



National Association of Retired & Veteran Railway Employees, Inc.

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NARVRE NEWSLETTER

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AMTK 5 with a conductor waving as he leads the Amtrak Southwest Chief, with a phase 2 heritage 130 trailing, bound for Chicago through La Plata.

FROM THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR —

The House of Representatives passed H.R. 2, the Moving Forward Act (from earlier title of INVEST in America Act) by a 233-188 vote, and it was sent to the Senate where it will not be accepted as written. NARVRE is hopeful that the Senate will present their own proposals soon, in order to address this important and overdue infrastructure bill, as the current surface transportation law will expire this fall.

H.R. 2 is the replacement to the Fast Act and that law needs to be re-authorized with new obligated funding by this 116th Congress. The concept of this year's transportation and infrastructure legislation will be to continue with the existing promise (Fast Act) to properly invest in rail passenger service for the future.

No matter the differences between the two parties, they are running out of time and should start negotiating and agree on legislation before the end of this fiscal year on 9/30/20. We know the parties do not agree on climate change proposals represented in the bill, but that should not stop the Senate from presenting their own proposals in order to find agreements in the underlying legislation necessary to fix the nation's infrastructure and continue to improve on rail passenger service. Just last year, the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works unanimously passed its portion of a bill, and like this House passed bill, it too includes climate change provisions. The Senate needs to start working, find common ground and pass important legislation, through the normal process of legislating. The House bill (H.R.2) is a \$1.5 trillion plan to rebuild America's infrastructure, not only our roads, bridges and transit systems, but also schools, housing, broadband and internet access. All of this can be tied to the emergency relief legislation, and help provide for jobs and health needs in order to recover from the national COVID-19 crisis.

FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT —

We are a little over 90 days to the General Election on November 3, 2020. I used to say this every presidential election: This is the most important one... and this year it is.

My friends, I don't have to tell you what is going on in this country with the COVID-19 Pandemic, Federal troops in major cities across America, divided government in Washington, D.C. whereby the House passes a bill and then goes to die in the Senate. No one in Congress crosses party lines in support of the other, instead the President issues Executive Orders to eradicate policy of past administrations.

IT IS TIME TO VOTE! If you like what you see or if you want change now is the time to make sure you are registered to vote. My suggestion to you is vote absentee or vote by mail, especially because of the pandemic. If you are not sure how to do that every Secretary of State, County and most municipal offices can lead you to the proper election official to fill out your forms. I just voted in our August 11th primary by mail. Simple and easy.

The country is going through some stressful times so do your civic duty and cast your ballot and be counted.

I want to recognize Mr. Dick George from Parson, KS Unit 148, who dropped me a note about his Uncle Paul J. Marnell. He was the assistant to the president of the Railway Employees Department which was in the March 29, 1969 LABOR Newspaper. If you recall this was right before the first big merger on March 3, 1970, of the Burlington, Northern Pacific, Great Northern and Spokane, Portland and Seattle Railroads.

— Tom Dwyer, National President

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From the National Vice President —

This year we had two major tragic conditions that brought some cultural changes to our way of life in America: “(COVID19)” and “Black Lives Matter.” The first is the catastrophic pandemic (COVID19) that has injured and killed thousands of our citizens, not only in the United States, but throughout the world.

Many employees have tested positive on Passenger train travel on SEPTA, Metro North, Amtrak Long distance trains and other commuter service, The Corona Virus has intensified our economic and political condition into a chaotic state among the victims and defenders of the direction of the policies from our government that has already resulted from the handling the containment of

the disease, as millions become infected and are dying from the COVID19 virus.

The pandemic is getting worse and may go to the end of the year 2021 and beyond into 2022. Infections are increasing daily by the thousands and continue before some immunization can be developed and distributed to the general public. The powers that be cannot make logical decisions to ameliorate the problem of following CDC guidelines; resulting in federal government state and local governments making aggressive mistakes due to politics.

In the past I gave the history of the many NARVRE challenges we experienced to fight to Promote Protect and Preserve our Railroad Retirement Pension Annuity, including saving other senior issues as our Railroad Retirement Pension Annuity, Railroad Medicare, Medicaid, and affordable Health Care. Some in Congress refer to Social Security and Medicare as entitlements, which they are not. They are Earned Benefits we paid into for our future senior years. It is not welfare, but they are social programs that our employers and we workers paid into in the form of taxes while working. NARVRE’s mission is to Protect, Preserve, and Promote the security of our RRB Pension Annuity.

The last time our Social Security funds were used for a national emergency was during the Vietnam War when the government used the funding, but did not pay it back. In the past, many unions lost hefty pensions unnecessarily during mergers and bankruptcies leaving employees with a fraction of their pensions earned.

The second major condition is racial culture

divide that resulted in the killing of George Floyd. The Black Lives Matter movement also evolved in a culture change that many refuse to recognize or to make amends to the injustices of our government against people of color. I am proud of our NARVRE President who wrote, “Congress passed the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the Voting Rights Act in 1965. This legislation has helped in our politics, but has not put out the flames of racism nor attacks on our citizens by the very groups sworn to protect us. “God Bless George Floyd and the many others that for the first time have seen black and white come together to protest racial inequality in our daily lives.” The NARVRE organization and our RRB Pension Annuity can be affected as the rail industry begins to also reduce jobs in the rail industry. The Primary Elections just finished and we are now looking at the General Elections. Go Vote on Tuesday November 3rd for all members of House in Congress, 1/3 of the Senate, and the Presidency. Although, NARVRE is not about Party Politics, we want to make sure that our RRB Pension Annuity is protected. If you do not vote, you do not have a say so. To see how your Representatives voted on senior issues, go to the Alliance for Retired Americans website at <http://retiredamericans.org/voting-record/>.

On another note, please continue with your Voluntary Contributions to do memorials and recognitions to augment the finances of NARVRE. Your contribution is appreciated, no matter the amount especially during the time that Units are not able to meet due to the pandemic. God Bless us all.

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



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.

Dale V. Drew, Sr • Charles Henry Nadeau Jr • Rose Marie Gibson • Ken Brooks • Phil Reardon • Robert Campbell • Steven R Prouty former UTU Local Chairman and Legislative Rep • Barbara Thornburg • Delores J Schmidt • Phyllis Branch • Kevin J Penne • Thomas A Basco

Memorials

Victor Sundquist • David Corless • Paul Johannis • Unit 74 In Memory of Charlie Quimby • Billy and Sandra Parker • Donald Rupp • Stanley Haessig - In memory of Dorothy Elizabeth Steward, mother of Philip Steward NST, Mike Steward, Pres Unit 095 KC, Joan Newbill, Unit 30 Council Bluffs IA



Unit 166 Springfield Missouri Officers: (L/R) Mondragon Alfonso, President; Steve Taylor, member; Susie Taylor, Secretary; Steve Counts, Leg Rep; Rona Counts, member; Joe Felin, VP. Not pictured: John and Marcia Ratcliff Treasurer.

From the National Secretary-Treasurer —

Amid the COVID-19 crisis in the United States units across the country have suspended meetings which significantly hampered ability to collect 2020 dues. Consequently, the Governing Board voted dues collected from July 1, 2020, to the end of the year (2020) will apply through December 31 2021. In other words any member presently late by paying dues from now to the end of 2020 will be credited through year 2021.

NARVRE Convention 2022

The Waterfront Hotel is still shuttered. We need to negotiate the further postponement of the Convention from October, 2020 to May of 2022. This is proving a bit difficult under the current circumstances. Once the venue is staffed, the Convention Committee will restart discussions. Updates to follow.

It has been reported to the National Office that three Units held meetings in July, 2020. Unit 056, St Louis MO, Unit 066 Springfield MO, and Unit 138 Albuquerque NM.

Each Unit was able to secure a meeting

location which adequately provided proper social distancing and required attendees to wear masks. This met CDC requirements as outlined in previous NARVRE Newsletters.

The following is excerpted from Unit 056 St Louis MO report:

Our annual picnic meeting in May had been cancelled as a precaution against Covid-19. All 23 members in attendance seemed to enjoy the chance to meet and greet fellow members. The patio at the restaurant where we were had ceiling fans and along with a slight breeze, it was quite comfortable outside and social distancing was observed.

A discussion was held on Amtrak's proposal to reduce long distance train service from daily to tri-weekly effective Oct. 1, 2020.

Names, addresses and phone numbers of all U.S. Senators and Representatives representing our members in Missouri and Illinois were



passed out to each member giving them no excuse for not making contacting with them.

Further discussion ensued about cancelling our September meeting. The consensus of the group was that it was so enjoyable on the patio, why cancel it. They all want to come back in September.

Norbert and Pat Shacklett, President and Secretary, Unit 056 St Louis MO

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

Editor's Note: All pictures in this issue were taken prior the COVID-19 pandemic.

(National Legislative Director from page 1)

From a point of specific interest issues, NARVRE and rail workers and retirees, have helped to move this legislation through the House and will continue to advocate for solid investments in federal funding to provide for good paying rail jobs that continue to fund railroad retirement benefits and programs. H.R. 2 will triple the funding for Amtrak to \$29 billion over 5 years, allowing for repairs and upgrades, and \$19 billion dedicated for capital projects (CRISI grants), all helping to expand passenger rail systems. We will be watching for updates on the hopeful progression of negotiations between the House & Senate.

Also, the House Appropriations Committee has approved the fiscal year 2021 Transportation bill which would provide \$10 billion for Amtrak in FY21, which is a record level of funding for both the Northeast Corridor and the National Network. The bill also explicitly prohibits Amtrak from reducing service frequencies. This too, will be debated with the Senate. We will remember that last month Amtrak leadership and CEO Flynn requested additional emergency relief funding, while presenting plans that would reduce 12 daily long-distance trains to tri-weekly departures and cut its workforce by 20 %.

That received the attention of many Senators that represent train routes and employees and

the riding public in their respective states. The sixteen bipartisan Senators that have communicated their concerns to Amtrak represent Indiana, Wisconsin, Mississippi, Nevada, Colorado, W. Virginia, No, Dakota, and Montana. Separate letters with co-signers were sent to CEO Flynn asking for more details in order to understand the duration of cuts in his plan, and how the additional relief money would be used, while pointing out the impact and harm he will cause to hundreds of communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is not the first time that a bipartisan reaction from the U.S. Senate was heard by the Amtrak leadership, and that certainly is the best arm of defense against the repeated actions to try to dismantle Amtrak's network and long-distance train service.

Senators Blumenthal (D-CT), Udall (D-NM), and Rep. Danny Davis (D-IL) recently introduced The Intercity Passenger Rail Trust Fund that would permanently fund Amtrak. This legislation would create a dedicated fund to help Amtrak invest in major improvement projects, increase passenger rail's efficiency, and help provide safer, more reliable service. Passenger rail currently relies on unpredictable and limited appropriated funding, making it difficult to plan long-term, comprehensive investments needed to improve the system. We will be following and supporting this legislation, and candidates running for federal office should understand where NARVRE and rail retirees stand on the issue. Certainly, all

engaged advocates have been successful in gaining more support for rail passenger service and railroad retirement through our communications with our representatives in the House & Senate. Keep up the good work. For seniors voting early using mail-in ballots, the threats and warnings are everywhere reminding us to get our ballots in early. Hopefully, Congress will step up and send the necessary resources to election officials to ensure our citizens have safe and secure voting options to vote by mail or in person.

— **Gary Faley,**
National Legislative Director



Unit 138 Albuquerque/Belen NM: First row, left to right: Daisy Sanchez, Bettie Hall, Mary Jo Moya, Mary Stanford, and Marie Barnes. Second row, left to right: Nancy Lunsford (President), the late Melvin Miller, Dale Alexander, Bryan Lunsford, Ronald Russell (Treasurer)

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KANSAS CITY, MO

Ordering a Replacement Medicare Card



If you need a replacement Medicare card (but keep your existing Medicare number), there are two easy ways you can accomplish this task:

1. You can contact the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB). You can do this online or by telephone.

To order a replacement Medicare card online,

- Go to www.rrb.gov
- Click on ‘Benefits’, then select “myRRB” from the drop-down list
- Select ‘Request Documents’
- On the ‘RRB Online Service Request’ page, select the 2nd box to order a Medicare Replacement Card
- Enter your identifying information
- Proceed through the prompts to submit your request

To order a replacement Medicare card by phone,

- Call the RRB at 1-877-772-5772
- Choose option 1 for the automated help line
- Choose option 3 - Request a Replacement Medicare Card or Hear General Information about Medicare
- Press 1 to request a Replacement Medicare card
- Press 1 to confirm you have your Railroad Medicare Claim Number and Social Security Number available
- Follow the prompts to enter your information

2. You can call Palmetto GBA/Railroad Medicare.

When you call Palmetto GBA/Railroad Medicare, we will ask you for the following information:

- Your Medicare number
 - Your Name
 - Your Date of Birth
 - Your Address
 - Your Social Security Number
 - Your Telephone Number
- The Railroad Medicare Customer

Service Advocate (CSA) you speak to will verify the information you provide.

No matter which way you use, all replacement cards are mailed to the address the RRB has on file for the beneficiary. The replacement card will be received within 30 days. If the card is not received in 30 days, you must call the RRB at 877-772-5772.

To obtain a replacement card from Palmetto GBA/Railroad Medicare, please call our toll-free Beneficiary Customer Service Line at 800-833-4455, Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. ET. For the hearing impaired, call TTY/TDD at 877-566-3572. This line is for the hearing impaired with the appropriate dial-up service and is available during the same hours CSAs are available.

As always, we encourage you to visit our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/myrrmedicare>. We also invite you to join our listserv/email updates. Just select the ‘Listserves’ link at the top of our main webpage at www.PalmettoGBA.com/RR/Me.

— Jennifer Johnson,
Palmetto, GBA