



- 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, 2024

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## FROM THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR —

We have been working on Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) issues for the better part of this year, and our work is not done, to be sure. Relative to operational needs of the RRB, the House Appropriations Committee has again proposed more cuts in funding for the agency’s administrative budget for FY2025. The GOP House majority passed their appropriation bill on a party-line vote which represents a decrease of \$26 million from an already inefficient level in current year operations. Early July, NARVRE members were asked to contact their Representatives in Congress and urge their support for the full funding requests from the RRB in order to address longstanding backlogs in many offices due to chronic understaffing since FY2017. Advocacy groups from rail labor and throughout the rail industry are all asking for the same consideration, reminding Congress that funding for the RRB comes from railroad trust funds, paid for by the rail industry and rail employees, and not from the U.S.

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## FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT —

Well, here we are in the middle of one “HOT” summer. Heat coming from everywhere not only the sun, but both sides of the political aisle. No matter what our individual political views are, THANK GOD former President Trump was not seriously hurt. Now the candidates for President and Congressional positions can resume seeking our votes in the upcoming November elections. Give heed to the information coming from our National Legislative Director, Gary Faley, in the coming months. As always support those candidates that Promote and Preserve, not only Railroad Retirement benefits but also Social Security as they are closely related.

Three years ago, NARVRE leadership initiated a training program for individual Units to set up and monitor FACEBOOK GROUPS. Previously about 8 Units around the country starting in 2015 had setup Facebook pages. I am happy to report we now have more than 60 GROUPS, most of which are Unit groups and a few regionals set up by the Executive Board members. These Groups are intended to Promote and

Preserve NARVRE by listing upcoming meetings, picnics, birthdays/anniversaries, deaths, special events and future speakers at meetings.

Sadly. A very few individuals have used this platform to air their perceived grievances and dislike for Unit officers. This will not be tolerated by your President and the other leaders of NARVRE. If you are dissatisfied with how your Unit is run, PLEASE contact your local officers by phone, email, direct messaging or ATTEND MEETINGS! ALL of our local officers are volunteering their time and energy to PROMOTE, PROTECT and PRESERVE Railroad Retirement benefits and thus should have your respect and support. NOW, I will step down from my “soapbox” and relate some GOOD and POSITIVE news!

Most of us former railroaders had some type of emergency response training for choking, breathing difficulty and heart attacks. Recently, one of the members of Unit061OAKLAND, faced the choking hazard at their luncheon meeting. A member tried to do the Heimlich maneuver but needed help from another room in the form of waitress, Renee Cook, who successfully performed the procedure. I think individual Units should ask local fire/EMT units to come to a meeting to demonstrate lifesaving procedures to us “old” people. Along with Unit061’s leadership, I would personally like to THANK, Renee Cook from the Black Bear Diner for possibly saving the life of one of our members.

This past month I had the honor of attending the 12th annual picnic held by Unit043CONNEAUT, OH and on August 15th I plan to meet with Unit151EAST-LIVERPOOL, OH for their picnic. Both events have the support of Duran & Murphy law firm, who has supported Ohio State Association Units for years preceding Jones Granger’s partnership with NARVRE. In ad-

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NARVRE leaders at booth attending festivities in Galesburg IL. Area 4 Director Gary Nelson; Stanley R Haas; Treasurer, Unit 096, Galesburg IL; Ron Hylla, National Vice President.

## From the National Vice President —

Greetings from the Office of NARVRE National Vice President. NARVRE National President and I have been busy visiting locations to encourage more railroaders to join NARVRE. As President Boatwright advised, he visited NARVRE Unit 043 in Conneaut OH. Meanwhile, I attend the Railroad Days event and Unit 096 in Galesburg IL with NARVRE Area 6 Director Gary Nelson and Jeff Doerr from Jones Granger Law Firm. Director Nelson and I met with Unit 096 Treasurer Stan Haas and member Diane Godsil. Both NARVRE members are working vigorously to keep their unit afloat, much like many units in NARVRE.

Such is why I call upon all NARVRE Area Directors to review the rosters in their respective areas. If we find units with depleting memberships, they need to contact the Unit Officers of the unit to determine what can be done to curtail the decreases. Many units falter because of their lack of action to seek new members. While the Area Directors are responsible for their respective areas, the units themselves are also in control of their destinies.

During the week of August 19, 2024, we will be visiting areas in North Dakota to potentially start new units. After consulting with Area 6 Director Gary Marquart, I will be traveling to Minot and Mandan ND. Joining me will be Area 4 Director Gary Nelson

and Jeff Doerr from Jones Granger. We plan to relay the importance of railroaders, active and retired, to join NARVRE and start new units. Jeff Doerr will be informing the attendees of the Asbestos Trust Fund available to retired railroaders. Information will be sent to NARVRE members in the vicinity of these two locations.

Finally, I would like to thank those who have contributed to NARVRE through

### (National President from page 1)

dition, TLC Insurance is also in attendance at these meetings and provides door prizes. Thank you to Craig Villwock, TLC and your regional agents for your continuing support of NARVRE. Contact them for information about supplemental Medicare options at 330-637-8320 and mention NARVRE

Following the 43rd Biennial Convention of NARVRE, I am happy to report, UNIT 095 KANSAS CITY, MO was able to remit the sum of \$9,000 to the general treasury of NARVRE. THANK YOU to all involved in making this Convention a rousing success.

### (National Legislative Director from page 1)

taxpayers. This year, budget cuts forced the agency to implement a hiring freeze. Crucial improvements to IT have declined, leaving information and data open to new cybersecurity risks with systems running on outdated mainframes. Reasonable requests for adequate funding should be appropriated to properly protect the basic personal information of all beneficiaries. All of us are personally invested in this matter and we need to insist that our Representatives in Congress approve the full funding of \$172.3 million requested by the RRB federal agency.

Our email on RRB funding was sent

donations above their regular membership fees. Weldon Granger from Jones Granger Law Firm has made monthly donations to NARVRE. If you would like to contribute, please send your donation to the NARVRE National Secretary-Treasurer Phil Steward. As a thank you, you will receive recognition in the NARVRE Newsletter.

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

Special THANKS to JonesGranger law firm for their sponsorship of the Convention and their continuing support of NARVRE. PLEASE contact them at 800-231-3359 or [www.jonesgranger.com](http://www.jonesgranger.com) with individual concerns about asbestos exposure during your career.

Visit our FACEBOOK GROUPS by clicking on Groups on your Facebook page and then search for NARVRE GROUPS. Soon we will begin “Indian Summer” and then Fall before we know it. Keep Cool and “keep your cool”! STAY SAFE!

— **George Boatwright**,  
*National President*

out on July 2, 2024. Members can use NARVRE toll-free #'s to reach their Member of Congress. This is a necessity for many active members that do not have access to a computer. We also work with other groups that provide online options to contact Congress, such as this from rail labor: <https://actionnetwork.org/letters/railroaders-fund-our-retirement-board-tell-the-house-to-give-us-the-budget-we-are-owed/>.

The House GOP continues to dismiss the importance and popularity of passenger rail in America and proposals in the recent markup of the House Appropriations Committee cut deep into investments for the current upgrading and modernization of projects across the nation. Reports indicate that the House bill would cut more than \$300 million from Amtrak's FY25 budget, affecting train service across the NE Corridor and the National Network. It would also zero out funding for the Federal-State Partnership Operation which pays for upgrades on projects to expand America's intercity passenger rail service. The House GOP voted to kill specific funding that will hinder the economic developments of many projects such as the Brightline West which will connect Las Vegas to Southern Calif. That project, expected to launch higher speed service in

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## 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 • Donation in Honor former VP Mike Koziara by Unit 047 La Crosse - Pres Douglas Fischer - Secretary Nancy Fischer - Treasurer Patricia Burr - L R Dan Kelleher • Barbara Sundquist • Victor Sundquist • Donation in Honor of Marjorie Carson by Unit 030 Council Bluffs IA Pres John Billingsly - Secretary Pam Fogle - Treasurer Marjorie Ingram - L R Larry Fent • David Pfeiler • Jones and Granger Law Firm • TLC Insurance Group • Randall Brassell

## Memorials

Greg Haynes Unit President Unit 092 Proctor/Duluth MN • Mark D Onan • La Von P Christian • Arthur L Zurn • Marjorie Bucklin • Ernie M. Edmonds • Dale Dezeller • Shirley Johnson



(L to R) Discussing RRB Issues, Asst Area 3 Director, Dan Lauzon; Rachel Sherman; Congresswoman Chellie Pingree, D-ME.

## From the National Secretary-Treasurer —

Turning the page on the 2024 Convention, which was an outstanding success, Unit 095 says thanks to all Units and individuals for buying magazine advertisements and providing donations to this enormous undertaking. I cannot help but reiterate my gratitude for the \$9000 donation made to the National Organization by the wonderful members of Unit 095 Kansas City MO. I certainly appreciate having the honor of working with during the past year Unit 95 original Convention committee consisting Of President Michael Steward,

### (National Legislative Director from page 2)

2028, is only possible due to investments of grants earmarked for the Fed-State partnerships. The response from the GOP House members was to vote to end funding and possibly kill this project and all of the jobs with it. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) is a bipartisan law designed to finally restore adequate investments in rail and transit, after decades of ignoring the decay of the nation's rail infrastructure. The IIJA authorizes \$1.2 trillion for transportation and infrastructure with \$550 billion going to "new" investments. This "once in a lifetime" legislation is projected to create over 2 million jobs. Pres. Biden, who campaigned on the need for such invest-

Secretary Shari Miller, and Treasurer Florence Thaxton

Excerpted from Worldwide Technology, David L Steward, Chairperson and Founder's book Leadership by the Good Book. SERVE THOSE AROUND YOU "Did you hear the one about the chicken and the pig going into business together? They agreed to open a restaurant and then had to produce a name. The chicken said, "I know the perfect name -- let's call it Ham 'n' Eggs!" The pig thought for a moment and then replied, I don't think so." I'd be a hundred percent committed, but you would only be part time. "It's corny, but I love the point it makes. When you're committed to leading by serv-

ments, kept his promise and signed this historic legislation into law in November of 2021. Relative to the recent mark-up, the Republican majority also voted to cut funding for railroad safety research by \$8 million. We will pay attention to public statements on rail safety by members of Congress because the hypocrisy runs deep in this election year. Certain elected officials who voted against American rail projects, are appearing at ground-breaking ceremonies in our states and towns. Amtrak and transit commuters and the traveling public should remember this is an election year.

While we look for better outcomes from the Senate, we do not expect Congress to finish their full budgets before the end of this Fiscal Year on 9/30/24. We will keep you updated. You can simply email this office if you want to receive our updated information on these issues. NARVRE thanks you for your involvement.

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

**2024 Convention:** L-R Norbert Shacklett Pres St Louis MO - Vic Sirna Pres Springfield MO - Alda Evans Sec Topeka KS - Carl Shumpert Asst Area 2 Director - Roger Swanson Chair Finance Committee



**2024 Convention:** L-R Enie Mandoza, Unit 036 Pres - J J Quesada VP Unit 163 San Antonio Tony Padilla; Area 5 Director; Pam Sackett, Sec Houston TX; Dennis Taylor, Pres Houston TX; Juan Villarpondo, Delegate Unit 61, Oakland CA



ing a higher purpose, you naturally serve the people around you. When you begin with this commitment to servant leadership as your foundation, you create a domino effect. When you are all in, the people are all in! You not only model the kind of attitude and work ethic you expect in others, but you also attract new employees with the same sensibilities. These new hires reinforce the example of servant leadership while also attracting similar people to join their teams and their departments. People who aren't motivated to serve naturally don't stick around. Like the chicken, they're not committed 100 percent. Putting those entrusted to your care first is the wisest investment you can make in any business. When you serve them and look out for their best interests, over time you build up a level of trust that you can't get any other way. Over the years, I have learned that people want to work for and do business with people they trust. Once they trust you, the return on your investment is manifold. This is not a business strategy -- it's a fundamental principle of human relationships."

The book referenced above was available to our convention attendees, we have only 12 left and are available. If you wish to obtain a copy, contact the National Office and we will be glad to send the book to you.

All the revisions of the Bylaws and Policy and Procedures Manual which can be accessed through our website [www.narvre.us](http://www.narvre.us) have been updated.

In addition, on our website [www.narvre.us](http://www.narvre.us) all the forms such as Membership Reporting Form and Annual Audit Form and PayPal information have been updated.

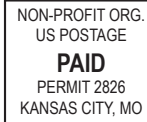
We posted on our National Facebook page, National NARVRE Forum over 200 pictures taken of the 2024 convention plus 30 or more Convention pictures are posted on our website [www.narvre.us](http://www.narvre.us)

As a reminder our national dues are listed below

SINGLE UNIT MEMBER \$32.00  
COUPLE UNIT MEMBERS \$39.00  
801 AT-LARGE SINGLE MEMBER \$34.00  
801 AT-LARGE COUPLE MEMBERS \$41.00

New members who join NARVRE for the first time and pay dues after July 1 will be paid through the remaining current year and through the end of the following year. Again, this is for new members one time only.

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



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

# Medicare Part B's Coverage of Drugs Used to Treat Alzheimer's Disease

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has announced coverage for a second drug aimed at treating Alzheimer Disease (AD). CMS approved the use of Kisunla (donanemab) in July 2024. Kisunla joins Leqembi (lecanemab), which became covered in July 2023. Both drugs are approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). These drugs are covered under Medicare Part B/Railroad Medicare.

What is AD:

AD is a brain disorder that affects thinking, personality, behavior, and memory. This disease is the top cause of dementia in older adults in the United States. The disease is irreversible and leads to death.

Who is eligible for these drugs:

- Patients with a medical diagnosis of mild cognitive impairment due to AD or mild AD dementia,

or

- Patients with a confirmed presence of amyloid beta pathology consistent with AD. The clustering of amyloid peptides is believed to form plaques in the brain.

How are the drugs administered:

These drugs are given intravenously (through a vein) in your doctor's office or other outpatient setting.

When does Medicare cover these drugs:

Medicare covers these specific drugs when you meet all medically reasonable and necessary criteria. Additionally, your healthcare provider will submit treatment data in a qualifying study. Submitting this information will help show how well the drugs work as part of your treatment plan.

How does Medicare pay for these drugs:

Medicare covers 80% of the Medicare-approved cost of these drugs after you have met the Part B deductible. If you are enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan or have a Medicare Supplemental policy, your costs may not be the same. You will need to contact your plan to understand how they pay for these drugs.

Very important things to know:

1. You may need additional services to see if these drugs would benefit you, such as scans or other medical tests. Be sure to talk to your healthcare provider about what tests or scans may be necessary.

2. While these drugs may slow the progression of AD symptoms, they do not cure the disease.

If you have questions about how Railroad Medicare pays for these drugs, please call our Beneficiary Contact Center at 800-833-4455. Representatives are available Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. ET. You can also call us at

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 Customer Service Representatives are available.

— Jennifer Johnson  
Palmetto, GBA



Unit 043 Conneaut OH picnic(L to R) TLC Executive, Craig Villwock and NARVRE National President George Boatwright.