NEWS OF THE SOUTHWEST CORNER (or...REMEMBER, YOU READ IT HERE FIRST)

SANTA FE has announced plans to increase passenger service between Los Angeles and San Diego as a part of that railroad's system-wide upgrading of passenger service. A new order of specially built Bud RDCs (remember them?) will be the mainstay for the 80 minute run. The sixteen RDCs, due to arrive by next April first, will operate at speeds up to 140 miles an hour on the San Diego to Los Angeles tracks now undergoing a massive realignment and upgrading. An agreement reached between Santa Fe and the railroad unions will permit two-man crews on the new high speed run consisting of a conductor and an engineman. Qualified brakemen and firemen will be promoted to take over the new jobs the extended service will create.

SANTA FE also announced plans for passenger "automobile train-ferries" on AT&SF passenger runs. The new San Diego to Los Angeles schedules will feature the automobile-and-passenger carrying cars when they are delivered. Initial plans call for the "automobile trainferries" to operate in each direction twice a day, early

in the morning and early in the evening.

An agreement has been reached between SANTA FE and PSRMA for a lease of the Fallbrook branch line to the San Diego based museum group for Sunday steam passenger operations. According to Santa Fe, management personnel.

feel that closer community involvement, as well as the opportunities for the public to compare the old rustic equipment of PSRMA with modern efficient Santa Fe locomotives and cars, will be but a couple of beneficial re-

sults from the lease arrangement.

UNION PACIFIC has been in the diesel ordering business again, and once more is opting for high horsepower units of unique designs. This time the order is divided between EMD, General Electric and the newly rejuvenated American Locomotive Company (ALCo). From EMD the railroad is receiving seven 15,000 horsepower triple-engined EE77s (UP 7701 - 7706) within the next few months. Delivery of eleven new GE U78Fs (UP 7888-7798) is expected by the early part of next year for these 15,050 hp giants. From ALCo is coming six of that empany's new PA-4s (Pneuclear Assists, Fourth Class) with 14,950 horsepower (UP 23-28). These units will be housed in bodies from traded-in Santa Fe PA-1s, obtained by ALCo from a scrap dealer in Illinois.

Colorado and New Mexico have obtained all DENVER & RIO GRANDE narrow gauge trackage in those two states, and have announced a schedule for tourist type passenger operations over the historic tracks. The combined state commission operating the railroad, which will retain the D&RG name by special agreement with the original D&RG, will utilize 100% diesel power for trains as a result of increased costs to operate steam.

SOUTHERN PACIFIC is receiving 450 more SD45s from EMD and will continue numbering the new acquisitions in the 9900 and 10000 series now occupied by the 375 SD45s

already on Espee property.

ESPEE has also withdrawn all passenger train-off petitions currently before the ICC as a result of the recent labor negotiations limiting train crew size, and the reassigning of postal contracts by the new Postal

Corporation in Washington.

And finally, SOUTHERN PACIFIC has announced through the offices of the SAN DIEGO & ARIZOMA EASTERN here in San Diego weekly passenger service between San Diego and El Centro via the Carizzo Gorge. According to Espee public demand for such service has been so great since 1954 when the last passenger train made the run that the railroad felt "it was our duty as a common carrier, serving the public, to fulfill these demands." Espee is also making arrangements with certain museum groups, including PSRMA, to operate occasional steam powered excursions through the gorge. One best bet for power is SD&AE #104, currently in Espee's Taylor Yard undergoing major repairs and rebuilding.

And that does it for a SOUTHWEST CORNER for this month. Chances are, most of these predictions will never materialize (thank goodness, in some cases), but it would be interesting if just a couple did! jfh