

The Re-Dedication of WP 805-A

By Steve Habeck

In a hotel room in Stockton during Winterail 1987, a plan was hatched to attempt to acquire the sole remaining WP CZ locomotive. The plan was successful, and in July of that year a very tired-looking FP7 survived a short stop at a scrapyards en route and arrived in Portola. At first, I was fearful that we had gotten in over our heads; this thing was all rust and mud daubed wasp nests inside, and was in obvious need of mechanical and cosmetic attention. But during my first walk through of the carbody, I saw it -- stenciled on the engineroom side of the engineer's door to the cab, still there after 15 years of life on short lines, her real identity: "805-A." I knew right then that we had to bring her back to what she was intended to be.

The work started slowly, and after some key involvement by certain individuals (Bill Evans in particular), the restoration effort developed some momentum, and progress started becoming evident, both mechanically and cosmetically.

Now, nearly 8 years later, WP 805-A proudly carries her orange and silver again; the distinctive nose feather, with its white trim, gleams even in the shadows of the shop building. She turned heads during her debut last August, for Railroad Days (also the first run of our A-B-A set of WP F's), and put on an impressive show during Railfan Day as well. While the mechanical and cosmetic restoration is not yet complete, it is time to celebrate our progress.

The FRRS will host a dinner and reception in the shop building at the Museum in Portola on Friday, May 26, 1995, for the re-dedication of the 805-A. This event will also signify the beginning of our 11th operating season, as this is the Friday before Memorial Day weekend, our traditional season opening. The event will tentatively start at 6:00 PM with a catered buffet style dinner, followed by remarks from some special guests, and the re-dedication of the locomotive. A reception will follow, which will include opportunities to inspect the 805-A, as well as F7B WP 925-C and F7A WP 921-D.

This event is being offered free of charge to all FRRS members and their families, as a way of saying "thank you" for your support over the years, both for the 805-A project and the FRRS in general. We acknowledge everyone's contribution; from annual dues renewal through hundreds of hours of volunteer time. We will, of course, accept donations from those able to do so. Please see the flyer that is with this Train Sheet for more information about the 805-A event, and note the deadline date for your RSVP. You must return your slip by the deadline (April 15, 1995) so that we can adequately plan for this event.

I will also put in a plea for help at the Museum during the week (or two) prior to the 805-A event. We can use all the help we can get to spruce things up and do it right. If it's at all possible, please come up to Portola anytime during the last two weeks in May; your help will be greatly appreciated. The work's not glamorous, but it is necessary. Hopefully, the sprucing-up we're doing in April for the Pacific Limited/ACS trips (see related article) will make it somewhat easier to set up for the 805-A event. But don't let that stop you from considering an extended visit to Portola!

We hope you will consider attending this "coming out" party for the 805-A. It is a celebration of what the FRRS can do, and every member played a part to make it happen. Come see our "signature" piece, the "true Diamond in the collection." [These "quotes" are taken from Flimsies.]

Starting the 44 tonner, SN 146

Our newest locomotive acquisition, SN 146, ex NOKL 1, a 44 ton GE, was started for the first time January 21, 1995. Because of our cold weather we first tried using the built in block heaters, but found the wiring too light and the wires burned. A portable electric heater was placed in the engine compartment overnight and this warmed the engine somewhat to make starting easier. After some preliminary checks and with the help of starting fluid sprayed through the air cleaners No. 2 engine started. This is the engine that was recently overhauled and we were told the easiest to start. When we attempted to start the No. 1 engine the batteries would not take the load resulting in several terminals that burned off. These batteries have been replaced, as they could not be repaired. With No. 2 engine running, we had to see if the locomotive would move under its own power. It did. We all had a turn moving the unit a few feet. Making the above possible were: Dave Anderson, Tom Graham, Melissa McGrath, Hank Stiles and Norm Holmes. Prior battery charging was done courtesy of Gordon Wollesen.

On February 18, 1995, Dave, Tom, Hank and Steve Habeck again worked on the unit, replacing three batteries that were unserviceable. Tom and Hank built a "jacking bar" that fit onto the crankshaft of No. 1 engine so that it could be turned over to be sure it was not locked up. With a lot of effort they rotated the engine one revolution and everything seemed OK. With the battery set in place No. 2 engine was started with no problem. No. 1 engine turned over, but would not fire. Further investigation revealed that the engine would not produce oil pressure even after cranking for a considerable time. We were told the engine was tired and that appears to be correct information! Included in the sale were two of these D-17000L Caterpillar engines that we could use for parts. As time permits we plan to rebuild the No. 1 engine so that the unit will operate as it was designed to do.

Election Time, again.

Would you like to take part in the decision-making of the FRRS?

News of Board Election

Once again our annual election for members of our Board of Directors is approaching. Four of our nine directors seats will be expiring June 30, 1995. These seats are now held by: Bruce Cooper, Sue Cooper, Wayne Monger and Norm Holmes. They are all eligible to run for reelection if they so choose.

Anyone who seriously wishes to run for one of these four positions is to submit their name and a short resume about themselves (which will be printed on the ballots mailed to all eligible voters) to the Society, to be received no later than May 25, 1995. This resume must not be longer than 200 words.

Being a member of the Board of Directors brings serious responsibility along with it. For example, Board members are required to attend monthly, day-long meetings in Portola, as well as to be willing to devote time and energies for the good of the museum.

All FRRS membership classes EXCEPT Associate are eligible to run for the Board and to vote in the election.

Ballots and several by-law change provisions will be mailed to all members that are eligible to vote. The results will be tabulated at the Annual Membership Meeting, Saturday, June 24, 1995, at 7:30 PM in the Flannery Room at the museum.