

ColoRail Passenger

September-October 2004

Issue #46

FasTracks Yes! Campaign '4A' Moves Ahead

An enthusiastic group of volunteers marched from Union Station up the 16th Street Mall to the Secretary of State's office on June 22 to present petitions supporting placement of FasTracks on the November 2nd ballot. Some 1400 volunteers for the FasTracks Yes! campaign collected 64,087 signatures since its kickoff event at the Englewood light rail station on May 2nd. Several days later the Secretary of State determined that the validity rate of the signatures was 81% which easily met the 35,000 signature criteria to get the measure on the ballot. The initiative has been given the ballot designation "4A".

Since then, volunteers have been actively courting voters by attending RTD presentations throughout the District, staffing booths and parades at local summer festivals, and speaking at meetings of community organizations and residential associations. This month the campaign shifts into high gear with door to door leafleting and lawn signs. The FasTracks Yes! campaign has been sponsoring traffic reports on radio and advertisements on local TV news shows.

All of this activity requires a lot of money and thus far, the campaign has received about \$1.8 million from a collection of community leaders, business, environmental, and pro-transit groups and individuals. In July, the ColoRail Board of Directors voted to contribute \$500. In making the contribution to the campaign, ColoRail President Jon Esty stated, "We are enthusiastic supporters of the FasTracks plan. Promotion of passenger rail in Colorado is what we are all about."

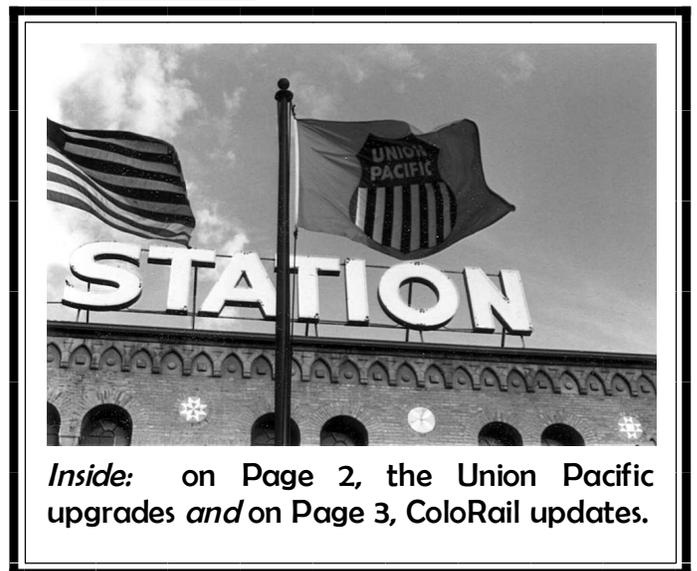
FasTracks is a comprehensive regional plan developed by RTD over the past seven years which provides improved rail and bus service to the entire district.

Included in the plan is construction of 119 miles of commuter and light rail lines, improvements to bus transit along the US36 Corridor, direct suburban to suburban express bus service, more local bus feeders to rail stations, and 21,000 parking spaces at 31 new and existing park 'n Rides.

Improvements are slated for existing Light Rail and Busway lines as a part of the plan. Additions to existing rail routes would take trains up Downing Street from 30th Avenue to connect with the planned DIA/East line, build an extension from Mineral Station to Highlands Ranch, and then as the last step, build an extension from the new Lincoln Avenue Station along I-25 to suburban Lone Tree. Other improvements to existing lines will strengthen the power distribution system and permit "through" operation of Light Rail trains at Union Station onto new lines for access to new destinations.

Cost of the plan is \$4.7 billion which is to be financed by an addition to the existing RTD sales tax which amounts to 4 cents on a ten dollar purchase (taxes on groceries, medication, gasoline, and home heating and electric bills are exempted).

Rail supporters may work for the passage of 4A by contacting the FasTracks Yes! campaign at: (303) 571-5500 or www.fastracks.org.



Inside: on Page 2, the Union Pacific upgrades and on Page 3, ColoRail updates.

"A Voice for Colorado's Rail Passengers"

UP spokesman gives straight talk about vital upgrades

UP works to expedite trains

Tom Mulligan, Director of Passenger Services for the Union Pacific, gave a full description of the railroad's trackwork program for the Moffat Line this summer and his company's working relationship with Amtrak. He made his remarks at ColoRail's Spring Meeting on May 1.

UP track crews will be replacing 80,000 ties and eleven miles of worn curve rail between Denver and Bond between June 8 and July 30. The schedule calls for the crews to work one week on and one week off. During the weeks when crews are on the line, the east and westbound California Zephyrs are to be detoured through southern Wyoming along with three or four UP manifest freights and BNSF freights which have trackage rights over the Moffat Line from Denver to Salt Lake City. At the request of the coal companies in west Colorado, Mr. Mulligan said that the railroad would try to "push" as many coal trains through the area at night when crews were not working.

A total of three hundred company employees will be split into one curve replacement and three tie replacement teams. The payroll for this project is \$200,000 per day.

Mr. Mulligan said that Amtrak's incentive payments for on time performance pales in comparison to income lost because of delay to freight trains caused by Amtrak. He quickly added, however, that UP was working closely with Amtrak to try to keep passenger trains on schedule. He mentioned UP CEO Dick Davidson and he were going to be meeting with Amtrak President David Gunn in Washington in June and that the relationship between UP and Amtrak was cordial.

Mr. Mulligan gave some reasons for delays which included freight interference, slow track orders, signal failures, and freight train failures (breakdowns).

In March, 2004, the last month that comprehensive data was available, he said the California Zephyr averaged about two hours of delay while on UP track. He said the previous owner, Southern Pacific, had severely under spent in needed track improvements and that UP was trying to catch up on the deferred maintenance. He also mentioned that UP was updating the Centralized Traffic Con-

trol signaling installed by the D&RGW in the 1930s between Denver and Salt Lake City.

He concluded that all of this maintenance is going to cause delays but in the long run, once repair and replacement work are completed, all trains will be expedited.



In an all too-familiar 2003 scene, an Amtrak conductor watches signals on a back-up move, as Train 11, carefully picks its tedious way over a congested former Southern Pacific single-track line for a three-way meet on a stub siding southeast of Salem, Oregon. Many rail travelers understand -- better than puzzled media experts -- why the nation's economy cannot grow. It is stuck on a siding, waiting for capacity to be added to the rail freight and passenger transportation system. We have been there.

Leaves turning gold...

Commuter rail and Regional rail experts tapped for “back to Boulder” - Oct. 2

Railway could be a way to keep Northern Colorado moving

... and Pearl streetcar proposal sparks discussion

Representatives from two major transportation studies will be providing updates on commuter rail alternatives at ColoRail's fall membership meeting which will be held at the Boulder Public Library, Saturday, October 2, 10:30AM to 12:30PM.

Tim Baldwin, Deputy Project Manager for Planning from the engineering consulting firm, URS, will be reporting on the commuter rail alternative along the US 36 corridor between Denver and Boulder in this jointly RTD/C-DOT funded study. URS is also completing an environmental assessment for an extension of commuter rail from Boulder to Longmont.

Tom Anzia, Project Director with Felsburg, Holt, & Ullevig, and Craig Gaskill, a rail consultant with Carter/

Burgess will be discussing opportunities for passenger rail in the C-DOT sponsored North I-25 study. The study encompasses an area which includes the northern Denver suburbs, Boulder, Longmont, Loveland, Brighton, Greeley, and Fort Collins. The area is bounded on the west by US 287 and on the east by US 85.

The US 36 and the North I-25 EIS's have been underway for about a year. The studies will address commuter rail issues on each corridor pertaining to railroad alignments, placement of stations, and estimated ridership and costs.

The meeting will also include a review of passenger rail topics of national, state, and local significance such as the latest developments in the FasTracks campaign. Graham

Hill will be making a brief presentation on the Boulder Breeze, a proposal to link Boulder's Pearl Street District and RTD's future commuter rail station at 30th and Pearl with streetcar service.

The library is located one block west of Broadway at 11th Street and Arapahoe Avenue in Boulder. Parking next to the library is available. Convenient bus service from Denver is also available. Alight at the stop between Arapahoe and Canyon and walk one block west to the library. Call RTD at (303) 299-6000 for schedule information or check the RTD web site at: www.rtd-denver.com.

ColoRail members and the public are cordially invited to attend what has become an important Autumn event.

Get ready for FREX:

Colorado Springs to Denver Commute Service Coming Soon

Get ready for FREX, the new Front Range Express scheduled to begin weekday service from Colorado Springs to Denver on Monday, October 11. Details of the new service were announced by Sherre Ritenour, General Manager of Springs Transit, at the annual meeting of the Colorado Mobility Coalition on July 22 in Colorado Springs.

The three year demonstration project primarily funded by a \$5 million federal congestion mitigation grant will utilize farebox revenue from the service as the local contributing match. Springs Transit has purchased 10 used over-the-road buses and will initiate service with nine trips northbound beginning at 5AM and returning in the evening with the last departure from Denver at 7:30PM. Four re-

verse commuter trips will also be provided at midday times.

Buses will serve existing or new park and ride locations in Fountain, Colorado Springs, Woodman Road, Monument, and Castle Rock. Passengers may either transfer to RTD buses at Arapahoe Park 'n Ride or continue their trip downtown to RTD's Market Street Station. A one-way trip from Fountain/Colorado Springs to Denver will cost \$6.00. A one-way trip from Castle Rock to Denver will cost \$3.00. Round trip single fares will be available at double to cost of a single ride as well as 31 day, 10 ride, 20 ride, and 40 ride tickets at reduced prices.

No connections with the Southwest Light Rail Line are planned due to

(Continued on page 6)

High Plains could gain short and long term economic benefits

C-DOT works with rail

Efforts by C-DOT to forge a working relationship between the state and private railroad companies as long ago as 1979, have finally begun to bear fruit.

Last September, C-DOT, Union Pacific, and Burlington Northern Santa Fe, began collaboration on a study to improve railroad efficiencies in Colorado. Tom Mauser, C-DOT Modal Program Manager and coordinator of the Railroad Relocation Study provided the first glimpse of the results of this study at ColoRail's Spring Meeting on May 1 at the Malley Senior Recreation Center in Englewood.

The study, which is formally known as the Public Benefits and Cost Study of the proposed BNSF/UP Front Range Railroad Infrastructure Rationalization Project, examined economic and social benefits of investments in relocating railroad lines and yard facilities. Mr. Mauser said the fact that there are only two Class I railroads operating in Colorado helped lead to the agreement to create this joint review. "With just two railroads, negotiations were a lot easier," he said.

Prior to C-DOT's involvement, BNSF and UP held a series of meetings to lay out a relocation plan making sure their proposals did not throw off the competitive balance between the two railroads. Once a plan was developed, C-DOT was invited to review the public benefits and costs of the

plan. The goal of this collaboration was to forge a partnership between private and public entities which would ultimately lead to improved mobility for both people and freight along Colorado's Front Range. The engineering firm DMJM+Harris was selected by C-DOT to perform the study.

Mr. Mauser outlined the major objectives of the proposal which included consolidation of freight operations, relocation of freight terminals, construction of a freight by-pass route, removal of through freight trains along the densely populated Front

direct connection to their Kansas Pacific Division for trains originating on the Moffat Line. Mr. Mauser pointed out that the railroad experiences considerable delay to its trains by having them enter the North Yard and then reversing direction to continue their trip to Kansas and other eastern destinations.

Both railroads mapped out an eastern freight bypass utilizing sections of existing rail lines and adding new segments which would total 95 miles of new construction. The line would depart from the BNSF line at Omar near Wiggins and go south 35 miles

on new track to Peoria. It would then follow the existing UP line southeast from Peoria through Limon to Aroya where the line would head directly south 60 miles on new track to a junction with the BNSF at Las Animas. Both railroads would have trackage rights over the entire bypass as well as on existing trackage owned by one or the other railroad leading to the bypass. The bypass would allow for the more direct running of trains south from the coal producing Powder River Basin.

The railroads also looked at the possibility of consolidating and relocating freight terminals outside of Denver. This would mean removal of UP's 36th and 40th Street yards and BNSF's Globeville and Rennick yards to a location east of the city.

The study found that there would be a significant growth of freight train

(Continued on page 5)



Dawn at Englewood Station, and an inbound RTD Light Rail train accelerates from the platform while a freight passes on the adjacent three-track Joint Line. Merchandise trains delivering freight to Front Range communities would be among those staying on the Joint Line if coal and other heavy traffic is diverted to a new route. This type of freight is compatible with potential Front Range regional passenger train service.

Range, and development of joint freight-passenger route along existing track to serve Colorado Front Range cities with a double track expansion between Palmer Lake and Crewes (south of Colorado Springs).

Specifically, UP would like to reactivate the former Rock Island line through north Denver to provide a

firms on bypass study

But some fear negative impacts.

(Continued from page 4)

traffic through Front Range cities by 2030 unless some could be routed through an eastern railroad bypass. An estimated 44 trains that would pass through Denver each day to points south in 2030 could be reduced to 16 with construction of the bypass. Nineteen daily trains between Denver and Greeley could be reduced to just nine. An anticipated 37 trains would travel the new bypass each day.

Total cost of the project which includes all of the new track for the bypass and other connecting track as well as the new consolidated freight yards and intermodal terminals is \$1.17 billion. Estimated economic

benefits are \$1.078 billion in transportation savings, \$684 million in land use expense, \$350 million in anticipated environmental costs, and \$178 million in savings for future passenger rail along rail corridors where freight traffic is reduced for a total economic benefit of \$2.29 billion. Mr. Mauser said these were very preliminary cost estimates which would be further defined by C-DOT and DMJM+Harris throughout the summer.

Project stakeholders both public and private were surveyed with some 89% stating positive reasons why the project should go forward. Only 4% of the respondents had negative comments. Many of the positive

comments cited the project's economic development possibilities, reduction of grade crossing delays in metropolitan areas, and facilitation of passenger rail. Negative comments came from residents of eastern Colorado counties who expressed concerns about increased train noise and grade crossing delays.

Once the study has been reviewed and approved by C-DOT's Transportation Commission, additional studies will refine the economic and environmental costs and engineering designs of specific projects listed in the initial study. C-DOT will also be seeking a wider level of public involvement as well as detailing possible sources of funding for the project.

Guides add to *California Zephyr* experience

The National Park Service (NPS) in conjunction with Amtrak has begun the long awaited interpretive guide service on the California Zephyr route between Denver and Grand Junction. The program was to start in the summer of 2003 but had to be postponed for a year because of budget cuts.

ColoRail members who reside along the Front Range and NPS volunteers from the Grand Junction area staff the trains. They provide information and announcements to passengers about the historical, geological, and ecological characteristics of the route as the train passes by.

Every once in a while, the guides have to interrupt their commentary to

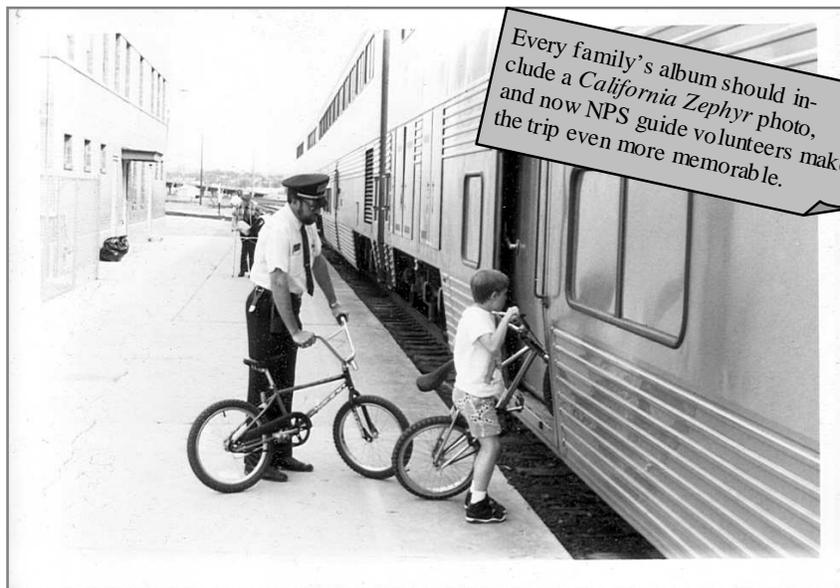
point out wildlife such as eagles or mountain goats-- or river rafters who are participating in the time honored

custom of mooning the train.

The first trip began June 17/18 and was staffed by George Ek and Chuck Muller. The last trip of the season will take place September 17/18 with Robin Anderson and Tom Peyton at the microphone.

Other ColoRail members who have volunteered to make one or more round trips this summer include Keith Dameron, Ron Vander Kooi, Jonathan Hole, Sarah McDowell, Bruce Eller, Tom Toft, Bob Kennard, Bob Smedley, Ed Wright, Mark Reeve and Vivian and David Fausset.

Guides are provided free travel on Amtrak as well as meals and overnight lodging in Grand Junction.



All the news of having fits-- the *New York Times* prints?

Notable quotes offer insights

"If you don't make your cost of capital, you can't afford to maintain redundancy. BNSF doesn't need the (Raton Pass) line but it is filled with freights when there is a problem on the Amarillo line. On the Sunset (route) the railroad does not have the capacity to move the tonnage using it. You need an industry that, when it needs a double-track line, has the money to put it down."

David Gunn, Amtrak President and CEO, discussing the capital needs of railroads during a press conference announcing Amtrak's Five-year Strategic Plan, June 29, 2004.

"The crowd of several thousand had waited for more than three hours for the tardy Kerry-Edwards campaign to arrive aboard a 15 car train that included an antique caboose used by Harry S. Truman during his famed whistle-stop tour." *New York Times*, August 8, 2004. (The "antique caboose" was the Georgia, the ex-Southern Railway open ended observation/business car.)

[Note: Your editor covered a campaign train trip in May 1968 and discovered that political operatives intentionally encouraged early turn-outs to give exposure to local political candidates. Overlength speeches by minor politicians caused more delays. Media blamed late operation on the railroad.]

"Road traffic deaths and injuries can be prevented. The key to successful prevention lies in the commitment of all relevant sectors, public and private health, transport, education, finance, police, legislators, manufacturers, foundations and the media - to make road safety happen." Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary-General speaking on the occasion of World Health Day, April 7, 2004.

According to the World Health Organization, Road traffic injuries kill 1.2 million people every year and injures or disables as many as 50 million more.

Road crashes are the second leading cause of death globally among young people aged five to 29 and the third leading cause of death among people aged 30 to 44 years. **They cost low and middle income countries more than the total development aid they receive.**

ColoRail Board Members:

(with telephone numbers and <e-mail addresses>

Jon Esty, President
(303-756-6910) Denver.
<rkrza@aol.com>

Ron Vander Kooi, Vice-President, Arvada.
<ronvanderkooi@juno.com>

Don Zielesch, Secretary, Denver.
<dwz1@juno.com>

Hugh Wilson, Treasurer, Lakewood.
<acelawilson@hotmail.com>

John Ayer, Board Member, Frederick.
<johnayer@aol.com>

Jo Campbell, Board Member, Denver.
<jcampbel@ecentral.com>

Daryl Kinton, Board Member, Littleton.
ColoRail Webmaster
<DarylKinton@hotmail.com>

Mark Reeve, Board Member, Cedaredge.
<wmreever@aol.com>

Ira Schreiber, Board Member, Aurora.
<ischreiber@aol.com>

Sheila Sloan, Board Member, Pueblo.
<sheila_sloan@msn.com>

Joe Tempel, Board Member Morrison.
<joe_tempel@dinoridge.org>

Jay Jones, NARP Board Member, Denver.
<sunjones@aol.com>

Robert Rynerson, Newsletter Editor, Denver.
(720-570-0647)
<rw.rynerson@worldnet.att.net>

Castle Rock Council to vote on whether or not to be included in Colorado Springs <-> Denver commute bus service

(Continued from page 3)

the already crowded conditions on the trains during the morning and afternoon commute times, however, once the Southeast Light Rail Line is completed in December, 2006, it is anticipated commuters will transfer to those trains and no FREX bus trips will be made downtown.

Without having the legal framework provided for in the Regional Transportation District's service area, FREX will depend for its success on a number of interrelated agreements. These include relationships needed for setting up park-n-Ride locations and bus stops outside of Colorado Springs, as well as an October 14th vote by the Castle Rock City Council as to whether to provide financial assistance for the project. Only newer portions of Castle Rock are within the RTD's area and

these segments do not offer logical park-n-Ride spots.

A recently completed Colorado Department of Transportation study determined that the Denver - Colorado Springs I-25 Corridor appeared to be the most promising corridor of any others in the state for long distance public transit followed by Denver - Fort Collins, Colorado Springs - Pueblo, and Denver - Greeley.

C-DOT and Springs Transit believe that the commuter bus service on I-25 will serve as a good measure of demand and support for Front Range passenger rail in the future.

Follow the development of FREX on its own website:

www.frontrangeexpress.com

West investing in transit

Tenth anniversary
coming up for the
little train that can.

(Continued from page 8)

later stage. *Albuquerque Journal*, July 22, 2004.

Transit Growing in Smaller Cities in the South and West

A new analysis by Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and the Surface Transportation Policy Project (STPP) finds that over the last five years, mid-size urban areas in the South and West have been making significant investments in public transportation, such as light rail and buses. This growing commitment to provide more transportation choices has been advanced by federal transportation funding provided in TEA-21.

The NRDC-STPP analysis documents how federal transit spending benefits every region of the nation and supports state, regional and local efforts in mid-size urban areas to broaden transportation options. Many cities investing the most in public transit are in the South and West, such as Salt Lake City, Austin and Durham, North Carolina. And more than half of the mid-sized metropolitan areas examined (27 of 51) used federal funds for 20 percent or more of their transit budgets from 1998 to 2001.

Commitment to public transportation is paying off, with ridership growing by more than 7 percent in the 51 urban areas with populations greater than 100,000 and less than 1 million. Ridership has grown nearly 5 percent in Salt Lake City, more than 12

percent in Austin, and almost 20 percent in Durham, from 1998 to 2001. *Transact*, a newsletter of STPP, July 1, 2004.

Aspen Branch Studied

The Roaring Fork Transit Authority (RFTA) has rejected an offer by a railroad salvage company to remove 37 miles of rail from the former Denver & Rio Grande Western Aspen Branch in exchange for construction of a trail. Instead RFTA is looking at the possibility of accepting proposals to operate a dinner train or other rail-oriented activities on at least a portion of the line while figuring out how a trail might be incorporated in the corridor.

In an August 12 hearing at the Carbondale Town Hall, the RFTA Board heard from both rail and trail supporters. Board members did acknowledge the value of maintaining the rail corridor for future development as population in the congestion valley grows, however no funds are available for either a trail or rail service.

ColoRail Member on Agenda:

Will Speak at Rail-Volution in LA

Newly arrived Denver resident and University of Colorado-Denver graduate student, Eric Miller has been selected to make a presentation at the Rail-Volution conference in Los Angeles in September on his efforts to form a coalition of community and business leaders to restore

the Burlington Route Station in Omaha. The restoration plan includes redeveloping the station site into a mixed-use structure with accompanying incremental transit-oriented development in the adjoining neighborhood.

The station, situated just south of downtown Omaha and near the historic Old Market district, has sat vacant for 30 years, even after several attempts at restoration. Built in 1898 and extensively remodeled in 1930, the station is currently on the National Register of Historic Places. Amtrak stops twice daily in a 1984 structure built next to the station.

Future plans affecting the station include Midwest regional rail service to Chicago and Kansas City, a commuter rail line to Lincoln, NE, and a \$6 million heritage trolley line. The trolley, now in its final engineering phase, will originate near the station and run through the Old Market to the new Riverfront developments.

Light Rail's 10th Birthday Planned

RTD plans to celebrate a decade of light rail service with a special event on Thursday, October 7, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM at the Denver Pavilions, 16th and Glenarm Streets in downtown Denver. Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper will be attending.

The line replaced over 500 weekday Diesel bus trips in Downtown Denver, smoothing traffic and reducing pollution.

Light rail has been a successful addition to Metro Denver's transportation network. It provides a choice for getting to work, school, and sporting and cultural events. Ridership has been over initial projections and all three light rail projects have been built on time, on budget. The 19 mile Southeast Corridor Light Rail Line which is now about 65% complete is also on budget and on time for its scheduled opening in 2006.

ColoRail Passenger

is published three to four times per year and mailed to members of the Colorado Rail Passenger Association, known as *ColoRail*, as well as to private individuals and public officials interested in improving intercity and urban transportation. E-mail news bulletins are also offered by "ColoRail." Membership in ColoRail is available at a calendar yearly rate of \$10.00. New members who join in the last third of the year are credited for the full year following.

**P.O. Box 480452
Denver, CO 80248**

New Mexico shaping
rail commute future
for quick start-up

News from here and there

New Director for DRCOG

Jennifer Schaufele has been selected as the new Executive Director of the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) replacing Bill Vidal who was recently appointed Denver's Manager of Public Works. Ms. Schaufele was most recently employed as the Director of Transportation Planning for Broward County in Florida and has ten years experience in transportation management and planning.

DRCOG, July, 2004 *Report*

Greyhound Cuts Service:

Greyhound Lines is ending bus service to 13 Colorado locations as part of a bigger move to trim expenses to towns where ridership is low. The company announced it would close 260 stops between Chicago and Seattle leaving a total of 99 remaining stops in its 13 state northern region

beginning on August 18.

Colorado stops being cut are Berthoud Pass, Brush, Burlington, Craig, Dinosaur, Fraser, Fort Morgan, Granby, Hayden, Kremmling, Steamboat Springs, Sterling, and Winter Park. Fort Morgan, Granby, and Fraser/Winter Park are served by Amtrak. *Rocky Mountain News*, June 26, 2004

Bike Station Opens in Denver

Colorado's first bike station opened on June 17 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony officiated by Mayor John Hickenlooper. The Bike Rack, which is operated by Campus Cycles in partnership with Transportation Solutions, is located at 171 Detroit St. in the heart of the Cherry Creek Shopping District.

The Bike Rack provides a secure location for visitors, residents, and employees in the Cherry Creek area

to park their bicycles. In addition, the facility will sell equipment and offer repair services and bike rentals, as well as provide transit schedules and route maps. More information may be found at www.CherryCreekBikeRack.com. *Bicycle Colorado Bulletin*, Summer, 2004.

NM Releases Rail Commute Funds

Commuter rail service should begin in November 2005, thanks to the approval of the release of \$75 million of state funds for the project. Seven of the eight stops in the first phase have been identified. They are Belen, Los Lunas, South Albuquerque (with a shuttle connection to airport), Downtown Albuquerque's Alvarado Transportation Center, North Albuquerque, Sandia Pueblo, and Bernalillo. An extension to Santa Fe will occur in a

(Continued on page 7)

ColoRail Passenger

P.O. Box 480452
Denver, CO 80248

