Merger of UTU, BLE moves forward again

CLEVELAND, Ohio – The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE) will conduct a second referendum vote on whether to merge with the United Transportation Union.

In a letter to his membership, BLE International President Don M. Hahs said the new ballots would be mailed to every active BLE member in the United States and Canada, with ballots to be mailed on Nov. 7, 2001, and counted Dec. 10, 2001.

A prior UTU-BLE merger vote was halted Sept. 17, 2001, by U.S. District Court Judge Ann Aldrich after several BLE dissident officers alleged in a lawsuit that the manner in which the BLE was conducting its balloting violated the BLE constitution.

Judge Aldrich ordered that all ballots cast by members of the BLE be impounded. She also ordered that the American Arbitration Association (AAA) "refrain from making the results of any ongoing or final tally of the votes known to any of the parties or to any third party and to preserve the cast ballots until an order to the contrary is made pending the resolution of this lawsuit."

AAA was the neutral party responsible for counting Dec. 10, 2001.

For reasons of national security, the specific recommendations made by the UTU to Federal officials cannot be detailed here, but many have already been adopted and all have

Members’ tips boost security

CLEVELAND, Ohio – Because of suggestions offered by UTU members, the nation’s transportation systems are safer and more secure today than ever before.

In the wake of the horrific terrorism of Sept. 11, 2001, UTU members were called upon to come up with ways to make passenger trains, freight trains, commuter trains and buses safer for employees, riders and the general public.

These patriotic members responded with creative and workable suggestions on topics ranging from the installation of security doors to the use of identification cards.

For reasons of national security, the specific recommendations made by the UTU to Federal officials cannot be detailed here, but many have already been adopted and all have

Bus operators choose UTU

SAN RAFAEL, Cal. – Seeking to counter what they felt was “inconsistent treatment by management,” the school bus operators of First Student, Inc., located in San Rafael, chose the United Transportation Union as their bargaining agent in a representation election held September 5.

Approximately two-thirds of the full-time and part-time drivers voted for the UTU after rejecting an overture from the Teamsters earlier this year.

“The Teamsters came to their property earlier, but they (operators) did not wish to join. After hearing that we had a good union, they came to us and asked for assistance,” said Jim Harford, UTU general chairperson for Laidlaw Transit, Inc., in San Francisco.

Harford said that the UTU has already held
Local 104, Sault Ste. Marie, Ont. Members working for the Sault Ste. Marie Transportation Commission, a union that represents Transpo Department, were recognized this summer for achieving more than 500 days and 200,000 hours of work without a lost-time injury, according to General Chairperson Blair Reid. Statistics also showed that transit operators had collectively accumulated 604 years of safe driving in the year 2000. For their achievement, employees received water bottle coolers and were treated to a barbecue.

Local 226, Moberly, Mo. Sweetening the deal with a free breakfast, the local hosted a pneumonia and flu-shot health clinic last month, inviting all members and their spouses, as well as the members and spouses from Moberly’s BLD Division, according to Secretary and Treasurer Fred G. Comeau.

Local 240, Los Angeles, Cal. Members are mourning the death of retired former Secretary and Treasurer Frank Alford, 87, a 31-year Southern Pacific employee who will be in the form of a funeral service and a celebration of life, according to Administrative Vice President Ron Koran of Local 240, Moberly, Mo.

Local 257, Morrill, Neb. Members are taking orders for a T-shirt designed by Auxiliary Lodge 257 in an effort to raise funds for the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund, Secretary and Treasurer Dave Martin said. The shirt features a U.S. flag, the phrases, “Proud to be an American,” and “Together We Stand,” and the Union Pacific logo. Shirts are pre-shrunk, 100% cotton Hanes Beefy-Ts in men’s sizes small, medium, large, X-large, 2X and 4X, and available in white with no pocket, or gray with or without a pocket. Quantity orders are preferred. For information or to place an order, call Martin at (308) 635-7522, send e-mail to sandiah@prairieweb.com, or visit the website at http://utu257.homestead.com/index.html.

Local 324, Seattle, Wash. The local’s annual holiday party this year was attended by more than 250. Among those attending were Auxiliary Chairperson Stan Johnson, John Bahler, Vice General Chairperson Mike Reedy and State Legislative Director Pat Hendricks, said Secretary and Treasurer Rick X. Duffy, who expressed his gratitude to those representing UTU Designated Legal Counsel for their participation.

Local 329, Boone, Iowa. The monthly meeting on September 12 was also the day of the local’s annual picnic, attended by more than 250. Among those attending were Auxiliary Chairperson John Bahler, General Chairperson Mike Reedy and State Legislative Director Pat Hendricks, said Secretary and Treasurer Rick X. Duffy, who expressed his gratitude to those representing UTU Designated Legal Counsel for their participation.

Local 369, St. Thomas, Ont. The local’s annual holiday party this year will be in the form of a murder mystery dinner and dance, to be held November 24 at the Moose Lodge in Sarnia. According to Local President Ron Cleary, about 40 CSA employees from various crafts are likely to be suspects.

Local 376, Louisville, Ky. Members at the monthly meeting in September voted to donate $500 to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund, according to Secretary Johnnie V. Estes.

Local 722, Babylon, N.Y. Members working for the Long Island Railroad join Brother Patrick McGovern in mourning the loss of his brother, Battalion Chief William McGovern, one of the firefighters lost when responding to the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center on September 11. McGovern was last reported to be on the 38th floor of Tower One just before the building collapsed.

Local 773, Galveston, Tex. Members voted to make a donation to the Families of Freedom Scholarship Fund, which provides money for higher education to the children and spouses of those who lost their lives on September 11.

Local 977, Pasco, Wash. The local’s annual intercraft picnic was a great success, Secretary and Treasurer Mitch Newell said, in large part due to the efforts of Andy Sanderson. Newell also offered his gratitude to UTU Designated Legal Counsel, including George A. Thornton, Zig I. Zakovics, Monte Bricker, and the firm of Yaeger, Jungbaier, Barczak & Vaccinovich.

Local 982, Rochester, N.Y. Members are making a cash donation to the relief efforts in New York City and Washington, D.C., and participated in a special dinner held by Local 1374 (New Castle, Pa.) to raise more funds for the effort. Members also recently presented a specially inscribed UTU watch and belt buckle to Local Chairperson Dave Murphy in appreciation of his 32 years of service, Secretary Tim Brown said. Meanwhile, members welcomed back into the fold Metro North switch operators and trainmen who wanted UTU representation.

Local 1316, Ravenna, Ky. CSX employees working out of Hazard, Ky., along with co-workers represented by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, have contributed more than $8,000 to the New York City relief effort, according to International Vice President Roy Boling.

Local 1594, Upper Darby, Pa. About 90 school bus drivers and aides employed by Delco Bus recently rattled their first UTU contract following negotiations that began a year ago last March, said Local Chairperson and President Ron Koran, who cited the pivotal role played by Alternate Vice President-Bus-East Carolyn Scarsella in securing the pact. Also, SEPTA bus operators recently donated $600 to the Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund, and management recognized four members with 10 or more years of safe driving at the agency’s annual safety banquet in September. Honored were George Purdie (33 years), Tom Bingel (32 years), Kevin Baldwin (29 years) and Joe Sciamanna (27 years). Members were also represented in the Delaware County Unity Day parade by Koran and Stan Bernatowicz, who carried a UTU banner and gave coloring books to children along the route. Meanwhile, members are mourning the sudden death on September 3 of Brother Eric Johnson, who was lured in May.

Local 1626, Anchorage, Alaska Members working on the Alaska Railroad are mourning the deaths of Michael Kyle Hill and James Gary Beiting. Local President Clinton Gray said Brother Hill, 44, succumbed to injuries suffered in an auto accident last April. Brother Beiting, 51, died of a heart attack on August 17 while in employee housing in Fairbanks. He had served as local president for 12 years, ending in 1996.

Local 1694, Barstow, Cal. Members employed by BNSF forward their best wishes to George Williams, who recently retired after more than 44 years, and A.E. Curtis, who retired after 40 years of service on the railroad, according to Secretary and Treasurer Michele Leonard.
West Virginia

Mark Mewshaw has been elevated to the position of West Virginia state legislative director following the resignation of John R. Pennybacker Jr., on October 1.

Mewshaw was elected to the position of assistant legislative director in 1998 and had previously held the office of chairperson of the UTU’s West Virginia Legislative Board.

A UTU member and railroader for 25 years, Mewshaw has held numerous offices in his local, UTU Local 605 at Grafton, W. Va., including secretary-treasurer, local chairperson and delegate.

“Jack (Pennybacker) did an outstanding job as our state legislative director and I really appreciate the time and effort he put forth so that I could step in and take over this position,” Mewshaw said. “I would also like to thank former delegate and local chairperson Dana M. George, who encouraged me to get involved with my union back in my early days on the railroad. He was truly an inspiration.”

Mewshaw said a letter from the legislative board has gone out to all UTU locals in the state to announce that nominations for the office of assistant legislative director are now being accepted.

District of Columbia

The District of Columbia Legislative Board was the recipient of a $5,000 gift from the UTU Canadian Legislative Board to assist in humanitarian efforts in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area following the September 11th tragedy at the Pentagon.

“We trust that this small token will somehow help those who need assistance most. Our prayers are with our American family,” wrote Canadian Legislative Director Tim Secord in a letter to District of Columbia Legislative Director Steve Fritter.

“On behalf of the members of the District of Columbia Legislative Board, I want to thank our Canadian brothers and sisters for their thoughtful gift. The money they have so graciously provided is being donated to the Survivors’ Fund of the Community Foundation for the National Capital Region to support the educational, health and general support needs of the individuals involved and their families in the metropolitan Washington region,” Fritter added.

One-hundred percent of this generous donation will go exclusively to supporting those families most affected by this tragedy in our region,” Fritter added.

Arizona

Legislative Director Scott Olson, Assistant Director Dave Shearer and Chairperson Steve Coffey have been meeting with and calling representatives of Sen. John McCain’s office, seeking the senator’s assistance in moving the Railroad Retirement and Survivors’ Improvement Act of 2001 to the Senate floor, Olson reported.

“Senator McCain is in support of the bill and looks forward to voting in its favor if it gets floor action this year,” Olson said.

“We need to thank all of our representatives and Sen. McCain for their support, whether or not the bill gets to the Senate and is passed,” said Olson, who added that Cong. J.D. Hayworth (R), Cong. Ed Pastor (D) and Cong. Belt Stump (R) supported the legislation.

Olson also noted that candidates are beginning to line up to run for Congress and state legislative seats, as well as the governor’s office, and that all UTU member assistance is needed, regardless of party affiliation.

“Without your financial help (through TPEL), many of our UTU-supported candidates will not be able to get their messages out to the people of Arizona,” Olson said. “Without those candidates, we could lose Railroad Retirement, FEIA, the Hours of Service Act and many other laws, as well.”

Colorado

One of Colorado’s great union and political leaders, former UTU State Legislative Director Jack Shaver, was honored as the 2001 Eleanor Roosevelt Democrat of the Year for Jefferson County at a ceremony on September 30, 2001, reported Legislative Director Rick Johnson.

More than 400 guests attended the event, including Cong. Barney Frank (D-Mass.), who served as the keynote speaker; Cong. Mark Udall (D-Col.) and Colorado U.S. Senate Candidate Tom Strickland (D).

“Jack’s résumé of political activity is too numerous to list,” Representative the UTU were Johnson, former International President Al Cheasser, Alternate National Legislative Director James Stem, Associate General Chairperson Jay Joslin (UP Eastern District), Associate General Chairperson Dave Anderson (BNSF) and 20 other UTU brothers and sisters.

Patriotism alive and well in U.S.

In America, patriotism is alive and well. Democracy is being tested as never before. I am proud to be part of the UTU and its caring membership. Literally, hundreds and hundreds of our members are actively involved in supporting relief efforts following the devastating attack on our nation’s capital and New York City. Working together for the common good is what unionism is really all about. Compassion, cooperation and teamwork will make America and the UTU stronger.

Numerous articles have been dedicated to the need for yardmasters to pay close attention to their insurance coverage. This applies equally to the plans funded both by our employing carriers and the yardmasters.

Recently, we have had a number of cases in which insurance benefits have been both delayed and lost as a result of failure of members to timely or properly pay premiums, make claims or insure that healthcare providers have submitted verification forms.

If you mark off sick, apply for a disability annuity or age annuity with the Retirement Board, contact your elected local representative, general chairperson or the Yardmaster Department.

We have experienced situations where unintended beneficiaries received life insurance benefits because the member did not submit a change-of-beneficiary form. “Change of Beneficiary” seems to be the very last item on the list of things to change when conditions change in our personal lives. If you need these forms, contact the insurance company or the Yardmaster Department and the forms will be forwarded.

State Watch

News from UTU State Legislative Boards

Taking a break from one of the many speeches honoring 2001 Eleanor Roosevelt Democrat of the Year Jack Shaver are, from left, Alternate National Legislative Director James A. Stem; Shaver; U.S. Senate Candidate Tom Strickland; U.S. Cong. Barney Frank (D-Mass.), and Colorado State Legislative Director Rick Johnson.

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Bus Department

By Bernie McNelis

Life must go on, but stay vigilant

Since the horrific incident of September 11, 2001, there are good reasons to stand behind our President, whether we believe in his politics or not, when it comes to dealing with the threat of terrorism to our nation and the world.

However, life must go on and we must be vigilant that our rights as unionists and as individuals are not diminished during these times.

We must continue to be vigilant in protecting the rights of union members and not give in to those political forces that are in command of the White House simply because the White House may be doing what is right to protect our lives and those of all our families and friends against terrorism.

Recently, Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia’s son, Eugene, was approved by a Senate committee to be the head lawyer at the Department of Labor. We know Justice Scalia is conservative and his son is, as well.

That means neither are labor friendly. He will be charged with enforcing our labor laws! It is encouraging.

That nomination indicates the White House still has its conservative agenda in mind and, therefore, we must continue with our agenda of protecting the rights of labor members.

Life must go on, and each of us must continue the fight against those who oppose the interests of labor.

In unity there is strength.

Yardmasters

By Don Carver

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Our nation demands a better rail system

By Byron A. Boyd, Jr.
UTU International President

The following message was delivered to railroad management and the investment community by UTU International President Byron A. Boyd, Jr., through an article in the November 2001 Railway Age magazine.

Sometimes we forget important historical facts.

Consider the 19th century robber barons, who built our transcontinental railroads. For sure, their unscrupulous business practices and abusive behavior toward employees earned them soiled reputations.

Forgotten is that some of them – E.H. Harriman, James J. Hill and J.P. Morgan – also combined long-term vision with huge personal investments to build railroad plants designed to last, compete and serve the public interest.

On that point, the robber barons are to be commended, while many of their contemporaries should feel ashamed.

More than a century ago, Harriman invested as much in modernizing the Union Pacific as the federal government then spent annually. "Harriman did nothing by halves," wrote historian Maury Klein in celebrating Harriman’s insistence on lower grades, straightening of curves and building of a “first-rate road bed.”

In 1906, trains traveled from San Francisco to New York in under 72 hours, a feat today's transcontinental systems have difficulty matching.

Hill spit in the face of a national recession and invested heavily at the time to extend his Great Northern to the Pacific Northwest. “Building a railroad is a public trust,” said Hill. Mark Reutter, editor of the Railroad History magazine, recalls, “Hill was once asked by a true robber baron, Jay Gould, to go in with Gould on building a line through Oregon. Gould offered to issue securities at $30,000 a mile on a road costing $15,000 a mile. Hill replied, ‘Our desire is to build up the country and share in the prosperity that must follow. I will not join with you in a real-estate speculation is not a railroad.’”

Morgan, meanwhile, imposed covenants on his many railroads, requiring substantial reinvestment of profits back into the plant.

Pity that some today don’t share that same bold vision, consume patience and unwavering commitment to build a 21st century rail system so urgently needed by our nation.

Too many modern rail officials have been forced to become handmaidens to Wall Street speculators, whose view of the future is measured in months.

Even before the events of September 11, it was abundantly clear that America’s rail network is inadequate to the task.

That money will not be appropriated without railroad labor’s political support.

The United Transportation Union is prepared to lend the necessary support and create with carriers an unstoppable partnership on Capitol Hill and in the various state houses.

But partnerships require commitment from both sides. Rail management must commit to doing what current and potential customers demand for the long term, and not what Wall Street demands for the short term.

It would only be normal for us to continue to press for the passage of Railroad Retirement. The United Transportation Union is prepared to lend the necessary support and create with carriers an unstoppable partnership on Capitol Hill and in the various state houses.

Byron A. Boyd, Jr.

WASHINGTON WATCH

By James Brunkenhoefer

Update on Railroad Retirement reform

The crisis of September 11, 2001, had a profound impact in your nation’s capital. There is more security everywhere. Many streets are closed or otherwise restricted as to types of vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

Congress is almost fully focused on the crisis of domestic security and pursuing terrorists internationally.

As for Railroad Retirement, a promise of quick passage has faded to concern as to when it might be passed.

As you know, the House of Representatives passed Railroad Retirement on July 31 and we were pressing the Senate to follow that lead following the August recess.

Then came September 11.

In the midst of this crisis, much important legislation, including Railroad Retirement, remains pending. There is election-law reform, the energy package, education reform, the faith-based initiative and even Railroad Retirement.

Yes, building a world-class 21st century rail network is going to cost lots of money. But Congress, itself now fully recognizing the role of railroads in an advanced society, is prepared to help provide tens of billions of dollars in low-interest loans and grants.

For the first time in our nation’s history, a railroad is a public trust,” said Hill. Mark Reutter, editor of the Railroad History magazine, recalls, “Hill was once asked by a true robber baron, Jay Gould, to go in with Gould on building a line through Oregon. Gould offered to issue securities at $30,000 a mile on a road costing $15,000 a mile. Hill replied, ‘Our desire is to build up the country and share in the prosperity that must follow. I will not join with you in a real-estate speculation is not a railroad.’”

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Too many modern rail officials have been forced to become handmaidens to Wall Street speculators, whose view of the future is measured in months.

Even before the events of September 11, it was abundantly clear that America’s rail network is inadequate to the task.

Rail labor has made countless sacrifices to help improve rail productivity in an effort to team with the carriers to provide better service than trucks.

Half our workforce disappeared, work rules were liberalized and we embraced technology – all necessary if railroads were to become more competitive with trucks.

Indeed, the railroads’ own numbers show employee productivity soaring some 50% in recent years.

But, instead of using the savings to improve service and take traffic off the highway, railroads chose instead to tear up or sell off track, cede even more business to truckers and borrow heavily to buy out competitors. Labor savings went not to build a world-class 21st century rail network, but to help finance a takeover binge that failed to improve service.

Stock and real estate speculation, the forer of robber barons such as Jay Gould, supplanted long-term vision. Today’s railroads may talk of the steel wheel’s efficiency, but the carriers need to walk the talk.

It is time for rail management to reorder its priorities and serve the public interest, which means increased capacity, mixed passenger/freight corridors, faster and more consistent schedules and a stronger commitment to safety.

The days of railroads opposing federal grants for fear of government-imposed conditions relating to service and safety must end, as must the railroads’ opposition to passenger service.

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In the midst of this crisis, much important legislation, including Railroad Retirement, remains pending. There is election-law reform, the energy package, education reform, the faith-based initiative and even Railroad Retirement.

However, if Congress does remain in session after passing essential legislation such as spending bills to keep government in business, you can be certain we shall attempt to focus lawmakers on Railroad Retirement reform.

And, even if Congress does adjourn without passing Railroad Retirement reform, the House and Senate bills (H.R. 1140 and S. 697) remain alive throughout the second session of Congress in 2002, which is an election year, when lawmakers look to make constituents happy.

Nonetheless, we have every reason to be optimistic that this legislation will become law this year.

Many in the leadership have assured us that this is something that they want to get done this year and not next.

Each of us must continue our efforts to keep Railroad Retirement as the very next priority after essential legislation is passed.

We cannot be diverted by the events of September 11. Indeed, the President encouraged this nation to go back to normal.

It would only be normal for us to continue to press for the passage of Railroad Retirement.

It appears that the President has made this our patriotic duty.

Let’s not disappoint him.
A conflict between dreams, reality

By Paul C. Thompson
UTU Assistant International President

Dreams and reality sometimes conflict. We can dream and imagine returning to five-person crews and a caboose behind every train. However, in the real world, because of new technology, five-member crews and cabooses are a thing of the past. In the real world, we have learned that there is no stopping new technology.

The real world can be cruel. The railroads’ greatest competitor is the trucking industry. In the real world, non-union truckers are willing to accept $35,000 annually with few benefits and work six days a week. Many independent truckers may haul goods from the East Coast to West Coast. But if they have no goods to return, many times they will agree to haul goods back from the West Coast for little more than the cost of fuel. This competition has seen the railroads’ market share of total dollars spent on freight transportation drop to under 10%, and train crews have paid a heavy price because of this reality.

In the real world, one must face reality and recognize there is no stopping new technology. As a union, in the past we have tried to fight technology. And each time we were unsuccessful and lost jobs as a result. Examples would be radios, end-of-train devices that took the place of cabooses, the fireman’s position and the rear- and head-end brakemen.

No, it wasn’t our choice to go to two-person crews and end-of-train devices any more than it was the choice of train and engine service employees to cut employment of firemen as diesels replaced steam.

It also wasn’t the choice of small grocers and bakers to close up shop after invention of the supermarket, or for local merchants to go out of business as WalMart and other discount superstores appeared on the scene. As for railroads, there are the bitter lessons of bankruptcy of the Penn Central, the Milwaukee Road and the Rock Island. We know the human cost when railroads are not competitive. The recent history of the steel and auto industries paints a similar grim picture for working men and women who lost their jobs, and sometimes their pensions and health benefits.

The challenge for railroad unions is to help make railroads more competitive with trucks while dealing with the potential economic harm to the members we represent. That is the real world. Of course, we can march in the street and shake our fists in anger, but trying to stop progress is much like spitting into the wind or building sand piles to hold back an advancing tide.

So it is with new technology such as remote control. We can fight remote control as we fought diesels, the elimination of firemen, head-end and rear-end brakemen and the retirement of cabooses. But we know how those fights ended. Federally appointed arbitrators decided our fate and a Congress (sometimes controlled by Democrats and sometimes by Republicans) supported those adverse decisions.

Sure, we can slow the process, but eventually technology will prevail and the employees (our members) suffer. Alternatively, we can work with the carriers in exchange for real benefits such as job protection, carrier-paid training and total assurance the new technology will be implemented only after its safety has been proven to our satisfaction.

Remote control negotiations have been around since the early 1960s and we have fought this issue for a long time. In Canada, remote control was first implemented by CN at various hump yards in 1986. CP Rail Eastern Lines followed with their implementation of remote control technology when an agreement was signed on February 28, 1994. Shortly thereafter, two more agreements were placed into effect for remote control locomotive service.

With remote control in use on Canadian carriers for almost a decade and also in use on many smaller railroads, including Montana Rail Link, there is no stopping or fitting its introduction or assigning the work. That is the real world, whether we like it or not. It’s the world in which we have to operate because that’s the world in which arbitration decisions and court rulings are made.

Had the UTU rejected the opportunity to sign the remote control letter of intent, the carriers likely would have moved forward to implement remote control without any worker protections.

UTU members will have control of the black box

Indeed, in accepting the carriers’ offer, the UTU made clear in the letter of intent, signed also by the carriers, that UTU-represented employees will have control of the so-called black box. That means when a UTU-BLE merger is accomplished, engineers now represented by the BLE will gain the same job protection, guarantee of training and safety assurances. The completion of the UTU-BLE merger also will assure that the carriers will no longer be able to divide operating employees.

The very last thing we want is for third parties, who do not know the issues, to make decisions affecting our jobs and futures. That is why the UTU accepted the opportunity to sit at the table and decide, through collective bargaining, how remote control would be implemented. At the very least, we have assured that implementation of remote control would protect UTU-represented employees, would include carrier-paid training and would not carry safety risks. It is the UTU’s intent to protect every operating employee that is adversely affected by the implementation of remote control operations.

We have no choice but to unify

By Dan E. Johnson III
UTU International General Secretary & Treasurer

Every time the UTU and the BLE start finger-pointing, bickering, fighting or outright engaging in war, railroad management in North America breathes the proverbial collective sigh of relief. Thereafter, the carriers immediately turn their heads and laugh hysterically. “The ignorance of the railroading public!”

But, together, we can and will secure the labor protection, training and pay increases and more seniority for the UTU members.

We just don’t get it! We can’t seem to learn that the more we slap and slug each other, the more we under-cut and erode our single most powerful and effective asset: unity.

During the past 40 years, history has attempted to teach us this undeniable fact. We have watched technology slash the number of operating crew members from six to two. While this was happening, the UTU and the BLE were fighting each other over every issue in sight. Now, the carriers immediately term their heads and laugh hysterically. “The ignorance of the combative railroad operating-craft worker shines brightly.”

What has this short-sighted, self-absorbed, arrogant and ignorant doctrine achieved for us?

• It has resulted in the wholesale loss of the majority of our original jobs, including firemen, brakemen and helper positions;
• It has resulted in less-than-reasonable and/or inappropriate job protection for those whose jobs were attritted and outright abolished;
• It has resulted in little or no training for existing, as well as future, technologies;
• It has resulted in less-than-equitable compensation in the form of salary, severance, up-front allowances, stock, productivity funds, profit-sharing, short-term allowances for our increased responsibilities and exceedingly advanced productivity;
• It has resulted in increased union dues to finance war between the UTU and the BLE and allowed for redundant services when those duplicated resources could have been pooled to help protect members.

Simply stated, our misplaced ego, short-sighted acrimony with one another and our unwillingness to find some common ground to fight for has enabled – and continues to allow – railroad management to divide and conquer us.

So, where are we? Again, we are fighting each other while permitting a self-serving few to block the wish of the majority and create red herrings to derail productive unification. This time, unfortunately, we will pay an even greater price.

While technology has been knocking at our door for many years, with the assistance of rail management, it is now prepared to kick our doors down. As in the past, divided and separated labor organizations will facilitate management’s objectives. While we help management play the UTU and the BLE off against each other, the black box is coming after us all.

But, together, we can and will secure the labor protection, training and the appropriate compensation to which we are entitled. But, apart, the black box will slaughter us. For a preview of how this might happen, a divided UTU and BLE, we need only look at today’s environment and overt activity on the Wisconsin Central.

Finally, absent unification, a voluntary agreement on the use of the black box is far less likely. If we continue divided, the resolution of this issue will be determined by a Bush-appointed emergency board. You tell me who wins this battle.

If we do get it, then we must unify. There is no other choice.
As this issue of UTU News went to press, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers had agreed to conduct a second referendum vote on whether to merge with the United Transportation Union. UTU News asked members of both unions to express their opinions regarding a merger during the first referendum. Here is what they had to say:

**Robert Snow**
Locomotive Engineer
UTU Local 1088

“We would have unity. This is what we need instead of having these unions fighting with each other. There will finally be no more union against the other with these railroad companies. I think President Boyd is moving us in the right direction and I support him 100%. He has done an excellent job. I would explain the entire process to the BLE members if possible.”

**James J. Wood**
Locomotive Engineer
UTU Local 763

“The historical operating crafts should be represented by one union. I think they (the unions) are spending too much time fighting each other, and this weakens both positions. We all work together now and, to me, we are one craft and class now. We will have more power. Most of the people I work with want to merge. This merger has been a long time coming. I have been here for almost 23 years and have seen these unions spend too much time fighting. I was in the BLE for three years when I went into engineering and I came back into the UTU. The unions must stop fighting and get into one group. It is costing time and money for each organization and its members.”

**Joseph Stacy**
Locomotive Engineer
UTU Local 770

“With one union the company would not be playing one against the other. As long as there are two organizations representing the men it will always be the same. As long as I have been on the railroad, these two unions have been at odds. It should be one union representing everyone out here. As long as craft autonomy is in our constitution and knowing the steps that are required to change it, craft autonomy will always remain the same as it has been. Some of the BLE members support and stand behind their union and I can understand that, but there comes a time when we can all see that one union will give us more power. When I hired out over 20 years ago, I starting hearing then that we should all be together in one union. We can get more done with less conflict. I think now it is agreed by all that we have a common thread with everyone. That’s why we should all be together. I can’t believe the resistance now when the rank and file all agree. Now is the time to be together as one.”

**Brian K. Gibbs**
Conductor
UTU Local 1929

“We should have one strong union as opposed to two unions butting heads all of the time. Unity. That is the answer. One voice. It seems that some of the BLE older heads will not listen to any new ideas. A majority of the younger members I work with are in favor of one strong union. We really need to be fighting for one thing rather than be split between the members of these unions. I worked several jobs before coming to work on the railroad. This is the very best job I have had and I want to keep and protect it. The UTU is my union and we all, BLE and UTU, should be united together.”

**J.W. Cosby**
Conductor
UTU Local 1088

“If both organizations could put as much time getting things done rather than squabbling, there’s no telling what would happen. With these unions together it would be a better place to work. I think our President is going in the right direction and doing the right thing attempting to bring these two unions together. I think once these unions are put together, it will work. I have read everything the BLE was going to get with the proposed merger and these three members of the BLE are throwing all of that away. Why would they vote the merger down? It does not make sense.”

**Curtis Roughton**
Conductor
UTU Local 878

“I believe the historical railroad operating crafts should be represented by one labor union. If the UTU and BLE were one, it would make us a stronger union. Our bargaining power would increase and together we could address the issues we have with the carrier as one strong organization. When members voice concerns about losing craft autonomy, I would tell them, ‘It is not going to happen.’ In our constitution, we are protected and if the carrier wanted to merge seniority rosters, they would have done that long ago without the UTU and BLE discussing it. The UTU has always upheld craft autonomy.”

**Connie English**
Conductor
UTU Local 489

“The UTU and BLE together would give us a strong voice. On the legislative side, I would like to talk with our senators and congressmen about the concerns on both sides of the cab, not just one. I want the person on the other side of the cab sitting there with me. When we give our story to these people, we want it to be the same. We all, both the UTU and BLE, have the same concerns out there—safety. We would be stronger fighting for the members’ rights together. The UTU is now the only railroad union that occupies the state capital, the only rail union that lobbies the state legislature. All of the railroad offices in Texas have offices next to the capital and full-time lobbyists working out of these offices. That tells you that our union must be there working for the members’ rights, too. I do a lot of traveling to visit with our state representatives, too. Unless you visit the home districts, they do not pay too much attention to you. But if you go to them, they remember. I try to visit the locals in Texas as often as possible. We need to let our members know that the state directors and local legislative representatives are the safety representatives of the unions. If I can tell the members of the BLE anything, I would tell them we need to come together and we need to be a voice of one.”

**Brian Habjan**
Conductor
UTU Local 763

“With one union, we have a stronger bargaining power. We can no longer be played one against the other like we are now. On the whole, most people agree that we need one union. There are just a few that cannot agree on how to go about accomplishing it. I guess some of them think we are bullying or trying to take over. I do not see how anyone could have seen anything wrong with the proposed merger. This is something that we have to do. If we continue like we are now, neither union will survive. Why not form one strong union to come at them?”

**Ken Binger**
Yard Helper
UTU Local 1780

“This will benefit all railroaders. The majority of the members of both the UTU and BLE want to do this through the merger, not a representation vote. I think the problem with the members that do not want to merge is ‘pride.’”
Talk about merging UTU, BLE

“...united we stand, divided we fall.”

Aaron William
Conductor
UTU Local 1929

“Having the historical operating crafts united in one union will give us one voice when we negotiate with the company. Most of the people I work with want the unions to merge. I think almost everyone on the (property) is for the merger of these two unions. I like the benefits and pay we now have and want to make sure we keep them. We need the best deal for us and our families.”

Brad Nelson
Switchman
UTU Local 1780

“The historical operating crafts should be represented by one union because we will then have strength in numbers. The company is using members of one union against members of the other union. We will present a united front to the carriers, creating a position of strength. Most of the people I work with want the unions to merge. UTU members are in favor of the merger between the UTU and BLE. I really think the majority of BLE members are in favor, too. A few of them seem to not want to lose their separate identity. It is not really the merging; it is the loss of their name and their pride that is getting in the way. We have to move forward also, as the companies are. We must negotiate from a position of strength. It is amazing that about a year ago all of the BLE members were for the merging of these unions but now there seems to be an organized effort from the BLE to not merge. Why not let the vote take place and let the BLE members decide for themselves? The lawsuit now prevents the BLE members their right to vote. I would say to the BLE members: Think about what is best for all operating employees. We will then have one strong voice to represent our best interests. For too long the carriers have had their way with us. They have pitted us against each other for too long. This opportunity to merge is an opportunity for us to help us.”

Chuck Williams
Locomotive Engineer
UTU Local 1780

“Donny Eddy
Conductor/Switchman
UTU Local 1929

“The time has come to merge the unions. Our unions have spent too much time fighting. We need unity. Let us concentrate on the carrier instead of each other. It will be for the betterment of the men, and not the company. The UTU and BLE should be together to give one strong voice to the working man. Most of the people I work with want to merge. I think our UTU Inter- national officers are doing a great job. They are leading us in the right direction. I think the BLE is just stalling and attempting to kill the proposed merger. I am currently working as a switchman, but am to be promoted as an engineer on the KCS, so I know first hand how important craft autonomy is; I am living proof that it works. The UTU protects its members.”

Vic Sirna
Locomotive Engineer
BLE Division 8

“It is time for the operating crafts to be represented by one union. It is past time. I voted for the merger. I am tired of the squabbling between the unions and seeing the company have their way with us because they know the unions cannot agree on the contracts and agreements. One union will make us stronger. It should be up to the members to decide this merger. We live in a democratic society where we vote for president, congressmen and so forth. We should be able to decide for ourselves. Let the majority rule. Most of the people I work with want a merger of these unions.”

Larry Harrison
Local Chairman
BLE Division 569

“I voted for the merger of the BLE and UTU. I am upset that my vote is not going to be counted.”

(Comments made prior to recently announced re-balloting.)

Melvin Goines
Locomotive Engineer
BLE Division 599

“If the BLE and UTU merge, we can get someone to back us, but right now I do not think we are getting the backing we need. So, the merger should help. We will have more people pulling together instead of one side going their way and the other going in a different direction. We are the rank and file. We are the ones doing all of the work, making the railroad look good and making them all of the money and they will not acknowledge us. Maybe, together, they will. What is wrong with getting a fair piece of the pie? What is wrong with getting paid what you are worth? It is time to get together.”

Stacy Fuller
Conductor
UTU Local 781

“Most of the younger people are worried about their job security on the railroad. I voted for the merger of the BLE and UTU and feel it would be the best thing to do. I think, personally, that united we stand, divided we fall. We are stronger in numbers; that is how I feel. We are stronger in numbers and our voice will be heard loud and clear. We have more ability to make things happen. As it is now, the unions are bickering at each other. We should focus our energy on the company. We are not getting what we worked so hard to accomplish and the company is just loving it. If we form one big group, we can move forward, but if we stay like we are, we are at a standstill. We can’t let this chance slip by us.”

Brian Wilson
Conductor
UTU Local 763

“The UTU and BLE should be united because together we will have a common ground to stand on in contract negotiations. We all deal with the same issues so we may as well be in the same union. Most of the people I work with want to merge. The BLE members opposing this merger do not really understand what is going to happen, I feel. They seem to think they are going to lose their union representation somehow. If I could talk to all of the BLE members, I would tell them our record stands for itself. There always seems to be an outside influence to try to stop this merger. I think we are doing the right thing…We have no choice.”

Curtis W. Varone
Conductor
UTU Local 763

“We need one union out here to survive. We need strength in more numbers – united. Everyone I talk to is in favor of the merger, except for a very few. The merger of these two unions will be the best for all of us. In the past, when we negotiated, we had a split vote. It would be a lot easier if we all sat at one table to talk to the carriers.”

Tim Babcock
Locomotive Engineer
UTU Local 878

“I think both unions are good unions, the BLE and UTU. I voted for the merger. I see it as the right thing to do. The way things are going and with contact negotiations, we need to be together fighting for the same things. The railroads are merging and we have to do the same. We have a job to do together: to get our trains to point A to point B. We are out here as a team, working together. We all should be working together in one strong union.”

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Members’ tips

Continued from page 1

been given serious consideration.

“In the spirit of our partnership with Federal Railroad Administration, we asked our Unit-
ed Transportation Union officers and mem-
ers to share their thoughts and ideas on new
techniques to improve the security of our rail
industry,” UTU Rail Vice President James Brunkenhofer told FRA Administra-
tor Allen Rutter. “We received an over-
whelming response with many excellent sug-
gestions focused on all aspects of protecting
the people and assets of our industry.

“We also want to repeat our concern that the safety of employees and the public should remain
the FRAs main focus. Security of the industry
should remain the focus of our law enforcement
community and our U.S. military. We obviously
are concerned that the recent events will
divert our attention away from safety in the
interest of security,” Brunkenhofer said.

Politicians and intelligence experts have for
years warned that the next terrorist attack
could come on the ground instead of in the air.

Trains are particularly vulnerable because they
carry huge amounts of hazardous materials
through major population centers every day.

The U.S. Department of Transportation
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tation election. The authority also provides shuttle service for
in Lancaster as well as commuter bus service to
(A VTA) in Lancaster, Cal., overwhelmi-
ged its scope of services to include addi-
tional modes of service, such as municipal
fixed-route transportation, shuttle services,
school bus/pupil transportation and charter
operations.

The company’s website can be viewed at
http://www.mvtransit.com/.

UTU Local 1741 at San Francisco.

“I would like to congratulate Jim and Laura
for a job well done. Their hard work paid off in
this victory and I will be happy to assist them
in any way in getting the best possible contract
for our newest members,” McNelis said.

In other organizing news, the bus opera-
tors of Antelope Valley Transit Authority
(AVTA) in Lancaster, Cal., overwhelming-
ly chose UTU drivers in an election held
October 12. AVTA provides local transportation services in Lancaster as well as commuter bus service to
Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley.

The authority also provides shuttle service for
the elderly and disabled.

Originally employed by Ladlaw, Inc., the employees were given a vote in a representa-
tion election on August 10. However,
just days before the vote, Antelope Valley ter-
minated its contract with Ladlaw and hired
MV Transportation to manage its bus and
shuttle services.

After MV Transportation hired all of the for-
mer Ladlaw employees, the company agreed
to proceed with a representation election.

“I appreciate the confidence shown by the drivers in choosing the UTU as their bar-
gaining representative and would like to thank Alternate Vice President Percy Palmer and
Director of Strategic Planning John Nadalin for hard work and dedication in
bringing this matter to a successful conclu-
sion,” McNelis said.

“The UTU will do everything possible to get
these drivers the best contract possible,”
McNelis said.

MV Transportation, Inc., is the largest
African-American owned transportation con-
traction company in the United States, pro-
viding transportation services for more than
25 years.

Established in 1975 and initially focused on
providing paratransit service for seniors and
the disabled, the company has since broad-
ened its scope of services to include addi-
tional modes of service, such as municipal
fixed-route transportation, shuttle services,
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Meetings

Continued from page 1

more than ever, our members who operate bus-
ners feel they need better security.”

Warrington noted that Amtrak has increased
potential presence across its system, including
onboard trains; that security inspections of
facilities and equipment have been stepped up;
that the carrier is now requesting photo identi-
fication when selling tickets or checking bag-
gage; that employees are now required to wear
photo identification badges, and that all
employees have been directed to notify the car-
rider if they notice anything unusual.

Meanwhile, the Senate is nearing approval of
a $1.8-billion measure to increase safety and
security measures on passenger trains.

Nearly $1 billion within the Amtrak network is
being spent on safety concerns in six aging underwater tunnels owned
by Amtrak that carry rail passengers to New
York’s Penn Station. An additional $515 mil-
lion would be spent on security upgrades throughout the Amtrak system – increasing
the ranks of its 325-person police force, tripling the number of bomb-sniffing dogs and
adding new surveillance equipment.

Because of the desire of many in Congress to cut
this congressional session short and return home
to their districts for the remainder of the year, it is
not clear whether a bill acceptable to both the
House and Senate will be passed this session.

In addition, UTU Vice President Bernie McNelis has briefed the U.S. Department of Transporta-
tion (DOT) of safety and security shortcomings in the bus industry requiring immediate legislative or regulatory attention.

In his letter to the UTU membership, McNelis said, “The final decision rests with you. There-
fore, I urge you to exercise your right to vote on what is perhaps the most important issue in
BLE history.”

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UTU, BLE

Continued from page 1

- collecting and counting the ballots.

An “agreement between the parties” resolved that lawsuit, Haba said, paving the way for a second referendum among BLE members. Among changes in the second refer-
endum vote are that ballots will remain secret until the tally, the votes of American and Canadian members will be counted together and the plaintiffs who filed the lawsuit will be permitted to include with the ballots mailed a written statement in opposition to
the merger.

For BLE to approve the merger, a majority of the ballots cast by all active members, both Canadian and American, must favor the merger. The uninformed BLE ballots from the first referendum will be destroyed by the AAA
under the agreement to withdraw the lawsuit. The AAA will mail, collect and tally all BLE ballots in the second referendum.

Votes previously cast by UTU members and received by the American Arbitration Asso-
ciation by the Sept. 17 deadline will be
counted. Only BLE members will participate in a second referendum vote. There never

was any order questioning the validity of the
UTU ballots.

“I am extremely pleased that an agreement has been reached that will permit BLE mem-
bers to express themselves on this most crucial
decision of whether to merge with the Amtrak crafts, which will preserve historical craft autonomv,” UTU International President Byron A. Boyd, Jr., said.

In his letter to the BLE membership, Haba said, “The final decision rests with you. There-
fore, I urge you to exercise your right to vote on what is perhaps the most important issue in
BLE history.”
Voices: Do you have sufficient on-the-job security?

Willie Fulwiley
L-1563, El Monte, Cal.

“I’ve been a motorcoach operator for 26 years with the Los Angeles MTA. As operators, we’re out there with no security. Some of my co-workers have been assaulted. If something happens, we have to use the emergency button and call for help, but that’s after the fact that something’s already happened. We’ve had drivers drowned with coffee, soda, and even chemicals. The company wanted us to use seat belts, but we have to be able to come out of that seat any moment. Our right side is completely exposed when we open that door. If you had bad intentions, I could infect a bus driver with something, we’re at your disposal.”

Mitch Newell
L-977, Pasco, Wash.

“I’m a yard switchman for BNSF with 28 years of experience. Everybody here has been alerted to be aware of any unusual activity, and we’re all thinking about security now. I feel that talking about this is walking a fine line, because we have to be careful about making comments to outside sources. I don’t want to give anybody any ideas. The carrier has heightened the awareness within their police force, and they’ve given attention to tunnels and bridges. There have been notices put out about safety and procedures for handling hazmat shipments and paperwork. I’m critical of the railroad a lot of times, but not on this topic.”

Paul Remington
L-228, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

“I’m a Union Pacific engineer with just short of 29 years of experience. There’s definitely not enough security, but I don’t think there’s a whole lot that can be done to improve it. I really don’t see how you can protect this industry, with thousands of miles of track in remote locations. The fact is, we’re living in a dangerous world with a certain amount of inherent risk. It’s hard enough keeping end-of-train devices working, so I don’t think technology is the answer. I think the railroads should take a hard look at special agents and their training. I also believe the carrier can, and should, do a better job of keeping track of hazardous materials.”

G.G. Lawrence
L-1620, Elkhart, Ind.

“I’ve been a railroador since June 1970, and I’m a yardman for the Norfolk Southern. I think the carrier could beef up security more than they have. There was a notice put out asking us to report any suspicious activity, but I haven’t noticed any extra railroad police. I can handle myself, but I have some concerns about the kind of freight we’re handling. I can see a 101 ways to cause trouble if I were a terrorist. My feeling is that technology isn’t the answer to security issues. I’d like to see more warm bodies keeping watch, more security patrols driving by a little more often. It’s important, not just for us, but for the public.”

In Memoriam

E.W. “Tex” Croyle
A member of Local 816 at Harrisburg, Pa., Brother Croyle began his career as a trainman on the Pennsylvania Railroad and joined Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen (BRT) Lodge 574 in March 1942.
He was elected vice chairperson of the BRT’s Pennsylvania State Legislative Board in 1964, and held the position from unification until 1976, when he was elected alternate state legislative director. From 1978 until retiring in March 1988, he served as state legislative director, president of the state’s UTU Scholarship Aid Fund and chairman of the Rail Labor Committee of Pennsylvania. He was vice president of the state’s chapter of the AFL-CIO from 1978 through 1986 and served on the Advisory Committee of the Governor’s Occupational Safety and Health Conference. From 1981 to 1988, he served on the Pennsylvania High-Speed Intercity Rail Passenger Commission, and was instrumental in the formation of the Railroad Retiree Club of Pa.

Walter H. Callies
A member of Local 322 in Milwaukee, Brother Callies began his rail career as a brakeman on the Chicago & North Western, was soon promoted to conductor, and joined Division 46 of the Order of Railway Conductors and Brakemen (ORC&B). He was elected general chairperson in 1959, and following unification, served as vice general chairperson until retiring in September 1977.

Chester Pete Sawyer
Brother Sawyer, a member of Local 1593 in Brownwood, Tex., began his career as a brakeman on the AT&SF and joined BRT Lodge 985 in November 1947. He served as general chairperson from 1973 until retiring in January 1989.

Army Reserve seeks experienced railroaders

MIDDLETOWN, Conn. – As a result of the U.S. national emergency, the two Army Reserve railroad battalions are stepping up efforts to recruit experienced railroaders in the areas of train operations, maintenance of way, and railway equipment repair.

The two units include the 757th Transportation Battalion (Railway), with units located in the Chicago and Milwaukee metropolitan areas, and the 1205th Transportation Railway Operating Battalion, with units located in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and North Carolina.

According to Major Martin Piech, there are options available for those who do not live near the various units. Those interested in finding out how they can put their railroad skills to good use serving their nation in this time of need can contact Army Reserve representatives in the following ways:

For general information, contact:
Major Martin Piech
toll-free: 877-519-8533
e-mail: martin.piech@us.army.mil

For information about the 757th:
phone toll-free: SSG Steve Willis at 877-399-6595

For information about the 1205th:
phone toll-free: 877-519-8533
website: www.1205thtrob.com

The Army Reserve is especially seeking individuals with prior military service, Maj. Piech said, but all those with rail experience and a desire to aid their country are encouraged to contact the reserve.
Retiree helps create medical scholarship

When Retiree Program member George Paxton and his wife, Bonnie Jean, volunteered to help a neighbor and his wife, the good will was rippling back in a roundabout way.

A retired engineer and member of Local 1590 at Freedom, Pa., Paxton learned from his wife that a neighbor, Dr. Bert C. Wiley, and his wife needed help handling their affairs.

“We tried to maximize what Dr. Wiley could do to help other people,” Brother Paxton said, “and together we set up a medical scholarship program for students in the county. With a committee from our local hospital, my wife and I select the students to be granted $26,000 a year, based on need, desire and dedication.”

More than 30 have already benefited from the scholarship fund, which Paxton said will likely last forever. “We can grant anywhere from nine to 12 scholarships a year,” Paxton said.

Beginning his rail career on the Pennsylvania Railroad as a fireman, Paxton was promot ed to engineer in 1963. “I joined the Brother hood of Locomotive Enginemen and Firemen, but can’t remember the lodge number,” Paxton said. He retired in 1989 after suffering a heart attack.

Paxton, whose children are raising children of their own, realized after the scholarship was established that his grandchildren lived outside the county. Though his grandchildren, Zabrins, is a registered nurse working toward a B.S., she was excluded from schol arship eligibility.

As if to prove that “what goes around comes around,” Paxton’s granddaughter was chosen by random drawing to receive one of the 50 continuing United Transportation Union Insurance Association (UTUIA) scholarships granted each year.

“I really want to thank the UTU and UTUIA for the scholarship she received,” Paxton said. “She will soon graduate, and she already has work as a missionary nurse.”

U.S. Social Security and Railroad Retire ment Tier I benefits will increase 2.6% and Railroad Retirement Tier II benefits will increase 0.8% next year, federal officials said.

For Medicare Part A, which pays for hospital, skilled nursing, hospice care and some home health care, the beneficiaries deductible will rise to $812, up 2.5% from $792 in 2001. The premium for Medicare Part B, which helps pay for physicians services, ambulatory care and other services, will rise to $54 per month, up 8% from $50 per month in 2001, the Department of Health and Human Services said.

Tier II benefits are adjusted by 12.2% of the change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Vested dual benefit payments and supplemental annuities also paid by the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) are not adjusted for the rise in the CPI.

The average Railroad Retirement employee annuity will rise $29 a month to $1,479, and the average combined benefits for an employe e and spouse will increase $41 a month to $2,119. For aged widowed (er)s, the average survivor annuity will rise $20 a month to $890, the RRB said.

For Social Security beneficiaries, the average monthly benefit amount for all retired workers will rise from $852 to $874. The maximum federal Social Security monthly payments to an individual will rise from $530 to $545, while the payment for an eligible individual with an eligible spouse will total $817.

Like Social Security benefits, Tier I and vested dual benefits paid to employees and spouses, and Tier I and Tier II and vested dual benefits paid to survivors may be subject to deductions if post-retirement earnings exceed certain exempt amounts.

Under legislation enacted in April 2000, the retirement earnings test no longer applies to people above the normal retirement age (NRA). The NRA is age 65 for those born before 1938, and it will gradually increase to age 67. One of two different exempt amounts applies, depending on the year an annuitant attains normal retirement age.

For those who attain the NRA in 2002, the exempt amount is $30,000. Otherwise the exempt amount in 2001 is $11,280.

The Social Security Administration and the RRB withhold $1 in benefits for every $2 of earnings in excess of the lower exempt amount, and $1 in benefits for every $3 of earnings in excess of the higher exempt amount. Earnings in or after the month of NRA attainment do not count toward the retirement test.

Retired employees and spouses, regardless of age, who work for their last pre-retirement nonrailroad employer are also subject to an earnings deduction, in their Tier II and supplemental benefits, of $1 for every $2 in earnings up to a maximum reduction of 50%.

Retirees’ thoughts needed for planning Regional Meetings

Plans for the 2002 UTU/UTUIA Regional Meetings call for the inclusion of workshops addressing the needs of seniors, and UTU retirees are being asked to let the union know if they are interested in attending, how many days they would attend, what topics they would like to see addressed.

Preliminary plans call for workshops on Railroad Retirement, Social Security, health and welfare coverage, and investment strategies.

Next year’s Regional Meetings will be held at the Reno Hilton in Reno, Nev., June 10-12; the Hyatt Regency in Washington, D.C., July 29-31, and The Fairmont Hotel in New Orleans, La., August 15-17. The day before each meeting, a golf tournament will be held.

Please indicate if you would be interested in participating in that, as well.

Send your thoughts and ideas to: Regional Meetings, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4230.

RRB, Social Security COLAs, Medicare Part B to rise in 2002

Regional Meetings

Following are the names of members of the UTU Retiree Program who have died recently, according to reports received at UTU International headquarters. These brothers and sisters will be missed by their many friends and by fellow UTU Retiree Program members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Name</th>
<th>City/State</th>
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<tr>
<td>7 Triddle, Jack E.</td>
<td>Florence, AZ</td>
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<tr>
<td>145 Davis, Kenneth J.</td>
<td>Columbus, OH</td>
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<tr>
<td>202 Simpson, Jr., Fred E.</td>
<td>Boonfield, CO</td>
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<tr>
<td>219 Johnson, Jr., Everett W.</td>
<td>Center, MO</td>
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<tr>
<td>240 Allford, Frank F.</td>
<td>El Monte, CA</td>
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<td>254 Ryan, John G.</td>
<td>Everett, MA</td>
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<tr>
<td>305 Fricke, Louis L.</td>
<td>Lincolne, NE</td>
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<tr>
<td>312 Sorensen, Alfred H.</td>
<td>Adams, WI</td>
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<tr>
<td>322 Callies, William H.</td>
<td>Green Valley, AZ</td>
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<td>352 Harrison, Walter J.</td>
<td>W. Springfield, MA</td>
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<td>426 Choute, Sherman E.</td>
<td>Payson, AZ</td>
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<td>483 Palmer, Lester L.</td>
<td>Goderich, ON</td>
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<tr>
<td>525 Hellquist, Leonard W.</td>
<td>St. Cloud, MN</td>
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<tr>
<td>584 Parker, Teddly P.</td>
<td>Meridian, MS</td>
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<tr>
<td>607 Baker, Harold L.</td>
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<td>610 Serfas, Richard E.</td>
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<td>610 Tully, Russell J.</td>
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<td>631 Willian, Franklin L.</td>
<td>Hagerstown, MD</td>
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<tr>
<td>610 Trinko, Karl H.</td>
<td>Altoona, PA</td>
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<td>643 Lavelle, Jerry P.</td>
<td>Niota, IL</td>
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<td>646 Mitchell, Charles B.</td>
<td>Lewisville, TX</td>
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<tr>
<td>674 Luckey, Walter W.</td>
<td>Augusta, GA</td>
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<tr>
<td>706 Meader, Carl L.</td>
<td>Denton, TX</td>
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<tr>
<td>725 Lantier, J. Thomas H.</td>
<td>LaGrange, GA</td>
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<tr>
<td>816 Croye, E.W.</td>
<td>Enola, PA</td>
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<tr>
<td>933 Brooks, Dennis C.</td>
<td>Boonville, MD</td>
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<td>945 Lane, Ralford L.</td>
<td>Lajunta, CO</td>
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<tr>
<td>1074 Zellers, Jr., Charles</td>
<td>Well Tannery, PA</td>
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<tr>
<td>1177 Ihmholte, James</td>
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<tr>
<td>1293 Asplund, Clyde C.</td>
<td>Ironwood, MI</td>
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<td>1344 Knoll, C.J.</td>
<td>Mandan, ND</td>
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<td>1393 Krasinski, Edward A.</td>
<td>Hamburg, NY</td>
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<tr>
<td>1403 Johnston, Howard E.</td>
<td>Kansas City, MO</td>
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<tr>
<td>1422 Elkins, Donald W.</td>
<td>Arcadia, CA</td>
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<tr>
<td>1545 Brazil, Jr., William H.</td>
<td>Bull, LA</td>
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<tr>
<td>1595 Sawyer, Chester P.</td>
<td>Brownwood, TX</td>
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<tr>
<td>1628 Esrall, Richard C.</td>
<td>Pittsburgh, PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1638 Murphy, George H.</td>
<td>Okeechobee, FL</td>
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<tr>
<td>1948 Leach, Glennon</td>
<td>Vandalia, OH</td>
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</tbody>
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Think UTU for your holiday shopping needs

It is not too early to start thinking about holiday gifts for the UTU members in your family.

The UTU offers its members a wide variety of UTU-logoed items such as jackets, polo and T-shirts, sweatshirts, baseball caps, two types of watches, men's and women's rings, craft caps, belt buckles, pocket knives, tote bags, briefcases, pen sets, playing cards, golf balls, brass lanterns, sew-on patches and other items.

All items are union or American made. All prices include shipping and taxes. All UTU-logo items are available for viewing on the UTU web site at <www.utu.org/merch/items1.htm>.

Apparel and other Items

Jacket choices include: the Durango Jacket, a black duck-cloth coat with lining; the Stadium Jacket, in navy and white with a zip-off hood; the Herringbone Jacket, a lightweight jacket featuring a nice tan herringbone design; the Fleece Jacket, in a rich navy-blue fleece with a zippered front, and the Weekender Jacket, in either a Spring or Fall weight.

The UTU's selection of shirts includes the popular polo-style shirts in your choice of white or blue with pocket; the "Spencer" polo-style shirts in royal blue and green or light green and tan; the "Marsh" polo-style shirt with royal blue pinstripes; the "Brentley" polo-style shirt, a tan polo shirt with contrasting black collar and sleeves, and the "Fairview," which is a gray microweave pullover windshirt perfect for golf or other activities.

A variety of caps are available from the UTU, including baseball-style caps embroidered with either "UTU and Proud" or "UTU Retired and Proud," a baseball-style cap embroidered "Bus Operations," and corduroy baseball caps in black or navy blue.

Great for gift-giving are the UTU Craft Caps. A variety of different crafts are offered, each with the UTU logo. Please contact the UTU Supply Department at the address below for a list of available crafts.

Also available are soft-sided briefcases with pockets; a "Membership I" motorcoach replica coin bank; a clear acrylic yo-yo; a solid-brass belt buckle; a Zippo-brand pocket knife; a navy-blue lanyard for holding eyeglasses; a brass lantern; a three-foot by five-foot UTU flag; a royal-blue canvas barrel bag; an oversized tote bag; a money clip with nail file and knife; Garland-brand pen set; golf balls, tees or divot fixers, and a selection of sew-on patches.

An apparel and novelty item price list and order form also are available on the UTU website or by writing the UTU Supply Dept., 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250.

Watches and Rings

In a time-honored tradition, the significant moments that come but once in a lifetime now can be marked forever with a fine time-piece or ring custom-designed especially for UTU members.

Men's, Women's, Hamilton Watches Available

UTU rings that grandly display the union’s logo and highlight the union’s creed, “Progress Through Unity,” feature the wearer’s smooth-top or facet-cut birthstone circled with the words “United Transportation Union.”

The UTU men’s ring is available in “Aurora" (a gold alloy similar in color, hardness and wearability to 10K gold) for only $199 and in 10K gold for $375. Women’s rings are $330 for 10K or $355 for 14K gold. Add $12 for last-name personalization on ring side; $6 for year on opposite side; name and date can be engraved inside the ring for $7.

UTU medallion watches made by the Hamilton Watch Company feature the UTU logo and a choice of either a caboose, city bus or steam locomotive in three-dimensional relief, with up to four lines of personal engraving. In men’s or women’s styles and backed by a one-year guarantee, watches with Speidel expansion bracelet are $119, and those with a leather strap band are $129. Price includes jeweler’s presentation box, and four lines of engraving. Shipping is $5 in the U.S., $15 to Canada.

To place orders for UTU rings or Hamilton-made UTU medallion watches, call (440) 247-5414, or write to: Incentra, Inc., 67-B, Washington St., Chagrin Falls, OH 44022.

American Time Watches

Three distinctive American Time watches proudly emblazoned with the UTU logo also are available: a black dial with gold Arabic numerals, a gold-colored UTU logo and a date indicator; a white dial with gold Arabic numbers, blue and red UTU logo and a date indicator; and an elegant 14-karat gold-filled dial boasting proof-coin brilliance, with Roman numerals and a gold-colored UTU logo. Each watch is mounted in a classic, 18-karat gold-tone case, and protected by a mar-resistant mineral crystal.

Men’s and women's styles include your choice of a Speidel expansion band or a black leather strap, and may be engraved with a name and date, or other message. Each carries a two-year limited warranty.

The white- or black-dial watches are available at just $75 (plus $6.50 shipping), and the 14-karat gold dial watch is priced at $100 (plus $6.50 shipping). Engraving is extra, all prices quoted are U.S., and Canadians are requested to add $10 to the shipping price.

Order American Time watches by calling toll free (800) 272-5120. VISA and MasterCard are accepted.
Experience the Panama Canal with a twist! Active and retired UTU members and their guests are invited to enjoy a unique fraternal travel opportunity in the spring of 2002 when the UTU Travelers Club sponsors its Roundtrip Panama Canal Cruise aboard the Princess Cruise Line’s Sun Princess.

Set for March 6 through March 16, 2002, the Roundtrip Panama Canal Cruise provides a twist on the traditional 10-day cruise of the canal, offering the convenience of sailing from, and returning to, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

With cabin prices starting at just $1,522 per person (based on double occupancy), this Love Boat adventure gives those who were closed out of our sold-out Fall Foliage Cruise aboard the Crown Princess another opportunity to experience Grand Class cruising, where big-ship choice combines with small-ship intimacy to create an experience unlike any other.

Pampered guests aboard this cruise will embark from Ft. Lauderdale on Wednesday, March 6, and set sail for arrival on March 8 in Cozumel, Mexico. From there, travelers will head to the charming, British-influenced island of Grand Cayman. After a day at sea on March 10, participants will dock at Limón, Costa Rica, which offers white, sandy beaches and misty mountains draped in lush rainforest.

On March 12, the real adventure begins when the ship enters the Panama Canal at the Gatun Locks and heads for Gatun Lake, an immense 168-square-mile artificial reservoir surrounded by lush, impenetrable jungle.

Returning through the same locks, the ship cruises to Cartagena, Columbia, where travelers will get a glimpse on March 13 of colonial Spain as they stroll into the 16th century walled city boasting local boutiques that offer the world’s finest emeralds.

Two days at sea on the way back to Ft. Lauderdale give travelers ample opportunity to discover why Princess cruises outclass the rest.

Retired UTU member Willis G. Croonquist and his wife, Rita, pose for their annual Christmas photograph with their seven grandchildren. The Croonquists gave each of their grandchildren a gift that will last a lifetime: a paid-up, $25,000 life insurance policy from the United Transportation Union Insurance Association.

“The best thing I gave each of them was a paid-up $25,000 life insurance policy.”
– Willis G. Croonquist
Local 1177, Willmar, Minn.

Permanent life insurance is a wonderful way to provide a lifetime benefit for your youngsters. What better way to show them you care? Permanent life insurance is very inexpensive at young ages, and premium-paying choices are endless, since premiums can be paid in one easy payment or over just about any period of time you select. Give a gift that keeps on giving by returning the coupon below, or by calling toll-free, 1-800-558-8842, for assistance from your UTUIA representative.

PARENTS...GRANDPARENTS...
This Christmas, Give a Gift that Will Last a Lifetime

Have you ever stopped to think about what you could have done with the money you spent on Christmas gifts in the past? If you’re like most parents and grandparents, you go overboard. But what usually happens to those gifts? Do they end up in the corner, rarely played with or worse yet, broken? Why not give your little ones a lasting gift this Christmas?

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