



## JUST ONE MONTH OF AMTRAK ACTIONS



- **March 20**- Effective March 20, Amtrak [cancellation fees increased](#) dramatically. Amtrak also cut back year-round discounts, eliminated the former 10 percent discounts for AAA and AARP members, and cut the senior discount from 15 percent to 10 percent.
- **March 26** – Amtrak discontinued [discounts for military Veterans](#). The "Veterans Advantage" discount on Amtrak tickets for travel and on weekend Acela service was ended after 17 years. The decision to eliminate the program was part of Amtrak's decision to end its involvement with private company membership clubs.
- **March 28** - Amtrak issued a notice to employees: "Generally, Amtrak will no longer operate charter services or special trains."
- **March 29** - Amtrak personnel began denying moves by private cars located on route midpoints with less than 30 minutes dwell time. This limits the locations where private cars can be added or removed from trains.
- **April 18** – Amtrak issued [formal restrictions](#) on private cars which contains a [list of Amtrak-served locations](#) eligible for adding or removing Private Cars from designated Amtrak trains, subject to operating conditions at the time of the requested movement. The policy also limits maintenance performed by Amtrak on Private Cars to FRA-required repairs of safety appliances,
- **April 18** - [Rates were increased 12.4%](#) on all services to private cars despite a long standing rate addendum agreement "*The rates in this Addendum will be adjusted annually based on the AAR Quarterly Index of Charge-Out Prices and Wage Rates (Table No. C), using the 4th Quarter United States, "Materials prices, wage rates and supplements combined (excl. fuel)". The rate adjustment will be effective on October 1 of each year.*"
- **April 19** – Amtrak [cut hot food services](#) on two long distance trains. "Amtrak will offer contemporary and fresh dining choices for sleeping car customers, instead of traditional dining car service, embarking aboard its *Capitol Limited* and *Lake Shore Limited* trains starting June 1."
- **April 19** – Amtrak CEO Richard Anderson [Remarkd to California Rail Summit](#) on phasing out long distance service. The long-distance trains cost \$750 million a year to operate. Corridors are better. Only 4% of passengers travel end to end. Under PRIIA he believes that he has to operate at lower cost and more competitively. "That's what the law says". "There is some room for experience travel" but he did not elaborate.
- **April 27** - Stations with less than 40 passengers a day will no longer be staffed. These include Charleston, WV; Cincinnati, OH; Fort Madison, IA; Garden City, KS; Hammond, LA; Havre, MT; La Junta, CO; Lamy, NM; Marshall, TX; Meridian, MS; Ottumwa, IA; Shelby, MT; Texarkana, AR; Topeka, KS; Marshall, TX; Texarkana, TX; and Tuscaloosa, AL.

**AAPRCO has adopted a four-pronged approach to fight the continued**

### degradation of customer service which includes:

1. direct discussions with Amtrak,
2. educating and leveraging members of Congress and other officials,
3. public communications, and
4. the solicitation of proposals exploring formal remedies.

### What you can do:

- Continue writing your congressional representatives. A suggested letter and link to your representative is [here](#): At <https://www.congress.gov/> click on "Members" at upper right, then select a Representative or Senator. This will take you to a link to the Member's web site, where you can send an electronic message.
- Contact the news media in your area. A [suggested release to localize](#) is here. If you know a reporter on a national level get in touch with them. I would be glad to assist with that effort. [bordoblack@aol.com](mailto:bordoblack@aol.com).
- Write a letter or email to Richard Anderson CEO of Amtrak: [Richard.Anderson@Amtrak.com](mailto:Richard.Anderson@Amtrak.com) In addition to opposing the discontinuance of discounts, food service, charter trains and private car restrictions, point out that the increased fees conflict with already established policy *"The rates in this Addendum will be adjusted annually based on the AAR Quarterly Index of Charge-Out Prices and Wage Rates (Table No. C), using the 4th Quarter United States, "Materials prices, wage rates and supplements combined (excl. fuel)". The rate adjustment will be effective on October 1 of each year."*
- If you are an attorney or have ties to an attorney with railroad expertise contact [mmargrave@mclawfirm.com](mailto:mmargrave@mclawfirm.com)

## The New River Train Saga



Chris Lockwood and Joe Rosenthal of the Collis P. Huntington Chapter of the NRHS in a meeting last week with Senator Joe Manchin (D) West Virginia and Amtrak representatives.

On Tuesday April 17, 2018 Senator Joe Manchin and Congressman Evan Jenkins of West Virginia set up a meeting between Chris Lockwood, myself and Amtrak. We had been working closely with Senator Manchin's office on Amtrak's decision to eliminate charters and special trains. The meeting, which was originally to consist of Amtrak operations and CPH, was broadened when Senator Manchin and two of his staff, decided at the last minute to attend. Representatives from Hinton, WV also participated.

We talked about pricing and what had to be done in order to be able to run the annual New River Train. For about an hour, we discussed the increased cost that we would incur and the need to run multiple special trains in order to bring equipment in and out of Huntington. While Amtrak did not back down on their raise in price, which was more than 60% higher than the original quote for 2018, they did tell us the New River Train would be able to run. We are still working closely with Senator Manchin's office and Amtrak to make it work.

### **Joe Rosenthal**

News articles about the New River Train

[Huntington Herald-Dispatch](#) , [State Journal](#) . [WSAZ](#), [West Virginia Metro News](#), [Beckley Register Herald](#)  
[WV News Huntington Herald Dispatch](#)

## WHAT NOW?



It seems like every time I sit down to write an article, I find the situation with Amtrak has changed. The article I wrote at the first of the month for the printed magazine is already out dated.

I advocated a calm approach when we first got hit with the charters and private car news from Amtrak. Several times I have written, or have said "Let's look at this from Amtrak's perspective". I'm calling "uncle" (as my brother or I would say when one of us was ready to surrender to the other's surprising wrestling move when growing up)

now. The surprises with Amtrak keep coming. What could be next? I think we know that answer and we are starting to see it unfold before our eyes.

On April 19<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Anderson's remarks during the California Rail Summit left no doubt that long distance trains are on the chopping block. If you study history, this is not new. The April 1959 Trains magazine featured a lengthy article titled "Who Shot the Passenger Train" that was very detailed regarding the issues with passenger train travel. Less than a decade from when that article was written we saw the removal of diners on some routes that would be considered long distance trains. Then there was that wonderful addition to some railroads of the Automat rail cars (vending machines). How come we don't see Automat cars preserved in our museums? (We know that answer).

The discouragement of the long distance customer has begun again. What we are seeing today is a major point in our passenger train history that we will look back on and say, ***I remember when....*** As quoted from one of Amtrak's most ardent supporters (Former Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson of Texas) "Amtrak will be national or it will be nothing". Are we there?

So now what? Several organizations are already seeking guidance on their next step. We at RPCA have been in close communication with AAPRCO and other organizations. AAPRCO & RPCA have sent a joint letter to Mr. Anderson requesting a meeting but to date, we have not received a response. We have also considered the formation of some type of fund through contributions to assist with expenses as we move forward. Everything is being considered. We continue requesting each member to do your part and follow the suggestions that have been laid out. We have posted sample letters and other tools for you to contact your representatives in addition to calling them and or scheduling a visit with them.

I owe several of you an apology as it's been impossible for me to respond to every email. The amount of email traffic on the Amtrak issues has been more than I can read on most days. I'm currently prioritizing based on our board, other organizations and those on the front line. I promise you that I do eventually read them all. At times I have been too busy to respond without giving your email the response it deserves. I assure you that we take each suggestion seriously and I appreciate how much help everyone has been.

There is some great news out there in other areas of our industry. Here's two that I have enjoyed lately.

- Henry Weller & I attended French Lick's annual meeting in April. They continue to have record ridership and are expanding operations with several new cars, events and other surprises in the near future.
- The NRHS RAILCAMP continues to do a great job with future railroaders and enthusiasts. We have received wonderful letters (emails) from those who our membership sent to camp. I know many of you have some great stories out there. Feel free to share what's happening at your operation with our IE and magazine editors. We are always in need of some good stories.

Keep Safe  
Roger

## **RPCA NEWS**

**Membership renewals** are due **THIS MONTH**. Don't wait until the last minute. If your dues of \$45.00 (\$10.00 more for CUPS) are not paid by the end of June, you will lose out on all the benefits of RPCA. These include: this e-newsletter, a twice annual full color magazine, the informative annual conference, our resource library, access to single car tester and coupler gauges, insurance, reporting marks and best of all networking and friends. You can renew [on line](#) or mail your check to PO Box 404, Huntington, WV 25708

You will soon be getting your first copy of the full color news magazine. **Passenger Car News** edited by Joe Rosenthal. If you do not receive your copy by May, please make sure RPCA has your correct mailing address. In order for this to be successful, we need your long-form articles. They can be on any topic from railroad history to the success of a renovation. Email your story to [media@rpca.com](mailto:media@rpca.com).

It's not too early to start thinking about the **2019 RPCA conference**. Ray Kammer has set up a website where you can easily keep up with the news. Just [click here](#) to get the latest.

## **SCHOLARSHIPS TO NRHS RAILCAMPS**

Each year the RPCA, through the generosity of our members and our insurance vendors, strives to send at least two deserving youth to the NRHS RailCamps via our Caldwell-Luebke RailCamp Fund and the Stanlee E. Weller Fund.

This year we are pleased announce that we are again sending two well-deserving youth.



### **The Caldwell-Luebke Scholarship**

Elliot St.Peter. Elliot is actually a repeat camper. He attended the East camp last year and received no financial assistance. Among many things this energetic and enthusiastic young man is active with the Rutland Railroad Museum. His was the first application received this year on January 9th. Elliot will be attending the Northwest camp July 29 - August 5 and will be traveling to Tacoma, WA. Elliot lives in Rutland, VT and is in the 11th grade.

### **The Stanlee E. Weller Scholarship**

Nichole Howell. Nichole (and many of her family) are members of the Roanoke Chapter, NRHS. Nichole has been interested in railroading since a very young age. Proving it is indeed a family affair, Nichole has worked on the Amtrak charter trains operated by the Roanoke Chapter, NRHS as well as the VMT's N&W 611 excursions for the last three years. Nichole is from Check, VA and is in the 8th grade. She will be attending the East camp in Wilmington, DE June 24-30.

We congratulate these students and, once again, thank you for your continued support of RPCA's NRHS RailCamp Scholarship program.

**Roy J. Wullich**

RPCA - NRHS RailCamp Chairman

## SAFETY BRIEF - UNHEALTHY STRESS



What a roller coaster ride this last month has been! Amtrak this and Amtrak that. It has taken a toll on me and I assume you as well. Maybe the Almighty is trying to tell us something in the fact that May is both National Mental Health Month and National Blood Pressure Month. How does this relate to safety?

Stress takes its toll on the body in different forms and it can come from many sources. We can't always blame Amtrak, but at times they are more than deserving. It can raise the blood pressure which in turn affects the kidneys, heart and brain. Untreated it can certainly have long term effects. It can also cloud our judgement. The idea that we are in a working environment, with heavy equipment, machinery, high voltage electricity and other dangerous items tells us that the last thing we need is a clouded judgement.

Stress leads us down other unhealthy roads. We have a tendency to lose sleep and increase our calorie intake by eating more. The loss of sleep can affect the judgement mentioned above and the calories add pounds which can increase the blood pressure. A vicious cycle is starting to develop.

The real key to this stress issue is how we deal with it. One of the things to consider is the removal the stress creating factor. That is not going to happen with Amtrak, but there are other ways to handle it. First and foremost is to get some exercise. If things are going badly and that round bolt does not want to thread into that square hole. Put all of the tools down, grab a cold bottle of water and take a hike. Stay hydrated by maintaining your fluid intake. Next, take a break and walk around the block or yard, breath deep and get those endorphins moving. Don't reach for that candy bar. Watch the calories and try an apple or orange instead.

In closing, I want to urge you to contact a medical professional if this stress is starting to take its toll. It is National Mental Health Month and seeking a professional about feelings of depression or stress is the necessary step. Monitor your blood pressure. If it remains on the high side, contact your primary care physician. Stay healthy and watch the stress levels.

**Gary Carter**

## Umler Corner

As many of you know, PTC is causing havoc in the industry as the railroads rush to meet the implementation compliance deadline. Also throwing monkey wrenches into the gear mesh is Amtrak.

One thing is for sure, because of PTC, anyone that thinks they need to move a car, whether still on Amtrak or in a freight train movement, the data we've discussed over the last couple of years is still going to be required. Same applies to locos!

If Roger or any other fearless leaders of the RPCA ask for information, please provide it. For those afraid that Amtrak and PTC will stop all chances of getting car leases, there is action in the background. Have hope. This is not the time to sell your cars or locos to the scrappers!

As grandmother used to say, it may look dark and bad, but things always have a way of working out right.

I guess a corollary to that is what I learned in the Army Engineers: the difficult we do immediately, the impossible just takes a little longer.

**Pamm and Dan Monaghan**  
**Co-Managers RPCNB**

## RAILROAD NEWS

This is a synopsis of Railroad related news culled from various sources including Trains, Progressive Railroading, Railway Age, and various web sites.

### Museum and Excursion Trains



The organizers of Train Day to be held at Union Depot in St. Paul May 5 will offer a night photo session to be held on the evening of May 4. Train Day features railroad equipment, vintage buses, model railroads, nonprofit and government agencies that deal with railroads, and vendors selling railroad souvenirs and merchandise. The night photo session will begin at 8 p.m. May 4 at Union Depot. It will feature Minnesota Transportation Museum's Soo Line GP7 locomotive No. 559 in its classic maroon-and-gold colors.

A GE 25-ton locomotive, the only example of the class owned by the Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railroad, has found a new home at the Oklahoma Railway Museum. The locomotive was acquired new by the railroad in 1950. It was sold to Martindale Feed Mill in Valley View, Texas, and used to switch cars until approximately three years ago. ORM arranged to buy the engine from the company for \$15,000.

Vermont Railway System's Green Mountain Railroad is expanding dinner train service in May with the introduction of the Champlain Valley Dinner Train operating out of Burlington. The railroad also operates a dinner train at Chester each autumn. Beginning May 11 the train will depart Burlington at 5:30 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays offering a three-hour round trip to Middlebury.

Nearly 100,000 significant images of railroading will be preserved for future generations thanks to the Madison-based Center for Railroad Photography & Art. The nonprofit has acquired the collection of New York-based photographer Jim Shaughnessy. The collection includes about 60,000 black-and-white negatives, 30,000 color slides, and some glass plate negatives.

Two silver spikes driven by Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval and U.S. Sen. Dean Heller officially connected rail service between Boulder City and Henderson, Nev., and opened up new opportunities for the Nevada State Railroad Museum. Union Pacific built the branch line in 1931 to deliver supplies to Hoover Dam construction site. The railroad museum operates on a portion of the line, but the Nevada Department of Transportation closed off the portion of the line leading to Henderson in 1998.

The Texas State Railroad debuted a newly restored FP9, restored to working condition and repainted in an homage to Texas' fallen flags. Texas State Railroad general manager Greg Udolph says that the locomotive's restoration was about a year in the works. The new red and gold paint takes inspiration from schemes the Missouri, Kansas & Texas and Frisco railroads applied to the E and F units assigned to their jointly operated Texas Special.

Bridgton & Saco River 2-4-4T No. 7, one of Maine's most recognizable two-foot gauge steam locomotives, will be moving to Portland following an extensive decade-long restoration. To celebrate the return of No. 7, the Maine Narrow Gauge Railroad Co. and Museum is having a day-long celebration dubbed "Steam Fest" that will feature two live steam locomotives on May 19.

The North Texas Chapter of the National Railroad Historical Society will host the 13th annual "24 Hours @ Saginaw" between 7 p.m. on Friday, May 25, and 7 p.m. on Saturday, May 26 at the Saginaw Chamber of Commerce.

A special train to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society behind privately owned PRR E8s has been cancelled. The train was to have run from Philadelphia to Altoona May 9 for the society's annual meeting with Bennett Levin's streamliners as power. The train was set to return May 13.

## Amtrak/Federal Agencies

Norfolk Southern's safety train will stop in 23 cities during 2018 as part of its Operation Awareness & Response program, which provides first responders with free training on how to safely respond to a potential rail incident. The safety train kicked off in Hattiesburg, Miss., with three days of training at Norfolk Southern's rail yard there. Additional stops on the 2018 tour include communities in Alabama, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.



A top Amtrak executive reiterated in testimony on Capitol Hill that the passenger railroad's will not operate on some routes that fail to meet this year's positive train control deadline, and said the carrier will assess whether it feels it can safely run on routes exempted from PTC requirements. The latter view could affect the Chicago-Los Angeles Southwest Chief. Stephen Gardner, Amtrak's executive vice president and chief commercial officer, told a House Appropriations Committee hearing that "there will be portions of our routes where we cannot operate" if host railroads have not qualified for an extension of the Dec. 31, 2018 PTC installation deadline. In earlier prepared testimony, Gardner characterized continuing freight train interference delays as an "existential crisis," and reiterated the company's desire for legislation that would allow Amtrak to sue host railroads over failure to give passenger trains dispatching priority.

Federal Railroad Administrator Ronald Batory called on motorists and pedestrians to "make safe choices" at railroad crossings by honoring warning signals and lowered gates. Batory pointed out that 94 percent of rail-related fatalities and injuries occur at crossings or while trespassing. Also, about every three hours, a person or vehicle is hit by a train in the United States. In an effort to improve those statistics, the [Federal Railroad Administration](#) and [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) recently launched a media awareness campaign titled "Stop! Trains Can't," Batory wrote. President Donald Trump has announced his intention to nominate Jennifer Homendy of Virginia to serve on the [National Transportation Safety Board](#) (NTSB). Homendy is being nominated to serve the remainder of a five-year term on the board. She currently serves as Democratic staff director of the House Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials — a position she's held since 2004, according to a White House press release.

U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao has announced that Mathew Sturges will take on the deputy administrator's post effective immediately. Sturges was the majority staff director for the U.S. House of Representatives Transportation and Infrastructure committee. Before then, he was deputy staff director and held staff posts on the committee's Aviation subcommittee and was director of member services.

The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation has approved the nominations of Patrick Fuchs and Michelle Schultz as [Surface Transportation Board](#) (STB) members. They would serve five-year terms if confirmed by the Senate.

[contacts for board and officers](#)

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