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Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad
Antonito, Colorado
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Historic Colorado Springs Locomotive to Be Reborn! **A 132-Year Old Engine to be Restored and Run on the Cumbres & Toltec**

COLORADO SPRINGS, March 17, 2015 A historic 1883 locomotive that sat on display in Colorado Springs for more than 75 years is going to be given a new life. Engine #168 will be moved to Antonito, Colorado, where it will be completely restored to operating condition, and then used to pull passengers on the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad – the highest, longest and most authentic scenic railroad in America.

“We’re thrilled that the partnership with the people of Colorado Springs will allow the whistle blow of the D&RGW locomotive #168 to once again be heard on the tracks between Antonito, Colorado and Chama, New Mexico as it was nearly a hundred years ago,” said John Bush, president of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad. The locomotive, which once pulled President William Howard Taft to the Black Canyon, spent most of its 50-year working life chugging over the Cumbres, Marshall and La Veta Passes. “It’s a very rare opportunity for us to acquire additional equipment that actually worked on this line and to be able to restore it and bring it back into service,” Bush said.

Locomotive #168’s long journey home began on March 10, 2015 when the City Council of Colorado Springs approved a lease agreement with the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad to begin the restoration of D&RGW #168. Built in 1883, the #168 hauled the first passenger train from Denver to Ogden, Utah, where the D&RG connected with the transcontinental railroad. It was retired from service and donated to Colorado Springs in 1938, where it is currently on display in Antlers Park. It is one of only two locomotives of its class left in the world; the other, #169, is on display in Alamosa.

When the restoration is complete, the locomotive will provide visitors an opportunity to ride a truly historical railroad composed of vintage steam locomotives and restored historic cars dating back to the 1880s. The Cumbres & Toltec runs on 64 miles of narrow gauge track over the most scenic portion of the former San Juan Extension of the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad between Antonito, Colorado and Chama, New Mexico. It is the longest remaining portion of D&RGW narrow gauge track in the nation. The railroad has been owned jointly by the states of Colorado and New Mexico since 1970. The Cumbres & Toltec shops have already restored six locomotives.

The railroad is now beginning the process to ensure that the locomotive's status on the National Register of Historic Places is maintained and the restoration complies with both historical preservation standards and current railroad operating regulations. The National Register Review process is expected to be complete in July. The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad was designated a National Historical Landmark in 2012 by the National Park Service.

The Denver & Rio Grande Railroad was built by General William J. Palmer, who also founded the City of Colorado Springs. General Palmer envisioned a railroad line from Denver, through El Paso Texas that terminated in Mexico. With the discovery of gold and silver in the San Juan Mountains of Colorado, Palmer changed his focus to building a rail line known as the "San Juan Extension" to reach these remote areas. In Colorado, the line ran from Walsenburg to Alamosa then down into Chama New Mexico then up back into Colorado to Durango and Silverton Colorado.

Under the agreement with Colorado Springs, the railroad will have a series of three 15 year leases for #168 for a total of 45 years. The arrival date of the #168 in Antonito, Colorado has not yet been determined and since the restoration will take several month, it will not operate during the coming season. We will continue to post updates and photos of that process on our website under the News! Tab. Stay tuned!

The Cumbres & Toltec will begin its 45th season of providing thrilling steam locomotive rides through some of Colorado's prettiest scenery on May 23, 2015. For ticket information and schedules, visit www.cumbrestoltec.com



Locomotive #168 in 1909 ready to take President William Howard Taft to the Black Canyon of the Gunnison



Locomotive #168 on static display in Colorado Springs waiting to be given a new life.

For more information and additional photo images please contact

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