**The Voice of Transportation Labor**

“UTU’s friends in Congress assure us the carriers will not succeed in scrapping FELA.”

– UTU International President Paul C. Thompson

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**New & Notes**

**Debs plaque reminder**

UTU locals thinking of sponsoring a plaque honoring labor legend Eugene V. Debs as part of a project in Grand Rapids, Mich., to honor organized labor should act quickly. The Debs plaque is an integral part of the “Spirit of Solidarity,” a $1.275-million tribute to labor at the entrance to the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum. Checks, made out to the “United Transportation Union, Spirit of Solidarity,” should be sent to: UTU, Attn: Dora Wolf, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107. Each UTU local contributing $250 or more will be honored with the local’s name on a main walkway brick.

**Taxed-wage caps rise**

The amounts of compensation subject to Social Security and Railroad Retirement taxes will rise in 2005, but the taxation rate for Social Security and Railroad Retirement Tier I benefits will remain the same for employees and employers, the Railroad Retirement Board said.

In 2004, the maximum amount of earnings taxed for Social Security and Tier I benefits was capped at $87,900. In 2005 that amount will rise to $90,000. The tax rate, paid by both employers and employees, will remain at 7.65 percent. This tax includes a Medicare tax of 1.45 percent, but there is no cap on the amount of earnings that can be taxed for Medicare.

The earnings cap in 2004 for Railroad Retirement Tier II benefits was $65,100, but will rise in 2005 to $66,900. The good news is that the taxation rate levied against employees for Tier II benefits was 5.0 percent in 2004 and will drop from 5.1 percent to 4.4 percent in 2005.

**New UTU merchandise**

In conjunction with American Products, the UTU is offering a new line of clothing and merchandise bearing the union’s “new millennium” logo. All of the UTU items being sold through American Products are either union-made or are made in America.

To view the new line of merchandise, visit the UTU website at www.utu.org and click on the “UTU Gear” button in the blue menu bar on the left-hand side of the page.

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**BLET: ‘It’s good for us, but don’t you try it!’**

Bizarre as it may sound, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) has filed a lawsuit against the UTU complains of an action the BLET initiated. Equally wacky is that hours after the BLET filed its lawsuit, it was successful in an arbitration defending its own identical behavior.

Here are the facts:

Some years ago, the BLET imposed so-called “seniority maintenance” fees on all Illinois Central and Kansas City Southern (including KCS subsidiary South Rail) employees holding engineer seniority dates. Unless those employees, who belonged to the UTU, paid the seniority maintenance fees to the BLET, they could not accumulate additional engineer seniority while working as engineers. More recently, the BLET imposed seniority maintenance fees for all engineers employed by Conrail in the Shared Assets Area.

The fees are intended to reimburse the BLET for the fair share of the expenses of negotiating and administering the engineers’ collective bargaining agreement.

The fees also serve as a deterrent to engineers joining the UTU, and to encourage trainmen, who hold both engineer and trainmen seniority, to join the BLET. But when that didn’t have its desired effect, and engineers continued to choose the UTU over the other organization, the BLET began offering cut-rate dues to train service employees in a blatant attempt to raid the UTU.

As a defensive measure, and only years after the BLET imposed seniority maintenance fees, the UTU sought – and obtained from most major railroads – similar authority to impose seniority maintenance fees on trainmen.

The UTU made absolutely clear when it obtained this authority that it would halt implementation of seniority maintenance fees if the BLET stopped its raiding of the UTU – that is, the offering of cut-rate dues to trainmen – and scrapped its own imposition of seniority maintenance fees.

Instead, the BLET on Nov. 24 filed a lawsuit against UTU for fees it also charges members.

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**Feds say rail cops harass workers**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – For many years, the United Transportation Union has complained to carriers about improper conduct of railroad police, who have abused and harassed UTU members – as well as rail employees represented by other organizations – through oppressive interview tactics, illegal wiretapping, spying and other inappropriate activities.

No more are the UTU complaints merely allegations. The Department of Transportation's inspector general has validated the UTU's complaints, calling many railroad police actions against UTU members "serious issues," "misconduct" and "heavy-handed."

In a report to the bipartisan leadership of the Senate Commerce Committee, which has oversight of railroads, DOT Inspector General Kenneth Mead (the IG) said his office investigated
Local 23, Santa Cruz, Calif. Members of this local, employed by the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District as well as Galt Health Rides, held a holiday party Dec. 11 featuring music, food, raffles and gifts, said Local Chairperson Bonnie Morr. Honored at the event was bus operator Patricia Clarke, who is retiring after working since 1978 without an accident. Meanwhile, the local is asking the transit district to open negotiations early, with health-care premiums paid on the front burner.

Local 48, Norfolk, Va. Members of this Norfolk Southern local are mourning the death of retired UTUIA Field Supervisor Henry "Hank" Hunter, 84, who passed away Oct. 27. Brother Hunter had recently suffered a stroke, and during treatment doctors discovered he also had a malignant brain tumor. Hunter had 49 years of railroad experience and served the UTU and UTUIA for 37 years.

Local 61, Newark, N.J. Conductor and trainmen in this NJ Transit local held an educational seminar after their regularly scheduled meeting on Nov. 30, said International Vice President Tony Iannone. General Chairperson X. D. Williams invited Iannone and State Legislative Director Danny O’Connell to assist, and gave special recognition to Vice Chairperson David Rasmussen for coordinating the event. O’Connell’s presentation focused on UTU PAC and legislation affecting NJ Transit, and he noted the lawmakers who support legislation benefitting rail and bus members.

Local 500, Grand Junction, Colo. Retired Union Pacific switchman Art Kent recently held a UTU for Life meeting, and looks forward to hosting another in March. Kent, who retired Dec. 15, according to Trustee and Vice Chairperson Court Skinner, for the intent of integrating the two railways, said Local Chairperson John Holiday. The next step will be to remove seniority issues. “Keeping our existing contract until the end of 2006 is a huge win,” said Secretary-Treasurer David Moorehouse. For updates, visit the website shared by the two locals at www.utubc.com.

Local 1529, Walbridge, Ohio Members of this CSXT local now have their own website, said Vice President Doug L. Losiewicz. The website can be viewed at www.utu1529.org.

Local 1594, Upper Darby, Pa. Among the 44 members of this SEPTA local lauded as distinguished bus operators at the recent annual safety banquet were Bill Novak, who is retiring at the end of 2004, and Legislative Rep. Tom Bisignani, said General Chairperson Ron Koran. Single out from among 5,000 SEPTA employees, neither have ever been disciplined, and each boast at least 35 years of safe driving. An officer for 30 of his 38 years in the industry, Brother Bisignani intends to negotiate one more contract before retiring at the end of 2005. Brother Novak’s son, Joe Novak, took a job with SEPTA so he could join the UTU.

Local 1741, San Francisco, Calif. If the mechanics who fix the San Francisco Unified School District’s buses decide to strike, members of this school’s local will not cross the picket line, Local President Ange Beloy said. Check the local’s webpage at www.sfutu.org for updates. (See Page 3 for the full story.)

Local 1778, N. Vancouver, B.C. Trainmen in this former BC Rail local, as well as trainmen in Local 1923, Prince George, B.C., signed an agreement Dec. 1 with the Canadian National Railway, which purchased BC Rail, for the intent of integrating the two railways, said Local Chairperson John Holliday. The next step will be to remove seniority issues. “Keeping our existing contract until the end of 2006 is a huge win,” said Secretary-Treasurer David Moorehouse. For updates, visit the website shared by the two locals at www.utubc.com.

Local 1846, W. Colton, Calif. Plans called for this Union Pacific switchmen’s local to host a Christmas party Dec. 20 for active members and their families at Stewart Anderson’s Black Angus Restaurant in San Bernardino, said Local President Richard Escamilla.

Local 1977, Seattle, Wash. Retired BNSF yardmaster Jim Sofie, 71, a long-time member of the UTU for Life program, has extended an invitation to join him and the members of the Polar Bear Club in a brisk swim in Lake Wenatchee near Leavenworth, Wash., at 2 p.m. on Jan. 1, 2005. Call Sofie at (509) 763-2197, or send e-mail to leavenworthpolarbear@yahoo.com.

Lifetime max boosted The lifetime maximum benefit for each individual covered under the Railroad Employees’ National Early Retirement Major Medical Benefit Plan (UniteHealthcare’s Policy GA-46003) will increase from $38,100 to $92,400 as of Jan. 1, 2005. The $4,300 in additional benefits payable applies to expenses incured on or after Jan. 1, 2005. The lifetime maximum benefit is adjusted each year based on the medical cost component of the Consumer Price Index. Around the UTU News from around the U.S. and Canada

Local 733, DeQueen, Ark. Members of this BNSF local in Texas are mourning the death of retired UTUIA Field Supervisor Harry "Doc" Gordon, who retired Dec. 15, according to Trustee and Vice Local Chairperson Court Skinner. Brother Gordon, who began his career as a brakeman on the AT&SF in June 1965, served as editor of the local newsletter, Bakehead News, for nearly seven years. Taking the reins of the publication will be Bill Clemmer. Meanwhile, more than 550 attended the annual family Christmas party hosted in early December by the local in conjunction with Tri-State Auxiliary 711, said Local President Larry A. Parker. The party was held over the course of two days so all could participate.

Local 1252, Fresno, Calif. Members of this BNSF local are mourning the deaths of four retirees, of which past Secretary-Treasurer Don Heffernan. Those who recently passed away include yardmaster Harry Torongo, conductor Elmer Finken, conductor and past Local Chairperson (Trainmen) Leon Reynolds and engineer Richard Koontz.
City halts SEPTA’s plans for fare hike

PHILADELPHIA – In a rare use of its veto power, the City of Philadelphia in December that the brakes on a last-minute plan by the SEPTA board to erase the agency’s $920-million budget. SEPTA officials predicted one million daily riders – can veto any measure.

SEPTA riders’ sense of relief could be short-lived. Most board members vowed to override the measure. Under Pennsylvania law, the two representatives of the city – home to 80 percent of SEPTA’s estimated one million daily riders – can veto any measure.

Since September, SEPTA had threatened to raise fares by 25 percent, end weekend service and lay off 1,300 employees. SEPTA officials predicted that 20 percent of commuters would abandon public transit.

Local 1741 drivers prepare to honor pickets

SAN FRANCISCO – Members of Local 1741 in San Francisco, employees of Laidlaw, are preparing to honor the picket lines of mechanics on the property who are preparing to strike over wages and health-care benefits as this issue of UTU News goes to press.

More than 6,500 students could be left without transportation as of Jan. 3, 2005, if the 10 mechanics who fix the San Francisco Unified School District’s buses decide to strike. In support of their cause, the UTU-represented drivers have vowed not to cross the picket line.

“If they’re on strike, the buses won’t be rolling,” said Ange Beloy, president of Local 1741.

The mechanics and approximately 230 drivers work for Laidlaw, the largest school bus operator in North America. Negotiations between the mechanics and Laidlaw have been ongoing for more than 18 months, during which time the mechanics have worked without a contract.

The main areas of contention are wages and health benefits. Currently, the mechanics make $28 to $32 an hour and are expected to contribute a co-payment of about $173 a month for their health insurance. They’ve asked Laidlaw for a cost-of-living increase for the company to pay all of the health insurance costs.

Both sides are hoping to reach a final agreement by Dec. 17, the last school day before the district’s two-week winter break.

Feds say target drivers with medical conditions

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Federal safety officials said last month that states must do a better job identifying and removing from roadways drivers with medical conditions that make them dangerous to other motorists.

The National Transportation Safety Board recommended that states adopt laws to guarantee legal immunity for doctors, family members and others who report dangerous drivers to state motor vehicle officials. Twenty states and the District of Columbia have no such laws.

Six states – New Jersey, Nevada, California, Delaware, Oregon and Pennsylvania – require doctors to report drivers with high-risk conditions. Board members said police need to be trained to spot drivers with medical problems and doctors should be taught to talk to patients about whether they should be driving. The board also said federal agencies need to coordinate transportation possibilities for people who can no longer drive.

The government has no data on crashes caused by medical conditions, so the extent of the problem is unknown. The NTSB studied six crashes, including five caused by epileptics having seizures and one by a diabetic who had a blackout, before issuing its recommendations. The crashes, in Maryland, Pennsylvania and Florida, killed eight people and injured 24.

Authorities said as many as one in four drivers could have a condition that may cause a crash if they included arthritis, sleep disorders, high blood pressure, Alzheimer’s disease, alcoholism and cataracts.

Officials crack down on diesel bus fumes

BOSTON – State environmental officials are taking aim at pollution caused by school buses by invoking a seldom-enforced law that limits most vehicle idling to no more than five minutes, according to the Daily News Tribune.

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) conducted a sweep of 34 schools in September and October and found that students in many communities, including Waltham and Shrewsbury, were being exposed to more diesel exhaust than permitted under state law. More inspections are ongoing and a third round will be conducted in the spring.

“It’s serious, especially when you have buses idling and spewing the emissions they do around children,” said Ed Coletta, DEP spokesman.

“Children breathe deeper. They breathe 50 percent deeper than adults because they have smaller lungs.”

Officials at the DEP warn that diesel exhaust can cause breathing difficulties, respiratory infections and attacks of asthma and chronic bronchitis. Diesel exhaust from idling buses can accumulate in schoolyards and inside schools when bus stops are near air intake vents.

The law allows for fines of up to $100 for a first offense and up to $500 for repeat offenses, but has rarely been enforced.

DEP is urging school districts to direct drivers to turn off engines as they arrive at school driveways or parking lots, post “idling limit” signs and retrofit buses with pollution controls or buy new buses with cleaner-burning engines.

UTU 35th Anniversary watch now available

The UTU has commissioned a 35th Anniversary Limited-Edition union-made watch for the members of this great union. The watch, created by American Time, features a brilliant, die-struck, 14-karat gold-filled watch face that captures the detail of the union logo in proof coin brilliance.

Sequentially numbered from 1 to 1,000 (men’s) and 1 to 500 (ladies’), this limited-edition members’ watch will provide you with an heirloom that will be treasured forever.

The timepieces are created by union-represented watchmakers at the American Time Company in Rochester, N.Y., so you know these watches guarantee you quality and reliability in the tradition of the great railroad watches of yesteryear.

The watches are available with either an expansion bracelet or leather band. The cost is $125 for either the men’s or ladies’ style, plus $6.95 for shipping and handling.

Also, 20 percent of the purchase price will be donated to the UTU PAC fund, so your purchase gives twice!

Honor this historic event and reserve your limited-edition 35th Anniversary UTU watch today.

To order call (800) 272-5120. You also may download an order form from the UTU website, www.utu.org by clicking on the “UTU Gear” button.

If you prefer, you can fax your order to American Time at (585) 295-8004; please include your choice of men’s or ladies’ watch, band desired, credit card number and expiration date.

www.utu.org www.utuia.org
Better transport safety means better training

We can think of no better New Year’s resolution for employers than to do something positive about workplace safety. Hanging posters proclaiming, “safety first,” but not investing in more and improved training programs, is shameful. Saving money by not hiring, while working existing employees to exhaustion – where they are accidents waiting to happen – is senseless. Refusing to invest in improved security is scandalous. More than three years after 9/11, baggage loaded aboard buses and trains is not being inspected for explosives. Employees have not been trained to recognize and respond to security threats.

Cargo containers are being unloaded directly from ships to rail cars without adequate inspection. In spite of warnings that terrorists could target buses and trains, communication between operating employees and police has not been upgraded.

Outrageous as all this is, carriers have taken even more contemptible action by opposing whistleblower protection, and by lobbying Congress to scrap a law – the Federal Employers’ Liability Act, or FELA – that allows injured rail workers to recover damages when the workplace is unsafe.

What a wonderful year 2005 would be if carriers would voluntarily do the right thing and cooperatively sit down with UTU to improve workplace safety. Railroads respond—on rail safety where CEOs will be asked to answer questions under a public spotlight. It makes more sense for the carriers to cooperate with the UTU to improve workplace safety.

One way or the other, 2005 is likely to produce workplace safety gains. They have been too long in coming.
Idaho
Officers from UTU Locals 265 and 78 (both based in Idaho Falls) met with Union Pacific (UP) management last month to work out the implementation of remote control operations in the Pocatello yard, according to State Director George Millward.
A target date of Jan. 3, 2005, was set to begin training employees who will operate the remote control locomotives. Training will be given to employees who have worked in the Pocatello yard for more than 30 years as well as to those with only a few months of service.
Millward said the initial training will last approximately four months.
Ten current assignments will be replaced by remote control operations, Millward said. About 15 yard engineers will not lose their jobs; they will be absorbed into the current local and road operations, he said.
Sam Teullie Sr. (Local 202, Denver), who serves as vice general chairperson, insisted that UP management work closely with local UTU officers in the implementation and training of remote control operations as well as training of local and road crews as to the new work rules that will be in effect in the Pocatello yard. UP agreed with Teullie and approved an overview committee of 14 employees.
Manager of Terminal Operations Steve Wil-ard said, “We have been working with the locomotive engineers for more than 20 years and I have expected it to come long before now.
Technology has been in our industry for more than 30 years, but we can’t stop proven technology. This implementation of remote control is ‘safety first’ technology.”
Manager of Terminal Operations Steve Wil-ard said his main concern in the implementation of remote control is “safety to crew members as well as to the community. I hate to see the locomotive engineer replaced by a little box with toggle switches but we can’t stop proven technology. This technology will help the locomotive industry for more than 20 years and I have expected it to come long before now.
“We tried to get the other union that represents many of the engineers here in Pocatello to negotiate with us on remote control operations, but they insisted on having all of the work, not half of the work,” Millward said. “Had we not continued negotiations with UP, we were faced with losing 30 or more switchman positions that the UTU represents.”

Colorado
“No, there wasn’t a change from a being a ‘red’ state in the presidential election, but there was a change to blue in many other political races within the state.”
Johnson said Colorado elected two Hispanics to higher office: Democratic Senate candi-date Ken Salazar and Democratic Third Con-gressional District candidate John Salazar.
“Yes, Ken and John are brothers from south-ern Colorado,” Johnson said. “With their rural roots and moderate political views, the Salazar brothers beat formidable Republican oppo-nents to win their seats.
Johnson also said Colorado made history when both the state Senate and House changed majorities from Republican to Democratic. “It has been 44 years since both chambers were pre-dominantly Democratic,” Johnson said. “Thanks to the political funding of UTU PAC, feet on the ground and an aggressive get-out-the-vote effort, this election really did change the color of the state to ‘a light blue.’”

New England States
New England States Legislative Board Director George Casey reports that Boston-area Amtrak Locals 262 and 1462 sponsored a blood drive for Conductor Larry Solomon in South Station, Boston, earlier this month. Local 1462 Secretary Roberta Pianna is chair-person of the blood drive and can be contacted at (617) 345-7839 for further information.

Our work cut out for us in 2005
We must wage the battle for security.
With four more years of a president who favors big busi-ness, we must work even harder to educate lawmakers in Congress that transportation security means more than airlines. Bus passengers and baggage must be screened. Increased bus oper-ator training and security is a must.
You can help by contacting your lawmakers and explaining the impor-tance of increased bus security. Our national legislative office will also be doing so when Congress returns to Washington, D.C., in January.
We have secured wage and benefits increases and improved working conditions for Locals 113 and 1731.
On Nov. 1, Locals 1697 and 113 (Alex operators) were consolidated into Local 1731 in Spokane, Wash. We are conducting elections for Local 1731.
The carriers have always looked to eliminate and/or consolidate posi-tions to positions based upon qualification and ability.”
It is likely negotiations will be long and quite difficult. This round of collective bargaining is likely to be one of labor’s hardest-fought battles.
The carriers have always looked to eliminate and/or consolidate posi-tions to positions based upon qualification and ability.”
This would eliminate the seniority provisions in agreements and allow carriers to put whatever they want on positions, regardless of seniority. The carriers have been after this since the 1988 round. The carriers do not want to accept the fact that yardmasters are not usually entry-level posi-tions, but rather a stepping stone.
Instead of seeking to eliminate the seniority protection in our agreements, carriers would be better served by looking at work loads and stress levels in our positions. In many instances, people have decided that stress and/or the quality of life is not worth working a yardmaster position.
I can assure you that in this round of bargaining, as in the past, seniority, work preservation and quality of life are at the top of the list as we begin negotiations with the carriers.
As we prepare for this difficult round of negotiations, Doyle Turner, Cara McGrady and I extend to you and your families our best wishes for a safe and prosperous holiday season and new year.
News from UTU State Legislative Boards

Minnesota
The UTU Minnesota State Legislative Board held a conference recently where union officers and others reviewed current initiatives and talked about federal and state elections. On hand as a show of support was Minnesota State Sen. David Tomassoni and State Rep. Tony Smith. Shown at the conference, standing left to right, are Local 1292 (Proctor) member Paul Fish, Duluth, Massa-chie & Iron Range General Chairperson Clyde Larson, Local 1067 (Virginia) Legislative Rep. Jim Barker; newly elected State Director Phil Quay and Tomassoni. Seated is Local 1175 Duluth Legislative Rep. Richard Olson.

Texas
Following a rash of deadly derailments in and around San Antonio, State Director Connie English has been working with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), local government-officials and the carriers to help straight-en the mess.
“The Union Pacific (UP) and the FRA have started an ‘FTX’ field training exercise program that will last for one year there,” English said. “UP put up a command center at the Kirby Yard where crews have to call in, get job briefings and all of the current bulletins. FRA also is out on the property testing rules knowledge not only of the employees but the managers, too.”
English said the UP replaced the supern-tendent in San Antonio in an attempt to boost employee morale. “Morale starts with the superintendent,” he said.

State Watch

Idaho

Minnesota

Our work cut out for us in 2005

By Roy Arnold, vice president–director

By J.R. (Jim) Cumby, vice president

Youth seniority

is sacred

We are in the process of exchanging Section 6 notices with the carriers as we begin a new round of negotiations toward improving wages and benefits, working conditions and our quality of life. Existing contracts are open for revi-sion effective Jan. 1.

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We share the same goals for a safe, secure transportation system and for preserving quality of life and decent pay for rail workers.
The UTU has won arbitration for Local 1670 in Harlingen, Texas. The UTU has won an arbitration for Local 1670 in Harlingen, Texas.
The carriers have been after this since the 1988 round. The carriers do not want to accept the fact that yardmasters are not usually entry-level posi-
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As we prepare for this difficult round of negotiations, Doyle Turner, Cara McGrady and I extend to you and your families our best wishes for a safe and prosperous holiday season and new year.
**Member’s first book takes on mysteries**

Members who purchase a copy of E.H. (Frank) Wallace's first book will be involved in tackling two mysteries for the price of one.

In the retired Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) conductor's book, *Tickets, Please...*, a commuter train conductor’s life is turned upside down when he is suspected of robbing and shooting dead a jewelry salesman on his train. But readers engrossed in the mystery written by Brother Wallace should be gratified to know that 40 percent of the proceeds from the novel will help medical researchers unravel the mysteries they face battling melanoma cancer.

“I had finished the book, but put it on the shelf when I learned my 27-year-old daughter, Kelly Ann, had cancer,” said Brother Wallace, a member of Local 645 in Babylon, N.Y. “I promised her before she died that proceeds from this book would go to the cancer research and treatment program at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in Manhattan.”

Wallace, who spent 28 years on the rails before retiring in September 1999, based one of the characters in his book on a friend, a retired LIRR detective. “I included a lot of rail jargon and explain the mechanics of railroading to the reader,” he said. “This is the first of a series of five books I’ve planned that will involve some of the same characters.”

Though he began his rail career on the LIRR in 1971, Wallace always wanted to write. “I attended writing courses over the years, thanks to Veterans Administration benefits. But I didn’t really get busy with it until I retired.”

The book is available at Barnes & Noble bookstores, through Amazon.com, and will be in a variety of other bookstores soon. Excerpts can be read online at www.Xlibris.com. “Click on the ‘Bookstore’ link on the left, then click on the ‘search’ link, and fill in ‘Wallace’ as the search term,” the book’s author said.

Contact Brother Wallace at (631) 226-0797, or send him e-mail at tickets@optonline.net.

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## Q’s & A’s address changes affecting Medicare in 2005

By V.M. “Butch” Speelman Jr.

The Medicare program provides hospital and medical insurance protection for railroad retiree annuitants and their families, just as it does for Social Security beneficiaries. The following questions and answers provide basic information on some of the changes in Medicare that will take effect in 2005.

**What are the Medicare Part A deductible and coinsurance charges in 2004 and what will they be in 2005?**

For the first 60 days in a benefit period, a Medicare patient is responsible for paying a deductible, which for 2004 is the first $757 of all covered inpatient hospital services. The Part A deductible will increase to $912 in 2005. The daily coinsurance charge that a Medicare beneficiary is responsible for paying for hospital care for the 61st through the 90th day is $219 in 2004, increasing to $228 per day in 2005. If a beneficiary uses “lifetime reserve” days, he or she is responsible for paying $458 a day for each reserve day used in 2004, and $456 a day in 2005. Lifetime reserve days are an extra 60 hospital days a beneficiary can use if he keeps him or her in the hospital for more than 90 days; a beneficiary has only 60 reserve days during his or her lifetime and the beneficiary decides when to use them.

In addition, the daily coinsurance charge a beneficiary is responsible for paying for care in a skilled nursing facility for the 21st through the 100th day is $109.50 in 2004 and will be $114 in 2005.

**Will the Medicare Part B deductible and premium next year and by how much?**

The annual deductible for Medicare Part B will increase from $100 in 2004 to $110 in 2005. After that, the deductible will be indexed and subject to annual increases. After the deductible is paid, Medicare will generally pay 80 percent of the approved charges for covered services during the rest of the year; the beneficiary is responsible for paying the remaining 20 percent of the cost. All beneficiaries currently pay the same basic premium amount for Medicare Part B ($66.60 in 2004 and increasing to $78.20 in 2005, which covers outpatient care and doctor visits. Beginning in 2007, the premium will increase for individuals with annual incomes of more than $80,000, and for couples with annual incomes of more than $160,000, on a sliding income scale.

**What new preventive benefits are being offered?**

Beginning in 2005, preventive benefits coverage will be expanded to include: a one-time initial wellness physical examination; screening blood tests for early detection of cardiovascular diseases, and diabetes screening tests for people at risk of diabetes.

Will Medicare be putting out information about program changes?

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the federal agency responsible for administering Medicare, plans to mail informational booklets in 2005 to Medicare beneficiaries to explain the prescription drug benefits that will begin in 2006.

In the meantime, CMS will provide information about Medicare-approved drug discount cards through Medicare’s toll-free number 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227), and through the program’s website at www.medicare.gov.

V. M. “Butch” Speelman Jr. serves as labor member of the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board.

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**Retiree marks 100th birthday**

Best wishes for continued life in good health recently went out from the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) to a retired UTU member who marked his 100th birthday in November.

Lewis J. Welch of Local 1397 in Columbus, Ohio, a switchman who retired from the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad in December 1967, became a centenarian on Nov. 2, 2004, the RRB said.

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**The Final Call**

Following are the names of recently deceased retirees who maintained annual membership in the UTU for Life Program (formerly known as the UTU Retiree Program), according to reports received at UTU International Headquarters. These brothers and sisters will be missed by their many friends and by fellow UTU for Life members.

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<th>Local</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>City/State</th>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>Chapman, Lawrence A. N.</td>
<td>Fond Du Lac, Wis.</td>
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<td>McDermott, John P.</td>
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**Q’s & A’s address changes affecting Medicare in 2005**

By V.M. “Butch” Speelman Jr.

The Medicare program provides hospital and medical insurance protection for railroad retiree annuitants and their families, just as it does for Social Security beneficiaries. The following questions and answers provide basic information on some of the changes in Medicare that will take effect in 2005.

**What are the Medicare Part A deductible and coinsurance charges in 2004 and what will they be in 2005?**

For the first 60 days in a benefit period, a Medicare patient is responsible for paying a deductible, which for 2004 is the first $757 of all covered inpatient hospital services. The Part A deductible will increase to $912 in 2005. The daily coinsurance charge that a Medicare beneficiary is responsible for paying for hospital care for the 61st through the 90th day is $219 in 2004, increasing to $228 per day in 2005. If a beneficiary uses “lifetime reserve” days, he or she is responsible for paying $458 a day for each reserve day used in 2004, and $456 a day in 2005. Lifetime reserve days are an extra 60 hospital days a beneficiary can use if he keeps him or her in the hospital for more than 90 days; a beneficiary has only 60 reserve days during his or her lifetime and the beneficiary decides when to use them.

In addition, the daily coinsurance charge a beneficiary is responsible for paying for care in a skilled nursing facility for the 21st through the 100th day is $109.50 in 2004 and will be $114 in 2005.

**Will the Medicare Part B deductible and premium next year and by how much?**

The annual deductible for Medicare Part B will increase from $100 in 2004 to $110 in 2005. After that, the deductible will be indexed and subject to annual increases. After the deductible is paid, Medicare will generally pay 80 percent of the approved charges for covered services during the rest of the year; the beneficiary is responsible for paying the remaining 20 percent of the cost. All beneficiaries currently pay the same basic premium amount for Medicare Part B ($66.60 in 2004 and increasing to $78.20 in 2005, which covers outpatient care and doctor visits. Beginning in 2007, the premium will increase for individuals with annual incomes of more than $80,000, and for couples with annual incomes of more than $160,000, on a sliding income scale.

**What new preventive benefits are being offered?**

Beginning in 2005, preventive benefits coverage will be expanded to include: a one-time initial wellness physical examination; screening blood tests for early detection of cardiovascular diseases, and diabetes screening tests for people at risk of diabetes.

Will Medicare be putting out information about program changes?

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the federal agency responsible for administering Medicare, plans to mail informational booklets in 2005 to Medicare beneficiaries to explain the prescription drug benefits that will begin in 2006.

In the meantime, CMS will provide information about Medicare-approved drug discount cards through Medicare’s toll-free number 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227), and through the program’s website at www.medicare.gov.

V. M. “Butch” Speelman Jr. serves as labor member of the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board.

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**Retiree marks 100th birthday**

Best wishes for continued life in good health recently went out from the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) to a retired UTU member who marked his 100th birthday in November.

Lewis J. Welch of Local 1397 in Columbus, Ohio, a switchman who retired from the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad in December 1967, became a centenarian on Nov. 2, 2004, the RRB said.

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**The Final Call**

Following are the names of recently deceased retirees who maintained annual membership in the UTU for Life Program (formerly known as the UTU Retiree Program), according to reports received at UTU International Headquarters. These brothers and sisters will be missed by their many friends and by fellow UTU for Life members.
UTU for Life program offers improved benefits for retirees

The UTU is pleased to announce a number of new benefits for retired members who voluntarily belong to the union’s UTU for Life program.

The new benefits, announced below, are by far the most significant improvements in the program since the program was created in 1976.

And, the additional benefits are being provided at no additional cost to members of the program.

The benefits, which take effect Feb. 1, 2005, include additional discounts on cellular telephones, hotels and motels, cruises and tours, insurance and other items.

Retirement should not mean abandoning workplace friends, losing touch with your industry’s current events and not having influence over public-policy issues affecting retirement.

To keep UTU members together and informed, and to provide them with benefits to help them and their families in their golden years, the UTU for Life program was created. UTU for Life is an expansion of the UTU Retirees Club and its greatest strength will be at the local level.

The UTU for Life program is bringing UTU retirees and active members together for luncheons and other activities aimed at fellowship, information and political action. Dues are still only $9 per year.

“Our retired members from the air, rail, bus and transit industries deserve an opportunity to stay in touch, swap stories, receive information on health care, retirement benefits and legal issues and be part of UTU’s legislative program,” said UTU International President Paul C. Thompson.

“Wherever UTU retirees live, there is opportunity for a UTU for Life chapter and UTU will assist in its organization.”

The first UTU for Life chapter was formed in the Seattle-Tacoma area. Retiree Jim Shelley of Seattle coordinated the chapter’s formation. The members of each chapter determine the frequency and location of their meeting and other get-togethers. Spouses are always invited to participate.

“UTU retirees are among our most effective members in influencing lawmakers on issues of Railroad Retirement, Medicare and Amtrak,” Thompson said.

“We also work to offer our retirees a wide-ranging package of benefits that they and their families can use to save money, enjoy their retirement years, enhance their quality of life and celebrate their union affiliation. We think the UTU for Life program offers all that, and very affordably. No other transportation union offers its retirees what the UTU offers, and we are proud of that.”

UTU retirees interested in joining the UTU for Life program (and possibly sponsoring chapters in their areas) should contact: UTU for Life, United Transportation Union, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, Ohio, 44107-4250, or complete the membership application form below.

Members receive discounts on cellular telephones, hotels and motels, cruises and tours, insurance and much more, at no additional cost!

UTU for Life benefits

• A baseball-style cap featuring the UTU for Life logo;
• Continuation of the UTU News;
• A colorful full-size wall calendar;
• A wallet-size medical emergency card, listing phone numbers, allergies and other data;
• Membership in the UTU Travelers Club, which features tours of interest to seniors worldwide;
• Membership in UTU for Life chapters in your area;
• Discounts on cellular telephones and service provided by national providers;
• Discounts on car rentals from National Car Rental, Tilden (in Canada) and others;
• Discounts on cruises from numerous cruise lines;
• Discounts on tours offered by a number of national tour operators;
• Discounts of from 10 to 20 percent on room rates at a number of the nation’s most popular hotel chains;
• Insurance and annuity products purchased through the United Transportation Union Insurance Association;
• Two different booklets to help keep track of health issues and finances;
• An important-papers folder, designed to hold legal documents;
• A listing, upon death, in the “Final Call” section of the UTU News;
• Discounts of 15 percent on railroad artwork by noted rail artist “Scotty.”

UTU for Life Program Application Form

I wish to make the most of my retirement. Please enroll me in the UTU for Life Program.

Name __________________________
Address _________________________
City __________________ State _____ ZIP _____
Phone ( ) __________________ Email ________________

UTU member? □ Yes □ No Local number ________________________

Please complete this form and return it with a check or money order (U.S. funds, please) payable to “UTU for Life” in the amount of $9.00 to: UTU for Life, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250.

UTU News www.utu.org
Members face challenge of New Year's resolutions

Many UTU members will join the estimated 100 million Americans who decide to improve themselves by making New Year's resolutions. A study cited by the Wichita Business Journal, however, found that among those who break their resolutions, nearly a third, or 30 percent, do so during the first week of the New Year. Women were 50 percent more likely than men to give up on their resolutions during the first week, but more women than men made fitness resolutions. And 71 percent of people age 65 and older kept their resolutions, compared to only 35 percent of the younger set.

University of Washington researchers Eliza-}

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University of Washington researchers Elizab
Parents, grandparents...

This holiday, 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 holiday 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 holiday season?

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 on the right, or by calling toll-free, (800) 558-8842, for assistance from your UTUIA representative.

Get ready to attend the 2005 UTU/UTUIA regional meetings

The dates and locations for the 2005 UTU/UTUIA regional meetings have been finalized. Members who must soon decide their 2005 vacation schedule should note the following information:

**Anchorage, Alaska, June 13-15, 2005**
Anchorage Hilton, 500 W. Third Ave., Anchorage, AK 99501.
Hotel reservations: (800) HILTONS; (907) 272-7411; www.hiltonanchorage.com. (The overflow hotel is the Howard Johnson Plaza, 239 W. Fourth Ave., Anchorage, AK 99501. Hotel reservations: (800) 545-7665; (907) 793-5500; www.hojo.com.) Reservation code: UTU. Room rate: $145 plus tax per night ($139 at Howard Johnson Plaza); rate good for three days before and after the meeting. Parking: self park: $7 per night/$14 valet. Reservation deadline: May 9, 2005.

**Orlando, Fla., July 18-20, 2005**
Disney’s Coronado Springs Resort, 1000 W. Buena Vista Dr., Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830. Hotel reservations: (407) 939-1020, option 2. Reservation code: UTU. Room rate: $93 per night plus tax for single/double; additional persons age 18 or older: $15 per night; room rate good four days before and after the meeting. Parking: complimentary.

Discounts on airfares have been arranged with Northwest, Continental and Alaska/Horizon Airlines. For Northwest or Continental, call (800) 328-1111 and refer to WorldFile Ticket Designator “NM52A” for Anchorage or “NM52B” for Orlando. For Alaska/Horizon Airlines, call (800) 445-4435 and refer to code CMA0700.

Check the UTU News and UTU website for more information.

Moving? Wrong address?

The UTU International pays hundreds of dollars a month in fees to the U.S. Postal Service because many active and retired members do not inform the union that they have moved. If you are planning to move, please inform both the International and your local secretary of your new address at least six weeks in advance. Contact the International by phone at (216) 228-9400, ext. 336, via email at “directory@utu.org” or clip and mail the coupon below.

Please correct my address

Please clip the address label from this newspaper, attach it below, note the correct address and send to Directory Dept., UTU, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250. Please allow six weeks for address changes to take effect.

Name ____________________________
Local ____________________________
Address __________________________
City/State/ZIP ____________________

Please print.
in federal court in Philadelphia seeking to overturn UTU’s agreement with carriers permitting the UTU to impose seniority maintenance fees. After the UTU and the carriers settled, at the time it filed this lawsuit, the BLET was defending before the First Division of the National Railroad Adjustment Board its own appointed authority to impose, back in July 2000, seniority maintenance fees on a portion of the Kansas City Southern.

And just hours after the BLET filed its lawsuit, the First Division of the National Railroad Adjustment Board sided with the BLET, finding the imposition of seniority maintenance fees on engineers was proper. That case arose from two South Rail engineers who refused to pay the maintenance fee to the BLET. As a result, the BLET froze their engineer seniority.

The First Division award turned on a 1998 federal appeals court case known as Corzine, et al. v. Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Illinois Central Railroad Company 147 F.3d 651 (7th Cir. 1998).

The court in the Corzine case upheld the imposition of seniority maintenance fees. The court ruled, “It is difficult to understand why, if the BLET has a statutory duty, as it does, to represent (engineers), it cannot charge them for the actual costs of that representation.” The First Division concluded, based on the Corzine case, that “[T]he BLET (as does the UTU) has the right to represent railroad employers as it sees fit, subject only to the limits of law as it did through negotiations with the Carrier.”

While each day brings more evidence that these two organizations should be merged in the interests of all train and engine service employees, citing the example of the BLET instead chose to associate itself with a labor union that represents employees in an entirely different mode of railroad operation, said UTU International President Paul Thompson. “This choice of affiliation does not do right by the members of these two organizations or the rail industry.”

activities. Unfortunately, conductors and assistant conductors have not received adequate security training following 9/11, and that is a serious public-safety issue that the news report touched on,” Iannone said. “I just wish they had done it in a more constructive way.”

For NJT conductor Diana Lane (a member of Local 60 in Newark, N.J.), it is a day she will not soon forget. Indeed, she soon learned she was the subject of a television news investigative report looking at possible terrorist targets.

Conductor Lane was assigned to NJT Train 6635. A female passenger with a large suitcase boarded the train at Secaucus during the crowded evening rush hour. It is not uncommon for passengers to carry luggage, including large suitcases, onto commuter and passenger trains.

Additional facts also are clear. The woman was instructed by conductor Lane to seat herself in that luggage area, which, because of its size and the crowded car, was placed in the designated luggage area. As commuters departed the train at subsequent stations and more seats became available, the woman moved to a more comfortable seat further from the luggage area – but still not more than 10 feet from her suitcase.

Between stations, conductor Lane stationed herself in that luggage area, filling out train reports. When the train stopped at Convent Station and the woman passenger detrained, conductor Lane was clearly aware that the suitcase belonged to a woman passenger who had brought it on board.

The Fox News report suggested that if the woman (who, it turned out, was an undercover reporter for Fox News) had been a terrorist, the "woof," to an Amtrak police dog. The policeman was ordered personally to deliver disciplinary notices to an employee’s home – an act that violated due process procedures.

In 2003 alone, the IG, major railroads used their police on 975 separate occasions to investigate employees. The IG called this “significant” and also observed that carriers have used railroad police “beyond the enforcement-related activities on behalf of management, such as investigating time and attendance issues, delivery of administrative notices to employees, and conducting surveillance of injury claimants.”

The most frequent uses of railroad police to investigate employees are Union Pacific and Illinois Central. In the fall of 2000, UP ordered its railroad police to investigate employees 226 times during 2003. UIC ordered such investigations 196 times.

Here are some of the worst violations report-
A message from UTU International
President Paul C. Thompson

Education is the key to success, and the key to an education can be a United Transportation Union Insurance Association scholarship.

With college enrollment time upon us, we strongly urge all eligible persons to take a few minutes to fill out the UTUIA scholarship application form printed below and apply for a UTUIA scholarship. It will be one of the smartest things they ever do.

This is the 31st year UTUIA is making available 50 continuing $500 scholarships for its members, and the sons, daughters and grandchildren of its members. We are very proud of our scholarship program, a pride that comes from helping thousands of college students over the years.

We realize the amount awarded, $500 a year, doesn’t meet the full cost of the recipient’s education, but in this way we can help a larger number of students with educational costs. They may use the scholarship money for tuition, learning materials or other related expenses.

UTUIA scholarship winners will receive the full amount of the award each year for up to four years of undergraduate study as long as they maintain a satisfactory academic record.

With a UTUIA scholarship, we hope to give the recipient the opportunity for a full-time education instead of a part-time education, day school instead of night school, higher education instead of basic training.

We are proud also in knowing that UTUIA scholarship recipients are enrolled in some of the finest and most prestigious colleges and universities in the world. We also can point proudly to the many achievements of past scholarship winners who have contributed so much to our great nation.

UTUIA is proud and happy to provide these scholarships for they are an opportunity for achievement. The success of deserving students is our success and the benefits are boundless. The key to success is education, and the key to education is a UTUIA scholarship. Take a minute to apply for the chance of a lifetime.

As the saying goes: “If you think education is expensive, try ignorance.”

Paul C. Thompson
International President

UTUIA Scholarship: The Key to Success

DISTRIBUTION
Fifty continuing $500 scholarships are awarded each year upon verification of enrollment for the fall term. The scholarships are prorated according to the number of UTU and UTUIA insurance members in each of nine districts. Names of the 50 scholarship winners for the academic year 2005-2006 will be drawn at UTUIA headquarters in Cleveland after the March 31, 2005, deadline for submission of applications.

ELIGIBILITY
Requirements for a scholarship applicant are that he or she be at least a high school senior or equivalent; age 25 or under; be a UTU member or UTUIA-insured member, the child or grandchild of a UTU member or UTUIA-insured member, or the child of a deceased UTU member or UTUIA-insured member. (If member is deceased please include date of death). UTU members or UTUIA-insured members must be U.S. residents.

Applicants also must be accepted for admittance or already enrolled for at least 12 credit hours per quarter or semester at a recognized institution of higher learning (university, college or junior college, nursing or technical school offering college credit). Graduate schools are not included. Families of full-time international officers are not eligible.

AWARDS
Scholarships are awarded on the basis of chance, not grades. A UTUIA scholar, however, is expected to maintain a satisfactory academic record to keep the scholarship for the full four years.

ADMINISTRATION
The UTUIA Scholarship Committee decides whether individual scholarships should be continued or discontinued. Each successful applicant must provide annual proof of eligibility or before a deadline set by the scholarship committee to qualify for a continuing award. The day-to-day management of the program is handled by the office of the UTUIA general secretary and treasurer.

INVEST IN THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME
The UTUIA Scholarship Program is an open program. All eligible students, regardless of previous grades or future plans that don’t happen to include college, are strongly urged to apply, to take five minutes to invest in the chance of a lifetime, the chance for a better future.

UTUIA Scholarship Districts

District  Scholarships
1 Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont  5
2 Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania  5
3 Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia  8
4 Indiana, Michigan, Ohio  6
5 Illinois, Wisconsin  4
6 Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas  5
7 Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota  6
8 Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah  8

Applications must be received no later than March 31, 2005. Please submit only one application per student. Incomplete, photocopied or duplicate applications will not be accepted.

The application form printed on this page is the official UTUIA scholarship application form and is the only one you will receive. If you need another application form, request one from the address below. Please include your UTU local or UTUIA local unit number with your request.

Complete the form above, cut it out (leaving address label on reverse side, if possible), and mail to:

UTUIA Scholarship Program
United Transportation Union Insurance Association
14600 Detroit Ave.
Cleveland, OH 44107-4250
UTU Local 1138 officer killed in head-on crash in Florida

RICHLAND, Fla. – A UTU local officer working as a conductor was killed in a head-on collision of two CSX cargo trains early Nov. 29 in eastern Pasco County, Fla. Killed was Cedric J. Jones, vice local chairperson of UTU Local 1138 in Miami, Fla. He was 28 years old and lived in Opa Locka, Fla.

Jones had been railroading about two years and had a seniority date of July 1, 2002. He had a wife and two children.

Jones was “a super, super nice guy,” Florida State Legislative Director Carl Cochran said. “He was an exceptional human being and a true friend to all of us,” Local 1138 Chairperson Yvonne Hayes said. “Everybody has good memories of him. So many people were touched by him. He was not only an exceptional person to work with as a railroader and union representative but he was a great friend and father and brother and son. It is a terrible loss for all of us.” Jones and engineer E.E. Anderson were northbound on their way to Wildwood from Miami when they met a southbound 136-car freight train. Jones jumped from the locomotive before the crash and was killed after being struck by a boxcar, investigators told the Tampa Tribune. Anderson survived his jump, but was reported to have broken bones. He was treated at a local hospital and released.

Engineer G.M. Whitehead II of Lake Butler and conductor W.E. Taylor of Bartow (a member of UTU Local 1221 in Tampa, Fla.), crewmembers on the southbound train, were admitted to East Pasco Medical Center with injuries that were not thought to be life threatening, according to reports.

An investigation team from The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) traveled to the accident scene and was assisted by members of the UTU Transportation Safety Team. Investigators have yet to confirm what caused the accident but CSX officials focused on several angles: The behavior of the train crews at the time of impact, the possibility of equipment failure, and the actions of a dispatcher in Jacksonville who operates signals and switches by computerized remote from a central console, according to news report.

The black boxes in each locomotive recorded the southbound train traveling at 28 mph, less than half its maximum speed of 60 mph. No data was available for the northbound train, according to news reports.

NTSB officials in Washington used the Zephyrhills crash as an opportunity to press the railroads to install automatic shutoffs in their locomotives. Head-on crashes between trains are rare. Of 170 collisions through August of this year nationwide, only seven were classified as “head-on,” according to the Federal Railroad Administration website.