

2006 IN REVIEW

This past year proved a busy one for our volunteers. It began with a change of name in December, 2005, when it was decided to state our focus up front and the museum became the Western Pacific Railroad Museum at Portola.

January marked the start of our ramp-up to the WP Centennial in 2009. The 2nd was the 100th anniversary of the "invasion" where WP workers stormed across the SP at Oakland and broke the stranglehold on the waterfront.

February found a group of volunteers, led by President McClure, in San Francisco, working alongside members of the Golden Gate Railroad Museum and Pacific Locomotive Association. GGRM lost their home at Hunter's Point and PLA offered space on their railroad in Niles Canyon. The FRRS, with our experience in road movements, was asked to make one of the longest museum hospital trains in recent years a reality. It took longer than expected, but the team got it done and the move went without a hitch. In thanks, GGRM donated WP Sleeper "Clover Plot" and SP SD9 4450 to us. We also received a donation of cabooses SN 1642 and WP 668. CZ dome "Silver Rifle" also came to Portola on long-term loan.

The FRRS turned publisher with the release of "Track and Time" by Jeff Asay. This book is a detailed study of the evolution of the WP and its subsidiaries, presenting an operational history of the Western Pacific through timetables and maps.

Work cranked up on the 805-A in the spring. After some discussion, it was decided by the restoration team, led by Dave McClain and Larry Hanlon, that the prime mover was solid and, by the end of the year, the engine was declared operable. There is still work to do, including installation of salvaged dynamic brake grids, but she's looking good.

The WPRRHS held its annual convention in Chico. Well-known WP/CZ conductor Ernie von Ibsch came to town and shared stories of WP history to cap off a well-enjoyed weekend.

WP steam returned to Portola after a 50+ year absence. WP 0-6-0 165 is now in the hands of Steam CMO Chris Allan. After a series of inspections, the loco was found to be in good shape and fundraising began for the initial phase of work: remediation of toxic materials. With help from the California Trolley and Rail Corp., and many generous members, the goal was met and that work took place in early 2007.

Rod McClure and Steve Habeck had a special opportunity to work with the Union Pacific Steam Crew on their Spring 2006 Tour. One memorable sight was our little red WP 484 caboose sandwiched between the Challenger and its yellow passenger train during a ferry move from Cheyenne to Portola.

Equipment surplus to the collection continued to be sold or donated. Following the prior sale of SP 0-6-0 1215 to the California Trolley and Rail Corp., a Kennecott RS-3, acquired as a parts source, was parted out and sold off. Clean-up of the grounds and collection continues to pay dividends, with many compliments on how much better the museum looks compared to years past.

The FRRS had a chance to give some special assistance in May. The Washoe County Sheriff's Department conducted a training exercise at the Museum on as part of their Rail Protection Team training. The museum proved to be an ideal training facility for the team.

One of the items in the 2006 Election was approval of new by-laws for the Society. This effort, many years in the making, finally came to an end with an overwhelming vote of 400 in favor and 19 against.

Work began on making caboose Sacramento Northern 1642 into a place for parties and events. While David Epling drew up the operational parameters, Norman Holmes cleaned and worked on the car, received as a donation from Mike Mangini of GGRM earlier in the year.

The popular WPLives.org discussion board was updated along with the webcam computers. With new IT Manager Bruce Veilleux and work by David Epling, Tom Carter and Eugene Vicknair, many new projects are moving forward to increase our on-line capabilities and offerings.

Railfan Photographer's Day had a paid attendance of 55. Loren Ross, Matt Parker and the operating crews put on a fine show of photo run-by trains. This year, the RPD will be held in September.

July found the museum train at Dunsmuir Railroad Days again. While attendance at the event appeared lighter than last year, revenue from the gift shop and RAL raffles were up considerably. The Union Pacific and the Dunsmuir Railroad Days Committee have already extended an invitation to participate again next year. All in all, the event was widely hailed and enjoyed by everyone who participated.

Portola Railroad Days was a hit this year. With a heavy dose of community involvement, the event was bigger and better. The UP Mini-Train made an appearance, and there were handcar rides, model railroads and live music at the museum, as well as the usual train rides. Donations were also received from PRD events in town to help with this year's Santa Trains. A thank you to the merchants for an excellent Railroad Days and their assistance with the upcoming Santa Trains.

As the year closed out, there was a flurry of activity. Visitors from the combined Tourist Railway Association and Association of Railroad Museum's convention in

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FRRS ARCHIVES NEWS

The FRRS archives, under the care of the Western Pacific RR Historical Society, have been growing rapidly. Now, we are pleased to announce that we have obtained secure, environmentally controlled storage for these important documents in downtown Reno. Much of the collection has been stored off-site in recent years. Now, we will have the archives consolidated in two locations: the archives car at the museum and the new, secure site in Reno. The Reno storage is being used for our more fragile documents, photographs and films. Movement and cataloging of the collection has begun and procedures for allowing access to the collection are being created to ensure both their protection and their usability by researchers. The long-term plan is to build a climate-controlled archive and research library as part of the restoration of the Western Pacific Hospital in Portola.

Special thanks to Rod and Gail McClure, Thom Anderson, John Walker and everyone else who has been assisting in caring for this collection and overseeing its storage, movement and cataloging. The next issue of the Train Sheet will feature a sampling of items from the rapidly expanding FRRS archives.

If you have documents, photos, films or other artifacts that are relevant to the Western Pacific, Sacramento Northern, Tidewater Southern and other WP related roads, please consider the FRRS as a home for these important parts of WP history. We can assist you in receiving in creating a donation agreement and finding resources to give a fair evaluation for tax purposes. In addition, we are always looking for assistance in caring for and cataloging the collection. If you would like more information, please contact Thom Anderson, WPRRHS Administrator or Rod McClure, FRRS President, either via e-mail at the addresses listed on page 2, or by calling the museum at 530.832.4131.



NEW MUSEUM LOGO

To go along with the renaming of the museum earlier this year, the FRRS adopted a new museum logo in December. This logo, with its prominent use of an orange feather and WP traditional lettering, emphasizes the heritage of the railroad.

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Sacramento made a bus trip to the museum. Special events were held including a spin-up of the SP rotary snowplow. The attendees were impressed with the museum and we received much positive notice in the next ARM newsletter.

Our archives, under the care of the WPRRHS, have grown considerably in recent years. They now require climate-controlled storage for some of the sensitive materials being donated. In the fall, the search began for a suitable facility in Reno, reaching a successful conclusion in early 2007. (See article in this issue for more details).

We also received a special donation in late 2006: Southern Pacific Fire Truck 1. Used at the Roseville Shops, this rare item will be used in events like the Portola Railroad Days Parade and local gatherings like Hot August Nights in Reno to promote the Society and the Museum.

A special retirement event was held for long-time member and former president Andy Anderson. Our road crew took WP 707 to Quincy with a short train and gave

"The Chief" a first class ride from the junction into town for his celebration. It was a truly special day that brought a huge smile to Andy's face.

Sadly, we also said farewell to a good friend of the museum as George Brietweiser, husband of former Board member, Jan Brietweiser, passed away. George spent many hours working on projects and helping others at the museum. He is missed.

As 2006 disappeared under the Sierra snows, more changes were on the horizon. To complement the new museum name, a new logo was adopted in December and is now entering wide use. Remediation work is scheduled on the 165 and a restoration proposal is in place for WP GP7 705. We enter 2007 with three California Zephyr cars to keep the 805-A company, and the possibility of more on the way. The FRRS will have a heavy presence at the Railroad Passenger Car Alliance Convention in San Jose in February. The 2007 WPRRHS Convention will be in Tracy this year, while Dunsuir and Portola Railroad Days are looking to be better than ever.

Can't wait to see what 2007 brings....