

New Redford signs salute area's railroading heritage

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New "Welcome to Redford" signs on Telegraph and Grand River take note of the community's railroading past.

The new signs take note of railroads and interurban rail lines that helped lead to the development of Redford, Farmington and Livonia.

"We used the lettering that was used on maps in 1876," said Mary Haney, a Redford Township trustee, who is active with the Redford Township Historical Society.

There are two new signs on Telegraph. One at Joy Road and the other at Puritan. Two are also on Grand River, one at Seven Mile and the other at Inkster.

Haney said the rail system in Redford affected the entire Western Wayne County area. "People used them even to go to school. A lot of kids used to ride to Farmington High School."

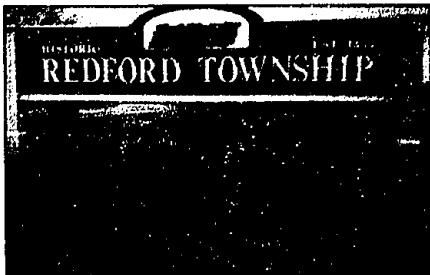
While interurban rail service brought people to the Redford area as early as 1876, the 1890s were the boom time for the light rail system.

According to the book, "When Eastern Michigan Rode the Rails," the Lake Division ran a line through what is now northwest Detroit, Redford and into Farmington. That line continued to Pontiac.

A 1915 map shows the line running through Sand Hill, Clarenceville and into Farmington. Sand Hill was an early Redford community. The line from Detroit to Farmington was a major one, running along Grand River.

"In those days Grand River was not the developed business street it later became," according to the book.

"In fact, the Detroit City Railway had decided earlier not to



Ode to past: This is one of the new "Welcome to Redford" signs, which features lettering used on maps in 1876.

"People used them (trains) even to go to school. A lot of kids used to ride to Farmington High School."

Mary Haney
—Historian

build a horsecar line on that street feeling there would not be sufficient business."

A small company eventually built the line and it was electrified in 1895.

"Grand River was one of the last major streets leading of from the city to receive an electric interurban line," the book said.

In that year, Redford Township was granted a franchise to operate the line along Grand River.

The first effort failed, but by 1898 Redford and Farmington were both allowed to run the electric rail cars.

Here's a look at the fares of the time.

From Detroit to Southfield Road, the fare was 15 cents or 10 tickets for a \$1; to Sand Hill (Redford), the cost was 15 cents

or seven tickets for a \$1.

And while many of us think of crime and high speed police chases as part of modern life, they aren't new.

According to the book, a Detroit newspaper in 1901 ran an account of a police chase along the Grand River line.

The account stated that a thief in a horse drawn wagon, stole copper wire from the rail line. It was discovered by police, who chased the culprit for 14 miles, "under all kids of travel."

At one point the thief noticed his wagon was being chased. He unhitched the horse from his wagon, and led police on another chase for another two miles before being captured.

Some things don't change in Redford.



Running for good cause

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As the official, number one Primary Emergency Information Station for all of Southeast Michigan, make sure AM 760 WJR is part of your plan.

With the approaching New Year, we've all heard stories about the importance of being prepared for any problems that may occur as we enter the year 2000.

If you're a regular listener of AM 760 WJR, you already know we've had an on-going, on-air initiative to help separate the facts from the fiction as we speed towards the new millennium. For example, we've been airing special features during the Paul W. Smith morning show, the news department has been focusing on the various facets of the Y2K frenzy, and we've taken lots of calls from listeners like you, who have had a chance to have their questions answered.

Now, it's important to remind you that no matter what takes place as the New Year dawns, AM 760 WJR will be here to keep you updated and informed.

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So, as we forge ahead into the year 2000 with friends and family, all of us at AM 760 WJR wish you a prosperous and safe new year.

We're looking forward to continuing our tradition of having great personalities, the latest news 24-hours a day, the BIG 7 Traffic, the most dependable weather, along with all the sports.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Fezzy

Michael D. Fezzy
President/General Manager



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