

## Title:

NC Railroad Museum Enthralls Kids Young & Old Alike

## Word Count:

512

## Summary:

Take a ride with me as we journey down New Hope Valley Railroad's tracks and experience a little bit of American train history.

## Keywords:

trains, history, travel, museum

## Article Body:

Situated in the heart of central North Carolina along the border of Wake and Chatham counties, just thirty minutes south of Raleigh, is the <b>North Carolina Railroad Museum / New Hope Valley Railway</b>. Featuring steam and diesel locomotives as well as various boxcars, flatcars, and the like, the museum / railway has been entertaining train fans at its rural Bonsal location since 1981. Take a trip down the old railroad line with me and experience a little bit of American train history!

Since I was a boy I have been enamored by trains -- steam engines, diesels, bullet trains and even subways. My family feels the same way; we marvel at the sight of a steam locomotive hissing and wheezing its way clackety-clack down the tracks, imagining that we, too, are taking a trip across this great nation of our's.

This particular rolling museum will excite train buffs for the variety of equipment on hand, as well as, for the rides that are made available to the general public. Indeed, when we visited the museum recently the grounds were packed since ride days are held only on the first Sunday of the month [from May through November with special Halloween and Christmas season rides as well]. Five excursions are held each ride day; visitors are encouraged to arrive early for the ride they wish to take.

Pulled by a rugged General Electric diesel locomotive [built in the early 1940s], the one hour train ride allows passengers to travel from Bonsal to New Hill and back. The 6.5 mile track was purchased from the venerable Southern Railway Company and is now used exclusively by the museum.

Enthusiasts sit in one of two comfortable open passenger cars that are, in fact,

converted flat cars. On a recent Sunday, the museum brought out one of the aforementioned diesels and added a pair of wood sided red cabooses and a brown baggage car to round out the set.

On the sprawling museum grounds sits a US Army Transportation Corps Tool Car which currently houses the museum's gift shop and exhibits. Various other cars and a crane boom tender are located on site as well; some are being carefully restored while others are in active use. Currently, the museum's steam locomotive is used on a limited basis, but plans are to begin using it on excursions more frequently.

The railroad museum is staffed by a dedicated group of volunteers [Saturdays are workdays and skilled volunteers are <u>welcome</u>]. Train ride prices are reasonable and passengers know that the fares are helping to restore a little bit of train history to North Carolina while reliving it at the same time.

A "G" scale model garden railroad is on site along with a barbeque restaurant and adjoining picnic area. There is plenty of parking on the premises as well.

Yes, there certainly is much to see and do while visiting the <b>North Carolina Railroad Museum / New Hope Valley Railway</b> in Bonsal, NC -- stop by soon and you will hear the conductor announcing to you, "all aboard!"