

THE FEVER FLASH

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEBRASKA RAILROAD MUSEUM

1835 N. SOMERS, FREMONT, NE 68025, DECEMBER, 2013

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BACK ISSUES:

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

(Note: the following is not the official meeting report. Only the approved meeting minutes sent to NRM members is the official report.)

The NRM Board of Directors met at the NRM Depot in Fremont on December 4, 2013, for the regular monthly meeting. Treasurer **Angermund** and BOD member **Sedlacek** were absent. There were no guests at the meeting.

The minutes of the previous BOD meeting were approved.

There were **five** ballots for the BOD election returned. There were five votes each for **Blessing** and **Blackmore**, three write in for **Swetnam** and one for **Cunningham**.

Swetnam declined re-election and **Cunningham** was to be contacted (*Editor: He later declined*). There was an approved motion to accept the election results.

There was no **new** information from the Mechanical Department nor on the topic of NRM restructuring.

A BOD member donated funds to renew NRM **membership** in Pro-Rail Nebraska, a passenger rail advocacy organization.

There was a suggestion that a **calendar** for public distribution be produced. The topic will be discussed at a future.

Shirley **Angermund** is retiring at the end of the year from her duties as NRM Treasurer. In addition to duties in that position, she has worked in many areas including those in the excursion scheduling and maintenance operations. The BOD expressed its appreciation.

Secretary **Swetnam** presented the records of the 2012 and 2013 meetings to President Fchman .

There was an **Executive** Session prior to adjournment.

THE YEAR THAT WAS:

There were many events, as usual, during 2013 in the railroad industry. Some of those reported in the FLASH are mentioned here.

January - NRM track maintenance expenditure was halted until the intentions of the track owner were clarified. NRM personnel attended the Great Train Expo in Council Bluffs. City of Blair was considering quiet zone UP crossings.

February- A BOD member was working on a business plan. The same member intended to donate funds to modernize the depot office with computer equipment. The FLASH had an extensive article on the railroads historically associated with Blair, Nebraska.

March - The BOD discussed improvements needed - suggested were plantings on the depot grounds and a railroad themed mural on the depot. An ad for the operating season was placed in TRAINS magazine. The BOD President explained in a Tribune interview that the Fremont Dinner Train which had departed for Kansas the previous October never was part of the NRM.

APRIL - Because of the uncertainty of track conditions, it was recommended that reservations for possible excursions not be accepted. The out-of-service condition of the Maple Creek bridge for nearly ten years and its partial repair were noted. The use of natural gas as a locomotive fuel was in an article.

MAY - There was a meeting with an FRA representative to determine what would have to be done to resume limited excursion operations for the John C. Fremont Days celebration. Disasters on other railroads were noted in the death of a trespasser on the UP east of Blair and a UP and BNSF train collision in Missouri. There was an article explain the factors entering into the wheel-rail interaction on a curve. This interaction limits the variety of speeds that can be accommodated in a given curve.

JUNE - Charters and excursions were still not available. The major national railroad news was the high speed head-on collision of two BNSF trains east of the north Oklahoma town of Goodwell. The train which was supposed to remain on the main while the opposing went on the siding did not. Only one crew who

jumped survived. Investigation revealed that the probable cause was that the engineer of the offending train had become color blind and failed interpret the signal aspects correctly.

July - Dennis Wallen, former BOD President, was asked to become the new Executive Director and will be returning to Nebraska in October. The RPO car had undergone extensive renovation, using a grant from the Union Pacific and donations. The 23rd street overpass which would extend over both NRM and BNSF tracks is again being considered, having been approved some years ago. A disaster occurred in Quebec when a train of oil tank cars parked for the night broke loose and rolled into the town, derailed, and caught fire. Many blocks of the town were destroyed and there were 47 casualties. The consequences of the derailment of oil carrying tank cars in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, July 6, continue to unfold. Numerous lawsuits on behalf of casualties have been filed, undoubtedly bringing the Montreal, Maine, and Atlantic short line into bankruptcy. Operating rules for trains carrying hazardous materials will change and future tank car construction will be modified.

August - Many adjustments in security and expenditures were made in consideration of the prospect of no foreseeable future resumption of excursion operation. Responsibility for track signal maintenance was turned over to the track owner.

September - Rules for the BOD membership and election procedures for the election of officers for 2014 were published. Plans were made to winterize locomotive 1219 to reduce depot expenses.

October - Director Wallen had returned to Nebraska and was present at the BOD meeting. There was an article describing his and his wife's volunteer work at several tourist railroads during their absence from Nebraska.

November - Mr. Wallen submitted his resignation as Executive Director, intending to once again leave the State.

December - Ballots were returned. Further winter preparations were discussed. On December 30 a BNSF train carrying grain near Fargo, ND, derailed and was then struck by another BNSF train made up oil tank cars which caught fire.