



RAIL REPORT

Rocky Mountain Railroad Club

Rocky Mountain Railroad
Historical Foundation

January 2024

Issue 757

There is no January meeting in Barnes Hall

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A note from Dave Schaaf, VP and program director ---

I mentioned at the December meeting that we do not have a presenter lined up for January, and it looks like my job on that day may go late anyway, so we need to skip a month. We will not have a meeting this month.

Andy Dell and Nathan Holmes and I have been spread pretty thin in the last few months, and it will take a little more skill now that Nathan has stepped away from the Board. The technical side of putting our meetings on to Zoom for the distant members, and trying to make the meetings also available on YouTube for potential members is a challenge. If it gets too complicated, we may have to do less of the "free TV".

We are still planning to have the February 13 meeting presentation with John Crisanti in-person at Barnes Hall. He will show us images of the Montana Rail Link, and I have invited him to bring along copies of his brand-new MRL book to sell if he wants to. The MRL reverted to BNSF ownership at the end of 2023, so this is a timely topic.

Upcoming Events:

Amtrak's Winter Park Express starts Friday, January 12, 2024. It will run Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from Denver Union Station to Winter Park Ski Area, Colorado. Last run will be March 31st.

Santa Rides the Rails into Windsor, CO



OmniTRAX Great Western Railway carried Santa Claus to Windsor, CO, on December 2, 2023. The Wonderful Windsor event was well attended. Santa rode GWR business car #1 named Yellowstone. ©2023 Chip Sherman

Santa Claus arrived in style aboard OmniTRAX Great Western Railway of Colorado at Windsor, CO, on December 2, 2023. Santa rode business car #1 named Yellowstone handled by locomotive OMLX 4011 painted unique orange scheme.

The Wonderful Windsor annual event is held the first weekend each December. Train pulled up to Boardwalk Park next to the Windsor Lake at 4:30 PM. The large crowd greeted Santa as a high school band played Christmas tunes.

OmniTRAX Great Western Railway, GWR 1 named Yellowstone, ex-Northern Pacific (NP) business car. The former Northern Pacific business car 2nd NP 8 was built in 1898 in the NP's Como Shops. It was not built for James J. Hill. He had his own Great Northern car. Instead, it was built for the NP's president, CS Mellen, named "Yellowstone." In 1918 the car was assigned to the NP's USRA General Manager, J.M. Hannaford, and renumbered USRA No. A-116. At the end of USRA control, the car was returned to the NP and its original NP 8 restored.

The car was rebuilt at Pullman in 1921 with steel bolsters, end platforms, and sheathing. New 6-wheel trucks were installed to replace the original wood ones. It was replaced as the NP president's car by a new car, 4th No. 1, also named Yellowstone, built by Pullman in 1924.

In 1926 car NP 8 was down-graded and renumbered to division superintendent's Car NP 1909. The car was removed from service 1954. Placed for sale but found no buyer. In 1955 the car was designated supply train Diner-Dormitory Car NP X-589. It was re-designated Supply Car NP X-143 in 1959. In 1986 the NP X-143 was sold to the Great Western Railway purchased by GWR manager Pete Ascher. GWR 1 was upgraded and painted in 2014 at the Loveland, CO, shop.



OmniTRAX OMLX 4011, GP40-2LW, ex-Canadian National locomotive handled the Santa Special to the waiting crowd at Windsor, CO, Saturday, December 2, 2023. ©2023 Chip



Great Western Railway of Colorado business car #1 - named Yellowstone after sunset December 2, 2023 at Windsor, CO, with Happy Holidays banner on rear platform railing. Thanks to owner Pat Broe for participating in this annual event. ©2023 Chip

Union Pacific's 'Powered by Our People' unit



Union Pacific 1111 - The Powered by Our People unit on November 28, 2023 at Kelker Yard south of Colorado Springs, CO. UP 1111 came from Yermo, CA, as the rear DPU on a unit Fort Carson military train. This unit was leader on 6-unit light power move from Kelker to Pueblo, CO, later that day. ©2023 Chip



Conductor side of UP 1111 with slogan 'Powered by Our People' at Kelker Yard, CO, November 28. ©2023 Chip

Knotts Berry Farm ex-Rio Grande Southern 41 was rebuilt at Durango, CO, during 2023



Rio Grande Southern #41 (owned by Knotts Berry Farm) was given some tender loving care by the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad shop force at Durango, CO, in 2023. Test run was done Nov 27. ©2023 Jerry Day

Rio Grande Southern C-19 class 2-8-0 was built for the Denver & Rio Grande by Baldwin in 1881 as their number 409. It was sold to the Rio Grande Southern in November 1916 and renumbered to 41. The Rio Grande Southern sold it to Knotts Berry Farm in Buena Park, California. The 41 was joined by ex-D&RGW C-19 number 340 and the two have pulled trains there to the present day. On February 18, 2022 it was trucked to Durango for a major rebuild. The work was completed on November 16, 2023 and it was tested around the Durango yard. On the 17th the 41 ran light to Rockwood for the first test run on a 2.5% grade.

On the 18th, staff from Knotts Berry Farm and the Colorado Railroad Museum were taken to Rockwood on a test run. The train was backed out to the High Line for a run by. On the 19th, the staff was taken for a longer test run to the Cascade Wye.

After some adjustments were made and a final painting applied, the 41 took Durango & Silverton shop and train staff for a ride to Cascade Wye on the 27th. The area had received snow, so the 41 ran in significant snow for the first time since the late 1940's. Jerry B. Day



Knotts Berry Farm had Rio Grande Southern #41 worked on by the Durango & Silverton NG RR shop forces. She was on the Durango turntable November 27 and was shipped back to California in early December 2023. The former RGS 41 actually ran from Durango to Telluride and on to Ridgway, Colorado, until purchased by Walter Knott. Ghost Town & Calico locomotive 41 was the name used at Knott's Berry Farm. ©2023 Jerry Day



Colorado Pacific RR 1964 brought Santa Claus to Eads, CO, December 10, 2023. Motorcar enthusiasts with the North American Railcar Operators Association (NARCOA), Rocky Mountain Division, participated. ©2023 Chip

Colorado Pacific RR Santa Run to Merry on Maine at Eads, CO, Dec 2023

The Town of Eads, Colorado, in southeastern Colorado hosts an annual event called Merry on Maine (spelling is correct) The Colorado Pacific RR brought jolly Saint Nick to town on their locomotives, CXR 1964 and 1923, SD40-2. Santa arrived at 2:00 PM this year.

Adding to the festivities were the motorcars decorated for the season. The North American Railcar Operators Association (NARCOA), Rocky Mountain Division, had seven motorcars following the Colorado Pacific RR units into Eads, CO. Weather was cool. Great turnout for the holiday festivities.



Colorado Pacific RR crew aboard CXR 1964 prepared for Santa Run near Eads, CO. Note the nose herald and student conductor Morgyn's sweatshirt. Santa Run operated Sunday afternoon, December 10, 2023. ©2023 Chip

Sunset Hugo Roundhouse at Hugo, Colorado, December 10, 2023



Colorado sunset at former Union Pacific RR Hugo Roundhouse built 1909. Building was restored by the Town of Hugo and Lincoln County. Hugo, CO, December 10, 2023. ©2023 Chip



Brilliant sunset December 10, 2023 at former Union Pacific Hugo Roundhouse along UP's Limon Subdivision. Town of Hugo and Lincoln County have restored the windows of the closed historic building. ©2023 Chip

Dome Coach nee-UP 7000 now PAXX 7000



Union Pacific 7000 was sold to Auto Train and renumbered to 700 in June 1972; to Jonathan Gallucki, Atlanta, Georgia, in December 1981; to Ken Bitten in 1999, leased to American Orient Express and Montana Rockies Rail Tours service; to Oregon Rail Corporation (Henry Hillman, Jr.) in August 1999; stored in 2000, with primer paint; moved to American Orient Express facility at Chehalis, Washington, in September 2001. Recent owners were Phil Sheridan (deceased) and then Bernie Watts with some partners. Car now carries reporting marks PAXX = Passenger Railcar Services Corp. Denver, CO, December 19, 2023. ©2023 Chip



Union Pacific 7000 was built in 1954 by American Car & Foundry. Car was painted primer gray and interior gutted by Colorado Railcar before its bankruptcy. Car stored on the Denver Rock Island RR now lettered PAXX 7000 near Holly Street, Denver, CO, December 19, 2023. ©2023 Chip

Union Pacific Layoffs November & December 2023

Union Pacific laid off 13 carmen from the two run through track car shop on the west side of North Yard, Denver, CO, on December 5, 2023. Employees were shocked to learn they were out of work. Some were offered transfers to Bailey Yard at North Platte, NE, or Fort Worth, TX.

The only employee found at the North Yard car shop on December 6th was the car shop manager. No work was being done on bad ordered rail cars.

Another carman layoff was done at South Morrill, NE, in November 2023. Nine carmen were laid off of the 14 employees at that location. Five carmen jobs were retained due to the requirement to inspect extended long haul unit coal trains servicing the Wyoming Powder River Basin.

UP Layoffs - Maintenance of Way

The president of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division union has been sending letters to regulators for more than a month raising concerns about the layoffs, but the the Surface Transportation Board hasn't intervened.

“Chaos and disruption with Union Pacific’s Maintenance of Way forces can only lead to one outcome — deferred maintenance and catastrophic outcomes,” Tony Cardwell, who leads the union, said in his letters. “These furloughs will affect the safety of Union Pacific operations and pose serious safety risks for the general public and the communities surrounding Union Pacific’s infrastructure.”

Cardwell said that after these layoffs of 1,350 workers UP will have only a little over 4,700 track maintenance workers. Back in 2015 before a series of cuts designed to make the railroad more efficient, Union Pacific employed 8,791. That means each maintenance worker will now have about 11 miles (17.7 kilometers) of track to take care of on average, up from 8.6 last year and 6.5 in 2016.

The union is concerned that these cuts are an indication of how tightly new CEO Jim Vena plans to manage the railroad's expenses. Union Pacific, like all the major freight railroads, already made significant cuts in its workforce over the past several years as part of overhauling its operations to rely more on fewer, longer trains. Last month, Union Pacific announced plans to trim the ranks of its mangers across the railroad to help streamline decision making. (December 2, 2023)

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Membership Information

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

Rocky Mountain Railroad Club

Membership

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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:

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