

PRICELESS
SEPTEMBER 2014

Women's **VIEW**



TRAIL OF TERROR

STONEY POINT

A Halloween Tradition





WVF COVER STORY

STONEY POINT FIRE DEPARTMENT'S "TRAIL OF TERROR" FUNDRAISER 2014

Like many volunteer fire departments during the 1980s and 1990s, the Stoney Point Fire Department depended upon community-supported fundraisers to generate supplemental revenue and bolster tax-based funding they received from their districts. With costs rising on everything needed to keep a fast-growing department operating in accordance with toughening state and federal standards, tax revenues alone were not keeping pace. Many fire departments struggled just to keep their equipment operating and stations properly manned. In addition, Stoney Point had recently begun providing emergency medical services to the community. Although representing over sixty percent of the fire department's calls, this critical service remains unfunded to this day.

For years Stoney Point Fire Department held two primary fundraisers per year. One was a photo fundraiser partnering the department with a commercial photo company. Fire district residents would receive a very nice portrait for a small donation. All proceeds were donated to the fire department. The photo company would make their money by selling additional photos or products to those that had donated when they would pick up their portraits. This fundraising event was very successful and continues to this day. The other popular and seasonal fundraiser was the autumn Turkey Shoot. Held each fall, participants would pay \$3.00 per shot to fire a shotgun at a small target stapled to a board 75 feet away. There were 10 targets on each board. After all 10 shooters had taken their turn, whoever was the closest to the center bulls-eye would win a turkey or ham. This was a fun and popular event, but had very low revenue generation relative to the amount of effort in running the event. As the Stoney Point area began to become increasingly more urban, the Turkey Shoot became less popular with the neighbors, and much less so with county and city ordinances.

With the demise of the Turkey Shoot, a group of department members gathered to discuss future fundraising efforts necessary to supplement the growth of the department. A few members had been associated with a local haunted house and the discussion of the "fear sells" concept arose. It seems the business of haunted attractions in the United States represents a multi-billion dollar industry, generating seasonal revenues second only to Christmas. After more discussion and research the idea for the Trail of Terror was born.

To say the original Trail of Terror was nothing like the current event would be quite the understatement. During the first year there was only a short trail that department members had hacked out with hand tools through the woods behind the station. There were only a few props and sets with several firefighters doing their best attempts at acting. It's a good thing that they were good firefighters! The most advanced prop that was displayed was a ghost named Winston. He was a three-foot-tall, glow-in-the-dark ghost suspended by parachute cord. Winston would be pulled through the trees as fear-seeking guests walked through the dark woods below. There were a few spots along the Trail where things would pop from the dark and generate a good scare. Winston's haunting days may be over but he still serves as the inspiration for the Trail of Terror logo. The Trail was more profitable than the Turkey Shoot, but not by much. The first year saw attendance just over eleven hundred. Despite all of the time, effort, and sweat that department members sunk into this new endeavor, the first year was still kind of rough around the edges.



With the first year behind them, a core group of department members set out to make the Trail better. They attended several conferences and seminars around the country, each intended to teach organizations hosting haunted attractions the skills necessary to make their haunts successful. They learned vital management and marketing skills. They also learned to build sets and scenes, to set up multi-dimensional props, and to use sound, lighting, 3-D, and other special effects to make every moment fun and exciting experience. Armed with this new found knowledge, Trail of Terror expansion was off and running.

From its humble beginning 12 years ago, the Trail of Terror has grown in scope every year and is now considered a local Halloween tradition. The exponential growth has been fueled not only by the dedication of staff and volunteers but the community's passion to support the department's efforts. The total number of visitors has increased every season. Last year, attendance topped 11,000 – a tenfold increase at what is now considered one of the best haunts in central North Carolina.

They say it "takes money to make money" – and the Trail is no exception. It expands and improves every year. Trail revenue is assigned to two categories: a small portion is reinvested back into Trail operations, funding supplies and improvements necessary for the next season; and the bulk of the revenue is directly invested in the department to purchase new firefighting equipment and life-saving devices. Some items purchased with Trail revenue include numerous sets of turnout gear, heavy and technical rescue tools, hazardous materials gas monitors, thermal imaging cameras, cardiac defibrillators, and other emergency medical gear. This equipment directly supports the department's efforts to provide the highest levels of service to the citizens of Cumberland County and surrounding communities.

While equipment and props may be important, it's the people that are absolutely critical. Over the years, the trail has grown from a small backyard operation with only a handful of people to a multi-faceted event with almost 200 actors and support personnel employed nightly. Primary management of the Trail resides with a core group of dedicated professionals constantly working to make every Trail season better than the last. Administrative planning for Trail season begins in March with physical construction beginning in June. Some Trail-related tasks occur on a year-round basis. Not only do they manage the upgrades of the physical aspects of the Trail, but also coordinate with the many volunteers needed each night to make the whole thing work like a well-oiled machine.



During Trail operations, the volunteer firefighters fill many critical roles, including stand-by fire watch and on-site medical coverage (just in case one of the monsters scares the life out of you!). They also ensure that the department is properly manned to insure immediate respond to any dispatched emergency – fire, rescue, or EMS. However, most of the nearly 200 volunteers that it takes to make the Trail function each night are students at local high schools. Most of these volunteers are part of a class, club, or group within the school that require the students to participate in community service projects. They must complete a certain number of community service hours to fulfill graduation requirements. A student volunteering at the Stoney Point Fire Department in support of the Trail has the potential to earn up to 130 hours of community service time.

A person desiring to volunteer on the Trail of Terror must first meet several requirements. They must be at least fourteen years old with a photo ID and parental permission. Each volunteer is responsible for their own transportation to and from the Trail. They must attend one of the scheduled orientation events that occurring in the weeks prior to opening night. Acting positions are highly coveted and competition is fierce. Those wishing to fill one of these key roles undergo an audition held several weeks before the actual start of the Trail. These students and the other volunteers all work very hard to put on the best shows possible. Some of the students and volunteers say they enjoy working the Trail so much that they come back year after year. If you wish to volunteer, please see the volunteer preregistration form and contact information available on our website, <http://stoneypointtrailoferror.com>.

By now you must be wondering "What can I expect when I visit this event?" Well, your adventure begins as soon as you arrive. You'll be treated to a dynamic, interactive, and entertaining stage show, hosted by "The Diva" and her Zombie Dance Crew. From there you'll depart on an exhilarating walk through a haunted mansion, maze, and a trail filled with monsters, clowns, and other creepy characters in animated and 3-D scenes that will scare and excite you! With the exception of a few favorite scenes that return every year, the Trail offers enough variety that everyone who visits can find a little something outside (or maybe inside) of their comfort zone! With 12 years of haunting experience under their belt, our Boo Crew has the art of assaulting your senses down to a science! So ask yourself, "What is it that scares YOU?" and then come out and find it at the 2014 Stoney Point Fire Department's Trail of Terror.



Trail operating hours are 8-11 PM

SEPTEMBER 26 & 27
OCTOBER 3, 4, 10, 11, 17,
18, 24, 25, 30, & 31
NOVEMBER 1

910.424.0694
7221 STONEY POINT ROAD
FAYETTEVILLE, NC 28306

TRAIL OF CANDY

TICKETS ARE \$5 PER CHILD AND ADULTS ARE FREE

We put the "treat" in trick or treat! The annual "Trail of Candy" will be held on October 25th from 12-2PM. Children aged 10 years and younger may walk through parts of the Trail and receive candy! Come and play in the bouncy house and enjoy all the fun games!

VALLEY OF SHOPPING

The "Valley of Shopping" will be held on October 25th from 12-2 PM along with the "Trail of Candy!" This brand new event for our local vendors and businesses is an opportunity for them to come out and support the Stoney Point Fire Department's "Trail of Terror" and showcase their business and products to our community.

For Immediate Release



Media Release: For Women's View Magazine Stoney Point Fire Department's 2014 "Trail of Terror" Fundraiser

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This year's Trail of Terror begins on 26 & 27 September, and runs on 3, 4, 10, 11, 17, 18, 24, 25, 30, & 31 October, concluding on Saturday, 1 November. Trail hours are 8 to 11 PM. Tickets are \$15 for adults and children. Special VIP admissions are available for \$25. This option will allow the purchaser to avoid waiting in line and provides VIP access. Special group rates are also available for groups of 20 or more but must be coordinated in advance. The Trail is located behind the Stoney Point Fire Department, Station #13 at 7221 Stoney Point Road, Fayetteville, North Carolina 28306. For further information, please check out our website: <http://stoneypointtrailofterror.com> or give us a call (910) 424-0694.

A special Trail of Candy event will be held from 12 until 2 PM, Saturday, 25 October 2014. This event is designed put the "treat" in trick or treat, by allowing children 10 years and younger to walk through "the not so scary" parts of the trail and receive lots of candy. There will be a bouncy house and many other fun games to enjoy. Admission is \$5 per child and free for adults.

In addition to the Trail of Candy, a new event, The Valley of Shopping will also be held 12 until 2 PM on Saturday, 25 October 2014. This event will allow our local vendors and businesses to support the fire department, and showcase their businesses and products to the community. Vendor spots are still available, visit our website for further details.