

FEATHER RIVER RAIL SOCIETY

DATE: January 2019
ITEM: New Business Item 1
FROM: Eugene Vicknair

RAL SCHEDULING / BOOKING SOFTWARE

During the recent Marketing meeting I had with Big Fish, we discussed ways to improve the RAL income. Last year we informed the Board that the Pullman House was willing to do joint lodging / RAL bookings and that Chalet View may also be interested. One problem with this is the need for the lodging to contact the museum to confirm schedule availability. Also, during our down time, someone is only in the store part of 1-2 days per week so that any RAL calls must be returned off the answering machine.

In researching how other businesses and museums handle bookings, I found software apps that allow on-line booking and management of bookings. One in particular, Resurva, is a plug-in designed to work with our Vend POS system.

The software has several features that I think could be very beneficial to us with the RALs. They include:

- Create custom calendar for RAL bookings that can include blackout times / dates for events and allow buffer time between RALs (just like we currently do in the RAL book)
- Allow customers to see available RAL slots and equipment real time and chose those when they order on-line. They can also pay at the same time.
- Allow waiting list. If customer wants an earlier time, they can be booked into a waiting list and be informed if there is a cancellation.
- Send reminders to clients and RAL engineers.
- Allow store staff and RAL engineers to view and manage bookings and schedule remotely.
- Tie specific locomotives to specific time slots if desired.
- Integrate engineer schedule into booking schedule. Note non-available times.

The software has a 60 day free trial and customer support for set-up.

I have checked out several websites using this software. It is not flashy, but appears to be pretty straightforward to use.

Its price is based on number of bookings and locations. Since we have 1 location, they have a package for \$20 / month that handles up to 200 bookings. They also have unlimited booking plans for higher prices.

If the Board wants to investigate this, I would be willing to donate the cost for the first 2-3 months of service fees beyond the 60 day free trial.