

# All Aboard for the National Railroad Museum

**December, 2007**

By Dalene Byrum and Dana Sease

A trip to the National Railroad Museum is sure to put you on the right track if you want to learn more about trains.

Located in Green Bay, Wis., the museum is attracts over 75,000 visitors a year from throughout the world.

The National Railroad Museum was founded just over 50 years ago, and became a reality in 1958 when a couple of Green Bay residents decided that there needed to be a museum to show the history of the railroad.

The Union Pacific Big Boy steam locomotive is one of the major attractions of the museum. As the world's largest successful steam locomotive, Big Boy measures up to its name. It weighs 245 tons, or 1.2 million pounds and is 130 feet long. There were 25 of this type of locomotive constructed, but only eight were donated to museums.

Of the museums that received a Big Boy, the National Railroad Museum is the only one that has it in a climate-controlled setting. Visitors are able to climb into the cab and see for themselves the perspective that the conductors of the train had. Another popular attraction at the museum is the Dwight D. Eisenhower train. This is actually a British train that was re-named in honor of Eisenhower. Two other British carriages in the museum are Eisenhower's command train for WWII. One carriage was set aside for sleeping, and the other was the lounge and quarters. It's interesting to note that the Eisenhower train never pulled the carriages for the command.

The GG-1 locomotive, one of America's most famous trains, is on display as well. This is the train that is featured on U.S. stamps.

The Aerotrains, built in 1955, is also on display. Capable of speeds up to 100 miles per hour, the Aerotrains were designed to make travel faster. But after passengers complained of bumpy and uncomfortable rides, Aerotrains were sold for local commuters in Chicago.

In addition to over 70 locomotives and railcars that are on display, the museum's archives contain over 5,000 artifacts, including textiles, uniforms, tools and personal items. It includes corporate records and documents, annual reports, maps, mechanical and engineering drawings, and oral histories.

Several different topics related to aspects of railroad history in the U.S. are covered in the museum's Library Collection.

Over 15,000 photographic prints, slides, and film negatives that depict railroads since 1890 are in the Photograph Collection.

Forty Bauer Drumheads – round signs showing the logo of the trains – are also on display. The name drumheads came from the way they look, like the top of a drum. Frederick Bauer donated the drumheads in 1999. It is believed that this is the largest collection of drumheads in the world.

During the summer months, there are 25-minute train rides for the visitors to take. The price is already included in the admission. The conductor provides information on the museum, hobo culture and railroad safety.

More information is available at [www.nationalrrmuseum.org](http://www.nationalrrmuseum.org) and 920-437-7623.