

UTU News

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The Official Publication of the United Transportation Union

Obama taps UTU's Joe Szabo to head FRA

WASHINGTON – Illinois State Legislative Director Joe Szabo, age 51, is President Obama's choice to head the Federal Railroad Administration.

His March 26 nomination requires Senate confirmation.

The railroad industry already has signed on in support of the confirmation, with the industry's chief congressional lobbyist, Ed Hamberger, saying Szabo "brings a wealth of experience in the railroad industry to this assignment."

Rail industry support of the nomination is considered crucial to Senate confirmation.

UTU International President Mike Futhey emphasized that Szabo would be "the first FRA administrator to come out of the ranks of rail labor. It is a validation that this Obama administration is a friend of organized labor."

If confirmed, Szabo would become the 13th FRA administrator since its founding as a Department of Transportation agency in 1967.

Szabo would be the first FRA administrator to come out of the ranks of rail labor.

The FRA administers and enforces federal rail safety laws and writes and enforces federal rail safety regulations.

Szabo is a fifth-generation railroader. He hired out with the Illinois Central (now part of Canadian National) in 1976, where he worked as a yard switchman, road trainman and commuter passenger conductor. In 1987, he went to Chicago Metra when IC sold its rail commuter division.

In 1984, Szabo was elected secretary/treasurer of Local 1290, Chicago, progressing to delegate and legislative representative. In 1992, he was



Joe Szabo with President Obama

elected vice chairperson of the Illinois State Legislative Board, and in 1996 elected state legislative director. He also has been serving as a vice president of the Illinois AFL-CIO.

He also has represented the UTU on the FRA's Rail Safety Advisory Committee, where he participated in the drafting of rail safety regulations.

In making the nomination, Obama said that as the UTU's Illinois state legislative director, "Joe has provided vision and direction to rail safety and regulatory issues and worked with business and civic leaders in the advancement of freight and passenger rail service."

Obama also noted that Szabo had served as mayor of the Village of Riverdale – a Chicago suburb – "where he managed more than 100 employees and a budget of \$9 million serving 15,000 residents."

The Senate's assistant majority leader, Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), said of the Szabo nomination, "I look forward to working with him to address our nation's next round of rail innovation."

The *Journal of Commerce* said Szabo "has a history of pursuing FRA penalties against railroads for (safety regulation) infractions that involve rail labor."

Separately, Obama named Karen J. Rae, a transportation executive with nearly 30 years' state and regional experience, as the FRA's deputy administrator. That position does not require Senate confirmation. Rae will report to the administrator.

Rae is currently deputy commissioner for

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Rail labor joins forces to aid Arkansas railroad crews

LITTLE ROCK – Railroad operating crews gained a new measure of safety March 10 after Arkansas Gov. Mike Beebe signed into law a bill bringing contract carriers who transport rail employees under strict state safety standards.

The legislation – the Safe Transportation of Railroad Employees by Contract Carriers Act – was proposed to Arkansas lawmakers almost two years ago by former Arkansas State Legislative Director Don Beavers.

The bill was shepherded through state legislature passage and signing into law by the governor by current State Director Steve Evans. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and the Arkansas AFL-CIO also helped in support of the law's passage.

It applies to passenger contract carriers that transport railroad employees with a vehicle designed or used to transport up to eight persons, including the driver.

The new law imposes minimum driver-hiring

qualifications and disqualification standards, establishes hours of service limitations for drivers, subjects drivers to drug testing, requires annual state DOT inspections of vehicles that transport rail crews, and requires DOT certification of weekly vehicle maintenance inspections and repair records.

Each vehicle is required to have fully function-

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The UTU was well represented at the signing of the Safe Transportation of Railroad Employees By Contract Carriers Act. Seated is Arkansas Gov. Mike Beebe. Directly behind the governor is UTU-endorsed bill sponsor Rep. Barbara Nix. Standing to the left of Nix is SLD Evans, AFL-CIO S&T Ricky Belk and former SLD Don Beavers. Second row, directly behind Nix, is Local 656 (N. Little Rock) Legislative Rep. Talmon Preyer and AFL-CIO State President Allan Hughes with other labor organization representatives.

News and Notes

Officer loses leg in accident

Robert Kevin Spragg, vice local chairperson for yardmen in Local 1420, Memphis, Tenn., was severely injured March 21 at the BNSF Railway's Tennessee Yard in Memphis.

Spragg, 46 with 11 years of rail service, reportedly was struck by a cut of cars and lost his left leg below his knee. He is recovering in a local hospital.

Investigations are continuing.

Belden memorial ride set

The Scott Belden Memorial Motorcycle Ride, to benefit the UTU PAC, will be held Sunday, Aug. 16, at the New Orleans regional meeting. Rental motorcycles are available from New Orleans Harley-Davidson, 1208 Lafayette St., New Orleans, LA 70112; (504) 362-4004. For more information, contact Louisiana State Director Gary Devall at (225) 383-5741.

Around the UTU

Local 202, Denver, Colo.

On March 3, this local established a program to provide a \$50 union supermarket gift card to each furloughed member of the local, State Legislative Director Local Secretary **Rick Johnson** reported. To receive a gift card, furloughed members must attend one local meeting per month. Meeting times are 7 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month and 10 a.m. on the third Thursday of the month at 1900 W. 38th Ave. "It is our intent to help, in this small way, to minimize the effect of these hard economic times on our members' families in this time of need," Johnson said. The gift card program will last at least four months.

Local 240, Los Angeles, Calif.

Conductors **Robert C. Taylor** and **Gary Holland** retired after 38 and 32 years of service, respectively, Local Chairperson **Harry J. Garvin Jr.** reported. "All the members of Local 240 wish them both many long years of happiness and retirement," Garvin said.

Local 432, Champaign-Urbana, Ill.

Legislative Rep. **Grady Crippin** reminds all members of the local that meetings are currently held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. at Rock's Bar and Grill, 25 E. Springfield Ave., in Champaign. Also, the local has established a Web site that can be found at <http://0432.UTU.org>.

Local 607, Thayer, Mo.

For the third consecutive year, members of this BNSF Railway local have made a generous donation to radio station KAMS's Country Cares for St. Jude Kids radiothon, Local President **Chris Skaggs** reported. Members of the local, along with State Legislative Director **Ken Menges**, Auxiliary International President **Carol Menges** and UTUIA Field Supervisor **Steve White**, met with representatives from St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tenn., at the radiothon on Feb. 11 and presented a \$250 donation.

Local 1081, Glendale, Ariz.



Pictured, from left, are Local Chairperson **Tom Pate**, U.S. Rep. **Ed Pastor** (D-Dist. 4) and Legislative Rep. **Greg Hynes** after the UTU team placed first on Saturday, March 21, and second on Sunday, March 22, during a golf tournament to raise funds for the Pastor campaign. The tournament was part of "sports weekend" fundraiser for the congressman, Arizona State Legislative Director **Scott Olson** said.

Wis. legislative board to host railroad safety summit

The Wisconsin State Legislative Board is conducting its third annual railroad safety summit on June 29 at the Ramada Inn Hotel and Convention Center in Stevens Point, Wis., according to State Director **Tim Deneen**. All railroad employees (all crafts) and their union representatives are invited to attend this daylong event, which will include discussions on hazmat training (National Labor College), new hours of service regulations (FRA) and an update on whistleblower protection (OSHA). RSVP to Wisconsin State Legislative Board at (608) 251-4120 or e-mail utulo56@gmail.com.



Brian Hunstad, **Elmond Ekblad**, **Bob Feichtinger** and **Willis Croonquist** meeting next to the Great Northern Railway's retired steam locomotive 2523.

Willmar retiree provides timeless words of wisdom

People study history because history often repeats itself. The economics of today have put many in dire straits, but UTU retiree **Elmond Ekblad** has seen bad times before and sees hope for the future.



Ekblad

Ekblad was a member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen and later the UTU. On Feb. 24, at Local 1177's annual Chili Feed in Willmar, Minn., Ekblad offered 60 active

and retired members in attendance his words of wisdom.

"After the worst days of the Depression, we had good traffic out here by the 1930s. Traffic dropped off in 1938 and 1939, but we kept working and hoped for the best. The trains were shorter and we had workers laid off, but they came to local meetings, kept in touch, and we helped them out," said Ekblad. "Then in 1940, when England was in trouble, we saw more traffic and the men went back to work. Once the war started, we couldn't find enough good men to run the Great Northern."

"Hopefully, it won't take another war to get the men back to work," Ekblad said. "Tell them to tough it out, the trains will fill out, and they'll be back to work. They'll make back the pay. We always have and we always will."

"Elmond Ekblad was one of those workers who was a true gentleman, who you really looked up to amongst the ranks," said former UTU Minnesota State Legislative Director **Willis Croonquist**, who worked with Ekblad from 1955 to 1980. "He was then, and is today, an honest man who did not drink, did not swear, and was a pleasure to work with."

"But," Local 1177 Legislative Rep. **Brian Hunstad** said, "legend has it that if you mentioned another rail operating union's name around Ekblad, all bets were off."

"It's really remarkable and a privilege to stand with a gentleman like Elmond, and to listen to the knowledge and the history of the railroad," said Hunstad. "And when I see an old timer like that, make no mistake, as a member of the UTU, I'm proud of this union."

Local 1252, Fresno, Calif.

Retired member **Jim "Tanglefoot" Thompson**, 94, passed away in February, according to retired former Secretary & Treasurer **Donald Heffernan**. "Thompson drank coffee from the same small drip pot he carried across Europe in W.W. II and then at home on every trip he made on the railroad. He never said 'no' when asked to help and never asked to be repaid for any help he gave," Heffernan said.

Local 1328, Louisville, Ky.

At the local's February meeting, President **Phil Culver** presented law firm Wettermark Holland & Keith investigator **James Chappell** with a commemorative brass lantern for all the great work he and his firm have done to assist Local 1328 and its members. "Brother Chappell is a lifetime member of the UTU and always goes the extra mile to help his brothers and sisters," Culver said.



Local 1328 President **Phil Culver** shakes hands with Wettermark, Holland & Keith Investigator **James Chappell**, along with WHK Investigator **Pat Sullivan** and UTU Engineer **Murrell Cotner**.

Local 1366, Salt Lake City, Utah

Former Union Pacific General Chairperson **Theron Kunz**, one of the 40 men who worked to create the UTU, passed away Feb. 24. He was 94. Kunz served on the committee that wrote the UTU's constitution and bylaws when it was formed by a merger of four railroad brotherhoods in 1969. He is survived by his wife, Helen, and children Peggy and Gary.

Local 1440, Staten Island, N.Y.

This local representing employees of the MTA's Staten Island Railway will celebrate a Union Night Out with the Staten Island Yankees July 18 at 7 p.m. at Richmond County Bank Ballpark, Secretary & Treasurer **Vincent LaBella** reported. Those attending will receive a free, limited edition Yankees ball cap and a game program. The event will also feature all-you-can-eat burgers, hotdogs, chicken sandwiches and sodas, and children 12 and under can run the bases after the game. Interested members should send their name, address and telephone number, along with the number of tickets requested, to Local 1440 GCA/SIR, Attn: **Thomas Wilson**, 4 Court St., Staten Island, NY 10314. Tickets are \$16 each and checks should be made payable to Local 1440 GCA/SIR. For more information, contact LaBella at (718) 662-3179.



Local 1813, West Colton, Calif.

The local has scheduled its 30th annual golf tournament for June 2 at Indian Hills Golf Club, 5700 Club House Dr., in Riverside, Calif. The cost is \$75 and includes greens fees with cart, barbecue lunch, prizes, a raffle and just a lot of fun, reported Local President **Richard Acuna**. Acuna is also coordinating a picnic that will include all Los Angeles service units from locals 1813, 1846, 240, 1770 and 1422 from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. on June 13 at Yucaipa Regional Park, 3390 Oak Glen Rd., in Yucaipa, Calif. A \$7 parking admission fee includes parks, fishing at three lakes, free food, drinks and entertainment. There is a fee for the water park. Bring your families and come enjoy yourselves. For further details on either event, call Acuna at (909) 496-3981 or e-mail elpres1813@verizon.net.

Local 1951, Albany, N.Y.

CSX yardmaster **Michael Doherty** will be running in his sixth consecutive Boston Marathon on April 20 to raise money for the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston. To sponsor Doherty, visit his page on Web site www.runDFMC.org/miked2009 or e-mail him at mdoherty76@comcast.net. "I receive a lot of donations from my UTU brothers and sisters and many other CSX employees. If you'll be in Boston on April 20, 2009, please come cheer on my DFMC teammates and me as we race towards the ultimate finish line: a world without cancer," Doherty said.

UTU lobbies rails on entry rates, furloughs

The UTU continues aggressively pursuing with the National Carriers' Conference Committee an equitable resolution of the entry-level rates-of-pay issue after an arbitrator ruled in January that the dispute be returned to the bargaining table.

While a daylong bargaining session in mid-March failed to produce a tentative agreement, it did add a new dimension to the talks: Reducing member layoffs and protecting the incomes and benefits of those members who are laid off.

"Notwithstanding the impact of the recession on freight loadings, we are approaching the peak employee-vacation season, and the carriers must soon comply with new hours-of-service regula-

tions, which have the potential of creating shortages of train crews and yardmasters if the carriers continue with their layoffs," said UTU International President Mike Futhey.

"Moreover, the number of retirements, encouraged by the restored 60/30 provision of the Railroad Retirement Act, reduces the overall number of seasoned train crews and yardmasters," Futhey told the carriers.

"We sought also to impress upon the carriers that layoffs will jeopardize their ability to crew their trains with experienced train and engine service employees once the recession ends," Futhey said.

"Many recently hired employees, who are laid off, are not going to return to the railroad when the recession ends," Futhey said. "Not only will the carriers have lost the \$30,000-plus cost of having trained those lost employees, but they will have to spend another \$30,000-plus to train a replacement.

"Finding innovative ways of keeping employees on a partial work schedule, which continues their healthcare benefits, their Railroad Retirement

credits and their seniority accumulation is just good business," Futhey said.

"And paying fully trained new hires, who are given the same responsibilities and accountability of their longer-employed peers, improves morale and lessens the likelihood that those new hires will depart the railroad."

Although some railroads have scrapped entry-level rates for newly hired and fully-trained conductors and yardmasters that are given full responsibilities, it is the industry norm to pay them less for the first five years.

A second bargaining session over these issues is scheduled for late April. Representing the UTU at the bargaining table will be Futhey; Assistant President Arty Martin; International Vice President Robert Kerley; General Chairpersons John Hancock, John Lesniewski and Jim Huston, and Alternate Vice President – East Delbert Strunk.

The carriers – BNSF Railway, CSX, Kansas City Southern, Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific – will be represented by their chief labor negotiators.

Feds sue UP over drug smuggling

BROWNSVILLE, Texas – The Department of Justice has filed lawsuits against the Union Pacific, seeking \$37 million in fines for not preventing the use of railcars to smuggle more than 4,200 pounds of marijuana and 260 pounds of cocaine from Mexico through California and Texas.

UP issued a statement last month, noting that Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and not the railroad takes initial control over railcars entering the U.S. and that the border patrol is "punishing Union Pacific for drug smuggling that the company has no ability to prevent."

"Drug traffic originates on Mexican railroads that Union Pacific does not control. When Mexican trains reach the U.S. border, CBP takes control of them (and) bars Union Pacific from approaching or inspecting the trains except under CBP direction," the statement noted.

Union Pacific further contends that CBP even penalizes the rail company after the railroad finds drugs that CBP missed in their inspections.

The railroad also contends that it cannot send its personnel into Mexico to inspect the railcars for drugs, because they would not be allowed to carry arms or use drug-detecting dogs. Personnel "would have no legal authority and would be forced to turn over drugs to unreliable authorities in Mexico," Union Pacific contends.

SIR members form new general committee

UTU members working on Staten Island Rapid Transit Operating Authority – more commonly known as Staten Island Railway (SIR) – have overwhelmingly voted to form their own general committee.



Wilson

They previously were represented by Long Island Rail Road's general committee (GO 505); now they will have their own general committee, GO SIR.

The SIR is a commuter carrier in New York City's Staten Island borough and is a subsidiary of New York's Metropolitan Transit Authority, which also controls New York City's subways and the Long Island Rail Road.

The UTU represents about 190 workers in all crafts on the SIR, including locomotive engineer, conductor, track worker, building and bridge worker, track cleaner and third-rail shop

worker. All are members of Local 1440, Staten Island.

SIR mechanic **Thomas Wilson** was elected general chairperson and delegate. **James Massaro** was elected vice general chairperson of track and bridge building and **Darryl Jicha** was elected vice general chairperson for conductors and trainmen.

President of the local is **James Brownell**; vice president is **Dennis Jackson**; **Vincent LaBella** serves as secretary/treasurer.

The members petitioned UTU International President Mike Futhey for authority to vote on forming an independent general committee, which was granted. The members voted overwhelmingly in favor of autonomy.

Also supportive was Long Island Rail Road General Chairperson **Anthony Simon**.

General committee dues will not increase, Wilson said. "All dues money will now stay in house," he said. "Now we will have a general chairperson on site to handle negotiations and any problems that may arise.

"We will now be negotiating separately with the New York Metropolitan Transit Authority, which is the largest such agency in the world and an admirable foe, but we are looking forward to the challenge," Wilson said.

"Our new team of union representatives has devoted a lot of their time to provide information to our members," LaBella said.

Amtrak workers to get back pay

Amtrak employees — including UTU represented conductors, assistant conductors and yardmasters — will receive 100 percent of their back pay on May 1, which Amtrak President Joe Boardman has designated to be "Employee Appreciation Day."

Boardman told UTU International President Mike Futhey on March 19 that he has the full support of the Amtrak board of directors to fulfill Amtrak's obligation to pay all back wages to Amtrak agreement employees.

The money will come from congressional appropriations that will be paid Amtrak in April.

The current contract covering Amtrak agree-

ment employees provided for a wage-increase and lump sum retroactive payment package totaling \$573 million.



Because Amtrak did not have the funds to pay the entire amount in a single fiscal year, Amtrak agreed to pay it out over two fiscal years.

Amtrak, so far, has funded some \$428 million of the \$573 million contract settlement, leaving a balance of \$145 million. The remaining amount will be paid May 1.

UTU National Legislative Director James Stem has been working with Amtrak lobbyists to convince Congress to provide the necessary funding.

In a Feb. 17 letter to Congress, Boardman wrote:

"Amtrak is committed to meeting our agreements, and holds the skills of its employees and the dedication they bring to their job in high esteem. To that end, we are meeting and intend to continue to meet, on a quarterly basis, with the unions' leadership to ensure that we are communicating frankly and clearly with them. We hope that this will improve an already open and productive relationship."

In 2005, as federal railroad administrator, Boardman told *Railway Age* magazine, "Railroads must invest in human resources by hiring talented people and training and motivating them, as well as measuring the quality of that training and motivation to ensure incremental and continual involvement."

Boardman told Futhey: "On May 1, everyone will be paid their remaining back wages."

UTU offers members numerous discounts

UTU members can take advantage of money-saving offers negotiated by the union on their behalf.

These discounts apply to hotel rooms, computers, car rentals, travel, credit cards, cellular-telephone service and much more.

UTU members also can take advantage of the numerous discounts offered by the Union Plus program, the benefits arm of the labor movement. These benefits include automobile insurance, health-club discounts, tax-preparation discounts and much more.

The complete list of benefits can be found on the "Promotions" page of the UTU Web site, www.utu.org.

Breaking news as it happens: Register for UTU News alerts

Information is power and your UTU is trying to give you as much information as it can, as soon as possible. Savvy members have learned to log on to www.utu.org at least once daily to check the latest transportation news and any important new happenings within the UTU.



We want important UTU news to reach you even faster. So we are updating our special e-mail list by which UTU members may voluntarily sign up to receive e-mail on important UTU events.

Register for e-mail alerts by visiting www.utu.org and clicking on the "E-mail Alerts" tile on the UTU homepage. Be sure to double check the information for accuracy before sending your e-mail registration.

Your e-mail address will be kept confidential. It will not be sold, traded nor given to anyone else. You will not receive any solicitations to purchase anything as a result of registering.

Rails, customers: Stop the quarrel; join with us

We are urging railroads and their customers to join with us and others in rail labor to meet jointly to resolve, amicably and quickly, a long-simmering and too-often acrimonious quarrel over how railroads are regulated by Congress and the U.S. Surface Transportation Board.

This dispute threatens the long-term viability of the railroad industry, its ability to increase capacity and improve customer service, its image as the environmentally superior transportation mode, and its immediate ability to attract and invest federal stimulus funds for further productivity enhancements that will benefit rail customers, the carriers and rail labor.

This quarrel is fracturing congressional support for railroads, and its continuation will only further erode



International President's Column

By Mike Futhey, International President

the industry's ability to shift freight from the highways, expand commuter rail access and strengthen our national intercity rail passenger network to include high-speed rail options.

If this dispute is not resolved during this session of Congress, we face a most unpleasant result of negative conversations dominating congressional hearings and crowding out the ability and willingness of Con-

gress to focus on legislation to benefit carriers, their customers and rail labor.

A mutually mediated solution, with rail labor at the table, will ensure that rail customers make

and benefits to UTU and other rail-labor organization members.

To this end, I have asked our national legislative director, James Stem, to reach out to the various stakeholders to begin the collective dialogue.

I am personally reaching out to other rail labor chiefs and carrier CEOs.

We intend to be the catalyst to resolve this dispute quickly and equitably – and well in advance of the start of contract talks with the carriers in November.

Of interest is a recent report by

“This is how we will best protect our job security, our wages and our benefits.”

long-term choices to move more products by rail and create a win/win result for each vested interest.

We wish to create a workable and effective partnership among freight railroads, commuter railroads, Amtrak, rail customers and rail labor.

This is how we will best protect our job security, our wages and our benefits.

It is in each of our best and long-term interests for the rail industry to improve the quality and quantity of rail service and continue to provide good jobs and competitive wages

the Wall Street firm of Morgan Stanley, which said our initiative is likely to earn for rail labor a meaningful reward at the bargaining table.

Said Morgan Stanley:

“Labor is a key player in the regulatory debate. Rail senior management may need to offer unions something of value in labor negotiations as a quid pro quo for support in Washington. As a result, one-man crews are unlikely in the next round of negotiations, and we expect labor to push for a greater share of profits going forward.”



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Boardman envisions the future of Amtrak



A message to UTU members from Amtrak President Joe Boardman

Amtrak has always been a company whose time is coming, but now, I think, it's fair to say that it has truly arrived.

Congressional passage of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act and the recent stimulus bill give us an idea of the plans the country has for passenger rail.

Given the state of the highway and air traffic systems, and the past spikes in oil prices, it has come not a moment too soon. This is a tremen-

ding the stimulus funds into some much-needed facilities improvements. I have approved plans that will bring major improvements to our maintenance facilities. We're going to extend positive train control and electrification on the Northeast Corridor, and we're going to get working on our equipment situation.

But important as this strategy is, I can't overemphasize the degree to which it depends on our workforce.

A lot of companies say that their

“We are truly the safer, greener and healthier transportation alternative, and we are going to turn our efforts to realizing that vision.”

dous opportunity for Amtrak to build on the solid performance our company turned in last year. We are truly the safer, greener and healthier transportation alternative, and we are going to turn our efforts to realizing that vision.

We are going to get a start by put-

workforce is the most important asset they have. But I think Amtrak can go even farther; the knowledge and skills embedded in our workforce are the basis of our competitive advantage.

We have this advantage because some very fine people have dedicat-

ed their careers to this work – and you can see it when you look at our seniority rosters. A lot of men and women have dedicated their working lives to the central proposition of railroading – “the safe and timely arrival of the train.”

It is one of the last places you can see parents and their sons and daughters working side by side.

One of the most important things management can do for our employ-

“One of the most important things management can do for our employees is to build a safety program that works.”

ees is to build a safety program that works. There are a couple of key aspects to any safety program. One is technology. Technology can be as simple as basic safety gear, or as complex as positive train control. But even the best technology depends on safe and competent operators.

Our people are competent. Competence and operating intelligence are the single biggest components of safe operation. A well-run operation is naturally safe. But it's important that we build a firm partnership that involves labor, agreement employees and field management so that we can make a deliberate effort to build on the good work that has been done in recent years to improve safety.

I think the establishment of cross-functional safety teams was a good start. We are going to expand and improve these teams, and develop a “risk-based” and “behavior-based” process. We need to work cooperatively to use observations to determine accident risk and develop strategies to minimize risks with union-management field co-operation. I am confident that we can make some significant improve-

ments, and I want to work closely with labor, the FRA, and our employees to make sure we succeed.

This is a great moment for everyone associated with the railroad industry, particularly for Amtrak. There is a renewed understanding of what we have to offer, and I think our potential is endless.

Safe operations for our employees and passengers underpin everything, and I hope that we can work closely together, not just to improve safety, but to realize a true revolution in mobility here in America.

(Joe Boardman headed the Federal Railroad Administration from 2005 to November 2008, when he was appointed Amtrak president by the Amtrak board of directors.)

State Watch News from UTU State Legislative Boards

North Carolina



State Legislative Director **Richard Westbrook** and his wife Janie (who serves as the state director for the UTU Auxiliary) recently attended a fundraiser for Rep. Heath Schuler (D-11th Dist.).

Schuler serves on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, which has jurisdiction over railroads, transit, Railroad Retirement, bus transportation and other issues, including transportation safety, vital to UTU members.

Former President Bill Clinton also was in attendance.

Pictured at the event, from left, are Schuler, the Westbrooks and Clinton.

Florida

State Legislative Director **Andres Trujillo** has testified against a proposed state constitutional amendment that would require secret ballot elections among workers to decide if they want to form a union.

Federal law currently allows such elections, which are preferred by employers, or a second method known as card check, which is similar to a petition and is favored by unions. The law now gives employers the right to choose which procedure to use.



Trujillo

A bill pending in the Democratic-controlled Congress called the Employee Free Choice Act would do away with employer choice. It would require unions to be formed without an election if a majority of workers submit check cards.

In testimony before the Senate Ethics and Elections Committee, Trujillo questioned why business interests are suddenly so interested in the secret ballot issue.

“That’s because they control all the cards, and I would venture a guess that then democracy’s only safe if Walmart’s in charge,” he said. Trujillo said businesses are worried the federal legislation “will make it a workers’ choice, not Walmart’s or Home Depot’s.”

Kansas



Members of the Kansas Legislative Board recently attended the Annual Washington Day Event in Topeka, State Director **Don Lindsey** reports. The featured speaker was Montana Gov. **Brian Schweitzer**. Lindsey and Assistant State Director **Ty Drago** were invited to a private reception prior to the banquet and had an opportunity to visit with Gov. Schweitzer, as well as Kansas Gov. **Kathleen Sebelius**, who recently was confirmed as secretary of Health and Human Services in the Obama administration. From left to right are **Chad Henton** (alternate assistant legislative Director, L-506, Herington); Lindsey; **Ron Pauls** (legislative rep., L-477, Newton); **Joey Holzhauser** (alternate board secretary, L-94, Kansas City) and **Dragoo** (L-1503, Marysville).



Georgia

The Georgia State Legislative Board sponsored a recent luncheon at the State Capitol in Atlanta held for the Working Families Caucus, State Legislative Director **Howell Keown** reports. Some 17 state senators and representatives were among the 50 attendees, Keown said. The caucus, a non-partisan voice for Georgia’s working families, was created to develop and promote legislation and policies that invest in workers, families and communities, and help Georgians achieve the American dream of security, prosperity, and equality. Shown at the luncheon are, left to right, Legislative Rep. **Gary Whitt** (L-1971, Atlanta); Assistant Director **Tim Ussery** (L-1790, Fitzgerald); Keown and Legislative Rep. **Bernard Gray** (L-1033, Atlanta).

Bus Department

By **Vic Baffoni**, vice president/director
v_baffoni@utu.org

Charlotte bus mechanics approve new pact

The members of Local 1596, Charlotte, N.C., have ratified a new three-year deal with Transit Management of Charlotte (CATS) by an overwhelming margin.

UTU represents bus mechanics on the property.

Major advances were made in job classifications and job protection, with a guarantee of no employee layoffs for 15 months following the ratification date.

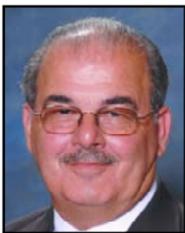
UTU members also received a signing bonus, wage increases with guarantees, increases in tool allowances and company-supplied winter clothing.

Increases in the agency’s portion of contributions to the employee pension plan and agency maintenance of medical benefits were also part of the deal.

I congratulate General Chairperson **Alvy Hughes**, Vice Local Chairperson **Craig Patch**, Local Committee of Adjustment Secretary **James Hinton Jr.** and Secretary and Treasurer **Anthony Sandle** for their patience and hard work throughout the negotiations.

I assisted these fine local officers with negotiations, but these local officers and other members of the committee did an outstanding job from start to finish. It was a privilege to work with such a hard working and dedicated group of members.

Despite sales tax revenue for the months of November and December being down 25 percent and 15 percent respectively, ridership and fare revenue are up on this property. CATS says year-to-date through the first seven months of fiscal 2009, ridership has increased 25.8 percent and fare revenue rose 53 percent. That’s good for the job security of these hard-working members.



Diesel bus fumes said to threaten children

BEND, Ore. – Thousands of Oregon children who ride buses face serious health risks, according to the state’s Department of Environmental Quality.

Of the 5,000 school buses in Oregon, the DEQ says nearly 4,000 could leak fumes inside of the bus. And the effects of these fumes can be very serious.

School districts have been aware of the exhaust problem for some time now.

“In cases where you have leaks in the bus, those fumes can swirl their way up and make their way inside, and you can get the fumes inside the bus,” said Dave Voile of the Bend/La Pine Schools’ transportation process.

It’s this process, along with tailpipe emissions, that have the DEQ concerned. According to a new report, fumes and particles from diesel engines can be very harmful to children.



“There’s been a number of studies that indicate it increases risk for cancer, for heart disease,” Kevin Downing of the DEQ said. “But also a number of respiratory issues, including asthma and bronchitis, pleurisy and pneumonia.”

It’s for such reasons that some lawmakers are pushing House Bill 2795, which would require school districts to fix their buses by 2017 at a cost of roughly \$13,000 each.

UTU seeks info on members, families in military

The United Transportation Union is seeking to honor its members, or their children or spouses, who are serving in any branch of the U.S. military. The *UTU News* plans to publish these names, and any photos received, in a future edition.

Please mail or e-mail the name and rank of the individual, the branch and unit of the military in which they serve, where they are currently stationed, along with the UTU member’s name and local number.

UTU News also welcomes photographs of these military personnel, in uniform, for publication. Photos can be returned if requested.

Names and photographs should be e-mailed to utunews@utu.org or sent to UTU News, United Transportation Union, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250.

UTU
Alumni

UTU Alumni Association

News, information for members of the UTU Alumni Association

RRB can appoint representative payee

By V.M. "Butch" Speakman Jr.
Labor member, Railroad Retirement Board

The Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) has a new nationwide toll-free telephone service to connect customers to the agency's field offices via a single telephone number (877) 772-5772.



Speakman

Persons calling the toll-free number will be transferred to their local RRB field office; or, during emergency and peak periods, have their calls automatically forwarded to claims representatives in nearby field offices.

In addition, the new telephone service offers the following options for self-service through automated menus.

- Rail workers can obtain a statement showing their months of railroad service and the amount of compensation credited to them under the Railroad Retirement Act.

- Railroad unemployment or sickness benefits claimants can check the amount and date of their latest benefit payment, the claim period for which the payment was made, and review information about their last five payments. They can also confirm whether the RRB has received their latest unemployment or sickness claim, application for benefits, or supplemental doctor's statement.

- Railroad retirement annuitants can request a letter showing their current monthly annuity rate, or a duplicate tax statement.

- Medicare recipients can order a replacement Medicare card. Callers can also find the address of the RRB field office serving their area and hear special announcements and general information about the agency and its benefit programs.

The services listed above, and others, are also provided at the RRB's Web site at www.rrb.gov. For customers who choose not to conduct their business over the phone or on the Internet, the RRB's field offices remain available to answer in-person and written inquiries.

UTU retiree enjoys life aboard RV

Alumni Association member Ernest Howard and wife Patricia are living their dream.

Just months after Howard retired as a locomotive engineer from the Southern Pacific in 1994, the couple sold their house and most everything in it and moved permanently into an RV.

They have never looked back.

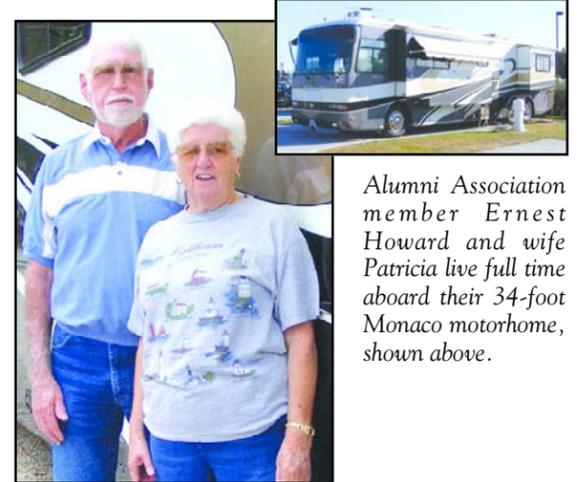
They spend their winters at a member-owned RV park in Texas and, when the weather turns hot and sticky, head north into Utah, Colorado, Wyoming or wherever the spirit moves them.

"I dreamed about this for years, and it's turned out great," Howard, 77, said by cell phone from Texas. (He is a member of Local 857, San Antonio.) "My cost of living went down 30 percent when I sold the house. We live in a condo on wheels."

The Howards got into RVing in 1971 when they purchased a 34-foot Monaco Dynasty diesel pusher. They are currently enjoying their fifth different RV, a 2001 40-foot Monaco diesel pusher with two slide-out rooms. The unit is completely self contained, and includes a generator, satellite television, computer and washer/dryer. They tow a Jeep, that they use for errands and offroading.

The couple's few bills are paid by credit card.

"We haven't given up anything but yardwork," he said.



Alumni Association member Ernest Howard and wife Patricia live full time aboard their 34-foot Monaco motorhome, shown above.

What does he miss the most? "Nothing. I have been looking forward to this for years. A lot of guys at work had this dream but they never pursued it, retired and died. We stayed with it, and it's great."

"I handle the wheel but she (wife Patricia) provides the directions," Howard said.

"We have been everywhere, from Nova Scotia to San Diego, but we are home every night," he said.

"We have been married 55 years and manage to live together in this small place in harmony!" Patricia said.

All aboard for coastline cruise

Members of the UTU Alumni Association have spoken: They want to enjoy a fall cruise along the eastern coast of New England and Canada, and the UTU is going to make it happen for them!

The UTU recently aligned with Landfall American Express Travel to offer members of the Alumni Association discount travel offerings. This cruise is the first.

The cruise will be Sept. 26 to Oct. 3 aboard the Princess Cruise Lines' *Caribbean Princess*.

Participants will enjoy a leisurely seven-day sail from New York up the coast and back, stopping at Newport, R.I.; Boston; Bar Harbor, Maine; St. John, New Brunswick, and Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Rates start at \$400 per person (double occupancy) plus \$295 in taxes and government fees; rates are subject to change, and restrictions apply.



For a complete itinerary and more information, call Landfall American Express Travel toll free at (800) 835-9233; e-mail travel@landfalltravel.com or log onto www.landfalltravel.com. Landfall can also arrange airfares.

This cruise is open to members of the UTU Alumni Association; other UTU members, however, are welcome to join them.

THE FINAL CALL

Following are the names of recently deceased members who maintained annual membership in the UTU Alumni Association (formerly known as the UTU for Life Program), according to reports received at UTU International Headquarters. These brothers and sisters will be missed by their many friends and by fellow UTU Alumni Association members.

Local	Name	City/State	Local	Name	City/State	Local	Name	City/State
2	McConnell, Harold M.	Elyria, Ohio	544	Johnson, Daryl D.	Havre, Mont.	1059	Richardson, Vern L.	Minot, N.D.
9	Malone, Odell J.	Lubbock, Texas	596	Vidak, Henry G.	Newport, N.C.	1177	Dubrosky, Lavern A.	Willmar, Minn.
94	Wilson, Earl K.	Branson West, Mo.	620	Stephens, Robert M.	Springfield, Ill.	1177	Radke, William A.	Breckenridge, Minn.
98	Kadluboski, Joseph A.	Pleasanton, Calif.	627	Aden, Melvin R.	Blue Springs, Neb.	1258	Wickler, Paul B.	Kennewick, Wash.
200	Powers, Lawrence	North Platte, Neb.	631	Frazier, James B.	Newburg, W. Va.	1366	Kunz, Theron A.	Norman, Okla.
259	Foster, William W.	St. Joseph, Mo.	694	Loney, Leif L.	Marysville, Wash.	1388	Dodson, Jack A.	Ozark, Mo.
298	Dyrek, Lloyd H.	Niles, Ill.	694	Miller, Harry E.	Danville, Calif.	1433	Blackburn, Wayne K.	Streamwood, Ill.
331	Anderson, Tom W.	Sweetwater, Texas	756	Seitz, David J.	Laredo, Texas	1433	Peterson Jr., Walter V.	St. Charles, Ill.
363	Albert, Bernard L.	Vinton, Va.	771	Kerr, Donald G.	Needles, Calif.	1505	Pringle, E.W.	Spokane, Wash.
367	Wolf, R.E.	Omaha, Neb.	771	More, Thomas	Needles, Calif.	1518	Bowsman, Eugene J.	Indianapolis, Ind.
375	McBride, Dale C.	Edgemont, S.D.	771	Stearns, Donald L.	Umpqua, Ore.	1529	Boening, Donald	Toledo, Ohio
385	Calise, Giovanni B.	Toms River, N.J.	792	Baldwin, John E.	New Philadelphia, Ohio	1570	Phillips Jr., Francis	Gerlach, Nev.
446	Butcher, Clinton E.	Cheyenne, Wyo.	792	Brennan Jr., William J.	Mentor, Ohio	1620	Rose, Wesley D.	Middlebury, Ind.
462	Buckley, Ivan B.	Pagosa Springs, Col.	857	Remling, Joseph C.	San Antonio, Texas	1962	Hoekstra, Daniel L.	Hudsonville, Mich.
462	Griffey Jr., Herman A.	Fayetteville, Ark.	898	Kaufman, Stephen S.	Potomac, Md.			
493	Larsen, Orville H.	Council Bluffs, Iowa	903	Riles, Walter A.	Middleburg, Fla.			
496	Scalf Jr., Willie M.	Sidney, Ky.	1006	Hromada, Ernest	New Salem, Pa.			

Don't gamble with your retirement money!

With the stock market fluctuating in value, now is the time to ensure a positive return on your money.

Bet on a sure thing. UTUIA is currently paying 4% interest on IRAs and annuities. Although that rate can change from time to time based on UTUIA's investment earnings, you will never earn less than our guaranteed 3% interest rate.



Give us a call toll-free at 800-558-8842, or complete and return the coupon below to receive more information.



Information, please

I would like more information on the following UTUIA life annuities. Please print.

Traditional IRA Roth IRA Flexible Premium Annuity



Full name _____ Date of birth _____ UTU local number _____
 Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
 Telephone number with area code _____ Sex _____ Are you currently employed? Yes No

Complete and mail to: UTUIA Sales Dept., 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250

04/09

North Dakota legislature passes bill limiting train whistles

BISMARCK, N.D. – With the support of UTU's North Dakota State Legislative Board, the legislature here has passed a bill that limits the frequency of when locomotive personnel must blow their train whistles.

Train crews in North Dakota will no longer be required to blow their whistles at every private crossing.

H.B. 1342 also requires that private crossings be marked with cross bucks and stop signs. Whistle posts will be removed.

If a land owner or someone with an interest in the area wants the whistle routinely blown at a



Risch

private crossing, the law would allow for them to notify the railroad to put up whistle posts.

“What this bill does is align North Dakota law with federal regulations for public crossings. We are no longer required to blow the whistle routinely at every private crossing,” UTU State Legislative Director **John Risch** said.

“The overall goal is to give train crews some discretion as to when to blow the whistle at private crossings.”

Risch said the UTU is also in support of state senate bill S.B. 2338 that would provide funding for improved rail crossing safety with revenue designated to the state's Highway Trust Fund.

“Currently, railroads in North Dakota pay \$3.2 million annually in a special fuel tax that goes into the Highway Trust Fund,” Risch said. “It is totally inappropriate that railroads pay money into the fund to directly subsidize a competing industry.”

“Consequently, we are working with the legislature to use some of the railroad fuel tax money for rail crossing safety, including quiet zones, improved electronic gates, and other upgrades.”

To voice support of S.B. 2338, Risch said UTU members in North Dakota should call the legislative telephone message center at (888) NDLEGIS (635-3447) or (701) 328-3373 and leave a message for legislators in support of S.B. 2338.

THE UTU INTERNATIONAL STAFF: HERE TO SERVE YOU

BRENDA BARRON

Brenda Barron serves the UTU and UTUIA as secretary to General Counsel Clint Miller and Associate General Counsel Robert McCarty.

She started in 1980 in the union's Updating Department, then worked a number of years in the Accounting Department. She also served as secretary to now-retired Vice President Pete Patsouras. She has been in the Legal Department since 1995. “I type legal briefs and correspondence, do filing and keep the legal books current,” she said. “I also handle a lot of phone calls. There are a lot of deadlines and the work often is fast paced so the days go quickly. It's certainly not boring.”



PATRICIA SCHMIDT

Patricia Schmidt is the assistant director of UTUIA's Claims Department. She started in 1974 as a clerk in the Policyholders Service Department. Since then she has worked her way up through various assignments in the UTUIA, information technology and accounting departments. “My department handles accident and health, premium waiver, life and endowment claims,” she said. “In

addition, I address and solve any questions that may arise in the department. It is gratifying to be able to help our members and their families during times of need.”



LISA POWERS

Lisa Powers is the UTUIA's associate underwriter. She started in early 2007 after spending 13 years with Central Reserve Life Insurance. “I review applications along with required medical information, such as paramedical exams and medical records, against industry-standard guidelines, to determine the eligibility of insurance for those members applying for our disability income replacement insurance and/or life insurance products,” she said. “I enjoy working at UTUIA and facing the challenges and rewards that each day can bring.”



Amtrak announces capital improvements

WASHINGTON – Amtrak has released a list of capital projects to be funded by \$1.3 billion from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

The highlights of the list include railcar and locomotive restoration to augment the current fleet; projects to bring Amtrak stations into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); passenger and maintenance facility

improvements, and track, bridge and signal replacements and upgrades.

The investment package is broken down into two separate accounts: one for railroad and station capital projects funded at \$845 million and one for security and life safety projects, funded at \$450 million.

For a detailed list of projects, go to www.Amtrak.com and click on "Inside Amtrak," then "Other Reports."

Following are examples – not a comprehensive list – of some of the projects to be performed with ARRA funding.

Railcars and locomotives

Amtrak shops in Beech Grove, Ind., will rebuild 20 out-of-service Superliner and one Viewliner railcar (\$19.3 million) and 15 locomotives (\$13 million) and the Amtrak shops in Bear, Del., will rebuild 60 out-of-service Amfleet railcars (\$58.5 million). This equipment can be used throughout the Amtrak system.

ADA compliance

More than 200 stations in 40 states will receive needed upgrades to improve accessibility for disabled persons (\$40 million).

Other station projects

Replacement of the existing Auto Train passenger station in Sanford, Fla., (\$10 million)

will be carried out, and the Wilmington, Del., station will receive more than \$20 million for renovation.

Bridges, tracks, structures

This includes major investments such as the Niantic River Bridge replacement in Connecticut (\$100 million), the renewal of 10 other bridges in Delaware, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and New York (\$65 million), construction of a maintenance facility in Los Angeles (\$25 million) and Seattle (\$35 million), improvements to the Chicago facilities (\$47.5 million) and the Miami (Hialeah) maintenance facility (\$25 million).

Security and safety improvements

The \$450 million Security and Safety fund will be used for investments in security measures that reduce infrastructure vulnerabilities and enhance incident management at Amtrak facilities nationwide, including stations, bridges, tunnels, maintenance facilities and other buildings.

Enhancements to safety installations include projects such as fire detection and suppression systems and improved emergency egress from buildings and tunnels. Projects in this category also involve expansion of Positive Train Control safety systems in the Northeast Corridor (\$50 million) and Michigan (\$10 million).

UTU aids crews

Continued from page 1

ing heat and air conditioning, secure locations for baggage, and fully operational seat belts.

The law also requires that each van operator maintain liability insurance of at least \$5 million for each motor vehicle used to transport rail employees.

Beavers began the legislative effort after receiving a steady stream of complaints from UTU members that drivers who transported them to and from rail terminals appeared fatigued at the wheel and that the vehicles had numerous safety defects.

"We approached rail management and the contract carriers who transport crews, seeking their cooperation in solving these problems, but were stonewalled," Evans said.

"So we invited the BLET to take part in a safety audit of these operations, allowing us jointly to provide evidence of safety problems to Arkansas lawmakers, who introduced the legislation mandating safety improvements," Evans said.

Recognizing that contract transportation of rail crews is covered by federal safety law when the vans operate in interstate service, the legislation makes clear that if federal safety law administered by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration does not apply, then the Arkansas law will apply to all intrastate operations.

"This removed any grey area that might have allowed van operators to avoid safety regulation within Arkansas," Evans said.

Former One Bus GC Frierson dies

Former One Bus General Chairperson **Joe Frierson** passed away March 5. He was 56.

Frierson, of Local 710 in Newark, N.J., served as general chairperson from 1999 to 2003. He joined the UTU in 1990.

"Joe was a devoted member and officer and he will be missed by his fellow members," UTU Bus Vice President Vic Baffoni said.

Szabo nominated

Continued from page 1

policy and planning of the New York State DOT, a post she has held since June 2007, with responsibility for rail, aviation, and public transportation.

Her experience includes serving as deputy secretary for local and area transportation at PennDOT, director of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, and general manager for the Austin, Texas, Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

Earlier in her career, Rae was a ticket sales and tour representative for Adirondack Trailways, whose bus operators and mechanics are represented by the UTU.

In 2006, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* newspaper said of Rae: "She is also known for taking a tough stand with CSX Corp., the Florida-based railroad that owns the tracks that run through the heart of Virginia. Rae said she was 'disappointed and frustrated' with CSX's foot-dragging in starting a \$65.7 million upgrade funded by the state. Her outspokenness led to a meeting between CSX's top executives, who apologized to then-Gov. Mark Warner."

To follow the confirmation process, log on regularly to www.utu.org and sign up for UTU e-mail alerts on the Web home page.

Hazmat training at regional meeting

Rail workers interested in learning about how to respond to hazardous-materials incidents are encouraged to attend a special seminar prior to the San Francisco regional meeting.

Certified trainers from the rail workers' hazmat training program, all members of the UTU, will conduct a full-day training session on hazmat first response Sunday, July 5, at the Westin St. Francis Hotel, the host hotel for the meeting.

Training begins at 8:30 a.m. and covers duties of first responders, hazmat regulations, communications, chemical properties, hazard classifications, resources for health and safety activists, and railroad security.

Because space is limited, participants must commit to attend the all-day session.

A \$25 registration fee is required, which will help cover the cost of program materials.

Checks should be made payable to the "UTU." Please keep payments for this seminar separate from regional meeting registration fees. On-site registration will be held if there is space available.

To enroll, send your name, local number, e-mail address and telephone number, along with payment, to UTU Hazmat Program, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107.

Meet your UTU Designated Legal Counsel

There is no more dangerous work environment than on the railroads, where injuries too often are severe. The Federal Employers' Liability Act (FELA) makes railroads accountable for unsafe working conditions. Railroads retain skilled attorneys to protect their interests. You also have access to skilled and experienced attorneys who understand the railroad industry, its

safety hazards, and every aspect of the FELA. They are the UTU Designated Legal Counsel, chosen for their special knowledge and experience. Their job is to represent you. This continuing column introduces you to all of the UTU Designated Legal Counsel. For a complete listing, go to the UTU home page at www.utu.org and click on the blue tile, "Designated Legal Counsel."



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If you are injured on the job, the Federal Employers' Liability Act (FELA) and your UTU designated legal counsel are the best friends you and your family have. These successful trial lawyers are specialists in handling FELA claims, and are fully experienced in dealing with railroad claim agents and railroad lawyers.

When an employee is injured, the railroad puts a machine in motion to protect itself. Immediately, the claims agent and managers conduct re-enactments, interview witnesses, take pictures, preserve evidence, do surveillance of injured employees and much more. They are trained and skilled to protect the railroad. The injured employee MUST ask: Who, with training and skill, is protecting me?

Regional meetings offer education, fraternalism

The 2009 UTU/UTUIA regional meetings have been designed to provide a grand sense of fraternalism, lots of worthwhile education and tons of fun for the whole family.

As before, each regional meeting will run for 2 1/2 days, ending early on the afternoon of the third day. The evening of the first day has been left unscheduled so you, your family and friends will be free to explore and enjoy the many offerings of the regional meeting cities.

UTU meeting registration and hotel reservations can be made online by visiting www.utu.org and clicking on the "Meetings" tile in the blue menu bar at the left-hand side of the UTU homepage.

All those attending the regional meetings must be registered in order to attend any planned social function. Children ages 11 and under who are pre-registered are complimentary. The registration form is printed on the right.

The pre-registration fee for the 2009 regional meetings is \$150 per member, spouse or child over age 11. Additional fees apply for the golf outings. You must make your own room reservations, and certain deadlines apply.

The \$150 registration fee covers all workshop materials; a welcoming reception the night before the meeting; three lunches and one evening meal. Those wishing to attend only the workshops do not need to pay the registration fee. No one-day registrations are offered.

A completed registration form listing each attendee, regardless of age, and complete payment in U.S. funds must be received at the UTU International Headquarters, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107, 10 days prior to the scheduled start of the meetings or the registrant will be charged the on-site registration fee of \$200.

You may cancel your regional meeting registration 10 days prior to the first day of the meeting or the golf outing without penalty. Please fax any changes or cancellations immediately to the UTU International Headquarters at (216) 228-5755.

SAN FRANCISCO, JULY 6-8

WESTIN ST. FRANCIS
335 POWELL ST.
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102
WWW.WESTINSTFRANCIS.COM

Hotel reservations: (800) WESTIN1 toll free; (415) 397-7000 direct; (415) 774-0124 fax

Reservation code: "United Transportation Union"
Daily room rate: \$139 single/double, plus tax; rates good for three days before and after the meeting, depending upon availability

Reservation deadline: June 4, or until all rooms being held for the UTU are reserved

Parking: Valet park: \$49 per night (see other parking options on www.utu.org)

Golf outing: The regional meeting golf outing will be held Sunday, July 5, at the Chuck Corcia Golf Complex in Alameda. The cost is \$80 per golfer, which includes transportation, golf, lunch and more. See www.utu.org for details.

NEW ORLEANS, AUG. 17-19

SHERATON NEW ORLEANS
500 CANAL ST.
NEW ORLEANS, LA 70130
WWW.SHERATONNEWORLEANS.COM

Hotel reservations: (888) 627-7033 toll free; (504) 525-2500 direct; (504) 595-5552 fax

Reservation code: "United Transportation Union"
Daily room rate: \$99 single/double, plus tax. Room rates are good three days before and after the meeting, based upon availability.

Reservation deadline: July 17, or until all rooms being held for UTU are reserved.

Parking: \$30.00 per day

Golf outing: The regional meeting golf outing will be held Sunday, Aug. 16, at the Stonebridge Country Club in Gretna. The cost is \$80 per golfer, which includes transportation, golf, lunch and more. See www.utu.org for details.

DISCOUNT AIRFARES, CAR RENTALS

Continental Airlines and jetBlue Airways are offering discounted airfares to UTU members and others attending the San Francisco and New Orleans regional meetings. See the UTU Web site, www.utu.org, for details.

The UTU also has arranged with Avis Rent-a-Car to offer discounted rates to UTU members attending the 2009 regional meetings. To reserve a car, contact Avis at (800) 331-1600 and use the UTU's Avis Worldwide Discount (AWD) number: **D150699**. Or reserve online at www.avis.com.

TWO SPOUSE TOURS SET

The UTU is arranging **two different tours of local attractions** at both regional meetings. The tours will take place the day before, as well as the first day of, each regional meeting. Fees are \$35 per registered spouse, guest or child, or \$60 per unregistered spouse, guest or child. Check out www.utu.org for complete details.

UTU REGIONAL MEETING REGISTRATION FORM

Registering before the regional meetings speeds sign-in procedures, helps organizers plan more accurately, and saves on meeting costs. **Each person attending the regional meeting, including family members and guests, MUST be registered in order to attend any event. Please note that these meetings last 2 1/2 days and conclude on the afternoon of the third day.** Registration fees are \$150 per person; children 11 years of age and under are complimentary. On-site registration is \$200 per person. All fees must be paid in U.S. funds. Canadian funds will be returned, possibly delaying your registration. If you have questions, consult your bank. Registration forms with payment must be received at the UTU International 10 days prior to the start of the meeting for the member/spouse to be considered pre-registered.

Which regional meeting will you be attending? San Francisco New Orleans

Arrival date: _____ Departure date: _____

Transportation type: Automobile Air Other

Member registration

Name _____ Local _____ Title (if any) _____

Home address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Phone number () _____ Email _____

Meals: Day 1 Lunch No meal
 Day 2 Lunch Dinner Both No meals
 Day 3 Lunch No meal

Spouse registration San Francisco New Orleans

Spouse name _____ Title (if any) _____

Meals: Day 1 Lunch No meal
 Day 2 Lunch Dinner Both No meals
 Day 3 Lunch No meal

Spouse/guest tour: Sunday or Monday (\$35 per registered spouse; \$60 per unregistered spouse)

Child registration San Francisco New Orleans

Child name _____ Age _____

Meals: Day 1 Lunch No meal
 Day 2 Lunch Dinner Both No meals
 Day 3 Lunch No meal

Child name _____ Age _____

Meals: Day 1 Lunch No meal
 Day 2 Lunch Dinner Both No meals
 Day 3 Lunch No meal

Child name _____ Age _____

Meals: Day 1 Lunch No meal
 Day 2 Lunch Dinner Both No meals
 Day 3 Lunch No meal

Child name _____ Age _____

Meals: Day 1 Lunch No meal
 Day 2 Lunch Dinner Both No meals
 Day 3 Lunch No meal

Tour: Sunday or Monday (\$35 per registered child; \$60 per unregistered child) No. attending _____

Guest registration San Francisco New Orleans

Guest name _____ Relationship to member _____

Home address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Meals: Day 1 Lunch No meal
 Day 2 Lunch Dinner Both No meals
 Day 3 Lunch No meal

Spouse/guest tour: Sunday or Monday (\$35 per registered spouse; \$60 per unregistered spouse)

Golf registration San Francisco New Orleans

Name _____ Handicap _____ Name _____ Handicap _____

Name _____ Handicap _____ Name _____ Handicap _____
 (Golf fees are \$80 per golfer; include in total payment. Please provide names of others if foursome.)

Payment options

Check/money order enclosed (U.S. funds only) \$ _____

Credit card VISA MasterCard

Card number _____ Exp. date _____ Total charged \$ _____

Signature _____

Should additional space be needed, make copies of this form and attach to the original. This form and payment of \$150 per person over the age of 11, plus golf registration fees of \$80 per golfer (if applicable) and spouse/guest tour fees (if applicable), must be received at the UTU International Headquarters, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250, 10 days prior to the regional meeting for the member/spouse to be considered pre-registered. Make checks or money orders payable in U.S. funds to "UTU Regional Meeting." Those who do not pre-register for the regional meeting but choose to register at the meeting site will be charged a \$50 penalty fee.

Published monthly (except for combined months of December/January and July/August) by the UNITED TRANSPORTATION UNION, 14600 DETROIT AVE., CLEVELAND, OH 44107-4250 • Periodicals postage paid at Cleveland, Ohio, and additional mailing offices • Mike Futhey, International President; Kim Thompson, General Secretary & Treasurer • This publication available on microfilm from National Archive Publishing, P.O. Box 998, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to UTU News, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250.

Periodicals Postage
PAID at Cleveland, Ohio,
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Mailing Offices



The Official Publication of the United Transportation Union

UTU's Delbert Strunk scores for new hires

Some of UTU's newest members are suffering during this economic recession; many haven't worked enough days to qualify for Railroad Unemployment Insurance benefits.

Often having left non-railroad employment and paid out of their own pockets for training for their first railroad job – only to be furloughed – many of these new hires have had the economic winds and optimism knocked completely out of them.

On Norfolk Southern, General Chairperson **Delbert Strunk** (GO 687) searched for a means of salvaging the careers of eager new hires. Strunk knew he couldn't get them back to work until the economy improves, but he could make their return to work easier, and ensure they built seniority while on furlough.

Strunk, who also is first alternate International vice president – East, convinced NS to suspend application of a contract clause that required newly hired, and then furloughed, employees to be terminated permanently following 365 days of consecutive furlough.

Strunk and NS amended, for Strunk's general committee of adjustment, Article XII of the 1985 UTU National Railroad Agreement (still in force). The amendment suspends operation of Article XII until Oct. 31, 2010.

Now – and through Oct. 31, 2010 – new hires with fewer than three years of service who have been fur-

loughed, or are furloughed, by NS on Strunk's general committee, will not be permanently terminated by NS if their furlough extends for 365 consecutive days.

Thus, even if their furlough extends for 365 consecutive days, they will be called back to work in order of seniority without having to go through the rehire process – and they will accrue seniority for that time on furlough.

Some 600 new hires on Strunk's general committee will benefit.

Strunk's agreement was the first on NS, and he is working with other UTU general chairpersons to help them gain similar agreements.

"Our newest members should know that the UTU is totally committed to protecting every member's rights, whether a 30-year veteran or a new hire," Strunk said. "This is a small step to ensure a prosperous and fulfilling career on Norfolk Southern for new employees."

UTU International President Mike Futhey credited general committee autonomy – guaranteed under the UTU constitution – for giving general chairpersons significant leeway to find creative ways to help members.

"The best ideas often are born at the general committee and local level, and then are shared with others," Futhey said. "We all benefit from this creativity and the autonomy of general committees."



Strunk

This month's winning photo:

The UTU Public Relations Department awards UTU gear to the union member who submits the best photograph during the previous months.

The winning photo will be published in the *UTU News*. Exceptional photographs will be included on the UTU Web site.

The UTU would like to see photographs or digital photographs of work-related scenes, such as railroad, bus or mass transit operations, new equipment photos, scenic shots, activities of your local, or photos of your brothers and sisters keeping America rolling.

Printed photographs should be mailed to UTU News, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107.

High-resolution digital photographs should be in the JPEG format and e-mailed to "utunews@utu.org".

With each photograph, please include your name and UTU local number, the names of the persons in the photo (left to right), where the photo was taken, and all other pertinent information.

All photographs submitted become property of the UTU.

Remember to review your employer's policies regarding use of cameras on the property or during work hours.



This month's winning photograph was taken by **Robert D. Clites**, a CSX conductor and member of Local 631 in Brunswick, Md. Clites took this photo at milepost BF 211.0 at Sand Patch, Pa. The Sand Patch Grade is 100 miles of grades and curves over the Allegheny Mountains in Pennsylvania and Maryland. It is one of the legendary meccas for American railfans.



Please recycle

Inside this issue of the UTU News:



UTU retiree **Elmond Eckblad** provides words of wisdom. See page 2.



Kansas legislative board members meet and greet. See page 5.



UTU retiree, wife, live full time in motorhome. See page 8.



UTU offers Alumni scenic East Coast cruise. See page 8.