This time it’s different. Our senators stand for a network that brings people together. Veteran rail advocates recall the Johnson cutbacks, the Nixon cutbacks, the Carter cutbacks, the Reagan cutbacks, and so on. Each time was supposed to save money and Congress bought the schemes. Each time was an excuse to “wait and see” for state and local officials, presidential permission to do nothing.

In this “process” we have learned some things. ColoRail and National Association of Railroad Passengers members have stepped up to share this knowledge with elected officials. One result is the important, bi-partisan letter shown here.

The draft administration budget proposes to end long-distance train service and small city air service, leaving only the intercity bus subsidies. State-sponsored trains, such as in Oklahoma or Oregon -- or in Colorado’s future -- would have to bear the full cost of facilities, while losing connecting revenue. And experience has proven that intercity bus service will decline when rail service is gone.

**Inside story - page 2:**
2017 Colorado legislation and Federal budget draft proposal reviewed by Jim Souby

**Last-minute reminder!**
ColoRail general meet - May 6

“*For Colorado’s future -- ensuring mobility!*”
2017 is off to an up and down start for ColoRail and passenger rail transportation.

On the up side, the Southwest Chief & Front Range Passenger Rail Commission Bill is on the Governor’s desk having passed both state houses by wide margins! We urge the Governor to sign the legislation. If so, the new commission will continue work to improve and extend Southwest Chief service and begin a serious Front Range rail development process.

The legislation was spearheaded by prime sponsors Senators Larry Crowder (R-Alamosa) and Leroy Garcia (D-Pueblo) and Representative Daneya Esgar (D-Pueblo), and engineered by Pueblo County Commissioner Sal Pace with support from ColoRail. The legislation creates a thirteen member commission. The eleven voting members include five appointed by the Councils of Government/Metropolitan Planning Organizations along the Front Range, one appointed by Denver RTD, and five appointed by the Governor. The Governor’s picks will include one each from the BNSF Railway and Union Pacific Railroad, one from Southeastern Colorado along the SW Chief route, and two passenger rail advocates. The non-voting members are appointed by the Colorado Department of Transportation and Amtrak.

If signed, the new law charges the commission with continuing its work on the SW Chief, including extending service to Pueblo and investigating a Walsenburg stop. It also directs the commission to “facilitate the development of Front Range passenger rail.” The latter charge includes providing the legislature with draft legislation by December 1, 2017. Given all the studies and past efforts, creating this draft seems very feasible.

On the downside, the statewide transportation fund ballot referral for a .05% ($0.50 per $100) sales tax measure went down to defeat in the Senate Finance Committee. This measure was intended to allow Coloradans to vote for funds to provide fixes for our roads, bridges and highways and fund transit and rail improvements.

ColoRail supported this measure, but learned early on that ideological arguments had entrenched opponents. Their arguments were primarily based on a belief that users pay for highways and air service, and other public transportation should be privately funded.

The ignorance this argument represents, and it is routinely pushed by conservative think tanks, cannot begin to be believed. State and federal gas taxes pay for about half of our highway expenditures. Commercial air services received $476 billion between 1971 and 2011. Meanwhile, Amtrak, which would rank as the nation’s fourth or fifth largest carrier if it were an airline, received $31 billion in its first 40 years. Rail opponents often say: “who would ride a train from Chicago to LA?” Well, according to Amtrak, about 10% of their passengers on the Southwest Chief, for example. The important point is that some 90% travel between communities along the routes. This is why the trains are so important to rural America.

Most importantly, when you consider that long distance passenger rail also serves as the only alternative to driving for many rural community residents, whether for medical reasons, business or families, the need for improvement of rail connectivity in Colorado and the west is obvious.

On the upside, the Inaugural season for the Winter Park Express ski train was a great success! Amtrak sold over 18,000 tickets and ColoRail provided nine train hosts per trip. ColoRail is calling for the addition of a lounge car, and Friday service next (Continued on page 7)
When will passenger trains stop here again?

ColoRail doesn't know the answer yet, but the beautiful Cheyenne Depot deserves a visit by ColoRail and NRHS members on Saturday, May 20.

Please join members of ColoRail and the Intermountain Chapter-NRHS as they co-sponsor a charter bus trip to the famed Cheyenne Depot Days celebration, featuring the Depot Museum, Union Pacific shop complex, and the Sherman Hill Model Railroad Club train show. The UP shop area is of special interest as Big Boy steam locomotive 4014 undergoes full operational restoration, next to its shop-mates Challenger 3985, Northern 844, E9 diesels, and more.

Can we imagine this famous train station hosting Front Range Rail service? See for yourself!

Might regular train service to our northern neighbor spur economic development in downtown Cheyenne, not unlike Denver Union Station?

Could the Depot host a restored Amtrak Pioneer, returning Wyoming to the national rail network? So many questions, so few answers. Evaluate the potential for yourself!

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CHARTER BUS EXCURSION TO CHEYENNE DEPOT DAYS

INTERMOUNTAIN CHAPTER - NRHS & COLORADO RAIL PASSENGER ASSOCIATION

......Invite you to join us for a charter bus trip to Cheyenne Depot Days on Saturday, May 20, 2017!

ATTRACTIONS INCLUDE:
UNION PACIFIC STEAM SHOP COMPLEX
CHEYENNE DEPOT MUSEUM
SHERMAN HILL MODEL RAILROAD CLUB TRAIN EXPO.
* SEE BIG BOY 4014 BEING RESTORED *

The bus will depart at:
- 9:00am—RTD’s Broadway & 1-25 Park and Ride
- 9:15am—Wagon Road (125th/1-25)

The bus will leave Cheyenne at 4pm, returning about 6pm in the Denver Area.

Fares include:
- Depot Days Admission fee and transportation
- $29 for paid members of the Intermountain Chapter—NRHS and ColoRail
- $39 for non-members*
- Non-member fee includes a voluntary complimentary memberships in both organizations through the end of 2017 —which will offer member rates for future excursions this year

Payment is by check only, made payable to: INTERMOUNTAIN CHAPTER —

Please mail to: INTERMOUNTAIN CHAPTER —NRHS, c/o ColoRail,
PO Box 9613, Denver, CO 80209
Checks must be received by May 13!

SO PLEASE JOIN YOUR RAIL FRIENDS FOR OUR SPRING EXCURSION TO CHEYENNE WHERE RAIL HISTORY ABOUNDS AND WHERE COLORAIL WANTS PASSENGER RAIL TO RETURN TO THE BEAUTIFUL CHEYENNE DEPOT

NAME:______________________________________________

ADDRESS:______________________________________________

PHONE:________________ EMAIL:__________________________

GROUP AFFILIATION: Intermountain Chapter - NRHS_______ OR ColoRail________
Pedal Power

by Bob Brewster

Yikes! Bikes! They’re everywhere! As the popularity of the pedal mode continues to grow, ColoRail decided to include the bicycle as the third leg of our COLORADO NEEDS TRANSPORTATION CHOICES campaign of 2016-17.

Earlier, we declared Year of the Train and Year of the Bus in order to celebrate the rapid growth in those transportation choices opening in 2016, but Year of the Bike must be added, considering the growth in bikeways and other enhancements that make bike travel safer and more user friendly.

The big news is the 18-mile concrete bikeway that now parallels RTD’s newly branded Flatiron Flyer bus service on US 36 between Denver and Boulder. The bikeway connects with numerous other bike conduits creating a bigger bike system throughout the metro area, in addition to serving the bus stations along the US 36 route.

Completion of the bikeway demonstrates a high level of commitment to the bike mode and how it can offer a valuable transportation choice.

Secure storage areas at major transit hubs are becoming more common and, of course, bikes can be accommodated on buses and trains in order to facilitate the first and last miles of one’s journey.

Too frequently, mass transit doesn’t quite reach the origins or destinations of the passengers conveniently, but the bike fills that gap. All of these factors contribute to making the bike mode a serious option for our mobility needs. Bikes and transit are natural partners.

While people of all ages have become ardent bike users, the college age demographic continues to overwhelm the bike lanes of college communities, especially Boulder and Ft. Collins. Boulder, in particular, must be cited for the aggressive build-out of exclusive bikeways and tunnels that separate cyclists from the always present dangers of mixing bikes in general street traffic. Indeed, the network is expanding county-wide.

Bikes not only provide efficient transportation that frequently avoids traffic woes in our communities, but they also provide healthy workouts to counter the more sedentary moments of our lives. Plus, bikers could be more motorists - not what our communities need. Certainly a win-win-win!

Another growing facet in the world of bikes: the expanding networks of bike-sharing in cities all over the country. Prominently located racks of bikes, very often near major transit hubs, offer temporary use of bikes to the general public, particularly members of the bike-sharing network. This eliminates the need to

Bicycles extend the coverage area of Regional Transportation District bus and rail routes. Highway coaches, including Flatiron Flyers as seen here, carry bicycles on bike racks and in cargo bays.  

Photo by Bob Brewster

Annual Meeting set for Denver, May 6th

The ColoRail annual meeting is now scheduled for 9:00 a.m. May 6th at the Oxford Hotel in downtown Denver. The meeting will include important new developments on the Colorado Southwest Chief and Front Range Rail Commission Bill, and the transportation funding ballot measure bill, both considered by the state legislature, as well as an inspiring recap on the successes of 2016 including the Winter Park Express.

Equally important, the meeting will take up the election of 6 or more ColoRail Board members. If you are a current ColoRail member and interested in running for the Board of Directors, email president@colorail.org for further information.
Pushing Progress

(Continued from page 4)

keep one’s own bike all day when a bike is only needed for a segment of our busy daily itineraries. B-cycle serves the Denver and Boulder areas with many locations, as well as other cities across the country. Membership reciprocity is an added benefit as one travels.

Of course, Colorado is well recognized as something of a bike mecca, with its wide spread bike training activities on our ubiquitous hills and mountains. High altitude training is a staple of the competitive bike racing world, for both professional and amateur participants. Various types of bike events occur throughout the state, raising the profile of this mode exponentially. Perhaps there will even be a bike corollary to the Winter Park Express ski train!

RTD has a long history of accommodating bikes on regional buses in the baggage compartments. Then the bike rack was developed so all buses could carry bikes. Unfortunately, demand for space on those racks often exceeds supply. We hope there is a solution to this dilemma.

We further hope that RTD can better accommodate bikes on its light rail vehicles. Making cyclists stand with their bikes at the ends of the cars is not a welcoming gesture and it poses a safety hazard. Perhaps formal wall-mounted bike racks in the articulation section between cars would be more appropriate, as other light rail systems have done. When rail cars go in the shop for court-mandated renovations for the disabled there may be an opportunity to experiment with better cycle “parking”.

Colorado most certainly needs more transportation choices! Trains, buses and bikes are paramount in the effort to bring those choices to fruition and ColoRail exists to spark the fires of transportation progress.

Left: Colorado Springs, one of now many cities equipped with bus bike racks.
Right: Shhh! Unofficial solutions preceded bike racks on Amtrak trains.

Opinion: by Bob Brewster
Gary DeFrange
for the Amtrak Board of Directors

Those who have followed the saga of how the Winter Park Express became reality recognize the tireless contributions made by just-retired Winter Park Resort President and Chief Operating Officer, Gary DeFrange. Gary wanted the Ski Train back and apparently wouldn’t take NO for an answer. Negotiations dragged on for some time between the resort, Amtrak, and host railroad, Union Pacific. There were setbacks and frustrations, but there was real desire to serve the public and the resort by rail once again and the efforts paid off magnificently.

Gary is a native Coloradan and served as leader of Winter Park Resort for 20 years, after being associated with the resort and its various programs for years. He also served as a bank CEO, a Federal Reserve Bank board member, and a bank owner. He knows finance! An excellent front page article, ‘Snow Business’, in the March 23 issue of Westword magazine profiles Gary and the resort, lending credence to his managerial skills, enthusiasm, and experience in public/private endeavors.

Now, add those impressive credentials to his experiences gained while working with Amtrak and Union Pacific in the Rocky Mountain West - Ground Zero for the almost trillion dollar outdoor recreation industry and much of the nation’s most spectacular natural scenery.

Considering that Gary helped shepherd an entirely new rail service into the Amtrak family of trains, and other recent Amtrak activity in the region (Southwest Chief preservation and proposed expansion), is it finally time for this vast region of the country to be represented on the Amtrak Board by someone who knows the region and its transportation opportunities.

Amtrak has faced countless challenges since its inception. How about some new perspectives and voices from the heartland? Perhaps our regional federal legislators should advance Gary’s name to a seat on the Amtrak Board. As a CU Business School graduate, Gary knows that a major key to success in the business world is growth. And we all want to see Amtrak grow. Americans want and need growth in the passenger rail alternative. GO GARY!
who do not support rail as well.

A phenomenon of rail investments that is frequently overlooked and under discussed is land use change. On the surface, this concept might sound simple; however, it has far reaching implications that will greatly appeal to those who believe that only highway investments create economic growth. An investment in highway infrastructure does indeed improve a highway, but it encourages more people to use roads and therefore it creates more congestion in an urban area. Also, highway investments do not spawn high density developments right along the shoulders of the road (one could argue it does the opposite).

What highways cannot do, rail can. Let’s first discuss the Oxford light rail station in Colorado’s Englewood and Sheridan. This station for years sat in isolation. With no park and ride, it was far from residents and attractions. But recently, a apartment complex was constructed directly next to the station. The reason? Accessibility to the regional rail system. Without the rail line, no such investment would have ever been made in this Englewood neighborhood.

Moving further north, one of the most obvious examples of land use change that has been spawned by investments in rail is Denver Union Station. Around the now centralized rail and transit hub, high density office, hotel, and residential buildings have sprung up. The neighborhood has grocery stores, cafes, restaurants, and mixed income housing. An investment in rail has created a thriving, diverse neighborhood that one could live in without a car. Clearly, highway investments cannot create such an environment, nor drive such lucrative investments in Denver (ding ding ding, who wants to say no to large and sustainable economic activity? Almost no one does).

This phenomenon of land use change is not limited to just downtown. The Westminster station on the B Line is being completely re-born with new high density residences being constructed around the city funded terminal and parking garage.

On the A-Line, the Panasonic Campus is well underway, creating Denver’s first “smart neighborhood” with renewable energy and artificial intelligence installed in almost every aspect of the development next to the new Panasonic Headquarters. There are new investments being made along the I-25 corridor, with Belleview Station rolling out new office and residential buildings, a new master plan for Orchard Station, and high density development at the future Lone Tree City Center Station. New outdoor businesses are opening offices at the 44th and Ward station. The new Denver World Trade Center campus will be built at 38th and Blake.

Businesses are locating their offices and headquarters at rail stations because they understand the high value of rail corridors. Now, policy makers from more rural areas may argue that rail investments only work in large metropolitan areas. That is -- fortunately -- completely false. One only needs to reference Meridian, Mississippi. The city (which is only served by the daily Crescent and an Amtrak Thruway bus to Dallas) renovated its Union Station to become the intermodal hub of the region. Within five years of the initial investment, 230 million dollars were invested in neighboring properties and blocks. The downtown district was completely reborn, all from one investment in a central intermodal train station.

This kind of economic activity is attainable in almost any city of any size, whether that be Colorado Springs, Loveland, or Berthoud. As rail advocates, we need to educate policy makers and the public about the wonderful economic benefits that rail can offer to all areas and cities of Colorado and the “Rocky Mountain Empire”.

Highways alone cannot create large sustainable economic activity in downtown regions, nor can highways create new neighborhoods. But rail can do both of these things. Investments in rail create enormous economic returns and spawn large, lucrative investments around rail stations. This in turn creates large, sustainable economic development with permanent, high quality jobs.

This phenomenon is scalable, it occurs at any city level, whether metropolitan or rural. As the 2017 legislative session winds down, transportation is still a top priority for both Republicans and Democrats. It is time to call not only your senator and representative, but the Senate President and House Speaker as well. Their staff are waiting to take your calls and listen to what you, the citizens they represent, have to say. 2016 was the year of transportation choices. 2017 could have been the year of rail and transit investments. Plans for 2018 will soon be drafted.

Take the initiative to call your Congress members, and be sure to highlight the facts presented in this article, for they have the potential to bridge partisan lines and unite Coloradans for a new transportation future with robust investments in rail transportation. And thank our United States senators for their support (see Page One).

Crisanta Duran, House Speaker: 303-866-2346
Kevin Grantham, Senate President: 303-866-4877
Volunteers key to WPE success; Members contact Congress

year based on what our hosts heard from passengers. ColoRail board members Harry Safstrom and Sean Flannery coordinated the service which received warm responses and thanks from passengers as well as Amtrak. Over 50 volunteers served on the 26 round-trips! Thanks to Harry and Sean, and to all our volunteers for a superb effort. Our high quality service will be extremely important to keeping this service beyond the initial three year agreement with the Union Pacific.

On the downside, the President's budget proposal would zero out Amtrak long distance train service. This would eliminate the California Zephyr and Southwest Chief trains in Colorado and thus the Winter Park Express. Since the proposal, ColoRail has responded. Rob Rynerson visited with Senator Cory Gardner's staff in person in Washington, DC, and ColoRail has also responded with personal meetings, emails and calls. ColoRail members also called in, thanks!

Funding is in chaos for this year and next as of now so your continued support will be essential. Remember: You don't need to speak to your Congressional Rep personally, you need to call and let his or her office staff know that you support full funding for the FAST Act, the 2016 law that fully funds Amtrak as well as other transportation modes.

On the upside, President Souby just returned from a NARP meeting in Washington, DC where he learned that the current sense of chaos in our nation's capitol is shared by all, it's not just us! As far as passenger rail is considered, our Senate delegation sent a powerful bipartisan message to the US Senate Appropriations Committee (see letter on Page One). At the meeting a positive outlook prevailed, though the most important message is to contact your state and congressional rep and express your support for passenger rail!

Your president is resuming his speaking outreach. Recently Bob Wilson arranged for a presentation to the Jefferson-Arvada Kiwanis Club. If you have a group that would like to hear about ColoRail and our vision for passenger rail, please let me know! I or another ColoRail leader will be happy to attend.

On the upside, I am very proud about how far we have come over the last few years. There is one reason for this success, your support! Let's keep it up!

-- Jim Souby
Erroneous excuses vs. rail facts

by Jack Wheeler

When we rail activists have a conversation about passenger rail, it generally centers around several key benefits of rail transportation. Such benefits include rail’s unmatched capacity. For example, along I-25, the highway section of the corridor can handle ~4,500 vehicles in each direction each hour. Along this section of highway, I-25 is at peak road, meaning there is absolutely no room for expansion. The significantly smaller light rail right of way can handle 6,820 passengers in each direction each hour on the current schedule. Additionally, the two track mainline has a maximum capacity of ~12,000 passengers in each direction each hour (credit to the National Cooperative Highway Research Program Multimodal Corridor and Capacity Analysis Manual, Issue 399 for this information). Along the same corridor, the light rail right of way uses one fifth of the land that I-25 uses (credit to Google maps). Clearly, rail is the most efficient use of land and resources to transport large numbers of people through urban areas.

Other benefits of rail transportation include its environmentally friendliness (using about ¾ less carbon than a private vehicle per passenger mile; credit Federal Transit Administration), as well as rail’s ability to integrate connectivity among modes at stations located throughout a geographic region. Unfortunately, these very valid and crucially important benefits of rail are frequently cast aside by the naysayers. Members of congress who do not support rail will almost always advocate for more roads instead, citing that everyone drives and no one takes the train (ironically, transit transports 41% of commuters in and out of downtown Denver every day, while only 38% of commuters drive a private vehicle; credit Downtown Denver Partnership).

Policy makers who do not support rail investments will routinely draw erroneous excuses to justify the denial of support for rail service. Therefore, as rail advocates, we must change our dialogue so that our discussion not only appeals to those who understand the benefits of a multimodal transportation system with world class urban and regional rail corridors, but to those

(Continued on page 6)