

WBR ARTICLE

Union Pacific going green

By Staff

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OMAHA, Neb. — As Earth Day approaches, Union Pacific has announced its plans to go green year 'round. The company has been a leading innovator in developing hybrid locomotive technology, improving the fuel efficiency of its locomotives to the point where they can move one ton of cargo nearly 830 miles on a single gallon of diesel fuel. Employee programs contributed to saving 58 million gallons of diesel in 2008.

Another new technology adapted by UP is the ultra low-emitting Genset switching locomotive, which reduced nitrous oxide emissions by up to 80 percent and particulate matter by up to 90 percent while using as much as 37 percent less fuel. Since 2000, the company has added more than 3,300 new fuel-efficient long-haul, high-horsepower locomotives to its fleet.

According to the UP's release, railroads are the safest, most fuel efficient and environmentally friendly mode of freight transportation. Freight trains are almost four times more fuel efficient than over-the-road trucks, and emit less greenhouse gases than trucks. One UP intermodal train can carry the same freight at 280 trucks, reducing congestion on crowded highways. If just 10 percent of highway freight moved by rail instead, the U.S. would save more than one billion gallons of fuel annually.

Union Pacific's comprehensive waste reduction and recycling program touches nearly every part of the organization. The company makes a concerted effort to address high-volume items such as wooden track ties, used oil and e-waste.

Whenever possible, wood track ties that are no longer needed are refurbished for use elsewhere in the system. In addition, Union Pacific has been using concrete ties for nearly 20 years. Concrete ties require less maintenance than wood and last longer, generating less waste.

The company uses automatic fuel-nozzle shutoffs to prevent overflows during locomotive fueling, drip pans to catch oil spills, separators to recover oil from industrial wastewater, and on-board retention tanks to capture residual oil from locomotive engines for proper disposal.

In terms of e-waste, Union Pacific has recycled nearly 700,000 pounds of electronic equipment and 2.5 million pounds of batteries in 2007 and 2008.

On Earth Day, April 22, Union Pacific plans events in Cheyenne, Green River and Laramie.