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Orders Due: 4-15-11
ETA: December 2011

DDA40X

The DDA40X was a massive locomotive, 98 feet, 5 inches long, 17 feet four inches tall with 8,200-gallon fuel tanks and an operational weight of 545,432 pounds. They were delivered on two orders: the first order was for 25 units, numbers 6900 through 6924, delivered between April and December 1969. The second order was for 22 units, numbers 6925 through 6946, delivered between June 1970 and September 1971. Each cost \$551,168.

Over the years, the Centennials underwent various modifications. The horns were originally mounted between the first and second radiator fans. Later they were moved to the cab roof. Two units were equipped with sirens as an experimental means of warning maintenance of the way personnel of the approaching train. Various types of strobe lights, flashers, and rotary beacons were installed on the DDA40Xs to make them more visible. Number 6936, still operating in UP's Heritage Fleet, was modified with exposed bearings on the trucks, air conditioning and a new nose door following a grade crossing collision on November 30, 2000. The paint also changed. The first order was delivered with "Union Pacific Railroad" lettering in the shield. This was changed to just "Union Pacific" by painted out the "Railroad" with blue paint. After 1974, the shields just had "Union Pacific" lettering. Number 6936 got UP's winged shield herald that adorns the nose of today's engines, when it was repaired after the collision.

The DDA40Xs operated on almost any type of UP mainline freight trains including priority manifests, the California Livestock Special, secondary trains, and even coal and grain trains. However, their primary assignment was to hotshot Trailer on Flat Car (TOFC) or more commonly, piggyback trains, between North Platte, Nebraska and Los Angeles, Ogden, Utah, and Portland, Oregon. In the 1970s, these trains carried names and symbols like the Overland Mail, Los Angeles Expediter (LAX), Portland Expediter (SPX), Van, and Super Van. In this service, the Centennials averaged 20,000 miles a month and were over the one million mile mark in just five years.

A pair of Centennials was adequate power for most trains east of Ogden, but in the Blue Mountains of eastern Oregon and on the up and down profile of the Los Angeles and Salt Lake, 13,200 horsepower was not enough to maintain the schedule UP desired with the tonnage. Often during the first five years, three Centennials were used, but by 1976, UP decided that 18,500 horsepower was excessive to the needs. Instead, UP shop forces created the "Fast-Forty". ** The Fast-Forty was an SD40-2 that was given the same 59:18 gearing as the Centennials and numbered into the 8000 number series. They carried a UP model designation of SD40-2H (high speed). There were 100 Fast-Forties, 35 converted from existing units and 65 built new. Of these, 72 had 116-inch "snoot" noses. The introduction of the Fast-Forties created the arch-typical image of the UP in the 1970s, the "sandwich set". The "sandwich set" was a 15,200 horsepower lash up of two DDA40Xs with an SD40-2H "sandwiched" between them. When they were new, UP's six GP40Xs often replaced the SD40-2H in a sandwich set. Of course, DDA40Xs operated with most any model of UP diesel and with run-through power from roads such as WP, SP, C&NW, BN, Frisco, and N&W.

Two DDA40Xs were destroyed in wrecks. Number 6903 was involved in a rear end collision with a Santa Fe train on Cajon Pass on April 6, 1974. Number 6921 was wrecked on August 27, 1978 at Point of Rocks, Wyoming. In 1981, the Centennials fell victim to a recession and a new policy of locomotive standardization. Regardless of their effectiveness, the Centennials were out of favor, replaced by groups of 3000 horsepower SD40-2s and C30-7s. The units went into storage. In 1982, all 45 were moved to Yermo for storage and they remained there until 1984, when 25 were overhauled and put back into service. The reactivation lasted until April 1985. Twelve DDA40Xs have been preserved. In addition, one unit, number 6936, remains in UP's heritage fleet and sees service on special trains.

Athearn would especially like to thank Union Pacific RR and the Western Pacific Railroad Museum for its help in making this an accurate model.