

DAYLIGHT



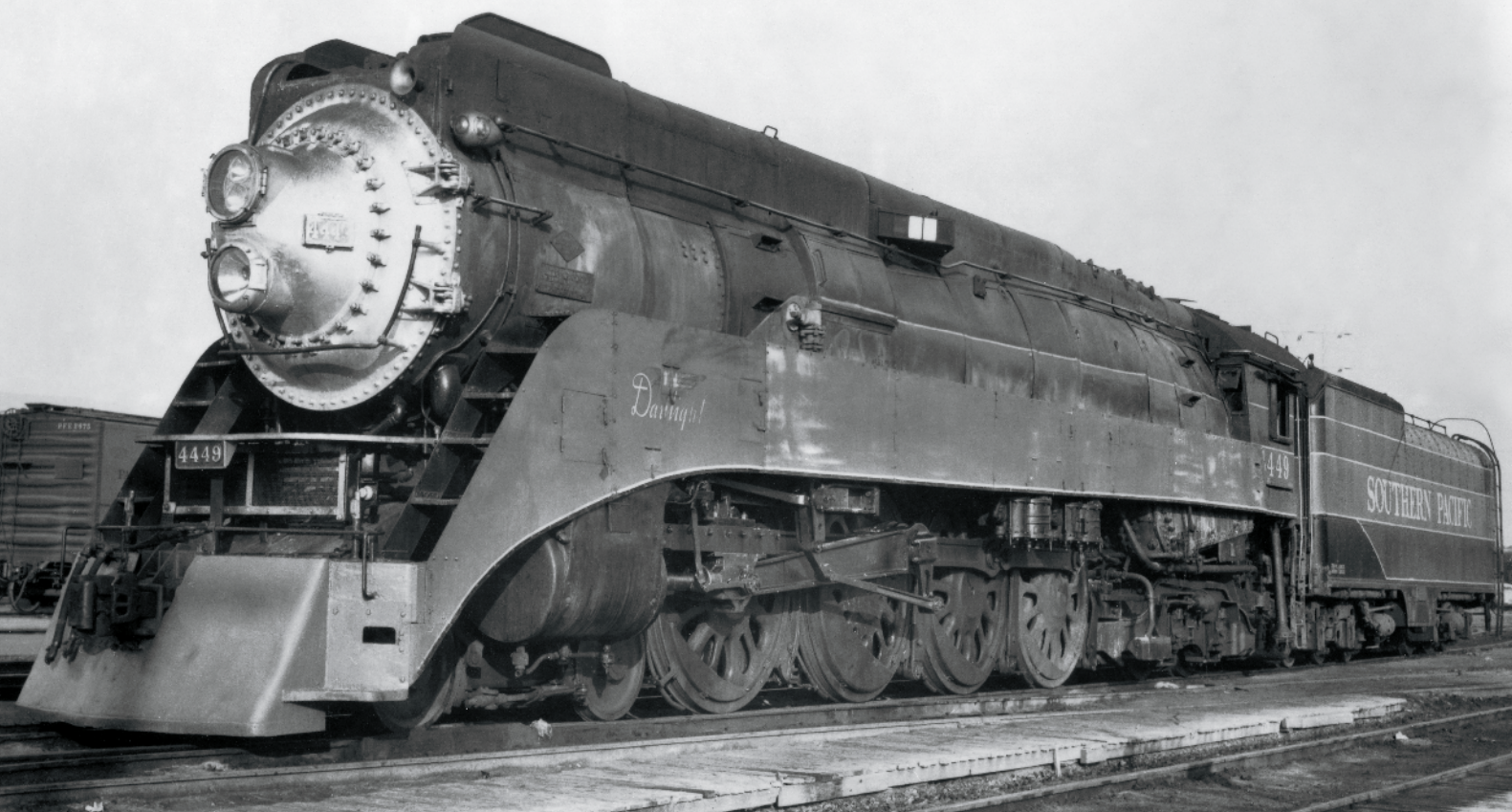
Southern Pacific No. 4449 is an impressive sight during an Oct. 21, 2012, photo runby on the Willow Creek Trestle in Madras, Ore. The 4-8-4 was on a two-day excursion from Portland to Bend, Ore., on BNSF Railway's Fallbridge and Oregon Trunk Subdivisions. Justin Franz

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**For four decades,
Southern Pacific 4449
has wowed crowds from
coast to coast**

by Justin Franz





A less-than-pristine No. 4449 awaits duty in Los Angeles in 1954. American Freedom Train foundation, Kenneth G. Johnsen collection

Doyle McCormack hates to set deadlines. A few years ago, whenever McCormack, primary caretaker of Southern Pacific No. 4449 for the last four decades, was asked when the big 4-8-4 would be ready to roll following its most recent overhaul, he'd shoot back with the same, simple answer: "It'll be done when it gets done."

For more than two years, McCormack and a small but dedicated group of volunteers in Portland, Ore., put in thousands of hours rebuilding one of the most iconic steam locomotives in America. They stripped the boiler, inspected the running gear, and rebuilt the superheaters.

Finally, in November 2015, the locomotive was fired up, days before it was scheduled to lead 70 Holiday Express excursions over four weekends on a short stretch of track near Portland's Oaks Park. "We were practically throwing the coal scoop into the cab as we rolled out of the roundhouse," says Pat Tracy, long-time fireman and current president of the Friends of SP 4449, the locomotive's non-profit support group.

The holiday excursions were a slow and tedious task for the Lima Locomotive Works product that once headed up SP's fastest passenger trains, almost like a big-league slugger playing a few innings in the minors to get his swing back. As always,

Southern Pacific 4449

Wheel arrangement: 4-8-4
Builder: Lima Locomotive Works
Builder's date: May 1941
Boiler pressure: 300 pounds
Serial number: 7817
Tractive effort: 64,800 pounds
Total length: 110 feet
Wheelbase: 80 inches
Engine, tender weight: 869,800 pounds
Fuel capacity: 6,275 gallons
Water capacity: 23,300 gallons
Driver diameter: 80 inches
Valve gear: Walschaerts
Date retired: Oct. 2, 1957
Owner: City of Portland, Ore.
Date restored: April 1975
Location: Portland, Ore.

No. 4449 performed flawlessly.

Even lumbering along at a runner's pace, No. 4449 can still attract a sellout crowd. The *Daylight* locomotive, with its flashy red-and-orange paint and sleek streamlining, has a worldwide following among steam enthusiasts, and the men who maintain the locomotive are optimistic that those dedicated fans will get to see a lot more of the engine in years to come. "It's pretty amazing that so many people come out to see an old steam locomotive built in 1941," Tracy says. "She turns heads. She always has."

GOLDEN STATE (OR GENERAL SERVICE)

SP's streamlined 4-8-4 locomotives were the brainchild of railroad president Angus D. McDonald. According to author Kenneth G. Johnsen, McDonald felt that big and bold investments in the early 1930s could help lift the nation from the Great Depression. Toward that end, he pitched the idea of reinvesting in the SP's *Daylight* passenger service between Los Angeles and San Francisco. While other railroads were dabbling with streamlined diesel locomotives, McDonald wanted to use proven and perfected steam technology for his passenger trains, specifically 4-8-4s. At the time, SP had 10 Baldwin Locomotive Works-built 4-8-4s known as GS-1s. The letters stood for "Golden State," although in the 1940s, the railroad reportedly changed it to "General Service" to appeal to the no-frills War Production Board that oversaw locomotive construction during World War II.

The SP turned to Lima to build six GS-2s, Nos. 4410-4415, in 1936. The locomotives were soon in service between Los Angeles and San Francisco on the railroad's newly revamped *Daylight*, featuring a matched set of new air-conditioned cars. As the railroad expanded the service, it ordered more 4-8-4s, and by 1943 the SP had 60 streamlined GS-class locomotives. (Western Pacific also received six Lima

GS-6s, allocated from an SP order by the War Production Board. Three were eventually sold to the SP for parts.)

While almost all of the locomotives arrived in the *Daylight*'s red-and-orange scheme, most were temporarily painted black during World War II, again to appease the War Production Board. The SP also added dispersion shields over the locomotive's headlights and classification lights because of the fear of a Japanese attack on the West Coast. Following the war, many of the locomotives returned to red and orange.

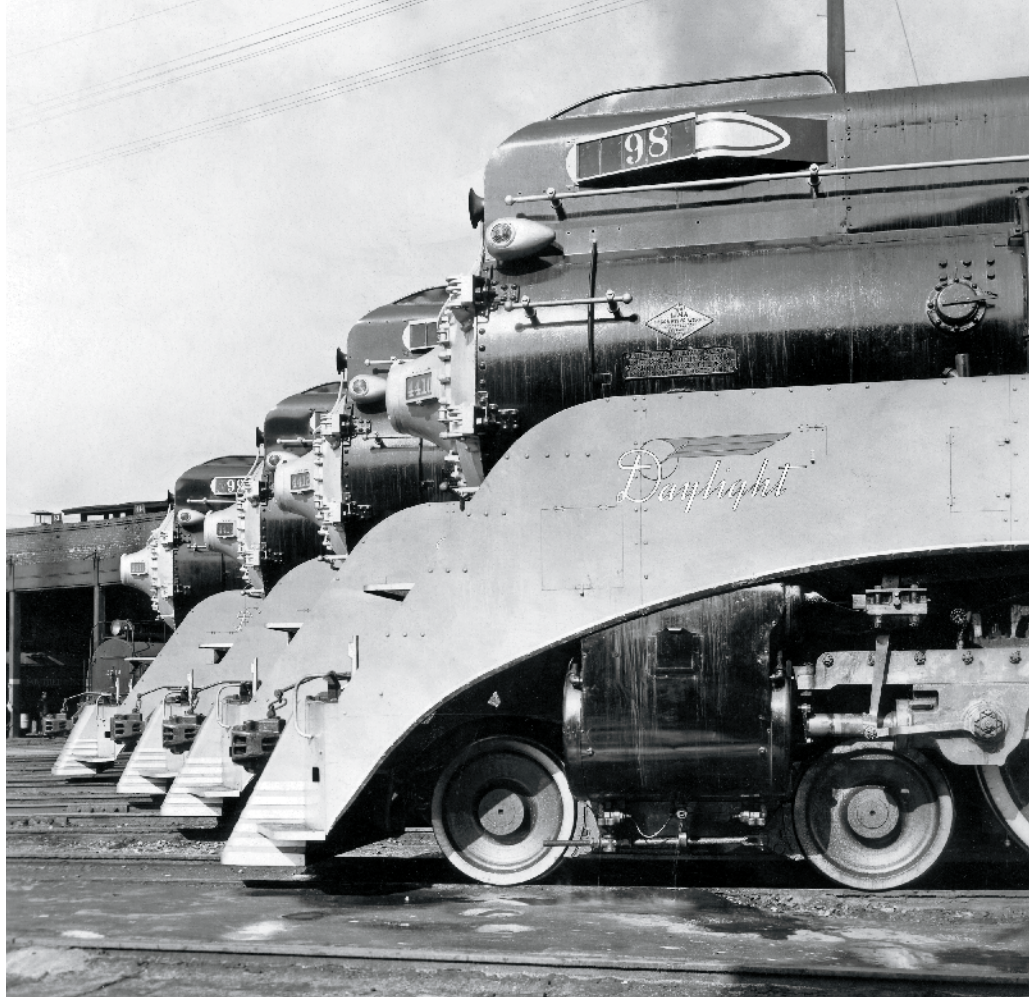
The 4-8-4s remained on the *Daylight* route between Los Angeles and San Francisco until the mid-1950s, when diesels pushed them into secondary roles. Some of the 4-8-4s ended up in commuter service in and out of San Francisco, where they remained until January 1957, when GS-4 No. 4430 pulled the last regularly scheduled steam-powered train on the SP. While a handful of the 4-8-4s were fired up in 1957 and 1958 for excursions, most were placed in the dead line. Within a few years, all but two of the SP's 4-8-4s had been scrapped. GS-4 No. 4449 was donated to the City of Portland in 1958 and GS-6 No. 4460 was donated to the Museum of Transportation in St. Louis in 1959.

No. 4449 was put on display in Oaks Park, not far from the Willamette River, and it languished in obscurity through the 1960s and early 1970s. On occasion, a local railfan named Jack Holst would oil the locomotive's bearings and axles in hope that someday it would run again. But for the most part, No. 4449 stood as a forgotten memorial to the steam era.

BICENTENNIAL REBIRTH

In the early 1970s, Ross Rowland Jr., a New York commodities broker and preservationist, started building the American Freedom Train, a 26-car exhibit train with hundreds of artifacts from the nation's history that would tour the country to celebrate America's bicentennial. Rowland, a lifelong steam fan who had his hand in numerous locomotive restorations, was adamant that the train be powered by steam and began looking for a locomotive big enough to do the job.

Many engines were considered, including Union Pacific No. 844 [page 50], Santa Fe 4-8-4 No. 2925, Norfolk & Western No. 611 [page 26], and Nickel Plate Road 2-8-4s Nos. 759 and 763. The search eventually led to Portland and SP No. 4449. The locomotive was ideal for the Freedom Train because of its horsepower and speed, but mostly because it was an oil burner — it's easy to load fuel just about anywhere. To help lead the restoration, Freedom Train organizers sought out a young man named Doyle McCormack, a Norfolk & Western



Four of the six original GS-2 locomotives pose prior to the launch of Southern Pacific's *Daylight* service between Los Angeles and San Francisco. TRAINS collection



Fame is still years away as No. 4449 sits in Portland's Oaks Park in 1972. Steve Schmollinger

railroader in Ohio with whom Rowland had worked on NKP No. 759.

"They called me up and asked me if I wanted to go to Portland to restore No. 4449, and being young and dumb I said, 'Yeah, sure,'" McCormack recalls. "I wasn't locked down with a family, so I took a leave of absence from the N&W and headed west.

"I actually had to break out my copy of [David P. Morgan's book] 'Steam's Finest Hour' to see what the locomotive looked like," he adds.

In late 1974, McCormack moved to Portland, and with the help of a handful of full-time employees and dozens of volunteers, tore down the locomotive to start the rebuild. Because the locomotive had only been out of service for about 15 years, it was in generally good condition and the restoration progressed quickly.

Because No. 4449 was too big for some East Coast routes, Freedom Train organizers restored a second locomotive — Reading Co. T-1 No. 2101 — to handle the



train when it began its journey in Wilmington, Del., on April 1, 1975. A third locomotive, Texas & Pacific 2-10-4 No. 610, piloted the Freedom Train on its journey through the Lone Star State.

No. 4449 was ready by April 1975, lettered for the American Freedom Train and wearing a new red, white, and blue livery. It made a few break-in runs in the Portland area before heading east in June. On Aug. 4, No. 4449 took over the Freedom Train at Chicago with McCormack at the throttle. For the next two years, No. 4449 and the Freedom Train crisscrossed the country, hitting more than 30 states. For the young engineer it was a learning experience he would never forget. McCormack was able to learn firsthand the challenges of running a big steam locomotive on a modern railroad. He also got to learn from older steam railroaders he met along the way. "I learned something from everyone," he says. "It was a unique experience."

Within two years, the Freedom Train had covered more than 25,000 miles and touched all 48 contiguous states. The final stop came on Dec. 26, 1976, when No. 4449 led the train to Miami. On Dec. 31, the last of 7 million visitors passed through the Freedom Train and the exhibit was closed for good. A few months later, the locomotive returned west to Portland.

"Some of us assumed that was the end of No. 4449's return to steam," McCormack says. "We put the locomotive in storage in Portland, and we all went home."

RESTORATION'S SECOND ACT

From 1977 until 1980, No. 4449 sat undisturbed at a UP freight house in Portland, but many people who helped restore the locomotive remained close by. McCormack, who went home to Ohio after his time on the Freedom Train, moved to Portland in 1978 with his wife and hired out on the SP.

In 1980, McCormack and a few others who had worked on No. 4449 approached the SP about firing up the locomotive and bringing it to Sacramento, Calif., for the California State Railroad Museum's grand opening the following year. The idea was quickly shot down. "They didn't say just 'no,'" McCormack says. "They said 'hell no.'" But a few months later, Union Pacific announced that it would bring two of its own steam locomotives to the Sacramento celebration, and SP had a change of heart. "They didn't want the UP to steal the show in their own backyard," McCormack says.

With SP's blessing, the crew got to work in early 1981, preparing the locomotive for the trip south. In April and May, No. 4449 ventured to Sacramento wearing its *Daylight* red and orange for the first time in more than two decades; the locomotive was a big hit at the museum. The trip helped SP officials realize the benefits of running big steam. "A steam locomotive, be it No. 4449 or any other locomotive, is the best public relations tool a railroad has," Tracy says. McCormack says it was positive press that convinced SP to let the crew prepare the engine for its next big adventure: a

No. 4449 leads the eastbound American Freedom Train near Beaumont, Calif., on Jan. 21, 1976. Steve Patterson

cross-country trip to the 1984 World's Fair in New Orleans.

In 1983, McCormack and his crew began a full restoration of the locomotive to address issues overlooked during the rebuild nine years earlier. In May 1984, No. 4449 departed Portland with a train dubbed the *Louisiana World's Fair Daylight* that featured an entire red-and-orange consist. The train ventured south to Los Angeles before heading east for Louisiana. The 51-day, 7,477-mile round trip became the longest steam excursion in U.S. history and proved that No. 4449's caretakers could operate a long-distance mainline excursion without impacting regular operations.

In 1986, the locomotive made its Hollywood debut with a prominent role in the Touchstone Pictures film "Tough Guys" starring Burt Lancaster and Kirk Douglas. McCormack even gained a few seconds of stardom in the film with a scene where Lancaster's Harry Doyle pulls a gun on the locomotive engineer, a performance that earned McCormack his own page on the Internet Movie Database. A full-size wooden model of the locomotive was constructed for the final scene where No. 4449 runs off the end of track and crashes into the desert.

Through the late 1980s and 1990s, the locomotive made appearances on SP rails, and later on BNSF Railway throughout the Pacific Northwest. In March 2002, the locomotive



On the way to film the movie “Tough Guys,” No. 4449 crosses Gaviota Trestle north of Santa Barbara, Calif., in 1986. Roger Puta



No. 4449 pauses in Chicago on the way east for Train Festival 2009. Matthew Phelan

tive was returned to its American Freedom Train colors for the first time in 25 years for an excursion between Portland and Bend, Ore. In 2009, the locomotive embarked on its biggest trip since the 1984 World’s Fair when it traveled 2,500 miles to Owosso, Mich., for Train Festival 2009. “You never know when an opportunity like that will come knocking at the door,” McCormack says of the 2009 trip through 10 states. “We never dreamed of doing a big cross-country

trip like that again, but it happened.”

In June 2012, No. 4449 and two other steam locomotives owned by the city of Portland — Spokane, Portland & Seattle 4-8-4 No. 700 and Oregon Railroad & Navigation 4-6-2 No. 197 — moved from their longtime home at SP’s Brooklyn Roundhouse (by this time Union Pacific’s facility) to a new 19,000-square-foot facility along the Willamette River. The \$5.8-million Oregon Rail Heritage Center houses the

three steam locomotives, as well as some privately owned diesels, including McCormack’s ex-Santa Fe Alco PA, repainted as Nickel Plate Road No. 190. Open four days a week, the Heritage Center enables the public to see what it takes to maintain a steam locomotive. The center is located alongside the Oregon Pacific Railroad, which owns the tracks through Oaks Park, where No. 4449 and Spokane, Portland & Seattle 4-8-4 No. 700 [page 41] lead the annual Holiday Express excursions.

STAYING ACTIVE

While the Holiday Express trips mean that No. 4449 runs at least once a year, McCormack says getting out on the main line is the Friends of SP 4449’s primary objective. In recent years, the locomotive has made many trips down the Oregon Trunk route to Bend. It was scheduled to do so again on June 24 and 25, 2017. McCormack says it’s an ideal two-day trip because it is scenic and, once the train turns south off of BNSF’s busy Columbia River Gorge route, it is no longer a nuisance for the dispatcher because there is less traffic on that line.

McCormack says maintaining a good relationship with railroads like BNSF is one of the many keys to running mainline steam in the 21st century; another is managing expectations. McCormack says every locomotive group needs to realize that big



Heading east for its appearance in Train Festival 2009, No. 4449 rolls along the Kootenai River near Troy, Mont., on July 4, 2009. Mitch Goldman

No. 4449 is the star attraction at the opening of the Doyle McCormack Enginehouse at the Oregon Rail Heritage Center in 2012. Alexander B. Craghead





SP&S 700, The Northwest's Own 4-8-4, awaits its return



Spokane, Portland & Seattle 4-8-4 No. 700 leaves Portland Union Station on May 11, 2013, after being displayed on National Train Day. Justin Franz

Nearly 80 years after rolling out of the Baldwin Locomotive Works as one of three E-1 4-8-4s built for “The Northwest’s Own” road, Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railway No. 700 will soon be hitting the rails following a lengthy rebuild.

Owned by the city of Portland and operated by the Pacific Railroad Preservation Association, No. 700 was restored to steam in the early 1990s and has spent the last 20 years operating in the Pacific Northwest. The locomotive is housed at the Oregon Rail Heritage Center, along with Southern Pacific No. 4449, also owned by the city. In 2016, volunteers began the locomotive’s 1,472-day inspection. Preservation Association Vice President Steve Sedaker says volunteers have replaced the locomotive’s superheaters, inspected the boiler, firebox, and flue sheet, and refurbished the air pumps, along with many other repairs. The inspection is expected to cost nearly \$180,000 and has been aided by grants from the Tom E. Dailey Foundation, Preserving Oregon, the National Railway Historical Society, and BNSF Railway.

If everything goes according to plan, the restoration will be done by late 2018, just in time for the annual Holiday Express runs on the Oregon Pacific.

Visit www.SPS700.org for more information. — Justin Franz

trips — like the 1984 journey to New Orleans or the 2009 excursion to Michigan — are rare and should not be taken for granted. “It’s getting more and more difficult to run big steam excursions, so you have to be realistic,” he says. “If you get one big trip in a year, that’s pretty good, because sometimes it can consume an entire year just planning that one trip.”

But perhaps most crucial to success on the main line is fielding a professional crew. “It all comes down to the crew’s ability, and we’ve always had really good people involved with this effort,” Tracy says. “When we’re out on the road it’s not play-time. It’s serious business.”

Tracy says McCormack has always been the “heart and soul” of the crew, and its professionalism stems from the boss’s railroad experience. That’s why No. 4449 has had one of the longest steam excursion careers in

railroad preservation, he says, one that has lasted twice as long as the locomotive’s time with the SP. “Doyle is the reason this locomotive has run so long,” Tracy says. “Doyle’s a first-class locomotive engineer. He’s good at what he does and cares about what he does.” While the nonprofit Friends of SP 4449 helps organize excursions and raise funds for its continued maintenance, no decision is made without McCormack’s input. Tracy and others on the crew joke that it’s a “benevolent dictatorship” that works.

Forty-three years after the locomotive was selected to lead the American Freedom Train, Rowland says it’s amazing that No. 4449 is still rolling. “It’s so gratifying to see No. 4449 so well kept all these years later by Doyle and his crew,” Rowland says. “The locomotive represents the proud heritage of steam in this country and helps tell the often under-told story of how railroads

helped build America.”

McCormack and Tracy say they are optimistic that No. 4449 will help tell that story for years to come. Both men say the locomotive is in the best condition of its career and is ready to hit the main line again. When it does, they know a sellout crowd will be waiting. “No. 4449 doesn’t have a regional or national appeal,” Tracy says. “She has a worldwide appeal.”

After four decades at the throttle of the Lima-built 4-8-4, McCormack says there is no better representative of mainline steam railroading in America.

“No. 4449 has a lot of charisma, a lot of style,” he says. “She’s a classy locomotive, and she’ll run with the best of them.” **I**

For more information about Southern Pacific No. 4449, visit www.4449.com or www.ORHF.org.