

THE

# TRAIN SHEET

News from the Feather River Rail Society



Fall/Winter 2015  
Issue 169

**-THE TRAIN SHEET-**

News from the Feather River Rail Society and the Western Pacific Railroad Museum at Portola

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**FEATHER RIVER RAIL SOCIETY  
WESTERN PACIFIC RAILROAD  
MUSEUM at PORTOLA**

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The museum grounds are open to the public from 10:00am until 5:00pm daily from the last Sunday in April through the first Monday in November. The diesel shop is open during this time.

Train operations begin the last Saturday in May and continue each weekend through the first Monday in September, as well as on major holidays between these dates.

Museum grounds are closed to the public from the first Tuesday in November through the Friday before the last Saturday in April except for special events for which advanced arrangements have been made. If you wish to visit during the closure period, it is advisable to call in advance and find out if the museum will be open.

Entrance to the museum for members is free. Non-members are required to pay an admission fee, details are inside this issue on the inside of the back cover.

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 Western Pacific Railroad Museum in Portola, California.

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

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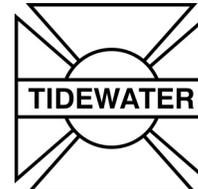
On the Cover

WP 707 sits on the West Pass at the WPRM on a sunny Father's Day in 2015. 707 will soon be used to bring a passenger special into the museum for servicing on this fine day.

Greg Elems photo.

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**- WEB PAGES of INTEREST -**

FRRS Official Site	www.WPLives.org
CZ Virtual Museum	calzephyr.railfan.net
California Zephyr	californiazephyr.org
Western Pacific Pages	www.WPLives.com
WP Virtual Museum	wpmuseum.railfan.net
Sac Northern On-Line	www.WPLives.org/SN
Tidewater Southern Pages	www.TidewaterSouthern.com
Tidewater Southern	www.5.pair.com/rattenne/WP/TidelIndex.htm
Central California Traction	www.trainweb.org/tractionco/

**2014 Santa Trains**

—Steve Habeck  
Santa Train Project Manager

For 2014, the FRRS Board and President McClure agreed with my plan to run the event on three Saturdays in December (the 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup>), with the caveat that the event at least cover its costs. In the past, the Santa Trains, although very popular, wound up costing the FRRS money to run. The recent change of charging admission at the gate, and adding the option of donating non-perishable food items for a discounted admission, as suggested and started by Director Gail McClure a couple of years ago, was instrumental at reducing our costs, and the efforts that went into this year's events succeeded in generating income for the FRRS.

Debra Baer volunteered to take on the task of advertising for the Santa Trains, using most of the budgeted funds left in the advertising account. Her efforts, I believe, had by far the most impact on the success of the events. Starting in late October, she arranged for ads in the Feather Publishing family of papers, based in Quincy (weekly papers in Quincy, Portola, Westwood, Chester, Indian Valley, and Susanville), as well as an ad in the Reno Gazette-Journal's special section that came out right after Thanksgiving. Additionally, she (and husband, Director Kirk Baer) paid for and distributed 50 posters advertising the events. She also worked with the Portola Rotary, who allowed the use of their portable, illuminated sign trailer to advertise the Santa Trains. The trailer was placed at the corner of Highway 70 and Gulling Street. She also worked with Audrey Ellis from the Eastern Plumas Chamber of Commerce, who provided a web page advertising our event, and provided a link to MapQuest and Google Maps for us. Audrey also passed out fliers for the Santa Train at her expense. Having Debra and Kirk being able to devote the time to the advertising campaign left more time for the rest of us to complete our preparations. The bar has been set high for the future, for sure.

The Santa Trains are probably the most labor and volunteer intensive events the FRRS runs. Preparations start in early October, with the staging of the caboose train along the shop so power can be run to the train for setup, and placing the baggage car and *Silver Plate* in the shop so power cords can be run and decorations can be put up. The team that has taken care of these cars for the past few years, continuing the ideas first put forth by Director Gail McClure, is

now led by my daughter, Kathy Errecart, and my sister-in-law, Vickie Krois, assisted by my wife, Mary, daughter Jennifer, sister-in-law Susie Johnson, Vickie's friend Eddie, Kathy's husband Kevin, Jennifer's fiancé Justin, and my grandson Zayden. They also had assistance this year from Kirk and Debra Baer, as well as from David "Fritz" Elems. After I spend a couple of days running 12 power cords into the baggage car (5 for coffee pots and water dispensers, 5 for heaters, and 2 for lights) and 5 cords into the *Plate* (2 for heaters, 2 for Christmas lights, and one for car lights), Vickie and Kathy's team spends 5-7 workdays setting up these cars, and the results are dramatic. Hopefully some photos (again, thanks to Debra Baer for being the photographer) will accompany this report, although photos just don't do these cars justice. The overall effect can best be summed up by one of the first visitors to enter the baggage car on the first weekend: she came in about five steps, stopped, looked around, wide-eyed, and exclaimed, "Ohhh my God!". This was repeated just a minute or two later by the next lady to enter the car. Of course, the effect continues throughout the car and into the diner. Attention to detail is everywhere.

Out on track 3, I have a system set up for putting the 8000 or so lights on the caboose train. First, with a power cord run to the MoPac caboose, I set this hack up as a workshop for staging and testing lights. We use this caboose since it has two large storage areas, that we can lock, where we store all the Christmas lights for the train, front gate, fence, and shop areas. I also have a heater set up in the caboose for use when I'm working out on the train, and need a place to warm up. This caboose is also where the power for the entire train is fed from, so it's a logical place to start. It usually takes about 10 to 20 days to complete the lighting of the train, spread out over 3-4 weeks (I still have a real job to protect, too), but the end result is always worth the effort. I also spent an afternoon putting up some lights at the Museum's front gate, and, this year, with the UP 105 in the shop, I added Christmas lights to the end railing of the car.

We also decorate about 150 feet of the fence along the parking lot on each side of the main entrance with Christmas lights. Using tried and true methods, Director Charlie Spikes and Duane VanderVeen take care of stringing these lights and the power cords, and then troubleshooting them to get them all working.

Also, Matt and David Elems (aka Poindexter and Fritz, the Bicker Brothers) took

care of filling the fuel cans with gas and diesel, so we'd have fuel for the generator and the cabooses stoves (which burn diesel). After the Elems' filled the tanks on the 3 cabooses with working stoves, Eddie Powell came over a couple of times to work on the fussy carburetors on the stoves, and was successful in getting all three of them to work. Having heat in three of the four cabooses is a big plus with many of the visitors.

Meanwhile, many folks were busy at home, baking cookies for distribution at the events, including my wife Mary, daughters Kathy and Jennifer, Debra Baer, Patricia Ryan (Friends of Portola Railroad Days Committee), Linda Merchant (I Love Portola Committee), Pat Morton (former City Council member), and others (whose names I regretfully misplaced). Special mention goes to Rick Gruninger's friend Leisa, who showed up the first weekend with several boxes of customized goodies that had obviously been labored over for quite a while, and had everyone in awe. Several of us (myself, the McClures, Kerry Cochran, David Elems, and Director Greg Elems) gathered (and donated) other supplies (coffee, cocoa, cider, tea, and candy canes) needed for the events.

So now, the first Santa Train date, December 6<sup>th</sup>, is almost here, and several weeks of preparation are almost done, as well. Kirk and Debbie picked up the light plant from J's Feather River Rentals that we use to light up the parking lot, and things are ready to go. Ann Powers, the Portola reporter for Feather Publishing, wrote up a nice article on the Museum following a tour I gave her before the Santa Train preps started, and it ran two weeks before the first event, followed by the ad we bought the next week. All we can do now is hope for the best.

Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup> (and the following 2 Saturdays, December 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>): Although the first Santa Train won't depart until 5 PM, several volunteers, including myself, are at the Museum by noon. The passenger cars in the shop are dark and cold; soon the heaters and lights are on, warming and brightening the interiors, and setting the mood. Shop lights are turned on, the UP 105 business car lights are turned on, the gift shop lights are turned on (and the heaters behind the counter for Gail and Jasmine are also turned on), and the heaters in the meeting room are fired up, providing a warm place for the volunteers while on break.

Soon, the next wave of volunteers arrives, and things really get going. Coffee pots are filled, heating up water for hot chocolate and tea, while another pot brews fresh coffee, with

the aroma filling the baggage car. Cookies and treats are set up, candy canes are stacked at the ready for Santa and Mrs. Claus, and last-minute cleanup takes place. Several CD's of Christmas music are loaded into the CD player in the *Silver Plate*, and soon the sounds of Christmas complete the setting. Outside, more volunteers are preparing the SP 2873 for service: checking fluids, watering up the engine, and starting it up, allowing it to warm up. Also, SP 1100, our TR6A, was moved to the end of track at the front gate, and a Santa figure was placed in the cab, waving at the visitors as they drive by, lit up by the cab light. Back at the shop, the cabooses stoves are lit and tended to by Eddie Powell, warming up the cars for the evening. And, it's only about 3 PM!

Just before the crew safety briefing takes place, the fence lights, front gate lights, outside building lights, and the parking lot light plant are fired up. It's only a bit after 4 PM, but several visitors are already milling around the Museum. The gas-powered generator is placed on the MoPac caboose, and, after a bit of reluctance, was started, lighting up the Santa Train. Now, with everything ready, job assignments are made, and everyone heads out to their positions. Right on time, Santa (Dave Rudolph) arrives, greets everyone, and heads to his staged seat in the baggage car, soon joined by Mrs. Claus (Linda Knutson). Their seats are backed up by a train mural hung from the wall, providing a great prop for the kids' photos with them throughout the evenings. It's Santa Train time!

The Santa Train (GP9E SP 2873, and cabooses UP 25283, MP 13878, UP (RI) 24592, and UP 25732, all lit up with LED lights) makes it's first run at 5 PM, and then runs as often as necessary (load & go) until around 8 PM, or until the crowds thin out. The train starts out from the boarding area on track 3 alongside the shop and proceeds west, going around the balloon and then coming up the south lead, running east along the parking lot to clear the pedestrian crossing. This gives visitors just arriving or leaving a good view of the train in motion. The train then backs up, utilizing a shop light mounted on the railing of the UP 25732 as a backup light, and returns to the loading area, where passengers are exchanged, and the process repeats.

Running trains at night, at a museum, in the cold, with the general public as passengers, including lots of young children, requires competent operating personnel, attention to detail, and teamwork to be successful. We have accomplished that with the volunteer team that

stepped up to handle this task. I have high praise for everyone who helped make these events a success (the baggage car crew, mentioned earlier, also were the ones who served the cookies and drinks, and most of them were there for all 3 nights). Special mention goes out to Bart Hansen, who did a fantastic job as conductor for all 3 nights, David Elems, who was anywhere we needed him to be all 3 nights, Director Charlie Spikes, who, in addition to working as engineer on the trains, took care of watering up the kitchen area each event afternoon, and then draining it again after the event, to prevent freeze damage to the water system, and Duane VanderVeen, who helped with the water system, and assisted Director Kirk Baer collecting admissions and food items at the front gate. Others who served on the train crews, in various positions as they rotated through, included David Hanson (Bart's dad, who is also a Director for the local electrical cooperative), R. Hanson (Bart's brother), Matt Elems, Director Greg Elems, Loren Ross, Ed Powell, Matt Shuman, Ron Huey, Rick Gruninger, Kevin Errecart, Randy Morton, Ethan Doty, his girlfriend Ali, and his dad. If I have omitted anyone, my sincere apologies for my failing memory (I did refer to the volunteer sign-in book, as well, so make sure you sign in when you're at the Museum).

FRRS President Rod McClure also was there for 2 of the events to oversee things and assist in parking control and grounds security. Director Gail McClure was also at two of the events, handling the Gift Shop, assisted by Jasmine, who was in the store for all 3 events. Out at the front gate, Director Kirk Baer, his wife Debra, Duane VanderVeen, and Ethan Doty's dad, among others, all worked in the cold to collect admissions, count cars, and gather the donated food items for the events.

It should be noted here that the spirit of WP's Willing People was alive and well at the Santa Trains, with President Rod McClure, Directors Greg Elems and Kirk Baer, and Randy Morton, all hired by the WP (and, except for Kirk, who is retired, still working for the railroad) all volunteering to help make these events a success.

Special thanks go out to Dave Rudolph and Linda Knutson, who have played Santa and Mrs. Claus at our Santa Trains for several years now. Their willingness to sit with countless children and pose for photo after photo for several hours contributes immensely to the success of our events; just having them there completes the setting we're trying to achieve.

After the crowds have thinned out, the focus shifts to closing things up. Caboose stoves are allowed to burn out, the engine is shut down and drained, generators and lights are shut down, coffee pots and drain tanks are emptied, trash is collected and dumped, the kitchen water system is drained, and the volunteer crew gathers in the *Silver Plate* for pizza, provided by myself and my wife (6<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>) and the McClure's (13<sup>th</sup>). After enjoying pizza and conversation, the last of the trash is dumped, the lights and heaters are turned off, the building is locked up, and the front gate is closed and locked. The Museum returns to off-season slumber.

Following the 3<sup>rd</sup> Santa Train event, the usual cast of characters returns to put everything away and allow the Museum to move on to other needs for the winter. First, the baggage car crew comes in and takes everything down in the passenger cars, boxing it all up for return to storage in one of our boxcars. Then, the power cords are removed from the cars, allowing them to be moved outside to free up shop space for planned winter projects. Charlie and Duane removed all the lights and cords from the fence, and I got everything removed from the front gate. David and Matt Elems worked with the baggage car crew to get everything back into the boxcar. By the end of 2014, the only thing left to do is clear the lights off the Santa Train itself, which I worked on as time (and health issues) allowed. By mid-February, that task is completed. All the lights and stuff are locked up in the MoPac caboose lockers, and the cabooses themselves are locked up for the winter. We're ready for the summer season.

The Santa Trains generated income for the FRRS by charging admission at the front gate of \$10 per carload, or \$5 per carload with a donation of 3 non-perishable food items, which we collected for donation to the EPCAN (Eastern Plumas Community Action Network) food bank. With car counts of 119, 107, and 111 for the three events, over 1150 pounds of food items were collected for EPCAN, and cash income for the FRRS was nearly \$3200 in gate admissions and donations, and cash in donation boxes in the UP 105 and the *Silver Plate*. Gift Shop sales are not included in these figures. Expenses attributed to the Santa Trains came to about \$1850, including the electric bill (high due to the number of electric heaters in use, plus all the lighting in the building and cars), advertising, rental of the light plant used to light up the parking lot, and supplies. As can be seen, this

resulted in a profit for the FRRS in excess of \$1300, which is directly attributable to the dedication and drive of the FRRS volunteers who made it happen. As Project Manager for the Santa Trains, I cannot thank all of these people enough, and I hope many of you will be back next fall to do it all again. The 2015 Santa Trains will run on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup>. Come up and see what a dedicated group of volunteers can do; you'll be impressed.

## Waking a Tired Workhorse: Bringing WP917D into service for 2015

– David Elems (“Fritz”)

Following the troubles with getting 917 to turn over on March 4, Poindexter (Matt Elems) and I decided to put the batteries on a charger for a couple of days. I returned two days later on the sixth and found the voltage of the batteries had come up and that the charger was putting out the expected amperage.

Hopeful that I'd finally get the prime mover to turn over I started watering up the locomotive, leaving the charger hooked up as long as possible. While waiting for the cooling system to fill, I opened all the cylinder relief valves and barred the engine over to clear the cylinders. Eventually the cooling system was filled; at 200 gal, it takes some time. Once the charger was disconnected and all the cords and the hose pulled, I gave it another go. Giving the layshaft a couple of inches I pushed the start button; the engine turned over, but not fast enough. At this point I suspected a problem with the batteries, and decided that it would be best to not draw a load from them until checking their condition. Voltage wise they hadn't dropped significantly, which means the batteries were low on water or there was a shorted cell. Steve Habeck, the keeper of the batteries, was thus sent a text message of the situation. At that point nothing could really be done until the next day in which Steve and I would have to take a look at the batteries.

The following day, being Saturday the seventh, was a board meeting day. Following the board meeting a group gathered at the West end of the shop for the verdict on the batteries. Each battery was checked individually while the engine was turned over (via the starting circuit). The discovery being that the fireman's side battery had indeed developed a short. The decision was made to pull the batteries and

replace them with the ones in the rotary plow snail. This would have to wait though, due to scheduling constraints from my classes and other people's work schedules. It would be another week and a half before anything more would be attempted.

I arrived early on Thursday the 19, and set about cleaning in and about the machine shop, waiting for Habeck and Poindexter to arrive. About an hour later, I was greeted by McClain and Whetstone who had come up to install the hydraulic rams back onto the white forklift and continue repairs to QRR 1100.



*WP 917's right side battery box, prior to cleaning. Regular cleaning helps slow the corrosive effects of battery chemicals on the metal of the locomotive. The wood lining prevents terminals from inadvertently touching the metal body.*

– David Elems Photo

With their help 917 was moved over the oil pan, a location more readily accessible by the electric forklift. Within an hour and a half Steve arrived, and work could finally begin on getting the batteries swapped. The batteries were removed and the battery boxes washed out. Clean battery boxes are important!

While waiting for the battery boxes to dry, Habeck and I needed to rearrange the battery house to get 917's former batteries put away. It's a little easier to walk inside, having swapped the over-sized pallets by the large swing door with one of a more reasonable size.

Having completed the task of getting the batteries put away and the battery house arranged to Habeck's liking, we then took a brief respite while we waited for Poindexter to arrive. Luckily that wasn't long, and we were back to work within the hour.



*Steve Habeck applies terminal protector after installing the lead connector, while Poindexter waits at the helm of the electric forklift. It's important to remember to use protection.*

– David Elems Photo

At this point we had to fire SP2873 back up and pull four rail to get the rotary set over to a 'forklift accessible' location. Once both batteries were removed from the rotary snail, everything was put back on four rail and 917 was spotted at the loading platform alongside three rail. Before placing the batteries into 917 we decided this would be an opportune time to service them, and both batteries had their water levels topped off. We were about to start putting batteries back in 917 when we noticed that the connectors were different; both locomotive and batteries had male connector ends. We utilize welding lead connectors to ease in connection/disconnection of batteries during servicing. Luckily the connectors are not hard to swap, and soon we were back to the task at hand.

WP917D was now complete, with two serviced batteries. All that was left to do was place them on a charger overnight. A cord was ran into the cab, and the charger turned on; initial output was 11 amps. This dropped to 8 amps after about an hour or so. Steve figured that the engine would be able to be fired up the next day.

I arose from my berth in the Edenwold sleeper next morning around 07:45. It was March 20, the first day of spring; and an uncomfortably warm morning. The Battery charger on 917 had dropped down to 6 amps overnight. At 13:30 I flashed the engine and started filling the cooling system. With the locomotive being parked at the water riser, I was able to use a

shorter hose that didn't leak; filling time was 26 minutes.

This time around, the engine turned over and fired. Mechanically the engine ran pretty good, aside from the smoking rear stack. The only issue at this point was an air leak at the drain valve on the number one main res. tank, which wasn't to big of a problem. The repair work done by Etan Doty back in January also seems to have held up; the oil jumpers between governor and load regulator are leak free as is the water hose on the block discharge header. The engine loaded up in both directions and is more or less ready for the coming season.

The following day I returned to the museum to repair the leaking valve. My father, Greg Elems, drove out with me for assistance. We fired up SP2873 and let it warm up, as we would need it to move 917 from the pan to the loading platform were there is enough ground clearance to crawl under the locomotive. This also allowed for some running inspections of top deck of 2873's prime mover, which still has a slight knocking; it would seem to have a sticky hydraulic lash adjuster on one of the valve bridges of the number one cylinder. Once 2873 was warm enough for operation, 917 was spotted in position for repairs.

I worked on getting the valve off the air tank and then repaired on the work bench while Dad scraped reflective striping off WP1503 to help prep it for painting this season. The valve had lost two of the four nuts that hold it together because the threads on the associated bolts had been stripped. This allowed the valve body to partially separate. Once rebuilt, the valve was reinstalled and 917 was fired up again for more inspections. With my fathers help I was able to trace the knocking and smoking of the rear stack to the number nine cylinder, which is next on my list for maintenance.

At the moment, the unit is ready for service.



NECH.  
DEPT.

## FRRS Begins Display Building Project

—Eugene Vicknair

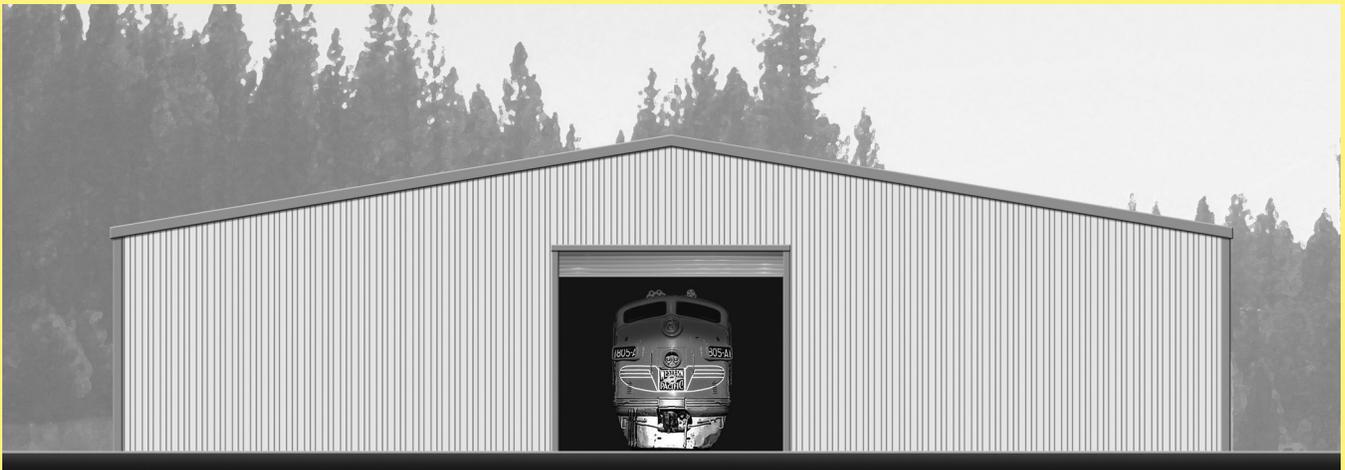
The FRRS has taken a big step toward building our first permanent display building. In February, we were contacted by a steel building manufacturer. They had a 100 foot wide by 200 foot long prefab steel building with 20 foot eaves available for less than half of its retail cost. A customer's needs had 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.

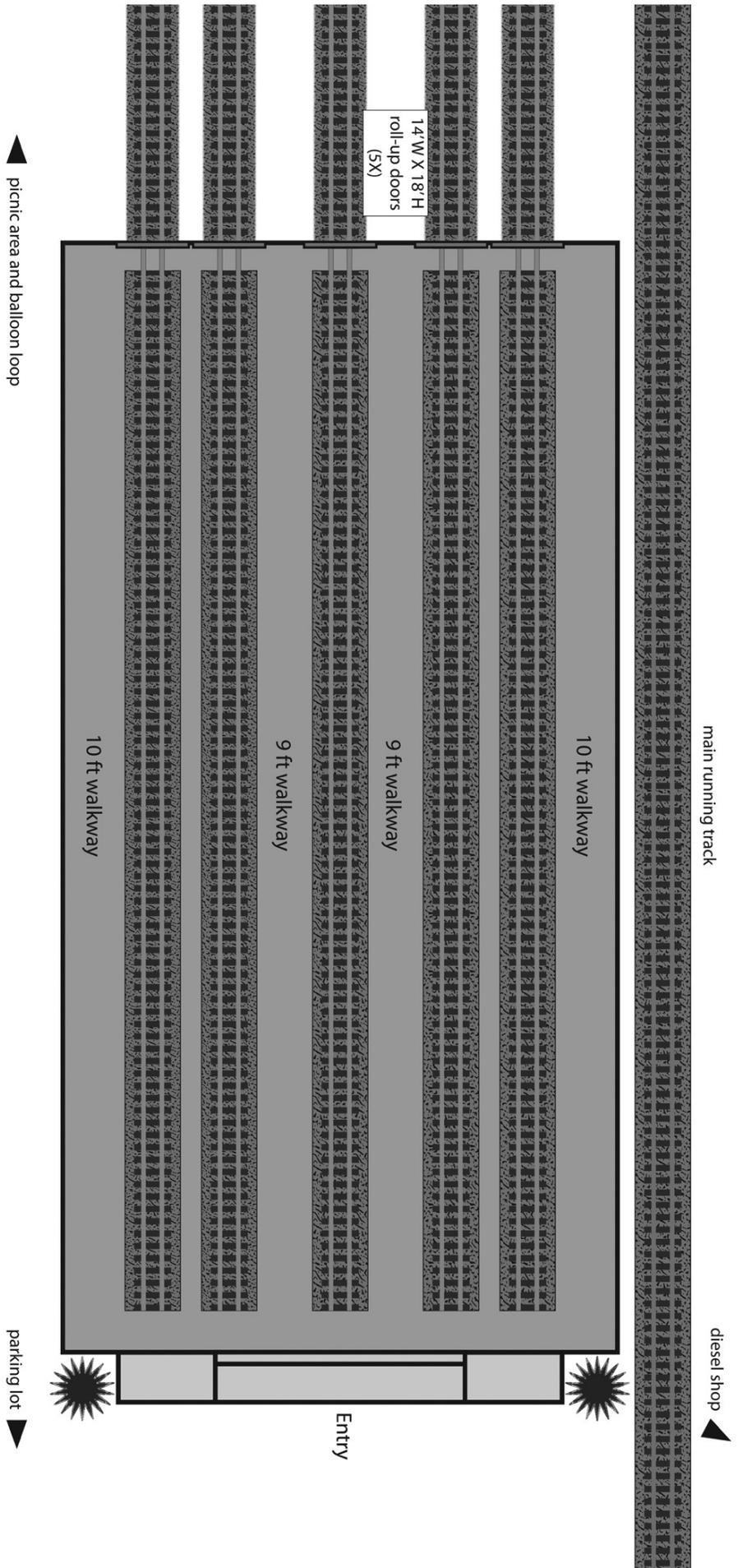
The construction of dedicated covered storage is a critical and needed step in the evolution of the Western Pacific Railroad Museum. While restored equipment is exciting and looks great, stored outside it eventually begins to weather and wear, even with the best of care. With this new building, we can 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



### Whitman Display Building, Interior

Layout of the five tracks and internal walkways for the new building. The layout maximizes usable space while providing wide aisles for viewing by the public. The building will provide much needed covered storage for the collection's important equipment and equipment that needs to be sheltered from the elements.

## 2015 Western Pacific Historic Convention Report

—Eugene Vicknair, Convention Chair

The 2015 Historic Convention was held April 24-25, 2015 in Elko, Nevada, with a special charter trip to the Nevada Northern Railway Museum in Ely, NV on Sunday, April 26. This was our first convention to be held east of Reno, NV and we attracted a lot of folks from Elko and Salt Lake City, including several former Western Pacific and Southern Pacific employees. Some current Union Pacific folks also dropped in as Elko is a crew terminal and we offered special admission to crews on layover for the clinics.

The shows this year drew a lot of positive comment for their depth of information and level of presentation. They included two shows by Nevada Northern museum personnel on Friday, with former Western Pacific engineer Harry Baynes sharing his stories of working for the railroad and NNRy Executive Director Mark Bassett giving a talk on the Nevada Northern and its relationship with the WP.

Jeff Moore gave a great look at the McCloud River Railway and its importance to the WP and the Highline, with an in depth look at the history and traffic between the two roads. Wayne Monger started things off on Friday with a look at the WP's operations in Nevada and Utah and also had a detailed look at the difficult work involved in building through Flowery Lake Pass in Nevada.

We had two newly scanned, high resolution films from the Virgil Staff collection, one showing a ride on the *California Zephyr* in 1967-68 starting in Fremont, California and ending in Oroville. The other was, appropriately enough, a look at the east end of the WP starting just west of Salt Lake City and ending in Portola. For modelers, there was a clinic on car weathering by Bill Meeker and a modeling segment on the WP's SW1500 switchers. The SW1500 show was a group effort that covered the WP's efforts to order new switchers starting in the late 1960s, the delivery and use of the 1500s through their WP and UP days and finishing with their



**Riding behind NNRy 40 at Keystone, NV**

*NNRy excursion – A group of WP Convention attendees travelled to Ely, NV for a special tour and charter steam train ride on Sunday, April 26. Here the four car train, with vista flat and Kennecott caboose trailing, climbs toward the still active mine at Ruth, NV, behind 1910 built 4-6-0 Nevada Northern 40.*

eventual retirement and the preservation of the 1503 by the FRRS. Contributors to the SW1500 included Al Fonseca, Dave Stanley, Rod McClure, Frank Brehm, Mike Mucklin, Greg Elems, Ted Benson and many more.

Saturday's presentations closed out with a show by Eugene Vicknair on WP's obscure subsidiary the Deep Creek Railroad, which ran from Wendover, Utah to Gold Hill, Utah and a great look at the last days of Sacramento Northern's electric operations on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their end by Matthew Vurek and Edward F. Graham.

On Friday afternoon, Rod McClure and Steve Habeck, both Union Pacific employees, gave driving tours of the UP's Elko Yard and some historic WP locations around town. Thank you to Rod and Steve for donating their time and to Rod for donating the rental of a large van for the tours. Everyone seemed to enjoy the tours a great deal and we are going to look for opportunities to do similar events at future conventions.

The Saturday banquet speaker was former WP employee Michael Kessler who also brought a large amount of his railroad memorabilia collection. His stories of working for the WP were very informative and entertaining and he stayed around after the banquet to answer questions and show off his collection. Thank you, Mike for being a great speaker!

The vendor room included the Museum Store, staffed by Gail McClure, and Brad Lomazzi, dealer in railroad collectibles. Brad made several donations to our archives from his photo collections. We also had specially retouched prints from the FRRS archives for sale and an exhibit of archives materials. About 10 new members signed up as part of the convention. Welcome to you all!

The raffle drew a lot of prize donations this year and raised several hundred dollars for the archives. Donations came from Peter Arnold, Kadee Quality Products, Broadway Limited, Kalmbach Publishing, railroad artist Marc



***Nevada Northern Shop Tour***

*Mark Bassett and the NNRy staff were fantastic. Thank you to all of them for giving our charter group a great tour and excursion. Here, Mark takes part of the group on a tour of the massive engine house at Ely. Visible are an SD9 and an RS3.*

Desobeau, Woodland Scenics, Signature Press, Shade Tree Press, the FRRS Museum Store and others. Thank you to all our raffle donors and we ask our members to remember these fine individuals and companies.

The finale to the entire event was a spectacular charter trip to Ely, Nevada via motor coach where we were treated to a catered lunch by Silver State Restaurant (1204 Aultman Street, Ely, NV; be sure to visit and say hi when you are in Ely!).

The group had some time to look around the historic depot and its upstairs museum before boarding a special FRRS only train heading toward Ruth and pulled by classic 4-6-0 steamer #94. Two photo run-bys were held just west of the East Ely yard during the 2-1/2 hour trip.

The train then returned to the yard and dropped us near the shops and enginehouse for a guided tour by NNRy Executive Director Mark Bassett. The tour explored every inch of the massive shop and house building, and then moved to the

Repair In Place building which held even more treasures.

The bus ride back included a quick stop at the NN station site of Currie and an inspection of the still standing depot there. Thank you to the entire Nevada Northern staff for giving our convention guests a great day on the railroad!

Planning for the 2016 convention is already in full swing. We are looking at either Lodi or Modesto in the Central Valley of California. Either way, we have some special events that will go along with these locations. The preliminary schedule is for April of 2016, so mark your calendar. We should be announcing details soon.

Thank you to everyone who joined us in Elko! And thank you to all the presenters and volunteers who made it happen.



### **Currie**

*On the way back to Elko, the Nevada Northern charter group had a brief stop at the NNRy station of Currie and got a chance to examine the depot there.*

## 2015 Crew Training Recap

– Rick Gruninger  
WPRM Superintendent of Operations

Our Operations Department Crew Training was very well attended and received this year. My personal heartfelt "Thank You" goes to Kerry Cochran, David Elems, Paul Finnegan and Greg Elems for their positive, professional, and "hands on" assistance and teachings for our Students. It truly was a team accomplishment.

Subjects covered were SAFETY, Organizational structure (FRRS and Operations), Positive Relationships with our Patrons and fellow Volunteers, Train Operations, Hand Signals and, yes, some good solid "hands on" work.

Here is how the numbers broke out:

Overall attendance: 4/11, 4/12, 5/2 (5/3 was annulled)

- 1) 25 total Students. 27 participants.
- 2) ALL 25 Students Passed. With a noticeably higher average test score than in years past!
- 3) 21 of the Students are returning Veterans of our Operations Department.
- 4) 4 attendees are brand new to our Organization & Department.
- 5) 2 Students are Female.
- 6) 3 returning Veterans have returned after a hiatus.

I am very proud to share that the Operations Department is very much alive and well at the WPRM and FRRS. The participants in this year's Operations Training are bright, energetic, and willing to bring the quality of service needed to be a Top Notch leader in our field. Please support them.

It is not too late for additional Members to be part of the Operations Department. There will most likely be one last Training session, potentially in July. Please keep an eye on I-Volunteer and our website calendar for the date.

## Operations Department Updates

– Rick Gruninger  
WPRM Superintendent of Operations

### July 2015

The Operations Department is pleased to announce that:

- Bil "One L" Jackson has successfully been re-qualified as a Qualified Brakeman, Conductor, and Fireman. Bil has worked very diligently at his Operations Qualifications. Please welcome & support Bil in his efforts to make a positive difference for our Museum, its patrons, and Volunteers.
- David Elems has completed his Student Passenger Engineer training with flying colors. He awaits a DSLE check out ride. We are confident that David will proof. (No pressure, David.)
- Kerry, Paul, and I have begun working on clarifying and finalizing Ops Department processes, issues, and items of confusion that have developed over many years.

### August 2015

The WPRM Operating Department is proud to announce that:

- Harvey Duncan has been promoted to Qualified Brakeman. Harvey has worked diligently at his Railroad skills. He has participated in WPRM activities on a regular basis this season. Please Congratulate Harvey on his promotion and job well done.

### September 2015

The WPRM Operations Department is proud to announce that:

- David Elems has been Qualified as a WPRM Passenger Engineer. This is the highest qualification in our Engine Service Program. Hyper-Kudos David! Our Patrons and Crews are well served with you behind the throttle.
- Loren Ross has been officially appointed as Assistant Yardmaster for the WPRM. Loren has all of the skill sets and experience needed to make "The Yard" operate properly, smoothly, & efficiently. Happy to have you on the team, Loren. Welcome!
- David Epling has been Qualified as a WPRM Passenger Engineer. David brings years of positive WPRM experience to the table. We are all in good hands with David at the helm of one of our Locomotives.

## Museum Web Page Update

– Paul Finnegan

After many years as the society's webmaster, Tom Carter has passed the role of maintaining and development of the museum's web page to me. I want to thank Tom for creating and implementing a web page that is very attractive and has had a very positive impact on the museum's public image and for his service over the years as webmaster. Tom wears many hats at the museum so I am pleased to be able to help him by taking on this role.

My intention is to maintain the look and feel of the current web page with no major changes to the existing structure. My focus will be on maintenance and expansion of the role of the web page as a resource for the visitor and the society. Some additions and reorganizations are slated for spring 2016. In the meantime, I have been making sure information is up-to-date and fixing some existing problems such as broken links and inconsistent behavior.

I am very interested in everyone's questions, issues, and suggestions for the web page. I have created the [webmaster@wplives.org](mailto:webmaster@wplives.org) email address to send mail directly to me for such input. I encourage you to visit the web page at <http://www.wplives.org> to learn more about our museum.

At the September Board of Director's meeting, Kerry Cochran, Kenneth Finnegan and I made a

presentation to describe the creation of a new web page specifically for the Operating Department under the museum's [wplives.org](http://wplives.org) web page. We demonstrated a proof-of-concept web page, running on a private server, for the board. Additionally I am working with Kerry Cochran, Rick Gruninger, Kenneth Finnegan and Don Nelson to create a WPRM Hand Signal Training video for the Operating Department. We plan to have the Operating Department Web page and the video available for use at the 2016 Crew Training Sessions.

Another new resource for the museum will be a Crew Training registration system for the 2016 crew training. This is planned to be the official Operating Department Crew Training signup method. Check the museum web page after the first of the year to see the Operating Department's new web pages and to signup online for crew training.

Finally, I am working on creating a new "WPRM Gallery" as part of the museum web page. It is on the "About Us" pull-down menu. I need your contributions to make this excel. I am looking for groups of eight to fifteen pictures of WPRM or FRRS activities, centered on a theme. For example, maybe you can share "my best dozen pictures from Santa Trains 2016" or "ten pictures from RR Days 2014."

Contact me at [webmaster@wplives.org](mailto:webmaster@wplives.org) to explore seeing your photographs online representing the museum.



### Track Work at the Museum

*More track work has been taking place on the balloon loop in the last few weeks. This has mostly involved the removal of excess ballast from the track to facilitate inspection and replacement of ties as needed. Seen here is a newly worked section of track, protected by a slow order. The metal sign in the background denotes the end/start of the slow order on that end.*

– Greg Elems Photo  
14 November 2015

**- FRRS Membership -****Yearly Dues**

Associate \$25.00  
 Active \$50.00  
 Family \$80.00  
 Sustaining \$150.00

**Single Life Membership** - \$1800.00

**Family Life Membership** - \$3000.00

**Institutional** - \$60.00 (annual membership for 501(c)3 groups)

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 two votes and include two adults and all minor children residing at the same address.

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

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

**Family Life** memberships receive both The Train Sheet and the Headlight, include two adults and all minor children residing at the same address, and have two votes (one per member) for life.

Send all applications, renewals and address changes, including email changes, to:  
 Feather River Rail Society - Membership Dept. - P.O. Box 608 - Portola, CA 96122-0608  
 Address / email changes may also be sent to [membership@wplives.org](mailto:membership@wplives.org)

**Mission Statement**

"The Feather River Rail Society is dedicated to the preservation, interpretation and education of the public, as to the history and people of the Western Pacific Railroad."

**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, and WP's influence in the lumber, mining and agriculture industry from Plumas County throughout California, Nevada and Utah.

**WPRM Admission and Train Ride Fares for non-members (effective April 1, 2011)****Admission**

- Adults 19 and over... \$8.00
  - Youth 4 - 18... \$4.00
  - Child under 3... free
  - Family... \$20.00
- (2 adults plus any related children 18 and under)

**Train Rides**

- Adults 19 and over... \$4.00
  - Youth 4 - 18... \$2.00
  - Child under 3... free
  - Family... \$10.00
- (2 adults plus any related children 18 and under)

Admission and Train Ride tickets are good all day.

**Cab Rides**

- Adult 19 and over... \$20.00
  - Youth 4 - 18... \$10.00
- Cab rides are for one (1) ride only.

Admission and Train Rides for FRRS members are free. Cab ride is extra fare with member discount.

***The Train Sheet needs your photos and articles!***

If you are working on projects for the Society, volunteering on restorations, performing archives work, helping out at off-site events, etc., or if you get some nice photos of FRRS or museum happenings that you want to share, **please contact us to have them printed in The Train Sheet.**

Photos should be at least 5" high by 7" wide and 300 dots per inch.

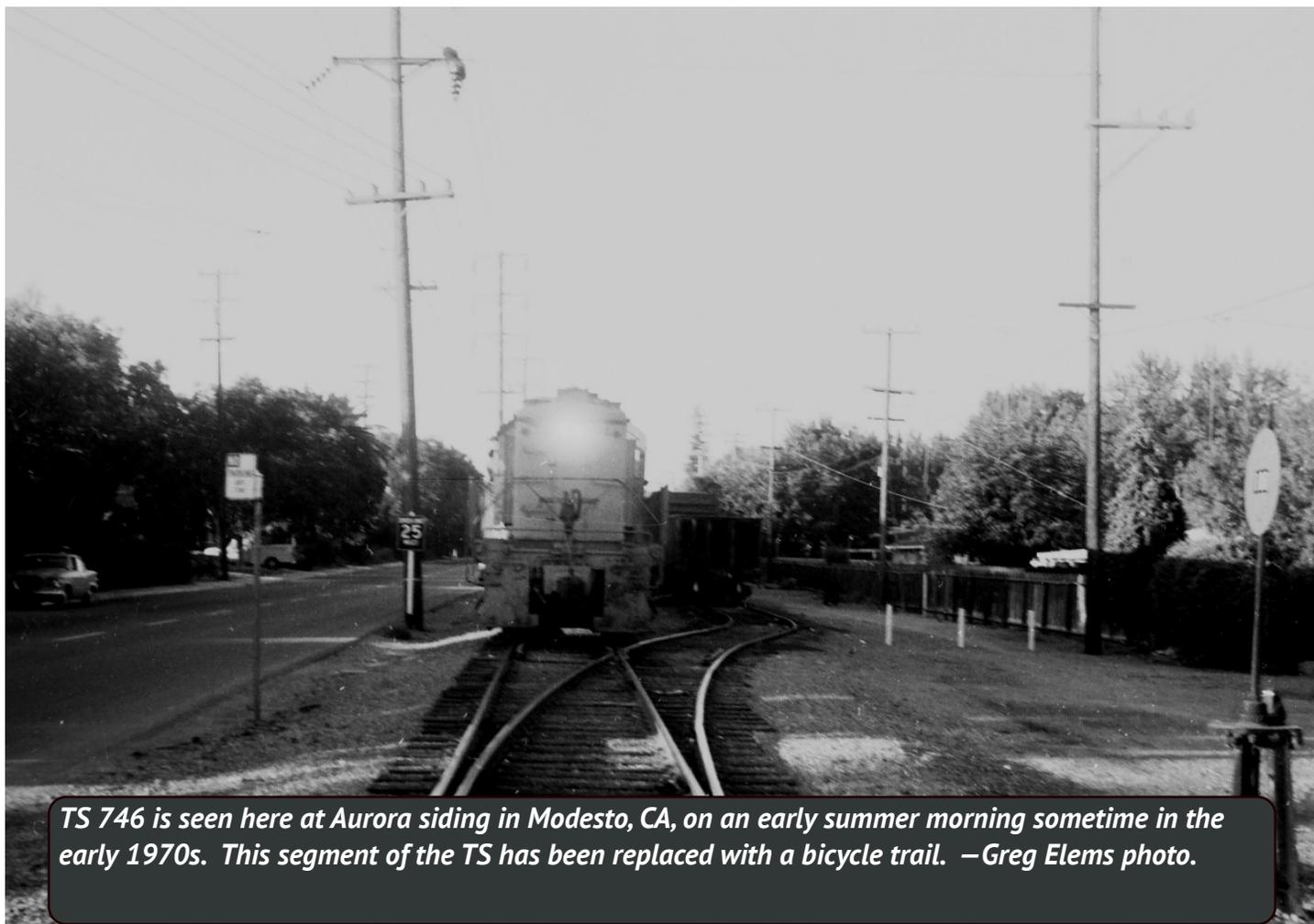
Articles should focus on FRRS related events, people or your own personal experiences with the Society.

To contribute, contact Editor Matthew Elems by email at [trainsheet@wplives.org](mailto:trainsheet@wplives.org).

The Train Sheet  
Feather River Rail Society  
P.O. Box 608  
Portola, CA 96122-0608

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*TS 746 is seen here at Aurora siding in Modesto, CA, on an early summer morning sometime in the early 1970s. This segment of the TS has been replaced with a bicycle trail. —Greg Elems photo.*