



# ProRail Nebraska News

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

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Volume XXVIII

November 2018

## Next ProRail Nebraska Meeting

**Saturday, December 1, 2018 – 9:00 am – Lincoln, NE**

**Where:** St. Marks Episcopal Church on the Campus, 13th & R Streets, Lincoln, NE

**Time:** 9:00am (Doors open about 8:30 am)

**All ProRail Nebraska meetings are open to the general public!**

### Tentative Agenda

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

9:05 – Report on MIPRC Annual Meeting in Milwaukee – Sen. Dan Quick, District 35 (invited) & Bob Kuzelka, PRN Vice President

9:30 - Presentation on Lincoln's StarTran Transit System

10:00 - Update from Citizens For Improved Transit – Richard Schmeling, President - CFIT

10:15 - Break

10:30 - Update from Lincoln's Railroad Transportation Safety Dist. - Roger Figard, RTSD Exec Dir (invited)

10:50 - Status report on 33rd & Cornhusker railroad project – Roger Figard (invited) & Bob Kuzelka

11:00 - Report of Rail Passengers Association meeting in Miami - Jim Hanna, PRN Board member

11:30 - Plans for 2019 NE Legislative Session – Sen. Dan Quick (invited) & Bob Kuzelka

11:45 - PRN Secretary and Treasurer Reports – Morrie Tuttle & Ralph Haden

11:50 - Other ProRail Business, set dates for future meetings - Matt Roque

Noon - Adjourn

For more information contact Bob Kuzelka (402) 417-9424 (Lincoln) email [rkuzelka1@unl.edu](mailto:rkuzelka1@unl.edu). It may be possible to participate by conference phone. Contact Bob if interested.

***Please join us on December 1st to better understand why we feel so strongly that Nebraska must become an active participant in the future of passenger rail travel.***

### **Directions to Reach the December 1st Meeting**

**MEETING LOCATION:** St. Marks Episcopal Church on the Campus, 13th & R Streets, Lincoln, NE. Take O Street to 13<sup>th</sup>, turn north on 13<sup>th</sup> and proceed three blocks to the church. See map on page 4.

(Continued on page 2.)

**PARKING INSTRUCTIONS for the Dec. 1st meeting:** Parking should not be a problem on this non-football Saturday but it will cost. The UNL lot to the east of the church has guest meters plus there are city meters on the streets but usually for only 90 minutes. Remember to bring change! You can also park in the LARSEN Building lot which is south of the church across “Q” Street (850 Q St.) for \$1.00/hr.

### **It’s Almost Membership Renewal Time**

*If you are a ProRail Nebraska member, please watch for your 2019 membership renewal letter which will be mailed in late November. If you would like to become a member, please send a check for \$20 (more is always welcome!) to Morrie Tuttle, ProRail Nebraska Secretary, 1910 Lake St., Lincoln NE 68502-3816 or call Morrie at (402) 435-5454 for more membership information.*

## **MIPRC Annual Meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

October 3 – 5, 2018

Submitted by Bob Kuzelka – Vice President, ProRail Nebraska

The Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission’s 2018 annual meeting convened in Milwaukee on October 3-5 to review developments since the 2017 annual meeting and lay the groundwork for what promises to be a busy 2019.

MIPRC welcomed new commissioners from Illinois and Missouri, along with new partners and allies. Overall, 54 people attended the meeting, which began at Chicago’s Union Station with a presentation on and tour of renovation work there, an overview of the state-sponsored Chicago-Milwaukee Hiawatha service, and a 90-minute ride on the Hiawatha to Milwaukee’s Intermodal Station.

Hosted by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation in its offices at the station, MIPRC’s agenda included a recap of the previous year by Director Laura Kliever, a review of MIPRC’s annual trip to Washington, D.C., on May 23-24, and presentations on:

- Member states’ passenger rail developments;
- Updates from the Federal Railroad Administration, including on the FRA-led Midwest Regional Rail Planning Study, and from Amtrak;
- Updates on the Next Generation Equipment Committee and the new locomotives and coach cars for Amtrak Midwest service; and
- Brightline’s passenger rail service in Florida and future plans, along with potential lessons for similar, potential corridor services in the Midwest. (Brightline’s presentation included a new promotional video, which can be seen here (<https://gobrightline.egnyte.com/dl/sOxn7RizYB>) and seems to hint at interest in the Chicago-St. Louis corridor.)

Participants toured the Milwaukee Intermodal Station – which was built in 1965, given a \$16.9 million renovation in the mid-2000s and a new \$22 million passenger concourse in 2015-16 – and the private railcar Caritas.

They also toured the nearby maintenance facility for Milwaukee’s new streetcar system, *The Hop*, which is scheduled to begin service on November 2. Once it’s running, Amtrak passengers can use it to access the city’s Third Ward, East Town and Yankee Hill neighborhoods. A spur to the lakefront is scheduled to open in 2019.

Commissioners agreed to hold MIPRC’s 2019 Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C., next fall.

## PRN's Jim Hanna Attends RailNation: Miami

*From November 2018 RPA Passengers Voice Newsletter*

More than 100 rail advocates from across the country gathered in Miami for **RailNation: Miami** sponsored by Rail Passengers Assn. where they heard from an outstanding line-up of speakers and presenters.

The program got underway on Friday, October 19 with a 'Fireside Chat' led by Jim Mathews with former Amtrak President Joe Boardman answering questions live and pre-recorded responses from former Amtrak President David Gunn; Trains Magazine Columnist Fred Frailey and Governor Michael Dukakis.

Saturday's program included an opening presentation by Joe Boardman on his perspectives on railroad safety. Morning concurrent sessions included 'Why The Swiss Can Build Big Projects Cheap And We Can't...' moderated by Sean Jeans-Gail; How To Pay For Infrastructure; Unlocking The Value of Real Estate' moderated by Abe Zumwalt and 'Envisioning The Future Of The U.S. Rail Network; which was led by Jim Mathews. The morning concluded with a lively panel presentation 'Passenger Rail On Freight Tracks' with Patrick Goddard ( President/CEO - Brightline); Gene Skoropowski (Retired from Brightline & California's Capitol Corridor) and Jay Westbrook (General Manager - Florida Dispatch Company) participating.

Saturday's lunch special guest was Stephen Gardner, Amtrak's Executive Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer. Stephen addressed a number of timely topics and he reinforced that Amtrak is committed to a National Network.

Afternoon sessions included 'The Miami SMART Plan's First Mile/Last Mile Opportunities' moderated by Joe Aiello; 'Amtrak's Upcoming Re-Authorization – The Next Opportunity & Challenge' moderated by Sean Jeans-Gail and 'Introducing RPA's Station Volunteer Program' moderated by Carolyn Cokley.

Attendees gathered on Saturday evening at Brightline's Miami Central Station for a benefit reception in support of the Jim Hamre Scholarship Fund. Over \$2,200 was generously raised towards the initial \$100,000 Fund goal.

It was announced during the Sunday morning Council Business Session that the RPA Fall 2019 gathering will be held in Sacramento, CA over the dates of October 18 - 21, 2019. Other Sunday sessions included a review of the Summer By Rail 2018 intern trip and a lively interchange on 'RPA's Passenger Experience; What Do We Want To See In The Future?'

Tours held in conjunction with RailNation Miami included a Miami to Fort Lauderdale round trip on Brightline and a visit to the Gold Coast Railroad Museum.

Jim will provide a full report with photos at PRN's meeting Saturday, December 1 in Lincoln.

## Amtrak Executive to Visit Nebraska Mayors in December

By Richard Schmeling – ProRail District 1 Director

Derrick James, Director, Government Affairs at Amtrak for the Greater Chicago Area, will be in Omaha Monday, December 10<sup>th</sup> to meet with Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert to get her support for continued operation of Amtrak's **California Zephyr** across Nebraska. She will be asked to contact Nebraska Senators Fischer and Sasse and District 2 Representative Don Bacon encouraging them to fight against any cutbacks in **Zephyr** service.

He will then travel west across Nebraska visiting the mayors in Lincoln, Hastings, Holdrege, and McCook asking them to take action to support the **California Zephyr**. Derrick James has been invited to speak to a meeting of ProRail Nebraska members and allies in Lincoln on the evening of Monday, December 10<sup>th</sup>. If Mr. James accepts the invitation, the meeting will be at the Gere Public Library, 2400 South 56th Street (SE corner - 56th St. & Normal Blvd.) Please check the ProRail Nebraska website <http://www.trainweb.org/prorailnebraska/> to see if Mr. James accepted the invitation, or call Richard at 402-853-9537.

ProRail Nebraska  
7020 Burt St.  
Omaha NE 68132-2600

\$0.50  
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### Fall Meeting Sat. Dec. 1st

ProRail Nebraska's Fall Meeting will be in Lincoln on Saturday, December 1st, at 9:00 am (doors open about 8:30 am). The general public is welcome!

**Where:** St. Marks Episcopal Church on the Campus, 13th & R Streets, Lincoln, NE.  
Metered street parking is available near the church, or you can park in the LARSEN Building lot which is south of the church across "Q" Street (850 Q St.) for \$1.00/hr.

**See page 1 for details.**

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