HEBER VALLEY RAILROAD

Advantages of Current Ownership Model September 11, 2023

Mark Nelson, Executive Director



Legislature Appropriations - Recent Past:

2014 - \$250K one-time

2019 - \$315K one-time

2022 - \$IM one-time + \$600K grant via Wasatch County

2023 - \$1M one-time



Why Maintain the Current Model? **A Utah Treasure** A Valuable Asset A Great Investment **An Economic Driver** Well Run Organization Historic Weakness will be a Strength We Have Plans to Grow **Our Unique Business Model Works!**



A Utah Treasure

Utah history:

Transcontinental railroad

Utah's only historic/tourist railroad

DRG&W route

Historic equipment

2 - 1907 steam locomotives

1913-1930's Era passenger cars

1940's-1950's Era passenger cars



A Valuable Asset

Right-of-way – owned jointly by UDOT and Parks

Depot/shop – owned by HVR

Historic locomotives

2 steam locomotives

5 diesel locomotives

Historic restored/being restored, passenger car

24 - 1930 < cars

4 - 1940 > cars



A Great Investment

The legislature has "invested" about \$3.5M in the HVR since 1992.

In the last 9 years the HVR has generated \$24.8M in revenues and \$8M in profit (all of it re-invested in the HVR)

In the last 4 years the HVR has generated \$14.5M in revenues and \$5M in profit (all re-invested).

The most recent 4 year average is \$3.6M in revenues, with profit of \$1.4M

That's A Great Investment!



An Economic Driver

The HVR is the #1 tourist attraction in Wasatch County.

Last year carried 130K passengers on 570 trains.

About 50% of riders are tourists/visitors.

The HVR employs >100 teenagers, and uses local vendors for almost all services/supplies



Well Run Organization

The HVR is has a great safety record.

Fun. We provide a diverse range of themed experiences.

Service. We answer the phone. We provide good, oldfashioned customer service.

Profitable. We have been profitable 8 years in a row.

Good partner. We work well with UDOT, State Parks, Wasatch County, MAG, Heber City, Midway City, Tourism & Economic Development, Wasatch County School District, Utah County



Our Historic Weakness will Soon Be a Strength

The HVR inherited a badly maintained right-of-way.

We have invested heavily in rehabilitation of the right-of-way.

The State has granted about \$3M to the HVR in the past 10 years.

The HVR has spent more than \$3M on right-of-way maintenance during the same period.

When the Provo Parkway segment is completed (2025), the HVR will have all 15.5 miles of track in "good" shape. (reasonably easy to maintain from cash flow).

We Plan To Grow

We have the pieces in place to continue to grow.

Right-of-way

Equipment

Management team

Facilities

Community support

Trails in work

Dinner train



Our Unique Ownership Model Works!

Quasi-state agency combines government-owned advantages with entrepreneurial "private organization" agility and flexibility

The State provides the right-of-way, employee benefits, and general oversight.

The Board and team drives the business and railroad as a private organization.



Keep it the way that it is.

Or transfer it to Wasatch County.

They can maintain existing relationships with UDOT, State Parks, Cities, Utah County, MAG, etc.

Under Wasatch County have a similar board/control structure. It would work.



Our Current Board of Directors Steve Farrell - Wasatch County Council - Chair **Celeste Johnson – Mayor Midway Heidi Franco – Mayor Heber City** Dallin Koecher - Director Tourism & Econ Dev. **Rob Clayton - Region 3 Director, UDOT** Laurie Backus - Deputy Dir. Of Ops. State Parks Richard Nielsen - Utah County Parks Tom Jacobson - DABC - At large member

Advisory Board

Currently has 22 members

Tom Jacobson - Chair

Includes: Craig Lacey - former Exec Director

Jon Brewster - retired Chief Scientist at HP

Scot Lythgoe - local builder

Lane Lythgoe - local architect

Armando Tirado – VP Savage Services



Questions?

