

150th Anniversary Celebration of the Transcontinental Railroad

By Judy DePuy

150 years ago on May 10, 1869 the Transcontinental Railroad was completed, forever changing the landscape of the Truckee-Donner Summit area. The railroad made traveling across the Sierras relatively painless. Instead of taking 7 months or more to go from New York to San Francisco, the railroad shortened the trip significantly. By 1876 the *Transcontinental Express* railroad made the trip across the country in less than 7 days!

The sesquicentennial (150th anniversary) of the transcontinental railroad marks the spanning of the continent with rails and a revolution to this area and the country. The railroad was critical to President Abraham Lincoln who realized that he had to unite our country. This was the period of the Civil War and in 1862 he passed the Pacific Railroad Act enabling the construction of the transcontinental railroad.

The railroad brought both freight and travelers to Truckee. The train helped create our local lumber and ice industries. Writers and artists came to capture the beauty of the area. The railroad led the way for the first transcontinental highway system, telephone line, pipeline and postal air route. It opened Truckee-Donner Summit to snow sports, summer activities and the filming of numerous movies (over 140) in the area.

The Truckee-Donner Summit Historical and Railroad Societies invite you to join us in celebrating this wondrous feat. From May 10th through Labor Day enjoy various activities in this area including:

- 4th of July parade in Truckee with a Transcontinental/Railroad theme.
- Passport program where visitors and locals can pick up 'passports' that they take to various locations around Truckee and Donner Summit to learn about our history. At each location people can get their passport 'stamped' with a unique stamp at the site.
- Steam and electric train runs at the Truckee Regional Park for children and adults.
- Numerous historical/educational walk and hikes in the Truckee-Donner Summit areas.
- Historical talks speaker series.
- Truckee's Old Jail Museum will be open this summer on Truckee Thursdays from 5 – 8 pm and weekends from 11 am – 4 pm.
- Truckee-Donner Railroad Society Caboose Museum will be open every weekend from 10 am – 4 pm (weather dependent).
- Regular articles in local publications highlighting the history of Truckee and Donner Summit.

These activities are family friendly. For more information and a list of summer activities going on in Truckee to celebrate the sesquicentennial of the Transcontinental Railroad, go to <https://goldspike.org/> or the Facebook page: [Donner Summit-Truckee Golden Spike Celebration](#). For a specific calendar of events (to date), please visit Truckee-Donner Historical Society's [Calendar of Events](#) page. There is also a printable copy of the current calendar of events available at this [link](#), and at the Donner Summit Historical Society's [Heirloom April 2019](#) issue, p. 7.

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