

# Friends of the 261 takes delivery of former Milwaukee Road E9

By Steve Glischinski | May 30, 2019

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**Friends of the 261 President and Chief Operating Officer Steve Sandberg poses with former Milwaukee Road E9 No. 32A in St. Paul on May 29. Sandberg's grandfather was a Milwaukee Road engineer who operated 32A many times on passenger trains between the Twin Cities and La Crosse, Wis. The unit will make its debut at Union Depot Train Days June 1-2.**

Steve Glischinski

ST. PAUL, Minn. – The Friends of the 261 has taken delivery of former Milwaukee Road E9 No. 32A, ex-Wisconsin & Southern No. 101. The unit was moved by Canadian Pacific from Milwaukee to St. Paul, where the Friends accepted delivery on May 29. The unit will make its debut at Union Depot Trains Days at St. Paul Union Depot June 1-2. It is one of four surviving Milwaukee Road E9s.

The E9 was delivered to the Milwaukee Road by EMD in April 1956 as No. 202A. It was part of six sets of A-B-A E9s to be used on Union Pacific's "Cities" streamliners the Milwaukee began operating between Chicago and Omaha in 1955. All were delivered in UP yellow colors. The numbering sequence for the third set was 202A, 202B, and 202C. In the 1959 Milwaukee Road fleet renumbering the set became 32A, 32B, and 32C. Eventually the units were used on other

Milwaukee Road passenger services, such as the *Olympian Hiawatha* between Chicago and Seattle/Tacoma and the Morning Hiawatha and Afternoon Hiawatha between Chicago and the Twin Cities. In 1971 the unit began service for Amtrak, officially leaving the Milwaukee Road roster in June 1974. Amtrak had the unit rebuilt at the Milwaukee Shops where it lost its side porthole windows and was renumbered 434. It remained on Amtrak's roster until 1982.

It was then sold to the Alaska Railroad where it was renumbered 2402. It toiled in the 49th state until 1986 when it was purchased by Wisconsin's Northern Rail Car Leasing and numbered 10C. Northern Railcar founded Scenic Rail Dining, which between 1987 and 1990 operated a high-end dinner train out of North Milwaukee, Wis., on a portion of the former Milwaukee Road to Horicon, Wis., owned by the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad. In 1988, Northern Rail Car, owned by William Gardner purchased the Wisconsin & Southern. When the dinner train was discontinued in 1990, Wisconsin & Southern retained the unit for its business train. The unit was rebuilt, including restoration of its porthole windows, and eventually renumbered 101 when an E9B was leased from Illinois Railway Museum and rebuilt to operate with No. 10C and Wisconsin & Southern's other E9, No. 10A, a former UP unit.

After Watco acquired Wisconsin & Southern in 2011, it sold the 10A to Iowa Pacific and the E9B was returned to the Illinois Railway Museum. The 10C was retained but saw minimal use. According to the Friends, the railroad hoped to see the locomotive go to a good home. Longtime Friends of the 261 members Robert Schroeder and Mary Walters provided key support for the acquisition.

After Train Days, the Friends plan to repaint No. 32A into the scheme worn by Milwaukee Road F units and E7s in the 1950s. To aid in that effort, the Friends are hosting two events during Train Days. On May 31, they will host a reception to allow supporters to enjoy an up close, one-on-one experience with the Friends of the 261 crew. There will be private guided tours of 32A, and the group will have No. 261 memorabilia for sale to help support the continued operation of the Milwaukee Road 4-8-4. Items for sale include cab rides, Lionel and Broadway Limited models of No. 261, and other 261 memorabilia. The reception will be held from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Tickets to the reception includes two complimentary drink tickets and cost \$32.00 person.

On June 1 the Friends will be host a multiple course gourmet banquet on its cars at Union Depot. This private dinner will include slow poached egg, potato leek soup, Salmon & sorrel troisgras, steak Diane, vegan cassoulet, red wine poached pear, and Washington apple pie. The dinner will run from 6 to 9 p.m. and include two drink tickets. Cost for the dinner is \$148.50 per person.

For tickets and information go to [www.261.com](http://www.261.com).

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