



# National Association of Retired & Veteran Railway Employees, Inc.

NARVRE National Office

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NARVRE NEWSLETTER

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## FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT —

It has been a while since we wrote an article on our Political Action Committee, NARVREPAC. It is expected in 2016 alone that there will be close to \$1 billion spent in next year's presidential election let alone the senate and house races. There are so many political action committee out there who raise millions of dollars in the political process. To give you an idea for example lets just look at the railroad industry alone. In the election cycle of 2014 where 17 PACS

gave a total of \$6.4 million with 63% going to Republicans and 37 % to Democrats.

There is no way NARVRE can compete with corporate America but we can do our part. Every member of NARVRE can make a voluntary contribution to NARVREPAC. We are registered with the Federal Election Commission as a 501 (c)4 which allows us to have a PAC. All contributions have to be reported to the FEC as required by law. Candidates who support our issues whether they are Democrats or Republican with the approval of the National Legislative Director and his committee would be eligible

for a contribution.

How can you take part. You can make a voluntary contribution to NARVREPAC for any amount and mail your check to National Secretary Treasurer Joyce Burton. Checks have to be written to NARVREPAC only not to NARVRE in general. **No funds can be used from Unit treasuries or no passing the "hat." All contributions must come from individuals on a voluntary basis only.**

I want to thank you in advance for your participation in NARVREPAC. We cannot do it with out you!

— Tom Dwyer, National President

## From the National Legislative Director —

On March 4, 2015, our membership began contacting their Representatives in Congress urging them to protect Amtrak from a foolish amendment meant to destroy that train system, and to finally pass H.R. 749. This legislation is a bipartisan product from the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (T&I) which would reauthorize annual funding for Amtrak @ almost \$1.4 billion per year. The threat in not supporting this bill, which is still woefully underfunded, was to face the usual myriad of attacks each year, all bent on disrupting and crippling the entire train service. The Passenger Rail Reform & Investment Act or PRIIA (H.R. 749) was passed 316-101 under the leadership and bipartisan management of the T&I Committee. Rep. Tom McClintock (R-CA) whose main objective was to end all federal subsidies for Amtrak, offered the one amendment that we had to oppose and defeat. NARVRE worked with many alliances to get that done. McClintock has apparently taken over for former Rep. Paul Broun (R-GA), a repeat offender that consistently offered absurd amendments in order to destroy Amtrak. Just as we beat back the killing proposals from Paul Broun, we did the same with Rep. McClintock. The bipartisan leadership of the T&I committee was evident

as the major threat was basically limited to the one amendment. In previous years, we faced additional amendments from a number of Representatives all meant to cripple Amtrak. That was averted in this vote because of the support from both parties. This legislation was a necessary rail investment that was agreed to only after many compromises were made on both sides of the aisle. This should serve as a welcome reminder to other committees as to how you move important legislation through the Congress. NARVRE's motivation in supporting this bipartisan bill, is due to our history with an eye to the future. Helping to pass this legislation will protect existing jobs on Amtrak, and help sustain the Amtrak train service. We hope that the investment and reforms in this bill helps Amtrak to become an integral and fundamental component of the national transportation policy.

NARVRE is a legislative association that relies on a membership that makes up a national constituency with the immediate capability to reach many different offices within the Congress. Our elected officials are seated on many different committees that can be involved in many decisions that can affect our families and railroad retirement annuities. Importantly, as was the case on H.R. 749, each member has an important role in communicating and expressing our collective voice as members of NARVRE. Make no mistake, NARVRE

is indeed a "Special Interest" Association, assigned with a basic mission to protect and preserve railroad retirement. We are a diverse group with members from all across the country. We should know about our own Member of Congress, and they should know about us. We know that Rep. Tom McClintock will always be a threat to Amtrak, and he should not be trusted by railroad retirees drawing an annuity. McClintock represents the 4th District in southern California. He represents a district that encompasses one of the largest railroad towns in America, yet he's no fan of passenger rail train service. He doesn't believe Amtrak should receive any federal subsidies, yet he doesn't have a problem with much larger subsidies for the highways and airline industry. He ignores the popularity of the traveling public, as Amtrak breaks records in ridership on a monthly and yearly basis. Many workers living in rural areas, survive because of rail transportation that gets them to and from work and many wish they had more accessible connections to the cities and job markets. Americans from all political backgrounds have consistently polled in favor of more trains and more routes. Indeed, a high percentage of taxpayers in this country support an increase in federal funds for Amtrak and passenger train service. We should not support

## From the National Vice President —

Once again, the goal of NARVRE is to increase membership and most important to research out to find niches where railroad retirees are found. Some units are very dedicated to find ways to search out for railroad retirees others may find it difficult, not because they are not dedicated but their railroad industry has closed out where railroads once flourished because of deregulation of the industry. **Here is a suggestion from our Legislative Representative in Unit 44 in Las Vegas who understands how some Units advertise in their areas.** “Knowing we do not nationally have the capacity or money to reach out to seniors as AARP or The Alliance for Retired Americans with millions of members to afford to advertise, we can find other ways. In Las Vegas we have 1100 Railroad Retiree workers and we’re constantly trying to find ways to reach out to them to find new members, including paying for ads in local papers ourselves and leaving literature in places where retired rails may go, such as well as on senior centers, but with not much luck. It is only by reaching those still working that we have a chance. I’m glad to hear RRB is inviting NARVRE’s participation--that’s hopeful. Since unions and NARVRE both have partially the same goal, the protection of wages and pensions, you’d think they’d give us a break on advertising gratuitously. I guess it doesn’t work that way. Again, thanks for your response,” **said Joan Bockholt Legislative Representative of NARVRE Unit 44, in Las Vegas Nevada** who was answering to a response by National Vice President Tony Padilla regarding advertising.

### Informational Meeting in Fort Worth, Texas on February 12, 2015

National President Tom Dwyer, V.P. Tony Padilla and Past President Whitey Westphal held a NARVRE Informational Meeting in Fort Worth, Texas on February 12, 2015. Although a small group showed up, they were determined to form a NARVRE Unit. Our presentation was welcomed and accepted with great support to start a Unit and those that attended volunteered to be the temporary officers and made a commitment to follow thru to recruit the necessary membership to charter a unit. This tribute is to thank all those that attended making the NARVRE Meeting a success. We have a complete slate of

officers, **Gary Bowen for President, Larry Hutsell for VP, Ruben Cano Jr. for Secretary-Treasurer, and Jack Kelly for Legislative Representative.** We look forward to seeing a good number of members to be a part of the NARVRE




*Left to right: Whitey, Mark Banton, Steve Devaney, George Appleby, Ruben Cano Sr., Ruben Cano Jr., Pres. Gary Bowen, Jack Kelly, Ken Stevens, Tom Dwyer, and on far right Darrell Jones. (Not Shown Larry Hutsell-VP).*

### Meeting NARVRE Unit 85 of Denison/Sherman, Texas on February 13, 2015

**President Bobby White of NARVRE Unit 85 of Denison/Sherman, Texas** invited National President Tom Dwyer, V.P. Tony Padilla and Past President Whitey Westphal to speak at their regular monthly meeting on February 13, 2015. **President Bobby White** opened the meeting on time and called the meeting to order calling for the opening prayer and pledge of allegiance to the Flag. He then made the introduction of the special guests who followed: Past President **Whitey** opened the meeting with the historical preview of the our NARVRE history and the politics involved to the purpose of NARVRE organization to Protect, Promote and Preserve our Railroad Retirement pension... etc. He talked for about twenty minutes on how seniors are always challenged with pharmaceutical drugs and how the Will Moody Firm whom he represents, can help make sure that our members are protected when these drugs work adversely and pointed out to his material on the display table. **Whitey, then introduced VP Tony Padilla** who spoke for about twenty minutes on all political and legislative issues and fights in the efforts to protect our Railroad Retirement

historical record of the Fort Worth Charter—the minimum required is 17 which include spouses. In reality all you need is nine paid members and their spouses to qualify for a NARVRE Charter. Once again, thank you for your commitment to promote, preserve and protect your Railroad Retirement Pension. *Phone photo from Tony Padilla*

Pension and gave a historical review of the many close victories we had in the past to keep our retirement from going into the social security administration and made clear we are not a politically motivated organization, but we present the facts about who periodically wants to take away your RR Pension. Tony talked about working with the Area Directors about our goals to increase membership and establish new Units and called on the membership to stay active and alert to preserve our pension. **Tony recognized our TX Area 5 Director G.G. Gonzales** to let the membership know he was ill and could not attend this meeting. Brother **Whitey Westphal then introduced President Tom Dwyer** who also spoke for about 20 minutes on some of the many challenges he faces and inquiries from the membership regarding protection of their benefits. He spoke of the many cases where he was able to recuperate State Tax Laws the State wanted to tax retirement income. He talked how he had to fight in court and in the legislature to make his point that Railroad Retirement wages are federal wages and cannot be taxed by states because of federal pre-emptions of the laws. Overall we presented and completed a very

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## (National Legislative Director from page 1)

those that do not support our issues. The new Chairman of the House T&I Committee (T&I), Rep. Bill Shuster, is a welcome change from his predecessor in that he supports Amtrak train service. However, we know that the bipartisan bill just passed, HR 749, is filled with many proposals that could cause problems down the road. There is language in the bill that could cause the destruction of many jobs if the actual language is implemented. The chairman of the House T&I Sub-Committee on Railroads, Rep. Jeff Denham (R-10th, CA), is in favor of eliminating the food & beverage (F&B) division on Amtrak trains. He turns a blind eye to the fact that the F&B service is

very popular among travelers, especially the long-distance riders who expect good food and good service. In T&I hearings, Denham has dismissed testimony and illustrations on the point that the suggestion to downsize or eliminate the F&B service could easily cause a decrease in ridership. He constantly comments on the need for Amtrak to act like a business yet he ignores these facts that warn that his business prescriptions will cause a loss of profit, and would threaten Amtrak's bottom line. It might be that he does not care about the business outcomes on Amtrak. Could it be that he knows that his suggestions might result in more bad profit margins and ultimately set up an unraveling of specific Amtrak routes? The history of his actions should make us wonder. We will likely be involved in this

legislation again...

The Supreme Court on 3/9/15 has ruled that Amtrak is indeed a government entity and not a private company as the Association of American Railroads (AAR) argued. This means that Amtrak does have the authority to set on-time Performance Standards and Amtrak trains should be given priority on freight rail lines. We recently joined with the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) asking our members to send in their personal stories regarding train delays while riding on Amtrak. As always, thanks to the many members that got involved...we have many frequent Amtrak travelers that do not appreciate these long delays! Hopefully, this action will help.

— Gary M. Faley, Legislative Director

## From the National Secretary-Treasurer

Since last month we have received a great number of Audit reports for 2014 and that is much appreciated, for those S/T that have not completed them please do so. Also as a reminder of the S/T for the STATE ASSN's please get you Audit reports in to National, I have Kansas and Ohio completed need OK and FL. Also DO NOT FORGET THE IRS 990N EPOSTCARD REPORT.

**WARNING:** The IRS was hacked around February 24, 2015, there is a security warning on the website where we enter our 990-N information for each Unit. You will need to change the password for your entry into the system. We have not had a good response from the IRS with help. Keep you password written in a safe place for this report to continue through

your term in office and pass it onward to all election position changes for the future. Each new officer will need to reset the password and numbers that follow you ID FEIN number. If you have questions please call the National Office. Please complete this important report to the IRS. IRS 990N EPOSTCARD FOR ALL UNIT TO KEEP NON PROFIT STATUS.

NARVRE OHIO Biennial State Meeting:

The NARVRE OHIO Biennial State Meeting will be held May 18, 2015 at the Holiday Inn in Strongsville, OH. Speakers will be our National President, Tom Dwyer, National Vice President, Tony Padilla; National Legislative Director, Gary Faley and a representative of the Moody Law Firm. We will also have a speaker from United Health, Medicare and Railroad Retirement and Whitey Westphal, Unit 19 Legislative Director. A luncheon will be served the day of the meeting of which there

is no charge.

A block of rooms has been reserved for anyone wishing to stay overnight. For more information or for a reservation contact Ruth Teper, Ohio State President at 216-749-2786 or [rft@cox.net](mailto:rft@cox.net).

NARVRE FLORIDA STATE CONVENTION will be held Saturday, November 7, 2015 in Sebring, FL, hosted by Unit 011 from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. The meeting will be held at the Homers restaurant at 1000 Sebring Square, Sebring, FL. The address is 6525 US HWY 27 North. The phone number is 863-385-4500. The motel is giving us a price break, but you must say you are with NARVRE and reservation must be in by September 1, 2015. Cost of convention to be decided. More information will be mailed to all the register at a later date. Please think of any new business to discuss and who might consider and officer position at the state level. Let Jerry or Nancy Tressa know how many Burlington Northern/Santa Fee retirees you will have in your group as soon as possible. Hope you can make this very important event. It will be a reorganization of the Florida State Organization. Jerry Tressa, President; PH# 863+441-4418 or Nancy Tressa, V-P; PH# 863-464-2711.

**NOTICE:** To all Unit 140, Topeka KS members posted dues are \$16.00 for Single and \$29.00 for a couple. Send you renewal s for 2015 to Alda Evans, Unit 140 S/T; 2620 SW Bingham CT, Topeka KS 66614-6003.

— Joyce A. Burton, National Sec/Treas

## (National Vice President from page 2)

successful meeting. President Bobby White of Unit 85 thanked and praised many of

membership who are hard workers in the Unit and merited to be recognized in the photos below:

— Tony Padilla  
National Vice President



Left to right: Fran Tucker, Carolyn Boen, Tony Padilla, Betty Henry, Whitey Westphal, Bonnie White, Tom Dwyer, Joyce Nichols, Harry Gates, Nelda Perdue, Ellen Cupp.

Nickie Starkey of Unit 046 is offering member report 3X5 cards to unit S/t to recording member information, they are duplicates of past cards we have used. 100 cards for \$11.60 the unit does not make any money off this offering. To Order Call Nickie Ph# 765-473-6344.

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**News deadline 10th of each month**  
**Mail to National Office**

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APRIL, 2015

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Toll Free Phone #'s for calling your Congress persons:  
1-877-668-3864 and 1-877-668-3866.

**From Palmetto, GBA**  
**Changes to Medicare's Coverage**  
**of Pneumococcal Vaccinations**

**R**ecently, Medicare made changes to its coverage of pneumococcal vaccinations, which help prevent pneumococcal diseases such as pneumonia. For the past several years, Medicare only covered these shots once in a beneficiary's lifetime, with additional injections covered for those individuals in 'high risk' categories. High risk patients:

1. Were 65 or older
2. Had a weakened immune system due to illness or medications
3. Had chronic conditions, such as heart or lung disease, or diabetes

Now Medicare covers an initial pneumococcal shot if the patient has never received a vaccination under Medicare Part B, and it covers a second shot when one year has passed since the initial injection. The second shot is slightly different than the first because multiple doses of the same vaccine are not generally recommended.

If you chose to have these shots, you don't have to show proof (such as an immunization record) of previous vaccinations. Simply tell your doctor or provider when you recall having your last pneumococcal shot. With electronic health records, doctors and providers are presumed to have access to much of a patient's history.

We encourage you to talk with your doctor about the pneumococcal vaccines, but you do not need a doctor's order to receive the shots. Instead, you can request the vaccination, and a doctor doesn't need to supervise the injection. In 2015, the shots are free if your provider accepts Medicare assignment. (To 'accept assignment' means your doctor, health care provider or supplier has a signed agreement to be paid directly by Medicare and to accept the Medicare-approved amount as full payment.)

If you have questions about these changes, please feel free to call our Beneficiary Contact Center 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 Customer Service Representatives are available.

We encourage you to visit our Facebook page at [www.Facebook.com/MyRR-Medicare](http://www.Facebook.com/MyRR-Medicare). We greatly value your input and encourage you to 'Like' our Facebook Page.

We also invite you to begin receiving email updates about the Railroad Medicare program. Just select the 'Sign up for our Listserv' in the 'Stay Connected' section on the left-hand side of our main webpage at [www.PalmettoGBA.com/RR/Me](http://www.PalmettoGBA.com/RR/Me).  
— Jennifer Johnson