

25th ANNUAL RAILROAD DAYS

- Matt Parker and John Walker

A full slate of events for the 25th Annual Feather River Railroad Days August 24-26 filled the community of Portola with activities for all. At the museum, the usual weekend caboose train rides were available for visitors. Adding to this attraction were two hand cars rented from Lassen Land & Trails Trust in Susanville that visitors, under the supervision of museum chaperones, were able to run up and down the tracks in between runs of the train. FRRS member Dave McClain also brought up his SP "Black Widow" motorcar, providing rides in between trains along with the assistance of member Steve Milward.

Union Pacific again graciously loaned us their Centennial, UP 6936, which was running and open for visitors to tour. Periodic operation of rotary plow SPMW 208 rounded out operational events, along with several model railroad layouts presented by the "Gandy Dancers", Bob Sandin and Gary Van Treese and family.

Elsewhere around the museum, a passenger car set consisting of our baggage/display car, ex-VIA diner, and biz car UP 105 was open for the public. Inside the baggage car were displays showcasing photos submitted for the Railroad Days Photo Contest, including the works of Matt Stentz, whose outstanding photos garnered first place in both the color and black-and-white categories. Congratulations are certainly due to Matt who, we are pleased to report, used part of his prize money to join the FRRS.

A notorious group of scofflaws known as the Spirits of the Old West Wild West Theatrical Troupe were present at the museum throughout the weekend. This group added excitement to the museum's activities by periodically robbing the caboose trains. Additionally, the group staged a special show next to the diesel shop on Saturday afternoon for members only which culminated in a proposal from member (of both the FRRS and the Spirits of the Old West) Tom Carter to his now-fiancée Alicia.

On Friday night and Saturday morning, a portion of the Museum's parking lot served as a staging area for floats entered in the Railroad Days Parade. This year, the FRRS and WPRM were represented by our 1953 Southern Pacific Fire

Truck, which was driven in the parade by Director Frank Brehm.

Community activities were wide and varied. The list of events included street dances on Friday and Saturday evenings, bands playing on two stages, a car show, monster trucks, paragliders, rock crawlers, bounce houses, free swim day on Saturday at the city park, the Lucky Duck race, and the Willie Tate Memorial 5K/10K walk/run. The rock crawlers presented a new and interesting event for the visitors, showcasing the classic battle of man and machine versus nature. These highly modified four-wheelers attacked a rock pile placed on a portion of the block between Commercial Street and Second Avenue. The pile presented a brutal challenge for these machines. This event was quite popular, particularly with the younger crowd.

Several visitors to the Museum on Saturday afternoon stated this was their first attendance at Feather River Railroad Days and they were drawn by the wide variety of activities offered, adding they were not disappointed. A number of Portola residents commented that they were impressed with all of the community events that were offered with several saying they thought the street dances and bands were really great.

Museum Manager John Walker was an integral part of the Railroad Days planning committee. By garnering the support of the community and local businesses, this committee was overwhelmingly successful in creating an outstanding community event for this 25th Anniversary of Feather River Railroad Days. John credits the success of the Museum's activities to all of the members who were present to assist both before and during the event. In particular, John noted the crewmembers from the Operating Department who attended to their duties fantastically and safely throughout the weekend. He also noted the assistance of members Linda Brimmer, Julie Anderson, and Stephanie Parker in attending to the gift shop and staffing the passenger cars display as well as Karen Potts who assisted with train ride ticket sales both days. A group that included members Don Borden, Nick Tynan, Larry Douglas, Mike Barlow, Bill Parker, and Hank Stiles provided what John described as "phenomenal help" in the form of the hard work they contributed in the weeks before the event in the form of cleaning the shop building and grounds,

repainting the south side of the shop building, completing the new rock garden near the main entrance at the east side of the shop, and moving furniture and equipment to make the facility look great for our visitors. "Good job, everyone!" he added.

SP 1215 HEADS TO NEW HOME

Carried on rubber tires, former Southern Pacific steam locomotive 1215 left the WPRM recently heading to its new home in San Jose, California.

The Baldwin 0-6-0 switcher, built in 1913, was acquired by the FRRS in 2001 from Kings County, California, where it was on display in a park. Last year, the FRRS was contacted by the California Trolley and Rail Corporation (CTRC), an organization formed in 1982 to preserve and reflect the rich legacy of rail transportation in the Santa Clara Valley. CTRC expressed interest in acquiring the SP 1215 for their planned San Jose Railroad Museum. The Acquisition / De-acquisition Committee was subsequently asked to review the 1215's status. With the acquisition of WP 165, the committee determined that the 1215 was not a key piece in our Museum's collection and suggested disposal of the locomotive. The Board of Directors subsequently voted to sell the 1215 to CTRC.

On October 14, two semis from Taylor Heavy Haul arrived at the Museum to transport the

locomotive. Assisting members from CTRC, FRRS members including Steve Habeck, John Walker, and Norm Holmes used SPI 1100 and two idler cars to load the engine and tender onto separate lowboy trailers. Work began around 1 PM and was finished around 5 PM.

According to CTRC's web site, the 1215 is currently located at Kelley Park in San Jose while CTRC finalizes plans for the permanent location for their museum. A cosmetic restoration of the locomotive is planned. For more information about CTRC and their plans, see their website at www.ctrc.org.

SP 1215 worked numerous terminals around the Bay Area until its retirement, and fits nicely into the mission of CTRC. The engine will eventually be displayed alongside a fellow SP Bay Area veteran: SP 2479, a 4-6-2 passenger engine.

Southern Pacific 1215 steam switcher

Class: S-10 Type: 0-6-0 Builder #: 39832
 Built: Baldwin Locomotive Works - May 1913
 Weight: 154,600 lbs. Boiler Pressure: 190 psi
 Tractive Effort: 29,720 lbs.

SP 1215 is unloaded at San Jose's Kelley Park after a long ride from Portola.

- photo courtesy of CTRC

