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Aug 10, 2008 6:47 pm US/Mountain

Group Offers Fresh High-Speed Train Proposal



Reporting **Howard Nathan**

DENVER (CBS4) — Another proposal to transport travelers to the mountains by train is on the table. A group of local government leaders will announce a plan to add high-speed rails to Colorado on Tuesday.

The idea is to gain federal approval for a high-speed rail corridor running along Interstate 25 from New Mexico to Wyoming and from the Front Range to Grand Junction along I-70. The train would have stops at Denver's Union Station and Denver International Airport among many others.

The proposal goes beyond the monorail-to-the-mountains concept envisioned five years ago.

Harry Dale, chairman of the Rocky Mountain Rail Authority, says for one year his group will be looking into what kinds of different trains Colorado needs.

"We're going to provide a fresh look, an objective look," Dale said. "In areas that are more physically constrained, we're looking at an elevated system; we might look at magnetic levitation vehicles."

Exactly where tracks are laid is critical as well. One problem area is along I-70 is between Floyd Hill and Idaho Springs because of the cost.

"That will be in my estimation a billion dollar project just by itself," Dale said.

Many residents said they would really welcome the idea of a high-speed train along I-25 from New Mexico to Wyoming.

"If I was travelling from Denver to Grand Junction, I would want to be on an express train, not a locals-only train," Fred Fulkerson of Keystone said.

For Dale, it's a matter of Colorado's economic survival.

"The stress, the white-knuckle driving that most people experience, that's not really a generally good thing to have your visitors experience when they're coming here to ski," Dale said.

If high-speed rail comes to Colorado, it might not be fully completed for another 30 years, but Dale hopes a high-speed train can be running somewhere in the state in about 10 years.

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"If I was travelling from Denver to Grand Junction, I would want to be on an express train, not a locals-only train."



An example of a magnetic, high-speed train (File) AP

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