

Owens Valley Railway Company Newsletter

Volume IV No. 1 May 2004

Well, here we are in another year! The lack of newsletters over the past several months does not mean we have been sitting on our hands. We decided to send out the Newsletter on an "as needed" basis rather than try to do it quarterly. You will note from the various items in this letter that we have been very busy working toward fulfilling our dream of a tourist railroad here in Bishop.

BRILL CAR RESTORATION

Restoration work on Death Valley Railroad Car #5 is almost finished! The restoration work is being performed under an ISTEPA Grant, which was initiated by our predecessor group, the Owens Valley Railroad Committee, and followed through with Inyo County by the Owens Valley Railway Company. The Grant was actually made to Inyo County (the Brill car and museum property all belong to Inyo County) and the Laws Museum is carrying out the restoration work under the leadership of Jim Pitman, Project Leader. Many of Jim's volunteer crew are members of the OVRC. At present the car is nearly completed and a roll out under its own power is expected in the very near future, possibly mid May. The car has a brand new Cummins diesel engine in it. We did run into some delays getting parts to complete the engine and connect it to the old driveline.

The exterior of the car is completely repainted and all the new windows and doors are in place. The seats and most of the interior work are also finished. The old car looks **beautiful!** Get out and see for yourselves as soon as you can

RAILWAY RESTORATION NEWS

As reported in our last Newsletter, our application for grant funding for partial rail route work and reconstruction of the historic 1927 Owens River railroad bridge was approved and accepted by all political entities involved. We have received word from Inyo County (the lead agency in this project) that they are going out for bids for a contractor to perform the environmental studies required for this project. So we are moving ahead!

RAILWAY NEWS CONTINUED

The OVRC has accepted several donations recently that will facilitate reaching our goal of establishing a Tourist Railroad in the Owens Valley. The first donation was a 100-year-old house in Bishop that was destined to be torn down to make room for expansion of a business property. Sierra Office Supply owner Dan Wells offered the building to the OVRC intact instead of having it destroyed. Through the efforts of several members the old house has been moved and stored in a safe location. We hope to use it as a terminal building and/or ticket office.

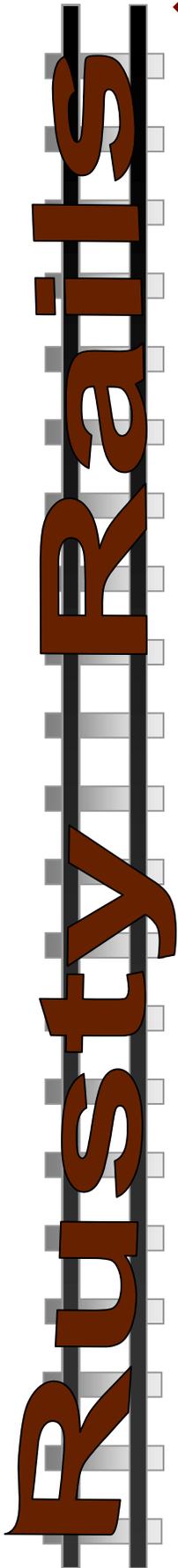
Another very important historic donation came from an organization whose primary work could certainly be considered futuristic. California Institute of Technology (Caltech) has operated the "Big Ears" (radio telescopes) on the Owens Valley floor near Big Pine for many years. These big white "dishes" are moved about on rails during their research work. Caltech has had approximately 1.4 miles of rail stored for many years in addition to the rail that is in use. Caltech has recently received approval to move ahead with their CARMA (Combined Array for Research in Millimeter-wave Astronomy) project, which will be located near Cedar Flats in the White Mountains and will not need the rails they own. Caltech, through Project Manager Tony Beasley, has very graciously donated the entire rail they have to the Owens Valley Railway Co., including the 1.4 miles stored and the rail they are presently using. The rail is dated 1914, is the same size as the rail presently in the museum yard, and is believed by several people to have come to Caltech from the old Southern Pacific narrow gauge line in the Owens Valley. This rail will be used for the necessary track work on the museum grounds to allow the Brill Car to be moved around, so in a sense the historic narrow gauge line is coming back home! Many thanks to Roof Components Inc., Home Lumber Co., Brown's supply, and High Country Lumber for the contribution of their equipment and employees to help us move all the rail to the Museum grounds.

In addition to the above, thanks to Olin Anderson, OVRC recently received a donation of several pieces of rail, 86 ties, spikes, joint bars and a crossing signal from a salvage company in Rocklin California. We had to come up with the freight charges to get it to Reno, and Western Nevada Supply hauled the materials to Laws for us for free. The parts are hard to find in the right sizes and needed to complete the track from the engine house (barn) to the museum yard

The next phase of the grant that is being used to restore the Brill car is to restore the 1883 turntable at the museum to operating condition. Max Cox will be Project Leader on this phase and is already making material lists and working out details as to how the project will proceed.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

At a recent Board of Directors meeting, the Board elected officers of the corporation for the ensuing year. Jerry Core



ELECTION OF OFFICERS (CONTINUED)

was reelected to President; Jim Saylor, Vice President; Jon Anderson, Secretary; and Jim Morrow Treasurer. There are currently, three vacancies on the nine member Board of Directors due to resignations for a variety of reasons. If any of you wish to be on the Board of Directors or wish to nominate an interested person, please contact President Jerry Core at Inyo-Mono Title Company (760) 872-4741 and submit your names. Any current member of the OVRC is eligible to serve on the Board of Directors, so this is your opportunity to jump in and take part in developing this fun project.

ANNUAL DUES ARE DUE

It's that time of year again. Annual dues are due soon. Our fiscal year for dues runs from June 30 to July 1 the following year. For those of you that are current to June 30 2004, your membership card is enclosed with this newsletter. Please fill in your name on the top line. A renewal application is also enclosed, please fill it out and return it promptly to the OVRCO with your check. There are a few people on our mailing list that are not current with their dues. This will be the last newsletter those people will receive unless they renew their memberships. Thank you in advance.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Events coming soon are Mule Days over Memorial Day Weekend, where we are planning to have an informational booth at the Crafts Show, and Good Old Days in late July at the Laws Museum Grounds. The Train Barn will be open and the Brill Car will be on display.

