

FEATHER RIVER RAIL SOCIETY

DATE: November 2024
ITEM: New Business 1 – Membership Dues Review and Recommendations
FROM: Eugene Vicknair

Overview

As part of my recent review of the admission and group rates, I also took a look at the membership dues structure and costing. This is also important as we recently made some major changes to the Train Sheet and Headlight costs which is a major contributor to our membership costs.

Current Membership Structure

Our current membership structure and dues are as follows:

- **Associate** - \$25.00 annually (\$40.00 USD foreign)
- **Active** - \$50.00 annually (\$65.00 USD foreign)
- **Family** - \$80.00 annually (\$95.00 USD foreign)
- **Sustaining** - \$150.00 annually (\$165.00 USD foreign)
- **Life** - \$1,800.00 one time (or 4 annual payments of \$450.00)
- **Family Life** - \$3,000.00 one time (or 4 annual payments of \$750.00)

We also have these special options:

- **Institutional** - \$60 annually
- **Silver Sponsor** - \$300 annually
- **Gold Sponsor** - \$1,000 annually

Membership Costs

An important item to note in these costs is that I am attributing costs on a PAYING member basis. This means that, while we provide publications to our Life level members, the on-going costs for these services are being attributed to annual member dues. Our proportion of Life to annual members has shifted to near parity, which means that each annual paying member is also covering publications for the Life members.

Also, I did not assign Headlight costs to Associate members. Dues for those members who get their Train Sheets via email still go toward paying for publications, so their dues are factored into these calculations. Additional costs applied to memberships include membership cards, Do Not Detail letters and an estimate on what service time each member takes as part of our contract with Susan Scarlett's office.

Based on the major services we provide to our members and their management, here are the costs I have calculated on a paying per member basis.

- Train Sheet cost per member: \$19.94
- Headlight cost per member: \$28.93
- Support and servicing per member: \$1.76

Based on these costs and the factors mentioned before, the income per member per level is estimated to be as follows (note that foreign membership higher rate is not factored here):

- Associate \$3.30
- Active **-\$0.63**
- Family \$29.37
- Sustaining \$99.37

I earlier mentioned the percentage of Life member levels (Life and Family Life). Our split of Life memberships vs. annual memberships is nearing 50%. This is a concern as it puts more cost burden onto the annual paying members.

Membership Dues and Structures at Other Railroad Museums

I reviewed other museums similar to ours to analyze their membership dues and levels.

Bay Area Electric Railroad Association

Junior	\$25	- Admission for those under 18
Associate Senior	\$40	- Admission for those 65+ years old
Individual	\$50	
Individual Plus	\$75	
Family	\$100	
Sustaining	\$150	
Contributing	\$250	
Patron	\$500	
Benefactor	\$1,000	

Pacific Locomotive Association

Single dues level	\$48
Additional adult members of the family pay	\$24
Additional members under the age of 18 pay	\$12

Southern California Railroad Museum (formerly Orange Empire)

Individual Member	\$50
Dual Member	\$75
Family	\$95

Sustaining Member	\$150	
Benefactor Member	\$300	
Life Member	\$1,000	one time payment

Pacific Southwest Railroad Museum

Student	\$25	- 18 and under
Senior	\$25	- 65 and over
Individual	\$35	
Family	\$60	
Contributing	\$75	
Supporting	\$100	
Sustaining	\$150	

They also have several Life levels:

Senior Life	\$300	- 65 and over
Life Member	\$750	
Gold Spike Life	\$1,000	
Benefactor	\$5,000	

Nevada Northern Railroad Museum

Active	\$30
Contributing	\$50
Centennial	\$100
Sustaining	\$250
Patron	\$500
Friend	\$1,000
Supporter	\$2,500
Benefactor	\$5,000
Leader	\$10,000

Roots of Motive Power

Single dues level	\$50
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If you want to review the specifics and coverage / discounts / perks of these museums, please go to their websites. It would take too much space to list them all.

I have also found that some of these websites (most notably Nevada Northern) have grants or partnerships that match or add-on to any dues paid, increasing their revenue from memberships.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this analysis and my research into the other museums, I am recommending the following changes be made to the FRRS membership dues and structure:

Revision to Dues..

Associate	\$30	(\$45 non US)	
Active	\$60	(\$75 non US)	
Family	\$85	(\$100 non US)	
<i>Sustaining</i>	<i>\$150</i>	<i>(\$165 non US)</i>	<i>- no change</i>
Institutional	\$65		
<i>Silver Sponsor</i>	<i>\$300</i>	<i>- no change</i>	
<i>Gold Sponsor</i>	<i>\$1,000</i>	<i>- no change</i>	

I recommend eliminating all Life levels while leaving current Life and Family Life memberships as is. We will just not accept new Life memberships and will drop that option.

I suggest these actions, if approved, take effect March 1 or April 1, 2025 to give us time to put the notice out in the Train Sheet and on the website.

I also recommend that we commence a membership drive to increase our annual dues paying memberships starting Spring 2025. Again, due to the proportion of Life members, bringing in more annual pay memberships will improve our income levels from those memberships.

Finally, I strongly recommend that the FRRS find someone willing to act as full time Membership Chair. While I would be willing to help with any drives or promotions, I do not have the time to devote sufficiently to pushing a major membership drive along with my other duties.

Requested Action: Discuss and approve recommendations.