

Vice-President/Director Report November 2020

It has been a period of change and adaptation at the Museum. Last week, our Indian summer abruptly changed to winter, with a 20-degree drop in temperatures and the first snow of the season, causing a change from shirt sleeves to warm jackets. Also, after a summer of relatively stable conditions with the coronavirus in Plumas County, the positive case count has taken off, with 36 positive cases this week alone, putting the county's total near 120 cases. Not much for more-populated areas, but significant for us up here. We still have to maintain locked gates and property security, as people continue to show up at the gate almost daily, even though we would now be closed for the season in a normal year.

Phil Schmierer and Dave Roth have spent a lot of time at the Museum (Phil is still here) cleaning up the log/refuse pile created last summer, and falling more trees and clearing more brush on the property (you may have seen some of the photos of the work being done). Ethan Doty has also been busy cleaning up behind Phil, and whacking weeds all over the property. The importance of this work was brought home around Halloween when a fire started in the trees just south of UP's West Portola siding switch (about 1/4 mile west of our balloon). It was quickly controlled by a significant fire response by several area fire agencies, assisted by the fact there was no wind at the time. Had the usual west wind been blowing, it may have been a problem for us.

I have received a notice from Travelers Insurance (our property insurance) that we can expect a 25% increase in our premium for 2021. This is most likely due to the payout they made for our caboose fire in February. Also, our electric utility, Liberty Utilities, is changing its name to simply Liberty, with a new logo and new emphasis on going green policies. We'll see how this affects us as time goes on. Led by David Elems, we are continuing to upgrade to LED lighting in most of our facilities.

Work continues on the locomotive fleet; we need to continue emphasis on this to get the RAL program off life support. The RAL program will not help us unless we can get more variety and reliability in the program next season. Along these lines, I have ordered another 2 barrels of diesel engine lube oil, at David Elems' request, as work continues on SP 2873.

I also have some items to be discussed in closed session, as per the agenda.

Steve Habeck
PT/VP