

ESSEX STEAM TRAIN & RIVERBOAT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Essex Steam Train & Riverboat 2010 Spring Spectacular *Neighbor Appreciation Weekend & Day Out With Thomas!*

April 14, Essex, CT -- Essex Steam Train & Riverboat will kick off its 2010 season with 2 spectacular events -- *Neighbor Appreciation Weekend*, on May 1 & 2, immediately followed by *Day Out With Thomas: The Celebration Tour 2010*, May 8-9 and 15-16.

Robert Bell, *President of the Valley Railroad Company*, says, "All of us at Essex Steam Train & Riverboat are thrilled to jump start the spring season with 2 of our most anticipated events. In just 6 years, *Neighbor Appreciation Weekend* has become a hugely popular event and the railroad truly appreciates this annual opportunity to thank local residents who support our efforts to share this historic treasure with visitors." Bob continues, "By moving *Day Out With Thomas* from its traditional November time slot to May, Essex Steam Train is now able to offer the beautiful springtime experience in Essex and the lower Connecticut River Valley to one of our largest family audiences of the year."

Neighbor Appreciation Weekend, May 1- 2 *Essex, Deep River, Chester, Haddam, and Old Saybrook Residents...Ride Free!*

The "Goodspeed Local" will embark on a sentimental TRAIN ONLY journey, just as the *Connecticut Valley Railroad* did back in the 1870's, when the train line was the primary means of weekend travel from Hartford to Old Saybrook. This train event includes *free* rides for residents in 5 towns along the Valley Railroad's operating line - - **Essex, Deep River, Chester, Haddam, and Old Saybrook.**

Making all local station stops from Essex to Haddam . . . "Goodspeed Local" passengers may choose a 90-minute, round-trip journey or they may elect a shorter trip from one town to another. There will be three trains making departures and arrivals at local stations. Please view the Train Timetable at essexsteamtrain.com or call 860-767-0103 for departure times.

Tickets for "Neighbor Appreciation Weekend" are available for all 3 departures, on a *first come, first serve basis*. Adult residents must present picture identification at the Essex Ticket Window, or to the Trainman upon boarding at Local Stops.

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essexsteamtrain.com

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Season Opening (cont.)

Thomas the Tank Engine™
Comes to Essex for his 65th Birthday Bash...May 8-9 & 15-16

All aboard for the best birthday party ever! Thomas is set to roll into Essex Station for his 65 birthday and fans are invited to partake in some choo choo-rific celebratory activities! Traditional event highlights include a 25-minute ride with Thomas, an opportunity to meet Sir Thopham Hatt, Kaboose the Klown, Face Painting, Temporary Tattoos, Kiddie Rides, Music, and Imagination Station. NEW activities in 2010 are:

- A photo opportunity with Roary the Racecar
- A tour of Essex Locomotive Works
- 2010 commemorative merchandise and giveaways, including a mini-view finder giveaway that tells the story of Thomas' upcoming adventure, *Misty Island Rescue*.

This will be the only Day Out With Thomas event in Connecticut in 2010!

Tickets for *Day Out With Thomas: The Celebration Tour 2010* are on sale now and available by calling Ticketweb toll-free 866-468-7630, or by visiting <http://events.hitentertainment.com> or www.essexsteamtrain.com. Ticket prices are \$18 plus tax for ages 2 and up (service charges and fee may apply).

The Valley Railroad Company

Incorporated in 1969, The Valley Railroad Company opened the Essex Steam Train & Riverboat to the public in 1971. Today, the Essex Steam Train & Riverboat attracts 150,000 visitors a year and is one of Connecticut's most vibrant tourist attractions. Tour goers enjoy a 2½ hour narrated steam train and riverboat journey through the scenic Connecticut River Valley. Special events include *Day Out With Thomas*, *Santa Special North Pole Express*, *Lomax the Hound of Music*, *Fright Train* and *Murder Mystery*. Please visit www.essexsteamtrain.com.

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