

SANTA MARIA VALLEY RAILROAD COMPANY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 28, 2020

Santa Maria Valley Railroad loses Director instrumental in company's turn-around

It is with deep sorrow that the Santa Maria Valley Railroad announces the passing of Director Betty Chiyoko Himoto on Wednesday January 22, 2020 at the age of 95. The Coast Belle Rail Corp purchased the Santa Maria Valley Railroad from the descendants of the Hancock Family on October 1, 2006. Betty assumed a position on the Board immediately following the ownership change, a position she held until the day that she passed. She was a tireless advocate for rail transportation, and an unwavering supporter of reinvestment in the company. As a result, The Santa Maria Valley Railroad was revitalized growing traffic 5 fold while rebuilding its track infrastructure and customer base. In 2016 the Osburn Rail Yard was opened has now expanded to 2,200 feet of track for transload customers and all office and shop facilities relocated to the property.

Betty was born in Burbank, California on July 4, 1924. She was the 4th of 6 children to Kameto and Tschio Hori. Betty grew up on a hardscrabble farm in Burbank and later Ryde, California. During World War II the family was sent to Tule Lake Relocation Center, part of the 110,000 Japanese Americans who were relocated out of the West Coast.

In 1950 Betty married Roy Himoto and they had 4 children, Lester, Raymond, Nancy, and Robert. In 1996 she moved to the Central Coast and became increasingly more active in railroad industry investing, ultimately leading to her 2006 involvement with the Santa Maria Valley Railroad led by her sons Robert and Raymond Himoto. The company remains committed to carrying on her legacy and carrying on her vision for the future.

Memorial services are pending.