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## Safety cited in razing

The cost of maintaining the building and safety concerns were two of the reasons given for Wednesday's demolition of the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad depot here.

The D&RGW hired Avery Structures of Buena Vista to raze the 43-year-old depot, built in an art deco design.

Chuck Burroughs, D&RGW chief engineer and supervisor of the demolition project, told The Mail in a telephone interview on Thursday that the depot "was getting quite costly to maintain. And from a safety standpoint, it should be taken down."

Burroughs said the razing of the Salida depot was consistent with similar projects to get rid of structures no longer in use by the railroad.

"We're in the process of cleaning up the property. We're taking down the depot buildings in Grand Junction and Rifle, too," he said.

"It's a lot larger a structure than we needed. We don't have a need for that much space.

"And someone on the property might get hurt," he said.

Burroughs downplayed the historical significance of the building, which was erected in the fall of 1941. He implied that had the depot been built nearer the turn of the century, the railroad might have been less likely to raze it now.

Ironically, the depot had replaced an earlier depot built in 1919. The D&RGW tore the old depot down about the same time it built the one just razed.

The chief engineer noted that the Pueblo depot was recently sold to a developer. Asked if there were any similarities between the Salida and Pueblo depots, he responded, "What do you think?"

He then explained that the Pueblo depot was a turn-of-the-century, sandstone structure.

Burroughs said he knew that efforts by the city of Salida to acquire the depot "had been talked about," but he was not aware of any specific offers.

He denied that the D&RGW tried to raze the depot in secret. He also denied that the railroad was concerned that someone would obtain a court order to stop the demolition.

"This is nothing different than what we've been doing elsewhere," Burroughs said.

"We feel it is still a railroad property," he said. "As far as I know, this is just a basic step for securing the property and clearing it."

He said the railroad has no immediate plans to demolish any of its other buildings in Salida. However, a rundown shed just west of the depot site and used for storage of maintenance equipment will "eventually be phased out with a new structure."