



Diesel Doings

Winter Work

Good December weather allowed some of our volunteers to work on equipment. Ervin Hartung did an evaluation on USA 1694 (81) and did some tune-up work on the 7376 (80). Jim Ley and Bruce Cooper checked filters on 7372 (512) and Norm Holmes installed a bell. An oil analysis on No. 80 revealed good oil with normal wear, while the analysis on 512 showed abnormal wear on rings and bearings. An oil change is necessary and we will have to keep a close watch on this problem. Wayne Monger worked on U25B No. 5057, placing a Milwaukee Road herald on the cab.

Ken Roller is removing all the old cracked paint from the cab of No. 80.

Norm Holmes hauled a set of junk batteries to Sacramento to exchange for a set of used batteries from scrapped locomotives. On yet another trip Norm removed a water pump from an NW-2 which is to be scrapped to replace a leaking pump on the 608.

Vic Neves and Wayne Monger obtained numerous parts from Alameda Belt Line's Alco S-1. It had died and the parts were no longer needed. With our collection of obsolete equipment, any spares we can acquire will help us in the future.

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WP-PFE Reefer Acquired

Norman Holmes

We now have another wooden WP-PFE refrigerator car body. The car was found along Highway 101 in Redwood Valley by member Ken Meeker who asked about it's donation nearly two years ago. It was one of a number of WP-PFE car bodies once located at the Tracy Railcar Co. yard, most of which have now been scrapped. PFE 55333 arrived the evening of December 9th on a low bed trailer belonging to Terisi Trucking of Lodi, California. Norm Holmes and Gordon Wollesen unloaded it the next day using the museum's Little Giant crane. The car differs from our other reefer in that it has a rebuilt body. PFE 52138 has the original 1924 body, while the 55333 has a 1953 body. The latest repack date noted was 1962.

The car was donated by Scott Gibbs. We only had to share in the trucking cost, and this was done at a reduced rate by Teresi. The car is in fairly good condition, except for the flooring which will need to be replaced. After this is done, it can be placed on one of the UP tank car frames and we will have another complete car.

Why We Didn't Get The 1298

Norman Holmes, UP engineer, retired

Several years ago, after spending nearly 24 hours in beautiful Winnemucca, Nevada, I was called for the SST (Salt Lake - Stockton local) at 12:30 pm. The train arrived in Winnemucca earlier, but was held for a "window" (space-age railroad talk to describe a time when no trains are run so as to perform track work). Our train had four UP SD40-2 units, with 81 cars for a total of 5597 tons. On the head end there were four cars of tie plates, nine cars of rail and 13 propane tank cars. This was followed by some general freight and about 40 empty mechanical refrigerator cars. The makeup was such that severe slack action occurred whenever the brakes were set, the train was going through a sag or when a change was made from power to dynamic brake and vice-versa.

Our first work was at Gerlach, where we had to pick up a water car (WPMW 1298) and set out two cars of coal for the gypsum plant at Empire. We stopped at the east end of Gerlach on the siding, cut the engines off, picked up the water car, set it over to No. 2 track on top of five plaster cars and came back to our train. We pulled to the west end, cut the power off, ran back two rail, picked up the plaster and water cars, put them back on the train and after an air test were ready to depart. The dispatcher informed us we would have to wait "a few minutes" for a broken rail to be replaced. That few minutes became an hour. Our next stop was Reynard, 22 miles west. Here we were to pick up a crew that had "died" on the hours of service law. They had been dumping ballast since 4:00 am - it was now 6:30 pm. I stopped the train to pick up the crew and when restarting the train, the entire end sill and drawbar was pulled from tank car 1298. This 1928 vintage, 12,000 gallon tank car was the regular water car for Sand Pass for many years and old age finally caught up with it. The rivets holding the end sill to the center sill had long ago rusted through and all that held it together was two small welds. It was lucky that this happened when the train was stopped, because if it had given way while the train was moving, the parts probably would have derailed the car and part of the train following.

This car had been on my "wish list" for the museum, but it was now beyond economical repair. The remains were towed back to Gerlach and sold to US Gypsum. They removed the tank and used the frame for a flat car to haul replacement rail on their six mile industrial line.

