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Office of the State Engineer Employees Reunite and Ride the Rails

by Julie Maas

(ALBUQUERQUE, New Mexico) -- Former Office of the State Engineer co-workers were reunited this fall when Sue Gwinn and Matthew Martinez of the District IV office came up from Las Cruces to attend WATERS 101 database training in the Albuquerque office. They were pleased that they could reconnect with Kimberly Harris who transferred to Albuquerque during the summer of 2006 to be closer to her family, and began working in the WATERS office.

Since the Rail Runner runs along the railroad tracks on the west side of the building, the attendees of the class were able to see it from their training room and began asking questions. Matthew really wanted to ride on it because he'd never been on an actual train run by a locomotive, just the smaller trains at the zoo or the amusement park. He also wanted to see if it was something he thought his kids would like to do.

"Why not? Let's check it out!" Matt had said to the others, "We sat on the top level of the double-decker and you could see everything from the train. The scenery and ride were great. Overall it was a very nice experience."

Kim was delighted with the idea, and at the end of the first day of training they decided it would be a fun thing to do together.

"We hopped on the train at the station downtown," said Kim as she pointed in the direction of the Alvarado Transportation Center. "It was my first time being on a train, so I was all excited. We took it all the way to Bernalillo. It took about an hour and was a really nice, scenic train ride."

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Sue really appreciates that it promotes the use of public transportation and that it saves commuters gas and the hassles of going into Albuquerque during rush hour, as well as providing family fun and entertainment.

"I was happy to see that, and happy that they're charging, too, to help keep up what it takes to financially run it," said Sue. "It's great they have extended the service to Belen, and maybe someday all the way to Las Cruces."

The Office of the State Engineer is charged with administering the state's water resources. The State Engineer has power over the supervision, measurement, appropriation, and distribution of all surface and groundwater in New Mexico, including streams and rivers that cross state boundaries. The State Engineer is also Secretary of the Interstate Stream Commission and oversees its staff.

The Interstate Stream Commission is charged with separate duties including protecting New Mexico's right to water under eight interstate stream compacts, ensuring the state complies with each of those compacts, as well as water planning.

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