

## WP Hospital in Portola

By Frank Brehm and Eugene Vicknair

As has been previously reported in the The Train Sheet, FRRS now owns the old WP hospital property located in Portola. Because restoration of this historic structure is such a large undertaking a plan of action has been developed to use as a guide during the renovation. As we progress on the project there will be public comment periods which will be used to help create the master plan for this particular site which will also become part of the museums overall master plan. We invite your participation in this exciting new project. Below is a brief description of the project as well as the current action plan. The action plan is subject to revision as needed.

### Brief description of the project

In 1914, the Western Pacific Railroad established a hospital in Portola for its own employees and the local communities. This was a common practice of railroad companies at the time, who were among the leaders in providing such benefits to employees and their families. This hospital was located on 2nd Avenue in Portola, on a bluff overlooking the WP locomotive facilities (and today the location of the Portola Railroad Museum). It was a full service facility, providing emergency care, long-term convalescent care, check-ups and physicals, and surgery. It served until 1972, at which point it was sold to a private owner. In early 2001, the daughter of the former owner donated the entire facility to the Feather River Rail Society, operators of the Portola Railroad Museum and the leading Western Pacific Railroad historical group, for preservation. Very few railroad hospitals remain and this is one of the few in the United States to be preserved for historical purposes.

The goal of the FRRS is to return the exterior of the hospital to a historically accurate appearance and create landscaped grounds around it. Inside, the facility would provide several functions to the FRRS and the community:

- Several rooms are envisioned to be restored to historic accuracy to tell the story of the role the hospital played in the railroad company and community.

- One wing is planned to house the archives of the FRRS and allow the creation of a research library for accessing and analyzing these archives.

- Several large rooms in the opposite wing would function as meeting rooms where the society and local community groups could hold meetings and gatherings.

Inspections have deemed it restorable, but desperately in need of care, attention and stabilization as soon as possible. Immediate needs include remediation of asbestos, removal of debris, securing of the buildings and inspection and repair of utilities.

The FRRS has in place a long-range plan for the complete restoration of this historic facility. Long-term fundraising is beginning, but the immediate needs of the structure are great. We must quickly engage specialists to assist in the planning, stabilization and remediation of the structures.

04.20.04 Forms set up for new sidewalks. Eugene Vicknair met with city building inspector while John Walker fetched all the supplies Eugene forgot to bring with him. Our special train to Sparks returned and Rod McClure and Steve Habeck switched everything back into place. Doug Morgan and Eugene discussed work needed to replace old ties before new sidewalks poured on East end.

04.21.04 More work done on forms and excavation for sidewalks. After 37 straight days of working John Walker took a half-day off!

04.22.04 Eugene Vicknair and Dave Barr worked on sidewalk project. Ken Iverson ran an RAL.

04.23.04 Norman Holmes and John Walker cleaned out a boxcar. Eugene Vicknair and Dave Barr worked on sidewalks and Volunteer Lounge Car. Steve Habeck delivered mail and checked batteries. Ken Iverson ran an RAL. Don Nelson dropped by to visit the museum with a perspective new member and volunteer.

04.24.25 Continuing site preparation on new sidewalks. Doug Morgan, Eugene, Dave Barr, John Walker, Jack Thompson and Jason Krois replacing ties under tracks on east end and installing rubber gaskets between rails.

04.26.04 New drain rock and road base spread over East end track age and new sidewalks poured. Ken Iverson ran RAL's. Jason Krois slept all day.

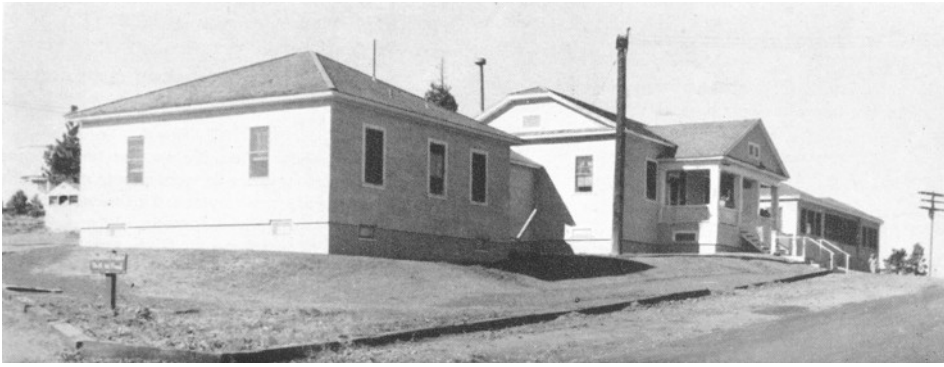
04.27.04 Last of new sidewalks poured. Area cleaned up and barricaded. Jason Krois washed locomotives. John Walker moved surplus furniture and appliances into boxcar for storage.

04.28.04 Jason Krois washed locomotives. Norman Holmes ran RAL for group of 25 people. Doug Morgan applied tie downs to Quincy #4 in Quincy and then went to Westwood where he and Frank Beavers picked up a speeder cart donated by BNSF (our first donation from BNSF?).

04.29.04 Don Nelson repaired broken hand brake on SP 2873. Ken Iverson ran RAL for school group of 8 children. Howard Hanson worked on several welding projects. Ken Iverson and Don Nelson did maintenance on Tug. Jason Krois cleaned up baggage and Lounge car. Jim Eroh worked on computers.

04.30.04 Don Nelson and Ken Iverson worked on WP 921, repairing a broken air brake line. Jim Eroh worked on computers. Kerry Cochran and Don Nelson turned water on in shower car and checked for leaks. Rod McClure changed out defective coil on big forklift and moved stairs to baggage car. John Walker made a fuel run, filling fuel cans. Kerry Cochran and several Operating dept. volunteers set up baggage car and lounge for crew training.

Thanks to John Walker for keeping this log of the daily activities at the museum.



**Stabilization**

1. Stabilize and/or isolate identified hazards.
2. Clean up of the grounds and structure(s).
3. Secure the structure(s) against un-authorized entry. May include grounds access restrictions and signage.

**Planning**

1. Consider the planned occupancy and use of the grounds and structure(s). Identify extent and limits of adaptive reuse and historical restoration.
2. Adaptive reuse possibilities: Society/Museum offices, Research

**Action Plan**

Preliminary actions. (COMPLETED)

1. Accept donation of property and structures.
2. Conduct preliminary assessment of grounds and structures.
3. Extend FRRS liability insurance to cover Hospital campus and structures.
4. Open liaison with city to coordinate community involvement.
5. Authorize funds for Assessment and Research of Hospital.



library and archives, Meeting/Presentation rooms (open to the Society and the Community), Display spaces.

**Historical Possibilities**

1. History of structures and Western Pacific Medical System, relationship of hospital and railroad with the community, leadership of railroad companies in providing health/benefit systems to employees and communities.
2. Identify changes to be made to the current grounds and structure(s) to confirm with new usage model. Specific aspects include seismic stability, ADA compliance, adaptive reuse issues,

**Assessment and Research**

1. Assess security of the structure(s) and grounds.
2. Examine structural integrity of the existing structure(s) and condition of surrounding grounds.
3. With assistance of city building inspector, identify non-conforming materials, building code violations, and immediate hazards.
4. With assistance of county health inspector, identify any immediate health hazards.
5. With assistance of power company, identify any immediate electrical/ utility hazards.
6. Obtain or have produced architectural drawings of the lot and structure(s) in current condition and at significant historical points (ie: at original construction, at completion of final addition, at time of 1950's renovation).
7. Inspection by a qualified structural engineer. (Completed. Final report expected shortly)



IT networking, improved power/utility systems, historical appearance.

3. Re-accomplish architectural drawings with planned changes to the existing grounds and structure(s). Include aspects concerning integration of the Hospital site with the adjacent main body of the Portola Railroad Museum.

4. Identify the scope of work to be performed.

5. Determine funding mechanisms available for the project.

### Renovation

1. Obtain funding for complete project scope.

2. Obtain necessary permits for any planned demolition.

3. Obtain necessary permits for any planned construction.

4. Remove all non-conforming materials.

5. Gut structures in preparation of renovation including the removal of all existing electrical wiring, sewage piping, water piping, and interior finish materials.

6. Repair and/or replace identified structural component deficiencies.

7. Perform complete construction work necessary to accomplish finished product as identified in the plans from section 3.

8. Complete grounds improvement and visitor signage.

### Integration

1. Perform additional work required to functionally and visually integrate completed Hospital site into main campus of the Portola Railroad Museum.

2. Work scope as determined in section 3 and to include ADA compliant walkways, signage, additional parking and access, data and voice technology systems.

Photo Credits:

Top and Center, Western Pacific Mileposts

Bottom, Jim Murphy

**When visiting Portola,  
Support the local  
merchants,  
as they Support us.**

## Summary of Recent Board Meetings

*Any member in good standing may request a complete copy of the transcript of board meetings from the Society. There is a nominal charge for each copy which covers postage and administrative costs. Full minutes are posted on the FRRSlist hosted by Yahoo Groups.*

### March 2004 Board Meeting

#### Motions and Actions Summary

#### Motions Passed

Consent Motions – Motion 04-03-01

Minutes – Approval of the minutes of the regular meeting held February 7, 2004.

Financial Reports – Approval of reports as of March 5, 2004.

Motions

**Motion 04-03-02.. Facilities Budget Change:** Shift of \$7,000 from budget line item 70005 – Fencing to 70005 – ADA Access. Motion made by Director Vicknair, seconded by Director Anderson. All Directors present voted in favor – Motion carried.

**Motion 04-03-03.. Southern Pacific 0-6-0 1215 Sale:** Approve sale of SP 1215 for the amount of \$40,000 to Santa Clara Trolley and Rail Corporation subject to the terms and conditions of a contract to be approved by legal counsel. Motion made by Director Stiles, seconded Director Vicknair. All Directors voted in favor with the exception of Director Monger who abstained – Motion carried.

#### Actions and Notices

Several items of SP and PFE equipment referred to A&D Committee.

President McClure presented to the Board the original boiler pressure steam gauge from the WP 165 previously reported as donated to the Museum.

SP 2873 has returned from the Quincy Railroad.

Crew Training weekend is scheduled for 05/01-02/04.

Work is progressing on Silver Debris Lounge and Phase 1 Walkways.

#### Closed Session

Meeting was adjourned to closed session at 1:25 PM. and reconvened to open session at 2:40 PM. Alan Turner reported the Board discussed five items of a confidential nature with consensus direction given but no reportable action taken.

### April 2004 Board Meeting

#### Motions and Actions Summary

#### Motions Passed

Consent Motions – Motion 04-04-01

Minutes – Approval of the minutes of the regular meeting held March 6, 2004.