

DEPOT GETTING READY TO CELEBRATE CENTENNIAL (1909-2009)

[Liz Engel](#)

Herald-Citizen Staff, Cookeville, TN
Sunday, Mar 22, 2009

Amy Vickers, historical arts assistant with the City of Cookeville, holds up a T-shirt commemorating the Cookeville Depot's centennial. Celebrations are scheduled all year leading up to the 100th anniversary date in November. The T-shirts are available now at the Depot Museum. Herald-Citizen Photo/Ty Kernea

COOKEVILLE -- The Cookeville Depot will be celebrating a big birthday this year as the local landmark will turn 100 in November.



Built in 1909 by the Tennessee Central Railroad, the Depot was saved from demolition and restored in 1985. It's now home to a museum -- and it's not showing its age one bit.

"The architecture itself is very unique," said Judy Duke, museums administrator. "The building has a lot of oriental influence, which was rare (in that time), especially for Middle Tennessee.

Duke isn't revealing too much about the months-long birthday celebration, but several events are planned for this summer, leading up the official party Nov. 4.

"This is very special, and we want to make it special," Duke said. "We're going to have fun all year celebrating."

The first planned event will take place Saturday, June 20, as Cookeville's West Side will host the annual Dobros at the Depot. The Depot Museum will be adding additional events.

July 25 will be the date for the CityScape-sponsored ice cream social, Cream City Crankin'. There will be music, and in recognition of the centennial, CityScape will be donating all of the proceeds from the event to the Depot.

And in late September -- no official date has been set -- there will be a "night at the museums."

"I don't want to give too much away, but it will involve the (Cookeville) History Museum and the Depot Museum," Duke said. "I can say it will be reminiscent of 100 years ago."

The museum still averages 9,000 to 11,000 visitors a year, many from all over the world.

A committee has been working for months behind the scenes to make the celebration possible.

"I think this will be a great opportunity for people to get out on the town to celebrate something that's become a real landmark for the town," said Amy Vickers, historical arts assistant for the City of Cookeville.

Centennial T-shirts are on sale now at the Cookeville Depot Museum and are available in children's and adult sizes. The museum is open to the public from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

For more information, call 528-8570.

DEPOT'S 100TH

The Friends of the Depot Board purchased a new flag to be flown at the Cookeville Depot to commemorate its 100th birthday. This large flag will be flown on the flagpole, while a number of smaller flags will be displayed around the Historic West Side. Pictured, in front, from left, are Chad McDonald, cultural arts superintendent; Judy Duke, museum manager; Jim Breyer, historian for Friends of the Depot; Amy Vickers, historical arts assistant of the city of Cookeville; and Rick Woods, director of Leisure Services. In back, Don Prince, Friends of the Depot board member; and Marge Rios, vice president of Friends of the Depot.

Herald-Citizen Photo/Ty Kernea



DEPOT REDEDICATION

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Herald-Citizen Staff , Cookeville, TN
Saturday, Oct 31, 2009

COOKEVILLE -- For all the celebrations that have centered around the 100th birthday of the Cookeville Depot, it's all been leading up to this. An official re-dedication party, which will be held Wednesday, Nov. 4, on the Depot grounds, will wrap up the months-long centennial celebration, which kicked off with a downtown parade in June.

The "Cookeville Depot Centennial Ceremony" will include speeches from dignitaries on the state and local level, refreshments and the planting of a redbud, the official Cookeville city tree. **There will also be descendants of the Jere Baxter family in attendance -- Jere was the president and founder of the Tennessee Central Railroad, which built the depot a century ago. "The reason we chose to have the celebration in November was because the Depot opened its doors for the first time in November 1909," said Judy Duke, museum administrator. "We've had the parade, we've had a night at the museums event and we've had a cookout for all the Depot volunteers and their families. This will help wrap of the year honoring the Depot centennial."**

The Depot, according to recordings, is remembered as a "preservationist puzzle." One of its allures is its unique style -- to this day, the architect for the building is unknown, and it's oriental design was considered

rare at that time, especially for Middle Tennessee. In 1973, the L&N scheduled the Depot for demolition, but concerned citizens arranged for the city of Cookeville to purchase the building. It has since been transformed into a museum, and still attracts 9,000 to 11,000 visitors each year. Depot officials have centered much effort around the centennial celebration, and a proclamation will also be presented honoring the Depot for having survived 100 years.

The ceremony, which is open to the public, will begin at 1:30 p.m. Nov. 4 and will be held rain or shine. For more information, call 528-8570.

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