

WP 165: New Year and New Progress

- Chris Allan, Steam CMO

Coming into 2010, this promises to be a year of significant progress for the WP 165 project. I am happy to report that, thanks to the generosity of G.W. Redman of Redman Equipment & Manufacturing, we have a new section of front tubesheet ready to go. This donation of time on the Redman machinery would otherwise take us, with our limited resources, several days of effort on a conventional drill press. The accuracy of the holes in size and location is unparalleled as well. The hole layout is significantly more uniform than ALCo was able to achieve back in the day. Thanks also go to longtime friend of the project, Paul Boschan, Redman's code compliance officer, who facilitated the donation. Paul also helps us out with his sage advice pertaining to boiler matters and related issues from time to time.

This part of the pressure vessel was replaced due to the deteriorated condition of the existing piece, having been over-rolled, cracked and welded through the bridges repeatedly over the years. We could have used the original front tubesheet as is, but the amount of work it would have taken to keep it serviceable would be frustrating and tedious.



The new tubesheet section on the mill at Redman Equipment and Manufacturing.

- Chris Allan photo

Thanks also go to Nathan Osborn who measured the original and generated the cut pattern and drilling plan into AutoCAD. During the Fall work session Nathan brought up a

printout of the tubesheet patch in full size, which we matched to the existing piece to verify accuracy.

The tubesheet will come up to Portola for the Spring work session. Until then it's ensconced in my garage, tucked out of the way. It will be welded in after the boiler is completely scaled out inside, and we are sure that most of the work in the shell interior is complete. With the lower portion of the sheet removed access to the water space is much easier than dropping in through the dome, at least for us older, chunkier individuals!

Our next fundraising drive raised cash to have replica cab numbers and WP feather heralds for the tender done. I am happy to report that our intrepid FRRS Secretary and board member Eugene Vicknair donated \$350.00 for the first tender insignia. (Also, thanks to Eugene for preparing the artwork for these heralds.) This donation was followed by James Mason's donation of \$350.00 for the other herald. Cab number donations came from Norman Holmes (\$100.00) and Bob Sims (\$200.00). Bob also kicked in an additional \$1000.00 to the 165 Steam Fund. Thank you, Bob!!

Some of you may wonder why we are not utilizing the original number plates or the tender logo that was recently returned. Simply put, these are wonderful artifacts, but due to the abuse they have taken, restorative measures would alter their current appearance (patina if you will). This would irreparably damage their value as museum artifacts. Replicas are much better suited to long-term display as well, given the value of the originals to certain less-than-reputable "collectors". The replicas will be marked as such and no attempt to pass them off as originals will be made.

We could still use some donations to cover the rest of the cab numbers and all the other work still needed on the 165. Please send your donations to the Western Pacific Railroad Museum - WP 165 Fund, P O Box 608, Portola, CA, 96122. As a donor you will be proud that you helped return the 165 to operation. I cannot thank all of you enough for your past and future support. Without you, the "Willing People", WP history would simply pass into obscurity!