

ChampionCountry

All aboard! Railway museum open for season

By Robin Downton-Poirier
SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

Train enthusiasts of all ages were on hand the first weekend in May as the Halton County Radial Railway Museum (HCRR) on Guelph Line opened for the 2007 season.

Caroline Rose, the museum's marketing director, said a lot of work has been done over the winter months and there was a good turnout.

"We always enjoy opening weekend because it gives us a chance to show off what's been done over the winter," she said.

"We ran two or three railcars for visitors to take rides along the tracks and tours were available for anyone who was interested. We usually get between 50 and 80 visitors each day on opening weekend but we had more this year due to the new website and increased brochure distribution."

Work this winter included the completion of a new archives facility, a new eating area and renovated snack counter in the gift shop, as well as work on the cars and the website, said Rose.

She added that there are a few other items in the works that will be available in June.

"We have a new website and brochure available for visitors, as well as a new guidebook to come out for sale later this year," said Rose. "There is also a new cafe and ice cream shop in the works to open in June. All of these have been made possible by a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. The official launching of these materials will be later this year once the guidebook has been completed."

The museum's on-line gift shop, 'Stop 92', which is named after an actual stop along the Toronto Suburban Railway, is more prominent on the new website, and Rose believes sales will increase now that the season is underway.

Efforts are ongoing to raise money to build the Sir Adam Beck Centre, which will be a place to store and perform restoration on the railcars, said Rose.

The education program that began last year will continue this season, giving children the opportunity to learn about an important part of Canadian history and the purpose of the individual cars, said Rose. School tours are available by appointment in May, she added.

The HCRR museum, with an annual attendance of between 11,000 and 15,000 people, was established in 1953 (open to the



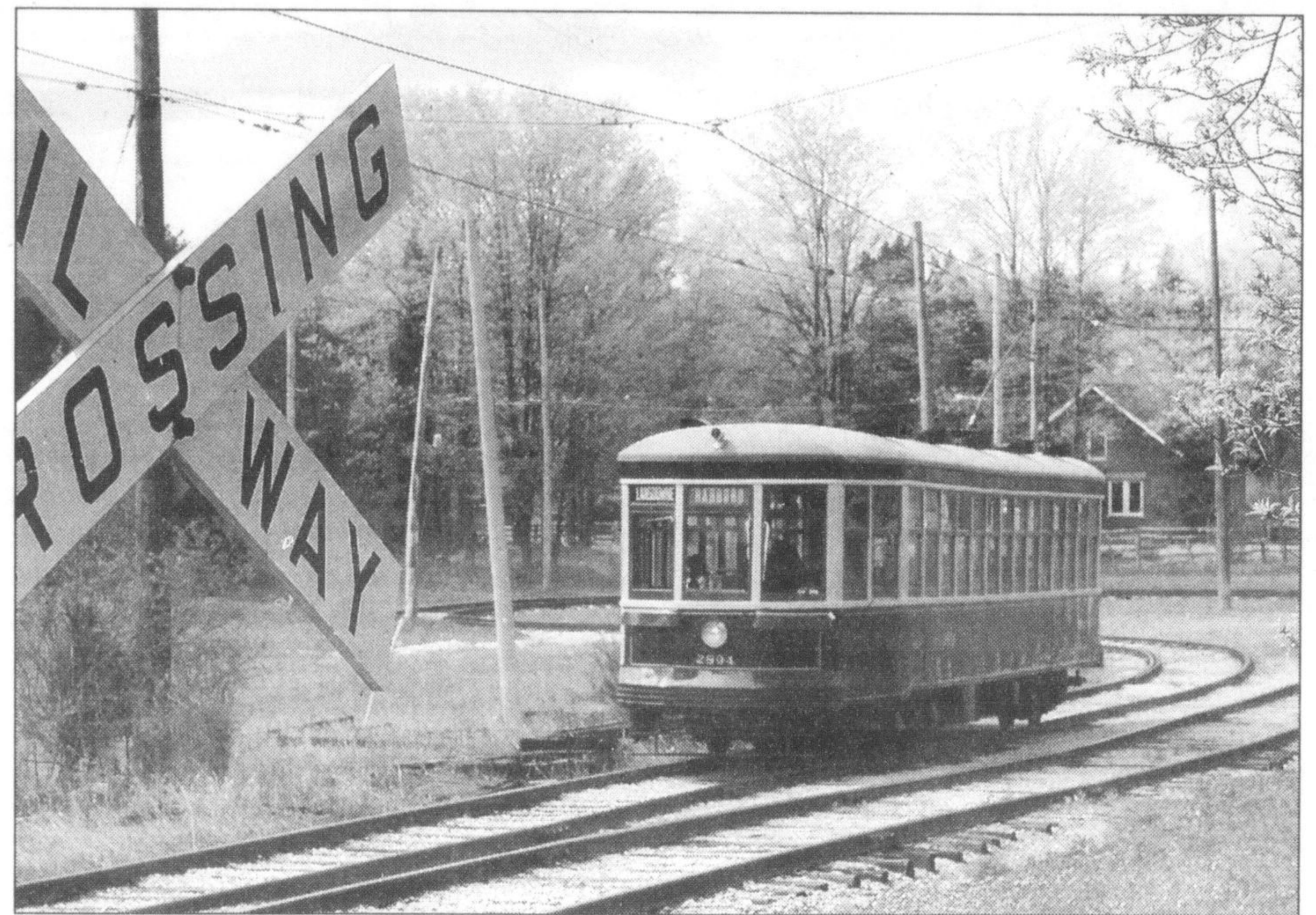
Halton County Radial Railway Museum operators are expecting bigger crowds at the Guelph Line tourist attraction this year due to increased promotion.

public in 1971) by seven men who had a dream and a love of railcars.

Much effort has gone into making the museum's buildings and cars as authentic as possible, including full restoration of the old Rockwood Station that was rescued from demolition in 1971 and moved to the Guelph Line property.

Several events are planned for the 2007 season including Wildflower Weekend (Saturday to Monday); Father's Day Open House (June 17); Transit Day (June 24); Ice Cream and Starlight (July 14 and Aug. 11); Autumn Colour Weekends (Sept. 29 to 30 and Oct. 6 to 7); and the Halloween Spooktacular (Oct. 20 and 27).

The museum is open weekends and holidays from May to October as well as seven days a week throughout July and August. Admission costs \$9.50 for adults, \$8.50 for seniors, \$6.50 for youth (aged four to 17), and kids under three are free. For more information, visit the Halton County Radial Railway Museum's website at www.hcrr.org or call (519) 856-9802.



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