



A publication for the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum members

Campo Railroad Museum

February 2026

La Mesa Depot Museum





**Pacific Southwest Railway Museum
Association, Inc. WWW.PSRM.ORG
619-465-PSRM (7776)**

Campo Railroad Museum

Campo Depot
Highway 94 at Forrest Gate Rd, Campo
619-478-9937

La Mesa Depot Museum & Office

4695 Nebo Drive, La Mesa, CA 91941

PSRMA Board of Directors

Meetings are held on the 3rd Friday of the month except Dec at 6:30PM. A link to join the Zoom meeting will be provided on our website at members.psrn.org.

Museum Directors

President: Stephen Hager
Vice President: Cass Witkowski
Treasurer: Carl Brooker
Secretary: Duke Schweikert
Equipment Dept: vacant
Facilities Dept: Frank E. Denison IV
Museum Services Dept: Jim Lundquist
Operations Dept: Colin Atwood

Museum Staff

Archivist: Bruce Semelsberger
Asst Dir. Of Facilities: Jim Lundquist
Fundraising: Donna Spevack
Gift Shop Manager: Sarah Fullum
Asst Gift Shop Manager: Roark Stump
Hot Scoop Editor: Jim Lundquist
Membership: Lena Ibarra
Social Media Manager: Jason Drenkow
Station Master (La Mesa): Timothy Miller
Volunteer Coordinator: Jenn Brooker
Acting Equipment Dir: Stephen Hager



Special Events:

February 14 - Wine Trains at 12:00 and 3:00 P.M.
February 27 - Membership meeting - 1875 Gun Fight in Campo
March 21 - Volunteer Appreciation Dinner train at 5:30 P.M.
March 28 & 29, April 4 & 5 - Easter Bunny Trains
April 11 & 18 - Brakeman class
April 19 - Wine Trains at 12:00 and 3:00 P.M.
April 23 - Annual Dinner

Regular Schedule:

At Campo Railroad Museum:

Saturday & Sunday - Golden State train rides at 10:30, 1:00 & 2:30 p.m.

Saturdays and Sundays - volunteer work days.

Wednesdays and Saturdays - Library open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Call Bruce Semelsberger at 619-264-7282 for an appointment

La Mesa Depot Open:

Tuesday & Thursday Noon - 3 p.m.

Volunteers are at both locations during the week as well.
For more information, please email: volunteer@psrm.org

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS AT THE CAMPO RAILROAD MUSEUM



Above: The Witkowski family and Dawn Lundquist shared a table and good conversation inside the AT&SF #1509

Members came out to Campo to enjoy a beautiful sunny day on Saturday, January 10th as we celebrated the completion of our 40th year in Campo.



Left: Bruce Semelsberger and President Stephen Hager enjoyed the ride.

Below: New member Natalie staffed the AT&SF #1509 bar.



A good time was had by all!

Front Cover: Conductor Jim Lundquist inside #1509 on the January 10th Golden State train. *Photo by Jenn Brooker*



The *Hot Scoop*® is a publication of the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association, Inc.

The opinions expressed in the *Hot Scoop* are those of the individual writer and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association, Inc., (PSRMA) its officers or staff.

PSRMA Mission Statement:

PSRMA is dedicated to preserving the physical legacy and the experience of rail transportation. Programs address the historical, social, economic and technical impact of railroading with particular emphases on railroads of San Diego County and the systems with which they connected in the United States and Mexico.

PSRMA is a non-profit educational organization operating under section 501(c)3 of the tax codes. Donations may be tax deductible.

PSRMA is a member of the Heritage Rail Alliance.

Submission guidelines: All articles should be single spaced and submitted in Microsoft Word format. Photographs are also welcomed. Please include photographer and date of photo. Send all submissions to Editor@psrm.org

The *Hot Scoop* is available in color via email. To receive the electronic version in PDF format, send an email to editor@psrm.org and include your name, membership number and email. Note that if you opt for the e-mail version, you will no longer receive the printed copy.

Comments are always welcome. Send your feedback to: editor@psrm.org

BACKCOUNTRY *ValenWine* Train

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S ONLY
WINE TRAIN EXPERIENCE**



Join us for a special Valentine's Day edition of the Backcountry Wine Train! Bring a special someone or celebrate with friends as you indulge in a curated selection of 6 San Diego County wines, nibble on a charcuterie platter, and enjoy a decadent dessert, all aboard vintage train cars on this one-of-a-kind journey. 21 and over only.

Member's Only Presale Begins January 1.

Password: ValenWine

psrm.org/winetrain



Fundraising - Donna Spevack (fundraising@psrm.org)

Almost a month into 2026 and our volunteers are working continuously to improve and make restorations at PSRM. Thank you volunteers for making a difference! If you are interested our volunteers can always use additional volunteer assistance to help with projects.

Fundraising is in full swing for 2026

PSRM's *Wishlist Items* for 2026 are as follows:

- Library Resources and Upgrades - Looking to expand volunteer opportunities (remote) to assist with future archiving projects,
- Coach Car Upgrades - Installing AC to our Excursion Ride Coach Cars,
- Track Work - Ongoing,
- Upgrade the PA System in the Campo Depot – \$50,000
- Platform Safety Lighting - Received a grant for \$25,000 from District 2 –SD Neighborhood Reinvestment Grant Program towards a portion of the project, but additional safety lighting funding is still needed to complete the remainder,
- Completion of the Birthday/Celebration Car - Looking forward to hosting your celebration!
- These are just a few projects, but additional projects are available - We will be glad to speak with you.

Thank you to our donors for the Month of January: **YTD: \$9,054.16**

\$1000-\$5,000 Level- Robert and Kit Stebbins; Anthony R. Neece; Robin Becker

\$1-\$999 Level - Angela Estrada; Jeffrey Rule; Cheryl Anderson; Quentin Baca; Jack M. O'Lexey; Thomas Bauer; Michael Rella; The Rev Cannon Keith B. Brown; Gary Klockenga; Ryan Hodge; Michael Riemann; Erik Ruggels; Renee Choy; Mark Peterson & Colleen Conaway; Walk Stringer; Douglas Wong; Gregory Flores.

- ♦ Please go to our website at [Donate – Pacific Southwest Railway Museum](#) if you would like to support our efforts in maintaining railway history for future generations. Thank you so much for your donations, either monetary or volunteer time, even the smallest contribution makes a difference.

And of course, you can always make a difference by exploring our free or low-cost donation giving options:

Three free/low-cost and easy additional ways to donate are:

- ♦ **Free:** Volunteering your time is a great way to give back in 2026.
- ♦ **Free:** *Microsoft Rewards Points* can now be automatically donated to your favorite charity (PSRM) as part of a new initiative called, **"Give with Bing"**. The points that Microsoft Rewards users earn by searching the internet via Bing will be changed into money when it's donated to one of more than a million non-profits organizations. You can automatically donate your Microsoft Rewards points to charity, just designate the ***Pacific Southwest Railway Museum*** when registering, it's free, so keep browsing! (Just paste either link below into your browser to get started). [About Microsoft Rewards](#) or [You can now automatically donate your Microsoft Rewards points to charity](#) .
- ♦ **Free or Low Cost:** There is also a **Matching Gift** option whereby many companies double (or even triple) your contribution. Find out if you work for, or are retired from a company that matches donations by visiting [Home - Matching Gifts](#) or ask your Human Resources Department if your place of employment participates.

Brakeman Training Classes

By Stephen Hager, Brakeman Class Instructor

The next hands-on class for the entry level train crew position, Brakeman, will be held this April. The class is open to anyone, age 16 and above, who is interested in becoming a member of our volunteer train crew (don't let the brakeman title scare away any ladies.) Class size is limited to eight people. There will be two sessions of the class; attendance at both sessions is

necessary to complete the class. The two sessions will be held on April 11th and 18th (Saturdays), all day, at Campo. There are only two prerequisites for the class; those interested in taking the class must hold a current museum membership and must have completed two brakeman "observation runs". Visit the brakeman class webpage to view more details and information on signing up: <https://www.psrn.org/brakeman-class/>

Down at the La Mesa Depot by Timothy Miller, Station Agent

2026 is off to a great start! Shout-outs to: BG Miller, for making sure every visitor gets a PSRM brochure, Bruce Semelsberger, for helping with the advertising banners and his many behind-the-scenes repairs, Evelyn Repass, for greeting visitors, Justin Hyland, for being my second set of hands with the set-up and take-down of the portable signage and other behind-the-scenes needs, Maureen Miller, my wife, for pruning the rose bushes and trying to keep a lid on the falling leaves, as well as giving me some food for thought about the depot, Rob Repass, for making sure the trains are set up and running on the HO scale model railroad layout, and Jeff Devenberg, our newest PSRM member, who has been helping me take measurements and exploring the attachment of the rotten wood pilot beam on the Mojave Northern #3, to start the process of its replacement.



New volunteer Jeff Devenberg.

All of the above activity occurs on a Tuesday or a Thursday. That leaves the Depot unattended for five days a week. Please consider helping us keep the La Mesa Depot open on other days, so more visitors are exposed to the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum and our preservation of San Diego area history. You can set your own hours based on your availability. Remember, frequent rail transportation is available just across the street!



Timothy Miller working on #3 at La Mesa,

Photo by Justin Hyland.

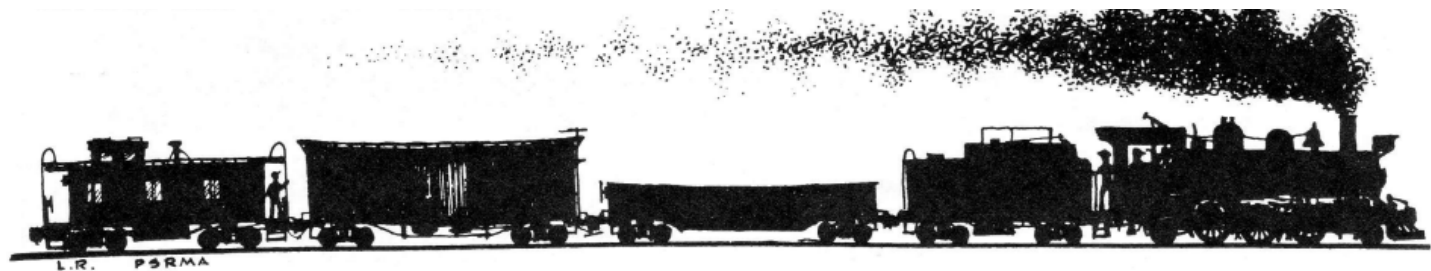
Life Member and Long Time Volunteer Jack O'Lexey Passes

Jack O'Lexey was a very active volunteer member at Campo for many decades. After he could no longer drive or work at Campo, he continued his support of the museum financially with regular donations to his favorite projects. Jack passed away on January 12th at the age of 87.

Jack held many positions in our museum, from Director of Operations, train crew, as a Hobo for our North Pole Limited trains and landscaper. Jack was always a smiling face at Campo. He installed multiple water pipes in Campo in the early days. He and his dog Skippy were a regular at Campo, assisting wherever help was needed.



He will be missed. RIP, Jack. O'Lexey, my friend.



Volunteers Step Up to Assistant by Jim Lundquist, Editor

Last month, I asked for volunteers to assist in three areas. I had multiple responses to the request for computer help with the equipment descriptions. Thank you to volunteer member Leanne Whalen for coming forward to assist.

Still unfilled are docents at the La Mesa Depot and the Director of Equipment board position.

Any volunteers?

Membership Meeting

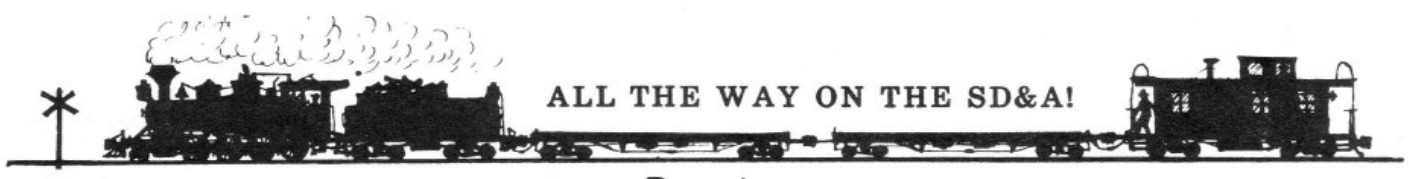
Friday, February 27th at 7:00 P.M., Bryon Harrington will be our guest speaker for the evening. Bryon will be speaking about the great gunfight at the Campo store which took place in 1875. This is a fascinating historic story of our local community. Bryon wrote a book about the topic, *Campo, The Forgotten Gunfight*.

The meeting will take place at the La Mesa Police Department's Community Room located at 8085 University Avenue. If you wish, you may Zoom in using the codes:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89556433245?pwd=j9rTwZe9A3kXh3bLQrSALetX6RPIBL.1>

Meeting ID: 895 5643 3245

Passcode: 823831



Operations Volunteers

by Rich Paulus, Chief Operations Officer

Train Service - those who are qualified train crew members, speeder operators/crew, and trainees who have helped us run 12 Golden State trains and the number of days they have volunteered through January 21:

Colin Atwood 1, Ken Brown 1, Stephen Hager 1, Ryan Hodge 2, Randy Houk 2, Dave Little 2, Jim Lundquist 2, Bob Nickles 2, Glen Rogers 1.

MOW - maintenance of way volunteers who have assisted Track Foreman James Caestecker in maintaining tracks and right-of-way this period: Jim Lundquist 1.

MOS – maintenance of signal volunteers who conducted electrical and mechanical maintenance and testing of highway crossing signal systems this month: Chad Baker 1.

Yard switching - these are the volunteers who have worked in PSRM yards this period doing switching: Colin Atwood 1, Carl Brooker 1, David Choy 1, Stephen Hager 1, Ryan Hodge 1.

There was a total of 21 volunteer-days this period.

Looking Back - Museum History by Decades

February 1976 - The Museum's newsletter, "Report", discussed a site possibility for our museum in Campo. There was enthusiasm about the proposal. We know now that the site didn't pan out, but we don't know where exactly it was or why it didn't happen. Four short years later, we purchase two parcels of property in Campo, which is now home to the Campo Railroad Museum.



LIBRARY NEWS by Bruce Semelsberger, Librarian

2026 will be a year to remember as we embark on a brand new way of doing things at your library. For me personally, thinking back on forty years ago when we made index cards on a typewriter, this will be a very different world indeed. Thanks largely to a lot of research and hard work by Richard Finch in particular and some very helpful collaboration from other partners at libraries and institutions we have settled on a path forward which will dramatically improve all of our processes as well as our interactions with our public. The museum board has approved the purchase and installation of new software and equipment and Director of Museum Services Jim Lundquist has made the actual purchases of new mini computers, back-up systems and protection. Once the new equipment has arrived a portion of the approved \$7500 outlay will go to the hire of technical assistance to network everything, install the Catalog IT software and migrate the data from the old Past Perfect software onto the new system.

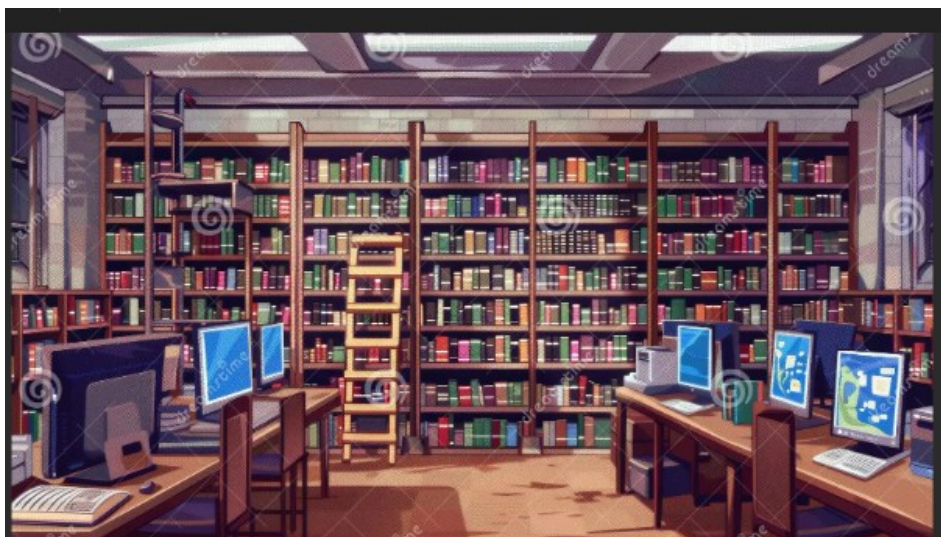
A deal from the folks at Catalog IT to migrate the data from Past Perfect without having to fix all of the glitches that accumulated during many years FOR FREE really accelerated the process, although we will probably still need to make some fixes to the data after the migration. One of the many improvements we will see with the new system is the ability to integrate other databases into the software such as file indexes in Word and Excel, the list of former SD&A employees, newspaper chronologies and scanned maps and documents. We will also have the ability to integrate certain documents into the museum's new website

where they will be available for viewing by everyone including the public which will make the website much more meaningful to new potential members and also act as a recruiting tool. As a bonus, everything we have will be protected on our own server and selected items will be backed up in "the cloud" as well.

As we have previously discussed, one of the hurdles to finding new help has been the time and money to drive to Campo. While the new system won't obviate all need to be present to accomplish some tasks, it does allow remote access so work can be done from home on many things such as creating finding aids, editing maps, adding data to photographs and answering requests for information. We hope this new flexibility will allow students and others to actively participate in our museum.

The funding to make this possible was largely supplied by a generous donation from member Robin Becker and supplemented by funds from the library's existing restricted account which was also contributed by members past and present. Thank you all for supporting our library!

On other fronts, your library staff keeps busy on many diverse projects. We are handling an increasing number of research requests, Mike Rella and I continue the work of sorting and organizing the large backlog of newspaper clippings for a future database and we all found some time to contribute to unclogging a culvert, tracking down a missing tarp and repairing (or attempting to repair) some non-functioning portions of the Signal Science exhibit. There is a never-ending supply of things to do at Campo any time you get bored, do feel free to come out and join the "fun".



From the Back Platform

By Stephen Hager, President

2026 has gotten off to a good start for the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association. The month of January was a period of celebration as we commemorated 40 years of the Campo Railroad Museum being open to the public. On January 10th, we reopened the museum after our typical two-week holiday hiatus with free rides for museum members aboard our Café/Lounge Car, ATSF 1509. Free drinks and cake were provided for the occasion, and many members took advantage of the opportunity to ride in spite of an unseasonable dry storm that brought gale-force winds whipping through Campo that weekend. Locomotive Engineer Bob Nickles, Conductor Jim Lundquist, and Brakeman Ryan Hodge had the honors of operating the train that day. Jim Lundquist has the distinction of being the Engineer on the first day of public train rides 40 years ago on January 4, 1986.

January saw the return of our New Holland backhoe from a fabrication shop, freshly equipped with a new set of hy-rail gear. For those who don't know, hy-rail gear is a set of small railroad wheels that allow a rubber-tired vehicle to drive on a railroad track. They are often installed on pickup trucks used for track inspections, but they can also be installed on larger work trucks and heavy equipment like a backhoe to allow them to access remote worksites. In our case, the benefit of a hy-rail equipped backhoe is clear; many sections of our railroad are inaccessible by road which, up until this point, has forced us to rely primarily on hand tools to do track work. Now that we have a backhoe that's able to travel down the track, we can bring it to any and all worksites. A backhoe makes quick work of one of the most laborious tasks; digging ballast and soil out from around the ties. The newly-equipped backhoe will get its first true test during a track work day at the end of the January.

Volunteers in the Equipment Department started the year by continuing work on the Birthday Party Caboose and Locomotive. Project manager Bryon Anderson is finishing up new tables for the interior of the caboose. Bryon, Tim Wamsley, and Jaden Soroka are also installing recreations of the car's original roof walks. Originally made primarily of wood, these recreations will be made of a combination of wood and plastic so

as to better hold up against the elements. This project has been years in the making, and volunteers will be making a concerted push over the next couple months to complete it. Be on the lookout in the near future for an advertisement to rent out our new birthday party venue!

The Operations Department is hosting two upcoming hands-on training classes for new and existing volunteers. In addition to the April Brakeman Class covered elsewhere in the Hot Scoop, there will be a Locomotive Engineer Promotion Class in February. This 1 and ½ day class is open only to existing volunteers in the Operations Department who have worked their way up through the positions of Brakeman and Conductor. This year, we have three students who will be taking the class. All started in the Operations Department within the past five years; one as recently as a year and a half ago. Many starry-eyed new volunteers have arrived at the museum over the decades and knew immediately that they wanted to become a locomotive engineer (I was one of them). For any of you reading this who may be in that camp, I encourage you to pursue your passion and put in the effort to achieve it. All of our current and up-and-coming locomotive engineers put in the time and effort to learn the railroad rules and become proficient in each of the prerequisite positions as they worked their way up. If you'd like to take the first step in following in their footsteps, please send an email to our Qualification and Training Officer, James Caestecker, at training@psrm.org. He'll happily get you started on your volunteering journey.

On a more somber note, I would like to end by paying my respects to our friend and longtime PSRMA volunteer and life member Jack O'Lexey. As covered elsewhere in this edition of the Hot Scoop, Jack's volunteer tenure at Campo spanned multiple decades and he took on numerous roles during that time. He was one of the first volunteers who took me under his wing at Campo, and many of my early formative experiences of learning how to operate motorcars at the museum were under his guidance. I probably would not have become as involved in the organization as I am now without his guidance and encouragement. He will be sorely missed.

As always, if you would like to get in touch with me, please send a note to president@psrm.org. Until next time, keep it on the high iron!

Membership News By Lena Ibarra, Membership Coordinator

It's always exciting to see current members sign up for Life memberships and show their commitment to PSRMA. And we had two this month! A warm welcome to Michael Rella and Joan Sieber. Welcome to our newest members: Quentin Baca with a Supporting membership. Manuel Perez and Julie Vildibill with a Family membership. Angela Estrada with an Individual membership, and Jeffery Devenberg and Walt Stringer with Senior membership.

2026 PSRMA, Inc. Board of Directors

Name and Position	Contact Information	About/Affiliation
Stephen Hager - President	hager@psrm.org	Stephen has been a volunteer with the organization since 2010. Prior to his role as President, Stephen served as the Secretary on the Board of Directors. Stephen currently also serves as the organization's designated supervisor of locomotive engineers, rules instructor, brakeman class instructor, mechanical foreman, and regularly volunteers in all train crew capacities on the museum's weekend excursion trains. Stephen graduated from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo in 2017 with a Bachelor's of Science in Civil Engineering. Stephen currently works as a professional civil engineer specializing in railroad track design at an engineering firm that provides professional services for the railroad industry.
Francis (Cass) Witkowski-Vice President	cwitkowski@psrm.org	Cass Witkowski has been volunteering at the museum since 1974 and currently holds the board position of Vice President. He is also maintaining the Museum's website. Cass is a retired Systems Engineer.
Carl Brooker - Treasurer	brooker@psrm.org	Carl Brooker has been volunteering with the museum since 2022 and currently holds the board position of Treasurer. He actively volunteers as Conductor and Brakeman on the railroad. He is a lawyer by vocation, railfan by birth, and San Diegan by the grace of God.
Jim Lundquist-Director of Museum Services	Jim@psrm.org	Jim Lundquist has been volunteering with the museum since 1969 holding board positions of President, Secretary and Director of Museum Services. He is an active volunteer in many areas, including Operations as Engineer, Conductor and Brakeman. Jim retired as a Traffic Engineer and spends many days at Campo during the week.
Colin Atwood - Director of Operations	catwood@psrm.org	Like many kids, Colin started out with a small HO set that went around his bed. When Colin became a father, he started a background railroad (G-scale) to enjoy the hobby with his son. One day a police officer in La Mesa, I had to contact the past-president of the PSRM, when a drunk driver drove into the Depot building at La Mesa. Through talking with her I learned about Campo and the opportunities it had to offer. He saw this as another great way to engage with the community on a totally different level. From first training day as a brakeman, he was hooked and has enjoyed every day on the railroad. Currently Colin spends every Saturday out at Campo as a qualified speeder operator, brakeman, conductor and engineer.
Frank Denison – Director of Facilities	denisoniv@gmail.com	Frank, has been a volunteer at PSRM for 40 years, he is in charge of the Campo Museum Facilities.
Rattapon (Duke) Schweikert - Secretary	DSchweikert@psrm.org	Duke is a volunteer at PSRM and now serves as secretary.
Note All Board Members are Volunteers		

FORTY YEARS LATER. WE ARE STILL RUNNING STRONG AT THE CAMPO RAILROAD MUSEUM.



Brakeman Ryan Hodge, Engineer Bob Nickles and Conductor Jim Lundquist are ready to take the Golden State to Canyon on this beautiful, sunny day on January 10, 2026.