

seen again, because the roundhouse was completely destroyed by fire September 10, 1976, caused by a careless welder.

With the loss of the imposing roundhouse, the appearance of the entire facility had changed dramatically. My visits after that were totally different until I met Mr. Al Hill, the Trainmaster, on the morning of April 25, 1980, which led to another unforgettable experience.

Some Lights for the Darkness

—Eugene Vicknair, Director

For many years, the FRRS had a great friend in Jay's Feather River Rentals. Jay's often rented us equipment at discounted rates and assisted the Society when needed. Most often, we would rent a portable light generator towers to illuminate the grounds during Santa Trains. Unfortunately, Jay's left the business a few years ago and we have been renting light towers from Reno and Truckee. This has been at a higher cost and our volunteers need to travel farther to pick up these units.

With recent plans to increase the number of night time events at the museum (including the Pumpkin Patch Express Trains, evening work parties and other late events such as the Light The Fire fundraising dinner in May 2018), it was

realized that the cost for renting these light towers would become very high.

Therefore the Board made the decision to purchase a pair of used towers. Brand new such units sell for over \$12,000. Even used, low hour units can run over \$6,000. After a lot of searching and many dead ends, we were able to purchase a pair of Magnum MLT3060 light towers with low hours for under \$10,000 total.

Our volunteers checked and serviced the units and pressed them into service almost immediately for the first Saturday night Pumpkin Patch trains on October 14. They performed flawlessly.

Based on our use schedule and the prior rental costs, the purchase of these units will pay for itself in about 2 years, a very good return on investment. They also allow us to expand our night operations, creating more opportunities for events and income. We have already discussed being able to loan them to the city of Portola to assist in emergency work when needed, helping enhance our cooperation with the city.

Thank you to everyone who helped with this acquisition: Eugene Vicknair, Charlie Spikes, Bil Jackson, Frank Brehm, Roger Stabler, David Elems and the staff at Blue Line Rentals and Equipment Time Rentals.

