

Vice-President/Director report
September 2020

This last month has been quite inhospitable around the Museum. We have dealt with excessive heat, and now heavy smoke. Add in an unwelcome visit by a transient, and another round of vandalism by the locals (generating our 3rd sheriff's report this year), and things are getting damaged faster than we can fix them. We have had ties placed on the track on the balloon, switches opened and left floating, break-ins on the sleeper and shower car, attempted jump-starting of the Ford pickup, successful jump-starting and joy-riding on the Kluge (while towing the water buffalo, full of 600 gallons of water), and Charliegate being found open on several occasions. We have secured the facilities as best we can, such that the only way to get into the sleeper now is to cut the Clover Plot away from it, so the vestibule can be accessed; the lock and hasp on the east door still needs to be replaced. A shim of wood has been placed on the window frame of the south door to the shower car, making it harder to open the window through the punched-out screen and unlock the door. Little things have been set to tip us off if someone is snooping around the deck, shower car, and sleeper; we check these things almost daily. So far, no issues in the past two weeks.

The strong winds last Tuesday that caused such chaos in the lower canyon of the Middle Fork of the Feather River also moved the west webcam down again; we will work on getting it readjusted soon.

Our Directors and Officers (D&O) insurance policy has been renewed effective 8/28/2020, and the first installment on the premium has been paid.

The 3000 gallons of diesel fuel I ordered two weeks ago will finally be delivered next Tuesday, 9/15. The fuel jobbers have been quite busy keeping all the fire apparatus fueled. David Elems has obtained a fuel stabilizing product that we will be adding to the fuel car's contents. This product promises several benefits to our equipment by its use.

I have been trying to keep up with the answering machines in the WP Store, but the main WPRM line (4131) has been out almost all of the time lately due to the heat, and what few messages were on it were hang-ups. There are a couple of messages on the RAL line that I will attempt to decipher and respond to, if necessary. Our friend who wants to know why we're not open because "this COVID stuff is bullshit" has left us another couple of messages, too.

Back in May, I started the process of listing all of our rolling stock in the yard, in preparation for rearranging the Museum yard to accomplish several objectives. I have logged 36 hours, over a two week period, walking the Museum yard tracks, figuring distances, making lists of tracks at the start, and how I intended things to wind up. The objectives were to address several security concerns with our equipment; gather the "problem children" in the collection in the Rip tracks, where access by the public can be restricted due to equipment hazards and unsafe conditions; improve some of the sight lines around the Museum for the benefit of the visitors; improve access to cars and

equipment used by the Museum staff for maintenance and repair, and address some fire protection concerns, primarily with the wooden equipment in the yard. I feel we have addressed these concerns with what we have accomplished. There are 18 conductor reports that have been generated between 5/20/2020 and 8/29/2020 that document 82.5 hours of switching completed in this process. This work was accomplished by Greg Elems, David Elems, Ethan Doty, Loren Ross, and myself. This time frame also includes a two-week hiatus from switching to address some emergent track issues that came up. I have complete track lists that show the location of every one of the 157 pieces of equipment on the rail at the WPRM, and I have used these lists to generate the attached equipment roster. I am not aware of any recently-compiled comprehensive equipment lists or rosters, which is why I generated this one. Please feel free to contact me with any questions, comments, corrections, or clarifications regarding this roster.

Now that the yard rearrangement is completed, I have started working with David Elems on restoring the power and lighting on the Rip tracks. This is a big part of our plan to improve security and monitor activity in this area, as well as provide power for work on the Rip tracks. There are 5 light poles between Rip 1 and Rip 2, and I have designated them 1 through 5, from east to west. Pole 1 has already had LED's installed in its 2 light fixtures, and I have almost completed work on the power outlets on poles 1 through 4, ensuring the outlets are in good shape (most have had to be replaced), are wired correctly, properly grounded, and have weatherproof covers. Pole 5, adjacent to the battery house, has a host of issues that require further investigation. These poles are fed from a 30-amp breaker in the shop, which feeds a fused disconnect box (with 30-amp screw-in fuses) on pole 4. From this disconnect box, it appears one feed goes underground and east to poles 1, 2, and 3, and a second feed goes underground and west to pole 5 (and, most likely, the former location of pole 6, which was short-sightedly cut down in the early years of the FRRS). We suspect the problems with pole 5 have a lot to do with the remnants of the feed to pole 6.

I am aware that there are many ideas out there to improve our visitor counts, and our income, once we reopen. My two cents' worth is this: the best way to boost RAL sales is to have a larger selection of locomotives available. To do this will require a large investment in money and manpower to get the RAL fleet built back up. Once the RAL program is off life support, the visitor counts will rise accordingly. Upgrades to the WP Store may help, but the RAL program is where we should focus the help. We may also want to look at going to a 4 day week throughout the season; I would like to look at our daily summaries for the last 2 or 3 years and see how many days being open has cost us money (payroll, lights, fans, etc.) I know there are many days that this has happened; I would like to go through the dailies and see if any days stick out as not worth our effort. At first blush, I would suspect Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, in general, are the slower days (but not always, I know). Just my thoughts on this.

Steve Habeck
PT/VP/YDM