For those with a taste for travel on Memorial Day, the Nevada State Railroad Museum in Carson City offers up a full menu Saturday through Monday. Special outdoor exhibit photo opportunities, extended hours and all-inclusive tickets for unlimited rides highlight the holiday celebration May 26-28.

“This year a combination ticket will admit you to the museum and the train ride,” said Museum Director Frank Ackerman. “It allows you to spend the day or a few hours enjoying the history and action too.”

The museum’s historic Virginia &Truckee train with steam locomotive No. 25 will run every 40 minutes. Handcar rides are always a popular family attraction.

Inside, the Jacobsen Interpretive Center tells the story of Western expansion and the railroad’s contribution to Nevada’s developing economy.  In the outdoor display, photographers can

capture the 1910 McKeen motor car, 1926 Edwards motor car and the 1913 V&T locomotive No. 27 with freight cars.  Also on display will be the full-size thank you gift from France following World War II. The French National Merci Boxcar known as “40 and 8” honors the holiday’s deep patriotic roots.

In 1947 Americans collected 700 boxcars loaded with food, clothing and fuel to help the people of France who were desperately struggling to recover from WWII. The Friendship Train stopped in Reno to collect food gathered from all across Nevada. In response, French people collected a trainload of gifts for Americans.  Called the Merci Train,  49 boxcars filled with tokens and treasures from the French provinces, one boxcar for each state and one to be shared between Hawaii and Washington D.C., made their way across the U.S.

“Ours is one of only a handful still around. More than 50,000 items were given by French people,” Ackerman said. “The bulk of the gifts were works of art including paintings, folk art, sculptures, ceramics and trench art made from artillery shells used in WWI. They came here on

this car."

Admission for the event is $11 for adults, $5 for ages 12-17 and $3 for ages 4 to 11. Children 3 and under are free. Tickets are available at the depot, 2180 S. Carson St. and are valid for the day of purchase only. Contact 687-6953 or museums.nevadaculture.com for more information. Rides are from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., outdoor exhibits are open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and the interpretive center is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.