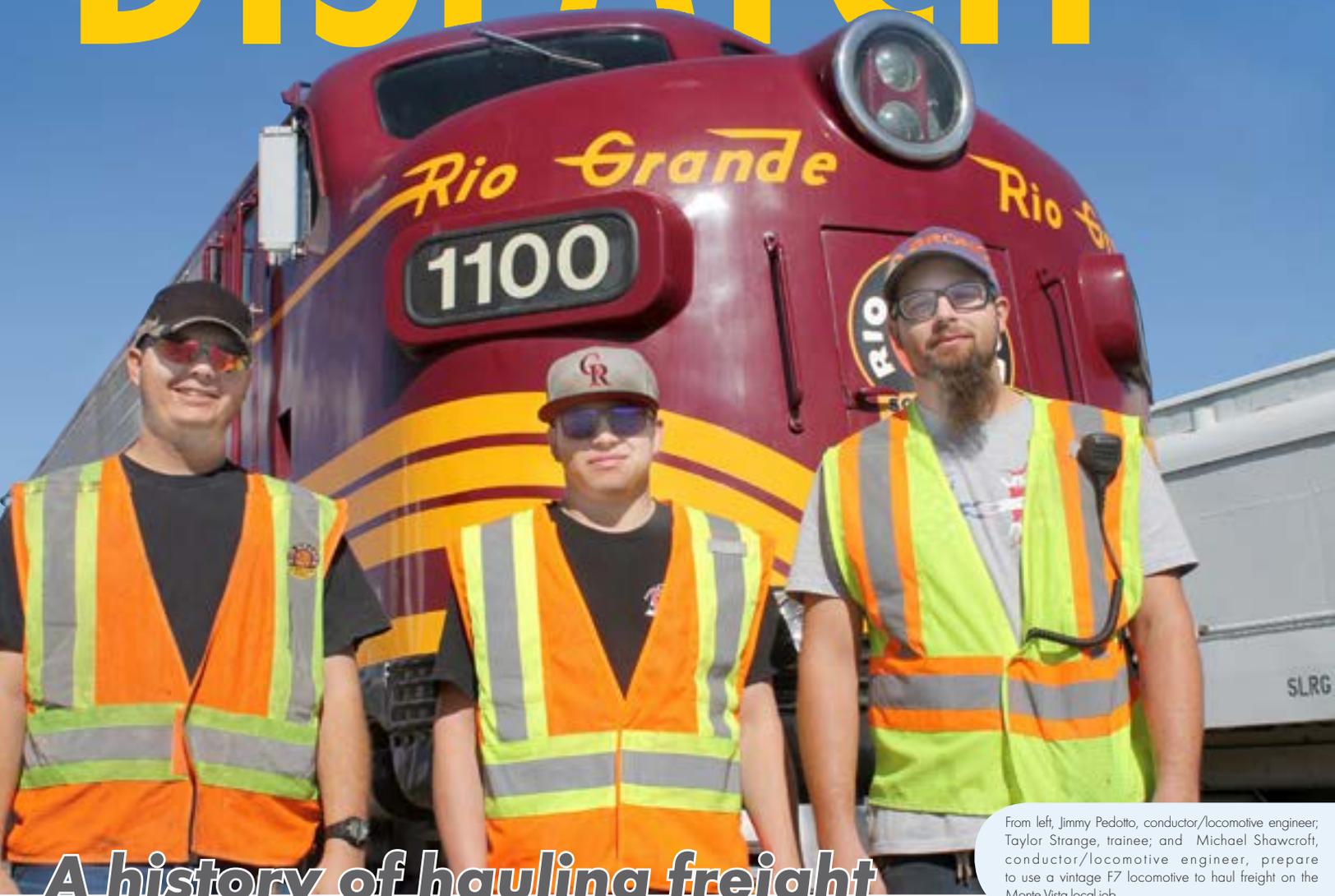


## DISPATCH



## A history of hauling freight

From left, Jimmy Pedotto, conductor/locomotive engineer; Taylor Strange, trainee; and Michael Shawcroft, conductor/locomotive engineer, prepare to use a vintage F7 locomotive to haul freight on the Monte Vista local job.

Engine No. 1100, a 1946 EMD F7, was new when Michael Shawcroft's grandfather, James Shawcroft, worked as a locomotive engineer with Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad.

"That was back in the steam days when diesels were new," said Shawcroft, five-year locomotive engineer and conductor. "This job was something I always wanted to do."

He, Locomotive Engineer/Conductor Jimmy Pedotto and Trainee Taylor Strange take the F7 on the local Monte Vista job, which brings freight to and from Monte

Vista, Colorado. Customers include Coors' barley loadout, which recently tripled the size of its facility, adding another eight cars a week.

San Luis & Rio Grande Railroad brings the facility eight empty covered hoppers four times a week, and the full cars are picked up after the empties are dropped off.

"It gets busy here in the summer, juggling freight, passenger and concert trains," said Trainmaster Jason Trujillo.

The Monte Vista freight job includes a three-day-a-week interchange with San Luis Central Railroad, which brings

potatoes, barley and wheat from area farmers on a seasonal basis.

Two smaller jobs are for Wilbur Ellis and Poole Chemical, fertilizer manufacturers that receive tank cars and covered hoppers of the ingredients used for making their products.

"You ensure the livelihood of the valley keeps going," Shawcroft said.

Normally, the SLRG uses a 1980s built GE B39-8 for freight, reserving the vintage F7 for passenger excursion trains. Sometimes the vintage engine is recruited for duty hauling freight.

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# Make it train; Central Reservations staff make excursion dreams come true

Each passenger railroad has something uniquely beautiful. Cape Cod has the Atlantic Ocean. Texas has rolling hills and pine forests. Mount Hood has pear and apple blossoms, plus mountains. San Louis & Rio Grande has mountains and a summer concert train.

“Every railroad has a different excursion that they are truly proud of, and we have to know them all,” said Desiree Naranjo, Iowa Pacific reservations manager.

The call center is in Alamosa, Colorado, occupying the historic depot across the street from the SLRG headquarters. The eight-employee, two-manager staff during the spring and summer months swells to 25 in the winter to handle the Polar Express trains. Beginning in October, central reservations becomes a 24-hour call center through December, staffed by seasonal agents. Agents work in shifts during the peak months, also staffing a second call center next to freight operations.

The call center is gearing up to operate 24 hours a day to handle calls from the United Kingdom, where Iowa Pacific has acquired railroads.

“We’re excited,” Naranjo said. “We’re already getting phone calls from people in the United Kingdom who are excited about the excursion trains.”

In addition to answering phone calls, agents book trips, make reservations, sell tickets, and assist passengers in the depot and adjacent gift shop. They also program the reservation system for each railroad.

“It’s a great way to learn each railroad,” Naranjo said.

Agents enter information received from the railroads into the Fulgen reservation software system. Since each railroad has its own training manual, every agent has area-specific information at his or her fingertips to help customers. Most agents have visited many of the railroads in person.

“When we talk to a passenger, we have a passion for the location built by experience,” Naranjo said. “We are passionate about what we do. We like talking about railroads and trains. If we don’t know something, we find out.”

Reservation agents are expanding their services to provide information about accommodations and area attractions, and even booking entire vacation packages.

“That’s what I like about being central reservations,” Naranjo said. “We’re the first ones the customer comes to. They have an idea what they want to do, and we take their idea and make it reality.”

The agents work with Key Holidays, applying what they have built in Alamosa to it and other railroads, working with local hotels and businesses to make the customer experience as fulfilling as possible.

Information is entered into the



The Iowa Pacific Central Reservations staff prepare to help. Back row, from left, Jessica Shawcroft, central reservation supervisor; Adeline Duarte-Lee, reservation agent; Sherlyn Howes, reservation agent; and Desiree Naranjo, central reservation manager. Front row, from left, Lynn Clark, reservation agent; Brandi Shawcroft, reservation agent; and Nancy Henson, reservation agent. Not pictured are April Anaya, central reservation trainer; Sherri Pascoe, reservation agent; and Daniela Duran, reservation agent.

reservation system, so if the customer calls with a question about his or her trip, it is available and can be used in the future when the customer calls seeking advice on the next trip.

“People can book an entire package or we provide alternatives,” Naranjo said. “I wouldn’t want to send someone to a place I wouldn’t want to stay, so we do a lot of research.”



Lynn Clark, reservation agent, helps a customer at the ticket window.



Nancy Henson, reservation agent, helps a customer make a telephone reservation.

Cars that transport sand used in the oil fracking industry are unloaded at the Titan Lansing Transloading LLC facility in the Levelland Industrial Rail Park west of Lubbock, Texas.

## Communication vital to partnership with oil customer

Communication and relationships are key to the successful partnership between West Texas & Lubbock Railway and Titan Lansing Transloading LLC, according to Jack Richards, Titan Lansing vice president.

“They let us know on a daily basis what we have coming,” he said.

Mike Murvihill, customer service manager, sends a daily email listing what cars are en route and calls the facility with updated information.

“We try to plan the switching ahead of time,” Murvihill said. “That makes it more efficient.”

Titan Transloading LLC and Lansing Trade Group LLC entered into a joint venture known as Titan Lansing Transloading in 2013. It combined Titan’s experience in transloading frac sand and crude oil with Lansing’s marketing and capital strengths, to support demand for transloading in the Permian Basin. It owns and operates transload operations terminals in Lubbock, Levelland and Fort Stockton, Texas, and Carlsbad, New Mexico, where it primarily stores and transloads frac sand and crude oil.

WTLC brings cars to and from the facility, located at the Levelland Industrial Rail Park west of Lubbock, providing a connection to an interchange with BNSF Railway two hours away. The rail park was developed by the Levelland Economic Development Corporation in 2010.

The vast majority of Titan Lansing’s business at the facility is transloading and storing frac sand. It has 20,000 tons of storage capacity and averages 350 sand cars per month, about 35,000 tons.

As oil drilling in the Permian Basin has moved north, the facility’s location at the north end of the oil field has turned out to be strategically located, according to Richards.

The sand and hydrochloric acid used in the fracking process enters the rail park and is transloaded to trucks provided by the drilling service companies. Most of the oil in the region is shipped out via pipeline. When pricing dictates the need for it to be shipped by rail, the facility can shift to transloading crude oil within a day, he said.

Train crew members vary, said Matt Jackson, WTLC general superintendent.

“Our #104 job provides service on the Whiteface Subdivision,” he said.

Service in the Levelland area in the past could be as little as a few times a month depending on demand, but now trains operate six days a week, Murvihill said.

“The majority of the time, we set out loaded cars at the west end and they move around as they need; we pick up empties at the east end and deliver to BNSF,” Jackson said. “We just hook up, air test and blast off. They make it easy for us.”

Partnerships and relationships among Titan Lansing, WTLC, Aim Bank, which financed the operation, the Levelland Economic Development Corporation, hard work and luck combined to make a successful venture, Richards said.

“The rail crews do a great job,” he said. “The railroad has hired people, and we’ve probably created 25 jobs in this one facility. The Permian has been good to all of us.”

## Texas tracks enhanced

Thanks to a recent track enhancement project, trains can move faster on Texas State Railroad and Rusk, Palestine & Pacific Railroad.

A pair of existing 80-pound-rail turnouts were replaced with heavy-duty, 115-pound turnouts in May. Additionally, steel turnout components and switch ties will be replaced. The enhancement eliminates a longtime 10 mph slow order in Meshaw, Texas, which was in effect several years before Iowa Pacific Holdings’ acquisition of the Texas State Railroad.

“Removal of this slow order will make train operations on the line more efficient and timely,” said Bruce Carswell, vice president of Permian Basin logistics. “It also will ensure the track at this location is better suited to handle the heavier freight traffic we are developing on the line.”

Managed by General Roadmaster Randall Roberson, the project was completed with joint forces from the RPPR and West Texas & Lubbock Railway.

The siding is primarily used for meeting and passing passenger trains.



# A history of hauling freight

Continued from page 1

In its heyday, more than 7,000 of the locomotives crisscrossed North America's railroads; today, only about a dozen remain in active freight service.

With 1,500 horsepower, the F7 has less than half the horsepower of the B39-8. It also lacks some modern crew comfort. For example, the air horn is right above the cab and has no sound proofing.

"People must have been 5 feet tall back in the day," Pedotto said. "The windows and everything are short."

Despite the differences from its modern counterparts, the vintage locomotive provides a link to earlier generations of railroaders, and the positive reaction from members of the public make operating the old engine unique.



Conductor/Locomotive Engineer Jimmy Pedotto takes a break in the cab of a 1946 EMD F7 locomotive – one of just a handful still used to haul freight.



From left, Conductor/Locomotive Engineer Michael Shawcroft prepares to head out in the cab of an F7 locomotive, while Taylor Strange, trainee, keeps a vigilant eye on the tracks ahead.

Once the cars are brought to Alamosa Yard, they are set out for the interchange job with Union Pacific in Walsenburg, Colorado. The trip involves steep, twisting mountain grades through terrain that can have falling rocks or heavy winter snow. It is the highest railroad pass used for freight in the U.S.

"You have to use retainers and keep the brakes warm to prevent snow buildup in winter conditions," Shawcroft said.

The engineer uses both dynamic and air brakes. The air brakes are cycled, with one set starting before the first bleeds off, giving each time to recharge.

The interchange is a night job that runs three times per week. The SLRG crew heads down the pass at 10 mph and waits for the UP crew in a siding.

"We know all the people down there, and they're great to work with," Shawcroft said.

UP employees had similar praise for SLRG crews.

"We have a good working relationship with them," said Steve Toliver, UP Pueblo manager-road operations.

## The Dinosaur Train promises a roaring good time

Plan to take a dinosaur safari and explore the Nature Tracker's Adventure Park aboard Jim Henson's Dinosaur Train™ this summer.

Based on the hit PBS children's television series, the blast to the distant past is coming to Mount Hood Railroad in Hood River, Oregon, for the first time.

Adventure-seekers will meet Buddy, the lovable and curious Tyrannosaurus rex, and challenge their inner-explorer at the Nature Tracker's Adventure Park. Children can participate in four challenges — digging for fossils, identifying dinosaur footprints, excavating and a dinosaur-themed craft area — designed to earn stamps on their Game Card which, when filled, will earn them their Nature Trackers Membership Card. Visitors of all ages will enjoy live entertainment, food and face painting.

The 30-minute train ride is a fun-filled journey complete with Dinosaur Train music, sing-a-longs and a delicious snack. Children on board will receive a Buddy Bag and Adventure Game Card as a keepsake memory of this adventure-filled day out. The entire excursion lasts two hours, departing from the Mount Hood Railroad Depot, 110 Railroad Ave., Hood River, Oregon, on Fridays at noon and 3 p.m. and weekends at 10 a.m., 1 p.m. and 4 p.m., July 18-20, 25-27 and Aug. 1-3, 8-10.

Bring cameras and snap pictures with this famous star of the Dinosaur Train show. There will be lots of fun and surprises for the whole family, along with live entertainment and a picnic.

Please arrive 45 minutes before the scheduled departure to park and gather boarding passes.

Tickets may be purchased online at <https://www.mthoodrr.com> or by phone at 800-872-4661.

Standard Safari Class: adults \$30; adults with lap baby \$30; children \$20.

Grand Safari Class: adults \$40; adults with lap baby \$50; children \$35.

Dome Safari Class: adults \$50; adults with lap baby \$60; children \$45.



Meet Buddy, the lovable and curious T. Rex, aboard the Dinosaur Train.

# Concerts feature quality family fun in the mountain sun

Rio Grande Scenic Railroad hosts summer concert trains beginning June 14. With quality acts such as the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, The Rifters, Juice Newton and more, this year's concert series promises a summer of music fun.

"I can't tell you how exciting it is to have this opportunity," said Desiree Naranjo, reservations manager. "Who else would bring the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band?"



At the top of La Veta Pass, 9,400-foot Fir Summit is the nesting place for Mountain Rails Live, a summer concert series accessible only by train.

The mountaintop amphitheater is powered by wind and solar energy and hosts top-name musicians. A barbecue station provides delicious chuck wagon food, and there's plenty of log seating, restrooms and shelter from the sun.

When passengers disembark to the fir-ringed, wildflower-filled meadow, the scent of barbecue is the first thing they smell.

"There's no cell service," Naranjo said. "Instead, you're out enjoying nature and classic bluegrass, jazz and other American music."

## Schedule:

**July 19-20:** Michael Martin Murphey, featuring Bill Staines. Progressive country music and American Cowboy Music with American folk music.

**July 26-27:** Trout Fishing in America, featuring Mark Dvorak. Family-friendly music and American folk music.

**Aug. 2-3:** Juice Newton, featuring Harpeth Rising. Grammy-nominated American pop and country music with folk fusion.

**Aug. 9-10:** Robin and Linda Williams, featuring Harpeth Rising. Country, bluegrass and Gospel with folk fusion.

**Aug. 16-17:** Michael Martin Murphey, featuring Locust Honey. Progressive country music and American Cowboy Music with pre-war blues and old-time bluegrass.

**Aug. 23-24:** Pete and Joan Wernick, featuring Dana and Susan Robinson. Country duet with blend of traditional Appalachian music and contemporary songwriting.

**Sept. 6-7:** Suzy Bogguss, featuring Anne Hills. Chart-topping country music and contemporary folk music.

**Sept. 13-14:** Michael Martin Murphey,

featuring Syd Masters. Progressive country music and American Cowboy Music with traditional western music.

The Rio Grande Scenic Railroad built a depot at Fort Garland. Those coming from Colorado Springs, Pueblo or Denver can save a half hour of drive time by boarding in Fort Garland. The location features a new ticket office, freshly graded parking lot and easy access from Highway 285, an easy drive straight north from Taos, New Mexico.

# Bears aboard The Teddy Bear Train

Boomer Beary has been a very busy bear this year. He and his family have been traveling this summer and posting their travels on Facebook. Now, you can meet them in person on The Teddy Bear's Train ride.



**Left:** Boomer Beary hangs out in the ticket office during the Piney Woods Steam Excursion June 28. **Right:** Uncle Mike Beary sends Facebook greetings from a trip to Willis Tower in Chicago. Boomer Beary, Uncle Mike Beary and their family will be aboard The Teddy Bear Train this summer.

The Texas State Railroad's The Teddy Bear's Train ride departs at 11 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 1, from the Rusk Depot. The train will run to Maydelle, Texas, where the engine will turn around on the railroad's historic 1890s turntable for the return trip to Rusk.

The ride will feature special snacks, children's music, teddy bear coloring book pages and more.

Blankets and Bears Children's Fund will be accepting donations of new or gently used teddy bears on this day. Donated bears will be distributed to traumatized children by Palestine, Texas, police officers and the Palestine Regional Medical Center.

Children 12 and under who bring their teddy bears will get to ride the train for free. Pricing for all others:

### Open Air/Coach

\$15 — Children ages 12 and under with no teddy bear.

\$20 — Seniors, ages 65 and older.

\$25 — Adults, ages 13 to 64.

### Lone Star

\$25 — Children ages 12 and under with no teddy bear.

\$40 — Seniors, ages 65 and older.

\$45 — Adults, ages 13 to 64.

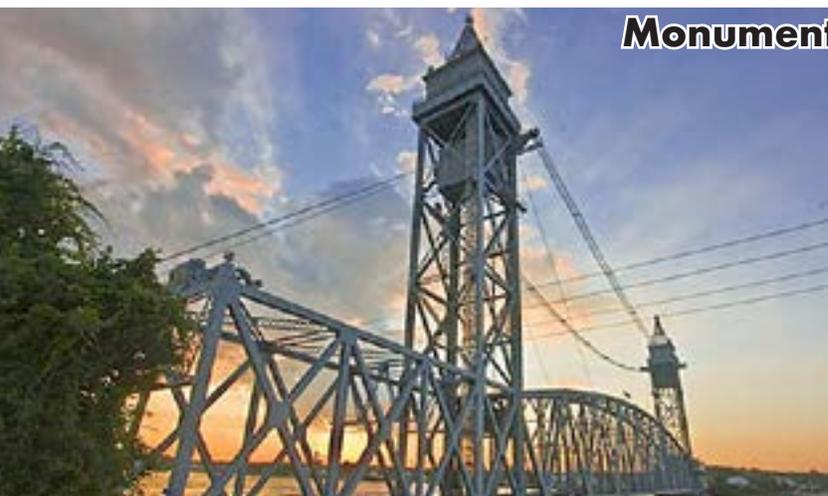
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## Cape Cod Central offers variety of special dinner trains

In addition to annual favorites — Shoreline Excursion, Cape Cod Dinner, Yankee Clipper Brunch, Colonial Lunch and Family Supper trains — Cape Cod Central Railroad will feature special events this summer. Book tickets online, <https://www.capecentral.com>, or call toll free 888-797-7245.



The historic 544-foot vertical lift Cape Cod Canal Railroad Bridge is a highlight of the Cape Cod Canal Centennial Celebration Train.

### Monument Beach Dinner Train

The only departure from North Falmouth in 2014, the Monument Beach Dinner Train escorts passengers over 6 miles of rarely used and incredibly scenic track. Salt marshes and coastal views set the mood for an intimate rail dining experience. This departure also features two trips across the Cape Cod Canal Railroad Bridge.

The Aug. 8 train departs at 5 p.m. from Falmouth tracks at the junction of Route 28A and Route 151. Please park in the Shining Sea Bike Path parking lot.

Adult: \$84

Private Tables for two are available for an additional \$20.

### Beer Tasting Train

The Cape Cod Central Railroad and Independent Fermentations Brewing are bringing together seven of the best craft breweries in Massachusetts and one craft distillery for this one-of-a-kind event.

Each 5-ounce beer tasting will be paired with an appetizer created specially for this event by the railroad's chef. Food pairings will emphasize local ingredients to match the local beers. Brewers will be on board to educate passengers about their beers and answer questions.

This three-hour journey begins at 5:30 p.m. from Buzzards Bay, Friday, July 11. It travels over the Cape Cod Canal railroad bridge, then over the most scenic portion of the rail line into North Falmouth to watch the sunset at Monument Beach.

\$64 per person includes souvenir tasting glass.

Must be 21 or older to attend.



### Centennial Celebration Train

Celebrate the Cape Cod Canal Centennial aboard the Cape Cod Central Railroad.

Depart Buzzards Bay and venture across the historic 544-foot vertical lift Cape Cod Canal Railroad Bridge. Then, travel along the scenic Cape Cod Canal under the Bourne Bridge and Sagamore Bridge to Sandwich, the oldest town on Cape Cod, before returning to Buzzards Bay.

Trains depart at 11 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., July 26-27.



The Cape Cod Central makes its way through beautiful scenery.