

The Rockton-Rion Flyer

News and Information from the South Carolina Railroad Museum
Volume 44 Number 1 Spring 2016

STEAM IS A HIT!



0-6-0T No.126 smokes it up pulling a packed 3-car train near Airport Road crossing on the way to Rockton Station.

FLYER NEWS FLASH:

2016 is turning out to be a successful year for the museum. Steam trains had almost 1,000 passengers carried. The museum acquired a historic velocipede. We purchased additional coaches with HVAC and power that will be arriving soon. Easter Trains were popular with families.

UPCOMING EVENTS: Regular Saturday excursions started June 4th with 10:00 AM and 1:30 PM departures. Contact Rodger to help out on the train or in the gift shop.

HOT TOPIC: Friday work sessions are being held every week for track work and other maintenance items. Contact Charles Weber for more details. **WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

MEMBERSHIP MEETING: Saturday, July 9th at 3:30 P.M. 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

Maintenance Update

By Charles Weber

The maintenance crew has continued to work on several tasks in 2016. These include finishing the storage siding in Rion, repairing and maintaining the track equipment and locomotives and rolling stock. Currently, we are working on two of the locomotives and a portion of the right-of-way near Ruff to keep our operations safe and reliable. There are 5 locomotives, 4 passenger cars, the *Lake Rion* diner, an open car, and several cabooses that need to be maintained. This takes hard work and regular maintenance by a group of dedicated volunteers. Now with the announcement that 4 more cars will soon be arriving there will be even more emphasis on maintenance and repair of our equipment.

We have work sessions nearly every Friday targeting specific projects on the railroad. If you're not on the email list that is sent out weekly recapping our progress and describing our future sessions, please contact me to be added. Many people have contributed countless hours to these tasks. Without their efforts, the RR&W could not function. Thanks all the hard working members for their continuing efforts. Please contact Charles Weber at cwebersr@bellsouth.net or (803) 317-7187 for more information, to get placed on the email list or to help out with our maintenance work.

Financial Report

By Henry Nechemias

2015 was a solid year with higher revenues and lower expenses. 2016 has seen some unexpected big-ticket expenses, but revenue is strong, so the Museum continues to be financially secure. For possible future improvements, we have secured a line of credit at our bank, just in case. Please don't forget that your donations and membership dues are vitally important too!



No. 126's whistles as she crosses Rt. 321 bound for Rockton.

Steam returns to the RR&W

By Vince LiBrizzi

The Rockton Rion & Western hosted the return of the Gramling Locomotive Works 0-6-0T steam locomotive No. 126 for two Saturdays in early May. Despite a reduced schedule of two days compared to three last year, nearly 1,000 passengers were carried. That's the best turnout for steam in more than three years! On both days, passengers were rewarded with Carolina blue skies and warm weather while enjoying the sights, sounds, and smells of a historic steam locomotive. This year, the voice of No. 126 was the melodic sound of our locomotive No. 44's Crosby 3 chime whistle. Engineers made full use of the whistle's range and tone with every blast, to the delight of passengers and train chasers. The train crew added an additional coach which was needed both days. A caboose was added to the train on the second Saturday for a party.

Photo run-bys were performed at Greenbrier again this year. No. 126 backed her three car train west of the Greenbrier siding and came storming by in a display of smoke, steam, and whistle blowing to the delight of the crowd. At Rockton, there were refreshments available, and passengers were able to pose for pictures with No. 126 and ask the crew questions about her operation and history. Plans are already being made for steam to return in the near future.

New Passenger Cars Coming Soon

By Kelvin Woods

The museum has purchased four modern coaches to increase our capacity and improve the comfort and convenience for our passengers. The cars have HVAC and lavatories, along with modern brake systems and roller bearings.

One car is located in Fort Eustis, VA on CSX and is a stainless steel former FRA test car built by Budd in the 1950s. This car has a generator on board to power lights, accessories, HVAC, and one other car via 480V HEP connections. Current plans are to make this car a lounge for use with the *Lake Rion* on dinner trains and special event trains.

The other three cars are bi level coaches last used by the government for troop transport. These cars have HVAC and 480V HEP connections and were also built in the 1950s but have been rebuilt and modernized over the years. The cars are in Fort Lee, VA on Norfolk Southern. Plans are being finalized to transport all cars via Norfolk Southern to home rails in Winnsboro as soon as possible. The cars will supplement but not completely replace the veteran 1950s era former Canadian National MU and trailer cars that are currently in service. The older CN cars need repairs and are not well suited for the hot humid weather we have during our operating season. The A/C and lavatory equipped cars will be a welcome addition to our passengers' comfort. More information will follow on the status and delivery of these cars in future publications.



Charles Weber tests out the historic velocipede in Rockton.

Museum Acquires Historic Velocipede

By Rodger Stroup

Recently the South Carolina Railroad Museum acquired a rare artifact for our collection. It is a railroad velocipede built circa 1880. It was donated by the family of Henry A. Stone, Sr. Mr. Stone worked for the Atlantic Coast Line, Charleston & Western Carolina and the Seaboard Coast Line for over 40 years. When Mr. Stone placed the velocipede in storage in Dillon, SC over 28 years ago it was in working condition. We brought the classic piece of equipment back to Rockton and placed it on the track and it worked perfectly after a little oiling and cleaning. The velocipede will be on display in the museum gallery and used for demonstrations on the RR&W.

The velocipede was especially adapted for use by road masters, bridge inspectors, telegraph line repairers and crosstie inspectors. While it was normally used by one person, the "back seat" could accommodate a passenger. The velocipede was the second type of transportation for railroad workers. In the 1850s the hand pump car was introduced and was used until the 1910s when motorized maintenance of way equipment evolved and replaced both the hand-pumped cars and the velocipede.

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Return Service Requested



The Easter Bunny has his hands full with twins!

Easter Egspress Trains Popular with Families
By Vince LiBrizzi

The RR&W hosted two Saturdays of Easter Egspress trains earlier this year that proved to be popular, with over 900 passengers riding on the two days. The weather was pleasant and the passengers were able to meet and greet the Bunny, participate in many family themed events, and enjoy the ride in either coaches or the Green Giant Open car. As in previous years, two trains operated and met and passed at Greenbrier, allowing passengers to photograph and see two passenger trains in service at the same time. One of our passengers took this picture of these adorable twins that just loved being in the arms of our Easter Bunny!