

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

— SINCE 1937 —

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NARVRE NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER, 2011

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## FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT —

Today is an important day in Wisconsin. Since 1908, there have been 20 recorded state legislative recall elections in the United States. Wisconsin will be holding 9 such recall elections in a month's time. This all started when the newly elected Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker and his Republican legislative allies who control the legislature attacked labor rights, public education and basic services in the State of Wisconsin. Governor Walker never campaigned

in 2010 on stripping collective bargaining rights from it's state workers and once elected stated the budget problem was because of public employees and teachers. His position drew over 150,000 people to the state capitol in protest.

*“The attack on working people woke up a sleeping giant. These elections will tell the story.”*

Why would NARVRE have an interest in these elections? We have railroaders who live in bordering districts in Wisconsin and work in Minnesota on the railroad. The

same situation prevails in LaCrosse, Wisconsin where there is a major terminal and where we have a NARVRE Unit as well. Railroaders live in both states with the majority living in Wisconsin. Two incumbent Republican senators are up for recall who represent these border districts. The attack on working people woke up a sleeping giant. These elections will tell the story. There are many conservative groups support-

ing the incumbents as well as organized labor and progressive groups supporting the challengers. Millions of dollars have been spent in these districts on both sides. The current makeup of the Wisconsin Senate is 19 Republicans and 14 Democrats. If the Democrats pickup 3 seats they will take over the majority.

The bottom line is this. Most of the contentious issues of the past six months such as the stripping of collective bargaining rights, a one-sided redistricting plan and a draconian voter ID law are and have been challenged in the courts. If the courts send any of these issues back to the legislature the Senate Democrats will have a seat at the table. That is not the case presently. Efforts to recall Governor Walker will begin in November. Results in Wisconsin if positive for the Democrats will carry over into Ohio and Michigan with the same progressive groups as well as organized labor.

We will make a report in the next newsletter as to the August results in Wisconsin.

— Tom Dwyer, National President

## From the National Legislative Director —

In July, we put out an email advising that a letter advocating full funding for Amtrak in FY2012 had been sent to the Appropriations Subcommittee with jurisdiction over Amtrak. The letter was drafted by Sen. Webb and Sen. Lautenberg and had been signed by twenty (20) Senators (18 Democrats and 2 Independents). I mentioned that if your Senators were not on the list, it was advisable that we let our position be known to them and urge their support. I received more than a few emails and phone calls from members expressing concern over the lack of their own Senator's signature. I should have noted that it is customary for Senators to add their name and support to the intent of a letter at a later date. However, since this full funding is-

sue is critical to the operation and solvency of the Amtrak network, we all need to make sure that each of our Senators know where we stand as constituents. If they advise that they have signed on to support Amtrak, we should thank them for their continued support. If they have not, we should advise their office that Amtrak and it's 19,000 employees are a crucial component of the Railroad Retirement System, and we expect them to help protect the solvency of the RRB and our annuities. Always advise them that you are a member of NARVRE, and explain what that means. I am currently awaiting an update on the status of this supporting letter, and will forward that when available, as well as update the original letter on

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## From the National Vice President —

N.A.R.V.R.E. Membership Chairman James Brewer, Directors Areas 4 and 6, and I plan to hold a one day-meeting in Kansas City this fall to put together plans for action by the membership committee. Our first objective will be to encourage all Units to be very concerned about renewal of current members. Remember: No one can do everything, but everyone can do something. Also, there is no "I" in TEAM. We are all team players in this fight to protect our benefits.

This year of 2011 could go down in the history book of extremes. We Missourians have experienced extremes in the weather this year, which included cold, then snow, and then rain followed by storms and flooding. As I write this newsletter, we have extreme heat, but not just in the weather! Congress and its efforts to cut Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, gives us a reason to turn on the heat in the next elections. Tom has said elections have consequences. Any doubt about that now should be erased.

We have 3 area directors who have a total of nearly 54 years working for N.A.R.V.R.E. as area Directors.

Roy Stanley Area 5 Tyler, TX 20 years, Roger Barr Area 6 Topeka, KS 18Years, Harry Foreback Area 3 Cumberland, MD 16 years.

These Directors have years of experience, they are a part of the History of N.A.R.V.R.E. Thanks for a job well done.

If you do not have a copy of the book "The History of NARVRE" Author Mary David edited by the late Walter Lietzen, copies are still available at the National Office for only \$15.00 postage pd

Thanks for your time this time, you are important to N.A.R.V.R.E. make N.A.R.V.R.E. important to you.

— **George Wisdom**

## From the National Secretary-Treasurer —

### NATIONAL S & T

As we start into autumn I want to update you on the activities at your National Office. We have been preparing for the 2012 membership annual dues billing cycle. We will be doing a direct dues billing to our members at large (801) and will be sending renewal packets to all of our local unit officers. It is very important that all of our members keep us updated with their current mailing address. If you have just recently moved, the post office will only redirect you mail for a short time. So don't forget to keep your local unit S&T or the National Office updated with those addresses.

I hope all of our members have had a fun summer. Attendance at some of the local meetings have been low so let's all try to get back into the habit of going to Unit meetings. Many of the local units have very interesting programs or

guest speakers. If you know of something that would make a good program don't hesitate to tell your program chairperson about it.

How to get an Amtrak pass, the railroad employee or retiree must fill out an application form that is supplied by his or her home railroad. When the form is completed, it should be returned to the railroad. The railroad then certifies the information supplied by the employee or retiree and forwards the application to Amtrak, which reviews the information and, if the employee or retiree is eligible, issues an Amtrak Rail Travel Pass. Amtrak is a fun way to travel and all of their employees pays into the Railroad Trust Fund.

Here is a phone number you might need sometime: RAILROAD RETIREMENT BOARD: 1-877-772-5772.

— **Richard L. Duley**  
**National Secretary/Treasurer**

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

### Railroad Retirement Board

[www.rrb.gov](http://www.rrb.gov)

### SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

[www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov)

### DEPT. OF VETERAN AFFAIRS

[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)

877-772-5772 • 880-772-1213 • 800-827-1000

**MEDICARE** ..... **800-633-4227**  
[www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)

**UNITED HEALTHCARE GA-23111 PLAN F** ..... **800-809-0453**  
[www.myuhc.com](http://www.myuhc.com)

**UNITED HEALTHCARE GA-46000 PLAN E** ..... **800-842-5252**  
[www.myuhc.com](http://www.myuhc.com)

**PALMETTO GBA (RAILROAD MEDICARE)** ..... **800-833-4455**  
[www.palmettogba.com](http://www.palmettogba.com)

**METLIFE \$2,000.00** ..... **800-310-7770**  
[www.metlife.com](http://www.metlife.com)

**NARVRE** ..... **800-551-2588**  
[narvre@gmail.com](mailto:narvre@gmail.com)

**(National Legislative Director from page 1)**

my web page ([www.narvre.org](http://www.narvre.org)).

The latest showdown in Congress over the Debt Ceiling issue did nothing but remove confidence in the government's ability to work together in times of financial emergencies. We have now seen the ramifications of prolonging the issue, and not resolving it until the eleventh hour. The lack of meaningful and timely compromise has its own consequences, as witnessed by the reaction of the stock markets. Moreover, the components of the final agreement signed into law (August 2), will now lead us into yet another review of spending cuts in order to reduce the national debt. The law calls for a new bipartisan "super committee", made up of 6 Democrats and 6 Republicans. The committee will make their determinations in two-stages. In the first-stage, \$917 billion in discretionary spending must be cut over 10 years from Cabinet-level agencies and the thousands of programs they administer. If the committee does not agree by a 7 vote consensus, or if they do not obtain approval of the House & Senate, automatic cuts totaling \$1.2 trillion will then be implemented across the board, and that will include deep cuts in the military, as well as all three major entitlement programs. Defense Dept. and CIA officials are warning against that scenario, and Medicare has stated that they would likely be forced to impose 2% cuts in payments to our Medicare doctors and other medical providers (we need not be reminded that many current Medicare providers have already threatened to stop taking new Medicare patients). Confronted with all of this, while Americans once again watched their savings and 401k's tumble in declining stock markets, Congress decided to leave town and go on a prolonged vacation. With a national economic calamity in the markets, and a downgrade in our national credit rating by the S&P, their emergency was to leave

town. Our elected Representatives in Congress need to return to work, fix what's wrong and do what's right for the American people. There is a short amount of time in order to get this challenge worked out. This new committee must make their recommendations by Nov.23rd, and Congress must act on them by December 23rd. No amendments are allowed and Senate approval will take only 51 votes instead of the usual 60 needed to avoid a filibuster. All members of Congress should lay aside their own political aspirations, make the cuts with fairness and shared sacrifice in mind, and get on with the immediate challenge to jump-start the economy by putting Americans back to work.

In the months ahead, leading into the 2012 elections, we must all be aware of our own Representative's record on crucial issues relative to the future and safety of our retirement system. We need to keep their offices advised of our concerns, so they will understand that votes on

Amtrak issues can seriously affect our railroad retirement and annuities. Congress will return to work in September, and must address this nation's high unemployment problems. Surely they must understand that they need to keep the existing Amtrak jobs that currently employ over 19,000 Americans. They need to create jobs, not destroy them! As our Representatives begin to know NARVRE and the Railroad Retirement Board, they will understand that their actions can undermine the stability and solvency of our railroad retirement system. Many of those in Congress are newly elected, and they most likely are not familiar with NARVRE, or for that matter, the Railroad Retirement System. Kudos to the Units that have advised that they have invited their Congressperson or staff to future meetings. That is surely a major leap in getting them to know NARVRE and our issues.

— Gary M. Faley  
National Legislative Director

### How Do I Join?

JUST FILL OUT THIS APPLICATION AND SEND IT TO:  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED & VETERAN RAILROAD EMPLOYEES  
102 S WILLIAMS ST., SUITE B  
MOBERLY, MO 65270-3430

#### ANNUAL DUES

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SPOUSE NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS OR BOX No.: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

RAILROAD: \_\_\_\_\_

RETIRED:  Yes  No

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ 20 \_\_\_\_\_

YEARLY DUES

EXTENDED MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP

SINGLE

COUPLE

PERSON \$13.00

FIVE YEARS

\$50 \_\_\_\_

\$80 \_\_\_\_

COUPLE \$20.00

TEN YEARS

\$90 \_\_\_\_

\$120 \_\_\_\_

LIFE

\$120 \_\_\_\_

\$160 \_\_\_\_

**From Palmetto, GBA**

## **Railroad Medicare Is On Facebook - Come Join Us!**

Railroad Medicare has launched a page on Facebook called "My RR Medicare". If you are already registered on Facebook, come and check us out and give us ideas on what you would like to see on this page. We need your input!

If you're not on Facebook, give it a chance! You may very well like it. Facebook is a way to connect to friends from the past and the present, and family members who may live far away. Kids and (and grandkids!) are on it talking to friends and family, and many people post pictures of what they are doing, what their family is doing, and places they have been. People talk about their health concerns, their good days (and sometimes joke about their bad ones), and generally find a place to catch up on the important things in life.

The reason that Railroad Medicare has joined Facebook is to offer you another way to communicate with us. You can ask us general questions, request information, or see pictures from the NARVRE events that we have attended with you. This page is all about sharing what we have in common and finding ways to help each other navigate Railroad Medicare together.

So please take a few minutes of your day and see what we have. We are looking for many ideas, and we welcome your thoughts and guidance.

Come see us today at <http://www.facebook.com/myr-rmedicare>. If you have trouble logging on to Facebook after you have registered, please contact us at 706-855-3112 and we can walk you through the process.

We thank you in advance for your help and look forward to shaping this page into a fun and useful tool for you to use and interact with.

— **Jennifer Johnson**

**NARVRE NEWSLETTER**  
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