



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A carman and a conductor mark a century of service

Two Alaska Railroad employees each mark 50 years in 2018

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – Two Alaska Railroad (ARRC) employees mark 50-year work anniversaries in 2018, marking a century of service between them. To celebrate the rarity, ARRC is honoring Carman Writer / Inspector Charles R. Dillard Jr. and Conductor / Brakeman Harry Ross:

1:30 p.m., Thursday, March 29, Anchorage Historic Depot

During the celebration, Alaska Railroad President & CEO Bill O’Leary will present 50-year service award pins and letters of recognition. And, because both the conductor and carman work in/around passenger train equipment, the event includes special recognition involving passenger railcars and befitting the half-century milestone.

Conductor Ross spends most of his time working aboard a train. Carman Dillard works in, under and around railcars in a cavernous car shop. While their work environments differ, both men perform mission-essential jobs for the railroad. Both men also chose their respective careers early and stuck within the same railroad career field for the five-decade duration.

Ross chose railroad transportation (train operations) when the Alaska Railroad hired him as a Student Brakeman on May 21, 1968. He became a full-fledged Brakeman in 1970 and added Conductor to his skills the following year. From 1979 to 1984, he oversaw train operations in the Anchorage Yard, first as a Yardmaster Trainee and later as a Yardmaster. In 1985, he resumed Conductor / Brakeman duties and remained in this position ever since.

Known as “HR” and “the singing conductor,” Ross is a lifelong Alaskan with a love of the blues and boating. He particularly enjoys working the railroad’s *Coastal Classic* train with service from Anchorage to Seward, where he has kept a boat.

Dillard chose a mechanical career, maintaining railcars. He joined the Alaska Railroad as an Apprentice Carman on July 12, 1965. Dillard took a 2-1/2 year break from the railroad in 1967-1969, and returned as a Freight Car Carman in early 1970. Within a couple of months, he was promoted to Car Inspector. In 1990, ARRC promoted Dillard to Carman Leader. He has served in his current position as Carman Writer / Inspector since April 2007.

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Originally hailing from Alabama, Dillard is a second-generation railroader (his father, Charles Sr., was an Illinois Central Railroad conductor for 39 years). The U.S. Army brought Dillard to Alaska for the first time in 1961. He left military service and returned to Alabama in 1964, but headed back to Alaska the next year, following a railroad job lead.

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PHOTOS AVAILABLE:

Charles Dillard



Harry Ross

