

April 2005

Dear Friends Members:

During the fall of 2004, our Strategic Planning Core Team conducted a survey of Friends members. The information collected was used in our strategic planning process. When this data was requested, members being surveyed asked to see the results. In the text below you will find those results along with some background from the Core Team. As stated in the background material, 454 members were asked to provide input to three specific questions. The Core Team received responses from 18% of those questioned. Please keep in mind that this represents approximately 4% of the Friends total membership. Having read the comments, I appreciate the input Friends members are sharing with us. It is important that we listen and are responsive to the organization. As President, I am sensitive to some of these issues and know you as members have strong opinions on certain topics. It is my responsibility to ensure that as an organization we stay steadfast in our mission of preserving and interpreting the history of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad. Thank you to those who responded and provided comments. I also want to acknowledge members of the Strategic Planning Core Team for the outstanding job they did throughout this process. Finally, let me say thank you again to all Friends members for everything you do to support our mission.

Sincerely,

Tim S. Tennant
President & CEO

Strategic Planning Survey Information and Vision Statements

Prepared and Submitted by Strategic Planning Core Team
Bob Ross & Frank Yockey, Co-Chairs, Tim Bristow, Nan Clark and Bill Kepner

As background for the Friends new strategic objectives, the strategic planning core team conducted a series of surveys and also requested vision statements from the Board of Directors and members at large. The information was collected by email, phone calls and in person interviews. The goal for the surveys was to delineate the needs of the various groups of people with whom the Friends are involved. The goal for the collection of vision statements was to produce a representative cross-section of views for the future. With the surveys, it was the desire of the planning team to compare the perceived needs of various groups, with the actual statement of needs, as reported by each of the groups. In the case of the vision statements, the planning team was looking for consistency of the Board of Directors view and a contrast/comparison to membership views. Input was provided by:

Members of the Friends, the C&TS Railroad Commissioners, RGRPC Board of Directors and management, individual guests of the railroad – passengers and visitors

to the yard, and a general category called “donors”. The donor category was created to reflect the point of view of persons, organizations or foundations having a particular interest in sound and ethical financial practices by non-profits. While all of our members are donors, not all donors are members – thus the reasoning for this group.

A number of members requested the results of the findings from the surveys so the following information is provided as a summation.

Membership Survey

Random surveys were sent to 454 Friends members and the rate of response was 18%. Members were asked three questions: 1) In joining the Friends, I have the following expectations (needs) of the organization; 2) The following expectations have not been met by the Friends; 3) In an ideal situation, I would like to see the Friends offer the following which is not currently available, and I have the following comments and suggestions.

Replies to “Expectations” (listed in order of importance based on replies)

1. Communication with membership

- Keep the Dispatch coming – good, professional
- Information regarding membership, the organization and events
- Information on RR operations (shop, derailments, riders)
- Information on plans for projects and restoration
- Expressed appreciation for the website
- Information on work sessions while in session
- Appreciated receiving the survey
- Information regarding Friends and RR financials
- Information on dealings between Friends, C&TS & States
- Provide more handouts like trip maps, walk around brochures
- Appreciate the shareholder stock certificates
- Requested more photos
- Copy of the bylaws
- Copy of the annual report
- Information on non-Friend sponsored charters
- Make members feel like “insiders”
- Decide whether Friends are member supported or member services organization
- Expressed appreciation for the website notification service
- Provide members with list of government contacts to write letters on behalf of RR
- Request more historic information be disseminated
- Provide reports and write-ups on things learned at work sessions

2. To preserve, restore and interpret the RR

3. To keep the RR running - insure a working historic exhibition of steam, insure RR is operational

4. To provide the opportunity for work sessions

5. Fund raising, grants on behalf of the RR & Friends, ACNGS

6. To maintain structures and rolling stock

7. To cater to RR modelers

8. To provide information on D&RG(W) history

9. To provide information on Rocky Mountain NG RR

10. To protect the 64-mile line from development, to protect the scenery, the view

11. To participate in volunteerism and receive sense of accomplishment

12. To experience fellowship and fun with other members

13. To involve young people to ensure the future of the RR

14. To provide the Docent program

15. To insure that locomotives are rebuilt

16. To maintain good relations with the stewards of the RR – Friends, Commission and Operator

17. To cater to rail fan community
18. To provide information on CO & NM history
19. To stay legally, fiscally and materially strong
20. To maintain a strategic plan
21. To take over operations of the RR if necessary (as was done)
22. To market the RR and the Friends
23. For the Board of Directors to exhibit a high level of competency, management & leadership
24. Friends should still be the operator of the RR
25. To ensure the authenticity of the RR
26. To ensure better “access” to the RR
27. To coordinate with the D&SNG
28. To receive a premium offered by a docent
29. To effectively lobby the two states
30. To stay within budgetary guidelines
31. To host a Narrow Gauge Convention
32. To maintain relations with the US Forest Service
33. To represent the Friends at Conventions (ARM, TRAINS, NG Convention, etc)
34. To replicate equipment, not just restore it
35. To provide work session participants with the feeling their money and time is well spent
36. To provide an escape from “real life”
37. To prioritize the operation of the RR over preservation aspects
38. To provide a RR swap meet
39. To hold online auctions
40. To provide an introductory packet to new members
41. To provide a membership bumper sticker

Replies to “Expectations not met”

1. Lack of excursions and charters
2. Founding Fathers syndrome, stagnant Board
3. “Old guard” members complaining, need fresh energy
4. More interpretive activities, museum
5. No “branded” merchandise
6. Skills analysis – too work session oriented, other uses for volunteer skills, can work from home
7. Caboose charters priced too high
8. More frequent issues of the Dispatch
9. Not including volunteers to work on locos or MOW during the work sessions
10. Tenure of Friends Executive Director too short
11. Reduce cost of Friends administrative and membership costs
12. Friction between Friends and Operator, bad experience with operator
13. Friends President not involved in work sessions
14. Not using restored rolling stock in operations
15. Provide more lead time for notifications and communication for members outside the US
16. RPO cars not restored
17. Request the lettering of C&TS engines and tenders be Rio Grande, not C&TS
18. No online Dispatch
19. Membership acknowledgment not timely
20. Do not feel connected to the organization or informed
21. Current organization appears rudderless
22. More news of Commission activities
23. More news of operations
24. Work session accommodation info provided separate from work session registration materials
25. Efforts of Friends diverted by issues related to RGRPC

Responses to “Ideal Situation, Thoughts, Comments”

1. Discounts on tickets (especially if volunteering at work sessions)
2. Offer instructional classes (will pay, could run the engine light, steam locomotive operation, engineer, fireman, how Rotary snow plow operates)
3. Prototype clinics for modelers (RR construction, maintenance, bridges)
4. Cab Rides (will pay)
5. Provide D&RG drawings, original plans or online links to same
6. Provide Membership Directory
7. Make Internet Forum Available (or C&TS specialty on NG Discussion Forum)
8. Passes for train rides
9. Links to other websites (historic, preservation, RR Museums)
10. Collect written and oral stories and copies of memorabilia from former employees
11. Conduct a right-of-way clearing project every year
12. Provide a bibliography of written resources for C&TS, CO & NM RR and D&RG history
13. Offer occasional regular train trips that include run bys
14. Survey guests of the RR about their experience
15. Provide an operational model layout of the C&TS
16. Use diesels if necessary to ease load on steam engines
17. Provide more color photos
18. Provide mini-work sessions of smaller groups
19. Get the Rotary Snow Plow operational
20. Provide a premium with membership for discounted tickets or free tickets
21. Provide work session credits to exchange for train rides
22. Offer in depth shop tours (will pay)
23. Offer special train trips with experts on board to discuss construction of the RR and history
24. Partner in projects with the CO RR Museum

Survey Results from the C&TS Railroad Commission

The strategic planning team prepared a list of perceived needs for review by each of the Commissioners. The following items were confirmed:

1. Responsibility for the RR Museum
2. Historic assets accurately: restored, preserved and interpreted
3. Provide assistance with special projects
4. Provide consultation, guidance and ideas
5. Provide timely communication of Friends activities

[The Commissioners acknowledged the Friends good track record of raising funds and requested that we include it in our needs of the Commission.]

6. Assistance with fundraising

Survey Results from the RGRPC Board of Directors and Management

1. Restoration, preservation and interpretation of historic assets
2. Timely information and communication
3. Consultation, guidance, sharing of ideas
4. Assistance with special projects
5. Quick responses to their requests
6. Respectful attitude
7. Assistance with maintenance of equipment and buildings
8. Assistance with other infrastructure work like vegetative control project

9. Communication, coordination and cooperation in vision and planning for the historic property and artifacts
10. Provide the Docent program and other volunteers to create the historic context of the RR for passengers and guests

Survey Results of Guests of the C&TS – Passengers and/or Visitors to the Yard

1. Request that restoration and preservation of equipment and structures be in operational condition
2. Want to feel welcome
3. Want to have a memorable and educational experience
4. Appreciate experiencing the “ride” – scenery, history, stepping back in time
5. Appreciate seeing the historic equipment and structures
6. Like the interaction with docents and work session volunteers
7. Appreciate the brochures, trip maps and all the information
8. Want to buy souvenirs
9. Be treated with respect
10. To observe and learn
11. Appreciate ‘real’ access to the yard
12. Learning about the history of the railroad
13. An enjoyable family experience
14. Assurance about the safety and reliability of the RR
15. To provide an opportunity for future generations to remember, appreciate and understand the vital role played by mountain, narrow gauge, steam railroading in history and in this country
16. Rail fans especially express an appreciation for Friends efforts helping to guarantee the RR, locomotives, historic structures and rolling stock are considered important and worth saving, in operable condition and as unaltered as possible

Survey Results of Donors

1. To be educated about friends work, projects and services that benefit the RR and the community
2. A sound business plan
3. A vision for the future
4. Confidence that funds will be used wisely
5. Investment will be worthwhile and sound
6. Present an established track record
7. Seek their involvement in future projects
8. Be transparent, timely and credible
9. Demonstrate successful performance
10. Maintain trust and respect

Key Phrases from the Visions Expressed by Friends Board of Directors

Increase Membership
Set standard for railroad museum oversight
Good management and timely communication
Excel as a teaching museum of living history
Fund raising essential to RR operations
Effective and powerful organizational structure
ACNGS development program ongoing
Preservation plan for each historic item to guide repair and rehabilitation
Sound finances

Large, growing, passionate membership base
Good relations and reasonable agreements with Commission and others
Friends recognized as the official museum and historic preservation arm of the C&TS
Accreditation by all appropriate museum and historic preservation groups
Financially capable of funding our preservation work
Year-round restoration program
Provide the RR operable fleet of historic cars for charters
Create a Museum and CRF in Chama and Antonito
Active participation in fundraising
Preserve the “essence” of the C&TS living museum and historic experience
True, full-fledge member of the C&TS Triad
Be advocate for historic preservation
Garner financial support, preserve the artifacts
Honor the opportunity to be part of the C&TS future and keep telling the story
Consideration and proper treatment of the artifacts given the highest priority
Maintain a comprehensive program of planning, preserving and managing the historic site
NPS quality visitor center needs to be constructed
Custodianship over historic rolling stock and structures
Year round presence at the railroad including CRF for both ends and an interpretive center

Key Phrases from Visions Expressed by Membership

Contribute financial and labor support
Increase membership
Manage the “historic trust” that is the property
Preserve the historic fabric
Develop private endowments and financial resources
Realistic, cooperative arrangement with mutual respect with operator and the Commission
Locate, secure, obtain, stable sources of funding
Promote new members
Focus on finance, oversight and professionalism
Emphasize historic preservation and interpretation of a world class museum
Take on more – retell the story
Continue Another Century of Narrow Gauge Steam
Slogan: “Serving the future by preserving the past – one volunteer at a time”
Maintain structures, ex D&RGW rolling stock
Participate in the national historical Museum community
Maintain quality relations with the Commission, Operator
Keep good rapport with state and federal agencies
Communicate with membership including more financial reporting
Be the repository of the huge historical museum
Maintain a master list of restoration projects for equipment, structures and artifacts
Attract new members
Enhance current fund raising abilities
Be capable of financing the RR operation – all as a direct result of the fundraising and promotional and restorative efforts of the Friends