

“As always, there are so many volunteers that help around the museum all the time and I would be remiss if I did not say thank you to all of you. I may have missed some specifically by name, however all of your help is greatly appreciated.”

At any time should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, I may not have an answer right away, however I will get one for you.

Superintendent of Operations Report

–Loren Ross, Superintendent of Operations

With the unfortunate departure of Rick Gruninger, I have been solicited to take the reigns as the Superintendent of Operations, a position I temporarily held a few years ago. I have accepted this offer with excitement and I am looking forward to continuing Rick's work on several projects. Kerry has asked me to join the Working Group as well, and I'm already reviewing their past records in anticipation of the groups next meeting. I am going to miss working alongside Rick, and I wish him success in his future.

This operating season has seen its share of difficulties, the most notable being the poor track conditions on the balloon from Malfunction Junction to Milward Switch. Over the summer, I worked on the track repair crew under the supervision of our Roadmaster, Greg Elems. Many of us weekly braved the extreme heat to manually replace over 60 rail ties in order to make the track safe to run. The balloon was repaired just in time for Railroad Days, which was another success! If you haven't seen the photos of the track repairs on the web site, I recommend you check them out!

Although the repairs were done well, there is still much to be done. An emergency track repair had to be completed in order to run the Pumpkin Trains in October, and more work was done to insure that Santa Trains would also come off without a hitch. However, an examination of the track shows that there are another 25-35 ties in need of replacement. There are wide spots that

need to be properly gauged, and some ties need to be plugged and re-spiked. The Roadmaster will be announcing track repair dates, and I encourage as many of you as possible to consider coming to the museum to help with this project. The more hands available, the easier it will be on all of us!

Our other area for improvement is train staffing on the weekends. For a variety of reasons, we have been losing members from the Operations Department, and not replacing them with “new blood”. This has resulted in staff scheduling problems, and I would like to find some new folks to join us so that we can continue to operate the museum to the best of our ability. I will be working with the Yardmaster to create more weekend yard switching days so that we can keep our level of proficiency as high as possible, and to provide the volunteers with more training time. This will only work if we have people available. So, if you know anyone who might be interested in joining the Operations Department, please start talking to them now so that we might have them come to next year's training classes.

After some discussions with our RAL staff, I have appointed Ethan Doty as the RAL scheduler. Ethan, and KC in the gift shop, have been working hard to fix some of the scheduling problems that seem to pop up from time to time, and have done an excellent job! Ethan and KC are working on several new ideas to help streamline the RAL adventure for our clients, and our staff, and I'm looking forward to their success! Our RAL engineers have done a fantastic job this summer as well, a fact often echoed by our customers.

Finally, I want to thank all the volunteers and staff who worked so hard this summer to keep our trains running and our customers happy. I've been volunteering at this museum since 2001, and I've never been prouder of the people I work with. WP IS the Willing People!