

How the Visitors are Viewing Us

—Eugene Vicknair, Director/Secretary FRRS

While we have always received feedback from our visitors, the rise of the internet has afforded us a broader chance to see what people think about a visit to our Museum and Archives. Below are some reviews we have received within the past year on Google, Yelp, and Facebook. On Google and Facebook, we hold a 4.8 star average rating out of 5, while our overall rating on Yelp is 4.5 out of 5.

Zack Smith – 5 star

This place is absolutely rich in history. Could easily spend all day here looking at locomotives and rail cars related to the Western Pacific railroad. The real kicker is for a certain price you can operate a couple different locomotives around the balloon track. A great place for kids as well. Don't forget to grab a T-shirt on your way out in the gift shop.

Donna Fink Shaw – 5 star

The museum is filled with caring people, they explain about all trains and engines and have experienced conductors to help!!! The caboose rides are fun!!! I don't wanna ruin the surprises, pay the museum a visit and see for yourselves!!!

Mike Curry – 5 star

Great museum great people! Very friendly and helpful. Best part of this trip is I got to rent a locomotive for the day and Charlie my engineer teacher was the nicest guy. He was amazing and the experience was amazing! Their collection is second to none in western railroading. And I love how they keep everything looking like it did back in the day. Faded and used like real life, some railroad museums look like new car dealers. Not this one! Very impressive! If you are in the area or if you are a train guy this should be on your bucket list.

David K. – 5 star

I've been coming here since I was only 12. Even though I'm 41 now, it is still just as enjoyable as it was when I was a kid. I highly recommend the Caboose or locomotive engine ride. I was recently there for Portola Railroad Days.

Thomas Martin – 5 star

Museum Sponsors

The Western Pacific played a major role in developing the economy of Plumas County and the surrounding region. The Western Pacific Railroad Museum is proud to be a part of that heritage and to hold a position in supporting the ongoing economic health of our community. We welcome the support of that community in return. Helping to preserve the Western Pacific is good for tourism, good for our regional culture and good for business.

We ask our members and visitors to support our business sponsors, companies who have generously contributed to the museum and its mission to preserve the Western Pacific family.

If you are a business owner, see how you can support the WP Museum, your community and improve your advertising and networking outreach through our sponsorship program.



Sierra Motel

380 East Sierra Avenue, Portola, CA 96122
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Trains and Travel International

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This has been one of my best locations to visit. If you love trains or you would like to learn more of the California history this is the place to visit. Be ready for a full day's entertainment. The staff are very informative and love their work.

Jeremey Barclay – 5 star
Awesome Hands on Museum. Lots of trains to see and play with. For the right price you can even drive one. Highly recommended for anyone seeking adventure

Bill Jackson – 5 star
What a great place to take your kids for an experience to touch and enjoy diesel locomotives from the fifties and ride in one and learn to operate.

Reflections of The Western Pacific – Part 2

—Jack Palmer

In September 1964 I took my family camping for a few days at a Forestry Service campground across the river opposite Portola. My son and I went fishing and my wife and daughters were entertained by the Blue Jays and chipmunks. Whenever a train appeared we all ran down to the edge of the river and waved to the crews (naturally) as they ran by. Sleep was difficult at times because of the noise caused by the switching crews in the yard when switching and making up trains, much less the ground-shaking caused by the arrival and departure of the trains on the main.

My son and I, together with my Brownie camera in hand, went over to the Portola Depot and Yard one day and discovered that this is a modern Diesel facility, unlike the yards at San Francisco and Oakland. The most interesting photos taken that day were of the WP Rotary Snow Plow #4 with Water Tender #82 and other equipment spotted outside the west end of the shop plus FT set 911A-D on #3 rail next to the shop with a huge orange snow plow on its nose. We also caught a four unit set of FT's switching the yard with WP 908A on the point and the CZ No. 17 going through the washer so she would have nice clean windows before her run down the canyon.

Following that trip I made several visits to the Oroville Yard and its Roundhouse area. I was aware that the WP's diesel fleet received their routine maintenance here and I was expecting to see a number of F units. (How wrong I was)

On my first visit I was awed by the sight of the huge 18 stall roundhouse and the number of miscellaneous orange and silver units in the immediate area and fascinated by the bee-hive of activity

The roundhouse was filled with diesels and others were spotted on all the whisks around the turntable idling away. Several new GP-20's were spotted outside the entrance to the roundhouse idling away with their high-pitched turbos singing a new song for the WP. (On later visits GP-20's, 35's and 40's would also be seen here.)

The steam powered derrick WP37 and its crew was working on a project in the yard. (It was later converted to diesel power and now resides at the Western Pacific Railroad Museum.)

The Feather River Railroad Shay #2 was seen a short distance from the side of the roundhouse sitting in a huge dried-up mud puddle in mud up to its side-rods.

An old wooden Pullman car was found behind the roundhouse with much of its ornate stained-glass intact, and WP Emergency Car #0635, which at one time was assigned to a work train and was used to replace wheel sets.

Although the Sand Tower was intended to serve WP power, at different times I would also see power from other roads, i.e. Burlington (Chinese Red), BN, SP&S, D&RG all as a result of Pool Power which originated in 1953.

On another visit I saw a few F-Units together with more GP-20's and nice shiny new orange and silver GP-35's, 40's and U-Boats shortly after their arrival on the WP and again later when they appeared in orange and green.

How fortunate I was to have taken those photos and to have witnessed all that – never to be