

STATE OF THE UNION DEPOT

EDITION #2

A PUBLICATION OF THE FRIENDS OF GJ UNION DEPOT

JUL 29, 2024

UNION DEPOT APPROVED UNDER ENTERPRISE ZONE

To help support economic development in depressed areas, the state of Colorado has designated certain geographic regions as Enterprise Zones: areas that are given special tax breaks to help incentivize progress in the community. We are pleased to announce that the Union Depot restoration project was recently approved as an Enterprise Zone Contribution Project in Mesa County, administered by the Grand Junction Business Incubator Center. This means that donations to the Friends of GJ Union Depot to support restoration efforts may be eligible for additional tax credits in addition to the usual tax deduction. Although we are still working to finalize our contribution system with OEDIT, we look forward to offering additional benefits to our donors soon.

CONTENTS

Celebrating One Year	1
Enterprise Zone Approved ...	1
From the Ticket Office	2
Volunteers Needed.....	2
Time to Renew.....	2
National Train Day	3
New Fire Line.....	3
Rural Philanthropy Days	5
Tee It Up for History	5
CMU Students Restore Depot...	6
Contact & Membership	8



FRIENDS OF GJ UNION DEPOT CELEBRATES ONE YEAR

It has been over a year since the Friends of GJ Union Depot first officially incorporated as a nonprofit, demonstrating how far the group's mission has come since the project's inception. In celebration of this milestone, the Friends hosted its first annual meeting and members-appreciation luncheon in June. Throughout lunch, the board of directors sat down with members of the Friends and their guests to listen to their thoughts and feedback. It was a delight to be able to hear your ideas and visions for the future of the depot. We also welcomed two new additions to the board of directors, Cindy Duff and Art Chase, and recognized two outgoing directors, Bennett Boeschstein and Julie Carlson, for their exemplary service to this organization by awarding each of them the title of Director Emeritus.

During the meeting, we also reviewed just some of the successes over the previous year. The Friends has produced a compilation video summarizing a few of our accomplishments, which was premiered at the event. You can watch this video on our website: friendsofgjuniondepot.org/2023-accomplishments.

We look forward to hosting more events, including members-only activities, as we move into our second year of operations. The board has begun creating a rotating bureau of speakers to talk about Grand Junction's history and other topics. We will begin with a highly-requested second run of Michael Nuttall's presentation "A History of Grand Junction's Union Depot and How the Railroads Shaped the Grand Valley," which is expected to take place sometime in mid-September. We also foresee hosting more members-only and ticketed events in the future, as well as additional member benefits. We thank you for your continued support and look forward to seeing you during the upcoming year!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Friends needs volunteers from all backgrounds, professions, and walks of life to help support its operations. To that end, the board has created several committees to help manage communications and outreach, events, fundraising, and labor. If you have any interest in volunteering with the Friends or joining a committee, especially if you would like to help us with fundraising, grant writing, accounting, event planning, community engagement, social media, website management, photography, graphic design, business, artisanry, physical labor, or more, please send us an email at friends@friendsofgjuniondepot.org.

TIME TO RENEW

The Friends is celebrating one year as an incorporated nonprofit organization. That means, for most of us, it is time to renew your membership in the Friends. If you would like to inquire about your membership, please email friends@friendsofgjuniondepot.org or call (970) 589-4875. You can also find more information about renewing your membership in this newsletter (page 8) or by visiting our website: friendsofgjuniondepot.org/memberships.

SPREAD THE WORD

Community development projects, like the depot, cannot be completed without the support of members of the community like you. Please tell your friends about the Union Depot and let them know how they can become involved in restoring Grand Junction's most important building.



FROM THE TICKET OFFICE

AN UPDATE FROM THE OWNERS

By Dustin Anzures and Veronica Sanchez

Our summer got off to a great start with an open-house celebration of National Train Day on Saturday, May 11, followed by the Friends of GJ Union Depot's first annual meeting and members-appreciation luncheon on June 15. Events like these are only possible thanks to the generous contributions made by our volunteers. Many work hours go into preparing the Union Depot for its hosting duties. With this in mind, we have established Wednesday Workdays at the Union Depot for any volunteers who would like to contribute their time and expertise. Every Wednesday, Keith Williams our volunteer coordinator, leads the on-site effort. There are also other opportunities for volunteerism to fit all schedules which don't necessarily involve on-site work or physical labor. If you'd like to learn more about the various volunteer committees, please email the Friends at friends@friendsofgjuniondepot.org. You may also call Dustin Anzures at 970-628-1117.

Just a few weeks ago, during one of the Wednesday work sessions, we had an unexpected visitor with an interesting connection to the building. Mr. Bill Hokanson, long-time owner of Euro Brick, a local brick making company based in Grand Junction, started his business in 1994 in a vacant historic building, Grand Junction's Union Depot. One worker operated a single concrete mixer at the west end of the depot's waiting room, and he would then pack the dyed concrete into molds on a small vibrating table before sending formed bricks down a 75-foot-long conveyor belt from the depot's waiting room, through the breezeway, and into the baggage room where they would be stacked on a pallet to dry. Bill and his helper produced 300 to 350 bricks each day. Euro Brick operated out of the depot from 1994-1997, and it was during this three-year period that the waiting room's second floor was removed. Bill explained that he performed all the demolition and removal of the second floor in exchange for his monthly rent. Euro Brick went on to

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FROM THE TICKET OFFICE CONT'D

outgrow the depot and relocated to a larger facility where it ran successfully for decades, until Bill's recent retirement.

Some members have arrived at the depot bearing gifts. Member Joe Wilson not only shared stories of his time working for Western Pacific (WP) but he also donated narrow gauge and standard gauge rail tools known as "gaugers." These tools allowed the section crew to quickly position new track and ensure the rails were spaced precisely 36 inches (narrow gauge) or 4 feet, 8 1/2 inches (standard gauge) apart. These are unique items embossed with "D&RGW" and will make beautiful display pieces. Members Diane and John Widstrand also donated a high quality map from the 1970s which depicts the Burlington Northern's routes before its merger with the Santa Fe Railroad.

The effort to clean out the tunnels is nearing completion, thanks to several of the CMU engineering students who spent many hours of dirty work removing tons of dirt and debris. Once lighting and ventilation has been taken care of, we will make tunnel tours available to any member that is interested and able! It is tight quarters down there, and a certain level of athleticism is required to traverse the length of the system. Be on the lookout for a future email soliciting interest.

If you couldn't make it to one of our midsummer events, we hope to see you at the First Annual Friends of GJ Union Depot Charity Golf Tournament on September 5, 2024, at Redlands Mesa Golf Course, presented by The Shade Tree Auction House. We'll be teeing it up to keep history on track. The charity golf tournament will be accompanied by an online auction beginning on August 24, 2024, viewable at [TheShadeTreeAuctionHouse.com](https://www.TheShadeTreeAuctionHouse.com). We also anticipate hosting more events soon. We look forward to seeing you!

CELEBRATING NATIONAL TRAIN DAY

In 2008, Amtrak created National Train Day to celebrate the importance of railroads on the Saturday closest to the completion of the first transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869. This year, National Train Day was observed on Saturday, May 11, 2024. The Friends of GJ Union Depot commemorated the holiday by holding its second annual National Train Day Open House of the Union Depot. During the four-hour event, over 800 attendees toured the Union Depot. Visitors were able to view the depot's interior and learn about its history and stories, as well as hear ideas about the building's future. Additional exhibits included a history wheel from the Museums of Western Colorado, a presentation by the Colorado Department of Transportation, the photos and discussions with the Grand Junction Historic Preservation Board, food and tours by Peer 180, and a model train display from the Grand Valley Model Railroad Club. The Friends of GJ Union Depot also signed up 40 new members and three more windows were sponsored by Elizabeth Liberty, John and Vicki Swaik, and John and Diane Widstrand. Thank you for your support!

continued next page



NEW FIRE LINE TO BE INSTALLED

If you spent any time driving around downtown during April or May, you likely encountered road construction in the areas around Union Depot. You may have also noticed a line of fresh asphalt on the southeast side of the building.

Recently, the City of Grand Junction was hurriedly replacing expired clay and concrete water lines in preparation of CDOT's Phase 6 of the I-70B expansion project this August. The city's water line replacement work afforded us the opportunity to tee in a 6-inch fire line to the Union Depot while the street was already excavated. The cooperation of the city's engineering department saved the Union Depot restoration project around forty to fifty thousand dollars by including our fire line stub in their scope of work.

City street work tends to be a thankless job. If you'd like to send a note of thanks for a job well done, please convey your appreciation to Inspector Mike Mazza and Engineer Will Comerer by emailing them at mikem@gjcity.org and williamc@gjcity.org.



QUOTE

“To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain always a child. For what is the worth of human life, unless it is woven into the life of our ancestors by the records of history?”

—Cicero



NATIONAL TRAIN DAY CONT'D

This year also saw the introduction of the Memory Booth, facilitated by volunteer Dave Grossman, in which attendees could share stories about their railroad career, memories of their relatives that worked for the railroad, or reminisce about the former glory of the Union Depot. If you missed the open house or didn't have time to share at the Memory Booth, we'd love to make an appointment to meet you and hear your railroad stories.

The silent auction was also a new addition to this year's open house. Participants were able to bid on pieces of wine, instruments, railroad memorabilia, art, and Western Slope excursions and activities, including two tickets on the Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad.

Thanks to a grant from the Grand Junction Commission on Arts and Culture, we were able to further elevate the open house with a live mural painting event. Nine local artists were commissioned to create large murals on plywood boards. These murals have been installed in various window openings and will take the place of the windows while they undergo restoration. Once these windows are restored and reinstalled, the murals will be moved to the next set of windows to be restored. We thank the nine artists that participated and shared their creativity: Cynthia Duff, Lance Williams, Emily Adamson, Mae Piña, Ashley Peterson Hall, Mindy Hill, Tyrell Osborn, Giselle Genova, and Monica Esposito Mann.

We also owe a debt of gratitude to all the volunteers that generously gave their time to assist in running the open house: Keith and Sandy Williams, Elizabeth Boeschstein, Lucie Shelofsky, Patrick Burnett, Jeff & Trish Vagneur, Logan Wilson, Josh Tonsing, Polly Cady, Dave Grossman, Cindy Duff and Greg Tapp, Matthew Brooks, Russell Cross, Joe and Shelley Anzures, and many others.

National Train Day provided us with a fantastic opportunity to spread awareness and raise funds for the restoration of Grand Junction's Union Depot. Our community has consistently delivered, demonstrating that they recognize the importance and value of preserving and rehabilitating our heritage. We thank you for your support and look forward to seeing you down the line at the next event!

WESTERN SLOPE RURAL PHILANTHROPY DAYS

June 5 and 6 brought the long-awaited Western Slope Rural Philanthropy Days (RPD) conference to Fruita, Colorado. Rural Philanthropy Days is a regional conference that brings foundations and major funders from the Front Range to the rest of Colorado so that they can better understand the struggles and needs of nonprofits in rural communities. The conference, hosted by the Community Resource Center (CRC), only comes to the Western Slope once every four years, and it is almost exclusively attended by organizations within the Western Slope's five counties. Organizations that attend are also provided with additional resources and opportunities to expand skills and build capacity.

Bill Wade, our board chair, and Michael Nuttall, board vice-chair, attended this two-day conference to represent the Friends of GJ Union Depot. Their efforts were extremely productive, resulting in new relationships with Colorado-based foundations looking for projects that align with their missions, as well as rapport with other local nonprofits. One-on-one meetings with the Boettcher Foundation, Gates Family Foundation and the El Pomar Foundation provided guidance on pursuing capital grants in the near future. Additionally, the Western Colorado Community Foundation continues to be a meaningful local partner with whom we continue to communicate. In response to contact made at RPD, the Friends of GJ Union Depot submitted a preliminary concept form to AmeriCorps, and we have been invited to complete a full application for their labor-assistance grant, which would run this November and December. Thank you to the organizers of this great event and to Bill and Michael for their attendance!

TEE IT UP & KEEP HISTORY ON TRACK

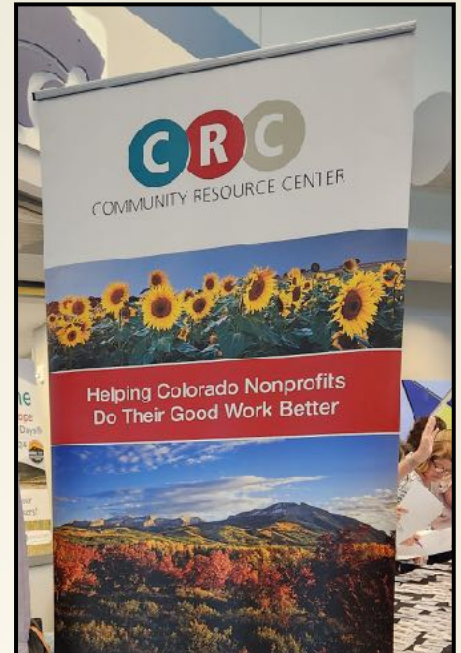
Join us for our First Annual Friends of GJ Union Depot Charity Golf Tournament, presented by the Shade Tree Auction House! We are excited to host this event at the number one rated course in Colorado, Redlands Mesa Golf Course.

Grab your clubs and meet us on the course on Thursday, September 5, 2024, for a day filled with fun and a \$20,000 split-the-prize with charity hole-in-one contest. Make a hole-in-one on hole 8 at Redlands Mesa Golf Course and win \$10,000 with an additional \$10,000 donated to the Friends of GJ Union Depot.

Plus, we will have prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place teams as well as longest-drive and closest-to-the-pin contests!

Register at FriendsGolfDay.com. Registration includes breakfast, lunch, two drink tickets, an awards reception, live music, and more! Members of the Friends enjoy special pricing of \$125 (vs \$150 for non-members). Use the code "Friends Deal" when you register and receive a \$25 discount on your player fee.

We thank all of our sponsors who made this event possible. We look forward to a great day on this world-class course with all proceeds benefiting the restoration of Grand Junction's historic Union Depot.



MISSION STATEMENT

Friends of the Grand Junction Union Depot, Inc. is a nonprofit corporation in Grand Junction, Colorado whose mission is to support the preservation and rehabilitation of Grand Junction's historic Union Depot, built in 1906. We celebrate the history of the Union Depot through events, fundraisers and educational opportunities

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CMU STUDENTS SUPPORT DEPOT RESTORATION



When the Union Depot first opened as a train station in 1906, it stood as a testament to Grand Junction's economic development as it united an array of railroad companies into a burgeoning metropolis. The splendor of its architecture reflected the Grand Valley's success and resilience as a community. The Union Depot rapidly assumed a role as a community center and served as the primary gateway into Grand Junction when Colorado Mesa University (then Grand Junction Junior College) was founded in 1925. But attitudes against rail travel during the latter part of the twentieth century allowed the elegant building to become dilapidated and fall into disuse. However, recent community-driven efforts, led by the nonprofit group Friends of GJ Union Depot, have sought to restore the building back to its original glory. That's when a group of students from Colorado Mesa University decided to get involved.

"It's as if the history is practically seeping out of the walls of the station. It's almost like the Statue of Liberty from the *Planet of the Apes* movie—definitely a sense of awe at the former beauty in addition to disappointment in the state that the station was in," said Vaughn Beeson, former president of the Civil Engineering Club, a student chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers. After visiting the depot, Beeson saw the restoration project as a unique opportunity and encouraged members of his club—and other students—to get involved.

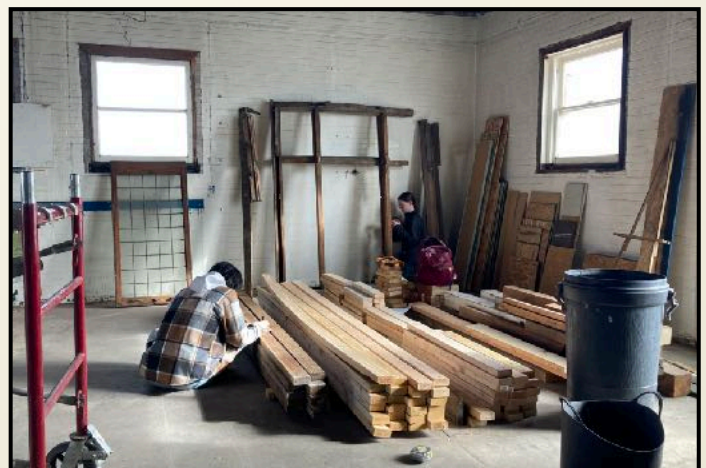
In April, after encouragement from CMU students, Colorado Mesa University's Associated Student Government ultimately voted to sponsor one of the depot's 54 historic windows to support its restoration. This funding allowed CMU engineering students to become engaged in

rehabilitation efforts. "We are excited to be a part of this impactful project and provide opportunities for students they might not have access to otherwise, while also promoting our university within the Grand Junction community," said former Student Body Vice President Robert Hammes in a statement.

The focus of these students was on restoring the sponsored window—one of the depot's most deteriorated windows—a task which seemed increasingly daunting. The unique window was installed in one of the building's curved brick-and-mortar walls, exhibiting the skill of early-twentieth-century artisans. Few of the students had experience in this type of engineering and architecture. "I was concerned about the scope and schedule of the project with our students," said Beeson. It quickly became apparent to him that more help was needed. "But after seeing the station in-person," he continued, "I was too excited to *not* try to persuade our students to help!"

"Vaughn approached us because the Civil Engineering Club only has a few members and they needed shoes on the ground," said Tucker Wiltse, former president of the CMU chapter of Engineers Without Borders. The organization has a history of community-empowering projects, such as supporting the Diné Reservation in Arizona or constructing water tanks for Friends of the Mustangs. Members of Engineers Without Borders returned from a humanitarian trip to Runashitu, Ecuador, as recently as January 2024. "We showed the [engineering] department, the city, and the community with the Runashitu project that we're not kidding and we're not stopping," he continued.

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CMU STUDENTS CONT'D

With financial assistance provided by CMU's Associated Student Government and a partnership established between the Civil Engineering Club and Engineers Without Borders, over 17 CMU students worked alongside volunteers from Friends of GJ Union Depot to restore the historic window. Their aim was to complete the window's frame before the nonprofit hosted an open house for National Train Day in May. The students demonstrated remarkable efficiency in their collective efforts. Some students took measurements using existing windows as a reference. Other students created detailed drawings documenting the intricacies of the window's construction. Replacement wood was fashioned shortly thereafter, and students began reassembling the frame so that it was faithful to the original window's more than a century-old construction. The window was finally reinstalled in its original location in early May 2024.

Extensive work on the CMU "Maverick" window still needs to be completed. New window sashes will be fashioned, and leaded glass and trimming needs to be installed. However, students have had no difficulty finding additional projects in the meantime, going further by stabilizing walls, remedying old boards, cleaning floors and removing debris. Several students found interest in exploring the tunnels that run underneath the depot, most of which are older than the building itself. A few chose to spend their weekends and summer vacation clearing out these tunnels for future rehabilitation.

"It was good having something meaningful to spend my time on. If I didn't have this, I'd probably hang out at home and watch TV," Wiltse remarked, "but we care, and we'll be in the trenches and in the tunnels dragging pipes out on a Saturday." Beeson added, "I think all our members were excited to work, even it was just cleaning, which is surprising considering we're a bunch of college students."

Regardless of the work they completed, many students said that they found value in their participation. "Working more hands-on for a project as opposed to the theoretical work of school was very rewarding," said Athena Branch, who recently graduated with a degree in mechanical engineering. "Getting into the tunnels with people who are my friends only made it better too!"

"Our members are more invested in the Grand Junction community," Beeson noted. "We also really began to understand just how important a single structure can be to thousands of people, which makes students excited to



create buildings like this in the future." He also looks forward to continued involvement. "I'm really hoping that our club and future members get to see this whole thing through. I would love to help solve any of the future challenges that come up and have a hand in fleshing out the vision that we all have for the station. Regardless of whatever work needs done, we'd want to be involved as an opportunity to learn and help see this through." He continued, "All of the Civil Engineering Club's members felt as though they were contributing to building a greater community and bringing out the history of Grand Junction. If the potential that we see in the station is lived up to, then absolutely it's important and probably the best project we've had the opportunity to work on."

"It's been really special to do something meaningful for the community, because once that project is done, it'll be really beautiful. It'll probably bring back that whole part of town and gentrify it, and introduce a new 'third place,'" said Wiltse. "There's a lot of work to do, and it's good to keep people interested," he concluded. "I'm glad that

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SPONSORS

Thank you to our window sponsors who inspire us to keep going.

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We couldn't do this without your support. Thank you! If you would also like to sponsor the Friends, please visit our website:
friendsofgjuniondepot.org.

CMU STUDENTS RESTORATION CONT'D

we were able to help improve the train depot,” Branch remarked, “and hopefully when I visit again in a decade or so it will look even better!”

These individuals made history by becoming the first CMU students to help rehabilitate Grand Junction's Union Depot, continuing the legacy of others who came before them. These students volunteered their time, choosing to spend hundreds of hours across more than a dozen days furthering the restoration of the historic structure. They went above and beyond by performing the arduous and thankless jobs required for historic preservation. Their ethics and enthusiasm are inspirational and give us confidence in our community's youth. We thank these students for their unbridled dedication to this project and their professors, Drs. Sholtes and Techera, for their support. We look forward to their continued involvement in future semesters.

FRIENDS OF THE GRAND JUNCTION UNION DEPOT, INC.

PO Box 71, Grand Junction, CO 81502.

friendsofgjuniondepot.org

DONATE

Thank you for making a donation!

To donate to the Friends, please visit SaveThisDepot.org, or mail a donation. Please make checks payable to Friends of GJ Union Depot.

Additionally, you can sponsor the Friends by visiting our website:
friendsofgjuniondepot.org

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Stay in touch by following us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Youtube](#) @friendsofgjuniondepot.

You can send us an email at friends@friendsofgjuniondepot.org.

You can also contact the depot's co-owner Dustin Anzures by emailing dustin@gjuniondepot.com or calling (970) 628-1117.

MEMBERSHIP

Annual Membership is

- \$30 for Individuals, or
- \$50 for Households.

To renew your membership, please mail your dues to our mailing address, or visit our website:
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Please make checks payable to Friends of GJ Union Depot.