

## **Southern Museum to House Extensive Southern Railway Archives**

KENNESAW, GA – The Southern Railway Historical Association (SRHA) has found a home for its vast collection of archives at the Smithsonian-affiliated Southern Museum of Civil War and Locomotive History.

The Southern Railway was a large Southern railroad that eventually merged with Norfolk Southern. The SRHA is a nonprofit educational/historical organization, comprised of more than 1,000 members dedicated to the preservation and dissemination of information related to the Southern Railway, its predecessors and affiliates.

On Friday, August 15, SRHA representatives, including President John Hawkins of New Orleans, LA and Board Members Dan Sparks of Duluth, GA, and George Eichelberger of Smyrna, GA, signed an agreement with the Museum to house its large collection of archives, currently stored at three separate locations.

The Southern Railway collection represents an extensive source of documentation on the economic and social development of the southern states from 1895 – 1985, and its Presidents' files includes personal correspondence with local Chambers of Commerce, politicians, and other notable public figures.

"For the past eight or nine years, we've spent all our time and resources accumulating these archives, not preserving them. Working with the Southern Museum will serve a dual purpose to provide a safe, climate-controlled environment to preserve the archives, and also allow researchers and historians access to this collection that has never been published," George Eichelberger, Archives Director, said.

"This is the largest collection of archives known to exist for the Southern Railway and the Central of Georgia. It's a very important historical collection that contains letters from nearly every Southern governor as well as historical figures like Booker T. Washington," he continued.

Museum Executive Director Jeff Drobney is pleased to forge a partnership with SRHA. "The Southern Railway archives will significantly expand our collection of documents and photos that illustrate the importance of railroads in the South," he said.

In addition to housing the SRHA archives, the Museum will serve as a focal point for SRHA's annual meeting in May 2004, which will be held in conjunction with several other railway historical societies and modeler associations.

"We plan to have several displays at the Museum that will be open to the public during the convention," Eichelberger said. "I think our relationship with the Museum will be a good one."

The Museum is 20 miles North of Atlanta, off I-75 at exit 273, Wade Green Road. Call 770-427-2117 for more information.

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