

Denver council hails Colorado State Fair: A proclamation recognizes the 135th year of the Fair and its inaugural train run.

Byline: Charles Ashby

Aug. 21--DENVER -- The City Council here marked another tie between the Mile High City and Pueblo on Monday, when all 13 council members approved a proclamation honoring the 135th Colorado State Fair and the inaugural run of the Colorado State Fair Express train.

The 11-day Fair starts Friday.

"There are a lot of people in Denver who have Pueblo roots," said Denver City Councilman Rick Garcia, a former Pueblo resident. "It's not often we get to point out the close ties between Pueblo and Denver . . . and this train is another initiative in keeping the two cities connected."

With help from Democratic U.S. Rep. John Salazar, Denver attorney and Pueblo native Frances Koncilja led the way to making it a reality.

Koncilja led a handful of Pueblo residents and Fair officials to the Council's chambers to accept the proclamation.

The train, which leaves on its first trip south from Denver's Union Station on Saturday, will be powered by a historic Union Pacific steam locomotive pulling eight vintage cars, including a souvenir car, a dance car and a diner.

Tickets range in price from \$385 to \$435.

The proclamation ceremony, which was held in the Denver City and County Building, was carried live on Denver community television.

The proclamation also recognized the Denver Rustlers' continuing support of the Junior Livestock Sale.

Pueblo residents and train organizers who attended the event also took the opportunity to promote the Fair, encouraging the Denver council and anyone else listening to visit it.

"The State Fair is an opportunity to showcase not only agriculture, but also our young people throughout the state," Colorado Agriculture Commissioner John Stulp told the Council. "We appreciate the support of Denver. There's opportunity at the Fair for all of us no matter our age."

"It's a fabulous show, it's a fun show and it's an educational show," Pueblo Chieftain Publisher Bob Rawlings told the Council. "This train has been the dream of (Pueblo) county leaders for many years."

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