

Ricky Durrant

(Candidate for District B, At-Large West seat)



I was born in Rawlins, Wyo., the son of a roadmaster and telegraph operator. So, since a young age, I have been around the railroad and railroad history.

From Rawlins, we moved to Portland, Ore., and then to Lawrence, Kan. where I was raised. During the summers, we would either ride the Streamliners on vacation or travel to Arkansas and spent time on the Reader Railroad when it was still a freight railroad.

In 1971, I started work on the Union Pacific as a small track machine operator (Jackson tamper) and on a system tie gang. After graduating from Lawrence High School (1972), I worked as a track machine operator on a system surfacing and lining gang on the Kansas Division. I then went on to work with the chief engineers' survey party (1972-1973), and went into engine service at Kansas City (1973), running Kansas City to Marysville and Salina, Kan.

During this time, I learned and enhanced my photography skills and recorded the way of life and of the era I was working in. I was promoted to road foreman of engines (1979) in Marysville, Kan. and (1981) Green River, Wyo. At Green River, I became a member of the Promontory Chapter NRHS, meeting members while on a chapter excursion. At the same time, I spent numerous hours documenting the history of the railroad and coal mines in Wyoming.

I was promoted to trainmaster in Rawlins, Wyo., (1985) and worked with various civic historical groups and economic groups in various positions, promoting the local culture. In 1990, for the Wyoming State Centennial, I was awarded the honor of being one of the "Wyoming 100," an award given to the top 100 state citizens for promoting historical preservation. I was the manager for train operations at Salem, Ill. (1990) and given the opportunity to research and document the C&EI railroad. At North Platte, I was senior manager of Terminal Operations (1993) before moving on to Pocatello, Idaho (1996), and Salt Lake City as director of transportation services (1997). Along the way, at all territories, I was researching and documenting the history of the company for future compilation.

Next I was general director of quality assurance for the western region (1999), covering operations. My final move was to Omaha (2012) as general director of Positive Train Control. Retiring In 2017.

I volunteer at local historical locations and research history and genealogy in my spare time. I have been married to the former Carolyn Statler since 1990, and have two daughters, one in the medical field and the other in supply chain operations.

Ricky Durrant — "Why I'm running for District B, At-Large seat"

I have watched various groups and individuals in my lifetime save railroad equipment and items relating to the life we call railroading. One thing missing on a lot of levels is having the actual railroaders' side of the lifestyle told and saved. There are many projects addressing this, but I believe we are missing this part of the story at many different levels of preservation.

From the gandy dancer's life, the porter's recollections, and the views and work styles of the general managers and vice presidents, we need to address the stories that have made this mode of transportation rich in culture and history.

With the changing technology we are facing in this field, the documentation of the current story is also

important for the next generation. It will mean the same to them as a steam whistle does to us. I believe I can bring a 'rails' viewpoint to the board and help improve the accessibility for researchers to get to the material they need. We need to address the membership ranks among us and help promote the organization more, especially to the generations just now embracing our passion for this mode of transportation.

