

PACIFIC NORTHWEST RAILROAD ARCHIVE

Progress Report – Sept. 2011

The Pacific Northwest Railroad Archive (PNRA) is now in operation with our member-RHOs holding regular sessions to work with their collections of historical railroad documents or their model layout in the case of BEMRC. Since the building purchase, PNRA has completed the initial phase of planned facility improvements; received five grants to fund programs and facility improvements; installed computer work stations, a scanner and printer tied together on a wireless network; and begun fulfilling orders for two RHO's online stores. These activities are described in greater detail in this report.

Brief History of PNRA

PNRA was formed in 2009 by a consortium of three railroad history organizations (RHO) the Great Northern Railway Historical Society (GNRHS), Northern Pacific Railway Historical Association (NPRHA) and the Boeing Employees Model Railroad Club (BEMRC). In June 2010, PNRA closed the purchase of the 7,500 square foot, Archive building in Burien, Washington, ten miles south of downtown Seattle and near Sea-Tac airport. In September 2010, Cascade Rail Foundation representing the Milwaukee Road in Washington State, became a member-RHO of PNRA. PNRA received its non-profit exemption under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code in the late Fall of 2010. Participating RHOs retain ownership of their collections and have contracted to pay PNRA fees for use of space, equipment to digitize and catalog their collections and for other services provided by the PNRA.

Funding Sources

PNRA is funded from operating revenues, individual contributions and grant funding. Current operating revenue levels cover the recurring operating expenses, however the building mortgage interest is covered by the individual contributions and some grant funding. PNRA has been awarded five grants to date with others pending, the awarded funds must be used for the purposes requested in PNRA's submitted application. The table below lists the details of the grants awarded to date:

Grantor	Grant Purpose	Award Date	Grant Amount
BNSF Foundation	General operating expenses	12/24/2010	\$7,500
WA Dept. of Archaeology & Historic Preservation	Scan & catalog 6,000 train sheets in RHO collections.	3/28/2011	\$18,500
National Railway Historical Society	Partial funding of a traveling exhibit, titled: <i>Where the Rails meet the Sails on Puget Sound.</i>	6/30/2011	\$2,000
North American Railroad Foundation	Purchase the initial set of compacting shelving capable of storing 1,500 boxes on the lower floor.	7/22/2011	\$46,800
Moccasin Lake Foundation	Partial funding of new roof for Archive building	8/20/2011	\$5,000

Fulfillment Services

The NPRHA and GNRHS operate online "Company Stores" linked to their individual websites where they offer back issues of their quarterly publications, books, modeling kits, clothing and specialty items like: pins, cups, note cards, etc. Both RHOs have contracted with PNRA to pick, pack, ship and report their online sales. PNRA installed shelving on the securely locked, upper floor of the Archive building to hold the offered items. PNRA receives income related to the order volumes from each of the RHOs. In addition, PNRA fulfills orders for copies of photos, documents or drawings in the RHO collections when requested. This service assures timely responses to orders and other requests.

Facility Improvements

PNRA started converting the former plumbing supply building into a serious archive facility soon after the purchase closed in 2010. A local architect firm drew a set of plans to submit for a building permit from the City of Burien. The work has largely been done by volunteer help from RHO members, except licensed contractors were used for the installation of the plumbing, electrical panels, stucco and new roof.

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The following improvements are complete:

- A new east restroom built and put in operation, and the west restroom walls rebuilt to ADA requirements.
- The wall between Receiving and Archive spaces on the lower floor completed with lockable double doors.
- Glass panes in North wall of the Main floor were removed and replaced with an insulated, stucco wall.
- A mail slot was added to the East side of the North wall to start the receipt of mail at the Archive.
- An exterior steel door was installed on the BEMRC side of the main floor.
- Electrical branch circuits and light switches were added to the new construction.
- Interior fire door was installed at the top of the stairs from the Main floor to the basement.
- A new vinyl window with protective grill was installed on the Upper floor to provide ventilation.
- Wood shelving was installed on the Upper floor to store inventory for the order fulfillment operations.
- The old roof was removed and replaced with a new 20-year roof.

Furniture & Equipment

PNRA, due to our non-profit status, has been very fortunate in finding much of the furniture and equipment needed to start operations either donated by people interested in helping establish the Archive, or for sale at low cost by surplus or recycling stores. For example, the Washington State Surplus warehouse in Tumwater sold us three computer work stations and thirty newly upholstered chairs worth an estimated \$2,000 for a total of \$188. During August 2011, we purchased used sink and toilet fixtures for the new east restroom for about 5% of the new cost from a building materials recycling store in South Seattle.

Various people have donated their older computers to PNRA when they upgrade to newer systems and continue to be interested in receiving more used computer systems. We currently have five computer systems setup and available for working with image processing, order fulfillment, web site maintenance and catalog data entry. All are running either Windows7 or WindowsXP, depending on the capabilities of the machines. When a computer needs to be upgraded, we are able to purchase used parts from local computer recycling stores at a fraction of the new costs. Also, we receive donated software by paying only a nominal handling fee through the TechSoup Foundation, a consortium of high-technology companies which make the donations to non-profit organizations.

In July 2011, six RHO members disassembled and moved to the PNRA lower floor, five 6-foot sections of compacting shelving that would have gone to the dump. Later that month, another small compacting shelving system was donated to PNRA at no cost. This second system has seven 48-inch wide sections, five which are 24-inches deep and two are 12-inches deep. Each of these systems are worth about \$12,000 and will fit nicely into unallocated spaces on the lower floor of the PNRA building.

Capital Campaign

In the Spring of 2010, PNRA successfully raised \$72,500 and ended the 2010 year with contributions and long-term loans totaling \$131,500. These funds were used to close the purchase of the building, modify it and begin operations. Building on this success of the past 18 months, PNRA plans to start a capital campaign this Fall to raise funds to “Establish a World-Class Railroad Archive in the Pacific Northwest.”.