

FEATHER RIVER RAIL SOCIETY

DATE: August 2018
ITEM: New Business 1
FROM: Eugene Vicknair

PUMPKIN PATCH EXPRESS 2018

Over the prior two years, we have built the Pumpkin Patch Express into an important event for the Society. Last year's addition of night time trains on Saturday proved to be a big hit. This year, I would like to propose we consider some other expansions to try and build the event and attract more visitors.

Considering there are currently very few other Halloween themed events going in Plumas County, if we can continue to build this event into a must attend community and regional happening, we should be able to keep growing it for many years.

My main proposal is that we add more vendors than the food sales we did last year. For the last 20 years, there has been a Farmer's Market going outside of Beckwourth every Friday from 10 AM to 2 PM. The event attracts over 20 vendors and when I visited the two parking lots were packed with cars (about 60 cars by my count). Patty Clawson knows the operator of the Market and introduced me to him. When we talked about having some vendors at the Pumpkin Trains, he offered to help with contacts and logistics.

The vendors ranged from fresh organic produce sellers, to ranch meat producers, to art and craft sellers. It was a nice variety.

What I propose is the following:

VENDORS – we invite 5-7 vendors to attend the Sunday Pumpkin Trains, offsetting the Saturday night trains. As many of these vendors have regular Saturday events, the Sunday timeframe will likely attract more attention. Also, it may attract more visitors with the added attraction. Propose we focus more on local craft vendors and avoid any fresh food vendors, unless they are ready to eat foods that would complement the 4H food sales. Non fresh foods, such as a honey vendor, may be good to have.

Patty Clawson went to the Farmer's Market on Friday, Aug 10 and let me know that she has three, possible four interested vendors, with some who may also want to come for Santa Trains.

LOCATION – outlined on the map on the next page, I propose two possible locations: along the south side of Track 2, east of the Diesel Shop, facing toward Track 2; and on the Loading Dock. The Track 2 location has better access and we can put an Information Booth at the beginning of

the line, as we did for Portola Railroad Days 2 years ago. It would tie into the Haunted Railcar location. The Dock has more space, but access is harder and it is more out of the way.

LOGISTICS – we already are inviting outside groups to operate as part of the event (food vendor(s), the two Haunted Railcars and last year we had facepainting. Adding self contained vendors of crafts, produce, etc. would be a natural extension. These vendors already have their own insurance and permits (if needed), so that is not an area we need to take care of. They are also self-contained in their set up. We just need to provide space and possible power for some. They handle their own equipment, set up and tear down.

SPACE FEE and RESERVATION – to confirm commitment, we should charge a space fee for each 10' X 10' area. I am thinking something like \$25 per day. We would take advance reservations for each Sunday, and vendors could take 1 day or both. They would be open during the same times as the Pumpkin Train operations, 1 PM to 5 PM.

MANAGEMENT and ADVERTISING – I would be willing to handle the contact and reservation of these vendors. With help from the Beckworth Farmer's Market organizer and Patty Clawson's contacts, I think we can fill 5-7 spaces per Sunday. We can also advertise at the current Farmer's Market to help promote the Pumpkin Patch Express event. We would send each vendor a media info package, as many of them maintain their own advertising and social media contacts, and we can leverage those by having the vendor advertise their presence at the event.

Additional issues:

HAUNTED RAILCARS – with the disbanding of the Volunteer Fire Department, we need a new sponsor for the Haunted Railcar. In emailing with Ali and KC, I understand that they are checking some options, and Patty Clawson is also looking for operators / sponsors. Also, Ali has made the decision to have only the "scary" Haunted Railcar this year, which I agree is a good idea considering the need for a new sponsor. We should keep the idea in mind to try again in future years.

ADVERTISING – I am working on concepts for the poster and will have one available for the meeting.

FOOD VENDING – everyone seemed to enjoy the 4H doing the food last year, but we need to make sure we have no permit issues with their set up. We can help them with contact in the city to clear any permit needs, if they want to handle that task again this year. I understand from Ali and KC that the group may have the proper license for vending.

PUMPKINS – Bart Hansen and his family are again willing to handle pumpkin supply and are looking to use their contacts with Winco. Also, due to popular demand, we will be purchasing small pumpkins again. I understand that Winco offers them as "pie pumpkins". If there is any issue getting the smalls from Winco, I have the contact with the farm we used in 2016. As with last year, pumpkins will be prepriced and marked for easy sale.

Also, earlier this year I planted a patch of large size pumpkins at my mother's place in Reno. These pumpkins are supposed to grow to 60+ pounds. If I get a good yield, I will donate them to the museum. Suggestions are to raffle the extra large pumpkins or sell them for a premium price.

HAY BALES – I think we should contact the same vendor as last year for new haybales. We also need to have a cleanup of the old haybale material from the patch.

PATCH ENTRY – Ali and Ethan did a nice job on the patch entry last year. Ali shared with me her plans for the patch this year and they look great! I am hoping we can find some folks to help her and Ethan build the entry gate and enhance the patch in line with her plan.

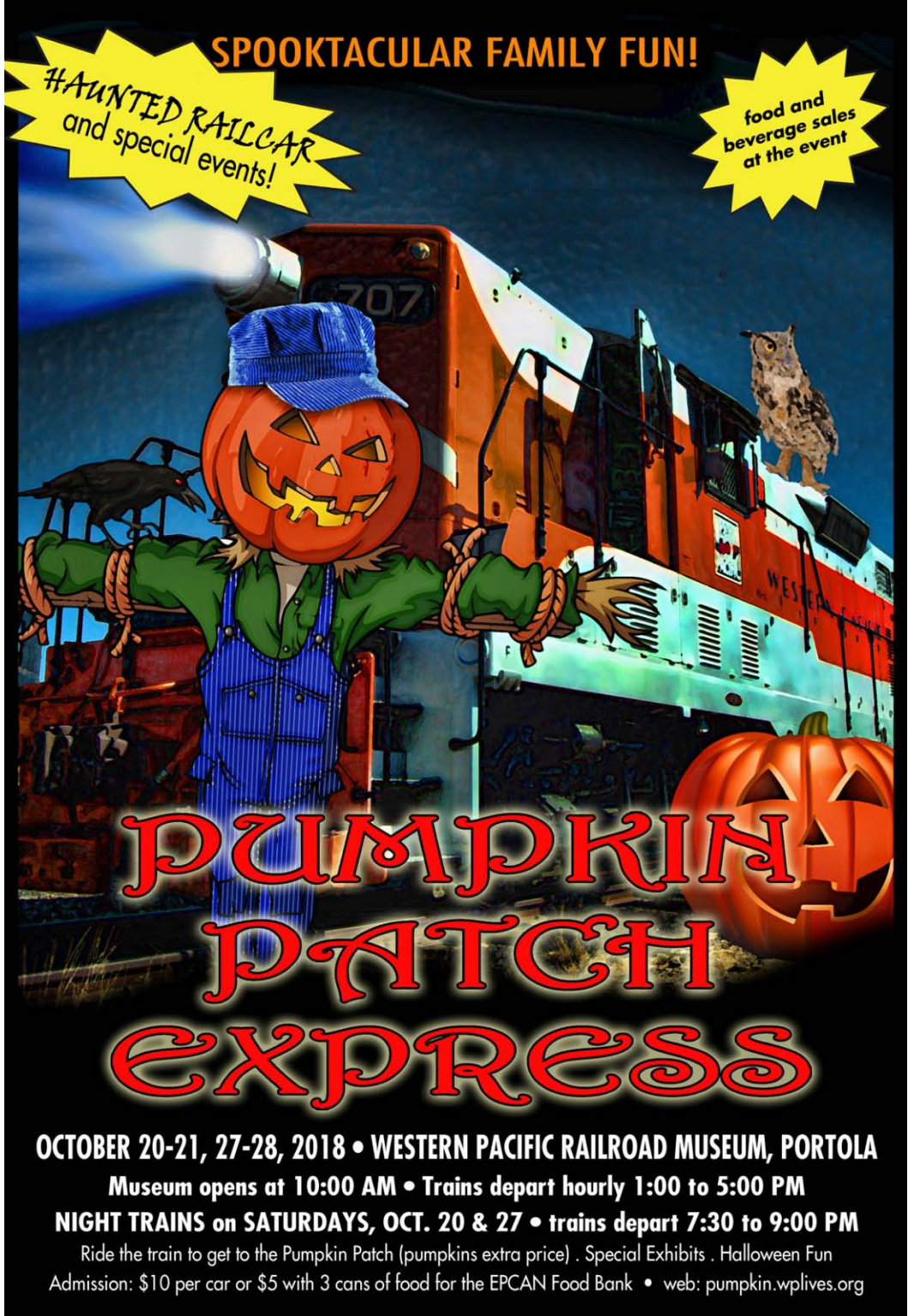
VOLUNTEERS – due to issues with the teen volunteers last year, we need to set out some rules and guidelines for behavior. It has also been suggested that we look for a different volunteer group to assist us this year. Perhaps we should consider contacting one of the Boy Scout troops we work with.

SALES – had several requests to purchase water out at the patch last year. I think we should have that available for sale along with the pumpkins. Also, we talked about stocking pumpkin carving / decorating kits last year. I would like to discuss if we want to do this. I have found some wholesales for prepackaged kits.

There has also been a request to add a wifi hotspot that will allow better communication with the sales tablets we use out at the patch. I would like to ask Paul Finnegan to look at this.

REQUESTED ACTION:

1. Approve having 5-7 vendors as a test at Pumpkin Patch Express and designate a location. I recommend location 1 on the attached map.
2. Provide thoughts and guidance on other elements of this report.



Concept poster in progress. Not final version.

