

Full Steam Ahead: Big public railroad show coming to ETSU Mini-Dome June 3-4
From antiques to Z gauge, Carter Railroad Museum's national train show expected to draw hundreds during first-ever show



Photo: Among the amazing scenes modeled from the region is the long-gone store in Blevins, Tennessee, just completed on the Carter Museum's world-class ET&WNC railroad layout.

Railroad buffs from around the south will be converging on Johnson City this weekend for the first-ever national train show at the 64,000 square foot ETSU Memorial Center Mini-Dome. With displays of model railroading in all forms and exhibits of many types of railroading, the event heralds a step forward in perhaps helping make the town once referred to as Little Chicago, Johnson City, noted for railroading again.

In fact, the region's rail heritage has never been as evident as today, with the city's two surviving depots now serving as definitive area restaurants just minutes away from the venue. The restored C.C & O. depot is now Tupolo Honey Café and the reconstructed ET&WNC narrow-gauge station is the home of YeeHaw Brewing Company and White Duck Toco. The right-of-way of the old Tweetsie line, as the ET&WNC was known locally, is now a countryside recreational trail leading to nearby Elizabethton, and the ETSU campus itself is host to the George L. Carter Railroad Museum, named for an industry and railway magnate who played a vital role in the university's creation. The museum is the sponsor of this event.

Trains in miniature will be running on schedule both at the museum and inside the confines of the Mini-Dome as this event gets underway on Friday morning. An operating live

steam demonstration layout has been planned, with other fascinating exhibits for people of all ages on hand. Almost 200 tables of railroad-oriented merchandise offered by sellers from around the Mid-Atlantic states to help make this Friday-Saturday event a fun occurrence for people of all ages who love railroading.

“We are excited to finally be able to host a show of this magnitude in association with the George L. Carter Railroad Museum, as it was in development for a long time,” states George L. Carter Railroad Museum director Fred Alsop, who is also a noted biologist on the faculty staff at the university. “There will be a lot of people coming into the area as a result this event, including the annual convention of the ET&WNC RR Historical Society, which is happening here at the same time. Coupled with the Blue Plum festival nearby, we are expecting both solid attendance and a lot of happy faces at this inaugural show.”

Beyond these activities, the two local rail museums, the George L. Carter facility in the adjacent Campus Center building, and the Southeast Regional Toy Train Center, less than a mile away in the Kroger shopping center, will also be open for their regular Saturday hours in conjunction with the show. Admission to the show itself is \$5.00 per day, with free adjacent parking, while both museums are free of charge with donations accepted. The first 25 people to pay for admission to the Mini-Dome train show on Friday will be given a free cup of coffee in a special vintage mug that they can keep, which is surplus material from the Carter Museum’s rail-related china accumulations.

The Carter Railroad Museum is normally open on Saturdays from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM, but with the train show in town it will also be open on Friday, June 3rd from 10:00 AM to 5:00PM; 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://johnsonsdepot.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 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 Roberts 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.

GEORGE L. CARTER RAILROAD HERITAGE DAYS SERIES EVENTS FOR 2016

- _____ June 3-4 – 1st Annual Train Show, ETSU Mini Dome (admission charge)
- _____ June 25 – Southern Serves the South
- _____ July 30 - Pulling Power Parade: Articulated Steam and
- _____ August 27– Coal, Coke and Commerce: The Appalachian Carriers
- _____ Sept 24 – Streamliners in Action
- _____ Oct 29 - Next Stop Nashville: L&N, N C& St.L, TC
- _____ November 26 – Carter Homecoming/Tribute to the Clinchfield
- _____ Dec 31 - N&W/NS Heritage: