How does a museum get started?

First you need to have a bunch of stuff to put in it, and then you need a place to put your stuff in. After that you put up displays, paint, clean and after lots of hard work open your doors.

You then wait to see if people will come and if they do, the museum will grow and the word will spread.

The Niagara Railway Museum has the stuff and now has a place to put their stuff. This is the culmination of a project that started in 1997.

I attended the Niagara Railway Museum Open House on Sunday September 12th at their new facility in Fort Erie. It is located in the old CN diesel repair facility located at 21 Warren Street in Fort Erie.

When they moved in they had to clean out years of garbage, cut down bushes and overgrowth to even get to the building. They even had to lay track as all track up to the building had been removed.

Over the last couple of months with help from a group of dedicated volunteers they have moved part of their collection into the building and are eager to get restoring some of the pieces.

Their prized piece is Hydro Electric Power Commission #46 steam engine. Their long term goal is to one day have it restored and running. It was built in 1920 by the American Locomotive Company in Patterson NJ. The museum obtained it in 2006 from a private collection.
Another rare item in their collection is Hydro Electric Power Commission E-7 electric. It was built by National Steel Car/Westinghouse in 1919 to work at the construction of Queenston-Chippewa power plant. It then ended up at Inco where it ended its career.

The museum has many other items in their collection and will be actively pursuing new items. They have a number of motorcars and were offering free rides when I was there.

The group under the guidance of Ken Jones has big plans to make this a tourist attraction in Fort Erie which is sadly lacking any tourist draws.

The Town of Fort Erie is supporting the museum as they can see the potential to bring people to their town. Talk of a railway heritage park has also been discussed so things are falling into place.

The owner of the property is also supportive as he does not want to see the building torn down and is working with the museum to develop the site.

You can visit the Niagara Railway Museum’s web site to learn more about how you can help.

You can also contact them by email at info@nfrm.ca

If you are in Fort Erie please drop by as I am sure you will find some dedicated volunteers working to bring the museum to life who will be happy to give you a tour.

CRO wishes them a speedy growth.

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