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Summer 2022  
149th Edition

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**THE NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM**  
An Agency of the Nevada Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs



**Special Expanded Issue!**

**NEWSLETTER OF THE NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM**

*Locomotives Come Alive at the Great Western Steam Up*

by Adam Michalski

After several months of planning and preparation, the Nevada State Railroad Museum, Carson City, hosted the Great Western Steam Up, July 1-4, 2022. The Great Western Steam Up (GWSU) celebrated the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the completion of the Virginia & Truckee with visiting steam locomotives and steam-powered equipment, train rides, live entertain-



Southern Pacific No. 18, the Slim Princess, hauls a passenger train during the Great Western steam Up. (Photo by John Gaffney)

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*Heavy Hauling: The Logistics of Moving Locomotives*

by Chris de Witt

The Great Western Steam Up has come and gone. It was spectacular with many wonderful locomotives, great characters, fun vendors, scrumptious food, and good music. Having successfully concluded the program, I, for one, am glad we did it and now it is someone else's turn to put on a good show. The planning started many



(Continued on page 3) The Eureka arrives for the Great Western Steam Up.

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## SAGEBRUSH HEADLIGHT NEWSLETTER

**Adam Michalski**, Curator of Education: Editor  
Correspondence: [amichalski@nevadaculture.org](mailto:amichalski@nevadaculture.org)

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## Message from the President, Todd Moore

This issue of the *Sagebrush Headlight* is dedicated to the Great Western Steam Up held at the museum over the 2022 Fourth of July holiday weekend. This event would not have been possible without extraordinary support from the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum. This support took many forms.

First, the Friends group was instrumental in providing event planning and organizational expertise. Planning for the event began approximately 18 months in advance and we were able to draw on members who have extensive experience planning and running major events such as the Rose Parade.

Second, thanks to the generosity of many Friends members, the organization provided a significant share of the seed funds necessary to plan and carry out the event. This included funds for ticketing, promotion, event infrastructure and professional event planning.

Third, and most importantly, Friends members provided the critical staffing necessary for the largest event in recent Carson City history to run smoothly and safely. The event required more than 50 volunteers each day just to cover basic needs. Friends members assisted in train operations, visitor services, vending and logistics, including the extremely hard physical labor needed to unload and load the many pieces of visiting railroad equipment.

The impact of this successful event on the Friends cannot be understated. Our membership numbers increased approximately 30 percent during the year of the event, our finances are strong, and we established a framework to build upon for future events. Planning is already underway for a second major event that will further cement the Nevada State Railroad Museum in Carson City as one of America's finest and most exciting transportation museums.

Thank you for all of your ongoing support.

**FNSRM Board Meetings are scheduled for February 6, 2023 & April 3, 2023. All members of the Friends organization are encouraged to attend.**



## Heavy Hauling *(continued from page 1)*

months before the event and slowly ramped up to the weekend of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. My contribution was in the area of logistics of moving equipment on and off site and mechanical support for the visiting engines. An early question was, "What theme could we work towards?" The answer was, "to amass the best collection of existing Virginia & Truckee (V&T) and Nevada heritage locomotives."

The museum chose to go with a sole source trucking company from Las Vegas to move the railroad equipment. This approach has its pros and cons. The trucking company was responsible for moving 13 pieces of rolling stock to include locomotives, tenders, and cars. The



The Reno arrives for unloading at The Great Western Steam Up.

balance of the arriving equipment, six pieces, arrived by other means, including: two locomotives, one tender, one yarding engine, a steamboat, and a

steam fire pumper.

Communication with the trucking company was going through the director's office,

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## Great Western Steam Up *(continued from page 1)*

ment, food trucks, a beer garden, craft vendors, and more.

The Great Western Steam Up featured nine visiting steam locomotives, including six operational steam locomotives. The operating locomotives included: Antelope & Western No. 1; the Bluestone Mining & Smelting Railroad No. 1; Eureka & Palisade No. 4; Nevada County Narrow Gauge No. 5; Santa Cruz Portland Cement No. 2, the *Chiggen*; and Southern Pacific No. 18. Except for Antelope & Western No. 1 and the *Chiggen*, all of the operating locomotives had ties to Nevada railroad history, having worked in the Silver State at some time during their lifespan.

While the remaining three visiting steam locomotives were inoperable, they were integral to the Great Western Steam Up celebration. These

*Museum Director Daniel Thielen (left) introduces the Senior Manager of Heritage Operations for the Union Pacific Railroad, Ed Dickens, to the attendees of the question and answer session on July 3, 2022. (Photo by David Calvert)*



locomotives included Virginia & Truckee's *Reno* (11), *Genoa* (12), and *J. W. Bowker* (21). The *Reno*, purchased by Tom Gray, was repatriated to Nevada in 2021 after a long absence. The *Genoa* and *J. W. Bowker* are currently on

loan from the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento. The addition of these three steam engines to the Great Western Steam Up's lineup with the current stable of V&T locomotives in the NSRM collection made for the largest gathering of surviving V&T motive power in 75 years.

In addition to the steam locomotives on display during the Great Western Steam Up, the museum featured other exciting displays of mechanical equipment and demonstrations. Model Ts from the Western Pacific Railroad Museum and the



*V&T locomotives Nos. 12 and 21, the Genoa and the J. W. Bowker, respectively, bask in the sun outside the NSRM shop. Both locomotives are currently on loan from the California State Railroad Museum. (Photo by Cristol Digangi)*

collection of Ryan Blake were on display. Steam-powered items included: a fire pumper from Virginia City; a former Reno Fire Department ladder truck; a steam donkey; a steam-powered printing press and steam-powered shave ice machine from the Kinetic Steam Works; and a steamboat. A blacksmith and metalworker were also on hand to demonstrate their wares.

An exciting last-minute addition to the Great Western Steam Up lineup included a visit from historical rail preservation legend Ed Dickens. Mr. Dickens is the Senior Manager of Heritage

*(Continued on page 5)*



Operations for the Union Pacific Railroad and is well known for his work to bring Union Pacific “Big Boy” locomotive No. 4014 back to operation. Mr. Dickens gave a presentation on the Union Pacific Steam Program on July 2, as well as an interactive question and answer session with GWSU visitors on July 3. Visitors appreciated learning more about the Union Pacific Steam Program and having the ability to meet Mr. Dickens at the Great Western Steam Up.

The Great Western Steam Up would not have been complete without the live entertainment, refreshments, and craft vendors who participated in the festivities. Each day of the event featured musical acts from around the region performing on entertainment stage. In Gibson Park, the Nevada Gunfighters staged

a gunfight each day, as well. A variety of food trucks stopped by each day to feed the hungry crowds of visitors. Meanwhile, the Rotary Club’s beer tent became a popular destination for visitors to have a drink and get out of the sun for a bit. Over 25 different craft vendors and non-profit organizations sold their goods or promoted themselves during the four-day event, too.

Museum staff and volunteers made sure the visitor experience was not overlooked. Most of the operating steam locomotives offered train rides for the vis-



GWSU attendees take a ride on the handcar. (Photo by David Calvert)

iting public from the historic Wabuska Depot. A narrow gauge train and a standard gauge train alternated runs to maximize the amount of rides to be offered to the public. Also, this provided some variety of the trains that could be operated and gave more opportunities for the visiting railroad equipment to operate at the museum. Onboard the trains, friendly car attendants explored the history of the railroad equipment they were riding with the passengers and answered their questions. Full trains operated throughout the entirety of the event and were extremely popular with visitors.

Additionally, since not all of the steam locomotives could occupy the museum’s rail-



The Black Irish Band performed at the GWSU, featuring songs about railroading, mining, and cowboys. (Photo by David Calvert)

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## Great Western Steam Up *(continued from page 5)*

road, the remaining operating steam locomotives boiled water on the leads in front of the Annex. Visitors could then see the locomotives up close and personal, while also having the opportunity to chat with the crews for each locomotive. Also, at 1:00pm each afternoon, the museum hosted a locomotive pageant in front of the Annex. Each of the locomotives took turns going for a spin on the turntable while museum staff discussed the history of each steam engine. The pageant was extremely popular and gave railfan photographers an opportunity to get some great photos of the iron horses.

Another benefit of the Nevada State Railroad Museum is the compact nature of the museum property. The museum is situated on 11 acres, but virtually all of the excite-

ment occurring at the museum took place within the museum's 2,200-foot railroad loop. Railfans could chase the trains around the loop easily to get that perfect photo of their favorite locomotive. If you missed that photo the first time don't worry; the train will come by again in five minutes. Passengers on the train ride could get a good overview of where all of the activities were happening around the museum. Wherever you were on the museum grounds, you could see, smell, or hear a piece of operating steam-powered equipment. Food trucks, vendors, entertainment, and restrooms were all a short distance away from the railroad action. The museum grounds were perfectly de-



*Southern Pacific No. 18, the Slim Princess, approaches the turntable. (Photo by David Calvert)*

signed to enhance the Great Western Steam Up visitor experience.

The museum provided options for visitors to enhance their experience during the Great Western Steam Up, as well. Each morning of the event, a limited amount of visitors could add on ticket to visit the museum starting at 8:00am to enter the grounds two hours before the event started each day. These visitors were afforded the opportunity to take photos with fewer people on the grounds, chat more extensively with train crews, watch the crews



*Santa Cruz Portland Cement No. 2, the Chiggen, gets prepared for the day as onlookers watch the crew at work. (Photo by David Calvert)*

*(Continued on page 7)*



get their locomotives ready for the day, and take a behind the scenes tour with a museum staff member. These tickets sold out each day of the event. Also, another add-on included an extremely rare opportunity to ride in V&T Coach 4 behind the *Inyo* each day. Tickets for this unique experience sold out well in advance of the Great Western Steam Up.

Finally, on Saturday night, the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum hosted a dinner in the museum's restoration shop to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Virginia & Truckee. This event was intended to mirror the grand ball the V&T hosted in their newly constructed Carson City shops on July 4, 1873. Attendees included museum staff, members of the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum and the Virginia & Truckee Railroad Historical Society, the

*Visitors enjoy an open-air ride aboard historic narrow gauge equipment during the Great Western Steam Up. (Photo by David Calvert)*



*The crew of the NCNG No. 5 poses with its locomotive next to the Glenbrook at NSRM. The Glenbrook and No. 5 (Tahoe) operated together on the Carson & Tahoe Lumber & Fluming Co. from Lake Tahoe up to Spooner Summit from 1875 until 1899. (Photo by Cristol Digangi)*

Board of Museums and History, California State Railroad Museum, the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, and others. Mark Amodei, the keynote speaker for the dinner, spoke about the importance of historic preservation. Additionally, an original pen and ink drawing of the Virginia & Truckee shops

with a lineup of the remaining V&T locomotives by artist and Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum member Loren Jahn fetched \$4,000 at a silent auction during the dinner. The proceeds benefitted the Re-steam History fund.

The Great Western Steam Up exceeded the museum's expectations. The event attracted 7,500 paid visitors (and many sneaky party-crashers) over the course of four days. It was the largest ticketed event in Carson City's history. The complaints we received are under 10. Mostly, the complaints were that we did not have a discount price. Visitors overwhelmingly stated how much they enjoyed the Great Western Steam Up

*(Continued on page 8)*



## Great Western Steam Up *(continued from page 7)*



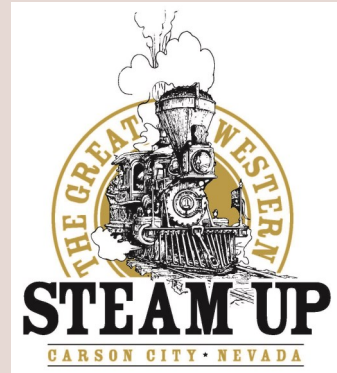
The Inyo hauls a special passenger train with V&T Coach No. 4, July 3, 2022. (Photo by Nick Hovey)

and asked if we were doing this again next year (so far, that answer is a resounding “no”). Many visitors had no idea the museum existed but said they would be back for future events. The visiting steam locomotive crews praised the museum staff and volunteers for their professionalism and commitment to safety. Vendors were quite satisfied with the financial outcomes from the event, as well.

The museum could not produce such a large event without the support of many organizations, including: The Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum, the Board of Museums and History, Visit Carson City, Travel Nevada, and East Public Relations. We received support from the Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Union Pacific, Nevada Mining Association,

Casino Fandango, Port of Subs, Black Bear Diner, DoughBoys Donuts, and Renown Health. E-Tix provided masterful support. Delong Trucking provided exceptional support. Also, the museum would like to extend a thank you to all of its volunteers and those who came from our sister institutions, the Nevada State Railroad Museum, Boulder City, and the Nevada State Museum. 🚂

To purchase Great Western Steam Up merchandise, visit:  
<https://www.bonfire.com/store/great-western-steamup/>



Antelope & Western No. 1 rests outside by the Buildings & Grounds office during the Great Western Steam Up. (Photo by David Calvert)



Scenes From the 2022 Great Western Steam Up by David Calvert and John Gaffney





## Heavy Hauling *(continued from page 3)*



The crew of the Nevada County Narrow Gauge No. 5 prepare the locomotive for unloading at the Great Western Steam Up. (Photo by Cristol Digangi)

communication with the locomotive owners was going directly from myself to those persons, and other communications were going hither and yon. It was all a little confused. Arrangements were made with the owners for a calendar window for a marathon move. Upon submission of that calendar to the trucking firm it was revealed that they couldn't meet it due to scheduling and submitted back a calendar of a much shorter window and different set of dates. Then there was the call back to the owners who could or not make the new dates because of their own limitations. Negotiations ensued. It was all higgledy-piggledy.

Dan Markoff's Eureka & Palisades No. 4, tender, and flat car arrived first, which

was well as we provided some courtesy maintenance to all three pieces. Thanks go out to George Sapp, lately of Railtown 1897 State Historic Park, who spent three days fine tuning No. 4. Next to arrive was the Southern Pacific No. 18 and tender from Independence, California. Lead by Charlie Cross, they were self-contained and efficient. Following shortly was the caboose from Laws Railroad Museum whose inclusion provided additional seating capacity as well as historic context.

The trucking company was running two truck/trailer

combinations. So, while the caboose was being gathered from Laws, the *Reno*, V&T No. 11, was collected from Virginia City courtesy of Tom Gray. When Tom received the *Reno* from Old Tucson in Arizona the tender was in deplorable condition. He had started work on it, so it wasn't available. It is known that the *Reno* is not operational at this time, but the museum felt that the inclusion of No. 11 was paramount. While the *Reno* was here it received much firsthand attention not only from the visitors but from the crew from Virginia City. Taylor McCready cleaned, scraped, and fussed over the *Reno* for the entire time it was there. It is exciting to note that an early example of Russia Iron was found on the locomotive which will bear some study in the future. By the end of the event the *Reno*

*(Continued on page 11)*

Laying the rails before building the ramp to take No. 5 off the trailer. (Photo by Cristol Digangi)







Laying the rails before building the ramp to take No. 5 off the trailer. (Photo by Cristol Digangi)

looked far better than when it arrived. The whole exercise afforded the visitor entertainment and made the *Reno* come alive to a small degree.

Other non-operations locomotives included the *J.W. Bowker*, V&T No. 21, with tender and the *Genoa*, V&T No. 12 with tender, both on loan from the California State Railroad Museum (CSRM) in Sacramento.

The balance of the equipment flooded in daily. The Nevada County Narrow Gauge No. 5, sister to the *Glenbrook*, and tender arrived on its own as did the Antelope and Western Porter. The Bluestone Heisler and *Chiggen* arrived in good form.

There were a couple of early mornings where the business of the day was just getting going. The engines were hauled out of the shop and the fires lit. The crews were going quietly about the business of servicing and firing, while making incidental repairs and adjustments. The sun was low

in the eastern sky and there wasn't a breath of wind. In the hiss and the quiet roar of the oil burners and the mumber of the wood burners was a calm, which must have been reminiscent of the days gone by when railyards were filled with locomotives readying for the workday ahead. It was a very magical moment, standing amongst them and taking in all of the subtleties of the industry.

It was the intent of NSRM to amass the largest gathering of V&T locomotives in recent history. In full disclosure, it must be said that three existing V&T locomotives did not attend: *Empire*, No. 13; *Tahoe*, No. 20; and No. 27. *Empire* is solidly ensconced in the mirrored volume at CSRM and, although we leaned on CSRM to free it from its cage, it was not to be. *Tahoe* is on display at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania at Strasburg, Pennsylvania, and was not available to travel.

Number 27 is on display in Virginia City at the Comstock History Center. The logistics of moving it to NSRM for display were signifi-

cant and the effort to remove it from and return it to Virginia City for four days was deemed to not be a good investment of time and funds. That said we had all other existing locomotives from the V&T, which was very pleasing in of itself.

There were two Porter locomotives with no direct history to Nevada in attendance: the Antelope & Western (ex-Sacramento Brick Company) narrow-gauge tank engine 0-4-0T No. 1 and the *Chiggen* (Santa Cruz Portland Cement Co. #2). Both locomotives operated in California. No one seemed to mind, and all of the locomotives got to operate at the Great Western Steam Up.

Other visitors of note were a steam fire pumper, a Marshutz & Cantrell yarding engine, a steamboat, and many smaller steam exhibits. NSRM unloaded all of the pieces with great care and returned the items to their respective institutions safely. 🏠

NSRM's crew uses the forklift to pull No. 5 slowly off the truck and into the shop. (Photo by Cristol Digangi)



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