

WP 705's Journey Home

- Paul Finnegan

EMD GP7 number 705 was completed on October 10, 1952 and delivered to WP on October 29, carrying serial number 17029 and frame number 5197-5. The 705 stayed on the roster until after the merger with UP. She was sold by UP to Mountain Diesel Transportation on July 15, 1987.

Mountain Diesel, in turn, sold her to the Great Western in August 1987. There, she was repainted and lettered Arizona Central 705 in May 1989. She was later acquired by OmniTrax. In 2003, she was declared excess and was scheduled to be scrapped if a purchaser could not be found.

When news of 705's imminent demise and her appointment with the cutting torch reached Portola, thirteen FRRS members came to her rescue and raised the \$5000 scrap value and a required \$400 inspection fee in about a week's time.

WP 705 was discussed at the FRRS Board meeting on June 7, 2003. The July 12, 2003 board minutes indicate a check was sent to OmniTrax for the purchase of WP 705. UP approved moving her on August 2, 2003. On November 1, 2003, WP 705 was safely inside the UP Steam Shop under the watchful eye of FRRS member and friend Steve Lee, manager of the Union Pacific Railroad's steam program in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

It took what seemed like forever to finally bring 705 home, but she arrived on the property at Portola on March 23, 2005. She has waited patiently for her restoration work to begin, and now her time has arrived.

Our thanks go out to the original donors who stepped forward in time of need: Lew Barnard, Dave Bergman, Kerry Cochran, Kenneth & Paul Finnegan, Norm Holmes, Wayne Monger, Don Nelson, Jack Palmer, Jay Sarno, Hank Stiles, Eugene Vicknair and Ed Wagner.

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Departure - Barbara Holmes

Barbara Holmes, Norman Holmes's wife, passed on September 29th, 2020 in Carson City, NV. We will try and share more information in the next issue of *The Train Sheet*.

~ Notice ~

Due to the COVID-19 Health Emergency, Pumpkin Trains and Santa Trains have been cancelled for 2020.