

PACIFIC NORTHWEST RAILROAD ARCHIVE

NORTHWEST NEWS

The activities at the Archive during the second quarter of 2016 are summarized for the *Friends of PNRA* in this progress report.

2016 GiveBIG Campaign Results

Last quarter, PNRA used *Seattle Foundation's* annual **GiveBIG** campaign to reduce the mortgage principal on our Archive building and successfully raised a total of \$15,702. This total is being matched dollar-for-dollar by generous Challenge Grants from the GNRHS and NPRHA.

Our original debt incurred to purchase the Archive building was \$475,000 at the start of 2015 and has now been reduced to \$188,547. We still have \$24,298 in Challenge Grants remaining which are designated to match additional Capital Campaign contributions. If you have not already contributed to the Campaign, please help PNRA by mailing us a check to the address below, or by making an online contribution from the **Donate Now** link on the Home page of our www.PNRArchive.org web site.

Community Outreach

On October 25th, the PNRA will host the meeting of the *Association of King County Heritage Organizations* (AKCHO), and share our Digital Archive Plan with our heritage partners attending. Digital copies of the plan will be available to those organizations that are interested in long-term preservation of the digital collections.

PNRA is honored to receive part of an exhibit of the works of Winold Reiss (1886-1953), a gifted artist and designer who immigrated to the United States from Germany in 1913. After his first visit to the Native American tribes of Montana in January of 1920, Reiss was able to return many times in a long-lasting collaboration with the Great Northern Railway. It was said that the Blackfeet trusted him to record their greatness, not for himself, but for them. Reiss left an incredible body of work that captured the true spirit of the Blackfeet, much of it in the form of Great Northern calendars and advertising materials. Scott Tanner, a GNRHS Board Member, has lectured and written on the connection between Reiss and the Great Northern Railway, and participated in the 2005 Winold Reiss exhibition at the *Hockaday Museum of Art* in Kalispell, Montana. Scott has lent some of the materials from his Winold Reiss collection to PNRA for display on our main floor.

During the next quarter, PNRA will host the following rail-heritage groups on our main floor space. Anyone with an interest in the history of the following railroads are invited to attend:

- On July 16th the *Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society*, Pacific Northwest Chapter will hold their quarterly meeting.
- On September 17th the *Cascade Rail Foundation* and the Coast Division of the *Milwaukee Road Historical*

Association will hold their second Milwaukee Road Meet of 2016 with slides, movies, discussions and socializing.

In September, PNRA members are scheduled to report Archive activities at the annual conventions of the: *Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railway Historical Society* during an Archive tour at PNRA; *Northern Pacific Railway Historical Association* convention at Wallace, Idaho; and the *Great Northern Railway Historical Society* convention at Spokane, Washington. The collections preserved at PNRA are being used heavily to support these presentations.

The Boeing Employees Model Railroad Club, a PNRA charter member-organization, completed the bench work for a new modular layout to be used at community events in the Puget Sound region. The members are working to have the modules ready for their first community event at the *Washington State History Museum's* annual Train Show during the 2016 Christmas Season in Tacoma.



The Winold Reiss Exhibit panel showing the artist at work is displayed on PNRA's Main Floor wall, along with four GN calendars featuring Reiss' Native Americans portraits.

Preservation Activities

Digital Archive Project - Under guidance of Elizabeth Knight, our certified digital archive consultant, the Digital Archive Plan was completed on schedule in June 2016 as Phase 1 of the Project. This Phase developed a comprehensive policy framework, based on existing standards, to assure the long-term preservation of the PNRA's digital content, and increase the worldwide discoverability of PNRA collections. The Plan provides PNRA with a roadmap to improve and standardize the handling, description, and management of digital assets our volunteers generate, and a foundation upon which the Archive can be fully developed as a sustainable and secure digital repository.

An integral part of the Plan development involved evaluating commercially-available software systems which manage the preparation and handling of both collection information and digital objects for long-term

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preservation. After observing demos of the systems and studying each system's operational feature sets, it was determined that the best fit for PNRA's requirements is the *Access-to-Memory* (AtoM) system supported by Artefactual Systems Inc. of New Westminster, British Columbia. AtoM was developed to make it easier for archival institutions worldwide to put their archival holdings online using descriptive archival standards. It was ruled best in terms of functionality, cost, ease of use, customization capabilities, support options, and the ability to later integrate with long-term, a OAIS-compliant, digital object preservation structure.

Also in June 2016, a grant was submitted to partially fund the Phase 2 of the Digital Archive Project in which we will:

1. Configure a server to run the AtoM software.
2. Confirm that AtoM meets its specifications;
3. Configure the system to handle descriptive-data characterizing PNRA's collections;
4. Train the PNRA volunteers to catalog the collections;
5. Configure a new PNRA web site using the AtoM platform.

Collection Cataloging – PNRA's volunteer crews have made great progress in cataloging many of the photo collection donated to the Archive in at the end of 2013 by Walt Ainsworth, which include:

- NP steam locomotive photos are scanned, cataloged and being posted on the NPRHA.org web site.
- Pacific Coast photos are scanned and cataloged, and will be posted on the PNRArchive.org web site.
- NP Freight and Passenger cars and MOW equipment has been scanned and catalog and waiting to be posted.
- SP&S steam and diesel locomotives prints have been scanned and are being cataloged
- Other collections in work include prints being scanned of GN Condensed Profiles, NP diesel locomotives, Tacoma Trolley, and NP locations.

Heritage Services

PNRA and our four member-Rail Heritage Organizations are receiving an increasing number of requests for information from individuals and groups studying the history of the Pacific Northwest region. Requests come from many constituencies: Historians; Government Agencies seeking historical information about existing railroad structures; Consultants preparing background histories of projects; Authors and Artists seek assistance with creative details; and Individuals seeking research of genealogy, regional history, modeling information.

Facilities

An individual donated six Xeon-powered IBM servers to PNRA. We plan to use one unit for the setup of the software for the second phase of the Digital Archive Project where we will configure the software to guide the cataloging of the collections at PNRA. The other servers



PNRA's building taken June 2016 showing the completed parking lot. The sun only shines on the Archive's front like this each year near the summer equinox.

will be setup to control our high capacity scanners and speed up the processing of the data they create.

The east-bay on the Archive's lower floor is being cleared, painted and new light fixture installed in anticipation of installing more mobile shelving this fall. This has meant finding room elsewhere in the Archive for temporary storage of many loaded pallets, file cabinets, and stationary shelving that has occupied the east bay since the Archive went into operation. We look forward to the time when we again have permanent shelf space for all the collections.

The east wall of the Archive building showed some water incursion this last winter. Contractors are providing bids on the work which needs to be sealed this summer while the weather is warm.

Help Preserve Collections

PNRA continues to receive collections of railroad documents, maps and photos at a rate of four to five each month. However, we know many more collections will still need a new home in the future. Most of the owners or their families don't know of PNRA, our preservation mission where their collections are honored and preserved. It is critical that we talk with these people or their families before the collections are discarded. **If you know of such a collection, please contact us.**

Gary Tarbox,
PNRA Executive Director
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