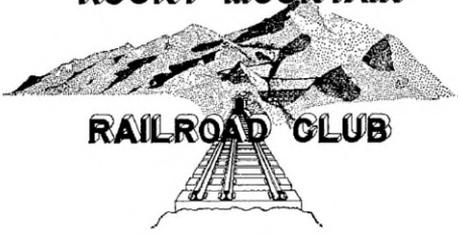


**ROCKY MOUNTAIN**



**April 2024**

**RAIL REPORT**

Rocky Mountain Railroad Club

Rocky Mountain Railroad  
Historical Foundation

**Issue 760**



Two photos at Chama, New Mexico © Earl Knoob.

## **April 9th meeting at Barnes Hall ---**

Earl Knoob will give us a look at photos that he made when he was working with the Antonito to Chama line in the early 1980's. He will join us via internet from his home in Arizona.

In 1981 he began a nearly 20 year association with the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic RR. Earl's program outlines the first several years of his employment, from the demise of the first operator (Scenic Railways) to the success story of Kyle Railways management.

**We meet in person for a no cost show at 7:30 pm in Barnes Hall, on the south side of the church at 2950 S. University Boulevard Denver, Colorado. Or Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86251105134?pwd=VWRwRUVCbVoyTzhwMWhYbm5scTlqdz09> Meeting ID: 862 5110 5134 Passcode: 496652

### **Upcoming Events:**

#### **Sunday, May 19th**

Club Picnic and Steam Up at the Colorado Railroad Museum

The Club has gotten an opportunity for another daytime picnic at the Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden. On Sunday afternoon, May 19th, we will have the use of the pavilion at the Museum, and their train will be steam-powered that weekend. The catered barbecue meal with side dishes and beverages will be served at about 2:30 pm and our group train ride should be after the last public train that leaves at 3 pm.

As with any event using antique equipment, there is the possibility of changes to the engines and cars that are available.

You and everyone in your party will need to check-in at the ticket window in the Museum store, so please get here a little early and head to the depot building. We will verify that you are on the list of paid participants and then put a wristband on you. The wristband is required for admission, our train ride, and your meal. Please wear your Rocky Club name tag if you have one. The Museum may have

more than one steam engine hot that day for pictures and may also be running one or more of the Galloping Gooses, so there are more reasons to arrive early. Tickets are \$45 per person including the lunch buffet with your choice of BBQ brisket or BBQ pulled chicken. We also plan to have burnt end baked beans, coleslaw, slider buns, individual chip packages, cookies, and Pork Barrel BBQ sauce. There will be water and soft drinks provided. Order tickets on-line by May 10th and pay with a credit card through PayPal on the Club website at: [www.rockymtnrrclub.org](http://www.rockymtnrrclub.org)

We really hope to do all of this on-line, but if you must use a check then see Keith at the April 9 meeting, or lastly mail your check in time to arrive by May 10th to:

Rocky Mountain RR Club – May Picnic  
PO Box 2391  
Denver, CO 80201-2391

Please include attendees name(s) and dinner choice(s) of BBQ Brisket or BBQ pulled chicken with your order. Note: Tickets will not be available after May 10th or at the Museum. This event will take the place of our regular monthly meeting for May.

## **There will not be a meeting at Barnes Hall in May.**

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**Rocky Mountain Train Show - Spring 2024 on April 6th & 7th**

**Sat 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM - for Pre-Registered TCA/NMRA Members**

**Sat 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM - Public Sun 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM - Public  
National Western Complex 4655 Humboldt St. Denver, CO  
80216**

**This is not a free event.**

**April - May 2024 CPKC Announces 2024 Steam Tour Schedule Dates**

**<https://www.cpkcr.com/en/media/CPKC-2024-Steam-Tour-Schedule-Dates>**

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# Amtrak Winter Park Express had good ridership



Amtrak's Winter Park Express (train 1105) had engines 171 and 169 in fresh snow near Pinecliffe, Colorado, March 3, 2024. ©2024 Chip

Amtrak's Winter Park Express (WPE), also known by railroaders as the ski train, enjoyed great ridership during the 2024 ski season.

Amtrak 169 and 171 handled the train in late February into March 2024. The five car Superliner equipped train featured two baggage coach cars, the lounge car, and two coaches.



Amtrak 171 West emerged from tunnel 29 near Pinecliffe, CO, on Union Pacific's Moffat Tunnel Subdivision March 3, 2024. ©2024 Chip



Amtrak 174 with Phase VII color scheme came off Amtrak's California Zephyr at Denver Union Station on March 2nd and was placed on the Amtrak storage track. The Phase VII livery was first introduced on Siemens ALC-42 locomotives. ©2024 Chip

## **Union Pacific Power on BNSF Brush Subdivision**



Union Pacific power; 6945 AC4460CW, led 3 x 2 UP locomotives on detoured Tri-State unit coal empty from Arizona to Peabody Coal operated North Antelope Mine, WY, for loading. This train was on BNSF's Brush Subdivision near Keenesburg, CO, on Feb 28, 2024. A BNSF crew was aboard for this move. ©2024 Chip

BNSF hosted a Union Pacific powered train from Tri-State operated Springerville, Arizona, generation plant. Train ran across BNSF's Brush and Angora Subdivisions February 28, 2024. UP 6945, an AC4460CW unit, led the 120-car empty unit coal train out of Denver, on the Brush line towards Alliance, Nebraska.

Here is some background information about the Springerville Plant with its diverse ownership: Symbols used for trains to the plant include SPS, SPT and SPV. I think the symbols have to do with who is paying for the coal.

There are four units at Springerville, Arizona

Unit 1 380 mw built in 1985

Unit 2 380 mw built in 1990

Unit 3 400mw built in 2006

Unit 4 400 mw built in 2009

The site is co-owned by **Tucson Electric, Salt River Project and Tri-State Generation.**

No documentation on who owns what or what percentage each owns. It is set to close in 2032.

Train loaded 120-cars in the Wyoming Powder River Basin. BNSF might have obtained the contract from UP. BNSF ran train as North Antelope Mine, WY, to Rincon, NM, train ID C NAMDCH-001A. BNSF added units on both ends of the train March 4, 2024 at Denver.



Union Pacific 8172 was the rear distributed power unit (DPU) on the eastbound coal empty from Springerville, AZ, headed for the Peabody Coal owned North Antelope Mine, WY. Water reflection at Barr, CO, on BNSF's Brush Subdivision, February 8, 2024. ©2024 Chip

# Colorado Governor Polis on special train to Longmont, promoted Front Range passenger service in March 2024

On March 7, the Amtrak train set that was used on weekends for the Winter Park Express carried an invited group of officials from Denver to Longmont and back on BNSF rails. On board were Governor Polis of Colorado, Amtrak's president Roger Harris, and other state and federal representatives that are interested in developing Front Range Passenger Rail.



The VIP inspection train is seen here approaching Broomfield on the BNSF line between Denver and Fort Collins, Colorado. © 2024 by Dave Schaaf



The train is shown here northbound at Niwot, Colorado. © 2024 by Dave Schaaf

Who: Governor Polis and the Front Range Passenger Rail District representatives.

What: Join Governor Jared Polis and the Front Range Passenger District hosted a special Amtrak train. Guests included national and statewide transit and passenger rail leaders, elected officials, stakeholders and Amtrak president Roger Harris took a showcase train ride from Denver's Union Station to Longmont, CO, March 7, 2024. Colorado's Front Range Passenger Rail District line was recently accepted into the Corridor I.D. Program bringing Colorado one step closer to the reality of a front range passenger rail system.

When: Thursday, March 7th, 2024

- Guests arrived at Union Station 12:30 PM and gathered for a news conference on the train platform.
- Train departed at Denver Union Station at 1:20 PM and arrived in Longmont at 2:45 PM.
- Once the train arrived in Longmont, Governor Polis disembarked for a few announcements and photo ops.



Left to right; James Flattum, Colorado Governor Jared Polis, and Roger Bamber at Longmont, CO, March 7, 2024. ©2024 Chip

## Rocket Booster Train on UP's Sidney Subdivision



Empty rocket booster cars were part of a 21-car Memphis, Tennessee, to Pocatello, Idaho, Union Pacific train at Sidney, Nebraska in February 2024

Norfolk Southern 4096, AC44C6M, led Union Pacific's Memphis, Tennessee, to Pocatello, Idaho, train S MEPC1-23, across Nebraska and Wyoming on February 26, 2024. Train was stopped at Sidney, NE, and Egbert, WY, to allow other trains to pass on account of the high/wide concerns. UP Sidney Subdivision was humming with traffic.

The booster segments contain solid propellant that is quite flammable. These were empties going back West. There was recently a delivery to Florida of the booster segments for the NASA Space Launch System (SLS). Those booster segments were mated with the Boeing built Core Stage of the SLS at the Vehicle Assembly Building at Kennedy Space Center in Florida.



Norfolk Southern 4096, AC44C6M, with 21-car empty booster train was held on the middle track due to high/wide clearance concerns. Passing trains had to reduce their speed passing the rocket booster special. Train at Egbert, WY, Feb 26, 2024. Note in upper right distance the Sidney Local was on the wye. ©2024 Chip

## **Proposed Savage Tooele Railroad in Utah**

WASHINGTON – Federal regulators have concluded that construction of the proposed Savage Tooele Railroad in Utah would have no impact on the environment if mitigation measures are followed.

The Surface Transportation Board's Office of Environmental Analysis on Friday (March 2, 2024) released its final environmental assessment for the proposed short line, which aims to revive Union Pacific's former 6-mile Warner Branch, restore a quarter mile of ripped-up track, and build 5 miles of new track in the Lakeview Business Park, which is being developed in Grantsville, southwest of Salt Lake City, Utah.

The environmental report recommends that the STB impose 37 voluntary mitigations that the railroad had proposed, along with 25 additional mitigation measures.

The STB now must rule on the transportation merits of the project. (Info courtesy of Kalmbach Media)

## Former Union Pacific Dome Leaves Colorado

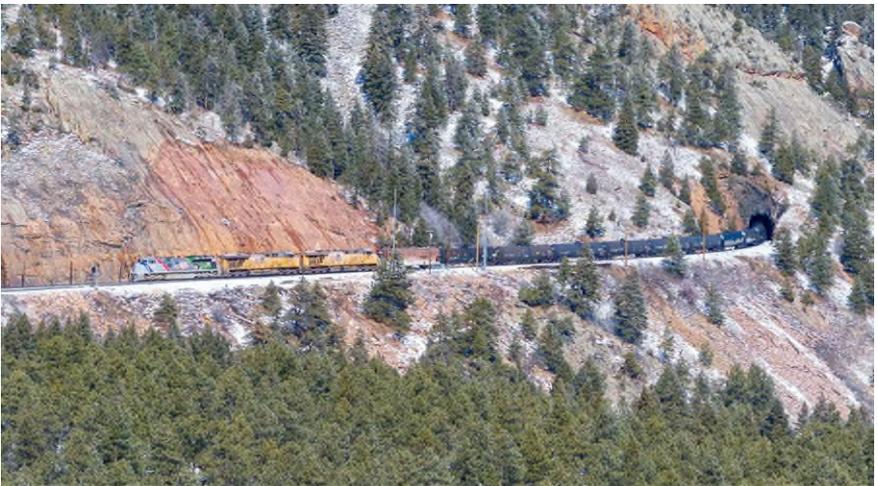


Former Union Pacific 7000 dome coach now lettered PAXX 7000 left Denver Rock Island RR storage on March 7, 2024. Car was interchanged to UP's North Yard, Denver, CO. UP moved the car via Bailey Yard, North Platte, NE, ultimately towards Tennessee. Car left UP's North Yard on the rear of the North Platte, NE, bound train late March 12, 2024. ©2024 Chip

## UP 1943 Veterans Unit March 2024 on Oil Train



Union Pacific 1943, SD70AH Veterans unit Support Our Troops, led the Price River Terminal, Wash, Utah, to St. James, Louisiana, 94-car loaded oil cans on March 9, 2024. Train was between tunnels 3 (right) and 2 on the Moffat Tunnel Subdivision. ©2024 Chip



UP 1943 emerged from tunnel 2 with loaded oil cans March 9, 2024. Unique paint scheme honors Veterans. Train O XPSJ-05 cut off the rear two DPU's and continued on the Limon Subdivision with the three units up front. ©2024 Chip



UP 1943 East on Big 10 Curve rolling down grade towards Rocky Siding west of Arvada, CO, on March 9, 2024. Loaded and empty oil trains are more numerous than coal trains on UP's Moffat Tunnel line these days. ©2024 Chip

## **BNSF and UP Cut Employees in 2024, commentary from Chip**

UP has embarked on a furlough odyssey. From the time Jim Vena arrived in August 2023, through January 2024, as shown in UP's reports to the STB, UP has reduced its operating personnel by 771—this, after cutting 25% of its workforce in previous years. Every other US Class I has increased employment during the same period.

At UP's 4th quarter earnings call, Mr. Vena promised growth, but at the same time promised to continue to reduce headcount throughout 2024 as he has done continuously since he arrived. Indeed, in late February 2024, UP announced additional furloughs. And the railroads' year end filings show that UP is the only Class I which ended 2023 with hundreds of fewer workers than it had a year earlier. All of the others, including Norfolk Southern, the only railroad which reported zero furloughs, ended the year with a larger workforce.

BNSF only recently (first week of March 2024) has decided to hop on the furlough bandwagon again—announcing hundreds of new furloughs (Havelock, NE, Alliance, NE and Lincoln, NE mechanical

hard hit!) and just last week, with more to come. This is, indeed, unfortunate. How does BNSF's return to furloughing square with its exciting new partnership with J.B. Hunt to move millions of truckloads to rail by delivering 95% on time performance?

BNSF recently announced roughly 362 jobs were being furloughed nationwide. That translated to 38 carmen, four laborers, two building maintenance workers and one pipefitter being laid off in Lincoln, Nebraska.

## Nebraska Kansas Colorado Railway News



Nebraska Kansas Colorado Railway (NKCR) OMLX 420, SD40-3, and OMLX 4016, GP40-2LW painted Hudson Bay Railway, crossed trestle with five covered hoppers loaded with fly ash. The train makes weekly Friday trips to Gerald Gentleman Station coal fueled electrical generation operation near Sutherland, NE. The train crossed trestle March 15, 2024. ©2024 Chip

Nebraska Public Power District's Gerald Gentleman Station is Nebraska's largest electric generating facility. It is consistently ranked as one of the lowest production-cost electric generation plants in the nation.

Sheldon Station generates 225 megawatts of electricity. Power generated here is distributed to Nebraska's residents through transmission lines leading to Lincoln, Hastings and Beatrice.

# Rocky Mountain Railroad Club Information

Author/photographer: Chip

Web: <http://www.rockymtnrrclub.org>

Email: [rails@rockymtnrrclub.org](mailto:rails@rockymtnrrclub.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/rockymtnrrclub](http://www.facebook.com/rockymtnrrclub)

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## Membership Information

Membership in the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club may be obtained online at [www.rockymtnrrclub.org](http://www.rockymtnrrclub.org) or by sending the annual dues to the Club address:

Rocky Mountain Railroad Club

Membership

PO Box 2391

Denver, CO 80201-2391

Regular membership dues are \$35.00 with email delivery of the Rail Report or \$50 if a printed, mailed *Rail Report* is desired.

Contributing membership is \$55.00.

Sustaining membership is \$75.00.

Patron membership is \$100.00.

An associate membership for spouses and children is \$20.00 additional.

Members joining after June may send a payment for half of the dues level they wish to join at for the remainder of the year. Members of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club are also members of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Historical Foundation, a tax exempt 501(c)(3) organization.

## Board Meetings

Members are always welcome to attend any board of directors meeting. Please contact any Club officer for the date, time and Zoom meeting information.

**Newsletter contributions and items for publication should be sent to:**

Chip Sherman, Editor

Email: [rails@rockymtnrrclub.org](mailto:rails@rockymtnrrclub.org)

USPS Mail:

Rocky Mountain Railroad Club

Rail Report

PO Box 2391

Denver, CO 80201-2391