

East Troy #L9



Type: Steeplecab Locomotive

Built: 1944

Seats: n/a

Length – 34' 4"

Weight – 53 tons



During the early 1900s, fast electric interurban railroads carried everything from passengers, mail, trucks, and cargo between cities and towns across the upper midwest. The interurban railroads often carried packages, crates, boxes and other cargo that did not require a full railcar in their own self-propelled boxcars, but they also commonly interchanged freight cars with the steam railroads, hauling full cars of supplies and materials from places far away to and from their final destination.

The Milwaukee Electric Railway and Light Company (TMER&L) did use a few "box motors" but a large portion of their freight traffic was handled by the popular "steeplecab" locomotives, named for the steeple-like cab above the sloping ends, situated above the



axles. TMER&L actually built their own steeplecabs and track maintenance equipment at their Cold Springs Shop complex. Locomotive L9 was built in 1944 at Cold Springs for service on TMER&L's 383 miles of electric rail lines around Milwaukee.

After interurban service was abandoned in the early 1950s, L9 was moved to the Lakeside Power Plant, where it moved hopper cars loaded with coal between the Chicago and Northwestern Railway interchange and the plant. After electric rail operations were shut down at Lakeside, L9 was acquired by the Wisconsin Electric Railway Historical Society in 1974 and was moved to East Troy, where the last segment of an electric interurban line built and once-owned by the TMER&L continued to operate. It was called upon for hauling the fifty cars of ballast the line received in the 1996-97 track rehabilitation project. The car is operable but is

awaiting a cosmetic restoration, currently wearing a faded East Troy Railroad paint scheme.

