

D&RGW #223 to Be Restored to Operation in Colorado with Landmark Partnership

October 28, 2025

Ogden City, the 223 Locomotive Foundation, and the Colorado Railroad Museum are excited to announce a plan to restore the Denver & Rio Grande Western #223 to operational status to operate for the public.

One of three surviving C-16 locomotives and the last surviving narrow-gauge Grant-built locomotive, D&RGW C-16 #223 was manufactured in 1881 and served the D&RGW lines in Colorado and New Mexico throughout its working life. After being located in Ogden for over 30 years, ownership of the locomotive was officially transferred to Ogden City in February 2024 from the Utah Historical Society. Since then, city staff have been undergoing vigorous analysis as to the future of the locomotive with the goal of determining the best future for this historic engine.

During this process, Ogden City solicited expert opinions, examined partnership capabilities, and invited public comment. The City hired narrow-gauge locomotive expert John Bush to complete a full inventory of the #223's component parts over the course of 6 months, which was facilitated with funding from the Narrow Gauge Preservation Foundation connected by board president Jimmy Booth. At the same time, the City solicited written and verbal consultations with over a dozen relevant individuals and organizations; additionally, the City hosted a community townhall meeting and survey. Based on relevant feedback and capabilities, priorities for #223's envisioned future included a return to operational status with full FRA approval, as well as a focus on operating the engine in its historic homelands in Colorado.

Based on united goals to preserve railroading history and honor this engine, Ogden City has completed negotiations with partner organizations. The 223 Locomotive Foundation will take ownership of D&RGW #223 as a purpose-created 501(c)3 non-profit. They are fundraising for an operational restoration of #223. Once restored, the engine will visit Colorado's narrow-gauge railroads pulling public excursion trains. Within 10 years of achieving operational status, the D&RGW #223's permanent home will be at the Colorado Railroad Museum, which hosts operating narrow-gauge tracks in Golden, CO and tours locomotives throughout Colorado.

"The 223's journey is a testament to the passion and perseverance of volunteers who refused to let this piece of history fade away," said Ogden Mayor Ben Nadolski. "Their dedication when others were unwilling to step up kept the dream of the 223 alive,

because of them, this remarkable locomotive now has the chance to be part of something much bigger — restored, celebrated, and shared with generations to come. While it's hard to see this important piece of history leave Ogden, I couldn't be more proud of our volunteers and community who played a major role in ensuring that the 223 will once again steam to life and inspire everyone who sees it."

223 Locomotive Foundation president Jimmy Booth said "After so many years of being a static artifact, we will now be able to move forward in making the #223 a piece of living history to educate current and future generations on how narrow gauge railroading built the communities of the Rockies, along with the development of steam locomotives."

"We set out to understand and implement the best possible future for this locomotive. I truly believe we've accomplished this," said Hope Eggett, museum administrator for the Museums at Union Station. "With this plan, generations will be able to experience Rocky Mountain railroading, reflecting the priorities and desires of both the narrow-gauge community and the Utah State Railroad Museum." The #223 will be returning to Colorado in recognition of Colorado's 150th anniversary of statehood in 2026, celebrating the role of the railroad in the state's creation.

"We are deeply grateful to previous stewards of the #223 for preserving this locomotive, especially the Golden Spike Chapter of the National Railway and Locomotive Historical Society," Eggett said. In recognition for their contributions, members of the Golden Spike Chapter and Ogden City residents will receive discounted fares on future train rides and will be recognized in a plaque on the locomotive.

More about the 223 Locomotive Foundation can be found at 223locomotiv.foundation.org. The founding board of directors includes Jimmy Booth, president, Ray Bjerrum, treasurer, and Jeff Taylor, secretary. More about the Colorado Railroad Museum can be found at coloradorailroadmuseum.org.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the timeline & next steps for #223?

The official transfer of ownership is being initiated now, and the 223 Locomotive Foundation is beginning fundraising efforts immediately.

The component parts of #223 will continue to be physically housed in Ogden as a logistical courtesy until restoration facilities are ready to receive it, anticipated in 2026.

Where can I learn more about the 223 Locomotive Foundation?

You can visit the Foundation's website at 223locomotiv.foundation.org

The mission statement for the 223 Locomotive Foundation is:

Restore Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad's C-16 locomotive 223 to both operational and museum-quality based on the end of service life configuration. Ensure the management and maintenance of locomotive 223 for the benefit of future generations, thereby preserving the unique history of Colorado's narrow-gauge railroads. Collaborate with Colorado museums and operational railroads to operate, maintain, and demonstrate the historical significance of the C-16 class locomotive.

How do I contact the 223 Locomotive Foundation?

Visit our website and donate to the #223 project at 223locomotiv.foundation.org. Email the board of directors at info@223LF.org.

Where can I learn more about the Colorado Railroad Museum?

The Colorado Railroad Museum brings Colorado's rich rail heritage to life with dozens of narrow- and standard-gauge steam and diesel locomotives, passenger cars, freight cars and cabooses. Located on a spectacular 15-acre site in Clear Creek Valley in Golden, just west of Denver, the Museum features a half mile circle of operating track offering weekend train rides, a working roundhouse and turntable, educational tours for school groups plus families and adults, a railroad research library and publications program, along with exhibition galleries, an outdoor railyard, and a huge indoor HO model railroad and outdoor G-scale garden railway. Smaller artifacts and full-size rail vehicles from the Museum, including operating steam locomotives, occasionally travel to offsite locations for display and to pull special excursions for benefit of the public.

Visit www.ColoradoRailroadMuseum.org to learn more.

How do I contact the Colorado Railroad Museum?

Email Info@crrm.org or call (303) 279-4591 (Tuesday-Sunday, 9-5 MT, closed Monday)

Physical Address: 17155 W 44th Avenue, Golden, CO 80403

How will the Golden Spike Chapter be recognized? How will Ogden City citizens be recognized?

Ogden City, the 223 Locomotive Foundation, and the Colorado Railroad Museum recognize the contributions that the Golden Spike Chapter of the R&LHS has made to the preservation of this locomotive. In honor of this, members of the Golden Spike

chapter will be given discounted fares upon restoration of the #223 to operation. The chapter will also be recognized in a plaque that will travel with the locomotive. In addition, Ogden City residents will also receive discounted fares in gratitude for their support of the #223 for the last 30 years.