

Why the Western Pacific Railroad Historical Society name is being retired by the Feather River Rail Society

In 2010 the FRRS approached Harvard Business School Association of Northern California to get assistance on improving visitorship and business practices.

The FRRS was very pleased that HBSA/NC performed this assessment without charge to the society.

Project Background



The Feather River Rail Society (FRRS) approached HBSA/NC Community Partners on behalf of the Western Pacific Railroad Museum (WPRM), seeking assistance with increased visitorship, bringing more revenue to the community and the Society, and other assistance, with the ultimate goal of successfully establishing ongoing relationships with local government and business entities leading to financial, promotional and other forms of aid.

Our project team has analyzed how to increase visitorship at the museum, looking at the WPRM, its facilities, shop, display of Western Pacific and other rolling stock and its position as a tourist and educational attraction in the greater Reno and Truckee/Lake Tahoe areas.

We have made recommendations in three distinct areas: Museum specific; tourism development in the Truckee/Lake Tahoe areas; and educational promotion in the Reno area.

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One of the major areas that HBSA/NC looked at was the “Branding”, or name recognition of the FRRS, WPRRHS, Portola Railroad Museum and the Western Pacific Railroad Museum along with the public presentation of the WEB pages.

Western Pacific Railroad Museum – Branding Identity & Consistency



There are too many different logos & identities used for and within the museum – examples:



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Western Pacific Railroad Museum – Branding Identity & Consistency (cont'd)



- Different logos are appropriate ONLY for rolling stock & locomotives that depict the era-specific WP logo representing its build time period
- For maximum brand identity, the same logo should be used consistently in all marketing, advertising, signage, etc. for the WPRM, in order to build greater brand recognition

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Western Pacific Railroad Museum – Online Shopping



- Combining two websites that come up from a simple search and why this can enhance customer satisfaction:
<http://www.wprrhs.org/> Western Pacific Railroad Historical Society
<http://www.wplives.org/visitthewprm.html> Western Pacific Railroad Museum
- The role of the webmaster in effecting change:
 - Tom Carter as an important asset for WPRM and the website.

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Education – Reno Area (cont'd)



- www.nationalrmmuseum.org/en-Us/education/teacher_resources/default.aspx, and the National Automobile Museum's "On Your Mark" lesson plan on the 1908 New York to Paris Automobile Race (the winning car is an exhibit at the museum) -<http://www.automuseum.org/education.html>.
- The WP Historical Society serves a significant role in WPRM's educational mission by archiving important WP documents. Must WPRM (i.e., FRRS) and WPRRHS remain separate organizations?

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When this was presented to the FRRS Board of Directors, it was discussed over several meetings and the decision was made to begin implementation of these recommendations.

One of the changes that was very visible to the public was the discontinuance of the public use of the name Western Pacific Historical Society (WPRRHS) name, now referring to it as the Historical/Archive Department of the FRRS. Historical memberships had been discontinued in November 2002.

This naming change may not have been communicated very well to all the membership of the organizations and unfortunately lead to some feeling left out, not important or just frustrated with the FRRS.

During the last few years the FRRS has been very fortunate in receiving several donations of historical documents, photographs, slides, negatives and other materials related to the Western Pacific Railroad.

While all of this material is being cared for and cataloged, it will take significant time to accomplish these tasks.

A statement in the Headlight issue # 10, then FRRS Director and the original Headlight Editor, John Ryczkowski stated:

“Just to clear up any confusion about the WP Historical Society, it is not any new group, but that the FRRS is now the official organization to disseminate info on the Western Pacific, and the FRRS is the WP Historical Society”

I would like to let all the members know this direction has not been lost, the Board of Directors is committed on preserving and sharing the archives of the Western Pacific Railroad.

**Kerry Cochran
General Superintendent**