

National Association of Retired & Veteran Railway Employees, Inc.



NARVRE National Office
Phone Toll Free: 1-800-551-2588
6819 Crumpler Blvd, Suite 200 • Olive Branch, MS 38654-1940
Email: NARVRE@gmail.com • WEBSITE: www.narvre.us
Published ten times a year
Cost – Membership in a Unit or Membership-at-Large

NARVRE NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2019

VOL. 33 NO. 8



Area 4 Assistant Director George Wisdom (formerly NARVRE National Vice President) was invited to speak at the monthly meeting of Unit 154 Marceline Missouri. Former Area 4 Director Roy Palmer was also in attendance. Included in Mr. Wisdom's presentation was information with respect to the Metropolitan Life \$2000.00 death benefit available to most union employee's designated beneficiaries. Pictured L-R Nancy Schreiner Unit Secretary Treasurer, George Wisdom, Glenn Lindbloom Unit 1st VP Wayne Heins 2nd VP unit 154

FROM THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR —

Congress is out on recess, and will not return until September 9, less than three weeks before spending deadlines and the close of the current fiscal year. And without a compromised agreement to extend government funding, they will again face a possibility of another government shutdown. While the House and Senate did pass a FY 2020 budget cap agreement, the financial numbers need to be finalized on many issues, to include the appropriations for the RRB and Amtrak. We're advised that staff is still working on a compromise between the House & Senate for a possible conference committee, even though the Senate has yet to close on any of their spending bills. Three weeks will not realistically allow enough time to get this amount of work completed, so all of the usual actions will be in play, such as a go-to

continuing resolution, or a larger omnibus package to keep the government open and funded to a later deadline. The recent budget cap deal, signed by the POTUS, was guided by negotiations between the White House and the Speaker's office in order to suspend the debt-ceiling through July of 2021 in order to avoid a shutdown. All of this precedes the work and outcome of Appropriations Committees which are scheduled to begin the week after they return from recess.

NARVRE continues to follow the on-goings with Amtrak management, the Senate hearings and proposals/actions that may impact or threaten rail employees and railroad retirement. Two former Members of Congress have been nominated to serve on Amtrak's Board of Directors, and the Senate Commerce Committee held a hearing to ask important

FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT —

We have been contacted by the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) as to a study to be conducted to future online services. The RRB has obtained a contractor, Accenture who would do a survey not only of retired employees but actives as well. The railroads are releasing the surveys to active employees and NARVRE members have been asked to participate.

The contractor is looking at approximately 400 completed surveys for their study. To make this a viable effort NARVRE will probably approach 500 members as to taking this survey knowing that some will not respond. You would receive a link to take the study. Our participation will be directed from the National Secretary's office, Mr. Phil Steward. If you receive a request, we encourage you to take part. After all, Information technology is the norm in most organizations today.

We are getting close to Unit elections and electing your delegates to the 2020 NARVRE Convention. Electing the delegate is one thing but sending him/her is another. The Host Committee has to know of your plans because of rooms, food and other planning. So, when you get the information from Unit 61 in Oakland, CA please respond as soon as possible. Once a delegate is elected and planning on attending we can upgrade our committees where there are vacancies and we have some in 2020. Your help is greatly appreciated.

— Tom Dwyer, National President

questions regarding the voting records of these nominees on Amtrak funding issues. The questions were due to a history of voting against Amtrak and its' mission and purpose. While in office, former Representatives Lynn Westmoreland (R-GA) and Todd Rokita (R-IN) voted against funding for Amtrak on multiple occasions with no regard for actions that

From the National Vice President —

We have reduced arrears from 2019 to \$74,486. Area Directors and units officers please make every effort to collect these dues.

Judging from my experience of working on Railroad Retirement issues for over 50 years as National Legislative and Political Officer of the Transportation Communications Union (TCU-IAM) on our Railroad Retiree pensions benefits, there were many adjustments made during that period of time to our Railroad Retirement Pension.

I personally worked on some of those changes relating to the Tier II tax and raising the retirement age to be able to continue to have a fair pension for all. Later, better benefits were provided when the RRB coffers improved. Labor and Management got together to make improvements when the funds seemed to be in order. Some Labor Unions wanted to lower the retirement age to 55, but the actuaries did not agree because the fund would end up short in the near future. So, when the funds improved we finally agreed to lower the age of retirement to age 60 with 30 years of service. While some unions did not agree because they wanted the retirement age to be 55, they opposed the legislation on Capitol Hill. The Legislation moved without their help and when they saw the legislation moving they finally agreed to support it.

What made this legislation possible was that the industry and the Unions agreed to the establishment of what became the Trust fund which would be managed by Labor and Management and the Railroad Retirement Board, which to date, it has \$28.3 billion in assets.

We are so very lucky to have worked in the rail industry where your spouse also gets a Railroad Retirement and never worked for the railroad. God Bless us for our Railroad Retirement Pension Annuity and the Railroad Retirement Medicare and Medicaid. Our Area Directors are working to make sure that all the units continue to push to continue to bring back all those members that are delinquent, so we can continue to Promote, Protect and Preserve our Railroad Retirement Pension Annuity which can be wiped out with an executive order and bypass congress.

This month, September 2nd is the Labor Day Celebration. I was hired by the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1966 and attended all my Union Lodge meetings and was elected

Legislative Representative from the very beginning. As an activist and elected officer of my union, it is a reminder of how lucky I was to have a secure job in the rail industry, the Southern Pacific Railroad, Amtrak and lastly working as National Legislative and Political Director for the Grand Lodge of BRAC, the Union today called the Transportation Communications Union-IAM.

NARVRE has been the grass-roots organization that has helped to keep our legislative

(National Legislative Director from page 1)

could lead to the demise of Amtrak, and spell disaster for communities and working families across the country who depend on this carrier for their livelihoods. Rokita actually voted in favor of an amendment that would completely eliminate all Amtrak funding, which would absolutely mark the end of Amtrak with no regard nor respect for the law that governs the nation's passenger train system. NARVRE agrees with all other supporting advocates that any nominee hoping to serve on the Board of Directors for Amtrak must demonstrate a clear commitment to Amtrak's national network and not just for east coast train service. Importantly, GOP Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS), continues to block the confirmation process for the White House nominees, because of his attention to the law that mandates a national network for passenger train service and because of his focused support of the Southwest Chief's long distance route. Sen. Moran and other Senators from both parties have always identified those national mandates as the focus of a bipartisan Senate. We recently sent out an email with a positive look on Amtrak on a Utube video, narrated by Tony Trifiletti, from All Aboard Arizona and the Western Interstate Trains Coalition.

issues strong since its creation.

As stated before, the main function of an Area Director is to monitor Units and be in contact with the officers to promote and cultivate the membership in their respective units to increase membership; but, the most important function is to establish new Units in areas where there are no Units. Let us continue the task to recruit new members.

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

<https://youtu.be/20hOAFiWk8Q>. Link is also available on our website (www.Narvre.us) and the national NARVRE facebook page.

We are happy to report that the Safe Freight Act (H.R. 1748), which would require a crew of two people on all freight trains, has secured it's 100th co-sponsor in Congress. This legislation would require that the two crew members must be a federally certified conductor and a federally certified locomotive engineer. SMART Legislative Director John Risch has notified NARVRE that this did not happen by accident. John states that "we made it to 100 cosponsors (currently 90 Dems and 10 Republicans, and counting) because of members and retirees like you". But the job is not done. Besides securing even more cosponsors in the U.S. House, we need the same strong effort for the companion bill in the U.S. Senate (S.1979). We hope that all NARVRE members have contacted their member of Congress to support H.R. 1748, and we now urge that we all contact our Senators asking them to cosponsor S.1979. The Safe Freight Act is the right prescription to ensure rail safety for both rail workers and the public alike.

Toll-free calls to Congress, House & Senate - 877-668-3864 and 877-668-3866

— **Gary Foley,**
National Legislative Director



Left to Right: John Brady, Unit 043 President. Parke Wentling, Pennsylvania State Representative. John Patterson, Ohio State Representative. Jim Hockady, City Manager Conneaut. Ralph Mongenel, Unit 043 Secretary Treasurer.

From the National Secretary-Treasurer —

This Labor Day marks NARVRE's 82nd anniversary of protecting, preserving and promoting Railroad Retirement.

To excerpt Mary David's book History of NARVRE beginning Chapter 11 "On Labor Day September 6, 1937, Railroad Employees from nine states met in Louisville, Kentucky, and laid the foundation for an association of retired railway employees. Employees with thirty years service were eligible to retire from the railroad. The founder and first president was J. L. Stark.

This historic two-day meeting, held in conjunction with the annual Labor Day celebration of railway unions, was in the Hotel Seelbach. It was the consensus of those in attendance that a "pension association" be formed in response to the newly passed Railroad Retirement Act of 1937 since there were still concerns about who was covered under the act and how benefits would be derived.

The states represented were: Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, New York, Illinois, Georgia, and Wisconsin."

Our annual 2020 membership renewal campaign begins in October. As usual, 801 members (members not belonging to a unit) will receive an invoice with their membership card and a self-addressed envelope to send their dues in the form of check or money order to the National Office. In September 2019 we will be mailing the three required reporting forms Membership Reporting Form, Officer Election Report, and Annual Audit Form to Unit Secretary Treasures. All these forms can be found on our website www.narvre.us

for those who choose to utilize that resource. Membership cards and Unit rosters will be available upon request.

We frequently receive information regarding members and/or member spouses who suffer heart attacks. Some of the reports outline positive outcomes while others have devastating results. Listed below are the Heart Attack Warning Signs published by the American Heart Association.

Don't wait to get help if you experience any of these heart attack warning signs. Some heart attacks are sudden and intense. But most start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort. Pay attention to your body and call 911 if you experience:

- Chest discomfort. Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes – or it may go away and then return. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.

- Discomfort in other areas of the upper body. Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.

- Shortness of breath. This can occur with or without chest discomfort.

- Other signs. Other possible signs include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.

For more information contact your nearest American Heart Association office call 1-800-242-8721 or visit www.heart.org/cause

— *James (Phil) Steward,*
National Secretary/Treasurer



Bob Boltz Area 7 Director and Mike Mossler Assistant Area 7 Director drove to visit Unit 082 Nampa, Idaho both giving well received and appreciated presentations regarding NARVRE to the membership



Unit 082, Nampa Idaho, President, Ted Zahradnicek.



Unit 082, Nampa Idaho, Treasurer, June Robertson

Spouses are an integral part of our NARVRE Organization



Left to Right: Connie Coates, Jacquie Berrier and Joanie Scafaro



Left to Right: Lynn Harlacher, Cheryl Lambert, Susan Mongenel and Mary Lee Brady.

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.

David Corless • George Joyce • William Dailey • Ivison Rowland • Roger Reynolds • Edgar Terry

Memorials

Donald Copeland and Dick Pelow

NARVRE NEWSLETTER

Volume 33 Number 8

National President
Thomas Dwyer
11304 Norway St. NW
Coon Rapids MN 55448-3269
763-757-1501 FAX 763-767-5794
tdwyertcu@aol.com

National Vice President
Anthony “Tony” Padilla
303 Black Cap Run
Buda, TX 78610-4978
Home: 512-523-8465
Cell: 512-552-8703
tonypadillatcuam@austin.rr.com

National Secretary-Treasurer
James (Phil) Steward
6819 Crumpler Blvd, Ste 200
Olive Branch, MS 38654-1940
1-800-551-2588
narvre@gmail.com

National Legislative Director
Gary M Faley
6324 Calkins Road
Flint, MI 48532-3207
810-733-7256
faleyg@comcast.net

News deadline 10th of each month
Mail to National Office

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED
AND VETERAN RAILWAY EMPLOYEES, INC.
6819 Crumpler Blvd, Ste 200
Olive Branch, MS 38654-1940
SEPTEMBER, 2019

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT 2826
KANSAS CITY, MO

Upcoming Events

Florida State Association, Hosted by Unit 070 Daytona Beach. Saturday, November 2, 2019, at Hampton Inn, Daytona Speedway-Airport, 1715 W. International Speedway Blvd, Daytona Beach, FL 32114. Time: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (Lunch will be provided at no charge) R.S.V.P. by September 25, 2019 to George Boatwright, Unit #70 Leg. Representative, at 386-589-6777 or email amboat49@hotmail.com.

Springfield Missouri Informational Meeting, October 24, 2019, 1 pm – 4pm at The Library Center, 4653 Campbell Ave, Springfield MO 65810. Phone: 417--882-0714. For more information call Alfonso Mondragon, Unit 166 President, 417-379-9247 or Steve Counts, NARVRE Speakers Bureau, 417-298-7661.

Update on the ‘Patients over Paperwork’ Initiative

The “Patients over Paperwork” initiative, launched by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in October 2017, seeks to reduce provider burden. CMS announced a proposal in July to change current policies that have had clinicians spending a lot of time on paperwork. Per a CMS press release, “this proposed rule builds on the Trump Administration’s efforts to establish a patient-driven healthcare system that focuses on better health outcomes, and is projected to save 2.3 million hours a year in burden reduction.”

“Clinicians are drowning in paperwork and reporting requirements caused by cumbersome government rules and regulations,” said CMS Administrator Seema Verma. Verma continued on to say that these changes will allow providers to spend more time with their patients.

Other announcements had to do with CMS allowing clinicians to better manage chronically ill patients.

“For the first time, CMS is proposing to pay for care management services for patients with a single, high-risk chronic condition, such as diabetes or high blood pressure, “ the CMS

press release said. “CMS is also proposing to pay clinicians more for additional time spent on care management activities for patients suffering from multiple chronic conditions. These steps would address drivers of health-care costs and ensure a sustainable safety net for vulnerable patients.”

To read more about this announcement, please follow this link: <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/trump-administrations-patients-over-paperwork-delivers-doctors>

If you have questions about your Railroad Medicare coverage, you can call our Beneficiary Contact Center at 800-833-4455, Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. ET. We encourage you to sign up for email updates. To do so, visit our website at www.PalmettoGBA.com/RR/Me and click ‘Listsers’ on the top banner on the website to start the process. We also encourage you to visit our Facebook page at www.Facebook.com/MyRRMed. If you are interested in using our beneficiary provider service portal, please visit www.PalmettoGBA.com/MyRRMed.

— Jennifer Johnson