

Ribbon Cutting for Depot addition Saturday, July 20

Written by George Browning
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The culmination of three years of planning, fund raising and construction will be celebrated Saturday, July 20, with a ribbon cutting ceremony at The John Hay Center's Depot railroad museum in Salem.

The event will take place at 11 a.m. at The Depot, 206 South College Ave.

A 3,000 square foot addition to The Depot is now completed, providing the museum with a large meeting and display room on the main floor. Also, a 1500 square foot room on the basement level is now world headquarters and archives of the Monon Railroad Historical Technical Society.

Following the ribbon cutting, the new areas will be open for viewing by the public. However, because the Monon Society is having a board meeting at Salem that day, the Monon archives will only be open until about 12:30 p.m.

"We're very excited to have the additional meeting and display area," Cecil J. Smith, the volunteer stationmaster, said. He said in honor of Salem being the birthplace in 1847 of the New Albany & Salem Rail Road, which later became the Monon Railroad, the new meeting and display room will be known as the "Monon Room."

Also, Smith noted that "sharing the building with the Monon Railroad Historical Society is an added asset for our museum and provides the Monon group with an excellent facility for the storage and research of its archives."

Prior to moving to Salem, the Monon Society was headquartered at Linden, north of Crawfordsville. Termination of the Society's lease with the Linden-Madison Township Historical Society resulted in the need to move.

The Depot's addition was built with a generous grant from the Paul Ogle Foundation at Jeffersonville, plus more than \$60,000 from Monon Society and Washington County Historical Society members and individuals and businesses in the area.

The Depot, a replica of the Monon Railroad station that served Salem for many years, was constructed in 1999 and 2000 by high school students from Salem and Eastern high schools. They were members of a building trades class at Prosser School of Technology at New Albany. Their instructor was Ron Zimmer of Salem.

The general contractor on the addition, which is attached to the original building, was Ray Walker Construction Associates of Paoli. John Hawkins of the firm of Kovert Hawkins in Jeffersonville, served as the architect. Depot volunteer John Campbell of Louisville, a retired building contractor, was project manager.

The public is invited to the ribbon cutting.