

FRRS Begins Display Building Project

—Eugene Vicknair

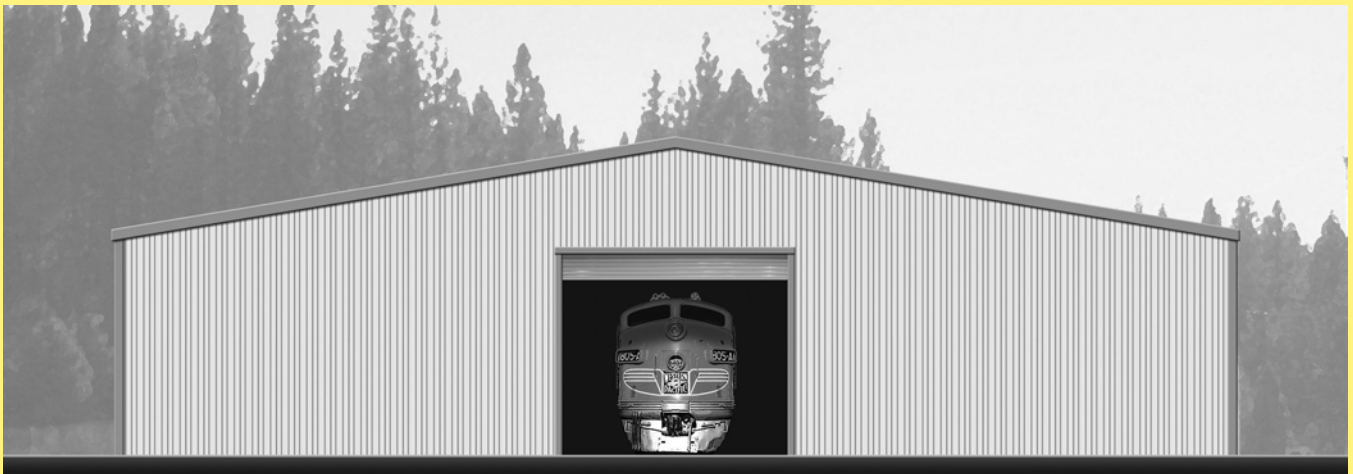
The FRRS has taken a big step toward building our first permanent display building. In February, we were contacted by a steel building manufacturer. They had a 100 foot wide by 200 foot long prefab steel building with 20 foot eaves available for less than half of its retail cost. A customer's needs had changed and they had requested the company sell it for the outstanding amount due. This is a tremendous deal for a building that fits well into our master plan. The height allows for doors tall enough to clear our rail equipment and the floor size allows for five 200 foot long tracks. This is enough storage for significant number of pieces of rolling stock, depending on length. The building features upgraded hardware and multiple door openings to accommodate tracks. Unlike the bare building frame that was donated to us a few years ago, a frame that is already many decades old, this is a new building with full walls, roof and a manufacturer's warranty.

In addition to the steep discount, the manufacturer requested a very low down payment and has given us up to 10 years to complete the purchase with no interest or storage fees. A very gracious offer for which we extend our thanks! The initial down payment has been made and the first round of fundraising has begun. We have already received numerous comments from members supporting this large step forward.

In addition to the recent mail-out fundraiser, we are also seeking grants and other "outside" funding, including sale of the bare building frame that was donated to us. We are also working with the City of Portola on required codes and other details. President Rod McClure and Portola City Manager Robert Meacher have also reached an agreement where the FRRS will work with the city on grant applications for this project. Thank you to Mr. Meacher for the city's kind assistance.

Our goal is to complete the purchase well within the 10 year time frame and have enough money to immediately begin assembly of the structure. This means raising an estimated \$350,000 to \$450,000 to get the building to its "Phase 1" condition, which would be assembled with tracks inside. Future phases will see improvements to the building and possibly construction of a façade echoing a historic Western Pacific structure, if funding permits.

The construction of dedicated covered storage is a critical and needed step in the evolution of the Western Pacific Railroad Museum. While restored equipment is exciting and looks great, stored outside it eventually begins to weather and wear, even with the best of care. With this new building, we can protect our "crown jewels" and ensure their preservation for generations to come. Please join us in making this dream happen!



The Whitman Display Building

Artist's interpretation of the front of the future Whitman Display Building. This 5-track covered storage building will provide shelter for some of the collection's more important and weather-intolerant pieces.

— Image courtesy of Eugene Vicknair