

New Mattresses for the Troop Sleeper

- Steve Habeck

Back in August 2018, we were contacted by Bill Hartman, a Scout Leader for Boy Scout Troop 341 in Carson City, NV, about working with us to get new mattresses for our troop sleeper, USAX 8300. This car is one of a very few troop sleepers still in existence that is still in its original configuration, retaining all 30 bunks, doors, and appliances. The one thing missing was suitable mattresses for the bunks; the car came with about 6 or 7 beat-up, torn mattresses, shedding dust and chunks of petrified foam rubber everywhere. We have used the car on many occasions for Scout troops staying over at the Museum, as they participate in the Railroading Merit Badge program that we facilitate. The car was usable, as long as the Scouts brought sleeping bags to put on the bunks, but it was still uncomfortable sleeping directly on the spring frames with a sleeping bag. Another problem was that the bunks in the car were not a standard size; new mattresses would have to be custom-made, which had prevented us from dealing with this issue in the past.

So, at Bill Hartman's request, we got the measurements off the bunks and forwarded this information to him. He then went to Reno Mattress in October and had 30 custom mattresses made. He sent us a donation for the cost of the mattresses, which we used to buy them from Reno Mattress. The mattresses were finished in early November, and we arranged to meet Bill and his wife at the Museum on Tuesday, November 20th. That morning, Ethan Doty, Bil Jackson, and I hauled the remains of the old mattresses out of the car and lined the dumpster with them. Bill and his wife showed up that afternoon with a trailer and the mattresses, which Ethan, David Elems, and I loaded into the troop sleeper. The new mattresses are wrapped in sets of three in plastic, so we stacked them on the center bunks in the car, still in the protective plastic wrap, until we can do some cleanup in



the car, to get rid of the petrified foam rubber dust and residue that's still in the car.

Bill Hartman has requested that we get signage made to place in the car, indicating that the mattresses were donated by Boy Scout Troop 341, Carson City, NV. I am working with the sign shop in Portola to get suitable signs made, per his request, and they will be posted in the car this spring.

This is a significant, functional, and visually appealing upgrade to our troop sleeper, helping to tell the story of these cars, and we are extremely grateful to Bill Hartman and Boy Scout Troop 341 for their donation.

Member Communication

The FRRS is always working to improve its communication with the membership. Please make sure that we have your correct postal address if you move. Also, we ask that you provide a valid email for our files, even if you are not getting the *Train Sheet* electronically. We never share your information outside the society and it just gives us another means to contact you with new events and developments.

Make sure you note your correct address and email on your membership renewal form, or update it via the website at https://wplives.org/membership_change_of_address.html or by emailing your updated information to membership@wplives.org.

