

The little engine that could

No. 6593 saved by local group and brought to Waterloo to be restored and used for heritage railway

Brent Davis, Record staff

KITCHENER – It looked like old No. 6593's days were numbered.

Built in Montreal in 1957, the locomotive toiled as a diesel switcher in Canadian Pacific Railway yards for nearly three decades before being moved to the National Research Council's Ottawa testing facility.

But earlier this year, it was put up for sale by the federal government.

Most bidders wanted it for its scrap value. A group of local volunteers wanted to save it.

And earlier this week, No. 6593 arrived in Waterloo Region, en route to its new home with the Waterloo Central Railway.

Run by volunteers, the heritage railway operates passenger trains between Waterloo and St. Jacobs and occasionally Elmira. It's owned by the Southern Ontario Locomotive Restoration Society, the not-for-profit group that will perform the repairs required to put 6593 back on track.

"We're hoping that in less than a month, we'll have it operational," said Carson Wiebe, who manages the society's restoration shop in St. Jacobs.

On Tuesday evening, cranes prepared to lift the red locomotive from the flat car used to transport it from Ottawa to its own wheels. If all goes according to plan, a train will take 6593 to the restoration shop on Wednesday morning.

The society now has six locomotives, in various states of repair and restoration. One of them, No. 1556, a diesel switcher, is operational and serves as the prime locomotive for the Waterloo Central Railway.

The acquisition of 6593 "will enable us to have two prime operating locomotives" to pull their passenger cars, Wiebe said.

Wiebe wouldn't disclose how much it cost to purchase the locomotive, but he said



BRENT DAVIS, RECORD STAFF

A crane prepares to lift a locomotive from a flat car in Kitchener on Tuesday. The 1957 locomotive was acquired by a local heritage group.

the society got a good deal.

"To us, it was a lot of money . . . In the locomotive world, it was nothing."

The primary cost, Wiebe said, came in transporting No. 6593 to Waterloo Region.

Repairs could cost another \$2,000 or more, but the group hopes to offset their costs through donations.

There's one extra repair the volunteers weren't counting on. Within hours of its

arrival, someone had already tagged both sides of the locomotive with graffiti.

"We'll clean it off," Wiebe promised.

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