

HOT AUGUST NIGHTS 2009

- Tom Carter

After a successful campaign to reach out to the families of the Reno Sparks area at the 2008 Hot August Nights car show in Reno, this year, the Feather River Rail Society decided to renew their sponsorship agreement with one of the area's largest events. Last year, we reached out to literally thousands of families at the event who lived in the Reno area, yet had no idea we existed. As an event sponsor, we also included locomotive rental and gift shop discount coupons as part of the exhibitor's packs to all participants. According to the numbers, the results were about on par with what we expected being a first time sponsor. Although we signed on near the deadline last year, we deemed it an overall success.

Based on that success, we expected even more out of this year's sponsorship, and due to the early start planning, we were able to take advantage of better prices in regards to advertising materials. Monday, August 3rd, Rod McClure, Seth Adams, Bob Simms, and I loaded up the Model "T" railcar on a flatbed trailer, and loaded banners, tables, chairs, brochures, pictures, wire racking (to hang the photos on in the display), models and locomotive parts and we headed out for Reno. Matt Parker, Charlie Spikes, Ed "Gizmo" Powell & Bil Jackson had worked feverishly the week before to get our Southern Pacific fire engine ready for the ball as well. It was a neat feeling Monday to watch Matt and "Gizmo" take turns cruising around the parking lot of the museum wailing the siren. They had worked hard to get the funky old machine back to operating condition, so it was good to see them able to enjoy it. I was met in Reno by Matt Parker and Charlie Spikes who helped assemble the booth into the late evening hours.

Tuesday, August 4th, the "Corporate Village" area opened to a beautiful day with many people about enjoying the show. Charlie Spikes and Cody Wilson had come out to assist Matt and I in spreading the word that we are in fact a local family friendly tourist destination, and not "the museum in Carson City". Charlie immediately set to work finishing off repairs on site to the Model "T" and was determined for a Wednesday morning start to the little truck. Wednesday, the

"T" lit right off with minimal effort, and our crew was joined by Craig Simmons, Matt Stentz, Eddie Powell, Bill Parker, and Pat & Linda Brimmer, who drove out from Salt Lake City, Utah, to work the booth. Though we talked to many families and took lots of photos, we all enjoyed the event, and enjoyed each other's company. We even got a chance to talk a little shop as well.

The Model "T" was a HUGE draw; just something about that little car makes the "motorheads" go nuts. When the crowd would thin out away from our booth, Charlie would get that sly grin and say "Watch this..." He'd light off the "T" (remember, this old contraption still has the old hand crank!), and RIGHT NOW, crowds would flock. It was pretty neat to watch. People were just fascinated by it.



HAN visitors checking out our Model "T" railcar.

- Tom Carter photo

Despite the name of the event, temperatures were actually very mild for this time of year. In fact, we had rain one day! By the way, I hear the "Car Gods" are erecting a statue of Charlie Spikes in Victorian Square in Sparks to pay homage to their cars' savior on Wednesday of the event. When the rain hit, Charlie had jumped up and ran around the joint like a nut frantically closing hoods and windows on the exhibited cars near the booth, saving untold thousands of dollars worth of interiors. My family has a '55 Chevy and can attest to what Mother Nature can and will do to the interior of a classic car. The motorheads were very grateful to Charlie's quick action and selflessness; he was soaked to the bone when finished. This is just one example of the sacrifices of the individuals who worked the booth. Thanks a MILLION to Stephanie Parker for making sack lunches for the crews