



Rock Island Technical Society Awards

“The Rocket Award” to Iowa Interstate Railroad

The Rock Island Technical Society, which seeks to preserve and promote the history of the Rock Island Railroad, has awarded it “Rocket” Award “for service to the Employees of the Iowa Interstate Railroad, Henry Posner III, Chairman”. Jeff Spangle of R.I.T.S. presented the award at its annual convention held in Galena, IL, September, 26, 2009. The committee, chaired by Jeff Spangle, awarded the honor after reviewing nominations from members of the society, which numbers over 800 members worldwide.

Spangle cited three areas Iowa Interstate Railroad has preserved Rock Island heritage. First, the railroad and its chairman, Henry Posner III, have turned the once struggling short line that was the Chicago-Council Bluffs mainline of the Rock Island into a profitable venture, therefore guaranteeing its physical preservation in the long term: as rail systems shrink around the country the R.I.T.S. recognizes the efforts of maintaining the physical remains of the Rock Island. Secondly, the railroad now owns the rights to the Rock Island herald, which it incorporates as part of its own corporate identity. Finally, the railroad has worked with civic entities like the “Grand Excursion 2004” committee to celebrate Rock Island history in the states of Illinois and Iowa.

Vice President and Chief Operating Officer M. C. “Mick” Burkart accepted the award on behalf of the Iowa Interstate employees. Burkart noted the physical improvements that his company has made to the physical plant and also the investment in 14 new state-of-the-art GE locomotives, one of which will honor the Rock Island by wearing a heritage “Rock Island” paint scheme. He stated: “The Rock Island

had a long and proud history. We are glad that the Iowa Interstate can carry on this tradition in not just preserving, but growing this important transportation corridor.

President & CEO Dennis H. Miller commented: "Our Company has maintained a connection to the old Rock Island railroad through the use and ownership of the logo and is proud to display it on our locomotives. In honor of that heritage and our 25th anniversary we are preparing one of our new GE locomotives to be painted in one of the traditional Rock Island Railroad color schemes this year."

The Rock Island Technical Society was founded in 1974 and is celebrating its 35th anniversary. Originally the society was organized to keep rail fans and modelers informed about details of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad. The railroad was liquidated starting in 1980. Since 1980, it has served as an organization that preserves the history of that railroad. The society publishes quarterly newsletters and semi-annual magazines that document the history of the CRI&P. The society maintains a webpage at <WWW.RITS.ORG>.