

## B&O Budd Car Update

Former B&O RDCs 1908 and 1910 are ready to come home.

At the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum, their air brakes are in date, CSX has inspected them and cleared them for movement, the paperwork is done and the move paid for.

The three cars (including the former B&M RDC-1 coming north as part of the swap) are on the interchange track in Chattanooga awaiting pick up.

CSX has not advised what the routing will be. It is not particularly easy to get from Chattanooga to Cumberland by rail, and depending on what lanes it follows it could arrive from the east or the west. The most direct route is not always the best or fastest, and as we used to say when I was out there, “It is their railroad.” We should be delighted with CSX’s cooperation and willingness to move these over-60 year old passenger cars on their own wheels.

The plan is for several TVRM folks familiar with the cars to come north for a few days to familiarize WMSR crews with their maintenance and quirks. Both the 1908 and 1910 were in occasional service on TVRM and should be “runners” with a bit of TLC.

Actually operating them will be no trouble at all. WMSR senior staff includes no fewer than five former B&O locomotive engineers, and three of us had experience with the Budd Cars when they were in service. Going uphill at the 20 mph track speed will be no trouble at all. Coming downhill with “straight air” (no automatic train brakes on RDCs) will be a bit more of a challenge, especially on frosty rails. I’ve slid right past passengers on the platform on cold days as the Budd Cars behaved more like hockey pucks than a passenger train.

The cars should arrive in plenty of time to be part of the celebrations marking the formal debut of the 1309 over the weekend of July 5-7, 2019.

Alex Mayes, an exceedingly skilled and generous photographer whose work often appears in railroad heritage publications and online, will be documenting the Budd Car move for WMSR. The railroad would be delighted if Society members also wanted to “Chase the Budd Cars” and share their results with WMSR. My hope is to record both their homecoming and new lives going forward.

The Western Maryland Scenic Railroad is completely revamping its volunteer program and looking for folks of all ages and skill sets—and who have a commitment to safety and doing things the traditional “Railroad Way.” If you’ve ever wanted to get more deeply involved in real railroading, there will be many opportunities going forward.

More on all this as details become available . . .