



### ***The Boise Depot***

The Boise Depot is a Mission-style structure operated by the Boise Parks & Recreation Department. Designed by New York architects, the building opened in 1925 to elaborate fanfare in the capital city.

With a splendid panoramic view of the Boise Front, the building grounds include Platt Gardens, a lovely park with pathways, a gazebo and a koi pond.

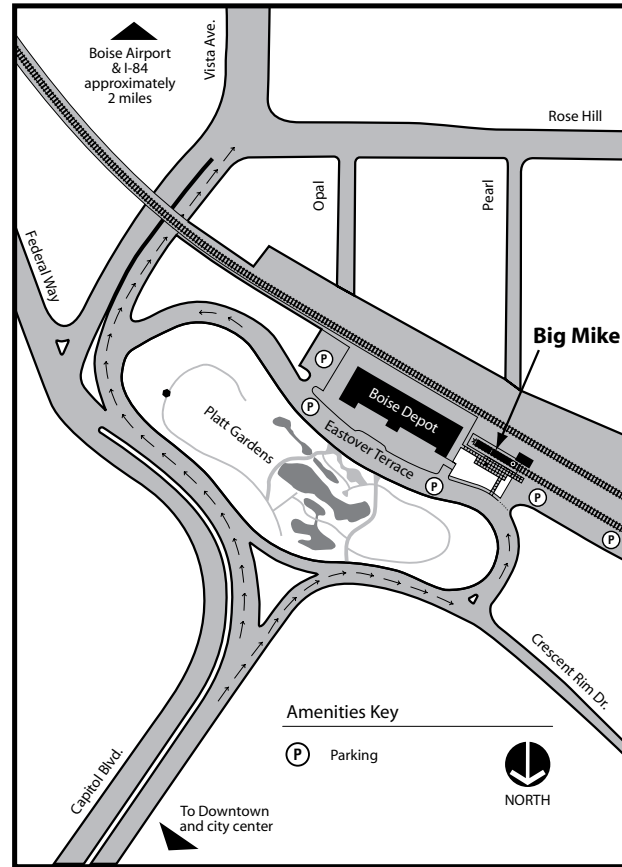
Depot amenities include The Great Hall, a 3,542-square-foot multi-story atrium that once served as a Union Pacific passenger waiting room.

The Great Hall is available for rent as a venue for business meetings, weddings, receptions and special events. Capacity: 165 seated, 300 standing.

### ***Funds for Improvements***

The Idaho Transportation Department awarded \$309,000 in federal funds for the Big Mike move, renovation and kiosk construction. The funds were designated for non-roadway improvements.

Private donors contributed \$14,000 to the Big Mike relocation project; the city provided \$13,500 of in-kind services.



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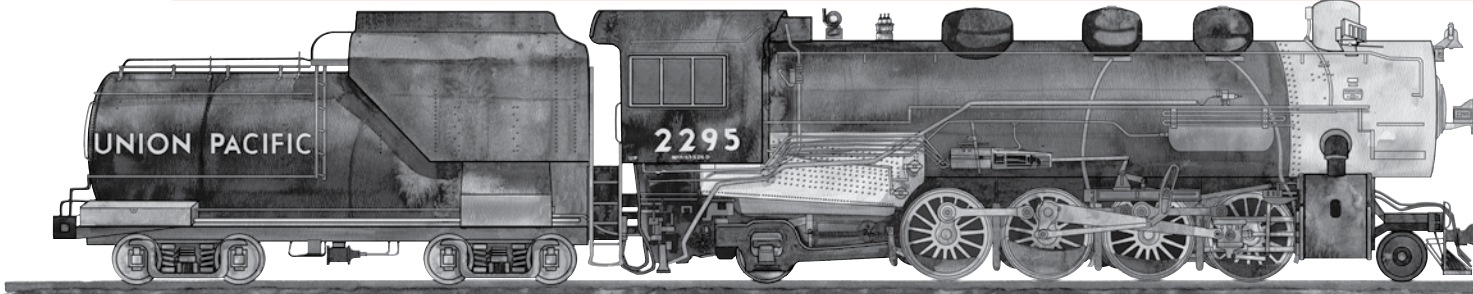


# ***Big Mike At The Boise Depot***

*An Interactive Kiosk  
& Educational Display*



# Big Mike At The Boise Depot



## Big Mike Goes to Work

Big Mike, a Mikado-type steam locomotive, was built in 1920 by the American Locomotive Company.

The powerful 2-8-2 Mikado was designed to include a large firebox supported by a two-wheel trailing truck located behind the rear driving wheels. The locomotive acquired the name Mikado because the first 2-8-2 engines were built for export to Japan.

Nicknamed “Mike” by railroad men, it was a successful type of locomotive. More than 14,000 were manufactured between 1920 and 1944.

Boise’s Big Mike was used as an all-purpose freight engine along Union Pacific’s main line from North Platte, Nebraska to Fruitland, Idaho.

## A New Home

Engine No. 2295 was “retired” by the Union Pacific Railroad and donated to the city of Boise in 1959. The locomotive was subsequently moved to the 3rd Street entrance in Julia Davis Park.

On December 9, 2007, Big Mike was moved to a permanent new home on a siding at the west side of the Boise Depot, a former Union Pacific passenger station located in the heart of Boise. Hundreds of people watched the midnight move on that cold winter’s night. The “tender,” which carried water and fuel for the engine was separated and moved earlier that week.

## The Railroad Comes to Boise

During the late 19th century, railroads were vital to the economy and development of settlements in the western United States. Anxious Boise business leaders began courting the Union Pacific in the 1860s.

It wasn’t until 1887 that Boise’s first Depot opened for freight and passenger service. The site was unpopular because of the distance from town on a rough road.

In 1893, tracks were laid by the Oregon Short Line parallel to downtown and a new sandstone depot was constructed at 10th and Front Streets. When the present Depot was opened in 1925, the old depot was converted to office space and then demolished in 1947 to make room for a new freight station.



## All Cleaned Up

After the train was moved, it was power washed, the windows were repaired, and the engine and tender were repainted. Hillside Landscape Construction built a new plaza, which features a freestanding kiosk with interactive display, interpretive signage, paved walkways, trees and a wrought-iron fence.

The interpretive kiosk and signs were designed and constructed by Mark Baltus of Boise-based Landmark Impressions. The kiosk interactive display includes three short videos about:

- How engineers operate trains
- Locomotives in motion and photos of depots along Big Mike’s route
- Moving Big Mike from Julia Davis Park to the Boise Depot

Signs feature colorful illustrations, maps and photographs about:

- How steam locomotion works
- Train facts
- The history of Big Mike Engine 2295
- Union Pacific’s Old Overland Route
- Chronological history of trains
- Train crews of the steam era

