

Roadmaster's Report

—Greg Elems, Roadmaster

A quick update on the track and tie replacement.

I've had some fantastic help from a core group of members. Thankfully with the help from Loren Ross, Bil Jackson, Ethan Doty, Rick Gruninger on basically a moment's notice we've pulled and replaced 14 ties. We will spike and gauge them and move onto the next batch to be pulled, replaced and spiked. Don Nelson came up and spent a week on the back hoe digging a ditch alongside the ties needing to be pulled. A big thank you goes out to him for that work. He has prepped the full length of track where the ties were marked to be replace. At this time we are ready to put another 12 – 14 ties on the speeder flat and stage it out at the work site.

As stated on the web page, I will start a 3 day a week work program on tie work on the track on July 10th. Those days will be Monday, Wednesday and Friday with the start time at 9 am, or earlier if those close by are willing to start earlier. My hope is with Don's work and the air jack hammer and air spade we can get a dozen ties done a week or more. The heat will be a factor and an earlier start might be in our best interest for keep our volunteers safe from overheating and exertion. I will have the work days until we get the track currently out of service back in service.

As stated in my last report we are replacing old 8' ties with new 10' ties, not a new idea but one that will make the track more stable for when we get to run the 165.

At this time I have identified 4 sections of rail that will need to be replaced after the tie work is finished. Rod McClure procured a flange oiler which we will set up at the apex of the balloon on the outside rail after the new rail is installed. If we have time there are 2 other sections of rail replacement that might be prudent to take care of also.

I'm not sure if I will tackle the tie replacement between Milward switch and the location of Wayne Monger's track work. In walking the balloon several times and under the watchful

eye of Loren Ross two wide gauge spots have been identified and probably a dozen ties located at rail joints should be taken care of before we tackle the rail replacement. The factor that has been in our favor there has been the good drainage that we didn't have in the derailment area.

A preliminary look into hiring the work on the balloon has been started. The big thing is money, we need a good chunk of change to do it. The advantage is threefold. The contractor can come in and use our materials and rebuild the balloon for us in a week's time probably. Second we can then put our volunteers time and effort towards other projects at the museum. The third advantage that also comes to mind is our physical abilities and health. Not tearing our backs up, doing manually the work the contractor has machines for is a benefit to my helpers. I know my back will take longer to heal up than the 3 days it took to get it so sore.

Depending on time and budget, I may consider extending the track work with the contractor down to the Edenwold crossing. Again, time and money will have to weigh in on that part of discussion with a contractor and board of directors.

In conclusion my hope is to get the balloon open before Railroad days, and maybe lift the slow order of 5 mph and let our trains go around the balloon at 10 mph. The use of a contractor would facilitate that quicker but getting it open could be done given the weather temperature and my help.

Greg Elems, Steve Habeck, and Mike Wissink (Cal-OSHA) inspecting damage.

—Paul Finnegan Photo.

