



Press Release: Scenic Railroad Plans to Save Century-Old Tillamook Depot From Demolition



Tillamook, OR depot, circa 1918. Photo Courtesy of the Tillamook County Pioneer Museum

The Oregon Coast Scenic Railroad wants Tillamook's historic train station to celebrate its upcoming 100th birthday in a new location and with an important new purpose—welcoming visitors to the nonprofit railroad and teaching them about the crucial role that railroads once played in Tillamook County.

The railroad's president, Scott Wickert, plans to move the 1912 depot—which is now threatened with demolition—and make it the heart of a new railroad complex adjacent to the Tillamook Air Museum. The railroad also plans to build an attractive new restoration and storage facility at the site, which is less than five miles from the station's current location. The clock is ticking on the project, though, because the owner of depot's current site at the east end of 3rd Street needs the land for another use. He has generously agreed to give the railroad not only the station but also time to secure funds to move the depot. "It is crucial to move this depot and not lose an important part of Tillamook County's history," Mr. Wickert says.

Once relocated, the station will be restored by the railroad's volunteers and returned to the use for which it was built, serving as a passenger boarding facility for the railroad's steam- and diesel-powered excursions along Tillamook Bay and the Pacific Coast. It will also house the railroad's office and information center, and it will display some of the line's smaller historic artifacts. The railroad, says Mr. Wickert, "has a great desire to keep pieces of railroad history available for future generations to enjoy and learn from."

The depot's history makes it a perfect representative of hundreds of small-town stations from the heyday of American railroading. It was built by the Pacific Railway and Navigation Company, a railroad that was controlled by the Southern Pacific, which had a series of standard station designs. For the traffic anticipated at Tillamook, railroad officials chose what they had designated as a Type 23 depot, which could accommodate passengers, less-than-carload freight, and mail. The Tillamook depot is one of five Type 23 stations surviving in Oregon.

The station saw regular passenger service until 1932, --serving two trains a day--and it continued to serve occasional passenger trains until 1953. Soon after that, the freight-handling end of the station was removed. The depot was finally closed in 1977.

The passenger portion of the building remains in good condition, in part because it was refurbished in the 1980s. But moving it presents several challenges. The structure will need to be secured so that it can be put on the moving rig, and a number of utility lines along the intended route will need to be temporarily disconnected so the station can pass beneath them. In addition, a foundation for the depot will have to be constructed at the new site. The move and utility relocation are together expected to cost about \$40,000, according to Mr. Wickert.



April, 2010. OCSR Photo.



Circa 1950. Robert Morris Collection.

For more information about the Oregon Coast Scenic Railroad, visit their Web Site at: <http://www.ocsr.net> or contact the railroad at: (503) 842-7972.