

SAN DIEGO MODEL RAILROAD MUSEUM, CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL TOPOGRAPHICAL MAP WITH TOUCHSCREEN KIOSK



In 1953, San Diego newspaper publisher James S. Copley commissioned topographical mapmaker Wallace F. Hamilton to create a 3-D map depicting San Diego County and adjacent Imperial County from the air.

Completed in 1955, the map was intended to highlight the advantages of life in the Southwest. More than 100 bulbs installed in the map were illuminated by buttons corresponding to location names placed on three sides of the structure.

The huge steel-and-plywood map was sent on several tours of major cities, including New York and Chicago, then donated to the San Diego Unified School District in 1959.

Forty years later, with funding from the James S. Copley Foundation, the map was painstakingly restored for placement in its new home — the lobby of the San Diego Model Railroad Museum in Balboa Park.

Location bulbs were rewired to a custom controller designed by Signal-Innova to respond to actions from a newly developed touchscreen kiosk. Lamps on the map now illuminate when corresponding location pages are selected on the touchscreen.

Featuring a presentation of “The Railroad Lines of San Diego County,” the touchscreen program provides a brief overview of the development of San Diego railroading.

Visitors can choose a railroad line, then select a page about the locations of the line’s depots. Historical photos of the stations during their heyday contrast with contemporary color photos of the depots as they are now used — as a museum, visitor center, church and even a private residence.

Most of the railroad stations date from the end of the 19th century and the early decades of the 20th. The stations were often the focal point of the towns’ commercial and social activities.

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The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad brought the first trains to San Diego County in 1881, providing service between San Diego and National City. As the railroads developed, so did the region. Tracks connected the West with the rest of the country and safely moved people and goods to and from the area.

To present this historical perspective, the San Diego Model Railroad Museum based its touchscreen kiosk on a booklet, "The Railroad Stations of San Diego County: Then and Now." Its author, James N. Price, supplied contemporary color photos of the depots while the historical photos were obtained from the San Diego Historical Society.

Signal-Innova provided the touchscreen hardware and lamp interface controller, designed the graphic treatment, and developed the content structure, narrative and programming.

For more information about the San Diego Model Railroad Museum touchscreen and other interactive projects by Signal-Innova, please visit our website at www.Signal-Innova.com.