

Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society



www.psrhs.org

September 2013 Newsletter

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*A Rotary will likely appear at this year's Colfax Railroad Days. UP plans to display a rebuilt rotary if the unit is delivered in time. See inside for more on equipment & displays
Roger Staab photo*



Scheduled Events & Notices



- Sep 26 **Monthly Meeting & Program – 7 pm**
– **John Cockrell**, UP engineer, will discuss his book on his railroad experiences and share some of his stories and photos
– **Final Plans for Colfax Railroad Days.**
– **NOTE LOCATION - Auburn Airport Terminal Bldg**
- Oct. 5-6 **Colfax Railroad Days, 9am-4pm each day**
- Oct. 15 **Fall Field Trip – Siemens Sacramento – 3-5 pm.** Tour of Siemens' facility in South Sacramento. See **page 2** for details. Attendance limited to PSRHS Members.
- Oct. 24 **Monthly Meeting & Program – 7 pm**

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Sept. Meeting –Thurs., 26 Sept., 7:00PM
Auburn Airport Terminal Bldg, New Airport Rd.

September Program: John Cockrell, UP engineer, will discuss his book on his railroad experiences and share some photos taken on “the hill.” We’ll also discuss final plans for the 2013 Colfax Railroad Days, along with descriptions of the displays, events and equipment that will be part of this year’s celebration.

Recap of August Meeting

August Program: Norm Lucas, Assistant Manager for Railroad Operations at the California State Railroad Museum, described CSRM’s annual Polar Express excursions, and provided an in-depth look at the behind the scenes training, scheduling and volunteer efforts associated with the event. This is the seventh year of operation. They handle 1000 passengers per train, and it takes 55 volunteers per day to staff the 4 trains operated each day. Norm’s presentation gave us all a greater appreciation for the amount of work that goes into staging the event each year. Thanks, Norm.

Fall Field Trip to Siemens Sacramento

Our fieldtrip is scheduled for **Tuesday, October 15 at 3pm**. This is a reprise of our tour of the Siemens Plant a couple of years ago which was wildly popular by our members. Again, this tour will be led by Kevin McGrew of Siemens and will focus on the new Amtrak electric locomotives that Siemens is manufacturing for the US Northeast Corridor. The locomotive is called the American Cities Sprinter 64. Read more about it here: <http://w3.usa.siemens.com/mobility/us/en/rail-solutions/locomotives/Pages/amtrak-cities-sprinter.aspx>

Kevin reported to us that safety is key for any visitors to the shop floor and all people who wish to go into the shops are required to wear steel-toed shoes/boots. For those of us who don’t own any and can’t beg/borrow/steal a pair from someone that they know (please try), a very limited number of pairs may be

available at the Siemens plant. Shoe sizes will need to be noted way ahead of time so they can be rounded up. Attendees, please make sure your name is on an attendance list being compiled by Jim Wood by October 9th so those names can be provided to the Siemens front office for admission into the facility. Those who wish to request a pair of shoes to borrow will need to note that by the end of September.

Only one member of our group will be allowed to take photos in the plant at the discretion of Siemens. We’ll have plenty of photos to share with the group in the end, we’re sure.

Email Jim Wood for further questions and place your name on the list. greenstonemaker@gmail.com

As this is a very popular trip, please only Society members for this one.

2013 Colfax Railroad Days Oct. 5-6

This year’s event is packed with railroad-related displays and activities. California State Railroad Museum will be displaying SP6051, an E-9 diesel locomotive (see photo on page 3). Union Pacific is bringing snow removal equipment including a spreader and a rebuilt rotary plow if the unit is delivered in time. Retired UP employees will display maintenance of way equipment and explain their operation. We have commitments from four different model railroad groups and the ride-on live steamers. Brendan will be screening railroad films of the Donner region. The caboose will be open to display status of our club-managed renovation.

This should be a great event and promises to build a solid foundation for future years, eventually leading to the establishment of an outdoor rail museum in Colfax.

Additional volunteers are still needed to secure sponsorships, to help with setup on Friday the 4th, and to staff the venues on the days of the event. Contact Roger Staab (see contact info in box on next page) if you can donate some time and help make this an event to remember.

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Passing Scene – A bit of railroad history will return to the Donner Route in October when California State Railroad Museum displays its restored SP6051, E-9 Diesel locomotive at Colfax Railroad Days. Union Pacific will transport the E-9 to Colfax along with UP snow removal equipment including a recently rebuilt rotary snowplow that should be delivered this month.

SP6051 served on the Coast Daylight route between LA and San Francisco. Similar SP E units powered the City of San Francisco over Donner Pass. This particular locomotive was previously showcased in Colfax in 1993. It was then a featured attraction at the City's first annual Founders Day, celebrating the rich history of the area including the railroad through town. Founders Day has for the past several years been replaced by Colfax Railroad Days. *Photo courtesy of Jamie West.*

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

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

Reader comments, additional details, etc., are invited on any newsletter items or photos. Please forward comments, suggestions or information for inclusion in future issues of the newsletter to:

Roger Staab (530) 346-6722 roger.staab@psrhs.org

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From the Archives

August Photo: The photo at right shows Emigrant Gap circa 1950. The buildings near the tracks housed or served railroad workers. The building at left was likely the store (the hotel next to the store was absent or not visible in this photo). The Tahoe Sugarpine Lumber Co. planing mill is above the tracks in the distance. Until the 1920's a 65-ft. Turntable was located in the clear area at lower right. The track and buildings at Emigrant Gap were under snowsheds in earlier days. A 1901 fire destroyed 2500 feet of snowsheds here including the shed covering the turntable. In 1922



a new 80 ft. Turntable and shed were built beyond the curve in the distance. The telegrapher's office was also located there. The balloon track replaced the turntable in the 1950's. *Photo above courtesy of Herman Darr.*



The photo at left shows the same location today. The buildings are gone, but graded areas show where buildings and the early turntable were once located. *Photo at left by Roger Staab.*

September Photo: This month's photo is not directly on the Donner Route, but the location was important to many who traveled by train over Donner. What is the building at right, and what was the significance of its location? Answers in the October newsletter.



CPRR/SP Donner Route Timeline: Improvements were needed almost immediately on some portions of the transcontinental route. By 1873 iron rail over Donner was being replaced with 60-pound steel rail. Trestles below Colfax and at Clipper Gap were filled in. At Deep Gulch east of Clipper Gap, one of the highest trestles on the line was abandoned when a new tunnel (Tunnel 0) was completed in 1873 and the trestle bypassed. Repairs to other trestles between Newcastle and Secret Town assured their safe use for at least 3-5 more years.