

HERITAGE RAILWAY ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA – FEBRUARY 2010 – PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE REPORTS

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MONTHLY PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE REPORTS: FEBRUARY 2010

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SUB-COMMITTEE: HRASA CORPORATE LIAISON REPORT

Team Leader: Chris Janisch **Members:** Dudley Smith, Nerina Skuy and Elize Lubbe

The MOU with Transnet Foundation has been concluded, which we feel has given us a stronger forum as we continue our interactions with them. The Transnet Group dynamics has seen the TF assets fall under the broader control of Transnet, with the Group Transnet Exco thus having to approve the “disposal of assets” process. The final decision on this is expected at the end of March, as well as on the future of Lend-lease, which TF are agitating to bring to conclusion. An internal Transnet Heritage Committee has been formed, which consists of all possible stakeholders within Transnet.

The Choo-Tjoe has been tendered and a successful buyer is expected to be announced soon. We also discussed a few ideas for the 150 years of railways celebration. There is a business plan from Durban to move and permanently mount the Natal locomotive, as well as create a heritage corridor from Durban to Point. TRE have indicated interest in supporting this project. We also suggested a special steam train from Jo'burg to Durban, and TF have prompted TFR to get involved as we need their permission and support.

Further discussions centred around the responsibility for the remaining heritage assets; Transnet have indicated that they will not abdicate their responsibility. HRASA is not to be part of the Transnet Heritage Committee, as it is an internal structure, but have been assured that we will be broadly consulted in future policy formation.

We have been contacted by PRASA, who have finally delivered interface agreements to the clubs for signature. These are for legal purposes only and are not commercial. Fees continue to enter the coffers of TFR. We have been warned that chemical toilets may soon be insisted upon, and also that detonators will need to be applied for and obtained through the SAPS in future. Waterval Boven is still without an access agreement, despite written confirmation of acceptance in October 2009. However, we have been assured that they are continuing the process.

On a more positive note, we are making forward strides with the RSR. Our MoU with them was signed on 30 January. Coen Pretorius has been very active attending meetings and doing risk assessments. We are to hold a follow-up meeting in March, as a start to the creation of a set of standards to govern heritage rail operations.

Although the HRASA BOD has made undertakings to provide dynamic interactive sub-committees and task teams, as outlined in our mission statement and code of responsibilities, it operates with limited human and financial resources. More assistance is required in this regard and the BOD welcomes all recommendations. The HRASA website is in the process of being redeveloped for re-launch in March. All related material will be posted here for members' edification, with discussions and questions also channelled through the site. We are excited that our new-look website will provide better channels of communication and exposure for our members. However, members are required to submit content for their respective sections.

Chris Janisch

SUB-COMMITTEE: HRASA OPERATIONS PORTFOLIO REPORT

Team Leader: Ian Pretorius **Members:** Coen Pretorius, Chris Janisch, Mike Du Plooy, Dylan Knott and Steve Smith

At last there has been movement from PRASA regarding the new interface agreements. Atlantic Rail, after 16 months of extreme frustration, now has a new PRASA interface agreement. I believe from Chris Janisch that Friends of the Rail have also signed their new PRASA interface agreement, but have not been informed by any other HRASA members about their new agreements. These agreements are only for safety and operating and are not from the commercial department, which still leaves us beholden to PRASA in this regard.

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I attended a two day SAHRA workshop on 9 & 10 February. This workshop was mainly intended to streamline the reporting process of declared cultural institutions including the SA Museum, Bloemfontein Museum, etc, on how they would move forward in the identification and description of preserved items such as archaeological finds, human remains etc. One section of the SAHRA Workshop, which directly affects us and could be of great assistance, is that the SAPS, in conjunction with Interpol, have a division that looks into particularly the theft of heritage items. I have made contact with them and explained how much theft actually takes place, in particular of brass items from steam locomotives. Although they are mainly focused on thefts of paintings from museums and sold on the black market internationally they will certainly look into this matter and are prepared to take up this case with the scrap merchants.

Ian Pretorius

SUB-COMMITTEE: HRASA FINANCIAL PORTFOLIO REPORT

Team Leader: Len Smuts **Members:** Nerina Skuy, Chris Janisch and Ian Pretorius

HRASA financial report March to December 2009

HRASA is on a sound financial footing, with further donations totalling R6 000.00 received from various HRASA members.

The BOD was mandated at the 2009 AGM to take the organisation through a transformation process. Part of that process included the review of membership categories and fees. That exercise has been completed and the consolidated membership categories are as follows:

Category	Description	Voting Points
A	Commercial operators Commercial operators and parastatal organisations that operate on national lines and who maintain rolling stock and/or locomotives of any type.	25
	Heritage Section 21 Non-profit distributing (NPD) operators Heritage organisations not for gain that operate on national lines and own, lease and maintain rolling stock and/or locomotives of any type.	
B	Carrier operators Organisations that own or lease rail and/or heritage equipment and that operate on private lines, or who lease equipment to run on national lines, or that are directly involved in the promotion of the heritage railway industry.	15
C	Support organisations Associations, companies, clubs and museums that supply relevant services, goods and/or support to heritage operators.	5
D	Individuals having relevant expertise pertaining to the Association's activities – non-voting membership.	1

Membership renewal invoices for the 2010-11 financial year have been sent to members.

Len Smuts

SUB-COMMITTEE: TOURISM PORTFOLIO REPORT

Team Leader: Dudley Smith **Members:** Nerina Skuy, Chris Janisch, Ian Pretorius and Mike du Plooy

The uncertainty surrounding the Cape-Natal Branch Line has to a certain extent receded and a meeting was held between myself (Ingwe Municipality) and Derek Preiss TFR. Mr. Preiss reported that TFR would maintain the line over the next two years, pending negotiations between TFR and Sappi. The Donnybrook- Creighton section of the line would include the replacement of all the wooden sleepers with concrete sleepers.

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The Financial Mail (5 Feb 2010) featured both an editorial "*Sending the right signals*" as well as an article on the Sisonke Stimela project "*Keeping up steam*" – this support is encouraging and the editorials are as follows:

"Sending the right signals"

There is so much that needs to be built in SA that we can hardly afford to neglect and destroy sound assets that we already have. Thankfully there are signs that government, in the form of Transnet, is beginning to understand this.

The national rail network was established as a matter of economic necessity in the first three decades of the 20th century. Many rural towns and farming areas were served by branch lines, many of which were always going to be uneconomic. Indeed, until the 1980s, the railways enjoyed substantial permit and tariff protection against road hauliers. That changed, but the deregulation was so rapid that rather too many babies were thrown out with the bathwater.

Spoornet, the predecessor of Transnet Freight, pursued the closure of many lines with no less zeal than it had shown in defending protectionism, while objecting in principle to any form of public-private partnership. The first privatisation (in 1987) - the Alfred Country Railway from Port Shepstone to Harding - was delayed to the point of being made unviable, and then continually obstructed by bureaucrats. In other cases, lines that might have been saved instead lay decaying for so long that privatisation ceased to be an option. When the Eastern Cape government managed to reopen the link between East London and Mthatha two years ago, it cost taxpayers over R40m just to rehabilitate the track.

In KwaZulu Natal, two long timber-carrying branch lines have been closed to Transnet trains, but this time the utility is apparently seeing a bigger picture. It is said to be working with local stakeholders to at least create the conditions for preservation of the line, and so help grow tourism and therefore jobs.

Much has already been lost, but with this evident departure from centralised, blunt decision-making, much may still be retained.

"Keeping up steaming"

Timber is one of the commodities that is ideal for rail: it is heavy, easily loaded and unloaded, and delivery must be frequent and regular. The other advantage of a timber train is that it removes dozens of heavy lorries from rural and trunk roads. Historically, rail had the lion's share of timber traffic in SA, with many dedicated branch lines. Yet the traffic has been steadily lost to road.

The latest loss to the rail network is the closure of two major branch lines in KwaZulu Natal, from Pietermaritzburg to Greytown and to Kokstad (see map). These used to be busy services, conveying passengers and general traffic, but only timber survived - until now. The last train ran on January 18. Transnet will not comment on the reported closures.

Hendrik de Jongh, Sappi Forests MD, admits the company's use of rail "has been reduced in some areas, but this is due entirely to the service delivery capability of Transnet Freight. Rail remains the preferred mode of transport for Sappi." A key destination for the wood is the Saicor pulp operation at Umkomaas on the coast.

Generally, the shift of goods traffic from rail to road over the past 30 years has been encouraged by Transnet's inefficiencies and uncompetitive tariffs. But another incentive has been the maximum axle-loading, high by global standards, allowed for lorries on SA's roads. In KZN, the provincial government has now raised these even higher on two roads, the N2 highway and the regional R612.

Special dispensation has been given to timber companies such as Sappi and Mondi to use new "PBS" (performance-based standards) vehicles. These are 28% longer and may carry 22% more load than their predecessors in the industry.

"PBS is one of the most exciting heavy transport programmes in SA," says Mondi head of transport technology Des Armstrong. "The aim is to improve payload efficiency and performance, with the added benefit of increased safety and reduced road damage." The PBS licences were granted as part of a pilot study by the department of transport. But critics say that safety on the single-lane R612 will be severely compromised.

Mondi says the PBS project is "completely unrelated to the rail vs road debate". Sappi's De Jongh says: "It was never the intention to develop these trucks to reduce or cease rail usage."

A potential casualty of the branch line closure is an admirable project (Sisonke Stimela) to stimulate the local economy. The Ingwe municipality, which serves Creighton, Donnybrook and Bulwer, has designed and facilitated investment of millions of rand in a tourism route that includes the early monasteries, bird-watching and, of course, the stunning scenery of the region. At the heart of the plan is a luxury steam-hauled passenger train, running from Pietermaritzburg and overnighting at Donnybrook.

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So committed is the Ingwe municipality to the project that it has not only restored the historic railway station at Creighton, but has built the new municipal offices in the station grounds. The irony of the timing of the line's closure is that the train - with old sleeper coaches restored with the support of Rohan Vos, of Rovos Rail fame - is now ready to start operations.

But Ingwe's Dudley Smith - who moved from his post as municipal corporate services manager to drive the project - says all is not yet lost. Transnet Freight Rail CEO Siyabonga Gama was "hugely supportive," says Smith, and Transnet will transfer the branch to the department of transport rather than lift the rails. There is an undertaking to maintain the line for two years while private concessioning is explored.

Apart from the rail tourist operation, Sappi has not ruled out applying for concessions to operate such lines.

Dudley Smith

SUB-COMMITTEE: MARKETING PORTFOLIO REPORT

Team Leader: Nerina Skuy **Members:** Dudley Smith, Charles Phillips, Kevin Wilson-Smith and Jamie Hart

A rather pleasing report is the fact that HRASA has secured sponsorship for the production of the 150th Commemorative Calendar, a joint venture with *SA Rail*, and a Commemorative HRASA Heritage Rail Map. Both will be ready for distribution by end April and available at both *Africa Rail* and *Indaba 2010*.

1. RAIL-RELATED TRADE SHOWS/EXHIBITIONS – UPDATE

(a) **Africa Rail 2010 (Johannesburg): Africa Rail 2010 (Johannesburg):** BOD and SC members will be in attendance and tickets will be distributed to HRASA members by mid-April. Members who wish to use this opportunity to make brochures and/or pamphlets available or to submit their DVDs for broadcasting at the HRASA stand must advise the Marketing SC and arrange for these to be delivered.

(b) **16th International Wheelset Congress (Cape Town – 14-19 March 2010):** Members from HRASA West will attend and report back.

2. Indaba (Durban) 8 – 11 May 2010

A list of local and provincial tourism bodies will be distributed by the end of March and it is recommended that HRASA members make contact with their respective body to request that their pamphlets/brochures be distributed at *Indaba 2010* (8-11 May 2010).

3. HRASA WEBSITE

This project is on track and the revamped website will be up and running by mid-March.

4. Report back

- Eastern Cape Freight and Logistics Forum (ECFL) Meeting

I attended my first ECFL meeting where I presented the findings of the Route 62 Corridor Development Task Team. Offers have come from Coega and the PE Chamber of Commerce to assist in compiling a final report to be submitted to DOT and Transnet.

- Humewood Station

I was mandated by the HRASA BOD to oversee the request/advice by TFR Properties that they wish to demolish the buildings on Humewood Station due to the fact that it is no longer their core business and for safety, health and security as they have been subjected to extreme criticism because of the condition of the precinct by the media and the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality's Land Usage department. I met with the Mandela Bay Heritage Trust and TFR Properties and Infrastructure about the way forward. Although invited, SAHRA and PHRA (Provincial arm of SAHRA) did not attend. A full report will be submitted to the BOD before recommendations are made to SAHRA and PHRA.

5. **National Heritage Trust**

I will be in Johannesburg on 13 March to attend the meeting to formulate support for a National Heritage Trust, called by Dr Kader Asmal, Minister of Arts and Culture. National Trusts exist elsewhere in the world. These have successfully assisted their respective communities in heritage awareness and protection and, in many instances have been successful in ensuring that valuable assets – coastlines, historic buildings and sites are transferred to a Trust for protection and maintenance. To date, there has not been a sustainable attempt to emulate such an organisation in our country. The question that needs to be asked is whether such a Trust could be set up here. The purpose of such a Trust is not to supplant current statutory heritage preservation mechanisms but rather to complement them, as a citizens' effort and to involve the public in ensuring greater public awareness of our heritage.

NERINA SKUY



VISION

To be the recognised representative body for the benefit and support of its members and oversight of the heritage rail preservation and heritage rail tourism industry in Southern Africa”