

FEATHER RIVER RAIL SOCIETY

DATE: September 2018
ITEM: Old Business 2
FROM: Eugene Vicknair

HIGHWAY 395 BILLBOARD

Bart Hansen's family owns land adjacent to Highway 395 in Doyle. The foundation posts for a billboard are on the property and it is zoned for a billboard. His family has offered that we could build a billboard frame and display a billboard at this location, which would face southbound 395 (heading toward the Highway 70 junction. There would be no monthly cost.

I reviewed the costs and numbers with the Board last October, but below is an updated report as requested.

This location is south of Susanville and funnels all the traffic coming from north of Susanville heading to Reno. According to a Department of Transportation traffic census in 2016 (latest dates available) the average daily traffic volume southbound at this location during peak season is about 7,500 per day. Peak hour traffic is about 800 cars.

In talking to Bart last year, we discussed an idea for a billboard with a size around 16' X 8' to 20' X 7' using a reinforced pressure treated wooden frame with outdoor plywood facing. Cost for the frame materials would be around \$1,600 if we purchased everything, including reinforcement parts, paint, etc. Cost to print banners and have them reinforced and prepped for hanging would be around \$450 per banner. We would also need to rent 1 or 2 boom lifts or bucket trucks for a couple of days for some framework and to hang the banner. Depending on how we construct the frame, a small crane (if our Little Giant is road worthy, this would be perfect) may be needed. Estimated total cost would be around \$3,200 to \$3,800 with volunteer per diems during the construction, etc.

The sizes proposed above are different from typical billboards, being between what the industry calls a Poster (about 24' X 12') and a Junior Poster (about 12' X 6'). The full size billboard is referred to as a Bulletin and typically measures between 36' and 48' wide and 10' to 14' tall. Building a larger frame would be possible, but cost would be higher for construction and printing. The sizes recommended above, about 130 to 140 square feet, were chosen to make most cost effective use of easily available materials (lumber, plywood, etc.).

In further reviewing the concept recently, the idea of a larger billboard was explored more fully. Larger billboard will allow for larger text. The larger the text size, the longer it is in view clearly to drivers. (For example, 3 ft high text can be seen for about 4 seconds, 4 ft high for about 5 seconds, at 60 MPH speed.) If we were to expand the billboard size up to 24' X 12' for greater visibility, the estimated material cost for the frame would be about \$3,600, with the banners costing about \$1,100 each. That would place the entire project cost at about \$7,400 to \$7,800.

For reference, I found a couple companies selling used metal billboard frames sized 24' X 12'. Their listed cost was \$12,000 plus shipping to site. Assembly and placement would be out responsibility.

Also to be considered is that there is a \$300 outdoor display permit required by the State of California, which costs \$100 annually to renew. I have not received any code or building rules on billboards for Lassen County, yet, but I expect there will at least be a building inspection required.

The lack of a monthly cost makes this option very attractive. For an upfront cost, we would have a long term display on a moderate traffic corridor. We could even create 4 or 5 banners and swap them out during the year fairly easily (General Museum, RAL, Pumpkin Trains, Santa Trains, Railroad Days, etc.).