

# Snowshed

December 2008

Volume 2, Number 1



#### News Flash!

- Town working with TDRS to locate Caboose downtown
- Interim museum to focus on area rail-roading

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## Caboose to become Interim Museum

### OUR SECOND ISSUE

Thank you to all providing feedback on our first issue of the Snowshed. Please continue to let us know what you would like to see in future issues.

This second issue will focus on the efforts underway to convert our 1953 era Southern Pacific caboose into an interim museum to be positioned down town adjacent to the old railroad depot. A number of fellow members have been working diligently over the past several months to overcome both the physical and political issues to make this happen. Many thanks go to Bob Bell, Don Davis, Jim Hood, Ron Mason, Keith Pattison, Frank Ross, Nelson Van Gundy and too many others to list.

As with all such projects, our greatest need is for financial support. Given the state of the economy and subsequent needs for local social services, our hopes for historic community support have dimmed. Any support you are able to provide will be greatly appreciated.

As you may note, Ed Geiger is no longer a member of your Board. Ed is fighting some health issues and felt he would be unable to provide the attention deserved. We thank Ed for his efforts categorizing our book and wish him a speedy *return*.

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The great news continues as our Caboose Museum / Exhibit planning moves thru the refinement stage and we continue the approval process thru the Town of Truckee. Our gratitude goes out to our members Don Davis (Town approval) and Keith Pattison (Strategic Planning) for all their hard work. Also, a big thank you to members that have agreed to step up to design and help construct our exhibits. Special thanks go to Frank Ross and the Gary Davis Design Group for their commitment in preparing the drawings and specifications for the project.

We are currently also applying to 6 local non-profit foundations and community organizations to fund the purchase of labor and materials we will need to complete the Caboose Museum / Exhibit after the approval and design process is completed. So far the Contractors Association has agreed to construct our handicap ramp and the Truckee Rotary Foundation has made a cash contribution.

As with any organization, we need more members!!! Not only to help sustain the organization but to increase our base of members to recruit docents and get involved in the many other tasks we will continue to work on, such as equipment restoration. I believe it is every member's obligation to spread the word. We all know other friends and railroad enthusiasts and it is vitally important that you remember to suggest to them to look at our website, print out an application, and join the fun. Be sure to continually check out our website because Keith Pattison is continually changing and adding information on the site.

We now have over 800 railroad books to sell. The list is on the website and all proceeds go to our operating budget. Please further support us by increasing your knowledge and interest in Railroad History and buy a book or two.

As always, I encourage everyone to attend our board meetings and get involved, the more help we have the more we can do, the more we do the more we can demonstrate to the community and ourselves that we

have left the station behind and we are picking up steam. Even in these tough economic times our efforts will move forward and any donations of time on our various projects will be appreciated. Spread the word, get involved, get other railroad friends to join, make suggestions, and have the chance to get involved in building a museum from the ground up is a rare opportunity.

Bob Bell, President

## The New Truckee Railroad Museum

Keith Pattison

- A place to Learn
- A place to Interact
- A place to Enjoy

That's the vision of the Truckee Railroad Museum. Even though this initial museum fits into only 267 square feet, there are many stories told of the impact the railroads have had on the Town of Truckee.

Starting in the foyer, the thank you plaque for all the contributors is right in front for all to see. To the right, the artists concept of the future museum is shown. It will be incorporated in the Railyard redevelopment project in downtown Truckee. In addition, plans and events for the museum are proudly displayed.

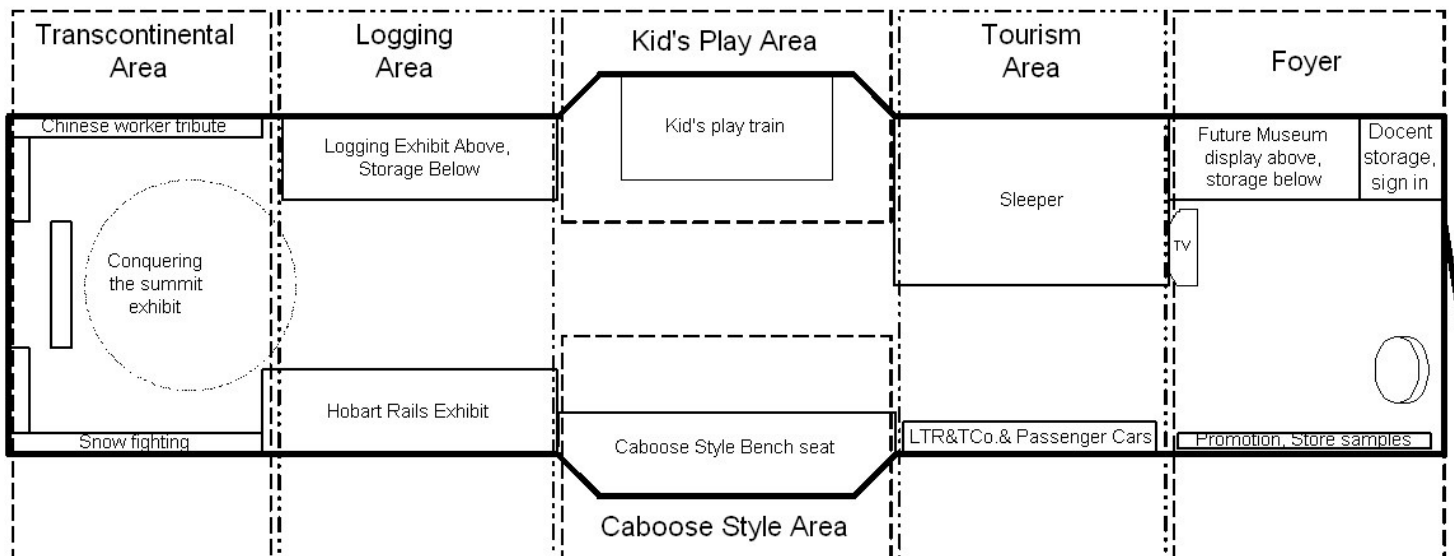
Next, the hallway is formed by a portion of the museum's sleeper car removed and restored for display in the museum. A view of tourism through time is displayed in the sleeper "window" which is a TV showing historic pictures from the train of the Truckee area. Across the hall is the story of the Lake Tahoe Railway and Transportation Company which is responsible for opening up tourism to the Tahoe region.

The hallway empties into an area for kids to play that has stylistic elements of a caboose. A small train will be there for the kids to enjoy "hands on." A sitting area will provide rest for the weary and a view up and down the historic Truckee downtown row.

Exiting the play area brings the logging exhibition. A scale diorama of logs being brought from the forest and loaded on to trains is the focal point. Across from that an exhibit shows various rail sizes, gauges, and equipment sizes with the story of how Hobart Estates used all of that as part of their lumber empire.

Finally, in the First Transcontinental Railroad exhibition, the story of all the challenges the railroad has had to overcome to conquer Donner Summit are shown. From the high energy rotary snow plow, to the remarkable contribution of the Chinese railroad workers, all the challenges of the summit are explored.

Come see this and more when the museum opens this summer!



## Making it Happen

As TDRS President Bell indicated in his report last quarter, we have begun development of an actual museum. We will modify the Caboose donated by Pam Dobbas and Teichert Construction Inc. to house the museum and temporarily locate it downtown. We are starting small, in order to gain museum experience and to provide an example of what we can do as a means to attract public and financial support for a larger museum down the road. The train depot parking lot, in the center of Truckee, next to the mainline tracks, across from Commercial Row, seemed to be the optimum site. Not only will it meet our goals but also it will provide an attraction downtown, which pleases the merchants. Further, it is not a disadvantage that the town owns the parking lot.

The first step was to propose the idea of temporarily locating the caboose in the parking lot to the Town Council. In November, they authorized the Town staff to work with us on the details of a plan. Since that time, we have developed a set of “deal points” for the Town Attorney to incorporate into a formal agreement. These “deal points” identify what the town will do and what we will do. We expect the agreement to be ratified by Town Council by mid March.

The next step was to redesign the parking lot to accommodate the Caboose. Parking is at a premium downtown so a minimum loss of stalls was a major goal. Frank Ross, a TDRS member and also a member of a Tahoe City design and engineering firm, the Gary Davis Group, took on the task. Frank succeeded in making space for the caboose and an ADA compliant access ramp in the NE corner of the lot without losing a single parking stall. This made the Down-

Don Davis

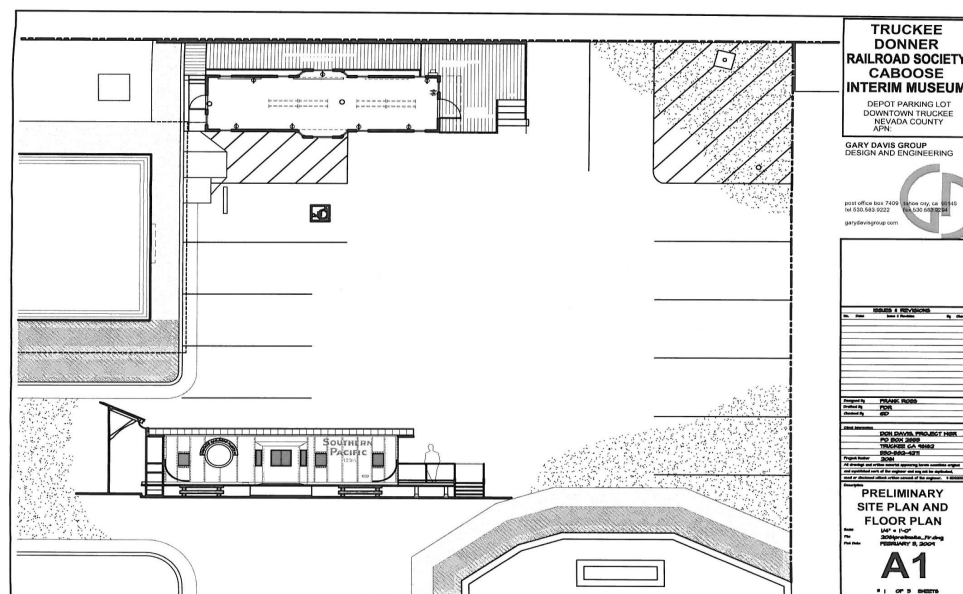
town merchants very happy. He also managed to fit in a viewing platform that will be ideal for watching passing trains.

For several reasons we want to avoid excavating for a foundation or trenching to access underground power. There are concerns that disturbing the soil will uncover contamination resulting from past uses that require soil remediation, an expensive and time-consuming process. Excavation may disturb the several underground pipelines and utilities crisscrossing underground. And most important, we have to remove the caboose and its foundation and return the site to parking use only, when we open the larger museum. A local consulting firm, Holdrege and Kull, came up with an innovative design using railroad tie cribbing that meets the seismic requirements without having to excavate. By placing the caboose close to the Depot building, we were able to access power lines hidden under the roof eave with a short jumper, avoiding the need to trench for underground power.

On Feb. 11, the plan was presented to the Town’s Historic Preservation Advisory Commission. Their charter is to review development within the downtown district for consistency with its’ historic character. Since we have a historic caboose and the museum will focus on Truckee history, we didn’t have a problem and were approved with only a few minor items to resolve.

The plan at the right depicts the depot, at upper left, with the location of the caboose/museum to its right.

The drawing at the bottom is an elevation depicting how the caboose and deck will look from Donner Pass Road.



## Society Mission

### Board of Directors:

Bob Bell—President

Jim Hood—Vice President

Don Davis—Secretary

Nelson Van Gundy—  
Treasurer and Historian

Sandy Coots

Steve Disbrow

Dean Dvoracek

Rick McConn

Frank Ross

Dale Fowler

The mission of the Truckee Donner Railroad Society is to perpetuate the study and advancement of knowledge of working railroads in the Truckee Donner area with the goal of building a railroad museum to preserve and share what we have learned.

## Truckee Railroad Museum Vision

*Keeping Truckee railroads alive!*

Railroads of the Truckee area played a significant role in founding and developing the town of Truckee. From blasting black powder in the granite over Donner Lake, to hissing of the first steam coming to town, to lumberjack whistles in the mountains, to ice cracking as it loads in reefers, and tourists flocking to share the beauty of the area, The Truckee Railroad Museum tells the story.

- ◆ A place to Learn
- ◆ A place to Interact
- ◆ A place to Enjoy

Truckee Donner Railroad Society  
P.O. Box 3838  
Truckee, Ca 96160

[www.truckeedonerrailroadsociety.com](http://www.truckeedonerrailroadsociety.com)  
501(c) 3 non-profit organization

### Current Projects Seeking Support

- ◆ Caboose Museum Interior
- ◆ Crane Rehabilitation
- ◆ Rotary Restoration
- ◆ Sleeper Restoration
- ◆ Switcher Operational repair

If you are able to support any of these projects with your time, talent or dollars, please contact us.

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