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Old Style Trolleys Return to Downtown

By Steve Morgan

After ten years of planning and nearly two years of construction Portland's new/old "Vintage Trolley" finally began operating on November 29, 1991. The Vintage Trolley follows the MAX light rail line through downtown to a terminus on a newly built single track spur on N.E. 11th Avenue across from Lloyd Center.

The service, which operates year-round on weekends, is designed to attract tourists and shoppers to Lloyd Center and the downtown commercial district. It also serves as a link between the West and East sides, and runs past the new Oregon Convention Center and Memorial Coliseum (Cont. on page 2).



GOMACO streetcar 511 poses at the downtown light-rail turnaround on November 1, 1991, at the end of its first daylight trip onto the line under power. Note test equipment wires projecting from side window at left (Steve Morgan Photo).

Car 514 turns onto N.E. Holladay St. from 11th Ave. on Nov. 29, '91 the first day of Vintage Trolley service. This car was delivered on Nov. 5 and conditionally accepted by Tri-Met just two days before the start of service! The PCC trucks are well illuminated in this view (Steve Morgan Photo).



New President for 1992

By Dick Thompson, Sec.

The results of 1992 balloting are as follows:

<u>Trustees.</u>	<u>Secretary</u>
Glenn Eaton	Dick Thompson
John Nagy	
Gene Fabryka	<u>Treasurer</u>
	Dick Shipley

<u>Vice Pres</u>	<u>President</u>
Jack Norton	George Inness

The presidential race was the only contested position in the mail-in balloting, with all other nominees running unopposed. George Inness, the out-going Vice President succeeds Greg Bonn as head of the OERHS.



The Vintage Trolley spur on N.E. 11th is also usable by light rail cars, although such use will be rare. On Nov. 15, 1991, during clearance testing, car 107 became the first LRV to enter the spur (Steve Morgan photo).

Old Style Trolleys

(cont from page one)

Vintage Trolley, Inc. is a non-profit organization of business and local government leaders formed in 1987. The vintage streetcar plan was part of the original Banfield Light Rail Project with the Urban Mass Transportation Administration funding 80% of the cost of rolling stock, car barn and construction of the 11th Avenue spur. Operation is funded through local improvement district taxes, interest from a trust fund set up in the mid '80s, sponsorship from businesses on the line, and revenue generated by \$1.00 fares. Four businesses agreed to be \$100,000 "car sponsors" (\$20,000 a year for five years) for the right to advertise on and inside their designated car. Eight other businesses made donations of \$30,000 as "station sponsors" in exchange for signage at the stations and recognition in promotional literature.

Tri-Met is reimbursed for all operating expenses, including operators' salaries. Conductors (officially known as "hosts and hostesses") work for VTI, and are

either reimbursed directly or through donations to affiliated museums. As most readers of this bulletin know, about one-half the crew roster comes from the OERHS. The other half consists of Amalgamated Transit Union retirees and crews from the National Railway Historical Society and the Willamette Shore Trolley. These traditionally uniformed conductors are employed to collect fares and answer questions about the cars and local transit history.

Vintage Trolley operates reproduction Brill streetcars built by the GOMACO Corporation of Ida Grove, Iowa, which also made old-style cars for a heritage trolley line in Lowell, Massachusetts. The 40' long double-truck cars are patterned after Portland's 501-510 series streetcars, better known as the "Council Crest" cars. The Council Crest car design was chosen because these popular vehicles were used longer than any other Portland trolleys (from arrival in 1904 until the abandonment of city line service in 1950). The two Council Crest cars surviving at the Trolley Park (503 and 506) were used as models for

the reproductions, which cost up to \$600,000 each.

The new cars' numbers are a symbolic continuation of the original Council Crest series. Cars 511, 513, and 514 are now in the VTI car barn, with a fourth, and final, trolley expected in May.

Interiors are also like that of the original Brills, including carved woodwork and rattan-covered, walk-over seats. There are seats for 40 passengers and 28 standees. Other period interior features include hand-operated doors, pull-down window shades and leather standee straps. There is a difference, however, in the way the windows work. In the 1903 Brill "semi convertible" design side windows opened upward, into the curved roof. In the new cars, the windows drop down, into the sides of the vehicle. This design is similar to that used by GOMACO for its earlier enclosed Lowell streetcar so may have resulted in cost savings.

There is more to Portland's GOMACO cars than meet the eye; they are actually a unique combination of three different components: reproduction turn-of-the



OERHS volunteers were often aboard car 511 during November 1991 training (Steve Morgan photo).

-century body and fittings; 1950s PCC trucks and motors; and 1990s light rail electronics. Their handmade wooden bodies have been made heavier, and safer, due to the incorporation of steel frames. Beneath the floor are refurbished PCC trucks from Boston (ex Dallas) air-electric PCCs and Chicago rapid transit PCC cars. They feature air tread brakes plus magnetic emergency track brakes. The cars have modern Cineston controllers housed in replica K-35 wooden cabinets. Though rated for 40 m.p.h., the GOMACOs have proven capable of 55 m.p.h. Banfield light rail speeds. Passenger service is currently confined to the downtown area, where speeds are limited to around 25 m.p.h.

1903 vintage Brills collected current from standard trolley poles but the GOMACO reproductions use something more akin to a European bow collector. It is the result of a compromise between Tri-Met and the historical review committee, which wanted to avoid a full-fledged pantograph like that on MAX vehicles. The unusual looking result looks something like a trolley buses' dual poles with a pantograph shoe fitted across the top. They are similar to the current collectors still used on some cars of Chicago's Skokie Swift line. Each Portland car has two of these, mounted back to back. Like the poles on the original trolleys, they are raised and lowered by hand using ropes and retrievers.

Most maintenance is carried out at the new four-car Vintage Trolley Car barn located beneath the I-5 freeway

adjacent to Coliseum station. Major work is done at Ruby Junction.

Woodburn Trolley?

Trolleys have not run in Woodburn, Oregon since the demise of the Oregon Electric shuttle that ran the 2.6 miles to West Woodburn in the 1910s and '20s. But, if trustee Glenn Eaton gets his way they may get a traditional streetcar line 60 years later. He is investigating the possibility of an OERHS-run railway that could be the catalyst the City needs to get approval on an economic block grant. Glenn,



The third Vintage Trolley, no. 513, arrived from GOMACO's Iowa plant on January 24, 1992 and was off-loaded onto the rails at Red Lion Station and towed to the VT car barn. In the windows are posters announcing that this new trolley is bound for Portland (Jack Goetz photo).

who is an engineer, is preparing car barn and track plans for presentation to the city council and the OERHS board.

The Winter of '91

By Greg Bonn

As Winter settled over the valley of Gales Creek the Trolley Park depot was locked and all rolling stock except motors 250 and 251, and

the caboose, moved under cover. Yet things were hardly quiet. Lights burned in the car barn and shop as several restoration projects got under way.

Restoration work began on a new project intended to restore historic sweeper 1455 to its earliest period (1899). New timbers are being shaped and later modifications removed, including the work roof and the heavy high-level coupler that has put so much strain on the frame. The project should be completed by Summer.

Steeplecab 251 has received a coat of paint. Although this first coat is green instead of yellow, the correct shade can be applied next Spring. When the cold weather lets up painting will also continue on Sydney tram #1187. In the meantime, Charlie Seims has replaced broken seat slats.

Meanwhile, side panels have been ground and primed and silver paint applied to the roof of Portland Traction car 813 and "Council Crest" car 503 has been hauled back to Glenwood.

Work has also progressed along the line. Framing on the west end of the barn is now 90% completed as are roofing and sheathing on the newly built waiting station/pump house. The depot trestle was leveled by realigning its west end timbers and new poles have been installed on the mainline loop so the overhead can be raised for operation of double deck Blackpool tram #48 next year. The Community Service project to replace bad ties on the mainline is now 2/3 complete. 200 ties have been replaced on the loop and work is continuing.

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Help! We need articles, letters or photos for the newsletter

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