

Zephyr Project Update – April 2016

–Eugene Vicknair, Zephyr Project Coordinator

While a lot of focus has been placed on the restoration of WP 0-6-0 165 in the last couple of years, our *California Zephyr* equipment has also been seeing some attention. Due to several factors, focus has shifted off the dome cars “Silver Lodge” and “Silver Hostel” and moved to our diner, “Silver Plate”. WP FP7 locomotive 805-A has also been getting care.

Thanks to work by a number of volunteers, including Steve Habeck and Duane van der Veen, most of the electrical system in the “Silver Plate” is now operational and the car can be plugged into ground power. We can now light the car for visitors and often have it on display during operating weekends. The car is also used for our annual Santa Trains.

The kitchen has been cleaned and evaluated and plans are proceeding for restoring various systems. The rotary toaster has been repaired and is now off display waiting for other work in the kitchen. We have also identified a supplier for the surface material on the dining tables and are evaluating which tables can be restored and which will need full replacement. Thanks to the donation by Walt Disney Resorts of several shadow boxes of *California Zephyr* artifacts, we now have some displays in the “Silver Plate” along with information for visitors. WP 805-A is maintained in operational condition and has been receiving engine work over the last few years. We have also received a set of traction motors to replace the mixed set under the engine and plans are being reviewed for the best way to replace them. This will likely need to wait until repairs are done to 200 ton derrick WP MW37.

Finally, a plan has been approved to move the F-unit cab we received from Disney to a permanent location at the end of the loading dock to form the centerpiece of an eventual *Zephyr* historic exhibit. Thanks to Steve Habeck and other volunteers, the headlight and some interior lights now work on the cab and it is often lit during evening operations such as Santa Train.

At the recent Western Pacific Historic Convention in Modesto, some newly scanned films from the Virgil Staff Collection of the FRRS Archives were shown. In several scenes the WP 805-A can be seen leading *Zephyrs* through the East Bay and Niles Canyon. The FRRS is currently looking at ways to make these films more widely available.



Run-A-Lo Locomotive Signage

(Above) Eugene Vicknair prepares to attach mounting magnets to new signage advertising a locomotive's availability in the Run-A-Lo Locomotive program. These new signs follow the lead of the other new museum signage (see article on page 7), using magnets for a secure, but non-damaging way to attach to equipment.

(Below) Having finished drilling holes, Eugene poses with the finished product and his signature smile.

Photos by Matt Elems

