

2015 Western Pacific Historic Convention Report

—Eugene Vicknair, Convention Chair

The 2015 Historic Convention was held April 24-25, 2015 in Elko, Nevada, with a special charter trip to the Nevada Northern Railway Museum in Ely, NV on Sunday, April 26. This was our first convention to be held east of Reno, NV and we attracted a lot of folks from Elko and Salt Lake City, including several former Western Pacific and Southern Pacific employees. Some current Union Pacific folks also dropped in as Elko is a crew terminal and we offered special admission to crews on layover for the clinics.

The shows this year drew a lot of positive comment for their depth of information and level of presentation. They included two shows by Nevada Northern museum personnel on Friday, with former Western Pacific engineer Harry Baynes sharing his stories of working for the railroad and NNRy Executive Director Mark Bassett giving a talk on the Nevada Northern and its relationship with the WP.

Jeff Moore gave a great look at the McCloud River Railway and its importance to the WP and the Highline, with an in depth look at the history and traffic between the two roads. Wayne Monger started things off on Friday with a look at the WP's operations in Nevada and Utah and also had a detailed look at the difficult work involved in building through Flowery Lake Pass in Nevada.

We had two newly scanned, high resolution films from the Virgil Staff collection, one showing a ride on the *California Zephyr* in 1967-68 starting in Fremont, California and ending in Oroville. The other was, appropriately enough, a look at the east end of the WP starting just west of Salt Lake City and ending in Portola. For modelers, there was a clinic on car weathering by Bill Meeker and a modeling segment on the WP's SW1500 switchers. The SW1500 show was a group effort that covered the WP's efforts to order new switchers starting in the late 1960s, the delivery and use of the 1500s through their WP and UP days and finishing with their



Riding behind NNRy 40 at Keystone, NV

NNRy excursion – A group of WP Convention attendees travelled to Ely, NV for a special tour and charter steam train ride on Sunday, April 26. Here the four car train, with vista flat and Kennecott caboose trailing, climbs toward the still active mine at Ruth, NV, behind 1910 built 4-6-0 Nevada Northern 40.