

The Freedom Train

One of the first larger projects our Pikes Peak by '76 undertook , was to land and host the national Freedom Train, which was scheduled to visit every State.

Our Bicentennial committees were beginning to form and organize, so I looked ahead. When the news was printed in the Denver Post that the Denver Mayor's "Committee of 19 for '76" withdrew its invitation for the Freedom Train to come to Denver, the State Capitol City, and there were only about 5 weeks before it would have to reach Colorado or not at all, I grabbed the phone and acted. Denver had complained it would cost too much for the host city to sponsor it.

After learning that the Train, sponsored by a non-profit organization which charged \$2 for adults and \$1 for children would refund to the host committee 10% of gross ticket sales for the 4 days, I grabbed it and invited, on my own authority of the Chair of the Committee, the Train to Colorado Springs for October 2d to 5th, 1975. We might have some off duty police security costs, but I knew we could get volunteers for the rest if it were parked on the tracks at the old Denver and Rio Grande Passenger Station, which was now a popular restaurant - Guseppie's with parking, and with a large grassed park across the street.

I just knew we could get a large crowd from the city and county and others from afar in Colorado, to buy such cheap tickets since this would be the only visit of the Freedom Train to the State of Colorado.

It was a smashing success Over 56,000 people visited it, while 2,000 volunteers hosted it. And in spite of the mixed press it got coming across the country, when the press polled 1,500 who saw it and went through its inside displays, 1,356 said it was 'worth it.' It was not only a hit in Colorado Springs, but it helped rescue the Train's national reputation from glowing press reports its visit to Colorado and Colorado Springs engendered.

Our committee gained \$8,000 from the 10% of ticket sales - which was the first money in our budget for other events. The city fathers sat up and took my committee's plans and work seriously after that. Governor Lamm came down from Denver to see it, and thanked me for saving Colorado's reputation by hosting it, lest Colorado would have been the only state in the nation which it did not visit.

You can see photographs of the train and the Colorado Commission's report on the PDF file below. Just click on the name.

[The Freedom Train](#)