

# National Association of Retired & Veteran Railway Employees, Inc



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Published ten times a year  
Cost – Membership in a Unit or Membership-at-Large



NARVRE NEWSLETTER

January 2018

VOL. 32 NO. 01

## FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT —

As the first newsletter of 2018 I want to wish you all a belated Holiday Season and wish you all a prosperous and healthy new year. We are now only five months from our national convention May 20-22 at Council Bluffs, IA at the Hilton Garden Inn. By this time all Units should have elected a delegate to attend. We encourage you to register as soon as possible with the Host Committee and don't wait until the last minute to do so. The Host Committee needs a head count on various fronts such as rooms, meals and other incidentals that may arise.

To all local Units who may have interest in issues they should be put forward in the form of a Resolution and sent to the National Secretary's office prior to March 8, 2018 which is seventy-five (75) days before the convention in this order:

1. Are typed or printed in duplicate.
2. Contain the signature of the author.
3. Include the date adopted and the Unit number or the local Unit.

4. Resolutions are to be submitted to the National Headquarters at least seventy-five days prior to the date of the convention.

5. Resolutions may be reworded, combined and/or rewritten in an easily understood form before being presented to the delegates.

These instructions need to be carried out so all Resolutions can be mailed out to all Units for local action prior to the convention. Please adhere to these guidelines in your deliberations.

This convention will be historic as we need to make some major decisions that will affect our existence in the near future. We see healthy Units wanting to close due to lack of members stepping up to become officers, we see others closing because there is no growth in the area because the railroad presence has been diminished.

Without wholesome Units, there can be no conventions in the future as everyone would be a member in the at-large 801 Unit. Think about it folks this convention has some major issues to be addressed especially finances. They will be addressed at this convention.

— Tom Dwyer, National President

## FROM THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR —

We are awaiting the outcome and decisions from the conference committee assigned to work through the differences in the House & Senate bills on the GOP tax reform legislation (12/15/17). Both versions of these tax measures are primarily partisan with no indications of any compromised outcomes in their final products. The crux of these tax law proposals are a mixture of GOP ideology and a throwback to the tried and failed practices of trickle-down economics. It has been 3 decades since the last tax reform legislation was passed, but that process in 1986 was deliberative, with testimony from experts in 30 different public hearings (today=zero hearings) and amendments that were actually proposed by both parties and made part of a package that was passed in the Senate by a bipartisan vote of 90-10. But those days of working together in regular order are long gone, for many reasons, all political and/or driven by the almighty dollar, and both parties share this reality today. However, the one similarity in past tax reform proposals and present-day legislation is the GOP party-line platform

that continues to declare that upper-income tax breaks will automatically bring about economic prosperity... and all tax cuts pay for themselves. That does not have a history of truth, according to data and graphs, filed by economic experts from non-partisan organizations with no bone in these political fights. The current proposals today offer massive tax breaks to the wealthiest and to mega-corporations, which will add well over \$1 trillion dollars to our national debt, which presently tallies over \$20 trillion. The downside of these handouts is that the lost revenue to the treasury must be paid for and they (the GOP) will be targeting Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security, raising fees on senior's earned benefits. We have known for years that Rep. Paul Ryan has always planned on using these types of proposals and outcomes to weaken the national and successful programs. And lately, more lawmakers are owning up to the reality on the cost of today's GOP tax reform and who will pay that bill in coming years. Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fl) has declared that spending cuts in senior earned benefit programs will be necessary to pay for their tax cuts for the wealthy and multinational corporations..." We need to generate

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## From the National Vice President —

We begin the New Year 2018 wishing a very Happy and Prosperous New Year to all the NARVRE members, friends and families of our Railroad Unions. We are entering a New Year that NARVRE officers will be tracking in preparation for the upcoming future for growth. I encourage all our Area Directors and all officers of all NARVRE Units to begin the year 2018 by resolving to set up membership drives and by instituting committees to make calls in their respective Units to ask to re-new Membership dues for 2018 and try to recruit new members.

As we move forward we look to be vigilant to protecting our Railroad Retirement Pension Annuity and Railroad Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security and Healthcare during this volatile political season of uncertainty.

We thank you once again for the contributions you made in 2017 and once again ask for NARVRE voluntary contributions above your regular Unit Dues as we enter the New Year 2018. We continue to push for that drive and recognize those making individual and memorial contributions.

An ongoing effort to re-establish a NARVRE Unit in Fort Worth, Texas has been going on since 2012 because of the high concentration of Railroad Retirees in the area. We have not given up that effort. The BLE Railroaders Smart-TD invited NARVRE to participate at their Union rally day in Fort Worth, Texas at end of the year. Area 5 Director G. G. Gonzales, Oscar Cisneros President of Houston NARVRE #187, President Don Hollis of the Tyler Unit # 149, Jim McGibbens and other BLET members from Ft. Worth were there to getting out recruiting information. "We were successful in picking up new members and I am hopeful in starting a unit by Year's end," said G. G. Gonzalez.



San Antonio NARVRE Unit 163 continues to slowly grow due to their great leaders pushing for growth. On October 11, 2017 NARVRE was invited to make a presentation to a group of railroaders from Amtrak, UP, and SP, BN from all over Texas. "We were able to pick up many new members and applications were distributed," said S/T Sergio Perez of Unit 163.

— **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 furthering the goal of NARVRE.

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## (National Legislative Director from page 1)

economic growth which generates revenue, while reducing spending. That will mean instituting structural changes to Social Security and Medicare for the future.”- Sen. Marco Rubio, 11/29/17. What “structural changes” actually means, is that their 2017 proposals will turn Medicare into a voucher program ran by the private, for-profit healthcare industry. This office has written and talked about this GOP agenda for years, but presently, they are talking openly about this

scheme, because they now have the power to enact it, with no regard to the financial and/or medical harm it will bring to seniors and the disabled. In that regard, the House bill proposes to repeal the current medical expense deduction which millions of seniors rely on to mitigate the high out-of-pocket fees for medical and long-term care costs. The GOP leadership has portrayed this as closing an expensive loophole, but this deduction affects specific people who spend 10 percent of their income on medical bills, typical for those facing serious illnesses like cancer or who have children with

severe birth defects. The repeal of this deduction is a brazen act that should be reconsidered and reversed in the conference committee meetings. This Congress and committee should look elsewhere for savings to pay for their handouts to the ultra-rich that do not need nor asked for this wind-fall. This office has written to many Congressional leaders, hoping they would address more obvious ways to reduce the cost of Medicare. Many non-profit agencies (such as Taxpayers for Common Sense) have written on eliminating waste and improper payments such as investigating duplicate services and billings. TCS has reported that companies are billing for unproven testing services and using millions of dollars in Medicare payments as funding for their new start-up companies. The bottom line is that the government made improper payments totaling \$144.3 billion in 2016 alone, and \$96 billion of that was related to Medicare and Medicaid. This equals \$960 billion over 10 years, or twice the Budget Resolution amount of the \$473 billion they now plan to cut from Medicare. Our Representatives in Congress need to focus on eliminating waste and improper payments, to build and strengthen the Medicare system, rather than cut funds from Medicare to implement a new system of vouchers for the profits of the healthcare industry.

So, presently, we await the outcome and decision of the Conference Committee, and the vote of both parties on a negotiated final bill (H.R. 1). Also, the possible shut-down of the government was averted by a bipartisan vote to extend the spending and funding of all gov't agencies (to include the RRB and Social Security) to yet another deadline of December 22nd.

**UPDATE (Dec. 22, 2018):** *Before heading to Florida for the Christmas holiday, President Trump signed the GOP tax bill in the Oval Office.*

Happy Holidays and a healthy and prosperous New Year. Seniors and retirees truly need to re-evaluate priorities in 2018, and vote to elect people that will protect issues important to them and their families. And more seniors need to exercise...get out and vote! Thank you all.

— Gary Faley,  
National Legislative Director

## From the National Secretary-Treasurer —

### EFFECTIVE January 1, 2018

The Governing Board voted to immediately suspend offering 5-year and 10-year Memberships for individuals and couples until the matter is resolved at the 2018 National Convention in Council Bluffs, IA.

The fact is these Memberships as

Lifetime Memberships are an unfunded liability and not economically sustainable.

Current Lifetime, 5-Year and 10-Year Members are not affected by this decision.

— James (Phil) Steward,  
National Secretary/Treasurer

## Special Recognition and Thanks

Special recognition and thanks to OLAN comprised of 5 units in Oklahoma which donated \$8585.06 to the NARVRE National Organization for the purpose in furthering the Goal of NARVRE — Preserve and Protect Our Pensions. Those units and Presidents plus some officers are listed below:

Lloyd Hobbs, President Unit 6, Tulsa, Ok; Carl Mallonee, Unit 006; Jerry Agee Treasurer, Unit 006; Arnold Thompson, President, Unit 2, Oklahoma City, Ok; Bill Webb, President, Unit 145, El Reno, OK; Sandy Stuart, Unit 145, El Reno, Ok; Joe Ellis, President Unit 122, Purcell, OK; John Permetter, President Unit 93, Shawnee, OK; Maxine Marzuola, Unit 93, Ponca City, Ok; Doyle Wasson, Secretary/Treasurer, Unit 93, Shawnee, Ok. Pictured above l-r Carl Mallonee, Lloyd Hobbs, Sandy Stuart, receiving checks from r-l Lynese Clements of Rock Island Credit Union Employee located at El Reno, OK



## Unit 130 Installs New Officers for the 2018-2019 Term

Pictured (right to left): Jim Nelson, President; Ken Brown, Vice President; Noah Tickle, Legislative Representative; Sylvia Long, Secretary Treasurer; Roberta Roberts, Recording Secretary; and Yvonne Tinsley, Chaplain.



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**Volume 32 Number 01**

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News deadline 10th of each month  
Mail to National Office

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JANUARY, 2018

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## Memorials

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• Barbara Krieg • Don Munoz • Bill BJ Ulry • Antony V Tony Klepaida • Jack Miller • Henry  
Cash • Betty Williams • Anthony L Domingos • Mary K Leathernan • Raymond C Bennett  
• Dorothy Gaone • Muriel A Du Bois

## From Palmetto, GBA

### Welcome to the Railroad Medicare Self-Service 'Portal' Website

**P**almetto GBA is pleased to offer MyRRMed, located at [ww.PalmettoGBA.com/MyRRMed](http://ww.PalmettoGBA.com/MyRRMed). It is our free Internet-based, beneficiary 'portal' that lets you access your healthcare data. (A 'portal' in this sense, is a website that functions as an entry point to accessing your data on the Internet).

#### **Portal Functions:**

At this time, you can use the portal to access:

- Status and details of your last 22 Railroad Medicare claims on file
- Historical Medicare Summary Notices (MSNs)

You also can view a list of individuals with whom you have authorized Railroad Medicare to grant access to your healthcare information.

#### **Creating an Account:**

Accessing MyRRMed information is easy. Just follow the link above and enter the following information:

- Your Medicare number (as printed

on your Medicare card)

- Your last name
- Your first name
- Your date of birth
- The effective date for Part B (as printed on your Medicare card)

Once you have entered this information and it is verified within our files, you will create a user name and password.

#### **Logging into the Portal:**

To enhance the security of Medicare data, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid services (CMS) requires Palmetto GBA to adhere to several security requirements. Some of these security features require the user to verify their identity using their email address.

This is done through what's called 'Multi-Factor Authentication', or 'MFA'. MFA has the user log partially in, and then the system sends a 'passcode' (a unique and random set of numbers) to either your tele-

phone by text or your email for you to enter on the portal access page. Upon each log in, users are required to enter an MFA code in addition to their password to access MyRRMed. CMS requires that Medicare contractors use MFA as a secondary level of security to protect beneficiary data.

#### **When is the Portal Available?**

MyRRMed is generally available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. However, certain functions are only available from 8 am to 7 pm Eastern Time (ET). These include accessing claims data and MSNs.

#### **Questions?**

If you have questions about using the tool, please call our Beneficiary Contact Center at 800-833-4455, or for the hearing-impaired, call TTY/TDD at 877-566-3572. Customer Service Representatives are available Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. until 7 p.m. ET

— Jennifer Johnson