

STATE OF THE GJ UNION DEPOT

May 2025

A PUBLICATION OF THE FRIENDS OF GJ UNION DEPOT

Edition #3

TOP NEWS

Train Day/Open House

At The Depot - **May 10, 2025**
11am - 3pm

Annual Member's Meeting

At The Depot - **June 7, 2025**
11am - 2pm

2nd Annual Golf Tourney

At Redlands Mesa Golf Course
Saturday, September 13, 2025

From The Ticket Office

Message From The Owners
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Enterprise Zone Tax Credit

The Union Depot restoration project is an approved Enterprise Zone Contribution Project in Mesa County.
See page 3...

Commemorative Bricks

Limited number of authentic firebricks recovered from the original freight room of Grand Junction's Union Depot. available at the Depot on Train Day.
See page 8...

Friends of GJ Union Depot, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, tax exempt Colorado corporation (tax ID 92-2185927)



Celebrate National Train Day with us at GJ Union Depot!

Stray Grass will perform a free show on the trackside patio
12 PM - 2 PM

Bring a chair and enjoy the music.

The owners will unveil renderings of the future GJ Union Depot.
We hope to see you there!

Be part of the excitement

Join the GJ Union Depot Volunteer Team

Contact us on the website at

friendsofgjuniondepot.org/contact

AmeriCorps awards Union Depot federal grant

On a snowy day in November, our AmeriCorps team, officially known as Team Water 6, arrived in Grand Junction. The crew consisted of 5 women and 4 men from Iowa, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, Florida, South Carolina and Utah. After completing orientation and reviewing safety protocols, the group began the arduous task of **preparing Union Depot for restoration**.
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2024 was a remarkable year on our journey to restore Grand Junction's Union Depot. We achieved a lot of "firsts" for the project and the organization. We had our first art event at our National Train Day celebration in May. The Friends of GJ Union Depot held their first annual meeting in June which was attended by over 50 members. The inaugural charity golf tournament in September was a big hit and will again be held at Redlands Mesa golf course on Saturday September 13th, 2025. The Friends were awarded, and closed out, their first federal grant which contributed 1000's of work hours at the depot. On top of those milestones, the organization received significant support from local business owners, members, volunteers, sponsors and donors. In 2024 there were several donations and sponsorships which made a significant impact on our collective success. Please share in our gratitude for the following contributions:

Kokopelli Farms – In-Kind Housing Donation
 Linda and Jack Widstrand – 2-time window sponsors
 Colorado Mesa University, Associated Student Government – Window sponsor
 Elizabeth Liberty – Window Sponsor
 Vicki and John Swaik – Window sponsors
 Cindy and Rob von Gogh – Event sponsors
 Katherine Kylen – Monetary gift
 Chadwick McGrady – Event sponsor
 Flo Henris and Jim Witmer – Window sponsors
 Janet Reece – Window sponsor
 Alpine Lumber – In-kind materials donation
 ANB Bank – Event Sponsor
 KREX – Inkind services donation
 Grand Junction Chrysler Jeep Dodge – Event Sponsor
 Plaza Reprographics – In-kind services donation
 Downtown Development Authority – Event sponsorship
 Highline Internet – Event sponsor

And to our volunteers that have given us their most precious commodity, their time:

Keith and Sandy Williams, Dave Grossman, Matthew Brooks,
 CMU Clubs: Civil Engineering Club and Engineers Without Borders

Message From The Owners continued

We also want to thank the board members that are so giving of their time, expertise and passion for this endeavor. Their commitment to enhancing Grand Junction's well-being is an inspiration to us. As we anticipate more "firsts" in 2025, we're excited to continue building on the progress that has already been made.

Looking to 2025, we are targeting the immediate replacement of the roof. As we continue to invest labor and funds into the building's interior, it's imperative to protect these investments with a weatherproof roof. The roof was last updated in 1995. Today, there are many penetrations where water can enter unimpeded and the underlayment has met its life expectancy. Fortunately, the roof tiles are in sound condition and will be re-used. It will be a labor intensive task as the tiles will need to be cataloged as they are removed to ensure they are returned to the proper locations. The 1995 effort left several pallets of brand new roof tiles available if needed. Fortunately, Ludowici, the original tile manufacturer in Chicago, is still in operation and can reproduce any specialty pieces which may be needed. Several hundred-thousand dollars will be needed to complete the roof and this will be the theme for 2025's fundraising efforts.

Again, thank you to everyone that is making this possible. We hope to see you down at the depot very soon!



Enterprise Zone Tax Credit

The Union Depot restoration project is an approved Enterprise Zone Contribution Project in Mesa County.

This means 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.

An enterprise zone tax credit of 25% on donations amplifies the benefits of charitable giving by providing direct financial benefit to companies and individuals.

This is an ideal opportunity for businesses to make donations, aligning fiscal prudence with a commitment to community development.

AmeriCorps Story continued from page 1

Keith William's oversight, experience, reliability and overall awesome attitude made the workdays safe and productive with very high morale. Keith leads the Friends of GJ Union Depot Volunteer Team. Thank you Keith!

AmeriCorps was created through the passage of the National and Community Service Trust act. The agency intended to bring about a renewed focus on volunteerism in the United States and was charged with supporting service-learning programs for school-aged youth, higher education service programs, youth corps, and national service demonstration models. AmeriCorps consists of multiple branches; VISTAs (Volunteers in Service to America), AmeriCorps Seniors and AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps).

The Peace Corps is a federal agency created in 1961 through an executive order made by President Kennedy. The mission of the Peace Corps is to promote peace and friendship between Americans and communities-in-need around the world. In 1993, After 30 years of successful volunteerism by over 100,000 participants in over 100 countries around the world, a domestic agency was created to follow in the footsteps of the Peace Corps.

In June 2024, while attending the Rural Philanthropy Days conference in Fruita, vice chair Michael Nuttall was introduced to the availability of an AmeriCorps NCCC grant. If awarded, this particular grant would send a team of 8-10 volunteer workers between the ages of 18-26 to Grand Junction for a six-week work assignment.

The Friends of GJ Union Depot submitted a concept letter in late June, followed by a full application in August. A key requirement to receive this grant is for the project sponsor to provide housing for the work team



Through community relationships, the Friends of GJ Union Depot made contact with the Harrison Family of Kokopelli Farms in Palisade. Eli and Aaron Harrison agreed to donate their migrant farm worker housing for the months of November and December to house the work team.

An initial task was to address the condition of the utility tunnels. Ultimately, over 4,000lbs of rotted and rusted cast iron and steel pipe was removed from the tight quarters of the tunnel system. Gravel, mud and debris had to be shoveled out in 5 gallon buckets and hauled hundreds of feet to the tunnel openings for disposal. The tunnels were then swept, power washed and had lights installed for safer future access.



The AmeriCorps Story

Equipped with hammer drills, the team removed failing plaster throughout the ticket office, the sitting room, restrooms and the service stairwell. The loading dock was meticulously disassembled and the baggage scale was removed intact. It was this task that revealed 100's of relics from years past.

As the decking was pried apart, each board's removal revealed a trove of items that had either fallen between the cracks or had been thrown under the dock for disposal. Bag tags, coins, keys, newspapers, soda and alcohol bottles, unmailed letters, ticket stubs, candy wrappers and much more was discovered as 6' inches of dust and debris was carefully sifted to find all mementos left behind.



The two attics were cleaned of pigeon droppings and skeletons, expired insulation was removed, decking and lights were installed for future usability.

The utmost care was taken as over 40 of the original windows were stripped of paint and rotted trim. Pulleys, window weights, latches and handles were carefully removed, labeled and stored. Glass was methodically removed and sash frames were sanded and made ready for epoxy filler, priming and painting.



Many other tasks were completed over the project period and in all, the team contributed over 2,100 work hours and removed over 20 tons of debris from the property with all areas now prepped for future phases.



AmeriCorps Story continued from page 5

In addition to contributing their 40 work hours each week at the Depot, Water 6 also gave presentations to students from R-5 and Fruita Monument High Schools. In their downtime they contributed over 200 hours of volunteerism at organizations such as Mesa County Behavioral Health, the Food Bank and Roice-Hurst humane society.

As sponsors, we tasked ourselves with creating learning opportunities, outdoor excursions and community connections for Water 6 while they were here with us in Grand Junction. Every Friday afternoon a guest speaker met with the group to talk about their career path, their industry and their professional motivations. These talks and excursions were organized, curated and guided by local Grand Junction do-gooder Dave Grossman.

We are eternally grateful for Dave's contributions in helping us invest in this special group of young adults. Over the 6 weeks, Dave arranged talks by leaders across our community. Mesa County Library Development Director Ami Schiffbauer toured the group at the Grand Ave branch, her teammate, Ike Rakiecki, also helped the team navigate the micro fiche system of the library as they compiled over 400 historic Deoot articles via the Daily Sentinel archives during their stay.

The team was invited to KAFM and was interviewed by local historian Dave Fishell on his radio show. Our vice chair, Michael Nuttall, delivered his presentation on the history of the depot and railroads in the grand Valley.

Mayor Abe Herman joined us at Union Depot to talk about his time in public office and later invited the team to a city council meeting as honorary guests. Also delivering informative presentations were Johanna van Waveren, Director of the Colorado National Monument Association and Kait Thomas, Program Manager, National Park Service.

AmeriCorps alum Dr. Greg Cope engaged the group in team building activities and shared life lessons via song with guitar accompaniment. Sonia Gutierrez of Sierra Concrete met the team and shared her inspirational and motivational story as a woman breaking down barriers in the construction industry.



AmeriCorps Story continued from page 6

The team was also able to tour Dave Grossman's woodworking shop, Confluence Woodcraft, at the Business Incubator and meet staff. From the riverfront trail to the Grand Mesa to the Bookcliffs to the National Monument, the group was treated to outdoor experiences that only a prolific guide like Dave can provide.



To all of our community contributors that made this possible, we thank you. Friday December 13th marked the team's last work day. We celebrated their success and hard work with a Pablo's Pizza party, sponsored by Dave Goe of the Downtown Development Authority. We are grateful to all the members that were able to attend the celebration. Thank you to City Manager Mike Bennett, Administrator Johnny McFarland, Council member Scott Beilfuss, Curator of History Museums of Western Colorado Vida Jaber, WCCF Development & Donor Relations Associate Jesse Redmond who also attended our farewell party to thank the team for their hard work and contributions to our community.

The AmeriCorps team loaded up their van and officially hit the road back to the regional headquarters in Denver the next morning. Their next assignment will take them to Prescott, Arizona where they will be working with the National Forest Service to rebuild trails and amenities.

A few days after their departure we received a call from Ka Vang, the Regional Director for AmeriCorps in Denver. She informed us that the Friends of GJ Union Depot had been selected as "Sponsors of the Round". This accolade is a testament to all the care and love given by our community.

For us, the experience has given us memories we will cherish for life. Their enthusiasm for a hard day's work has earned our respect and admiration. To Elias, Khensani, Alex, Skye, Sage, Mary Kate, Elijah, Jenna and Molly, thank you!



AmeriCorps Water Team 6 preparing the Depot for renovation



Rebuilding the Depot one brick at a time

Did you know that the trackside patio of GJ Union Depot used to showcase red brick pavers arranged in a beautiful herringbone pattern? This photo, taken in March 1906, captures pallets of red bricks ready for installation just one month before the Depot's grand opening. We are dedicated to restoring this unique historical feature, allowing you to become a part of the Depot's inspiring legacy.



Sponsor a brick – 100% of the proceeds will aid in the restoration of Grand Junction's Union Depot.

1) \$200 – Engraved brick with 18 characters per line, up to 3 lines.

2) \$225 – Engraved brick plus a commemorative brick to take home or gift. You will receive an authentic firebrick recovered from the original freight room of Grand Junction's Union Depot.

3) \$50 – Standalone Commemorative Brick. You will receive an authentic firebrick recovered from the original freight room of Grand Junction's Union Depot.

Engraved bricks will be installed on the trackside patio upon project completion.

Options 1 & 2 may receive a 25% Colorado State tax credit for a qualified Enterprise Zone Contribution.

Limited number of commemorative bricks available.



Mission Statement

The Friends of the Grand Junction Union Depot is a 501c3 nonprofit. We support the preservation and rehabilitation of Grand Junction's historic Union Depot, built in 1906.

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Friends of The Grand Junction Depot
PO Box 71, Grand Junction, CO 81502

Thank you for joining the effort to restore and revitalize The Grand Junction Union Depot.