

SANTA MARIA VALLEY RAILROAD COMPANY

628 S. McClelland St. • Santa Maria, California 93454

Telephone (805) 922-7941

FAX (805) 922-9554

CELEBRATION OF THE SALE OF SANTA MARIA VALLEY RAILROAD

A ceremony was held on Friday, October 6, 2006 with the Hancock family handing over the Santa Maria Valley Railroad to the Himoto and Larsen-Neubert families of the Coast Belle Rail Corp., ending 81 years of family ownership by the Hancock family. The ceremony took place alongside the SMVRR locomotive 1801 next to the historic freight depot built in 1914, now the new corporate office of the SMVRR.

It was an emotional day for the Hancock family, Captain G. Allan Hancock's great grand daughter Jane Brennan-McGovern opened the ceremony stating the family is sad to sell the railroad, but is happy to find a new owner to share the Captain's vision, imagination and passion for the long term prospects of servicing the Santa Maria Valley.

Hancock purchased a dilapidated SMVRR from bankruptcy in 1925. With his vision and passion for the SMVRR, Captain Hancock invested heavily in the railroad, building a new concrete engine house and machine shop, purchasing new locomotives, and upgrading track structures. The SMVRR soon became one of the most successful and profitable short line railroads in the Western United States. Captain Hancock passed away in 1965 but his family continued to own the SMVRR.

Pat Brennan, Captain Hancock's grand daughter, presented a picture of SMVRR engine No. 21 in 1925 and Captain Hancock at the throttle of No. 21. to Rob Himoto, President of the Coast Belle Rail Corp. Ms. Brennan presented the Red Book, a family biography to the Himoto and Larsen-Neubert families. Ms. Brennan spoke "The Hancock family is pleased to sell the Santa Maria Valley Railroad to Rob Himoto and the Himoto and Larsen-Neubert families.

To signify the official change of ownership, Captain Hancock's great great grand daughters Brenna and Sydney McGovern handed the keys to the railroad and a brakeman's signal lantern over to Adrian Flores, son of 3rd generation SMVRR railroader Jesse Flores and Michael Soares, nephew of SMVRR General Manager David Jennings. Many member's of the Flores family worked for the SMVRR, including Flore's father and great grandfather. Mr. Jennings is the most senior SMVRR employee, currently his 31st year with the company.

Himoto thanked the Hancock family for the opportunity to continue the legacy of Captain Hancock. "We feel we have great prospects for the future. We have a winning combination of great customers and great employees. We are a part of a national railroad system that is the most efficient, cost effective and environmentally friendly way of transporting our nation's goods. The SMVRR will continue to be the 'Transportation Gateway for the Central Coast'."

A presentation was made for Michael Parry, ending a 24 year career with the SMVRR where he started in track maintenance and depot clerk and ascended to President. Ms. Brennan-McGovern presented Mr. Parry with a plaque from the Hancock family and Mr. Jennings presented a desk clock from the new owners and current employees of the SMVRR.

The ceremony ended with two blasts of the locomotive whistle, the first from the Hancock family with Brenna and Sidney sounding the whistle, the second by Michael and Adrian signaling a new era for the Santa Maria Railroad.



Pat Brennan, grand daughter of Captain Hancock, presents a picture of SMVRR locomotive No. 21 with Captain Hancock at the throttle to Rob Himoto, President of Coast Belle Rail Corp. Photo courtesy of Jamie Foster.



Three generations of the Hancock family was represented at the ceremony. Left to right Rob Himoto, President of Coast Belle Rail Corp., great great grand daughter of Captain Hancock Sidney McGovern, grand daughter Pat Brennan, great great grand daughter Brenna McGovern, great grand daughter Jane Brennan-McGovern, and Adrian Flores, son of third generation SMVRR railroader Jesse Flores. Photo courtesy of Jamie Foster.