In a sort of pre-grand opening, over 300 enthusiastic participants watched the lighting of the Lakewood span on the Regional Transportation District’s West Line. The January 23rd event included a ceremonial passage of a lit Light Rail train over US6 as RTD Board Chair Lorraine Anderson and General Manager Phil Washington signaled the lighting as the close of the construction phase. ColoRail member Bob Brewster was there and contributed this new angle on the distinctive structure.

**ColoRail Winter general meeting in Lakewood’s Belmar Public Library**

Key on the agenda for the Saturday, February 16th meeting will be a panel discussion featuring Representative Max Tyler, Chair of the Colorado House Transportation Committee, and Colorado Department of Transportation Commissioners Ed Peterson and Kathy Gilliland. The panel will be moderated by Jim Souby, president of ColoRail.

Questions and Answers with audience participation will follow.

Doors of the library will open at 10:00 a.m., with a social period and set-up time to be followed at 10:15 a.m. by the meeting. The meeting will also include nominations for elections of board members and updates on issues of interest to rail passenger advocates. The meeting should end at 12:30 p.m. There are numerous restaurants in the area.

The library, located at 555 South Allison Parkway, is just south of the Lakewood City Hall complex and

(Continued on page 3)
Multi-state effort for Chief

[Editor’ note: The following from e-mails is just a part of the ongoing effort.]

Notes from Steve Bradford

This is a status update on what is currently going on locally to support continuance of the Amtrak Southwest Chief on its current route from Chicago, Kansas City, across Kansas and Colorado, over Raton Pass and down through Northern New Mexico to Albuquerque and points West. The portion of the current route that is threatened is from Garden City Kansas to just south of Albuquerque.

Diane Dolan is working up language for a draft City Council resolution in support of the keeping Amtrak Southwest Chief service on the current route serving Albuquerque. They plan to introduce it at an Albuquerque City Council meeting. She is City Councilor Ike Benton’s staffer.

Ford Robbins’ Santa Fe SW Chief Coalition succeeded in getting a SW Chief resolution introduced into both houses of the New Mexico legislature. It is basically the same wording as the “draft” Senate resolution disseminated previously. Diane Dolan is aware of this. Ford also stays in contact with the larger Kansas/Colorado SW Chief Coalition (convener is Rick Klein, La Junta Colorado City Manager), as well as Amtrak and BNSF officials.

Amtrak and BNSF worked cooperatively with the Kansas/Colorado group to put together the track inspection special run a couple of weeks ago. [See article and photos on pages 4-5.] Ford says that New Mexico DOT was also contacted and eight seats reserved for NM officials, but they declined because "NM officials can not travel out of state". I was not aware of that rule.

Therefore, Ford says that NM folks (not further defined), Amtrak and BNSF appear to be having preliminary discussion about how to do a similar inspection on the New Mexico portion of the route. Whether this would include state executive branch participation, I do not know. I am aware there are officials from the affected New Mexico counties and cities that would participate if the such an activity actually takes place. More on this as it develops. ABQ/Bernalillo County public officials are only now becoming aware of the potential for a New Mexico-only track inspection special.

Ford will also speak to the Amtrak VP for Public Relations about the need for a short (as in 3-8 pages), economic impact assessment that would address the impact of a loss of the SW Chief in Northern New Mexico. If developed, it should show what kind of economic impact the potential loss of the SW Chief and the some 73,000 visitors/year it delivers to the local Albuquerque/Bernalillo County economy. For New Mexico all total it equates to on the order of about 120,000/year (I think not 110). They have done such studies before. We’ll see what the Amtrak VP says. Obviously credible economic data is very useful when trying to demonstrate how it will affect local business, especially restaurants and hotels.

In parallel, Bernalillo County Commissioner Maggie Hart Stebbins plans to introduce essentially the same resolution at a County Commission meeting on 12 Feb. Her staff person, Janice Hartley is working on that. If anyone can help her with that send her an email. (jhartley@bernco.gov). If you have anything that could be of assistance to Diane Dolan also email her at (ddolan@cabq.gov). Note that city and county staffers are often over tasked (been there done that in a past life), so anything you can do to make their job easier is usually a good thing.

The city council meeting and the county commission meetings will be looking for persons to sign up for public comment who can speak to the need to retain Amtrak SW Chief service on its current route.

> Steve Bradford
> 505-407-2180
> 505-934-9010 (Cell)

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 ColoRail Board and Colorado NARP Council Members:
 (with telephone numbers) and <e-mail addresses>

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Bob Brewster, Board Member, Boulder, <railbopq.com>
Edie Bryan, Vice-President, Lakewood, <twobryans@aol.com>
Gary Carter, Board Member, Pueblo <pueblosilver@yahoo.com>
Jay Jones, Treasurer, Denver, <sunjones@earthtones.com>
Jay Jones, NARP Council Member, Denver, <sunjones.railguy@gmail.com>
Joan Shaffer, Board Member, Loveland, <joanshaffercsilverliningstrategies.com>
Ira Schreiber, Board Member, Aurora, <ischreiber@aol.com>
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ColoRail, the Colorado Rail Passenger Association, is in correspondence and coordinates with NARP, the National Association of Railroad Passengers. Membership in both organizations is encouraged.
ColoRail endorses SB 13-048, bill to permit flexible use of Highway User Trust Funds by local governments

Your editor received the following e-mail:

Rob, it is very important that we note ColoRail’s Board endorsement of SB 13-048 allowing local governments and authorities to allocate HUTF funds to transit.

Thanks, Jim

The Highway User Trust Fund is often portrayed as a sacred covenant, only to be used for streets and roads. At the same time, local streets suck in property taxes, sales taxes, developer fees and real estate expenses from everyone, including non-drivers or those who are forced to drive by lack of alternatives. The restrictive funding works against projects that offer balanced transportation.

Given the pressures they face, local governments will not go wild with non-auto/truck spending. This bill just treats them as rational adults.

Volunteers brighten the holidays at Denver Amtrak station

Jay Jones and I would like to thank the following volunteers who helped out at the Amtrak station over the Thanksgiving and Christmas-New Year's holiday periods. There was a good response for Thanksgiving but not so good for the long Christmas New Year's period. We appreciate the effort you all made to help out.

The following volunteers helped at Thanksgiving:

John Bishop
Edie Bryan
Mike Cronin
Ron Kaminen (2)
Sarah Mc Dowell
Rob Ryerson
Vince Szafranko (2)
Betty Vander Kooi
Ron Vander Kooi (2)
Don Zielesch

The Christmas-New Year's volunteers:

Mike Cronin
Keith Dameron
Ron Kaminen
Tom Peyton
Jim Souby
Vince Szafranko (2)
Don Zielesch

The next opportunity to volunteer will be the Easter weekend of 3/29/13 - 4/1/13. A reminder will come out about 7-10 days in advance, but why not put it on your calendar now so you keep the dates open?

If I missed anyone, please be sure to let me know. Thanks again for helping out.

Don Zielesch

Lakewood Commons a focal point for transit

(Continued from page 1)

the Lakewood Commons RTD bus focal point. Saturday Lakewood Commons buses include Rtes 1, 3, 11 and 76. Rtes 3 and 11 connect with all of the Light Rail lines.

The meeting location will give attendees from around the state a look at this growing civic and commercial area. Effective with the April 28th opening of the West Rail Line, it will be only a seven-minute bus ride on current Rte 76 and new Rte 26 from the Lakewood-Wadsworth Station on the West Rail Line.
(La Junta Jan 10th) At the request of the Kansas Department of Transportation, Amtrak chartered a special train to tour the route of the Southwest Chief from Topeka to La Junta. Of particular interest was the jointed rail portion of the line in western Kansas. Slow orders have slowed the Chief to 45 miles per hour and may drop to 30 miles per hour in the future along this segment unless repairs are made to the track. This could make the route untenable for the Chief and cause Amtrak to move to the BNSF transcontinental route south of Colorado.

The train was pulled by an Amtrak locomotive (see photo). The consist included BNSF Railway’s gleaming stainless steel business cars Glacier View (BNSF 30), Topeka (BNSF 06), Marias Pass (BNSF 64), and Snoqualmie Pass (BNSF 51) which includes power generation. Glacier View is the full length dome/“theater” car with a large, transparent rear window looking over the rails behind the train (see photo).

As with any special passenger train movement, the 490 mile trip required careful preparation and execution. Officials were picked up at each station along the route. Colorado officials traveled to meet the train in Topeka on the eastbound SW Chief, Train 4, while Kansas officials were picked up by Train 3 along the route and returned home on (Continued on page 5)
Train 4 the following night. Security and switching for the train was provided by BNSF railway.

While ColoRail was not invited to join the trip (we discovered the train orders ourselves) both BNSF and Amtrak execs graciously invited the ColoRail delegation aboard in La Junta for the “wye” move to turn the train so it could be coupled to the eastbound Chief (no. 4) that evening.

That short move turned into a long interlude which allowed ColoRail President Jim Souby and members John Bishop and Bev Babb to interact with the Amtrak and BNSF leaders. We were also able to greet CDOT representative John Valerio, Garden City KS city manager Matt Allen and La Junta city manager Rick Klein on the train. Matt and Rick are leaders of the Southwest Chief Coalition.

No new ground was plowed on the trip, but the interest in keeping the train on the current route was confirmed by both Amtrak and BNSF Railway.

In 1963, the 556 miles from La Junta to Kansas City on Santa Fe’s Chief via Topeka was scheduled for 10 hours, 50 minutes. Recent Amtrak scheduled time on this route is 12 hours, 43 minutes.
Under 17th Street in Denver’s Central Platte Valley, another element of the sweeping FasTracks project is nearing completion. Stretching from the Millennium Bridge light rail station to the historic Denver Union Station structure, the “Bus Box” -- as it is nicknamed -- will serve multiple purposes.

On April 26th of this year, cities along the line will celebrate the opening of the West Rail Line, with trains marked “W-Line” beginning regular service on Sunday, April 28th. That line, however, will not reach its full potential overnight. [Editor: count on the anti-rail passenger claque to instantly project a dark future for this lone segment of the program.]

Its pioneer customers will find that work is underway beneath their feet on the Bus Concourse which will replace Market Street Station. Interior work will continue, directed toward completion before Spring 2014. When the station is ready, a miniature reprise of the 1995 Stapleton to DIA overnight move will be required, with hundreds of bus arrivals and departures being switched to new gates in the new facility.

The Bus Rapid Transit role will be enhanced by a direct connection for buses to and from the North I-25 HOV/HOT/LEV/Bus Lanes. Completed in September 1994 at a cost of $225 million, more costly than the original MAC Light Rail project, the special lanes are often forgotten in regional transportation debates. As critics of BRT predicted, there has been a tendency to load up the lanes -- which spent their first year as ‘bus only’ -- with more and more vehicles. Program commitments keep traffic on the special lanes moving, but then the buses enter city streets with the added traffic and lose time.

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the ‘Bus Box’ at DUS

(Continued from page 6)

With the new set-up, buses to or from the special lanes will stay out of traffic, using ramps on the south-east end of the concourse. The “reverse commute” riders -- those commuting toward Boulder in the morning, for example -- will have to travel over city streets for access via a ramp on the northwest end of the facility.

Before the concourse opens, Amtrak trains are due to move back into the station. This will present a series of complexities for pedestrian and vehicle access as project phases evolve toward the plan.

The 2014 opening will connect the W-Line to the Northwest, North and some Northeast bus links, including skyRide to DIA. Then in 2016, skyRide will fly away and commuter rail lines will begin a series of openings. Changes will occur again!

ColoRail Nominations Due

Terms for the following 5 board members expire and those choosing to stay on must be re-elected at the spring membership meeting: Bob Brewster, Edie Bryan, Gary Carter, Jim Souby and Ira Schreiber. Additional nominations may be received by mail or email by February 15th or at the Winter meeting as we announced in the December newsletter. Forrest Whitman has been nominated by mail. A slate of candidates must be selected by March 1 and announced by March 15th. The date for the Spring meeting has not been set, but a date in April or May seems appropriate.

ColoRail’s open Board meetings relocate -- but still handy to Market Street and Union Stations in LoDo Denver.

COPIRG has graciously agreed to host our board meetings in their conference room at 1543 Wazee St. Ste 330. I met with Danny Katz today to check it out and found it to be quite suitable and convenient to most transit. They are between Market Street Station and Union Station in Denver. The conference room can hold 12 easily and has a telephone for call ins. It is located almost directly behind the Alliance Center. Parking will be no better or worse than before.

Jim

James M Souby, President
Colorado Rail Passenger Association (ColoRail)

ColoRail Membership

Name: ______________________________________________________________________
Address: _____________________________________________________________________
City: ______________________________ State: _____________ Postal Code: ___________
Telephone, with area code: _____________________________________________________
E-mail address, fax number or other contact information: ____________________________
_________________________________________________
_________________________________________________

$15 PER YEAR pays for 2013 mailings, printing, publicity
**“Save the date/s”**

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RTD FasTracks I-225 Rail Line
Friday, March 1st,
10 a.m.

Location To Be Determined

RTD tells us to mark our calendars! Its FasTracks program is commemorating the groundbreaking of the second segment of the I-225 Rail Line, marking the beginning of construction on the complete line.

More information will follow in the coming weeks via the ColoRail online Yahoo Group and RTD websites.

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**Sustainability, Transportation, and the Global Supply Chain**

Wednesday, May 15th

WHAT: Panel Discussions and Luncheon with Keynote Speaker

WHEN: 9:00 AM - 1:30 PM

WHERE: The Cable Center
200 Buchtel Boulevard
Denver CO 80210

WHO: Open to the Public - for all interested transportation companies, shippers, and supply-chain and logistic professionals.

Hosted by NCIT and ITI at the University of Denver with the participation of the Colorado Transportation and Logistics Organizations.

Registration information and program agenda to follow via the NCIT website.

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**Special to roll on UP rails**

The American Association of Private Railroad Car Owners board will hold its midyear meeting in Cheyenne, Wyo., this spring and is sponsoring a UP special train to allow members to attend. The "Cheyenne Cowboy Limited" will run from Omaha to Cheyenne May 15th and return to Kansas City, Mo., via North Platte May 20-21. It leaves Omaha, Neb. at 6 a.m. May 15th, North Platte at 1:15 p.m., Sidney at 4:45 p.m., and arrives in Cheyenne at 7:15 p.m. It will leave Cheyenne at 7 a.m. May 20th, via Yoder, Wyo., arriving in North Platte at 5:30 p.m. It will leave North Platte at 7 a.m. May 21st, Gibbon at 9:30 a.m., Marysville, Kan., at 12:30 p.m., Atchison, Kan., at 3:30 p.m. and arrive in Kansas City, Mo. at 7 p.m.

*(Trains News Wire, Jan. 24th)*