

THE FEVR FLASH

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEBRASKA RAILROAD MUSEUM
1835 N. SOMERS, FREMONT, NE 68025, SEPTEMBER, 2014

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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.

NOTE: YOU NEED TO HAVE NRM MEMBERSHIP TO CONTINUE RECEIVING THE FLASH.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

(Note: the following is not the official meeting report and only summarizes the activities. 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 **September 3, 2014** for the regular monthly meeting.

Blessing was excused because of illness.

The treasurer's report was approved.

The departmental reports were discussed.

It was announced that the party which was interested in acquiring the Fremont depot building for an industrial expansion was no longer a potential buyer.

(Detail items from the meeting of September 3 were not available at the time of publication.)

END OF TRACK:

There has been another loss in the ranks of those affiliated with the railroad industry. Don **Snoddy** passed away on September 12, 2014 in Omaha at the age of 66. He was born in Kansas. He is survived by his wife and four children.

He was best known in the railroading community as the **Manager** of Museum Services at the Union Pacific from 1984 to 2002 in Omaha. *(This ended with the construction of the new Union Pacific building and the movement of the museum artifacts to Council Bluffs.)*

Prior to that time he had been employed as the Nebraska State Archivist in Lincoln and subsequent to his Union Pacific work he worked at the Douglas County Historical Society.

He was well known from his association with railroad excursions and other railroad activities.

FOOTBALL TRAVEL:

The opportunity to attend a football game on the University of Nebraska at Lincoln campus was **revived** after nearly 40 years when a charter left Omaha. The departure point was the Omaha Durham Museum (former Union Station), headed by an Amtrak locomotive and mostly privately owned passenger cars.

Since the museum is across the Union Pacific double **mainline** tracks to Council Bluffs from the Amtrak station and BNSF tracks the train had to back across the UP tracks. After the back up move, the train had access to the outbound track to Lincoln.

The fare to Lincoln was reported to be \$200.

Details about the location of the train in Lincoln were not published.



Outbound to Lincoln. Amtrak station to right – UP to BNSF transfer track to left.

*(Editors note: This information was obtained from **TrainOrders**, a website containing much information about railroading in general. Membership yearly is \$36.*

The information was posted under passenger trains on 09/20/14 by Mark A. Bess –used with permission.

The football game was the Husker vs. Miami game. It is not known if there will be more trips.)

Comment:

(Your editor was a friend of an engineer who did yard switching between the BNSF tracks and the UP tracks. The BNSF yard is adjacent to the Missouri River so the gradient on the transfer track is significant. Frequently, he would lose communication by regular company radio with the person in the caboose protecting the backup. This meant stopping the shove, going to the bottom of the grade, and trying again. The Company would not allow the use of a cell phone.

THE QUEBEC ACCIDENT:



STORY FROM SEPTEMBER 2014 RAILWAY AGE AND INTERNET

At about 1 AM on July 3, 2013 a train consisting of 72 tank cars containing light crude oil, along with five locomotives, accelerated on a 7 mile long downgrade from where it was parked without anyone on board into the town of **Lac-Mégantic**.

This town is very close to the US border.

All but seven tank cars derailed and many caught fire and exploded. The engineer – a one man crew - had left for the night, calling a taxi to take him to Lac-Mégantic.

47 persons were killed and a considerable portion of the town was **destroyed**. The light crude escaped from the wrecked cars and began – on fire – to flow down streets and into storm sewers, exploding there. The nearby lake and water supplies would soon be threatened.

The cause of all this was a small **fire** in the locomotive which apparently had been noticed by a passerby. This was left running to supply air for the train brake system. The locomotive was stopped and the fire put out, but none of the locomotives was started to supply air. Since apparently only seven hand brakes had been applied on the train, these were insufficient.

In the time since the accident, it has been shown that the railroad, some of the Canadian responsible agencies, and persons involved were all **lax** in their practices. The railroad was bankrupted and persons arrested, including the engineer.

As usual, many separate factors came together to cause the accident. Just setting a sufficient number of **hand** brakes would no doubt have prevented the runaway.