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Tweetsie's Railfan Weekend: Annual Event for Railroad Enthusiasts
Weekend includes exclusive photo-special train ride and train shop tours

Blowing Rock, N.C. (August 18, 2009) – Tweetsie Railroad will celebrate its history as it hosts its fifth annual Railfan Weekend, September 12 and 13. This year marks the 90th anniversary of train service to Boone, NC, and the completion of the original 66-mile East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad between Johnson City, TN and Boone. Railfans will have the opportunity to observe the operation of Tweetsie's historic steam locomotives and learn about their historic past.



The highlight of the weekend will be the East Tennessee and Western North Carolina (ET&WNC) train, comprised of the historic #12 locomotive, pulling the 1870's vintage coach car on non-stop trips around the mountain. This exclusive train trip will be running Saturday, September 12 and the afternoon of Sunday September 13, while the #190 locomotive pulls a separate train, taking riders on a Wild West adventure. On the morning of September 13, Tweetsie will showcase a rare doubleheader, with locomotives #12 and #190 working together to pull the train on the Wild West adventure train ride.

Railfans will be escorted on tours of the famous Tweetsie Railroad Train Shop, where steam locomotives from across the nation are repaired and restored. The Tweetsie Train Shop staff is the best in the business and strives to keep historic locomotives in top condition. In addition, Railfan Weekend pass holders will have the opportunity to explore the special memorabilia room, which will showcase many rare artifacts and feature documentaries covering Tweetsie's historic past.



Tweetsie is offering a special Railfan Weekend price for both days of railroad entertainment: \$46 for adults, and \$31 for children ages 3 through 12. The Railfan admission price includes two fun-filled days at the park with unlimited train rides, and shop tours, historic documentaries, memorabilia room, photo-specials, and a chance to ride in the cab of one of the locomotives are also included in this special weekend. Only guests with a Railfan Weekend pass will be allowed to be a part of these exclusive opportunities.

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Tweetsie's history goes well beyond 1957, when the park opened to the public. The original "Tweetsie" was known as the East Tennessee and Western North Carolina (ET&WNC) Railroad. The line began service in 1881 from Johnson City, Tennessee to Cranberry, N. Carolina. Eventually the railroad expanded the line to Boone in 1919. Service to Boone continued until a flood in 1940 destroyed most of the tracks. By 1950 the remaining narrow gauge portion of the line was abandoned. The railroad gained its familiar nickname, "Tweetsie" from the sound of the whistle as it echoed off the mountains. The railroad's sole surviving steam locomotive, engine #12, was purchased by Tweetsie Railroad in 1956, and North Carolina's first theme park opened July 4, 1957. Engine #190 the "Yukon Queen" joined #12 in 1960 after being purchased from the White Pass and Yukon Railway in Alaska, where it had served the US Army's operations during WWII.

Tweetsie Railroad is located in the Blue Ridge Mountains on U.S. Highway 321 between Boone and Blowing Rock, North Carolina. Daily admission is \$30 for adults and \$22 for children ages 3 through 12. Children 2 and under are admitted free. Tweetsie Railroad is open seven days a week through August 23 before returning to the weekend schedule (open Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays) from August 28 through November 1, including Labor Day Monday. Hours are 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

For more information about Railfan Weekend and Tweetsie's 2009 season, or to purchase tickets, visit www.tweetsie.com or call 1-877-TWEETSIE.

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