



Federation of Heritage Railways of Southern Africa

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Dear FEDRAIL SA Member,

FEDRAIL SA NEWSBRIEF No: 1

Welcome to our first News Update of 2016, in these frequent bulletins we shall be updating our members and friends on matters relating to rail preservation and tourism in Southern Africa. We invite all our readers to submit any comments or information that could be beneficial to the growth of rail preservation and tourism for future issues.

Our Web Site.

The FEDRAIL SA web site is now operational at www.fedrail.co.za and is available to all to browse and make contact with FEDRAIL SA. We shall be pleased to hear from you with any comments about the site.

Transnet Steam Locomotive Disposals.

Not soon after FEDRAIL SA was formed this very contentious issue emerged as it reached its finality after many years of debate. Whilst the first auction has come and gone with only 10 locomotives sold out of 38, it is good to see that at least one has been saved for preservation, 15A No: 1970, the inclusion of which for disposal, was queried by many interested parties. At this moment in time no further details of who bought what are available but FEDRAIL SA is keeping a close watch for further information. The 28 locomotives unsold in this auction (No: 118) will now be offered again in auction 119 which opens on 24th February and closes on 29th February. You can see further information at the Go Dove website: http://international.go-dove.com/en/event-19478?utm_source=Eloqua&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=19478&ContactSeq=232542687&CampaignSeq=41849.

Whilst FEDRAIL SA is not in a position to bid for locomotives we are happy to coordinate any such bids from preservationists to avoid prices escalating between unknown bidders who may be seeking the same objectives. Just contact Dave Richardson on dave@fedrailsa.com

Later in April or May there will be another auction which will encompass many locomotives currently at Millsite in Krugersdorp. The list of these locomotives is detailed on our website (see: http://www.fedrail.co.za/images/pdf/Locomotives_for_disposal_second_round.pdf) but should not be taken as final at this moment in time as this is a fluid situation.

Transnet Discussions.

As part of its mandate to engage with rail operators, FEDRAIL SA has in recent days had some productive discussions with Transnet. These are the highlights:

1) Transnet would like to hold a working workshop with FEDRAIL SA and its associates in order to discuss technical issues in particular relating to the operation of tourist trains on Transnet lines. They are very upbeat about the possibilities of opening up new branch lines but would like to review the agreements currently in place to see how improvements can be made. YQ charges (those are the charges that cover the use of their lines), depot leases and other items would be on the agenda. An official invitation will be sent to FEDRAIL SA members to attend once the time and place of such a meeting has been confirmed.

2) In the interim Transnet have asked FEDRAIL SA to coordinate the preparation of a report which looks at the entire South African Railway network with specific reference to those lines that might have tourist potential in the future. Obviously all lines currently in use would be clearly marked but those operators might wish to expand to new destinations and this is where the report would become meaningful. We therefore invite all FEDRAIL SA members to put forward their ideas and recommendations regarding interesting railway journeys that might ultimately be steam hauled. We need to know of buildings that could be useful to function as railway stations, restaurants, picnic areas etc. Transnet has pointed out that very often clubs operate from a single location and do not worry about where they are going in terms of the quality of that infrastructure. The railway passengers need facilities when they get off the train, even if it is purely a picnic spot, and Transnet is making the point that those areas need to be under private sector control but on the assumption that Transnet is doing something about them.

Our meetings have been very productive and Transnet is in a very constructive frame of mind and would like to see their branch line strategy mature and they are quite determined to see a passenger/tourist component being part of it. The recent success of the reopening of the Ceres line for freight and passengers has provided added momentum in this regard.

We have set a deadline of the end of March for the submission of the national assessment of Rail Tourism potential and we invite contributions from anyone with an interest in seeing the railway network productively employed. We look forward to your valued input but ask that you keep the proposed initiative confidential at this moment in time. Please contact Dave Richardson on dave@fedrailsa.com.

The Outeniqua Tjoe-Choo.

Some good news on this ongoing project to return trains to the George-Knysna line is that a consortium has been formed to reinstate the line. As full details are subject to confidentiality FEDRAIL SA can only congratulate the consortium on their initiative.

Membership

Readers are invited to share this newsletter and non-members are invited to join FEDRAIL SA. Full details can be found on our website: www.fedrail.co.za under Membership Enquiries.



David Shepherd's 15F, 3052, is due to return to the rails in early 2016. Picture courtesy of Reefsteamers.