

National Association of Retired & Veteran Railway Employees, Inc.

— SINCE 1937 —

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NARVRE NEWSLETTER

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FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT —

In February, President Obama signed an Executive Order creating the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform (“Commission”). The Executive Order directs the commission to recommend how to reduce the annual deficits to 3% of the national economy by 2015. While retirees fully support the President on the critical need to reduce our nation’s budget deficit, many are concerned by the incorrect words of deficit hawks who repeatedly claim that Social Security is to blame for the deficit, even though the program has not contributed to the Federal deficit and maintains a \$2.5 trillion surplus. Our concerns are how the commission will view railroad retirement because of its proximity to social security. There are some well known members of the commission who are known foes of both Social Security and Medicare.

This commission is made up of 18 members, 6 appointed by the President, 3 appointed by the Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, 3 appointed by Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, 3 appointed by the Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and 3 appointed by House Minority Leader John Boehner. Additionally, Democratic Leadership Council CEO Bruce Reed was recently appointed to serve as Executive Director of the Commission.

The President’s Appointees are as follows: Andy Stern, President of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU); Dave Cote, a Republican executive who is the head of Honeywell; Ann Fudge, a former executive at several corporations; Alice Rivlin, a former Vice Chair of the Federal Reserve and Director of both the Congressional Budget office and President Clinton’s White House Budget Office; and former White House Chief of Staff Erskine Bowles and former Republican Senate Whip Alan Simpson, who both will serve as Co-Chairs of the Commission.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid’s Appointees: Kent Conrad of North Dakota; Max Baucus of Montana and Richard J. Durbin of Illinois.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell Appointees: Tom Coburn of Oklahoma, Judd Gregg of New Hampshire and Michael Crapo of Idaho.

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi’s Appointees: John Spratt Jr., of North Carolina, Xavier Becerra of California and Jan Schakowsky of Illinois.

House Minority Leader John Boehner’s Appointees: Paul Ryan of Wisconsin, Dave Camp of Michigan and Jeb Hensarling of Texas.

The Commission is tasked with proposing

recommendations designed to (1) reduce annual deficits to 3% of the national economy by 2015 and (2) long-run fiscal outlook, including changes to address the growth of entitlement spending (Social Security and Medicare).

The Commission must vote on a final report containing a set of recommendations no later than December 1, 2010. This report must be approved by 14 of its 18 members for it to be adopted by the commission. Blocking cuts to Social Security and Medicare thus require 5 commissioners.

If the final report is adopted by the commission, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid has promised to give the recommendations an up or down vote by the end of the year.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi will then vote on the Senate’s recommendations by the end of the year.

The commission will commence its work on April 27 and will dissolve 30 days after submitting its final report.

Keep an eye on this commission as it progresses through its deliberations.

— Tom Dwyer, National President

FROM THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR —

The Jobs Bill (HR 2847) that we have been following has been signed into law, but with lower funding levels for Amtrak and rail transit. The Appropriations for 2010 came up far shorter than the funding that the House bill had requested. As example, the House version had called for \$4 billion for capital grants to states, and ended up with \$2.5 billion. For FY 2011, NARVRE supports budget requests for \$592 million for operations, \$1,299 million for capital (includes American Disabilities Act compliance work), \$305 million for debt service, \$7 million for Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) oversight, \$446 million for Amtrak’s fleet modernization requirements, and \$4 billion for capital grants with states & rolling stock acquisitions. We agree with the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) requests for proper funding to restore Amtrak service between New Orleans and Florida, as provided for in ’08 legislation (PRIIA) requiring that Amtrak submit a plan to restart that service by July, 2009. We further support their efforts to restore service between Salt Lake City and the Pacific Northwest, as well as between Chicago and the Pacific Northwest. In 2010, through the first two Quarters of Amtrak’s Fiscal Year, total rail ridership was up 4.3% at 13.6 million compared to the

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From the National Vice President —

Membership Activities: I would like to recognize Roy Palmer who in the last year has brought into his unit in Marceline, Mo. 109 members in 13 months now that just shows what can be done with a little work. Thanks Roy for such great effort, NARVRE APPRECIATES your hard work.

I would like to recognize Bob Bloomer, new Area 8 Director, who has been having numerous informational meetings with the help of Whitey & the Moody Law Firm. Bob has worked very hard with increasing membership in his area. Keep up the good work Bob, NARVRE also appreciates everything you are doing for our great Organization.

I have decided with the approval of Tom Dwyer our National President to form a Membership Committee. I have had two volunteers: Jim Brewer from Topeka, Kansas Unit #140 and Roy Palmer from Marceline, Missouri Unit #154. I have asked for three more people to join us on this Committee and awaiting their reply. One is Jack Bengtson, Grand Rapids Michigan Unit #152. Michigan is one of the States we want to concentrate on heavily as there is only one unit in that State. I have also asked Area 8 Director, Bob Bloomer, to also join this committee and awaiting his response at this time.

I would like to have one more volunteer besides those individuals that I have mentioned. If not I will seek one or two more members to assist. Memberships will be our number one priority in the next two years. I ask for your support. As everyone knows your National Vice President is in charge of Membership but it can't be done with out help throughout the organization starting with you the members and officers. We need and want your suggestions and support. By forming this committee we will have a number of members from different areas and also of different rolls throughout the organization to asset in this endeavor.

— **Rich Renz, National Vice President**

From the National Secretary-Treasurer —

Overcome obstacles to obtain our goals

What you can do is often simply a matter of what you will do.

— Norton Juster

What you can do is simply sit on the rocking chair and rock away. What should you do? There is more pleasure walking and/or talking with former railroaders you meet or call them to tell them that NARVRE is the only Federally chartered organization to preserve, promote and protect your railroad annuity. WE NEED YOUR HELP TO INCREASE MEMBERSHIP! As information, Arkansas City, Unit 025, has enlisted 15 new members on April 1, 2010. La Grande, new Unit 089, was chartered on March 10, 2010 with 82 members. It can be done!

CONVENTION

The 37th Biennial Convention is weeks away. Credentials should be in the possession of all delegates. They are to be submitted to the Credential Committee upon registration. They will be issued a VOTING CARD and a bag which will include the WORK BOOK, DIRECTORY, and other convention essentials. If the delegate is unable to attend, the alternate delegate will submit his/her credential card and receive the voting card and bag.

NARVREPAC

The National Office has received calls as to what is being done to correct the TAKE-BACK and WIMA? That is what NARVREPAC is all about. We got it rolling, now keep sending your contributions to the National Office. We need some members in Congress to consider our cause and enact legislation. KEEP YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS COMING IN!

AS INFORMATION

The name of our legal counsel "Moody, Strople, Kloppel and Higgenbotham, Inc." has been changed to "The Moody Law Firm, Inc."

ALERT

As there will be another National Secretary-Treasurer elected at the 37th Convention on May 11, 2010, The National Office will have to move it's headquarters to a new location where the next National Secretary-Treasurer lives. We will notify you and give the information in the June-July issue of the NARVRE Newsletter.

Looking forward to seeing many of you at the convention in La Crosse.

**Happy 75th Anniversary
to the
US Railroad Retirement Board
1935-2010**

Stay well and God Bless.

— **Mary David**

In God We Trust

(National Legislative Director from page 1)

same period last year. Revenue for FY 2009 was at \$2.32 billion, with an operating loss of \$468 million. The requests from NARP, while highlighting the importance of passenger trains to the riding public in the U.S., also emphasized the upfront benefits of mobility for the aging, and the quality of life rail service brings to our communities. They further pointed out the factual improvements in energy efficiency, additional jobs and a huge reduction in our transportation system's negative environmental impact. Studies show that young people are becoming more & more receptive to non-auto transport, and older segments of our population are turning away from driving, and using rail as an alternative mode of commuting and travel.

This month, the FRA began accepting applications for \$115 million in planning & construction project funds for high speed intercity passenger rail. FRA Administrator Joe Szabo, stated that this funding will help states lay the groundwork for high speed rail programs and get specific projects started so that jobs can be created in the near term. This funding complements the earlier appropriated funding by the Obama Administration's \$8 billion to "Enhance Passenger Rail in America".

NARVRE is happy to report that proposed legislation (Va. State Legislature) which would have granted immunity to certain corporations in asbestos related liability cases, was soundly defeated in committee. The letter this office received included their appreciation for the assistance and experience of

the Moody Law Firm, which is the Designated Asbestos Counsel for NARVRE.

The latest Quarterly Report from the National Railroad Retirement Investment Trust (NRRIT) has been released and is published on the web, at www.rrb.gov. Under Investment Performance: After the Trust experienced substantial growth during the first six years of the Trust's operations, Railroad Retirement System assets, like assets of most pension funds, declined as a result of the general economic downturn beginning in 2008. As of December 31, 2009, the latest quarterly reporting shows that the Railroad Retirement System assets stood at \$24.8 billion compared to \$20.7 billion at the trust's inception (Feb,'02). In addition to this balance, however, the Trust had transferred an additional \$8.6 billion in earnings to the Treasury for making benefit payments to participants in the Railroad Retirement System. Keep in mind that the Trust and the RRB are separate entities. The RRB remains a Federal agency and continues to have full responsibility for administering the Railroad Retirement System, including eligibility determinations and the

calculations of beneficiary payments. Although the RRB does not have authority with respect to day-to-day activities of the Trust, the RRB may bring legal action to enforce any provision of the Act in the event it should ever become necessary. The financial statements of the Trust are required to be audited annually by an independent public accountant. The Trust must also submit an annual management report to Congress on its operations, including a statement of financial position, cash flows, internal accounting and administrative control systems, and other related information on the operations and financial condition of the Trust.

More Medicare fraud is in the news, with unlicensed offices continually opening up to utilize the Medicare cards of both the unsuspecting enrollees, and those that are willing to assist in the crime, then close down after bilking the system through large bogus billings. We need to be aware of who we do business with, and keep track of our benefits on the claims information we receive. The money saved will add to the solvency of the Medicare Trust Fund.

— Gary M. Faley, National Legislative Director, N.A.R.V.R.E.

CANDIDATES FOR OFFICE

- Tom Dwyer is seeking re-election as National President.
- Richard Renz is seeking re-election as National Vice President.
- Rich Duley is seeking election as National Secretary Treasurer.
- Roy Palmer is seeking election as Area 4 Director.



National President Tom Dwyer presenting Charter listing 82 members to Larry Romine, President of Unit 089 at LaGrande, Oregon.

FROM PALMETTO, GBA

For Railroad Beneficiaries...

Medicare coverage and guidelines can sometimes be confusing. We realize that it is important for you to know what your benefits are. So below, we have outlined some answers to questions that are frequently asked by Railroad Medicare beneficiaries:

How do I meet my Medicare deductible?

Your 2010 Part B deductible is met with the first \$155.00 worth of allowed charges that are billed to Medicare.

Does Railroad Medicare pay for my hospital charges?

Hospital charges are handled by Part A Medicare. If you have been in the hospital or if you just went to the hospital and received outpatient services, the hospital will bill Part A Medicare for your services. To find out which Part A Medicare office handles your hospital bill, call the hospital that provided your services.

How can I find out which doctors are participating in my area?

Contact Railroad Medicare for a list of participating providers in your area.

How can I get a new Medicare card?

You may contact the Railroad Retirement Board toll-free at 1-877-772-5772, to request a new card. You may also contact our office for assistance by calling 1-800-833-4455. You will need to have your Social Security number and your Medicare number ready.

Who do I notify when I change my address?

Notify your Railroad Medicare Office and the Railroad Retirement Board.

If I join a HMO plan, can I go back on Medicare?

Yes. Contact your HMO plan and tell them that you want to cancel the policy and go back on Medicare. They will take care of the paperwork for you. If have any problems canceling your HMO plan, you may contact the Railroad Retirement Board.

Does Medicare pay for hearing aides?

Medicare does not pay for hearing aides.

I need transportation to and from the doctor's office, does Medicare pay for transportation by wheel chair vans or senior citizen's vans?

Medicare does not pay for these services.

How do I know whether or not I'm eligible for both Part A and Part B?

The Railroad Retirement Board can give you this information. The staff there can tell you if you are eligible for Part A and Part B Medicare.

— **Barbara Naugle**

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37th Biennial Convention In
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May 9, 10, And 11, 2010

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