

Ex Southern Pacific TR-6a 1100 Joins Our Collection

By Norman Holmes

In December, 2004, the Feather River Rail Society added another historic locomotive to its collection at the Portola Railroad Museum. The unit is an EMD TR6 switching locomotive built as a demonstrator and sold to Southern Pacific. A brief history follows:

Electro Motive Corporation was a builder of gas-electric motor cars and diesel engines. General Motors had a desire to get into the locomotive building business and purchased EMC in 1930. With GM's improvement of the two-cycle diesel engine they began to market diesel switchers and passenger locomotives starting in 1935. Diesel switchers were available in 600hp (SC & SW) and 900hp (NC&NW) versions. Demonstrator models were sent out to prospective buyers and often these demos were purchased and usually this resulted in orders for additional units. An early example of these demo switchers are SP 1000, WP 501 and UP DS1000. Fortunately all three of these early demos have been preserved in railroad museums.

In 1941 EMC became EMD, Electro-Motive Division of General Motors, EMC built a two engine transfer locomotive for the Illinois Central, later EMD came upon the idea of a stock diesel switcher with a cabless booster unit for transfer service. The semi-permanently coupled set was designated TR. The sets were soon nicknamed "cow and calf."

EMD switcher production was halted by the War Production Board during WWII in favor of EMD building the 5400hp FT freight locomotive. Switcher production was left to Alco and Baldwin. After the war ended EMD resumed building switchers including 36 sets of TR2s in addition to SW1s and NW2s. EMD also built a two booster unit for the C&O, the only railroad to order this consist. They soon became known as a "herd."

In 1951, the 1200hp SW7 was available with a booster unit called TR4 followed by the SW9 designated TR5. (Union Pacific had TR5s.) EMD also produced an 800hp switcher, a SW8. This model was also available as a cow and calf combination known as a TR6. Only 12 TR6 sets were built, four for the Southern Pacific and eight for the Oliver Mining Co.

A TR6, 1600hp demonstrator set was built in 1951 and sent out to the Southern Pacific for trials on Nevada branch lines. SP had been using the 1500/1600hp Baldwin road switchers on its branch lines, but it was determined that the TR6 developed 20% more pulling power and was easier on the light rail. SP purchased the pair on April 25, 1951. Three more sets were ordered for November delivery.

EMD 1600 and 1600B were moved to Sacramento where their numbers were changed to 4600 and 4700. The two tone red demonstrator paint scheme was retained with Southern Pacific replacing Electro-Motive on the hood. Two days later the unit was transferred to the NWP. In November 1951 units 4601-4603 and 4701-4703 were also transferred to the NWP. Later the 4600 and 4700 were repainted in the standard black with orange



Our newest locomotive rests quietly shortly after arrival at the museum.

Photo - David Epling

tiger stripes and silver ends to match the other TR6s. While the 4600 was on the NWP in Eureka it was given the name, "Little Lulu" after a comic strip character, a name it retains today.

In April 1953, the units were returned to the SP, the solid drawbars were removed and replaced with standard couplers. Nos. 4600-4603 were transferred to the Pacific Electric while 4700-4703 were assigned to the Roseville hump yard. No 4600 was renumbered 1100 in 1972 and continued to be used in Southern California. SP's SW9s were being sold off rapidly after 1977 and by March, 1979, all of the TR6Bs were off the roster and scrapped. No. 1100 was sent to Sacramento in 1980 to replace No. 1004, a SW1, as the shop switcher in SP's General Shops. It survived in this use while all the other 800hp units were sold or scrapped.

In 1985 Southern Pacific wanted to abandon the 23-mile branch from Wendel to Susanville. This would leave Sierra Pacific Industries mill at Susanville without rail service. A deal was struck where SPI would lease and operate the branch as an extension of its Quincy Railroad. Motive Power for the line was to be none other than our Little Lulu. No. 1100 was purchased by SPI for \$14,000 and served the mill until it was supplemented by a SW7, No. 12, transferred from their closed Amador Central Railroad. No. 1100 stayed on as a standby unit and saw occasional service.

Due to a continuing lack of National Forest Service tim-

ber sales, Sierra Pacific Industries closed their Susanville mill March 28, 2004. The last use of No. 1100 was on April 29, 2004. After the last of the milled lumber was shipped out on June 24, 2004, both No. 12 and No. 1100 were out of a job. Realizing the historical significance of No. 1100, our museum immediately began negotiations with SPI to obtain a donation of the unit. The donation request was granted and on December 2004, No. 1100 and No. 12 were moved to Portola. No. 12 will be stored at the museum pending further use by SPI.

Both units are in excellent condition and have good paint. It is expected to use No. 1100 in our Run-A-Locomotive program. The only drawback is that it has dual controls, left over from its as built design, which makes for a crowded cab area. We wish to thank SPI and UP for their cooperation in preserving this historic locomotive.

Builder: Electro-Motive Division of General Motors

Type: TR6

Build date, serial No. November 1950, #13549,

Engine: 8V, 567BC, 800hp

Weight: 206,870

Source material:

Hayden, Bob, Model Railroader Cyclopedia Vol. 2, Milwaukee WI, Kalmbach Books, 1980

Pinkepank, Jerry A. The Second Diesel Spotters Guide, Milwaukee WI, Kalmbach Books, 1973

Stindt, Fred A., The North Western Pacific Railroad Vol. 2, Kelseyville CA 1985

Strapac, Joseph A., Southern Pacific Review, Huntington Beach CA, Shade Tree Books, 1977

CZ “Silver Lodge” Purchased

Built by the Budd Company during February-May 1948 under lot number 9656-021 for the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy as number 4717, Vista-Dome chair car.

The Vista-Dome chair car, also called a dome coach, was the hallmark and most prominent feature of the California Zephyr. Each car featured forty-six reserved seats on the main level and an additional twenty-four unreserved seats in the dome level. Unlike many other trains, the dome seating in the forward cars was open to everyone and would remain so for the entire life of the CZ. Typically, three dome coaches were placed in each train and located directly behind the baggage car or, in later years, a flat top coach.

Three separate varieties of the dome coach were built: a “Women’s and Children’s” car where the smaller forward section (segregated from the rest of the car by a door) was reserved for women traveling with small children, the “Conductor’s Coach” featuring a small office for the train conductor, and the standard car with no special features.

The “Silver Lodge” was built as one of the “Women’s and Children’s” Cars and, like its siblings, lost its doorway and special reserved section in mid-1950. After the end of the CZ, the “Lodge” was conveyed to Amtrak for its long-distance trains. After retirement from Amtrak services, the car was purchased by Denver Railcar and entered lease and charter service on a number of operations. These included a stint in Alaska from 1984-86 and tourist service in Mexico in 2000-01. When Denver Railcar decided to sell off its large stock of cars, the FRRS acquired the

“Lodge”, which still retains much of its original features and architecture.

FRRS efforts to obtain the “Lodge” began in late summer 2004 and approval to acquire the car was finalized in November. It is currently planned to have the car moved to Portola by early Spring 2005. Documentation and clean-up work will commence shortly after.

Work is continuing on the Silver Hostel. While some clean-up work will be done on the Lodge, and major work on the car will be done in conjunction with similar work on the Hostel. For example: plans are being made to reupholster all dome and chair seats in both cars, once fabric type and color are finalized and suitable materials located.

Now that we have taken this step, we need help from all of you. Restoring such sophisticated passenger cars is an expensive and time-consuming labor of love. We need help to return these two cars, as well as our CZ locomotive WP 805-A, to full operation.

If you would like to volunteer your time for work crews, please contact me off-list and provide your name, e-mail, phone number as well as any relevant, special skills you have (ie: electrician, metal work, etc.). We do have lodging in Portola for volunteers and can help coordinate carpools to reach the museum.

We also need FUNDS. The Silver Hostel is expected to need \$250,000 or more before its restoration is done. The Silver Lodge will likely take around \$100,000 for a complete restoration. If you would like to donate to the Zephyr Project, please send your check to FRRS Zephyr Project, P O Box 608, Portola, CA, 96122. You can also donate securely, on-line at www.ZephyrProject.com . Click the “Make a Donation” button located at the bottom of the page.

And we need INFORMATION. Any photos of the interior of the dome-coaches, but particularly COLOR images are needed from the 1950-52 time frame. Also, we need interior photos of the dome-lounge-dormitory cars following 1963, following the introduction of the Cable Car Room. If you know of any fabric or carpet samples from these cars, please contact me off-list.

Finally, if you have any questions about the Silver Lodge, the Hostel or the Zephyr Project, please contact me at evicknair@studiod.com.

WPRRHS Convention

**scheduled for April 15-16 2005 at the Tracy,
CA Holiday Inn.**

Registrations will go out the end of January. Both by email and snail mail. If you don’t receive anything by the middle of February this year, please contact Steve Hayes as we are trying to figure out why some are not getting contacted each year!

Jeff Asay will be the guest speaker at the dinner.

Editors’ note: This is all of the information that was provided to me. For further information such as pricing or planned activities contact Steve Hayes at P.O. Box 1083, Soulsbyville CA, 209-536-1847 or email wprrhsconvention@wplives.org .