

New Website Service Provider

*- Paul Finnegan
FRRS Webmaster*

For a long time (since mid 2008), the FRRS has used Hostmonster as the website service provider. I became the FRRS webmaster in fall of 2015. Over the past five years, the paradigm of the society's website has changed from a static, desktop centric website to a custom, mobile friendly, interactive, highly-automated website with significant data-management capabilities.

Although the services promised by Hostmonster are capable of supporting this expanded paradigm, the actual service provided has proven to fall short. In the past 11 months, we have had four serious (multi-day) and two minor service interruptions due to Hostmonster's negligence and/or lack of expertise. In addition to the actual service interruptions, some of Hostmonster's environment required me to implement strange coding/design/deployment methods to function on their systems.

For several years, Kenneth Finnegan has encouraged me to abandon Hostmonster and move the web service to a dedicated server. Kenneth's suggestion was not to go to a new hosting provider, but rather rent a virtual server at a data center and administer the system ourselves. I was reluctant to pursue this kind of solution because I thought the support services provided by a hosting company would outweigh the advantages of going stand-alone. I did not want to just change the host service vendor either, since the reviews I kept reading said they are all bad once you stop using the very simple, basic, click and drag created websites. Thus, the devil we knew might be better than the unknown devil of a different provider.

Hostmonster's service over the past year has convinced me I was wrong and we began to explore replacing Hostmonster.

The Signal Department made a presentation to the FRRS Board of Directors to move the web hosting from Hostmonster to a dedicated Linux

virtual machine hosted in Kenneth's personal hosting company, PhirePhly Design. We have super-user (root) access to the virtual machine and now administer the entire system ourselves. This eliminates the dependence on the provider's sys-admin group for fixing problems or making system level changes for the website. It also insulates us from unexpected system updates, inconvenient scheduled downtimes and other system events that we had no control or influence over while using Hostmonster. The FRRS Board approved the proposal.

On Saturday, September 26th Kenneth and I completed the move from Hostmonster to our new server on Kenneth's PhirePhly Design network located at Hurricane Electric's FMT2 data center in Fremont, California. The website, the wplives.org email system, and our sub-domains are now fully under our control.

PhirePhly Design is hosting the virtual machine gratis, thus saving the society the cost of web hosting every month. We plan to move the DNS hosting from Hostmonster and NameSecure to Google Domains and Cloudflare in the near future, providing additional cost savings due to their lower cost. The end user of the website should not notice anything different, except improved performance and reliability.

FRRS/WPRM Updated Equipment Roster September 2020

*- Steve Habeck
FRRS Yardmaster*

Following the completion of the WPRM Yard switching/rearrangement during the summer of 2020, I created track lists of all tracks and all equipment (on flanged wheels, and on the rail) at the WPRM.

The total number of pieces of equipment on this list is 157, and they have all been verified to be on the property by physical inspection. My list is available on the Collection page on wplives.org (Museum -> Museum Rolling Stock pull-down menu). Please contact me for any comments, questions, or clarifications, including the master track lists.