

THE FEVR FLASH

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEBRASKA RAILROAD MUSEUM

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

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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 March 7, 2012. Present were Treasurer/Executive Director Angermund, BOD members Daniels (BOD president), Swetnam (BOD Secretary), Eveland, Peterson, Blackmore, Mutthersbough, Blessing, and Fachman.

Not attending: Powers.

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

A report by one of the BOD members about unconfirmed information concerning the possibility that the new owner of the track to Hooper might consider a **salvage** status for the line provided for considerable discussion. A motion was passed to allocate funds to clear the line between Nickerson and Hooper sufficiently to allow the **retrieval** of railcars, some privately owned, stored in Hooper. This section of track has been out of service since the summer of **2003** due to the condition of the bridge over Maple Creek. This bridge has undergone considerable repair work since but still needs additional work. (Note: A track inspection sometime later found that the small bridge over a drainage ditch east of Hooper was degraded to such an extent that railcar travel over it was not safe.)

The sale of the Day out With Thomas™ merchandise still left with NRM as proposed by Mr. Schecklman, a local merchant, at the February BOD meeting was approved. The decision on the swap meet proposed at that meeting was tabled.

The need to change the railroad **radio** system to the mandated narrow band status by

2013 was discussed. This would cost between ten and fourteen thousand dollars. Approval was postponed until several other matters affecting future operations are clarified.

The manager of the **Fremont Dinner Train** carried out a discussion with the BOD expressing his concern about the operational issues confronting the railroad and the effect on his business.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER:

President Daniels writes:

"We are making significant progress on a new constitution and by-laws. The committee did a great job. George Blessing mentioned that two people suggested changes.

We want to get some track work done soon. There are a number of important issues brought before the Board in the next few meetings. Please keep watching your email and postal mail in the next two or three months."

BYLAWS COMMITTEE:

The **draft** document prepared by the Committee was distributed to the Board after the March meeting. A **two week** period was set for Board members in which suggested modifications could be forwarded to the Committee. These will be incorporated into a **new** draft for Board consideration in the April meeting.

UNION PACIFIC:

The railroad is celebrating the legislation effective July 1, 1862, which, signed by **President Lincoln**, authorized the start of the railroad and was one of the several actions, including the **Homestead Act**, which defined the American West. In less than a decade later, travel by rail from New York to California in less than a **week** was possible. For the Union, inclusion of California was essential to insure that it would not become part of the South during the Civil War.

The railroad is promoting various events in celebration. Steam locomotive **844** is travelling throughout the system with a train having a car with a selected display of historical artifacts. The train will be stationed near the **College World Series** in Omaha in June. See the Union Pacific website for more information.

Unfortunately, the railroad suffered a major loss when it was found that CEO **Jim Young** was suffering from pancreatic cancer. This is a particularly deadly cancer since it may be diagnosed very late and the five year survival rate is low.

The **double track** project west from Blair is proceeding west from Kennard with the Blair-Kennard segment in service for some time. The new north main has been extended beyond

Kennard and **joined** to the current single main at a point where a county road formerly crossed (see the April, 2011 FLASH issue). The former pass track west of Kennard is being completely rebuilt in to a new second main track.



Apparent point where new north main joins current single main. New track to right (east) - old siding road bed in foreground.

The Kennard-Arlington new main, for which grading has begun, will follow the curve alignment of the present track, keeping that ROW the **ruling grade** for many miles in each direction.

TRAIN WRECKS:

Railroad disasters have been happening as long as there have been railroads. The **first** documented event in the United States was the boiler explosion of the **Best Friend of Charleston** in 1831 which was the first locomotive built in the United States. This happened because of the fireman allegedly **tying** down the safety valve because he was irritated by the noise of escaping steam. Removing that irritation cost him his life.

The application of the automatic **Janney** coupler and the **Westinghouse** air brake, mandatory by 1900, both of which are still in use **today** with improvements, reduced accidents when crews no longer had to put coupling pins in place **manually** or **walk** on top of cars to set brakes. In the days of cheap, plentiful crew labor and few lawsuits, the ability to run heavier, **longer** trains **faster** with these improvements was probably a greater corporate motivation than personnel safety.

Even **modern** devices can fail. Recently there was a fatal rear end collision of commuter trains near Washington, D.C. because of an undetected, long term signal system failure.

The **Kalmbach Publishing Company**, (*Trains Magazine*) has a 2012 publication titled "Train Wrecks" covering notable wrecks, investigations, and causes. This would be a source of information for everyone interested in railroads. Most wrecks are the result of an **accumulation** of prior events.