

THE FEVR FLASH

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEBRASKA RAILROAD MUSEUM

1835 N. SOMERS, FREMONT, NE 68025, APRIL, 2010

POINTS OF CONTACT:

Nebraska Railroad Museum (NRM) and Fremont and Elkhorn Valley Railroad (FEVR) 1835 N. Somers, Fremont, Nebraska 68025, (www.FremontRailroad.com), voice and fax - 402-727-0615 (office)

For excursion only- 402-727-0615.

Fremont Dinner Train (FDT) - 650 N. H St., Fremont, NE 68025

For Dinner Train only- 402-727-8321.

(The Fremont Dinner Train is a separate business for which the NRM provides motive power and trackage under contract.)

BACK ISSUES:

Back issues of the FLASH and links to numerous railroad related sites may be viewed at www.FremontRailroad.com.

MAILING LIST:

If anyone wishes to be added to or removed from the FLASH email list send a request to NPTCHM@Hotmail.Com.

BOARDS OF DIRECTORS :

On April 18 the NRM Board of Directors met at the Fremont Depot to hear a proposal from a person interested in augmenting NRM's efforts toward continuing the preservation and operation of the rail line between Fremont and Hooper. This individual, of the local area, proposed to operate a dinner train along with excursion travel, and to try to repair the line to Hooper within a specified period of time. Efforts to re-open the connection with the general railroad system through the track south of Linden Street were not addressed.

This was the **third** party which has presented plans to the BOD concerning the future operation of the railroad. The first definitely did not consider operating or preserving the track and facilities between Nickerson and Hooper and since the preservation of this historic segment of the ex-Northwestern line is a major goal, there was no further consideration of those plans.

HISTORY: The Fremont-Hooper line was part of the intended acquisition of the **abandoned** Chicago & Northwestern track from Fremont to West Point in the mid-1980's by the Eastern Nebraska Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society (now NRM). This was complicated by a washout of the track between Hooper and Scribner. Because of that and funding problems, the operating track and facilities were preserved only to a point about **one mile** west of Hooper. This remnant was later salvaged by NRM to a point nearly inside Hooper several years ago before the area was to be used for new highway US 275 construction. Before abandonment by the Northwestern –

which abandoned most of its branch lines in Nebraska in the late 1970's – early 1980's time period which were no longer of benefit because of highway transport, maintenance was of course very minimal. When the Chapter assumed possession of the current track over **twenty** years ago, it was no longer suitable for much more than light traffic. There was some freight and car storage use for a time, but most use was for excursion and dinner train traffic. The deterioration of the **bridge** over Maple Creek forced the closing of the line north of Nickerson in the summer of 2003.

Bridges have become a major problem. In the early 2000's the bridge across a drainage ditch north of US 275 was rebuilt with proceeds from the first Day Out With Thomas™ event. One of the two bridges in the golf course in Fremont received temporary repairs last year but needs further repair.

THE PRESENT: It had become obvious that if NRM was to continue in its missions, an operational change needed to be made – this change to involve an infusion of capital to repair and improve the infrastructure and equipment. Effecting this change would involve the acquisition and operation of the railroad by another party, leaving to NRM the operation of the museum and its functions. This is the process currently underway.

SHOWING OFF – AGAIN:



(Photo by Dennis Wallen)

On April 24 and 25, our organization was again represented at a railroad themed display – this time at the **NMRA** (National Model Railroad Association) show at Burke High School in Omaha, Nebraska. Our very talented **T.J. Foster** (shown) again led our public relations effort. Among his other contributions, which include track maintenance work, T.J. has developed a script to be used later on excursion train trips which describes the locales through which the train travels.

Besides many chapters in the United States and Canada, the NMRA has representation in

over 20 countries world-wide. Among other functions, it sets standards for model railroad equipment.

REPAIRS:

In addition to the repair of the derailment damage done to locomotive 1219, a number of maintenance items have been addressed. Track repairs have proceeded with the use of a loaned backhoe tractor.

The April travel schedules for the Fremont Dinner Train were completed.

TEMPORARY CLOSURE:



(Photo by Dennis Wallen)

There was a short time closure over the small bridge just south of Nickerson, NE because of tie problems which were subsequently resolved by MOW personnel. This bridge is pictured in the summer of 2008 when high water runoff from farm fields carried cornstalks into the waterway under the bridge, diverting flow around the bridge and washing out the south approach. The elevator at Nickerson can be seen in the background. This latest closure again produced the undesirable situation of backing the Dinner Train to Fremont for its return trip, requiring extra caution and effort for the FEVR crew.

EXCURSION SEASON:

The 2010 season begins on May 8, with trips thereafter on Saturday and Sunday to Nickerson, NE. The boarding for these trips is at 1:00 PM at the Depot at 1835 N. Somers, Ave. This location is on the west side of Fremont, just south of 23rd Street, which is a main east-west route through the city. A copy of the 2010 brochure may be downloaded from the website at www.FremontRailroad.com or can be obtained by calling the office at 402-727-0615.

PRESERVATION NEWS:

Steam locomotives **attract** ridership but they are expensive. In an article in the June, 2010, **TRAINS** magazine there is an estimate that steam on the Valley Railroad costs about \$2000/day as compared to \$400 for diesel.