

that weekend but nothing is confirmed yet. If you can make it to Reno for the Convention, then try and save some time to come by the Museum and check out what has been going on. You might be surprised.

Another project going on during the cold, miserable days of winter is the construction of our new Volunteer Lounge. Eugene Vicknair has been leading a crew that has stripped and begun rebuilding the old Silver Debris into a new, modern and comfortable place for all volunteers to relax, get together, and have fun in. He can use any help available in this project as I have asked him to have it ready to go for opening day of operations. Give him a call or Email him even if you can only be there for the day. Thanks Eugene.

Now, some of you might have noticed that the first track work weekend is at the end of March. If you haven't, I need as many volunteers as possible to get some important track work done before operations begin. We need to finish replacing the ties under the west 2-3 switch so we can remove the slow order. We also need to replace some ties under the track out by the picnic area and by the parking lot. Hopefully once these items are complete, we can begin building some new track this year!!!! I know that this work is about the worst of all, but it is needed to prevent derailments and keep us and our guests safe.

In closing, I would like all of you to remember that we operate on donations. We are always in need of donations from everybody to continue to grow and expand. Matching donations from employers is becoming more popular, and we continue to apply for grants for all different kinds of projects. Gail McClure is working hard to write and apply for grants for us. Thanks Gail! We will be starting a new fund raising drive real soon so if you can spare anything, or need a tax deduction please keep your Museum in mind.

CMO Report

By Hank Stiles

Hello to all. It has been a while since I have written a column for the Train Sheet. Life got busy winter came with its lull in activity and I had nothing to say.

Now spring is just around the corner and that means it's time to think about projects for this year.

Along with the maintenance that we do every year is this years projects. First thing on the agenda is repair of the WP 608. Cleaning and reassemble of the flex joint on the shaft that drives the air compressor and the cooling fan. Parts are ordered and by the time you read this I hope to have it up and running again.

Next on the list is the 1857 (Fairbanks Morris). After manufacture of oil and water lines for the oil cooler system, water was added and it poured onto the ground. We found that the exhaust manifold was there the water was coming from. After removal it was discovered that the water drain for it had clogged causing the failure. This engine has a water cooled manifold. So I had Howard Hansen repair the manifold and with the help of Jack xxxxxx it was discovered that the exhaust flange needs to be surfaced. Anyone know of someone with the ability to surface a six foot long manifold? When that is done it can be reassembled as soon as we get the rest of the gaskets, a job that Doug Morgan has

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been working on, with about 90% success. One set of "O" rings being all that we lack.

This brings me to the question, what do we do next? I was thinking about the WP501. It would be a nice engine to have running. Maybe we have enough EMD's. What about the whistle of a turbocharged ALCo 539, in the form of the WP563, how does that sound? We could run catenary around the balloon track and use the Kennacot electric.

It would be most helpful to have a project leader to lead a project along with the things already planed, much more could be done. Just like the Marines we are also looking for "Few good persons" Please come and help.

If anyone has any other suggestions please let me know it's your museum too!

Western Pacific 165



0-6-0 switching locomotive, built Alco-Schenectady, 1919

By Eugene Vicknair

As our collection has grown and developed, we have been fortunate to gather a significant variety of WP related equipment covering much of the early and mid diesel era, as well as some freight equipment from the mid and late steam era. However one glaring gap has been the lack of a WP steam locomotive. Both for historical and publicity reasons (one common question visitors ask is "Do you have a running steam engine?") the acquisition of an old WP "kettle" has been viewed as a priority by the FRRS.

With only 5 survivors, our options were limited. In late 2002, an opportunity arose to acquire 0-6-0 165 which had been at the Alameda County Fairgrounds in Pleasanton but was now in the hands of the new Triple T Agricultural Museum located in (Turlock?). Triple T was more interested in a flashier engine and inquired about our Union Pacific 4-4-0 737. After extensive negotiations, a trade was completed that sent the old 4-4-0 to the Triple T, where it will be cosmetically restored and displayed indoors, while bringing Western Pacific 165 home to Portola

Of the 5 surviving WP steam engines, 2 are 0-6-0s: the 164 and 165. Both of these engines are also second-hand locomotives, having been purchased with two additional sisters from the United Verde Copper Company of Arizona on September 17, 1927. The 165 was built as UVCC 87 in 1919, a stout little engine

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that was larger and more modern than WP's own 0-6-0s. Assembled by Alco-Schenectady, the 4 engines were heavier and more powerful than any of the 0-6-0s used on rival Southern Pacific, and would be among the last steam locomotives in active service on the WP.

Acquired for \$16,000 each, the little workhorses soon found a long-term home at in Stockton and they spent much of their careers working this important yard as well as Portola and Wendover. The 165 herself was often documented working the Portola Yard.

In the early 1950's, diesels were coming in greater numbers and the days of steam on the Wobbly were numbered. In late 1957, 164 and 165 became the last 0-6-0's retired, outlasting their sisters and the WP's original fleet. The 165 had been last used in March, 1953, but saw one last hurrah when it and WP 94 were towed down the Tidewater Southern to Escalon and used as stationary boilers at a cannery in October 1959. It returned to Stockton for storage, one of only 3 steamers left on the railroad (along with 4-6-0 94 and 2-8-2 334). On April 4, 1962, it was donated to the city of San Leandro and eventually was displayed near the San Leandro BART Station. At some point in the 1980's, it was relocated to the Alameda County Fairgrounds.

Currently stored at the Niles Canyon Railway, the 165 will move to Portola following the completion of their new connection to the Union Pacific. Once she comes home, a cosmetic restoration is planned along with evaluation for a possible return to operation. Someday, perhaps our wooden freight cars will once again polish the rails, clacking the joints to the rhythm of steam exhaust and the haunting wail of a whistle.

Reference:

Guy Dunscomb and Fred Stindt, *Western Pacific Steam Locomotives, Passenger Trains and Cars*

Western Pacific 917-D

F7A locomotive, built Electro-Motive Division, 19

By Eugene Vicknair

In 2003, the FRRS completed an agreement for a major trade of equipment with the Bay Area Electric Railway Association. Perhaps the most significant piece of equipment exchanged in this deal is Western Pacific F7A 917-D, one of WP's "Fab 4" F-units and one of only 7 WP Fs to survive.

WP 917-D was delivered in the first of two orders WP placed for freight F7s. It arrived on February 4, 1950, just three days before the 921-D which has been part of the FRRS collection since 1983. The Fs quickly became the backbone of the motive power fleet, supplementing WP's FTs and later joined by small groups of high nose GP locomotives.

Nothing unique set the 917-D apart in its WP career. It would become special only through luck and longevity. By the mid 1960's, the FTs were gone and time was running out on the F7s. As new U30Bs and GP40s arrived, the F7s were rounded up and sent east as trade-ins for the new power. In 1972, most of the survivors, including the last B-units, rolled off the property, traded for new U23Bs that were intended to banish the Fs from the mainline. Only 6 units survived this final purge, 920-A (renumbered 913), 914-A, 915-D, 918-D, 921-D and 917-D (the suffix-

es were dropped in 1975). The 914-A had suffered an electrical fire in 1972 and was scrapped in 1975, while 915 was sidelined in 1974 and finally cut-up in 1979. The remaining four soldiered on as the WP was too cash-strapped to replace them. Their regular assignment was a train commonly called the *San Jose Turn*. Working from Stockton to Milpitas, they delivered cars to the San Jose area and WP's biggest customer: the Milpitas Ford Plant.

In 1972, the 917-D and the 914-A became the first two Fs to receive Perlman green paint. The 917 would remain the only green F until late 1977, following its sidelining in July. Assigned to a 5400 ton train with only 913 and a U30B for companions, the 917 (and 913) caught fire on Altamont Pass and joined the 921 (which had tangled with a gravel truck the previous month) in the Stockton deadline. The WP decided that it still could not afford to replace the units and rebuilding was more cost effective. The railroad sent 913 and 921 off to Boise for a rebuilding at Morrison-Knudsen while 917 was reworked in the Stockton shops. While 913 would famously receive a new version of the classic silver and orange colors, the other three were painted in new versions of the Perlman green scheme. WP 917 returned to service on February 2, 1978, just two days shy of the 28th anniversary of its arrival.

While 913 and 918 would be donated by the WP before merger day, 917 and 921 were the property of the UP as 1983 dawned. Both were quickly shutdown then shipped to North Platte, NB where they received zephyr-style paint schemes patterned after the 913's livery. In late 1983, they returned to California and were donated by WP to their new homes: 921 to the FRRS and 917 to the BAERA.

With the acquisition of the 917-D, the FRRS now has 2 WP freight F7As and, with FP7 805-A, holds 3 WP Fs all together. Eventually it is hoped that additional B-units can be acquired as stand-ins for the long gone WP Bs and permit Portola to field an A-B-B-A set of these classic locomotives. On a more practical note, the nicely-preserved 917-D will permit the museum to continue showcasing an operational WP freight F while our well-used 921-D undergoes a deserved restoration, leading to the day when the two sisters will again work together on home rails.

Reference:

Joseph Strapac, *Western Pacific's Diesel Years*

Portola Railroad Museum Master Plan

By Eugene Vicknair

As the FRRS enters its next 20 years, the Portola Railroad Museum is poised to undergo a renaissance in its appearance and layout.

Starting five years ago, an aggressive effort began to define a cohesive master plan for the museum facility. This plan would address several issues with the facility, including a lack of visitor amenities, a need for more covered railcar storage and restoration space, Americans with Disability Act requirements and a desire to present a more polished museum and provide a visual context for the rolling stock.

After spending time holding public meetings, questioning visitors and members, reviewing the results of the museum mission statement survey and exploring the efforts of other rail-