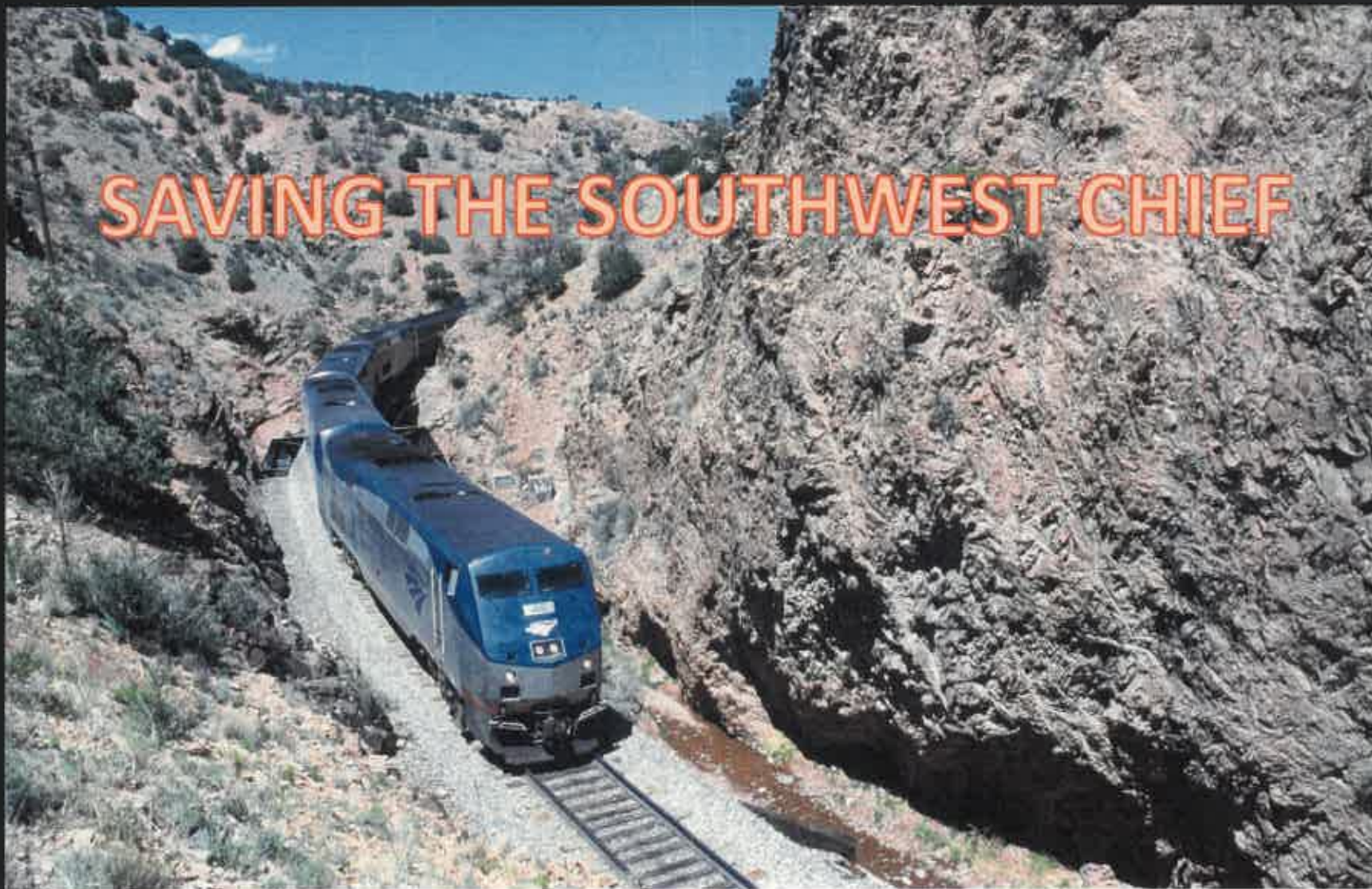


SAVING THE SOUTHWEST CHIEF



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**COMMISSIONER SAL PACE, PUEBLO COUNTY
CHAIR, COLORADO SOUTHWEST CHIEF
COMMISSION**

Draft Prepared by COLORAIL.ORG



AMTRAK'S SOUTHWEST CHIEF AND ITS ROUTE

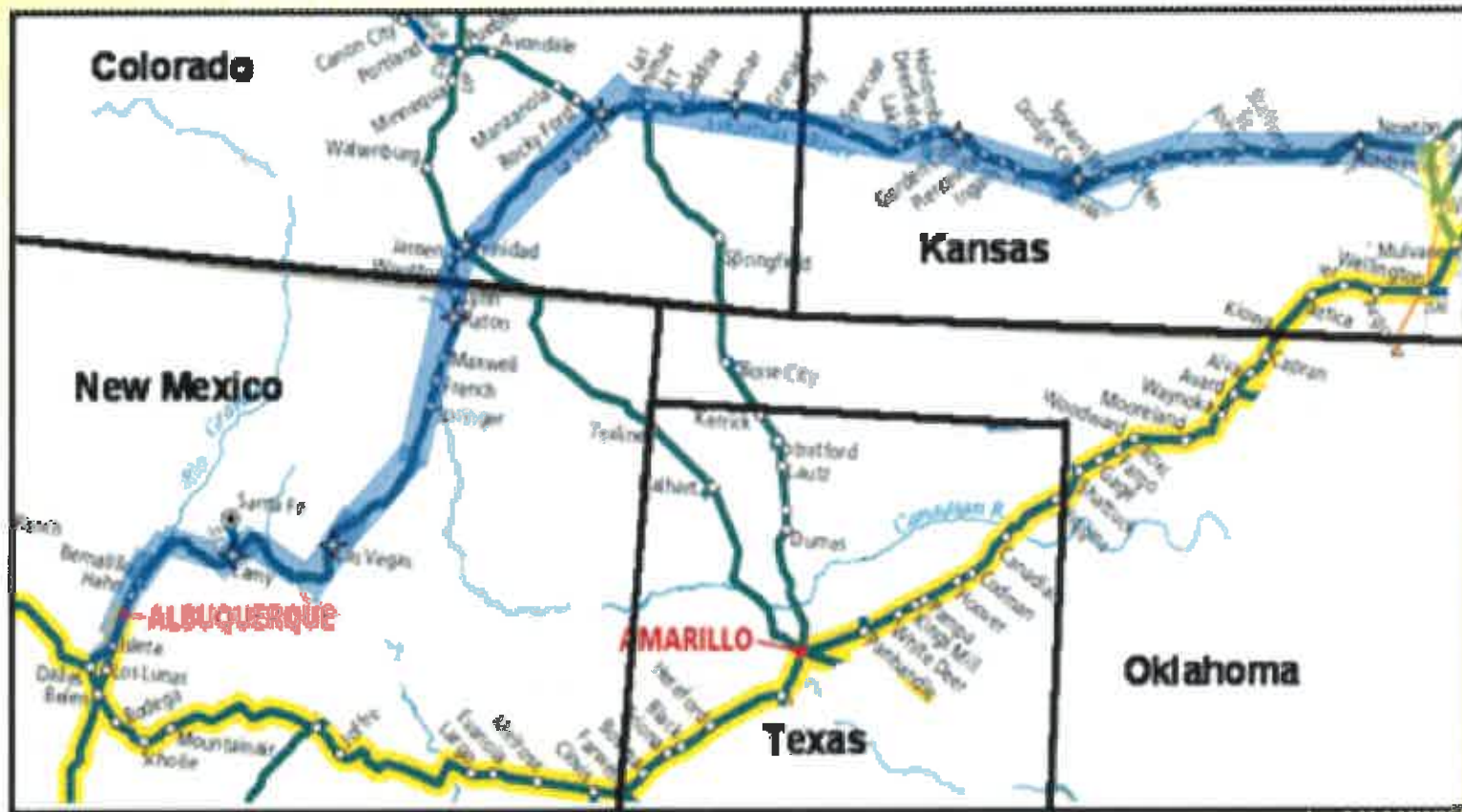
- Streamliner running from Chicago to Los Angeles via Kansas City, Southeastern Colorado, Albuquerque and Flagstaff with 33 stops
- Follows the historic Santa Fe Trail in Colorado and New Mexico over Raton Pass
- Serves many rural communities like Lamar, La Junta and Trinidad in Colorado
- Rail line was forged by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad in the 1880's
- Hosted famous trains including the Super Chief "Train of the Stars" which ran from 1936 until 1971
- Became an Amtrak train in 1971, upgraded to Superliners in 1982

AT ISSUE

IN 2011, DISCONTINUING THE SOUTHWEST CHIEF WAS UNDER SERIOUS CONSIDERATION:

- **632 miles of track between Newton, KS, and Lamy, NM, in disrepair, particularly in Kansas and Colorado**
- **Amtrak contract with BNSF Railway expires in 2016**
- **BNSF traffic over the route had declined since the original contract was executed 25 years ago**
- **BNSF pegged the increased Amtrak share for maintenance and repairs at over \$200 million over ten years, well beyond Amtrak's budget**

Current (blue) and Possible Alternative (yellow) Route



AT STAKE

- Ridership for local and out of state travelers
- Employment and payroll
- Economic benefits such as tourism
- New opportunities – e.g. Pueblo Service, Colorado Front Range Rail, other future rail links along the route (e.g. Oklahoma, Texas)!

Mobilizing to Save the Chief

- **2011** ColoRail “shoe leather” **advocacy campaign** in 2011-2012 generates 19 resolutions of support and culminates in a three state Southwest Chief Coalition with leadership from La Junta, CO, Garden City, KS, and Colfax County (Raton), NM (one elected and one senior manager each): **Community Leaders buy in!**
- **2012** ColoRail (advocate) hosts **leadership excursions** on the SW Chief for Mayors, Legislators, Congressional Staff to **build understanding and support**. Amtrak conductors support each trip.
- **2012** Congressional efforts for federal funding in 2012 lead to new strategy for 2013: ***You have to have skin in the game!*** (Federal funds must be matched say our Congressional Leaders)
- **2013** Coalition convenes 2013 “Southwest Chief Summit” in Pueblo, CO, to enlist more champions who can help get public and private funding for the campaign. **Commissioner Sal Pace answers the call!**
- **2013** Campaign goes on the offensive: **Lets add Pueblo as a stop! Lets seek TIGER Grant funding!**
- **2014** New leadership forges legislative strategies in CO and NM, while KS turns to KDOT to take the lead. **Colorado Act creates SW Chief Commission.**

Accomplishments

- **Legislation in Colorado creating Commission**
 - Commissioners represent important sectors: Local, County, Freight Rail, Amtrak, CDOT, Advocacy and Transit
 - Commission can receive and expend funds
 - Commission tasked to look at additional stops in Pueblo and Walsenburg
 - **Commissioners support intermodal transportation**
 - **Commission is an official state agency focused on the train**

ACCOMPLISHMENTS (cont'd)

- Coalition lead by Garden City obtains 2014 TIGER 6 Grant
 - BNSF, Kansas DOT and Amtrak pledge \$ 9 million match
 - 14 Colorado and Kansas Counties/Communities/Advocates provide over \$330,000: **Key matching support**
 - **BNSF will repair worst track segments to maximize improving the SW Chief's performance**
 - US DOT awards \$12.5 million grant!

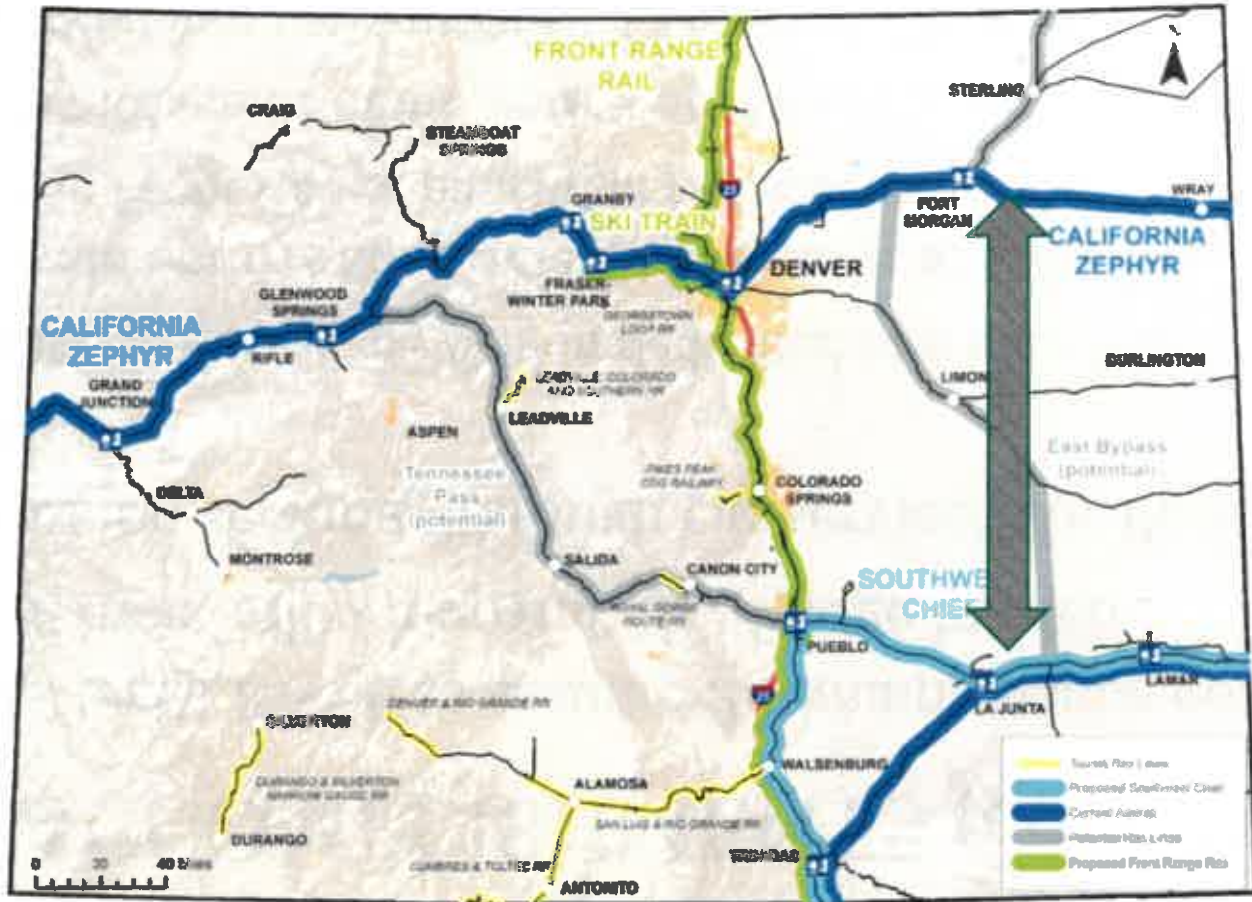
ACCOMPLISHMENTS (cont'd)

- **Coalition Lead by La Junta Obtains 2015 TIGER 7 Grant**
 - Colorado and New Mexico DOT's join application
 - 22 communities/counties/advocates from 3 states join application
 - US DOT awards \$15.2 million grant!
- **Rail manufactured in Pueblo, Colorado!**
- **Over \$46 million has now been raised and 137 miles of track will be replaced or improved by the end of 2016 creating "time table" space for Pueblo stop**

ACCOMPLISHMENTS (cont'd)

- Success leads BNSF to assume full maintenance costs for restored track relieving Amtrak of huge burden
- Commission seeking “through car service” for Pueblo and beyond
 - Chicago to Pueblo service on dedicated cars cut off at La Junta
 - Colorado Springs at 40 miles, and Denver at 110 miles, create realistic Front Range passenger rail scenario
 - Ballot measure: **Pueblo voters approved funding in 2016**
 - Transition into the Southwest Chief & Front Range Passenger Rail Commission

COLORAIL PROPOSED RAIL SYSTEM



- Front Range Rail
- Proposed Southwest Chief
- Current Amtrak
- Potential New Lines
- Proposed Front Range Rail