

Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society

June 2011 Newsletter



www.psrhs.org

In this issue:



Tony Hesch presents the first of a two-part look at the Colfax Caboose reconstruction project. Part 1 in this issue focuses on the history of the caboose, and how our club came to be involved in rescuing it from its slow decline. In the next issue, Tony will summarize the work that has been accomplished to date, and outline plans for completing the project.



Malcolm Frost discusses recent upgrades to the club web site, and how you can help with its continuing improvement.

Siemens Field Trip. A report on the field trip our club members took to the Siemens light-rail-car manufacturing facility in South Sacramento on May 25.

Scheduled Events



- June 18 Caboose Work Party 9am at the Colfax caboose (weather permitting)
- June 23 Monthly Meeting – Slide show of Dunsmuir Railroad Days and vintage equipment on the move. Discussion of Colfax Railroad Days.
- July 6 Caboose Work Party
- July 9 Caboose Work Party
- July 20 Caboose Work Party
- July 23 Caboose Work Party
- July 28 Monthly Meeting
- Oct 1-2 Colfax Railroad Days

Check out our updated web site

www.psrhs.org

Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society

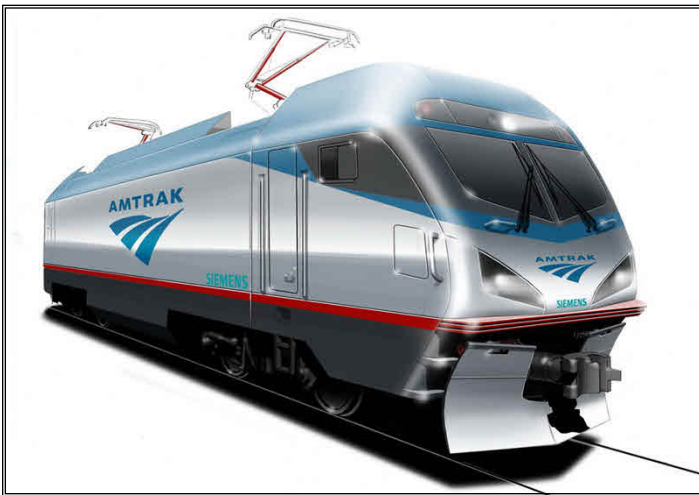
June 2011 Newsletter

June 23 Meeting Presentation. Dunsmuir celebrated its railroad days on June 10-12. The Feather River Rail Society sent vintage equipment to Dunsmuir for display, and Trains and Travel International offered a daylight excursion from the Bay Area to Dunsmuir on vintage California Zephyr cars. You will see shots of these bygone-era railcars and equipment on their way to and from Dunsmuir, view the displays at Dunsmuir, and ride on a daylight excursion from Dunsmuir to the Black Butte Wye to turn the train. Also included are views of the Caboose motel in Dunsmuir.

Following the slide presentation, we will discuss the logistics of bringing the Portola equipment and support staff to the October 1-2 Railroad Days celebration in Colfax.

May 25 Field Trip. PSRHS members enjoyed an exclusive plant tour of the Siemens Industry, Inc-Mobility Division Headquarters facility. Located in South Sacramento, they are tasked with manufacturing light rail cars and locomotives.

Siemens has recently been awarded a contract from AMTRAK to build 70 all electric Locomotives for service on the Northeastern Corridor. Pictured below is a rendering of their locomotive concept. These locomotives will be built in Sacramento. First deliveries are estimated for December of 2012.



In the next photo, Kevin McGrew, Director, Supplier Quality Management, leads the tour outside the main



assembly building, and in front of a massive car hauler that moves the railcars between different buildings during the manufacturing process.

Our group viewed the manufacturing process from start to finish, including piece-part fabrication and machining, welding jigs, car-body and truck assembly, side panel application, priming and painting, wiring harness sub-assemblies, and final car assembly and testing.

Inside the assembly building final assemblies are completed in eight weeks by teams of twelve technicians. Siemens currently ships about 10 light rail vehicles a month. Many are placed on custom flat cars and can be seen in plastic shrink-wrap on Union Pacific's Roseville Sub. Current customers receiving cars are the cities of Edmonton and Calgary, Alberta, Salt Lake City, Denver, and San Diego.

Siemens currently has about 800 employees at its Sacramento facility. They are planning to almost double their work force to meet the demands of additional contracts. They are also poised to participate in California's High Speed Rail Initiative.

PSRHS would like to extend a special thanks to Kevin McGrew, who conducted the tour, and Keith Turner who worked with Jim Wood to set up the tour. We sincerely appreciate their wonderful hospitality and very insightful tour. We would also like to thank all the employees and management of Siemens Mobility Division for allowing us to see what will eventually be history, being constructed today. — *Malcolm Frost*

Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society

June 2011 Newsletter

We Have Re-Worked Our Website! –

Malcolm Frost

In case you haven't visited the PSRHS website recently, www.psrhs.org, may I suggest you do. About a month ago we launched the society's site on a new platform. Building on the great work of Bill Yoder, we are working to make the site much more informative.

One interesting aspect of a website however is how it is a bit like a museum. You must change the content and keep adding exhibits. So it is a work in progress. To that end I would like to ask for help, docents if you like, to keep it up. First, I hope everyone will proof read it. If you find an issue, please email me at rv129.3@gmail.com. Secondly, I could use help with the event calendar, the timetable, and any photo albums. We hope the calendar will list the rail fan events throughout California and into Oregon and Nevada. The concept of the Time Table is to build a list of historic sites along the Donner Pass Route in the format of a railroad timetable. And of course photo albums are wonderful ways to protect history and tell the story of this magnificent line. If you would like to help or have an idea for additional features please contact me.

Colfax Caboose Reconstruction –Tony Hesch

The Main Street corner of Colfax features a unique railroad artifact. It was originally referred to as the little red caboose but with time it is now referred to as the Colfax Caboose. This corner became a landmark since the Colfax Soroptimist Club placed the caboose there in 1969.

The caboose was originally constructed by the Northwestern Pacific Railroad (NWP) at its yards located in Tiburon, California. The design of this caboose followed closely the construction drawings of the Southern Pacific Railroad (SP), parent company of the NWP. This caboose design is referred to as a C-30-1 class. This class is known for its double truck, wood construction and cupola style.

The construction of this caboose was completed in July of 1924. It would serve the NWP railroad well on the tracks between areas of extreme northwestern Califor-

nia and the San Francisco Bay area. The NWP hauled passengers, freight, lumber and minerals. A great deal of track right of way still exists and can be seen as one travels north on Highway 101 from the San Francisco Bay to Northern California. The history of the NWP railroad is well documented in the web site of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad Historical Society <http://www.nwprhs.org>

All railroad equipment has a designation number associated with it and that number generally stays with it, throughout its service life on the rails. The Colfax Caboose number started as 6028 and later became NWP 28. While this caboose would probably not have traveled to Colfax, it is an exact class and model of caboose that was seen frequently passing through Colfax, only with SP markings.

Since the caboose arrived in Colfax it has been used for a variety of community events and club activities. During the last few decades only painting and some minor maintenance has been done to the caboose. Because it is a wood caboose exposed to the elements the lack of real repairs and maintenance caught up with this grand piece of railroad history. The majority of exterior wood siding has decayed as well as many of the wood support beams. The interior flooring and siding has also suffered from the water that seeped in from the roof, windows and the leaking interior walls.

It became obvious around 2001 that the caboose needed attention, and soon. PSRHS members discussed their concerns with City officials. The city did not have



Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society

June 2011 Newsletter

the personnel, expertise or funding to pursue the needed maintenance, but committed to supporting the PSRHS members taking it on as a project.

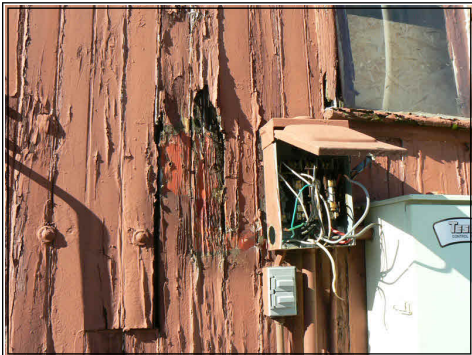
The initial fund raising began and plans began to coalesce in mid-2001. The club did a complete survey of the caboose and outlined what needed to be accomplished. The list was long but within the reach of modest fund raising and a group of volunteers.

While the beginning work on the caboose was still in the planning stage it became apparent that the Colfax Passenger Depot project, already under way with grants the county had arranged, was in trouble. Bids had come in way over budget, and the project had to be downsized to commit available funding. Only a new roof and foundation and some site work were completed; beyond that, the depot project had ground to a halt.

PSRHS shifted its focus and began looking at taking on this more complex and costly project. Our club joined with the Colfax Area Historical Society, and with the support of the town of Colfax, explored the possibilities of raising the money and gathering the volunteers necessary to complete the large remaining depot project.

With both clubs leading the way our club took on the management and construction of the remaining work on the depot. The depot project was completed in four years with the knowledge that another excellent example of original railroad history was restored and saved for the use and enjoyment of future generations.

After a few years of respite from construction work our club, PSRHS, regrouped and turned its attention back to the caboose project. Unfortunately, in the additional years of neglect the caboose had taken a serious turn



for the worse. A relatively small project had become a much larger and more costly project than when it was first considered. This was in spite of other

local citizens repainting the caboose in the interim.

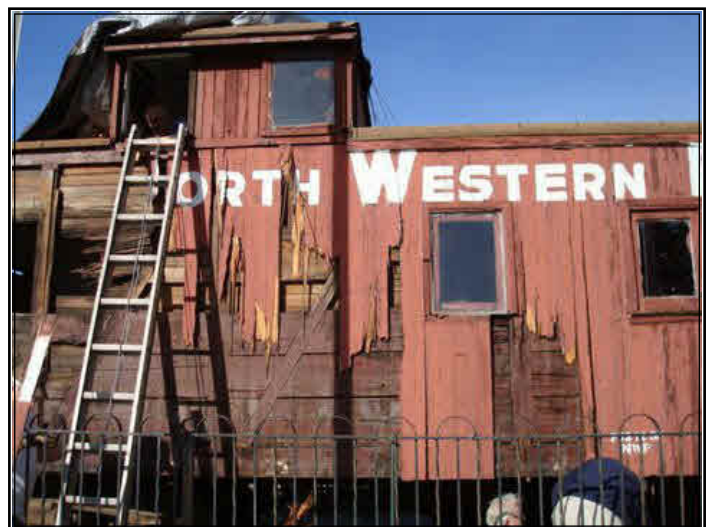
Now instead of minor repairs, more money and time was needed. As the club again looked for the additional money, necessary work was done to the roof with some interior patching and plugging of holes to make the caboose as weather tight as possible while the preliminary work continued.

Only after a PSRHS member made a sizeable contribution for the caboose project was it possible for the club to start major repair work. While the grant was large it would not be enough for complete renovation, but it would be enough to replace all of the exterior siding and the worst of the decayed support beams.

The club set the goals lower than originally but still high enough to save the caboose and set it on a course that will preserve it for at least another 3 or 4 decades, at which time the club and its members hope the city, other community members, or railroad fans with interests in saving such an historically important object will be able to complete a full restoration.

The caboose reconstruction project started in 2008/2009. The project continues today.

In next month's newsletter, Part 2 of this article will summarize the actions that have been taken to date, and outline the work remaining to be done to complete the Colfax caboose reconstruction.



Let the demolition begin!!

Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society

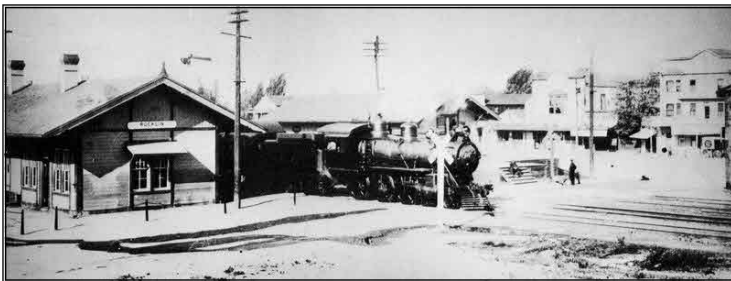
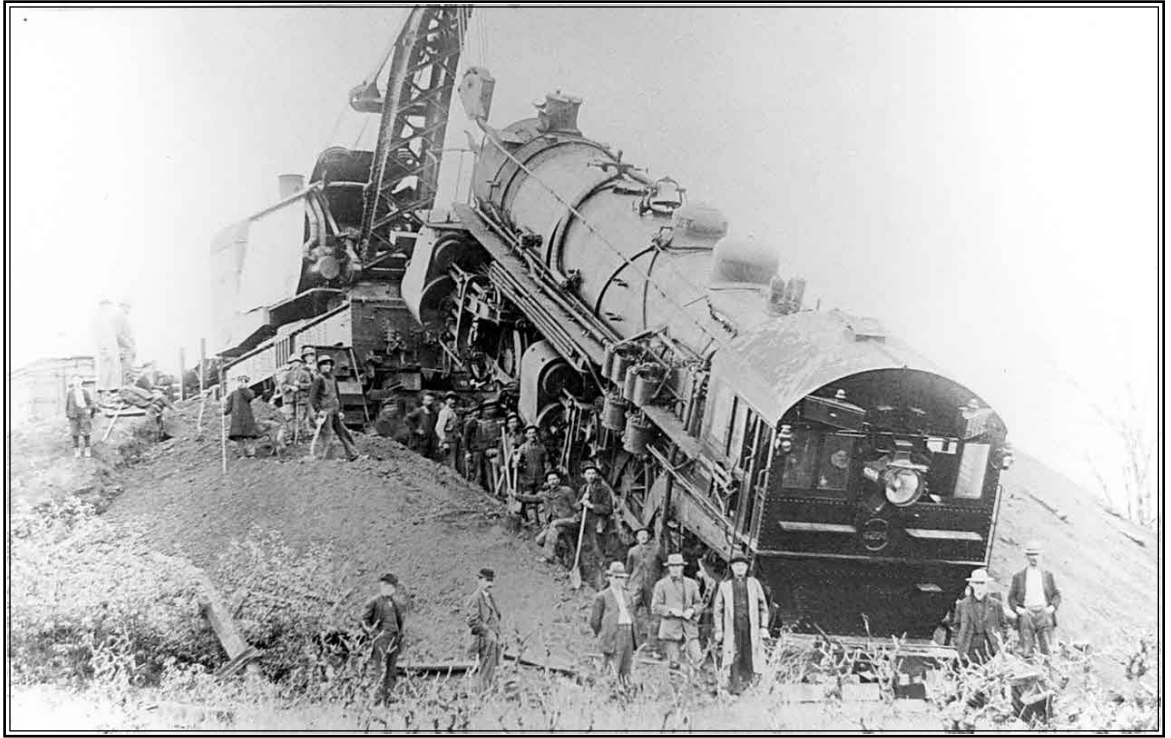
June 2011 Newsletter

FROM THE ARCHIVES

June Mystery

Photo: Don't you hate it when this happens? The question is – where was this mishap, and what year did it happen? Bonus – what kind of engine and how long had it been running on the Donner Route?

Art Sommers collection.



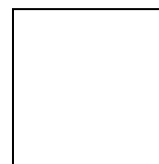
Last Month's Mystery Photo: The scene is Rocklin Depot in the early 1900's. The depot was located at what is now the Rocklin Road crossing. The roundhouse was located to the far right of this view. The photo at right shows the new Rocklin depot at this same location.

CPRR/SP Donner Route Timeline: On March 19, 1864, the Governor Stanford pulled an excursion train with two recently completed passenger cars. The destination was the granite quarries at Rocklin, the new end-of-track. The first revenue train operated on the Central Pacific March 25, 1864, carrying granite from the Rocklin quarries to Sacramento.

Please forward any comments, suggestions or information for inclusion in future issues of the newsletter. Next Issue Deadline – July 14

Editor: Roger Staab,
(530) 346-6722
rsrr@exwire.com

Placer-Sierra RR Heritage Society
P.O. Box 1776
Colfax, Ca 95713



To:



Monthly Meeting...

The next PSRHS meeting will be held at 7:00 PM on **Thursday, June 23rd** in the Multi-purpose Senior Citizen Center at the Dewitt Complex in Auburn (enter on D Ave.). See Extra Board section on web site for map and directions.

Membership Information

Individual Members = \$20.00/yr
Family Membership = \$25.00/yr

- Monthly Meetings (4th Thursday) and Newsletter
- Member Activities, Presentations and Field Trips
- Display and Restoration Projects

PSRHS, P.O. Box 1776, Colfax, CA 95713
www.psrhs.org