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Railroad Museum Has A Huge Working Roundhouse

Jerry Joe Jacobson wasn't your ordinary railroad worker, such as a gandy dancer maintaining the tracks, a bull who sought out railway fraud, or a carman who inspected railroad cars. In fact, he wasn't even a brakeman, an engineer or a bridge tender. After graduating from college, he became a career board-certified anesthetist.

In the early 1980s, Jacobson bought a locomotive, acquired a rail line, and then built his own railroad business, mile by mile, locomotive by locomotive, car by car. At its zenith, his Ohio Central System employed more than 200 workers. He and his wife, Laura, then sold it and created a foundation to develop, own and operate the Age of Steam Roundhouse Museum. The Sugarcreek, Ohio, operation, on 34 acres, procures, refurbishes, maintains and displays a large collection of locomotives, train cars and other memorabilia from the golden age of railroading.

Nathan Vance, Executive Director of

the Museum, says it's a multi-functional operation.

"We repair and refurbish aging rail equipment and also develop and present educational activities to help visitors understand the importance of railroad history in the U.S."

They offer tours for people of all ages from school-age children to experienced rail fans. They also host special events, lectures, film screenings, and temporary exhibits year-round.

The museum owns 25 steam engines and freight equipment, including boxcars, flatcars, oil tankers and hopper cars. Two large heavyweight coach cars, retired in 1967 and carrying up to 84 passengers, are also in the museum. Some of their eight lightweight coach cars from the Canadian National Railway are passenger-only, combination passenger/baggage, or passenger/café models. A Conneaut Wabash crew car was

a combination mail, baggage and working vehicle, complete with a small galley, a washroom and a sitting area. The Pullman heavyweight sleeping car, originally with upper and lower berths, was repurposed as the field office for the roundhouse construction site. Caboose and working cars for hauling cranes, steel, lumber and other commodities are also part of the museum.

Vance says visitors have several ways to see and experience railroading. Yard tours take people on a moving train. Coaches include guides who explain engine operation, how locomotives and cars were built, and where they operated. The tour concludes at the Museum's 20th-century roundhouse, where visitors can experience the sights, sounds and smells of railroad operations.

The roundhouse has 18 stalls, each 100 to 120 ft. long, and a turntable 115 ft. in diameter. It stores the museum's locomotive collection and includes a backshop where

they maintain and repair historic steam engines and other railroading equipment. An additional roundhouse site opening in 2026 will add 10 more stalls.

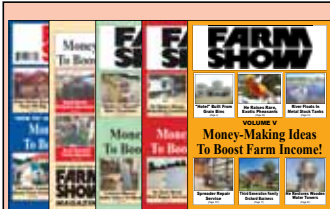
Vance says, "Even though our museum is a half hour from anywhere, we're definitely worth the trip. We have about 12,000 visitors annually, and everyone enjoys the tours and equipment."

Their special events include a Grand Christening of No. 19 in April, Steam to Victory in June, Touch a Truck/Touch a Train in August, a Fall Steam Festival in September, Evening Lantern Tours in October, and Santa Comes to the Roundhouse in December. Visit their website for detailed information on all their exhibits, special events and tours.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Age of Steam Roundhouse, 213 Smokey Lane Rd. S.W., Sugarcreek, Ohio 44681 (ph 330-852-4676; info@ageofsteamroundhouse.org; www.ageofsteamroundhouse.org).



Berths in the roundhouse have restored engines and locomotives, along with an area dedicated to repair and reconstruction.



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