



## The “Little Red Caboose” Project

Restoration Plan for  
Central California Traction Caboose #24



A Project by the all volunteer Feather River Rail Society, a California 501c3 Non Profit Organization, for the Western Pacific Railroad Museum in Portola, California, where the WP Lives!

## Introduction to CCT 24



In 1964, the Central California Traction Company of Stockton found itself in need of a pair of cabooses to replace their wooden car fleet, which were worn out and no longer met the requirements of California PUC General Order #114 for caboose safety standards. Western Pacific, Southern Pacific and Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe were each 1/3 owners of the CCT, so, naturally, CCT went to their parent roads for assistance in finding a pair of suitable cabooses. SP offered up a wooden car, however, ATSF offered two steel end cupola cars at a bargain price of \$6,500 each. ATSF #1547, constructed by American Car & Foundry Co. in 1927 became Central California Traction #24 on April 26, 1965. Initially painted in an economy paint job of aluminum silver with black "C.C.T. 24" markings, a scheme it wore from 1966 to 1972, #24 was given a coat of solid red paint in August of 1972. For many years, CCT 24 carried the rear markers on freight trains between Stockton and Sacramento, often in the company of Alco S-4 CCT #50, the former Western Pacific #563, preserved at the WPRM.

In 1978, the Traction Company rebuilt their fleet of 3 cabooses with new windows, desks, toilets & flooring, along with newer oil fired stoves, replacing the old coal burning units. CCT 24 was repainted in the scheme it wears today; red & white with large sheet metal, historic, CCT quatrefoil emblems in a scheme that matched their locomotives. CCT #24 continued to work almost daily, between Stockton & Sacramento until 1998, when the line between Lodi and Sacramento was taken out of service. Shortly after the last run to Sacramento in June of 1998, Pacific Coast Producers moved their Lodi Cannery across town to Lodi Junction on the CCT, thereby eliminating the need for the street running down busy Lodi Avenue. With the elimination of street running in Lodi, the need for cabooses on the CCT was now over and #24 was parked inside the Stockton carbarn for a long rest, its future uncertain.

In 2005, FRRS members inquired about the status of CCT 24 with Dave Buccolo, CCT General Manager, for potential preservation at the Western Pacific Railroad Museum. Mr. Buccolo needed a caboose that he could turn into a rolling classroom for the "Transcaer" hazmat training that he conducts around the country. Realizing the historical significance of this caboose and the fact that #24 was complete inside from its last revenue trip, Dave offered to trade CCT 24 for a caboose in our collection that had no relevance to the WPRM.



On May 15, 2008, UP Engineer and FRRS member David Stanley, himself a former CCT trainman and company historian and co-author of "The Central California Traction Company", the definitive history of the CCT, found himself behind the throttle of the "Roseville-Stockton Turn", and what just happens to show up as the rear car in his 111 car train? CCT 24, for one last run with an old friend. CCT 24 arrived at the museum the next morning, where she now enjoys her retirement, as a fully functioning display of railroading's "glory years."

## CCT 24 – Portola’s “Little Red Caboose”



The Western Pacific Railroad Museum is very well known for having one of the largest collections of preserved cabooses of any museum in North America. Several types of cabooses, from wooden bay window cars to modern steel cupola and bay window designs call our museum home, and several of those, in service on weekends, hauling happy children around the museum grounds in “caboose train” service. CCT #24 however, being as complete inside as it is, is slated to become a regular display exhibit, showing our guests how a short-line caboose functioned in its day to day service life. Currently, #24 wears its 1978 coat of red paint with white lettering and chevrons. Its logos are faded and plexiglass windows are crazed and faded, making them impossible to see out of. However, it’s red paint and end cupola design has become the popular stereotypical image of what the “classic red caboose” looks like in the imaginations of the general public, thanks to countless children’s books, movies and culture. It is for these reasons, that the Feather River Rail Society proposes to restore CCT #24 to its in service appearance for the enjoyment of members and visitors alike, while adding yet another regular museum exhibit to the Western Pacific Railroad Museum.

## CCT 24 – Restoration Overview

Restoration of Central California Traction caboose #24 is being proposed in five phases to facilitate successful fundraising and volunteer utilization for the 2014 Museum Operating season. These phases are outlined as follows: (UPDATE – fundraising for phase one has already been secured as of the date of this overview thanks to a generous \$500 donation from a recently deceased member’s estate.)



## Phase 1:

### Interior cleaning & preparation

- Thorough Interior Cleaning
- Remove old linoleum flooring
- Paint original wood floor with non-skid “porch & floor enamel” paint
- Clean & paint wooden bunk & desk surfaces

**Fundraising goal for Phase 1 = \$500.00**

**Target for fundraising completion = ~~March 2014~~ (COMPLETED)**

**Target for work completion = March 2014**



## Phase 2:

### Windows & Doors

- Window Frame Replacement (wood work)
- Window Glass Replacement

CCT 24's windows are made of plexiglass, presumably replacing glass when rebuilt by the CCT in 1978. Plexiglass was likely chosen due to it being shatterproof (as CCT runs through East Stockton, shatterproof windows were desirable). The problem with plexiglass is that it eventually “crazes” (scratches) and looks “cheap” and isn't conducive to being kept outdoors at the museum, whereas #24 enjoyed the warmth and cover of being stored in a carbarn throughout most of its service life. Therefore, it is recommended that we replace the windows with tempered safety glass at a cost equal to or less than equivalent plexiglass for durability and appearance. The window frames are made of wood and would be a simple project in the WPRM wood shop.



**Fundraising goal for Phase 2 = \$1,000.00**

**Target for fundraising completion = May 2014**

**Target for work completion = June 2014**

## \*Phase 3:

### Air Brake Work

CCT 24 currently has an “ABD” type air brake valve. While this is not an issue, and in fact rode in 2 mainline Union Pacific trains to come to the museum for retirement, being that #24 is a rolling exhibit, it must be maintained to current mechanical standards if we intend to take it on the road to future off site events with the WPRM exhibit road train. We currently have newer style “ABDW” brake valves; however, they must be rebuilt by a qualified air brake shop and a “COT&S” (Clean, Oil, Tested, & Stencil) certification made by a qualified mechanical department employee. We feel that we can get the COT&S performed gratis from various Car Department friends of the museum; however, the main expense will be the brake valve rebuild. This work is discretionary, and though it is recommended, can be performed at any time during the cars restoration.

**Fundraising goal for Phase 3 = \$1,500.00**

**Target for fundraising completion = TBD**

**Target for work completion = TBD**





## Phase 4:

### Paint & Finish

- Paint Exterior
- Lettering
- Replace sheet metal emblems

As complete as CCT 24 is, the direst need in its restoration is the exterior; paint and lettering. The good news is that it is simply “red”. Not a particular shade of red, just “DuPont Red”. It is believed that we could make a bulk buy of red paint to paint WP 483, MP 13878 & CCT 24 with the same batch, as these cars are all “DuPont Red”. Trucks will require a coat of black paint, and safety appliances (end railings, hand holds and top and side railings) will require white paint. Lettering will be reflective vinyl, as that is what CCT used when they rebuilt 24 in 1978. Emblems will require reflective red and white vinyl as well.

As of November 2013, we have on hand, approximately \$3500 in a restricted account that I would rather use as a “matching fundraising” type of program, using that money as “seed” for the remaining balance necessary to complete Phase 4.

**Fundraising goal for Phase 4 = \$7,500.00 (approximately \$3500 on hand in restricted CCT24 account)**

**Target for fundraising completion = December 2014**

**Target for work completion = April 2015**



## Phase 5:

### Signage & Details

- Interior/Exterior Exhibit Signage
- Donor recognition area inside car
- Add mannequins, paperwork & other associated details to reconstruct a secure, interactive exhibit of daily service with CCT 24
- Interior lighting

CCT #24 came to the museum in a very complete condition with all of its paperwork (timetable special instructions, wheel reports, manifests, etc.) from the last revenue train it worked. There were also several “romance novels” and other miscellaneous personal items from the crew of the CCT’s “Lodi Local” that were left behind. These items will be displayed in place under protective “plexiglass” cover on the various desks and bunks of the car, combined with mannequins in period railroad attire to simulate a “working day in the service life of CCT #24).

**Fundraising goal for Phase 4 = \$7,500.00 (approximately \$3500 on hand in restricted CCT24 account)**

**Target for fundraising completion = December 2014**

**Target for work completion = April 2015**



## CCT 24 – Conclusion

Currently, Central California Traction Company uses CCT #24 stable mate #1790, a rare EMD GP-18 daily, for the “Lodi Local”. The FRRS has conversed with CCT management regarding the possibility of preserving 1790 at the Western Pacific Railroad Museum once its service to CCT concludes. At this time, 1790’s service life for daily use is coming close to an end. It is of the opinion of President McClure and I that if we want to have any chance at securing the donation of 1790, an immaculately maintained locomotive, that it is imperative that we show some serious efforts to restore #24. The decision to donate the locomotive lies with an operating committee of BNSF & Union Pacific officials and to be able to show them a pristine example of their previous donation will go a long way towards making that happen.

Western Pacific Railroad Museum is well known by its fans and guests for having one of the most comprehensive collections of cabooses in the country. Unfortunately, the WPRM, despite its large collection, does not have much in the way of actual exhibits for the enjoyment of our guests; exhibits that guests would reasonably come to expect from any entity referring to itself as a “museum”. This restoration, in addition to hopefully helping preserve the locomotive that hauled it, will improve our guests experience, hopefully encourage other members to create more interactive exhibits for public enjoyment, will be a shining example of a “classic red caboose” that we can take to offsite events, and the CCT being a WP subsidiary short line, will go a long way towards telling the story of the “Western Pacific” railroad’s legacy.

