

RAIL REPORT

Rocky Mountain Railroad Club

Rocky Mountain Railroad
Historical Foundation

July and August 2024

Issue 763/764

No July or August meetings in Barnes Hall ---



Rocky Mountain RR Club picnic offered members a delicious BBQ lunch, and two steam engine runs. Rio Grande Southern 20 pulled our passenger special. DRGW 491 handled a photo freight with Rio Grande 0578 caboose. Thanks to the Colorado Railroad Museum for a magnificent day in Golden, Colorado, May 19, 2024. ©2024 Chip

Heartland of America steam tour

Big Boy #4014 will depart on the "Heartland of America Tour" on Wednesday, August 28 from Cheyenne, Wyoming, and travel across nine additional states: Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Texas. The eight-week tour concludes in late October. Updates can be found on the internet at UP.com

President's Column by Andy Dell

It has been a while since I have written a column. Our board meetings over the last six months or so have focused on several things. Three main topics keep coming up:

What exactly are we able to provide to our membership currently and in the years to come? What does the future of the club look like moving forward? And finally, how do we continue on with no new volunteers coming forward to replace our burned-out volunteers?

Your next question after all that is probably “What is the Railroad Club board doing about all this?” A group of six volunteers, some past board members or presidents and some current board members, have formed a committee to explore options for the club’s future. Since asking for more volunteers in the past has not had much effect, we are needing to take some drastic measures. Many of the behind-the-scenes functions of the club are all done by 3 people: the President, Vice President and Treasurer. We also have our secretary, board members, our newsletter editor and a handful of others that put in many hours each month. Many of us are at the point of burn out or beyond.

Several meetings of this committee will take place in August and throughout the rest of the year to explore a few different options which include possibly merging with another organization, reducing in person meetings or eliminating them altogether, switching to an email only newsletter and potentially finding a different place to house the club’s historical records and other items.

We are also looking to hire (or volunteer) a bookkeeper to review our finances monthly and perform a formal audit of our

books. This person could also potentially help with membership processing.

A new president needs to be identified or someone from the membership to volunteer for this position by the end of November. I asked the membership last year in a few of my columns looking for a new president and received zero response and so I continued on this year to ensure the club kept going. As part of our bylaws, the president of the club is restricted to 3 consecutive years and I will reach that 3-year limit in December.

In order for the printed Rail Report to continue in 2025, we need to have someone volunteer to do the conversion / layout from the email version to a print friendly version. I currently do this with a template in Microsoft Word but it would look much nicer if someone with Adobe InDesign knowledge and software access takes it over as I do not wish to continue doing this in 2025. We could also hire someone to do this and spend some of our money in the Club account to keep the mailed version going even if that means taking a loss.

As more details are solidified, I will keep everyone up to date in this column. While we are making every effort to keep the club going, some major changes will be necessary over the next year or two. We will make a strong effort to honor the club name and it's legacy.

To summarize, our immediate needs for 2025 are someone to take over the layout of the Rail Report to convert from email format to print friendly, a new president and a bookkeeper / accountant to help manage and review the club's finances.

I will be mailing out a more detailed letter to the entire membership body explaining our current situation, options being explored as well as the progress we are making. Please keep an eye on your mail starting in early September for a letter

from me in a standard sized envelope with the club logo and return address in the upper left.

Department of Energy Car Named Atlas



Department of Energy finished certification testing at the MxV Puebloplex (AKA Pueblo Army Chemical Depot) Test Track in May 2024. The car IDOX 10001 was moved by BNSF up the Joint Line to Denver, CO, on May 25, 2024. Car was parked at BNSF's Denver Locomotive Shop for several days. ©2024 Chip

The Atlas railcar is designed to carry 17 different Spent Nuclear Fuel (SNF) containers (also known as "casks") weighing between 82 tons and 210 tons. The railcar design process included extensive dynamic computer modeling to simulate how the railcar design would perform with different railcar components, different container attachment mechanisms, and different container weights.

Safety Standards and Testing the Association of American Railroads (AAR) is the standard-setting organization for all of North America's freight railroads. AAR's S-2043 standard is specific to railcars used to transport high-level radioactive material, like SNF.

To gain AAR approval under the rigorous 5-2043 standard, railcars must undergo individual testing, and testing as part of a full train with

other S-2043 railcars (multi-railcar testing). DOE estimates it will take about 8 years of railcar development and testing to verify that all of the new railcars meet the S-2043 standard, and receive approval from the AAR.

Atlas was built to fulfill the department's obligation to eventually move and permanently store the growing stockpile of some 92,000 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel produced by the 94 nuclear power plants in the United States, including the US Navy's nuclear fleet. (Info courtesy Dept of Energy)



Department of Defense (DODX) 800 escort car arrived in Denver, CO, June 1, 2024 via East St. Louis, IL, by BNSF La Junta, CO. DODX 800 was parked at BNSF's Denver Locomotive Shop. Department of Energy hosted over 180 folks to tour the two trains that included the Atlas system recently fully certified for operational use. MxV Rail test site east of Pueblo, CO, did the Atlas certification tests. ©2024 Chip

Martin Marietta Ships Rock to Lubbock, TX

Martin Marietta loaded a unit rock train with BNSF power at Parkdale, CO, (west of the Royal Gorge) in early June 2024 for delivery at Lubbock, Texas. Train was noted at La Junta, CO, June 7, 2024. Train had BNSF 5861, 7786, 4126 and 6632 handling 90-loads of 12,760 tons. Train Parkdale, CO, to Lubbock, TX, had BNSF symbol U PKDLUB -001T. (Larry Green)

UP Steam Added Positive Train Control



UP 4014 made a Positive Train Control test run May 22, 2024. The UP support cars and 16-covered hopper cars went west towards Speer, Wyoming and out on track three to Lynch, WY. Equipment returned to Cheyenne that afternoon. ©2024 Chip



Union Pacific 4014 Big Boy visited Wamsutter, Wyoming on July 1, 2024. The special train left Cheyenne, WY, on June 30th with no diesel unit headed to Roseville, CA. Train stopped in Laramie, WY, on June 30th laying over at Rawlins, WY. UP 6388, C44ACM, was added to the special at Green River, WY. ©2024 Chip

Union Pacific Big Boy Trip to California



Union Pacific's Steam Program Manager and Big Boy engineer Ed Dickens with 4014 at Point of Rocks, Wyoming July 1, 2024. ©2024 Chip

Union Pacific's legendary Big Boy #4014, the largest operating steam locomotive, made 19 whistle-stops in five states during the summer of 2024. The epic western tour included a two-day public display at Roseville, CA, on July 12 & 13, 2024. Ogden, Utah, display was July 20 & 21st.

During the tour, the Union Pacific Museum hosted a special, sold-out passenger trip from Roseville, CA, to Sparks, Nevada. The unique experience was an annual gala fundraiser for the nonprofit organization and provided a rare opportunity to ride Union Pacific's historic heritage equipment.

The passenger special on Sunday, July 14th, hit a fallen pine tree near Auburn, CA, requiring a four-hour delay. The tree had to be cut away from the track. Repairs were required to UP 4014's cylinder cocks. The special included dome cars Colorado Eagle and Challenger. Newly renamed business car LINCOLN UPP 101 brought up the rear of the train.

The UP 4014 returned to Cheyenne, WY, at the end of July, Thursday the 26th. (Info courtesy Union Pacific RR)



Union Pacific 4014, Alco built 4-8-8-4, arrived at Rawlins, WY, on June 30, 2024 for an overnight layover. ©2024 Chip



UP 25809 caboose was on the rear of the Big Boy special behind freshly painted UP boxcar 701518. The train passed the former Rock Springs, WY, depot and was parked across from the depot that evening. ©2024 Chip

UP Rail Days at North Platte, Nebraska



2024 Rail Days Celebration on August 2, 3, and 4, 2024 held at North Platte, NE. Rail Days is the only time throughout the year when visitors can experience Bailey Yard up-close on a motorcoach tour through the yard. Photo shows the East Hump on a foggy February 5, 2024 night at Bailey Yard, North Platte, NE. ©2024 Chip

BNSF Wind Blade Train Texas to Canada

BNSF 6121 led a northbound U-PTNSWE1-04A (destination Sweetwater, Montana, continued into Canada) loaded windmill blade train with a Montana Rail Link (MRL) 4316 unit across Colorado June 13 & 14, 2024. The special train was reported in Rosenberg, TX at 10:59 CST on the BNSF's Galveston Subdivision MP 65.8 on June 10, 2024. (Info courtesy of Henry)



BNSF unit wind energy train was parked at Boulder, CO, June 13, 2024. Up front were two BNSF locomotives; 7815 & 745. Train had wind

nacelles, gearboxes and generators on heavy duty KRL flatcars. Train parked on BNSF's Front Range Subdivision. ©2024 Chip

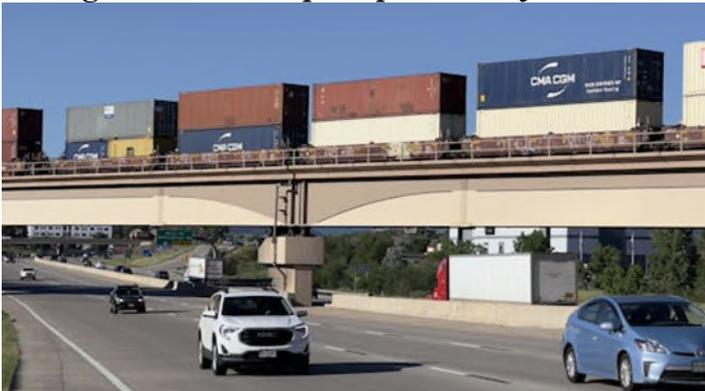
BNSF Moved Wind Energy Supports



BNSF had a Nordex wind energy support unit train parked at BNSF's 31st Street Yard in Denver, on June 29, 2024. ©2024 Chip

Nordex SE is a European company that designs, sells and manufactures wind turbines. The company's headquarters are in the German city of Rostock while management is in Hamburg. Nordex produces at sites in Germany, Brazil, India, Mexico and Poland and, until 2022, in Spain. The main production facility is located at the headquarters in Rostock. Nordex has branches and subsidiaries in 19 countries. According to the company, it had installed wind turbines with a total capacity of around 50 GW in over 40 countries worldwide by the end of 2023.

U.S. rail freight traffic was up 3.8 percent in June 2024



BNSF northbound intermodal train from Alliance, Texas, headed to Hudson, CO passed Castle Rock, CO, crossed over Interstate 25 (I-25) on July 4, 2024. ©2024 Chip

The Association of American Railroads said carriers handled 1,960,510 carloads, containers and trailers last month. The percentage increase is compared with June 2023.

The figures included 885,864 carloads, down 1.7 percent compared with June 2023, and 1,074,646 containers and trailers, a gain of 8.7 percent compared with the same month in 2023.

Eleven of the 20 carload commodity categories that AAR tracks posted gains. These included grain, up 17.5 percent; chemicals, up 6.7 percent; and petroleum and petroleum products, up 14 percent.

Losing ground were coal, down 10.4 percent; crushed stone, sand and gravel, down 11.2 percent; and all other carloads, down 16.9 percent.

“June rail traffic continued the trends we’ve seen throughout the first half of 2024, with coal shipments declining and pulling total carloads below 2023 levels,” said AAR Chief Economist Rand Ghayad in a statement.

“Freight rail serves as a reflection of the broader economy, and the increase in motor vehicles and intermodal traffic indicates resilient consumer spending across various industries,” he said.

Como Open House June 15, 2024



South Park Rail Society held an Open House Day at Como Campus at Como, CO, Saturday, June 15, 2024. The National Park Service owned Colorado & Southern 8311 boxcar lettering was done during the pleasant Spring day. ©2024 Chip

Denver International Airport Adds New Cars

Denver International Airport (DIA) added Alstom-built train cars to their Automated Guideway Train System (AGTS) starting July 2, 2024. 26 new train cars are scheduled to be operational throughout 2024 and into 2025.

The Alstom cars feature lightweight aluminum car bodies and an efficient power supply system.

As of July 2024, 31 train cars are used by DIA; 16 of those are 29 years old, exceeding their useful life. DIA will expand their train fleet to 41 vehicles during 2024.

The underground AGTS trains move passengers between the main airport concourse and terminals A, B, and C.

Crawford Hotel Renovations Completed July 12, 2024



The Crawford Hotel at Denver Union Station completed an \$11 million dollar renovation of the Great Hall, the 112 hotel rooms and the Cooper Lounge. The grand unveiling took place on Friday, July 12, 2024. ©2024 Chip



The Crawford Hotel Great Hall has a new look. Below the Terminal Bar sign was once the ticket windows for Denver Union Station. Shops and restaurants now occupy the huge station originally opened in 1914. ©2024 Chip

CPKC Final Spike Steam Tour back in US



Canadian Pacific 2816 returned from Mexico to the USA at Laredo, TX, June 11, 2024. The steam engine was behind the diesels leaving Mexico. The CP 2816 was returned to the front of the special June 13, 2024 departing Laredo, TX, on the northbound Final Spike Steam Tour in the USA. Photo - CP 2816 was serviced at Nahant Yard near Davenport, Iowa, May 9, 2024. ©2024 Chip

Tragic Death in Mexico with CPKC Final Spike Steam Tour on June 4, 2024

The CPKC Final Spike Steam Tour hit and killed a 29-year old Mexican woman on June 4, 2024. Spectators crowded the tracks near the Aragón station in the municipality of Nopala de Villagrán, where CP 4-6-4 No. 2816 and the CPKC executive train were scheduled to make a 20-minute stop. Dulce Alondra and her son were watching the vintage steam train pass by when Alondra pushed her son to safety while trying to take a selfie cellphone photo with the locomotive coming up behind her.

One rule of train photography is you don't take train photos on the tracks. Despite warnings to the crowd to keep a safe distance from the live track, this happened anyway.

CPKC Final Spike Steam Tour Completed July 2024



Canadian Pacific 2816 returned to Winnipeg, Canada, July 16, 2024 completing the Final Spike Steam Tour from Canada, across the middle of the USA and south to Mexico City, Mexico.

Photo - CP 2816 was serviced at Nahant Yard near Davenport, Iowa, May 9, 2024. ©2024 Chip

Rocky Mountain Railroad Club Information

Author/photographer: Chip

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

Email: rails@rockymtnrrclub.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/rockymtnrrclub

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Rocky Mountain Railroad Club, PO Box 2391, Denver, CO 80201-2391

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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
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

USPS Mail:

Rocky Mountain Railroad Club
Rail Report
PO Box 2391
Denver, CO 80201-2391