

FIRST DRAFT

Transportation troublesome on Green, Colorado rivers

The excitement was palpable in newspaper articles written when the steamboat Undine launched at Green River, Utah, in November 1901. "The new water transportation company expects to handle everything in the way of freight down the river and up to the La Salle country (Moab)," the Emory County Progress reported on Nov. 21, 1901. "As well as hauling back to Green River Station all minerals, oils, fruit, etc., that may be produced along the route."



BOB SILBERNAGEL

The Undine would go down the Green River to its confluence with the Colorado, then up the Colorado to Moab, Utah, more than 180 river miles. Its launching promised new economic connections for communities along the rivers.

More steamboats would be put in service the following season, the newspaper reported, and the manager of the company expected that within a few years it would have "a most lucrative patronage." "A fleet of steamers with ore and fruit barges in tow will be a novel sight in Utah," the paper optimistically added.

But that fleet never materialized. The Undine made one successful trip to Moab and back. On her second trip in 1902, she capsized just below Moab. The captain and two crewmen were lucky to survive.

The Denver-based entrepreneurs behind the Undine were not the first people to see the Green and Colorado rivers as potential transportation highways.

But, unlike the rivers of the eastern United States, the Colorado River and its tributaries would never lend themselves to commercial transportation.

The first documented attempt to boat the Green River occurred in 1825. William Ashley and trappers with his Rocky Mountain Fur Co. floated the upper part of the Green in bull boats — round saucers of buffalo hide stretched over willow frames that were nearly impossible to steer.

Despite encountering several of the river's famous rapids, such as the Gates of Lodore, Ashley and his men succeeded in floating and portaging from Flaming Gorge on the Utah-Wyoming line to Split Mountain near present-day Jensen, Utah.

Long before Europeans arrived, it's likely some native people attempted to travel parts of the Green and Colorado rivers.

However, when Americans began to consider boating the rivers, natives sought to dissuade them.

In 1849, William Manly abandoned the overland trail to the California gold fields believing he could float the Green and Colorado rivers to



Steamboat Undine near Moab, Utah, 1902.

Photos courtesy of Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah

the Pacific. With a half-dozen men, he retraced much of Ashley's route in poorly navigable dugout canoes. Near today's Jensen, Utah, he met Ute chief, Walkara.

The Ute leader used sign language to convince Manly that continuing downstream was a mistake.

"He then made signs of death to show us that it was a fatal place," Manly said.

He and his men heeded Walkara's advice, acquired horses from him and headed overland to the Salt Lake Valley, then to California.

Maj. John Wesley Powell received similar warnings from Utes as he and his crew prepared to enter the first treacherous canyons of the Green River in the spring of 1869.

"The Indians say, 'Water heap catch 'em,' " Powell wrote in his journal of the trip.

But Powell and his men ignored the warnings and eventually made it down the rivers — and through the Grand Canyon — despite losing one boat and having three members of the expedition walk out, only to be killed by Indians.

Even before Powell's trip, people were attempting to travel up the Colorado River from its mouth in the Gulf of California.

In 1856, the Explorer, a U.S. Army sternwheeler under the command of Lt. Joseph Ives, headed upriver to Fort Yuma and beyond.

Sixty-four days later, it arrived at the head of the canyon where Hoover Dam now sits. After an unsuccessful attempt to proceed up the canyon, Ives and his crew turned back.

There were other unsuccessful attempts to traverse the river, both upstream and downstream. Two small steamboats preceded the Undine in the 1890s in trying to reach Moab. Neither made it all the way down and back.

In 1889 and 1890, Robert



The steamboat Undine, after striking a submerged boulder in 1901.

Brewster Stanton made a series of trips on the Green and Colorado rivers as he and his team surveyed a possible railroad line to the Pacific through the river canyons.

But investors balked at the railroad idea.

A decade later, Stanton was a principal in a company that brought a 115-foot gold dredge to the Colorado River in Glen Canyon. The dredge was hauled in pieces by rail and wagon to Hite Crossing on the Colorado River, where it was reassembled.

But the plan was not an economic success, and a year later, the dredge was abandoned.

The sections of the Green and Colorado rivers between the towns of Green River and Moab is not the most dangerous water.

In modern times, motorized pleasure boats have made that run on Memorial Day weekend.

But the water in these sections was treacherous enough for the Undine.

The boat capsized while crew members were attempting to haul the boat by rope around a small rapid just downstream

from Moab, the Salt Lake Telegram reported on May 23, 1902.

The captain was thrown into the water and was carried a mile and a half downstream before he reached shore.

His crewmen climbed on top of the overturned boat, which floated upside down four miles before washing up on a gravel bar in the river.

Nearly all of the steamboat's machinery was lost and the hull was severely damaged, the Telegram reported.

"This will probably end the proposed (steamboat) line," the paper correctly forecast.

Information for this article came from: The Library of Congress "Chronicling America" historic newspapers website; "The Rapids and the Roar," by Gaylord Staveley; "Death Valley in '49," by William Lewis Manly; the John Wesley Powell River History Museum in Green River, Utah; and Powell's book, "The Exploration of the Colorado River and its Canyons."

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Aging czar needed for 'silver tsunami,' state report says

By CHARLES ASHBY
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Colorado government has a "czar" for water, energy and many other critical issues, but not one for aging.

Such a person is needed to help coordinate all state programs that deal with the elderly if Colorado is to be prepared for the so-called "silver tsunami" that is expected to hit the state in the next 20 years.

The idea for a statewide guru on aging issues was only one of several recommendations to come out of the first report from the Strategic Action Planning Group, a 23-member group created by the Colorado Legislature last year to examine aging issues and services to the elderly.

The group identified about 100 different programs in several state agencies that impact the elderly.

"This is the first really thorough work that's been done on this issue," said Dave Roman, director of the Northwest Colorado Area Agency on Aging, who served in the group. "The whole plan is geared for a bottom-up process. We're not directing that the state initiate new programs. The biggest thing that we came away with is we have a lack of coordination. If that can be achieved, there can be greater efficiency and effectiveness."

Like the nation as a whole, Colorado has seen a dramatic increase in the number of residents age 50 and older.

According to U.S. Census figures, the state had more than 818,000 people age 60 and older in 2010, which was a 46 percent jump from the year 2000.

State demographers predict

that figure to increase by about half a million people by 2030, a 68 percent jump from current levels, according to the report.

To be ready, the planning group is suggesting several things beyond the creation of a permanent office or high-level position in the governor's office. They include:

- Develop a comprehensive accounting of all state expenditures related to aging to help policymakers plan and prioritize statewide efforts.

- With those programs, commit to protect the elderly from fraud, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

- Support caregivers who work to assist the elderly.

- Help Coloradans find ways to better save for retirement.

- Support local government efforts to provide such services as transportation and building designs.

While Roman said he and the group are aware that the state has a tight budget and is unlikely to find more money to put toward programs for the elderly, he said the panel did discuss finding a way to repurpose the state's homestead exemption to help only those who really need that property tax break, freeing state money to pay for other programs.

That exemption continually increases each year as more people qualify for it — going to people 65 and older who have been in their homes for at least 10 years.

Next year, it's expected to be up to \$140 million, but could reach upward of \$400 million by 2030.

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Merry Christmas!
Thank you to all my wonderful clients & friends who continue to bring joy into my life! If I can help with your real estate needs in 2017, please contact me!
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Fort Collins man dead after being hit by train

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FORT COLLINS — A Fort Collins man is dead after being hit by a train.

Police in Fort Collins say they were notified of a pedestrian hit by a train early Sunday morning.

They found a 42-year-old

man dead at the scene, near the Spring Creek Train Station on the west side of Creekside Park.

Authorities aren't identifying the man or specifying how he

died until his family is notified.

Police are asking anyone with information about the incident who hasn't already given a statement to contact them.

BLOTTER

COMPILED BY SENTINEL STAFF

Liquor store burglary

Crime Stoppers of Mesa County is seeking information about a burglary at Peachwood Liquors in Palisade.

Sometime after midnight on Oct. 20, unknown subjects entered the store at 309 W. Eighth St. and stole cash and merchandise valued at more than \$500.

Anyone with information about the iden-

tity of the suspects can contact Crime Stoppers at 241-7867 or at www.241STOP.com.

Tips are anonymous, and anyone who provides information that leads to an arrest can receive a cash reward of up to \$1000.

According to the Mesa County Sheriff's Office:

- Jason Archuleta, 36, was arrested on Friday in the 400 block of Forelle Street on suspicion of possession of a schedule I/II

drug and resisting arrest.

- An assault was reported in the 500 block of Amy's Way on Friday.

- Elizabeth Olson, 24, of Grand Junction was arrested in the 3200 block of White Avenue on Saturday on suspicion of criminal mischief and domestic violence.

- Deputies responded to reports of a suspicious incident in the 43000 block of Colorado Highway 141.

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