

FEATHER RIVER RAIL SOCIETY

DATE: August 2022
ITEM: Director Report
FROM: Steve Habeck, Vice-President

A lot has been going on around the Museum in the past month, much of it due to extended stays by several people, including Phil Schmierer, Roger Stabler, and David Elems. Phil resumed the fire mitigation process he started on last season, and many more trees and limbs are now relegated to firewood for someone's home, instead of the Museum property. Phil also cut several more firebreaks around the property, making it harder for a fire to spread on our land, should one get started nearby. We can always use more help cleaning up the limbs, trees, and stuff from this work.

Phil, Roger, David, and Logan Beers also put in some very hot mornings working on the east lead track, after a rail was observed trying to turn over as the SP 1100 went over it. The assessment is that our railroad, which was built mostly in the 1950's, has now reached the point that significant tie work, ballasting, and tamping is necessary if we wish to continue to operate, period. We have already had the balloon rebuilt, but it needs ballasting and tamping to stop the track creeping that is occurring; now, the south lead and the east lead (especially the switches) need to be addressed. We will need to buy ties and rock to facilitate this work; the road base rock we have is inadequate for our ballasting needs (we need bigger rock), and we need many long switch ties. Roger is working on the tamper to get it into shape for the work we have for it to do. This is a serious issue, folks - our livelihood from the steam engine and the RAL program is on the line here. We can't put it off any longer. We also need lots of help.

One success story was the replacement of the two east roll-up doors in the shop. This project, though expensive (37K), has been something we have needed to do since we acquired the building for use as a Museum, in the case of the east #2 door. I want to thank Fritz (David Elems) for pushing us to get this job done, and for spending a week at the Museum to assist in the project. This project became a catalyst for significantly cleaning up and reorganizing all the crap that had accumulated in that dark, lost southeast corner of the shop building, due to the inoperative door on east track #2. Our dumpster got filled twice during the cleanup process so far, and the entire area looks much more presentable. Plus, we now have fully operable doors on both ends of both tracks through the shop. Having the new doors open last weekend did wonders for air flow through the shop, as well as making it much brighter at the east end of the building. There's still more work to be finished up on this project, but everyone needs to see the vast improvement that has been made. Other areas that need work are now more obvious, now that we've cleared up that perennial eyesore in the southeast corner.

Before we get too full of ourselves, another issue has been discovered. Critters (mostly raccoons) have been observed on top of the passenger cars on Rip 1 (Silver Plate, the baggage car, and Wisneski's diner) at times in the evenings this season. Yesterday, Fritz and I went inside the Plate, and found clear evidence that the raccoons have been in the car. The kitchen is the biggest mess; styrofoam stuff has been chewed up, boxes and stuff are scattered, power cords have been gnawed on - typical mayhem from a raccoon infestation. The remainder of the car isn't as bad, but it needs cleaning up. The car has the distinct smell of wild critters, although it's not currently completely overpowering. The car is not

suitable for opening it up for display, or any other use, until it gets cleaned up. I suspect they are getting in through the vents in the roof and ceiling in the kitchen. I have not checked the baggage car, but I don't believe there is any place in that car that the critters can use to get into it. I also suspect they have been in Wisneski's diner as well, as it has several openings in the kitchen area that I know of.

Due to all the volunteers spending many nights at the Museum, and taking lots of showers due to the recent oppressive heat and humidity, I thought it would be a good idea to check the propane tanks, to make sure we still had gas on hand for the hot water heaters. No worries here; the larger tank I had installed last year for the shower car was still at 67%, even with 3 people staying on-site for a week or more, and the other tank for the restroom hot water and the archive car was still at 67%. One fuel that we'll need to look into buying again is diesel fuel; after the latest round of filling diesel cans, the backhoe, telehandler, SP 1100, and WP 1503, we are down to about 400 gallons in the tank car.

And now, a comment related to correspondence. Recently, there have been a couple of inquiries as to whether or not we had received membership renewals in the mail, because they hadn't received their renewal yet, or their check hadn't cleared yet. However, both of these inquiries occurred within a week of the renewal being mailed by the member. I would appreciate something being written up to go with renewals, stating that this process will take at least about 2 weeks, possibly longer. I usually pick up the Museum mail daily, and go through it that day. However, renewals go to Susan's office in Quincy for Cheryl to process, and I can only afford to go (or get the time to go) to Quincy about once a week; so, renewals that I receive in the mail right after I make a Quincy run may not even get to Susan's office for a week or more after receipt, and Cheryl may not get them processed (including the bank deposit) for several days after that. The renewal may then take a few days to get delivered by the mail service. This could easily add up to 3 weeks, worst case. I would say the average time for the FRRS processing is 2 weeks, so people should give us that much time before they start wondering if we got it or not. Payments made by credit card go to the WP Store to be processed, then the membership form is scanned and sent to Susan's office with the daily summary at the end of the day. Since the Store is only open Thursday thru Sunday, renewals arriving Monday thru Wednesday don't get processed till at least Thursday, and renewals sent from the Store over the weekend won't get processed at Susan's office until at least Monday.

We here at the Museum (and anyone else who happens to be around) needs to pay more attention to the ice machine in the back room of the WP Store. It almost burned up last week, due to the extreme heat we've had, and the fact that the air filter on the unit was so plugged up that we didn't know it was a filter at first. It's also hotter than hell in that back room, so much so that Phil turned the thermostat down to about 70 degrees, so the fan runs continuously, even at night, to try and cool the room down some, and the door must be left open. Cleaning the air filter probably saved the ice machine for now, and it's making quite a bit of ice again (but not near enough for the soda machine). No one is betting on that exhaust fan to last through the season; the noise and vibration can be heard and felt from the Store to the Ops Office, and everywhere in between, on the north side of the building.

Steve Habeck
PT/VP