

Owens Valley Railway Company Newsletter

Volume II No. 2

ANNUAL DUES ARE DUE

It's that time of year again. Annual dues are due right now. Many of you have already paid your dues for July 2002-June 2003, those of you that have, can ignore this paragraph. If you have not paid your dues for this next year, a renewal application is enclosed with this newsletter. Please fill it out and return it promptly to the OVRCO with your check

ANNUAL MEETING SET

As required by our corporate by-laws, our annual meeting is set for September 12, 2002, from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm at The Pizza Factory in Bishop. All members whose dues are current are invited to attend the meeting and participate in the company business to be conducted at that meeting. We are hoping for a large turnout of members interested in the preservation of our railroad heritage.

ELECTION OF FOUR DIRECTORS

At our most recent Board of Directors meeting, the board voted to increase the Board to 9 members, the maximum allowed by our present by-laws. Since the inception of the corporation our membership has grown from ten to approximately 120, and the Board wants to get a broader representation of our membership actively involved in the operations and management of our company. One important item on the agenda for the Annual Meeting is the election of four directors. Directors Jerry Core and Jim Saylor's terms of office are ending, and they are running for re-election, and Bob Tomko, is running for one of the new seats. Bob operates the Carlson Wagon-Lit Travel Agency in Bishop, and has been extremely helpful with publicity and acting as a liaison with the local government agencies. Enclosed with this newsletter is a ballot form for you to vote for corporate directors. Please vote for up to four candidates and return the ballot to Owens Valley Railway Company, P. O. Box 355, Bishop, CA 93515, promptly so that it can be counted at the election.

BRILL CAR RESTORATION

Restoration work on Death Valley Railroad Car #5 is progressing along nicely, and we are starting to reassemble parts of the car. For a look at the progress, if you have access to the Internet, take a look at http://www.ttrr.org/dv_text/dv_n05-1.html for a photo tour of our progress. Or better yet, come out to the Train Barn and see for yourselves.

GOOD OLD DAYS AT LAWS

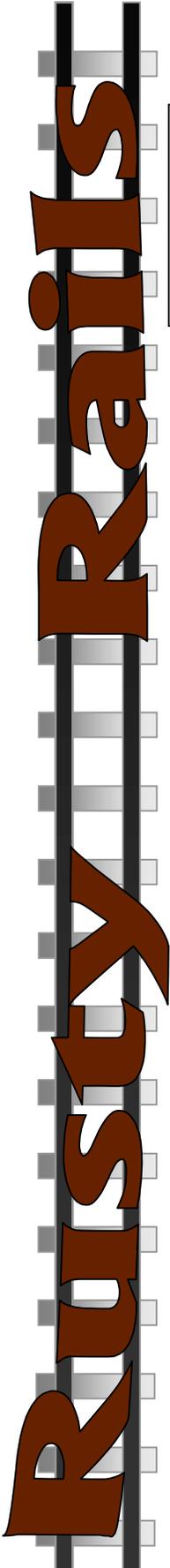
Good Old Days Celebration at Laws R.R. Museum is coming up July 27 from 4 to 8 p.m., and the Barn will be open for viewing our progress on restoration of the Brill car. Several OVRCO volunteer workers will be on hand to show you around and answer your questions about the motorcar restoration project and our railway restoration project. We will also have available for sale t-shirts, golf shirts and whistles, all with the Owens Valley Railway Company logo imprinted, and raffle tickets too. Come on out!

RAFFLE!!

Another item on the General Meeting agenda is a drawing for the following prizes: Grand Prize, two days and one night on the Grand Canyon Railway, donated by Steve Heinrichs of State Farm Insurance; Additional prizes, water color picture of S.P. narrow gauge Engine #18 by local artist Jeffrey Scott, \$200 in labor towards any reupholster job, and \$200 in labor towards any refinishing job both donated by Fendon's of Bishop, and two bottles of wine donated by Inyo-Mono Title Company. Tickets are available \$5 each or four for \$15 at the following locations: Mr. K's Automotive Service, Inyo Mono Title Company, Sierra Office Supply, Laws Railroad Museum, Carlson Wagon-Lit Travel Agency, the Train Barn during Good Old Days, and any of the OVRCO Board members. You need not be present to win, but if you can make it to the annual meeting we would welcome your presence.

RAILWAY RESTORATION

You regular readers know we have been striving to obtain Grant Funding to aid in financing a tourist railroad from Laws toward Bishop. Jerry Core, Jon Anderson, and Bob Tomko have been actively pursuing the possibility of grant funding for laying some rail toward our goal of running a rail line to Bishop. They have found that we may qualify for available federal grant funds under the Transportation Enhancement Act (T.E.A.) for the first phase, as a restoration project and extension of the Laws R.R. Museum. We have received unofficial assurances from CALTRANS that our proposal for the first phase appears to be eligible for approval. If so, we would be funded to lay track to the Owens River to the west of the Laws R.R. Museum, reconstruct the old S.P. bridge, and cross it with rail, restore approximately 1-1/2 miles of the old Owens River Valley Electric Railway line grade, and reconstruct approximately 1000 feet of track on the present museum grounds. Actual approval of a grant request for this phase is still in the future. (See next page.)



RAILWAY RESTORATION (cont)

Our grant application will be on the Inyo County Board of Supervisor's agenda for the August 13 meeting. Actual approval of the grant application requires a yes vote by the Board of Supervisors. After that the Local Transportation Commission must also approve the application on Aug. 21st. Then the \$585,000 application must be approved and processed by CALTRANS in Sacramento before the funds to start work become available. However, at this moment, the project is definitely on track to begin soon.

MULE DAYS AND TRI-COUNTY FAIR

As many of you know, Bishop is famous for its Memorial Day celebration of Mule Days. It's a fun-filled event that attracts thousand of visitors to our scenic area. This year our group had an informational booth at the Crafts Fair located in the Bishop Park. Hundreds of visitors and locals stopped by to chat and be brought up to speed on our progress with both the restoration of the Brill car and the railway route. After their visit they left both informed and enthusiastic. We sold our Brill car shirts and whistles, and added many new members to our group. It was such a great success that we are going to repeat it again during the Tri-County Fair over Labor Day weekend. If you are in town please stop by our booth and say hi! We will be located next to the Rotary Club Snack Shack.

OWENS RIVER VALLEY ELECTRIC RAILWAY

One of our proposed routes from Laws to Bishop would utilize part of the old grade for the Owens River Valley Electrical Railway. The Owens River Valley Electric Railway was formed by a group of Bishop businessmen in 1910 to form a link between the city of Bishop and the Southern Pacific Railroad at Laws, five miles away from town.

The railroad route was surveyed and funds were raised to fund the railroad construction and to develop a 1300-acre apple orchard in the Sunland area south of Bishop (Thus the nickname "Red Apple Line"). Grading for the route was done during the summer of 1911, but tracks were not laid. Local people anticipated the rail line would be completed by the summer of 1912, but no more work was done after the grading. Facts and events that prevented any further work or attempts to build the line are cloudy, but there are some hints that the City of Los Angeles was not pleased at any attempts at progress in the Owens Valley at that time.

At any rate, much of the old grade is still in place and visible to the careful observer. It ran from Laws around the north end of the airport, south across Wye Road towards East Line Street. The route turned west south of Line Street and its southern terminus was roughly near the corner of Main and South Streets. *This brief summary is taken from an article written by David A. Wright in 1989. The complete reference material is available at the Laws Museum.*

