The Nevada State Railroad Museum at Carson City, Nevada, has completed the restoration of a 19th century track-laying car. Though only a small service vehicle, it is a significant relic from the days of hand-built railroads. Until the increased weight of rail before World War I made track-laying *machines* imperative, these *cars* were the standard means of delivering rail to the end-of-track during new construction. They were generally the first rail vehicles acquired by railroads, and the NSRM's car is believed to be the last surviving example.

In use, track-laying cars were loaded with 16 to 20 rails and drawn by horses hitched to an iron ring on the side of the car. At the end-of-track, the rails were pulled lengthwise off the car on rollers, placed at the ends of the transoms so the rails came off virtually to gauge. Thirty-foot rails weighing 56 pounds to the yard were handled by as few as four men, one team working on each side of the track. To make rapid progress, crews only placed the rails; splicing and spiking took place after the track-laying car had been rolled ahead. Crews often laid more than a mile of track in a day, and a Central Pacific crew once laid ten miles in eleven hours. On large projects, several track-laying cars were used; when they met shuttling back and forth, the empty cars were tipped onto their side on the tie-ends so the loaded cars could pass. A crew of men rode each car to brake and tip it out of the way, and to assist in loading and unloading.

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