



# TRANSCONTINENTAL

★ 1869 ★ RAILROAD ★ 2019 ★

## 150TH ANNIVERSARY

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## **Railroad Museum & Foundation to Commemorate 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 2019**

***Community is Encouraged to Participate in a Series of  
Exciting Events, Activities & Exhibits that Culminate in Spring***

**SACRAMENTO** – In 2019, the California State Railroad Museum & Foundation are proud to present a series of exciting events, activities and exhibits to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad. As history can attest, the completion of the 1,912-mile continuous railroad line was arguably the single greatest technological feat of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It helped to connect the country, shape the nation, and put the United States on a path to economic prosperity.

“The completion of the Transcontinental Railroad is not simply a railroad story, it is our story,” said Ty Smith, Museum Director of the California State Railroad Museum. “It is a milestone of monumental importance. It bound the United States at a fragile time and it has impacted every one of our lives. At the Railroad Museum, we are honored to do our part to interpret the complex history and share the stories of the people who lived, worked, and died in this tremendous endeavor.”

Sacramento played a pivotal role in the remarkable feat that ultimately took thousands of laborers – largely Chinese railroad workers – and multiple private railroad companies to complete. On January 8, 1863, then-governor Leland Stanford officially broke ground in Sacramento to begin construction of the Central Pacific Railroad. Approximately six years later, the first Transcontinental Railroad was completed on May 10, 1869, when Stanford drove a ceremonial Gold Spike at Promontory Summit, Utah to officially connect the country.

The original completion date of May 8, 1869 was delayed by two days due in part to a labor dispute and a major storm. With plans in place and dignitaries already poised to participate on May 8, the city of Sacramento commemorated the completion in grand style two days before the rest of the nation did on May 10, 1869.



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To commemorate the important milestone in our nation's history, the California State Railroad Museum & Foundation are proud to present and/or support the following events, activities and exhibits that culminate in May 2019 (while some have already begun, and others extend throughout the year).

### **HeritageRail Conference in Sacramento – April 25-27**

Working in collaboration with the HeritageRail Alliance, the California State Railroad Museum & Foundation are helping to coordinate a prestigious gathering of railroad operators, historians and supporters from throughout North America to visit Sacramento for an annual conference that is timed to help kick off the sesquicentennial celebration. Information on events that are open to the public will follow at a later date.

### **Judah Map on Public Display inside the Railroad Museum – Debuts in April 2019**

For six weeks in Spring 2019, visitors to the California State Railroad will have the unique opportunity to see the 66' Judah Map in person – on loan from the California State Archives – that has never been on public display in its entirety. Theodore Judah was the first engineer to systematically explore the western Sierra Nevada mountains and map the route of the Central Pacific Railroad. The map will debut on April 15, 2019 and will remain on public display through May 31, 2019.

### **Gold Spike Exhibit Redesign inside the Railroad Museum – Spring 2019**

The California State Railroad Museum is home to both the priceless "lost" Gold Spike and the famous "Last Spike" painting by Thomas Hill. The spike was cast at the same time as the gold spike used at the Promontory Summit ceremony. Thomas Hill's painting illustrates the scene of the famous joining of the Union and Central Pacific Railroads. The California State Railroad Museum will redesign the Gold Spike exhibit areas so museum guests can enjoy a more interpretive and interactive exhibit experience.

### **The Chinese Workers' Experience Exhibit inside the Railroad Museum – Spring 2019**

The California State Railroad Museum plans to debut an enhanced exhibit that will showcase and share stories of the Chinese railroad workers who were instrumental in the building of the Transcontinental Railroad. Once completed, the exhibit will allow visitors to immerse themselves in the toil and experiences of Chinese railroad workers who endured and persevered through severe weather and treacherous terrain.

### **Free Community Sesquicentennial Event – May 8, 2019**

To gain a better understanding and experience the commemorative events (as closely as possible) to those that took place 150 years prior, the California State Railroad Museum & Foundation invite the community-at-large to visit the Old Sacramento Waterfront for a free outdoor Sesquicentennial event beginning at 10 a.m. on May 8, 2019. Planned free activities will include (but are not limited to) the following:



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- Historic re-creation of the parade that took place on May 8, 1869 complete with flags, music, historic fire brigade, horse-drawn carriages, and more;
- Complimentary historic and authentic excursion train rides aboard the Sacramento Southern Railroad throughout the day;
- Entertaining and interpretive Transcontinental Railroad melodrama performances playing in the historic Eagle Theatre;
- Community Picnic where guests can bring a sack lunch to enjoy on 1849 Scene (big grassy area in front of the Railroad Museum) that will feature entertaining live music along with docents and historians telling stories of the Transcontinental Railroad.

### **Sesquicentennial VIP Gala at the Railroad Museum – May 11, 2019**

The California State Railroad Museum Foundation is proud and excited to offer a memorable evening of dinner, dancing and a private walk-through of one of the most influential and far-reaching moments in our nation's history during a special Sesquicentennial VIP gala inside the impressive Railroad Museum. Sponsorships are available now, and more event information to follow at a later date.

### **Waterfront Days Heritage Event at the Old Sacramento Waterfront – May 24-26, 2019**

In collaboration with the Downtown Sacramento Partnership, the Old Sacramento Living History Program and Sacramento History Museum, the California State Railroad Museum & Foundation are proud to support a free heritage event over Memorial Day weekend that will include three days of engaging, educational and fun festivities. Friday is Education Day with a focus on school groups and the community festival is scheduled for Saturday & Sunday. More details and event information will follow at a later date.

“Next year is shaping up to be the year of the railroad in Sacramento and beyond,” said Cheryl Marcell, President & CEO of the California State Railroad Museum Foundation. “And while it’s fitting that the Railroad Museum & Foundation are leading the way to recognize and honor this historic achievement in Sacramento, we’re thrilled to see our community partners stepping up to join in the effort in exciting and innovative ways. We applaud and invite the entire community to pause, reflect and commemorate with us in 2019.”

In addition to the California State Railroad Museum & Foundation, the region-wide museum community is also planning numerous ways to mark the pivotal date in our nation's history with special events, exhibits and activations. A number of museums and destinations with plans in place for 2019 include the following: California Automobile Museum, Center for Sacramento History, Crocker Art Museum, Locke Boarding House Museum, Roseville Utility Exploration Center, Sacramento Historic City Cemetery, Sacramento History Museum, and SSVMS Museum of Medical History. More detailed information will follow and/or be available from each respective museum and/or destination.



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For more details and updated information about events, activities and exhibits presented by the California State Railroad Museum & Foundation, please visit [www.Railroad150.org](http://www.Railroad150.org); for more information about the Museum or Foundation visit [www.californiarailroad.museum](http://www.californiarailroad.museum); and for more information about Waterfront Days happening over Memorial Day Weekend, please visit [www.oldsacramento.com](http://www.oldsacramento.com).

### **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](http://www.californiarailroad.museum).*



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