

557's Rebirth—the Labor

Under the oversight of our volunteer Chief Mechanical Officer along with one of the nation's top steam locomotive consultants, the maintenance crew immediately started the dirty job of opening the boiler and removing the tubes to assess the boiler condition. Internal surfaces were thoroughly cleaned of scale and prepared for reassembly. In June 2015, after the year-long process of removing and replacing the fire box, the firebox was installed in the boiler. Over 1,000 stay bolts have yet to be welded. The sand blasting, cleaning, repairs, and painting of the tender water and oil tanks have been completed. The overhaul of components such as the running gear, valve gear, and brakes are planned. Excitement is building as the project plan is being executed!



The volunteer Mechanical Department after a productive but grueling 12-hour day.

The Future

Much work remains to bring the dream to reality. Parts still need to be rebuilt, refurbished, or fabricated. The work needs to be inspected and tested, followed by certification and acceptance for use by the Alaska Railroad Corporation and the Federal Railway Administration. Significantly more funding is needed! The target for steam tests and crew training is the middle of 2017. When completed, Engine 557 will be prepared to operate for many more years and the sound of a steam whistle will again echo across Anchorage, from the bluffs on Turnagain Arm, and in the Mat-Su Valley.

DREAM BIG, DREAM STEAM!



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A tired Chief Mechanical Officer looks like a proud papa after he and several other volunteers spent a 10-hour day painting and putting the finishing touches on the drive wheels.

Tax deductible contributions are gratefully accepted.

Engine 557 Restoration Company
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An Alaskan 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Corporation, EIN 46-2663256

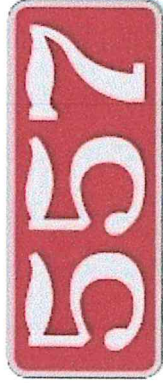


Engine house visits are available by appointment.

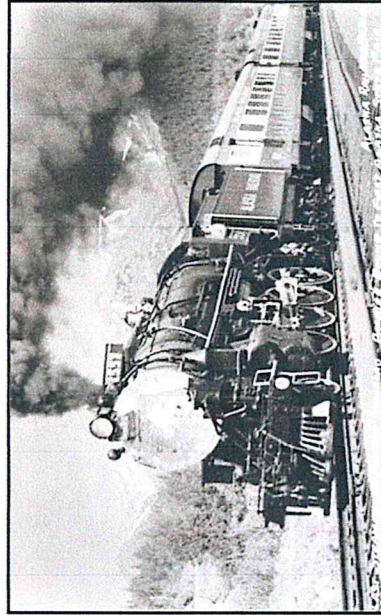
For more information, call:

(907) 350-4340

ORAL HISTORY
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Engine 557
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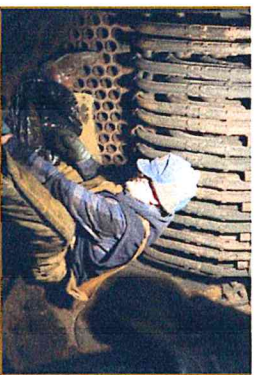


In what everyone thought was her last dance, Engine 557 took her final passenger train to the Alaska State Fair on September 5, 1959, a scene that will be repeated almost 60 years later.

**Restoring Alaska Railroad
Steam Locomotive #557
to Again Operate on the Alaska
Railroad**

The Dream is Becoming Reality!

Returning Alaska's last steam locomotive to operation is a tangible symbol of the toil and grit necessary to develop Alaska. People of all ages will be able to see, smell, hear, and experience this living piece of railway history.



*A volunteer
cleans soot out of
the Smoke Box.*

Alaska's "War Baby?"

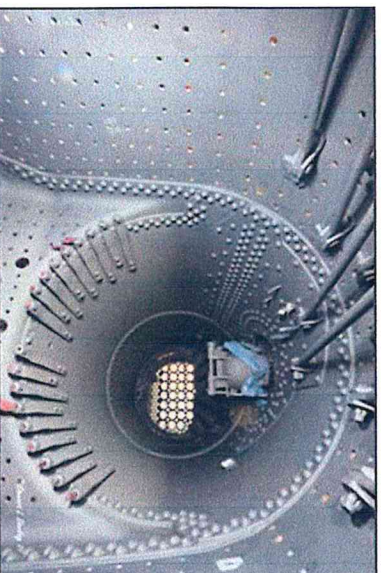
Engine 557, a 2-8-0, Consolidation type locomotive weighing 160,000 pounds, was built for the U.S. Army Transportation Corps by the Baldwin Locomotive Works. She arrived in Anchorage in November, 1944, and was one of 12 identical locomotives acquired by the Railroad. Used in both passenger and freight operations, she served extensively to move troops and military cargo while at the same time serving the non-military transportation needs of the growing Alaskan Territory. In a unique arrangement, Railroad employees were augmented by soldiers assigned to the Army's 714th Railway Operating Battalion between 1943 and 1945. During this period it was common for train crews of Engine 557 and her sisters to include a mix of soldiers and Alaska Railroad civilian employees.



*"Hot Riveting" - a nearly forgotten art - is used to
reassemble the new firebox into the boiler.*

**YOUR DONATION, will help Engine 557
to once again carry passengers on the
Alaska Railroad.**

Over 100 firms and organizations have provided financial and in-kind support to return Engine 557 to operation. A partial list includes: Rasmuson foundation, Atwood Foundation, KMTA Heritage Area, MEA Charitable foundation, John H. Emery Rail Heritage Trust, Ushibelli Foundation Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry, National Railway Historical Society, Alaska Railroad Corporation, Lynnden Transport, Alaska West Express, Central Environmental Services, Davis Wright Tremaine, Independent Lift Truck of Alaska, Greatland Welding, Alaska Industrial Hardware, ATS Portable Toilets.



*The interior of the boiler was cleaned, inspected and
treated with a specialized coating to ready it for
reassembly.*

Post War

After the war, Engine 557 and her sister locomotives continued to be mainstays of the Railroad. Then, upon retirement of the steam fleet in the early 1950s, Engine 557 was retained for special passenger excursions and stand-by service, including the continuation of passenger operations during track flooding too deep for diesel locomotives of the day. She performed for several rail fan excursions and made her final passenger run to the first Alaska State Fair in 1959.

A Rip Van Winkle Retirement

Engine 557 was finally retired in 1964. Following 250,000 miles of operation she was essentially worn out and was sold for scrap. Monte Holm of Moses Lake, Washington saved her from scrapping and placed her in his private museum where she was displayed for the next 45 years. Following Holm's death, family friends purchased the locomotive and returned her to Alaska with a condition that she be restored to again do the job she was intended for - haul passengers on the Alaska Railroad.

*Our self-described
"557 boiler rat."*



Homecoming

In January, 2012, Engine 557 was returned to Alaska with much fanfare. In August, 2012, the non-profit Engine 557 Restoration Company purchased the locomotive for "One Dollar and other good and valuable consideration," and moved her to an empty warehouse in Wasilla. This warehouse has since been transformed into an "engine house," facility well equipped to perform the ongoing restoration.