



Alaska Railroad Corporation *Press Advisory*

DATE: August 14, 2012
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Engine #557 moves to restoration facility in Wasilla *New non-profit fires up fund-raising campaign*

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – At 9:00 a.m. tomorrow (August 15) Steam Engine No. 557 (#557) moves a step closer toward restoration as a donated Lynden Transport truck and lowboy trailer tow the historic cargo from the Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) yard in Anchorage to a project facility in south Wasilla. Making the move as well is an oil tender, recently donated by the Alaska Transportation Museum, which was used to supply fuel for #557.

On the heels of the move, the new non-profit Engine 557 Restoration Company (Restoration Company) will conduct an initial board meeting on Thursday, August 16. Board members will discuss a critical fund-raising campaign to generate \$350,000, which is required to secure the Rasmuson Foundation matching grant of up to \$350,000. Funding will support the Restoration Company mission to rehabilitate the historic steam locomotive for eventual return to service on the Alaska Railroad. The bulk of the restoration work will be accomplished at the Wasilla-based project facility, formerly known as the Kenai Supply Building. Owned by the Alaska Railroad, the facility is located at 1390 E. Matanuska Spur Road.

- **MEDIA OPPORTUNITY #1 – August 15:**

Media are invited to cover the departure from the Anchorage Rail Yard at 9:00 a.m. Media should meet at the ARRC Anchorage Operations Center at 825 Whitney Road **no later than 8:45 a.m.** Personal safety gear (hard hats, vests, safety glasses, etc.) are required and will be made available to media, prior to proceeding into the active rail yard.

- **MEDIA OPPORTUNITY #2 – August 15:**

Media are invited to cover **the 2:30 p.m. (approximate) arrival** at the project facility at 1390 E. Matanuska Spur Road. The truck/trailer will travel along the Glenn Highway. Representatives from ARRC and the Restoration Company will be available to answer questions in Wasilla. A press area will be established near the Kenai Supply Building in Wasilla.

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BACKGROUND

In early January 2012, #557 returned to Alaska, where it last operated along the Alaska Railroad tracks 50 years ago. Sold to a scrap dealer in Washington in the early 1960s, #557 was recently purchased by Jim and Vic Jansen of Lynden Transport. In turn, they donated the locomotive to ARRC with the proviso that it be restored and used to provide rail passenger service.

Restoration is estimated to cost between \$600,000 and \$700,000. Major costs include initial tooling, asbestos removal and abatement, replacing galvanized steel cladding, new insulation, boiler and tubing replacement and repair, gear inspection and repair, painting and positive train control electronics.

In order to establish a funding mechanism, project supporters recently turned to the Alaska Community Foundation (ACF), which oversees and has helped establish nearly 300 funds and endowments that support philanthropic endeavors that benefit Alaskans. ACF agreed to establish and administer a new fund to accept donations, while the Restoration Company will coordinate the project, including fund-raising, hiring subcontractors, recruiting volunteers and overseeing the restoration work.

The first substantial fund-raising effort came by way of the Rasmuson Foundation grant program, which approved a grant request for up to \$350,000. The fund-raising campaign to generate the match begins this summer and will include a call for monetary donations as well as valuable in-kind contributions of professional services and supplies needed for the restoration.

According to locomotive experts, #557 is in excellent, near-running condition and represents an opportunity for ARRC to display it as a signpost of the past. As a piece of history, it provides a visible, solid, tangible artifact for tourists and residents alike. ARRC is interested in using the locomotive during the summer tourist season as early as 2013. ARRC believes there is a market for rail tours of incredibly scenic territory coupled with the nostalgia sparked by #557, as a truly grand reminder of the early days of steam railroading in Alaska.

#557 was built for the U.S. Army Transportation Corps and arrived in Alaska in December 1944. It was retired in June 1963 and sold to a scrap dealer in Washington in 1964. The attached fact sheet (also available at www.AlaskaRailroad.com > capital projects) provides the locomotive's background and mechanical specifications.

Contributions to the Engine 557 Restoration Company may be made to: Alaska Community Foundation; Attn: Engine 557 Restoration Company; 400 L Street, Suite 100; Anchorage, Alaska 99501 or on-line at www.alaskacf.org.

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ARRC is an Equal Opportunity Corporation. If you need special assistance (including language) in order to participate in any ARRC service, program, or activity, please contact: Alaska Railroad Corporation; Attention: Legal Department; P.O. Box 107500; Anchorage, AK 99510; or by email at: zappasi@akrr.com, (907) 265-2461; via Alaska Relay Service for hearing impaired – dial 7 11 anywhere inside Alaska, OR dial toll-free from anywhere outside the state 1-800-770-8255 (voice); 1-800 770-8973 (TTY). Upon request, printed materials can be made available in alternate formats.