

# Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society



<https://www.psrhs.org>

## May 2023 Newsletter

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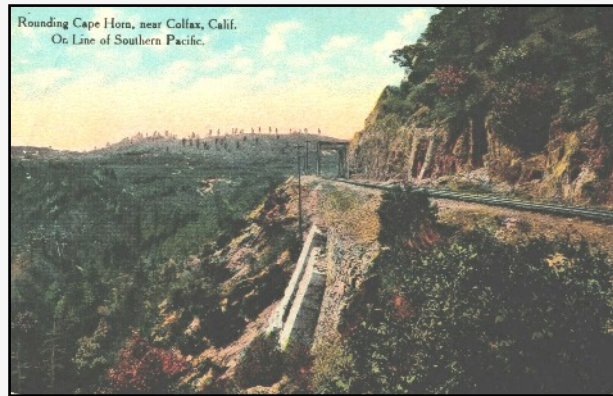
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*What is unique about this particular view of the railroad grade around Cape Horn? See page 4 for details. PSRHS collection*

### Scheduled Events & Notices



**May 23 PSRHS Monthly Meeting, 7PM – Program – Roger Staab - J.H. Chambers  
Logging Railroad Covered Bridge in Cottage Grove Oregon**

**Jun 27 PSRHS Monthly Meeting, 7PM – Program TBA**

**May 16-21, 2023 Joint Meeting of Southern Pacific Railroad History Center,  
Pacific Coast Chapter R&LHS, and the National Railway Historical Society  
– Nugget Casino Resort in Sparks, Nevada. See their web site for details  
<https://www.splives.org/sprhc-rlhs-nrhs-joint-meet-may-2023>**

A reminder to renew your membership for 2023 or join PSRHS if you are not already a member. See the box at the bottom of page 3 for details.  
Thank you for helping support our local railroad history activities.

***Preserving Railroad History on the Donner Pass Route***



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## PSRHS MONTHLY MEETING

TUESDAY, MAY 23, 7PM

### Auburn Veterans Memorial Hall

**May Program:** Roger Staab will show photos and provide history of the **Chambers Covered Railroad Bridge located in Cottage Grove Oregon.** The bridge was built in 1925 to serve a logging railroad and was recently saved from years of decay and refurbished by the City of Cottage Grove into an attractive park.

Our meetings are open to all who are interested. See our web site for directions to the meeting location.

**April Program Recap:** Tim O'Brien gave an interesting program on the **evolution of the Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad Museum in Nevada City,** and the **important role played by NCNG #5** in the development of the museum, culminating in the return of #5 to operational status. He touched on many of the other pieces of historic rail equipment that are part of the museum's collection.

We hope to offer additional presentations by Tim on topics related to the Nevada County Narrow Gauge RR at future meetings.

## PSRHS APRIL BOARD MEETING

The PSRHS board met prior to the April meeting. Topics discussed include:

- By-laws were reviewed and proposed changes discussed to be voted on by members. Some changes were for clarification of terms. Dues are to be paid per calendar year. The exception is full annual dues paid after Sept. 1 cover the following year. Life membership may be offered upon approval of the board of directors.
- Membership name tags will be printed and given to paid members at the monthly meeting.
- The society has several valuable documents in our collection that are currently kept at members' homes. As an interim measure to make the documents more accessible to our members,

some documents will now be stored at the Colfax Area Historical Society (CAHS) Archives room at the Sierra Vista Center in Colfax. Once the new arrangement is set up an appointment can be made to view the documents by contacting your newsletter editor who also works at the CAHS archives.

- We continue to need programs for our monthly meetings. All board members are responsible for helping identify program topics and presenters. We welcome and request topics suggested by our members.

## VENTURE TRAINSETS FOR VIA RAIL

### WILL TRANSFORM

### CANADIAN TRANSPORTATION

### WORLD-CLASS TECHNOLOGY TO EVOLVE

### CANADIAN RAIL TRAVEL

*Editors note: The Passing Scene photo on page 3 of this newsletter features shipment of a new Siemens-built Venture trainset destined for Canada's Via Rail service. The following article published by Siemens Mobility briefly describes the contract to build these trainsets and highlights their features.*

### **Connecting Canadians and Modernizing Transportation**

"In December of 2018, VIA Rail ordered 32 Venture trainsets from Siemens Mobility to reimagine the way Canadians travel. One of the most environmentally friendly fleets in North America, these trainsets will modernize transportation in Canada for future generations and help the country meet sustainability goals in the fight against climate change.

"The 32 trainsets, with associated TSSSA, will result in VIA Rail having one of the most environmentally friendly fleets in North America. Designed for all passenger needs, the trainsets offer an unparalleled, barrier-free and fully accessible travel experience, transforming the journey of Canadians.

*Continued on page 5*







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## Passing Scene – New Siemens Via Rail Trainset Delivery

PSRHS member Bill Yoder captured this month's Passing Scene photo on the PSRHS Applegate WebCam in April. A Union Pacific locomotive is delivering a new Siemens-built Venture trainset to Via Rail in Canada as part of a contract to deliver 32 of these trains from Siemens' South Sacramento manufacturing facility. The trainsets are transported to Chicago via Union Pacific, then transferred to Canadian National for delivery to Montreal.

The first revenue run of a new Via Rail Venture trainset was Nov. 8, 2022 between Quebec City and Ottawa. It was then placed in regular Tuesday service between Ottawa and Montreal. See the related article on the Siemens contract on page 2 of this newsletter. *PSRHS web cam image.*



### Membership Information

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

- Monthly Meetings (4th Tuesday) 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)



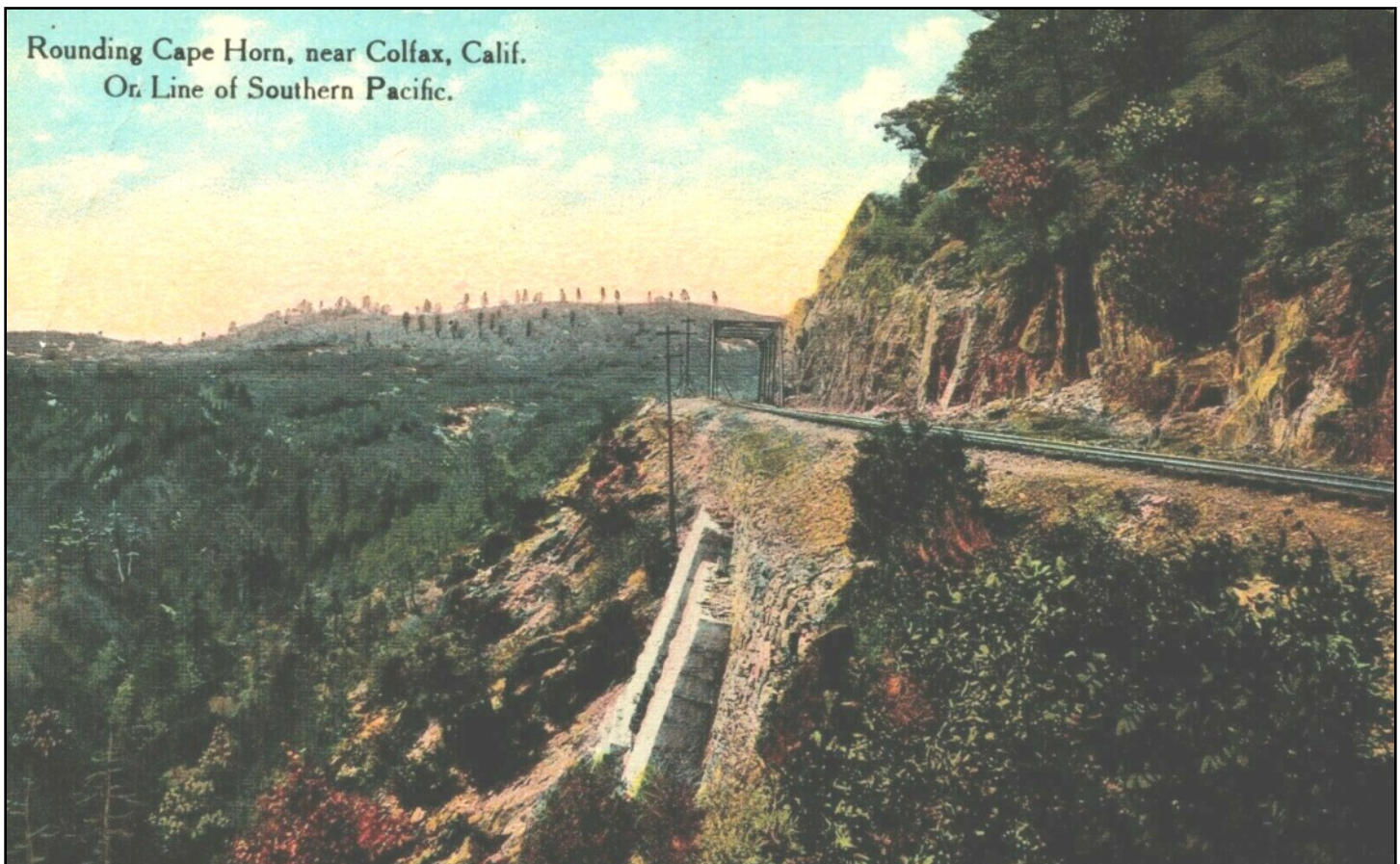




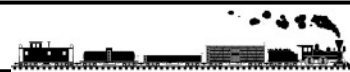
### From the Archives - Rounding Cape Horn

This postcard image shows the tracks rounding Cape Horn east of Colfax, but with an added wrinkle. Note the steel bridge near the center of the image. This bridge provided safe passage over a tight roadbed cut and sharp dropoff. Later a retaining wall was added at this location and the need for the bridge was eliminated. This line around Cape Horn was abandoned for a short time after the double-track tunnels were built, but operational problems in the curved tunnels soon led to upgrading the line around the Cape and reactivating it for uphill traffic, while downhill trains use the tunnels.

The relatively steep (but not vertical) slope along the Cape Horn right-of-way can be seen in this image. The roadbed is essentially what was built for the original transcontinental railroad in 1865-66, but it was widened as larger locomotives made their way up-grade from Colfax. *PSRHS collection Courtesy of Jim Wood..*



**Accidents/Other Incidents.** *Colfax Record, Jun. 1, 1945* – **“DERAILMENT CHRISTENS “BIGGER HOOK” HERE** – Derailment of the crack Southern Pacific streamliner the “City of San Francisco” at Midas, 16 miles east of Colfax early Monday morning brought the “Bigger Hook” to the Colfax area for its maiden run. The “Bigger Hook,” a 250 ton capacity wrecking crane, is stationed at the Roseville yard of the railroad and was put into service only last week. ... A loose wheel on the next to the last car of the streamliner caused the derailment at Midas. There were no injuries among the passengers ... Traffic on the railroad was tied up for over three hours and then only one track was opened until the three-quarters of a mile of roadbed torn up by the derailment could be repaired...”





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### *Via Rail Trainsets (continued from page 2)*

“With historic VIA Rail ridership numbers in 2019 – more than 4.7 million passengers in a single year in the Quebec-Windsor corridor – passengers are looking for more comfortable, cleaner and sustainable transportation options as they return to public transit. While the trainsets are a key part of VIA Rail’s modernization program, together with our teams at Siemens Mobility, these trainsets will allow VIA Rail to connect communities and evolve Canadian rail travel.

“Beginning in 2022, VIA Rail will welcome passengers on the first new Venture trainsets. Follow along as we work towards better passenger service and 100% availability on our journey to transform passenger rail!

### **A CPTDB Wiki article goes on to describe features of the locomotives and coaches.**

[https://cptdb.ca/wiki/index.php/VIA\\_Rail\\_Canada\\_Siemens\\_trainsets](https://cptdb.ca/wiki/index.php/VIA_Rail_Canada_Siemens_trainsets)

“**VIA Rail Canada's Siemens Trainsets** are 32 bidirectional locomotive-hauled corridor trainsets currently being built by Siemens Mobility. The base trainsets will consist of a Siemens SCV-42 locomotive and five Venture coaches; two business class cars, two economy class cars, and an economy class cab car. The trainsets can be reconfigured to between 3 and 7 cars long.

### **“Locomotive Features**

On May 28, 2021, Via Rail unveiled the finalized exterior design of the new trainsets. Photos of the first locomotive at the Siemens manufacturing facility were also released. The exterior design differs slightly from the original renders.

“VIA Rail's Siemens Charger locomotives are designated as SCV-42 (they were built as SC-44 units, and were unveiled as such, but were derated and redesignated before delivery), and are equipped with customizations that comply with operational regulations and VIA's needs. The SCV-42 features larger, more pronounced snowplow-pilots, a high-intensity discharge beam below the main headlights, and additional powertrain winterization to better cope with winter weather. In addition, VIA's units sport a streamlined, bolt-on nose

cone instead of the blunt nose sections typically found on SC-44 locomotives. Whereas Charger units used for Corridor service elsewhere are equipped with 6,800 L fuel tanks, VIA's units were built with 8,300 L fuel tanks to more closely match the range of the outgoing P42DCs. As with all recent passenger locomotives in Canada, they were delivered with the federally-mandated Nathan K5CA-LS horns. They are painted mainly in dark gray, with gray, black, and yellow elements following the units' streamlined profiles. They also feature large yellow 'VIA' logos on their midsections, and large red maple leaves on their rear sections.

### **“Coach Features**

As with the LRC equipment they will be replacing, the Siemens Venture coach and business class cars will be configured with 50-50 seating, with 2+1 abreast seats in business class and 2+2 seating in economy class. Some of the new features of the Venture equipment include automated announcements, wider aisles, additional enhanced wheelchair spaces, enhanced Wi-Fi, and flexible luggage compartments that integrate bike racks (thus allowing bikes to be brought aboard as carry-on baggage). The trains will feature multiple wheelchair-accessible washrooms and multi-purpose rooms. They feature automatic entry doors and automatic folding steps, as well as integrated wheelchair lifts, in order to service low-level platforms. Each business class car features a four-seat semi-private compartment at one end of the car for added privacy. The cab ends of the cab cars are identical to the cab sections of the locomotives. Coaches are painted mainly light gray, with black trim around the windows and yellow stripes above the windows.

### **“Production and Delivery**

The trainsets are currently being built at Siemens' Sacramento plant. Trainsets are delivered via Union Pacific and CN to Montreal, interchanging at Chicago. The first two locomotives, units 2200 and 2201, along with the first full set of Siemens Venture coaches, were delivered to VIA's Montreal Maintenance Centre on September 29, 2021. ...”

*See photo on page 3 of a trainset being delivered.*

