



C&TS DISPATCH

VOLUME 37 NO. 2
SUMMER 2024



June 12, 1899: The Day Chama Burned
C&TS Has a New General Manager
Photos from Work Sessions A and B
Latest 2024 Work Session Schedule
Searching for a new Friends President

Plus: Opening Day, 2024
Express Car 163 Makes Progress in The Springs





C&TS DISPATCH

Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec
Scenic Railroad, Inc.

William Lock, Founder-1988

Vol. 37, No. 2 ☞ Summer, 2024

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C&TS DISPATCH

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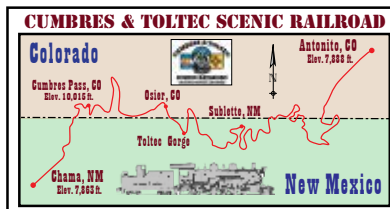
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The *C&TS Dispatch* is published four times each year by *The Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad Inc.*, a New Mexico nonprofit corporation. The Friends is the official museum arm for the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, a sixty-four mile-long Railroad and museum of railroad history and technology, operating between Antonito, Colorado, and Chama, New Mexico. The Railroad is owned jointly by the States of Colorado and New Mexico. As the museum arm, the *Friends* is dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of the Railroad. The Friends is an Affiliate Member of the *Heritage Rail Alliance (HRA)*. Family membership in the Friends is \$40.00 per year; outside the USA membership is \$50.00. All contributions are fully tax deductible and will be gratefully accepted. For information, please write us in Albuquerque at the **Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, Inc., 4421 McLeod Rd. NE, Suite F, Albuquerque, NM, 87109**, or call us at (505) 880-1311.



Denver & Rio Grande Railway: 1880-1886
Denver & Rio Grande Railroad: 1886-1921
Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad: 1921-1970
Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad: 1970-today

**The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad is both a
National Historic Landmark and a
State Registered Historic Site.**

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President's FORUM



Wrapping Up Twenty Years: Part III

As I continue to reminisce about my twenty-year journey as CEO of the Friends, I can recall some interesting moments along the way. When I spoke to Work Session A in Antonito on May 20th, I mentioned my first glimpse and visit to our Car Restoration Facility (CRF) in February of 2005. It was a cold winter day. I was from Wisconsin, so the cold didn't bother me; as a "cheesehead" I knew cold. I met up with Ed Lowrance in Chama and we began our drive to Antonio. In addition to cold weather, I also knew about snow. I've been in plenty of snowstorms and typically snow doesn't faze me. However, what Ed and I encountered starting at Cumbres Pass was probably the worst white-out conditions I had ever seen. We drove extremely slowly, watching the reflecting stakes marking the edge of the road and praying a lot!

After that nail-biting ride, Ed and I finally arrived in Antonito and the CRE, tucked away in the southeast corner of the C&TS yard. The building was merely a shell, constructed during the fall of 2004 with a dirt floor, no concrete, no tracks, no nothing. But it was the Friends building

On the cover:



There were at least nine layers of paint on Railway Post Office Car 54 and they all had to come off to get down to bare wood before beginning the repainting of the 1888 RPO. It had been restored and painted a number of years ago but the many layers of paint were failing so it was time to start over. C&TS Friends member Ward McCartney spent Work Session B with a disk sander doing a lot of the really dirty work.

Photo by Don Atkinson

and located on Friends property. It was all ours! Looking back, I never envisioned what this structure would become and the valuable asset that it is to our organization today. The many investments in the CRF made through the years have paid tremendous dividends to the Railroad and the Friends. The work session attendees who gravitated towards the CRF have been a huge part of this success story as well.

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Life is full of twists and turns and my work career often wasn't much different. My first three years were far more interesting than I expected.

In November 2005, the Rio Grande Railway Preservation Corporation, which was managing the C&TS Operations, gave notice to the Railroad Commission that, due to liability insurance issues, it was cancelling its management agreement. Shocking news! To assure that the Railroad would open for the 2006 season, the Commission reached out to the Friends, who rose to the challenge. A great deal of time and effort went into forming a new non-profit entity, C&TS Management Company, which would take over operation of the Railroad. This was a stand-alone organization and we were fortunate to find excellent talent and expertise to serve, including Frank Turner, Richard Tower, Amos Cordova, and Elmer Salazar. I was drafted as the fifth Board Member and General Manager. Once again, life took a different turn.

With a great deal of hard work from the team and the Railroad's staff, the C&TS successfully opened in 2006 with high hopes. To be close to my new duties, I was fortunate to rent the vacation home of Warren & Joyce Smalley out at Herron Lake, west of Chama. I would work ten days

and then come home to Judy and Rio Rancho for four days. When I returned for the 2007 season, I rented a cabin in Chama from Ernie Vigil, reducing the commute.

Those two years were rewarding; the C&TS did extremely well with ridership, carrying 42,500 passengers in 2007. Frank Turner hired Roadmaster John Matthews in late 2006, which began a solid capital program to improve the C&TS' track and rights-of-way. This work continues today, continuously improving the Railroad's infrastructure.

After my second season as General Manager, Judy and I faced a decision: the Friends Board wasn't willing to go a third year without a full-time Executive Director. We gave everything deep consideration and actually looked at a few homes in Horca, west of Antonito, if indeed it was our choice to stay as GM of the Railroad. In the end, because the Friends position brought us to New Mexico from Wisconsin, we felt I should remain as President.

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Life seemed to be becoming a bit more normal, depending on what normal is. As an organization, the Friends continued to do what it has been doing for years: raising funds, working on the Railroad's historical assets, and placing docents on the daily trains. In 2011, the operations of Railroad changed again as the C&TS Management Company faded into the sunset and the Durango & Silverton took over management duties in 2012. However, by the fall of that year the Commission, through the newly formed CTO Operating, LLC, once again assumed overseeing day-to-day operations. This model and arrangement still exists today.

• • •

While this transition was taking place, the Friends took on a hefty restoration project: the Board decided to find the funding to bring K27 Locomotive 463 back to operational condition. It was quite an endeavor and I would not recommend the organization ever take a project of that magnitude again. As Marty Knox, the

project's mechanical consultant, told me with a chuckle, "It's an illogical act to restore a steam locomotive." The Friends raised \$1.3 million for the project and on May 13, 2013, No. 463 pulled a consist of passenger equipment from Antonito to Chama to prepare for Opening Day with a bunch of happy donors, board members and dignitaries. The Friends should always be extremely proud of this accomplishment. To this day No. 463 has been a workhorse and with its use on daily trains out of Antonito it reduces boiler hours on the fleet of K36's.

That investment to restore the 463 had more of an impact on the Railroad's operation than most Friends members recognize. I believe most people get caught up on the historical nature of the locomotive but it has allowed the Railroad to haul passengers during period when operable motive power has been tight. The economic viability of the C&TS is paramount and Friends members should always be cognizant of that.


• • •

Another notable restoration project undertaken by Friends volunteers was bringing Pullman "Tourist Sleeper" 470 back to operational life. This car, built in 1889, provided inexpensive transportation to the Western frontier. Friends volunteers at the Colorado Springs CRF started work in 2009, and were able to witness its maiden voyage back over C&TS tracks twelve years later on May 18, 2021. These sort of projects demonstrate the expertise and skillsets of Friends members. Because of their varied skills, they have enabled the Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec to accomplish so much over our thirty-six year history.

• • •

I'll continue down Memory Lane over the past twenty years in my next column. I appreciate all the comments from the folks who read these columns. Thank you for everything you do to make the Friends so successful.



 Tim Tennant



DON'T WAIT! JOIN THE FRIENDS OF THE C&TS!



2024 is going to be a great year for the Railroad and the Friends!

If you love trains, history and volunteer activities, JOIN US as we help preserve the "Living History" of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad.

For \$40 a year, you and your family can become Friends and receive the quarterly *C&TS Dispatch*, train ride discounts, invitations to special events and the opportunity to participate in restoration projects each summer, along with the satisfaction of supporting and investing in the historic cultural heritage that is the Cumbres & Toltec!

Only \$40 per year for a basic Family Membership! Foreign: \$50

To join, send us this application (or a facsimile):

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Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

My check for \$ _____ is enclosed,
or

Charge my Visa / MC / Discover
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**Already a Member?
Give this to a friend!**

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Friends of the C&TS: TELEGRAPH AND NEWS

Sessions C-G

If you are concerned about the cost of attending any of the work sessions or special sessions this summer, you're in luck: *beginning this year, as a two year trial, there will be:*

NO REGISTRATION FEE!

NO INSURANCE FEE!

NO COST FOR LUNCHES FOR 2024!

We are hoping that these fee waivers will be just the incentive you need for this year's important projects. We are behind on painting because we had to cut back from four painting/lettering work sessions to two after we found Sessions E & F did not work well. With the monsoon rains getting the wood wet, the primer and paint would not properly adhere to the wood. The painting began early in **Special Session 1, June 10-14 (Project 720, just prior to Session C in Chama) and will continue throughout C and D (Project 720) in Chama and elsewhere along the line.** These projects will include:

D&RGW RPO 54: Complete paint stripping and prep for priming and painting.



D&RGW Reefer 157: Prep, prime & paint in Reefer Yellow colors.

D&RG Stock Car 5553: Currently painted for the 1916 period, paint in Stock Car Black to match a later period.

D&RGW Stock Car 5549: Paint black.

D&RGW Stock Car 6633: Paint black.

D&RGW Rider Box Car 3537: Paint car Boxcar Red.

Cumbres Pass: Car Inspector's House: Paint trim and porch.

Cumbres Pass Coal Bin: Paint after needed wood repairs.

Cumbres Spring House: Prime and paint.

Osier Station: Prep and repaint windows, sills, doors and trim.

See FIDO Schedule at right for details!

STOP THE PRESSES!
This just in!

DATELINE: CHAMA, NM, JUNE 10-14, SS-1

As noted in the column to the left, Special Session-1 was scheduled for just prior to Session C. The various painting projects will continue through Session C and D. The



SS-1 goal was to paint three D&RG Stock Cars, Nos. 5553, 5549 and 6633 in Stock Car Black to match a later period on the Railroad. At one time, there were hundred of stock cars on the Narrow Gauge, reflecting the vast amount of sheep and cattle ranching and shipping that was part of the Chama Valley and vicinity.

(Left to right):

Lance Godfrey
Don Stewart
Jill Stewart
George Trevor
Druby Hebert
Frank Higgins

Photos by:
Michael Mee

The Project 0720 SS-1 Crew

Work Session Schedule, 2024 (as of June 2, 2024)

Listed below is the schedule for Sessions C-G. Remember that the project schedule is often quite fluid and may change throughout the season without notice. The most current and complete schedule is posted on the Friends website at www.friendsofcumbrestoltec.org or through the QR code to the right. Go to the "Volunteer Registration" link. Not all projects are shown, including "T L+None" listings.



Support Services Projects

Proj Num	Project Description	Session C 6/17 - 6/21	Session D 6/24 - 6/28	Session E 7/29 - 8/2	Session F 8/5 - 8/9	Session G 9/23 - 9/27
	Registration Deadline	6/7	6/14	7/19	7/26	9/13
0200	Chama restoration session Site Leader.	C. McMullen + none	C. McMullen + none			
0201	Antonito CRF restoration session Site Leader.	D. Atkinson + none	D. Atkinson + none	D. Atkinson + none	D. Atkinson + none	I. Kelly + none
0202	Restoration Session Asst. Site Leader Chama	J. Kanocz + none	J. Kanocz + none			
0210	Work Session Check-In for Chama	TL NEEDED + none	TL NEEDED + none			
0211	Work Session Check-in Antonito CRF			M. J. Smith + none	M. J. Smith + none	M. J. Smith + none
0222	Friends merchandise sales - registration location.	J. Price + none	J. Price + none	M. J. Smith + none	M. J. Smith + none	M. J. Smith + none
0230	Food Preparation - Chama lunches and snacks.	C. Tower + 3	J. Lauffer + 2			
0231	Food Preparation - Antonito CRF Lunches.	L. Aldrich + 1	L. Aldrich + 1	M. Barlen + 2	M. Barlen + 2	J. E. Mitchell + 1
0240	Tool Car Operation - Chama	C. McMullen + 1	C. McMullen + 1			
0241	Bolt Car Operation - Chama	R. Brigham + 1	R. Brigham + none			
0245	Tool & Bolt Operation - Antonito CRF.	G. Davies + none	G. Davies + none	M. Smith (Asst: D. Barlen) + none	M. Smith (Asst: D. Barlen) + none	M. Smith (Asst: G. Davies) + none
0246	Paint Car Operation - Chama	F. Higgins + 1	F. Higgins + none			TL NEEDED + none
0250	Carpentry Shop Operation - Chama	J. Hickman + 2	J. Hickman + 2			
0282	Work Session Close at Chama		B. Reib + 2			
0294	Hauling & Vehicle Operation	B. Reib + 1	B. Reib + 1	B. Reib + 1	B. Reib + 1	B. Reib + 1
0762	Project Chronicling - Chama	M.Mee + 1	M.Mee + 1			
0763	Project Chronicling - Antonito CRF	TL NEEDED + 1	TL NEEDED + 1		S. McGee (Asst: M.Mee) + none	S. McGee + none
						B. Oltmanns + 3

Projects in Antonito, CO

Proj Num	Project Description	Session C 6/17 - 6/21	Session D 6/24 - 6/28	Session E 7/29 - 8/2	Session F 8/5 - 8/9	Session G 9/23 - 9/27
0311	Safety Coordinator for Antonito CRF	D. Atkinson + none	D. Atkinson + none	J. Engs (Asst: D. Atkinson) + none	J. Engs (Asst: D. Atkinson) + none	J. Engs (Asst: I. Kelly) + none
0701	Landscaping Antonito Yard and Friends Ed Lowrance CRF / CSF complex			TL NEEDED + 2	TL NEEDED + 2	TL NEEDED + 2
0722	Car Painting Antonito CRF and AN based painting	D. Stewart (Asst: F. Higgins) + none	D. Stewart (Asst: F. Higgins) + none			
0732	Car Lettering Antonito CRF		S. Jorgensen + none	S. Jorgensen + 2	S. Jorgensen + 2	
0741	Caboose Annual Maintenance and Roof Repair					
0763	Project Chronicling - Antonito CRF			M.Mee + 1		
0779	Mechanical Maintenance - Antonito CRF			B. Kepner + 3	B. Kepner + 3	
1197	Construct Period Trucks for Passenger Coaches	I. Kelly + 1	I. Kelly + 1	I. Kelly + 1	I. Kelly + 1	I. Kelly + 1
1246	Restore UTLX Tank Car 11050 original GRAMPS car		C. Trunk (Asst: R. Worwag) + 1	C. Trunk (Asst: R. Worwag) + 1	C. Trunk (Asst: R. Worwag) + 1	C. Trunk (Asst: R. Worwag) + 1
1304	Restore Converted Stock Car 5774					D. Pyzel + 2

Projects in Antonito, CO

Proj Num	Project Description	Session C 6/17 - 6/21	Session D 6/24 - 6/28	Session E 7/29 - 8/2	Session F 8/5 - 8/9	Session G 9/23 - 9/27
1332	Restore GRAMPS Tank Car 11056 to operational condition		C. Trunk (Asst: R. Worwag) + none	C. Trunk (Asst: R. Worwag) + none	C. Trunk (Asst: R. Worwag) + none	C. Trunk (Asst: R. Worwag) + none
1354	Maintain and Repair MW02 to operational condition				J. McGee + 1	J. McGee + 1
1360	Addition of a Covered Structure on west end of Antonito CRF.			B. Oltmanns + 2	B. Oltmanns + 2	
1369	SHPO - Repair Telegraphphone booths, wood structures at key locations along the right-of-way.	D. Atkinson + 1	D. Atkinson + 1	D. Atkinson + 2	D. Atkinson + 2	
1389	Rebuild Box Car 3263 for use as Friends Stencil Car.			D. Myers (Asst: S.McCollough) + 2	D. Myers (Asst: S.McCollough) + 2	
1390	Railway Post Office Car 54 - Repair windows and windowsills then strip old paint and prime, repaint and re-letter		D. Stewart + none	D. Atkinson + 2		
1391	Rebuild Flat Car 6649 to roadable condition for MOW service	B. James + 3	B. James + 3			B. Oltmanns + 3
1332	Restore GRAMPS Tank Car 11056 to operational condition		C. Trunk (Asst: R. Worwag) + none	C. Trunk (Asst: R. Worwag) + none	C. Trunk (Asst: R. Worwag) + none	C. Trunk (Asst: R. Worwag) + none
1354	Maintain and Repair MW02 to operational condition				J. McGee + 1	J. McGee + 1
1360	Addition of a Covered Structure on west end of Antonito CRF.			B. Oltmanns + 2	B. Oltmanns + 2	
1369	SHPO - Repair Telegraphphone booths, wood structures at key locations along the right-of-way.	D. Atkinson + 1	D. Atkinson + 1	D. Atkinson + 2	D. Atkinson + 2	
1389	Rebuild Box Car 3263 for use as Friends Stencil Car.			D. Myers (Asst: S.McCollough) + 2	D. Myers (Asst: S.McCollough) + 2	
1390	Railway Post Office Car 54 - Repair windows and windowsills then strip old paint and prime, repaint and re-letter		D. Stewart + none	D. Atkinson + 2		
1391	Rebuild Flat Car 6649 to roadable condition for MOW service	B. James + 3	B. James + 3			B. Oltmanns + 3

Projects in Sublette, NM

Proj Num	Project Description	Session C 6/17 - 6/21	Session D 6/24 - 6/28	Session E 7/29 - 8/2	Session F 8/5 - 8/9	Session G 9/23 - 9/27
1343	SHPO - Repair Shingle Bunk House (SBH) exterior			B. Conry + none	B. Conry + none	
1344	SHPO - Repair Log Bunk House (LBH)			B. Conry + none	B. Conry + none	
1345	SHPO - Maintain and repair deteriorated Sublette Section House (SSH) structure and exterior. Please see NOTE for a health and safety recommendation.			B. Conry + 4	B. Conry + 4	

Projects in Cumbres, CO

Proj Num	Project Description	Session C 6/17 - 6/21	Session D 6/24 - 6/28	Session E 7/29 - 8/2	Session F 8/5 - 8/9	Session G 9/23 - 9/27
1005	SHPO - Reconstruction of Car Inspector's House	J. Pierce (Asst: V.Behr) + 3	J. Pierce (Asst: V.Behr) + 2	J. Pierce (Asst: V.Behr) + 3	J. Pierce (Asst: V.Behr) + 3	
1385	Construct Walking Trails - Cumbres Section Town and Historic signage, joint project with Scouts BSA.	J. Engs (Asst: T. Stewart) + none	J. Engs (Asst: T. Stewart) + none			
1398	Develop Master Plan for Cumbres Section Town MPC	R. Young (Asst: J. Engs) + none	R. Young (Asst: J. Engs) + none			
1401	Repair Cumbres Station Pump House	J. Pierce (Asst: V.Behr) + none	J. Pierce (Asst: V.Behr) + none			

Projects in Chama, NM

Proj Num	Project Description	Session C 6/17 - 6/21	Session D 6/24 - 6/28	Session E 7/29 - 8/2	Session F 8/5 - 8/9	Session G 9/23 - 9/27
0700	Landscaping Chama - Yard and Gardens	L. Schoen + 2	TL NEEDED + 1			
0720	Car Painting - Chama Based	D. Stewart (Asst: F. Higgins) + 10	D. Stewart (Asst: F. Higgins) + 9			
0730	Car Lettering - Chama Based		S. Jorgensen + 2			
0780	Mechanical Maintenance - Chama Based	M. Wissler + 3	M. Wissler + 3			
1017	SHPO - Stabilization and Repair of Coal Tipple (2024 - Advise contractor for installation of lightning protection system).	J. Sutkus (Asst: J. Soos) + none	J. Sutkus (Asst: J. Soos) + none			
1186	Cosmetic Restoration Engine 483 and Tender for Static Display	R. Schoen (Asst: B. Sargent) + 6				
1286	Construction of Friends Storage Building.	C. Wander (Asst: F. Kuhns) + 3	C. Wander (Asst: F. Kuhns) + 2			

1307	Install Sign Garden in lower garden area below the stairs on the west embankment in the Chama Yard.	J. Ferrell + 2			
1310	Remove and replace west side hand rail on stairway from Terrace Avenue	J. Lauffer + 3			
1312	Reconstruct High Side Gondola 1000	M. Hagemann + 5	M. Hagemann + 4		
1372	Joint Project RR / Friends Excavate Material, Install Retaining Wall, Swell, Sump Drain and Stabilize Track Bed	J. Sulkus (Asst: J. Soos) + 4	J. Sulkus (Asst: J. Soos) + 4		
1376	Rebuild boxcar 3566 as a Hollywood Movie Boxcar (HMB) for public display	R. Young (Asst: D. Sowell) + 4	R. Young (Asst: D. Sowell) + 3		
1379	Rebuild double deck Stock Car 5600 to road-able condition.		B. Lock + 5		
1404	PUBLIC INFORMATION SIGN - NORTH, RECONDITION. project signage will be removed and project deleted SIGNS BEING REMOVED NO LONGER NEEDED	J. Ferrell + none			
1405	PUBLIC INFORMATION SIGN - SOUTH SIGN BEING REMOVED	J. Ferrell + none			

Projects Along the Right-of-Way

Proj Num	Project Description	Session C 6/17 - 6/21	Session D 6/24 - 6/28	Session E 7/29 - 8/2	Session F 8/5 - 8/9	Session G 9/23 - 9/27
0710	Removal of plant material along the Right of Way (ROW) that may impair SAFE and efficient Railroad operations. The ROW extends from the Yard Limit in Chama to the Yard Limit in Antonito.		P. Davenport (Asst: A. Green) + 5			
0740	Wood Preservative Treatment - Along the Line and Rail Yards		F. Higgins + 1			
0750	Maintain All Railroad Signage Along the 64-Mile Long Track	M. Mahoney (Asst: P. Davenport) + 4				L. Marquess (Asst: P. Davenport) + 2

Projects in Chama yard - Antonito yard

Proj Num	Project Description	Session H 1/1 - 12/31
0208	Volunteering on the Railroad Outside Scheduled or Special Work Sessions	VOL NEEDED + 12
0246	Paint Car Operation - Chama	F. Higgins + none
0270	Equipment Preparation - Chama/Antonito	L. Beier + none
0284	Hauling & Vehicle Operation	B. Rob (Asst: L. Beier) + 4
0305	Historic Signage at Osier. Install May - Remove October	T. Stewart + 1
0390	Mowing of Grass (Rider Mower) Chama Yard and Stock Pens.	T. Stewart + 1
5005	SHPO - Reconstruction of Car Inspector's House	J. Pierce (Asst: V. Behr) + 10
1286	Construction of Friends Storage Building.	B. Conny + 10
1345	SHPO - Maintain and repair deteriorated Sublette Section House (SSH) structure and exterior. Please see NOTE for a health and safety recommendation.	B. Conny + 10
1379	Rebuild double deck Stock Car 5600 to road-able condition.	B. Lock + 5

Projects in any location

Proj Num	Project Description	Session J 1/1 - 12/31
1384	Social Media Volunteer Assistance	K. Walser + 5
1385	Special Projects Committee - Education Programs	M. Sellers (Asst: K. Walser) + 25

OPENING DAY ON THE C&TS: CHAMA AND ANTONITO, MAY 25, 2024

Opening Day is always a grand event for the Cumbres & Toltec. At both ends of the line there are flag raisings, prayers and blessings, welcomes and “thank you’s.”

One couldn’t have asked for better weather or a better turnout. The operating season is off and running (and steaming!) Come join us this year on the C&TS!



Photo: Thomas Scalf



Photo: Don Atkinson



Photo: Don Atkinson

On June 12, 1899: "C

Photos: Friends of C&TS Photo Archives



Chama Panorama, around 1898, a year before the fire. Chama had been established by the D&RG eighteen years earlier.

CHAMA WAS BURNED
 Postoffice, Railway Depot, Roundhouse and Business Blocks Destroyed.

RIO GRANDE ROAD BLOCKED
 Several Merchants Lost Their Stocks of Goods—Railroad Oil Tank and Hundreds of Tons of Coal Are Still Burning.

Lumberton, N. M., June 13.—At 4:40 yesterday afternoon a fire originated in Broad's store at Chama, N. M. The flames spread with incredible rapidity, aided by a heavy wind. Every effort was made to check the conflagration, but in vain owing to a lack of water.

The postoffice, T. D. Burns' business block, McDaniels' saloon, J. V. Johnson's store, P. M. Dolan's store, T. D. Burns' warehouse, the depot, roundhouse and adjoining buildings were burned. J. V. Johnson and P. M. Dolan lost their entire stocks of merchandise, and 450 sacks of wool stored in Burns' warehouse were consumed. The reading room, the section house and the wrecking train are safe, but the railroad oil tank and 500 tons of coal are still burning.

The main track of the D. & R. G. railroad is blocked.

Albuquerque Daily Citizen June 13, 1899

Fire was a constant threat to frontier towns and Western railroad camps. Creede, Silverton, Cripple Creek and other hastily-built towns and villages often burned. Boomtowns, built out of available materials that were milled on-site to make rough-hewn lumber, quickly sprouted stores, saloons, boarding houses and railroad support facilities close to the tracks, all highly flammable. It didn't take much for a fire to start and quickly spread through the closely-packed clapboard structures. Even major cities weren't immune to fire as Chicago discovered, courtesy of Mrs. O'Leary's cow.*

Chama was no exception. While Chama was perhaps too small a village to rate a lot of press coverage, several regional papers in Albuquerque, Aztec, and Alamosa did cover the June 12, 1899 fire, though not in much depth. Chama was also probably too small or too poor to have a organized fire brigade should the unexpected happen.

According to the Albuquerque Daily Citizen, "At 4:40 yesterday afternoon a fire originated in Broad's store... The flames spread with incredible rapidity, aided by a heavy wind. Every effort was made to check the conflagration, but in vain owing to a lack of water."

While no mention was made in any news story of the cause of the fire—a lantern, a stove, an errant cigar, Mrs. O'Leary's Cow—the results were devastating: almost all of Chama's commercial structures were destroyed along with much of their goods and

*Not true, but still a good story!

Chama Was Burned”

by Chris James, Editor



FCTS RD-010-106 and RD010-107

merchandise. The Denver & Rio Grande lost its Depot and Roundhouse, and some of its employees lost their homes. It is perhaps fortunate that, given the speed at which the fire spread, at least as far as we know from the news reports, there were no fatalities.

Nonetheless, much what you see in the 1888 Chama panorama from the Friends Photo Archives (above) was lost in the fire. While it doesn't show much of the Railroad (which, given the high angle, the image was probably taken from atop Chama's original coaling facilities), the roundhouse, out of view to the left and the Depot (far left) were consumed in the blaze. Some D&RG rolling stock near the Depot may have burned as well.

After the fire, a new brick Roundhouse was built, portions of which still exist today. The turntable survived the blaze but was removed when new D&RG locomotives arrived in the 1920s, larger than the original motive power and too big for the turntable. The Depot (above right) was rebuilt and is the structure that the C&TS continues to use today.

The story in the San Juan County Index in Aztec, New Mexico, stated that, "people of Chama fear that they will never rebuild. The intentions of the company are kept very dark. With rumors of a broad gauge line direct from Alamosa



FCTS RD-175-014



FCTS RD-011-040

The original Chama Depot (above) and Roundhouse were both casualties of the 1899 fire.

or from some point on the Creede line, from Pagosa Springs to Durango, Chama people fear that the long and torturous line now in use will be abandoned entirely or given over to the use of lumber trains only.”

Because of the difficult operating conditions over Cumbres, the D&RG management may have actually been considering easier alternative routes to get to Durango and the San Juan mines around Silverton rather than rebuilding the facilities at Chama. Several routes had been considered by the Railroad during General Palmer’s original 1879 surveys, including a route directly from Alamosa, up the Rio Grande River and down to Durango, bypassing Cumbres Pass altogether. (See: C&TS Dispatch, Spring 2017, Vol. 30 No. 1) According to post-fire news reports, accurate or not, the D&RG was considering it as a shorter, standard gauge line, in accordance with the standard gauge and three-rail conversions that had begun elsewhere on the Railroad.

It is possible that the original survey might have been dusted off, if not by the D&RG engineering department, then at least by the newspapers. Fortunately (for the C&TS) nothing came of that and the village of Chama was rebuilt. Portions of the town would last for another quarter century until...

August, 1925:

“Chama Was Burned” (again)

In searching old newspapers, there seems to be nothing on the 1925 fire, at least in the existing files.

The only reference appears to be in the description text of the photo (above, right) in the Friends Photo Archives that states, “Remains of a structure fire on Chama’s main street which destroyed a block of business buildings, rooming house and three large residences, August 1925.”



FCTS RD-010-128

Both photos are from the collection of Ken Lively, the son of Charles Lively, the Station Master at Cumbres at the time. It’s difficult to tell the exact location of the photos but given the description of the destruction of “a block of business buildings, rooming house and three large residences,” the photos were probably made along Terrace Avenue with the upper photo looking west, (Rabbit Peak is visible in the smoky background) and the lower photo looking south down Terrace Avenue.



FCTS RD-010-105

Once again Chama was rebuilt and a number of the present buildings in Chama were built soon after the 1925. Foster’s Hotel, one of Chama’s better-known structures, built in 1881, survived the blaze.

There have been several large fires in Chama since then but nothing like the blazes of 1899 and 1925.



The May issue of the *Rio Chama Reporter*, Chama's community newsletter, carried a story about the Cumbres & Toltec's new General Manager, Ed Beaudette. The *Chama Valley Reporter* graciously allowed the *Dispatch* to reprint their story here. *Thank you!*

Rio Chama REPORTER

SERVING THE UPPER RIO CHAMA VALLEY

VOLUME 1 NUMBER 10

A COMMUNITY NEWSMAGAZINE

MAY 2024

All Aboard! There's a New Engineer in Town!

By Sue Windeck

The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad is the highest and longest scenic train ride in the U.S. Last year it ranked as one of the best rail trips in the world to see fall colors. Riding the C&TSRR is complete sensory experience: the kinesthetic input of the rails on the tracks; the clatter, the clang, the steam, the haunting whistle. And when you look out the windows, the vista is overwhelming. With just a bit of imagination, it takes you out of your ordinary existence and transports you through time and space into another dimension.

Responsibility for the general management of this historic resource has been given to local resident Ed Beaudette. It is a task he holds dear, as he has been involved in most aspects of the train's operation for years. Prior to his retirement, he and his wife Lorraine visited Chama at least once a year and volunteered as members of the Friends of the C&TSRR.

Ed is very aware of the significant role the Friends group plays. They are a major player in the historic preservation. He currently serves on the Friends Board and plans to continue.

Ed has been a rail fan all his life. He grew up on a Vermont farm with steam trains from the Central Vermont Railway running past his house. He was initially an U.S. Army Corps of Engineers officer and earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Norwich University and a Masters Degree in Engineering from Boston University.



Photo: Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad

He retired to Chama from Exxon-Mobil where he held a variety of engineering and project management jobs. Not surprisingly, the train runs through the northwest portion of their property.

Ed loves talking to people riding the train. He notices the repeat customers. He feels the biggest challenge is getting them here in the first place. Once they're here, the large windows and incredible scenery do the rest. In Ed's opinion, the historic significance of the railroad, combined with the variety in vegetation, geology, ecosystems and scenery, make it two railroads in one. The route is volcanic from Antonito to Osier and glacial coming down the valley into Chama.

Ed's plan is to provide a variety of riding experiences that will meet as many preference of the passengers as possible. He would love to see them spend more time shopping and eating in town, and is planning rides and products to appeal to millennials. The biggest challenge he faces in

establishing additional trains is finding people to "crew" them. In this regard the C&TSRR has much in common with other area businesses.

The C&TSRR is jointly owned by the States of Colorado and New Mexico. It is governed by a commission that serves at the pleasure of the two state governors. The "operating group" is a separate LLC, as is the "historic preservation" arm. Because the train is a joint venture between two states, it had to receive endorsement of

the U.S. Congress.

Opening day was May 25, and festivities and ceremonies were scheduled for Memorial Day weekend which signified the beginning of "train season." Currently the train operates six days per week and Ed's goal is to make that seven. Moisture from the winter snowpack is critical for both a fire-safe season and lush vegetation, and luckily this winter's snow level at Cumbres Pass is reported to be 99% of normal. As a matter of safety, the crew will continue to monitor the route throughout the season, which is timed to close on October 19th, after the fall colors have peaked.

For Ed Beaudette, shepherding the train through his first season as general manager will be a labor of love. Everything is on the table, and spending some time with him you can sense the possibilities. His excitement is palpable and his glow is infectious. Engage with this and you will walk a way with a smile.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION ON THE C&TS, 2024 SESSION A (MAY 20-24), SESSION B (MAY 27-31)

PLUS: AN UPDATE ON EXPRESS CAR 163 RESTORATION IN COLORADO SPRINGS

Photos by Sharon McGee and Don Atkinson. Photos are shown when available. Reports are based on Team Leader submissions to FIDO. Reports not submitted to FIDO use archival information. The Editor regrets any errors in content.



Session A Team, Antonito, May 20, 2024



Session B Team, Antonito, May 27, 2024

CHAMA YARD, NM

Proj. 1379 (SS-2) Restoration of D&RG Stock Car 5600, May 3-5

Stock cars are a complex piece of construction and each takes about three seasons to restore. No. 5500, a double-deck sheep car, will probably take longer than other restorations as it's in poor condition. Norma Lock poured epoxy into oak cracks, creating a strong oak sill with a bond that, when sanded and painted, is as good as the original wood.



(L to R) Norma and Bill Lock, George Trevor, Dave Ferro, Dave Jenkins

When we apply epoxy, we can preserve as much of the original car as possible. The structural posts and diagonal framing were removed, lined up with new wood, and new wood



was cut to match the way the older pieces would have fit into the lower and upper sills. Some posts were grooved for metal rods for strength. Work will continue with another session, hopefully this fall.

ANTONITO, COLORADO: ED LOWRANCE CAR REPAIR FACILITY

SUPPORT SERVICES, ANTONITO

Proj. 0201: Site Leader, Antonito, Sessions A & B



Jim Hickman was the Site Leader for the first two Work Sessions of 2024. He performed Monday morning briefings and helped keep things running smoothly during both A and B while also supervising the paint stripping of the RPO Project 1390.

Proj. 0211: Work Session Check-in, Antonito, Sessions A & B



As always, **Mary Jane Smith** was on hand to check-in volunteers for each session and also...

Proj. 0222: Merchandise Sales, Antonito, Sessions A & B

...beg, persuade and cajole session volunteers to purchase the latest t-shirts, books, calendars and more.



Proj. 0231: Food Preparation Antonito, Session A & B

Like the military, the Friends travel (and restore) on their stomachs. Volunteers **Michelle Barlen, Jane Mitchell** and **Mary Jane Smith** kept the crews well-fueled with coffee in the morning, lunch at the noon whistle, and



snacks and all-important hydration throughout the day. While we're busy with a paint brush and power saw, the "food ladies" are busy making hearty meals for us and planning lunches for the rest of the session. They deserve a James Beard restaurant award!



Proj. 0245: Tool and Bolt Operation Antonito, Sessions A & B

Where would we be without nuts, bolts and tools that actually work when we need them. Into the Tool and Bolt Operation steps **Marshall Smith**, assisted by **Doug Barlen**. The two not only check the tools in and out but they also keep them sharp and working properly.



Proj. 0249: Hauling and Vehicle Operation, Antonito, Sessions A & B

Not everything is always where it needs to be so **Ron Lira** and **Druby Hebert** loaded and delivered supplies and equipment throughout both sessions. Much of their work in A and B was delivering materials to the upcoming restorations in Sublette.



Proj. 0311: Safety Coordinator, Antonito, Session A



Crew safety is, of course, of the utmost importance every step of the way. **John Engs**, the Safety coordinator, assisted by **Don Atkinson** monitor and correct any unsafe practices during each session.

Proj. 0741: Caboose Annual Maintenance and Roof Repair, Antonito, Session A and B

Don “Mr. Caboose” **Atkinson**, assisted by **Terry Mitchell** during Session B, performed the annual caboose inspection and repairs on Caboose 0503, 0579, 05635 and 0306. Most needed minimal repairs but 05635 failed a roof water-leak test which required the running boards to be removed and a new cleat installed and caulked.



Proj. 0763: Project Chronicling Antonito, Sessions A & B

Each step of every project needs to be documented photographically with written progress recorded and preserved, not only for the State Historical Preservation Officer (SHPO) but also for the Friends and the Railroad to keep track of maintenance and restoration for the future. **Sharon McGee** was slated to retire last year but she was coaxed back for 2024 to fill an otherwise vacant position.



John Eng shared a few of the photographic duties as well, including capturing some of the latest progress on Speeder MW02, Project 1354.



Proj. 0779: Mechanical Maintenance Antonito, Sessions B

“Mechanical Maintenance” is the inspection, service, repair or replacement of brake system parts and linkages, wheel sets, bearings, couplers, and safety appliances as required by the US Railroad Administration. Rolling stock slated for inspection during Session B in Antonito this year included:

(*COTS: Check, Oil, Test, Stencil)

COTS* inspections on cabooses 0503, 05635 and 0306.

R2 bad wheel on Caboose 0579, “B” end and COTS inspection.

COTS inspection on High Side Rider Gon 1204.

R2 bad wheel on High Side Rider Gon 1357 “A” end & COTS inspection.

COTS inspection on Potty/Concession Box Car 3244.

COTS inspection on Flat Car 6649.

Brake system modification required to make Idler Flat Car 9569 road-able.

COTS inspections on other cars identified for Friends and Lerro charters (TBD).



Bill Kepner, Randy Quinlan, Ron Burkhard, Matthew Jameson, and Douglas Reinke checked oiled, tested and stenciled the rolling stock and made appropriate repairs. It’s a pretty impressive set of skills for a bunch of volunteer railroaders.





Proj. 0781: Inspection and Training, AED Defibrillators Session B



Proj. 1197: Construct Period Trucks for Passenger Coaches, Antonito, Sessions A & B

The construction of period-accurate passenger trucks has been Team Leader **Ian Kelly's** main project for the last several years. During Session A he was assisted by **Fuzzy Astine** and during B by **Roger Davis**. Much of the work of late has been focused on the truck's wheel bearings.



Let's face it: A lot of the Friends volunteers aren't exactly spring chickens. The chance of an accident or medical emergency is always possible. While we try to keep accidents to an absolute minimum, there is no way to predict or prevent an ailment such as a heart attack. Therefore, leaders at each of the Friends work areas, including off-site locations such as Cumbres and Sublette, carry an AED, an *Automated External Defibrillator* in case a crew member suffers a heart attack. Fortunately, they have never been needed but they still need to be maintained and crews trained in their use annually. **John Eng**s does the maintenance and training each season. It's far better to have it and not need it than need it and not have it.



Proj. 0800: Maintenance of CRF Facility, Antonito, Session B



The result of all this variety of work, from brakes to bearings, is antique rolling stock that is still safe to travel over the line!

A few small projects "filled in the cracks" (pun intended) of the Work Sessions. **Doug Reinke** cut and placed wood in the CRF flangeways to eliminate a tripping hazard.

Proj. 1354: Maintain and Repair MW02 to Operational Condition, Antonito, Sessions A & B



Jim McGee and **Roy Obrugewich** continued restoration work on the hybrid C&TS Speeder MW02. It's been a long haul but the project is nearing completion with the installation and finishing of a new interior floor, windows and frames, and replacement of the original headlight.



When it rides the rails again it will be a distinctive addition to the C&TS roster.



Proj. 1390: RPO 54, Scrape, Prime, Repaint and Reletter, Sessions A & B

Probably the most labor-intensive project in both Sessions A and B was the total scraping of Railway Post Office No. 54. The RPO was completely restored, inside and out, during the early-and-mid-20-teens.



However, the final painting did not survive the harsh Rocky Mountain winter and it was repainted again, and then repainted to a specific color for a film that wasn't Pullman Green...



...so it was repainted and relettered again.



The paint still would not stay adhered to the base wood. It was time to scrape down to bare wood and start over in 2024.



The Session A crew included Team Leader **Jim Hickman**, **Michelle Barlen**, **Phil Dougan**, **Michael Shuster** and others. Much of the early work was simply elbow grease: manually scraping the loose paint.



One team worked on the car body, another removed, sanded and prepared the windows for priming.



With that complete, the surface was sanded with power sanders and many layers of paint had to be removed to get to the bare wood.



Metal parts had to be cleaned and striped down to bare metal with an air-powered needle gun, and the window frames, now stripped, sanded and primed, were prepared for installation.



The last of the remaining paint between the siding boards was scraped out bit by bit



...and the windows were covered to prepare for the primer coat in Session D in late June.



At the end of Session B, John Eng gave Certificates of Appreciation to the crew members who worked their tails off to get the stripping project done on time. Congratulations to:

- Jim Hickman*
- Michelle Barlen*
- Phil Dougan*
- Michael Shuster*
- Michelle Barlen*
- Bryan Bechtold*
- Glenn Butcher*
- Ward McCartney*
- Ron Lira*
- Druby Hebert*

and others not listed, all of whom did an incredible job on RPO 54!



D&RG EXPRESS CAR 163 RESTORATION AT THE COLORADO SPRINGS CRF

Text and photos by **Don Atkinson** from the March, April and May Work Sessions at the Colorado Springs Car Restoration Facility

Work has progressed steadily at the Colorado Springs CRF. Between March and early May, the crew aligned the outside sill on the north side to the other sills, drilled holes to attach the outside sill to the bolster, and installed blocking between the intermediate and outside sills.



Work continued on the end sill by cutting square mortises to hold washers for the truss rods, and drilling holes and installing vertical truss rods in preparation for welding.

They drilled, fitted and welded all of



the horizontal truss rods on the north side of the car and installed the end sill. The end sill required holes to be drilled for the vertical truss rods, holes drilled for the main truss rods along



with some minor fitting of the tenons for installation of end sill.



32nd Annual Moonlight and Wine Tasting Train Ride! July 20th, 2024!

“One Small Step for Man, One Giant Leap for the Cumbres & Toltec!”



Sponsored by the Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, the 32nd Annual Moonlight and Wine Tasting Train will depart Chama, New Mexico at 4:00 PM on July 20th, the day before the full moon! Arrive at the Osier Dining Hall at 7:15 PM for a mouth-watering prime rib and cod dinner with all the trimmings. Along the way there will be wine and cheese tasting featuring award-winning wines from a local winery along with a full cash bar stocked with your favorite libations. The train will return to Chama at 11 PM. All times are approximate.

The train will include enclosed passenger coaches for a smooth ride and warm return. A special photo run-by will be staged en route.

Tickets are limited to two hundred passengers and will be sold on a first-come, first served basis. A sell-out is expected.

Ticket prices, including dinner: are:

For reservations, contact	Parlor Car:	\$200
the Friends Office at:	Caboose:	\$180
505-880-1311	Coach Class:	\$145
	(\$110, Friends members Coach Class only)	



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505-880-1311 www.FriendsofCumbresToltec.org

You can also order your calendars directly from the Friends website at
https://bit.ly/CTS_Calendar



MIXED TRAIN PHOTO CHARTER SATURDAY, AUGUST 3, 2024

Circle your calendar for Saturday, August 3, 2024 as the Friends will be offering a mixed train photo charter departing Antonito on a round-trip to Osier and return. The consist will entail a mixed train theme with **Locomotive 463** with the Flying Rio Grande herald with the emphasis of **re-creating a "Chili Line" train**. Plenty of photo run-bys en route.

Date: Saturday, August 3, 2024

Departure: 7:00 AM, Cumbres & Toltec Depot, Antonito, CO

Return: 6:30 PM

Night Photo Shoot: 7:30 PM - 9:30 PM

Fare: \$315 / person - Friends Member
\$370 / person - Non-member

A box lunch, water and snacks are included in the fare price. We're looking forward to a fun day and will be limiting the capacity to 60 passengers. This ensures we can accomplish enough photo run-bys.



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Call the Friends Office in Albuquerque at 505-880-1311 for reservations or any questions. You may also purchase on-line at <https://friendsofcumbrestoltec.org/>



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Gondolas galore await restoration in the Chama yard, south of the Depot and Coal Tipple. Those not restored may become an almost endless source of spare parts for other future restorations.

Photo By Don Atkinson