

2022 WP Historical Convention

*Kerry Cochran, Eugene Vicknair
2022 Convention Co-Chairs*

The Western Pacific Historical Convention was held in Reno, Nevada at the SureStay Plus Hotel on May 12-14, 2022, and at the Western Pacific Railroad Museum in Portola, California on May 15, 2022.

A big thank you goes out to all of the attendees, without your support we would have not been able to hold this event. Thank you also goes out to Bob Sims (Registrar), Eugene Vicknair (Co-Chair) and Kerry Cochran (Co-Chair) along with Greg Elems and Janet Steeper, who were unable to attend, but assisted with the preparations.

We had 60 attendees along with 4 vendors and the WP museum store. Exhibits included material from the FRRS' Western Pacific Archives as well as the new Nevada-California-Oregon Railway historical group and a representative from the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento.

The convention started off on Thursday May 12th, with a tour and train ride on the Virginia and Truckee Railroad. The train initially took the group from the V&T depot to the shops at the south end of Virginia City where V&T employees, including owner Tom Grey, gave us a behind the scenes look. Then the train continued on past Gold Hill and the Overman Pit before returning to VC. The attendees had about 80 minutes to



*Touring behind the scenes at The Depot
- Photo by Steve Miller*

explore central Virginia City before the bus returned to the hotel. This event was very well attended and everyone had a good time.

Later Thursday evening, we held a mixer at the Old WP / NCO Depot in Reno. While this was a no-host event, we did have an assortment of appetizers on hand for all who attended. We displayed a few artifacts in the depot while enjoying the food and drinks and having some fine conversation among the convention goers. During this event we were treated to a guided tour of the NCO Depot and the Depot Brewery that now occupies it.

On Friday, May 13th, we formally opened the convention shows with Chris Skow's presentation "*Train Wrecks and Derailments of the WP*". N-C-O Railway President Shane Starr gave a presentation on the newly formed Nevada-California-Oregon Railway Society, and shared the group's plans for keeping the story of the N-C-O narrow gauge alive. After that, Eugene Vicknair gave a presentation on Western Pacific's Sierra Branchlines, covering the lines that connected to the WP between Portola and Reno Jct.,

After lunch, we started off with a WP MOW modeling presentation by Kerry Cochran. This was the fourth in a series done by Kerry covering Western Pacific's maintenance of way equipment. From there we were treated to some old WP films that were donated scans from member Bill



*Riding the Virginia and Truckee
- Photo by Eugene Vicknair*



H/A Displays 5/12/22

- Photo by Kerry Cochran



WP Artifacts Displays 5/12/22

- Photo by Kerry Cochran



Tom Callan at his Booth 5/14/22

- Photo by Kerry Cochran



Chris Skow Presentation getting ready to start

- Photo by Kerry Cochran



Closing Banquet

- Photo by Eugene Vicknair



Tom Hervey receives gift from FRRS/WPRM

- Photo by Kerry Cochran

Magazin. Next was Chris Skow's UP 6900 Class Centennials running on the WP.

We followed this show with a "Guided Tour of the Historical Archive Website" pages. This presentation was very well received by our attendees and several questions came from this presentation. Last of the day was Kerry Cochran's "Modeling the WP's EMD SW 1500s".

On Saturday May 14th, the FRRS Board of Directors held their monthly meeting prior to the start of the convention presentations, giving attendee's a chance to participate in the board's actions.

Opening the Saturday presentations was Chris Skow's "Feather River Express 2009", a great insight into a ride down the Feather River Canyon. Next was Steven Cope's "Time Flies and the Feather Flows", showing then and now photos taken along the WP, followed by recently scanned films of the WP from the Virgil Staff and Kenneth Meeker archive collections. Kerry Cochran's "Modeling WP's 65' Mill Gondolas", which was an updated version of a presentation Dave Pires gave a few years back, closed out this year's presentations.

A big part of the 2022 Convention was reviving the Photo and Modeling contests. We had two attendees enter models into the modeling contest. Steve Cope and Kerry Cochran provided models for viewing and the attendees were given a chance to vote on their favorite. We received many comments they the attendees liked having the models back on display and there were mentions during the banquet that they would like to see more. Unfortunately, there were no photos entered into the photo contest, but there were several photos on display that Kerry Cochran had from his collection as well as photos from the archives on display.

Our guest speaker for the banquet was Tom Herve, former WP and Cal/OHSA employee and longtime FRRS member and supporter. Tom gave us some history about working on the WP and shared stories about some of the employees in



*FRRS Founder Norm Holmes watching the arrival of WP 165 5/15/22
- Photo by Eugene Vicknair*



*Chris Skow's Garden railroad
- Photo by Steve Miller*

attendance at the convention. The door prize raffle was a big hit this year, with a large quantity of items that had been gathered over the previous 2 years. Big shout out to Bowser who sent quite a few HO scale models. Our vendors and the WP Museum Store also contributed several items, as did some of the attendees.

Sunday, May 15th, brought the big finale to the convention: Restored WP 165 0-6-0 steam locomotive came back to life at the Western Pacific Railroad Museum. After tireless work by our steam volunteers, WP 165 ran a 1950's era freight train for the convention attendees, who got to ride in the caboose train pulled by 165's successor, WP SW1500 1503.

The highlight of this event, beside of showing off the WP 165 in operation, was attendance of Norman Holmes, the chief founder of the FRRS. Norm was on hand to see the 165 run and he was surprised to be given the chance later in the day to be the engineer and operate the locomotive.

Convention attendees were also able to take a shuttle bus (supplied by Chris Skow) to Chris' home to visit his garden railway and WP home museum.

The only negative issue that we heard from the attendees was the very short staff at the hotel. This led to the hotel closing the restaurant during lunch Saturday and closing the bar Saturday night. The convention staff, consisting of Kerry, Eugene and Bob, also had their hands full, but some well-timed assistance from several attendees, including Matt Elems and Tom Hervey, helped keep everything moving along.

The volunteers managing the convention, as usual, took careful notes of the requests from the attendees with the goal of always trying to make the next convention better.

The dates and location for the 2023 Convention have already been announced. This will be a joint convention with the NMRA Pacific Coast Region held in Sacramento on Wednesday, April 26, 2023, to Sunday, April 30, 2023. The convention is being called Rails to the River.

Be sure to join us!



**Western Pacific Railroad Museum
700 Western Pacific Way, Portola,
CA. Museum is open for 2022**

**season! Museum Hours:
Thursdays & Fridays 12-4**

**Weekends 10-5 Open for the
following Holidays:**

July 4th and Labor Day 10:00 - 5:00

<https://www.wplives.org/>



WPRM was "Business of the Month" as a member of the East Sierra Valley Chamber of Commerce for June 2022.