

10. Ernie Little's Rotary Snow Plow



My Favorite Maintenance of Way Car would be the rotary snowplow used by railroads in areas that experience heavy snowfall. In the [photo above](#), Norfolk Southern 35, a rotary snow plow shown on my Norfolk Southern Connector layout, is being assisted by a GP-9 Norfolk Southern locomotive number 890 on its way to the storage yard. In my research I have not found this car ever being in the Norfolk Southern system. However, there were and still are rotary plows such as Union Pacific 900075, [photo right](#) which was one of the last steam-powered rotary snowplows ever built. This plow was unveiled at the Illinois Railway Museum (IRM) on October 2 and 3, 2021 following a three-year restoration effort. It was built by the Lima Locomotive Works of Lima, Ohio in 1949. It was one of three steam-powered “rotaries” constructed at that time to clear snow on the Union Pacific’s lines in the midwest and west. The rotary is effectively a giant snow blower on wheels. It used an internal Shay-type steam engine to turn a large blade at the front of the unit that throws snow to the side of the



tracks. The rotary had its own tender to carry fuel oil and water, but relied on a locomotive (or locomotives) to push it. The Union Pacific employed 900075 in snow-fighting service until retiring it in the 1970s. After retirement it went to a museum in Kansas City for preservation. In 1993, IRM acquired 900075 and moved it to Union, Illinois. For many years the museum displayed the rotary on the “steam leads” near the south end of the museum property. *Ernie Little, MMR*