

## FRRS Board of Directors and PRM Site Committee To Host Final Public Comment Meeting Before Adoption of Museum Master Plan

The Board of Directors of the Feather River Rail Society will soon consider adoption of an integrated master plan for the future development of the Portola Railroad Museum. The master plan will be a document that links plans for the physical design of the Museum with funding, action strategies and outline a timeline for implementation of improvements and objectives emphasized in the plan.

Currently two documents outline the objectives to be achieved, (1) a Master Plan prepared by the Synthesis Design Group, historic preservation architects and urban designers who were retained through a United States Forest Service (USFS) grant authored by the Plumas Corporation, Plumas County's Economic Development, Visitor Center and Business Development agency, and (2) the Final Report and Recommendations – Facilities Improvement Plan for the Portola Railroad Museum authored by members of the Site Committee and Director Eugene Vicknair.

It is imperative that all members of the Feather River Rail Society, residents of Plumas County, and users of the Museum facility review the recommendations contained in both documents and make comments on the recommendations before the Board of Directors adopt the final master plan. While the plan can always be revised, it is important that it be as thorough, comprehensive, and all encompassing from the onset to capitalize on cost efficiencies and to create a complete vision for the future of the museum. The final plan will outline short-term actions and goals to achieve as well as long term projects to enhance the facility well into the future. This plan will also be reviewed with representatives of the Union Pacific Railroad and will form a cornerstone of our push to attain greater control over the PRM site.

In May and June of 2000, open meetings were conducted by the Site Committee to invite comment from members and allow discussion of findings and recommendations. Both meetings were held in Sacramento as a central location accessible to the majority of Society members. Unfortunately, problem with the mailing of the Train Sheet and a later special postcard gave members little warning concerning the meetings. It was then decided that at least one further meeting would be held before the board adopts a complete final plan. This meeting will be held in Portola and open to comments from members, the Plumas County community, and government agencies concerning environmental, economic or service issues arising from plans for the Museum. Two meetings will be held in October, one on the 7th and one on the 14th at 12 noon in the Portola Railroad Museum Beanery. This will be a great opportunity for anyone interested in the Museum's future to

attend the public meeting, tour the museum facility and assist the Society's site Committee in creating a vision for the future.

Copies of both reports are available on request by calling Doug Morgan at the FRRS office at 530.832.1657 or by e-mailing or calling Site Committee member Eugene Vicknair at 408.248.4039, e-mail [TSRY@aol.com](mailto:TSRY@aol.com).

If you are unable to attend the October public meeting, please review the recommendations and submit your comments either by letter, e-mail or verbally to any member of the Site Committee (listed below) or to any Director. Contact information is listed in the beginning of the Train Sheet.

Your opinions, comments and recommendations are important in helping craft the final plan. More detailed information on current proposals will be published in the next Train Sheet, but a brief list is presented at the end of this article. Please take a few minutes of your valuable time to review these concepts and ideas and submit your comments. In addition, any recommendations you may have are most welcome.

The Master Plan provides both an overview of the ultimate build-out of the site and also, more importantly, provides a roadmap as to how to get there. The Master Plan develops the site in a holistic manner, incorporating the safety concerns strongly emphasized by the FRRS, opportunities offered by the natural features of the site, recognition of the site's physical connection to the City of Portola and its downtown redevelopment plans, and finally a realistic strategy towards creating improvements that are fundable.

The Site Committee has compiled an exhaustive investigation of the physical plant of the Portola Railroad Museum and spent many hours over several years including the following components:

- \* Examination of the Museum site by members and public space designers
- \* Examination of the future needs of the Museum and its Stakeholders
- \* Determination of what actions must be taken to comply with public space law
- \* Interviews with and recommendations by museum visitors
- \* Open meetings with Society members
- \* Recommendations of members and interested parties
- \* Studies of similar museums, railroad historical sites, and other sites of relevant public access.

Some of the proposed Master Plan highlights are:

- \* Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act

The museum must shape our plans to ensure

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## Site Committee Meeting

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providing equal access to our facility to all visitors.\* **Public Accessways**

A system of hard surface paths to guide visitors through our facility and provide safe, all-weather passage areas for guests and members alike. The largest challenge will be retaining the classic, "working railroad" feel while making the site accessible.

\* **Artifact and Site Signage**

Informational signs to help guide the public through the museum and educate them about our outstanding collection of railroad artifacts.

\* **Visitor Amenities**

Shaded seating areas, water fountains, museum informational booklets, and other items and services to enhance the PRM experience and make the Museum a destination without losing its flavor or character.

\* **Volunteer Amenities**

Improvements to provide for the needs and comforts of the volunteers who form the backbone of the FRRS.

\* **Night Safety Improvements**

\* **Track Additions and Improvements**

Including additional storage and display tracks and concepts for operational trackage traveling from the museum site, providing an opportunity for real excursion operation.

\* **Landscaping**

Including general cleaning of the site and designated green areas where families can safely spend time away from moving equipment.

\* **New Facilities**

Plans and concepts for a Visitor's Center, Library, Display Museum, new Gift Shop, and meeting and administrative spaces are being explored.

\* **Diesel Shop Improvements/Alterations**

Expansion and improvement of the Beanery and workspaces within the building.

\* **Replica Railroad Structures**

Potential structures include ideas for a replica WP depot, tower, steam era water tank, and roundhouse.

\* **Display Buildings**

To provide for all weather storage and display of our precious artifacts, including our growing California Zephyr collection.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact a member of the Site Committee:

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## Movie Train, a Reflection

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prelubing and watering. Doug Morgan, Andy Anderson, Ken Iverson, and Meg Evens then set up the train utilizing NW2 608.

The morning of the 25th dawned with a snowstorm covering up the fine work of Tobe and the City. While Doug, Andy, and Meg were clearing the track and coupling the 2873 to the train Jeff Palmer and Tom Graham upon arriving from Santa Rosa got the Backhoe and Snow blower in service to remove the new fallen snow. Jeff then spent the rest of the day clearing the area with the Hoe and Tom used the Snow blower. By now we were all getting hungry and it was 15:00 so we broke for lunch.

As train time was called for 16:00 the train was properly checked and it was discovered that there was no caboose as required for back up protection. It was determined that the Santa Fe caboose was the only one available on short notice so the crew of Tom, Andy, Jeff, and Doug were assembled and the necessary switching performed with the assistance of Ken. At this point it was getting dark and we were waiting for our assignment from the Movie Director.

The first request was for more snow removal so Jeff got on the backhoe and went to work. At 19:00 Jeff returned and we started our run-bys and shooting with Andy riding in the freezing caboose protecting our back-ups and Doug relaying directions from the Director to Tom and Jeff in the cab. This lasted until 22:30 when dinner was served. After dinner it was back to the train for more shots until 2:00 a.m. on the 26th.

At the conclusion of the shooting the cars were separated from the engine and tied down. The 2873 was then moved to the shop and left running as it would be needed to put the train away after the crew had rested. Late morning on the 26th Ken, Jeff, and Doug put all the cars away on the rip track and drained the engine on Track #3. On the afternoon of the 26th the 2873 was moved by Tom, Ken, Jeff, and Doug with the 146 to the shop door on track #1 where later Ken and Doug removed the batteries.

Volunteer hours required for this operation are compiled below.

Contact, Selection and negotiations	20
Clearing snow	25
Preparation, Assembly and Put back	40
Train operation	42
Total hours committed	127

I would like to thank the volunteers who assisted and made this all possible.