



FROM THE PRESIDENT



One thing you have to be used to and know how to cope with, as a car owner, is that the best plans can change on short notice. Such was the case last month when I wrote about our participation in the annual Railroad Day on Capitol Hill, sponsored by the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association on May 17, 2023. Literally, just a few days after I wrote that in my last column, word came down that the Short Line Association was limiting participation this year to members and short lines only, thus excluding us and the NRHS from this year's event. The reason stated was that the ASLRRRA wants to concentrate on safety issues in discussions with congressional representatives in light of the Lebanon, Ohio derailment and subsequent derailments that have been featured in the media.

I have also received word in the last two days that the 2024 Conference Committee is going to be shifting gears a bit to accommodate the escalating unavailability of facilities within the Georgia Veterans State Park and the Lake Blackshear

Lodge. As you may know, the Lodge was closed earlier this year for renovation, but it was expected that there would be sufficient cabins and off-site hotel rooms for the conference to still be held at the Conference Center in the park. It appears now that is not the case, so our Conference Committee has shifted gears to a site in Cordele, GA itself, with two good primary hotels. Stay tuned for details of the new arrangements, which will be available shortly. As always, thanks to both the Conference Committee from the SAM Shortline and our Conference Coordinator, Charles Barthold, for keeping us "on track" through this unexpected disruption.

Disruptions seem to have been the norm over the past few years, starting with Amtrak's reductions of operating choices and routes for Private Cars in the Anderson Administration, the COVID pandemic, and the dramatic rise in the cost of almost every item and service. From that period of limited opportunities, we are now seeing an expansion of operations by many of our member organizations that are tapping into a renewed hunger for travel and new experiences. In talking with some of our Tourist Railroad and Museum members, they are seeing somewhat of a resurgence in booking and interest in trips. This has the potential to be a really good year for our members to resume their normal operations.

In the same vein, Amtrak is working with RPCA and AAPRCO to improve our opportunities to charter cars and increase the destinations available as the system returns to normal traffic levels. One of the big impediments for Amtrak to regain capacity is that during the COVID downturn, they did not have the funding or staffing to overhaul tired and wrecked equipment. Now, hindered by both a shortage of materials from supply chain issues and the lack of experienced workers, it is challenging to restore the backlog of needed equipment.

New equipment, primarily locomotives at the moment, is arriving or in the pipeline to be delivered over the next five years to replace the aging Amfleet and Horizon cars. The replacements for the Acela trainsets are being delivered and awaiting completion of testing for daily service on the Northeast Corridor. Finally, Amtrak has amassed a team of experienced managers to carry a Long Distance Fleet Replacement for the Superliners, some of which are now more than 40 years old. In the case of the latter, the firm that is my "day job" will be involved in that effort, and I am very excited to be part of the team that will specify and procure the newest long-distance Amtrak equipment.

As we approach Amtrak's 57th Birthday on May 1, 2023, the car and locomotive fleets that have sustained its mission from the assumption of the services provided by the nation's railroads until today have been, or will soon be, retired. The possibilities for preservation of the first generation of Amtrak's equipment are upon us and I hope we will be as successful as we have been with the previous generations of passenger equipment. More about that next month.

Brad

MEMBERSHIP NEWS



RPCA 2024 CONFERENCE JANUARY 11-14 2024

A few changes have been made for the upcoming 2024 conference. Our HQ hotel will now be the Holiday Inn in downtown Cordele with the nearby Fairfield Inn by Marriott as the second hotel. The rate is now just \$114 a night, and breakfast is included. These hotels are close to transportation, 2 hours south of Atlanta Hartsfield Airport on I-75 (exit 101). We are 3 hours from Jacksonville, FL, 3 Hours from Savannah, GA, and 90 minutes from Columbus, GA. We are 2 1/2

hours from Tallahassee, FL. Amtrak services Atlanta and Savannah, GA. Many of the seminars, the vendor area, and the banquet will be at the Lions Club meeting hall. Our costs there are low, so registration will be less than last year, and vendor fees are also considerably lower. Sponsorship rates and benefits will remain the same. We are planning three train excursions ranging in price from \$55 to \$65. In addition to the standard Amtrak and FRA meetings, we will have hands-on mechanical workshops at the SAM yard and some new seminars on food safety and dinner trains, marketing, and PR tips. More information will be forthcoming in the next few months but mark your calendars now.



As preparations continue for the 2024 Conference in Cordele, GA, and the 2025 Conference in Pueblo, CO, let's take a look back at the 2023 Conference.

An attendance record was set with 257 attendees (that includes 11 banquet-only registrations). The previous record was Indianapolis in Indianapolis with 236 attendees. Of the 2023 attendees, 58 were attending

their first RPCA Conference, including 12 under 30 first-timers. The last time we were in Spencer in 2010, there were 160 registrants.

For the banquet on Saturday night, a record 220 meals were served—65% were prime rib. Cincinnati in 2019, served 215 meals. Spencer in 2010, served 198.

The hotels were very happy to see us. The numbers may be lower than what we actually used, as the two primary hotels reported that they had RPCA guests who did not use the reservation code. Our overflow hotel, the Comfort Inn, says no one used the reservation code there, although we know a number of folks stayed there. The numbers that can be verified show we used 501 room nights, not even close to the record 560 used in Indianapolis and slightly under the 518 used for the 2010 Spencer Conference.

A side note here—It is important to use the room codes provided, as we get credit for the rooms used. This often translates to hotel costs for us based on the number of room nights accumulated (a room night is one room occupied one night).

We thank our hosts, the North Carolina Transportation Museum and its foundation, for all the work put into pulling off a successful Conference.

We also thank our sponsors, whose support allows us to do things that help keep the Conferences going.

Platinum

United Shortline

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Dynamic Ticket Solutions

Rowan County Convention & Visitors Bureau

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Rail Events, Inc.

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Gateway Rail Services

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Northwest Rail Electric

Dynamic Ticket Solutions and Diamond Rail Group each also sponsored one night of the hospitality rooms.

Vendors

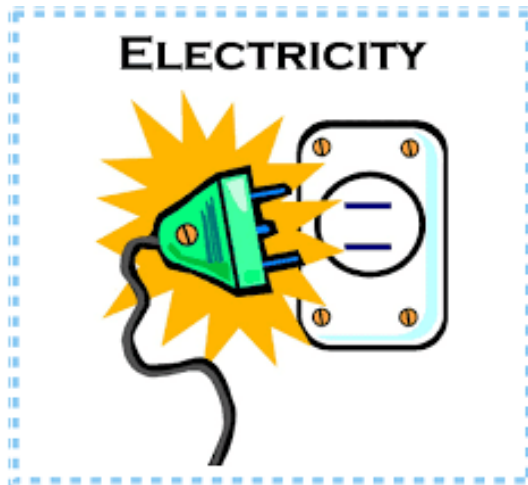
Adams & Westlake

Over the Top Construction

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SAFETY



ELECTRICAL QUANDARIES

There are a few things in life that I would really like to avoid. Snakes have to be near the top of the list. Dark beers, ladders, and electrical issues probably round out the top 4 on my list. This is not to say that I won't pick up a small garter snake or drink Guinness if no other beers are available, but I would prefer not to do either. The same holds true for working with electricity.

I will admit that I am not very good at working with electricity. My focus is trying to shut off the power to the outlet or appliance I am attending to. Needless to say, I have found out the hard way that I was unsuccessful with the shut-off. This can be especially true when it comes to passenger cars.

We have an array of electrical power and circuitry in these steel monoliths. Some of the systems vary between 32-volt, 64-volt, and 110 volts, most of which are DC circuits. Then as we progress or decide to switch, we drag in the 220 VAC or go right to the top with the HEP, 480 VAC. There are transformers, main panels, and maybe converters or rectifiers for using DC appliances. It can be complicated.

Personnel with electrical backgrounds and professions should be the ones tackling these needs with well-thought-out solutions. Using resources like the Pullman Library for wiring blueprints might be a first step.

Having some weekend warrior like myself work on a car would probably put an end to either myself or the car. Know what you are dealing with, have an experienced person do the work, and then enjoy.

Stay safe and make sure you dry those hands you just washed off, before touching anything electrical.

Cheers,

Gary

UMLER



A reminder that renewal for RPCNB subscribers will be coming out in May! You will have until June 30th to pay the invoice. After the mail arrives on Friday, June 30th, we will delete unpaid cars and locomotives out of Umler! Also, remember to submit your current insurance certificate with RPCNB as additional insured and to pay your RPCA dues.

Remember that RPCNB uses most standard formats for data – word, excel, png, jpg etc. We usually use Libre Office. Libre Office is a **free** open-source program that can replace MS Office. We have had a couple of documents that we could not open so we had to email back that we

needed a different format because we had nothing from Libre, Apple or Microsoft that could read it.

Thank you Take care, stay safe.

Pamm&Dan

RAIL CAMP



Caldwell-Luebke NRHS RailCamp Scholarship Awarded

We are pleased to announce Alex Nuzzo of Pueblo, CO is the recipient of a RailCamp Scholarship. Alex is turning 16 in May and has been active with the Pueblo Museum group and with his Grandpa (and RPCA Member) Gary Carter.

Alex will be attending RailCamp Northwest in Tacoma, WA June 18-25. Among other things, RailCamp

Northwest includes a trip to Seattle for a day with Amtrak and Sound Transit, activities at Tacoma Rail, Northwest Railway Museum, and a trip to Portland to visit the Oregon Rail Heritage Center.

RailCamp is a week-long camp and educational experience for high school students who have an interest in railroads and railroading. The program is designed to teach students a variety of topics about 21st-century railroad operations, dispatching, and maintenance while providing a simultaneous experience in the early history of U.S. railroads in the development and settlement of our country. Students participate in railroad operations, interact with railroaders, learn about preservation techniques, experience rail history, career opportunities, and work with real railroad equipment.

Students will learn both modern and historic elements of America's most vital transportation mode, including how diesel, electric, and steam locomotives function, how track is built and maintained, and how early freight and passenger cars were constructed.

We thank you, our members and friends, along with our insurance partners -- United Shortline/Hub International Insurance and McRail/CBIZ Borden Perlman for your continued generosity and support of our RailCamp scholarship program. Donations can be made anytime to: RPCA, Attn Roy Wullich, Treasurer, RailCamp Scholarships, PO Box 719, Quinton, VA 23141-0719

FYI



On average, railroads are three to four times more fuel efficient than trucks on a ton-mile basis. Railroads can move one ton of freight more than 480 miles on a single gallon of fuel, generating a carbon footprint up to 75% less than trucks and making them the most fuel-efficient way to move freight over land. While railroads move 40% of U.S. freight, they are only responsible for 2.1% of U.S. transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions and just 0.5% of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. If 10% of the freight shipped by the largest trucks were moved by rail instead, it would cut greenhouse gas emissions by more than 17 million tons each year — the equivalent of removing 3.35 million cars from our highways. Tier 4 locomotives weigh a whopping 432,000 pounds — the same

as 108 hippos weighing in at 4,000 pounds each.

RAILROAD NEWS

This is a synopsis of Railroad-related news culled from various sources, including Trains Magazine, Progressive Railroading, Railway Age, and various websites.

Please submit your railroad news.

Museum and Excursion Trains



The Historic Pullman Foundation will celebrate its 50th anniversary at its annual Rail Car Reception on May 18 from 5:30 to 7:30. It will be held aboard three historic Pullman cars on the Track One platform at Chicago Union Station. The event is a prelude to the 2023 Pullman Railroad Days, to be held May 20-21.

The Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum is transferring ownership of former Canadian National 4-6-2 No. 5288 to the Colebrookdale Railroad Preservation Trust in Boyertown, Pa., which plans to restore the locomotive to operation eventually. The engine was retired in 1961. After a series of owners, it was acquired by TVRM and put on outdoor display.

Norfolk & Western 4-8-4 611 will return to Virginia this year following a “farewell tour” at the Strasburg Rail Road in May. N&W 611 has run at Strasburg since 2019 and recently underwent a federally mandated annual inspection at the railroad’s shops. The locomotive will lead excursions on May 20-21 and May 27-29.

The Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad will resume its National Park Scenic excursions and its Explorer Program as of May 5. The railroad that runs through Cuyahoga Valley National Park has faced a series of limitations on operations or complete shutdowns because of erosion issues along its right-of-way along the Cuyahoga River.

Santa Fe 4-8-4 No. 2926 will make a short trip from its restoration site to Tractor Brewing Company in Albuquerque next month. The short run of approximately four blocks of industrial track will operate on May 6 as a fundraiser for the New Mexico Steam Locomotive & Railroad Historical Society, which restored the locomotive to operating condition. It will be the first time the engine has moved any distance under its own power. Baldwin built the locomotive for AT&SF in 1944, and it was retired in 1953.

Amtrak/Freight/Federal Agencies



Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern have officially merged, creating a new Class I railroad dubbed “Canadian Pacific Kansas City.” The merger comes more than two years after CP’s acquisition of KCS was first proposed and just one month after the U.S. Surface Transportation Board approved the deal. A “final spike” ceremony was held in Kansas City, and a groundbreaking for the railroad’s new dispatch center there. “CP” signs have been replaced with “CPKC” ones, and a new logo was released: A modified version of the CP’s golden beaver shield with a bold red “CPKC” at the bottom. While CP and KCS’s websites remain up, both direct visitors to the new CPKC.com.

The construction of a train stop, and a track leading to it in downtown Mobile, Ala., is the final infrastructure issue that must be addressed before Amtrak can restart passenger trains along the Gulf Coast for the first time in 18 years, officials say. Mobile, which is the only city along the route to New Orleans without infrastructure built to accommodate an Amtrak train. Other cities along the Gulf Coast route, including Pascagoula, Biloxi, Gulfport, and Bay St. Louis, have train stops or depots “ready to go” in preparation for Amtrak’s restart.

A group of key Senate Republicans on the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce wrote to President Biden and Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg asking for greater geographic diversity on the Amtrak Board of Directors, as stipulated by law. As part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Amtrak’s Board must include two individuals who “reside in or near a location served by a regularly scheduled Amtrak service along the Northeast Corridor,” and four individuals from regions outside of the Northeast Corridor (NEC)—two of whom shall live in states served by an A

Eleven Amtrak routes will again feature commentary about the regions the trains are passing through. The program, staffed regionally with volunteers sponsored by National Park Service historical sites, monuments, and national parks, began in 2000 and has enriched journeys aboard many long-distance trains. There were cutbacks in 2018, and the program was paused during the COVID-19 pandemic. It partially resumed in 2021 and 2022 but is back with a robust schedule and new offerings. The newest route is set for the City of New Orleans between Jackson, Miss., and Hammond, La.; A notable restart is on the Adirondack’s scenic New York State trek between Saratoga Springs and Westport.

A privately funded project to operate a nightly first-class passenger train between San Francisco and Los Angeles is underway. Dreamstar Lines Inc., based in Newport Beach, says it’s working on lining up passenger cars, financing, staffing, and agreements to operate the new service on the route. The train would leave at about 10 p.m. and arrive at around 8:30 a. Dreamstar hopes to begin service in the summer of 2024.