

# SAN FRANCISCO

# Railroad Fair

**T**he Great San Francisco Railroad Fair opened its doors to the public on April 15, 1987, allowing the general public a rare look at western railroading as it used to be. Hosted by the California State Railroad Museum, the fair took place on the tracks of the San Francisco Belt Railroad along the Embarcadero and featured everything from a Sacramento Northern Birney Safety Car to E9A units from two different railroads. In between were exhibits from Project 2472, The Western Railroad Museum, Big Trees & Pacific and Amtrak.



Above: SP hostlers were kind enough to arrange cowl unit visitors to Oakland's diesel servicing facility for photographs on April 12, 1987. The four units were in Oakland on their way to the San Francisco Railroad Fair. *Jon Pullman Porter*  
At right: Looking like a modern-day mixed train, SP Extra 6051 West storms through Warm Springs on its way to San Francisco along the single track Milpitas line on Tuesday, April 14. Tucked in behind ex-SP E9A 6051 is Santa Fe SDFP45 5998, UP E9A 951, Amtrak F40PH 240 and ex-WP F7A 913.  
*Ken Rattenne*







**Three examples of the locomotives that define the diesel era: Southern Pacific E9A 6051, Western Pacific F7A 913A and Union Pacific E9A 951. These three locomotives were the stars of the show at the San Francisco Railroad Fair, held there between April 15 and 19, 1987.**

*Ken Rattenne*

While events concerning the collection of equipment for movement to San Francisco are described in this month's Amtrak column, a brief look at the various displays will show the diversity that fair-goers enjoyed. The major participating railroads were Amtrak, Southern Pacific, Union Pacific, Santa Fe and CalTrans. Though not involved in any display, the San Francisco Belt Railroad was a big participant, being responsible for moving and spotting the equipment at the display site near Pier 23. The use of Alco S-2 number 25 to ferry the exhibits from SP's 4th Street Coach Yard to the waterfront added a touch of class to the whole affair.

Participants included the California State Railroad Museum (sponsor of the event), which brought Southern Pacific E9A 6051, Western Pacific F7A 913 and V&T steam engine *J.W. Bowker*; the Pacific Locomotive Association, which displayed 1913 Porter-built 0-4-0 tank engine number 3; Project 2472, displaying Sacramento Northern caboose 1632 and private car *Virginia City*; The Western Railway Museum, with their SN trolley

number 62; Amtrak and CalTrans, with a combined display train consisting of F40PH 240 along with Superliners 32052, 38008, 34030, 39917 and CalTrans coach 3847; Santa Fe, who showed off shiny SDFP45 5998 and a TOFC trailer; Union Pacific, which sent out their queen-of-the-fleet, E9A 951, along with baggage-display car 5714; Southern Pacific, which showed off two freight cars; and the San Francisco Municipal Railway, displaying their vintage street car 578.

Other participants had booths with promotional material, including the Operation Lifesaver Committee and Roaring Camp & Big Trees. Amtrak spokesman Arthur Lloyd, who was chairman of the California Operation Lifesaver committee, estimated that between 8,000 and 10,000 people attended the fair each day. Mr. Lloyd also coordinated the fair in relation to the scheduled Operation Lifesaver Special, keeping deadhead expenses to a minimum for railroads participating in both events.

For San Francisco, the fair represented the largest gathering of carbody units in

one place since the days of SP streamliners. It was the first time a WP F-unit had been in The City since the original *California Zephyr* was christened on the Belt Railway in March of 1949 and it was also the first time such a diverse gathering of locomotives had been on display since the July 4, 1976 weekend.

On Easter Sunday, April 19, the fair closed and all participants packed up their exhibits and prepared to return home. The Belt Railway went back to work, assembling the various carbody and cowl units for the Operation Lifesaver Special, slated for a Tuesday departure. It was fun, and hopefully the California State Railroad Museum will see fit to do it again. Real soon!