

# The Rockton - Rion Flyer

News and Information from the South Carolina Railroad Museum  
Volume 41 Number 4 Fall 2013

## **PUMPKIN PATCH TRAIN IS A SMASH HIT!**



Full passenger cars were seen on all trains during the event.



Children participate in fall activities at Greenbrier.

### **FLYER NEWS FLASH:**

The Pumpkin Patch train was a huge success with over 1,000 passengers carried on 5 sold-out trips. Steam locomotive No. 75 ran many excursions in November. The West End motorcar excursion was popular with members. The track crew has been working hard to keep our railroad in great condition. We need your suggestions for naming our passenger coaches. SW-8 Diesel No. 2028 was polished and has new lettering. 2013 looks to be a successful year for the museum.

**HOT TOPIC:** **WE NEED YOU** to help out with our upcoming events as a car host or in the gift shop. Contact Rodger Stroup or Joe

Palma for more information. Do you want to make a difference that shows? Help spruce up and letter our locomotives and passenger cars and see your efforts every time you visit! Contact Rodger or Vince for more details.

**ANNUAL MEETING:** Join us on Saturday, January 18<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM in the Rion office building for our 2014 Annual Meeting. Elections will be held for Board Members and a review of 2013 will be presented. All members and guests are welcome.

### **CONTACT US:**

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**Vince LiBrizzi, Editor** <>



A young passenger watches Percy at Greenbrier during the event.

## **Pumpkin Patch Train is a Smash Success**

*By Rodger Stroup*

On Saturday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, the museum had its second annual Pumpkin Patch train event. 1,008 passengers rode the five sold-out trains. This was the biggest one day event held at the museum in nearly 7 years! This event was the first time we utilized the newly built ramp to detrain at Greenbrier, which made train operations run smoothly. Passengers could pick their own pumpkin from our patch, decorate it, participate in story time or color books, and meet our Friendly Scarecrow. An expanded Thomas the Tank Engine G scale layout was in operation and delighted passengers with both Thomas and Percy in operation. The *Lake Rion* diner was well patronized and proved trouble-free since its recent HVAC repair. Refreshments were also available for all passengers at Greenbrier. All involved had a great time and plans are already in the works to expand this event to two weekends in 2014! Kudos to all the hard working members who planned, staffed, and operated the trains during this event! <>



No. 75 steams past Summit crossing with a trainload of passengers.

## **Locomotive No. 75 Puts on a Show**

*By Vince LiBrizzi*

The Gramling Locomotive Works' steam locomotive No. 75, "Hank the Tank", powered a series of excursions and an *Engineer Experience* event in November. Over 1,000 passengers rode behind steam, enjoying the mild sunny weather and vivid fall colors. On Saturday, November 9<sup>th</sup> there was a need to add an additional coach to the train due to ticket sales. No. 75 put on a show by hauling the heavy 3-car train up the steep grade at Hunter's crossing unassisted. The 0-4-0T's efforts produced billowing clouds of steam and smoke that were seen from nearly 2 miles away. The deep exhaust chuffs and whistle blasts (borrowed from our steam locomotive No.44) could be heard for a great distance, attracting passengers and train chasers alike. The *Engineer Experience* on November 16<sup>th</sup> had participants from as far away as California and as close as the Columbia area. All participants enjoyed this unique opportunity to operate the well-traveled, 52-ton 1930 Vulcan-built locomotive. <>



The track crew performs track work with the aid of the tie handler.

### **Track Maintenance on the RR&W** *By Rodger Stroup*

One of the most important activities on the Rockton Rion & Western is the maintenance of our track. If the track is not kept up to standards then everything else is derailed (*no pun intended*). Chris Lainis, Phil Woodell, Dennis Wright, and Clif Hall (with help from other members) usually spend one day each week inspecting and repairing our track. The crew performs a great deal of manual labor, aided by machines such as the tie handler shown above. With about 2,000 ties per mile and more than 5 miles of track and sidings currently in service, there are over 10,000 ties that need to be in acceptable condition. The ties have a service life of 12 to 15 years and cost \$30 each. Each year we spend a considerable amount on track maintenance so our passenger excursions can run safely. <>

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Members pose at the "Chinese Wall" during the motorcar excursion.

### **West End Motorcar Excursion is Popular** *By David Lewis*

On Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, members of the South Carolina Railroad Museum rode motorcars west of the normal end of operations, from Milepost 5.1 to about 7.1. Members saw the famous "Chinese Wall" a stone edifice that was constructed to minimize the grade on the Rockton and Rion, but never used. The weather was perfect to view the fall colors, and many members attended. The only unwelcome guests were some angry yellow jackets that had built a home in trees and brush alongside the railroad, and were not pleased by our visit. <>

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### **Coaches to be Lettered and Named** *By Rodger Stroup*

We are planning to letter our passenger coaches **Rockton Rion & Western**, reflecting the museum's focus on the excursion ride and familiarizing our passengers with the railroad's name. Industrial vinyl stickers will be used, and we are asking members to give input on the names for the cars. The most popular choices will be selected and applied with the railroad name. Contact Rodger or Vince with your choices as soon as possible. <>

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### **2013 on Track to be a Great Year** *By Henry Nechemias*

This year is looking to be a successful one for the museum. As of mid-November 6,100 passengers were carried and we are on track to break 10,000 riders for the year. The Sweetheart Dinner trains, Easter Eggspress, Pumpkin Patch trains, and Steam Trains have showed an increase in ridership compared to previous years. Charter trips continue to gain substantial interest and demand. And a new advertising campaign utilizing local papers and focusing on markets such as Charlotte and Augusta has increased our ridership and awareness in these areas.

**South Carolina Railroad Museum**  
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SW-8 No. 2028 is sporting a restored paint finish and new lettering.

### **Diesel No. 2028 Has a New Look**

*By Vince LiBrizzi*

In August, SW-8 diesel locomotive No. 2028, which had not operated in almost two years and was showing the effects of several years of exposure in the Rockton yard, was selected to receive a sprucing up. Four hard working members washed, polished, compounded, and waxed the 100-ton locomotive, which was quite a formidable task for one day. In addition, No. 2028 was lettered **Rockton Rion & Western** with reflective white decals. The locomotive debuted her new look and lettering during the Pumpkin Patch trains on October 26th. Many thanks to the members that helped No. 2028 look better than she has in a long time. <>