

# Rocky Mountain Express

Where preserving railroading in the Rocky Mountain States begins and will never end...

August 2014

Rocky Mountain Railroad Heritage Society

Volume 2014, Issue 6

## CALHAN DEPOT, 2005 AND NOW



The above photo was taken during the Rock Island Technical Society annual meeting in 2005. On July 24, 2014, we revisited the depot and were shocked at the deterioration that had occurred. If preservation efforts are not begun almost immediately, within a short time it may not be in a condition to be successfully restored. The following pictures show the current condition of the depot.



Angle view of the front and east side of depot



Angle view of back and east side of depot



View of west side of depot showing some subsidence

RMRHS has been working with Calhan so that this depot can be saved as soon as possible.

Photos above by Mike Walker

## A Stop in Grand Junction

July 16 and 17, 2014

A round trip on the California Zephyr from Denver to Grand Junction provided several hours of "wait" time at the present Amtrak station in Grand Junction. There are several buildings near the current station, including the former Grand Junction Union Depot and Freight House, an office building named the Union Station, and a small D&RG-themed office building and freestanding boxcar. The following photos provide an update on the complex of buildings and their condition.



The above picture is of the former Grand Junction Depot and Freight House taken from the street, while the picture below is taken from trackside. There is a zip line hardware fabrication business in the former freight house.



The following photos show the condition of the exterior of the building. Window frames and doors are in need of restoration as well as the roof trim.



Rear of west end of depot



Detail of condition of rear window



"Union Station" Office Building



D&RG Office building and D&RG Boxcar

In contrast, the current Amtrak building is an unimpressive one-story frame structure. It has a small waiting room in the center of the building with a snack shop at the east end and a restaurant on the west end. The restaurant enjoys a good business, so parking for departures and arrivals is not always available.



Front of current Amtrak depot in Grand Junction

While taking pictures, Mike Walker encountered a great deal of curiosity and was asked if he was going to buy the depot. Privately owned, people commented that someone new needed to buy the building and restore it. They wanted to present a better picture of their community to rail travelers.

### About the GRAND JUNCTION DEPOT— DENVER & RIO GRANDE WESTERN RR

119 Pitkin Avenue  
Grand Junction, Mesa County  
National Register 9/8/1992, 5ME.4163

Designed by Henry J. Schlack and constructed in 1905 by the William Simpson Construction Company, this two-story brick depot, with terra cotta detailing, features elements of the Italian Renaissance style. The depot contributed to the development of the western portion of the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad system as well as to the growth of Grand Junction.

*Excerpted from the History Colorado website*

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Inside Pueblo Union Depot photo by Bob Brewster

Newsletter Volunteer Staff  
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Note: All submissions may be edited for content, grammar, and space allocation, and become the property of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Heritage Society unless other arrangements have been made. Digital text submissions in .doc or .docx; photos in jpg, please. Submit articles and photos to the following address.

Rocky Mountain Railroad Heritage Society  
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RMRHS has applied for 501(c)(3) status.



Inside Milwaukee Road's Gallatin Gateway Inn, soon to re-open under new ownership Mike Walker photo

Writers contributing to this edition:

Jim Jordan  
Sammy King  
Mike and Sigi Walker

**PRESIDENT'S LETTER TO THE MEMBERSHIP:**

On this, the first anniversary of our organization, I feel that we have done very well for our first year.

True, we haven't yet completed a project from identification to preservation. However, there are two that are on their way to being preserved. We need to acknowledge the individuals that have been responsible for the progress that has been made on these wonderful depots. In the case of the Loveland Great Western Depot, it is through the efforts of both Pam Sheeler and Dave Naples that it appears this historic railroad station will be going to Granby.

In the case of the Calhan Depot, Bret Johnson has been working hard guiding the Town of Calhan through the grant process (which was successful) to fund a building assessment. Soon, he and a structural engineer will make a detailed examination of this Rock Island Depot and then the findings will determine what the next stop will be.

I should mention that we have a temporary change of editors; Sigi Walker is currently filling in Bernard Minetti as the newsletter editor. Mike Walker is providing the photos to add detail to the stories. Sigi is doing a wonderful job, as Bernard did.

Mike Morris has done a fantastic job on the posters, which are eye-catching. Sue Edge has come through for the Society with used railroad ties which were badly need at the Western Museum of Mining & Industry in Colorado Springs. Doug Cohn and James Craig have helped in many different ways; besides putting together a really great Symposium they have helped out at train shows to tell about our Society. Jan Moore and Weldon have been great in helping out when needed at the shows.

Tom Van Wormer has provided thoughtful insight and sage advice on how we might do things to improve our organization.

I am happy to report that we have been asked to provide advice to other groups with the goal of preserving a depot or moving a historic railroad building. We are glad that we can be of service to others outside the geographic area we are concentrating on.

This is an organization that is about working together and having the same goals. To everyone who is or has been in our Society, thank you for a great first year start. I believe that our second year will be even greater.

Thank you all so very much,  
Jim



The Cheney "Save Our Depot Group" has requested our support and would like for us to provide any and all resources available to save the Northern Pacific RR Depot in Cheney, WA. We will be providing advice on saving this one-of-a-kind depot, not as consultants, but as to what has worked well for us in dealing with the political side and getting the public's attention.

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*Compendium of some of the Historic Depots and Buildings RMRHS is striving to preserve*

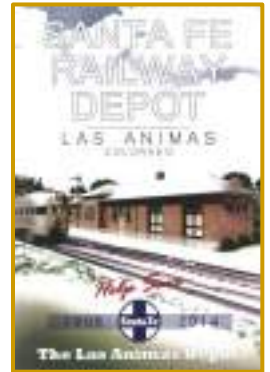


Above 7-2014 photo by Kathleen Tomlin, RMRHS

**LAS ANIMAS DEPOT—SANTA FE RAILROAD**

333 8th St., Las Animas, Bent County  
State Register 5/14/1997, 5BN.415

Built in 1908, the Las Animas depot is a good intact example of the Santa Fe Railroad's *Brick Standard Plan* depot design frequently erected in Kansas and Colorado in the first decade of the 20th century. The depot is slightly different in that the front bay window is rectangular instead of half-hexagonal. The rear of the depot features a "carriage porch." It is associated with both passenger and freight railroad transportation. By the late 1980's, the Las Animas depot had passed into private hands and was not well cared for. Clean-up has been initiated.



The RMRHS is working with Bent County Commissioner Bill Long and others to secure funding to restore the historic city-owned Santa Fe Depot in Las Animas. Artist Michael Moore's poster is available from the RMRHS.

**LOVELAND DEPOT— GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY**

405 Railroad Ave., Loveland, Larimer County  
National Register 6/14/1982, 5LR.488

Completed in 1902, this relatively small depot appears grand and sophisticated with its classical lines and Romanesque Revival style details. Oliver Stanley's fleet of steam-powered automobiles picked up passengers at the station for the trip to his hotel in Estes Park. (The current owner is Omnitrix.)

Right: 2014 photo by Allan Tabor, RMRHS



Above: 2013 photo by John Crisanti Photography.

The RMRHS is working with Pam Sheeler, Loveland Historical Society, and Dave Naples, Moffat Road RR Museum in Granby, CO. on this project.



The left hand photo of the **Kit Carson pump house/engine house** (built in the style of most buildings in the 1860-1870's) and the right hand vintage photo are courtesy of the Kit Carson Historical Society. The pump house is slated for demolition if it is not moved. The center photo is of the architecturally important 1904 restored UP RR standard plan combination depot (now a museum) in Kit Carson.

*The poster shown above is available from the RMRHS for \$20.00. All proceeds will be used to further the activities of the RMRHS.*



Above: Como Depot on July 27, 2014. Older than Dirt Construction company began the final phase in summer 2013 and expects to finish both the exterior and interior by the end of August 2014. Stay tuned!

**Update on Como Depot as of July 27, 2014  
COMO ROUNDHOUSE, DEPOT & HOTEL COMPLEX**

Off US Hwy. 285, Como, Park County  
National Register 5/20/1983, 5PA.30

The site contains the six-stall stone roundhouse (stabilized), the "I" plan two-story hotel (recently closed), and the one-story frame depot (under restoration). The roundhouse and depot date to circa 1880 and the hotel to 1897. The complex served the Denver, South Park & Pacific Railroad that originally built west from Denver to tap the area's coal deposits; it remained a busy railroad division point after the completion of the DSP&P high line over Boreas Pass to Leadville in 1884. Rail operations at Como ceased in 1938.

Financial support for the Como Depot restoration is being coordinated by the Denver, South Park and Pacific Historical Society and comes largely from memberships, renewals, and donations.



**COLORADO'S  
NEWEST DEPOT!**

The Rio Grande Scenic RR has just built a new depot near historic Fort Garland. It saves a half hour for those driving up from Taos or coming down from Colorado Springs, Pueblo, or Denver.

The new location features a brand new ticket office, freshly graded parking lot, and easy access from Route 522 and Highway 160.

### Train Treks with Mike and Sigi Walker: Steamboat Springs D&RG depot and Georgetown Loop Railroad

We spent several relaxing days in early June enjoying the natural beauty, the abundant arts, and numerous restaurants of Steamboat Springs. We were delighted to find that the former D&RG depot was "alive and well" and is now the Eleanor Bliss Center for the Arts. As you can see from the photo below, the building and grounds are in very



good condition. There is a D&RG caboose on display on the north side of the building which is also in reasonably good condition. There are plans to incorporate it into the art center.



On our return to Colorado Springs, we stopped for the 3:00 p.m. ride on the Georgetown Loop RR. The terminal in Georgetown, called the Morrison Valley Center, includes the Morrison Theater, boarding and ticketing areas, parking, and visitor facilities; it was dedicated in 1985.



Above photos by Mike Walker

We stopped at the Silver Plume depot, which is where the reconstructed railroad, begun in 1982, originated. The depot here is original, dating back to 1884; it served as the western terminus of the Colorado Central Railroad route from Denver to the Clear Creek mining region. It was restored to its original appearance in 1985. Today it serves as the ticket office and a very nice gift shop. It sits several hundred feet from its original location.



2005 Photo from History Colorado website

### MIL GRACIAS, DOSCIENTOS, another Guatemalan rail adventure - Part II --- by Sammy King

The FEGUA traffic department in Guatemala City was run by a fellow I had never seen or spoken to before, a Sr. Lopez. I made an appointment, but first my buddies in the roundhouse gave me their impressions of Sr. Lopez - he was not well liked. We were proposing to fire up an engine and do various video shots in the area of the Guatemala City yards, with maybe a little bit of running in the countryside near town, using perhaps four hours of locomotive effective time and using whatever equipment was first out on the yard tracks. We had enough cash to pay for the fuel. Even though the Mechanical Department had recommended us, he wanted us to pay the same rate per day as a commercial tour operator. I tried to talk him down a bit, saying that we weren't selling tickets and weren't going very far, so we didn't need the same level of equipment, services or scheduling as an occupied passenger train. And, my video would be available for official use *gratis*. None of this did any good. Perhaps a few US greenbacks, which I couldn't afford, slid into his desk drawer would have helped, but I didn't much like Sr. Lopez.

So, Bernardo and I gave up on the idea of seeing a FEGUA steam engine running during this visit and decided we could throw a "hell of a party" for our friends with the money that four barrels of oil was going to cost us. We walked back to the roundhouse and told the fellas about our meeting with Sr. Lopez, which they thought was funny. We grabbed a cup of wonderful Guatemalan coffee, sweetened with equally wonderful Guatemalan brown sugar, and got comfortable on the leather chairs in the CMO's office. It wasn't long before a secretary came in and said I needed to go see Sr. Jaime DeLaPena, second in command of FEGUA, about our steam engine. I replied that we didn't want to bother our hosts, who had treated us so wonderfully for two weeks. Their friendship mattered more to us than train pictures, and we had made some plans for a fiesta before we left Guatemala. The secretary grabbed my hand and dragged me up to Sr. DeLaPena's office in the old IRCA headquarters above the trainshed. The mysterious fire of 1997 destroyed this grand official suite from IRCA days, but fortunately the nice antiques had mysteriously been removed to a safe location first.

Sr. DeLaPena was as much the opposite of Sr. Lopez as it was possible to be. He asked what he could do for us. We tried to make our request a minimum nuisance proposition. While we couldn't really afford what it was worth, we could pay costs. He asked what we could afford, and agreed that would be fine. The agreement was for \$200 US, paid in cash to Sr. Lopez. We were provided with an official letter to this effect, which we were to present to Sr. Lopez IN PERSON.

When we returned to the roundhouse, our friends already knew all about what had just happened. We had gone back to see Sr. Lopez to deliver the letter from his superior along with our payment. The secretaries had already told every juicy detail of the breaking news story while we were walking from one office to another. It was a golden opportunity for his underlings to torment the most universally unpopular Sr. Lopez.

Honestly, Bernardo and I were enjoying this as much as the locals were, although we were trying not to be too obvious about it. Sr. Lopez was about to explode, and he furiously tried to think of a way to get even with us. You have to expect these sorts of things, so we didn't argue when he

decided to charge us 3% tax on top of our \$200 fee. We knew it was a made-up deal and that he was going to try and have the last laugh. Much to Bernardo's credit, he immediately asked me to get a receipt for the extra \$6! Sr. Lopez had to give it to us, but our train orders were issued in such a way as to restrict us to the Guatemala City yard area only, without allowing use of the main line. He was still trying to get even, but I let it go.

We could hear the laughter as we got closer to the roundhouse. They said it was very unusual for anybody, particularly a *gringo*, to beat Lopez out of his graft money and to then get what they wanted. That's why they were laughing so hard. For him to have to issue us a receipt for that \$6 not only meant he couldn't steal a single centavo, but it also gave us written proof that he had made us pay a nonexistent tax. While we weren't going to bother the Interventor about \$6, it gave Sr. Lopez something to worry about and all the FEGUA employees something else to laugh about. To this day, people still laugh whenever this incident is mentioned. It was the secretaries who had fixed this for us; they had called Lic. Leal in Florida without telling anyone, and he had called Sr. DeLaPena, who had squished Sr. Lopez like a pimple. It was handled before we had a chance to finish our coffee. It pays to be nice to people.

We figured that we had things under control, but as usual we hadn't figured on all the unknowns. Things weren't settled until Friday afternoon about quitting time. By then, there was no time to buy oil before the weekend, so engine #200 was our only possibility. My friend Chucho was then lead man in the air shop, and he was instructed to fire up the engine on Saturday to have her ready for us on Sunday morning at 8am.

Bernardo and I showed up at the appointed time on Sunday morning, and Chucho gave us the washout sign. He shrugged; he had stayed up until after midnight before shutting down, and this morning he had 30 pounds of steam and no water in the sight glass. This was of course a bad sign, but Sergio said to put cold water into the boiler through the blow down valve and light her anyway. They tried to keep the fire going, but the fuel wouldn't warm up enough to flow until we got steam, and we weren't getting steam without any fuel. We took turns baling beer cans full of diesel fuel into the firebox through the open fire door, but this crude method produced only very low pressure before the water again fell out of the sight glass. We had to kill the fire then. There was hissing and water in the smokebox, and we all knew what was the matter.

It was almost noon when Sergio said to me that tomorrow would be better for this. I answered that Bernardo had to leave the next day, and maybe we should just forget the whole thing. He wouldn't hear of it and immediately hooked up a hose to the blow down and gave poor #200 another shot of cold water. This time it didn't take much to raise the level to a safe point; Chucho lit her off again and she started to steam for us. Not long after that, we had enough pressure to use the injectors to maintain a safe water level, so we began planning what we were going to do now that we had a steam engine running at last. Originally, my scheme was to start with some runbys in the three track trainshed. There were passenger cars in there already, and it would have only taken a few minutes to tie onto a few and pull them out. But the light had shifted while we were trying to get up steam, so that idea was no longer so great. The yard crew gathered in a circle around me while I scratched my head. It was a good time for me to have a good idea.