

We originally hadn't planned on going to see UP #844 pull the Denver Post Frontier Days Special but the closer we got to the date we decided we wanted to go. It was just Jim and I since Perry had prior family commitments.

If you don't already know, I really like knowing the history of locomotives as in who has all owned them, what numbers they've had and any type of a rebuilding. That being said, if I was able to find anything of interest I included it in this writing. You will find this information inside () and **bolded** to make it easier if you would like to skip it.

We left Thursday and stopped at a park in Blair, NE by the tracks for lunch. We were hoping to see some train activity while there but the UP didn't produce anything so instead of leaving "empty handed" I decided to take a picture of the UP's **(Former C&NW's)** bridge over the Missouri River without a train as it is an impressive bridge all



by itself. **Picture is looking to the east.** It's hard to tell by looking at the picture but it was very hot here, temps were approaching or a little over 100° F as we continued west.



We drove US Highway 30 following the UP mainline west and did see a few trains while driving but didn't stop very often as we needed to keep driving and photo opportunities weren't great where we did see trains. Seeing a headlight ahead of us, I did stop at a grade crossing west of Silver Creek, NE for this westbound auto rack and intermodal train led by UP #7765 **(C45ACCTE built 9/2007)** with an unidentified **(#48?? built 3/02-12/2002)** SD70M trailing and UP

#8043 **(C45ACCTE built 9/2012)** on the rear of the train as the DPU. We didn't have to wait here long as they were really moving!

We hit the road west again and after a quick Dairy Queen stop in Central City, NE **(this has become a traditional stop on our way west over the years)** we got to see something other than yellow on the UP mainline. Here we see Nebraska Central **(NCRC)** SD40-2's #6330 **(built 1/1971)** and #6326 **(built 1/1971)** westbound with 3 cars west of Central City, NE heading to North Platte.



(A couple notes, NCRC #6330 built as Penn Central SD40 #6274, became Conrail #6274, Chicago Rail Link #610 lastly Helm Leasing #5024. NCRC #6326 was built as Penn Central SD40 #6277, it became Conrail #6277, Chicago Rail Link #602 then Helm Leasing #5017.)



After catching up to the Nebraska Central train and pacing them for a bit, we continued on our way again deciding to stop in Elm Creek, NE to stretch for about 20 minutes. We picked a great time as we ended up seeing 3 trains in that short time! The first train was lead by UP #6440 (**C44AC built 10/2000**) and UP #5818 (**C45ACCTE built 2/2002**) with an eastbound mixed freight.

Next, we saw UP #6495 (**C44AC built 6/2000**) and #4614 (**SD70M built 5/2001**) in charge of a westbound mixed freight.



Lastly before leaving Elm Creek we caught these two UP GE'S, #5645 (**C44ACCTE built 10/2004**) and #7090 (**now a C44ACCTE built 11/1997 as an AC4400**) powering an eastbound loaded coal train. The coal is bound for a power plant on the Ohio River near Joppa, IL.

(From what I've been able to find,

UP has been converting its older C44AC's or AC4400CW's to C44ACCTE's by changing the wheel slip software and some other components then restencilling them as C44ACCTE's but keeping the same road number.)

With it getting later, we continued west stopping in Lexington, NE for supper and then continued on to North Platte, NE where we stayed for the night.

The next day, Friday, we started west again. After checking out Bailey Yard for a few minutes and then the newly completed highway overpass on the west end of the yard, which looks like it could be a promising spot for photos, we continued west. The UP was extremely quiet so we jumped onto Interstate 80 to gain some time and miles.

We rejoined the UP and US 30 at Chappell, NE catching this eastbound doublestack just west of Lodgepole, NE with UP #7679 (**C45ACCTE built 5/2007**) leading with CSX #5439 (**ES44DC built 2/2007**) and UP #5733 (**C44ACCTE built 2/2001**) assisting. This train did have a UP GE as a DPU on the rear of the train but I wasn't able to get the road number or locomotive type.





Back on the road again, we arrived at Sidney, NE. This is a spot that I really enjoy stopping as the UP has a yard there which sometimes has some interesting freight equipment to photograph. There's usually one or a couple power sets sitting on the edge of the yard within camera range too. Today was no disappointment, we came across not one but two sets of newly rebuilt SD40N's! Here UP #1643 (ex UP #3672 built 1/1980, rebuilt 9/2011) and #1601 (ex UP #3369 built

3/1977, rebuilt 1/2011) are waiting for their next assignment at Sidney, NE.

What's better than two SD40 models? I would say four! Still at Sidney we saw UP SD40N's #1601 (ex UP #3369 built 3/1977, rebuilt 1/2011), #1820 (No history available), #1643 (ex UP #3672 built 1/1980, rebuilt 9/2011) and #1645 (ex UP #3746 built 2/1980, rebuilt 10/2011) all waiting to get to work on a hot Friday morning. I couldn't help but take lots of pictures of these units. It seems to be getting more and more difficult to see these together in multiples!



UP #1601 was coupled to UP #1820.



UP #1643 was coupled to UP #1645.

Utility poles made decent photos tough but you can see the rear details here.



Note, SD40N's are SD40-2's that UP has rebuilt/reconditioned and therefore reclassified as an SD40N.

UP is also using this rebuild program on some GP15's, GP38-2's, GP40-2's and MP15AC's. An article explaining more specifics about this "N" rebuilding program is in the Union Pacific Streamliner Magazine, Volume 30, Number 3. It's nice to see some of these older units especially knowing that they will continue to stick around longer now with being rebuilt!

We continued west yet again meeting up with a couple friends in Cheyenne, WY for a little while. From there we went south to Greeley, CO to check out the Colorado Model Railroad Museum in Greeley. Neither Jim or I had been there but were told if ever in the area to check it out. Well, we were and we did and it was definitely worth it! If you are ever in the Greeley area be sure to stop in and check it out but make sure to have a couple hours to spend. There's a lot of memorabilia, signs and a huge layout to try to take in as well as a real caboose inside the building too!



The large layout is all complete with scenery and done extremely well!



The layout also features some very impressive trestles too!



Outside the museum, we found a shady spot next to the UP mainline. It wasn't long and an empty Soda Ash train came through with three units on the point and no DPU. Lead by UP #6893 (now a C44/60AC built 11/1996 as UP #7505 a true C60AC,

renumbered to 7005 and converted to an AC4400, to UP 6893 series 11/2009), UP #5703 (C44ACCTE built 3/2001) and UP #9000 (a brand new SD70AH built ??/2016) the train is northbound as they pass the Museum in Greeley, CO.



With it getting later, we decided to get checked in at the motel and get supper. After eating we drove down the road to La Salle, CO to check out spots to photograph the steam train the next day.



We stopped at the UP yard and found UP #4360 (**SD70M built 4/2001**), UP #1349 (**GP40-2 built 11/1974 as D&RGW #3128**), UP #1425 (**GP40-2 built 3/1980 as SP #7674**), UP #4947 (**SD70M built 5/2002**) along with some other unidentified UP units sitting at La Salle, CO.



It's Saturday morning and we are back in La Salle, CO south of the UP yard. This is the first spot that we caught the Denver Post Cheyenne Frontier Days Special. It was great to hear #844's whistle again and watch and listen as the train came into town. The train wasn't going very fast as they had a scheduled stop in Greeley, CO not far

up the track. This made it even better and allowed for more pictures. I also took a video at this location too. [Click here to watch video.](#)

Behind UP #844 was the auxiliary water tender #809 "Jim Adams" and UP #1989 (**SD70ACe built 5/2006**) the "Rio Grande Heritage Unit". The train is approaching the UP yard in La Salle, CO.



After the train was past we drove out to catch Interstate 25 North figuring that it would be easier to get around the train and catch them south of Speer. We figured that this would be the only other spot that we could catch the train before they arrived in Cheyenne, WY. With the train making good time, some road construction and traffic being a bit heavy, this turned out to be a good move.



We did catch the train again just off of Terry Ranch Road, south of Speer/Cheyenne, WY. You can see that they had a pretty long train in all. The total car count was 22 passenger cars and an auxiliary water tender.

From here we continued north a bit up to Speer to get into position for pictures as they turned the train using the wye at Speer. Turning of the train took place after they arrived in Cheyenne, WY to let all of the passengers detrain.

The area around Speer has been built up with a number of new industries and commercial properties over the last few years. On our way to the wye, we came across these two units sitting outside an industry with a train. The Wisconsin & Southern unit is what really caught my attention with it being this far west! **Some info about these units; WAMX is ex KCS 625(SD40), SOO 625(SD40), SOO 6403(SD40), CP 6403(SD40), GCFX 3094(SD40-2), CITX 3094(SD40-2). WSOR #4050 is ex MP 3281(SD40-2), UP #4281 (SD40-2), UP #B4281(SD40-2B) (The UP redesignated some SD40-2's in the early 1990's to trailing only status by removing control stands and other cab components and adding a "B" to the locomotive road number, #B4281 for example. All units were converted back to standard status in the mid 1990's.)**



We got to Speer and had lunch while we waited for #844 to come back to be turned on the wye. While we waited and ate, UP did provide some entertainment! UP #5693 (**C44ACCTE built 12/2004**) and UP #6959 (**now a C44/60AC built 1/2001 as UP #7570 a true C60AC, renumbered to 6900 series and converted to an AC4400 3/2010**) are westbound with a solid train of covered hopper cars. UP #7954 (**C45ACCTE built 5/2012**) was on the rear of the train as the DPU.

Not long after that westbound cleared, another train arrived, this time a loaded coal train heading toward Denver, CO. UP #5411 (**C45ACCTE built 3/2005**), UP #5388 (**C45ACCTE built 2/2005**) and UP #5715 (**C44ACCTE built 1/2002**) are westbound with a loaded coal train bound for Colorado Springs Department of Electric Generation.



With three units on the point of this train it was a bit surprising to see two units on the rear as the DPU but UP #7243 (**C44AC built 8/1999**) and UP #6229 (**C44AC built 5/1995 as SP #181**) are the two DPU locomotives. It seems that any units in Southern Pacific paint are becoming more and more scarce. Though it is patched for UP, the Southern Pacific paint is still holding up quite well for all the years of exposure to the elements.

A little while after the coal train came past, the steam train came into sight. With such a long train and some grades involved, the UP used two diesels to help pull the train out to Speer. UP #7143 (**C44AC built 4/1999**) and UP #4950 (**SD70M built 6/2002**) are helping pull the steam train past the water tank at Speer. This water tank has seen a lot of trains go by during its lifetime, passenger, freight, big steam, big diesel, turbines, lots of great UP power!



UP #844 and UP #1989 help turn the train backing past the water tank at Speer. Trips like these are the only taste of steam this old water tank gets anymore. A shot of days long gone, well without the SD70ACe anyway!

UP added to the excitement to turning the train on the wye by sending a westbound doublestack up Sherman Hill. UP #6832 (C44AC built 6/1996), UP #4105 (SD70M built 10/2000) and UP #8079 (C45AH built ??/????) have started their climb up Sherman Hill with a westbound doublestack while UP #844 brings its train around the second leg of the wye at Speer. The sound of camera shutters were constant as the crew brought the "Northern" past our group of photographers. It was pretty awesome to be able to take in all of the sights and sounds as #844 slowly went past.



Side rods down and flags flying in the wind, UP #844 works her way around the second leg of the wye at Speer. There were a number of people that came to Speer to watch and photograph the train.

Not wanting to be left out, BNSF got in on the action too. After the passenger train cleared the switch, the BNSF local powered by BNSF #6536 (ES44C4 built 11/2012) and BNSF #7274 (ES44DC built 4/2009) came by on their way to switch some of the new industries at Speer outside of Cheyenne, WY.



The train, now turned around, works its way back east/northeast to Cheyenne and past the water tank at Speer. The diesels will help the train back to the UP depot in Cheyenne and then be cut off the train. The Northern and the train would be on display for an hour or so before loading the passengers for the return trip to Denver, CO.

With the train gone, everyone had cleared out so I was able to play around with my camera a bit.

With the train on its way back to Cheyenne, we loaded up and headed south debating where we wanted to photograph the train as it made its way back to Denver.



We ended up very close to the last spot that we photographed the train on its trip north, south of Speer just off of Terry Ranch Road. It clouded up quickly just before the train came but the actual rain managed to hold off while we were here. The train left on time and was not wasting anytime as they went by here.

After the train went by, we made tracks to I 25 and headed south hoping to get around the train to get some photos. The train had a scheduled stop again in Greeley, CO so we figured that would help us get around the train.

We found a pretty nice spot south of Platteville, CO which is south of Greeley and got set up and waited. We again didn't have to wait very long and the train came into view.



Same spot, still south of Platteville, CO, the train passed and I snapped some pictures of the end of the train. A fitting shot to signify the end of the day Saturday. We returned to Greeley for food and some rest to get ready for Sunday.

Sunday came and #844 would be bringing the train back to Cheyenne leaving Denver around noon mountain time. With the morning open, I wanted to drive south to Denver and check out Caboose Hobbies to see if they had anything I needed for my collection. I had never been there but had always wanted to go and with them closing I figured it was now or never. We left the hobby store and headed north to find a spot for pictures again.

The train left Denver late and while we were waiting in Brighton, CO a southbound empty coal train came through with UP #5992 (**C44ACCTE built 10/2003**), UP #6561 (**C44ACCTE built 3/1997**) and UP #6842 (**C44ACCTE built 10/1995**). I didn't get the reporting marks on this train so I'm unsure of it's owner/destination. I'm also unsure of whether this train had a DPU on the rear. I guess I was too focused on deciding whether we should stay here for #844 or if we should go farther north.



We decided to go a bit farther north, we actually ended up south of Platteville, CO in the same spot that we ended the chase the day before. The train and crew were moving right along and looked great in the afternoon sunshine!

UP #1989 (**SD70ACe built 5/2006**) the Rio Grande Heritage unit is trailing UP #844 at Platteville, CO. The duo are returning the equipment used for the Denver Post Cheyenne Frontier Days train back to Cheyenne.



We figured that this would be the last spot that we would see the train but they slowed down as they neared La Salle, CO so we were able to catch it on the north side of La Salle.

We continued north and waited for the train at Ault, CO for about a half hour but it was getting to be mid afternoon and with the train leaving Denver late we couldn't spend anymore time waiting and had to start our return trip east. As much as I wanted to catch the train one last time, I knew it would be well after 10 PM by the time we would get to our motel in Kearney, NE.

It never fails, you always see something worth a photo when it's getting dark or you don't have time to stop. Well, it was no exception east of Brady when we saw an eastbound mixed freight with new EMDX #1503 (a Tier 4 SD70ACe) in a new EMD Demo paint scheme mixed into a set of UP locomotives. A photo of it wasn't meant to be I guess. Sunday was a very long day but we made it to Kearney, NE and called it a day.

Monday morning and we hit the road before 7 so we could stop a few places for pictures. We didn't even make it out of Kearney without stopping for a couple pictures.



UP #506 (GP38N built 4/1974 as UP GP38-2 #2006. UP #506 has been newly rebuilt and was just painted 5/2/16.) sits ready to start another busy Monday. Actually the crew was getting ready to go when I was taking these pictures. Kearney, NE.

UP #832 (GP38-2 built 7/1981 as MP #2332, renumbered UP #2332).

GP38-2 sets like this are a common sight along the UP mainline in Nebraska for powering locals.



Leaving the local to start the day, we left Kearney and started east taking US 30. The railroad was pretty quiet, we only saw a couple westbounds as we drove.

We stopped at Columbus, NE and checked out the UP yard. There was some power there but it was buried in the yard so pictures weren't possible. It was possible though to get a picture of UP Caboose #25851 (CA-11 built 6/1979). It almost appeared to be posed beneath the Antiques sign on purpose! UP still does use some cabooses around the system as shoving platforms. These give a safe platform for the conductor/brakeman to stand when making long reverse moves instead of hanging on a car ladder.



Not far east of Columbus, we noticed UP had a large concrete tie replacement project underway. Crews had been busy setting out new concrete ties along both tracks. We continued east and arrived at Fremont, NE at lunch time so we sat and ate down by the UP/BNSF diamond. Right away, we saw UP #5553 (ES44AC) C45ACCTE built 7/2005) with a MOW tie train full of new concrete ties being unloaded.





The UP local was working the Fremont area too. UP #519 (Now a GP38N built as a GP38-2 4/1974 as UP #2019) has a short string of cars to interchange with the adjacent BNSF yard. UP #519 is another GP38N, completed in January 2016.

BNSF got in on the action too. BNSF #4041 (C44-9W built 8/2003) and BNSF #611 (AC44C4M built 2/1994 as ATSF C44-9W #611) are eastbound with a mixed freight crossing the UP/BNSF diamond at Fremont, NE.



BNSF has a few different rebuild programs going on too. With one of the programs BNSF has taken a handful of ex ATSF C44-9W's that had been stored and with help from GE have rebuilt them into an AC locomotive designating them as AC44C4M's. It has yet to be determined whether money can be saved by rebuilding these older

locomotives with new technologies versus buying brand new locomotives.



Not seeing any trains after leaving Fremont we found ourselves in Missouri Valley, IA. We drove into town to see if there were any locomotives sitting in the UP yard. Well, as you can see there were a few to say the least. Not being able to get a real good look, we estimated 60-70 locomotives sitting stored here. From what I could see they were all DC locomotives, C41-8W's,

C44-9W's and SD60M's. Units visible in this shot on the west end of the yard include; UP #9762 (C44-9W built 8/1994), UP #9502 (C41-8W built 9/1993), UP #9762 (C44-9W built 1/1994 as C&NW #8658), UP #9705 (C44-9W built 7/1994), UP #2341 (SD60M built 7/1989 as UP #6194).

Units visible in this shot still on the west end of the yard include; UP #9705 (C44-9W built 7/1994), UP #2341 (SD60M built 7/1989 as UP #6194), UP #9799 (C44-9W built 4/1994 as C&NW #8695), UP #2337 (SD60M built 6/1988 as UP #6082), UP #9377 (C41-8CW built 2/1990).



As we left town, I noticed this newly refurbished UP caboose. UP #25734 (CA-10 built 9/1975) sits on display on the west end of Missouri Valley, IA. I couldn't find any information other than the build date for this caboose.

What better way to end this write up about a train trip along the Union Pacific than a parting shot of a Union Pacific caboose!

I hope you enjoyed reading about our trip as much as Jim and I enjoyed it first hand!



For those of you that may be interested in the equipment used to make up the Frontier Days Special, I did take pictures to show the cars that were in the train. Photos are in order as they appeared in the train, front to back.

UP FEF-3
"Northern"
UP #844



UP "Jim Adams"
Water Tender
UPP #809



UP "Rio Grande Heritage"
SD70ACe
UP #1989



UP "Art Lockman"
Baggage Car/Tool Car
UPP #6334



UP "Howard Fogg"
Power Car/Dormitory Car
UPP #209



UP (Car Is Not Named)
Power Car
UPP #2066



UP "Feather River"
Observation Car
UPP #114



UP "St. Louis"
Observation Car
UPP #102



UP "Harriman"
Dome/Lounge Car
UPP #9004



UP "Lone Star"
Observation Car
UPP #101



UP "Missouri River Eagle"
Dome/Lounge Car
UPP #7011



UP "City of Denver"
Dining Car
UPP #5011



UP "City of Salina"
Coach Car
UPP #5486



UP "Portland Rose"
Coach Car
UPP #5473



UP "Sunshine Special"
Coach Car
UPP #5480



UP "Challenger"
Dome/Coach
UPP #7015



UP (Car Is Not Named)
Baggage Car
UPP #5769
(Formerly Council Bluffs)



UP "Katy Flyer"
Coach Car
UPP #5468



UP "Texas Eagle"
Coach Car
UPP #5483



UP "Columbine"
Dome/Coach Car
UPP #7001



UP "City of Portland"
Dome/Diner Car
UPP #8008



UP (Car Is Not Named)
Power Car
UPP #208



UP "Walter Dean"
Dome/Lounge Car
UPP #9005



UP "City of San Francisco"
Dome/Lounge/Observation
UPP #9009



UP "Cheyenne"
Observation Car
UPP #103



**2016
Denver Post
Cheyenne Frontier Days
Passenger Special**

