

Streamlined Diesels Will Be Rolling Thunder at ETSU's Carter Railroad Museum on April 29th



Heritage Day “Diesel Celebration” program feature legendary designs on the final Saturday of April

The era of streamlined internal-combustion design on rails is coming to the George L. Carter Railroad Museum, located in the Campus Center Building of East Tennessee State University. On the upcoming Heritage Day ‘Diesel Celebration’ on April 29, the facility is showcasing the first-generation 1933-1958 era of diesel power, when colorful paint and streamlined shrouding helped create excitement on America’s railroads. Calling on the talents of some the period’s most noted designers, these creations would fuel the dramatic change from steam to diesel power. Open free of charge to the public, the Carter Museum facility will honor this epochal era in American rail transportation.

“This was an amazing time of change, considering that steam power had been virtually unchallenged before 1930. The result to the industry cannot be underestimated,” notes Heritage Days coordinator Geoff Stunkard. “The diesels, with easy maintenance, lack of water and fuel needs, multiple-unit possibilities and beautiful designs, truly reshaped the nation’s lines. By 1960, many of these early designs were already being superseded themselves, leaving this quarter-century as the true bell weather of what had transpired.”

Though the earliest models were built as single-engined articulated passenger sets for the Burlington Route and Union Pacific lines, it was World War II and the huge demand for power that sealed the diesel deal. Being able to add units as required without resorting to additional train crews, as well as lacking the need for boiler and running gear attention, gave these locomotives huge advantage from every angle, especially economic. By 1955, many lines had already switched to this form of horsepower, and by 1960, the steam era was basically over.

The Carter Railroad Museum is open on Saturdays from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM, and includes model railroad layouts, a special child's activity room, and ongoing programs. There is no admission fee but donations are welcome for its upkeep. The museum is also seeking artifacts for display, including the newest addition dedicated to the long-defunct, but well-remembered 'Tweetsie' line, the East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad; this room, still under construction, again will be open for guided tours during event days.

In addition to the displays, there is also a growing research library, and an oral history archive being established as part of the museum's programs. Info can be found online at

'<http://etsu.edu/railroad/>' or '<http://johnsonsddepot.com/>' or
'<http://www.stateoffranklin.net/johnsons/glcarter/cartermuseum.htm>'

Members of the George L. Carter Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society and the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders (MEMRR) club will coordinate the exhibits. Visit 'www.memrr.org' to learn more about MEMRR, or visit '<http://glcarternrhs.com/>' to learn more about Carter Chapter, which helps demonstrate and maintain the model layouts, museum exhibits and other projects.

Membership opportunities are available to adults, and include special benefits and model railroading enjoyment.

The museum can be identified by a flashing railroad-crossing signal at the back (west) entrance to the Campus Center Building. Visitors should enter ETSU's campus from State of Franklin Road (at green light) onto Jack Vest Drive and continue east to North Dossett Drive(then left) to John Robert Bell Drive at end, then right then left on Ross Drive(176) to end, adjacent to the flashing RR crossing sign.

For more information about Heritage Day, contact Alsop at 423-439-6838 or alsopf@mail.etsu.edu. For disability accommodations, call the ETSU Office of Disability Services at 423-439-8346.

CARTER MUSEUM HERITAGE DAYS 2017 – final Saturday each month

April: Diesel – All diesels 1925-1960

May: Modern – 21st Century

June: Tri-Cities

July: Western

August: Midwestern

September: Heritage paint schemes

October: Roanoke Rails

November: Clinchfield

December: Fallen Flags