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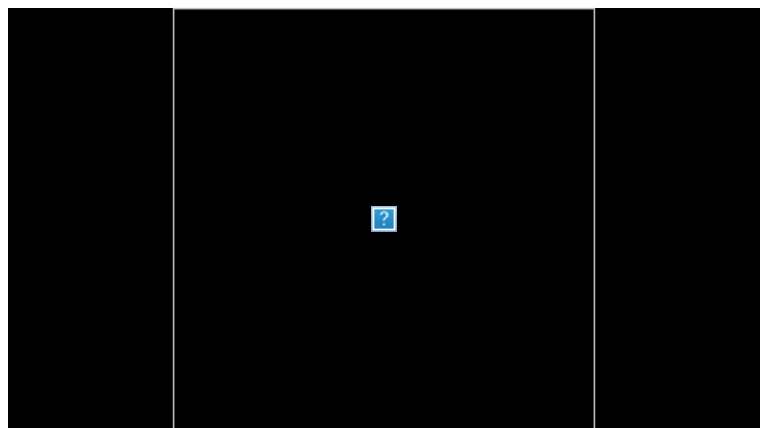
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Engine Restoration Project Continues



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by Marissa Silver
 Story Created: Aug 28, 2014 at 8:49 PM AKDT
 (Story Updated: Aug 29, 2014 at 9:42 PM AKDT)

Anchorage, AK - A piece of Alaska's history will eventually be making it's way to the railroad tracks of Anchorage and Portage thanks to many generous donations.

Those who work on her call her "gypsy", but most everyone else knows her as engine 557, and she is a part of Alaska's history.

"It was one of 12 locomotives that came here by special request during the Second World War," said Patrick Durand who is the President of the 557 Engine Restoration Company.

And now she's being restored.

"It was 70 years old," Durand said. "It's last revenue service was the Alaska State Fair Special in 1959 for the first Alaska State Fair."

The Restoration Project is estimated to cost around one million dollars and is taking place thanks to donations by The Rasmuson Foundation, Alaska Community Foundation and many others.

"The 557 Restoration Project is important because it's a piece of Alaska's history, railroads have played such an important part in this state," said Candace Winkler who is the President and CEO of the Alaska Community Foundation.

The project is currently two years into the restoration process.

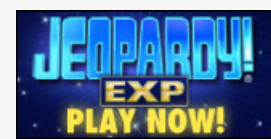
"As you walk around you'll find it's been totally disassembled," Durand said.

And the locomotive is being restored completely through the passion of those involved.

"All of the work that's being done here is by volunteers," said Durand.

And once the steam engine is complete in June of 2016, they hope to be able to take passengers from Anchorage to Portage and on special excursions.

"Rail fans will be able to see it going down Turnagain Arm and ride along the corridor, the transportation corridor there, and it should be a major attraction along the way," Durand said.



And for those riders who do show up, they hope to have a special place for them to sit and enjoy the ride.

"We hope to have the four oldest dome cars from The Alaska Railroad as our consist haul passengers," said Durand. "If everybody who says I can't wait to ride it shows up, we'll be busy."

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