

## Chinese 2-10-2's arrive in the United States

HOUSTON — Two Chinese steam locomotives have arrived in the United States, bound for Iowa, with another three possibly coming later. This brings the total of serviceable Chinese steamers in the U.S. to five. The latest two were transloaded from a ship onto flatcars at Dock 18 at the Port of Houston on June 11. Not yet released for transit, they were both still in the port as of Tuesday, June 13, according to contributor Ed Blyard.

Owned by Railroad Development Corp. (RDC), based in Pittsburgh, the two Chinese class QJ 2-10-2 locomotives – Nos. 7081 and 6988 - are destined for the Iowa Interstate Railroad, which will steam them up as a test and then give them a little work hauling freight trains.

RDC is a privately held railway management and investment company which owns, or has financial interests in, rail properties in the U.S. and six other countries in Latin America, Africa, and Europe. Its largest U.S. property is the 550-mile Iowa Interstate, whose ex-Rock Island route links Chicago, Des Moines, and Omaha.



**Two Chinese QJ 2-10-2's arrived at the Port of Houston June 11, bound for the Iowa Interstate Railroad. The owner, Railroad Development Corp., has an option for three more.**  
*Photo by Ed Blyard*

According to RDC Chairman Henry Posner III, the two locomotives were overhauled in China by the Jinzhou 701 Works to meet U.S. Federal Railroad Administration standards, under the supervision of steam consultant Dennis Daugherty and under contract with U.S. company Multipower International. They were shipped through the Chinese port of Dalian.

Why bring Chinese steam to the U.S.? "It's a test of the market, without any preconceived notions," Posner said in a report by Steve Glischinski in the July 2006 issue of *TRAINS* magazine. "I didn't see anyone else putting their hands up to buy these engines in the last year." Ideally, there would be a market to resell the engines to regional or tourist railroads. Absent that, other methods of generating revenue would be examined, such as serious photo charters or renting them out. If there is a market for the locomotives, RDC has an option to buy three more QJs.

The QJ (a derivation of the Soviet LV class) was the last Chinese steam design to go into production and was the most numerous steam class to run in China. The first prototypes were introduced in 1956. Eventually more than 4,700 QJs were built, the majority between 1964 and 1988. Datong Locomotive Works built both of RDC's, No. 6988 in 1985 and No. 7081 in 1986.

Two Chinese-built steam locomotives, both 2-8-2s built in 1988, currently operate in the U.S., hauling tourists. A class JS runs on Iowa's Boone & Scenic Valley, and a class SY, built for Connecticut's Valley Railroad. The SY was later sold to the New York, Susquehanna & Western, which transferred it to the NYS&W Historical Society; the group now operates it on the Bel-Del line at Phillipsburg, N.J. A third 1988 Chinese 2-8-2, also a class SY, is in storage in Pennsylvania, having worked on the now-embargoed Knox & Kane tourist line to Kinzua Viaduct.

The 7081 had the distinction of hauling the world's last regularly scheduled mainline steam passenger train.