



Preserving "THE FEATHER RIVER ROUTE"

Issue - 183

October/November/December 2019

2019 Pumpkin Patch Express

- Eugene Vicknair

The 2019 *Pumpkin Patch Express* operated once again at the museum over two weekends, October 19-20 and 26-27. Despite a couple rainy, blustery days, everyone seemed to feel the event went very well. Our overall public attendance was only slightly less than last year, despite of the dicey weather, and we saw higher income from the pumpkin patch sales. Ali Doty and Kristina Dunn spearheaded the set-up and planning of the event.

The Haunted Railcar was decorated and staffed by the S.W.E.E.T. (Sierra West End Educational Theater) group out of Quincy, led by Risa Joy with help from the West End Theater/Dramaworks. It proved to be very popular, especially with the crew tailoring the experience to the age and scare level of the guests as they entered. The WP 106 "Charles O. Sweetwood" business car was open as an all-ages haunted car decorated by Kristina Dunn and Ali Doty.

Ali Doty led the Pumpkin Patch and decorating the train and diesel shop with help from Ethan Doty, Kristina Dunn, Shaun Rowden, Debra Reynolds, Portola City Council member Pat Morton and others. Ali, Ethan, Shaun and Debra, with help from Adam Mahoney and Patty Clawson, also handled the pricing of the pumpkins. Eugene Vicknair and Bob Danner took

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2019 Santa Trains

- Staff

The FRRS and WPRM hosted its annual Santa Trains event in December. We opened the gates to our winter guests on Saturday December 7th and then Friday and Saturday nights December 13th, 14th, 20th and 21st. To the delight of the children, Santa and Mrs. Claus took time out of their busy schedule to visit.

New for 2019, we ran seven cabooses and doubleheaded the train with newly restored WP 1503 in the lead and SP 2873 trailing. Also new for this year, cab rides were available as an extra-fare item for our visitors. Preparations for Santa Trains began right after the October Pumpkin Express trains were done. It takes a lot of work to put this event together every year. Thanks to all who participated.

We had 55 cars through the gate on opening night. We ran on the half hour and had riders for every train.

It is estimated we had 200 guests on opening night even though it was cold and rainy until about 7:45 p.m. Attendance was good both of the following weekends and we ran a total of 37 trains over the five nights.

Our baggage car was decked out for its role of Treats Center for the event. Although we didn't get good snow, everyone seemed to have a good time!

2019 Pumpkin Patch Express
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turns performing as Sasquatch during the Super Spooky Saturday Night Trains.

We also had several vendors this year, including two food vendors: We Cook For You out of Chico and Portola's own Pizza Factory. The facepainter in particular was a popular vendor and all requested to come back next year. Advertising and vendors were handled by Eugene Vicknair and Patty Clawson, with help from Michael Clawson.

The highlight operationally was the use of recently restored Western Pacific SW1500 1503 on the trains. The 1503 ran great and garnered a lot of positive comments. Several visitors had been following the restoration on Facebook and the WPRM website and raced to the engine to check it out up close. Cab rides were popular and also a good source of revenue. The train crew volunteers were Bil Jackson, Loren Ross, Kevin Ross, Charlie Spikes, David Elems, Greg Elems, Matt Elems, Janet Steeper, Steve Habeck, Robbie Campbell, Kenneth Finnegan and Duane Van Der Veen. Eugene helped out with the patch set-up, as car attendant and as general troubleshooter. Duane also took on some last-minute electrical work to keep everything going.

Taj Yager and Kristina Dunn worked the store, while Jean Danielson and Barbara Jackson handled the gate. We received about 460 pounds of food for the EPCAN food bank. This was delivered to EPCAN by Bil Jackson. Thank you to everyone who helped out with this event! Hopefully we got all your names.

We plan to run the Pumpkin trains again in 2020 and build the event even larger!



Pumpkin Patch Entrance

- photo by Kenneth Finnegan



Pumpkin Patch

- photo by Michael Clawson



Pumpkin on its way home

- photo by Michael Clawson



Pumpkin Express

- photo by Kenneth Finnegan