

**RAILROAD PARTNERS, INC
MEMBERS NEWSLETTER - MARCH 2011**

March 19, 2011 – TX
Capitol Metro Transportation

Llano, TX to Scobee Spur, TX – Approx. 54 miles RT. NARCOA insurance and rules apply. This will be a cleanup ride to clear flangeways and brush to prepare the line for the 4/2/11 Bluebonnet excursion. Bring weed trimmers, loppers, and grubbing hoes. Fee: \$25 membership to Railroad Partners, Inc. Additional RPI safety rules will apply. Do not set on until permission given by EC. Set on at 8:30 am at Llano wye. Safety meeting at 9:00 am. Please pre-register so we may plan accordingly and know who to notify in case of cancellation. Set on locations may vary.

Excursion Coordinator: Leland Stewart 10057 Palomino Canyon converse, TX 78109 210-945-9268 home 210-863-5397 cell email: poppermaker@gmail.com . RPI website: www.railroadpartners.com

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April 2, 2011 (Saturday) - TX
Capitol Metro Transportation – ex SP Llano branch
Bluebonnet Run – Railroad Partners, Inc. is pleased to sponsor a motorcar run over the ex SP Llano branch. This is a scenic stretch of track which parallels the Llano River and crosses the Colorado River on Lake LBJ. There will be abundant wildlife and, nature permitting, bluebonnets and Indian paintbrushes. Participants will travel from Llano, TX, through Kingsland, TX to Scobey Spur, a round trip distance of approx 54 mi. Trip fee is \$40.00 per car payable as a donation to Railroad Partners, Inc. (a nonprofit 501c3). This is a NARCOA insured event and all NARCOA rules apply. Hy-rails welcome.

For trip details or lodging information, contact: EC in training: Myron Malone 5306 Kayway Dr Greenville, TX 75402 (903) 454-8307 email: malonemg@geusnet.com or (EC) Leland Stewart 10057 Palomino Canyon Converse, TX 78109 (210)863-5397.email:poppermaker@gmail.com . Information about RPI may be found atwww.railroadpartners.com .

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APRIL 9, 2011 - EAGLE LAKE, TEXAS, DISPLAY

The Eagle Lake Santa Fe depot turns 100 this year and there will be a celebration on April 9 from 10AM to 5PM. The Santa Fe telegraph operator in Eagle Lake was connected to the San Antonio & Aransas Pass dispatcher and copied train orders for that road until Tower 115 was opened in 1924. Plus, there are artifacts from a lot of TX railroads in the exhibits room and the T&NO and its predecessors are well represented. If you are in the area, hope you can join us. See our website for more information on the depot and its history: www.eaglelakedepot.com

Sincerely,

Ken E. Stavinoha
President
Eagle Lake Depot, Inc.

NOTE TO RPI MEMBERS: President Leland Stewart is bringing a motorcar to the Eagle Lake Depot on April 9, for outside display, and invites other members to join him for the hours of display.

"As of March 5, 2011, RPI has 34 paid-up members. Please encourage persons who show an interest in historic rail preservation and motorcars to check out our website, railroadpartners.com, and use the contact info at that site to get in touch with us. If there are any inaccuracies or omissions from the list below, please let the compiler, Ed Michal, know. We appreciate our members' hard work and enthusiasm in accomplishing our mission goals. from Ed Michal.

Abrahamson, Michael - Palestine, TX
Balestreri, David - Sacramento, CA
Barnette, Michael - Katy, TX
Casares, Robert - San Antonio, TX
Cooney, Thomas - Gainesville, TX
Davis, Jason - Klondike, TX
Frisbee, Jr., Donald - Waxahachie, TX
Frisbee, JoAnn - Waxahachie, TX
Gentles, Doug - Nelson, B.C., Canada
Hamadock, Frank - Cibolo, TX
Hamadock, Susan - Cibolo, TX
Hamilton, Gary - McKinney, TX
Hamilton, Linda - McKinney, TX
Harris, Donna - Channelview, TX
Harris, Michael - Channelview, TX
Kemper, George - Marble Falls, TX
Kendall, Donald - Houston, TX
King, Robert - Frisco, TX
Light, Jerry - Cherokee, TX
Malone, Myron - Greenville, TX
Mandell, John - Austin, TX
Michal, Edward - Dripping Springs, TX
Nelson, Bradley - Elgin, TX
Pattison, John - San Antonio, TX
Peterson, Ronald - Carrollton, TX
Reimer, Martin - San Antonio, TX
Sapp, Leon - Burleson, TX
Sandford, Ellroy - Austin, TX
Stamper, Donald - Shreveport, LA
Stenzel, Ralph - Santa Fe, TX

Stewart, Frankie - Converse, TX
Stewart, Leland - Converse, TX
Summers, A. Hugh - Palestine, TX
Vierra, Jake - Schertz, TX
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RPI Mentoring List - as of February 25, 2011

The following members have signed up for the Mentor's List:

Jeff Cooney
Mike Barnette
Don Kendall
Frank Glatz
Ron Perieda
Gary Hamilton

As our group grows and takes on new members, there is a need to mentor new operators. Narcoa's mentoring policy requires that the mentors of new operators be identified as having sufficient experience and knowledge so as to impart that wisdom upon the new operators. By doing this we may be assured that only competent operators will be participating in events and keep accidents and incidents from harming this hobby.

I have solicited advice from Narcoa as to the "mentors list" and found that it doesn't exist for Area 9. After conferring with our area director, I would like for Railroad Partners to take the lead and establish a list of approved mentors for submission to the Area 9 director. Primarily, I would use this list for any new RPI members who need mentoring. This list does not require anyone to do anything except be open to a request to mentor a new operator.

Recently, I have been attempting to do the mentoring myself but it is very distracting to try to run an event and mentor at the same time. Therefore I am asking any experienced (2 or more years) operator who would be willing to mentor new operators to respond to this request so I may include you on this list. The list will be primarily used by RPI but the names will be also submitted to Chris Weaver, Area 9 Director for his reference.

This is a good way to give back to the hobby that has given us great enjoyment. I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

See you on the rails. Leland Stewart, RPI President

COME HELP RPI MAINTAIN THE LLANO BRANCH!

The additional Llano clean up runs scheduled for 4/23, 5/7, 5/14, and 6/18 are cleared to go as planned. I have received the permission documents and we're ready to continue maintaining the line for our Summer and Fall runs. Those dates are pending and will be announced as soon as available.

We will be getting the specific information on the RPI website shortly. If you plan to attend, please let me know as there may be last minute changes and I will need to know who to notify. We plan to set on in Llano as usual.

Note: There have been some complaints about us blocking traffic, so please leave your cars on the trailers until directed to unload. We will need to keep one lane open at all times during unloading and loading. The preferred set on point is on the north side of the wye near the switch. There are 2 tracks available and parking in the wye. Do not set on the track until directed to do so. Let's all work together to be good neighbors in Llano.

The cleanup runs are a great way to get your car tuned up, get mentored, enjoy the camaraderie, and perform a valuable service to RPI and its mission. The only requirement is membership in RPI for safety reasons. Please be familiar with the RPI Safety documents prior to commencing work.

If you have any questions or concerns, please give me a call or email.

Leland Stewart
210-863-5397 cell

April 23, 2011 – TX
Capitol Metro Transportation

Llano, TX to Scobee Spur, TX – Approx. 54 miles RT. NARCOA insurance and rules apply. This will be a cleanup ride to clear flange ways and brush to prepare the line for the Summer and Fall runs. Bring weed trimmers, loppers, and grubbing hoes. Fee: \$25 membership to Railroad Partners, Inc. Additional RPI safety rules will apply. Do not set on until permission given by EC. Set on at 8:30 am at Llano wye. Safety meeting at 9:00 am. Please pre-register so we may plan accordingly and know who to notify in case of cancellation. Set on locations may vary.

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May 7, 2011 – TX
Capitol Metro Transportation

Llano, TX to Scobee Spur, TX – Approx. 54 miles RT. NARCOA insurance and rules apply. This will be a cleanup ride to clear flangeways and brush to prepare the line for the Summer and Fall runs . Bring weed trimmers, loppers, and grubbing hoes. Fee: \$25 membership to Railroad Partners, Inc. Additional RPI safety rules will apply. Do not set on until permission given by EC. Set on at 8:30 am at Llano wye. Safety meeting at 9:00 am. Please pre-register so we may plan accordingly and know who to notify in case of cancellation. Set on locations may vary.

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May 14, 2011 – TX
Capitol Metro Transportation

Llano, TX to Scobee Spur, TX – Approx. 54 miles RT. NARCOA insurance and rules apply. This will be a cleanup ride to clear flangeways and brush to prepare the line for the Summer and Fall runs. Bring weed trimmers, loppers, and grubbing hoes. Fee: \$25 membership to Railroad Partners, Inc. Additional RPI safety rules will apply. Do not set on until permission given by EC. Set on at 8:30 am at Llano wye. Safety meeting at 9:00 am. Please pre-register so we may plan accordingly and know who to notify in case of cancellation. Set on locations may vary.

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June 18, 2011 – TX
Capitol Metro Transportation

Llano, TX to Scobee Spur, TX – Approx. 54 miles RT. NARCOA insurance and rules apply. This will be a cleanup ride to clear flangeways and brush to prepare the line for the Summer and Fall runs. Bring weed trimmers, loppers, and grubbing hoes. Fee: \$25 membership to Railroad Partners, Inc. Additional RPI safety rules will apply. Do not set on until permission given by EC. Set on at 8:30 am at Llano wye. Safety meeting at 9:00 am. Please pre-register so we may plan accordingly and know who to notify in case of cancellation. Set on locations may vary.

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February Work Session on Llano Branch, February, 2011

The first RPI work session of the year featured three motorcars, one Gator and one Hy-Rail, with a total of eight workers. Our Hy-Rail was a visitor from British Columbia, Doug Gentles, who had come down

for the Border Pacific run the previous weekend and stayed over to experience the Llano line as well. Other participants included Leland Stewart, Jerry Light, Ed Michal, Frank Hamadock, Jake Vierra, Bob King and Bradley Nelson.

The RPI crew replaced or repaired hidden driveway warning signals, dug out crossings and cut branches too close to the tracks. We had lunch at Spyke's BBQ and then went all the way to Scobey Spur before returning to Llano. The flangeways at the 1431 crossing in Burnet County were problematical, as usual. We hope to clean them out prior to the Bluebonnet Run.

A pickup truck afforded a never-before seen sight on the way back when it got hung up on the line just minutes prior to our arrival. Fortunately, however, the pickup was towed off the rails by a Good Samaritan after much head-scratching, jacking and timbering.



Unauthorized Rail Vehicle taking a diverging route.

The run revealed several long sections of track in the Kingsland area overgrown with weeds that need cutting and then spraying to keep them down. RPI members are collaborating on an effort to mount a garden tractor engine and mower deck on a motorcar trailer to mow between the rails. We hope the rail-mower will be completed in the near future, enabling us to cut weeds on a scale not possible using weedwhackers. See [HYPERLINK "http://www.rpiprojects.blogspot.com"](http://www.rpiprojects.blogspot.com) www.rpiprojects.blogspot.com for the latest.

All in all, it was a great day to be out on the rails. Please plan on joining us for the March 19 work session to finalize preparations for the Bluebonnet run on the first weekend in April. (From Ed Michal)

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Border Pacific Trip Report, from Leland Stewart

The 2nd annual Railroad partners, Inc. winter run on the Border Pacific was held on 2/12 and 2/13/11 in the Texas Rio Grande valley. Attendance was a little light due to severe winter weather in the north causing some folks to cancel at the last minute. We had 4 motorcars and 1 hyrail. One car came from Colorado and the hyrail traveled all the way from British Columbia. They were rewarded with beautiful valley weather in the 70's and abundant sunshine.

A derailment caused a change of seton location but thanks to the generosity of the Border Pacific RR, our plan B allowed us to actually exceed the planned mileage over both days. Our impromptu set on changed from Penitas for Rio Grande City giving us a little later start but we still made a leisurely RT to the derailment site. Upon return to Rio Grande City, we loaded the cars and drove to Penitas for a 2nd seton to run the other side of the derailment.

While running that segment we came upon a displaced rail caused by some unknown equipment exiting a cane field. The rail was kinked approx. 6" out of alignment which would have caused a derailment. We notified the RR of the hazard and returned to the set off location.

The next day the group again seton in Rio Grande City and made 2 RT's with lunch in between the segments. The beautiful weather, after a prolonged period of cold, had lots of people outdoors. It was obvious that the parade of rail vehicles provided great enjoyment to the local folks.

The trips on Sunday gave us many wildlife sighting opportunities including migrating birds, deer and feral hogs. We kept many a roadrunner racing down the ROW. At one point, as we exited a trestle, we came upon an elderly goat herder and his dog as they

crossed the line with his large herd. As usual, the U.S. Border Patrol was on duty and very present.

We ended a great weekend on the valley rails with a leisurely set off and everyone made their farewells. It was an excellent run with no issues thanks to the very competent operators. The BoP run is a neat way to run your speeder in the winter so keep this in mind for next year. Our sincere thanks go to the great folks of the Border Pacific, particularly Joe Escamilla and Jesse Longoria, for their hospitality. Also, thanks to Frank Jacobson for helping me coordinate this run. See you on the rails.

Leland Stewart, EC
Railroad Partners, Inc.

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RAILROAD PARTNERS, INC., OFFICERS

Leland Stewart, Converse, Texas - President
John Pattison, San Antonio, Texas - Vice President
Myron Malone, Greenville, Texas - Secretaru
Edward Michal, Dripping Springs, Texas - Treasurer
Brian Schenk, Austin, Texas - volunteer Newsletter Editor

Railroad Partners, Inc. is an organization dedicated to the maintenance and preservation of active railroad right of ways in Texas and adjoining states.

The mission of Railway Partners, Inc. is:

- 1) to use volunteer labor and privately owned maintenance equipment to preserve historic rail corridors in partnership with communities, railroads, local governments and other entities and individuals;
- 2) to acquaint the public with the geography, local history and cultural landmarks

of such corridors;
3) to support efforts to educate the public regarding safety within rail corridors;
4) to build community support for the preservation of out-of-service or soon to be out-of-service rail corridors; and
5) to promote safe maintenance and other activities within historic rail corridors through training and mutual cooperation with rail-related groups.
We need dues-paying members and volunteers to help further our mission stated above. Please consider joining our group.
An on-line application and instructions can be found at:
www.railroadpartners.com .

MY AFFECTION FOR THE “LLANO BRANCH”, from Brian Schenk,
Newsletter Editor

My family moved to Texas in 1950 and I came to Austin in 1959 to finish my bachelor’s degree at “the University”. I didn’t pay much attention to railroads or the Hill Country for a number of years, but I was aware of both. I suppose my affection for the old Southern Pacific Hill Country Branch began the first time chance took me west on Highway 29 from Burnet.

“Into the Hill Country”, I thought, as I managed the twisting state road toward Buchanan Dam, and then west from the intersection of Farm to Market Road 1431 and State 29. Suddenly there was an old railroad line that ran parallel to the highway and in a few miles, there was a river, that I later learned was the Llano River. I suppose that was in the 1970s, as I went to Midland via Brady.

I always made a stop at Llano, and found the “end of the line” at a point just south of State 29. There was still Southern Pacific service at that time, and I saw the portable building perched on the freight dock that later was replaced by the current depot/museum. A friend has since provided me a half dozen photos of Southern Pacific

operations, including a 1961 shot of the old freight depot and a 1974 shot of SP Power spending the night at Llano on a layover.

The line was posted for abandonment in 1984, and luckily, Congressman J. J. Jake Pickle helped local folks in Travis County save the entire railroad. For a few years freight service continued on a declining basis, even out to Llano. I was able to see some of the last trains out there, operating with third-hand old Katy and Colorado diesel.

One run, in 1992, was caught on film by a strong friend of the Llano Branch, James Vaughan, Sr., of Liberty Hill. Some bad track on a spur to the granite pit at MP 90 had derailed an old KATY switcher serving the quarry and a GP 9 was used with a gondola handle to pull the old Katy diesel back on the line. Since there was so little traffic and so much bad track out at the end of the line, the operator asked for and received the right to “embargo” the last 29 miles of the line, from Scobey to Llano.

One has to admire the wisdom of the Regional Transportation Authority - Capitol Metro - for railbanking the entire 162 miles of the line from Giddings through Austin and out to Llano - the Llano Branch. As years passed, CapMetro has begun rail passenger service from Leander into Austin - 32 miles. And is talking about a “Green Line” into Austin from the east - from Elgin.

By 1996 I was dimly aware of the railroad problems out on the Llano Branch, and, after volunteering for a year or two for the Austin Steam Train Association, and riding west to Burnet on their Hill Country Flyer, I joined the Hill Country Railroad Association, formed in 1992 to “save the railroad”. That was in 1998, and my romance with the Llano Branch bloomed from there. I think the strongest urge to join came on the wings of the efforts and success of that Association to put the Llano County portion of the railroad (About 21 miles) in the National Register of Historic Places. “The National Register?” I said, “This must be spectacular!”.

I first saw the true spectacular-ness (to coin a word) when I rode the one and only “Bluebonnet Express” from Kingsland to Llano (renamed in 1999 the “Wildflower Express”) and actually saw the

stunning river valley as the railroad ran parallel for more the last seven miles into Llano.

'SON OF A GUN!', I said, (not REALLY what I said), "that's spectacular, They need to run a tourist train out here! No one should die without seeing that land!". By 2001 a first federal Internal Surface Transportation Act had begun repairs of line and some light tourist activity began. And in 2003, the HCRA put the star in its crown - largely due to the annoying, persistent, passionate effort of Bob and Joan Krause of Llano - the repairs on the Llano Wye and the creation of a depot-museum at the end of the line.

HCRA bought a passenger car from a broker. It was a former Long Island Railroad commuter car that could seat up to 120. And one of the railroad operators, I think it was Longhorn Railroad, left an old C& O caboose parked out at the end of the line.

2005 was the "glory year" of operations out on the Llano Branch. First, there were several tourist runs from Llano to Kingsland and some "out and back" push-pull runs to MP 88 from MP 98. A thousand people got to see what I had seen along the River. And the first NARCOA sponsored motorcar runs were operated with Leland Stewart as the leader.

Things were happening out on the Llano Branch. In 2006 the wye was relaid with 90 pound rail, replacing the original 61 1/2 pound rail dating to 1892. There's still some of that very old rail piled in the wye, obtw. And also included in a second federal funding was the station/museum, a true jewel that should bring old times back to mind when one sees it. And track was relayed to provide access to the station/museum.

Passenger car, caboose, wye rebuilt, 88,000 ties replaced, station/museum done! And then in spring of 2008, HCRA fell apart over operating questions. All that remained by the fall of 2008 was the NARCOA connection. And in 2008, the Railroad Partners, Inc., organization was born and in 2009 negotiated a 3 year lease agreement with the owner of the line, Capital Metropolitan Transportation, for motorcar operation and light maintenance. It was, of course, the first such "operating lease agreement" that RPI negotiated.

So, that's sort of the story. I joined RPI as soon as I understood what they were trying to do, hoping that the motorcars could bring some folks to have some of the affection I have for the line. Did you know that there is a nationally-famous "eagle nest" at MP 90? I have a mile by mile "scenic tour" of the line I can send by email to you. Just ask. What's not to love about these rusting parallel lines of steel in the Hill Country?

brian.schenk1938@att.net