

# LINEUP

Official Newsletter Of Motorcar Operators West

**2013 Rocky Mountain Rail Tour**  
**Nevada Northern Railway**  
**Heber Valley Railroad**  
**Leadville Colorado and Southern Railroad**  
**San Luis and Rio Grande Railroad**



Volume 21, No. 2

Fall 2013

Motorcar Operators West  
Board of Directors Officers and Members

**Bill Schertle**      **President**  
804 E. Tularosa Avenue  
Orange CA 92866  
H (714) 633-1605  
C (714) 743-0804  
bschertle@sbcglobal.net

**Dave Balestreri**    **Vice President**  
2320 E Street  
Sacramento, CA 95816  
H (916) 444-6374  
C (916) 531-7536  
dbalestreri@softcom.net

**Malcolm Frost**      **Secretary**  
1020 Sylvan Glen Place  
Auburn, CA  
H (530) 885-0354  
W (530) 887-8003  
C (530) 305-2145  
rv129.3@gmail.com

**Glen Ford**              **Treasurer**  
PO Box 129  
Rough and Ready, CA 95975  
H (530) 432-5487  
C (530) 913-2386  
captianford@jps.net

**Jim Culbertson**  
PO Box 221  
Courtland, CA 95615  
H (916) 775-1894  
C (209) 483-0903  
Email: ccab@softcom.net

**Karl Hovanitz**  
2110 S Halcyon Road  
Arroyo Grande, CA 93420  
(805) 481-7353  
Silverado@thegrid.net

**Howard Brown**  
155 Dana Street  
Fort Bragg, CA 95437  
H (707) 964-1808  
C (707) 972-3018  
toolshack@mcn.org

**John Martin**  
1360 J Street  
Wasco, CA 93280  
(661) 331-7916  
MADOG979@aol.com

**Mike Mitchell**  
PO Box 245  
Guinda, CA 93021  
H (530) 796-2350  
C (707) 421-6333  
mlmitchell@solanocounty.com

**Paul Zaro**  
668 El Dorado Avenue  
South Lake Tahoe, CA  
(408) 234-2172  
zarocmrails@aol.com

**Dan Berg**  
**Excursion Committee Chairman**  
2017 Mule Creek Road  
Las Vegas, NV 89134  
(702) 341-8617  
deerail@embarqmail.com

**NARCOA Rule Book Certification Test**  
Al McCracken  
2916 Taper Avenue  
Santa Clara, CA 95051  
(408)249-3120  
alnethie@alnethie.com

Motorcar Operators West  
Documents  
Available at [www.mowonline.org](http://www.mowonline.org)

**MOW Webmaster**  
[www.mowonline.org](http://www.mowonline.org)  
Jamie Foster  
pbjrr@jf2.com

**New Member Committee Coordinator**  
**Harry Fisher**  
28819 Shadow Valley Lane  
Santa Clarita, CA 91390  
H (661) 296-0636  
C (661) 733-3084  
Email: [homecrafttharry@gmail.com](mailto:homecrafttharry@gmail.com)

**Line Up Editor**  
Dan Berg, Editor  
2017 Mule Creek Road  
Las Vegas, NV 89134  
(702) 341-8617  
deerail@embarqmail.com

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Motorcar Operators West, Inc.  
705 E Bidwell Street, Suite 2 Box 354  
Folsom, California 95630

COVER PHOTO CREDITS  
Front Cover: Aron Kahn  
Leadville, Colorado and Southern  
Railroad  
Fremont Pass, Colorado

Back Cover: Carol Balestreri  
John and Connie Haverty following Terry  
and Mardie Devine downgrade towards  
Leadville, Colorado

**2013 MOW Membership and Renewals**

Membership renewals and new membership applications are now being accepted. All memberships expire on December 31, 2013. Please download the printable form on the MOW website (<http://www.mowonline.org/>) and fill-out all requested information along with your \$24.00 check. Mail to: Harry Fischer, Membership Coordinator, 28819 Shadow Valley Lane, Santa Clarita, CA 91390

**The Line Up** is the official publication of The Motorcar Operators West, Inc. and is a non-profit corporation dedicated to the safe and legal operation of railroad motorcars as excursion vehicles.

**Membership Fee** is \$24 per year. This includes a Line Up subscription. The Line Up is published three times a year; Spring, Summer, and Fall issues. The Line Up is copyrighted and permission to reproduce any portion of the newsletter must be obtained. All rights reserved.

**Submitting Photos and Captions:** Members and guests are encouraged to contribute to the Line Up Photo Journal by sending their excursion photos and accompanied by whom, what, when, where captions to: [deerail@embarqmail.com](mailto:deerail@embarqmail.com). Place caption text in the email body and photos as .jpg attachments. Cover photos are to be submitted in a portrait orientation at a high resolution.

*President's Message*

"Termed out". That's me as I end my four-year tenure as the President of Motorcar Operators West. Our by-laws dictate that anyone in the position of President must step down after four consecutive years in office. I have had a great time in this position and have enjoyed meeting all the challenges that have come my way. MOW is in a great position to move forward as the leader in providing fun and interesting excursions whether they are one or several days in length. My thanks go to the Executive Board of Dave Balestreri, Malcolm Frost, and Glen Ford who have given me their support and encouragement. Motorcar Operators West is held in high esteem by NARCOA and is one of the largest affiliates out there. I know that will continue under new leadership. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve.

*Bill Schertle*

Bill Schertle, President



Retiring NARCOA President Bernie Leadon congratulates Bill Schertle, the newly elected 2014 NARCOA President

**2014 North American Railcar Operators Association's Elects New President**

Motorcar Operators West's President, Bill Schertle, serving as Area 11 Director has been elected as the 2014 North American Railcar Operators Association's President at the Chicago Board meeting. Bill will continue as a MOW Board of Directors member while providing leadership to the NARCOA Board of Directors and all of its affiliates. MOW members are proud of Bill's ascension to the National leadership position and wish him well.

*Dan Berg*

Dan Berg, Editor

# 2013 Rocky Mountain Rail Tour

June 22 – 29, 2013

Welcome by Bill Schertle

With the cooperation of the Rocky Mountain Division, Motorcar Operators West was proud to sponsor a 2013 tour of several railroads in Nevada, Utah, and the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. Thanks go to Dan Berg for arranging the excursions on the Nevada Northern and the Heber Valley Railroads, to Jerry Geiger of the Rocky Mountain Division for the tour of the Leadville, Colorado & Southern, to Jon Keeling also of the Rocky Mountain Division for arranging a run on the San Luis Central, and to Dave McClain for assisting on the San Luis and Rio Grande Railroad. Unfortunately, the Creede Branch excursion was cancelled at the very last minute because of wildfires in the area.

Enjoy the attached photos as a way to relive the experience if you went along with us or to encourage you to join us next time. Either way, you will be amazed at the scenery we enjoyed along the way.

## Nevada Northern Railway

June 22, 2013

Dan Berg, Excursion Coordinator  
Photos Courtesy of Carol Balestreri, Dan Berg,  
Don Borden, Whitey Brown and Aron Kahn

The Nevada Northern Railway was built in 1906 and operated until 1981 serving the Kennecott open pit copper mine at Ruth and hauling ore to the McGill smelter. The railroad was connected to the Southern Pacific Railroad at Cobre, Nevada which provided a rail route to markets beyond the state. As the price of copper declined, Kennecott withdrew from their Ely mining operation and donated the entire Nevada Northern Railway to the City of Ely in 1983. The White Pine Historical Railroad Foundation promoted the development of a rail museum and began steam and diesel passenger train excursions in 1987.

On Friday afternoon, June 21, 2013 thirty six motorcars were set on in



Nevada Northern Railway employee Anthony DeBellis and Paul Zaro leave the East Ely yard to inspect the Hi Line prior to the excursion.



During the Friday afternoon set on Nevada Northern Railway Director Mark Bassett looked on as Dave Balestreri inspected Tom Ferrier's motorcar.

Right: Motorcars moved towards the East Ely depot in preparation for the Saturday morning excursion.



East Ely Nevada. The following Saturday morning operators and guests assembled in front of the East Ely depot for a brief safety meeting and welcome address by Director Mark Bassett. The motorcar excursion traveled seven miles up the Ore Line to the Keystone Wye for the return



Tod Hill secured his motorcar for overnight parking in front of the East Ely depot.



The excursion preparing to depart East Ely for the morning run up to the Keystone wye.

trip back down to Ely. On the way the group was treated to a meet at Lane Siding with steam engine 94.

After lunch the fourteen mile run up the Hi Line towards McGill provided the operators and guests with expansive views of the high desert Steptoe Valley surrounded by the Egan and Schell mountain ranges. After turning the motorcars at the abandoned Adverse Wye the group returned to Ely for set off and the road trip to Heber City, Utah. The excursion covered over 46 rail miles.



Motorcars exit the Keystone Wye for the down to Ely.



On the way back to Ely the excursion ducked into Lane Siding for the steam locomotive meet.



Motorcars waited at the Keystone wye tail track for the return trip back to Ely. The Ruth open pit mine tailings are in the background.



After lunch the excursion passed through Hi Line Junction. The track to left is the 120 mile mainline to the Shafter, Nevada interchange with the Union Pacific Railroad while the right hand track travels north to the abandon mill at McGill.



The excursion is stopped at the Adverse end track to turn the motorcars for the run back to Ely.



While some operators and guests began their highway travel to Heber city, Utah a few folks remained behind to enjoy the Saturday evening Restoration Rails shop tour. Director Mark Bassett points out to Carol Balestreri and Karl Hovanitz the refurbished strong box that was featured on the History Channel's American Restoration.



Mile Wambsgans, John Haverty, and Dave Balestreri explore the locomotive shop.

Left, On the return trip to Ely the group stopped at Hi Line Junction for a photo opportunity.



# Heber Valley Railroad

Monday, June 24, 2013

Dan Berg, Excursion Coordinator

Photos Courtesy of Carol Balestreri, Don Borden, Whitey Brown, Aron Kahn and Laura Wambsgans

The Heber Valley Railroad was originally built by the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad in 1899. The 30 mile Provo Canyon Branchline connected Provo, Utah to Heber City. It provided passenger and freight rail service until its 1967 abandonment.

The line was rescued for tourist use and was reopened in 1970.

Union Pacific steam engine No. 618 and other rail equipment were brought in before the track between Provo and Vivian Park was later removed and converted into a recreational trail. During the 1970's and 1980's the railroad operated as the Heber Creeper and this railroad went out of business in the late 1980s. During the early 1990's the State of Utah sanctioned the Heber Valley Historic Railroad Authority to save the railroad.



Motorcar operators and guests reported to Heber Valley Railroad, located in Heber City Utah for the Sunday afternoon set on. The motorcars used the asphalt covered engine house track for a very convenient parallel trailer to rail transfer set on maneuver. During the next morning safety meeting, Heber Valley Railroad personnel were

introduced before departing for the 16 mile run to Vivian Park. The excursion left Heber City behind traveling through the rural Heber Valley, along the Deer Creek Reservoir, past the dam and down Provo Canyon to Vivian Park for lunch. The excursion returned to Heber City for the early afternoon motorcar set off and begin the day and half highway journey to Leadville, Colorado.



Above: Heber City depot and Heber Valley Railroad excursion motorcar set on site.



Right: Union Pacific 2-8-0 Steam Locomotive Number 618



Motorcar set on in front of the Heber Valley Railroad locomotive shop.



Above: Jim Groover and Paul Zaro ferry motorcars to the line up site during the Sunday afternoon set on.



Sunday afternoon motorcar line up.



Sue and Bill Pardee walked toward their motorcar in preparation for the early Monday morning safety meeting and departure.



Excursion Coordinator Dan Berg introduced the Heber Valley Railroad personnel during the safety meeting. From left to right: Mike Manwiller, Chief Mechanical Officer, Greg Udolph, Trainmaster, Devin Lloyd and Mark Nelson, General Manager.



Departing Heber City bound for Vivian Park.



Leaving Heber City behind.



Winding down Provo Canyon, John Martin led Addison Austin's and Tom Ferrier's motorcars.



John Martin held down the flagging duty at Vivian Park.

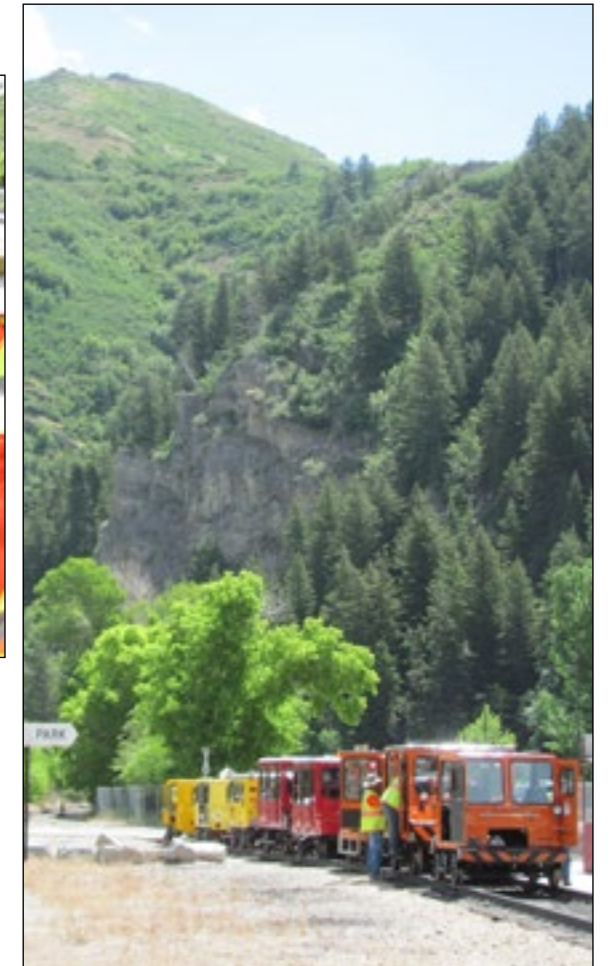
Motorcars heading for Vivian Park through the rural Heber Valley.



The mid morning comfort stop at Decker Bay on Deer Creek Reservoir.



John Martin, Paul Zaro, Mardie and Terry Devine, Dianne and Jeff Devine enjoyed lunch at Vivian Park.



Above: Departing northbound from Vivian Park after lunch break.



Left: A photo opportunity stop alongside the north shore of Deer Creek Reservoir.

# Leadville Colorado and Southern Railroad

June 25 and 26, 2013

Excursion Coordinator Jerry Geiger

Photos Courtesy of Carol Balestreri, Dan Berg, Aron Kahn, Jim Lancaster and Laura Wambsgans



The afternoon passenger train clears the main track as it enters Leadville.

track, 2 GP9 diesel locomotives, an assortment of freight cars and structures. What began as the Denver South Park and Pacific Railroad in 1894 hauling supplies to the gold and silver mines in and around Leadville, Colorado be-



Motorcars set on Tuesday afternoon at the Leadville rail yard in preparation for the evening run up to Fremont Pass and the head waters of the Arkansas River.

The Burlington Northern Railroad had no use for the orphaned Colorado and Southern Railroad branchline that provided no freight revenue after the closing of the Climax molybdenum mine in 1980. It offered to sell the tracks from Leadville to the Climax mine. A feasibility study conducted by Ken Olsen for the city of Leadville determined that it was not economical for the city to purchase. However, Mr. Olsen was interested in purchasing the branchline for a tourist operation. The Burlington sold the rail line to Mr. Olsen for 10 dollars that included 9 miles of



Kayla and Steve Weiss from Paramus, New Jersey sit contently on a pile of discarded pallets looking out over the magnificent Sawatch Mountain Range. The Rocky Mountain Rail Tour was a portion of their "Father and Daughter Great American Road Trip."

came the family owned Leadville Colorado and Southern Railroad tourist attraction in 1980.

The Leadville Colorado and Southern Railroad hosted two excursions. The first was the optional Tuesday evening run up to the Devil's Tangent. The second was Wednesday's excursion that took operators and guests on a nine mile trip through the San Isabelle National Forest while clinging to the steep mountain



Extremely twisted track halts the excursion at the Devil's Tangent talus slope.

slope above the Arkansas River Valley. All the motorcars arrived at the infamous Devil's Tangent slope just below the Fremont Pass saddle and the Climax mine. Because crossing the Devil's Tangent talus slope was considered too

hazardous, the motorcars were turned for the return run back to Leadville. The excursion travelled down to the French Gulch water tank to wait for the arrival of the morning passenger train. This gave the group time to visit and take photos of the surrounding mountains and train. Following the passenger train to Leadville the motorcars were set off in the early afternoon and the group began the caravan road trip to Alamosa, Colorado for the next morning rail excursions.

Operators and guests gather at the front of the engine house Wednesday morning in anticipation of the safety meeting and excursion departure.



The motorcars hugged the mountain side as they traveled up to the end of track.

hazardous, the motorcars were turned for the return run back to Leadville. The excursion travelled down to the French Gulch water tank to wait for the arrival of the morning passenger train. This gave the group time to visit and take photos of the surrounding mountains and train. Following the passenger train to Leadville the motorcars were set off in the early afternoon and the group began the caravan road trip to Alamosa, Colorado for the next morning rail excursions.



Excursion Coordinator Jerry Geiger gave a job briefing during the safety meeting.



Below: During the safety meeting Laura Wambsgans and daughter Cassie presented birthday boy Mike Wambsgans with a decorated birthday cake.



Under an Ansel Adams moon rise the motorcars are framed by the Sawatch Mountain Range that includes fifteen peaks over 14,000 feet high.



Bill Schertle led the excursion out of the Leadville wye heading north.



The morning excursion stopped at the Devil's Tangent and prepares to turn the motorcars for the return trip to Leadville. The Climax mine buildings can be seen to the left.



While the excursion waited for the arrival of the morning passenger train at the French Gulch water tank, Kathy and Whitey Brown chat with Dan Berg while down the line, Steve Weis talks with Mike, Laura and Cassie Wambsgans.



Dave McClain waited beside his motorcar admiring the sylvan pool and glade.



Left: French Gulch water tank.

Above: Looking down the beautiful Arkansas River Valley with Mount Massive on the horizon.



# San Luis and Rio Grande Railroad Excursions

June 27, 28, 29, 2013

Excursion Coordinators Dave McClain and Bill Schertle and Jon Keeling

Photos Courtesy of Carol Balestreri, Dan Berg, Don Borden, Whitey Brown, Aron Kahn, Jim Lancaster and Laura Wambsgans

The Denver and Rio Grande Railway completed building the standard gauge rail line from Walsenburg, Colorado over Las Veta Pass across the San Luis Valley to Alamosa by 1899. Through passenger train service provided travel from Denver to Alamosa then on to Durango which operated until June 1953. Freight service hauled commodities into the San Luis Valley, served mines in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, Antonito and Creede. The Valley's cattle and agriculture shipments were the mainstay of the railroad's freight business up to 1988 when the rail line passed from the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad and was merged into the Southern Pacific Railroad System. The Union Pacific Railroad acquired the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1996 and began operating the San Luis Valley rail lines until Rail America purchased Valley lines in June

2003. Rail America incorporated the shortline as the San Luis and Rio Grande Railroad which encompassed the La Veta Pass line, along with the Antonito and Creede branches. The San Luis and Rio Grande Railroad was sold to Iowa Pacific Holdings in December 2005. Presently, the San Luis and Rio Grande Railroad offers tourist passenger train rides between Alamosa and La Veta, Colorado. The railroad also provides freight service in and out of the San Luis Valley interchanging with the Union Pacific Railroad at Walsenburg, Colorado.

After repositioning the excursion group from Leadville to Alamosa, Colorado the Rocky Mountain Rail Tour's La Veta Pass motorcar excursions gave operators and guests three days of runs over the San Luis and Rio Grande Railroad.



Excursion Coordinator Bill Schertle and Iowa Pacific Holdings representative Tom Sharratt began the Fort Garland Group safety meeting prior to traveling over Las Veta Pass while Tod Hill offered his support.



Traveling east from Fort Garland, the noisy motorcars apparently spooked both horses and elk. Bill Pardee came to screeching halt and waited for the large elk herd to cross the tracks.

## San Luis and Rio Grande Railroad

### La Veta Pass Excursion

The Las Veta Pass excursion began on Thursday, June 27th between the towns Fort Garland and La Veta, Colorado. The excursion was divided into two groups to accommodate the 40 motorcars. Each of the Fort Garland and LaVeta Groups started and ended the



The Wambsgans, Hilliards, Zaro, Browns, and the Bergs motorcars are followed by the SL&RG Hi rail truck as they enter the 12 degree horseshoe loop climbing up to Fir siding at the top of La Veta Pass.

runs at their respective towns during the excursion. While many motorcars have participated in La Veta Pass excursions in the past, The Rocky Mountain Rail Tour is the first to arrange for two motorcar groups operating simultaneously between Fort Garland, Colorado and La Veta.

A late morning motorcar meet was scheduled at Fir siding on La Veta Pass summit. The two groups chitchatted and traveled on after a brief safety meeting.



Fort Garland group leader Bill Schertle enters Fir Station.

Another afternoon meet was established at Occidental siding down grade from Fir. Both groups encountered the daily passenger train at Sierra siding and at La Veta. After 74 round trip rail miles the excursion was repositioned to Alamosa in preparation for the Antonito run.

Interestingly, during the noon La Veta layover, the Fort Garland group ladies explored the downtown shops. On the return to their motorcars, Kathy Brown and Dee Berg walking past town folks sitting in the park thanked them for protecting the La Veta community from the wild fires. Because the ladies were wearing safety vests, apparently they were mistaken for firefighters returning to the fire camp.



The La Veta group finished setting on their motorcars at the La Veta wye track.



La Veta Group leader Dave McClain addresses the railroad's safety expectations assisted by Sharon Sharratt and San Luis and Rio Grande Railroad representative Emily Ellis.



The La Veta group entered Fir Station on the left hand track as the Fort Garland Group awaited their arrival.



Micah Schertle waves to photographer Aron Kahn and is anxious to get moving down to La Veta for lunch.



During the stop at Fir Station the groups took the opportunity to visit and explore the surrounding La Veta Pass area. Mount Blanco can be seen in the far distance to the west.



La Veta Group paused at Sierra Siding for the passing of the eastbound San Luis and Rio Grande Railroad passenger train.



While waiting at Sierra Siding for the eastbound morning passenger train, Jacob Devine tries his hand at working on the railroad.



La Veta group turning their motorcars on the Highway 159 crossing in Fort Garland for their return trip east to La Veta.



Dee Berg waves to the La Veta Group as they pass through Occidental Siding on the way into La Veta.



Fort Garland Group members Rick Schertle, Mike, Cassie, Laura Wambsgans and Karen Hilliard wave to the eastbound group.



Bill Schertle, Micah Schertle, Jim Lancaster and Rick Schertle leave Fir Station followed by Dee and Dan Berg for their set off in Alamosa.

## Antonito Branch Excursion

The second excursion offered on Friday, June 28th was arranged for the group to travel 57 mile round trip from Alamosa south to Antonito, Colorado and return. They parked their motorcars at the Antonito Cumbres Toltec and Scenic depot, boarded buses and traveled to Chama, New Mexico to ride the narrow gauge passenger train back to Antonito. Lunch was provided at the Osier dining hall. Most of the guests took advantage of riding in the open air passenger car or standing in the open passenger car vestibule to take photos or take in the sounds and



Above: Motorcars, operators and guests get ready for a very early departure from the Alamosa rail yard.

Left: The excursion prepares to leave the Alamosa depot for the 29 mile ride to Antonito and board busses for Chama, New Mexico.

Below: Once on board the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad passenger train the excursion crosses Lobato Trestle to begin the 63 mile trip back to Antonito.



site of a hard working steam locomotive. The appearance of the Colorado Big Foot captured the imagination of passengers. As young Jacob Devine said of the sighting, "it was the coolest thing I saw during the whole trip." The group left Antonito being pushed towards Alamosa by strong tailwinds and arrived back in Alamosa in the early evening hours.



Riding the open air passenger car, Laura Wambsgans, Mike Wambsgans with Aron Kahn peeking over Laura's shoulder enjoyed the mountain vistas. Dave McClain on the right is busy photographing points of interests while Jim Lancaster can also be spotted shooting photos from the rear of the car.



Pat McDonald took in the spectacular Rock Mountains from her perch riding on the passenger car's open vestibule.



Colorado's famous Big Foot emerged from the forest to taunt the passengers.

During the lunch stop at Osier, Tom and Kathy Norman visited with Jan Taylor while Don Borden and Johnna Cook enjoyed their hot lunch. Bad boy Whitey Brown gestured to the photographer with what hopefully was the peace sign.





As a thunderstorm passed over Osier the locomotive engineer whistles off to call the motorcar excursion group back to the train for its departure to Antonito.



Big Foot flirts with CT&S Railroad employees Robin and Teresa.



CT&S Railroad steam locomotive number 487 arrived at the Antonito depot.

Emily Ellis tends the switchstand as the excursion heads north to Alamosa. Emily is the daughter of Ed Ellis who is owner of the San Luis and Rio Grande Railroad.



Looking back towards the original Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad Antonito depot.

## San Luis and Rio Grande Railroad and San Luis Central Railroads

### Monte Vista and Center Excursion

Excursion Coordinators Jon Keeling, Dave McClain and Bill Schertle

The third excursion held on Saturday June 29th gave the motorcar group the opportunity to run on two railroads for a total of 66 round trip rail miles. Leaving Alamosa on San Luis and Rio Grande rails the group traveled west across the San Luis Valley and entered the San Luis Central rail at Sugar Junction. Traveling north toward Center, Colorado the excursion crossed the Rio Grande River and passed vast produce fields. The motorcars turned in the shadows of Center's grain elevators and produce packing sheds. Excursion Coordinator Jon Keeling led the motorcars back to Sugar Junction again joining the San Luis and Rio Grande Railroad for the run into Monte Vista. After a picnic lunch or snacks at the Sugar Shack, the excursion headed back to Alamosa for the motorcar set off that provided operators with over 197 miles of rail



Bill Schertle conducts the morning safety meeting in front of the Alamosa depot before departing for Center and Monte Vista, Colorado.

travel during the entire tour.

Bill Schertle made arrangements at the Cavillo's Mexican Restaurant in Alamosa for a buffet dinner. This was the last opportunity for the 80 plus operators, spouses and guests to say their goodbyes before returning to their homes in Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey and Oregon.



Motorcars are lined up and ready to travel 16 miles to Sugar Junction.



Motorcars are making the transition from San Luis and Rio Grande rails to San Luis Central rails at Sugar Junction.



The Rio Grande River crossing.



The excursion entered the community of Center, Colorado which is the agricultural hub of San Luis Valley. Potatoes are one of the main crops grown on over 50,000 acres. Barley and wheat are also major crops along with alfalfa, carrots, lettuce, canola and broccoli.



Motorcars were turned at milepost 15, the end of track in Center. Lining the San Luis Center rail line are the grain elevators, fertilizer, seed and nursery dealers supported by irrigation, food processing and warehouse industries.



The excursion is preparing for the run back to Sugar Junction then on to Monte Vista.

The excursion arrived in Monte Vista for the lunch break.



Monte Vista's Fullenweider Park was the ideal location for a casual picnic and rest stop.



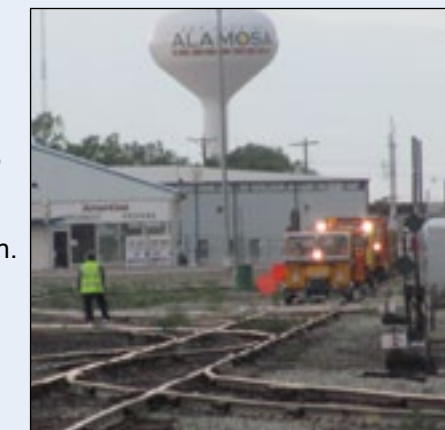
Next to the park, the Sugar Shack provided "The Fun Food Place" for ice cream treats, hotdogs and good conversation. Back row left to right: Joe Snyder, Dave McClain, Kathy and Whitey Brown, Bill and Micah Schertle, John Martin and Rick Schertle. Sitting at the table: Mike, Laura and Cassie Wambsgans and standing is Dee Berg.



Leaving Monte Vista eastward for the 18 mile ride back to Alamosa.



Entering Alamosa, Sharon Sharratt is providing road crossing protection.



# The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad Creede Branch Excursion

June 30, 2013

The Denver and Rio Grande Railway – Creede Branch excursion scheduled for Sunday, June 30th was cancelled because of the West Fork Complex Fire threatening the town of South Fork and along the Rio Grande River canyon in the area of Wagon Wheel Gap.

The Denver Post reported that the West Fork Complex Fire located in the San Juan Mountains, between the towns of South Fork, Creede and Pagosa Springs, Colorado consumed over 110,000 acres since its start by lightning on June 5, 2013. More than 1,400 firefighters battled the wild fire. The blaze was fueled by the large stands of beetle-killed spruce and fir trees in the San Juan and Rio Grande National Forests. Much of the area where the fire was burning was in steep, rugged terrain making it difficult for firefighters to mount a direct attack. The firefighters were supported by 20 helicopters, 82 fire engines, 5 bull dozers and 13 water tender trucks.



Above: West Fork Complex Fire.

Denver Post

Below: Road closure in South Fork, Colorado.

