

Spotlight On: LOREN ROSS

For Superintendent of Operations Loren Ross, railroading started as a childhood experience.

Beginning at the age of 7, Loren would go to work with his dad, who was a Switchman for the Southern Pacific in Sparks, Nevada. Loren's dad was a Herder at the Sparks yard and had Loren helping with the responsibility of lining switches to route trains into and out of the yard. Gaining the trust of switch crews, Loren had the opportunity to work with them sorting cars about the yard and even got the chance to run an engine or two.

At age 12, Loren began participating in a summer swim team. This, he says, led to his discovery of girls. This new fascination soon sidelined his interest in trains for a time. At 15, Loren joined the police Explorer program, a move that led to a 32-year career in law enforcement with the Reno Police Department.

Throughout his life, volunteerism has been a value. Be it coaching Little League and football for his kids or running the police Explorer program, an opportunity that allowed him to lead at least 35 young people into law enforcement careers, giving his time is something that has been prevalent in his life. At present, aside from working for our museum, Loren also participates in a "Car Clinic" his church conducts bi-monthly wherein 10 men provide basic service (oil changes, light repairs, etc.) and safety checks on vehicles belonging to widows and single parents, serving about 10-15 people at each clinic.

This spirit of giving, coupled with his involvement in law enforcement, led him to serve for 11 years as a volunteer with the Washoe County, NV Sheriff's HASTY team. This unit trains to perform heavy and hazardous rescue work, including water and mine rescues, and, at the time of Loren's involvement, performed all accident extrication work in the County. One of the most memorable events during this time was the Galaxy Airlines crash on January 21, 1985, the worst aviation accident to occur in Reno. Loren had the team's rescue rig that fateful night and was involved in the initial response to this disaster as well as spending four days assisting with recovery efforts.

In 2000, fellow Officer and FRRS Member Tom

Mueller learned of Loren's interest in railroading and told him about our museum, adding that he must check it out. Loren did - in May of 2001 he attended a crew training weekend and has been active in our Operating Department since that time. Now, we get to benefit from Loren's drive to volunteer as some of his free time, which increased with his retirement from law enforcement in 2002, is given to us. In 2005 he was appointed to the position of Assistant Yardmaster, and he stepped in to take the position of Superintendent of Operations in 2007 following the resignation of Kerry Cochran.

"I found a place where I can have some fun and interact with people," says Loren about what attracts him to spend time at the museum. "There is nothing better at the end of the day than to see a kid and his parents headed for the gate with smiles from ear to ear because they had such a great time," he adds.

From mid-August through mid-November 2006, Loren and his wife Kim took advantage of a program they discovered that allows retired law enforcement personnel to perform service for the National Parks Service, doing work in the Great Smokey Mountains National Park in Tennessee. Unfortunately for us, but fortunately for Loren and Kim, this program will take them from our area for much of the summer of 2008. They will be enjoying an opportunity to work at Grand Canyon National Park this April through July and then are hoping to return to the Great Smokey Mountains National Park for another rotation from mid-August through mid-November. Although Loren will be greatly missed, we wish he and Kim a wonderful sojourn while looking forward to the great stories they will return with, as well as those post cards we know they will be sending.



Loren and faithful companion A-Bomb.