

Imperial Valley Weekly

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Carrizo Gorge Railway Resumes Freight Service

By Luke Phillips

With the driving of a golden spike last Saturday, May 15th, Congressman Bob Filner officially reopened the Carrizo Gorge Railway, which will provide San Diego with a rail link to points east via the Imperial Valley.

The Carrizo Gorge line, which lies between Plaster City and Jacumba, was closed nearly 30 years ago after a series of floods, storms, and fires damaged many of the railroad's tunnels and bridges including the magnificent Goat Canyon Trestle - the largest wooden structure in North America.

After bridge repairs were made and the last of the collapsed tunnels were cleared only weeks ago, the line has resumed freight service, carrying goods such as hay, produce and sand out of the valley

and supplying us with up to 17,000 tons of fertilizer per day from China, Russia, and Malaysia, beef cattle from Canada, Olive and Soy Oil from South America, and Automobiles from manufacturing plants in Baja California, Europe, and Japan among other things.

"This is a great day for the Imperial Valley, and I am thrilled that I was able to see this project through to fruition," said Congressman Filner, dubbing the project *The Jobs Train* and predicting that it will be a great boon for the economies of the Imperial Valley and San Diego.

With the reopening of the line San Diego's port facility will also be put back into use after lying dormant for last twenty years due to lack of a rail link to the east.

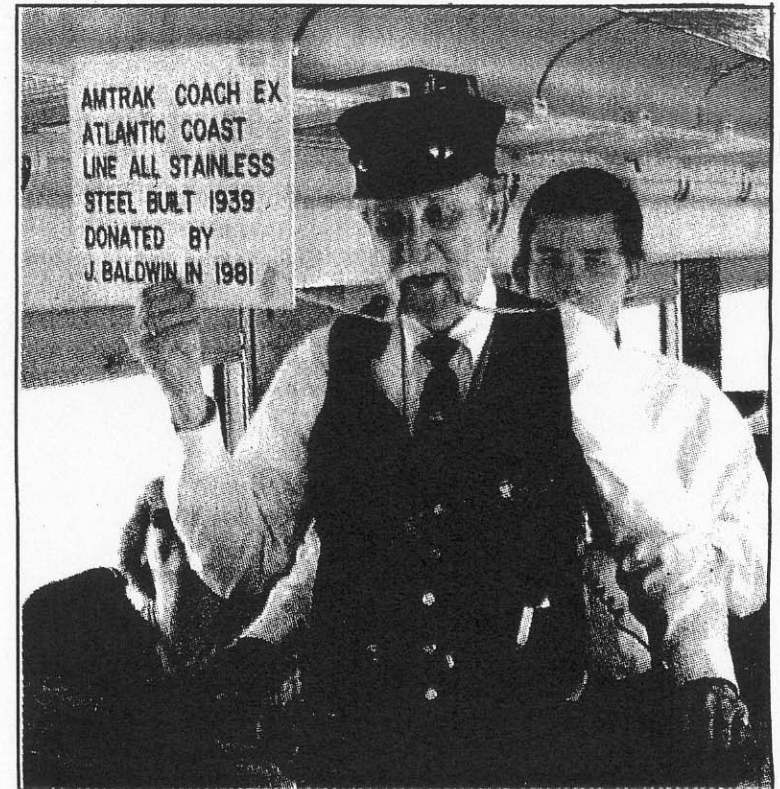
After the spike driving ceremony, held outside of Plaster City last

Saturday, Congressman Filner boarded the Jobs Train for an inaugural ride to the Goat Canyon Trestle along with 50 Imperial Valley officials and invited guests.

Among those on board were IVC President Paul Pai, Calexico Chamber Director Louie Wong, Calexico Council member Carmen Durazo, outgoing SDSU Dean Koshrow Fatemi, and Brawley Chamber Executive Director Nicole Gillis.

"It is an honor to take the inaugural ride on our new Jobs Train," said Filner. "This project will transform the economy of our entire region!"

The Carrizo Gorge Railroad is now off limits to hikers and is patrolled by special security agents, however, passenger trains may be offered as early as next year.



ALL ABOARD! Congressman Bob Filner hosted a rail excursion to the Goat Canyon Trestle last Saturday to mark the reopening of the Carrizo Gorge Railway. Pictured above is Roger Challberg, a crew member on the train and an expert on the history of the 100-year-old rail line. Challberg is also the president of the Campo Historical Society. *Photo By Luke Phillips*