



WCRA NEWS

APRIL/MAY/JUNE

2020

**DAY OUT WITH THOMAS Is Back Again
This Year - But Later Dates!**

**BCER# 960 is really getting close
in her multi year restoration**



The WCRA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The next monthly meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 24th in Burnaby, BC at Rainbow Creek Station at 19:30 hrs.

ON THE COVER:

Photo of the completed front truck for ex BCER #960. Work has now started on the rear truck. Photo by Mike McGaw

Calendar

- West Coast Railway Heritage Park is closed except for special events for the winter until expected re-opening on June 1st.

Day Out with Thomas returns but this year the dates and number of days have changed! Thomas chugs into the Heritage Park on May 23/24 and May 30/31. And the departure times have also changed with the first departure now at 10 AM. Details and tickets at wcra.org. See you and your family at DOWT!

Please note since there will NOT be a regular monthly meeting in April, and the WCRA News will change to a quarterly publication in a magazine format in June (last regular issue not until April) Notice is given now that the Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 24th, 2020 rather than the normal last Tuesday in March at Confederation Park at 19:30 hours.

WCRA Trivia #368 - When the CPR built the last sections of the transcontinental line in the West during the 1880's and through the mountains to the Pacific Coast, what were the workers called and how much were the labourers paid?

The West Coast Railway Association is an historical group dedicated to the preservation of British Columbia railway history. Membership is open to all people with an interest in railways past and present. We are a non-profit British Columbia society, registered as a Canadian charity. Membership prices are as follows, **Please note that GST must be added to all fees:**

Senior \$50 (\$52.50), Individual \$55 (\$57.75), Family \$65 (\$68.25) **E Members (electronic newsletter only) are \$35 (\$36.75) Senior, \$40 (\$42.00) individual and \$50 (\$52.50) family.** Other categories are:

- Junior Member (age 18 and under) \$ 30 (\$31.50)
- Sustaining Member \$100 (tax receipt) **plus** membership type regular fee
- Life Membership \$700 (\$735) individual life / \$1,200 (\$1,260) family life

All memberships include the monthly newsletter, Heritage Park admission (except Special Events), mini rail rides and discounts on food and merchandise. The Association holds a monthly meeting on the last Tuesday of the month at 1930 hours in Burnaby at Rainbow Creek Station in Confederation Park. Apply through www.wcra.org or mail to WCRA, PO Box 2387 Stn. Main, Squamish, BC, V8B 0B6

FROM THE EDITOR

The recent blockades of Canada's rail lines in Ontario and northern BC have had far reaching effects. It is probably a surprise to many, especially those not familiar with the importance of rail traffic in Canada, that almost 50% of freight moved in Canada is done by rail. It's a 'double whammy', as it not only affects the movement of goods between major centres, but more importantly import of manufactured goods from around the world and the export of raw commodities. In the winter, freight train capacities are reduced by 25-30% due to colder conditions and, in many cases, speed is reduced due to cold temperatures and snow. The reluctance of the federal government to enforce court injunctions for over three weeks has had a devastating effect on the movement of every day goods. And of course this affected VIA and commuter rail operations with shut downs and lay offs at CN, VIA and GO trains (in Ontario). And then as 'behind the scenes' arrangements were trying to be set up for negotiations with Hereditary Chiefs, the corona virus became a world wide concern with all production initially in China, and then in other countries being shut down affecting the stock markets around the world as the infection becomes a global reality. Predictions are this infection could be an issue for months to come. People are not only canceling business and vacation trips, but staff is now being told to stay home and work remotely to try and prevent the spread of this disease. This year will be a real challenge both from a personal and business perspective with far reaching effects beyond the rail industry.

ASSOCIATION NEWS

FROM THE JANUARY GENERAL MEETING

The January meeting of the WCRA was held Tuesday, January 28th at the usual location in Conferderation Park in Burnaby

Chair Bob Phillip called the meeting to order at 1935 hrs with 17 Voting Members, 2 Spouses, no Staff and no Guests present. THIS DID NOT CONSTITUTE A QUORUM

REPORTS

Bob Philip combined his President`s Report and the Staff Reports:

- Work continues on meeting commitments for Repairs/upgrades to MP2.
- Staff is being guided by the priorities in the current Business Plan;
- The Association continues to meet with the Bank regarding funding. They seem receptive to our proposals and the Executive is putting together a package of information they requested. Any proposal will go to the Board or Directors for approval.

The Heritage Park will remain closed to the Public until early June while work is done to improve the Guest Experience on the main grounds:

- All “Dirty Work” will be moved to the MP2 side;
- Turn the Car Shop into exhibit space rather than do restorations;
- Keep more displays in the CN Roundhouse whenever possible;
- Implement periodic tours of MP2 on the Budds;
- Install more interpretive signage for the exhibits.
- Members & Volunteers will still be able to do restoration work in MP2. Events like Day out with Thomas and other social/community bookings will continue during the hiatus;
- MP2 – Planning still ongoing actual work is dependent on improvement in the weather. Current projections indicate that up to 30 months will be needed to get the building to fully usable. Short term priorities continue to be Furnace, Insulation and (wet) Fire Suppression and Installing Roof over outside tracks north & east of the Building;
- The Associations financial position is basically on-track. Bob updated on some items detailing a few changes and additions;

Other Reports:

- Bill Marchant advised that nothing is currently happening as MP2 is not heated and additionally there is very little space available inside;
 - Jeremy Davy confirmed that Western Rails 2020 will be held at the Cameron Recreation Centre March 15th (0900-1600). UPDATE: The Western Rails show was canceled due to concerns of the Coronavirus threat and the average age of most attendees. If the virus is contained, may be re-booked later this spring.
 - George Game reported that while the 374 Pavilion was open the venue was cold & damp with the visitor count and resulting donations have been relatively low. He commented that this year the 374 Celebration will be on May 17th, so does not conflict with DOWT;
 - All were reminded that the Annual General Meeting will be held prior to the Regular Meeting on March 24th here at the Rainbow Creek Station;
- WCRA Elected Board Members:
- Bob Philip oversaw the election of WCRA Members as Directors for the 2020 year advising there are 3 positions available to be filled/elected by the Membership:
- George Game – at the end of his Second Term was eligible to be re-elected; and two positions currently unfilled;
- Bob Philip presented the Board’s recommendations for consideration and on behalf of the Board asked the membership to leave one position unfilled as the Board had a Member in mind who would be an asset but could not currently accept the position;

Nominated from the floor:

- George Game – by Jeremy Davy Seconded by Ryan Cruickshank;
- Craig McDowall – by Bob Philip Seconded by Tim Ryan;
- Keith Anderson – by George Game, No seconder.
- Two Nominees were acclaimed:
- George Game for his second term; and
- Craig McDowall for his first term.
- The third position was left unfilled as there was no seconder for Keith Anderson's nomination. It will be filled at a later date by Board Appointment for a term ending at the AGM in March 2021.
- Bill Marchant provided a Trackside Report.
- Ryan Cruickshank featured narrow gauge Steam locomotives from the WP&YR including an early 4-6-0 in his with examples from each.
- 50/50 draw was held.
- Bill Marchant supplied the entertainment, a DVD Canadian Rails – Vintage Scrapbook featuring Passenger action in various parts of Canada.

MEMBER NEWS

Our condolences go to the families of:

- Richard Harvey, a Member since 1993 who passed away recently. For many years, along with his wife Margaret he looked after the Newsletter distribution every month.
- Bart McMillan, Constable CN Police Service and BC Rail Police. Supported many WCRA activities by bringing Operation Lifesaver and other Rail Safety materials to our venues. Bart passed away in September.

Our deepest sympathy to Deb Sankey on the passing of her mother Betty on Jan. 15th, 2020 at the age of 96. A memorial celebration will be held at a later date.

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

If the expiry date on your membership card or the date on your label is 3/31/20 it is time to renew your membership If the label reads 11/30/19,12/31/19 or 1/31/20, this is your last issue of WCRA News.

We need all of you as members, please renew today.

BOARD REPORT

Editor's note: This will be a new feature of the newsletter as I have asked our Chair of the Board, Steve Crombie, to submit a short report for each newsletter to better understand the important role of the Board in the WCRA.

The Board held a day-long facilitated Strategic Planning workshop on Feb. 9th to discuss steps to make the organization and the Heritage Park more successful. Discussion included 'branding' of the park, new business opportunities, set up of the park and its rail collection and potential new events. The board will continue these discussions in the coming months and more information will be shared with the membership. Three new directors and two returning directors have been elected to the board in recent months. All with strong experience in the areas of tourism marketing, the legal/philanthropy sector and financial services. They will add to the board that already has strong representation from a historical, association and business perspective.

The Board Directors for 2020 are: Steve Crombie (Chair), Max Hufton (Vice Chair), Jeremy Davy (Sec/Treas), Singh Biln, John Day, George Game, Hugh Little, Paula Martin, Christine Matheson, Paul McCrea, Craig McDowall, Kyle Miller, Debora Sweeney and Christian Vazzaz.

VANCOUVER TRAIN EXPO 2019

The WCRA Event Crew attended the 2019 Vancouver Train Expo held again this year, in the Forum building at Vancouver's PNE, on the weekend before Remembrance Day. The Show was open 15 hours over 2 days again this year, and both the Association and MiniRail were ably supported by Volunteers. MiniRail, under the guidance of Donna Simon, ran from the opening bell to closing both days often with long lineups, giving rides to nearly 2600 happy children of all ages.

A huge thank you to those Volunteers who assisted with the Show ... Keith Anderson, Andy Catton, Ryan Cruickshank, Jeremy Davy, Bonnie Game, George Game, Bob Hunter, Bill Johnston, Gary Kreschuk, Ryan Kreschuk, Bill Marchant, Craig McDowall, Ashlee Simon, Donna Simon, Hailey Simon, and Dai Yates, as well as Dave Emmington, Doug Hicks, Dave Manzer, and Lance Simon for assisting with the MiniRail before/after the Show. (JD)

Canadian Rockies by Daylight

The Days Before GCRC's Rocky Mountaineer- by Bill Johnston

In the 1980's and likely long before that, train travellers' complaints about VIA Rail's scheduling of its transcontinental trains through the Rockies and Fraser Canyon were commonplace. Given the distances and scheduling challenges it was not possible in one run-through to avoid some nighttime travel through these scenic wonders. There was obviously a market for an all-daylight tourist service. In 1986 VIA Rail experimented with such a service out of Vancouver involving a 10-day circular route from Vancouver through Kamloops, Jasper, Edmonton, Calgary, Banff and return. Low demand killed the service undoubtedly due to its exorbitant pricing in the thousands of dollars even if it included meals and hotels. Only one of the 5 advertised trips ran. It was time to come up with another more reasonably priced alternative to meet customer demands. Photo below: VIA #101 at Ottertail, B.C.



Each Sunday train (#104) departed Vancouver at 9:45 am for Kamloops on the CN line arriving Kamloops about 6:00 pm. It consisted of 2 new FP40 locomotives, steam generator car, and up to 10 coaches. After the overnight in Kamloops the train separated into 2 sections each with the number of coaches matching the bookings for their destination. The Banff/Calgary train (#102) left at 8:00 am arriving in Banff at 6:30 pm and Calgary at about 9:00 pm. The Jasper-bound train left at 9:00 am and arrived in the Alberta resort at 5:30 pm.

On Thursday both trains left their destination cities and met up in Kamloops. They would combine and return as #103 to Vancouver on Friday arriving at Pacific Central Station about 5:00 pm. Prices were reasonable and included very basic on-board meal service and the overnight hotel and transfers in Kamloops. The cost per person between Vancouver and Jasper or Calgary/Banff was \$275 per person double occupancy one-way, or \$495 return. Full tours, including two-day layovers at Banff and/or Jasper and connecting motorcoach between the 2 resorts was \$859. Special air-rail packages were also available between Vancouver and Calgary.

In 1989 the all daylight service attracted much attention in the travel industry along with happy guests - despite many logistical problems. The name was changed to Rocky Mountaineer to simplify the marketing of the service. In VIA Rail's Annual Report of that year President and CEO Ronald Lawless noted in his annual message : "The role of private operators – and the possible privatization of some VIA services – will also play an important part in shaping VIA's future. The government has indicated its interest in exploring various options in this area." This was a signal by the federal government that such a service should not be in the hands of a government subsidized organization. The federal government put Rocky Mountaineer out to tender. After a brief dalliance with a group of contentious VIA Rail staff members putting together a bid, including the man who'd thought up the Rocky Mountaineer model, a fellow named Peter Armstrong found his own investors – his brother Beverley, a real estate developer and restaurateur, and others – to pull together their own bid. He also convinced some qualified advisors to come on board, like Mac Norris, the former head of BC Rail. So, Mountain Vista Railtours, with parent company Great Canadian Railtour Company (GCRC) purchased the routes and equipment of VIA Rail's Rocky Mountaineer daylight service for \$7.2 million. The date was April 1990. Armstrong's company initially stumbled through three horrendous seasons. Some say they lost \$7 million dealing with tempestuous VIA Rail executives , angry unpaid vendors and aging temperamental equipment. Only after federal mediators stepped in, ordering VIA Rail, a Crown corporation, to compensate the boutique train company, did the company turn a profit. And the rest they say, is history.

In VIA Rail's Summer 1990 timetable a ¼ page timetable notes the times for the service calling it Mountain Vistas Railtours. No further explanation of services offered is included despite ample space available for such.

Rocky Mountaineer's 1991 8-page brochure has much the same timing and train numbers as the original VIA service but departures from Vancouver were now more frequent. The first trip that year left on May26th then departed every 4 or 5 days until the last departure on October 10th.

Fares were \$390 one way per person sharing or \$695 for the round trip. If Calgary was your destination, as it was for many years, you added \$45

And now 30 years later over 2 million guests have been given their “ experience of a lifetime” in daylight. RM has doubled its capacity of rail cars since 2014. The Dayniter cars which were once RedLeaf service have been retired or used for service cars. Some were upgraded to SilverLeaf service. The company now has 26 GoldLeaf and 18 SilverLeaf cars. Including the locomotives and power generation cars, they we have more than 70 pieces of rolling stock. A unique North America success story! (Russ Grycan photo: taken east of Kamloops)



COLLECTION - Update on BCER #960

Our focus since the October update had been primarily the rear truck. A number of years back we first overhauled its disassembled components and completed a successful testing of the two traction motors. More recently the partially assembled frame and the two motors were spray painted. We then set about in November putting it all back together.

Thankfully, with the 10 ton crane we were able to tilt the traction motors up and block same. We then utilized the heavy crane to drop the main frame, allowing the frame bolster to squeeze clear of the motors when we lowered it over the equalizers, the journal boxes, and the four heavy coil spring assemblies. There were some frustrating moments when we couldn't make a clean alignments of the guides over the journal boxes. The three of us, with pry bars and multiple cranes along with the much appreciated help from John Jellis, finally prevailed. We've installed the brake shoe hangers with shoes and all the under truck brake linkages

Brake gear of course will require fine tuning adjustments once both finished trucks are under 960 and we have access to the service pit.

Of course there have been other projects continued and or finished on the steeple cab... one of those would be the installation of reupholstered cab seats and their reversible back rests. Not only does the unique seat hardware allow the seats to drop down against the cab wall, these seats can be slid along on cab wall rails. This permitted engineer and fireman to exchange seats when 960 reversed direction on longer runs, utilizing the dual control set up.

Just before we had to pack it in early December with MP2s winter closure, progress was made with preliminary disassembly prep of the front truck. In so much as we had a few homework projects these past months, Bill, Bob and myself are keen to get back into MP 2 to continue the restoration work on BCER 960.

MODEL RAILROAD LAYOUT IN MP2

As part of the upgrade of MP2, the Heritage Park is seeking the donation of an N-scale model train layout to add to its display area currently in development. We have been focusing on HO scale but with recent access to N-scale items we find we have space for addition of a N-Scale layout. A donated layout of 4 feet by 8 feet size or similar that is modular and 'ready to run' would be best.

We will pickup if the item is suitable (weather permitting). DC or DCC operation is possible for us and we are experienced in layout construction and installation on our end. We do not necessarily require the operational electronics, throttles etc. but would be interested.

I am the contact person and can furnish info and further contacts from the WCRA and my credentials whenever you wish. If you include a picture of the layout in a reply we would be grateful.

If you know of someone who is downsizing and would like an ideal 'new home' for the public to enjoy, please contact Dave Heine at dvhn@telus.net. This would be an ideal companion to the large HO scale layout that is currently being worked on in MP2 and under the design of Aaron Gruber, the N scale layout would be placed in the middle of the overall layout. (DH)

A LOOK BACK - The Royal Hudson

Eve Lazarus runs a historical blog on Vancouver history, and this appeared recently. It is a short article with photos from Angus McIntyre on a trip by The Royal Hudson when she made a special passenger trip from North Vancouver over the CNR bridge down to Seattle to meet up with Southern Pacific steam locomotive 4449 in November 1975 to celebrate the USA's Bi-Centennial and the #4449 was painted as the American Freedom Train. Angus states he wasn't able to go on the trip, but several friends of his did and it turned into a marathon session with the train returning to North Vancouver many hours late. However, as the Royal Hudson departed North Vancouver, Angus got up early and with a few local rail fans, they spotted themselves at the south end of the Thornton tunnel and into Burnaby. (JM)



CPR 374 Pavilion Update

Our total visitor count for January and February 2020 was 4,484. We had 334 more visitors than at this time last year. It will be interesting to see if the COVID-19 coronavirus affects our visitor counts in March and April.

We are still getting international travellers at the Pavilion. Many from Australia, England and the United States. Visitors enjoy the short history lesson on the Locomotive and the surrounding area. They also appreciate the Tourist Information we have on site.

Our Chinese Railway Workers Exhibit for the 374 Pavilion, from Revelstoke, is taking longer to build than I thought. Hopefully we will have it installed before the next Newsletter.

Donations and Sales are up slightly over last year.



We are currently on Winter Hours - 11 to 3 PM.
On April 1st we will be going to Summer Hours - 10 to 4 PM.

We will be down by 3 volunteers in April. If anyone would like to help out at the Pavilion please give me a call at 778-875-3573 or email george@wcr.org. Warmer weather is coming.

We are located at the corner of Davie St. & Pacific Blvd, just across from the Canada Line Yaletown/Roundhouse Station. Please come down for a visit.

WCRA News - 39 Years Ago - January 1981 - Part 2

Steam Train for the Okanagan

The Penticton Chamber of Commerce is looking into a proposal by Terry Ferguson to run a steam train between Okanagan Falls and Penticton. Mr. Ferguson cites his 'ownership' of a steam locomotive and five coaches and his successful Victoria Pacific and his involvement with the Royal Hudson and the Western Washington Forest Museum as references! Alderman Joanne Grilaldi says " I think the idea has merit but there are a lot of things to iron out".

Burlington Northern

BN has orders for fifty GP39-2's from EMD this year, thirty C30-7's from GE and five GP38-2's from EMD.

GO Transit

Toronto's GO transit has purchased Milwaukee FP7A's #63A and # 104A for conversion to APCU's #910 & 911. These are cab control and auxiliary service units on the opposite end of GO trains to the locomotives.

Union Pacific

UP's Challenger #3985, being restored at Cheyenne WY has been successfully test steamed and will steam to Sacramento for the opening of the California State Railway Museum. The big 2-6-6-4 will depart Cheyenne on April 25th, overnight at Green River WY and Salt Lake City before steaming west on either SP or WP to Sacramento. It will double head with UP's 4-8-4 #8444! (MCM note: Fellow WCRA member Art Bain and I chased it from Cheyenne to SLC. Art then continued the chase to Sacramento while I flew to Sacramento and met my wife Nora, rented a car and drove to Klamath Falls to chase #4449 south to Sacramento. Shot reels of super 8 film with stereo sound which am finally converting to a DVD).

Seattle and North Coast Railway

The S & NCR has purchased three F units from Burlington Northern for operations on Washington's Olympic Peninsula. The units are #610, 684 and 704. Also on the S & NCR's Baldwin CLC DS4-4-6 has been sold to Publisher's Paper of Newberg OR. This was the unit that was leased to the Port of Tacoma in early 1980.

RAIL NEWS

CN

The Canadian National Railway (CN) confirmed Friday that it is moving its traffic control centre from Montreal to Edmonton, affecting 108 jobs.

CN's media relations officer Alexandre Boulé said in a statement that the move will happen gradually over the upcoming months and all employees concerned have been notified and offered the opportunity to relocate to Edmonton. According to the railway company, the reason for the move is to bring all the people controlling the movement of trains into one single building. The company said their goal is to merge the three control centres in Toronto, Montreal and Edmonton into one in Edmonton. (JM)

CN#355 was detoured via BC Rail which is a very unusual movement in the past few years. Highway #1 north of Hope was also closed beyond Yale where multiple slides blocked the road. (KS)

On March 5th, a CN freight derailed at Giscome, BC at 09:30. Giscome is at MP 122 on the Fraser Sub between Prince George and McBride. It was an EB of mostly empties with no fire or explosion thankfully as an elementary school which was only 300 yards away from the mainline.

Arson is suspected in a fire that destroyed a CN building next to the Kwinitsa station in Prince Rupert on March 1st and a suspect has been arrested.

CP

Due to very heavy rains over a number of days, a slide came down in front of CP 301-243 led by CP #9762 at about 23:30 on Wednesday, Jan. 29th on the CN line (directional running in the canyon). Location was about MP 20, just west of SNS Stout on the Yale Sub. Soon after, the train was blocked by another slide behind it! The line wasn't cleared until Feb. 2nd with huge backups for both CN and CP. (KS)

Former CP police officer Mark Tataryn told The Fifth Estate: 'I was ordered to stop investigating' the Feb. 4, 2019, crash. 'I would say it was some type of coverup.' A police officer probing the death of three Canadian Pacific Railway crewmen killed in a runaway train crash in B.C. last February alleges he was denied access to key evidence and suspects a "cover up" by the railway. Mark Tataryn was one of three officers with CP Police Service assigned to investigate the derailment of CP Train 301. CPPS is a fully authorized federal force, bound to uphold Canada's laws, but is employed directly by the company.

Rail cars lie piled together in the aftermath of the Feb. 4, 2019 crash that took place near Field, B.C., killing three crewmen. The lead locomotive wound up in the Kicking Horse River. Tataryn has since quit CPPS and joined the RCMP. But before he left, he says he shared his concerns and a copy of CP's police file with the BC's Coroner, Canada's Transportation Safety Board and the RCMP.

The Fifth Estate conducted a seven-month investigation, talking with witnesses, railroad workers, families and sources within police and government and uncovered a string of failures in the Train 301 tragedy, and was explored in a documentary on CBC 'Runaway Train' that aired on Sunday, Jan. 26th.

CP announced on Jan. 31st its first domestic intermodal shipments to Atlantic Canada via the recently purchased Central Maine & Quebec Railway.

VIA

1st VIA #2 to leave Vancouver since Feb. 11 on the road on March 5th with 3 units and 20 cars.

VIA 6426 arrived Vancouver Feb. 13. Used on the West Coast Express eastbound March 3rd, round trip on the 4th, and westbound on the 5th, returning to VIA that morning. (JM)

On January 29th, successive days of heavy rain resulted in a number of washouts, some large, with the result that VIA #1 was stopped at Boston Bar and passengers were bussed to Vancouver. The train remained there for over 80 hours before it was able to complete the trip empty to Vancouver. The next VIA #1 was annulled at Kamloops and became EB #2 with passenger bused to Kamloops. With the train stranded in Boston Bar, VIA was still able to out together enough of a consist on hand in Vancouver for VIA #2 to depart on time on Friday Jan. 31st but encountered a small mudslide near Glen Valley on the CN Yale Sub. It was delayed for 7 hours until the track was cleared. On it's very slow trip through the Fraser Canyon and Black Canyon on the Ashcroft Sub they encountered some very small slides that they were able to 'plow through'. Then at Cornwall, they encountered a large rock on the tracks which entailed CN bringing in a big Hiab crane to remove the boulder. VIA #2 finally reached Kamloops 12 hours late. The WB Canadian that arrived in Kamloops seven days later on Feb. 5th was also annulled and passengers bussed to Vancouver. (KS).

Protesters to the LNG pipeline construction here in BC blocked the rail line near Belleville ON with the result that VIA has cancelled all trains. The protest lasted almost three weeks with VIA laying off almost 1000 workers. It is the first time in 42 years since VIA was inaugurated that it had to cancel service across the country for this length of time. This even included The Skeena which was cancelled due to another rail blockade in Northern BC.

CN #6060

The estimate to restore ex CN#6060 is \$650,000 and it's only an estimate at this point. That's a very big number and this is just the boiler repair. There are some other things that need to be done as well. The good news is they have a place to start and a very good idea about what needs to be done. As you can see the challenge is going to be finding the money to get the work done. They are currently exploring our fundraising options. If you would like to help, please contact their Fundraising Chairman, Ken Warenko at metalwood@shaw.ca or 403-830-9661.

AMTRAK

President Donald Trump's administration yesterday unveiled a proposed fiscal-year 2021 budget that calls for cutting Amtrak funding by more than 50 percent compared with 2020 levels.

The White House budget would cut funding to the Northeast Corridor from \$700 million to \$325 million, as well as cut funding for long-distance train routes from \$1.3 billion to \$611 million. After that, the White House would phase out support for Amtrak's long-distance trains. Trump's budgets have called for similar cuts in the past, but have been rejected. Democrats are not likely to go along with this latest proposal.

Amtrak has cancelled its Acela nonstop service between Washington, D.C. and New York as one of its safety measures amid concerns regarding the spread of the coronavirus. Service suspended from March 10th until Tuesday, May 26th.

On March 8th, Amtrak received notification from St. Louis County, Mo. that an individual traveling on Amtrak train 303 (Chicago – St. Louis) on March 4, 2020, has tested presumptive positive for the coronavirus. Amtrak states that it is working in close contact with public health and emergency management teams to have the best available information to be able to share with our customers and employees who might be affected. Amtrak is notifying passengers and employees who may have been on the same train, and as a precaution, They have taken the train out of service for comprehensive cleaning and disinfection, and are also working to do a thorough disinfection of the Chicago and St. Louis stations.

MISC. RAIL NEWS

Calgary based Cenovus Energy Inc. is reducing its 2020 capital spending by approximately 32% in order to maintain the strength of its balance sheet. Cenovus is also temporarily suspending its 'crude-by-rail' program and deferring final investment decisions on major growth projects.

Mount Hood Railway

Mount Hood in Oregon went into receivership in September 2019. Here is an update on its current status and operation plans for 2020

Mt. Hood Railroad plans to start its spring season on March 20 with a Groupon offer that will run through April 26. Manager Ron Kauffman said the offer, which will discount regular retail prices up to 45 percent, will launch on March 16th. While the railroad intended to start spring passenger service in late February, Kaufmann said that they were waiting for new equipment, including locomotives, to arrive and decided to push back the start date.

“I’ve been here 32 years and you know, we’ve had the same locomotives,” Kaufmann said. “It’s time to make some upgrades.”

All booking for the spring season will be done via Groupon up until the offer expires. Passengers won’t be able to book via the railroad’s website until the offer expires, Kaufmann said, because they’re working towards launching a revamped version of their website.

To handle the volume of phone reservations, Kaufmann said that the railroad will be hiring call center operatives in Hood River.

“I’m actually excited that we’re moving the call center back to Hood River,” Kaufmann said, adding that calls had previously been handled in an off-site. “It just makes it better for the customers,” he said.

Mt. Hood Railroad had a remarkably successful Christmas season, Kaufman said, and is still prospering on the freight side of their business.

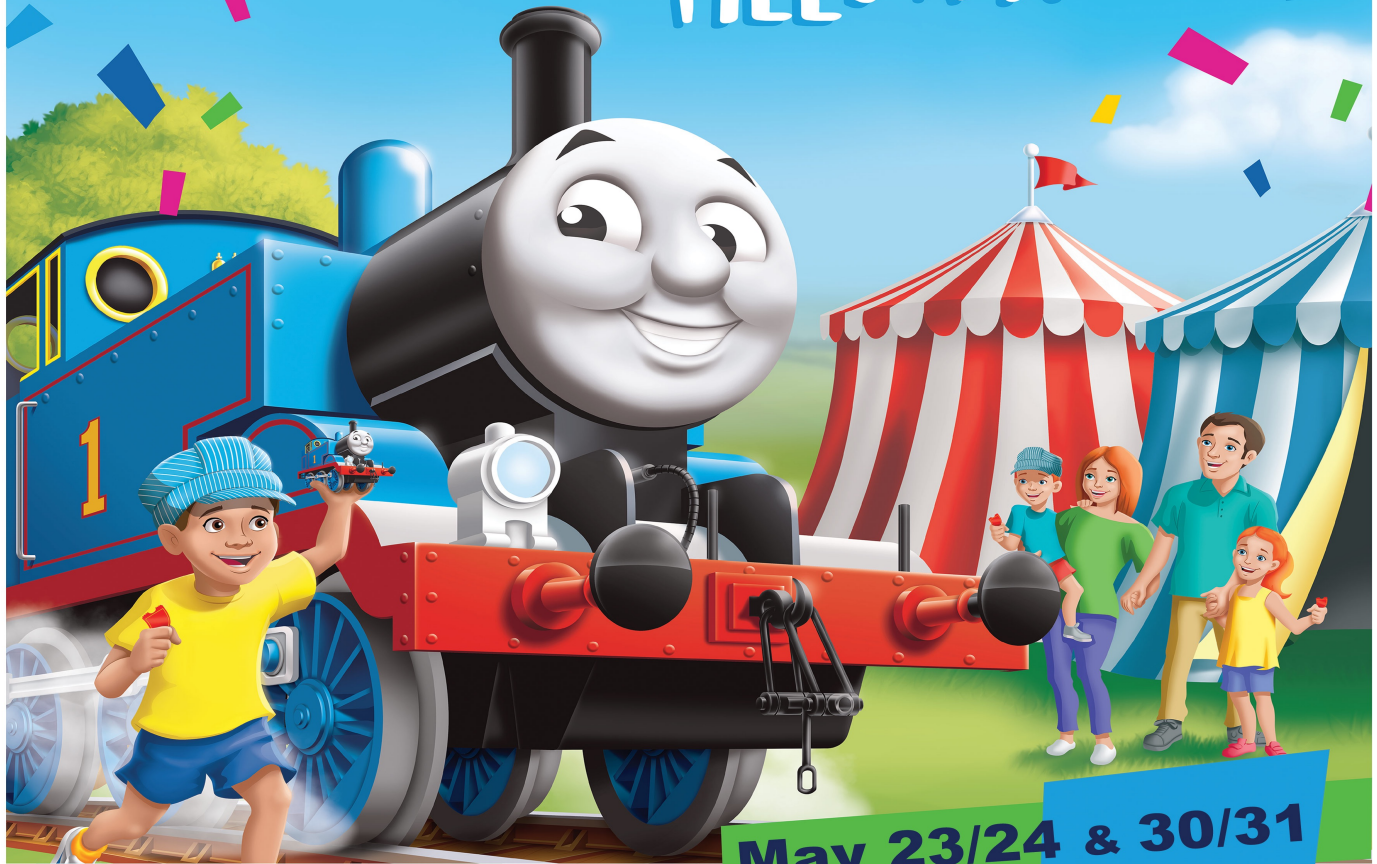
Mt. Hood Railroad went into receivership in September after its parent company, Iowa Pacific Holdings, defaulted on a \$5 million loan from Big Shoulders Capital LLC. Under the receivership, all of Mt. Hood Railroad’s assets and business operations were turned over to the court-appointed receiver: Novo Advisors, a financial advisory firm based in Chicago, where Iowa Pacific is based.

Mt. Hood Railroad’s day-to-day operations have been unaffected by the receivership, according to Kaufman, and the railroad continues to operate 'business as usual'.

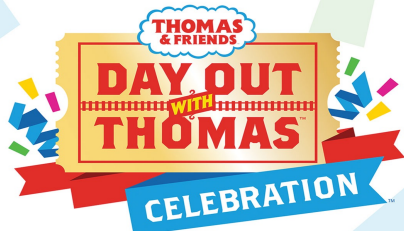
Meanwhile, Mt. Hood Railroad currently owes Hood River County approximately \$210,135 for failure to pay property taxes for the last three years (tax payments, interest and fees associated with late payment). Hood River County was in the process of resolving that payment, potentially by seizing railroad property, when the railroad went into receivership. That process is on hold for the duration of the receivership.

The legal aspects of the receivership are being handled in Chicago, with infrequent updates delivered to local county officials and others with a financial interest in the outcome. As of publication, “the receivership is still in place, but we expect there will be filings to dissolve the receivership,” said Hood River County Administrator Jeff Hecksel.

RIDE, PLAY, & STAY ALL DAY!



May 23/24 & 30/31



Presented by
AMTRAK

**West Coast Railway Park
Squamish, BC**

**10am, 11am, 12 noon,
1pm, 2pm & 3pm**

**For Tickets Visit: www.wcra.org
or call **604-898-9336****

DayOutWithThomas.com

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BACK COVER

Top & Bottom Photos: Ken Storey. Photos of the shutdown of all train movements stacked at Boston Bar on Jan. 31st due to numerous washouts and ensuing derailments.

TRIVIA ANSWER:

The labourers were were called 'navvies' and the European immigrants were paid between \$1 and \$2.50 per day. And they had to pay for their own food, clothing, transport to the job site, mail and medical care. After 2 1/2 months of hard labour, they could net as little as \$16. But the Chinese labourers, who did the more risky tasks like setting up the dynamite charges, were paid between 75 cents and \$1.25, paid in 'rice mats', which barely left anything to send home. Between 600 and 800 Chinese 'navvies' lost their lives in building the railway through the Rockies.



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