



## From the President



Spring is officially here. The start of a new season brings excitement, anticipation and for many, questions on moving forward.

We find ourselves wishing we had gotten more done on our equipment during the off season. Our needs always outweigh our time and money. I'm always intrigued by the operators who find that perfect balance between needs (different from wants), funding and available manpower resources. Private cars and locomotives (steam & diesel) are unique from any other type of restoration. All of our equipment has survived beyond its original design and expectation for regular use. Unlike a classic automobile, a good majority of our equipment is being utilized in regular service. Our ride in January on the Whitewater Valley Railroad was a good example of that. No kids, that's not smoke coming out from under those cars, it's steam.

For some, we are still struggling with Amtrak policies and rates. State funding of some routes is also becoming an issue. Once again the Hoosier State is in question. As we continue to fight these issues, we are still moving forward. I understand that several of the private car inspectors have completed, or are in the process of completing, some of the continuing education requirements. The insurance committee has provided a policy that would meet the new requirements required by Amtrak for the inspectors. All of this continues to increase the cost of private car operations on the national network. There is a limit to what the market will sustain on the cost of doing business and the nickels and dimes add up quickly. Contributions to the legislative fund are needed as we continue to seek solutions as we move forward.

I'm reminded often that the frustrations associated with private car preservation and the operation of those cars can be overwhelming at times. Recently a friend of mine reminded me what rail travel means to the next generation. He shared with me his recent several day journey with his family on a private car with their children. The children had no electronic devices or other distractions. They simply had their family and friends on a journey across country on a Pullman car. The experience was so special to one little girl, that she put together a book of pictures and the story of their journey on a classic Pullman car. Those are the memories that will last a lifetime. They are the foundation blocks that are laid at the feet of the next generation as we preserve rail travel in this great nation.

Until next time, Be Safe,  
W. Roger Fuehring

## SAFETY



## SAFETY CAN BE TAXING

It's April and that can mean a couple of things. This year Easter is on the 21<sup>st</sup> and of course the annual IRS tax filing deadline of April 15. Every year Sue and I trudge into the CPA's office with folders full of receipts, mileage logs, letters and other documents. Why the paperwork? Documentation. Without support or documentation for our claims of deductions, we cannot hope for any type of tax relief, especially with our accountant.

This same idea of support and documentation can be applied to our safety programs as well. Many of us face oversight by a Federal agency similar to the IRS, requiring documentation for our actions. If we have the FRA involved, they might ask for a log of the hours of service for conductors and engineers. We should step back and document safety programs and practices as well. This action affords a couple of opportunities to evaluate what is in place under the heading of safety.

Documenting our safety practices (safety meetings before working in the yard, radio checks and communication procedures, etc) helps us to see what we are doing to prevent injuries. We can point to these practices and show how serious we are about safety. To an even great extent, some of this documentation may be mandatory. If our organization falls under OSHA, FRA or other government alphabets, we may be required to submit such paperwork on a periodical basis.

On the other side of the coin, once something is in writing, it can be evaluated more easily for areas of improvement. This process allows us to take stock of what we have in place and which direction we might want to head in the future. Not all that different from tax time. A time to see what transpired last year, what it is worth today and what we might want to do differently next year.

Whether you owe or receive a refund, please don't forget that IRS deadline. After that chore is fulfilled, it would be a good time to improve those safety practices by committing what is already being done into writing. Share that document with other members of your group or organization. Then take that next step to see where things can be improved. Above all, work with safety in mind.

*Gary Carter*

## 2020 CONFERENCE IN ALBUQUERQUE



### ALBUQUERQUE IN 2020

The RPCA Annual Conference has been set for Albuquerque, NM for January 23, 24, 25, 26 and 27. Here is a quick overview of the planned events:

- Thursday, January 23rd – Excursion to Santa Fe aboard the RailRunner.
- Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> – Opening Day of Conference with Friday night reception at the National Museum Of Nuclear Science and History
- Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> --Sessions all day at the hotel and mechanical sessions at the shop area of the ex-ATSF 2926 where a passenger car will be used for demonstrations.
- Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> --Sessions all day at the hotel and general membership meeting
- Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> -- Excursion to Acoma Pueblo all day.
- (At this early date, all events are subject to change)

The host hotel will be the Crowne Plaza. This hotel is about 2 miles from the Amtrak station in Albuquerque. YES, it appears as though funding for the Southwest Chief will be in place to circumvent the issue of a bus bridge. If you want to ride this historic route over Raton Pass, please start making your plans. If flying is on your radar, the hotel is located about 6 miles from Sunport International Airport. This would translate to about a \$15 Uber or Lyft fare from the airport to the hotel. Albuquerque has air service for almost all of the major carriers. If you would like to do something on your own either prior or following the conference, please feel free to contact Sue or I as we would love to help plan something. Hot air balloon ride? Tram to the top of Sandia Peak? (2.7 miles by tram to a peak of over 10,000 feet) Personal visit to a Native American pueblo? We can help. Please call 719-543-5197.

Sue and Gary Carter  
2020 Conference Committee

## AMTRAK ISSUES

### Amtrak fiscal year 2020 Annual Report

The General and Legislative Annual Report to Congress includes the FY 2020 grant request and an overview of the FY 2018 accomplishments. (The report on charter trains and private cars is on page 46.)



#### FY 2018 Highlights

- Adjusted operating loss was reduced to \$171 million, an improvement of 11.9 percent from the prior year, and the lowest in Amtrak's history.
- Operating cost recovery was increased to 95 percent, another record for the company.
- Total revenue was \$3.39 billion, an increase of 2.5 percent over the prior year.<sup>1</sup>
- Capital spending on infrastructure, rolling stock, stations, and other assets and systems was \$1.46 billion, one of the highest levels of investment in recent history.
- Began deployment of a Safety Management System (SMS), becoming first major U.S. railroad to do so and implemented Positive Train Control across much of Amtrak's network.

#### FY 2020 Grant Request

#### Amtrak report to Congress

- \$1.8 billion overall request to Congress to support the Northeast Corridor and National Network accounts, consistent with the overall level authorized by the FAST Act and which the law requires we not exceed in our grant request.
- An explanation of where additional funding beyond the authorized level is needed.
- Includes the financial breakdown by service line and asset line, and also how the requested federal funding fits within our overall business strategy and investment plan.

## LEGISLATIVE FUND



Recent and pending legislation that may affect our members and the ongoing restrictions and cost increases Amtrak has placed on private cars and special trains greatly concern the RPCA board and membership. During the Annual Meeting in January, the Board of Directors voted to form a new Legislative Committee. This Committee is charged with raising awareness of the issues impacting RPCA members with policymakers and legislators in government and industry. The membership stipulated that any funding must not come from the RPCA's general fund. Therefore, the financial support needed for the Committee to begin addressing these issues must come from interested members.

Our first goal is to engage a legislative liaison to meet with members of congress and major transportation industry and regulatory officers on the RPCA's behalf. This liaison will also advise the Board and members on any actions necessary to further our cause. This is an important initiative that will help ensure that our members are heard. As we've seen during the past 20 years, new rules, regulations, and laws are increasing the burden on us and restricting how we are able to use our equipment. If we want to stay on the rails, we need to make sure that we are not forgotten in this process.

Please contribute to the RPCA Legislative Fund. Checks should be sent to:

RPCA  
5323 Highway N #331  
Cottleville, MO 63338-0331

All checks should be payable to RPCA and should indicate it is for the Legislative Committee.

Thank you all for your support. We will keep you informed how the money will be used and the results.

**Thank you to all who have already contributed. The fund has a balance of more than \$1,700.00**

## UMLER UPDATE

Amtrak auction: all of the cars that we have had to deal with to date from the Amtrak auction have very poor, if not none at all, Umler records. All we have seen are inactive and/or in conflict and a couple that don't even exist in the Umler system. That means one can't just do a simple electronic 're-stencil' of the car to the buyer's reporting mark. This is not a major issue, just causes those that know how to work around this a little more work. If you are attempting to do your own, and don't know the tricks, it stops you cold.

Umler: March 14 was another major update to Umler. Because of this there is a new Data Specification Manual dated March 14, 2019 available for download.

Locos: The March 14 update, 1 prior not mandatory field became mandatory. Every loco in Umler went into conflict if the data was not already in that field. Simple yes or no response. What is the field? PTC Operating Status, i.e. does the loco have a fully functional PTC control system?

Passenger and freight cars: Some fields had an increase in the number of acceptable data inputs. Nothing new to cause cars to go into conflict.

Conflicts: Locos started going into conflict last October with the major update then with new fields that became mandatory that first day. The major update in March added another mandatory field. If locos had been corrected prior to March, they again went into conflict if the newly mandatory field had not been input.

Locos that have not been corrected since the October system update are already at the third stage of conflict, subject to deletion. After the Railinc computer deletes them automatically due to not correcting the conflict, they can not be put back in without the data that caused the

conflict to begin with. If you need your locos in Umler, and you have not provided the correct data, you need to get that corrected soon or the locos may not be in Umler much longer. Similar for passenger cars, almost all of the conflicts are due to the load limit and gross rail load not being input. There are a few that don't have the 'reflectorization' input, and there is a FRA waiver for all passenger cars. And there are a few that are out of date air. The weights were part of the Umler major update in December. If you want your car to remain in Umler and the weight data has not been updated, you need to get this corrected. The RPCNB web site has a nifty easy to use weight calculator for passenger cars. Use it, keep a copy in your records, and send a copy to your Umler representative to provide the data to upload to the Umler system.

This is NOT the end to data changes. The big one we see coming, just don't know when, is Brake Ratio. To calculate that requires some more data on the brake system configuration which are currently NOT fields, let alone a mandatory field, in Umler. We are collecting that information in our local data base to try to get ahead of the rolling ball. That calculation also requires accurate weight!

These new fields include: air brake service and emergency portion model and sub-model numbers; relay valve model and sub-model; body or truck mounted cylinders; cylinder size; brake shoe/pad type/model; if tread, disc or both, and where applicable, lever ratios. You don't need to send this now, not required yet, but it helps to get the data fields filled before brake ratio becomes a mandatory field in Umler to support PTC. Most of this is easy to get, ask your air brake test technician to identify them for you if you don't know. Lever ratios will be the pain. How brake ratio will get entwined with the air brake test next due date will be interesting. There is still disagreement within the industry whether the passenger car next due should be Railinc computer calculated or an owner/tester input. Some say it must be Railinc computer input to avoid getting bogus information. If that is true, why doesn't the bogus data currently input for passenger cars with passenger valves using computer calculated dates based on freight brake requirements cause them concern? Others contend that bogus inputs on next due dates are not a Railinc or AAR issue, it is between the car owner and the FRA. Until next month, take care and stay safe.

Dan and Pamm Monaghan

## GRANTS



The National Railway Historical Society has awarded \$48,000 Annual Heritage Grants to nine recipients:

- \$8,000 to the Oregon Rail Heritage Foundation towards the refurbishment and installation at its Rail Heritage Center of a 102-foot continuous turntable.
- \$8,000 to the Roanoke Chapter, NRHS to replace window gaskets and related parts of former Norfolk & Western Railway "Jim Crow" coach no. 512.
- \$3,500 to the North Carolina Railway Museum towards the rehabilitation of the Goldston Depot, a small town freight depot constructed around 1884 by the Cape Fear & Yadkin Railway.
- \$8,000 to the Pacific Railroad Preservation Society for work relating to the 15-year FRA boiler inspection and rebuild of former Seattle, Portland & Spokane steam locomotive No. 700.
- \$2,000 to the New England Steam Corporation toward the replacement of the tender cistern and coal bunker of Maine Central passenger steam locomotive Pacific class No. 470.



- \$5,000 to the Lake Superior Railroad Museum for the cosmetic restoration of Erie Mining Co. S-12 switcher No. 403 the last diesel to leave the Baldwin Locomotive Works factory in Eddystone, Pa., in 1956.
- \$8,000 to the Nashville Steam Preservation Society towards the rebuild of the Worthington SA Hot Water Pump, a part of the feedwater system of Nashville, Chattanooga, & St. Louis steam locomotive No 576, a 4-8-4 J-3 class engine.
- \$2,500 to the Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad Museum in Nevada City, CA to restore gondola car #233, built in 1917 and used by the Southern Pacific narrow gauge line.
- \$3,000 to the Placerville & Sacramento Valley Railroad for brake equipment parts for Southern Pacific "suburban" coach No. 2110 built by the Pullman Co. in 1924.

## 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



Between Amtrak's ban on special excursion trains and the implementation of Positive Train Control, mainline steam other than on Union Pacific will be scarce in 2019.

Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad representatives say they will host Nickel Plate Road 2-8-4 No. 765 again on excursions this fall for two long weekends, Sept. 20-22 and 27-29. Cuyahoga Valley operates over its own tracks, a former Baltimore & Ohio route, that does not fall under PTC rules. The Berkshire, which in 2019 is celebrating both its 75th birthday and its 40th year since restoration, will pull two 2-hour trips each day through the

Cuyahoga Valley National Park near Cleveland.

Norfolk & Western Class J locomotive No. 611 will be used for four weekends of events in September and October at Pennsylvania's Strasburg Rail Road. The Virginia Museum of Transportation and Strasburg will combine for events including an opportunity to ride behind the restored N&W 4-8-4, opportunities to operate and fire the locomotive, cab rides, and photo charters. The events will reunite No. 611 with Strasburg's N&W Class M locomotive, No. 475, a 4-8-0 built in 1906 and in service on the N&W until 1962.

Union Pacific has announced the steam operation schedule this summer, featuring the return of Big Boy 4-8-8-4 No. 4014. Events begin Saturday, April 27, with 4-8-4 No. 844's departure from Cheyenne. It will travel to Rock Springs, Wyo., that day, and to Ogden, Utah, on April 28. It will be on display in Ogden April 29-May 4 and May 6-8, then take part in the Gold Spike 150th anniversary celebration in Ogden on May 9. A full schedule with times and information on intermediate stops each day is available on [the Union Pacific website](#).

Preservationist and steam locomotive engineer Doyle McCormack has stepped down as president of the Oregon Rail Heritage Foundation after 15 years. McCormack, best known as the engineer aboard Southern Pacific 4-8-4 No. 4449, will remain on the board of directors representing the Friends of SP 4449. He is being replaced by Roy Hemmingway, who previously served as ORHF treasurer. McCormack has been president since the founding of ORHF in 2004.

Amtrak Pacific Parlour Cars will join Steam Railroading Institute's passenger car fleet. The cars were built as Santa Fe Hi-level lounges by the Budd Co. in 1956 and used until last year by Amtrak on the Coast

Starlight. They are set to become "Pere Marquette Parlor" first class cars on the North Pole Express holiday excursions behind 2-8-4 No. 1225.

The Cheyenne Depot Museum is selling tickets to a special christening ceremony of the Union Pacific Big Boy No. 4014 scheduled for May 4. No. 4014 is expected to depart for Ogden, Utah, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the completion of the first Transcontinental Railroad. Tickets are going on sale March 21

The NRHS 2019 Convention will be held in Salt Lake City. The dates are Tuesday, May 7th through Saturday the 11th. Convention Registration materials and online ordering are now available. The [convention page](#) has more information.

## Amtrak/Federal Agencies



More than a hundred current Amtrak employees, political leaders and friends attended Joe Boardman's funeral service in Rome, N.Y. Boardman died after suffering a stroke in Florida. Those attending were a cross-section of people he influenced from retired sleeping car and Beech Grove business car attendant Lou Drummeter to Joe McHugh, Amtrak's vice president, state-supported services business development. In a fitting tribute to Boardman's eight years at Amtrak's helm was one long blast of locomotive horns across the system.

### **The Trump administration's proposed 2020 budget for Amtrak**

The budget proposal includes \$1.49 billion for Amtrak which represents a 22 percent cut from the 2019 figure of \$1.9 billion. The measure calls for refocusing Amtrak on routes of less than 750 miles and envisions a partnership between Amtrak and bus operators to serve rural areas. It requests \$550 million to help states take over these routes. The Capital Investments Grant program, which funds commuter rail, light rail, and streetcar systems along with bus rapid transit and ferries, would be cut by \$800 million. In general, the budget seeks to shift much of the responsibility for transportation project to state and local entities. The budget does fully fund FAST Act programs and calls for long-term surface transportation reauthorization. And it provides \$1 billion for BUILD grants, previously known as TIGER grants.

Railroad Passenger Car Alliance | 5323 Highway N #331, Cottleville, MO 63338

[Unsubscribe {recipient's email}](#)

[Update Profile](#) | [About Constant Contact](#)

Sent by [media@rpca.com](mailto:media@rpca.com) in collaboration with



[Try email marketing for free today!](#)