

# A New Arrival! WP 4408



By Norman Holmes

A long sought after WP gondola car finally became part of our collection of ex WP equipment. On April 6, 2005, WP 4408 arrived in Portola billed to the FRRS, a gift from the Union Pacific.

In 1953 WP purchased 100 29 foot gondola cars from Greenville Steel Car Co. to haul rolls of sheet steel from Geneva, Utah to Pittsburg, California. Delivery to USS was via D&RGW and WP then transferred to the Sacramento Northern at Sacramento. These cars were the first roller bearing cars purchased by the WP and among the first industry wide. They were numbered 6401-6500. In the late 1970's, early 1980's 25 of these cars were rebuilt and numbered 4401-4425.

I first made a request for one of these unique cars in November 1993. At that time there were eleven of these cars remaining and all were in storage at Dupo, Illinois. After several more inquires Mr. A. I. Shoener agreed to the request "if any suit-

able equipment is available." Then because of a gondola car shortage they were all placed back in service. They quickly became a favorite of the MW department because of their low sides and short length. They were frequently used to haul tie plates and ties. As time went on their numbers were reduced as the cars required repairs they would be sold for scrap instead of being repaired. We even tried to purchase one but to no avail.

Finally as the number of cars dwindled to four, Rod McClure contacted the car department in Omaha and supported by the letter from Mr. Schoener, car number 4422 was donated to our organization. As fate would it though the car was involved in a derailment in Oregon on its way to Portola and scrapped on site. Car number 4408 was then substituted and finally made it to Portola despite several attempts by MW personnel to snag it on it's way.

The car will be restored to its original number, WP 6424, with a shiny black paint job and the Timkin Roller Bearing decal on its side as originally delivered.

