This Railroad Means Business

By PETER HARRIGAN
Sunday News Staff

MEREDITH, Oct. 22--It's 8 a.m. on a gray, chilly weekday, and Jim Moore and Brian "Woody" Woodward have a run to make from Meredith to Tamworth. Before they get started, they have to fix a crossing switch just above Prescott Lumber, where the train is waiting. To do this, they must readjust the engine's controls, which they made unworkable the night before.

"There's no way to lock the car and nothing attracts kids like an idle train," Moore says as he finally cranks up the 1,600-h.p. HHO diesel locomotive.

With several blasts of the whistle, the Goodwin Railroad is on its way with a boxcar of grain for Merriam's Farmers Exchange in Plymouth and four hopper cars to be filled with crushed rock in Tamworth. The trip is a slow one, at 15 to 25 m.p.h. over old or untamped tracks. It is a journey past long-abandoned stations and mills, past track switches infested with rodents or ghoulishly bedecked with a broken doll that someone left near the rails.

The Goodwin Railroad has operated the Concord-To-Lincoln line since February. It is the second company to lease the line from the state, which bought the 72 miles of track after they were abandoned by the Boston and Maine in 1975. While there are many more improvements to be made and their jobs are a trip of sorts through the past, Moore and Woodward believe the line has a good future, although it may take a few years to catch up.

Head of the railroad company is Herb Goodwin of Weaver Brothers Construction Company of Bow. Since taking over the state-owned line last February, he has seen business increase steadily, showing a profit for the last three months.

Moore and Woodward are both veterans of the construction business who began working with trains with the Wolfeboro Railroad, Woodward's grandfather. Ralph Woodward, was an itinerant station master years ago on the Concord-Lincoln line. Some of the many crossings along the route are still used, and some not, but for all— and then some— Moore gives several blasts of the whistle.

"Should we wake the old farmer up this morning," he asks as they pass the old Ashland paper and woolen mills and over the river into Bridgewater. "Sure, let her rip," says Woodward.

"It seems this fellow's grandfather was killed at a crossing, and he gets madder than hell if we don't let him know we're not obligated, but we...

REPLACING ties and adding new bedrock is a crucial factor in attracting new business for the Concord-Lincoln rail line. Swinging sledgehammers near the Lakeport maintenance sheds are Dale Whitman, left, and Daryl Lavigne.

BOSSMAN of the Goodwin Railroad is Herb Goodwin of Weaver Brothers Construction Company of Bow. Since taking over the state-owned line last February, he has seen business increase steadily, showing a profit for the last three months.
THE CREW for the day on a run from Meredith to Campton was Brian “Woody” Woodward, left, and Jim Moore. Both veterans of the construction industry, they say the railroad will make it as a business, not a tourist attraction.

NEW TIES and ballast, speed can be increased to the 40 to 45 m.p. limit of train 700 on the line has been completed. Moore said as he looked north past a newly improved stretch at mile post 44 at Ashland Summit.

IN THE engineer’s seat, Moore mans the controls of the Goodwin Railroad’s 1,600-h.p. diesel locomotive. The company also has a smaller engine for lighter loads.

A TRIP up the line is one through the past. Jim Moore views from the cab the rapids above the old generating station at Livermore Falls.

END OF the line for this run is in Campton where four hopper cars are loaded with crushed rock, to be spread along the railbed farther south. About half the line’s 72 miles have been repaired.

The Week

Today

“The Wheelmen” from 12 northeast states windup their annual two day meeting today at Strawbery Banke in Portsmouth. The public is invited to an antique bicycle display and demonstration at 1 p.m.

Mission Sunday observance for New Hampshire Catholics who in special church services will show support by praying for Granite State natives who are serving in foreign missions abroad.

Citizens Band and Van Show for the benefit of the United Cerebral Palsy Association winds up today at the State Armory in Manchester.

Fall Fly-In at the Concord Municipal Airport and The State Military Reservation from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., sponsored by the Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce and the N.H. National Guard.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Manchester will hold all day open house for guidance counselors, teachers, parents and prospective students from throughout the Northeast.

A Lupus Awareness Program will be held at 2:30 p.m. at the Alton Community Church. Dr. Michael Minnich of the N.E. Medical Center in Boston will speak. The public is invited.

Dedication of the new Nashua Airport Control Tower Building at the Capt. Nicholas N Tandy Airport Control Center at 3 p.m.
Cobleigh on Alaska: Balance Is Possible

NOTE: Marsh Cobleigh, administrative assistant to Gov. Milton Thompson, has been assigned to Alaska as a staff representative to the Governor's Conference Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development.

Cobleigh's account of that trip and his impressions of the biggest state are being published in a five-part series beginning today in the Sunday News and continuing during the week in the Manchester Union Leader.

By MARSH COBLEIGH

Supposedly they were the Russians who were to rejoin Alaska as the Panamanians are trying to do with the Panama Canal — that would be a pretty kettle of compute.

As a member of the staff advisory committee of the National Geographic Society, Cobleigh was one of nine members of the Governor's Conference Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development. Cobleigh was in Alaska because one of the other committee members is Governor Jay Hammond of Alaska who felt that we were constantly voting on issues concerning development of Alaska's energy resources without ever having seen the situation first hand.

In addition to seeing this beautiful country and learning of its problems, we were successfully in getting Governor Benson's resolution on nuclear development, the Outer Continental Shelf, and energy facility sites passed by the committee so it was a business standpoint as well as an opportunity to evaluate the problems of our largest state.

It is 5,000 miles from Concord, New Hampshire to Anchorage, Alaska, an average of 500 miles of coastline is larger than the coastline of the United States and Alaska is further north and west than any other state. Like the United States it stretches across four time zones. The greatest range of temperature under the American flag occurred in Alaska from 78 degrees below zero to 100 degrees above zero. The population is slightly over 120,000, it is the smallest of the states in population.

Alaska's incredibly beautiful mountain ranges include Mount McKinley, the highest peak in the North American Continent, 20,320 feet.

Its Kodiak bear is the world's largest living animal. Its annual catch is salmon, halibut and King Crab, the largest in the nation.

On our trip, I saw thousands of salmon literally jumping into fishermen's nets. I saw American Eagles soaring over the land of splendor. I saw moose, sea lions, seals, whales, spectacular birds in their native habitats; yet, for all its size and splendor, for all its bountiful beauty, it is a troubled state as it attempts to cope with growth.

The BIG QUESTION

The overriding question facing Alaska since the discovery of crude oil and natural gas is how can balance be achieved? Alaska is much more than an energy pocket for the lower 48 states to plug into. There are those who feel that progress and development is conflicting with Alaska warner than the gold rush of '49 in the technological Utopia inspired by a dollar morality and the goals of the short run.

There is a trend in wilderness is the preservation of the wilderness. In the restaurants and everywhere you go, no one is neutral on this subject.

Alaska is America's last chance to control a great region without disrupting its ecological integrity and without letting technology rule to the detriment of finding a real balance between conflicting forces.

Alaska has the opportunity to be a model for the development of a society showing how we can extract minerals and energy in harmony with protection of the natural environment. There is proof in Alaska that it can be done.

We visited the Tesoro Oil Refinery, Alaska's oldest and first refinery built 10 years ago in 1957. It is located on the Kenai Peninsula. I stood on a helicopter ad looking across the beauty of the Alaskan Mountain Range, and in back of the refinery, I could look down the bay of Port Nikiski and see an oil tanker at the dock.

I was told that this summer during the salmon run small commercial fishermen were netting fish in their three man boats to the incredible sum of $100,000 a week. The catch was also proof that the refineries and their accompanying seaports have not been hurt by the commercial fishing industry. This is a scene of spectacular beauty.

It is also the site of a working oil refinery in a port where tankers have been loading and unloading for ten years. It is living proof that vital energy can be produced without impairing environmental beauty.

Today, a look at growth versus environmental concerns in a small Alaskan town.

THROWING a track switch involves considerable running around for a crew of two, and the hazard of insect versus iron horse. Several of the switches have been appropriated by hares.

(Staff Photo by P. Harrigan)