

Automotive Trades and Highways Department

Robert J. Pritchard, Manager
F. M. Bannell, Chairman

AUTOMOTIVE TRADES

With a Big Automobile Show due in April; the merging with the Chamber of Commerce of the Auto Club; and trade groups meeting regularly, the year of 1920 promises to be an active one in the Motor Field.

HIGHWAYS

The automobile trades of El Paso were organized on March 30, 1919, into the Automotive Trades Association of El Paso, affiliated with the Chamber of Commerce. The original officers of the Association were Glenn W. Curtiss, president; O. C. Youngblood, vice-president; Fred H. Lazenby, treasurer; Sam Watkins, L. A. Thompson and J. C. Byars, directors. When the Association became a department of the Chamber of Commerce, these officers automatically became the committee of management. Later, when Mr. Byars resigned, F. M. Bannell was elected to fill the vacancy.

The first enterprise undertaken by the Association was the Automobile Show, which was held at Liberty Hall, May 8, 9, and 10. Practically all the automobile dealers in the city were represented, and the event attracted much attention all over the Southwest. Mr. C. M. Barber was named manager of the show, with a committee from the Association to help him.

With the conclusion of the Automobile Show, the organization slept despite repeated efforts of Mr. Roberts of the Chamber of Commerce, and others to revive it. On June 18, a session of the directors was held, at which it was voted to merge completely with the Chamber of Commerce, and the treasurer was directed to turn the funds of the organization over to the Chamber of Commerce. The matter ended there until September.

Coming Up to Full Strength.

In the meantime a membership campaign was proposed to bring the organization up to something like representative strength. At the time of its formation, the Automotive Trades Association had numbered only about forty members, and some of these had dropped out. A list of prospects was compiled, covering the entire automotive industry in El Paso. A committee of ten men was appointed, and the prospect list apportioned among them. Nothing further was heard of the campaign, although a number of efforts were made to get the committees out.

Suggests Paid Manager.

As a result of agitation for a road race, a meeting of the organization was held Sept. 2, and it was unanimously decided to stage a race from El Paso to Phoenix.

On Sept. 5, Mr. Roberts held a conference with Mr. Curtiss, and proposed to place the automobile men's organization directly in the Chamber of Commerce, as a branch, under a paid manager, in spite of the failure of the June membership campaign. Accordingly a meeting of the directors was held the same afternoon, and the merger actually accomplished. The directors named Robert J. Pritchard to handle the Automotive Trades and Highways Department, which was thus created. A few days later Mr. Lazenby turned over the funds of the defunct Automotive Trades Association, which amounted to \$302.73.

El Paso-Phoenix Road Race.

The immediate business of the Automotive Trades and Highways Department was the conduct of the El Paso to Phoenix Road Race. Robert H. Rinehart was named by the organization to handle the technical end of the race, and the manager handled the promotion and publicity end. The race was held on Nov. 2, and 3, starting from El Paso, with a battery of the 82nd Field Artillery to start it. The official figures of the race are contained in the report which Mr. Rinehart has consented to make.

The original proposal was to finance the race entirely by public subscription, but after a day or two of work the committees appointed to take care of this, reported that much difficulty had been met with. Mr. Roberts then proposed that the expense of the race would be met from the Chamber of Commerce funds, if the automobile men would guarantee ten men to serve in the September membership campaign. The proposition was accepted, and approximately \$1100 already subscribed, was turned over to the Chamber of Commerce. This amount was a little more than doubled by subscriptions from automobile and tire manufacturers, secured by postal solicitation. The cost of the race aggregated about \$4500, including \$2500 prize money put up by the Chamber of Commerce.

Meantime the membership of the Automotive Trades and Highways Department was no greater than when the merger with the Chamber of Commerce was effected. On Sept. 13, when the general membership campaign was held, seven automobile men appeared to work. These men, working with Mr. W. G. Roe and Mr. C. M. Harvey, turned in a total of 108 memberships, of which 76 were affiliated with the Automotive Trades and Highways Department.

Trades Lists.

While these activities were being carried on, the Department has been at work on the compilation of a trades list covering Arizona, New Mexico, and the 39 counties of West Texas. The proposition is to compile a directory, carrying the name of every firm engaged in the automotive industry in any capacity, in the territory named, with an estimate as to the size of the firm, and listing the various lines of automotive products carried.

At the present time this list has been completed for Arizona only, and does not contain the financial rating of the firms.

Another interesting bit of information has been obtained, in the shape of a list of automobile owners in El Paso, listing the makes of cars in alphabetical order, with the names of the owners of each make, and their address.

Highways Development.

At the 1919 convention of the Bankhead Highway Association at Mineral Wells, April 14, Mr. C. H. Lester, representing the Highways Department of the Chamber of Commerce, and armed with 50 votes purchased by the Highway fund, proved the pivot which swung the routing of the Bankhead Highway along the Texas Pacific into El Paso. Later, at a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Bankhead Highway Association, a Scenic Subdivision was provided for, leaving the main route at Sweetwater, and passing through the mountains of eastern New Mexico, via Roswell, and getting back into the main Bankhead Highway at El Paso.

The Old Spanish Trails Association was reorganized at San Antonio in the early fall, and rearranged its contemplated routing, placing El Paso at the terminal of the San Antonio and Arizona divisions of the Highway, with the right of representation on the boards of directors of both divisions. Mr. C. M. Harvey, chairman of the Highways Committee of the El Paso Chamber of Commerce was named chairman of the El Paso County Committee of the Old Spanish Trails Association, and the manager of the Automotive Trades and Highways Department was named secretary.

For Laney Amendment.

Judge Adrian Pool and County Engineer L.

A. White represented this Department at the convention of the Ozark Trails Association, held at Roswell, Oct. 1, 2, and 3.

This Department took an active part in the campaign of propaganda for the Laney Constitutional Amendment, providing for the authorization of the legislature to issue bonds aggregating \$75,000,000 for a state highway system. As a result the amendment carried by a 981 to 83 vote in this county. The amendment was defeated by the vote elsewhere in the state.

On September 25, the committee of management of the Automotive Trades and Highways Department met to discuss a proposed bond issue, for the construction of the Alamogordo highway north to the county line, the completion of the Fabens road east to the county line, and 4.75 miles of road in San Elizario. It was represented at this meeting that the Island had been long neglected in the matter of roads, and on Lee Moores' motion, an item to build four miles of road in the Island was included. The committee finally endorsed a proposition to float a county bond issue of \$525,000 to build the roads named, and to take advantage of the state aid funds.

The election was finally held on November 15, on a proposal to issue bonds for \$800,000 to build 15 miles of road from El Paso to Newman on the Alamogordo highway, 14 miles from Fabens to Hudspeth county line, 4.75 miles in the San Elizario gap, and four miles on the Island. The bonds were voted by an overwhelming majority. At the present time, it appears that the Alamogordo road will be ready for travel by June, 1920.

Highways.

El Paso is the hub from which radiates five main highways east, west and north. These are the Bankhead Highway, with its White Mountain Scenic subdivision coming in from the north and east, the Old Spanish Trail, from the east, the John Hutchins Highway from the north, and the El Paso-San Diego Road west. The Bankhead main route, and the Old Spanish Trail are routed over the same highway for considerable distance east and west of El Paso, namely State Highway No. 1 to the east, and the old Borderland route to the west. The John Hutchins' Highway, probably better known as the Alamogordo road, and the White Mountain Scenic subdivision of the Bankhead Highway are also routed over a common road from Alamogordo into El Paso.

The Bankhead sub-division was actually adopted by the directors of the Bankhead Highway Association at Birmingham Feb. 6. Previously this route had been a bone of contention between certain New Mexican and Texas delegations to highway conventions, but the dispute was satisfactorily settled by naming both routes as part of the Bankhead highway.

National Airline Association.

Another proposition, partaking of the nature of a highway but marking the birth of a new traffic, is the plan presented by the National Airline Association, whose representative visited El Paso in February. Through this Department the representative was presented to the city council which agreed to provide a landing field for aircrafts, according to the Airline Association's plans. No financial arrangement was made.

Conventions.

The Arizona Good Roads Association held a one day convention at Tucson, Jan. 19, 1920. The Highways Committee authorized any member who cared to attend the convention to represent the Chamber of Commerce. Mr.