

## 2016 Historical Convention

—Eugene Vicknair, 2016 Convention Co-Chair

The 2016 Western Pacific Historical Convention was held in Modesto, California at the DoubleTree Hotel April 20-23, 2016. This event was held jointly with the Pacific Coast Region of the National Model Railroad Association and provided a different format from our regular conventions.

Huge thanks to Scott McAllister, 2016 Co-Chair and lead on the PCR-NMRA side, as well as his fantastic convention committee. The attendance was nearly 200 and with 4 days of clinics, presentations, tours and events it took a lot of coordination from the whole team. Presentations included the debut of an updated film on the First 50 Years of the Western Pacific from Catenary Video, a look at the history of and techniques for modeling several WP related pieces, including the shorty steel gondolas by Bill Gilbert and Tidewater Southern steeple-cab electric 100 by Chris Allan. Jim Providenza shared information and techniques on modeling WP F-units, while Mark Williams gave presentations on the *California* and *Pioneer Zephyrs*. WP branch lines were also featured, with Ken Middlebrook discussing the San Jose Branch and Wayne Monger giving a look at the

relatively unknown Terminus Branch. Special thanks to Stan Jennings who came out from Salt Lake City to share his knowledge of the Salt Lake, Garfield and Western Railway. Eugene Vicknair did a show on 6 ex-Rio Grande steam locomotives that came into the WP family, while CSRM's Kyle Wyatt presented research on WP's second generation of heavyweight passenger cars. Newly scanned films from the Virgil Staff collection were shown and Evan Werkema closed out the presentations on Saturday with a great show on WP's steam powered railfan excursions. Other presentations focused on details of modeling and model railroad operations. Attendees also got to enjoy the NMRA model contests.

Three tours were also part of the goings-on. On Thursday a bus took 40 attendees to the Port of Stockton for a close up look at the Central California Traction Company's operations at the port as well as the recently opened welded rail plant. Friday afternoon was a special excursion and photo run-bys on the Sierra Northern's Sierra Railroad division out of Oakdale. And on Saturday morning a group got to tour the shops of the Modesto and Empire Traction Company, which included a roll-out of newly restored General Electric 70 tonner 600. Thanks to Scott Inman for coordinating the tours



*The Closing Banquet of the 2016 Convention.*

*Photo by Eugene Vicknair*

and special thanks to the CCT, Sierra and M&ET for their assistance and cooperation.

The Saturday banquet featured a talk by retired Sacramento Northern trainman Norm Lucas, sharing his experiences with the SN in the 1970s and some of the interesting people he worked with on trains like the Chico Local and the SN Detour. Norm's presentation was very well received and generated more than a few laughs at some of the colorful stories. Thank you again for sharing it all with us, Mr. Lucas!

The banquet also featured an announcement that the Union Pacific Foundation had awarded the FRRS a \$3,000 grant to being work on an Archives Research Facility. More details on that will be coming soon.

The archives raffle had over 30 sets of prizes ranging from models and model railroad supplies to archive prints. Special thanks to our raffle gift donors for their generous assistance:  
Catenary Video  
Richard Brennan  
Brad Lomazzi - Railroad Americana

Walt Schedler - Walt's Trains & Electronics  
Bowser Model Trains  
Peter Arnold  
Kadee Quality Products  
Woodland Scenics  
Marc Desobeau  
Kalmbach Publishing  
FRRS Museum Store  
FRRS Archives  
Pacific Coast Region - NMRA  
Broadway Limited

Planning for the 2017 Convention is already in progress. Details will be coming in the next few months.

Thank you to the 2016 Joint Convention Committee and the convention volunteers:

Scott McAllister, Al Rowe, Jim Dieckman, Richard Klammer, Steve Wesolowski, Jim Collins, Mary Moore-Campagna, Bob Schott, Scott Inman, Nancy Stokely, Tom Campbell, Rod Smith, Bob Cable, Dan Evans, Giuseppe Aymar, Ray deBlicek, Greg Elems, and David Elems.



On 4/14/16, Steve Habeck, Leisa Wesch, and Rick Gruninger attended the Sierra Valley Gun Club's monthly meeting in Portola, CA. The FRRS was asked to make a presentation to their membership, outlining the importance of the Western Pacific Railroad to the City of Portola. With the aid of a very well constructed slide show, put together by our own Eugene Vicknair, Steve hit his Mark with the audience. Steve's extensive knowledge of the area, and it's Railroad History, scored a Bulls eye with their members. The audience was also treated to a rare glimpse of Firearms/Railroad History and information. Thank You Steve and Leisa for representing the FRRS in an informative and positive light.

Photo by Richard Gruninger