



Still dancing
their time away
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Pine Knot

News

Carlton County's
only independent,
locally owned newspaper.

Vol. 3 No. 7

www.PineKnotNews.com

Friday, February 14, 2020

\$1.25

Consolidation survey: A resounding 'yes'

Process continues
for Carlton, Wrenshall

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Sue Peterson had some choice words about the survey results released this week regarding how residents feel about the possible consolidation of the Carlton and Wrenshall school districts. "Atypical."

"Shocking."
"Surprising."

Peterson works for School Perceptions, the company hired by the school districts to guide the survey. The school boards wanted a clear idea of where residents stood on consolidation and the costs to accomplish it. They want it. And they seem willing to pay for it as well.

An overwhelming number of people who responded to

the survey in January support a consolidated district. Across the board, in age categories and among those who have children in the district and those who don't, 80 percent of respondents want consolidation.

The results were released Tuesday night at a special meeting of the school boards with Peterson from School Perceptions, a company that has performed more than 10,000 surveys for schools

looking to gauge community support for school improvements.

More than 33 percent of the surveys came back — 1,121 — a number that Peterson called "beyond impressive." More than 50 percent of respondents support the costs associated with consolidating, about \$38 million to shore up the South Terrace school in Carlton to create a K-5 school and making room in Wrenshall for middle and high

school classes, including new gyms and an auditorium.

The taste for those costs comes with a caveat — funding from the state. School officials will now head down to the legislative session to lobby for about 40 percent of those costs coming through state bonding. If the bonding doesn't come, both districts have said there will be no consolidation.

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150 YEARS AGO, A CROSSROADS IN HISTORY



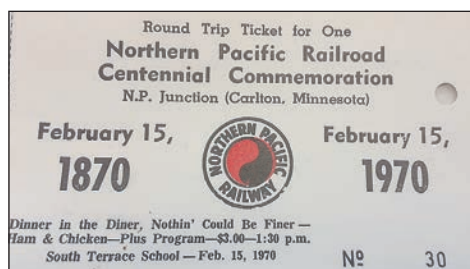
Men from the Northern Pacific Railroad and dignitaries from the region around Duluth joined in a groundbreaking ceremony Feb. 15, 1870, where the NP rail would link with the Lake Superior & Mississippi Railroad at a spot that is about a mile west of Carlton. The rail started here became the third transcontinental rail line in the U.S.

Northern Pacific started in county

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It was supposed to be an "impromptu" act, a quiet ceremony more for employees than the general public. There was likely good reason to keep things on the down-low. While the Northern Pacific Railroad had been buoyed the month before by a cash infusion from Jay Cooke, it really was nowhere near ready to begin the Herculean task of laying a rail line from Lake Superior to the Pacific Ocean.

But word got out. People traveled by rail from Duluth and Superior on the new Lake Superior & Mississippi Rail-



A ticket to a dinner in Carlton in 1970 celebrating 100 years since the famous groundbreaking.

road line that had been cut through the dalles of the St. Louis River. They came from the west and other points in horse-

drawn wagons. Despite the cold and snow, it was estimated that 200 people ended up gathering at a spot just a mile west of today's Carlton for the official Northern Pacific groundbreaking. It was 150 years ago — Feb. 15, 1870.

Officials used a shovel and pick-ax to fill a wheelbarrow full of soil. It was all ceremonial. No real work on the line would begin until well into the summer. Logistics got in the way of a planned first phase of the route to the Red River and Dakota Territory. Surveys of land had to be made.

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Eva Flovick, left, has been battling kidney failure the past year with the help of her mother, Katie Johnson. Contributed photo

Teen pushes on through kidney crisis

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A year ago, they thought the swelling in her face and ankles was caused by allergies. But the allergy shots didn't help. When her face was so swollen she couldn't open her eyes, the emergency room doctor told her to get a second opinion.

It was following that referral — to an allergy specialist — that 15-year-old Eva Flovick and her family found out she had severe kidney disease.

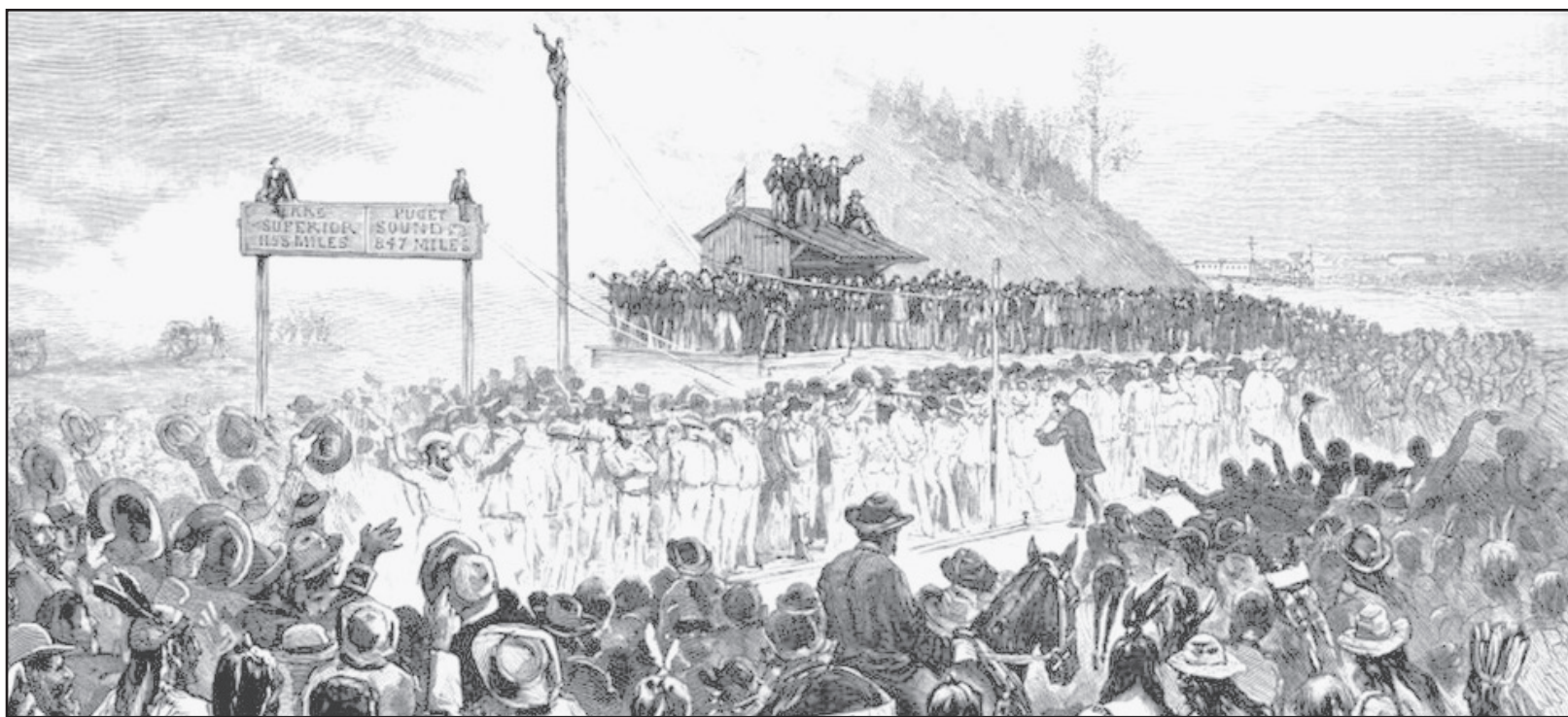
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Nordic skiers break through to state

Read about the historic team on Page 12. See a page honoring the team on Page 24.





This sketch from Harper's Weekly depicts the driving of the last spike in the Northern Pacific Railroad's transcontinental line on Sept. 8, 1883. It was reported that the same spike first driven at Northern Pacific Junction in Carlton County 13 years earlier was also used in the ceremony in western Montana.

Railroad ...

Continued from page 1

The company needed to find an optimum spot along the Mississippi River to cross. And, as anyone has witnessed on a drive west in Carlton County along Minnesota Highway 210, there were thick woods, bogs, swamps and lakes to navigate. Not to mention the maddening mosquitoes.

This would be the first undertaking by a single company to cross the continent by rail. In May of 1869, the first such successful effort was marked by a "golden spike" ceremony in Utah as the Central Pacific Railroad from California and the Union Pacific Railroad from the east were joined, creating the first transcontinental rail line in the United States.

The NP line from Carlton County to Spokane of 2,000 miles was expected to cost \$100 million to build.

There was optimism in 1870 at the spot that would later be called Northern Pacific Junction. Capt. James Starkey of St. Paul was the contractor for the clearing of land west of the groundbreaking. He was asked to speak that day for NP engineers who had demurred. As the Duluth Minnesotian reported, Starkey encouraged those in attendance to soak up the moment, and take some earthen relics from the wheelbarrow home with them to remember the "sacred" nature of the day. "I express with ardent hope that you will treasure them up," Starkey said. "And that when the Northern Pacific Railroad is finished every possessor of one of those chips will, with the souvenir in his pocket, participate in the rough ride to the other side of the continent to witness the last spike driven in the last rail of our now commenced and then will be completed fact."

The first work after the ceremony was in bringing supplies for workers. Finding employees wasn't a challenge at first, as those working on the soon-to-be completed LS&M line that connected Duluth to St. Paul would simply switch to the route west. As surveying continued, it was decided the NP line would dip south to what is now known as Brainerd. The crossing of the Mississippi

was deemed easiest there but it added miles to a line that would have to tilt north again toward Fargo. The locomotive Minnetonka was brought up from St. Paul in July, the first engine to ply NP rail as it moved supplies. It sits today at the Lake Superior Railroad Museum, along with other NP artifacts, at The Depot in Duluth.

On Aug. 29, 1870 the first actual rail was laid at the junction, connecting to the LS&M, which eventually became part of the Northern Pacific system. By Sept. 24, seven miles had been laid west of NP Junction.

Rail laid over the winter would haunt the company as spring thaws had the line sinking to the bottom of wetlands.

While the money from financier Cooke got things rolling for the NP, it wouldn't be the cure-all. His \$6 million was for the 200 miles to Fargo. There would be years of ups and downs in financing, including long periods when no work was done. And NP had to coordinate things from the east and the west, generally following the trail of explorers Lewis and Clark.

The financial panic of 1873 ruined Cooke and put NP into bankruptcy. The line had reached the Missouri River by then but there wouldn't be more western work for six years.

In the fall of 1883, the line was finally connected to the ocean. There was a grand ceremony in western Montana that included former president Ulysses S. Grant. The first spike driven in Carlton County was used. But, like the ceremony 13 years before, it was mostly smoke and mirrors. Northern Pacific was using short lines in Oregon to reach Puget Sound. It didn't have its own lines until 1888.

Fights over control of the railroad continued until J.P. Morgan got ahold of it at the turn of the century. The NP proved to be a vital link for goods and passengers in the 1900s, with its North Coast Limited becoming one of the most popular and safest passenger services in the country.

People in Carlton and the region knew the impact of the NP getting its start there.

There was a 75-year jubilee celebration in 1948. It had been delayed because of World War II. Minneapolis Mayor Hubert Humphrey spoke at the event.



State and local officials marked the 100-year anniversary of the Northern Pacific groundbreaking west of Carlton in 1970. Photo from the Carlton County Historical Society files

In February of 1970, another grand effort to mark the beginning of the Northern Pacific was taken up in Carlton. It was already known that NP was going to merge, along with Great Northern, into what today is the Burlington Northern Santa Fe system. The Northern Pacific name was going away but the spirit remained. Officials, including Gov. Harold Levander, gathered at the sign west of Carlton marking the spot where work had begun — however ceremoniously — 100 years before. There was a ham and chicken dinner at the South Terrace school.

It's hard to imagine such a celebration today. And there's good reason, says Ken Buehler, director of the Lake Superior Railroad Museum in Duluth.

"We are detached from railroads now," he said. "You can't ride them. You don't see them. A train today has containers that it moves from point to point. There's no unloading of a boxcar at the station."

The small groundbreaking the Northern Pacific officials had planned 150 years ago, only to be mobbed by a crowd knowing the import of the day, will have

Northern Pacific Junction (23 miles from Duluth, 131 miles from St. Paul, and 91 miles from Brainerd; population, 1,000).—This is the junction of the St. Paul & Duluth and Northern Pacific Railroads, and a branch of the St. Paul & Duluth Railroad, known as the Knife Falls Branch, which runs six miles north to Knife Falls and Cloquet, where three saw mills are established, and large quantities of lumber are manufactured. Northern Pacific Junction has several hotels, two public halls, a church, good schools, and the county jail. It does a large business in supplying the numerous lumbering camps which are situated in the vicinity. Two saw mills are here, which run summer and winter, and are supplied with logs during the winter by a logging train. *Pine Grove*, 28 miles from Duluth, is only a side track. The same may be said of *Norman*, 33, and also of *Corona*, 39 miles from Duluth.

Cromwell (45 miles from Duluth; population 350) is situated on a beautiful lake, which is stocked with pike, pickerel, and perch. Cromwell has a section house, telegraph office, two hotels and a water tank. The principal shipments are wood and ties. Game: deer, bear, rabbits and grouse. *Tamarack*, 57 miles; *M'Gregor*, 66 miles; and *Kimberley*, 75 miles from Duluth, are small places of little importance except as points for the shipment of wood, ties, fence posts and telegraph poles, which are cut from the neighboring forests.

Aitkin (87 miles west of Duluth, and 27 miles east of

A Northern Pacific brochure from 1893 described the area where the line began.

an anniversary Saturday. It will likely be quiet there. No crowd. No excited promises of adventure to a faraway coast.

It was announced by Capt. Starkey at the groundbreaking that the pick-ax, shovel and wheelbarrow should in turn be sent to the Fond du Lac Society,

Duluth Library Association and the Minnesota Historical Society. Instead, the items were shipped east, to Philadelphia, and the offices of Jay Cooke.

There is no record of what happened to these "sacred" items from a turning point in Carlton County.