

The South Carolina Railroad Museum Newsletter
Information and Happenings on the Rockton, Rion & Western Railroad
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EGGSPRESS GETS SEASON HOPPING



Passengers are entertained by the Easter Bunny and other activities at Greenbrier during the Eggpress.

IN THE NEWS:

A cool, wet spring probably has most of us looking forward to warmer summer weather for a change. We started our regular 2013 season with an Easter Eggpress event which, despite some rain, was a success. Rudy Mancke hosted popular nature excursions in April. The *For Those Who Have Served* excursions were popular again. A new picnic area has been built with member support. NS moved two huge flatcars over the RR&W.

HOT TOPIC: WE NEED YOU to help out with the Saturday summer excursions as a car host or in the gift shop. Contact Rodger Stroup or Joe Palma for more information.

MEMBERSHIP:

The next SCRM Membership meeting will be at the Rion building at 10 AM on July 13th. Family Membership is \$35, Single is \$25, and

Senior is \$18. See our website, or apply in Rockton or mail it to us. Members ride free on all *regular* trains.

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Vince LiBrizzi, Editor <>

Eggpress Event is Popular Season Opener *By Tim Hill and Vince LiBrizzi*

The Saturday Eggpress trains operated on March 23rd and 30th to kick off the regular 2013 season were totally different than previous Easter Trains for many reasons. Passengers detrained at Greenbrier, met the Easter Bunny and participated in several fun family activities, such as face painting, storytelling, coloring, and watching the G-scale Thomas the Tank Engine train layout.

The first Saturday was a cold and rainy un-spring-like 48 degrees. Despite the bad weather, everyone worked together to ensure a great experience and events were held under a large tent. More than 100 cups of hot chocolate were sold to the chilly passengers! The second Saturday was a completely different spring-like 65 degrees and sunny, and nearly all 5 trains were sold out. A Fairfield County fire truck, balloon artist and additional activities were added. More than 850 people attended with over 140 passengers on more than one trip. The feedback from passengers was very positive, praising the concept of a destination with family activities in addition to seeing the Easter Bunny. Passengers also appreciated the hourly departures with a brief layover and several activities for. Many thanks to the hard working members that organized, participated, and staffed this event, which despite the weather was successful with over 1,100 people total attending. <



The Bunny greets face painted passengers at Greenbrier.



Rudy Mancke describes the type of granite found in Greenbrier Cut.

***NatureTracks* Excursions Popular**

By Rodger Stroup

On Saturday, April 6th, a perfect spring day in South Carolina, over 150 passengers were treated to a unique railroading experience. Rudy Mancke, host of ETV's *NatureScene* and professor in the environmental studies department at the University of South Carolina, highlighted and discussed the many natural resources along the tracks of the Rockton & Rion Railroad. Both *NatureTracks* excursions were well patronized and utilized the Green Giant open car with a newly installed public address system. In addition to the native vegetation, Rudy also explained how plants brought from other countries have changed the landscape in our area. Riders were fortunate that during both trips wildlife magically appeared, enhancing the experience. In addition to a number of small birds we saw deer, jackrabbits, red-tailed hawks, and buzzards. At Rion Road, we scared off several buzzards feeding on a recently deceased opossum. Rudy asked to stop the train, climbed down and held up the opossum for all to observe. He explained how the carcass was becoming "recycled buzzard" as part of the food chain. At Greenbrier Cut, Rudy pointed out the layers of granite and explained how they were formed millions of years ago. At another stop at the Brooks Granite Works in Rion, Rudy again detrained and picked up pieces of

granite and passed them around for closer inspection by the passengers. He discussed what the granite was composed of and how the color and composition were clues to the age and type once hauled on the Rockton & Rion. Even the train crew members, who have made scores of trips on the railroad, were fascinated to learn more about what they have been riding past for years.

The popularity of these excursions has caused museum management to consider bringing back Rudy for another set of *NatureTracks* excursions in the fall. <>

Volunteering at the Museum

By Rodger Stroup and Vince LiBrizzi

Working as a volunteer at the South Carolina Railroad Museum can be a very rewarding experience. Volunteers perform a variety of jobs from serving as a crewmember on our trains to manning the gift shop and ticket office. This fall we will install a new exhibit program in the museum gallery and need volunteers to greet visitors in the gallery and display train. Our car hosts inform visitors about the history of the railroad. A new public address system makes this task easier, so we are looking for some great people to take the microphone and narrate.

Many volunteers work on their own schedule assisting with behind-the-scene activities. These include marketing, membership, building and grounds maintenance, track repair, and restoration of our rolling stock. In addition to working with a great group of people, our volunteers are able to participate in special events on the railroad, such as membership cookouts and excursions, and operations like Steam Trains, Easter Eggspress Trains, Pumpkin Patch Trains, Santa Trains, and Dinner Trains. To join our volunteer team, contact Rodger Stroup at (803) 318-7086 or at histrycur@aol.com. <>



Volunteer Gene Allen paints the Southern RPO at Rockton.

New Picnic Area at Rockton

By Vince LiBrizzi

The next time you are at Rockton, visit the new Picnic Area and Shelter that was recently constructed for our visitors. The picnic area is west of the passenger loading area and museum buildings and across from the parking lot. It has a large concrete pad, aluminum shelter from the sun and inclement weather, and several tables to accommodate guests while viewing the train passing by. The Picnic Area was supported by the generous efforts of museum member Henry Nechemias and his wife. Their contribution, along with the efforts of other members in assembling and transporting tables and planting trees around the new picnic area has made an enjoyable place to have a picnic before or after a visit to the museum. <>



The new Picnic Area and Shelter at Rockton entertains picnickers.

South Carolina Railroad Museum

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(from previous page)

**For Those Who Have Served Honored
By Henry Nechemias**

On Saturday, May 25th, through the generous support of Columbia-based law firm Nexsen Pruet, the museum offered free train rides to all active and retired military personnel and their families. Trains ran at 10:30 AM and 1:30 PM, and nearly 200 guests enjoyed the nice weather and company of fellow veterans. This was twice the riders of last year's event, and was featured in a front-page article in Columbia's *the State* paper. The museum is working with other corporate sponsors for additional support for other events in the future. Thanks to all who participated in this Memorial Day event to honor our well-deserving veterans and families. <>



Electrical transformers on depressed-center flatcars at Guardian.

NS Moves Freight Over the RR&W

By Vince LiBrizzi

On Monday, June 3rd, Norfolk Southern moved the first freight over the RR&W in nearly two years. A trucking firm requested to transload two large electrical transformers at an accessible location on the railroad. The two dual-truck depressed-center flatcars are on the Guardian siding. <>