

## Chinese steam locomotives make special freight run on Iowa Interstate

COUNCIL BLUFFS, Iowa - Two former Chinese Class QJ 2-10-2s brought to the United States in 2006 made special trips pulling freight trains over the weekend. The trips, organized by photographers Jim Gunning and Bill Raia, were set up specifically for photography and were not made public.

The pair of 2-10-2s, Nos. 6988 and 7081, is owned by Pittsburgh-based Railroad Development Corporation, which also owns the Iowa Interstate. RDC Chairman Henry Posner III was on hand for the trips, which also were intended to set a record for a steam-hauled freight train in the United States in the 21st Century. The two locomotives were prepared for the trips last week at Newton, Iowa, where they are stored. On Friday, June 8, the engines pulled an ethanol tank car full of water from Newton to Booneville, Iowa, so they would be ready the next morning. On Saturday, June 9, they pulled regular IAIS freight train BICB-07 (Blue Island, Ill.-Council Bluffs, Iowa) with 66 cars weighing over 4,000 tons from Booneville to Council Bluffs, a line that has many up and down grades and curves. That evening a night photo session was held at Council Bluffs with the engines posing on the turntable at the IAIS engine facility. IAIS personnel cleaned up the turntable area specifically for the night photo shoot. "All the Iowa Interstate people went out of their way to be nice to us this weekend," Bill Raia told Trains News Wire.

On June 10, the 2-10-2s left Council Bluffs early in the morning for the best light angles with train CBBI, which included some cars of double-stacked containers. The steam power took the train all the way from Council Bluffs east to Newton, where they will be placed back into storage.

The pair of QJs are not the only Chinese steam engines in Iowa. The Boone & Scenic Valley at Boone operates Chinese class JS 2-8-2 No. 8419. That engine is a product of the Datong Locomotive Works in Shanxi, China, and was built in October 1988. It was one of the last batches of JS class locomotives built there.



**QJ Hancock** Iowa Interstate freight CBBI-07 shows off some different motive power on June 9, 2007 near Hancock, Iowa. (Jeff Terry)