
FEVR FLASH

EASTERN NEBRASKA CHAPTER

NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1835 N. SOMERS, FREMONT, NE 68025

MAY, 2002

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

THOMAS IN TOWN!

The visit by Thomas- the little engine loved by all- was an outstanding success! Over **16,000** passengers total rode on Thomas' train on **May 3,4,5 and 9,10,11**. The weatherman gave high wind and heavy rain on two days of the second weekend, but in true railroad fashion, the train must go through and it did - leaving every hour on the hour. The merchandise and entertainment tents were filled with visitors and so many of Thomas' little admirers went home happy to have something to remind them of their visit.

All of this would not have been possible without the work of so many Chapter members, the Chamber of Commerce, Fremont's park organization, and the many volunteers from businesses who made this an event not just for the Chapter and the FEVR, but for the whole community. There are certainly too many to thank individually, but examples are **Charles Egbers and Jerry Morris**, who devoted countless hours to building the track to the depot, **Lee and Brad Wilmart**, who literally worked a miracle in getting the excursion cars repainted, **Bobbi Jo Lang**, who spearheaded the organization of the event, **Gene Zimmerman**, who held his post in the depot "command center" and **so many more**.

For those who missed the event, there will be a limited amount of **Thomas' merchandise** available at the gift counter in the depot museum.

But- **best of all**- Thomas was so impressed with the friendly people that

he is **considering another visit next year!** Stay tuned!

HOOPER SHELTER:

Because of the efforts of a very enterprising young man- **Benjamin M. Wagner** of Boy Scouts of America Troop 42 in Omaha- there will be a new "depot" for the railroad in **Hooper, Nebraska**. This "depot" is a shelter with a roof and benches built as a project on the way to earning the coveted Eagle Scout ranking. This shelter not only will be a convenience for rail passengers but will be a very appropriate symbol at the entrance to Hooper- a town with over **125 years** of railroad history.

Assisting Benjamin in the project were members of the **BSA Troop 164-Elkhorn Valley**. Several businesses assisted in providing needed materials.

Dedication of the shelter and acceptance by the Chapter occurs on **May 26** starting at 3 PM. State Senator **Ramon Janssen** is the featured speaker.

Benjamin is certainly an example of the youth who often go unrecognized- hard working, conscientious young people who will be the leaders of tomorrow!

JULY EVENTS:

Fremont will celebrate the annual **John C. Fremont Days on July 12,13, and 14**. The Fremont and Elkhorn Valley trains will operate on special schedules on all days. Times available later in the next issue of the FEVRFLASH or by calling the depot. The event features many events in the city including a large parade. Watch local media for event announcements.

EXCURSION TRAVEL:

Regular excursion travel continues with departures on **Saturdays and Sundays**. The Saturday trip to Nickerson is a round trip of about two

and one-half hours with the option of a visit to the Nickerson antique shop. The Sunday trip of about 30 miles is three and one-half hours long with time to visit Hooper's historic main street. Trips board at the depot at **1 PM** and leave on the mainline at **1:30 PM**. Reservations for excursion trips recommended. Charters available- call the depot.

RAIL SCHOOL:

Each issue of this publication features information about railroads. This time the subject is **"T" Towns**.

Many **Mid-Western towns** owe their existence to the building of a railroad. **Hooper, Nebraska**, is an example. These towns were laid out with a main street at right angles to the railroad. At the intersection of these was the depot, which was the site of activity for everything and everybody that arrived at or left the town. Immediately beyond the depot was the merchandising establishment which depended upon the depot as their connection with the railroad. Beyond this were the homes of the more **affluent residents** who wanted the greatest distance between them and the noise, dirt, and the often unsavory characters associated with the railroad.

However, those residents who were of a **lower economic status** were unable to afford the isolation of the affluent and were forced to live in the only other place available- across the railroad from the rest of the town. Hence- the rise of the expression - **"Born on the Wrong Side of the Tracks"**- which came to be applied to those of a more humble and disadvantaged background.

Towns which existed before the railroad may show a different configuration- with perhaps the main street in parallel with the tracks. It is an interesting activity as one travels to try to **identify the "T" Towns** and imagine what the railroad meant to them.



RAILSCENE: Thomas in town: At the depot among his fans while his train was boarding passengers for another trip.
