

Article from the Janesville, Wisconsin Gazette:
(Published Monday, February 26, 2007 11:34:31 AM CST)
By Jim Leute, Gazette staff

Railroad debuts engine fleet that's environment-friendly

If it looks like a locomotive and sounds like a locomotive, it must be a locomotive.

That was definitely a locomotive working the tracks around Janesville's General Motors assembly plant last week.

But it was a state-of-the-art engine designed to reduce emissions of both nitrous oxides and particulate matter by up to 80 percent, while using as much as 16 percent less fuel than to current low-horsepower locomotives.

Union Pacific Railroad is rolling out the new environmentally friendly locomotives as part of its efforts to reduce air emissions in cooperation with federal, state and local agencies.

The new 2,100-horsepower locomotives are called "Generator-Set," or "Genset" switchers. Each is powered by three 700-horsepower ultra-low-emission diesel engines.



Union Pacific Railroad engineers use two new low-emission locomotives as they switch out railroad cars at the General Motors assembly plant in Janesville. With an eye on improving the environment, the railroad is rolling out a fleet of the new diesel engines. Crews tested the locomotives in Janesville for about a week before they moved to California.

Al Hoch/Gazette Staff

Union Pacific began studies and tests of the prototype Genset switcher locomotive in 2002.

The new locomotives will be used to serve customers and sort rail cars for outbound trains and will replace many of the 95 older, low-horsepower locomotives currently being used in Los Angeles Basin rail yards.

Last week, two of the new engines were put through the paces in Janesville before heading for California.

Jim Griffiths, UP's senior manager of terminal operations in Janesville, said local engineers tested the new locomotives for about a week.

"The overwhelming response that I've received is that they work very well," Griffiths said.

A team of technical experts is following the new locomotives from site to site, testing and collecting a variety of technical information, he said.

"These ultra-low emission yard locomotives continue Union Pacific's voluntary efforts to go beyond air quality regulations and are the result of applying research and development of new technology to reduce emissions," Bob Grimaila, UP's vice president, environment and safety, said in a news release.

"Union Pacific is committed to preserving our environment by reducing emissions to help improve air quality and conserve fuel."

Union Pacific links 23 states in the western two-thirds of the country and serves the fastest-growing U.S. population centers. Its diversified business mix includes agricultural products, automotive, chemicals, energy, industrial products and intermodal.