

Western Pacific Railroad 608

Diesel Electric Switching Locomotive

Well traveled locomotive 608 was built before World War II for the Union Pacific Railroad. It was, in fact, the first diesel switching locomotive to be purchased new by the UP. Numbered DS-1001, this sturdy switcher worked for the Union Pacific until the late 1960's, when newer models replaced it.

The 1001, and older sister UP 1000 (built as a demonstrator unit to convince the UP to acquire diesel switch engines) were sold in July 1966 to the Stockton Terminal and Eastern, a shortline railroad in Stockton, California which still operates today and interchanged much traffic with the Western Pacific. The two switchers were intended to replace the ST&E's stable of smaller locomotives, but were in poor condition and proved hard on the track. A lower horsepower switcher built by the Alco company was borrowed from the WP and proved perfect for the ST&E. A trade in late 1968 brought two WP Alcos to the shortline in exchange for the ex-UP switchers. Renumbered to Western Pacific 607 and 608, they were completely rebuilt by the railroad, including an upgrading to 1200 horsepower from their original 1000.

The two rebuilt switchers served until the end of the Western Pacific, although the 607 was transferred to subsidiary Sacramento Northern in 1973. They spent most of their WP service working yards in Stockton or Sacramento. WP 608 was retired less than 1 year after the Union Pacific, being set aside in September 1983. Donated to the FRRS in late 1984, 608 quickly became a favorite of FRRS volunteers and visitors alike. She quickly acquired the nickname "Bing", in honor of Bing Crosby, due to the engine's unique "va-va-va-vooo" sound when accelerating rapidly.

builder

Electro-Motive Division
of General Motors

built

May, 1940

type

NW2u

horsepower

1200

serial number

1000

original cost

\$181,538.00

top speed

60 MPH

operating weight

248,000 lbs

acquisition

donated by Union Pacific