



## From the President



Reports early this month are true. We are holding a conference on the SAM Shortline in March 2021. Let's face it, all of us are expecting cancellation announcements. That seems to be the new normal unfortunately. Thank You to Chris Lockwood, the staff at the SAM and all the volunteers that have agreed to pull this off. What a great location this will be.

As a board, we are concerned about meeting in person, but feel like each individual needs to make that decision themselves based on their own circumstances. Strict guidelines will be in place as it pertains to the virus. Anyone including board members and management of RPCA will have the option of attending through an on-line resource that will require a registration fee. It's important that you feel safe at the conference but also, understand the risk associated in regards to the virus. It's a risk we all choose on a daily basis when we go about our everyday life. With a new vaccine potential, along with the new practices we have all learned to adopt, I personally feel safe and will

be excited to see many of you again. It's just refreshing to look forward to the ability of getting out again. Please make sure to consider all factors when it's time to register for the 2021 conference.

We had a small low key event that a few of our members decided to gather for recently. It was an entire day activity that we wouldn't even have considered doing 8 months ago. It was a success, in my book, as it helped at renewing our hope that this too shall pass. We remained masked when distancing couldn't be achieved. Regardless of the face coverings, you could still make out the smiles in our eyes when visiting each other as we enjoyed a perfect day on our cars.

With all that's going on in our country, we still have the ability to leave all our worries behind, climb on a train and remember why we love this so much. The SAM has been offering that very thing in recent months to the communities they serve. If your organization or private car are unable to do that yet, it will soon. In the meantime, hang in there. This is where you picture the motivational poster of a kitten hanging on by one paw. That pretty much sums up 2020.

Be Safe My Friends,

**W. Roger Fuehring**

President, RPCA



## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

### Special Board of Directors Meeting

The RPCA board of directors met in a Special video/phone conference September 19,2020. The board voted to have an in-person conference March 4 – 7 at the SAM Shortline in Cordele, GA. There will be a virtual component. Another special board meeting will be held Saturday, January 23 10:00 am Eastern Standard Time about 6 weeks before the conference, to make any final decisions.

### 2021 RPCA CONFERENCE TO BE HELD MARCH 4-7 IN GEORGIA\ HOSTED BY SAM SHORTLINE EXCURSION TRAIN



We will be staying at the Lake Blackshear Resort located at Georgia Veterans State Park, just down the road from the SAM Shortline Excursion Train, in Cordele, GA.

Current Plans Include:

- Hands-on Mechanical Sessions at the SAM yard
- Seminars and Workshops
- A Dinner Train Ride on Rare Mileage
- An Excursion Train to Plains Georgia
- Banquet, Hospitality Rooms, Vendors, Silent Auction
- Members Meetings, Elections

\*The resort is so large that we can maintain social distancing. The conference will be held in compliance with all Georgia Covid-19 rules and regulations at the time of the event.

The Atlanta airport is roughly 2 hours from the resort (and plane tickets are a great deal right now). Rental cars are available and we will try to arrange for a shuttle.

More details on pricing, registration, schedules and transportation will be forthcoming in the next few weeks.

Chris Lockwood  
Manager, SAM Shortline (Chris promises no snow this year)

### Host Hotel - Lake Blackshear Resort located in Georgia Veterans State Park Cordele, Georgia

Room Rate: \$119.00 Per Night. \*\*There will be a resort fee 15.00 per night\*\*

We currently have 25 rooms on hold for the start of reservations. We can add more rooms along with cottages. Right now RPCA is the only event scheduled. If we run out of rooms at the resort there a couple of nice hotels in downtown Cordele. There is a Marriott, Holiday Inn, Hampton Inn, and a Best Western. They currently range in price from \$90 to \$130.



## Georgia Veteran's State Park



Georgia Veterans State Park was founded in 1946 as a memorial to U.S. veterans. It covers 1,308 acres and offers a wide variety of recreational activities and overnight accommodations. Located on the banks of Lake Blackshear, the park includes: an 18 hole golf course, four miles of nature trails, and endless opportunities for fishing, boating, and water recreation. Other Amenities include: Archery & Air Gun Range, frisbee golf, an airstrip, military museum, and of course the SAM Shortline. There are two restaurants in the resort and three more within a mile of the park.

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#### NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

Our By-Laws state that nominations for Director open on Sept 1 OR 120 days prior to our A Conference, and close 45 days prior to the Conference. Since the dates of our 2021 Confer been moved from our traditional Martin Luther King weekend to March 4-7, so must our n window be moved.

The window for nominations of candidates will commence on Wednesday, Nov 4, 2020, an on Monday, Jan 18, 2021.

Directors are elected for a three-year term, commencing on the day of the Annual Membe which will be March 7, 2021 and run until the Annual Members Meeting in 2024.

In a "normal" year, Directors meet in person twice: Once at the Annual Conference, and o This year's midyear conference was held electronically, and we recently completed a secur conference to discuss the change in Conference venue and dates.

The main mid-year conference has a compensation arrangement for all directors and office in person, that being a stipend of up to \$500 to help defray travel and lodging expenses. Tl such arrangement for attending the Annual Conference BOD meeting. There are no compo arrangements for virtual meetings.

There are three seats up for election: Those currently held by Judy Gray, Ray Kammer, and They all have indicated their intention to run again.

Please consider running for Director, especially if you believe you have some talent or exp would be of benefit to our Alliance.

*Burt Hermey*

# NEW RPCA WEBSITE

Although it is still under construction, The RPCA website has a totally new look. All the great information but easier to navigate and more attractive. Check it out

[Visit our website](#)

## AMTRAK

### Notes from 9/29/2020 Conference Call



Present from RPCA:

Roger Fuehring  
Burt Hermey  
Mike Stickel

Present from Amtrak:

Rob Rikperger  
Steve Robusto  
Mike DeAngelo  
Beverly Davis  
Theresa Smith

Rob Rikperger reports to Paul Vilter, and Steve Robusto reports to Rob.

Amtrak is still promoting long-term (3 months) parking in Albany, for the period Oct-Dec 2020. This is at a reduced rate vs published tariff rates. Amtrak is considering a parking discount for multi-cars. No details yet.

A new "best practices" page has been added to the Amtrak website. This provides a pretty good checklist for things the owner/mechanical rep/person in charge should ensure are in place prior to pickup by Amtrak.

Amtrak is working on a "Parking Brochure" that will list locations and amenities available for private car parking. Track charts are also contemplated to be in the brochure.

It may be possible to operate a charter train of PV's on the NEC without the necessity of booking multiple departures, provided that the charter conforms to an established charter train business plan, such as Amtrak's sports charters. Interested operators should discuss with Beverly Davis or Steve Robusto for details.

A small rate increase takes effect on Oct 1. Although not guaranteed, at this time Amtrak does not expect to implement another rate increase until Oct 1, 2021.

Burt Hermey  
[cbhermey@pacbell.net](mailto:cbhermey@pacbell.net)

## SAFETY



## Planning and Preparedness

October is here and many in this organization are making plans for the upcoming holidays trains starting with Halloween. From Spooky Trains to Santa's Express, now is the time to take a look at what is and might be needed for their operation.

The usual mechanical inspection and checklist almost goes without saying. Wheels, brakes, couplers, safety appliances such as grab bars, step boxes and all of the other bits and pieces required for the safe operation of these special trains need looking at prior to the night before the operation begins. Lights, drop cords and heat sources need a review as well. It is easier to do the inspections and repairs in this beautiful fall weather rather than a snow storm on the first of December.

Amidst this backdrop is the dark cloud of the C-19 virus. What safety requirements are in place now and what is being considered for the future? Tune into your local health department and state requirements for guidance and answers to questions as they arise. It appears as though there is a second wave rearing its ugly head in Europe and the head of the FDA has acknowledged that we should brace for this wave here as well. All of this information should be the impetus to go into some detailed planning. It looks as though the social distancing and mask requirements are here to stay. Currently, disposable masks are readily available from many sources. Would it be a good time to purchase a supply for the volunteers? I have noticed a decent supply of paper towels and cleaning solutions available as well.

As we evaluate which trains to run and how to staff them for the safety of everyone involved, there are some questions which should at least be addressed in a planning session:

Are all passengers required to wear a mask when boarding and traveling on the train? Are staff and volunteers required to do so as well?

Are the cars set up for social distancing as required by local or state regs? How easily would it be to increase this distancing if the regs change?

Lastly, where will the passengers congregate prior to boarding? Is social distancing being observed? Is there a maximum capacity on the enclosed boarding area? Is there a limit on group size by local or state regs? These are just a few of the questions and scenarios that make the operation of these trains possible.

Flexibility to make last minute changes will certainly help in these operations. We need to keep the safety of our passengers and ourselves at heart, while abiding by the health requirements in place at the time. I know that this "season of trains" is what financially keeps many organizations going forward. Plan to make it safe and advertise those safety features. Prepare for the unlikely changes. Try not to be Tricked and give the passengers a Treat of safety when they ride. Stay healthy and safe.

Gary Carter

## Mechanical



For years, there have been a number of vendors that have sold small quantities of rubber window gasket material that we car owners needed for our vintage passenger cars. Usually, we are replacing a window or two and just need enough for those windows. Maybe 15 to 20 feet of each gasket per window, at most. There have always been many vendors that produce extruded rubber, so having a die made and then a run of gasket material made locally has always been an option, and continues to be. However, due to the minimum quantities of such runs, (which vary from company to company) those are not generally practical unless you are going to replace all of the window gasket material

on your car.

For years, I have used Logan Corp in Huntington, WV for such small quantities of gasket material. They stocked some of the more common gaskets that used to be carried by the late, great, Power Parts Company. However, I recently found that Logan is no longer stocking this gasket material due to a change of ownership. So, my question for RPCA members is: are there any other vendors stocking any of our favorite gasket material, so we can order small quantities?

Some car owners have used companies such as Central Sales and Service in Waverly TN, but keep in mind that they are a manufacturer, and not a supplier, so to speak. They make runs of gasket material to order, and while their minimum run requirements are less than most, they are not a realistic alternative for someone just replacing one or two windows. So, any ideas out there? I would like to share this info with the membership. Please email me at [domeliner@hotmail.com](mailto:domeliner@hotmail.com).

## Legislative



Amtrak President William Flynn has told members of Congress that the company needs a \$4.9 billion appropriation for fiscal 2021 to avoid employee furloughs and reduced long-distance train frequencies planned for October. He was among those testifying at the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's Rail Subcommittee hearing titled, "Amtrak's response to COVID-19."

If Senate and House conferees don't come up with the \$4.9 billion (which includes the \$2 billion Amtrak originally asked for in its annual Grant and Legislative Request in February), Flynn says Amtrak will have to make very dramatic reductions across the company to stave off bankruptcy.

## UMLER REPORT



Things continue to change in Umler.

When this was written on Sep 17, Railinc added car cushion gear, both sliding sill and end of car, to the component ID (CID) program. Jan 1 these become mandatory inputs. Fortunately we don't have very many listed in the 800 plus passenger cars in the GLR data base, but we know there are still a few out there.

With respect to the overall CID program, the following have been identified as hardware suppliers who do comply with the tagging requirement:

MultiService is reported to be applying the CID codes to valves they service.

Elcon National for slack adjusters.

Progress Rail for wheels.

Make sure when you get your brake valves serviced you demand the CID on any freight standard valves, and it wouldn't hurt to have it on all valves.

From the last monthly newsletter, here's how our attempt to get a change with Railinc worked out, we think as well as could be expected, for now:

We had sent in a request to discuss the inclusion of passenger cars in the CID brake valve program when Railinc did not include the passenger car unique models in the pull down menu. Kind of hard to be compliant when they don't include your hardware in the list of the only acceptable data.

After Railinc had a discussion with the AAR air brake group, it was decided the CID group was not going to include the passenger unique valves, and that we should submit an Umler Change Request to exempt passenger cars, which we did, sort of.

Finally got a phone call from the Railinc CID program analyst about the Change Request. They were confused.

After about 40 minutes of discussion, this is what was revealed:

AAR and Railinc had no idea that freight and loco standard hardware was and is and will continue to be used on passenger cars.

They were unaware that this project could affect every passenger car in existence including Amtrak and commuter.

During the discussion of why we would want to do this extra work, the examples used were a failed emergency valve will mean the train takes a little longer to stop. That could be OK, but it could be bad if because of that the train hits something. A failed wheel usually does NOT end well, usually causing a derailment. Passenger cars use freight car standard 36" multiple wear wheels just like the standard freight car 125 ton truck wheels. The only exception is cars equipped with disc brakes where the blank wheel is a standard freight car item, but it then gets modified with tapped holes in the hub to mount the disc brake rotor. And similar for axles and journal bearings!

Contrary to his contact's opinion at AAR, AAR **IS** responsible for the components because they are standard freight car or loco hardware with no modifications or adaptations except as noted and are subject to AAR M1003 and the specific standards applicable to the item. In this specific case, standard freight emergency valves and standard freight/loco vent valves.

Many of the big commercial shops are NOT applying the CID required ID tags for passenger anything yet, they are waiting until it changes from optional to mandatory. This was confirmed by two of RPCNB's certified air techs performing recent air brake work. That also means car owners can't get ahead of the curve by inputting the CID data now even though the computer will accept the data now.

Here is what was determined:

He will discuss with his AAR contact on the brake valves what we had discussed and why his contact is wrong in that 1. passenger cars **DO** have AAR specified standard freight car components and 2. why we **DO** want this hardware tracked for safety reasons.

He will provide our contact information and strongly suggest that anytime there is a question about standard freight hardware being used on passenger car, or any passenger car question, they contact GLR/RPCNB. Already confirmed by summary email from him.

Here is what is going to happen:

He is going to close the case file on our change request. The change request has been added to the CID change request queue and it will be included in the programming for brake valve CID change from optional to mandatory so that passenger cars stay optional and don't also go mandatory.

We asked that he contact us anytime they are doing something that affects passenger cars. He is going to retain our contact information and will call or email whenever he has a question as well as pass it around the department.

Bottom line: when the CID on air brake valves does go mandatory for freight cars, it will still be optional for passenger cars, and if the data is inputted, the system will take it and notify the appropriate designated party with an early warning if there is a match. That means that not inputting any data does NOT make the car in conflict and later subject to deletion as would have happened originally. It also means that every passenger car owner reporting mark needs to ensure that there is a responsible person to receive the Early Warning on hardware field failures and so designated in Find Us Rail.

Now we need to start the same task on wheels, axles and bearings, and possibly cushion gear.

Take care, stay safe.

Pamm and Dan Monaghan

## 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



### Many Holiday Trains are cancelling due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Canadian Pacific Holiday Train's annual trip across the CP system in the U.S. and Canada will be replaced by donations to food banks in communities along its network, as well as an online concert. The railroad says the 2020 program will draw attention to food security issues, while ensuring donations go to all food banks that



would ordinarily receive them, including those that typically host a Holiday Train event in alternating years.

The [Indiana Rail Road Co.](#) has canceled the 2020 run of its Santa Train. The train travels to communities in the INRD's service areas every December. This year, however, railroad officials were unable to find a safe way to operate the train.

Kansas City Southern will not operate its Holiday Express train this year, but will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the program with a fundraising campaign to benefit the Salvation Army in 20 communities along its rail network

The Essex Steam Train & Riverboat in Essex, Conn., has announced its North Pole Express and Santa Specail Elf Academy holiday operations are postponed until 2021 The tourist operation will instead stage a 1-hour, self-tour event, Christmas Adventures at Essex Station.

Michigan's Steam Railroading Institute has canceled all 2020 excursions including its annual Fall Colors Tours and North Pole Express trips The institute, home of Pere Marquette 2-8-4 No. 1225, is seeking donations to help offset the revenue loss from its cancelled excursions.

The Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Railway Museum has cancelled both its Fall Work Weekend and its popular Victorian Christmas events for 2020. In recent years, the spring and fall work weekends have attracted up to 100 volunteers, who build track, repair and paint rolling stock, paint buildings, and tackle other projects.

The Virginia & Truckee Railway Commission has announced the railroad has canceled its Polar Express excursions for 2020, and will replace them with Santa's Drive-Thru Village, a socially distanced holiday event Dec. 11-13 and Dec. 18-24 at Eastgate Depot in Carson City, Nev.

A former Norfolk & Western passenger car, built in 1927 and most recently a part of a hotel restaurant, has been donated to the Roanoke chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. The Holiday Inn restaurant in Blacksburg, Va was being torn down, and the company doing the work, Empire Salvage and Demolition, made the donation.

The Southern Pacific Historical and Technical Society and the Southern Pacific Railroad History Center, and the California State Railroad Museum have saved a former Central Pacific coach that was at the driving of the Golden Spike in Promontory Summit, Utah, in 1869. The car, Central Pacific No. 12, was inside the former Southern Pacific depot in Calistoga, which is planned to become a restaurant and if not moved would have been destroyed. A benefactor of the Center offered to pay for CP No. 12 to be removed from the depot and transported to safety.

The Emery Rail Heritage Trust has announced two significant changes to eligibility rules for those seeking grants. In certain cases, groups can now apply for grants for equipment or facilities that are owned by a governmental agency or leased from a different owner. This replaces the prior policy in the project requesting funds had to be owned by the group seeking funding. Details on the specific requirements which apply are [available at the Trust's website](#). The has distributed \$1.376 million to 63 groups.

The Boca Raton Historical Society has sold the former Florida East Coast Railway train station that houses its Boca Express Train Museum for \$2.1 million. The museum's collection also features two former Seaboard Air Line passenger cars, an Atlantic Coast Line caboose and a 1930 Baldwin steam switch engine.

The Center for Rail Photography & Art and historian and professor Roger Grant have been selected to receive the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society's annual research fellowships. The CRP&A received \$2,500 as recipient of the 2020 William D. Middleton Research Fellowship, for a project to examine the role of videography in railroading.

Four individuals have received the inaugural scholarships awarded by the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, selected by a three-member panel. Receiving the \$3,000 scholarship are: Thomas Blampied, Lee Evans, Katherine Teipel, Michael Begany.

The Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad will receive a federal grant for more than \$1.9 million to replace a bridge over the Animas River as part of the latest group of Department of Transportation Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grants

# Amtrak/Freight/Federal Agencies



Amtrak's Office of Inspector General reports that although Amtrak has built a more disciplined process to plan and coordinate major track repairs more steps could be taken to reduce service disruptions and maximize the amount of time it has access to tracks. According to the report, these additional steps include institutionalizing multi-year planning, updating planning tools, and clarifying the roles of departments that coordinate the outage plan with affected external stakeholders like commuter railroads.

VIA Rail will not resume transcontinental passenger service as previously planned as a second wave of COVID-19 cases is seen in parts of Canada. [It had previously hoped to resume service on its two flagship trains, the \*Canadian\* between Toronto and Vancouver and the \*Ocean\* between Montreal and Halifax, on Nov. 1.](#) VIA has not operated either of the trains since March when the pandemic began to impact North America.

For the first time in the nearly 200-year-old history of North American railroading, a woman has been named chief executive of a Class I railroad. Kathryn Farmer was named as the next chief executive of BNSF effective Jan. 1. She will succeed Carl R. Ice as President and Chief Executive Officer. She will also assume leadership of BNSF's Board of Directors. Farmer has been BNSF's executive vice president operations since 2018 and has spent her entire career with the railroad.