



UTU News

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The Official Publication of the United Transportation Union

News and Notes

UTU member killed

UTU member **John J. Deutch**, a Union Pacific employee working as a conductor on a Metra commuter crew outside Chicago, was struck and killed by a train Jan. 8 at the Waukegan, Ill., Metra station.

Deutch, a member of Local 528 in Chicago, was 59 and looking forward to retiring in April, according to Local Chairperson David Wells.



Deutch

He leaves behind a wife and three adult children, Wells said, including a daughter in the Air Force.

"He was a nice guy," Wells said. "He served in Viet Nam and was wounded there. I have

known him for 35 years. You don't understand sad until you have to go to his house. He was a great co-worker, a good union member and a veteran who had served his country. He was special."

Deutch was struck around 8:30 p.m. by the passing Metra train. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

TENTATIVE AGREEMENT!

UTU, carriers reach deal on wages, rules and benefits



Members of the UTU National Rail Contract Negotiating Team are joined by U.S. Rep. Corrine Brown (D-Fla.) following signing of a tentative agreement between the UTU and representatives of the National Carriers' Conference Committee on Jan. 23 in Jacksonville, Fla. Brown heads the House of Representatives' Subcommittee on Railroads. Standing, from left, are UTU General Chairperson John Lesniewski, UTU Assistant President Arty Martin, Brown, UTU International President Mike Futhey, UTU Vice President John Babler and UTU Vice President J.R. "Jim" Cumby. Kneeling, from left, are Alternate Vice President -East Delbert Strunk, UTU National Legislative Director James Brunkenhoefer and UTU Vice President Robert Kerley.

AETNA WARNS OF INELIGIBILITY

Aetna has sent **FINAL NOTICES** to all employees eligible for coverage under the Railroad Employees' National Dental Plan who have not yet provided the required proof to verify their dependents' eligibility for this coverage.

Aetna began to seek verification of eligible dependents last year. To date, many members have not responded to this request or supplied proof of their dependents' eligibility for coverage, placing continued coverage in jeopardy.

If you have not yet responded to previous requests for this information, it is imperative that you do so immediately. Failure to respond to this **FINAL NOTICE** will result in the termination of coverage for your eligible dependents, **not only under the dental plan but also under the medical plan.**

It is vital that UTU members who have not yet responded comply immediately with this request for dependent verification to avoid any potential discontinuation of coverage for their eligible dependents.

Failure to provide the required proof by Feb. 29 will result in termination of dependent benefits March 15.

This dependent eligibility audit is being conducted in accordance with understandings reached between rail management and labor.

Aetna has established a toll-free help line at (866) 682-5619. It is staffed by customer service representatives specially trained to answer questions about the verification process and the required documentation.

If you have not received any requests for dependent verification from Aetna, please call Aetna's help line at the number above immediately to begin the process.

The United Transportation Union (UTU) and the National Carriers' Conference Committee (NCCC) reached a tentative agreement Jan. 23 on wages, rules and working conditions retroactive to Jan. 1, 2005, and continuing in force through Dec. 31, 2009.

The tentative agreement, which must be ratified by some 46,000 affected UTU members, applies to conductors, brakemen, engineers, fire-

men, hostlers, switchmen and yardmasters employed by BNSF, CSX, Kansas City Southern, Norfolk Southern, Union Pacific and smaller railroads party to the national agreement between the UTU and the NCCC.

After nearly three years of negotiations, a new bargaining team, headed by recently elected

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Amtrak deal averts strike

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Amtrak said it has reached a preliminary deal with nine labor unions averting a potentially devastating strike.

Details of the agreement will not be released until it is ratified by affected union members in coming weeks, according to a statement from Amtrak.

The UTU remains in contract talks with Amtrak and was not a member of the coalition that just reached the agreement.



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Around the **UTU**

Local 161, Seattle, Wash.

Jeannie Houchens, a bus driver for Gray Line of Seattle, died in a single-vehicle crash on Interstate 5 in downtown Seattle on Dec. 19. The bus she was operating spun around and slammed into a concrete barrier. "Jeannie was a kind-hearted, two-time cancer survivor who was loved by all who knew her," said Local President **Brian Donald**. Houchen's family suggests donations to the American Cancer Society. Donald also reported that his son, Brandon, passed away on Thanksgiving Day at the age of 24. He died as a result of cardiomegaly. "There is, apparently, no test capable of detecting this unless the heart is severely enlarged. He died peacefully in his sleep, thankfully," Donald said.

Local 367, Omaha, Neb.

This Union Pacific local held its annual raffle for charity in November, raising \$1,475 for the Heart Ministry Center. The center raises funds to assist disadvantaged children during the Christmas season, said Legislative Rep. **Kevin Kresl**. The first-prize winner was member **Dan Jamrozy**, who received a Remington Unlimited 12-gauge shotgun. Second-prize winner of a camera was member **John McGruder**. Kresl said the event was coordinated by Local Vice President **Phil Tamisiea**, who "strongly believes in community involvement and has actively supported Heart Ministry by donating \$4,295 over the past several years."



On Dec. 19, members of Local 367 presented a check to Heart Ministry Executive Director Sara Hohnstein. Pictured, from left, are Local Chairperson John Vaughan, Secretary & Treasurer Joe Brown, Legislative Rep. Kevin Kresl, Assistant Legislative Rep. Mike Keith, Hohnstein, Vice President Phil Tamisiea and Local Chairperson Dick Casey.

Local 524, Palestine, Texas

Friends are mourning the loss of Larry Randall "Randy" Bumpurs, who passed away last month. Bumpurs, 31, was the son of Union Pacific General Chairperson **Larry Bumpurs**. He is survived by his wife, Tamara, daughters Gracie and Allie, and parents Larry and Nikki. Bumpurs was laid to rest at the Seale-Round Prairie Cemetery in Marquez, Texas.



Bumpurs

Local 597, Des Plaines, Ill.

This Union Pacific local is mourning the loss of terminal engineer and brother **Willy L. Torres**, who passed away last month. "He was a good engineer, union member and family man," reported Local Vice President **Harry C. Lewis Jr.**

Local 982, Rochester, N.Y.

The members of this local and the New England Lines General Committee of Adjustment GO-081 presented **Daniel T. Fadden** with a plaque commemorating his 35 years of service with Penn Central, Conrail and CSX. Fadden, who boasts 35 years of injury-free service, retired last month according to Local Chairperson **Dave Murphy**.



Pictured, from left, are Rud Eile band members Matt Glover, Martin Butler (UTU member and Amtrak conductor), Colm O'Brien and Jerry Murphy.

Members collaborate on Irish music tracks

Two Boston Amtrak conductors have joined with a host of other musicians to create "Rud Eile – The Album," a 17-track CD of traditional Irish tunes that Irish Hit Parade radio calls "a must-have in all Irish music collections."

The CD features the sounds of the band Rud Eile, pronounced "rud ella," with the UTU's own Martin Butler performing on the Celtic drum. Butler is an Amtrak conductor and a member of Local 1462 at Boston. The other band members are Colm O'Brien, Matt Glover and Jerry Murphy.

The 17 tracks on the CD are the work of Rud Eile and 20 other musicians, including fellow Amtrak conductor and Local 262 Secretary & Treasurer Marty Murphy. The CD took almost two years to produce and was recorded in Hingham, Mass., New York City and Westmeath, Ireland.

While the music on the CD is considered traditionally Irish, Butler terms the individual tracks on the CD "eclectic," featuring a variety of musical styles and influences.

In fact, that is how fellow UTU member Murphy got involved. He is featured on one of the tracks on the CD playing the finger-pick guitar. "There was an awful lot of thought given to each track on the album," Butler said. In the track featuring Murphy, the band was looking for a "bluegrass" sound and Murphy fit the bill.

Butler hails from the village of Cloughjordan in County Tipperary, Ireland. He moved to the U.S. in the early 90s to work in the cruise ship industry, but eventually found his way to Boston. Rud Eile member Jerry Murphy also grew up in County Tipperary, only 13 miles away from where Butler was raised, but the two never met up until they were in Boston.

Odd as it may sound, Butler says Boston, not Ireland, is the center of the Irish music world. Murphy agrees. "I was in Ireland in April for my sister's wedding. I was surprised at the music. I asked people what they listened to and one guy told me 'Justin Timberlake,'" he said.

Subscribers to the Sirius satellite-radio network can often hear tracks from the CD on the network's Celtic Lounge station.

To find out more about the band's music, or to purchase its CD, visit the band's Web site at www.rudeilemusic.com. Sample tracks of the band's music are available too.

The CD or individual songs can also be purchased at www.cdfreedom.com or through iTunes.

Local 1252, Fresno, Calif.

Fred Uriate, 89, a former conductor, local chairperson and local president, was recognized recently by the *Fresno Bee* with a full-page story on his life and accomplishments, notes retired former Secretary & Treasurer **D.L. Heffernan**. Uriate, a 50-year member of the Elks Club, has been a cow-

boy most of his life. He served as grand marshal of the Clovis Rodeo in 2002, and has cooked more than 7,000 lbs. of tri-tip annually at the Clovis Rodeo and at Clovis schools, the newspaper noted. "He has retired from this activity and will just keep an eye on things – as any good conductor does," Heffernan noted.

Local 1263, Valdosta, Ga.

Legislative Rep. **Richard A. Youmans Jr.** reported that this Norfolk Southern local has a Web site featuring a 2008 NS rules study guide, news, important contact information, a local events calendar and more. The site can be found at www.L1263.org.

Local 1383, Gary, Ind.

The employees of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway Co. belonging to this local have recognized **Dannie "Doc" Williams** after 35 years of service. Local Secretary **Tom Collins** reports that Williams was first elected vice local chairperson in 1974, and since that time, has held the positions of local secretary, vice local chairperson (yardmasters), local chairperson (yardmasters), system yardmaster representative and secretary of EJ&E General Committee GO-329. Pictured below, from left, are Local Chairperson **Virgil Smith**, Williams, and GO-329 General Chairperson **Cory Mayberry**.



Local 1594, Upper Darby, Pa.

Local President **Ron Koran** reports that two members from the local were excluded from an article in the January 2008 *UTU News* recognizing employees of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority, who were rewarded for their safety efforts. The members were 11-year SEPTA employee **Larence G. Brown** and 15-year SEPTA employee **Thomas Sausman**.

Local 1626, Anchorage, Alaska

The members of this Alaska Railroad local have established a funeral fund for **Jesse Gray**, the 28-year-old son of conductor **Clinton "Buddy" Gray** and his late wife, Margie, who passed away last month of a sudden heart attack. Any money raised will be used to assist Jesse's wife, Alicia, with final costs. Donations may be sent to the Jesse Gray Fund, Wells Fargo Bank, 301 W. Northern Lights Blvd., Anchorage, AK 99503-2655. The account number is 3036757635, General Committee Secretary **M. Ashley Schultze** reported.

Railroaders to picnic in St. Petersburg, Fla.

Retired member **Joe Alenduff** is again organizing an annual picnic for railroaders in the vicinity of St. Petersburg, Fla. The event, scheduled for Sat., March 15, will run from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Shelter 15 in Ft. DeSoto Park in St. Petersburg. Coffee and iced tea will be furnished. Participants are urged to bring two covered dishes to share, their own place settings and cups. All railroaders, their friends and relatives are welcome and encouraged to pass the word, Alenduff said. Take U.S. 19 South, or Exit 17 on I-275 at St. Petersburg and follow the signs. For more information, contact Alenduff at (727) 522-6808 or send e-mail to him at jalenduff@tampabay.rr.com.

Your UTU negotiating team supports the proposal:

Mike Futhey

International President



We stared down the carriers' political power to preserve crew consist and FELA. We then broke their pattern with other organizations and gave up nothing.

We receive the same 17-percent wage increase, but are the only organization to retain a COLA. We preserved entry rates as a live issue to be decided in arbitration. We extracted something extra for yardmasters. We may have to wait a couple of years for the higher meal allowance, but we have the only national agreement providing for it. We also expanded eligibility for the managed health-care option.

John Babler

International Vice President



Once again, UTU delivers a superior agreement for ratification to the TE&Y membership. The tentative agreement is an improvement over the pattern agreements reached by the other rail unions that settled earlier.

The tentative agreement is the result of 2 1/2 years of contentious negotiations and litigation. As a member of the UTU's negotiating team, I support this superior agreement and would request that the membership lend their ratification support for same.

Arty Martin

Assistant President



Only the UTU preserved COLAs, which protect us against price inflation while new agreements are negotiated and general wage increases (GWI) are not being paid. Several years sometimes elapse between the "last" GWI of one agreement and the "first" of the succeeding agreement. COLAs put more dollars in our pockets during this period.

Some call the COLA a loan (that is interest free), but I call a COLA an important financial bridge protecting us against price inflation between contracts. And we didn't give up a thing to preserve our COLA.

Robert Kerley

International Vice President



The UTU was forced into critical court action to overcome some of the carriers' initial adversarial demands in this bargaining round. In spite of those unprecedented challenges, and the current global economic uncertainty, the tenacity and cooperation of this dedicated negotiating team (with invaluable support from our legal and legislative departments), has ultimately produced a solid wage package for our members without sacrificing work rules or jobs.

I fully endorse this proposal and urge you to ratify it.

James Brunkenhoefer

National Legislative Director



UTU members and their families have waited long enough for this agreement. It is an agreement that gives us more than other organizations and attests to our unity and bargaining strength. The railroads had hoped that delay would divide the UTU membership and force us into a Bush slam-dunk presidential emergency board that would eliminate all trainmen jobs and repeal the FELA. This agreement is a victory for UTU members and their families. It deserves to be ratified.

Delbert Strunk

Alternate Vice President - East



We busted the pattern and that hardly ever happens. If we don't ratify this agreement, the carriers get another bite of the apple with help from their anti-union friends in the Bush White House.

When you get a deal better than the other organizations, you grab it, because it's not coming back around. We've preserved crew consist and FELA. We get everything the other organizations get – and then more, which includes an increased meal allowance, much earlier health-care coverage for new hires, and preservation of the COLA.

J.R. "Jim" Cumby

International Vice President



The UTU's tentative agreement is better than the pattern agreements reached by the other organizations. That is what our membership expects; and, once again, that is what has been achieved, even though UTU was one of the last organizations to reach a settlement.

Particularly for yardmasters, the UTU's tentative agreement provides that the carriers will contribute to the yardmasters' supplemental insurance plans beginning Jan. 1, 2010.

I believe this agreement is a good one, and it is worthy of your support.

John Lesniewski

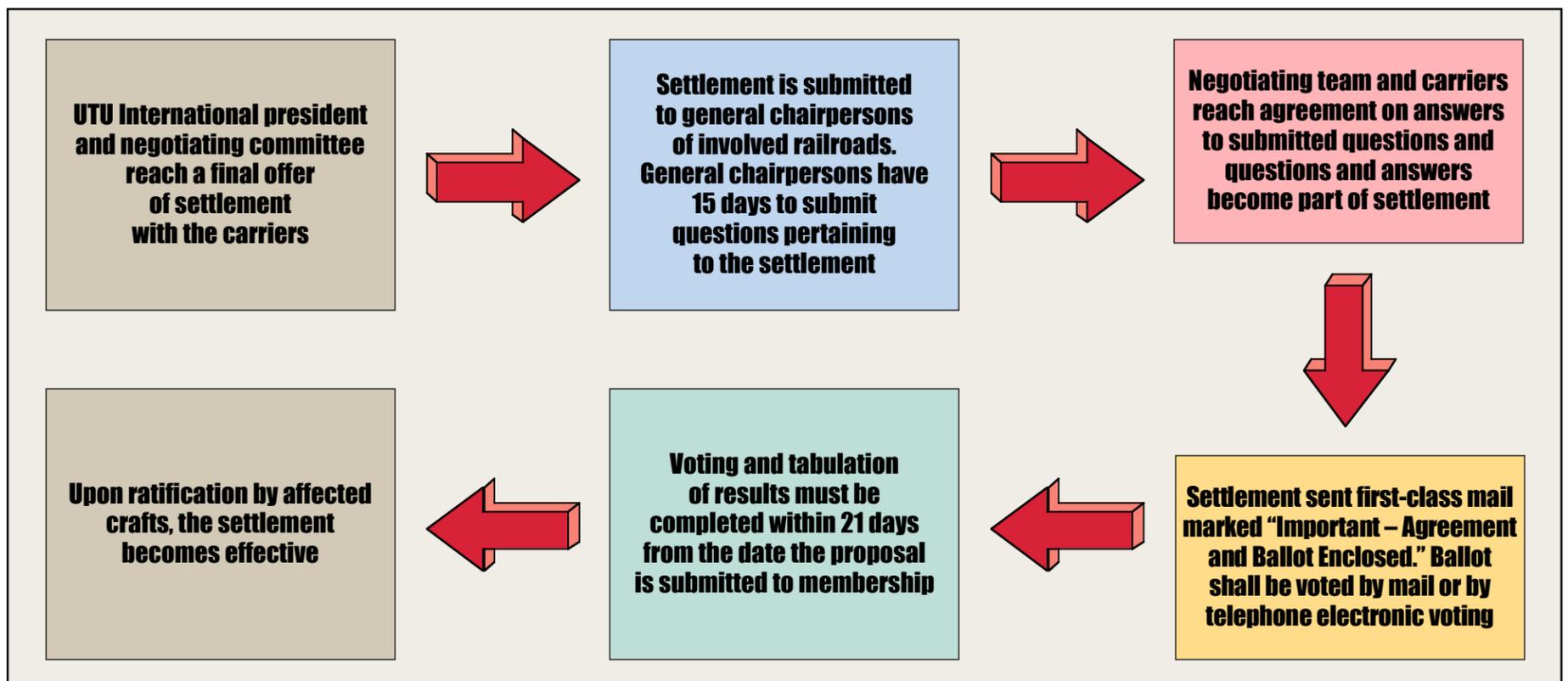
CSX General Chairperson



After the Rail Labor Bargaining Coalition established an industry settlement pattern, I'm sure almost everyone expected the UTU would end up with a cookie

cutter of their agreement, much the way all other crafts have. We didn't. We accomplished everything the Rail Labor Bargaining Coalition did, and more! Given the current economic and political climate, and the obstacles the UTU has faced from the onset of these negotiations, this was a home run by anyone's standards. I heartily endorse ratification of this agreement!

Procedure for conducting a referendum election



UTU, NCCC deal

Continued from page 1

UTU International President Mike Futhey, reached the tentative agreement two days into resumption of talks.

Other members of the negotiating team are Assistant President Arty Martin, National Legislative Director James Brunkenhoefer, UTU International Vice Presidents John Babler, J.R. (Jim) Cumby and Robert Kerley, Alternate Vice President-

East Delbert Strunk and CSX General Chairperson John Lesniewski.

Although the specifics of the tentative agreement will not be released until after discussion with affected (District 1) general chairpersons, Futhey said it provides for a 17 percent general wage increase over the life of the agreement, a retention of the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), and a cap on health-care contributions. The wage increases also include retroactive payments covering the period June 1, 2005, to June 1, 2007.

Additionally, the tentative agreement pro-

vides a mechanism for resolution of the entry-rates dispute, an increase in the held-away-from-home-terminal (HAHT) meal allowance, and, for the first time, contributions by the carriers to the yardmasters' supplemental retiree medical insurance program.

Futhey thanked the negotiating team for their "participation and their contributions to the negotiating process. The UTU and the NCCC have made commitments to a cooperative process that returns the industry to a spirit of interest-based resolution of matters of mutual concern. This is a process that will pay dividends to the membership."

We busted the pattern

Brothers and Sisters:

The tentative national agreement with BNSF, CSX, Kansas City Southern, Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific, which you will vote on soon, was hammered out in an intense two-day bargaining session Jan. 22-23 because the carriers recognized the unity the UTU brought to the negotiating table.

Equally important to the process was our return to interest-based bargaining, whereby both sides choose mutual problem solving over confrontation.

A year had gone by without a single meeting between the two sides, and the situation looked bleak.

There were credible signals from the carriers that they intended to cash in their Bush administration IOUs and move for a presidential emergency board (PEB) by spring.

After all, the carriers had established a pattern, holding ratified agreements from most of the other labor organizations.

The carriers had established a pattern agreement with most of the other unions. We wanted better than that, and got it.

The carriers reasoned they could count on a carrier-friendly PEB to recommend that the pattern be forced on us.

In an election year, with Congress not wanting a rail strike dumped in its lap, the odds were similarly high that lawmakers would quickly pass legislation ordering us back to work under the precise recommendations of the Bush-appointed PEB.

With that unhappy chain of events looming, I met with CSX CEO Michael Ward and made clear



By Mike Futhey
UTU International President

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that the UTU's intent was to craft a win/win agreement.

We both agreed that a mutually negotiated settlement is preferable to one imposed by a third party – even if the carriers thought the White House was on their side.

I asked Mr. Ward to relay our message to the other CEOs and the industry's labor negotiators.

Our bargaining team reaffirmed our intent to reach a negotiated settlement when we sat down Jan. 22 with the carriers' chief labor negotiators in Jacksonville, Fla.

We were told that they and their CEOs had been reading our leadership messages on the UTU Web site,

(COLA) during the period new agreements are being negotiated.

The UTU also was the only union to achieve, in national nego-

entry rates tied to training; and, for the first time, to make contributions to the yardmasters' supplemental retiree medical insurance program.

We busted the pattern. But if we fail to ratify this agreement, we could lose it all – and more, because a PEB and Congress could embrace the carriers' desire for one-person crews and elimination of the Federal Employers' Liability Act (FELA).

In the days ahead, we will be providing much more information on the tentative agreement, including

We busted the pattern. But if we fail to ratify this agreement, we could lose it all, and more, because a PEB and Congress could embrace the carriers' desire for one-person crews and elimination of FELA.

tiations, an increase in the meal allowance.

Also, the carriers agreed to provide full health-care insurance to new hires and their families after only one month, rather than four; agreed to arbitrate the dispute over

answers to questions posed by general chairpersons.

Please, stay informed by checking the UTU Web site, www.utu.org, periodically. This agreement deserves ratification. The alternative is unthinkable.



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The election we've been waiting for!

“Candidates who support working families may not share your opinions on gun control and abortion, but what they offer is greater job security, increased workplace safety and comprehensive and affordable health-care plans.”

According to the experts, the upcoming presidential election is the election America's working families have been waiting for.

The experts say that the candidates who have the best chance of winning in November are the ones supporting issues of major importance to American working families.



Brunkenhoefer

I am not talking about gun control, prayer in school or abortion. Right-wing conservatives have promised solutions to these issues for many decades, and convinced many working families to vote for them because of it; but in spite of all their election promises over all those years, they have not delivered on a single promise.

In the meantime, the economic security of American working families has been deteriorating, while the economic condition of the most wealthy has been rising fast and furiously.

What the right-wing conservatives have delivered is an assault on American working families. They have pushed to dilute the effectiveness – and even the very existence – of labor unions. They have turned their backs on affordable health care, workplace safety and retirement security.

These are the issues of importance to American working families.

These are pocketbook issues – issues that return you in one piece to your family every day, issues that keep your families together, issues that put meals on the table and gasoline in the fuel tank so you can drive to and from your job, and issues that allow you to retire with dignity.

The candidates who support working families may not share your opinions on gun control and abortion, but what they offer is greater job security, increased workplace safety and comprehensive and affordable health-care plans designed for working families.

This November election presents the first major opportunity in eight decades for the labor movement to grow.

Labor-friendly legislation introduced and passed by a labor-friendly majority in Congress – legislation vitally important to American working families – won't be vetoed by a labor-friendly White House.

Consider that as you prepare for the November election – and don't forget the value of a dollar-a-day contribution to the UTU PAC, which helps to elect labor-friendly candidates to Congress, state legislatures and the White House.

WASHINGTON WATCH
By James M. Brunkenhoefer

State Watch

News from UTU State Legislative Boards

Illinois

State regulators in Illinois have been given the go ahead by a federal court to begin enforcing a safe-walkways regulation, a law passed in 2004 which mandates that all newly constructed and reconstructed yard tracks within the state include safety features that prevent employees from losing their footing while working on the ground.



Szabo

"This court decision is a tremendous victory for UTU members and all the crafts that work in rail yards," said UTU Illinois State Legislative Director **Joe Szabo**.

The Illinois Commerce Commission also has authority under the regulation to order walkway improvements for existing tracks where conditions are shown to be hazardous.

Norfolk Southern sought to invalidate the 2004 state regulation, arguing that the finer ballast and flat surfaces required for safe footing would interfere with track drainage and track stability, putting it in violation of federal track standards. But a federal district court in Chicago ruled the railroad failed to prove its case.

Under the regulation, employee walkways must now have a minimum width of two feet, and any ballast used must be no bigger than three-quarter inch in diameter, and must be spread in a uniform manner. Additionally, walkway slopes can rise or fall no more than one inch in height for every eight inches in length or width, and walkways must be free of obstacles, including rocks, equipment and debris.

The UTU began lobbying for the safe walkway regulation in 2002 over the objection of NS, with the UTU providing evidence of tripping and falling accidents on walkways. "This is really a story about perseverance," Szabo said. "We simply weren't going to give into the power and money of NS."

After the 2004 regulation was adopted, NS went to court to challenge it. But the federal court ruled NS failed to prove the law was in conflict with federal track maintenance standards.

Maryland

Applications are now being accepted for \$500 scholarships offered by the Maryland State Legislative Board, State Legislative Director **Larry Kasecamp** reports.



Kasecamp

The program is dedicated to the memory of Local 610 member James E. Major Jr., who died tragically in the head-on collision of a MARC commuter train and an Amtrak passenger train in 1996.

To be eligible, the applicant must be a member of a Maryland UTU local member or connected to a member by being a spouse, child, stepchild or grandchild. The applicant must also be accepted for admittance or already enrolled at a recognized accredited university, college or junior college for at least 12 credit hours per semester.

Scholarship applications can be downloaded from the state legislative board Web site, www.utumd.org. There is a June 1 deadline for application.

Kansas, Tennessee and Minnesota

Three UTU state legislative directors – **Don F.**



Lindsey

Lindsey Jr. of Kansas, **Jerry Anderton** of Tennessee and **Phil Qualy** of Minnesota – have been named to Hillary Rodham Clinton steering committees.



Anderton

Lindsey was named to a 39-member Kansas steering committee to support her campaign. The Tennessee steering committee is made up of more than 100 community leaders from across the state who will mobilize grassroots support for Hillary.

Qualy joins a list of other notable individuals on the Minnesota steering committee, including former Vice President Walter Mondale, former U.S. Sen. Mark Dayton, St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman,

California



The California State Legislative Board, with 38 local legislative representatives, held its quadrennial reorganization meeting in Sacramento in January. Pictured are the members elected to the executive committee.

Standing, left to right, are Steve Dawson (L-811, San Bernardino, alternate director); Harry Garvin (L-240, Los Angeles, first vice chairperson); Robert Rodriguez (L-1563, El Monte, second vice chairperson and bus representative); B.W. Robertson (L-1564, Los Angeles, third vice chairperson); Bonnie Moor (L-23, Santa Cruz, alternate bus representative).

Seated, left to right, are Norm Lucas (L-1570, Roseville, secretary); Mike Anderson (L-1570, Roseville, assistant director); J.P. Jones (L-240, Los Angeles, director) and John England (L-1674, Los Angeles, chairperson). Additional photographs of the event may be viewed and/or downloaded from www.public.fotki.com/utu492.

and variety of other state and local community activists.

"I am pleased and honored to be named to this committee," Anderton said. "I will work hard on Hillary Rodham Clinton's behalf because she is the Presidential candidate most sympathetic to the needs of UTU members and their families."



Qualy

"I encourage every UTU member and their families to support Sen. Clinton in her campaign for the presidency," Qualy said.

Bus Department

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

Negotiations top list of challenges in 2008

Negotiations for improved wages, benefits and working conditions are Bus Department priorities in 2008.

Negotiations are underway in Locals 710 (Newark, N.J.), 1589 (New Brunswick, N.J.) and 1670 (Laredo, Texas).

Agreements held by six other locals expire this year: Local 1582 (Albany, N.Y.) in April; Locals 172 (Darby, Pa.), 1741 (San Francisco), and 1785 (Santa Monica, Calif.) in June; Local 23 (Santa Cruz, Calif.) in September; and Local 1596 (Charlotte, N.C.) in December.

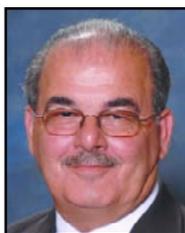
In all cases, we seek affordable health-care benefits and preservation of work rules. Also important is protection from layoffs and contracting out.

The UTU International will be assisting, as requested. The sooner we start working in unison on these issues of crucial importance, the sooner management will recognize and respect the unity and determination of the UTU to negotiate equitable agreements on behalf of its members.

We received a letter from Hillary Rodham Clinton, whom the UTU supports for president, asking that our bus members note the following:

If elected president, she promises:

- To preserve labor protection for all federally funded transit programs;
- To push for passage of the Employee Free Choice Act, ensuring workers have a fair chance to join a labor union;
- To expand access to paid leave, permitting workers a better balance of work and family commitments.



UTU drivers, mechanics ratify with Laredo Transit

UTU-represented bus drivers and mechanics employed by the Laredo (Texas) Transit Management, Inc., have overwhelmingly ratified a new contract with the company.

The vote was two to one in favor of ratification, General Chairperson **Bill Koehn** reports.

The 120 workers on the property are members of Local 1670 in Laredo.



EL METRO

The new pact is a three-year deal retroactive to Oct. 1, 2007, Koehn said. It includes wage increases and a retroactive pay adjustment; no work-rule changes; employees retain their defined-benefit pension plan with a small co-pay, and no decreases in health and welfare benefits.

The previous contract expired May 21, 2007.

"The city is growing by leaps and bounds and the transit systems needs to grow, too, but the funding is lagging," Koehn said. "That's why it took more than six months to negotiate this contract. We called in a federal mediator right from the start because we knew it would be tough."

Koehn praised Vice General Chairperson **Amado Bustamante**, operators' representative **Mario Sanchez** and mechanics' representative **Robert Robles** for their hard work during the negotiations.

Koehn also thanked former President Paul Thompson for his support. "Brother Thompson sent us a letter authorizing a strike and we put that up on the bulletin board for everyone to see, including management. That really made a difference."

EL Metro fixed-route service uses 49 buses, including two trolleys, and the EL Lift ADA paratransit service uses 18 vans. Annual ridership is close to four million. About 80 percent of the bus fleet is powered by CNG, which contributes to the clean environment that exists in Laredo.

PARSEC employs UTU members to ensure shippers 'truck' by rail



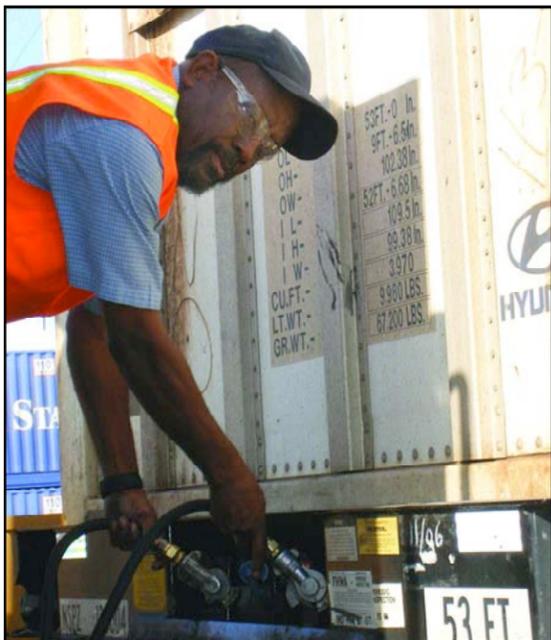
*Light Years Ahead...
In Intermodal
Transportation*



At the FEC intermodal terminal in Miami, arriving cargo containers are removed by cranes from intermodal flatcars and positioned aboard a wheeled chassis for subsequent pick up by local truckers. Connecting air-brake hoses to a chassis at the FEC Miami terminal is Juan Ucanan, president of Local 1900, Miami, Fla.



Note the two rubber-wheeled cranes that lift the containers to and from double-stack rail flatcars in the Miami FEC yard. Similar operations occur at PARSEC-operated facilities in Jacksonville and Ft. Lauderdale, where the UTU also represents ground-service employees.



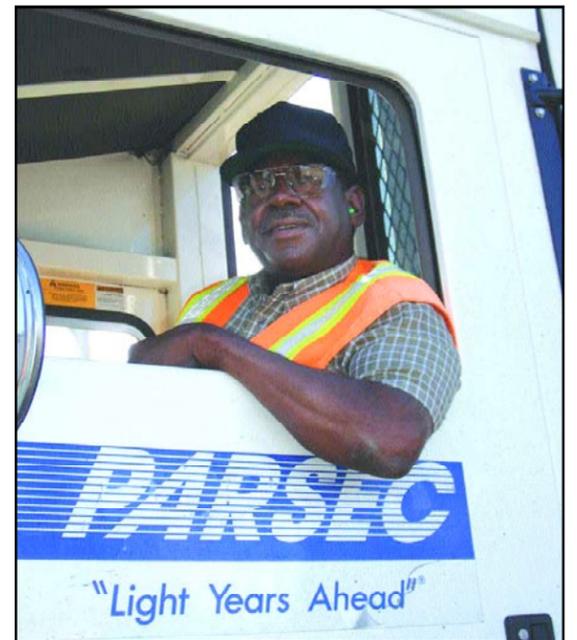
PARSEC employee Jimmy Mills (Local 1900) readies a cargo container on a wheeled chassis. The Miami FEC intermodal terminal is the busiest on the FEC system, with a 50/50 split between container and trailer loads.

The Florida East Coast Railway, which operates between Miami and Jacksonville, transports more than half a million trailers and containers aboard flatcars annually, and interchanges with CSX and Norfolk Southern.

At the FEC's Miami intermodal terminal, it's largest, some 21,000 trailers and containers arrive and depart monthly on FEC trains. Almost half carry international cargo arriving from or bound for Caribbean and South American ports. The FEC also operates intermodal terminals in Ft. Lauderdale and Jacksonville, with ground-service employees at all its intermodal terminals represented by Local 1900.

PARSEC commenced contract operation of FEC intermodal terminals in 1994, and also operates intermodal terminals for other major railroads in the U.S., including BNSF yards in Chicago and Oakland; NS yards in Atlanta and Charleston; CP's yard in Detroit; CSX yards in Cincinnati and Indianapolis; and two UP intermodal yards in Los Angeles.

America's freight railroads transport some 12 million containers and trailers annually, and intermodal volume is projected to grow to more than 20 million containers and trailers over the next 10 years.



Local 1900 member Harold Smith at the wheel of a yard tractor that will take a cargo container just positioned on a wheeled chassis to a parking space where it will await pickup for drayage to a Miami-area warehouse.



Atop a flatcar following the lift of its cargo trailer is Local 1900 member and PARSEC employee Ernesto Bencomo, with Local Chairperson Albert Collie, at right, at the Florida East Coast's Ft. Lauderdale yard.



PARSEC General Manager Colleen Drulard reviews work orders with Local 1900 Chairperson Albert Collie at the FEC's Ft. Lauderdale intermodal yard. In the background are tractors awaiting gate clearance. Drulard's husband, Larry Drulard, is an assistant trainmaster at the FEC intermodal yard in Miami.

United Transportation Union

SUMMER

Local Picnic Pictures




Approximately 160 members, family and friends from Local 490 marched in the 121st Labor Day parade in Princeton, Ind., one of the largest celebrations in the nation, according to Legislative Rep. Randy Utley. The local received a trophy for the best marching unit out of 98 parade entries, and held a picnic later in the day.



Robin Bottini, wife of retired member Louis Bottini of Local 492 at Sacramento, Calif., sits to put her shoes on after enjoying her turn inside one of the inflatables at the local's picnic on May 12, 2007.



More than 100 participants from Locals 305, 367, 627, 646 and 872 took part in the 2007 Labor Day parade in Omaha, Neb. The UTU consist included a UPRR mini-train, a BNSF mini-train, two other theme-based mini-trains, and a UTU caboose.



There was plenty of food to go around at Local 1607's (Los Angeles, Calif.) first annual family picnic Sept. 29, 2007.



Attending a picnic and fish fry for members of the UTU and the Sheet Metal Workers' International Association at Waycross, Ga., are UTU General Chairperson John Hancock, retired SMWIA member Vernon Carter, UTU Local 998 Chairperson Joe Bennett, UTU Georgia State Legislative Director Howell Keown, SMWIA Railroad and Shipyard Department Director Dewey Garland, SMWIA member Jerry Stevens, SMWIA Chairperson Danny Shirmans and SMWIA member Larry Crawford.



Robert Stabler, daughter Makayla, and his wife Katie enjoy some fun in the sun at the Local 492/1570 joint picnic at Loomis South Park in Loomis, Calif.



At the Local 492/1570 joint picnic at Loomis South Park, on May 12, 2007, friends (from left) Barbara Ward, Ray Ward, John Kuehl, Jackie Kuehl, Eileen Lawson and Don Dawson catch up on old times. John Kuehl is first on the trainmen's roster on the Union Pacific in Roseville, Calif.



Retired member Alan Sexton, of Local 1201, Stockton, Calif., stands between his daughter, Stacey, and son-in-law, David Haena, at the local's picnic on May 19, 2007, in Lodi, Calif. Sexton's wife, Dianne, is seated between their two grandchildren, Sammy and Alaina.



Lourdes Pagan, left, and Rosalia Medina volunteer to prepare food at Local 1607's family picnic on Sept. 29, 2007. The UTU members, employees of Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, hope to make the picnic an annual event. To view more pictures, visit the local's Web site at www.utulocal1607.org.

UTU for Life

News for members of the UTU for Life program

Three former UTU officers pass away

Three retired former UTU International officers – **William R. Meyers**, **Thomas J. McGuire** and **James E. Burke** – have passed away.

Meyers, 93, served as UTU International assistant to the president in 1969 then as assistant president from 1970 until his retirement in 1980.

McGuire served as UTU International general secretary and treasurer from 1984 to 1992. He passed away Jan. 21. He was 77.

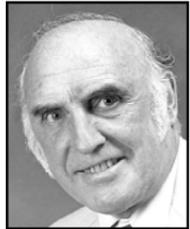
Burke, former UTU International vice president, passed away Jan. 18. He was 87.

Meyers served as Switchman's Union of North America (SUNA) Lodge 77 secretary/treasurer, president and member of the board of directors. In 1959 he was elected executive vice president of SUNA.

McGuire began as a brakeman on the Milwaukee Road in 1951. A member of Local 281 in Milwaukee, he was elected alternate vice president in 1975, became a full vice president in 1980 and was re-elected in 1983.

McGuire was elected by the UTU Board of Directors to be general secretary and treasurer in 1984, and was re-elected at the union's 1987 convention. He retired in 1992.

Burke, of Local 1390 in Trenton, N.J., started as a brakeman in 1941 for the Pennsylvania Railroad. He served as treasurer of his Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen lodge from 1949 to 1955, lodge chairperson from 1951 to 1963, then secretary of the PRR grievance committee from 1959 to 1964, when he was elected a BRT alternate vice president. In 1966, Burke became a full vice president. He retained that position when the UTU was formed in 1969 and was re-elected to the post at the 1971, 1975 and 1979 conventions. He retired in 1982.



Meyers



McGuire



Burke

UTU retiree works to elect Hillary Rodham Clinton

Many UTU members, both active and retired, have gone to work for the UTU's endorsed candidate for president, Hillary Rodham Clinton.

It was an easy decision: Clinton supports the UTU in its national contract negotiations with the railroads, particularly on issues such as entry rates and training; she backs a strong Railroad Retirement System; she is behind Amtrak and public-transportation funding, and she believes there should be a fair way of keeping a commercial driver's license.

One UTU retiree, **Lawson Chadwick**, has gotten on the Hillary Rodham Clinton for president train, and is working hard to ride it to victory.

Chadwick, a retired member of UTU Local 84 in Los Angeles, which represents Amtrak members in Southern California, is a member of Clinton's guidance team in the state.

As such, he hosts and participates in gatherings, fundraisers and strategy sessions "to keep the campaign going and up to date," he said from his home in San Diego.

"I would like to be one of the 441 delegates from California to go to Denver in August to sup-

port Hillary," he said, adding, "and I'd travel there aboard Amtrak."

Chadwick, an Air National Guard veteran, also belongs to Veterans for Hillary, veterans working for Clinton in the San Diego area.

He also is a member of the California 1,000 HillStars for Hillary, an elite group of volunteers committed to electing the senator president.

Chadwick said he also is going to be hosting parties for Clinton at his house and at various clubs, like the Elks Club and the local women's club, to keep the campaign going.

"We had a big Hillary event in San Diego a couple days ago," he said, "where you bring your cellphone and make calls on her behalf. There were a couple of hundred people there. I got a lot of positive responses from the calls I made; a lot of people told me they will be voting Democrat this time."

Chadwick also is chairperson of the UTU for Life's Chapter 3 in San Diego. "I send out e-mails to the members of the chapter in support of Clinton," he said. "I have met with quite a few of the members personally. We are a tight-knit group and we are staying involved in the campaign."

"I am glad the UTU was the first to endorse Hillary," he said, "and now I want to do all I can to help her win the election."

Three retired general chairs pass

Retired Los Angeles Junction Railway General Chairperson **George Thomas Haskins**, retired former CSXT/C&O Proper Assistant General Chairperson **Arthur A. Clay** and former St. Louis Southwestern Railway General Chairperson **R.J. "Ray" Roberts** have died.

Haskins, a member of Local 1674, Los Angeles, was 86. Clay, a member of Local 915 in Handley, W. Va., was 90. Roberts, a member of Local 462 in Pine Bluff, Ark., was 98.

Haskins began his 47-year railroad career on the Illinois Central Railroad at Memphis, Tenn., in 1941. In 1957, he moved to California and

went to work as a switchman for the L.A. Junction Railway, where he remained until retirement. During the next 30 years he served as general chairperson, unopposed at each election.

Clay began his rail career on the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway in 1943. He held a variety of offices, and was assistant general chairperson of GO-201 from 1971 until retirement in 1983.

Roberts worked for the Cotton Belt Railroad as a brakeman/conductor from 1928 to 1951, then continued working as the general chairperson of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen (a UTU predecessor union), representing train service employees.

THE FINAL CALL

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

Local	Name	City/State	Local	Name	City/State	Local	Name	City/State
6	Hoopingarner, James W.	Marshall, Ill.	601	Beehner, Robert L.	Mansfield, Ohio	1376	Zimmerman, Clytus E.	Lakeland, Fla.
94	Welch, Larry T.	Chanute, Kan.	605	Clonch, Robert L.	Clarksburg, W. Va.	1377	Ramsey, Ralph L.	Cleves, Ohio
166	Johnson, John N.	Broomfield, Colo.	610	Hicks, George H.	Baltimore, Md.	1390	Kelly, John J.	Allentown, N.J.
194	Knoepfel, William D.	Paris, Ill.	622	Lowery, Reubin E.	Hayden, Ala.	1390	Rogers, Martin F.	Panama City Beach, Fla.
195	Anderson, Russell G.	Galesburg, Ill.	674	Ashley, James E.	Harlem, Ga.	1393	Keenan Jr., Ellis W.	West Seneca, N.Y.
228	Aicher, Rex A.	Appleton, Wis.	730	Thompson, C. J.	Livingston, Texas	1393	Shatzel, Richard J.	Hobe Sound, Fla.
239	Sayre, Melvin F.	Castro Valley, Calif.	756	Elizondo Jr., Matias A.	Laredo, Texas	1420	Cash, George E.	Collierville, Tenn.
240	Northrup, E. S.	Seal Beach, Calif.	792	Keller, Norris A.	Berea, Ohio	1503	Johnson Jr., Delbert E.	Topeka, Kans.
265	Wallentine, Gerald L.	Paris, Idaho	838	Belle, Mario	Las Vegas, Nev.	1545	Thiele, Donald E.	McGehee, Ark.
300	Wilkes, Edward J.	Philadelphia, Pa.	872	Snipes, Albert H.	Council Bluffs, Iowa	1620	Wilson, Martin L.	Stevensville, Mich.
318	Hoyt, Robert J.	Hornell, N.Y.	911	Jongquist, Marvin E.	Center City, Minn.	1638	Smith, Arthur A.	Strongsville, Ohio
324	Hecimovich, Tony	Seattle, Wash.	915	Osborne, George D.	Chesnee, S.C.	1663	Hoard, James E.	Inverness, Fla.
377	Poole, Harry S.	Jamestown, N.Y.	971	Mann, R. L.	Blackstone, Va.	1663	King, Woodrow M.	Lincoln, Ill.
385	Bekanich, Andrew	Deland, Fla.	1031	Tootle, Francis L.	Savannah, Ga.	1732	Grace, Roy A.	Hayward, Calif.
407	Morris, Harold K.	N. Charleston, S.C.	1043	Sweet, A. L.	Canby, Calif.	1883	Gerdes Jr., William J.	Port Orange, Fla.
426	Barbour, Dale R.	Mead, Wash.	1067	Kujala, August E.	Mt. Iron, Minn.	1895	Anderson, John K.	Grayslake, Ill.
427	Bullock, Charles L.	McComb, Miss.	1074	Augenstein, David H.	Pittsburgh, Pa.	1962	Kurtz, Edward O.	N. Ridgeville, Ohio
473	Scott, Ernest M.	Stanfield, Ore.	1172	Sarver, Johnny J.	Oak Hill, W. Va.	1947	Fanguy, Kenneth W.	Lake Charles, La.
498	Nonnemacher, Daniel T.	Allentown, Pa.	1221	Gillis, Dan R.	Brandon, Fla.	R	Sheridan, Mrs. C. F.	Yonkers, N.Y.
507	Gates Jr., Albert W.	Springfield, Mo.	1294	Norton, Harold W.	St. George, Utah	SORRY: The names of Edward D. Spencer, Local 674, Greenville, S.C., and Melvin E. Sayre, Local 239, Castro Valley, Calif., were incorrectly included in the December 2007/January 2008 Final Call. UTU News regrets the error.		
573	Selby Jr., William R.	Ft. Myers, Fla.	1301	Palmer, Arthur L.	Knoxville, Tenn.			
586	Uehlein, Milo B.	Avon, Ohio	1346	Ray, James C.	Nashville, Tenn.			
597	Ashworth, Albert P.	Schaumburg, Ill.	1375	Grahn Jr., Lige J.	Norristown, Pa.			

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02/08



UTU BUS LINES

News items culled from the UTU's Daily News Digest, posted every weekday morning on the UTU Web site, www.utu.org.

NJ Transit bus defects said ignored by firm

ELIZABETH, N.J. – A former mechanic claims a company that leases buses that transport disabled passengers for NJ Transit has ignored major mechanical defects on the buses, the radio station 1010 WINS reports.

The whistle-blowing mechanic, Anthony Ventura, said failing transmissions, broken suspension springs and other issues were ignored because his supervisors told him not to worry about it.

NJ Transit said it was well aware of the problem at MV Transportation before Ventura contacted them and some of MV's maintenance practices were not up to NJ Transit standards. NJT said they are working with MV to improve them.

Officials at MV Transportation responded by saying that these are erroneous claims by a former employee who is disgruntled because he was terminated for his performance failures.

MV said they are confident that they are operating safe vehicles and want to ensure their riders and the public that the fleet of buses is safe.

MV continued, any further libelous comments being made by Mr. Ventura will result in legal action against him by MV Transportation.

Expect random drug, alcohol testing

Workers in safety-sensitive positions in the motor carrier industry can expect a one-in-two probability they will be tested for drug use in 2008, while their counterparts in the rail industry can expect a one-in-four probability.

For both groups, there will be a one-in-10 probability they will be tested for alcohol in their system during 2008.

The random tests will be administered by the Federal Transit Administration, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration and the Federal Railroad Administration. The percentages are established annually based upon the frequency of positive-test results from previous years.

Individual transit and motor carrier operators may exceed those probability thresholds in a separate employer testing program, but federal regulatory agencies require employers to do so on a systemwide basis and not at specific locations.

The UTU strongly supports efforts to eliminate workplace drug and alcohol use. Toward this end, the UTU provides support for peer intervention programs such as Operation RedBlock and Operation Respond, which have demonstrated success in reducing drug and alcohol use among safety-sensitive transport workers.

PATCO, SEPTA seek to form alliance

PHILADELPHIA, Pa. – New proposals for extending commuter rail service along the Philadelphia waterfront envision an unprecedented alliance between the regional transit agencies PATCO and SEPTA, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* reports.

PATCO, the Camden-based agency that operates the 14-mile rail line between Philadelphia and Lindenwold, wants to expand service along Columbus Boulevard and perhaps to City Hall. It proposes reopening the long-closed Franklin Square station beneath Sixth and Race Streets to serve as the hub of the expanded service.

Any new service, which would depend on federal financial help, is probably at least \$1 billion and eight to 10 years away, PATCO officials said.

PATCO could build the lines and SEPTA, the Philadelphia-based agency, could operate the service, suggested John J. Matheussen, president of PATCO and chief executive officer of its parent, the Delaware River Port Authority (DRPA).

Passengers "don't care whether it's SEPTA or PATCO or New Jersey Transit," Matheussen said. "What they want is clean, efficient, safe transportation. It's time government handles itself in the same way."

UTU-led LIRR workers ratify pact



NEW YORK – The strength of labor unity was demonstrated again on the Long Island Rail Road, the largest commuter railroad in North America.

The Long Island Rail Road Labor Council, a coalition of 10 unions led by UTU General Chairperson **Anthony Simon**, has negotiated and ratified a new contract with the carrier that Simon says meets the needs of the more than 5,400 affected employees.

The unions involved in the negotiations included the UTU; the Transportation Communications

UTU's Simon, chairperson on the Long Island Rail Road, heads up the bargaining for a coalition of 10 labor unions, which leads to improved wages, benefits for all

Union; BLET; International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen; International Railroad Supervisors' Association; International Association of Machinists; Sheet Metal Workers International Association; National Transportation Supervisors' Association; National Conference of Firemen and Oilers, and the Service Employees International Union.

"The officers and members of all these organizations stood behind me as, for the first time in LIRR history, every organization signed an agreement in unity," Simon said.

"Every union's ratification was with overwhelming numbers," he noted.

The contract is retroactive to Jan. 1, 2007, and covers workers through June 2010, Simon said.

In the photo, Simon, center, shakes hands with LIRR President Helena Williams with the LIRR Labor Council members united behind him.

FRA boosts passenger train safety

Commuter and intercity passenger rail equipment will be safer under a new federal rule that ensures improved emergency window exit availability, specifies additional emergency rescue features, and requires two-way communication systems, announced Federal Railroad Administrator Joseph H. Boardman.

Boardman said the new FRA regulations mandate that passenger rail cars be equipped with two-way communication systems that better help train crews inform and instruct passengers during emergency situations.

Also, emergency evacuation and rescue access windows are required at all levels with passenger seating, and all new passenger rail cars must be equipped with emergency roof access locations, he added.

In addition, the rule includes minimum requirements for the inspection, testing, maintenance, and repair of these safety systems.

Boardman added that a related FRA rulemaking proposing to enhance passenger rail car emergency lighting systems, exit path markings, and emergency signage is expected to be completed later this year.

Major provisions of the regulations include:

Emergency window exits and rescue access windows

- At least one rescue access window on each side of every single-level car and of each main level of a multi-level passenger car.
- At least one emergency window exit (for

passenger egress) and one rescue access window on each side of an intermediate level seating area in multi-level passenger cars. Together, they provide passengers a way to directly exit from, and emergency responders a way to directly access a passenger compartment without first having to go to another level of a car or through an interior door.

- Written and/or pictorial instructions providing clear direction for the rapid and easy removal of emergency window exits around potential hindrances.

PA and intercom systems

- All passenger cars must have public address (PA) systems by Jan. 1, 2012. PA systems allow train crews to keep passengers informed during emergency situations and provide direction or instruction in a timely manner, reducing the chance that passengers unintentionally place themselves in danger. Passenger cars that currently do not have PA systems are scheduled to be retired from service before the new requirement becomes effective.

- All new passenger cars must have intercom systems that enable passengers to quickly communicate with the train crew during emergency situations.

Emergency roof access

- All new passenger cars must have a minimum of two emergency roof access locations which can be especially useful for emergency response if a passenger car rolls onto its side.



Amtrak deal

Continued from page 1

The UTU expects to return to the bargaining table with Amtrak shortly.

UTU International Vice President Tony Iannone, who is assisting in the talks, congratulated the bargaining coalition for a "job well done in presenting their case to the presidential emergency board" that resulted in favorable recommendations that led to the settlement.

"Our UTU members are rightfully upset that Amtrak has refused to do the right thing by its loyal workforce," Iannone said. "UTU members employed by Amtrak are equally deserving of their full back pay and wage increases. Even President Bush's handpicked emergency board understood that." (Monitor www.utu.org for updates.)

The proposed settlement affecting the other crafts adopts the recommendations of a presidential emergency board report issued Dec. 30. The board's report, which recommended that Amtrak grant back wages to its workers, triggered a 30-day countdown until a strike became legal.

Joel Parker, a spokesman for the Transportation Communications International Union and a lead negotiator, said the tentative contract includes back pay totaling more than three times what Amtrak was offering and none of the concessions on work rules that Amtrak was seeking.

It includes wage increases that average 35.2 percent over the life of the agreement from January 2000 through Dec. 31, 2009, or about 3.1 percent per year.

UTU members equally deserve full back pay

The labor dispute, which had continued despite years of unsuccessful mediation, involved about 10,000 employees whose last contract ended Dec. 31, 1999.

"I hope I never have to go through another eight years without an agreement," said Dan Pickett, head of the Passenger Rail Labor Coalition. "We've got a real morale problem, and we have to show that we can work together with Amtrak from this point forward."

"We have averted a possible strike that could have had a crippling effect on the lives of millions of Americans," Amtrak president and CEO Alex Kummant said in a statement.

Amtrak spokesman Cliff Black said there appears to be a "pretty universal feeling" that the agreement will be ratified.

If Amtrak workers had walked out for the first time in the railroad's 36-year history, the 71,000 people who use the service every day would not have been the only ones impacted.

Hundreds of thousands of people who ride commuter trains also would have suffered because many such services depend on Amtrak employees or infrastructure, particularly in the Northeast.

Amtrak, which depends heavily on federal subsidies, was concerned about how it would afford the back wages, which would average nearly \$13,000 per employee. The railroad had offered to give each worker a lump signing bonus of \$4,500 instead of back pay.

Amtrak had said the back pay would cost it about \$150 million more than what the company had offered.

"This is a fair and balanced settlement between Amtrak and its workers," said Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., who pressed both sides to come to an agreement. "It's good that the two sides were able to come together in time to save riders from what would have been a crippling shutdown of our rail system."

UTU, CN Rail reach tentative contract deal

The United Transportation Union and Canadian National Railways have initiated a tentative labor agreement applying to approximately 600 UTU members working on CN's former Illinois Central (IC) and Chicago, Central & Pacific (CCP) properties in the Midwest and southern United States.

The four-year agreement would renew, for the first time, the hourly rate agreement for conductors and brakemen on the former IC and CCP. If ratified, the agreement would be retroactive to Aug. 1, 2006, and run through July 31, 2010.

UTU International President Mike Futhey, who assisted in negotiations, praised the

efforts of Chairpersons **R.W. "Red" Dare** and **Tracy Bublitz**, as well as the negotiating committee, which included **Butch St. John** and **Ron Caldwell**.



"Jointly, with the carrier, we have addressed a number of the concerns voiced by the membership," Futhey said. "In addition, issues beneficial to the membership will be addressed in the established labor/management conference committee."

A meeting for local chairpersons will be held in Memphis on Feb. 14 for presentation of the agreement prior to the membership ratification vote, Futhey said.

Kim Madigan, CN vice president of labor relations, said, "CN is pleased to have reached this agreement with the UTU. As both parties have learned through the last few years, this new type of agreement improves our operations and service to our customers, our employees' compensation and quality of life, and our relationships in the field and at the bargaining table. All of us appreciated the participation of the UTU's international president in this process."

CN has hourly rate agreements in place for virtually all of its U.S. train and engine employees.

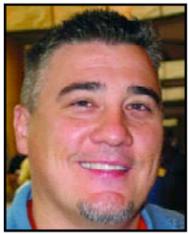
Details of the tentative agreement are being withheld pending a ratification vote. The voting results should be announced in mid-March.

SLD Gibson halts transfer of NS trackage, saving jobs

What can a dollar a day to the UTU PAC purchase?

Job security.

Just ask UTU Michigan State Legislative Director **Jerry Gibson**, who proved this against what many said were insurmountable odds. Having the strength of the UTU PAC alongside him made a sizeable difference, as it helped enlist the support of Michigan lawmakers.



Gibson

What Gibson, with help from the UTU PAC, did was to stop cold an effort by Norfolk Southern to transfer 384 miles of Michigan trackage to a short-line railroad that intended to reduce employment, pay lower wages and provide fewer benefits, while NS would have avoided labor protection.

The sham was a shame, and Gibson built a political coalition within Michigan to ensure the UTU voice about the sham transaction was heard by a regulatory agency in Washington that historically has turned a deaf ear to labor.

Cool.

Indeed, on Dec. 10, the usually carrier-friendly U.S. Surface Transportation Board, by a 3-to-0 vote, denied the application of NS and short-line operator Watco. And in early January, NS threw in the towel and admitted defeat, telling *Traffic World* magazine it would not try to restructure the deal.

The trackage NS sought to transfer to the short line was operated by the Michigan Central Railroad from 1846 to 1930, when it was merged into the former New York Central. The NYC was merged into Penn Central, which itself became

part of Conrail. The trackage was transferred to NS when NS and CSX carved up Conrail in 1998.

Gibson's efforts to derail the transfer to Watco got an additional assist from the UTU law department, which filed in opposition with the STB.

"I thank everyone who believed in the power of persistence, the power of unity and the power of our PAC," Gibson said.

State director, packing UTU PAC power, stops cold efforts by Norfolk Southern to spin off Michigan trackage to a non-union short-line railroad

Alternate Vice President-East and General Chairperson Delbert Strunk, whose NS-employed members would have been on the short end of the sham transaction, termed Gibson a brother "who has shown that never giving up and never saying die and never accepting the coined phrase, 'you will never stop that from happening,' has proved that perseverance and hard work can make all the difference."

In a letter to UTU International President Mike Futhey praising Gibson, Strunk said that Gibson "never stopped from the day NS and Watco filed their notices with the STB to destroy the lives and jobs of our members on the Michigan Central lines. He went to every politician. He went to every formal hearing on this matter with a 'take-no-prisoners' attitude. He was relentless.

"There have been over 500 similar transactions and this is the first time labor has defeated the carriers at one of their sham/shell games,"

Strunk wrote. "Had Brother Gibson not worked as hard as he did and in the matter in which he did, the families and members of this union could have been left without a job, without health-care benefits and the needed income to support their families."

Gibson responded that in order to produce similar victories on behalf of UTU members in the future, "we must continue to support the UTU PAC, which aids candidates for public

office who support our views – such as our supporters in the Michigan legislature.

"Delbert and I have recently reached out to Norfolk Southern in our efforts to ensure this property remains a viable Class I rail corridor that benefits both our members and the carrier," Gibson said.

Gibson earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Columbia State University, and hired out on CSX in 1996 as a conductor. He was promoted to locomotive engineer in 1998, and has served as a UTU new-hire training mentor and safety coordinator. His first UTU elected position was as Local 313 legislative representative in 2001, and as assistant Michigan state legislative director in 2004. Gibson was elected UTU Michigan state legislative director in 2005.

"Without my family's love and support – which allows me to trade family time for UTU activities – efforts such as this would not be possible," Gibson said.

Big Sky employees step up efforts to buy airline

BILLINGS, Mont. – UTU-represented Big Sky Airlines pilots are spearheading attempts by the airline's employees to purchase the troubled airline and continue operating its Montana routes.

[Editor's note: UTU International Assistant President Arty Martin has been assigned by International President Mike Futhey to assist the pilots in this effort. Futhey also has promised the pilots whatever assistance can be provided by the UTU law department.]

"We have all the employees who are willing to stay. We have the ground equipment and personnel, like our mechanics union," said **Bruce Tall**, a pilot captain who heads Local 15. "The airplanes are painted, and if we can buy the company, we're ready to fly."

First, the employees must raise the money. No sales price has been disclosed. They must also persuade the Transportation Department to give back the Essential Air Service (EAS) contract.

On Jan. 10, many Big Sky pilots spent another day with telephones pressed to their ears in talks with the governor's office as they try to line up financing and support.

Big Sky Transportation Inc. President Fred deLeeuw said he has been talking frequently with the pilots.

"I fully support someone trying to buy Big Sky and keep it going. We'll see if they can pull it off," he said.

To sweeten Big Sky's financial picture, deLeeuw said that his company asked the U.S. Department of Transportation to move up from March to Jan-

uary a planned EAS subsidy increase. That would increase the airline's subsidy for providing flights to rural cities by \$135,000 per month. Big Sky's current subsidy is \$600,000 per month, deLeeuw said. The federal subsidies are designed to maintain airline service to sparsely populated rural cities.

In mid-December, a Minneapolis holding company called MAIR Holdings Inc., which has owned Big Sky Transportation Co. since 2002, announced that Big Sky would close its East Coast and other operations due to bad weather shutdowns, high fuel costs and a lack of customers.

Big Sky flights east of the Mississippi River and service to Sheridan, Wyo., and Denver ended Jan. 7, and about 140 workers were laid off.

The airline's remaining 150 Montana employees appear to have eight more weeks on the job.

Under federal law, employers with more than 50 workers must give their employees a 60-day notice of job termination.

Big Sky Airlines this week told its remaining employees, including about 50 pilots, that their last work day will be March 8.

Along with airlines' other troubles, airplanes and pilots also are in high demand. After last month's news that Big Sky Airlines was selling its assets, deLeeuw said pilots for the Billings-based airline have been recruited by at least 10 other carriers, including Great Lakes.

"They are all interviewing our pilots and interviewing them on the spot," deLeeuw said. "We have a bunch of great pilots we've hired through the years."



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 Eric Page, a BNSF conductor and member of Local 324 in Seattle, Wash. "This photo is of an eastbound BNSF stack train on the Scenic Sub-division, led by BNSF 7818. On an early winter day, this stack train is taking its turn heading toward the 7.8-mile long Cascade Tunnel while on its journey towards Chicago on the BNSF's High Line," Davis said.



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Consensus reached

UTU officers support efforts by UTU's Futhey, SMWIA's Sullivan to craft a SMART constitution to be provided members for a ratification vote

NEW ORLEANS, La. – Some 140 UTU general committee, state legislative and International officers overwhelmingly demonstrated their support here Jan. 30 for a cooperative process to resolve differences over a stalled merger between the UTU and the Sheet Metal Workers International Association.

The merger's intended Jan. 1 implementation – which would have created the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART) – was halted by a federal court Dec. 27.

The court ruled that UTU members had not been provided a SMART constitution (giving them sufficient information on which to make an informed decision) when they voted last year to approve the merger.

The federal court action was initiated by a group of UTU members, who successfully complained to the court that UTU members should have been provided – prior to the vote – with a copy of the SMART constitution into which the UTU constitution was to be inserted intact.

The complaint was filed following allegations that UTU members were not made aware of conflicts between the two constitutions.

The UTU officers demonstrated support for UTU International President Mike Futhey and SMWIA General President Mike Sullivan following the federal court's order – as well as recommendation of UTU counsel – that the two (Futhey and Sullivan) settle upon the text of a SMART constitution. When that task, which may require arbitration of conflicts, is completed, the UTU membership would be provided a copy, and then asked to vote on ratifying the new constitution.

"I appreciate the participation of officers at this meeting," Futhey said afterwards. "The open dialogue reflected a spirit of cooperation and was beneficial in allowing our officers to be fully informed of events surrounding the merger. It is my feeling that the memberships of both the UTU and the SMWIA are best served by having a proper constitution prepared and presented to members for a vote."

Inside this issue of the UTU News:



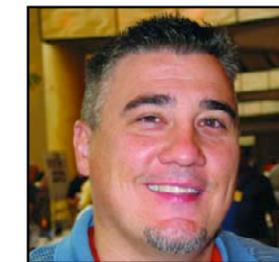
UTU members of Rud Eile keep Irish music alive. See page 2.



The California state legislative board convenes. See page 5.



PARSEC workers keep intermodal traffic on the move. See page 6.



Michigan SLD Gibson stops sham NS plan in its tracks. See page 11.