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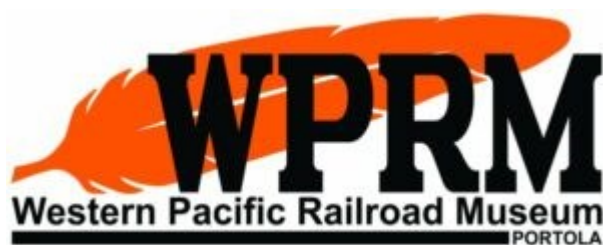
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The Order Board-Supplemental

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Western Pacific Railroad Museum Portola, CA

This is a Special Edition of The Order Board highlighting the Western Pacific Railroad Museum.





The Editor's Column

Kurt Matthews, Publications Chair



This is a supplemental edition of The Order Board focused on my recent trip to the Western Pacific Railroad Museum in Portola, CA. Portola is a one hour drive northwest of the Reno International Airport. The museum is located on the Union Pacific right of way that was previously the Western Pacific's mainline from Sacramento, CA to Salt Lake City, UT. UP purchased the WP in 1981. The current right of way is used primarily for westbound manifest trains as the westbound grades are gentler than the nearby ex-SP transcontinental line. Amtrak and UP stack trains are routed via the ex-SP. I saw two westbound UP manifest trains in a single day along with a westbound stack train with all BNSF power. I have no idea if this was a trackage rights train or a detour, perhaps turning north at the Keddie Wye towards the BNSF Gateway Subdivision (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gateway_Subdivision) to Oregon.

The museum is housed within the ex-WP engine shop. Portola was a crew change stop. It looked like the UP still uses Portola for crew changes. Most of the equipment is stored outside, so be prepared for a lot of walking, take plenty of water and wear appropriate clothing including a hat. It is blazing hot in the summer. There is a stand along the right of way that allows you to get above the fence line to take photos of the main. However, when I was there in August, it was swarming with wasps. I braved it anyway in short pants and short sleeves and they did not bother me, but they are also over all the outdoor equipment.

Inside the engine shop are about a half dozen locomotives and a passenger car on display. You can walk thru the passenger car, it is an ex-UP business car. The shop also has a number of stalls that are specific to carpentry, metal work and upholstery. Everything is accessible. There is also an air-conditioned gift shop. What was impressive about the gift shop was the amount of books, maps, track diagrams, equipment rosters and other detailed information for sale specific to the WP.

The museum also offers visitors train rides and running locomotives on the weekends. I was there on a weekday, so no rides or running for me. There is a balloon track within the museum for the rides, which are in restored cabooses from various roads. The rides do not extend out to the UP main.

Visitors are allowed to climb on most of the equipment, such as locomotives to look inside the cabs. The locomotive collection is primarily diesel with only a single steam engine. There are plenty of various freight cars, passenger cars, cabooses and maintenance of way equipment including a snow plow, rotary snow blower and a large crane with tender.

Portola is a small town with limited hotel and dining options. There are various golf resorts in the nearby area. The museum is closed from October to May except for some select weekends around Halloween and Christmas. The museum website has a detailed explanation of each piece of equipment and its history.

I enjoyed my visit despite the hot sun. Expect to spend the afternoon looking at all the exhibits.

<https://www.wplives.org/>



Diesel Locomotives



Western Pacific Railroad 805-A

California Zephyr Passenger Locomotive

This unit, affectionately called a "covered wagon" was purchased to power Western Pacific's California Zephyr less than one year after the train began on March 20, 1949. This cab unit, typically joined by two cabless "B" units, hauled the train between Oakland, California and Salt Lake City, Utah from 1950 until March 22, 1970, when the CZ ended. The 805-A was then placed into freight service.

In 1972, WP purchased 15 General Electric U23B locomotives and turned in the 805-A for credit toward their purchase. GE sold the unit to the Wellsville, Addison and Gettysburg Railroad in Pennsylvania. After that railroad was abandoned in 1977, the 805-A was transferred to the Louisiana and Northwestern Railroad in Louisiana.

The Feather River Rail Society wanted this locomotive for its Western Pacific Railroad collection as it had become the last WP California Zephyr locomotive in existence. Arrangements were made to purchase the locomotive in 1987 with the cost shared between members Steve Habeck, Larry Hanlon and John Ryczkowski. FRRS joined as the fourth partner in the purchase.

The 805-A was cosmetically restored by Bill Evans and David Dewey. With this work completed a rededication ceremony was held on May 27, 1995.

In early 2000, the FRRS launched the Zephyr Project to raise money for a complete mechanical restoration of the 805-A and restoration of the CZ dome car "Silver Hostler". The 805-A is the last, intact locomotive built specifically for the CZ.

builder
Electro-Motive Division
of General Motors

built
January, 1950

type
FP7

horsepower
1500

serial number
9004

operating weight
252,800 lbs

acquisition
purchased by FRRS
and members

EXHIBIT CODE
WP805A



Kodachrome



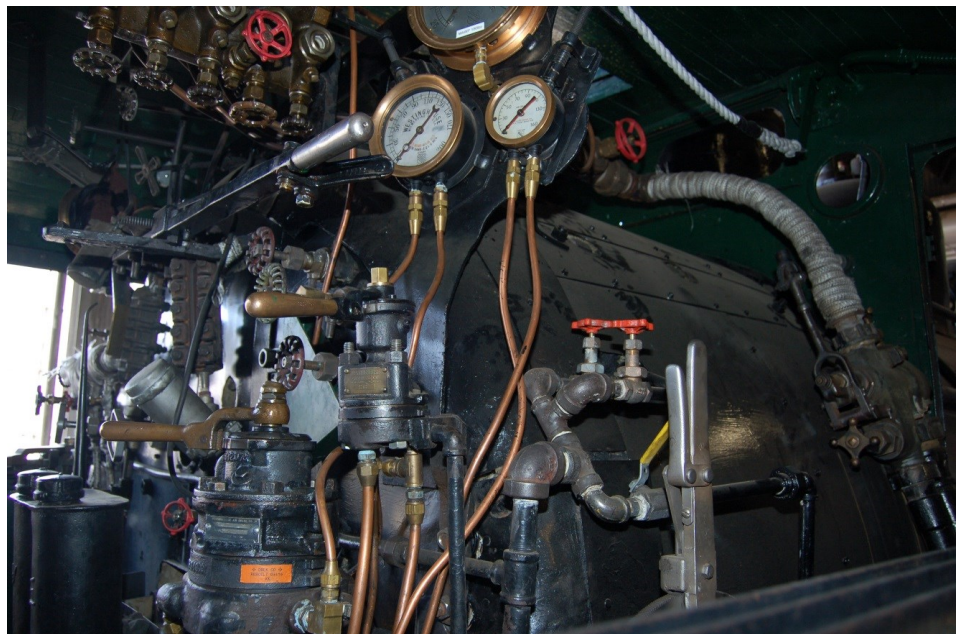


Diesel Locomotives





Steam Locomotive





Passenger Cars



**From Right to Left: Clock,
Speedometer, Air Brake Gauge
(Red Dial: Cylinder Pressure,
Black Dial: Pipe Pressure)**

UP Business Car Interior



For the Canadians





Cabooses





Box Cars





Other Freight



Western Pacific Railroad 6424

Steel Coil Gondola Freight Car

This tiny gondola is among the most historically important freight cars in the WPRM collection. Its wheels, specifically the bearings that hold the wheels, represent a sea-change in railroad technology.

From the earliest days of railroading, friction where the rotating axle attached to the framework holding wheelsets, referred to as a "truck," had been a major issue. A type of bearing device, called an "oil waste journal" and commonly referred to as a plain or friction bearing, quickly became the standard for axle bearings. It consisted of a bearing surface which supported the end of the axle. Lubrication was supplied by wick elements, referred to as "wicks" that reached into an oil reservoir and carried oil to the bearing surface. These were prone to failure, through loss of waste, wear on the axle or bearing surface, low oil, etc. When a failure occurred, the bearing would heat up and fall apart, a condition railroads referred to as a "hot box."

Starting in the 1920s, the Timken Company began promoting a "roller bearing" for railroad applications. This bearing required very little lubrication, created less friction and was built as a money and fuel saving device. While some steam locomotives and, by the 1940s, many passenger cars received roller bearings, the railroads felt they were not worth the cost for freight cars.

The Sacramento Northern Railway, a WP subsidiary, served a US Steel mill in Pittsburg, California. When the WP needed to expand its fleet of steel coil cars for this mill, they decided to improve on the gondola cars usually used in such service. They purchased 100 of these short mill gons, a design that would end up being unique to the railroad. Since the coils were so heavy, they overloaded the typical 45 to 50' long cars before they were full, so the builder made the new cars very short for less wasted space.

Most significant was the application of roller bearings. These cars were the first large batch of production freight cars built with sealed roller bearing trucks. WP was at the forefront of this revolution, which was so important that the cars were delivered with a special "Roller Freight" logo, which was recreated when the car was repainted a few years ago. Today, the old "plain bearings" are illegal for regular rail service and the roller bearing reigns supreme.

builder
Greenville Steel Car

built
September, 1953

type
GBS Mill Gondola

length (inside)
29 feet 4 inches

capacity
140,000 lbs.

operating weight
46,800 lbs

acquisition
donated by
Union Pacific



SP Sugar Beet Car





Maintenance of Way Eqpt



Speeder Motor Compartment



Detail Parts and Components





Track Components and Sheds



Scale House or Car Knocker Shed?



Interesting Model Project



Interior



UP Main



UP Firefighting Train