

FRRS Advocacy

By Eugene Vicknair

With the recent, high-profile announcements of the Western Railway Museum trade, the acquisition of WP GP7 705, the trade with the Santa Maria Valley RR Historical Society for SN 2126 and the big events of Portola and Truckee RR Days and Railfan Day, I have been seeing members growing more energized about events at the museum and asking more questions such as when will *X* be restored or are we considering acquiring *this thing*. The next comment often seems to be “I wish I lived closer so I can do something”.

I wish more people lived closer as well. I wish I did sometimes. I live in the South Bay, in Santa Clara to be precise, and make the drive (or flight via Reno) one sometimes two times a month. But, by the same token, living away from the museum does not mean that one cannot still help. It is possible to be an advocate for projects or programs and not even come to the museum.

Personal advocacy is one of the most important aspects of getting something done in a volunteer organization. And this advocacy can take many forms. More extreme examples can include taking on all aspects of overseeing fundraising and restoration of an item, as has been done with the Silver Hostel and the Zephyr Project in general. This is a MASSIVE project and would not have happened without a group of members pushing for it to happen and taking on the tasks of seeing it through.

Another notable example was the acquisition of the WP FP7 805-A, which was only possible because members Steve Habeck, John Ryczkowski and Larry Hanlon stepped forward with the needed funds to save this historic engine.

Recently, we have seen a marked increase in members taking on the advocacy of projects, seeking to move them forward by becoming closely involved in their acquisition and/or restoration.

Member Jack Grasso, although residing on the East Coast, has taken up the challenge of finding a Budd Rail Diesel Car to replicate the WP's Zephyrette cars. Mr. Grasso has been tirelessly chasing leads and pursuing existing cars in the hope of finding a suitable candidate for acquisition and restoration. More information on this goal can be found at www.ZephyrProject.com/Zephyrette/zephyrette.html.

President Rod McClure learned that WP GP7 705 was soon to be scrapped in Colorado. He quickly had the locomotive surveyed with the help of our mechanical department and then approached several members to donate the money to purchase the engine, which was found to be operational, for scrap price. The 705 was acquired through their efforts and should be on the property soon.

Ed Wagner, former director and long a proponent of facilities improvements, made a \$15,000 donation to access and ADA improvements at the museum. Plans have recently been approved by the Board and with Mr. Wagner's consent to put this generous donation to work by constructing the first new walkways in 15 years and acquiring a wheelchair lift.

Vice President Frank Brehm found two WP freight cars in the yard of a scrapper in Roseville in 2002. He quickly organ-

ized an e-mail based fundraising drive that netted the \$2000 needed to acquire these cars, the first post 1960 WP freight cars in our collection.

Gail McClure has taken on the mantle of grantwriter and head of fundraising. Her efforts have recently resulted in a grant of \$1800 toward the restoration of our WWII Pullman Troop Sleeper and fundraising programs that have brought thousands in new donations to the FRRS.

Operations Department member Paul Finnegan has taken the lead in creating a locker room for volunteers who are staying at the museum. The goal is to give them a permanent space to store their gear without having to lug it back and forth from home.

Linda and Wayne Monger recently donated \$5000 toward the restoration of our two Union Pacific cabooses in memory of Wayne's mother, and Linda's father. As both were teachers, the donation was made with a focus on the educational role of our mission.

John Walker, our new museum manager, has taken on several projects. The longest running being the cataloging of our archives. A more recent project is the planned revamping of the signal and track display at the southeast corner of the Diesel Shop.

San Herschbein, residing in the Pacific Northwest, is our FRRS webmaster and is currently engaged in a complete redesign of the WPLives.org website.

Each other these members has found a different way to advocate a project that is important to them. It can take the form of researching for information, creating a fundraiser, making a donation or planning and running a restoration. It can involve running a table at a local railfan event, helping publicize FRRS happenings or searching for surviving equipment relevant to the FRRS mission and bringing it to the Board for consideration. There are ways to help improve the Society that maybe you will be the first one to think of.

If enough people step forward and take on the advocacy of such projects, then there is no limit to what we can do.

If you are interested in advocating or participating in a project for the FRRS, please contact President Rod McClure, Vice-President Frank Brehm or Museum Manager John Walker. Their information is found in the front of this issue, or call the museum at 530.832.4131.

PRM Facilities Report

By Eugene Vicknair, Facilities Manager

Well, the improvement and upgrading of the PRM facility is continuing and is steadily gathering steam. The biggest news recently is the incredible donation by long-time member and former director Ed Wagner of \$15,000 toward access and ADA improvements. This donation was made in memory of Ed' brother Joe Wagner. Complete details on this donation are found in this issue.

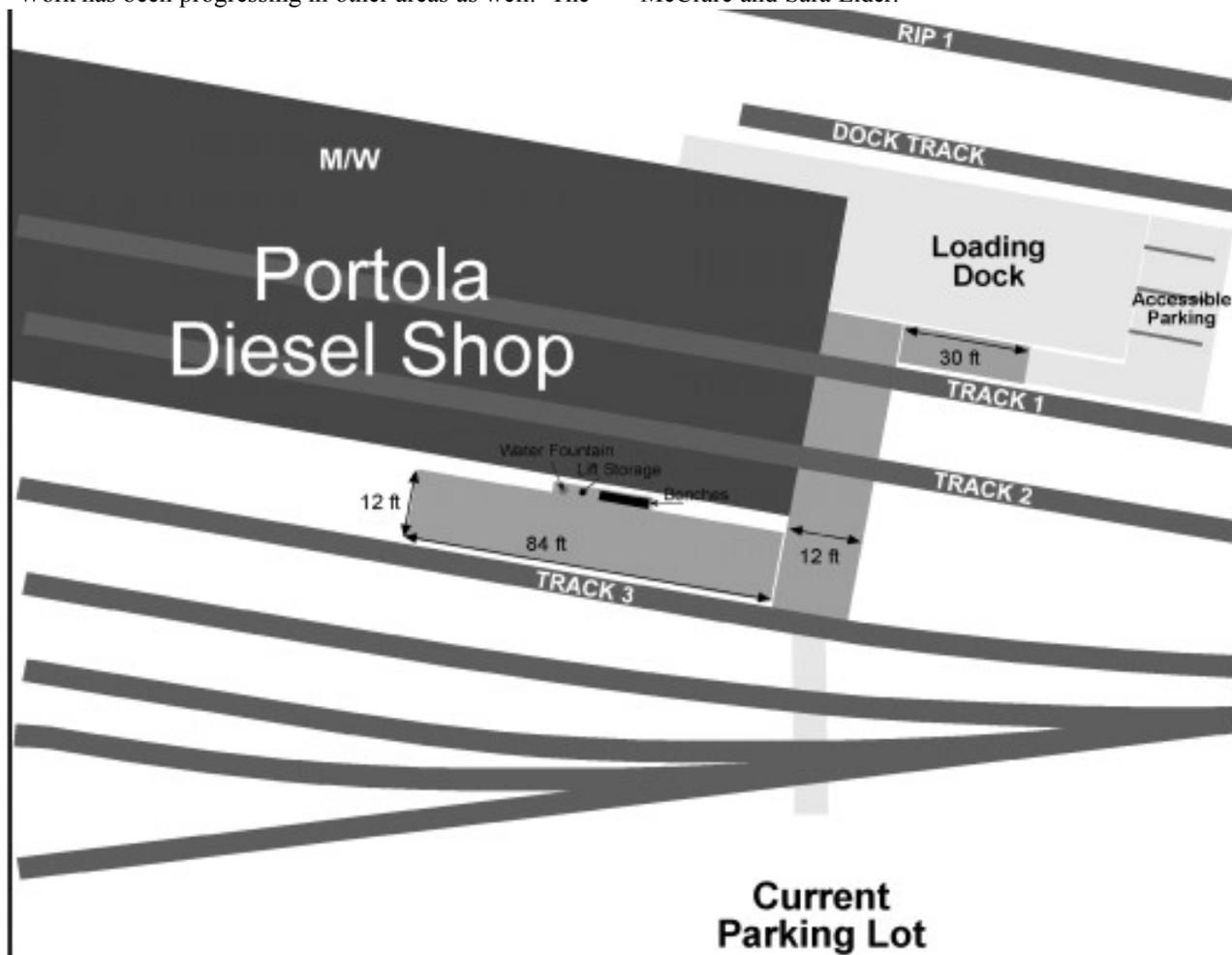
Combined with monies previously donated for facilities and wheelchair access work, this will allow us to finally begin laying the first walkways outlined in the Master Plan. This will

also lead to the purchase of the long-planned wheelchair lift and general improvements to the main entry to the Diesel Shop. As approved by the Board, this first phase will see the completion of a new concrete apron along the east end of the Diesel Shop, improvements to the walkway leading to the new accessible parking area at the end of the loading dock and the first part of the Caboose Loading Gallery, which will eventually include benches, storage for the wheelchair lift, a drinking fountain and lighting. Also, the signal and track display at the southeast corner of the shop will be rebuilt and improved under the leadership of Museum Manager John Walker. We hope to have this completed in time for season opening 2004.

Work has been progressing in other areas as well. The

unteers. The Shower Car will also be receiving more attention following the rebuilding of its drain system by member Dave Bergman, including new windows and other improvements. Thanks to Dave Bergman, Rod McClure, Gail McClure, Doug Morgan, Eric Stephens and everyone else who has been helping with the recent Shower Car and Deck work.

The repainting and improvements to the Women's Restroom in the Diesel Shop continues to receive positive comments. The final repairs were made in July and now we are focusing on redoing the Men's Restroom over the winter. Thanks again to everyone who helped, including Gail McClure, Mary Ann Vicknair, Eric Stephens, Aaron McClure, Eric McClure and Sara Eider.



East Plumas Volunteer Fire Department took down much of the hillside at the west end of the parking lot that lay in the path of the Parking Lot Display Track. Once the power feed into the museum has been reconfigured, this will clear the way for the track to be laid and the road to be rerouted around the outer perimeter of the parking lot.

The "Silver Debris" outfit car will soon begin its transformation into the new Volunteer Lounge. Plans for rebuilding and extending the deck in the volunteer area are currently being reviewed by the Portola Building Department for permit approval. When we have the permits, work will kick into high gear toward completing the new access ramp and extension of the deck to reach the Silver Debris. When finished, the car will feature a kitchenette, dining seating and are lounge area for vol-

With assistance from John Walker, a glass installer from Portola has replaced all the missing and cracked glass panes in the Diesel Shop. This has greatly improved the look of the building.

Finally, as many have heard, we have received the framework for a very large building as part of our trade with the Western Railway Museum. With some reworking, this framework will form the basis for the Jeffrey Display Building discussed in a previous issue. While there are a great many details to still be worked out, this is a massive first step in bringing more covered display space to the museum.

September 27-28 is a work weekend. Be sure to mark your calendars and come on up!