



## AAPRCO & RPCA members meet to develop their response to new Amtrak regulations

Members of the two associations met in New Orleans last week to further develop their response to new regulations being imposed by Amtrak on their members' private railroad car businesses. Several of those vintage railroad cars were parked in New Orleans Union Station.

"Most of our owners are small business people, and these new policies are forcing many of them to close or curtail their operations," said AAPRCO President Bob Donnelley. "It is also negatively impacting their employees, suppliers and the hospitality industry that works with these private rail car trips," added RPCA President Roger Fuehring.

Currently about 200 private cars travel hundreds of thousands of miles behind regularly scheduled Amtrak trains each year. Along with special train excursions, they add nearly \$10 million dollars in high margin revenue annually to the bottom line of the tax-payer subsidized passenger railroad.

A 12% rate increase was imposed May 1 with just two weeks' notice. This followed a longstanding pattern of increases taking effect annually on October 1.

Cost data is being developed by economic expert Bruce Horowitz for presentation to Amtrak as are legal options. Members of both organizations are being asked to continue writing their Congress members and engaging the press. Social media is being activated and you are encouraged to follow AAPRCO on Facebook and twitter.

Successes on the legislative front include this [Congressional letter](#) sent to Amtrak's president and the Board and inclusion of private car and charter train issues in recent hearings. More successes are included in AAPRCO Legislative Liaison Ross Capon's [presentation](#). The campaign to inform local and national lawmakers continues. [Sample letters](#) can be used with your legislators.



RPCA President attends



Knox Ross



5 PVs in NOL



On behalf of the RPCA, I attended AAPRCO's mid-year meetings in New Orleans on May 24th. Several items were discussed in regards to current Amtrak issues and various avenues of response were explored.

In reality, it boils down to a clear, economic impact message on the loss of private car routes and charter trains. It's about communicating a consistent message about the various economic impacts to the communities we run in, where our cars are maintained and the heavy repairs shops that keep our cars in better condition than when they were originally built.

What is the economic impact to Amtrak if our cars don't run? The actual cost of handling our cars by Amtrak is crucial to figuring out how to approach that issue. Amtrak has refused to release figures but an independent expert has been retained by AAPRCO and is crunching numbers. We will soon have an answer. We have a story but how do we articulate that story? How do we show the economic impact to Amtrak's bottom line as it relates to our private cars being handled on their trains?

An even broader issue is the future of long distance trains. The elimination of hot meals on some overnight routes could cause a reduction in ridership providing reasoning for reducing frequency or eliminating some routes. If we can continue to run cars and special trains, without the routes we are still out of business. How do we express the importance of the national network?

Knox Ross, Vice Chairman of the Southern Rail Commission has worked directly with Mr. Anderson in regards to the New Orleans - Mobile trains. Knox was very direct with his assessment of our current situation. He has found Mr. Anderson a fair partner based on their face to face communication. Some key points that I took away from his statements;

- Anderson's number one priority is safety and he was astonished at the difference with safety in the Amtrak culture verses the airline industry.
- He's looking at cold hard facts on the economic condition of each route.
- Based on Anderson's knowledge of the airline industry, he sees regional routes as the future.

Knox suggested we approach this from the economics of the private cars and charters as mentioned above. It's simple, the economics speaks volumes to legislators.

To help coordinate a joint effort, Borden Black is handling the media for RPCA & AAPRCO in relation to Amtrak. As you continue to read through the IE and other email blasts, she will keep you updated and make suggestions on staying in the fight. A special thanks to Borden for her efforts on behalf of both organizations.

Be Safe,  
W. Roger Fuehring

## In case you missed it- We need your help with PR



What has become a pitched battle by AAPRCO and RPCA against new Amtrak restrictions is being waged on several fronts.

Many of you have assisted in the campaign to educate and motivate your elected officials to write letters and demand some input on the actions against private car and charter trains. It appears there has been little response from the railroad.

Various legal avenues are also being explored.

The third prong is involving the media to inform the public and put the pressure of the 4<sup>th</sup> estate on Amtrak.

This is another skirmish that requires involvement of the entire membership. While we will contact national media, much of what is contained in the major papers and TV outlets originates in smaller communities. [Attached are some sample news releases](#) that you can localize and provide to your local media. You have to make it matter to them and their audiences which is why you need to find a local angle...either in your town or state... that affects people.

Your first step is to determine the media outlets in your area if you do not already know them.

Google "media" in your location and a list should be available with their web pages. The contact page usually just contains a form to fill out. Instead search the site for "Our Team" or "About Us" There is

usually a listing of editors and reporters. For the newspaper, the managing editor, content editor or city editor is the best contact. For television contacts, this is where I profile, send the release to the oldest man on the team. He is most likely to remember railroads fondly.

Next take the base release and add local material. If you own a private car, work on a tourist/charter train or are a site where private cars regularly stop be sure and mention that as a photo opportunity. Often the lack of availability of a visual element will kill a story. Explain how the community would be impacted by the loss of the car or train.

It is best to email your release in the morning and then follow up with a phone call the next day. If the newsroom has not received your information get the email address they recommend.

Should you get an interested reporter and a story is prepared, be sure to ask the reporter to share with the Associated Press or the other media in their chains. This is how we got coverage in USA Today and many of the other large media outlets

If you are having difficulties or need help in developing your special story, drop me an email or call and I will be glad to work with you. If you wish, you can have the media contact me if they have questions.

Borden Black – [bordoblack@aol.com](mailto:bordoblack@aol.com) 706-326-0014

Good luck and please help. You are an important soldier in this war.

## **RPCA NEWS**

**Membership renewals** have been mailed and are due June 30. Don't wait until the last minute. If your dues of \$45.00 (\$10.00 more for CUPS) are not paid, 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

The first edition of the new RPCA magazine was mailed and you should have received it. If not let us know at [media@rpca.com](mailto:media@rpca.com). That is also where to send your articles for the next magazine.

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.

## **SAFETY BRIEF- Safety Unplugged**



Sometimes I wonder how anyone would ever see fit to appoint me the Safety Chairman of this great organization. My personal safety record is not one to be envied. An ER visit for a smashed finger and a trip to the ophthalmologist for a metal shard from a die grinder represent two low points. Now, another chapter.

I had convinced Sue to go with me to the railyard to see if we could get some holes drilled and tapped for the cover of a holding tank. Reluctantly she agreed. I had the magnetic drill set up and had 6 or so holes drilled

when another bit was going to be needed. I shut off the drill and laid it on its side. At the time, I was wearing leather gloves. With my left hand, I grasped the drill chuck and with my right, I inserted the key into the chuck. What I had not planned on was my right elbow nicking the exposed "ON" switch. The chuck grabbed my gloved left hand and attempted to wrap my middle finger around the chuck multiple times. Luckily my right hand found the "OFF" switch quickly. My initial reaction was that my middle finger had been broken in at least one place. Pulling my glove off, I could see blood inside and my finger was numb. Sue, always the champ, drove once again to the ER. Thankfully, nothing was broken but the lesson was learned.

1. Hand protection—leather gloves or comparable

2. UNPLUG the tool. Changing a grinding wheel? Can you imagine the carnage if I had been changing the burr in a die grinder? Again, UNPLUG the tool.  
Hopefully, this will be my last RR incident requiring medical attention. Sue is hoping the same, but still has her doubts. Stay safe and if anyone wants this Safety Committee position, please step forward as the current safety record is not hard to beat..

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## Umler Corner

We are in the renewal season. Renewals have now been sent out. If you have not received a renewal notice, please contact us (phone, 309.493.1013 or email: [rpcx@rpcnb.com](mailto:rpcx@rpcnb.com))! If you have not renewed RPCA membership and/or RPCNB subscription by Aug 1, your car is subject to deletion from Umler.

We thank the 14 people and organizations that have already renewed their subscriptions!! Thank you very much for helping us stay ahead of that giant rolling ball named annual renewal.

Remember, your RPCA membership renewal does NOT include the RPCNB mark user subscription! And vice-versa.

RPCA Membership, Treasurer and RPCNB Office Staff are all **volunteers**. We do not work out of the same office. RPCA membership and RPCNB are several hundred miles and one time zone apart (membership is on EST and RPCNB is on CST, both go on Daylight Savings Time in summer). If you change your address, email or phone number, please notify Membership and if you have a car in Umler under the RPCA member benefit, also the RPCNB.

Phone calls: In this time of spam calls, please make sure that your phone call shows your name or company name on our end. RPCNB has been receiving a lot of "no number shown", "private number" or "blocked number" calls that are spam, calls that we do not always answer if we are in the middle of something. If you need immediate help, that puts you in a bind. We do check voice mail a short time later, but it still delays solving your needs.

E-mail: make sure both RPCA membership and RPCNB office has your current email address! Last year people changed email address without informing us, and subsequently they did not receive renewal notices and their cars were deleted! This year we have already gotten one bounced email from a car owner. Also make sure your email box is not full, because that bounces our notifications to you also. This is YOUR responsibility to make sure we know how to, and can, contact you.

We have already gotten many, many spam emails from aol and gmail accounts with our subscribers names on them. After a while it is very tempting to not look to see if it is really our subscriber attempting to contact us, just add that subscriber's name to the junk mail list. If your private car is out there making you money, it is too expensive an object to lose the Umler registration, which means it stops moving, just because the owner decides to cheap out on the email and internet service.

As Umler changes, we will send notices of the errors in your records that occur because of it. When the Umler computer sees an error in a car record, the car goes "in conflict" for 30 days. If not corrected, the computer makes the car status "restricted from interchange" for 30 days. If not corrected, the computer makes the car "subject to deletion" for 30 days. If not corrected by then, the computer can automatically delete the car. Note, this is not us, it is the computer operating autonomously. We had already attempted to contact you at least twice in that time period before the computer deletes the car. Don't blame us if your car gets automatically deleted by the Umler computer. At any point during this process a railroad can and usually does refuse to accept your car due to the Umler error.

But as we have already seen last year, there are some changes to Umler that go immediately to "subject to deletion". There is another major change to Umler coming, currently scheduled for June. We don't know yet what is contained in this one. As soon as we find out, we will send the info to Borden so that she can get the info out to you, and it will be posted on the RPCNB web site. But that already eats up

part of the 30 days. That puts all of us in the hurt locker and makes rapid communication that much more important.

**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



A Utah legislator introduced legislation to upgrade the Golden Spike National Historic Site to national park status. The Golden Spike 150th Anniversary Act is designed to "further acknowledge Utah's Promontory Summit as a place that changed the world." By upgrading the site's status to that of a national park, more visitors are expected to visit the site. Union Pacific confirms that Big Boy 4-8-8-4 No. 4014 will be in Ogden, Utah, in celebration of the sesquicentennial of the first transcontinental railroad.

In a Facebook live event in conjunction with the CBS affiliate in Cheyenne, the restored Big Boy as well as 4-8-4 No. 844 will travel to Ogden, Utah, for the celebration. The engines will re-enact the scene made

famous by the two American-type locomotives, the Central Pacific Jupiter and UP 119 on May 10, 1869 at Promontory Summit. Ogden is the closest UP point to Promontory, where the railroad was abandoned during World War II. The journey between the steam shop and Ogden will take several days in order to give the public plenty of opportunities to see the locomotive.

Trains Magazine has announced a May 2019 tour of the first transcontinental railroad and the addition of two blogs to the Trains Magazine website, one about the first transcontinental railroad and the other about the history of Big Boy steam locomotives. Trains and partner Special Interest Tours will offer a unique [Journey to Promontory tour May 5 to May 14, 2019](#), that will cover the route from Sacramento, Calif., to Council Bluffs, Iowa, stopping at significant sites, and making sure to be at Promontory on May 10, 2019.

The Northwest Railway Museum has saved a wooden Northern Pacific parlor car built in 1901 that was converted to a beachfront cottage on an island off the coast of Washington. The car, No. 1799, was loaded onto a barge in late April and moved to Seattle where it is waiting to be trucked to the museum Snoqualmie, about 25 miles east of the city.

The Union Pacific Museum Association will host a special passenger trip on Union Pacific historic equipment July 22, from Denver, Colorado, to Cheyenne, Wyoming, pulled by the "Living Legend," steam locomotive, UP No. 844. All proceeds generated from the special trip will benefit the Union Pacific Museum Association, a 501 (c) 3. The trip is one way with a bus return.

New River Train excursion tickets are back on sale after U.S. Sen. Joe Manchin reported that Amtrak and the non-profit organization have reached a tentative agreement to allow the train to continue to operate. Amtrak leaders met with the lawmaker and representatives from the Collis P. Huntington Railroad Historical Society in April to discuss the train's economic impact to West Virginia and rural communities. Its operation had been threatened by new Amtrak policies announced in April, which

would have ended most charter and special-train operations. While the train will be permitted to operate its four-day schedule during the third and fourth weekends of October, costs will be higher and some of the operations will change.

The North Shore Scenic Railroad and Lake Superior Railroad Museum have announced dates Duluth & Northeastern 2-8-0 No. 28 will operate this season. The Consolidation was returned to service in 2017 following a seven-year restoration effort. No. 28 will power excursions between Duluth and Two Harbors, Minn., through five weekends in August and September. Trips will operate Aug. 17-19, Aug. 24-26, Aug. 31-Sept. 3, Sept. 7-9, and Sept. 14-16. Trains depart Duluth at 10 a.m. and lay over in Two Harbors for two hours.

A wooden baggage car is available to a good home. The Illinois Railway Museum car from the Chicago & North Western Railway No. 1236 is being offered as-is, where-is at the museum's property. Serious inquiries can be directed to the museum and the baggage car is available for inspection to any museum visitor.. It was built in Chicago by the Pullman Co. in 1908 and is roughly 70 feet long, weighing in at about 99,000 pounds. The baggage car is mechanically complete but the interior is partly removed . Chesapeake & Ohio 2-8-4 No. 2716 will be the centerpiece of a new rail heritage partnership with CSX Transportation in Ravenna, Ky. Kentucky Steam Heritage Corp., the No. 2716's non-profit arm, is purchasing nearly 50 acres of former CSX rail yard and property to build a rail-based tourist and community development center. The non-profit group plans to establish a multi-use facility on the site of CSX's retired Ravenna car shops.

The Emery Rail Heritage Trust has awarded grants totaling \$212,500 to 19 organizations, including three to mainline steam PTC systems. Among the awards are \$60,000 in grants to Friends of the 261 and the Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society (FWRHS) to fund Positive Train Control (PTC) on two historic steam locomotives: Milwaukee Road 261 and Nickel Plate Road 765. Each organization will receive \$30,000 to launch individual fundraising efforts to cover the estimated \$120,000 cost per locomotive for PTC implementation.

[The complete list can be accessed here.](#)

The trust was established by the late John H. Emery, a long-time Chicago resident and avid railroad enthusiast who loved to ride trains around the world and wanted to preserve rolling stock and infrastructure so that future generations could enjoy what he considered to be the Golden Age of Railroads from the 1920 to 1960.

Southern Indiana's Madison Railroad dedicated its "Memorial Fleet," on Memorial Day. The three specially decorated locomotives honor the U.S. Armed Forces and NASA. The fleet includes two former Baldwin Locomotive Works-built units dating to 1943. Also present was former NASA Railroad SW1500 No. 3, built for the Toledo, Peoria & Western as its No. 306. The locomotive served NASA for decades at Florida's Kennedy Space Center.

## Amtrak/Federal Agencies



On May 16<sup>th</sup> a House appropriations subcommittee approved \$27.8 billion for operations of the Department of Transportation in fiscal 2019.

Funding for the Federal Railroad Administration includes:

- \$1.9 billion for Amtrak, including \$1.3 billion for long-distance routes,
- \$500 million for the Federal-State Partnership for Good State of Repair,
- \$262.3 million for rail safety and research,
- \$150 million for the development of magnetic levitation

systems.

The bill prohibits spending for California's high-speed rail system, and requires Amtrak to reduce employee overtime costs.

In all cases, funds the committee approved exceed the president's budget request. The bill now goes to the full House Appropriations Committee for approval, where members may try to add "non-appropriations" riders.

Association of American Railroads President and Chief Executive Officer Edward R. Hamberger has announced that he will be retiring in early 2019, following a transition period. Hamberger, 68, is the longest-tenured head of the 84-year-old organization, with more than 20 years of service. Executive search firm Korn Ferry has been retained to lead the search for Hamberger's successor.

#### FROM RPA/NARP:

Rail Passengers Association President and CEO Jim Mathews met last month with Amtrak CEO Richard Anderson. During the meeting Anderson said that there are no immediate plans to suspend service on any long-distance routes. Amtrak Chief Commercial Officer Stephen Gardner, who joined the meeting, added that any changes that might result from failures by commuter agencies to address Positive Train Control issues would be temporary service disruptions.

Both executives sought to ease concerns among rail advocates that Amtrak management is moving towards abandoning service on large parts of the National Network in favor of corridor investments, particularly in the Northeast Corridor. These followed [similar assurances](#) Gardner offered to Senators during public testimony before Congress. Both executives stressed that they are pursuing a growth strategy for Amtrak aimed at serving more Americans rather than fewer. Further, Anderson added that there will always be long-distance trains, and that in many cases Amtrak will try to upgrade the experience on these routes--trains Anderson describes as "epic, experiential trains" like the Empire Builder, Coast Starlight or other long-distance services.

However, growth in the near-term and opportunity in the medium term lie in services around the country in corridor segments of under 600 miles, and ideally about 400 miles, Gardner said. This is a "sweet spot" in which multiple daily frequencies can be serviced with an optimized number of trainsets, so that both fares and trip times can be competitive with other modes.

Responding to concerns about removing hot food options Anderson and Gardner both told Mathews that Amtrak wants to improve the food offerings systemwide, and Anderson added that the railroad is prepared to spend more money on food to accomplish this. Gardner acknowledged that the Lake Shore/Capitol menu is a work in progress, noting that there is more to be done. Amtrak expects eventually to restore at least one hot-food option to that menu, as well as the ability for Coach passengers to buy meals from that menu in the diner or elsewhere.

In safety, Anderson is laser-focused not only on Positive Train Control but on leading the industry in implementing an airline-style Safety Management System, or SMS, by the end of the year. As a comprehensive, systematic way of assessing individual risks to safe operation and identifying specific mitigation steps for each risk, SMS is proven in the aviation world not only to improve safety but to continuously drive down incidents and risk. It's why the SMS at Amtrak will identify a range of ways to reach "PTC-equivalent" levels of safety in areas that aren't fully PTC-compliant.

Amtrak released the schedules for this [summer's detour to & from New York's Grand Central Terminal](#). Running through Monday, September 3, all Empire Service, Adirondack, Maple Leaf and Ethan Allen Express trains will operate in & out of the iconic transportation landmark, instead of New York's Penn Station. The detour is necessitated by an extensive rebuilding of Amtrak's westside Empire Connection line.

Most schedules have been adjusted to accommodate the Amtrak service into Metro North's very busy commuter operations at Grand Central. The Lake Shore Limited will not operate through to New York during the detour period; passengers will be required to use a local Empire Service train to & from Albany-Rensselaer to connect to the through Boston to Chicago Lake Shore service. An on-line PDF version of the schedules changes is yet available, but the reservation system has been fully updated with the correct revised train and time information. Amtrak staff will be stationed at Grand Central for passenger assistance and Quik-Tik machines will be available. Passengers will be required to make their own transfers between Grand Central and Penn Station if required.

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