

# IRON HORSE NEWS

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**NEW EXHIBIT STARTING THIS MONTH:  
TRAINS AND TOURISM IN COLORADO**

# Trains and Tourism in Colorado Unveiled in New Exhibit

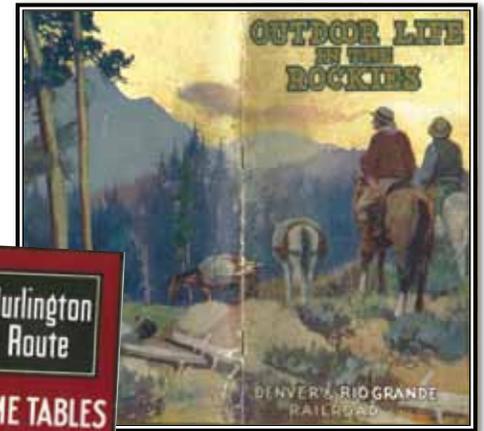
By Larry Dorsey

Like the couplers on vintage railcars, tourism and railroads have a historic linkage; that interconnection is the focus of the next exhibit at the Colorado Railroad Museum. Opening in May, "Up the Canyons and Over the Peaks: Trains and Tourism in Colorado, 1800s to the Present" is slated to bedeck the lower exhibit hall in the Colorado Railroad Museum. This new exhibit traces the influence of tourism and marketing on Colorado's railroad industry.

As the United States expanded westward after the Civil War, the railroad builders came to Colorado moving passengers and goods across the high plains and into the rugged Rockies. The mining industry that gave birth to Colorado was dependent on both the availability of resources and the American government's inconsistent program of purchasing gold, silver and other precious metals for legal tender.

Farmers and cattle ranchers were subject to the whim and caprice of nature. As revenues from passenger, freight and government contracts waned, many Colorado railroads turned to tourism as a supplement while others catered strictly to tourists.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, railroads promoted travel out to the "Wild West." Throughout cities in the Midwest and East railroad offices carried promotional literature luring the potential vacationer to Colorado. Some of the marketing was directed at enticing the wayfarer to a specific resort, Glenwood Springs perhaps. Others invited the traveler to ride "The Narrow Gauge Circle," a now lost opportunity to ride narrow gauge steam trains throughout western Colorado starting and ending in Denver.



In what might be called an early form of "staycation," Coloradans traveled by train on sightseeing trips throughout the Centennial State. In the early 1900s, it was common for people wanting to escape the city for the inviting

mountain atmosphere to ride a "Wildflower Special" on the Colorado Midland or the Switzerland Trail. Unions and fraternal organizations reserved interurban trains so their membership could spend a weekend day relaxing at the resort in Eldorado Springs. The Colorado & Southern offered a narrow gauge steam ride from Denver's Union Station "Over the Loop" from Georgetown to Silver Plume.

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*California Zephyr*



**Come Up to Colorado**

*For relaxation and peace... Escape for a time from the swift pace of the busy business world... the humdrum of household duties... the weary days and long, uncomfortable nights.*

Can you avoid the thronged splendor of the Rockies you can find a quiet retreat... a haven of rest where you can find in blessed ease, blow up your lungs with the sparkling ozone of Colorado's high plateaus, power that has appetite and appetite your store of precious energy that is so essential to the wearing game of modern business, and the endless round of social activities.

A thousand sunny hours, large and small, invite you to snow-capped valleys, kindly rest at the shore of Alpine lakes—out here where days are clear, clean and sunny—and nights soft for the rough frosts of a blizzard.

The two weeks' vacation, the week-end worker gets more variety—more freedom ("freedom" in Colorado is a better comparative word than in any summer region within the scope of his or her vacation possibilities.

Colorado is near at hand. Burlington trains take you there in a day and night from Chicago or St. Louis, while the low round trip summer fares and the moderate prices for accommodations make the cost of a glorious vacation in the Rockies only a little more than for one spent around home.

When to go, what to see and do... all explained in our beautiful illustrated round-trip brochure that we will be glad to send you... free for the asking.

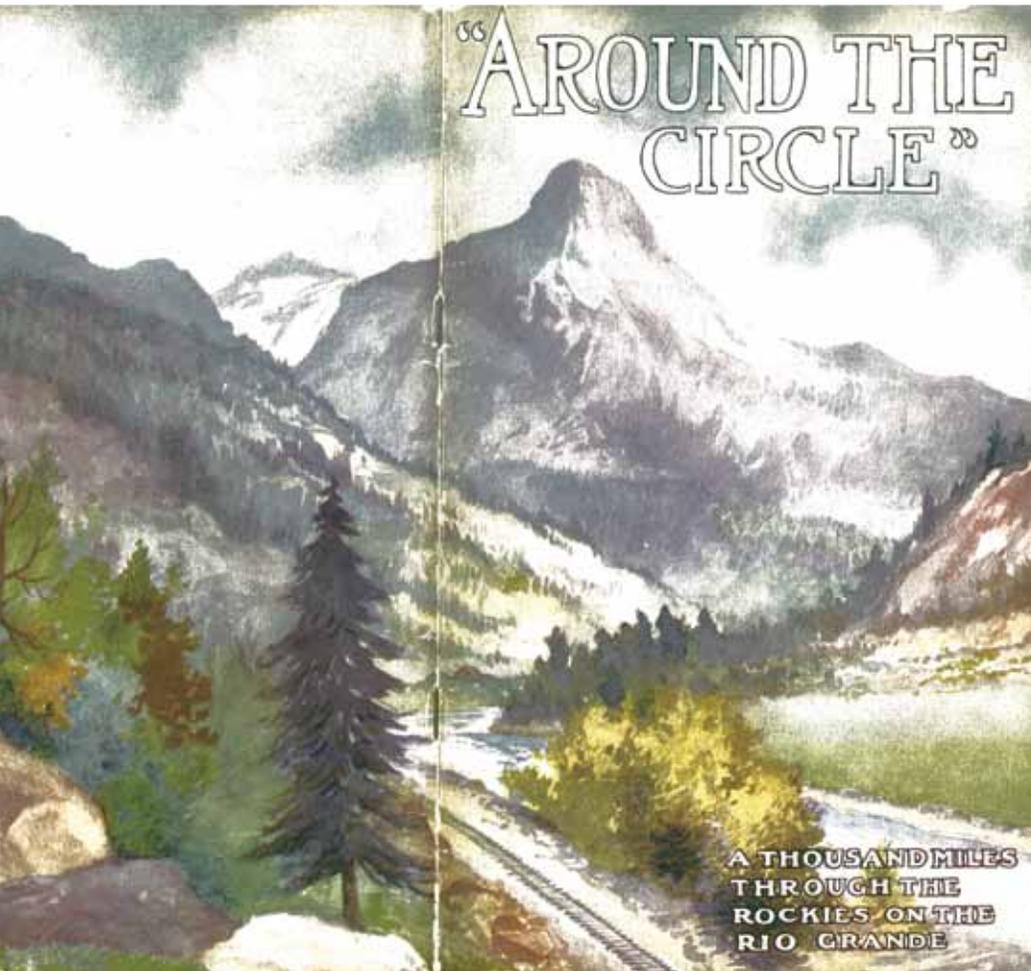
**Burlington Route**

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To get out of the city, many folks rode tourism trains to the inviting mountain atmosphere.

After World War II, the end of narrow gauge steam travel was inevitable. Railroad management reading the omens and the profit and loss statements knew that, in spite of the romance of the rails, freight and passenger service on the "crooked and slow" narrow gauge was a losing proposition. The improvement of highways, the expansion of automobile travel and inexpensive gasoline meant people could drive to vacation spots in the family sedan. The Rio Grande Southern attempted to save the company by offering scenic rides through the San Juan Mountains in a quirky, homemade Galloping Goose motor car, but that last gasp was only for a few seasons.

In the 1960s, The Denver & Rio Grande Western began to dismantle its San Juan Extension from Antonito to Durango. Before the entire line could be scrapped, the state legislatures of Colorado and New Mexico banded to save the last section from Antonito, Colorado to Chama, New Mexico and operate it as a tourist railroad. Eventually the Silverton Branch of the Rio Grande was sold to private interests. The result of these moves is two of Colorado's current successful narrow gauge steam tourist railroads, the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad and the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad.



In addition to those tourist roads, both railfan and general tourist have many attractive opportunities to ride Colorado's ribbons of steel. The vagabond can hop aboard consists provided by the Georgetown Loop, Rio Grande Scenic Railway, Royal Gorge Railway, Pike's Peak Cog Road, and the Leadville Colorado & Southern, all railroads whose origins date back over a century ago.

Starting this month is the latest exemplary exhibit in the Colorado Railroad Museum lower level exhibit gallery. Join us as we take a nostalgic visual journey "through the canyons and over the peaks" of Colorado's yesteryear.

We encourage you to come enjoy it!

