

Arizona Railroad



Historical Society

The DESERT DISPATCH

Time Table

Layout work sessions

Every Wednesday and Saturday beginning at 9am:
Arizona Capitol Museum
1700 W. Washington St.
Phoenix, AZ

ARHS Elections

July Election Results

New Officers

President: **Don Stewart**

Vice President: **Craig Faris**

Secretary: **David Brown**

BoD: **DeWayne Coltin**

VP to serve a 1 year term, all others are for a 2 year term

Beat the Heat Swap Meet

August 17, 9am-1pm

Liberty Traditional School

3300 N. Lake Valley Rd
Prescott Valley, AZ 86314

*Sponsored by the
Central AZ Model
Railroad Club*



Downtown Yuma, with the Colorado River at right. Upper right corner is a field on the California side of the river

Scenery in Yuma, Benchwork in Tucson Underway

Progress Report and photos by Don Stewart

Scenery in Yuma is being completed at the lower level to allow Tucson to be built over the area. Scenery has been placed near the back of the layout under the Grand Canyon, including a field of what looks to be healthy green lettuce on the California side of the Colorado River by Dick Christ, Don Stewart and Ken Nelson. The fourth pour of modeled water (resin) has been completed on the Colorado and downtown Yuma sidewalks have been installed.

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ARHS Officers

President - Don Stewart

Vice President - Craig Farris

Secretary - Dave Brown

Treasurer - Dan Kubarych

Director - Ken Nelson

Director - DeWayne Koltin

The Desert Dispatch is a publication of the Arizona Railroad Historical Society, a 100 Percent NMRA club.

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Mission Statement

The **Arizona Railroad Historical Society** strives to create a world class railroad experience which includes history, education and railroad operations centered around the state of Arizona.

We are honored and excited by the opportunity to create that world class railroad experience in the Arizona State Capital Museum in downtown Phoenix.

June Layout Progress



photos by Don Stewart

Metal beams and vertical posts were added to support the top level of the layout. This level will contain Flagstaff, Ashfork, Williams and the Grand Canyon. By the end of June the north half of the level was complete and wooden splines for track sub-roadbed from Prescott to Flagstaff were built. Cork roadbed and track were added to the splines and the Johnston Canyon Bridge was laid out. The bridge will be completed and set in place at a later date.



A view from above shows Yuma and the Colorado River at the south end of the layout. Tucson will sit above Yuma at the 40 inch level.

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Yuma: Yuma scenery was added with the Colorado River taking shape. A mirror under the RR girder bridge at the south end adds length to the river.



Mobest Yard: Tracks were laid out in the Mobest yard for engine facilities. This includes a turntable, roundhouse, engine house, coal tower, sand house and diesel servicing area. Buildings are being built separately and will be added soon.

Terrain from Tempe to Tucson around Picacho peak was added. (next page) Track was installed and connected electrically to the control system. Scenery near Picacho Peak will include wildflowers as it is generally seen in the spring time.

Electronic components were acquired and they were added to the appropriate places on the layout. Drops were added to the track laid in the Picacho area, as well as the track on the splines.



Left: Blue insulation foam is used to create the rough outline of the mountains.

Below, Blue painters tape protects track from the hydrocal plaster that gives texture to the shape.



Building Picacho Peak

photos by Don Stewart



Earth tone paint completes the basic form of Picacho Peak on The Arizona Capitol Lines layout. Details including spring wildflowers will soon finish the scene.



Donations now Accepted via PayPal

Helping build the Arizona Capitol Railroad is now just a click away. Visitors to the www.AZRHS.com website will find a PayPal button at the bottom of the page. Clicking the button will enable PayPal users to make one-time or recurring monthly donations to help the ARHS build the layout.

The **Arizona Railroad Historical Society** is located on the 2nd floor of the Arizona Capitol Museum, 1700 W Washington St., Phoenix AZ 85007.

Tax-Deductible donations to the ARHS may be made through the **Arizona Capitol Museum Guild**, a 501(c)(3) organization. Please specify that your gift is for the **ARHS**. The ARHS is a 100 percent National Model Railroad Association club.

visit us on the web at:

www.azrhs.com

On Track

by **Jesse Poole** — ARHS President

All my previous messages have been forward looking because that is where I see this group going. However, this will be my last message as President and I thought it might be worthwhile to see how far we have come. Two years ago we were still wandering in the wilderness looking for a home. There was hope that the State Capitol would become our new home, but it was not a done deal. After some legal hurdles and many meetings an agreement was reached with the Museum and we had a home!

That is when the real challenge began—now we had to build something. And build it we did!! I think we can all take a great deal of pride in the work we have accomplished to date. The talents of all members have brought us to where we are today, but it is the pride each individual member takes in his personal contribution that makes this whole endeavor a success.

We have secured funding from many sources and currently have funds to finance the rest of this year. Assuming several large corporate donors continue with their generosity we can project sufficient funds to complete the project. We still have a long way to go, but we are in far better shape fiscally than when we started a year ago. More importantly, we are becoming recognized in the model railroading community. We have good relationships with local clubs and one has helped us financially. We have been included in two articles in the NMRA magazine and will soon begin a series of articles on the LCC installation on our layout.

Let me conclude by returning to the future. This is a great club, we have great members and a great future. We work well together and have fun doing it. As a personal note, the support that each of you provided to me while I was president made this a fun job. We just elected a great new leadership team, and I ask that you provide them the same enthusiastic support as in the past. Working together we can continue making this organization better every day!!

I look forward to seeing you at our banquet on July 22. We will have a good time socially and officially install the new officers. Same great club with new leadership to carry us into the future!



The Story of Frank Murphy's Impossible Railroad

At the peak of its prosperity, the fabled Bradshaw Mountains of central Arizona produced a king's ransom in gold and silver. Towns and mines with whimsical names like Bueno, Turkey Creek, Tiger, Tip Top, Oro Belle and Big Bug were peopled with boisterous devil-may-care miners aptly described as unmarried, unchurched and unwashed. Each community boasted it was built atop the Madre Del Oro and its streets would soon be cobbled with golden nuggets.

In 1899, the vast riches inspired railroad entrepreneur Frank Murphy to extend his Prescott and Eastern Line from Mayer into the



heart of the great mountains. Although Murphy was warned he'd be stopped by this maze of rugged, perpendicular grades laced with canyons so steep that big horn sheep had to shut their eyes and walk sideways, he was determined to meet



the challenge of the mountains. That's why it's best-remembered as Frank Murphy's Impossible Railroad

This mighty railroad line wasn't Murphy's first challenge. A few years earlier, he built the famous

Peavine from Ashfork to Phoenix, linking the capital city with the Santa Fe mainline in Northern Arizona. Later he ran a line from Prescott to Mayer. The mines in the Bradshaws were producing nearly \$400,000 in gold and silver annually.

Because Murphy owned mining properties in the area, he was most anxious to extend his railroad from Mayer into the mountains. Actually, the plan was two-fold. One spur would run up Big Bug Creek, between Humboldt and Mayer, to Poland (town, not the country). The other would extend along the eastern side of the Bradshaws then climb the lofty summit to Crown King. In 1901, Murphy hired a band of strong-backed gandy dancers and steel-driving men back East and transported them out to Prescott.

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He paid them a dollar a day for their toil, twice the going rate. Even those top wages couldn't prevent a mass exodus of hired hands after a dynamite blast on a cut exposed a rich vein of gold. Undaunted, Murphy shipped in another load of track layers and the steel ribbons continued to inch their way up the slopes towards Poland and the mines at Walker.

On April 21, 1902, the spur line finally reached Poland.

Murphy's gamble paid off immediately. Miners following a gold vein above Poland met another group tunneling from the other side of the mountain at Walker. The result was an 8,000-foot tunnel linking the Lynx-Walker District with the railroad at Poland.

The first week, \$180,000 in gold ore was hauled through the tunnel in mule-drawn ore cars to the railroad where it could be hauled to the smelter at Humboldt. Now Murphy turned his attention to the more difficult task of building a line from Mayer to Crown King.

The Crown King line stretched east from Mayer across the broad cattle country to Cordes before winding down Cedar Canyon and south into Crazy Basin. From there it was 13 treacherous miles and a 3,000-foot rise in elevation to Crown King. The grade was four percent and at Horsethief Canyon it took seven miles of track to go just two miles. The tracks had more kinks and

lazy loops than a cheap lariat. On some of the tight switchbacks, the steam engine had to head up a short spur, then back uphill to the next hairpin turn before putting it in forward again.



In late October, 1903 an excursion train brought a party of Prescotttonians up to behold the view. From atop the summit, they could see 50 miles off into the distance.

The new railroad brought civilization to Crown King. In its early days Crown King was pretty wild and woolly. The nearest lawman was at Prescott. Local legend has it that 17 men died with their boots on in the 1890s alone.

The years leading up to World War I were boomers for the railroad and mines in the Bradshaw Mountains, but by 1918 the ore was starting to play out and the line went into decline. The old iron-bellied locomotives, their boilers leaking steam, were hard-pressed to make the steep grade.

There's an old saying, "When the gold runs out, so do the people," and by the 1920s the impossible railroad went into decline. The last train pulled out of Crown King in November, 1926 and soon after the Santa Fe pulled up the rails.

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During his illustrious career in the bustling Arizona territory, Murphy engaged in a host of activities. He was the first superintendent of the rich Congress Mine. He was associated with the



purchase of the legendary United Verde Mine at Jerome in the 1880s and he once owned the famous Castle Hot Springs Resort. Noted for his integrity, resourcefulness and ability, Murphy attracted substantial Eastern capital to Arizona and was one of the territory's most influential businessmen.

Frank Murphy, the visionary who brought the impossible railroad to fruition continued his entrepreneurial efforts. He spent the last years of his life developing plans to build a railroad from Arizona across Mexico and down to the Panama Canal. He died in Prescott in 1917 after a long illness.

Excerpt from Arizoniana by Marshall Trimble, the state's official historian.

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Arizona Junction 2019 PSR Convention



September 25-29 2019

Sheraton Mesa at Wrigleyville W.
860 North Riverview
Mesa, Arizona 85201

[http://azdiv-nmra.org/
psr2019convention/](http://azdiv-nmra.org/psr2019convention/)

- Tony Koester, guest speaker and clinician
- Over 35 Layouts in Tucson, Prescott and metro Phoenix area.
- 40 plus Clinics
- OPS Sessions
- Special Day trip / ride the Verde Canyon Railroad / private car
- Self Guided tour to the AZ Railway Museum
- Hobo Auction
- Opening night BBQ at McCormick Stillman Railroad Park / Layouts on display
- Kalmbach book signing, layout room / manufacturers displays
- The Beginners' Corner
- And much, much more!



ARHS News



Ray Rumble's winter scene along the BNSF TransCon east of Williams, AZ took first place in the color Prototype Rail photo contest at the Fall NMRA Arizona Division meeting held in Scottsdale. Ray used a Canon T6 Rebel with a 55-250mm zoom lens to capture the action on a snowy 25 degree day.

The Arizona Railroad Historical Society

held their Spring Swap meet on May 11. The highly successful event included 60 vendor tables and attendance was about 200 guests. The club will hold its fall Swap Meet on November 16 2019 at the same location, Glendale Christian Church 9661 N. 59th Ave. in Glendale, AZ 85302.





Above, (L-R) Ray Rumble, John Clark, Don Stewart and Al Shultz help customers at the ARHS table. **Right**, Craig Faris announces a door prize winner.



Dave Brown serves coffee and donuts to an eager customer.

SPRING SWAP MEET