

Executive Director

Steam Railroading Institute | Owosso, Michigan

Full-Time | Exempt Position

The Steam Railroading Institute (SRI), a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to preserving and sharing the rich history of steam-era railroading, is seeking an experienced, mission-driven Executive Director to lead its operations, fundraising, and strategic direction. This is a unique and rewarding opportunity for a visionary leader with a passion for heritage preservation, community engagement, and nonprofit excellence.

As the chief executive officer, the Executive Director is responsible for the overall leadership and management of SRI—including organizational strategy, development, financial oversight, external relations, and day-to-day operations. Reporting to the Board of Directors, this individual will oversee a dedicated team of staff and volunteers and ensure the safe and successful execution of SRI's programs, including excursion trains and public events. The role requires a balance of high-level strategic thinking, operational management, and visible community presence.

Key responsibilities include:

- **Fundraising and Development:** Lead a comprehensive development strategy that includes individual giving, sponsorships, corporate partnerships, grants, special campaigns, and planned giving. Cultivate and steward donor relationships to support capital improvements and long-term sustainability.
- **Strategic and Financial Management:** Collaborate with the Board of Directors to develop and execute strategic plans. Oversee budgeting, financial reporting, and regulatory compliance to ensure sound fiscal management.
- **Program Oversight and Operations:** Ensure the safe and effective delivery of all programs, events, and excursions. Supervise staff and volunteers, enforce safety standards, and maintain adherence to operating procedures.
- **External and Community Relations:** Serve as the public face of the organization, building strong relationships with business partners, railroads, civic organizations, government entities, and the broader community.
- **Capital Improvements and Facilities Management:** Direct capital improvement projects, including oversight of shop forces, infrastructure, and long-term maintenance planning.

Ideal Candidate Qualifications:

- Demonstrated leadership experience in a nonprofit or business environment, with a preference for experience in 501(c)(3) organizations.
- Proven success in fundraising, including major gifts, grants, and donor stewardship.
- Strong operational and financial acumen, including budget development and reporting.
- Ability to lead and inspire staff and volunteers with transparency, integrity, and accountability.
- Experience working with a nonprofit Board of Directors and engaging in strategic planning processes.
- Exceptional communication, interpersonal, and public speaking skills.
- Commitment to safety, regulatory compliance, and operational excellence.
- Familiarity with the railroad industry or historic preservation strongly preferred.
- Ability to work on-site in Owosso, Michigan, with occasional travel required.

Physical Requirements: Must be able to safely access rail equipment and facilities, including climbing stairs and ladders.

This position offers a chance to shape the future of a beloved institution and preserve a vital piece of America's railroading legacy. If you are a collaborative leader ready to engage deeply with mission, people, and place, we encourage you to apply.