



News Release

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Railroad Museum to Debut Interactive & New “A Shift in Power” STEM Learning Experience on June 26

SACRAMENTO – California State Parks and the California State Railroad Museum are proud to debut an interactive and new STEM Learning Experience titled “A Shift in Power: Railroad History Meets Changing Technology” on Friday, June 26, 2015. Funded by a National Science Foundation grant, the hands-on learning experience is part of a joint effort with five other history museums across the nation designed to introduce prototype STEM learning centers in historic settings. STEM -- which stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math -- is an integrated learning system that utilizes play and other informal activities designed to encourage and stimulate problem-solving abilities. Elements of the new learning experience at the Railroad Museum will include a toy train layout that is perpetually under construction, large format photographs, a flipbook showing examples of innovation in railroading, test benches with simple low voltage components for both alternating and direct current, a “video window” showing video of railroading scenes, tools and memorabilia from the early 1950s, and “snoop” elements that will allow visitors to open doors and flip pages to discover related content.

The Railroad Museum’s new learning experience will focus on simple electric circuits in a setting designed to evoke the period of transition from steam to diesel-electric power for U.S. railroads, generally from 1947 to 1955. Great technological change happened in railroading during this period when steam engines were replaced by shiny and sleek diesel-electric locomotives. The setting will depict a home garage occupied by a recent railroad retiree familiar with both steam and diesel technology complete with necessary tools and equipment for both types of locomotives. Visitors can gain an understanding of how simple circuits are used to operate the toy train set and, by extension, learn how diesel-electric locomotives use the same electric principles on a much larger scale.

The “A Shift in Power” STEM Learning Experience will remain on display on the Museum’s Mezzanine Level through June 2016. Railroad Museum admission is \$10 for adults, \$5 for youths (ages 6-17), and children ages five and under are free. More information about the California State Railroad Museum is available at 916-323-9280 or www.csrmf.org

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