

Tax changes will have negative impact on some transport workers

Popular itemized deductions either capped or suspended starting with filings for 2018 and beyond

In December, the United States Congress passed and President Donald Trump signed into law the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) that made sweeping changes to the nation’s tax code, providing tax cuts to individual taxpayers as well as to businesses and corporations, both large and small. After its signing, proponents said that the TCJA also would benefit the middle class.

“Our massive tax cuts provide tremendous relief for the middle class and small businesses,” President Trump stated at the time.

Tax experts say the middle-class benefits derive mostly from an increase in what is known as the standard deduction that individual taxpayers can claim when they file in 2019. As a result of that increase, the standard deduction will nearly double from \$12,700 in 2017 to \$24,000 in 2018 for a married couple filing jointly, increase from \$6,350 to \$12,000 for single filers and go from \$9,350 to \$18,000 for heads of household. These increases

Some workers employed in the transportation industry may actually see their taxes increase as a result of the TCJA.

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OVER-THE-ROAD WORKERS FACE DEDUCTION LOSSES*

A married, working train service employee with no children and younger than 65 could lose more than \$3,000*

	2017 tax law	2018 TCJA
Standard deduction	\$12,700	\$24,000
ITEMIZED DEDUCTION BREAKDOWN		
Total taxes (property, sales, etc.)	\$11,796	\$10,000
Interest	\$12,530	\$12,530
Charitable contributions	\$1,460	\$1,460
Job expenses/unreimbursed business expenses	\$16,304	\$0
Total itemized deductions:	\$42,090	\$23,990
Greater of standard or itemized deductions:	\$42,090	\$24,000
Tax result:	\$333 REFUND	\$2,749 OWED

Example 2: Another married over-the-road employee under age 65 could lose \$891*

	2017 tax law	2018 TCJA
Standard deduction	\$12,700	\$24,000
ITEMIZED DEDUCTION BREAKDOWN		
Total taxes (property, sales, etc.)	\$10,711	\$10,000
Interest	\$7,693	\$7,693
Charitable contributions	\$2,545	\$2,545
Job expenses/unreimbursed business expenses	\$9,720	\$0
Total itemized deductions:	\$30,669	\$20,238
Greater of standard or itemized deductions:	\$30,669	\$24,000
Tax result:	\$1,691 REFUND	\$800 REFUND

* These examples of the effects of the TCJA on deductions were provided by SMART TD Alumni Association member Bill Smith of Smitty’s Tax Solutions in North Platte, Neb. Members’ individual tax situations will vary. Members are urged to consult a professional adviser to see how the TCJA may change your tax situation. These figures are not intended to project total tax due on the 2018 re-turn.

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Around the SMART TD

Local 1741, San Francisco, Calif.

School bus drivers out of this local in February extended solidarity to school bus drivers of Teamsters Local 174 in Seattle, Wash., who were striking for healthcare for themselves and their families.

On Day 7 of the strike, 5,000 members of the Seattle Teachers Association walked out to join the picket line. The day after, First Student and the Union were back in negotiations. The contract agreed upon the following day provided healthcare to all employees and their families and a pension.

“Solidarity across unions is more important than ever in the age of new ‘right to work laws’ and other nationwide attacks on unions like the current Janus case before the Supreme Court,” said a submission from the local.

After the victory, Local 1741 sent 44 pizzas and a letter of congratulations to the drivers.

LCA 887/Local 31, San Jose, Calif.

Members of SMART TD did not cross picket lines and joined members of Teamsters Local 890 when the Teamsters went on strike against San Benito Foods in Hollister, Calif., for a \$1 an hour raise last summer. Among participants showing solidarity with the Teamsters local were Vice Local Chairman **Matthew McCrillis** and Local Chairman **Darin Jessup**, both of LCA 887, Local 31. After eight days of picketing, the Teamsters won their raise, and the strike ended.

Local 941, Columbus, Ga.



Pictured, from left: John Privett, Bryan McWhorter, Andrew Beam, NS GO 169 General Chairperson Jimmy Stewart, Local Chairperson Shane Privett, Rep. Kelley, Campbell, Vice Local Chairperson Bo Payne, Shay Harrell, retired TD member and DLC representative. Clay Parker and UTUIA Field Supervisor Steve White.

Members of Local 941 were proud to welcome Georgia State Representative Trey Kelley (R – Dist. 16) to present an update on 2018 legislative railroad issues and to give a commitment to working with SMART TD, reported Georgia State Legislative Director **Matt Campbell**.

Bright ideas lead to new flashlight for remote control operators at CSX

The efforts of General Chairperson **Dale Barnett** (GCA 513 — former Seaboard Coast Line, Louisville & Nashville, and Atlanta and West Point Railroad) have helped to spread some light for his brothers and sisters at CSX and elsewhere.

Barnett, a member of Local 762 in Montgomery, Ala., was given a commemorative flashlight by the carrier for his work in the design of a replacement for the lantern used by Remote Control Operators (RCOs).

In 2009, during a meeting between SMART TD labor safety coordinators and CSX safety department managers, discussion occurred about the need for a better source of light at night for trainmen working remote control assignments.

“This idea was first brought up by a fellow coordinator from Evansville named **Brian Hall** (secretary of Local 904), but I was tasked with working with CSX Manager of Safety Barry Morton and designing a new modern-day lantern,” Barnett wrote in an email. “It was a group effort, and a shining example of how our organization works together on behalf of our peers.”

After meetings with various design engineers from the Pelican Company, a manufacturer out of Torrance, Calif., a slim-bodied, heavy-duty light with an unbreakable shell and lifetime guarantee with an LED light source was envisioned.

The process involved some troubleshooting by Barnett and Morton. The LED was interfering with the remote control, causing the remote control unit to go into communication failure and put the lead unit in emergency. A new bulb was chosen that didn’t cause interference, but more



General Chairperson Dale Barnett (GCA 513) shows off the flashlight he had a hand in helping to develop for Remote Control Operators (RCOs).

tweaks were needed.

“While we had the basis for a good flashlight for RCO operations, there were still numerous issues to resolve to make it the best railroad light possible and maybe to replace the lanterns,” Barnett said.

An AA battery turned out to be a “tremendous” power source, Barnett said. A way to separate the body of the flashlight where it could rotate and move, yet stay in the position needed, was found, and a magnet on the back of the clip was vital for tasks such as lacing air hoses, he said.

One more design challenge needed to be met in 2011 in order to further improve the light—it had to provide the ability to signal the engineer on the head end. Barnett tried out plastic cone-shaped devices and tested them at night with different yard crews, and Pelican Co. engineers took Barnett’s lead to design a sliding extendable tube made out of glow-in-the-dark plastic that enabled the light to be seen from afar.

“The cost was actually comparable to the lanterns and much cheaper, considering the required extra parts needed for a lantern and the larger batteries,” Barnett said.

CSX began ordering the new lights to provide to trainmen and recognized Barnett and Morton’s efforts — their names were printed on the first two new flashlights produced, and they received the first two serial numbers for the model.

Morton has moved on from CSX to become the new assistant vice president of safety on Kansas City Southern, and the light design likely will make its way to that carrier, Barnett said.

“I was proud that my work and efforts were recognized,” Barnett said. “The one thing that really means the most to me is when my fellow peers express how much they enjoy these flashlights and how it has helped them with their work and safety.”

Before his 2014 election as general chairperson for GCA 513, Barnett was elected assistant general chairperson in July 2012.

He has served as GCA secretary (2009 – 2012), safety coordinator on the CSX Atlanta Division and as local legislative rep, local chairperson and president of Local 762.

Barnett has also served on the SMART TD Board of Appeals since 2012.

Let us know: What’s news to you?

All members and officers are invited to submit items to the SMART TD News. Whether it’s an item from your local, the latest legislative success, a fundraiser or charity effort or just a great story about a brother or sister, we are here to get the word out. Email your items to news_TD@smart-union.org and we’ll be in touch!



SMART TRANSPORTATION DIVISION PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Carriers reap billions in savings from cuts

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) made sweeping changes to the nation's tax code and provided big gains to corporations by permanently reducing the corporate tax rate from 35 percent to 21 percent. The nation's Class I railroads reaped immediate benefits.

According to fourth quarter earnings reports, Union Pacific (UP) received a \$5.8 billion boost because of the cuts, CSX saved \$3.6 billion, Norfolk Southern (NS) about \$3.48 billion and Kansas City Southern (KCS) \$488 million. BNSF, a Berkshire Hathaway subsidiary, reported in its Form 10-K filing to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commis-



By **John Previsich**

sion that it received a tax benefit of \$7.4 billion. Savings for the two Canadian-based Class I railroads also increased, reported at \$1.4 billion (U.S.) for Canadian National (CN) and about \$406 million (U.S.) for Canadian Pacific (CP).

On the heels of those savings, CSX announced in February a plan to increase its efforts to buy back \$5

billion in stock, further enriching its shareholders, rather than investing in safety or infrastructure improvements. NS also has been engaged in a stock repurchasing effort, and Zack's Equity Research reported in February that UP is repurchasing stock and increasing dividends, as are CN and KCS.

As Class I rail carriers get millions and even billions of dollars in savings, shareholders benefit from increased stock prices and top executives join in the windfall through stock grants, options and outright bonuses unrelated to company performance. Such benefits do not typically flow to employees

under the executive level, who work day in and day out to keep these companies profitable.

The one outlier of the major railroads is KCS. Recognizing the significant benefits flowing from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act to Class I carriers, leadership at KCS was initially very enthusiastic about the savings projected for them. Leadership there said it wanted to share the windfall with its employees and was reportedly going to hand out \$1,000 bonuses to workers, the lone Class I to announce plans to do such a thing. The workers who would receive such bonuses, however, are

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Tax changes will have a negative impact on the returns of some transportation workers

Continued from Page 1

will no doubt benefit taxpayers who utilize the standard deduction to prepare their taxes.

However, experts advise that some workers employed in the transportation industry may actually see their taxes increase as a result of the TCJA. While the standard deduction was increased, other deductions commonly used by SMART Transportation Division members were eliminated. Many of our members will be paying higher taxes, especially over-the-road workers, when they file a year from now.

Individual tax situations among SMART TD members vary greatly, and it's imperative that members consult with a tax professional to discover how these changes may affect them.

Why will some transportation workers be paying more in tax after implementation of the TCJA? There are many factors involved. For example, what was known as the personal exemption is now gone — a tax filer used to be able to reduce about \$4,000 off their taxable income per person in his or her household. This is somewhat offset by a doubling of the tax credit by the TCJA from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per dependent child.

But the biggest issue is that the increase in the standard deduction, when coupled with the reduction and elimination of other deductions commonly used by transportation workers, will knock a lot of people out of itemizing, said Nathan Rigney, lead tax research analyst at The Tax Institute



"Don't get me wrong, some people get small tax cuts, but anyone on a train loses. This is an attack on unions and on the working class of the United States."

Bill Smith,
owner of Smitty's Tax Solutions,
which serves more than 300 rail clients

at H&R Block. According to data from H&R Block, about 30 percent of Americans itemize deductions to reduce their tax burden. To do that, taxpayers' itemizations must exceed the standard deduction. Those higher standard deductions and two other substantial changes by the TCJA to itemizations are where SMART TD members might see more coming out of their pockets, Rigney said.

First, miscellaneous itemized deductions such as unreimbursed employee expenses are eliminated. These unreimbursed out-of-pocket expenses are things such as away-from-home meals, union dues and work clothes which are usually filed on Form 2106. For employees, Rigney said, "Those cannot be deducted. That's the big deal — all unreimbursed business expense deductions go away." Elimination of the away-from-home meal deduction is a loss of about \$50 per day, a total of up to \$13,000 to \$14,000 per year for a worker who was previously entitled to claim the deduction.

Rigney advises that another major blow to itemizers is a limit on the ability to deduct state and local taxes (SALT). "For those who would otherwise still itemize — all state and local taxes

they were previously able to deduct will be subject to a \$10,000 cap. This includes state, locality and property taxes they pay — real property and personal property taxes as well," Rigney said.

Some of the states with the highest individual income taxes include California, Iowa, Oregon, Minnesota, Maine, New Jersey, New York and Vermont. States with the highest median property values where homeowners pay more in property taxes are on both coasts with a couple in between: Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Utah, Virginia and Washington.

Members in all those states can look forward to an increase in tax over what they had previously paid if their SALT taxes exceed that \$10,000 cap.

Of course, the railroads' business expenses are still tax-free. "If an employer reimburses employees for out-of-pocket travel expenses, the employer can deduct the reimbursed amount," Rigney said. In addition, unlike individuals, businesses and corporations have no limit on the amount of SALT taxes that they can deduct from their income.

This favoring of corpora-

tions over workers was confirmed in testimony given in November before the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee by Thomas Barthold, the chief of staff for the nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation that assists Congress on tax policy. When asked about the ability of corporations to deduct the cost of materials, property taxes and other expenses from their tax bills by U.S. Rep. Suzan DelBene, a Democrat from Washington's 1st District, Barthold responded that "as ordinary and necessary business expenses, the taxes attributable to earning income would be deductible."

The inequitable outcome of preserving the deduction of employee business expenses for corporations while taking the same deduction away from workers is something that doesn't sit well with Bill Smith, of North Platte, Neb., a SMART TD Alumni Association member from Local 286 who has been doing taxes for more than 300 rail clients since his retirement in 2011.

"Don't get me wrong, some people get small tax cuts, but anyone on a train loses," Smith said. "This is an attack on unions and on the working class of the United States." Bottom line: "Companies get to save, workers foot the bill," Smith said.

What to do?

Rigney said that there are things members can do to avoid a nasty surprise a year from now in the form of a balance due courtesy of the TCJA. "First thing they can do — find a calculator. These changes will affect virtually all taxpayers," Rigney said. "Do research and see how their situation is affected."

Both the IRS (<https://www.irs.gov/payments/tax-withholding>) and H&R Block (<https://www.hrblock.com/tax-calculator/>) offer tax calculators that, based on data entered, tell users how the TCJA affects them.

Members should then go to their employer and redo their W-4 form based on the calculator's findings so that the correct amount is withheld. "They may have been withholding enough before, but if they don't revisit their W-4, they could end up with a bigger refund or — worst case — a balance due," Rigney said.

For those in high income or property tax states such as the ones listed above, Rigney tells taxpayers to be vigilant.

A thorough review of prior returns and deductions, measured against the changes imposed by the tax act, is absolutely necessary to ensure no unwelcome surprises. In addition, there could be remedies to save some credits that would otherwise be lost under the TCJA's cap. "They should keep an eye on the state level," Rigney said. "New Jersey and California, in particular, are looking at a way to soften the blow."

SMART GENERAL PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Community action reinvigorates our union

I want to start by thanking our SMART Army and every member participating in our Month of Community Action.

This April we held events across the nation that raised our local profile and enhanced our ties to local organizations.

The goal of the SMART Army is not only to do more volunteering, but also to raise our profile. As local action improves our union's image, we gain support from groups who can amplify our voice when our issues are in play, at any level.

Our collective effort — in this case, “good deeds” that affect the common good: Christmas in April in Maryland; visiting with World War II and Korean War veterans in Illinois; remodeling seniors’ homes in upstate New York; and holding a basketball fundraiser for local youth in New Jersey.



By Joseph Sellers Jr.

Our army of volunteers is just as varied as our 200,000-plus members: In Missouri, Transportation Division and Sheet Metal members joined to serve meals at a rally. TD members in southwest Virginia helped the small town of Crewe ensure that Little League players got the opening day they deserved. That event included a screening of the movie “Sandlot” for local families, who thus learned about the role SMART members continue to hold in their area.

Building support, putting it to use

All of this work is important

not only for helping our neighbors and towns, but also our union — the brothers and sisters in our locals and our regions.

To increase our capacity for delivering results to members in all the sectors we represent, we must build real power. That means getting involved in the life of our towns and cities, having a voice in the centers of power and advancing our interests at the local, county, state and federal levels.

In our heyday of the mid-20th century, union halls served as the center of local communities. America may look different today, but the connection between working families, the sense of common interest that was the bedrock of labor’s solidarity — is still there — and people want to restore its strength.

Local action builds such a bond and raises awareness

of the value we create. This adds to our voice when we fight for our issues, such as safety, jobs and wages.

But even a strong voice means nothing if those in power don’t hear us because we don’t vote.

To be clear we are not asking or telling you who to vote for. At the same time, for any of us to prosper, all of us must be seen, heard — and counted.

Strength in numbers commands respect from those who need our support to hold public office. Your union asks that you stand up and be counted. Register — and vote.

Visit SMARTVote2018.org to check your registration status. Make sure your family, friends and co-workers are registered as well.

If you don’t think your one vote matters, ask Ronnie Hobbs, SMART TD Legisla-

tive Director for Virginia. He was there when control of the state Legislature was set by picking a name out of a bowl — because the election was a tie.

How did one uncast vote matter? The loser strongly backed two-person crews, but she can’t help us now, because she — we — lost, by one vote. (See Page 9 for more on that).

Again, check your voter registration at SMARTvote2018.org. Make sure you are ready to stand up and be counted where you live.

We are on the move, but it will take all of us to do our part to be visible, to be heard and to keep moving.

Fraternally,

Joseph Sellers Jr.
General President, SMART

Bus Department News

A message from your Bus Department leadership



Dear SMART TD members,

Together, working side-by-side with all of our leadership and members, we have come a long way, but we still have a lot to do. Each day brings new challenges. Each time we close one case, contract or organize a new property, we are doing better than before.

If any of our members need assistance, please contact your local president, local chairperson or your general chairperson. If you are not happy with the outcome of your inquiries, please contact us for clarification on the matter.

This is a very important year in our organization. Our members will be electing their local committees of adjustment. The local committee of adjustment is very important, so please support and elect the people who are best qualified to the open positions.

The 2018 regional meetings are coming up soon. The locations are Seattle, Wash., on July 2-4; and, Hollywood, Fla., on Aug. 6-8. These meetings are very important for officers and members. The purpose of the regional meetings is to educate officers on their positions and to open the doors for networking among our leadership. If you are interested in running for a position, the regional meetings are the perfect place for you to learn about the responsibilities associated with an office and will help you to decide whether you are ready to run for office. I hope to see many new and returning faces at this year’s meetings.

Remember, the “SMARTer” a person is, the stronger we are as a union. At the end of the day, you, the member, ARE the union. Elected officers are the employees of the membership. Officers are for the membership, by the membership, and are the membership.

Recently, Congress passed a \$20 billion bill to make improvements to Amtrak, railroad and transit. This is a very positive thing for the Bus Department. More money for our industries means more jobs and more members.



Reddy

The Bus Department is almost finished with opening Local 1909, the new First Student local out of Gardenia, Calif. A contract has been negotiated and signed. Now we are helping the local to hold an election of officers so they can “hit the ground running.” After elections, we will continue to assist them in any way possible.

We are also working on negotiating a contract with Coach USA in Anaheim, Calif. SMART TD Bus Department Vice President **Calvin Studivant** has taken the lead as the head negotiator. Myself, Organizer **Bonnie Morr**, Local 1589 (New Brunswick, N.J.) and Coach USA GO 877 — led by General Chairperson **Gordon Harris** — are also on the negotiating team. Together, we are making progress and the negotiating team is doing the best that we can to get a great contract for our members. We do not want to just get a contract, we want a great contract, and for that, it takes time and patience.

The Bus and Organizing departments are also working together to organize new properties around the country.

At the end of the day, life is important for everyone. So please be safe and help keep the people around you safe. We know that we must take time to rest whenever possible to be safe and alert. Ten- to 15-minute power naps are a good way to stay refreshed. A walk to the back of the bus will give you exercise and help you to do your job.

I hope all of our members are doing well and hope to see you all at our 2018 regional meetings.

Until next time, stay safe and God Bless America!

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Great Lakes Airlines suspends flight operations

Great Lakes Airlines, a Wyoming-based regional carrier, announced in late March that it was suspending scheduled flight operations after more than 40 years in business.



A release from the company issued March 28 said that it was going to lay off employees and that its 34 planes were available for sale.

“Critical staff members needed to support the scheduled airline certificate, repair station certificate, reservation platform and maintain the fleet will be kept onboard until the airline’s assets can be sold,” the release said.

A notice on the company’s website said that Great Lakes was not entering bankruptcy.

“Although we are ceasing flight operations, it is important to note that the company has not entered bankruptcy and will continue to operate certain segments of the business,” the release from company officials said. “We will continue to support the ADI flightsop-

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Carriers reaping billions in gains from changes in federal tax law




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confined to the management ranks and do not include those who work under a collective bargaining agreement.

“Kansas City Southern is pleased with the passage of this legislation and optimistic about what it could mean for our customers, investors and growth in the U.S. economy, as well as trade growth with Mexico,” KCS President and Chief Executive Officer Patrick J. Ottensmeyer said. “KCS wants to share the benefit with our employees, who work so hard to serve our customers and increase shareholder value.” But in a twist, KCS might find itself in the same boat as over-the-road SMART Transportation Division members — paying more when they used to pay less. The Wall Street Journal reported in late March that the carrier said its overall tax bill will actually go up 1 to 1.5 percent over 2017 because much of its income comes from Mexico.

\$178 billion — That’s how much American companies spent repurchasing shares during the first quarter, topping a record that was set in the third quarter of 2007. The buybacks were up more than 42 percent from the same period in 2017, according to S&P Dow Jones Indices. A large portion of these billions flow from the tax cuts granted to corporations and businesses. Far from the promise of reinvesting the savings in new jobs and infrastruc-

CLASS I CARRIERS REPORT 4TH QUARTER TCJA GAINS

	\$3.6 BILLION		\$3.48 BILLION
	\$5.8 BILLION		\$488 MILLION
	\$7.4 BILLION		
	\$406 MILLION		\$1.4 BILLION

ture, stock buybacks benefit a very few while adding to the federal deficit to the tune of trillions of dollars over the next decade.

And that projection is with the recognition that the TCJA tax cuts for the middle class are only temporary, with the law providing for their expiration in 2026. Meanwhile, the business and corporate cuts are permanent, adding trillions to the deficit at the expense of future generations.

Along the way, don’t be surprised to see many ideas proffered to help lighten the weight of the staggering deficits. Such ideas, already being thrown at the wall to see if they have any sticking power, include reductions in “entitlements” (Social

Security, Medicare, Railroad Retirement, etc.) and reduced government services, such as transit funding, medical services and more.

Other ideas for savings run the gamut from increased revenue through additional tax cuts (the so-called and much-discredited trickle-down theory) all the way to a basic guaranteed income for all Americans. Somewhere in the middle of this discussion is most likely the best place to land, and the politicians that we elect at the local, state and federal levels will be the ones deciding which views prevail.

Now, more than ever, it is critical that the voices of working people are heard loud and clear.

Our future is in our hands – we

need to vote, we need to support the candidates who support us, and we need to be proactive in advancing our cause with our friends and neighbors, relatives and acquaintances. Every vote matters, and a vote not cast is the same as a vote against your interests. Elections have consequences — we ask that you make sure that you are registered, that you vote when the time comes and that you help deliver our message in every forum.

Fraternally,



President, Transportation Division

State Watch

News from SMART TD State Legislative Boards

Georgia

State Legislative Director **Matt Campbell** and the State Legislative Board sponsored a luncheon for the General Assembly’s Working Families Caucus at the State Capitol in Atlanta.

“The WFC focuses on legislative issues that affect our members’ well-being and livelihood,” Campbell said. “We are honored to work beside them every day at the Capitol.”

While at the Capitol, SMART TD legislative representatives met several state leaders, including Gov. Nathan Deal, the lieutenant governor, Senate pro tem and minority leaders as well as several senators and representatives.



Pictured, from left, are Patrick Folsom (Local 1263), Georgia State Legislative Director Matt Campbell (Local 1031), Bernard Gray (Local 1033), Gov. Nathan Deal, Jarvis Jackson (Local 1598) and Charles Johnson (Local 535).

Midwest

The Kansas State Legislative Board has been working to get the state to expand passenger rail in the state with the Northern Flyer Extension. To that end, State Legislative Director **Ty Dragoo** has helped introduce SB 409 that provides a mechanism for the project, which would involve Kansas, Texas and Oklahoma all pitching in to help bring the project to fruition.

“The process has been rewarding,” Dragoo said. “Hopefully, the Flyer will extend to Wichita ahead of schedule.



From left, Kansas State Legislative Director Ty Dragoo; Missouri State Legislative Director Jason Hayden and Illinois State Legislative Director Bob Guy pause for a photo at the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC) in Wichita, Kan.

Indiana

State Legislative Director **Kenny Edwards** said a joint effort with the BLET yielded success when the governor signed an insurance bill March 25 that contains a provision that increases the minimum liability for a contract van carrier hauling railroad employees from \$1.5 million to \$5 million.

“It was a tough pull that required lots of tact, years of relationship-building with the state legislators and honing a familiarity with the process,” Edwards said. “I gave this legislation a 0 percent chance of passage when it was filed. Goes to show if you don’t try, you have a 0 percent chance. Also goes to show the value of developing and applying our tradecraft!!”

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Deadlines near for SMART TD's 2018 regional meetings

The 2018 SMART TD regional meetings are scheduled for **July 2 - 4 in Seattle** and **August 6 - 8 in Hollywood, Fla.** The meetings have been designed to provide a platform for educational training, leadership growth and a sense of fraternalism and solidarity among members.

As in the past, each regional meeting will run for 2.5 days, ending early in the afternoon of the third day. The evening of the first day has been left unscheduled so you, your family and friends will be free to explore and enjoy the many offerings of the regional meeting cities.

Regional meeting registration and hotel information, as well as links to make hotel reservations online, can be accessed by visiting www.smart-union.org/td and clicking on the "Regional Meetings" box on the right

side of the page.

All those attending the regional meetings must be registered in order to participate in the tours planned for the Sundays before the opening reception or in the Tuesday nights out.

The pre-registration fee for the 2018 regional meetings is **\$150 per member, spouse or child over age 11**. Children ages 11 and under who are pre-registered receive complimentary registration. The form is printed on the right, and online registration is available in the Regional Meeting section of the TD website.

A completed registration form listing each attendee, regardless of age, and complete payment in U.S. funds **must be received** at SMART Transportation Division, 24950 Country Club Blvd., Suite 340, North Olmsted, OH 44070-5333, by **Friday, June 22 for the**

Seattle meeting or by **Friday, July 27 for the Hollywood, Fla. meeting**, or the registrant will be charged an on-site registration fee of \$200.

The registration fee covers all workshop materials, a welcome reception the night before the meeting, three lunches and one evening meal.

Additional fees apply for the tours. You must make your own room reservations, and certain deadlines apply. Those wishing to attend only the workshops do not need to register. No one-day registrations are offered. You may cancel your meeting registration 30 days prior to the first day of the meetings without penalty.

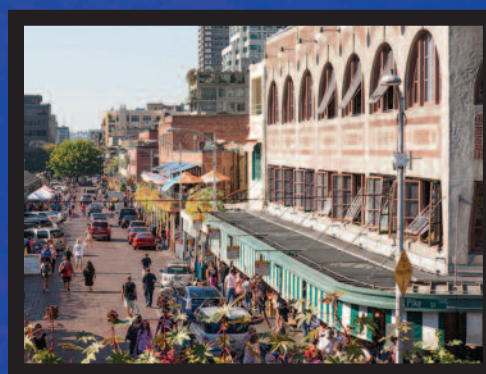
Call the Transportation Division office at **216-9400** or email apatchin@smart-union.org immediately regarding changes or cancellations.

Seattle: Emerald City of the Northwest

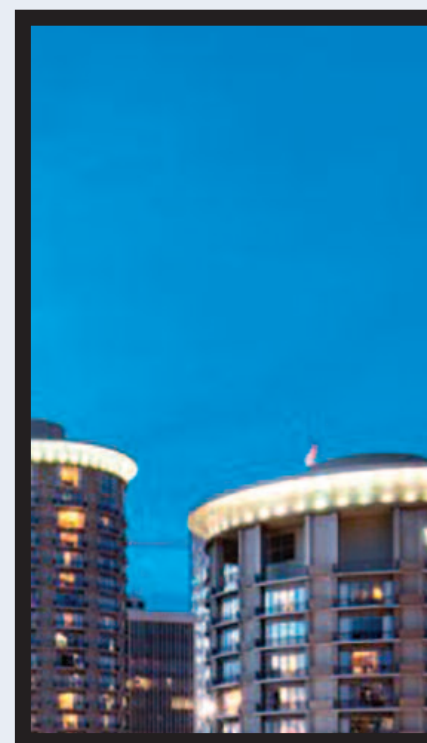
The ocean, the iconic Space Needle and the Pike Place Market (at right) are just a few of the draws to Seattle, the largest city in Washington state.

There's no shortage of things to do in this big city of more than 700,000 on Puget Sound with amusement parks, fine dining, pro sports, a thriving nightlife and the legendary music scene among the city's attractions. But there's the quirky side of the city as well — there's even a wall covered in chewing gum in Pike Place Market's Post Alley that people come to photograph and contribute to, if so inclined.

And if you happen to stay out a bit late the night before a meeting session and need a pick-me-up in the morning, there's always the coffee!



Visit Seattle / Howard Frisk photo



SEATTLE REGIONAL MEETING AT A GLANCE

WHEN: July 2-4, 2018

WHERE: Westin Seattle, 1900 5th Ave., Seattle, WA 98101

INFO: www.westinseattle.com

Reservations: 888-627-8513

Reservation code: SMART/2018 Regional Meeting

Room rate: \$179 single/double, \$209 triple, \$239 quad, plus taxes; rates good for three days before and after meeting depending upon availability.

Room reservation deadline: June 8, or until all rooms being held for SMART TD are reserved.

Parking: \$45 per day for self-park, \$57 per day for valet parking

Workshop participation earns two locals free registration

Each year, SMART TD holds a continuing voluntary Certificate of Achievement program at both regional meetings. Based on the number of workshops completed, members can attain a bronze, silver or gold level. Locals who have members attain the gold level of achievement are automatically entered into a drawing to win five complimentary registration packages for

the following year's regional meetings.

At the 2017 San Antonio regional meeting, 200 members participated in the program, and 65 members reached gold status. At a drawing on the last day of the meeting, Local 202 Secretary **Jeffrey Maxfield's** name was pulled, winning his local the complimentary registration packages.

At the 2017 New York City regional meeting, 400 members participated and 80 members reached gold status. Local 933 Legislative Representative **ward Krawczyk III's** name was pulled.

The complimentary registrations are good for the 2018 regional meetings to be held in Seattle, July 2-4, and Hollywood, Fla., Aug. 6-8.

Regional meetings

Avis Rent-a-Car offers discounts

The Transportation Division has arranged with Avis Rent-a-Car to offer discounted rates to members attending the 2018 regional meetings.

To reserve a car, contact Avis at 800-331-1600 and use SMART's Avis Worldwide Discount (AWD) number: **D150699**.

Members and guests can reserve a car online for the meetings. Visit www.smart-union.org/td and select the "Regional Meetings" link on the right side, then select the appropriate regional meeting city.

Discounts at each city are good for seven days before and after the meetings. The discount code will not be valid for the Hollywood, Fla., meeting until July 2.



United offers discounted flights

United Airlines is offering discounted flights for members attending the regional meetings.

Seattle

- Valid dates: 06/25/18 - 07/11/18
- Location: Seattle, WA (SEA)
- Offer code: ZEYZ455457
- Z code: ZEYZ
- Agreement code: 455457

Hollywood, Fla.

- Valid dates: 07/30/18 - 08/15/18
- Location: Ft. Lauderdale, FL (FLL)
- Offer code: ZEYZ455457
- Z code: ZEYZ
- Agreement code: 455457

Members can book their flights by calling **800-426-1122** or visit www.united.com.



Attend the meetings in style!

You can always add some new SMART Transportation Division gear to your wardrobe to show off your union pride.

Visit www.smart-union.org/td today and click on "Gear" in the navigation bar to get started. All products are union made and/or American made.



Tours, social events readied

The Transportation Division is arranging tours of local attractions and social events at both regional meetings.

The tours are tentatively scheduled from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sunday prior to the meetings' evening welcome receptions; a social event is planned on the Tuesday evening of both meetings from 7 to 10 p.m.

Details will be announced and appear at www.smart-union.org/td. Select the "Regional Meetings" link on the right side of the homepage.

Tour fees are \$35 per tour for each registered guest, or \$75 per tour for each unregistered guest.

Transportation Division Regional Meeting registration form

Registering before the regional meetings expedites sign-in procedures, helps organizers plan more accurately and saves on meeting costs. **Each person attending the regional meeting, including family members and guests, MUST be registered in order to attend any event. Please note that these meetings last 2.5 days and conclude on the afternoon of the third day.** Registration fees are \$150 per person; children 11 years of age and under are complimentary. On-site registration is \$200 per person. All fees must be paid in U.S. funds. Registration forms with payment must be received at the Transportation Division by **June 22 for the Seattle** meeting and by **July 27 for the Hollywood, Fla.**, meeting for all members, spouses and guests to be considered pre-registered.

Which regional meeting will you be attending? ☐ Seattle ☐ Hollywood, Fla.

Arrival date: _____ Departure date: _____

Transportation type: ☐ Automobile ☐ Air ☐ Other

Member registration

Name _____ Local _____ Title (if any) _____

Home address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Phone number () _____ Email _____

Meals: Day 1 ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal Any dietary restrictions? _____
Day 2 ☐ Lunch ☐ Dinner ☐ Both ☐ No meals
Day 3 ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal

Tour: ☐ Sunday or ☐ Monday (\$35/tour per registered member; \$75/tour per unregistered member)

Spouse registration

☐ Seattle ☐ Hollywood, Fla.

Spouse name _____ Title (if any) _____

Meals: Day 1 ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal Any dietary restrictions? _____
Day 2 ☐ Lunch ☐ Dinner ☐ Both ☐ No meals
Day 3 ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal

Spouse/guest tour: ☐ Sunday or ☐ Monday (\$35/tour per registered spouse; \$75/tour per unregistered spouse)

Child registration

☐ Seattle ☐ Hollywood, Fla.

Child name _____ Age _____

Meals: Day 1 ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal Any dietary restrictions? _____
Day 2 ☐ Lunch ☐ Dinner ☐ Both ☐ No meals
Day 3 ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal

Child name _____ Age _____

Meals: Day 1 ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal Any dietary restrictions? _____
Day 2 ☐ Lunch ☐ Dinner ☐ Both ☐ No meals
Day 3 ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal

Child name _____ Age _____

Meals: Day 1 ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal Any dietary restrictions? _____
Day 2 ☐ Lunch ☐ Dinner ☐ Both ☐ No meals
Day 3 ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal

Tour: ☐ Sunday or ☐ Monday (\$35/tour per registered child; \$75/tour per unregistered child) No. attending _____

Guest registration

☐ Seattle ☐ Hollywood, Fla.

Guest name _____ Relationship to member _____

Home address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Meals: Day 1 ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal Any dietary restrictions? _____
Day 2 ☐ Lunch ☐ Dinner ☐ Both ☐ No meals
Day 3 ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal

Guest tour: ☐ Sunday or ☐ Monday (\$35/tour per registered guest; \$75/tour per unregistered guest)

Special needs? (Circle appropriate responses): Registrant / spouse / child / guest is:
hearing impaired / visually impaired / in wheelchair / other: _____

Payment options

Check/money order enclosed (U.S. funds only - NO CASH) \$ _____

Credit card ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard

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

Signature _____

Should additional space be needed, make copies of this form and attach to the original. Make checks or money orders payable in U.S. funds to "SMART TD Regional Meeting" and mail to SMART TD Regional Meeting, 24950 Country Club Blvd., Suite 340, North Olmsted, OH 44070-5333. Please do not send cash. When registering online, payment also can be made online. Persons who do not pre-register for the regional meeting but choose to register at the meeting site or after the pre-registration deadlines will be charged an additional \$50. Space on scheduled tours is limited; reservations are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

SMART TD Alumni

News and information for members of the SMART TD Alumni Association

Becoming a member costs just \$9 a year! For more information, call 216-228-9400, email kcashin@smart-union.org or visit www.smart-union.org/td/alumni.

RRB sets schedule for informational conferences

The United State Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) has issued its schedule of informational conferences and pre-retirement seminars for local officers and for members respectively. Registration for both of these types of programs is required and available at the RRB website (www.rrb.gov).

RRB informational conferences

The RRB's informational conference program was started by the Office of the Labor Member in 1957 to

provide local union officers comprehensive information about the benefits available to rail employees and their families under the railroad retirement and unemployment insurance systems. Union officers who attend can become better prepared to share accurate, reliable information with their members. Union officials planning to attend an informational conference program must register either online by going to



<https://www.rrb.gov/index.php/OurAgency/LaborMember/InformationalConferenceProgram> for a local conference listed below or print a paper form from the RRB website, then complete and return the registration form to your local RRB field office. If you plan on attending with your spouse or another guest, please indicate so in the designated fields on your registration form.

- If you register for a conference and become unable to attend, inform the RRB. Bring photo identification for entry to Federal buildings; no weapons allowed.
- **June 8:** La Quinta Inn & Suites, 5120 Victory Drive, Indianapolis, Ind.
 - **June 15:** Hilton Garden Inn, 2465 Grant Road, Billings, Mont.
 - **June 15:** Sheet Metal Workers Union Hall, 1157 Adams St., Dorchester, Mass.
 - **June 22:** Tinley Park Convention Center,

- 18451 Convention Center Drive, Tinley Park, Ill.
- **June 22:** Courtyard Fort Worth University Drive, 3150 Riverfront Drive, Fort Worth, Texas.
- ### Pre-retirement seminars
- Conferences with parking fees are marked with *.
- **June 29:** Joliet Public Library, 150 N. Ottawa St., Joliet, Ill. (Start time: 9:30 a.m.)*
 - **July 20:** Robert A. Young Federal Building, 1222 Spruce St., Room 2.308, St. Louis, Mo. *

Former UTU general counsel Clint Miller dies

Clint Miller, general counsel for the United Transportation Union for more than two decades, died March 28 at his home in Lakewood, Ohio. He was 70. Before his 2012 retirement, Miller was a fixture in the UTU Legal Department for 27 years – 21 of them as UTU general counsel. He also participated as a mem-

ber of the negotiating team in national contract talks. At the time of Miller's retirement, then-UTU International President **Mike Futhey** said: "In Clint Miller, the UTU has had a lawyer with the best interests of the membership at heart." Miller is survived by his daughters,

Emily (Lewis) Dichairo, Hilary (Aaron) Lee, and Sarah (Mark) Gonzales; wife, Cynthia; stepdaughter Stephanie Popik; and grandchildren Annabelle, Greyson, Reese, Ryan and Camden. He was preceded in death by his first wife, Bettie Sue, in 2002.



Miller

THE FINAL CALL

Following are the names of recently deceased members who maintained annual membership in the SMART TD Alumni Association, according to reports received at SMART TD Headquarters. These brothers and sisters will be missed by their many friends and by fellow SMART TD Alumni Association members.

Local	Name	City/State	Local	Name	City/State	Local	Name	City/State
17	Meisel, Richard A.	Marshalltown, Iowa	511	Griner, Joseph N.	Eatonton, Ga.	1007	Kettell, Richard O.	Shortsville, N.Y.
195	Paul, Virgil	Lewistown, Ill.	598	Amos, Claude W.	Mobile, Ala.	1059	Kirsch, John L.	Bull Shoals, Ark.
196	Featherstone, Dale K.	Centralia, Ill.	645	Brookins, Linda G. P.	Jamaica, N.Y.	1168	Price, Wayland E.	Clovis, N.M.
200	Smith, Drexel J.	Mountain Grove, Mo.	830	Hooven, Jennings F.	Mechanicsburg, Pa.	1299	Hitzeroth, Douglas J.	Geneva, Ill.
318	Hicks Jr., William	Port Jervis, N.Y.	832	Cordts, Carl	Foxboro, Wis.	1366	Frantz, Arch L.	Salt Lake City, Utah
340	Brothers, Charles H.	Dunbar, Pa.	835	Harbin, Paul E.	Bakersfield, Calif.	1383	Wolf Jr., James A.	Waukegan, Ill.
376	Stuart, Tommy H.	Prospect, Ky.	835	Koch, Richard L.	Fresno, Calif.	1524	Haynie, Lester E.	Alto, Texas
445	Colwell, Kenneth D.	Chillicothe, Ill.	904	Damm, Harold W.	Evansville, Ind.	1524	Tate, Thomas R.	Pasadena, Texas
446	Crowder, Benjamin H.	Glenwood, Iowa	931	Houston, Sam W.	Spartanburg, S.C.	1574	Johnson, Carrol E.	Newport, Ore.
490	Broshears Sr., Rodney V.	Haubstadt, Ind.	941	Anthony Jr., Paul D.	Buena Vista, Ga.	1918	Lewis, William F.	El Paso, Texas
495	Cleveland, Blaine S.	Salina, Kan.	945	Bellar, John D.	La Junta, Colo.	1973	Casey, James T.	Hickory Hills, Ill.

2 brothers die performing service in March

SMART Transportation Division lost two brothers who were performing service in March. Brother **Robert "Rob" J. Hemling**, 39, of Randolph, Wis., and a member of Local 590 (Portage, Wis.), died in a train accident March 27 in Sparta, Wis. Brother Hemling, a conductor for Canadian Pacific, was working at Cedar Creek Lumber when he was killed. Police and media reports did

not provide details about the circumstances of the accident. He began working for the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad before joining Local 590 in 2003. He is survived by his wife, Megan; his two daughters,



Hemling

Madelynn and Savannah; parents, Randy and Kathy Hemling; other relatives and friends. A memorial fund directed toward Brother Hemling's family has been set up at <https://www.gofundme.com/conductor-rob>. On March 5, conductor **Peter PoChing**, 52, of Lincoln, Calif., died of cardiac arrest while in service at Union Pacific's Roseville Yard in Roseville, Calif.

Brother PoChing had been a member of Local 492 in Sacramento, Calif., since 2009. He is survived by his wife of 25 years, Brenda, and daughters, Nina and Kaylene. PoChing studied the mar-



PoChing

tial art of silat for 30 years and was a guru, teaching many others. His skills led him to a role in the 1994 movie "Kickboxer 4: The Aggressor," according to IMDB. "There will not be a moment this easy-going, guitar-loving, compassionate silat guru will not be missed," his family wrote. Brothers PoChing and Hemling are the second and third SMART TD members to die in service in 2018.

GUEST COLUMN

Uncast vote determined future

I would like to share a little message from Virginia. Here in Virginia, we made history in the November 2017 election. Control of the Virginia House of Delegates (the state House in most states) came down to **one vote**. This **one vote** not only determined a local district race tied at 11,608 votes each for a delegate in the community. This **one vote** ultimately decided control of the Virginia House of Delegates. The General Assembly now stands at a count of 51 Republicans to 49 Democrats. And this party control came down to picking a name out of a bowl. Yes, as hard as it is to believe, control of the Legislature came down to a picking a name out of a bowl. By chance, the Republican candidate was picked as the winner. Imagine if that's how we



Hobbs

decided football games — instead of playing overtime, a referee picked a team's name out of a helmet. I know, that would be crazy. So don't tell me **one vote** doesn't matter. Don't tell me your vote doesn't matter. Because of one vote, the Republican majority tabled Virginia's two-person crew bill. This important piece of legislation for SMART TD members will not have a public hearing, much less a vote. All because of **one vote** that was not cast. This is a real-world consequence for SMART TD members since the other candidate in the bowl was a strong sup-

porter of two-person crews. Our job security and safety was put on hold by **Just. One. Vote.** So, what can we do as members? Here in Virginia, not much until 2019. But around the country, there's a lot we can do. First, all union members, active and retired, should be registered to vote. Voting should be held in high regard for all of our members. Membership to our union does not stop at paying dues or attending your local or regional meetings or contributing to UTU PAC. Bottom line, voting is what makes America great. Don't let others decide our future. I hope you'll join me in the next election proudly casting a vote for the candidate of your choice.

Ronnie Hobbs is SMART TD state legislative director in Virginia.

Jim Hicks, a four-term VP with UTU, passes away at age 96

Former four-term UTU International Vice President James "Jim" M. Hicks, of Nortonville, Ky., died March 29 at Baptist Health Hospital. He was 96. Hicks was local chairperson of Local 904, Evansville, Ind., for 11 years before election in 1963 as general chairperson on Louisville & Nashville Railway (now part of CSX). He was elected alternate vice president of UTU predecessor Brotherhood of Railroad

Trainmen in 1968 and re-elected in 1971 and 1975 during UTU conventions. He first took office as an International vice president in 1976. Hicks also served as manager of the UTU Field Service Department from 1981 to 1983. He retired in 1990. He was preceded in death by his wife of 68 years, Ruth. He is survived by his two sons, Corkie (Lois) Hicks of



Hicks

London, Ky., and Don (Shirley) Hicks of Owensboro. In lieu of flowers the family

requested donations be made to the Shriners Hospital for Children, mail to Rizpah Temple 3300 Hanson Rd. Madisonville, KY 42431.

Great Lakes Airlines suspends its flight operations

Continued from Page 4

erating between Denver, Pierre and Watertown." ADI — Aerodynamics Inc. — operates scheduled service between Denver, Pierre, S.D., and Watertown, S.D. The company cited changes in flight officer qualifications enacted in 2015 as a reason for the shutdown. It said that it had difficulty finding qualified pilots and caused flights to be suspended. The Regional Airline Association issued a statement on March 28 about the Great Lakes suspension of operations, also cit-

ing the pilot shortage as a cause. Great Lakes Aviation co-founder Doug Voss serves on the association's board of directors. "Once serving numerous routes in many states and employing 1,600 individuals, the airline has been highly exposed to a growing pilot shortage that has forced even larger carriers to cancel service and reduce frequency in recent years," the association said in a press release. "As a result, several communities and hundreds of passengers have been left without air service. This is the latest example of the pilot shortage and its damaging

impact on American businesses and communities." The federal Department of Transportation issued an order March 28 saying that Great Lakes should resume service, as it did not provide a necessary 90-day notification before stopping operations. Great Lakes Airlines was founded in 1977 by Voss and Ivan Simpson in Spirit Lake, Iowa. According to the Regional Airline Association, it has 216 direct employees, of which more than 20 are SMART Transportation Division members of Local 40.

State Watch continued...

Illinois



In conjunction with the Chicago Federation of Labor, Illinois SMART TD members participated in get-out-the-vote activities leading up to the March 20 Illinois primary. From left, are Alternate State Director Bob Blomgren (Local 577), Vice Chairman Jeff Votteler (Local 1597) and Assistant State Director Joe Ciemny (Local 1534).

Ohio

State Legislative Director **Stuart Gardner** hosted Vicky and Dennis Moore, co-trustees of the Angels on Track Foundation, on March 26 for a meeting at the SMART TD office in North Olmsted, Ohio. The Moores established their foundation after their son, Ryan, was killed in 1995 at a dangerous crossing in Ohio. Angels on Track supports and promotes railroad grade crossing safety and awareness and develops programs designed to identify and remove existing hazards at railroad crossings. Along with Matthew Weaver, assistant to the president of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division, and Esosa Osa, chief of staff of House of Representatives District 7 candidate Kenneth Harbaugh's election campaign, Gardner and the Moores discussed sight obstructions at grade crossings and of rail signals, procedures for rail workers and the public to report safety hazards and the problems caused by longer trains that frequently block crossings. The Ohio Legislative Board's office also has moved. Its new address is 750 Cross Pointe Road, Suite E in Gahanna, OH 43230, and the new office phone number is 614-604-6731.

Wyoming



Wyoming State Legislative Director Stan Blake stands to the left of Gov. Matt Mead as Mead signs House Bill 39.

Stan Blake, state legislative director in Wyoming and a state representative for Sweetwater County, has had a hand in a pair of recent successful bills. His House Bill 39 created a special series of license plates to help fund state wildlife conservation efforts. "The extra money generated will go towards building overpasses and underpasses also increased fencing and signage to decrease human/wildlife vehicle accidents," Blake said. He said wildlife is involved in 1 in 15 fatal vehicle accidents in Wyoming. Blake also was involved with SF0031, which has begun the process of establishing a skilled nursing center for veterans in the state.

Members of the SMART Transportation Division Railroad Day contingent meet with U.S. Rep. Don Young of Alaska, center, the primary sponsor of the two-person-crew bill H.R. 233.



Lobbying for change on Railroad Day

Members of the SMART Transportation Division Legislative Department and legislative directors from multiple states took part in the March Railroad Day lobbying effort coordinated by the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association on March 7 in Washington, D.C. Among the topics discussed were limiting bigger, heavier trucks on the nation's highways, making the short line rail tax credit permanent and federal rail regulations.

Participants in the effort included **Erick Siahaan**, government affairs associate; Assistant National Legislative Director **Greg Hynes**; Georgia State Legislative Director **Matt Campbell**; Pennsylvania State Legislative Director **Paul Pokrowka**; Minnesota State Legislative Director **Phillip Qualy**; Ohio State Legislative Director **Stuart Gardner**; National Legislative Director **John Risch**; Illinois State Legislative Director **Bob Guy** and Ohio Assistant State Legislative Director **Ralph Leichter**; New Jersey State Legislative Director **Ron Sabol**; Oklahoma State Legislative Director **Dennis Scholle**; Virginia State Legislative Director **Ronnie Hobbs** and Washington, D.C., Legislative Director **Willie Bates**.



ABOVE: Ohio Assistant State Legislative Director Ralph Leichter, U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R - OH) and Ohio State Legislative Director Stuart Gardner meet March 7.



LEFT: Illinois State Legislative Director Bob Guy meets with U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin (D - Ill.) in Durbin's office on Railroad Day.

Omnibus spending bill's passage means funds for Amtrak, RRB and NMB

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congress passed and President Trump signed into law March 23 a bipartisan spending agreement known as the “omnibus” spending bill that provides a massive boost toward several union priorities, including transportation infrastructure projects, the Railroad Retirement Board and the National Mediation Board.

With the growing demand by our nation's leaders to address infrastructure needs, the omnibus provides a major boost to funding passenger rail and transit projects such as \$1.9 billion for Amtrak, including \$650 million for projects in the Northeast Corridor.

This will provide much-needed funding for the Gateway Project that will

double passenger train service between New York and New Jersey to reduce congestion while making overdue repairs to tunnels and tracks. For our bus and transit members, the bill provides \$2.6 billion to fund major transit capital investments, including heavy rail, commuter rail, light rail, streetcars and bus rapid transit projects nationwide.

In addition, the Railroad Retirement Board received a \$10 million boost that will allow the agency to phase out its decades-old hardware systems with modernized Information Technology services to provide and disburse benefits to our railroad retirees in a timely manner. Lastly, the omnibus provides the National Mediation Board with \$13.8 mil-

lion that includes the sustained \$570,000 funding increase to address the arbitration backlog.

“The SMART TD National Legislative Office continues to inform lawmakers about the importance of funding transit and passenger rail that are vital to our union membership and the nation's transportation workforce at large. We will continue working to ensure that Congress addresses the full needs of our rail workers by increasing resources for the National Mediation Board and Railroad Retirement Board so that our members receive the services they earned and deserve,” SMART TD National Legislative Director **John Risch** said.

Flurry of activity for the STB

Since the middle of March, the Surface Transportation Board installed a leader, made a request to all Class I railroads for service updates and had two nominees for three of the board's vacancies vetted.

Ann Begeman, who had been acting STB chair, was designated as chairwoman by President Donald Trump on March 19.

The board then sought and received responses from the Class I's about deteriorating service over the past few months.

Finally, the board nominations of Michelle Schultz and Patrick Fuchs are under consideration by members of the U.S. Senate.

FRA rejects our request to limit train length

The Trump administration's Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has declined a request made by SMART Transportation Division to address the safety concerns of excessively long trains.

In an April 25, 2017, letter from National Legislative Director **John Risch** to Robert Lauby, FRA's associate administrator for safety, Risch referenced a pair of trains – one CSX train consisting of 234 cars and exceeding 2.5 miles in length and a BNSF train that had 246 cars that also exceeded 2.5 miles.

Risch said in the letter that such “incredibly long” trains pose challenges to crew radio communications and maintaining brake pipe pressure, block more rail crossings and that crews are not adequately trained to handle these dangerously long trains.

But those concerns were simply brushed aside by Lauby.

“FRA does not have sufficient data or evidence to justify an Emergency Order limiting the length of trains,” he wrote in his March 7, 2018, response, saying also that the carriers were lengthening trains in an attempt “to enhance service delivery and operational efficiencies.”

“The letter signed by Lauby looked like it was written by some railroad lobbyist,” Risch said. “Anyone who has ever dealt with a two-mile-plus-long train knows they are anything but efficient. They tie up the railroad because sidings and rail yards can't handle them.”

Copies of both letters are available to be viewed on the SMART TD website.

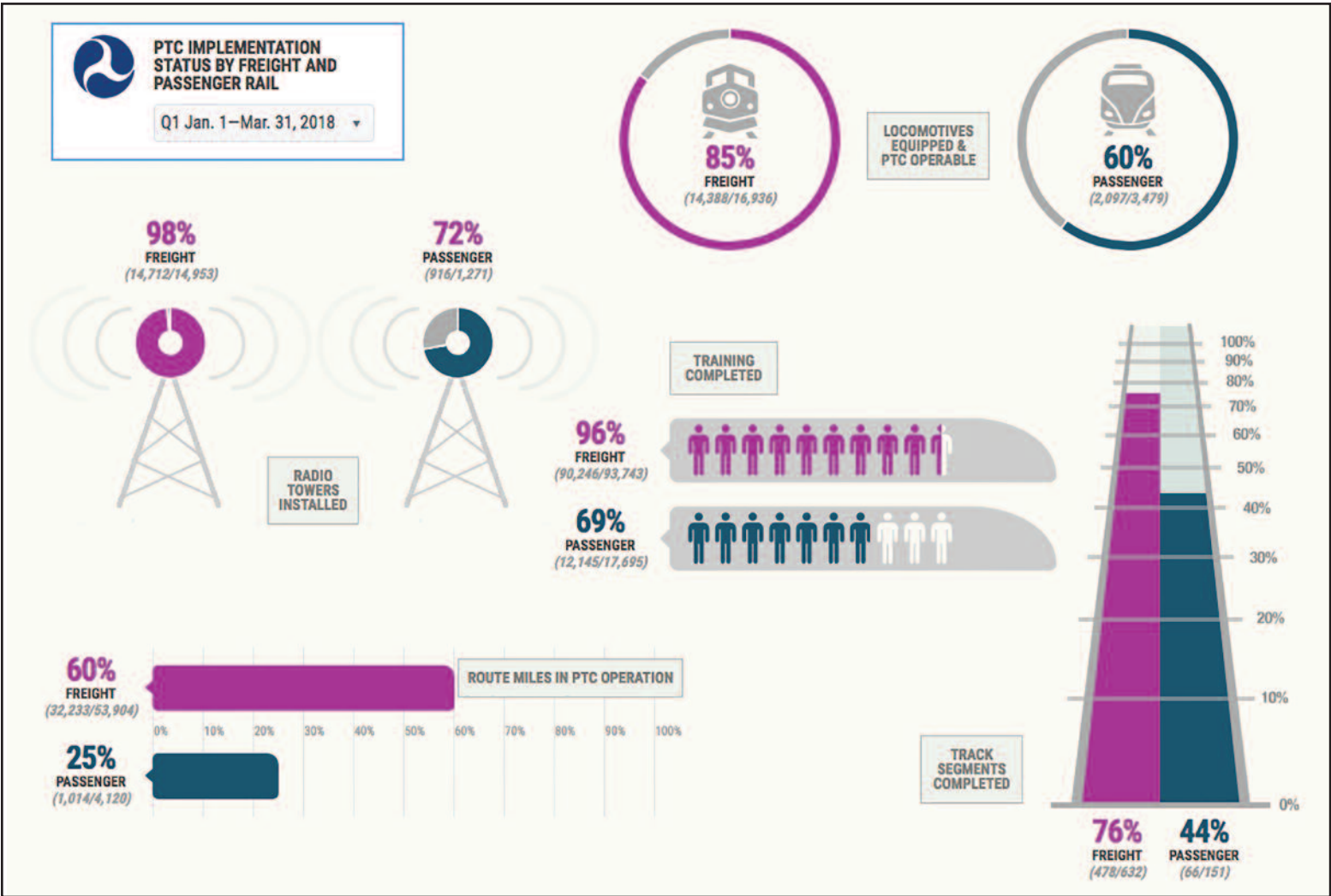
Risch testified last October in a Surface Transportation Board listening session centered on CSX's service problems about the numerous dangers posed by longer trains.

This testimony plus derailments and other safety concerns, such as blocked crossings, did cause members of the House Transportation Committee to take notice.

A letter from U.S. Reps. Peter DeFazio (D – Ore.) and Michael Capuano (D – Mass.), members of the committee, spurred the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to begin an investigation in March into the effects of excessively long trains and the safety hazards that they pose.

That investigation is ongoing, and representatives of SMART TD's Legislative Office provided hours of testimony April 12 to assist the GAO.

SMART Transportation Division 2018 budget									
Pursuant to Article 21B, Section 16, of the SMART Constitution, below is the 2018 budget for the SMART Transportation Division									
Fund	Dec. 31, 2017 Unaudited (valued in U.S. dollars)	Dec. 31, 2017 Audited Adjustments	Dec. 31, 2017 Audited	Negative Funds Adjustment	Jan. 1, 2018 Revised	Receipts and Other Additions	Disbursements and Other Deductions	Negative Funds Adjustment	Dec. 31, 2018 (Projected)
General	\$11,831,288	\$257,007	\$12,088,295	\$(3,046,159)	\$9,042,136	\$20,210,382	\$(19,415,612)	\$(1,292,369)	\$8,544,537
Education and Training	120,482	(6,911)	113,571	-	113,571	913,000	(1,465,016)	438,445	-
Maintenance of Membership	(1,635,823)	42,709	(1,593,114)	1,593,114	-	666,000	(1,352,307)	686,307	-
Public Relations	(1,422,853)	(30,192)	(1,453,045)	1,453,045	-	166,500	(334,117)	167,617	-
Strike	6,658,334	(5,377)	6,652,957	-	6,652,957	499,500	-	-	7,152,457
Convention	3,589,221	(213,819)	3,375,402	-	3,375,402	1,332,000	-	-	4,707,402
Total funds	\$19,140,649	\$43,417	\$19,184,066	-	\$19,184,066	\$23,787,382	\$(22,567,052)	-	\$20,404,396



GRAPHIC COURTESY FRA

PTC progress reported by nation’s railroads; FRA offers grants to those lagging behind

The U.S. Department of Transportation’s (DOT’s) Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) in released a status update this spring on its efforts to assist railroads in implementing positive train control systems (PTC), along with the railroads’ self-reported progress for the first quarter of 2018.

“It is the railroads’ responsibility to meet the congressionally mandated PTC requirements,” said FRA Administrator Ronald L. Batory. “The FRA is committed to doing its part to ensure railroads and suppliers are working together to implement PTC systems.”

PTC systems are designed to prevent certain train-to-train collisions, over-speed derailments, incursions into established work zone limits, and trains going to the wrong tracks because a switch was left in the wrong position.

All railroads subject to the statutory PTC implementation mandate must implement FRA-certified and interoperable PTC systems by the end of the

year. Under the Positive Train Control Enforcement and Implementation Act of 2015, however, Congress permits a railroad to request FRA’s approval of an “alternate schedule” with a deadline beyond Dec. 31, 2018, but no later than Dec. 31, 2020, for certain non-hardware, operational aspects of PTC system implementation.

The congressional mandate requires FRA to approve a railroad’s alternative schedule with a deadline no later than Dec. 31, 2020.

First quarter data, current as of March 31, 2018, shows PTC systems are in operation on approximately 60 percent of freight railroads’ route miles that are required to be governed by PTC systems — up from 56 percent last quarter. Passenger railroads have made less progress—with PTC systems in operation on only 25 percent of required route miles, up a mere 1 percent from the previous quarter.

Progress on installation of the tech-

nology varies widely among the nation’s railroads. Freight railroad BNSF reports that PTC has been installed on 100 percent of its trackage and the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority also has accomplished the same feat. In contrast, New Jersey Transit and Long Island Rail Road have substantial work to do in order to install the system on their locomotives and trackage, respectively.

One main area that railroads, especially the Class Is, still have to work out is interoperability among the systems. BNSF is the leader with only 16 percent progress.

Between Jan. 2 and Feb. 14, FRA leadership hosted face-to-face meetings with executives from each of the 41 railroads subject to the statutory mandate.

On May 15, FRA announced it would be offering \$250 million in PTC systems grants to spur progress among railroads lagging behind.

Sturges named deputy admin at FRA

U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao announced April 18 that Mathew M. Sturges was appointed as the deputy administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).

Before joining FRA, Sturges was majority staff director of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, where he directed legislative oversight and authorization efforts related to all modes of transportation, including the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. Previously, he served as the T&I committee’s deputy staff director, staff director of the aviation subcommittee and director of member services.

“I am excited to welcome Matt to the FRA executive team. He brings a wealth of Capitol Hill experience to FRA that will be an asset when dealing with some of the agency’s most pressing policy issues,” FRA Administrator Ronald Batory said.

As deputy administrator, Sturges will be responsible for helping lead the agency’s safety regulatory activities, federal investments in freight and passenger rail, as well as legislative initiatives.



Sturges

Photo of the month

SMART Transportation Division is always looking for good photos and your picture can be featured on this page as a Photo of the Month.

SMART TD seeks photographs or digital images 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 SMART TD, 24950 Country Club Blvd., Suite 340, North Olmsted, OH 44070-5333.

High-resolution digital photographs should be in JPEG format and emailed to news_td@smart-union.org. We prefer horizontal photos.

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 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.



A Brightline train arrives at West Palm Beach from Fort Lauderdale, Fla., in the afternoon of Feb. 7 in this picture taken by retired Long Island Railroad carman John Keating, a member of SMART TD Local 722 (Babylon, N.Y.). The Brightline trains are the first to run on the Florida East Coast Railroad tracks in many years and plans are to expand service to Miami and Orlando.

Local 1715 bus operator drives charitable effort

Charlotte Area Transit Systems (CATS) bus operator and Local 1715 GCA TMD Vice Chairperson **Debra Franklin** has been collecting and handing out toiletries to the homeless population in Charlotte, N.C., since November 2016.

"I just noticed that when I went into the public bathrooms that women were washing up in the bathroom," Franklin said. "I noticed that they were using the bathroom pump soap. So I started collecting toiletries and handing them out or leaving them bags of toiletries by their things in the bathrooms. I would also get other bus drivers to tell me where these women were or I'd walk the streets looking for them."

As a bus operator, Franklin also received frequent complaints from other passengers about how the homeless riding her bus would smell and they'd ask her to kick them off the bus, but she couldn't just kick someone off of her bus because they smelled bad.

"There's that saying that 'You can be part of the problem or part of the solution,' and I want to be part of the solution," Franklin said. "I started out just helping women, but then I saw that a lot of these women had families with sons. So I

started handing out blue bags for the men along with the pink ones for the women."

Franklin estimates, based on the number of bags she's given out, that she has probably helped around 800 people.

But she has a bigger project in mind: to renovate two retired buses into mobile shower and laundry facilities.

She heard about a person who converted an old bus in San Francisco into a shower bus and about a man in St. Louis who turned a bus into laundry facilities for the homeless in that city. Franklin thought she would combine the two ideas and create a shower bus with laundry facilities – pointing out that it's not enough for people to be clean, they need their clothes to be clean if they are going to go out, get jobs and become independent.

She told local Fox affiliate FOX 46 that, "if you don't have a place to stay and a place to shower, how are you going to maintain a job? If you look like me and you – bathed, have your hair done, clean clothes – you can get a job and maintain a job."

After her story went public via FOX 46, Franklin says the donations of toiletries

have come pouring in. "Right now everyone's giving me donations for the showers, but they've forgotten about the bus. I feel good that people are donating the products for the shower."

For her, it's about helping them take steps to get jobs, not about giving a handout and making them dependent on that handout.

But her bigger goal – that of converting the bus to a mobile shower facility – carries a big price. Her online fundraising effort estimates a \$200,000 cost to acquire and convert the two buses.

SMART TD North Carolina State Legislative Director **Ron Ingerick** has also been helping Franklin.

He's made SMART TD North Carolina locals aware of Franklin's cause and has asked that they contribute toiletries.

Ingerick then picks the donations up from the locals when he's in the area for meetings and delivers them to Franklin.

"Debra is a vital member of our NCLB and Local 1715. If there's anything that needs to be handled, Debra is always there to complete the task," Ingerick said.

Once she gets the funds to buy the buses, Franklin, who also is a local legislative representative, legisla-

HOW TO HELP DEBRA

Want to help Debra Franklin reach her goal? Checks can be made payable to "The Shower Bus 'N Charlotte" and sent to Franklin, 222 S. Church St., Ste. 100, Charlotte, NC 28202. A GoFundMe account has also been set up at <https://www.gofundme.com/CharlotteBathroom>.

Franklin's charity is considered a 501 (c)(3) corporation by the IRS and all donations are tax deductible. Members can also show their support for Franklin's efforts by following her at www.facebook.com/CharlotteBathroom or on Twitter at twitter.com/CLTBathroom.



Debra Franklin, of Local 1715, poses with packages of toiletries she has collected to help the homeless population of Charlotte.