FEATHER RIVER RAIL SOCIETY

DATE: November 2025
ITEM: Event Report
FROM: Eugene Vicknair

PUMPKIN PATCH EXPRESS 2025

While I was unable to attend any of the actual event due to illness and family issues, I did received a lot of feedback on the event and did have a lot of participation in the lead up and planning.

Overall, the PPEx for 2025 went well. I only heard of one incident with a visitor that was a minor item. Weather certainly did not do us any favors on the final weekend, but the first weekend saw an attendance improvement over 2024.

Here are the preliminary numbers:

First Weekend 2025 vs. 2024

Oct 18-19, 2025	**Oct 19-20, 2024**
Cars - Sat: 68 / Sun: 35	Cars - Sat: 54 / Sun: 32
Admission – Sat: $890.00 / Sun: $510.00	Admission – Sat: $800.00 / Sun: $470
Pumpkins - Sat: $572.00 / Sun: $462.00	Pumpkins - Sat: $634.00 / Sun: $267.00

Second Weekend 2025 vs. 2024

Oct 25-26, 2025	**Oct 26-27, 2024**
Cars - Sat: 120 / Sun: 25	Cars - Sat: over 130 / Sun: 30
Admission – Sat: $1,411.00 / Sun: $328.00	Admission – Sat: $1,828.00 / Sun: $409.00
Pumpkins - Sat: $539.00 / Sun: $67.00	Pumpkins - Sat: $826.00 / Sun: $126.00

I am still gathering all the cost numbers, but the major costs were:

- Pumpkins: $757.98
- Posters and Promotion: $94.71

In final report next month I will include wages, power, store sales, donations, etc.

GOING FORWARD

Our biggest issue appears to be one of staffing, not just the event itself but also pre and post. I want to strongly thank everyone who helped before, during and after the event. Your assistance is greatly appreciated and I hope to have a complete list by the meeting. However, no doubt we were shorthanded and some desired aspects of the event were curtailed. Also, as we have not been able to find a dedicated set of Event Coordinators, several of us once again fell into planning and running the event.

In the past, there has been talk of getting more formalized with planning timelines, event details, etc. For various reasons, this has not really been carried through. Not laying any blame, this is just how things have shaken out. However, I think the time has come to push this through. We have several events coming in 2026 and we will need to get more formalized and dedicated in our operation and planning. I would like to use the PPEx as a template for how we approach events in the future.

For discussion, I will outline this in terms of a timeline:

8 months pre-event: Designate 2 event chairs and a Board Liaison (if chairs are not directors / officers)

- One of the chairs will have as a specific job of handling accounting

6 months pre-event: Define scope of event, admission, volunteer / staff needs, hours, special needs, etc.

Start reaching out to volunteers, food trucks, other needed participants

- NOTE: Event should be structured with sub-events which should be implemented based on staffing.
- For example:
    - Pumpkin Patch Express
        - Train rides * – FRRS Operations Department
        - Pumpkin Patch
            - Outdoor – requires 3-4 volunteers to operate, 4-5 to set up
            - Indoor * – requires 2-3 volunteers to operate, 4-5 to set up
        - Admission Gate * – requires 2-3 volunteers
        - Haunted Railcar Adult – requires outside group with 4-8 volunteers
        - Haunted Railcar Youth – requires outside group with 3-5 volunteers
        - Harvest Fair – requires 1-2 volunteers to reach out and coordinate, 4-5 to set up
        - Food Truck(s) – requires 1 volunteer to contact, coordinate and handle county
        - Caboose Train Lighting * – requires 2-3 volunteers
        - Grounds Decoration * – requires 4-8 volunteers to set up and 3-6 to teardown
        - Sponsors / Donors – requires 1-2 volunteers
        - Promotion * – requires 1-2 volunteers to prep, 2-3 to execute

*Sub-events marked with * are considered critical to a Minimum Viable Event. Others are optional.*

- NOTE: Some of these can have overlapping persons. For example, Sponsors and Promotion can overlap. Set up / Decorations / Lighting happen pre and post event, so those volunteers can also

participate in event itself. But the goal is to identify persons to responsible / available in each area. Also, things like port-o-potty arrangements can be combined with food Truck set-up, etc.

4-5 months pre-event: Start regular planning meetings with key persons involved in event

4 months pre-event: Have any outside entities (Food Truck, Haunted Railcar, Harvest Fair) confirmed and their details scheduled / defined.

3 months pre-event: Have all promotional materials completed and ready for final checks / production.

Have all event volunteers signed up and identified. Any holes have 1 month to fill.

2 months pre-event: Event GO-NO GO

- If any sub-event is not staffed / ready, that sub-event will be scrubbed
- If we do not have sufficient personnel to property run Minimum Viable Event (*) then complete event will be cancelled.

If GO confirmed, all promotions released and promotional push starts.

1 month pre-event: Decorations / pre-work have begun or is imminent. Any permits / scheduling with county, vendors, etc. is done and ready.

Final confirmation of outside groups / vendors.

Final confirmation of operations schedule, volunteer staff, store ops, etc.

EVENT: Ensure there is someone with complete overview of event and layout available to answer questions and manage overall operations. Ideally, this is at least 1 of the event chairs.

1 month post-event: Clean up / stowing of materials is complete.

Post event meeting has taken place and analysis / report written or near complete

Event accounting report complete.

In trying to work to a plan like this we should already be appointing a committee for the Big Boy visit even though we do not have final date yet. We should also try to use a model like this for the Conventions, so we should also be appointing a convention committee ASAP.

This outline is of course open to modification and is just intended to get a discussion framework going.