

# **YAKIMA VALLEY TROLLEYS**

## **2019**

### **THE YEAR IN REVIEW**

The Yakima Valley Trolleys organization is a non-profit 501(c)(3) association that preserves and operates the former Yakima Valley Transportation Company electric railroad that now belongs to the City of Yakima. The YVT railroad is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the last intact, turn of the century, electric interurban railroad in America.

Our Mission Statement directs us to preserve, maintain, and operate the YVT railroad as a living example of what interurban railroads were like over a hundred years ago. We are careful to make sure that our restoration work is consistent with the way the railroad looked and operated back in its heyday.

An example of that practice was the complete restoration of the three-part powerhouse main door in 2019. The original powerhouse door was splitting and showing its age and becoming something of a security risk. Using funds from a Capital Heritage Projects grant obtained by the City and managed by Bob Desgrosellier, an all new powerhouse door was built, using specially milled dimensioned lumber to perfectly match the original.

Funds from the Capital Heritage Projects grant were also used to create signage for the museum property. Four outdoor signs explain the YVT railroad history to visitors, and a dozen interior signs give details of the preserved YVT artifacts in the museum. Also, a monument sign was created for the property at the corner of Third Avenue and Pine Street so that passersby will know it is Yakima's trolley museum.





Under the supervision of Larry Fournier, our 1968 Chevy van was restored and re-painted to look like new. It was used in parades and Christmas activities as a tangible icon of the Yakima Trolleys. This van was originally provided by Wray Brown to haul a house trailer to Whitney School where trolley rides originated in the 1970s. The trailer was used to sell tickets from. The van had fallen into disrepair in recent years, but now is once again fully operable.





An offer from the Issaquah Valley Trolley of a track speeder led us to re-evaluate our equipment needs in 2019. We already had two speeders which we weren't using. Another would just take up needed space in the barn. What we need is a good hy-rail bucket truck that is dependable and can be operated without a special permit. So it was decided to liquidate all our speeders as well as an unused vacuum machine and use the proceeds to purchase a second hand bucket truck. If you know of a good one that is available, please let us know.

The City of Selah had previously removed a section of our track in one of their street crossings and efforts were made in 2019 to get their help in repairing it. Despite discussions between Selah and our board members, as well as conferences between the Yakima City Attorney and the Selah City Attorney, the Selah City Administrator refused to help us repair the damage. So we are planning to go it alone and construct a panel of new track to be installed into the crossing in the Spring of 2020. Selah has agreed to provide traffic control for the project and the Yakima City Street Department will help us open and close the street for the installation.

Stewart Wadsworth was added to the YVT Board of Directors in 2019 and Jim Moore was added to the pool of motormen.

For the second year in a row, YVT participated in an event put on by KCTS television. It honors Daniel Tiger and Mister Rogers, and includes an appearance by Daniel himself. The trolleys gave free rides to kids who came to the Daniel Tiger event. Those familiar with Mister Rogers will remember that he opened his shows with a trolley.

We obtained a grant from the William G. Pomeroy foundation to pay for a beautiful cast metal sign proclaiming our inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. We received the sign and it is being installed in our parking lot area.



The last living YVT lineman, Dick Noyes, has moved back to Yakima and spent a day helping us properly reconnect the 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue line wire with the Pine Street wire. As a result we are now able to run under wire all the way up 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue to about the former Jeld Wen plant, where the track moves over onto private right of way.

This project gave us an opportunity to use the 110-year-old Line Car Number A. This electric locomotive has been in continuous service in Yakima since 1910 and is without a doubt one of America's longest active locomotives.



On May 4, a gala fund raising event was put on at the Yakima Valley Museum by Joan Walsh and her helpers. It included a sit down dinner and games and prizes and entertainment and netted over \$15,000 for the trolleys.

A grant was obtained from the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Electric Railway Foundation to pay half the cost of repairing the sandstone walls of the carbarn and fuel building. The City of Yakima paid the other half. The same stone mason who did similar work on the carbarn years ago was found and hired to do the present work. It is a very specialized technique, using a very dry type of mortar. This prevents the mortar from breaking the sandstone in times when changes in temperature cause expansion in the walls. And the look had to blend perfectly with the original sandstone mortar that was used when the building was constructed in 1910.





Both the Pine Street Route and the Selah Line were in use throughout 2019. Special trolley events were held for Halloween, Dia de los Muertos, and Santa Claus.

On June 15<sup>th</sup>, our fourth annual car show event was held in the Comprehensive Mental Health parking lot. Anne Hatch, with the help of her husband Dusty, and their friends, put on the show and raised \$1,522 for the trolleys.

A Brill single truck trolley built in 1912 for the Oporto, Portugal street railway system was given to us by the family of Byron Cole. This car is almost identical to the single truck cars that YVT purchased new in 1908 and 1910. The plan is to restore it as a YVT car and use it to replace one of the present Oporto cars in service so that the present car can be taken out of service and be completely reconditioned. The Northwest Railway Museum in Snoqualmie is helping us with the restoration and helping us find funding sources to cover the cost of restoration.



One of our new members, Michael Gregory, operates a metal fabricating business and can make parts in various types of metal using computer technology. We have been working on our Oporto cars' controllers and obtaining the copper contactors and fingers for the controllers was becoming prohibitively expensive. For example, a paired set of them, bought as new old stock, cost \$350. And we needed dozens of them.

Mr. Gregory, upon hearing of our need, offered to make us new copper parts at no charge. As a result, both controllers of both Oporto cars will be able to be fully refurbished in 2020. Huge thanks go to Mr. Gregory for this much needed help!



All in all, 2019 was a good year for the trolleys and found expansion of the electrical system, addition of another trolley, a couple of successful fund raisers, and completion of some needed repair work.

*Ken Johnsen  
YVT President*