

Snowshed

February, 2019

Volume 11 Number 4



- ♦ Dan Cobb has been elected to the TDRS Board of Directors and has agreed to take over the Strategic Planning Function.
- ♦ The Truckee Town Council agreed to lease space in the Train Depot building in Downtown Truckee to the Truckee History—Railroad Museum for a new Truckee History Museum.

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Presidents Letters

Past President - Jim Hood

It has been an honor to be your President for the past eight years. I feel that together we have accomplished a great deal and have established a clear path for continued growth. On January 2, 2019, I stepped down from the Presidency due to personal health reasons but will continue to serve on the board.

New President - Jerry Blackwill

We have a new year and a new Railroad Society president. I want to thank Jim Hood for all his great leadership over the last few years. Under his leadership the Caboose Museum was established, the train in the park was constructed, our rolling stock was moved off the Railyard project and into the new pocket park, and the joint Truckee Donner Railroad and Historical Societies developed a non-profit to manage the development of a new Truckee History – Railroad Museum.

Three major projects are facing the Railroad Society this year.

First, we are working with the Town of Truckee to establish a Truckee – Railroad History Museum in a portion of the Truckee railroad depot.

Second, this is the 150th anniversary year of the Golden Spike and completion of the transcontinental railroad. The Railroad Society, the Truckee Donner Historical Society and the Donner Summit Historical Society are jointly planning over two dozen talks and walks as well as multiple articles in the local press about Truckee history this year.

Third is the restoration of the rotary snow plow and crane in the pocket park. We plan to restore the equipment, develop plaques describing the equipment, and construct a fence enclosing the project. Because these activities will be costly, we currently have an active campaign to raise the necessary funds.

Fortunately, Jim will remain on the board and be able to give us continued support and suggestions.

Central Pacific Railroad (CPR)/Southern Pacific (SP) Early Snow Removal

Ed Larson

Following the first great battle with snow in the winter of 1866-1867, the Central Pacific realized that conventional snow removal strategies of the time were not adequate to keep the line open during the winter. They reached the final decision to build snow sheds (originally called snow galleries). They tested the concept in the summer of 1867 and the next summer started in earnest to build the sheds. By the end of the summer of 1869 they had completed 35 of the total 40 miles that eventually would be built.

While the snow sheds were to be the main defense against snow interrupting train service, the CPR built its first Bucker Snowplow in 1866 at the CPR shops in Sacramento. Nine more were eventually built at the CPR shops with the last one completed in 1884.

The Bucker Snowplow and snow sheds were the only defenses against the snow during the record Sierra snow fall (783 inches - largest ever recorded) of the winter of 1879-1880. Because each storm was relatively light and there were no blizzards which cause large drifts, there was no significant disruption in rail

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The TDRS Railyard Pocket Park

Chip Huck

Completion of the Rotary Snowplow and Steam Crane pocket park is underway! Last year, with a cooperative effort with Rick Holiday and the Railyard Development, TDRS was able to find a home for the Rotary and Crane, two pieces of rolling stock with historical significance to our region. Last spring, the Railyard began site development, and established the location of the new pocket park at the southeast corner of Donner Pass Road and A Street. Dobbas, Inc. through a monumental effort relocated the rolling stock to the park by way of snap tracks and large cranes. Further progress was made on site development through the fall, and completion is anticipated this summer.



Rotary and Crane Relocation to Pocket Park By Dobbas, Inc – May 2018 – Photo by Jerry Blackwell

The Society will continue efforts on an aesthetic restoration of the equipment, taking queues

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CPR/SP Early Snow Removal (continued from Page 2)

Ed Larson

service. So, for the next 20 years “Buckers” and snow sheds were the only defenses against the Sierra snow storms. Then came the Rotaries.

In 1884, Orange Jull was issued Canadian and US patents for the rotary snowplow. Jull partnered with the Leslie brothers (John and Edward) to build the first rotary, which was shipped to Union Pacific in January of 1887. The CPR, now Southern Pacific, received its first rotary snowplow, built by the Leslies, in December 1887 and the second Leslie (now the term used for Leslie brothers rotaries) was shipped to the SP in January of 1890 and arrived in March, too late to enter the snow battle created by the epic January and February snowfall in 1890. As of 1966, Southern Pacific had purchased a total of seventeen rotaries. The last two (SP No. 210 and 211) were delivered in October 1937. No. 210 now resides at the pocket park in downtown Truckee.



Southern Pacific Company No. 2 rotary snow plow in service over Donner Summit

E.P. Caldwell organized the Cyclone Steam Snow Plow Co. and entered the competition in 1889. Caldwell offered a demonstration of the Cyclone for the SP. In February/March of 1890 both tests of the Cyclone failed, the last test witnessed by SP officials. The SP Leslie Rotary cleared the tracks where the Cyclone had failed. Still the SP did purchase one Cyclone with the vision of removing the snow sheds and using Rotaries and Cyclones to keep the tracks clear. That vision did not pan out and portions of the snow sheds remained in service until the 1990s.

The TDRS Railyard Pocket Park (continued from Page 2)

Chip Huck

from similar restorations completed in Roseville and at the California State Railroad Museum. We look forward to sharing with the public the histories of this Rotary and Crane.

Thank you to all involved in the establishment of this park, and the preservation of railroad history.



Railyard Pocket Park – Rotary Snowplow & Steam Crane
Southeast corner of the Donner Pass Road Extension and A Street
Design by Callandar Associates – Landscape Architecture

Truckee Donner Railroad Society

Society Mission:

Board of Directors:

Jerry Blackwill—President

Bob Bell—Executive Vice
President/Treasurer

Ed Czerwinski—Secretary

Nelson Van Gundy —
Historian

Ed Larson—Vice President,
Museum Operations

Dan Cobb—Strategic
Planning

Chip Huck

Greg Kuzma

Jim Hood

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.

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 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

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

www.truckeedonerrailroadsociety.com
501(c) 3 non-profit organization

Current Projects Seeking Support

- ◆ Caboose Museum Interior
- ◆ Crane Rehabilitation
- ◆ Rotary Restoration
- ◆ Sleeper Restoration
- ◆ 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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