

HERITAGE RAILWAY ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

(A Section 21 company incorporated not for gain)

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HRASA – NOVEMBER MONTHLY NEWS LETTER

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INTRODUCTION

The end of 2009 is fast approaching and railway land is heading towards its Christmas slumber period. Nevertheless, our interaction with Transnet Foundation continues. TF have now moved forward on the path of dealing with their assets, and have formed an asset disposal committee. This will deal with the sale, lend lease and other disposal of redundant railway assets, especially rolling stock. Numerous legal obstructions exist in the auctioning of this undertaking, but they are being overcome. It should therefore be sooner rather than later that things start happening on this front. HRASA have been assured that they will be consulted on all allocations and disposals, with our recommendations likely to be adopted should they be feasible.

Fundraising will be the biggest challenge, since TF have little interest in allocating monies towards this process. This is the unfortunate fact of the matter, and is not helped by the current economic woes of government.

The first fruits of the engagements are likely to be picked in the Western Cape, where some resolution to the abandoned rolling stock at Worcester and Salt River is likely. HRASA West has been actively involved in discussing and planning as to the preferred transfer for these coaches. TF have indicated that they will authorise movements, and this will be a good test case for the future. Once again, it is necessary to affirm that we can actually perform and put actions to words. It will give us credibility in future.

HRASA has obtained the published information document for the proposed takeover of the Choo-Tjoe. The current figures do not make good reading. It will be a brave organisation which takes on the undertaking. It is our opinion that this service needs to be subsidised in order to flourish. Whether the country is ready for such an investment and getting governmental support is questionable; nevertheless HRASA is bound to support the way forward for the tourist train.

The detailed port folio reports below provide a perspective on progress to date.

- The HRASA Liaison Sub-committee would like to welcome Len Smuts to its ranks. Len is a man with considerable financial and railway experience, and his level-headed contributions will be of great use to us in future. It pleases us to report that the HRASA 2009/2010 mid-year financial reports have been lodged and that budgets and cash flow projections for 2010 are in the process of finalisation. As is the case all over, HRASA's sustainability presents its own set of challenges.
- Copies of the SANS 3000 SABS standards have been distributed by Ian Pretorius and Coen Pretorius. Looking ahead members should be considering internal audits based on the deployment of their SANS 3000 Standards based Safety Systems. HRASA in consultation with Ian Muir from the SABS look forward to an opportunity during 2010 to workshop the significance and impact of the Safety Standards.
- Dudley Smith informs that SAPPI has converted logging in the Underberg, Creighton – Pietermaritzburg area to road transport. The consequences of this are that the project known as the "Sisonke Stimela" a steam hauled passenger tourist train which was due to use the line has uncertainty surrounding it.
- Nerina Skuy's contribution to the latest SA RAIL magazine (Vol 47 / 2009 /03) is inspiring. This medium will in future also provide HRASA with an exciting communication opportunity.
- The Corporate Liaison domain, as earlier reported, continues to provide challenging and exciting avenues. As manifested in the introduction to this news letter and the detailed liaison report below, HRASA is gradually extended its heritage position across a spectrum of forums and institutions.
- On the membership front, it is indeed a pleasure to welcome the Sandstone Foundation back into the HRASA fold as a member. The synergies are obvious and we look forward to a mutually beneficial relationship. There has been progress from Waterval Boven and Elgin Valley towards operational futures. More detail will emerge soon.

Progress during 2009 has been significant and we wish to thank all those individuals and organisations for their contributions and support. We wish to assure the heritage community that we serve that as much as technically possible will be placed in the public domain, and on our website.

I believe that this has been a watershed year for HRASA. We have finally started moving towards functioning as a proper accountable and representative organisation. At the end of the day it is up to our members to contribute in order for us to succeed, and I would like to call on you all to assist in whatever way possible. All contributions will be appreciated.

In closing an exciting year, may I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the HRASA Board for their support and commitment! We wish all our Members, friends, colleagues a joyful festive season and a prosperous 2010.

■ **Chris Janisch:** *HRASA Chairman*

Reg No: 2000/027224/08

Board of Directors: Janisch, C (Friends of the Rail) [Chair]; Lubbe, E (Reefsteamers); Pretorius, I (Atlantic Rail) [Vice Chair]; Smuts, L (RSSA); Skuy, N (Skuy Communications) [Secretary]; Smith, D (Ingwe Municipality); Van den Heever, E (Individual) Co-opted Members: Coen Pretorius [Rail Safety Rep]; Mike du Plooy; Charles Phillips; Kevin Wilson-Smith, Jamie Hart

HRASA – November Port Folio Reports

■ Operations – Ian Pretorius

The roles, costing and application of pilots, as well as requirements and guidelines are in the process of negotiation. Various negotiating forums are being attended to finalise the status quos as soon as possible.

- A successful meeting was held with Minister Alan Winde, MEC for finance and tourism of the Western Cape Government. Minister Winde is very positive towards rail tourism and has recently returned from a trip to the UK, where he visited the Welsh Highland Railway / Festiniog Railway and the Manchester Museum of Science, amongst others.
- He requested more information on Transnet's branch lines and policies, the 150th anniversary of railways in South Africa and the Atlantic Rail situation.
- The new SANS3000 has been distributed by Coen Pretorius. Steve Smith has been co-opted to assist Coen with all RSR matters.
- The Western Cape members have had a meeting regarding the equipment that they would like to lease lend and agreement has been reached.
- Transnet Foundation had a meeting with SAHRA to clarify the way forward as far as heritage equipment being placed under the care of HRASA is concerned. TF are also going to form a specific committee to handle this matter and HRASA will be included.

■ Tourism – Dudley Smith

Recent events regarding the survival of the Cape-Natal branch line which links Underberg / Creighton to Pietermaritzburg is a major point of concern. The transporting of SAPPI logs has been discontinued in favour of using road haulage. The section linking Franklin to Donnybrook has ceased to operate. The section from Underberg to Pietermaritzburg is still operating.

The consequence of this is that the project known as the "Sisonke Stimela" a steam hauled passenger tourist train which was due to use the line has uncertainty surrounding it.

Negotiations are ongoing with role players such as the DOT in KZN and every effort is being made to salvage the line.

■ Marketing – Nerina Skuy

2010 is upon us. The opportunities to participate in this once in a lifetime event should NOT be left TO LATE! We look forward to hear from all our members in the New Year and to receive their respective 2010 scheduled events for publication on the HRASA website.

■ Corporate Governance - Ed van den Heever

The new HRASA Board is growing from strength to strength. The past three news letters would not have been possible without the input from the seven port-folio Committees.

■ Corporate Liaison – Chris Janisch

The liaison subcommittee would like to welcome Len Smuts to its ranks. Len is a man with considerable railway experience, and his level-headed contributions will be of great use to us in future.

- Ian Pretorius as the designated liaison officer with SAHRA has had further discussions with Regina Isaacs. SAHRA will act as a leverage body and give us some teeth in our struggle to safeguard heritage items. Transnet are already working on the principle that SAHRA will have to endorse any proposed asset disposals.
- From feedback across various sectors the general feeling amongst heritage supporters is that HRASA is doing a good job and is worthy of support. Similarly the new relationship with Sandstone, having re-joined HRASA, sets the scene for broader co-operation.
- It is sad to report that closure over the pilot fees ended has not been reached as yet. Negotiations are continuing with TFR. On a broader front, the conclusion of a policy on heritage rail will hopefully be implemented at some time in the future. Regarding the heritage assets question, we are encouraged at the positive and proactiveness of Transnet.
- Negotiations with PRASA regarding interface agreements, is ongoing. There has been talk that this is being looked at, but nothing has transpired. An agreement is critical, as interfaces are necessary from an RSR perspective. The slow progress in this regard sadly has delayed the Atlantic Rail situation.

■ Finance – Len Smuts

The HRASA interim financial report ending September 2009 has been issued. Appropriate to report that the revised financial format complies with recognised financial management practice. Subject to Board approval the following items are newsworthy and of importance.

- Various anomalies in the 2008/09 financial reports were corrected.
- The September 2009 provisional income statements, budget and cash flow projections will be placed before the HRASA Board in January 2010. The significance of the current membership fees structure will be reviewed to ensure alignment with the current financial climate and fiscal responsibilities. Opportunities beyond membership fees will receive serious attention in 2010.
- It is expected that the 2010 Audit fee will be greatly reduced as a full set of financial statements will be submitted for audit, resulting in a substantial saving in accounting time.

■ Board Meeting

The next Board meeting will be held at Reefsteamers in Germiston on 31 January 2010. Should members have specific questions regarding the various portfolio activities, kindly direct the questions to Nerina Skuy, who as the HRASA Secretary will ensure it reaches the responsible BOD Member.

■ THOUGHT OF THE DAY:

Lest we forget!



“A long exposure shot in the very last light of the day shows the stripped, rusty hulk of the last of the dozens of deadline Class 15F’s that was retired and eventually scrapped at Germiston. But for the efforts of the dedicated people at Reefsteamers, Friends of the Rail, Umgeni Steam Railway, Paton County Railway and the Sandstone Heritage Trust, amongst several others – when steam’s long day finally draws to a close, this will be all that’s left.”

(Paragraph and photo used with kind permission of author Lee Gates – Reefsteamers – Dec. 2009)

To one and all, we wish you a Merry Christmas and a safe and Prosperous New Year.