

# RAIL REPORT

October 2019

No. 708



Rocky Mountain Railroad Club • Rocky Mountain Railroad Historical Foundation

## **The Rocky Mountain Railroad Club Annual Banquet Luncheon**

October 12, 2019 • Socializing at 11:00 AM • Lunch At Noon

The Denver Athletic Club – 1325 Glenarm Place – Denver, Colorado 80204

### **Program by Jeff Johnson, General Manager Of The D&SNGRR, and Narrow Gauge Veteran Mike Ramsey**

Jeff will be joined by Mike Ramsey (and possibly a couple of others) to share reminiscences of their times and careers which saw the transition of the Silverton Branch from the D&RGW to D&SNG. They will share photos and the stories of those people who were a part of a very special time. Mike and Jeff hired out in Durango in the spring of 1981, and have ever since shared a great enjoyment in recalling some memorable moments from that era.

The lunch includes a choice of London Broil or Sesame Crusted Salmon. Coffee and tea is included and a cash bar will be available. Tickets are \$45 per person.

**Call the Club Treasurer at 303-781-8616 with questions or for last minute Reservations (prepaid by credit card) no later than October 6th.**

Parking is available for \$7 in the Denver Athletic Center Parking Garage. Garage entrances are between 13th and 14th on Welton and on Welton past 14th.

#### **RMRRC 2019 Calendar**

November 12: Monthly Meeting and Program.

December 10: Annual Meeting and a Colorado RR Museum history program by Rich Luckin.

Due to circumstances beyond our control, programs and dates are subject to change without notice. Please contact Dave Schaaf with program ideas at ds5280@comcast.net or 303 988-3456.

## The Annual Banquet Luncheon Features Jeff Johnson, General Manager of the D&SNGRR



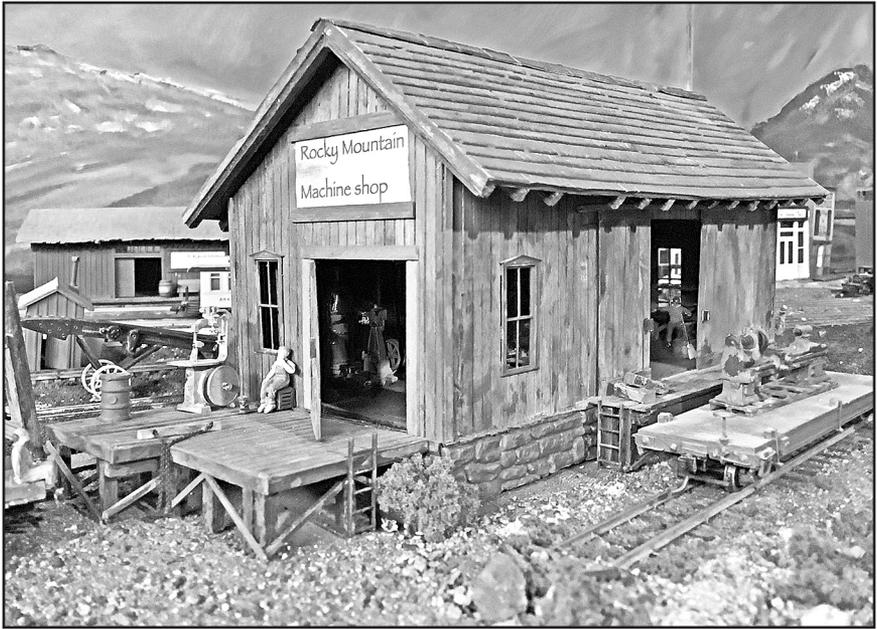
The first Durango & Silverton revenue train below Rockwood in May 1981.  
– Photo © 1981 Dick Bell.



The team that returned 481 to service, posed here on August 1, 1981.

For Rail Report 708, the masthead features Kennecott Copper Corporation  
708 in the Copperton Yard on October 18, 1977.

– Photo from the Tom Klinger Collection.



The Rocky Mountain Machine shop on Denny's model Lake City and Ouray Railroad. – Photo © 2019 Denny Leonard.

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## A Fall Report From RMRRC President Dennis Leonard

As we pull into Lake City, we see the Rocky Mountain Machine shop. To support the mining of all the minerals and ores, mechanical equipment from rock drills to railroads were necessary. As the development of materials from wood to cast iron to steel occurred, machine tools were invented and refined to shape and form the parts required.

Every roundhouse had machines like lathes, drills, mills and presses and so too did every town have a blacksmith shop and a machine shop of some size with similar equipment.

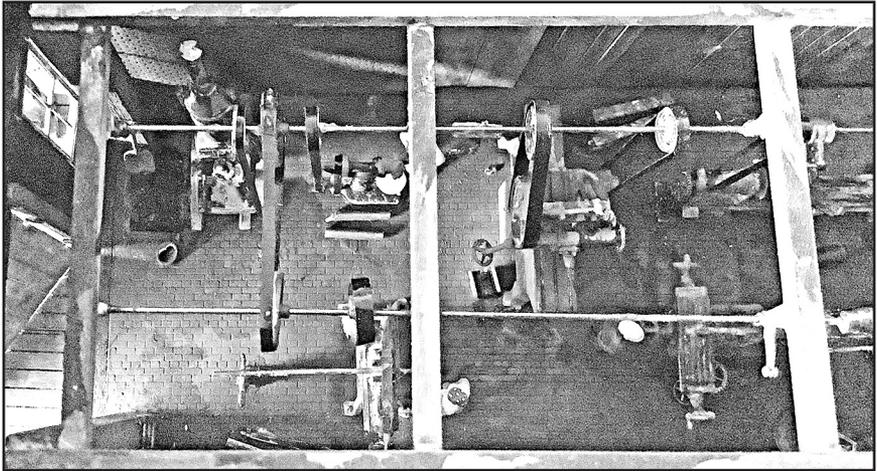
Lake City is no exception and the mining equipment in the area is maintained by the fine equipment in the LC&O roundhouse and the Rocky Mountain

Machine Shop. This shop, like others of its day, has a stationary steam engine (not a locomotive) to provide power through a series of overhead and shafts and pulleys and leather belts. The various machines speeds and spindle direction are shifted by using a long wooden pole and moving the belting.

The invention of the rock drill, replacing hand drills and hammers, allowed faster hard rock drilling and therefore more profitable mining operations.

Ingersoll was a pioneer in rock drilling but after the turn of the century the Denver Rock Drill company became a prominent competitor, later becoming the Gardner-Denver Company which was located at Williams and 40th Ave in

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The interior of the Rocky Mountain Machine shop on Denny's model Lake City and Ouray Railroad. – Photo © 2019 Denny Leonard.

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Denver for many years. They also made drill rod and compressors. Pumps were also very necessary in mines and A.R. Wilfley and Son was a big producer along with the Wilfley table developed with Otto Mears. The machine shops produced the industrial and mining equipment and made parts for maintaining their function.

The recent Club tours of Backshop Enterprises featured a horizontal boring machine, milling machine, lathes, drills, grinders and a stamp. These machines are necessary to repair and build new air pumps and well as to make the parts to maintain them.

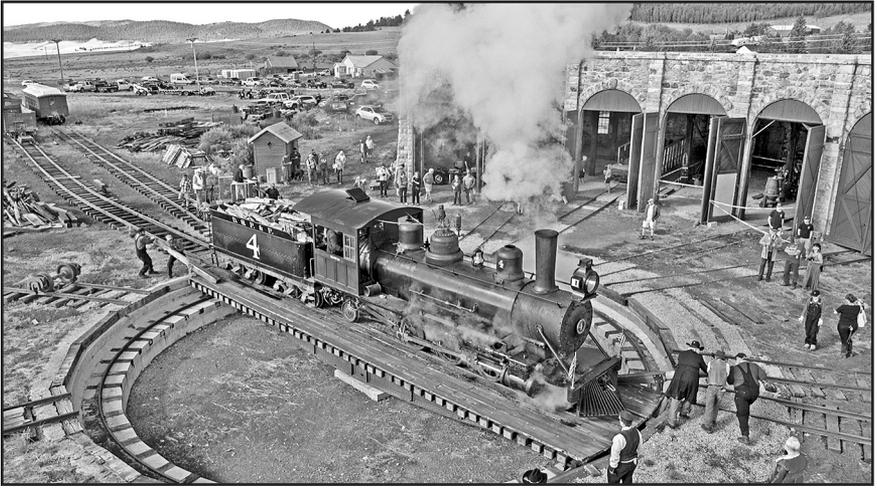
You still have time to get tickets to attend the Club's annual banquet on October 12th. Reservations can be called into the Club treasurer at 303-781-8616 until October 6th. Last minute reservations must be prepaid by credit card.

In addition to enjoying the Denver Athletic Center lunch, Dave Schaaf has lined up a great program by Jeff Johnson, General Manager of the D&SNGRR and Narrow Gauge Veteran Mike Ramsey.

The year is flying by and we will soon be asking for nominations for four officers and three board members for the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club and the Rocky Mountain Railroad Historical Foundation. They will serve for the 2020 calendar year. A nomination committee has been formed and we ask members to forward any nominations to the committee or to an officer.

As always, from this great group of historians that make up our membership, I appreciate your opinions and knowledge, please feel free to contact me by email at [denny@amerm.com](mailto:denny@amerm.com) or my cell (303) 809-9430.

## Railroad Days in Como



South Park Rail Society Klondike Kate #4 was turned on the Como Turntable in Como, Colorado. Rocky Mountain Railroad Club members rode the first Railroad Day trip on August 17, 2019. In the lower right, three men helped move the Baldwin (built 1912) 2-6-2. A record crowd turned out for the 2019 Boreas Pass Railroad Day. – Photo © 2019 by Chip.

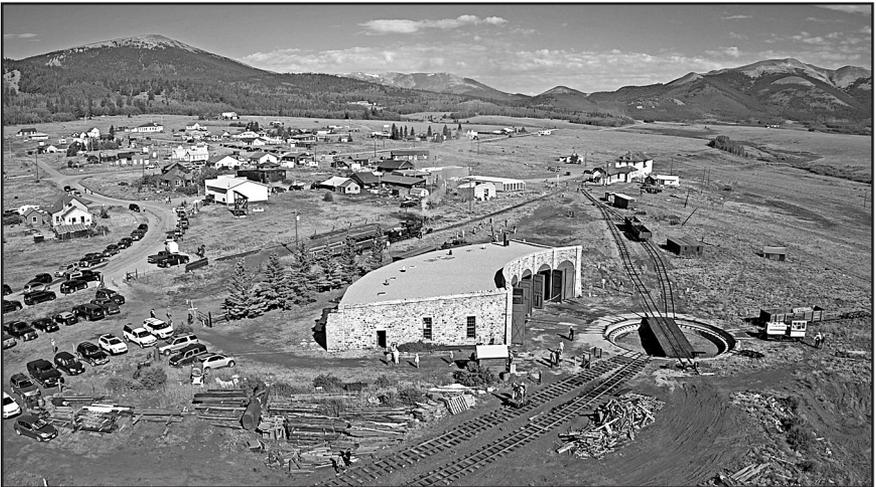


Donations from the first ride were transferred to the Como groups.  
– Photo © 2019 Joe McMillan.

## Railroad Days in Como



The first trip of the day was the Club trip. – Photo © 2019 JW Stephens.



A record crowd turned out for this year's Boreas Pass Railroad Days on August 17, 2019. – Photo © 2019 JW Stephens.

## Railroad Days in Como



Boreas Pass Railroad Days events included train rides to the restored Como Depot. – Photo © 2019 JW Stephens.



A borrowed Plymouth, on loan from JC McHugh, in action with the idler flatcar “stage” for the Denver Brass concert. The fund raising is ongoing for a 20-ton rare Plymouth model HL 3 locomotive for future use as the museum’s work train locomotive. – Photo © 2019 JW Stephens.

## Southern Pacific #18 In Silverton

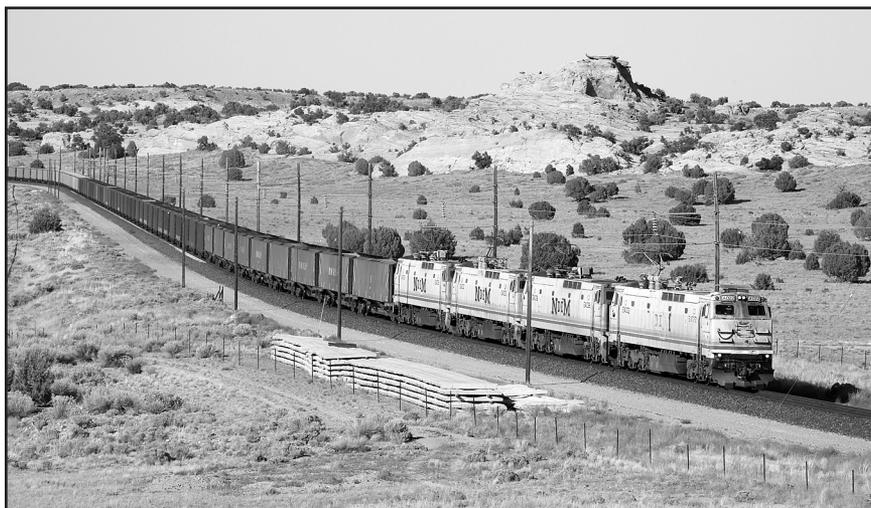


Southern Pacific #18's first visit to Silverton was at 3:36 PM on August 15, 2019, with the two open cars, a flat and caboose 0540. They added water then backed onto scale track to pick up a ballast hopper. SP #18 turned light on wye then backed into the scale track behind the ballast car. The flat and passenger cars were left on the scale track. These are the "fire train cars" usually stored here coupled to Porter diesel 1203. They had been picked up by Extra 480 a week ago and taken to Durango. Extra SP18 returned to Durango, departing Silverton at 4:45 PM with the hopper and 0540. – Photo 2019 Bill Jones.



Southern Pacific #18 after it had dropped its first set of cars in Silverton. The cars are in the background on the scale track. – Photo 2019 Bill Jones.

## The Black Mesa & Lake Powell Railroad



The Black Mesa & Lake Powell Railroad hauled its last load of coal on the morning of Monday, August 26, 2019. Coal mining ceased the previous Thursday, and the final trains ran to move the remaining coal from the loading silos to the stockpile at the plant.

Just south of Kaibeto, the second to last run heads back to the mine for another load in the late afternoon on Sunday, August 25, 2019.

– Photo © 2019 Nathan Holmes.

The railroad was an isolated 78-mile electric railway, purpose-built to haul coal from the mine near Kayenta, Arizona, to the Navajo Generating Station at Page. Constructed in the early 1970s, the line typically ran three round trips daily to feed the plant's three boilers. The final runs were made using all ex-NdeM E60C-2s, acquired in the 1990s to replace the railroad's original E60s and modified to run on the railroad's unusual 50kV power.

The locomotives, cars, electrical system, and buildings will be scrapped shortly, with the power plant to follow as soon as the coal stockpile is depleted. The Salt River Project, who operated the plant, is shutting it down in favor of less expensive power generation elsewhere.



In the last light of the day, the second to last train loads at the mine. By the time they complete loading, it will be dark. The final run left Page in darkness around midnight, and made its final trip into the plant at daybreak on Monday, August 27, 2019.

– Photo © 2019 Nathan Holmes.



The Club returned from Monarch, and the locomotive was turned and was preparing for the second leg of the day's trip over Poncha Pass to Villa Grove, a distance of 25.24 miles.

– Jack Pfeifer Photo from the James L. Ehernberger collection.

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## Personal Histories – The 1949 Villa Grove Line Club Excursion

By Jim Ehernberger

The final narrow gauge excursion in 1949, was the second segment of the Monarch Branch trip, and returning to Poncha Junction, the Club's train departed on the old original Marshall Pass line to Mears Junction, and then over Poncha Pass to Villa Grove.

The motive power was engine 499, and the six-car train consisted of baggage car 163, coaches 306, 284, 280 and 319 with the **SILVER VISTA** on the rear.

Salida, elevation 7,055 feet, was located along the Arkansas River on the Tennessee Pass route, and it was the major terminal for narrow gauge operations over the original main line to Gunnison and Montrose. At this terminal there was a lot of activity with the limestone movements off of the Monarch Branch, the coal shipments from Crested Butte, as well as a tremendous fall livestock movement from the huge ranches west of Gunnison. Salida was the home terminal for operations to Monarch, Gunnison,

and Alamosa via the Valley Line.

From Salida, the 5.01-mile grade to Poncha Junction was only 2.30%. Poncha Junction was the location where our train had returned from the Monarch limestone quarry. From that point 6.18 miles to Mears Junction, the grade became 4%. Mears Junction was a water station, elevation 8,431 feet, and the junction of the 73.42-mile Alamosa line that switched off of the main line and looped over the Marshall Pass line on a 4% grade to the top of Poncha Pass, elevation 9,059 feet, a distance of 3.29 miles. Poncha Pass only had a siding and a telephone booth. The siding was used when it was necessary to double "the hill" during freight operations.

The distance from Poncha Junction to Villa Grove, elevation 7,972 feet, was 25.24 miles. Villa Grove, located 54.38 miles north of Alamosa (where a 53-mile tangent track existed), was a water station and had a wye track, used

# Personal Histories – The 1949 Villa Grove Line Club Excursion



The excursion operated over the Marshall Pass main line from Poncha Junction to Mears Junction on September 25, 1949, a distance of 6.18 miles on a 4% grade. At Mears Junction, the locomotive took on water at the standard Rio Grande wooden tank. (The Mears Junction tank was relocated to the Gunnison Museum in 1971) – Jack Pfeifer Photo from the James L. Ehernberger collection.

for turning helper locomotives when needed for freight trains. During live-stock shipping season Villa Grove was one of the important locations for such movements.

At Villa Grove the excursion train was turned for the return trip to Salida. The grade at Villa Grove was only 1.42%, however, 12.41 miles to the north at Round Hill, the grade increased to 3% for the 3.32-mile climb to the top of Poncha Pass.

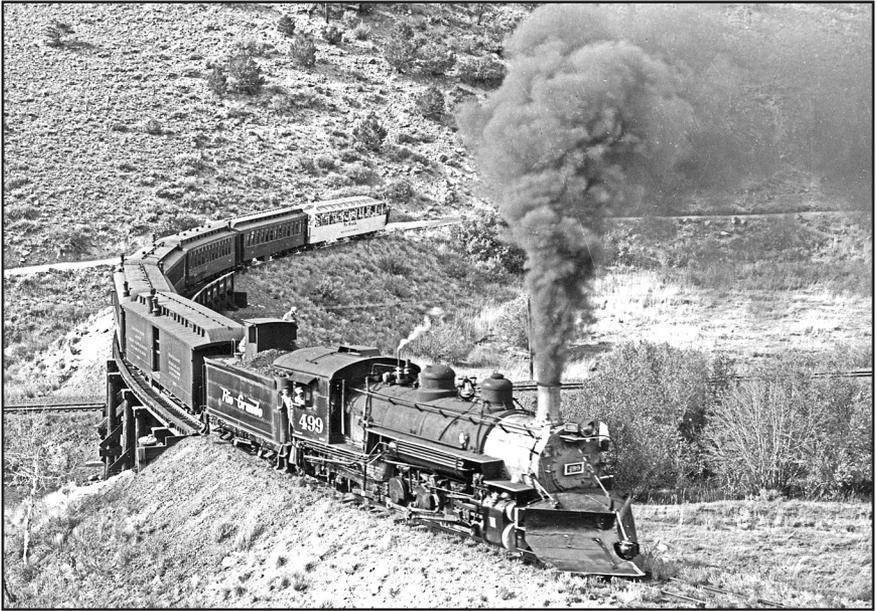
The Valley Line to Villa Grove was abandoned and track removed in 1951, from Mears Junction to Hooper, a total of 53.21 miles. The Hooper spur

(20.23 miles from Alamosa) remained (it was three-rail and they pulled out the center rail) until abandoned in 1959.

The Marshall Pass line from Poncha Junction to Sapinero and the Crested Butte and Baldwin branches were all removed in 1955.

When the Monarch Branch was standard gauged in 1956, that ended narrow gauge operations out of Salida. The locomotives and many cars were taken to Alamosa on flat cars for use on the Alamosa-Durango-Farmington lines. At that time the gondolas were in demand because of the increase of business with the pipe loadings at Alamosa.

## Personal Histories – The 1949 Villa Grove Line Club Excursion



Leaving Mears Junction water stop, the track switched off of the Marshall Pass line to make a loop-over while gaining elevation on the Poncha Pass route toward Alamosa via Villa Grove. This was always a favorite photo location for photographers. – Jack Pfeifer Photo from the James L. Ehernberger collection.



The excursion train was turned on the Villa Grove wye track and then returned on September 25, 1949. The Club enjoyed the use of the special SILVER VISTA car attached to the rear of the 6-car consist. – Jack Pfeifer Photo from the James L. Ehernberger collection.

## Personal Histories – The 1949 Villa Grove Line Club Excursion



The track crossed over US-285, a short distance from the top of Poncha Pass. Much of the grade is visible today, including this crossing. The grade from Round Hill to the summit of the pass was 3%, for a distance of 3.32 miles.  
– Jack Pfeifer Photo from the James L. Ehernberger collection.



The final photograph of the day, as it was getting quite late in the day, was when the excursion train dropped down the 4% grade from the top of Poncha Pass to Mears Junction. – Jack Pfeifer Photo from the James L. Ehernberger collection.

## Colorado Railroad Museum 2019 Special Events

### Trick or Treat Train – October 26 & 27

It's full steam ahead for tricks, treats and trains! The Railroad Halloween Town is a safe place for kids to enjoy Trick or Treating. Ride behind a historic Denver & Rio Grande Steam Locomotive in vintage passenger cars hosted by conductors and engineers in full costume. Visit the special stops with your treat bags and tickle your funny bones including the "not so spooky" Haunted Railcar and the Olde Railroaders Silly Graveyard. Enjoy food, kettle corn, shaved ice and even face painters. Finally, get a great picture of your costume as you pose in front of our Pumpkin Patch cart. Get professional fall portraits by Mama Chicken Photography.

Admission includes unlimited rides on the Steam Engine as well as entertainment throughout the grounds. Open to the public from 9 AM to 5 PM with entertainment and events running from 10 AM to 4 PM. Museum members and Children under 2 are free, Children \$5, Adults \$15 and Seniors \$10.

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### Friday Tours

Each Friday, enjoy an hour of exploring a different aspect of Colorado's railroad history. Each tour covers a specific theme and focus. Friday Tour Tickets are \$3 each plus General Admission (\$10 adults, \$5 kids 2-15, \$8 seniors). Tickets are available for purchase at the door, no reservations required.

October 25, and November 29 – Cabooses.

November 8 – Kitchens.

October 11, and November 22 – Locomotives.

December 13 – Railroad Post Office Cars.

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For information call 303-279-4591 or visit <http://www.coloradorailroadmuseum.org>

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### Colorado Railroad Museum Admission

Rocky Mountain Railroad Club Members in good standing, and upon presentation of a current membership card, are entitled to free admission. Members are invited to join the Colorado Railroad Museum (a Museum membership provides certain merchandise discounts), and members may participate in restoration or other maintenance programs as volunteers.

### Intermountain Chapter, NRHS Events

For information call 303-883-2435 or see <http://www.cozx.com/nrhs>.

October 16, 2019 – Dinner Meeting – 5:30 PM to 8:30 PM

Interview with Cornelius Hauck, co-founder  
Of the Colorado Railroad Museum by Richard Luckin.

The dinner meetings are in the back room of Red Lobster, 4455 Wadsworth Boulevard in Wheat Ridge, Colorado. Parking is in front and behind the building.

Go south on Wadsworth, the restaurant is on the west side of Wadsworth just before you get to 44th Ave. Reservations are not required.

Dinner orders begin at 5:30 PM and the program begins approximately at 7:00 PM.

## **Publishers Statement — Rocky Mountain Rail Report**

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### **Club Information**

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Facebook:  
[www.facebook.com/rockymtnrrclub](http://www.facebook.com/rockymtnrrclub)

### **Club and Foundation Officers**

President	Dennis Leonard
Vice President	Dave Schaaf
Secretary	Andy Dell
Treasurer	Keith Jensen

### **Club and Foundation Directors**

Nathan Holmes, Ron Keiser, Pat Mauro,  
Debbie MacDonald, Steve Subber, Michael Tinetti.

### **Membership Information**

Membership in the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club may be obtained by sending the annual dues to the Club address listed above.

Regular membership dues are \$35.00. Overseas regular membership dues are \$45.00.

Contributing membership is \$50.00. Sustaining membership is \$70.00.

Patron membership is \$100.00. Golden membership is \$500.00.

An associate membership for spouses and children is \$25.00 additional.

Members joining after April may send a payment of \$3.00 for each month remaining in the year. New members who join in-person at a meeting will be given a free copy of the Club history book

Members of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club are also members in the Rocky Mountain Railroad Historical Foundation, the non-profit arm of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club.

### **Board Meetings**

Members are always welcome to attend any board of directors meeting. Please contact any Club officer for the date, time and location.

### **Newsletter Contributions**

Newsletter contributions and items for publication should be sent to:

Bruce Nall, Editor  
Rocky Mountain Rail Report  
PO Box 620579  
Littleton, CO 80162-0579

E-mail: [selectimag@aol.com](mailto:selectimag@aol.com)

**Items for the November 2019 *Rail Report* should be sent by October 18th.**



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