

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



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NARVRE NEWSLETTER

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## FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT —

**W**e are nearing convention time with just over three months until May. As of February 3, we only have 30 delegates registered and our normal number is around 70 delegates. I emphasize your early participation so as the Host Committee has a viable count. Send in your registration as soon as possible as this helps all concerned. This is going to be a very important convention dealing with several issues, finances, several interesting speakers and the long range projection as to the direction of NARVRE in the future. Costs have gone up every year, Units have closed for many different reasons and there has been a drop off starting up new Units.

Keep in mind the retired members of NARVRE will be the last generation of retirees that won't be computer savvy. Operating

employees on the railroads today are called to work off a computer, clerical employees all use computers in their daily work. Every business worth its salt is computerized. High tech is here to stay. NARVRE also has to move into the modern world of technology. This will all be discussed at the convention including Facebook, websites, legal shield/identity shield and Social Media.

Those that are contemplating bidding on the 2020 convention need to run it by your Unit before you ever get to Council Bluffs. You need to take into consideration proximity to modes of transportation such as air, rail, and hotels and even those who may drive. A national convention is a two (2) year project which includes a committee of local members to pull it off. If interested talk it over, bring brochures and make your case before the delegates. The convention site is chosen by the delegates in attendance in 2018.

— *Tom Dwyer, National President*

## FROM THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR —

**S**ince last December, Congress has managed to pass a GOP written tax bill which Trump signed into law, and a bipartisan 2018 budget, both of which could add trillions to the national debt.

The Trump tax bill alone will reduce the normal flow of incoming revenue to the U.S Treasury by \$10-\$15 billion per month, according to the Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT). Since the passage of the tax bill, we are hearing more and more comments from the President and committee chairs on the scarcity of government money for projects (think yearly underfunded Amtrak, and/or infrastructure promises).

In early February, the President released his budget for fiscal year 2019, and his previous glowing remarks on rail passenger service in America are not evident in his plans, with the White House citing the lack of revenue, without commenting on the harsh financial realities of the republican passed tax bill.

Trump now proposes to cut Amtrak funding from \$1.4 billion to \$738 million, again proposing to cut into segments of the long-distance sleeper trains, and that is entirely unrealistic.

It has always been a reality that these cuts would of course, serve to cripple and destroy the rail passenger national network of train service. This is a reiteration of Trump's budget from last

year, so all train supporters must take his actions seriously and realize he means what he says. And those in Congress that agree with his proposals should be replaced. The American public will suffer the consequences from his draconian cuts as more than 220 communities and millions of Americans could lose passenger/commuter train service, and that means people living in rural towns that ride trains to and from work to support their families.

On the issue of infrastructure, the president wants the states to be responsible, along with investments from the private sector, as he wants funding to be a 20-80 deal with the federal government investing 20 percent and the states (and private investors) will be responsible for 80 percent.

The states that cannot afford to add this to their budgets are already complaining, and the president's reaction has been to threaten to eliminate existing funds for projects already in progress, if they will not join in this new partnership. It cannot be possible for the Trump Administration to not understand that millions of dollars have already been invested in states on rail lines where Amtrak trains run, and that certain states are already financially committed to an existing partnership with Amtrak, and by extension the federal government, contained in legislation that passed the Rail Passenger Service Act.

Further, the president should re-consider his proposals to eliminate existing investment grants, such as the TIGER program, as

continued on page 3 ➡



**N.A.R.V.R.E.** National Association of Retired and Veteran Railway Employees, Inc.

## From the National Vice President —

With only two months to go before NARVRE's 41st Biennial Convention May 20-22, 2018 in Council Bluffs, Iowa, I encourage all delegates to make your reservations as soon as possible.

The deadline for the Hotel rate is April 15 and the Airline tickets get more expensive as time gets closer to the Convention.

Our Secretary Treasurer Philip Steward is doing a commendable job by being innovative to change. As read in last month's Newsletter he has improved the face of our website soon to be in place to increase the growth of NARVRE as it is now attracting new members.

As you already know we only have a membership of about 2 to 3% of all retirees in the rail industry as members of NARVRE. I dare call continuity for the future is an inevitable slow extinction of our organization due to the shrinking unless we find new ways to attract numbers and establishing new NARVRE Units.

Between 2016 and 2017, 17 Units were closed. President Tom Dwyer, Legislative Director Gary Faley and I agree with our Secretary Treasurer Phil Steward that many changes are necessary if we want to survive. I look forward to continue to try to see us change and grow.

With that in mind, I once again humbly ask for your vote for National Vice President. I also thank you for your past support and as we continue to work together to protect your Railroad Retirement Pension Annuity from any threats to our hard earn pension; including the protection of our Railroad Medicare and Medicaid.

We also seek to protect an affordable healthcare for all as well as protect Social Security; which is part of the Tier I of our Railroad Retirement Pension Annuity we and our employers paid into during the years we worked.

By all means it is not a hand out, but it is an earned benefit. I believe our Team of officers is looking forward to your continued support for our re-election to office.

We know many members are still behind and are delinquent on paying their dues as it happens every year around this time of the year. Our Area Directors have done a great job in working with our units to push to increase our membership. We know the difficulty since most unit officers have tried to find more members.

This year we did not do as well in establishing new Units, but it was not because our Area Directors did not try.

We remain vigilant from this Administration and Congress to the protection of our benefits from harm as the Speaker Paul Ryan continues to target those senior benefits.

At this time many other Senior Groups are calling for the expansion and improvement for our benefits because of possible loses from the tax breaks given to the top one percent of the wealthy all on the backs of seniors.

I recently got my Congressman Lloyd Doggett, from the Ways and Means Committee on Pension, to sponsor Legislation to keep our RRB funds from being sequestered for Railroad Unemployment. We also requested increased funding

since the administration's budget has reduced our railroad retirement-budget to adequately fund and administer field Railroad Retirement offices and staff cuts for operations and services.

Hopefully the sequester of funds is taken care on the current continuing resolution and forthcoming Appropriations Committee Action for the remainder of FY2018. Although, the RRB has said it is not clear yet.

Legislative Representative David Hahn from NARVRE Unit 077 of Decatur, IL, who tracks Medicare and Medicaid services said, "Some in Congress may be considering cuts to programs that help older adults and people with disabilities meet basic needs—including Medicare and Medicaid—in an effort to fill the expected \$1.5 trillion budget shortfall created by recent tax legislation. According to a new Kaiser Health Tracking Poll, this goes against the will of most Americans. In fact, the poll finds that just 7% want cuts to Medicare and 12% want cuts to Medicaid."

— **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.**

Pat and Sandy Hiatte  
James & Cheryl Bosley  
In memory of Bill Shaver by Pres  
Tony Schmitt and members of  
unit 115 Wichita Ks  
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William Mercer  
Donald Goetzka  
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Paula Plush  
George Grogan  
Alonzo Robinson  
Thomas Herrman  
James Kozal  
Edna Strickland  
Margaret Trent  
Jeremy Ferguson  
David Canas

## Memorials

Joyce Lemon  
Richard Meisel  
Doris Beard  
Robert Torassa  
Regina M Tony  
Carl Olson

Peter Poepeke  
Ramon Conejo  
Fred Luckeroth  
Ben Crowder  
Richard Mayor

***A Special Thank You to Unit 146, Minot, North Dakota, for their donation of \$1000. We're disappointed that the unit has closed, but we welcome all members into 801 Members-at-Large.***



## (National Legislative Director from page 1)

those projects and programs represent a sound invitation for partnership.

There are plenty of other cuts in the Trump

Budget that will only bring harm to more seniors, directed at Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. NARVRE members will soon join in to contact Congress and advocate for Amtrak and speak out in support of seniors and retirees on other pending issues. We will

also be assisting the Railroad Retirement Board on their requests for proper funding in their Administrative Budgets. More on these issues later...

— Gary Faley,  
National Legislative Director

## From the National Secretary-Treasurer —

Last year in September the National Officers along with Past President Whitey Westphal and former BNSF General Director of Corporate Communications, Pat Hiatte (who will be leading our marketing and media campaign) developed a 5 year

comprehensive business plan. This plan was put forth and approved by the Governing Board. The main components of the plan are Finances, Increase Membership, Outreach, Messaging, Training, Succession Planning, and Training. All of the



Spouses are an integral part NARVRE. Pictured is Joyce Elliott S/T Liverpool, OH; and Joan Hagerty.



The clock was made by Russell DuPuis and presented to the past Vice President of Unit #32 in Rhode Island, Neville Booth. Pictured from left to right; Russell DuPuis, Neville Booth, and Secretary-Treasurer Susan Bergeron.



Left - Right Richard Elliott Jim Blum JJ Grabner



NARVRE Unit 151 Officers Meeting With Blet Div 526 In Ohio

major components are closely interrelated. In this article we will briefly address Outreach, which we anticipate will positively impact our plan as a whole.

The new and improved NARVRE National website will be launched March 15, 2018. Regardless of your time zone, we ask all members to share with your Facebook friends a request to visit the website [www.narvre.us](http://www.narvre.us) and Like our two Facebook pages: N.A.R.V.R.E (official) and NARVRE National Forum, which was originally created by Mel Underhill. Official FB page will be essentially an extension of our newsletter, and the Forum will be designated for posting individual unit special events such as election of officers, speakers of note, celebrations, and any matters of newsworthy interest to the NARVRE community. We insist no personal political opinions be posted on NARVRE media pages. Additionally, if you haven't already, join and follow us on Twitter.

Past President Whitey Westphal will resume his popular monthly article posted in the Past Presidents area on the website, and excerpts will be posted on Facebook N.A.R.V.R.E. official.

As a reminder, February 28, 2018 unpaid members will be considered delinquent.

Units wishing to take advantage of our corporate accountant to file 990n to IRS, please send a check for \$8.00 to the National office. Filing deadline is May 15, 2018.

— James (Phil) Steward,  
National Secretary/Treasurer

## The Council Bluffs Convention Planning Committee. Unit 030

Council Bluffs, Iowa, is ready to welcome fellow NARVRE members and guests for an informative and fun convention May 20-22, 2018. Be sure to get your registrations in. Deadline for hotel reservations is April 15, 2018. The Hilton Garden Inn is a very nice facility and offers free parking, free full breakfast and free shuttle service. See you soon.

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## From Palmetto, GBA

# Highlighting Select Preventive Services

Medicare currently offers 28 preventive services, most of which are free to you. A majority of people with Medicare are aware of the Annual Wellness Visit, the Influenza Virus Vaccine and Administration, and Lung Cancer screening. But here are two services you may not be aware of that could be beneficial to you and your health:

1. Depression Screening
2. Intensive Behavioral Therapy (IBT) for Cardiovascular Disease

First, let's discuss Depression Screening. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 50% of Americans are diagnosed with a mental illness (such as depression) at some point in their lives. Having depression is not anyone's fault, and the old adage of 'pull yourself up by your boot straps' is not helpful advice. The American Psychology Association explains that late-life events (such as chronic illnesses, surviving the death of loved ones, failing faculties – such as eyesight and hearing ) all contribute to the chances of an individual becoming

depressed. Sometimes we just feel 'down', but there is something you can do about it.

Medicare's Depression screening can be conducted once a year, and it's free. It takes about 15 minutes, and must be provided in a primary care setting – such as a doctor's office. While the screening does not include treatment for depression, your doctor may use the results of the screening to arrange for treatment or referrals. There's no reason to suffer with depression when it can be addressed medically.

Our next preventive service is Intensive Behavioral Therapy (IBT) for Cardiovascular Disease. This is a face-to-face 15 minute visit to address ways to reduce your risk for cardiovascular disease. The visit includes screening for high blood pressure, counseling on the importance of a healthy diet, and may include instruction on the use of aspirin, if it is appropriate for your condition.

You can receive this service through your primary care physician in a primary care setting. It is free, and you can receive it annually.

These two services are just a few of the

many benefits Medicare's Preventive Services program offers to you. To learn more, please visit our website at [www.PalmettoGBA.com/RR](http://www.PalmettoGBA.com/RR) and click on the box that says 'Use Medicare's Preventive Services'. It will direct you to an article about these and the other preventive services.

For more information on preventive services, please call our Beneficiary Contact Center at 800-833-4455 or for TTY, call 877-566-3572. Representatives are available Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. ET. You can also visit our Facebook page called 'My RR Medicare' at [www.facebook.com/myrrmedicare](http://www.facebook.com/myrrmedicare). We also encourage you to use our free, beneficiary website portal called 'MyRRMed'. MyRRMed provides you with access to your claims information, along with historical Medicare Summary Notices, and a listing of individuals you have authorized to have access to your protected health information (PHI). MyRRMed is located at [www.PalmettoGBA.com/MyRRMed](http://www.PalmettoGBA.com/MyRRMed).

— Jennifer Johnson