



" Moving the People who move the World "

ACRE Headquarters Officially Opened

On August 17, 2000 the Association of Commuter Rail Employees officially opened its headquarters. The offices are located in the Graybar Building at 420 Lexington Avenue, Suite 215 New York, New York. The main office number is 212-599-5856 and the various officer extensions are listed at the right of this article and are also provided over the voice mail service. Voice mail is available 24 hours a day and officers will routinely check for messages either in the office or from a remote location. For those of you unfamiliar with the location of the Graybar Building, you can access the building through the Lexington Avenue corridor in Grand Central Terminal.

Over 300 ACRE members and guests from MetroNorth visited the office at our open house on August 17. The most notable and honored guest was MTA Chairman, E. Virgil Conway who stopped by to say hello and wish ACRE success in the future.

Members were given a tour of the new offices which included an overview of our new computer system, phone/voice mail system, and CMS terminals. We would like to thank MetroNorth for their assistance in getting four CMS Terminals installed in our new offices. Any members needing assistance with claims or bids may receive help in the office during normal business hours. If you are unable to get to the office during the week you can call and have officers assist you with CMS over the phone.

The Offices are here for the membership. Please make sure to use this resource to its best advantage.

LIST OF VOICEMAIL BOXES

Tony Bottalico	Dial 11
Michael Doyle	Dial 12
Jimmy Fahey	Dial 13
Jack Gaines	Dial 14
Gerry Politi	Dial 15
Dick Gunderman	Dial 16
John Potthast	Dial 17
Ron DeAndrus	Dial 18
Tommy Cooper	Dial 19
Bobby Felicetta	Dial 20
John Scalabrini	Dial 21
Denis Perri	Dial 22
Bill McNeil	Dial 23
Ralph Sanzari	Dial 24
Bryan Marcella	Dial 25
Mike Shaw	Dial 26
Mike McCarthy	Dial 27
Mark Amorello	Dial 28
Andy Steimle	Dial 29
Jeff Aveis	Dial 30
Dennis Pope	Dial 31
Paul Holland	Dial 33
Joe Lindenberg	Dial 34

HOLIDAY DINNER DANCE

The First Inaugural Dinner Dance for members of the Association of Commuter Rail Employees is scheduled for Saturday, December 9, 2000. This year the affair will be held at the Fountainhead in New Rochelle. It has been our experience that the Fountainhead provides the highest quality of service and entertainment possible. As in the past, the affair will be used to raise funds to purchase toys for sick and disadvantaged children during the holiday season.

There will be only 400 tickets sold so we urge everyone to make your reservations early by completing the reservation form inserted in the center of this newsletter. We assure you this years affair will be the social event of the season so come on out an support this most worthy event.

Any member who would like to advertise their business or help sell advertising in the souvenir journal distributed at the Dinner Dance can do so by calling Co-Chairman of the Entertainment Committee, Mike Shaw at the union office (212) 599-5856. We look forward to seeing you there.

ACRE “National in Scope”

In May of this past year, the Acting Director of ACRE, Jack Gaines presented a report to the Railroad Retirement Board so that it could determine ACRE’s status under provisions of the Railway Labor Act and the Railroad Retirement Act. The subsequent investigation produced the following excerpts from page 1 and page 3 of the Railroad Retirement Board’s ruling:

“The evidence obtained reflects that ACRE was organized March 1, 2000, pursuant to the provisions of the Railway Labor Act (45 U.S.C.151 *et seq.*). The business of ACRE includes making and maintaining agreements covering rates of pay and working rules and conditions for its members, and settling disputes arising from grievances or interpretation or application of collective bargaining agreements. ACRE currently represents approximately 1200 members. The National Mediation Board has recognized ACRE as representative of the crafts of locomotive engineers (27 N.M.B. No. 49), conductors (27 N.M.B. No. 47, dispatchers (27 N.M.B. No. 50), yardmasters (27 N.M.B. No. 67), and power supervisors/directors (27 N.M.B. No. 66).”

“As a brand new organization, ACRE has not yet participated in the selection of labor members of the National Railroad Adjustment Board and has not been formally recognized by other labor organizations as having such right. However, in his letter to the Board’s Office of Audit and Compliance, Mr. Gaines expressed ACRE’s belief that it would be found under the provisions of the Railway Labor Act to have the right to participate in the selection of labor members of the National Railroad Adjustment Board. In addition, the Board notes that ACRE’s Constitution states that membership is open to all employees of commuter railroads. There are commuter railroads nationwide, whose employees thus would be eligible for membership in ACRE. In addition, the National Mediation Board has recognized ACRE as the representative of five classes of railroad employees. Further, as the membership of ACRE appears to consist exclusively of railroad employees, its primary purpose may be said to be promotion of the interests of railroad industry employees. **The Board therefore finds that ACRE is a railway labor organization national in scope within the meaning of section 1(a)(1)(v) of the RRA and the corresponding section of the RUIA.**” (Emphasis added)

This ruling establishes ACRE’s status as a labor organization ‘national in scope’ and should put to rest the last of the misinformation that has been spread over the past year. By now it should be obvious that forming our own organization did not affect our contractual rights or our rights under the Railway Labor Act.

Railroad Retirement Update

The Railroad Retirement and Survivors Improvement Act of 2000 (House Bill H.R. 4844), aimed at increasing benefits for railroad retirees and reducing expenses for railroad employers was passed on September 7th in the House of Representatives by a vote of 391 to 25. This concludes over 2 years of negotiations between the rail carriers and a coalition of rail unions. The bill now moves on to the Senate for consideration and passage.

Under provisions of this bill, railroad employers who currently pay 16.1% into the Tier II account would benefit from a reduction in the Railroad Retirement payroll tax and the supplemental annuity tax they currently pay would be eliminated. The initial reductions would be 3% (from 16.1% to 13.1%) phased in over a 3 year period that would represent an estimated savings of 400 million dollars.

For railroad employees, the increased benefit provisions would allow surviving spouses to inherit a retiree’s full Tier II pension (under current law the surviving spouse may receive no more than 50% of the annuity). The bill would also allow for employees with 30 years of service to retire with full benefits at age 60 instead