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Colebrookdale railroad gets clean-up

By Lynn A. Gladioux
For 21st Century Media

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courtesy of Nathaniel Guest.

Racers from the Pottstown Roller Derby Rockstars are used to spending their time on the tracks.

But this past weekend they spent their time on tracks of a different kind when they volunteered to clean up the historic Colebrookdale Railroad, the 8.6-mile rail line that runs between Pottstown and Boyertown.

Working amidst the lush foliage that envelops the line's right-of-way, the 40 or so volunteers -- which included members of the Montgomery County ARD program -- plucked trash and other debris from the along the line.

Nathaniel Guest, President of the Colebrookdale Railroad Preservation Trust, headed up the clean-up efforts and said one of the goals in getting the tracks cleaned up is to prepare it for use as a passenger railroad.

"For some time, the Colebrookdale Railroad Preservation Trust has been advocating and planning for a tourist passenger railroad on the Colebrookdale line," Guest said. "A recent report found that the Colebrookdale, as a tourist railroad, can be a powerful engine of economic development for our region."

Conductor Fitzhugh "Beanie" Clark coordinated the volunteers with support from the Borough of Pottstown. Lunch was provided by Berks County Subway, and Pottstown Health and Wellness Foundation provided water.

Trash hauler J.P. Mascaro & Sons provided two dumpsters.

The Colebrookdale Railroad was purchased by the Berks County commissioners in March 2009 for \$1.35

million.

The commissioners have contracted with Eastern Berks Railroad to operate the line, which Guest hopes to turn into a tourist operation by 2015.

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