

# The Rockton-Rion Flyer

News and Information from the South Carolina Railroad Museum  
Volume 42 Number 4 Fall 2014

## **PUMPKIN TRAINS ARE A SCARY SMASH!**



Passengers pick pumpkins at Greenbrier during the event.



Ghastly looking SW8 No. 2015 pulls the Spooky Special Train.

### **FLYER NEWS FLASH:**

Fall has been a busy time for the railroad with the Caboose Train, charters, BBQ Dinner trains, and a record 1,535 passengers for the Pumpkin Patch trains. We also had fun on our inaugural sold-out 120 passenger Spooky Special scare train on the 25<sup>th</sup>. The track crew has been working diligently to improve the railroad and the Rion yard. Our Gallery's artifacts were catalogued by the SCFM's White Glove Gang.

**UPCOMING EVENTS:** Norfolk Southern will be joining us for their Holiday Train event on December 13<sup>th</sup>. Please plan on helping out in any way possible to showcase our railroad and equipment to over 450 railroad professionals. This is our chance to shine in front of a Class 1 Railroad!

**HOT TOPIC:** Santa Express trains are November 29<sup>th</sup>, December 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. We need your help staffing the trains and decorating for these events. We are running two sold-out Santa Twilight Express trains on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> and will need car hosts and support for these trains also. Contact Rodger or Kelvin to be a part of these events.

**MEMBERSHIP MEETING:** Saturday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at 10 A.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](mailto:libreez@carolina.rr.com).

**Vince LiBrizzi, Editor**

## **Making Tracks**

*By Phil Woodell*

Track construction and maintenance of the railroad this summer proceeded at a somewhat slower pace due to the hot weather. The new Rion storage track has more than 400 feet of rail spiked to ties and aligned to parallel the south main track. Ballast was added to anchor the newly installed ties.

We have been marking ties that need replacement and 70 new ties have been set out for installation starting at Greenbrier Cut. As of October 9th, 25 of these new ties have been installed, with more to be added as time permits. Several more ties have been delivered to Rockton for insertion at various areas of the railroad.

Chris Lanis has borrowed a hydraulic tie remover/insertor for our use, and it will be put to work very soon. Charles Weber repaired our air compressor to allow the use of pneumatic tools for spiking the new ties, much to the relief of our crew that needed to hand spike many ties previously.

A railroad is a system of transportation that starts below ground level and includes sub-ballast, ballast, ties, and rails to provide the surface that trains operate on. It is the essential component of any safe operating railroad and has to be regularly and properly maintained for safe operation.

We encourage members to participate in this necessary maintenance to ensure safe and continued operation of the RR&W. Let's work together on this necessary and never ending task to keep our track in good shape and the most valuable asset and attraction to our museum.



The Friendly Scarecrow greets a passenger at Greenbrier.

## **Pumpkin Patch, Spooky Special Trains Break Records**

*By Vince LiBrizzi*

This year's Pumpkin Patch trains on October 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> and first-ever Spooky Special night train on the 25<sup>th</sup> broke attendance records for the second year in a row. Helped in part by the sunny and warm weather on both Saturdays and the targeted advertising in local papers and on Facebook, the turnout was nothing short of amazing.

630 passengers were carried on the 18<sup>th</sup>, selling out the 10:30 AM and 11:30 AM trains, while the other trains were nearly full. Over 75% of the entire day's tickets were pre-sold by the following Saturday morning, and so many passengers showed up that every train was completely full. Unbelievably, we carried more than 150 passengers over our normal ticketed capacity of 740 people!

The first run of the Spooky Special night train was completely sold out, and some potential passengers who showed up close to departure time had to be turned away. The train,

consisting of a ghastly illuminated and decorated SW8 No. 2015, *Lake Rion* diner, *Green Giant* open car, and XC-5 caboose, departed Rockton at 6:30 PM, and the passengers prepared for the scare. The train crew and other members participated in frightening the 120 passengers at different “zones” along the railroad, such as Ruff, Hunter’s Crossing, Greenbrier, and the “Haunted” Greenbrier Cut!

1,025 passengers were carried on the 25<sup>th</sup>, one of the biggest one day events ever held at the museum. A remarkable 1,655 passengers rode the trains over the two Saturdays. What’s astounding is our ridership grew 60% over 2013’s 1,008 passengers and nearly 400% over 2012’s 425 passengers for this event! Kudos to all the hard working train crews, event staff, and “scare crew” that made this event a success! Undoubtedly, 2015 will be an even bigger year for these events at the railroad.



SW8 No. 2015 handled the most recent BBQ dinner trains.

### **BBQ Dinner Trains Are a Success**

*By Rodger Stroup*

On September 20<sup>th</sup> and October 11<sup>th</sup>, the Rockton Rion & Western ran two additional twilight BBQ Dinner trains using SW8 No. 2015 for motive power. Like the first BBQ dinner train on August 15<sup>th</sup>, passengers enjoyed a delicious meal of chicken and pork

barbeque, side dishes, beverages, and dessert. Unlike the first trip, on October 11<sup>th</sup>, passengers seated on the *Green Giant* open car were treated to a brief drenching as the skies opened up as the train departed Rockton. Both trips were nearly sold out, with advertising limited to the website and Facebook page only. Passengers were very pleased with the twilight views and the meal, and we are making plans to offer more BBQ trains next year.



Rodger, Gene, and No. 1249 with the White Glove Gang.

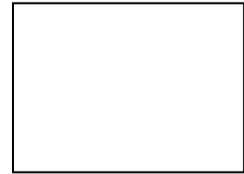
### **SCFM White Glove Gang Visits Museum By Zinna Willits**

The South Carolina Federation of Museums’ White Glove Gang recently traveled to the museum to assist in the preservation of equipment and smaller collection items. Museum professionals from around the state lent their time and expertise for this all-day workshop.

The group worked with Rodger Stroup, our museum Curator, to mark objects with accession numbers, reorganized and rehoused a small collections area and assisted with our Past Perfect software. The collection, displayed in the Gallery building, is looking much better due to the efforts of these individuals. Thanks to the SCFM and the White Glove Gang for helping out with this very important project.

**South Carolina Railroad Museum  
PO Box 7246  
Columbia, SC 29202-7246**

*Return Service Requested*



Our whistle is from a Southern passenger locomotive.



Southern Ps-4 Pacific No. 1401 has a similar whistle.

### **Whistle is from a Southern Passenger Locomotive**

*By Vince LiBrizzi*

During the White Glove Gang's visit, Rodger Stroup sent me this picture of a steam whistle with an unknown origin. The note with the whistle stated, "Gift of Southern Railway, 1953" and Rodger gave me the whistle's dimensions and asked if I could find out more information about it. Southern Railway retired steam in 1953 and the famous Ps-4 green and gold 4-6-2 Pacifics had similar whistles. My sources and research confirmed that the whistle is indeed a Southern Railway Passenger whistle, and may have been used on one of the Ps-4s. No. 1401, the last Ps-4, is enshrined at the Smithsonian Institution, and has the same type of whistle.