

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



- SINCE 1937 -

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NARVRE NEWSLETTER

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## FROM THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR —

On Wednesday, March 10th, Congress passed H.R. 1319, The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. The next day, President Biden signed the bill into law. The Senate passed the bill a day prior by a vote of 50-49, without any Republican votes, and sent the bill to the House. That body then concurred with the Senate action by a vote of 220-211, with zero Republican votes. This rescue package contains emergency funding for multiple facets of our economy, addressing the needs of citizens and families impacted by Covid-19. States and cities, and smaller municipalities, governed by both democrats and republicans, are on record endorsing this legislation, citing their needs to recover furloughed employees. Small businesses and restaurants trying to stay afloat or re-open and recall employees have lobbied for its passage. Immediately, once the bill became Public Law, citizens began to realize direct deposits of up to \$1,400, and an additional \$1,400 for dependent children claimed on their tax returns. Emergency funding includes

\$600 of supplemental unemployment benefits for thousands of rail workers through September 6, 2021. \$30.4 billion of additional relief will fund transit agencies to prevent the layoffs of rail workers and avoid severe cuts to rail services which would impact those workers as well as the traveling public that rely on transit for their work and jobs. That funding also helps rail union workers on commuters across the nation. And funding is now earmarked for the process of delivering and implementing vaccinations to combat the war against Covid-19 virus. The National Coalition of Counties, which represents 40,000 elected officials (both democrats and republicans) says the assistance is a lifeline. This legislation represents emergency funding that will keep firefighters and cops and front line workers employed and available for duty. There are party-line disagreements with this legislation, as noted by the votes on HR 1319, but Americans support this emergency package in a big way. Pew Research polling now reports that 70 percent of Americans

favor the American Rescue Plan Act, and 41 percent of Republicans polled also support the package (JasonDicks, CQ RollCall). These disagreements will undoubtedly remain...political. NARVRE however, must be focused on how a proposed legislative bill will affect the mission and cause of our association. Our attention and energy will always be to support legislation that will ultimately maintain and improve the federal retirement programs that are in place and working, such as the Railroad Retirement System, and Railroad Medicare. This American Rescue Plan meets those parameters, as did part and parcels of the previous CARES ACT of last May and the December 2020 Covid Relief bill. NARVRE supported all three bills and we thank our members that contacted Congress regarding the legislation. This office conveyed those sentiments earlier this month to our members that are on our legislative email lists. If you are not, let this office know, and you will be added.

NARVRE, along with other supporters of Amtrak and rail passenger service has been working collectively for the last year, in order to get the Congress to respond to the impact of this pandemic and specifically fund Amtrak and protect train service and rail employees. The

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## FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT —

I been approached by a fellow NARVRE member about an organization that there may be other NARVRE members associated with, the Brotherhood's Relief and Compensation Fund (BRCF). This group of railroaders were primarily CNW/Union Pacific employees and there maybe others as well.

Since 1912, the officers, directors and staff of the Brotherhood's Relief and Compensation Fund (BRCF) have worked tirelessly to serve the membership. The Fund has faced many challenges through the years, and we know that will always be the case. Here is the problem. Unfortunately, the latest challenge occurred when the fund became the target of a cyber-attack on January 3, 2021. The fund immediately launched a system recovery effort and engaged the services of a highly recommended digital forensic investigation firm. Unfortunately, the results of the investigation cannot identify the criminals responsible.

Although there is no evidence that any personal information was compromised, the following types of information are contained in the Fund's database, name, address, date of birth, social security number, telephone number and bank account information, if provided.

For further information please call (833) 726-0931 or go to <https://response.idx.us/brcf> for further assistance. This is for BRCF members only.

— Tom Dwyer, National President

Missouri-Kansas-Texas No. 194 as seen from Santa Fe CF7 No. 2469 at Temple, Texas.

June 3rd, 1981  
Photo by R.J. McKay



## From the National Vice President —

The month of April is a very interesting month of celebration. It is a time for the family to begin to enjoy the Spring festivals celebrating the season's renewal of family life. April 1st is "All Fools' Day." The fifteenth is also a Jewish celebration and is a Catholic month beginning with April 19 is Pass-over (beginning at sundown). April 21 is Easter Sunday. April 22 is Earth Day. For NARVRE it is a month dedicated to increasing membership and recruit members that are behind in paying their NARVRE Unit Dues. After having had a Governing Board meeting on March 11, 2021, we determined that it is imperative that we begin a membership drive. While there is that notion that many "Retirees do not even know there is a NARVRE organization." It is our duty to change that trend slowly by letting some of those retirees know of our existence. It is time again to use our informational poster that all Area Directors used to use to attract new members with these posters before the COVID-19 VIRUS. We took those posters to meetings we attended and we also delivered those posters to work stations and placed in them in bulletin-boards at railroad work stations where workers go on duty to work. We used these posters before and they do attract new members. Our late Brother Bob Bloomer introduced these posters and they work. I take posters to every Unit meeting I attend and we used these poster when we visited our former RRB promotional NARVRE

informational meetings and will do it again once the RRB restores these meeting when the pandemic ends the danger to attend in person meetings end. I thank all the Area Directors and units who made that promotion possible to protect and preserve our Railroad Retirement Pension Annuity. While at this time our RRB Pension is not being attacked by Congress, we have to be vigilant as committees and national budgets are introduced, because this is where the congress sneaks in and slips language to decimate pension benefits using the code word "reform" to begin to eliminate senior benefits that regularly and frequently apply to making changes to Senior benefits more notably to our Social Security which is the Tier 1 of Railroad Retirement along with our Railroad Medicare and other healthcare benefits. President Tom Dwyer has said we have a fiduciary duty to evaluate attendance to see if it's economically beneficial to attend units out of our areas. This is also the duty of the Unit Officers. He is talking about this in terms of Travel expense. We have to be frugal when our membership is in decline. Throughout the years we have had good and bad membership numbers and expenditures are evaluated accordingly. Area

Directors are always encouraged to contact me in advance of attending any Unit meetings for advance evaluation for attending meeting to organize and establish new Units. Our quest to increase our membership will continue to be of priority as we seek to Promote, Protect and Preserve our Railroad Retirement Pension. At this time, I would like to thank Area Director George Boatwright for the work he does to go after the promotion of organizing and recruiting new and old members behind on the dues. All Area Directors should contact their respective unit officers to ask them to put in place calling committees to get their members to bring their dues up to date. Here is another success story from our Unit #165 Treasurer, "Kristine Wisdom here, treasurer for NARVRE Unit 165 in Moberly, Missouri. Read your piece in the newsletter regarding dues renewals: We have not met as a group since last March. In October I made up a notice about renewing and mailed it to all members of our unit, around 110. It took me four or five days. To date I've received 97 renewals. This week I telephoned those who hadn't replied. Four just needed reminding, two or three opted to withdraw, one has passed away,

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### (National Legislative Director from page 1)

American Rescue Plan includes \$1.7 billion in emergency funding for Amtrak, and also includes a Congressional mandate that Amtrak return daily service to long-distance routes within 90 days of passage, and the re-hiring of 1,230 rail workers who were involuntarily furloughed due to the pandemic. Rail passenger advocates, the industry, rail labor, community activists and our NARVRE association fought hard to insist that Congress include these specific directives to stabilize service on the Amtrak national network and the NEC as soon as possible. Further, Amtrak CEO Bill Flynn has stated that the funding options of this new rescue bill to expand the Amtrak network through new corridor routes will create thousands of new jobs. Again, those new employees will be paying into the railroad retirement system. Incidentally, the CARES bill passed the Senate with a bipartisan vote of 96-0, and the House

concurrent with support to a similar bipartisan action (no objections). The Covid Relief bill of Dec. 2020 passed the House with a bipartisan vote of 359-53 and the Senate passed the bill with a vote of 92-6.

The Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) successfully made their case, that the pandemic has placed additional stress on their employees and operations, which was already understaffed prior to the arrival of Covid-19. Federal funding in the American Rescue Plan will now provide \$28 million to help the RRB improve services for their railroad beneficiaries. This funding is meant to improve staffing levels for handling claims as well as improve their operations and infrastructure and resume efforts to modernize the IT capabilities. We are happy to see this funding arrive as NARVRE has worked for years lobbying Congress to provide adequate appropriations needed by the RRB agency to manage and operate in a 21st century.

—Gary Faley,  
National Legislative Director

## Memorials

Alfonso Mondragon President Unit 166 Springfield MO • Nancy Donelan • Eileen Foster • Philip E. Konscak • Elmer T Ganzer • Robert S. Peterson, Sr • Viola Mae Fioreck • Louise Mary Burris • Arthur J. Kemper • Elizabeth Adams 100 years old Unit 113 Port Charlotte • James Stussy • Robert McCloskey • Alice McCloskey

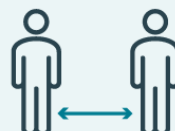
## Thank you!

We would like to thank all who made donations, both large and small. Your contributions are important to advancing the organizational goals of NARVRE.

Steven and Shelly Kauffman • James Earl White • Darwyn Meyers • Daniel Domin • Clayton M Dunn • Jeanne Boruta donated in Memory of Herm Boruta • Victor Sundquist • David Corless • Unit 030 Council Bluffs IA in memory Marion Hicks



WEAR A MASK



STAY 6 FEET APART



AVOID CROWDS



## From the National Secretary-Treasurer —

As reported in the previous issue, several Units have a 0% delinquency rate and all of their members are up to date with membership dues. Many others have a delinquency rate of 10% or less. These units along with the names of their Presidents and Secretary — Treasurers are listed in this issue. The first three listed units all member's dues are current, the remaining units have 10% or less unpaid. We would like to take the time out to thank all officers nationwide for their concerted effort in addressing this important matter. Our national delinquency rate demands much attention. We will reissue the list as progress is made in the oncoming months

Across the nation, our members are planning to be or have already been vaccinated. Consequently, more units are planning to resume meetings for the first time in over a year. The following are facts and guidelines to utilize if you are planning on attending any social gatherings in the near future.

- Three vaccines are approved in the Unit-

### (National Vice President from page 2)

and some phone numbers are disconnected. So, got a few updates to the membership roll. It's a time-consuming effort but well worth it. One recently widowed lady did not know about the MetLife \$2,000 benefit. Making the phone calls served more than one purpose, making actual contact with some older folks, who live alone, appreciated them. Admittedly we are not as large a unit as some and this would be a challenge for larger groups, but wanted to

ed States - Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson.

- Daily infection rates are trending downward

- The U.S. is set to hit the goal of administering 100 million vaccine doses in 100 days — six weeks ahead of this self-imposed deadline.

- So far, the country has delivered more than 151 million doses to the states, with about 77% of those doses having already been administered.

- States are racing to expand vaccine eligibility to all adults as part of a sprint to meet the goal of every adult having vaccine access by May 1.

The following is excerpted from the Center for Disease Control:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued its first set of recommendations on activities that people who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 can safely resume.

The new guidance—which is based on the latest science — includes recommendations for how and when a fully vaccinated indi-

pass along my strategy and the results. Maybe in a bigger group the job could be divided up among several members”, Kristine inscribed. She is correct it is hard to do by yourself but thank you Kristine for your courage. I know we need a committee to do what you did. As I conclude, please continue to make voluntary contribution to our NARVRE organization. Your contribution will be recognized in our NARVRE Newsletter. Please sponsor a memorial as any amount will be appreciated.

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

vidual can visit with other people who are fully vaccinated and with other people who are not vaccinated. This guidance represents a first step toward returning to everyday activities in our communities. CDC will update these recommendations as more people are vaccinated, rates of COVID-19 in the community change, and additional scientific evidence becomes available.

A person is considered fully vaccinated two weeks after receiving the last required dose of vaccine. Although vaccinations are accelerating, CDC estimates that just 9.2% of the U.S. population has been fully vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine that the FDA has authorized for emergency use.

While the new guidance is a positive step, the vast majority of people need to be fully vaccinated before COVID-19 precautions can be lifted broadly. Until then, it is important that everyone continues to adhere to public health mitigation measures to protect the large number of people who remain unvaccinated.

- Wear a well-fitted mask.
- Stay at least 6 feet from people you do not live with.

- Avoid medium- and large-sized in-person gatherings.

- Get tested if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.

- Follow guidance issued by individual employers.

- Follow CDC and health department travel requirements and recommendations.

CDC has released resources to help people make informed decisions when they are fully vaccinated. Visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) for the latest guidelines regarding COVID-19 issues.—

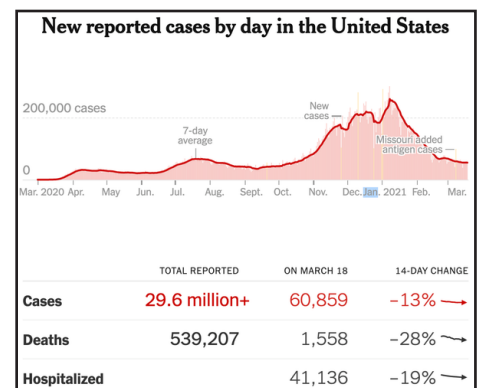
**James (Phil) Steward,**  
*National Secretary/Treasurer*

## April 2021 Top Performing Units of Dues Collection

- 093 Shawnee OK. President, John Permetter; Secretary, David & Virginia Kubiak.
- 057 Eugene OR. President, Geraldine Peltzer; Secretary/Treasurer, Coleen Hisey.
- 081 Spokane WA. President, Donald Cain; Secretary, Alice Domrese; Treasurer, Claudia Rohlinger.
- 113 Port Charlotte FL. President, Arthur & Patricia Tiedemann; Secretary/Treasurer, Mary Parker Secretary/Treasurer, Lisa Conley.
- 017 Navarre OH. President, Robert & Virginia Miller.
- 096 Ft Madison IA. President and Secretary/Treasurer, Stanley & Jane Haessig.
- 184 Marshalltown IA. President, Tom Laws; Secretary/Treasurer, J Gene Jackson.
- 166 Springfield MO. Secretary, Steve &

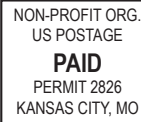
- Susie Taylor; Treasurer, Joe & Marcia Ratcliff.
- 174 St Cloud MN. President, Duane Tadych; Secretary/Treasurer, Ron & Cheri Hylla.
- 027 Shreveport LA. President and Secretary/Treasurer, John & Carolyn Flack.
- 123 Fargo ND. President, Kenneth Tighe; Secretary/Treasurer, Marvin Boser.
- 021 Marysville KS. President, Roger Stein; Secretary/Treasurer, Marilee Adams.
- 148 Parsons KS. President, Charles Wells; Secretary, Jeanine Dodds.
- 074 Auburn WA. President, Donald Reiling; Secretary/Treasurer, Stephen & Katherine Shaben.
- 039 Stockton CA. President, Bill (William) Sullivan; Secretary/Treasurer, Paul Jevert.

\*First 3 listed all members for 2021 are current.



## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!!

Clayton and Eileen Siesel (Secretary, Unit 147, Bellevue OH) celebrating 70 years in April 2021.



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

## NARVRE NEWSLETTER Volume 35 Number 04

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News deadline 10th of each month

## When Did You Have Your Last Annual Wellness Visit?

**M**edicare pays for an Annual Wellness Visit (AWV.) An Annual Wellness Visit is a visit to develop or update a preventive services plan that is personalized to your needs and to perform a Health Risk Assessment (HRA). An AWV comes in two sizes: your initial AWV sets the baseline for future visits. Before or during this visit, you will complete a Health Risk Assessment (HRA) questionnaire, which collects:

1. Your demographic data and a health status self-assessment
2. Your assessment of depression/life satisfaction, stress, anger, pain, fatigue, isolation or loneliness
3. Information on behavioral risks, including but not limited to if you smoke or use tobacco products, drink alcohol or use drugs, your physical activity, nutrition
4. Information on your ability to do general activities of daily living, such as washing clothes, bathing, walking, ability to stand for periods of time, etc.

During an initial AWV, your provider will create a baseline of your medical and family history, capture information about your current list of doctors and medications that you take, and gather measurements of your height, weight, blood pressure (and other routine measurements as they apply based on your medical and family history). Your provider may also perform a cognitive impairment assessment to check for potential cognitive impairment, such as for Alzheimer's disease or dementia, and for depression or other mood disorders.

Your healthcare provider will review all the information you provided to them, along with what they have observed focusing on your ability to do general activities of daily living, your risk of falling, plus any hearing impairments or potential home safety issues that may come up during the visit.

From all of this, your provider will create a written schedule/checklist, for the next 5 to 10 years for future screening visits and preventive services. Your provider also will give you personalized referrals for health education, preventive programs or counseling services based on what the AWV data has shown them.

These recommended services or programs can help you reduce risk factors or promote wellness (such as to increase weight loss and physical activity, as well as prevent falls and improve nutrition). Referrals can also be made for programs to help you quit smoking. You can also work with your provider about Advance Care Planning ('living wills,' 'advance directives' and other documents that instruct others about your healthcare wishes in the event you are unable to do so due to injury or illness).

That's the first AWV. The second type of AWV is considered a follow-up AWV, or just a plain AWV.

At this AWV visit, you will review and update your Health Risk Assessment (HRA), and your provider will update your medical/family history, the list of your current providers and medications, and your measurements (including weight and blood pressure). Your provider will then make any

needed changes to your screening schedule and your personalized health plan, and make new referrals, if necessary, to keep current with your needs. It is important to have this service every year.

You can receive an AWV if:

- It has been more than 12 months since the effective date of your first Medicare Part B coverage period, and
- You have not received an Initial Preventive Physical Examination (IPPE, or "Welcome to Medicare" exam) or an AVW within the past 12 months.

Many healthcare providers are authorized to perform AWV services. They include:

- Doctor of Medicine (MD) or osteopathy (MO)
- Physician assistant, nurse practitioner, or clinical nurse specialist
- A medical professional (including a health educator, registered dietitian, or nutrition professional or other licenses practitioner) or a team of such medical professional, working under the direct supervision of a physician.

\* Teaching physicians in graduate medical education programs can perform these services in certain specific circumstances.

If you have a question about the AWV, please call our toll-free Beneficiary Contact Center at 800-833-4455, Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. until 7 p.m. ET. We offer a TTY/TDD line at 877-566-3572.

— *Jennifer Johnson, Palmetto, GBA*