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## Village of Orland Park History Museum Marks Importance of Rail Service



The Wabash, St. Louis and Pacific Railroad came to Orland Township in 1879 when railroad workers began laying track to complete a connection between Chicago and St. Louis, thirteen years before the Village of Orland Park was incorporated in 1892.

"The railroad connecting Orland Park to Chicago is very important in the village's history," said Mayor Dan McLaughlin. "The train was how Orland Park's early merchants received their stock. It let farmers ship their produce and life stock and it's how our first mayor --- John Humphrey --- traveled to his law office in downtown Chicago."

This milestone in Orland Park's history was the cornerstone of the town's transition from a rural area with few more than 1,200 residents to what it is today. The train station around which Orland Park was built, Sedgewick, sparked a growing agricultural business and development of area. The town's first train depot is remembered with the village's Lake Sedgewick at Centennial Park.

During the month of July, the Village of Orland Park Museum is celebrating that part of the community's history with a special program for all visiting children. Ten trains will be hidden throughout the museum and children may search for them during regular museum hours. Children who find all 10 trains will receive prizes.

"The importance of rail service coming to Orland Park is shown with the model train that we have running at the museum," said Curator Diane Grah. "We are fortunate to have items on display that were donated or loaned by some of Orland Park's longtime rail buffs. Kids get a kick out of the train display and it's a fun way for them to learn how important the train was to Orland Park."

The museum will host other activities this summer, including Orland Park Trivia, coloring pages, word finds, and more.

The museum's speakers' series continues in July with WWII Veteran Gene Sinclair of the American Legion Orland Memorial Post 111 and WWII Veteran and retired history teacher Bruce Cala speaking on July 17 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Upcoming museum events include the Orland Park Police Department's K-9 Unit on July 21, Orland Grassland's Pat Hayes speaking on August 11 and Tom Ryan discussing the 9/11 Aftermath on September 7.

The village's museum is open on Thursday and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and on the second Sunday of the month from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. Admission is free and donations are accepted. A variety of museum memberships are available. For more information, call 708/873-1622 or send an email to [museum@orlandpark.org](mailto:museum@orlandpark.org).

