

# STEAM ACROSS AMERICA



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Steam Across America (ISSN 978-1-96120-001-2) is published by Kalmbach Media Co., 21027 Crossroads Circle, P.O. Box 1612, Waukesha, WI 53187. Canada publication mail agreement 40010760.

Single-copy prices: \$9.95 in U.S.; \$10.99 in Canada and other foreign countries, payable in U.S. funds, drawn on a U.S. bank. Canadian cover price includes GST. BN 12271 3209 RT Printed in the U.S.A.

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**I**t's the bottom of the ninth. Wyatt Langford, center fielder for the Florida Gators, digs into the batter's box. The situation is classic baseball: The College World Series, Virginia vs. Florida, home team down 5-3, and looking to rally. Virginia pitcher Jake Berry goes into his windup and hangs a change-up right over the middle of the plate. The ting of Langford's aluminum bat making contact reverberates around Charles Schwab Field Omaha.

Every Florida fan in the house knows immediately that ball is headed out of the park. A few seconds later, Langford's hit drops into the left field bleachers 456 feet from home plate — a new home-run distance record for the NCAA Men's College

World Series. The game is tied, and the Gators go on to win, eventually advancing to the CWS finals, where they lose their bid for the national title to the LSU Tigers.

Home plate inside Charles Schwab Field Omaha is but one focal point during the annual collegiate baseball tournament. There is a second home plate involved in the festivities surrounding the CWS. This one highlights a long-standing railroad connection.

Step outside the stadium in Omaha, Neb., and across Cuming Street. At the corner of 12th Street and Cuming, you'll find the second home plate. This one belongs to the Union Pacific Railroad. During the 2023 CWS, UP hit a home run of its own by spotting Big Boy No. 4014 on the display track located here, as part of its

**The Home Run Express, as with other Big Boy excursions, began and ended in the UP's Cheyenne, Wyo., shop. The facility, which is home base for the railroad's steam program, is the remaining portion of the massive 1919 backshop. It originally measured 195 feet by 410 feet.** Two photos, Erik C. Lindgren

*Home Run Express* tour. From June 15 through 26, No. 4014 not only became part of the baseball celebration, but also marked a homecoming of its own.

In Omaha today, the 100-acre tract beginning at the corner of 9th and Webster streets, looking northwest, is filled with hotels, a convention and entertainment venue, parking lots, dozens of small businesses, and Charles Schwab Stadium Omaha.

From 1865 through its closing in 1988, this was the site of UP's massive Omaha



**Maintaining No. 4014 is a constant regimen of following inspection schedules. The entire steam crew is involved in a hands-on manner so that everyone becomes familiar with the entire locomotive. Here the stacks and smoke deflectors are being examined.**

ha for the NCAA Men's College World Series. On the way to Omaha, Big Boy traveled through some unusual territory, running over the Yoder and South Morrill subdivisions before taking to the Overland Route for the trip's final leg.

### **A family team**

Baseball, like any sport, is a chess game. To come out on top, as the LSU Tigers did, a team must think three, four, even five moves ahead. Every member of the team and every action they take must meld together in a near-perfect manner to achieve the desired outcome. The team that grows in this fashion becomes a family unit, anticipating each other's moves, complementing strengths, and supporting falterers — all while continuing to work toward the common goal of an outstanding performance.

For the CWS, another team, beyond the eight competing in stadium, played to a championship level. The game was not baseball, but running and exhibiting the world's largest operating steam locomotive. The Union Pacific steam crew — no, steam family — turned in a performance that thrilled more than 52,000 fans at stops in eastern Wyoming and across Nebraska. The railroad estimates that 30,000 people visited the Big Boy at its Omaha Home Plate.

Two members of the UP steam crew are its qualified firemen: Austin Barker

and Kirt Clark. When No. 4014 is running, one of them will be on the left side of the cab tending the fire, monitoring the boiler water level, and listening and watching to help ensure the locomotive is working properly.

Barker, 35, studied mechanical engineering at Colorado State University prior to signing on with UP. Clark, 45, was a UP locomotive engineer with a mechanical background who transferred into the steam program.

"My family has steam tractors and a 24-inch gauge tourist railroad with steam engines that I was around when I was a little kid," Barker says. "I always was infatuated with steam locomotives and big machinery." After an internship

with John Deere, Barker visited UP's booth at a CSU job fair.

He discovered there was an opening for a machinist in the steam program. You know the rest of this story.

Clark found his way onto the steam crew with a solid mechanical background, good timing, and "clean living,"

as he says.

"You know timing is everything," says Clark. "When I applied, they actually had a position that was open. I sent in my resume a couple hundred times to be persistent and let them know I was serious. It helped that I had a mechanical background before I went to work for the railroad."

Both men indicated mechanical aptitude was only part of the qualification for

*Continued on page 12*

**UP's steam crew goes well beyond a group of people working together — they're a family.**

shop facility. Car and locomotive repairs were completed here. The railroad modified and fabricated cars in the shops as well. The first McKeen motorized railcars were built here. The self-propelled passenger vehicle was designed by William McKeen, UP superintendent of motive power and machinery. In the early 1940s, as Alco delivered the 4000-class locomotives — the Big Boys — they were directed to the Omaha shops for final preparation before revenue service.

In 2022, anticipation was high No. 4014 would make a longer trip, possibly through California via Donner Pass and then onto the Pacific Northwest. That longer trip did not happen. It was replaced with the shorter run from UP's steam home base in Cheyenne, Wyo., across Nebraska to Oma-

**Water tank**  
24,000 gallons

UNION PACIFIC

### Coal fired — No. 4017

**Built:** December 1941  
**Regular service mileage:** 1,052,072  
**Preserved:** National Railroad Museum, Green Bay, Wis.

#### 1 Oil bunker

6,450 gallons of No. 5 fuel oil are carried in the forward tank of the tender. Baffles within the oil bunker work to calm the liquid, minimizing forces created by the moving oil.

#### 2 Oil heater

No. 5 fuel oil is a thick substance that must be heated to 171 to 219 degrees Fahrenheit in order to atomize properly for combustion. A steam heater warms the oil in the bunker.

#### 3 Oil piping

The fuel oil flows by gravity from the tender to the locomotive.

#### 4 Atomizer

The fireman controls the rate of flow and how much steam is mixed with the oil (atomized). The oil is atomized creating a combustible "cloud" that is blown into the firebox.

**Water tank**  
25,000 gallons

UNION PACIFIC

### Oil fired — No. 4014

**Built:** December 1941  
**Regular service mileage:** 1,031,205  
**Preserved:** Union Pacific Railroad, Cheyenne, Wyo.

#### 3 Firebox

235 1/32 inches long by 96 3/16 inches wide, 150.3 square feet

#### 1 Coal bunker

28 tons of coal ground to stoker grade, a size that could be moved by the auger in the stoker tube. UP added metal barriers to the top of the coal bunker, decreasing spillage and increasing capacity to 32 tons.

#### 2 Stoker auger moves coal from tender to firebox.

#### 4 Ashpans

Located below the grate, these hoppers collect ash from the firebox.

1

2

3

4

7

8

5

6

# Firing Big Boy

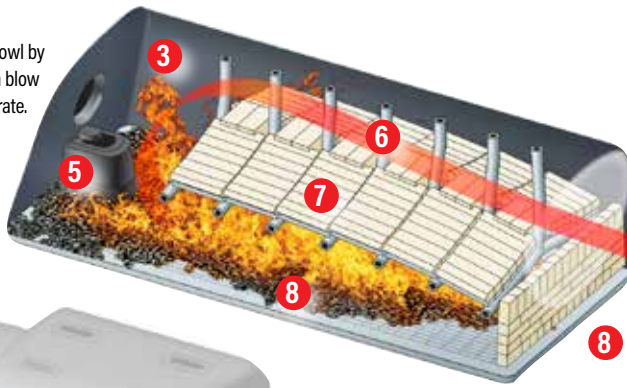
## The differences between the coal-fired 4000s and the restored oil-fired No. 4014

#### 5 Damper

Most of the airflow through the firebox is created by the locomotive's draft. At the bottom rear of the firebox is a damper that admits additional air to enhance combustion. This is the fireman's only air control. The damper is either open, half open, or closed.

**5 Stoker firing table**

Coal is placed in this bowl by the stoker. Air jets then blow the coal to cover the grate.



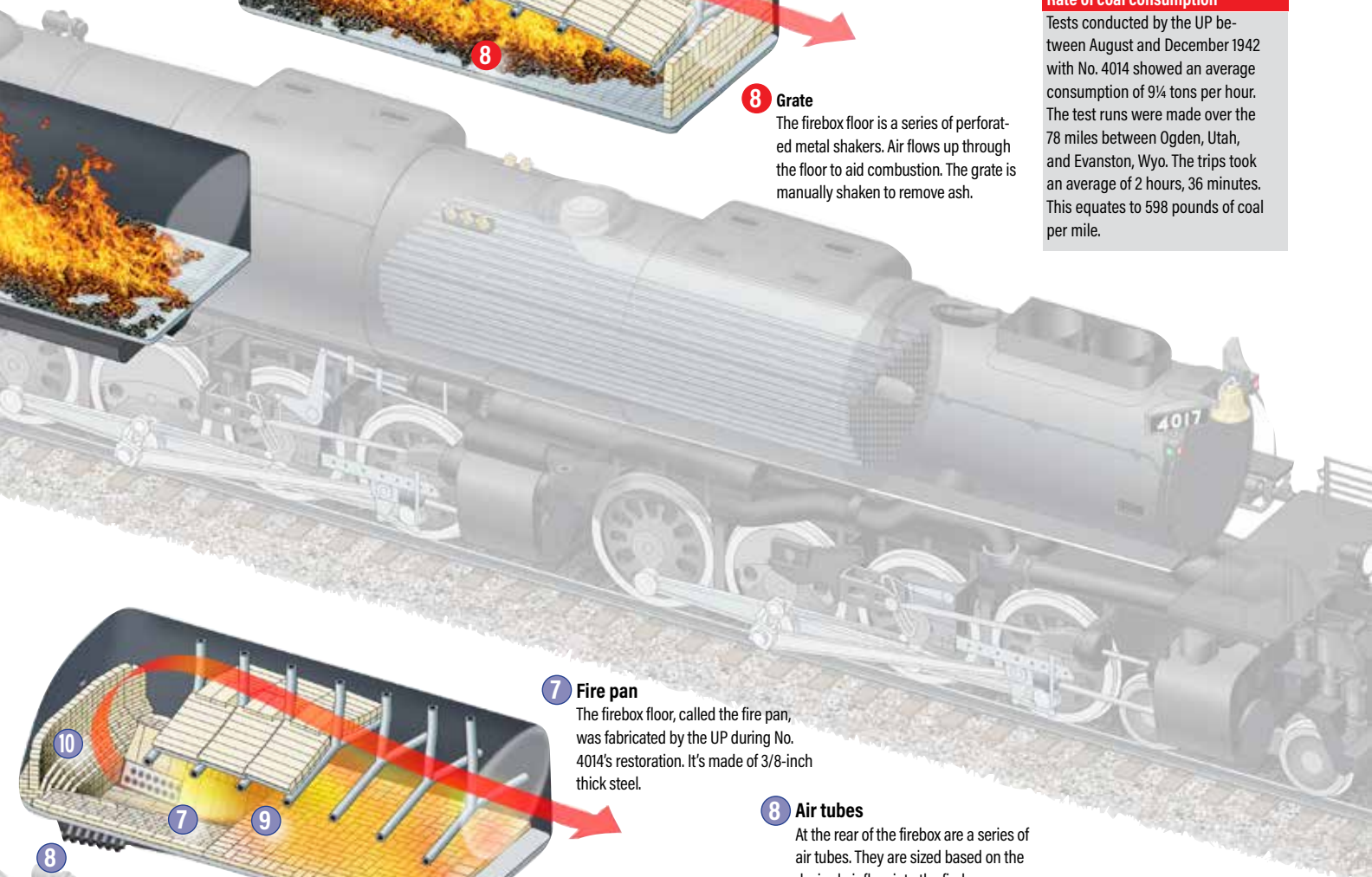
**6** Circulators move relatively cool water from lower in the boiler to the crown sheet at the top of the firebox. This increases heat transfer.

**7** Brick arch — This baffle across the firebox forces the fire toward the rear before rising, which helps improve combustion.

**8** Grate  
The firebox floor is a series of perforated metal shakers. Air flows up through the floor to aid combustion. The grate is manually shaken to remove ash.

**Rate of coal consumption**

Tests conducted by the UP between August and December 1942 with No. 4014 showed an average consumption of 9¼ tons per hour. The test runs were made over the 78 miles between Ogden, Utah, and Evanston, Wyo. The trips took an average of 2 hours, 36 minutes. This equates to 598 pounds of coal per mile.



**7 Fire pan**

The firebox floor, called the fire pan, was fabricated by the UP during No. 4014's restoration. It's made of 3/8-inch thick steel.

**8 Air tubes**

At the rear of the firebox are a series of air tubes. They are sized based on the desired air flow into the firebox.

**9 Fire brick**

The firepan is lined with a heat-retaining fire brick.

**10 Flash wall**

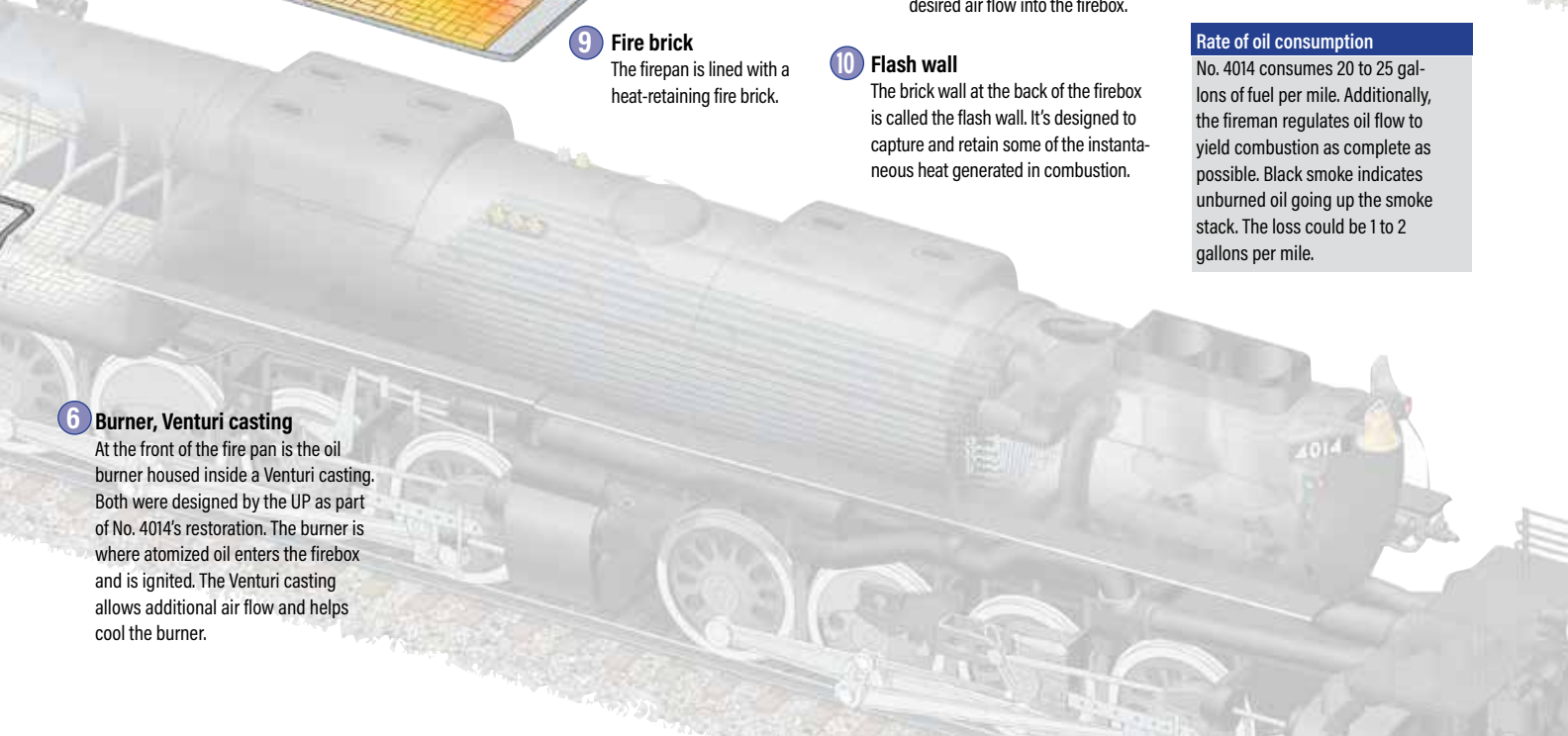
The brick wall at the back of the firebox is called the flash wall. It's designed to capture and retain some of the instantaneous heat generated in combustion.

**Rate of oil consumption**

No. 4014 consumes 20 to 25 gallons of fuel per mile. Additionally, the fireman regulates oil flow to yield combustion as complete as possible. Black smoke indicates unburned oil going up the smoke stack. The loss could be 1 to 2 gallons per mile.

**6 Burner, Venturi casting**

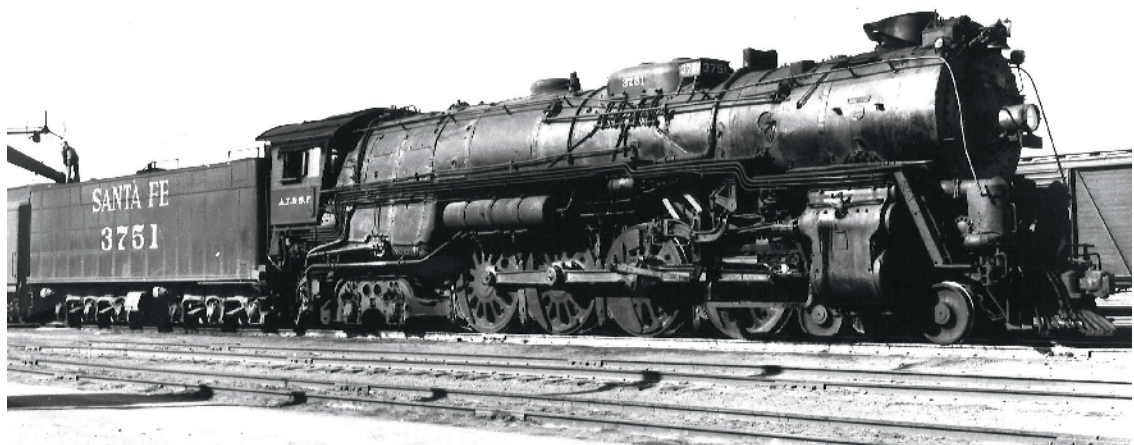
At the front of the fire pan is the oil burner housed inside a Venturi casting. Both were designed by the UP as part of No. 4014's restoration. The burner is where atomized oil enters the firebox and is ignited. The Venturi casting allows additional air flow and helps cool the burner.

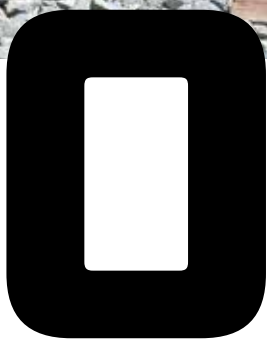


The Northern is about to receive some maintenance while stopped in front of the station in San Bernardino, Calif., on April 12, 2014. Craig Walker



► The 4-8-4, built by Baldwin in 1927, is already two decades old as it awaits action in Bakersfield, Calif., on Aug. 23, 1947. William Raia





On any given Saturday, deep inside Amtrak's Redondo Junction Maintenance Facility in Los Angeles, the clanking and banging of railroading past still reverberates.

Amidst the passenger corporation's diesel locomotives and rolling stock, a hulking 478,000-pound giant sits quietly on a turntable whisker, the number 3751 adorning its tender.

Although partially covered with a tarp, a small group of dedicated diehards is busy testing, cleaning and calibrating it, systematically going over every moving part to keep its locomotive in working condition for the

next trip. Whenever that may be.

It was in 1927 that Baldwin Locomotive Works built this former Santa Fe engine, serial number 60004. It was the railroad's first 4-8-4 Northern, a logical mechanical successor to previous 4-8-2 designs. Originally coal-fired, it sired nine copies, all of which were put to work on mainline passenger trains. Eventually, the railroad would roster a total of 65 Northern in four classes.

### The world has changed

In 1939, 4-8-4 No. 3751 was on the point of the first Santa Fe revenue passenger train into then-new Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal, just a short distance north.

In 2023, the locomotive is the property of the San Bernardino Railroad Historical Society, which rescued it in 1986 following years of slow decay as a city park display, complete with missing parts, graffiti, and pigeon droppings.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars and years of steady, careful volunteer labor in an unheated building at the former

Kaiser Steel plant in nearby Fontana put it back in operating condition. Retrofitted with state-of-the-art safety equipment such as positive train control, the locomotive is as up-to-date and roadworthy as any from today's builders.

Despite cooling its brake shoes for extended lengths of time, No. 3751 does get out and kick up its heels when opportunities present themselves. It did so on an employee appreciation special on the former Santa Fe. It has steamed throughout Southern California, mostly on Amtrak-controlled lines radiating out of Los Angeles. It also appeared at the Grand Canyon Railroad in Arizona in 2012.

Wherever it goes, No. 3751 is a crowd pleaser. Why, then, are its outings so few and far between?

As seems to be the case with almost anything today, it's complicated.

"Dealing with the railroads is not like it used to be," says San Bernardino Railroad Historical Society member Bob Kittel. One of the original volunteers that helped get No. 3751 out of the park, he is a Society director as well as its chief me-



▲ The builder's plate for No. 3751. When Santa Fe introduced the locomotive, management referred to it as a "Heavy Mountain," referring its roster of 4-8-2s. That reference was quickly sidelined and replaced with what it really is: a Northern.

David Styffe



▲ No. 3751 leads the *Grand Canyon Limited* excursion at Vicksburg, Ariz., on May 17, 2012, during the Parker-to-Williams, Ariz., leg. The locomotive also went to the Grand Canyon in 2002.

Mathieu Trembley

► Not the typical cause of a Southern California traffic jam, No. 3751 creates a massive backup as it runs in the center divider of the San Bernardino Freeway through Rosemead, Calif., during an April 17, 2011, excursion.

Steve Crise

chanical officer.

As Kittel explains to a visitor the complexities of keeping the locomotive active, there is a sense of underlying frustration in his voice: “The further we get away from the railroad employees who remember their history, the harder it becomes.”

“Sometimes we have problems dealing with the Class I [railroads] that although we are an all-volunteer organization, we are capable and qualified to safely operate the 3751 on their railroad,” says Fred Hill, president of the historical society. “We have to be, or they’ll never let us run again.”

BNSF declined to comment when asked by *Trains* if the railroad had a policy on running steam locomotives on its right-of-way.

So, what are the right conditions for No. 3751 to operate?

Sometimes it is luck. Other times it is the right time and sponsor.

Its first major public outing was a Society-sponsored trip of its own on Dec. 27, 1991, with a 16-car round trip from Los Angeles to Bakersfield via the Tehachapi Mountains. Additional muscle for the trip was

provided by two Santa Fe EMD FP45s tucked in behind the tender. Tickets were sold for four separate trip segments.

While deemed a success, the overall planning and coordination of the excursion strained the group’s capabilities, explains Society president Fred Hill. “We concluded

we are not tour operators. We know our engine; we know how to run our engine. But we quickly realized somebody else has to take care of all the other logistics of running a fan trip.”

Hill knows what he is talking about. He has been with the group since the beginning and also







serves as a director, its merchandising manager, and the coordinator of field operations.

### **Altering the dynamics**

“We want to run her whenever we can,” says Society Vice-President

Alex Gillman, who also serves as a director, webmaster, and the group’s official photographer. “But now we consider ourselves a ‘locomotive for hire’ operation and continuously seek opportunities to contract for as many excursions as possible.” Gillman has been

a member since 2013.

The organization website explains: “As a society we own, maintain, and operate the 3751 and offer excursion operators the opportunity to lease it for excursions they plan, coordi-

nate, and execute.”

In short, Gillman explains it’s up to the group that is negotiating to lease the 3751 for its excursion or event to obtain railroad approval, contend with logistics, and deal with all legal and liability issues. An-

▲ In a steady rain, No. 3751 is doing most of the work on the 2.1% grade near Caliente, Calif., on Dec. 29, 1991, during the excursion that marked its return to operation. Ted Benson



▲ Shortly after 11 p.m. on May 4, 1952, No. 3751 waits while the second section of *San Diegan* No. 78 unloads before running as an extra back to Los Angeles.

Richard Steinheimer

other caveat is that there must be sufficient income to cover the Society's operating expenses, maintenance, and repairs.

### **Full circle**

Which brings us back to 2023 and how the historical society has evolved.

Formed in 1981 for the express purpose of somehow restoring No. 3751, it was five years later that the group achieved a major milestone by purchasing the locomotive from the City of San Bernardino for \$1, moving it out of the park

and setting up a place to work on it in Fontana.

There was a lot of work to do. Santa Fe last officially ran the 4-8-4 on a Los Angeles-San Diego *San Diegan* passenger round trip in 1953. It was then stored in San Bernardino for 5 years

before being scratched from the roster and moved to the park.

The late 1980s were spent tearing the locomotive down and putting it back together, refluencing it, and bringing it up to current specifications.

Original plans were



useful but upgrades and modifications during its life on the Santa Fe made finding all additional paperwork essential.

No. 3751 was converted to oil in the 1930s. In 1941, along with others of its class, its original 73-inch drivers were

replaced with 80-inch wheels. A new frame was slid under her, roller bearings were installed on all axles, and it received a tender with a 20,000-gallon water capacity, an increase of 5,000 gallons.

As a test, or perhaps part of its regular run,

company records indicate that No. 3751 achieved more than 100 mph more than once on a regular assignment.

### Alive again

In August 1991, for the first time in 38 years, the firebox was lit. No. 3751 was once again a living, breathing entity. The cost to revive it is estimated at \$1.5 million.

Four months later, in December, came the debut excursion to Bakersfield. It was dubbed the *California Limited*, in honor of a Santa Fe passenger train between Chicago and Los Angeles from 1892 to 1954.

While considered a fan success, drawing unprecedented crowds throughout its journey, the trip quickly became a learning experience for the Society. It convinced members this was not the economic route it wanted to travel in the future.

Agonizing over the advertising of the trip, onboard menus, and other details were a distraction to a group making sure the railroad rules and regulations were complied with and insurance forms had all their i's dotted and t's crossed.

En route, every detail

had to be considered, including where No. 3751 would get fuel and water, how it would be integrated into the daily operating schedule, and where ticket holders would gather while waiting for their turn to ride.

Outings since, whether it be the aforementioned Santa Fe employee appreciation special between Los Angeles and Chicago, up the Pacific Coast, to Arizona, or down to Fullerton and San Diego, have been at the behest of another organization, with the Society providing the locomotive and the crew to operate it. Guest engineers have included Ed Dickens of Union Pacific's steam program, who once helmed it to San Bernardino.

The most recent trip was Sept. 9-10, 2023 — an 8-mile round trip to Los Angeles Union Station for Trainfest 2023, an open house featuring displays of railroad equipment, model train exhibits, and rail-related arts. No. 3751 was a key draw, invited at the behest of Union Station, Metro, Amtrak, and Metrolink. Another notable display was recently restored Santa Fe Bicentennial SD45-2 No. 5704,



▲ No. 3751's return was a four-day extravaganza that, in part, convinced the society it didn't want to deal with arranging excursions. On Day 2, Dec. 28, 1991, the locomotive has just left Barstow and is at Hutt, Calif., en route to Bakersfield.

Steven J. Brown



▲ No. 3751 and a BNSF diesel draw a crowd during a stop at the Fullerton depot on April 30, 2015. Rest assured the diesel is not garnering most of the attention. Craig Walker

► On adjacent tracks but several generations of technology apart, No. 3751 poses with a Metrolink F125 at a Los Angeles Union Station event to unveil the commuter locomotive in July 2016. Alex Gillman

making its Southern California debut.

### Saturday Crew

Currently, it is membership dues — there are about 170 members — and the support of outside benefactors keeping the group solvent. But it is the Saturday Crew, a group that hovers at about a dozen people at any one time, that physically maintains No. 3751 on a year-in, year-out basis.

Surrounded by Amtrak Genesis and Charger locomotives, along with various pieces of passenger equipment in for maintenance, this is where members such as Bob Kittel, Jonathon Schoen, Matt Wiles, Smokey Smith, Dave Clark, Sam Calderwood, Matthew Correa, Robert Franklin, and Alex Gillman are working.

They quickly greet an expected visitor, show him around, invite him

into the cab, and then go back maintaining the 4-8-4 — adjusting, testing, and scraping knuckles — rain or shine, every Saturday.

Their diligence keeps No. 3751 in pristine condition and making it hard to believe the locomotive will be 97 years old on its next birthday.

The engine requires regular FRA inspections and long-term maintenance. It underwent a major boiler rebuild in 2022, so is early in the 15-year cycle for requiring a major overhaul.

### Not just the steam engine

The society also has other equipment to take care of — and for that matter, other endeavors.

A small fleet of former Santa Fe passenger cars located elsewhere in Southern California awaits its own repairs and upgrading.



The first is tool car SBRX 1161. The former Santa Fe baggage car No. 3656 was built by Budd in 1953 as part of an order for new lightweight passenger equipment. Gillman guesstimates the car eventually was in the consist of every passenger train on the system before being picked up by Amtrak.

In 1980, the passenger agency upgraded 3656 to include head-end power equipment and renun-

bered it AMTK 1161. It served faithfully until 2015, finally being replaced by new Viewliner II baggage cars. The historical society picked it up in 2019.

Also on the roster are ATSF Nos. 1636, *Pine Lodge*, and 1639, *Pine Peak*. Both were part of a 27-car order for 10-roomette, six-bedroom sleepers built by Budd in 1950.

Both cars made it into Amtrak service, usually

working out of Los Angeles as well as other western car maintenance bases. Upgraded from steam heat to HEP in 1978, they migrated to Midwest trains before being withdrawn and stored at Amtrak's Beech Grove (Ind.) Shops. The historical society acquired both in 2019.

Since 2008, the society has also been involved in a volunteer Station Host Program in San Bernardino's former Santa Fe station. In a joint agreement with the City of San Bernardino Historical and Pioneer Society and the San Bernardino Associated Governments, about 4,800 square feet of space was leased to the societies for what became the San Bernardino History and Railroad Museum. Exhibits in the station's former baggage area include photographs and historic equipment. Other dis-

plays include a replica of a telegraph office along with various maps and images of the area.

### The future

As long as the locomotive passes its various tests, and there are individuals such as Gillman, Kittel, Smith, and the other dedicated members willing to spend their time and get their hands dirty — as well as donations from other members and supporters — No. 3751 will eventually find its way out of Redondo Junction and back onto a main line.

All it will take is the willingness of a group or organization to make a phone call to the Society and say, "We'd like to talk to you about renting your steam locomotive."

It is guaranteed the response will be "Come on down and take a look. Have we got a deal for you!" **I**



◀ Among those who keep No. 3751 running: Matt Wiles (top left), Jonathan Schoen (red gloves), Bob Kittel (bottom left), Alex Gillman (center), Dave Clark (right), Sam Calderwood (bottom right).  
David Lustig

▼ No. 3751 poses on Amtrak's Redondo Junction turntable in September after being on display at Los Angeles Union Station as a part of 2023 Train Festival.  
Nick Martinez

