

engines were small enough to fit under the floor, cooling and exhaust was a serious problem. Budd's engineers found a novel solution: The radiators for cooling and the exhausts were mounted in a bubble enclosure on the roof of the coach, giving the Budd RDC a completely unique side profile.

The designers of the RDC, well aware of the extremely rural nature of many of the locations where they would be used, built in a number of innovative reliability features. The two diesel engines operated independently of each other, and the entire RDC could be operated with either one out of service; the performance was obviously affected but it would get the RDC home. Furthermore, the diesel engines themselves could be removed from under the coach by a simple trolley in a matter of an hour or two, allowing for maintenance and repairs to be carried out to the diesel engines while the RDC itself was out in revenue service with an alternate engine fitted.

### THE SURVIVORS

It may seem amazing for a DMU of 1949 vintage, but the Budd RDCs are still in daily service today in a wide range of roles from commuter trains in Dallas, Texas and Syracuse in upstate New York, to main line service in Canada and Alaska, and on



*At the controls: Cab of Alaska Railroad RDC3 No.701 at Susitna river bridge, Milepost 264.*

short-line tourist train services all across North America.

Two of the most interesting services still operated by Budd RDCs are north of the 49th Parallel – the Alaska Railroad's summer-only Hurricane Turn service and VIArail Canada's 'The Lake Superior'. These services are amongst the very few remaining flag trains – small passenger trains that serve remote wilderness areas completely

inaccessible by road – they will stop to pick up or drop off passengers from the track side anywhere along the route. The Hurricane Turn serves a 58 mile stretch of wilderness between Talkeetna on the banks of the Susitna River and Hurricane Gulch at the southern edge of the Denali National Park, home to the highest mountain in North America. VIArail's 'The Lake Superior' serves 460 miles of wilderness on the Canadian



*Hurricane Gulch Bridge: Northern turning point for the Hurricane Turn service*