



From the President



With the changing of Administrations in Washington, we see renewed conversations in states and communities along former Amtrak routes about expanding services. It's encouraging to see discussions of restoring old routes, but we are a long way before we see trains back in areas long forgotten. Infrastructure, capacity for additional traffic, equipment, and the many expenses associated with a growing national passenger network have many obstacles. However, it's encouraging. We are still finding our footing with the new leadership in Washington in every part of our country, from the railroads, farmers, factories, and our homes. The good news, we should see the bleeding stop at Amtrak with a pro-Amtrak administration.

Are you ready to be done with all this Covid? I've had conversations with a few of you on how to plan for this year. With little money left in the coffers, it's hard to gamble on the next few months with an exact start-up plan. Some have lenient regulations in their areas which makes decisions much more

manageable. AARP has an updated list of each state and their restrictions. It's almost numbing to read. "Depriving one of the feeling or responsiveness" is the definition of numbing. It's what I hear on the other end of the phone as we have these tough conversations. Then others see the light at the end of the tunnel (I know the different meanings of that metaphoric expression). I think we all are planning on something for the Christmas season as most of the country will be vaccinated. The issues of the past seem so minor compared to the year we just went through.

I just looked back at what I was writing for this article for the March 1st, 2020 Information Exchange and found no mention of Covid. I was talking about my upcoming visit to Washington DC and getting our message out. I remember being at DC at the station with Al Weber in the restored Presidential Suite of the station's main room. It was built after President Garfield's assassination for Presidents to safely await within a secured location for the departure of their train and as a receiving room on their arrival back into DC. Many dignitaries utilized the space over the years, and during WWII, it became USO lounge for soldiers heading off to war. And here we were, in a room designed for 300 for cocktails (standing) and 160 seated for dinner. I'm estimating we had well over the 300 for our cocktail hour. The room was packed like a sold-out concert venue. I remember Al telling me this virus was going to be very bad. He even mentioned you're not going to witness large groups gathered for a while.

Shortly after that conversation, I found myself near the entrance to get some fresh air. I was visiting with some friends within the insurance groups and a couple of friends from some regional railroad operations. The discussion of the upcoming short line conference in Grapevine, Texas, was the topic. A brief comment was made in regards to canceling the event. Within that group of friends, it didn't seem plausible with any of us. It was the tale of two worlds in regards to the conversation that night.

Recently I stopped at a gas station that had free calendars for 2021 on the counter. It was titled "Remember Yesterday." It had paintings of old classic cars in 50's type downtown areas, soda fountains, and people just enjoying life during the post-war years. I commented to the lady behind the Plexiglas, incased counter in her mask, "it's not the old cars that I remember; it's all the unmasked people out in public."

We are getting there, and soon we will be back to full operation. I'm ready, you're ready, and the public we serve is ready.

Be Safe My Friends,

W. Roger Fuehring

President, RPCA



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Board of Directors Election

Every year, three or four Board of Director seats come up for election. This is one of those years where three seats need to be filled. We have 4 candidates seeking office, so it is up to you to choose the three candidates who you think best fulfill the requirements.

Ballots are being placed in the mail today in order that they most likely will arrive in your mail by March 3. Included in the mailing are a pre-addressed return envelope (your stamp is required), and a bio sheet for the four candidates.

Please vote for not more than three candidates, place the ballot in the return envelope and mail it so it arrives BEFORE April 17. Since there is no in-person Conference this year, ALL ballots must be submitted by mail. The winners will be announced at the General Meeting, which will be held Sunday, April 18. Your vote matters!

Burt Hermey

March Insurance Update

Renewals are pretty much completed with a few still coming in. Thanks to everyone who got them in on time. We lost several cars due to sales to tourist or other railroads. For those members who sold their cars, we thank you for using the program while you had them and hope that you will keep your membership to stay in touch with us.

The increase in premiums this year is manageable and we are fortunate to have a robust insurance program for our members. We had no liability claims last year and only one property claim that I know of. Hats off to everyone for doing a great job protecting your equipment. Please don't let up! As the situation hopefully returns to normal this year, you may see increased activity around your equipment.

The Property Market was devastated last year. The hurricanes that struck the US combined with the western wildfires and the Midwest wind/hail storms caused major struggles in losses for the insurance carriers and their reinsurers. This hardened Property market will probably continue for the next one to two years. The damage from riots and looting across the US in 2020 is estimated to be the costliest in insurance history-between \$1 billion and \$2 billion, according to data from the Insurance Information Institute. We are grateful that our property/inland marine carrier Hanover Insurance Co. is still with us and supporting our program. The liability/casualty market is also struggling. Carriers are limiting capacity (writing lower limits). The estimates on the impact of COVID have a wide projection range, with predictions for losses ranging from \$40B to \$100 billion. This is a result of financial losses tied to the financial markets and covered claims. The railroad industry also suffered due to some carriers withdrawing from the market and increasing the burden on the remaining insurers.

Looking forward, we are hopeful that you will be able to get some charters or leases going this year. By the way, if you have any ideas to share with us for beefing up security around your equipment, etc., please let us know. We'd love to hear about them and share them with other members.

Tom Johnson, Chairman

Insurance Committee

copy should address 3 key questions: Who am I writing for? (Audience) Why should they care? (Benefit) What do I want them to do here? (Call-to-Action)

Create a great offer by adding words like "free" "personalized" "complimentary" or "customized." A sense of urgency often helps readers take an action, so think about inserting phrases like "for a limited time only" or "only 7 remaining!"

List your car or trip on the new RPCA website



As some of our members may already know, RPCA has been working on a revised, updated Website. Included in the site is a page devoted to private cars for charter.

So far, we have only three entries! Listing is free. We'll include a picture that you submit of your car, interior or exterior, the type of car it is, a link to your own website, and email and telephone contact information. We want to include everyone who has a car for charter, including those that normally run on tourist lines, so sign up today!

The person to contact is Eric

Payne: <fjpaynerpca@gmail.com>. He can also be reached at 443-600-4810.

On another, but related subject: Do you have a trip planned or pending that is open to the public? You can list it, also for free, on our website. Upcoming trips are listed under the "EVENTS" menu on the website.

To list your trip(s), email <webmaster@rpca.com>. Include details of the trip, car names, a link to your web page, etc. Preferred would be to receive the information formatted the way you'd like it to appear on the RPCA site. The sponsor/operator must be a RPCA member to post.

Legislative



The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has passed a pandemic relief bill that includes \$1.5 billion for Amtrak—along with Congressional mandates to restore daily service on the long-distance routes and bring back employees furloughed due to COVID-19—Amtrak is required to bring back daily service within 90 days of the passage of the bill into law.

U.S. Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.) has introduced a bill that would reinstate furloughed Amtrak employees and return complete long-distance service to routes such as the Empire Builder. Tester's bill would authorize and appropriate federal funding in the form of grants to Amtrak to restore the routes and rehire furloughed employees.

SAFETY



Shielded for Safety

By now, we have all heard and read about the debate over wearing masks. Rather than rehashing the pros and cons, I would just like to get everyone thinking about the fact that while the surgical staff is performing open heart surgery, everyone in the room is wearing a mask. I don't think this is to prevent the staff from being infected with some sort of heart disease, but I may be wrong.

Along the same line, we have all been advised to wear eye protection in the form of safety glasses, especially while working wood, metal or in extremely dusty conditions. I would hope that everyone wears eye protection while working in the shop or yard or anywhere there is a risk of eye injury.

Lately, I have been noticing the increased use of full face shields in the medical setting. It seems like every news cast showing an ICU has the staff wearing face

shields. There is a couple of reasons for this move. This shield provides a level of protection against contagions found in bodily fluids. In the industrial setting it helps against chemical splashes to the face and eyes. I was recently using a wire wheel on my angle grinder and noticed some of the wires being shed off. The reason I noticed this effect was the fact that a couple of the wires ended up embedded in my face.

Once I put the face shield on, the cleaning with the wire wheel became much more comfortable and safer. I have heard horror stories of broken cut-off wheels on angle grinders leading to ER visits. Yes, the face shields are somewhat bulky and can be obtrusive when working in tight spaces, say under a passenger car.

Until we can put some sort of Star Trek "force field" around us for protection, we will need to rely on the current standards of safety glasses for the eyes and face shields for the rest of the head. Please find some good weather to work on those projects, stay safe and don't forget to wash those hands!

Gary Carter

UMLER REPORT



We just got the annual mileage report for RPCNB cars.

We were mildly surprised at how many miles were accumulated last year.

On BNSF: 5,933 miles total thru:

BC, CO, ID, IL, MN, MT, ND, TX, WA, WI, WY

On KCS: 7,308 miles total thru: AR, IL, KS, LA, MO, OK, TX
13,241 miles total, not bad for a really bad year.

Maybe a couple of the car owners who accumulated these miles would like to share with us their experience? Or maybe not, because fortunately for us, these reports don't identify the car number, therefore we can't identify who the owner is that accumulated mileage in states that expect tax revenue because the car traveled through their state. If the report did identify the car number, we would be able to invoice the owner for the taxes. But in a few of the states that do charge such taxes, we still have to pay a minimum amount, they haven't let us off with no tax. That comes out of the "overhead" funding that your subscriptions pay for along with the cost of the reporting mark, shop code, and maintenance fees charged by Railinc.

But the down side to the report not identifying the car number is that someone could be unlawfully using our reporting mark and we wouldn't know it. For that we count on RPCA members to notify us if they see a car moving under the RPCX mark that they don't think is a subscriber.

Umler has been relatively quiet for January. Minor changes in some data fields that haven't yet affected us.

There are still cars from the last Amtrak auction showing up needing a reporting mark and number for movement. What is disconcerting about that is in one way or another we have "touched" almost 100 cars that were sold, and of that number only TWO had a good enough record we could perform an electronic re-stencil of the car.

Umler does NOT allow one to re-stencil or clone a car that has conflicts. Any conflict. Could be air date expired, could be mandatory data fields not input. That means we either need to find a "sister" car with an Umler record that is in good enough condition to clone from, or we need to build the car in Umler from scratch. The latter means you must then correctly fill in the car data form for us to do that. Fortunately for all of us, there were many cars of the same series/class and by now we might have at least one of each class correctly in Umler to work from.

Wishes for Safety and Health

Pamm and Dan Monaghan

Co-Managers RPCNB

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.

Museum and Excursion Trains



Cordele, GA has opened a viewing platform in its Railway Park, providing a better and more comfortable spot for photographers and rail enthusiasts. An average of 80 trains a day cross the diamond in the south central Georgia community, making it one of the busiest rail crossings in the Southeast. Norfolk Southern, CSX Transportation, and the Heart of Georgia Railroad, a Genesee & Wyoming short line, all use the

crossing. The covered platform has charging stations for personal electronics and bathroom facilities. The walkway leading to the elevated deck is lined with plaques detailing the history of the trains that have passed through, as well as the depot and city history.

Steam-powered passenger trains are set to return to the Grand Canyon Railway on eight dates beginning in April 2021, with one of the railroad's two steam locomotives powering a morning train from Williams to the Historic Village inside Grand Canyon National Park.

The Fort Wayne (Ind.) Railroad Historical Society has completed an extensive rebuild of its century-old Wabash Railroad cabooses, one of just two wooden Wabash cabooses in existence. Work on caboose No. 2534 began in 2018 with over a dozen regular volunteers over three years, committing over 5,000 hours and replacing over 90% of the structure with more than 1,000 pieces of new wood.

Union Pacific's presidential commemorative locomotive, SD70ACe No. 4141, will arrive at the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum in College Station, Texas, this spring following approval of a lease that will allow the museum to expand.

Amtrak/Freight/Federal Agencies



Amtrak says it has notified host railroads CSX Transportation and Norfolk Southern that it plans to start two daily round trips between New Orleans and Mobile, Ala., sometime in 2022. The passenger carrier announced its intentions even though a traffic study of the route is not complete, more than a year after it began.

Passengers with existing reservations can visit [Amtrak.com/BidUp](https://www.amtrak.com/BidUp) and improve their accommodations. Passengers can check eligibility up to two hours prior to departure and place a bid to upgrade their reservation into premium classes of service: Business Class (most corridor routes) and

First Class (Acela).

NEW FRA MASK REGULATIONS

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is issuing this emergency order (EO) to require compliance with the mask requirements of the Order of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC),

[FRA MASK REGULATION](#)