

THE MAIL CAR

June 2021



Bishop Museum
& Historical Society
dba
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& Historical Site
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How many railroads actually operated in Inyo County?
Answer: There were a total of 17 railroads proposed to connect Inyo County with other parts of California and/or Nevada, but only nine actually ran trains. The Southern Pacific and the Carson and Colorado, of course, and also The Death Valley Railroad, The Inyo Development Company, The Lila C. Railroad, National Soda Products Railroad, the Nevada and California Railway Company, Pacific Coast Borax Company "Baby Gauge" mine railroad, and the Tonopah and Tidewater Railroad.



Pete Watercott

A Message From The President

The results of the Board of Directors election are in! Out of an amazing field of nine highly qualified candidates, Denise Gillespie, Robert De La Riva, and Brad Keehn are our newly elected board members. All three have been dedicated volunteers at the museum, and I look forward to the new energy they will bring to our Board of Directors! Denise, Robert, and Brad will officially take their seats at our July 12 board meeting. Come to the meeting to cheer them on! I would also like to thank outgoing board members Karin Coy and Ted Williams. It was a pleasure to work with Karin and Ted, and they will both continue to work with us at museum, Karin on the train crew and Ted assisting with keeping our website up to date. Two trees will be planted on the museum grounds to honor Karin and Ted for their years of service and dedication to Laws.

Plans are well underway for the Curley Fletcher Birthday Poetry Rendezvous September 24-26 2021. The big day at the museum will be Saturday, September 25. We are excited to have cowboy poet, Waddie Mitchell, to headline the event. Waddie was a working cowboy out in Northern Nevada, when he got a call from Johnny Carson to appear on his show. His appearance on national TV was the first time the general public experienced cowboy poetry. Waddie was instrumental in getting the Elko National Cowboy Poetry Gathering started, and continues to perform as one of the most popular and loved American poets. Waddie will be joined by Carolyn Dufurrena, who lives on a ranch 200 miles north of Winnemucca, and Laurel Ann Bogen, a "city" poet from Los Angeles. This event encourages participation with open stage opportunities for those who would like to recite a poem or sing a song. We encourage local students involved with Poetry Out Loud to perform. Along with poetry, the event will offer music, kids activities, Brill Car rides, food and Arts and Crafts vendors, a silent auction, and the famous and popular Laws Museum pie auction! Watch the website for tickets on sale soon!

Summer time is here! Come out and enjoy Laws Museum!

Notes From The Engine

House The Engine House gang is busy with painting and doing some minor repairs on the "display train". Many thanks to volunteers Paul Kirsten, Don Stansifer, Lynna Walker, Beverly Schroeder, Bob Bauer, Paul Thompson, Marty Blodget, Jim Morrow, and help scraping old paint from the Inyo County Probation Dept. At the time of the time of this writing, all the cars have been repainted and we are preparing to do some needed repairs to Caboose 401.





Bob Hoyle

Hoyle's History Five weeks, almost to the day, Law's re-opened and the museum remains open, as Inyo County, for now, is in the yellow tier. On Mondays Raven covers the gift shop / information center. Tuesdays it is Sue Butler, Wednesday it is Kathrine Daniels, then Thursday and Friday I cover and on Saturday it is the ever popular Robert and finally on Sunday Lynna takes her turn. Coming out of a scaled back Mule Days celebration over the Memorial Day weekend, it sure was great and welcome to see the people flocking back to view and walk through Laws again. On Sunday as I sat on the porch of the original Agents house, waving to the Brill car and the passengers aboard as they passed by, I thought that this is what has been missing and hope it will last through summer and beyond.

Of course, with Inyo County calling the shots in order for Laws to re-open safely, I feel a bit safer and being vaccinated really helps, but there are still those who come out to Laws resisting and questioning the wearing of masks, granted they are few and far between but they do exist and missing out over a mask is truly their loss, but I digress. Since coming back to Laws on limited hours, it is outstanding to see the cars, campers, and motorhomes roll in, spilling out families young and old alike to have a view at history, our history or to just relax and have a picnic lunch. To quote Clint Eastwood, "it really makes my day"! What I find that is really neat is that a large number of those folks have been here before and do not hesitate to come back and donate again.

On a side note, I would like to add my two or three cents about the re-modeled gift shop, it has always made money, but with the items we now have in stock, I cannot begin to tell you how much it sells itself and if you have not been out to see it, well you need to make a trip. I have people enter and are amazed at what they see. Sometimes the history will have to wait until after shopping, heck I had a couple a few days back come in not once not twice but three times. There is nothing like selling Christmas ornaments or other Christmas related items while outside it is one hundred degrees, I love it! I hope, as we all do, that Inyo County continues to improve with Covid-19, and that Laws will remain open to the public forever. It's a great place to visit and volunteer. I often ask visitors about what they saw on a scale from 1 to 10, I always get the response I am looking for, "ELEVEN"!

Go Sox!!

NOTES FROM THE ENGINE HOUSE Continued from the previous page.

Caboose 401 has been cleaned up inside and new age-appropriate locks put on the walk-through doors. Soon it will be moved into the engine house for a new top layer on the roof and other repairs.

In addition to all this activity, we have been doing some refresher training on operations in anticipation of being able to commence summer train operations. Thus far John Berger, Stu Richardson, Beverly Schroeder, Paul Kirsten, Tom Chinzi, Don Stansifer and Jim Morrow are ready to roll as Engineers or Conductors. We like to spread the wealth, so if any of you are interested in participating in the train operations contact the Museum and we will arrange training days for you. Note: California laws require a person must be at least 18 years of age to operate machinery, and in addition, we require a valid drivers license.

Come on out and say hello. We always love to have visitors!



Jim Morrow, Paul Kirsten, Paul Thompson, and Don Stansifer

*Of the railroads that operated in Inyo County, Which railroad stayed in business in Inyo County the longest?
Answer: The Southern Pacific Railroad. It operated the Keeler Branch (originally the C&C) narrow gauge from 1900 to 1960, and it operated the Jawbone Branch to Lone Pine from 1913 to the early 1980's.*