Signal Department Work & News - Jul-Sep 2021
- Kerry Cochran
Signal Department Manager

Over the last couple of months, the Signal Department has started work on several projects to improve the overall network and telephone systems at the museum and add new systems to provide more information to the general public.

Museum Network and Telephone Infrastructure

Since mid-2020 we have been experiencing trouble with our AT&T phone service. The main telephone line was not working very well, or not at all. The problem seemed to be very intermittent.

On the weekend of July 1st, I was able to trace the trouble back to the AT&T line coming into the museum. Once I was able to get a trouble ticket issued by AT&T, an AT&T repair person met me at the museum and he made repairs to the AT&T incoming line from county road A-15 into our building. Once this repair was made, our main telephone line was returned to service.

After the AT&T repairs, with the help of Kenneth and Paul Finnegan, we traced out the existing telephone wiring and removed and replaced several old cables. This has improved the telephone service into the museum grounds. During this time we also installed new network and telephone cabling to the remodeled Museum Store sales desk and counter.

Working on the network, we have extended the hardwire and the Wi-Fi into the archive car on a permanent basis and it has improved the coverage of the museum network.

Wig Wag Display Signal

A proof-of-concept design system to operate the Wig Wag signal at the museum front door was installed. This coin operated controller was designed, built and installed by Kenneth Finnegan.

This has become a very good attraction to the general public. Dropping $0.25 in coin into the coin controller operates the Wig Wag signal for about 30 seconds and so far has been a big hit.

Screenly Display Room, Store & Entrance
- Paul Finnegan
Signal Department

A new display system called Screenly, was deployed in the Display Room over the July 4th weekend.

This system is an electronic stored screen display with content that we create to display various items and information. It is an automated system that will come on and go off with the museum public hours.

Within the first 15 minutes after it was turned on, a visitor was standing in front of the new system and watching the information provided.

This system is intended to expand our historical/archive information and be able to display to the public without having to have any volunteers or Museum Store staff turn it on and off each day.

Based on the successful deployment of the Display Room Screenly, the FRRS Board approved funds to deploy two additional systems. They were deployed August 14th. One is a big display in the Museum Store to replace the old letter board sign that hung above the sales counter. The second system is mounted just outside the Museum Store to the left of the entrance.

The display in the store rotates through slides of admission/fares, train schedules (there is one for normal operating weekend and one for three-day holiday weekends), museum hours and RAL information. The entrance Screenly has similar information, but also will display special upcoming events (e.g. Pumpkin Trains).

All three systems are administered over the WiFi by the Signal Department, which can be done remotely.