HOT SCOOP

A publication for the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum members

November 2024

PUMPKIN TRAINS A SMASHING SUCCESS



Photo by Dave Tomeraasen

10/5/24

UP NEXT - NORTH POLE LIMITED.

Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association, Inc. WWW.PSRM.ORG

619-465-PSRM (7776)

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Museum and Train Operations

Campo Depot

Highway 94 at Forrest Gate Rd, Campo

619-478-9937

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La Mesa Depot Museum & Office

4695 Nebo Drive, La Mesa, CA 91941

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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.psrm.org.

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Museum Directors

President: Stephen Hager
Vice President: Colin Atwood
Treasurer: Hector Gonzalez
Secretary: Jenn Brooker
Equipment Dept: Robert Smith
Facilities Dept: Frank Denison
Museum Services Dept: Travus Clark
Operations Dept: John Cenkner

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Museum Staff

Archivist: Bruce Semelsberger
Asst Dir. Of Facilities: Jim Lundquist
Asst Volunteer Coordinator: Colin Atwood
Fundraising: Donna Spevack
Gift Shop Manager: Alex Fiori
Hot Scoop Editor: Jim Lundquist
Membership: Carl Brooker
Social Media Mgr: Jason Drenkow
Station Master (La Mesa): Timothy Miller
Steam Foreman: Jim Baker
Volunteer Coordinator: Jenn Brooker



Special Events:

NO GOLDEN STATE TRAINS OPERATE FROM NOVEMBER 2 UNTIL JANUARY 11. NORTH POLE LIMITED TRAINS WITH SANTA WILL OPERATE:

November 29 & 30, December 6, 7, 13, 14, 20 & 21 - North Pole Limited trains depart Campo in the evening. Reservations are required.

MUSEUM CLOSED TO PUBLIC FROM NOVEMBER 25 TO JANUARY 10. MUSEUM OPEN FOR VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES.

November 14 - Membership Meeting. "Spreckels Empire". 6:30 p.m. at La Mesa Police Dept Community Room. The speaker for the lecture will be Dr. Sandra E. Bonura, she will be presenting her book Empire Builder: John D. Spreckels and the Making of San Diego.

Regular Schedule:

At our Campo Facility

Saturdays and Sundays - 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Nov. 2-24, Museum open to public, No Train Rides

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



Don't be left out. Order your tickets NOW!

North Pole Limited Tickets are on-sale

Our most popular event each year is the North Pole Limited. The evening trains feature caroling, cookies and hot chocolate and, of course, a visit with Santa Claus all while travelling by train to the North Pole!

Don't be left out, as many trains are sold out each year. Tickets are available for sale at:

https://www.psrm.org/npl/

Bring the whole family, including grandparents and grandchildren.

To truly experience the Christmas excitement, join with other volunteers as we entertain families onboard our trains. Make Christmas come alive for you as you share your time and talents bringing Christmas cheer to all who come to ride our trains to the North Pole this Christmas. Details on your opportunities to participate are all included inside this issue of the *Hot Scoop.*

HOT SCOOP

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

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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.

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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

Santa Claus Needs YOU!

By Jenn Brooker, Special Events Coordinator and Volunteer Coordinator

While Santa's elves toil away at the North Pole in their workshop, PSRM needs our very own elves to bring the North Pole to Campo! Don't be on the naughty list: Experience the magic of the North Pole Limited and help make this an event to remember. The following volunteers are vital to our operations:

1. Decorating Crew: Unleash your creativity and transform our iconic vintage train cars and depot area into a winter wonderland! Decorate with vintage themes to make the experience cozy, warm, and inviting. No artistic experience necessary, just a love for all things fun and festive!

2. Clean-up Crew: Be our unsung heroes! After the North Pole Limited excitement is over, help us keep the museum sparkling clean. This role involves removing and storing décor from the depot and train cars.

3. Gift Shop Assistant: Welcome visitors to our charming gift shop! Answer questions, recommend souvenirs, and make their shopping experience delightful. Strong communication skills, a friendly demeanor, and retail experience are beneficial but not required.

4. First-Class Snack Bar Attendant: Fuel the fun as a snack bar hero aboard our First-Class car! Ride the rails as you greet guests with a smile, prepare soft drinks efficiently, hand out snacks and candy, and ensure excellent service and a clean workspace.

5. Hot Chocolate Chef: Whip up warm, chocolatey magic in large batches to be served aboard the train. Transport the large containers via golf cart from the kitchen facility to the train cars. Requires a driver's license and may require heavy lifting.

6. Parking Lot Attendant: Rudolph may have a shiny red nose to lead the way, but our guests will rely on you and your bright parking wand to find the perfect parking spot. Dress warmly, as this role is all outdoors.

7. Crew Caterer: There's nothing like coming back to a homecooked meal after a long day of work. Whip up large batch meals for our volunteer crews to enjoy at the end of a long night of NPL.

8. Santa Shuttle Driver: Take the big man and his wife back and forth between the North Pole and the Campo Depot between train excursions. This role requires a driver's license and a privately-owned vehicle large enough to accommodate two adult passengers. The route is approximately 9 miles each direction.

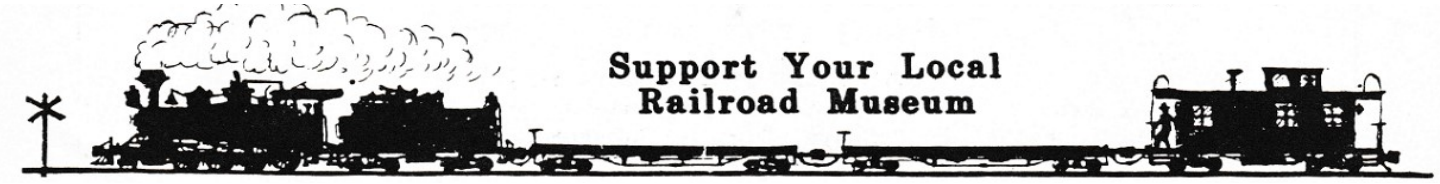
9. North Pole Attendant: Keep the North Pole looking shiny and bright! Ensure the facilities are clean, the décor is staged both inside and outside, the generator is powered on and full of gasoline, the fireplace is chugging along, and all the lights are twinkling throughout the night. Dress warm as this role is entirely outdoors.

10. Ticketing Agent: Distribute ticket reservations to guests, answer ticketing questions, and assist guests with walk-up ticket purchases. Customer service skills and a big smile are a must!

11. Hobo: Done your finest tattered hat and worn-out clothes while you engage with children and families while sharing stories of your travels and adventures around the fire pit.

Please note: The event runs Fridays and Saturdays from November 29th through December 21st from 5pm until 9pm, with many volunteers needed as early as 2pm. Flexible schedules are available for many positions. Specific requirements and responsibilities may vary slightly depending on the role.

Interested? Email volunteer@psrm.org for more information or SIGN UP HERE (https://



Volunteers team up together to set up the “Pumpkin Express” experience

The effort to transform the Exhibit Hall into a huge pumpkin patch always involves a few volunteers putting in the time during weekdays to make it all happen. This year, the team was lead by Jenn Brooker, with assistance from Morgan Snyder, Richard Finch and Teresa Gonzalez, amongst others. These photos show them working together to entertain our visitors during the just completed Pumpkin Express trains. THANK YOU to all involved.













The Robert Peary

Celebrate in elegance this holiday season aboard the Robert Peary, an intimate VIP experience for up to 20 guests.

Visit PSRM.org/NPL to experience the magic!





Work is underway to prepare our property in Campo for the first construction projects on the Master Plan by Dave Tomeraasen. With a huge donation by Hawthorne Equipment Rental of Lakeside, a large excavator has been used by our 'Hot Scoop' Editor and decades long volunteer Jim Lundquist operating a Caterpillar shovel removing large boulders from our rail yard for future expansion and realignment of yard tracks. THANK YOU Hawthorne, for supporting our museum development.





Above photos by Dave Tomeraasen 10/24/24



Two other photos by Jim Lundquist 10/19/24

Museum has a YouTube channel

by Carl Brooker

We've been busy curating a collection of engaging videos that offer a deeper dive into our exhibits, collections, and history. From captivating documentaries to insightful lectures and fascinating vintage footage of the railroad, there's something for everyone. Explore our channel and discover the rich history and stories that our museum has to offer.

https://www.youtube.com/@psrmrailway



From the Back Platform

by Stephen Hager, President

In my article last month, I mentioned that I was travelling to Northwest Arkansas to attend the HeritageRail Alliance annual fall conference. To my knowledge, this was the first time that a representative from the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association has attended in over 15 years. The HeritageRail Alliance (HRA) is an organization composed of railroad museums and tourist railroads from around the country. HRA's mission statement is to promote the common interests of entities engaged in the business of tourist, scenic, historic or excursion railroading, railway museums, and trolley museums. HRA has a wealth of information that has been compiled over the decades on all things to do with running a railroad museum. Need a list of museum best practices? Mechanical information on historic rail equipment? Regulatory guidance? HRA has it all!

The HRA fall conference is their largest annual event. Representatives of railroad museums and tourist railroads from around the country meet up to take train rides, visit local museums, attend plenary sessions, and participate in roundtable discussions. There are also numerous vendors who cater to the heritage railroad industry in attendance. The spectrum of attendees is vast. Many of the big names in the heritage railroad industry were there; California State Railroad Museum, Illinois Railway Museum, American Heritage Railways (Durango & Silverton, etc.), Tennessee Valley Railway Museum, Museum of the American Railroad, and many more. There were also many attendees from museums and organizations smaller than our own; some of whom only have a few hundred feet of operable track. I had the privilege of meeting and getting to know people from museums and tourist railroads throughout the country. As fellow members of the railroad preservation community, we are all in it together, and I am hopeful that the connections I make at events like these will be mutually beneficial to our respective organizations in the future.





The conference was held in Springdale, Arkansas. It was sponsored primarily by the Friends of the Arkansas & Missouri Railroad, the nonprofit arm of the A&M Railroad. The A&M Railroad has the distinction of being one of the few railroads still operating in the United States with a locomotive fleet consisting primarily of Alco locomotives. On the first day of the conference, we took a ride on the A&M Railroad's regularly scheduled excursion train ride from Springdale to Van Buren, Arkansas. I was able to snag an upstairs seat in their beautiful dome car. The Arkansas & Missouri Railroad is about 150 miles long, and the excursion train ride covers half of that distance. We hit some delays along the way and the ride ended up being almost four hours long! The train ride takes you through the beautiful, lush Ozark Mountain Range including over several tall viaduct bridges and through a quarter-mile long tunnel.

Upon arrival in Van Buren, we traveled by motorcoach to nearby Fort Smith, Arkansas. There, we visited the Fort Smith Trolley Museum. The museum has a fully functioning car shop where they restore historic trolleys and streetcars from the surrounding area. The trolley ride itself is only about a quarter mile long, but the museum has additional trackage into downtown

Fort Smith and hopes to further extend its trackage in cooperation with the city. The museum also has a large population of cats; an unconventional feature that most other railroad museums do not have. After the trolley museum, we visited the nearby United States Marshals Museum. This museum is run by a nonprofit organization which was established in 2007 to tell the story of the US Marshals Service from its inception in 1789 all the way to present day. The museum opened in July of 2023 after 16 years of planning, fundraising, construction, and outfitting. The museum receives close cooperation, but no funding from the US Marshals Service. Amazingly, the nonprofit organization raised $50 Million to construct and operate the museum through only grants and private donations! Imagine what PSRMA could do with a tenth of that money!



Day two of the convention was a full day of plenary sessions at the hotel. Speakers included a consultant who spoke about building up a museum from scratch,



several people who spoke about museum governance and fundraising, and the founder of a new nonprofit organization that seeks to link prospective volunteers with mentors and railroad museums around the country. I have lots of notes from these sessions that will be distilled down and presented to the PSRMA Board of Directors for consideration on different approaches that we could take to fundraising and volunteer recruitment.

Day three of the convention consisted of several optional roundtable discussions in the morning. I sat in on the regulatory sessions hosted by the Federal Railroad Administration. Discussion topics included some upcoming changes to regulations applicable to non-insular railroads like our own, a moving presentation on train crew safety called "Back to Basics," and updates on steam locomotive boiler regulations. After the roundtable discussions were finished, we traveled to the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and spent a few hours there. Finally, we traveled back to Springdale to visit the A&M Railroad's locomotive shop and yard. The shop is clean and well organized. It was impressive seeing multiple Alco locomotives undergoing heavy maintenance including complete engine rebuilds. These locomotives are a rare breed in the 21st century and the A&M Railroad takes pride in maintaining and operating them.

Day four of the convention was an optional rare-mileage excursion on the northern end of the A&M Railroad. Although A&M traverses the entire length of their railroad with freight trains daily, they rarely ever run excursion trains north of Springdale. We traveled all the way north to Monett, Missouri before returning via the same way. On the outbound trip, we did two photo runbys. The A&M Railroad was rebuilt in the early 2000's with continuous welded rail and well-ballasted track. Much of the trip was spent chugging right along at 35 miles per hour.

The HRA Convention was a great experience and I am already looking forward to attending next year's convention on behalf of PSRMA in Durango, Colorado!

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!

Library expansion is underway in Campo by Jim Lundquist



Two “new to us” containers have been delivered to Campo which will allow expansion of our Library. Thanks to Frank Denison and Julio Ornelas with special thanks to Vance Butler for allowing us to use his 30,000 pound lift forklift in assisting Jim Lundquist in clearing out the site, grading and placing the containers on ties. Space was left to allow for a covered patio to be installed at a later date. *Photo by Jim Lundquist 10/24/24*

Membership News by Carl Brooker.

Train enthusiasts and history buffs alike, lend a hand (remotely!) to the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum! We're seeking a volunteer to take on the rewarding role of Membership Coordinator. This fully remote position is perfect for someone who wants to support the museum from the comfort of their own home. As Membership Coordinator, you'll play a vital role in processing new memberships and renewals, ensuring our valued members receive their welcome packets promptly while also helping the museum generate a stream of much needed revenue. It's a fantastic opportunity to make a real difference for the museum, all without needing to travel to Campo. If you're passionate about trains and have a knack for organization, we encourage you to inquire! Please email membership@psrm.org with any questions or to express interest!

It is always great to see one of our members convert their annual membership to a life membership. Bobbie Swendra of Campo, Calif. made that very important upgrade and became our newest Senior Life Member. Thanks Bobbie!

PSRMA is happy to announce that the following people have joined as either new individual, student, senior, or family members and we are grateful for their support – Pamela Bundy; Steven Cologne; Dalia Cortes; Bonnie Crews; Kathy Houston; Miranda Kijanka; Cathleen Martin; Adrian Medina; Karen and Dave Mejia; Anne Mendoza; Ed Sherman; Ernesto Valdes; and Leanne Whalen. Welcome all!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



Track work underway in museum's yard by our volunteer Gandy Dancers

Museum volunteers started working on two switches in the museum yard tracks. With no trains operating for the majority of November, the timing was perfect to undertake this task. Trackwork, especially installing large ties under switches, is a lot of hard work. Thank you to these volunteers for taking this task on.

Above and below left photos by Bruce Semelsberger 10/26/24. Photo below right by Jim Lundquist 10/26/24.





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 & Scare Specials, and the number of days they have volunteered through October 20: Colin Atwood 4, Jim Baker 2, Carl Brooker 2, Ken Brown 1, James Caestecker 1, David Choy 2, Stephen Hager 2, Ryan Hodge 4, Randy Houk 3, Charles Karayan 1, Dave Little 3, Jim Lundquist 2, Mike McIntyre 1, Matthew Milhoan 1, Bob Nickles 1, Rich Paulus 1, Duke Schweikert 2, Tom Ulrich 1.

MOS – maintenance of signal volunteers who conducted electrical and mechanical maintenance and testing of highway crossing signal systems this month: Chad Baker 1 and Christopher Baker 1.

Yard switching - these are the volunteers who have worked in PSRM yards this period: Jim Lundquist 1 and Rich Paulus 1.

MOW - maintenance of way volunteers Jim Lundquist 1.

There were a total of 39 volunteer-days this period.

Down at the La Mesa Depot by Timothy Miller

October is always a busy month with PSRM, but this year it seems to be even more so.



The weekend of October 5th-6th the Great Train Show returned to the Del Mar Fairgrounds, after a long absence. We handed out almost a full box of PSRM's flyers and brochures, and spread the news about our Halloween and Christmas events.

Paul Falk staffed the Depot on October 5th during the La Mesa Octoberfest.

On Thursday, October 10th, Diane Angus from the Lakeside Historical Society dropped by with four United States Postal Service art prints, featuring steam locomotives and stamps issued with locomotives. The Society decided that PSRM would be a better home for these items, and Bruce Semelsberger happened to be there to receive them. Diane also offered additional items to PSRM for which the Lakeside Historical Society has no future plans, including railroad signals and 1900-style lampposts, but moving them will require some advance planning on PSRM's part.

To keep our younger visitors entertained, our two Depot wooden railroad play tables were repaired and exchanged.

Planning for our Christmas holiday display at the La Mesa Depot is well underway. We're looking forward to making our Depot display shine!

Our next big event is Halloween at the Depot. The Downtown La Mesa Trick-or-Treat is scheduled on Thursday, October 31st, from 4:00 - 6:00 PM. Donna Spevack has already supplied candy for the crowd. Volunteers are always welcome!

The La Mesa Depot is 130 years old this year!

Equipment Dept - volunteers work on the Robert Peary by Jim Lundquist



What is this you ask? That is a center pin in the Robert Peary. All passenger cars are equipped with a pin which keeps the truck sets attached to the car in case of a roll-over derailment. This month found volunteers jacking up the private car to grease the center plates allowing the car to glide into turns. It turns out that this pin was very happy where it was and didn't want to come out. Volunteer members kept at it until the job was completed.

Photos by Jim Lundquist 10/19/24





FREE BOOKS OFFERED TO MEMBERS - WHAT A GREAT CHRISTMAS PRESENT

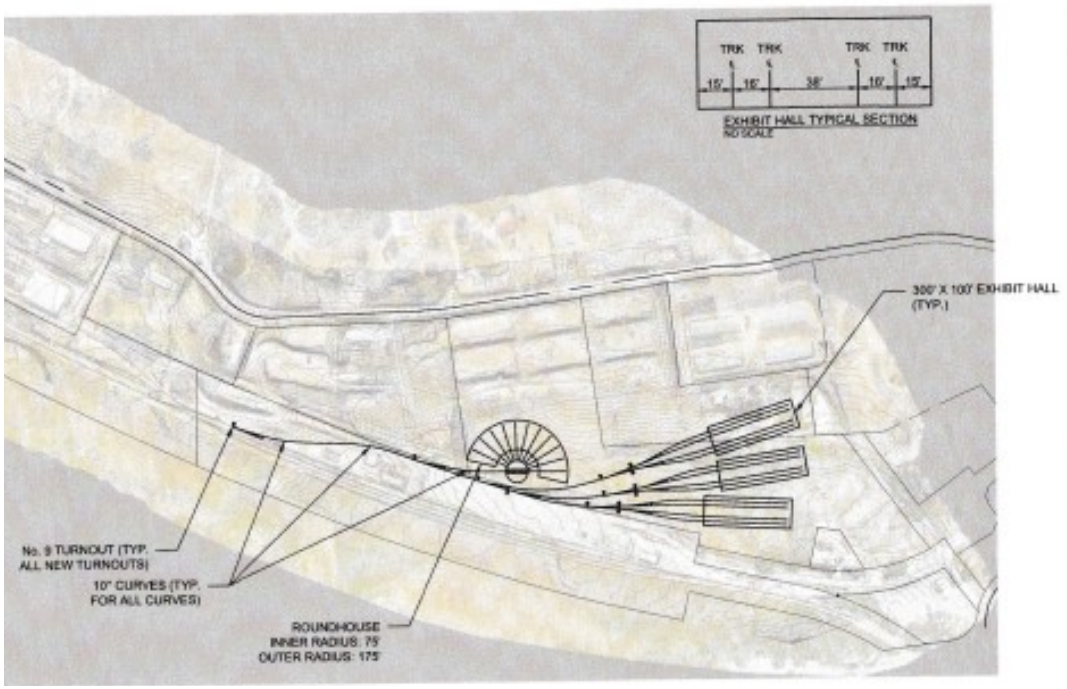
Do you have a friend or family member, or yourself, who is interested in trains and history? We have just the gift for you, just in time for Christmas - your selection of duplicate books in our library! All that is needed is to arrange to meet our Librarian, Bruce Semelsberger, at Campo and select the books you are interested in. Bruce is normally in the Library on Wednesdays and Saturdays. These books are duplicate to our collection and we are happy to find good homes for them. Call Bruce at 619-264-7282 to arrange your visit.



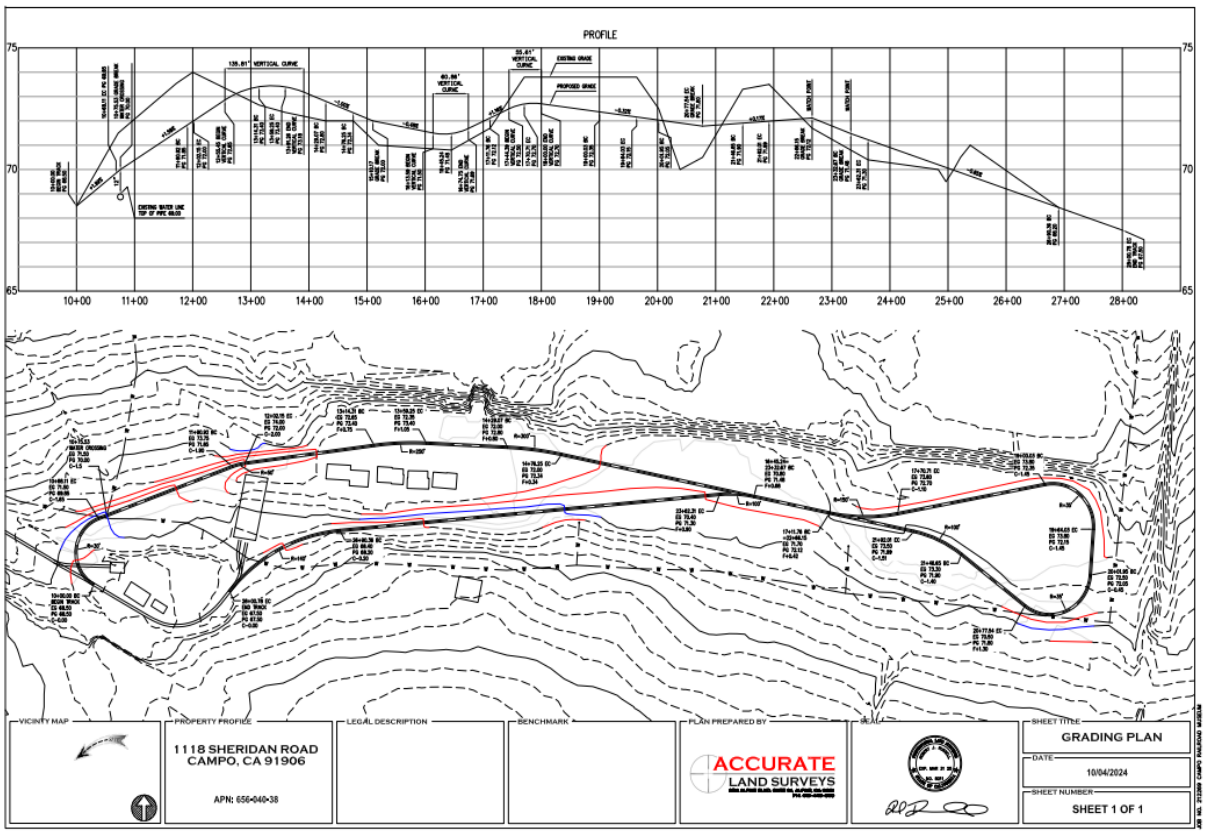
Happy reading and Merry Christmas to you and your friends!

Master Plan and "Mine Train" plans were modified by Jim Lundquist

The Board of Directors tasked a members committee to review the Master Plan prior to plans being drawn up for drainage grant. The committee recommended relocating the turntable and future roundhouse closer to the Campo Depot where the public will view equipment as a "display only" building. By bringing the roundhouse adjacent to the depot, the public can easily access the building from the existing parking lot and keeps all public exhibit buildings in one area. Please note that only the buildings in which the locations were modified are shown on the exhibit. The Master Plan includes additional buildings in other locations of our 100 acre site.



In addition, the Board accepted a proposal by Jim Lundquist to modify the track location for the California History Exhibit "Mine Train." The new track layout greatly reduces the grades to less than 2%, which will allow for the locomotives to pull extra cars on each train. Special thanks to Rob Russell of Accurate Land Surveys in Alpine for the design work he donated.



Grade Crossing Signal Maintenance Update by Chadwick E. Baker MIRSE

Our monthly, quarterly, and yearly signal maintenance on our two active grade crossings at State Highway 94 MP 65.4 and 67.2 continues. Yes, we maintain and keep the crossing at milepost 67.2 near the Motor Transport Museum current and ready for service. A condition of our railroad lease requires both crossings to be current on inspections and tests. One day, a train might transverse the crossing at 67.2.



Our two highway-grade crossing warning systems are on the required FRA 29-day inspection cycle. This includes testing the system, stand-by battery power on and power off test, grounds test, cleaning lenses, inspection, and testing of the system and subsystems.

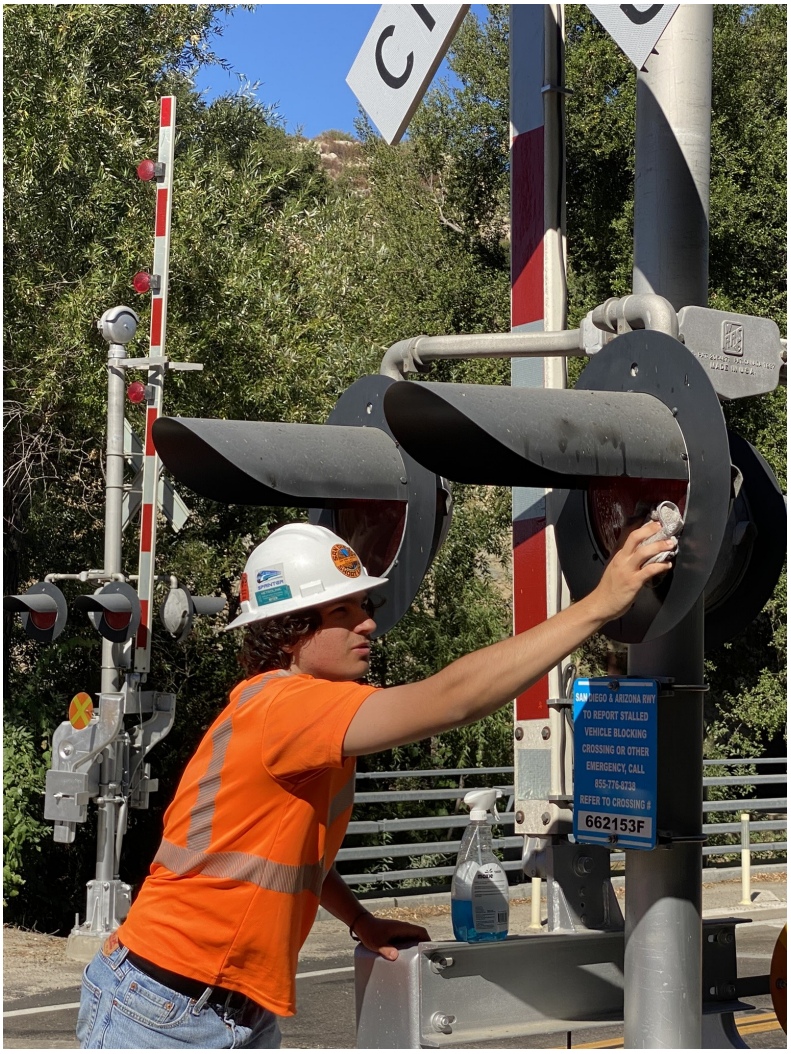
We must conduct additional inspections and tests every 89 days or quarterly, including walking the approach track circuits and inspecting the insulated joints, track connections, and bond wires at each rail joint in the circuit. Our crossings are equipped with cut-out circuits. A cut-out circuit allows the trainmen to cut out the activation should the train stop on the approach circuit for an extended time.

In August, we conducted our annual inspections and tests. The yearly tests include testing the voltage to each lamp on the masts and gate arms, opening each lamp and cleaning the insides of the housings, and checking, adjusting, and verifying each track circuit and corresponding warning time (FRA requires a minimum of twenty seconds of warning time in each direction of travel). Additionally, the flash rate for each lamp shall be recorded and verified within specifications, and the vertical and horizontal torque of each gate arm shall be measured and weighed, as well as the testing time elements related to the gate control and DTMF Digi Set used for remote activation via the road channel.

Over the last year, we've needed to make a few repairs. We lost a track diode on one of the approach tracks due to lightning and replaced a capacitor on the gate control relay that was beyond its useful life cycle and failed in service.

Recent upgrades: We installed new standby battery chargers with automatic temperature-compensated battery chargers at each crossing. The newer, more modern chargers extend the battery life of each cell by





changing the charge rate based on the ambient temperature at the battery cell. This proves well with our hot summers and cool winters so as not to boil the nickel-cadmium solution in the cells.

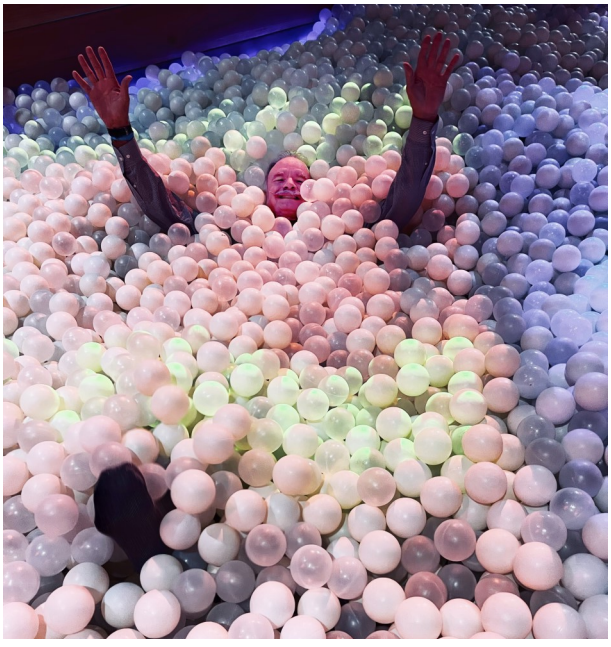
If you are interested in signal maintenance or the technology and science of signals, I encourage you to reach out and participate each month in our signal maintenance tasks. We are developing a training manual specific to our crossing signal technology, and I would be happy to share it and train our next generation of SD&A Railway Signal Maintainers.

Date of our next signal maintenance inspection and test:

Saturday, November 9th at 0900 am
Saturday, December 7th at 0900 am
Saturday, January 4th at 0900

Chad Baker 760-622-1513 or brcrail@aol.com

Volunteer Signal Maintainer Christopher Baker cleaning the flasher lamps at State Highway 94 West MP 65.4





Mark Landguth and Jennifer Brooker enjoy a "dip" in the Ball Pool at the Fleet Science Center. The San Diego Museum Council, of which PSRM is a member organization, held their annual meeting and mixer at the Fleet, with attendees getting to enjoy the museum after hours.

Pumpkin Express Photo Pages. Thank you to Dave Tomeraasen for these photos.













More Pumpkin Express Photos. Thank you to Dave Tomeraasen for these photos.













There was something for everyone of all ages to enjoy. Lots of families having fun at our museum. Thank you volunteers for making it happen.

Our Thanks to Hawthorne Equipment Rental for Their Support of Our Museum







In preparation of our drainage and grading work to be completed on site as part of the federal grant, Jim Lundquist has been working overtime with the excavator to remove concrete chunks, steel and rubber materials using the donated Hawthorne equipment. All of the non-dirt materials needs to be removed prior to the grant work starting.



Richard Finch, one of our hard-working volunteers, submitted this photo. The sign points the way to the scary train inside the Exhibit Hall for all who dared to enter!

Many hours were spent by a small group of volunteers to make our Pumpkin Express event a success.

Other, popular special events could be run at Campo for our visitors if we could get a few more volunteers to step forward to assist.

Please consider volunteering for your railway museum. Special events are fun!

THANK YOU for those who answered the call. It was a hugely successful Fall event.