



# Atlanta & New Orleans Annual Convention

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July 1–5, 2017

For 2017, the ERA embarks on its first ever convention in the deep south, with visits to two of Dixie's most magnificent cities, Atlanta and New Orleans.

Atlanta is the nation's ninth largest metropolitan area and home to 5.7 million people. It is the birthplace of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and home to such iconic companies as CNN, Coca-Cola, Home Depot and Delta Airlines. Atlanta is also one of a handful of U.S. cities with a heavy rail system. The Atlanta Metro, first opened in 1979, is operated by the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA). The Metro carries 232,000 passengers per day, the nation's eighth busiest, over a network of four lines and 48 route miles. The Atlanta Streetcar, which opened in 2014, is a 2.7-mile streetcar line connecting Downtown Atlanta with the vicinity's most important tourist venues.

New Orleans is home to the picturesque 18th Century French Quarter and the 19th Century Garden District. Known for their outstanding Cajun cuisine, these two iconic neighborhoods are connected by the St. Charles Streetcar, the world's oldest continuously operating railroad and still using traditional streetcars dating back to the 1920s. The New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (NORTA) streetcar network features service on five lines covering over 23 miles of track, including the St. Charles Streetcar.

Both cities are packed with activities and sites for both traction enthusiasts and their significant others. Our 2017 convention features a MARTA shop tour, trips on the Atlanta Streetcar, visit to the famed Southeastern Railway Museum in suburban Atlanta, ERA's second group trip on Amtrak scenic train, the Crescent, from Atlanta to New Orleans and a scheduled tour of all of New Orleans' streetcar lines. So mark your calendars for July 1–5 and plan on joining us!

Note: This convention begins July 1 in Atlanta and ends on July 5 in New Orleans. The convention had to be moved from its traditional Labor Day date to avoid limited and very expensive hotel space on Labor Day weekend in Atlanta due to a large annual convention.



## Atlanta Convention Headquarters

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### **Crowne Plaza Atlanta Midtown**

Nights of July 1, 2 and 3

590 West Peachtree NW, Atlanta, Georgia 30308

The recently renovated Crowne Plaza Atlanta Midtown (<http://bit.ly/2iQ9SgC>) is located one block from MARTA's Red and Gold Line Metro Station. As with all our recent Convention hotel accommodations, the hotel's close MARTA Metro and bus access makes all the region's tourist venues accessible:

- **10-Minute Walk:** Atlanta's landmark 1920s Fox Theater movie palace, now the region's premier performing arts venue;
- **15 minutes by Metro and Walking:** The World of Coca Cola Museum, CNN Studio Tours, the Georgia Aquarium, Center for Civil and Human Rights, the High Art Museum, the 190-acre Piedmont Park, Midtown dining, and Centennial Olympic Park;
- **20 Minutes by Bus:** The historic Sweet Auburn neighborhood and Martin Luther King National Historic Site (and neighborhood);
- **25 Minutes by Metro:** A one-seat ride from Atlanta-Hartsfield International Airport!
- **45 Minutes by Metro or Bus:** The high-end 50-store Shops Buckhead Atlanta and the acclaimed Atlanta History Center portraying the fascinating development and transformation of Atlanta from the Antebellum South (Plantation era) to the dynamic metropolitan powerhouse of today.

The ERA has secured a special rate of \$112.95 (single) or \$125.90 (double) plus 16% sales tax and \$5.00 hotel tax per room per night available for the nights of July 1, 2, 3, and 4. (plus three days before and after these dates, depending on availability). Both single king bed and double queen bed hotel rooms are available. Your room rate includes free guestroom Wi-Fi and complimentary hot buffet breakfast from 6:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. (earlier for July 4th departure on Amtrak). Reservation details are near the end of this flyer.

## New Orleans Convention Headquarters

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### **Renaissance New Orleans Pere Marquette French Quarter Area Hotel**

Nights of July 4 and 5

817 Common Street, New Orleans, Louisiana 70112

Marriott's Renaissance New Orleans Pere Marquette (<http://bit.ly/2caL28f>) combines contemporary luxury with old-world charm and hospitality. The Pere Marquette features a compelling lobby and bar, a 24/7 fitness center, an outdoor pool, and luxurious guest rooms. Buffet breakfast and high-speed Wi-Fi are both included in your room price. The Pere Marquette is a five-minute walk from the historic St. Charles and Canal streetcars (three of five main streetcar routes) and one block from the historic cast-iron buildings and cobble-stoned streets of the French Quarter, also known as the Vieux Carré. **If you booked before April 15, this is a change of hotels from the Marriott AC Hotel New Orleans which is still under renovation. All AC Hotel reservations have been automatically transferred to the superior Pere Marquette. You will receive your new reservation and confirmation on or about May 15.**



The French Quarter is the oldest neighborhood in the city of New Orleans and not only features stunning 18th and 19th century architecture, but also acclaimed Cajun and southern cuisine. The most well-known of the French Quarter streets, Bourbon Street, or Rue Bourbon, is known for its drinking establishments.

New Orleans hosts some of the best chefs in the U.S. (see “A Few of the Best-Known Chefs of Louisiana,” <http://bit.ly/2j0Cwt3>), such as John Besh of PBS fame (<http://bit.ly/2jByLL4>). Several of Besh’s restaurants are within walking distance of our hotel. Dishes associated with New Orleans include beignets, gumbo, po-boy sandwiches, jambalaya, muffuletta sandwiches, shrimp remoulade, shrimp creole, crawfish etoufee, turtle soup, blackened redfish, red beans and rice, and grillades and grits. The beignet, which is a square piece of dough, fried and covered with powdered sugar, can be found at the casual Café du Monde. Other well-known restaurants include Galatoire’s and Antoine’s. Brennan’s is a Creole restaurant known for its lavish breakfast (Breakfast at Brennan’s) and for the creation of Bananas Foster.

Most French Quarter restaurants are a **10-minute walk or less** from our hotel, but don’t expect to just walk right in. Many are immensely popular and require reservations. A few, especially Brennan’s, may need to be booked **up to six weeks in advance** (<http://bit.ly/2iQkOL9>). Some restaurants require jackets and ties. So, check ahead. Due diligence will be worth your while!

The Garden District is less than a 30-minute trip on the St. Charles Streetcar. Here you can stroll or tour through one of the South’s best preserved collections of 19th century historic mansions and the famous above-ground Lafayette Cemetery No. 1. Also within 30 minutes of our hotel are New Orleans’ magnificent Audubon Park and City Park, respectively on the St. Charles and Canal/City Park Streetcar lines, as well as paddle-wheel steamer trips on the Mississippi River. Our tour schedule will be packed, so to fully enjoy New Orleans’ ambiance and dining experiences, make sure to book extra days at the Pere Marquette beyond the July 5th end of the Convention!

The ERA has secured a special rate of \$119 per night at the Pere Marquette which includes free guestroom Wi-Fi and complimentary hot breakfast. Our special room rate is for either single or double occupancy, with either one king bed or two double beds, plus 15.75% sales tax and \$1 hotel occupancy tax per room per night and is available for the nights of July 4, 5 and 6, with check-out on July 6 (plus three days after these dates, depending on availability).

## Itinerary

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### Saturday, July 1

**Arrive early!** Then join us at the Crowne Plaza Atlanta Midtown for our opening meeting beginning at 7:30 p.m. Featured speakers will be Patrick Sullivan and Matthew Tankersley, co-authors of the comprehensive 2012 publication, *Historic Streetcar Systems in Georgia*. This work was commissioned and funded by the Georgia Department of Transportation and traces the history, development and decline of electric traction in the state of Georgia (prior to MARTA) with specific focus on the Greater Atlanta region. A free PDF of this 268-page illustrated document can be found at <http://bit.ly/2jhdGGe>.



## Sunday, July 2

We will leave our hotel **promptly at 9:00 a.m.** Each participant will be provided with a pre-loaded one-day Breeze card which is tapped in any MARTA Metro station (<http://bit.ly/2iQgtaV>) or on a MARTA bus. We will be guests of MARTA this morning, visiting one of the principal **Metro maintenance and overhaul shops** for a guided tour and photos. Following a break for lunch, we will meet at one of the terminals of the **Atlanta Streetcar** (<http://bit.ly/2j8OIl5>). Each member will be provided with an unlimited ride pass for the afternoon. The 2.7-mile Downtown Loop, opened at the end of 2014, connects Olympic Centennial Park (surrounded by the Georgia Aquarium, Skyview and the World of Coke Museum) with Downtown Atlanta, the Sweet Auburn Market and the Martin Luther King national historic site. The line uses four Siemens S70 vehicles. Service frequency is every 10 to 15 minutes and operates from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Sundays.

As no ERA activities are planned for this evening, participants can use their time to ride the streetcar line (there are plenty of dining opportunities along the line, too) or use their Breeze card to tour the balance of the 48-mile Metro system. Fried chicken lovers can enjoy the mid-priced South City Kitchen Midtown (<http://bit.ly/1NekZqW>), about a 15 to 20-minute Metro ride from the hotel.

## Monday, July 3

We will leave our hotel at 9:15 a.m. for the **Southeastern Railway Museum** in suburban Duluth, Georgia (<http://bit.ly/2jRoLtM>). The Museum was founded in the 1970s by the Atlanta Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. It is the official transportation history museum of Georgia, with over 90 pieces of rolling stock featuring railroading from the Georgia. You will be able to view and photograph a wide variety of railroad and transportation exhibits including steam and diesel locomotives, passenger cars, private cars, trolleys, maintenance-of-way equipment, historic automobiles, tractors and buses. The museum also displays historic publications and memorabilia.

## Monday Evening, July 3

ERA's **Annual Banquet** will be held in a private room at the Crowne Plaza Atlanta Midtown Hotel. An hour-long informal reception and cash bar will begin at 5:30 p.m., and dinner will follow promptly at 6:00 p.m. A MARTA representative will discuss the organization's rich past, present and future transit plans for the greater Atlanta region and invite questions from guests. This banquet is earlier than usual to allow participants enough time to rest up for our early departure on Amtrak the following morning.

## Tuesday, July 4

**Early start!** We have arranged for an early breakfast buffet at 5:30 a.m. followed by the drive to Amtrak's Peachtree station in Northwest Atlanta at 6:30 a.m. in our chartered buses. We've budgeted extra time to allow for a leisurely check-in of our group. For maximum room in our chartered train car(s), we strongly urge the checking of all large pieces of luggage to the baggage car (included in your fare). **Amtrak's Crescent** (<http://bit.ly/2jysFxl>), train no. 19, departs Atlanta at 8:38 a.m. and arrives at the New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal at 7:32 p.m. Sites of note along the route include the Chattahoochee River just outside of Atlanta, Cheaha Mountain in Alabama, the Italian Renaissance-style Hattiesburg, Mississippi train station and the 6.2-mile trestle we will ride on across Lake Ponchartrain, a 630-square-mile brackish estuary with an average depth of 12 to 14 feet. ERA members will be seated together in two adjacent train cars. Members may enjoy meals in the dining car (with on-board reservations) or snacks and sandwiches in the café car. In



New Orleans, chartered buses will transport us from the Union Passenger Terminal to the Pere Marquette. Your ERA booking includes Amtrak train fare, all bus transfers and all tips. On-board meals and snacks are at your own expense. **Make sure to read the Logistics section on important instructions for traveling by Amtrak.**

## Wednesday, July 5

We will leave the Pere Marquette at 8:30 a.m. and walk one block to the **St. Charles Streetcar** line (<http://bit.ly/ziAFOqu>). Each participant will be provided an all-day pass to ride all bus and streetcar lines of the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority. We will break into several groups and take regular service on the historic St. Charles Streetcar to NORTA's **Carrollton Barn and Shops** at the end of the line. We will tour the shops and marvel at their artisans' ability to maintain the historic 1920s fleet as well build the replica cars serving the other lines. We will then travel the entire streetcar network in one or more chartered streetcars, possibly a combination of both the 1923 and 1924 Perley Thomas cars and the replica cars. In addition to the St. Charles line, opened in 1835, we will also cover the Riverfront Line (1988), the re-built Canal Street line (2004) with two branches, and the Loyola-Rampart Street line (2013–2016). The charter will include photo and rest stops enroute as well as a box lunch and drink. Time will be allowed to travel on your own in the afternoon with your day pass.

## Wednesday, July 5 night

ERA is in the process of securing an evening speaker at the Pere Marquette to discuss streetcar developments in New Orleans. More details will be provided in the final itinerary.

## Please Note

Scheduled event times given in this flyer are subject to change in the final itinerary or during the trip without prior notice. Daily trip itineraries may be changed without prior notice to ensure on-time return at the end of each day. Announcements will be made throughout each day to update guests on essential information during all ERA events. Providing your phone number (and email address) on your registration form is critical. If you have questions regarding the itinerary or accommodations, please email Trip Co-Chairman **Nayan Naidoo** at [Nayan.Naidoo@gmail.com](mailto:Nayan.Naidoo@gmail.com) or call him at 718-551-8755, or email ERA President **Bob Newhouser** at [bnnyc1955@aol.com](mailto:bnnyc1955@aol.com) or call him at 917-482-4235. All inquiries will receive a prompt reply.

## Logistics

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### Traveling with the Group by Amtrak:

**The number of seats available for the Amtrak group trip is limited to 70 persons.** If and when we sell out, no more seats are available for the group ticket, and there will be no exceptions. You will then need to purchase a ticket on your own through Amtrak and arrange for transportation to and from the train stations, or travel on the ERA buses at an extra charge. Alternatives include Greyhound (11 hours), driving (7 hours) or flying (Delta has frequent 1.5-hour flights).

**As with airline travel, Amtrak requires each passenger to carry government-issued photo ID such as a driver's license or passport and present it on demand.** Don't forget to take this with you!



**Carry-on baggage.** Identification must be securely attached to each item. Carry-on baggage is limited to two pieces of luggage per passenger. No item of carry-on baggage may exceed the following limits:

- Size: 28" x 22" x 14" (70 cm x 55 cm x 35cm)
- Weight: 50 lbs (23 kg)

**Checked baggage.** A maximum of four checked items are allowed per passenger as shown below:

- The first two items are free.
- The third and fourth items will be assessed a charge of \$20 per item.
- Any additional items over the four-item limit may be accepted as Amtrak Express.
- Weight and size of checked baggage must not exceed 50 lbs (23 kg) or outside linear dimensions (length + width + height) of 75 inches (190 cm). Items between 76–100 linear inches (193–254 cm) will be accepted at \$20 per bag.
- Checked baggage must be transported in a suitable container that can withstand handling and exposure to weather.
- Storage tubs and plastic bags are prohibited.
- All checked items must be visibly tagged with the name, address, phone number and email address of the person traveling with the item.
- **Medical devices do not count towards the checked item limit.**

## Reaching the Crowne Plaza Atlanta Midtown

### From Hartsfield-Jackson Airport, Atlanta (ATL)

- **Public Transportation:** MARTA offers frequent Metro service (10-minute headways during most times) with either the Red Line toward North Spring Station or the Gold Line toward Doraville Station. Both trains start at the airport and travel northbound. Take either train to North Avenue Station. When you exit the station walk down West Peachtree Street toward the Bank of America and the Crowne Plaza Atlanta Midtown Hotel will be across the street at the intersection of Linden Avenue NW and West Peachtree Street NW. Travel time to North Avenue Station is under 30 minutes.
- **Taxis** are located outside the terminal and provide travel to Midtown Atlanta for about \$34.
- **Uber and Lyft** pickup is available at the lower level of each of the airport's three terminals. After selecting a vehicle, follow the Rideshare signs to navigate to the lower level of the terminal, then select the door or gate number. If you are unsure of the number, check the signs posted outside.



## Reaching Louis Armstrong International Airport or Amtrak

### To Louis Armstrong International Airport, New Orleans (MSY)

- **Jefferson Transit Airport-Downtown Express Bus (E2):** Jefferson Transit (JET) bus fare is \$2. Fare box accepts \$1, \$5, \$10 and \$20 dollar bills and all U.S. coins. The E2 bus is a 45-minute ride to the airport from Tulane and Loyola Avenues (a six-minute walk from our hotel) and leaves every 35 to 45 minutes. Exit the hotel on Carondelet and turn left (north) on Common Street (which turns into Tulane) and walk four blocks to Loyola Avenue. Go to <http://bit.ly/2j1ttrx> for maps and schedules.
- **NORTA Express Bus 202:** NORTA provides service via Express Bus 202, but it is infrequent (about every two hours) and boards further away from the hotel.

### New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal (Amtrak and Greyhound)

Union Passenger Terminal is only 0.8 miles from hotel and can be reached two ways other than by taxi:

- **Walk** seven blocks west on Carondelet Street, then turn right on Julia Street and walk five blocks north. Total walking time 17 minutes.
- **By public transportation,** walk one block east on Carondelet Street to Canal Street, then left on Canal Street and walk four blocks north to Rampart Street. Take a westbound Loyola-Rampart Streetcar to the Union Passenger Terminal.





## Making Reservations

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### **Crowne Plaza Atlanta Midtown (nights of July 1, 2 and 3, departing July 4)**

You may make reservations for ERA's special discounted rate by one of two methods:

1. **Book on the hotel's website** containing the ERA rates by clicking on the special ERA links below:
  - **One person in room with a king bed and breakfast**  
(\$112.95 + 16% tax + \$5 hotel tax per night)  
<http://bit.ly/2izA9Mw>
  - **Two people in room with two queen beds and breakfast**  
(\$125.90 + 16% tax + \$5 hotel tax per night)  
<http://bit.ly/2iEMZwi>
  - **Two people in room with king bed and breakfast**  
(\$125.90 + 16% tax + \$5 hotel tax per night)  
Please call Associate Director of Sales Ms. Vicky Nimmons at 404-464-4827 to make your reservation or email her at [Vicky.nimmons@cpatlantamidtown.com](mailto:Vicky.nimmons@cpatlantamidtown.com) stating your date of arrival, date of departure, return phone number and request two persons and a room with king bed. She will call you back to confirm and guarantee your reservation with a credit card.
2. **Call the Crowne Plaza Hotel** at 855-646-8549 (**mention "Group Code: ERA"**) or 404-877-9000 and ask for reservations. At either the hotel desk or the national desk, ask for "**Crowne Plaza Atlanta Midtown**" reservations and most importantly, the "**Electric Railroaders' Association, Group Code: ERA**" to get the discounted ERA room rates. A valid credit card is required to reserve accommodations.

**CUT-OFF DATE:** The cut-off date for the Crowne Plaza Atlanta Midtown Hotel reservations is **June 1, 2017 OR when our room block has been fully booked, whichever occurs earlier**. Reservations booked after June 1, 2017 will be accepted at the special lower convention rate at the hotel's discretion based on availability.

**ADDITIONAL NIGHTS:** The Crowne Plaza Atlanta Midtown will honor the discounted room rates for check-in up to three days prior to July 1 on a space available basis.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Canceling a reservation 24 hours or more prior to arrival will result in no charge. Canceling your reservation 23 hours or less on day of arrival, or failing to show, will result in an automatic charge of 1 night per room to your credit card. Taxes may apply. Failing to call or show before check-out time after the first night of a reservation will result in cancellation of the remainder of your reservation.

**NOTE:** The Crowne Plaza Atlanta Midtown does not accept reservations by U.S. mail. Please reserve by phone or online.



## **Renaissance New Orleans Pere Marquette French Quarter Area Hotel (nights of July 4 and 5)**

The Pere Marquette's special ERA rate is \$119 plus 14% tax and \$1 per night hotel occupancy tax and 1.75% New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau Assessment. This rate includes a complimentary hot buffet breakfast for up to two guests in a room. The Pere Marquette is a Marriott hotel and reservations by Marriott Rewards members will earn points. There are two ways to book your reservation:

1. Register at the hotel's website containing the ERA rates: <http://bit.ly/2p59i2w>
2. Call Marriott Reservations at 888-236-2427. Ask for the **"Renaissance Pere Marquette Hotel New Orleans"** and identify yourself as part the **"Electric Railroaders' Association"** to receive the lower room rates of \$119 plus taxes described above, for either a room with one king bed or two double beds.
3. **CUT-OFF DATE: The cut-off date for Pere Marquette reservations is June 13, 2017 OR when our room block has been fully booked, whichever occurs earlier.** Reservations booked after June 13, 2017 will be accepted at the special lower convention rate at the hotel's discretion based on availability.

### **Additional Nights**

The Pere Marquette will honor discounted room rates for check-out **up to three days post July 6 on a space available basis** (last night would be July 8, check-out July 9).

### **Cancellations**

Guest will forfeit one night's room and tax if reservation is not cancelled within 72 hours prior to arrival (check-in is 3 p.m.).

### **NOTE:**

1. Please reserve online or by phone. **The Pere Marquette does not accept reservations by mail.**
2. If you booked with the Marriott AC Hotel New Orleans before April 15, **your reservation has been automatically transferred to the Pere Marquette.** You will receive your room confirmation details by around May 15, 2017.