

News Release

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Railroad remembers former president, CEO and chairman Bill Sheffield for his indelible legacy 40 years of Sheffield's contributions and leadership shaped the railroad

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – The Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) Board of Directors Chairman Emeritus Bill Sheffield passed away on Nov. 4 at age 94. *(Pictured at right was the last official board photo taken in 2018.)*

For 40 years, Sheffield championed Alaska Railroad progress, serving ARRC in several influential roles, including as president, CEO and chairman of the board. His leadership was instrumental in ARRC reaching many milestones through the decades.

As Alaska's fifth governor, the policies and projects Sheffield undertook during his tenure made a lasting impact on the state, especially in the transportation sector. Recognizing the importance of infrastructure for fostering economic growth, Sheffield's lasting legacy lies in his steadfast and visionary support of the Alaska Railroad.

"There are just no words to encompass all that Bill Sheffield meant to our organization," said ARRC President and CEO Bill O'Leary. "Alaska lost a great man, one who always put the state first and did what he believed was best for Alaskans. Bill set the example, and we will honor his contributions for many, many years to come."

Sheffield supported the ARRC in various roles, but his most notable contribution was during his term as governor. In 1984, Sheffield brokered the deal to purchase the Alaska Railroad from the federal government for just over \$22 million (see photo on next page). That transaction made ARRC a state asset and saved the railroad from being shut down.

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Once his term as governor concluded, Sheffield continued to support the railroad on the board of directors from 1995-1997 and as president & CEO from 1997-2001. During this time, he helped establish the railroad's eligibility for federal funding, facilitating tremendous investments in infrastructure and facilities. In 2004, Sheffield returned to the board of directors to continue providing perspective, leadership and expertise.



“Over the years, Bill brought invaluable leadership and stewardship to the ARRC,” said ARRC Board Chair John Shively. “The loss of someone who made countless contributions to Alaska is never easy, and he will be greatly missed. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work closely with Bill. One of Bill's proudest accomplishments as governor was the purchase of the Alaska Railroad, and once he left the governorship, he worked tirelessly to make sure the railroad was successful.”

Outside of his involvement in the ARRC, Sheffield was an active member of the community. He served as president of the Alaska Chamber and the Alaska Visitors Association (now the Alaska Travel Industry Association), a trustee for Alaska Pacific University, a member of the ENSTAR Natural Gas Advisory Board and charter member of Commonwealth North, among numerous civic and business leadership positions.

Sheffield spent his life making Alaska a better place for all as governor, a business leader, philanthropist and loving husband. At age 94, he missed only the first six years of the railroad's history. As the railroad prepares for its centennial anniversary in 2023, it is the history, milestones and leaders like Bill Sheffield that have made the ARRC an organization that lives up to the greatness for which the 49th State is known.

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