

Truckee Donner Railroad Society—Newsletter

Keeping Truckee Railroad History Alive!

Snowshed

December, 2014

Volume 7 Number 4

Truckee River Railroad Open for Business

Bob Bell



- ♦ Truckee River Railroad opens to enthusiastic ridership
- ♦ TRRR begins expansion activity
- ♦ Work begins on Static Display and construction of Society Engine

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The Society's TRUCKEE RIVER RAILROAD riding miniature train at the Truckee River Community Regional Park has been a huge success. Before the cold and rain moved in we were able to get in five public run days and over 600 passengers counting kids and parents. Many riders were observed riding several times during the day so the total passenger count is even greater. Our low profile riding cars, that we were able to purchase thanks to an anonymous donor, have worked perfectly. We have also completed the phase two site clearing work to add another 800 feet to our current 800 foot mainline and we look forward to moving forward on the final grading and track work in the spring. In addition to our contributors mentioned in the June newsletter, I want to acknowledge the following for their valuable contributions toward our construction: Teichert Aggregates for all the rock materials, Great Outdoor Landscaping for tractor work, Ulf Grigoleit Trucking, Ed and Carol Geiger, Al Marshal with Handcraft Construction, TNT Concrete, Ace Mountain Sports and Hardware, Eric and Elaine Ring, William Palmer, Steven Lai, Laurie and Roger Skinner, Bob Gray, Tom Nixon, Wayne Crow, Buffalo Cano, Luke Salmon, Bob Ferwerda and again a special thanks to our road master and lead engineer Tom Smith. Thanks also to our trained and reliable train engineers and operation volunteers: Roger Skinner, Laurie Skinner, Steve Disbrow, Gerald Herrick, Nelson VanGundy, Jerry Blackwill, Don Clukey, Tom Combs, Teri Smith, Jim Schmidt, Bob Gray, and Ed Larson.

This winter we will be constructing the static train to be installed in the park and a Society owned locomotive in my shop. Please watch for work day email announcements to our volunteers and please contact me at bellbob@sbcglobal.net if you want to get notices for volunteer work and train operations this winter and next summer. Of course, the more monetary donations we receive the sooner we can expand our track, build structures, and make improvements to our operations. Please consider the Society for a tax deductible contribution toward our expansion.

Caboose Museum Status

Don Davis

This quarter has been fairly quiet visitor wise. We've had the usual number of school tours and local visitors but the lack of snow and resulting missing skiers has certainly diminished the visitor count. But there are always other things to talk about.

When is the next train coming? This is probably the most frequently asked question by museum visitors. Docents have been able to make rough estimates by using a scanner tuned to the UP communication channel. It gives a five minute warning for east bound trains and a very rough 45 minute estimate for west bound trains. To better answer the question, we are taking a step into the information age with a new display. A new docent, Roger Skinner, has proposed using data from the UP Automatic Train Control System (ATCS) as the basis for a new display. Roger is a member of a group of volunteers who have assembled a system which monitors the UP ATCS reporting channel (much like the existing scanner for voice communications) and makes that data available via the internet. At the last Board meeting, Roger proposed a concept and the Board approved funding for a display which will enable the visitor to see on a map, the location of each train between Sparks and Roseville, whether east or west bound, at any given moment, and will enable the docent to make a significantly improved estimate of the next train's arrival time. I think this new display will become a visitor favorite and I am especially pleased that it was suggested by a member.

Elsewhere in this issue, Jim will be describing proposed changes in the Railyard Master Plan which have stimulated increased activity in securing a larger museum site. While we will be scaling up most of our present displays, we also will need to develop several new ones to fill the increased space. If you have any ideas for displays or simply want to participate in their development please let me know.

President's Letter

Jim Hood

The Tahoe Donner Railroad Society has had another good year in 2014. The visitation at our Museum has continued to be excellent and I want to personally thank Don Davis for all of his hard work in keeping the Museum running. I also want to thank all of the Docents who give generously of their time so that we can continue to have our doors open.

A major addition to our activity occurred in August 2014 with the opening of our Truckee River Rail Road - a 1/8 scale riding railroad that we constructed in the Truckee River Regional Park. The major contributors to planning, building and operation of this railroad are Bob Bell and Tom Smith. We also owe a round of thanks to the many people and organizations that contributed time and material for the completion of this project. The riding railroad has been a huge success with the public with high ridership and excellent contributions.

The Brewster West Foundation made a very generous endowment to the Museum in 2014. They are by far our largest contributor. We have used their contributions to continue to upgrade our Museum and keep the exhibits "fresh" for visitors. We are planning to incorporate some new "museum technology" in these improvements which we believe will make the Museum an even better and more interactive experience for our visitors.

In 2015 we will again focus our efforts toward finding a location for a larger Museum. The rail yard expansion in downtown Truckee is moving forward, spearheaded by Holliday Development. We will meet with Rick Holliday early in 2015 with the objective of finding a location for our future Museum within the Railyard project and start the exciting work of designing how to utilize the space. If we are successful in finding a suitable location, we will also start planning a Capital Campaign to configure the space and contract for "professional" exhibits that are tailored to our objective of preserving the rich railroad history of our area.

I want to thank all of our members and friends for their support throughout the year and to wish all of you a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Truckee Railroads Alive Series

Jerry Blackwill

Come hear the history of a railroad streamliner stranded in snow, a railroad from Truckee to Lake Tahoe, and logging railroads above the present Boca reservoir.

On January 15th, Barbara Czerwinski TDHS Volunteer Researcher & Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission District 5 Representative, will describe how the streamliner - City of San Francisco bound for its namesake city from Chicago was struck by an avalanche and remained immobile for three days.



On February 19th, Jerry Blackwill will tell how one could board a train in Truckee, travel up along the Truckee River to a railroad pier at Tahoe City. Upon arrival, you would step off the train, walk across the pier and board a steamer that sailed around Lake Tahoe. Upon your return to Tahoe City, you could spend time at the first class Tahoe Tavern resort hotel and casino. Come hear the fascinating story of how Duane L Bliss, William Seth Bliss, Walter D Bliss, Duane L Bliss Jr. and Frank Titus built and ran this tourist system. They laid the foundation for Lake Tahoe's present day tourist industry.

Later, Nelson Van Gundy, Truckee Donner Railroad Society member and Historian will present a history of logging operations with a Train Expo and Lumber/Timber Trestles Presentation. Date to be announced.

These events will be held at the Veterans Memorial Hall at 7:00 PM. Carpooling is encouraged and a suggested donation of \$10.00 would be welcomed.

Truckee Donner Railroad Society

Society Mission:

Board of Directors:

Jim Hood—President

Bob Bell—Executive Vice President/Treasurer

Don Davis—Vice President, Museum Operations

Jerry Blackwill—Vice President, Strategic Planning

Ed Czerwinski—Secretary

Nelson Van Gundy — Historian

Barbara Czerwinski

Steve Disbrow

Chip Huck

Bonnie Thompson

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 Donner Railroad Society
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[www.truckeedonnerailroadsociety.com](http://www.truckeedonnerrailroadsociety.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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