

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**This Year's Fall Excursions Offer Day Trips to Charlottesville, Va. and Asheville, N.C.**

SPENCER, N.C. –The N.C. Transportation Museum Foundation and the Watauga Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society offer a chance to see the beautiful fall foliage, experience a great destination and enjoy the romance of riding the rails this fall. The museum is again hosting fall train excursions. In addition to our traditional Charlottesville, Va. day trip, the museum will also offer a day trip to Asheville NC.

After hosting day trips through the 1990s, the museum revived rail excursions in 2007. The past two years have been sell-out crowds and satisfied passengers made those excursions a great success. . The “Virginia Autumn Special” will travel to Charlottesville, Va., Oct. 31, while the “Blue Ridge Special” will travel to Asheville, Nov. 1. Each day’s trip will include spectacular views of fall foliage.

Departing Spencer at 7 a.m., Saturday’s “Virginia Autumn Special” will again offer a second passenger pick-up at the Greensboro Amtrak Station at 8 a.m., allowing those living in the Triad a more convenient boarding opportunity. Passing through the North Carolina cities of Thomasville, High Point and Reidsville, and the Virginia cities of Danville, Lynchburg and Oak Ridge, passengers will experience beautiful views of the Piedmont and rolling hills of the Carolinas and the western part of Central Virginia. Spectacular views of the Dan, Roanoke and James Rivers will be seen as the train crosses above. The train will even pass by Schuyler, the mountain town fictionalized in the television show “The Waltons.”

At noon, the “Virginia Autumn Special” will arrive in Charlottesville, home of the University of Virginia. Here travelers will have nearly three hours to explore the historic downtown area. A short walk takes you to the downtown outdoor mall, considered one of the finest urban parks in the country. Unique shopping and dining opportunities can be found in boutiques, specialty wine, coffee and tea shops, and outdoor dining spots. Travelers may also enjoy relaxing walks under a lush, leafy tree canopy. Departing Charlottesville at 3 p.m., the train will arrive back in Greensboro at 6:45 p.m. and Spencer at 8 p.m.

During Sunday's trip, the "Blue Ridge Special" will travel through the western Piedmont into the foothills and on to the Blue Ridge Mountains. Departing Spencer at 7 a.m., the train will roll through the cities of Statesville, Hickory, Morganton, Marion, Black Mountain and Swannanoa. The train will climb the famed "loops" of the Blue Ridge Mountains passing the famous **Andrews Geyser** and through several tunnels before arriving in Asheville at noon. Passengers will have nearly three hours for an outing at Biltmore Village.

Established in the late 1890s as a planned community near the entrance of the Biltmore estate, Biltmore Village stands near the entrance to Biltmore Estate. Shopping will be available in unique, locally-owned boutiques. Passengers can dine in restaurants and take walks along brick sidewalks that parallel tree lined streets. All of this will be enjoyed alongside spectacular views of the North Carolina mountains. Departing Asheville at 3 p.m., the "Blue Ridge Special" will return to Spencer at 8 p.m.

Several different levels of excursion tickets are available. Ticket prices are the same each day. Premium First Class tickets feature comfort seating on private rail cars restored to the height of luxury. Premium First Class passengers will also enjoy an early continental breakfast, newspaper and dinner in the diner on the return trip. Premium First Class tickets are \$240 per person.

A new offering this year, Deluxe Coach Class tickets feature spacious seating with large windows, lunch on the dining car and light snacks during the trip. Deluxe Coach tickets are \$170 per person.

Coach tickets feature comfortable seating, air conditioning and heat and restrooms. Coach tickets are \$140 per person.

Another new feature, an optional box lunch will allow travelers to save time for shopping in Charlottesville or Asheville. The \$14 box lunch, served in a souvenir lunch tote, includes include a half turkey wrap, pasta, chips & salsa, a cookie and drink.

Passengers may also take advantage of a shuttle bus at each destination for an additional \$2.

Tickets are available online at [www.nctrans.org](http://www.nctrans.org) or by calling 704-636-2889 ext. 232.

The N.C. Transportation Museum, located in historic Spencer Shops, the former Southern Railway repair facility, is part of the Division of State Historic Sites, Department of Cultural Resources. The museum is located just five minutes off I-85 at Exit 79 in Spencer, N.C., and about an hour from Charlotte, Greensboro or Winston-Salem. Visit [www.nctrans.org](http://www.nctrans.org) for more information. The N.C. Department of Cultural Resources is celebrating the 2009 theme of "Treasure N.C. Culture." For information on the Department of Cultural Resources, call (919) 807-7385 or visit [www.ncculture.com](http://www.ncculture.com).

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*Division of State Historic Sites, N.C. Department of Cultural Resources*