

Our next bit of big news is the completion of new ADA compliant walkways and a caboose-loading platform. A generous donation last year from member Ed Wagner in memory of his brother, Joe, provided the major funding required to replace walkways at the main public entrance of the Museum and allowed about half of the caboose train loading area on 3 Rail to be completed. Facilities Manager and Director Eugene Vicknair has spent a huge amount of time working on this project and his commitment to the FRRS shows when you take a look at the new walkways and loading platform. I will save the details for Eugene's article on this, but you won't be able to miss it the next time you are at the Museum. We are still in need of funding to complete this project but we have made a huge stride in making our Museum a better place for our visitors and members. Special recognition and thanks go to Ed Wagner for his donation and to Eugene Vicknair for his vision, project management and hard work!

So many things are happening around the Museum right now it is hard to keep up. Museum Manager John Walker has been keeping track of this work will be reporting to you, the members, on what is being done. We have lots of projects that we need your help in doing, both big and small, so if you are able to come up and volunteer some of your time, please let John know and he will be glad to direct you. Monetary donations are appreciated as well!

The annual WPRRHS convention was held in Reno, NV last month and was a great success!!! For those of you who could not attend, you missed a great show thanks to the efforts of convention chairman Frank Beavers. I don't have the final numbers yet, but I believe that this has been the best and biggest attended convention we have had. Everyone I had the chance to talk to enjoyed the clinics and shows. The highlight of the well attended dinner was a presentation by Kathy von Ibsch on the CZ Zephyrettes, of which she was one of the last. In concert with the convention, Trains Unlimited Tours ran its "Return of the California Zephyr" train from Oakland to Sparks and return with a couple of short half day trips. This was quite popular and the train looked full each time I saw it arrive and depart from Sparks yard. On behalf of the Board and I, a very big "Thank You" goes out to Frank Beavers for all his hard work on the convention, Steve Hayes for his help and for being a great emcee at the banquet, Thom Anderson for his work as the WPRRHS department head, Chris Skow for his fantastic "Return of the California Zephyr" excursion train and all the people who attended the convention making it a great success.

Along with the excursion train, the FRRS supplied four of our WP locomotives and two cabooses for display at the UP Sparks Yard during the duration of the convention. WP 707 and WP 2001 provided the power to bring the WP 925-C and the WP 805-A from Portola to Sparks via Winnemucca. Director Steve Habeck, member Cliff Cox and I (all UP employees) brought the equipment over and displayed it for many to view and take pictures of. As I have previously mentioned, Dave McClain and his crew have brought the 805-A back to operating status and was quietly rumbling away while on display and occasionally showing off it's newly operating Mars headlight. She still has a few problems but we should see them repaired and can look forward to being able to use her this year. I hope to have a detailed article

for the next Train Sheet documenting the adventure of bringing our equipment to Sparks (along with pictures), and I believe that we will have a complete report on the Convention along with an article on the Trains Unlimited excursion.

Lastly, I want to thank those of you who have contacted me with your comments, both good and bad, regarding what we have been doing at the Museum. Your feedback lets us know if we are properly guiding the direction of the organization and how the history of the WP is presented to future generations. If you have any questions or comments, positive or negative, please e-mail or write me. This is going to be a busy summer for all of us. If you can volunteer some time, contact us at the Museum and let us know when you can come up. We always need volunteers! We always need donations of money!

Until next issue, WP LIVES !

## **Pedestrian Walkways - Phase 1**

By Eugene Vicknair

The contractors completed pouring the first phase of permanent walkway at the museum on Tuesday, April 27. This first section covers the east end of the Diesel Shop and 84 linear feet along the south side. This work was made possible by a donation from former director and longtime member Ed Wagner in memory of his brother. As part of this work, the FRRS will also be receiving a wheelchair lift. Thanks to Ed's generosity and those of previous donors to the wheelchair lift fund, the Diesel Shop will for the first time be accessible.

Those of you who remember the cracked and misaligned concrete that used to mark the museum entrance will be surprised. Brand new rail gaskets now buffer the tracks with concrete between the rails on the 1 and 2 rails heading out of the shop. Also, the south side section, where we load the caboose train, has now been raised 2-1/2" above the rail height, making for a much easier step into the railcars.

The completed section was opened for pedestrian traffic on Friday April 30 and will be fully open by the beginning of operating season.

However, we are not done! We need donations to allow completion of the walkways down to the west end and across its face and across the tracks to the parking lot, as well as allowing the installation of benches, fixed trash bins and drinking fountains in the Train Loading Gallery, as well as landscaping and new, railroad related displays of signals, switches and trackwork. Total cost for this work is estimated at around \$10,000 for the section to the parking lot, \$20,000 for the rest of the Loading Gallery and the west end apron and \$12,000 for the displays, benches, fountains and other amenities.

There was a lot more work required than anticipated. Through no fault of anyone, a lot of the prep work for the walkways went undone until after the WPRRHS convention. The available group was just too busy with prepping for the convention, running the museum and general pesky things like family life and work.

The work took some interesting twists, the most significant being the uncovering of part of the old Roundhouse floor and Turntable pit. These were documented before being covered

again.

With help from Frank Brehm I got all the underground utilities materials (we added future use conduit, water piping and drainage lines) and drove them to the museum. I spent Monday trenching with help from John Walker and some contributions from Doug Morgan and a UP employee on layover whose name escapes me. Ken Iverson was kind enough to shift some cabooses for me and Steve Habeck and Rod McClure reworked their switching list after they returned the equipment from Sparks to accommodate the concrete contractors.

The biggest issue was the need to change 8 ties and pinch up about 14 more along the east end of the Diesel Shop to allow installation of some custom walkway rail guides. With a lot of help from John Walker, Jason Krois, Doug Morgan, and non-member David Barr, (and some backhoe work from Jack Thompson) and with guidance and assistance from Rod and Steve we got the tracks dug out, ties changed and the flangeway guides installed.

Also thanks to the crew from Van Kol Concrete who did a lot of extra work to help me get this done and for doing a great job on the walkways, and to Mark Mattola and the crew at Omega Industries who came up with the custom flangeway guides and gave us a great deal.

And thanks, once again, to Ed Wagner who made it all possible.

## Museum Manager Report

By John Walker

The 2004-operating season is well underway!

For those of you who have not yet made it up to Portola this year, there have been many changes here at the railroad museum.

1) Security: Thanks to your efforts, the FRRS has acquired over five million dollars worth of equipment, archives and tools over the last twenty years. The security of our property is paramount. We have worked very hard to get all of this stuff and we now have to be very vigilant in keeping it safe from theft, vandalism and harm.

The museum is open 10-5 daily. For those of you who have keys to doors and gates, it is very important that you secure these doors and gates before 10 am and after 5 pm. Do not assume that someone else will do it for you. Please do not assume that it is okay to just leave things open. The general public will enter into any area that is not physically blocked or is left open. For their safety and the safety of our property, please keep doors and gates closed and locked when not in active use. Please notify a supervisor, director or the museum manager if something needs to be locked up or if you need access. If your coming up to the museum at some odd hour, give the museum a call at 530-832-4131 to arrange for access.

2) The old Operating Department Office is now a private office. The people who work in these offices have important jobs here at the museum and are entrusted with a lot of responsibility. Important papers and records are kept in this office. We respectfully ask you to stay out of this office unless you have business

there.

A new volunteer lounge is being constructed in the old "Silver Debris" outfit car. The FRRS has spent a lot of money and time to provide volunteers with a relaxing place to kick back and relax. When completed, the car will have an entertainment center, computer and a kitchen area for your enjoyment. You are welcome to kick back and relax in this car during breaks and after hours.

In the meantime, the Conference Room (old gift shop) has been set up with a color TV, VCR and DVD player. The microwave, coffee pot and crew refrigerator have also been moved into this room. Please use this room for breaks, meetings and to relax in the evening until the new volunteer lounge is completed.

3) Parking: With the startup of the operating season, we will begin enforcing the NO PARKING RULE on the north side of the building. We are required by law to keep this area clear for use as a fire lane. Please do not park in this area unless you are actively in the process of loading or unloading. Volunteers are asked to park in the parking lot or on the east end of the building near the Reefer cars. The paved area at the end of the dock is reserved for handicapped parking.

4) Your suggestions for safety or productivity improvements are essential to improving the museum and ensuring the safety of our volunteers and visitors. Please feel free to contact the museum manager, department heads and directors with your suggestions and observations.

Thank you for your valuable contribution to the FRRS. We genuinely appreciate your service and your cooperation. I think we are primed for an excellent year here at the Portola Railroad Museum. We look forward to seeing you soon.

## Museum Log March/April

3.01.04 Snowing. Eugene Vicknair, Eric Stephens, Dave Epling and John Walker worked on Volunteer Lounge Car.

3.02.04 John Walker Cleaned Meeting Room. Jim Eroh worked on computers.

3.03.04 COLD! Three visiting engineers from Switzerland. Doug Morgan worked on Op's Office. John Walker cleaned Meeting Room, Jim Eroh worked on computers.

3.04.04 John Walker worked on Supply Room and assembled new work cart. Dave McClain, Dwight Whetstone, John Ryczkowski worked on WP 805A. Jim Eroh worked on computers.

3.05.04 SP 2873 returned from duty on Quincy Railroad. Steve Habeck, Rod McClure and Doug Morgan moved it back into the museum along with donated UP tank car. Doug Morgan worked on Op's office, Rod McClure worked on ATSF 999414. Steve Habeck worked on putting away Christmas lights.

3.06.04 Museum Reopens with 3-6 inches of old snow on the ground. First day the temperature has reached 40 degrees in nearly 3 months. Sure felt good!. Eugene Vicknair, Tom and Tim Carter, Dave Epling worked on Volunteer Lounge Car. Hank Stiles and Rick Edwards worked on SP

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