**The Little Train that Did!**

**Verde Canyon Railroad’s Silver Anniversary Celebration**

**Sedona, Cottonwood, Clarkdale, AZ -** Twenty five years is a great run for any business, and Verde Canyon Railroad proudly celebrates its Silver Anniversary in 2015.

Running on tracks built in 1912 during copper’s heyday, this popular Sedona-area scenic excursion train first departed Clarkdale on Friday, November 23, 1990. Back then there was no depot; tickets were sold from a converted boxcar. The southwestern-style station was built from the ground up in 1997 and in subsequent years the depot added a large picnic area, café, gift shops and John Bell Museum.

Initially operating on select weekends only, the train now runs year-round on a schedule that varies with the seasons. The original line-up of cars, comprised of three passenger coaches flanked by two open-air cars, has also grown considerably in response to customer demand.

“Despite the higher price, first-class cars always sold out faster that coach class,” said Teresa Propeck, marketing director. “So when it came time to expand our capacity, it made sense to add more first-class seats.” Eight first-class cars, two coach-class cars, six open-air cars, plus a luxurious caboose, make up today’s expanded consist.

The popularity of first-class service gave Verde Canyon Railroad the idea that enhanced service might be appealing to the railroading public. Over the years, select events, each featuring a special seasonal essence, have become established as annual favorites. The Chocolate Lovers’ Train, Grape Train Escape and Tequila Sunset Limited all include superior food and beverage service - a resort experience on wheels.

Since 1990, this heritage train has carried nearly two million passengers through the remote and wild scenery of the Verde Canyon. Though growing to meet popular demand, this historic railroad stays true to its roots, joining railroads across the country in celebrating National Train Day on Saturday, May 9. This free event takes place at the Clarkdale depot, where area attractions, area museums, wildlife rescues, local authors, vendors, musicians and chefs showcase their specialties prior to the train’s 1 p.m. departure.

Additional longtime favorite events celebrated at Verde Canyon Railroad include the Easter Bunny Express, Starlight Tours, Firecracker Express and Ales on Rails.

Liberty Wildlife, a rescue organization based in Scottsdale, AZ has enhanced Verde Canyon Railroad’s interaction with raptors by bringing rehabilitated animals to the depot every month, including a bald eagle that rides the train.

From part-time to year-round, from five cars to seventeen, Verde Canyon Railroad is proud to be the little train ride that did.

 Only two hours from Phoenix and 25 minutes from Sedona, Verde Canyon Railroad is the perfect Arizona day-trip. Reservations are accepted at 800.293.7245 or online at verdecanyonrr.com.

It’s not the destination, it’s our **Silver Anniversary** journey!

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