

Richard B. Esposito PUBLISHER  
Michael E. Rafferty EDITOR  
Pat Lahey MANAGING EDITOR

# Editorial

## Keep the tracks

*"Don't say I never warned you  
when your train gets lost."*

— Bob Dylan, from the song "It Takes a Lot to Laugh,  
It Takes a Train to Cry."

The El Dorado County Board of Supervisors is about to make the blunder of the century by agreeing to rip up the railroad tracks from Shingle Springs to the county line.

We'll grant that nine miles from Shingle Springs to Diamond Springs may be enough track for the little bit of rolling stock the El Dorado County Museum volunteers have assembled.

We'll also grant Supervisor Ray Nutting's contention that the railroad ties west of Shingle Springs may not be in the best of shape and spikes could be loose.

But neither of those two arguments are sufficient to abandon a unique and irreplaceable asset. Ties can be replaced and spikes redriven. A real railroad right of way and its rails can never be replaced. To claim otherwise is believe in the Tooth Fairy and Daddy Warbucks.

Trails can be built alongside the rails. That, too, is a given. It is also a fact that building a paved trail is expensive with or without the rails and requires extensive design and regrading. Just getting from Missouri Flat to Camino has cost the county \$8.5 million. That came from special grants, but it didn't happen in one year, despite having an entire rail-free right of way after Michigan-Cal Lumber Co. salvaged the rails from its private line and surrendered the right of way to the county and city. The city's portion is not part of the \$8.5 million and part of the city's trail digresses from the original right of way. The whole trail that is now paved took over a decade to complete. Despite using an existing railroad right of way, regrading and new culverts had to be done. Creeks had flowed across the right of way and trees had grown up in the middle of it.

Before the Board of Supervisors so cavalierly surrenders 16 miles of track from Shingle Springs to the county line it had better consult with its other partners in the joint powers authority that governs the railroad right of way. Folsom has kept its line intact despite intensive commercial development. The rails cross major streets — Oak Avenue, Clarksville Road, Broadstone Parkway and Iron Point Road continuing along Placerville Road, eventually crossing into El Dorado County south of White Rock Road.

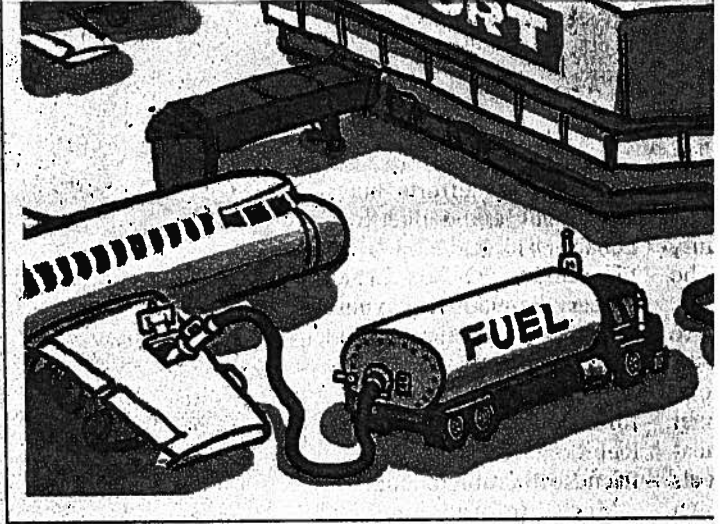
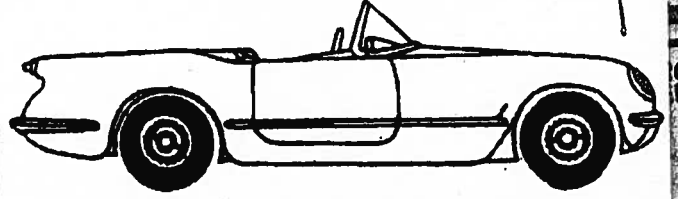
Folsom has a lot more resources, including a strong railroad volunteer support base, a rebuilt railroad turntable and now a revamped railroad museum. A serious excursion train effort is more likely to originate in Folsom and travel to and through El Dorado County. El Dorado County still has the signal equipment at its road crossings.

Except for the Napa Wine Train and seasonal train service between the Railroad Museum in Sacramento and Freeport, the Placerville branch line is the only existing track near a major urban center. It is a branch line that features a beautiful countryside that is an up-and-coming wine region.

Don't rip up the future. The right of way is sufficient to keep the rails and build a trail too.

NOLAND ADAMS  
Author / Historian

P.O. Box 1134 • El Dorado, CA 95623-1134  
(530) 626-3232 • Fax 530.626.0536



## The rural life/Jenr

### Gimme shelter

In a perfect world, there would be no need for animal shelters. People would never abandon their animals, either from necessity or neglect. All pets would be neutered or spayed, to prevent indiscriminate breeding. And no one's beloved companion animal would ever get lost. But we don't live in a perfect world, so we do need shelters. They provide a safe place for animals in custody. They enable owners to find lost pets. And they provide potential new owners with the very best pets of all — the recycled ones.

In certain sad cases, they also provide a means of humane euthanasia for homeless animals that cannot be



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adopted out. For all these reasons, it's that, at a Board of Supervisors meeting a week ago today, it's El Dorado County will find the permanent shelter needed for so long. It's been an "incredible" effort for the Western Shoshone Project to get this far, but plenty of prodding from groups along the way. Here's how it happened: In 2004, the county le

## California rambli

### National Park Week

This week is National Park Week, a week to celebrate America's natural and cultural heritage. In California there are 19 national park units, a lot to celebrate.

Yosemite is the best known of our state's national parks. It's considered to be one of America's crown jewels. There are 394 national park units, including such truly spectacular places as



*Each is a jewel in its own right. Each preserves a special place or thing for the use and enjoyment of all people. And, each provides free admission, April 16-24, during Fee-Free*

Liberty and the Lincoln. Each is a jewel in its own right. Each preserves a special place or thing for the use and enjoyment of all people. And, each provides free admission, April 16-24, during Fee-Free

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