# THE FEVR FLASH A PUBLICATION OF THE NEBRASKA RAILROAD MUSEUM 1835 N. SOMERS, FREMONT, NE 68025, JUNE, 2013

# **POINTS OF CONTACT:**

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

#### **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 Clarion Inn in Fremont on June 5, 2013. Present were: Treasurer/Executive Director Angermund, Swetnam (Secretary), Blackmore (Vice-President), Fachman (President), Lafferty, Sedlacek, Blessing, and Love.

Absent: None

Guests: Mel Cunningham

Treasurer **Angermund** presented her report which was approved.

**Lafferty** (Mechanical Department Supervisor) reported that needed **repairs** on the hi-rail truck are still not completed. He reported that a brake shoe on the RPO car will be changed and that the shop area has been cleaned up..

**Blackmore** said that the June 1 safety meeting was **cancelled** because of low attendance and has been rescheduled for June 15.

**Sedlacek** said the office **computer** equipment installation is still awaiting installation and the combination door lock has been received (*the equipment has been installed since the meeting but is still not connected to the Internet*). He also presented a draft executive summary for incorporation into a new business plan. He restated the goal of resuming **excursion** operations, at least on a portion of the track, to coincide with the John C. Fremont Days celebration July 12-14.

**Cunningham** (Superintendent of Communication and Signals) reported that the signals on Somers Street are inoperative because of **disconnected** wires on a pole and that a bucket truck will be needed to gain access for repairs. He will follow up on that.

The Board went into an Executive Session before adjournment.

#### **COLLEGE WORD SERIES:**

Once again the Union Pacific steam locomotive and passenger cars were parked

across the street on a spur track by the site of the series in Omaha, Nebraska. The total attendance was nearly 350,000 even though the final two out of three games to determine the champion went for only two when the UCLA team won the first two. 844's consist at the series included a diesel on the rear of the train. (See 2012 FLASH issues for information when a diesel locomotive in 844's train under remote control failed to shut down at a scheduled tour stop. The diesel can be used as a helper, saving the steam locomotive's supplies of fuel and water while moving, although scheduled stops still must be made for mechanical servicing of the steamer.)

844 does not always travel with diesel protection.



East bound – Blair, Nebraska – June 19, 2009 WINTER REMINDER:

Although summer has just begun, winter will come again. The photo below (January 2010 FLASH) was taken during the snow season of 2009-2010. On January 15, 2010, the line to **Nickerson** was finally opened and on the  $23^{rd}$  the Fremont Dinner Train ran as scheduled.



1219 Reaches Nickerson, NE – January 15 Conductor TJ Foster contemplates shovel work Photo courtesy of engineer Mel Cunningham

#### **Goodwell, OK Union Pacific Collision**

The head-on **collision** of two Union Pacific freight trains near Goodwell has been investigated by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and a report, subject to further editing, was released on June 18, 2013.

In the collision, an eastbound freight and a westbound freight collided just east of Goodwell. The eastbound, which was supposed to stop prior to a main line switch to let the westbound into a siding track did not do so, running though the switch after not **responding** to the several usual signals set against it, and without it slowing from the approximate 65 mph speed which it held to the point of collision. By the point of collision, the west bound was in emergency.

The collision resulted in a massive fuel fed **fire** which totally destroyed the lead units of both trains, including the event recorders. What records were made of the event were those obtained from recorders in the trailing locomotives of both trains. The conductor of the westbound **jumped** prior to the collision and was the only survivor.

The investigation found no **evidence** of contributing factors in signals (CTC is in use there) or any usual applicable condition.

The probable causes are listed as 1) the **inability** of the eastbound engineer to see and respond to wayside signals; 2) the **disengagement** of the conductor from the usual duty of confirming the aspects of wayside signals; and 3) the lack of a positive train **control** system which would have automatically stopped the trains; and 4) the failure of a organizational **medical** process to de-certify the engineer with failing vision.

The medical examination results from the engineer's private **physicians** indicated that his vision could not have been corrected enough to pass the FRA visual acuity requirements and in 2009 he failed the FRA color vision test. He apparently passed any testing procedures within the operating company.

The NTSB report states that: "The engineer of the eastbound train was **unable** to visually detect and correctly interpret the signals and he operated the train as if the signal aspects were green".

(Editor's note: Another source indicated that the engineer had restrictions on his highway vehicle operator's license. The accident is a good example of an accident seldom resulting from a single cause. Besides those causes already discussed, there existed the incidental fact that the causative train remained on the main line. Had it been routed into the siding at its speed it most likely would have derailed there, causing a serious, but much less severe accident.)

### **CHARTERS AND EXCURSIONS:**

Excursions and charters are not available at this time.