



COLORADO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Letter from Ed Nichols
To the Clear Creek Courant
06/12/07

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to the Clear Creek County community. My name is Ed Nichols, and as of June 1, I became the new Colorado Historical Society President and CEO.

Residents of Clear Creek County clearly have a deep appreciation for Colorado history, as they have chosen to live in an area where some of Colorado's most important economic foundations—mining, railroading and tourism—were built. I have had the pleasure of acquainting myself with the Georgetown community through my support of the Hotel de Paris, assisting the Colorado Department of Wildlife with local Bighorn Sheep counts, and numerous other opportunities in the area. So I am familiar with the history, the historic figures, and the geography of the region.

As a fourth generation Coloradoan, I also share this passion for history. My family arrived here in the 1870s and founded the Cliff House Hotel in Manitou Springs, which remained in our family for three generations. After graduating high school in Colorado Springs, I went to college in the east. I began working for IBM and found myself constantly moving around the country with my wife and children. I decided to leave IBM so I could return with my family to Colorado and once again call it home. Here, I have been fortunate to become involved with a variety of community organizations, including the Central City Opera House, where I have served for 10 years on its board.

In the last decade, I have become increasingly more aware of the future of Colorado's history. That may sound like a paradox, but to me, Colorado's history belongs to everyone—whether you and your family have been here 10 years or 100 years. And so I am thrilled to head the Colorado Historical Society, an organization which has a distinct mission to share the stories of Colorado's past with the state's residents and visitors in a meaningful and memorable way.

The Colorado Historical Society is fortunate to administer the State Historical Fund, which re-invests gaming tax revenues from gambling districts such as Central City and Black Hawk into communities across the state in the form of grants for historic preservation.

From 1993 to 2006, projects in Georgetown have received approximately 60 grants totaling more than \$3.4 million. These grants have helped preserve structures like the Alpine Hose No. 2, where the hose house and the 60-foot bell tower were in danger of

collapsing, and the old Ohio Bakery/Georgetown Community and Visitor Information Center, which was slated for demolition. SHF also had a role in restoring tourism attractions like the Hamill House Museum and the Hotel de Paris. Grants have also been awarded in Idaho Springs, Empire and Silver Plume. I truly believe that working to preserve and share the past helps our communities thrive for the future.

The Colorado Historical Society has 12 museums and historic sites of its own throughout the state that also help us tell Colorado's stories. Perhaps one of the most memorable of all of them is the wonderful Georgetown Loop Railroad®. Back in 1959, the Colorado Historical Society understood how important this story was when it founded the Georgetown Loop Historic Mining & Railroad Park®. This importance increased manifold once a running steam train and mine tour proved to be a major attraction for tourists and residents alike.

Over the last 33 years, the Colorado Historical Society has invested approximately \$8 million into the Georgetown Loop site, from grounds and building improvements to rolling stock acquisition and restoration, which includes \$2 million in State Historical Fund monies since 1993.

We are very proud and committed to the success of the Georgetown Loop Railroad® and the park. By extension, I believe this shows how this organization is vested in the Clear Creek communities. I also believe we all depend on one another for our successes, and that this is not just a railroad, but an opportunity for visitors to be drawn to experience the entire county and all it offers. To accomplish this, we have to work together.

I realize that the citizens and merchants of Georgetown and Silver Plume have had to make adjustments to coincide with the change in operating vendors for the railroad. As we all know, any successful venture takes time and cooperation to perfect. As I get more acquainted with the needs of the Georgetown Loop Railroad®, I will make sure that improvements continue forward.

As a way to thank the community for its continued support, the Colorado Historical Society and Railstar Corp. invite all Clear Creek County residents and business owners to come join us for a special train ride on Thursday, June 14. A reservation is not necessary, just come and enjoy. The train leaves the Silver Plume Depot at 6 p.m. I am looking forward to this summer and beyond at the Georgetown Loop Historic Mining & Railroad Park®.

Ed Nichols
President & CEO
Colorado Historical Society