



## RAIL REPORT

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Rocky Mountain Railroad Club

Rocky Mountain Railroad  
Historical Foundation

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December 2024

Issue 768

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--- December 10 meeting at Barnes Hall ---



**At this event we will have our annual election and business meeting. We will talk about the future of the**

## **Club and Foundation, and possible options.**

**A few of the Board members recently worked to consolidate some of the many Club items that are currently in storage. We have brought a few boxes of things that will be available as give-away items at this meeting. You may want to bring a bag or box in order to take things home with you.**

**As is the custom for the December meeting, we will have soft drinks and some treats to enjoy while we socialize, following the program.**

**- - -**



**Richard Luckin will present his new video program.**

**Denver's ski train has a rich history going back almost three-quarters of a century to become a "Denver Tradition for Generations."**

**While passenger cars evolved from standard heavy-weight coaches to an upgraded service in the 1980s, the mission has always been to offer rail service to the popular ski resort of Winter Park in Colorado.**

**"Steel Rails to Ski Trails" shares the stories of those who operated and rode the train through the winter scenery of the Colorado mountains. Welcome aboard!**

**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 the Zoom Meeting ---

This month our Zoom meeting may only cover the annual meeting and electing of new officers. We will try to show you Rich Luckin's video, but due to internet variability, the video may not work well on your particular Zoom connection.

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86251105134?pwd=](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86251105134?pwd=VWRwRUVCbVoyTzhwMWhYbm5scTIqdz09)

[VWRwRUVCbVoyTzhwMWhYbm5scTIqdz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86251105134?pwd=VWRwRUVCbVoyTzhwMWhYbm5scTIqdz09) Meeting ID: 862 5110 5134

Passcode: 496652

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## **President's Column**

It is with mixed feelings that I write my final column. Another Thanksgiving holiday is complete and I am still reveling in the feelings it invokes in us. While the last 3 years seems like it was a long and difficult time serving as President of the club, it went by fairly quickly. At times I felt like I have not been able to provide the best leadership, but I gave it my best while juggling other commitments such as work and family. I am thankful for the board of directors I have had helping me and all they provide for the club. I am also thankful to my wife and daughter for their support during this time and their understanding of the time commitment.

The club has continued on in spite of many changes resulting from Covid, an aging membership, dwindling numbers of volunteers and less value for the club to provide its membership. 10 years ago, our board began to have discussions on just how long we could continue on as a club. We have addressed several items needing immediate action but the elephant in the room still remained and no solution for the future. We are constantly reminded that change is inevitable and if we don't do anything about it, certain things will just cease to exist.

Halfway through my first year, our first two big changes came with the announced retirement of Bruce Nall and Michael Tinetti. I am grateful for the 25 years that Bruce Nall did an exceptional job on the Rail Report and after his retirement, we transitioned to an email style newsletter as is becoming much more common in our world of technology. For those that prefer a printed copy, I was able to learn enough skills to make a printed layout from the email but it is far less polished than Bruce's newsletter. Michael Tinetti also retired from processing membership. I picked that task up and quickly realized just how much he did to ensure records are recorded, seniority numbers assigned and membership cards printed and mailed.

This year, it was brought up again at board meetings that the club just can't be sustained and keep going as it is without new volunteers or some significant changes. I solicited in the newsletter and club meetings multiple times for new volunteers and that pretty much resulted in two new board members but not the turnout I had hoped for. It was really looking like the club would either need to outsource many tasks and spend some of our savings or close down and disburse assets.

In May, one of our board members proposed that we should join forces with another organization. They would be able to provide membership and newsletter services and we could offer a large donation of both money and club artifacts in return. This idea made a lot more sense than trying to limp things along a few more years or just throwing in the towel and ending after 86 years.

A detailed letter was mailed out to members in October summarizing the direction the club intends to head in 2025 provided we can come to the right agreements. **I would ask that members refrain from discussing any details of this transition online or with anyone outside of the club.** We don't want rumors or negative publicity going around, especially any that could jeopardize our talks concerning our joint venture. If this proposed joining of forces doesn't take place, that would most certainly be cause for the club to be done with everything and we don't want to end that way. It has been a great club over the years and our board feels this is the best way to

preserve our club name and continue on in some fashion rather than just fading into the distance as has happened with countless other clubs.

In closing, I would like to thank all of my officers and board members for a job well done these last three years. I would also like to thank our members for their emails and conversations of support in this time of change as well as their continued membership.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Sincerely, Andy Dell

### **Upcoming Events:**

**January 15-20, 2025 Railroad Passenger Car Alliance (RPCA) 2025 Conference at Pueblo, CO. You have to be an RPCA member to attend.**

### **Heber Valley RR adds three PV's**



Catalpa Falls Group (CFG), LLC, has sold their three private varnish (PV) cars to Heber Valley RR in Utah. Amtrak's California Zephyr, train 5, handed the cars over to BNSF 2854 near BNSF's 31st Street Yard, Denver, CO, November 1, 2024. ©2024 Chip

The **Catalpa Falls**, **Passaic River**, and **Chester County** arrived into Chicago, IL, on train 29 late October 2024. The cars belong to the (now closed) Catalpa Falls Group (CFG), LLC. The cars were headed west to a new home at Heber Valley RR in Utah.

**Passaic River** was built for the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe as a 48 seat dining car built by Budd. ATSF sold the dining car to Amtrak, rebuilt as a heritage {HEP} cafe/lounge Amtrak number 3108. This cafe/lounge then sold to the Morristown & Erie. They rebuilt and used the car on the Maine Eastern RR as their **Penobscot Bay**. When the MERR shut down, the car returned to the M&E and became **Rocky River** and later **Passaic River** and then to Catalpa Falls Group. dba as Executive Rail. Passaic River private car number is 800762 now considered a buffet lounge.

**Catalpa Falls** could sleep 12 people in six double bedrooms, each with its own toilet and wash basin. The **Catalpa Falls** was retrofitted with the latest electronic amenities that in no way detract from its historic appeal. For travelers' comfort, brand new shower and laundry facilities were available.

**Chester County** 28-seat parlor car was built in 1946 by the Budd Company for the New York Central Railroad. NYC #2936 was originally configured as a 56-seat coach and served on the NYC's *Empire State Express*. The car continued in service into the Penn Central years when it was eventually sold into private ownership. While in private service, the coach seats were removed and replaced with 28 Pennsylvania RR-type parlor seats. The CFG purchased the car in 2020 and the car underwent mechanical refurbishment at the shops of the Morristown & Erie Railway. Final interior refurbishment was conducted by CFG's Philadelphia-based mechanical team. The CFG has renamed the car the **Chester County**.

BNSF placed the cars on the Denver, CO, to Provo, Utah, manifest behind the rear DPU's leaving Denver before midnight on November 1, 2024. An impressive turnaround at

the Mile High City! (Thanks to Catalpa Falls Group, LLC,  
Bob Andrews)

[Learn More](#)



**PV Catalpa Falls, Passaic River, and Chester County** came off Amtrak train 5 and were handed over to BNSF at Denver, CO, November 1, 2024. BNSF moved the cars at the end of the freight train headed to Provo, UT. ©2024 Chip

**Georgetown Loop RR Devil's Gate Bridge is  
now over 40 years old !**



In 1983 the Colorado Historical Society (AKA History Colorado) along with the Boettcher Foundation had Railroad Builders of Englewood lift the center span on the rebuilt Devil's Gate Bridge west of Georgetown, CO, on September 22, 1983. ©1983 - 2024 Chip

**Devil's Gate Bridge built again, 1982-1984**



The High Gate also known at Devil's Gate Bridge or Viaduct is a narrow gauge railroad bridge used by the Georgetown Loop Railroad. It was rebuilt in 1982-1984 on the former Colorado & Southern Railway right of way. First train across was on June 1, 1984.



Devil's Gate Bridge needed two more spans as of  
September 22, 1983. ©1983 - 2024 Chip



First train on Devil's Gate Bridge used Georgetown Loop  
Railroad #14 and Argentine & Gray's Peak #8, both 3-truck  
Shays on June 1, 1984. ©1984-2024 Chip



Colorado Historical Society and the Georgetown Loop RR  
(Lindsey & Rosa Ashby and company) invited media and  
supporters to the opening of the Devil's Gate Bridge (AKA  
High Bridge) on June 1, 1984. ©1984-2024 Chip

## A Great Western Railway memory



Great Western Railway 121, SW9, with engineer Phil Johnson, operated a passenger fund-raiser special to Longmont, Colorado, September 24, 1983. The Colorado Midland Chapter of the NRHS operated the event. ©1983-2024 Chip



Olivia Estrada waved from PV Warren R. Henry before continuing west to California on the rear of Amtrak's

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## CSXT power visited Colorado & Nebraska



CSXT 938, ES44AC-H, led the Vestas Wind Energy support unit train (61-cars) from Southern Junction, CO, towards Chicago area, IL. Train was on Union Pacific's Sidney Subdivision east of Ogallala, Nebraska, October 6, 2024. ©2024 Chip

An ethanol train was delivered to Colorado Pacific RR at NA Junction, CO, for storage October 4, 2024. This train came west via Union Pacific's Kansas Pacific line through Limon, CO. Train had CSXT 938-4742-313 and Canadian Pacific 8006. The 313 was in the CSX Yellow Nose 2 (YN2) scheme as they call it. CSXT 938 and 4742 were in the dark future scheme. The 4742 is a CSX SD70MAC in the newest version of the dark future scheme. No boxcar logo. The CP wore the Beaver scheme. (Ben Helsel info)

Union Pacific then sent the eastern road visitors onto a unit Vestas wind energy supports unit train. CSXT 938, ES44AC-H, led CSXT 313, Canadian Pacific 8006, and CSXT 4742 on Vestas 61-loads of wind energy supports from Southern Junction (south of Pueblo), Colorado, to Chicago, Illinois. UP train S SJCHW of October 4th. Perfect

autumn day along UP's Sidney Subdivision found the Vestas unit train near Ogallala, Nebraska, October 6, 2024

Southern Junction south of Pueblo, CO, is where Vestas has a large plant building wind blade supports.

[Learn More](#)



CSXT 938, an ES44AC-H, led a unit Vestas wind energy support train (62-loads) eastbound from Southern Junction, (Pueblo area), Colorado, to Chicago, IL, area. Train was just east of Ogallala, NE, Sunday, October 6, 2024. ©2024 Chip

## Rocky Mountaineer 8600 at Granby, CO



Rocky Mountaineer RMRX 8600, an SD40M-2, was pressed into service September 18, 2024. The 8600 received positive train control (PTC) equipment during the summer. This westbound 10-car passenger train was on Union Pacific's Moffat Tunnel Subdivision and passed the Granby, CO, depot September 25, 2024. Holding on the Granby Siding was UP's Grand Junction, CO, to North Yard, Denver, CO, manifest. ©2024 Chip

## Moffat Tunnel Line News



Eastbound Union Pacific 7234, AC4400CW, led a 77-car unit Army train across Colorado on October 7, 2024. Train originated at the National Training Center near Yermo, CA, headed to Fort Riley, Kansas. The train passed Pinecliffe, CO, on October 7th. ©2024 Chip



Military vehicles on a Union Pacific train wound down Coal Creek Canyon, CO, with Blue Mountain Drive in the foreground. Eastbound train was headed to Fort Riley, KS, October 7, 2024. New Oshkosh-built utility vehicles called Joint Light Tactical Vehicles (JLTV) were numerous on the unit military train. ©2024 Chip

## **San Luis Central RR was combined into Colorado Pacific Rio Grande RR October 2024**

San Luis Central RR was formally rolled into the Colorado Pacific Rio Grande Railroad on October 1, 2024. The Monte Vista, CO, based short line saw its long-time General Manager Tom Tancula retire. Two employees were retained and two others were laid off by this acquisition. (Info courtesy of Bryan Bechtold)

## **BNSF inspected by the Federal Railroad Administration in October 2024**



Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) DOTX 220 inspection car inspected BNSF's Joint Line from Denver, CO, October 10, 2024. Back on October 16, 2023, a broken rail on the Joint Line near Bragdon north of Pueblo, CO, led to a major coal train derailment that took out the Interstate 25 highway overpass. ©2024 Chip

The Federal Railroad Administration track inspection train with DOTX 220 (built by Colorado Railcar) and DOTX 218 pulled by BNSF 7108. Train arrived in Denver over BNSF's Brush Subdivision on October 10, 2024. It laid over at BNSF's Denver Locomotive Shop that evening.

Train had a morning call and waited for two coal loads to run south on the Joint Line on BNSF's Pikes Peak Subdivision. BNSF 7108 pulled out of Denver using main track one headed for Pueblo, CO.

A year ago on October 16, 2023 a broken rail piled up a loaded coal train and landed derailed coal cars onto I-25 north of Pueblo, Colorado. Interstate 25 was closed as the railroad overpass collapsed onto the highway. Denver news media were provided details of the incident October 11, 2024.



BNSF 7108, an ES44C4, passed under the Denver RTD flyover near the 13th Avenue grade crossing and departed Denver, CO, on October 10, 2024. ©2024 Chip

## **Rocky Mountain Railroad Club Information**



**Roving reporter -- Chip**  
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## Intermountain Chapter

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



## Colorado Railroad Museum

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