FEATHER RIVER RAIL SOCIETY

Signal Department Report
Kerry Cochran
Date: Aug. 10, 2021

The FRRS/WPRM Signal Department has completed some major improvements that have been made at the museum. Kenneth and Paul Finnegan worked with me to get several improvements completed at the museum.

These improvements include the following:

We need to get a new RAL phone/answering machine. (The old phone/answering machine was not working properly and the messages on the answering portion of the machine could no longer be recorded or retrieved.)

A new telephone/answering machine was ordered and installed. However, I received a message and then called the museum to see that the issue was. The new telephone/answering machine was not working properly.

Another new telephone/answering machine was ordered and installed. All seems to be working now.

Thanks go to our president, Greg Elems, for helping with this issue.

Archive Department improvements:

A new display system called *Screenly*, was deployed in the Display Room.
This system is an electronic stored screen display with content that we create to display various items and information. It is an automated system that will come on and go off with the museum public hours.

During the July board meeting an authorization was given to purchase two more of these units. One for the Museum Store to display information and museum pricing. A second display is to be placed at the Museum Store entry doors to provide more general information for the museum visitors.

Both of these units are in the process of being configured and installed.

Operating Department Office Computer:

The operating system was updated on both the Board Room computer and the Operating Department computer. The old O/S was no longer in support.

It has been reported that he Operating Department computer is operating very slowly. On the weekend of Aug. 7th, Kenneth Finnegan upgraded the RAM on the computer, however that did not make much difference. Kenneth will be performing a clean operating system installation the weekend of Aug 14th to see if that corrects the issue.

Wig-Wag display:

The automatic coin acceptor for the wigwag on display was installed on July 3, 2021. This box consists of a nickel/dime/quarter coin acceptor and a custom microcontroller board which watches for 50 cents to activate a 12V automotive relay for 30 seconds, which powers the wigwag. As of August 7th, 2021, there was $16 in the acceptor, which logged being run 31 times.

This means that across the 6 weekends/20 days that the museum was open with the display installed, we averaged 1.5 runs per day. It would also appear that one or two people added more than 50 cents to run the wigwag longer, which explains the discrepancy between $16 and 31 runs x 50 cents. If a visitor adds more money than the required amount, the controller simply runs the wigwag proportionally longer. The $16 was removed from the display and added to the general donation box inside the museum store.

On August 8, 2021, the following changes were made based on feedback from other museum volunteers:

1) Based on the feedback of Steve Habeck, an inconspicuous "free play" button was added.

   Any museum docent wanting to demonstrate the wigwag without inserting money are welcome to press this button.

   Museum staff will be shown where the button is located.

2. Based on the feedback of Steve Habeck, Greg Elems, and Loren Ross, the price was reduced to 25 cents and the time reduced to 20 seconds, since there have been several negative reactions from guests that the 50 cent price seemed too high. It is possible that we won't see twice as many runs at the lower price, but maximum profit was deemed less important than engagement and a positive guest experience.

Since the "Coin Operated Experience" controller board is an in-house design, these sorts of changes are possible to implement. The Signal Department also welcomes any additional input or ideas on other displays to deploy to make the museum experience more engaging for visitors.

Kerry Cochran
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