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PRESS RELEASE

Bergün, 7 September 2012

The first 100 days of the Albula Railway Museum in Bergün: The Albula Railway Museum is a success

The Albula Railway Museum in Bergün opened its doors on 2 June 2012. The initial results show that the museum is meeting with great interest among a highly diverse public from Switzerland and abroad, the region is profiting from numerous visitors and the number of people entering the museum (15,830 in the first hundred days) even exceeds expectations.

Something is happening by the railway station in Bergün. The Albula Railway Museum in the former armoury, with the fresh facade and the crocodile locomotive, is an eye-catcher which is casting a spell over people from far and wide. Inside, a fascinating world full of historical objects, stories and pictures opens up to the visitors. This is a highlight of the Albula railway, one of the boldest railway projects in the Alps. It took over 14 years to get from the initial idea to the completed museum and over seven million francs were raised in order to set up this meeting point for railway enthusiasts and culture vultures of all ages from far and wide. The initial results show that it was well worth it.

15,830 visitors in 100 days

In a short period of time, the Albula Railway Museum has become an attraction. Many visitors travel to Bergün in order to look around the museum. They come from all over Switzerland, but also from countries such as Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Colombia or Japan. As well as visiting the museum, they also spend time in the village of Bergün and its surroundings. They are railway enthusiasts with a particular interest in the technical aspects and the historical rolling stock, as well as curious individuals informing themselves about the financial, social and cultural effects of the railway. For families, the museum offers a fascinating addition to the holiday programme, an alternative for when the weather is bad, or a popular day-trip destination. Despite technical teething problems, the virtual ride in the driver's cab of the historical crocodile locomotive is also being met with particular enthusiasm.

Stimulus for the region

From the beginning, it was clear that the museum was intended to stimulate Bergün. The people behind the scenes managed to achieve this. The contracts for the construction and installation of the museum were awarded to local companies whenever possible; a large portion of the overall costs flowed into the valley. The museum restaurant, with original seating from various restaurant cars and lounge cars, is doing brisk business – up to three people are employed here, depending on demand. The museum has created up to ten additional part-time jobs, depending on how they are counted. "The Albula Railway Museum is an asset to the region," says Yves Broggi, President of the Albula Railway Museum Foundation. "Not only does it bring jobs which are secure on the long term, it also raises the profile and increases the appeal of Bergün for a public with diverse interests. This provides an important stimulus for the development of tourism in the region."



Financing with a broad basis

Fundraising was a key aspect of the preparatory work. The railway museum managed to obtain financial support from strong partners, such as the Rhaetian Railway and the canton of Graubünden. Major foundations and associations, numerous benefactors (private individuals and organisations), patrons and small donors showed significant commitment to the project. Moreover, the offer to purchase shares is also being actively seized upon. "The Albula Railway Museum is a project with a future, and for the future," says Andreas Dürst, President of Bahnmuseum AG's Board of Directors. "The financing, secured for the long term, and the success since the opening make us feel confident that we can secure the business and keep adding new highlights (and drawing more attention) to the museum."

More on the Albula Railway Museum in Bergün

In the presentation conceived by exhibition organiser Pius Tschumi, multimedia rooms and original exhibits convey historical and current aspects of Switzerland's most spectacular railway line to visitors, along with information on the story of its construction and on the financial and social changes which this entailed.

Railway museum opening hours:

Open TUE–FRI 10 am – 5 pm, SAT & SUN 10 am – 6 pm.

Further information:

www.bahnmuseum-albula.ch

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About the Albula Railway Museum

The Albula Railway Museum represents the unique cultural and historical merits of what is probably Europe's most spectacular Alpine railway. The combination of nature, culture, architecture and the museum itself has enormous potential, which we want to tap into, in a meaningful way with public appeal – directly incorporating the Albula/Bernina landscape (which can be experienced every day and is part of the Rhaetian Railway, a UNESCO World Heritage site) as well as the industrious population and the active tourism. The museum lends another aspect to the Rhaetian Railway as a UNESCO World Heritage site: it tells, and elaborates on, stories and facts which are addressed on the Rhaetian Railway UNESCO World Heritage site's long-distance hike, with presentations of content and local info points, thus creating an additional attraction. The presented railway experience trail between Bergün and Preda virtually constitutes the museum's exterior: topics conveyed in the museum can be experienced at first hand. The educational railway trail and the Rhaetian Railway UNESCO World Heritage site's long-distance hike lead to this place for railway enthusiasts and jointly invite travellers to visit the museum. More information can be found at www.bahnmuseum-albula.ch.

If you have questions, please contact:

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