The Big Train Project Status Report (Part 9)

Major Progress! The Project has an approved building permit. The contractors have been hard at work, some for 12 hours per work day. Trenches have been cut and dug out in the building's floor for utilities and for the "foundations" of the internal "buildings," like the station (ticket office/entry and gift shop). The hobby shop wall is going up, and work on strengthening the roof beams to hold the heating and air conditioning units has been completed. Work on the infrastructure is proceeding at a rapid rate. The "layout" area is now a hard-hat zone, so visitors must wear a hard hat to enter. The "back" area where the maze, storage, and additional exhibits will be located is still available for our planning meetings, but some work is going on in there as well. So far, we haven't been required to wear hard hats in there.

All of this means that soon there will be tables on which to start layout construction. The first to go up will be the Early Era, which is also where layout construction will begin, once the tables are up. The Roadbed and Track Section Gang is planning to build some test structures out of steel "lumber" to represent what we expect to use to support track above the level of the tables.

Communications with the volunteers have increased markedly. Larry Koehl, our "Supervisor of Volunteers" has written and distributed to registered volunteers the first of what we expect to be a monthly newsletter, "The Gandy Dancer." If you filled out and turned in a volunteer form you should have gotten a copy (by email if you provided that on your form). Needless to say, if the email address Larry has for you is no longer current, you'll need to send Larry and update.

If you signed up for the Buildings and Bridges, Special Effects, or Scenic Details Section Gangs, you should have gotten a tasking message describing the sections of the Early Era portion of the layout and asking for volunteers to take on individual tasks.   For those of you who don't want to handle a task by yourselves, let Larry know what your interested in doing and that you may need some help and/or guidance, and he'll probably team you with one or more experienced people who can help you along.

Even though MVGRS volunteered to design and build the Middle Era engine servicing facility and designed the Modern Era portion of the layout, which will have he layout tables built later. You should not hold off volunteering your services until we start building those areas. There is plenty to do that needs your help NOW, and your feedback to Larry about your skills, your interests, and any help you can give are needed and will be greatly appreciated by the entire Big Train Project team.

As I reported in the February issue of TRACKS, the Buildings and Bridges gangs have been split into two separate groups. Jack McLaren has done an outstanding job getting his team working on research and planning for the Bridges Section Gang. That group is off and running, a model of organization and spirit that sets the current standard for how the volunteer effort should work. The team has, so far, focussed on the Early Era bridges. Specific individuals have been assigned to work on specific bridges (some by themselves, others in teams) and results of some of their research and planning have already been presented to the steering committee for go-ahead to the next phase. Our Bob Mott is an active and enthusiastic member of that section gang, so, if you

want more information on how the gang is working, and, hopefully, how to get involved yourselves, get the inside story from him.

The Buildings, Scenic Details, and Animation Section Gangs still need leaders. If you have the interest to be a boss rather than a worker, here's an opportunity for you. Let Larry Koehl know (gcgrs@fuse.net). One prerequisite is that you have email capability, both outgoing and incoming.

As always, stay tuned to the Big Train Project Yahoo group at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bigtp for the latest news.

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