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## **TORONTO RAILWAY MUSEUM'S 'TOP CONDUCTOR' HONOURED WITH PRESTIGIOUS VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD OF EXCELLENCE**

Phil Spencer, 20-year Volunteer and Former Board Chair,  
Recognized by Ontario Museum Association



**TORONTO (ON) OCTOBER 30, 2023:** – [Toronto Railway Museum](#) (TRM), the historic railway museum in stall 17 of the iconic Roundhouse building managed by the non-profit [Toronto Railway Historical Association](#), is proud to announce Phil Spencer, the visionary behind the TRM's inception and former board chair, received the prestigious [Ontario Museum Association's \(OMA\) 2023 Volunteer Service Award](#). Celebrated via a virtual presentation on October 27, Phil's invaluable contributions were highlighted, alongside numerous other well-deserved recognitions bestowed upon esteemed museum leaders from across Ontario.

“Phil Spencer’s lifelong passion for trains was channelled into volunteering with the Toronto Railway Historical Committee in 2003, culminating in the establishment of the TRM in 2010,” said **Joe Corrigan, committee chair, OMA Awards of Excellence**. “He has played a crucial role in numerous restoration projects at the TRM, including the restoration of Train Stalls 15 through 32 at [John Street Roundhouse National Historic Site](#), restoring and installing the 37-metre rotating turntable, moving and restoring former CPR Don Station to Roundhouse Park, restoring the Watchman’s Shanty



gatehouse, and much more. This was all alongside constructing the popular miniature railway attraction and a computer simulation of Toronto Rail Lands, increasing the museum's operating revenue, diversifying the museum Board, and building its volunteer group to nearly 100 'strong'."

"Many Canadians share a deep-rooted passion for railways from a young age, but there are few who successfully turn this into an enduring legacy," said **Robert Robinson, president, Canadian Railroad Historical Association**. "It is worth celebrating Phil's work in developing the TRM into a place to preserve Toronto's railway heritage, but most importantly to tell the fascinating railway story to Canadians now and into the future. We salute Phil on his leadership and great accomplishments at TRM."



"Beneath our feet and along the tracks is a rich and long history. Over many years Phil Spencer helped to protect and tell an important story of Toronto - a story of connection. The TRM is a deeply important institution, and it simply would not exist without Phil's tireless work," said **Joe Cressy, Former Toronto City Councillor**.

"The museum's success is because of the volunteers, board members and external supporters that we have had over the life of the TRM," said Phil Spencer. "I did what I could because I believe that a purpose in life is to give back. My opportunity to give back is helping preserve rail for the younger generations so that they can see a glimpse of what it was like when it was new, the experience that I had as a child."

[Click here](#) to view the congratulating video message submitted by TRM volunteers. [Learn more about the TRM](#), visiting hours, and hopping aboard the [volunteer train](#) and preserving rail history.



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## **New Online Exhibit – *On The Rails: The Experiences of Toronto's Railway Workers***

High resolution imagery and video are available upon request. **For interview opportunities, please contact our communications team at:**

Jacqueline Tyler  
Volunteer PR  
403.669.6606  
[info@jacquelinetyler.com](mailto:info@jacquelinetyler.com)

Brooklyn Zalik  
Communications and Development Lead  
416.214.9229  
[bzalik@trha.ca](mailto:bzalik@trha.ca)

### **ABOUT PHIL'S 20-YEAR HISTORY WITH THE TRM**

- 2003, he joined the Toronto Railway Historical Committee (TRHC) as a volunteer
- 2004, the TRHC became the Toronto Railway Historical Association (TRHA) when they acquired 'not for profit' status
- 2007, Phil oversaw the restoring and installing the 37-meter rotating turntable, one of the largest ever built in Canada
- 2010, the TRHA was victorious in the creation and opening the Toronto Railway Museum (TRM)
- 2013, Phil became President of the TRHA and manager of the TRM
- 2019, the TRHA became a board of directors, with Phil taking the Chair position and working to recruit more talent
- 2020, worked to support TRM through the pandemic offering support to expand educational offerings with digital experiences such as the notable lecture series drawing fans from across Canada to login in building additional revenue

### **ABOUT TORONTO RAILWAY MUSEUM (TRM)**

Located in Roundhouse Park, across from the CN Tower, in the heart of downtown Toronto, the Toronto Railway Museum's most important goals are to preserve the legacy of rail in the City and to help guests discover Toronto's railway heritage. With one of the largest collections of Toronto-based artifacts, the museum displays include the original, fully restored and operational 120-foot-long locomotive turntable, and a carefully conducted collection of rail equipment, historical photographs and documents. The museum uses their exclusive collection to share the stories of Toronto's railway history



which lay the tracks for future generations to discover the impact Toronto's rail history had on the innovative city, Toronto has become. Subscribe to the TRM monthly newsletter [here](#) and follow along on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or [Twitter](#) to stay-up-to-date on all the events at the TRM. <https://torontorailwaymuseum.com/>

### **ABOUT TORONTO RAILWAY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION (TRHA)**

Established in 2001 to work with the City of Toronto to establish a railway museum at the John Street Roundhouse. The TRHA is incorporated and is a Federally registered charity. Its primary purpose is to promote the development of the TRM.

<https://trha.ca/trha>

### **ABOUT THE ONTARIO MUSEUM ASSOCIATION (OMA)**

The Ontario Museum Association strengthens capacity among institutions and individuals active in Ontario's museum sector, facilitates excellence and best practices, and improves the communication and collaboration of its membership. The Association advocates for the important role of Ontario's museums to society, working with all stakeholders, related sectors and industries, and other professional organizations.

<https://members.museumsontario.ca>