

# Coast Mail News from the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum

Issue Number 85 – Fall 2023

San Luis Obispo, California

Open Saturdays from 10:00 to 4:00. Other times for groups by arrangement. 1940 Santa Barbara Avenue.



This beautifully restored motor car is displayed indoors. Variations on this type of vehicle were used for inspection and light maintenance from the 1920s through the 1980s. This one is not available for visitors to climb on or into.

#### Motor cars have arrived

Our motor cars, under a general group of "track cars" and often called "speeders" by fans, arrived in late Spring. See page 7 (online) for some of Southern Pacific's rules governing use of motor cars. And see page 8 for more information on these artifacts and for photos of our motor-car moving adventure.



This more modest motor car is displayed outside the Freighthouse, where visitors are may sit on it, imagine clacking along, and take photos to share. Gary See photo

## Central Coast RR Festival

Join us October 7 for special tours and presentations, swap meet, and food. See progress on the model railroad.

Locations besides the Museum will offer adventures October 6 through 8, as listed on the Festival link via our homepage. The swap meet will offer items such as the laser-cut wooden fantasy locomotive and pencil illustration below.





## Wine-rail tours

These popular events resume October 14, by morning van to Santa Barbara and evening return on Amtrak's Pacific Surfliner. Watch fall sunsets over the ocean.

Besides wine tasting, the Santa Barbara harbor and museums are a convenient walk or shuttle ride from the station. For details, including future dates, follow the "Wine Rail" link on our homepage.



#### Our Mission

Promote California Central Coast railroad heritage through community participation, education, and historic preservation.

#### Contact

Telephone (message) 805 548-1894 email: info@slorrm.com Website: www.slorrm.com Mail: 1940 Santa Barbara Avenue San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

#### **Board of Directors**

Mike Burrell
Stephen Cake
Ken Green
Brent MacGregor
Dave Rohr

Peter Brazil
Alan Estes
Greg Jackson
Andrew Merriam
Ted Van Klaveren

#### **Crew List**

The museum is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, educational organization, staffed entirely by volunteers.

#### **Documents Available**

Anyone may access the Museum's Bylaws, Collections Policy, Development & Operations Plan, Code of Conduct, and other documents at slorrm.com. Or request a paper copy via the contact information above.

#### Museum Store

To raise funds, the Museum offers several items for sale on-site and online: T-shirts, hats, belt buckles, mugs, enameled pins, embroidered patches, and engineer hats.

At www.slorrm.com click on Company Store.

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#### **Timetable**

Board of Directors meetings are scheduled for September 12, October 10, and November 14, at 6:00 p.m. They are held at the Museum. Online participation can be arranged. Contact <a href="mailto:info@slorrm.com">info@slorrm.com</a> for help with on-line participation.



## SLO & SMVR loco under construction

Here is the second one-tenth size model of a narrow-gauge locomotive that Jack Erhart is building for the Museum. San Luis Obispo and Santa Maria Valley Railroad's 1876 Baldwin 4-4-0 was named "John Harford." The SLO & SMVR became the Pacific Coast Railway.

## An exciting childhood at Surf and Edna

The Museum's "Train Tales" video histories resumed in a big way in July when Richard Nakano shared memories of growing up in Surf, Lompoc, and Edna. See page 6 (online) and watch the recording via our homepage, under "About," then "Train Tales," or on YouTube.

## Longtime member Bill Pyper passed in July

For several years Bill Pyper designed, composed, and printed the Coast Mail. He also edited the hobby magazine S Gaugian. Bill had a print shop near the San Luis Obispo depot and for a while taught printing at Cal Poly. Originally from New York State, bill served in the US Air Force, partly in Europe, before settling in California.

He spent his last years close to family in the Pacific Northwest.

## Become a member

Membership provides opportunities for anyone interested in today's railroads, railroad history, train travel, railroad artifact restoration, or model railroading.

Individual members pay \$36 per year, a family \$60, and a sustaining member \$100. Junior memberships (ages 12-18) for the model railroaders are available (see our Model Railroad Superintendent for details). Application forms can be downloaded from the Museum's website and mailed with payment, or you can join online by clicking Membership and using PayPal. (Mailing and web addresses are in left-hand column.) Membership benefits include free admission to the Museum.

#### Seller information

slorrm (44 \*)

100% positive feedback



## Online sales success

We often receive donations of books, magazines, and various railroad collectibles that don't fit our mission or that duplicate what we have. With limited display and storage space, we must make them available to others. Some are donated to other nonprofit organizations. Many are sold at the Freighthouse on open days and at special events. Proceeds support our mission.

To reach a wider market, member Pam See has been using eBay with great success. Her efforts have produced needed funds and positive impressions from near and far. Here are two buyer comments:

One of my favorite groups on ebay! I love buying anything and everything I can from them as I'm not only supporting a great organization, but I'm getting some great books at a great deal!

Thank you so much for everything you all do to help preserve our railroad history. I have never been out to California but someday, hopefully, I can and your museum will be high on the list to visit. Chris

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Two images from a video by Rail Relaxation

#### Far from the Central Coast

Continuing the theme of Southern Pacific *Daylight* colors, here we see red, orange, and black in —wait for it— the main train station of Zagreb, capital of Croatia (part of the former Yugoslavia). It's not obvious from these views, but much of the systems in southeastern Europe have shiny, new, electrified, graffiti-free passenger trains running on continuous welded rail and concrete ties.

## Decades of details: Nah nah, we're better

The Southern Pacific Bulletin of December 1922 reported Southern Pacific's efforts to prevent Union Pacific from prying away SP's Central Pacific component (text on next page). This will take some time to unscramble.

Union Pacific was chartered in 1862 to build west from Omaha. Central Pacific was formed in 1861 to build east from Sacramento. Both were responding to the incentives in the Pacific Railroad Acts of 1862 and 1864, intended to keep western territories in the Union rather than the Confederacy. Southern Pacific did not then exist. Despite the initial fame of Promontory, Utah, UP and CP in practice met at Ogden, Utah, near Salt Lake City.

Southern Pacific was formed in 1865 to build from Sacramento into the San Francisco Bay area and the San Joaquin Valley. After making substantial progress, SP basically absorbed CP in 1885.

Western Pacific was formed in 1903, largely to break SP's monopoly on the substantial traffic to and from Northern California that had developed by that time. Set WP aside for a moment.

UP tried from 1901 to 1909, including U.S. Supreme Court filings, to acquire the whole SP. No, said the court, that would form a combination not in the public interest. But during that time UP management invested in SP's track, bridges (including the Stenner Canyon bridge north of San Luis Obispo), and locomotives. By the early 1920s, UP was again arguing to the Interstate Commerce Commission (formed 1887) that the former CP part of SP should be UP's.

SP argued against that and prevailed.

Fast forward: In 1981 UP acquired WP, which had connected Salt Lake City and the San Francisco Bay Area. This siphoned "Ogden Gateway" traffic from SP. Times were tough for SP. SP and the Santa Fe tried unsuccessfully to merge. The Surface Transportation Board replaced the ICC in January 1996, and by fall of that year Union Pacific absorbed the Southern Pacific.

Blended families, like all families, can be stressed and stressful.

## **Restoration progress**

In June the doors of our former Southern Pacific outside-braced, wood-sheathe box-car were craned into place, following extensive work to straighten them and replace damaged boards. The boxcar will be home to an exhibit featuring employees of the SP.



It's heavy and it's awkward. Museum volunteers on this effort were Mike Adams, Greg Jackson, Brad LaRose, and Dan Manion. Dennis from Louie's Crane Service was the crane operator.



## A decades of details full page bonus Commentary is on previous page.

## Southern Pacific is "Already On Its Toes"

Chairman J. Kruttschnitt, Testifying Before Interstate Commerce Commission, Shows How Our Road Overtops Union Pacific in Efficiency

R. J. KRUTTSCHNITT, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors, Southern Pacific Company, testifying before the Interstate Commerce Commission at Washington, November 22, 1922, at the hearing on the Southern Pacific Company's ap-plication to lease the Central Pacific, referred to the following statements made by Union Pacific "propagandists," in urging the tearing from the Southern Pacific System of lines anding in the corporate name of entral Pacific:

(a) The separation "would make every railroad coming into San Francisco stand on its toes as to business efficiency."
(b) "All major improvements were

put in under Union Pacific control."

(c) Southern Pacific "a corporation that has never built up your territory." Union Pacific central of Central Pacific "woold force development of every kind through the entire territory."

Regarding these statements Mr.

Kruttschnitt said:

"In 1921 the following tata established the rela-tive 'business efficiencies' of Southern Pacific and Union Pacific. Remenber that Union Pacific's main line is substantially all double tracked with curvature and grade rates much lighter than on Southern Pacific ,whose long steep grades, com-bined with sharp curves, over the Sierra Nevada, Sickiyou and Tehachapi Mountains, probably present the most difficult opyating problems in the orld on heavy traffic rines, Not withstanding the handicaps we have mentioned, Southern Pacific freight locomotives made 8.82% more mileage daily than did those of Union Pacific.

"Southern Pacific passenger locomotives ran 914% more miles than did those on Union Pacific, with 30% more passengers per train, suburban passengers exclud-

"Notwithstanding lighter rades, Union Pacific conhumed 1056% more fuel to move the same number of ton miles.

"Notwithstanding lighter

grades, Union Pacific burned 17% more fuel to move the same number of passenger car miles. Pacific's equation of oil to coal such as Union Pacific uses, gives the coal 4% advantage over oil.

"Proceeding a step further, the regplarity of movement of traffic, passenger and freight, through Ogden shows the superiority of service rendered the public by Soothern Pacific over Union Pacific.

Percentage of on time deliveries of trains at Ogden.

Passenger Trains

1921 6 mo. 1922 By Southern Pacific. 93.9% 91,4% 73,2% 80.3% By Union Pacific ... Manifest Freight Trains

By Southern Pacific. 92.1% By Union Pacific ... 79.2% 88.0%

Perishable Preight Trains between Roseville, Calif., and Council Bluffs, Iowa, made schedule time over Southern Pacific-Union Pacific, thus:

By Southern Pacific, 90% 94% 50% By Union Pacific .... 60%

"The movements over Southern Pa-Union Pacific on double track with sharp curves and rates of grade very much against Southern Pacific.

"During the shopmen's strike, Southern Pacific placed embargoes on livestock and perishables for but two periods of 23 and 44 hours respectively, and annulled no passenger trains. Union Pacific embargoed live stock and perishables at all California junctions for six days and were unable to move passenger trains for four days, on which Southern Pacific assisted them by handling their passengers to destination. For several days during the strike the Southern Pacific Lines. afforded the public the only means to move freight and passengers by rail out of California. In face of these tests of efficient organizations and management, much superior to those of its covetous traducer, not only it would not benefit but it would inflict great injustifiable injury on the public to lower the excellence of its service by turning any part of the Southern

Pacific System over to the Union Pacific."

Referring to the charge "all major improvements were put in under Union Pacific control," Kruttschnitt said:

"Union Pacific acquired

control of Southern Pa-cific in 1901, Ten years cific in 1901. Ten years preceding 1901 covered a period of financial trouble for the railroads. The return on book cost of all railroads in the United States in that period averaged but 5J percent; for the ten years ending in 1910 the average was 5.2 percent. Added to this countrywide trouble the Southern Pacific had pe-culiar troubles of its own in negotiating the settlement of the Central Parific debt of some \$58.812,-715 to the United States The nego-Government. tiations, which were com-pleted in August, 1899, were a cloud on the Southern Pacific's financial horiron which made large expenditures on long desired and fully matured plans impossible. It was impracticable to raise large sams of money on poor credit of the Southern Puelfic Company. A review of the status of 'major improvements preceding and

## A Home Road with Home Interests Chief Reliance of Community

Paul Shoup, Vice-President of the Southern Pacific Company, speaking before the California Bankers' Association, at Santa Rosa, Cal., said:

ISMEMBERED with the very heart of its system turned over to a competitor, deprived of a direct route east, what expansive power has this system left with a dagger pointed at its heart? What incentive to build branch lines to feed a rival trunk line and that rival not a Coast System?

"A home road with home interests must be the chief reliance of a community for development, because such a home road depends upon the community growth for it's own growth. That is now the case with the Southern Pacific,

"In the last twelve years it has put more money into railroad extensions, railroad shops and railroad terminals in the territory west of the Sierra Nevada and Cascade Mountains and south from the Columbia river to the Mexican line, than all other railroads put together, two to one. It has built locomotives and cars, put up the finest railroad office building in the country, built the most modern warehouses, developed electric railways, increased its port facilities, all on a large scale.

"What the people want is more railroads, not more railroad companies, more cars, not more railroad managements."

## A decades of details extravaganza

Here's a long list of Southern Pacific Coast Division workers, from the June 1922 S. P. Bulletin, who deserved recognition. For those who may not know: Surf is on the coast at Vandenberg Space Force Base, and is the Amtrak Surfliner stop closest to Lompoc. King City is about 46 miles south of Salinas. Wunpost is about halfway between San Luis Obispo and Salinas. Soledad is about 26 miles south of Salinas. Ellwood was on the coast a little north of Goleta, and is remembered for having been "attacked" in World War 2.

Elkhorn was near Monterey Bay, only four feet above sea level. It should not be confused with Elkton, which was on the San Bruno Branch only five miles from Sam Francisco. Edna gets the prize for local interest, having been in the Edna Valley very close to Hadley, where the S.P. crossed the narrowgauge Pacific Coast Railway. Pomar was in the Santa Clara Valley between San Jose and Gilroy. Schuman was on the climb from Guadalupe to Casmalia, which could overlook Santa Maria in the distance if a hill was not in the way. (Thanks to Brad Hellman for research help on former northern location names.)

COAST DIVISION

J. H. Whitehead, telegrapher, Surf, for flag-ging a freight when he noted brakes sticking while train passing his station; his action no doubt resulted in preventing derailment; we rely on all employes working on and about trains to maintain constant vigilance over equipment, both moving and at a standstill, to detect defects which might originate after inspection made at last terminal.

Wm. Lencioni, brakeman, King City, for noting bottom arch bar on a car in train while making on-line inspection. His conduct in this instance is especially praise, worthy as no doubt had car continued on

run, derailment would have occurred.

E. D. Lynch, engineer, and W. M. Lloyd fireman, Wunpost, for making temporary repairs to broken spring hanger on engine on important passenger train; resulted in their bringing the passenger train into terminal on time.

J. R. Grant, yard engine foreman, San Jose, for discovering a broken rail in yard and making prompt report thereof; his action no doubt prevented a derailment which might have assumed serious proportions.

A. J. Sauer, signal maintainer, Soledad; for making repairs to wires which had blown down during a severe wind storm; had he not made repairs to the wires, considerable delay would have resulted to railroad and Western Union telegraph business.

D. J. Murphy, towerman, San Francisco, for noting brake beam dragging in car and taking prompt action by whistling train down with whistle on tower; train was stopped in time to save derailment; this occurred on important lead and had car derailed considerable delay would have oc-curred in transaction of business. L. Wieland, section foreman, Ellwood, for

resetting poles at point where telegraph line was blown down by high wind. His action resulted in circuit being restored and busi-

ness handled without delay.

W. J. Brown, engineer, C. J. Sethman, freman, Elkhorn, for making temporary reirs to engine on line atter discovering ring hangar broken; action resulted in bringing important through passenger train to terminal on time.

L. J. Fehrn, engineer; A. E. Rudell, fire-man; H. T. Proctor, yardman, San Fran-cisco, for assistance rendered by them in removing a Ford machine which had become disabled from the track, thereby enabling switch engine to function without

interruption.

E. Williams, engineer; W. S. Purcell, fireman; E. P. Titcomb, conductor; F. D. Sayre, and H. Kern, brakemen, Edna, for making repairs to engine which had blown out piston rod packing. Had they not volunteered to assist in getting engine which was a long way from roundhouse, back in working condition, considerable labor and time would have been lost due to tying up work train.

R. W. Matley, conductor; D. H. Gates, engineer; F. McCallum, fireman; A. Corbell,

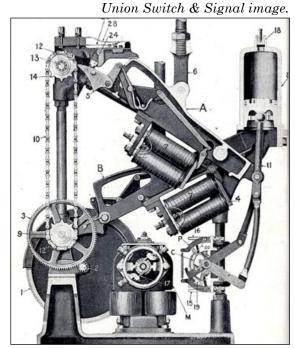
T. C. Quamme, brakemen, Elkton, for mak-ing temporary repairs to a telegraph lead which had been blown down at time of severe storm. Service performed by these men enled telegraph service to resume. Perma-

nt repairs were subsequently made.
P. J. Clark, conductor; J. A. McKean, brakeman, Pomar, for assistance rendered by them to an engineer. They assisted in disconnecting a road engine which had failed, before arrival of relief engine, which

reduced delay to minimum.

A. Nissen, conductor; A. H. Jones, brakeman, Schuman, for assisting a first class passenger train through limits of a block signal which was standing in stop position, due to failure of mechanism, reducing delay to train to a point where they were able to make up and go into a terminal on

Almost certainly the type of mechanism that had a problem at Schuman. The fail-safe aspect was "stop."



#### A railroad childhood

by Bob Wilson

What is the value of a museum? Answer: Connecting people with their own and other's history.

In June Richard Nakano visited and spoke with me (a docent) at the Museum. He stated that as a child in the mid 1950s he had lived in structures near the since demolished Southern Pacific Railroad depot at Surf. As the Nakanos were not a family of means at the time, they lived in a "grounded" boxcar (no wheel assemblies under the car) that had been converted to living quarters. Mr. Nakano talked about "entertainment" that a child might find at that time. He described how at the end of the Depot platform a telephone or telegraph pole stood, with a wire hanging from it. He would grab the wire, run as fast as he could, jump off the end of the platform, and swing out into the air coming back onto the platform!

Mr. Nakano went on to describe the people who lived at Surf and the buildings in detail. While he was talking, a mental image began to form of what life at Surf was like at that time. We then went up to the Museum's model railroad display and saw that the scene at Surf had been recreated almost exactly as Mr. Nakano remembered it, down to the pole near the end of the platform! There were a few discrepancies. As described by Mr. Nakano, there were three, not two, grounded boxcars at Surf. Also the SP had "remodeled" the boxcars into deluxe accommodations by cutting windows in the sides and providing some interior finishing. Andrew Merriam, one of the founders and builders of the model railroad, has assured Mr. Nakano that the details he described, which have been verified, will be incorporated into the layout scene at Surf.

As for myself, meeting Mr. Nakano was a tremendous educational experience.

## Morgan cars gathered

Forty sporty cars by the British builder Morgan gathered at the Museum in July. Members of a car club came from southern and northern California to our halfway meeting point. Museum board member Brent MacGregor's photo (below) seems to show an affinity among green machines.

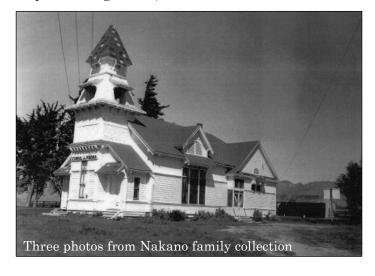




Richard Nakano, at right, while living at Surf in the mid-1950s. Be sure to watch the Train Tales video for details on his sister, brothers, and mother (above).



Richard holding the pet squirrel that he rescued, with the cabin made of railroad ties, and a surprisingly cooperative dog. Below, the school he attended in Edna.



### Southern Pacific track car rules

Here are only some of the rules from the 1990 Rules and Chief Engineers Instructions for the Maintenance of Way and Structures. Motor cars generally had been replaced by hi-rail vehicles (trucks that can operate on

- 2.11.1 Track cars must be thoroughly inspected by foreman or other employee in charge as frequently as necessary to insure that all bolts, nuts and cotters are in place and tight; that gasoline tank, feed pipes and connections do not leak; that rail sweeps are in place and in proper adjustment; that brakes are in good condition and adjustment; and that wheel wear is not unsafe and wheel gage is correct. They must be kept clean and in good order and bearings and machinery well oiled. Cars considered unsafe to operate must be withdrawn from service immediately and report made to the proper officer; also cars requiring repairs, although not unsafe to operate, must be similarly reported.
- 2.11.2 Track cars must be kept clear of main track for all trains unless line-up provides sufficient time on all trains to permit safe movement, or in an emergency adequate flag protection is provided.

In block system limits, when block signal or track occupancy indicator indicates approach of train, track car must be immediately stopped and removed from track and kept off track unless it can be seen or it is known that it is safe to proceed.

Track cars shall be operated only by duly authorized and properly qualified employees while on Company business. Only employees whose duties require it will be permitted to ride on these cars.

- 2.11.3 A watch conforming to requirements of Rule 2 and a copy of current timetable, and supplements, if any, must be carried by each employee in charge of track car.
- 2.11.4 Employee in charge is held responsible for carrying necessary signals, torpedoes and fusees for use as required under the rules.
- 2.11.5 Track cars shall not be used unless accompanied by sufficient men to remove cars from track. A line-up of trains should be obtained before starting on a run, and with sufficient frequency thereafter to insure safety of movement.

Within CTC limits track car operator must obtain track car time and movement limits from train dispatcher for movement between two points. If track car time is available and track unoccupied, train dispatcher will immediately actuate control machine to display stop indication in absolute signals at the entrance to each end of movement limits and secure control of these signals with control blocks. Track car time and movement limits may be granted when track is occupied after definite understanding with operator of track car that all trains and engines which have entered the limits on signal indication have passed the location where track car is to be placed on track.

After track car time and movement limits have been granted, a shunt will be placed beyond switch and roads or rails) by this date. Several rules respond to track cars' inconsistent ability to short electrically across the rails, needed to activate train-control signals and grade-crossing protection. "Track cars" included push cars, motor cars, and hi-rail vehicles.

signal at switch point when movement is being made from one siding to another. Shunt is to be placed on switch when movement is to be made from one end of siding to other end of siding on main track. Shunt is to be placed beyond signal at fouling point within limits of siding when movement is made from one end of siding to other end of controlled siding. After shunt is placed and dispatcher has confirmed that indication of shunt is shown on control machine, shunt will be removed before movement is made. Track car may occupy main track and move in either direction within such limits without protection of flagman, but movement must be made WITH CAUTION.

Upon expiration of track car time, track car must be clear of main track, and train dispatcher will release track for train movement. If impossible to clear main track before track car time has expired, protection by flagman must be provided.

When authorized by special instructions between specific points within territory where current of traffic has been established, a train, track car, machine or employee may occupy main track or tracks on authority of track permit issued by a designated control operator under the direction of the train dispatcher, and may move in either direction on such track or tracks within the limits during the effective time of track permit without train order authority or flag protection. (Rule 252 Track Permit.)

Within DTC limits track car operator must obtain Work and Time Authority from train dispatcher for occupation of DTC Blocks.

2.11.6 Before starting, there should be a thorough understanding as to what part each person is to take in handling the car should an emergency arise necessitating prompt removal of car from track.

Do not attempt to rescue car at risk of personal safety.

2.11.7 Maximum speed governing movement of track car is as follows:

#### Motor Cars

- (a) Five (5) miles per hour over street and road crossings.
- (b) Fifteen (15) miles per hour with trailers.
- (c) Fifteen (15) miles per hour for all other movements, except on tangent track where the following speeds are permissible:
  - (1) 20 miles per hour for gang cars without trailers.
  - (2) 30 miles per hour for one to four-man inspection type cars without trailers.
- (d) During darkness, stormy or foggy weather, or when from other causes visibility is obscured, or restricted to a short distance, speed must be reduced and cars operated only at a speed consistent with safe operation under the prevailing conditions. A constant and vigilant lookout must be maintained. All cars must

Potential for comedy and tragedy

## Motor car moving adventure

The motor car movers were Howard Amborn (who drove the truck, provided by West Coast Towing of Atascadero) Karl Hovanitz, Greg Jackson, Brad La Rose, David Litster, Dan Manion, and Ted Van Klaveren.

This two-person motor car was built by the Fairmont Railway Motors Company for the Southern Pacific about 1976. It was light enough to be removed from the track by one person, typically at a road crossing or at a "setout" made of planks. Southern Pacific used several hundred of them throughout its system.

The Museum's example was bought at auction in Oakland around 1987. It has a two-cylinder motor with a two-speed, reversing transmission. Normal maximum speed was 25 mph.

By the way, the gentleman barely visible behind the woman in the page 1 photo is Mr. Binns. His father was an SP locomotive engineer in San Luis Obispo. The senior Mr. Binns was instrumental in providing homes around Terrace Hill for several of his co-workers, and is the source of the street name for Binns Court.



Karl Hovanitz transported the Fairmont on a trailer, above. Below, volunteers transferred it to a flatbed truck's deck that can be angled to the ground.





The flatbed allowed the motor car to be positioned at the height of the Freighthouse floor.

All photos on this page by Gary See



Above, wheels on wheels. Dollies helped maneuver without damaging the floor. Aluminum channel ramps provided transition to the display track, below.

