

Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society



www.psrhs.org

June 2016 Newsletter

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So what's the story on those classy locomotives and passenger car spotted this month on freight trains traversing the Donner route? See page 3 for details. Photo by Larry Bangert

Scheduled Events & Notices



Jun 23 PSRHS Meeting and Presentation – 7 pm
– Auburn Airport Terminal Bldg – Program – Roger Staab
– A Century and a Half of Passenger Service on the Donner Route

Jul 28 PSRHS Meeting and Presentation – 7 pm
– Auburn Airport Terminal Bldg – Program - To Be Announced

Regional Items of Potential Interest

Jul 27-30 Union Pacific Historical Society Annual Convention – Sacramento
Details at www.uphs.org

Jul 25 Northwestern Pacific RR Historical Society Presentation – 7:30 Santa Rosa
– Program - Railroads of Sonoma County - Part 4. www.nwprrhs.org

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Monthly meeting 7PM Thursday, June 23rd Auburn Airport Terminal Bldg

June Program: Roger Staab will present a photo retrospective on the changing look of passenger trains on the Donner Route over the past century and a half.

May Program Recap: Chuck Spinks presented an informative look at the original surveys and other engineering issues related to building the original transcontinental railroad. He imparted an appreciation for the tools and conditions of the time, and the challenges faced by work crews planning and constructing the route. Chuck also showed maps he prepared of the five route alternatives initially considered by Judah.

PSRHS Board Meeting

The PSRHS board met on May 26 prior to the member meeting. Seven board members were present along with two guests. Items discussed include:

Big Day of Giving. The event and web donation process were very disorganized this year. The club received donations of \$1150, less than a year ago.

Caboose Committee. Lonnie Dickson reported new roofing is now on the cupola, and the work crew gained experience for installing the rest of the roofing. Tony Hesch offered thanks to the workers and expressed hope that the roofing could be complete before hot weather sets in. Tony noted he is not physically able to continue the roof work. He is completing the stencils so that lettering can be painted once the final exterior paint coat is applied. The proposal for operational control of the caboose needs to be presented to the City of Colfax at an upcoming council meeting.

Web Cam. The camera has been taken down but Bill Yoder has not yet picked it up from Brendan for testing.

Donner Crossings Distribution. The board had earlier decided to keep distribution of printed copies of Donner Crossings to paid members only as a benefit of membership. Board member Chuck Spinks reported that he believes making the information in Donner

Crossings and other club publications available to the public would enhance our standing as a historical preservation organization and perhaps help encourage membership. After discussing several alternatives the board voted to rescind its previous decision and make Donner Crossings publicly available, possibly through our web site.

On a related topic Roger Staab reported that he has generated a list of 160 topics that were presented at past PSRHS monthly meetings or were the subjects of club field trips. The board suggested the list be posted on the web site. (See note at the bottom of this page)

RR Equipment Donation. Jim Wood reported that Penny Todd has offered to donate the concrete phone booth, wig-wag and motor car next to the freight depot to PSRHS. The board voted to accept the donation. Bill Yoder offered to repair the wig-wag. Some of the equipment will be relocated inside the caboose fence.

Proposal to Donate Historic Railcar. Jim Wood spoke to the proposal received from Gunnar Henriouille asking PSRHS to assist with the financing to bring his historic SP lounge car to Colfax. While the railcar would be a good addition to a Colfax railroad museum the board felt the lack of suitable location for display and the cost to bring it here made it beyond the club's reach. Malcolm Frost sent a letter to Gunnar expressing the club's regrets at not being able to act on his proposal at this time.

The board will meet again prior to the June 23 meeting.

****Check out the new web page list of past PSRHS presentations at the events tab at www.psrhs.org****



Amazon Smile Fund Raising

We are now part of the Amazon Smile fund raising campaign. We receive a donation to the society based on your purchases. Please feel free to copy and past the link below and include it in all your emails.

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/68-0488569>

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Passing Scene



Recently spotted in Sparks and Roseville and rolling through Colfax are EMDX 1502, 1503 and their test car. These photos taken in Roseville and the information that follows on these new locomotives and their testing were provided by Larry Bangert. Thanks Larry!

The EMDX Tier IV units are being tested between Sparks and Roseville on regular trains. They have previously been tested on the Moffat line west out of Denver and the FRA testing facility near Pueblo Colorado. They have run the Roper Westbound which is the train that goes from Roper yard in Utah to Roseville and they have returned back to Utah on the Roseville to North Plate train. Both trains can do set outs and pick up at Sparks and both are usually very large trains. It makes sense with the EMDX 820 test car between the units to run them in real life conditions which include the tunnels and pulling heavy trains.

They are beautiful looking units with a rather striking paint scheme by my thinking. All of the testing has been done on trains with the regular power and the units are part of the power lash up. They do not lead trains on the Union Pacific. The units are much different than the present SD70Ace model that is still being built for the Union Pacific under Tier III credits.

This new unit has an inverter for each axle instead of one per power truck like the SD70Ace that was designed by the GM EMD. With an inverter to drive the AC motor separately, most shudder can be eliminated when starting heavy trains. The Tier IV unit also has a new 4 cycle motor instead of the 2 cycle that General Motors used for almost all of their locomotives. This new unit also has manufactured trucks and does not use a steel casting like every EMD built by General Motors.

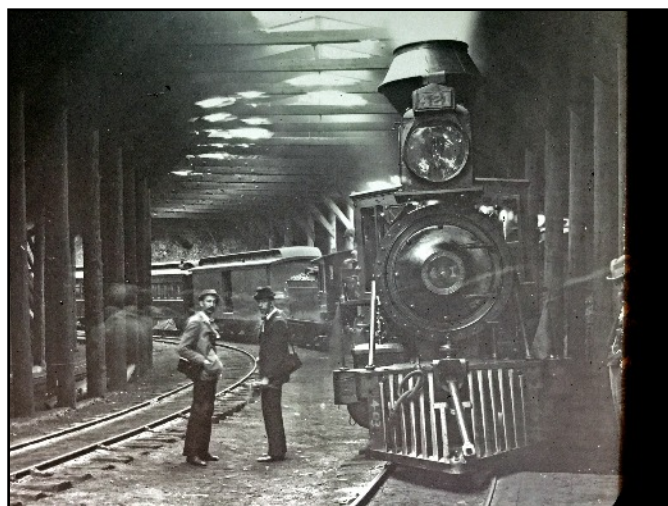
The car body is almost all new and they incorporated the teardrop windshields for better visibility. The steps at both ends of the locomotive are the six step type. GE started to use the six step in 1994 and it seems to be popular. Many of the incorporated changes were ideas that the railroaders gave them. They received many more possible changes but about 80 of the ideas or concepts that the engine operators gave EMD were included. In other words, they gave the customer what they asked for in most cases. The trucks look different but have an overall feel of the self guiding truck that has been used for many years.

From the Archives

May Mystery Photo: The photo at far right of Andover sheds shows the same mountain peaks in the distance, identifying the photo at near right as Horseshoe Curve in Coldstream Canyon. The line moving tangentially away from the curving tracks is the spur line that served a saw-mill owned by A.P. Stanford (brother of Leland), and later by John Kneeland. *Postcard photos courtesy of Jim Wood*



June Mystery Photo: Here's one for the locomotive buffs out there. I bought this photo as a 2 inch glass plate, thinking what a cool photo of a vintage locomotive in a Sierra snowshed. When I was able to transfer the image to an enlarged print, I could read the number plate as #421 built by Baldwin. Note the number also above the headlight. Much to my surprise I found that the SP Steam Loco Compendium shows no 400 series CPRR numbers, and none for SP except on the Texas & New Orleans line. So where was this photo taken and what rail line? The glass plate is by T.H. McAllister, New York, and is marked Train in Snowshed.



CPRR/SP Donner Route Timeline. With completion of Summit Tunnel 41 in 1925 and the Benicia-Martinez railroad bridge in 1930, Southern Pacific now boasted nearly 250 miles of continuous double track from the Oakland Pier to Sparks, Nevada. Along with double-track operations and improved snow fighting equipment came a gradual reduction in costly snowsheds, until by 1950 only a few miles remained. In the Truckee area SP leased the Lake Tahoe line in 1925 and standard-gauged it in 1926. The line operated between Truckee and Tahoe City until abandoned in 1943.

Membership Information

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

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

PSRHS, P.O. Box 1776, Colfax, CA 95713
or join/renew online at 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:

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