

# C & T S Dispatch

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE

FRIENDS OF THE CUMBRES & TOLTEC SCENIC RAILROAD, INC.

P. O. Box 222, CHAMA, NEW MEXICO 87520

Vol. 1 No. 1

May, 1988

## WELCOME !!

Welcome to the C & T S Dispatch, and especially welcome to the Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, Inc. The Friends is a non-profit corporation incorporated for the purpose of promoting New Mexico and Colorado railroad history in general and in particular that history as it relates to the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad. This Railroad runs between Chama, New Mexico, and Antonito, Colorado, a distance of over 64 miles. It constitutes a major portion of the former San Juan Extension of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad and is now North America's longest and highest narrow gauge railroad. Without a doubt, it is the finest remaining example of a vast network which connected commercial outposts in the Rocky Mountain region and is a Registered National Historic Site.

In order to preserve this irreplaceable treasure, the people of Colorado and New Mexico purchased these 64 miles of track and a significant amount of equipment and rolling stock from the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railway in 1970 (after its official abandonment had been approved). Volunteers assisted in the initial stages of moving the equipment from Antonito to Chama. The Railroad is now operated under a lease agreement by Kyle Railways. 1987 was its best ever season with 38,721 riders experiencing the unique blend of railroad history and spectacular Rocky Mountain scenery.

The goals of the Friends include the continuation of the volunteer program for the preservation of the museum pieces located on the Cumbres & Toltec property, both structures and rolling stock. In 1987, approximately 50 people from all over the United States attended work sessions on the Railroad. In addition, the Friends hopes to raise tax deductible contributions which will allow more equipment to be restored and operated. Tax deductible contributions would be gratefully received, and additional information about joining the organization can be obtained by writing to the Friend's address shown above. Finally, the Friends intend to interpret the history of the Railroad to the public through these newsletters, through the restoration and display of equipment, and self-guided tours of the railroad yards.

The purpose of this newsletter is to keep you informed about the Railroad and the preservation activities of the Friends. We would certainly appreciate all comments and especially written materials for publication. Again, welcome!!

--> FEATURE ARTICLE ON OSIER, SEE PAGE 9 <--

## THE FRIENDS - THE CORPORATION

The Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, Inc., is a New Mexico non-profit corporation incorporated in March, 1988. The Board of Directors has been chosen for their interest in the Railroad and to be a fair representation of the constituencies that make up the members of the Friends. The By-laws established sixteen Directors who will be elected by the members at the Annual Meeting. Our first Annual Meeting will be held on August 20, 1988, in Chama, New Mexico. At that time, eight Directors will be elected for a two-year term and eight Directors will be elected for a one-year term. Thereafter, eight Directors will be elected each year for a two-year term. The By-laws provide that the Directors will elect the Officers of the Corporation.

Seven of the initial Directors are from New Mexico. The New Mexico Directors include:

Glenden Casteel of Albuquerque who is one of the people responsible for the resurrection of the volunteer program in 1981;

Russell Fischer of Chama who is the Operations Manager for Kyle Railways;

William Lock of Albuquerque is another one of the original founders of the volunteer program;

Claude Morelli of Albuquerque (presently in Italy - see story next page) started out in 1983 as a teenaged volunteer on the Railroad;

Dan Ranger of Chama is the General Manager for Kyle;

Laurie B. Schuller of Placitas has long been a volunteer and with her civil engineering background, has assisted in insuring the safety of volunteer sessions;

Spencer Wilson of Socorro is the co-author of the 1980 book on the Railroad calling for the reimplementation of a volunteer program, and as a history professor has served as the Official Historian of the Railroad Commission. In April, 1988, Dr. Wilson was appointed one of the two New Mexico Railroad Commissioners.

Seven of the Directors are from Colorado and include:

Carl Carlson of Denver, has been an active volunteer for several years and retired businessman;

John Carson of Grand Junction, a retired carman for the Rio Grande Railroad and as an active volunteer has taught many of the new volunteers historic work methods;

Chip Irwin of Denver has been an active volunteer and has designed a new logo for the Friends;

Darlene Phillips of Aurora has been an active volunteer along with her husband Mike Phillips;

Leo Schmitz of Antonito is the Executive Director of the Railroad Commission;

Charles Slovacek of Antonito is a retired businessman and a person interested in the Railroad;

Hugh Wilson, normally of the Denver area but now temporarily residing in the Birmingham, Alabama area, has been an active volunteer.

In addition, two other volunteers stretch across the continent. Fred Knight of Cherry Valley, California is a dentist who has been an active volunteer since 1983. On the East Coast, Calvert Smith of Jacksonville, Florida is a businessman who has also been an active volunteer.

All of these ladies and gentlemen have contributed significantly to the past volunteer program and have indicated by their dedication and participation a real love of this Railroad.

#### MEET DIRECTOR CLAUDE MORELLI

An active volunteer since a teenager in 1983, Claude Morelli is this year completing his bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin. Actually, his spring semester has been spent as an international student at the University of Wisconsin/University of Michigan Villa Corsi-Salviati in Florence, Italy. Most past volunteers on the Railroad know Claude, and his excitement for the Railroad typifies the spirit of the volunteers. Claude has done much behind-the-scenes work to prepare for work weekends including the purchase of supplies and materials, the construction of parts and assemblies in Albuquerque and much other work to assist the volunteer program.

Claude is interested in all types of railroads and has enjoyed his time at the University of Wisconsin especially because of his ability to railfan midwestern railroads. Claude is also a modeler and has served as the national treasurer of the Teen Association of Model Railroaders. This year Claude is getting his dose of European railroads and took the time to write about his experiences in Italy, a summary of which follows:

I am having a great time here in Italy. A moderate amount of schoolwork allows me to keep weekends free for travel. So far, I have made it to Milan, Rome, Assisi, Perugia, Siena, Verona, Lucca, San Gimignano, and (for spring break) Vienna and Prague. The rail systems in Europe are extremely convenient and the trains are always full. I think the big reason they lose so much money is because labor costs are so high. A large number of gates at grade crossings are still hand-operated, and there are permanent section gangs about every ten miles. Most of the secondary or branch line routes on the Italian railroads look like something out of the 1940's: pullman greens passenger cars, mail cars, bay-windowed stations (manned of course) in every little town. But despite this, most of these lines see an amazing number of trains every day.

One of the things I learned on my trip to Prague is that eastern block countries have lousy rail systems. Our train from Vienna to Prague made good time in Austria, but once we passed the border



into Czechoslovakia it moved at a snail's pace. At one point we sat and waited in the middle of nowhere for an hour and a half. I noticed a couple of working steam engines too (probably still in use because of the abundant Czech coal reserves). Prague is beautiful, but a bit dirty from coal smoke. There are lots of quaint, colorful buildings and an enormous castle on a hill just across the Vltava River from the center of the city, complete with gothic cathedral (and lit up at night). Food was extremely cheap, less than \$1.90 for two hotdog-type things and an ice cream cone. There were lots of police around.

In May a railfan friend of mine from Chicago is coming over here and we are going to do some traveling in Italy, Austria, and Switzerland to see the sights and ride trains. After he leaves, I might head to Greece or Germany for a bit before I have to return home.

My Italian is getting better. After three months here, I do not have much trouble understanding people, especially if they are from the north. Speaking or trying to understand people from southern Italy is more difficult.

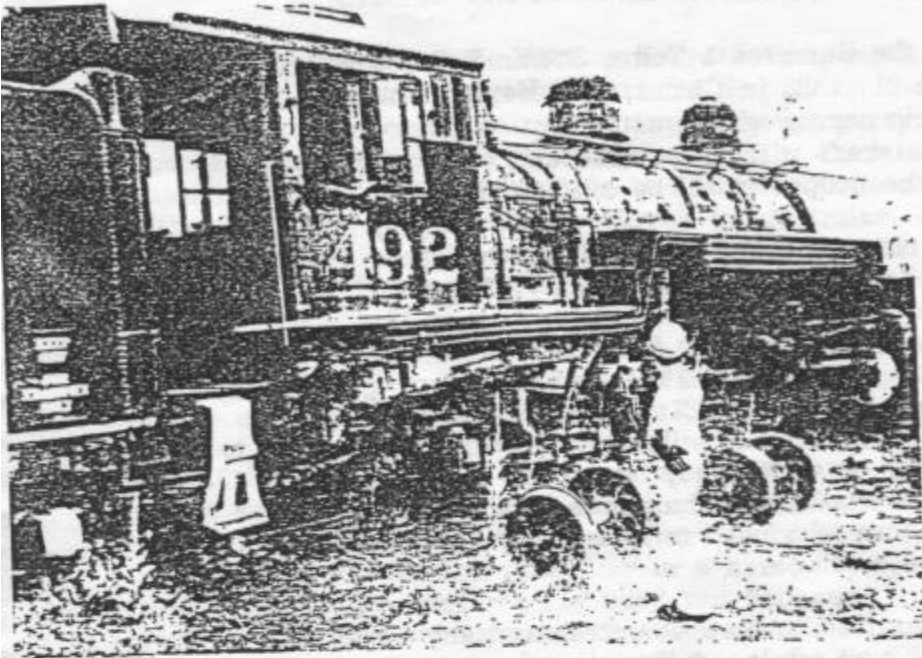
I want to say again that I am very honored and happy to serve as a member of the Board. I am looking forward to helping out the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad again this summer.

We thank Claude for this insight into railroads in Europe and look forward to his return.



Broken wrist notwithstanding, Claude was available to help in whatever way to get the job done in the August, 1987 work session.

AUGUST 1987  
Work Weekend

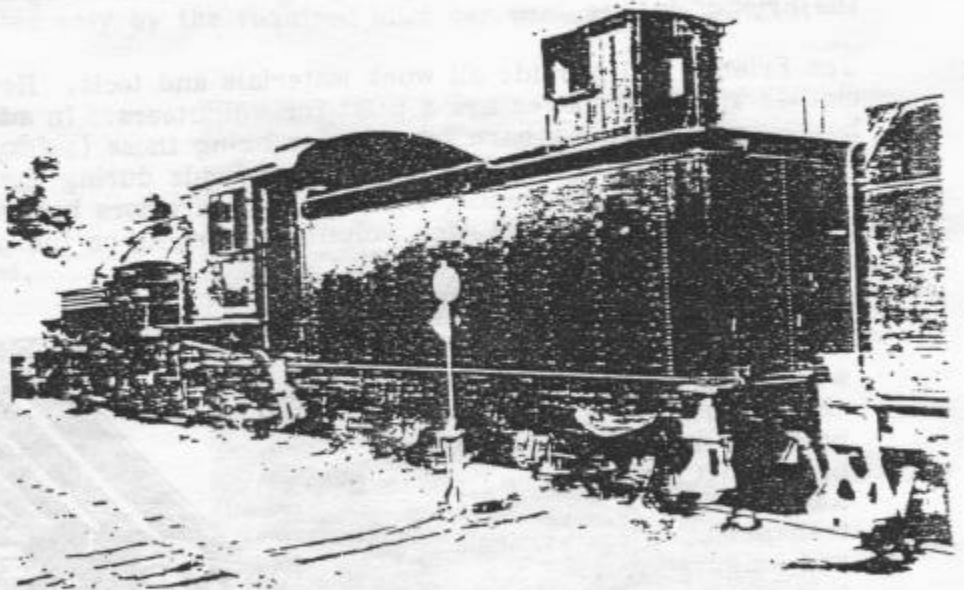


Left and Below:

No. 492 before and  
after painting. Our  
lettering crew has a  
job in 1988.

Below:

On Volunteer Weekends  
the Chama yard is a  
busy place. Volunteer  
Howard Bunte surveys the  
scene including hatch-  
cover work on refers done  
in 1987.



## 1988 WORK PROJECT

The main 1988 work project on the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad will be held on August 18, 19, 20 & 21, 1988 in Chama, New Mexico. Many projects of restoration of historic narrow gauge equipment will be completed, additional milepost markers will be installed and other work done to improve and preserve the property will be conducted.

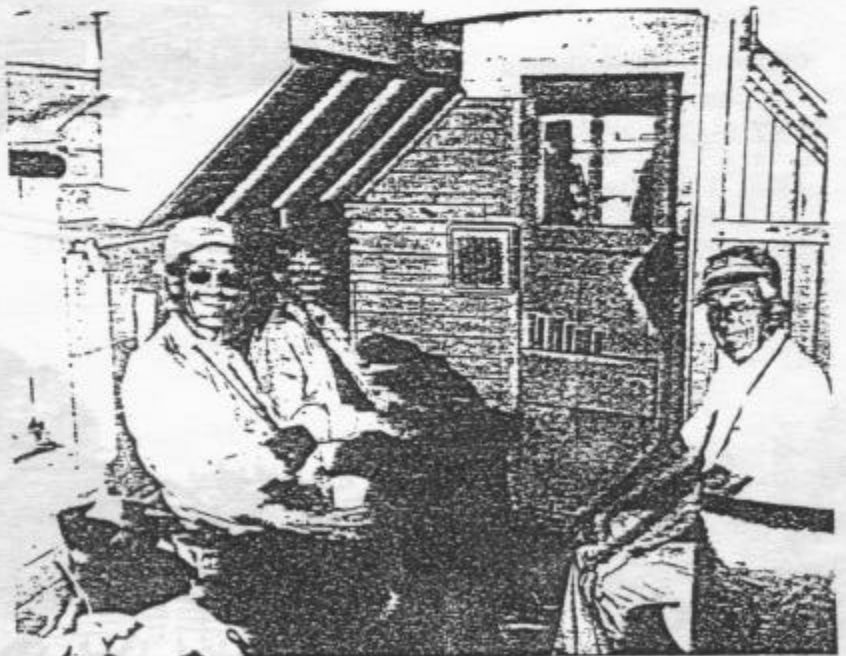
Because of the great distances many volunteers travel, some of the volunteers will be arriving on the afternoon of Wednesday, August 17, 1988, and work sessions will be conducted on Thursday, August 18; Friday, August 19; and Saturday, August 20. A special dinner is planned for volunteers on Friday evening, August 19, 1988, and a slide program will be held on Saturday, August 20, 1988, at 7:30 p.m. in Chama. Sunday, August 21, 1988, will be devoted to volunteers having an opportunity to enjoy the property on which they have been working. Various train ride options will be available including the normal round trips, an abbreviated trip for those who need to leave early, and a special photo opportunity will be available.

Membership in the Friends is required to be a volunteer and any teenage volunteers must be supervised by an adult. Advance registration is necessary, and registration material will be mailed to all members of the Friends in late June.

The Friends will provide all work materials and tools. However, work clothes and good gloves are a must for volunteers. In addition, if you have goggles and/or a hard hat, please bring those (safety equipment such as hard hats can be obtained from the Friends during the weekend). To cover the cost of insurance, the Board of Directors has voted to charge a \$10 registration fee for each volunteer working on the property.

The registration fee and any expenses incurred in traveling to and attending a work project for a charitable organization are normally tax deductible pursuant to the Internal Revenue Code. This includes transportation costs, meals and lodging incurred for this purpose. Please see your accountant for details.

Right: Volunteer sessions are not all work--here Howard Bunte, Kathy Hall, and Klaus Haase (L to R) relax in Caboose 0503 during trip over the Railroad at August 1987 Work Project.





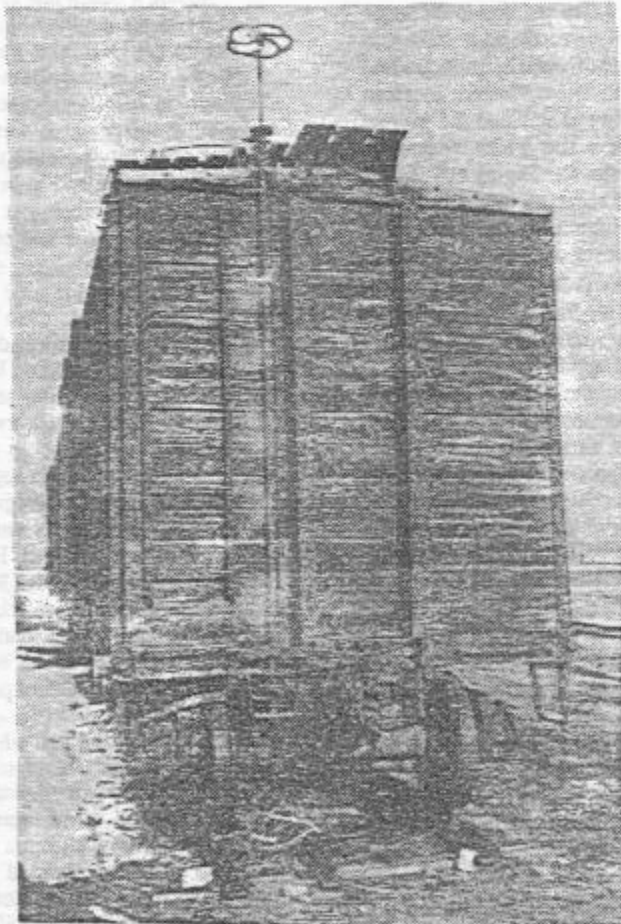
## STANDARD GAUGE WORK ON NARROW GAUGE?

The Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Company has generously agreed to donate two standard gauge box cars for display on the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad to enhance the interpretation of the property. As a part of the San Juan Extension, for many years up until 1970, there was dual gauge track extending from Alamosa, Colorado to Antonito, Colorado. This would allow either standard gauge trains or narrow gauge trains, or combinations of cars on the same train, to go between these two points, a distance of approximately 30 miles.

Dual gauge means a three-rail set of tracks with 36 inches between the narrow gauge and 56 1/2 inches between the standard gauge. For historical interpretation, the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad purchased in 1970 a unique piece of equipment in the form of a flat car known as a standard gauge idler (No. 010793), which was the connecting link between the standard and narrow gauge equipment. This idler car is actually a standard gauge car with three coupler pockets at each end of the car, to be used depending on whether it was connected to a standard gauge car or a narrow gauge car (also depending on which side of the idler car the third rail happened to lie). The 1986 Master Plan for the Railroad provided that there would be a dual gauge display in the Antonito yard. With the donation of these standard gauge box cars, there is now an opportunity to display both a narrow gauge box car and a standard gauge box car end to end separated only by the required idler car necessary to connect the two in actual practice.

Hopefully, the details of the donation and of movement of these cars from Alamosa to Antonito can be completed prior to the August, 1988, work session. At that time, we are hopeful that volunteers will be able to begin cosmetic restoration of these cars to their original appearance. These standard gauge cars are historic cars themselves and the Railroad is very pleased to have them on the property.

Right: Standard gauge box car now located in Alamosa, Colorado to be donated for display on the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad. Note: These boxcars are still sitting on dual gauge track as can be seen in the bottom of the picture.



# Citizens want engine to stay home

You've heard of the prodigal child returning home? Well, this story tells about a prodigal engine that cowboy and Western singer Gene Autry, donated to the Town of Antonito during the latter part of 1971. The Class K-27, Vintage Engine 463, better known as "Mudhen," arrived in Antonito on March 25, 1972. It had been expected earlier, though several problems delayed the arrival of the famed engine through the southern Colorado mountains.

Mudhen was built in 1903 and was one of 15 engines built at that time and was used on the Cumbres Pass trains at one time, although it was before Mr. Autry bought the engine. It was in service by the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad on the Durango-Silverton run. Mr. Autry purchased the locomotive in 1955 and had it shipped to his ranch in Newhall, Calif. He had planned to make Western-Mexican movies, but abandoned the project following a fire which destroyed much of the set. Engine 463 lost its chance to become a movie star.

Sen. Hugh Fowler of Colorado and president of the Colorado Society for the Preservation of the Narrow Gauge, Inc., with Joe "Swede" Johnson, Antonito mayor pro-tem, were in charge of the arrangements for getting the prodigal engine back to its home once again. It couldn't get home on its own steam, so had to be shipped on a flat car. If the little engine could talk, it would have had a tale to tell Antonito for sure.

On March 1, 1972, the engine was on a flat car at Southern Pacific Railroad's Saugus Depot in California. It should have been on its way to this southern Colorado hamlet, but it had been quarantined until it could be loaded onto special heavy-duty flat cars. A search was launched to find the necessary special car.

The wheelbase of Mudhen was too small for Southern Pacific tracks. Engine 463 was undergoing more troubles on the Saugus tracks than in its decades of hauling ore and freight between Antonito and other towns in southern Colorado. The vintage locomotive became a local tourist attraction, like the story about the little engine that couldn't. Several hundred people came to see

the engine while it was still in Saugus. It became very popular with the photographers at that time.

The days went on, and finally the special flat car arrived in Los Angeles, only it was discovered it was defective. Engine 463 was supposed to have been towed away from Saugus Depot by a freight train, but safety inspectors said the bulk of the 54-ton locomotive on a regular flat car would make the trip hazardous.

An order was put out for another flat car and then legal problems arose over lifting the locomotive from the flat car it was then on to another special car. No one was sure when the engine would be leaving for Antonito because repairs on the new flat car in the Los Angeles freight yard would take a few days.

Adding a punch line to the comedy of errors for engine 463: once it did finally get rolling, it headed in the wrong direction. Southern Pacific Railroad officials pointed out that the "wrong way" it was headed in was necessary because the locomotive and tender had to be weighed at the Los Angeles freight yard so the company would know how much to charge Antonito.

On March 8, the little engine was on its way home, even though the modern freight train had been more than an hour late. The Rio Grande took the locomotive to Colorado from an Ogden, Utah, transfer point. To get there, it had to come back from Los Angeles through Valencia Valley — past the Saugus Depot — to Bakersfield and Sacramento where it was then turned east. Even though there were scales in Bakersfield, Southern Pacific officials insisted the locomotive and tender be taken to Los Angeles to be weighed because this was standard procedure for them.

The question of whether 463 would be held for ransom was the next question when it ended up costing Antonito much more to have it shipped from California to Antonito than had been planned on. Where would they possibly come up with the freight bill of \$7,980 instead of the expected \$4,000 that was estimated by the railroad? \$1,800 more was raised with donations from residents and some from outside of the area, though donations from other areas of Colorado didn't materialize.

The public relations man conceded it might be bad public relations for the railroad industry if the Rio Grande Railroad were to keep Engine 463.

Once again, Engine 463 had a hex on it as it had been placed on a wrong track by mistake and was again lost, only this time somewhere in Utah or Nevada. Antonito residents had a gala affair planned for the return and because of the delay, the festivities would have to be postponed. They still didn't know how they were going to come up with the \$7,980 COD on the prized possession.

Finally, the engine arrived at Alamosa and would be transported on to Antonito. The Southern Pacific Railroad and the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad legally had the right to hold the engine until Antonito could pay the COD, but they let the town go on a time-payment plan.

Engine 463 was welcomed back home with a three-gun salute, an anthem from the high school band and a round of speeches, along with hundreds of viewers. It was once again onto its Antonito tracks.

Now, 16 years later, vintage Engine 463 could bring a lot of tourists and viewers into the area because its famed name still holds — "The Gene Autry Engine." How they will make the most of this great little engine is debatable. One of the ways would be to make it a museum attraction for tourists which wouldn't cost as much to set up as it would in trying to make it work over the rugged mountains again.

It has done its duty; now perhaps it can be admired for the work it has done in the past. Mudhen, the K-27 locomotive, Engine 463, has gained new respect and a new name — "The Gene Autry Engine," which tourists and townspeople alike can appreciate. This little engine still could run over rugged mountains if a lot of money and time were sunk into it — or it could be restored as a famed museum piece to let tourists see and hear about in a shorter time. What the Town of Antonito and those in control do, no one knows. Most feel, however, that Engine 463 should not be allowed to leave its home any more because it has put in its tour of duty.



## HISTORY OF OSIER

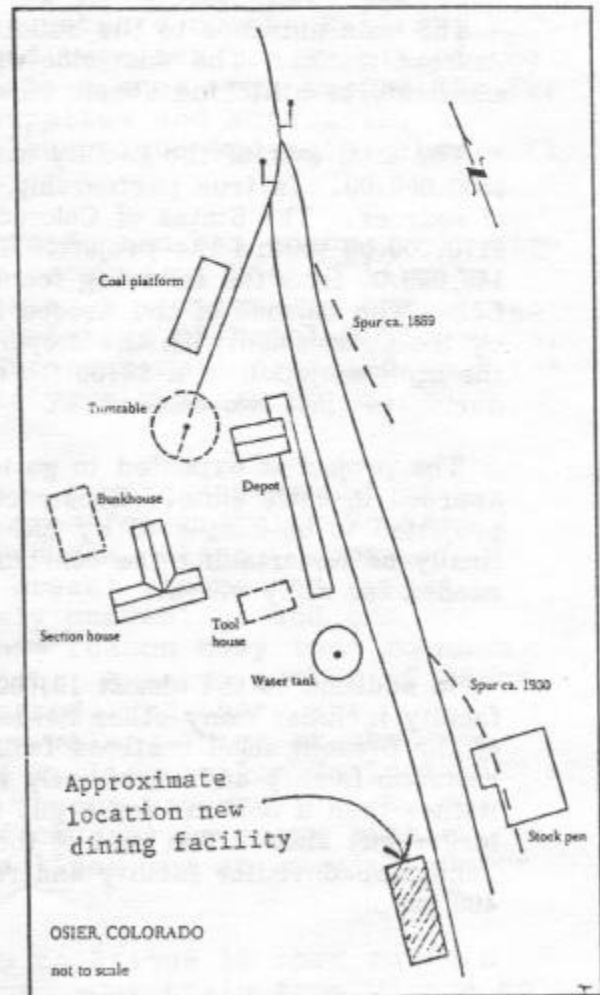
Osier began as a large railroad construction camp in the valley of the Los Pinos, just over three railroad miles west of Rock Tunnel (Tunnel no. 2). Located at Milepost 318.40, there is a long passing siding, where in current operations, trains from Antonito and Chama switch engines while passengers enjoy a hot meal. At one time, a turntable and other buildings existed, but before the new dining facility is constructed, the buildings remaining include the section house (now used as a kitchen) and the depot (now used as a restroom). Also presently located on the site are the water tank in active use, the stock pens and the remains of the coaling platform.

Since the beginning of the operation of the Cumbres & Toltec Railroad, the depot and the water tank have been restored and the section house converted to its present use. Planning for the new dining hall has been foremost on the agenda for many years. In the Five Year Master Plan for the Railroad adopted in 1986, it was stated that "one of the most critical needs on the entire Railroad is a dining facility for Osier. Weather at Osier can be some of the worst of any location on the Railroad and at present, almost all passengers must eat outside." After significant study and the analysis of many alternatives, some including portable shelters and old box cars, the only really feasible solution and certainly the best possible solution was to build a permanent facility to the east of the present grouping of buildings.

Mr. Schmitz, Executive Director of the Railroad Commission stated that "not having a covered place to eat lunch is the major complaint we get from people who ride the train." On a typical summer day, more than 200 tourists normally eat lunch at Osier, but as many as 750 may be unloaded for lunch during the fall weekends. General Manager of the Railroad, Dan Ranger, stated that "it can be cool up there in summer [9,634 feet elevation], . . . and the mountain weather can be terribly unpredictable." This new facility should take care of this need and make the ride on the Railroad an even more pleasant experience.



Osier, Colorado.



## NEW OSIER DINING FACILITY

by Leo Schmitz

The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad Commission is excited to announce the upcoming construction of a Dining Facility at Osier, Colorado. The Commission has hired Akira Kawanabe, a well-known and respected architect from Alamosa, Colorado, to design the building and oversee the construction.

The plans call for a two story building, with the serving area, dining area and restrooms to be on the main floor. The lower floor will contain the kitchen, souvenir shop, storage space and additional dining area. The main floor is to be 56' by 104' and the lower floor will be 40' by 104', for a total area of 9,984 square feet.

The building is to be constructed using prestressed concrete beams and steel. The exterior finish of the building will be board and bat, which will resemble traditional railroad buildings. There will be a high sloping roof from east to west. From the peak on the east, there will be clerestory windows installed to allow natural light to illuminate the main floor.

The interior of the building will be finished with drywall and plaster. The interior roof will be exposed wood beams. Eventually, the walls of the interior will be host to pictorial displays of the Cumbres & Toltec Railroad and Railroad related historical displays.

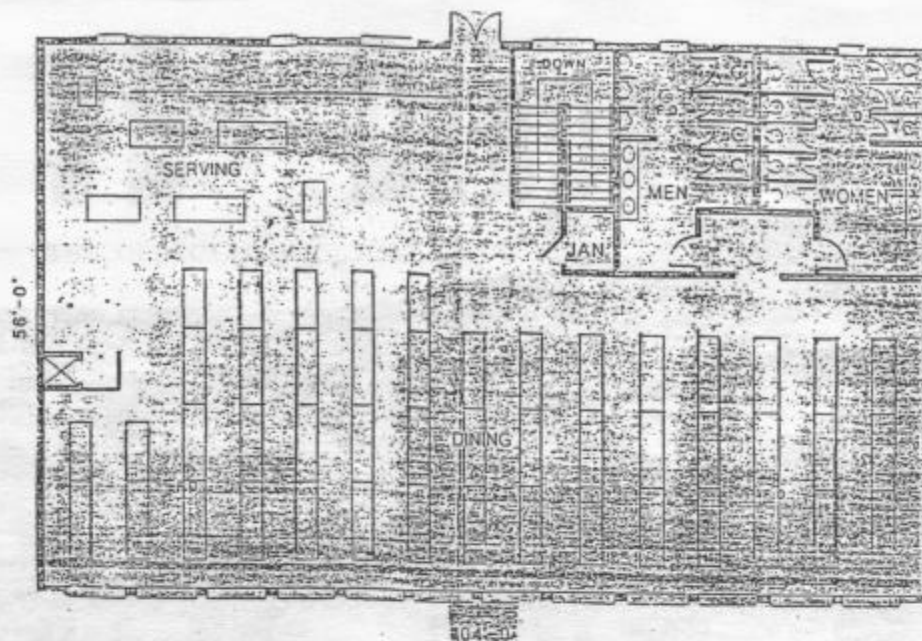
The main entrance to the building will be from the East side which faces the Railroad tracks. The West side will overlook the Los Pinos river and afford an excellent, breathtaking scenic view up the canyon towards Cumbres Pass.

The total cost of the facility is estimated to be slightly in excess of \$500,000.00. In true partnership spirit, it is being funded through a combination of sources. The States of Colorado and New Mexico have each contributed \$170,000.00 toward the project. The Commission has received grants totaling \$45,000.00 from the following foundations: Boettcher, El Pomar and Mountain Bell. The balance of the needed funds, approximately \$127,800.00 has been raised by the Commission with the cooperation of the operator Kyle Railways through the implementation of a \$2.00 fee on the adult tickets sold on the Railroad during the last two seasons.

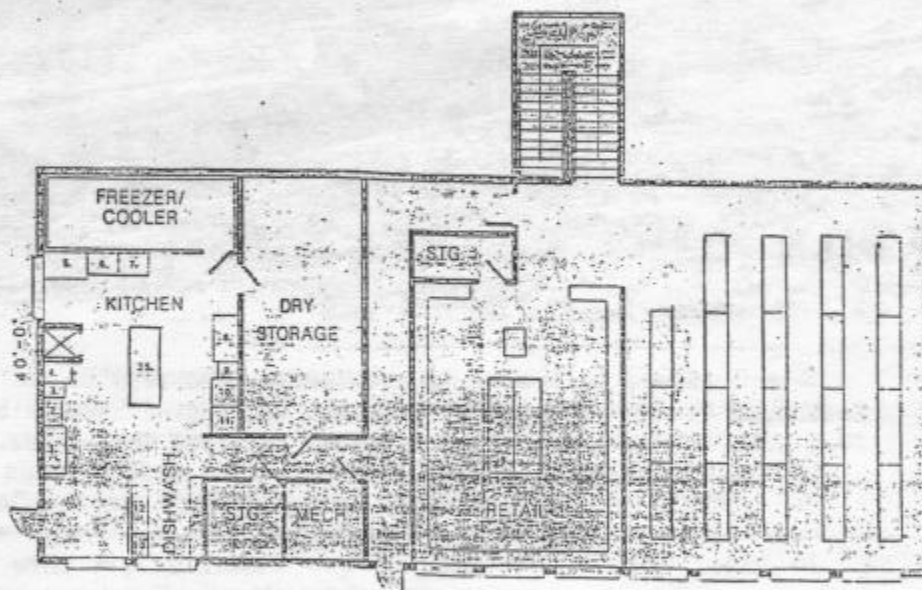
The project is expected to go to bid in mid-May with the contract to be awarded in early June. Construction is expected to begin in June and is projected to be completed by mid-October 1988. The Commission is thrilled to finally be undertaking the construction of this Facility, which has been much needed for many years.

In addition to the almost 10,000 square feet of this facility, the cost of the facility includes many other needed improvements. Riders of the Railroad know of the present small restroom facility. The new building will have a complete restroom facility and an entirely new septic system for the Osier location. Rather than a box car for a gift shop, there will be a new permanent and much larger gift shop. The cost of the facility includes an entire kitchen area, handicapped visitor facility and restroom, and most importantly, indoor dining for 400 people.

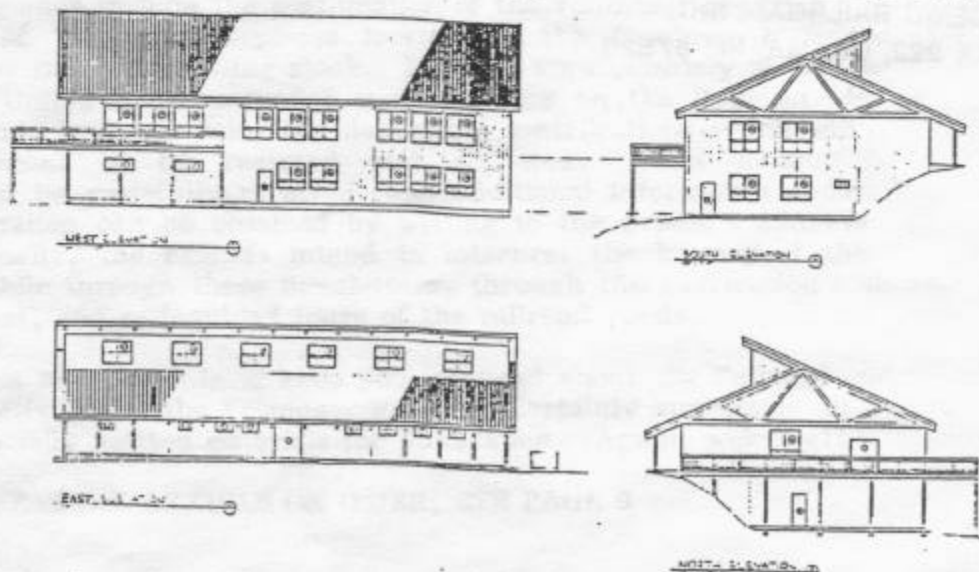
UPPER LEVEL  
Dining and  
Restrooms



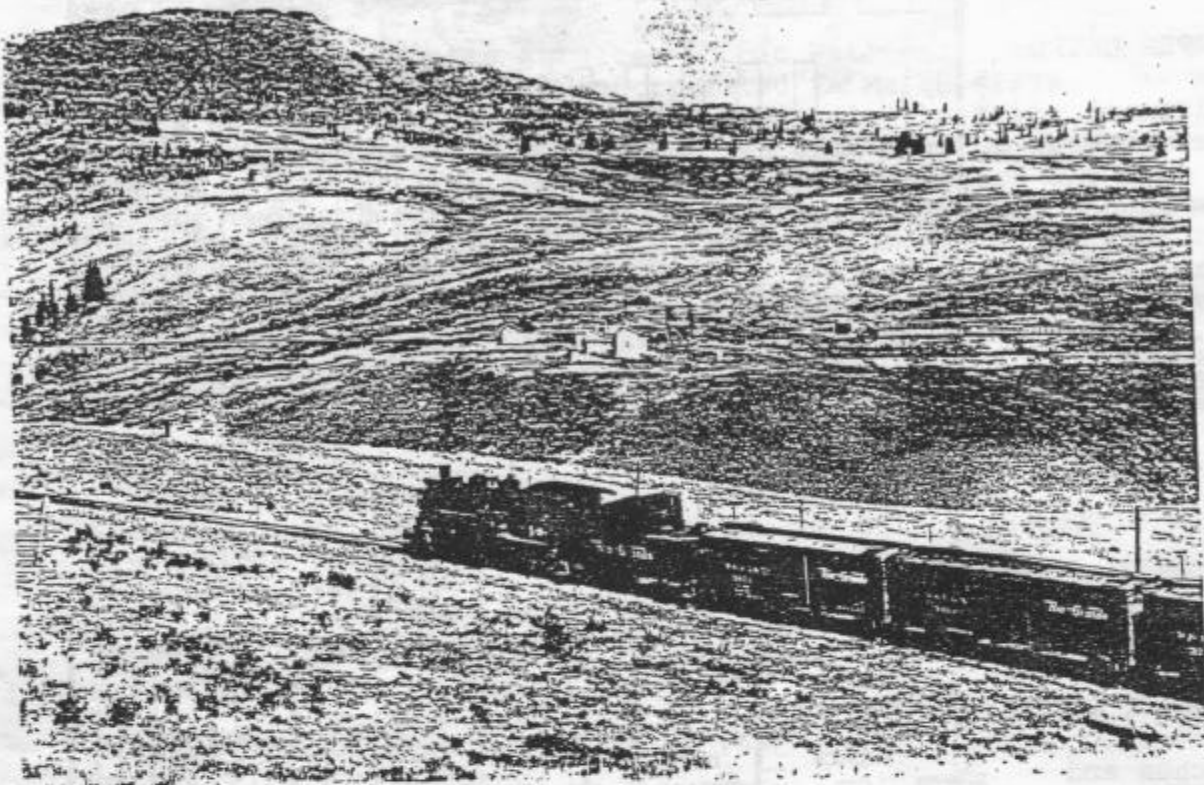
LOWER LEVEL  
Kitchen and  
Retail



EXTERIOR  
VIEWS







Osier, Colorado - approximately mid-1950's  
Eastbound freight powered by K-36 No. 488 approaching Osier.  
John Krause photo - Courtesy Joe Hereford collection.

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FRIENDS OF THE CUMBRES & TOLTEC  
SCENIC RAILROAD, INC.  
PO BOX 222, CHAMA, NM 87520