



# 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 XXVIII

May 2018

## ProRail Nebraska Annual Meeting

Saturday, June 9, 2018 – 9:00 am to Noon – Omaha, NE

*This event is free and the general public is welcome to attend*

**Where:** Second Unitarian Church of Omaha, 3012 South 119<sup>th</sup> St. – Southwest corner of Westwood Lane & 119<sup>th</sup> St. From 120<sup>th</sup> & West Center Road proceed two blocks south on 120<sup>th</sup> St. to Westwood Lane, turn left (east), proceed east on Westwood Lane one block to 119<sup>th</sup> St., turn right (south) and the church is on your right. Parking is available on the south side of the church. **By Bus:** Take OMetro Route 15 to 120<sup>th</sup> & Center and walk three blocks. Go to <http://www.ometro.com/> for schedules.

**Time:** 9:00 am to Noon (*Refreshments - 8:30am*)

### Tentative Agenda

8:30 am - Social with refreshments

9:00 - Welcome & Introductions (Matt Roque, PRN President)

9:10 – Award to Senator Burke Harr (Matt Roque)

9:15 - NE Legislature Activities (Bob Kuzelka, PRN Vice President, Senator Dan Quick – Grand Island)

9:30 – Modern Streetcar – Making the Connection to a Better Omaha – (Jay Lund, GreenSlate Development)

10:30 – Break (restrooms located downstairs)

10:40 – ORBT: Omaha Dodge St. Bus Rapid Transit update (Jason Rose, Omaha Metro Transit)

10:55 – Kansas City Streetcar – A Success Story (Bob Kuzelka, PRN Vice President)

11:05 - ModeShift Omaha's Transit Objectives (Clyde Anderson, ModeShift Transit Team)

11:15 – Citizens For Improved Transit – Lincoln's StarTran (Richard Schmeling – PRN Dist. 1 Director)

11:25 – NARP<sup>1</sup> Meeting in Washington, DC (Jim Hanna – PRN Dist. 4 Director & NARP Liaison)

11:40 – Review of Iowa's Rail Passenger Efforts (NARP Representative from Iowa)

11:50 - PRN Business - Secretary & Treasurer Reports, Election of Officers (see page 4 for candidates)

Noon - Adjourn

**Registration:** Free! Advance registration appreciated so we will have enough refreshments.

**To register or for more information** call Clyde Anderson (402) 740-5556 (Omaha) email [ClydeLAnderson@cox.net](mailto:ClydeLAnderson@cox.net) or Bob Kuzelka (402) 417-9424 (Lincoln) email [rkuzelka1@unl.edu](mailto:rkuzelka1@unl.edu).

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<sup>1</sup> NARP – National Association of Railway Passengers a.k.a Rail Passenger Assn.

## Jay Lund – Modern Omaha Streetcar Advocate

### Keynote Speaker at PRN’s June 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

By Clyde Anderson, PRN Director - District 2



As the leading advocate for a modern streetcar line in Omaha, Jay Lund believes streetcars would be the catalyst for Omaha to become a world-class city. Jay will be our keynote speaker at ProRail’s June 9<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Jay knows development and techniques for spurring urban growth. The Lund family has played a major role in commercial real estate development in Omaha. For example, Jay and others transformed a series of unused and underused buildings into the hip mid-town Blackstone District.

Lund is the lead spokesman for Modern Streetcar Advocates, <https://modernstreetcaradvocates.org/>, an organization that promotes streetcar transportation in Omaha and believes that “Omaha’s future is riding on the streetcar.”

Modern streetcars utilize clean, energy-efficient all-electric vehicles utilizing overhead trolley wire or battery-electric hybrid vehicles that only have overhead wires transit stops for charging the batteries eliminating most of the cost of erecting the network of overhead trolley wires.



Detroit’s new QLine Streetcar Line utilizes articulated streetcars with a unique hybrid design using power from overhead wire and on-board batteries. In the photo note the short overhead wire at the trolley stop. The vehicles are also unique in that they are American made by Brookville Equipment Corp. in Pennsylvania.

Streetcars provide a much smoother, quieter ride than buses, and there are no exhaust emissions. Streetcars are also more reliable than buses and have much longer service lives.

You don’t have to go far to visit a streetcar success story. Kansas City’s Downtown

Streetcar has provided more than 4 million trips since its opening day two years ago. Since the streetcar began operations, at least 20 new businesses have popped up along or near the Main Street route. More than \$2.1 billion has been invested in the greater downtown Kansas City area since the streetcar opened. "In two short years, downtown residents, employees, and visitors have embraced the KC Streetcar and have ridden at record numbers," said Kansas City Streetcar Authority Executive Director Tom Gerend. "The transformation of downtown and the excitement it generated is nothing but remarkable." To accommodate ridership growth, the KCSA has ordered two more streetcar vehicles to expand its existing four-vehicle fleet. The new units are slated to arrive next year. The authority also plans to extend the streetcar route to the University of Missouri-Kansas City and the Berkeley Riverfront area.

Key to Kansas City’s success is operating expenses are paid for by a tax paid by businesses and property owners along the streetcar route which allows the streetcar to be fare-free. This not only encourages ridership but also speeds operation by not having to collect fares and inspect for fare payment.

It’s interesting that streetcar opponents often promote buses as a more cost-effective alternatives, but these opponent are rarely existing transit users who ride Omaha buses regularly and have to deal with the discomforts of bus travel.

## Amtrak can't cut its way to success

April 24, 2018 – Midwest High Speed Rail Association Blog (abridged)

As passenger train advocates continue to speculate what the future will hold for Amtrak, the latest remarks from Amtrak's new CEO Richard Anderson paint a dim picture for long-distance trains. Although Anderson again spoke of new equipment and other improvements to state-supported corridor trains, there was no word of improvements to long-distance trains. Some are interpreting that as a bad sign.

It's undeniable that Amtrak's long-distance trains could benefit from some new thinking. The critical eye that Anderson brings to Amtrak as an outsider presents a great opportunity to remove the shackles of railroad tradition and have a different discussion about the way things are done. This discussion should result in more trains and more service, not less.

In trying to explain why long-distance trains don't make sense, Anderson pointed to the sweet spot for train travel being the 100- to 500-mile market. He's not technically wrong, but he seems to be thinking of the long-distance trains from a non-stop, end-to-end perspective, as if they were airline routes. Few passengers ride them that way. Instead, the long-distance trains serve as multipurpose mobility machines for all the intermediate stops along their routes, many of which are far from airports and may not even have bus service.

The Southwest Chief, for instance, serves 528 city pairs on its 2,265-mile route between Chicago and Los Angeles. This one train serves as many destinations as an entire mid-size airline. About a third of the passengers use the train for short hops of less than 500 miles, another third between 500 and 1,000, and the remaining third more than 1,000 miles. Less than 10 percent travel the whole distance. *(Photo shows Southwest Chief at Kansas City Union Station.)*



The convenience and utility of these trains are limited by their inflexible schedules: one a day in each direction, often serving intermediate destinations in the middle of the night. They suffer delays that make them impractical for business travel or other time-sensitive trips.

Although it will require an upfront investment in new train equipment and track upgrades, the best way to improve the long-term performance of these trains is to increase service and reliability. Add a second daily train that operates 8 hours away from the original schedule. This gives passengers more options and makes better use of fixed costs, like station maintenance. Work with the freight railroads (on their terms) to upgrade tracks and keep trains moving on time.

This would be a more productive direction than trying to reduce costs by removing amenities and cutting frequencies. That will only further degrade revenue and set up the classic "death spiral," resulting in the eventual elimination of the service. The conspiracy-minded think this is the game Anderson is playing. That seems unlikely for a number of reasons, including the inestimable political opposition it would face, from village halls to Congress.

Amtrak needs to seize this moment to move the discussion about long-distance trains in a productive direction, one that increases revenue by providing better service, instead of cutting to save costs.

Go to <https://www.midwesthsr.org/> to subscribe to Midwest High Speed Rail Assn's weekly e-newsletter.



## ProRail Opposed to New Amtrak Policy



*Photo by Tom Jurgens of the Sept. 2014 Omaha-Lincoln Husker Football Special at Melia Siding.*

Amtrak recently announced a new policy for private passenger cars and special trips. This change will likely eliminate special trains in Nebraska like Husker Football Specials between Omaha and Lincoln. ProRail Nebraska opposes this new policy and encourages our members and allies to contact their Representatives and Senators expressing their opposition. A of Amtrak's full announcement is available on PRN's website <http://www.trainweb.org/prorailnebraska/>.

### ProRail Nebraska Election of Officers at June 9th Meeting

The Board has nominated the following slate of candidates for officers to be elected June 9th for 2-year terms:

Vice-President - Robert Kuzelka

District 2 Director – Dave Purdy

Secretary – Morrie Tuttle

District 4 Director – Jim Hanna

ProRail Nebraska members and allies are welcome to attend our Board meetings and participate in the business of our organization. There will be a short business meeting after the June 9<sup>th</sup> presentations, and you are welcome to join us. **Not a ProRail Nebraska member yet? JOIN NOW!**

### MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

**Regular Member \$20 annually**

**Family Membership \$30 annually**

**(Family Memberships receive two votes on organizational issues)**

**Student Member \$10 annually**

**Corporate Member \$100 annually**



#### **Mail your membership dues to:**

F.M. "Morrie" Tuttle, PRN Secretary  
1910 Lake St., Lincoln NE 68502-3816  
home phone: (402) 435-5454;  
e-mail: [mtuttle@inebraska.com](mailto:mtuttle@inebraska.com)

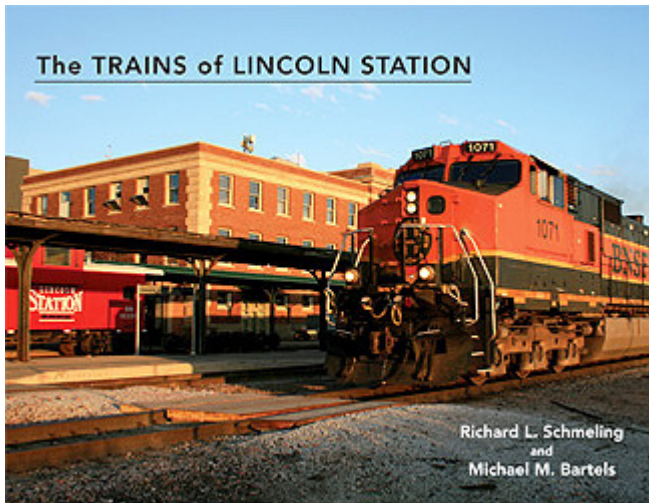
## Richard Schmeling on his book *The Trains of Lincoln Station*

Tuesday, June 12, Noon to 1:00 p.m.

### State Historical Museum Auditorium at P and Centennial Mall North - Lincoln, Nebraska

ProRail Nebraska Director, Richard Schmeling, will be the guest speaker at the Preservation Association of Lincoln's (PAL) June 12th Brown Bag lunch talk. Dick will present on his new book "The Trains of Lincoln Station" which he co-authored with Michael Bartels.

It will be held at noon in the auditorium of the State Historical Museum at P and Centennial Mall North – free and open to the public. All the PAL brown bag lunches are videotaped and shown often on public access channel 5. ProRail is providing a grant to co-sponsor the event and help fund the video coverage.



"The Trains of Lincoln Station" is available in softcover from South Platte Press for \$24.95.

*In the past several decades, the railroad presence in the downtown area of Lincoln, Nebraska, has been significantly diminished. This pictorial looks at the many changes that have taken place around the city's former Burlington and Amtrak station between the early 1960s and 2012. The authors, noted Lincoln area rail historians, recount the history of Lincoln's "Burlington box," various steam and football excursions that operated, and changes to local passenger train service during the Amtrak era.*

*Photos by a number of local rail photographers show the equipment, area facilities and special events that supported depot operations. This is a visual document of how the trains of Lincoln Station were gradually replaced by what is now a vibrant retail and event district for Nebraska's capital city.*

### **Congressional budget allocates \$2 billion to Amtrak, earmarking \$1.3 billion for the long-distance network!**

Sounds like good news, doesn't it ?

Then why is Amtrak's new president eliminating amenities for Amtrak's sleeping car passengers?

- No more dining cars
- No hot meals.
- No first class lounge cars.
- No discounts.
- No morning newspapers
- No scenic routing through the Rocky Mountains.
- Three days a week service.

Worried? Pick up your phone and call your Senators and Representatives.

Congress intended to improve long distance Amtrak trains.

They need to know about this!

Sen. Ben Sasse - 202-224-4224

Rep. Jeff Fortenberry (Dist. 1) – 202-225-4806

Se. Deb Fischer – 202-224-1325

Rep. Don Bacon (Dist. 2) – 202-225-4155

Rep. Adrian Smith (Dist. 3) – 202-225-6435

ProRail Nebraska  
7020 Burt St.  
Omaha NE 68132-2600

## Annual Meeting Sat. June 9th

**ProRail Nebraska's Annual Meeting** will be in Omaha on Saturday, June 9th, at 9:00 am (refreshments at 8:30 am). The general public is welcome!

**Where:** Second Unitarian Church of Omaha, 3012 South 119th St. – Southwest corner of Westwood Lane & 119th St.

**See page 1 for details.**

For more information, contact Clyde Anderson (402) 740-5556 (Omaha) email [ClydeLAnderson@cox.net](mailto:ClydeLAnderson@cox.net)



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## Amy Tuttle Passed April 1<sup>st</sup>

Amy Tuttle, wife of ProRail's Secretary, Morrie Tuttle, passed away this past Easter after a lengthy illness. Amy was a regular attendee at ProRail's member meetings and often assisted Morrie at the registration table.

Amy was a native Nebraskan and grew up in Humboldt. Amy graduated from the University of Nebraska with a degree in Nutrition, and first worked in nutrition research for several years on the east campus. She next moved into publishing, first employed by the Omaha Journal Stockman and then later by the University of Nebraska Press. While at the Nebraska Press, among other editorial duties, she was the business manager of the *Prairie Schooner*. With her marriage and the birth of her children, she became a full-time homemaker, devoting her considerable talents to volunteer positions. She made substantial contributions to the League of Women Voters, Symphony Guild, Red Cross, P.E.O., Great Books, Outlook Club, First-Plymouth Congregational Church, and at Prescott Elementary and Irving Junior High Schools.

Amy loved her husband deeply, married to him for more than 56 years. They both enjoyed extensive travels by train and worked hard to preserve America's remaining passenger train service, especially Amtrak's California Zephyr which operates across Nebraska on its trek between Chicago and Oakland, California.