



RRB News

U.S. Railroad Retirement Board

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No. 15-3

For Immediate Release
March 2015

RRB Labor Member Appoints Two Assistants

The Labor Member of the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board (RRB), Walter A. Barrows, has selected Michele L. Neuendorf and Mark L. Thomson to serve in the capacity of Assistant to the Labor Member. The appointments became effective March 9, 2015.

At the time of her selection, Ms. Neuendorf was serving as an attorney in the RRB's Office of General Counsel, a position she held since July 2010 when she joined the RRB. In that capacity she handled a variety of assignments, including drafting decisions on appeals for the three-member Board, drafting legal opinions, reviewing legislation and executive orders, representing the agency in litigation before courts and administrative venues, and serving as an attorney advisor and ethics advisor for RRB programs and personnel.

Before joining the RRB, Ms. Neuendorf was the Director of Human Resources and Legal Counsel for Pompeii Restaurants, based in Chicago. She also worked as a Staff Attorney for the Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago where she represented clients in various legal areas including unemployment compensation, employment discrimination, and public benefits. Prior to that she worked as a Staff Attorney for Legal Action of Wisconsin, first in the Madison office as an advocate for migrant and seasonal workers throughout Wisconsin regarding employment and other legal rights, and then in the Milwaukee office as an attorney for victims of domestic abuse. Ms. Neuendorf looks forward to utilizing her advocacy skills in her new position.

A New York City native, Ms. Neuendorf is a graduate of Boston University School of Law (J.D. 1998) and Princeton University (A.B. in History, 1995). She lives in Chicago with her husband, Timothy, 18-month-old son Thomas, and newborn daughter Cecilia Marie.

At the time of his appointment, Mark Thomson was the manager of the RRB's district office in Omaha, NE, a position he has held since August 2008. As such, he was responsible for a staff of employees who

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provide direct customer service to railroad employees and their families regarding retirement, survivor and disability benefits, as well as unemployment and sickness benefits.

The son of a retired dispatcher from the Union Pacific Railroad, Mr. Thomson has been around the railroad industry his entire life. He began his career with the RRB as a retirement claims examiner over 25 years ago at its headquarters in Chicago. He moved to the RRB's field service in August 1993, serving as a claims representative, first in the RRB's branch office in San Antonio, TX and then transferring to the Albuquerque, NM district office. In 2003 he was selected to head the Wichita, KS office, where he worked until he transferred to the Omaha office. The breadth of his program knowledge, as well as his past involvement in the Informational Conference Program sponsored by the Labor Member's Office, will be welcome assets he brings with him as he returns to employment at the RRB's headquarters.

A native of Savanna in northwestern Illinois, Mr. Thomson is a graduate of the University of Northern Iowa (B.A. in History, 1988) where he also obtained certification to teach secondary education. He and his wife, Jennifer, are the parents of four daughters, Callie (19), Rebekah (17), Kathryn (15) and Abigail (13). The family will be relocating to the Chicago area later this year.

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An independent Federal agency headquartered in Chicago, the RRB pays nearly \$11.9 billion a year in benefits under the Federal Railroad Retirement and Unemployment Insurance Acts to the nation's railroad workers and their families.