



## From the President



I don't know of anyone not affected by the events of 2020. Staying positive, regardless of the circumstances is crucial to one's mental health. The hardship on private car owners based on new Amtrak policies was difficult to go through for many. Now we face the complete shutdown and partial reopening of all of our operations throughout this year, and potential disruptions for 2021.

One thing that we have learned is not to take for granted the simple things. Our friendships within this industry should be stronger. We will need to make sure we are checking on each other. It's important that we stay in continued communication about what is working, and what is

not. Taking the time to also check on each other's well-being is very important in these trying times.

We all have interesting lives with different worlds outside of the RPCA. Our profession is sometimes tied to the industry but for most of us, we are not railroaders full-time. We also have other interests such as classic automobiles, gun clubs, aviation groups, civic organizations, church and many more. This year I had the pleasure of my professional career, and the RPCA coming together as a result of the Albuquerque conference.

As a new member/car owner, Rail Logistics Services sent James O'Kelley, a dear friend of mine to represent them. Some of you have worked with him previously but for the most part, many at Albuquerque did not know him. James was a former employee of mine that I hired in the late 90s. By the early 2000s, I thought so much of him, that Cathy and I sold him and his wife our California-based company that serviced the Pacific Harbor Line Railroad. In 2014, James successfully negotiated with a handful of our southern Indiana customers to take over for me. I was getting back in the employment of a railroad full-time since 1995. That's when I left to build up our railroad contracting business that we started in 1991.

In January 2020, I had the pleasure of spending time with my early career mentor Henry Weller, and James O'Kelley at the same time. The man who started my career in 1987, and a man who started his railroad career unloading/loading automobiles from rail cars. Humble beginnings; it seems to be a pattern for many of us railroaders. Henry hired me as a track laborer, and many years later, I hired James to manage our California based operation. The same operation that he and his wife would own within a few years.

There I was, having dinner at the Nuclear Science & History Museum with Henry, James and others. Two instrumental men in shaping of who I am today. In some ways, we were a family. Not in the traditional sense, but three railroad men whose careers would forever be linked. Linked by the desire to railroad and influence those we worked with. It was a great moment in my life for us to sit around the table swapping stories of our lives in the railroad. It was great for James to meet the man who gave me my start and had faith in me. This is the same type of faith that James had in others, as he developed and influenced those he worked with. I unfortunately missed the opportunity of getting a picture of us all together.

The next day, we as an organization, brought Henry up to honor him for his service and friendship that he has bestowed over the years on the RPCA. At that moment, James snapped a picture of me with my arm around Henry at the podium and sent it to me via text. During check out, as the conference ended, James and I met up with Bill Jubeck to discuss airbrake training in French Lick during March. Unfortunately with Covid, that did not happen. In July, we unexpectedly lost James to a sudden heart attack at age 49. He was home surrounded by his wife and other family members when he left this world. Through his career, he had become the leading expert on all types of hybrid and environmentally correct locomotives. He was behind the scenes on many projects that we see within our industry today. He had texted me just a few weeks prior to his passing, letting me know that he had finished the repairs on a locomotive that was damaged severely in California earlier this year. So many times within our industry we have stories of those who have touched our lives. Those friendships have been strengthened, and possibly even discovered during our annual meetings. It's a time we take each year to broaden our horizons and knowledge as we learn from each other. We encourage each other as we make the impossible dreams we have, a reality.

Each of us is a placeholder in time for the positions we represent. We try to do our best to leave things better for those who follow after us, just as those who laid the ground work for what we do today. This is true in all aspects of our life. A good example of that generational groundwork was running into Carl Jensen (an original Elder) after his son Chuck and I both ended up on the Board of Directors. You could see how proud he was. The foundation that he help build, along with many others, is just what we needed during these interesting times. The foundation is strong.

Losing a close friend has been a reminder to me of how important we all are to each other within this industry. Survival has been difficult for several operations as they try to navigate these troubled waters. But as we move forward, I look forward to seeing all of you in March, as we continue to strengthen our operations through our friendships, and dedication to the industry.

Be Safe My Friends,

**W. Roger Fuehring**

President, RPCA

## In Memoriam



Paul Logan DeVerter II  
1932-2020

It is with deep sympathy that we must report that Paul Logan DeVerter II, 87, of Houston passed away on August 19, 2020, in Findlay, OH.

A long-time RPCA member and veteran of the Korean War, Paul was an Intellectual Property and Patent attorney specializing primarily in unfair competition and trademark law.

Paul also had a passion for railroading and engineering. He enjoyed working on the restoration of historic railroad passenger cars, including his own Pullman car, renamed the "San Jacinto" which he later sold. He was a founding member in 1961 of the Gulf Coast Railroad Club and was instrumental in the club's 1967 transformation into the ongoing educational nonprofit Gulf Coast Chapter - National Railway Historical Society, Inc., also

serving as the organization's first elected president. Paul was a former president of the American Association of Private Railroad Car Owners, serving as that organization's Chief Mechanical Officer (where he was a vocal and effective voice with railroads and Amtrak on behalf of car owners) for more than thirty years, and was named a Director Emeritus. He was also an officer and founding member of the Southwestern Live Steamers, on the board of directors of the Galveston Railroad Museum and a member of the Electric Railroaders' Association.

Paul enjoyed travel, a good Manhattan, and watching John Wayne Westerns. A full obituary may be found at:

[https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/houstonchronicle/obituary.aspx?n=paul-deverter&pid=196682316&fhid=10886&utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=obitshare&utm\\_content=p196682316](https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/houstonchronicle/obituary.aspx?n=paul-deverter&pid=196682316&fhid=10886&utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=obitshare&utm_content=p196682316)

## MASKING UP



Six months into this pandemic and I suppose that everyone knows about wearing masks. There have been many confrontations over making and hours of discussions on the pro's and con's. But let's all step back and see what is going on with the mask situation.

It started out with medical personnel needing N-95 masks. These are sometimes called an N95 respirator. They are intended to filter out 95% of small and large particles. These masks need to have the edges form a tight fit around the face. These are the masks used in the intensive care units for

personnel attending to COVID-19 patients.

Due to the ongoing shortage of these N95 masks, the guidelines for the general use of masks were revised to include any type of mask which had more than one layer. In other words, the old West bandana type of mask was not recommended. Masks with multiple layers, including surgical masks and homemade cloth masks with the ability to insert a paper towel are now the preferred types.

But shouldn't we already have a grasp of working with face coverings when it comes to restoring vintage passenger cars? Grinding nasty old rust off of our favorite Pullman car should be the basis for us using some sort of protection. N-95? Probably not, but even a dampened Western style bandana might work. Any layer of protection for the mouth, nose and lungs would help.

Welding and cutting steel with a torch can emit some ugly fumes and sparks which might call for a mask inside the welding helmet. These situations are unique in that the mask should be fire resistant.

There are many different situations where a mask is called for and some instances where respirators are needed. The pandemic has highlighted the use of masks, but we should be aware of their use outside of the medical reasons. Besides, Halloween is coming up and we all can use a good mask! Stay safe, wear your mask and wash those hands.

*Gary Carter*

## AMTRAK NEWS



Teresa Smith

RPCA-Amtrak Conference Call, August 28, 2020.

Present from RPCA:

Roger Fuehring  
Mike Stickel  
Burt Herme

Present from Amtrak:

Mike DeAngelo  
Steve Robusto  
Beverly Davis

- Long Distance trains will phase in to 3x weekly operation starting Oct 7 and continuing over the following two weeks.
- There is no additional switching to accommodate PV's in Spokane. Westbound PV's wishing to go to Seattle must travel on the head end of the train, and PV's destined for Portland must travel rearmost.
- The "Next Available Train" rule will apply for situations where a PV must lay over additional time at switching locations due to the new schedules.
- Amtrak does occasionally get requests from customers wanting to book a private car. Those customers are referred to the RPCA and AAPRCO websites. It behooves all RPCA PV owners to update their listings on RPCA's website, and to PROMPTLY reply to interested potential customers. Note: When I would get an inquiry for a charter I would attempt to help the person, even if we determined that the cars I operated weren't best suited to the customer's wishes. I would walk the customer through the process, and where appropriate, suggest where to look for a more appropriate car, on the theory that if not this time, maybe next time ours would be the preferred equipment and service, and, of course, that other operators would do the same.
- Each layover area has its own rules regarding COVID19 PPE, when and where it should be worn, etc. The Person in Charge should check with the General Foreman on duty. If you don't have a phone number, call CNOC Mechanical Desk and ask to be connected to the proper person in the facility where you are. The CNOC phones are manned 24/7.
- Paperwork from car owners and inspectors has been reaching Amtrak in a timely manner.

Burt Herme

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## Legislative



The House of Representatives has passed two bills, [HR 2](#) and an [FY2020 transportation budget](#), that would provide funding to maintain Amtrak service at existing levels while simultaneously banning the railroad from reducing frequencies.

Additionally, committees in both the House and the Senate are contemplating holding hearings in September to examine how the U.S. passenger rail service is weathering the coronavirus pandemic. However, the Senate has yet to act on either HR2 or the FY2020 transportation bill.

Amtrak will phase in triweekly operation of its long-distance trains over a three-week period beginning Oct. 5. Trains moving to triweekly schedules as of Oct. 5 are the California Zephyr, Capitol Limited, City of New Orleans, and Crescent. The Coast Starlight, Lake Shore Limited, Southwest Chief, and Texas Eagle will become triweekly on Oct. 12, with the Empire Builder and Palmetto triweekly as of Oct. 19. Auto Train will remain daily, while the Cardinal and Sunset Limited will continue their current triweekly operation, and frequency reductions have already occurred for the Silver Star and Silver Meteor.

Amtrak has said that the switch to triweekly operation is because of financial losses reflecting decreased ridership because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but could be avoided if a funding proposal passes

Congress The metrics that it will track to determine if trains resume daily operation in spring or summer 2021 include:

- Public health: COVID-19 hospitalizations must be stable or declining as of Feb. 15, 2021.
  - Future demand: Advance bookings for June 2021 must be at least 90% of the available seat-miles or room-miles of the figure for June 2020, as of Feb. 15, 2020. Calculations will take into consideration caps on ticket sales to promote social distancing, as well as other COVID-related measures.
  - Current performance: Ridership in the first quarter of Amtrak's 2021 fiscal year, which begins in September, must be at least 90% of projections in Amtrak's 2021 operating plan.
- If all three criteria are met for a given route, service will be restored to daily levels as early as May 2021 and no later than June 30, 2021.

The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation held a hearing for Amtrak Board of Director nominees Sarah Feinberg and Chris Koos. Both are experienced candidates with a background in government and passenger rail. Both nominees were clear that they support increased investment in Amtrak infrastructure, an increased footprint for the National Network, and for Amtrak communities on the long-distance network.

## 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



The CSX Santa Train, an Appalachian tradition for 77 years, will be sidelined this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Rather than Santa riding the rails to deliver gifts at more than a dozen designated stops, gifts will be distributed in a drive-through process from retail stores along the route.

The Toys for Tots Operation Toy Train in New York and New Jersey has joined the list of traditional holiday events cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The special train, was in its 12th year. Organizers say they will still hold a toy collection and distribution effort along the train's route in southern New York and Northern New

Jersey. Visit [the Operation Toy Train website](#) for more information.

California's Niles Canyon Railway will not offer its Train of Lights holiday excursions this holiday season. The Pacific Locomotive Association, which operates the tourist railroad, said current restrictions and other concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic prevent planning for the event. While the group still plans to operate some excursions this fall, it says the holiday trains are its primary fundraiser.

The Durango & Silverton has given up hopes of operating to Silverton this summer, and will continue operating excursions between Rockwood and Cascade for the remainder of the 2020 season. The Silverton trips have been ruled out because of factors including a washed-out bridge about 5 miles from Silverton, as well as an ongoing issue with the U.S. Forest Service regarding the railroad's fire-mitigation efforts along its right of way.

The Wautauga Valley Railroad Historical Society and Museum, a National Railway Historical Society chapter with a museum in Jonesborough, Tenn., will sponsor excursions on the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad in North Carolina on Sept. 12-13.

The Emery Rail Heritage Trust is awarding a special mid-year grant of \$35,000 to help the Pacific Railroad Preservation Association complete the boiler inspection and repair on Spokane, Portland & Seattle 4-8-4 No. 700. The Boone & Scenic Valley received a \$150,000 state grant for its All Aboard Capital Campaign. The money will be for expansion of the railroad's passenger depot, refurbishment of a freight depot to be used as a climate-controlled display site for museum artifacts, track work, and restoration of the railroad's steam locomotive and two diesels.

The B&O Railroad Museum has been named a Travelers' Choice award winner for museums worldwide by travel review website TripAdvisor.

Fundraising has begun to remove a former Union Pacific steam locomotive from a park in Evanston, Wyo., and restore it to operation. The 0-6-0, built in 1914 by the Lima Locomotive Works, was donated by UP to the city in 1958 and is currently on display in a local park. The Evanston Historic Preservation Commission has begun the fundraising effort, and has a goal of raising \$10,000 to move the locomotive to Evanston's roundhouse, where it can be restored.

## Amtrak/Federal Agencies



Here is a look at Amtrak's revenues and ridership since the pandemic first clobbered the U.S. transportation system. During the pandemic period since March, the National Network's routes have contributed 45% of Amtrak's revenues, compared with 21% a year ago during those same five months.

Since March, NEC revenues are down 90% compared with a 64% decline for the National Network. As for ridership, it plummeted in the NEC and hasn't really recovered. In all of calendar 2020, NEC ridership is down 66%, and during the pandemic period ridership is down 88%. By contrast, the National Network's ridership is only down 53% in 2020, and 68% during the pandemic period. For calendar 2020 through the close of July, Amtrak's overall revenues are down 62%. Since the pandemic began, Amtrak's revenues are down 83% compared with the like period of 2019. Between March and July of 2019, Amtrak had pulled in about a billion dollars in ticket revenues; this year, between March and July total revenues came in at only \$177 million.

Amtrak says it has completed implementation of positive train control on all track owned or controlled by the passenger railroad. The final portion to be completed was 1 mile of slow-speed Chicago terminal trackage. The railroad operates or controls 898 miles covered by PTC. Its implementation process has also included the equipping of 550 locomotives, installation of 160 radio towers, and employee training.

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