



November 10, 2010 Nevada Site Office Environmental Management

EM NEWS FLASH

A Hard-Working Train with a Unique Past Finally Gets the Attention She Deserves!

Although it was a wet and dreary day, October 21, 2010, marked the beginning of a bright future for a locomotive that played a very distinctive role in the nation's history. After being loaded onto a specialized truck amidst steady rain, the 25-ton "L 2" locomotive was transported from its home of over 40 years, the Nevada Test Site (now known as the Nevada National Security Site, NNSS), to its new home at the [Nevada State Railroad Museum in Boulder City](#).

The locomotive, which had resided near the Area 25 Engine Maintenance, Assembly, and Disassembly (E-MAD) facility since the 1960s, was constructed as part of the [Nuclear Rocket Development Station](#). The L 2 diesel-electric switch engine was used along with its 80-ton sister, the L 3 (donated to the museum in 2006), to transport nuclear reactors, engines, and equipment between the E-MAD facility; the Reactor Maintenance, Assembly, and Disassembly (R-MAD) facility; and various test cell facilities that made up the expansive rocket development complex that operated until 1971. The L 2 and L 3 locomotives, together with a series of other rail cars, were part of the Nevada Test Site's only [railway system](#), which is currently being evaluated for cleanup (along with many of the Areas 25 and 26 facilities) under a rigorous environmental restoration project at the NNSS.

"It rained the whole time we were there and didn't stop until we were loaded and about to leave," laughed Museum Director Greg Corbin, who was in attendance at the water-soaked loading event along with representatives from the office responsible for the donation, the U.S. Department of Energy, National Nuclear Security



Administration Nevada Site Office. Despite the poor weather conditions, the *Paul DeLong Heavy Haul* trucking company performed a successful transfer—using a temporary rail system

to move the engine onto a specially designed truck before winching it, chaining it down, and whisking it away to the Boulder City museum, where it was promptly unloaded and placed on display.

The locomotive's historical significance makes it an ideal addition to the Nevada State Museum's collection of 35 pieces, explained Corbin. "There is uniqueness about these trains and the role they played in the rocket development program," he said. "We are very excited to be able to display, preserve, and interpret these pieces for the public." Visitors can now get an up-close look at the L 2 and L 3 at the museum's open-air display pavilion.

A Hard Life: In 1968, the L 2 locomotive derailed after a brake failure on its way to the E-MAD facility. Operators were forced to jump from the train before the vehicle cartwheeled off the track and landed on its side. The jumpers were not injured, and the locomotive suffered only minor damage.



"As is the case with any artifact that is being released from the NNSS, safety is always our first concern," explained Federal Project Director Rob Boehlecke. "Before we authorized the L 2 for release, we evaluated the equipment to make sure that it was safe for handling," he added. Mitigation activities involved draining fluids, removing batteries, and performing radiological surveys.

Two additional locomotives, one cable spool car, two flat cars, one manned control car, and one emplacement installation vehicle remain at the E-MAD compound. The Nevada Site Office is currently considering future options for these seven rail cars. Alternatives include donating them to a museum, disposing them on site, or leaving them in place.

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