



MEDIA RELEASE

Release Date: Immediate

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Nearly 115,000 Hours Logged by Railroad Museum Volunteers for 2000

April is National Volunteer Month, and the California State Railroad Museum (a part of California State Parks) would like the Sacramento region to know how important volunteers are! Throughout all of 2000, some 579 volunteers gave 114,788 hours of service to the Museum – the equivalent of over 55 full-time employees. Another way to look at these totals: each volunteer averaged 25 eight-hour days of Museum service.

To recognize these many contributions, the Railroad Museum Foundation each year underwrites the costs of a Volunteer Recognition Dinner. This year's awards dinner will take place on Friday evening, May 11, at the Capital Plaza Holiday Inn. This invitation-only Volunteer Recognition Dinner is one of many activities planned during the California State Railroad Museum's 25th anniversary, which takes place from Thursday, May 10 through Saturday, May 12.

Every day during the Railroad Museum's 25th Anniversary, special activities, railroad equipment demonstrations, entertainment, and reenactments will take place throughout the Museum's main facilities and along the railroad tracks in Old Sacramento. As part of California State Parks' "May is State Parks" promotion, admission to the Railroad Museum will be free all three days! In addition to the many free activities, there will be ticketed train rides, special guided tours of the Southern Pacific Sacramento Shops, and a Saturday evening 25th Anniversary Gala.

Since the opening of its first facility in 1976 – the Central Pacific Railroad Passenger Station on Front Street – the California State Railroad Museum has always enjoyed the support of numerous volunteers. Over the last 25 years, in fact, Museum volunteers have contributed well over one million hours! Today, over one-half-million guests enjoy learning about railroad history at the Museum annually. Always there to assist are a variety of volunteers, from uniformed Docents on duty inside the Railroad Museum, to the crews operating the Museum's weekend excursion trains.

Museum volunteers support a variety of outreach programs, too. Every day, for instance, Museum Docents climb aboard Amtrak's California Zephyr passenger train between Sacramento and Reno. These volunteers narrate the route with historical information about towns and cities, the building of the Transcontinental Railroad, and the Railroad Museum and other Sacramento attractions. Another popular volunteer-run program is Operation Lifesaver, in which certified presenters visit area schools to discuss railroad grade crossing safety with youngsters.

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-- Railroad Museum Volunteers Continued --

Additional volunteers work behind the scenes. Museum volunteers with specific skills work at a variety of non-public physical tasks, such as locomotive and railroad car restoration. Then there is the most demanding of physical labor: maintenance and construction of the tracks utilized by the Museum's excursion railroad (the Sacramento Southern Railroad), which is an all-volunteer program. Still other volunteers assist with planning, research, and execution of Museum events and exhibits, which can involve long hours of reading and writing. Volunteers assist as well with office tasks, such as stuffing and mailing of envelopes, answering phones, and more.

The list of volunteer job possibilities at the Railroad Museum is virtually endless, with many more programs and tasks available than can be mentioned herein. Additional dedicated Railroad Museum volunteers are always sought, with training courses held each spring and fall. To learn more about becoming a volunteer at the California State Railroad Museum, please call our All Aboard volunteer scheduling desk at (916) 445-0269. For additional details about the Museum's 25th Anniversary, to be held May 10-12, 2001, call our 24-hour events and information line at (916) 445-6645 or visit www.californiastaterailroadmuseum.org.

Operated by California State Parks with assistance from the CSRM Foundation, the California State Railroad Museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. Widely regarded as North America's finest and most-visited interpretive railroad museum, the complex of facilities includes the 100,000-square foot Museum of Railroad History plus the reconstructed Central Pacific Railroad Passenger Station and Freight Depot, 1849 Eagle Theatre, and Big four and Dingley Spice Mill buildings in Old Sacramento. For 24-hour information about events and exhibitions, including the Railroad Museum's 25th Anniversary May 10-12, call (916) 445-6645 or visit www.californiastaterailroadmuseum.org.

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