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### UPCOMING EVENTS:

Field Trip - Santa Maria Valley's Electric Railroad  
February 23, 2019

Friends Presentation Hosted by the Santa Maria Valley Railroad  
April 2019

Friends Annual Dinner Gala  
May 18, 2019

Annual BBQ at SMVRR  
July-August 2019



Photo SMVHS

## 4th Annual Friends of SMVRR Dinner Gala

The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Friends of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad Dinner Gala was held on Saturday May 19, 2018 at the Santa Maria Fairpark with a full house of supporters in the Fountain Pavilion.

The Friends of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad awarded the annual G.A. Hancock History Preservation Award and The Santa Maria Valley Railroad presented their annual Railroad Public Safety Award.

Emcee and Friends Board Chairman Jeff Karsh along with Jane Brennan and Sydney McGovern, the Great Grand Daughter and Two Times Great Grand Daughter of Captain G. Allan Hancock, presented San Luis Obispo Museum Members Diane Marchetti and Gary See with the G.A. Hancock History Preservation Award for their efforts on their new exhibit Santa Maria Valley



Railroad "Two Centuries, One Dream" at the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum.



The exhibit, opened in May of last year, talks about the history of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad and the work that G. Allan Hancock did in building the railroad and building industries around the railroad and the role the railroad played in building Santa Maria

economically. The tale does not end there, the exhibit talks about the resurgence of the railroad after Coast Belle Rail Corporation purchased the railroad from the Hancock Family a dozen years ago. It is the museum's first interactive exhibit and has been a very popular exhibit this past year.

Rob Himoto, President of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad, and Al Sheff, General Manager, presented Javier Sanchez, Union Pacific Railroad's Local Manager of Track Maintenance based in Guadalupe with (continued on page 4)

***“a spiking demonstration was performed by “Conductor Bill” Hatrick and SMVRR MOW worker Keith Summers”***



***“double tracking the main line”***



Photo SMVHS

## Annual Friends BBQ at Santa Maria Valley Railroad

The annual Friends of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad BBQ at the Osburn Yard hosted by the Santa Maria Valley Railroad was held on Saturday August 18, 2018. Rob Himoto, President of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad, kicked off the event with a presentation of

completed track projects and future projects. Over 60 people enjoyed a Santa Maria style tri-tip and chicken BBQ prepared by Chef Paul Perez.

Afterwards a spiking demonstration was performed by “Conductor Bill” Hatrick

and SMVRR MOW worker Keith Summers. Nathan Paul, Kevin O’Roark, and Anthony Aguirre hosted tours of the Osburn Rail Yard.

Other volunteers included Dini O’Roark, Betty Himoto, Linda Rodrigues, Rafael Sanchez.

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## “Current Operations and Future Plans on the Santa Maria Valley Railroad” Presentation Hosted by the Santa Maria Valley Railroad

On April 11 at 6:00 pm Rob Himoto, President of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad, spoke at Shepard Hall, Santa Maria Public Library about a typical day on the railroad and the new future plans to accommodate the growing traffic.

The first part of the presentation was about “A Day on the Santa Maria Valley Railroad”

talking about a typical day on the railroad. The day starts early on the Santa Maria Valley Railroad with planning in the early morning and contacting customers. Once a daily plan is in place, a meeting with the crew takes place and tasks are handed out. A typical day not only includes train service, other tasks such as track work, signal work,

and equipment maintenance are performed.

The second part of the presentation was on long term plans which include double tracking the main line, expanding Osburn Rail Yard, and acquiring more right of way. Attendees found the presentation informative and intriguing as there were many questions from the group.

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The Santa Maria Valley Railroad is a sponsor of our newsletter and our quarterly programs. Murphy Bank is a sponsor of our meeting room for Friends Board meetings. We are always looking for sponsors to expand our programs and tours and fund educational activities.

Historic Photos are from the archives of the Santa Maria Valley Historical Society ([santamariahistory.com](http://santamariahistory.com)).



## ROADAMITE

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century oil was being discovered all along the Central Coast from Arroyo Grande to Los Alamos. During the first decade of the new century, oil production developed, with the Santa Maria Field considered among the richest in the world at the time. Further exploration and strikes in the hills southeast of Santa Maria known as the Palmer Annex continued the oil boom. To fully exploit these discoveries an efficient transportation system was needed to get the commodity to market and to bring equipment and supplies in. Pipelines were being built, but to handle the flood of oil rail service was needed.

The Pacific Coast Railway, having built east from their mainline in Santa Maria to Sisquoc and then further into the production area at Palmer was taking advantage of the situation. They would load tank cars at Palmer, haul them to Avila and then transload to storage tanks. The tanks would then be used to load

ships and barges to transport the oil north or south. It was a system, but not that efficient. In addition the Pacific Coast Railway was a narrow gauge with inherent capacity limitations.

Along with more wells coming in, the announcement of an asphalt plant said to be the largest in the world, being built in the Palmer area (Roadamite) made the need for a standard gauge railroad connection apparent. In 1911 the Santa Maria Valley Railway, later to become the Santa Maria Valley Railroad,

was built to connect the refinery at Roadamite to the Southern Pacific Railroad at Guadalupe. In January of 1912 the railroad was complete, the oil racks were in, and the shipment of oil by the new standard gauge shortline was underway.

In 1915 the Santa Maria Valley Railway had 5,700 car loadings, 2,000 of which were oil. The plant at Roadamite was a 24 hour operation with workers living in housing on site. Over the decades with continued pipeline development and other economic changes, the need for the remote

facility and rail service diminished. Eventually the plant was shut down and dismantled.

The Friends of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad conducted a field trip to Roadamite on June 9, 2018. The right of way is still visible where loading racks once filled strings of tank cars. Bits of foundation and curbs where houses once stood is all that remains, even though oil production continues in the area. More information and photos from the field trip are available on the Friends website at [www.friends-smvrr.org](http://www.friends-smvrr.org).



Photo SMVHS



## Annual Dinner Gala (continued from page 1)

the Railroad Public Safety Award. Himoto commented that "In the past we awarded the Railroad Public Safety Award to individuals who directly promoted railroad safety, this year we have a slightly different take on it. This year the award will be going to a group who kept the railroad lines open during a time that highway traffic was cut off. By alleviating trucks and automobile traffic, the overall safety of the Central Coast Communities improved."



Mr. Sanchez's crew kept the Union Pacific Railroad's Coast Line open during the Thomas Fire, the

largest fire in the history of California, last December. The crew fought the fire on the railroad right of way in the Ventura area and quickly restored the line within a day. In January the line was covered by the mudslide in Montecito, and the crew was called again to uncover and repair the line and restored service within days. Their efforts were nothing short of heroic to remove mud, boulders, and debris particularly at the Olive Mill Road area.

As a result, there were only slight delays in railroad traffic. The customers on the Santa Maria Valley Railroad were able to continue to ship and receive by rail and did not have to divert freight traffic by truck. Amtrak was able to operate over the line and was greeted with full trains as Highway 101 remained closed. The efforts of UPRR's local Maintenance of

Way crew lessened vehicular traffic along the 101 corridor as alternative vehicle traffic routes were congested. With Highway 101 closed, what would have been a 20-minute drive became an almost 4-hour drive between Santa Barbara and Ventura. Passenger rail became a valuable transportation alternative. Also, with minimal interruption in freight traffic, rail freight traffic was not diverted to trucks during this time.

This year's fundraising efforts grossed almost \$10,000 and has been the most successful fundraiser to date for the Friends of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad. Part of the proceeds is for the construction of an exhibit for the Santa Maria Valley Historical Museum depicting the history of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad



economic development of the Santa Maria Valley.

A thank you to volunteers Dini O'Roark, Kevin O'Roark, Gary See, Pam See, Linda Rodrigues, Anthony Aguirre, and Keith Summers.

Event sponsors included the Santa Maria Valley Railroad, G.A. Hancock Family, Tri-Cal, and Phillips 66. The Friends of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation, acquisition, and interpretation of the history of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad and educating the public about the current railroad industry.

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