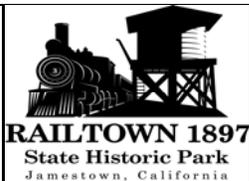


# News Release



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Railtown 1897 Awarded Up to \$75K Matching Grant From Sonora Area Foundation To Keep Historic Park Open & Operating** *Community Partners and Rail Enthusiasts on Mission To Raise Funds Before July 31 Deadline*

**JAMESTOWN, Calif.** – In an effort to keep Railtown 1897 State Historic Park (SHP) open and operating, the Sonora Area Foundation and the Irving J. Symons Foundation for Tuolumne County (a supporting organization of the Sonora Area Foundation), have stepped up and awarded a challenge grant of up to \$75,000 that is accompanied by a July 31, 2012, deadline to raise matching funds in support of Railtown 1897 SHP. The grant application process was led by the California State Railroad Museum Foundation with support by motivated community leaders and involved partners such as California State Parks, Tuolumne County Film Commission, Tuolumne County Chamber of Commerce, Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau, local Rotary groups, Railtown 1897 volunteers, community organizations, and others.

“Supporting Railtown 1897 is right in line with our long-lasting mission to award grants to worthy projects that help improve the quality of life in Tuolumne County,” said Jim Johnson, President of the Sonora Area Foundation. “We would be very proud to award the maximum \$75,000 of the challenge grant to the California State Railroad Museum Foundation and many community fundraising partners, in order to help keep Railtown open and operating. Now is the time for the community to show their support for this beloved historic park and tourist destination.”

Widely known as the “Movie Railroad,” Railtown 1897 SHP remains the only intact steam-era roundhouse and shop facility in California, and one of just two in the U.S. Railtown 1897 SHP and its signature artifact, Sierra No. 3 -- the “Movie Star Locomotive” -- have been central to community life in Jamestown for more than a century. Made famous by starring in more than 100 Hollywood movies and television productions alongside world-class celebrities, Sierra No. 3 is displayed at the Park along with an array of historic facilities and artifacts combining industrial heritage, railroad history and the lure of Hollywood.

“We are delighted the Sonora Area Foundation and various community groups are showing their support for Railtown 1897,” said Catherine A. Taylor, District Superintendent for Capital District State Museums and Historic Parks which operates the Park. “In addition to its rail-related history, impressive Hollywood credentials and lasting legacy, Railtown 1897 is an important economic engine for Tuolumne County that contributes an estimated \$17 million annually in tourism revenue. Its closure would be devastating to the community.”

Due to state budget cutbacks, Railtown 1897 (SHP) is one of 70 state parks on the closure list that is set to begin taking effect as early as July 1, 2012. Efforts continue to identify short and long-term sustainable solutions to keep the treasured historic park open and operating.

"We are excited and grateful that the Sonora Area Foundation has awarded a \$75,000 matching grant to help save Railtown 1897," said Kathy Daigle, Executive Director of the California State Railroad Museum Foundation. "Time is short but we are confident that, with the support of the community and all those who love Railtown 1897, we can raise \$75,000 in matching funds by July 31, 2012. There are many ways for individuals and businesses to contribute."

In fact, Tuolumne County's Rotary clubs will host a high-profile "Spotlight on Railtown" fundraising event this Saturday evening, June 9, that even includes a raffle for a 2012 Corvette. Event tickets are \$50 per person (and Corvette raffle tickets are \$100 each) with all proceeds counting toward the matching grant to benefit Railtown and its continued operation. Raffle tickets for the 2012 Corvette and event tickets to "Spotlight on Railtown" are available directly from local Rotary club members. Event tickets are also available at Railtown during regular hours, or online at [www.railtown1897.org](http://www.railtown1897.org).

Donations to support Railtown 1897 SHP can be made in various ways, including: by giving online at [www.railtown1897.org](http://www.railtown1897.org) (click on Keep Railtown Rolling! Give a Gift Today); visiting Railtown 1897 SHP and donating in person; or mailing a check directly to Railtown 1897 (P.O. Box 1250, Jamestown, CA, 95327). Community donors can also mail a check to the Sonora Area Foundation and insert "Keep Railtown Rolling" on the memo line (362 S Stewart Street, Sonora, CA, 95370 or P.O. Box 577, Sonora, CA 95370) or donate online at [www.sonora-area.org](http://www.sonora-area.org) by clicking on the "Donors" tab on the left side of the home page and inserting "Keep Railtown Rolling" as the fund name.

Railtown 1897 SHP is currently open five days per week, Thursdays through Mondays. More information about supporting Railtown 1897 SHP is available by calling 209-984-3953 or visiting [www.railtown1897.org](http://www.railtown1897.org).

#### **About Railtown 1897 State Historic Park**

*Operated by California State Parks with assistance from the nonprofit California State Railroad Museum Foundation, Railtown 1897 State Historic Park offers year-round tours plus train rides weekends April-October (selected dates only November-December). Known as "The Movie Railroad," the Park and its trains have been featured in hundreds of feature films, TV shows, and commercials. The Park is located at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Reservoir Road in Jamestown, reached by highways 49/108. As of 1/2/12, Railtown 1897 State Historic Park is open Thursdays through Mondays (except for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day) and the Park's operating hours vary by season: April-October, 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; November-March, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. For more information, call Railtown 1897 State Historic Park at (209) 984-3953, or visit our Web site at [www.railtown1897.org](http://www.railtown1897.org)*

#### **About the Sonora Area Foundation**

*The Sonora Area Foundation strengthens its community through assisting donors, making grants, and providing leadership. The Foundation assists donors by providing a safe, easy way for people and businesses to make a difference, and assures that their contributions will do good work now and in years to come. The Foundation's governing board has a pool of discretionary funds, and regularly awards grants to qualified non-profit and public agencies. These grants are competitive, and awarded for worthy projects that help improve the quality of life in Tuolumne County, whether for education, human services, recreation, arts or the environment. The Foundation is also a community leader that brings all sides into discussion on important issues and helps find solutions. For more, visit <http://www.sonora-area.org/>*