

National Association of Retired & Veteran Railway Employees, Inc.

— SINCE 1937 —

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

NARVRE NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER, 2010

VOL. 24 NO. 08

FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT —

The NARVRE National Office has now moved to Moberly, Missouri. Our thank you's go out to Mary David for over 20 years of service as our National Secretary-Treasurer. All correspondence should be directed to Richard L. Duley, National Secretary-Treasurer, 102 S. Williams, Suite B, Moberly, MO 65270. Telephone (660) 269-8895, Fax: (660) 269-8896 or Toll Free 1-800-551-2588, Email: NARVRE@gmail.com. There are many things to set up with a move such as this so please be patient until things work themselves out.

With the completion of the May 2010 Convention another looms in 2012 in Minneapolis/St. Paul. We had the best attendance of any convention in LaCrosse, Wisconsin with over 87 total delegates attending. Can we beat that record in 2012? That depends on the membership and their preparation as once again we will be holding the convention in the Midwest. It is about raising money to send your delegate which can be done in several ways. Raffles, Drawings, Donations, Garage Sales even members throwing in a dollar at each monthly meeting as a "Convention Donation" to send your delegate. To those Units who would like to host a convention in their city in 2014 they should prepare themselves accordingly by bringing the issue to their membership for approval prior to attending the 2012 Convention in Minneapolis/St. Paul. It takes two years of planning and you need an active committee to put in on properly.

2010 is an election year with the economy, jobs and the slow recovery causing extreme anxiety amongst the electorate. Donations have dropped off to our NARVREPAC which we expected after the first year. Remember if you gave a donation in 2009 you can contribute again. We have made no donations to any candidates so far as we wanted to build the fund up and wanted to wait until after the convention to implement the program. Keep in mind that any donation has to be from an individual voluntarily with no monies coming from Unit treasuries or no bundling like "passing the hat" at a meeting to donate to the PAC. All contributions should be made out to NARVREPAC and mailed to the Richard L. Duley, National Secretary-Treasurer.

On December 1, 2010 the President's Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform is due to make their report on how to reduce the national deficit and entitlement programs such as Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. One of the members of the Commission is Rep. Paul Ryan, R-WI. He is the Ranking Member of the House Budget Committee and would become Chairman if the GOP take over the House after the fall elections. Rep. Ryan has his own budget plan and he has run it by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO). The CBO has estimated that Rep. Ryan's

plan would cut the budget deficit in half by 2020. Some highlights of the plan are as follows: (1) Leaves in place the current Social Security and Medicare system for people 55 and over; (2) For those currently under 55, it would reform Medicare with vouchers that seniors would use to buy private insurance. The vouchers would grow more slowly than the projected increase in medical costs, but Ryan argues that competition would keep plans affordable. The age for Medicare eligibility would increase over time from 65 to 69; (3) Future Social Security benefits would be reduced for many workers now 54 or younger. They would have the option of putting into investment accounts some money they would pay in Social Security taxes; (4) Gradually raises the retirement age to 70; (5) Eliminates taxes on interest, capital gains and dividends; (6) Replaces taxes on corporation with a consumption tax on what businesses buy and (7) Would freeze increases on most spending by the government but would exempt such programs as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, as well as defense spending.

Keep in mind that Railroad Retirement interacts with Social Security through Tier 1 and Tier 2. We will be dragged into this reform whether we like it or not. Stay tuned!

— **Tom Dwyer, National President**

FROM THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR —

The Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) has submitted its 2010 financial report to Congress, as required by law. This annual report is required to include any possible recommendations in financing changes, if applicable. That is not the case in this report, and as of September 30, 2009, total railroad retirement system assets, including those managed by the National Railroad Retirement Investment Trust (NRRIT) and the retirement system accounts, equaled \$24.6 billion. The RRB's conclusion was that barring a sudden, unanticipated large drop in railroad employment or substantial investment losses, the railroad retirement system will not experience any cash-flow problems during the next 23 years. That full statement, as well as further explanations as to the RRB's testings and methods used in reaching their conclusions can be seen and read in entirety on their website at www.rrb.gov. There is also a Q & A publication on the overall financial condition of the retirement system, which I sent out via email in early August. They will also post the Quarterly Report ending June 30, 2010 when that becomes available. Bottom line is that under the most pessimistic assumption, the RRB reports that no cash-flow problems will occur through 2033, 23 years from now. The RRB's 2010 railroad unemployment insurance financial report was also

continued on page 3 ■■■▶

From the National Vice President —

We have the opportunity, now, to offer new N.A.R.V.R.E. members a signing bonus. Those who join now will have their dues paid through 2011, which makes the membership balance of 2010 free. We all like free offers, or senior discounts. This offer, along with the fact that N.A.R.V.R.E. is the only organization looking out to protect the Railroad Retirement, is a great sales pitch for new membership.

The National Office is now open in Moberly, MO. Setup has taken a lot of work. National Secretary/Treasurer Rich Duley and Dianna have worked very hard in organizing the office space. Thanks to them, I too, will have office space. Anytime you need to talk to me, please, either call my cell, my home, or the National Office.

Although summer is fast turning into fall, Jim Brewer is working hard looking for members and sharing membership recruitment ideas from everyone all across this Great Land of ours. Any of you that have a membership plan, please, share your idea with Jim or with me.

We plan to get together in October while attending the Kansas State Meeting. "Communication, Cooperation and Action" was once used as a slogan at the National Convention. This slogan conveys such an important idea. I recall when National Office and Area Directors were impressed by how much the use of fax machines improved our communications. Now it is the internet and cell phone usage that have improved our person-to-person networking. What will the next communication phase bring?

We are looking forward to hearing of your plans for the rest of this year and the beginning of 2011. For those of you with Internet access, I encourage you to visit the N.A.R.V.R.E. website: www.narvre.org. You can reach us at the new National Office address: N.A.R.V.R.E. National Office; 102 S. Williams; Suite B; Moberly, MO 65270. E-mail: narvre@gmail.com.

From the National Secretary-Treasurer —

National Office is Up and Running

Our national office is up and running. We are still trying to locate some of the things we need. but for the most part we are getting along pretty good. Most of our attention is focused on 2011 membership renewal. We are wanting to be as helpful as we can to all of the local unit Secretary / Treasurer's with the renewal process. Our local unit officers do a great job in serving their members and make attending meetings fun & interesting.

Do you know that NARVRE has a membership category called social members. Any person can belong to NARVRE. These social members need not of worked in the railroad industry. We have social members who are family of railroaders, good friends of railroaders or in some cases just railroad enthusiasts who like to socialize with people who have worked in the rail industry. So when you talk about attending a NARVRE meeting and how much fun you have, or how informative the meetings are, remember to ask the people in your circle of friendship if they would like to join N.A.R.V.R.E.

I hope everyone is enjoying their summer, and looking forward to a beautiful fall.

— **Richard L. Duley**
National S & T, NARVRE

For those without access to the Internet, call the new National Office at 1-660-269-8895 or fax 1-660-269-8896.

I wish to mention activities progressing in all area regions of N.A.R.V.R.E. but, due to the lack of space, will only comment on two this month.

Area 8 Director Bob Bloomer attended the Old Rails meeting in Oakland, CA, on July 13, 2010; signed up four new members; and attended the Bakersfield N.A.R.V.R.E. meeting July 19. Diane Painter and Ed Brown signed up four new members. We now have one member who has volunteered to be Membership Chairman and one member who has volunteered to be

Legislative Representative for the Bakersfield unit. On July 20, Director Bloomer traveled to the Southern California area to select a meeting location for the October 16 railroaders' luncheon. On July 23 he attended a meeting in Stockton with a B.N.S.F. police officer who has volunteered to help establish a N.A.R.V.R.E. unit in Stockton, CA.

On July 30, he mailed out 126 letters to Southern California retired and active railroaders announcing the October 16, 2010, railroaders' luncheon.

Area 7 Director Maggie Haverfield reported that she had a N.A.R.V.R.E. table at the N.P.R.H.A. 2010 Convention in Spokane on July 14 thru July 17. She was assisted by Don Cain. Larry Romine, President of Unit 89, La Grande, OR, said "...I have already asked all the N.A.R.V.R.E. members to invite those retirees they know and have them come for free food!!! I have LOTS of handouts from last month's Railroad Retirement meeting to put out on my lending library tables and I have established that anyone with questions can ask me at the end of the meeting. Of course, N.A.R.V.R.E. Membership information will be all around....

Gosh, I guess N.A.R.V.R.E. information will be at all three picnics." (August 10 thru August 13).

You are important to N.A.R.V.R.E.; please continue to make N.A.R.V.R.E. important to you.

— **George Wisdom**

(National Legislative Director from page 1)

generally favorable. Unemployment levels are the single most significant factors affecting the financial status of this insurance system. While employment levels are still down compared to 2008 figures, the nation's railroad workforce continues to grow, with favorable projections leading into 2011. Cash balance for the railroad unemployment insurance system was at \$47.6 million ending FY2009.

As of late, we have been active in the annual exercise of attempting to secure reasonable funding for Amtrak and high speed rail investments in FY2011. All rail passenger service advocates are disappointed in the lower than expected appropriations and the differences in funding levels must be worked out between the House and Senate. Narvre is very familiar with the funding process that works it's way through the different committees in Congress. We're also accustomed to working with other rail passenger support organizations each year as we voice our concerns regarding Amtrak's ability to operate and invest in it's future, thereby protecting twenty thousand plus jobs and employees. Every year we hear the same song from opponents in their attempts to underfund Amtrak, and each year we react by having our respective memberships contact their representatives in Congress, just as we have done during this appropriation process. This year, we had to react to specific attempts that would dismantle and destroy Amtrak that came from certain small-minded individuals in Congress that do not care about this nations rail passenger service, or it's employees, nor do they care what a lack of train service would mean to different segments of our population. These attempts came in the form of amendments from three GOP Representatives in Congress that would

eliminate crucial amounts of Amtrak money earmarked for capital funding and operating expenditures. They also targeted funding for loan and debt repayment, which would eventually dismantle and destroy major train routes in America. Four connected amendments were sponsored by Rep. Sessions (Tx), Rep. Bachmann (Mn), and Rep. Thornberry (Tx), which culminated in one specific amendment offered by Rep. Flake (Az). The Thornberry amendment would have prohibited any funds from being used to subsidize sleeper class service on lany ong-distance Amtrak routes and would reduce Amtrak's operating grants by \$120 million. This is a pitiful back-door method of eliminating amenities, making the sleepers less comfortable, thereby discouraging future customer revenues. This is a juvenile attempt to disguise their obvious intention, which would be to then criticize the lack of customer revenue, which, of course, would have been specifically caused by the language in their amendment. The final Amendment (No.20 as introduced), authored by Rep. Flack, would have removed over \$1 billion from the amount included in the House Appropriations Committee in the FY11 Transportation Comm. appropriations bill. Thankfully, the Amendment was defeated by a vote of 129-293. Had the full intent and purpose of these ill-conceived amendments been realized, all of the successes and improvements on Amtrak would have been for naught and a waste of federal funds. These same members that claim to work for the American people would have denied rail passenger service to 29 million people in over 500 communities in 46 states. They would have caused additional undue hardship for the many disabled and elderly citizens that rely on intercity rail service. Americans have continued to board Amtrak trains in record numbers, and expansion plans are being

implemented. The traveling public has embraced Amtrak passenger service and their new five year plan should be allowed to move forward. While these representatives continue to insist they are concerned about the lack of jobs in this country, their actions would have caused Amtrak to furlough more than 20,000 employees that live in every state in the union. A hit like that would be a devastating blow to the Railroad Retirement Board. This amendment would cripple operations in every corner of the country and force Amtrak to default on existing commercial loans which financed the purchase of new equipment. These people and those that supported this nonsense should be rejected when they ask for our votes in the near future. Their actions would place our annuities in jeopardy. This attempt to destroy Amtrak is a direct assault on our railroad retirement system. A total of 129 members in Congress voted for this amendment (Amendment No, 20, Roll Call 494 on H.R. 5850). You can see the full vote here:

<http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2010/roll494.xml>

The Medicare Fraud Enforcement and Prevention Act of 2009 has helped Medicare agencies fight back against ongoing fraud that continues despite increased penalties and stronger prosecutions. An existing anti-fraud effort announced record arrests earlier in July. Strike force teams committed to weeding out Medicare fraud announced July 16 that they were indicting more than 90 people for their alleged participation in schemes to submit more than \$251 million collectively in false Medicare claims. The operation represents the largest federal takedown since Medicare fraud strike force operations began in 2007. New and separate legislation, "The Fighting Fraud with Innovative Technology Act" has been introduced that will bolster Medicare's claims screening process before payments are sent out. Meanwhile, advocates for senior citizens (as well as NARVRE) are reminding people covered under Medicare's Part D Drug Plan that they don't have to do anything to receive the \$250 rebate check if they hit the gap (or donut hole) in prescription drug coverage costs. Scams are continually being perpetrated on unsuspecting seniors by asking for personal information such as Social Security or Medicare numbers. Be aware!

— **Gary M. Faley**
National Legislative Director

Avandia Alert

The drug Avandia has come under serious scrutiny by the FDA and thousands of lawsuits have been filed against its manufacturer, GlaxoSmithKline, for causing heart attacks, strokes and congestive heart failure. Avandia was initially put on the market in May of 1999 and has been prescribed to treat individuals with Type II Diabetes. It is estimated that Avandia has caused 60,000 to 100,000 heart attacks from 1999 to 2006 alone.

The Moody Law Firm is currently representing individuals affected by Avandia (Rosiglitazone). If you or a loved one has had a heart attack, stroke, or congestive heart failure and took Avandia, please contact The Moody Law Firm immediately at (800) 793-4816. There are critical time limits on these claims, so call immediately if you have been affected.

FROM PALMETTO, GBA**Railroad Medicare**

Have you ever gone to the doctor and been concerned that maybe they were not sending your claim to the right place? Maybe you have received notices from the local Part B Medicare carrier stating that they could not process your claim because you are covered under another carrier. You ask yourself, "What are they talking about? I have Railroad Medicare!"

Many doctors and providers don't realize that Railroad Medicare beneficiaries are special! Most think that 'Medicare is Medicare', and that the local Part B carrier processes claims for all Medicare beneficiaries. This is a common mistake. You do have the same Medicare benefits as other Medicare beneficiaries, but claims for Railroad Medicare beneficiaries are all processed in one place — Palmetto GBA Railroad Medicare in Augusta, Georgia.

The difference between Railroad Medicare and social security Medicare is the identification number. Railroad Medicare Health Insurance numbers are either six or nine numbers with one, two or three letters in front. The person who is retired from the railroad will usually (but not always) have their social security number with an "A" in front as their number. Their spouse will use the same number but with "MA" in front, to show that they are married to the retiree. If the retiree passes away, the "MA" changes to a "WA" to show that they are now a widow or widower.

All Railroad Medicare claims must be sent to Palmetto GBA Railroad Medicare in Augusta Georgia for processing. Since you are not enrolled with social security Medicare, they will not have your records and cannot process claims for you. Sometimes, the local Medicare carrier will forward Railroad claims that they received to the Railroad Medicare carrier, but most of the time your doctor will have to refile directly with us.

You can help the processing of your claims by making sure that your doctors know that you are a Railroad Medicare beneficiary. Make sure they have a copy of the Health Insurance Card that was issued to you by the Railroad Retirement Board. If your card is worn out, you can request a new one by calling our office.

Tell your doctor that all Railroad Medicare claims have to be sent to:

Palmetto GBA Railroad Medicare
PO Box 10066

Augusta, GA 30999

Your doctor can call Provider Services toll-free at 1-877-288-7600 with any questions about Railroad Medicare. And as always, if you have any questions, call our Customer Service center toll-free at 1-800-833-4455 and we will be happy to help you.

— **Barbara Naugle**

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Volume 24 Number 08
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