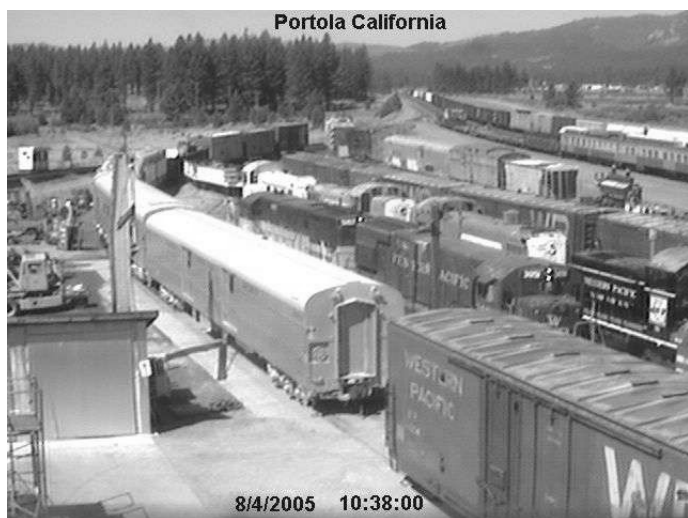


ly 60 degrees to face Northeast with the primary focus being the Union Pacific mainline just west of the current UP station.

In July, Tom Carter set up an online discussion board with several rooms. Registration is required and free. SO far, the board has 181 members. This board is your board. Log on and check it out. Both the Web camera and the Discussion Board are accessed by links on the FRRS/PRM website located at <http://www.wplives.org>.



## WP 484 Graphics

By Eugene John Vicknair

One very important part of the recent repainting of Western Pacific caboose 484 was the creation and application of its graphics. Getting all the typefaces and data correct on restored equipment has often been a difficult task for many museums. This is complicated by the vagaries and rarity of some of the typefaces used on older equipment (see the article on WP's "Clarendon" font in the next issue of the Train Sheet for more info on this problem).

In the case of the 484, the task was somewhat simpler. The caboose was only 25 years old and the font used on its main lettering had been in use on the WP since steam days. Many examples existed and I was able to build a near complete alphabet by carefully photographing each letter and then laying it out into a computer program that crafts each letter as mathematical vectors. The result is a letter that can be scaled to match any size we need.

Using the photos, I laid out the letter spacing for everything from the large WESTERN PACIFIC to the small, stenciled items on the side sill. Here, I discovered that International Car had used not one but two different and distinct stencil faces. These matched no computer font I could find, so I was forced to draw each letter into the computer individually. Steve Habeck, who was leading the 484's restoration, quickly supplied me with missing photos when it was discovered that I had missed some of the data items.

Once all the files were created, the question turned to how the lettering had been applied. The weathering on the 484's lettering appeared to point to paint and it

was well-known that the lettering on these cars was reflective. While Doug Morgan worked with Steve on paint, I spoke with former WP carman Rick Carter, who gave me an overview of how WP mixed reflective paint by adding large amounts of reflective powder to their standard white paint. I located a supplier for such powder, but no one could determine mix ratios. In trying to solve this question, I contacted Mike Mucklin who quickly raised the point that the 481 class cabooses in fact had reflective vinyl for their large lettering! I contacted Doug at the museum and he went out to the 483 and investigated its lettering. Sure enough, the reflective vinyl was so thing that, when it wore, it gave the appearance of fading paint. However, with a little scraping, the presence of vinyl for the numbers, roadname and initials over the end doors was confirmed. The remaining graphics were non-reflective paint.

With advice from Tom Carter, who has worked extensively with vinyl graphics, I contacted Yak Graphics in San Jose. They took on the task of actually making the large reflective lettering and cutting paint mask vinyl for the smaller data items. Their quick turnaround allowed me to hand carry the lettering to the museum on the weekend of August 6, where the freshly painted 484 was waiting.

Tom Carter joined with painter Raymond Franklin and together they began exploring how best to handle the application of the lettering. After some initial issues, they discovered techniques that worked beautifully. Visitors to the museum got quite a sight as Tom and Raymond quickly worked their way around the caboose. With the paint mask vinyl down, Raymond was able to paint the data lettering, while Tom de-bubbled and put the finishing touches on the reflective.

In all, this process took around three weeks and resulted in the crowning touch that completed the car. A particularly gratifying moment came when Tom and Raymond were laying the large WESTERN PACIFIC on to the car and they reported that the letters were aligning perfectly over the faint ghost left by the original lettering. Three weeks of worrying if we had gotten it right came to an end. In the end, this major group effort resulted in a very accurate repainting of this highly visible part of our collection. The 484 is now continuing its role as our road caboose for off-site trips.



Photo by John Manter