

To: FRRS Board of Directors
From: Paul Finnegan, Webmaster
Re: Museum Web Page
Date: December 10, 2019

Hostmonster Change

On the evening of Thursday November 21st, our web hosting service, Hostmonster, moved our website from host257 to host2056, without prior (or any) notification. This change had significant, and immediate, impact to our website. I discovered the change when on Friday morning I failed to get the daily report email to the webmaster. I was unable to log into (using SSH) the wpliveso@wplives.org account. I quickly realized what had happened due to some other breadcrumbs the move had left along the way.

The immediate impact was the webcams were down and many of the cgi-scripts that allow users to signup for crew or sleeper reservations (along with many other things) were broken. The immediate issue required that SSH access be restored since that is how I maintain the website and is fundamental to the webcams. Kenneth Finnegan happened to be at my house to use my woodshop on Friday, the two of us working together were able to restore SSH and put enough hacks in place to restore the website on Friday. It took us 6 hours of work.

After the website was functional, I began the long process of recoding all of our web pages, tools and scripts so that if Hostmonster does this again, the only thing that should break will be the webcams. If the web-server host is changed, to maintain security, you must update the SSH keys. This cannot be done until the new host is online. It took me until Tuesday November 26th to complete all the audits, tests and fixes. In addition to the 6 hours the previous Friday, I spent another 20 hours of work to restore the website.

While I was traveling over the Thanksgiving Holiday weekend, Eugene sent me an email pointing out that the admission information was missing from the 2019 Santa Trains web page. It was a very simple edit to fix, but since I was not at home, I had to make the edit on the server at Hostmonster. I was unable to use the usual automated release tool and had to release the updates manually. (I normally do this on the web development system I have at home and thus had not tried to use the tool at Hostmonster since the host change.) When I got home and did more debugging, I found another side effect of the host change, the UNIX tool aspell was broken on the new host. I opened a ticket (#185685336) with Hostmonster asking them to properly install the tool so the FRRS automated web page release system will work properly. By Wednesday 12/4, it was still broken so I contacted Hostmonster again. It had not been addressed; I got to the third tier support and finally got someone to look at it. They agreed the tool was not properly configured. It finally got fixed mid-day Thursday.

To the best of my knowledge the website is fully functional again. If anyone sees a problem please bring it to my attention.

General Items

- 11/6/19 – Posted *Train Sheet* September/October 2018 to [Train Sheet Archive webpage](#).
- 11/7/19 – Posted Santa Train notice on home page.
- 11/8/19 – Posted November Board Meeting material to [Minutes & Reports web page](#).
- 11/11/19 – Per Eugene Vicknair's instructions, removed 2020 WP Historic Calendar order information from home page, then restored them and changed end date to 11/17.
- 11/12/19 – Added six photos about Santa Train preparation from Greg Elems to [Around the Museum 2019 gallery](#).
- 11/17/19 – Per Eugene's request, extended WP Historic Calendar offer to 11/20.

- 11/17/19 – Posted approved and preliminary Board Meeting Minutes to [Minutes & Reports web page](#).
- 11/17/19 – Eugene Vicknair renewed wplive.org domain name registration for five years.
- 11/18/19 – Eugene Vicknair renewed Hostmonster web hosting account for one year.
- 11/19~20/19 – Developed [2020 Convention web page](#) working with Kerry Cochran and Eugene Vicknair.
- 11/27/19 – Added Covention Banquet menu to [2020 Convention web page](#).
- 11/29/19 – Added admission to [2019 Santa Trains news item](#) after Eugene Vicknair pointed out it was missing.
- 12/6/19 – Added a pre-Santa Trains photo from Greg Elems to the [Around the Museum 2019 gallery](#).
- 12/10/19 – December Preliminary Agenda posted to [Minutes & Reports web page](#).