

Trains proposed for I-25 & I-70

By The Associated Press
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A newly created Rocky Mountain Rail Authority has an aggressive plan to seek statewide voter approval for rail service along Interstate 25 from Wyoming to New Mexico, and along Interstate 70 with branch service to all ski resorts along that corridor.

The authority will use a grant to study the feasibility of such a system, including finding out where existing rail lines can be used, where new ones are needed, and how much it will cost, authority President Bob Briggs said.

"We can become the one that sets the standard for the rest of the nation to follow," Briggs said.

Briggs plans to have the study completed by the time he seeks voter approval in 2008. If approved, plans are to have service along I-25 completed by 2016, and I-70 two years later.

Briggs, a former Regional Transportation District board member, presented his idea to the Roaring Fork Transportation Authority's board of directors last week.

With a Denver committee exploring a possible bid for the 2018 Winter Olympics, Briggs hoped federal funds could be acquired if the area lands the games. He pointed out how the federal government demonstrated in Utah during Winter Olympics and Los Angeles during Summer Olympics that it will help construct rail systems.

"It's not our goal to reinvent," Briggs said. "It's our goal to make it happen." Board members Thursday contributed \$5,000 to join the effort.

Briggs is seeking support from all jurisdictions that would be affected by the rail service, including big cities such as Denver and Aurora to small towns like Gypsum and Basalt.

--- On the Net: Rocky Mountain Rail Authority: <http://www.rangerxpress.com>.

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