

The Rockton-Rion Flyer

News and Information from the South Carolina Railroad Museum
Volume 42 Number 3 Summer 2014

SUMMER TRAINS ARE HOT!



Diesel No. 1276 crosses Highway 321 with the Lake Rion, a coach, and the *Green Giant* open car on a charter to Rion.

FLYER NEWS FLASH:

This summer has been popular with ridership on Saturdays and charters on the increase. The track crew has been working diligently to improve the railroad and the Rion yard. Significant improvements have been made in Rockton. A BBQ Dinner Train will be on August 15th. Engineer Gene Allen has a close encounter of the bovine kind. No. 1276 and No. 1249 are now lettered for the RR&W.

UPCOMING EVENTS: September Saturdays will be work days rather than operating days. There are several projects underway, from track work to site preparation. We have a lot to accomplish in a few short weeks, so come on down and lend a hand!

HOT TOPIC: Pumpkin Patch trains are October 18th and 25th. We need your help staffing the trains and on site at Greenbrier for this popular event. We also need a "scare crew" for the Spooky Special train on the night of the 25th. Contact Rodger or David to be a part of these events.

MEMBERSHIP MEETING: Saturday, October 11th at 10 AM will be the next membership meeting in the Rion office building. All members are encouraged to attend.

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS:

Please send articles and pictures to:
SCRM, P.O. Box 7246, Columbia, SC 29202
email: libreez@carolina.rr.com.

Vince LiBrizzi, Editor <>

Making Tracks

By Phil Woodell

As noted in the Spring issue of the Flyer, Rion yard has been the focus of the track maintenance crew this spring and summer. All trees and stumps east of the Rion building have been removed to permit general clean up and preparations for the construction of a storage track and access to a car and locomotive inspection pit.

Materials collected and stored since as early as 1983 at Rion yard and determined to be of scrap or no use have been collected and disposed of. The proceeds from the disposal of these items will be used to help fund this project. The improvement to the look of the Rion yard area is quite noticeable and visible from the train or the Rion office building.

Piles of rail and other track materials have been sorted and inventoried to support ongoing track maintenance and the construction of new track at Rion. The new track work is proceeding swiftly, with over 600 feet of track already laid out and bolted together.

Maintenance of the railroad is tentatively scheduled for this upcoming winter, pending availability of labor, funding, materials, and equipment. The ties previously installed during the winter were primarily switch ties. More details on this maintenance plan in the next issue.

In addition to the members listed in the Spring issue, Bob Ford and Richard Treme have participated in the Rion yard project. Thanks to all for your continued hard efforts to improve the Rion yard and the entire RR&W. <>



The four legged trespasser as seen from the *Green Giant* open car.

A Bovine Encounter

By Gene Allen

Over the years I have been an engineer on the RR&W, I've chased a variety of critters off the right-of way: deer, coyote, and an occasional wild turkey, for example. Recently, I was at the throttle of No. 1276 on a Saturday run. No. 1276 has the hood facing west, so Charles Weber was aboard to watch the view out of the left side of the cab.

As we rounded Mack Curve and began the climb to Hunter's Crossing, Charles called out: "Cow by the track!" Since I had never seen any livestock impeding the passage of a train in 14 years as an engineer, my first thought was, are his glasses fogged up? I slowed the train and then Charles said, "The cow is on the track!"

Since No. 1276 is not equipped with a cowcatcher, I stopped the train to assess the situation. Sure enough, a rather large bovine was slowly ambling up the track. Conductor Dave Lewis then asked what had caused us to stop the train unexpectedly. After a brief discussion, we started off in hopes that the horn, bell, or other crew persuasions might induce the trespasser to abandon a personal excursion on our right-of-way.

The offending beast ignored our requests and sauntered up the track until just west of the crossing where he finally left the rails. We

then proceeded westbound. The intruder was nowhere to be found on the return trip. Superintendent Stroup later learned from Chandler McNair that the animal, which was a bull, not a cow as first thought, had strayed from the east side of Highway 321. <>



Re-lettered No. 1249 will be pulling the BBQ Dinner Train.

First BBQ Dinner Train is August 15th

By Vince LiBrizzi

On Friday, August 15th the Rockton Rion & Western will run a Twilight BBQ Dinner train for the first time. The passengers will enjoy a delicious meal of traditional chicken and pork barbeque, side dishes, beverages, and dessert. All passengers will be treated to a serene air-conditioned ride on the **Lake Rion** dining car on the way to Rion, with the option to ride in the **Green Giant** open car on the return trip to Rockton.

Powered by diesel No. 1249, the train will run to Rion and treat passengers to late summer twilight views of the scenic South Carolina countryside. As of August 10th, 85% of the tickets have already been sold, with advertising limited to the website and Facebook page. This high demand will lead to more of these trains in the future. <>

Rockton Station Area Improved

By Kelvin Woods

Over the past few months, major improvements have been made to the Rockton station and grounds. The most obvious is a change in the color scheme of the buildings to a bright yellow with red trim. The roofs of the buildings have also received a coat of silver paint to help reflect heat. The walkway around the station will be receiving a sun and rain cover to protect passengers as they walk to the ticket office.

The ticket office and gift shop interior have also received much attention. The entire area has been painted and finished and a ticket window, complete with metal bars like those used in depots years ago, has been installed. Installation of a sound system for background railroad music and train announcements should be completed in time for the Pumpkin Patch trains. This will be possible due to recently donated audio equipment and through the efforts of our members to wire and install the system.

These changes are designed to create a more “railroad” experience for our passengers as they purchase tickets and wait for the train. The parking area has also received attention, with the addition of several tons of gravel to minimize dust and improve drainage, especially in front of the main buildings. The concrete parking stops have been moved and repainted to improve the layout of the parking area directly in front of the Rockton station.

These efforts, in addition to the new RR&W sign, significantly improve the appearance of the Rockton station area. Since this the first impression the passengers have of our railroad and museum, they have a positive effect on our image as a tourist railroad. <>

**South Carolina Railroad Museum
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Return Service Requested



Diesel locomotive No. 1249 has new RR&W lettering.

Diesels lettered for RR&W

By Vince LiBrizzi

RS4-TC-1A Diesels No. 1249 and No. 1276 are now sporting white reflective Rockton Rion & Western lettering on their flanks. This completes the removal of all the Air Force markings on the locomotives and gives them the similar lettering and numbering font style used on SW8 No. 2028. The two line lettering is in a similar location to the previous markings, but gives the locomotives a different look. Sister locomotive No. 1275, which will return to service this fall, will have the same appearance soon. <>