

# Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society

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## July 2021 Newsletter

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*Old Camden & Amboy Railroad track on stone sleepers adjacent to Pennsylvania Railroad. See page 2 for details on our July zoom presentation by Chuck Spinks*

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### Scheduled Events & Notices



**Jul 22 PSRHS Zoom Meeting – 7PM – Program: Chuck Spinks – The History of Railroad Track 1500's to 1900's**

**Aug 26 PSRHS Zoom Meeting, 7PM - Program TBD**

As we move on from the COVID trials of 2020, we encourage you to renew your membership in PSRHS for 2021 or join PSRHS as a paid member. As conditions permit, we will be hosting presentations on historic or contemporary operations along the Donner Route using Zoom or in-person meetings, offer field trips to regional sites, continue publishing our monthly newsletter articles and historic photos, and expand resources on our web site. More web cams are planned so viewers can track rail operations over the route. Thanks for your past and continued support of PSRHS and regional railroad history.

### JULY ZOOM PROGRAM

#### ZOOM Presentation JULY 22 at 7PM.

**The History of Railroad Track 1500's to 1900's.**  
Presented by PSRHS president **Chuck Spinks**.

The story of railroad track from wood rail to strap rail to plate rail to edge rail. Rail was originally constructed to reduce the rolling friction and increase the loads of horse-drawn wagons. As locomotives replaced horses and loads got heavier, track materials and construction methods changed to keep up.

To access the zoom presentation:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9324272808?pwd=L2ltVjdwYkg2ZjcwOE5qTTN6RUFWdz09>

Meeting ID: 932-427-2808

Passcode: 837480

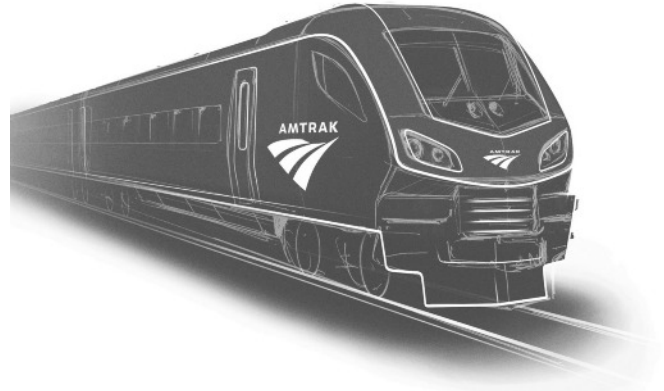
### MONTHLY MEETING STATUS

Our former meeting room at Auburn Airport is no longer available to us. After reviewing other meeting room options, your board decided in June to submit a request to the Auburn Veteran's Hall to hold our meetings there. This will likely involve changing our meetings from Thursday evening to the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday. We will update members via this newsletter, email and our web site when we have firmed up the location and day of the week for in-person meetings.

Meanwhile our new programs director Peter Diurni is setting up zoom presentations, staying with the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday schedule for now.

### NEW AMTRAK-SIEMENS CONTRACT

**Railroad to contract with Siemens Mobility as new equipment vendor** (*From amtrak.com media page*)



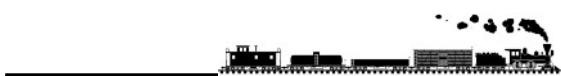
*(Image caption: "A rendering of one of the new Amtrak trains to be built in the U.S. by Siemens Mobility. More formal design images will be released later." Photo Credit: Siemens)*

WASHINGTON – Amtrak is contracting with California-based Siemens Mobility Inc. to manufacture a new fleet of up to 83 multi-powered modern trains that will be leveraged for state and northeast services, with further options for up to 130 additional trains to support Amtrak growth plans. The new fleet will offer modern rail amenities that better serve Amtrak customers.

"These new trains will reshape the future of rail travel by replacing our aging 40-to-50-year old fleet with state-of-the-art, American-made equipment," said Amtrak CEO Bill Flynn. "This investment is essential to preserving and growing our *Northeast Regional* and state-supported services and will allow our customers to travel comfortably and safely, while deeply reducing criteria pollutants."

The new equipment will operate on the Northeast Corridor, long distance *Palmetto* and various state-supported routes that will replace Amtrak-owned Amfleet-Metroliner, and state-owned equipment on certain routes throughout the country. In addition to the *Northeast Regional*, other routes will include

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### **Passing Scene – UP Fire Train In Action**

In these “happening now” July 14 action shots, a Union Pacific fire train is helping fight the Dixie fire, currently burning in the nearby Feather River Canyon above Cresta Dam. Specially equipped tank cars can pump large amounts of water on fires burning near the railroad tracks. The fire trains can access portions of fires not easily reached by conventional fire crews, as can be seen in these photos. The April 2020 issue of this newsletter featured a similar UP fire train in action against a fire burning near the tracks at Cape Horn in 2004. A fire train is kept on standby in the Colfax yard during fire season. The March 2020 newsletter showed it being tested in the yard in 2007. *Daytime photo from a tweet by Dennis Shanahan; nighttime photo from yubanet.com’s fire news. Both photos courtesy of Jim Wood.*



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### **Amazon Smile Fund Raising**

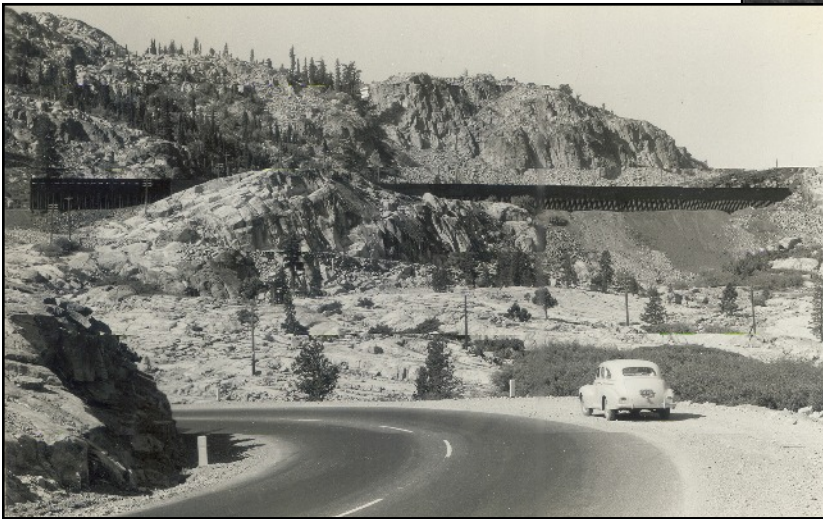
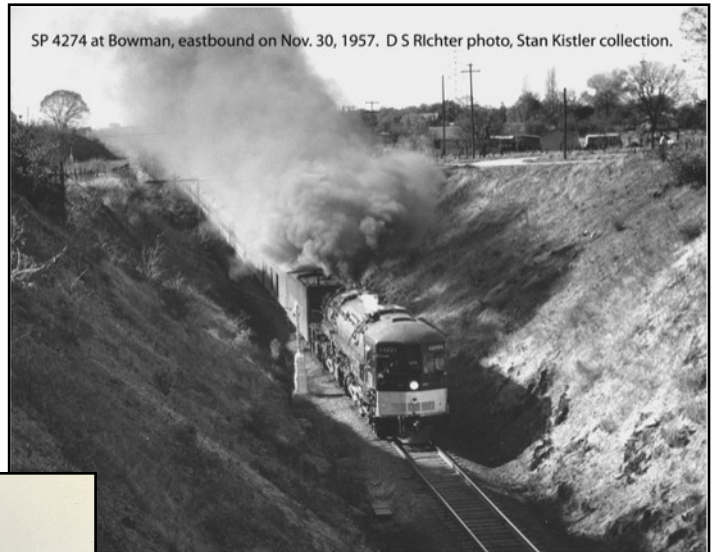
We are now part of the Amazon Smile fund raising campaign. We receive a donation to the society based on your purchases. Please feel free to copy and paste the link below and include it in all your emails.

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



### From the Archives

**June Mystery Photo (right):** That's SP 4274 making its famous "Last Run of a Cab Forward" over the Donner Route in 1957. The photo captured the historic locomotive eastbound at Bowman on Nov. 30. This run marked the end of mallet steam on the route. In October 1958 SP 4464, a GS 4-8-4, powered a steam excursion marking the official last run of steam from Sacramento to Sparks and return. *D. S. Richter photo, Stan Kistler Collection*



**July Mystery Photo (left):** Here's another easy one. Where was the photo taken and what transportation-related features are visible in the scene? *Postcard image courtesy of Jim Wood*

**Accidents/Other Incidents.** *Placer Herald, 23 March 1906. The Great Storm.* The storm that began on Friday night of last week and continued with hardly a lull Tuesday afternoon was one of the heaviest known to white men in California. ... Travel along the railroad has been delayed by the collapse of a portion of the snow sheds between the summit and Eder station, and by a slide a short distance above Applegate. At the latter place the road bed slid out and Wednesday night the temporary track built around the gap also slid out after several trains had passed over. ... On Thursday morning the Auburn yard looked like a terminal, owing to the number of trains brought to a stop by the slide at Applegate, in the fill at the John Jones ranch. The earth slid down into the vineyard, leaving a pit twenty-five feet deep.

#### 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 <https://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@psrhs.org](mailto:roger.staab@psrhs.org)



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the *Adirondack*, *Carolinian*, *Cascades*, *Downeaster*, *Empire Service*, *Ethan Allen Express*, *Keystone Service*, *Maple Leaf*, *New Haven/Springfield Service* (*Amtrak Hartford Line* and *Valley Flyer*), *Pennsylvanian*, *Vermont* and *Virginia Services*. [Ed. Note: No mention of increased trains for long-haul routes in the west such as the *California Zephyr* and *Coast Starlight*]

“Amtrak’s procurement of new rolling stock is historic. These state-of-the-art trainsets will allow Amtrak to operate and provide services more safely, efficiently, and reliably,” said FRA Deputy Administrator Amit Bose. “More importantly, doing so will give riders the modern passenger rail accommodations, amenities and comforts they want and deserve.”

“New York State congratulates Amtrak Chair Anthony Coscia and CEO William Flynn on their sustained commitment to service innovation and eco-friendly travel,” said New York State Department of Transportation Commissioner Marie Therese Dominguez. “Today’s historic trainset award will serve to accelerate the replacement of the nearly 50-year old Amfleet cars currently in operation and serve to complement New York’s unprecedented investments in new passenger stations, service reliability, and safety. The 17 new trainsets being dedicated to New York State-supported routes will significantly enhance the passenger experience and incorporate cleaner fuel technologies, in support of New York’s nation-leading climate laws. The State is committed to working with Amtrak and the State’s Congressional Delegation to secure the federal funding necessary for the manufacture of these new trainsets.”

“We look forward to the delivery of the new trains for Amtrak Cascades service. They will enhance the passenger experience on one of the most beautiful train routes in the country,” said Ron Pate, Washington State Department of Transportation Director of Rail, Freight and Ports. “Since our trains will be the first off the assembly line, it’s exciting they’ll be unveiled in the Pacific Northwest.” ...

The \$7.3 billion investment includes the purchase of equipment and a long-term parts supply and service

agreement, facility modifications and upgrades, and other program expenses.

A long-term service agreement for technical support, spare parts and material supply will accompany the contract to manufacture the trains. The new trains include remote monitoring and fully integrated digital diagnostics for increased reliability. These advanced features will enable Amtrak to test and develop new technology and introduce new maintenance approaches to drive efficiency, increase availability and reduce long term costs.

“These new trains, some of which will be our first hybrid battery operations in the United States, will transform the way Americans travel. Offering a more sustainable and comfortable travel experience, they will be built for excellence and built with pride in Sacramento, California,” stated Michael Cahill, President of Siemens Mobility, Rolling Stock in North America. “Over the past decade, we’ve worked closely with Amtrak and its state partners to develop and deliver trains that meet the needs of America’s travelers, these next generation trainsets build on that experience and offer much more.”

The latest trains will feature more comfortable seating, individual power outlets and USB ports, onboard Wi-Fi, enhanced lighting and panoramic windows, larger vestibules, a more contemporary food service experience, including self-service options, as well as state-of-the-art customer trip information, digital seat reservation system and navigation display systems. The trains were designed with the latest health and safety standards, including enhanced HVAC, touchless restroom controls, and automated steps. The trains meet all the latest safety regulations and standards, providing improved structural safety. With expanded capacity and the ability to shorten trip time, Amtrak expects the new equipment to add over 1.5 million riders, annually.

Using multi-power systems, including hybrid battery operation for a portion of the fleet used for New York’s *Empire Service*, these trains will also provide a substantial environmental benefit through reduced criteria pollutants compared to the existing fleet. They will be designed with Amtrak’s new standard of enhanced accessible features, including inductive hearing

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loops, accessible restrooms and vestibules, an accessible Food Service car, and lifts for customers with reduced mobility, including wheelchair users.

The trains will be manufactured at Siemens Mobility's rail manufacturing facility in Sacramento, California, and will comply with the Federal Railroad Administration Buy America Standards. The facility is celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of operations this year as it continues to add to its more than 2,100 team members. It is one of the largest plants of its kind on the continent, and also one of the most sustainable, using a 2.1 MW solar panel installation to provide the majority of its power coming from the strong, reliable Californian sun. Siemens Mobility designs and manufactures across the entire spectrum of rolling stock including passenger trains, light rail and streetcars, locomotives, and passenger coaches in Sacramento.

*[The article on the AMTRAK media page went on to add these comments from regional politicians. Ed.]*

"California's innovation economy is coming roaring back, and this \$7.3 billion contract – one of the biggest of its kind – represents good paying jobs and further proves that California is a great place to do business," said California Gov. Gavin Newsom. "Based right here in Sacramento for 30 years, this Siemens facility is one of the largest such plants on the continent and one of the most sustainable, and this new contract cements California's leadership in clean transportation and reducing carbon emissions."

"This is welcome news for California. These new Amtrak trains made in Sacramento will make travel more efficient and accessible for residents and visitors, while also benefitting the environment through reduced emissions," said California U.S. Sen. Alex Padilla. "Modernizing our transportation systems is essential – and this new investment helps us do just that."

"I applaud Amtrak's announcement to purchase next generation trains built by Siemens here in Sacramento. I am proud that this investment will not only go towards modernizing our nation's rail infrastructure, but

also support good paying jobs for our community," said California U.S. Rep. Ami Bera.

"Transit systems like Amtrak are the beating heart of our economy and bold investments like these allow us to take crucial steps forward to transform our transportation sector and reduce our carbon footprint," said California U.S. Rep. Doris Matsui. "In Sacramento, Siemens Mobility is not only an important local job creator, but an active member of our tight-knit community. With this announcement, their innovation will bring state-of-the-art and environmentally friendly fleet improvements to travelers across the nation."

"I applaud Amtrak's investment in the future of passenger transportation, American manufacturing, and climate resiliency," said California U.S. Rep. John Garamendi. "This project will support 2,100 jobs at the Siemens plant in the Sacramento for years to come. These energy-efficient locomotives will be replacing aging trains throughout the country, ensuring reliable Amtrak services, and reducing carbon emissions. I have introduced legislation to further promote American train manufacturing and ensure that American infrastructure creates American jobs. Large investments like this purchase are a key step towards restoring American manufacturing, rebuilding American infrastructure, and revitalizing the American workforce."

"If we invest in passenger rail, our nation can have a future with world-class transportation infrastructure that can spark economic growth, curb pollution, and connect Americans across the country to opportunity," said Senator Tom Carper of Delaware. "Today's announcement is a step towards that future—the first of many to come as we work to support Amtrak and all the good it can do for the American people."

"An upgrade to our nation's infrastructure that will help move tens of millions of people faster, safer, and reliably is a step in the right direction. I am excited for this agreement between Siemens and Amtrak, and particularly glad for what this means for the thousands of men and women who will maintain these train sets in America," said Senator Chris Coons of Delaware.

