Monticello Railway Museum Adds Two Historic Locomotives to Collection

MONTICELLO, IL – Today the Monticello Railway Museum (MRM) announced the acquisition of two new diesel-electric locomotives: Chicago & Illinois Midland Railroad RS1325 #31 and Illinois Terminal Railroad SW1200 #784. Both of these historically significant engines and their respective railroads have strong ties to Central Illinois. Their preservation is key to furthering the Monticello Railway Museum’s mission of interpreting the region’s rich railroad history.

Chicago & Illinois Midland #31 is one of only two RS1325’s ever built by Electro-Motive Diesel (EMD). A unique design of a light road switcher, the RS1325 combined design elements of both EMD’s GP-series road locomotives and their SW-series switching locomotives. The #31 worked for the Chicago & Illinois Midland Railroad from 1960 until 1996, when the C&IM was acquired by Genesee & Wyoming Inc. and became the Illinois Midland Railroad. The unit was retired after 60 years of freight service in Central Illinois in 2020 before being purchased by MRM. Once delivered to the museum, it will soon be added to the rotation of operating locomotives used on MRM’s historic passenger train rides. As time and funding allows, it will eventually be restored to the C&IM’s classic green paint scheme.

Illinois Terminal #784 is one of twelve SW1200 switch locomotives delivered to the Illinois Terminal Railroad. Built in December 1955, #784 operated throughout Central Illinois, including on the same trackage currently used by MRM’s passenger trains. The Illinois Terminal renumbered #784 as #1210 later in its service life, before later serving with both the Norfolk & Western and Norfolk Southern Railways. It was retired in 1994 and sold to the Sequatchie Valley Railroad, where it worked in short line service before being acquired by Knoxville Locomotive Works. Acquired in a trade with Knoxville Locomotive Works, it will only be the second Illinois Terminal diesel locomotive to be preserved. The engine will undergo a mechanical and cosmetic restoration as funding permits before joining MRM’s operating fleet.

Donations to assist with the restoration of these historic locomotives can be made via a GoFundMe page here: https://gf.me/u/y8pys9, or mailed to: Monticello Railway Museum, P.O. Box #401, Monticello, IL. The Monticello Railway Museum is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, dedicated to preserving and interpreting the history of railroading. Progress on both of these locomotives and other projects can be followed at mrym.org and on Facebook and Instagram.

Monticello Railway Museum would like to extend its gratitude to a number of organizations involved in these acquisitions including LTEX Rail, Illinois Midland Railway, Sequatchie Valley Railroad, Knoxville Locomotive Works, and many others.
C&IM #31 as currently painted on the Illinois Midland at their diesel shop in East Peoria, IL

Illinois Terminal #784 is being prepared for movement to Monticello from Bridgeport, AL
C&IM #31 is shown in its future restored paint scheme, pulling a passenger train through Taylorville, IL in September of 1991.

IT #784 when in service in Central Illinois.