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saukobits@shawlocal.com

Publisher

Jennifer Heintzelman

815-632-2502

jheintzelman@shawmedia.com

Editor

Charlene Bielema

815-632-2518

cbielema@shawmedia.com

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SHAW LOCAL
News Network

Sterling added as whistle-stop for Big Boy steam engine's fall tour

Mayor Diana Merdian is planning a celebration to accompany the Sept. 6 whistle-stop

By **BRANDON CLARK**
bclark@shawmedia.com

STERLING – Union Pacific has officially added Sterling as a whistle-stop along the iconic Big Boy No. 4014 steam engine's "Heartland of America Tour."

Big Boy will stop in Sterling from 1:30-1:45 p.m. Friday, Sept. 6, near the Twin Cities Farmers Market at 106 Ave. A, barring any unforeseen delays. Spectators can take pictures but are asked to keep off the tracks and maintain a minimum safe distance of 25 feet until the train comes to a complete stop, at which point visitors can get a closer look.

According to Union Pacific, Big Boy is the world's largest operating steam locomotive. Of the 25 steam engines built during World War II, only eight survived. Big Boy is the only one still in operation. It last passed through Sterling on July 30, 2019.

Sterling Mayor Diana Merdian has been pushing for the whistle-stop ever since reaching her goal of adding Sterling to the list of more than 100 communities, including Crystal Lake and Rochelle, to be designated a "Train Town USA" by Union Pacific earlier this month.

"To be honest, I thought I had a better chance of winning the lottery than getting this train to stop," Merdian joked.



Shaw Local file photo

The world's largest steam engine, known as Big Boy No. 4014, enters Railroad Park in Rochelle on July 30, 2019.

"I'm just a small-town mayor who grew up next to the tracks. So, when they told me that we got it, I had chills."

Merdian said she is meeting with other city officials this week to plan an event for the big day commemorating the whistle-stop and the city's "Train Town USA" designation. The designation honors communities founded by immigrants who migrated along the expanding rail lines from the Missouri River to the

Pacific Ocean more than 150 years ago.

Big Boy's eight-week tour starts Thursday, Aug. 29, in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and will continue across nine additional states, including Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Texas before concluding in October. Fans can track Big Boy's location as it progresses along its route via the Steam Locomotive Tracking map on Union Pacific's website.

LOTTERY

ILLINOIS LOTTERY

Midday Pick 3: 1-4-3 (5)
Midday Pick 4: 7-0-0-4 (6)
Lucky Day Lotto Midday:
1-24-34-37-39
Lotto jackpot: \$8.45 million

MEGA MILLIONS

Est. jackpot: \$435 million

POWERBALL

Est. jackpot: \$212 million

INDIANA LOTTERY

Daily 3 Midday: 2-4-4 (9)
Daily 4 Midday: 1-4-6-3 (9)
Est. Lotto jackpot: \$19.3 million

WISCONSIN LOTTERY

Pick 3 Midday: 0-9-3
Pick 4 Midday: 3-6-5-6

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ON THE COVER

Breelyn Hill, 5, goes face first into a plate of spaghetti during an eating contest Saturday, Aug. 10, at Dixon's Venetian Night.

See story on page 3.

Photo by Alex T. Paschal

CORRECTIONS

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