



— SINCE 1937 —

National Association of Retired & Veteran Railway Employees, Inc.

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NARVRE NEWSLETTER

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FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT —

The time has come to seriously address financial issues confronting the NARVRE organization. Your national officers and Governing Board have weighed in as to the long range projections and to our future. We have failed to stay abreast of modern technology until only recently. We cannot

FROM THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR —

The good news is that Congress was able to pass a \$15 billion disaster bill in a direct response to Hurricane Harvey's devastation. Our thoughts have been with everyone affected by Harvey or Irma, especially our members and families in the path of those storms. This was responsible action by Congress working together, as this bipartisan bill passed 316 to 90, and signed by the POTUS on 9/8/17. There will be more monies needed to assist homeowners and travelers in the states hit by Hurricane Irma, with more tropical storms developing in the warmer waters of southern oceans. This particular legislation also extended federal spending to keep the government open and running for another three months, as well as extending the federal borrowing limit to avoid a federal default on our debt and credit. The measure also passed the Senate by a bipartisan vote of 80-17. We'll keep you posted as these pressing issues begin to get politically charged yet again, as they approach the new deadline of December 8th. Meanwhile, we're hearing unusual talk about possible meetings between the parties in hopes of finding common ground in order to act on other legislative issues that could minimize the waste of billions of taxpayer dollars. And, that should be the "regular order" of business when discussing ways of cutting federal spending, rather than proposing to reform Medicare or Social Security on the backs of the middle class, which has been the recurring plan from the majority party in Congress. On the railroads, safety issues like Positive Train Control (PTC), and the 2-man crew bill should be addressed and completed. High(er) Speed Rail (HSR) needs to be seriously addressed as airports and city developers continue to agree they should be connected via passenger train service, with expanded accessibility on train routes to locations around the country. Travelers and non-travelers alike, from both political parties, continue to favor more passenger train service, and even agree that a higher federal subsidy is a sound investment for America. Congress must begin to respond to the requests and demands from leaders in our cities and municipalities that continue to blame the lack of federal action for holding their progress back on

operate anymore with thinking back in the 1970's and 1980's. Costs have increased in many areas which we cannot control. The national newsletter, printing and postage alone is \$40,000 per year. Computers, software and fax machines have taken the place of typewriters, word processors and index files. As a former railroad clerk I have seen the transition and many of you have as well. In addition, you need to hire people to do the work and maintain an office which means rent. All this adds up to real money. NARVRE General Policies under 5:04 states "NARVRE (shall) operate within a balanced budget. Resolution #17 of the 1988 Convention.

Adequate income over the past 27 years has been seriously lacking by previous conventions. Bottom line is no one likes to raise dues. See for yourself. National Dues.

You have to do the math folks! There will be a resolution covering an increase in dues at the 2018 Convention. We have no other alternative to this situation.

— Tom Dwyer, National President

Single Unit Member	1988	1993	1994-2002
	\$7.50	\$8.50	\$9.50
	2012	2014	2015
	\$10.50	\$10.50	\$13.50

This is a six dollar increase over 27 years!

Unit Married Couple	1988	1993	1994-2002
	\$12.50	\$14.50	\$16.50
	2012	2014	2015
	\$17.50	\$17.50	\$20.50

This is an eight dollar increase over 27 years!

801 At Large Single	1988	1993	1994-2002
	\$10.00	\$11.00	\$12.00
	2012	2014	2015
	\$13.00	\$13.00	\$16.00

This is a six dollar increase over 27 years!

801 At Large Married	1988	1993	1994-2002
	\$15.00	\$17.00	\$19.00
	2012	2014	2015
	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$23.00

This is an eight dollar increase over 27 years!

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From the National Vice President —

We in NARVRE engage in protecting our own Railroad Retirement Pension Annuity and support industries and organizations that have similar pensions and medical healthcare benefits as those provided by the rail industry. It was not by accident that we came to inherit those benefits, but it was the work of those before us who made it happen as members of their respective unions and industry. Let us look at protecting Railroad Retirement as we continue to safeguard the viability of NARVRE. We must look for methods to be creative in our quest acquiring new members. I received notification from the RRB inviting us to attend informational meetings sponsored by the RRB for the Fall Season of 2017. You can find a schedule of those meetings in the Officers tab on our Website, www.narvre.info Office of the Vice President. The NARVRE Organization was formed to Protect, Preserve, and Promote Railroad Retirement. We celebrate the 80th Anniversary of NARVRE and continue to defend benefits enjoyed by thousands of annuitants. We must focus our efforts to boost membership. Our Area Directors and Local Unit officers are aware and very much engaged in accomplishing this objective. Please redouble your efforts plus continue that mission to increase and establish new Units as we approach NARVRE's 41st Biennial Convention May 20-22, 2018 in Council Bluffs, Iowa, which is being hosted by Unit 30. I want to thank all contributors who made NARVRE contributions to augment our finances to continue to promote our NARVRE organization. As an activist in the Rail Labor Movement, I take every opportunity to try to make working families aware that we all need to remain vigilant to guard those generations following us are assured of their retirement benefits.

Without exception the duties and responsibilities of all officers are to look after our members by adding value to our memberships. President Thomas Dwyer has made numerous solutions in RRB shortcomings in terms of recipients not receiving their pension because of the many problems in changes in circumstances of railroad

workers while still working. This includes RRB policy changes, marital changes, divorces, widower's pensions, working after retirement, equal rights cases etc. Tom has brought to resolutions to many of these instances. While visiting the NARVRE Laredo, Texas Unit 51 in May 2017, President Cesar Trevino reported an incident where one of his members suspected he was not receiving the proper amount of RRB Pension benefits. This particular married couple, NARVRE members and former (KCS Employees) requested assistance with respect to their retirement income. 'The agreement within the railroad industry states when both husband and wife worked for the railroad and were hired before 1975, both employees will be compensated dual pensions. NARVRE Unit 51 President Cesar Trevino after making several inquiries in the couple's behalf was able to get the problem corrected along with their back pay. Subsequently the couple expressed their gratitude for the help received.



Photo (1) - Left to Right - Anthony (Tony) Padilla- NARVRE National Vice President and Cesar Trevino- NARVRE President Laredo Chapter #51. Photo (2) - Left to Right - Thom Woodroof of San Antonio NARVRE Unit 163. Photo (3) Jack McCabe Member of NARVRE Unit 163 San Antonio.

During the Labor Day Celebration for the month of September, our San Antonio NARVRE Unit 61 members celebrated Labor Day with all the Austin CLC Labor unions at a Fish Fry as part of the annual celebration.

— Anthony (Tony) Padilla NARVRE National Vice President



The unit meeting in Olive Branch, MS was concluded with a National Officers Meeting. Present at the meeting were Past President Whitey Westphal; President Tom Dwyer; Vice President Tony Padilla; Legislative Director Gary Faley; and Secretary-Treasurer James (Phil) Steward. Guest speakers at the meeting included: Lynn Duncan, presenter for identity theft protection; Jessica Mason, a graduate of Louisiana State University, presenting information on social media; and Morris Heath, retired IBM Executive and consultant.



(National Legislative Director from page 1)

a whole host of transportation issues, which only denies more jobs to American workers. The promise of a trillion dollar infrastructure plan from the President continues to shrink in size, with no legislative proposals in sight. Just last month, the President signed an Executive Order (EO 13690) on infrastructure permitting rules, which in the past took an average of 7 years, and will now be reduced to an average of two years. The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) has outlined a plan to improve and move our infrastructure projects forward, and they agree with the President and recommend streamlined permitting as a viable way to get the projects started. Congress needs to work with the US Dept. of Transportation, and pass legislation that will appropriate increased investments (funding) in order to close the gap in the nation's infrastructure, without adversely affecting the environment. However, the ASCE outline needs the President to work with their plan, and not against it. The President's EO in this matter also "repeals" the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS) which finally requires

that any new federally funded infrastructure projects in a flood plain must first and foremost mitigate flood disaster risk. It is designed to end the costly and unsustainable cycle of relying on disaster relief funds to rebuild after flooding events, like those we have just witnessed. This design from the ASCE favor plans that reduce risk, protect the health of the public, and maximize the public interest on cost considerations. This approach from ASCE gives federal agencies the flexibility to use one of three standards for establishing the flood elevation of new infrastructure projects, and ensures that taxpayer dollars are responsibly allocated while also safeguarding public health. Last year, in October 2016, the ASCE advised the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on their positions in response to these flood issues. In March 2017 and June 2017, ASCE, along with a coalition of supporting organizations, sent letters to the White House in full support of FFRMS. However, the President has ignored those endorsements, as well as specific solutions offered by these experts. Hopefully, moving forward, our new President will grasp the advice from ASCE, and do what he should to amend his EO and reverse the repeal of

FFRMS, especially after Harvey and Irma has left so many families standing in flood waters, asking for more financial assistance from FEMA. Optimistic reports are that the President is indeed, reviewing his recent actions, and working with ASCE. More information can be seen @ www.asce.org.

Earlier this month, we were again faced with legislative proposals that would have eliminated Amtrak's long-distance train service. Two anti-Amtrak amendments were again introduced in a House Subcommittee by Rep. Mo Brooks (R-AL) and Rep. Ted Budd (R-NC), and were again defeated, as we continue to pick up additional support from other Congressional offices. The House has now passed their FY 2018 transportation and appropriation bills, as has the Senate. NARVRE favors the funding levels of the Senate and will support the higher funding in their forthcoming negotiations in conference committees. Your work and phone calls on our issues are all important to our victories, with more to come. We cannot get complacent, as we need more Members of Congress to join with us on these Amtrak issues, and other harmful proposals (think Medicare) that will only burden seniors and retirees. Accordingly, NARVRE is in need of more involvement, so introduce another retiree to NARVRE. We need them, just as they need NARVRE. Thank you.

— *Gary Faley,*
National Legislative Director

From the National Secretary-Treasurer —

The national Officers, including our past President Whitey Westphal, met for the first time at the National Office in Olive Branch, MS to tackle matters crucial to the organization.

Among the many topics discussed were finances, the newsletter, our social media presence, succession planning, executive pay, our database, and websites. A number of proposals will be put forth for the General Board's consideration and approval. Key elements of a three year business plan will be in the forum of resolutions for convention delegates to contemplate.

Of paramount importance is our monetary position, which must be immediately addressed and fixed. The downward trend cannot be sustained without significant intervention. We must reach out to 248,000 annuitants and the 243,000 railroad employees who have never heard of our organization. By utilizing modern social media techniques combined with conventional contact platforms, we plan to increase membership. Leading this communications initiative will be former BNSF General Director Corporate Communications, Pat Hiatte. Hiatte will be heading a team of social media experts.

Past President Whitey Westphal said, "The presentations of Scott Stuard and Jessica B. Mason at the captioned meeting of NARVRE was outstanding. The efforts in outlining Facebook and the results pertaining to new members in NARVRE were most informative. We must follow up and not let this opportunity fall through the cracks. This venture is one we have needed for years. Our chance to reach railroad retirees."

Next month the National Office will be mailing renewal notices to 801 members at large while the units begin to initiate their own renewal efforts.

For the members who are unfamiliar with the renewal process, February 28, 2018 is the latest time for payment. Members who have not made a payment by this date will be considered delinquent and will not be receiving their newsletter until dues are received. We as an organization can no longer afford to send newsletters to members who have not renewed.

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

10th Annual Fall Luncheon and Railroad Reunion

Saturday, October 28th, 2017, 12:30pm for the reunion which runs from 1:00pm to 5:00pm with lunch served at 2:00pm. Spenger's Seafood and Fish Grotto, located at 1919 Fourth Street, Berkeley, CA 94719. The phone number is: 510-845-7771 in the McCormick and Schmick Room.

For reservations send your check for \$44.00 a plate to: John Herrmann, P.O. Box 4763, Walnut Creek, CA 94596. Be sure to note your choice of entree on the check or include a note to John. For additional information call 925-465-4122, or 530-925-0325.

In Memoriam...

Charles Hough, Bill Wood, Lois Wood, Howard Kaler, Duane Tourville, Leora Honer, Vi Vienne Disciascio, Richard Ingram, Gregory A Christy, Loyd Koch, Dorothy Wadkins, Karen Chaffee and Ronald Buddy Gibson.

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Medicare's Response to the Hurricanes

A hurricane can be thought of as nature at her worst. When the storm is over, then we see people at their best. But for people with Medicare, you may be worried about your care and your benefits. However, there are provisions that can be put into place to eliminate those concerns.

It all begins when the President of the United States declares a state of emergency for a hurricane; then the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) can declare that a Public Health Emergency exists in affected states. For this rapid hurricane season, those states are: Texas (hurricane Harvey), Florida, Georgia and South Carolina (hurricane Irma), and Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands (hurricanes Irma and Maria).

Under Section 1135 or 812(f) of the Social Security Act, CMS can issue 'blanket waivers' for providers and suppliers when it comes to services that are provided by skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies, and critical access hospitals. Measures are in place to assist with durable medical equipment and supplies, as well as quality reporting, extending appeals time limit, and getting replacement prescription refills.

As an example, when a waiver is granted for submitting appeal requests (which normally would need to be filed 120 days from the date of the claim denial notification), an appeal may be filed after the 120 days based on the area's Medicare Administrative Contractor's (MAC) discretion. CMS has allowed Medicare Contractors (including the Railroad Retirement Board Specialty MAC) to use their discretion in determining timeliness.

CMS staff works tirelessly to help participating hospitals/ healthcare facilities to give timely care to as many people as possible impacted by a hurricane.

Hurricanes don't discriminate in terms of destruction, and there are times when a person only has the clothes on their back – but no wallet or Medicare card to get assistance. If you lose your Medicare card, you can call our Beneficiary Customer Service Center at 800-833-4455, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. until 7 p.m. ET to order a new one. For the hearing impaired, call TTY/TDD at 877-566-3572. You may also call the Railroad Retirement Board at 877-772-5772.

For general Medicare questions, you can always visit our website at www.PalmettoGBA.com/RR/Me and our Facebook page at www.Facebook.com/MyRRMedicare.

— Jennifer Johnson



Mickie Curtis Visits Unit 147

BELLEVUE, OHIO UNIT 147, REGULAR MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 13TH. LEFT TO RIGHT: Mickie Curtis — Railroad Retirement Board Claims Representative; Bob Fay — President of Unit 147; Amy Wagner — Manager of Home Medical for Medicine Shoppe.