

Sacramento Northern Railway 712

Road Freight Locomotive

The Sacramento Northern was a subsidiary railroad of the Western Pacific. The SN was originally an electric interurban railroad from Oakland to Chico, California, but by the late 1960s it was dieselized and its lines had been chopped into isolated segments serving clusters of freight customers. Among the most important was the large steel mill in Pittsburg, California, on a line reached via trackage rights over the Santa Fe Railway from Stockton, California.

SN 712 was built for the Western Pacific, part of WP's second order for this locomotive model. In July 1971 the 712 and sister engine 711 were transferred to the SN, retiring two ex-New York Ontario & Western Railway F3A model locomotives that had worked the SN trains running to the steel mill at Pittsburgh. The old F3A locomotives were worn out from the heavy service and the railway needed a pair of engines with similar horsepower but more conducive to switching duties, as the previous F3s were carbody style locomotives with limited visibility.

The two "new" locomotives were among the first on the WP system to be repainted from their as delivered silver and orange colors into the new "Perlman Green" paint, adopted with the appointment of Alfred E. Perlman to the Presidency of the WP in December of 1970.

Though owned by the Sacramento Northern, 712 was often found working on the WP proper. At the time of the Union Pacific merger in December 1982, SN 712 could usually be found working in San Jose, California or running on secondary trains on the western end of the WP.

The 712 was the last SN lettered locomotive in service. Upon retirement by Union Pacific in March 1985, the engine was donated to the Western Railway Museum near Fairfield, California, where it was repainted and displayed. In 2006, the Feather River Rail Society and Western Railway Museum operator Bay Area Electric Railway Association traded several pieces of equipment, including SN 712, to better focus their respective collections.

builder

Electro-Motive Division
of General Motors

built

April, 1953

type

GP7

horsepower

1500

serial number

18168

original cost

\$170,833.00

top speed

65 MPH

operating weight

246,800 lbs

acquisition

donated by Bay Area
Electric Railway Association