

PRESS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Division of Boating and Waterways | Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division | Office of Historic Preservation

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Historic 1920s Rotary Snowplow & Compelling “Snowbound in the Sierra” Exhibit Return for a Limited Time at the Railroad Museum

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – For a limited time, visitors to the California State Railroad Museum have a special opportunity to see a 251,000-pound rotary snowplow from the Museum’s impressive collection along with a compelling exhibit titled “Snowbound in the Sierra.” The SP MW205 (formerly known as SP 715) snowplow on display was built in 1920, converted to electric in 1958, retired by Union Pacific in 2004 and was donated to the Railroad Museum in 2008. Since then, the historic snowplow has been housed in the Shops in the Sacramento Railyards except for short-term displays at the Railroad Museum each winter.

With the historic snowplow as an eye-catching centerpiece, the exhibit highlights the dramatic story of 226 passengers and crew members who were rescued – with the help of crews working around the clock and seven rotary snowplows – after being trapped on a luxury streamliner locomotive during a massive snowstorm in the Sierra Nevada in 1952. The exhibit includes riveting narrative from passengers and crew, a special kiosk, exhibit case and video along with an interactive game.

The historic snowplow and exhibit help give Museum visitors an understanding of the various snow removal methods used by the railroad to allow for year-round locomotive use. While Museum guests will learn how cumbersome, arduous and dangerous snow removal on the railroad can be and how the preferred methods have changed over time, they will also gain insight into the critical role they played in saving lives and clearing the path for freight and transportation. Rotary snowplows were often used by the railroad as a very last resort – such as was the case for the *City of San Francisco* locomotive highlighted in the exhibit – due to the incredible expense involved. Rotary snowplows only moved five to ten miles per hour, had high fuel costs and required an elite crew. It is estimated that less than 200 rotary snowplows still exist throughout the world today.

Currently on display in the Museum’s Roundhouse, the rotary snowplow and companion “Snowbound in the Sierra” exhibit will remain on public view through March 2019. Viewing the exhibit and locomotive are included in Museum admission: \$12 for adults; \$6 for youths ages 6-17; free for children ages 5 and under. For more information about the snow plow, exhibit or the California State Railroad Museum in general, please call 916-323-9280 or visit <https://www.californiarailroad.museum/>.

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About the California State Railroad Museum Foundation

The mission of the California State Railroad Museum Foundation (CSRMF) is to generate revenue and awareness on behalf of its destinations, while supporting the preservation, interpretation and promotion of our railroad heritage. The Foundation provides funding for ongoing support of numerous programs, both at the museum's Old Sacramento location and at the historic park in Jamestown, Calif. For more information, please visit www.californiarailroad.museum.