

To: Strathroy-Caradoc Municipal Council

Subject: Sleepy Hollow Railway – Volunteer Update and Name Announcement

Dear Mayor, Members of Council and the Public,

On behalf of the Southern Ontario Live Steamers – formerly the Strathroy Railroad Engineers – we are pleased to provide an update as we enter our sixth season operating the Sleepy Hollow Railway at the Strathroy Fair Grounds Recreation Complex.

Each year, our railway continues to grow – in ridership, volunteer involvement, and track development. Our group now includes 15 active volunteers who collectively welcome thousands of visitors annually. Special event days such as Ribfest, Rail Safety Day, and Halloween's Spooky Saturday each attract close to a thousand riders. Spooky Saturday, created in partnership with municipal staff, has become a beloved family tradition – offering a safe and inclusive Halloween experience centred around the railway.

Since taking on operations, we have focused on upgrading the original "squirle" layout to support more reliable running and a better rider experience. These enhancements are ongoing, with continuous improvements to both the track and its visual features and experiences. Looking ahead, we are eager to expand the railway further into the rear area of the fairgrounds, beyond the baseball diamond.

The Sleepy Hollow Railway is gaining recognition across the region. We've welcomed guests from Hamilton, Kitchener, Windsor, Detroit, across Michigan, and even as far as Alberta. As the track grows and our visitor experience improves, the railway is becoming an increasingly valuable piece of the tourism landscape in Strathroy-Caradoc and Middlesex County.

We are especially proud of the youth members within our organization. A large contingent of our volunteers are aged 10 to 18, and their involvement is central to our success. These young volunteers assist with track repair, train operation and maintenance, and public safety engagement. Through their work with the Southern Ontario Live Steamers, they are developing exceptional life skills – teamwork, responsibility, and communication – while pursuing a hands-on passion for railway history and mechanical systems. The railway offers them a unique and rewarding environment to grow as individuals and future community leaders.

We warmly invite you to join us on Opening Day – Saturday, June 14th.

Come experience the charm of the Sleepy Hollow Railway firsthand and see the positive impact your ongoing support makes possible.

Thank you for your time, your support, and for helping us bring smiles and steam to the heart of our community.

All the best,

Anthony Clark, President

Southern Ontario Live Steamers

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