



# Heber Valley Historic Railroad Authority

## Overview

### **OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH AND GENERAL COUNSEL**

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Retirement and Independent Entities Committee

August 14, 2020



# Warning: Lessons of History Ahead





# Rio Grande Western Railroad

**Train Service through Provo Canyon between Heber City and Provo was inaugurated in October 1899 by the Rio Grande Western Railroad (later Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad)**





# Rio Grande Western Railroad





# Heber Creeper

Maximum allowable speed was 20mph, so while no one is certain when it started, the Heber Creeper nickname started early and stuck.





**1920s**

**Automobiles started taking over and soon there was only one round trip per day between Heber City and Provo**





# 1940s

**By 1942, Deer Creek Dam and Reservoir was completed and, as a result, the railway line was realigned.**





# 1960s

By mid-1960s Rio Grande freight traffic had nearly disappeared

- Train ran to Heber City only once per week in 1967
- Service ended in 1968
- UDOT purchased tracks to relocate US-189, but...

**PROVO CANYON BRANCH.**

.....	Mls.	STATIONS.	.....
.....	0	.....Provo.....	.....
.....	1.1	.....Smoot.....	.....
.....	5.8	.....Hale.....	.....
<b>Freight</b>	9.3	.....Nunn's.....	<b>Freight</b>
<b>Service</b>	10.6	.....Upper Falls.....	<b>Service</b>
<b>only.</b>	11.8	.....Vivian Park.....	<b>only.</b>
.....	17.2	.....Wallsburg.....	.....
.....	24.2	.....Charleston.....	.....
.....	27.9	.....Heber.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....



# Wasatch Mountain Railway

In 1970, Lowe Ashton and other Heber City businessmen established a new tourist railroad to run steam-train tours from Heber City to Bridal Veil Falls

- Officially, Wasatch Mountain Railway, but still commonly known as the Heber Creeper
- Ran from 1971-1990





# The Legislature (almost) to the Rescue

- In 1990, there was almost a deal in place via legislative appropriation for UDOT to buy the Heber Creeper and related assets for approximately \$1.6MM
- Deal fell through and most of the locomotives and passenger cars were sold off to the Nevada State Railroad Museum





# The Legislature to the Rescue

**In 1992, the Utah State Legislature statutorily created the Heber Valley Historic Railroad Authority and appropriated \$1MM to buy locomotives and cars and to refurbish tracks**

- (Creating statute was repealed in 2009 but reenacted in 2010)



# Heber Valley Historic Railroad

The newly christened Heber Valley Historic Railroad made its debut run on May 8, 1993



James Belmont



# Heber Valley Historic Railroad

- Tracks were rebuilt between Heber City and Vivian Park, a new depot was built, and new locomotives, passenger coaches, and freight cars were obtained and restored





# Heber Valley Historic Railroad

Since inception, the Heber Valley Historic Railroad Authority has received the following amounts in Legislative appropriations:

- 1992 – \$1MM
- 2001 – \$260K
- 2014 – \$250K
- 2019 – \$315K





# Committee Requirements

- **To Privatize an Independent Entity (63E-1-403)**
  - Independent Entity must submit request to Legislature
  - Independent Entity is audited by state auditor within one-year prior to proposed effective repeal date
  - Address the value of any interests the state holds in the independent entity and whether the state should receive compensation for those interests as part of privatization
  - Relationship between state and an independent entity may not be terminated except by repeal of the authorizing statute
  - Various prohibitions (with criminal penalties) on interested parties or entities receiving benefits or assets of the independent entity or its successor

HEBER VALLE



JOHN L. MARTINEZ

1900



**OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH AND GENERAL COUNSEL**

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Utah State Capitol Complex | W210 House Building | P.O. Box 145210 | Salt Lake City, Utah 84114 - 5210 | O: (801) 538-1032 | F: (801) 538-1712