

SENRUG Press Release: 10th March 2014

**CALLING ALL SCHOOLS:
COMPETITION TO PROFILE RAIL RE-OPENING CAMPAIGN**

November 2014 will mark the 50th Anniversary of the closure of the Ashington Blyth & Tyne railway line to passengers. To commemorate the event, and further profile the campaign to re-instate passenger services on the line, a competition is being organised for middle and high schools in the area.

SENRUG, the voluntary pro-rail campaign group which is leading the calls for the line to be re-opened, is inviting schools to produce a short DVD between 7 and 10 minutes long, setting out the business case for re-introducing passenger services on the line, which still remains fully operational and carries freight trains.

The winning school will receive a cash award of £250 sponsored by Arch – the Northumberland Development Company, and SENRUG also hope to organise a trip for students from the winning team to the Houses of Parliament, where they will present their DVD to their constituency MP.

Wansbeck MP Ian Lavery and Blyth Valley MP Ronnie Campbell, who both want to see the line re-opened, have confirmed their support for the competition. Additionally, SENRUG has obtained permission from both the BBC and the News Post Leader for schools to use a short section of their own video footage of the campaign in their entries, made when SENRUG organised its

charter train to Ashington in 2008 to demonstrate the line's potential. Ian Arkle, editor of the News Post Leader, has also agreed to be part of the judging panel.

SENRUG Chair Dennis Fancett said that schools could link the competition to a range of national curriculum studies. For geography this could be town planning, transportation and urban geography, whereas for history the link is the de-industrialisation of Britain in the 1960s. For economics, we are looking at barriers to employment and creation of economic growth. There's also English including spoken English and media text, and for film & media studies the competition offers interviewing, camera and editing techniques. "We also believe the competition will encourage young people to take an interest in politics and citizenship as it will look at how things get done, the role of local campaign groups and how MPs serve the interest of their constituency areas at Westminster. There are a number of ways to interpret the competition and it is for individual schools to decide which approach to take" said SENRUG Chair Dennis Fancett.

Middle and high schools in South East Northumberland have been sent full details of the competition including the basic rules by email. Any school or teacher that has not received these details can contact SENRUG at enquiries@senrug.co.uk. Entries are also welcome from schools from the wider area. Schools need to confirm their intention to submit an entry by the end of the current term, with work completed during the Summer term and winner announced at a SENRUG Public Meeting in September.

Ends (469 words)

Notes for Editors

SENUG is The South East Northumberland Rail User Group, a pro-rail campaign group that campaigns for better rail services for existing and potential passengers in South East Northumberland.

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