



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 13, 2023

Contact: Judith Ehrlich, Agency of Transportation
802-595-3744, Judith.Ehrlich@vermont.gov

Stolen Weathervane Returned to Vermont

Barre, Vt. – An antique copper weathervane that was stolen from the White River Junction railway station 40 years ago is now back in Vermont thanks to an effort to identify and return it.

The 1910 weathervane, which depicts a steam locomotive and coal tender, perched on the White River Junction Station in Hartford until its theft on November 3, 1983. Theft of weathervanes was very common, as they are outside and easy to remove since they sit on a spindle to enable them to move in the wind.

Nearly forty years after the theft, the weathervane was consigned to a New York auction house. An organization called the Art Loss Register (ALR) serves auction houses around the world by checking each item in a database to determine whether it was stolen. When the ALR confirmed that the Vermont weathervane was a match for the stolen item, the auction house withdrew it from sale.

The State of Vermont now owns the White River Junction station, and the ALR, which provided their services on a pro bono basis, partnered with the Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT) to return the weathervane last week.

“We are delighted to see this valuable historic artifact and beautiful piece of art returned to its home here in Vermont,” said Judith Ehrlich, AOT’s Historic Preservation Officer. “We are working with the Vermont State Curator to select a great location for the weathervane so that it may be enjoyed once more.”

The weathervane was produced by W.A. Snow Iron Works Inc. and was returned by a generous donor to the State of Vermont. Sotheby’s covered the \$2,300 cost to ship it safely home.

The best record of the weathervane before its loss was a black and white photograph taken when it was above the Amtrak station in White River Junction. The ALR confirmed that the

weathervane offered for sale was indeed the stolen weathervane by comparing the patinated exterior caused by weathering on the side of the coal tender and the engine of the train.

To view images of the weathervane, see the original auction listing:

<https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2022/important-america-furniture-silver-prints-manuscripts-chinese-export-and-porcelain/molded-and-gilded-copper-locomotive-weathervane-w>.

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