

INTERESTING FACTS

How and when was Durango founded?

Durango was founded by the Denver & Rio Grande Railway in 1879. The railroad arrived in Durango on August 5, 1881, and construction on the line to Silverton began in the fall of the same year. By July of 1882 (amazingly only nine months after construction began), the tracks to Silverton were completed and the train began hauling both freight and passengers.

How long has the train been taking passengers on leisure rides?

Those involved with the train were always aware of the spectacular experience a ride presented, and they promoted scenic rides from the train's inception. The train was officially promoted as a scenic tour beginning in July of 1882. It was promoted in 1951 solely as a passenger train, and not as a freight train.

How many passengers does the D&SNGRR carry per year?

In 2017, 156,910 passengers rode the D&SNGRR's regular excursion trains, and an additional 40,000 guests rode special event trains.

Has the D&SNGRR "starred" in any films?

Absolutely! The D&SNGRR has appeared in *Colorado Territory* (1949), *Ticket to Tomahawk* (1950), *Denver and Rio Grande* (1952), *Viva Zapata* (1952), *Three Young Texans* (1954), *Run for Cover* (1955), *Maverick Queen* (1956), *Around the World in 80 Days* (1956), *Night Passage* (1957), *How the West Was Won* (1963), *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969), *Support Your Local Gunfighter* (1970), *The Tracker* (1987), *Durango Kid* (1999), *The Claim* (2000), *The Prestige* (2006), and *Godless* miniseries (2017).

How narrow is the narrow gauge?

Narrow gauge rails are three feet (36 inches) apart, while standard gauge rails are four feet, eight and one half inches (56½ inches) apart.

Why is narrow gauge used?

Actually, General Palmer implemented narrow gauge and narrow passenger cars because he wanted to prevent men and women from being able to sleep in the same bed on the train (the narrow passenger cars only have room for single sleeper bunks on each side). These cars are also less expensive and easier to bring through the rough mountain terrain, so they became popular. The rails were also less expensive to install (it's easier to blast out a narrower track on the side of a mountain) and can make sharper curves around mountains.

What is the total value of gold and silver the D&SNGRR has carried?

Over its 137-year-old history, the D&SNGRR has transported over \$300 million in precious metals.

How much coal and water does the train need for one roundtrip?

The train needs six tons of coal and 10,000 gallons of water for a roundtrip.

How fast does the train go?

18 mph is top speed, certainly not average speed as the highline is done at 5 mph.

How many miles does the train accumulate after one day?

The train travels 45 miles to Silverton, making a total of 95-100 miles in one day.

Is mileage recorded?

Unlike automobiles, locomotives do not have odometers, so it is up to the conductor to keep track of mileage. Locomotive and train mileage is recorded monthly and submitted to the S/B Federal Railroad Administration. Passenger miles are also submitted monthly. The number of passengers on that roundtrip multiplies the daily mileage (approximately 90 miles) for the total miles traveled.

How many employees does it take to run the train?

The train requires five employees plus concession and private car attendants. Two employees work in the locomotive cab (the engineer and fireman), and two brakemen and one conductor work throughout the entire train.

How does one become a conductor?

How does one become an engineer?

Both positions require special exams and on-the-job training. To become a conductor, one must first become a brakeman and work under the conductor. It typically takes more than four years to become an engineer. One begins as a brakeman, then progresses to working in the cab alongside the engineer as a fireman. Then, one must study mechanical instruction and take student trips.

What is the oldest part of the train?

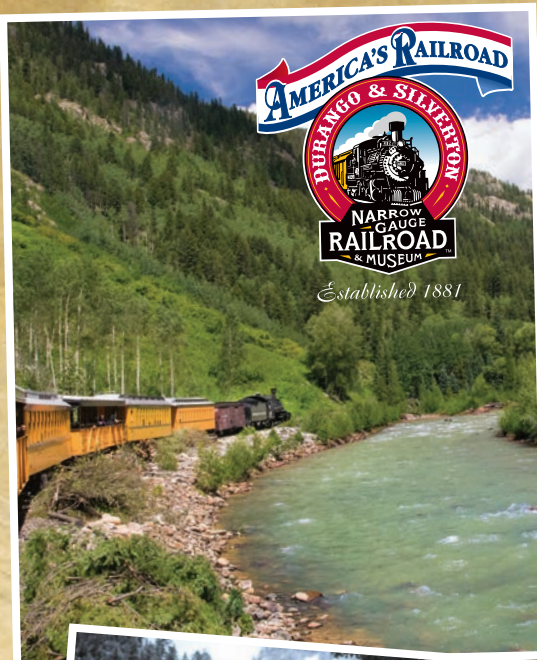
Concession Car #212 was built in 1879.

What is the oldest D&SNGRR locomotive?

No. 42 was built in 1887 and is on display in the museum. The locomotives used daily were built between 1923 and 1925.

Who owns the D&SNGRR?

American Heritage Railways purchased the D&SNGRR in the summer of 1998 under the leadership of Chairman Allen C. Harper and President Carol Harper.



The D&SNGRR was named the

BEST TRAIN EXPERIENCE

by *Sunset Magazine* in 2016, the #1 North American Train Trip by *National Geographic Traveler* in 2010, and one of the World's Top Ten Train Rides by the Society of American Travel Writers in 2009. The railroad is designated as a National Historic Landmark by the National Park Service and is also an American Society of Civil Engineering Landmark.