

# Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society

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[www.psrhs.org](http://www.psrhs.org)

## May 2020 Newsletter

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*AMTRAK #5 passes a support truss for one of the cantilever signal bridges being installed as part of the new high speed crossovers at Gold Run. See photos and story on pages 3-4. Paul Greenfield photo*

### Scheduled Events & Notices



#### All Events Listed are Subject to Rescheduling due to CoronaVirus restrictions

**The Planned Dedication of Track Segment, Monument and Information Kiosk for NCNG RR at site of Nevada City Depot has been delayed to a future date**

**May 28 NO MEETING IN MAY due to Coronavirus restrictions.**

**Jun 25 (TENTATIVE) PSRHS Monthly Meeting – 7pm – Program TBA**

### MONTHLY MEETING

There will be **NO** PSRHS Monthly Meeting in May. Our meeting room at Auburn Airport is still not available due to Coronavirus precautions. The status of the June Meeting will be announced in June's Newsletter. We will resume meetings once restrictions have been lifted.

### NCNG DEDICATION POSTPONED

NCNG Railroad Museum officials have postponed the planned dedication ceremony for the track segment and new monument to the NCNG railroad. Museum volunteers erected a track segment and monument along the original railroad right-of-way at the Nevada City depot site. A July date is being considered for the rescheduled event. When a new date is set we will announce it in future newsletters.

### PSRHS WEB CAMS

Your PSRHS board is in the process of reviewing technical requirements and costs for establishing one or more web cams that would be linked to our web site. The objective is to select camera sites that will provide eye-catching views of railroad operations along the Donner Route, but they must also have access to power and reliable, fast wi-fi to support streaming. One site being looked at is on the eastbound track approaching the west portal of Tunnel 28 next to Peter Hills' property, but other sites are under consideration. Watch the newsletter for further updates.

### AMTRAK UPDATES

AMTRAK has announced new policies and procedures to help protect customers and employees, including:

- **New Facial Covering Policy.** For your safety and the safety of our employees, Amtrak is now requiring all customers to wear a facial covering over their nose and mouth. Amtrak customer-facing employees are also required to wear facial coverings. The CDC recommends the use of facial coverings to slow the spread of the virus and prevent transmission.

- **Physical Distancing.** To maintain CDC recommendations for physical distancing on board our trains, we are limiting bookings to 50% capacity. In addition, signage has been added in our stations to help travelers maintain safe distances in highly trafficked areas. We have also installed transparent protective barriers at many station ticket counters across our network.
- **Enhanced Cleaning Protocols.** We have increased the frequency of cleaning services on board trains and at our stations. In addition to steam cleaning the carpets, the trains are sanitized with misting machines daily before entering service.
- **Cashless Service.** For the safety of our customers and employees, we are temporarily accepting cashless payments only, in stations and on trains.
- **Travel Flexibility.** We are waiving change fees on all existing or new reservations made through August 31, 2020, so you can book a trip with confidence.

### CHINESE AND RR CONSTRUCTION

Check our website [www.psrhs.org](http://www.psrhs.org) for links to two just-released projects on the significance of Chinese workers in early railroad construction.

### CORRECTIONS FROM APRIL

Your editor must have been addled by shelter in place orders last month, because a typo slipped into the April newsletter, along with a case of inadequate checking of source information.

The photo caption on page 3 of the fire train in operation at Cape Horn **should have listed the date as 2004, not 2014.** Thanks to reader Cape Horn Ed Wuelfing for catching the error.

The note on page 2 about AMTRAK stopping California Zephyr service from Emeryville to Denver was taken from the AMTRAK web site alerts page. That alert failed to note that the service disruption was due to 14 day quarantine of crews for that line due to a crew member's positive test for Covid-19. AMTRAK resumed the service the day the newsletter was distributed.

### **Passing Scene – New Crossovers at Gold Run**

PSRHS member Paul Greenfield has kindly provided this series of photos of new high-speed crossovers that are in the process of being installed at Gold Run. Paul's accompanying commentary noted UP is converting the two manual, hand-throw crossovers to power switch crossovers controlled by the dispatcher in Omaha. Two new cantilever signal bridges are being installed, one at the east end and one at the west. The photos show the construction in progress over the past few weeks, with the first photos taken on April 14.

Paul noted that after the crossovers are completed westbound Amtrak California Zephyr (No. 5) could use Main Track 2 and access the station platform in Colfax instead of unloading at the street crossing, then return to Main Track 1 at RV140 crossover and continue westward. Not sure if this is part of UP's plans, but if used it would route AMTRAK #5 on the outside of Cape Horn rather than in the tunnels. *Photos courtesy of Paul Greenfield*



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### **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 paste the link below and include it in all your emails.

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

### Passing Scene – New Crossovers at Gold Run (continued)



By 4/30/2020 when the photo at left was taken, UP had installed the second support truss for the west cantilever signal bridge. Amtrak No. 5 passes through the area with both cantilever supports visible.

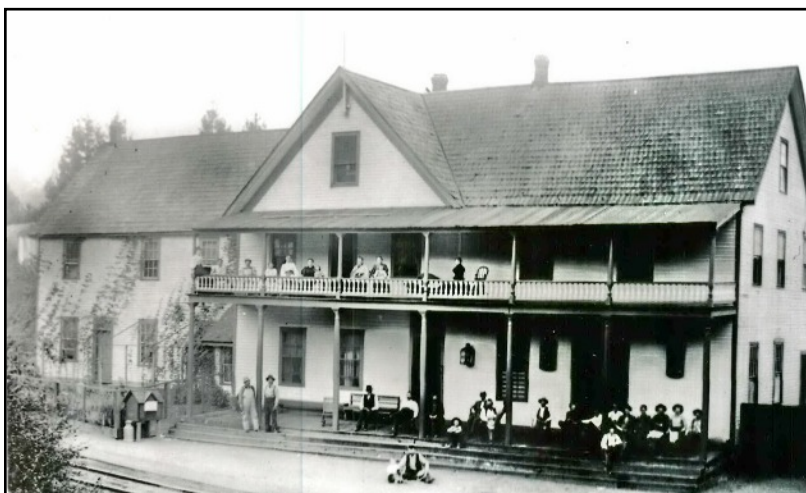
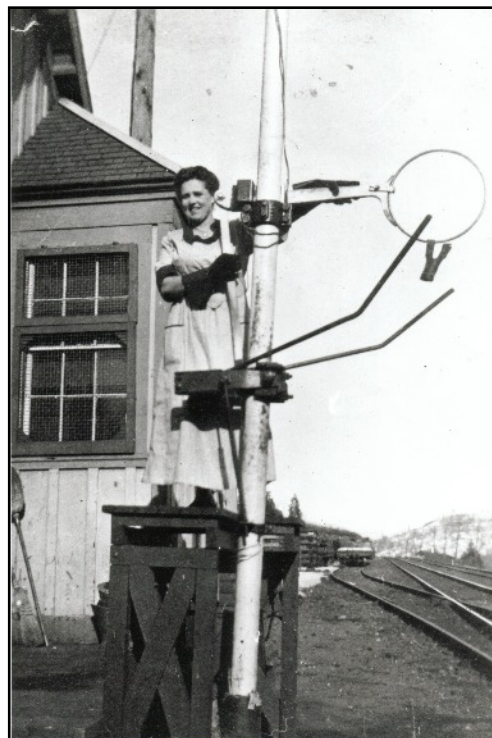


As of 5/11, the signals are up on the cantilever signal bridges at Gold Run. The signal bungalow has been placed, but no trenching activity to the power switches yet.

**Thanks Paul for the photos and info.**

### From the Archives

**April Mystery Photo (right):** This photo shows the staff operator at Fulda hooping a staff for pickup by a train crew. The staff system was used to control traffic on the single track over Donner from about 1905 to the 1920's when double tracking was completed. The Fulda staff station was located west of Emigrant Gap. Staff stations were placed about every 3 miles to control which train had the right of way for each section of track. *Photo courtesy of Herman Darr*



**May Mystery Photo (left):** This photo was featured in the January 2017 PSRHS newsletter. It's location was unknown at that time and none of our readers offered input on its identity. Recently new information has come to light about this image. Where was this building located? Note track at lower left. *Photo courtesy of Art Sommers*

Accidents/Other Incidents. *Sacramento Union*, 25 September 1922 – “**Pears Menaced by Car Shortage** – Colfax, Sept. 24. – Two local warehouses are filled with pears which cannot be moved, due to the shortage of refrigerator cars. No cars have been available for three days, and heavy losses to growers are expected unless the situation is promptly relieved.” [Ed. Note – A Sept. 30 article placed blame for the shortage of railcars on heavy demand for fruit cars in the East and major movement of coal due to settlement of the coal strike.]

#### 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](http://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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