

**NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM**  
**FRIENDS OF THE NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM**  
**2021-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY**

**MISSION OF THE NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM:**

The Nevada State Railroad Museum in Carson City is a vital cultural resource dedicated to preserving and interpreting history. The Museum accomplishes this mission through the collection, preservation, and interpretation of significant locomotives, rolling stock, artifacts, photographs, and ephemera relating to railroads and railroading. In addition to static exhibits of restored and unrestored railroad artifacts, the Museum operates select pieces of railroad equipment to demonstrate steam and early internal-combustion technology and interpret railroading through the sights, sounds, and sensations of an historic train ride. The Museum also supports and produces scholarship regarding the people and industries related to railroading and operates a restoration program that is a recognized leader in restoration research, techniques and outcomes. [Note: This mission statement is more expansive than the current one.]

**MISSION OF THE FRIENDS OF THE NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM**

The Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum ("Friends") is a non-profit organization that exists to support the Nevada State Railroad Museum in Carson City. This support takes three primary forms. First, the Friends provide a trust fund to assist with the needs of the Museum. Second, the Friends recruit, train and provide docents to aid in the museum's operations, events and programs. Third, the Friends actively engage with community and state leaders to sustain, grow and perpetuate the role of Nevada's museums as a cultural resource.

**ELEMENTS OF THIS STRATEGIC PLAN**

Key staff of the Nevada State Railroad Museum in Carson City and members of the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum held a day long planning retreat during May 2021 to identify the elements of this plan. Planning is divided into four principal elements. These elements are Infrastructure, Human Resources, Interpretation and Fundraising.

**ELEMENT 1 - INFRASTRUCTURE**

As used in this plan, the term "infrastructure" refers to the fixed and immobile assets of the NSRM Carson City, chiefly buildings, grounds and utility infrastructure such as utilities, railroad track and communications.

Planning priorities:

1. Develop a Facilities Master Plan ("FMP"). The NSRM Carson City presently does not have a FMP even though elements of the museum, such as the Jacobsen Interpretive Center, were clearly planned and constructed with future expansion in mind. The FMP governs the

expansion, development and use of the NSRM property in order to carry out its mission and goals. An FMP is expected to be completed within one year of this Strategic Plan being adopted.

Elements of the Facilities Master Plan will include:

- a. Expansion of exhibit space. (Includes rotating exhibit space.)
  - b. Addition of space for Buildings & Grounds Department use.
  - c. Potential acquisition of additional real property to the north and south of existing NSRM property.
  - d. Construction of an events pavilion within the grounds of the NSRM.
  - e. Turntable Re-Build.
  - f. Construction of a motor car shed.
  - g. Addition of a minor loading platform at Gibson Park.
  - h. Reconfigure Museum entrance to ensure access control to the entire grounds.
  - i. Grounds (landscaping) improvements.
  - j. Addition of a snack bar. (Need to consider licensing and staffing complexities.)
  - k. Eventual lease or sub-lease of space in the Carson City Chamber building for library or administrative uses.
2. Nelson House/Wabuska Depot Area. There is a pressing need to improve the freight section of the Wabuska Depot to make it a suitable space for exhibits and events year round. Complete interior renovations to the Nelson House are also needed to make the entire structure useable, including as possible administrative space for the FNSRM. (5 year completion goal.)
  3. Improve internet connectivity at existing buildings. (1 year completion goal.)
  4. Construct additional collections storage facilities. (10 year goal.)
  5. Complete installation of 3rd rail. (Due in one month.)

## ELEMENT 2 - HUMAN RESOURCES

As used in this plan, the term “Human Resources” refers to the staff, volunteers and other supporters of the NSRM.

We recognize three areas for growth in human resources.

- Friends Recruitment and Memberships
  - Museum Staffing
  - FNSRM Board revisions and updates
1. Recruitment and Memberships: (time table: 6 months to 1 year)
    - a. Clear marketing – We need to be able to sell the museum and a clear marketing sales pitch is required. In order to develop a clear sales pitch, we need to know what it is we are selling. In order to get a clear idea, we need to work out what we offer to adults, teens, and children in regards to volunteer opportunities.

- b. Develop a clear volunteer list, with all volunteer opportunities available at the museum. One additional possibility would be to design a pyramid, with the easier, less training involved volunteer positions at the bottom, with the next layer being more volunteer positions with higher training involvement, and the next layer being more positions with ever higher training, etc. The top tier would be train operating crews. (Envision Maslow's hierarchy of needs.)

From our clear volunteer list, we can design clear volunteer pathways for the more difficult volunteer positions, e.g. steam train crew and motor car crew. This would allow new and current volunteers that ability to see what they can work towards and what steps would be required to get there.

- c. Clear path to operate trains.

Also from our volunteer list we can design volunteer opportunities and pathways for the teenage volunteer (12-17). We spend time engaging young children in the schools and on the property, we need a way for teens to volunteer and work towards goals at the museum. We need to obtain clearer direction from the State about youth volunteers are permitted to do.

Must pass review by museum staff to move to the next level.

- d. We also considered a credit program, where volunteers can earn credits for the hours they volunteer. They could use those credits for items or opportunities, e.g. a shirt or a hand on the throttle. The program would need to be designed, but it would be a way to engage volunteers where they can work toward tangibles.
- e. Once a clear marketing sales pitch is designed, we could assemble a team of volunteers to engage guests at events and steam ups and help sell memberships. Memberships are easier to sell when the sales team knows what they are selling.
- f. Outreach programs can also be developed, where volunteers travel and attend meetings of other organizations and explain our volunteer opportunities, the pyramid, and our credit program in the hopes of getting buy in from community organizations.
  - i. Financial Aid in colleges for Promise scholarship recipients
  - ii. Auxiliary clubs in town
  - iii. Carson City, and Reno leadership

## 2. Staffing: (time table: 1-5 years)

- a. Once we increase the number of volunteers, it will be imperative that we also increase the staffing (a combination of paid and volunteer) to assist the volunteers. There are a few positions what would be helpful:
  - i. Volunteer program coordinator
  - ii. Marketing representative
  - iii. Facilities support staff
  - iv. Building and Grounds support staff
  - v. Museum attendant

3. Board revisions and updates: (time table: 1 year, could be voted on by October)
  - a. Emphasize advance succession planning.
  - b. Ensure continuity of knowledge and experience.
    - Possibilities:
      - i. Stagger terms of board officers, formalize rotating officers (Treas. to VP to President). Impact of term limits needs to be considered.
      - ii. Make former President a non-voting "immediate past president" member.
  - c. Need contingency to remove an ineffective officer
  - d. Will require further analysis and a vote by the current Board
  - e. Potential fee waiver for Board members: (Could be voted on by October 2021.)
    - i. Could be helpful in bringing in new members from the community.
    - ii. Free membership would only be for the first year.
    - iii. May be a major negative for fundraising or grant writing.

### ELEMENT 3 - FUNDRAISING

As used in this plan, the term "Fundraising" refers to efforts to secure money and in kind donations from governments, corporations, foundations and individuals to sustain and perpetuate the NSRM.

Fundraising efforts will be addressed to four main channels:

1. Charitable Grants.
2. Government support.
3. Individual Donations.
4. Corporate Giving.
5. Planned Giving.

The key to fundraising is the development and dissemination of a clear and consistent message. We must convey the importance of the NSRM by (a) highlighting the primacy of railroads in the history of settlement and development of Nevada and the West, (b) conveying the mission of the NSRM in preserving and interpreting that history, (c) explaining the collections, events and facilities that make the NSRM an important cultural resource for Nevada and the West, and (d) explaining the needs and plans for the Museum and how supporters can participate.

Communications should always be positive and proactive. Communications should focus on "enhancing" the Museum, "extending the longevity" of artifacts and "perpetuating" strengths rather than couching the Museum's needs in a negative way that may demotivate potential supporters.

Fundraising Committee members and Museum staff will develop a standard "talk in box" that can be used across various communications platforms, including a PowerPoint presentation to give to groups, a tri-fold brochure, web communications and other channels.

Particular efforts of focus are:

Charitable Grants: Our goal is to identify and train a team of 3-5 individuals who will apply for charitable grants for identified capital projects, such as new exhibit spaces, improvement or completion of individual pieces of railroad equipment, etc. We also will seek permission to retain one or more professional grant writers who will be compensated from grants actually obtained. In order to have the best chance of grant success, the Museum needs to have discrete written plans for the projects it wishes to pursue. More effort to identify specific projects and to commit to pursuing them needs to be undertaken. (i.e. Committing to a locomotive (*Lyon, Reno, No. 8*) for the Re-Steam program.)

Government Support: The Friends needs to identify and train its leaders to successfully lobby local, state and federal officials to provide funding for important Museum improvements. The process will begin with Friends leadership meeting with elected officials to update them about the Museum and advise them of our future plans so that they can subsequently be enlisted to support funding requests. Friends complementary memberships will be given to each official we meet with so that the local officials receive our communications and are up to date.

Individual Donations: The Friends will initiate an annual giving campaign directed to members. Members will be asked to donate money that can be used to build up the trust fund that the Friends maintains for support the Museum.

Corporate Giving: The Museum and Friends need to develop opportunities for businesses to sponsor activities and equipment.

Planned Giving: The Friends will partner with local estate planning attorneys and wealth advisors to educate individuals about the benefits of planned charitable giving.

Fundraising Goals:

1. Develop standardized communications materials and a "talk in a box" before the end of 2021.
2. Develop and deploy a formal grant writing program within 18 months.
3. Raise \$500k within 3 years.
4. Raise \$1M within 5 years.
5. Create a class of Friends Board membership that includes community leaders and "friend raisers" that provide access to additional networks of potential donors.

#### ELEMENT 4 – INTERPRETATION

As used in this Strategic Plan, the term "Interpretation" refers to the historic collections, programs, exhibits and rolling stock of the NSRM.

The NSRM has a severe lack of space for displaying historic equipment and collections and little to no capacity to accept and preserve additional pieces of historic railroad equipment. It is critical that the NSRM's forthcoming FMP include expansion and improvements that increase display areas and make more of the collection accessible to visitors.

In addition, the NSRM's steam train operations rely on a single locomotive that is also an historic artifact. Completion of the *Lyon* locomotive replica will provide another primary mover option that interprets an earlier era of railroading than any other museum with operating equipment does and extend the operational longevity of the other locomotives in the NSRM's collection.

Goals:

1. Complete the *Lyon* locomotive within 5 years. (Estimated cost \$350k.)
2. Develop plans for additional display and exhibit space within 1 year.
3. Develop new community outreach programs for schools and underrepresented communities within 3 years. (i.e. a STEAM related program for students, events like the "Suffrage Special" for women, etc.)