

BY GREG McDONNELL

An all-EMD bastion falls as KCS gets its first GE's



DAN MUNSON

Ready to depart Kansas City Southern's Knoche Yard in K.C. November 28 on its first revenue trip is brand-new AC4400CW No. 2003, one of 50 such GE's that have ended KCS's all-EMD status.



MIKE ZOLLITICH

BNSF GETS FIRST GE A.C.'S: Burlington Northern Santa Fe has 770-plus EMD SD70MAC's, assigned almost exclusively to coal-train service, and almost 1000 new (since 1994, including some to pre-merger Santa Fe) GE C44-9W D.C.-traction units in general freight work, but AC-4400CW's 5600-5602 are its first GE A.C.-traction units. They're spinoffs of an ongoing C44-9W order. After Niagara Falls-Selkirk (N.Y.) break-in runs on CSX, the 5600's, along with GE test car *Gemini*, headed out of Buffalo on October 30 toward home rails with CSX train Q363. After a Chicago-Twin Cities round trip, BNSF dispersed the trio for crew-training sessions.

CHALK UP ANOTHER ONE for the boys in Erie. Just prior to Thanksgiving, Kansas City Southern, one of the last all-EMD bastions on the continent, began taking delivery of its 50 AC4400CW's, its first A.C.-traction units and its first GE locomotives ever. An EMD stronghold since the days of slant-nosed E's and A-B-B-A sets of F3's, KCS has owned fewer than two dozen non-EMD diesels in its history. In fact, it's been more than 50 years since the railroad took delivery of its last new, non-EMD locomotives, a pair of Fairbanks-Morse H15-44's in May 1949. Since then, except for a few secondhand Alco switchers (four in 1956 and one in 1964), KCS has bought nothing but General Motors power.

Of course, A.C. traction and GE locomotives are no strangers to KCS. EMD and GE A.C.'s from BNSF and UP, not to mention earlier C30-7's from BN, have been on KCS run-through coal trains for years. And, there have been GE A.C.'s in the KCS family since 1998, when TFM, the road's Mexican affiliate, purchased 50 AC44's.

Nevertheless, KCS's AC44 acquisition is a landmark decision in more ways than one. Beyond the obvious switch in builder allegiance and the adoption of A.C. traction, the GE purchase also marks a shift away from



BRUCE FRY

AVAILABLE: CIT Group/Capital Finance, a big player in the equipment leasing and financial field that manages almost 400 locomotives, is breaking new ground with its purchase of 40 new EMD SD-90/43MAC's and 50 smaller units for lease. New "MAC" CEFX 106 is fresh out of Alstom's paint shop at Hornell, N.Y., in November.



MARK MADTNER

DROUGHT ENDS: Four GP38-2's from Alstom are Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis's first "new" power since SW1500's in 1971 and its first road-switchers since the 1964 sale of its four 1950 Alco RS3's. Nos. 2201-2203 (ex-NS) are lettered Locomotive Leasing Partners, but 2204, in Madison (Ill.) Yard November 7, is TRRA red.

KCS's long-standing policy of relying on the secondhand and rebuild markets for locomotives. Other than 46 SD60's purchased new during 1989-91, KCS has gone for used, rather than new, power for more than a decade. In doing so, it has assembled one of the most eclectic collections of EMD's anywhere: GP38-2's of Boston & Maine, Milwaukee, Norfolk Southern, and Toledo, Peoria & Western ancestry; SD45's (rebuilt to SD40-2 specs) built for BN, Conrail, Chicago & North Western, and Rio Grande; and SP SD45T-2 "tunnel motors" reborn as "SD45-3's." KCS has also acquired 23 Canadian National wide-nose GP40-2Ls, plus 40 CN and 5 Quebec North Shore & Labrador SD40's rebuilt to Dash-2 specs.

The best-known, and best-looking, hand-me-downs in KCS's stable, of course, are its four executive F's, a trio of former VIA (CN) FP9's and an F9B. They're dressed in a version of the classic black, red, and yellow of KCS's old *Southern Belle* streamliner, and when the GE order was first announced, word spread that the AC44's would be delivered in a variation of that scheme. Alas, it was not to be. Although "class engine" KCS 2000 has special NAFTA markings (replacing "NAFTA" SD50 2000, which has

reverted to its original scheme and road number, KCS 712), the GE's, which are numbered 2000-2049, have emerged from Erie in KCS's usual ultra-conservative gray, albeit with boxed "KCS" initials on the nose.

To paraphrase L. Mann and H. Glover, though, it ain't the paint, it's the power. And what the new KCS AC44's may lack in visual flair, they more than make up for in prowess. The 412,000 lb., 4400 h.p. units are equipped with GE-Harris Locotrol, CCBII electronic air brakes, steerable trucks, and dual-language (English and Spanish) diagnostics. Shades of those Wabash Alco C424's diverted from National of Mexico in the '60's!

"They're absolutely phenomenal," says Homer Henry, president of Transportation Certification Services and consultant to KCS for strategic train operations and training, of the new GE's. They give the road "twice the bang for the buck," he notes, bringing not only the efficiencies of new-generation motive power, but the capability to implement distributed power (DP) operation.

Distributed power is a big plus for KCS, allowing it to eliminate three mainline helper districts (which will release helpers for general service), cut running times, and improve cycle

time for everything from locomotives to unit coal-train consists.

Moreover, the advantages of DP operation will extend far beyond KCS rails, as the new GE's will operate through to Wyoming's Powder River Basin on coal trains, helping to fulfill the road's horsepower-hour obligations in pool service. Says Henry, "It's a win-win-win situation."

Oh, and for the record, the AC44's may be KCS's first GE's, but they're not its first Erie-built locomotives. That honor went to three A-B-A sets of FM "Erie-built" units delivered to KCS during 1946-48.

Distinctive diesels—all in the family

Still soldiering on in the employ of its original owner, KCS 637, the first SD40-2 built (in 1972), has been joined by an equally significant locomotive on the roster of KCS affiliate TFM, namely the last SD40-2 built. Outshopped from La Grange in February 1986 as NdeM 13004, the last of 4447 SD40-2's has become TFM 1404 and now is painted in the "family" gray scheme. Like many TFM units, 1404 operates in international service and has done time in KCS territory. Now, if only the 1st and 4447th could lock knuckles and work the same train! **I**