

## PORTOLA RR DAYS 2008

- David Epling, Museum Manager

I am happy to report that we had an outstanding Portola Railroad Days here at the museum. The crowds, on Saturday in particular, were among the heaviest I have seen at a Railroad Days event.

First off, I want to offer a huge thank you to our staff and volunteers.

In the Gift Shop, Linda Knudsen and Linda Brimmer helped with the crowds and questions.

On the Train Crew we had Lew Barnard, Bart Hansen, Tim Carter and Craig Simmons, as well as Duane Vanderveen and George Sousa as Car Attendants. Protecting the pedestrian crossing was Tom Potts and Cheri Johnson. Spencer Walker ran the handcart rides. Pat Brimmer was the Ops Supervisor for the weekend.

Selling raffle tickets, train ride tickets and sodas was Karen Potts and Jack Hathaway. On Sunday, they were joined by Gail McClure.

This year, we also provided the tram crew that transported visitors between the downtown area, the park and the museum. This was operated by Bruce Veilleux and Russell Johnson.

Sally Thomas greeted visitors in the UP 105 Business car on Saturday. Charlie Spikes & Steve Habeck worked the rotary and Cody Wilson worked the UP 6936 Centennial that UP was kind enough to allow us to display, along with UP 1983, the Western Pacific Heritage Unit.

Wayne Monger presided over both the photo contest and the spike driving contest. The photo contest was held in the SN 1642 caboose. Matt Stentz was last year's winner and he won again this year with his photo of the signals at Keddie lit up at night with the moon in the background. The Spike Driving contest was held downtown and the winning spiker drove his 4 spikes in 21 seconds. Thank you to Union Pacific for donating the materials for the contest.

Frank Brehm was going to drive the Museum Fire truck in the parade, but as he was headed to the gate, the master cylinder decided to take the day off. Fortunately, Frank was able to stop safely.

Dave "Motown" McClain was also on hand with his motorcar and gave speeder rides all weekend.

Tom Carter brought in four of his "Spirits of the Old West" Gunfighters and they robbed the trains several times during the day. At the end of the day, the Spirits donated their spoils to the society. Thanks to Tom and his team.



*Union Pacific SD70M 1983, the Western Pacific Heritage Locomotive, gets a scrubbing from our volunteers before Railroad Days.*

*- Wayne Monger photo*

Model layouts on display were provided by Paul Martinovich and his son, who had their modular HO/HOn2.5 layout, the Gandy Dancers modular club from Sparks with their HO layout, the Truckee Meadows N Trakkers and Lee Van Treest, who ran his G Scale live steam layout on the dock area. As usual, the model displays were a big hit with the visitors. Thanks to all of you!

This leaves four people not yet mentioned: Rod McClure, Kevin Caldwell, Daniel Simpkins and Eugene Vicknair.

These four, and most of the others already mentioned (who worked between other assignments), got to spend the weekend doing an unplanned track repair. A locomotive passing over the switch for the east 3 track on Friday broke several ties. As this is a critical switch, repair work began early Saturday morning.

I think at this point, we showed why the WPRM's train and track crews are among the best, if not the best, in the Railroad Museum world. With a ton of people

watching and train rides going on which required passing through the work area, our operating and track repair crews safely and seamlessly kept the caboose trains running during the repairs with the use of good communications (READ: Authentic Railroad Gibberish). Kudos to our volunteers!

Sunday saw continued track repairs and a heavier than expected crowd compared to previous Sundays during RR Days. We also had a visit from a car owners club who were out on a weekend drive. Eugene Vicknair took a break from track repair to act as their docent, giving them the full tour, including a memorable fire-up of our SP Rotary thanks to Charlie Spikes.



*Spencer Walker gives a family a run on the handcar.  
- Wayne Monger photo*

Sunday's big event was the arrival of Amtrak train #5 (which would have been WP train #17), the westbound *California Zephyr*, around 2:15 PM, followed by train #6 (#18) the eastbound *California Zephyr* about three hours later. The detours were caused by trackwork on Donner Pass and the opportunity was seized by tour operators, who placed the former CZ cars Silver Rapids, Lariat and Solarium on the rear of #5. Seeing the 3 original CZ cars on a passenger train in Portola was both exciting and sad at the same time. Exciting to see that train arrive and sad to see it leave. The Silver Solarium's CZ herald lit up on the back, as well as the rotating red mars light, made for an awesome sight. At the west end of our yard, we had WP FP7 805A (our former CZ locomotive), WP replica F9B 925C, WP GP7 707, WP GP20 2001 and the UP / WP SD70M 1983 on hand to greet the westbound "Silver Lady" with a horn salute as she glided by. Hogger Phil Gosney on the *Zephyr* kept a nice even speed as the cameras rolled.

As Railroad Days wound down, it came time to put

everything away. While the train crew put the yard back together, the track crew put the finishing touches on the switch repair. Tom Olsen went full out and cleaned the grounds of every speck of trash, including emptying all the garbage cans he could find. Russ Johnson, Tim Carter, Spencer Walker and myself put all the tables and chairs away and placed the picnic tables back in the shop. By 7:00 PM Sunday night you could not tell that there had been an event on the property. I think it was cleaner after than it was before.



*Lew Barnard at the throttle of WP GP7 707.  
- Wayne Monger photo*

And speaking of before, I would be remiss to leave out exemplary work by new FRRS Member Dave Ferreira. He came up Thursday and stayed until Friday doing prep work that was invaluable to our efforts to show off the museum over the weekend. Thank you, Dave!

In conclusion, thanks to everyone who helped, this was a great event. It was my first Railroad Days as Museum Manager and I am proud of every one of our people who made this the weekend it was. Financially, we came close to, if not over, double the amount made last year in donations and gift shop sales. So once again, we've made the WPRM shine. Thanks to you all!



*Kevin Caldwell and Eugene Vicknair square off with their chosen spike driving tools during the switch work.  
- Wayne Monger photo*