

THE FEVR FLASH

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEBRASKA RAILROAD MUSEUM
1835 N. SOMERS, FREMONT, NE 68025, AUGUST, 2014

POINTS OF CONTACT:

The **Nebraska Railroad Museum** (www. FremontRailroad.com) address is 1835 N. Somers Ave., Fremont, Nebraska, 68025, with voice and fax access at 402- 727 -0615.

BACK ISSUES:

Back issues of the FLASH and links to numerous railroad related sites may be viewed at www.FremontRailroad.com.

NOTE: YOU NEED TO HAVE NRM MEMBERSHIP TO CONTINUE RECEIVING THE FLASH.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

(Note: the following is not the official meeting report and only summarizes the activities. Only the approved meeting minutes sent to NRM members is the official report.)

The NRM Board of Directors met at the NRM Depot in Fremont on **August 6**, 2014 for the regular monthly meeting.

All BOD members were present.

The treasurer's report was approved.

The departmental reports were discussed.

(Detail items from the meeting of August 6 were not available at the time of publication.)

(Information from the Arkansas-Democrat-Gazette, the NTSB, and the Fremont Tribune is used in the following articles)

ANOTHER HEAD ON COLLISION:

Two Union Pacific freight trains collided **head on** August 17 at about 2:30 AM south of Hoxie, Arkansas. Hoxie is about 90 miles north west of Memphis, TN.



The UP track is a CTC controlled single track in the town and has a diamond with a double track BNSF line. There is a transfer track between the two lines in town. Fortunately, **none** of the collision took place in the town itself but just south of it.

Two crew members were **killed** and

two were injured. Although there was a fire from burning fuel and a tank car reportedly containing alcohol, no toxic materials were released. The alcohol was an unrefined type to be processed for human consumption. There were about 14 different chemicals on the two trains.

About 500 people were evacuated but soon allowed to return to their homes.

(Editor's note: This event appears to be a similar situation to the crash at Goodwell, OK in 2012 wherein a train that was supposed to wait on a siding did not do so. The NTSB determined at that accident that the apparent main cause was the color blindness of the engineer which caused him to mis-read the signal aspects.)

Union Pacific could not comment on probable cause pending **release** of information from the NTSB.



On the NTSB website, an **investigator** is pictured carrying the apparently undamaged event recorder from derailed UP 9707 which was the southbound lead locomotive. The crew on that unit died in the collision.

The first train had **two** locomotives and 86 cars and the second had two locomotives and 92 cars. On this track, the majority traffic is northbound.

(Editor: Fatigue on the part of the crew that was to be clear of the main line might well have been a cause. Research has shown that in a "partially asleep" state one can perform functions that are routine and not remember them later. An example is when people drive to a destination when very tired and then when arriving cannot remember the trip. It is possible for a train to enter a main line from a siding either thru a spring switch designed for the purpose or by forcing the switch mechanism. PTC when fully implemented probably would have prevented this accident.)

The **TEXAS EAGLE** twice daily Amtrak train connecting Chicago and San Antonio was delayed by the accident, adding up to 3 hours to its 32 hour

schedule.

STOPPED AT NORTH BEND:

A Union Pacific train was forced into an **emergency** stop for over 30 minutes August 28 at North Bend because of trespassers.

A North Bend Central volley ball **team** and apparently at least one adult were assembled for a photograph on or near the track.

Since at least **50** trains travel that double track daily with bi-directional simultaneous running possible, this could have had fatal consequences.

The participants could have all been charged with trespassing and any adults could have been charged with **endangerment** of minors.

Over **800** trespassers are killed or injured each year on train tracks in spite of efforts by organizations like Operation Lifesaver.

There seems to be an unfortunate increase in the tendency of the public to want to take **photos** of groups on railroad bridges, tunnels, and overpasses.

The distance needed to stop a hundred or more car train can easily exceed more than **one-half** mile.

END OF TRACK

Information has been received of the death of **Gene H. Zimmerman** in an assisted living center in Council Bluffs. (December 22, 1923 - August 28, 2014).

He previously had lived in Fremont and Woodcliff. He was preceded in death by his wife Marilyn in July 2012.

He served as office manager in the NRM depot in the early 2000's. Prior to that he was a railroad telegrapher and member of a telegrapher's club.

A memorial service is pending at the Ludvigsen Mortuary in Fremont.

