

Owens Valley Railway Company Newsletter

Volume I No. 2

GRANT APPLICATION STATUS.

Well, we have some great news here. After several months of hard work by Jerry Core and Jon Anderson, and others, the Inyo county Board of Supervisors approved our T.E.A. grant application by a unanimous vote. In addition, the Bishop City Council also agreed, by unanimous vote, to contribute half of the local matching funds required by the federal government for the grant. We extend a big THANK YOU to all of you who helped support this effort.

After approval by these two government bodies, our application went before the Local Transportation Commission (LTC) for approval before being forwarded to CalTrans for final approval. The LTC also gave unanimous approval for our grant application. It appears that we have a lot of support among our local government officials.

The total grant request is for \$818000, of which the local government agencies must contribute approximately \$96000. This money will allow us to get our environmental clearances done and construct half the line to Bishop City Park from the Laws Museum. Our preferred route follows the historic Owens Valley Electric Railway route to Wilson Creek. This rail line was graded in 1911, but no rail cars ever ran on the line, even though old maps show a rail line running from Laws to Bishop, terminating at South Main Street near the present High Country Lumber yard. The old grade we propose to use still exists.

BRILL CAR RESTORATION.

Restoration work is moving along, although slowly during the winter months. We have most of the new sheet metal in place, and will be starting on riveting the sheet metal very soon. It will be noisy at the barn then! Once the sheet metal is riveted in place, we can jack up the car and remove the trucks in order to do whatever work will be needed to restore them to proper working order. Work on the air piping, brake lines, seats, etc., is also progressing. After the sheet metal is permanently in place the painting will start on the inside, and then the woodwork. The old original engine will be replaced with a modern diesel engine for fuel efficiency and to be able to obtain replacement parts when needed. The original engine is now on display in the barn.

TRACK WORK.

Inyo County has authorized us to proceed with restoration and repair of much of the existing track within the museum grounds. 500 ties will be needed for this work, along with miscellaneous track parts, spikes, etc. Much of the needed materials will be purchased in the next two months.

A contractor is currently removing 22 miles of track at the China Lake Naval Air Weapons Center by Ridgecrest. The present two miles of track we have on hand was purchased from this same contractor, and we are exploring the possibility of additional purchases of track and track parts for our proposed tourist RR project from him.

NEW TOOLS (TOYS?).

We have purchased and taken delivery on a new power miter saw and a new rail-cutting saw. The rail saw looks like an over grown chain saw with the bar and chain removed and a big metal cutting disc in its place. The miter saw will be very handy when it comes to cutting the wood for the interior of the car, and the rail saw will be in heavy use during the restoration of the museum tracks and the installation of our rail line to Bishop.

The company recently received a donation of a recently rebuilt 190 hp Cummins Diesel engine. Clarence Whistler Hurd donated the engine. The company certainly appreciates this valuable donation and will put it to good use, either in the restored Brill car, or as a back-up spare.

MEMBERSHIP AND VOLUNTEERS.

According to Secretary Jon Anderson, membership in the Owens Valley Railway Company is now up to 92. We certainly appreciate your support. As you may have gathered from some of the news above, we have a lot of work on the burners and can always use lots of help. Much of the work is not physically demanding (we get young strong backs for driving rail spikes!), so any time you can devote to helping out at the train barn will be greatly appreciated. Contact Jim Pittman, project leader for the Brill car restoration, to find out when a work group will be at the Train Barn.

COMING EVENTS.

The Laws Museum semi-annual Choo-Choo Swap Meet will be held at the Tri-County Fair Grounds on May 5 this year. We will have a booth at the swap meet and will be selling shirts, various gift and souvenir items and taking new member applications, as well as passing out information on our projects.

The Board of Directors of the OVR Co. is also considering holding a raffle with a significant first prize. More details on this will be available later.

Treasurer Jim Pittman asked me to remind all members that 2001-2002 dues will be due by June 1. If you renew your membership now, or have just joined within the past month, your membership is current until June 2002. Please fill out the attached application form and return it with your dues amount to Owens Valley Railway Co., P. O. Box 355, Bishop CA 93515.

Remember, dues paid to the Owens Valley Railway Company are tax deductible.

As a final note, if you have any items of interest to the membership and would like to see it published in the newsletter, please contact Jim Morrow with the item and we will get it in. The items can be news of progress, historical notes about the Death Valley Railway (the original owner of our Brill car), the Owens Valley Electric Railway, or the old Southern Pacific Narrow Gauge (former Carson and Colorado R.R.), or any other appropriate news items.