

The Ultimate Snow Clearing Machine The Rotary Snow Plow - SPMW 208

- Paul Finnegan

On August 23rd, 2017 WPRM was contacted by a TV production company based in the United Kingdom interested in producing a documentary series including pieces of American railroad equipment.

They traveled to California in September 2017 to produce a short segment about Rotary Snow Plows. The piece discussed the history of the rotary plow, how it worked and why it was such a successful piece of machinery.

They were interested in learning more about the Southern Pacific Rotary MW208 at the Western Pacific Railroad Museum at Portola and already had some great footage of it in action. They were very interested in visiting the museum when they learned it was "stored operational" and with some TLC (and some funding), could be demonstrated for their film crew.

They came on the property on Saturday, September 16th for a day of living history.

For the film crew we provided an operating crew who demonstrated the equipment. Steve Habeck was the engineer for the snow plow that controlled the entire consist with Charlie Spikes as his fireman. The second unit, and the motive power, was SP 2873 (the SPMW 208 cannot move by itself, it needs a pusher engine) engineered by Loren Ross with David Elems as the fireman. In addition to the engine crews, we had a ground crew with Bil Jackson as conductor and brakeman Ed Powell. The operation ran for four hours.

We were not allowed to publicly share information about this until after the show aired in the United Kingdom. In October 2018, after it was broadcast, the production company sent a DVD to us of the full one-hour show.

I have created a three-minute video that contains the portion of the show shot at our museum. I posted it on the website in the "WPRM Photo & Video Gallery" on the "About Us" pull-down menu.

Flyer's Corner

As a kitten, I like to purr, but lately it has been more of a brrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr! After Santa Trains my human friends moved me from the Museum Store out to the Crew Lounge car for the winter. Santa Trains was a lot of fun with lots of people and things going on here at the museum.



Then I guess it was getting too quiet around the museum. The water feed line for the Lounge Car did a catastrophic disassembly on January 25th and proceeded to flood the area between 5 & 6 Rails and under the Shower Car. Ethan Doty discovered it, shut off the water and then Charlie Spikes & Duane Vander Veen got it patched up.

Then the snow really came. The photo below is looking out the door of the Crew Lounge car on February 7th. My buddy Ethan came down to the museum to check on me. I'm sure glad I'm inside!

