

Good News On Grant Application!

We have received great news on our Application for TEA Grant funding from Sacramento. Our application for approx. \$650,000 in funding has been approved! We have also obtained confirmation from Inyo County that the grant funded project to run rails from the Car Barn across the Owens River, which includes the reconstruction of the 1927 Tinnemaha Bridge, was to be formally accepted before the end of the year. This means that we now have funding in place and a city-county-state-federal commitment to proceed with the environmental studies necessary to confirm the feasibility of our long awaited rail project. It is our hope, and the county's intention, to proceed with preparing the environmental study proposal so that it can go to bid and hopefully begin before spring of 2003. We anticipate having preliminary findings next summer and a completed study in hand before the end of the year 2003. The environmental study work is the last major hurdle to be cleared toward making our dream of providing a living rail experience across the Owens River and toward the town of Bishop, a reality. The Grant includes funding for doing the environmental work as well as grading from Laws Museum, across the river and on toward Williams Creek. It also provides funding for reconstructing our historic railway bridge across the Owens and for laying track between Laws and the river crossing. We still must seek additional funding to extend the rail beyond the crossing point; but we are encouraged by this major, initial success. We are confident that when people see this great first step, all the future pieces will begin to fall into place. This success has come as a result of the serious commitment and sincere effort of many individuals and government entities. They include the Bishop City Council and Manager, The Inyo County Board of Supervisors and County Administrator and County Staff, several individuals within the Caltrans organization both locally and in Sacramento, as well as several members of the Board of Directors of the Owens Valley Railway Company. Obtaining such significant funding for a project of this nature further illustrates the clear value our project has to all who value the preservation of history. Thanks

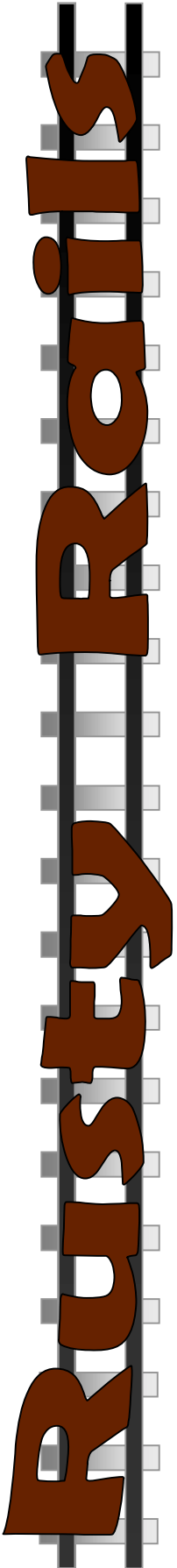
to the support of each and every member of our organization we are confident that soon after the Brill Car restoration project is completed, we will have a worthy route in place on which she can run.

SP BRIDGE DISMANTLED AND MOVED

Those of you that have been following our progress through these newsletters know that the Union Pacific Railroad (successor to the Southern Pacific RR) had offered to sell to the OVRC for one dollar, the old SP Narrow Gauge Bridge spanning the Owens River south of Big Pine, with the proviso that the bridge be removed from its location. Well, thanks to the tireless dedication of the entire railway group, and the overwhelming support of the local Bishop community, the Owens Valley Railway Company has completed this project. The old timber bridge has been dismantled, transported, and preserved for re-assembly. With this action we moved one step closer to the reality of a railroad operating in the Owens Valley again.

Two dedicated O.V.R.C. members, Jon Anderson and Paul Thompson crafted the cost-saving removal plan, but the successful execution of the plan was the result of tremendous volunteerism. Before the dismantling process began, Los Angeles Dept of Water & Power employee Terry Williams re-graded the 1.3-mile dirt road (much of it actually the old railroad grade) from highway 395 to the bridge's location below Tinnemaha Reservoir. California Dept. of Forestry Owens Valley Camp Chief Ken Toy and Lieutenant Larry Martinez assigned a Conservation Camp Crew for manpower and the Bishop Rotary club made a \$2,000 donation to help cover the expected costs. A detailed set of plans was made of the existing bridge, in order to aid in reconstruction later, by retired Civil Engineer John Naaken. These in turn were reviewed and accepted by County Public Works Director Jeff Jewett.

On Jan. 2nd the work finally got under way. A 17-man CDF crew, under the direction of Capt. Dan Heiser and Capt. Len Cudney, removed the bolts, and the crew manually carried the 121 ties, the 64 15 foot long walkway boards, and numerous support wood beams to shore. Working closely with the CDF crew each day, OVRC member John Martindale solved the technical material removal problems. Paul Thompson and Bill Kelly tagged

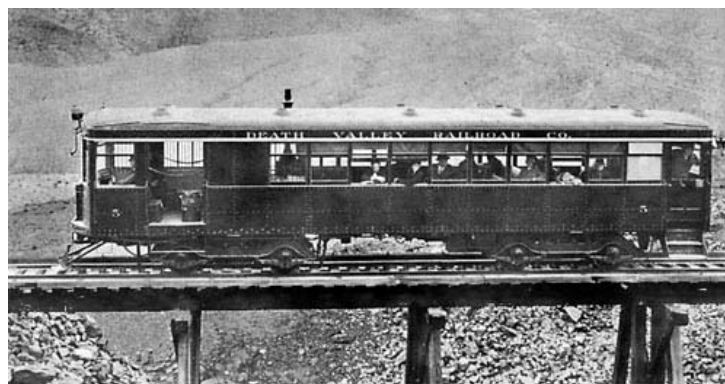


each part to identify its location on the bridge in order to assure accurate reconstruction later. By the third day, all the ties, walkway boards, and support members had been removed. OVRC Director Bob Bell used his truck to haul seven loads of wood boards and beams, bolts, and misc. parts from the bridge site to the Laws R.R. Museum. Hank & Tib Wilkerson of Inyo Mono Body Shop, and Vance Johnston of Mr. K's Automotive brought their tow trucks to the bridge site and within an hour 60' of the large wood timbers weighing 6,000 pounds were winched to shore. By the end of the day the volunteer crew had successfully pulled over 24,000 pounds of wood timbers safely to shore.

On Day Four Rich Lober's crane semi-truck from Roof Components Inc. was brought to the bridge site and within two hours crane operator Kevin Drake, assisted by the CDF crew, had the 24,000 pounds of beams loaded and ready for transportation to the Laws storage site. By the next day Rich Lober had unloaded all the heavy beams at Laws where they are stored until the bridge is reconstructed as an historical display crossing the Owens River in connection with the Laws Museum and as part of the soon to be built railway route from Laws toward Bishop.

Local residents Lefty Irwin, Fred Bear, Dave Storey, and John Martindale loaned tools for this project. Scott and Wendy of High Country Lumber, Bob Zeigler of Southern California Edison, and Kitty Pratt of LADWP made material donations. The water safety items were loaned by Gary Olson of Bishop Creek Lodge, Jerry Core, and also included Lefty Irwin's boat. O.V.R.C. members Bob Selvidge, Jim Saylor, and Bruce Dishion also worked at the site. Once again the community has demonstrated that they really do support the building of a tourist railroad from Laws to Bishop.

The original Carson and Colorado Railroad never crossed the Owens River at the location of this bridge. The railroad was re-routed in 1927 when the Tinnemaha Reservoir was built. At that time the railroad crossed the river in two locations to get around the reservoir. The other bridge was destroyed some time ago. Some of the old grade and a small trestle are still visible along the east side of Highway 395 just north of the Poverty Hills.



ELECTION OF OFFICERS

An election of officers of the company was held at the most recent Board of Directors meeting. Jerry Core is President; Jim Morrow, Vice President; Jon Anderson, Secretary; and Jim Pittman, Treasurer.

TRACK WORK

Jim Saylor, Board Member, and our track-laying guru, has roughly staked out a possible route from our existing track to the Owens River. Jim figures it would take 5000 ties, 10000 tie plates, and 20000 spikes to lay the two miles of track we have on hand. This route is not our final selection, but only one suggested route. The final route has not yet been chosen. Jim is currently working on possible donations of materials to help reach our goal.

CORRECTION

In our last newsletter we incorrectly identified the person that has donated the new window frames and windows for the Brill Car. The company that made this very generous contribution to the restoration project is the SW Sash and Door Company of Fountain Valley California. SW Sash is a custom window design and construction business. Among its many customers are Disneyland and Knott's Berry Farm, for whom they have built numerous windows for their various attractions. The company did a beautiful job of recreating the original wooden window frames that were in the Brill car. We apologize for any confusion that may have resulted from our incorrect identification. We also apologize for not mentioning many of the other people that have contributed their skills and expertise as well as time and money to this project.