

To: FRRS Board of Directors
From: Paul Finnegan, Webmaster
Re: Museum Web Page (June Report)
Date: May 30, 2017

News

Three caboose train specials were added to the crew sign up system and email sent to all 2017 crew members asking for volunteers. A special announcement for help with the June 3rd/4th weekend was created by Leisa Wesch and posted.

News items for the Convention, the Lost & Found Bike event and the Spring 2017 Track Work were added or updated on the News Archive page. At various points in time they were also in the *Latest News from the Museum* box on the home page and webcam page.

A news item was created for the Spring 2017 Track Work project underway at the museum.

We have a large number of photos from Memorial Day weekend. I am spending the week between Memorial Day and the Members Meeting and Lost & Found event. I plan to post material from the Memorial Day weekend, Lost & Found and the Members' Meeting when I get home next week.

2017 Convention

Working together with Eugene Vicknair, we created several web pages for the 2017 Western Pacific Railroad Historical Convention held in Reno. The main pre-convention web page had 1,144 page views. 61% were from desktop users, the remaining 39% were mobile or tablet users.

Working primarily with Kerry Cochran, a post-convention web page was created with photos and materials from the convention. As of this writing it has been visited 68 times.

Routine Work

Loren Ross experienced trouble with the Crew Sign up system. It always worked from his desktop, but he failed to get the confirmation email when he tried to sign up from his mobile device. I opened web ticket 2017-0047 and investigated. The root cause was discovered to be his mobile device was using auto-fill for his email address and it was appending a space. The system has been enhanced to remove any trailing spaces from email addresses and the ticket closed.

A major portion of my efforts this month focused on removing dependencies in our website to our host provider Hostmonster. As previously reported, I have been very unhappy with the system performance at Hostmonster since they did the "upgrade" on April 8th. I plan to explore changing host providers at the end of the year. Before we could realistically consider doing that all the Hostmonster file system paths and specifics would have to be removed from our code. Also the response has become so poor at the command prompt I was getting very frustrated using their system for web page and code development. So to address these issues Kenneth and I spun up two UNIX systems at my home that I now use for development, audits and testing. I created a UNIX rsync based tool that will automatically keep my UNIX development systems and the Hostmonster system in sync. This has worked out very well for me, but it took a fair amount of work getting it all working.

On May 19th we had a user use the on-change address change tool, and unfortunately he experience issues (web ticket 2017-0050.) The change of address worked correctly, but he did not get the "Thank You" screen. Eugene and I noticed he had trouble because he clicked the "Submit" button three times within two minutes. The root cause turned out to be a result of my Hostmonster dependency removal efforts. It has been fixed.

In preparation for the 2017 operating system I have developed an on-line conductor report system. It was used in beta-test and training over Memorial Day Weekend. Training material is posted no the Crew Training Material web page.

New material was posted including a new Patron Safety Briefing document. It was posted on the following pages: Visit Us, RAL, Museum Forms and Documents and Operating Dept Forms and Documents.

The Job Abbreviations document was also updated this month as part of the on-going effort to update and improve the Operating Department Entrance and Service Requirements book. Kerry Cochran, Rick Gruninger, Kenneth Finnegan and I made another draft and we are reviewing it this month.

I made no progress on the new RAL Management System (RMS) being considered this month. The Hostmonster performance issues took most of my time this month. While I was working on the new on-line conductor report project I encountered several issues that will also impact how a RMS solution would work for us.

Finally I spent significant effort this month working on getting our web site to work better with the way most users use their web browsers caching capabilities. Some of our web pages (e.g. the crew mark up Extra Board) should never be cached because it is important that the user see the latest information. Other pages (like the galleries that have lots of big image files that don't change) should be cached so the user sees good page response performance and minimal load times. I have made progress, and learned a lot about caching, but I am not fully satisfied with what I have accomplished so far.