

A Big, Long Cadillac...

Our "CADILLAC," SP 4404 SD9E, finally arrived in Portola December 17, 1991. It left LMC'S Richmond yard on November 14 via a special move by Santa Fe to their Richmond yard. It was supposed to go to Stockton that evening, but after hooking it up to the road units, a problem was found in that the brakes on the front truck would not release. The unit was set back to the engine storage tracks to await repair. Wayne Monger and Vic Neves checked the air system and thought they discovered the problem. Norm Holmes was called and asked to bring a J-1 brake valve part to Richmond. Norm and Vic changed the valve, but the problem persisted. On Norm's return to Portola a stop was made in Roseville to discuss the problem with SP mechanical people. No ready solution was available. Norm made another trip to Richmond and again stopped at Roseville to talk to an air expert. A possible solution was suggested to change the control valve. Norm also contacted Dick Hurlbert, an electrician for SP, who found two other air experts who had suggestions. Norm changed valves and made air tests, all to no avail. The source of the air to the front truck was discovered, but the cause was not apparent until discussing it with one of the experts. The air gauges on the locomotive were missing so the copper lines were crimped over to stop air leaks, except two which were hooked together. This connection allowed air to reach the truck and not release. Vic disconnected and plugged the lines and a successful air test was completed. Vic again contacted the Santa Fe that the unit was ready to go and they promptly moved it to Stockton that evening, November 25, 1991.

At Stockton 4404 was placed on the rip track and "lost." A week later Wayne received a call from Santa Fe in Chicago at 5:30 AM wanting to know what to do with the unit! It arrived in the UP yard December 5, 1991. The UP placed it on the rip track... You guessed it, it remained there until December 16 when it was finally placed in the STSC for movement to Portola.

Even though it took a long time to move the unit about 275 miles, it arrived safe and sound and we really appreciate the free transportation from the Santa Fe and Union Pacific. Upon its arrival in Portola, Gordon and Norm switched the unit into the diesel house and started charging the batteries. Although the unit is a long way from running, the battery set looks good and must be kept charged to prevent the electrolyte from freezing and breaking the battery cases.

At the December Board of Directors meeting President Norm Holmes presented a deal to the Board: if the FRRS would purchase the two ALCO/GE MRS-1 units now at Portola for Norm's cost, he would donate the SP SD9E No. 4404 and all the salvaged parts to be saved from the two MRS units that went to LMC including all 12 traction motors. Transportation costs of the two units from Concord to Portola and costs to bring the parts from Richmond were to be paid by FRRS. The value of the SD9E is estimated to be \$30,000. This offer was accepted by the board as a bargain as the SD9E is a valuable addition to our collection and the MRS units can be used for parts, operated, traded or sold.

Some Cadillac History...

Southern Pacific started a unit upgrading in 1973. Our 4404 was completed September 15, 1975. In addition to plumbing and electrical work, the main spotting feature of the upgrade was the addition of a Farr air filter located in a Saddle Style box located behind the cab and forward of the dynamic brakes.

No. 4404 came to Southern Pacific in April, 1955, as No. 5428, one of 149 SD9'S purchased between March, 1954

and May, 1956. It carried EMD No. 20206 and had its builders plate until recently. It sure would be nice to have the plates returned! Some SD9'S were equipped with steam boilers, 5428 was not. In the system renumbering, 5428 became 3906. If anyone has photos of 5428, 3906 or 4404 in service we would appreciate receiving a copy. 4404 was assigned to Eugene as the maintenance base. Our 4404 is our second longest and second heaviest unit, only Centennial 6946 is larger.

