

Preserving "THE FEATHER RIVER ROUTE"

# The Train Sheet

News from the Feather River Rail Society and the Portola Railroad Museum

ISSUE 123

January/February 2004



## - The Train Sheet -

News from the Feather River Rail Society  
and the Portola Railroad Museum

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Contribution Deadlines: Last Day of  
February, April, June, August, October and  
December.

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## - Portola Railroad Museum -

P.O. Box 608  
Portola, CA 96122-0608

Museum: (530) 832-4131  
Fax: (530) 832-1854

The museum grounds are open to the public  
from 10:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. daily the first  
Saturday in March through the first Monday of  
November. The museum building is open from  
10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. daily. Train opera-  
tions begin the last Saturday of May and con-  
tinue through the first Monday of September.  
The museum grounds are closed to the public  
from the first Tuesday of November through  
the first Friday of March except for special  
events in which arrangements have been made  
in advance. If you wish to visit during the  
closed period it is advisable to call in advance  
and find out if the museum grounds will be  
open.

Entrance to the museum is free, although a  
suggested donation of \$5.00 is greatly appreci-  
ated.

*The Feather River Rail Society, a tax-exempt  
public benefit California corporation, is the  
historical society for the Western Pacific  
Railroad and operator of the Portola Railroad  
Museum in Portola, California.*

***The FRRS is not associated with the Union  
Pacific Railroad.***

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*Cover Photo:* Covered in fresh snow, the 805-A awaits her return to running sta-  
tus. A wait that would not be that long. - photo by John Walker

*Back Cover:* Our 917D compares battle scars with the 918D on December 14,  
1973 outside the house in Stockton, California. -photo by Mel Lawrence

## *Web Pages of Interest*

**Feather River Rail Society (Official Site) [www.wplives.org](http://www.wplives.org)**

WPRRHS	<a href="http://www.wprrhs.org">www.wprrhs.org</a>
Central California Traction	<a href="http://www.trainweb.org/tractionco">www.trainweb.org/tractionco</a>
CZ Virtual Museum	<a href="http://calzephyr.railfan.net">calzephyr.railfan.net</a>
SN Page	<a href="http://www.people.virginia.edu/~ggg9y">www.people.virginia.edu/~ggg9y</a>
Tidewater Southern	<a href="http://www.tidewatersouthern.com">www.tidewatersouthern.com</a>
Tidewater Southern	<a href="http://www5.pair.com/rattene/WP/TideIndex.htm">www5.pair.com/rattene/WP/TideIndex.htm</a>
WP Virtual Museum	<a href="http://wpmuseum.railfan.net">wpmuseum.railfan.net</a>
Western Pacific	<a href="http://www.wplives.com">www.wplives.com</a>

**- FRRS Membership -**

<i>Yearly Dues</i>		<i>Single Life Membership</i>		<i>Family Life Membership</i>	
Associate	\$20.00	Birth-17 years of age	\$1200.00	Birth-17 years of age	\$1800.00
Active	\$40.00	Age 18-39	\$900.00	Age 18-39	\$1350.00
Family	\$60.00	Age 40-61	\$600.00	Age 40-61	\$900.00
Sustaining	\$100.00	Age 62 and above	\$300.00	Age 62 and above	\$450.00

These are the dues for the duration of one year, with Life and Family Life being a one-time payment. Five year payment plans are available for life memberships.

**Associate** memberships do not have a vote, receive The Train Sheet but not the Headlight and are for one person only.

**Active** memberships receive both The Train Sheet and the Headlight, have voting rights and are for one person only.

**Family** memberships receive both The Train Sheet and the Headlight, have one vote and include all members of ones immediate family.

**Sustaining** memberships receive both The Train Sheet and the Headlight, are for a maximum of two persons with one vote each.

**Life** memberships receive both The Train Sheet and the Headlight, have voting rights and are for one person only for life.

**Family Life** memberships receive both The Train Sheet and the Headlight, are for a maximum of two people and have two votes (one per member) for life.

Send all applications, renewals and address changes to:

**Feather River Rail Society  
Membership Dept.  
P.O. Box 608  
Portola, CA 96122-0608**

Address changes may also be sent to [memberships@wplives.com](mailto:memberships@wplives.com)

### **A Message From the FRRS President**

By Rod McClure

Even though we have just begun a new season, lots of work has been going on in the snow and ice at our Museum. Last month, we spent a lot of time plowing snow and trying to get things done. We did load the UP 737 4-4-0 and its tender on a truck for its trip to the Double "T" Museum. It took two days of snow removal to get the front gate cleared and the track cleaned off to do it, but it is done. Thanks go to Norm Holmes, Steve Habeck and Doug Morgan for helping in this. We purchased 7 sets of locomotive batteries from a rail services contractor for a fantastic price. They are used, but the oldest pair is only 8 years old with the newest being only a year old. The newest set of batteries at the Museum was almost 18 years old! We have not had enough batteries to make all of the operational locomotives useable for sometime and new batteries are about \$4000 per set. Steve "Pop Tart" Habeck and I made a quick trip to Fresno to inspect them before we purchased them and found them to be in great shape and made some new friends. Our trucker and Life Member Scott Franklin hauled them up for us and Scott and I unloaded them in the middle of a snow storm. They are already being serviced and prepared to install in some of our locomotives. This opens up possibilities to see some of our other locomotives operating this year. But to make them run, Hank Stiles needs all the help he can get in the Mechanical Department. So if you can make one of his monthly clinics it would be of great help.

Another item of interest going on in the snow and cold is

the flurry of work happening inside the car body of the 805-A. Longtime member Dave McClain along with Dwight Whetstone have been working on returning the 805-A to operation. I am happy to report that a couple weeks ago I witnessed the 805-A start for the first time in over 4 years. Larry Hanlon has been seen inside the electrical cabinet on more than one occasion in the last month and even John Ryskowski was spotted with an injector or two in his hands. As of this writing, Dave and friends have solved her water leaks and are now working on the numerous little problems that exist. Big Thanks goes to these guys, and its nice to see old faces returning.....

John Walker has returned from his winter vacation to the sunny south. (I can't remember if he said Bahamas or Bakersfield???) He is braving the cold and has already begun working around the shop cleaning up puddles of water, dirt, along with getting the gift shop stocked and ready for this year. If you need anything or have questions about what is going on or when you can come up and help, give John a call at the Museum during the day and he can help you. John is a great asset to our organization. He always has a smile on his face and takes the time to say hello to everyone. Hey John, Thanks!!!!!!

The WPRRHS Convention is shaping up to be quite spectacular this year. Frank Beavers has an impressive list of shows and presenters lined up along with the "Return of the California Zephyr" excursion train that Trains Unlimited Tours is sponsoring. We are working on trying to have a few pieces of our equipment on display along with all the CZ equipment in Sparks

that weekend but nothing is confirmed yet. If you can make it to Reno for the Convention, then try and save some time to come by the Museum and check out what has been going on. You might be surprised.

Another project going on during the cold, miserable days of winter is the construction of our new Volunteer Lounge. Eugene Vicknair has been leading a crew that has stripped and begun rebuilding the old Silver Debris into a new, modern and comfortable place for all volunteers to relax, get together, and have fun in. He can use any help available in this project as I have asked him to have it ready to go for opening day of operations. Give him a call or Email him even if you can only be there for the day. Thanks Eugene.

Now, some of you might have noticed that the first track work weekend is at the end of March. If you haven't, I need as many volunteers as possible to get some important track work done before operations begin. We need to finish replacing the ties under the west 2-3 switch so we can remove the slow order. We also need to replace some ties under the track out by the picnic area and by the parking lot. Hopefully once these items are complete, we can begin building some new track this year!!!! I know that this work is about the worst of all, but it is needed to prevent derailments and keep us and our guests safe.

In closing, I would like all of you to remember that we operate on donations. We are always in need of donations from everybody to continue to grow and expand. Matching donations from employers is becoming more popular, and we continue to apply for grants for all different kinds of projects. Gail McClure is working hard to write and apply for grants for us. Thanks Gail! We will be starting a new fund raising drive real soon so if you can spare anything, or need a tax deduction please keep your Museum in mind.

## CMO Report

By Hank Stiles

Hello to all. It has been a while since I have written a column for the Train Sheet. Life got busy winter came with its lull in activity and I had nothing to say.

Now spring is just around the corner and that means it's time to think about projects for this year.

Along with the maintenance that we do every year is this years projects. First thing on the agenda is repair of the WP 608. Cleaning and reassemble of the flex joint on the shaft that drives the air compressor and the cooling fan. Parts are ordered and by the time you read this I hope to have it up and running again.

Next on the list is the 1857 (Fairbanks Morris). After manufacture of oil and water lines for the oil cooler system, water was added and it poured onto the ground. We found that the exhaust manifold was there the water was coming from. After removal it was discovered that the water drain for it had clogged causing the failure. This engine has a water cooled manifold. So I had Howard Hansen repair the manifold and with the help of Jack xxxxxx it was discovered that the exhaust flange needs to be surfaced. Anyone know of someone with the ability to surface a six foot long manifold? When that is done it can be reassembled as soon as we get the rest of the gaskets, a job that Doug Morgan has

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been working on, with about 90% success. One set of "O" rings being all that we lack.

This brings me to the question, what do we do next? I was thinking about the WP501. It would be a nice engine to have running. Maybe we have enough EMD's. What about the whistle of a turbocharged ALCo 539, in the form of the WP563, how does that sound? We could run catenary around the balloon track and use the Kennacot electric.

It would be most helpful to have a project leader to lead a project along with the things already planed, much more could be done. Just like the Marines we are also looking for "Few good persons" Please come and help.

If anyone has any other suggestions please let me know it's your museum too!

## Western Pacific 165



0-6-0 switching locomotive, built Alco-Schenectady, 1919

By Eugene Vicknair

As our collection has grown and developed, we have been fortunate to gather a significant variety of WP related equipment covering much of the early and mid diesel era, as well as some freight equipment from the mid and late steam era. However one glaring gap has been the lack of a WP steam locomotive. Both for historical and publicity reasons (one common question visitors ask is "Do you have a running steam engine?") the acquisition of an old WP "kettle" has been viewed as a priority by the FRRS.

With only 5 survivors, our options were limited. In late 2002, an opportunity arose to acquire 0-6-0 165 which had been at the Alameda County Fairgrounds in Pleasanton but was now in the hands of the new Triple T Agricultural Museum located in (Turlock?). Triple T was more interested in a flashier engine and inquired about our Union Pacific 4-4-0 737. After extensive negotiations, a trade was completed that sent the old 4-4-0 to the Triple T, where it will be cosmetically restored and displayed indoors, while bringing Western Pacific 165 home to Portola

Of the 5 surviving WP steam engines, 2 are 0-6-0s: the 164 and 165. Both of these engines are also second-hand locomotives, having been purchased with two additional sisters from the United Verde Copper Company of Arizona on September 17, 1927. The 165 was built as UVCC 87 in 1919, a stout little engine

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that was larger and more modern than WP's own 0-6-0s. Assembled by Alco-Schenectady, the 4 engines were heavier and more powerful than any of the 0-6-0s used on rival Southern Pacific, and would be among the last steam locomotives in active service on the WP.

Acquired for \$16,000 each, the little workhorses soon found a long-term home at in Stockton and they spent much of their careers working this important yard as well as Portola and Wendover. The 165 herself was often documented working the Portola Yard.

In the early 1950's, diesels were coming in greater numbers and the days of steam on the Wobbly were numbered. In late 1957, 164 and 165 became the last 0-6-0's retired, outlasting their sisters and the WP's original fleet. The 165 had been last used in March, 1953, but saw one last hurrah when it and WP 94 were towed down the Tidewater Southern to Escalon and used as stationary boilers at a cannery in October 1959. It returned to Stockton for storage, one of only 3 steamers left on the railroad (along with 4-6-0 94 and 2-8-2 334). On April 4, 1962, it was donated to the city of San Leandro and eventually was displayed near the San Leandro BART Station. At some point in the 1980's, it was relocated to the Alameda County Fairgrounds.

Currently stored at the Niles Canyon Railway, the 165 will move to Portola following the completion of their new connection to the Union Pacific. Once she comes home, a cosmetic restoration is planned along with evaluation for a possible return to operation. Someday, perhaps our wooden freight cars will once again polish the rails, clacking the joints to the rhythm of steam exhaust and the haunting wail of a whistle.

Reference:

Guy Dunscomb and Fred Stindt, *Western Pacific Steam Locomotives, Passenger Trains and Cars*

## Western Pacific 917-D

F7A locomotive, built Electro-Motive Division, 19

By Eugene Vicknair

In 2003, the FRRS completed an agreement for a major trade of equipment with the Bay Area Electric Railway Association. Perhaps the most significant piece of equipment exchanged in this deal is Western Pacific F7A 917-D, one of WP's "Fab 4" F-units and one of only 7 WP Fs to survive.

WP 917-D was delivered in the first of two orders WP placed for freight F7s. It arrived on February 4, 1950, just three days before the 921-D which has been part of the FRRS collection since 1983. The Fs quickly became the backbone of the motive power fleet, supplementing WP's FTs and later joined by small groups of high nose GP locomotives.

Nothing unique set the 917-D apart in its WP career. It would become special only through luck and longevity. By the mid 1960's, the FTs were gone and time was running out on the F7s. As new U30Bs and GP40s arrived, the F7s were rounded up and sent east as trade-ins for the new power. In 1972, most of the survivors, including the last B-units, rolled off the property, traded for new U23Bs that were intended to banish the Fs from the mainline. Only 6 units survived this final purge, 920-A (renumbered 913), 914-A, 915-D, 918-D, 921-D and 917-D (the suffix-

es were dropped in 1975). The 914-A had suffered an electrical fire in 1972 and was scrapped in 1975, while 915 was sidelined in 1974 and finally cut-up in 1979. The remaining four soldiered on as the WP was too cash-strapped to replace them. Their regular assignment was a train commonly called the *San Jose Turn*. Working from Stockton to Milpitas, they delivered cars to the San Jose area and WP's biggest customer: the Milpitas Ford Plant.

In 1972, the 917-D and the 914-A became the first two Fs to receive Perlman green paint. The 917 would remain the only green F until late 1977, following its sidelining in July. Assigned to a 5400 ton train with only 913 and a U30B for companions, the 917 (and 913) caught fire on Altamont Pass and joined the 921 (which had tangled with a gravel truck the previous month) in the Stockton deadline. The WP decided that it still could not afford to replace the units and rebuilding was more cost effective. The railroad sent 913 and 921 off to Boise for a rebuilding at Morrison-Knudsen while 917 was reworked in the Stockton shops. While 913 would famously receive a new version of the classic silver and orange colors, the other three were painted in new versions of the Perlman green scheme. WP 917 returned to service on February 2, 1978, just two days shy of the 28th anniversary of its arrival.

While 913 and 918 would be donated by the WP before merger day, 917 and 921 were the property of the UP as 1983 dawned. Both were quickly shutdown then shipped to North Platte, NB where they received zephyr-style paint schemes patterned after the 913's livery. In late 1983, they returned to California and were donated by WP to their new homes: 921 to the FRRS and 917 to the BAERA.

With the acquisition of the 917-D, the FRRS now has 2 WP freight F7As and, with FP7 805-A, holds 3 WP Fs all together. Eventually it is hoped that additional B-units can be acquired as stand-ins for the long gone WP Bs and permit Portola to field an A-B-B-A set of these classic locomotives. On a more practical note, the nicely-preserved 917-D will permit the museum to continue showcasing an operational WP freight F while our well-used 921-D undergoes a deserved restoration, leading to the day when the two sisters will again work together on home rails.

Reference:

Joseph Strapac, *Western Pacific's Diesel Years*

## Portola Railroad Museum Master Plan

By Eugene Vicknair

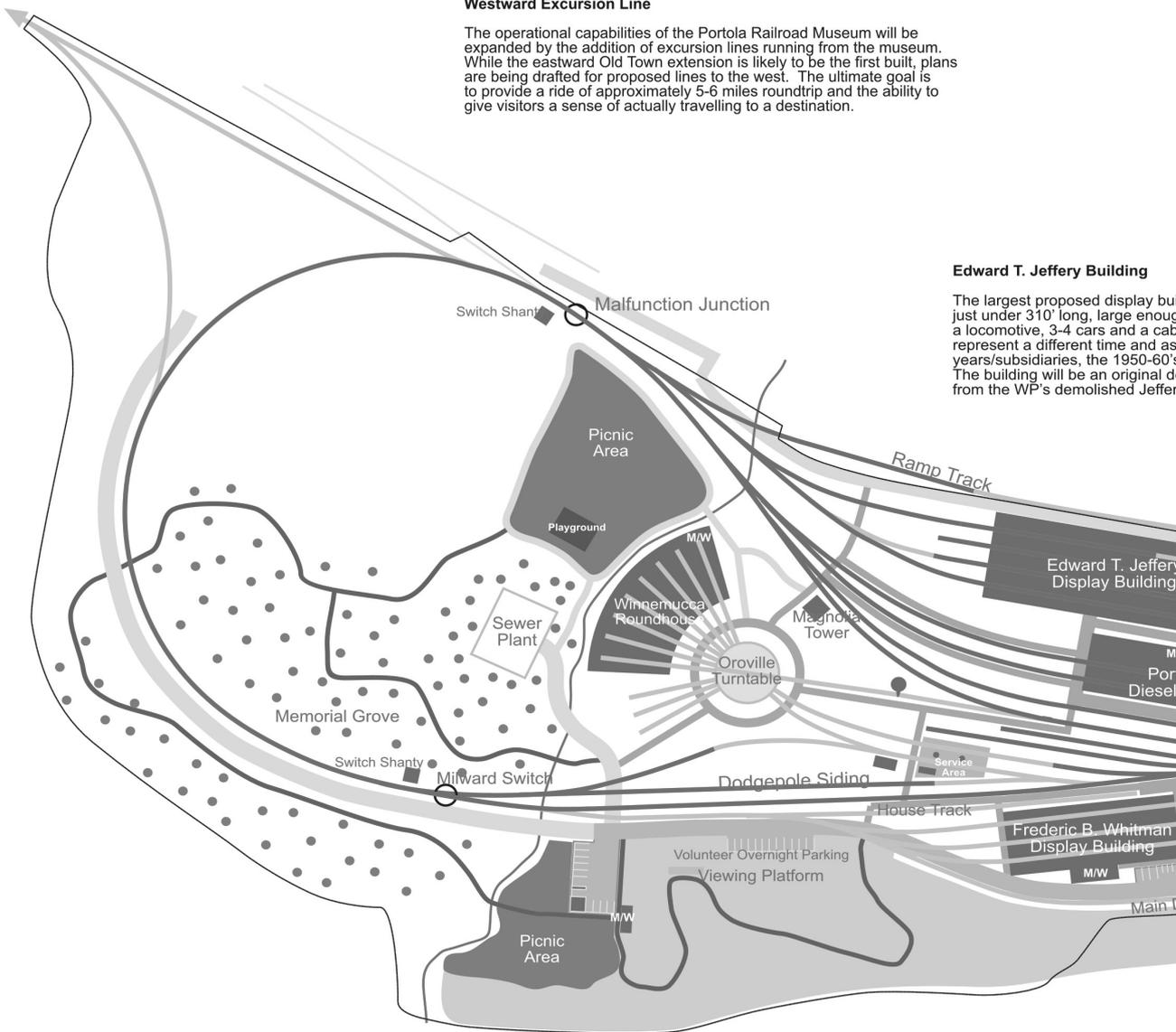
As the FRRS enters its next 20 years, the Portola Railroad Museum is poised to undergo a renaissance in its appearance and layout.

Starting five years ago, an aggressive effort began to define a cohesive master plan for the museum facility. This plan would address several issues with the facility, including a lack of visitor amenities, a need for more covered railcar storage and restoration space, Americans with Disability Act requirements and a desire to present a more polished museum and provide a visual context for the rolling stock.

After spending time holding public meetings, questioning visitors and members, reviewing the results of the museum mission statement survey and exploring the efforts of other rail-

**Westward Excursion Line**

The operational capabilities of the Portola Railroad Museum will be expanded by the addition of excursion lines running from the museum. While the eastward Old Town extension is likely to be the first built, plans are being drafted for proposed lines to the west. The ultimate goal is to provide a ride of approximately 5-6 miles roundtrip and the ability to give visitors a sense of actually travelling to a destination.



**Edward T. Jeffery Building**

The largest proposed display building, just under 310' long, large enough to house a locomotive, 3-4 cars and a caboose. It will represent a different time and place, perhaps the 1950-60's. The building will be an original design from the WP's demolished Jeffery Building.

**Winnemucca Roundhouse  
Oroville Turntable**

replica

Never substantially modified and featuring eight stalls, the Winnemucca Roundhouse is a perfect prototype for a replica roundhouse. Built to the most common of WP's roundhouse plans, it was in use into the diesel era. The 110' Oroville Turntable, the same size once used in Portola, provides an ideal companion to the Roundhouse.

**Frederic B. Whitman Building**

This small display building, located west end of the lower parking lot, will house up to 9 individual pieces of equipment. Displayed here will be the rarer and more delicate items of rolling stock and those that can tell a historic story on their own (such as the WP construction outfit car, WP 2001, etc.) This building will be an original design taking its styling cues from either the DRGW/WP Salt Lake depot or the WP's Oakland depot.

**Replica WP Depot**

Forming the gateway to the museum, the building will be a classic, wood frame structure. After similar structures at Gerlach and Portola, the Depot will house the FRRS Gift Shop. It will provide train boarding for excursions and will be a reproduction of the far west end of the WP's San Jose Depot.

**Magnolia Interlocking Tower**

Now owned by the FRRS, Oakland's Magnolia Tower was built by the Southern Pacific to control the junction with the WP near the Oakland Waterfront. It was at this location that Walter Barnett led a team of workers to cut a crossing into the SP line and break the monopoly on the port. This historically important structure will house the dispatching center for FRRS trackage and function as an interpretive display.

# Master Plan Map of the Portola Railroad Museum

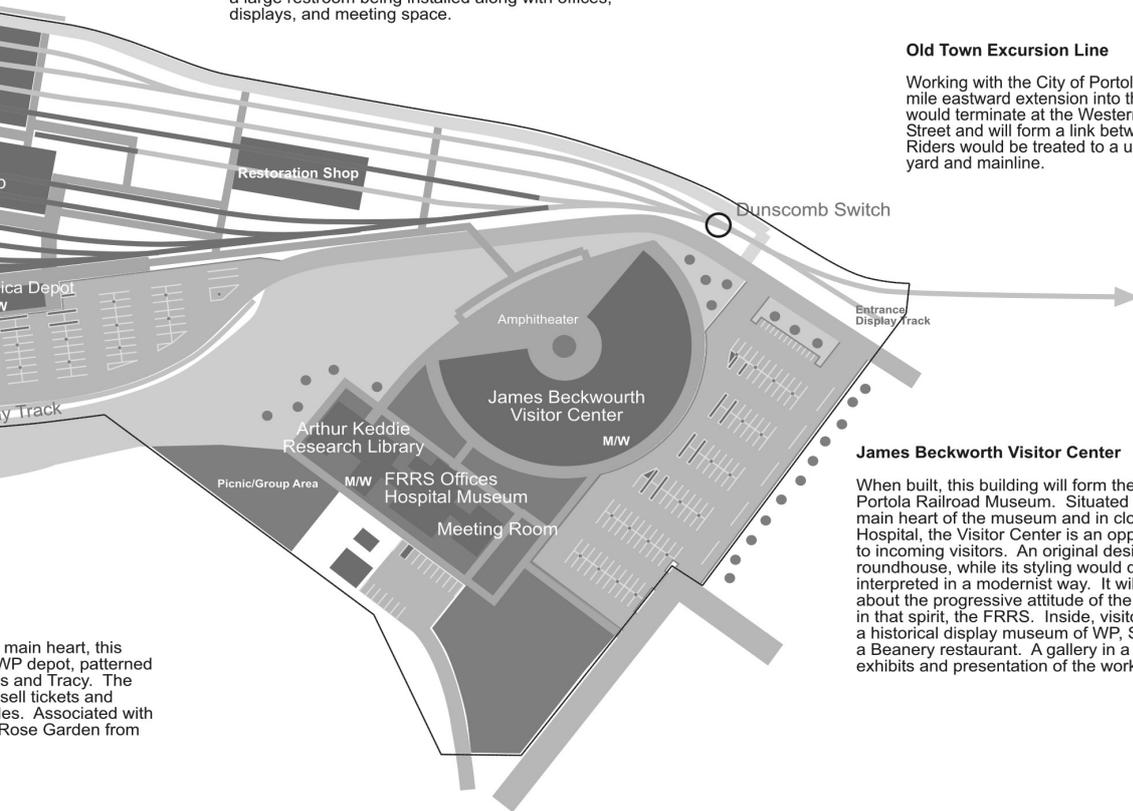
- Existing Trackage
- New Trackage
- Concrete Walkways
- Asphalt Paved
- Gravel
- Dirt Trail
- Water



this structure will be  
house 4 short trains of  
Each train would  
e.: steam era, early  
the pre-merger years.  
taking its styling cues  
Shops in Sacramento.

## Portola Diesel Shop

The original 1954 built diesel shop is the centerpiece structure of the PRM. This structure will be returned to its original function as a working repair shop, with a large restroom being installed along with offices, displays, and meeting space.



## Old Town Excursion Line

Working with the City of Portola, the FRRS hopes to construct a 3/4 mile eastward extension into the heart of Old Town Portola. This line would terminate at the Western Pacific caboose along Commercial Street and will form a link between the museum and the community. Riders would be treated to a unique view of the parallel Union Pacific yard and mainline.

## James Beckworth Visitor Center

When built, this building will form the main, grand entrance to the Portola Railroad Museum. Situated on the hilltop overlooking the main heart of the museum and in close association with the WP Hospital, the Visitor Center is an opportunity to make a bold statement to incoming visitors. An original design, its shape would echo a roundhouse, while its styling would draw on WP, SN and TS influences interpreted in a modernist way. It will be an architectural statement about the progressive attitude of the Western Pacific and, continuing in that spirit, the FRRS. Inside, visitors will find interactive exhibits, a historical display museum of WP, SN and TS artifacts, a Gift Shop and a Beanery restaurant. A gallery in a second story will allow rotating exhibits and presentation of the work of railroad artists and photographers.

main heart, this  
WP depot, patterned  
s and Tracy. The  
sell tickets and  
es. Associated with  
Rose Garden from

## Western Pacific Portola Hospital

The Western Pacific Hospital is the most significant and rare preserved railroad structure owned by the FRRS. Its large interior space and prior uses make it perfectly suited to function as the library and offices for the FRRS. The large west wing is two stories, with large rooms and an open plan. The lower story will function as archives and storage, while the top story will contain the Arthur Keddie Library, research and reading spaces. The center wing will hold a reception area, FRRS general offices and meeting rooms.

road and transportation museums, the FRRS Site Committee began issuing a series of recommendations on the final form of a Site Master Plan.

As currently envisioned, the plan represents a build-out of the PRM facility that includes restorations and replicas of buildings that span the entire history of the WP system, from the Portola Hospital, which began construction in 1914, to the Diesel Shop itself, built in the 1950's. The final piece will be a modernist visitor's center located on the bluff above the main museum and housing our artifact collection and historical displays covering the WP system and its context among the nation's railroads. Display and restoration buildings will be patterned after WP, SN and TS prototypes and create the atmosphere of a working railroad.

Careful attention was paid to placement of both buildings and public access. Development is concentrated in the eastern end of the property, leaving the tree-studded balloon loop area relatively natural. Walkways allow visitors multiple paths through the facility and different vantage points to observe operations. In the museum's main heart, the area between the proposed depot, the Diesel Shop and the replica roundhouse, one will experience locomotives being serviced, crews prepping trains and general the environment of a vibrant railyard. Moving toward the western end of the property, visitors can watch trains roll by while enjoying a walk among the trees or a picnic in a sheltered grove. Inside the balloon loop, near Malfunction Jct., will be a grassy family play area, isolated from the movement of equipment but located to allow good visibility of all operations.

Equipment display is spread among four distinct buildings. The largest will be the Jeffrey Building, a 310' long, 4 track structure that will allow display of representative trains from different eras. The Portola Diesel Shop will continue as a running repair and display facility and provide visitors a change to see and explore our rolling stock as it receives regular TLC. The Whitman Building, located adjacent to the Depot, will hold some of our rarest equipment, those which present a unique, individual story and require special storage and care.

The final display building is a replica of a WP roundhouse. Patterned after the structure that once stood in Winnemucca, NV, this 8 stall roundhouse will be capable of storing a maximum of 16 locomotives, both steam and diesel. The highlight of this building will be the restored Oroville Turntable, which is now owned by the Society. Tracks lead to different service areas for steam and diesel motive power, both easily visible to visitors.

A replica WP depot will house the Gift Shop and ticket office, located in the current parking lot next to the proposed Whitman Building. Patterned after standard WP plans, the depot will be a nice entry into the main heart of the museum. The restored Magnolia Tower will anchor the other end of the facility. Located along the balloon loop, the tower will be returned to functional operation and serve as the dispatching center for the PRM in addition to providing an interactive lesson in the role of interlocking towers to our visitors.

Up on the hillsides above the museum will be the oldest and newest structures in the plan. The WP Hospital will be completely renovated and eventually house the FRRS' library and archives, as well as the Society's business offices and meeting rooms. Additional space will be devoted to displays explaining

the workings of the Hospital and galleries where photos and artwork relevant to the museum's mission can be shown.

The Beckwourth Visitor Center will be the new entrance to the museum. As visitors enter the building, they will find themselves in a great hall with full size locomotives and cars on static display. These will be interactive exhibits that display the technology of railroading and provide a basic understanding of the artifacts they are about to see. The south wing of the building will present artifacts of the railroads in a timeline fashion, allowing one to walk through the complete history of the WP and gain a context for the people and events that coexisted with it. The north wing will house a snack bar/restaurant and another gift shop. Additional space within the visitor center will include an upstairs gallery for temporary exhibits, a children's activity room and meeting rooms that will be open to the community. Visitors will exit the building into a large amphitheater that overlooks the main museum. Tours can start here and open air programs can be held, including historical talks and slide shows.

These are ambitious plans. While they may take years, or even decades, to reach completion, the end goal is the creation of a true experience that showcases the people and history of the Western Pacific and its corporate family and allows the visitor to immerse themselves in the environment, allowing them to gain a better understanding of the role the railroad plays in our lives.

## Sacramento Northern 712

GP7 locomotive, built Electro-Motive Division, 1953

By Eugene Vicknair

SN 712 is the second locomotive we are receiving from the Bay Area Electric Railway Association as part of the groundbreaking trade between our organizations in 2003. It also brings another subsidiary locomotive into our collection, one with a long and interesting history.

WP 712 was built in 1953 as part of the road's second order for narrow hood road diesels. The arrival of GP7s 710-713 signaled the completion of full dieselization of the WP and the last steam locomotives were removed from active service that year. The WP's GP7s and their later kin quickly found jobs in every aspect of WP service, from switching to road freights, while the more numerous FTs and F7s were confined mostly to the mainline. Even as the streamliners were replaced by later high horsepower roadswitchers, the small GPs soldiered on and remained an active part of the roster right up to merger day.

In the 1950's, the Sacramento Northern had decided to abandon its carferry across the San Jouquin River. Heavy trains of steel for the plant in Pittsburg were pounding the mainline and bottleneaking at the venerable carferry "Ramon". With the collapse of the Lisbon Trestle, the SN began detouring over the WP and Santa Fe from Sacramento through Stockton to Pittsburg. To power these trains, the SN purchased F3As from the abandoned New York, Ontario and Western. By 1971, these two engines were wore out and the road needed replacements. The F3s went to WP as trade-in fodder and two GP7s, WP 711 and 712, were transferred to the SN. Along with NW2u 607, transferred from WP in 1973, these were the last locomotive's acquired by SN.

While intended for the *SN Detour* steel trains, the two

geeps actually roamed much of the SN and even back onto the WP, just as their predecessor F-units had done. By the late 1970's, WP power was common on the steel train and the 711 and 712 spent much of their time working the SN lines north out of Marysville, including the *Chico Local*. With the coming of the merger with UP, the SN GPs hung around a little while with a few WP stragglers, then were set aside. While SN 711 was scrapped in 1984 (after being repainted in UP colors and suffering a major mechanical failure shortly thereafter), SN 712 was donated to the BAERA in 1985. When the Association decided to return their focus to electric railroading, the 712 was deemed surplus and became part of the trade with the FRRS.

With the 712 heading to Portola, the FRRS now owns 4 Western Pacific GP7 locomotives and its first SN road unit. The 712 will remain in its SN Perlman Green paint as part of the FRRS collection.

Reference:

Garth G. Groff, "US Steel and the SN Detour" and "All-Time Diesel Roster", *Sacramento Northern On-Line*  
Joseph Strapac, *Western Pacific's Diesel Years*

## Sacramento Northern 2129/2346



40ft wood boxcar

By Eugene Vicknair

In early 2004, the FRRS completed a trade with the Santa Maria Valley Railroad Historical Society that brings Sacramento Northern wood boxcar 2129/2346 into the Portola collection. These cars had a long history on the SN and the WP and the 2149/2346 fills a major gap in our preservation of WP subsidiary equipment.

In 1918, the Sacramento Northern Railroad was formed from the reorganization of the Northern Electric Railway. Owned by the Western Pacific, the new SNRR was severely lacking in viable freight equipment, being equipped with a small fleet of obsolete, truss-rod equipped 36' boxcars. The next year, the road purchased 25 steel underframe wood boxcars from Mt. Vernon Car Manufacturing Company. These 40 ft cars were nearly identical to a design Mt. Vernon built for WP starting in 1917. These cars featured an 8 ft interior height and a capacity of 2723 cubic feet. They rode on arch bar trucks and were equipped with K-brakes and Murphy galvanized metal roofs. Numbered as SN 2129-2153, they became the only SN freight equipment (along with steel underframe auto boxcar 2100) allowed in interchange service after wooden underframe cars were banned in 1928.

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Both the SN and WP fleets would prove to be incredibly long-lived, although WP began tinkering with their own Mt. Vernon cars (WP 16001-18300 and 30001-30200) by the late 1920's. The most prominent change WP made was rebuilding its own cars with steel ends. SN's original cars retained their wooden ends throughout their service lives. Starting in the 1930's, the WP cars began receiving Andrews trucks, although some kept their archbars into the late 1950's. Some in the WP fleet survived in revenue service into the 1960's and many continued in MOW service even longer.

The SN's own fleet had a few more twists and turns in its history. These cars were not included in the conversion to Andrews trucks and were restricted to on-line service after the 1941 archbar ban went into effect. As such, they could only be used on the WP system, which of course included the SN and Tidewater Southern. They were often used in Less than CarLoad (LCL) service on the SN. In 1947, SN received 28 of the WP's rebuilt Mt. Vernon cars, featuring Andrews trucks, AB brakes and steel ends. These cars were numbered 2301-2328 and eventually received the same arched roadname paint scheme as the SN 2129 series.

The 22 surviving original cars were retired from service and an Authorization for Expenditure (AFE) issued in 1947 reports them retired and scrapped. However, they were actually just stored for a year. In 1948, they were unretired and shopped, receiving AB brakes, and renumbered (out of sequence) as SN 2329-2350. Some also received Andrews trucks, although a handful continued to ride on archbars into the 1970's.

As WP's fleet of wood cars dwindled, the SN fleet continued in a variety of services. In 1954, several were transferred to MOW service. By the beginning of the 1960's, many were sold for scrap and most others were transferred to company service. Amazingly, three, SN 2326, 2337 and 2350 were still listed in revenue service in 1969. The last Mt. Vernon car, SN MW02335, was sold in January 1976, having served the SN for 57 years.

SN 2349 became a workshop in Santa Maria, California, minus its trucks and brake gear. In the late 1990's, she was acquired by the Santa Maria Valley Railroad Historical Society with the intent to restore the car to operation. Kept in a sheltered location, the car survived in very good condition, still featuring its original SN paint scheme and a beautiful, varnished wood interior. Car loader marks are still evident chalked in the interior, along with notations of cargos from days gone by. In 2002, a proposal was made to trade one of our Southern Pacific sugar beet gons to SMVRHS in exchange for the 2346. An inspection of the car revealed its original number: SN 2129, the first car of the series.

Spring 2004 is the planned target to transport the SMVRHS' beet gon to its new home in Santa Maria (near the site of the Betteravia Sugar Beet Mill where the car saw service) and bring SN 2129/2346 back to WP rails. A restoration will occur in the future than will reequip the car with appropriate trucks and brakes and return her to service, joining our own WP Mt. Vernon car and looking right at home behind WP 0-6-0 165 or one of our early WP diesels.

Reference:

Garth G. Groff, "40' Wooden Boxcars on the SN", *Sacramento Northern On-Line*

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## Summary of Recent Board Meetings

*Any member in good standing may request a complete copy of the transcript of board meetings from the Society. There is a nominal charge for each copy which covers postage and administrative costs. Full minutes are posted on the FRRSlist hosted by Yahoo Groups.*

### December 2003 Board Meeting

#### Motions and Actions Summary

#### Motions Passed

Consent Motions – Motion 03-12-01

Minutes – Approval of the minutes of the regular meeting held December 6, 2003.

Financial Reports – Removed via motion 03-12-01.

Motions

#### **Motion 03-12-03.. WP 165 Trade**

Acceptance of contract finalizing the trade of UP 737 for WP 0-6-0 165 and sale of the SF 444414 Caboose in the amount of \$5,000 and two pieces of horse drawn fire apparatus as presented, along with authority for the President to sign said contracts. Motion made by Director Brehm, seconded by Director Monger. All Directors present voted in favor – Motion carried.

#### **Motion 03-12-04.. SP 2873 Loan**

Amendment to current contract loaning SP 2873 to Sierra Pacific Industries extending the gratis period for the usage of the locomotive through the end of February 2004, along with authority for the President to sign said amendment. Motion made by Director Brehm, seconded by Director Cochran. All Directors present voted in favor – Motion carried.

#### **Motion 03-12-05.. Cheyenne Business Trip**

Authorization for travel expenses for representative Committee comprised of President McClure and Director Habeck to travel to Cheyenne, WY and said expenses to be posted against budget line item 67310 – Travel & Meals. Motion made by Director Anderson, seconded by Director Brehm. All Directors present voted in favor with the exception of Director Habeck who abstained.– Motion carried.

#### Actions and Notices

Planning continues for the California Zephyr excursions coordinated with the WP Convention in Reno. Chris Skow reported on car availability.

President McClure advised that all required paperwork has been completed and our insurance has been renewed for 2004. He informed the Board that none of our rolling stock has been insured in the past and he is currently exploring insurance for select pieces of our collection.

Director Anderson reported work continues with regard to movement of Quincy 4 to Portola.

Director Habeck stated all batteries have been removed from and all

stacks capped on locomotives with the exception of WP 707, WP 608 and WP 512.

Eighteen ties were replaced under the 2-3 switch with another 14 to go.

Director Vicknair reported 5 sets of left-handed tear drop dome glass windows were donated by the owners of the passenger car “Virginia City”. They have also offered to assist with restoration of the “Silver Hostel” in any way they can.

Director Vicknair reported that Kewit Construction has allowed us more time on the Magnolia Tower. Volunteers from Santa Clara along with Vic Neves have inspected and have a plan to remove the machine from the building. Coots Construction appears to have agreed to the plan to dismantle the building in exchange for forgiving their debt to us.

Election Committee – Ed Wagner reported that he, Jay Sarno and Vic Neves comprise the committee this year and things are moving forward with the elections process.

#### Closed Session

Meeting reconvened to open session at 3:30 pm. Alan Turner reported information regarding noted issues was provided to the Board. Consensus direction was given. No reportable action was taken in closed session.

### January 2004 Board Meeting

#### Motions and Actions Summary

#### Motions Passed

Consent Motions – Motion 04-01-02

Minutes – Approval of the minutes of the regular meeting held December 6, 2003.

Financial Reports – Removed via motion 04-01-01.

Motions

#### **Motion 04-01-03.. Locomotive Battery Acquisition**

Authorization for the President to negotiate for the purchase of seven sets of batteries at a cost of \$1,000 per set, plus a life membership, pending confirmation that they are in good condition via testing, and to be funded from line item 51020-Equipment Maintenance, Mechanical Department, and pending confirmation of available funds per Dan Brady. Motion made by Director McClure, seconded by Director Anderson. All Directors present voted in favor, with the exception of Director Brehm, who voted against – Motion carried.

#### Actions and Notices

President McClure advised the Board that CSRM has stated that they are unable to accommodate our request for meeting space in February due to their “Free Museum Day”. He is working on meeting space at the Oxford Suites in Roseville, CA. **February Meeting WILL BE at Oxford Suites, Roseville.**

## Summary of Recent Board Meetings

Insurance is in place for this year with a minimal increase in cost. This coverage includes general liability, commercial property and business income. It also includes for the first time, property damage insurance on selected pieces of our collection (WP 707, WP 805, WP 2001 and WP 921).

### Closed Session

Adjourned to closed session at 2:05 p.m. and reconvened to open session at 2:35 p.m. President McClure reported out of the session that a report was given regarding possible equipment sale. Direction was given by the Board to the President on this issue. Report was also provided regarding a separate equipment issue with consensus direction given to President.

### February 2004 Board Meeting

#### Motions and Actions Summary

#### Motions Passed

Consent Motions – Motion 04-02-02

Minutes – Approval of the minutes of the regular meeting held January 3, 2004.

Financial Reports – Removed via motion 04-02-01.

#### Motions

##### Motion 04-02-03.. 2004 Budget

Acceptance of proposed 2004 FRRS Budget. Motion made by Director Cochran, seconded by Director Brehm. All Directors present voted in favor with the exception of Director McClure who voted against – Motion carried.

##### Motion 04-02-04.. Policies and Procedures

Renewal of all presented policies for a period of four years with change of wording from “expiration date” to “effective date” with review date to be stated as four years from today. Motion made

### **PRESERVING “THE FEATHER RIVER ROUTE”**

### **WP Lives, in Portola!**

#### Mission Statement

The mission of the Feather River Rail Society is to preserve the history of the Western Pacific Railroad. The secondary mission is to preserve the history of the subsidiary and interchange railroads within the territories it served.

#### Mission Goals

To preserve and interpret the history of the WP, the “Willing People” as a vital link in the development of the rail industry on the West Coast, including the steam and diesel evolution, WP’s influence in the passenger tourism industry, the impact of freight competition between neighboring railroads. WP’s influence in the lumber, mining and agriculture industry from Plumas County throughout California, Nevada and Utah

by Director Stiles, seconded by Director McClure. All Directors present voted in favor – Motion carried.

### Actions and Notices

Union Pacific 4-4-0 737 has been loaded and moved to its new home. Seven sets of lightly used Unipak locomotive batteries were acquired and delivered to the museum. Purchase authorization was for six, but seller threw in an additional slightly damaged set that is still usable. WP FP7 805-A is once again operational. RALs will begin March 1.

John Walker is now Advertising Manager.

Crew Training weekend is scheduled for 05/01-02/04.

Work is progressing on Silver Debris Lounge and Phase 1 Walkways.

### Closed Session

Reconvened to open session 3:54 pm. President McClure reported that an equipment issue was discussed. Consensus direction was provided by the Board and no action was taken.

respectfully submitted by Eugene Vicknair, secretary

## From the Editor

By Frank Brehm

First of all I must apologize for the lateness of this issue. Believe me it was not planned! I have been very busy with some personal items and time just kept slipping away. Hopefully the other items that have taken so much of my time will be completed very soon and I can fully concentrate on this as well as the other duties I have helping the FRRS.

On another note I hope you enjoy this issue and again we are asking for member feedback concerning the society and what we can do better to serve you, the membership.

If you get the chance drop us a line or better yet stop by and say Hi.

## Upcoming Events

**April..** Prepare for Operating Season Hours: 10 AM – 5 PM  
3 Board Meeting - 1 PM Portola  
3-4 Locomotive Maintenance Clinic, Facilities Work Weekend  
16-17 WPRRHS Convention Reno, NV  
20 Election Ballots mailed to membership  
24-25 Track Work Weekend  
30 Train Sheet Deadline

**May..** Prepare for Operating Season Hours: 10 AM – 5 PM  
1 Board Meeting - 1 PM Portola, Appoint Election Tellers  
1-2 Crew Training/Rules Exam, Locomotive Maintenance Clinic  
15-16 Track Work Weekend  
22-23 Facilities Work Weekend  
28 Ballot Return Deadline – 5 PM  
29 Operating Season Opens  
31 Memorial Day



**The Train Sheet**  
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