

uncertainties in regular state funding for the railroad. Colorado's financial problems made it unable to match the full New Mexico appropriation last year and any appropriation for the railroad this year is considered doubtful.

In these circumstances, support from New Mexico would make a critical difference. Two long-time supporters of the railroad familiar with the ins and outs of the New Mexico legislature went to work to build support for additional assistance. Former Governor David Cargo (who signed the legislation purchasing the railroad) contacted members of the executive and legislative branches, and spoke in legislative committee hearings. He and John Pritchard (one of the original volunteers who helped preserve the railroad) co-authored articles published in the Albuquerque Tribune newspaper.

Carl Turner (prior to his appointment as commissioner) drew on his years of lobbying for the railroad. He contacted staff and members of the New Mexico joint Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) to explain the issues facing the railroad and its funding needs and the LFC scheduled a hearing. During this hearing, members expressed very strong support for the railroad. I have been to LFC meetings in past years and, at this meeting, for the first time it was evident that their thinking embraced several significant concepts. First, that the railroad brings economic benefits to the state as a whole and not just the Chama Valley and that, therefore, funding for it should be budgeted like other projects benefiting the whole state and not come from funds earmarked for regional capital projects. Second, that the railroad is a unique historic site whose preservation as a living museum should be managed similarly to a museum or state park. And, that New Mexico can waive the requirement that its appropriation be contingent on an equal match from Colorado.

The LFC also referred the needs of the railroad to the joint Committee on Rural Economic Development, recommending a task force be set up to

investigate the needs of the railroad and current governance structure and to make recommendations for improvements.

After this hearing, the commission applied for and received a \$90,000 loan for emergency administrative expenses from the State Board of Finance and got advice about how to structure its FY 2003–2004 appropriation request. The commission and RGRPC staff are now working together to prepare operating and personnel budgets to support the commission's FY 2003–2004 appropriation request.

The Winter Shop Work Program

The commission initiated a work program on locomotives, tenders, and passenger coaches on November 25, 2002. It opted to hire 15 former RGRPC employees for this purpose. One of them is answering phone inquiries in the depot and taking information from those who want to receive the 2003 brochure or be contacted about making reservations. When the management contract with RGRPC is in final form and approved by the necessary governmental authorities, RGRPC will employ and manage these workers.

Marketing and Advertising

Although some advertising for the 2003 season was placed by RGRPC in September and October last year, other ads were not placed because neither RGRPC nor the commission had funds for this. The appropriation request being made to the New Mexico legislature will include a budget for marketing and advertising. A new rack card advertising the railroad and other recreational activities in the Chama area to be funded by New Mexico lodgers tax is currently being developed collaboratively by the Village of Chama, Chama Chamber of Commerce, RGRPC, and the Railroad Commission.

Continuing Drought and the 2003 Season

In November 2002, there were several meetings involving representatives of

the commission and RGRPC with officials of the Carson National Forest in which it was agreed that communication had not been as good as it might have been in 2002 and that there might have been more consultation before the closure action was taken. Those at the meeting developed a plan for improving communication in the future. Although a better relationship exists now, the Forest Supervisor would not commit to never making such an order in the future. This winter has been very dry again and conditions in the forests this summer are expected to be similar to 2002. RGRPC has drafted a fire prevention and suppression plan for Forest Service review. If these measures are deemed satisfactory, RGRPC will be able to operate.

The EDA Grant for Locomotive Work

Commission Executive Director Bob Johnson and I have participated in several meetings with EDA administrative staff to discuss the peculiarities of our project as compared to the usual EDA construction grant and to review how to complete the application forms. The application forms have been filed with EDA's office in Austin, Texas and they are now going through its review process. EDA is looking for completeness of information, compliance with relevant federal law, and for issues that could delay or prevent the successful completion of the project. The normal course of this review would make funds available in late March.

We have been told that the EDA regards our project as a very beneficial one and that our paperwork is in very good order. The commission's Letter of Intent with RGRPC has settled the uncertainty about running the railroad this season and having technically qualified personnel to plan and oversee the activities funded by the grant.

Further information about operator selection and questions answered at commission meetings can be found in the news section of the Friends' Web site: www.cumbrestoltec.org.

No Track, continued from page 1

The FRA instructions for repair or studies of the two affected areas were delivered about 10:00 a.m., Friday, May 17, 2002, in the general offices of the RGRPC. Within 30 minutes, RGRPC President Bill Albert was in telephone conference with C&TS Commission Chairman John Swartz about the FRA instructions. Swartz issued emergency work orders to repair or replace the track at the two affected locations as quickly as possible. Everyone was in agreement that the railroad needed to be in operation as near to the opening day of May 25 as possible.

Under the leadership of President Albert, RGRPC forces mobilized track crews and train crews to move equipment to the work sites. The passenger car fleet was still in Antonito so a special doubleheader train was made up to bring the cars to Chama before the track was cut at MP 316. President Albert and Geotec Engineers were at MP 319 at noon, Saturday, May 18 to start the inspection of the right of way. For those unfamiliar with the track location, MP 319 is just west of Osier, Colorado, with a 20-degree outside curve with a narrow rock shelf for track placement. The FRA wanted to know the make-up of the rock ledge and the rock wall on the inside of the curve.

Inspections were also conducted at MP 316. This area of track is east of Osier, a 20-degree S curve with a man-made fill on the east end of the affected track section.

The fill was originally made by the D&RGW many years ago and back filling over the past 32 years of C&TS operations had resulted in some settling causing the nickname, The Roller Coaster. The Geotec Engineers determined that MP 316 needed to be rebuilt. The field reports showed that rebuilding would require less time and provide a better track surface. Field inspection on MP 319 indicated that a drill test report would be needed to determine rock type and strength. This would take up to four weeks to obtain and might require that track be replaced.

RGRPC management and the commission consulted and determined the best course of action was to rebuild MP 316 and move the track at MP 319. Track was broken after the doubleheader passenger train passed on May 22 at MP 316. The RGRPC track crew removed rail and ties, and outside contractors were brought in with heavy equipment to remove the old fill material. After the old material was moved, the process of rebuilding the fill began. As the material was compacted in the fill area, a black geo blanket material was laced throughout the fill site. The geo blanket

material adds to the strength of the fill, interlocking the fill material at different levels.

Track laying was started on June 3, and track was ready for passenger train service on June 6. A total of 289 ties were removed and replaced in the track structure, along with 1380 feet of rail. The ballast train delivered 120 tons of ballast to the work site. The railroad was back in service from Osier east to Antonito on June 7, then the U.S. Forest Service closed the Carson National Forest and stopped all train and construction activities.

Meanwhile, on the west side of Osier at MP 319, track crews removed ties and rails to prepare for the blasting work that was to be required. After receiving permission from the Forest Service to enter the closed areas on June 12, work crews started the drilling operation. The solution to the concerns of FRA was to blast the rock wall on the inside of the curve to widen

the roadbed shelf. During the 2001 season the FRA had required C&TS trains crews to physically inspect the track around this point before allowing trains to pass at 5 mph.

Outside contractors were again employed to drill and shoot the rock point. This was a slow process because of the location and the need to control the rock falls to the river below. It was estimated that 20,000 cubic yards of rock were moved at MP 319 to make the new track alignment. On July 10, RGRPC track crews began the process of relaying the railroad; 341 ties, 1500 feet of track and 70 tons of ballast were used at this location. The railroad's tamper crew spent many days tamping and aligning the new track.



Milepost 316 after track repairs, August 2002.



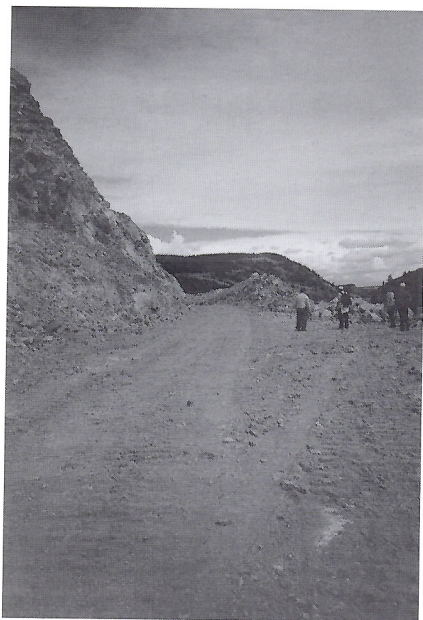
New fill and new track at MP 316, August 2002.



New cut at MP 319, Martinez Point, June 2002.



Laying out new ties and track at MP 319, July 2002. The rock blasting area came to the right of the tractor.



Milepost 319 ready for new track, June 2002. The old alignment was to the right of the people.

The first revenue passenger train over this new section was July 22. A previous charter wedding train was already on the operation schedule prior to the May 17 FRA instructions. RGRPC was pleased that they could provide a train for the wedding party to reach Osier for the dinner reception. Regular scheduled passenger trains started operation on Tuesday, July 23, from Chama to Osier. With the increased fire prevention equipment provided on the trains, arrivals from Antonito began on August 7.

Numerous other areas of track work were completed during the 2002 season. The C&TS track crew are unsung heroes in the operation of the railroad. Very seldom do you see a track worker because of their early start times and the need to get out of the way of the daily trains. But they are there, every day, keeping a lookout to make sure the track is safe for our traveling guests.

Under the leadership of Max Pacheco and Bill Collins, the 2002 track crew of Robert Pacheco, Ruben Pacheco, Toby Vigil, Joseph Sisneros, Marvin Valdez and Noel Lujan did an outstanding job restoring the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad to operating condition.

The work that was accomplished at MP 319 and MP 316 earned high praise from the Federal Railroad Administration inspectors. All of the staff from the FRA were available for consultation during the construction period. RGRPC would like to thank John Megary, Director, Region 5 for his help and making his staff available to the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad.

The next time you see a train anywhere, remember, **No Track, No Trains!**

Another Century of Narrow Gauge Steam

Update as of March 1, 2003

by Bob Craine

In spite of the difficulties and challenges encountered by the Friends and the RGRPC since the close of the 2002 season, the ACNGS campaign has continued to attract additional support. As of March 1, 2003, a total of almost 600 people have made contributions and/or pledges totaling \$500,000. Actual cash donations now amount to \$239,000, and pledge totals over each of the next four years (including 2003) now approximate \$64,000 per year.

The piston and valve rings necessary to complete the repair of locomotive 484 and return it to operation have been purchased and received. Campaign funds of approximately \$12,000 were used for this purpose.

The Railroad Commission and the Friends' application for an EDA grant for locomotive overhaul, restoration and repair in the amount of approximately \$1,300,000 is on track, and final approval is expected before the end of April. The Friends previously authorized up to \$130,000 from the ACNGS campaign to be used as part of the matching funds (with a like amount to be provided by the commission) for this very important project.

Report from the Projects Committee

by Art Randall and Jerry Sahn,
Co-chairs

Currently, we are in the midst of preparations for the summer work sessions, a process that began last November, with the preparation of the preliminary project list, which members received with the renewal notice.

Our work sessions this year will be somewhat constrained by budgetary considerations, but we look forward to having a productive year, and the same "family reunion" atmosphere that has made our work sessions such a success.

We will have a couple of new projects in Antonito. Along with the ongoing projects to restore the short caboose 0579 and drop bottom gondola 859, we plan to replace the deck on flat car 6636, acquired last summer from the Sundown and Southern. 6636 is an ex-standard gauge steel frame stock car, whose superstructure was removed and the car converted to narrow gauge in the 1950s to serve as an idler flat in pipe train service.

We also plan to start a project to enhance the display of the three rail track by uncovering the switch and adding a switch stand.

In Chama, we hope to get started this year on the replacement of the loading dock platform, which was removed several years ago during the project to replace the depot foundation. Changes to the scope of the work increased project costs so that the loading docks and the walk across the south end of the building were never replaced. We would like to return the dock to its historic size and configuration. The loading dock was modified in 1971 to allow access to train loading on track 1, and to allow easier public access to the restrooms, then located off the baggage rooms. Since the restrooms are no longer there, and trains now load on track 2, we should be able to put the loading dock back the way it was in Rio Grande days, but several

layers of approval and redesign of the dock still separate us from that goal. Current usage of the areas prevent returning either the south or west sides to their historic configuration.

Also in Chama, we will begin the restoration of a short pipe train of five cars. Currently, all of the high-side gondolas that have cast steel bolsters and draft gear are considered unserviceable because of problems with the center sills. The center sills in these cars consist of two stacked 4 x 8-in. fir beams, with the upper one extending the length of the car, and the lower one between the bolsters. Water entering through the deck rots the top of the upper member, and the tie bolts pull out allowing the two members to separate, the separation being most visible near the bolsters. Most of the cars have other problems as well, particularly bad end sills and stress from overloading, but there are a few that are not in very bad shape. In particular, 1557 and 1648, both of which have been rider gons, are likely candidates. We will remove the sides and decks, tend to the frames, and remove the trappings of rider gons from the cars as they are reassembled. Tony Kassin and Roy Blizzard will be the team leaders for this project.

Another new project will be the preparation of the little Rogers gasoline-hydraulic locomotive for service. This was another acquisition from the Sundown and Southern, and should be useful to the railroad for shunting cars in Antonito during the winter. However, it needs some modifications, including a handbrake and some electrical rework before it can enter service. Last year, although it was not a project, several people, mostly members of Bob Tully's boxcar coach



Pipe gondola 1648. Volunteers will restore high-side gondolas 1648 and 1557 for display in a five-car pipe train. These cars have been used as rider gondolas. (All photos by Art Randall, August 2002.)



Gondola 1648, center sill separation.



Gondola 1648, B-end sill.