

NIXON PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY TO OPEN NEW FAMILY-FRIENDLY HOLIDAY EXHIBITION

Yorba Linda, CA. . . On November 17, 2009, the return of "A Holiday Festival of Trains," an exhibition focusing on the world of miniature trains, and the delightful landscape designed by members of the Train Collectors Association, Western Division, will open at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum in Yorba Linda, California.

The train layout features a multi-level platform that is 40 feet long by 32 feet wide, rising from the floor to a height of almost 14 feet. One area will feature a display of large, colorful Standard gauge trains made from the early 1900's until just before the start of WWII. Characterized by bright colors and fabricated out of metal, these trains are often referred to as pre-war – reproduction trains will be used on the track, yet the metal buildings and accessories around them will be original items dating back to the 1930's. This section will include a "G" scale layout featuring a Western Town and forest logging scene.

A highlight from past years will be a Christmas village built of Department 56 buildings with visits from the famed Polar Express train. Watch out for occasional Santa Claus sightings. This section will also feature a Thomas the Tank and friends display. There will be twelve to fourteen trains running at all times from manufacturers Bachmann, Lionel, MTH and Williams.

Featured around the platform a showcase filled with vintage monorail models and two original pieces of the blue and red monorail trains first used at Disneyland in 1959. Photographs and video of the monorail opening day and ribbon cutting ceremonies with Walt Disney, Richard Nixon and his young daughters Tricia and Julie will be shown.

Walt had an uncle who was an engineer on the Missouri Pacific. Walt's first job was selling sundries on the train and it was here that he developed a love for live steam trains. In 1948, Walt Disney boarded a train with employee and animator Ward Kimball to go to the Chicago Rail Fair. This trip re-kindled his enthusiasm for trains; Walt commissioned his studio to build his Lilly Belle engine for his soon to be backyard railroad. We will have unique views of this trip courtesy of the Kimball Family.

Before Disneyland, and before Walt built his backyard railroad, he was a frequent visitor to Ward and Betty Kimball's backyard. Ward was an avid collector of not just toy trains but also full sized working real trains. He was once listed in the Guinness Book of World Records as having the smallest operating railroad in the United States. Ward's beloved "Chloe" engine is slated to go on display on the grounds of the Library. Ward bought the engine in 1948 from a sugar cane company in Hawaii and spent 8 years restoring it. Ward passed away in 2002, and in 2006 the Kimball family moved Ward's train collection to the Orange Empire Railway Museum in Perris, California. The "Chloe" engine, named after Ward's second daughter, will be on loan from the Orange Empire Railway Museum, and set to be installed by the end of October 2009 at the helicopter site – it will be on display through January 2010.

In the Great Room there will be a 20-foot suspension bridge built by the members of the Southern California Lego Train Club. The layout will feature a city to town train display with arch and truss bridges, and a cable-stayed bridge. LEGO's Emerald Night train will be running on the tracks. The display will remain until the end of January 2010.

A Holiday Festival of Trains in the Special Exhibits Gallery will be on display through January 10, 2010 in the Presidential Library, and is included with your admission fee - see link for admission fee: <http://www.nixonlibrary.gov/themuseum/index.php>. The Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum is located at 18001 Yorba Linda Boulevard, Yorba Linda, California. Hours are Monday to Saturday from 10 A.M. – 5:00 P.M. and Sunday from 11 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.

About the Nixon Library: The Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, a nonpartisan federal institution, is a part of the National Archives and Records Administration. For more information, contact (714) 983-9120 or visit <http://www.nixonlibrary.gov>.