

Operating Department News

- Kerry Cochran, General Superintendent

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the members of the Operating Department and the rest of the FRRS volunteers for your help so far with the 2023 operating season.

While this year has had its challenges with having sufficient amount of crew members, we have been able to operate the caboose trains all summer.

We do have several new crew members this year: Des Powers, Nick Manos and Brian Waller, to mention a few. These members have come out to support the FRRS/WPRM and have vastly improved the number of active crew members.

Along those lines, many years ago the Operating Department had an unofficial uniform consisting of a purple shirt and hat. This sort of went by the wayside when it was decided that the train crew needed to be more visible during operations. A newer HiVis yellow shirt was purchased by the FRRS and for many years it has been used.

Brian Waller and Nick Manos on WP 1503

- Photo by Kerry Cochran



Kerry Cochran presenting Nick Manos with Operating Department Shirt

- Photo by David Elems 8/12/23

I have made the decision to bring back the purple Operating Department shirt and hat in addition to using yellow safety vests for the operating crews. During the weekend of August 11th, Nick Manos was presented one of the purple Operating Department shirts since he was a newly qualified brakeman.



In the past, the procedure was when a new Operating Department member qualified for the first time, the FRRS/WPRM would provide one shirt and hat for the member and the member could purchase more items if they so wished. I am currently working with Eugene Vicknair (Museum Store) to get some purple hats made and become available for the crew members. (Stand-by for that development.) The purple shirts are now available for purchase by the Operating Department crew members by invitation. These may be purchased by using a link provided by the Operating Department (Paul Finnegan) at the Spring.com site that we use for other FRRS/WPRM branded materials. Those members who wish to participate can send a message to Paul and he will send the link.

While crew training (switching trains) has been at a minimum in the past few years due to some of the insurance requirements and the fact that there is just not much room left to move cars around, we did do a small switch move the weekend of the August 11th to get a caboose into the shop for work.

A big Thank You goes out to our President, Vice President and the CMO for being at the museum on the weekends that we had short crews making sure our Caboose Trains ran for the public.

We have a few new members and volunteers this year, so if you do not recognize someone, please take the time to introduce yourself to them and see what you can do to make their volunteer experience at the museum a good one so that they will feel welcomed and return to give us a hand.

As always we need help around the museum in getting everything ready for any of our events and general museum work, so if you have time to spare for a few hours, please consider volunteering.

Without the help of all the Museum volunteers, we would not be able to keep the caboose train running each weekend.



*Switching Move UP Caboose into Shop
- Photo by Kerry Cochran 8/11/23*

And what about the RAL Engineers? Without them we would not have a successful rental program to keep us working at the museum all year. The support of the RAL program helps us continue our operation each year and keep the museum open for all.

All the Operating Department Crewmembers work very hard through the year in volunteering there time to the museum. The time they spend working on the crew in their student positions or qualified positions helps us run the trains during the weekends.

At any time should any member have any questions, please feel free to contact me, I may not have an answer right away, however I will get one for you.