



NEWS

Volume 2 Number 4

Winter 2003

Sullivan Car Barn plans moving ahead



FVHRS Chair Robert Ashton presents Sheila Copps, Minister of Canadian Heritage, with an information package about the Society's efforts to revitalize heritage BCER interurban passenger service on the 95-year-old Fraser Valley Line that runs from New Westminster to Chilliwack. Minister Copps spent two hours at the Surrey Museum and Archives during a West Coast visit in November, 2002.

A Message from the FVHRS Chair

As the FVHRS gets ready to invite members to its second AGM, I have been asked to inform the membership about our attempt to secure a "B" designation under the Cultural Property Export and Import Act. Not being a lawyer with expertise in matters dealing with federal government acts and policy, I will present the information as I understand it.

The "B" designation is a category assigned, when all requirements are fulfilled, to lawful museums or societies that wish to seek a buyer / donor for a specific item of cultural property: a one time purchase.

Once the requirements and necessary paperwork have been completed, they are shipped to the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board in Ottawa. This board, which meets five times a year, has the authority to assign the designation.

Once the FVHRS has its designation, we may approach a buyer / donor to purchase the item of cultural property in question. Why would the buyer / donor wish to do this? Special Tax Credits and Capital Gains Exemption.

In other words, the buyer / donor would not lose any money (\$ for \$) and has a chance to see the item of cultural property increase in value and, thus, be exempt from any capital gains payment but able to claim it. The FVHRS is going this route so we may see one of our most famous Fraser Valley interurbans, return home and it will not cost the Society any money. The American owners of the artifact have agreed to wait for a minimum of two years while we go through the process. We do not think it will take that long but we are giving ourselves lot of breathing space just in case we have to redo certain items. Another positive is the owners have agreed to "lend" us the item of cultural property when we have a car barn available to house it.

Robert Ashton
Chair, FVHRS

Plans for the Sullivan car barn are moving ahead now that Surrey Council has approved in-principle a three-year lease with a two-year extension for a 1.3 acre site on 152nd Street next to the Sullivan Community Hall.

The FVHRS has been negotiating property tax and land lease grants as well as liability insurance grants and hopes to have the lease signed by the Society's second annual general meeting on March 26. Upon successful completion of the land lease and grant approvals, the Society will begin detailed design work on the car barn and operation centre.

"Assuming a three-month period to complete designs for the buildings plus city approvals, construction could start on the site by May or June 2003," advised Society Secretary Allen Aubert. "Allow three months to complete construction and we could be ready to receive our first interurban car by October."

Society Director Terry Lyster has been shepherding the project through Surrey City Hall - where he used to work in the earlier stages of his career in municipal planning. Working closely with him is Director Larry Fisher, who is underwriting the cost of the car barn and has hired an architect to develop detailed plans of the 3,165 square-foot facility.

Roy Mufford, another Board member, who is a realtor and contractor, is overseeing the replacement of a shed for the main part of the original Sullivan Station which has been sitting on a farmer's property a half-mile away from its original location at 152nd Street (Johnston Road) and 84th Avenue (Bose Road). Once the original station has been restored or reconstructed, it will be moved onto the BC Hydro right-of-way close to its original siting. Assisting Roy is Director Graham MacDonell, who is acting as project manager, carrying out a broad range of tasks, along with Director John Sprung adding his CAD-CAM expertise for presenting the drawings of the car barn when the Society makes its presentation to Surrey Council.

Meanwhile, Society Chair Robert Ashton is dealing with obtaining a "B" designation (See "Message from the FVHRS Chair" at left.) that will make it much easier for the Society to acquire the interurban car. Rounding out the team are: Secretary Allen Aubert who is responsible for getting the paperwork through City Hall; Treasurer Howard Reich for keeping track of the funding and expenditures for the projects and Vice-Chair Bill Watson, whose many decades of experience with railway societies is making sure that the whole project stays on track.



Bev Sommer, Manager, Heritage Services, City of Surrey, is presented with a gift from FVHRS Director Graham MacDonell (wearing motorman's hat) in appreciation of her spearheading a seven-month display at the Surrey Museum and Archives on rail history in Surrey, entitled, "Railways Run Through It". Other members of the Community Exhibition Team include: Ken Atkey (left), Henry Ewert (behind Bev), Jack Brown and David Reuss (at right).

Surrey's rail history on display at Museum

The FVHRS is not the only organization in the Fraser Valley working to preserve the region's rich railway history. So is the Surrey Museum and Archives.

On Saturday, February 8, a seven-month display of rail history in Surrey entitled, "Railways Run Through It", began with over 150 patrons attending. Society members are invited to discover Surrey's railway history including:

- the New Westminster Southern Railway, the first railway to run through Surrey from Brownsville to the international border at Blaine, Washington, starting in 1891;
- the Victoria Terminal Railway and Ferry Company which operated a railway from Port Guichon on the west side of Ladner to Cloverdale starting in 1901;
- the Vancouver, Victoria and Eastern Railway which operated from Cloverdale east to Cannon through Abbotsford starting in 1903;
- the Great Northern Sea Level line from New Westminster to Blaine, Wa. through White Rock, starting in 1908;
- the British Columbia Electric Railway which operated electric interurban passenger service in Surrey (and all the way to Chilliwack) from July 1, 1910 until October 1, 1960; and,
- the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society, its mission and works program for 2002-2006.

The display includes:

- a number of rail artifacts, including the shovel used by BCER's General Manager R.H. Sperling, for the sod-turning ceremony on August 28, 1907 for the Fraser

Valley Line (at Old Yale Road where the tracks cross the roadway);

- a model rail diorama of the BCER, MNSR, VTR&F / VV&E in Cloverdale;
- a walk-in-model of a B.C. Electric Railway station;
- maps of railway systems that operated in Surrey between 1891 and 1945 including many lumber lines that existed between 1887 and 1932;
- videos on the B.C.E.R.'s Fraser Valley Line and the Great Northern Railway in the Fraser Valley; and,
- lots of hands-on activities for the whole family - including a board game.

Exhibition attendees will be transported back in time through vintage film footage of the Fraser Valley Line augmented by sounds of a broad variety of steam locomotives. Discover the role of Brownsville and Cloverdale in Surrey's rail past while learning about the more modern impacts of the Canadian National Railway (CNR), B.C. Rail and Amtrak.

FVHRS members assist exhibit

The Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society will be featured in the exhibit which has been researched by members of a special Community Exhibition Team, each with expertise in a particular field of railway history and heritage. Among the team members are:

- FVHRS Director Graham MacDonell, who has helped to co-ordinate the display with Heritage Manager Bev Sommer;
- Society member Henry Ewert, author of the book, "The Story of the British Columbia Electric

Railway Company", for his expertise on the BCER, Brownsville and the Great Northern Railway;

- Society Member David Reuss for his modeling expertise in overseeing the development of the rail diorama;
- Society Member Frank Home for his knowledge of BCER and GNR;
- Ladner resident Ken Atkey for his knowledge of the Victoria Terminal Railway & Ferry as well as the Vancouver, Victoria and Eastern Railway;
- New Westminster Southern Railway aficionado Norm Sherriff;
- Marine and Railway Artist Ray Warren for his artwork for the hands-on materials and backdrop for the rail diorama;
- Jack Brown, a former high school teacher who wrote the history of Surrey for his Masters degree and has a deep knowledge of railway development; and,
- Ray Menagh, a BC Trolleyman Association member who has added his expertise on BCER models.

The Surrey Museum and Archives is located at 6022 - 176th Street, adjacent to the Cloverdale Fairgrounds.

Museum hours are Tuesdays to Saturdays, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Admission is by donation. For information or to schedule a group tour, call 604-502-6456. Tours guided by expert members of the Exhibition Team will be offered every Saturday from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

A series of railway presentations will also be presented. For further information, contact the Museum at the above telephone number.

Second AGM marks efforts to acquire interurban cars

The Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society's second annual general meeting will be held in the Jim Kealing Room at Fraser Downs on Wednesday, March 26, starting with registration at 6:30 p.m. and the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Members attending the meeting will be brought up-to-date on the Board's efforts to acquire two heritage BCER interurban cars as well as an update on the development of a car barn to be located on City of Surrey-owned property in Sullivan adjacent to the Southern Railway of B.C. trackage

A notice of the A.G.M., an agenda and other information is enclosed with this newsletter.

SEE YOU AT THE AGM!



The Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society NEWS is published quarterly by the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society for its membership, sponsors and limited public distribution.

The Editorial Board welcomes brief letters and stories from readers who remember the Fraser Valley Line when BCER's interurban trains plied the rails between New Westminster and Chilliwack.

Please send your contributions to: Graham MacDonell, Editor, Heritage Railway NEWS, 148 - 3160 Townline Road, Abbotsford, B.C. V2T 5P4 or e-mail: gencom@shaw.ca

The Editorial Board also welcomes advertising for business card size ads at \$20 per placement per issue.

For additional information about FVHRS, contact: Allen Aubert, Secretary, FVHRS 1045 - 165th Street, Surrey, BC V4A 9A2