

## About the *Pioneer Zephyr*

The *Pioneer Zephyr* is America's first diesel-electric, streamlined, stainless-steel passenger train. It is located in the Museum's Entry Hall and was renovated and conserved in 2020.

### History

In an attempt to increase rail passenger traffic, the Burlington Zephyr was built for the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Company (CB&Q) in 1934 by the Budd Company of Philadelphia. The Burlington Zephyr offered high-speed transportation in an elegant, streamlined, stainless steel design. It was the first diesel-electric passenger train to enter regular service. The train was renamed the "Pioneer Zephyr" in 1936 because it was the first of several diesel-powered Zephyrs built for the CB&Q.

On May 26, 1934, the *Pioneer Zephyr* left Denver and arrived in Chicago 13 hours and five minutes later to reopen the A Century of Progress World's Fair in 1934. That single nonstop trip of 1,015 miles at record-breaking average speed of 77.6 mph changed the course of railroading and land transportation. Never before had a train traveled more than 775 miles without stopping for fuel and water.

The *Pioneer Zephyr*, nicknamed the "Silver Streak," was donated to the Museum of Science and Industry in 1960 and was displayed outside next to the 999 *Empire State Express* locomotive near the Columbia Basin. In 1997, the Museum hired Northern Rail Car of Milwaukee to restore the *Pioneer Zephyr* to its 1930s-era glory. The gleaming, refurbished train was then moved to a new, underground gallery at the Museum in 1998. The exhibit closed in October 2019, to make way for a completely new exhibition, opening in March 2021.

### Significance

The *Pioneer Zephyr* was a true pioneer. It served as a prototype of design and technology for future trains. The *Pioneer Zephyr* sparked the rapid conversion of rail transportation from steam to diesel-electric locomotion. Its aerodynamically efficient shape stimulated the streamlining of all types of products in the 1930s, and helped to preserve passenger rail travel.

### By the Numbers

- Maximum Speed: 112.5 mph
- Rating: 600 hp @ 750 rpm
- Length: 60.0456 meters
- Weight: 197,000 lbs. (98.5 tons)
- Passenger Capacity: 72 (20 in Smoking Compartment, 40 in Main Passenger Compartment, and 12 in Observation Lounger/Solarium)