

To: FRRS Board of Directors  
From: Paul Finnegan, Webmaster  
Re: Museum Web Page  
Date: April 10, 2024

## **Mailtrain**


We continue to have society members and the public signup on our “*WPRM News*” email distribution list on Mailtrain. We now have 511 active email addresses on the list. Last month we had 506, so we had a net increase of five subscribers this month. Zero people unsubscribed this month.

## **RAL Page Meeting 3/13/24**

On 3/13/24 Eugene Vicknair hosted a meeting with Kerry Cochran, Nicholas Manos and myself to explore improvements to our RAL presence on the internet.

I received the action item to add meta data to attempt to influence how search engine results are returned. By adding code to our web pages we hope to change the snippet that comes back with search results. The existing return (from an incognito) Google search for “run a locomotive” was

About 37,100,000 results (0.35 seconds)

 Western Pacific Railroad Museum  
<https://wplives.org> › ral

### WPRM RAL

Rentals are from mid-April through mid-November (weather permitting) by appointment. A certificate suitable for framing is awarded after every rental. All ...

The link goes back to our RAL web page. It is interesting that the snippet (chosen by the Google algorithms) picked one line out of the bulleted list at the bottom of the existing page:


diesel fleet for inspection, maintenance, or repair. In the event that this is necessary, that particular locomotive will be used for the rental. If none are available, guests will be offered a rental of greater value.

- Specific locomotive requests will be accommodated when possible, substitutions may be necessary.
- Rentals are from mid-April through mid-November (weather permitting) by appointment.
- A certificate suitable for framing is awarded after every rental.
- All persons intending to operate a locomotive under the age of 18 years old must be signed release of liability.

Nick suggested new metadata that would change it to "The WPRM at Portola, California is home to one of the largest museum collections of diesel locomotives in the country. The museum offers seasonal train rides on historic cabooses, cab rides in historic locomotives and even the opportunity to operate a locomotive in our Run a Locomotive (RAL) program."

I added the suggested meta data and requested Google to crawl the web page to update the snippet. Unfortunately, the resulting snippet was truncated and we got:

About 47,100,000 results (0.33 seconds)


 Western Pacific Railroad Museum  
<https://wplives.org> › ral

**WPRM RAL**

The WPRM at Portola, California is home to one of the largest museum collections of diesel **locomotives** in the country. The museum offers seasonal **train ...**

Therefore, Nick reworded the meta data and I added the meta data to both the RAL pages and the home pages for the society. I requested Google to crawl the site again. Google crawled the site at Mar 17, 2024, 12:37:16 PM, and updated the RAL snippet as desired:

About 32,700,000 results (0.39 seconds)

 Western Pacific Railroad Museum  
<https://wplives.org> › ral

**WPRM RAL - Run-A-Locomotive**

YOU can rent and **operate** a vintage diesel **locomotive**. Learn from one of our qualified engineers as you take the controls and have the time of your life.

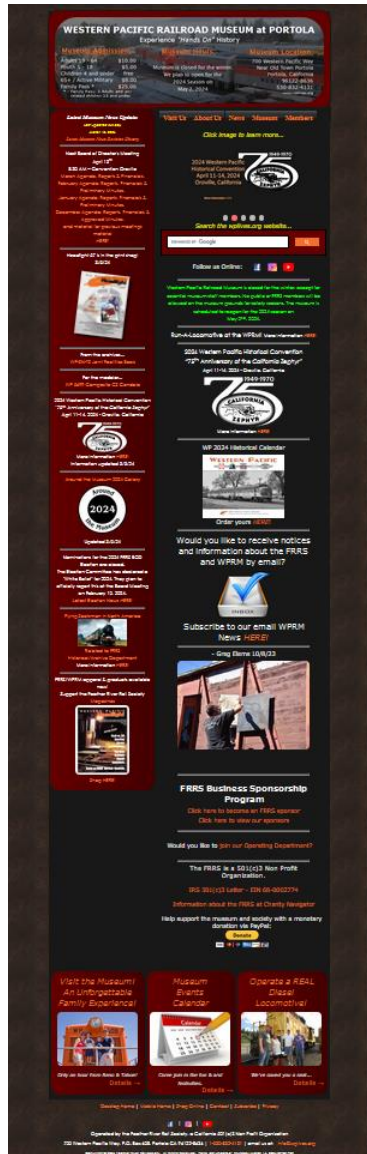
The team also discussed and made suggestions for a new desktop home page. These changes were implemented 3/18/24.

The major change was to move the boxes for “Visit Us” and “RAL” to the top of the page to increase the visibility of them. A new box for “Summer Weekend Train Rides” was added at the top.

The calendar box moved from the bottom of the page to the bottom of the announcements section.

The old and new home page is shown on the next page.

... changed to ...



## Museum Visitor Focused Website

I created a new sub-domain style website focused on the casual visitor to the museum at [museum.wplives.org](http://museum.wplives.org). The idea behind this website is to cater to the first time visitor or someone who wants to know about the museum. The intent is to make visitor information easier to find. Both the main wplives.org website and the [museum.wplives.org](http://museum.wplives.org) sites link to each other to share information and keep everything in sync. This is an outgrowth of the new business 3 item, “2024 Marketing and Promotion Proposals” from the February 2024 FRRS Board Meeting.

Although this website is online, I expect the RAL and Marketing Teams to continue to refine its contents as we move into the 2024 season.

## **General Items**

- 3/8/24 – Posted March BOD meeting preliminary agenda.
- 3/9/24 – Posted March BOD meeting material.
- 3/10/24 – Updated next BOD meeting notice.
- 3/10/24 – Added new “Join the Operating Department” slide to home pages.
- 3/12/24 – Removed “Please note: all issues are \$12 unless indicated otherwise in the table below.” from the [THE WESTERN PACIFIC Headlight](#) web page, no longer true.
- 3/16/24 – Posted PM0042 Crew Training Procedures from Kerry Cochran to [Museum Policies](#) page.
- 3/18/24 – Updated photo on [MP 13878 collection page](#) per request from Kerry Cochran.
- 3/18/24 – Released the new [WPLives.org](#) desktop home page with emphasis on Visit Us, Train Rides and RAL after consensus from the meeting attendees of 3/13/24.
- 3/20/24 – Updated [Crew Roster](#) per email from Kerry Cochran – moved Pat Brimmer and Robbie Campbell to Retired/Inactive section.
- 3/21/25 – Updated [runalocomotive.com](#) to point to the museum.wplives.org RAL page.
- 3/24/24 – Added a photo of WP 805 from Greg Elems to the [Around the Museum 2024 gallery](#).
- 3/24/24 – Updated the convention schedule to R 8 on [2024 Western Pacific Historical Convention](#) news item base on email from Kerry Cochran.
- 3/25/24 – Restored and updated the “Details and Rules” section to the [RAL web page](#).
- 3/29/24 – Replaced old RAL slide with new Classic Trains Marketing Ad 2024 image for rotating slides on home and webcam pages.
- 3/30/24 – Updated wording and layout on [RAL page](#) per email from Nick Manos.
- 3/31/24 – Posted a video from Michael Clawson of one of the new Caltrain eclectic train sets passing the WPRM on the [WPRM Gallery web page](#).
- 4/1/24 – Did the monthly From the archives... and For the modeler... updates.
- 4/1/24 – Posted that *Train Sheet* 200 is in the print shop and had been sent to email subscribers.
- 4/3/24 – Posted *Train Sheet* #196 to [Train Sheet Archive](#) and updated [Train Sheet Master Index](#)
- 4/3~9/24 – Made almost daily updates to the [convention information](#) news item including the banquet speaker, Revisions 10~12 of timetable and announced day passes.
- 4/8~10/24 – The website system has a weekly automatic audit of the website for consistency, broken links, spelling errors, etc. Because of all the new material added in the last month and the changes to the site architecture, the audit tool needed be updated and some inconsistencies identified needed to be addressed. It is not quite 100% passing yet, so I am continuing to resolve the issues identified.
  
- various – Updated [Operating Department Crew Roster](#) as members completed and passed rules exam for 2024.