# The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad

*Success Story*

## Historic Railroad Nonprofit Picks up Steam with AccuFund

FRIENDS OF THE CUMBRES AND TOLTEC SCENIC RAILROAD, INC., ALBUQUERQUE, NM—Built in 1880, the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad is the finest and most spectacular example of steam era, narrow gauge mountain railroading in North America. It is located in a little-known corner of the southern Rocky Mountains along the border between Chama, New Mexico and Antonito, Colorado.

Today, its steam locomotives travel 64 miles of what was once the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railway, carrying visitors over high trestles, through tunnels, and along narrow shelves above yawning gorges.

The Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, Inc. (FCTSRR) is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization. Established in 1980 and incorporated in 1989, FCTSRR is an organization of 2500 members/donors from across the United States and several countries overseas. FCTSRR and Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad Commission work together to preserve and interpret the railroad and support its operation for the people of Colorado and New Mexico who own it, and the tens of thousands of visitors and future generations.

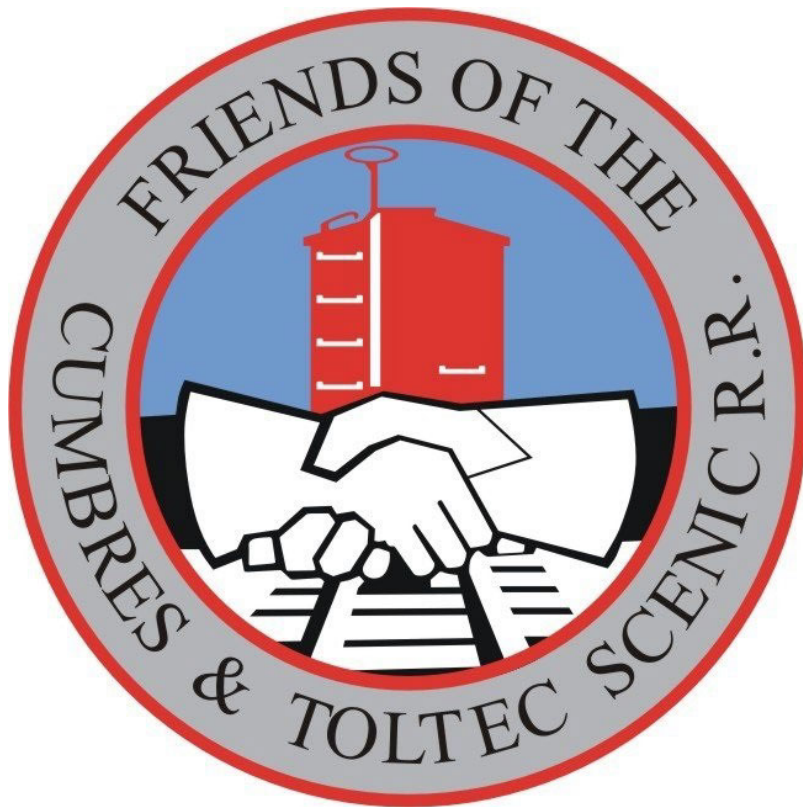### Existing Software Left Funding Allocation Needs Unmet

To manage its fund accounting, fundraising and constituent relationship management, FCTSRR was using a well-known business accounting software package, however they needed a more robust solution.

FCTSRR tried to restructure their current accounting software to accommodate their fund allocation needs, but they could see that the process would only become more complex in the future. In additional to fulfilling their allocation needs, they wanted a system that was user friendly and would help streamline their reporting capabilities.

"We really needed a solution that specifically handled fund accounting," explained Katharina Root, bookkeeper for the Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, Inc. "We had income and expenses that belonged in more than one 'class' in the software. A member/donor would request that a specific amount go to a specific project, so we had started using the classes in the system for our major projects. However, because we had multiple funds supporting one project in addition to capital campaigns, the process became very complex. We needed a system that would recognize that one or multiple funds could support one or multiple projects."

Fundraising and CRM challenges surfaced with program tracking, membership reporting and

the overall need to track data. FCTSRR wanted to be able to track and record split gifts. They wanted their CRM system to record what people were buying at what time and also have the ability to provide membership reporting quickly and easily. By centralizing data about donors and members, their goal was to be able to view a person's record in one place and know all the ways they had contributed to their organization.



## No Other Solution Could Compare to AccuFund

After reviewing several accounting solutions, the Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, Inc. chose and implemented the AccuFund Accounting Suite in 2012.

They liked the software system's advanced capabilities and competitive price point, as well as AccuFund's responsive customer service. "None of the other accounting packages I looked at was robust enough to handle the membership activities we need to track," said Root.

Because the organization had only two data entry personnel, Root was looking for a solution that not only fit their expanding membership initiatives, but was also user friendly and efficient.

Shortly after implementing the AccuFund Accounting Suite, FCTSRR turned to implementing Salesforce and customized the core components of the CRM solution to meet their unique needs.

## AccuFund Accounting Suite

With AccuFund, Root has gained the ability to quickly find and sort the information she needs to create her reports; allowing the organization to realize significant cost and time savings.

Root requires a monthly fund accounting report that would take her a full day to produce with the organization's previous accounting system. The report details the amount of money received and spent in each fund, but because different 'classes' or 'funds' crossed over into various projects, the funds needed to be identified. Root would have to move the information to an Excel spreadsheet to work on it— a very complicated process. With AccuFund, Root can run the report on-demand and have a completed result within a matter of seconds.

> "In the 16 years I've been here, it was the easiest audit we've ever gone through and I attribute that to AccuFund,"
> ~ Katharina Root, bookkeeper Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, Inc.

"I can also run the report with a much higher level of confidence that the information is accurate," added Root. "That report by itself is worth the price of the product." FCTSRR has 150 to 200 projects at any given time, and the active projects change from year to year. AccuFund enables the organization to easily track its expenditures by project, and run a report for each that shows the project committee how much they've spent and which funds are available.

"That is another valuable, time-saving report," said Root. "The ability to set up a separate budget just for the projects committee and then run reports based on their budget versus actual spent, including encumbrances, allows us to be more on top of our expenditures. I can get expenditures posted and reports run so the projects committee can see how much they've spent on individual projects. That's a huge benefit."

FCTSRR's recent annual audit was the most efficient audit the organization has ever had. "In the 16 years I've been here, it was the easiest audit we've ever gone through and I attribute that to AccuFund," said Root. Root also appreciates that the organization's Net Assets are continually balanced with AccuFund. That is typically done through Adjusting Journal Entries at the end of each period in other off-the-shelf accounting software.

## Fundraising CRM

FCTSRR customized their Salesforce solution for donor reporting, donation and merchandise sales, credit card processing, correspondence tracking, campaign involvement and more. Using the AccuFund Connector, they embraced a centralized solution, utilizing the insight and accuracy of the system to guide the organization forward.

## Program Allocation (Tracking)

Salesforce capabilities enable Toltec to split gift entries. When receiving a donation for multiple programs, the data is input into a single record, but can be allotted for membership dues or specific programs according to the donor's specifications.

The benefit of allocation and tracking goes beyond the single record entry; it has also improved reporting capabilities. FCTSRR can drill down to see funding sources and pull reports from many different angles. Reconciliation reports improve work efficiency by providing checks and balances.

## Membership Reporting

FCTSRR operates on a 15 month member cycle. At any given time, they can now track their active membership on this 15 month cycle. To compliment this type of report, a customized "Renewal Dashboard" was created to break out active members and streamline the renewal process. Forecasting out their membership renewals allows FCTSRR to better manage this

process and be proactive with their communications.

Inactive member reports provide insight about members who didn't renew – including the date they were supposed to renew – and give FCTSRR the ability to target and create specific membership correspondence. Additional reporting capabilities can track gifted memberships, members who are not donors, donors who are not members, etc.

## Centralization

Centralization of donor and membership detail saves time for FCTSRR by giving them the ability to run reports, get insight into their database and focus their efforts, all from one place.

AccuFund Accounting Suite and Salesforce are seamlessly integrated, enabling each transaction entered in Salesforce to sync with the accounting system with the simple press of a button. This helps FCTSRR eliminate double entry of transactions which in turn reduces user error and data entry time.

> "The AccuFund Connector has been a life saver," said Root. "It's made a huge difference by allowing us to know whether checks are posted in the accounting system. It's very accurate and reliable and it allows me to reconcile my CRM to what I have in the bank and see that we're tracking properly."

## AccuFund Is More than Just Software—It's a Real Relationship

Having used the product for a few years now, Root is very pleased with where the organization is as a result of the AccuFund Accounting Suite and its integration with Salesforce. "The more that I've used the products, the more I realize how perfect they are for our organization, and I could not be happier," she said. "David Williamson, our value added reseller, has also been a tremendous resource. He's been very helpful because he knows and understands fund accounting and the software extremely well". Root also points out that she can call the Help Desk for assistance and talk to someone she has a relationship with.

"I get someone I know who knows me, as opposed to getting some random person," she explained. "Also, they are able to assist me quickly, logging on to my system while we talk about it and then troubleshoot over the phone. The kind of responsiveness we get from David and the Help Desk team is huge in the world that we live in today. Being able to have that kind of customer service is a real benefit."

## Let's Get Started

AccuFund supports your mission with a full suite of financial management applications for nonprofit and government organizations. To learn more and arrange a demo, contact AccuFund at 877-872-2228 or sales@accufund.com or visit www.accufund.com.

AccuFund integrates with Salesforce for Nonprofits to meet the unique needs of an organization; improving development, management and fundraising activities.

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