

Omaha/Council Bluffs
October 25th - 26th, 2003

The club left Ames at 6am for an early morning rendezvous in western Iowa. With the luxury of following US30 the entire way to Nebraska, a few trains were caught en route. West of Denison when the light was decent enough for pictures, a full grain train was waiting for the main, complete with a West Central hopper. He was waiting for a couple eastbounds, including UP 8030 and UP7275. After waiting a few minutes between those two trains, the club moved on to the Logan area to meet up with a few local railfanning experts, Kirk and Tim. Now with knowledgeable tour guides, we made the trip down to Council Bluffs. First stop was the ex-IC yard area, complete with coal tower. EMDX 747 was nearby as well. Next stop was the Iowa Interstate facilities where a nice lash-up of IAIS 802 and 800 were found. Before departing for Nebraska, a quick trip to the new Union Pacific Railroad Museum was made. Now that the Iowa side had been scouted out, we moved across the Missouri River to Omaha. First stop was the Amtrak station, where one can see the Durham Western Heritage Center and the pair of UP 4023 and UP 6900 wrapped in fence. Next up was the BNSF yard, which yielded no accessible power. Seeing little hope for catching a BNSF train, we "raced" out of Omaha and headed to Fremont, where the UP and BNSF cross each other. The BNSF did not disappoint, with two trains in a few hours. BNSF 8040 lead a manifest north across the diamond, and BNSF 4801 arriving a little while later in the opposite direction. UP 3082 (with an ex-CNW in the middle) headed west as between the BNSF action. Notable freight included some MKT tanks. The next UP train was UP 2249, an SD60M on a manifest, complete with CSX and lease power. It appears as though the buyout might be near! Before leaving Fremont, BNSF 2215 was spotted at the BNSF depot, complete with an ex-BN GP30 and caboose trailing. Now working back to Iowa, we stumbled upon the BNSF local waiting to cross the river, complete with a rough looking BN caboose. In consist were 5 engines, 3 of which had GP30 cabs-- one with an interestingly-sized BNSF font. After taking one last pass through Council Bluffs, we bid farewell to our gracious tour guides and moved on to Missouri Valley where we stayed overnight.

The next morning brought cirrus clouds and cold air. The club took what was left of the continental breakfast-- chocolate doughnuts and toast-- and headed toward Woodbine. In the span of about 20 minutes, 4 WB trains passed. UP 9773 happened to be the nicest looking of the bunch. The digital also did a nice job of grabbing a roster shot of UP 8010. Realizing it was time to leave pheasant hunting territory, we continued east. The next notable train was UP 3055 west of Denison. The missing number board was a nice touch. The curve near Arcadia produced a nice shot, baring the weather, of a WB coal train led by UP 6643. A trip to western Iowa would not be complete without a stop at Ralston to check out the ex-CNW 4190. Its Transglobal heritage is easy to spot on the nose. A few trains were caught as we proceeded east. None of the trains were out of the ordinary, though a Black Dog coal train was sitting in the siding north of Grand Junction on the Tara Sub (sorry, no picture... too dirty and cloudy to even bother). East of Odgen, UP 4100 was spotted where some new CTC signals are currently being installed. The final train of the trip was on the High Bridge, UP 4274.

Cold, cloudy weather aside, the trip was a success and would not have been possible without the help of Kirk and Tim, who deserve a huge thanks from the club. Look for more pictures in the near future as film is developed.