

The Greater Cincinnati Garden Railway Society
P O Box 17568
Ft. Mitchell, KY 41017

Dear fellow railroad enthusiast,

The Greater Cincinnati Garden Railway Society is very excited about an opportunity that has presented itself to us and to all railroad enthusiasts in the Greater Cincinnati and surrounding areas. GCGRS member Don Oeters, half owner of Watson's, has proposed the idea of creating an indoor public entertainment and educational facility devoted to railroading, currently being referred to as "The Big Train Project". The main attraction will be a very large G-scale train layout covering 20,000+ square feet, reaching heights of 20 feet, involving many operating trains. The scale minded layout will depict the history of railroading with an emphasis on railroading within this region. Many special effects are to be incorporated, with a large amount of animation and a high degree of interactivity between the visitor and the exhibit.

Envisioned for the facility is a railroad museum embedded in the train layout exhibit, a children's activity center, a maze area which changes with the seasons, a children's birthday banquet facility, snack bar, gift shop, specialty retail shops including a hobby shop, and meeting rooms. Included in the possibilities for the future are areas for other model railroad layouts in different scales created by other participating clubs, as well as related hobby events such as R/C auto racing, etc. Admission charges will be about the cost of a movie ticket, keeping it family friendly. All visitors will have free access to food and shopping.

A voluntary effort is required to make this a viable venture. We are asking you to lend your expertise, modeling skills, talent, and time toward the construction of this G-scale layout. Volunteers will be able to pick and choose the type of work they wish to do and a good bit of work can even be done at home. There are also many tasks that do not require modeling skills.

Those who volunteer will accrue benefits for both themselves and the club with which they are affiliated. Among the benefits to participating clubs will be space to create other layouts to be part of the exhibit, free party and meeting rooms as needed (a place to hold clinics, swap meets or club promotions) a way to continually promote the hobby and the club, and a place to socialize, have fun and meet to exchange ideas and accomplishments and to share them with the public.

The acquisition of an 80,000 square foot building on I-75 at the Tylersville Road exit, the former Oak and More furniture store, has been accomplished. The building is presently being readied for it's new and exciting purpose. Its location is easily accessible to the public and provides free exposure to 140,000 passing vehicles each day. The City of Westchester is excited about the prospect of a family entertainment facility coming to their community. Promotional efforts will have the goal of placing this quality facility among the top eight Greater Cincinnati family entertainment destinations.

The Big Train Project will be financed primarily by Mr. Oeters but will need corporate sponsors for various aspects of the attraction, along with an additional investor. The organization of the volunteer work force to build the centerpiece train layout is an integral part of this project and must be in place and ready to go to work within the next few weeks.

The project is currently in the hands of three design firms: one for the overall facility, another for the holiday maze, and the third for the G-scale train layout. Concept drawings are projected to be approved by December this year with actual facility construction beginning about June of 2006; certain aspects of the G-scale layout construction could begin as early as January 2006. A soft opening is projected for September 2007 with the grand opening in November 2007.

All those interested are invited to a gathering of volunteers being held at the site of the project on Sunday October 23, 2005 at 2 p.m. (See directions below.) A tour of the building will be conducted and the current draft of the concept drawing presented. The organization of the work force will be explained and individuals asked to sign up for the "Section Gang(s)" of their choosing. Each "Section Gang" will work on a different aspect of the layout. Initial work assignments will be given to each of the groups. Time will be devoted to answer any questions or concerns you may have about this project. Refreshments will be served.

If you cannot attend October 23 but wish to get involved or simply wish more information contact me: Larry Koehl, 859-344-0671, gcgrs@fuse.net

Please feel free to forward this document to your fellow train enthusiasts.

We are looking forward to meeting new people and making new friends as we embark upon this monumental undertaking.

Larry Koehl, President
Greater Cincinnati Garden Railway Society
Superintendent of Volunteers

DIRECTIONS: Take I-75 to the Tylersville Road exit- about five miles north of I-275. The former Oak and More building is adjacent to the east side of I-75, just south of Tylersville Road. Go east on Tylersville Road and take the first street on the right. If you get to Cox Road you've gone too far. Go about a "block" and turn right onto the drive to the Big Train Project. Look for the Cross Buck.