

President's Report – May 2018

—Steve Habeck, President, FRRS

Things have been picking up around the Museum, now that we're open, and the weather is finally warming up (although we had snow on April 30th). I have been on the road a lot lately, going to Winterail in Corvallis, OR, in March, and attending the FRRS Convention in Salt Lake City, UT, in April (which was a great success). I towed the Museum's trailer to Salt Lake City, carrying miscellaneous stuff to the Convention, and then brought it back with much more stuff than I brought over. It made for a long trip home after the Convention. Also, the rigors of travel caused me to have health issues crop up; I was laid up for most of the first day of the Convention, and for several days afterward.

At the Museum, the Mechanical Department has completed the prep work and placed 3 of our RAL engines in service (SP 1100, SP 2873, and WP 917-D). The 1100 has been a problem child, however, with fuel system issues. RAL bookings are picking up, as is income.

As I write this, we are closing in on the big "Light The Fire" dinner. While ticket sales were very slow for quite a while, we wound up with over 90 tickets sold, so the event should be a success. I'm sure detailed reports will follow, after the event is over.

I am working with the people at Western Rail, who bought GP30 849 last year. We are providing information to them that they need to prepare the engine for movement to their shop at Usk, WA. This work may require use of our derrick; I have started work on the derrick's batteries in preparation for its use. Western Rail expects to send a crew to Portola soon with a service truck to work on the 849, and we need to support them as best we can.

We also have the open issue of the two beet gons that will be going to museums in AZ. I have been in touch with Al Richmond, who is coordinating the move; they are on hold for the beet gon move at the moment, since they just completed some other equipment moves, and finances are tight. Their experiences with UP with these other moves are causing them to

reconsider shipping the beet gons by rail; something I suggested last year when they first started this process.

My daughter works at AmeriGas Propane in Quincy; she tells me her manager wants our business. I reminded her that our last experience with AmeriGas was not pleasant; after the initial fills, the price shot up and stayed there. My daughter has assured me that she can beat the price we are currently paying to Ferrell Gas; if I can secure a long-term deal at the better price, we'll take a chance on them, but only if I can get a long-term deal at a good price, in writing. AmeriGas' track record is not good, even if my daughter works there.

Work has been ongoing since early May on the 165. Roger Stabler has been at the Museum almost continuously since May 2nd, and Hank Stiles has been here since then, too. Several more people are showing up, as the core of the work week (and the fundraising dinner) approach.

Operations has completed their first Crew Training session for 2018 on May 5th, as we prepare for another caboose train operating season. Another session will be held on May 27th, if you couldn't make it to the first one. We are also benefiting from a full week of volunteer work by Don Nelson, who came up for crew training on the 5th, and is staying for the dinner on the 12th. In the meantime, he's been doing track work (with and without the backhoe), assisting with work on the 165, and other beneficial stuff.

As you can see, the pace is picking up here at the Museum. Come on up, give us a hand, and see how we're doing. We can always use more help, whether it be labor, monetary donations, or both. No special skills are required; if you have a skill you wish to share, that's great. There's always any number of things that need doing around the Museum; a lot of them are not glamorous, but they need doing just the same. Lastly, I want to express my deepest gratitude and thanks to all of our volunteers and staff that have gotten us through another off-season, and readied us for what we hope will be a busy summer.