

ALASKA RAILROAD

News Release

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Railroad commissions two Alaska artists for 2023

2023 official print-poster artwork features centennial themes

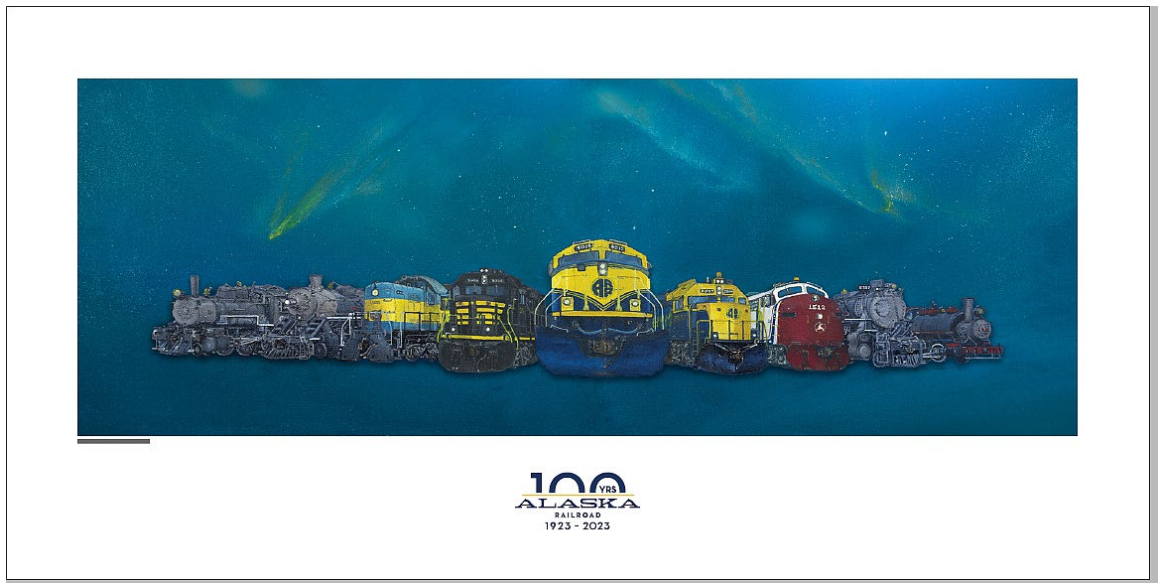
ANCHORAGE, Alaska – For its 100-year anniversary in 2023, the Alaska Railroad (ARRC) commissioned centennial-focused artwork by two artists from Alaska’s interior region, including Nenana, where the railroad was completed in a spike-driving ceremony on July 15, 1923. The artwork is featured on official 2023 prints, posters and other merchandise available at the railroad’s gift shops and ticket windows.

The public can meet artists William “Art” Chase from North Pole and Noah Nolywaika from Nenana during two sign-and-sale events in January that kick off centennial year activities in 2023.

- **FAIRBANKS: Friday, Jan. 6**, 4-7 p.m. at the Fairbanks Depot (1031 Alaska Railroad Depot Road)
- **ANCHORAGE: Saturday, Jan. 14**, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Anchorage Historic Depot (411 W. 1st Avenue)

2023 OFFICIAL PRINT - ART CHASE

Entitled **Alaska Railroad: 100 Years Strong**, the layered oil painting on canvas depicts a line-up of nine influential locomotives that showcase the Alaska Railroad’s rail transportation development over the



decades. They range from the historic steam-driven engines to today’s modern locomotives. In the deep blue background, shines the aurora borealis and stars, “as a tribute to Alaska, because in many parts of the state, ‘Alaska’ and ‘Railroad’ are inseparable,” said Chase.

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“Recreating the locomotive history of the Alaska Railroad is something I’ve wanted to do for many years,” said Chase, noting that the idea hatched in 2006. “I have been waiting for just the right time. The 100-year anniversary of the railroad seemed to make it all come together.”

This is the second time Chase was selected to create artwork for the Alaska Railroad’s annual collector’s series. In 2006, he won approval to produce artwork for ARRC’s official 2007 poster/print. The result was a painting entitled “Then and Now,” featuring a steam locomotive and a modern locomotive. While the locomotive-through-the-years was among the ideas Chase submitted for the 2007 poster/print contest, the railroad asked him to re-submit for the centennial year art contest instead. He did so.



Chase came to Alaska in 1983 courtesy of the U.S. Air Force, which assigned him to Eielson AFB. He and wife Wendy settled in nearby North Pole, where they’ve raised six children. After separating from active duty military in 1989, he went to work for the Federal Aviation Administration, supporting navigation systems around the country. He also served in the Air National Guard until retiring with 23 years of service.

Outside of work and military service, Chase spends much of his spare time pursuing a 40-year passion for steam locomotives. He’s rebuilt and operated several around the country, including Alaska. In 1990, he was a founding member of the Friends of Tanana Valley Railroad, helping to rebuild TVRR Porter #1 engine that now operates on special occasions in Fairbanks’ Pioneer Park. In 2012, when the Alaska Railroad retrieved a historic steam engine that had operated on ARRC tracks long ago (see the [August 2012 news release](#)), he quickly joined the Wasilla-based nonprofit Engine 557 Restoration Company. He’s helped to rebuild the 557 locomotive and tender over the past decade.

Chase is a self-taught artist with an innate talent for drawing and painting. See more of his work online at:

- <https://www.facebook.com/art.chase.5>
- <https://www.flickr.com/gp/artchase/zLsY59p708>

OFFICIAL CENTENNIAL PRINT - NOAH NOLYWAIKA

Entitled ***Nenana: Where River Meets Rail and Past Meets Future***, the charcoal pencil drawing on watercolor paper depicts a locomotive approaching Nenana’s historic railroad depot. In the upper-left area, President Warren Harding is driving the ceremonial golden spike amidst onlookers during the railroad completion ceremony on July 15, 1923. The gold spike in the foreground solidifies the composition. “The truck partly visible on the right is a 1967 Ford F-600 belonging to my dad,” said Nolywaika. “It represents my family’s life and presence in Nenana, just as if we were parked at the station, waiting for the train on a bright November afternoon.”

Born in Fairbanks, Nolywaika grew up in a small log cabin 10 miles north of Nenana. He and his father Manfred own and operate Northwoods Enterprises, a log home refinishing business based in Fairbanks.

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Nolywaika discovered his passion for drawing as a child. The 22-year-old has studied art under private mentorship for the past four years while pursuing his art career.

"Winning this contest and working on the railroad's centennial drawing is by far the most thrilling and significant achievement of my short art career," said Nolywaika. "What I love most about this project is the opportunity to be involved in the Centennial of the Alaska Railroad."

Using compressed charcoal pencil on watercolor paper affords me the control I require to consistently achieve my intricate art style," he said. "For the centennial drawing, I also used mechanical graphite pencils for very sensitive shading as well as colored pencils for the golden spike."

Find more examples of Nolywaika's artwork and follow his process online at:

- Website: www.noahnolywaika.com
- Blog: www.noahnolywaika.com/blog
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/noahnolywaikaart>
- Instagram: www.instagram.com/noah_nolywaika_art/
- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/noah-nolywaika-869ba7172/>

ARRC's art print program began 43 years ago, when renowned artist John Van Zyle was commissioned. Since that 1979 beginning, the annual tradition (except in 1984, when no painting was released) has evolved into a popular collector's item. Find more information, including history and images of past prints on www.AlaskaRailroad.com/Corporate > [IN THE COMMUNITY](#) > Annual Print Contest.

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