



RAIL REPORT

Rocky Mountain Railroad Club

Rocky Mountain Railroad
Historical Foundation

November 2023

Issue 755

Upcoming Programs:

November 14 meeting in Barnes Hall at 7:30 pm

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**Fifty Years of Preservation on the Cumbres & Toltec
Presented live and via the internet by Bill Kepner**

One of the main reasons for preserving the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad is to show what narrow gauge railroading in the Rocky Mountains was really like. What transpired during the past 50 years is truly amazing. The Bi-State Railroad Commission and the several operators have strived to keep as much of the original historic fabric as possible while operating regular excursion trains for the general public. The Friends of the Cumbres and Toltec have provided both sweat equity and financial support to preserve much of the freight equipment and lineside structures that aren't used on a regular basis.

This presentation will show before and after images of many of the projects that have happened over the last 50 years, as well as commentary on what it took to make it happen. Three photos
©2023 Bill Kepner

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=VWRwRUVCbVoyTzhwMWhYbm5scFlqdz09> Meeting ID: 862 5110 5134 Passcode: 496652



Upcoming Events:

**The Royal Gorge Route Polar Express starts November 19, 2023
and runs till December 24th (Christmas Eve).**

**Rocky Mountain Train Show - Holiday 2023
November 25th & 26th
The Ranch Events Complex
5280 Arena Circle Loveland, CO 80538**

A Call For Nominations For The Rocky Mountain Railroad Club and The Rocky Mountain Railroad Historical Foundation

Elections are held every December at the annual business meeting. Any member wanting to volunteer or nominate another member for either an officer or director position should contact the nominating committee, Andy Dell or Dave Schaaf at the November Club meeting or contact them through the Club website or by mail to the Club PO Box.

Notice Of Annual Meetings

The annual meetings of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club and the Rocky Mountain Railroad Historical Foundation will be held on Tuesday, December 12, 2023, 7:30 PM at Christ Church, 2950 South University Boulevard, Denver, Colorado, and virtually through Zoom. These meetings are called for the purpose of electing Officers and Directors for both organizations. At these meetings the Club or Foundation may conduct any other business as may properly come before these meetings.

Membership Renewal for 2024

Renewal season is now upon us. The cost of everything has increased significantly in the last few years. Insurance costs, postage, printing, storage fees and bookkeeping fees have all steadily increased during the period of time since the last dues increase. The board of directors voted in the October meeting to increase the dues costs by \$5 per year each for regular membership, USPS mailed Rail Report membership and the Contributing membership levels. This small increase may be substantial to some but it is necessary to ensure the club does not operate in the red and maintains a balanced budget. While all costs may not be fully covered by this increase, the club has many generous individuals whom are able to renew at higher levels such as the contributing, sustaining and patron levels. The additional monies that are received from these membership levels

help to fulfill some of those deficits and allows us to keep membership level increases to a minimum.

Presidents Column

As the end of 2023 nears, I wanted to state a few reminders. The first being membership renewal. Last year alone we lost nearly 40 members due to non-renewals. A large percentage of our membership does consist of older members and every year some of them pass away or develop health concerns that prevent them from being an active club member and they feel their membership dues don't provide them with the intended value. We understand that but it seems a fair number just forget to renew. That being said I will be mailing out a renewal form in the mail this first week of November. As the board, we have found that we get a greater percentage of renewals mailing them than when we just sent an email reminder or an additional insert in the Rail Report for those receiving it via USPS.

Another item of interest will be a table of free stuff at both the November and December in person meetings at the church. Both Nathan Holmes and myself have acquired a number of items that we either have no room for or not enough interest to keep them at our homes. That being said and identified, we would like to pass these items along free of cost to our members that show up in person to the November and December meetings. These items consist of books, spikes, framed and unframed pictures and other items that have been received as part of donations from other club members that have passed on or just items we don't have room for. If you are interested in some free stuff, please show up to our November and December meetings in person if you happen to be in the Denver area on those nights.

Finally, in order to not have blank pages in the printed Rail Report this month, I will include 2 pictures from my recent trip to the Black Hills, SD. On Sunday October 15th, the last day of their regular 2023 season, I visited the 1880 train in Hill City, SD. As I had hoped, we were able to ride behind one of the two Mallet type steam locomotives owned and operated by the tourist train. "Locomotive #108 joined its nearly identical twin, #110, at the beginning of the 2020 season following a four-year restoration. This 2-6-6-2T articulated tank engine was built by the Baldwin Locomotives Works in 1926 for the Potlatch Lumber Company. It later made its way to Weyerhaeuser Timber Company and eventually to the Northwest Railway Museum in Snoqualmie, Washington." -1880 Train website. These locomotives are certainly unique as they are both tank engines.



Golden Spike Sculpture visited the Colorado RR Museum



On October 17th, this new sculpture made a stop at the CRRM in Golden. It was traveling from westward from Kentucky, and was displayed in at least 7 states this fall. It will be stored over the winter in Utah, and then travel to California and Nevada before being put on display next year.

In 2021, the Golden Spike Foundation commissioned Douwe Blumberg to create a public art piece, Golden Spike Monument, that celebrates the power and diversity of those whose labor and sacrifices contributed to the creation of the transcontinental railroad. The 43' tall, gold-leafed spike hosts reliefs that depict scenes of various people from diverse backgrounds who worked to build the railroad, people impacted by the railroad, and many others whose vision and support were instrumental in bringing this historic feat of human engineering to fruition. The Monument will be a permanent feature on display at Golden Spike Park at Reeder Ranch in Brigham City, Utah. That location is just off of Interstate 15, roughly 30 miles east of Promontory Point. Information gathered by Dave Schaaf.



Public relations people Joy Meadows, Rich Grant, Charlie Giordano, and CRRM Exec Director Paul Hammond. Two photos © Dave Schaaf

Union Pacific Military Train Derailed at Kelker, Colorado

Eighteen cars of a unit Army vehicle train derailed at Kelker, Colorado, about 6:20 PM on October 9, 2023. The incident occurred as the Union Pacific crew was delivering the train from the National Training Center, Yermo, CA, to the Fort Carson railhead. The cars derailed near East Las Vegas Street and the El Paso County jail. This derailment was much more substantial than originally reported. The derailment damaged the mainline and siding, destroying the UP and BNSF switches into Kelker Yard.

Union Pacific confirmed that 18 of 85 railcars were involved in the incident, and issued this statement.

“There were no injuries and no releases of hazardous materials.”



Union Pacific unit Army train at Platteville, Colorado, on UP's Greeley Subdivision Sunday, October 8, 2023. The southbound train originated at the National Training Center, Yermo, California. ©2023 Chip

BNSF Coal Train Derailed Bragdon, CO, Closed Interstate 25 Oct 15, 2023

A portion of Colorado Interstate 25 was closed in both directions on October 15, 2023, after a loaded BNSF coal train derailment collapsed a bridge and blocked the highway Sunday afternoon, killing a semi-trailer truck driver, Colorado State Patrol authorities said.

On October 17, 2023, a National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) release stated that the preliminary cause was a broken rail. Crews worked to clear toppled coal hoppers and spilled coal at the derailment site near Pueblo, about 45 miles south of Colorado Springs, the CSP said.

Images of the scene posted online by the state patrol showed at least 30 cars that had slid off the tracks and over the side of a bridge and nearby embankment, blanketing the ground with coal. One span of the two-span bridge that extended over both lanes of the interstate was partially collapsed, crushing a semi-trailer truck beneath it.

The truck driver was killed. There were no reported injuries among BNSF crew members, the rail company said.



BNSF Antelope Mine, WY, to St. Johns, Arizona, unit coal train C

ATMCRD-031 derailed demolishing highway bridge over Interstate 25. Photo courtesy Colorado State Patrol October 15, 2023. View looks south on I-25 with collapsed span over the northbound lanes at the left of the photo.

Amtrak Southwest Chief Detoured via Pueblo, CO, account Bridge Replacement

October 3, 2023, Amtrak train 4 was detoured between Trinidad to La Junta, CO, north over the former Colorado & Southern Trinidad to Pueblo and east on the former AT&SF Pueblo to La Junta lines. At 8:12 PM, October 4, 2023, Amtrak Track-A-Train showed train 1004 approaching Ludlow, CO. doing 35 MPH track speed. They used the wye at Pueblo Jct. about 11:00 PM to turn east towards La Junta, CO.

BNSF bridge replacement construction between Trinidad and La Junta caused the Amtrak Southwest Chief train 4 detour. Replacement of the damaged span went smoothly and Amtrak train 4 resumed using the normal route. Amtrak train 3 was not affected by the detour.

Cheyenne Depot Museum Fund Raiser Union Pacific Shop Tours October 2023



Rocky Mountain Railroad Club member Bob Fryml helped the Union Pacific Steam Shop conduct tours for the Cheyenne Depot Museum fund raiser October 13, 2023, Cheyenne, WY. The UP Steam Shop tours occurred October 13th and 20th. ©2023 Chip. Our Club had a private tour last April for members and guests, at a lower cost.



Bob Fryml conducted UP 7-stall roundhouse tours for the Cheyenne Depot Museum guests at Cheyenne, WY, October 13, 2023. Missouri Pacific River dome car is shown behind Bob. ©2023 Chip

Here Comes the Sun - OMLX 4011



OmniTrax Great Western Railway OMLX 4011, GP40-2LW ex-Canadian National, greeted the sunrise at Great Western Industrial Park, Windsor, CO, October 13, 2023. The orange-painted unit reminds me of the 'Great Pumpkin' from the Peanuts comic strip. ©2023 Chip



The bell above the cab in this OMLX 4011 close-up reveals previous ownership by the Canadian National. Windsor, CO, October 13, 2023. ©2023 Chip

Gomez Store along D&RG Narrow Gauge at Pagosa Junction, CO, Preserved



These three photos show the R.G. Gomez General Merchandise store that was located in Pagosa Junction, Colorado, on the Denver & Rio Grande narrow gauge.

The first photo shows the store on location in Pagosa Junction as it was visited by Rocky Mountain Railroad Club members on June 24, 1988, during the Club's 50th Anniversary celebration. The store had been closed since 1971, but Club members were given a tour inside by Gomez family descendants. When the descendants lost their lease in 2000 to the Southern Ute Tribe, the store was moved to the grounds of the Harman Museum in Pagosa Springs (second photo), where I photographed it in May, 2021.

The Harman Museum was defunct at that time, and the Gomez store was sitting on steel girders awaiting movement to another new home. I'm happy to report that the historic Gomez store has found a new home at the Archuleta County Events Center in Pagosa Springs, where I photographed it in September 2023 (third photo). The store now rests on a permanent foundation and is being renovated. A happy ending for those of us who first saw the store in 1988.

More information on the Gomez store and Pagosa Junction can be found in my book *Tracking the Narrow Gauge from Chama to Durango*, published in 2022 and available from Amazon and other outlets.

Thank you, Mike Butler





Pueblo, Colorado, Hill Cut Action in 1971 by Bruce Barrett



This image shows the Colorado Fuel & Iron plant area and the Santa Fe "Hill Cut" that served the east side of the plant. The west side of CF&I was

served by then-D&RGW. CF&I was the largest employer in the Pueblo, CO area with many supporting industries in Wyoming and Colorado, bringing limestone, coal and iron ore to the plant.

The image above was taken in 1971 and shows the daylight Hill Cut coming down the S-curve and crossing the "whitewater bridge" or high bridge on the ATSF-C&S Minnequa District. Ownership of the right-of-way changes from ATSF to C&S on the far side of this bridge. If you look carefully two cars past the bridge, a silver-white marker is visible in the ballast, showing the demarcation of ownership change.

The CF&I was served by three Hill Cuts each day, one on each shift, many of those trains handling more than 70-100 cars per shift, plus occasional extras. Unit trains of iron-ore loads would be in addition to the Hill Cuts during the virgin steel production years, handled by Denver-Pueblo road crews. Note the 70-ton hoppers behind the Hill Cut, that are on the slag tracks that loaded ballast for ATSF use for many years. Those trains would be pulled 4-5 times per week by extra or scheduled yard crews from Pueblo Yard.

This image brings back lots of memories for me. It was taken 3 years before the beginning of my railroad career. I worked with the men on this crew many times before they retired. Engineer Bill Davis was a mentor and BLE union chairman. Conductor Prilliman, and brakemen Gene Barns and Les Carter were the other crewmembers. During my time assigned in Pueblo Yard my duties included Hill Cuts, Slag/Ballast Trains, and running coal loads up this hill to the Comanche Power Plant.

This track still exists today, though served by only one BNSF Hill Cut per day now. The plant has changed ownership three times since this image was taken and is again up for sale. An additional track was laid (behind the photographer) by BN/C&S in the 80s to eliminate the steep grade and S-curve that plagued coal trains, causing many broken knuckles and drawbars over the years.

Thanks to Bruce for sharing his Pueblo rail encounters.

Rocky Mountain Railroad Club Information

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Please use this address for legal, commercial, Foundation donations, and general business:

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Secretary Steve Subber

Treasurer Keith Jensen

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Nathan Holmes, Denny Leonard, Debbie MacDonald,

Pat Mauro, Kirk Thode, Nathan Zachman

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

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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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