

FEATHER RIVER RAIL SOCIETY – SAFETY REPORT

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FROM: Tom Carter – Director

Given my family's business revolves around safety; we have been highly discouraged lately by a prevailing corporate attitude that values profits and cost saving over worker safety. In fact, it highly disgusts me. Too often lately, we have been getting calls for service *after* a derailment, injury, or in one case, a death of an employee. Why didn't they call us before hand? Did safety mean nothing to these corporate bean counters? Wasn't this employee's life worth a few dollars to empower him/her with the knowledge to safely perform their job? I prepare and send a quote, and....crickets. If I am lucky enough to catch them on the phone, I get blown off or told that we're too expensive. Hey...safety costs money. It's a fact of life. I have high insurance rates for General and Professional liability insurance, on top of the taxes, business licenses, and all of the other things I need to operate a business, let alone the travel expenses. Lately though, we've been getting our asses kicked by "correspondence courses", whereas, a company elects to purchase a set of workbooks, videos (that are cheesier than WWF wrestling) and internet learning courses. It's enough to make you want to bang your head against the wall.

Folks, you can't "half-ass" safety. It's an all or nothing deal. Now, I understand that none of us draws a paycheck at the museum, and we are SO far from a for profit business that the comparison is apples to bowling shoes, however, what we do is not *as dangerous* as what our friends at UP do on the other side of the fence; on the contrary. What we do is *more dangerous* given that we invite the public to get right in the middle of it all as part of the authentic railroad experience we offer, and the fact that most of the equipment that we are fortunate to have at the museum is there because it's outlived its usefulness to somebody else. Therefore, that equipment requires extra special care and attention to safety when we go to use it. Lately, I have been asked by numerous people why they can't have access to the shot boom forklift we recently acquired. The answer is simple: Unless you have been properly trained on it, you have no business using it (or attempting to use it). It's not that we are being selfish or stingy; we don't want you getting hurt. It's as simple as that. Using the new lift as an example, it is very unstable and top heavy when the boom is extended. It is not as simple as jumping on the small electric lift in the shop. Fortunately, most people have understood our reasoning when told "no". *Unfortunately*, we have had a few folks that get upset. *Those* are the volunteers that worry me as a safety person. If you can't understand our desire for a safe workplace, you really have no business wielding any piece of equipment more dangerous or complicated than a broom. I hate to be so blunt about it, but, I am getting really tired of blatant regard for safety from a few people. The fortunate news is this small group has gotten smaller and smaller. Thanks to the efforts of the vast majority of our volunteers, we're making strides to improve our safety culture. At the June Meeting, David Elems was appointed "Shop Safety Supervisor". He has picked up the ball and ran with it. He has also spread the word regarding our desire to become as close to 100% safety compliance as we can get and for that, we are all grateful. Thanks to efforts like these, the very small number of volunteers with a blatant disregard for our safety culture is getting smaller and smaller. We need your help as volunteers to eliminate that small group's disregard all together. Together, we can make ours the safest museum possible. If you see an unsafe act, stop the work. You *do* have the right to stop any and all work, whether you are involved in the project or not, at any time, if you feel it is not being done safely. Don't be afraid

to “stick your nose in someone else’s business” when it comes to safety. You may make a few people upset initially, but, you’ll keep them and others *safe*.

The summer season is, obviously, here. I know, it’s hot outside, “duh!” It goes without saying that it is imperative that you KEEP HYDRATED. Water is your best option for keeping hydrated. Soda, energy drinks, even juice, contains sugar and syrups that can actually dehydrate you more. A good rule of thumb to consider whether you are properly hydrated or not is, if you haven’t urinated in the past 2 hours; you are likely getting dehydrated. There is always plenty of drinking water available for you as a volunteer, free of charge. If the refrigerators are empty of water, please, take a few minutes to replenish them, but drink up. Keep yourself hydrated. It is also been proven that you are just as vulnerable to dehydration in cold weather and at night, as you are on a hot day.

Eugene and I are working with Kerry to revamp our safety procedures manuals and I appreciate their willingness to get these important documents updated and presented to the volunteers. This will not be an overnight job; it’ll take some time to get this all ironed out between our day jobs and other museum projects; however, it is coming down the pike and is being worked on. We look forward to making these available to you soon.

I want to thank everyone for their cooperation and efforts to make the museum the safest it can be and would appreciate any ideas or other feedback you may have to improve it further.