

The North Carolina Railway Museum, Inc. 2022 to 2032 Strategic Plan Summary

The North Carolina Railway Museum, Inc. (NCRM) was founded in 1963 by a group of railroad enthusiasts from (then) East Carolina College dedicating themselves to the preservation of railroads and the education of the public to the benefits railways offer to our society. In 2008 we added “museum” to our name as we had relocated in 1983 to the railroad crossroads called “Bonsal” in New Hill, North Carolina and the curation and presentation of our collection had grown to include a heritage railroad founded in 1906. The current Mission of the NCRM is *to educate current and future generations in the exciting science, technology, and development of America’s railroads while preserving the heritage of railroading, its connection to and social impacts on the land, people, and industries of North Carolina and our nation.* We are especially proud of our work with school and children’s groups, special needs groups, senior groups, and many others who visit us from North Carolina, across the US, and beyond.

Into our next 40-years, the core values of NCRM remain defined in three words:



Restore – to rebuild and present to our visitors historic railroading equipment in working condition in all its original power, glory, and pride.



Preserve – to bring awareness and understanding of the heritage of railroading and its impact on our culture and society with an emphasis of a more sustainable tomorrow for all.



Engage – to enrich the lives of our visitors, members, and community through our full-scale, live demonstration of railroading with all its excitement, knowledge, and skills.

The Board of Directors and members of the NCRM, Inc. together feel that we have an opportunity to affect the future of rail transportation not only through the continued operation of our 120-year-old New Hope Valley Railway for the public, but in making a significant impact in the education of our visitors through our preservation and presentation of unique railroad equipment. Our strategic plan summarizes key steps we have identified in that path forward:

Over the next five years, we will make progress in two critical area:

- Increasing the Museum’s impact by strengthening our relevance and message through our program and in partnership with other railway, science, and history museums; and
- Engaging our stakeholders in our work to show the history and benefits of rail transportation to our rapidly changing society and nation.

Recognizing that the challenges before us are as daunting as those faced by the managers of our nation’s aging and stressed transportation infrastructure, we believe that our role in education is clear and unmovable. Future generations will rely upon the economy of rail transportation in the conveyance of

passengers and within our logistics industry. Our role is to present the history and technologies behind railroads, and the educational exhibits to understand the place of railroads within our future world.

The actions we are adopting in this plan over the next ten years will make the NCRM a greater contributor to public education and recreation, increase our long-term sustainability, and provide a lasting economic benefit to the region. We believe we achieve our full potential when, with the smiles and excitement of our young visitors, we know they are taking away the seeds of scientific and engineering knowledge that will help our more diverse audiences delve into the bigger questions facing the environment and society.

The Three Priorities of NCRM over the next 10 years fall into three areas:

Priority 1 – (Visibility) Strengthening our identity as both a railroad history and technology museum through re-shaping the governance and organizational structure of the museum and railroad with a new focus on S.T.E.M. education, membership growth, and partnerships with community efforts, other non-profits, and museums.

GOAL 1.1 - Strengthen the NCRM, Inc. organization to provide the needed flexibility for sustained growth of both the museum operation and heritage rail operations.

GOAL 1.2 - Increase the Outreach of the NCRM into the surrounding communities and region.

GOAL 1.3 - Increase the size and promote greater diversity within the NCRM membership with new paths to volunteer activities and expanded affiliations and partnerships with other museums, railroad historical societies, and other non-profit organizations.

GOAL 1.4 - Deliver a high-quality visitor experience that attends to the needs, comfort, and safety of our diverse visitors.

Priority 2 – (Substance) Turning Excitement into Education: Revealing the evolution of technology and science within railroads and heritage railroad equipment – how and where the laws of physics and motion, force and gravity, and hundreds of other concepts of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (S.T.E.M.) can be seen and experienced in our exhibits.

GOAL 2.1 - Transform the education component of all our museum activities at the NCRM.

GOAL 2.2 – Open new educational opportunities at the museum for children, families, and members.

GOAL 2.3 - Broaden the appeal for institutional funding by expanding our requests to include S.T.E.M. education opportunities and economic development.

Priority 3 – (Funding) Securing New Funding Streams: As annual budget for the NCRM grows ten-fold between 2023 and 2032, the predominant role of our increasing number of volunteers will transition from pounding railroad spikes, painting equipment, and overhauling diesel engines to being mentors, museum docents, and project coordinators as the NCRM, Inc. has become an engine for economic development for the region.

GOAL 3.2 - Increase financial stability by growing private funding streams.

GOAL 3.3 - Optimize collaborations with our community of partners.

GOAL 3.4 - Enhance the NCRM and the New Hope Valley Railway through infrastructure projects that support the mission and lead by example in sustainability and accessibility.

Some of the highlights of NCRM strategic goals over the next 10 years are as follows:

2024 (The 40th Anniversary of our First Public Trian Ride offered in Bonsal):

- Complete the deck and platform around the historic **1884 Goldston Depot** and open the exhibit inside devoted to the history of railroad Express Delivery and freight logistics, with planning started to rebuild the historic passenger waiting are that was removed in the 1960s.
- Complete the required 15-year inspection and rebuilding of our **1941 Vulcan Iron Works Steam Locomotive #17** putting steam power back on our railroad tracks.
- Complete the restoration and conversion of the **1974 Seaboard Coast Line Louisville & Nashville Caboose** allowing us to operate a train consisting of at least four (if not five) heritage cabooses.
- Complete the restoration of our **1916 Pullman Atlantic Coast Line Express Baggage Car #704** allowing the display of many of our historic railway artifacts collection.
- Complete a new Outdoor Science and Technology exhibit called *LOCOMOTION* which will open to the public for the first time our **1936 Swifts Premium Refer**, and our Red, White, and Blue **1945 80-ton GE Diesel-Electric Loco #71 (#3)**; and our **1953 Beaufort & Morehead 80-ton GM Diesel-Electric Locomotive #75** and present an exhibit of the power components of typical diesel locomotive with hands-on, interactive learning play-activities about gears, motors and drivers. This exhibit will introduce to kids and families the technologies introduced by railroads more than 100-years ago that are now popular in hybrid automobiles.

2025 to 2027:

- Complete the reconstruction of the historic Passenger Waiting area on **1884 Goldston Depot** illustrating the racial segregation practices in the South during the Jim Crow era.
- Complete installation of an elevated **Water Tank for our Steam Locomotives** and new **Public Restrooms** added to our outdoor science and technology museum park.
- Complete the planning of **“Power Park” Outdoor Science and Technology Exhibits**, the construction of pedestrian pathways and approximately 1,000-feet of new rail spurs accessing Sawmill and new Locomotive Maintenance Shop.
- Complete Assembly of Historic **1946 Frick Timber Tiger Sawmill** and Reconstruction of historic Bonsal short-wood operation by Piedmont Woodyard along with two pulpwood cars and our **1949 Cullen Friestedt Co. 12-ton Burro Crane** and **1940 Diesel Locomotive #67** and a historic plaque on the **1952 Dispatch Office** used built by Piedmont Woodyard honoring the North Carolina Lumber industry and founding of the New Hope Valley Railroad.
- The **1922 Southern RPO Baggage Car #188** the historic **1926 Aberdeen and Rockfish Caboose #308** get needed repairs and new paint, and the Inspection and Restoration of the **1927 Vulcan Iron Works 2-6-2 Steam Locomotive #110** is completed.

2028 to 2032:

- Complete construction of at least three of the **“Power Park” Outdoor Science and Technology Museum Pavilions** with planning for more.
- Complete planning and Architectural and Site Designs in anticipation of a Groundbreaking on the new **William Roscoe Bonsal Railroad Logistics Museum** (final names as yet determined)
- Complete the restoration of the 1906 Pullman Heavy 12-2 Sleeper and the 1910 Pullman RPO/Camp Car, and a 1950 High Cube C&O and 1983 Southern Box car are restored and converted to temporary museum space while our 1958 Budd Co. Rail Diesel Car (RDC) # 6929 is restored to a mobile museum classroom for educational purposes.