

# WESTERN PACIFIC

## 426 SERIES

### STEEL CABOOSES



Presented by Mike Mucklin  
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**W**estern Pacific's 426 series steel cabooses were built in 1955 and 1956 by International Railway Car Co. of Kenton, Ohio, and were the first steel cabooses built for the WP. The series consisted of 35 cars total and represented the largest and oldest group of steel cabooses on the Western Pacific, which owned a grand total of 61 steel cars.



#### 426 Series Identifying Features

These 1955-56 built cars featured butt-welded steel bodies (as opposed to being riveted as earlier IRC cabooses were) and roller bearing 40 ton trucks, features which were considered very modern for the time.

The most distinguishing feature of 426 series cars compared to other WP steel cabooses is the steep slope on the top sheet on the bay windows.

The 426 series cars were built with Stanray diagonal panel non-overhanging roofs, full length slotted style roof walks and full height end ladders. They featured a 48" smoke jack with a direc-

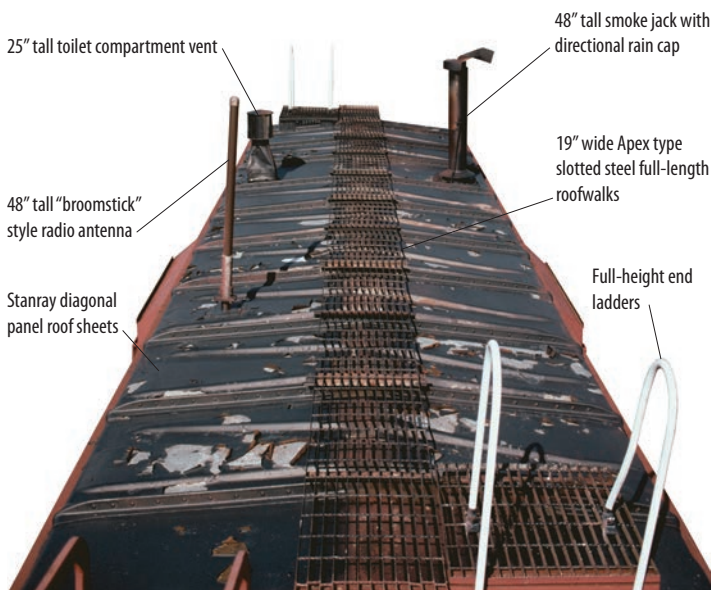
Western Pacific Steel Bay Window Cabooses			
All built by International Car Company of Kenton, Ohio			
Series	Car Numbers	Number of Cars	Year Built
426	426 – 460	35	1955-1956
461	461 – 465	5	1969
466	466 – 480	15	1973-1974
481	481 – 486	6	1980

A grand total of 61 steel cabooses were produced for the WP between 1955 and 1980. Each series is represented by the first number in that group. The 426 series was the largest group of steel cars ever built for the WP with 35 cars built in 1955 and 1956.

The steeply angled top sheet on the bay window is unique among all the groups of WP steel cabooses to the WP 426 series cars. Later cars had a nearly flat top sheet.







The roof of the WP 426 series cars featured a combination of certain details unique to this series. Additionally, only the 426 series cars had non-overhanging diagonal panel roofs. Later WP cars had either overhanging and/or X-panel roofs.

tional rain cap, a 25" toilet vent and a 48" tall "broomstick" style radio antenna which is actually a 2" OD fiberglass antenna casing.

These cars had two windows on each end plus a window in each end door as well as a single window on the right side and two on the left. Cars that went through the S-2 rebuild program in the late 70s-early 80s had some of these windows plated over.

## 426 Series Paint Schemes

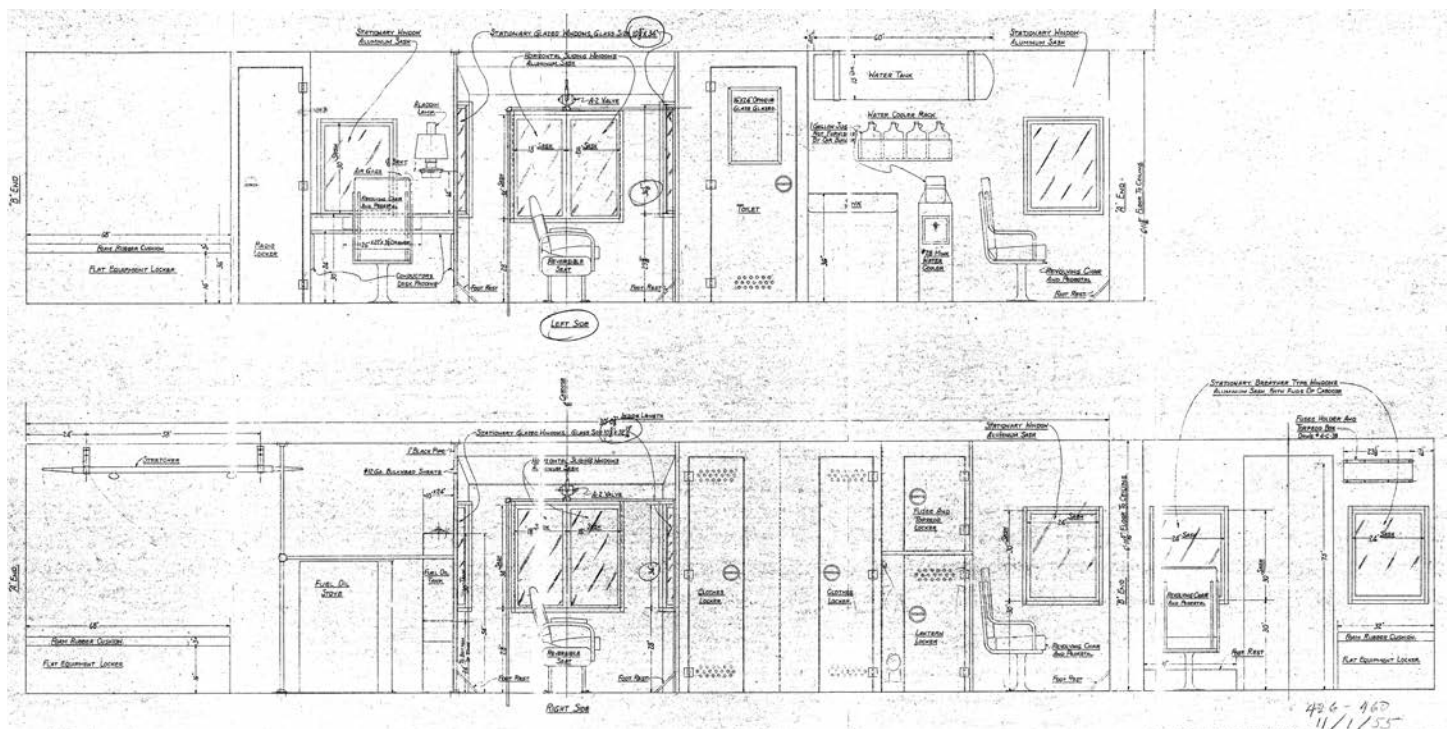
All 35 cars were delivered in a box car red paint scheme with yellow lettering and safety appliances and a black roof. Early repaints (1960s and early 70s) often emerged from the shop without the black roof and at least one car, the 427, emerged with white lettering and numbers but with yellow bay stripes and safety appliances.

After WP took delivery of the new 466 series bright red cars in 1973-74, 426 and 461 series cars that were shopped or rebuilt ended up with a caboose (bright) red scheme with a black roof, side sills and steps. Generally, if the car had black steps, it had a black roof but in true WP fashion, there were a lot of variations including black roof with red steps and no black on the roof or steps at all.

In 1979 the above scheme was refined further with the revival of the Feather River Route medallion. The 453 was the



In June of 1979 caboose number 453 emerged from the Stockton shops in a bold new bright red paint scheme with a black roof, black steps and side sill, white safety appliances and the 45" Feather River Route medallion on white reflective Scotchlite backing material.----



Interior elevations of the left and right sides, as well as the end, show the window arrangement for the 426 series cabooses.

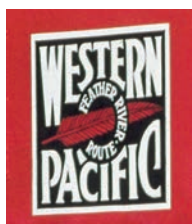




The large "WP" painted on the late 70s repaints was obviously hand-masked as no two were exactly alike.

first to receive this scheme in June 1979 then four additional cars received similar paint schemes between the Summer of 1979 and the Spring of 1980. In addition to the revived Feather River Route medallions, these four cars received a large white WP on each side opposite the medallion and the car numbers were moved back to the sides of the bay windows.

The 444 was unique with a hand painted medallion that was missing the white ring that normally encircles the feather.



Hand painted medallion on the 444. Note the lack of a white ring encircling the feather.

Unlike the other four cars, the 455 had the medallion to the left of the bay and the large WP to the right.

On the 450, the medallion was back to the right hand position, but the P in the large WP on the left side was an odd condensed version with a small stencil-like cut at the bottom of the loop.

The 452 was the first car to receive a white roof, among other unique features that are covered here separately.

### WP 452 - Laboratory on Wheels

Before the 1980 S-2 program went into full swing, one caboose, Western Pacific 452, served as the guinea pig for the program and was actually produced by the Sacramento Car Shop forces.

In 1979, the 452 was completely stripped down and rebuilt and many experimental and unique construction techniques, materials and appliances were tested on her before they were committed to the S-2 program. The most visible of these experiments was the solar panel battery chargers

on the roof of the car, and the end-of-axle gear driven generator from Safety Electrical Equipment Corporation.

Details on the 452 rebuild can be found in an 11 page detailed article I wrote on the subject was recently published in issue number 27 of *The Headlight*.



The 452 was the predecessor for the 1980 S-2 caboose rehabilitation program and had many unique and experimental appliances that were tested to insure the success of the S-2 program.

### S-2 Caboose Rehabilitation Program

On October 24th 1980, Western Pacific work order MM 8642 was signed off, and by December Stockton shop forces commenced work on the 430, which had been out of service since July of 1980.



The 452 was the predecessor for the 1980 S-2 caboose rehabilitation program and had many unique and experimental appliances that were tested to insure the success of the S-2 program.

The overhaul involved complete strip down and disassembly of each car, roofwalks were removed on cars that still had them, certain specific windows were blanked out with steel plate, then recycled components were completely overhauled before being combined with new parts to produce a near new, thoroughly modern caboose.

The overhaul program was originally specified for 12 cars from the 426 series but only 11 were completed, as well as

two cars from the 461 series (462 and 464).

The 426 series cars that completed the program were the 430, 429, 434, 435, 440, 441, 442, 443, 446, 448 and the 451. The program was wrapped up about the time of the 1982 merger with the Union Pacific.

### Union Pacific Post-Merger Reassignments/Retirements

59 of the 61 total steel cabooses WP owned were still on the roster at the time of the 1982 merger. Of the 35 cars in the 426 series, only one, the 458, had been removed from the roster after being wrecked in the 1970s.

The 426 series cars were classified as CA-14s on the Union Pacific and although the end for cabooses was near, five of the 426 series cars were painted UP armor yellow while retaining their original WP numbers and reporting marks. Cars repainted UP yellow were the 431, 437, 438, 449 and the 459. By 1991, all of the remaining WP cars from the original 426 series had been retired from service.

### Preserved 426 Series WP Cabooses

There are 14 known WP 426 series caboose still in existence. We are fortunate to have the 428 in the collection at the Western Pacific Railroad Museum in Portola, California. The 428 somehow managed to survive virtually intact in its original configuration and was generously donated to the museum by the Union Pacific Railroad in 1984. In 2002, museum volunteers and staff returned the 428 to a near replica of the as-delivered paint scheme. It is undoubtedly in the most pristine condition of all the remaining 426 class cars in existence today.



Western Pacific 428 as she appears today at the Western Pacific Railroad Museum in Portola, CA.

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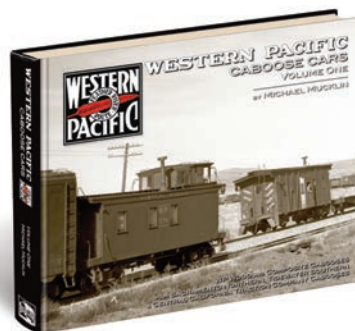
427	Inkom, ID	445	Rancho Cordova, CA
428	Portola, CA	446	Westwood, CA
429	Healdton, OK	447	Lodi, CA
431	Muskogee, OK	449	Carson City, NV
437	Elko, NV	451	Monroe, LA
438	Spokane, WA	456	Cherokee, CA
441	Orleans, NE	457	Maxwell, CA

### Modeling Disclaimer

Aside from the as-delivered schemes, WP shops seemed to have pretty free reign on how cars were painted after repairs or rebuilding. If you plan to build an accurate WP caboose model, I cannot emphasize enough that you use photos of that specific car taken in your approximate modeling era as a guide.

### WP Caboose Book

I have spent 15 years researching and collecting photos and information on WP cabooses and I am working on a detailed two-volume reference book set that I hope to release in 2011.

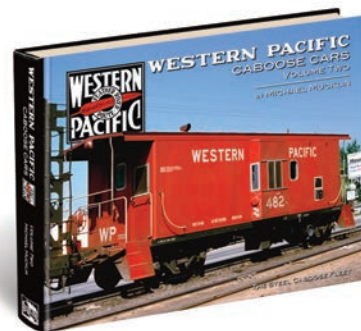


*Western Pacific Caboose Cars, Volume 1 and 2* will present a journey through more than 70 years of caboose history on the Western Pacific Railroad and will be a must-have for all

Western Pacific fans and modelers as well as anyone with an interest in western railroads or cabooses in general.

For more information, updates and announcements regarding these books, or if you have material you would like to contribute, please see me after the presentation or any time during the convention. You can

get the latest information on the book as well as my contact information through my web site at [www.wpcaboosebook.com](http://www.wpcaboosebook.com)



### Acknowledgements

This project would not have been possible without the support, information and photos provided by many kind individuals and friends of the WP. In no particular order, I am sincerely grateful to;

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