

National Association of Retired & Veteran Railway Employees, Inc.



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NARVRE NEWSLETTER

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FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT —

Recently the National Secretary Treasurer and I attended the 2020 Convention committee meeting in Oakland, CA. The Convention site is at the Waterfront Hotel May 17-19, 2020. We thought the hotel size was adequate to host our gathering. Particulars will be forthcoming from the convention committee this fall before delegates are elected.

Plans should be underway by all local Units to attend if all possible. This is where

all policy is set for the next two years, 2020-2022. The 2018 convention made some important decisions in regards to finances. There were concerns by some Units who were not present about the end results. You have to be there to be represented.

Local Units right now should be raising funds to attend such as monthly raffles, drawings, donations or any other means of raising money. There are concerns as to the future of NARVRE because of loss of local Units being closed for reasons such as aging of members (officers), railroad presence is no longer in certain areas for growth and we are

not reaching out to new retirees to become members in larger terminals. Many Units have members in the arrears on 2019 dues. Reach out and call these people as membership is the life blood of any organization.

Within one-hundred-twenty (120) days Units will be electing Unit officers and Delegates to the 2020 Convention. The Host Committee needs your support in hosting this convention. They will be mailing out material to every Unit so please don't throw it in the corner and get back to it later.

Let's make 2020 a great convention!

— Tom Dwyer, National President

FROM THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR —

May was a busy month, working on our regular and current issues, and attending a legislative conference in Washington D.C. which gave us the opportunity to discuss the concerns of NARVRE with other organizations, such as rail labor (TCU/IAM), who make it possible for us to attend this annual event. This conference gives your officers the time to digest up-to-date information on Amtrak, and the funding issues facing the Railroad Retirement Board Agency (RRB) proposed in Fiscal Year 2020 Appropriations. We also have the opportunity to meet with specific offices in the House and the Senate, in order to determine their perspective, and how they might be willing to help. We like to remind Congress that the Railroad Retirement Board is our own independent federal agency that administers retirement, survivors, disability and other benefit programs to over 750,000 beneficiaries in every state and Congressional District. It's important that these Congressional offices understand that all RRB operations are self-funded through our own respective trust funds that do not require any funding from the general U.S. revenue fund. That said, the RRB agency does require an appropriation from Congress in order to ac-

cess our funds. That is required of all federal agencies, but the RRB agency revenues are retirement dollars collected from railroad employers and their employees and does not belong to the government.

The RRB agency has been underfunded for decades, and staffing levels have decreased, and more field offices continue

to face the ongoing threat of being closed. Information Technology Systems (IT) are badly outdated, and many programs are obsolete. Small items, like password changes and address updates are impossible, as the IT services are running on a 40-year-old legacy mainframe which cannot protect and main-

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Working the Hill on your behalf: Independent Senator Angus King and Republican Senator from ME, NARVRE VP Tony Padillo, R-Senator Susan Collins and NARVRE LD Gary Faley.

From the National Vice President —

We are now in the 7th month of the year and we still working on the NARVRE Membership Dues of 2019. We are behind \$86,000 in membership renewals as of the end of May 31, 2019. As I have done in the last three NARVRE Newsletters, I am appealing once again to ask you to set up membership drives and set up call-committees to bring back members that have not renewed their membership dues. I am being persistent in asking all the Unit officers and the entire NARVRE Governing Board to help in this effort to continue to form membership calling committees to regain a membership balance. I say it with sadness that many dues are just flatly overlooked and I know that it is not that the members cannot afford the new membership rate. The Officers of the Governing Board of NARVRE had a conference call to bring this issue to light to see if we all together can reduce the number of delinquent dues. I want to thank all the Area Director who also committed to working to form those call-committees. I feel that the dues are not a financial burden but just an oversight and that is why making personal phone call to those that are delinquent can be reached. Many officers have already engaged in working to regain our membership. It is imperative that we continue to make the effort to bring that balance back to normal so we can have the clout in Congress to make an impact to continue to Promote, Protect and Preserve our RRB Pension Annuity for present and future railroad retirees as those before that come before us, did it for us.

On May 5 to May 9th, 2019 NARVRE President Tom Dwyer, National VP Tony Padilla and National Legislative Director Gary Faley participated in a TCU-IAM Legislative Conference in Washington D.C. to lobby in conjunction with 498 other members of TCU and IAM on over 16 major issues affecting Airline and Railroad employees. Our main goal was to Lobby to Promote, Protect and Preserve our Railroad Retirement Pension Annuity and protect FY2019 funding for all of our programs that make up our Railroad Retirement System work. I met with my own Congressman Lloyd Doggett to thank him for the work he does in sponsoring and sponsoring several pieces of Legislation to protect seniors. This includes Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, prescription Drug prices and Healthcare. These are the issues that affect

all seniors and family members who depend on these benefits to living and enjoying a dignified retirement. We will keep an eye on the recent introduced Presidential FY2019 Budget release which may reduce funding for working families.

We lobby with others such as the Alliance for Retired Americans, and as pursuant to our preamble of our NARVRE Constitutional bylaws. ARTICLE II of the NARVRE Bylaws affirms "The purpose of N.A.R.V.R.E., is for the study of the legislative principles and processes of the Railroad Retirement Act of 1937 enacted by Public Law # 162. It shall be in the interest of N.A.R.V.R.E. to actively pursue cooperation between both retired and active

railroad employees of actions affecting these principles.

Now is a time that we the members, current and former railway employees, can uphold and lend aid and strength to its members; standard railway organizations, senior citizens groups and other organizations who are promoting the general welfare of retired railroad people in the United States of America.

With that in mind, I remind our membership that we work with all the railroad unions and retiree organizations to preserve our earned Senior Citizens' pensions and healthcare benefits.

— **Anthony (Tony) Padilla**
NARVRE National Vice President

(National Legislative Director from page 1)

tain data information. And all beneficiaries have reason to be concerned about our own individual and personal information. Congress recognized the immediate need for specific upgrades and has appropriated \$20 million over the last two years. For FY2020, additional funding for the IT modernization at the agency is \$10.7 million. In order to continue to provide excellent service to their beneficiaries, they have focused on the IT Modernization efforts on transforming the outdated systems and building modern digital services. Your officers from NARVRE's Hdqts were on Capitol Hill to advise that the RRB agency is requesting full funding of \$138 Million in FY2020 which will include additional funds of \$11.8 for staffing levels. The RRB and the National Railroad Retirement Investment Trust have combined net assets of \$26 billion available for payment of benefits and for funding agency operations. Appropriating funds to cover the emergency needs and normal RRB operations would represent 0.08% of these assets. NARVRE agrees with the Association of American RR's (AAR) and Rail Labor Division (RLD) that the time is now to properly fund the RRB agency. This office will keep you all informed as to how we can best assist our RRB Agency.

On June 5th, The House Appropriations Committee passed a Fiscal Year 2020 transportation budget. As reported earlier, the appropriations look good, as this package contains an increase of \$146 million over last year's funding levels for passenger rail. Amtrak's national network also received \$1.29 billion, and the Northeast Corridor got

\$700m. We must keep up our work on contacting our representatives in Congress, as needed. The appropriators included strong criticisms in this bill and chastised Amtrak leadership for their intentional neglect of the many Congressional mandates from the statute that governs Amtrak. The House proposal also directs Amtrak to begin following the law when making any decisions regarding change in about every aspect of Amtrak. The report was adamant that a bipartisan Senate is demanding that Amtrak follow the law, as they will expect management to work towards the expansion and growth of rail passenger service in America. This measure will now head to the full House, where we expect passage, and onto the Senate, where we may be needed to help move this important legislation. Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS) has been outspoken about his concerns for Amtrak, and the immediate future of the long-distance Southwest Chief train route. So far, they have been assured that the Chief will be active through the end of FY2019, which ends September 30th. Amtrak has alluded to the possibility that it may be running through FY2020, when the Fast Act law is up for reauthorization. In order to keep discussions headed on a fair playing field, Sen. Moran has been stalling the President's nominations to the Amtrak Board of Directors until he receives answers to other specific questions (*June NLD Article).

Congress is running short on actual working days left in this Fiscal Year, and they have much work to finish. The Senate, at this point in time, has not passed any of their spending bills. More later.

— **Gary Faley**,
National Legislative Director

From the National Secretary-Treasurer —

As mentioned by NARVRE President Tom Dwyer, we met with the 2020 Convention Committee in Oakland, CA this month. One of their first requests was an accurate National mailing list of Unit officers. In order to fulfill this requirement, we must receive accurate and timely information from the Units. Please review the following Resolution #2 passed at the 2018 Convention in Council Bluffs, IA.

Article IX, Constituent Divisions, Section 2B, Local Units, be amended to read as follows:

“Elect Officers. Unit Officers will be elected biennially at the regular meeting in the month of November in the odd number years. Unit Officers shall be installed and take office immediately at the close of the meeting. Unit Officers will serve for a two (2) year period or until their successors have been elected and qualified. The results of the elections shall be reported immediately to the National Secretary Treasurer, whereas the election results will be certified, including verifying the elected Unit Officers are current members in good standing and not delinquent. The elected Unit Officers will be added to the membership rolls and placed in the National Directory.”

After the Elections are completed, the results should be immediately communicated to the National Office using the OFFICERS ELECTION REPORT FORM, which can be obtained from the NARVRE.US website. This form will also be mailed or e-mailed to the Unit Presidents, Unit Secretaries, and/or Treasurers in September 2019.

When the Delinquency Report first became available in March 2019 it indicated \$93,000 in late membership dues with a national delinquency rate of 35%. As I write this article, that number has decreased to \$78,469 with a national delinquency rate of

26%. No doubt we are making progress with regard to this issue, but obviously a lot of work still remains. We have currently have 3 Units that have a 0% delinquency rate.

1. Unit 128 Mt Carmel IL
2. Unit 059 Boone IA
3. Unit 179 Ft. Dodge IA

Next month we will publish the Units which are 10% or less.

To assist in membership recruitment, we strongly encourage all Units create a

Facebook page with at least two responsible administrators. If you need any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the National Office. Our official Facebook page has 1193 members, a huge increase from less than 450 members last year. Our NARVRE National Forum membership has increased by 37% with 26 new members in the last 30 days.

Since Jan 1, we have a total of 15383 members with 224 new members and 138 deceased members.

— James (Phil) Steward,
National Secretary/Treasurer



Celebrate CB 2019 with ‘Rolling Along’

The parade is an annual event in May. It is called “Celebrate CB 2019” and it’s theme this year was “Rolling Along” and celebrated Council Bluffs’ diverse transportation system—including the 150th anniversary of the Transcontinental Railroad, new interstates, and RAGBRAI (a bicycle ride across the State of Iowa from east to west, the Missouri River to the Mississippi River).

There were 13 Unit 30 members (a baker’s dozen) that were either on the float or handing out candy to the kids. The members were: Margie Ingram, Royce Ingram, James Wayman, Orval McGee, Judy McGee, Pam Fogle, Ray Miller, Peggy Miller, Gloria Gardner, Art Hendersen, Shirley Hendersen, Carolyn Hanson and Gary Moller. James Wayman decorated his trailer and pulled it with his pickup. Margie had the two signs made up locally, which provided NARVRE some good advertising.



Unit 66, Wildwood, FL. Former Unit 66 President Donna Eichelberger was honored for her many years of dedicated service to NARVRE. Donna served as Unit 66 president from 1998 to 2018. Current President Don Lynch presented a bouquet of roses and a gift card to Donna at the May 13 meeting.



Mary Sansom, President of IAM Local 1833 Retirees Newport MN; NARVRE National VP Tony Padilla; and National NARVRE President Tom Dwyer

Thank you!

We would like to thank all who made donations, both large and small. Your contributions are important to advancing the organizational goals of NARVRE.

Paul Johannis on behalf of Unit 163 • Victor Sundquist • Sergio Perez • Darwyn Meyers, in Memory of Joyce Manning • Larry Chandler • Davis Corless • James Mercer • Victor Sundquist • John Karst • Thomas Olsen • M E Michael • Eugene Smith • Peter Faller • George Tait • Stevenson Parrish • John Korte

Memorials

Raymond Lopez • Leland Workman • Ronald Kopriva • Margaret C Schack • Louise A. Hofmann • Carol Yskes • Earl Ringler • Mike White • Joan K Galloway • Larry C Bennett • Barbara • Lois Nadeau • Paul Kalil • David Cowgill • John Dratwick • Phillip L. Dial • Vernold Keller • Dan Blume • Jimmy Lee Banks

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Fraud Alert: Genetic Testing Scam

Provided by the Health and Human
Services (HHS) Office of Inspector (OIG)

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General is alerting the public about a fraud scheme involving genetic testing.

Scammers are offering Medicare beneficiaries cheek swabs for genetic testing to obtain their Medicare information for identity theft or fraudulent billing purposes. Fraudsters are targeting beneficiaries through telemarketing calls, booths at public events, health fairs, and door-to-door visits.

If a beneficiary agrees to genetic testing or verifies personal or Medicare information, a testing kit is sent even if it is not ordered by a physician or medically necessary.

Protect Yourself

- If a genetic testing kit is mailed to you, don't accept it unless it was ordered by your physician. Refuse the delivery or return it to the sender. Keep a record of the sender's name and the date you returned the items.



- Be suspicious of anyone who offers you free genetic testing and then requests your Medicare number. If your personal information is compromised, it may be used in other fraud schemes.

- A physician that you know and trust should approve any requests for genetic testing.

- Medicare beneficiaries should be cautious of unsolicited requests for their Medicare numbers. If anyone other than your physician's office requests your Medicare information, do not provide it.

If you suspect fraud or abuse, please call the Railroad Medicare Beneficiary Contact Center at 800-833-4455.