

Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society



www.psrhs.org

July 2013 Newsletter

In this issue:

July meeting and presentation by Mark Fagley on the January derailment of a UP container train in Colfax. Page 2

Summary of June Membership Meeting and presentation. Page 2

Field Trips. Page 2

UP Tunnel 41 Work. Page 2

Passing Scene. Page 3

From the Archives. Page 4



UP container cars are on the ground at the Grass Valley St. crossing near the Colfax depot in Jan. 2013. Roger Staab photo

Scheduled Events & Notices



- July 25 **Monthly Meeting & Program** – 7 pm
– Mark Fagley, Manager of Operating Practices for Union Pacific RR will discuss the January derailment in downtown Colfax. Photos taken by PSRHS members will be included in the presentation
– **NOTE NEW LOCATION - Auburn Airport Terminal Bldg** – see p. 2
- Ongoing **Colfax Caboose Work Sessions** – Caboose work sessions have resumed. Contact Tony at 346-9179 if you can contribute some time to this project.
- Aug 22 **Monthly Meeting & Program** – 7 pm – CSRM Docent Programs
- Oct. 5-6 **Colfax Railroad Days**
- Fall Field Trip – Watch for Details on Date and Location

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July 2013 Newsletter

July Meeting – Thursday, 25 July, 7:00PM
Auburn Airport Terminal Bldg, New Airport Rd.

July Program: Mark Fagley, UP Manager of Operating Practices will discuss the January derailment of several double-stack container cars at the Grass Valley Street crossing in Colfax. Photos taken by PSRHS members of the derailed cars and cleanup efforts will also be shown.

Recap of June Meeting

Roger Staab reported that at the Sierra Narrow Gauge conference held June 18-20 in Nevada City, 50 copies of the book on Towle Brothers were sold. Information on PSRHS was provided to conference attendees.

June Program: Mike Haire showed photos of his trip to the Powder River Basin in Wyoming and Montana. Mike provided a good overview of operations in this rich coal mining region. He also included shots of Montana Rail Link operations in Western Montana. Mike then showed video clips of UP844 on its westbound and eastbound runs over Donner last year. The photos and video were excellent. Thanks, Mike.

Spring Field Trip to Niles Canyon Railway

Our Spring fieldtrip to the Niles Canyon Railway on July 6 was less than well attended, unfortunately. Perhaps the prospect of continued heat or the rush of the Holiday weekend persuaded some to stay home. Those members that did attend reported that they really enjoyed the excursion and day on the train. A photo taken by Jay Hansell of steam locomotive #3 is at right.

Arrangements are now being made for a reprise of our past tour of the Siemens manufacturing plant to view the new Amtrak Cities Sprinter 64 assembly line. The trip will probably be in August or September. More info will appear in the August newsletter. Information about the locomotive is online at <http://w3.usa.siemens.com/mobility/us/en/rail-solutions/locomotives/Pages/amtrak-cities-sprinter.aspx>

– Jim Wood

UP Tunnel 41 Work Completed

In mid-June UP shut down the line over Donner for eight days to lay new track and ties in Tunnel 41. Starting June 16 the Track Renewal Train (TRT) Gang 909 replaced over 10,000 feet of track in the tunnel, while 15-20 trains per day were rerouted over the Winnemucca and Feather River Canyon subdivisions. Additional track maintenance and signal replacement was scheduled and completed while the line was closed down. Tunnel 41 reopened for business on June 23. Thanks Paul Lanyi for forwarding the UP summary.

Recent Donations

PSRHS member Dick Whitney recently donated an 1853 map showing the U.S. Government-commissioned surveys for a possible northern route to the Pacific through areas that are now Montana, Idaho and Washington states. We hope to soon scan this map and make an electronic copy available.

PSRHS member Art Sommers has donated a copy of the book “Southern Pacific Company Steam Locomotive Compendium,” by Diebert & Strapac. This 400+page book is packed with information about all the steam engines owned and operated by Central Pacific, Southern Pacific, and subsidiary lines. The book is a companion to another book acquired earlier by PSRHS, “A Century of Southern Pacific Steam Locomotives,” by Dunscomb.

Thanks, Dick and Art, for your donations to our club’s growing library.



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Editor's Note: Reader comments, additional details, etc., are invited on any newsletter items or photos. See contact information at the bottom of this page.



Passing Scene – Recently several private cars with new company names have been spotted behind AMTRAK trains passing through Colfax. Some of these cars will be featured in upcoming newsletter issues. This June 11 photo shows the California, Kansas and Utah, owned by American Railway Explorer. From the company's website, "The American Railway Explorer is a collection of three Los Angeles based luxury charter railcars, the finest private railcars in America... The railcars travel linked to regularly scheduled Amtrak trains. We are a charter operation only. We do not operate excursions where individuals may purchase a ticket to ride aboard our railcars." Cost for each car is \$5000 per day. The cars were formerly part of the Colorado Ski Train, but no further information on their heritage was provided.

Membership Information

Individual Members = \$25.00/yr
Each Additional Member Card = \$5.00/yr

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

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Please forward comments, suggestions or information for inclusion in future issues of the newsletter.

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Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society



July 2013 Newsletter

From the Archives

June Photo: Fulda station in the photo at right was located at Fulda siding, about two miles west of Emigrant Gap. It was from this siding that a spur line ran down into Fulda Flat, where Towle Brothers and other lumber companies owned yards from which to ship their lumber products. Prior to establishing the Fulda station in 1900, the siding was known as Shed 27 or Woodshed 27, named for an early woodshed built to store firewood for the wood-burning engines.

Photo at right courtesy of Jim Wood.



The photo at left shows the same station in the 1920's, looking eastbound. Emigrant Gap is out of sight in the distance. Southern Pacific abandoned the spur line into Fulda Flat around 1920, after Read Lumber Co. (successor to Towle Brothers) ceased shipping from the siding. In the 1950's the balloon track was added slightly west of this location to turn snow-removal equipment. *Photo at left courtesy of Herman Darr.*

July Photo: What was this building, and where was it located? Answers in the August newsletter.



CPRR/SP Donner Route Timeline: Snowsheds – Before rail construction over Donner was completed, heavy snows made it clear that some protection was needed to keep the new line open in winter. Snowshed construction was started soon after rails were laid, and by the early 1870's more than 30 miles of sheds were complete. The snowsheds started at Blue Canyon, and were nearly continuous from Emigrant Gap to Andover. Early sheds were an A-frame design, but experience soon showed that a flat slanted-roof design was preferable, anchored into the hillsides.