



RAIL REPORT

Rocky Mountain Railroad Club

Rocky Mountain Railroad
Historical Foundation

February 2025

Issue 770

=====

--- February 11 meeting at Barnes Hall ---



© Zach Green

Twenty Years Down the Barrel A Joint Line Native's Perspective

Zach Green grew up a stone's throw from the world famous railfan hotspot of Crews, CO, MP 654, today's MP 87 give or take on the BNSF Pikes Peak Subdivision. A railfan from the time he could hold a camera, he worked his way up from a Kodak 110 Camera (the OG Point and Shoot) to a second-hand Minolta X-GM and access to his Dad's lenses and Kodachrome at the age of 10. Nearing the end of high school, the X-GM was upgraded to a Minolta X-700. All was well until Kodak pulled the pin on KR-64, Fujichrome didn't quite match the results, and a search and lots of research went into finding his next photographic upgrade. About this time, Canon had launched their 10D DLSR and more research was done. A full time job as a Land Surveyor enabled him

to sample an early Canon Point and Shoot S50, which after 6 years of use has been mostly in the field while surveying. After several years of working out of town, Zach was able to save up enough extra per diem to make a major splash. Canon had recently launched the EOS 30D, a 16 megapixel DSLR. In the Fall of 2005 Zach, purchased a Canon 30D kit with a 17-85mm zoom lens and for close up work a 100-400 f4 L Series mini-bazooka. With his photographic abilities starting to run into the limits and capabilities of the Canon 30, a savings measure and new research performed. In the fall of 2016 an upgrade was made to the Canon 5D MkIV, Zach's first full frame digital camera. Over the years Zach has added to his arsenal of lenses to include: f4 100mm Marco L Series, f4 70-20mm IS USM Ver II L Series, f4 24-105mm IS USM L Series, f4 16-35mm L Series, and a Sigma Contemporary 150-600mm IS USM Bazooka. Zach's show represents 20 years of digital railfan photography, not only in Colorado but in many states he has traveled to for work and even several job sites. Zach specializes in railroad-related land surveying and has had the opportunity to work on railroad-related projects in Nevada, Wyoming, Texas, Washington, Indiana, Idaho, New Mexico, Kansas, Nebraska, Illinois, and Indiana. Please join us as Zach takes us on a journey across Colorado and the western US in "20 Years Down the Barrel - A Joint Line Native's Perspective".

Please join us for an enjoyable, educational evening in the meeting hall at Christ Church at 2950 S. University Blvd. in Denver. There is off-street parking on the south side of the complex. All programs are intended to provide an educational experience on railroading. The general public is welcome to attend. There is no charge for this meeting that starts at 7:30 pm.

Or Join the Zoom Meeting ---

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86251105134?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86251105134?pwd=VWRwRUVCbVoyTzhwMWhYbm5scTlqdz09)

[pwd=VWRwRUVCbVoyTzhwMWhYbm5scTlqdz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86251105134?pwd=VWRwRUVCbVoyTzhwMWhYbm5scTlqdz09) Meeting ID: 862 5110
5134 Passcode: 496652



Two photos above © Zach Green

Upcoming Events:

Our March 11 meeting will have a program from Paul Swanson, who will travel here from Wisconsin. April meeting is on the 8th. We are likely to have our annual Club picnic in May, and are working on details.

Amtrak's Winter Park Express operates on weekends from January 9 - March 31, 2025 to Winter Park Ski Resort. This train leaves Denver Union Station at 7:00 AM on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays.

--

Rocky Mountain Train Show - Spring 2025
April 5th & 6th at the
National Western Complex
4655 Humboldt Street
Denver, Colorado 80216
Exhibit Areas
Expo Hall, Hall Of Education - East, Hall Of
Education - West, Stadium Hall.

[Learn More](#)

--

Colorado Crossings annual event at the Colorado RR Museum, May 16-18, 2025.

--

Open house Saturdays at Como, Colorado:
June 21 and July 19; The annual Boreas Pass
Railroad Day will be on August 16.

President's Letter by Dave Goss February 2025

As I mentioned in last month's Rail Report, Jim Ehernberger, Dave Schaaf and I met with Paul Hammond, Rob Kramer and Sharon McGee at the Colorado Railroad Museum on January 14. We went over most of our thoughts about possibly transferring the Club's membership and assets to the museum. Paul and his staff were very open to suggestions. As you can imagine, there are many details to be worked out and at this point in time nothing is final. Once our dues renewals are complete, we will provide the museum with a listing of our members so they can compare them with their membership list to identify duplicate memberships. Paul also indicated that he needs to brief the museum's Board of Directors, which will take place in March. I know everyone would like a firm answer, but I believe that we jointly agree that this integration makes a lot of sense to both the club and the museum. Paul also wants feedback from his staff and the Board before we make any formal announcements.

As to 2025 dues, I want to thank all of you who have renewed. Of the 308 members listed in 2024, more than 270 have renewed as of January 21st. We are going to continue to accept renewals until mid-February. It is remarkable how many of you have, despite the somewhat uncertain future of the organization, committed to stay with us through this year. To recognize what might be the Club's last year, we are researching a special membership card that will be a unique memento and commemorative way to

mark our 87 years of preserving Colorado railroad history. Additionally, we are planning several special activities including a 2025 Membership Directory and a proposed picnic at the Colorado Railroad Museum similar to what we did in 2024.

We are also in the process of cleaning out our “World Headquarters” which is a storage unit located on South Broadway. As you saw at the December annual meeting we have many VHS tapes, publications, and memorabilia that need to find a home. In February we will continue this process and over the next few months, make additional items available to Club members and other organizations. We thank you for your continued support of the Board’s officers and committee members as we go through this important transition.

Amtrak's Winter Park Express - Well Patronized

Amtrak’s Winter Park Express (WPE) has been well-patronized during the 2023-2024 holiday season. The five-car train with capacity for 280 passengers was nearly full on all trips that started December 20, 2024. Trains operated 3 days per week (Fridays - Sundays) from Dec. 20 thru January 5, 2025.

Amtrak 75 in Phase VII paint scheme and 146, both P42DC units, started off the season out of Denver, CO, at 7:00 AM sharp. Those trains were dispatched by Union Pacific's Harriman dispatchers in Omaha, NE. The best part: the fares were \$19-\$39 one-way. Children 2-12 were at half fare.

Amtrak refurbished Superliner lounge car 33043 in 2024 with tables, and increased the number of seats. The car was assigned to the WPE beginning mid-December 2024.

Amtrak added two cars via California Zephyr train 6 that arrived Denver, CO, on January 8, 2025. These cars were added to the WPE making for a 7-car train that started 5-day operations (Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays) for the daily runs to Winter Park Ski Resort and Fraser, Colorado, as of January 9, 2025.

The expanded train now offers 408 seats in six coaches. Three Superliners offer ADA accommodations. Three Superliners have 62 seats upstairs and also offer Americans with Disability Act (ADA accommodations) in the form of 12 seats on the lower level. The trains depart Fraser at 4:05 PM and arrive at Winter Park Ski Resort at 4:25 PM to pick up skiers.



Amtrak 75, Phase VII paint scheme, (at lower right) was ready to depart Denver Union Station, Denver, CO, December 28, 2024. ©2024-2025 Chip



Amtrak Winter Park Express crew left to right; engineer Curt Bruckle, conductor Chris Nelson, and assistant conductor Antonio with Amtrak 146 & 75 along with their 5-car train. Fraser, CO, January 5, 2025 along UP's Moffat Tunnel Subdivision. © 2025 Chip



Amtrak 33043 Superliner lounge now features tables and increased seating. This car was recently reconfigured with table seating. Amtrak train 1105 was at Rocky Siding, CO, west of Arvada, CO. ©2025 Chip



Amtrak conductor Chris Nelson found someone had placed a 'Ski Train Through the Rockies - Rio Grande' decal on Amtrak 75 during Fraser, CO, layover on January 12, 2025. Winter Park Express had six Superliner coaches and a lounge car starting January 9, 2025 when 5-day a week service began. The 5-day a week service continues until late March 2025. ©2025 Chip

Nebraska Kansas Colorado Railway



OmniTRAX OMLX 421, an SD40T-2 tunnel motor, was freshly painted at Grant, Nebraska, late 2024. This unit was ex-WRIX 51, ex-PHL 51, nee-Southern Pacific 8550. Unit was parked outside the Nebraska Kansas Colorado Railway (NKCR) enginehouse December 30, 2024. ©2024-2025 Chip



OmniTRAX OMLX 419 on NKCR rails picked up boxcars at Holyoke, CO, on December 30, 2024. Trucks were parked after hauling the latest grain harvest in from the eastern Colorado prairies. ©2024-2025 Chip

MxV Rail Tour

MxV Rail, the former operator of the Federal Railroad Administration's Transportation Technology Center, has built a new testing and training facility a few miles south of its former home. Now located at the decommissioned Pueblo Chemical Depot.

Stockpile Destruction

In 2002, neutralization followed by biotreatment was selected to destroy the more than 780,000 mustard-filled munitions stored at the depot. In 2004, a groundbreaking ceremony was held for the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP). Construction was completed in 2012, followed by extensive testing of all systems. Work was completed in July 2023.

The U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot, which safely stored chemical weapons in Colorado for a majority of its 82-year lifecycle, was deactivated during a public ceremony Sept.

12, 2024. With the depot deactivation, it will operate as the U.S. Army Chemical Materials Activity-West.

In 2025, the former military installation was being prepared for the ultimate turnover to PuebloPlex, who will transform this storied site into a hub of quality enterprises and initiatives that promote sustainable, long-term economic development for the Pueblo community.”

Pueblo Chemical Depot has 45 miles of trackage. It's being used by companies such as Omaha Track for storage of discarded wood railroad ties. Vesta Wind (new owner CS Wind) stores their specialized flat cars out there when not needed.

[Learn More](#)



MxV Rail is a world class rail research, consulting, training and test facility at the former Army Pueblo Chemical Depot. Newly built 2022-2023 amongst the 600 storage igloos is a custom built railroad test track. MxV is the formula for momentum.

The Railroad Passenger Car Alliance 2025 Conference that was held in Pueblo, CO, January 15-19, 2025 offered 150



MxV Rail engineer Blake Boucher used UP 3886 on loan to the MxV Rail campus for the two car commuter train that RPCA attendees rode around the test track January 16, 2025. Blake is a former UP employee. Facility for Accelerated Service Testing (FAST). ©2025 Chip



Tour Guide MC Jones (center) briefed (right) Bob Menzies (Aberdeen Carolina & Western RR owner) about the first responder training for tank cars involved in derailments. MxV Rail training facility at the Pueblo Chemical Depot, CO, January 16, 2025. ©2025 Chip

San Luis Central RR News

San Luis Central will get \$1 million to replace about 6000 ties courtesy of the Federal Railroad Administration grant announced on October 29, 2024.

Denver RTD Maintenance in January 2025

Denver RTD Service Notice kept light rail commuters up to date on rail line maintenance in mid-January 2025. Buses substituted for light rail trains.

Denver RTD performed railhead surface defect repairs on their D Line, E Line and H Line on January 13 and 14, 2025. During the three-day period, crews worked to mitigate railhead surface defects by conducting rail grinding along the corridor north of I-25 Broadway Station. Light rail service on all three lines resumed January 15, 2025.

Pueblo Union Depot Event January 18, 2025



The Railroad Passenger Car Alliance 2025 Conference visited the Pueblo Railroad Museum at Pueblo, CO, on January 18, 2025. Former Colorado & Wyoming 103, a GP-

7, sits next to former Denver & Rio Grande Western RR caboose 01432 in the frigid cold weather. © 2025 Chip

Kyle RR Developments



Kyle Railroad, operated by Genesee & Wyoming Inc, took off the slow order between Flagler and Limon, CO, on January 17, 2025. The track speed limit will now be 25 MPH. Kyle RR installed 27,500 new ties in November and into mid-December 2024.

Photo - Kyle RR westbound train at sunset had Utah Railway 5004 and 5005, rare MK50-3 units, December 29, 2024 east of Burlington, Colorado. © Chip

SSRX 4410, ex-Soo GP38, made a one time trip to Limon, CO, and back east to Goodland, KS, mid-January 2025 before becoming an elevator locomotive at Scoular Goodland. The unit was turned as requested by Scoular. (Info courtesy Kyle RR)

[Learn More](#)

The small Plymouth locomotive that is used for operations in Como, Colorado, is soon getting new wheels and axles in order to be ready for the coming season.

In Remembrance

Cliff Mestel

Clifford P. Mestel joined the Club in 1962 and held membership number 10 at the time of his passing on September 15, 2024. He spent much of his life in Park County, Colorado living in Grant, Pine Junction and Bailey before moving to Buena Vista. He was active in the Buena Vista Heritage Museum and was involved in preservation and restoration work in St. Elmo and Como. His hobbies included model railroading, and he had small businesses devoted to making track, railroad cars and railroad related building reproductions.

Roger Cook

Roger P. Cook, who joined the Club in 1968 and held membership number 30, passed way in Oradell, New Jersey on November 21, 2024. Roger served in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam conflict. He was a self-taught photographer and specialized in photographing steam locomotives. He co-authored the book *The Western Maryland Railway; Fireballs and Black Diamonds*, published by Howell-North Books in 1981.

**Rocky Mountain Railroad
Club Information**



Roving reporter -- Chip
Published in February 2025

With editing assistance from Dave Schaaf and Dave Goss.

Club and Foundation Information:
Rocky Mountain Railroad Club,
Rocky Mountain Railroad Historical
Foundation
P.O. Box 2391
Denver, Colorado 80201-2391

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

To submit pictures and or a write up for a future months column, please send an
Email: rails@rockymtnrrclub.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/rockymtnrrclub

[Learn More](#)

Transportation

Technology Center

ENSCO is proud to support the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Transportation Technology Center (TTC) as the prime contractor conducting research, engineering, testing, and training as well as operating and maintaining this important US Department of Transportation facility.



Intermountain

Chapter

Click on the above INTERMOUNTAIN CHAPTER NRHS link to go to their website.



Colorado Railroad Museum

Click on the above COLORADO RAILROAD MUSEUM link to go to their website.

[Unsubscribe from our emails](#)