**NEWS RELEASE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mid-Continent Railway Museum Set to Open New Display Building

New building houses steam locomotive and a variety of unique and historic railcars

NORTH FREEDOM, WISCONSIN – After suffering severe flooding just over one year ago, the volunteers at Mid-Continent Railway Museum have bounced back in a big way. The group, which has operated the museum and train at North Freedom since 1963, has not only repaired the flood damages, they are expanding with the construction of a new display building. Starting at 1:00 PM on Saturday, September 21st, the museum is set to welcome visitors inside the new 10,500 square foot display building.

Keeping the museum’s treasured railcars and locomotives indoors is a high priority for the organization as it serves to protect the items from rust and rot caused by sitting out in the rain, snow, and sun. Nearly as important as the new building’s roof overhead is the floor and ground underneath. The new structure, referred to as Coach Shed #2, was built on higher ground than the rest of the museum and sits safely above the flood zone of the Baraboo River.

Erecting the new structure above the flood zone presented its own challenges. Because trains have limited ability to climb uphill, over 2,000 feet of new track had to be built to create the gentle upward climb needed to give the trains access the new building. Prior to construction over 1,000 truckloads of dirt were removed from the building site and track path to create a level construction site.

The new structure contains three railroad tracks with enough space to store and display 10 of the museum’s gigantic railroad machines of yesteryear. Upon entering the new building, visitors find themselves immediately dwarfed by a 109-year-old, 242,000 lb. steam locomotive with a complete freight train including a caboose behind it. Other items include a gas-electric self-powered railcar built in 1925, the most complete and original of its kind in the nation, and the Wisconsin Fish Commission #2, the nation’s only surviving original “fish car” once used to transport fish from hatcheries to lakes throughout Wisconsin.

The museum’s new building was funded in large part by a gift from the Estate of Laurence Dorcy, Jr. who passed away in 2011. Dorcy was the great-grandson of James J. Hill, the founder of the Great Northern Railroad which spanned from Minnesota to the Pacific. Mid-Continent Railway Museum has in its collection the Great Northern car #A-22, a “business car” built in 1905 and used by Dorcy’s grandfather, Louis Hill, to travel the railroad and conduct business dealings for the railroad. Laurence Dorcy included the museum in his will so that his grandfather’s car could be preserved indoors. That car is currently awaiting restoration and is displayed in the new building.

Mid-Continent Railway Museum is open each Saturday and Sunday through October 20th. Museum admission is free. Train rides (ticket purchase required) are offered several times on each day. On October 5-6, the museum will be hosting their annual Vintage Rail Car Tours event, which takes visitors behind the scenes beyond normally locked doors and provides guided tours inside numerous restored railcars. Tickets for train rides or the Vintage Rail Car Tours event can be purchased by visiting the Mid-Continent Railway Museum website ([www.midcontinent.org](http://www.midcontinent.org)) or calling 800-930-1385.

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# Pre-Opening Media Access

Members of the media are invited to attend a pre-opening, by-invite-only, building dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony for project donors, dignitaries, and media. The dedication begins at 11:15 AM on Saturday October 21st after which the media and invited guests will be able to explore the building and displays and conduct interviews before the building is opened to the public at 1 PM. Earlier media access is available by contacting the museum office staff at 608-522-4261

# About Mid-Continent Railway Museum

Mid-Continent Railway Historical Society–also known as Mid-Continent Railway Museum–is an outdoor, living museum and operating railroad recreating the small town/short line way of life during the “Golden Age of Railroading,” with operating trains, educational exhibits, and displays of restored rolling stock. Mid-Continent has operated at North Freedom, Wisconsin since 1963.

Mid-Continent Railway Museum Homepage: <http://www.midcontinent.org>

Media Page (full-resolution photos, logos, etc.): <http://www.midcontinent.org/media-page/>

Full resolution photos are available via the Media Page link.





