

Life on Colorado Railroads: Railroading Now

By Lauren Giebler, Museum Curator & Volunteer Coordinator

Railroading Now is the third installation in our Life on Colorado Railroads series and examines the evolution of railroading and what it is like to work for the railroad today.

Railroading Now

There have been many changes in railroading throughout the past 50 years—the most noticeable changes include the integration of computers, the Internet and women into the

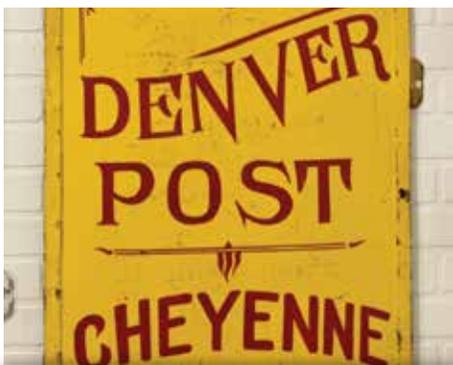
workforce. Equipment has also changed as Class 1 railroad companies now focus primarily on long-corridor freight shipments instead of intercity passenger travel.

Working On Today's Railroads

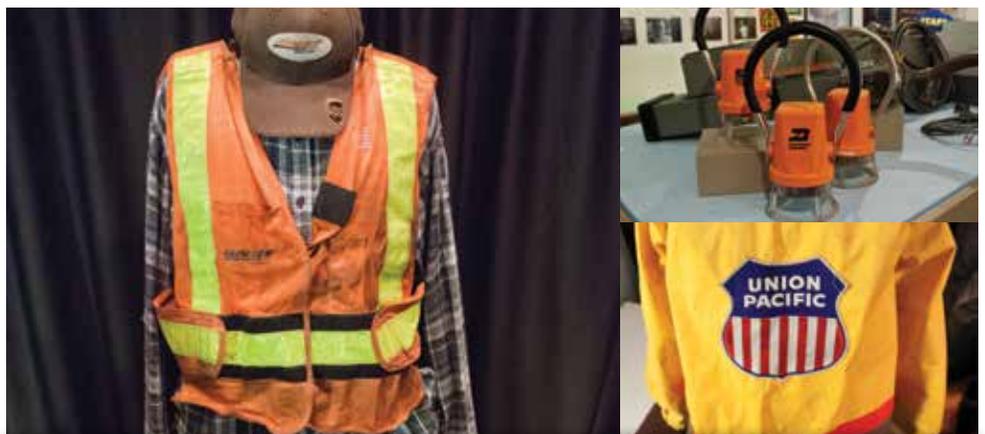
Some might consider a career on the railroads to be a thing of the past, but it still remains a promising opportunity in Colorado. The average salary for a railroad employee in Colorado is \$112,000, which is higher than the national average. It also remains one of the highest paid jobs available to individuals without a college degree.

More than 3,000 Coloradans are currently employed by the Class 1 railroads Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Union Pacific. Colorado is also home to the Transportation Technology Center, a research and testing facility in Pueblo that develops new railroad technology.

Be sure to stop by *Railroading Now* on your next visit to the Museum. You'll be able to climb into our model Ski Train diesel locomotive, discover available jobs with today's railroads, read about Union Pacific's Bailey Yard—the largest Class 1 rail yard in the world—and much more.



Special excursion trips have been a hallmark of historic and contemporary passenger service. After a hiatus of two decades (1970-1992), the Denver Post Cheyenne Frontier Days Train has again become a popular special trip.



Artifacts from contemporary commercial freight carriers may look surprisingly familiar. Though many people think of railroads as artifacts from the past, rail freight transportation accounts for billions of tons of freight—from potatoes to wind turbine blades—moved annually.

LUDLOW CENTENNIAL



Colorado Fuel & Iron Company founder
General William Jackson Palmer

Tensions between coal companies and miners had been building for almost a decade, which led to the Colorado Coal Fields Strike.

On April 20, 1914, members of the Colorado National Guard and Colorado Fuel & Iron Company opened fire on a tent colony of 1,200 striking miners and their families at Ludlow, Colorado. Strikers and their families took refuge in bunkers that had been dug beneath the floorboards of their tents. Guardsmen set fire to the tents, killing two women and 11 children hiding in one of the bunkers.

The massacre was considered the deadliest single event during the strike.

Mining and the Railroad

This exhibit has been installed as part of a statewide collaboration to remember Ludlow,

and because coal mining and railroading have always been closely tied together in the state of Colorado.

The Colorado Fuel & Iron Company was founded in part by General William Jackson Palmer, the same businessman who founded the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad.

A century later, Colorado remains a major freight corridor for coal trains, and mining labor issues are still a frequent topic of conversation around the United States.

Be sure to visit this exhibit in our downstairs side gallery on your next trip to the Museum and join us as we remember the lives lost on that day 100 years ago.

Our recently installed *Ludlow Centennial* exhibit commemorates the 100-year anniversary of the Ludlow Massacre, a tragic event of the 1913 – 1914 Colorado Coal Fields Strike.

Colorado Coal Fields Strike

Nineteenth-century coal miners faced constant risk of explosion, suffocation and collapsing mine walls, and Colorado mining companies were notorious for ignoring national safety laws.

Between 1884 and 1912, more than 1,700 miners died in Colorado mining accidents, a state mining death rate nearly three times higher than the national rate.



(Above)
The aftermath of the Ludlow Massacre
Photo: Library of Congress



(Right)
A man at work in one of the 19th century Colorado coal mines.
Photo: Library of Congress