



Historic Locomotive Move in Harrisburg Draws Train Buffs

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The Harrisburg Transportation Center has been home for two pieces of railroading history for nearly three decades. But, that has changed...temporarily. The GG1 Pennsylvania railroad locomotive No. 4859 and the 1920 Pennsylvania Railroad Cabin Car (caboose) are now sitting outside

"We know we're going to take very good care of them here and move them out of the way so that we can do the important work that we need to do here at the transportation center and make sure these pieces of history are preserved," said Amtrak spokesman Craig Shulz.

First to be moved outside was the fully restored caboose, gently tugged from its covered berth by an Amtrak locomotive. Then, it was nudged slowly along the track to a siding less than a thousand feet away.

But it was the GG1 electric locomotive that brought out the train buffs. It was their chance to once again see the wheels of the 4859 in motion. Tom McCurdy was among the train enthusiasts enjoying the move.

"I have a lot of pictures of GG1s," said McCurdy. "And I have downloaded off the Internet a lot of pictures of GG1s. I'm very enthusiastic about the GG1, which is the state locomotive."

Retired railroad baggage handler Bob Weller remembers servicing the 4859 during Harrisburg stops.

"You take the baggage off the cars and make sure it gets to the train it should go to, then on upstairs to the baggage room."

From 1938 to 1981, the GG1 class locomotive was a mainstay of the Pennsylvania Railroad, serving Harrisburg to Philadelphia and New York City. Its working top speed was 100 mph, but for this short journey, Amtrak inspectors were able to keep up with the huge locomotive on foot.

Both the 4859 and the caboose are owned and maintained by the Harrisburg chapter of the National Railway Historical Society.

Chapter president John Smith was not surprised at the turnout to see the famous locomotive moved.

"People came from Philadelphia area, Lancaster, Paoli," he said. "Even Amtrak employees came in on their day off just to be part of the move today."

During its outside stay, the historic locomotive will be shrink-wrapped to protect it from the elements.

source: www.abc27.com