



**COUNTY OF EL DORADO  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**



**INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM**

Date: March 7, 2011  
To: Terri Daly, CAO  
From: Jim Ware, Director  
Subject: El Dorado Train Depot Building Status

Last month I met with Mr. Ed Hagen of El Dorado regarding his desire to construct a replica of the El Dorado Train Depot in the original location of the former Depot. We discussed the size and type of the building, location, construction materials, historic accuracy, etc. I expressed my concerns regarding his intent to construct the building 16 feet wide instead of 20 feet wide as local historians and train buffs believed it was. He said that he was limited on the width of the building by the length of the logs that he was using to mill the lumber for the work. I had suggested that he contact Supervisor Nutting to see if he had any logs available that he could mill and provide for the project.

I told him that I needed to meet with the various Departments interested in this project to ensure that he had everything that he needed to move forward with his project.

I convened a meeting on February 23, 2011 attended by several members of my staff, the DSD, Library, and Museum Directors, and a representative of one of the Train organizations. Our goal of the meeting was to identify what needed to be done to advance this project and what we could do as an organization to help the project be successful.

First off, a decision needed to be made regarding the width of the building. Was 16 feet wide acceptable or should we pursue the "authentic" 20 foot width or is it 19 feet as shown in the "standard plan" blueprints provided by the museum, or did anyone know for certain? In the end, a decision was made to follow the blueprints we had.

We determined that Plans for the new depot building needed to be prepared by a licensed professional and submitted to the Building Department for review/approval and building permits issued. Also that the building should be as authentic as possible in both construction methods, materials, detailing, etc. That the building should be constructed in such a way that future phases could be added on to this initial phase. Most importantly, this building needed to be constructed in the correct location and consistent with the February 25, 2003 Sacramento-Placerville Transportation Corridor Master Plan and the Proposal for the Development of the El Dorado County Historical Railroad Park conceptually approved by the Board of Supervisors in August 2009.

I was to contact Mr. Hagen and discuss these points with him. I had not done so prior to March 1<sup>st</sup> when I was informed that Mr. Hagen had constructed a stem wall footing for a building on the County site for his proposed 16 foot wide building. I visited the site on  
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March 2<sup>nd</sup> and met with Mr. Hagen. I questioned why he had proceeded with the 16 foot wide building instead of the wider building that we had discussed. He said that the lumber that he had made arrangements to have donated to the project wasn't available due to weather and that he couldn't wait on the project because he was going in for surgery that would put him out of commission for several months or longer so this was his only available window to complete the work.

At the meeting on March 2<sup>nd</sup> I ordered Mr. Hagen to stop all work on the project.

I did this for several reasons. First off, Mr. Hagen does not have the backing of the interests that he is alleging to be helping with the construction of this facility. The Museum and the Railroad organizations have not given their approval of the work. The County should not be in a position of having a building in place that it may not want and potentially missing opportunities to get the building that it does want. Secondly, there have not been any plans prepared or approvals given by the Building Department. The County has no way of knowing if this building will be safe for its intended use. The liability of allowing the Public to access and use an unpermitted structure places the County in a very poor position should someone be injured in the facility. Another alternative would be to construct the structure without benefit of plans/reviews/inspections and then put a fence around the structure to ensure that no one can get near it and that no one can get hurt. Thirdly, the County must ensure that whatever the County constructs (or allows to be constructed) on the site is fully consistent with the Master Plan. To allow a structure to go on the site that is inconsistent with the Master Plan could put future grant funds at risk. Funding agencies take a dim view of organizations that allow unplanned work on their site but they reward those organizations that develop public-private partnerships to obtain funds and volunteers to complete work that is consistent with the approved planning documents. I still hope that this project will be in the latter category.

The Museum has been in contact with a local structural engineer that is willing to donate his time and expertise to prepare plans for the new Depot building. We hope to engage his services soon. We also desire to ensure that the building is sited correctly by coordinating the Depot building work with surveys that were donated last summer by several SAGE members. DOT and DSD staff intend to bring an agenda item to the Board to receive authorization for staff to work on this project, to request authorization to expend ACO funding to help pay for some of the work, and to receive guidance from the Board regarding the project. DSD staff can then ensure that the plans are approved, inspections performed, and the building is safe. There have been some concerns that this project approval, engineering and permitting effort will take too much time and that the lumber needs to be moved inside to protect it from the elements. The DOT has an open bay inside our storage facility at its Greenwood yard that we can make available for this effort.

The DOT hopes that it can work with Mr. Hagen and the various departments to help accelerate any approvals necessary to have this project approved and under way as quickly as possible while fulfilling its responsibility to ensure that this is the right project, in the right place, that is safe and functional for the County, the various organizations that will use this facility, and its visitors.