

Western Pacific Railroad 805-A

California Zephyr Passenger Locomotive

This unit, affectionately called a "covered wagon" was purchased to power Western Pacific's California Zephyr less than one year after the train began on March 20, 1949. This cab unit, typically joined by two cabless "B" units, hauled the train between Oakland, California and Salt Lake City, Utah from 1950 until March 22, 1970, when the CZ ended. The 805-A was then placed into freight service.

In 1972, WP purchased 15 General Electric U23B locomotives and turned in the 805-A for credit toward their purchase. GE sold the unit to the Wellsville, Addison and Galetton Railroad in Pennsylvania. After that railroad was abandoned in 1977, the 805-A was transferred to the Louisiana and Northwestern Railroad in Louisiana.

The Feather River Rail Society wanted this locomotive for its Western Pacific Railroad collection as it had become the last WP California Zephyr locomotive in existence. Arrangements were made to purchase the locomotive in 1987 with the cost shared between members Steve Habeck, Larry Hanlon and John Ryczkowski. FRRS joined as the fourth partner in the purchase.

The 805-A was cosmetically restored by Bill Evans and David Dewey. With this work completed a rededication ceremony was held on May 27, 1995.

In early 2000, the FRRS launched the Zephyr Project to raise money for a complete mechanical restoration of the 805-A and restoration of the CZ dome car "Silver Hostel". The 805-A is the last, intact locomotive built specifically for the CZ.

builder
Electro-Motive Division
of General Motors

built
January, 1950

type
FP7

horsepower
1500

serial number
9004

top speed
95 MPH

operating weight
252,800 lbs

acquisition
purchased by FRRS
and members