



From the President

We have all been red tagged "Do Not Start" for the last 2-1/2 months. Just as we are getting ready to open our doors, the unexpected happens. Now we find ourselves becoming educated on how to "stop the spread and proper social distancing." Overnight we have had to become experts in areas that the experts even struggle with at times. Those are two issues, "stop the spread & social distancing" that are hard to fit into our business models.

Last month I asked for you to contact our Information Exchange Editor (Borden) for your thoughts on how to reopen safely. I know she has reached out to several of you in regards to these issues. In addition, we have also looked outside of our own industry to the general guidelines of the CDC. Confusion, especially in the beginning, seemed to be the only thing that was consistent. Especially as you looked at state to state policies.

One organization that has been ahead of the curve is Dynamic Ticket Solutions. Alan Kamp of Branson Scenic brought their weekly webcast to my attention. I have to admit, on the freight side of railroading, I've been busier since the virus started. Initially I missed this series of webcasts. Michael Kuehl and his team have put together a great resource for all of us. To quote their website:

"None of us have the right answers as to how to navigate these uncharted waters. No one has ever even dreamed the scenarios we now face. We are all working in the dark, using our gut instincts to make decisions to try and keep our organizations afloat.

Our goal is to start a conversation within our small, tight knit community, and we figure the best way to achieve this is by hosting a webinar. We do not have the answers, and we are not claiming to be experts...our goal is to start a conversation, share ideas, and help establish or reestablish critical connections."

As we start to venture out into this new world, I like to think we can offer an escape to a simpler time. Marketing "Hope" and a bright future. The equipment we utilize has been here before. This time in history might be strange to a world that is consumed by instantaneous consumerism, but we have a story of survival.

A good majority of our equipment and rail lines tell that story. Several of our cars and locomotives carried passengers during the 1918 pandemic. If not our equipment, the rail lines we run on did. Per the CDC, 500 million or 1/3rd of the worldly population became infected with the virus. Total deaths in the US was around 675,000. Railway Age published an article online on April 4th by Kevin P. Keefe titled "As 1918 Shows, Railroads Have Been Through This Before". It quotes an article from an October 11, 1918 Railway Age editorial. Two lines from that 1918 editorial that stuck out to me were:

"Crowding in passenger trains should be avoided as much as possible" and "Insistence on open windows and ventilators is a positive necessity".

So what's the difference from 1918 to the year 2020? For one thing the main mode of transportation has changed. We now see empty airplanes, and when they show a news clip in regards to air travel, it's always accompanied by someone in full PPE disinfecting the interior with a fog mist. Let's face it, that's scary looking. And then we have the horrific stories of the cruise ships. With all that coverage, we are living in an environment of fear. We need to change that narrative in a responsible way. The webinar series offered by Michael and his team is a great tool in this modern era of technology that they didn't have in 1918. New ideas are flowing, what works, what will not. No matter if you have a static museum, tourist operation, private car on Amtrak or a live steam locomotive, we are truly in this together.



So how do we bridge that gap from fear to security? A good majority of the public doesn't want to get into airplanes or cruise ships. How are we different? For those with open window cars or converted freight equipment, it's a much easier sell. What about the closed cars? The tight hallways that everyone's touching or worse, the second level cars such as commuter cars and dome cars? Touching of handrails is a must. And then there is the perception of airborne droplets and continuous recycling of the air much like plans and ships.

As I look online at the various articles and selling points of UV lights in HVAC systems, it's a consideration. Surgical equipment has been sterilized for years utilizing UV light. A broad-spectrum germicidal UV light, with wavelengths between 200-400 nanometers, is very effective at killing bacteria and viruses, by destroying the bonds that hold their DNA together. I know Cathy and I looked into it several years ago in regards to killing mold before it could start in air duct systems in an old farm house we were restoring. By no means am I an expert in the matter. I'm just as good as the next person when it comes to Google. You need to do your own research and be careful, UV light can be very dangerous if handled or installed incorrectly, so consult an expert.

This is just one option out there. Talk to your local HVAC Company. You might just find out that they can come in and install a UV system in your duct work near your coil. You might be able to exchange their services for free advertisement. You can thank those companies when putting out Press Releases about your reopening's and the precautions you are taking. It's another great way to reassure your customers that you're taking every step possible to keep them safe. Not everything done is a 100% guaranty and the public needs to know that as well. There are still too many unknowns. Work with your local health departments on policy and training of your staff and volunteers.



In closing, take the time to tell the story of life in 1918 and how much further along we are at combating this virus. Turn it into a living history moment utilizing your rail lines and equipment to reassure the communities you run through. Work with your local medical personnel and see if they won't come in and tell the story of then and now. Educate them on how we move forward, especially the kids. Be a fun, educational resource for your community. We might not see that as our job. But history repeats itself, and we have the perfect opportunity to bridge that gap in history that is touching everyone's life. Artifacts and equipment that were essential to the growth of our nation during the worse epidemic every known. It might be a stretch, but why not?

Be Safe,

W. Roger Fuehring

President, RPCA



IMPORTANT MEMBERSHIP NEWS

YOUR DUES RENEWAL INVOICE HAS BEEN MAILED

A lot of things have changed amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. We as a board understand the hardships many tourist railroads, museums, private car owners and the rest of our members are going through. Because of the hard time, the board of directors voted to reduce membership renewals to \$25 instead of the \$45. This will only apply for members renewing their membership for 2020-2021. This will not include any new members. Any member who wishes to send the full \$45 may do so and the extra \$20 will be considered a donation to the general RPCA fund.

Please make note the mailing address has been changed:
RPCA Membership

P.O. Box 67
Cordele, GA 31010

Dues are delinquent on July 1, 2020. Make check payable to RPCA or renew online at JoinRPCA@rpca.com Do not enclose payment to RPCNB. That will be billed separately.

If you have any questions about you renewal please email Chris Lockwood at membershipRPCA@gmail.com

2020 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

There has been no decision on the annual conference. Planning continues. You should have received an email questionnaire seeking your input. PLEASE fill it out and return by June 15th to aid us in our decision making.

There will be a change in the way registration information is distributed. Our primary means of distribution will be the website. Because of the cost in time and dollars, we will no longer be mailing a registration packet to every member. If you still want to receive the information in printed form, there will be a line on your membership renewal form to indicate your desire. You will need to check it and pay a fee of \$7.50 to cover the cost.

STANDARDIZING THE CORONA VIRUS



It appears as though we are in the midst of “reopening” the country for business. This includes many museums and tourist railroads. This reopening is taking on many different facets some of which have come under critical review such as beaches, restaurants and mass gatherings. The paths we take to achieve this reopening may in fact dictate how we face the second or third wave of this pandemic.

We have a responsibility to the public and to our volunteers and employees as we look ahead to open up operations in the midst of local and state health orders. Who should we look at to decide which procedures and protocols are best suited for our operation? The travel and entertainment industry has many applicable operations in place. The precautions and procedures which have been put in place by Amtrak, various airlines and the CDC would all be good starting points. Amtrak currently requires facial coverings by all passengers, has reduced seating capacity to 50% for social distancing and has placed protocols for social distancing in dining areas and lounges. Enhanced cleaning of the equipment with EPA and CDC approved cleaners is also part of the Amtrak Covid program. Handwashing is a major part of the program as well.

These basic functions are mirrored in the protocols of the airlines as well. Southwest Airlines is boasting physical distancing by the removal of seating in the middle seat and an enhanced program of cleaning using a broad spectrum disinfectant.

Each operation, whether tourist railroad, museum or heritage car operator, should have a “standard of practice” which is documented and in practice for the operation. The document should be based on those practices which are in place and accepted by the industry. In other words, if Amtrak, American Airlines, Southwest Airlines and Disney are doing procedure A, B, C, D, etc., then these procedures really set “standards” for the travel and entertainment industry. In general, this is what the public will grow to expect when boarding trains. These standards are also looked at by personal injury lawyers.

Boarding procedures might include physical distancing while in the que, facial masks on and fever checks prior to boarding. Onboard practices might have every other row seating, food service where the food is taken back to the assigned seats and lounge cars with predetermined social distancing. Accommodating families and group size would be another consideration.

These standards may change as the pandemic evolves. What measures do you really need to ensure the public and employee safety? Some of these procedures are relatively easy to achieve, others may or may not even be needed. Do we need to screen everyone, including employees and volunteers for fever? Do we need a cleaning crew for sanitizing the car(s) between trips if the trips are 30 minutes or less?

These measures may not be necessary at this time, but as testing evolves, such things as contact tracing may come into play.

As for trips on private cars, those matters would involve more details than mentioned here. Screenings, distancing, capacity, cleaning (which would include environment and linen service), and the list goes on. These measures may not be necessary at this time, but as testing evolves, such things as contact tracing might come into play which could answer the question: Did a passenger contract the virus on a long distance trip on your car? If so, were "standards of practice" met?

Let's all look forward to getting things back to some sense of normalcy. That normalcy may be face coverings, disinfectant hand wipes and limited capacity. Having a plan in the form of written "Standard Covid Procedures" will go a long way in helping decide how the safety of all the passengers is maintained. Keep your distance, cover your face and wash your hands; now go for a ride.

Gary Carter

Restarting your engine in the time of COVID -19



ACTION AND ADVICE FROM FELLOW RPCA MEMBERS

Insurance

Hopefully, everyone is staying safe during the pandemic. For the tourist railroads and PV operators, insurance is a major portion of their budget. At Branson Scenic Railway, we contacted our insurance representative and inquired about the possibility of a refund for the period we are not operating. I was prompted to do this because the auto insurers are refunding premiums to their customers.

Our representative contacted the underwriters and responded that sometime in the summer they will review our account and consider doing something.

In addition, we were advised that our Workers Comp carrier will do an audit in the near future and will probably refund some premium for the period we are shut down.

So, tourist railroads and PV operators should contact their representative and ask the same question.

The RPCA Insurance program is quite different. Due to the staggered renewal dates for our members, it would be difficult to calculate how much each member might get back. At this time, we believe it is better to remind our carriers at renewal time of the time period our members were shut down and use this information to help keep our rates from rising. Of course, this also depends on there being no large claims.

Speaking of claims, I want to remind everyone who has equipment to be ever vigilant in protecting it. This means checking it frequently and keeping an eye out for potential problems. We may see an uptick in vandalism or copper theft during this time.

Tom Johnson, Chairman
Insurance Committee

Here is a short, video from McRail team member Chris Borden, on resources and guidance to reopening a business safely in the current climate.

[reopening guidance](#)

A webinar is being hosted by Dynamic Ticket Solutions every Thursday. The sessions are archived. Our President Roger Fuehring was on last Thursday.

webinar



Branson Scenic Railway's Approach to COVID-19 by Alan A Kamp

Developing employee and operating procedures that include requirements and provisions for the COVID-19 virus is best done after studying and investigating many sources of information including the CARES Act Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). To that end, Branson Scenic Railway (BSR) watched and participated in numerous webinars and zoom meetings and reviewed information available on line or in conversations with others. These aids included:

Information from County and State Health agencies

The FRA regarding reporting employee illness

Regional Employer Assistance Companies

Insurance Brokers and Companies

Rail Events (Agent for The Polar Express)

Dynamic Ticket Solutions (A tourist railroad ticketing

company that has been hosting weekly webinars with panelists

that have specific industry insight. You may watch these webinars

by registering at the website dynamicticketsolutions.com)

Various Branson business owners and operators and RPCA members

BSR's evolution from opening the season in early March until now has been careful and deliberate. After opening in March with fairly good passenger counts and already implementing enhanced cleaning procedures, we were quickly realizing that continuing to operate would not be in the best interest of public health. About the time we were planning to shut down, the City of Branson passed an ordinance that shut down all non-essential business until May 15. This was followed shortly by a similar State directive. Then because of improving COVID-19 case load, the State of Missouri revised its directive and Branson passed a new ordinance allowing reopening in early May with certain restricted group size and social distancing. At first BSR was going to reopen May 20, hoping for a Memorial Day bump, but later decided to wait until June 3 which is more consistent with other Branson venues and public health guidelines. Also, the Missouri State guidelines expire on May 31 and although new guidelines are expected, they may be less restrictive.

Since mechanical work is considered essential, BSR was able to continue servicing the train and in fact completed many small projects. Therefore the train was ready to go at any time. Plastic shields were installed at the ticket windows, at the gift shop checkout and in the food service area on the train.

Signage is being put in place to assist passengers with social distancing, limiting the number of people from the same group in the depot and stating we are not liable for COVID-19. Information was also posted for employees regarding their rights and responsibilities under unemployment compensation and CARES PPP. Employee recall timing was communicated to employees.

BSR prepared written employee procedures and trained employees to these new procedures which include provisions for taking temperatures daily; washing/sanitizing hands and wearing gloves; staying home if ill; wearing face masks; social distancing; limiting train capacity; boarding and departure procedures to help maintain social distancing; cleaning of the depot, train, boarding areas and grounds; and using a daily disinfectant spray/fogger.

Since Branson is a tourist destination, we hope people are ready to resume traveling and riding the Branson Scenic Railway train. And we also need to be nimble for making changes as new information becomes available and regulations are modified.

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FRA/OSHA

COVID-19 contracted in the workplace is an OSHA recordable which prompted the question to our host railroad if COVID-19 was a FRA reportable. Short answer is yes, FRA has exerted jurisdiction, but as you can see they acknowledge that establishing transmission at work can be difficult. Per Mike Lundell, FRA has suggested in separate calls that there will need to be some reasonable connection to work, i.e. extended contact (20 minutes or more) with prolonged exposure of less than 6 feet."

Alan A. Kamp

FRA SAFETY GUIDELINES

FRA REPORTING

Heritage Rail Association has “set a standard” and published recommended practices for tourist rail <https://heritagerail.org/2020/03/covid-and-railroad-museums-and-tourism-operations/>

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RailCamp Update

As with many other things, the NRHS and the business partners that join together to sponsor the annual RailCamp on both the east and west coast, have decided to cancel the program for this year due to the ongoing Pandemic situation. As such, for 2020 we did not award the RailCamp Scholarships from either the Caldwell-Luebke Scholarship Fund or the Stanlee E. Weller Scholarship Fund. Donations will be carried forward to subsequent year scholarships. We appreciate everyone's support and concern for the program and look forward to the continuing the program in 2021. Your generous support and donations to both the Caldwell-Luebke and Stanlee E. Weller Scholarship Funds are always appreciated and remain dedicated to that purpose.

Roy J. Wullich

Legislative



Two democrats have now been nominated by President Donald Trump for the Amtrak board of directors. Sarah Feinberg, former head of the Federal Railroad Administration and current interim president of New York City Transit, and Chris Koos, mayor of Normal, Ill. Feinberg, was administrator of the FRA from 2015 and 2017 and also served on the Amtrak board at that time. Koos, a member of the advisory board of Transportation for America, would become the only board member from the Midwest. Both nominations require confirmation in the U.S. Senate.

The public has through June 1 to comment on proposed FRA section 207 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008. That requires FRA and Amtrak to jointly develop the Metrics and Standards. Specifically, 207 requires the Metrics and Standards to address the following topics: cost recovery; on-time performance and minutes of delay; ridership; on-board services; stations; facilities; equipment; and other services. More information is available at:

<https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=FRA-2019-0069>

Grants



The Tom E. Dailey Foundation announced 7 grants totaling \$17,750 that were awarded at their May 9, 2020 quarterly board meeting. Since 2013, the Foundation has awarded 332 grants totaling \$974,161. Their next board meeting is planned for August 8, 2020.

Des Moines Heritage Trust \$2,000

Funding was granted for the Restoration of 1909 East Des Moines Union Railroad Depot. The Depot will be the home base for Des Moines area heritage organizations that currently have no home such as the

Des Moines Historical Society, the Des Moines Rehabbers Club, Friends of Des Moines Streetcars, the Historic East Village and the Des Moines Heritage Trust.

<http://desmoinesheritagetrust.org/>

Arcade Historical Society "Steam Locomotive Restoration Fund" \$5,000

Funding was granted for their Return #18 to Steam project, which seeks to return historic 2-8-0 Consolidation steam locomotive No. 18 (built in 1920) to operating condition by partnering with the Arcade and Attica Railroad to fund extensive repairs to the locomotive's firebox area to permit the locomotive to be used again. Once restored, No. 18 will be put in service to pull excursion trains, to keep tourists and history buffs coming to visit Arcade.

<https://www.arcadehistoricalsociety.org/>

New England Steam Corporation \$1,000

Funding was granted for their Tender Body and Cab Rivet Project.

As part of this active project, volunteers are working concurrently towards rebuilding locomotive #470's tender and cab in an effort to maximize the time, materials and labor necessary.

<https://www.newenglandsteam.org/>

French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society \$1,250

Funding was granted for their Meadville Railroad Depot Phase One Restoration Project for 2020. The former Bessemer & Lake Erie Railroad Passenger Depot and Freight House is the last railroad building in Meadville that has not been razed or restored. The goal is to restore the building to its original 1881 appearance and transform it into an educational railroad museum and community center to be known as the Meadville Railroad Depot.

<https://meadvillerrailroaddepot.com/>

Hoosier Heartland Trolley Co. \$3,000

Funding was granted for Electrify 429 Interurban Rail Car Restoration - Phase One. Electrify 429 is a capital campaign for the full operational restoration of a 1925 intercity, electric interurban car (No. 429) as part of a comprehensive electric heritage railway development project.

<https://www.hoosiertrolley.org/>

UMLER REPORT



April and May have been busy months. Some of it personal, some of it commercial, and a bunch of it RPCNB - adding more cars from the Amtrak auctions and renewal season

RENEWALS: June is renewal month, July starts the RPCNB 2021 subscription year! Near the end of August we start to delete non-renewals. And some of you will enjoy saving a little money on renewal. Please, if you are not going to renew, send us an email. If you have a

situation that doesn't allow you to pay the renewal fee immediately, talk to us. Communication is everything. So, communicate.

Invoices will be going out in the next couple of weeks. Sorry for being later than usual, we have in the past tried to get them all out by now so that owners can do their budget planning. General statement: no one will pay more than they did for subscriber year 2020 unless they register more cars. **Please reply if you are not going to renew.**

Both Boards of Directors approved a change to the renewal costs. This is simply a blatant attempt to keep more cars registered, because our registered (not owned or represented) unit volume directly affects discussions and changes in the industry. We understand that with cars not earning income, it is hard to justify maintaining the subscription, even at only 65 bucks a year that isn't that much compared to other car ownership costs. And it costs less than registering an auto. Based on data we have, our roster could be near 180 units if members registered all their rolling stock they own. It would be great to break 200! That puts us on par with small lease companies and larger than some commuter agencies! Higher registration counts IS more power.

The new fee structure is a sliding scale based on groups of 5 units. The first 5 is the same old fee of \$65 per year. The next 5 units the renewal cost drops to \$45 dollars. The cost continues to drop for each subsequent group of 5 until we hit the minimum fee. We will try this for the 2021 subscription year, the renewal invoice you get will reflect this. Please comment during the year so

that maybe we can tweak it a little next year. If it doesn't work for the subscribers, we'll trash it. This is not set in concrete! We can keep modifying it each subscriber year until either subscribers are happy, or we give up and dump it.

Of course, if a subscriber wishes, they are very welcome to send the same old amount to help build the rainy-day fund for RPCNB. But we are not a 501c3, therefore you can only deduct the registration fee as a business expense.

The single reason we can do this is because your office staff and Board are volunteers! The office direct costs are mostly born by Great Lakes Railcar. RPCNB is not an income source for us, therefore we can cut the fees a lot closer to the current actual and future projected costs. Now we just need to learn how far we are wrong in the 2021 projection for actual costs. We have tax returns to make payments on for 11 states that tax our rolling stock just because they crossed into their state.

What, you thought we could dodge that? Well....we did for a while. Then the taxing agencies started looking up reporting mark contacts and issuing threats. RPCNB is taxed by either mileage or value. At least for the states where the tax is on cargo value, we get to claim zero CARGO value, but in all cases are still stuck with a minimum tax! Remember, these taxers are thinking the large freight cargo values and mileages. We are a pimple on the butt of that, and the state must decide whether to apply ointment, pop it or ignore it. In one case it took two months and 8 email replies to finally get the state official to understand their rules didn't fit us, and determine a low minimum tax instead of having a fight over the constitutionality of their tax law that was not applicable to us yet they wanted money.

Because the RRs don't identify the car number on the mileage reports, to us or to the states, we can't apply those costs to the individual car owners directly, it is therefore an overhead cost against the company and the group. That means that there is a larger cost associated with keeping RPCNB the company legal than the sum of all the individual actual rolling stock registration costs for AAR/Railinc. And some states want to tax us even higher, and more states are rattling their swords wanting a piece of the pie.

Why does RPCNB require insurance coverage on cars/locos operating under the RPCNB reporting mark to include RPCNB as an insured or certificate holder? Because if anything happens, and we mean anything, that a lawyer would attempt to attribute to your car or loco, the first place they will come is to RPCNB because that is the entity assigned the reporting mark and per AAR rules is responsible as the "owner" of the equipment.

That is why we are concerned with the liability coverage, not physical damage to your car. Physical damage you must work out yourself. The easiest way to handle this is through the RPCA group policy. We suspect that if we had a complete response to a survey of the RPCNB equipment owners, we'd find considerably more of us are "middle class working folks."

Why is RPCNB separate instead of integrated into RPCA 1. When this first started, long long ago in a land far far away, it was decided that if something bad happens, RPCNB needed to protect the organization (RPCA) from liability. RPCNB must be self-supporting (Separate from RPCA). 3. By being separate, it is easier on the membership and finance committees by separating general membership from those with car ownership.

What is an aggregation organization? There are two such currently existing in Umler. AAPRCO and RPCNB are recognized by the AAR/Railinc and the FRA as aggregation organizations. This means that the organization owns no rolling stock, it is the members or subscribers that own the equipment. They also are NOT lease companies or banks. The organizations are helpful to AAR/Railinc in that there is a relatively large number of cars and locos, a little over 300 between us, under just 2 reporting marks. This saves over 250 reporting marks for assignment to short lines or large commercial operations. That is important, because the North American railroads have to share reporting marks with their counterparts in US, Canada and Mexico, and trucking companies in those countries plus all the trailers, container chasses (that's plural of chassis) and, biggest user, containers, INTERNATIONALLY! Not just North America for the railroad marks, but all the world for containers, because the containers travel worldwide and carry the same registration ID everywhere. There are some people that own companies that do allow others to use their mark but are not recognized by Railinc as an aggregation organization because they do own rolling stock directly.

STATUS: We now project we will end subscription year 2020 (June 30) with 153 cars and locos registered under the RPCNB reporting mark. Wow! Are we pleased! Thank you car and loco owners! We hope that we will get them all back for 2021, but history indicates we won't. We know that number contains some one time moves. Since we started this 2 decades ago, we have registered 607 units in Umler. That shows you how many onetime moves we've had. John McMath was the first subscriber, and

he sent \$400 because he wanted to help RPCNB get going against the high costs associated with the service. One must understand back then we had \$27.50 per **MINUTE** computer access costs. That has fortunately gone away with internet access now available, but other things quickly and gladly stepped in to eat up the fee we collected.

We still need someone(s) to learn this activity! Any volunteers? It really can be fun.

Pamm and Dan Monaghan

Where did the name Railroad Passenger Car Numbering Bureau come from? Brad Black came up with that name. At the time, what we had and where we were planning to go made that choice a good one. Next keeper of the flame may very well take this to the next level.

What organization had the reporting mark before RPCNB? New contest! No prize but a published congratulations. Email or call with the answer, first correct one wins. Got to be a complete correct name of the company. Here's the clue:

Pamm got a phone call from a railroad wanting to know why one of our cars was way billed and wasn't in Umler. Pamm asked for the car number. It was 8 digits long. Her response was "that is not our car, we don't have any with 8-digit numbers." She asked if the caller could describe the car, expecting a really poor description of a passenger car. The caller said: It is a 50-foot plug door box car, red body, white lettering, with a checkerboard on the end of the side.

Which company originally owned this car? We'll finish the story when we have a winner.

RAILROAD NEWS

This is a synopsis of Railroad related news culled from various sources including Trains Magazine, Progressive Railroading, Railway Age, and various web sites. Please submit your railroad news as well.

Museum and Excursion Trains



Coronavirus fallout includes tourist railroads cancelling or delaying operations and events. Mt. Rainier and Railroad Logging Museum appears to be the first major heritage operator to call it quits as a result of the pandemic. American Heritage Railways, Inc., says it will close the Mt. Rainier Elbe, Wash., and cease operations there for the foreseeable future. According to reports, since its acquisition in 2016 the railroad has not been profitable and the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the MRRR's

forced delayed annual opening also played a factor in this decision.

The Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis Depot and Museum has shut down due to lack of visitors. Jackson's Mayor Scott Conger said that the city had been performing cost-benefit analyses of different attractions, and the depot's average attendance was less than 10 a week, at a cost of roughly \$109,000 a year."The closure was in the works before the COVID-19 pandemic. Artifacts will be moved to the Casey Jones Railroad Museum, also in Jackson.

Colorado's Royal Gorge Route Railroad has pushed back its planned reopening from May 23 as it waits for a variance to allow operation to be approved from the state. The tentative reopening date is June 13, The railroad has said it can accommodate up to 300 passengers on a train even with social distancing

Washington's Chehalis-Centralia Railroad & Museum [plans to open June 20](#), in time for Father's Day weekend, and now has tickets on sale. Operations will be reservation-only, and will have reduced capacity of 49 or less.

As tourist-train operations are idled at short line Wisconsin Great Northern Railroad by the COVID-19 pandemic, railroad president Greg Vreeland has kept his entire staff employed, in part by tackling a major track project to improve safety for users of a major trail, as well as rail operations.

VIA Rail Canada has cancelled the summer travel season for its long-distance overnight trains, the Canadian and the Ocean, until at least November 1, 2020. It has suspended Sleeper class on its Winnipeg-Churchill, Man., train until the same date. VIA is using the suspension of service to accelerate an inspection and modernization program for its heritage passenger equipment, and has found structural issues that need to be addressed.

The Placerville & Sacramento Valley Railroad has received an operating steam locomotive for excursions on a portion of the former Southern Pacific Placerville branch in Northern California. Santa Cruz Portland Cement No. 2, an oil-burning 0-4-0 built by H.K. Porter in 1909, has operated at the Nilas Canyon Railway, Roaring Camp Railroads, and Northwest Railway Museum.

Former Norfolk and Western Y6a steam locomotive No. 2156 will soon return home to St. Louis, after spending the past 5 years in Virginia. It has been on loan to the Virginia Museum of Transportation. Discussions were held to potentially extend the five-year loan/lease of the 2156, but the locomotive will be moved in the near future.

Genesee Valley Transportation, parent company of the Delaware-Lackawanna, recently purchased 80-year-old HH660 NIWX 603. The railroad plans on restoring the switcher to its original identity: Delaware, Lackawanna & Western 409 and take it to Scranton, PA. The GVT is home to the largest fleet of Alcos in North America.

Interesting observation on future of Private Railroad cars in [Forbes Magazine](#).

Amtrak/Federal Agencies



Amtrak's initial results for April show the result of the coronavirus restrictions. A little more than 120,000 people rode Amtrak trains in all of April, compared with 2.7 million a year earlier. Amtrak's remaining Northeast Corridor regional operations carried just under 19,000 riders -- 97.5% fewer than in April of 2019. [Amtrak posts its monthly results here](#), with a lag time of about six weeks.

Amtrak is taking the following steps in light of COVID 19:

- waiving change and cancellation fees for reservations made by Aug. 31;
- limiting ticket sales to 50 percent of each train's seat capacity to allow for social distancing during travel;
- installing signage to indicate safe distances in high-traffic areas, as well as protective barriers customer counters at the busiest stations;
- requiring all riders and employees to wear facial coverings while in stations and on board;
- encouraging riders to arrive only 30 minutes before departure or only 60 minutes of ticketing or baggage assistance is needed;
- accepting cashless payments to enable a contact-free travel experience; and

- enhancing the cleaning of trains, including the use of a fogging method to disinfect surface areas and sanitizing highly touched surfaces, seats and restrooms.

The railroad has taken additional steps to support the communities it serves. For example, fewer trains in operation during the pandemic has resulted in a surplus of food supplies. To help those in need, Amtrak is working with food banks to donate food and other essentials.

Amtrak management has asked Congress for \$1.475 billion in “supplemental funding” in addition to \$2.04 billion in its budget request for fiscal 2021. Even with the funding it says most long-distance routes will be reduced to less than daily service. The company has also told employees it expects to reduce its workforce by as much as 20%. In a message to employees, Amtrak President and CEO William Flynn said the cuts are “to ensure we have a sustainable Amtrak that can continue to make critical investments in our core and long-term growth strategies, while also keeping safety a top priority.” The full letter is available [here](#).

Amtrak’s next-generation Acela has achieved a testing milestone, reaching speeds up to 165 mph in testing at the Association of American Railroads’ Transportation Technology Center Inc. near Pueblo. That is faster than the equipment’s planned top operating speed of 160 mph.

Amtrak is looking to hire individuals who will restore agent staffing at 15 stations in 12 states, responding to a congressional mandate to do so. The uniformed workers will be trained to assist customers with booking and boarding trains, including helping with unaccompanied minors, carry-on baggage and providing information on the status of arriving and departing services.

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

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