

# Western Pacific Railroad 2001

This locomotive was built in **1959**. Other events from that year...

- Soviet Union launches the Luna 1 spacecraft, the first craft to successfully reach the vicinity of the moon, from the Baikonur Cosmodrome.
- Alaska and Hawaii become the 49th and 50th states of the United States.
- Charles De Gaulle becomes the first president of the French Fifth Republic.
- Walt Disney releases the animated film *Sleeping Beauty*.
- A plane carrying musicians Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and The Big Bopper crashes near Clear Lake, Iowa, killing all on board, including pilot Roger Peterson. The tragedy is later termed "The Day the Music Died".
- Lee Petty wins the first Daytona 500.
- The Marx Brothers make their last TV appearance in *The Incredible Jewel Robbery*.
- The Barbie doll debuts.
- NASA announces its selection of 7 military pilots to become the first US astronauts: the Mercury Seven.
- Hugh Laurie, British actor and comedian known for *House MD*, *Jeeves and Wooster* and *A Little Bit Fry and Laurie*, is born.
- Fidel Castro becomes Premier of Cuba.
- The first skull of Australopithecus is discovered by Louis Leakey and his wife Mary Leakey in the Olduvai Gorge of Tanzania.
- Keith Olbermann, news correspondent and sportscaster, is born.
- *Ben-Hur*, starring Charlton Heston, is released and becomes MGM Studio's greatest hit. It is critically acclaimed and will win 11 Academy Awards.
- Sarah Ferguson, Duchess of York, is born.
- Rod Serling's anthology series *The Twilight Zone* premieres on CBS.
- The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, opens to the public in New York City.
- First large scale actions of the Vietnam War, which will continue until 1975.
- The first known human with HIV dies in the Congo.
- Kyle MacLachlan, actor known for his roles in the film *Blue Velvet* and the television series *Sex and the City* and *Twin Peaks*, is born.
- The St. Lawrence Seaway linking the North American Great Lakes and the Atlantic Ocean officially opens to shipping.
- Pantyhose are introduced by Glen Raven Mills.
- Architect Frank Lloyd Wright dies in Phoenix, Arizona.
- US Vice President Richard Nixon and USSR Premier Nikita Khrushchev engage in the "kitchen debate."
- The USS George Washington is launched as the first submarine to carry ballistic missiles.
- The Virginian Railway is merged into the Norfolk and Western Railway, starting what is known as the "Merger Era" in American railroading and leading to a modernization and contraction of the US railroad industry
- Round Table Pizza is founded in Menlo Park, California.
- The first version of the *Mickey Mouse Club* ends its television run.
- The Western Pacific Railroad stops transfer of *California Zephyr* passengers between Oakland and San Francisco. Passengers now must use Southern Pacific buses or ferries.