

RAILFAN PHOTOGRAPHER DAY

- David Epling

Railroad Photographer Day began as usual with a week's worth of yard switching to prepare for it. Under the guidance of Vice-President and Yardmaster Steve Habeck, an ops crew consisting of Craig Simmons, Charlie Spikes, David Epling, Tom Andrews, Rick Gruninger, Russ Johnson, Bobby Johnson, George Sousa, Seth Adams, and Bil Jackson. On Friday the 25th, Ethan Doty and Tim Carter arrived. (There are others whose names slip my mind that were also there.)

The crew began to put the trains together beginning Monday September 21. One of the significant accomplishments was on 24th when we had three separate switch crews operating simultaneously. To my knowledge, this is the first time that has happened and is another excellent indicator of the WPRM's training program and capabilities of our operating department.

On Saturday September 26th, crew call saw two full crews assigned to work the day's trains. Crew A was Charlie Spikes, Ed Powell, Tim Carter, and Ethan Doty. Crew B was David Epling, Rick Gruninger, Russ Johnson, Craig Simmons & George Sousa. As we did the previous RP day, Wayne Monger came in dressed the part of a WP Dispatcher and issued track warrants for the day's operations.

Crew A boarded the first scheduled train of the day, WP FP7 805-A, "WP" F9B 925-C, WP F7A 917-D and our passenger cars, Crew B went to their train, SP TR6A 1100 and the Caboose train that is normally used during our Operating Season. As we waited for Dispatcher Monger to issue track warrants to the WP 805-A, the booming sound of a dynamited train echoed across the yard, the passenger train decided to get cranky for the A crew. After almost 30 minutes of trying to recover the air, Dispatcher Monger pulled the warrant and issued our warrant for movement. We then got underway and the day began.

The result was we wound up being down about 45 minutes on the daily schedule, the next train out was the 805-A who had finally got train to keep it's air. The 805-A was running but the

925-C was the power and controlled by Charlie in the 805-A. The B crew in the WP GP7 707, WP GP20 2001 and a modern boxcar train followed out the 805-A. Next was the A crew in WP NW2u 608 and a local freight. The B crew followed that after a small power swap by Ops Supervisor Bill Parker in the USArmy H-12-44 1857. He along with yardmaster Habeck, took the 925-C and married it to the SN GP7 712.



The crew provides protection for the back-up move from the platform of WP caboose 428.

- David Epling photo

When that was done, the B crew boarded SN 712 and another local freight. As the engineer of the B crew, this was a new experience for me. I was running the 925-C from the cab of the dead SN 712. Normally you can feel your engine and react to it, but when running from a dead locomotive there is a delay in movement, needless to say, and not being used to that, it led to a rocky ride. It didn't help that our caboose for the train was WP 484, the Yardmaster's rolling office. Steve likes to set a fan up and challenge the WPRM Engineers to move the 484 without knocking over the fan. Let's just say that fan went for a ride and we'll leave it at that.

The rest of the day went as planned, only trains moved in an opposite direction to take advantage of the afternoon sun. I should also note our Switch tenders did a great job, Bobby Johnson at Milward and Bil Jackson at Malfunction Jct. They were both excellent at making sure everything was lined for their proper movement.

As with past Railfan Photographer Days, dinner was included. This year, the event was also in conjunction with the FRRS' Member Appreciation Day. After dinner, Vic Neves set up