

SMART[®]

Transportation Division News

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International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers

Previsich testifies before Senate subcommittee on passenger rail

SMART Transportation Division President John Previsich testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation's Subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Infrastructure, Safety and Security Dec. 10 at the Russell Senate Office Building.

The hearing focused on the current state of intercity passenger rail in the United States, the need to invest for future growth and implications for future legislative action. It was presided over by Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), chairman of the subcommittee.

Previsich called on the committee and Congress as a whole to present a long-term vision for passenger rail that includes predictable, dedicated sources of funding.

"Public investment in our nation's passenger rail system is truly an investment in our nation's future. Passenger rail is a critical part of our national transportation infrastructure, an important driver of our national and regional economies, and is a middle-class job creator," Previsich said.

"I can speak to this matter from personal experience. In my capacity as a union representative, I have been involved on passenger rail properties from coast to coast that have leveraged various forms of

public funding to provide excellent quality service to the communities through which they operate.

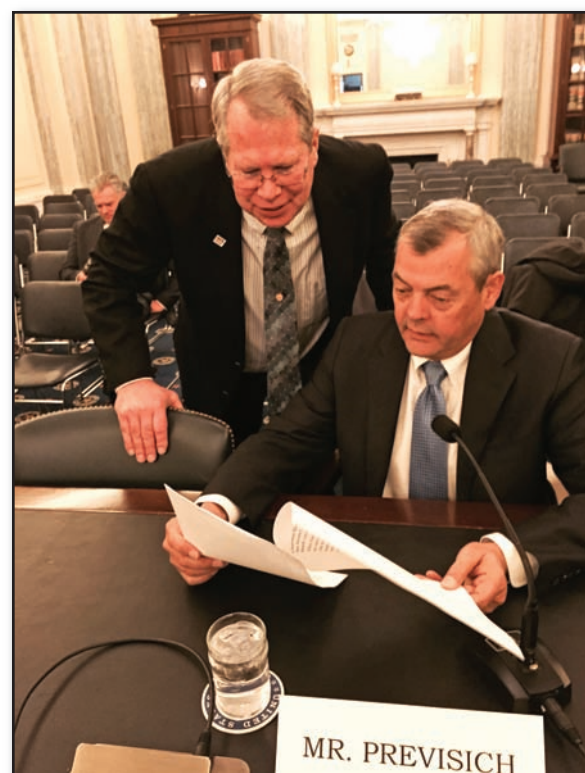
"In my home state of California, I have watched Caltrain in the San Francisco Bay Area leverage a combination of local and federal funding to revitalize the service and move from a low of 5,500 boardings per day, when operated by a private enterprise, to the current figure of over 53,000 boardings per day.

"In my home county of Santa Cruz, Calif., a planning process is already underway to identify transit corridors that will reduce the number of daily auto trips, decrease our use of fossil fuels and promote more affordable housing. All across America, communities are relying on transit funding to invest in strategic planning that will pay back the investment many times over through job creation, community stimulus, an increased tax base and better utilization of local resources.

"It is important to note that for more than 100 years prior to the creation of Amtrak, passenger rail service was provided by private railroads. For at least 40 years prior to public funding, the private rail carriers were unable to provide passenger rail service without sustaining significant financial losses. It was because private operators were unable to continue to provide that service without sustaining huge losses that Amtrak was formed.

"Amtrak was created to save rail passenger service in America, but it must be remembered that the creation of Amtrak was also intended to save our freight rail industry from economic ruin. America's railroads were losing \$1 billion per year providing passenger service just prior to the creation of Amtrak. That is \$10 billion in today's dollars. Had Amtrak not been established, America's rail system would have financially collapsed.

"Today, Americans support and want more passenger rail. Amtrak has set ridership records in 10 of the last 11 years and polling that our union has commissioned throughout the country shows



SMART Transportation Division President John Previsich, seated, discusses his testimony with Amtrak GO 769 General Chairperson Dirk Sampson prior to a Dec. 10 hearing before the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation's Subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Infrastructure, Safety and Security.

overwhelming support for more service and increased funding for Amtrak. This is not a partisan issue – our polls show that Democrats and Republicans in red states and blue all strongly support continued and improved Amtrak service.

"Unfortunately, this comes at a time when inadequate federal funding has caused our nation's passenger rail system to age and deteriorate. As Amtrak's annual budget requests have established, its aging fleet needs replacing and

Continued on page 10

SMART TD, BLET, others to bargain together

Top leaders of the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART TD) and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) announced Dec. 17 that their organizations will be participating with four other rail unions in coordinated bargaining in the upcoming round of national negotiations.



Previsich

On Dec. 8, 2014, BLET general chairmen and SMART Transportation Division general chairpersons each served bargaining notices on their respective railroads, including identical notices related to health and welfare and related benefits.

"Today we build on the successes of joint bargaining during the past two national rounds," said BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce. "Now, more than ever before, it is imperative that the unions representing railroad operating crafts sit side by side at the national table, and I am pleased that we have been able to accomplish that."



Pierce

"This is a landmark occasion for BLET members and SMART Transportation Division members alike," said Transportation Division President John Previsich. "Today's announcement builds on several years of

Continued on page 10

SMART Constitution now available online

The official SMART Constitution, as amended by SMART delegates at the first SMART General Convention, is now available on both the SMART website at www.smart-union.org and the Transportation Division website at www.utu.org.

In January 2014, the SMART Sheet Metal and Transportation Division officers completed constitutional modifications required by the terms and conditions of the merger between the two predecessor organizations. That document incorporated the former UTU Constitution into the former SMWIA Constitution as Article 21B of the merged document. At that time, all conflicts between Article 21B and the remainder of the constitution were resolved in order to effectuate the merger.

In 2014, delegates to the SMART Transportation Division convention proposed recommendations for amendments to the constitution. At the first SMART General Convention held Aug. 11-15, those amendments were



debated and resolved.

The August proceedings in Las Vegas closed with a show of unity, cooperation and newfound strength.

Of significance to SMART's Transportation Division membership, the amended constitution contained provisions for the addition of a second vice president to the division's Bus Department and the addition of a member of the Aviation Department to the division's board of appeals.

As noted in the October edition of the *Transportation Division News*, the Transportation Division's board of directors selected former Alternate Vice President – Bus **Calvin Studivant** to serve as the division's second bus vice president to serve the Bus Department's growing membership. To fill the vacant office of alternate vice president – bus, the board of directors elevated former board of appeals member **Alvy Hughes** to that position.

On Oct. 23, the Transportation Division's board of directors selected Charlotte Transit GO TMD Vice General Chairperson **Brenda H. Moore** (1715) to fill the open bus position on the board of appeals. The board also chose Great Lakes Airlines Local 40 (Denver) President **John Nolan** to fill the position of aviation representative to the board of appeals.

Around the SMART TD

Local 199, Creston, Iowa



The members of this BNSF Railway local recently recognized the retirement of three members in November, Local Chairperson Billi Vavra reports: Lonnie Grail, who hired out with Chicago & North Western Transportation Company in 1976; Dale Hoepker, who hired out with Burlington Northern in 1978; and Jamie Hayes, who joined BN in 1972. Hayes and Hoepker are pictured above. "All were great members and mentors and will be missed tremendously," Vavra said.

Local 486, Glendive, Mont.

Beginning in January, this local will hold a monthly photography contest for its members for its website photo gallery, member Michael Shumway reports. "Each monthly winner will receive a \$50 prize and all photos submitted will be included in the website's photo gallery, with each monthly winner being featured on the website's homepage," Shumway said. Photographs will also be eligible to be included in the yearly Transportation Division calendar for Alumni Association members. The website can be found at www.utu486.com.

Local 303, Springfield, Mo.



Longtime Local Chairperson Steve McElhany was honored with a retirement celebration at the Springfield BNSF Railway Terminal Dec. 2 after more than 42 years of service, Legislative Rep. Jeff Nichols reports. McElhany is pictured above with his wife and daughter. "Steve hired out with the Frisco Railroad when he was 18 years old. He served as chairperson for conductors and brakemen for more than 20 years and was a convention delegate. He also worked as a new-hire training coordinator along with Local Chairperson Scott Perryman. I can count on one hand the union meetings Steve missed over the last 10 years and they were usually because he was on duty and out of town," Nichols said.

Local 607, Thayer, Mo.



Newly hired conductors for BNSF Railway here completed their class Nov. 21, Local Secretary & Treasurer Ryan King reports. Pictured in the front row, from left, are Tanner Holman, Richard Dills, Ryan Lamb, Chase Benson and Matt Turnbough. In the back row, from left, are Stoney West, Brian Powell, Allan Brown, Benjamin Burns, Josh Lindberg and Ricky Smith. Congratulations.

Conductor nabs stray dog after five-year rail odyssey

In the desolate tract of land adjacent to the Farmingdale, N.Y., railroad tracks, a buff-colored stray German shepherd was familiar to Long Island Rail Road passengers and crews.

One day, about five years ago, "Pretty Girl" was visited by a kind lady who fed her. That kind lady is SMART Transportation Division member and LIRR conductor Clara T. Campbell of Local 645 at Babylon, N.Y.



Campbell

Campbell and her coworkers named her Pretty Girl and Campbell began putting out food for her in bowls on a near daily basis. Other co-workers quickly followed suit.

For nearly five years, Campbell provided food to the dog. She fed her steak and bread, hamburger meat and canned dog food – meals high in protein with good nutritional content. As time went by, she decided to and rescue the dog from the elements. It was time that Pretty Girl got a good home.

Campbell first contacted animal control officers in the town of Oyster Bay. After attempting to rescue the dog, they informed her that they were unsuccessful. With another cold winter rapidly approaching, and at her wits end, she recruited the help of a good friend. A plan for Pretty Girl's capture was in order.

The two novice trappers studied the dog's habits and were able to snare her in a large cage with a trap door.

The dog was taken to the Massapequa Hospital for Animals. Veterinarians discovered that Pretty Girl was infested with ticks and had Lyme disease. Pretty Girl's medical bills were paid for by the animal rescue group, Last Hope. The group says that she will go through a specialized animal rehab program that will help re-socialize her to live with a family.

Who else is more deserving to adopt this dog other than Campbell? In a heart-breaking twist, individuals have come forward claiming to be the dog's owners after hearing about Campbell's story in the media. They have purportedly submitted documentation proving that the dog was theirs when it ran away five years ago.

While Campbell admits that her chances to adopt Pretty Girl have now diminished, she is still holding out hope.

SMART's LIRR General Chairperson Anthony Simon said, "We are extremely proud of Clara. She is just another example of a SMART Transportation Division member going above and beyond the call of duty by doing the right thing. Our membership here on Long Island is a dedicated group and it provides safe transportation and always goes the extra mile. Clara is one of many who display these traits each and every day. I could not be prouder of our entire membership."

Whatever the adoption outcome, congratulations to Clara Campbell who, in a modern world often characterized as indifferent, cared enough about this suffering creature to get it out from the cold.

Local 240, Los Angeles, Calif.

"This year's 14th annual rail reunion and retirement dinner Nov. 7 for Southern Pacific, Union Pacific, Pacific Electric, Amtrak, ATSF/BN, and Metrolink had a great turnout, with more than 190 in attendance from all crafts," Local Chairperson Harry Garvin Jr. reports. "We even had a retired company officer. Everyone had great time and all are looking forward to next year's reunion Nov. 6." Garvin also noted the death of retired conductor Douglas L.

West, who died Oct. 31. He retired March 1, 2004, after 42 years of service and is survived by his wife, Doris, and a son and daughter. Local 240 wishes everyone "Happy Holidays."

Local 911, Minneapolis, Minn.

Retired former Local 911 Chairperson Fred J. Croes Jr., 78, a mentor to many United Transportation Union and SMART Transportation Division officers in the Upper Midwest, died Nov. 12 of natural causes. During his railroad career, he served his local in a variety of capacities, most notably as local chairperson, legislative representative and delegate. He also served as a vice general chairperson of



Croes

Soo Line – Milwaukee Road GO 261. He attended UTU International conventions from 1971 to 1999. He retired in May 1998. "Brother Croes was a remarkable leader. He was a fixture at regional meetings and conventions for years. I remember Willis Croonquist once telling me, 'Croes knows the federal regulations better than the FRA inspectors do,'" said Transportation Division National Legislative Director John Risch. Croes is survived by his wife of 59 years, Jan; children Andrea, Denise, Marcia (Ken) Gallaway, David (Sherry), Lisa (Doug) Strenke; 10 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Local 1162, Erwin, Tenn.

Retired former Local Chairperson Bruce A. King, 70, died Sept 24 at the Johnson City Medical Center with family and friends by his side, Secretary & Treasurer W. Ray Thompson reports. A CSX conductor, King was a member of the UTU for 47 years, during 16 of which he served as local chairperson. He was a faithful member of Alcoholics Anonymous for 31 years, serving as a sponsor to many in their quest for sobriety. He was preceded in death by his wife, Sherry, and survived by his son, Tony; his daughter, Stacey, and two grandsons.

Local 1701, Montebello, Calif.



SMART members gather outside a city council meeting in Montebello in October after council members approved a memorandum of understanding regarding the payment of pension contributions and rest and meal periods for Transportation Division members employed by the city's Transit Department. At an earlier council meeting, Sheet Metal Local 105 Business Rep. Tim Hinson approached Local 1701 Chairperson Cecilia Lopez, who was wearing a SMART T-shirt, and asked if he could help by bringing members from his local to the next council meeting in support of 1701, General Chairperson Tom Pate reports. "One Local 105 member, who regularly used the transit system, addressed the council. In the end, three locals were represented at the council meeting, including 1701, Sheet Metal 105 and 1674. It was fantastic to see the unity between Transportation and Sheet Metal. This group is what the union is all about," Pate said.

Local 1741, San Francisco, Calif.

In the fall, this bus local negotiated a contract for its Durham School Services drivers in San Carlos, Calif., GO SFS General Chairperson Paul Stein reports. The six-year agreement provides a 4.5 percent wage increase for the first year and cost-of-living adjustments each year thereafter, based on the Consumer Price Index. Members will also receive a new paid holiday for Labor Day, their eighth. Representing the drivers were GO SCS General Chairperson Bergman Zuniga, with assistance from former Transportation Vice President Bonnie Morr and Stein.

Compensation subject to RRB taxes to increase in 2015

The amounts of compensation subject to railroad retirement Tier I and Tier II payroll taxes will increase in 2015, with the Tier I tax rates remaining the same while Tier II tax rates will increase for both railroad employers and employees. Also, railroad unemployment insurance contribution rates paid by employers will include a surcharge of 1.5 percent in 2015.

Tier I and Medicare Tax – The Railroad Retirement Tier I payroll tax rate on covered rail employers and employees for the year 2015 remains at 7.65 percent. The Railroad Retirement Tier I tax rate is the same as the Social Security tax, and for withholding and reporting purposes is divided into 6.20 percent for retirement and 1.45 percent for Medicare hospital insurance. The maximum amount of an employee's earnings subject to the 6.20 percent rate increases from \$117,000 to \$118,500 in 2015, but there is no maximum on earnings subject to the 1.45 percent Medicare rate.

An additional Medicare payroll tax of 0.9 percent applies to an individual's income exceeding \$200,000 or \$250,000 for a married couple filing a joint tax return. While employers will begin withholding the additional Medicare tax as soon as an individual's wages exceed the \$200,000 threshold, the final amount owed or refunded

will be calculated as part of the individual's Federal income tax return.

Tier II Tax – The Railroad Retirement Tier II tax rate on employees will be 4.9 percent in 2015, and the employers' rate will be 13.1 percent. The rates in 2014 for employees and employers were 4.4 percent and 12.6 percent, respectively. The maximum amount of earnings subject to Railroad Retirement Tier II taxes will increase from \$87,000 to \$88,200 in 2015. Since 2004, Tier II tax rates are based on an average account benefits ratio reflecting Railroad Retirement fund levels. Depending on this ratio, the Tier II tax rate for employees can be between zero percent and 4.9 percent, while the Tier II rate for employers can range between 8.2 percent and 22.1 percent.

Unemployment Insurance Contributions – Employers, but not employees, pay railroad unemployment insurance contributions, which are experience-rated by employer. The Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act also provides for a surcharge in the event the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Account balance falls below an indexed threshold amount. The accrual balance of the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Account was \$140.8 million on June 30, 2014. Since the balance is less than the indexed thresh-

old of \$141.2 million, a 1.5 percent surcharge will be added to the basic contribution rates for 2015, but will not increase the maximum 12 percent rate. There was no surcharge in 2014 or 2013, although a surcharge of 1.5 percent applied in 2012.

As a result, the unemployment insurance contribution rates (including the 1.5 percent surcharge) on railroad employers in 2015 will range from the minimum rate of 2.15 percent to the maximum of 12 percent on monthly compensation up to \$1,455, an increase from \$1,440 in 2014.

In 2015, the minimum rate of 2.15 percent will apply to 77 percent of covered employers, with eight percent paying the maximum rate of 12 percent.

During the year, new employers will pay an unemployment insurance contribution rate of 4.09 percent, which represents the average rate paid by all employers in the period 2011-2013.



SMART's CN/IC members ratify retroactive agreement

SMART Transportation Division-represented conductors and trainmen employed by the Canadian National/Illinois Central Railroad have ratified a new six-year agreement, Vice President Dave Wier reports.

The agreement provides for six annual wage increases retroactive to Aug. 1, 2010, with the final wage increase to be effective Jan. 1, 2015, totaling 18.6 percent and resulting in a cumulative wage increase of 20.08 percent over the life of the agreement. The accord includes conductor certification pay rolled into the rates of pay and full retroactive back pay for all active trainmen and employees that retired or died subsequent to Aug. 1, 2010.

The agreement also lowers the calculated vacation qualification days from 240 to 160 days; increases the meal allowance to \$12 after four hours and every eight hours thereafter at the away-from-home terminal; improves bereavement leave; provides for a furlough retention board; institutes provisions for temporary transfer to other CN properties, and establishes seniority on the first day of compensated service.

It also establishes regular assignments after four

consecutive days of similar-type work and provides for six-and-two and four-and-two work rest cycles with local negotiations concerning eleven-and-three work rest cycles. Participation in the National Health and Welfare plans continues.

"The work rest cycles are, six days of work followed by two days of rest, and four days of work followed by two days of rest, in a 14-day period," Wier said. "The 11 and three is subject to local negotiations and includes 'Smart Rest,' to allow an employee's consecutive work days to be reset by taking a 24-hour period off. This complies with Rail Safety Improvement Act regulations."

Wier, who assisted with the mediated negotiations, expressed his appreciation to CN/IC GO 401 General Chairperson **Tracy Bublitz** (234), retired General Chairperson **R.W. "Red" Dare** (1525), GO 433 Acting General Chairperson **William Butch St. John** (1557) and GO 433 General Committee Secretary **Jerry "J.J." Russum** (1334) for their exceptional effort in bringing the members' concerns to the bargaining table.

"This agreement will make their members some of the highest paid rail employees in the country," Wier said.

Treasurers receive training at Atlanta workshop



SMART Transportation Division Auditors Bobby Brantley and Mike Araujo conducted a three-day local treasurers' workshop at the Hampton Inn & Suites Atlanta Airport North Oct. 6-8, 2014. The workshop provided local treasurers with hands-on training on the responsibilities and reporting duties pertaining to their office, including direct receipts and Winstabs. It also focused on completion of mandatory filings for Labor Management reports, IRS Form 990 and Department of Labor requirements. Pictured, from left, are Keith Hartley (1501), Mike Laughlin (533), Araujo, Ernie B. Suazo (1701), Carl E. Schab (60), Bernard Gray III (1033), Charles K. Burn (427), Benjamin Vang (64), Milton L. Driver III (back row, 1290), T. Craig Spangler (974) and Brantley (back row).

Transportation Division sets 2015 regional meeting sites

The SMART Transportation Division has set the dates and locations of the union's two 2015 regional meetings.

The western regional meeting will be held June 29 – July 1 at the Arizona Biltmore in Phoenix.

The eastern regional meeting will be held July 13-15 at the Rhode Island Convention Center in Providence. Accommodations will be available at both the connecting Omni Providence Hotel and the Providence Biltmore.

Both regional meetings will run Monday through Wednesday.

The Transportation Division's officers and director of meeting management will continue to finalize details of both meetings in the coming months. Check www.utu.org regularly for meeting updates.

SOFA warns of winter-related safety issues

The upcoming months are historically the most deadly time of year for railroad workers, with more career-ending injuries than any other period of the year.

In February 1998, a Switching Operations Fatalities Analysis (SOFA) working group, with representatives from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), labor and management, was formed at the request of the FRA to review employee fatalities and to develop recommendations for reducing fatalities in switching operations. It is a voluntary, non-regulatory, workplace-safety partnership that looks for commonalities among the fatalities that occur during switching operations.

SOFA consultant Dr. David Skinner, who has been a part of the working group since its inception, has compiled a summary notice to both railroads and rail crews currently experiencing winter-related conditions. To view the notice, enter "Dr. David Skinner" in the Search box at www.utu.org.

As the onset of winter is upon us, take note of the following safety measures to help avoid a career-ending injury or loss of life during the winter months:

- Be sure winter clothing does not restrict movement or degrade hearing and vision.
- Identify any winter-related conditions affecting safety. For example, ice can cause derailments. Ice, snow and mud can cause falling. Snow can muffle sound and reduce visibility.
- Adjust productivity expectations based on darkness and weather.
- Discuss winter conditions in safety briefings and post any weather-related concerns on bulletin boards.
- Do not lose situational awareness, no matter the other circumstances in your family or personal life.

While we are thankful, we must continue to build for the future

In the spirit of the holiday season, I want to focus on what we have to be thankful for as we leave 2014 behind.

For one, our First SMART General Convention will go down as the seminal moment when our two former organizations merged into a strong, united union built to improve upon our advancements of the past.

This has been a long time coming.

Already, local unions from coast to coast and everywhere in between are working together to solve the challenges that face us.

In New York, we showed what we can accomplish when we stand united. I was proud to see sheet metal workers, mechanics, and sign hangers join conductors and their fellow workers in standing together for what became a fair contract for members on the Long Island Rail Road.

We built on that success by moving forward with organizing and bargaining advances in places like Tennessee, Pennsylvania, New Mexico, Colorado, New Jersey, Michigan and California.

“Our goal for the coming year is growth. Through growth, we will be able to maximize our union’s bargaining strength for the betterment of each and every member. It is in everybody’s self-interest to help out in these efforts.”

Already, leaders from the local level representing both the transportation and sheet metal industries are coming together to learn about how to launch strategic campaigns customized for every industry we represent.



SMART General President’s Column

By Joe Nigro

Our goal for the coming year is growth. Through growth, we will be able to maximize our union’s bargaining strength for the betterment of each and every member. It is in everybody’s self-interest to help out in these efforts.

While workers on every Class I railroad must belong to a union, not every one of them is a member of SMART. Because of this, it is easier for the carriers to pit workers against each other due to those employees being in separate organizations.

Our ability to bargain is further hurt when short line carriers utilize the lower pay of their non-union workforce to undermine the standards we built.

That cannot be allowed to continue and we need to challenge these threats to the advances that those that came before us made.

We have a long trip ahead of us in the coming years. It will not always be easy, but that which is worth doing never is.

We now have the framework and the foundation to forge a united path forward thanks to our new constitution and the hard work and dedication put in by delegates from the transportation and sheet metal industries.

As we enter the holiday season and make plans for the New Year, I am humbled by the commitment of so many of

our brothers and sisters across this union. We work tirelessly to build and keep our country moving forward.

The sky is the limit to what we can accomplish when every part of this union comes together to build a better future for every member.

On behalf of General Secretary-Treasurer Joe Sellers, the General Executive Council and myself, I wish you a safe and happy holiday season.

Fraternally,

Joe Nigro
SMART General President

*Happy
Holidays!*



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For the latest news, visit www.utu.org; also, register on the SMART TD website to receive news alerts via email.

Risch: ‘Another year over. And a new one just begun’

“So this is Christmas, And what have you done, Another year over, And a new one just begun,” so sang John Lennon.

The holidays are a good time for all of us to ponder what we have done to make life better for our families, our brothers and sisters in the workplace, and the communities in which we live.

I love a new year; 2015 offers a fresh start with new opportunities to make some progress for our membership and in our personal lives. The year 2014 is water under the bridge, and dwelling on past mistakes and lost opportunities wastes precious time and energy.

There are opportunities, and of course challenges, in store for our union this year and we are preparing to address them all.

National negotiations with the big freight railroads are front and center. John Previsich, our Transportation Division president, has assembled a great negotiating team and this team, along with our general chairpersons, have established our priorities. The rail industry, of course, has other priorities, but then that’s the nature of collective bargaining.

The good news is the industry is in very good financial shape and the future looks great for freight rail in America. Our big freight railroads are investing in their infrastructure and are hiring far beyond normal attrition levels, meaning there will be more jobs in the industry in 2015 than in 2014.

It makes sense for America to expand our freight rail network for a number of reasons: shipping by rail is better for the environment; it’s more fuel efficient, it relieves highway congestion and freight rail doesn’t rely on gov-



SMART Transportation Division Officer’s Column

By John Risch

ernment investment, because it is almost entirely privately funded.

As for passenger rail, Amtrak continues to set ridership records and needs less federal operating assistance every year. Amtrak, however, continues to need additional money to invest in infrastructure and equipment. We will be working with Amtrak’s leadership to make that case in Congress. In addition to Amtrak, passenger rail is expanding.

“The 2015 Congress will be less supportive of transportation and labor. We will make our case that investments in public transportation and adopting policies that encourage the expansion of rail is not just good for our members, but is good for America as well.”

California is proceeding with their high-speed rail project and there are other passenger rail proposals in Florida, Texas, Nevada and elsewhere.

For our bus members, there are always challenges for adequate funding at the federal and state levels. Our national office and our state legislative directors will be working to make sure transit agencies get the money they sorely need. But the big picture for public transportation is that more young people are opting out of cars in favor of public transportation. So the future is bright here as well.

There is no question the 2015 Congress, and many of the state legislatures, are more conservative and less supportive of public transportation and organized labor in general than in 2014. So be it. We will make our case that investments in public transportation, and adopting policies that encourage the expansion of rail, is not just good for our members, but is good for America as well.

So this is Christmas. And while we will have lots of challenges in 2015, it’s a great time to be in our industry and for that reason we are truly blessed.

Wishing you and your family all the best this holiday season.

Fraternally,

John Risch
National Legislative Director
SMART Transportation Division

State Watch

News from SMART TD State Legislative Boards

Georgia



Georgia State Legislative Director Matt Campbell introduces Georgia Senate President Pro-Tempore David Shafer (R), who gave the keynote address to attendees of the Georgia Railroad Association’s Freshman Legislator Workshop.

The Transportation Division’s Georgia State Legislative Board was a sponsor of the Georgia Railroad Association’s Freshman Legislator Workshop, Legislative Director **Matt Campbell** reports. “The freshman legislators learned about the freight rail industry and important issues such as rail funding, truck sizes and weights, and elimination of the sales tax on diesel fuel used by locomotives,” Campbell said. “SMART Transportation Division is the only union member of the GRA, which represents 25 freight railroads that operate in Georgia.”

North Dakota

U.S. Sen. Heitkamp (D-N.D.) recently spoke to employees of Canadian Pacific Railway about agricultural shipment delays, her support for rail workers and the need for CP to get back on track with its shipments, Legislative Director **Jim Chase** reports. “North Dakota’s farmers rely on consistent rail service to get their products to market so they can

make a living and support their families. But the disappointing reality is that extreme backlogs have hurt our state’s farmers, unnecessarily costing them time and money,” said Heitkamp. “Rail workers, including those from Canadian Pacific, have shown a great deal of commitment through these difficult circumstances to help farmers and address these agriculture shipment delays – but we need those at the top of the company to get on board and make real changes. “We can’t have this same problem happen again next year. We need to make sure all of North Dakota’s farmers, grain elevators, and utilities have the certainty and rail service they need during this harvest and in the future.”



Pictured in the top row, from left, are Chase, GO 261 Vice General Chairperson Gavin Lindahl (980), Local Chairperson Gerry Wallace (590) and Local President Trevor Koop (980). In the bottom row, from left, are GO 261 General Chairperson Jim Nelson (980), Alternate Legislative Rep. Duane Steedsman (980), Heitkamp, GO 261 Vice General Chairperson Tim Baird (887) and Local Secretary & Treasurer Chad Waldoch (980).

Washington

Washington State Legislative Director **Herb Krohn** Nov. 7 appeared on *Northwest Now*, a Public Broadcasting System program that airs in Washington on Television Station KBTC.

Northwest Now is an Emmy-award winning weekly public affairs show that goes beyond the headlines to provide perspective on the issues that have western Washington talking. In the episode, *Northwest Now* took a closer look at coal trains and the two proposed terminals that would be used to export coal and oil through Washington. To view this episode online, enter “Northwest Now” in the Search box at www.utu.org.

Wisconsin

In a letter to the editor published Oct. 24 in the *Fond du Lac Reporter*, State Legislative Director **Craig Peachy** wrote a response to an article published Sept. 13 entitled, “More trains lead to traffic delays at crossings.” “A train blocked the 175 Highway crossing for more than five hours Sept. 7. Almost immediately, three misguided Republican congressmen misdiagnosed the problem and proposed Congress pass a law that would require railroad workers to work longer hours. “The problem with this incident is not the fault of the crew on the train. Rather, it lies with bad decisions by railroad managers. “The train blocked the crossing because a railroad manager refused to communicate with the train crew and forced them to pull the train to a point where it blocked the highway crossing, knowing full well there were places where this train could have parked that would not have blocked a crossing. “Railroads are ever increasing train lengths to 9,000 to 10,000 feet, when road crossings are generally located on section lines approximately a mile apart. Add to the mix that some railroads want to go to one-person train crews, which would make it impossible to cut road crossings. “What is the solution? Better management decisions, shorter trains and the continuation of at least two persons on every train.”


Bus Department

By Alvy Hughes, Alternate Vice President-Bus
ALVYHUGHES1@GMAIL.COM

Winter is coming, so let’s be safe out there

Although winter hasn’t arrived yet, many states have already seen winter conditions and record snowfall. It’s that time of the year that U.S. roads and highways can be hazardous for transportation.

According to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), more than 70 percent of the nation’s roads are located in snowy regions that receive more than five inches of average snowfall annually. Nearly 70 percent of the U.S. population lives in these snowy regions.



Hughes

These conditions can be especially difficult for bus operators, as many people depend on us to get them to their destinations safely and on time. We need to be extra cautious and prepared this season. Here are a few preventive measures you should practice to keep you and your passengers safe.

- Facility lots and walk areas may be in horrible condition due to weather. Watch for slick spots – especially ice – when approaching your bus. Always take the safest path.
- Make sure to do proper pre-trips. Checking tires, defroster, wiper blades, mirrors, lights and heating system are especially important in winter. If you discover any issues during your pre-trip, please write it up and report it to the proper company personnel. If your issues aren’t addressed, please contact your local union legislative representative.
- Many companies have a “no idling” policy to save on fuel, but it’s very important that you take some time to warm-up your vehicle.
- Be aware of the conditions around you at all times and remember that the posted speed limits are for normal road conditions.
- Enhanced driving skills, alertness and reaction time are needed in wintry conditions. (Bridges freeze first, and many exit ramps can be challenging due to the fact they may receive less attention than main roads.)
- Watch out for pedestrians.
- Always buckle your seat belt.

Our main goal is to be safe. All operators should have buses that are equipped with the necessities to handle the winter weather. Make sure that you put yourself and your passengers in the safest position at all times.

Ill. Legislative Director Guy responds to Amtrak attack

SMART Transportation Division’s Illinois State Legislative Director **Bob Guy** responded to a “letter to the editor” published in the Nov. 5 issue of the *The News-Gazette* and Guy’s letter was published by the newspaper Nov. 13. The original letter by Corrine Ann Williams of the Heritage Foundation was a call to stop increased funding for Amtrak and put the carrier “on a path toward privatization.” Guy’s response is below. “A recent letter about Amtrak from the Heritage Foundation regurgitated tired arguments that Amtrak critics have spewed for decades, that Amtrak receives taxpayer assistance, doesn’t run on-time, should be privatized and (my favorite) blamed the workforce, yet dismisses ridership records attained nearly every year for a decade. “The author gripes about taxpayer assistance, but omits the fact that roads and aviation don’t nearly pay for themselves and rely on public support. The state of the highway trust fund and its seemingly yearly bailout is proof enough. “The author slams Amtrak for on-time performance, but admits it’s the freight railroads’ fault, yet insists that’s no excuse. Handling of Amtrak by their freight “hosts” is a huge problem, especially Chicago-Champaign, which is why Amtrak is taking action, having the Surface Transportation Board investigate Amtrak’s handling by Canadian National Railway. “The author blames the unionized workforce for their “above-market” wages. What market? These aren’t 9-to-5 jobs. Amtrak’s highly skilled, trained, safety-sensitive employees work every single day serving the most precious cargo, passengers. “Finally, the author retreads ‘privatization.’ Forty-plus years ago, Congress allowed railroads to shed passenger service; it wasn’t profitable. If these same private railroads, while enjoying record revenue and profits, could make passenger rail profitable, they would. But they can’t, so they don’t! “Amtrak should be accountable to taxpayers. But, with a generation of young people driving less to stay electronically connected and relocating to locales with public transportation, why starve a transportation mode Americans are obviously demanding.”



Guy



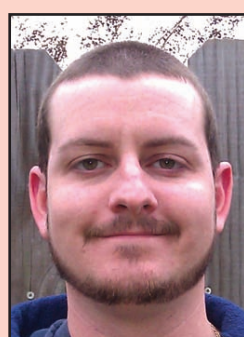
UTU PAC contributions for 2013



Your top-performing local legislative representatives



Robert "Scott" Jones
Local 1081



Jared M. Costello
Local 1129



Ronnie R. Hobbs
Local 854



Bruce A. Przybyski
Local 312



Steven R. Evans
Local 950



Kamron T. Saunders
Local 508



Wilbur J. Witzel
Local 31



Brian J. Hagele
Local 234



Shawn Nance
Local 490



Joseph H. Wingerter
Local 219

How does your state stack up?

(Average UTU PAC contributions per member, per month)

Arizona	7.62
Montana	5.95
Michigan	4.47
New Mexico	4.29
Wisconsin	4.10
Nebraska	3.90
Arkansas	3.86
Wyoming	3.79
Oregon	3.69
Missouri	3.47
Indiana	3.45
Idaho	3.40
Utah	2.96
Illinois	2.83
Colorado	2.80
North Carolina	2.76
Kansas	2.65
Iowa	2.51
Minnesota	2.47
North Dakota	2.32
District of Columbia	2.31
Texas	2.23
Virginia	2.21
Nevada	2.13
Delaware	1.89
California	1.63
Oklahoma	1.66
Louisiana	1.60
Florida	1.39
Maryland	1.36
South Carolina	1.36
New Jersey	1.33
Tennessee	1.30
Washington	1.26
Mississippi	1.22
South Dakota	1.19
Georgia	.95
New England States	.94
West Virginia	.89
Alaska	.86
Kentucky	.85
Alabama	.84
Pennsylvania	.79
Ohio	.64
New York	.54
Connecticut	.28

If You Want a Say... Give a Dollar a Day

"To have a strong union, you must have a voice in your local union, attend your local union meetings and support and contribute to your PAC fund. Here at Local 854, all members (100 percent) contribute to the PAC fund. We teach our new members by example. I am a proud Gold Club member. When I greet a new member with an application to join, they also receive a PAC form with information that all 854 members support our PAC."

Ronnie R. Hobbs, Local 854 Legislative Rep.

Top Ten UTU PAC Locals

(Average UTU PAC contributions per member per month)

Local	City	Amount
1081	Glendale, Ariz. Robert S. Jones, Legislative Rep.	\$17.22
1129	Raleigh, N.C. Jared M. Costello, Legislative Rep.	15.87
854	Portsmouth, Va. Ronnie R. Hobbs, Legislative Rep.	13.19
312	Madison, Wis. Bruce A. Przybyski, Legislative Rep.	12.51
950	West Memphis, Ark. Steven R. Evans, Legislative Rep.	12.41
508	Smithville, Texas Kamron T. Saunders, Legislative Rep.	12.03
31	San Jose, Calif. Wilbur J. Witzel, Legislative Rep.	11.00
234	Bloomington, Ill. Brian J. Hagele, Legislative Rep.	10.13
490	Princeton, Ind. Shawn Nance, Legislative Rep.	9.86
219	Hannibal, Mo. Joseph H. Wingerter, Legislative Rep.	9.85

Average UTU PAC contribution per member, per month in dollars for 2013

Local	Amount	1312	Pensacola	.29	477	Newton	1.29	486	Montana		489	San Antonio	3.09							
Alabama		1502	Wildwood	1.07	495	Salina	2.45	486	Glendive	3.12	2	Toledo	.08							
598	Mobile	.21	1504	Sanford	1.82	506	Herington	1.45	544	Havre	5.75	14	Cincinnati	.46						
622	Birmingham	1.99	1900	Miami	.00	527	Coffeyville	.88	730	Great Falls	5.11	138	Lima	1.03						
762	Montgomery	2.32	State Average	1.39	533	Oswatimie	.72	891	Whitefish	8.17	145	Columbus	1.21							
772	Sheffield	.47	Georgia		707	Marysville	8.63	1840	Glasgow	7.61	225	Bellevue	1.08							
847	Birmingham	.60	511	Atlanta	1.38	763	Pittsburg	.98	State Average	5.95	284	Cleveland	1.11							
1053	Selma	.30	535	Macon	1.60	794	Archison	1.00	7	North Platte	3.12	378	Cleveland	.14						
1291	Birmingham	1.47	674	Augusta	.75	1227	Wichita	1.73	200	North Platte	3.97	421	Conneaut	1.02						
1887	Fairfield	.00	941	Columbus	.74	1409	Kansas City	2.06	207	Morrill	1.93	440	Sharonville	.21						
1972	Birmingham	.18	998	Waycross	.77	1503	Marysville	4.69	286	North Platte	6.92	496	Portsmouth	.47						
State Average	.84	1031	Savannah	1.43	1532	Kansas City	4.19	State Average	2.65	586	Willard	.52	586	Willard	.52					
Alaska		1033	Atlanta	.76	State Average	2.65	303	Lincoln	1.65	601	Crestline	.00	621	Crestline	.00					
1626	Anchorage	.86	1245	Atlanta	1.18	367	Omaha	3.49	792	Cleveland	.20	860	Middleport	.05						
State Average	.86	1261	Atlanta	1.12	Kentucky		626	McCook	3.96	991	Steubenville	.16	937	Mart	1.40					
Arizona		1263	Valdosta	.81	376	Louisville	.33	627	Wymore	4.70	1365	Youngstown	.65	940	Wichita Falls	2.36				
113	Winslow	7.71	1598	Manchester	.40	573	Danville	.52	872	Omaha	7.02	1376	Columbus	1.11	949	Sherman	.46			
807	Tucson	2.92	1790	Fitzgerald	.62	630	Ashland	1.19	934	Alliance	2.20	1397	Columbus	1.89	953	Victoria	4.13			
1081	Glendale	17.22	1910	Macon	1.11	785	Paducah	.21	962	Alliance	2.98	1529	Walbridge	.29	965	Dallas	1.79			
1629	Phoenix	6.02	1971	Atlanta	.69	1190	Ludlow	.70	State Average	3.90	1816	Toledo	1.09	1092	Teague	4.35				
1800	Tucson	4.22	State Average	.95	1310	Loyall	.80	1315	Covington	.39	1928	Toledo	1.12	1205	Kingsville	1.17				
State Average	7.62	Idaho		78	Pocatello	5.61	1316	Ravenna	1.11	1043	Sparks	.31	1524	Houston	.17					
Arkansas		265	Pocatello	2.19	1058	Nampa	2.41	1328	Louisville	.64	1117	Las Vegas	5.06	1571	El Paso	2.54				
221	North Little Rock	1.14	State Average	3.40	1567	Corbin	2.80	1377	Russell	1.34	1775	Elko	.00	State Average	.64	1593	Brownwood	1.39		
462	Pine Bluff	2.01	Illinois		1963	Louisville	.23	State Average	.85	254	Fitchburg	1.92	770	Heavener	.52	1670	Laredo	1.91		
507	Van Buren	1.87	168	Chicago	2.67	Louisiana		254	New England States		894	Tulsa	1.45	1886	Houston	1.75				
656	North Little Rock	.68	171	Aurora	1.41	659	Leesville	.81	262	Boston	2.51	1016	Enid	1.72	1892	Houston	.64			
733	DeQueen	5.07	195	Galesburg	2.76	781	Shreveport	1.90	352	West Springfield	.26	1042	Oklahoma City	3.73	1904	Houston	3.47			
950	West Memphis	12.41	196	Beardstown	3.00	976	Shreveport	2.46	587	Greenfield	.35	1188	Oklahoma City	1.38	1918	El Paso	1.13			
State Average	3.86	California		198	Peoria	.27	1066	New Orleans	.58	663	Bangor	.47	1289	Tulsa	1.13	1957	Silsbee	5.80		
23	Santa Cruz	2.03	234	Bloomington	10.13	1337	New Orleans	.79	679	Attleboro	.00	State Average	1.66	1574	Portland	1.67	1974	Fort Worth	1.73	
31	San Jose	11.00	258	Rock Island	1.04	1458	DeQuincy	2.38	898	Boston	.17	1841	Klamath Falls	3.41	State Average	2.83	State Average	2.23		
32	Glendale	1.42	432	Champaign-Urbana	4.04	1501	Baton Rouge	3.22	1400	South Portland	.00	0283	Portland	4.95	266	Salt Lake City	6.94			
84	Los Angeles	2.42	445	Niota	2.30	1545	Monroe	1.53	1462	Boston	2.53	0471	Eugene	6.09	138	Ogden	1.76			
98	San Luis Obispo	2.02	453	Clinton	3.20	1678	Minden	2.12	1473	Boston	1.24	0473	La Grande	4.06	1294	Milford	2.24			
100	Oakland	.61	469	Madison	4.34	1836	New Orleans	1.12	State Average	.94	1573	Klamath Falls	1.96	1366	Salt Lake City	1.04				
239	Oakland	.86	528	Chicago	1.36	1947	Lake Charles	.68	State Average	.94	1574	Portland	1.67	1554	Ogden	2.18				
240	Los Angeles	7.54	565	Centralia	7.50	State Average	1.60	60	New Jersey		1574	Portland	1.67	State Average	2.83	State Average	2.83			
492	Sacramento	.64	577	Northlake	1.58	Maryland		710	Newark	2.07	1841	Klamath Falls	3.41	State Average	3.69	State Average	3.69			
694	Dunsmuir	2.35	597	Des Plaines	4.72	430	Cumberland	.81	759	Newark	.15	State Average	3.69	Virginia		48	Norfolk	.41		
771	Needles	1.29	620	Chicago	3.16	600	Cumberland	.28	800	Jersey City	3.34	61	Philadelphia	.66	363	Roanoke	.84			
811	San Bernardino	3.36	653	Blue Island	2.24	610	Baltimore	.55	1390	Trenton	.62	172	Darby	.00	623	Clifton Forge	1.22			
835	Bakersfield	1.23	740	Joliet	.84	631	Brunswick	1.57	1413	Jersey City	1.20	300	Philadelphia	.99	662	Richmond	.37			
1201	Stockton	1.05	768	Decatur	2.51	1445	Elizabeth	3.14	1445	Elizabeth	3.14	309	Altoona	.00	706	Roanoke	.82			
1241	Richmond	1.12	979	Salem	.43	1470	Edmonston	4.71	1447	Newark	1.74	340	Connellsville	.18	769	Alexandria	1.36			
1252	Fresno	.25	1003	Kankakee	1.41	1949	Baltimore	.25	1558	Bergenfield	.72	386	Reading	.72	854	Portsmouth	13.19			
1422	Los Angeles	1.91	1083	Villa Grove	.47	State Average	1.36	1589	New Brunswick	.09	498	Allentown	.43	971	Crowe	2.72				
1544	Maywood	2.68	1258	Elgin	3.01	Michigan		State Average	1.33	596	Albion	.00	924	Richmond	.92	924	Richmond	.92		
1563	El Monte	1.17	1290	Chicago	2.90	72	Battle Creek	1.66	1168	Clovis	2.34	632	Altoona	.00	971	Crowe	2.72			
1564	Los Angeles	1.39	1299	Chicago	3.83	278	Jackson	9.29	1687	Belen	6.24	816	Harrisburg	.77	1601	Appalachia	.26			
1565	West Hollywood	1.20	1358	Danville	1.36	313	Grand Rapids	7.34	State Average	4.29	830	Harrisburg	.13	State Average	2.21	State Average	2.21			
1570	Roseville	1.09	1402	Dupo	2.29	320	Saginaw	2.57	1687	Belen	6.24	838	Philadelphia	2.23	117	Vancouver	3.46			
1581	Bakersfield	1.79	1421	Franklin Park	9.47	886	Marquette	4.70	State Average	4.29	1006	Brownsville	.00	161	Seattle	.31				
1584	Lancaster	.00	1423	Galesburg	1.91	1075	Trenton	8.19	1	New York		1074	Freeport	1.16	324	Seattle	1.74			
1607	Los Angeles	1.16	1433	Elmwood Park	2.92	1183	Port Huron	3.07	29	Buffalo	.60	1373	Philadelphia	1.83	426	Spokane	1.07			
1608	Chatsworth	1.77	1494	Chicago	3.82	1438	Lincoln Park	1.02	95	Babylon	.71	1374	New Castle	1.45	556	Tacoma	2.04			
1674	Los Angeles	5.58	1525	Carbondale	5.55	1477	Dearborn	.63	95	Rensselaer	.36	1375	Philadelphia	1.47	845	Seattle	2.14			
1694	Barstow	.50	1534	Chicago	3.21	1709	Pontiac	8.31	139	Rensselaer	.36	1375	Philadelphia	1.47	855	Spokane	1.57			
1700	Perris	.00	1597	Chicago	3.65	1760	Detroit	2.39	153	Spring Valley	.00	1418	Conway	.00	977	Pasco	1.21			
1701	Montebello	.00	1883	Riverdale	1.75	State Average	4.47	212	Albany	.22	1594	Upport Darby	.81	1238	Vancouver	.25				
1730	Richmond	.91	1895	Chicago	1.87	Minnesota		211	Binghamton	.13	1628	Pittsburgh	1.14	1348	Centralla	1.52				
1732	San Jose	1.31	1929	East St. Louis	2.02	650	Minneapolis	3.17	212	Albany	.24	State Average	.79	1505	Spokane	.26				
1741	San Francisco	.00	1973	Chicago	1.45	911	Minneapolis	1.75	256	Watervliet	.58	1637	Wishram	.96						
1770	Los Angeles	.66	State Average	2.96	1000	Minneapolis	1.59	292	East Syracuse	.00	1713	Everett	.37							
1785	San Monica	.41	Indiana		1067	Virginia	5.49	318	Hornell	.83	1977	Seattle	.70	State Average	1.26	State Average	1.26			
1801	Martinez	.30	6	Indianapolis	2.21	1175	Duluth	4.11	377	Salamanca	.00	407	Charleston	.82	West Virginia		118	Hinton	.06	
1813	West Colton	.77	194	Elkhart	2.74	1177	Willmar	1.73	394	Albany	.19	793	Columbia	2.22	504	Wheeling	.39			
1846	West Colton	.61	206	Peru	4.13	1292	Proctor	2.00	645	Babylon	1.68	942	Florence	.84	605	Grafton	3.47			
State Average	1.69	298	Garrett	4.39	1614	St. Paul	1.75	722	Babylon	1.55	970	Abbeville	.64	655	Bluefield	.20				
Colorado		333	North Vernon	.93	1976	St. Paul	.69	982	Rochester	.03	1814	Spartanburg	3.31	915	Handley	.66				
40	Denver	.00	490	Princeton	9.86	State Average	2.47	1007	Syracuse	.07	State Average	1.36	State Average	1.36	1062	Huntington	1.65			
201	Trinidad	1.48	744	Frankfort	6.15	Mississippi		1370	New York	.79	South Dakota		63	Huron	2.50	1172	Mullens	.70		
202	Denver	3.68	904	Evansville	3.47	427	McComb	2.98	1393	Buffalo	.37	233	Aberdeen	.22	1327	Peach Creek	.07			
204	Pueblo	4.50	1202	Fort Wayne	1.48	584	Meridian	1.14	1440	Staten Island	.32	375	Edgemont	.84	1386	Parkersburg	.11			
500	Grand Junction	2.92	1381	Hammond	1.90	853	Amory	.48	1491	Port Jervis	.00	State Average	1.19	1869	Williamson	1.58				
945	La Junta	3.81	1383	Gary	.54	1088	Jackson	.43	1566	Buffalo	.59	State Average	1.19	State Average	.89	State Average	.89			
1136	Sterling	3.24	1518	Indianapolis	2.65	1334	Hattiesburg	1.05	1831	Babylon	3.57	Tennessee		281	Milwaukee	3.93				
State Average	2.80	1526	Michigan City	2.25	State Average	1.22	1951	Albany	.33	1908	Buffalo	.00	338	Chattanooga	1.19	311	La Crosse	4.25		
Connecticut		1548	Indianapolis	5.43	Missouri		1978	New York	.50	1951	Albany	.33	339	Jackson	7.64	312	Madison	12.51		
277	Hartford	.00	1620	Elkhart	4.65	5	Kansas City	1.84	State Average	.54	753	Memphis	.00	750	Knoxville	1.81	322	Milwaukee	6.05	
328	New Haven	.11	1663	Indianapolis	2.41	185	Brookfield	5.07	North Carolina		974	Nashville	.65	753	Memphis	.00	581	Green Bay	2.00	
1361	New Haven	.84	State Average	3.45	219	Hannibal	9.85	0782	Asheville	4.23	1162	Erwin	.39	974	Nashville	.65	582	Stevens Point	2.93	
1672	New London	.17	Iowa		226	Moberly	1.78	1011	Hamlet	.28	1301	Knoxville	.20	1162	Erwin	.39	583	Fond du Lac	2.76	
State Average	.28	17	Marshalltown	3.84	259	St. Joseph	3.85	1105	Wilmington	1.19	1308	Bruceton/Hollow	.80	1301	Knoxville	.20	590	Portage	3.22	
Delaware		199	Creston	4.31	303	Springfield	3.60	1106	Rocky Mount	1.08	1314	Etowah	.64	1345	Knoxville	.09	832	Superior	3.14	
1378	Wilmington	1.83	228	Cedar Rapids	1.59	330	Poplar Bluff	2.02	1129	Raleigh	15.87	State Average	1.19	1346	Nashville	.18	1293	Altoona	2.64	
State Average	1.83	306	Eagle Grove	2.15	349	Kansas City	4.03	1166	Charlotte	1.17	1420	Kansas City	.58	1557	Memphis	.58	1382	Milwaukee	1.67	
District of Columbia		316	Clinton	1.80	607	Thayer	2.78	1715	Charlotte	.01	State Average	1.30	State Average	1.30	State Average	1.30	State Average	4.10	State Average	4.10
1522	Washington	1.																		

UTU
Alumni

UTU Alumni Association

News, information for members of the UTU Alumni Association

Rail retiree earnings limits to rise in 2015

Railroad Retirement annuitants subject to earnings restrictions can earn more in 2015 without having their benefits reduced as a result of increases in earnings limits indexed to average national wage increases.

Like Social Security benefits, some Railroad Retirement benefit payments are subject to deductions if an annuitant's earnings exceed certain exempt amounts. These earnings restrictions apply to those who have not attained full social security retirement age. For employee and spouse annuitants, full retirement age ranges from age 65 for those born before 1938 to age 67 for those born in 1960 or later. For survivor annuitants, full retirement age ranges from age 65 for those born before 1940 to age 67 for those born in 1962 or later.

For those under full retirement age throughout 2015, the exempt earnings amount rises to \$15,720 from \$15,480 in 2014. For beneficiaries attaining full retirement age in 2015, the exempt earnings amount, for the months before the month full retirement age is attained, rises to \$41,880 in 2015 from \$41,400 in 2014.

For those under full retirement age, the earnings deduction is \$1 in benefits for every \$2 of earnings over the exempt amount. For those attaining full retirement age in 2015, the deduction is \$1 for every \$3 of earnings over the exempt amount in the months before the month full retirement age is attained.

When applicable, these earnings deductions are assessed on the Tier I and vested dual benefit



portions of railroad retirement employee and spouse annuities, and the Tier I, Tier II, and vested dual benefit portions of survivor benefits.

All earnings received for services rendered, plus any net earnings from self-employment, are considered when assessing deductions for earnings. Interest, dividends, certain rental income, or income from stocks, bonds, or other investments are not considered earnings for this purpose.

Retired employees and spouses, regardless of age, who work for their last pre-retirement non-railroad employer are also subject to an additional earnings deduction, in their Tier II and supplemental benefits, of \$1 for every \$2 in earnings up to a maximum reduction of 50 percent. This earnings restriction does not change from year to year and does not allow for an exempt amount.

A spouse benefit is subject to reduction not only for the spouse's earnings, but also for the earnings of the employee, regardless of whether the earnings are from service for the last pre-retirement non-railroad employer or other post-retirement employment.

Special work restrictions continue to be applicable to disability annuitants in 2015. The monthly disability earnings limit increases to \$850 in 2015 from \$840 in 2014.

Regardless of age and/or earnings, no railroad retirement annuity is payable for any month in which an annuitant (retired employee, spouse or survivor) works for a railroad employer or railroad union.

Landfall Travel offers 2015 Alaskan land, sea vacation

Landfall Travel – the official travel agency of the UTU Alumni Association – is offering an 11-night Alaska land and sea vacation Aug. 19 – Aug. 30, 2015.

Travelers will begin their journey with a seven-day "Voyage of the Glaciers" cruise aboard a Princess Cruise ship, with visits to Glacier Bay National Park and the Hubbard Glacier or College Fjord, and visits to the ports of Skagway, Juneau and Ketchikan. On day seven, they'll enjoy a scenic rail journey on the Direct-to-the-Wilderness rail service.

Day eight of the trip has members departing on a scenic motorcoach journey, arriving at the Denali Princess Wilderness Lodge for a two-night stay. On day nine, members can enjoy the attractions of Denali National Park, with an included history tour detailing the flora and fauna of the area. On day 10, guests will reboard the motorcoach and travel to the Mt. McKinley Princess Wilderness Lodge, where they'll have spectacular views of the mountain. The final night of the journey allows members to explore Anchorage and all it has to offer.

Interested parties can contact Landfall Travel directly at (440) 799-8977 or toll-free at (800) 835-9233 for more information. Fares start at \$1,883 per person, based on double occupancy. All members are welcome. You do not have to be a member of the Alumni Association to enjoy this excursion.



Lorain, Ohio, Alumni chapter meeting monthly again

UTU Alumni Association member **Walter Demich** (586) advises that Lorain, Ohio, Chapter 9 of the Association has begun having meetings every second Tuesday of the month at 10 a.m. The chapter briefly closed after former head **Tim Smith** died. Members meet to discuss Railroad Retirement, healthcare and other issues. Meetings are held at the Amherst Diner at 46323 Telegraph Rd. (Route 113), South Amherst, Ohio. Contact Demich at (440) 233-7801 for more information.

Georgia rail retirees hold barbecue, swap tales from the rails



Railroad retirees from Georgia held a barbecue in Portal, Ga., on the cotton farm of retired Seaboard Coast Line (CSX) conductor Jackie Anderson (1031) Nov. 12. "It is great to see these men who worked so hard for so many years be able to enjoy the fruits of their labor," said Georgia State Legislative Director Matt Campbell. "The stories they tell could be wrapped into a New York Times best selling novel." Pictured in the top row, from left, are Gary Weitman, Joe Fletcher (30), Johnny Campbell (1031), Lester Igou, Lamar Lanier (942), Anderson, Billy Whitfield (1031), Mike May (1031), Ricky Fail, Jimmy Hendley (1031), Jerry Brantley and Roy Thigpen. In the bottom row, from left, are Paul Deloach, Mickey Fell (1031), J.C. Smith, Ed Cope (1031), Buzzy Zetterower, Paul Myers, Gerald Cook and Harold Miller.

THE FINAL CALL

Following are the names of recently deceased members who maintained annual membership in the UTU Alumni Association, 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
1	Yusz, Danial P.	Lake Placid, Fla.	306	Miller, Hiram O.	Sioux City, Iowa	694	Olsen, Wayne J.	Redding, Calif.
2	Chism, Warren C.	Elkhart, Ind.	311	Harrison, Lyle A.	La Crescent, Minn.	771	Wilmot, William W.	Needles, Calif.
2	Stage, Jack	Northwood, Ohio	322	Flisiak, Paul B.	Valparaiso, Ind.	792	Cline, Jack C.	Morristown, Tenn.
94	Albin, Ernest B.	Emporia, Kan.	329	Smith, L.J.	Greenwood, Ariz.	793	Goldson Jr., Harry L.	Columbia, S.C.
118	Anderson Jr., Garland E.	Hinton, W.Va.	376	Redden, Clayton L.	Georgetown, Ind.	911	Linn, Clarence E.	St. Paul, Minn.
202	Jorstad, John T.	Thornton, Colo.	464	Givens, Harold W.	Edmond, Okla.	1075	Roberts, Richard H.	Trenton, Mich.
206	Varvel, Lawrence C.	Oakwood, Ill.	493	Reed, William B.	Lena, Ill.	1344	Zander, Nicholas	Bismarck, N.D.
225	Cook, Clifton C.	Bellevue, Ohio	496	Finn, Kevin D.	Wheelersburg, Ohio	1382	Malicoat, Russell G.	Woodruff, Wis.
262	Welsh, Edward V.	Palm Bay, Fla.	511	Odom, Dennis D.	Decatur, Ga.	1388	Trickey, Clyde V.	Farmington, Mo.
284	Grabowski, Ted J.	Cleveland, Ohio	590	Dopp, J.H.	Portage, Wis.	1709	Anderson, Archie D.	Belleville, Mich.
305	Aukerman, Timothy W.	Lincoln, Neb.	605	Deleurere, George H.	Hendricks, W.Va.			

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General chair Bill Beebe reaches 60-year membership milestone

To be described as a “classic” means that one is considered to be of the highest quality with lasting value; an authoritative standard; fashionable, with simplicity and restraint in style; one of a kind. Like the classic ‘57 Chevy or the fashionable Elvis Presley, SMART General Chairperson **William A. Beebe** is a classic in his own right.

Amtrak GO 663 General Chairperson Beebe is a classic railroad union man who has withstood the test of time. On Jan. 1, he will have completed 60 years of service as a union representative to the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, the former UTU, and now the SMART Transportation Division. More amazingly, Beebe will turn 86 years young in January and shows no signs of slowing down. Throughout those 60 years, the membership has been his top priority.

GO 663 Vice General Chairperson **Gary J. Hopson** offered highlights of Beebe’s union career. Beebe has been a delegate to every national convention since the creation of the UTU. He has witnessed, firsthand, the evolution of this union and has often been described as the union’s resident historian. Hopson said Beebe was an active participant in the formation of the UTU.

According to Local 227 (Hartford, Conn.) Chairperson **Francis L. Ariola**, Beebe proudly served in the U.S. Army, beginning in 1946. He later attended college at the University of South Florida and Southern

Connecticut State University, where he earned both a bachelor’s degree and teaching certificate.

He hired out in 1951 with the New Haven Railroad (New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad) in the mail and baggage department, and on May 29, 1953, he transferred into operations as a brakeman, joining the BRT on Aug. 1, 1953. On Jan. 1, 1954, Beebe assumed the office of secretary of the local committee of adjustment for BRT Lodge 937 (now Local 1361). He was elected vice local chairperson in 1957 and became local chairperson in 1962. While serving simultaneously as local chairperson and Connecticut state legislative director from 1964 to 1976, he was elected general chairperson on the former New Haven and Hartford Railroad in 1976.

In 1983, Beebe led UTU-represented Metro North Railroad employees through a six-week strike that resulted in a ground-breaking agreement that has become the benchmark for commuter rail contracts. SMART TD members still benefit from that agreement today, Hopson said. “Now, our committee handles our own contract negotiations with Amtrak with minimal national involvement by the International. Beebe’s 1983 agreement opened the door to this.”

In addition to serving as general chairperson, Local 1361 delegate and trustee, Beebe is again the Connecticut state legislative director. He maintains a rigorous caseload and there are no indications that retirement will ever even be a consideration of his, Ariola said.

So how does Beebe keep it all going? Accord-

ing to Ariola, Beebe makes a concerted effort to stay healthy through physical fitness, diet and rest. “He is very health-conscious and works out every day, and has even been known to beat racquetball opponents 30 years his junior.”

Hopson provides more evidence, explaining that, “Beebe was a renowned handball player at the New Haven YMCA, and played masterful tennis even into his seventies.” According to Ariola, Beebe was a successful minor league pitcher in the Drummond Baseball League during the early 1950s. He is also a family man and ensures that he is involved in his two granddaughters’ lives by frequently visiting his daughter Susan’s family in Oregon. “He just loves his grandkids and they love their grandpa,” Ariola said.

“As the union’s ‘resident historian,’ Bill has accumulated a lot of stuff over the years. He keeps the most current union contract with him at all times, in the very likely event that someone asks his opinion about some vague, but pertinent, contractual provision. Members are always asking for his thoughts on various provisions because they trust him as highly competent, knowledgeable and wise. The funny thing is that, he really doesn’t need it since he practically has it memorized.”

“As a union representative and as a man, Bill is fearless. The carriers know that he is a fighter and that he is never intimidated.”

As SMART embarks on another year, members can rest assured that Bill Beebe will continue to take care of business by representing them with the highest quality. Bill Beebe truly is a one-of-a-kind classic.



Beebe

Previsich testifies before Senate subcommittee

Continued from page 1

the system needs significant renovations to tracks, bridges, tunnels and other infrastructure. Meanwhile, the rest of the world – most notably China – is investing heavily in modern and efficient passenger rail infrastructure, leaving American competitiveness, and American workers, further and further behind.

“Earlier this year, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee reported out the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act (PRRIA) of 2014. My union, as well as other rail labor unions, supported this measure and applauded the bipartisan nature of the proposal. The four-year bill does many important things that will help strengthen our national passenger rail network. However, it does not provide Amtrak with the funding levels required to meet the needs of an aging system. Most of all, it does not establish a predictable, dedicated funding source so Amtrak and our communities can adequately plan for future investments.

“The last passenger rail reauthorization – PRIIA, signed into law by President Bush in 2008 – was bipartisan and provided realistic, multi-year funding levels for Amtrak, and resisted efforts to recklessly privatize. In fact, the privatization pilot projects that were included in PRIIA received virtually no private sector interest. Permitting private companies to seize routes is a recipe for ending Amtrak service across the country and would give investors the green light to profit from assets paid for over decades by the American taxpayer and rail passengers.

“The next passenger rail reauthorization should build on the framework established by PRIIA 2008. It should include dedicated, adequate funding to upgrade and operate the Northeast Corridor and to operate the regional and long-distance trains that make up our national system.

“I want to emphasize one point. Our union is not opposed to private enterprise. The bulk of our

membership works for privately held freight railroads and, overall, we have good relationships with those companies.

“But the facts are, Amtrak has partnered with our private freight railroads and has negotiated operating agreements with them for more than 40 years. Amtrak’s employees, many of whom are federally certified, know and understand the complex operating rules that govern freight railroads, making Amtrak the right fit to operate this vital nation-wide service.

“Reauthorization must also protect the rights, jobs and wages of workers. Labor protections provided for in PRIIA should be updated to ensure they apply to all rail workers when federal funds are used. In addition, it must ensure that there is a level playing field for all competitors and that rail workers are covered under the appropriate rail and labor statutes, including the Railroad Retirement Act, the Railway Labor Act and Federal Employers’ Liability Act.

“Allowing employers, oftentimes foreign corporations, to circumvent U.S. labor laws or to undercut wages and benefits, and then claim the private sector is more efficient or profitable, is a game that must not be played. If we are serious about having a first-class rail system, it must be one that creates and sustains middle class jobs.

“Passenger rail reauthorization is an opportunity to make needed investments in a critical segment of our transportation system.

“I look forward to working with the members of this committee on the timely passage of a bill that establishes dedicated long-term passenger rail funding, supports the jobs and rights of our skilled and dedicated rail employees, rejects unwanted and ill-advised privatization proposals and lays out a national rail policy that is integrated with America’s multi-modal transportation needs.”

BLS reports steady decline in workplace injuries

WASHINGTON – Dr. David Michaels, assistant secretary of labor for occupational safety and health, Dec. 4 issued the following statement on the Labor Department’s Bureau of Labor Statistics’ 2013 Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses:

“Today we learned that, in 2013, approximately three million private sector workers in America experienced a serious injury or illness on the job. In this extraordinarily high number, it is easy to focus on the headline and miss the trend line. We are encouraged that the rates continue to decline over the past few years, even during this period of healthy economic growth when we would expect the rate of injuries to rise.

“The decrease in the injury rate is a product of tireless work by those employers, unions, worker advocates and occupational safety and health professionals all coupled with the efforts of federal and state government organizations that make worker safety and health a high priority each and every day.

“But we cannot ignore those three million workers. The severity of their injuries and illnesses varies widely; some are amputees, some suffer back injuries, while others have to struggle for each breath. Work injuries can instantly pull the rug out from a family striving for a good middle-class life. This is why the work of the Labor Department is so vital, and why the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, along with our partners in both the public and private sector, will maintain our commitment to ensuring that everyone can work in a safe, healthy place.”

To view the BLS’s complete report, visit <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/osh.nr0.htm>.



SMART TD, BLET, others to bargain together

Continued from page 1

cooperation between our organizations on a variety of common issues, and is the logical next step for our great unions. Working together will allow rail labor to make the strongest possible effort to obtain for our members the wages and working conditions that they deserve.”

Also participating in the coordinated bargaining effort are the American Train Dispatchers Association (ATDA), the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen (BRS), the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers (IBB), and the National Conference of Firemen and Oilers/SEIU (NCFO).

Jointly, the participating unions represent more than 85,000 railroad workers covered by the various organizations’ national agreements and comprise over 58 percent of the workforce that will be impacted by the negotiations.

The serving of the Section 6 bargaining notices is the first step in reaching a new national agreement with railroads represented by the National Carriers’ Conference Committee.

“All affected members will be kept informed regarding the Section 6 notices and developments in negotiations, when possible, through the SMART Transportation Division News and the SMART TD website,” Previsich said.

Under the Railway Labor Act, the current national agreement between the SMART TD (UTU) and NCCC will remain in effect until a new agreement is reached.

As specified in the current national agreement, a three-percent general wage increase will be paid on Jan. 1, 2015.

Bus operator, Amtrak conductor attacked

A member of the SMART Transportation Division employed by Los Angeles Metro was brutally assaulted Nov. 17 while operating a bus in the West San Fernando Valley and an Amtrak conductor was seriously injured while performing his duties Dec. 5 near Niles, Mich., after he was stabbed in the head, neck and several times on his body.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department identified the alleged attacker as Geovanny Falcon using the Metro bus’ surveillance video of the attack. Falcon, 24, was arrested on Thanksgiving Day and is being held on almost \$250,000 bail.

After boarding the bus, Falcon put the driver in a headlock and began punching and kicking her for no apparent reason, deputies said.

At a Nov. 24 news conference, Los Angeles Metro unveiled new programs to assist in the prevention of operator assaults. One initiative is a pilot program to install a two-part barrier system to provide separation between operators and the public.

“This union has sought this method of protection for more than 15 years. The SMART Transportation Division fully supports any initiative that promotes and furthers the safety and security of its members,” said GO 875 General Chairperson **James Williams**.

The Federal Transit Agency (FTA) recently sent a letter to Los Angeles Metro informing them of new oversight rules and regulations for local transit agencies in regard to public and operator safety.

“These programs will bring the best practices, as well as federal dollars, to tackle the issue of operator safety,” Williams said.

“In the past, operator safety has not been granted the appropriate level of attention that it deserves. It is the hope of SMART Transportation Division GCA 875 that new leadership at the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department, along with cooperation from the Los Angeles

County Metropolitan Transportation Transit Authority board of directors, will bring about new ideas and a sense of urgency to these very serious problems.”

Dontreal “Donnie” Bankhead, 40, a member of Local 168 at Chicago, was stabbed numerous times while performing his duties aboard Amtrak Train No. 364 on the evening of Dec. 5 near Niles, Mich. Three passengers were also injured in the attack.

Illinois State Legislative Director **Robert Guy** said Bankhead underwent surgery on Saturday, Dec. 6, and is currently in stable condition.

The assailant was apprehended by police at the Niles station. A family member said Michael Williams had suffered from mental illness since leaving the military and that it worsened after the deaths of his mother and father.

Guy said that collection boxes were set up at Amtrak facilities in Chicago until Dec. 12 to accept donations to assist the Bankhead family while Bankhead recovers.

“The SMART Transportation Division is deeply saddened after receiving the disturbing news that one of our members, while faithfully performing his duties, was seriously injured in a seemingly senseless and random act of violence,” Guy said.

“Our thoughts and prayers go out to our fellow member and the other passengers that were injured during this inconceivable attack. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to our other crew members, passengers and local law enforcement for any assistance that led to the apprehension of this suspect.

“SMART Transportation Division will stand ready to assist Amtrak and local law enforcement as the investigation into this rare act of violence moves forward and we will do everything in our power to ensure that the person responsible for these acts is prosecuted to the full extent of the law.”

Metra board chairman: Engineers, conductors do a great job

The following letter to the editor of the Chicago Sun-Times by Martin Oberman, chairman of the Metra Board of Directors, was published by the newspaper Nov. 23. It was in response to an article previously published by the newspaper that implied that Metra conductors and engineers were overpaid.

“The Chicago Sun-Times, without any evidence, insinuates that Metra engineers and conductors are overpaid because we use a century-old pay structure that other commuter railroads no longer use [“Money Train,” Nov. 12]. You demean these employees by portraying them as members of some exclusive club – never mind that they work very long hours, never mind that their pay is commensurate with the industry, never mind that they are responsible for the safe operation of trains carrying up to 1,500 riders, and never mind that cutting the overtime pay of these workers (who for the most part are paid straight time for overtime, not time and a half) would end up costing Metra even more money.

“Yes, we use a complicated pay formula that evolved in the decades before Metra’s formation. And yes, some engineers and conductors make good money. But that’s only because they work far more hours than a conventional 40-hour week. For example, a conductor working a standard 40-hour week would make about \$81,000 a year. When those conductors effectively put in an extra one-third to one-half of a year’s work – some of our assignments regularly call for a 70-hour week – their annual pay increases proportionately and may exceed \$100,000 per year, as it should for that much work.

“But as one of your own experts pointed out, changing the formula is not the same thing as changing the pay. It would be difficult to get their unions to agree to a new formula that reduces their pay. (We closely watched last summer’s

labor dispute between Long Island Rail Road workers and New York’s Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which went to two Presidential Emergency Boards and resulted in wage increases similar to ours.) And like it or not, the standard for their pay is largely set by national labor agreements. We either keep pace with that standard or lose employees that we’ve already spent money to train. For those reasons, we can confidently assert that a new formula would not only be difficult to negotiate but would not result in any lower wage levels.

“There is a way we could reduce the amount of straight-time overtime pay to these workers: hire more of them. You’d see fewer six-figure workers because there would be a lot less overtime to go around, and the Sun-Times would find it harder to

sensationalize about their pay. But you’d see the overall cost to Metra go up. We’d be paying to train new people, and paying all their fringe benefits, so we could pay the new workers at the same rate we are already paying the existing workers. We don’t think the Sun-Times, or our riders, would think that is a desirable or economically sound alternative.

“It is disappointing that the Sun-Times chose to highlight the pay of conductors and engineers in such a disparaging way rather than recognizing that these are veteran, experienced employees who work early in the mornings and long into the evenings, on weekends and on holidays to earn their wages and who carry heavy responsibility for providing safe, reliable transportation to millions every year.”



Amtrak delivers strong Fiscal Year 2014 financial results, losses lowest since 1973

Amtrak Nov. 25 reported unaudited record revenue totaling approximately \$3.2 billion for the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 2014, representing the fifth consecutive year of revenue growth, and the eighth out of the past nine years.

In Fiscal Year 2014, America’s Railroad covered 93 percent of its operating costs with ticket sales and other revenues, up from 89 percent the year before. In addition, Amtrak’s unaudited federally funded operating loss of approximately \$227 million was the lowest level since 1973, representing a 37 percent decrease from the prior year and 52 percent lower than in Fiscal Year 2007.

As a result of the company’s strong operating performance, long-term debt reductions of approximately 61 percent over the past seven years to \$1.3 billion, and other contributing factors, Moody’s Investor Service confirmed Amtrak’s A1/Stable debt rating on Nov. 12, 2014.

“Our financial performance over the past year is the clearest indication yet that Amtrak’s investments, operating efficiencies and focus on its customers is paying off,” said Amtrak Chairman of the Board Tony Coscia.

“Under the leadership of Amtrak’s board and management, the company is transforming how it does business. We are delighted with our latest financial results and committed to making further progress in the years ahead.

“As we continue to make improvements in our operating and financial performance, we call upon the federal government and our stakeholders to support the capital investments necessary to keep moving Amtrak forward.”

“Our efforts to operate a more financially sound railroad for our stakeholders continues to exceed expectations,” said Amtrak President and CEO Joe Boardman. “Amtrak’s customer value proposition improves each year as seen by our continued ridership and revenue growth for the

better part of the past decade.”

Amtrak’s corporate restructuring has resulted in a strong emphasis on increased financial transparency, a de-leveraged balance sheet, and providing an improved product to its existing customer base while attracting new passengers. This has resulted in consistently strong ridership and revenue growth, and less reliance on federal operating grant support.

Amtrak also is building the equipment, infrastructure and organization needed to ensure its strong growth continues.

Over the past few years, the company has seen the expansion of state-supported services, the introduction of Wi-Fi and eTicketing technologies, the procurement of new equipment for Northeast Corridor and long-distance services, a major planning effort for the development of next-generation high-speed rail, and the installation of positive train control safety technology to more sections of track maintained by Amtrak, among other critical capital projects.

These actions form the foundation that will support more and faster service, improve the reliability and safety of current and future operations, and meet the expectations of a growing number of customers choosing Amtrak for their travel needs.

Boardman added that to meet future passenger demands, increased levels of federal capital investment are needed to improve, expand and replace the aging infrastructure that supports intercity passenger rail. Predictable dedicated funding from the federal government to build new tracks, tunnels, bridges and other rail infrastructure-particularly on the Northeast Corridor and in Chicago-will keep Amtrak advancing and its customer base growing.



Tommy Casey, online Santa



With the holiday season upon us, Santa Claus was so busy that he gave in to the digital age by making himself available online. Our Santa is none other than BNSF Railway conductor and SMART Transportation Division Local 202 (Denver) member Tommy L. Casey. In his spare time, Casey was working with TalktoSanta.com. For a nominal fee, Casey and others appeared in live-streaming, interactive video for children around the world. There, they were able to interact with Santa, tell him what they wanted for Christmas and heard his reassuring response. Although they were unable sit on his lap or tug at his beard, the magic of seeing and hearing Santa Claus talk to them from very far away added to the mystique and the joy they experienced. Casey notes that Toys-For-Tots received 15 percent of the proceeds for every live chat purchased on this site. He said that he simply did it for the love of Christmas and his SMART brothers and sisters think his portrayal is great. This is the first year that he has been Santa Claus professionally, but he has thought about it for years. The beard is real and has been growing whiter with each passing year. The few dark hairs that remained were bleached white to match the rest.



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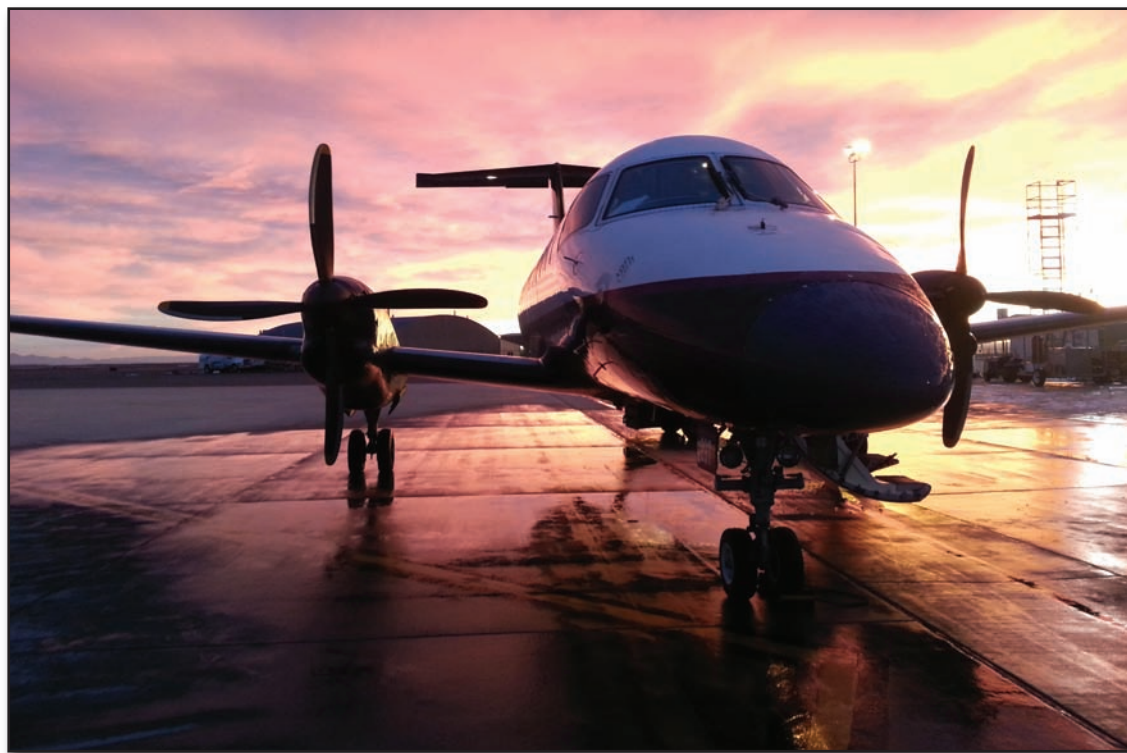
Printed photographs should be mailed to SMART-TD, 24950 Country Club Blvd., Suite 340, North Olmsted, OH 44070-5333.

High-resolution digital photographs should be in the JPEG format and emailed to "news_td@smart-union.org".

With each photograph, please include your name and SMART 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 SMART.

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



This photo was taken by Great Lakes Airlines pilot **Christopher "Chip" Leffelman** of Local 40 at Denver. "This is our Embraer Brasilia 120 after an early morning de-icing in Riverton, Wyo. It is a 30-seat turboprop that we operate out of Denver. The Pratt & Whitney engines deliver 1,800 shaft horsepower each and the airplane cruises at approximately 300 knots true airspeed," Leffelman said.

FRA issues advisory on roadway worker authority

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Nov. 25 issued a safety advisory to the rail industry to better protect rail employees working on active tracks, or right-of-ways, under the supervision of a dispatcher.

"Clear communication is critical to keeping employees out of harm's way," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. "I want railway workers to return home safely to their families after their shift and it is the responsibility of the railroads and their employees to keep the work environment as safe as possible."

Safety Advisory 2014-02 Roadway Worker Authority Limits, highlights the need for railroads to ensure that appropriate safety redundancies are in place in the event an employee fails to comply with existing rules and procedures. The advisory describes several related incidents and stresses the importance of clear communication and the need for railroads to monitor their employees for compliance. This Safety Advisory satisfies one National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) safety recommendation related to dispatchers and partially addresses another related to redundant signal protection.

There are three safety measures in the advisory designed to reduce incidents that FRA expects railroads to take action on immediately:

- Increase monitoring of their employees for compliance with existing applicable rules and procedures.

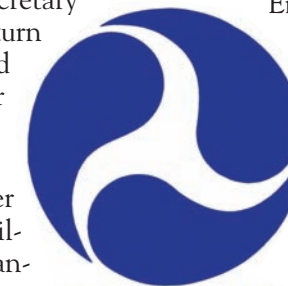
- Examine train dispatching systems, rules, and procedures to ensure that appropriate safety redundancies are in place.

- Adopt electronic technology such as the Enhanced Employee Protection System, Hi-Rail Limits Compliance System, and the Train Approach Warning System, which would provide appropriate safety redundancies.

Until such technologies are in place, railroads should stress the importance of dispatchers being advised of roadway workers' whereabouts and work plans; forbid student dispatchers from removing blocking devices until confirmed by a supervisor; and that, prior to passing any absolute signal, a roadway worker should verify the limits of his or her authority.

FRA believes positive train control, a system for monitoring and controlling train movements to enhance safety, would have prevented the incidents described in the Safety Advisory. However, where positive train control is not in effect, FRA recommends that railroads adopt one or more electronic technologies that may serve to fill the technology gap and safeguard roadway workers.

The full advisory can be found at www.utu.org by entering "Safety Advisory 2014-02" in the Search box.



FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION

Inside this issue of SMART Transportation Division News:



Conductor nabs stray dog after its five-year odyssey. See page 2.



Treasurers receive training at Atlanta workshop. See page 3.



Metra board chairman: Engineers, conductors do a great job. See page 11.



Tommy Casey, online Santa. See page 11.