speed and answer any questions you might have. If you are interested, please contact Jerry Blackwill at [jblackwill@hotmail.com](mailto:jblackwill@hotmail.com).

## Docent Seminar

The next Docent seminar will be 6:30 pm Feb. 19 at "Pizza on the Hill" in the Tahoe Donner Clubhouse. Dr. Barbara Czerwinski will discuss "The Human Side of the Snowbound City of San Francisco". Those interested in learning about the opportunities to volunteer as a museum docent are invited. Please RSVP to [ddavis@tcol.com](mailto:ddavis@tcol.com) so that we order sufficient pizza.

## Fighting Snow in the Sierra



An SP Flanger Still at Work in the Sierra



A flanger, (designed to clear snow between the rail), along with a spreader (used to push snow off of the right of way), are the two main pieces of equipment used to fight snow in the Sierra. The famed rotaries are only brought out in the most severe conditions.

# Truckee Donner Railroad Society

## 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, 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.

### Board of Directors:

Jim Hood—President

Bob Bell—Vice President/  
Treasurer

Ed Czerwinski—Secretary

Nelson Van Gundy —  
Historian

Jerry Blackwill

Don Clukey

Don Davis

Steve Disbrow

Ted Owens

## Truckee Railroad museum Vision:

*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 in to 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 Enjoy
- ◆ A place to Interact

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

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

## Current Projects Seeking Support

- ◆ Caboose Museum Interior
- ◆ Crane Rehabilitation
- ◆ Rotary Restoration
- ◆ Sleeper Restoration
- ◆ Switcher Operational repair
- ◆ Internet Book Sales

If you are able to support any of these projects with your time, talent or dollars, please contact us.

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