



July 20, 2010

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. – The Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad have pledged \$20,000 to the Lobato Trestle Fund, earmarked to repair the trestle damaged by fire last month.

“The leadership of Friends felt that this was the highest and best near-term use of these funds, in furtherance of the operation and preservation of this historic line,” said Tim Tennant, Executive Director of the Friends of the C&TS. “Our priority of projects will be rearranged to accommodate this special bequest.”

The trestle is an iron-framed structure with a wooden roadbed. Built in 1883, it was damaged by a fire of unknown origin on June 23rd. Initial engineering assessments raise the possibility the entire trestle may have to be replaced, but additional tests and analysis are still going on. The railroad has insurance covering the trestle, with a \$50,000 deductible and a maximum coverage of \$360,000. Should the worst case option of replacing the entire trestle become necessary, the cost will likely be several times what the maximum insurance coverage is.

The Friends contribution is being drawn from its “Another Century of Narrow Gauge Steam II Fund,” endowed with more than \$1 million in cash and pledges. Friends of the C&TS number its membership at more than 2,100, hailing from countries all around the world. Work crews of Friends volunteer labor every summer in Chama, NM and Antonito, CO, rebuilding and refurbishing the historic assets of the railroad.

“For our members, working to assist the railroad is a labor of love,” Tennant said. “Our people pay all their own travel, lodging and sustenance expenses while working on Friends projects.”

In the meantime, railroad operations are continuing uninterrupted, but with Chama Depot passengers taking a luxury motor coach trip to Cumbres Station and return, bypassing the damaged trestle.

“The trip, the scenery and the sense of living history are just as glorious as ever,” Tennant noted. “And, while this is the most serious mishap to the line in its 40-year history as an excursion line, it is far from being the worst in its almost 120 years of snaking up and over the San Juan Mountains between Chama and Antonito.”

Tennant noted that persons interested in contributing to the trestle restoration fund could send their tax-deductible donations to; Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, Lobato Trestle Fund, 6005 Osuna Road, NE, Albuquerque, NM 87109.

The railroad is marking 40 years since its purchase by the states of New Mexico and Colorado, following abandonment of the line by its builder, the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad. Special events are planned for next month in recognition of the anniversary of the 64-mile line. Information on those events, tickets and schedules to ride the train may be obtained by calling 888-CUMBRES or visit [www.cumbrestoltec.com](http://www.cumbrestoltec.com).