



A large group of passengers wait to board the Southwest Chief. The Amtrak passenger rail service, which operates between Los Angeles and Chicago, provides \$180 million annually to the coffers of eight states, including Colorado. [COURTESY PHOTO]

## Southwest Chief boosts states' coffers

**Decision to save train averts \$135M in additional one-time losses**

Special to The Chieftain

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Thwarting plans to replace a portion of Amtrak's Southwest Chief service with a bus between Albuquerque and Dodge City saved the economies of New Mexico, Colorado and Kansas from what would have been \$180 million in annual losses, according to the findings of a new study by the Rail Passengers Association and the University of Southern Mississippi. Had it gone through, the bus bridge would also have imposed a temporary loss of \$135 million in those communities, the study showed.

"Regular and frequent train service has proved to be an economic engine for communities large and small time and again," said Jim Mathews, president of the Rail

Passengers Association, which represents the interests of 40 million riders nationwide.

"This study illustrates not only the damage that would have come from Amtrak's proposed 'bus bridge' for the Chief, but also the real 'return on investment' for robust rail funding in both urban and rural communities nationwide," he said.

As the report - "Bustituted: The Socioeconomic Impacts of Replacing Southwest Chief Service Over Raton Pass" - shows, the \$180-million economic loss annually would be the result of "permanent direct economic losses" totaling \$116.4 million, as well as "permanent indirect losses" of \$63.7 million.

Direct losses consist of cancelled operating spending, fewer visitors and lost income from those visitors, and higher travel costs for families that live along the Southwest Chief route.

The indirect losses would be felt through increased pollution control, highway

fatalities, increased highway maintenance and forgone trips.

These losses alone are more than three times what Amtrak requests from Congress to operate the entire route of the Southwest Chief, which runs from city to city, through eight states: Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona and California.

An additional \$135 million in "temporary direct economic losses" would result from the cancelled construction related to Positive Train Control (PTC), a safety technology mandated by the federal government that can remotely monitor and control a train's speed.

"The bus bridge is not a realistic option for Amtrak passengers and surrounding communities," said Mathews, of the RPA. "It would create longer travel times and a financial loss for the region.

"It will be critical for lawmakers to take this study into consideration when

developing a surface-transportation bill reauthorization in 2019."

The new study also examined the socio-economic effects of Amtrak implementing a bus bridge. The results are significant as thousands of people who rely on train service for school, work, vacation and even hospital visits would lose easy access.

The overall socio-economic effects include:

- 32 universities would lose train service;
- 47 hospitals would lose train service
- 130,000 induced auto trips, diverted onto roads that are four times more dangerous than the national average; and
- Bus-bridge communities have the lowest median income (\$35K) of all those served on the Chief route.

When the bus bridge proposal surfaced last year, the Rail Passengers Association commissioned a team of researchers from the

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## Bennet, Gardner to be honored

**Six U.S. senators will be recognized for role in saving the Southwest Chief**

Special to The Chieftain

The Rail Passengers Association, the oldest and largest national organization speaking for the nearly 40 million users of passenger trains and rail transit, is awarding a bipartisan coalition of six senators its Golden Spike Award for their outstanding contribution in saving the Southwest Chief train route and their service to the tens of millions of Americans who depend upon the national train network.

The Golden Spike will be awarded to U.S. Sens. Michael Bennet and Cory Gardner of Colorado, Martin Heinrich and Tom Udall of

New Mexico, and Jerry Moran and Pat Roberts of Kansas. All six played instrumental roles in preventing the enactment of an Amtrak proposal to break up the route and replace the train with a bus line through the three states, the Rail Passenger Association said in its press release.



Bennet



Gardner

"Senators Bennet, Gardner, Heinrich, Moran, Roberts, Udall all showed tremendous insight to recognize the problem facing their constituents. They acted quickly—and in a bipartisan fashion—to ensure that this disaster was averted," said Rail Passengers President Jim Mathews.

"Unfortunately, most passengers aren't aware of the crucial role these six senators played in saving their train, nor the hundreds of millions of dollars that will be kept in these communities as a result," he said. "I'm hoping the Golden Spike Award shines a bright light on the great work they've done for these

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**CAMERAS**

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of the ban explained it to reporters in Denver last week.

In Pueblo, the cameras are operated by American Traffic Systems and they watch the busy intersections of Lincoln and Thatcher; Pueblo Boulevard and Northern Avenue; and Norwood Street and the U.S. 50 Bypass.

Pepper Whittlef, city traffic engineer, said the cameras caught 5,715 violators last year. They snapped photos of many more drivers but most he'll veto any camera ban that reaches his desk.

That may be one reason that HB1099 isn't expected to go far this session.

"There just aren't the votes to get it that far," is how a lobbyist for Colorado municipalities put it this week.

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The Cotter Family's  
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Jon M. Elgin, 76, passed away Feb. 19. Arrangements are pending

**IN MEMORIAM**

**IN MEMORIAM**  
Judy Montoya  
Happy Birthday Nanas



Comfort of your touch.  
I'll celebrate your birthday, Mum, the way I always do, for the precious love between us, and all I owe to you.

Love You Always,  
Your kids,  
grandkids and family

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Mary Alice Moreschini, 96. Mass, 10 a.m. Tuesday at St. Pius X. Full notice Sunday.

Viola Maldonado, 90, of Walsenburg. Arrangements pending.

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Irene Mismash, 95, passed away quietly on Feb. 14, 2019. Celebration of life at 11 a.m., Monday, Feb. 25, 2019 at Westminster Presbyterian. Full obituary to follow.

**IN MEMORIAM**

**IN MEMORIAM**  
In Loving Memory of  
**Bob Fajt**  
Who passed away on this day 30 years ago.



**LAST DANCE**

Day by year,  
Wrinkles creased,  
Progress slowed,  
No more crests to mount,  
Unlike mirror's reflection,  
Hearts not aged,  
Strong as the very first day.

"Will you dance with me,  
My Rose?"  
Tired palms became entangled,  
As they waltz to the floor.

Like heart,  
Young in step,  
They seemed to float,  
Above,  
Note by single note.

The arms that worked to feed,  
Held children,  
And those down the line,  
Encompassed tightly,  
Around her waist

With restricted breath,  
She whispered,  
"Robert, you hold me too near"

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August Joseph Hoyz Jr., 68, passed Feb. 18, 2019. Arrangements pending.

Cherri "Cheryl" Lynn Moore, 56, passed away Feb. 15, 2019. Celebration of Life, 11 a.m., Saturday, Angelus Chapel. Complete notice later

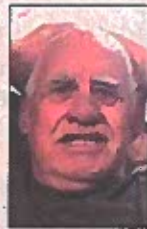
Mary Josephine Guerin, 93, passed away today with funeral Mass to follow at 10 a.m., Our Lady of Mount Carmel listening to music and being with her family. She leaves behind to cherish her memory, daughter, Nevaeh Duran; mother, Connie Duran; grandmother, Gloria Duran; siblings, Bryan, Desiree and Angelo Trujillo; nino, Cisco Duran; nina, Christine Duran; uncles, Marcelino (Andrea) Duran and Rocky (Brenda) Duran; numerous other uncles, aunts, cousins and friends who will dearly miss her. Memorial Mass 10 a.m., Saturday, Feb. 23, 2019, St. Leander Church. Online condolences ww w.angeluspueblo.com

Gilbert Milton Ortega, 71, passed away on Feb. 16, 2019. Affectionately known as "Gebo"



to family and friends. He was born Sept. 22, 1947, to the union of Justo and Lorenza (Sanchez) Ortega; both preceded him in death along with siblings, Richard, Billy, Leroy and Jenny. Gilbert served in the U.S. Army; he was proud to be a veteran. He retired as a professional painter. Gebo enjoyed riding his bike, being a comedian, listening to oldies music and poetry. He is survived by his children, Michael (Naomi) Ortega and Mariah Montano; siblings, Mary-Lou (Levi) Trujillo, Justo (Chris) Ortega, Joseph (Toyenne) Ortega, Johnny Ortega, Lee Ortega, Katie Ortega, Maryann (Richard) Stickler and Rosie Ortega; special friend, Leanna Montano; grandchildren, Emiliano, Alejandra, Marques and Masias;

John "Juan" Jose Duran, 74, passed away Feb. 18, 2019. He was born July 23, 1944, in Pecos, Texas. Juan was preceded in death by his daughter, Elena Duran. He is survived by his loving wife of 59 years, Maria Duran, children, Bob and friends. He was born Sept. 24, 1935, to Pete and Lupe (Trejo) Rodriguez; both preceded him in death along with brothers, Daniel and Lawrence Rodriguez Sr. Bob served in the United States Air Force 1953-1957. He retired from the Rail Mill department of CF&I. Bob was a dedicated family man and devoted to his Catholic faith. He loved going to Las Vegas and Cripple Creek. Bob was a car enthusiast, always took pride in having the shiniest and cleanest car. Bob enjoyed real estate and helping anybody in need. He is survived by his loving wife of 60 years, Gloria Guerrero; daughter, Roberta; brother, Joseph (Melodee) Rodriguez; grandson, Mitchel Rodriguez; in-laws, Mary Louise (Steve) Cordova, Ted (Patsy) Guerrero, Tom, Joe and Anthony Guerrero; several nieces, nephews, cousins and friends who will miss him dearly. Rosary, Friday 9:30 a.m. with Mass of Christian Burial to follow at 10 a.m., both at Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Interment, Roselawn Cemetery. Military honors by the Pueblo Veterans Ritual Team. Online condolences, www.angeluspueblo.com



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**IN MEMORIAM**

**IN MEMORIAM**  
Francisco Alcon  
Happy Birthday up in heaven.



**IN MEMORIAM**

**IN MEMORIAM**  
Happy Birthday in Heaven  
Kiki



Love you always,  
Family and Friends

**IN MEMORIAM**  
Anthony Cortese  
One Year Ago Today



Sara Nicole DeCesaro  
10/28/1983 2/20/2004



You are always missed.  
Thinking of you always.  
You will be in our hearts forever.

Love,  
The DeCesaro Family

**IN MEMORIAM**  
Joe Lucero



9 Years Gone  
Still loved and missed every day.  
Your Wife,  
Nancy

**IN MEMORIAM**  
In Loving Memory of  
Sandra Kaye Pruce  
8/9/1946 2/20/2012



Seven years ago today you entered Heaven. It was devastating to us left behind to live without you. You were a pivotal part of our lives and will always be missed and loved. We love you to the stars and back.

Love Your Family,  
Husband Jim,  
Sons Adam and Nathan,  
Daughter-in-law Jennifer  
and Grandson Wvatt

**AWARD**

From Page B1

communities and their constituents."

The award will be given at the Rail Passengers Association annual Congressional reception on April 2.

In the association's 50-year history, the Golden Spike has been gifted to giants in entertainment, such as Johnny Cash and Walt Disney, for supporting the train industry. Most recently, it has

been awarded to elected officials in Congress, like the late Reps. Jim Oberstar (D-Minn.) and Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY), who helped push forward new legislation in support of maintaining and furthering passenger rail in the U.S. Regardless of their background, all recipients have shared a common theme: actions of great service on behalf of America's passengers.

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**CHIEF**

From Page B1

University of Southern Mississippi's Trent Lott National Center to determine how life might change for the people who live, work, visit or study in affected towns. The USM team was led by research professor Dr. Yuanyuan Zhang and the work was supported by funds from the generous bequest of the late George McCallum.

Together, Rail Passengers and USM built a model to account for factors ranging from direct spending to construction, labor, local tax payments and visitation and tourist spending.

The model builds on work done by USM and Transportation for America (T4A), and funded by the Southern Rail Commission (SRC), to quantify the economic benefits of rail service for Gulf Coast communities.

Rail Passengers is indebted to T4A and the SRC for their work on the economic impact of passenger trains. Using our advanced model, the Rail Passengers team will be able to expand on this work on a county-by-county basis on any route in the U.S., or even to help assess the potential value of service in an area not yet served by rail.

The full study and its findings are available online at RailPassengers.org.