

HOT AUGUST NIGHTS 2009

- Tom Carter

After a successful campaign to reach out to the families of the Reno Sparks area at the 2008 Hot August Nights car show in Reno, this year, the Feather River Rail Society decided to renew their sponsorship agreement with one of the area's largest events. Last year, we reached out to literally thousands of families at the event who lived in the Reno area, yet had no idea we existed. As an event sponsor, we also included locomotive rental and gift shop discount coupons as part of the exhibitor's packs to all participants. According to the numbers, the results were about on par with what we expected being a first time sponsor. Although we signed on near the deadline last year, we deemed it an overall success.

Based on that success, we expected even more out of this year's sponsorship, and due to the early start planning, we were able to take advantage of better prices in regards to advertising materials. Monday, August 3rd, Rod McClure, Seth Adams, Bob Simms, and I loaded up the Model "T" railcar on a flatbed trailer, and loaded banners, tables, chairs, brochures, pictures, wire racking (to hang the photos on in the display), models and locomotive parts and we headed out for Reno. Matt Parker, Charlie Spikes, Ed "Gizmo" Powell & Bil Jackson had worked feverishly the week before to get our Southern Pacific fire engine ready for the ball as well. It was a neat feeling Monday to watch Matt and "Gizmo" take turns cruising around the parking lot of the museum wailing the siren. They had worked hard to get the funky old machine back to operating condition, so it was good to see them able to enjoy it. I was met in Reno by Matt Parker and Charlie Spikes who helped assemble the booth into the late evening hours.

Tuesday, August 4th, the "Corporate Village" area opened to a beautiful day with many people about enjoying the show. Charlie Spikes and Cody Wilson had come out to assist Matt and I in spreading the word that we are in fact a local family friendly tourist destination, and not "the museum in Carson City". Charlie immediately set to work finishing off repairs on site to the Model "T" and was determined for a Wednesday morning start to the little truck. Wednesday, the

"T" lit right off with minimal effort, and our crew was joined by Craig Simmons, Matt Stentz, Eddie Powell, Bill Parker, and Pat & Linda Brimmer, who drove out from Salt Lake City, Utah, to work the booth. Though we talked to many families and took lots of photos, we all enjoyed the event, and enjoyed each other's company. We even got a chance to talk a little shop as well.

The Model "T" was a HUGE draw; just something about that little car makes the "motorheads" go nuts. When the crowd would thin out away from our booth, Charlie would get that sly grin and say "Watch this..." He'd light off the "T" (remember, this old contraption still has the old hand crank!), and RIGHT NOW, crowds would flock. It was pretty neat to watch. People were just fascinated by it.



HAN visitors checking out our Model "T" railcar.

- Tom Carter photo

Despite the name of the event, temperatures were actually very mild for this time of year. In fact, we had rain one day! By the way, I hear the "Car Gods" are erecting a statue of Charlie Spikes in Victorian Square in Sparks to pay homage to their cars' savior on Wednesday of the event. When the rain hit, Charlie had jumped up and ran around the joint like a nut frantically closing hoods and windows on the exhibited cars near the booth, saving untold thousands of dollars worth of interiors. My family has a '55 Chevy and can attest to what Mother Nature can and will do to the interior of a classic car. The motorheads were very grateful to Charlie's quick action and selflessness; he was soaked to the bone when finished. This is just one example of the sacrifices of the individuals who worked the booth. Thanks a MILLION to Stephanie Parker for making sack lunches for the crews

throughout the week. That was REALLY appreciated, as "carnival food" can get old (and expensive) after a while. Homemade "sammiches" hit the spot.

According to the official numbers, the gift shop did pretty well during the week of and the week after Hot August Nights, with daily receipts up over \$1000.00 a day. David Epling reported getting a few coupons from last year through the gift shop for R.A.L.'s; it seems that some folks were intrigued enough to make our museum a part of their 2009 travel plans to Hot August Nights. THAT, folks, is what it is all about. When Seth and I went around the museum on the following Monday to put equipment away, we saw many folks around the museum wearing Hot August Nights swag, and enjoying themselves in our place. RAL's were booked up pretty near solid, and we made a few bucks of our investment back. In fact, we made a LOT of our money back in just those two weeks, and the rest definitely went to a GREAT advertising opportunity. It is an indisputable fact that Hot August Nights was a BIG success for your rail society, and I look forward to next year's event.

Special thanks to Mike Mucklin for his great advertising pieces and Eugene Vicknair for putting together the Hot August Nights museum brochure we gave out for the event.



Our former Southern Pacific fire truck made its Hot August Nights debut this year. (above)

The Model "T" was a popular photo opportunity. (below)

- Tom Carter photos



AROUND THE MUSEUM

- David Epling, Museum Manager

Gross revenues through the gift shop for July 2009 totaled \$23,718.64. The total includes RALs and donations. Foot traffic is noticeably higher than this month last year. Two factors are the lack of canyon fires and we are drawing a lot more people from the Reno area who are looking for things to do closer to home.

We have started taking credit card numbers for RAL reservations. In June, we had five no-show, un-cancelled reservations. So, people will now be told that we require a credit card to hold the reservation and if they are a no-show we will charge the card a 25.00 cancellation fee.

Bottled water bearing the museum logo has arrived, as well as 22 oz thermal mugs with special WP graphics for the soda fountain. A

special run of these mugs includes the word VOLUNTEER on the side, available to our hard-working volunteers. Purchase of these mugs entitles one to free refills. The graphics were designed in-house by Eugene Vicknair.

A huge thank you to Ed Powell. During the weekend of Sept 5-6, he replaced all of the malfunctioning overhead light fixtures and tubes in the Display Room with new equipment, under the direction of Vice President Habeck and myself. That is a huge help for that room! The whole cost for everything was under \$150. Wayne Monger is planning to order the appropriate UV light filter covers for these fixtures and tubes. This is required for any room where sensitive / irreplaceable paper documents are displayed to the public. Ed also took a few minutes to fix Hap Manitt's office typewriter that is displayed on Hap's old desk in the Display Room.