
WORK UPDATE TO THE FRRS MEMBERSHIP ON

CHICAGO, MILWAUKEE, ST. PAUL AND PACIFIC

GENERAL ELECTRIC U25B #5057

BY WAYNE MONGER

At first glance to both visitors and members, it appears that little if any work has been done to our U25B #5057 so far in 1989. But upon closer inspection, visitors to our museum in Portola will notice evidence of many hours of labor performed on this locomotive by nearly a dozen FRRS members. And for those members who were lucky enough to be in Portola during the last week of June, the unfamiliar throaty sound of a Cooper-Bessmer FDL-16 rattling the windows of the engine house announced the next big step toward returning the former Milwaukee Road U25B to active status.

The work on our most powerful, operable four-axle locomotive has actually continued at a very slow, but steady rate since last summer. Both Wayne Monger and Richard Canino, who are in charge of the project to restore the #5057, have spent days identifying the many problems and missing parts that need repairing or replacing. Rich Canino has taken on the unglamorous job of tracking down and checking all of the wiring in the locomotive. Norman Holmes, in his many parts-gathering journeys that he makes every year, has brought home many of the items that were missing or are in desperate need of replacement when the locomotive first arrived in Portola from Nebraska. Some of these parts include replacement doors for the cab, control stand parts, a pilot for the rear of the unit, and "new" brake hangers that are missing. And thanks to the tremendous generosity of Lee Johnson and his employer, General Electric Transportation Services, new outer door hinges and missing panels were manufactured for us by the GE locomotive-building plant in Erie, PA.

So far this year, most of the actual hands-on work on the #5057 has taken place in June. Rich made two weekend trips to Portola from his home in the Bay Area to continue working on the locomotive electrical system. On June 17, Rich was joined by Wayne at Portola, starting procedures to find out if the locomotive could actually operate after nearly three years of inactivity. The next day, a track jack and much patience was used to break loose and turn the prime mover a full one and a half revolutions, proving that the locomotive could be started and run without any damage to the prime mover. Later that week, Wayne along with FRRS members Eugene Vicknar, Bruce Cooper, Gordon Wolleson, Hank Stiles, David Barr, Ed Crary and some of the guys from Vintage Railroad Equipment spent most of a day placing (and replacing) 8 locomotive batteries into the battery boxes of the #5057, plus helping out with other necessary jobs on the

locomotive to get it to the point where it could be started. Very active member Steve Habeck (who has spent a great number of his days off from work this summer at Portola working on many different projects) also helped out, by replacing the air hoses and adding new signal lines to both ends of our U25B.

The "big day" for the #5057 came on June 23, when the batteries were wired up and current put into the circuits. At 7:30PM, with the assistance of a can of "quick start" ether, the 5057 belched and roared to life, throwing years of soot and rust from inside the exhaust system out over anyone and everything nearby. Over the next several days, the big FDL-16 that is the heart of the U25B ran a total of 15 hours, while Wayne Monger, Bruce Cooper and others helped to track down and identify small problems seen only while a locomotive is operating, including the usual small oil leaks found on all old GE locomotives. Overall, the internal mechanical systems on our big GE are in surprising very good condition, along with a majority of the electrical systems. But thanks to more electrical problems and some incomplete circuits, the #5057 has yet to move under its own power as of mid-August. Wayne, along with the occasional help and suggestions from Hank Stiles, Bruce Cooper, Steve Habeck and Vic Neves, has been narrowing down the possible problems and getting closer to actual operation. Three full days of efforts were placed into putting back into proper order the major electrical switching circuits that are located under the cab floor. Many of these electrical components had been disconnected and left loose by previous owner Western Technical College of Sidney, Nebraska. In August, some of the people from this college that were instrumental in the donation of this locomotive to us stopped by while on vacation, and were quite happy (and rather surprised) at the progress made on the #5057. Thanks to their positive reaction, our museum may be getting a donation of some small related items still at Western Technical College, leftover from their military contract to train military personnel in locomotive maintenance.

In spite of the work done so far, there is still a long way to go before the #5057 is returned to the condition and appearance it was in when it began hauling freight for the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad, specifically behind the "Little Joes" and the Boxcars of The Milwaukee Road's "Pacific Extension" in the 1960's. The 16 years of spotty maintenance while on the bankrupt CMSt.P&P is still very evident, and will be dealt with as we get the replacement parts. Major items still in need of heavy work are the brake hangers on the wheels, sheet metal work inside and outside the cab, a new cab floor, replacement of the cab doors, straightening of the doors along the hood covering the engine compartment and placement of these same doors back on the locomotive with the new door hinges donated by General Electric. But with the

FEATHER RIVER RAIL SOCIETY
FIRST SUBDIVISION CLUB

For a few years now, there has been some desire on the part of the FRRS members that live in the San Francisco Bay Area to become more involved with the museum, inspite of the four hour plus driving time one way to Portola. Thanks to the efforts of members such as Gary Cousins, Vic Neves and Erv Hartung, there is now a set time and place for regional FRRS members to socialize, talk and learn about the latest at Portola without actually having to travel there. This loosely organized social meeting has been dubbed the "First Subdivision Club", named after the Western Pacific's First Subdivision line between Stockton and Oakland. There is already some interest in starting a "Second Sub Club" for the members in the Stockton/Modesto/Lodi/Sacramento area and a "Third Sub Club" for the members in the Marysville/Chico/Redding area of the Sacramento Valley.

The first meeting of the "First Sub Club" was held on April 1 at Victor Neves' house in San Leandro. Thanks to the efforts of membership officer Joe Way, notification of this meeting were sent in the mail to all FRRS members that live in the Bay Area region. In all, 27 members showed up to pack Vic's house with lively discussions and suggestions of how we as members can best help the museum and our society grow. FRRS Board member Wayne Monger and his wife Lynda Monger passed out a prepared members questionnaire to the people present to get some solid feedback as to what the membership as a whole are concerned about and what they would like to see done to increase involvement in our organization. (The results and suggestions from this survey were presented to your Board of Directors the next day in Portola.) Many great suggestions came from this first meeting, some of which included better facilities and accomidations for the working membership, setting up a regional phone message line to help with updated museum information and carpooling to and from Portola, order forms for individual name badges, a well publicized prioritized work projects list and the possibility of the regional groups getting together to concentrate on a specific project at our museum. Other items discussed during this first meeting was how extensive was the interest in modeling information, possible video and multi-media productions and the need to make the meetings of the "First Subdivision Club" a regular event. Before the evening's discussions came to an end, it was decided that the "First Sub Club" would meet about every three months. After this, the activities continued with slides from some of the participants on hand, and WP videos from Vic Neves' extensive collection. We all have to thank Gary Cousins for "getting the ball rolling" on this idea and then following up on it to a productive end. Unfortunately, the Cousins'

family moved from the Bay Area to Redding about a month before this first meeting, but Gary did make it to see just how well his efforts paid off.

The second meeting of the "First Subdivision Club" took place the evening of June 10 at the beautifully restored Southern Pacific Niles Depot in the old Niles district of Fremont, California. This meeting saw only 17 of the regional FRRS members show up for an evening of discussions led by Erv Hartung and Wayne Monger, refreshments (including two pizzas delivered to the depot), a tour of the large model railroad being built in the basement, and slides from some of the people on hand. Thanks to the generosity of the people at the Niles Depot, the "First Sub Club" now has a very classy and impressive "home" to meet in. Most of the discussions at this meeting centered around the summertime plans at our museum and developments since the first meeting.

We hope that many more of our members from not only the San Francisco Bay Area but other areas will attend the next "fun-filled" meeting of the "First Subdivision Club". The next meeting is:

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 16, 1989
7:00PM

At The OLD SP NILES DEPOT
(Located Along Mission Blvd. in the Niles District of Fremont)

* Tell a Friend and Bring Along A Neighbor!*

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL:

Erv Hartung at (415) 727-0253

or

Victor Neves at (415) 352-4373

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doors off and the internal works exposed on the #5057, this locomotive has been a favorite display of many of our visitors this summer, allowing them to see what actually makes a locomotive run.

With some luck and lots of spare time for the people working on the #5057, this member of the collection at our museum that represents a very important step in the evolution of the diesel locomotive will be fully restored and repainted in less than two years. Meantime, the work will continue at a slow pace, and the sound of the FDL-16 prime mover will occasionally break the current all-EMD sound found at our museum.

Late breaking news: On September 4th 5057 moved under its own power. All systems seem to be working properly. The engine shut itself down several times due to a low-water protective device - typical of early GE's according to WP engineers...