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**DON'T MISS THIS TRAIN!
AS THOMAS THE TANK ENGINE™ CHUGS INTO SPENCER
AT DAY OUT WITH THOMAS™ 2006: COME RIDE THE RAILS TOUR**

**Thomas the Tank Engine™ to Visit North Carolina Transportation Museum
Sept. 29 – Oct. 1 and Oct. 6 - 8
Tickets On Sale Now!!**

Spencer, NC – Thomas the Tank Engine is set to roll into Spencer for the **Day Out With Thomas™ 2006: Come Ride the Rails Tour**. The 11th annual U.S. tour visits Spencer as part of a ten-month ride on the rails that steams into heritage railroads in over 40 U.S. cities. Over 1 million passengers are expected to ride with Thomas the Tank Engine, the classic storybook engine, at these events in 2006. This fun-filled family festival offers preschoolers and their families the opportunity to take a 25-minute ride with Thomas the Tank Engine and is sure to engineer miles of smiles for every guest. The event, which takes place Sept. 29 – Oct. 1 and Oct. 6 – 8 will be hosted by the North Carolina Transportation Museum, www.nctrans.org, at 411 S. Salisbury Ave. in Spencer.

Thomas the Tank Engine, star of *Thomas & Friends™*, broadcast weekly on PBS KIDS® and daily on PBS KIDS Sprout™ will be riding the rails across the country to visit all of his fans. This limited-engagement, one-year-only experience features a variety of *Thomas & Friends*-themed entertainment for the entire family, including:

- Meet and take a photo with **Sir Topham Hatt™**
- **Thomas & Friends Imagination Station**; featuring stamps, temporary tattoos, hands-on arts and crafts activities, coloring sheets and engineer certificates
- Storytelling, video viewing and live music

The tour provides a unique, interactive family experience at every station, offering a variety of entertaining activities that reflect the local flavor of each stop. At the N.C. Transportation Museum, activities will include: a magician, bounce houses, sidewalk chalk and bubble area, and Whistle Stop Willie.

The 25-minute train ride with Thomas the Tank Engine will depart every 45 minutes, rain or shine, between 8:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. daily. This event is expected to sell out, so advance purchase is recommended to ensure a choice of dates and times. Tickets for the **Day Out With Thomas™ 2006: Come Ride the Rails Tour** are \$16 for ages two and up.

Tickets are on sale now and are available by calling toll-free 866.468.7630 or logging onto www.nctrans.org. For more information and directions contact the N.C. Transportation Museum at 704-636-2889 or visit www.nctrans.org.

For general information or to find a **Day Out With Thomas 2006: Come Ride The Rails Tour** event near you, visit www.thomasandfriends.com.

Day Out With Thomas is presented by HIT Entertainment, www.hitentertainment.com.

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For high-resolution downloadable artwork or additional information please go to www.hitnewsonline.com, select U.S. media and then **Day Out With Thomas 2006: Come Ride The Rails Tour**.

About the N.C. Transportation Museum

The N.C. Transportation Museum in Spencer, on the 57-acre site of a former Southern Railway steam locomotive repair facility, boasts the nation's largest restored roundhouse with an impressive collection of restored locomotives and rail cars. Other exhibits include a collection of antique automobiles and other artifacts that tell the story of transportation in North Carolina. Admission is free, with a small fee for the on-site train ride, offered March-December. Regular hours are 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday and 1-5 p.m. Sundays. Winter hours (Nov.-March) are 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesdays- Saturdays, 1-5 p.m. Sundays and closed Mondays. Call 1-877-NCTM-FUN or visit www.nctrans.org.

About Thomas & Friends™

Created by a father for his son, Thomas & Friends invites children to enter a world of imagination through the tracks of a train and the words of a story. Today, families in more than 100 countries enjoy fun and adventure with their engine friends while experiencing timeless life lessons of discovery, friendship and cooperation. Thomas & Friends is making tracks to great destinations on PBS KIDS® and PBS KIDS Sprout. For more information about the world of Thomas the Tank Engine and his friends, please visit www.thomasandfriends.com.

About HIT Entertainment

HIT Entertainment, owned by private equity investment group Apax Partners since June 2005, is one of the world's leading independent children's entertainment producers and rights-owners. HIT's portfolio includes internationally renowned children's properties, such as *Bob the Builder™*, *Barney™*, *Thomas & Friends*, *Pingu™*, *Rubbadubbers™* and *Angelina Ballerina™* and HIT acts as a representative for The Wiggles® in the UK, US and Canada. HIT also owns the Guinness World Records™ publishing and television property and *Fireman Sam™*, a joint venture with S4C. Launched in 1989, HIT's lines of business span television and video production (including studios in the US and the UK), publishing, consumer products licensing and live events. With a catalog of over 1,000 hours of young children's programming, HIT sells its shows to over 240 countries worldwide, in more than 40 different languages and has operations in the UK, US, Japan and Canada. In 2005, the Company joined Comcast Corporation, PBS and Sesame Workshop to launch PBS KIDS SproutSM, a 24-hour digital cable channel and VOD service for preschoolers. For more information, visit www.hitentertainment.com.

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