

## WPRM TO CHARGE ADMISSION

- Eugene Vicknair, Secretary

In the last issue of The Train Sheet, there was an article discussing an on-going review by the FRRS Board of Directors concerning the charging of admission for visitors of the Western Pacific Railroad Museum. Much of the review and research of this step was undertaken by the FRRS Business Practices Committee and a team of volunteer advisors from the Harvard Business School Community Partners, an organization of Harvard graduates dedicated to assisting non-profit groups. We are particularly indebted to the HBSCP team for their insights and assistance, not only on the admission issue, but in several other areas as well. A complete report on their review and recommendations for the WPRM will appear in the next issue.

At the November 2010 Board Meeting, the HBSCP team presented the report of their findings for the museum, including a strong recommendation that we charge admission starting as soon as possible. They found many benefits to charging admission, including that visitors find greater value in the experience when they have a stake in it and also tend to spend more time when they have paid for it. Also, the organization benefits from higher income and gaining a better measure of attendance. Paid admission museums tend to be seen as higher prestige.

The HBSCP presentation was followed by a report from the Business Practices Committee which had looked at the issue from a different perspective as the Harvard team but arrived at the same conclusion. In a review of other railroad and transportation museums, nearly all in the western US were found to charge admission, and the few that did not were primarily excursion based operations which changed for train rides. The BPC joined the Harvard team in strongly recommending the adoption of an admission structure.

Based on these recommendations, the Board adopted the admission and ride ticket structure proposed by the BPC by unanimous vote of the eight directors in attendance.

As mentioned in the last issue, these new mission charges will NOT apply to FRRS

members. All members receive free admission and free train rides. Members will only be required to pay for locomotive cab rides and they will receive their member discounts on those tickets. In addition, Sustaining Members will be given eight (8) tickets each year to give to friends and family granting the bearer free admission and train rides for the entire day of their visit.

For non-members, admission will go into effect on April 1, 2011.

- Admission prices:
  - Adults 19 and over: \$8.00
  - Youth 4 – 18: \$4.00
  - Child under 3: free
  - Family (defined as 2 adults plus any related children 18 and under): \$20.00
- Train ride tickets will be an extra cost:
  - Adults 19 and over: \$4.00
  - Youth 4 – 18: \$2.00
  - Child under 3: free
  - Family (defined as 2 adults plus any related children 18 and under): \$10.00
- Cab ride price:
  - Adult 19 and over: \$20.00
  - Youth 4 – 18: \$10.00
- Any person who has a scheduled RAL will get free admission.
- Payments for single admission will be credited against membership cost if membership is paid by the second day after admission. (i.e.: Adult visitor purchasing Active membership with proof of admission will be charged \$42.00 instead of \$50.00)
- Payments for cab rides will be credited against RAL cost if RAL or gift certificate is purchased by the second day after admission / cab ride with proof of purchase.
- Two forms of proof of payment will be issued: all admissions get color coded tyvek wristband; all admissions, train rides and cab rides also receive a souvenir paper ticket. Costs are factored into worksheet and vendors have been identified.
- On days the museum is considered closed to

the public, but is open for work sessions or other restoration / maintenance activities, admission will not be enforced.

To facilitate the charging of admission and improve Gift Shop access, a proposal made by the Harvard Community Partners team to build a new Gift Shop access door at the east end of the Diesel Shop has been adopted. This new glass door entrance will be readily visible upon entering the Diesel Shop and will provide higher capacity access to the Gift Shop. Work on this will begin after the first of the year.

The FRRS proudly maintained its free admission policy for 25 years, but our responsibility to maintain and improve our collection and

archives has demanded that we reevaluate our financial needs. It is anticipated that the admission policy will substantially improve our income, even with an anticipated drop in visitor donations. In discussing these issues with other railroad museums who have made similar changes, all reported little or no decrease in donations and a substantial improvement in revenue and even store sales.

If you have any questions about the new policy, please contact President Rod McClure or Secretary Eugene Vicknair.

Thank you to the Harvard team and the FRRS Business Practices Committee for their diligent work and assistance.

## THE MUSEUM TRUCK

- David Epling, Museum Manager

Among the things that the museum relies heavily on are donations made by you, our members. Often, it isn't just monetary donations that we need. We always find ourselves in need of items in such as tools, equipment and, in a large manner, vehicles.

Enter Feather River Rail Society Member Andrew Peterson. Andy is best known as the owner of Peterson Supply. Peterson Supply can be found at [www.petersonsupply.com](http://www.petersonsupply.com). For those that don't know, Andy specializes in O scale and special runs in other scales. Among other models, Andy has done the special run WP subsidiary Central California Traction models in both N and HO Scales.

John Walker and Andy got to talking one day and John mentioned the need for a Museum Utility pick up truck to haul merchandise to public shows, run museum errands around town and so on. Andy stepped up to the plate and hit a home run on the first pitch. He donated his 1995 Dodge Ram 2500 Club Cab with the Cummins Turbo Diesel engine and camper shell.

The truck has proved invaluable. It has been to the National Train Show when it was held in Anaheim, California in

2008. It has been to Cheyenne, Wyoming to pick up equipment donated to the museum. It has been to Columbia, Missouri by way of Parker, Colorado to pick up a pair of Model Railroad Estates that were donated to the museum. In the picture at right, Andy Peterson stands by the truck and is holding an example of the magnetic signs that are on both sides of the track behind the door. You can usually see this truck at the various off sit shows the museum attends such as Winterail, the WP Convention, and the Great Train Expo in Sacramento and at the National Train Show in Sacramento in 2011.

So in closing, the FRRS extends a big thank you to Andy Peterson for his generous donation and to John Walker for his efforts in this donation.



David Epling photo