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Professional Licensure

APPOINTMENTS:

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Small Business Council, DCED
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**Rep. Valerie Gaydos Remarks Welcoming Union Pacific Big Boy to
Leetsdale, Pennsylvania**

Good afternoon, everyone! I am State Representative Valerie Gaydos. I love our nation's history and as a Commissioner of America 250 PA I am pleased to participate in this memorable day for Leetsdale, western Pennsylvania, and our great nation. It is an honor to join Mayor Ford, our distinguished guests, and all of you as we welcome one of the greatest symbols of American history and innovation – Union Pacific's **Big Boy No. 4014**.

This extraordinary locomotive, the world's largest operating steam engine, weighs in at an astonishing 1.2 million pounds. Yet what makes it truly remarkable is not its size, but what it represents. The Big Boy is a living tribute to American ingenuity, determination, and the hardworking men and women whose skill, sacrifice, and perseverance helped build the strongest economy and the greatest nation the world has ever known.

The rails beneath this locomotive carried the steel, coal, machinery, and manufactured goods that fueled America's rise. The rails connected farms to factories, towns to cities, and families from coast to coast. Many of those products were proudly made right here in western Pennsylvania, including in Leetsdale, where generations of workers helped power America's industrial strength.

To see the Big Boy in full operation rolling through our small but mighty town—is truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience. It reminds us that America's greatness has always been built by people who dreamed big, worked hard, and never stopped believing in tomorrow.

As our nation celebrates **America's 250th birthday**, Big Boy's cross-country journey is about more than just an historic locomotive. It is a celebration of the American spirit. As this locomotive travels thousands of miles across our country, it and our entire rail system reminds us that despite our differences, we are united by a shared history, a common purpose, and an enduring belief in freedom, opportunity, and the promise of America.

Today, families will gather, children will look on in amazement, and perhaps a young boy or girl watching this magnificent machine will be inspired to become tomorrow's engineer, inventor, welder, electrician, machinist, scientist, or entrepreneur – Here in western PA we have always had and still have to this day some of the nation's best skilled tradesmen and women.

When the Big Boy's whistle echoes through Leetsdale today, may it remind us of the courage, hard work, determination, and sacrifice of those who came before us – those who built our railroads, defended our freedoms, strengthened our industries, and left us a nation unlike any other in history. May it also remind us that America's greatest days are still ahead if we continue to invest in innovation, value hard work, and believe in one another.

Before we continue, I want to recognize the many people whose dedication made today's event possible. Please join me in thanking the Leetsdale Police Department, our volunteer firefighters from Leetsdale and the surrounding communities, Valley

Ambulance and all of our EMS personnel, our public works crews, Union Pacific, Norfolk Southern, and the many volunteers who worked tirelessly to ensure this visit is both safe and memorable.

Leetsdale may be home to just 1,100 residents, but today our community is proudly welcoming visitors from across Pennsylvania and beyond. That is something we can all be proud of.

INTRODUCTION TO WES JAMES

Finally, it is my pleasure to introduce someone who truly shares our excitement. Wes James is not only one of our dedicated volunteer firefighters, but he is also a lifelong railroad enthusiast and proud Leetsdale resident.

Wes, please come on up. We'd love for you to share a few fascinating facts about the Big Boy—and before you do, tell us what went through your mind when you first heard that this legendary locomotive was coming to Leetsdale!

Some interesting facts about Big Boy 4014: Built: 1941 in Schenectady, New York. Designed to haul heavy freight trains over the steep Mountains in the West Coast

- **Length: About 133 feet long**
- **Weight: Approximately 1.2 million pounds**
- **Horsepower: Around 7,000 horsepower**
- **Retired from regular service: 1961 after traveling more than 1 million miles**
- **Only 25 Union Pacific Big Boy locomotives were ever built, making them one of the rarest classes of large steam locomotives.**
- **17 were scrapped between 1962 and 1963 as Union Pacific rapidly replaced steam with diesel-electric locomotives. At the time, few people imagined they would become historic icons.**
- **8 were donated or set aside for preservation, ending up at museums, parks, and historical sites across the country.**
- **1 is in PA in Scranton but it is not operational**
- **Only one—No. 4014—is operational.**

CITATION

MAYOR FORD: The arrival of Union Pacific's Big Boy gives us a unique opportunity to reflect on the extraordinary role that railroads have played in shaping Pennsylvania, our nation, and especially our beloved Leetsdale—a community whose history has always been closely tied to the railroad.

For generations, the tracks that run through this town carried the workers, steel, coal, and manufactured goods produced right here in Leetsdale and throughout western Pennsylvania. Those products helped fuel America's economic growth, strengthened our communities, and established our nation as the world's industrial leader. Few machines represent that remarkable legacy more powerfully than the Big Boy.

REP GAYDOS PRESENTS CITATION/PROCLAMATION

As America celebrates its 250th anniversary, the visit of Union Pacific's Big Boy No. 4014 celebrates not just America but the proud railroad heritage of Leetsdale where generations of workers helped power America's industrial strength.

It is my distinct honor, on behalf of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, to present this official House Citation in recognition of the historic visit of Union Pacific's Big Boy No. 4014 to the Borough of Leetsdale and the pride and excitement this extraordinary occasion has brought to our community.

Welcome to Leetsdale, Big Boy!

Thank you.