

Report

Of San Diego County Rail Museum Activity

Issue 1

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50 IS STILL AROUND

As recently as one year ago San Diego & Arizona Eastern locomotive #50 was in the Bay Shore yards. Even today this locomotive may still be around - although in a junk yard. In December usable rail was removed from San Diego streets.

With the passage of time acquisition of railroad equipment becomes increasingly difficult and prospects for a San Diego County Travel Town and/or an operating rail museum appear to dim. It appeared to Douglas Duncan, Charles Gerdes and Eric Sanders that interested persons should meet and review the Museum situation. A letter of invitation was written and a mailing list was hastily compiled. If YOU did not receive a notice please consider this report as a belated but cordial invitation.

MEETING NUMBER ONE

Twelve persons on October 18, 1959 met in the Balboa Park Organ Pavilion Office and reviewed rail museum activity available to San Diego County railfans. Discussed also was the feasibility of establishing an operating rail museum in this area. The group agreed that a second meeting should be held and that there should be a further exchange of ideas. Certain individual assignments were made.

Discussion concerned the problems and challenges inherent in a museum project. It became apparent that the establishment of and the operation of an operating rail museum is a monumental undertaking. On the other hand it was also clear that a local operation did not need to start from scratch. The Railway Historical Society of San Diego, Inc. now owns two operating street cars and the body of a third. A few lengths of rail and some ties are also on hand. One of the members present owns the body of Birney street car.

All present at the meeting agreed that the RHSofSD would be and should be

involved in a museum project if one should be initiated. Many felt that a museum should be within the RHSofSD framework; some felt that results would be better obtained through the organization of a separate single-purpose group.

Land acquisition appeared to be a prime problem. Railroad access was deemed to be highly advisable. Sites suggested, including line and off-line locations, were: National City waterfront, Rose Canyon locations, former NC&O roadbed above Sweetwater Dam, former San Diego & Phoenix roadbed in Otay Valley, an Otay gravel pit site, and former Balboa Park street car right-of-way.

OFFICIAL NOTICE

Second meeting for those who are interested in San Diego Rail Museum activity is scheduled for Sunday, January 17, 7:30 p.m. in the Balboa Park Organ Pavilion office. YOU are cordially invited. Come and bring a friend. Notify interested persons.

Rolling stock discussed at the meeting included the previously mentioned street cars, Salt Works equipment, and other "light railway" equipment. Jack Stodelle stated that one group of San Diego railfans was actively interested in acquiring an operating steam locomotive.

Problems in powering a street railway system were outlined. Role of the Orange Empire Traction Co. trolley museum at Perris in local planning was discussed. Street car 171 is at Perris, RHSofSD has contributed financially and several San Diego area railfans are members.

SINCE THE MEETING

Dick Pennick reports that the Sweetwater Canyon roadbed may be taken over by a governmental unit for highway purposes.