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# FEVR FLASH

## EASTERN NEBRASKA CHAPTER NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1835 N. SOMERS, FREMONT, NE 68025

AUGUST, 2002

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### POINTS OF CONTACT:

**Eastern Nebraska Chapter and Fremont and Elkhorn Valley Railroad (FEVR)** - (402-727-0615) - 1835 N. Somers, Fremont, NE 68025

**Fremont Dinner Train** (402-727-8321 or 1-800-942-7245) - 650 N. H St., Fremont, NE 68025

### WHO WE ARE:

For those who missed our January, 2002, issue- a bit of explanation about the several organizations shown under "Points of Contact":

**Eastern Nebraska Chapter:** The chapter is one of over 170 organized under the National Railway Historical Society, which has nearly 20000 members nationwide. The Chapter, a non-profit organization, has ownership of all the physical assets pertinent to the railroad. It also maintains a museum of railroad artifacts at the depot in Fremont;

**Fremont and Elkhorn Valley Railroad (FEVR):** This is the railroad which is operated by the Chapter.

**Fremont Dinner Train:** This is a separate, privately owned organization which has its own railcars. It is highly regarded for its quality entertainment and food service. The Chapter and its railroad provide trackage and motive power for its operation on a fee per trip basis. This provides a source of income to sustain the Chapter activities. **NOTE:** All inquiries regarding reservations for the dinner train should go to the telephone contacts indicated to assure optimal service- not to the Chapter or to the railroad.

### GETTING READY:

As mentioned in the July issue, **Thomas**, the friendly little engine, will be back **May 30-June 1 and June 5-8, 2003**. The Chapter is already planning for the visit to make sure he will again enjoy his visit and his friends just as he did this past May. If you missed this year- make plans for next year. If you visited this year- come again! Ticket

sales will begin at least two months

before the visit- more details later.

### THE MUSEUM:

A museum of railroad artifacts is maintained in the depot at 1835 N. Somers. (This is on the west side of Fremont- signs on 23<sup>rd</sup> Street just east of the railroad crossings show the way). It is open before regular excursion train times. Because of volunteer staffing, other hours vary- call the Chapter number for information. A gift shop is available.

### TRAVEL:

Regular excursion travel continues with departures on **Saturdays** and **Sundays**. The Saturday trip to Nickerson is a round trip of about two and one-half hours with the option of a visit to the Nickerson antique shop. The Sunday trip of about 30 miles is three and one-half hours long with time to visit Hooper's historic main street. Trips board at the depot at **1 PM** and leave on the mainline at **1:30 PM**. Reservations for excursion trips recommended. Charters available- call the depot.

### CABOOSE CHARTERS:

Caboose charters are now available on a year-around basis. These will include evening trips and are ideal for birthday celebrations, family gatherings, and similar events. Call the depot for update information.

### RAIL SCHOOL:

Each issue of this publication features information about railroads. The June issue discussed the history of the **air brake** - one of the inventions that have made the modern railroad possible.

The air brake, using stored compressed air, was invented by George Westinghouse in the 1860's and was in common use not very long after. A system of piping connecting the locomotive, which is the source of compressed air, is used to store air in reservoirs under each railcar. The brakes are applied when the same air

line has a reduction in pressure- a valve

on each car senses this as a signal to apply the stored air to cylinders which activate the wheel brakes. When braking is finished, the air line is then used to recharge the stored air. Each railcar and locomotive has a hanging **flexible rubber hose** at each end terminated with a metal coupling. These hoses couple the piping under each unit with the next unit and form a closed airline for the train. For almost all cars, these hoses must be manually coupled from unit to unit. The metal coupling devices- called "**gladhands**" - are made in such a way that they can be coupled easily, will stay coupled in usual service, but will pull apart with no damage under greater force. Should cars become uncoupled, the hoses will part, exhausting the airline pressure. This rapid reduction will cause all of the brakes on the air line to set tightly into an emergency application and is a "**fail safe**" feature.

If the air pressure is reduced in the line by a valve in the **locomotive only**, then all air would need to go through the airline to the locomotive. There would be a pressure reduction first at the part of the train just behind the locomotive, with braking, while the rear of the train would not be braking, causing the rear to run into the front. This could cause damage and derail a long train.

A **modification** soon was made to each car valve so that the line air would be exhausted **more rapidly at each valve**- all brakes apply soon and reduce the run-in effect. However, in spite of improvements, anyone who has been around around a rail yard no doubt has heard a series of "bangs" between cars going from the front to rear of the train as the rear cars run into the ones ahead when stopping.

Freight car brakes, once starting to release, release completely. Passenger brakes are more complicated and can release partially. More about brakes later.



**RAILSCENE:** Working on the railroad: Employees Scott Egbers and Lawrence Addleman clearing the line of trees and brush, July 2002; temperatures in the 90's.

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