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# FEVR FLASH

## EASTERN NEBRASKA CHAPTER NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1835 N. SOMERS, FREMONT, NE 68025

MARCH, 2002

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### POINTS OF CONTACT:

**Eastern Nebraska Chapter and Fremont and Elkhorn Valley Railroad (FEVR)** - (402-727-0615) - 1835 N. Somers, Fremont, NE 68025

**Fremont Dinner Train** (402-727-8321 or 1-800-942-7245) - 650 N. H St., Fremont, NE 68025

### VERY SPECIAL EVENT:

**Thomas the Tank Engine-** That friendly little locomotive will be at the Fremont and Elkhorn Valley Railroad on **May 3, 4, and 5** and again on **May 9, 10, and 11** to entertain kids of all ages. Train rides with Thomas, entertainment, and Thomas merchandise will be featured. Credit card ticket sales are now in progress by calling toll-free **1-866-813-9993, 8 AM- 7 PM, Monday through Friday.** Reservations are filling rapidly; so to ride with Thomas, call right away. **NOTE:** A very limited number of train tickets will be available at the time of the events. However, to insure a ride on the desired time and day, advance ordering is highly recommended. Thousands of tickets have already been sold and new orders are arriving daily. Tickets are not necessary to visit the depot area where entertainment will be provided and souvenirs can be purchased. **Volunteers to help with the events still needed!**

### OPEN HOUSE:

**The 2002 Excursion Season** will start with our annual **Open House** on **April 20 and 21.** The public is invited to visit the museum and to see the new track facility next to the depot. The first excursion train to Nickerson and return will leave at 1:30 PM on the **20<sup>th</sup>** and the first train to Hooper and return will depart at 1:30 PM on the **21<sup>st</sup>.** This schedule will be in effect through October, with the exception of **May 4, 5, and 11** when the Thomas visit traffic will be in effect. The Saturday

trips leave at 1:30 PM and return at 3 PM with an option of time in Nickerson to visit the antique shop there. These shorter trips are ideal for those with small children and for those with limited time availability. The Sunday trips leave at 1:30 PM and return at 4:45 PM with time in Hooper to visit the historic main street area. Refreshments and souvenirs are available on the train on all trips. Reservations recommended- call 402-727-0615. Caboose charters and train charters are available- arrangements must be made no less than two weeks in advance. To receive the descriptive brochure about excursion travel, write or call the railroad office (402-727-0615)

### WHO WE ARE:

The **Eastern Nebraska Chapter** is one of over 170 chapters of the National Railway Historical Society. The Eastern Nebraska Chapter, a non-profit corporation, has as its goal the preservation of the historical aspects of the railroads along with education of the public as to the present and future values of the railroad industry. The Chapter operates the Fremont and Elkhorn Valley Railroad and maintains a museum.

### WORK IN PROGRESS:

**The new track** for Thomas leading to the side of the depot is nearly completed and will be finished by the time of the events. The new entry/exit way on the side of the depot adjacent to the new track has progressed nicely and awaits completion with the installation of the exterior door. Inclement weather has delayed renovation work on the train cars, especially for the exterior painting.

### CREW MEMBERS:

All available crew members **should contact** the depot to indicate when they are and are not available. The Thomas event and the excursion charter trips will especially need maximum availability.

### RAILSCHOOL:

This "Railschool" in each issue is intended to include a topic informative both to members and to the public. For this issue the diesel locomotive will be considered.

### THE DIESEL:

The diesel locomotive began in service in the **1920's** with small units in switching service. In the **1930's** passenger streamliners such as the Zephyrs began to be pulled by larger units. The CB&Q Zephyr (now BNSF) made the famous "sunrise to sunset" run from Denver to Chicago in that era. World War II slowed the pace of diesel applications, but by the **1960's** the diesel was the only type of unit in regular service.

All locomotives in regular service today utilize an "electric transmission" as the drive. The diesel engine powers an electric generator and this in turn powers the rail wheels through an electric motor. A few experiments such as hydraulic drives were tried, but the efficiency and control features of the electric drive have prevailed. Early units had both direct current generators and motors, but the invention of robust solid-state rectifier devices made the use of the more durable alternators (AC generators) practical in the **1960's.** The use of solid state controls began in the late **1960's.** Further developments in the **1990's** included the use of computers in the control mechanisms and the use of the more durable AC induction motors to drive the rail wheels.

The AC motor equipped units are more expensive (large locomotives have a price tag in the millions of dollars!) but are especially useful for heavy loads and steep grades. DC motor units are still being used for less rugged conditions.

The modern large locomotive is really a computer controlled electric utility on wheels.



**RAILSCENE:** Chapter members Allen Schlapfer and George Blessing replacing ties at the west turnout, elevator track, Hooper yard, December, 1999.

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