

Museum Managers Report 6 June 2004

- 1) My compliments to everyone for a successful opening weekend. Visitors were steady and seemed to enjoy themselves. Most everything went smoothly, nothing was broken, nobody got hurt and we grossed \$4,200 for the weekend. I consider this to be a great start to the Operating Season.
- 2) With the beginning of the Operating Season, we again find ourselves short of space. The FRRS has been very good at acquiring things over the years. Sadly, we don't have room for all of it. Anytime someone wants to work in a given area, they have to move someone else's project out of the way. Anytime someone wants to store something in a given area, they find something else is already there. To move one car, fifteen other cars and locomotives have to be moved. If you want to use a piece of equipment or tools, you find other people wanting to use that same equipment or tools. Everyone would like to have more room for their department, projects and storage. There simply is not enough room for everyone-all the time. This is just a simple fact of life around here that we have to deal with. As the leaders of this organization, we have to set the example of sharing what little space we have. None of us have the luxury of hoarding tools, equipment or space. Therefore, it is incumbent on all of us to manage our departments in such a way that we do not interfere or interrupt the ability of the other departments to get their work done. We do not have the luxury of having half a dozen projects spread all over the place in each department. With our limited space and resources, each department needs to concentrate their efforts on one project at a time. Get this one done then move to the next one and get that done so material, tools and space can be relinquished over to other people that need it also.

I have been trying my best to manage the shop in your absence. I have worked to improve the common areas that everyone needs to use, like the office and the tool room. I have cleaned up the messes that you don't have the time or inclination to clean up yourselves. I am not trying, nor am I interested in running your departments. I try to safeguard and protect them as much as I can. I am simply trying to help all of you be more productive in your departments. But I need more information, direction and cooperation from all of you. More importantly, all of you need to continue to improve your communication and cooperation with each other in this regard.

- 3) Many of you are working more than ever in your regular employment. The UP is running crews ragged, some of you are overloaded at work or you have family obligations that are putting increasing demands on your time. This is understandable and perfectly acceptable. We all understand this.

However, it occurs to me that some departments are suffering as a result of this. I'm not faulting anyone for this. But, it seems to me that all of us need extra help. And God forbid, what would happen to your department and this museum if you were incapacitated or suddenly died? Who would take over your department? Who is the number Two person in your department? Who would we appoint to take over if you could no longer fill the position?

A good management strategy is to develop and raise people up in your department who can take over in an emergency. At the very least, these people can help take the load off of you. Everyone claims they need more help. One way to get more help is to develop more leaders and assistants in your department. You will have to relinquish some of your control, passing some of it over to people who you trust to follow your directions and work well with the other departments and the museum for everyone's overall benefit.

Promoting someone within your department encourages growth in your department. Give someone a title, or a position and it encourages him or her to do more and take on greater responsibility.

- 4) Please find Income Summary for the first five months attached.

- 5) Safety. No reportable accidents. New safety sign installed on ticket office next to sidewalk. I think I need to spread a few more of these around. Surplus road base from sidewalk project spread over rails on west end and track four to cut back on tripping hazards. Lots of debris picked up off the ground, at least one 55-gallon drum each week. More work needed in this area.
- 6) Speaking of space problems: The MKT boxcar is being used for furniture and appliance storage. If you need good tables or chairs, this is the place to get them. The UP boxcar, The "Party Car" has been cleaned out somewhat and will have shelves installed for better storage of smaller items. The WP 20807 boxcar located on the east end of Rip One is being cleaned out of old furniture, old wood and garbage that apparently was being stored by Hap Mani. I checked with Norm and Kerry Cochran and both agree that there is little or nothing in the car worth saving. I threw out some eight chairs from the Tidewater Southern boxcar on Rip Three. There are various engines and engine parts in this car that we need to determine if we need to keep them. The Transco boxcar WP 19901 on the east end has stuff from the Old Hospital stored in one side of the car. The other side has Plumas County Chamber of Commerce booths that I would like to throw away. The booths have not been used in years and we need the space. Will continue digging through boxcars to find usable storage space. The next victim will probably be the lumber storage car on Rip Four near the train-viewing platform. If we clean that out then we will have a place to store all the good wood that we are getting from Sierra Pacific.
- 7) Now that the weather has stabilized enough to ensure warm weather in the evenings, I plan to start an ambitious painting program around the building.
- 8) We were invited to look over a museum management newsletter, The NONPROFIT BOARD REPORT. Please look over the copy provided and decide if we want to subscribe to this. The cost is \$249.00 for five copies monthly delivered to the museum.
- 9) Advertising. Several bogus invoices coming in for telephone directory advertising, which we did not order. Steve and I are catching these and throwing them out as we get them. RAL's are down a bit; I would consider a newspaper ad in the Reno and Truckee/Tahoe newspapers.

The construction of the new traffic light will probably benefit us in the long run as we will finally be able to give better phone directions to people trying to find the turnoff for the south side of town. I will talk with the Portola Merchants Association and the City of Portola about better signage in this area as the whole south side of Portola suffers from the poor signage there. I am also investigating the possibility of painting the railroad tracks in the street again that will lead people directly to the museum. Supposedly, the templates are still available.

- 10) Gift Shop: Sales are pretty good. But I wish they were even better. We are doing well on weekends but some days during the week are real slow. I had hoped to increase sales with placement of ad's in the Trainsheet and start using the website but that has not worked out yet. Hopefully, the donation of the digital camera and new efforts with both the newsletter and website will increase our sales.
- 11) Actively working on a museum guidebook for visitors. I have several previous versions, which I am working with, and plan to have something available in week or so. I plan to start small, four to eight pages, and then build it up with pictures and more information that we can sell in the gift shop.
- 12) The Plumas County Visitors Bureau has drafted up a new version of their brochure "Plumas County's Seven Wonders of the Railroad World". As presented to you here, the cost to print these would be \$450 for 3000 or \$549 for 5000. They are asking if we want to contribute to the cost of the printing. As you can see the brochure does advertise the museum. I think we should.

13) Donations: I traveled to Chester to pick up several boxes of items from the estate of George Caldwell who was an early member and volunteer here at the museum. We also received a box of early financial records from the building of the WP from Carl Rodolph of the NRHS.

On the trip to Chester, I dropped off museum brochures at three museums and four visitor centers around Lake Almanor.

14) While I believe that most of the organization is solidly behind our work here at the museum and in the organization, I still receive an occasional comment that the revised Bylaws still are not available as was promised some time ago. I don't think that more than a handful of people really care about it but I think it is a bit of housekeeping that needs to be taken care of. I would recommend that a minimal amount of copies be prepared and distributed only as they are requested so save the expense of mailing them to every member.

Respectfully Submitted

John Walker
Museum Manager

LATE NOTE: YOU WILL FIND AREAS ON THE GROUND THAT ARE OUTLINED WITH PAINT AND LITTLE FLAGS. THESE ARE WHERE THE ENVIRONMENTAL PEOPLE WILL BE DIGGING NEW MONITORING WELLS. THEY ARE SATISFIED THAT THE OTHER FOUR WELLS ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE BUILDING ARE OK.