



# ProRail Nebraska News

Dedicated to supporting and advocating for railroad service in the State of Nebraska

Visit our web site at <http://www.trainweb.org/prorailnebraska/>

Volume XXIV

April 2014

## AMTRAK EXHIBIT TRAIN TO VISIT LINCOLN

*By Bob Kuzelka, ProRail Vice President & Lobbyist*



On Saturday and Sunday, April 26th and 27th passenger railfans and advocates will have a unique opportunity to learn about the past, present and future of Amtrak – “America’s Railroad®.”

From 10 am to 4 pm on both days the Amtrak Exhibit Train will be parked in the passenger loading areas of Lincoln’s new Amtrak Station at 277 Pinnacle Arena Drive. The location is at the west end of “Q” Street on the western most edge of the expanded Haymarket Area. There are ample public parking garages adjacent to the building and train.

In addition to the Amtrak Exhibit Train on April 26th and 27th the Lincoln Station will host exhibits by a variety of rail and civic related organizations to include model railroad layouts and ProRail Nebraska.

For the third consecutive year, Amtrak is showcasing this traveling Exhibit Train with only 17 stops to communities around the country. The Exhibit Train allows visitors to take a self-guided tour to catch a glimpse of more than four decades of history of America’s Railroad® providing mobility and connectivity to the nation.

Since the train’s inception in 2011, new displays have been added such as workable signals, interactive virtual sleeping accommodation tours and trivia with returning favorite displays including the locomotive stand and horns. In addition, it features photos, uniforms, vintage advertising and memorabilia from Amtrak’s beginning in 1971 to

today’s modern-sleeping cars and high-speed rail service. Exclusive Amtrak merchandise will also be available for purchase.

The Exhibit Train includes two locomotives, three renovated baggage cars and one bistro car, all with historic paint schemes. For most stops, the Amtrak Veterans’ Locomotive will lead the train. Introduced in 2013 and featuring a patriotic paint scheme, it is a tribute to our servicemen and women and supports the company’s goal that 25 percent of new hires will be from the military by 2015.

Amtrak is the nation’s intercity passenger rail service and its high-speed rail operator. Amtrak and its state and commuter partners move people, the economy and the nation forward.

Formally known as the National Railroad Passenger Corporation, Amtrak is governed by a nine member board of directors appointed by the President of the United States and confirmed by the U.S. Senate. Anthony R. Coscia is board chairman and Jeffrey R. Moreland is vice chairman.

### Notice

ProRail Nebraska’s Annual Meeting will be in Lincoln on Saturday, April 26, at 9:00 am prior to the opening of the Amtrak Exhibit Train. See page 3 for details.

In FY 2013, a record 31.6 million passengers traveled on Amtrak on more than 300 daily trains – at speeds up to 150 mph – that connect 46 states, the District of Columbia and three Canadian Provinces. Enjoy the journey® at [Amtrak.com](http://Amtrak.com) or call 800-USA-RAIL for schedules, fares and more information. Like us on Facebook, Follow us on Twitter (@Amtrak) and check out our blog at <http://blog.amtrak.com/>.

## PASSENGER RAIL SUCCESS IN NEBRASKA LEGISLATURE

*By Bob Kuzelka, ProRail Vice President & Lobbyis*

After hard and consistent work by Nebraska State Senator Annette Dubas, District 28, our state has moved forward in passenger rail support at the state level.

On April 1st LB 905, the main budget bill, was amended by the 2nd Session of the 103rd Nebraska Legislature to override a variety of Governor Heineman's line item vetoes of the bill as originally passed by the Legislature on March 24th.

Included in the override was \$60,000 in current and past dues to reinstate Nebraska as an MIPRC member in good standing. This funding as has been the highest priority for ProRail Nebraska (PRN) for the past two years. PRN has also encouraged Nebraska to become more involved with MIPRC.

MIPRC is the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Compact which was formed by a compact of states in 2000 to bring together state leaders from across the region to advocate for passenger rail improvements. Nebraska was with the first states to adopt the compact. Currently there are ten states in the compact from Nebraska to Ohio and North Dakota to Missouri.

Nebraska has been delinquent in its dues for four years and has not been an active participant in meetings of the compact. PRN felt that if the Legislature sent a message with the payment of back dues, the state would again become an active compact member. Nebraska is allowed four members on the compact – two senators from the legislature and two appointed by the governor.

In both sessions of the 103rd Nebraska Legislature Senator Dubas introduced a bill to pay the state's MIPRC current and past dues. In both sessions those bills were incorporated into the main budget bills which were passed. In the 1<sup>st</sup> (2013) session Governor Heineman line item vetoed the funds and the Legislature did not

override that veto. In the 2nd session he did the same but the Legislature overrode the veto.

The Governor's most recent veto message for this action included the statement "Sufficient justification has not been presented to explain any benefit that Nebraska has received or will receive from its participation in the Compact."

In response it was pointed out that Nebraska has no active passenger rail planning activities at the state level. This is in contrast to such activities by most other states in the Compact or adjacent to Nebraska such as Iowa, Kansas, Colorado, Missouri, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota. All these states have active departments of transportation with rail planning branches. All of these states are also planning and many are implementing increased passenger rail service within their borders and to connect with adjacent states. The positive economic impacts of these actions are and will be significant in their communities.

Until our state engages in active passenger rail activities involvement with the Compact is our only touch with the reality that passenger rail service will increase and improve in the Midwest. The cities of Omaha and Lincoln especially would see positive economic benefits from increased passenger rail service to both Chicago and Denver.

By the governor's continuing veto of our state's back payments to the Compact and encouraging the Legislature to sustain his action he sends two messages to the other states who are compact members and to the citizens of Nebraska. First, the political leadership of the state is not interested in the future economic growth in the state that improved and increased passenger rail can help to bring about. Second, the state is not willing to stand behind the membership obligations of its legal compacts with other states. (Continued on page 3.)

## NE Legislature (continued from page 2.)

With the successful payment of the state's past and current MIPRC dues it is hoped that both the state legislative and executive branches will renew and increase their interest in both the MIPRC and passenger rail improvement and increase in Nebraska. PRN will work actively and aggressively towards this end.

There are already some signs of change. Stay tuned!

## Annual Meeting April 26th

ProRail Nebraska's Annual Meeting will be in Lincoln on Saturday, April 26, at 9:00 am prior to the opening of the Amtrak Exhibit Train. After a short business meeting, participants will get a guided tour of the Amtrak Exhibit Train. The general public is welcome!

**Time:** 9:00 am to 11:00 am including tour

**Location:** Scooters Coffee Shop, SW corner of 8<sup>th</sup> & P Streets, Lincoln

**Parking:** Parking structure near Amtrak Station

For more information, contact Bob Kuzelka (402) 318-4173 (cell) rkuzelka1@unl.edu

## ProRail's Web Site is Just a Click Away

*By Clyde Anderson, Director District 2 & Webmaster*

ProRail Neb. maintains an informative web site at <http://www.trainweb.org/prorailnebraska/>. The site provides information about our organization, Nebraska railroad news including photos, links to related web sites, and an archive of our newsletters.

Trainweb hosts our web site on its server for free in exchange for running ads at the top. Although the banner ads may be annoying to some site visitors, it would cost PRN about \$50 per year to buy web host services.

The first web page, or "home" page, welcomes visitors to ProRail Nebraska and lists some of the latest news such as upcoming meetings. The table of contents to the other web pages on our site is listed on the left margin and includes:

- Mission
- Commuter Rail

- NTRAC (Nebraska Transit & Rail Advisory Council)
- Midwest Regional Rail
- Links
- Government
- Newsletters (archive)
- Join Us (membership information)
- Contact Us (contact information for PRN leaders), and
- Visit Nebraska!

Some of the information on the web site is out of date, and new information needs to be added. We always welcome your input on web site updates, news submissions, and other web site enhancements.

If you have suggestions or are experiencing problems with our web site, please contact Clyde Anderson at (402) 932-7225 or [ClydeLAnderson@cox.net](mailto:ClydeLAnderson@cox.net).

## Keep Informed – Join ProRail's Yahoo Groups List

*By Clyde Anderson, Director District 2 & Webmaster*

Since 2001 ProRail Nebraska has utilized its own Yahoo Group as a means of supplementing its quarterly newsletters for communicating with members and friends. Yahoo! Groups operate as both electronic mailing lists and Internet forums. Group messages can be posted and read by e-mail or on the Group homepage like a web forum. Members can choose whether to receive individual e-mails or daily digest e-mails, or to read the posts at the web site. The basic mailing list functionality is

available to any e-mail address, but a Yahoo! ID is required for access to other features.

If you are a member of our ProRail Nebraska Yahoo Group, you receive timely messages about ProRail activities, NARP updates, and current events that may be of interest to ProRail members. There are presently 84 group members, and there is plenty of room for more!

(Continued on page 4.)

Joining is simple. Here's all you have to do to join the ProRail Nebraska Yahoo group:

- Go to this web site - <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ProRailNebraska/>
- Click on the purple "+Join Group" box. You will see a place to sign in if you already belong to a Yahoo group, and follow the prompts from there.
- If you are new to Yahoo groups, there will be another place for you to click and set up an account.
- After filling in your information, just click the "JOIN" button, and Yahoo will get you approved by Clyde Anderson, the group moderator.

If you have trouble, you can contact me at [ClydeLAnderson@cox.net](mailto:ClydeLAnderson@cox.net) or call (402) 932-7225.

The List only supports simple unformatted text. You can't post images or other graphical content. However, it does accept links (URLs).

Remember, it is illegal to copy and paste copyrighted material to a public email list without permission. If you want to post an article from a newspaper or magazine web site, view the article with your web browser, copy and paste the title and first few sentences to your Yahoo Groups posting, then copy the url from near the top of your browser.

For example, let's say you see Bob Kuzelka's letter in the April 4<sup>th</sup> Lincoln Journal Star, and you would like to post it to PRN's Yahoo Groups list.

- Start a new email addressed to [ProRailNebraska@yahoogroups.com](mailto:ProRailNebraska@yahoogroups.com).
- Copy the headline of the article onto the subject line of the email.
- Copy and paste the headline and first paragraph of the article into the body of the email.
- On a new line copy the url for the article (in this case [http://journalstar.com/news/opinion/mailbag/letter-rail-compact-important/article\\_f9bb0ce8-881f-53d3-a929-d6ff023532dc.html](http://journalstar.com/news/opinion/mailbag/letter-rail-compact-important/article_f9bb0ce8-881f-53d3-a929-d6ff023532dc.html)).
- Add your comments about the article either at the beginning or end of the email.
- At the end of the email include your name, especially if your email address is something other than your name, and your city and state.
- Then click on "Send" to transmit your message to the List.

The List Moderator will suspend posting rights for any List member not following our guidelines or being disrespectful of others.

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ProRail Nebraska  
7020 Burt St.  
Omaha NE 68132-2600

## **Annual Meeting Sat. April 26th**

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For more information, contact Bob Kuzelka (402) 318-4173 (cell) [rkuzelka1@unl.edu](mailto:rkuzelka1@unl.edu)

**Amtrak's Exhibit Train Comes to Lincoln April 26 & 27. See Page 1 for details!**