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Crosslake model railroad club open to public

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The Northern Trackers Model Railroad Club in Crosslake invites everyone to visit the club to see its model trains and layouts informational displays.

There are O-gauge and HO-gauge trains and G-scale trains and layouts for visitors to see; and an O-gauge train that children can operate.

The HO layouts scenery depicts early train yards, lumber yards and logging camps, mines and a sintering plant. The O-gauge layout features a town, mountains and rivers, a big-top circus, a lumberyard and a haunted house with a witch flying over the roof.

A replica of the St. Paul Union Depot is currently being added to the O-gauge layout.

Club members will provide information and answer questions about the trains, layouts and the history of railroading in Minnesota.

The club is displaying exhibit of late 1800s dining cars, with photos of diners, menus and floor plans of railroad dining cars and kitchens of the Northern Pacific Railroad. The meals were prepared from fresh food, provided by local farmers along the train routes. Visitors can take home recipes for a variety of foods served in the dining cars.

The club offers a scale model of the 1862 William Crooks locomotive that children can sit in and explore. The locomotive is outdoors, next to a display of the history of the William Crooks locomotive, and Operation Lifesaver information, which promotes safety at railroad crossings.

Also, a new G-scale (Garden Train) train is being installed outdoors, next to the club.

Kids can do a scavenger hunt indoors to find items on the layouts and take home a free giveaway from Operation Lifesaver. T-shirts, engineer hats, pins, books, magazines and other items are sold in the club's store.

A restored railroad telegraph is on display, and visitors can learn and send messages on the telegraph using Morse code.

The club is open all summer to the public from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays, noon to 3 p.m. Sundays and 5-8 p.m. Wednesdays through Aug. 28.

The Northern Minnesota Railroad Heritage Association, Northern Trackers, is at 35170 County Road 3, Crosslake.

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