

HOT ***SCOOP***

A publication for the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum members

Campo Railroad Museum **November 2025** La Mesa Depot Museum





**Pacific Southwest Railway Museum
Association, Inc. WWW.PSRM.ORG
619-465-PSRM (7776)**

Campo Railroad Museum
Campo Depot
Highway 94 at Forrest Gate Rd, Campo
619-478-9937

La Mesa Depot Museum & Office
4695 Nebo Drive, La Mesa, CA 91941

PSRMA Board of Directors
Meetings are held on the 3rd Friday of the
month except Dec at 6:30PM. A link to
join the Zoom meeting will be provided
on our website at members.psrn.org.

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Vice President: Jenn Brooker
Treasurer: Carl Brooker
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Facilities Dept: Frank E. Denison IV
Museum Services Dept: Jim Lundquist
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Hot Scoop Editor: Jim Lundquist
Membership: Lena Ibarra
Social Media Manager: Jason Drenkow
Station Master (La Mesa): Timothy Miller
Volunteer Coordinator: Jenn Brooker
Acting Equipment Dir: Stephen Hager



Special Events:

North Pole Limited

November 28, 29, December 5, 6, 12, 13, 19 & 20 - 5 P.M. and 7 P.M.

November 30, December 7, 14 & 21 - 3 P.M. and 5 P.M.

**December 12 - Rescheduled Membership Meeting at 7:00 P.M. with
guest speaker Russ Low. Details were on page 7 of the October *Hotscoop*.**

Regular Schedule:

At Campo Railroad Museum:

Museum **closed** to public until January 10, 2026, then:

Saturday - Golden State train rides at 10:30 a.m., 1:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.

Saturdays and Sundays - volunteer work days.

Wednesdays and Saturdays - Library open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Call Bruce Semelsberger at 619-264-7282 for an appointment

La Mesa Depot Open:

Tuesday & Thursday Noon - 3 p.m. Saturday: 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Volunteers are at both locations during the week as well.

For more information, please email: volunteer@psrm.org

Family Fun for Halloween onboard the Pumpkin Express



The overarching goal of our museum is to educate our visitors in local railroad history while also giving them a fun experience in order to encourage them to return and tell their friends about us. This is accomplished with demonstration train rides as well as our exhibits. Certainly, our special event trains are meant to allow families and friends to enjoy our museum together. The Pumpkin Express trains are one of many special events which draw greater visitors because we offer more things for them to do. However, those special events do take more time and more volunteers to put together and to run each day.

It becomes even more special when volunteer families work together as the front cover photo demonstrates. Dave and Michele Little experienced this during one of our Pumpkin Express trains. Dave writes "I was the Conductor on the Annual Pumpkin Express. My amazing wife, Michele Little, rocked the bar in first class! With 300 passengers throughout the day, we had a hauntingly good time. Thanks to everyone who volunteered and joined us for some Halloween fun! Look who I found running the snack bar! Isn't she scary and cute at the same time?"

Over the decades, we have had many families working together at our museum. Many consider it a special bonding time for each other as they work together building a museum for the community. That tradition continues today with several families at both Campo and La Mesa.



Hotscoop Delayed. I pride myself in getting the newsletter to you each month in a timely fashion. This month is late because my computer hard drive crashed. I am taking a lesson from this unfortunate event and will regularly backup my data. Maybe this will encourage you to do the same.



The *Hot Scoop*® is a publication of the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association, Inc.

The opinions expressed in the *Hot Scoop* are those of the individual writer and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association, Inc., (PSRMA) its officers or staff.

PSRMA Mission Statement:

PSRMA is dedicated to preserving the physical legacy and the experience of rail transportation. Programs address the historical, social, economic and technical impact of railroading with particular emphases on railroads of San Diego County and the systems with which they connected in the United States and Mexico.

PSRMA is a non-profit educational organization operating under section 501(c)3 of the tax codes. Donations may be tax deductible.

PSRMA is a member of the Heritage Rail Alliance.

Submission guidelines: All articles should be single spaced and submitted in Microsoft Word format. Photographs are also welcomed. Please include photographer and date of photo. Send all submissions to Editor@psrm.org

The *Hot Scoop* is available in color via email. To receive the electronic version in PDF format, send an email to editor@psrm.org and include your name, membership number and email. Note that if you opt for the e-mail version, you will no longer receive the printed copy.

Comments are always welcome. Send your feedback to: editor@psrm.org

From the Back Platform

By Stephen Hager, President

October feels like it went by in a flash! As I'm writing this, Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association volunteers just wrapped up four weekends of Pumpkin Express and Sip 'N Scare Sunset Special trains. The family-friendly Pumpkin Express is one of our "big three" special events along with Bunny Trains and North Pole Limited, and it was decently well attended this year. This was our second year running the 21+ Sip and Scare Sunset Special. It started out as a small offshoot from Pumpkin Express last year, but it has grown into a full-blown special event in its own right this year. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Jenn Brooker, Richard Finch, Morgan Snyder, Michael Rella, and all the other volunteers who worked hard to put the event on this year. The event was very well attended and it nearly doubled the income that we would have received from Pumpkin Express alone. I look forward to seeing this event continue to grow in future years.

Coming up on November 1st is our second set of Backcountry Wine Trains this year. After that, we will take a three-week hiatus from public train operations while we prepare for the start of North Pole Limited trains on November 28th. Museum members please take note: the Campo Railroad Museum will be closed to the public until January 10th, except for riders on the Wine Trains and North Pole Limited Trains. The Campo Railroad Museum will reopen on January 10th, just in time for us to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the start of our weekend train rides in Campo in 1986.

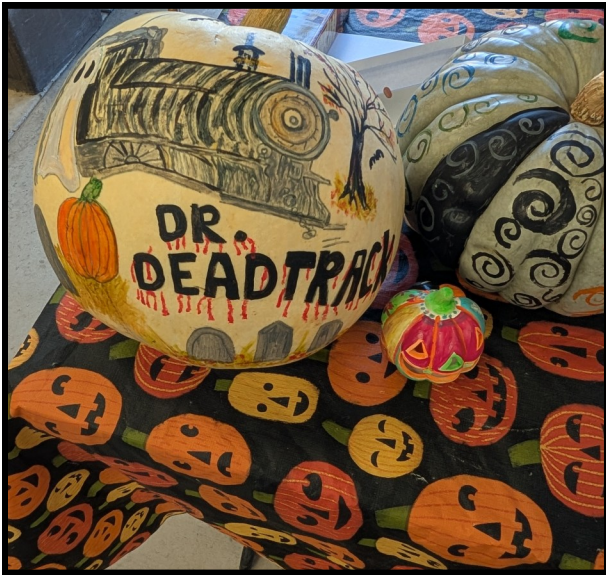
Work continues in the background on the Campo Railroad Museum Stormwater Project, funded by the \$475,000 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grant that we received last year from the County of San Diego. Here's a quick recap: this project consists of designing and constructing grading and drainage improvements throughout the museum grounds. This will not only resolve some existing drainage issues in the museum grounds; it will also pave the way for erecting three future 30,000 square foot exhibit halls, a roundhouse, and a permanent library building/welcome center. Our engineering consultants on the project consist of Civil Landworks doing grading and drainage design; Tory R. Walker Engi-

neering doing floodplain analysis, hydraulics & hydrology; and UES doing percolation testing and geotechnical borings and analysis.

In early October, PSRMA and our engineering consultants attended an initial consultation meeting with the county's land development division. During the meeting, we covered the myriad of engineering and permitting requirements that need to be addressed as the grading and drainage design is finalized. Major topics included the Campo Valley flood plain and the potential to adjust its limits through the FEMA Conditional Letter of Map Revision process; water and sewer utility relocations; storm-water requirements; environmental studies; and state and federal regulatory permits. Anybody who has ever worked in the Engineering and Construction industry in California knows how tedious it can be to navigate the environmental red tape to get a project off the ground. Fortunately, the County of San Diego is on our side and is motivated to get our project permitted and into construction. We're pushing the design work as fast as we can and hope to have a few solid months to do construction work before all the grant funding has to be expended.

Having access to grant money to pay for all of the engineering and environmental studies is truly transformational. It may not seem exciting or closely related to what we do as an organization, but it puts us on much stronger footing to build out our museum in the future. By getting the permitting done and doing the grading and drainage work now, we'll be ready to begin constructing buildings in the coming years as additional funds become available. I am particularly excited about the future exhibit halls and roundhouse. These buildings will allow us to put a much larger percent of our railroad equipment collection indoors and out of the weather. The elements are the number one enemy to the longevity of railroad equipment. The sun fades paint, dust gets into every nook and cranny, and water rusts steel and rots wood. Getting our equipment indoors will make our restoration work last much longer and allow us to be much better stewards of the collection with which we're entrusted. I look forward to providing more updates as this project progresses.

As always, if you would like to get in touch with me, please send a note to president@psrm.org. Until next time, keep it on the high iron!



After their train ride, visitors went into the Exhibit Hall to pick out their pumpkin along with the opportunity to decorate it. The Dr. Deadtrack pumpkin was painted by Sarah Fullum, our Giftshop Manager. Dr. Deadtrack was the mad scientist who was inside the scary train which was open to our "Sip 'N Scare" riders on Saturday nights. Those visitors also enjoyed live music along with drinks and food available.



October is coming to an end and the holidays are arriving fast! Let's envision simplicity this holiday season so that you have more time to enjoy and share with you family and friends!

If you are thinking about gift giving already, why not give the gift of a membership to the Campo Railroad Museum, a purchase of NPL tickets, or maybe a donation to the Museum in your giftee's name. You not only solve your gift giving quandary, but also assist with restorations, upgrades and educational programming at the museum! (Your donation is tax deductible so your *triple* your impact).

In order to make a difference, PSRM relies on the support of generous individuals and businesses in our community. Your support is substantial to PSRM's completion of our latest projects, and we will gladly keep you updated regarding our progress through our monthly newsletter. Even the smallest donation makes a difference.

PSRM would like to thank our September/October donors to the museum: YTD \$53,073.69

\$1,000-\$5,000 Level

Jack O'Lexey – Sustaining Contributor

Justin Miljan – in-kind donation

\$1-\$999 Level

Roman Mandra; Fedor Kuzminov; Adriene Monsalve; Leanne Whalen; Kathleen Rosario; Wayne Pierce; Jaden Soroka; John Caestecker; Lori Copeland; Grace Brown; Lourdes Gibson; Brittany Hendrix; Charles Karayan; Russell Bergeron; Dwight Couch Jr.; Chad Cooper; Ivan Maric; Susan Lapham

Please go to our website at [Donate – Pacific Southwest Railway Museum](#) if you would like to support our efforts in maintaining railway history for future generations. Thank you so much for your donations, either monetary or volunteer time, even the smallest contribution makes a difference

And of course, you can make a difference by exploring our free or low-cost donation giving options:

Two free/easy additional ways to donate are:

Free: *Microsoft Rewards Points* can now be automatically donated to your favorite charity (PSRM) as part of a new initiative called, **"Give with Bing"**. The points that Microsoft Rewards users earn by searching the internet via Bing will be changed into money when it's donated to one of more than a million non-profits organizations. You can automatically donate your Microsoft Rewards points to charity, just designate the **Pacific Southwest Railway Museum** when registering, it's free, so keep browsing! (Just paste either link below into your browser to get started). [About Microsoft Rewards](#) or [You can now automatically donate your Microsoft Rewards points to charity](#) . *I was able to donate over 1,100 points this month to PSRM just by browsing.*

There is also a **Matching Gift** option whereby many companies double (or even triple) your contribution. Find out if you work for, or are retired from a company that matches donations by visiting. [Home - Matching Gifts](#) or ask your Human Resources Department if your place of employment participates.

Thank You!

LIBRARY UPDATE by Bruce Semelsberger

Rather than talk about what we have been doing at the library this month (not as much as usual, as our most of our staff is also the Sip 'N Scare staff) I would like to talk about the library itself. For the benefit of our many new members (thank you for your support!) the library/ archive is inconveniently located at the extreme northeast corner of the museum property adjacent to the back gate on Sheridan Road. Technically, it is the Southwest Railway Library, Inc. and the beginning collection was initially assembled in the 1950s by a group of railfans, historians and collectors who pooled their personal archives together so that they would be preserved after their demise. One of them, Eric Sanders, was still active when I joined PSRM in 1984 and his own collection was added after his death.

Since that time, the collection has grown continuously, even during the nine years spent in storage at Campo. The first part of the "temporary" facility consisting of insulated office space, a large work area and four 8X40' bays opened in 2014 and was immediately filled. A few years later, funding was secured to add 7 additional bays and a second work area. In this last year two additional uninsulated bays were added to house large metal and wood objects. We are told by some who should know that we are the largest private railroad archive in California, and we are here for the benefit of researchers and you, our own members. You are welcome to visit us on Wednesdays and Saturdays, but if you want to come on Wednesday you need to make arrangements at: library@psrm.org and one of us will give you directions and let you in the gate.

What will you find here? I'm going to give you the overall picture this month and we'll go into more detail on individual areas in subsequent *Hotscoop* issues. The library part consists primarily of books, magazines and reports. Archives include correspondence and records of railroad companies, personal memorabilia, newspapers and newsletters, train sheets, maps and

drawings. Ephemera includes paper items of all sorts. Media includes photographs and negatives, audio recordings, video recordings and artworks. The objects collection runs the gamut from tiny items like tokens, pins and date nails to caboose stoves and teletype equipment.

We will begin with books as that is what most people think of when they hear the word library. We have several thousand books on all facets of railroading and they are organized by a version of the Dewey system. The lowest Dewey numbers up to 385.0 comprise local, state and federal government reports and studies, financial reports and union information. Included are reports on projects like high-speed rail and light rail, minutes of San Diego Trolley/MTS meetings, Interstate Commerce Commission accident reports, annual reports of railroad companies, rule books, railroad union histories and the original congressional reports on the 1854 transcontinental surveys.

The 385 numbers comprise general railroading: depots, equipment, management and individual organizations. This is where you will find all of the picture books and company histories. 386-399 covers trolleys and interurbans. 500-624.9 includes general technical subjects, dictionaries, encyclopedias and extensive correspondence school textbooks dating from the 1880s. 625 numbers are specific railroad technical works including construction, repair and operation of equipment dating from the 1850s to present day. The balance of the 600 numbers covers specific technologies related to rail while 700 to 900 covers the arts including radio/ television, posters and photography. 900s are history and travel including a lot of state and local history. The remainder is biography, fiction and juvenile. All in all, there are several thousand books in 1 1/3 bays. The remaining 2/3 bay is the magazine collection with over a century of original magazines in archival boxes and dating from about 1900 to the present.

Next time, we'll talk specifically about the SD&A and predecessors' collection.

Membership Meeting Rescheduled. Due to unforeseen events, the October 24th membership meeting had to be rescheduled at the last minute. The new date is December 12th at 7:00 P.M. Our guest speaker Russ Low will present "The Iron Road and the Steam-Breathing Dragon." Details were presented on page 7 of the October 2025 *Hotscoop*. See you there.

Operations Volunteers

by Rich Paulus, Chief Operations Officer

Train Service - those who are qualified train crew members, speeder operators/crew, and trainees who have helped us run 3 Golden State trains, 18 Pumpkin Express trains, 3 Sip 'N Scare Sunset Specials, and the number of days they have volunteered through October 19: Colin Atwood 3, Alyssa Andersen 1, James Caestecker 1, David Choy 1, Greg Flores 6, Jared Green 1, Stephen Hager 1, Ryan Hodge 3, Randy Houk 3, Dave Little 2, Mike McIntyre 2, Bob Nickles 2, Will Vanni 1.

MOS – maintenance of signal volunteers who con-

ducted monthly electrical and mechanical maintenance and testing/troubleshooting of highway crossing signal systems this month: Chad Baker 1.

Yard switching - these are the volunteers who have worked in PSRM yards this period doing switching to make up the consist for the Pumpkin Express: Colin Atwood 1 and Stephen Hager 1.

Brakeman class - these are the volunteers who have worked the second session of the Fall Brakeman Class at Campo and the number of days they volunteered this period: Colin Atwood 1 and Stephen Hager 1.

There were a total of 32 volunteer-days in Operations this period.



Membership News

By Lena Ibarra, Membership Coordinator

Cool mornings and evenings, warm, sunny days. It must be Fall in San Diego County!

What a great time to welcome our newest Life Member, Wayne Pierce. Wayne joins with a Senior Life membership this month.

And Fall is a time for family, please join me in welcom-

ing our newest members with a Family membership: Josh Bellinger, Adrienne Monsalve, Kary Pusi, Kathleen Rosario, and Scott Thompson.

Very happy to have Russell Bergeron and Brenda Bibbs joining as Senior members as well as Kaiden Patterson with a Student membership.

The holidays are quickly approaching. Consider gifting a membership to the Railroad Museum. Thank you for your support!



Down at the La Mesa Depot

By Timothy Miller, Station Agent

The last quarter of the year seems to be the start of PSRM'S busiest season. While many members were focused on operations at Campo the first weekend in October, I was at the Del Mar Fairgrounds for the annual Great Train Show, spreading the word about PSRM. It was two full days of standing and talking, but it was great exposure for PSRM. Many showgoers' first reaction to me was, "Oh, I have already been out there." I quickly countered by telling them that we are offering many new activities, such as Backcountry Wine Train and Sip 'N' Scare. It is so important to get the word out about current events, especially to those who think they have already seen all that the museum has to offer.

While at the Great Train Show, I was approached by a gentleman who said he had a stove that he purchased and removed from the La Mesa Depot, before the depot was placed in the field as a worm farm and chicken coop. He told me he was interested in getting the stove returned to the La Mesa Depot.

On Tuesday October 21, 2025, Rusty Burkett returned the stove to the La Mesa Depot. The attached photo shows Rusty Burkett delivering the stove, flanked by new members and Depot volunteers Rob Repass and his mother Evelyn Repass. A stove shuffle will have to occur before the historic stove can be reinstalled, as the current stove is connected to the chimney flue!



The current stove gives clues to its origins, as the cast door has a pattern number and the initials D&RG, indicating it was from the Denver & Rio Grande, whose corporate name changed in 1920 by adding Western.

While volunteering at the Pumpkin Patch at the Display Building, I frequently meet our future generation of rail-fan members. Young visitors are asking me about the location and status of several pieces of equipment that they have seen on our website. It is reassuring that our preservation work will be appreciated in the future.



Engineering Highlight

Railway Track and Signals

Chad E. Baker MIRSE

Insulated Rail Joints

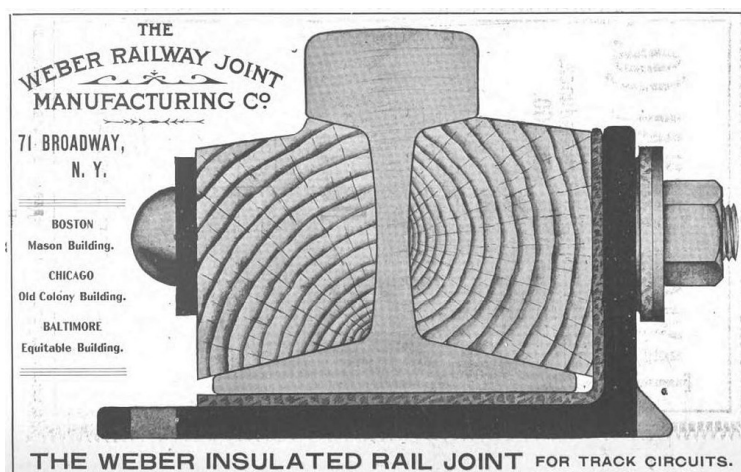
You have likely seen them on the railroad or heard the term 'insulated joint' or railroad signalman jargon "IJ". Insulated rail joints, similar to standard rail joints, connect rails while electrically isolating track circuits overlaid on the rails for train detection. Insulated rail joints must perform all the functions of the standard rail joint, such as wheel support and alignment.

The American Railway Engineering and Maintenance-of-Way Association (AREMA) defines an Insulated Rail Joint as a joint where the rails are electrically insulated from each other using insulated joint bars and insulated bushings or end-posts to prevent the flow of electric current between the rails.

Why are insulated joints necessary on the museum's section of the San Diego and Arizona Railway? Our two public grade crossings on State Route 94 are equipped with warning devices (gates, lamps, and bells) to alert motorists of approaching trains. Train detection for the grade crossing warning system uses track circuits overlaid on the rails. Insulated rail joints define the boundaries of a track circuit and separate each one. Each grade crossing system has three track circuits, each marked by a set of insulated joints—one on each rail (look for track circuits explained in a future installment of Engineering Highlight).

With William Robinson's invention of the track circuit in 1872, the need to isolate rail sections was recognized. The original insulated joints used blocks of hardwood as insulators and to support the rail. This design was replaced by the continuous insulated joint in 1905 and shortly thereafter by the continuous armored

joint. These latter two joints provided insulation through a series of pieces that electrically isolated the joint bar from the rail.



There are many types of insulated joints. They all use an end-post made of insulating material placed between the ends of adjoining rails. Since rails are connected by metal bars and bolts, these must be insulated from the rails to prevent electrical current from flowing from one rail to the next.

The San Diego and Arizona Railway now uses two types of insulated joints, along with one type that is no longer in use but still remains installed in the track structure. Let's look at the two types installed today at State Route 94:

Fiberglass/Epoxy Insulated Joint, Fiberglass joint bars that are held and compressed to the rail with steel bars and bolts, lock washers, and nuts. Each fiberglass bar is sized for the specific rail size. Insulated rail joints made from fiberglass/epoxy material are easy to install, and a single worker can handle the job.

Let's look at the two types installed today at State Route 94:

Fiberglass/Epoxy Insulated Joint, Fiberglass joint bars that are held and compressed to the rail with steel bars and bolts, lock washers, and nuts. Each fiberglass bar is sized for the specific rail size. Insulated rail joints made from fiberglass/epoxy material are easy to install, and a single worker can handle the job. In the case of SR 94, the rail size at the approach circuits is 90 ARA-A (refer to last month's Hot Scoop submission on the 90-pound rail section).

90-Pound Fiberglass/Epoxy Insulated Rail Joint at Mile Post 65.5 (westbound approach circuit at SR 94)



Bonded Glued Insulated Joint, bonded insulated joint 115-Pound Bonded/Glued Insulated Rail Joint at Mile Post 65.4 (SR 94 Island Circuit)



bars are fastened rigidly to the rail using structural mesh and epoxy adhesives. Bonded insulated joints make full contact with the rail in the web area, as well

as the head and base. This is to provide maximum contact area for the epoxy, thereby developing sufficient shear strength to resist the tensile and compressive stresses imparted to the joint by the rails. Bonded joints are the standard for today's class ones, transit, regional, and short-line railroads.

Another common yet obsolete insulated rail joint is the continuous armored joint, which refers to a continuous steel joint bar that bridges each adjoining rail end, separated by fiber head, base, grommets, and washer plates.

Continuous Armored Insulated Joint, the armored insulated joint consists of plastic or fiber materials that rest between the rail and the steel joint bar, including grommet sleeves over the bolt shank.

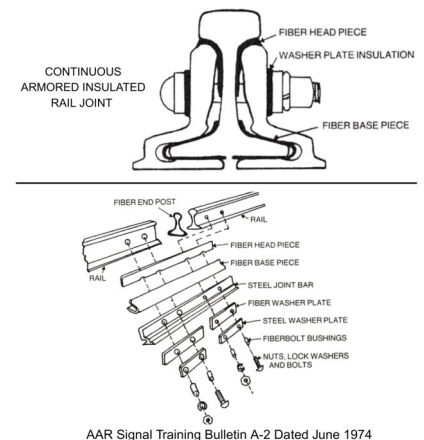
Common to all insulated joints is an end-post. The end-post is a fiber or plastic cross-section of the applicable rail size that rests between the rail ends.

Applicable FRA Regulation related to Insulated Rail Joints

49 CFR § 234.235 – Insulated Rail Joints

Each insulated rail joint used to separate train detection circuits of a highway-rail grade crossing warning system shall be maintained to prevent current from flowing between the rails separated by the insulation in an amount sufficient to cause a failure of any train detection circuit.

We need you! Maintaining 100-year-old railroad infrastructure is no easy task, and our museum depends on the SD&A Railway for revenue to support our preservation efforts. Please consider donating time or funds to maintaining the SD&A Railway infrastructure, ensuring generations can share and learn about railroads in San Diego and the Southwest. Track and signal maintenance volunteers most weekends. It is a rewarding look at engineering and labor.



AVAILABLE: METAL FILE CABINETS, DESKS AND PARTITIONS

The Museum has surplus office items available to members and other organizations at no charge. Must be picked up at the Campo Railroad Museum. Does not include the office chairs.



Contact Jim Lundquist, Assistant Facilities Director, to arrange pickup. Pick up scheduled in advance can be either a weekday or Saturday. Let's find good homes for these!

Jim Lundquist: Jim@psrm.org or 619-417-7059



Order a brick for your family to be remembered. **Orders must be received by November 30th.**

BRICK ORDER FORM

Each brick is 4" x 8". Minimum Donation \$100 each — 1-3 lines of inscription, 20 characters per line



Engraving Information

Each line has a maximum of 20 characters, including spaces and punctuation.
Please print clearly; use capital or lower case letters and make sure the information is spelled correctly. All inscriptions will be centered.

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