



#1702 Steam Engine Makes a Triumphant Return to the Smokies!

Contact: Sarah Conley Pressley
P.O. Box 1490
Bryson City, NC 28713
828.488.7024 or 800.872.4681 ext. 7024
WWW.GSMR.COM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bryson City, NC – After long awaited anticipation Great Smoky Mountains Railroad (GSMR) is excited to announce that the historic #1702 Steam Engine will return for the 2016 excursion season! Thanks to the innovative private/public partnership between Swain County Commissioners, Tourism Development Authority Board, and GSMR, #1702 is revived and ready to roll on the rails! Booking is now available!

Steam excursions will depart from the historic Bryson City Depot beginning July 22nd with a variety of options. Throughout the season 39 excursions will follow the Nantahala Gorge route and 22 excursions will follow the Tuckasegee River route. All general excursions will offer the full variety of seating options including our most popular First Class seating. Before departure, passengers may arrive early to enjoy a meet and greet with one of GSMR's star conductors along with the engine crew. As it prepares for its journey, #1702 will be on display allowing for photos opportunities and an up close and personal view of the impressive equipment.

On board, passengers will enjoy interacting with staff and hearing about various historical points and interesting facts about #1702. All steam excursion passengers will receive a commemorative #1702 souvenir ticket and lapel pin to celebrate the locomotive's return to the rails! These items are one of a kind and not sold in our retail store. Upon return to Bryson City, a live demonstration of the turn-table will also be on exhibit. A few lucky guests will be selected each day to be an active participant in the manual turning of the locomotive!

In addition to the regular excursion schedule, #1702 will also be leading six special event trains. The popular, family friendly Fontana Trestle Train featuring BBQ & Brews service and THE POLAR EXPRESS train ride will be operating with the steam engine on select dates! #1702 will also pull two new event trains in 2016: the Railroad Reserve, a wine and rail pairing dinner train; and the Photo Special, an 8-hour roundtrip excursion to the Nantahala Gorge departing from Dillsboro NC, stopping for two run by photo opportunities and a short steam shop tour.

This historic season has been years in the making as official restoration began in May of 2014. Under the guidance of Project Manager Steve Jackson and the official boiler contractor, Robert Franzen of Steam Services of America, GSMR in house shop workers have worked tirelessly to meet the summer deadline. GSMR owner, Al Harper, is personally thrilled to see this massive project reach completion. Harper says, "2016 is going to be a banner year for the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad. Steam is coming alive! Engine #1702 will once again be a super star on our tracks offering numerous excursions for all our guests to ride. The personnel of GSMR have done a tremendous job in making one of my personal dreams come true."

Booking is now available for the variety of steam powered options. Pricing and details can be found at www.gsmr.com or by calling 1-800-872-4681.

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Proud member of the American Heritage Railways family. Visit our sister railroad in southwest Colorado at the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad.