



WHEELS Hub

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WHEELS Museum

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Vice President Joe Craig
Treasurer John Coffman
Secretary Sandy Ginsburg

Officers of Friends of WHEELS

President Sandy Ginsburg
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Treasurer Monika Ghattas
Secretary Stan Rhine

Presidents Message

By Leba Freed

Dear Friends, My father taught me to hold up one's end of the business and things will work out. After eight years of work on the WHEELS Museum, we have had three extraordinarily good developments! First, Governor Richardson has granted WHEELS \$2,000,000.00 for capital expenditures to include land and buildings. Second, Mayor Chavez has granted us some operating funds to help defray office costs. Third, we are working closely with the Council of Governments and private developers to move ahead with locating WHEELS at the old

Executive Director's Message

By Alan Clark

There have been several pieces of good news over the last few weeks. Leba has covered them in her column, but I'll provide a little detail on each. The State of New Mexico has made a grant to WHEELS Museum of \$2,000,000.00. The grant is to cover land and building acquisition, or architectural and other planning costs. The grant will be added to the approximately \$500,000.00 already being administered by the City of Albuquerque. The WHEELS Board participated in a two-month plus series of strategic planning meetings in the fall and winter of 2005-2006. A strategic plan is now in place. Anyone wishing to see the plan may borrow a copy

AT&SF Backshops property

Next? A fund raiser—even with these wonderful developments, we are a long way from being able to pay for the property we need and want. So to help inch us further toward that goal, we are having a fund raiser at the Embassy Suites Hotel downtown. Ticket prices for the dinner, auction and entertainment are \$75 each, or \$600 for a table of eight and sponsor-ships for \$1,000 to \$10,000. It would be wonderful to sell out the party in advance, so please consider buying tickets now and saving our volunteers the last minute phone calls.

Also, we are seeking items for the silent auction. We can pick them up, or they can be brought to our development office at 1501 North First. Call for reservations now at 243-6269.

Two new Board members have come on board, Witt Reichard with United Way and Brent Tiano with Grubb and Ellis. They bring lots of great ideas and help to the Board. We have received the donation of a 1950 Buick Special by a good friend and WHEELS supporter, Mark Lautman. Work on the Milk Wagon is progressing beautifully, thanks to Barry Lyon and Dick Maki, two incredible volunteers. Work continues on the model railroad by Herb Palm. There are also two new volunteers; John Chester working on the fund raiser, and we are also thrilled to have a new volunteer bookkeeper, Bill Brown, a former federal auditor. Please come by to see our progress!

We are seeking additional volunteers to help with fund raising, membership growth and vehicle repair. We continue to work closely with the Steam Locomotive Society in the rehab of engine #2926, the BIG WHEELS exhibit.

Love,

Leba

WHEELS Are Beginning to Turn By Alan Clark

The WHEELS Museum established two major goals in its first year of life. The initial goal was to save the former Santa Fe

from me. Call 243-6269.

Our audit for fiscal year 2005 is complete and without complications. The City of Albuquerque has made a grant to enable the Museum development office to expand its activities. The grant is up to \$24,000 in the coming fiscal year. The Friends of WHEELS will continue to raise much needed operational funds with memberships and a fund raising dinner this fall.

Membership Information

Basic Membership (Please choose one category)

Individual \$30.00

Family (2 Adults and all children under age 18)
\$55.00

Hub Member \$100.00

Spoke Member \$250.00

Wheel Member \$500.00

Driver Member \$1,000.00

Business/Institution (up to 5 employees) \$150.00

Senior Individual (60 years and older) \$20.00

Senior Couple (60 years and older) \$40.00

Student (under 18 or college student with ID) \$5.00

Name _____

Additional
names(family/business) _____

Address _____

City,State,Zip _____

Phone

Number _____

e-mail _____

Payable to:

The WHEELS Museum

1501 1st St. NW

Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102

Friends of WHEELS President's Message By Sandy Ginsburg

Introducing Roger Blake Official WHEELS
Photographer Roger has always had interests in art
and photography. He sometimes combined these

Railway Backshops in Albuquerque. That first goal has been, I believe, accomplished. The possibility that the Shops and related property might be 'torn down' or otherwise vandalized is pretty much non-existent at this point.

The second goal that was established very early in our discussions was to plan and build a transportation museum. The ideal place for such a museum would be on the historic Backshops property. We are continuing to pursue that goal.

This final step in being absolutely sure the property is properly saved, preserved and developed, is for WHEELS to be a part of a defined program of site re-development. That step has been difficult to achieve.

I think, however, we are making real progress on that final step as well. City Councilor Isaac Benton, who represents the district that includes the Backshop property has made a fundamental commitment to the project. Mayor Martin Chavez has also made a strong commitment to WHEELS as a project and is very eager to see the Backshops redeveloped.

WHEELS is currently involved in a deep dialogue with the current owners of the property, the Middle Rio Grande Council of Governments, the City of Albuquerque, the State of New Mexico, Build New Mexico and private developers who are interested in retail, other commercial and possible housing plans for the site. That dialog is complex, time-consuming and demanding. A fundamental element in all the discussions is an agreement by all parties that the WHEELS Museum would be on the site, and part of the planning and re-development process. A meeting is scheduled for late August in which of all the parties will aim at a formal plan to acquire the site and begin joint master-planning.

Governor Richardson and members of the New Mexico State Legislature have made a substantial amount of state funding available. A two million dollar grant to WHEELS has been added to more that \$500,000 previously granted by the state. That funding could be used to secure land, for planning, or for construction/re-development. How the money will be spent depends on how the finances of

interests with other major careers, such as commercial real estate, or government executive. At other times he has been a full-time artist and gallery owner, and has supported himself as a bartender, a taxi driver, tour driver and hotel manager. For seven years before landing in New Mexico for the third time last year, Roger was an over-the-road truck driver. Driving 18-wheelers around the country brought few creative opportunities until he discovered digital photography. ^

Buying a good digital camera and a laptop with wireless capability, he took photos on the road and edited them at night. Every morning, he would send an e-mail and a photo to family and friends he met on the road.

Roger is semi-retired now, but his digital photography has become digital art. His first major Albuquerque project was a series of portraits for the People Living Through Cancer (PLTC) Glass Award Ceremony. Roger was asked to take photos of the nominees; he agreed, but asked to take their pictures at home or at work, capturing images that would express their true character better than a shot taken at the ceremony. The PLTC Project was much more gratifying than Roger had expected. It also challenged him to push his photography to a higher level. Surmounting his doubts, Roger not only succeeded, but experienced the joy of contributing his efforts to such a worthy cause.

The PLTC Awards also led to new friends and contacts, and before long rolled into WHEELS' orbit, volunteering to become the WHEELS official photographer. He hopes soon to capture that elusive image that will crystallize the excitement of the project and convey it to the public. Words, plans and projections are fine, but an image, Roger insists, can capture the imaginations of those who have difficulty visualizing the project. It hasn't happened yet, but Roger will keep his finger on the shutter release until it does.

Roger is also a member of the New Mexico State Poetry Society and the Enchanted Lens Camera Club here in Albuquerque. He is a contributing photojournalist for Horsemen's Voice Magazine. Eleven of his photographs will be part of a group shown at UNM's Cancer Research and Treatment Center starting on June 10th.

"Hub" Takes a Vacation

The WHEELS Museum's "Hub" Newsletter (we hoped you might have noticed), has taken a little vacation. A combination of circumstances; a lack of funds to cover this sheet, the continuing unsettled nature of

acquiring the site from its current owners is structured.

The Board of the WHEELS Museum has discussed at length, the issue of time. I believe the Board feels that significant progress on establishing the museum needs to be made soon. There has been some discussion and some investigation of possible alternative sites to be used as a 'first-step' museum. As most of you know, the Albuquerque Museum and the Explora Museum were located in a number of such 'first sites' until they moved into their present buildings.

We are holding fast to the idea of being on the Backshops site. We are encouraged by the City, State and Congressional delegation's support and encouragement.

I hope that we will have some definite news very soon, and we will continue to do our best to communicate about any developments with all of our friends and supporters.

Heavy Rail Hits New Mexico

By Ray L Rhodes

This reporter was on board when, at 5:10 am, July 14, 2006, Rail Runner train #500 pulled out of the Alvarado Transportation Center for the inaugural run to far-off Bernalillo.

Most of the riders were enjoying the first day of free trips, but at Bernalillo, and at the Los Ranches/Journal Center stop, a few genuine-looking commuters boarded, including one bicyclist.

In September, MRCOG promises, service to Belen will begin. But until then, why not join the many delighted riders (a noon trip a couple of days later was packed) and voyage off in style to Bernalillo? The news cars are very comfortable, and the train really kicks up a fine roostertail of dust as it rolls down the Rio Grande Valley.

the Backshops property, and a general malaise seemed to have settled over the development office. But then, the spigot opened, money flowed in, and the hope of an early resolution of property issues gave the world a much rosier hue. So we're back, with a resolution to keep the progress of the WHEELS Museum before you on a monthly basis.

As stories elsewhere in this issue note, there is a definite upbeat air around the office these days, and we are sure that forthcoming issues will have a great deal to say about the future of the WHEELS Museum. So please stay tuned!

Will Rogers Once Said:

Never miss a good chance to shut up.

Good judgment comes from experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgment.

If you don't learn to laugh at trouble, you won't have anything to laugh at when you are old.