All Aboard!

In 1868, Reuben Wells, master mechanic for the Jefferson, Madison, and Indianapolis Railroad, designed a 35-foot-long, 55-ton steam engine to conquer Indiana's Madison Hill, the steepest railroad grade in the United States. That engine, named after its designer, is the centerpiece of *All Aboard!* on the Lower Level of the museum.

All Aboard! visitors are welcomed by an entrance display of a G-gauge model train layout. One train winds its way through the Lower Level and returns, leading visitors into the exhibit. Young visitors enjoy the entrance train layout's tunnels and Plexiglas® bubbles, which enable them to crawl inside for a close-up view of the moving toy trains. They can also operate some of the control lights, switches, and signals on the track.

Inside *All Aboard!* visitors are transported to 1890s Madison, Ind., through an artistic re-creation that places the Reuben Wells engine in the context of its historic role. At scheduled times during the day, the engine pulls out of the station via a special effects program that features theatrical lighting, strobe-lit wheels, moving shadows, and appropriate engine, bell, and whistle sounds.

While visiting the train station, patrons of all ages can engage in fantasy play. They can sell tickets or send a Morse code message. While waiting for their pretend train to arrive, they can read books about real and fictional trains or play with Thomas the Tank Engine™ sets. Computers in the station also invite visitors to explore the history of the Reuben Wells, design a railroad, or race trains.

Once on board the train's tool car, visitors can take a short "ride" on the rails. Speakers and woofers in the seats of the car and video screens of moving scenery in the windows create the illusion of movement. While "traveling," they can also enjoy a wide range of train videos.

All of these elements work together to create a space full of adventure in which visitors can learn about trains, past and present.