

National Railroad Museum

General Museum Information

For Release at Will

For additional information contact: Bob Lettenberger – (920) 437-7623, x-16
April 19, 2007

The Museum at a glance

- Mission:** The mission of the National Railroad Museum is to collect and preserve the equipment, artifacts and historical material associated with U.S. railroading. Through educational, innovative and entertaining methods, the Museum will exhibit, display and interpret the history and significance of U.S. railroading.
- Location:** **2285 S. Broadway, Green Bay, WI** – The Museum is located on 33 acres along the Fox River. The grounds are bisected by Dutchman’s Creek, creating a beautiful park-like setting.
- Telephone:** **920-437-7623** – Information concerning hours, admission rates and special events can be obtained via this number.
- Website:** **www.nationalrrmuseum.org** – The Museum’s website contains a wealth of information about the Museum, its history, collection and visiting. When browsing the website, one will find a complete listing of the rolling stock collection with pictures of the highlights. Additionally, there is up-to-the-minute information on special events and Museum operations, including train schedules and ticket prices.
- Hours:** **Open year around** – The Museum is open all year. Hours are reduced during January, February and March. The Museum is closed on Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas and New Year’s. On New Year’s Eve, the Museum is open from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- Train Rides** **May 1 – September 30** – Ride aboard vintage, full-size railroad equipment for a 25-minute tour of the Museum. Along the way, the conductor describes additional pieces in the collection, points out highlights of the Museum, talks about railroad safety and discusses the hobo culture. The train ride is pulled by a diesel locomotive and is included in the admission price. No reservations are needed to ride the train.

Admissions:

	Adult	Senior	Child (age 4-12)	Child (age 3 and under)
May 1 - September 30	\$9.00	\$8.00	\$6.50	Free
October 1 – April 30	\$8.00	\$6.00	\$5.00	Free

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The Museum experience – the “must see” exhibits

Union Pacific #4017:

Big Boy – the world’s largest steam locomotive. Weighing in at 1.1 million pounds and measuring nearly half a football field in length (132’ 10 7/8”), the *Big Boy* locomotives were designed to haul heavy freight for the Union Pacific Railroad over the mountainous regions of Utah and Wyoming.

Originally, 25 of these giants were constructed in 1941 and 1944. They roamed the rails until 1959. The Union Pacific donated eight of them to museums across the U.S. The *Big Boy* preserved at the National Railroad Museum is the only one of the eight remaining that is housed inside a climate-controlled facility.

British Rail Board #60008

***Dwight D. Eisenhower* and Gen. Eisenhower’s World War II train**

To honor General Dwight D. Eisenhower for his role at the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces during World War II, the British placed his name on locomotive #60008. *Dwight D. Eisenhower*, or *Dwight* as the British would call her is from the London & North Eastern Railway A-4 class built in 1937. A sister to *Dwight* set and still holds the world speed record for a steam locomotive (126 mph). *Dwight* herself is capable of 100 mph.

Also in the Museum’s collection are two British carriages that were assigned to Gen. Eisenhower’s command train during World War II. The British Railway Board set aside a number of carriages for the general’s use while preparing for the Normandy invasion (D-Day) and for conducting other war-related business. One of the carriages contains Eisenhower’s quarters and lounge. The second is a dormitory (sleeper) used by the general’s staff.

It is interesting to note that locomotive #60008 never pulled the general’s command train during the war.

Pennsylvania Railroad #4890

GG-1 electric locomotive – America’s most famous electric locomotive. The GG-1, built first in 1932, has had its streamlined body featured on a U.S. postage stamp, as a Lionel toy train and in dozens of artist’s paintings over the years. Designed to move passengers, and eventually freight, along the Pennsylvania’s electrified lines between Washington, D.C., New York and Harrisburg, Pa., the locomotives streamlining is what brought it fame. The body was styled by industrial designer Raymond Lowey. Lowey, who railroad-related projects most, also completed assignments for IBM and Coca-Cola and designed the interior of the first Air Force One.

There were 139 GG-1 locomotives built. Today 16 remain, of which four, including the Museum’s, are preserved indoors.

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The Aerotrain:

In 1955, the railroads tried to stem the dismal downward spiral they saw in passenger traffic. They were looking for a vehicle that was fast, economical to build and operate, and fashionable in appearance. General Motors, using existing technology from its many divisions, developed the Aerotrain. With coaches fashioned from bus bodies and appliance by Frigidare, the Aerotrain was designed to travel at over 100 mph.

However, its rough ride and poorly designed locomotive, the prototypes were disliked by passengers and railroads alike. After testing on three railroad, the Pennsylvania, New York Central and Union Pacific, the two trainsets were sold to the Rock Island, who used them in commuter service around Chicago. In this service, the Aerotrain was allowed to travel at only 60 mph.

Incidentally, Charles Jordan, who lead the Aerotrain design team at GM is also responsible for the famous Cadillac tail fins introduced in the late 1950s.

The Bauer Drumhead Collection

Prior to May 1971, when Amtrak began to operate America's passenger trains, individual railroads offered their own service. There was considerable competition between railroads with travelers having several trains to choose from between major cities.

The top or named trains offered by each railroad were heavily promoted. One device used to advertise and identify these trains was the drumhead - a round, illuminated sign bearing the train's logo attached to the rear of the last car. The first drumheads were large and round, much like a bass drum - hence their name.

Drumheads generated powerful advertising. Celebrity pictures were often posed near the signs. Every use of such pictures promoted that particular train as a celebrity favorite, which was essentially an endorsement of its service. The first drumhead was displayed on the Northern Pacific's North Coast Limited in the early 1900s. The train ran between Chicago, Seattle and Portland, Oregon.

Among railroad memorabilia, drumheads are very rare items. Although hundreds of drumheads were manufactured, as few as a half dozen copies were made of some designs. Additionally, as trains were removed from service, the drumheads were scrapped along with unwanted passenger cars.

The Bauer Drumhead Collection is the largest gathering of such artifacts (40) know to exist. Frederick Bauer presented the collection to the National Railroad Museum in 1999 to be preserved and displayed for future generations.

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A brief history of the National Railroad Museum

General Carl R. Gray, director general of the Military Railway Service from 1942 to 1945, conveyed his dream of establishing a national railroad museum to a group of Green Bay area business leaders after the war. In 1955, those business leaders formed the "Steam Locomotive Committee" to obtain a steam locomotive and preserve it in a city park. The two dreams came together after a meeting with D.C. Everest in Wausau. As president of Wausau Papers, Everest had railroad contacts that got the group their first steam locomotive. He put them in touch with Clifford Lord, president of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, who offered the Society's assistance to operate the Museum; a plan that never materialized.

Harold Fuller, Ted Lenfestey, Helen DeSpirito and other founders acquired Milwaukee Road #261, a 4-8-4 Northern-type steam locomotive in 1956. The locomotive is now operated on a lease to North Star Rail (Minneapolis).

In 1958, the committee leased the 22-acre Cooke Memorial Park from the City of Green Bay. Rep. John Byrnes (R-Green Bay), ranking Republican on the House Ways and Means Committee, was instrumental in having the organization recognized as the National Railroad Museum by Act of Congress in 1958. Enactment did not include funding.

The Museum opened for its first season in 1961 and the Hood Junction depot was built that year. The 85' by 480' Victor McCormick Train Pavilion was added in 1970 and houses the Museum's steam locomotive and passenger car collections. Also in the 1970s, the Museum leased 10 acres south of Dutchman's Creek from Brown County and completed the 1.5-mile loop of track now used for the train ride.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the emphasis was on acquiring equipment. Today there are more than 75 pieces of rolling stock in the collection. The Museum was run by the Green Bay Area Visitor and Convention Bureau from 1979 until 1985, when the board of directors resumed control and began a capital campaign raising money to build a reception center and perform equipment restorations.

Today the Museum hosts an average of 72,000 patrons annually and is operated by a full-time, professional staff of ten.

In 2001, the Frederick J. Lenfestey Center and Frederick Bauer Drumhead Gallery were added to the existing facilities. This 33,000 sq. ft., \$2.2 million expansion brought the Museum's steam locomotive collection under cover, afforded greater opportunities for year around programming and provided Northeast Wisconsin with a new venue for events.

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The Frederick J. Lenfestey Center

In July 2001, the National Railroad Museum opened its new exhibit and event venue, the Frederick J. Lenfestey Center. This 26,000 sq. ft. facility will be home to the prizes of the Museum's rolling stock collection, as well as other equipment on a temporary basis. The main hall has a dinner seating capacity of 400 and will be offered to Northeast Wisconsin as an alternative venue for activities ranging from receptions to musical performances.

The new center also permits the Museum to offer additional programming on a year-around basis. Heretofore, most of the Museum's facilities were open-air. Not only did this make any kind of formal programming impossible, but also it made viewing even the highlights of the rolling stock collection difficult during the winter months. The Lenfestey Center will serve as a source of income for the Museum, permitting additional resources to be diverted to other preservation and educational programs.

The addition of the Lenfestey Center has also permitted the Museum to take a major step toward preserving its steam locomotive collection. By moving several pieces into the new hall for permanent display, space was opened in other buildings to house all but one of the Museum's steam locomotives. This move is welcome relief for artifacts that have been displayed outdoors for over 35 years.

The Lenfestey Center at a glance

Space added

Frederick J. Lenfestey Center 25,520 sq. ft.
Bauer Drumhead Gallery 4,600 sq. ft.

Total added space 30,120 sq. ft. approx.

Construction Period

September 2000 – July 2001

Project Funding

Private contributions made through
Track to the Future major gift campaign

Equipment permanently housed in Lenfestey Center

- *Dwight D. Eisenhower* locomotive &
- Gen. Eisenhower's World War II command train
- Union Pacific #4017 – *Big Boy* – world's largest steam locomotive
- Pennsylvania Railroad #4890 – GG-1 – electric locomotive
- Anahapee & Western Railroad #33 – bay window caboose
- Wisconsin 40 & 8 box car from the French Merci Train

Two live tracks in the Lenfestey Center are open for other equipment from the Museum's collection. These two tracks will also be available for the display of visiting rolling stock.