Negotiations update

CHICAGO – UTU’s negotiating team met here with the National Carriers’ Conference Committee Aug. 16-18 to continue talks over rates of pay, rules and working conditions for some 40,000 train and engine service workers on most railroads. Talks concerned issues other than crew consist and FELA issues in abeyance while a federal court considers a UTU petition seeking a halt to carrier demands that the UTU collectively bargain over those matters.

Local officer elections set

Under Article 57 of the UTU Constitution, elections of local officers – president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and three board of trustees members – will be held by all locals in November. Nominations will commence at all local’s October meeting, and elections will be either by mail referendum ballot or at the November meeting as provided by existing bylaws or procedures of each local. A special election circular and samples of all necessary election materials have already been furnished each local secretary.

2006 regional meetings

The dates and locations of the 2006 UTU/UTUIA regional meetings have been finalized:

- Reno, Nev., June 19 – 21 at the Reno Hilton
- Asheville, N.C., Aug. 22 – 24 at the Grove Park Inn

Check future issues of UTU News and www.utu.org for details as they develop.

UTU website offers more

Can’t get enough news from the home page of the UTU’s website? Looking for a story that ran before? You need “MORE HEADLINES!”

Most members know the UTU’s homepage at www.utu.org includes a gray-colored area on the right called “Headlines.” But there’s more! Beneath those daily headlines is a phrase that reads “MORE HEADLINES.” Clicking on that phrase will take you to a page with headlines linked to the last 175 news stories posted to the website.

Click on “MORE HEADLINES” and you also can browse all the stories from a particular month and year, or search for an individual story that appeared previously by supplying a keyword. For example, to find a story about SEPTA or CSX, go to the “MORE HEADLINES” page, type in “CSX” or “SEPTA” without the quote marks and click the “Search” button.

Changes to D/IPP Plan

Please refer to Page 3 of this issue for a list of the reasons for which benefits under the UTU’s Disciplined Income Protection Program will not be paid.

UTU proposes to carriers 12-point training program

The UTU is challenging the nation’s rail carriers to adopt a 12-point program it designed to provide more comprehensive training for employees.

The points address crucial training issues such as familiarity with day-to-day rail operations, the monitoring and mentoring of new hires, and making training specific to locations and not to systems.

“When it comes to working on the railroad, experienced train and engine service employees know how to get the job done efficiently and safely,” said UTU Vice President John Babler, who helped design the program.

“Those experienced train and engine service employees can also be at the core of an effective training program,” he said.

Babler said that with a sharp increase in retirements owing to liberalized retirement benefits, and a growing demand for rail service, carriers are hiring thousands of new train and engine service employees and that current training methods are often lacking.

“Too often,” Babler said, “current training programs fail to provide new hires with the day-to-day knowledge and job experience needed to perform the duties and responsibilities of the craft.

“Effective training programs should place emphasis on understanding and applying rules in the territory and situations an employee will actually work.”

Babler said that although carrier training programs have been static, railroads have been introducing and updating more complicated technology that must be mastered — and by fewer employees performing more complex tasks.

“It is not uncommon for new hires to suffer information overload,” he said.

“The FRA is beginning to scrutinize today’s accelerated path by which brakeman/helpers advance to conductor/foreman to remote-control operator to locomotive engineer,” Babler said. “The FRA is finding that accelerated promotion does not provide the work experience necessary to develop proficiency in crafts, meaning many employees lack a sound railroading base to formulate their decisions.

A plan to address crucial issues in training new railroad employees

Continued on page 10

UTU wins help for the injured

The UTU has won for its members stunning legislative victories in Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota that may soon be duplicated in other states.

The legislation passed specifically prevents carriers from delaying, denying or interfering with the injured employee’s access to immediate medical attention.

The purpose of these laws, International President Paul Thompson said, is to end a string of managerial abuses that all railroad crafts have been reporting for years to their union leaders.

The UTU PAC played a significant role in the passage of all three laws because that is what opens doors to legislators in all political parties. Lawmakers recognize that UTU members individually contribute to the UTU PAC.

One more nail in BLET coffin

OTTAWA – One more nail of societal retribution has been hammered into the BLE coffin by the Canadian government as payback for that organization’s unprovoked, reckless and premeditated sell-out of conductors on VIA Rail.

A far more costly nail of societal retribution is expected to be driven by the Canadian government into the BLE coffin before spring 2006.

That federal reprisal could bankrupt the BLE or lead to a massive dose increase for its members. The federally imposed monetary reparations that the BLE will be required to pay because it sold out another craft could total in the tens of millions of dollars – and the BLE/Teamster merger agreement specifically states the debt is the sole responsibility of the BLE.

The latest nail in the BLE coffin is a ruling by the Canadian Industrial Relations Board.

Continued on page 10
Local 84, Los Angeles, Calif.

Retired North Country Transit conductor
Lawson Chadwick was recently named by
Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.) as an alternate
delagate to the 2005 White House Confere-
cing on Aging. Brother Chadwick began
UTU for Life Chapter 4, which meets in
Oceanside, Calif. For information, contact
Chadwick by calling (760) 945-5365 or send
e-mail to him at lchad@cox.net.

Local 577, Northlake, Ill.

This Union Pacific local is in conjunction
with Local 526 (Chicago, Ill.) and Local 597
(Des Plaines, Ill.), as well as TCU Local 6176,
held a Labor Day family picnic on
Sept. 5 at Buse Woods Grove #52 in the
New Brown Forest Preserve in Schaumburg,
Ill. In addition, the local has appointed two
new vice local chairpersons, with Kevin
Hilko and Secretary Keith Larson now
working with Vice Local Chairperson
Patrick McNamara.

Local 933, Jefferson City, Mo.

This Union Pacific local is holding a fish fry
Sept. 16 from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the
Wardsville Lions Club in Wardsville, Mo.,
said Legislative Rep. and Delegate Ken
Menges. At the same location, on Sept. 17,
representatives from UnitedHealthcare, the
Railroad Retirement Board, Union Pacific
Health Systems and UTU designated legal
counsel will be on hand for an informational
seminar at 1 p.m., followed by a barbecue
dinner at 4 p.m. All active, retired and dis-
able members and their families are encour-
gaged to attend. Also on Sept. 17, a golf out-
ing is being planned. For more information,
contact Local President Dennis Menges at
(573) 634-7962 or Dennis Menges at (573) 635-
6415 or (573) 291-4908.

Local 1190, Ludlow, Ky.

This Norfolk Southern local on Aug. 2
honored recently retired conductor Terry
Ogden, with Local President Lou Wartman
presenting Ogden with a brass lantern. On
a sad note, members are mourning the death
of retired conductor William E. “Bill” Hughes,
who had served as the local’s legislative rep.
Contributions in his memory can be made to
the Fisher House, c/o Veterans Administra-
tion Medical Center, 3200 Vine St., Cincin-
nati, OH 45220.

Local 1293, Altoona, Wis.

All active and retired members of this
Union Pacific local and their families are
invited to the annual picnic being held on
Sept. 11 from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Lake
Altoona County Park, said Ed Thompson.
Food and beverages will be supplied. For
information contact retired member Donald
Knutsen at (715) 834-4405.

Local 1313, Amarillo, Texas

Members of this BNSF Railway local have
two opportunities to attend a seminar and
workshop entitled Know Your Rights Under
Federal Law, said Local President Joe Romo.
The event will be held at the Holiday Inn
Express in Amarillo on Oct. 10 at 6:30 p.m.
and on Oct. 11 at 1 p.m. Representatives of
UnitedHealthcare, the Railroad Retirement
Board and Aetna will be available to answer
questions. All members and their spouses
are encouraged to attend. For information, con-
tact Romo at (806) 622-2265.

Local 1397, Columbus, Ohio

Members of this CSX local who have not yet
received a special T-shirt should contact Secretary
& Treasurer Robert Smith. The shirt features the local
name and the UTU logo on the front and back, as well
as a patriotic graphic on the back. Extras are available in
navy, gray or black for $15 each. Call (614) 871-5067 or
send e-mail to rsmith@utuocalc1397.org. View the shirt at www.utuocalc1397.org.

Local 1563, El Monte, Calif.

A special thanks goes out to General Chair-
person James Williams, Local Chairperson
Robert Gonzales, all the other officers and
the sponsors who made the annual family
picnic held by this Los Angeles GTA local on
Aug. 13 a successful and memorable event,
said Local President David Ojeda.

Local 1594, Upper Darby, Pa.

The contract extension for members of this
SEPTA local operating buses, light rail and
the Norristown high-speed line was set to
expire Sept. 6, with talks stalled on health
and welfare, General Chairperson Ron Koran
said. The local has met with other SEPTA
unions and formed a coalition in an attempt
to break the logjam. Meanwhile, members
raised about $700 for the American Cancer
Society in a 20-mile bicycle ride. Along with
Koran, participants included Stan Bernatow-
icz, Anne Jordan and Bruce Wertz.

Local 1741, San Francisco, Calif.

Members of this bus local, which includes
bus operators, mechanics, yard workers,
report developments on three fronts, said Local President Ange Belay. At the
San Francisco Unified School District, members recently negotiated a new con-
tract with Laurelwood. (See Page 11 for story.) In San Mateo, the local has submitted an economic proposal to Durham and expects an agreement soon, Meanwhile, in San Rafael, it appears talks with First Student will begin this month.

Local 1846, W. Colton, Calif.

This Union Pacific local on Aug. 1 estab-
lished a new committee of adjustment for
engineering, said Local President Richard
Escamilla. Until elections are held in
November, Bob Perrine has been appointed
local chairperson. Members thank Interna-
tional President Paul Thompson and Gen-
eral Chairperson John Treischman for their help in creating the new committee. Meanwhile special thanks are sent to Mr. and Mrs. Den-
nis Robinson for their hard work in organiz-
ing the event honoring recently retired con-
ductor Tiger Lyons.

GO-377 (CN/Grand Trunk Western)

Local Chairperson David Hiatt recently
announced a brass lantern to Amtrak sponsor
Rep. Joe Schwarz, M.D. (R-Mich.) for his efforts in saving 100 trainmen and engineer-
jobs in Battle Creek, Mich. At the Aug. 16
ceremony at the Battle Creek Amtrak depot
was Vice General Chairperson John Henry.

Lehigh Valley reunion planned

The 24th Lehigh Valley Railroad
reunion and dinner, open to all crafts,
will be held Saturday, Sept. 17, at the
Pen Argyl Fire Company Hall on Rt.
115 in Northampton County, said E. K.
“Gene” Schuler of Local 490, Allent-
town, Pa. For information, contact Schuler
at 1359 N. Van Buren St., Allentown,
PA 18109, call him at (610) 432-6101, or
send e-mail to cheerup90@aol.com.
UTU honors Florida Congresswoman Corinne Brown

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – Rep. Corrine Brown (D-Fla.), who represents Jacksonville – the headquarters city of CSX Transportation – long has been a friend of the UTU.

In recognition of her career-long support of the UTU and its legislative agenda, the UTU in August presented Brown with a commemorative plaque and a set of engraved pens. The plaque praised Brown for her “unshakable commitment to working people.”

“The UTU group met with Brown to honor her with a plaque and pens in recognition and appreciation for her lifetime of leadership and work on legislation that benefits our sisters and brothers in the UTU,” Florida State Legislative Director Andres Trujillo said. Brown regaled all present with stories of her legislative work on various pieces of Amtrak legislation and old war stories were shared by the group. “We look forward to many more years of friendship and collaboration,” Trujillo said.

Drivers campaign for school bus driver stamp

In the wake of the murder of a Tennessee school bus driver earlier this year, drivers there and around the country are campaigning for the creation of a postage stamp to honor the nation’s half-million school bus drivers.

Stewart County school bus driver Joyce Gregory was shot and killed, allegedly by a 15-year-old student boarding her bus, in March of this year. After her murder, fellow drivers and other education officials began a campaign to urge the U.S. Postal Service to issue a stamp honoring all school bus drivers.

Larry Riggbee, executive secretary of the Tennessee Association of Pupil Transportation (TAiPT), began a letter-writing campaign asking Gregory’s murder, asking the postal service to create a stamp that honors not only her, but all other school bus drivers nationwide.

“School bus drivers play a vital and often unappreciated role in our educational system and in the lives of our children,” Riggbee said. “Even though the stamp will not honor Joyce Gregory specifically, Joyce’s death serves as the inspiration for our request to the USPS.

“All you need to do is write a letter to the Citizens’ Stamp Advisory Committee (CSAC), which recommends which stamps should be printed, requesting they issue a stamp to honor school bus drivers,” Riggbee said. “Ask your friends, relatives and colleagues to also write letters. The more letters CSAC receives, the better the chance we have to get our stamp!”

TAiPT has created a website, www.schoolbusdriverstamp.com, that contains additional information, including sample letters about the project.

Getting approval for a new speciality stamp usually takes about three years.

“School bus drivers, many of them represent-ed by the UTU, carry more than 25 million children twice each day, which is about 55 percent of students in school,” UTU Bus Department Vice President Roy Arnold said. “They do this important job in all types of weather and through all types of road conditions. I think they deserve all the recognition they can get, and a good way would be with a U.S. Postal Service stamp. I urge all UTU members to support this effort.”

Changes to UTU Discipline/Income Protection Program

Effective July 20, 2005, items 10 and 11 have been added to the list of reasons for which benefits under the Discipline/Income Protection Program will not be paid to a participant who is suspended or discharged from employment for disciplinary reasons. The complete list is as follows:

1. Conduct endangering the life or livelihood of a fellow employee;
2. Unavailability for duty; sleeping on duty; missing calls;
3. Insubordination;
4. Misuse, theft or destruction of property of the participant’s employer;
5. Falsification of records;
6. Failure to take or pass a required examination;
7. Failure to qualify for mandatory promotion;
8. Use, possession or evidence of intoxicants or illegal drugs while on duty or subject to duty;
9. Discipline due to criminal or civil court action;
10. An act or acts, or failure to act, which constitutes a violation of public policy; or
11. Involvement in altercations, verbal or physical.

Death benefits available from MetLife

Families of deceased UTU members may be eligible to collect $2,000 in unclaimed death benefits, according to MetLife. The death benefit is included as a group policy under contracts between railroads and various labor unions.

“Many families are unaware of the death benefit and may not have filed to claim it,” said UTU International President Paul Thompson. “The UTU for Life Program is working with MetLife to ensure UTU families are aware of the benefit and the possibility that they may be eligible for $2,000 in unclaimed death benefits.”

To determine if you are eligible to collect the $2,000 in unclaimed death benefits, it will be necessary to provide MetLife (not UTU) with certain information.

“If you know of a UTU family with a deceased spouse, father, grandfather or other close deceased relative who retired from railroad service, that family may be eligible to collect the death benefits,” Thompson said.

An individual can initiate a claim inquiry by calling MetLife toll-free at (800) 310-7770 or by contacting MetLife in writing. If contacting MetLife in writing, a copy of the death certificate along with the deceased employee’s Social Security number, final address and any available information should be sent to:

MetLife, P.O. Box 6122, Utica, NY 13504

A cover letter should be included indicating you are seeking to determine if you are eligible to collect an unclaimed death benefit from MetLife. MetLife will then conduct an investigation and advise whether it is a valid claim, Thompson said.
At dawn, we’re sleeping

Mediocriety takes less time. Hey, most people won’t notice the difference. Until it’s too late.

As bus, freight railroads, Amtrak and rail commuter operators shamelessly applaud their security preparations, a missing ingredient as obvious to employees as a fiery explosion is formal training.

Cameras, more razor wire and thick binders chock full of memos, plans and directives miss the most glaring hole in transportation security today - people.

The Association of American Railroads told Congress its security plan is world class – not to worry. But we do worry, and for good reason.

Train and engine service employees on the front lines of freight rail defense don’t have a clue about that security plan beyond the fuzzy instruction, “report anything suspicious.” So deadly chorine, other toxic chemicals and nuclear waste continue to roll through America on wheels and a prayer.

Bus operators similarly lack formal training in security procedures, and their backs are literally exposed to all passengers because employers have neglected to install protective shields.

As the dawn of terrorist attacks rises across America, our transportation companies are content with mediocrity. Training costs money. The alternative could cost far more some day.

As bus, freight railroads, Amtrak and rail commuter operators shamelessly applaud their security preparations, a missing ingredient as obvious to employees as a fiery explosion is formal training.Congress passed another bill of concern – a new bankruptcy law that is needed to prevent transportation companies from worsening. It is predicted that when the new law’s spending cuts, buses as well as commuter rail and transit cars will have more weight, yes, national defense and moral values are important.

As the dawn of terrorist attacks rises across America, our transportation companies are content with mediocrity. Training costs money. The alternative could cost far more some day too soon.
New Jersey

The New Jersey State Legislative Board last month voted to recommend to its members the election of Sen. Jon Corzine (D) for governor this November.

“Sen. Corzine has supported the UTU on issues of importance: mass transit security, Amtrak funding and opposing Bush administration attempts at privatization of Social Security,” State Legislative Director Dan O’Connell said. “He also was a co-sponsor and voted in support of Railroad Retirement reform.”

O’Connell said “time and again Sen. Corzine has stood with UTU and working families. Now it’s our turn to stand and support him.”

“The New Jersey State Legislative Board reminds members and their families that Election Day is Tues., Nov. 8. The last day to register to vote is Oct. 10, and we will notoday to submit absentee ballot applications by mail is Nov. 1, and in person Nov. 7. Register and vote!” O’Connell said.

Minnesota

State Legislative Director Phillip Quayl reports that the members in Minnesota will benefit from several significant victories for railroad labor during the recent legislative session.

“The UTU was an effective partner in the passage of the 2005 bonding bill that provided $37.5 million for the Northstar Commuter Rail. Passage of the 2005 bonding bill that provided railroad labor for a total of less than three hours.”

“I have seen first-hand the importance of our UTU PAC,” Quayl said. “It’s real simple: to exercise your First Amendment right, to run for office and get your word out and win, it costs money. We have a lot of friends in public office who stick their own necks out for railroad workers. UTU PAC is the best investment a railroad worker can make in his own job.”

Colorado

An informational meeting was sponsored on Aug. 10 by UTU Local 202, Denver. Guests included International President Paul Thompson, Vice President David Hakey, State Legislative Director Rick Johnson; General Chairperson Randy Knutson (CB&Q/BNSF) and John Fitzgerald (CSX/BNSF); Vice Chairperson Rich Draskovich (UP Eastern Dist.); UTUAFIELD Supervisor Dan McElroy and UTU designated counsel.

“The conference brought first-hand information from all levels of our union to the members of Colorado locals and their families,” Johnson said. “It was also an opportunity to meet the leaders of our great union and discuss important union issues both nationally and locally. About 90 UTU members approached the UTU and asked for help. Through their legislators, all endorsed friends of the UTU, the UTU was able to identify the engineering flaw at the crossing, which has a grade school adjacent.”

“The Canadian National had raised track speeds there to 60 mph. Members of Local 1067 and their legislative rep., Jim Busker, stepped up and provided documentation and the UTU local agreed and supported the speed restriction.”

“The UTU, along with others, also helped get passed a Senate resolution in support of Amtrak in Minnesota. In early May, the bill passed on a 44-7 vote,” Quayl said.

“The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen was essentially absent from the statehouse, Quayl said. “Over a session that lasted 180 days, the BLET was present working with railroad labor for such union initiatives.”

“Naturally, I took pride in their commitment to securing benefits.

North Dakota

UTU members living and working out of Harvey, N.D., will soon have their own local, according to State Legislative Director John Risch.

“These members work on the Portal Subdivision of the CP Soo Line and currently belong to Local 980 in Enderlin, which is about 178 miles away.

“The new local will be Local 887. Nominations for officers were made at the local’s organizational meeting held Aug. 29. General Chairperson Dennis Baker will define the jurisdiction of the local. Established a new UTU local in Harvey is a great opportunity for new members to get involved in the UTU,” Risch said. “It also makes it a lot easier for our members who live in Harvey to attend local meetings.”

Arizona

UTU officers were among the deputies who recently attended a fundraiser for the state's Democratic Party honoring party members for their volunteer work. Above, State Legislative Director Scott Olson (second from left) and Assistant State Director Greg Hynes (third from left) meet with long-time UTU friends Gov. Janet Napolitano and Gov. Mark Warner of Virginia.

They were in attendance for a day of brotherhood and unionism. Another bonus for the day included lunch that was served for those in attendance.”

Bus Department

By Roy Arnold, vice president--director

Yardmasters

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

Unity is crucial for our success

Recently, I noticed a picker line with union members holding “on strike” signs and chanting “union.”

Naturally, I took pride in their commitment to securing decent wages, benefits and something to look forward to in the future.

It was said by football legend Vince Lombardi that, “The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but rather a lack of will.”

I truly believe that each and every person who stands up for what they believe has the ability to succeed at anything they set out to accomplish.

Unfortunately, there are those who find it easier to cut and run.

Yes, it takes a lot of courage to walk a picker line in the summer heat, the rain, the cold of night. It takes a lot of will to stand up to management and tell them you no longer will work for low wages and no benefits.

I am very proud to see that union people across this country are standing up and making the right choices. We are the ones who stick their own necks out for railroad workers. We have a lot of friends in public office who stick their own necks out for railroad workers. UTU PAC is the best investment a railroad worker can make in his own job.”

Important Medicare changes coming

If you have Medicare or will become eligible for Medicare in the next 12 months, a new federal law gives you choices about your prescription drug coverage starting in 2006. Before making a decision, keep the following in mind:

• The new plan offered by the government is Medicare Plan D. It only applies to the prescription drug portion of Medicare benefits.

• The initial enrollment period begins Nov. 15 and runs through May 15, 2006. If you do not enroll during this initial period, you do not have “creditable coverage” elsewhere, and if you later decide to enroll in Part D, you will be assessed a penalty to your premium — and for the entire time you are enrolled in Plan D.

• The projected initial premium for Part D will be in the range of $32 to $347 per person per month.

• There will be a $250 annual deductible. After the deductible, there will be cost sharing of 25 percent of the next $2,000 in prescription drug costs ($500 from your pocket). For prescriptions costs between $2,250 ($250 deductible plus the first $2,000 in costs) and $5,100 (the so-called donut hole), you will be responsible for 100 percent of the costs (or $2,850 from your pocket plus the $250 deductible plus $500 cost sharing for prescriptions exceeding $2,660 annually).

A catastrophic level then kicks in for prescription costs exceeding $5,100 annually. At this level, you will pay only 5 percent of the costs.

Retired and soon-to-retire members should obtain a detailed cost analysis of their annual prescription costs as part of their budget planning. (For more information on Medicare changes, see page 8.)
UTU fights to save assistant conductor

It can’t be true that Amtrak wants to ditch assistant conductors. Amtrak couldn’t possibly wish to roll the dice with the safety of its passengers as the stake of $111 and passenger-train bombings in Madrid and London.

Good grief, say it ain’t so.

But it is.

Amtrak wants to scrap current crew-consent agreements. They require a minimum of one conductor and one assistant conductor on trains with between two and six revenue cars; and a minimum of one conductor and two assistant conductors on trains with at least seven revenue cars.

The real losers: passengers

“As many as 400 assistant conductor positions could be eliminated if Amtrak is successful,” says Tony Lombone, UTU vice president for commuter operations. “The real losers will be the passengers – and the loss could be their lives. It is the conductor and assistant conductors who are trained to provide first aid, locate hazards and lead passengers to safety.”

When the Sunset Limited left the tracks in 1995, four passenger cars tumbled into a waterway. The Albuquerque Morning News reported:

“National Transportation Safety Board officials singled out one Amtrak assistant conductor, saying his efforts sped the evacuation and may have saved dozens of lives. He ran the length of the four upright cars that remained on the track and began directing the evacuation. Once outside, he organized survivors into human chains to help pull those struggling from submerged cars. He saved 150–200 yards... (then worked) the next half hour coordinating rescue efforts.”

When sabotage derailed an Amtrak train on a trestle in Arizona in 1995, the conductor and assistant conductors evacuated 229 passengers and administered first aid. It took rescuers more than an hour to reach the remote location.

A nighttime Amtrak derailment near Buffalo, N.Y., in 1994 saw some cars burning down a 23-foot embankment. The conductor and assistant conductors assisted the 92 injured passengers and evacuated more than 200 others.

Conductors save lives

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Conductors led riders to safety

In 2004, when an Amtrak train crashed left two Texan, Ariz., at 2 a.m., and smoke filled two passenger cars, the conductor and assistant conductor led passengers to safety and then battled the flames with fire extinguishers. Both were hospitalized – one in intensive care – suffering from burns and smoke inhalations.

As the World Trade Center’s twin towers collapsed on 9/11, the conductors on a PATH train were credited with clearing the platform below the towers and saving hundreds of lives.

As Amtrak stated in a publication distributed to passengers:

“Being an Amtrak conductor is like being the mayor of a city on wheels... Ultimately, conductors are responsible for the safety and well-being of everyone on the train. And since 9/11, conductors have been given crucial new responsibilities for security and safety.”

Detailed railroad knowledge

Forty-year Amtrak conductor Dave Brooks says conductors must have detailed knowledge of engineering standards for equipment and track, speed limits and FRA safety regulations. Also, conductors must have an intimate knowledge of the tracks and communities through which their trains travel to identify hazards and quickly take proper action.

“When mechanical problems are encountered, the conductor must determine if it is safe to continue the trip,” says Gregory Casey, UTU’s New England States legislative director. “The conductor must understand the principles of air brakes and train handling, so the conductor determines when wheels turn.”

Car standards need to change

“Amtrak itself says the most important security risk Amtrak has is its employees. So it is incumbent upon Amtrak to determine what kind of training they would deem fit for becoming conductors from the train. The conductor is in contact with every passenger and observes their car’s security, actions and demeanor. With proper training, these observations are crucial to passenger safety and security.”

David Brooks, chairperson, UTU Local 1470

Amtrak conductor Angel Rivera of Local 1370 in New York City consults with Amtrak police officer Jonathan Blackburn prior to a departure at Washington’s Union Station. Note the badge around the neck of explosives-trained canine Bo. Officially known as K-16, Union Station serves Amtrak passengers as well as commuters using Maryland’s MARC trains and Virginia Railway Express.

Amtrak conductor Mark Cupeland of UTU Local 1672 in New London, Conn., often assists handicapped and elderly passengers while performing his regular duties.

Anna Rose, conductor treasurer, UTU Local 1462

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Detailed railroad knowledge

Forty-four-year Amtrak conductor Dave Brooks says conductors must have detailed knowledge of engineering standards for equipment and track, speed limits and FRA safety regulations. Also, conductors must have an intimate knowledge of the tracks and communities through which their trains travel to identify hazards and quickly take proper action.

“When mechanical problems are encountered, the conductor must determine if it is safe to continue the trip,” says Gregory Casey, UTU’s New England States legislative director. “The conductor must understand the principles of air brakes and train handling, so the conductor determines when wheels turn.”

Conductors save lives

The crucial importance of such a standard was made abundantly clear recently when within just 90 seconds flight attendants evacuated 102 passengers from a burning Air France jetliner that crashed in Toronto. Their presence, training and actions saved every life aboard that burning jetliner. Amtrak conductors and assistant conductors faced a similar challenge.

“Well-trained conductors and assistant conductors save lives,” says UTU International President Paul Thompson. “They are essential to the safety and security of passengers.”

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Medicare Rx law brings changes

Enrollment in Medicare Part D is voluntary and begins on Nov. 15, 2005, but a higher monthly premium applies if you enroll after May 15, 2006.

In 2003, President Bush signed the Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement and Modernization Act that established Medicare coverage for prescription drugs. On Jan. 1, 2006, Medicare will begin covering prescription drugs under a new “Medicare Part D.”

For retirees covered by Medicare, this change offers the opportunity to purchase prescription drug coverage for a small monthly premium.

This change is of particular interest to retirees covered under United-Healthcare’s policy GA-23111 Plan D, which currently provides benefits for drugs. United-Healthcare has announced that as a result of the Medicare law changes, Plan D will be terminating and coverage will be moved to Plan F. Plan F offers the same medical and hospital coverage as GA-23111 Plan D without the drug coverage. United-Healthcare will make this move automatically so retirees will not have to do anything to keep their current medical and hospital benefits.

Medicare Part D

Retirees currently enrolled in GA-23111 Plan D who want to continue coverage will have to enroll in Medicare Part D. All Medicare eligible retirees should also consider enrolling in Medicare Part D.

Additional details about this new Medicare benefit will be mailed to Medicare beneficiaries in October. However, here are some important facts about the Medicare prescription drug coverage you should know:

Late enrollment penalty
- You will be eligible for Medicare Part D if you are covered under Medicare Part A or Part B. Enrollment is voluntary, but there is a higher monthly premium if you enroll late (after May 15, 2006).
- There will be a cost for the Medicare Part D coverage. If you meet certain income levels, you may be eligible for a reduction in premiums, out-of-pocket amounts, and deductibles. If you think you might qualify for assistance, you should contact the Railroad Retirement Board or Social Security office in your area and ask for an application for a low-income subsidy. You should do this as soon as possible.
- Medicare Part D will be administered by private insurance companies. You will have a choice of which company with whom to enroll. While some of these companies will offer coverage everywhere in the nation, others will be limited to certain regions. If you live in different areas of the country during the year, you may want to choose a company that has a nationwide plan.
- Each company will have its own prescription drug plan. Each plan will cover a Medicare-approved list of drugs – called a formulary. The formularies may be different between plans, but all must have Medicare approval. You will want to compare the drugs in your formulary to see which one best fits your needs.
- If you take multiple drugs, you may not find all your drugs on any single formulary. If a drug you take is not on the formulary of a plan you like, speak to your doctor about changing your prescription to a drug on its list.
- In addition to different formularies, each plan will have a different network of pharmacies from which you must purchase drugs. Make sure the network pharmacies and other services such as mail order for the company you like are convenient to you.
- Each company will negotiate lower prices with drug companies and pass those discounts to you. You will have the advantage of being able to purchase your drugs at a discount even if you are paying the full cost of the drug.
- You will be able to change plans once a year during an annual open enrollment. There are other limited exceptions that may give you a right to switch plans. For example, if you move out of the service area of your current plan, you will have the opportunity to choose another plan that serves your new area.
- If you enroll late, you will pay more. Enrollment for Medicare Part D begins on Nov. 15, 2005, and ends on May 15, 2006. If you are eligible and do not enroll during this period, when you enroll later you will face a late-enrollment penalty of approximately 1 percent of the current premium for each month you delay.

Handbook coming
- More detailed information is on the way. In October, Medicare will send you the 2006 Medicare & You handbook which will include a list of all the plans available in your area. In addition, the companies in your area will be sending you specific information about their plans, including their list of covered drugs and network pharmacies.
- Information will also be available through the Medicare website at www.medicare.gov and from www.MedicareRxInfoSource.com, a website hosted by UnitedHealthcare.

Important dates and contact info

Oct. 1, 2005 – Companies will begin to release information about their plans. Medicare will send you the 2006 Medicare & You handbook.

Nov. 15, 2005 – The first day you can enroll in a Medicare prescription drug plan.

Jan. 1, 2006 – The first day you can use your Medicare Part D coverage. Call UnitedHealthcare’s member services at (800) 809-0453. To find the nearest office of the Railroad Retirement Board, call (800) 808-0772. For the nearest Social Security office, call (800) 772-1213.

To find out more about the Medicare program is available at (800) MEDICARE or www.medicare.gov.

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.

Local Name City/State
196 Baker, Howard L. Morris, Ala.
200 Bomberger, Dolan C. N. Platte, Neb.
212 Sotis, Charlie J. Allentown, N.Y.
298 Foulkes Jr., Lloyd Columbus City, Ind.
305 Tillman, Ernest K. Ashland, Neb.
329 Wiler, Clyde E. Livetown, Pa.
367 Dunn, Roland R. Tarkio, Mo.
378 Stadler, Leonard H. Mentor, Ohio
389 Blakes, Charles W. Omaha, Neb.
471 Gruchalla, O. L. Salem, Ore.
493 Baker, James K. Woodside, Iowa
505 Beavers, John O. Pinellas Park, Fla.
622 Owen Jr., John G. Trussville, Ala.
646 Moline, Thomas F. Bellevue, Neb.
679 Salisbury, George S. Middletown, Conn.
792 Anatra, Albert V. Massillon, Ohio
847 Smith, Parkers. Pardmouth, Ala.
911 Johns, Dewayne T. Corn Rapids, Minn.
911 Seleski, Stephen S. Hastings, Minn.
927 Killbury, Charles D. Pasco, Wash.
1043 Ahlberg, George William Fallon, Nev.
1059 Bjorke, U.R. Mentor, Ohio
1074 Reed, Harry L. Deming, N.M.
1074 Rose, Benjamin W. Nanny Cio, Pa.
1106 Ferguson, Robert A. Hope Mills, N.C.
1148 McKinney, Thomas O. Falls City, Neb.
1127 Wadkins, J.L. Wichita, Kan.
1146 Roland, Jesse M. Arrington, Tenn.
1361 Domanick, Michael S. Norwalk, Conn.
1365 Brophy, Gaylord E. New Wilmington, Pa.
1370 Wardell, Harold F. Point Pleasant, N.J.
1383 Nussle, John H. Sun City, Calif.
1386 Loughman, E. F. Newark, Ohio
1391 O’Rourke Jr., James J. Carlelt, Va.
1445 Banko, V. G. Hawley, Pa.
1518 Bishop, James C. Thousand Palms, Calif.
1537 Cox, Harold T. Zephyrhills, Fla.
1674 Pugh, Gerald L. Perris, Calif.
1722 Gohn, William D. Abingtonton, Pa.
1973 Gering, Paul K. Green Bay, Wis.

www.utuia.org www.utu.org
Retired Vice President C.E. “Red” Wible dies

LEVITTOWN, Pa. – Retired UTU International Vice President Clyde “Red” Wible, age 85, died July 29, 2005.

A member of Local 309 in Altoona, Pa., he began his rail career in 1941 as a brakeman and conductor on the Pennsylvania Railroad. He joined Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen (BRT) Lodge 174 in Altoona and served as local chairperson, chairperson of the grievance committee and general chairperson. He was elected an alternate vice president at the 1971 UTU convention, and moved up to vice president in January 1974. He was subsequently re-elected to the post at the next three quadrennial conventions and retired Dec. 1, 1984.

Wible served in the U.S. Navy from 1943 to 1945 aboard the USS Doran in the South Pacific. In 1968, he served on the 40-man Unification Committee formed to create the UTU.

Besides his wife of 64 years, Alma “Sis” (Waite) Wible, he leaves behind two daughters; a third daughter preceded him in death. He also leaves four grandchildren, six great grandchildren, one sister and five brothers.

Memorial contributions may be sent to the Shriners Hospital for Children, 3551 N. Broad St., Philadelphia, PA 19140.
Training program

Continued from page 1

“World-class training programs,” said Babler, “must link classroom training to actual field application so that the classroom application of rules makes sense to trainees.

“Additionally, remote-control training does not continue beyond the initial training program. Working conditions at terminals change by season. Nor do existing training programs provide for a mechanism to test the knowledge and teaching skills of the trainers,” he said.

Babler said the number of remote-control accidents and incidents actually has been rising although injuries have been declining. The FRA has concluded that in many instances, employees are unable to relate to the actual situations they face in the workplace, he said.

BLET coffin

Continued from page 1

(CIRB) ordering conductors who were sold out by the BLE and VIA Rail – after the BLE gained control of the former UTU contract – be docketed into the VIA Rail engineer seniority roster using the trainman date of seniority. Earlier this year, the Canadian Supreme Court rejected an appeal by the BLET challenging a federal ruling that the BLE “breached its statuto-

ry duty of fair representation” after it gained control of the former UTU contract on VIA Rail. All avenues of appeal have now been exhausted by the BLET, meaning the BLET must pay as much as C$230,000 each to as many as 230 once-UTU-represented former VIA Rail conductors – a potential liability in the tens of millions of dollars.

The to-be-determined monetary damages, and the seniority-list docketing order, flow as retribution following the CIRB’s finding of seri-

ous violations of Canadian labor laws by the BLE with the compliance of VIA Rail.

UTU new-hire training recommendations

Continued from page 1

• Training programs for new hires must be of sufficient duration and intensity to familiarize employees with the day-to-day operations of the workplace.

• Training programs must include a minimum time frame before skill-based assessments of the employees are conducted.

• Employees assigned to training programs should be monitored to ensure attendance and understanding of the curriculum.

• Accurate records should be kept of the employee training curriculum.

• The content of training programs must be location specific and not system specific.

• Training should be provided by competent instructors from the crafts who are intimately familiar with the day-to-day operations, rules and special instructions for the location.

• Trainees must be determined as competent with a phase of training before being permitted to enter the next phase of training. This may include the progression from trainman to RCL operator, and trainee to engine service.

• Training programs should be frequently evaluated by the parties for content and instruc-

tional value, and updated when new skill-based requirements are added.

• Remedial training should be location specific, continuous and classrooms- or workplace-

based with interaction between the instructor(s) and participants.

• Criteria and parameters should be developed to determine when operating employees qualify for familiarization.

• Familiarization of employees with locations, circumstances or territories with which they are unfamiliar should be performed by UTU mentor trainers/instructors.

• Familiarization programs may include class-

room, on-the-job or other instructional methods.

Help for injured

Continued from page 1

and are among the most energized voters on Election Day.

Individual UTU members, sending e-mails and making telephone calls to lawmakers – many of whom included personal histories of carrier denial and/or delay of medical treatment, or interference – also played a crucial role.

The law in Illinois imposes fines of up to $10,000 for each violation, and separate act of attempted delay, denial of medical treatment – or interference – is a separate count.

“This is a total victory by the UTU membership and benefits every craft,” said UTU Illinois Legislative Director Joe Szabo. “It really shows what organized employees can bring to bear on government when they coordinate their efforts and act as a united team.


Washington, a conductor on Chicago Metra and a member of UTU Local 1258 in Elgin, Ill., said, “This law is a result of teamwork by com-

mitted trade unionists acting in unity and with perseverance.”

When one railroad lobbyist testified that the “outlandish allegations” of carrier denial, denial or interference were “unfounded,” Assistant Illi-

nois State Director John Burner, assisted by Alternate State Director Bob Goy, supplied each lawmaker with case files documenting actual instances on that railroad.

Railroads asserted the bill violates federal law that gives the Federal Railroad Administration exclusive regulatory authority, but the UTU convinced Illinois lawmakers that while the FRA regulates “harassment and intimidation” of railroad workers, the federal government has chosen to leave to the states the matter of regu-

lating the “integrity of medical treatment” of injured railroad workers.

The Iowa Victory

Last April, UTU Iowa State Legislative Director Pat Hendricks scored a similar victory against substantial odds when the Republican-controlled and largely pro-business state legisla-

ture passed a UTU-supported bill requiring rail-

roads to “provide reasonable and adequate access to first aid and medical treatment for employees injured in the course of employ-

ment.”

“Iowa Gov. Red Blagojevich (seated) signs the landmark Railroad Employees Medical Treatment Act. Standing from left to right, are: House Transportation Chairman Jay Hoffman; UTU Illinois Alternate State Director Bob Goy; UTU Illinois State Director Joe Szabo; State Rep. and UTU member Eddie Washington; UTU Illinois Assistant State Director John Burner and UTU International President Paul C. Thompson.

‘World-class training programs,’ said Babler, “must link classroom training to actual field application so that the classroom application of rules makes sense to trainees.

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The Minnesota Law

“The chief component of our law is that it is a crime,” Minnesota State Legislative Director Philip Qualy said.

“While our bill is a misdemeanor crime, with stated right to return for a higher crime level if necessary, the potential value of a criminal find-

ing to a FELA case could be significant for the injured and victimized worker,” Qualy said.

“Our bill went through five hearings and passed unanimously in each hearing,” Qualy said. “UTU members stepped forward to testify about five specific cases. We withstood difficult conference committees through effective lobby-

ing, frankly, we just plain outworked the rail-

roads. At the end of the day, the railroads never got a single vote.”

Qualy praised the efforts of Clyde Larson, local chairperson and legislative rep. for Local 1292, Pro-

tor; Mike Nelson of Local 1614, St. Paul, and David J. Riehle, chairperson of Local 650, Minneapolis.
CSX sent packing

Continued from back cover

practice and neither pay the pool members a basic day nor release them from the pool so that they might exercise seniority elsewhere or find temporary alternative employment.

Complaints to CSX by McIntyre resulted in a CSX agreement to release the pool members so that they might earn a living to feed their families and pay the mortgage while not being paid by CSX.

CSX, according to McIntyre’s sworn statement to the court, indicated the pools would be inactive for about a week and re-established on Saturday, July 16. In the interim, CSX would not pay the train crews who had been members of the pool.

But on July 16, CSX, which makes pool pools known via computer, failed to establish conductor positions as it said it would – and this was evidenced by data provided the court by McIntyre from “snapshots” he had taken from CSX computer data. “Thus, any conductor who checked with CSX for open positions in the Erin pools at that time would be similarly slow (and, in some cases, slower) to mark up for re-established positions, CSX did not have the personnel available for marking up in advance, it would thus not surprise anyone,” McIntyre said. “In my experience, had the company taken out notice in the middle of the night on a Sunday as previously stated, CSX would not have found itself short staffed.”

“Had the company taken steps in advance to publicize the re-establishment of these positions, or even to make them available for marking up in advance, it would not have found itself short staffed.”

Nonetheless, as McIntyre’s data demonstrates, CSX conductors – on their own – began marking up for those re-established positions as July 17 wore on and as the positions began showing up on computer screens. On July 18, dissatisfied that the displaced CSX employees were not marking up quickly enough to suit the railroad, CSX filed a lawsuit against the UTU. In fact, Judge Adams initially granted CSX a temporary restraining order in which the UTU was ordered to advise each of the displaced pool members they must return to work.

Although engineers represented by the BLET were similarly slow (and, in some cases, slower) to mark up for re-established positions, CSX sued only the UTU.

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“Rufus McIntyre is a detail-oriented, no-nonsense general chairperson who makes this union sense general chairperson who makes this union.
The UTU Public Relations Department awards UTU gear to the union member who submits the best photograph during the previous months.

The winning photo will be published in the UTU News. Exceptional photographs will be included on the UTU website.

The UTU would like to see photographs or digital photographs of work-related scenes, such as railroad, bus or mass transit operations, new equipment photos, scenic shots, activities of your local, or photos of your brothers and sisters keeping America rolling.

Printed photographs should be mailed to UTU News, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250. High-resolution digital photographs should be in the JPEG format and e-mailed to utunews@utu.org.

With each photograph, please include your name and UTU local number, the names of the persons in the photo (left to right), where the photo was taken, and all other pertinent information.

All photographs submitted become property of the UTU. Remember to review your employer's policies regarding use of cameras on the property or during work hours.

This month’s winning photo was taken by Jim Allen, a retired member of Local 1400 in South Portland, Maine. The photo shows an Amtrak train in Flagstaff, Ariz.

ERWIN, Tenn. – CSX Transportation, which mismanaged a pool of conductors out of two subdivisions here, sought to cover-up its shortcomings by falsely alleging the UTU engaged in an unlawful work stoppage or slowdown.

Carriers don’t do that to the United Transportation Union – at least not do it and succeed.

When the case reached the courthouse, UTU General Chairperson Rufus McIntyre (GO-513) used statistical evidence to rebut CSX’s baseless and hollow claims. The mismanaged railroad walked from the courthouse with considerable egg on its face.

A federal judge, presented with McIntyre’s facts, immediately saw through the CSX flim-flam and declined to grant the railroad’s request for a restraining order against the UTU.

McIntyre’s statement of the facts convinced Federal Judge Henry Lee Adams Jr. that had CSX managed its railroad in a competent manner and merely advised its employees in advance that work was available, the positions the railroad complained were unfilled would have, in fact, been filled.

The UTU will now move to recover attorney and court costs from CSX. CSX had been required to post a $50,000 bond; that now could be subject to forfeiture.

The court understood there was absolutely no effort by the UTU, at any level of the union, to impede operations on CSX.

“The court finds that plaintiff (CSX) has not met all the prerequisites for issuance of a preliminary injunction,” Adams ruled. “First, plaintiff has not proven that ‘unlawful acts have been committed’ and ‘Plaintiff has failed to prove a work stoppage occurred… Most importantly, the court simply does not find that there is an imminent threat of a strike, stoppage or slowdown.”

What happened is this:

In mid-July, CSX, as it has done for at least five previous years, temporarily shut down – for track maintenance – two subdivisions of the former Clinchfield Railroad. A terminal supplying train crews for those subdivisions – which reach north to Shelby, Ky., and south to Spartanburg, S.C. – is located in Erwin. The shutdowns generally last about a week.

Train crews at Erwin are assigned to pools requiring conductors and engineers be on call and available to work 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and are paid only when they actually work.

At least since 1999, when CSX shutdown the two subdivisions for the one-week track maintenance, it paid adversely affected members of the pools a basic day in order that they remain immediately available for work when the subdivision re-opened. But this year, CSX – in a fit of greed – initially said it would depart from past practice.

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