



- SINCE 1937 -

# 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  
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NARVRE NEWSLETTER

AUGUST, 2023

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## FROM THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR —

We are deep into the month of July, and the U.S. House and Senate are working through the legislative process to determine the federal spending outlays on the annual appropriations bills for FY24. Early proposals from House subcommittees were worse than imagined for Amtrak. We've known all along that elections surely do have consequences. This year, in the 118th Congress, that is exceptionally true, and cruel. True to earlier threats, the House Republicans have announced that they intend to cut deep into spending on transportation and infrastructure systems, while targeting Amtrak which will adversely affect rail passenger train service. The GOP has proposed to curtail or eliminate existing rail projects funded by grant programs which will impact rail employees across the network. The House Appropriations Committee approved their Fiscal Year 2024 budget on a party-line vote. The bill proposes a 64% cut to Amtrak's budget for 2024, which could lead to rail service disruptions across the entire network, and the cancellation or suspension of dozens of critical passenger rail infrastructure upgrades. Republican leaders on committees and members of the Freedom Caucus continue to ignore the unprecedented growth and public interest in passenger rail service in America. They also disregard the popular and economic outcomes from the implementation of the Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act (IIJA), which passed the Senate with a bipartisan vote of 69-30 while the House voted 228-206 with 13 Republicans in favor of passage. Pres. Biden signed the bill into law in Nov 2021. Since gaining control of the House, the Republican party has dismissed the importance of that legislation, which happens to funnel billions to the states and local governments to up-

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## FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT —

Midsummer greetings to the members of NARVRE who are current for their 2023 dues in the ninety-five active Units and the more than three thousand (at-large) 801 members throughout the United States. If you are receiving this August national newsletter, then you are up to date on your dues. I am happy and pleased to report that since our last National Convention in May 2022 we have increased new membership by 580 through mid-July 2023. This increase was partly due to the establishment of Unit 002 Chicago in September 2022 and this Unit now boasts of having eighty-two members. Well-done all responsible for this growth including Unit002 President Tim Baker, Vice-President Dean Martinez, Secretary/Treasurer Mike Kelly, and Legislative Director David Pomrenke. Also, thanks to Area 4 Director Gary Nelson, Assistant Area 4 Directors George Wisdom, and John Zupansic. Finally, special thanks to 2022 new member Jeff Doerr and his wife Lori for their commitment to help in any way possible throughout

the Mid-West and Far-West.

I am sad to report that 201 members have passed away since May 2022 which gives us a net gain of 379 new members. It is of the utmost importance for each member to reach out by phone, email, Facebook and personal visit to your former co-workers and friends and inform them about NARVRE. The National and Area officers need your help to spread the word of NARVRE!

We also have several Units whose membership has been "closed" due to a lack of an officer "succession plan" within the Unit. As Unit officers reach an "age" where they cannot perform their duties, members must "step up to the plate" and continue the work of NARVRE in their local area to PROTECT, PROMOTE and PRESERVE OUR RAILROAD RETIREMENT benefits. The National Governing Board has made a commitment to visit many these locations this year and to help support Units and increase their membership plus reestablish those Units that are closed. We have made visits to at least twenty states this year already with another

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Celebrating 100th year birthday of Don Sullivan in Nampa ID surprise Presidential Visit. L-R NARVRE President George Boatwright - Betty Sullivan - Don Sullivan Unit 082 Nampa President Ted Zahdranicek Vice President Susan Liable.

## From the National Vice President —

Greetings from the Office of NARVRE National Vice President. The last National Newsletter, I reported we attended an informational conference in Portland, Oregon. We had a great attendance, and we are waiting for the final results on the number of new members. I had the privilege of meeting some wonderful NARVRE members from the Portland area along with a few from Salem, Oregon and other locations. I would like to thank them for their continued membership. I also would like to thank Area 7 Director Bob Boltz and Unit 074 President Don Reiling from Auburn, Washington for attending.

We will continue our attempts to recruit new members across the country. In August, we have plans to visit Myrtle Beach and Florence, South Carolina. We are also planning on visiting Cedar Rapids and Boone, Iowa along with Barstow and Sacramento California in the coming months. Thanks to Area 4 Director Gary Nelson and Assistant Area Director Dennis VanDyke, plans are



NARVRE President George Boatwright and Nampa ID Unit 082 President Ted Zahradnick

## 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 • Barbara Sundquist • Victor Sundquist

## Memorials

Vida Bazarth 103 years old • Dianne Meader • Mary Teel • Donald & Janet St Clair • Ron & Henerietta Partner • Thomas Gaynor • Norbert Fiedler • Michael Gill

being formulated for a regional conference in October hosted by Unit 154 in Marceline, Missouri.

I would like to apprise our members of the states with the most railroad retirees based on the most recent figures from the Railroad Retirement Board. Texas – 51,275, Illinois – 45,956, Pennsylvania = 38,937, New York – 36,813, Florida – 35,047, California – 34,429, Ohio – 26,547, Nebraska – 25,314, Missouri – 25,091, Georgia – 23,561, Indiana – 21,193, Virginia – 19,787. In these states and others, our members must educate the railroad retirees about NARVRE and what we do. We must ask them to join

## (National Legislative Director from page 1)

grade outdated roads and bridges, and many long-overdue safety improvements for rail passenger train systems. The investments to infrastructure and rail transportation would come unraveled by these republican bills and endanger thousands of operating, construction, and manufacturing jobs. Importantly, initial estimates indicate 10,000 Amtrak employees alone could be furloughed or separated due to a lack of funding. Currently, actions put into place via the IJJA legislation, even after the economic impact of the pandemic, are improving job opportunities and opening more options on public transit for Americans to get to school and work, as well as personal travel and vacations. The IJJA was set into motion with historic financing and investments above and beyond the five-year span of the bill. The bill states that all manufactured products will be American made, which is a continuance of the Fast Act which originally inserted that requirement into law in 2015. NARVRE is proud of our commitment and work to help pass both of those laws. Make no mistake, this House fiscal budget bill proposes to repeal the IJJA and eliminate scores of state-sponsored transit and intercity rail infrastructure projects that benefit tens of millions of Americans (rpa.org news). In the coming weeks, we will take on the fight once again, to protect what we have and that which helps to protect rail workers and retirees drawing retirement benefits. As NARVRE members and constituents, we must continue to educate our own Representatives in Congress.

Thankfully, the bipartisan appropriations approved in the Senate are in sharp contrast to the severity leveled and approved by the Republican-controlled House. The House fiscal budget (T-HUD) approved

NARVRE to help PROTECT, PRESERVE AND PROMOTE their railroad retirement benefits. We have heard about congress attempting to steal our railroad retirement from us. NARVRE was there every time to prevent this from occurring. We must ask ourselves this question: “What would happen with your Railroad Retirement benefits if NARVRE did not exist?” Would you be receiving only Social Security? Ask them to join NARVRE to insure this would never happen. We are only as strong as the number of members we have.

— **Ron Hylla**  
*NARVRE National Vice President*

\$875 million in funding for Amtrak on a party-line vote, which is a dramatic cut from fiscal 2023. The Senate advanced its FY24 bill (T-HUD) providing \$2.45 billion for Amtrak on a unanimous vote. The Senate budget proposal rejected the radical cuts to rail and transit included in the House bill. The House proposals to cut funding in grant programs would decimate the ongoing work and projects critical to improving the infrastructure and operations of rail expansion as directed by the IJJA. The House proposal of \$258 million for the CRISI grant program is a 50% cut from FY2023 and the House also seeks to zero out the RAISE program and eliminate all intercity passenger grant funding (beyond the \$7.2 billion guaranteed in the IJJA legislation). The Senate provides \$573 million for the CRISI grant program. The House proposes an 85 percent cut to the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) Investment Grants which would stop construction on rail and transit projects, and that includes Amtrak’s new Hudson River rail tunnel. In contrast, the Senate provides \$16.9 billion for the FTA funding. The House proposes to zero out the new Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Program, which is being used to upgrade and expand intercity train service across the nation. The Senate provides \$100 million for the Fed-State Partnership funds to advance State-Supported Corridors with connections to Long-Distance Routes. The differences are obvious as to who’s serious about governing and who is not. At this point in time, the leadership states that they won’t be able to advance these bills until after the August recess, so a floor vote would not take place until mid-September at the earliest. That’s asking a lot, as FY23 ends on September 30.

— **Gary Faley**,  
*National Legislative Director*



## From the National Secretary-Treasurer —

The 2024 dues campaign is fastly approaching and this year all officers will be asked to get ahead of the game. All hands on deck as last year we had some successes but not near enough. We failed to collect over \$85,000 in uncollected dues. Our 801 calling committee will be calling delinquent members reminding and encouraging people to renew their membership.

Packets will be mailed September to all Unit Secretaries, Treasurers, Governing Board, and Assistant Area Directors. The large envelopes will contain newly updated Unit reporting materials. These include Membership Reporting Form, Officer Election Form, and Annual Audit Form. No doubt over the last few years, the pandemic significantly impacted our organization and our ability not only to collect dues, but to hold informative meetings whereby members can socially gather, share information, and hear presentations from various speakers and public figures. Our policy from last year remains the same, any dues collected between now and the end of the year will be credited through December 31, 2024. National dues rates for members associated with a local unit are \$29.00 for singles and \$36.00 for couples. 801 (members not associated with a local unit) rates are \$31.00 for singles and \$38.00 for couples. For an easy way to pay membership dues, we have added QR Codes which are now displayed in this publication, on our brochures, and our website [www.narvre.us](http://www.narvre.us). Simply use your smartphone's camera to scan the code and it will bring you directly to our website where you pay your yearly dues

**(National President from page 1)**  
six coming in the fall.

I made an error back in April, which was brought to my attention by several of our members, and I am terribly sorry. The error was a statement that the death benefit from the RRB was \$255 across the board, the same as social security provides. This was both right and wrong as there was a "HOWEVER," which was brought to my attention by a 90-year-old member named John this past May. (THANK YOU John)! An RRB questions and answers from 2021 states "Both railroad retirement and social security provide a lump-sum benefit of \$255. HOWEVER, if a railroad employee completed 10 years of creditable railroad service before 1975, the average railroad retirement lump-sum benefit payable is \$1,030." (Special emphasis added).

electronically.

Last month we recognized Units which had no delinquent members on their respective Rosters. Listed below are Units 0% delinquencies and those which have 1% - 15% delinquencies. We certainly appreciate and commend these Units and the Officers responsible for outstanding management of their local resources. We will recognize such achievements at the 2024 National Convention,

### 0 % Delinquent

003 CHATTANOOGA TN Al Green Pres Mary Bowen ST  
002 CHICAGO IL Tim Baker Pres - Jose Garza ST  
153 FORT MADISON IA Stan & Jane Haesig Pres and ST  
165 MOBERLY MO Richard Duley Pres Kristine Campbell Wisdom ST  
081 SPOKANE WA Don Cain Pres Claudia Rolinger Treas  
151 EAST LIVERPOOL OH Randall Sarocco Pres Lee Powell ST

### 2% to 15 % Delinquent

166 SPRINGFIELD MO 2% Vic Serna Pres Joe & Marsha Ratcliff Treas Susie Taylor Sec  
123 FARGO ND 3% Ken Tigue Pres Marvin Boser ST  
148 PARSONS KS 3% Charles Wells Pres Lois Schrum Treas Jeanine Dodds Sec  
039 STOCKTON CA 3% Bill Sullivan Pres Paul Jevert ST  
093 SHAWNEE OK 4% John Permetter Pres Virginia Kubiak ST  
074 AUBURN WA 5% Don Reiling Pres Kay Shaben Treas  
057 EUGENE OR 5% Geraldine Peltzer Pres Colleen Hisey  
118 ELKINS WV 6% Thomas Jones Pres and Treas

Simply said if you hired out in 1964 and had ten creditable years of service by January 1, 1975, you qualify for a larger death benefit.

We will soon enter the "dog days of summer" and we are looking forward to the cooler days of autumn. September/October is the time to respond to your local unit treasurers request for you to pay your dues for 2024 and for the 801 (at-large) members to respond to the National Secretary/Treasurers (NST) "statement of dues". We are now only 10 months away from the 43rd Biennial Convention hosted by Unit 095 Kansas City, MO. All Units should elect delegates to the Convention no later than November and send the info to the NST prior to December 31 for inclusion in the official guide for the Convention and National Directory

— **George Boatwright, National President**

030 COUNCIL BLUFFS IA 7% John Billingsley Pres Marge Ingram Treas Pam Fogle Sec  
017 NAVARRE OH 8% Robert Miller Pres Lisa Conley ST  
171 MICHIGAN CITY IN 9% Mark Schiesser Pres & Treas Jeannie Lawson Sec  
006 TULSA OK 9% Jerry Agee Pres - Wanda Giiddens ST  
082 NAMPA ID 9% Ted Zahradnecik Pres Chery Lopez Treas  
187 HOUSTON TX 10% Dennis Taylor Pres Pam Sackett ST  
154 MARCELINE MO 11% Jackie Ray White Pres Nancy Schreiner ST  
107 ST. CLOUD MN 11% Duane Taydych Pres Cheri Hylla Treas  
095 KANSAS CITY MO 12% Michael Steward Pres Florence Thexton ST Philip Beebe Sec  
056 ST. LOUIS MO 12% Norbert Shacklett Pres Wanda Sullivan Treas Pat Shacklett Sec  
163 SAN ANTONIO TX 14% D R Castillo Pres Sergio X Perez ST  
080 PENSACOLA FL 15% James Gilman Pres Velma Foster ST

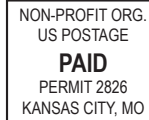
— **James (Phil) Steward,**  
**National Secretary/Treasurer**



Unit 147 had its regular monthly meeting at the Four County Young at Heart Senior Center in Bellevue, Ohio. The guest speaker was Area 2 Director, Walter Barrows with 23 members present. Mr. Barrows gave a most informative and stimulating presentation of what NARVRE is all about and reasons why all rail retirees should belong. Pictured left to right: John Brown—Trustee, Jeff Haughawout—President. Marge Kobylski—Member, Walter Barrows--Area 2 Director of Narvre, Paul Carr--Unit 147's Medicare Insurance Specialist, M.F. Perry--Trustee



Area 8 Asst Director Niece Patterson visits St Louis Unit 056 with Unit President Norbert Shacklette



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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### National President

George Boatwright  
2806 Pebble Beach Drive  
Elkton, MD 21921  
386-589-6777  
amboat49@hotmail.com

### National Vice President

Ron Hylla  
39594 125th Avenue  
Holdingford, MN. 56340  
320-492-6411  
320-363-4346  
rsimba@aol.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

## Summer Fun: Traveling Abroad and Your Medicare Coverage

If you are planning a trip outside of the United States and its territories, it's important not to assume you can take your Medicare coverage with you. Unfortunately, most of Medicare's payments for emergency and/or non-emergency services cease once you are beyond the U.S. borders, which include the 50 states, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the territorial waters adjacent to these areas.

Rare Circumstances in Which Medicare May Pay for Medically Reasonable and Necessary Services Outside of the U.S.:

\* Medical treatment you receive on a cruise ship when the ship is in U.S. territorial waters. This means while the ship is in a U.S. port or is within six hours of arriving at or departing from a U.S. port.

\* Emergency inpatient treatment you receive at a Canadian hospital when you are traveling straight through Canada between Alaska and another state, and the closest hospital that can treat you is in Canada. There is no benefit when you are vacationing in Canada.

\* Emergency inpatient treatment you receive at a foreign hospital when the emergency occurs in the U.S. but the closest hospital that can provide necessary treatment is outside of the U.S.

\* In addition to when you are traveling,

Medicare may also cover emergency or non-emergency inpatient treatment you receive at a foreign hospital when you live in the U.S., but the foreign hospital is closer, or substantially more accessible, to your U.S. residence than the nearest participating U.S. hospital that can provide the care needed. Physician and ambulance services performed as part of a covered foreign inpatient hospitalization may also be paid.

**IMPORTANT:** Please remember, being an 'inpatient' means you have been admitted to the hospital and are not there in observation status only. Spending the night in a hospital does not mean you were admitted.

Note: Some Medicare Advantage Plans and Medicare supplemental plans (not Original Medicare/Railroad Medicare) may pay for additional services, but you need to check with your plan before you travel to be sure.

When Medicare Won't Pay:

\* Medicare won't pay for any services related to a foreign hospital stay if the hospital stay is not covered by Medicare (this includes ambulance services).

\* Medicare won't pay for foreign ambulance transports or physician services after your foreign hospital stay is over (even if Medicare pays for the inpatient hospital stay).

Steps You Take:

\* Consider buying travel insurance. Because some travel insurance plans don't

cover health care services, be sure to talk to your insurance or travel agent about this topic. If the cost of travel insurance seems high, please keep in mind that most foreign services you receive require payment in full prior to leaving the facility, and in some instances, prior to receiving services.

\* You may have to file a claim yourself, since foreign hospitals are not required to file claims to Medicare. For information on how to file a claim, please visit our article called 'Filing a Claim to Railroad Medicare: Using the Railroad Retirement "Patient's Request for Medicare Payment" (G-740S) Form' located on our website at <https://palmettogba.com/palmetto/rrb.nsf/DIDC/AXRHM08308~Resources~Forms>

If you have question about your Part B Medicare coverage, please call our Beneficiary Contact Center at 800-833-4455, between 8:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. ET Monday through Friday. You may access the status of your Part B claims and a listing of people you have authorized to have access to your health information through our free internet portal, MyRRMed. You can also see, download and print your historical Railroad Medicare Part B Medicare Summary Notices (MSN). You can do all of this when you register for MyRRMed at [www.PalmettoGBA.com/MyRRMed](http://www.PalmettoGBA.com/MyRRMed).

— Jennifer Johnson  
Palmetto, GBA