

Narrow Gauge Railroad - News

Issue No. 1 July-August 1971

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CAR ATTENDANT PROGRAM

Scenic Railways, Inc., the group which is operating the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad, has designated the Narrow Gauge Railroad Association as the organization which will be responsible for all volunteer labor on the C&TS for at least the remainder of this season. In return for insurance coverage, Scenic Railways has asked the NGRRA to provide five volunteer car attendants for each of their weekend operations and, if possible, for their weekday runs as well. The car attendants will get free passage on the train in return for helping with information, passengers, car windows and steps, and other duties which may be assigned. It is a terrific opportunity to ride the train and be involved with the railroad. There is a bunk house in Chama for bedroll sleeping which has been set aside for our use. Russell Smith is coordinator for the volunteer schedule.

AUGUST 30 MEETING

The Narrow Gauge Railroad Association held a general meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Monday, August 30, 1971. Members learned about possibilities of future involvement in narrow gauge railroading being planned. The following persons were named to the Board of Directors of the N.G.R.R.A.:

Allen L. Stevenson	Al Chione
Dan Pyzel	Joe C. Johnson
Richard A. Glass	John Oldberg
Ernest W. Robart	Larry Broadway
Russell F. Smith	

President Robert Keller and other representatives of Scenic Railways Inc. gave a brief report on the current activities in Chama, and the future of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic RR. Mr. Joe (Swede) Johnson gave a brief report on activities in Antonito.

If you are not a member of the Narrow Gauge Railroad Association, we want to bring you up-to-date on the NGRRA and seek your membership and support. We have been negotiating with Scenic Railways for a stance as a museum and volunteer labor group to work under them if they get a long term contract which would include the whole C&TS railroad. It looks like they are very interested in some of our ideas and may be willing to give us all the involvement we can handle. This could include such things as restoring the non-revenue equipment for display, working on a museum, producing some publications and other possibilities.

— F. Alan Stevens, Pres.

THE NARROW GAUGE RAILROAD ASSOCIATION, INC.

P. O. BOX 4566

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO 87106

DUES AT \$5/YR.

1971 SEASON - CUMBRES & TOLTEC SCENIC RR

A California group incorporated as Scenic Railways, Inc. became concessionaires to operate the states' 64 miles of narrow gauge on May 1st. The people of the firm have had experience with other tourist lines at Camino and South Lake Tahoe.

About 50 people answered the Colorado and New Mexico State Authority advertisement in March in the Wall Street Journal, but we understand these people first learned of the project in the IRON HORSE NEWS!

Working seven days a week the concessionaires for the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic R.R. had by late June Engine #484 ready for service with ICC inspection O.K. Carpenters and volunteers meanwhile, had converted a dozen box cars to passenger cars. Even some repainting had been done in time for the inaugural run on Sat. June 26, handling 150 persons on a one-way trip to Antonito sponsored by the New Mexico Railroad Club. A test run with some cars went to Cresco a few days earlier.

Sunday June 27 a VIP special was operated Antonito to Chama for members of the legislatures, press, radio and TV. About 150 were aboard. Photo runbys were made at Phantom Curve, Cascade trestle, and a stop at Osier for a picnic lunch. Operated right on time, departing Antonito at 9 A.M., arriving Chama for red carpet reception at 4 P.M. (there really was red carpet spread from near the wye to the hall!)

Public trips got off to a good start, all sold out. On Sat. July 3 there was a round trip Chama to Big Horn; July 4 Chama to Antonito and July 5 Antonito to Cumbres and return. On the one-way trips, passengers were returned to starting points by bus, taking less than an hour.

At Antonito there was a wonderful turnout of local volunteers for a great deal of hard work laying track. By time of the first excursion they had completed the wye, passing tracks and storage trackage. Dead engine 495 was spurred to alongside the new depot, also built by volunteers.

C&TS is winding up a successful first season. President Robert Keller of Scenic Railways reports that trains have been running 90 per cent full, on the average. Sixteen public excursions were originally scheduled, but an increase in business made it necessary to add Saturday and Thursday trips during July and August, and to weekend excursions in September and October, for a total of 32 trips. Originally, no trips were scheduled after the Labor Day weekend. For the rest of the season, trips are slated as follows: Sept. 9, 11, 12 and 18, Antonito to Cumbres and return; Sept. 19, Antonito to Chama, return by bus; Sept. 25, Chama to Big Horn and return; Sept. 26, Chama to Antonito; Oct. 2, Antonito to Chama (geologists' excursion); Oct. 3, Chama to Antonito.

Scenic Railways has overspent the \$64,500 budget allocated to it from state appropriations to fix up the line. The cost may run as high as \$95,000 for repairs to roadbed and track, conversion of box cars into passenger cars and refurbishment of locomotives. It cost \$12,000 to fix up engines 483 and 484, compared to the \$4,000 which was budgeted for this job. During July, No. 483 took a work train to Toltec Section House site for about three days to re-ballast the track and clean out the Calico Cut, a notorious site for mud slides. Costs also ran higher than expected to build the new wye and yard at Antonito. While the Colorado and New Mexico legislatures appropriated \$100,000 for the narrow gauge this year, some \$25,000 was earmarked for tax liabilities in Colorado. (Adapted from IRON HORSE NEWS and MIDLAND RAILS.)