

*Opening doors to a better life*

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## **Snoqualmie railway museum building new visitor education center**

SEATTLE, Wash.— The thousands of visitors to Railroad Days in the town of Snoqualmie this weekend can get a sneak preview of the Northwest Railway Museum’s new education center.

Financed partly by a \$3.6 million loan from the Washington State Housing Finance Commission, the center will take the nonprofit museum’s visitor experience to the next level when it opens in October.

“We’re delighted that we could support the museum’s preservation not just of trains and railroad artefacts, but of the Northwest’s unique railroad history,” said Karen Miller, chair of the Housing Finance Commission.

The Commission’s Nonprofit Facilities Program enhances communities in Washington State by issuing tax-exempt bonds. More than \$1 billion has been issued to support 168 facilities across the state.

“With this bond we were able to break ground so we didn’t lose other funding opportunities,” said Peggy Barachi, the event and marketing manager of the Northwest Railway Museum.

“The really cool thing about this new building is that it will offer more accessibility during the year to the train shed building so that people can see the collection,” she added. “Right now people can only get up there by riding a train to it.”

The new center is one of the final planned pieces of the museum’s campus. It will offer not only restrooms and a bookstore, but spaces for learning such as classrooms and a public reading room. The latter will also safely house historical documents for the use of researchers and students.

The Railway Education Center will also combine staff offices into one building. Museum staff are currently divided across the museum grounds, and look forward to a collaborative space with their coworkers.

During Railroad Days this Friday through Sunday, guests can glimpse the new center while enjoying a ride on a 1909 steam locomotive, offered throughout the weekend. The festival, which attracts around 10,000 people each year, also offers a parade, timber sports, live music, arts and food. For more information, visit [www.railroaddays.com](http://www.railroaddays.com).

The Northwest Railway Museum, founded in 1957, is the state’s largest and most comprehensive railroad museum. More than 130,000 people participate in its programs each year, which include the annual “Santa train” and other steam-train trips from its historic Snoqualmie depot.

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The [Washington State Housing Finance Commission](http://www.wshfc.org) is a publicly accountable, self-supporting team that brings private investment dollars to benefit families and achieve public goals throughout Washington. Over 33 years, the Commission has created and preserved affordable homes for more than 334,000 people across the state, while contributing more than \$42.5 billion and 240,000 jobs to the economy.

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