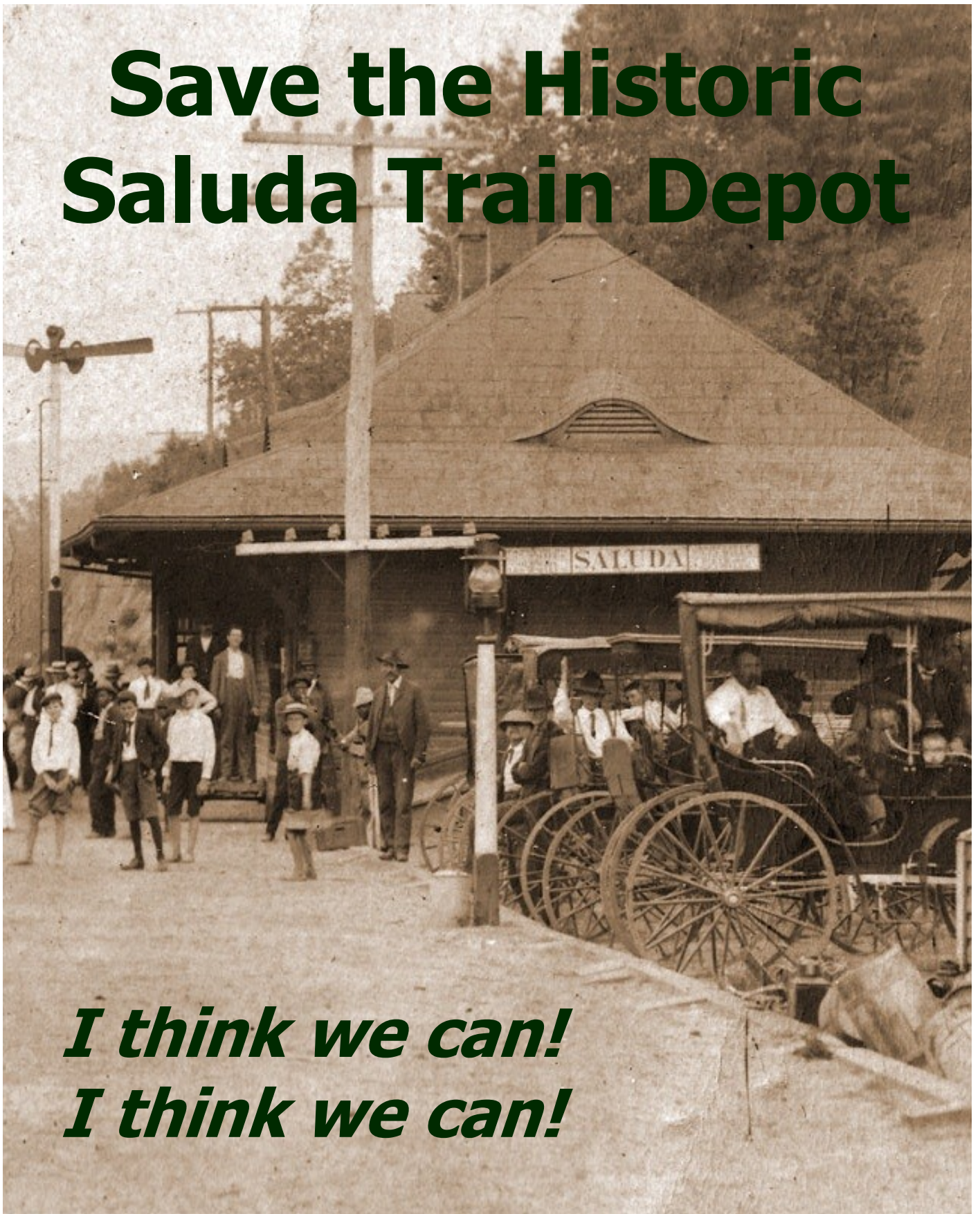


# Save the Historic Saluda Train Depot



***I think we can!  
I think we can!***



## **Time is of the Essence!**

For the first time in decades the historic Saluda depot is for sale. The depot is vulnerable because anyone can purchase it, change it or even destroy it.

Once it's gone it's gone!

The citizens of Saluda should own it!



### **Summary**

This is a rare opportunity for the citizens and friends of Saluda along with railroad history buffs everywhere to unite in saving one of its more treasured historical landmarks. The historic depot is a modern icon of Saluda's beginning and subsequent prosperity with the coming of the train bringing passengers up the Saluda Grade, the steepest grade in the country. Because brave men built a railroad up a steep mountain, the small mountain village of Saluda is a thriving community with a historic downtown district with prospering shops and restaurants. The town is surrounded by mountains and deep valleys in the Green River Gorge. These natural resources have drawn outdoor adventurers to bicycle, fish, zip line, kayak and hike mountain trails. These enthusiasts eat, stay, and shop in Saluda's businesses. Every Saluda citizen, whether born here or those who got here as fast as they could, will be asked to support this project.

### **Mission**

To unite the citizens and visitors of Saluda to acquire and preserve the historic Saluda train depot for future generations and to develop it into and operate it as a heritage museum and visitors center, emphasizing the railroad history and the Saluda Grade.

### **Vision**

To create and sustain a landmark tourist destination at the historic Saluda train depot that reaches a broad audience that preserves and promotes Saluda's heritage, celebrates its culture, and showcases its natural resources.

## **Brief History of the Depot**

The Saluda Main Street Historic District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, with the depot listed as a contributing structure. Here is a description of the depot from that listing:

*The exact date of construction for the former Saluda Depot is not known, but it was likely built during the first decade of the twentieth century. Some local tradition claims that it replaced the earlier depot, which had been located on Main Street in the center of town, in 1910. The "new" depot was built about a quarter of a mile away, parallel to the north side of the tracks and west of the present U.S. 176 overpass. In a town which owed its existence to the railroad and which depended on the railroad to transport its many summer dwellers and tourists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the depot was one of the most important buildings in town. In 1983 the depot was moved to its present location in order to assure its preservation. Although the depot is now positioned perpendicular to Main Street and the railroad tracks, it is architecturally very intact. It is a long rectangular structure defined primarily by its flared hipped roof with eyelid vents, widely overhanging braced eaves which cover the encircling platform walk, and stick style detailing. The combination passenger and freight station has German siding on the exterior, bay windows, six-over-six sash windows, and large freight doors as well as pedestrian doors. The well-preserved interior retains its unpainted vertical beaded board sheathing and paneling and some counters. In its new location, the depot has new chimneys, a new foundation, and an added railing around the outside.*

## **Preservation and Historical Commitment**

- Once the depot is purchased, through a legal binding agreement the historical integrity of the building will be protected into perpetuity.
- The museum will follow true museum standards using proper environmental control for photographs, documents and artifacts; will use museum exhibit standards for display and the handling of artifacts and will consult with state and federal preservation and museum offices, including Preservation North Carolina, the North Carolina State Preservation Office, the State Archives Offices, Museums in Partnership (MIP) and will collaborate with the historical museums in Hendersonville and Columbus, to create an authentic museum.
- The primary focus of the museum will be the railroad and the Saluda Grade, but since there are other significant historical areas of interest these will be showcased, as well. These may include early settlers, Pace's Gap, drovers trails, inns and boarding houses, the historic downtown district, historic homes, buildings, churches and schools; culture and events, including Coon Dog Day, artists, musicians, sports; the medical legacy, such as the Infants' and Children's Sanitarium, the Spartanburg Baby Hospital, the Southern Pediatric Seminars; unique people, such as Perry Como, Pat Hingle, Phoebe Sullivan, William "Billy" Morris of the Century Old Fire fame, and the many individuals who contributed to the rich history of Saluda. Oral history will be a feature and will showcase the many oral histories collected, which relay fascinating stories about the history of Saluda.

### **Brief History of the Railroad**

When the first passenger train of the Asheville and Spartanburg Railroad chugged up the Saluda Grade on July 4, 1878, Pace's Gap was forever changed. In 1877 Capt. Charles Pearson, former Confederate Army officer, was assigned chief engineer to construct the railroad. Pearson rejected the route of old trading paths and instead selected a route which followed the Pacolet River up the steep gorge, an almost vertical wall. This route begins at the bottom of the Melrose Mountain at 1,081 feet and climbs to the town of Saluda cresting at an elevation of 2,097 feet. This proved to be challenging! In 1878, due to the depletion of financial resources and manual labor, the North Carolina legislature ratified a bill to provide financial support and to allow convicts to work on the construction of the line. The price paid by all workers, free or otherwise, to complete the Saluda Grade, was high, due to sickness and accidents resulting in a high death rate. Despite this adversity, the tracks reached the top of the grade three months after the convicts began work on the project, resulting in the completion of the steepest mainline standard gauge railroad in the United States.

### **Key Points**

- \$100,000 in earnest money must be raised NOW and then the balance must be raised after a secure option is accepted. Because the building is actively being marketed, time is of the essence! To secure an option on the building will require making an acceptable offer to the owner with a \$100,000 option fee held in escrow.
- Many community leaders and citizens desire to secure the purchase of the train depot and make it a historical museum and visitors center.
- The Saluda Downtown Foundation, a non-profit organization, will take ownership of the building once funds are raised and will be responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the property. A legal binding agreement will be put in place outlining the responsibilities of the Foundation to carry out the intent of the project.
- Grants and other funding resources will be identified and pledged to show proof of funding to accompany an acceptable offer and the initial earnest money.
- Once the earnest money is secured, and funding for the purchase identified and affirmed, then an offer will be made requesting a one-year due diligence period to enable time to request and receive grant funding and plan fund raising through private donors.
- During this time, planning of the museum and visitors center will begin working jointly with the Historic Saluda Committee and other organizations to design the museum and build a collection of photos and artifacts.
- A marketing and promotional team consisting of members from the Saluda Downtown Foundation and the Saluda Business Association, working in tandem with the Historic Saluda Committee, will design signage and develop a marketing and promotional plan to draw visitors to Saluda that will have an economic impact on the businesses in Saluda.
- The Saluda Community Land Trust will be consulted to provide information about Saluda's natural resources, ecology, and geology.
- A gift shop, admission fee, museum membership and other ideas will be determined so that a reoccurring revenue stream is established for ongoing maintenance, upgrades, and management.

## 4 Primary Goals and Objectives

### Phase 1-First 12 Months

- Through a capital campaign, spearheaded by the Saluda Downtown Foundation, funds will be raised to purchase and preserve the historic Saluda depot, engaging Saluda's citizens, both full-time and part-time, and visitors to donate to the campaign.
- Through a collaborative process, will create and develop a sustainable historical museum and visitors center by working in tandem with the goals of the Historic Saluda Committee and the Saluda Business Association.
- Through this collaborative process, will develop a marketing and promotional plan to draw tourists to Saluda using the depot and the appeal of the train history as a primary focus.

### Phase 2 – Second Year

- A Saluda history museum will open to the public and become operational.

## Project Budget

The first 12 months of this project will focus on raising \$400,000 that will be needed to purchase the depot, interior design and development, and marketing. Once the Saluda Historic Museum is open in the second year, approximately \$30,000 will be needed to cover annual operating expenses with a projected income of \$37,000 consisting of grants, donations, gift shop retail, and annual memberships.

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**I think we can! I think we can!**



***Help us stay on track for the future by preserving the past! Please give!***

\_\_\_\_\_ \$50  
Passenger

\_\_\_\_\_ \$100  
Fireman

\_\_\_\_\_ \$250  
Brakeman

\_\_\_\_\_ \$500  
Station Manager

\_\_\_\_\_ \$1,000  
Second Conductor

\_\_\_\_\_ \$2,500  
First Conductor

\_\_\_\_\_ \$5,000  
Engineer

\_\_\_\_\_ \$5,000+  
Chief Engineer

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Name (As you wish it to appear in publicity or check here to remain anonymous )

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Contact Name for Business/Organization

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Address

City, State, Zip

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Phone

Email

Website

Please make checks payable to the **Saluda Downtown Foundation** and  
on memo line please write "Save Saluda Depot."  
Mail to: Saluda Downtown Foundation-Save Saluda Depot  
c/o Macon Bank, PO Box 98, Saluda, NC 28773





Carolyn DeMorest Serrano  
11/97

***I think we can!***



**For More Information**



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Visit *Save Saluda Depot* on Facebook and *Historic Saluda NC* on YouTube.