

Pacific Limited Report

By Steve Habeck

The Pacific Limited Group Board of Directors held a meeting in Salt Lake City on Saturday, November 18, 1995, to review the results of the 1995 Pacific Northwest trip and take definitive action to remedy the problems encountered. As you may have heard, Pacific Limited suffered a loss of slightly more than \$80,000 on the combination of the Kansas trip and the Northwest trip. While this amount is quite sizable, it reflects the remaining balance on our bill to the Union Pacific, which was in excess of \$485,000. The main causes of the trip operating at a loss have been identified, and people have been assigned to produce workable solutions prior to commencing any planning for the 1996 season. While the FRRS did not join Pacific Limited expecting to lose money, the FRRS Directors have chosen to see if the action plan being enacted by the Pacific Limited Directors will produce a profit in 1996, in addition to retiring the debt. There are several reasons behind this action by the FRRS. The Union Pacific continues to reorganize and reassign personnel in Omaha, and the future of the excursion program, as well as the historic locomotive program, is unclear. The only excursion trips approved for 1996 are Pacific Limited sponsored excursions on the ex-CNW across Iowa in August, and a fall colors excursion through the Ozarks that includes a layover at Branson, Missouri. The other trips Pacific Limited requested, such as the Canyon fall colors trip and the Inside Gateway trip, as well as trips requested by other groups that have worked with UP in the past, have not been approved, or have been turned down. Given this new atmosphere toward excursions, it is to the FRRS' benefit to remain with Pacific Limited, as we would have virtually no chance (or capability) of sponsoring excursions on our own.

I have received some feedback from some FRRS members who were not happy with the car host assignments that were made for the Kansas and Northwest trips. While I will agree that the process needs work, I was not able to participate on these trips. I was, however, involved in the early stages of planning for these trips, and I am aware that Pacific Limited had many more volunteers than slots available. Bob Harper, Pacific Limited Crew Chief, had to make many difficult decisions regarding who to take and who to leave. Factors affecting the selection process included length of availability of the volunteer, volunteers' assignment requests, how far the volunteer had to travel to get to and from the train, and prior experience as a host. While this may have upset some of our volunteers, many segments had over 100 volunteers to fill 46 positions, so more were turned away than were selected.

Requests for car hosts for the 1996 trips are now being accepted. Please contact Bob Harper at the address below if you are interested in working parts, or all, of these trips:

Trip #1 On the ex-CNW

Sat. Aug. 24, 1996 Council Bluffs, Iowa, to Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Sun. Aug. 25, 1996 Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to Chicago, Illinois (Proviso Yard).

August 26-30, 1996 Layover in Chicago (no motel rooms available due to Democratic National Convention).

Sat. Aug. 31, 1996 Chicago, Illinois, to Milwaukee, Wisconsin round trip.

Sun. Sept. 1, 1996 Chicago, Illinois, to Union Illinois, round trip, to Railfan's Weekend at Illinois Railway Museum (if 844 can be turned at Belvidere and bridges can handle weight).

Mon. Sept. 2, 1996 (Labor Day) Chicago, Illinois, to Clinton, Iowa.

Tues. Sept. 3, 1996 Clinton, Iowa, to Des Moines, Iowa (probably deadhead).

September 4-6, 1996 Layover/display in Des Moines, Iowa.

Sat. Sept. 7, 1996 Des Moines, Iowa, to Boone, Iowa, round trip to support Boone's Puffer Belly Days (contingent on being able to turn the train at Grand Jct., Iowa).

Sun. Sept. 8, 1996 Des Moines, Iowa, to Nevada, Iowa, round trip(s) (tentative).

Mon. Sept. 9, 1996 Des Moines, Iowa, to Council Bluffs, Iowa (deadhead).

Ozarks Fall Foliage Trip

Thurs. Oct. 24, 1996 St. Louis, Missouri, to Poplar Bluff, Missouri.

Fri. Oct. 25, 1996 Poplar Bluff, Missouri, to Little Rock, Arkansas.

Sat. Oct. 26, 1996 Little Rock, Arkansas, to Russellville, Arkansas, round trip.

Sun. Oct. 27, 1996 Little Rock, Arkansas, to McGehee or Gurdon, round trip.

October 28, 1996 Layover in Little Rock, Arkansas (Jenks Shops).

Tue. Oct. 29, 1996 Little Rock, Arkansas, to Branson, Missouri.

October 30-31, 1996 Layover in Branson, Missouri.

Fri. Nov. 1, 1996 Branson, Missouri, to Kansas City, Missouri.

Motive power for these trips will be the 844, as much as possible, otherwise the E9's will be up front. To get your name on the list, contact Pacific Limited Crew Chief Bob Harper:

Bob Harper
2 Pleasant Avenue
Corte Madera, CA 94925
(415) 924-0170

If you have other suggestions, complaints, or comments, please direct them to Museum Executive Director Norm Holmes or myself in care of the Museum, or to me by email (102054.637@compuserve.com). Norm and I are the FRRS representatives on the Pacific Limited Board of Directors, and we appreciate your input.