



Golden Landmarks Association
Preserving Our Past, Protecting Our Future

Living Landmark Award 2012

Colorado Railroad Museum

The Colorado Railroad Museum was formed to highlight the interesting and colorful history of Colorado railroading that is unique in the western United States. Railroads have been highly instrumental, not only in shaping Colorado's history, but also in setting the state's course through the decades by encouraging Colorado's economy, migration, history and culture to flourish.

In 1949, the Museum's co-founder, Robert W. Richardson, began acquiring locomotives, cars, artifacts and business records from Colorado's historic narrow gauge railroads, which were then being rapidly abandoned. Ten years later in 1959, he and Cornelius W. Hauck opened the Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden, Colorado. In 1966, they established the Colorado Railroad Historical Foundation, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation to own and operate the Museum. Governed by a volunteer board of trustees, the museum continued to grow with Richardson as its executive director until his retirement in 1992.

Since then, the Museum has developed into the largest repository for the railroad history of Colorado and the adjacent Rocky Mountain area. It now welcomes nearly 100,000 annual visitors. With the exception of Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, the Museum is open daily throughout the year.

In the late 1990s, a \$1.7 million fund-raising effort resulted in construction of two buildings: 1) a climate-controlled library building to house its collection of books, photographs and corporate records and 2) an authentically designed roundhouse and turntable to restore and maintain the museum's historic equipment. Both facilities are open to the public.

The museum offers train rides every weekend throughout the year, and for several years has hosted the popular Thomas the Tank Engine event to promote interest in railroading to a new generation.

The Colorado Railroad Museum has been recognized by the Smithsonian Institution, American Association of State and Local History and Colorado Historical Society for its work in preserving the railroad history of the Rocky Mountain West.

Since 1993, the Colorado Railroad Museum has been ranked among the Top 25 Denver area historical and cultural attractions by the Denver Business Journal. Since 2007 the Denver Convention and Visitors Bureau has named the Museum among the top 10 paid attractions in Denver based on the annual Longwoods Study. In 2011, the Museum was designated as a Jefferson County Landmark by the Jefferson County Historical Commission.