

CPR Diesel Locomotive SD 5500



The Revelstoke Division required the most power available in any area of the country, because of its steep terrain and large snowfall. In the steam era, every new locomotive that provided greater power was sent to this division. (i.e.: Revelstoke was the first location to have oil-burning locomotives in place of coal.)

Steam powered the railway until the arrival of diesel power in the 1950's. As with steam, these more powerful units were put into service in Revelstoke. The first diesel locomotives provided a great advance but it was the arrival of Canadian built General Motors SD-40 models in 1965 that finally proved the value of diesel power.

Steam power was a significant part of the development of Canada and when the diesels arrived, they continued that role. The SD-40 model is significant in that this was the second generation of diesel power that would carry the company into the latter part of the twentieth century. The SD-40, and later the SD-40-2 type diesel freight locomotive, was the most common road switcher on Canadian railways from the 1960's into the 1990's. These units accounted for over 5,200 units on North American railways during that period.

In essence, the SD-40's and SD-40-2'S represent the most typical road freight engines on Canadian railways, and certainly for Canadian Pacific over the last 30+ years.



CPR 5500 is significant in that it was the *first* SD-40 model locomotive produced by General Motors Diesel Division in London, Ontario for North America and delivered to the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1965. CPR ordered 32 units that year, (#s 5500 – 5531) and 33 more in 1966, (#s 5532 – 5564).

5500s were one of the most commercially and technically successful diesel locomotives built in North America, referred to by writers as "the standard North American diesel locomotive." The locomotive had 16 cylinders producing 3,000 horsepower, was capable of speeds to 65 miles per hour, and weighed 390,000 pounds. These units were the power behind the coal trains heading from the Rockies to Roberts Bank on the Pacific Ocean. The units were utilized as main locomotives and were utilized as "pushers" at Beavermouth, where units and crews were located, providing additional power to trains ascending the steep mountain grade through the Connaught tunnel to Glacier.

When refurbished to its original maroon & grey with "script" lettering, CPR 5500 will be a prime example of a second-generation diesel locomotive and a living testament to our railway history and heritage.



The Revelstoke Heritage Railway Society sincerely thanks Canadian Pacific Ingenuity for the kind donation of CPR 5500 to the Revelstoke Railway Museum, August 17, 2007.

On Wednesday November 9, 2011, six new heritage pieces of railway equipment were placed in our permanent, outdoor, exhibit area.

The move is the final stage of years of planning to augment current exhibits by adding an early diesel locomotive and era-appropriate rolling stock to present a broader interpretation of our region's railway history. With these exhibits, the museum will be able to represent not only the steam era but also the impact of diesel technology on the development of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The equipment was donated by the Canadian Pacific Heritage Equipment Committee and has waited patiently in the Revelstoke division's K-yard until the track was laid this summer in preparation for its transfer to the museum property.

The diesel locomotive, CPR 5500, is significant in that it was the first SD-40 model locomotive produced by General Motors Diesel Division in London, Ontario for North America and delivered to the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1965. The SD-40 model is significant in that this was the second generation of diesel power that would carry the company into the latter part of the twentieth century. CPR 5500 received Cultural Property Designation on December 15, 2003.



Following the diesel is a robot car, coal car, box car, tanker, and a double track snow plow. As its name suggests, the robot car is a remote control radio sending & receiving unit that housed equipment used to communicate between locomotives in a train consist. The coal car is the first of the 349000 series of steel gondolas to be preserved in a museum setting having been introduced in 1969 and just recently taken out of service. The significance of snow removal on the railway is further illustrated by the double track plow that compliment the single track wedge plow already part of the museum's collection. The newly added equipment is displayed on 136 pound rail laid on concrete ties, another stage of development in railway construction and innovation included in the museum's interpretation of railway history.

The Revelstoke Railway Museum is extremely grateful to many individuals and organizations who have assisted with the project over many years, including CP, the City of Revelstoke, BC Community Gaming, Columbia Basin Trust, the Columbia Kootenay Cultural Alliance, Ed Jaatteenmaki, Dennis Holdener, Downie Mills, museum board members and staff, local contractors and suppliers, and many many volunteers who have put in hundreds of hours of donated time to make this happen.