

The

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The Skagit motorized railroad car arrives at the boarding area in preparation for the historic run to Latrobe



Passengers and train crew chat before boarding the Skagit railroad car for the inaugural railroad trip to Latrobe

HISTORIC INAUGURAL RIDE LAUNCHES RAILROAD REVIVAL

A group of railway enthusiasts, the Folsom El Dorado & Sacramento Historical Railroad Association (FEDS) (www.fedshra.org), is seeking to start railway excursions along the rails of the old Placerville & Sacramento Valley Railroad tracks that run from Folsom to Placerville.

In August the FEDS hosted an informational trip for the board of directors of the Clarksville Region Historical Society on a rail trip out along the old rails that once were the tracks of the Placerville & Sacramento Railroad.

The trip started at nine o'clock in the morning at a spot along the old tracks near Placerville Road and Bidwell Street. The party rode in the FEDS Skagit Speeder No. 30, a vehicle generally used to haul track materials and a crew for permanent way maintenance. It is also used as their principle demonstration passenger vehicle.

A pleasant ride was enjoyed by the eager historians and their hosts, almost to Latrobe. Last winter, a section of track was washed out just north of Latrobe, and that was the extend of their travels. A tasty snack was provided by the hosts at the terminus, and the

ride back to Folsom was a memorable trip.

The instructional part of the trip was finding out about the history of the railroad in the Folsom area, and the extension of the railroad to Placerville.

It seems that the arrival of the Sacramento Valley Railroad in Folsom in 1856, connecting Sacramento and Folsom, gave rise to the notion that the railroad should be extended eastward from Folsom to Placerville.

The Placerville city fathers were acutely aware that railroad service was already up and running between Sacramento and the cities of Auburn and Marysville. They were anxious for a railroad to be built that would connect Placerville to Sacramento via Folsom. So the Placerville & Sacramento Railroad was organized, and by 1860 the track right-of-way had been graded from Folsom to Latrobe, and track construction on that portion commenced. On September 19, 1864, the first regular freight train ran from Sacramento to Latrobe. Passenger service started October 1, 1864, with service between Sacramento and Latrobe, connecting with the Pioneer line of stagecoaches that crossed the Sierras, as well as stages to all

the mountain towns throughout the counties of El Dorado, Amador and Calaveras.

The Placerville & Sacramento line eventually was built all the way to Placerville. There it connected with the shortline Camino Placerville & Lake Tahoe Railroad, which extended east from Placerville to Camino. At Camino, the Placerville & Lake Tahoe went to narrow-gauge tracks and operated as the El Dorado Lumber Company Narrow Gauge Lines, where it wound another 65 miles into the forest in the area of Old Pino, Pino Grande and Pilot Creek (Tallac).

The Placerville & Sacramento line was mainly used to haul forest products from Placerville, and continued in service until approximately the 1980s, when it fell into disuse, a victim of the modern highway system. In 1996 the right-of-way was acquired by a joint powers agency (JPA) made up of the County of El Dorado, the City of Folsom, the County of Sacramento, and the Sacramento Regional Transit District. The JPA continues to own the right-of-way for the purposes of preserving it for transportation uses, coordinating its usage, and governing

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BLAC TO CELEBRATE ITS SIXTH ANNIVERSARY AS AN OKTOBERFEST ON OCTOBER 10

Invitations have gone out to members and guests and their families for the Sixth Anniversary celebration of the Bass Lake Action Committee, which will be an Oktoberfest to be held on Saturday, October 19, 2009, starting at 4:00 PM at the home of BLAC members John and Fran Thomson.

Invitees are urged to complete their response cards and drop them in the mail at their earliest opportunity, so that the food and seating arrangements may be made.

For further information, please call Fran and John Thomson at 530-677-3039. ~



Alyson Huber

ASSEMBLYMEMBER SPEAKS TO BLAC

The August meeting of the Bass Lake Action Committee featured guest speaker Alyson Huber, Assemblymember for the 10th District, which includes El Dorado Hills. One of the first topics that Huber was asked to discuss was the budget that was recently passed by the legislature.

Huber said that she had voted against borrowing under Proposition 1A in the

Assembly, but that it passed anyway. Under Prop. 1A, the state is allowed to borrow local government property taxes on the condition that they be paid back within three years and with interest. Prop. 1A also provides that the state cannot engage in such borrowing for more than two fiscal years during any 10-year period, and cannot borrow a second time unless it has fully repaid the prior loan. She said that she was against the state borrowing money from local governments when it was not clear that the money could be paid back in the time frame proposed by the legislation.

Huber addressed the subject of special state boards and commissions. She said that California had more boards and commissions than any of the other states by far. The news article she was quoting said that California has over 1,000. She said that Texas had the second largest state government after California but they have only 167 boards and commissions. Other similar size states have between fifty and sixty. She expressed the belief that these boards and commissions were probably required when they were created, but that many of them have long outlasted their usefulness. In the past, there has been a sunset review commission that would evaluate the needs for the existing boards and commissions. She feels that this commission needs to be reinstated. Reestablishing the sunset review committee is one of the reform issues that Huber is working on.

The second reform issue that Huber is working on is bond oversight. She said that in general you can find out how bond money was spent, but it is much more difficult to determine if the expenditure of money is delivering the desired result. She believes that the metrics for performance should be an integral part of the bond. Along that same line, she is concerned about establishing accountability and transparency for the Federal stimulus money that is coming into the state. She said that the Department of Energy previously had funding levels in the range of \$3 million dollars. The Federal stimulus money will increase the agency's funding to \$300 million. She went on to say that the legislature has no idea what internal controls are in place. In an attempt to head off problems, she has asked the state auditor to test the internal controls of that agency prior to the money arriving.

BLAC president Thomson explained the problem we have along Bass Lake Road regarding our lack of right turn pockets. He explained that we have talked with El Dorado County DOT about raising money

on our own to help the county fund the right turn pockets. He asked Huber if she knew of any state or Federal funding sources where we might be able to acquire some kind of grant. Huber asked for a written description of what the pockets would be, and why they are needed, and she would see what could be done.

Huber also reported on her efforts to increase El Dorado Hills' representation on the El Dorado County Transportation Commission. Currently the board consists of six members. Of these, three are Placerville council members, and three are El Dorado County supervisors. Clearly El Dorado Hills is under-represented based on population.

In conclusion, Huber said that California is the eighth largest economy in the world, \$1.8 trillion. Her question to the group was, "What is a reasonable amount of taxes to support the infrastructure required to conduct an economy that large?" She said that when she came into office, the state budget was \$100 billion, which has now declined to \$88 billion. The question is, "Is that too much, or too little, and how do we know?"

There followed a general question and answer session, at the end of which Huber received a hearty round of applause. ~



Guy Gertsch

CSD BOARD MEMBER GERTSCH ADDRESSES SEPTEMBER MEETING

El Dorado Hills Community Service District (CSD) board member Guy Gertsch addressed the monthly Bass Lake Action Committee meeting in September.

From a budget standpoint, Gertsch said that the CSD was in better shape than many cities, because while cities rely on sales taxes, the CSD gets its funds from property taxes, which in El Dorado Hills have declined less than in other areas. The CSD is projecting

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THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Hello Everyone,

Our front page article this month tells about the historic train ride put on by the Folsom El Dorado & Sacramento Historical Railroad Association in August.

You may know that in addition to serving as president of BLAC, I am also on the board of directors of the Clarksville Region Historical Society. So I was pleased when the railroad folks invited the board of the historical society along on their inaugural ride.

It was quite an enjoyable experience. Leaving Folsom at about 9:30 in the warm sunny morning, the train traveled south as the rails paralleled Placerville Road, then as we crossed White Rock Road, we soon left civilization behind.

It felt as if we had traveled back in time, as we chugged along the rails that had been laid down almost a hundred and fifty years ago. No roads could be seen, just a few farmhouses and barns in the distance, far away across the yellow grass. Then we came to more rugged terrain, with a lot of trees and brush. We were surprised when, near the end of the ride, the tracks came out next to Latrobe Road.

The excursion lasted about three hours, out and back, with several stops to stretch and gaze at the scenery. We turned around near Latrobe, where the tracks that were washed out last year marked the present end of the line.

The historical railroad folks are hoping to begin regular service someday that will allow anyone to take that beautiful ride through the countryside. I will keep you posted on their progress, and don't forget to visit their website listed in the story.

John E. Thomson

President

GERTSCH (continued)

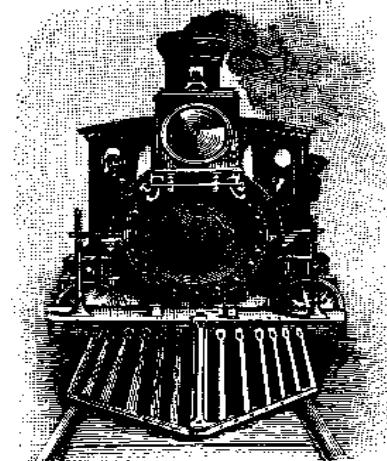
that their property tax revenues will remain level or decline a bit over the foreseeable future. He did say that the shortfall that the CSD is experiencing stems from the state "borrowing" a portion of the CSD's property tax revenue under the provisions of Proposition 1A. Under Prop. 1A, the state is allowed to borrow local government property taxes on the condition that they be paid back within three years and with interest. Prop. 1A also provides that the state cannot engage in such borrowing for more than two fiscal years during any 10-year period, and cannot borrow a second time unless it has fully repaid the prior loan.

Regarding the future of Oak Knoll Park, Gertsch said that the CSD is examining its options for recreation programs and activities at the park, and that the pool has been marked for demolition. The final determination of activities will dictate what will replace the pool. However, with the current lack of funds, any action regarding the park is probably postponed indefinitely.

Regarding the status of the refunds from the overcharge to the Bass Lake B Landscape and Lighting Assessment District (LLAD), Woodridge residences have been paid out in the amount of \$328,000.00 or so to date, leaving a balance of about \$30,000.00 still to be refunded to persons that have so far not been located. The payout was approximately \$1,200.00 per residence, prompted by the results of an investigation into the LLAD by BLAC.

Asked about the recent furor over trash collection in El Dorado Hills, Gertsch said that the current CSD contract with Waste Connections expires in 2012, and a new contract will probably be negotiated. The issue of exclusivity would be examined at that time. The onerous fuel surcharge on trash bills is slated to end next year, and any future fuel surcharge should be done in a more flexible manner. Gertsch reminded everyone that the CSD has a contract with Waste Connections that is separate from that of the county.

Vice President and Political Affairs officer Kathy Prevost thanked Gertsch for coming, and he was given a round of applause. Gertsch remained after the meeting to answer individual questions from the attendees. ~



RAILROAD MUSEUM PROPOSED FOR EL DORADO

Proponents of a railroad museum in El Dorado County have brought forth a proposal to build the El Dorado County Historical Railroad Park. The park would be a county museum facility where historical railroading artifacts would be displayed and operated for the enjoyment and education of the public. It would be located in the town of El Dorado utilizing the existing Sacramento-Placerville Transportation Corridor right of way near Oriental Street. The Railroad Park would recreate the historic Southern Pacific El Dorado Depot, have additional track for railroad cars, locomotives, and support equipment, and have a short section of operating railroad, along with visitor services, exhibit and maintenance facilities.

Under the proposal, the Historical Railroad Park would be developed in phases, with the first phase utilizing existing track salvaged from other sites and relocated to the El Dorado site. In addition, existing artifacts restored by County Museum Volunteers, can be placed at the site and operated on a limited schedule. The Railroad Park would be developed over time and as outside funding became available.

Beginning in 1994, a small group of museum volunteers began the restoration of the Diamond and Caldor No. 4 Shay locomotive on the grounds of the El Dorado County Historical Museum with the support of the Historical Museum Commission. Restoration of a narrow gauge passenger car and a caboose soon followed. Acquisition of considerable quantities of large shop machinery and tooling made it then possible to move ahead with restoration of additional rolling stock. In early 1997, the volunteer group incor-



(continued on page 4, col 1)

R.R. MUSEUM (*continued*)

porated as the El Dorado Western Railway Foundation (www.edwrf.org), a non-profit public benefit corporation. The foundation is actively supporting a historic location on the transportation corridor for the museum. Planning is underway to apply for grants, both locally and within the national railroad community, to pursue funding of restoration and building costs.

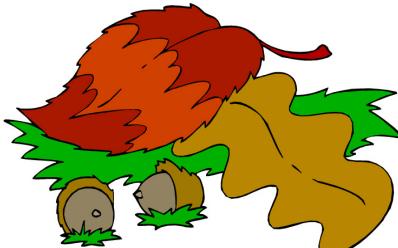
Several proposals for such a railroad museum have been floated over the past years. One location near the Wal-Mart store on Missouri Flat Road appeared viable until it was discovered that the land had been dedicated to environmental use. While the proponents are brimming with ideas and enthusiasm, the lack of funds has so far derailed their plans for a railway museum in El Dorado County. ~

***September***

*When the goldenrod is yellow,
And leaves are turning brown
—Reluctantly the summer goes
In a cloud of thistledown.*

*When squirrels are harvesting
And birds in flight appear
—By these autumn signs we know
September days are here.*

—*Beverly Ashour*



Some of the scenery along the inaugural FEDS train trip

RAILROAD (*continued*)

its maintenance by the member agencies. FEDS is working with the JPA and aims to create an educational and recreational community railroad on a section of the line between Historic Folsom and Placerville. Their museum is located by the Train Depot on the railroad block in Historic Folsom. The site also boasts a reconstruction of an 1867 "A-frame" or "gallows" type turntable used to turn locomotives. FEDS also organizes the annual Folsom handcar Derby held on a stretch of old tracks along Bidwell Street near Broadstone Shopping Center.

FEDS currently operate a beautifully-restored Skagit motor vehicle on a section of the Placerville line for essential maintenance. FEDS volunteers are engaged in a variety of restoration projects, as well as working to maintain and improve the condition of the track along the route. FEDS railroad operations are conducted from their storage facility at the Natomas Wye (the junction of the original Sacramento Valley Railroad and

the Placerville line) about a ten-minute walk from Historic Folsom.

FEDS representative Philip Rose will speak to the Clarksville Region Historical Society on October 22, 2009, at 6:30 PM at the El Dorado Hills Library. His topic will be the FEDS organization and the history that FEDS is trying to preserve. ~

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