

The Train Sheet

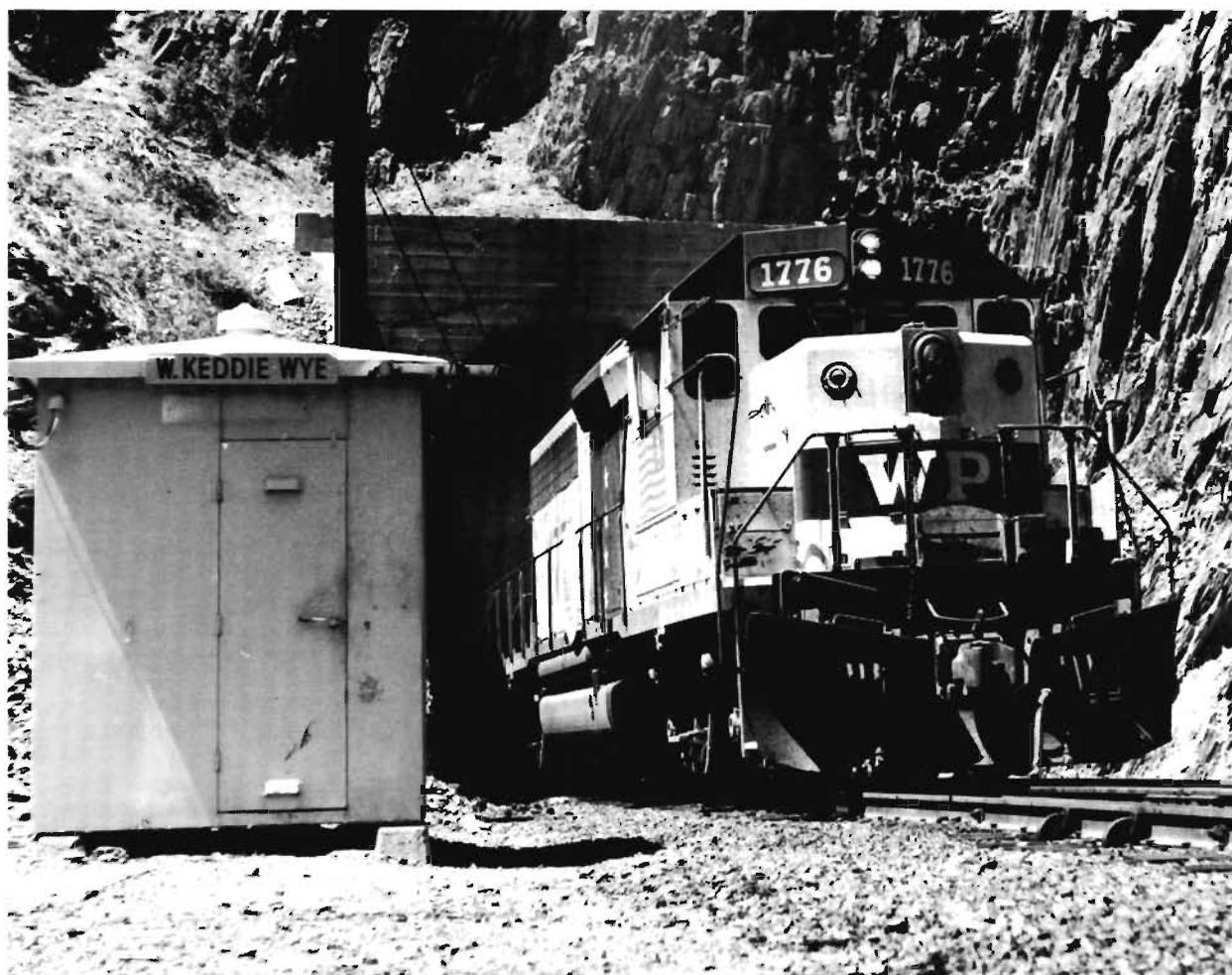


Preserving "The Feather River Route"
...news from The Feather River Rail Society and The Portola Railroad Museum

Issue No. 76

November/December 1995

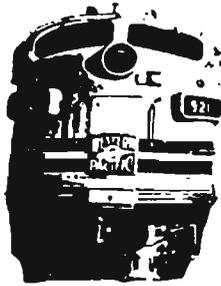
WP's Bicentennial Locomotives



Western Pacific Bicentennial Locomotive 1776 is shown leading an eastbound at West Keddie Wye in July of 1979. Photo by Ed Warren.

Inside this Issue:

- Report on the Santa Trains.
- Acquisition of two WP GP9's.
- Story of WP's Bicentennial Locomotives.



Feather River Rail Society

Portola Railroad
Museum

Preserving

"The Feather River Route"

P.O. Box 608
Portola, California 96122
(916) 832-4131

The museum is open daily year round from
10:00 AM to 5:00 PM except Christmas Day.
Entrance to the museum is free, however, we
have a suggested donation of \$2.00.

The Feather River Rail Society, a tax exempt public benefit California corporation, is the historical society for the Western Pacific Railroad and operator of the Portola Railroad Museum in Portola, California. The FRRS is not associated with the Union Pacific Railroad.

FRRS Tax ID number is 68-0002774
Member of Tourist Railway Association Inc.

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Membership

Associate-----	\$15
Active-----	\$30
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Life-----	\$300
Family Life-----	\$450

These are the dues for one year. Life and Family Life memberships are a one-time payment. Associate members do NOT have a vote and do NOT receive the Headlight, all other members do. Associate, Active and Life memberships are for ONE person only. Family memberships may include all members of one's immediate family, but there is only one vote. Sustaining and Family Life memberships are for a maximum of two people and two votes.

From the Desk of the President



The winter season has arrived in Portola and the Sierra, and it blew in with high winds and heavy rain/snow all across Northern California. I have heard of several members who were dealt a serious blow by this storm, and I sympathize with you. Fortunately, the Museum came through with virtually no damage, although we had locomotive stack caps scattered all through the yard.

With the annual Santa Trains behind us, things have been pretty well put away for the winter. All but two of the locomotives are drained, with stacks capped, and all engines with batteries have been spotted near the shop to facilitate keeping the batteries charged. The winter project for this year is upgrading the water system to the restrooms, along with expanding the gas supply system for the Beanery to provide gas for heating the gift shop, office, and ladies' restroom.

With day-to-day activity at the Museum winding down somewhat, I am working with the Directors to address several long-standing issues that have been the concern of many members for some time. Active dialog has already been observed amongst the Directors on several of these issues, which mainly focus on visitor services, volunteer services, and status of the collection. I am interested in hearing from anyone that has opinions on these issues, or on anything concerning the Museum and the FRRS. I can be reached by US Mail in care of the Museum, or by electronic mail at:

Steven J. Habeck 102054.637@compuserve.com

We are still eagerly awaiting the arrival of our WP GP9's; an article on their history and acquisition appears in this issue of the Train Sheet. We are extending our request for donations to defray the expenses incurred in obtaining these valuable additions to our collection; please consider us in your plans, and be as generous as you can. I extend my personal thanks and gratitude to those who have already donated; it is very much appreciated.

I hope you enjoy the calendar that is accompanying this issue of the Train Sheet, and that you find it useful. Directors Wayne Monger and Vic Neves have strived to produce a quality product, and I thank them for their efforts.

Again, I thank everyone for their continued support of the FRRS, and I hope to see many of you at Winterail.

Steve Habeck

Back Issues of the Headlight

- Issue 1 (Out of print) California Zephyr Anniversary Issue.
- Issue 2 Joint issue with the Freight Car Journal; WP freight car roster; color. 28 pages, \$5.00.
- Issue 3 (Out of print) F3s in freight service; AAR box cars; WP tank cars; index to historical articles in back issues of the Train Sheet.
- Issue 4 (Out of print) A tale of 2 engines; PC-WP box cars; GP40s....a guide to types; circus specials. 36 pages.
- Issue 5 The Reno branch; M-K remanufactured GP35s and GP40s; the Charles O. Sweetwood car; mill gons. 48 pages, \$4.00.
- Issue 6 M-K remanufactured GP40s, part 2; Budd RDCs; cupola cabooses; 1970 freight car roster. 52 pages, \$4.00.
- Issue 7 Western Pacific FT 50th anniversary issue; color cover. 48 pages, \$5.00.
- Issue 8 Working the Sperry Rail Detector Car on WP; GP 35's; modeling WP ex-MILW boxcars. 36 pages, \$4.00.
- Issue 9 WP History; Merger 10th Anniversary; Complete Western Pacific steam and diesel locomotive roster; color on cover and interior. 96 pages, \$12.95.
- Issue 10 War time, Beer cars, Shafter, GP-35's. 36 pp. \$6.00.

Headlight issue #10 is the most current issue.

Back issues of the Train Sheet are available
for \$1.50 each postpaid.

Send all orders to: FRRS Gift Shop at P.O. Box 608, Portola, CA 96122.

A word from...

The Museum Executive Director

Barbara and I attended the TRAIN convention in Louisville the first week in November. This is always a very interesting and informative event. Networking with counterparts from other tourist railways and museum groups always increases one's knowledge of operations and maintenance of our equipment and facilities.

We flew to Indianapolis a few days early to visit the Amtrak facility in Beech Grove and to visit some of the tourist railways and museum operations in the area. In visiting the eight locations it is interesting to compare them with what we have here at Portola. Most tourist railways are just that - a train to ride. Little or no thought is given to an accessible display of equipment not in current use for their operation. Others who call themselves museums do not have much in the way of display or identification of what they have on site. Weather is a definite factor in the preservation of equipment stored outdoors in the midwest and east. Rain and high humidity cause rust on steel equipment and rot on wooden cars. We are fortunate, in that respect our area is dry most of the year with only occasional spring rain and winter snow.

Visiting other operations always gives us ideas to improve our museum and to understand why visitors say we have one of the best railroad museums.

We wish to thank all who have sent Christmas cards and hope all have had a wonderful Christmas Season.

Norman W. Holmes

Western Pacific's Bicentennial Locomotives

By Norman Holmes

Twenty years ago, Western Pacific, along with the majority of the nation's railroads, painted two of its locomotives in a "Bicentennial" paint scheme. WP assembled a train of bicentennial painted cars and toured the system. The flyer reproduced here and included with this issue of the Train Sheet, was distributed wherever the train was placed on display. Following the display period, the 1776, along with 1976 were returned to regular service.

On its inaugural run from Oakland to Salt Lake City, stops were made en route for photographs. One of our charter members, Bob Larson, was the engineer on the portion from Oroville to Portola. On another occasion on May 18, 1976, WP Public Relations representative Paul Gordenev "arranged" to have 1776 and 1976 arrive at the Keddie Wye at the same time to pose for their famous portrait at that location. The 1776 was on a BN train from Bieber, 1976 was held at Portola and put on the point of a westbound train and with the dispatcher's cooperation arrived at Keddie at the same time as the BN train. With the sun slowly setting, cameras clicked for a once in a lifetime photo. Only a select few were informed of this event: Henry Brueckman, Jim Boynton and of course Paul Gordenev and myself.

1776 and 1976 continued to operate in regular freight service during 1976 and beyond. 1776, repainted back to its 3540 paint scheme met a tragic end as a result of a derailment at Hayward in April 1980. 1976 was the first EMD unit painted into the "New Image" paint scheme. The unit was retired by UP in 1986 and is still in operation on the Wisconsin Central Railroad as No. 3023.

A part of either 1776 and 1976 lives on at our museum. A cab window visor fell off one of the units at Doyle, east of Portola. I saw the visor laying along the right of way and retrieved it to place on my Plymouth locomotive.

We have several locomotives in our collection that were once painted in a bicentennial paint scheme, including the Plymouth mentioned above, Kennecott RS-3 No. 2, USS No. 16 and Kennecott electric No. 778.

Telling the Whole Story

Preservation Column

By David Dewey

I am going to start this month by assuming that the Museum exists to tell the "Story of Railroad" to the general public, especially people who might have no knowledge of railroading, except for waiting for one to pass at a grade crossing. What is the "Story of Railroad?" This is a dangerous question to ask, as the answer can be elusive. To the conductor, it is waybills and other reports; to the signal maintainer, it is battling the elements to keep the signal system in safe working order; to the engineer, it is resetting the Ground Relay one more time to get over-the-hill; and to the gandy dancer it is spikes and bolts. The answer changes with each craft.

Within all these answers is what many believe is the "Story of Railroad" -- but take note that each of these answers is about people and their tasks. The big picture is how they all relate to one another to move goods or people across the country.

Now let's look at another group. For this discussion, let's call them "buffs" so as not to accuse them of being Foamites (Functionally OverActive Mentally Incompetent Train Enthusiasts) or railfans. Buffs like trains enough that they collect parts of trains, look for places to keep trains and start museums of trains. Buffs already know how important trains are and what they look like and do; so they tend to concentrate on locomotives, 'cause they can do THINGS. Locomotives are neat, there are many different kinds of them, many colorful paint schemes, and they tell a story of the technological changes that have happened over the years. Without locomotives, trains wouldn't go anywhere!

But it is also true that without the many varieties of railroad cars, there would be no reason for the locomotives. Without the ability to move goods (including people), there would be no railroads.

Portola is fortunate in having saved many different freight cars, so we can tell much of the story, at least of the goods transport. The WP had a proud heritage of passenger transport, too, and we are trying to tell some of that story with our California Zephyr engine, 805A. But few of the passengers rode in the engine, and no meals on china were served there. To tell the complete story we need a CZ style passenger coach (preferably one with a Vista Dome, one of the hallmarks of a CZ train).

But I didn't write this just to lobby for the acquisition of a CZ car. It is only one example of what we could be doing to really tell "The Story." We need to constantly keep our feelers out for different kinds of things to show at the museum, and different ways of showing what we have, so others may understand what real railroading is all about. If we are willing to commit \$30,000 to save a locomotive, we should also be willing to make similar commitments to save other parts of the railroad story, and to budget our resources so we may make such commitments. Ahh, budgets -- that's a whole 'nother story.

CASH Donations CASH

The following generous people have made cash donations:

Tom Alexander
Steven Fauth
Don Hamma
E.E. Henton
Jack Horner
Alan Jacobson
Patrick Kenady
Tom Mitchell (steam fund)
John Orton
Walter Ozanick
William Redding
Terry Taylor

The following people are the newest members of the FRRS:

Charles A. Goodwin
Alan Grinnell
Don Honaker
Danny Jensen
Harold and Sharrell Lantz
Ralph Mathes
Kevin Metzger
John & Sharron Muller
Anthony Navarro
Ed Powell
James Sherry
David Stoll
Bill Tharp

The following people are the newest FRRS LIFE Members:

Alan Aske
Kirk Baer
Ryan Ballard
Ken & Elana Brink
Matt Vurek
Don Wilson

Attention FRRS Life Members

A new class of membership now exists called Family Life. This allows a maximum of two people and two votes.

Everyone who was a Life Member prior to October 1, 1995 may upgrade to Family Life AT NO CHARGE and AT ANY TIME simply by writing a letter requesting the upgrade, and listing the second person, and by sending the letter to: FRRS Membership Chairman, P. O. Box 608, Portola, CA 96122.

This effectively means that no spouse of a life member requires their own separate membership any more.



With Hap Manitt

- Nov. 8, 1995 Ken Iverson and Jim Malkson worked on siding of 614 caboose.
- Nov. 9, 1995 Bruce Cooper did maintenance work on the backhoe.
- Nov. 16, 1995 David Dewey painted silver on 2001, which completed his work for this year.
- Nov. 18, 1995 Ken Iverson, Bruce Cooper fixed steps to engine 6946. Lolli Bryan moved some archive material to her very large basement for sorting and preservation.
- Nov. 20, 1995 Hank Stiles, Tom Graham and Ken Iverson worked on compressor on engine 6776.
- Nov. 21, 1995 Ken Iverson placed covers on exhaust stacks on all locos.
- Nov. 27, 1995 Hank Stiles and Ken Iverson worked on compressor on engine 6776.
- Nov. 30, 1995 Bruce Cooper installed satellite dish on roof of Silver Spike for TV reception for Ken Roller and Silver Shower car.

Ongoing electrical and plumbing work was done by Gordon Wollesen; tour guide and model railroad work was done by Ken Roller; Train Sheet assembly was done by Sue Cooper, Lolli Bryan, Missy Iverson and Norm Holmes. Gift Shop and shows were handled by Norm and Barbara Holmes, and plenty more work was done by the above and others. The work never ends.

FRRS Member Benefit

All FRRS members in good standing receive a 10% discount on all items purchased in person or by mail from the FRRS Gift Shop. You must ask for this discount when making the purchase.



Two truck loads of rail from Grays Flat, consisting of 108 pieces of rail, and weighing 55 tons, are stacked inside the balloon track for use on possible track extensions at the Museum. Some rail dates from 1907 when WP was built. Photo by Norm Holmes.

New FRRS Membership Secretary

Please join us in welcoming our new FRRS Membership Secretary, Peggy Garner. Peggy has taken over the busy reigns of the job. She is continuing the computerization of all membership renewals and new members, and the sending out of renewal notices.

When you sign up new members, or when you are renewing your membership, you must still mail them to the museum address at P. O. Box 608, Portola, CA 96122.

Do NOT send membership applications or renewals to Peggy, they must go through Portola first.

For those of you who require membership lists and/or mailing labels, you may contact Peggy at:

P. O. Box 880
Blairsdon, CA 96103
(916) 836-0880
FAX (916) 836-2943

Again, do NOT send membership renewals to Peggy, they go to Portola.

FRRS Email Addresses

Joining the information superhighway are a large number of FRRS people. You may feel free to send electronic mail to any of the people listed below. As you can see, all of these people are subscribers to CompuServe. Since CompuServe provides Internet electronic mail, you can send email to these people from any other provider of Internet email, such as America On Line.

Steven J. Habeck----- 102054.637@compuserve.com
Larry Hanlon-----76436.2666@compuserve.com
Norman W. Holmes-----76043.741@compuserve.com
Peter Langdon----- 75407.3106@compuserve.com
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Wayne Monger-----73563.2652@compuserve.com
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John S. Walker----- 76362.167@compuserve.com
Ed Warren-----71251.2705@compuserve.com
Matt Willett-----74274.2171@compuserve.com

Don't Forget

Send in your raffle tickets with your payment for the Trains Unlimited, Tours' trip opportunity. Tickets are \$7 each, or five for \$30. All sales from these tickets will go towards the Building Restoration Fund at the Portola Railroad Museum. The drawing will be held on June 1, 1996 at the Portola Railroad Museum. Please help YOUR museum grow by buying all five tickets.

- The British Columbia Spectacular
- The North American Railfan Spectacular
- The Rocky Mountain Express
- The McCloud Spectacular

The Western Pacific Headlight Magazine

Many of our members are disappointed that we have not published an issue of the Headlight for two years. Our Board of Directors is disappointed also. We have been diligently encouraging John Ryczkowski to complete the next issue. His free time as a volunteer for this project has been severely limited, but now he promises to have an issue ready for publication very soon. We have contracted with Bill Shippen, of Flimsies fame, to produce issues during 1996.

Our dues structure is in line with other similar organizations that do NOT have a Headlight style publication. Your dues help support the museum as well as pay for the cost of an annual 12 page calendar. Your continued support is appreciated.

Rail Acquisition

Our rail acquisition project at Grays Flat went into high gear with the loading and transportation of two truck loads of rail weighing 55 tons to Portola. On November 10 and 14, 1995, Norm Holmes, Ken Iverson, Jim Malkson and Ken Roller, with help from the rail owner and truck driver loaded the rail at Grays Flat and stacked the rail in a six foot high pile at the museum. It took eleven hours each day to complete the work. The rail is being stockpiled for possible track extensions. Next spring we will go back to Grays Flat to remove the remaining rail.

New in the FRRS Gift Shop

We have purchased a limited supply of 11x17 color prints of WP 913A leading four F units and 2 U30B units on the Keddie Wye. The prints are available in the Gift Shop for \$2.50 or by mail for \$4.00 in a mailing tube.

New videos on hand are:

The California Northern (excellent) 100 minutes - \$29.95.
Steamtown Grand Opening, 60 minutes - \$19.95.
U-Boat Survivors, 120 minutes - \$29.95.
Pacific Electric Vol. 1, 70 minutes - Don Olsen's work - \$39.95.
Railfanning Southern California in the 1950's, 80 minutes - \$39.95.
Santa Fe diesel locomotive servicing, etc. 25 minutes - \$9.95.
Milwaukee Road Vol. 1 St. Paul Pass electrics, 47 minutes - \$19.95.

Upcoming Train Shows

Feb. 3-4, 1996 Thunder Rail - Roseville
Feb 17-18, 1996 GATS - San Rafael
March 2-3, 1996 GATS - Fresno
March 9, 1996 WinterRail - Stockton
March 9-10, 1996 Woodland Mall Show
March 16-17, 1996 GATS - Pomona



FRRS Life Member Frank Barajas died Dec. 7, 1995. Mr. Barajas lived in San Diego and had been a life member since 1991.

Santa Train '95

By Gordon Wollesen

The Portola Railroad Museum presented its final Special Event for 1995 on the nights of December 2nd and 9th, the annual Santa Train. This event was started several years ago when Skip Englert came up with the idea of running a lighted Santa train at night. The idea was accepted, tried and became a popular annual event.

Santa Train '95 planning was started last summer by Steve Habeck and Gordon Wollesen. A lot of planning goes into this event. By the middle of October the plans were formulated and ready to implement. By the middle of November the yard was set and the caboose train spotted in the diesel shop. The caboose train was put in the house because of past experience trying to string power cords and Christmas lights on wet, frozen cars. This way the cars stayed dry.

Decorating the train was started about November 24th and completed on November 29th. The Santa Train was advertised in eight newspapers during the two weeks prior to the event. All the other preparations were being taken care of. The Beanery crew was baking a zillion cookies and taking care of decorating the Beanery. A Christmas tree was obtained and set up in the house. By Saturday, December 2nd, all was ready with time to spare. This year there was no last minute chaos.

The First Night: People started arriving an hour before the event was to start. The first train was scheduled out at 5:30 PM. The train was run every 30 minutes starting at 5:30 and the last trip departed at 9:00 PM. A total of eight trips were made, each lasting about 12 minutes. There was a fairly good crowd for this night's event. I estimate that there were about 250 kids of all ages that came to ride the train, to talk to Santa and to partake of the goodies provided in the Beanery. The night started out cold and as the night progressed it got colder. Even though it was cold, all went well and every one had a good time.

The Second Night: Again people began arriving an hour before the event was scheduled to start. The train ran on the same schedule as the first night. This night there was a great crowd. I estimate that at least 500 people attended. At least six runs were made with a full train, 80-100 people were stuffed into four cars and a full locomotive cab. This night nine trips were run. The ninth was an extra run at 9:30 PM for the "late arrivals" and those that didn't want to leave. All went well and everyone again had a great time.

Santa Train '95 was a great success. Many comments were heard that were very positive: "This is great, had a good time, thank you very much and please do it again next year." As in the past Santa Trains, there was no charge for the train rides or Beanery goodies. This is our "thank you" to the public for their support of the museum. Will we do it again in '96? A very definite YES! It takes a lot of hard work to put it together. Is it worth the effort? Yes it is.

Now is the time for a big "THANK YOU" to those that worked putting this event together:

Decorating the train - Steve, Mary and children Habeck, Mary's sisters Vickie and Susie.

Decorating WP 512 - Steve Habeck, Tom Graham, Judy and Melissa McGrath, Vince Martin.

Decorating the Christmas tree and engine house - Hap Manit, Vickie Krois, Mary Habeck and children.

Helping wherever needed - Ken Iverson, Marty Anderson.

Wiring the train for electrical power - Gordon Wollesen.

Decorating and setting up the Beanery - Sue and Bruce Cooper, Lolli Bryan.

First Night: Beanery crew - Lolli Bryan, Edna Ede, Ellen Housen, Missy Iverson. Gift Shop - Barbara Holmes. Train crew - Steve Habeck, Marty Anderson, Peter Langdon, Tom Graham, Ken Iverson, Judy McGrath, Melissa McGrath, Bob Carr and Vince Martin. Gordon Wollesen superintendent and power car operator.

Second Night: Beanery crew - Sue Cooper, Edna Ede, Diane Wollesen, Ellen Housen, Missy Iverson, Bruce Cooper.

Gift Shop - Lolli Bryan.

Train Crew - Steve Habeck, Marty Anderson, Kerry Cochran, Ken Iverson, Vic Neves, Bob Carr.

Gordon Wollesen superintendent and power car operator.

Last but not least a special thanks go to Norman Holmes for his support and help where ever needed, to Rolf Goudard (Portola City Councilman) for playing Santa Claus both nights, to Larry McBride and Bruce Cooper for providing generators to power the lights on the train and locomotive. Credit and thanks go to the City of Portola for providing the Christmas tree. If I forgot anyone, please forgive me. I thank you too.

Report from...

The FRRS Chief Mechanical Officer

By Hank Stiles, FRRS CMO

This is a new feature of the Train Sheet. This column will keep the members of the Portola Railroad Museum current on what is happening in the FRRS Mechanical Department. It is the goal of the FRRS Mechanical Department to keep our equipment in excellent condition. If any members have any suggestions that would help in keeping our rolling stock up to world class standards please feel free to give me a call with your ideas. I can be reached at (916) 363-8572 or e-mail (103344.2501@compuserve.com). Our rolling stock is in safe operating condition. In fact, we have more equipment in better condition than most operations like ours. We can only keep on top of this mountain of maintenance by the hard work of the mechanical department volunteers.

To better use the limited help we have in the mechanical department, I have, with the blessing of the Board of Directors, divided our fleet of locomotives up into Service Categories as follows:

IN SERVICE: Locomotives that may be used at any time.

RESTRICTED SERVICE: Locomotives that need minor repair. Requires C.M.O. authorization to operate.

OUT OF SERVICE: Locomotives with repairs required. May not be used until repair.

DEAD LINE: Locomotives that are in need of major repairs to return to service.

These Service Categories have made a lot of difference in keeping our fleet in good condition.

Again this spring we will be having our Locomotive Maintenance Clinics on the first weekend of each month from April through October. I would like to invite each and every one of you to come up to the museum and learn how to maintain the equipment in our collection. These clinics are a way for you to put your skills to work on our equipment. It is also a way for those of you who would like to learn new skills, to help yourself and the museum. By the way, if there is a locomotive that you would like to see in the IN SERVICE category feel free to get in touch with me and we will devise a plan to repair that locomotive, remember locomotives that have been repaired have to be tested and who better is there to test it than those who have worked on it?

This spring we have the honor of putting in service two EMD GP9's, the WP725 and WP731. These locomotives were purchased by the museum and should be on the property by the time you read this. We will also be putting EMD GP20 WP2001, with a very nice as delivered paint job, back in service after a long stay in the enginehouse.

So please, all of you who can help, call or e-mail me and let me know when you can come up and help take care of our treasures. Thank you. Hank Stiles.

FRRS Buys Two Western Pacific GP9's

By Kent Stephens

The FRRS has filled a gap in our collection of preserved Western Pacific diesel units when former Western Pacific GP9's Nos. 725 and 731 were purchased in November 1995 from Helm Leasing. The GP's were saved for preservation only one month before Helm planned to sell them for scrap if another buyer didn't come along. Only three Western Pacific GP9's exist from an original roster of eight units and two of them will be at Portola.

A Bit of History

The GP7 and GP9 models designed by Dick Dillworth represented a big success story for EMD. From its introduction in October, 1949, through the end of production in May, 1954, EMD built 2,610 GP7's for U.S. railroads plus an additional 112 for Canadian roads. Five GP7B booster units without cabs were also built during 1953.

The GP9 was introduced in January, 1954, as a 1,750 horsepower replacement model for the 1,500 hp GP7. The GP9 was even more popular. EMD built 3,436 units in the five year production run from January 1954, through December 1959 for U. S. railroads, and an additional 646 for Canadian roads. EMD also cataloged a cabless version of the GP9's. The model was designated a GP9B and was a booster or "calf" version. A total of 165 booster GP9B's were built for three customers (ATSF, PRR, UP).

Western Pacific bought both GP7's and GP9's. The GP7's were numbered 701-713 and were built in two orders. Nos. 701-709 came in October, 1952, and Nos. 710-713 were built during March-April, 1953. The GP7's were built with high short hoods, 16 cylinder 2 cycle 567B, 1,500 hp diesel engines with a starting tractive effort of 61,900 lbs. The units weighed (fully loaded) 251,700 lbs. The GP7's were WP road class 701, Symbol RS-62. The GP7's were originally equipped with Pyle-National "barrel" style headlights, which were replaced by twin sealed-beam lights during the late 1970's. WP opted for EMD to equip them with dual control stands, making the units very flexible for either locals or mainline freights. The GP7's ended steam power on the WP, completing dieselization and resulting in WP being the first large railroad in the west to be completely dieselized. Nos. 711 and 712 were sold to the Sacramento Northern in 1971 for use on the Chico local. SN retained the WP numbers.

Out of the more than 3,000 GP9's built by EMD, Western Pacific bought only eight, built in September 1955. They were also numbered in the 700 series, WP skipping up to 725 to start the series, with the units numbered 725 through 732. The GP9's were equipped with a 16 cylinder 2 cycle 567C diesel engine producing 1,750 hp, with a starting effort of 62,100 lbs. They weighed 247,600 pounds fully loaded. WP designated their GP9's as road class RS-62. Like the GP7's the GP9's were also equipped with dual control stands and the large Pyle-National "barrel" type headlights. One spotting difference between the GP7 and GP9 is the latter has louvers on the long hood. This difference resulted in the GP9's being lettered Western Pacific in two staggered lines on the long hood instead of the single line of the GP7's.

Six of the eight GP9's were still rostered by WP when the Union Pacific acquired the carrier in 1982. No. 730 had been wrecked at Beowawe, Nevada during 1963. It was so badly damaged that WP traded it to EMD for an order for GP35's. Then in May 1970, No. 726 was damaged in a wreck at Keddle when No. 3513 ran into it on the siding with excessive force, punching in the GP9's short hood. WP elected not to repair the damage and traded the 726 to EMD on the GP40

Continued on Page 8

The Acquisition of the WP GP9's

By Kent Stephens and Norman Holmes

Our collection of preserved diesel units at Portola includes a number of former Western Pacific diesel units. Among the represented models are two of EMD's GP7's Nos. 707 and 708, and GP20 No. 2001, the first GP20 built.

The GP9 model is represented in our collection by Southern Pacific GP9E No. 2873, but the 2873 is an ex SP unit and not a former WP locomotive. There were several discussions at Portola during the last several years, with other volunteers, that it would be nice to have a Western Pacific GP9. Well, sometimes in our conversation it was so simple; the museum didn't really need two WP GP7's. Could we approach and work out a deal with the City of Elko to trade the inoperable GP7 No. 708 for Elko's GP9 No. 727? It sounded so simple, if only the City of Elko would agree to trade their GP9 for our GP7 then we could fill a the gap in our collection with an operable WP GP9. Then a reality check would set in at the end of the conversation. A GP9 only weighs 124 tons - ONLY 124 tons. But those 124 tons would be a big problem in swapping out that GP9 at Elko, moving a large heavy diesel locomotive on an extended low-boy trailer through city streets, with both weight and overhead wires to worry about, to the nearest Union Pacific spur. At the spur, 727 would be off-loaded and 708 on-loaded to the low-boy for a trip back through city streets to the display site in the park. In reality obtaining 727 would be a major project and an expensive one at that. Besides, it's nice to have two Western Pacific GP7's, especially two numbered in sequence. And one of these days 708 might just be an operable locomotive. After all, the museum has a 567C engine block setting on blocks that wasn't needed after all for 805A.

In our conversations during the last couple of years about how nice it would be to have Elko's GP9, we completely forgot about those four ex-WP GP9's running on the Iowa Interstate. They were actually a simple proposition to acquire when compared to Elko's diesel, at least the ones on the Iowa Interstate were on live rail. However, IAIS was still running the WP units up to a year ago.

On the regular Saturday night slide show at Gridley October 21, 1995, a slide taken by John Black from a recent trip to Omaha jogged Kent's memory. The slide showed two of the lonely ex Western Pacific Geep 9's, Nos. 300 and 306, stored on a spur near the shop and for sale. Kent's reaction to his comment about the two GP9's being for sale was "Bingo," here's our opportunity to buy an ex Western Pacific GP9 for the museum if they don't want an excessively high price for the unit. We can just forget about the stuffed and mounted GP9 at Elko. The next evening Kent called Norm Holmes to advise him about the GP9's, telling him that Nos. 300 and 306 were stored at Council Bluffs and for sale. He was interested and said he would follow-up with a call to the Iowa Interstate.

When Norm called the Iowa Interstate, he learned that the 300 and 306 were stored in operable condition and for sale but they didn't belong to the railroad. He was advised to call Helm Financial in San Francisco, which is a locomotive leasing company. A phone call to Helm followed. Yes, the GP9's were for sale and Helm was planning to sell both for scrap, along with other stored units, at the end of 1995, if a buyer wasn't found in the meantime.

Helm was asking \$40,000 for each unit, Norm said this was more than we could afford. Helm called back and said since we were a non-profit museum they would sell us the units for scrap price which was \$30,000 each and would like

Continued on Page 8

Conclusion of WP GP9 History

order in 1971.

Two GP9's were retired by Union Pacific without being renumbered. No. 727 was retired during 1984, but is a fortunate survivor. It was repainted in full Western Pacific orange and silver and donated to the city of Elko, Nevada where it was placed on display, "stuffed and mounted" with caboose 437 in a small park across from the police station. This equipment was given to the City of Elko as a remembrance of the time when the city was bisected by both the Western Pacific and Southern Pacific rail lines. The unfortunate GP9 was No. 728, retired during 1984 and sold for scrap.

The remaining four GP9's were renumbered and repainted for Union Pacific: 725 to UP 300, 729 to UP 304, 731 to UP 306 and 732 to UP 308. They were the second GP9's to have these numbers on the Union Pacific, the railroad had retired their own GP9's earlier. The four GP9's were returned to former WP territory and went back to work. Included in their runs were the Fremont and Milpitas locals and the Sacramento Northern's Chico local, where 300 and 306 at various times worked the runs. (By this time SN 711 had been retired and 712 was in work train service in the Feather River Canyon.) The GP9's lasted little more than one year, however, when an edict from Union Pacific motive power officials in Omaha ordered all Geeps with 567 diesel engines to be retired. The division superintendent at Stockton protested but it went unheeded by Omaha. He complained to Omaha that the GP9's were needed for assignments on light rail branchlines, such as SN's line to Chico with its 60 lb. rail. The replacements were ex Mopac GP38's that stayed for a few months until they were moved to the Salt Lake City shop to have their cabs rebuilt to experimental crew cabs. Railfan observers could hardly believe the replacement power for the Chico local - former WP GP35's and GP40's. Despite predictions of derailments, the "big" GP35's and GP40's managed to stay on SN's light rail without incident until the Chico local made its last run during the closing days of 1985.

In the meantime, Union Pacific sold the four GP9's to dealer Precision National Corp. of Mt. Vernon, Illinois. Not long after their sale all four units went to work on the Iowa Interstate Railroad in 1986. They were among the first diesel units acquired by this regional carrier after it took over a stretch of Rock Island mainline. Their western terminus at Council Bluffs, Iowa connects with Union Pacific.

Iowa Interstate did not repaint the units from their UP paint scheme, but merely being lettered for IAIS. At this point it is not clear, however, who owned them: PNC, Iowa Interstate or Helm Leasing. The Iowa Interstate roster in TRAINS (June 1989) that accompanied an article on the railroad does not indicate if the regional owned the four GP9's or was leasing them. The text of the article isn't any help either. They had several additional GP9's which they gave odd numbers to in the 300 series that mingled them with the even numbered former WP/UP Geeps.

GP9 Fund

As of the year's end (1995) a total of \$3,275 has been donated. This is still a long way from the \$70,000 needed to pay for these very important additions to our collection. The following people have made contributions to this fund:

Tom Abbott, Don Borden, Roy Bruington, *Bob Carr, *Stephen Colley, Charles Davis, Ed DeLozier, James Duncan, Erik Frodsham, Robert Gordon, *Jack Hathaway, Don Hunter, *Robert Hurney, *Dick Hussey, *Fred Klyver, *Michel Knight, Don Koors, Tom Lawler, Charley Lix, *Tom Mounovan for John Hungerford's collection, George Nolan, Randy Peck, *Andy Peterson, *Allan Ratcliff, Gary Richardson, *Kenneth Ritz, *Charlotte Rodgers, Chris Skow, J. Wheaton Smith, John Stein, Don Struken, Dave Tateosian, Michael Tolich, Eugene Vicknair, Eric Wright.

(*) indicates a donation of \$100 or more. Your help is greatly appreciated.

Conclusion of Acquisition of WP GP9's

us to take both units. Norm advised that he would take the proposal to the Board.

The proposed purchase was discussed at the October Board of Directors meeting and it was decided to send our CMO Hank Stiles to Council Bluffs to do a mechanical inspection. Since Norm was leaving for the TRAIN convention in Louisville, KY, Steve Habeck called Helm and Iowa Interstate to make arrangements for Hank to inspect the units. Hank flew to Omaha and through a great deal of cooperation from Iowa Interstate was able not only to inspect the units, but both were put into service so their operation could be evaluated. Hank determined that both units were in good condition as had been stated by Iowa Interstate and Helm. Regular maintenance was carried out by Iowa Interstate, one unit was in exceptionally good condition with new power assemblies installed only two years ago. The only problem found on either unit is that one unit has one wheel set with relatively thin flanges. We wish to thank IAIS CMO Fred Cheny and shop supervisor Wayne McClain and crew for their superb cooperation in helping us evaluate these units.

During the October Board meeting, it had been pretty well decided to buy both units if Hank's report was favorable, as buying one would undoubtedly result in the other unit being sold for scrap. Since time was running out to purchase the units, a decision had to be made before the next Board meeting. FRRS President Steve Habeck polled the Directors and it was agreed to purchase both units. With the help of Helm Leasing the transportation cost for moving the units from Omaha to Portola was reduced, but would still be a little over \$10,000 for the two units.

Iowa Interstate agreed to prepare the units for shipment, removing the horns and bells and doing a general inspection. The horns and bells will be shipped separately to prevent loss! As of this writing, December 29, 1995, the two units are awaiting a Union Pacific inspection in South Omaha. Pending approval, the units will probably be in Portola by the time you read this story.

It is planned to restore both GP9's to Western Pacific colors. No. 300 is ex WP 725 (c/n 20696); No. 306 is ex WP 731 (c/n 20754), both built in September, 1955. Elko's No. 727 is the only other surviving WP GP9.

The Board of Directors has discussed the possibility of leasing one or both of these GP9's (and possibly our SP GP9) to a short line railroad for a short period of time to help defray the acquisition cost, however we would not want these historic units wrecked or completely worn out. A final decision on this has not been determined. In the meantime, the purchase and the payment for transportation has seriously depleted FRRS funds. We have spent in excess of \$70,000 for the units and donations are sorely needed to help defray the cost of adding these two historically important former Western Pacific units to our collection. (Remember that the donations are tax-deductible.)



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Index to Back Issues of the Train Sheet

Issue No. 1 through Issue No. 75

1983

No. 1 through No. 4 single sheets, FRRS formation, No. 1 is dated May 1983.

1984

- No. 5, 4 pages - 921D starting.
- No. 6, 6 pages - 921D drawing, renumbering WP locos to UP.
- No. 7, 6 pages - 1912 tank car drawing, info.
- No. 8, 8 pages - FRSL No. 8 info.
- No. 9, 8 pages - SN 1632 caboose, 3032 box car drawing, donation of 6946.
- No. 10, 8 pages - 1937 box car, wood box car, WP herald info.

1985

- No. 11, 12 pages - 428 caboose, covered hoppers, 608 drawings and info.
- No. 12, 8 pages - 6946, 708 info.
- No. 13, 8 pages - Grand Opening, FRRS roster.
- No. 14, 10 pages - Transco box car, feather car, 2001 drawings, KCC Alcos arrive, Winnemucca depot.
- No. 15, 14 pages - Burro crane, WP refer, drawings.
- No. 16, 14 pages - KCC Alcos, electric, WP air dump, WP box car lettering.

1986

- No. 17, 14 pages - More WP box cars, cherry specials.
- No. 18, 14 pages - List of existing WP heavy weight passenger cars, reprint from WP Mileposts, storms of 1956.
- No. 19, 20 pages - UP 25049, UP 105 drawings, WP steel caboose locations, more WP box cars, WP history from Trains, 3-1942.
- No. 20, 14 pages - Painting and lettering WP steel cabooses, UP 849 drawing, 1776 drawing.
- No. 21, 12 pages - CZ car roster, inventory of WP eqpt. 1961, WP Navy.
- No. 22, 12 pages - Jumbo cars, Airslide hoppers, USS 12, WP Navy, continued.

1987

- No. 23, 14 pages - logging flats, Alaska F's, SN Marine Div., drawing of Ramon, FRRS roster.
- No. 24, 12 pages - crane 90, box car 3421, 707 arrives, new WP logo.
- No. 25, 12 pages - Santa Fe caboose, logging flats, WP and FGE affiliate, 481 tender drawing.
- No. 26, 12 pages - Santa Fe caboose, LI FA-2, 805A returns, Las Plumas.
- No. 27, 16 pages - 501 arrives, drawings, MILW U25B, new line around Oroville Dam, ballast hoppers.
- No. 28, 14 pages - Mountain Dispatcher story, FRSL No. 8 - 80 years old.

1988

- No. 29, 12 pages - Airslide hoppers, MILW U25B story, drawings.
- No. 30, 8 pages - 501 arrives.
- No. 31, 12 pages - UP gon, bunk cars, Santa Fe's first steel caboose arrives.
- No. 32, 14 pages - USA 80 ton GE's arrive.
- No. 33, 8 pages - WP 506 arrives.
- No. 34, 10 pages - USA 7372/WP 512 arrives.

1989

- No. 35, 8 pages - PFE wood refer arrives.
- No. 36, 14 pages - CZ 40th Anniversary.
- No. 37, 8 pages - WP caboose 484 arrives.
- No. 38, 8 pages - MILW U25B update.
- No. 39, 8 pages - WP 171 class, WP flat car.
- No. 40, 10 pages - Las Plumas, troop sleeper drawings.

1990

- No. 41, 10 pages - E9B, 805A report.
- No. 42, 24 pages - 805A report, RS-32, FRRS roster, U23B, all WP station name info.
- No. 43, 12 pages - MP caboose, WP gon arrive, Relco WP GP20.
- No. 44, 12 pages - Motor car event, guard car arrives.
- No. 45, 14 pages - 608 - 50 years old, SN 44 tonners, FRSL 8 leaves.
- No. 46, 10 pages - More equipment arrives.

1991

- NO. 47, 10 pages - WPMW 37 and cars arrive, UP snow plow drawing, info.
- No. 48, 8 pages - CN F7B arrives, CTC Board donated.
- No. 49, 12 pages - Short FRRS history, UP steam excursion.
- No. 50, 8 pages - Motor car races, ONW caboose arrives.
- No. 51, 12 pages - 805A runs, MRS units arrive.
- No. 52, 12 pages - MRS drawings, 4404 arrives, info.

1992

- No. 53, 8 pages - Museum news.
- No. 54, 12 pages - 805A report, ONW 4, UP baggage car arrives.
- No. 55, 12 pages - Baldwin loco story, AS-616 drawings.
- No. 56, 12 pages - UP steam excursion, 707 to CSRM.
- No. 57, 12 pages - Motor car races, FRRS roster, TRAIN convention.
- No. 58, 12 pages - Membership directory, Santa train.

1993

- No. 59, 12 pages - Snowbound, USS Baldwins, 2873, logging flats arrive.
- No. 60, 12 pages - Logging flats, Baldwin switchers, data, info.
- No. 61, 12 pages - FM H-12-44, all door box car arrive.
- No. 62, 12 pages - Caboose 614 acquired, 608 restored.
- No. 63, 12 pages - Ingersoll-Rand loco acquired, history, log train, motor car race.
- No. 64, 10 pages - Santa train.

1994

- No. 65, 8 pages - Sugar beet gons arrive, 45 year anniversary CZ.
- No. 66, 8 pages - Sugar beet car history.
- No. 67, 6 pages - plus 10th anniversary program, VIA passenger cars arrive.
- No. 68, 14 pages - VIA FPA-4, FPB-4 arrive, history, Motor car races, 10th Anniversary report, 805A restoration nearly complete.
- No. 69, 12 pages - 805A final report, to start an Alco.
- No. 70, 12 pages - 614 caboose, SN 146 arrives, history, drawing.

1995

- No. 71, 8 pages - 614 photo, museum news.
- No. 72, 10 pages - Rededication of 805A, Via lounge, WP outfit car arrive, drawing.
- No. 73, 12 pages - Rededication of 805A story, M60A3 tanks arrive.
- No. 74, 10 pages - SP 1060 caboose, baggage cart arrive, UP chairman visits, RR Days.
- No. 75, 12 pages - UP steamer arrives, history, purchase of WP GP9's.

The above issues are available from the museum office for a cost of \$1.00 each, postpaid. Most of the issues are available in their original printed form. Those that are not, we will make copies on our copy machine for you.

All issues of the Train Sheet contain news and photos of activities at the museum.

Pacific Limited Report

By Steve Habeck

The Pacific Limited Group Board of Directors held a meeting in Salt Lake City on Saturday, November 18, 1995, to review the results of the 1995 Pacific Northwest trip and take definitive action to remedy the problems encountered. As you may have heard, Pacific Limited suffered a loss of slightly more than \$80,000 on the combination of the Kansas trip and the Northwest trip. While this amount is quite sizable, it reflects the remaining balance on our bill to the Union Pacific, which was in excess of \$485,000. The main causes of the trip operating at a loss have been identified, and people have been assigned to produce workable solutions prior to commencing any planning for the 1996 season. While the FRRS did not join Pacific Limited expecting to lose money, the FRRS Directors have chosen to see if the action plan being enacted by the Pacific Limited Directors will produce a profit in 1996, in addition to retiring the debt. There are several reasons behind this action by the FRRS. The Union Pacific continues to reorganize and reassign personnel in Omaha, and the future of the excursion program, as well as the historic locomotive program, is unclear. The only excursion trips approved for 1996 are Pacific Limited sponsored excursions on the ex-CNW across Iowa in August, and a fall colors excursion through the Ozarks that includes a layover at Branson, Missouri. The other trips Pacific Limited requested, such as the Canyon fall colors trip and the Inside Gateway trip, as well as trips requested by other groups that have worked with UP in the past, have not been approved, or have been turned down. Given this new atmosphere toward excursions, it is to the FRRS' benefit to remain with Pacific Limited, as we would have virtually no chance (or capability) of sponsoring excursions on our own.

I have received some feedback from some FRRS members who were not happy with the car host assignments that were made for the Kansas and Northwest trips. While I will agree that the process needs work, I was not able to participate on these trips. I was, however, involved in the early stages of planning for these trips, and I am aware that Pacific Limited had many more volunteers than slots available. Bob Harper, Pacific Limited Crew Chief, had to make many difficult decisions regarding who to take and who to leave. Factors affecting the selection process included length of availability of the volunteer, volunteers' assignment requests, how far the volunteer had to travel to get to and from the train, and prior experience as a host. While this may have upset some of our volunteers, many segments had over 100 volunteers to fill 46 positions, so more were turned away than were selected.

Requests for car hosts for the 1996 trips are now being accepted. Please contact Bob Harper at the address below if you are interested in working parts, or all, of these trips:

Trip #1 On the ex-CNW

Sat. Aug. 24, 1996 Council Bluffs, Iowa, to Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Sun. Aug. 25, 1996 Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to Chicago, Illinois (Proviso Yard).

August 26-30, 1996 Layover in Chicago (no motel rooms available due to Democratic National Convention).

Sat. Aug. 31, 1996 Chicago, Illinois, to Milwaukee, Wisconsin round trip.

Sun. Sept. 1, 1996 Chicago, Illinois, to Union Illinois, round trip, to Railfan's Weekend at Illinois Railway Museum (if 844 can be turned at Belvidere and bridges can handle weight).

Mon. Sept. 2, 1996 (Labor Day) Chicago, Illinois, to Clinton, Iowa.

Tues. Sept. 3, 1996 Clinton, Iowa, to Des Moines, Iowa (probably deadhead).

September 4-6, 1996 Layover/display in Des Moines, Iowa.

Sat. Sept. 7, 1996 Des Moines, Iowa, to Boone, Iowa, round trip to support Boone's Puffer Belly Days (contingent on being able to turn the train at Grand Jct., Iowa).

Sun. Sept. 8, 1996 Des Moines, Iowa, to Nevada, Iowa, round trip(s) (tentative).

Mon. Sept. 9, 1996 Des Moines, Iowa, to Council Bluffs, Iowa (deadhead).

Ozarks Fall Foliage Trip

Thurs. Oct. 24, 1996 St. Louis, Missouri, to Poplar Bluff, Missouri.

Fri. Oct. 25, 1996 Poplar Bluff, Missouri, to Little Rock, Arkansas.

Sat. Oct. 26, 1996 Little Rock, Arkansas, to Russellville, Arkansas, round trip.

Sun. Oct. 27, 1996 Little Rock, Arkansas, to McGehee or Gurdon, round trip.

October 28, 1996 Layover in Little Rock, Arkansas (Jenks Shops).

Tue. Oct. 29, 1996 Little Rock, Arkansas, to Branson, Missouri.

October 30-31, 1996 Layover in Branson, Missouri.

Fri. Nov. 1, 1996 Branson, Missouri, to Kansas City, Missouri.

Motive power for these trips will be the 844, as much as possible, otherwise the E9's will be up front. To get your name on the list, contact Pacific Limited Crew Chief Bob Harper:

Bob Harper
2 Pleasant Avenue
Corte Madera, CA 94925
(415) 924-0170

If you have other suggestions, complaints, or comments, please direct them to Museum Executive Director Norm Holmes or myself in care of the Museum, or to me by email (102054.637@compuserve.com). Norm and I are the FRRS representatives on the Pacific Limited Board of Directors, and we appreciate your input.



WP GP9 731 (coming to Portola, with sister 725) assists WP 2-8-2 334 (also preserved, at Rio Vista) on a railfan excursion in March of 1956, when the Geep was less than a year old.

Help Fund A Portola Homecoming!

As the historical society for the Western Pacific, the Feather River Rail Society has strived to acquire Western Pacific materials and equipment for the collection at the Portola Railroad Museum. One of the gaps in our collection is EMD's GP9, of which the WP had eight, numbers 725-732. This gap has been filled with our acquisition of fully-operational GP9's 300 and 306 from Helm Leasing (WP 725 and 731).

Operational GP9's can command a high price in the used locomotive market, and although Helm Financial sold these units to us at their rock-bottom price, we have over \$70,000 invested in them. The Board of Directors felt that this expenditure was justified, since there are only 3 WP GP9's still in existence (the other is 727, on display in Elko, NV). We would like every FRRS member to consider making a special donation to help defray the expenses incurred. We appreciate everyone's help and support, and your contributions are, as always, fully tax deductible. Use the coupon below!

-----clip here-----
I'll help bring the WP GP9's home. Here's my contribution:

Name _____

Donation amount \$ _____

Address _____

_____ Check Money Order

_____ MC/Visa

City, State, Zip _____

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THANK YOU!

Signature

Send this form to: FRRS GP9 Fund, P. O. Box 608, Portola, CA 96122