
FEVR FLASH

EASTERN NEBRASKA CHAPTER NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1835 N. SOMERS, FREMONT, NE 68025

NOVEMBER, 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

SANTA CLAUS:

FEVR and the Fremont Dinner Train and Santa will be bringing Holiday cheer for young and old on the Santa trips on December 1 and 7. Contact the **Fremont Dinner Train** office for information early to assure space on these very popular events.

AND THOMAS:

As previously announced, that friendly little locomotive returns to our railroad next May 30- June 1 and June 5-8. Ticket sales are expected to be available shortly after January 1. A website- www.fremontrailroad.com- will shortly be on-line - with information about this event and more. Think Spring and Thomas these dark Winter Days!

TRAVEL:

Regular excursion travel ended at the last of October and will resume again in **May, 2003**. In the interim, depending upon weather and operating conditions, limited travel service will be available via heated caboose. This unit has a capacity of 22 passengers.

Contact the FEVR office regarding travel opportunities possible.

The Fremont Dinner Train, which offers fine dining and quality entertainment **continues** in operation with only a two-week absence in January. For information and reservations, contact the Fremont Dinner Train office.

ELECTIONS:

The members of the **Board of Directors** for the Chapter and FEVR hold office in one, two, and three year terms. There are four nominees (one incumbent) for the three positions

becoming vacant at the end of 2002. The Chapter membership has been sent ballots which are due for return no later than the regularly scheduled Board of Directors meeting on December 4.

HIGHWAY CHANGES:

Fremont area residents are already aware of the new, four lane highway 77-275 constructed and finished recently north of the city. This new construction now ends just before the highway descends into the Elkhorn valley and highway 275 leaves and leads though the town of Hooper.

A start of **further** construction is scheduled for **2004**. An interchange will be constructed just north of the truck weigh station to route 275 traffic south of Hooper and then rejoining the current route west of the town. The remaining railroad track and right-of-way west of town will be removed and become highway and wetland mitigation area.

The current **overpass** on highway 77 over the railroad tracks will be **replaced** with a grade crossing with a temporary crossing during construction.

Motorists will need to employ extra caution during the construction time- especially at the temporary crossing on highway 77.

RAIL SCHOOL:

Each issue of this publication features information about railroads. The last issue had information about the ties under the rails. This issue provides information about the **rails**.

Even in Medieval times and before, the efficiency of a **solid wheel** rolling on a **solid surface** guideway was apparent. An early application was with carts in mining operations. The advantage of this configuration was obvious for railroads, where heavy loads needed transportation over various forms of terrain.

Very early railroad rails were made by fastening **strap iron bands** on the top of wood stringers. Sometimes these bands would become loose and curl

upward (called **snakeheads**), entering a passenger area with potential injury and were certain to cause **apprehension** among the riders.

Not too much time passed before the now common, all metal, **inverted "T" rail** cross-section was adopted.

Until the past several decades, rail was produced in short lengths- typically **39 feet** (which could fit into the old 40 foot boxcar). These sections were then fastened together with **bolts** and short pieces of steel overlapping the ends of the rails- commonly called **"joint bars"** or a closely allied term. The train wheels running over these joints produced the traditional **"clickety-clack"** sound heard on train travel.

Rails are marked when manufactured with several identification marks. Most obvious are the **manufacturer, the date of manufacture, and the weight per yard**. Rail weights have ranged from 65lb or less to 141 lb per yard or more, with the light varieties in historic times and the heavy for modern main-line service. Rail is made of high grade steel and is very durable. Much of the FEVR rail is 90-100 lb and was manufactured in the 1920's. The oldest, lightest observed branch line rail in the area is 85 lb rail manufactured in 1906.

The heavy stresses produced by repeated passages of steel wheels with a **small contact area** (about the size of a **dime**) eventually will wear even the best rail and can produce internal defects, causing failures. To provide early detection, sophisticated electrical/electronic test methods have been developed and contained in a special rail vehicle. These tests can be performed at **high speed**. The Sperry Company was one of the first to provide this service.

The joints in sectional rail, while producing the nostalgic sound, also produce **weak spots** in the rail system and a **poor ride**. Next issue- the use of **CWR-** continuous welded rail. While CWR removes some of the jointed rail problems, it introduces new ones.



RAILSCENE: The Big Lift - Unloading the 1953 DE-44 Davenport locomotive from a Union Pacific flat car in Fremont, May 1999, after arrival from Algona, Iowa. This was one of 20 built for the US Army. It is currently being restored.
