

THE FEVR FLASH

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEBRASKA RAILROAD MUSEUM

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

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 6, 2013

Present Treasurer/Executive Director **Angermund**, **Swetnam** (*Secretary*), **Blessing**, **Fachman** (*President*), **Lafferty**, **Sedlacek**, and **Love**.

Absent: **Blackmore**

Guests: **Mel Cunningham**, **Jared Chrisman**, **Wes Chrisman**, **Josh Kay**, and **Bob Grosee**.

Kay reported that the **Great Train Expo** in Council Bluffs, Iowa, on February 2 and 3 at the Mid-America Center went "decently" as far as NRM's representation. He, **Lafferty**, and **Fachman** were in attendance. The majority of visitors at the table did not realize that NRM did not move to Kansas with the dinner train. He expressed his concerns about the future of NRM. In the discussion that followed, it was agreed that the representation to the public must be improved and that an effort be undertaken to contact former members.

Love reported on the conditions he found when visiting Hooper and inspecting the rail line from there to Fremont.

Lafferty was appointed as Mechanical Department Supervisor.

Sedlacek reported on the status of the business plan under development. He also said that he will acquire and donate a modern computer and associated equipment for the depot office. **Blessing** indicated he will handle the equipment installation. **Sedlacek** emphasized the importance of national advertising and said he will pursue that issue. **Fachman** will create and maintain a **Facebook** Page for NRM.

A motion to conduct a **survey** and **analysis** of NRM owned rolling stock in Hooper was passed.

An **executive** session was entered and exited from prior to adjournment.

The next BOD meeting is scheduled for

March 6, 2013.

A SPECIAL FEATURE-TRAIN TOWN:

In the January 2013 FLASH, the possibility of "**Quiet Zone**" crossings in Blair, Nebraska, on the Union Pacific line in that city was mentioned. These crossings are to become double tracked as part of the railroad's Fremont to Missouri Valley project.

The February 15 issue of the *Washington County Enterprise* (one of two weekly newspapers published in Blair) carries the information that the Blair City Council has **approved** the idea and will proceed toward implementation.

Blair has been involved with railroads from their **earliest** days in Nebraska. Very good information on those may be found in *Andreas' History of the State of Nebraska* (1881) and in the Internet site of the present day *Blair Historic Preservation Alliance*, among others.

Historical rail events involving Blair:

Nebraska Air Line Railroad

Organized in 1864 and re-organized 1867. Proposed a line from DeSoto to Fremont via Blair but never accomplished. Company later acquired by John I. Blair.

S.C. & P. *an east-west line*

Sioux City & Pacific Railroad

Organized in 1864 in Iowa and then acquired the Northern Nebraska Air Line by consolidation. John Blair was first President. S. C. & P. built the line from the Missouri river to Fremont and then in 1883, built the bridge at Blair.

C.R. & M.R.

Cedar Rapids & Missouri River Railroad was under lease to the C & N.W. Completed a line through Missouri Valley to Council Bluffs in 1867. Also in 1867 completed a line from Missouri Valley Junction to Yazoo – today known as California Junction.

O. & N.W. *a north-south line*

Omaha & North Western

Reached Blair in late 1870. Extended line to Herman the next year. Later became the Omaha & Northern Nebraska in 1878. Purchased by the St. Paul & Sioux City in March 1880. Then joined the C. St. P. M. & O. in 1881.

C.St.P.M. & O. *a north-south line*

Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha

Known as the "Omaha Railway." Chicago & North Western gained stock control in 1882 but continued to operate as the C.St.P.M. & O.

C. & N.W. *an east-west line*

Chicago & North Western

Later purchased the S.C. & P. and the Blair Railway Bridge in 1901. Later took over the C.St.P.M. & O. by lease in 1986.

U.P.

Union Pacific Railroad

First laid rails in Omaha in 1865 then built the bridge across the Missouri River in 1872. The S.C. & P. line west from Blair connected with the U.P. at Fremont in 1869. In 1995 the U.P. & C. & N.W. merged and today the U.P. operates the main line through Blair.

Comments:

The **initial** railroad construction north from Omaha began at IZARD Street. It proceeded through what became Florence, probably by the historic mill that still exists, and then eventually through high ground in what was called the "South Cut" and on through Fort Calhoun to **Desoto**. According to Andreas, the "Cut" – also known as the "**Florence Cut**" – was still in progress in 1881, replacing a longer, circuitous, westerly route before turning northward. Desoto – which once had a population of about 700 but no longer exists – was located just south of the current nuclear power plant. This was the hoped-for site for a railroad **connection** across the Missouri River with flat land on both sides expediting construction. The river crossing and the line to Fremont did **materialize** but the crossing was at Blair because of easier access westward. The high ground of Blair made it necessary to do extensive fill work on the lower Iowa side.

The first railroad **bridge** at Blair was completed in 1883 and replaced by the present structure in 1923. The original pilings of Minnesota **limestone** were reused and can be seen today.

The **C.St.P.M.&O.** line was broken by a **flood** near Pender. NE and not repaired, with cars and trucks replacing much railroad traffic. Succeeding segments of the line were abandoned, with traffic on the **Blair-Omaha** portion ceasing in **1980** and track removal in **1982**. A small portion to the MUD waterworks in Florence still exists but was partially re-routed when the Storz expressway to Eppley airport was built. A history of the C.St.P.M.&O. is currently available from the on-line retailer Amazon.

CHARTERS AND EXCURSIONS:

NRM **excursions** and charters are scheduled to return this Spring. More information at www.FremontRailroad.com.