

Teller Historic & Environmental Coalition

Newsletter 2007 Vol. 1

On May 19, History Comes Alive!

Mark your calendar and re-live the days when the Colorado Midland Railroad steamed up Ute Pass, through the fancy resorts at Cascade and Green Mountain Falls, bound for Cripple Creek.

A ticket to the Gold Camp Victorian Society's production "*Gold Mines and Grand Hotels*" gives you a seat on the Colorado Midland as it picks up colorful characters along the way. Glimpse Winfield Scott Stratton and Bob Womack en route to the gold fields.....hear personages like Katherine Lee Bates, P.T. Barnum, and Isabella Bird marvel at the mountain scenery...eavesdrop on the miners, promoters and swindlers off to strike it riche. Your journey will unfold against a power point backdrop of historic photos of Ute Pass from the turn of the century. The photographs --many of them by Anna May Wellington of local fame -- take you back to the Victorian elegance of grand hotels such as the "Ramona" in Cascade and the "Ute" in Chipita Park, and portray the rich and famous guests who pioneered our tourist industry.



The event is sponsored by The Teller Historic and Environmental Coalition, and will help launch T.H.E. Coalition's campaign to restore the historic Midland Depot at Divide.

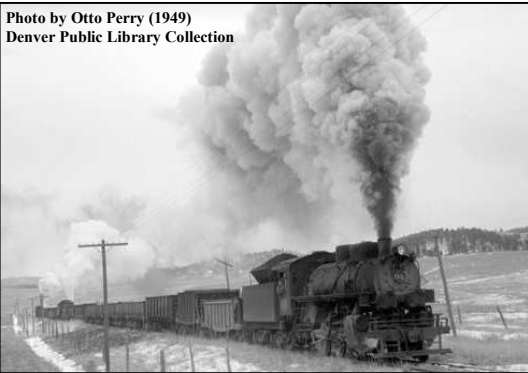
Gold Mines and Grand Hotels:

*Saturday, May 19 2:00 p.m. at the Pikes Peak Community Club
11122 Highway 24 in Divide - Adults - \$5.00, and Children under 12 - \$2.50
Refreshments will be served!*

This recreation of local history celebrates Archaeology and Historic Preservation Month and is supported by a grant from the Colorado Historical Society, the State Historical Fund, and the Colorado Archaeological Society.

Picking Up Steam.....

Photo by Otto Perry (1949)
Denver Public Library Collection



A long-nurtured plan to restore the century-old Midland Railroad Depot at Divide gained momentum in mid April when T.H.E. Coalition invited all interested parties to brainstorm ideas, agree on common goals, and commit to concrete "next steps".

Broad community representation -- in addition to the Coalition -- included directors of the Divide Park Board, Divide Chamber of Commerce, Ute Pass Historical Society, and Rampart Library District, as well Pete Kuyper who owns the Depot and architect Chuck Severance who conducted the Historic Assessment of the building.

A Foundation for Success!

The planning group reviewed what has transpired so far:

- in 1999 local developer Pete Kuyper purchased the six acre property to keep the Depot from being razed, with the vision of turning it over to a non-profit organization or consortium to be restored as a museum, information and visitors' center, park, and trailhead.
- The Midland Depot was officially designated a Teller County Historic Landmark, the first to be so honored under a local historic designation policy.
- In 2004 T.H.E. Coalition was awarded grant from the State Historical Fund to commission a Historic Structure Assessment that included an overall site plan developed with community participation and input.
- The Site Plan includes detailed recommendations and budget for restoration and development
- The property has been rezoned "C1" giving ample latitude for renovation.



- Water sources and sewer lines need work, but are in place..
- In 2005, a Coalition-sponsored fundraiser produced start-up seed money; the Divide Chamber of Commerce earmarked a special fund for the Depot.
- Coalition board members have initiated contacts with major potential donor organizations such as SHF and GOCO.

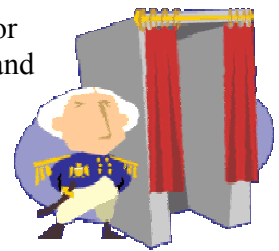
Next Steps for the Depot:

1. Each of the involved organizations will take the plan of action to its Board of Directors and seek approval and a modest financial commitment to get the ball rolling.
2. An "Occupancy Subcommittee" will work on the immediate goal of making the east-end addition suitable for use in the near term (60 - 90 days). Potential occupant/users are Divide Park Board, Divide Chamber, and T.H.E. Coalition.
3. A grants subcommittee will start the process of applying for grants, with a goal of meeting the major donors' fall deadlines.
4. T.H.E. Coalition will explore collaboration or partnership with other interested parties such as Mueller State Park, Florissant Fossil Beds, and the U.S. Forest Service for whom the Midland Depot Park and Visitor Center could serve as a gateway.

Once restoration gets underway, we're going to need lots and lots of volunteers!

SB 98 Opens the Door

A bill passed by the Colorado legislature and signed by Governor Ritter paves the way for counties to generate funds dedicated to the acquisition and maintenance of parks, trails, and open space. SB 98 does not of itself generate revenue, but it does give each county the option to create dedicated funding. Specifically, the Senate bill allows for an exemption to the current state cap on sales tax IF the additional funds are earmarked for parks and open space, and IF county voters approve an increase of up to one half of one percent in sales tax for such purposes.



What this could mean for Teller County -- should its voters so choose -- is a much greater rate of success in the competition for state and private grants for open space. Whereas neighboring counties have long been able to draw on dedicated funds for the all-important "local match", Teller has no such source, putting it at a disadvantage in the highly competitive grants arena.

The "enabling legislation" enacted by SB 98 opens the door for a Teller county ballot initiative to propose measures that would give it more options and greater leverage in attracting resources to preserve wildlife habitat, protect watersheds, and upgrade its parks, trails, and outdoor recreation opportunities. It will then be up to us, as voters, to say yea or nay.