

HRASA REPORT AS PUBLISHED IN SA RAIL VOL. 50 NO. 3

The past three months have been a challenging, busy and sometimes rewarding time for HRASA as this report back will reflect. It has been a matter of “you lose on the roundabouts, but you win on the swings” – I am hoping that the future holds more swings...

HERITAGE ROLLING STOCK

Transnet heritage assets

In an attempt to prepare for the more likely decision by the Transnet Foundation (TF) to dispose of its Heritage Assets in the near future, HRASA circulated to its members a set of criteria as a guide to garner feedback with regard to their “wish list”.

Currently the process stands as follows...

- 1) The list is with the Transnet Freight Rail Board, awaiting action. We have addressed this with TF in our recent meeting and have been informed that there are no further developments/decisions to report and that we **must** await the appointment of the TF Heritage Liaison person. We have also learnt that this appointment is no longer full-time, but a contract position.
- 2) TF also indicated that it is still awaiting finalization of the list by SAHRA. HRASA will meet with SAHRA in this regard in the next two weeks.

While awaiting the outcome of the above, HRASA members have been advised to mobilize their capital in preparation for this disposal by TF – remember that HRASA is a facilitator organization and has have no budget to spend on acquiring assets on behalf of members or Heritage Rail *per se*.

HRASA action on *Metroblitz* auction

When HRASA became aware of the imminent auction of the five Class 12E locomotives – E12001 to 12005 – stored at Koedoespoort, we immediately petitioned Transnet Foundation to “take the necessary steps to ensure that E12002 and E12003 (still in reasonable external condition, with some of the locos still carrying their SAR/SAS number plates) are protected and preserved as an integral part of our rail history and in accordance with the recommendations as per the SAHRA lists”.

Their response was that it was not within their jurisdiction led us to request the Transnet Group CEO, Brian Molefe, to intervene. He forwarded our request to TFR CEO, Siyabonga Gama, to process and copied us in this correspondence. At the time of going to publication we had not heard from Mr Gama’s office in this regard, despite a number of attempts to get feedback on the status of the locomotives.

RELATIONSHIPS AND NETWORKING

Transnet relationship

Following a brief meeting with Transnet CEO, Brian Molefe, when he visited our stand at Africa Rail 2012, he has agreed to a formal meeting with HRASA.

Transnet Foundation

A follow up meeting with Cynthia Mgiijima (Chief Executive, TF) and Cecilia Machaba (Operations Manager, TF) was held recently. The following was discussed/agreed on at the meeting:

- HRASA reported back on Heritage Rail operations and refurbishment programs currently in process as well as challenges, such as spares, funding, etc.
- The HRASA-TF Memorandum of Understanding – still in operation, but to be updated. In the interim the two organizations will operate on a partnership basis. TF acknowledges HRASA as the recognized Heritage Rail representative body.
- TF-SAHRA list – HRASA tabled an updated list with recommendations. HRASA will expand the list and an electronic version will be submitted to TF by mid-July 2012.
- At the request of TF, HRASA is to co-ordinate and submit to TF any “Green” information/studies for Heritage Rail.
- HRASA presented overview of “Regional Museums” proposal.
- HRASA tabled request for coaching stock for Heritage Rail operators. TF referred request to TFR Asset Disposal for processing. HRASA to follow up.
- HRASA reported on proposals for operation of Knysna-George line. The Good News is that TF still backs resolution of this operation as a matter of priority.

- The appointment of the TF Heritage Liaison person- this was discussed and is still pending. It was noted that this appointment is now key as, as the following actions are now booked by TF for his/her action (in conjunction with HRASA as appropriate) after appointment...
 - o The updated HRASA-TF Memorandum
 - o TF-SAHRA list - TF follow up with SAHRA
 - o TF Museum Status Report
 - o Spares and other assets ring-fenced at Voorbaai
 - o Feedback on donation of Heritage Rail rolling stocks assets

Railway Safety Regulator

HRASA and the RSR have an existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This year we have had two meetings with the CEO of the Railway Safety Regulator (RSR), Nkululeko Poya, who was appointed in October 2011.

The current MoU is now to be expanded to include HRASA's participation in the production of the various RSR Standards for Heritage Rail and linked or similar operations.

Department of Transport

Following an informal discussion at Africa Rail 2012 the Director-General: Transport, George Mahlalela, has agreed to a formal meeting to consider what Heritage Rail has to offer in line with their mandate.

Ministry of Tourism

The following electronic mail responses to our Open Letter to the Minister of Tourism, the Hon. Marthinus van Schalkwyk, were received:

Sent: Thursday, June 21, 2012 12:23 PM

To: skuys@worldonline.co.za

Subject: Rail Tourism - MCT75536

Dear Sir/Madam

The Ministry of Tourism acknowledges receipt of your e-mail correspondence dated 12 June 2012.

Kindly note that your correspondence has been forwarded to the office of our Director General for their further attention. You will receive a reply from their offices shortly.

Kind regards

RAMONA JACOBS
DIRECTOR: ADMINISTRATION

[No response has been received from the office of the Director General to date.]

Sent: 21 July 2012 11:37 AM

To: skuys@worldonline.co.za

Subject: Rail Tourism

Dear Ms Skuy

Your letter to Minister van Schalkwyk dated 11 June 2012 has reference.

First of all thank you for taking the time and effort to write to the National Department of Tourism on this important matter. Over the past couple of months we have received numerous letters raising the same concerns.

May I point out that although there is a tourism aspect to heritage railways in South Africa, the issue of heritage railways does not fall within the mandate of the National Department of Tourism. It is important to understand that the **National Department of Tourism is not responsible for heritage railways in South Africa**. This is a matter that falls under the mandate of the Department of Transport. From a protocol perspective, we cannot just start telling the Department of Transport how and what they should do and should not do. Therefore we will appreciate it that before you write open letters to any Minister in any publication, you first attempt to understand the role and mandate of the various government departments.

However, because we are concerned about the matter, we are liaising with the Department of Transport to try and get an understanding as to why this matter is coming up time and again. We need to understand the view of the Department of Transport on Railway Heritage.

I trust that you will understand where we are coming from.

Many thanks and kind regards

Leonore Beukes
Chief Director: Southern Regions

[HRASA is in the process of responding to this letter.]

AFRICA RAIL 2012

The HRASA Board of Directors agreed that we would join with **SA Rail** again this year at *Africa Rail 2012*. This turned out to be one of the best *Africa Rail* events in recent years. Of interest in relation to HRASA is the following:

- The HRASA stand received a number of important visitors who expressed interest in our activities – this included leaders in the Rail Industry, TFR Officials (including the CEO, Brian Molefe), Department of Transport Representatives, RSR CEO, Nkululeko Poya and other Government Departments and Bodies.
- HRASA was invited to present at the exhibition on Day One. The positive response to the presentation resulted in it being repeated. The presentation will be sent to members.
- We participated in a very enlightening Concession Workshop, led by Michael Whitehouse of Wragge & Co – highly regarded as one of the leading experts in this field. He has offered to assist HRASA in this regard.
- We negotiated with Terrapin, the organizers of *Africa Rail*, to include a Heritage Rail and Rail Tourism hub in *Africa Rail 2013*. If the Ministry of Tourism and SA Tourism is not going to commit to rail tourism, then we as a body need to be proactive and engage ourselves to forge our own niche and footprint.
- The *Africa Rail* organizers will also consider including Heritage Rail and Rail Tourism on future conference programs.

More than 300 copies of various editions of *SA Rail* published over the past year were distributed to interested parties and individuals – giving HRASA members excellent exposure. The response from exhibitors and delegates was very positive.

Branch Line Concession Strategy

We have been informed that TFR have revived the Branch Line Concession Strategy, with the Sub-Committee being headed by Albert Links. However, it appears that currently TFR are only looking at three Branch Lines for Concession – these have not been named as yet.

As TFR is apparently planning to haul the coal itself on the Maclear-Sterkstroom line in the Eastern Cape, it can be assumed that this may not be one of the Concessions. That may be a loss for HRASA, as the private concessions are more open to Heritage Rail activity – even if only for special tours.

PE-Avontuur Narrow Gauge Line

HRASA has been working closely with PRASA, Eastern Cape Department of Transport, TFR and TFR Real Estate (formerly TFR Property Management) on the future of the PE-Avontuur narrow gauge line.

- In February of this year HRASA took the rolling stock of the Apple Express train into custody and secured it at the Humeral Diesel Depot in Port Elizabeth.
- A forum, the Eastern Cape Narrow Gauge Rail Development Initiative (ECNGRDI), with participation from local and regional government, tourism, the private sector and the Coega Development Corporation, is now in the planning phases of a proposal to operate the line with passengers, freight, heritage tourism and a community train – ultimately to service the whole line.
- A training facility is also envisaged as part of the project.

MEMBERSHIP/OPERATIONS

Membership

Membership is always in a state of flux, and last year we saw a small membership drop. However, 2012 has started on an upbeat note with the addition of new members including the Cape Western Railway Museum Trust and SANRASM, while the Hilton Station Heritage Association, which announced its official status, will also be joining us.

We have also had contact with a number of other organisations, aligned or involved in Heritage Rail or Rail Tourism, who are contemplating joining our ranks.

It is important to remember that although HRASA has an "Individual Membership" category, its main membership base comprises organisations, which in themselves are made up of many members and in effect means that our member base is that much deeper, wider and the sum of a lot more than just the organisations we represent.

Operations – monitor processes and communicate outcomes

Under the experienced guidance of Ian Pretorius, Atlantic Rail has documented for Members the new renewal of the boiler certificate process, in easy-to-follow steps.

Nerina Skuy, HRASA Chairperson