Smyrna Depot Interpretation and Use Plan

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TENNESSEE CIVIL WAR NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA
A project of the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area
Prepared by the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University

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INTRODUCTION

The railroad depot building in Smyrna, Tennessee, is at the heart of the town’s economy, history, and culture. Smyrna originated as a stop on the railroad between Nashville and Chattanooga in the mid-nineteenth century, so one could say that the depot is the reason Smyrna is a town in the first place. The economic development that has happened since then is entirely thanks to this strategically-placed depot, as well as Smyrna’s forward-thinking civic leaders.

The significance of the current depot building, which dates from 1871, derives from its direct participation in the economic growth of the town. Smyrna is a town built around the technology of new transportation—railroads, automobiles, aircraft, and more automobiles. The depot connects these different technologies because the presence of the railroad stop was an important factor in locating the airport, air force base, and car manufacturing plant here.

The current depot building presents a unique opportunity for the Town of Smyrna to reinvest in its downtown core and connect residents, old and new, to the story of their hometown. Town officials and business owners are already well on their way in this reinvestment process, with new landscaping and building improvements that highlight the depot’s public function. The depot is at the center of a downtown revival, both figuratively and literally, as the area around the building has been rebranded as “the Depot District.” Town leaders rightly recognize that this depot-centered revival is “not only to strengthen Smyrna’s small business community but also define its local identity.”

Figure 1: The depot before landscaping (left) and after. The photograph on the right is from the Parks and Recreation pages of the Town of Smyrna website.

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The MTSU Center for Historic Preservation (CHP) first became involved in the depot project when Steve Smith, building official for the Town of Smyrna, contacted CHP research professor Stacey Graham at the end of February 2014 and asked if the Center could assist with the planning process. In March, Dr. Graham and assistant director Dr. Rachel Martin met with members of the depot committee (Mr. Smith, town manager Harry Gill, town councilman H.G. Cole, public works director David King, police captain Jeff Dwyer, Ron Alley of Carpe Café/Carpe Artista, and Ed Comer of Buildings, Grounds & Maintenance) for a tour of the depot and an opening discussion of the building’s potential. Also at the meeting was Jerome Dempsey of Depsey, Dilling & Associates, a local firm that donated much of the planning and labor that accomplished the building and landscape improvements around the depot. Drs. Graham and Martin then conferred with Dr. Van West, CHP director, and all agreed that this was an important local project that would be a good fit for a CHP graduate student assistant in the Fall.

In September, Dr. Graham and graduate student assistant Joey Bryan met with members of the depot committee at Smyrna Town Hall and articulated the components of the report the CHP would produce for the depot project. We envisioned an abbreviated plan which would focus on the history of the building, ideas for space use, and interpretation in the form of text and images for exhibit panels to be installed in the depot. This would answer many of the questions that the depot committee asked of the Center, while complementing the plans already in practice by the Town of Smyrna. The committee members approved this plan, and supplied the CHP with historic town images that they had previously collected for another project that might also work with the proposed exhibit panels.

At the September meeting, Mr. Smith and Mike Moss, director of Smyrna Parks and Recreation, in particular questioned the process of making structural improvements to the depot building. The committee has practiced appropriate caution in restoring the building, wanting to update essential systems while at the same time preserving the depot’s historic character. To help with this assessment, Dr. Carroll Van West, CHP director, along with Dr. Graham, met with members of the depot committee on site later that month. Dr. West applauded the committee for the excellent efforts they have taken to secure and promote the building, and advised them to follow through with their plans for adding insulation and an HVAC system.

Joey Bryan and Dr. Graham again met with members of the depot committee (Mr. Smith, Mr. Gill, Mr. Alley, and town planner Kevin Rigsby) in November to present the drafts of the exhibit panels with images. Members agreed that they would be able to design and print out panels at a reasonable cost.
This interpretive plan is meant to guide and enhance the ongoing efforts of the Town of Smyrna in the revitalization of the depot building. The town has been wise to preserve the building in the years since its active use on the railroad. With proper leadership and community investment, the depot can reclaim its place as the beating heart of Smyrna, providing residents with a focus for a sense of community identity.

*Figure 2: The depot beckons as a festive backdrop for family pictures.*
HISTORY OF THE SMYRNA RAILROAD DEPOT

The history of Smyrna, Tennessee, is interlocked with the railroad that passes through the heart of the town. The small brick depot serves as a reminder of this connection to industry and gathering place for the community. To understand the history of Smyrna it is vital to know the history of the small structure that built a great town.

Railroads developed more slowly in the southern United States than they did in the industry-heavy states to the north. However, by the 1840s, new railroad companies sprouted up throughout the south to connect the crops and goods of southern towns to the seaports of Charleston, Savannah, and New Orleans. From there, products could reach new markets across the globe. The Tennessee General Assembly granted a charter for the construction of the Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad (N&C) on December 11, 1845, to connect the two major metropolises of middle and southeastern Tennessee. From there, cargo could be shipped via the Tennessee River or three other developing railroads that would stop in Chattanooga. The charter provided the company the opportunity to sell up to 60,000 shares of stock at $25 per share. Murfreesboro, the capital of Tennessee from 1818 to 1826, purchased $30,000 in stock, ensuring that the company would pass through the city and thereby establishing the first third of the route outside of Nashville.

The N&C wanted to establish a way station between Nashville and Murfreesboro to give rural farmers and merchants a quicker access point to the railroad. They selected a location approximately twenty miles southeast of Nashville and named it Smyrna after the local Smyrna Presbyterian Church. The company purchased nearly thirty-seven acres of land from Silas Tucker, a local plantation owner, at $1,470 per acre. They then bought an additional four acres for the depot and a downtown area. The N&C then subdivided the land into sixty-four lots for both residential and commercial purposes to spur the small cluster of people around the church to expand. The Smyrna Depot opened on or before July 5, 1851, when the first train reached Murfreesboro from Nashville. The N&C completed the entire line to Chattanooga just before the outbreak of the Civil War.

The Civil War wreaked havoc on the fledgling railroads of the South, with the various routes constantly under attack by guerillas and commandeered by both Confederate and Federal forces. The path of the N&C proved to be vital for moving war supplies and it played a role in the Battle of Stones River on December 31, 1862-January 2, 1863. Fortunately for the N&C, it fared better during the war than other companies. Under the leadership of Presidents Michael Burns and Col. Edmund W. Cole, the N&C rebuilt the railroad and acquired other companies that were left in
ruins. The company renamed itself the Nashville, Chattanooga, & St. Louis Railway in 1873 and existed as one of the two dominant railroads in Tennessee for the next eighty years.

Part of the current Smyrna Depot dates to the building constructed in 1871 that replaced the original 1850s depot. Smyrna prospered quickly after the Civil War as businesses and farmers shipped their goods through the newly rebuilt NC&StL Railway. As a result, Smyrna was officially incorporated as a town on December 10, 1869. Warehouses and loading platforms sprouted up along the tracks and regularly scheduled passenger trains transported locals wherever they needed to go. The NC&StL serviced all of the local merchants and shipped products that included cotton, wheat, corn, cattle, sheep, hogs, timber, and lumber. Walter King Hoover writes, “The depot was a check point for all businesses coming and going at Smyrna.” Lines of carts paraded through the streets forming a “never-ending procession” to unload their goods for the passing trains.\(^2\)

The prosperity of Smyrna prompted the railroad to build an addition to the small brick structure in the 1920s. This created an entire area devoted strictly to freight, as well as a passenger area that provided segregated areas for African American and white passengers to wait for their trains. Schoolchildren and commuters would take the train into the city on a daily basis. Though the express trains did not stop in Smyrna, the locals could set their watches by the time that trains like the Dixie Flyer, The Lookout, The Georgian, Dixieland, and The Dixie Flagler passed through town en route to the larger cities. The sight and sounds of passing steam locomotives became second nature to those living and working along the tracks.

Smyrna also hosted a track gang devoted to maintaining the tracks and surrounding railroad property. Both African American and white workers comprised track gangs; however, there was no chance of promotion for the black workers. The track gangs re-aligned track, replaced old rails and ties, and checked the ballast to help prevent any accidents from occurring. In spite of their best efforts, however, incidents did occur on the line through Smyrna. Local passenger trains No. 4 and No. 5 collided head-on in 1925 while passing through the center of town. In July 1950, a freight train derailed and collided with the depot destroying half of the east wall and the bay window where the station agent would sit to monitor the passing trains. The NC&StL repaired the building, but the advancement of radio technology made the bay window obsolete and they chose not to rebuild it.

The rise of the highway system and trucking companies in the 1940s and 50s hurt the local traffic of the railroads, ending the glory years of American railroading as the principal mode of transport. The depot continued to serve Smyrna even after passenger service ended in the late 1950s. The NC&StL

merged with the Louisville & Nashville Railroad in 1957, who then used the building as an office for railroad workers and storage for maintenance materials. The L&N merged with the Seaboard Coast Line in 1982 and subsequently merged with the Chessie System in 1986 to form CSX, which still operates the line today. Smyrna still receives dozens of trains daily; the completion of the Nissan manufacturing plant in 1983 has kept Smyrna as a vital production town.
Nashville, Chattanooga, & St. Louis Railway Corporate Timeline

1845  Chartered as the Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad by TN General Assembly
1852  First Train Reaches Murfreesboro
1854  First Train Reaches Chattanooga
1868  Acquires the Nashville & Northwestern and the Hickman & Obion Railroads reaching the Mississippi River
1873  Reincorporated as the Nashville, Chattanooga, & St. Louis Railway
1877  Acquires the Tennessee & Pacific Railroad
1880  Louisville & Nashville Railroad gains controlling interest in a hostile takeover. Allows NC&StL to operate as separate company
1890  Leases Western & Atlantic Railroad from the state of Georgia extending line to Atlanta
1957  Merges with the Louisville & Nashville
1982  L&N merges with Seaboard Coast Line to form the Seaboard System
1986  Seaboard System merges with Chessie System to form CSX
| NC&S|R Presidents | NC&S|Named Trains |
|-------|---------------|-------------------------|
| 1848-64 | Col. Vernon K Stevenson | Dixie Flyer |
| 1864-68 | Michael Burns | Dixie Flagler |
| 1868-80 | Col. Edmund W. Cole | Dixieland |
| 1880-84 | James D. Porter | Dixie Limited |
| 1884-1906 | Maj. John W. Thomas, Sr. | The Lookout |
| 1906-13 | John W. Thomas, Jr. | The Georgian |
| 1913-14 | Maj. Eugene C. Lewis |     |
| 1914-18 | John Howe Peyton |     |
| 1918-26 | Whitefoord R. Cole |     |
| 1926-34 | James B. Hill |     |
| 1934-46 | Fitzgerald Hill |     |
| 1946-57 | W.S. Hackworth |     |
IDEAS FOR USE

The plain red brick, overhanging eaves, old-fashioned train stop sign, clock post, industrial doors, and exposed interior plaster of the depot create a unique ambiance that make this building ideal for housing various public and private events. In a part of the country known to market down-to-earth, “old-timey” imagery as part of its identity (think country music or the Civil War), the depot is a photogenic gem that makes the perfect backdrop for memorable experiences.

Figure 1: Depot decorated for the holidays, December 2014. Note the train to the left and the clock post in the distant right.

The depot building has been well preserved over the years, leaving it in good shape to house a number of different functions for Smyrna’s citizens today. Owned by the Town of Smyrna, the building is operated through the Parks and Recreation Department, thereby joining a system of parks that makes Smyrna one of the best communities in Middle Tennessee in which to live. Ongoing efforts by the depot committee to improve, preserve, and maintain the building should certainly be a part of a space use policy. Plans should move forward on the installation of a HVAC unit and insulation, which will not detract from the historic character of the building, and on the closing the gaps of the wood plank floor, which will also not detract from the appearance or fabric of the building and will be a valuable safety measure.

The depot committee has already created a brochure with information for groups interested in renting the building. The building is the centerpiece for Depot Days, an annual family-friendly festival on Front Street featuring local businesses, vendors, civic and church groups, and musicians.
The success of this event indicates a community interest in focusing on the downtown area, and shows how easy it is to get people to come out to the depot for worthy experiences.

While not particularly well equipped at the moment, the depot’s two rooms nevertheless have great potential. The smaller of the two rooms, referred to in this plan as the Museum Room and containing the freight scale, mail slots, cargo doors, and wood plank floor, is better for more specialized use such as museum exhibits. The larger of the two rooms, the former passenger waiting area, was currently updated with restrooms and a storage closet,¹ and is referred to as the Community Room for its multi-service potential.

![Image of Museum Room](image1.jpg) ![Image of Community Room](image2.jpg)

*Figure 2: The Museum Room, left, was once the freight room. Right, the Community Room with its newly installed restrooms.*

Building on the town’s current space use plans, this section of the report will suggest further uses for the depot building that will fit well with the depot’s historic significance in the community. These uses are as a rental facility, a classroom, a gallery, and a museum. After a discussion of these categories, both the short-term and long-term investments suggested by these usages will be summarized in a chart.

**Rental facility**

According to the depot brochure, the building is available for rental for “charity events, political events, street fairs, parties, reunions, weddings/receptions, showers, [and] family gatherings.”² These events vary widely from the public to the private and should create a respectable rental income that can help fund building maintenance, improvements, and equipment. By comparison, the N.C. & St.L. Depot & Railroad Museum in Jackson (Madison County), which is owned by the City of

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¹ Thanks to donations of materials and volunteer labor from the Home Depot.
Jackson and operated by its Recreation & Parks Department, also serves as a rental facility, allowing guests to use its authentic dining car for children’s birthday parties.³

In addition to rentals for the events listed above, the depot can also be made available for corporate meeting space. With the proximity of Nissan and other corporations, many of whom are looking for ways to connect to or give back to the community as part of their outreach policies, the depot is well positioned to offer a unique location for a planning retreat or other corporate event. This may necessitate the establishment of telecomm and Internet connections, plus the installation of a wall-mounted projector screen, so this may be relegated to more long-term plans.

The industrial appeal of the building might also attract music groups looking for a space in which to rehearse or perform. Already, bands have performed at events from the freight room, which, once the end freight door is drawn up, becomes a stage before an audience gathered outside the building.

Civic and cultural groups that wish to meet in the depot might be encouraged to do so for a reduced rental fee, or even for free. For example, groups like the DAR and Middle Tennessee Civil War Round Table meet regularly for free at the Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County,⁴ by virtue of being civic organizations with ties to the county’s heritage.

**Gallery**

The depot can also serve as a cultural center for the community by promoting the arts on a local level. Its proximity to Carpe Café/Carpe Artista, just across the roundabout on Front Street, will help promote the depot as a destination for art lovers; the inclusion of Ron Alley, owner of Carpe Café/Carpe Artista, on the depot committee marks the start of a fruitful partnership. The depot space can be transformed into a temporary art gallery for special art shows featuring local artists or the artwork of local students (Kindergarten through college). The depot could also host curated exhibitions of railroad- and transportation-themed art and photographs from the collections of local citizens. The large, open passenger room of the depot could also host art classes, if specialized equipment could be brought in by the persons renting the space on a temporary basis. The Town of Smyrna could host a contest for best artwork depicting the depot building and display the prize-winning results as part of a special exhibit on site. The first prize winner’s artwork could be printed on t-shirts and other merchandise that could be sold at various community events downtown. The Town of Smyrna can decide when and how to charge facility use fees for such events; perhaps a fee can be paid through a percentage of ticket and/or artwork sales.

Classroom

The depot is a natural classroom. It is the material culture of the past, engaging student interest in a way that images on overhead projectors inside of classrooms cannot. Schoolchildren can walk around its century-old walls, gaze at its strange-looking freight scale, look out its glazed windows, and hear the trains thunder by. The depot is a historic site – a tangible primary source that can connect students to the past. The only other public historic site in Smyrna, the Historic Sam Davis Home and Plantation, receives thousands of schoolchildren every year through field trips. While there might not be as much square footage to the depot as to the plantation, the history is just as rich and even more significant to the development of the town.

The depot is an ideal site for field trips, particularly for children in Kindergarten through fifth grade. Not only can teachers use the interior space for instruction on the role of railroads, but they can also lead children through the proposed exhibits, around the building (to see the old Smyrna signs, the clock post, and the memorial bricks), along Front Street (asking why it might be called “Front” Street) and even along the downtown sidewalks to Smyrna Public Library at Rock School Park. What makes this fun field trip even more worthwhile for teachers is the way the depot building can be used to meet state curriculum standards. K.1; 1.1, 1.11, 1.13, 1.21; 2.38; 3.9, 3.26; and 5.27 can be wholly or partially met by teaching students the story of the depot and its role in the development of Smyrna. Perhaps a local teacher can volunteer to create a series of lesson activities that can be available to teachers before, during, and after their field trips to the depot. Reach out to educator audiences through the elementary social studies curriculum coordinator of Rutherford County Schools, or look into coordinating with the Historic Sam Davis Home and Plantation to offer their teacher leaders this additional destination.

Public elementary school groups are not the only ones who can benefit from the depot as an educational setting. Homeschool student groups often take advantage of field trip opportunities and experiential learning. The depot can also serve as a setting for adult education classes, particularly as it applies to the role of industry and technology in the local and state economy. Lastly, the depot can serve as a location for educator professional development workshops, such as the kind offered by Teaching with Primary Sources – MTSU.\(^5\) Such workshops can draw easily on the topic of railroad history to use the building as a primary source learning experience for educators. After all, learning from a historic building is just as engaging for teachers as it is for students.

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\(^5\) See Teaching with Primary Sources – MTSU home page at [http://library.mtsu.edu/tps](http://library.mtsu.edu/tps).
Promoting the depot as a classroom would most likely require the same investment in equipment as for use as corporate meeting space – namely, Internet connectivity (wireless not necessary), wall-mounted projector screen, safe electrical outlets, decent lighting, and plenty of tables and chairs. Not all of these upgrades would be necessary for some school field trips if the lesson activities are focused rather on the words and images that will appear on the proposed exhibit panels, as well as the artifacts stored in the museum room (see below). In any case, reaching out to educational groups expands the depot’s mission beyond special events to one that more fully engages the community and promotes the history and significance of the building.

**Visitor Center / Museum**

The depot as a building engages and educates the public merely by the fact of its existence and accessibility. However, the significance of the building may not be apparent to most visitors without at least a small amount of context. People expect some signage or other reading materials to help them make sense of what they’re looking at or walking through. Furthermore, the freight room of the depot already contains artifacts that may be mysterious to the casual observer (i.e., scale, mail slots), requiring interpretation and explanation. If Smyrna wants to better share its history with its citizens, it can provide these in a cost-effective way. This section will discuss the benefits of adding artifacts and exhibit panels to the building.
The Town of Smyrna may wish to inhabit the Museum Room with further artifacts, creating a museum space. This would contribute to the depot as a learning environment and as the symbol of the development of the town. However, any collection of artifacts will require a collections policy, to make sure best practices are pursued in storing, accessioning, documenting, and deaccessioning items. (If you wish to see an example of a museum collections policy, consult the one at The Historic Sam Davis Home & Plantation, which was written by a graduate of the MTSU Ph.D. in Public History program and is currently being updated.) Furthermore, the Town may have to secure insurance coverage as well, and find someone to serve as curator (part time; volunteer or paid).

The depot can be a low-maintenance museum through panels and a few well chosen artifacts secured in a display cabinet. While this type of display cabinet is not cheap, the depot committee may be able to secure one that is heavily discounted from museums that are in the process of renovating their collections. The benefit of such a display cabinet is that it helps control the interior climate, which is necessary for historic artifacts, and can be easily secured via a solid lock. Therefore, no direct supervision is necessary when visitors view the artifacts. It concentrates the artifact display into a manageable space in which the artifacts can be changed out as needed.
The depot can draw people more deeply into the story of Smyrna transportation development through interpretive panels. As mentioned above, people visiting historic buildings expect reading materials to help them make sense of what they’re seeing and to learn more about the building’s significance to the community. This can best be accomplished through permanent exhibit panels that will draw people into the building and engage them with the story of the depot, illustrated with historic photographs and images. The CHP suggests a series of nine panels, with two introductory ones in the Community Room and the remaining seven in the Museum Room, all of which can be wall-mounted if desired. Proposed text, images, and captions for these panels are in the following section of the report, with a sketch at the end suggesting panel placement.

Designing the panels can be outsourced to a professional design shop or signage store, or possibly even accomplished by one of the artists affiliated with Carpe Artista. All that is required, apart from the text and images supplied by the CHP, is a software program such as Photoshop. Once the design is approved by the depot committee, printing can be outsourced to a local print shop. Exhibit panels can be wall-mounted or free-standing on hollow-core doors in the interior of a room. Mounting the panels on either the wall or a free-standing door requires supplies such as commercial-strength Velcro or spray adhesive. Hollow-core doors can be purchased from museum-supply stores or, more economically, can be built by local citizens or possibly purchased at low cost from retail stores that have used them in displays.
Figure 6: Hollow-core doors can be placed along a wall or in the center of a space, with panels on both sides. Examples from the Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County.

The benefits of exhibit panels are that they require little to no maintenance, will last for years, answer many visitor questions with no staff necessary, serve as a reference for student groups and heritage tourists, add to the visual interest inside the building, and give people a sense of the bigger picture for why this building is interesting and important. Upfront costs are necessary for design, printing, and mounting, but after this initial investment, few further resources are required.

In addition to the permanent exhibit panels that can be installed in the space, temporary and rotating exhibits can be brought into the space. This will be especially easy if done on the free-standing hollow-core doors. Bringing new stories into the depot will reward returning visitors with new text and images to view periodically and keep the depot relevant in the years to come. The depot committee can also apply to host traveling exhibits in the space. Other organizations across the state (such as the Tennessee State Museum and the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area) often provide these for free; for others, grants are sometimes available to defray delivery, installation, and insurance costs.
The depot will differ from some other depot museums in that it does not need to have regular opening hours or be regularly staffed. The Cowan Railroad Museum, the N.C. & St.L. Depot & Railroad Museum, and the Cookeville Depot Museum in Putnam County are open around four-to-five days out of the week, and are staffed by a combination of paid and volunteer staff (mostly volunteer). However, each building is also open by appointment, which is a much more viable option for the Smyrna depot, with certain restrictions.

The depot committee will have to consider how to staff the building for appointments. One option is to rely on volunteers from the community who, with minimal training, can be on site to answer questions. Another is to detail a member of the depot committee or a Town of Smyrna employee for a specific time. Individual appointments requested by interested citizens may be unfeasible at this point, but group appointments can be encouraged. Another option is to combine Museum openings with other concurrent events at the depot/downtown, and regularize the schedule of community events so that the public may have a chance at least once a month to visit the Museum and explore the exhibit.

_Heritage Development_

The Town of Smyrna is already making great strides to develop the depot as a heritage destination in Smyrna. Community-themed events such as the farmers market and Depot Days already emphasize the depot’s place as the center of town life. The depot committee will want to create an updated rack card or brochure that speaks to the depot’s historic significance to place in venues throughout Rutherford and neighboring counties to promote the depot’s heritage tourism potential.

In order to further explore and articulate the depot’s historic and cultural significance, the depot committee may choose to pursue the building’s eligibility for the National Register of Historic
Places. The first step in this process is to fill out, or work with a local preservation organization to fill out a National Register for Historic Places Information Packet (CN-1271) from the Tennessee Historical Commission.6 This form will provide the Commission with the basis for deciding whether a formal National Register nomination should be pursued or not. The approved nominations for the depot buildings of the Cowan Railroad Museum and the Cookeville Depot Museum can serve as useful models in this process.7 If the nomination were to be successful, it would make the depot only the third National Register-listed building in the Town of Smyrna, thereby contributing to the town’s historic tourism potential.8 However, the depot is historically significant to the Town of Smyrna whether or not it is listed in the National Register.

The depot committee should continue to promote the building and its events through social media. Currently, the depot itself does not have its own Facebook page, though seems to be covered under the Facebook pages of Smyrna TN – Revitalization Project and Smyrna Depot Days. Perhaps these two pages could be combined under a name such as Smyrna Depot District, to clarify and strengthen the outreach effort among the community.9 Because the depot is a unit of the Town of Smyrna Parks and Recreation department, its Web presence is contained within that Web site.10 Depot Days, however, has its own, separate Web site (www.smyrnadepotdays.com), primarily targeting potential vendors. Information about the depot, its history, revitalization, and events can also be increased within the Parks and Recreation Web site, with additional photos added and links to articles and possibly even videos. At the very least, the Web page for the Smyrna Depot can be linked to the Web site for Smyrna Depot Days; perhaps the Depot can even be listed on the page of historic sites on the Rutherford County Web site (http://www.rutherfordcountytn.gov/visitors/historic-sites.htm).

The Web sites of the Cowan Railroad Museum (www.cowanrailroadmuseum.org) and the Cookeville Depot Museum (http://www.cookevilledepot.com) each provide several internal pages with readable amounts of text, several available images, and links to social media pages. Both of

7 Cowan Depot, Franklin County, #78002588, http://pdfhost.focus.nps.gov/docs/nrhp/text/78002588.pdf (accessed January 6, 2015); Cookeville Railroad Depot, Putnam County, #85002773, http://pdfhost.focus.nps.gov/docs/nrhp/text/85002773.pdf (accessed December 22, 2014). The NR research database is currently under construction, so links to the pdfhost site have been made available until the renovated database will be accessible at http://www.nps.gov/nr/research/.
8 The other two NR-listed buildings in Smyrna are the Sam Davis Home and Idler’s Retreat, only the first of which is open to the public.
9 There is a Facebook page for Smyrna Depot, but it is a personal page, as opposed to a group page, meaning you have to “friend” it instead of “like” it. Its purpose is furthermore unclear, as there seems to be a mixture of personal and community posts on its timeline. It does not seem like an official source of information about events taking place at the depot.
these have dedicated Web sites with easy-to-recognize URLs because they are operated by independent, 501(c)3 non-profit Friends organizations. Developing a Friends of the Depot group might be an avenue for consideration among dedicated Smyrna citizens, as long as it is run completely independently of municipal government, with its own board of directors. Local precedents include the Friends of the Greenway group in Murfreesboro (Parks & Recreation) as well as Friends of Smyrna Library (Town of Smyrna and Rutherford County government). The first step in this process is creating a mission statement for the group, stating its committed role in promoting the historic and civic character of the depot. Even without a Friends group, having a mission statement that outlines the role of the depot in the revitalization of Smyrna is a positive idea. The mission statement for the City of Jackson’s N.C. & St.L. Depot & Railroad Museum, for example, states,

The NC&St.L. Depot and Railroad Museum is dedicated to preserving and teaching the rich local railroad history of Jackson Madison County and surrounding area, to show the impact the railroads had on America, to inspire public interest in railroading, and to help preserve railroading’s past and future while promoting fun and safety.11

Public programming is well underway at the depot, with potential for more expansion, especially with the input of the Parks and Recreation Department. In addition to live music and large-screen projected movies, programs can be developed to capitalize on the depot’s unique position as the best-preserved publicly-owned depot on the N.C. & St.L. Railway in Middle Tennessee. The Cowan Railroad Museum, for example, hosts trainspotting events, with live radio feed from CSX and an Advanced Train Control System monitor.12 These technologies are not necessary, however, for an enjoyable and entertaining event focusing on the many trains that thunder through the downtown corridor.

12 “Trainspotting at Cowan, Tennessee,” Cowan Railroad Museum,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FUNCTION</th>
<th>SHORT-TERM NEEDS</th>
<th>LONG-TERM NEEDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting space</td>
<td>Nothing: building already stores folding tables and chairs that can be set up in Community Room. HVAC systems: meetings during summer and winter will need indoor climate adjustment. Staffing: someone (volunteer or Town of Smyrna official) will need to unlock the building before the event, be on hand to answer initial questions, and return to lock the building upon the event’s completion.</td>
<td>Internet access: one outlet in which to plug an Ethernet cable for minimum access; Wi-fi access throughout the building or via hotspot device for connecting multiple users at once. Projector screen: a free-standing screen that collapses for easy storage and portability is one option; a wall-mounted draw-down screen is another. Telecomm: land-line connection through phone jack and dedicated phone number. Window coverings: meetings that focus on a projector screen may need to block out ambient light. Additional electrical outlets: for plugging-in of equipment such as laptops and projectors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallery</td>
<td>Same as above. Cleaning supplies: these include trash bins, mops, surface cleaners, and labor.</td>
<td>Additional electrical outlets. [Specialized art supplies and equipment should be brought in by facility renters and users, and removed upon completion of event.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>Same as above.</td>
<td>Same as above for Internet access, projector screen, window coverings, and electrical outlets. Wall-mounted dry-erase white board: this can serve as a projector screen as well, instead of an actual roll-up screen. Teacher resources: lesson activities using the depot as a primary source.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitors center / Museum</td>
<td>Same as above. Staffing: volunteers or committee members may serve for scheduled group visits and special events. Exhibit panels: design costs, printing costs, mounting supplies, [optional] hollow-core doors.</td>
<td>Depot brochures: copies of existing brochure can be printed and made available to visitors; also, a new brochure about the depot’s history and significance can be designed and handed out. Collections policy: should the committee choose to display artifacts inside the building, a policy is advised. Insurance: this is a potential additional expense, depending on the nature of the collections. Display cabinet: preferably with barometric control and interior spotlighting for better collections management and viewing. Locking mechanism a must.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage development</td>
<td>Updated Web presence: volunteers can help in consolidating, updating, and adding more information and images to depot Facebook page and Web pages. Mission statement: depot committee can articulate this and add to Web site. Public entertainment events: movie night, for instance, requires projector and screen; trainspotting requires railroad schedules (at minimum; RR radio for enthusiasts).</td>
<td>Updated brochure or rack card: design and printing can be accomplished at low cost by using same vendors as for exhibit panels. Committee members or volunteers can transport or mail copies to visitor sites. Determination of National Register eligibility: the committee is encouraged to seek help from a preservation organization or consultant for this process; costs vary. Formation of a Friends 501(c)3 group: dedicated group of volunteers required for filing requisite papers, organizing board of directors, raising funds, and planning programs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXHIBIT PANELS: TEXT & IMAGES

The following text and images constitute the CHP’s plan for nine interpretive panels that can form the backbone of the depot’s museum exhibitions. Panels 1 and 2 are recommended for the Community Room, while Panels 3-8 are recommended for the Museum Room. Recommended placement is suggested through the sketches provided on the immediately following pages. (Drawings not to scale.)

Images have been inserted into the text merely to suggest the interplay between paragraphs and photographs on the finished panels, and not as an actual plan for panel design. Peruse the many exhibit panels at the Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County for more ideas on panel design.

A list of abbreviated image names and corresponding captions appears after the panel text; these abbreviated image names match those provided on the CD of high-resolution image files.

Be sure to note that each caption ought to include a courtesy line that indicates the source for the image.
Smyrna depot: Panel placement

Community Room (open space)

Nashville

New restrooms

1. freight doors
2. windows
3. Scale
4. freight doors
5. door
6. windows
7. door
8. freight doors
9. L-entrance
Daily Notes Smyrna Depot: Heritage Room

Date: 9/28/14 NTS

Panel 1: Entrance handicap ramp needs to be installed

Panel 2: Depot as heart of crossroads

Panel 3: Agriculture and transport

Panel 4: Moving the nation's mail

Panel 5: Large exhibit case: Smyrna and the railroad

Panel 6: Tunnels, highways, Sky Harbour

Panel 7: Airways

Panel 8: War and transport, Civil War

Panel 9: Smyrna today

Modern-era artifacts

Railroad artifacts

Agriculture artifacts

Freight door

Small window

Freight door

Small window

Mailroom artifact hangs here

Scale
Panels 1 & 2: The Smyrna Depot: Heart of a Community, Crossroads of the South

PANEL 1:
The Smyrna Depot is at the very heart of this thriving community. At this spot the town of Smyrna began in the 1850s as a vision of local landowners to build a new place of promise and permanence on the Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad. John F. and Silas Tucker owned the land where this depot stands. They named the town after their church, the nearby Smyrna Presbyterian Church.

In those days successful farms and plantations were everywhere in the fertile land of northern Rutherford County. Their agricultural products—corn, timber, and grain—found markets throughout the South by way of the railroad.

War and occupation during the Civil War from 1861-1865 only delayed the promise of this railroad town. When the expanded Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railway built this brick depot in 1873, Smyrna entered a new era in its history, one where transportation, whether by rail, highway, or the sky, took center stage.

The Smyrna Depot, ca. 1940, during the height of rail travel.
The depot as it looked after 1970. *Courtesy of Albert Gore, Sr., Research Center (Hoover Collection).*

People wait to board a train in the 1960s. Regularly scheduled passenger trains served Smyrna for more than one hundred years. *Courtesy of Albert Gore, Sr., Research Center (Hoover Collection).*

People wait for their train on the platform, ca. 1940s.
For 100 years Front Street was Smyrna’s Main Street. Facing the depot, handsome one- and two-story brick buildings reflected its early prosperity and development as a railroad town.

Smyrna became much more than what it had been—all because of modern transportation—in the first half of the twentieth century. First in the 1920s came the Dixie Highway, which linked Chicago and Miami as it passed along the west side of Smyrna. In 1929, Sky Harbor, the first major Nashville-area airport, opened between Smyrna and Murfreesboro.

Then, as the nation prepared itself for world war in 1941, military officials picked Smyrna for a new army air base, later designated as Sewart Air Force Base. Within ten years the four-lane Nashville Highway added another layer of businesses along South Lowry Street, again facing the depot and railroad tracks. Smyrna, by the 1950s, was a major southern transportation crossroads.

Smyrna’s connections meant its residents and business could reach anywhere. In 1981 Nissan Corporation, urged by local and state officials, understood that promise and broke ground in Smyrna for its first major American factory. A boom started that decade that has never stopped.

And it all began at this little brick depot by the railroad tracks.

Aerial view of downtown Smyrna ca. 1930. Note the many different rail cars by the depot
View of Lowry Street in the early 1920s. Note the depot on the upper right side.

Winter view of Front Street, ca. 1940s.

The Bank of Smyrna opened in 1904 and was renamed the First National Bank in 1911. The building seen here dates to 1910. *Courtesy of Rutherford County Archives.*

This 1948 shot of Lowry Street shows the multiple businesses that paralleled the railroad mainline. Note: The picture is mislabeled as “Front St.” *Courtesy of Rutherford County Archives.*
Panel 3: The Railroad Freight Room

The scale to your left has been part of the depot for decades. It had a single but very important job: to tell the stationmaster the weight of anything to be shipped on the railroad. The weight determined the cost of shipping, thus the profit that companies could make from shipping goods and agricultural products. State laws regulated freight tariffs in an attempt to keep the rates fair and equitable.

The freight room was where the stationmaster kept goods until the correct train arrived to transport the items to their destination, from Nashville to Murfreesboro to farther points on the line in Chattanooga or St. Louis.

In larger cities, the railroad’s profitable freight business was separated into a separate building, known as the freight house. But in small towns like Smyrna, companies constructed “combination depots,” a single building where a single employee could operate both the passenger and freight traffic.

The station agent handled all of the freight orders for the depot. Courtesy of Tennessee State Library and Archives.

Wagon loads of cotton traveled from the cotton gin to the depot for transport, ca. 1920. Courtesy of Rutherford County Archives.

Local freight was loaded and unloaded at the depot and then shipped to bigger markets for sale. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Businesses, like the Smith Grain Co., lined the tracks through Smyrna for easier loading and unloading.
Railroads were the primary way the government moved mail across the country until the age of the automobile arrived. This freight room connected the local Smyrna post office to a national network of mail delivery. In small towns like Smyrna, handling the mail proved to be much more profitable than the relatively small number of passengers who took the train at this depot.

Specially designed postal cars, operated by the Railway Mail Service, picked up mail at this depot. Trains didn’t have to stop for the mail to be transferred from the depot to the railroad. Stationmasters sometimes would hand-off a mailbag to an employee leaning out of the moving train. This exchange was dangerous.

A new invention, the Ward mailbag catcher, appeared in 1869. The Ward device was made of a steel arm extending from the railway mail car that could “catch” a mailbag placed on a fixed wood or metal crane that extended high over the tracks. The invention made the exchange safer and also meant that the railroad would pick up mail at any time in the day.
Smyrna's railroad history begins in 1845 when local residents joined the effort to raise enough money to build the Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad. The railroad arrived in Rutherford County by 1851. The first depot in Smyrna was built c. 1855.

After the devastation of the Civil War, the company quickly regained its fortunes, led by president Edmund Cole. In 1873 the company announced that it would expand its lines westward, and renamed itself as the Nashville, Chattanooga, & St. Louis Railway, abbreviated as the NC&St.L. It built the current Smyrna depot in 1873.

To the north, the powerful Louisville & Nashville Railroad wanted to curtail the expansion of the rival NC&St.L. In 1880, without Cole’s knowledge, the Louisville & Nashville bought control of the NC&St.L. It allowed the NC&St.L to keep its name and identity, and continue to operate as a semi-independent transportation system until a formal merger of the two lines took place in 1957.

The NC&St.L made several changes to the Smyrna depot over the decades. With the arrival of Jim Crow segregation laws by the turn of the twentieth century, it altered the interior of the passenger station to have separate areas for white and for African American passengers. This segregation of space was found in almost every Southern depot. As the number of passengers boomed during World War II—especially workers and servicemen traveling to the Sewart air base—the company re-organized and renovated the interior of the passenger side of the depot.

In 1950 Smyrna almost lost its historic depot. A train derailed and crashed into the building’s south end, and took out the ticket office bay extension that faced the tracks. The company chose to repair the building and keep it as an operating passenger station.
The last regularly scheduled passenger train passed by the Smyrna depot in March 1968. But the noise of fast-moving trains remains part of the depot experience. Especially after the opening of the Nissan plant in 1983, freight trains roar past the station every day, delivering finished vehicles across the continent.

**NC&StL Named Trains**
- Dixie Flyer
- Dixie Flagler
- Dixieland
- Dixie Limited
- The Lookout
- The Georgian

1935 Time Table for the Nashville, Chattanooga, & St. Louis Railway. *Courtesy of Joseph Bryan.*

View of down Smyrna, ca. 1930s. Front Street is to the left and Lowry Street is to the right. Note the depot in the middle next to the tracks. *Courtesy of Rutherford County Archives.*
(Optional additions to Panel 5.)

Nashville, Chattanooga, & St. Louis Railway Corporate Timeline

1845  Chartered as the Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad by TN General Assembly
1852  First Train Reaches Murfreesboro
1854  First Train Reaches Chattanooga
1868  Acquires the Nashville & Northwestern and the Hickman & Obion Railroads reaching the Mississippi River
1873  Reincorporated as the Nashville, Chattanooga, & St. Louis Railway
1877  Acquires the Tennessee & Pacific Railroad
1880  Louisville & Nashville Railroad gains controlling interest in a hostile takeover. Allows NC&StL to operate as separate company
1890  Leases Western & Atlantic Railroad from the state of Georgia extending line to Atlanta
1957  Merges with the Louisville & Nashville
1982  L&N merges with Seaboard Coast Line to form the Seaboard System
1986  Seaboard System merges with Chessie System to form CSX

NC&StL Presidents

1848-64  Col. Vernon K Stevenson
1864-68  Michael Burns
1868-80  Col. Edmund W. Cole
1880-84  James D. Porter
1884-1906  Maj. John W. Thomas, Sr.
1906-13  John W. Thomas, Jr.
1913-14  Maj. Eugene C. Lewis
1914-18  John Howe Peyton
1918-26  Whitefoord R. Cole
1926-34  James B. Hill
1934-46  Fitzgerald Hill
1946-57  W.S. Hackworth
Even before Smyrna became a spot on the map, the Nashville to Murfreesboro Turnpike passed through here in the late 1830s. When the railroad came a decade later, it largely followed the turnpike route, beginning a link between rail and highway that still marks Smyrna today.

The Dixie Highway began in the 1910s and was finished the next decade. A private corporation named the Dixie Highway Association relied on state and local support and funds to complete its route from Sault Ste. Marie, Canada, and Chicago, Illinois, to Miami, Florida. The original route passed along the town’s west side and became designated U.S. Highway 41 in the late 1920s. The route is now known as Old Murfreesboro Highway, which connects to the Smyrna depot by Hazelwood Drive.

The four-lane U.S. Highway 41 created an entirely new transportation corridor—known as South Lowry Street—on Smyrna once it was completed in the early 1950s. For the next twenty years, commercial growth concentrated along South Lowry, a pattern that did not change until the early 1980s.

Tennessee Highway 266, named the Sam Ridley Parkway, was built to connect traffic on Interstate Highway I-24 to the Smyrna airport. In the 1980s and 1990s it developed into a commercial corridor that rivaled that of U.S. 41.

In order to speed traffic to the new Nissan factory, Tennessee Highway 102 was built to connect the factory to I-24. This four-lane road is known as Lee Victory Parkway from the interstate to the intersection with U.S. 41. From there to the factory it is named Nissan Parkway.

1918 map of the Dixie Highway from Nashville to Chattanooga. Courtesy of Tennessee State Library and Archives.
Smyrna was home to the first Nashville municipal airport, known as Sky Harbor. Construction of the airport began in 1929 on a farm south of Smyrna along the Dixie Highway. The field opened on October 14, 1929, with dedication ceremonies highlighted by an aerial daredevil flight from World War I ace, Jimmy Doolittle.


The airport operated as the region’s primary connection to the skies until Nashville opened Berry Field in 1937. It remained a local airport for years afterward until it became a light industrial site at the end of the twentieth century.
Panel 8: War and Transport

The most important airport in Smyrna’s history developed out of the nation’s preparations for World War II. Established as Smyrna Army Airfield in December 1941, two weeks following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the base began as training grounds for army bombers. The over 3,000-acre base gave pilots plenty of room to learn to navigate huge B-17 Flying Fortress and B-24 Liberator bombers.

The army deactivated the base in 1947 but the following year, the military reopened and expanded the facility as the Smyrna Air Force Base, home to the 314th Troop Carrier Wing, which was the air force’s primary troop carrier unit in the eastern United States. Once again, the roar of huge planes dotted the skies over Smyrna.

In 1950 the base was renamed Sewart Air Force Base, to honor Allan J. Sewart, Jr., of Nashville, who had died in a bombing mission over the Solomon Islands in World War II.

As the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union intensified in the 1950s, Sewart’s mission expanded to include helicopter units and C-130 Hercules transports. In 1959, the air force moved 463rd Troop Carrier Wing to Sewart, and from that point until 1971 the air force moved different units in and out of Sewart as it waged war in Southeast Asia.

The air force announced in 1965 that it would close Sewart but the demands of war meant that military use did not end until 1971. After closing the base, the military first transferred the airport to the Corps of Engineers, which left the property in the control of the county, the state of Tennessee, and the Metro Nashville Airport Authority. Today the Smyrna/Rutherford County Airport Authority manages the old Sewart base for a constantly expanding private and corporate air travel business.
A line of C-130s stationed at Sewart Air Force Base. *Courtesy of Rutherford County Archives.*

The Air Force staffed a weather station at Sewart to follow and record local weather conditions. *Courtesy of Tennessee State Library and Archives.*

Aerial view of the barracks and administration buildings on the Sewart Air Force Base.
Panel 9: Smyrna Today

Over 40,000 people call Smyrna home. Every day they depend on the city’s historic transportation corridors to get themselves to work, their children to school, and to get to shopping and recreational areas.

The bustling community of the last forty years began at this spot, where a brick depot connected the town’s first residents to what was in the mid-1800s the most modern technology possible—the railroad.

But those who made Smyrna home in those early years would have never envisioned the world that later residents created out of those transportation connections. Twenty-first century factories and schools, the recreational wonderland of Percy Priest Lake, and the thousands of modern homes—those are the places of Smyrna today.

Yet, everything can be traced back to this spot—the heart of the community. Recall and learn from the history and heritage of Smyrna, and dream about the futures still to be built in this city.

[Panel is designed to introduce a collage of images, emphasizing recent developments, from Nissan to Stewartsboro School, to the Motlow campus, etc.]
Panel Images and Captions

Panel 1- Overview/Depot
- 01 A Depot City- The Smyrna Depot, ca. 1940, during the height of rail travel.
- 01 B People AGC- People wait to board a train in the 1960s. Regularly scheduled passenger trains served Smyrna for more than one hundred years. Courtesy of Albert Gore, Sr., Research Center (Hoover Collection).
- 01 C People City- People wait for their train on the platform, ca. 1940s.
- 01 D Depot AGC- The depot as it looked after 1970. Courtesy of Albert Gore, Sr., Research Center (Hoover Collection).

Panel 2- Front/Lowry St
- 02 A Aerial City- Aerial view of downtown Smyrna in the late 1930s. Note the many different rail cars by the depot
- 02 B Lowry City- View of Lowry Street in the early 1920s. Note the depot on the upper right side.
- 02 C SP Lowry RCA- This 1948 shot of Lowry Street shows the multiple businesses that paralleled the railroad mainline. Note: The picture is mislabeled as “Front St.” Courtesy of Rutherford County Archives.
- 02 D Bank RCA- The Bank of Smyrna opened in 1904 and was renamed the First National Bank in 1911. The building seen here dates to 1910. Courtesy of Rutherford County Archives.
- 02 E Front St. City- Winter view of Front Street, ca. 1940s.

Panel 3- Shipments via Rail
- 03 A Station Agent TSLA- The station agent handled all of the freight orders for the depot. Courtesy of Tennessee State Library and Archives.
- 03 B SP Cotton RCA- Wagon loads of cotton traveled from the cotton gin to the depot for transport, ca. 1920. Courtesy of Rutherford County Archives.
- 03 C Freight Scale LOC- The freight scale similar to the one in this room weighed goods and determined the shipment price. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.
- 03 D Smith Grain City- Businesses, like the Smith Grain Co., lined the tracks through Smyrna for easier loading and unloading.
- 03 E Unloading Cotton- Local freight was loaded and unloaded at the depot and then shipped to bigger markets for sale. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Panel 4- Mail
- 04 A Mail Car 1 LOC- Loading sacks of mail onto a Railway Post Office car. Courtesy of the Library of Congress. [This caption refers to both 04 A and 04 B below.]
- 04 B Mail Car 2 LOC- [See above.]
• 04 C RPO LOC- Interior of a Railway Post Office Car, ca. 1930. Note all of the slots and open bags of mail. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.
• 04 D RPO Pickup NWHS- Trains picked up mail on the fly using the RPO’s hook. Courtesy of the Norfolk & Western Historical Society.
• 04 E RPO Hook LOC- A postal employee raises the hook on a RPO in the 1930s. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Panel 5- Railroads
• 05 A Tracks RCA- View of down Smyrna, ca. 1930s. Front Street is to the left and Lowry Street is to the right. Note the depot in the middle next to the tracks. Courtesy of Rutherford County Archives.
• 05 B Time Table JB- 1935 Time Table for the Nashville, Chattanooga, & St. Louis Railway. Courtesy of Joseph Bryan.
• 05 C Rail Workers 1920 TSLA- Track gang stationed out of Smyrna in 1920. Courtesy of Tennessee State Library and Archives.
• 05 D Wreck AGC- The July 1957 train wreck destroyed an entire wall of the Smyrna Depot. Courtesy of Albert Gore, Sr., Research Center (Hoover Collection).
• 05 E Track Gang B AGC- Members of the Smyrna track gang stand outside a tunnel. Courtesy of Albert Gore, Sr., Research Center (Hoover Collection).

Panel 6- Automobiles
• 06 A Dixie Highway TSLA- 1918 map of the Dixie Highway from Nashville to Chattanooga. Courtesy of Tennessee State Library and Archives.
• 06 B Front St AGC- Front Street in the 1960s. Note the depot on the right-hand side of the image. Courtesy of Albert Gore, Sr., Research Center (Hoover Collection).
• 06 C Chevrolet City- Chevrolet dealership office in downtown Smyrna.

Panel 7- Sky Harbor
• 07 A SP SkyHar Opening RCA- Festivities on the opening day of Sky Harbor airport. Courtesy of Rutherford County Archives.
• 07 C SP SkyHar RCA- Sky Harbor hangar, ca. 1923. Courtesy of Rutherford County Archives.
• 07 D shsSkyHarEatery RCA- Sky Harbor featured a small diner for travelers and pilots to get a quick bite to eat. Courtesy of Rutherford County Archives.

Panel 8- Sewart AFB
• 08 A Sewart Base Aerial TSLA- Aerial view of Sewart Air Force Base in 1950. Courtesy of Tennessee State Library and Archives.
• 08 B Hangar AGC- A C-130 plane being pulled out of one of the hangars at the Sewart Air Force Base. Courtesy of Albert Gore, Sr., Research Center (Hoover Collection).
• 08 C C-130 AGC- A C-130 plane in mid-air. Courtesy of Albert Gore, Sr., Research Center (Hoover Collection).
• 08 D SPsewart RCA- A line of C-130s stationed at Sewart Air Force Base. Courtesy of Rutherford County Archives.
• 08 E Sewart Weather TSLA- The Air Force staffed a weather station at Sewart to follow and record local weather conditions. Courtesy of Tennessee State Library and Archives.
• 08 F Sewart Barracks- Aerial view of the barracks and administration buildings on the Sewart Air Force Base.
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Town of Smyrna. “Train Depot Brochure.”