

Railfans rejoice at the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum



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By *Visitors Guide*

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San Luis Obispo museum housed in an 1894 freight house building packed full of train equipment and 'rolling stock'

—The San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum is a non-profit educational museum preserving and highlighting the unique railroad history of the Central Coast of California. The museum appeals to locals and tourists alike, and in particular, “railfans,” and those who may work or have worked on railroads that serve the local region, such as the Pacific Coast Railway, Southern Pacific Railroad, Santa Maria Valley Railroad, Union Pacific Railroad, and Amtrak.

On display is “rolling stock” including a 20-ton diesel switcher, a Southern Pacific railroad gondola car, boxcars, a tank car, and a caboose. Visitors can also check out other railroad equipment such as a velocipede, a hand car, baggage carts, trucking trailers, and more.



There is also a model railroad that sets the context within which local railroads operated. The model railroad depicts portions of the Southern Pacific and the entire

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Pacific Coast Railway as they operated along the Central Coast from Gaviota to Paso Robles.

“We love to have locals and visitors come to the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum, housed in the original Southern Pacific Freight House, built in 1894 when the Southern Pacific arrived in SLO from the north,” says Museum Manager Diane Marchetti. “This is the oldest remaining railroad building in SLO, and is the home of a 1200 square foot model of Central Coast railroads, several rail cars that ran on local lines, and many rail artifacts important to our area.”

The 32' x 150' historic freight house remains intact today and the exterior has recently been completely restored by the City of San Luis Obispo.

Events at the museum include children’s story times, holiday events, fundraisers, and special train talks. Visitors can find a current events calendar on the museum’s website, slormm.com/events.

The museum facilities can also be rented for private parties and events; it’s a popular party venue for train enthusiasts of all ages! Children can enjoy a recently expanded play area, and the Pullman car can be opened for viewing and photos. The model train room is also available for viewing for private parties as well. Up to 30 people (children and/or adults) can be accommodated.

“We hope you join us on any Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.,” encourages Marchetti “All Aboard!”

The museum is only open on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free for members, or \$5 for adults and \$3 for children ages 4-15, children age three and under are free. The museum is located at 1940 Santa Barbara Ave in San Luis Obispo. For more information, visit the museum’s website at slormm.com or on Facebook at facebook.com/slormm, or call (805) 548-1894.


—Skye Pratt



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