

MEMBERS SET 2025 PRIORITIES

Our Section 6 notices have been finalized and filed with the railroads

In June and July of this year, SMART-TD requested input from General Committees, Locals and individual members on items to include in its Section 6 Notices to the railroads.

During the 45-day submission period, the SMART-TD headquarters received more than 1,600 separate recommendations, encompassing over 60 areas of concern. Wages, healthcare costs and attendance policies are among the top priorities across the union.

Members also demanded improvement on issues such as vacation, certification pay, overtime, the addition of/increases to existing paid sick leave, held-away pay, cost of living adjustments and meals.

Unlike past rounds of national agreement negotiations, three of the six Class I's (BNSF, NS and CSX) are negotiating independently, two (CN and UP) are negotiating through the traditional process. CPKC is bargaining wage and rules independently, but joining the national group on issues of health and welfare.

SMART-TD President **Jeremy Ferguson** addressed the members of District No. 1 as they convened to study and combine the submissions.

"This is uncharted waters for all of us. One thing we must ensure is



District 1 General Chairpersons convene to read and organize member-submitted suggestions for inclusion in SMART-TD's next round of national collective bargaining under the Railway Labor Act. The three-day meeting resulted in a unified set of priorities that reflects the will of all rail union members.

that we maintain our communication and coordination among the general committees who have already reached tentative agreements with different railroads." Ferguson went on to say, "If we stay united while the carriers are splintered, it will defeat any attempts by them to divide and conquer labor."

"I am honored to have led this process and worked with our general chairpersons to finalize a draft of our Notices," said District no. 1 Chairperson **Scott Chelette** (GCA-927, Union Pacific). "Our Union's process is a

bottom-up structure, where the voices of our members transform into the foundation of our negotiations with the rail carriers.

"I couldn't be any more appreciative of our members for their valuable input, and I couldn't be prouder of District No. 1's hard work. Despite the sheer amount of information and the long hours, we made sure that every issue was weighed, discussed and worked into our notice for the next round of contract negotiations."

Section 6 notices list our priorities

for the next round of national agreement negotiations. These notices, required by the Railway Labor Act (RLA) are formal proclamations of bargaining issues that the railroads and the unions intend to raise in the negotiations scheduled to begin in the first quarter of 2025.

Members who ratified on-property tentative agreements will not be represented in the national negotiations, as their agreements have been negotiated and are already locked in place through the 2029 bargaining cycle.

2025 Regional Training Seminar locations announced



Why attend an RTS?

Training improves our success rates in appeals and claims by equipping local officers with the latest strategies and resources. Trained officers can meet the challenges of today's labor environment with confidence.

Who should attend?

Training is open to all members, while Local officers are strongly encouraged to participate. Sessions are tailored for local presidents, local chairpersons, secretaries and treasurers, safety and legislative representatives and others.

Mark your calendars!

Don't miss this opportunity to build your skills! Registration for the Dallas, Texas seminar is already open with availability limited for some sessions.

[Learn more on page 7](#)

Michigan 2-person crew bill advances



Michigan State Senator and Chair of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Erika Geiss; Michigan State Legislative Director Don Roach; and Michigan State Senator and Co-sponsor of SB 100, Stephanie Chang.

LANSING, Mich. – SMART-TD celebrated a major step forward for railroad workers and public safety advocates when the Michigan Senate Transportation and Infrastructure Committee passed a bill mandating a minimum two-person crew on freight trains operating in Michigan. Senate Bill 100 passed with a 7-2 vote. At the time of publication the bill was before the full Senate for further debate.

SB 100, introduced by Senator Erika Geiss (D-Dist. 1) and supported by SMART-TD, will improve safety and working conditions if signed into law. Geiss, who chairs the committee, led the effort. All six Democratic committee members voted in favor, joined by Republican Senator Edward McBroom (R-Dist. 38).

Don Roach, SMART-TD Michigan state safety and legislative director,

praised McBroom for his bipartisan support, emphasizing the importance of safety over politics. Roach also highlighted the growing need for state-level protections due to legal challenges to federal two-person crew regulations.

SB 100 addresses concerns over railroads seeking to reduce crew sizes, a practice critics argue jeopardizes both worker safety and community well-being. The bill’s passage marks a significant step forward for Michigan’s efforts to ensure safer, more accountable railroad operations.

Supporters are hopeful the full Senate will pass the bill and send it to the Michigan House for further consideration. “This is a victory for rail workers, public safety and Michigan families,” Roach said. “We’ll keep pushing to make sure this legislation becomes law.”

REEF Act passes after multi-year effort

WASHINGTON, D.C. – After more than four years of tireless advocacy by SMART-TD, the Railroad Employee Equity and Fairness (REEF) Act has passed both the House and Senate.

The act permanently exempts Railroad Unemployment Insurance benefits from sequestration, ending a 5.7% reduction that railroaders have unfairly borne for years.

In simple terms, this bill will end the outdated tax of \$50 every two weeks on railroaders drawing unemployment benefits from the Railroad Retirement Board.

These workers already face significant financial hardship when transitioning from regular railroad wages to the \$450 biweekly benefit provided by the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB).

“For most Americans, a \$50 cut may seem insignificant, but to a railroader relying on a fixed benefit, it’s a financial crisis,” said Greg Hynes, SMART-TD National Safety and Legislative Director. “After years of fighting this injustice, the REEF Act’s passage is proof that persistence pays off. The work we’ve done on Capitol Hill to secure this victory is worth every ounce of effort and all the shoe leather we left on the steps of the House and Senate buildings.”

The process to get this bill over the line was not easy. It took consistent advocacy, relentless lobbying, and co-operation across party lines. SMART-TD’s Greg Hynes and his deputy Jared Cassity led the charge, ensuring that Congress understood the gravity of the situation faced by railroad workers.

“SMART-TD members have stood shoulder-to-shoulder with us every step of the way, from rallies to calls to Congressional offices. This victory belongs to every one of our members who answered the call and fought to make sure their voices were heard,” said Hynes.

“It is because of their engagement, their commitment, and their perseverance that we’ve been able to secure this long-overdue relief.”

“We understand the struggle because we’ve lived it. We know how much that small cut impacts an out-of-work railroader’s ability to make ends meet,” said Jared Cassity, Deputy National Safety and Legislative Director.

“This legislation is a direct result of the tireless advocacy of our members, who took the time to speak out, engage with lawmakers, and apply pressure at every step,” Cassity continued. “It is through their hard work and effort that railroad retirement is funded, which is why it is so rewarding to see the senseless reductions finally lifted.

“In this process of advocating for REEF, our brothers and sisters have proven that they are willing to stand in solidarity, to put up a fight. I couldn’t be prouder of our members for their tenacity to win back not just what was earned – but what is deserved.”

SMART-TD wants to thank all of the Senators and Representatives for their support and sponsorship of this important legislation, with special acknowledgment of U.S. Senator Deb Fischer (R-Nebraska) for being the lead sponsor in the Senate and continuing to see this legislation through to the end.

SMART-TD is proud to have endorsed Fisher in her 2024 re-election campaign and was the only rail labor organization to have stood with her.

The REEF Act is a powerful reminder of what is possible when unions, lawmakers, and working people come together to fight for fairness.

SMART-TD extends its deepest thanks to all of the sponsors and cosponsors who supported this bill, as well as the thousands of SMART-TD members who stood united throughout the process.



After the election, I feel as though most of us went through a period of reflection. I know I did. It wasn’t so much because Trump won the presidency again, but what that election meant. It seems as though the working class of this country has lost its faith in government and wanted a change, and I honestly don’t blame them. With the increasing reach of corporate power, workers are desperate and hopeful for a change from the status quo.



**Guest Editorial
by Wes Ekstedt
LCA 009B Secretary**

Throughout the last few decades, we have seen the reach of corporate interests increase and the consequences have had a negative influence on the working class. We have seen it glaringly on the rails. Precision Scheduled Railroading (PSR) has taken over most of the Class I railroads. We have seen longer trains, furloughed workers, decreased time for inspections, increased derailments and deferred maintenance, all while efficiency and customer satisfaction hit all-time lows. Besides a few improvements in the FRA like the two-person crew rule, it is really hard to think positively about the future of our rails. With the power of the rail lobby, it is difficult to have faith that things will get better.

Some may think that Trump will help with these changes. Some may think the Democrats are the answer to positive change. I believe both of those groups are wrong. I truly hope that the Trump administration does decide to help correct the dangers of PSR or that future Democrats help make the difference, but I have a strong feeling that the only solution can be found in ourselves.

Many union men and women have put faith in the politicians for far too long. We need to look inwards. We have allowed the corporate railroads and politics to divide us. I see it when a fellow union member criticizes his or her GC for “selling out” without giving the effort to speak to them about what has happened in the last few negotiations. I have seen it when a union member steams over something that wasn’t even in the actual agreement. I see it when members don’t attend union meetings and allow rumors to influence their opinions on officers. For far too long, I have seen empty union halls and fractured solidarity. We are quick to blame anyone but ourselves.

In the next five to 10 years, we will have battles that will decide not only the safety of our profession, but the existence of our positions. We will not win those battles if we continue to allow these divisions amongst ourselves. I am not saying that we all have to vote for the same party or make every union meeting, but we need to inform ourselves on which representatives support our union and our jobs. We need to email our representatives about our issues. We need to make at least a few union meetings every year. We need to ask our officers about what is in our agreements before we vote. We need to take our grievances and questions to our officers rather than believing the first rumor we hear.

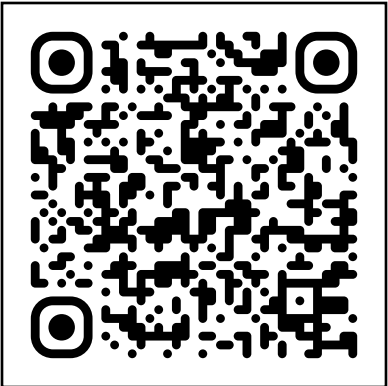
We, as union members, need to look inwards for our solutions. Without solidarity, I fear the worst for our future. By staying with our status quo, we can only expect more of the same. As your brother, I ask that you attend a few union meetings this year. Watch out for your brothers and sisters. Stay informed on your agreements and encourage fellow members to do the same. Take initiative when you can and encourage your officers when you see them. We have more power than we realize, as long as we have solidarity. We can absolutely win now and in the future as long as we lean on each other. What will be your first step to making this unity possible?

Brother Ekstedt is a 13-year SMART-TD conductor and an administrator of the popular “Fight for Two Person Crews” Facebook group.

The SMART App is a great way to get more involved with the union. Our app is free to use and available on all major platforms. Use it to stay up-to-date on your local meeting times and locations, and to find contact information for your local and general committee officers. The app will also help you keep up with relevant industry news, actions and other announcements.

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Virginia/DC merger will increase legislative influence



Left to right: Willie Bates, former SLD for D.C., Jarad Jackson, vice chair of passenger service for Virginia/D.C., Ronnie Hobbs, safety legislative director for Virginia/D.C.

The SMART-TD Safety and Legislative Boards for the state of Virginia and Washington, D.C. have voluntarily merged. This decision, voted into effect by both boards on November 15, will streamline operations and create a more unified voice at local, state and federal levels.

Ronnie Hobbs, Virginia’s safety and legislative director, will lead the combined body. Jarad Jackson, D.C.’s safety and legislative director, will serve as vice chairperson for passenger rail service, while Ray Miller, Virginia’s alternate legislative director, becomes vice chairperson for freight rail service.

Brother Hobbs told SMART-TD News, “By pooling resources, the leadership team is better equipped to advocate in Richmond, the D.C. Mayor’s office and on Capitol Hill.”

Hobbs went on to say, “This merger strengthens our collective power. Together, we’ll be more effective in advocating for the issues that matter most to our members. The new structure marks a stronger, more cohesive effort to address the region’s pressing challenges.”

The merger addresses member challenges in Virginia and D.C., where many activities span the boundary between the two regions. Combining the boards will focus resources and legislative activities while spending fewer resources coordinating efforts.

Safety remains the top priority, with a focus on addressing staffing shortages at Amtrak’s Union Station, where conductors are often required to work without an assistant conductor.

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Sharp-eyed conductor saves two lives in winter crossing accident

KIMBALL, Mich. – December 11, 2024 – In a remarkable display of quick thinking and selflessness, SMART-TD member and Canadian National (CN) conductor, **Brandon LaBombard**, (Local 1183, Port Huron, Mich.) acted swiftly to prevent tragedy.

While aboard CN train 484, heading northbound and approaching the rail yard in Port Huron, LaBombard saw an 18-wheeler approaching the Wadhams Road crossing. Given the icy conditions and speed of the truck, he suspected that it wouldn’t be able to stop in time.

As the head end of the train passed through the crossing, LaBombard kept a sharp eye on the truck through the window on the conductor’s side of the locomotive.

He watched as the truck jackknifed into a Dodge Charger waiting at the crossing.

“The trailer swung around and hit that Dodge like a baseball bat swatting a ball off a tee,” he recalled. The car was thrown into the train about 20 cars behind the locomotive.

Automatic systems, Engineer unable to detect the crash

The automated safety systems did not detect the collision, and the engineer remained unaware of the incident. Thankfully, as the second crew member, LaBombard was there to take control of the situation. He instructed

the engineer to stop the train and then rushed back to the scene to assist the victims.

Fortunately, the drivers of both the truck and the Dodge were able to walk away from the wreckage. While LaBombard was assessing the damage and coordinating with the Port Huron Yard, a second car sped out of control on the icy road. This second car flipped and rolled three times before coming to rest upside down in a deep ditch.

The vehicle was submerged in over three feet of standing water, trapping the driver and passenger inside. The doors were jammed, and as the car began filling with icy water LaBombard again sprang into action.

“My Transportation Supervisor, George Sarrica, and I tried to break the glass on the window, but it wouldn’t budge. We were banging on it, and it just wouldn’t break. So I gave up on that and pried the door open. Thankfully that worked, and I was able to get both of the people out and safe,” LaBombard recalled.

Second crew member is the first responder when things go wrong

In a statement to SMART-TD News, LaBombard downplayed his heroic actions. “I just did what I would hope someone would do for me or my family,” he said. “I’m just glad I was on the train and was available to respond.” He also pointed out that, had he not

been on the train, the engineer would not have known about the accident until he arrived at the Port Huron Yard.

LaBombard’s quick thinking and brave actions saved the lives of two people in the flipped car. His selfless response underscores a critical point raised by proponents of Michigan’s two-person crew bill, (SB 100) which is currently under debate in the state’s House of Representatives.

The bill advocates for a two-person crew on freight trains, highlighting that technology cannot replace the human element in ensuring the safety of both train crews and the public. The technology aboard the train showed no signs of trouble and the engineer, focused on the track ahead, had no idea that lives were at risk. Even with Brother LaBombard immediately radioing in a report of the accident, he remained the one and only first responder on the scene for nearly half an hour.

“Technology may be a good safety overlay, but it will never replace the human element or a second set of eyes on trains,” said SMART-TD President **Jeremy Ferguson**. “Brandon’s actions exemplify the values we hold as a union and show why we need trained professionals on the ground, on the trains and on the scene.”

Thank you, Brother Brandon LaBombard, for your heroic actions and your unwavering service to our industry. You embody the true spirit of our union.

Legal champion Kevin Brodar retires after 40 year career

It’s December of 2022, and a hearing is taking place in Washington, D.C. on the FRA’s two-person crew rule. As the room fills, one of the railroad’s top attorneys stops cold in her tracks. SMART-TD’s General Counsel **Kevin Brodar** just entered the room. She knows she’s in for a fight.

That’s the kind of reputation that he’s rightfully earned throughout his professional life: a steadfast champion of the labor movement, one who stands tall in the courtroom to defend SMART-TD members and their rights.

Now, after a legal career spanning four decades, Brodar has retired.

“It’s a little scary, I have to say, going over to the other side,” Brodar admitted. “I’m peering over the edge of the abyss.”

He slowly said his goodbyes as 2024 drew to a close, which gave him plenty of time to reflect on both the people he’s worked with and the experiences that he’s had at SMART-TD.

“It’s a little bittersweet, because you work with people and then you develop a bond and it’s more than just a working relationship. It’s a friendship,” Brodar said.

After graduating from Duquesne University, Brodar crossed the country to attend law school at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington. After his first year of law school he wasn’t sure that was the path he wanted to pursue. “I’m listening to this and I’m thinking ‘This is nothing like what I thought it was going to be,’” he remembered.

Not wanting to move all the way back across the country, his wife convinced him to tough it out for his first year. One option that caught his

attention: labor law. “I was like ‘Bam! This is it!’” Brodar said, laughing.

Brodar grew up in a heavily industrialized section of Pittsburgh. His father, brother, and an uncle all worked on the railroad, so it wasn’t surprising that Brodar was drawn to a life spent protecting workers.

Earning the highest grade in his class didn’t hurt either.

After receiving his Master of Laws with a concentration in Labor Law from Georgetown University and beginning his career with the National Labor Relations Board, Brodar was hired by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers in 1989 before being approached by the United Transportation Union (UTU) in 1991 to join as a full-time litigator. He never looked back.

He made an impact litigating in federal district and appellate courts all over the country, ensuring that SMART-TD members received historic raises and suffered no major changes to healthcare during the last round of national negotiations. Brodar never let his professional accomplishments overshadow why he wanted to practice labor law.

“Being a litigator wasn’t the be all and end all of everything,” Brodar said. “It was working for a cause, and that’s why you work on this side of the fence. That’s kind of what drove me all these years: that you’re working for something greater than yourself.”

Those who have crossed paths with him at SMART-TD agree.

“From his first day as counsel for the UTU to his instrumental role in shaping the victories of SMART-TD, Kevin has been the ultimate protector

of our members,” said SMART-TD President **Jeremy Ferguson**. “Since I stepped into my role as President in 2019, I’ve been fortunate to rely on Kevin’s knowledge and experience in some of our union’s most difficult fights. Kevin’s legacy is one of dedication and unmatched service to the labor movement, and we all owe him a debt of gratitude.”

“He really does care about the organization,” said **Brent Leonard**, SMART-TD vice president & international representative. “Not just the people he works with, but also the members we represent.”

Leonard predicts that there will be a noticeable void once Brodar retires.

“People always feel better when they know that there’s somebody there that has the answers,” Leonard explained. “It’s this certain comfort that everything will be okay, because you know what? Kevin knows what to do.”

Stepping up to fill Brodar’s role is **Erika Diehl-Gibbons**, who is the current Associate General Counsel at SMART-TD.

Leonard believes that there’s no one who’s better prepared for the job.

“We’re excited to have Erika coming in and filling the role,” Leonard said. “She’s been with us for a long time, and she’s going to be a fantastic General Counsel. ‘I know she looks at Kevin as a mentor, and I know he’s mentored her to carry the torch.’”

Brodar is hopeful that he was able to make an impact.

“It really has been a blessing to be able to have this job,” Brodar reflected. “It’s something that’s provided a lot of fulfillment, that I’ve been able to help people, which was my whole goal.”

SMART GENERAL PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Solidarity is our North Star: United we bargain, divided we beg

In October 2024, our union displayed the solidarity that defines our organization — and that will always serve as our North Star.

It was October 23. And while much of the national focus was on battleground states and polling numbers, hundreds of railroaders, trade unionists and allies gathered at Boston's historic South Station, calling on Keolis, the French-owned passenger rail operator of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, to bargain in good faith.

The workers who keep Bostonians moving safely and efficiently demanded fair wages, sick leave, maternity days and other essential benefits — which Keolis has neglected to negotiate on since the previous MBTA contract expired in July 2022.

Brothers and sisters, that rally represented something powerful.

For one, it illustrated the purpose of the labor movement, which every single one of us is a part of: Whether we work on the railroad, operating a bus, in public transit or beyond, we fight for the rights and dignity of working people.



By Michael Coleman

Even more important, in my opinion, was the unbreakable unity we put on display.

SMART-TD railroaders working on the MBTA were, of course, making their voices heard on the steps of South Station. But it wasn't just TD members standing up that day: Sheet metal workers from the SMART Northeast Regional Council held the line for their brothers and sisters.

Together, transportation and sheet metal workers in Boston demonstrated our defining principle: United we bargain, divided we beg.

At this point, it's been many weeks since President Trump won his reelection bid for president of the United States. As all of you know, SMART endorsed his opponent, former Vice President Kamala Harris, and her running mate, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz.

These two candidates each had long records detailing the actions they have taken on behalf of SMART members and working families, and they had plans to build on the victories we won under the Biden-Harris administration: securing two-person railroad crews, taking steps to curb violence on public transit and more. But the American people have spoken, and we must respect our democratic institutions.

Let me be crystal clear: SMART will work with any elected leader, regardless of political party, to advance the interests of members and their families. That has always been the case, and that won't stop now.

I also want to make sure you all know this: No matter what happens under a Trump-Vance administration, SMART will continue to fight tirelessly on behalf of every single member and their families.

These days, elections sow division like never before — and I'm sure many of you experienced the painful aftereffects of that division firsthand. I know I did.

But we can never, ever forget

the defining principle of our union: solidarity.

I have your back, and you have mine. You are my union family, and I am yours. That principle is what brought sheet metal and TD members together in Boston in October, and we must all continue to champion our values as union members moving forward.

Sisters and brothers, I don't know what the future will bring. But I know that it's more important than ever for all of us to stand together, united, as one union. As long as we have each other's back, we will continue our forward march to secure the rights and dignity every worker in this great nation.

In solidarity,

Michael Coleman

Michael Coleman
General President
SMART

A MESSAGE FROM BUS DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP

Education is the key to building a stronger, more united SMART-TD

As members of the SMART Transportation Division, education remains one of the most critical tools in our toolbox.

Whether on the bus or rail side, staying informed and empowered ensures we can continue to represent our members effectively, advocate for their safety, and build a stronger union. That's why I'm excited to share details about the upcoming SMART-TD regional training seminars scheduled for 2025.

These seminars are not just meetings—they are opportunities to learn, connect, and grow as union leaders and advocates. I want to emphasize that these Regional Training Seminars are for both Bus and Rail.

This year, we'll host sessions in the following cities:

- Dallas, TX: March 10-13 (S&T: March 10-14)
- Denver, CO: June 23-26 (S&T: June 23-27)
- Anaheim, CA: September 8-11 (S&T: September 8-12)
- Atlanta, GA: October 27-30 (S&T: October 27-31)

Each location offers a chance for members, local officers and chairpersons to receive hands-on training on essential union topics, including grievance handling, contract



By James Sandoval

enforcement, local President duties, Secretary/Treasurer duties, and Safety & Legislative rep duties.

We offer bus-specific Chairperson training at each seminar, as our transit members are governed by different labor laws than our railroad brothers and sisters. All other classes are the same, whether you are from bus or rail, as we face the same challenges and share the same processes.

Our union faces many challenges, from addressing safety concerns to protecting members' rights in an ever-changing transportation landscape. These seminars are designed to equip you with the knowledge and tools to meet those challenges head-on.

Why education matters

Union work is complex and ever-evolving. Laws change, employers adapt, and our members face new struggles every day.

Without proper training, we risk falling behind when it comes to representing our members effectively. These seminars provide a forum to

discuss solutions, share best practices, and strengthen our collective resolve.

But it's not just about knowledge, it's also about building new relationships.

Regional training seminars bring together members from across the country, fostering connections and solidarity that remind us we're all part of a larger movement.

The camaraderie you build in these sessions often translates into better collaboration when addressing issues back home.

Making training accessible for all

We understand that attending an in-person seminar may not always be feasible for some locals.

Whether due to tight budgets, scheduling conflicts, or other barriers, missing out on these educational opportunities can feel like a setback. That's why Bus Vice President Alvy Hughes and I are committed to making sure every local has access to the training they need.

If your local struggles to send members to these regional sessions, let us know. We're working on developing remote training options to ensure no one is left behind.

These virtual sessions will offer the same high-quality content, allowing members to participate and learn from

wherever they are.

Our goal is to ensure that every member, no matter their location or circumstances, has the tools they need to succeed.

Join us in 2025

I strongly encourage all members, especially local officers and chairpersons, to prioritize these regional seminars. If you're able to attend one of these sessions, I promise you'll leave better prepared to serve our members and tackle the challenges we face as a union. And if you can't attend in person, rest assured that we're working on alternatives to ensure you still have access to the education you need.

Together, we can continue building a stronger, more united SMART-TD. If you have questions or need assistance, don't hesitate to reach out. Let's make 2025 a year of growth and success for all our members.

In solidarity,

James Sandoval

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TRANSPORTATION DIVISION PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Keep pushing forward, together we can build on gains won in 2024

Brothers and Sisters,

Thanks to our collective strength, 2024 will go down as one of the most impactful years in SMART-TD's history.

By translating the concept of solidarity into tangible action, we have been able to move the needle significantly on some of the issues that matter the most to our members.

For starters, take the successful implementation of the two-person freight train crew (2-PC) rule across the nation. Even in the face of relentless attacks from the railroads and corporate special interests, you successfully made your voices heard.

Our brothers and sisters will continue to operate in safe environments, and it's thanks to the dedicated, member-focused advocacy that is a hallmark of SMART-TD.

Building off that history-making victory, a large majority of our members gained the dignity of paid sick days for the first time in the American railroad industry. This hard-won right is proof of our unwavering commitment to improving the quality of life for everyone in the SMART-TD family.

2024 also saw SMART-TD work with rail carriers and other unions in party to the National Agreement, to bring down the out-of-pocket Health & Welfare costs for our covered members.



By Jeremy Ferguson

As of January 2025, all SMART-TD rail members covered by the National H&W Plans will see a reduction of 10.2% in their monthly employee contributions! That puts an extra \$31.67 per month back into the pockets of our members without making any concessions in bargaining.

Our Amtrak members also ratified a monumental agreement that includes historic gains, including the largest general wage increase in the company's history and full retroactive pay dating back to July 1, 2022, which will also apply to short crew payments.

Key highlights include 10 weeks of paid parental leave, the addition of Martin Luther King Jr. Day as a paid holiday, increased training pay, and improved bereavement policies, all while maintaining the healthcare plan for current employees.

We are also wrapping up one of the most successful years with our Short Line Rail properties.

Thanks to our Organizing Department's efforts, we have brought many new short-line properties into the SMART-TD family, like the Louisville

& Indiana Railroad.

We have also dedicated resources to negotiating fair contracts for our members on smaller properties, such as our Alabama Gulf Coast brothers and sisters who ratified an agreement with their railroad featuring significantly higher general wage increases and more generous quality-of-life improvements than any agreement they have seen in recent memory.

Whether it's our brothers and sisters working for the Class I Railroads or our members working on a short line, SMART-TD is dedicated to fighting equally as hard for everyone under our umbrella.

On the Bus and Transit side, 2024 saw this union leverage our organization's solid reputation and strong relationships with federal officials to secure the future of hundreds of transit jobs in the upcoming high-speed rail project connecting Las Vegas to various locations in California. This project will not only enhance our members' job security but also transform public transportation in the region.

SMART-TD fought for and won essential safeguards and government mandates, ensuring that our members have a seat at the table during discussions on bus and transit equipment redesigns and additional training aimed at promoting your safety on the job.

Together, we took vital steps

to address the epidemic of transit violence.

This union and our Bus Transit Assault Prevention and Safety (BTAPS) committee are proud of what was gained this year and are set to achieve even more in 2025 with your assistance.

These accomplishments would not have been possible without your steadfast support and engagement.

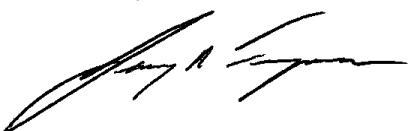
As we take the time to celebrate these victories and look ahead, I urge each of you to remain committed to our cause.

Let's keep pushing forward, holding ourselves and each other accountable while fighting for the rights and dignity of all members.

Our collective action is our greatest strength. As long as we do not lose sight of that, we will continue making history.

Thank you for your invaluable contributions to SMART-TD over the past year. I am honored and humbled to represent you, and I look forward to seeing what we will achieve together in 2025.

Faternally,



Jeremy Ferguson
President, SMART-TD

What YOUR UNION is doing for YOU

Arbitration victories as reported to SMART Transportation Division leadership.

General chairpersons who wish to report a victory should contact:
Transit Vice President Alvy Hughes (ahughes@smart-union.org) • Rail Vice President David B. Weir Jr. (dwierjr@smart-union.org)

Federal Mediation

SMART-TD Vice Presidents **Alvy Hughes** and **James Sandoval** report that the Bus Department has received a favorable award. Below is a reference to a Federal Mediation & Conciliation Service (FMCS) mediation.

In the matter of **SMART Local 1715 and Transit Management of Charlotte** (TMOC) case# 202512-050003, TMOC, without a meet and confer, changed the vacation payout, which affected 35 operators currently.

Operators bidding on 10-hour runs did not receive their full vacation allotment of days per the collective bargaining agreement. TMOC claimed that they notified the organization that they would start to use vacation payout in hours instead of days when operators scheduled a vacation day(s) working 10-hour runs. SMART-TD had no knowledge of this change and demanded that TMOC revert back to the practice and interpretation of the agreement.

The mediation concluded with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). TMOC will pay the difference of hours not received from operators to complete a full day of pay on vacation and will continue this past practice

throughout the term of the agreement. Also, they will allow operators to be paid out any unused vacation time per current practice.

General Chairperson **Christy Kiser** (GCA-TMD) advanced this mediation with the assistance of Vice President Alvy Hughes.

Railroad Adjustment Board

SMART-TD Vice Presidents **David B. Wier Jr.** and **Jamie C. Modesitt** report that the Organization has received numerous favorable decisions from cases arbitrated at the First Division of the National Railroad Adjustment Board. Of the many cases that SMART-TD received sustaining decisions on from the First Division, the cases referenced below are of significant interest:

In NRAB First Division Award No. 31838 (Deinhardt, 2024), Union Pacific terminated a conductor for allegedly being careless when he crossed closely in front of the movement of his train while shoving to a coupling when the excessive speed of the coupling caused a derailment. The Board concluded that even though the claimant was not in compliance with General Code of Operating Rule No.

6.5 when he took control of the shove movement because he was unable to observe the rear car of the train, his actions, nevertheless, did not cause the coupling to be completed at a high rate of speed and the resulting derailment. Based on its findings, the Board concluded that the locomotive engineer was the culpable employee for the coupling being completed at an excessive speed and the ensuing derailment. Based on its review of the record of this case, the Board determined that the carrier's assessed penalty of dismissal was excessive, particularly in view of the claimant's lengthy tenure with the carrier. For those reasons, the Board reinstated the claimant to service, awarded him back pay for his lost earnings, and converted his termination to a MAPS Training 1 assessment. GO887 General Chairperson **Todd Campbell** and GO887 Vice General Chairperson **Kurt C. Berg** progressed this case to the NRAB First Division.

In NRAB First Division Award No. 31853 (Moreland, 2024), Union Pacific terminated a switchman for allegedly being dishonest when he purportedly falsified a report that he sustained an injury to his knee at work. After reviewing the record, the Board

concluded that the carrier did not satisfy its burden of proof in this case. Accordingly, the Board fully sustained the claim on behalf of the claimant. In this regard, the claimant was reinstated to service, paid for all time lost and the assessed discipline was removed from his record. GO887 General Chairperson **Todd Campbell** and GO887 Vice General Chairperson **Kurt C. Berg** progressed this case to the NRAB First Division.

In NRAB First Division Award No. 31890 (Vonhof, 2024), Union Pacific dismissed a conductor from service for purportedly violating the carrier's attendance policy. Based on its studied review of the instant case, the Board determined that the carrier failed to introduce substantial evidence into the record of the formal investigation to bolster its allegation that the claimant violated the attendance policy. In light of that finding, the Board concluded that the discipline assessed to the claimant was not appropriate. Therefore, the Board ruled to reinstate the claimant to service with back pay and benefits. GO887 General Chairperson **Todd Campbell** and GO887 Vice General Chairperson **Kurt C. Berg** progressed this case to the NRAB First Division. **Continues on Page 6**



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LA models transit safety for other troubled US cities

In 2024, SMART-TD’s LACMTA General Committee, GO875, led groundbreaking efforts to improve safety for transit operators and other union members in Los Angeles amid a nationwide rise in violence against transit personnel.

A major achievement was the creation of the Los Angeles Transit Police Department, a collaboration with MTA’s CEO Stephanie Wiggins and Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass. This new force will focus on safeguarding both passengers and operators, providing a visible security presence on buses, rail cars, and stations.

In addition, SMART-TD successfully pushed for the rapid installation of a fully enclosed driver compartment for bus operators, a measure designed to protect them from the rising trend of assaults. By December 2024, all L.A. Metro buses will be equipped with these protective barriers thanks to General Chairperson **John M. Ellis** and SMART-TD’s Bus Department.

Further pushing the envelope, SMART-TD leaders attended a global transit safety conference in Berlin, Germany and brought back innovative ideas to improve safety, including AI-powered cameras with facial recognition and weapon detection. These cameras are currently being tested on Metro light rail with plans to be expanded to L.A. Metro buses.

The union’s success in securing these safety reforms serves as a model for transit systems nationwide. These initiatives demonstrate how collective action and strategic advocacy can transform worker safety and set new standards for public transit systems across the U.S. and beyond.

General Chairperson Ellis reiterated to SMART-TD News “I am proud to have been part of a major safety improvement, making L.A. Metro the first transit agency across the nation to have totally enclosed the driver’s compartment from the riding public.

“I look forward to see the day that Metro’s very own dedicated transit police become a reality and they can solely protect our membership, who I call Metro Heroes.”

Vice Presidents **Alvy Hughes** and **James Sandoval**, General Chairperson **John M. Ellis** and California Safety and Legislative Director **Louis Costa** will continue their relentless advocacy for transit safety in Los Angeles and throughout the nation.



Threat of strike in Philadelphia leads to agreement with SEPTA

UPPER DARBY, PA – On November 20, 2024, after intense negotiations, SMART-TD Local 1594 reached a tentative agreement with the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA).

It’s about safety, dignity

The agreement includes critical safety improvements and a wage increase, addressing longstanding concerns raised by the union over worker protection and security measures for transit operators. This agreement is a major step forward for the roughly 350 members of Local 1594, who stood firm throughout the negotiations.

Anthony Petty, General Chairperson and SMART-TD alternate vice president of the bus department led the negotiations for Local 1594.

“When SEPTA told us they had no budget for bulletproof glass enclosures, de-escalation training for our members, or to increase security and police presence on our buses and trolleys, that wasn’t just an insult—it was a direct threat to the safety of my union family,” said Petty. **“You might get away with that somewhere else, but not here in Philadelphia. We won’t stand for it, and today’s agreement is a testament to that.”**

Local votes to strike

On Saturday, November 16, in response to SEPTA’s refusal to improve security or agree to a pay increase in 2025, the members of Local 1594 voted overwhelmingly to authorize a strike.

This vote, combined with the strategic collaboration between Local 1594 and Transportation Workers Union

(TWU) Local 234, was a turning point in the negotiations. Petty and his team were able to resume negotiations alongside our brothers and sisters with the TWU.

“I want to take a moment to thank the leadership of TWU Local 234 and their President, Brian Pollitt,” Petty stated. “We couldn’t have reached this agreement without their tireless effort and solidarity. Together, we fought for the safety and dignity of our members, and today we’re seeing the results of that work.”

Enclosures, raises won

Under the terms of the tentative agreement, SEPTA has committed to installing full bulletproof glass enclosures around operators’ workstations on eight buses as part of a pilot project. There is also a commitment to extend these installations to more buses, based on feedback from operators. Additionally, the agreement includes a 5% general wage increase, helping to address the financial needs of SEPTA’s workforce.

“I’m proud of the leadership at Local 1594 for staying strong and staying focused throughout this process,” Petty added. “Our members show up every day with one goal: to serve the public in Philadelphia while keeping each other and our passengers safe. This was always about our members and their dignity, and today’s victory is because of their courage.”

A new officer earns his stripes

The agreement also marks a significant milestone for Petty, who, as a newly elected national officer with the



SMART-TD Local 1715 members working for the Charlotte Area Regional Transit System (CATS) have won a significant victory in the fight for fair vacation pay. The company had tried to manipulate vacation policies, shortchanging our bus members, but thanks to the hard work and dedication of General Committee 1715 and General Chairperson **Christy Kiser**, along with the support of SMART-TD Vice President **Alvy Hughes**, our members’ rights have been fully restored.

Company tried to shortchange some bus operators

CATS made a series of changes to their vacation rules that negatively affected some of their bus operators. Specifically, operators who switched from working four 10-hour days to five eight-hour days were not receiving their earned vacation time. CATS tried to exploit a “gray area” in the rules to pay vacation in hours instead of full days. This decision was made without any consultation with the union and violated their agreement, affecting 35 bus operators.

Union officers go to work

CATS thought this would be too small for us to challenge, but they were wrong. As Vice President Hughes said, “What is wrong is wrong, even if it only affects one of our brothers or

sisters. This organization will step in and do what it takes to make things right for our members, no matter how many people we are talking about.”

When they learned about this, Kiser and Hughes demanded that CATS return to the practice outlined in the collective bargaining agreement, which says that operators shall be paid in full for their vacation days, regardless of their work schedule.

After negotiations and successful mediation, the company signed a Memorandum of Understanding to pay the difference in vacation hours that were initially withheld. Operators will receive the full amount of vacation pay they were owed, and they will also have the choice to cash out any unused vacation time.

This ruling will remain in effect through the rest of the current contract, ensuring all members are treated fairly.

Know your contract and stand up for what’s yours

This victory reinforces the importance of standing up for what is right. Thank you, Sister Kiser, for your excellent work and that of your committee and all members of Local 1715!

Companies and management don’t learn anything fast, but if we stay diligent, they will come to accept that they can’t take what belongs to SMART-TD members!

SMART-TD, is learning to advocate for transit members across the country.

“This process has been a valuable learning experience for me, I want to thank SMART-TD President **Jeremy Ferguson**, and VP’s **Alvy Hughes** and **James Sandoval** for their assistance on this.

“These three national officers answered my phone calls every day and supported me through this whole process. I look forward to applying what I’ve learned from them to help all our bus members nationwide,” Petty explained. “We’re happy to have reached this agreement but make no mistake— we are staying on offense.

“Whether it’s in Philadelphia or from Charlotte, N.C. to Los Angeles, we are going to keep pushing for the safety and dignity of transit workers.”

“We’re proud of our members,” Petty concluded. “You’ve proven time and time again that you are committed to the safety of your coworkers and the communities you serve.

“You are the backbone of this system, and we will continue to fight for your protection and dignity.”

The tentative agreement is subject to ratification by Local 1594 membership.

UNION VICTORIES

Continued from Page 5

In NRAB First Division Award No. 31891 (Vonhof, 2024), Union Pacific terminated the employment of a conductor for allegedly being careless when protecting a shove movement that resulted in a coupling being made at an excessive speed and a derailment. In assessing the claimant termination from service, the carrier maintained that the claimant violated General Code of Operating Rules Numbers 1.6 and 6.5. Although the Board rationalized that a review of the record of this case supported a finding that the claimant’s actions breached Rule 6.5, it concluded that the carrier failed to meet the evidentiary bar to establish that the claimant violated Rule 1.6. Based on its findings and conclusions, the Board determined that the carrier’s assessment of dismissal to the claimant was arbitrary and unreasonable. Accordingly, the Board directed the carrier to return the claimant to service with back pay for his lost earnings. GO887 General Chairperson Todd Campbell and GO887 Vice General Chairperson Kurt C. Berg progressed this case to the NRAB First Division.

Texas 2025 Regional Training, Registration NOW OPEN!

Location: DoubleTree by Hilton
Hotel Dallas, near the Galleria
Dates: March 10-13, 2025
(S&T: March 10-14)
Room Rate: \$141/night
Registration Fee: \$75

The Dallas RTS will begin on Monday, March 10, 2025, with an evening welcome reception. The training will cover topics such as: local governance; the roles and responsibilities of local presidents, secretaries, treasurers, legislative representatives, and local chairpersons in member advocacy; an overview of the SMART Constitution and other key subjects.

For a detailed meeting agenda please visit the Meetings page via the SMART Union mobile app.

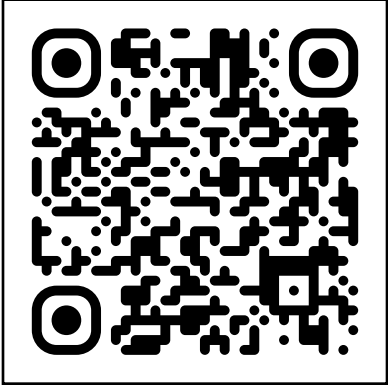
Room blocks and space in many popular training tracks is limited and will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Registration closes on **March 3, 2025**, and there will be no on-site registration available.

Attendees are responsible for making their hotel reservations.

For more information, contact **Nick Torres** in the SMART-TD office at 216-227-5269 or by email at ntorres@smart-union.org.

[Register for Classes](#)



REGISTER EARLY

[Hotel Reservations](#)



**We look
forward to
seeing you
in Dallas!**

SMART-TD SLD to lead big Kansas labor coalition

Brother **Ty Dragoo**, SMART-TD’s Kansas state safety & legislative director, has been elected by labor leaders across Kansas to lead a state-wide labor coalition called the Working Kansas Alliance (WKA).

Collectively representing more than 500,000 workers throughout the state, WKA advocates for labor-friendly policies at the Kansas state legislature.

The WKA ensures that workers have a voice with lawmakers, especially when confronted by policies pushed by corporate special interest groups on behalf of big business, which neglect the needs of working families.

Dragoo emphasized how labor leaders across Kansas have recognized SMART-TD’s ability to break down legislative barriers.

“Any time there’s a labor issue, SMART-TD is recognized as a leader and standard-bearer,” Dragoo said. “This shows what we can do, at the state level and across the country, when we have an active and engaged legislative program.”

When it comes to having conversations with legislators who aren’t labor-friendly, Dragoo focuses on finding similarities rather than dwelling on differences. He reminds lawmakers that their constituents are workers, too, who are worried about kitchen table issues.

“We try to get rid of all the other outside noise,” Dragoo noted. “We’re really on the same page on a lot of this stuff. It’s when we let in all the outside noise that we get into trouble.”

A member of Marysville, Kan. Local 1503, Brother Dragoo has long ensured that SMART-TD’s voice is heard and amplified at the state legislature across party lines. With his appointment he will ensure labor’s presence, along with SMART-TD, will continue to be felt in the Topeka legislature.

“I fully intend on bringing that ability to the legislature: to advance the causes of the labor movement. Not just SMART-TD issues but all labor issues.”

Congratulations, Brother! Your union continues to be proud of the progress you and the Kansas Legislative Board have made for our members, as well as the labor movement as a whole!

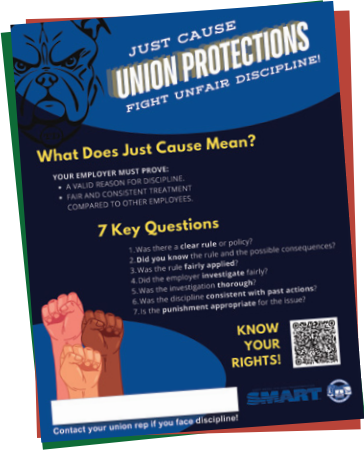
New E3 Committee strengthening our union through Empowerment, Education and Engagement

The SMART Transportation Division is proud to introduce our new E3 Committee. Driven by its mission, “making our union stronger, together,” the committee is committed to fostering a more united, informed and active membership through its three core principles:

- **Empowerment:** We believe that informed members are empowered members. We are committed to providing resources that help members understand their rights, strengthen their advocacy skills and build leadership capabilities. An empowered union member is a force for workplace fairness and justice.
- **Education:** Continuous learning is essential in today’s ever-changing labor landscape. Through Regional Training Seminars, SMART University, Bulletin Board Fliers, etc., SMART-TD will ensure that members have the knowledge to be ready for any fight. Knowledge is power!
- **Engagement:** True union strength comes from active participation. E3 will focus on increasing member involvement because every voice matters and every action counts!

“Remember, YOU are the union,” committee chairperson **James Sandoval** said. “Unions aren’t a spectator sport — we need every member to find their place on the field and get involved. When we stand together, supporting one another, our collective strength is more powerful than any force working against us!”

Among other initiatives, the committee is currently developing educational fliers for local officers to display on bulletin boards, ensuring important information reaches every member. A packet will be ready soon for local officers to use to update their bulletin boards.



“Together, we can achieve more than ever before. The SMART-TD E3 Committee is a call to action for all members to take ownership of our collective future. Stay tuned for opportunities to get involved,” Sandoval added.

“Let’s work together to strengthen our union family and create lasting positive change!”

The E3 Committee:
James Sandoval (Chair)
Nicholas Greficz
Justin Schrock
Charles (Buddy) Piland
Hilary (Bill) Manoski



We value your input! Please scan the code above to complete a [short survey](#) and to share your ideas about how we can better empower, educate and engage one another. Your suggestions will help guide the committee’s future efforts.

Union defends whistleblowers at OSHA meeting

The SMART-TD lobbied OSHA and the FRA for stronger whistleblower protections at a virtual meeting on October 29.

“We are here to fight for our members,” said **Jared Cassity**, SMART-TD deputy national director of safety and legislative affairs. “Railroad workers face harassment, demotion, and even firing for reporting unsafe conditions. This must stop, or it will continue to put both workers and the public at risk.”

OSHA began conducting an extensive inquiry into safety practices across America’s rail network, which included a request for public comments at the virtual meeting.

Multiple rail labor organizations

were represented at the meeting; however, SMART-TD was the only union to submit an official comment at the gathering.

SMART-TD’s public comment reflects the reality that we face the threat of discipline or termination for reporting unsafe conditions or injuries at work. While the union can challenge these management decisions, many workers will cover up injuries or lie about incidents to protect themselves.

Greg Hynes, SMART-TD national director of safety and legislative affairs, explained, “The culture of intimidation has been allowed to continue for too long. We need stronger protections for those who report safety issues.”

One key issue identified by our

members is the misuse of “operational testing,” where managers stealthily observe workers.

The use of drones and covert surveillance, where managers “super-vise” with binoculars from concealed locations, is justified by the railroads as ensuring safety.

Such observations are all too often used to intimidate and punish workers who encounter safety issues or to deflect liability if there is an injury.

Stronger protections for whistleblowers are a priority for all of us. “We must hold the railroads accountable,” said Hynes. “Workers must be able to report safety violations without fear of losing their jobs.”

National Mediation Board backs SMART-TD in agreement with Alabama & Gulf Coast Railway

SMART-TD Local 584, Meridian Miss. ratified a new five-year agreement with the Alabama & Gulf Coast Railway, a subsidiary of the Genesee & Wyoming, which spans 292 miles from Pensacola, Fla., to Columbus, Miss. The contract resolves long-standing wage issues for their 50 train and engine (T&E) members.

Negotiated by General Chairperson **Adren Crawford** and SMART-TD Vice President **Jamie Modesitt**, the agreement provides a 16.4% raise in pay in the first year, with further increases each year, which compounds to 33.57% over the five-year agreement.

Railroad appeal backfires

When Crawford submitted his proposal, the railroad immediately appealed to the National Mediation Board (NMB). However, the NMB eventually ruled in our favor.

Granting the largest increase in the first year of the agreement maximizes income growth, as it compounds over the length of the agreement. This win helps our brothers and sisters in the A&GC catch up on past wage increases that have fallen short.

“I’ve worked at this railroad for over 20 years, and I’ve watched our pay not keep up with the cost of living or what the Class I guys are making. I’m proud of my members who stuck together on this, didn’t settle and stuck with me and Adren (GC Crawford), and got a fair contract we can be proud of.

“Our members work hard to support families like every other railroader. It was good to know Adren, and Vice President Modesitt see that,

and it was important to them to listen to and fight for my guys,” **Allan Gilliam**, local chairperson of Local 584, explained.

General Chairperson Crawford expressed gratitude to the members he represents for remaining united. “I want to thank our Local 584 members for their patience and solidarity throughout this lengthy negotiation. They waited a long time for this agreement, and their ability to speak with one voice was the key to the historic success we achieved. This contract should serve as an example to other Genesee and Wyoming crew bases of the value of being organized and members of SMART-TD – the largest labor organization in the American rail industry.”

SMART-TD members train to win tough negotiations

The Alabama & Gulf Coast Railway is owned and operated by the Genesee & Wyoming Railroad. G&W owns over a hundred short lines in multiple countries. Not all G&W properties have unions to defend their workers’ interests.

SMART-TD continues to advocate for fair wages and working conditions on railroads of all sizes. This new contract highlights the importance of collective bargaining for workers in all short lines, especially for those who work for G&W-run companies. This clear-cut win for the dedicated men and women of the Alabama & Gulf Coast Railway also provides an example of the strength of SMART-TD negotiated agreements.

Local 622 shows up for vets returning home



Activities at Dovetail Landing’s fall festival, which honors our returning veterans. Dovetail Landing is supported by Stephen Henderson, a SMART-TD Local 622 member and retired Sergeant of the United States Marine Corps.

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – Local 622 took part in the first Dovetail Landing Rockin’ For Recovery Fall Festival on October 12, 2024.

Alana Centilli, President of Dovetail Landing, has channeled her personal loss into the driving force behind the organization’s work. Dovetail is a subsidiary of Alabama Veterans, which formed after the passing of Alana Centilli’s son, Lance Corporal Daniel Centilli.

Her commitment to honoring her son’s legacy has been crucial in shaping the services and outreach programs Dovetail Landing offers, helping veterans heal and rebuild their lives.

Dovetail is dedicated to providing veterans and their families with a peaceful, healthy environment where they can rehabilitate, acclimate and reintegrate into society, with a focus on addressing the health crisis faced by many returning veterans.

Marine Corps Veteran Sergeant **Stephen Henderson**, is a member of Local 622 and an active volunteer on the Dovetail Brigade, lending his time and expertise to support their mission.

Dovetail Landing offers a wide range of services, including workforce and reintegration training, post-secondary education assistance, patient rehabilitation and wellness care.



Amtrak’s deadly cost-cutting measures: A conductor’s story

Brother **Robert Cleverly**, a 28-year Amtrak veteran Conductor from Local 117 in Shelby, Mont., recently faced a harrowing experience that underscores the dangers of Amtrak’s cost-cutting measures.

While working on a train without an assistant conductor (AC), a position that has been increasingly undervalued by Amtrak, his train was struck by a vehicle, leaving multiple teenagers critically injured.

Left alone in a crisis

This tragic incident left Brother Cleverly alone, grappling with a horrific situation. He bravely performed life-saving measures on one passenger, but tragically couldn’t save others.

He witnessed a young life end in his arms, a trauma no worker should have to endure. The lack of an AC meant that Cleverly, the only one with CPR training, was solely responsible for attempting to save multiple lives.

Short staffing is a widespread and dangerous trend

While Brother Cleverly received extra pay for working without an AC that day, he stated, “The extra pay for being short-staffed didn’t come close to making up for what I went through.” When something goes wrong, having one less person on board can turn a minor incident into a major crisis.

His experience is not an isolated incident. Amtrak conductors are routinely asked to work without an AC, leaving them with inadequate support and placing an unfair burden on their shoulders. This short staffing has become a widespread problem, jeopardizing the safety of both workers and passengers.

Veterans are also provided job training tailored to the needs of affiliated employers, along with both short-and long-term care options.

Specialized holistic therapy is available for veterans and their families, with a focus on PTSD and traumatic brain injuries.

Dovetail Landing also provides temporary residential housing for single veterans and veteran families, creating a supportive environment for their transition into civilian life.

In addition to its therapeutic services, Dovetail Landing features an agricultural harvest and re-training area, along with a variety of outdoor

From full staff to a skeleton crew

Over the years, Amtrak has systematically reduced its train crews to a fraction of what they once were. In the past, long-haul passenger trains boasted a conductor, two ACs, dedicated attendants for each sleeper car, and a full dining car staff. Today, those same routes operate with a skeleton crew with just one conductor, one AC and an engineer. If there is not an AC available to take the call to work, the train runs with just one conductor and one engineer. The cuts mirror the “Precision Scheduled Railroading” changes that have plagued our freight rail brothers and sisters since 2017.

Amtrak executive bonuses are an embarrassment

Amtrak’s focus on “dollars and cents,” rather than “morals and sense,” is evident in its persistent under-staffing and general disregard for its employees.

The company’s top brass has been receiving substantial bonuses while our members are asked to do more with less. This blatant disregard for the safety and welfare of our men and women is unacceptable.

The time for change is now!

SMART-TD is calling on Amtrak to prioritize the safety of its workers and passengers:

- Return to consistent and reasonable staffing levels. No AC, no train!
- Honor existing agreements.
- End the use of hiring freezes as a budget-saving measure.

It’s time for Amtrak to stop treating staff as a line item that can be manipulated in its budget. Our lives are at stake.

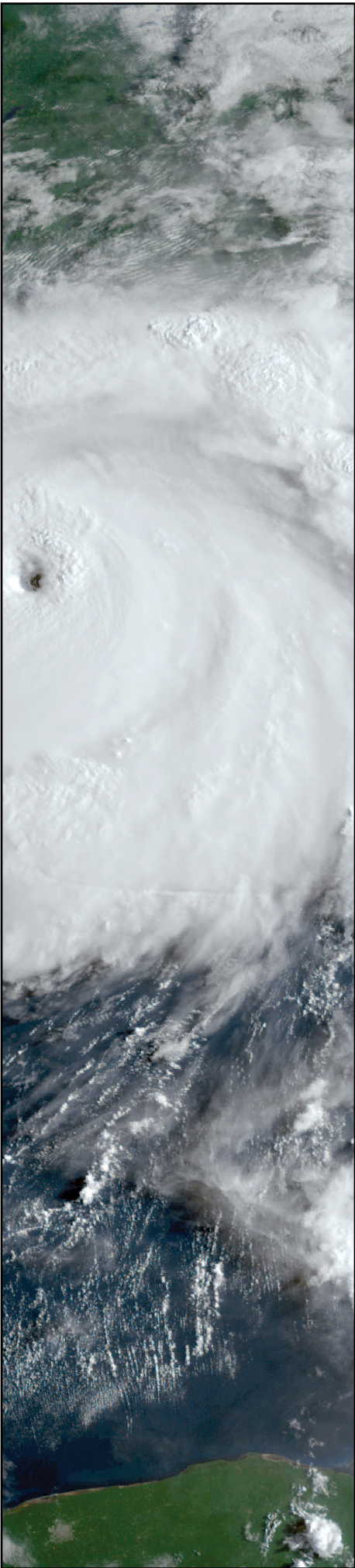
We demand that Amtrak reallocate its resources to hire more staff and support the people who make the railroad function. Our members and the passengers we serve deserve better.

recreational activities. These include bike trails, rock climbing, yoga, kayaking, fishing, ropes courses and aquatic recreation, all aimed at promoting physical and mental health.

The Fall Festival brought the community together to show support for local veterans and raise awareness of the valuable resources Dovetail Landing offers.

The day was filled with activities and connection, highlighting the work being done for veterans in the area.

The union would like to thank Brother Henderson for his work with Dovetail, and for inviting SMART-TD to contribute to this important mission.



Tennessee solidarity delivers, come rain (or hurricane) or shine



Union brothers Jason Caldwell and Josh Puckett pose with generators they purchased for members afflicted by hurricane Helene using the SMART-TD disaster relief fund.

ERWIN, Tenn. — Members of SMART-TD Local 1162 put the concept of solidarity into action as their community grappled with the devastating flooding caused by Hurricane Helene.

As the water recedes, community felt forgotten

Located in the northeastern corner of Tennessee, Erwin is a town that isn't used to extreme flooding. With so many other areas throughout the south-east located directly in Helene's path, the bulk of outside aid was focused elsewhere. This left the community feeling forgotten and overlooked. Brother **Jason Caldwell**, local chairperson of SMART-TD's Local 1162,

refused to let that happen. "Jason wasn't going to sit back and wait," said **Adren Crawford**, SMART-TD's Tennessee state safety and legislative director (SLD). "**Brother Caldwell knew our members needed support, and he was determined to make sure that we took care of every one of our own.**" "I felt that if we could help our brothers so they didn't have to worry about their families, they could go out to help others in the community," said Caldwell.

Stepping up to support Local 1162 members in need

Brother Caldwell's first priority was to ensure that all members of Local 1162 were safe and sound. With the help of **Josh Puckett**, president of SMART-TD's Local 1162, he reached out to every member and assessed who had weathered the storm without significant damage and who needed immediate assistance. "I'm so thankful for Josh's help, and I couldn't have done it without the help of my good friend and union brother," Caldwell noted. "I was very impressed with how Jason handled such a stressful situation," Crawford emphasized. "He took care of business and brought a sense of stability and calm to his members during a catastrophic event while addressing their most urgent needs." Alarmingly, 10 members reported losing power, with utility companies estimating restoration times of six to eight weeks. Determined to help make this right, Caldwell reached out to SLD

Crawford. Together, they worked out a plan to purchase large-scale generators for those without power. Crawford communicated with SMART-TD President **Jeremy Ferguson**, who immediately authorized the use of the union's disaster relief fund. "We knew we had to act quickly," Crawford remarked. "The support from our international union was crucial in getting this plan off the ground."

Challenges didn't stop Brothers Caldwell and Puckett from delivering much-needed aid

With roads washed out and hazardous conditions throughout the region, Brothers Caldwell and Puckett now faced the daunting task of finding the generators amid widespread demand. They were eventually able to find a supplier and enlisted the help of local members who were less affected. Together, they formed a team equipped with trucks, ATV's, and a whole lot of urgency to deliver the generators to their brothers in need. Their tireless efforts not only provided much-needed relief but also demonstrated the unwavering camaraderie that defines the SMART-TD union.

A proud moment for Local 1162 and SMART-TD

"What Jason pulled off following this storm is what being part of a union is all about," Crawford expressed. "We look out for one another. I'm proud of Brother Caldwell, Local 1162, and I'm grateful for the support from every one of the members involved."



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Railroad retirement and medicare tax tiers increase in 2025, tax rates hold steady

The amounts of compensation subject to Railroad Retirement Tier I and Tier II payroll taxes will increase in 2025, while the tax rates on employers and employees will stay the same. In addition, unemployment insurance contribution rates paid by railroad employers will not include a surcharge, as continued improvements in the rail economy and reduced usage of unemployment and sickness benefits will result in an employer credit.

Tier I and Medicare Tax

The Railroad Retirement Tier I payroll tax rate on covered rail employers and employees for 2025 remains at 7.65%. 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

earnings subject to the 6.20 percent rate will increase from \$168,600 in 2024 to \$176,100 in 2025, with 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 rates in 2025 will remain at 4.9% for employees and 13.1% for employers. The maximum amount of earnings subject to railroad retirement Tier II taxes in 2025 will increase from

\$125,100 to \$130,800. 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 0% and 4.9%, while the Tier II rate for employers can range between 8.2% and 22.1%.

Unemployment 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 or credit based on the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Account balance measured against various threshold amounts. The accrual balance of the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Account was approximately \$454.8 million on June 30, 2024, up from \$363.1 million a year earlier on June 30, 2023. Based on this balance,

existing employers, other than those paying the minimum rate, will receive a pooled credit of up to 0.83% applied to their contribution rate – the first time this has happened since 1994. No rates will be reduced below the minimum of 0.65%. Surcharges apply if the account balance is at or below \$100 million, indexed to \$166.6 million as of June 30, 2024. There was no surcharge in 2024, and a 1.5 percent surcharge in 2023. Unemployment insurance contribution rates on railroad employers in 2025 will range from a minimum rate of 0.65% to a maximum of 12% on monthly compensation up to \$2,065, an increase from \$1,985 in 2024. In 2025, the minimum rate of 0.65% will apply to 91% of covered employers, with 3% paying the maximum rate of 12%. New employers will pay an unemployment insurance contribution rate of 6.45%, which represents the average rate paid by all employers in the period 2021-2023.

SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
SMART DISCIPLINE INCOME PROTECTION PROGRAM

This is a summary of the annual report for the SMART DISCIPLINE INCOME PROTECTION PROGRAM, EIN: 34-1031303, for the period January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023. The annual report has been filed with the Employee Benefits Security Administration, as required under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The value of plan assets, after subtracting liabilities of the plan, was \$21,183,948 as of December 31, 2023 compared to \$17,371,816 as of January 1, 2023. During the plan year, the plan experienced an increase in its net assets of \$3,812,132. This increase includes unrealized appreciation and depreciation in the value of plan assets at the beginning of the year of the cost of assets acquired during the year. During the plan year, the plan had total income of \$8,599,679, including participant contributions of \$6,979,692 and gain on investments of 1,619,987. Plan expenses were \$4,787,547. These expenses included \$334,897 in administrative expenses and \$4,452,650 in benefits paid to participants and beneficiaries.

YOUR RIGHTS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

You have the right to receive a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof, on request. The items listed below are included in that report:

- 1. An accountant's report;
- 2. Financial information and information on payments to service providers, and
- 3. Assets held for investment

To obtain a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof, write or call the Discipline Income Protection Program, SMART Transportation Division, 6060 Rockside Woods Blvd N, Suite 325, Independence, OH 44131; telephone (216) 228-9400. The charge to cover copying costs will be \$13.00 for the full annual report or \$0.50 per page for any part thereof.

You also have the right to receive, on request and at no charge, a statement of the assets and liabilities of the plan and accompanying notes, or a statement of income and expenses of the plan and accompanying notes, or both. If you request a copy of the full annual report, these two statements and accompanying notes will be included as part of that report. These charges to cover the copying costs shown above does not include a charge for the copying of these portions of the report because these portions are furnished without charge.

You also have the legally protected right to examine the annual report at the main office of the plan, SMART Transportation Division, 6060 Rockside Woods Blvd N, Suite 325, Independence, OH 44131, and at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C., or to obtain a copy from the U.S. Department of Labor upon payment of copying costs. Requests to the Department should be addressed to: U.S. Department of Labor, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Public Disclosure Room, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Suite N-1513, Washington, DC 20210.

SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
SMART TD STAFF RETIREE HEALTH FUND

This is a summary of the annual report for the SMART TD STAFF RETIREE HEALTH FUND, EIN: 34-1031303, for the period January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023. The annual report has been filed with the Employee Benefits Security Administration, as required under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The value of plan assets, after subtracting liabilities of the plan, was \$5,462,325 as of December 31, 2023 compared to \$4,580,119 as of January 1, 2023. During the plan year, the plan experienced an increase in its net assets of \$882,206. This increase includes unrealized appreciation and depreciation in the value of plan assets at the beginning of the year of the cost of assets acquired during the year. During the plan year, the plan had a total income of \$2,518,040 including contributions of \$2,233,395 and gain on investments of 284,645. Plan expenses were \$1,635,834. These expenses included \$36,649 in administrative expenses and \$1,599,185 in benefits paid.

YOUR RIGHTS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

You have the right to receive a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof, on request. The items listed below are included in that report:

- 1. Governing documents including insurance contracts and collective bargaining agreements
- 2. Annual report and Financials
- 3. Summary Plan Description

To obtain a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof, write or call the office of the Plan Sponsor:

SMART
Plan Sponsor
1750 New York Avenue, 6th Floor
Washington, DC 20006
34-1031303 (Employer Identification Number) 216-228-9400

The fund office may make a reasonable charge for copies of the annual report.

You also have the legally protected right to examine the annual report at the main office of the plan at

SMART
1750 New York Avenue, 6th Floor
Washington, DC 20006

and at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C., or to obtain a copy from the U.S. Department of Labor upon payment of copying costs. Requests to the Department should be addressed to: U.S. Department of Labor, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Public Disclosure Room, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Suite N-1513, Washington, D.C. 20210.



Useful news and information for our retirees
and members of the TD Alumni Association

Lantern donation honors railroad
family's past, present and future

For 24 years, Joyce Mendoza has called South Portland, Maine, home. She lives just a mile from Rigby Yard in a neighborhood first established in 1923 to accommodate CSX subsidiary Pan Am's workers.

John McMillen (Mendoza's Father) worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad during the 1940s and early 1950s. Mendoza fondly remembers her father's stories of his demanding work, including a harrowing experience of nearly sleepwalking off a moving train due to sheer exhaustion. His stories also included lighter moments, such as learning to appreciate huevos rancheros and other foods that were introduced to him by railroad workers with different backgrounds.

Today, Joyce champions railroad safety through her involvement with the SMART-TD Railroad Union in Maine/New Hampshire

In a gesture of gratitude and honor, Mendoza donated her father's railroad lantern to our union's collection of historical artifacts. The lantern is on display in SMART-TD's headquarters in Independence, Ohio. This lantern symbolizes the hard work and commitment of railroad workers like John McMillen, and will serve as a cherished reminder of the sacrifices and dedication of past and present railroad workers.

We extend our sincerest thanks to Mendoza for her contribution and for her unwavering support of our union's mission to improve the safety and well-being of our members and the communities in which we serve.



Joyce Mendoza poses with her father's lantern outside her home in South Portland, Maine.

Retirees: Sign up as a new member of
the Alumni Association and receive a
pair of vintage UTU cufflinks!



Offer valid while supplies last. Cufflinks available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Are you getting close to retirement?
You can get the TD News and other benefits for \$12/year!
Call (216) 228-9400, email arayner@smart-union.org or visit
smart-union.org/resources/transportation-alumni/

IN MEMORIAM

Local 823 member killed in on-duty collision



December 18, 2024 – It is with deep sadness that we announce the tragic passing of SMART-TD member and Union Pacific Conductor **Phillip Araujo**. He and his engineer, Clay Burt, lost their lives in the line of duty when their train collided with a tractor-trailer in Pecos City, Texas.

Brother Araujo was a dedicated member of Local 823. Over the course of his career, Phillip earned the respect and admiration of his colleagues for his unwavering commitment to his work and his family.

His sacrifice and strong work ethic were evident in the way he managed the demands of his profession.

Living roughly 230 miles from the Sweetwater, Texas, yard office, Phillip would commute several hours to work, never complaining about the challenges of the railroad’s unpredictable on-call lifestyle or how it was compounded by his extraordinary driving time.

When his name neared the top of the board, he would get in his car and head to the yard office taking his call sometime during the drive.

If his calculation was off and he arrived before his on-duty time, Araujo would simply sleep in his car or handle the administrative duties of being a conductor with a smile on his face.

He knew why it was all worth it to him. Providing a good life for his wife and his three children was worth whatever the railroad lifestyle required of him. They were his clear priority, something his coworkers in Sweetwater not only noticed but admired.

In this spirit, Brother Ryan Monts of BLET Division 212, started a GoFundMe account to support both the families of Phillip Araujo and Clay Burt.

We ask all those who are able to consider giving what they can to help these two railroad families with final expenses in their time of need.

Brother Araujo’s loss leaves a profound void in the hearts of his family, friends, and coworkers.

He will be deeply missed by his family, friends, coworkers.



Araujo and Burt’s GoFundMe

Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Maria, and their children Abby, Andrea, and Fabian, the entire Local 823 family, and all who had the honor of knowing him.

Cancer claims local chairperson at Local 1518



December 4, 2024 – It is with heavy hearts that SMART-TD announces the passing of Brother **Steve Bryant**, a beloved friend, co-worker, and union brother, who passed away on December 4, 2024. Steve, local chairperson of Local 1518, Indianapolis, Ind., fought cancer with the same veracity he fought for his union brothers and sisters. Brother Bryant touched many lives throughout the union, and was known for his strength, compassion and resilience by all who knew him.

Bryant always put others before himself. As the local chairperson and secretary of Local 1518, he dedicated countless hours to serving his fellow union members. His unwavering commitment to his colleagues and the labor movement made a lasting impact, and his leadership was marked by tremendous success in helping others navigate complex issues at work.

Outside of his union duties, Bryant was a constant support to those around him, especially those struggling with addiction. He provided guidance and compassion to anyone who needed it, showing a deep understanding of the challenges faced by others. His ability to empathize and provide a helping hand made him a source of strength for many.

Bryant is survived by his wife, Kristi Bryant. He took immense pride in serving his household, and he cherished every moment spent with his loved ones. Brother Bryant will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

As those who worked with Brother Bryant know well, he loved going to concerts. His advice to all that would listen was, “Life is short, buy the tickets!” It wasn’t just a catchphrase; it was the way Brother Bryant lived his life — he didn’t cheat himself out of living. We should all be a little more like Brother Bryant. Give of our time and talents to one another in the name of this brotherhood and always remember that life is indeed short. Buy the tickets!

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to a charity of your choice that supports cancer research or addiction recovery, causes that were close to Bryant’s heart. If you wish to help his wife Kristi with his medical bills and the cost of his final expenses, please consider contributing to the GoFundMe page set up in Brother Bryant’s honor.

Donations of any amount are welcome and will be a fitting tribute to a man who gave so much of himself for the members of this union. SMART-TD asks our members to include their local number along with their name, so that Kristi and the Bryant family can see the incredible impact Bryant’s career had on the lives of members across the country.



Brother Bryant’s GoFundMe

THE FINAL CALL

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

Local	Name	City/State	Local	Name	City/State
1	Andrews, Donald C.	Lancaster, N.Y.	756	Wied, Steve R.	San Antonio, Texas
2	Pelleteri III, Robert J.	Toledo, Ohio	771	Proa Jr., Alberto G.	Needles, Calif.
5	Debus, Lori A.	Bonner Springs, Kan.	783	Cooper, Steven D.	Salisbury, N.C.
5	Fitch, Robbie D.	Galena, Kan.	783	Hudgins, Jesse R.	Spencer, N.C.
5	Kalm Sr, Raymond H.	Stilwell, Kan.	823	Araujo, Phillip B.	Sweetwater, Texas
9	Freeman, Daniel S.	Lubbock, Texas	891	Barker Jr., Robert L.	Whitefish, Mont.
48	Hall Sr., Frank S.	Portsmouth, Va.	904	Holmes, Alexander W.	Newburgh, Ind.
60	Lazur, George J.	Sewell, N.J.	911	Huggins, William J.	Cedar, Minn.
60	Leggin, John S.	Moosic, Pa.	934	Barkhuizen, Johan G.	Alliance, Neb.
61	Bogans, James C.	Philadelphia, Pa.	980	Anderson, Alexander R.	West Fargo, N.D.
84	Fernandez Jr., Anthony R.	San Bernardino, Calif.	1007	Stadelmann Jr., Francis O.	Chittenango, N.Y.
118	Vaughn, Billy G.	Prince, W. Va.	1059	Laudenschlager, Wayne L.	Minot, N.D.
195	Lester, Daniel B.	Galesburg, Ill.	1183	Langolf, Kirk Victor	Croswell, Mich.
239	Johnson, Ronald R.	Sonoma, Calif.	1188	Finley, Jerry L.	Oklahoma City, Okla.
240	Evans, Gilbert L.	Sylmar, Calif.	1190	Hein II, Thomas D.	Edgewood, Ky.
243	Cash, Keith D.	Rainbow, Texas	1221	Mercer, John M.	Dade City, Fla.
265	Hoyer, Richard E.	Twin Falls, Idaho	1263	Sauls, Jennifer	Valdosta, Ga.
311	Adams Jr., James W.	West Salem, Wis.	1313	Smith, Stephen B.	Amarillo, Texas
313	Sharum, Thomas C.	Rockford, Mich.	1315	Browning, Glen C.	Covington, Ky.
333	Cook Sr., David E.	Cincinnati, Ohio	1315	Dalton, Paul L.	Falmouth, Ky.
471	Fitzgerald, Ray M.	Creswell, Ore.	1315	Gregory, Ralph G.	Corbin, Ky.
495	Zager, Michael A.	Great Bend, Kan.	1337	Johnson, Brandon J.	Geismar, La.
496	Bates, Joshua A.	South Shore, Ky.	1370	Lang Jr., Otis	Elizabeth, N.J.
528	Raysby, Austin S.	Park Ridge, Ill.	1386	Kinsel, Charles M.	Lexington, Ky.
584	James, Charles A.	Meridian, Miss.	1473	Maffie, Robert	Framingham, Mass.
587	Deming, Randy L.	Hinsdale, N.H.	1518	Bryant, Steven T.	Indianapolis, Ind.
587	Kari, A. Peter	Turners Falls, Mass.	1544	Edwards, Gerald B.	Harbor City, Calif.
587	Scappace Jr, Joseph C.	Greenfield, Mass.	1570	Anderson, Michael N.	Roseville, Calif.
587	Slocum, Michael H.	Swanzy, N.H.	1589	Destine, Jean P.	Linden, N.J.
597	Larkin Sr, John E.	Addison, Ill.	1589	Hanrahan Jr., Ernest J.	North Brunswick, N.J.
601	Charlikowsky, Joseph	Canton, Ohio	1589	Otero, Edwin	Somerset, N.J.
650	Prindle, James	Mason City, Iowa	1605	Johnson, Daviance D.	Inglewood, Calif.
653	Cade, Kimberly C.	Alsip, Ill.	1741	Reid-Turner, Shirley A.	San Francisco, Calif.
694	Garrigus Jr., James C.	Dunsmuir, Calif.	1869	Henson, Charles E.	Williamson, W. Va.
694	Peacock, Neil	Klamath Falls, Ore.	1910	Berkner, Jerry F.	Byron, Ga.
750	Edmondson, Jackie E.	Knoxville, Tenn.	1929	Edwards, Joseph M.	Smithton, Ill.
750	McMillan, Terry W.	Strawberry Plains, Tenn.	1973	Delcour, Billy J.	Hoffman, Ill.

FEATURED PHOTO SHOWCASE



Lusk, Wyo. – KCS 4097 is leading a CJKBT empty coal train northeast to Black Thunder Mine in the Powder River Basin. This photo was taken by renowned photographer and UP engineer Alan “AJ” Nash of Local 257 (Morrill, Neb.).

Local presidents provide important oversight

Part of a local union president’s job is to make sure their members’ dues are handled correctly. While the secretary and treasurer help with day-to-day financial tasks, the final responsibility for overseeing the funds falls on the local president. This is an important job because it helps keep the union honest, trustworthy, and financially secure.

The money members pay in dues fuels the union. It is used to support everything from local operations to member representation.

The Local President keeps a close watch over the union’s bank accounts and reviews the local’s financial transactions every month. They help catch any problems early and ensure transparency for their members.

Each month, every local president will carefully check the bank statements and transaction records. Here’s a checklist of things they watch for:

- View images of cashed checks to verify that only the local treasurer and president signed each one. They are the only officers allowed to sign checks.
- Compare activity between accounts to make sure any money moved from savings or investment accounts matches deposits into the checking account. This shows that all funds are correctly allocated and accounted for.
- Confirm that all dues and other deposits have been deposited into the checking account. If no deposit was made they will ask the treasurer for an explanation, then share it at the next local meeting.
- Review every payment made by the union and make sure the purpose and amounts are clearly understood.
- Watch for electronic transactions. The local can make electronic payments to the IRS or state tax authorities but all other electronic payments are forbidden.
- If officers (like the treasurer) are getting paid, the president will verify that all taxes are being paid regularly to the IRS.
- Account for any cash handling. The treasurer should never handle cash, and there should be no cash deposits or withdrawals. The local president will never sign a check made out to “cash.”

- Watch for new debit or credit card transactions. Debit and credit cards are against the rules. If the bank sends a card, the president will verify that it has been destroyed. Debit card charges on the bank statement is a sign that something is wrong.
- Work with the treasurer to make sure the annual financial report for the local is submitted by the March 31st deadline. This report helps tracks the local’s finances and ensures everything is accurate.

If any officer uncovers something suspicious or unusual while reviewing the financial records, speak up! Contact the Local Support Department for advice. The team is available during business hours at 216-227-5444, or after hours at 216-227-5280.

Local presidents play an important role by protecting the Union’s funds. By regularly reviewing financial records and making sure everything is in order, they help maintain transparency and trust within the Union.

Following these guidelines ensures that the Union’s money is spent responsibly, which keeps the organization strong and our officers accountable.



Member Portal

Learn more about what it takes to be a local president, discover how your union operates, or explore the duties and responsibilities of other elected union officers at SMART University. Union members may access “Membership 101” through the member portal at smart-union.org.

Show us what you’ve got!

SMART-TD is always on the lookout for great photographs of work-related scenes. **If you see a beautiful moment on the rails, on the road, out the window or back at the shop consider sharing it with your union brothers and sisters!**

Printed photographs should be mailed to at SMART-TD, 6060 Rockside Woods Blvd. N, Suite 325, Independence OH 44131.

High resolution digital photos should be in JPG format at the largest, highest quality setting available to you. Email them to news_td@smart-union.org. We prefer horizontal compositions.

Tell us about your photos — each submission should include your name, SMART-TD local, when and where the photo was taken, along with the names of any people in the picture. Please list names as they appear in the photograph, left to right.

All photographs submitted become the property of SMART, which allows us to publish them in the newspaper, social media and other future projects.

Remember to review your employer’s policies regarding the use of cameras and other electronics on property or during work hours.