

THE FEVR FLASH

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEBRASKA RAILROAD MUSEUM

1835 N. SOMERS, FREMONT, NE 68025, FEBRUARY, 2012

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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)

BACK ISSUES:

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

MAILING LIST:

Questions about the list may be sent to the FLASH editor at nptchm@hotmail.com.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

The NRM Board of Directors met at the Clarion Inn in Fremont on February 1, 2012. Present were Treasurer/Executive Director **Angermund**, BOD members **Daniels** (BOD president), **Swetnam**, (BOD Secretary), **Eveland**, **Blackmore** and **Fachman**.

Not attending: **D. Mutthersbough**, **Peterson**, **Blessing**, and **Powers**.

Guests: **Charles L. Sedlacek**, **Bruce Eveland**, **Hunter Lafferty**, **Ed Schecklman** and Associates.

Announcements were made by President **Daniels**: There has been no further information either from the FRA or from track owner **Williams**. **Daniels** will attend the Fremont Chamber of Commerce where **Jim Young**, CEO of the Union Pacific will speak. The CNW Historical Society convention in Norfolk, NE, in May has requested reservations on the NRM excursion train.

There was discussion concerning a letter received from an individual who has an interest in circumstances regarding the sale of the track to **Mike Williams**. Motion passed to have the NRM lawyer review the issue.

BOD member **Fachman** introduced Fremont businessman **Ed Schecklman** who operates an E-Bay store and a local retail store. He has an interest in merchandising the items remaining from the recent Day Out with Thomas™ events. This was approved. He further proposed the possibility of a local swap meet in the Fall as a fund raiser for NRM. The motion to form an exploratory committee passed.

BOD member **Blackmore** stated that the repairs to the siding pass track at Nickerson are

holding up well after the repairs of last Fall (see September & October 2011 Flash issues).

He also expressed concern about some trenching being done along the right-of-way south of the US 275 crossing and its possible effect on the roadbed. It appears that it is an attempt by an unknown party to provide drainage for farm fields west of the track. President Daniels asked for measurements and photos.

Contacts were to be made with the City of Fremont regarding snow clearing at the 23rd street crossing.

Operation Lifesaver membership for NRM was approved.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER:

President **Daniels** writes: "A Board appointed committee is working on a new constitution and by-laws for the NRM. These should be completed soon. This work is extremely important as our current document does not cover many items and is vague in others. The BOD met with a local hobby shop dealer who is offering to sell some of our merchandise (mostly Thomas). That will help us financially. He is to make a formal presentation to the BOD in March. We will have to begin preparing our cars for the upcoming season. They will need a thorough cleaning and needed repairs."

CONSTITUTION BY-LAW COMMITTEE:

The Committee plans to have a draft document available for the Board prior to the March 7 meeting.

WINTER RAILROADING:

NRM provides train crews all through the winter for the schedules of the Fremont Dinner Train. Although the current winter weather has been more mild than some others (see conditions and results in the January and February 2010 FLASH issues), problems still arise. Ice formations in the flangeways at highway crossings can easily derail a locomotive and rail cars.



COUNTY ROAD T CROSSING

Photo by T.J. Foster

County road T is a gravel east-west road south of US 275 just northeast of Fremont that has heavy truck traffic. After a snowfall of

some 10 inches, the pre-run inspection before a Dinner Train run showed the need to clear ice. Shown with the propane torch is **Dan Griffith**. Others participating in the "winter sport" were **Dave Fachman**, **Hunter Lafferty**, **T.J. Foster**, and **Bruce Eveland** (Dinner Train).

THE INDUSTRY- PASSENGER RAIL:

The current trackage used by the NRM excursions and the Fremont Dinner Train has had a long history of passenger rail, starting in 1869 until the end in the mid-1900's. The only remaining passenger service today in Nebraska is the **Amtrak** Zephyr operating on the BNSF line through Omaha, Lincoln, and cities west.

According to an article in the February 13 issue of the **Omaha World-Herald**, there is considerable interest in passenger rail in Iowa and in Illinois. The proposed service between **Chicago** and **Moline**, Ill, should become a reality within a few years. The Iowa Department of Transportation and the FRA are starting a two million dollar study over the next 12-18 months to determine the feasibility of an east-west route across that state.

The possible routes all would connect the Chicago-Moline service with Council Bluffs. There are presently **four** contiguous east-west rail routes across Iowa: the **BNSF** across the south, the mid-state **Iowa Interstate** (former Rock Island), the mid-state **Union Pacific** (former CNW), and the **Canadian National** (former Illinois Central) across the north. Only the Iowa Interstate passes through both Iowa City and **Des Moines**, both possible sources of passengers. The Union Pacific and the BNSF already carry high traffic volumes, but have the best infrastructures. The other two routes no doubt would need more improvements.

Getting passengers to **Omaha** apparently is not in the current planning. The logistics of crossing the heavily used Missouri River bridge and the seeming lack of official interest in Nebraska are mitigating circumstances. The newspaper article quotes US Senator **Mike Johanns** as not supporting the concept in view of other current transportation needs and budget constraints. The Nebraska Legislature's publication *Unicameral Update* of January 30-February 3 shows the introduction of a Bill by Senator **Galen Hadley** of Kearney to terminate Nebraska's membership in the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Compact. The legislature took no action on the Bill then.

However, ProRail Nebraska, a private advocacy group, strongly supports passenger rail (see *President's Corner*, September 2011 Flash).