



OREGON RAIL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

For Immediate Release / November 16, 2011

Event: 7th Annual *Holiday Express*
Dates: December 2, 3, 4, and 9, 10, 11
Departure Times: **Fridays:** 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8pm
Saturdays & Sundays: 10, 11 am, Noon; 2, 3, 4; 6, 7, 8pm
Location: Oaks Park Station, 7806 SE Oaks Park Way, Portland
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The Little Engine That Could

Every major accomplishment has a back-story. The *Holiday Express* has a compelling one. How did a handful of concerned citizens and rail enthusiasts come to create a favorite seasonal event now in its seventh year? Sponsored by the Oregon Rail Heritage Foundation (ORHF), the *Holiday Express* will return for its now-traditional Christmas riverside excursions. Nearly 10,000 adults and children will board the historic train at Oaks Park Station, to ride for two eventful weekends, December 2, 3 and 4 and December 9, 10, and 11. The Spokane, Portland & Seattle 700 (SP&S 700) and the world-famous Southern Pacific 4449 (SP 4449) will pull vintage rail cars on separate weekends along the Willamette River on the Oregon Pacific Railroad from Oaks Park Station north to the Springwater Corridor gateway.

Crucial Time for Portland's Steam Engines

This year marks a milestone for the future of Portland's steam heritage: ORHF's capital campaign reached the critical mass of interest, commitment and money to start construction in late October on the new Enginehouse and Rail Heritage Center. *Holiday Express* proceeds will go to the new visitor-friendly home for the three historic steam locomotives owned by the city of Portland. It has taken three decades and thousands of volunteer hours to restore and maintain these locomotives at the Brooklyn roundhouse. Now they must vacate the yard by January 2012 for the Union Pacific's Brooklyn Yard expansion.

Not the only Landmark in the District with Small Beginnings

ORHF and the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI) both share the legacy of modest beginnings. OMSI also had a similar start. According to OMSI President Nancy Stueber, OMSI's museum began in a home in Northeast Portland. Both OMSI and ORHF had people passionate about their goal from the beginning. At the Enginehouse and Rail Heritage Center Groundbreaking on October 21st, 2011, Ms. Stueber addressed the crowd of nearly 300 people by describing the synergy between the two organizations. "The Oregon Museum of Science and Industry is pleased to welcome the future Rail Center to the neighborhood. We have worked with ORHF for the past decade and we celebrate the groundbreaking as a huge milestone in realizing a dream. This is a perfect location, at the intersection of light rail, heavy rail, and streetcar at what will be the largest transportation hub in the city. We have already begun to plan the ways that we can collaborate, through programs and exhibits, as we work together to create a landmark district for the city."

The Oregon Rail Heritage Foundation is a non-profit 501c3 all-volunteer organization. Our mission is to secure a permanent home for the City of Portland's steam locomotives and establish a Rail and Industrial Heritage Museum.



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When the Oregon Rail Heritage Foundation's Enginehouse and Rail Heritage Center opens in 2012, there will be over 100 years of passenger rail travel represented in the district.

Rare Locomotive Treasures Will Be Accessible to Public

With the exception of excursions like the *Holiday Express*, ORHF's new facility will be the first time the locomotives will be accessible to the public since they were donated to the city in 1958.

The locomotive at the front of the *Holiday Express* will either be the SP&S 700 or the SP 4449. Along with the Oregon Railroad & Navigation 197, they were all donated to the "Citizens of Portland" in 1958; each carried passengers along the Pacific Coast or throughout the Pacific Northwest from as early as 1905. For three decades they sat in the elements at Oaks Park until each one was removed for restoration. The SP 4449 became the engine pulling the American Freedom Train (1975-76). The SP&S 700 pulled passengers for the northwest portion of the Empire Builder (a passenger train route now operated by Amtrak). The SP 4449 and SP&S 700 are two of the largest operating steam locomotives in the United States. The Oregon Railroad & Navigation 197 (built in 1905) is currently under restoration.

The first phase of the Enginehouse includes paying back the loan from city of Portland for ORHF to purchase a site close to OMSI. When the capital campaign started in June 2009, ORHF faced a difficult decision. Should money be split between paying back the loan and building the Enginehouse, or dedicated solely to the Enginehouse? With the urgent deadline to vacate the Brooklyn roundhouse by January 2012, the ORHF board chose to concentrate its funding on the Enginehouse. The campaign will continue in order to pay back its mortgage. To date, foundations and individual donors have contributed over \$4.5 million toward the construction tab, leaving about \$950,000 still needed to fund the loan.

Community Sponsorships Stoke the *Holiday Express*

Fred Meyer Inc. will be the corporate sponsor of *Holiday Express* to help move this holiday tradition further down the track. In addition to Fred Meyer, the *Holiday Express* is made possible through partnerships with the Oregon Pacific Railroad, Oaks Amusement Park and Portland Parks and Recreation.

Former Oregon Public Broadcasting President and CEO and ORHF steering committee member Maynard Orme said that, "ORHF is like the 'Little Engine that Could'. They're making sure the Big Engines can still run and delight everyone who sees them."

For *Holiday Express* ticket information go to TicketsWest Ticket Centers, website www.TicketsWest.com or call 503-224-8499.

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NOTE: The Oregon Rail Heritage Foundation is dedicated to making our rail excursions accessible to everyone. Unfortunately, the structural features of these historic rail cars limit access for visitors who use wheelchairs or other wheeled devices, at this time. For more information, go to the ORHF website at www.orhf.org.

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