

Friends of Engine 557

2022 has been an exciting and productive year as Engine 557 comes ever closer to operation!

The biggest news is that 557 was returned to her wheels for the first time in ten years. Then, this fall, she was rolled outside and mated with her tender, complete with draw bar, safety chains, and interconnecting fuel, water, and brake hoses - her first time with the historically correct tender in over 50 years. Each week, additional overhauled and fabricated parts are being installed.

Preparing the locomotive for installation of Positive Train Control, a prerequisite for main line operation, has been challenging. The upgrade of the brake controls to a PTC compatible style is nearly completed. As an example of the financial challenges that were not expected ten years ago is the brake control upgrade which has required an investment of nearly \$50,000. We will soon be acquiring the engine-mounted PTC electronics – which will be another substantial investment.

Adjustment of priorities has delayed the installation of tubes and flues by several months, but we are now nearing their installation. The materials are on hand and grant funding for the work is in the bank. This will be followed by hydrostatic tests, steam tests, and boiler certification. 70 years of wear and pitting encouraged us to replace most of the steam and air piping. New pipe is on hand and many sections have been already trial fitted. Final piping, installation of new super heater elements, final steam tests, and fitting of the boiler lagging (insulation) and jacket will follow. Fitting the rods, pistons, and valve gear will be done concurrently with the boiler work.

This summer we established a YouTube channel, “557 Restoration Company.” Please follow progress there, on Facebook, and on our web page. To those who have stopped by to see the 557 restoration in person, thank you. To those who haven’t, we welcome your visit. Just call or email to arrange for a tour of the largest railroad preservation project ever conducted in Alaska.

To kick off the annual fund raising campaign a group of Engine 557 supporters has issued this challenge - they will match the first \$10,000 contributed, dollar-for-dollar.

Contributions can be made by check to the address below or by credit card at the “donate” tab on the Engine 557 web page. (Donation direct address - <https://www.alaskarails.org/pix/former-loco/557/support/donate.html>.) Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Richard T. Morris Secretary