

Program Letter

United States
Railroad Retirement Board



Office of Programs
Quality Reporting Service Center

Chicago, IL 60611-2092
(312) 751-4992

CONTACT: Quality Reporting Service Center Letter No. 06-04
TO: Certification Contact Officials Release: January 27, 2006
SUBJECT: **NATIONAL RAIL EMPLOYER TRAINING SEMINAR**

This letter provides all the information you need to register for the sixth National Rail Employer Training Seminar (NRETS) which is being held May 10, 11, and 12, 2006 at the Allerton Crowne Plaza, 701 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. We are again charging a minimal registration fee of \$15.00 to help cover the costs of refreshments. You are responsible for your own transportation, meals, and lodging expenses.

This seminar is designed for those persons who work in, or manage, the subject areas of service, compensation, and contributions reported to the RRB, and related areas. This includes, but is not limited to, payroll personnel, accountants, controllers, claims agents, benefit administrators, auditors, and executives of employers covered under the Railroad Retirement Act. **Please share this information with all the appropriate parties within your organization.**

WHAT IS DIFFERENT THIS YEAR

You will note a number of changes in the seminar this year. Most notably, employees do not have to register for the sessions they want to attend in advance. We have simplified the schedule and are offering each breakout session once. Plenary sessions are scheduled Wednesday afternoon and breakout sessions on Thursday and Friday.

We are starting the seminar one hour later and ending one hour earlier to allow for additional travel time. The seminar begins at 2:00 p.m. Wednesday and ends at 11:00 a.m. Friday.

Instead of the general discussion session "What's on Your Mind," we are hosting two discussion sessions on Friday, one for Class I railroads and the other for Short-line and Regional railroads. Commuter railroads may attend either session. A representative from the BNSF Railway Company will facilitate the Class I discussion along with Rob Perbohner, Counsel to the Management Member, and Ron Russo, Director of Policy and Systems, from the RRB. Eric O'Neil, Accounting Manager from the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association will facilitate the other discussion along with Ann Chaney, Attorney Advisor to the Management Member, and Wayne Scharnak, Chief of Compensation and Employer Services, from the RRB. This is an opportunity for you to join a group discussion and offer your suggestions and opinions. In the past, your input has helped guide the RRB in preventing problems and making decisions about forms design, collection of information, and services to be provided.

Plenary Sessions Wednesday Afternoon

The Management Member of the Board, Jerome F. Kever, will open the seminar, followed by Ms. Catherine Leyser, Director of Assessment and Training. Enos Throop, Jr., Chief Investment Officer for the National Railroad Retirement Investment Trust, will conduct the second session. Those of you who attended the luncheon at the 2003 seminar will remember Mr. Throop's interesting and informative presentation. We are glad that Mr. Throop can return and update attendees on the status of the trust funds.

The third plenary session on Wednesday is a report by Jim Verplaetse on the Medicare prescription drug legislation. Mr. Verplaetse is the RRB's project manager for implementing the Medicare legislation and will provide a summary of the major provisions affecting railroad retirement beneficiaries and the status of the RRB's implementation efforts.

Breakout Sessions Thursday and Friday

As mentioned earlier, it is not necessary for attendees to register for sessions in advance. Each breakout session is offered only once but there should be sufficient space in the presentation room to accommodate all interested attendees. An explanation of the breakout sessions is enclosed. Each attendee chooses the particular breakout sessions that meet his or her needs. Breakout sessions on Thursday are in three general areas. One series of "Basic Topics" provides general information in all areas of compensation reporting to new attendees and to persons who are new to the compensation reporting area. Another series of compensation reporting sessions covers "Advanced Topics." A third group of sessions provides information on "Automation Topics." Attendees can choose to stay within a series or pick and choose sessions, as they like. The choice is yours.

Luncheon General Session

In combination with the luncheon is an informative session by Management Member, Jerome Kever, on the RRB's disaster recovery plans and continuity of service plans, particularly as they relate to services to employers. Carol d'Aquin, Manager of the RRB's New Orleans office, will describe how the RRB handled the Hurricane Katrina emergency. This first hand account is illuminating and inspiring.

HOW TO REGISTER

You have two options for submitting your registration form. You can complete an on-line form at www.rrb.gov. If you register on line, you should print a copy of your registration and mail it to the RRB with your payment. You can also use the printed form enclosed with this letter and mail it to the RRB with your payment. You can submit your registration form by facsimile but please also send a copy with your check and indicate that the original registration was faxed. Please complete one form for each person attending the seminar. Photocopies are acceptable.

Mail your registration to: U.S. Railroad Retirement Board
Quality Reporting Service Center
844 North Rush Street
Chicago, IL 60611-2092

Fax your registration to: (312) 751-7190

Register on the web: www.rrb.gov. Look for the link to NETS on the home page.

Please register as soon as possible, and no later than, May 1. We will accommodate reservations received after May 1, but we require a count of attendees by May 1 for meeting room and contract purposes. Confirmations of registration and payment will be mailed beginning February 1, and every

two weeks thereafter. Confirmations will include directions to the hotel. If you do not receive your confirmation after two weeks, telephone Laretta Earls at (312) 751-4961.

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

The seminar is being held at the Allerton Crowne Plaza Hotel in the heart of Chicago's business, dining and shopping district with many activities available within walking distance. The guest rooms have dual-line telephones, Internet access, and in-room safes. Arrangements have been made with the hotel to give attendees a discounted government room rate of \$152 per day plus 15.4% tax. Each additional person is an additional \$20 per day. A very small number of rooms are being held for check-in the day before the seminar. If you plan to arrive on Tuesday, May 9, please make your reservations early.

To make reservations by phone, call the Allerton Crowne Plaza at **(312) 440-1500 or (800) 227-6963** and identify the group as the US Railroad Retirement Board . To make reservations on the Internet, go to <http://www.allertonchi.crowneplaza.com/reservation.html>. Enter your dates and preferences and click the + by corporate and group bookings. Enter the Group Booking Code USR and click "check availability" at the bottom of the form. **Reservations must be received by April 9 to receive the discounted rate.** A limited number of discounted rooms is available. Do not delay.

LUNCHEON SESSION

Thursday's luncheon session starts at 12:30 p.m., and includes a cash bar, lunch, and a general session. The cost of the luncheon is shown below and advanced payment and reservations are required. Attendance at the Luncheon is optional. Each entrée includes *Potato and Celery Bisque soup* and *Flourless Chocolate Cake*. The Salmon and Beef entrees also include potato or rice and vegetables.

Caesar Salad with Grilled Chicken, \$30, Traditional Caesar salad with croutons, shaved Parmesan cheese, roasted tomatoes, and grilled chicken breast.

Grilled Salmon, \$34, Grilled Salmon Au Poive with cucumber, tomato, and cilantro.

Grilled Beef Brochette, \$40, Grilled Beef en Brochette with rosemary Bordelaise sauce.

Special dietary or vegetarian entrees can be arranged upon request.

If you choose to attend the luncheon, please complete **Part B** of the registration form.

CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDIT

Many licensing boards and professional organizations will grant Continuing Education credit for attendance at our workshops when you submit the course outline and a certificate of attendance. Contact your own board or organization to find out what is required. If you want a certificate of attendance, sign up at the registration table and your certificate should be available on Friday.

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions about the seminar, or you require a special lunch meal or accommodations, please address them to any of the staff at (312) 751-4992. We are looking forward to seeing you in May.

Enclosures: Descriptions of Breakout Sessions
Schedule of Sessions
Seminar Registration