

Little Sykes RR closed for renovations

**By Marisa Navarro
Times Staff Writer**

The Little Sykes Railroad ride for children will be closed until October while work crews build a new \$10,000 train station in Sykesville.

The new station will offer shade to some parts of the train track to prevent children who ride the metal train from burning themselves on hot days, said Richard Doxzen, who operates Little Sykes Railroad.

“The train can get real hot, and [the children] sit on there and put their hands and arms on the side of the train,” Doxzen said. “I was afraid they might burn their little arms and hands.”

The station also will offer benches for parents to sit on and a ticket booth,

In a small park on Sandusky Road, the Little Sykes Railroad has offered free rides to children on Saturdays since 1999.

The last Saturday Little Sykes Railroad was open, approximately 60 children rode on the train, Doxzen said.

Doxzen built the train to resemble an actual B&O passenger train that use to frequently pass near Main Street.

Almost since Little Sykes Railroad opened, Doxzen and Sykesville town leaders wanted to erect a station.

“We wanted this for a long time, but we hadn’t been able to get funding,” said Town Manager Matthew Candland.

Eventually, local people decided to help out. Rob Scranton of Catonsville Homes offered to build the station for free, and the Sykesville Rotary Club gave all of the money for the project, including paying for design and supplies.

The Rotary Club has given money for town projects before, such as the amphitheater at Freedom Park. But this year, in honor of Rotary International’s 100th anniversary, the club wanted to support a bigger project, said club President Harry Haight.

“All of the clubs in Rotary International are trying to do a special project in honor of the anniversary,” Haight said. “We felt this was a good project to do for the children and the town of Sykesville.”