



Western Pacific Railroad 501



Switching Locomotive

This little engine was the Western Pacific's first diesel-electric locomotive. Sent west by the Electro Motive Corporation in 1939 as a demonstrator, WP tried the locomotive in various locations, liked what it could do, and bought it. This event marked the beginning of the company's push to eliminate steam locomotives. Less than 14 years later, the WP became the first large western railroad to be completely dieselized. This unit worked at a number of terminals, including San Francisco, where it was needed to eliminate smoke and steam while spotting cars inside a can factory.

The 501 was transferred to WP's subsidiary Sacramento Northern (a one-time electric interurban railroad) in 1965 and renumbered 401. There it, and sister locomotive SN 402, eliminated the SN's last electrified freight operation, located in Marysville and Yuba City, California. A "hanger queen" (locomotive from which parts are stripped to keep others running) by the late 1970's, some believed this historic locomotive would never run again. However, in 1980, 401/501 was repaired and sold to Corn Products Corporation in Stockton, California for use as a plant switcher. In 1987, Corn Products donated the unit to Feather River Rail Society. It has since been restored to its original Western Pacific appearance.

builder
Electro-Motive Corp.,
General Motors

built
August, 1939

type
SW1

horsepower
600

serial number
906

operating weight
201,000 lbs

Equipment Signage

An identified shortcoming of our equipment displays is signage. In an effort to alleviate this problem display boards as shown above have been designed and as the budget permits will be produced for each piece of equipment we have.