



# News

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad Significantly Expands Locomotive Fleet with Acquisition of Four 101-Class Diesel Engines From Legendary White Pass & Yukon Route Railway in Alaska**

***Historic 139-Year-Old Southwestern Colorado Railroad Doubles Diesel Locomotive Total For More Operational Depth, Maintenance Flexibility, and Business Opportunities; Company to Enlarge Diesel Fleet Further with MPES Engine Delivery in Fall of 2020***

**DURANGO, Colo. — April 13, 2020 —** The [Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad \(D&SNGRR\)™](#), which offers distinctive year-round rail experiences and special events to passengers of all ages in the remote, scenic wilderness and high-mountain landscape of Colorado's San Juan National Forest, today announced it has purchased four 101-class narrow-gauge diesel engines from the legendary [White Pass & Yukon Route Railway \(WP&YR\)](#) in Skagway, Alaska. Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed.



The acquisition, underway since last September and finalized in January, increases the company's roster of diesel locomotives from six to ten, facilitates the pursuit of incremental revenue-generating business opportunities, and provides the railroad with greater operational depth and maintenance flexibility throughout multiple seasons of the year. Steam will remain the primary motive power on the D&SNGRR line.

Locomotives Nos. 101 and 107 began their multi week journey to Durango on April 11<sup>th</sup> when they were loaded on a barge in Skagway, Alaska. The other two units are slated to be selected later in 2020 with transportation to Durango scheduled to occur in the second quarter of 2021. Initially Nos. 101 and 107 will be made available in support of its maintenance of way (MOW) activities, and on its short-trip Cascade Canyon Express summer excursions.

"Reliable narrow-gauge diesels of this size, design and efficiency are few and far between, so the D&SNGRR jumped at the chance to acquire them when we were first approached last year by the WP&YR," said Jeff Johnson, general manager of the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad. "Upon their arrival in Durango, these locomotives will join the company's diverse roster of diesel and vintage steam locomotives, and be deployed in multiple operations-supporting and passenger-transporting capacities. Ultimately, the addition of these locomotives to the D&SNGRR fleet gives us more operational depth for greater engine scheduling and maintenance flexibility, and the ability to develop and implement new excursions and special events specifically using these engines."

"These locomotives have served the WP&YR well over the decades, and we're delighted their story will continue at the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad," said Mark Taylor, superintendent of the White Pass and Yukon Route Railway. "These well-traveled locomotives built in Montreal performed exemplary at WP&YR, roamed the rails of South America, returned to work in Alaska, and now venture to Colorado where they'll continue doing what they do best: efficiently and reliably pulling heavy narrow-gauge trains, as they have for over 50 years."

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## ***D&SNGRR Expands Locomotive Fleet with Acquisition of Four Diesel Engines from White Pass & Yukon Route Railway***

Originally fabricated in 1969 by the American Locomotive Company's (Alco's) Montreal Locomotive Works (MLW) subsidiary in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, the four 101-class MLW-Worthington Model DL535E locomotives have spent most of their careers on the WP&YR. They were built as part of a major infrastructure improvement project WP&YR took on at the time to increase operational potential and efficiency, much the same as the D&SNGRR has been embarking on. Other than a short period of operation in South America between 1992 and 1999, Nos. 101 and 107 have called the WP&YR home since built. Each 1,200-horsepower locomotive measures 53 feet in length, and are outfitted with Alco 6-251D engines, 764 traction motors, multiple-unit (MU) capabilities, and six-axle C-C wheel arrangements. The locomotives are of rare narrow gauge design, built specifically for mountainous railroads with heavy trains, something that both the WP&YR and D&SNGRR have in common. Their service life so far has long proven the design and the capabilities that they will bring to the D&SNGRR.



*Boerries Burkhardt Photo*



This is not the first time locomotives will have operated out of both Skagway, AK and Durango, CO. In 1942, during WWII, seven of the ten Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad (D&RGW), K-28 class of steam locomotives were sent north to operate on the WP&YR and ultimately scrapped; the three not sent to Skagway are D&SNGRR locomotives Nos. 473, 476, and 478. Additionally, the first diesel locomotive to operate in Durango, No. 3000, ultimately went on to operate on the WP&YR.

The D&SNGRR's acquisition of the four WP&YR units follows the company's previously-announced agreement with Greenville, S.C.-based Motive Power & Equipment Solutions, Inc.

(MPES) to purchase two of its MP2000NG repowered diesel locomotives – D&SNGRR Nos. 1201 and 1202 - for \$3.2 million. The fabrication of these two 41-foot, 75-ton, six-axle - A1A wheel arrangement - units, each equipped with 1350 HP CAT 32 gensets, GE 764 traction motors, and MU capabilities, is nearly completed, with the exception of the traction motors. The D&SNGRR expects to take delivery of these MPES locomotives in the fall of 2020.

To house these units the D&SNGRR intends to construct a new 45' x 100' shop in its railyard, adjacent to the roundhouse, for the express purpose of maintaining its diesel locomotives and MOW equipment. The company is in the process of obtaining all requisite city and county construction permits, after which the building of the shop will commence over an estimated eight-week period.

“Even with the purchase of these four WP&YR locomotives, steam will still reign supreme in Durango,” said Randy Babcock, chief mechanical officer of the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad. “As we place these units into service, we will assess our current fleet of industrial diesels, and determine how many of them are needed to achieve our goals. It is our strategic direction not to be a diesel-focused railroad, but rather maintain our place as the premier steam-powered heritage tourist railroad in the country now...and well into the foreseeable future.”

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### **About The Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad**

Established in 1881 as a branch line of the Denver & Rio Grande Railway, and based in beautiful Durango, Colorado, the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad (D&SNGRR) has been transporting passengers, young and old alike, through the remote, scenic

wilderness and high-mountain landscape of the San Juan National Forest for 139 years. Now owned and operated by American Heritage Railways, the D&SNGRR provides distinctive year-round rail experiences and exceptional special events via its fleet of vintage coal-fired, steam-operated locomotives and coaches which have been updated with modern conveniences to accommodate today's discerning travelers. The D&SNGRR offers consumers a unique, enjoyable, and affordable family-friendly travel experience which combines the state's colorful pioneering and mining histories with the unparalleled beauty of the Colorado backcountry. For more information, please visit [www.durangotrain.com](http://www.durangotrain.com); like the company on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/DSNGRR](https://www.facebook.com/DSNGRR); and follow the railroad on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) at @DSNGRR.