

Tucson Children's Museum

200 South 6th Avenue

1. TCM has asked for help in developing an interactive train display to replace the current HO display.
2. The Museum had over 88,000 visitors in fiscal 2006-7 and anticipates 2007-8 will be somewhat over 90,000. School groups are roughly 38% Hispanic and overall visitors are 40% from low income zip codes.
3. The current HO set was built by some Gadsden Pacific members but is incomplete, a maintenance problem and occupies needed floor space.
4. In preliminary discussions Norm Ulmer, Ken Karrels and I met with Sandy Napombejra, executive Director and Samantha Schreiber, Facility Manager.
5. We tentatively discussed a wall mounted elevated loop operated by a push button with a TV camera broadcasting an engineer's eye view to a TV screen. The engine would have sound and the cars would be colorful, perhaps refers or a circus train.
6. We identified a space that would be suitable in a room roughly 25' X 15' and discussed running one end of the loop through two tunnel portals above existing doors to make the loop roughly 30' X 15'.
7. We tentatively thought of using acrylic as track support and as an inner edge to enhance visibility and prevent derailed cars from falling.
8. Other thoughts included building flats behind the train as scenery and perhaps crossing bells to enhance the sound.
9. A mock up (wood) engine cab might house the push button and a few (wood) mock up cars that kids could climb into might enhance the experience and add to the interactivity of the exhibit. Sandy said that if we did this at least one car should be wheel chair accessible.
10. An alternative might be a station front from which the children could 'dispatch' the train and disperse tickets.
11. Sandy is willing to work at raising funds after we rough out a budget.
12. The Museum hopes to move to a new building in four years and would like to include us in planning a more permanent display at that time.

Cons

We are already engaged with the new Children's wing at the hospital

It isn't clear how much funding the Museum could raise

While much of what we invest will be re-useable some will inevitably be lost or damaged when the Museum moves to new quarters (planned for about four years from now)

Pros

The commitment would be for four years and if we find it burdensome we could back out or re-negotiate for the new building

The museum operates 7 hours most days (10 am to 5 pm) so the daily running time would be considerably less than shows such as the Home Show or County Fair. Further the start – stop nature of the display (modified by a momentum circuit) would further reduce wear and maintenance requirements.

The anticipated costs are relatively small and this project need not impact our plans for work at the hospital.

This would give us a way to experiment and test durability in a live setting very rapidly before beginning work in the hospital

The Museum is well attended and would give TGRS even greater exposure than the hospital. Further the demographics of the visitors to the museum are desirable.

A display at the Museum would certainly meet the IRS 'educational' requirements to maintain our tax status.