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Patrick Durand talks about the Engine 557 Engine Restoration Mission

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Series: Pioneer Park Railway Museum Rail Tales Lecture series

Ron Inouye told a story about Judy Triplehorn and the patent office in Anchorage. She volunteered to take care of the patent office. She set up a group of local inventors. After a trip to a local high school they were surprised that the students weren't interested in using a 3D printer and the teacher explained they were in a time when things weren't repaired they just bought new things. Inouye said there are people who still care about taking care of things. Ron Inouye asked Martin Gutoski to introduce Patrick Durand.

Martin Gutoski said they have the first steam engine of the Tanana Railroad. Patrick Durand is restoring the old steam engine, 557, with the help of volunteers. Durand also evaluated the restoration of the engine no. 1. Martin talked about their annual meeting and Tanana Valley Museum information. Gutoski said Durand comes from railroad family

Patrick Durand said if you want to steam a boiler you have to do it very slowly. He mentioned Dan Gullickson. Durand said he used to deal with audio visual equipment. He was friends with Dan Gullickson through his business. Durand said it took ten years to restore engine no. 1. People had the will to do it. He said he is going to talk about his current project. He talked about their mission statement. 557 last revenue run was on September 5, 1959 at the state fair. There was an article in Trains magazine about their restoration project. He said 557 is one of twelve of this type of steam engine that came to Alaska. It was one of 2,120 of the same design were built to go to war. Several companies built them at the same time. Durand talked about places in the world where the steam engine was used. The engines were built small to fit through Italian tunnels and bridges. The engines were built on the east coast. They were nicknamed the Gypsy Rose Lee because they were stripped down. The locomotive pulled baggage and three coaches but it would take eight cars to Seward and Whittier. After 557 left Alaska it was in storage in Washington. It was bought by Monte Holm. It sat from 1968 until 2011 in Washington. A crew went down to load it up and it arrived in Whittier in January 2012. One of the last engineers to operate 557, Weaver Franklin, was on hand when 557 pulled into the Anchorage depot. Herbert Werthley, another operator, is now 86. Christopher Aadnesen was instrumental in bringing the locomotive back to Alaska. He listed their board of directors.

The engine was then stored in Wasilla. Monte Holme was considered the visionary. He thanked others for their help including Lynden Transportation and others. He talked about the condition of the building and how they moved the engine inside the building. The first open house attracted 48 people. There are many in-kind donors. Durand talked about finding funding. He discussed taking the engine apart. They had to remove cubic yards of asbestos. They shipped it off to Columbia Basin Steel where Steve Rimple

operates the business. He talked about using the name Gypsy or Rose. There were now 24 members of the mechanical crew. From five to 11 people are working at one time.

He talked about their fund raising. Arco Brewery created a 557 brew and they sold it. They sold 100 pints for 70,000 dollars. They also sold a print of the 557 engine by J. Craig Thorpe. They have given prints to in-kind donors. They have a sandblast shop outside of their warehouse. He showed a photo of Vic Jansen. He talked about the in-kind donations. He showed a photo of stripping the drivers. They shipped them off to the Tennessee Valley Railroad shop for machine work. He talked about the museum. He discussed their identification system of the parts. They scraped out the boiler because they didn't have water. He showed photos of workers on the boiler. They conducted ultrasounds of the thickness of the steel on the boiler tube and firebox. They have started the process of cutting out the interiors. They decided to remove the entire firebox. They had their first inspection from the federal team. He showed photos of the board of directors and identified the workers from 2014. He talked about why they removed all the parts. The frame is held together by tapered bolts. He talked about how to insert the bolts. He showed a photo of the pressure gauge. Mount St. Helen's ash fell on the train while it was at Moses Lake and they had to deal with damage. He talked about making handles. Great Land welding lent them the table for welding work.