

# 2025 National Agreement Freight Negotiations Update from President Ferguson

*The following is an update directly from President **Jeremy Ferguson** for SMART-TD freight carrier members, specifically those who are currently under “national handling” for the 2025 bargaining round.*

This round got off to a good start on the earliest schedule ever, with tentative agreements reached before the opening period required under the Railway Labor Act.

Currently, most of rail labor has already ratified what is now a “pattern agreement,” including the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMWE), which is the second-largest rail union membership-wise.

This was a historic tentative agreement (TA) that had been proposed to some of our membership already, but unfortunately it was turned down during the ratification process last year.

It's a significant TA, because it provides the largest **front-loaded** pay increase schedule, totaling a compounded 18.78 percent pay increase, with additional increases in vacation benefits for members with less than 25 years of service, increases in H&W benefits and improved vision/dental benefits, **without third party intervention**.

By July 1, 2029, the foreman rate of pay will increase \$61.40 per day and the conductor basic daily rate of pay will increase \$55.28 (under the record 22% of PEB 250 our foreman saw a \$63.36 per day increase and our conductors saw a \$56.53 basic day increase).

“Front loaded” means that the larger pay increases come in at the beginning of the contract rather than at the end of it, which strengthens the compounding effect of each subsequent

wage increase. Historically, our largest wage increases have been towards the end of our moratoriums.

“Without third party intervention” means that never has a union accomplished this much without givebacks and without a mediator, arbitrator or Presidential Emergency Board being involved in the process.

At the time of publication, President Ferguson and the full SMART-TD negotiating team planned to meet with the NCCC in Cleveland on Tuesday, July 22, to continue the negotiations, except for where we have already ratified agreements.

It's unfortunate that we were still at the table negotiating in July, instead of celebrating the first of the five pay increases going into effect July 1, but the circumstances are understandable due to the large misinformation campaign that was waged on social media and on the cabs of our locomotives by another union.

Furthermore, it's important that our younger (newer) members understand what a moratorium is and how that can protect them. **The sooner we get this round of negotiations completed, the sooner a moratorium will be in place to secure their futures for another five years! This is huge, in the event technology rears its ugly head and God forbid, the government sees no issue with its implementation thereof.**

**What about our Crew Consist Agreement that mandates conductors on all trains?**

Since there are no work rule changes to this effect, we will have another

five-year period where no changes can even be proposed under Section 6 of the RLA once we ratify these agreements.

**This is huge!**

We have obtained a two-person crew (2-PC) regulation from the FRA, but we are still very concerned about what the Supreme Court has done with its recent Chevron decision which could compromise our regulation.

We are still fighting for Congress to pass the latest Rail Safety bill, which would make 2-PC the law of the land. While we pursue this critical legislation, we still need to take every other possible measure to secure our futures one step at a time. Ratifying this agreement does this.

**Members have asked: what are we giving up?**

**The answer: NOTHING!**

There are no work rule changes in this proposal. This is a win-win for rail labor, hence the reason that nine other rail unions have already ratified the same pattern agreement, including our brothers and sisters in the SMART Sheet Metal Rail Department. Our SMART-TD yardmasters on CSX have now ratified this pattern, along with our BNSF yardmasters, but in a more modified version.

My office will provide another update following our July 22 meeting with the NCCC. All members are encouraged to keep staying engaged and standing united as we move forward in this crucial process.

## DENVER TRAINING SETS NEW ATTENDANCE RECORD



Over 300 SMART-TD members met in Denver, Colo. this June to hone their skills at the union's latest Regional Training Seminar (RTS). The largest event to date, their participation underscores the union's commitment to creating tomorrow's labor leaders.

Since the inception of the RTS in 2022, our officers have driven a dramatic increase in the win rate of appeals, as local chairpersons are now better equipped to stand up for their members.

Our local presidents, legislative representatives and secretaries & treasurers report measurable benefits. Reporting has become more timely and accurate, and the volume and quality of legislation SMART-TD drives at the state and local level has increased significantly. These gains stem from one core cause: the power of education.

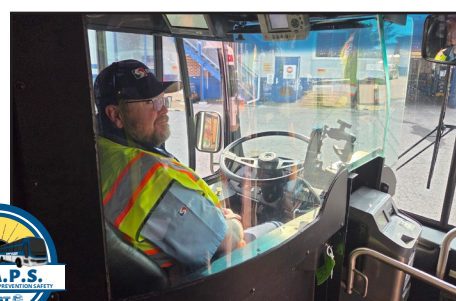
If you haven't attended an RTS, start planning now. Two regional training events remain in 2025. Registration is currently open for our next RTS in Anaheim, Calif., from September 8-11. The last one for the year will be held in Atlanta, Ga., October 27-30.

## Operators inspect new SEPTA barriers



SEPTA bus operators, including SMART-TD Alternate Vice President Bus-East and General Chairperson Anthony Petty, provided real-world feedback about the bulletproof barriers designed to protect operators.

Once the kinks are worked out Petty is hopeful that SEPTA will outfit



the entire SEPTA fleet in 2026.

“I hope every bus company gets this, but it has to start somewhere, and I'm glad it's starting with SMART.”

Petty says that the manufacturer of the barriers, Custom Glass Solutions, was on-site to ensure that all operator concerns were addressed.

## TAKE ACTION

Among many updates, you can now submit a Technology Event Report, Safety Condition Report, Hours of Service Violation Report or Workplace Assault Report directly from the SMART App.

**Update or install it today!**





# GREG HYNES RETIRES: A FEARLESS VISIONARY & RELENTLESS FIGHTER



Actor, punk-rocker and former National Safety and Legislative Director Greg Hynes poses atop the U.S. Capitol building. Hynes reinvented SMART-TD's national legislative agenda.

Brother **Greg Hynes**, SMART-TD's former national safety & legislative director retired on June 30. Under his leadership, the Safety and Legislative Department transformed into one of the most effective engines for labor advocacy in the nation.

"It's one thing to be a railroader and complain about the conditions. It's another thing to stand up and do something about it," Hynes reflected. "That's what I did, and it's been the greatest honor of my life."

Hynes' is a fifth-generation railroader from Winslow, Ariz. He hired out with Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway in Los Angeles in 1995 before transferring to Phoenix in 1997. By 2003, he was elected legislative representative for Local 1081 in Glendale. In 2004 he became Arizona's assistant state legislative director. He became the state director in 2009, a position he held until he was called to serve at the national level.

After chairing the UTU Rail Safety Task Force in 2009, he was elected alternate national legislative director in 2014 and took over as national legislative director in 2019, a role to which he was re-elected in 2024. From the Federal Railroad Administration's RSAC to the SOFA Working Group and the Department of Transportation's Advisory Committee on Human Trafficking, Hynes' influence radiated throughout the national transportation policy landscape.

Hynes made it his mission to ensure that the voices of SMART-TD members, rail and bus alike, were heard and respected in Washington, D.C.

Perhaps no achievement shines brighter than his role in the landmark 2024 federal rule mandating two-person freight crews (2-PC) across the United States. While many claimed credit, those who know the story understand that Hynes was the unstoppable force behind that victory.

He also coordinated the push for paid sick leave for rail workers, a victory realized for 90% of the industry. The 2024 REEF Act, which guarantees equitable treatment for railroaders receiving Railroad Retirement Board benefits may not have passed without him.

Hynes refashioned Railroad Day on the Hill into one of the most powerful lobbying efforts for rail labor, giving members direct access and influence in shaping policy. He also pioneered Bus and Transit Safety Day on the Hill, which immediately bore fruit in the form of stronger assault prevention regulations.

Outside the Capitol, Greg acted in stage productions all across Arizona. Hynes starred in Off-Broadway productions of Steven Sondheim's *Into the Woods* and *Assassins*. He also played Colonel Jessup in *A Few Good Men*, channeling Jack Nicholson with grit and charisma. He was nominated for Best Actor and Best Supporting Actor multiple times, and won awards for Best Production as well as Best Director.

Others may recognize Hynes as *Mr. Wonderful*, a Phoenix punk-rockers who pounded drums, belted out vocals and filled clubs with raw energy. He was a fixture in bands such as Teds, Jodie Foster's Army, the Skeletones, and Mighty Sphinxer. He opened for Social Distortion and The Dead Kennedys, and was cited as an influence by the likes of **Alice Cooper**, **Marilyn Manson**, **White Zombie**, and **GWAR**. This spirit fueled Hynes' relentless advocacy, fearless leadership, and boundless originality.

Consider the October 2024 Board of Directors meeting where a rare dress-code mandate directed officers to wear "sports coats." Hynes arrived wearing a Phoenix Suns windbreaker. "I don't understand the problem," he replied when asked about his choice. "This is a jacket, and basketball is a sport."

As President **Jeremy Ferguson** put it, "Greg Hynes accomplished what few have done in our union's history. He secured landmark legislative victories and set a new standard for rail and transit safety. His work has directly improved the lives of our members and their families for generations to come. Two things are certain. Greg will absolutely be missed around here, and he will never be forgotten in this union or anywhere else he goes."

Congratulations on your retirement, Brother Hynes. You've earned every word of praise and every minute of your retirement, though we suspect you'll never truly slow down.

With deep respect and heartfelt thanks,

Your SMART-TD Family

## 2025 Day on the Hill largest event yet

WASHINGTON, D.C. — For the third consecutive year SMART-TD led a Railroad Day on the Hill. This year's event took place in May, which united 13 rail unions to advocate for rail safety and workers' rights. They held 130 meetings with lawmakers, setting a new record for the event.

The group was led by our former National Safety & Legislative Director **Greg Hynes**, who founded the event.

When labor speaks with one voice and from every angle, Congress listens. The successful passage of the Rail Employee Equity and Fairness (REEF) Act was widely credited to SMART-TD's 2024 Railroad Day on the Hill activities.

This year's event saw more participation than ever before. New unions joined the coalition, including a notable appearance by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET).

"We're in lawmakers' ears every day," Hynes said, referencing the tireless work of Hynes' successor, **Jared Cassity** who now leads SMART-TD's nation-wide legislative team.

"When a local officer or state legislative board member from their own district walks into their office and tells them what's happening back home, it lands differently. It hits harder. And it sticks," Hynes concluded.

## Colorado safety office funding secured

COLORADO — After more than two years of relentless organizing, lobbying and standing firm in the face of corporate push-back, permanent funding has been secured for the Colorado Office of Railroad Safety.

State Legislative Director **Carl Smith** built the coalition, then he and his board pushed it through two full legislative sessions. As Smith himself said on the Senate floor: "This wasn't easy. But railroaders never ask for easy, we demand safe."

"It took a toll on all of us, and there were times when the odds were stacked against us. But Carl is the kind of leader who doesn't flinch. He doesn't

get discouraged by setbacks. He gets results," said **Omar Ledesma**, Colorado's alternate state safety and legislative director.

Now that it has funding, the Colorado Office of Railroad Safety can begin to collect and analyze data about the impact train length, crew size and scheduling have on accident rates—key safety concerns the carriers and the Association of American Railroads (AAR) have consistently claimed there is "no data to support."

SMART-TD will soon have the missing data needed to make a case for better regulation of the railroads.

## Teamwork speeds state lawmaking

ARKANSAS — The ideas for two pieces of SMART-TD backed legislation that passed the Arkansas State Legislature earlier this year weren't born in Little Rock. They were adapted from other states, a process our State Safety and Legislative Directors are using to accelerate key legislation across the country.

House Bill 1757 (Act 528), elevates serious railroad vandalism and assault of transportation workers to a Class D felony, which carries a penalty of up to six years in prison or a fine of up to \$10,000. The bill passed with overwhelming support.

It started with Nebraska Safety & Legislative Director **Andy Foust**.

While it didn't pass in Lincoln, Foust worked with Arkansas Safety & Legislative Director **Gerald Sale** to

give it new life in Arkansas.

"There are quite a few of us that get together and talk legislation," said SLD Foust. "There's a ton of legislation out there that we've been sharing."

Another collaborative bill protects member anonymity. This new Arkansas law redacts crew names from reports on railroad fatalities. It was originally penned by Illinois Safety and Legislative Director **Bob Guy**, who successfully lobbied for a similar bill in his home state. Wisconsin Safety & Legislative Director **Andy Hauk** is preparing to run the same bill in Madison.

"It's what we do, lobbying is networking," Guy pointed out. "You take that a step further and network with our brothers and sisters. If it benefits anybody, it benefits everybody."



Hynes elected NLD at the 2019 SMART-TD Convention



Hynes affecting his punk-rock persona Mr. Wonderful



Hynes makes a case during 2024 Transit Day on the Hill.



Hynes with Bill Clinton during a fundraiser for Jim Pederson.



Hynes at an event with Senator Bernie Sanders



Hynes testing the podium in the White House briefing room.



## New England becomes PAC powerhouse

**NEW ENGLAND** — In one year, 120 members chose to support the TD Political Action Committee (PAC) in the New England region. This support solidifies our union’s status as a powerful force at the Massachusetts Legislature and throughout the region.

This support can be traced to Brother **Dave Stevenson** (Local 0898, Boston) who became SMART-TD’s New England Safety & Legislative Director last May.

“Getting members involved in the TD PAC is big,” Stevenson explained. “The legislative part of our union is kind of the horsepower behind the union.”

Our brothers and sisters are seeing a tangible return on their investment when it comes to issues that impact our members.

“People listen to us,” Stevenson

said. “When I talk to people about the PAC program, I make sure to talk about how we’re one of the few unions that gives to both sides. We’ll give to Democrats. We’ll give to Republicans. I think that kind of resonates, because our members are diverse in their political leanings.

Even more important than the addition of political dollars is how plugged in and active our members in New England are becoming.

“Once the members see you out there doing stuff, going to events, meeting these people, letting them know our issues, staying in front of them, people seem to be very receptive,” Stevenson added. “It’s going directly towards contracts, towards rail safety, towards two-person crew (2-PC).” Ultimately, Stevenson knows that his team’s actions speak louder than their words.

## Keolis employees deserve full justice

**MASSACHUSETTS** — On May 29 two Boston men got into an onboard argument about evading their MBTA train fare. After being removed from the train, the two suspects allegedly assaulted the conductor and pressed a 9mm handgun to his chest. Both suspects were apprehended.

The conductor, a member of SMART-TD Local 898, was not protected by current transit assault laws, which call for increased penalties for this type of assault.

Existing assault statutes only apply to public employees. This leaves contracted commuter rail workers, like those at Keolis Commuter Services, unprotected. SMART-TD called on Massachusetts lawmakers to address this critical oversight in their current

state law. “This is yet another alarming example of the threats our commuter rail crews face far too often,” said **Cole Czub**, local chairperson of SMART-TD Local 898 and vice chairperson of SMART-TD’s Bus and Transit Assault Prevention and Safety (BTAPS) Committee. “It reflects a larger safety crisis facing front-line transit workers. This is exactly why we’re advocating for House Bill 1877.”

The bill would ensure that contracted transit employees, such as Keolis conductors, engineers and onboard crews, are granted the same legal protections against assault as their public-agency counterparts.

The legislation is currently awaiting further action from lawmakers.

## Testimony leads to new assault law

**MARYLAND** — A new bill designed to protect bus and passenger rail workers from violent assaults has officially passed both chambers of the state legislature and is now headed to the governor’s desk for his signature.

The bill was championed by SMART-TD Maryland State Safety and Legislative Director **David Pendleton**, who took office in September 2024. This is his first legislative victory.

The new law will create a labor-led workgroup, a passenger code of conduct, enforce dangerous passenger bans and more

“It’s a green light for unions and workers to take ownership of solving the transit violence problem in Maryland,” Pendleton said. “Through the efforts of our Legislative Board, especially Assistant Director **Tom Cahill**, through a strong partnership with the Amalgamated Transit Union as well as AFSCME, and with our

friends in the Legislature, Delegate **Jackie Addison** (Dist.-45) and Senator **Shaneeeka Henson** (Dist.- 30) who led from the front on transit safety, we got this done.”

The bill passed due to SMART members’ testimony about abuse they suffered while on the job.

“It’s not easy to step into the state house and handle the pressure but they did, and it made all the difference for this bill,” Pendleton said.

Brother Pendleton also credits his predecessor, **Larry Kasecamp**.

“Many legislators might not have known my name, but they sure as hell knew what SMART-TD was and what we stand for,” Pendleton said. “That’s all because of Larry’s passionate advocacy over his 30-plus-year career. This bill is part of his legacy in Maryland.”

The workgroup began in June, with new policies going into effect by October 1, 2025.

## GRANTS BECOME RAIL SAFETY CAMPAIGNS

### THANKS TO OPERATION LIFESAVER



Operation Lifesaver (OLI) has announced \$219,155 in grants to fund rail safety awareness campaigns in 11 states. OLI understands the multifaceted nature of rail safety — with every tragedy averted, a railroader is spared from trauma and a family is spared from pain.

Their state-level campaigns will address everything from pedestrian and driver education to youth awareness and professional driver outreach. Preventing accidents also prevents trauma for the train crews who are forced to witness them. The grants were provided by the Federal Railroad

Administration (FRA) and the Posner Foundation of Pittsburgh.

New York will address the alarming rise in train surfing by teens with video-driven outreach.

Texas and Florida will focus on educating professional drivers and targeting high-risk locations using geofencing and data-driven outreach.

Minnesota will ensure that immigrant and multilingual communities gain access to crucial safety messages.

South Carolina and Indiana will focus on high-collision areas through digital, on-the-ground, and event-based campaigns.

These projects join others in Illinois, Missouri, Tennessee, Washington, and California.

Help spread awareness of their See Tracks? Think Train!® Week (September 15–21, 2025). Learn more at: [oli.org](https://oli.org).

## SMART, FRA TEAM UP AT 2-PC HEARING

**MIAMI** — The Association of American Railroads (AAR), the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRRA), and several carriers are challenging the Federal Railroad Administration’s (FRA) final rule requiring a minimum of two crew members on freight trains (2-PC). This legal attack threatens a critical safety measure long championed by SMART-TD and its members.

In the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in Miami, Fla., SMART-TD stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the FRA, defending the 2-PC rule.

Your voices were heard in that courtroom.

As the following abridged transcript demonstrates, SMART-TD’s Associate General Counsel **Shawn McKinley** brought a forceful, well-prepared voice into the courtroom. He and FRA representative Laura Myron made it clear that our members’ safety is not up for negotiation.

“Good morning. May it please the court, [I am] Laura Myron, for the

Federal Railroad Administration. “The rule before you is a common sense product of reasoned decision making. It is well within the agency statutory authority, and it is not otherwise arbitrary and capricious.

“I’d like to start briefly with the statutory authority point. Petitioners don’t contest that. The Federal Railroad Administration can regulate train crew size, and that follows very clearly from the statutory authority that allows the Federal Railroad Administration to regulate safety as it relates to railroad operations.

“The agency goes through very carefully and says, one, we have lots of reasons to think that a two person crew, which is the industry standard for Class I operations, and for many Class II operations is what they have been operating with is safe and should be the default here.

“We will look to information and data that has been accumulated since the 2019 rule-making. We are reevaluating the previous studies.

[Continues on Page 6](#)

## OREGON REP. PAUL EVANS SELLS OUT 2-PC

**OREGON** — After months of work, hours of testimony, and a schedule packed full of meetings with lawmakers on both sides of the aisle, Oregon Safety & Legislative Director **Dan Garrison’s** 2-person crew (2-PC) bill was blocked thanks to one man: State Representative Paul Evans (D).

“This was the no brainer bill for us,” SLD Garrison explained. “This is the bill that we wanted to get passed first. This was the most important one that [we] wanted to do.”

Despite voicing support for protecting 2-PC, Rep. Evans became one of a handful of lawmakers who refused to support Senate Bill 723, which would have required 2-PC on trains.

By ignoring the testimony from dozens of Oregonians, including SLD Garrison and several other SMART-TD brothers, Representative Evans failed to do the job that his constituents elected him to do.

“The biggest reason for this legislation is simple: safety. Not only for the employees of the railroad, but for the communities that the railroad runs

through,” SLD Garrison noted during his testimony. “Common sense rules are needed to protect the integrity of the freight rail systems in the State of Oregon.”

Three bordering states (California, Washington, and Nevada) all have 2-PC laws on the books.

As SMART-TD and our members know all too well, the Federal Railroad Administration’s 2-PC mandate is a rule, not a law. Rules can be changed, so it is important to continue the push for state-level laws to support the FRA’s 2024 ruling.

Rep. Evans chose to let D.C. politicians decide what’s best for Oregonians. That’s a potentially deadly mistake for his railroading constituents.

If Representative Evans assumes that he can count on our union’s support when the next election cycle rolls around, he is mistaken. Our memories are long, and we will not forget this blatant betrayal at the expense of the safety of railroaders and communities across Oregon.

SHEET METAL | AIR | RAIL | TRANSPORTATION

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DISCIPLINE INCOME PROTECTION

DIPP

PROTECT YOURSELF

PROTECT YOURSELF



SMART GENERAL PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Pride in our purpose: Fighting for SMART members

Brothers and sisters,

As I write this, we are currently preparing for the 2025 SMART Leadership Conference, taking place this August in New York City. Since 2022, these conferences have brought together local union officers from across North America and across our union, with both Transportation Division and sheet metal leaders gathering to do the hard work of strengthening our union. To me, that is the most valuable part of these conferences: the fact that every single officer in our union — regardless of craft, trade, state, province or country — is in one place, doing the work that needs to be done for our common purpose.

That purpose? Fighting for SMART members.

Because make no mistake, brothers and sisters: The work we all do to create better lives for our families is frequently a fight. If you're reading this, you know better than most what's at stake when it comes to fighting for the things we deserve: fair pay, safety on the job, time with loved ones and



By Michael Coleman

a retirement with dignity. That's why I'm so proud to work alongside your SMART-TD President **Jeremy Ferguson**, your elected leadership team and each and every one of you — because we have battles to win.

Many of those battles take place at the bargaining table, where we can flex our collective strength to win vital victories for ourselves and our families. I'm thrilled by the solidarity SMART-TD members and officers have displayed when negotiating, and that unified strength shows in the agreements that have been won:

In San Carlos, Calif., members of Local 1741's Local Committee of Adjustment for San Carlos Schools (LCA SCS) ratified a new tentative agreement with a remarkable 96% approval rate.

In Mobile, Ala., members of SMART-TD Local 598 resisted the

Alabama Port Authority's attempts to divide members and secured an agreement that ensures major gains in wages, benefits and crew consist protections.

And in Boston, SMART-TD-represented conductors and assistant conductors won a long-fought battle with Keolis Commuter Services, ratifying a precedent-setting agreement that includes retroactive pay, general wage increases and additional sick days.

That's what standing up and fighting for your fellow members and working families looks like. That is our purpose.

Your union also fights on behalf of members and families in the political arena. SMART is a proudly independent union, especially when it comes to politics. You can see that in the bipartisan slate of candidates SMART-TD endorsed last election cycle, which included everyone from Maryland Senator Angela Alsobrooks to Missouri Senator Josh Hawley. And you can see it in the tireless work SMART-TD officers do at the state level, whether those states are "red" or "blue." In Colorado, for example, SMART-TD

secured permanent funding for the state's Office of Railroad Safety — a huge win for railroaders in the state. And in Kansas, SMART-TD won state-level funding to expand passenger rail service.

It's important to remember: SMART isn't blue, SMART isn't red. SMART is YOU, the members — and I, along with President Ferguson and the rest of your elected officers, am dedicated to working with anyone to make sure the interests of you, the members, come first.

We have plenty of fights ahead. But as long as we all have pride in our purpose, I know we will win those fights.

In solidarity,

*Michael Coleman*

Michael Coleman  
SMART General President

A MESSAGE FROM BUS DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP

Success begins by showing up

Brothers and sisters,

I want to take a moment to share with you how proud I am of the incredible momentum we've built together across our bus department. From the bargaining table to the front lines of safety advocacy, to organizing potentially new members who see what we've achieved and want to be part of it—your collective action, unity and dedication are showing what happens when working people stand together.

Over the last several months, we've successfully negotiated and ratified several strong new contracts that provide real improvements for our members and their families.

These agreements didn't come easily. They are the direct result of your solidarity and involvement—your participation in surveys, your presence at the table, your voices raised in meetings. These contracts mean higher wages, better benefits, improved job security and stronger protections on the job. This is what union power looks like—and we're just getting started.

Our work doesn't stop at wages and benefits. We've also been hard at work through the Bus and Transit Assault Prevention Safety (BTAPS) Committee to ensure that your safety behind the wheel is never an afterthought. Far too many of our members face dangerous situations on the road.



By James Sandoval

That's why we've been pushing for better protections, stronger enforcement of assault prevention policies and real solutions to make your workplace—our streets and vehicles—safer.

Another major step forward is the growing number of bus operators who are reaching out to us, inspired by what they've seen our union achieve.

These workers want a voice on the job, and they're turning to SMART-TD because they see the strength we have when we're united.

We've been actively supporting these efforts to organize new members and bring more working people into our movement.

Each new group that joins us makes our union stronger—for everyone. It's a powerful reminder that solidarity is our greatest strength.

**If you have any friends or family working in transportation who are interested in joining a union, please connect them with me.**

**I'd be proud to help guide them through the process of organizing into SMART-TD, or you could have**

them fill out their information here:

<https://www.smart-union.org/smartcareers/join-now/>

But none of this progress happens without you. This is your union. The power we have at the bargaining table, in legislative halls and on the shop floor comes directly from your involvement. That's why I urge all members to stay engaged: attend your union meetings, ask questions and stay informed. Don't fall for rumors—go straight to the source and get the facts. Your local officers and representatives are here to support you.

We are doing great things together. But the truth is, our greatest strength isn't just in contracts, safety wins or organizing victories. Our greatest strength is each other—our solidarity. When we show up for each other, when we have each other's backs, when we speak with one voice, when we refuse to be divided, there is no limit to what we can accomplish together!

In unity and strength,

**James Sandoval**  
International Vice President  
SMART Transportation Division  
(831) 247-0400

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Photo by Rosi Gutierrez  
Local 23, Santa Cruz, Calif.



TRANSPORTATION DIVISION PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

# SMART-TD delivers organizing wins, strong agreements

Whether on the rails or on the road, the trend is clear: workers are continuing to see the value of joining SMART-TD.

As the gold standard in representing rail, bus, and transit workers across the country, we remain as committed as ever to fighting for our brothers and sisters under the SMART-TD umbrella.

We're also focused on the future. As described on the following pages, we welcome our newest members and celebrate the more than a half-dozen tentative agreements that have been ratified so far this year.

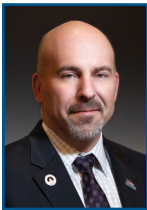
Building off last year's wins, such as the Louisville & Indiana (L&I) Railroad joining our union, we've had three short-line railroads choose SMART-TD by unanimous or overwhelmingly large margins.

The first was Wilmington Terminal Railroad, which is a subsidiary of Genesee and Wyoming.

After being without representation since coming under G&W ownership in 2005, the workers voted unanimously to join SMART-TD in January.

That was followed less than two weeks later by another G&W property, Connecticut Southern Railroad, joining our union in a nearly unanimous vote.

Connecticut Southern workers were previously under an umbrella agreement with the Brotherhood of



By Jeremy Ferguson

Locomotive Engineers which benefits some (but not necessarily all) properties that it covers.

Tired of feeling like they weren't being heard, our new brothers reached out to SMART-TD.

The most recent addition to our union family came in June when workers from both the Transportation and Engine (T&E) crafts as well as the Maintenance of Way (MOW) crafts with the Arkansas and Missouri Railroad (A&M) voted to organize in a landslide.

Our organizers are focused on having meaningful conversations about how union membership improves workers' quality of life, and what SMART-TD can deliver that other unions just can't.

This is just a snapshot of what our organizing department has accomplished at the halfway point of the year, and we have no plans to slow down.

These organizing victories are important, but our union's ability to nail down strong agreements is what makes SMART-TD stand out.

We ensure that members' voices are heard, their needs are met, and the bar is raised for both their quality of life and the level of respect they receive on the job.

Whether it's new hires at Zum Transportation (Local 1706) getting a front-row seat to negotiations with their new employer or ratifying a precedent-setting Tentative Agreement (TA) for Local 1732 at TransitAmerica Services Inc. (TASI) in California, our union is committed to fighting like hell for our members at the bargaining table and beyond.

When it comes to negotiating new agreements, we're always aiming to set the bar higher than before and ensure that our members' pay and benefits reflect the professionalism, knowledge and dedication that they bring to the job.

We saw this firsthand with several TAs that were overwhelmingly or unanimously ratified during the first half of the year, including SMART-TD-represented conductors and assistant conductors approving their tentative agreement with Keolis Commuter Services, bus operators in Local 1687 working for Red Apple Transit in New Mexico ratifying their new four-year agreement, and our Local 1887 members who work for Birmingham Terminal Railway putting

collective action into practice to secure meaningful change.

The common denominator between all three agreements is significant wage increases that redefine what's possible for rail, bus, and transit workers across the country.

Within the last two months, agreements have been reached between SMART-TD Local 598 and the Alabama Port Authority, California Local 1741's (San Francisco) LCA-SCS and San Carlos Schools, and SMART-TD Local 1701 and Montebello Transit.

This is a reflection of the SMART-TD difference. Workers see the value we bring to the table because we don't just talk about what we can offer members: we make it happen.

Together, our union is creating a movement, and these victories are proof. Momentum is with us. We will carry this force through the rest of 2025 and into the National Negotiations with the Class I freight railroads.

Workers are stronger, safer and more secure with SMART-TD at their side.

In solidarity,  
  
Jeremy Ferguson  
Transportation Division President

## 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:  
Bus Department Vice President Alvy Hughes (ahughes@smart-union.org) • Rail Vice President David B. Weir Jr. (dwierjr@smart-union.org)

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 the organization received sustaining decisions on from the First Division, the cases referenced below are of significant interest:

**In NRAB First Division Award No. 31945** (Halter, 2025), the former Kansas City Southern Railway Company, now CPKC, terminated a conductor for alleged dishonesty surrounding his FMLA usage. The cornerstone of the carrier's argument that the claimant was allegedly dishonest when he used FMLA from October 2, 2022, through November 13, 2022, was its contention that he was working in other employment.

At the time, the claimant owned another business, which is not a violation of the carrier's rules, and he vigorously disputed the carrier's argument concerning him working in other employment during his FMLA leave of absence. The claimant asserted that he neither operated, nor performed any work for his side-business while he was on FMLA leave and his wife took care of the day-to-day operations of the

business at that point. In an effort to support his contentions on these issues, the claimant requested that his wife be made available at his formal investigation as a witness.

The carrier denied the claimant's wife the ability to testify at the formal investigation, asserting that she was neither associated with the carrier, nor the union. In analyzing the factual record of this case, the board determined that the carrier violated the claimant's rights under the agreement to introduce witnesses on his behalf at the formal investigation because it rebuffed his request for his wife to appear as a witness.

In light of that finding, the board concluded that the carrier impeded the claimant's right to a fair and impartial investigation. Accordingly, the board ruled to reinstate the claimant to service with pay for all lost wages. GO 457 General Chairperson **Sam Habjan** progressed this case to the NRAB First Division.

**In NRAB First Division Award No. 31962** (Moran, 2025), Union Pacific dismissed a conductor based on its allegations that he was discourteous, quarrelsome and demonstrated threatening behavior towards a fellow employee. In this case, the claimant

was called to service from his away from home terminal for a return trip to his home terminal. The claimant attempted to call the yardmaster on multiple occasions to secure a ride from the hotel to the yard. Eventually, the claimant was able to get in contact with the yardmaster and a van was procured to transport him and his locomotive engineer to the yard. However, when the claimant arrived at the yard, he and the yardmaster became engaged in a spirited discussion. The yardmaster reported the matter to carrier management.

Based on a review of the evidentiary record of this case, the board determined that the carrier failed to satisfy its burden of proof. In particular, the board noted that the carrier failed to introduce the policy that it claimed the claimant violated into the record of the formal investigation. It also failed to secure the presence of a witness who possessed pertinent knowledge of the events prompting the charges at the formal investigation to provide testimony. Based on these findings and conclusions, the board ordered the carrier to reinstate the claimant to service with full back pay for his lost wages. GO 953 General Chairperson **Luke Edington**, GO 953

Senior Vice General Chairperson **Kurt Christensen**, GO 953 Senior Vice General Chairperson **Ian Reynolds**, GO 953 Senior Vice General Chairperson **Mike Moore** and GO 953 Senior Vice General Chairperson **Zach Nagy** progressed this case to the NRAB First Division.

**In NRAB First Division Award No. 31972** (Mayberry, 2025), Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad terminated the employment of a switchman based on its allegations that he violated General Code of Operating Rules (GCOR) Nos. 1.6, 1.15, 1.29, 7.1 and TSR Rule 1000.

Although the board determined that the carrier supported the charges it brought against the claimant with substantial evidence, it also concluded that the assessed penalty of discharge from service was arbitrary and excessive, particularly due to the fact that the claimant rendered 18 years of service with the carrier prior to his dismissal.

Accordingly, the board ruled to reduce the claimant's termination from service to a suspension of 120 days.

To that end, the board reinstated the claimant to service with back pay for lost wages, minus 120 days. GO 449 General Chairperson **Justin Wolters** progressed this case to the NRAB First Division.



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## TRANSCRIPT OF FEDERAL 2-PC TESTIMONY

Continued from Page 3

“We are independently also considering additional data, from the time period since the 2019 rulemaking. “We are concluding the default should be a two-person crew.”

The court then asked for a rebuttal to an accusation that the special approval process is a ‘mirage.’

“So I would make, two points in response. The first is, the rule outlines very common sense information that the the railroads need to provide, in order to get special approval. That also includes a risk assessment matrix and provides that if the railroad does not want to use the provided risk assessment methodology, it can submit its own. That is in the final rule in the regulation.

“My second point is that no Class I railroads have sought any special approval for a one man crew operation. 167 or so Class II and Class III operations have provided, through the notice and legacy exception, that they are continuing to operate with a one-man crew.

“There have been a couple, less than 10 petitions filed by Class II.

“In Class III, a number of them are incomplete. And so they’re discussing with the agency how to resolve that.

“And I understand there are two complete petitions pending, but there’s no reason to think that the special approval process provides a basis for invalidating the rule.

“Because the Class I railroads in particular have not sought to use it. If they were to go through the approval process, they were to, you know, reach a result that they disagreed with. It would be subject to judicial review, and they could challenge it at that point.

“So it doesn’t provide a basis at this juncture to invalidate the entirety of the rule.

“Of course, this is a special approval process. The agency does expect that the general default rule will be that railroads operate with two people, two man crews.

“We’re not imposing a rule here that is asking Class I, railroads to put someone on the train that wasn’t there before. We’re asking them to demonstrate, through the special approval process, that it is safe to remove that person before they do.

“So they haven’t dropped a crew member. There are no Class I railroads operating with a one-man crew, and there are no Class I railroads that have sought to get special approval to do so.

“What is the cost of compliance with the introduction of this rule?”

“Because they do operate with two-man crews, the cost is, at the point that the rule went into effect, zero for a Class I railroad operation.

“What the rule is suggesting is that the general default should be a two-man crew, unless the particulars of the situation demonstrate that a one-man crew is as safe or safer. And that is a very reasonable place for the agency to land, given the current information that it has, as well as the extensive information on the role of the conductor.

“You know, for example, that the conductor secures the air brakes and or the handbrakes, and it’s impossible to do that with only one person on board, given the way that the braking systems on trains currently operate.

“So, it is a particularized assessment that allows for demonstration that it would be safe in the particular circumstances of that railroad operation.”

McKinley then took the floor. “May it please the court. I’m Shawn McKinley. I’m associate general counsel with SMART-TD, and we’re urging the court to deny the petition from the numerous petitioners in this instance. With respect to some of the questions that were brought up, I want to address the necessity. I think a lot of the points were hit, but, the carriers are very focused on statistical data.

“In this case, the record is voluminous. There are 15,000, I think, comments submitted. And I understand that the carriers say that. ‘Well, that’s an anecdote from a couple people who were involved in an accident.’

**“These are the people that actually run trains. Okay? They’re on the tracks, they’re in the cabs, they’re on the ground. They’re the ones with the experience, that are actually out there and see what’s going on. I don’t want to be dismissive of their comments and what they’ve said in here. I just wanted to emphasize that.**

“I thank you for your time.”

This is how the testimony of individual trainmen helped SMART-TD show up and stand firm.

You spoke up when it counted, and your voices continue to shape the future of railroad safety.

The FRA’s advocate and SMART-TD’s legal team demonstrated superior preparation, credibility and delivery — all bolstered by your advocacy, submitted back in 2022. Your comments still resonate in federal courtrooms three years later.

We should be proud of the outstanding work of our legal team and equally proud of the commitment we all share that built the record that supports this rule. When our safety and our families’ security are under attack, we show up and stand firm.

The final decision now rests in the hands of the 11<sup>th</sup> Circuit.

## FUNDING CRISES MAY IMPACT TRANSIT MEMBERS

From Chicago to Philadelphia to San Francisco, many cities face difficult decisions about the futures of their transit agencies as budget cuts begin to bite.

SMART-TD members and the riding public will ultimately suffer the consequences.

In the most-publicized and widest-reaching funding cut, Regional Transportation Authority officials in Chicago are considering reducing services by as much as 40%. This means that up to 20% of Chicagoans who rely on public transit for their daily commutes and other important travel needs would be left stranded.

In Philadelphia, SEPTA is looking at a similar scenario. As reported by the Philadelphia Tribune, SEPTA has released a budget proposal featuring a 45% cut in service, fare increases, and workforce reductions.

In San Francisco, the municipal transit agency is looking at a \$322 million budget deficit. The city has a committee working to present six different plans on how the city will close this gap.

No matter what combination of cost cutting and new revenue streams this committee settles on, it may be forced to reduce the services the transit authority is able to offer.

Cutting this infrastructure also impacts SMART-TD members, many of whom operate these vital, frontline transit vehicles every day.

Investing in our communities means investing in public transit, and we call on local, state and federal leaders to fulfill their fiscal duty by funding these systems so that they can operate at their full potential and serve their riders.

## A NEW BEGINNING FOR MONTANA RAIL LINK RAILROAD

SMART-TD welcomes Local 406, out of Missoula, Mont. This local represents 125 members who were formerly working on the **Montana Rail Link** short-line railroad. BNSF officially took over the line on January 1, 2024.

Secretary & Treasurer **Josh Olson** added, “Those first few days, our guys weren’t sure about much of anything, including how much we were getting paid.”

As the takeover approached, Olson remembers being told by his old union that “SMART reps were arrogant and not to be trusted. But that turned out to be the furthest thing from the truth.”

“It was unsettling, leading up to that date,” Local 406 Vice Chairperson **Jason Tresner** remembered. “Not knowing what the future holds, there was a lot of uncertainty.”

A team of experienced BNSF workers stepped in to guide the transitioning crew base, led by SMART-TD Organizer **Pete Trotta** from Local 426. The new members were temporarily brought into Local 426 to get up to speed while they laid the foundation for their new local. The members of 426 answered questions, explained BNSF’s systems and helped members adjust to BNSF’s way of doing things.

“Pete and his team really took us under their wing,” said Olson. “You could tell they wanted us to succeed.

“We had a lot of great conversations, and the amount of knowledge that comes from these gentlemen is amazing to me,” Tresner said.

“We cared,” said Trotta. “Helping them was just the right thing to do.”

**Welcome to the union, Local 406. We’re proud to stand with you.**

## ARKANSAS AND MISSOURI JOIN SMART-TD

June 2025 — SMART-TD welcomes our newest brothers and sisters from the **Arkansas and Missouri Railroad** (A&M) into our union family. For the first time in this property’s history, both the Transportation and Engine craft and the Maintenance of Way craft voted overwhelmingly to join the same union.

SMART-TD Organizer **Andy Goeckner** led the process.

“These are committed professionals who have worked tirelessly under difficult conditions for years,” said Goeckner. “They deserve the opportunity to build a better future. One where their efforts are recognized, their time is respected and their voices matter.”

Their milestone marks a powerful step forward, as **these newest members have never enjoyed the protections of a collective bargaining agreement.**

For many non-union properties, foundational labor protections like overtime pay, job security, and fair leave policies are typically out of reach until they get organized and negotiate an agreement. With union representation, these workers can claim the protections and respect they deserve.

The decision to join SMART-TD followed months of conversations and solidarity-building among A&M’s workforce.

This is the fifth SMART-TD

railroad property that Goeckner has successfully organized, in addition to playing a key role in 10 other winning campaigns. His dedication makes both the properties he supports and our collective union stronger.

Goeckner was joined by SMART-TD General Chairpersons **Scott Chelette** (GO 927) and **Joe Cornelius** (GO 569). Together they hosted informational town halls and engaged directly with the A&M crews. They provided clarity and encouragement during an important and uncertain time.

With the organizing vote complete, the focus now turns to securing a strong first contract. SMART-TD has already started to fight for a CBA that reflects the professionalism and value of our new members.

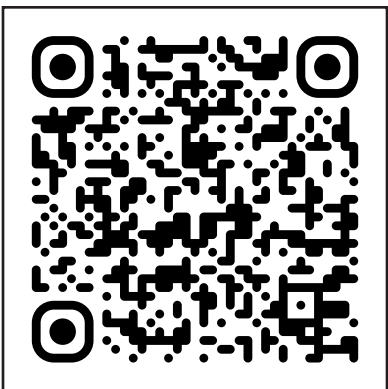
To all our new brothers and sisters from A&M: Welcome to SMART-TD. We’re honored to have you with us and we look forward to proving why life is better in a union.



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## WHEN TO CALL DESIGNATED LEGAL COUNSEL

If you are new on the job or are fortunate enough to have never been injured, you may not know about a key protection the union provides: a pool of pre-vetted lawyers who can help if you get into trouble.

A designated legal counsel (DLC) specializes in issues that affect railroad workers. Your employer may not have your best interest at heart if you are injured or want to report a safety problem. It is extremely important to immediately call a designated legal counsel in these situations.

In a conversation with SMART News, **Sarah Youngdahl**, the coordinator for SMART-TD’s DLC explained that, “The railroad isn’t like other employers. As a rail worker you are protected by a unique set of laws that only apply to our industry — the railroads are older than our other industries, so some of the laws that protect us are older than the ones that protect other occupations. When push comes to shove, not every lawyer out there will know how to defend you.”

There are very specific laws that protect railroaders when they’re injured or retaliated against.

### Law 1: Federal Employers’ Liability Act (FELA)

Railroad workers injured on the job are not covered by state workers’ compensation laws. The Federal Employers’ Liability Act (FELA) is your only way to get compensation for your injuries. Unlike worker’s compensation laws, FELA requires you to prove the railroad was negligent in causing your injuries. This is why getting a DLC involved early is important, as only they can make sure you have enough admissible evidence to win your case.

### Law 2: Whistleblower Protection

The second statute is a whistleblower law that protects railroad workers if they are retaliated against on the job.

This is a newer law that protects workers who report safety concerns or personal injuries. If you are fired for reporting a dangerous condition or a safety infraction, the whistleblower statute protects you. A DLC can hold your employer accountable for breaking this law.

A list of Designated Legal Counsel is available on the SMART website at [www.smart-union.org/resources/designated-legal-counsel/](http://www.smart-union.org/resources/designated-legal-counsel/)

Every DLC on the list is committed to protecting you as a union member, bus, freight or transit. They protect the security of your family, and help keep your workplace as safe as possible. They are here to help you.

## UTUIA IS NOW AMERICAN JOURNEY FINANCIAL LIFE

One out of every 35 railroaders were injured each year in the late 1800s. There were few laws, little regulation and the railroads couldn’t be bothered to care for the family of an injured or disabled railroader. Deaths were common and widows and orphans were left to fend for themselves. As they spread across the country, the railroads were considered a grand investment, but the dangers of the work made the railroaders themselves uninsurable and financially untouchable.

As late as 1892, Congressman **Henry Cabot Lodge** observed that railroaders “suffer as if they were fighting in a war.” In those early days — 1830 through 1900 — improvements to workers’ safety and security were carved out by the railroaders themselves.

Every rule in the book was written in our blood. Every institution that makes our lives bearable today was formed when old-heads stood together to make it happen. They formed the fraternal benefit societies from which our own union was born.

Unions and fraternal benefit societies serve different purposes. **Unions wield collective power to force justice from unwilling management. Fraternal benefit societies focus on pooling financial resources to form a safety net.** Sometimes a single organization will combine both functions; other times it is more effective to form separate organizations with the same membership. The two are fundamentally intertwined, even though they may merge, split or rename themselves over time.

In 1969, the **Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen** (est. 1873), the **Order of Railway Conductors and Brakemen** (est. 1868), the **Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen** (est. 1883) and the **Switchmen’s Union of North America** (est. 1894) merged to form the **United Transportation Union** (UTU). These organizations also pooled their financial operations into a new agency: the **United Transportation Union Insurance Association** (UTUIA).

With size comes strength and resiliency. In 2014, the UTU merged with the **SMWIA** to form the **International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, and Transportation Workers** (SMART), with the Transportation Division of the new union growing to embrace an increasing number of bus and transit workers. The UTUIA has kept pace, welcoming bus, transit and SMART’s sheet metal and other building trades to the organization.

This year, the UTUIA honors its expanded membership with the unveiling of a new name: **American Journey Financial Life** (AJFL).

The change was introduced to UTUIA’s members in a letter from AJFL President **Kenneth Laugel**, who explained that, “Over the years, we have made substantial gains in improving the infrastructure of the organization, modernizing our technology and enhancing our member benefits. Now, it is my pleasure to inform you of [this] exciting change to our organization. As we approach 16 decades of existence, we welcome all those who labor tirelessly in the hazardous trades to join with AJFL in solidarity as we seek to protect and enhance the lives and financial security of our members and their families.”

You may learn more about American Journey Financial Life at [ajlife.org](http://ajlife.org)

## TESSITORE RETIRES AFTER 30-YEAR CAREER

Vice General Chairperson **Vincent Tessitore Jr.** of GCA-505 has retired. Brother Tessitore was a major force behind LIRR’s Crew Consist Agreement and the new Conductor Training Agreement, both of which protect many members’ jobs.

GCA-505 General Chairperson **Anthony Simon** reflected that, “In the midst of some of the most challenging battles, Vinnie never wavered and stood firmly by my side and by our members. His strength and dedication to our union ensured that we always emerged stronger and more united.”

Brother Tessitore hired on with the Long Island Rail Road in 1994, became a training specialist in 1999, where he instructed over 700 railroaders before returning to the craft in 2005. He was elected vice president of Local 465, then chairperson in 2007. He was appointed as the labor member of the

MTA Board that same year. His role as vice general chairperson of GCA-505 capped off a career focused on dedication to his craft and determination to make life better for all workers in the transportation industry.

SMART-TD President **Jeremy Ferguson** thanked him for his dedication, saying, “Vinnie is the epitome of what it means to be a member of SMART-TD. He is committed to his craft, loyal to his members, and a true leader both in the craft, as a general committee officer and a long-time delegate to our international conventions.

“Our brothers and sisters on the Long Island Rail Road are better off because of his passion for fighting for them every day. I’m grateful for his friendship and his many years of service to our union and will miss him as he embarks on his well-deserved retirement.”

## TRUTH AND LIES ABOUT BNSF CREW CONSIST

There has been a flood of misinformation making the rounds about the Crew Consist Agreement with BNSF, with some of the loudest voices coming from outside our union.

It’s a complex situation and we know how deeply it affects each and every railroader in our union.

Arm yourself with the facts and share them with your brothers and sisters in your crew rooms. SMART-TD’s General Committee 001 created two straightforward videos that break down what’s really in the agreement. **This moment demands unity and clarity, not division and doubt.** Let’s stick together, get informed and continue the fight for what’s right.

Overtime, Bonus, RWB Protection



The Road Utility Position





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Pages from a booklet produced by American Journey Financial Life sharing their values and announcing their new name and logo.



CALIF. TRANSIT CONDUCTORS RAISE THE BAR

HELPER JOBS SAVED IN MOBILE, ALABAMA

**GO 769** — Now former General Chairperson **Rick Pauli** is pleased to announce that his office has reached a tentative agreement (TA) April 1, 2025, with the Transit America Services, Inc. (TASI) covering Local 1732-represented conductors and assistant conductors for its over 150 members in San Jose, Calif.

- Retroactive pay from July 1, 2022.
- General Wage Increase will be as follows: July 1, 2022 – 5%, July 1, 2023 – 5%, July 1, 2024 – 5%. July 1, 2025 – 4.5%, July 1, 2026 – 4.5%.
- This total GWI over the five-year term will compound out to 26.4%.
- Modification of bereavement leave to include additional family members.
- Increase in the meal period on yard assignments.
- A modest increase in Health and Welfare premiums

Overall, this is a great agreement, with very minimal work rule changes and a significant GWI that will certainly set a pattern for commuter railroads moving forward.

Pauli would like to thank the following people for making this TA possible: Local 1732 Local Chairperson **Reggie Kesecker**, Vice General Chairperson **John Vessels**, and GO 769 Secretary **Javier Ramirez**.

Thanks, also, to former GO 769 Secretary **DeVar Thompson** who started this process with the team. Without all of their help over these past few years, this TA would not have been possible.

NEW BEREAVEMENT LEAVE PRECEDENT SET

**LOCAL 1687 (BELEN, N.M.)** Ride Right Transportation bus operators have unanimously ratified a new four-year agreement that delivers major wage increases and meaningful quality-of-life improvements. The Tentative Agreement (TA) was negotiated by GO 202 General Chairperson **Steve Economos** with support from SMART-TD Vice President **James Sandoval** and General Committee Chairperson **Justin Schrock**.

General wage increases was the priority from the start. When compound over four years, this new agreement represents a total increase over 22%.

- Ratification was unanimous. Other improvements in the agreement include:
- Paid Holidays doubled from five to 10 per year.
  - Bereavement leave on non-consecutive days.
  - Paid sick leave increased from 40 hours to 64 hours per year.
  - PTO protection during weather delays.

The bereavement leave improvements create a new precedent for SMART-TD locals across the country. What started as a Local 1687 priority could evolve into a nationwide standard.

“The company didn’t want to lose our members, and that made it so we were able to get our wage increase and

much more,” Brother Economos said. “Ride Right came to us frustrated with retention issues and their inability to attract quality operators. We told them point blank: the quickest way to solve that problem is to raise wages. This agreement shows they heard us loud and clear.”

Schrock praised Economos’s leadership during negotiations. “Brother Economos knew exactly what his members wanted, and he carried that with him through every step of this process. He never wavered. I also want to thank Bus Vice President **James Sandoval**. I had never negotiated alongside James before, but his creativity, knowledge and determination to win for our members left a strong impression. It was an honor to work with him.”

Small injustices like being forced to use PTO for weather delays don’t make headlines, but they have a real impact. “These are the kinds of things a union is here to fight for,” he said. “We don’t let those things slide.”

Schrock had one final message for Local 1687: “Congratulations to each and every one of you. Your hard work is seen, and this agreement proves that Ride Right recognizes the high level of talent and professionalism our members bring to the job every day. They’ve shown they’re willing to pay to retain it, and that’s because of you.”

BUILDING SOLIDARITY IN KANSAS CITY

**LOCAL 94 (KANSAS CITY, KAN.)** — When local President **Devon Douglas**, Vice President **Michael Ganoe Jr.** and Secretary & Treasurer **Jake Thompson** settled into their first year in office, one of their goals was to come up with “outside the box” events and activities to keep their local active, engaged and involved.

One of the most impactful new ideas is a quarterly “Leadership Team Building Event Day.” Each quarter the officers participate in a community activity. They give back to their community, while forging personal connections off the job.

Most recently, Local 94 partnered with Habitat for Humanity ReStore. ReStore sells new and gently-used furniture, appliances, building supplies, home goods and more. 100% of the

profits are used to build and repair homes in their community.

After spending the day volunteering at the ReStore, Local 94’s officers were joined by their spouses and significant others to bond over pizza and beer at a local restaurant. Thanks goes out to Trustee **James Conway**, who went out of his way to coordinate the day’s events with Habitat for Humanity.

Additionally, many members of Local 94’s current leadership team also contribute to the SMART-TD Political Action Committee, which funds political advocacy across the region.

We applaud the new leadership team for creating an engaging environment and we can’t wait to see what they plan to do next!

**LOCAL 598 (MOBILE, ALA.)** SMART-TD members taught the Alabama Port Authority what solidarity is all about when they resisted efforts to divide and conquer. They overwhelmingly ratified a tentative agreement that ensures major gains in wages, benefits and crew consist protections.

Their negotiation journey began in January 2023, when both sides served Section 6 notices. While SMART-TD sought fair wage increases, quality-of-life improvements and equitable health and welfare provisions, the Port Authority sought to eliminate the helper positions from train crews, a direct threat to safety and job security.

Veteran Local Chairperson **Billy Johns** and Vice Local Chairperson **Frank Normand** stood firm. Johns, a 22-year employee of the State Docks, and his members knew that their three-person crews were required to deliver the responsive, customer-focused service the docks are known for.

“We’re not like other railroads,” said Johns. “We don’t jump on a train and go 200 miles. We make our living providing white glove service to our customers.”

Of equal significance, Local 598 members were clear that they would not accept any adjustments to their existing Crew Consist. This unwavering position (voiced directly from the rank and file to the carrier) was a defining moment in the negotiations and a testament to the power of grassroots advocacy.

The transfer of member sentiment from the crew room to the boardroom is what every union advocate should strive for.

Management attempted to exploit a wage disparity between pre-2008

and post-2008 employees, proposing incentives to divide the membership. Local 598 refused to take the bait and instead demanded pay equity across the board.

“They tried to buy us off to cut the helper,” explained member **Herbert Bohannon**, “but it would hurt us all in the long run when we started losing customers. We know where our bread is buttered. And that is customer service.”

Rather than fracture, the local emerged more unified than ever, a fact that surprised and ultimately pressured their employer.

“This wasn’t an easy process,” said Johns. “The company wanted our members to turn on each other. The opposite happened.”

After six months of stalled talks, SMART-TD forced the issue by invoking mediation under the Railway Labor Act. With assistance from SMART-TD Vice President **Joe Lopez** and unwavering advocacy from General Chairperson **Tommy Gholson** (GCA-898), the union kept pressing with new proposals until they emerged with a landmark TA nearly a year later.

- Key provisions include:
- 18% general wage increase
  - Adoption of the National Health and Welfare Plan, capped at 12% of carrier costs
  - Preservation of the helper
  - No concessions in existing work rules
- “This agreement is not only a victory for its contents, but for the journey we took,” said Gholson. “The carrier learned a lot about unionism and the Railway Labor Act. And they learned that our members still have a voice, and they aren’t afraid to use it.”

KEOLIS RATIFICATION CARRIES MOMENTUM

**GO 769 (PHILADELPHIA)** — SMART-TD-represented conductors and assistant conductors have ratified their tentative agreement (TA) with Keolis Commuter Services by an overwhelming majority of 92%. Keolis employs 450 SMART-TD-represented conductors and assistant conductors on behalf of the MBTA in Boston. The TA was presented for a vote in March.

- The tentative agreement includes:
- Retroactive pay
  - Scheduled general wage increases through June 2027
  - Increases compound to 32.69% for conductors and 33.51% for assistant conductors over the life of the agreement.
  - Three additional paid sick days per year.
  - The addition of Martin Luther King Jr. Day as a paid holiday.
  - The modification of vacation allotments for new employees within their first two years of service.
  - Modification of bereavement leave to include additional family members.

Former GO 769 General Chairperson **Rick Pauli**, GO 769 Secretary **Javier Ramirez**, and Vice President **David Wier** helped negotiate the agreement alongside Local 898 (Boston) officers **Cole Czub**, **Kenny Owens** and **Wayne Thistle**.

GO 769 General Chairperson **John Vessels Jr.** said, “Their combined efforts were instrumental in reaching our goal of gaining wage increases that are comparable to industry standards with minimal work rule changes.”

LONGEVITY PAY SECURED IN MONTEBELLO

**GO 876 (MONTEBELLO, CALIF.)** — Local 1701 ratified a new contract with a 90% approval rate which includes a 12.5% top pay increase over the next three years, including additional longevity pay after seven years of service.

The longevity pay is a rare benefit. Local 1701 represents Montebello Transit bus operators, mechanics, body shop, storekeepers and service workers. General Chairperson **Cecilia Lopez** noted that this was the second contract negotiated by GCA-876 and Local 1701.

“I would like to thank my members for their patience and support and believing in us in our work to

bring them the best contract possible,” Lopez said. “We were able to agree to longevity at the completion of the seventh year of full-time service. We were very fortunate to have it start at seven years.”

“Sister Lopez is never afraid to stand up for our members and fight for what’s right,” said Bus Vice President **James Sandoval**. “For a second time, she has shown that working productively with city leaders, while holding firm to members’ needs can result in a strong agreement with tangible, long-term gains, and I’m very proud of Sister Lopez, GCA-876 and Local 1701. We have have no plans to slow down!”

DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL?

news\_td@smart-union.org



# Anaheim 2025 Regional Training Registration NOW OPEN!

**Location:** Hotel Fera Anaheim  
A DoubleTree by Hilton  
**Dates:** September 8-11, 2025  
(S&T: September 8-12)  
**Room Rate:** \$159/night  
**Registration Fee:** \$75

The Anaheim RTS will begin Monday, September 8, 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 **August 25, 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](mailto:ntorres@smart-union.org).

[Register for Classes](#)



**REGISTER EARLY**

[Hotel Reservations](#)



We look forward to seeing you in California!

## Union benefit offers tuition discounts at accredited colleges for members and their immediate families

A new benefit is available to SMART-TD members and their families to help them to reach their higher or continuing education goals. In partnership with Employee Benefit Systems, Inc. (EBS), the Union College Benefit provides discounted tuition at accredited colleges and universities across the country.

“I’m proud that we’re now able to offer this benefit to our members and their immediate family members who are interested in continuing their education,” said SMART-TD President **Jeremy Ferguson**. “Whether on the rails, on the road, or when it’s time to hit the books, our union is once again setting the standard for what it means to support our members in every aspect of their lives. We welcome our partnership with EBS and hope that our brothers and sisters will take advantage of this educational opportunity.”

**Tuition discounts are available for more than 150 programs, including Business & Finance, and Information Technology. A complete list of courses and participating colleges and universities can be found on the SMART-TD EBS website.**

Qualifying courses are attended online and can be completed on a part or full-time basis. The ability to study without a fixed schedule enables students to pursue and achieve their

educational goals on their own terms, at a pace that fits within their valuable and often limited free time. Members who take advantage of this benefit receive a pre-enrollment evaluation to determine how existing college credits (if applicable) may impact their degree. Various student support services are available to help navigate the challenges that can come with returning to college after an extended period. Veterans who apply will have full access to hard-earned and well-deserved GI Bill benefits. To get started follow these three steps:

- Complete an interest form detailing your educational and career goals, which takes less than five minutes to fill out.
- Get matched with a participating college or university program that aligns with your experience, goals and interests.
- An admissions counselor will then contact you with specific information, including your out-of-pocket costs, transfer credits and instructions on how to complete the admissions process.

Visit the SMART-TD/EBS website to learn more, or to begin the process.

<https://ebsunioncollegebenefit.org/smart>

## SAN CARLOS AGREEMENT DOUBLES 401K MATCH, RIGHT TO TAKE TIME OFF FOR UNION BUSINESS

**LOCAL 1741 (SAN FRANCISCO)** — The members of Local 1741 have ratified a new tentative agreement with a remarkable 96% approval rate. Their new two-year contract brings tangible gains in wages, retirement security, workplace rights and union protections. The ratified contract goes into effect with the first full pay period after August 1, 2025.

- Key gains include:
- A 6.8% wage increase in top pay over two years. By the end of this period these members will enjoy the highest pay rate for school bus operators in the region.
  - 401(k) employer match doubles from \$500 to \$1,000 by 2027, creating a stronger path to retirement for members.
  - For the first time, union officers have secured the right to be released from their shifts for official union business, giving them more flexibility to serve and protect the membership.
  - Enhanced discipline and grievance procedures mean members have more favorable timelines and an improved process that strengthens their voice in disciplinary matters.
  - No concessions given!

These improvements, along with additional updates throughout the contract, reflect months of determined negotiations and collaborative effort between Local 1741, LCA-SCS and SMART-TD’s Bus Department.

### Union Leadership Voices

GCA-SCS General Chairperson **Timothy Haran** praised the solidarity and dedication of the membership, saying, “Talking with our members, they wanted to see a raise in wages, they wanted to see an increase in their 401K plans. All in all, what we wanted was security, and we got it in this contract.” Haran added that he wanted to thank Vice President **James Sandoval** for his role in the negotiations. “James is old school union. That is exactly what 1741 needed to get this done.”

Sandoval responded that, “Brother Haran did a tremendous job advocating for our members. This agreement not only improves conditions now, but it also lays the groundwork for even stronger contracts in the future. Something I don’t want to see get lost in this agreement is the win that Tim got, allowing the leadership of LCA-SCS to take the time off work needed to represent our brothers and sisters. **This is one of those easily overlooked wins that will pay dividends in the short term and long term. Our bus operators work hard, and they deserve to be represented by officers who aren’t constrained by how much time and effort can go into working for them!**”

### Looking Ahead

With this victory, Local 1741 provides another example of how it is possible to win the fight for fair treatment, dignity and respect for school bus operators across the country. The entire union congratulates Local 1741’s members on this hard-earned and well-deserved success.

# THAT’S UNION L202’s Gallegos Leads by Example

**LOCAL 202 (DENVER)** – The SMART Transportation Division is proud to shine a spotlight on one of our most inspiring members: Sister **Tierney Gallegos**.

Her combination of compassion, courage and tireless work ethic makes her a pillar of strength and a beacon for others to follow.

**She demonstrates what all SMART-TD members stand for: determination in the face of adversity, strength through unity, service to the community and a commitment to lifting one another when any of us has fallen. Her rise in prominence is a testament to her unshakeable dedication to these values.**

In the words of **Omar Ledesma**, Local 001B chairperson and alternate safety and legislative director for the State of Colorado:

“Union leadership is a voluntary position, and not every position is filled with people determined to make a difference. Sister Gallegos strives to make that difference. She wants people to know that railroaders still exist. We may not have the numbers we once had, but we are still present in our community and a leader among other unions.”

A conductor for BNSF Railway and the vice president of Local 202 in Denver, Sister Gallegos also serves as the secretary of the Local Committee of Adjustment (LCA) for the yard, a role in which she has quickly become an indispensable force.

She mobilized support for our legislative priorities and broader labor initiatives. From Senate and House hearings to street-level rallies, Gallegos ensures our members show up proud, powerful and ready to fight for positive change.

With fewer than six years in the union, Sister Gallegos has emerged as a model of leadership, service, and solidarity.

Elected as Local Vice President two years ago, Sister Gallegos hit the ground running, by assuming leadership of Local 202’s charity committee and its Ways and Means Committee. She has redefined what it means to connect union strength with public good. Her efforts have brought Local 202 into collaboration with key organizations such as:

- Toys for Tots
- The Colorado Railroad Museum
- Women on the Tools Event

For the third consecutive year, she successfully organized Local 202’s support for the National Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive, forging a powerful partnership with the Bienvenidos Food Bank and a local post office to combat hunger and raise awareness.

She made it her mission to bring the message of SMART-TD into the broader community: If something needs to be fixed, the union will get organized and fix it.

Thank you, Sister Gallegos for your unwavering commitment. Your union brothers and sisters look forward to the future you are helping us build: one action, one voice and one member at a time.



# SMART TD Alumni

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

## LOCAL 1190 HONORS RETIREES WITH BRASS BELL TRADITION



Brother **Steve Summerly** has been a loyal member of UTU/SMART-TD Local 1190 (Ludlow, Ky.) since June 1, 1994. His local honored him with a retirement celebration with his family and fellow union members. Local 1190 presented him with their traditional engraved brass bell to help him ring in this new phase of his life. Congratulations, Brother Summerly!

**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](mailto:arayner@smart-union.org) or visit [smart-union.org/resources/transportation-alumni/](http://smart-union.org/resources/transportation-alumni/)

## WIRTH BRINGS THE FIGHT TO CSX



Known for his fierce advocacy on the job, **Andrew Wirth** brought his determination into the ring. Wirth, the chairperson of Local 1760 (Detroit), claimed the 168-pound Masters Amateur Division Title by defeating reigning champion Michael Pinto at Cleveland's LaSalle Theater.

Legislative Representative **Andrew Curto**, also from Local 1760, was in attendance along with nine others repping SMART-TD. "There's a reason he (Brother Wirth) can win a boxing match, and it's the same reason he is

## CHAIRPERSON RAISES \$3,200 FOR SCHOOL



Gary Railway General Chairperson **Brian McWilliams** of Local 1383 (Gary, Ind.) redefined determination and dedication by running 65 miles in 24-plus hours, through rain and exhaustion, to raise over \$3,200 for Portage High School's athletic and music programs, a commendable example for all of us.

Congratulations Brother! We hope you had a P.O. day in the system after your run to get some rest!

the best local chair around," Curto said. Wirth has become a familiar face in discipline hearings, defending the rights of his members with fearlessness and precision. Deputy National Safety and Legislative Director **Don Roach**, a member of Local 1760 himself, had high praise for the new champion: "He's a fighter in every sense of the word. I told him he'd better start bringing that title belt with him into disciplinary hearings. Let CSX see exactly who they're messing with when they try to come after our members."

## SMART Transportation Division policy concerning fees objectors

- Any person covered by a UTU, now SMART, union shop or an agency shop agreement in the United States who elects to be a non-member has the legal right to object to political and ideological expenditures not related to collective bargaining, contract administration, or other activities germane to collective bargaining. Each non-member who objects shall pay reduced fees. In the public sector, nonmembers can elect to pay their fair share of the costs of collective bargaining by paying the agency fees, or they have the right to pay no fees.  
**To the extent permitted by law, a non-member cannot participate in union elections as a voter or as a candidate; attend union meetings; serve as delegate to the convention or participate in the selection of such delegates; or participate in the process by which collective bargaining agreements are ratified.**
- Notification of objection procedures:
  - To be a nonmember fee objector and pay reduced fees, the objecting non-members shall provide notice of objection by notifying the President, Transportation Division of the objection by first-class mail postmarked during the month of September preceding the calendar year to which s/he objects, or within thirty (30) days after he/she first begins paying fees and receives notice of these procedures. The objection shall contain the objector's current home address. Once a non-member objects, the objection shall stand until revoked. Objections may only be made by individual employees. No petition objections will be honored.
  - A nonmember who is a public employee: To be a nonmember fee objector and pay no fees, the objecting non-member shall provide notice of objection by notifying the President, Transportation Division of the objection by first-class mail during the period agreed to in his/her Authorization for Fee Deduction form, if applicable. The objection shall contain the objector's current home address. Once a non-member objects, the objection shall stand until revoked. Objections may only be made by individual employees. No petition objections will be honored. Any new hire of a public employer who wishes to be a nonmember should not fill out an Authorization for Fee Deduction form. Anyone who believes they are having dues improperly deducted must notify the President Transportation Division in writing.
- The following categories of expenditures are chargeable:
  - All expenses concerning the negotiation of agreements, practices and working conditions;
  - All expenses concerning the administration of agreements, practices and working conditions, including grievance handling, all activities related to arbitration, and discussion with employees in the craft or class (or bargaining unit) or employer representatives regarding working conditions, benefits and contract rights;
  - Convention expenses and other union internal governance and management expenses;
  - Social activities and union business meeting expenses;
  - Publication expenses to the extent coverage is related to chargeable activities;
  - Litigation expenses related to contract administration, collective bargaining rights, and internal governance;
  - Expenses for legislative and administrative agency activities to effectuate collective bargaining agreements;
  - All expenses for the education and training of officers and staff intended to prepare the participants to better perform chargeable activities;
  - All strike fund expenditures and other costs of economic action, e.g., demonstrations, general strike activity, informational picketing, etc., that benefit members of the bargaining unit or craft formerly represented by UTU, now SMART.
- SMART shall retain a certified public accountant to perform an independent

Percentage of chargeable fees determined by analyst for calendar year 2024	
Transportation Division	77.9 percent
State Legislative Boards	
LO-001 Alabama <sup>1</sup>	94.3 percent
LO-005 California <sup>2</sup>	69.1 percent
LO-011 Florida <sup>3</sup>	68.4 percent
LO-028 Missouri <sup>4</sup>	77.9 percent
LO-040 Oregon <sup>5</sup>	73.3 percent
LO-048 Texas <sup>6</sup>	84.4 percent
LO-051 Virginia <sup>7</sup>	58.6 percent
LO-054 Washington <sup>8</sup>	80.1 percent
Unreviewed Boards <sup>9</sup>	0.0 percent
General Committees of Adjustment, including locals under jurisdiction	
GO-851 CSX Transportation <sup>10</sup>	100.0 percent
GO-898 Norfolk Southern <sup>11</sup>	97.6 percent
Unreviewed Committees <sup>12</sup>	99.6 percent

\* Estimate; final ratio forthcoming.  
<sup>1</sup> Estimate based on March – December 2024 monthly activity reports.  
<sup>2</sup> Estimate based on January – September 2024 monthly activity reports.  
<sup>3</sup> Estimate based on 2024 monthly activity reports.  
<sup>4</sup> Estimate based on 2024 monthly activity reports.  
<sup>5</sup> Estimate based on May – December 2024 monthly activity reports.  
<sup>6</sup> Estimate based on January – August 2024 monthly activity reports.  
<sup>7</sup> Estimate based on 2024 monthly activity reports.  
<sup>8</sup> Estimate based on 2024 monthly activity reports.  
<sup>9</sup> Unreviewed state legislative boards will have a 0 percent chargeable percentage applied to new objectors.  
<sup>10</sup> Estimate based on 2024 monthly activity reports.  
<sup>11</sup> Estimate based on 2024 monthly activity reports.  
<sup>12</sup> Unreviewed general committees will have the historical average of chargeable percentages of audited general committees, which is 99.6 percent, applied to any new objectors.

dent audit of the records of the Transportation Division and subordinate units maintained by the President, Transportation Division. The Transportation Division shall designate an analyst for the purpose of determining the percentage of expenditures that fall within the categories specified in Section 3. The amount of the expenditures that fall within Section 3 shall be the basis for calculating the reduced fees that must be paid by the objector. The analyst shall also give an opinion concerning the adequacy of the escrow amounts maintained pursuant to Section 17, and later will verify the existence and the amounts of money in any escrow accounts.

5. The analyst shall complete the report no later than August 31. This report shall include an analysis of the major categories of union expenses that are chargeable and non-chargeable.

6. Each person entitled to receive the analyst's report may challenge the validity of the calculations made by the analyst by filing an appeal with the President, Transportation Division. Such appeal must be made by sending a letter to the President, Transportation Division postmarked no later than thirty (30) days after issuance of the analyst's report.

7. After the close of the appeals period, the President, Transportation Division shall provide a list of appellants to the American Arbitration Association (AAA). All appeals shall be consolidated. The AAA shall appoint an arbitrator from a special panel maintained by the AAA for the purpose of these arbitrations. The AAA shall inform the President, Transportation Division and the appellant(s) of the arbitrator selected.

- The arbitration shall commence by October 1 or as soon thereafter as the AAA can schedule the arbitration. The arbitrator shall have control over all procedural matters affecting the arbitration in order to fulfill the need for an informed and expeditious arbitration.
- Each party to the arbitration shall bear their own costs. The appellants shall have the option of paying a pro-rata portion of the arbitrator's fees and expenses. The balance of such fees and expenses shall be paid by the Transportation Division.
- A court reporter shall make a transcript of all proceedings before the arbitrator. This transcript shall be the official record of the proceedings and may be purchased by the appellants. If appellants do not purchase a copy of the transcript, a copy shall be available for inspection at the Transportation Division during normal business hours.
- Appellants may, at their expense, be represented by counsel or other representative of choice. Appellants need not appear at the hearing and shall be permitted to file written statements with the arbitrator instead of appearing. Such statement shall be filed no later than fifteen (15) days after the transcript becomes available, but in no case more than thirty (30) days after the hearing closes.
- Fourteen (14) days prior to the start of the first hearing, appellants shall be provided with a list of all exhibits intended to be introduced at the hearing and a list of all witnesses intended to be called, except for exhibits and witnesses that may be introduced for rebuttal. On written request from an appellant, copies of exhibits (or in the case of voluminous exhibits, summaries thereof) shall be provided to them. Additionally, copies of exhibits shall be available for inspection and copying at the hearing.
- The Transportation Division shall have the burden of establishing that the reduced fees set forth in the analyst's report are lawful.
- If the arbitrator shall determine that more than one day of hearings is necessary, hearings shall be scheduled to continue from day to day until completed. The parties to the appeal shall have the right to file a brief within fifteen (15) days after the transcript of the hearing is available, but in no case more than thirty (30) days after the hearing closes. The arbitrator shall issue a decision within forty-five (45) days after the submission of post-hearing briefs or within such other reasonable period as is consistent with the rules established by the AAA.
- The arbitrator shall give full consideration to the legal requirements limiting the amounts that objectors may be charged, and shall set forth in the decision the legal and arithmetic basis for such decision.
- If an objector receiving an advance reduction wishes to continue the objection, he/she shall continue to pay the reduced fees that he/she is currently paying until the analyst issues the report. As soon as possible after the issuance of the analyst's report, he/she shall pay the amount of the reduced fees calculated by the analyst. Persons objecting for the first time shall be sent a copy of the report prepared by the analyst for the previous year and shall pay the reduced fees as soon as possible.
- Each month thereafter for all objectors, an amount shall be put in an interest-bearing escrow account equal to 25 percent of the reduced monthly fees, or such other greater amount as the analyst may recommend. All objectors from the previous year shall be paid the amount of non-chargeable money that is in the escrow account as determined by the analyst's report as soon as practicable after its issuance. The appropriate unit of the Transportation Division shall not, however, take its portion of the monies in the escrow account until fifteen (15) days after the conclusion of the period within which an objector may appeal the report of the analyst, or upon the issuance of the decision of the arbitrator, whichever is later.
- When the decision of the arbitrator is announced the monies remaining in the escrow account shall be distributed in accordance with the decision.



# THE FINAL CALL

The 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
Local 195	Thomas J. Schutte	Galesburg, Ill.
Local 198	Larry E. Cecil	Peoria, Ill.
Local 259	Eugene B. Felling	St. Joseph, Mo.
Local 305	Calvin J. West	Lincoln, Neb.
Local 313	Wayne L. Vinkemulder	Grand Rapids, Mich.
Local 386	William R. Carbaugh	Reading, Pa.
Local 462	Woodie A. Castleberry	Pine Bluff, Ark.
Local 469	Leroy F. Adamove	Madison, Ill.
Local 508	John A. Saunders	Smithville, Texas
Local 524	Robert A. Gardner	Lufkin, Texas
Local 528	Gordon A. Hanna	Chicago, Ill.
Local 650	Gerald L. Johnson	Minneapolis, Minn.
Local 756	Jesus Quijano Jr.	San Antonio, Texas
Local 762	Leon Turner	Montgomery, Ala.
Local 768	Andrew Roberts III	Decatur, Ill.
Local 903	Donald H. Wolff II	Jacksonville, Fla.
Local 904	Norbert H. Brenner	Evansville, Ind.
Local 953	Dudley W. Garrett	Victoria, Texas
Local 1011	Irvin E. Blake	Hamlet, N.C.
Local 1106	Milton Burgess	Rocky Mount, N.C.
Local 1175	Floyd W. Kruger	Duluth, Minn.
Local 1202	John P. Kilander	Fort Wayne, Ind.
Local 1328	James E. Dobson	Louisville, Ky.
Local 1344	David H. Fandrich	Mandan, N.D.
Local 1421	Fred C. Miles	Franklin Park, Ill.
Local 1433	Daniel A. May	Queen Creek, Ariz.
Local 1563	Lionel P. Romero Jr.	El Monte, Calif.
Local 1637	George M. Grossmiller	Wishram, Wash.
Local 1704	Darryl L. Redmon	Kansas City, Mo.
Local 1841	Donald Ybarra	Klamath Falls, Ore.
—	Joan V. Follin	La Porte, Ind.

# IN MEMORIAM



**Robert A. Gardner**  
**Locals 524, 200**  
**Lufkin, Texas**

Brother **Robert Allen “Robbie” Gardner** passed away while working a local out of UP’s yard in Lufkin, Texas, on June 9, 2025, at the age of 43.

Gardner was a cherished member of SMART-TD Local 524 and a proud conductor on the Union Pacific Railroad.

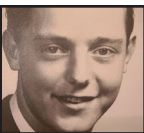
Brother Gardner was a man of deep faith, kindness and unwavering generosity.

In the crew room and out on the rails, he was known as “the guy who would give the shirt off his back.” His

warm presence, compassionate spirit, and sincere camaraderie made him the kind of brother we all strive to be.

Gardner began his railroading journey in North Platte, Neb., where he hired out with Union Pacific and first joined SMART-TD Local 200. In 2024, the job brought him to Lufkin, Texas, where he became a valued member of Local 524.

Though he was proud to be part of both the 524 and 200 families during his career, he most treasured his wife, Jennifer, and their two daughters.



**John A. Saunders**  
**Local 508**  
**Smithville, Texas**

Brother **John A. Saunders** passed away on January 28, 2025. He was 84.

Brother Saunders was the uncle of SMART-TD Texas Safety & Legislative Director Kamron Saunders.

He hired out as a conductor for the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad (MKT), also nicknamed the Katy, which had merged into Union Pacific by the time he ultimately retired. He became a member of UTU Local 508 in 1975.

Saunders was a United Transportation Union (UTU) general chairperson and the first chairperson of the Union Pacific Caucus.

He is survived by his sons, Nathan and Scott, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and his many nieces and nephews. We extend our sympathies to brother Saunders’ family and everyone at Local 508. We also want to express our gratitude for the impression Saunders left on our union and his nephew, Kamron.



**Darryl L. Redmon**  
**Local 1704**  
**Kansas City, Mo.**

Brother **Darryl Lennell Redmon**, general chairperson of GO STU departed this life on May 26, 2025, at the age of 73.

## A Leader of Principle and Compassion

Brother Redmon’s leadership style was characterized by empathy and respect for the voices of his fellow members. Whether representing operators at the bargaining table or encouraging member participation through grassroots outreach, he led with conviction and compassion.

Sister **Ethel Maze**, Vice Chairperson of the general committee and President of Local 1704, noted that, “Mr. Redmon devoted himself fully to the betterment of our local. He stayed late for meetings, passed out flyers to encourage membership involvement and continuously inspired others through his dedication and tireless efforts. His commitment to our union and its members was unwavering.

Brother Redmon’s leadership, integrity and presence will be profoundly missed by all of us at Local 1704.”

## A Calling, Not Just a Career

Though his tenure with our union was brief, the depth of his impact will be felt through the contracts he helped shape, the lives he touched and the unwavering example of servant leadership he provided.

Brother Redmon joined



**Donald H. Wolff II**  
**Local 903**  
**Jacksonville, Fla.**

**Donald H. Wolff II**, age 56, of Jacksonville, Fla., passed away unexpectedly on May 1, 2025, leaving behind a legacy of integrity, leadership and loyalty.

GO 851 General Chairperson **Joe Bennett** remembered Wolff as “a man’s man, with an unprecedented level of character. He was one of those guys who did the right thing even when nobody was looking.”

A dedicated railroad professional, Wolff devoted nearly two decades of his life to the Florida East Coast Railroad, earning the respect and admiration of his colleagues across the industry.

Wolff served Local 903, first as vice local chairperson from 2014 to 2021, and then as local chairperson from 2021 until his passing. In these roles, he represented trainmen, engineers, and tarmacmasters with unwavering commitment.

SMART-TD in September 2022 as a school bus operator in Kansas City, Mo. From the outset, his clarity of purpose and passion for advocating on behalf of working people set him apart. Within a year, he was elected vice president of Local 1704 and in January 2024, he was elevated to general chairperson, a role he embraced with humility, integrity and a relentless drive to uplift his union family.

Outside his union roles, Brother Redmon lived a life defined by service. He was known for his love of family, dedication to the community and profound faith.

## Honoring His Life and Work

Brother Redmon’s passing is a loss for the entire SMART-TD family.

His devotion to his family and faith was as strong as his commitment to his union, and he carried both with grace and honor.

As we mourn, we also recommit ourselves to the mission that Brother Redmon lived every day: to protect, uplift and unite each other through solidarity and service. His legacy will live on in every contract won, every member supported and every child safely brought home by the operators he so passionately represented.

We extend our deepest condolences to the Redmon family and the entire Local 1704 community. May we continue to honor our brother’s life not just in memory, but in action.



**Daniel A. May**  
**Local 1433**  
**Queen Creek, Ariz.**

Brother **Daniel Anthony May** passed away on May 5 at the age of 80.

A Chicago native and member of Local 1433, May worked out of the Bensenville Yard.

Brother May began his career as a brakeman with the Milwaukee Railroad and followed in the footsteps of his father, **Theodore May**, who was also a brakeman.

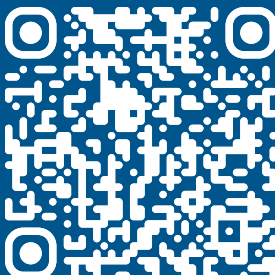
He also worked for the Soo Line Railroad and the Canadian Pacific Railway.

He is survived by his wife, Heidi, daughters Nicole and Lana and four grandchildren.

Brother May will be remembered for his strength, playful sense of humor and joy for the simple things in life.



**STAY INFORMED**  
Follow SMART-TD on Facebook!  
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# FEATURED PHOTO SHOWCASE



**Virgil Bandy, out of Local 807 (Tucson, Ariz.), captured the Milky Way over UP 8842 while on a six-hour maintenance window at Bosque, Ariz. SMART-TD is always on the lookout for great photographs of work-related scenes! Share your favorite shots and your photo may be featured in the next issue of SMART Transportation News. Send high resolution originals to [news\\_td@smart-union.org](mailto:news_td@smart-union.org) along with your name, local and what is going on in the photo. Remember to follow your employer’s policies regarding use of cameras/electronics. Terms and conditions apply, visit [smart-union.org](http://smart-union.org) for all the details.**

## PHOTOGRAPHY IS A LIFELINE FOR MEMBER/VETERAN CAFFEE

The mid-2000s weren’t easy for Brother **Jeffery “JP” Caffee**, now a conductor for BNSF out of Local 465, (Gillette, Wyo.). After returning from a two-year tour in Iraq he found himself battling alcohol and narcotic addiction.

Following treatment and looking for something to occupy his time, he tested out some new hobbies and settled on photography. “I wanted to do something good with my life,” Caffee reflected.

Concerned that he might relapse, he reached out to people who he met during treatment and was surprised to find that not one of them were still clean.

That led to a sobering realization, “I didn’t want to be a part of that, and I just sat there thinking about those people,” Brother Caffee said. “I could still see some of their faces and remember them.”

In particular, he remembered a man from Seattle he met during treatment who had a wonderful sense of humor and boundless energy.

“I thought of him banging heroin out on the street somewhere, and God knows if he’s even still alive,” he remembered. “That’s what kind of made me think, ‘Why don’t I photograph that?’”

Brother Caffee packed a bag and headed to Denver to photograph individuals experiencing homelessness. He wanted to do it right.

“I immerse myself in the street environment, and I try to earn [my] way in and make friendships over time,” Brother Caffee explained. “People will start to trust you and you trust them. Then you start to photograph them when everybody’s good with it.”

Approaching 13 years of sobriety on August 3, the people that he’s met and the relationships that he’s built have made an impact.

“It keeps me humble,” Caffee said. “A lot of times people ask me, ‘When you’re around all these drugs and alcohol, doesn’t that make you want to use?’ And no, it’s just the opposite. I’m reminded of why I don’t use.”

Another important influence in Brother Caffee’s recovery journey was joining the union 20 years ago.

“Becoming a union member and having better wages and some job security and good health insurance and a pension...I think we have a lot of members that think that stuff is just everywhere, and they’re not real grateful for it and are quick to undermine it or let it go, but I definitely don’t.”

“I didn’t know anything about unions and being a union member and all that,” Brother Caffee said. “I right away took to it, and I knew that my life was going to be a lot better in a union, and it was and has remained so. It’s given me a job, good health insurance.”

Caffee has held several different positions for Local 465, first as the local’s legislative representative and today as vice local chairperson of LCA-001A.

“It makes me happy to contribute something to an organization that has given my life so much.”

View more of Caffee’s work on his *Street Grunt Photography* Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/streetgruntphotography/>

