



# ProRail Nebraska News

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## Plans Near Completion for ProRail Nebraska Annual Meeting May 17

Mark your calendar to attend our annual meeting at Mahoney State Park. Assemble at 9 a.m., coffee and pastry available at no charge; meeting to convene at 9:30 a.m. Registration fee of \$5 per person will help defray expenses incurred at the meeting site. You do not need to pre-register; however, those of you who plan to attend and have internet access might e-mail our secretary, Morrie Tuttle.

We will adjourn the meeting at 11:30 for lunch...we will go through the buffet line to allow some food and beverage choices and each individual will pay for his or her meal. A final reminder: if you have not purchased a season permit, you will need to pay \$4 per vehicle at the entry gate. Planned adjournment for the meeting will be at 3:30 p.m.

Finally, according to our organization's by-laws, those who have not paid annual dues of \$20 by the date of the annual meeting are delinquent. If you have not paid your dues, hope you can attend the meeting and bring your checkbook to remain in good standing!

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An election will be held for officers and directors whose terms have expired as of the annual meeting date, as specified by the by-laws. The following officers and directors whose terms expire but whom have agreed to continue to serve if re-elected: Vice president—Dan Lutz. Secretary—Morrie Tuttle. Director District 2—Clyde Anderson. Director District 4—Jim Hanna. District 2 includes the same number of counties as Congressional District 2. The sprawling Congressional District 3 has been split into PRN Districts 3 and 4, south and north of the Platte River, respectively. Hanna, from Columbus, thus represents District 4.

Items on the meeting agenda at this point:

- It is hoped an Amtrak official can attend and report on latest developments.
- Roger Clark and Dan Lutz, members of the board of directors representing Region 10 of the National Assn. of Railroad Passengers, will report on the NARP annual meeting scheduled April 29-30 and May 1 in Washington, D.C.
- Director Clyde Anderson will discuss building coalitions with organizations with rail interests which relate to ProRail Nebraska and its mission.
- Jeff Poley, ProRail Nebraska past president, will report on his research regarding organizations having common interests with PRN. He will also present a legislative report.
- President Dave Purdy will lead a discussion regarding present project options for our organization and determine which ones need to prioritize. Improving service of the California Zephyr, possible future Omaha-Kansas City rail passenger service and the continued need for Omaha-Lincoln commuter rail service are recognized as continuing challenges.
- A report will be given on the Lincoln 2015 Visioning Project, which would include relocating the present Amtrak station.

If any of you, as members, have concerns or ideas which you feel need to be aired by our organization, please free to articulate these during the annual meeting.

## **Railroad Passengers Call on Congress and President Bush to Enact Real Climate Change Solutions**

Citing a missed opportunity to propose real solutions to climate change that would help both our environment and our economy, the National Association of Railroad Passengers criticized the April 16 address by President Bush and urged that balanced transportation policy be a key element in climate change legislation.

“The President has a goal of halting the growth of green gas emissions in the U.S. by 2025. His goal is inadequate and his methods of reach it ring hollow,” said NARP Executive Director Ross Capon.

“The framework he proposed ignores a key problem: The United States, with just 4.5 percent of the world’s population, uses 25 percent of the world’s oil; the U.S. imports about 60 percent of its oil, according to the Pew Research Center on Global Climate Change.” The U.S. transportation sector alone emits more CO<sub>2</sub> than the entire economy of any other country in the world except China (U.S. Public Interest Research Group). Environmental Protection Agency data show that over 60 percent of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions came from personal automobiles. Automobiles account for 40 percent of U.S. oil consumption, so U.S. automobiles cause about 10 percent of worldwide oil consumption.

Capon noted, “With an expanded national passenger train network, Americans could shift to—or expand use of—an attractive, energy-efficient travel choice that is environmentally sound, reducing both their carbon output and U.S. dependence on foreign oil.”

“The President’s desire to reduce carbon output in the energy sector is laudable, but his focus too narrow. NARP urges President Bush and Congress to include, as part of any meaningful climate change policy, an emphasis in transportation investment on the most energy-efficient and environmental sound form of transportation, including passenger trains and mass transit. Such an emphasis would be consistent with the President’s stated interest in green technology.

“Fuel efficiency offers the most immediate and biggest potential for reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from transportation over the next three decades, partly because we are so far from developing advanced, low-carbon technologies to replace oil-based transportation energy. The emissions reduction policy measure that will have the most immediate impact is the one that will make greater use of the most fuel/carbon efficient transportation.

Note: NARP is the largest citizen-based advocacy organization for trans and rail transit passengers. We have worked since 1967 to expand the quality and number of passenger trains in the U.S. Our mission is to work towards a modern, customer-focused national passenger train network that provides a travel choice Americans want. Our work is supported by 24,000 individual members.

## **Amtrak to Celebrate National Train Day**

To raise awareness of the vital role rail plays in our nation's transportation system, Amtrak will observe its first annual National Train Day during six weeks of celebrations culminating on Saturday, May 10.

“With ridership growing to record levels, we continue to see a strong demand for rail travel as a link between growing communities, said **Alex Kummant**, president and CEO of Amtrak. “Passenger and freight service is on the rise, and there's never been a better time to celebrate the railroad industry and passenger rail service in the U.S.”

Leading up to May 10, Amtrak is sponsoring special promotions, events, partnerships and an advertising campaign. On May 10, Amtrak will host events at four of its largest stations: Washington, D.C., New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles, where visitors may take part in a variety of activities, including live musical performances, exhibits, trip planning, VIP appearances and trip give-aways.

Amtrak's ridership and revenue have never been stronger. During fiscal year 2007, more than 25.8 million passengers traveled on Amtrak, setting a record for the most passengers since Amtrak began operations in 1971. Total ticket revenue for fiscal year 2007 was more than \$1.5 billion, an increase of 11 percent over the previous year. It was the fifth straight year of increases for Amtrak, and the trend still continues: For the first quarter of fiscal year 2008, more than 7 million passengers traveled on Amtrak, an increase of 11 percent, and revenue was up 14.6 percent to more than \$434 million

“Increasingly,. Americans are turning to rail to complement other modes of transportation,” Kummant said. “With more than 500 stations in 46 states, Amtrak is a relevant transportation option for many Americans, whether they live in small towns of in a large metropolitan area.”

### Travel Green:

More than just a convenient way to travel, Amtrak is also energy efficient. Traveling by rail contributes less per passenger mile to greenhouse gas emissions than either cars or airplanes. According to U.S. Department of Energy data, Amtrak is 17 percent more efficient than domestic airline travel, and 21 percent more efficient than domestic airline travel on a per-passenger-mile basis. When combined with all modes of transportation, passenger railroads emit only 0.2 percent of the travel industry's total greenhouse gases.

The date of National Train Day May 10 holds special meaning as it is the anniversary of the completion of the first transcontinental railroad in the U.S. at Promontory Point, Utah, in 1869. At Promontory Point, the east coast and west coast were connected for the first time by rail, when engines of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific Railroads met. As we all know, the Union Pacific Railroad of today is the largest rail firm in the U.S., and headquarters in Omaha.

From Promontory Point in 1869 to the launch of Acela Express in 2000, Amtrak employees across the country will celebrate the history of train travel while look towards the future on National Train Day.

For more information on National Train Day and planned events, visit [www.nationaltrainday.com](http://www.nationaltrainday.com)