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Press Release

ALASKA STATE MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: **August 1, 2008**

HISTORIC MINING LOCOMOTIVE TO BE ON EXHIBIT AT THE ALASKA STATE MUSEUM - FOR ONE DAY ONLY!

A rare electric locomotive used to haul ore in the Alaska-Gastineau mine near Juneau in the early 1900s is returning to Alaska to become part of the Alaska State Museum's permanent collection. It is being donated by the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento.

Lynden Transport and Alaska Marine Lines generously contributed the ground and barge shipping for the 18-ton locomotive, which will arrive in Juneau next week. The museum is hosting a one-day public viewing of the locomotive on August 7 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on the Alaska State Museum grounds. This event is free of charge.

According to mine historian David Stone, the electric locomotive was one of two built by the Baldwin Locomotive Works for the Alaska Gastineau mine in 1914. "It is amazing that this 94-year old locomotive is intact and returning to Juneau. It is a physical example of an innovative world-class mining operation that changed mining history." The mine eventually sold the locomotives to the Santa Cruz Portland Cement Company in California, where they operated for many years.

The Alaska-Gastineau mine, located in the Sheep Creek valley just south of Juneau, used them to haul ore from 13 underground levels of the mine to the processing facilities located at Thane. The mine was one of the world's largest gold mines, and the use of electric locomotives was innovative at the time and helped the mine become an industry model of efficiency and low-cost operation. The locomotives had a low-profile design to allow use underground, and were powered by two 90-horsepower electric Westinghouse motors with electricity supplied through a cable system.

"The locomotive represents a part of history that we have never been able to preserve on a large scale," said Alaska State Museum Curator Steve Henrikson. "It will help the public to learn more about the significance of mining in Alaska's development. We are extremely lucky to have this opportunity, and thank the California State Railroad Museum, Alaska Marine Lines, and Lynden Transport for making it possible."

The locomotive will become one of the best-documented artifacts in the museum, Henrikson said. Photographs of the locomotive in operation, complete blueprints of all the parts, and service documentation is preserved in the Alaska State Library Historical Collection—part of an extensive archive of mining in the Juneau area donated by the Alaska Electric Light and Power Company.

After the day-long display, the locomotive will be stored while the museum plans for future restoration and long-term exhibit. "The locomotive is literally too large and heavy to fit in the existing museum building," said Bruce Kato, the museum's Chief Curator. "We also have historical boats and aircraft in the collection that we currently cannot exhibit, and intend for our new building to be of sufficient size to allow their display." The state Division of Libraries, Archives, and Museums recently received 7.5 million dollars in state funding for planning and design of a new combined facility.

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