



Union Pacific Mourns the Passing of Former Chairman and CEO Dick Davidson

June 5, 2026

OMAHA, Neb.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Jun. 5, 2026-- Richard "Dick" Davidson, the former chairman and chief executive officer of Union Pacific Railroad who helped shape the modern railroad by expanding its footprint and advancing its technology, has died at the age of 84.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20260605641628/en/>



Union Pacific Railroad former Chairman and CEO Dick Davidson

"Dick dedicated his life to railroading, working his way up from brakeman to CEO," said Union Pacific CEO Jim Vena. "He loved this industry, believed in railroaders and set a

standard for leadership that still guides Union Pacific today. We mourn his loss and extend our deepest condolences to his family and friends."

A Career Born on the Railroad

Davidson was born on Jan. 9, 1942, in Allen, Kansas. Raised on a family farm by his mother after his father's death when Davidson was six years old, he learned early the values of self-reliance and hard work. To help pay for college, Davidson signed on as a part-time brakeman for the Missouri Pacific Railroad, launching what would become a lifelong career in railroading.

After graduating from Washburn University with a Bachelor of Arts degree, Davidson accepted a position in Missouri Pacific's management training program and rapidly rose through the organization. He continued climbing the ranks, serving as assistant general manager in Kansas City and becoming vice president of operations in 1976.

Leading Union Pacific

When Union Pacific merged with Missouri Pacific in 1982, Davidson became vice president of operations for the combined railroad. He served in a succession of expanding leadership roles before being elevated to president and CEO of Union Pacific Railroad in 1991. He was named chairman and CEO of Union Pacific Corporation in 1997.

During his tenure, Davidson oversaw the acquisitions of Chicago & North Western Railway and Southern Pacific Railroad. The Southern Pacific merger nearly doubled the size of Union Pacific and expanded the railroad's reach in the West and South, but absorbing the struggling railroad created operational challenges. Davidson responded with major investments in capital projects, modernizing the company's technology infrastructure and decentralizing operations. Union Pacific emerged stronger, and the operational framework Davidson put in place endured long after his retirement.

Recognition and Service Beyond the Railroad

Davidson's contributions to American industry were widely recognized. He was inducted into the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans, named to the Kansas Business Hall of Fame and the Nebraska Business Hall of Fame, and honored as Kansan of the Year by the Native Sons and Daughters of Kansas. He also received an honorary doctorate from Washburn University.

In addition to his positions at Union Pacific, Davidson served as chair of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, a director at Creighton University, and a member of the boards of the Kroger Company, the Boy Scouts of America, and the Capitol Visitors Center. He also served as chairman of President George W. Bush's National Infrastructure Advisory Board.

Davidson, who lived in Naples, Florida, with his wife Trish, was a loving husband, father and grandfather. A celebration of life will be held at a future date.

ABOUT UNION PACIFIC

Union Pacific (NYSE: UNP) delivers the goods families and businesses use every day with safe, reliable and efficient service. Operating in 23 western states, the company connects its customers and communities to the global economy. Trains are the most environmentally responsible way to move freight, helping Union Pacific protect future generations. More information about Union Pacific is available at www.up.com.

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