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MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY REOPENS PIONEER ZEPHYR TRAIN AFTER SWEEPING RENOVATIONS TO HISTORIC “SILVER STREAK”

Zephyr set 1934 speed record, reinventing train travel and design

CHICAGO (March 4, 2021)—The Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago (MSI) is reopening one of its most recognizable and largest artifacts, the *Pioneer Zephyr*. After a year of renovation and conservation work, this boldly reimagined exhibition invites guests to explore the train that reinvented travel and design.

The record-setting diesel passenger train stretches 60 meters (about one-third of a city block), welcoming guests as they enter the Museum. It has been part of MSI’s collection since 1960.

“The *Pioneer Zephyr* is a beloved piece of transportation and Museum history that has wowed guests for generations,” said John Llewellyn, creative lead at MSI. “We are thrilled to reopen this Museum icon for guests to experience up close its beautiful design and incredible story which sets the stage for what to expect as they explore the rest of MSI.”

The Museum has updated the exhibition to bring the Zephyr to life for new generations.

Highlights include:

- **Stunning setting:** The existing gallery was modified to show off the train in a dramatically visual way, with new lighting, gigantic media and period-accurate finishes and fabrics. A 170-foot-long projected media piece alongside the train captures the future of aerodynamics and makes it feel like you’re in motion when you’re on board the train.
- **Greater accessibility:** Guests can explore the entire train at their own pace. Improved ramps, a wheelchair lift, tactile map and other enhancements make the *Zephyr’s* story available to more guests.
- **Real stories:** Peek into the lives of the people who worked and traveled aboard the train. Reflect on innovation and heroism as well as racial and gender inequality on the railroad as you listen to oral histories unearthed from the vaults of the MSI Collection.
- **Interactive fun:** Learn about streamlining in a virtual wind tunnel and try your hand at shot welding, the revolutionary material-science breakthrough that allowed the *Zephyr* to be built. Media pieces detail the drama of the *Zephyr’s* historic 1934 “Dawn to Dusk” run from Denver to Chicago. At the far end of the gallery find an animated cyclorama about the fleet of Zephyrs that came after the *Pioneer Zephyr*.

The *Pioneer Zephyr*—named for the Greek god of the west wind—is renowned for being one of the most futuristic machines ever to ride the rails. Built in 1934 to boost spirits (and save a railroad) during the Great Depression, it was an engineering marvel. On May 26, 1934 the

Zephyr began a nonstop "Dawn to Dusk" speed run from Denver to Chicago, completing the trip in just over 13 hours and ushering in a new height of train travel and style.

Sporting a streamlined stainless-steel body and a cutting-edge diesel-electric engine, the *Zephyr* revolutionized the look of rail travel, while reducing fuel and maintenance costs. Shocked at first, the public eventually fell in love with all things "streamlined" and the *Zephyr's* sleek form was soon mirrored in everyday items from transportation to toasters.

The renovation of the *Pioneer Zephyr* was made possible through the generous support of The Grainger Foundation of Lake Forest, Ill.

The Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago (MSI), one of the largest science museums in the world, offers world-class and uniquely interactive experiences that inspire inventive genius and foster curiosity. From groundbreaking and award-winning exhibits that can't be found anywhere else, to hands-on opportunities that make you the scientist—a visit to MSI is where fun and learning mix. Through its Welcome to Science Initiative, the Museum offers a variety of student, teacher and family educational programs that make a difference in communities and contribute to MSI's larger vision: to inspire and motivate children to achieve their full potential in science, technology, medicine and engineering. The Museum is exceptionally grateful for the support of its donors and guests, who make its work possible. MSI is also supported in part by the people of Chicago through the Chicago Park District. For more information, visit msichicago.org or call (773) 684-1414.