

**MEDIA ADVISORY**

Date: March 25, 2024

Media Contact: Cindy Gubler 801-971-5639

**Golden Spike Foundation**  
60 S. 600 E., Suite 150  
Salt Lake City, UT 84102



## Golden Spike Monument Hitting the Road Again

**University of Utah Kicks Off Western Tour to Pay Homage to The Building of the Central Pacific Line of The Transcontinental Railroad by Chinese Workers**

**WHAT:** The 43-foot-tall Golden Spike Monument, inspired by the gold spike ceremoniously driven on May 10, 1869, at Promontory, Utah, to signal the completion of the nation’s first transcontinental railroad, will soon begin its westward journey to pay homage to the building of the Central Pacific Line from California to Utah. The University of Utah in Salt Lake City will kick off the public art piece’s ceremonial journey to Sacramento, which includes several “whistle stops” along the journey.

“The purpose of the Golden Spike Monument is to educate and inspire people to learn from the past and honor the memory of the thousands of workers who built the transcontinental railroad,” said Doug Foxley, Chair of the Golden Spike Foundation, which commissioned the piece. “This journey west is especially important in helping us tell the story of the thousands of Chinese workers that faced so many difficulties building the railroad through the rugged mountains.”

Construction of the Central Pacific Railroad's portion of the transcontinental railroad faced harsh, dangerous, and merciless conditions. Unable to find willing labor, the Central Pacific Railroad recruited thousands of Chinese laborers from the Chinese province of Guangdong. Utilizing mostly hand tools and a dangerous mix of nitroglycerin and black powder, the Chinese workers chiseled and blasted through the granite fortress of the Sierra Nevada mountains to build 15 tunnels. They endured frostbite and avalanches that came with the harsh winters. More than a thousand Chinese workers are estimated to have lost their lives while building the railroad. Nonetheless, the Chinese workers persevered and played a pivotal role in constructing the greatest engineering project of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Their achievement is even more poignant in light of the fact that they were forced to leave their families behind, paid lower wages than other railroad workers, and barred from becoming United States citizens.

"This great history helped transform our country and was made possible by a diverse group of brave and determined workers," said Foxley. "The Golden Spike Monument's journey west helps us pay tribute not only to the Chinese laborers but to all the workers of the transcontinental railroad, who risked so much to make this great dream a reality."

Estimated laborers working on the railroad included Chinese immigrants (15,000 – 25,000), Irish immigrants (10,000 – 12,000), members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (3,000 – 4,000), Civil War veterans (2,000 – 3,000), African Americans and newly freed slaves (uncertain due to lack of records), and other nationalities (500 – 1,000).

**WHEN:** The kickoff celebration and tour is as follows:

- April 24, 10:00 am to Noon: **Whistle Stop** – University of Utah President Circle, Salt Lake City, UT (Kickoff event starts at 11:30 am)
- April 24, 4:00 to 6:00 pm: **Whistle Stop** – Wells City Park, Wells, NV
- April 27, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm: **Whistle Stop** – California Railroad Museum, Sacramento, CA
- April 30, 11:00 am to 3:00 pm: **Whistle Stop** – Utah State University, Logan, UT
- April 30, 6:00 to 6:30 pm: **Honk & Wave** – Tremonton, UT
- May 3, 10:00 am to 8:00 pm: **Whistle Stop** – Ogden Union Station, Ogden City, UT
- May 2, 6, and 7: **School Assemblies** – Every elementary school in Box Elder School District
- May 10, 12:30 to 9:00 pm: **Whistle Stop** – Millcreek Common, Millcreek, UT
- May 11, 10:00 am to 3:00 pm: **Whistle Stop** – Golden Spike National Historical Park, Promontory, UT

**WHY:** The Golden Spike Monument sculpture gives "faces to the faceless" and truly celebrates the building of the transcontinental railroad. The Monument is a lasting legacy of the Golden Spike Foundation's Spike 150 celebration on May 10, 2019, which marked the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the driving of the last spike that joined the Central Pacific and Union Pacific railroads to form America's first transcontinental railroad. That celebration focused on telling the **complete story**

of the railroad's construction by recognizing and honoring the thousands of workers. Before the Spike 150 celebration, their stories had gone untold, their contributions glossed over, and their faces not shown. The Golden Spike Monument will continue to tell the **whole story** to the world so it can be remembered and honored. It also offers a **timely and lasting message about the power of diversity and inclusion**.

**WHO:** The kickoff event at the University of Utah will include remarks by University President Taylor Randall, Chinese railroad worker descendant and Utah State Senator Karen Kwan, and a festive confetti send-off. The Sacramento stop will share the spotlight with the Great Wall Youth Orchestra, a youth orchestra that plays traditional Chinese musical instruments. The Ogden Union Station stop will include a Chinese railroad worker exhibit and is part of Ogden's monthly First Friday Art Stroll programming. The Millcreek Common stop will include a public lecture from Chris Merritt with the State Historic Preservation Office on his research regarding the Chinese railroad workers living in Terrace, Utah, and evening entertainment with remarks by Mike Winder, City Manager for Millcreek, and a Skate Loop Legends roller skating performance of As One.

The Golden Spike Monument was created by artist Douwe Blumberg, who has completed over 200 private and public commissions and won numerous awards for his work. The piece was commissioned by the Golden Spike Foundation, a Utah-based non-profit organization that continues to inspire people to learn from the past and honor the memory of railroad workers through a series of legacy public art and educational outreach.

**ABOUT:** The Golden Spike Monument measures 43.3 feet tall, a seemingly random number that happens to be the square root of 1869 – the year the transcontinental railroad was completed in Promontory, Utah. The sculpture weighs just under 7,000 pounds. It has an aluminum interior structure, making it lightweight and strong. The outside has been carefully covered in gold decorative material and then overlaid with a thick layer of wax to maintain its appearance. It took 25 people, including casters, welders, sandblasters, and artisans, to create the monument. Following its tour, the Golden Spike Monument sculpture will be permanently installed at the new Golden Spike State Monument in Brigham City, Box Elder County, Utah.

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