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# UTU News

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The Official Publication of the United Transportation Union

## THE VOICE OF TRANSPORTATION LABOR

“The NMB Knowledge Store is an archive of more than 90,000 NRAB records, PEB reports, NMB representation decisions and other documents accessed through a sophisticated search engine.” – NMB Member Harry Hoglander (see Paul Thompson’s column, page 4)

### Negotiations update

Negotiations between the UTU and carriers represented by the National Carriers’ Conference Committee are progressing. Additional sessions have been scheduled for this month and December. To keep current with the latest developments, check the UTU website, www.utu.org.

## News & Notes

### Proof of disability needed

If you are a UTU member who is not working due to disability, it is necessary to maintain timely “proof of disability” on file with the insurance company administering employee and/or dependent health-care benefits.

For your convenience, the UTU has posted a generic “proof of disability” form on its website that you can print from your home computer and submit to your doctor for completion.

The form contains the fax number and mailing address for the insurance companies administering benefits under the NRC/UTU Health and Welfare Plan.

After logging onto the UTU homepage at www.utu.org, click on the healthcare link in the blue menu bar on the left-hand side of the page. Scroll down to the heading “Benefit Provider Directory” to find the “proof of disability” form in PDF format.

It is necessary to have Adobe Acrobat Reader to view and print the form.

### Some Opryland space left

The UTU for Life program has only a few rooms left for the Opryland Christmas trip set for Dec. 11-14. The package includes three nights at the luxurious Gaylord Opryland Hotel, a ticket to the Radio City Spectacular, a reserved seat for the Pam Tillis Christmas dinner party, a reserved seat at the Grand Ole Opry, a General Jackson paddlewheel luncheon cruise, admission to a fabulous ice show at the hotel, a coupon book worth \$250 in discounts plus much more. The cost is only \$442 per person, with first-time travelers receiving a rebate of twice their annual UTU for Life dues (\$18). For more information call Gone With the Wind Travel at (800) 886-4989 or email marcia@gwtw.webmail.com.

### Check UTU web for vote

A request by the UTU International to increase the International portion of monthly dues by \$5 per month is currently under review by local delegates. The results of the delegates’ vote will be announced after the Nov. 8 deadline for voting. Results will be available on the UTU website: www.utu.org.

## FRA targets misaligned rail switches; sets fines

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The nation’s railroads have until Nov. 22 to improve procedures for operating manual track switches under an emergency order announced last month by Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta.

An emergency safety order targeting hand-operated main-track switches in non-signaled (dark) territory has been issued by the Federal Railroad Administration.

The emergency order requires “railroads to modify their operating rules and take certain other actions necessary to ensure that railroad employees who dispatch non-signaled territory or who operate hand-operated main track switches in non-signaled territory ensure the switches are restored to their proper (normal) position after use.”

Any railroad, supervisor or employee who violates the emergency safety order is liable for a civil penalty up to \$27,000, according to the FRA.

The emergency safety order mandates that railroads retrain and periodically test employees on switch operating procedures and

increase communication among crewmembers regarding the position of the switch.

Specifically, employees must be briefed on the use of switches and provide written documentation every time a switch is moved.

In addition, locomotive engineers must acknowledge that switches are properly set before trains can be operated.

FRA’s emergency safety order follows what the FRA termed “nine serious train crashes, 10 fatalities, and injuries to more than 600 people” since January 2005 as a result of “track switches left in the wrong position.”

In 2005 the nation has experienced more accidents resulting from improperly lined hand-operated switches on main track in non-signaled territory than it experienced in any of the previous five years, FRA said. To date in 2005, there were nine accidents resulting in 640 injuries and 10 fatalities.

The FRA said the accidents occurred “when employees working in areas not equipped with

*Continued on page 10*

**Workers could be fined up to \$27,000 for violations**

## UTU to disburse hurricane aid

The United Transportation Union is preparing to disburse aid from its UTU Hurricane Relief Fund to those in need.

The fund was established in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, and then Hurricane Rita, to assist unionized railroad workers – regardless of union affiliation – cope with the devastation caused by the storms.

The UTU was the first union to establish a fund to assist all railroad workers, regardless of union affiliation.

All UTU-represented bus operators affected by these disasters also are eligible to receive this aid.

Completed applications for assistance must have been received at the UTU International no later than the close of business on Friday,

*Continued on page 10*

## Amtrak struggles to keep rolling

Sadly – ever so sadly for employees and the American public – Amtrak’s Perils of Pauline existence continues.

Amtrak, once again – as has been the case since its inception in 1971 – is on life support, awaiting adequate funding from Congress.

Amtrak’s opponents – conservative lawmakers egged on by the Bush administration – are hell

bent on putting our national intercity rail passenger network down as if it were a lame horse on the president’s Crawford, Texas, ranch.

The UTU PAC and UTU lobbying efforts have helped hold Amtrak’s opponents at bay while building support for more consistent and reliable funding.

The effort is fraught with challenge.

*Continued on page 10*



# Around the UTU

## News from around the U.S. and Canada

### Local 60, Newark, N.J.

Members working on NJ Transit rail operations are mourning the death of conductor **Kenneth Pear**, 54, who succumbed to a heart problem in September, said Treasurer **Neil Powers**. Brother Powers also noted that conductor **John Vannest** passed away earlier this year just a month shy of retirement. Meanwhile, the local is now paying for retiring members' first year of membership in the *UTU for Life* program.

### Local 240, Los Angeles, Calif.

Congratulations go out to two members of this Union Pacific local who recently retired, said Secretary & Treasurer **Fred Comeau**. Members offer their best wishes to **Don Wilson** and **Don Nelson** for long and happy retirements.

### Local 257, Morrill, Neb.

This Union Pacific local hosted its fifth annual information seminar on Sept. 22-23, said Secretary & Treasurer **Thomas Jones**, who assisted Vice Local Chairperson **Larry Murphy** in organizing the event. Guests included International Vice President **Arty Martin**, General Chairperson **Michael Reedy** (GO-225) and Nebraska State Legislative Director **Ray Lineweber**.

### Local 500, Grand Junction, Colo.

Associated with this Union Pacific local is Chapter 3 of the *UTU for Life* program, which had a good turnout on Oct. 12, said retired member **Art Kent**. Members explored the new Medicare prescription drug program, with input from the UP Hospital Association, a Medicare representative and a representative of the general committee. Also discussed was the high cost of living and how it related to the annual COLA affecting pensions. For information about upcoming meetings, contact Brother Kent by calling (970) 434-5806, or write to him at P.O. Box 341, Clifton, CO 81520.

### Local 706, Roanoke, Va.

Members of this Norfolk Southern local offer best wishes to fellow member **Richard Jeskey**, who left his job as Virginia state legislative director on Oct. 1 due to a disability related to a concussion he suffered recently. Brother Jeskey began his career on the Nickel Plate as a crossing watchman in June 1964, and a year later hired out as a fireman on the Norfolk & Western. He became an engineer in the early 1970s, as well as a vice local chairperson and then local chairperson. In 1992, Jeskey became assistant state legislative director, and in 1995 succeeded **Huston Kitts Sr.** as director.

### Local 773, Galveston, Texas

Members of this local working for the BNSF Railway have a new meeting location, said Local Chairperson **J.L. Stubbs**. Meetings are now held the second Tuesday of the month at 5 p.m. at the Fairfield Inn, 10700 Emmitt F. Lowry Expressway (State Hwy. 1764), Texas City, Texas.

### Local 1043, Sparks, Nev.

Perseverance has paid off for this Union

## Amtrak conductor makes hall of fame



Murphy

It's not unusual for an employee to feel beat up at the end of the day. But Amtrak conductor **Marty Murphy** got beat up voluntarily on a daily basis during his layover in New York City for a number of years.

Brother Murphy, secretary, treasurer and alternate delegate for Local 262 in Boston, Mass., was a light heavy-weight boxer who was considered a top amateur in his younger days. "I've sparred with five world champions, doing the majority of it on my layover on 30th Street in New York," he said.

Now 45 years old, Murphy no longer competes, but remains deeply involved in the sport. On Oct. 30, he was inducted into the International Veterans' Boxing Association (IVBA) Hall of Fame in recognition of his many years of involvement and his role as chairman of the IVBA Scholarship Fund, which he said he started in 1991. He currently serves as boxing commissioner for Massachusetts, and continues to train youngsters on weekends at the South Boston Boys' Club.

"I started boxing in the early 1970s," he said. "I was one of 13 kids in my family and you had to have a few moves to eat at dinnertime! I've got eight brothers and four sisters. Four brothers are on the railroad. Three are conductors and one is an engineer."

Murphy hired out on Conrail at 18 when he was pursuing another passion. "I collect and play guitars. I'm into jazz fusion," he said. "I was one month out of high school when my brothers told me there was a job on the railroad. I was in a band and had a gig, but they said, 'You're working on the railroad!'"

Being boxing commissioner has its glamorous side. "I know Don King pretty well, lived for years with world champ Don Lalonde, and I'm on ESPN all the time," he said.

But there's a lot of work involved, too. "My main job is safety. I oversee the weigh-ins, the contracts, medical records, and the licensing of fighters and seconds. I also oversee the venue, making sure aisles and fire exits are clear and security is in place. If there's a question about judgments and rules, I make the final call. And I shut the lights and close the doors at the end of the event. Between that and the railroad, I never sleep!"

Also competing for his time is his family, including two boys and a girl. "The oldest, my 11-year-old boy, is involved in baseball and soccer, and he comes to the gym with me on Saturdays. He wants to get into boxing, but we'll see. I don't know if I have the time and energy for another activity!"

Pacific local, which has gotten lights installed at the west end of the Winnemucca switching yard, said Local Chairperson and Legislative Rep. **Rod Nelms**. The effort

began more than five years ago and has resulted in lights that can be operated manually or can be dialed up from the locomotive or via portable radios, adding greatly to safety.

### Local 1177, Willmar, Minn.

Past Local Chairperson (switchmen) **P.J. "Pat" Connors**, who encountered complications in the wake of his kidney transplant in September 2004, has taken a dramatic turn for the better, said Legislative Rep. and Delegate **Bob Pearson**. A year ago, Pearson made an appeal through these pages for donations to assist Brother Connors. The appeal raised several thousand dollars for the family. In a letter to Pearson, Connors expressed his gratitude and offered high praise for the UTU health & welfare coverage that saw him through some dark times.

### Local 1567, Corbin, Ky.

The board of directors of this CSXT local last month approved the donation of \$1,000 to the UTU Hurricane Relief Fund, said Secretary & Treasurer **Donnie D. Head**. In addition, individual donations from members of the local continue to buoy the fund, said Local Chairperson **Dennis L. Fox**.

### Local 1597, Chicago, Ill.

Members of this local, employed by the Belt Railway of Chicago, are mourning the recent death of Brother **B. J. Woestman**, who succumbed to a heart attack while on the job, said Secretary **John Hahn**. The tragedy has raised questions about policies governing emergency services and response times that can be expected, Hahn said.

### Local 1629, Phoenix, Ariz.

Members of this Union Pacific local last month held a family picnic at Indianschool Park, said member and State Legislative Director **Scott T. Olson**. Retired switchman **Walter West** organized games for the kids and grownups, while food and beverages were supplied by the local, thanks to the efforts of Picnic Chairperson **David H. Hayes**. Also that day, a number of members had the opportunity for a round of golf.

### L-1741, San Francisco, Calif.

Members of this bus local are mourning the death of Sister **Jeanna Briones**, who lost her year-long battle with cancer on Sept. 27, said Local President **Ange Beloy**. A devout unionist and member for 33 years, she will be missed by all her brothers and sisters. Meanwhile, negotiations continue at the San Mateo (Durham) and San Rafael (First Student) yards. Special recognition is in order for Local Vice Chairperson **Diane Johnson**, who is working on the San Rafael contract and setting up training workshops at the Durham yard. Having won the arbitration that sidelined Local Chairperson **Beverly McClinton** for three years, the local is awaiting the outcome of the decision on back pay. The members also expressed their gratitude to International Vice President **Roy Arnold**, director of the Bus Department, for his continuing support. As news of this local's successes gets around, Beloy said, other properties are seeking advice and help in organizing.



# UTU PAC ROLL OF HONOR

Here is a list showing the average UTU PAC contribution per member per month for 2004, based on contributions received from active, dues-paying members (no members on E-49 status are included). State averages are total contributions divided by total active members in the state.

Table listing average UTU PAC contributions by state and local chapter. States include Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New England States, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

### TOP 10 UTU PAC LOCALS

Local	City	Amount	Legislative Rep.
1421	Franklin Park, Ill.	\$17.21	Cicuto, Daniel A.
1129	Raleigh, N.C.	13.73	Lamm, Glenn A.
78	Pocatello, Idaho	12.93	Millward, George J.
1293	Altoona, Wisc.	12.65	Staves, Kenneth M.
490	Princeton, Ind.	10.79	Utley, Randy D.
508	Smithville, Texas	9.70	Saunders, Kamron T.
166	Salt Lake City, Utah	9.31	Seegmiller, F. Jay
312	Madison, Wis.	9.17	Deneen, Timothy S.
17	Marshalltown, Iowa	9.10	Backoff, William D.
945	La Junta, Colo.	8.83	Engbrecht, Patrick M.

Continuation of the state contribution table, listing local chapters and their respective amounts and legislative representatives for various states including Kentucky, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New England States, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

Continuation of the state contribution table, listing local chapters and their respective amounts and legislative representatives for various states including Texas, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

**Paul C. Thompson, International President**  
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### Contact the UTU:

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## Public not to be damned

Running – or soon to be running – America’s four major railroads are CEOs of relatively young age who could be at the helm at least 10 more years.

Charles “Wick” Moorman, 52, succeeded David Goode Nov. 1 as Norfolk Southern CEO.

Jim Young, 52, is expected soon to succeed Union Pacific Chairman Dick Davidson.

Mike Ward, 55, became CSX chairman after John Snow was named Treasury secretary in 2003.

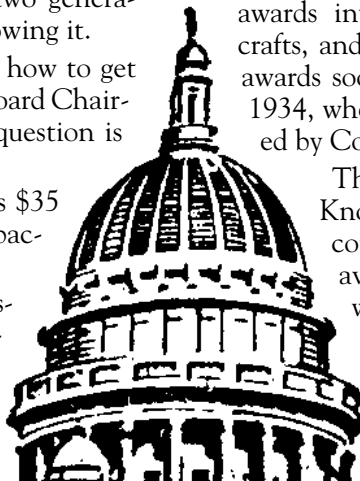
The youngest of the CEOs, Matt Rose, 46, succeeded Rob Krebs as BNSF chairman in 2002.

Although railroads are reporting their highest profits in two generations, they are said to be reducing rail capacity rather than growing it.

“For railroad CEOs in the past, the principle question was how to get more business on their systems,” said Surface Transportation Board Chairman Roger Nober, the nation’s top rail regulator. “Now the question is how to get the most valuable business on the railroad...”

This is happening despite new legislation offering railroads \$35 billion in low-interest loans and loan guarantees to expand capacity, which translates to more business and more jobs.

National security requires not only a financially fit rail industry, but one willing and able to serve the public interest. Congress would be wise to use its oversight power to ensure the rail industry understands the public is not to be damned.



## WASHINGTON WATCH

By James M. Brunkenhoefer

## The demigods of Congress are not divine

The only thing we have more of in Washington, D.C., than statues and monuments are demigods. A demigod is one so preeminent in intellect and power that they think they are divine.

Sadly, demigods control Congress. They may churn out press releases claiming to share our family values; but, in fact, they ignore the thoughtful, hardworking, God-fearing people whom they claim to care about.



Brunkenhoefer

They talk about family values, compassion for the poor, shoring up retirement plans and need for adequate health care.

Then they cast votes making it easier for foreign corporations to invade our markets and export our good-paying jobs.

They hand out tax breaks to the wealthy. And they make it easier for domestic employers to renege on pension promises, cut back health-care benefits and cut wages so drastically that families lose their homes, and children must drop out of college.

Demigods turn a deaf ear when told that corporate officials are lining their pockets with huge bonuses while working families struggle and fail.

Then they cast more votes sending more jobs overseas, more domestic employers into bankruptcy, more working families into crisis and more retirees into despair.

So long as the demigods control Congress, they will con-

## Knowledge is power

By Paul Thompson  
International President

How would you like to walk into a store selling job security?

Better yet, how would you like to obtain that product without being charged for it?

Welcome to the National Mediation Board’s Knowledge Store, with the potential to become a most valuable tool for UTU officers preparing arbitration cases on behalf of members.

“The NMB Knowledge Store, activated in July, is an archive of more than 90,000 National Railroad Adjustment Board records, Presidential Emergency Board reports, NMB representation decisions and other documents accessed through a sophisticated search engine,” said NMB member Harry Hoglander.

Harry promises the archive will continue to expand as new material is added by the NMB. It also will include copies of railroad union constitutions, some of which already are posted.

Although the UTU has on its own website an impressive database of awards and reports, the NMB’s Knowledge Store includes awards involving other railroad crafts, and the NMB database of awards soon will stretch back to 1934, when the NMB was created by Congress.

This will make the NMB Knowledge Store more complete than what is available on the UTU website or anywhere else – and especially valuable to UTU officers preparing and

pursuing grievances, and for all union members seeking to understand the history surrounding NMB issues.

I expect that in the near future, the NMB Knowledge Store will replace the less complete UTU awards database.

Harry told me the NMB’s Knowledge Store was designed specifically to be the most user-friendly database available. “We have moved on this project at what I would describe as ‘light speed,’ especially for a government agency,” Harry said.

Harry calls the NMB’s Knowledge Store “a one-stop shopping location, open and free, with a very sophisticated search engine. It allows the general public and anyone from the president of the union down to the most junior member to directly search for, read and use any of the records in the archive.”

I encourage you to check out the NMB Knowledge Store, which is accessible at [www.nmb.gov](http://www.nmb.gov) and by clicking on the “Documents and Forums” button and then, “The NMB Knowledge Store.”

I also request that our officers begin furnishing the International with copies of all awards rendered on their properties so we might forward them immediately to the NMB for inclusion in the Knowledge Store.

Send awards to Research Department, United Transportation Union, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107, or e-mail them to [research@utu.org](mailto:research@utu.org).



Thompson

# State Watch *News from UTU State Legislative Boards*

## Illinois

Norfolk Southern has opened a new state-of-the-art crew facility at its 55th Street yard in Chicago, and five other carriers in Illinois are planning to renovate or construct new crew shelters following complaints filed by the UTU Illinois Legislative Board.

"Our efforts to get NS to remedy the deplorable conditions in that building formally started in 2002 when inspectors from the Illinois Commerce Commission declared it in noncompliance," Illinois State Legislative Director **Joe Szabo** said.

"But the process really began a year earlier," Szabo said, "when our members at 55th Street started reporting conditions to their local union officers."

"That's how the process works: local members documenting conditions – it is the very foundation of any complaint."

Not until earlier this year, when Illinois Administrative Law Judge Bernadette Cole issued a proposed order to NS to remedy the defects or face substantial fines, did the railroad commit to a plan, timetable and budget to replace the facility, Szabo said.

"It's been open almost two months now," Szabo said. "The NS employees at 55th Street have a clean, modern 8,000-square-foot building with 120 lockers, appropriate, functional furniture, an attractive lunch room, plenty of hot water, modern plumbing fixtures and functioning heating and air conditioning."

Szabo said the other crew-facility projects currently underway include:

- the BNSF Railway modernization of two major Chicago facilities, Corwith Yard on the former Santa Fe and Cicero Yard on the former BN;
- Alton & Southern upgrades on its East St. Louis facilities;
- Union Pacific's renovation and expansion of its Dupo Yard office facilities, and
- Amtrak's planned modernization of its 14th Street facility in Chicago.

The UTU has also filed a formal complaint

with an Illinois Commerce Commission law judge regarding CSX's Barr Yard in Riverdale. The carrier has offered to present plans for possible renovations, expansion or new construction by year's end.

## Arizona

About 300 employees in an eight-state region, including about 20 in Arizona, who worked for Alex's Transportation haven't been paid since July, or have been paid with rubber checks, and Arizona State Legislative Director **Scott Olson** is trying to do something about it.



Olson

The company, which acted as a taxi service for railroad employees, allegedly owes thousands of dollars apiece to many of them.

Olson is gathering evidence, such as bad paychecks, so he can pass it on to Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard. Olson said he was hoping for felony charges.

The Labor Division of the Arizona Department of Economic Security has received 11 complaints against the company, which the division is compiling for an investigation, said director Orlando Macias.

Macias said the attorney general's office would be able to decide which charges, if any, to pursue, but there is no criminal charge for failure to pay employees set forth in Arizona statute.

The attorney general's office is most capable of conducting the investigation and bringing about any possible charges against the company, Olson said.

(Drivers for Alex in Clovis, N.M. are represented by the Teamsters. Alex drivers elsewhere are represented by the UTU. "We are working to get our members their pay," Bus Department Vice President Roy Arnold said. "I have had Teamster-represented drivers call me for help. When I ask them what their union is doing to assist them, they say, 'Absolutely nothing.'")

## North Carolina



The North Carolina Legislative Board recently sponsored a table at the annual Vance Aycock dinner at the Grove Park Inn in Asheville. Several candidates running for statewide office attended the reception, including Lt. Gov. Beverly Purdie and Hampton Dellinger, candidate for attorney general. Former Georgia Sen. Max Cleland (D) was the guest speaker. Pictured above, left to right, are Local 782 (Asheville) Legislative Rep. Ron Ingerick; State Director Dickie Westbrook, Dellinger and Assistant State Director Glenn Lamm.

## New England States

New England States Legislative Director **George Casey** and retired Alternate National Legislative Director **Gene Plourd** have been appointed as at-large members of the Maine governor's task force on rail passenger funding.

The two recently met with Maine Gov. David Baldacci concerning rail passenger and freight issues in Maine.

"The task force is primarily involved in the future funding of Amtrak's Downeaster service between Boston and Portland, Maine," Casey said.

"The Downeaster is currently operated by Amtrak for the Northeast Rail Passenger Authority. It is our intention to be able advocates for our members employed on this service."

## Bus Department

By Roy Arnold, vice president-director

### Company dreams can be nightmares

Back in 1966, the Lovin' Spoonful recorded the song, *Daydream* ("What a day for a daydream; what a day for a daydreamin' boy.") It was a big hit – and its lyrics perfectly describe many employers.

They live in a daydreamin' world of workers happy with \$1.25-per-hour wages and few benefits.

The world has changed since 1966, but to listen to what is said at the negotiating table, it is clear that many employers are stuck in a different era.

Caps on wages, reductions in retirement plans and fewer health care benefits are what they speak of; while, at the same time, hoping to gain for themselves a big bonus at the expense of workers.

Imagine: In one Texas city, where living costs are high, drivers are paid just \$7 per hour.

It is the job of the UTU to end these nightmares for families that barely get by and often have to choose between medications and food.

By standing united, we can and do end these nightmares, but sometimes the economic and mental costs of the struggle are significant to our members.

In Santa Cruz, Calif., bus operators walked the picket line because the employer refused to bargain in good faith, setting aside a tentatively negotiated agreement in hopes of bullying loyal drivers. Public opinion was not with the employer, and I am proud of our Local 23 leaders and members who wouldn't be bullied by employer greed in one of the richest communities in America.

Our hats are off to Local 23 Chairperson Bonnie Morr and every member of that local who looked the greedy employer in the eye and said, "Hell, no."



## Yardmasters

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

### Safety suffers as training wains

Every accident investigator will tell you that it is a combination of factors that cause so-called "human factor" accidents. Frequently among the factors are fatigue and lack of training.

As we know too well, railroads do not have a sufficient number of operating crews. Train and engine service crews often are denied rest days and frequently called to take another turn within eight hours of tying up. Carriers acknowledge that going to work tired is like going to work drunk, but rare is the manager who stays employed by putting safety ahead of profit.

Training has become at least as serious a problem as fatigue. To hustle new employees into the work force, carriers are shortening training programs that already suffer a one-size-fits-all approach.

A flat-yard assignment in summer has little in common with a hump-yard assignment in winter; and operating a train of boxcars across the prairie is hardly similar to operating a loaded coal train over mountains in West Virginia. Yet, it is not uncommon for a new hire to be trained in an environment quite different than the one to which he or she will be assigned.

Moreover, as new technology has been introduced, operating practices changed and carriers merged, long-time employees – including yardmasters – have not received refresher training courses. Even rules re-testing classes rarely offer opportunity to ask questions about rules applications.

UTU International President Paul Thompson and our national negotiating team have stressed this problem in recent sessions with the National Carriers' Conference Committee. The NCCC now has agreed that each railroad will begin a dialogue on this matter with UTU general chairpersons.



# UTU-represented bus employees on the job



Members of UTU Local 23 in Santa Cruz, Calif., entered the second month of their strike against the city's transit district with the same determination and solidarity as the first day of the walkout. Above, striking drivers, from left to right, Local 23 Chairperson Bonnie Morr, Patricia Cummings, former U.S. Marine Sgt. Johnny Chavarria, Anthony Perez (kneeling), Doug Grosjean, Justina O'Hagen and Vice Chairperson James Taylor.



Adirondack Trailways mechanics Malcolm Brown, left, and Bill Henning, members of UTU Local 1582 in Albany, N.Y., help to maintain and repair more than 100 motor coaches in regional, interstate and international service.



Rockland Coaches, part of the Coach USA family and one of the Northeast's largest private bus companies, operates 154 buses serving metropolitan New York-New Jersey, including the Port Authority New York bus terminal. UTU Local 1558 of Bergenfield, N.J., represents almost 250 drivers, mechanics, dispatchers and clerical employees of Rockland Coaches and Transit of Rockland. Above, UTU Bus Department Alternate Vice President Rich Deiser, far left, (also Local 1558 general chairperson) discusses safety issues with, from left of Deiser, William Crespo, James Miller, Will Hull, Local 1558 Secretary-Treasurer Mike Byrne and Leon Middleton (kneeling).



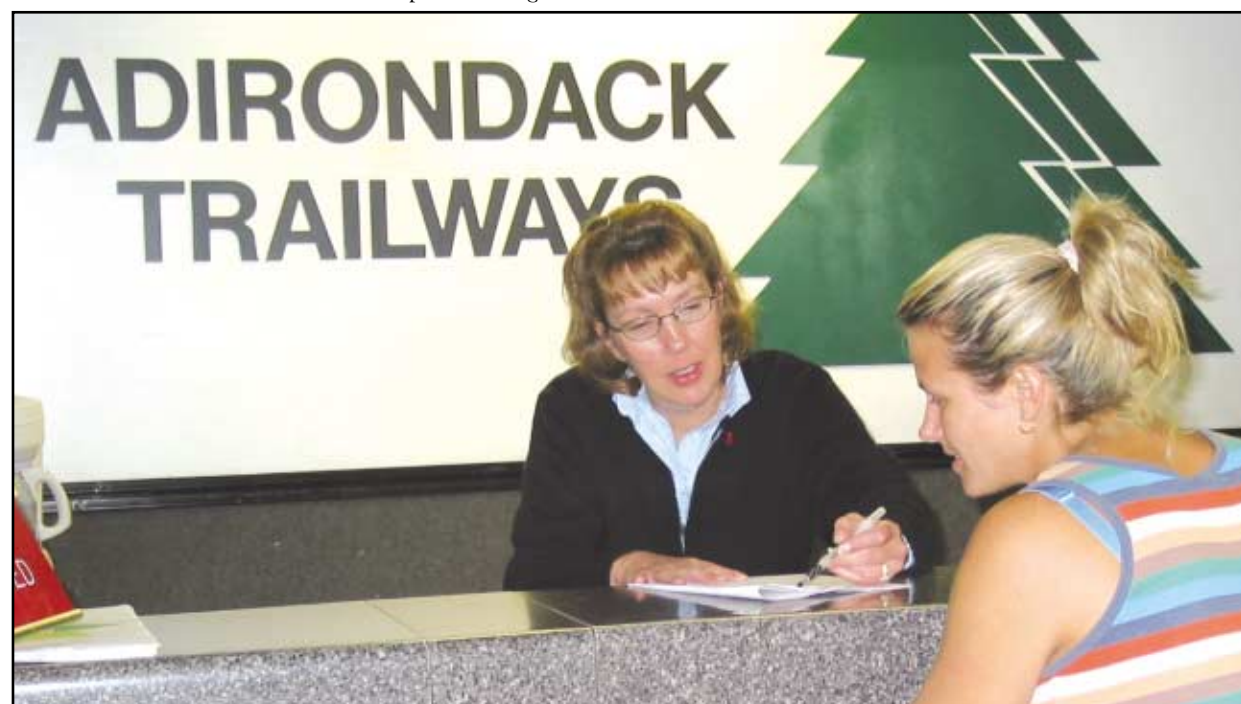
UTU-represented mechanics, coach attendants, maintenance support and body-shop employees at Charlotte (N.C.) Area Transit System (UTU Local 1596) work three shifts at two facilities maintaining 310 buses serving more than 1 million riders annually. Above, left to right, are mechanic Scott Gleason, Local 1596 Vice Chairperson Alvy Hughes, mechanic Bernard Romero and Local 1596 Chairperson Craig Patch.



Members of UTU Local 1741 drive, dispatch, fuel, supervise and handle office chores to keep some 220 school buses on the road serving students in the San Francisco Bay area. Above, Local 1741 Chairperson Melvin Brown confers with Vice Chairperson Lois Correa following member ratification of a new agreement (see page 9).



The UTU represents some 370 school bus drivers employed by Chestnut Ridge Transportation in Rockland County, N.Y., seeking their first contract. Another 150 assistant drivers with Chestnut Ridge are seeking UTU representation. Above, driver Faubert Saintus welcomes aboard one of the 20,000 students riding 350 Chestnut Ridge buses daily.



Adirondack Trailways ticket agent Carrie Gardenier, a member of UTU Local 1582, Albany, N.Y., assists passenger Catherine McCann of Utica, N.Y. More than 500 passengers purchase tickets daily at this bus hub for service north to Canada, south into New York City and New Jersey and to numerous upstate New York locations.



Janice Weaver, left, and Sue Nguyen, are among bus operators employed by Spartanburg Area Regional Transit Agency (SPARTA) and represented by UTU Local 1596, which is negotiating on their behalf for their first labor agreement. SPARTA serves the metropolitan Spartanburg, S.C., area.



At Albany, N.Y., International Airport, shuttle driver and UTU Local 167 member Dave Schulmerich, center, thanks UTU Local 1582 Chairperson Russ Gaillard, left, following a review of airport security procedures with Albany County Sheriff's Deputy Brian Ruciniski. The UTU also represents parking attendants at the airport. Schulmerich is Local 167's delegate and legislative director.

# UTU for Life

## COLAs to affect retirement benefits

The mechanism that will bring a 4.1 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to Social Security beneficiaries in 2006 will also boost benefits collected by Railroad Retirement beneficiaries.

Monthly Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits will increase 4.1 percent in 2006, the Social Security Administration (SSA) said.

That means Railroad Retirement Tier I benefits, like Social Security benefits, will increase by 4.1 percent while Tier II benefits will increase by 1.3 percent.

Railroad Retirement, Social Security and SSI benefits are adjusted automatically each year based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W).

Railroad Retirement Tier II benefit adjustments are calculated at 32.5 percent of the CPI rise. The vested dual benefit payments and supplemental annuities also paid by the Railroad

Retirement Board (RRB) are not adjusted for the CPI rise.

In January 2006, the average regular Railroad Retirement employee annuity will rise \$55 a month to \$1,788, while the average of combined benefits for an employee and spouse will rise \$76 a month to \$2,501.

The average regular annuity for Social Security beneficiaries will rise \$39 a month to \$1,002, while the average of combined benefits for an employee and spouse receiving Social Security will rise \$65 to \$1,648, the SSA said.

The average monthly SSI federal payment standard will rise from \$579 to \$603.

For those aged widow(er)s eligible for an increase under Railroad Retirement, the average annuity will increase \$33 a month to \$938.

Widow(er)s whose annuities are being paid under the Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act of 2001 will not receive annu-

al cost-of-living adjustments until their annuity amount is exceeded by the amount that would have been paid under prior law, counting all interim cost-of-living increases otherwise payable.

If a Railroad Retirement or survivor annuitant also receives a Social Security or other government benefit, such as a public service pension or another Railroad Retirement annuity, the increased Tier I benefit is reduced by the increased government benefit.

Tier II cost-of-living increases are not reduced by increases in other government benefits.

If a widow(er) whose annuity is being paid under the 2001 law is also entitled to an increased government benefit, her or his Railroad Retirement survivor annuity may decrease. However, the total amount of the combined Railroad Retirement widow(er)'s annuity and other government benefits will not be less than the total payable before the cost-of-living increase and before increased Medicare premium deductions.



## Coverage for retirees under Medicare to change

The UnitedHealthcare coverage enjoyed by many UTU retirees who participate in Medicare is changing, and retirees may wish to consider UnitedHealthcare's prescription drug program, as well as its Plan F policy which pays benefits in addition to Medicare.

### PLAN F OPEN ENROLLMENT

UnitedHealthcare has announced a special open enrollment under policy GA-23111 for Plan F only. **Plan F pays benefits in addition to Medicare, but does not include coverage for prescription drugs.** The monthly premium for the plan is currently \$155 per month for each person enrolled. The open enrollment period will be held during the month of December 2005. Enrollments received during December will be for coverage starting Jan. 1, 2006. Enrollment is open to all eligible railroad retirees regardless of their state of health.

Anyone who is interested in Plan F coverage can obtain a plan description and enrollment form by calling (800) 809-0453.

### PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE

Meanwhile, on Jan. 1, 2006, Medicare's new prescription drug coverage will go into effect. As a result, **GA-23111 Plan D will no longer provide a prescription drug benefit as of that date. Only the prescription drug benefit will be discontinued from your plan; all other health benefits will remain unchanged.**

Under GA-23111 Plan D, UnitedHealthcare worked with Medco Health Services to provide prescription drug services. With drug coverage under GA-23111 Plan D ending, UnitedHealthcare will no longer continue its relationship with Medco for GA-23111.

It is important to note that you may receive enrollment materials for a Medicare Part D prescription drug plan from Medco. We want you to be aware that **Medco's plan is not the same as UnitedHealthcare's.**

### UnitedHealthcare

**If you want prescription drug coverage with UnitedHealthcare, you will need to return the United MedicareRx enrollment form that will be arriving at your home soon.** If you do not receive the UnitedHealthcare package, you can request one by calling the toll-free number (888) 556-7059 anytime from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST Monday through Friday, and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays. For those with a hearing impairment, TTY service is available at (877) 730-4203.

### ABOUT UNITED MEDICARERX

UnitedHealthcare is now offering a Medicare-approved prescription drug plan, United MedicareRx. Your enrollment is not automatic; you must complete and return the enrollment form which will be sent to your home in October.

The United MedicareRx Medicare Prescription Drug Plan offers:

- co-payments as low as \$5 for generic drugs and \$28 for preferred brand name drugs;
- more than 50,000 network pharmacies ready to serve you;
- convenient mail order service, and
- a low monthly premium of \$23 to \$31 per person, depending on where you live.

### RELATIONSHIP WITH DRUG STORES

For Medicare Part D plans, UnitedHealthcare has established a new agreement with Walgreens Health Initiatives, which in turn has agreements with major national drug chains such as CVS, Rite Aid and other pharmacies.

If you have qualified for additional assistance for your Medicare Prescription Drug Plan costs, the amount of your premium and cost at the pharmacy will be less. Once you have enrolled in United MedicareRx, Medicare will tell UnitedHealthcare how much assistance you are receiving, and UnitedHealthcare will send you information on the amount you will pay.

If you are not receiving additional assistance, contact (800) MEDICARE (TTY/TDD users should call (877) 486-2048), your state Medicaid office, or the Social Security Administration at (800) 772-1213 or at the toll-free TTY/TDD number (800) 325-0778, between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., Monday through Friday, to see if you qualify.

## 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	Local	Name	City/State	Local	Name	City/State
2	Clayton, Charles R.	Arcadia, Fla.	508	Evans Jr., Emmett V.	Sealy, Texas	1366	Belden, G. Scott	Spotsylvania, Va.
6	Secaur, Ronald E.	Decatur, Ind.	622	Potter, Henry F.	Birmingham, Ala.	1382	Czajkowski, Charles	Milwaukee, Wis.
138	Lemar, Donald O.	Cridersville, Ohio	781	Wilemon, Ricky J.	Shreveport, La.	1382	Kross, Arthur L.	Port Orange, Fla.
202	Zimelman, Harold	Denver, Col.	792	Crannell, William E.	Massillon, Ohio	1628	Ream, Harold K.	Chantilly, Va.
225	McGhee Jr., Richard J.	Marion, Ohio	915	Kincaid, Clarence E.	Shady Springs, W.Va.	1770	Nordin, Kenneth W.	New Port Richey, Fla.
233	Johnson, Ralph A.	Aberdeen, S.D.	915	Sloan, Thomas W.	Eskdale, W. Va.	1801	Mitchell, Harold A.	Lodi, Calif.
257	Konst, Paul W.	Huron, S.D.	1106	Hall, Ira H.	Fayetteville, N.C.	1977	Breeden, Roy W.	Wenatchee, Wash.
281	Burbridge, Florian J.	Greenfield, Wis.	1200	Schuetter, Garold A.	Reno, Nev.			
281	Raines, Merle L.	Antioch, Ill.	1313	Jennings, John L.	Amarillo, Texas			
439	Miller, Charles H.	Tyler, Texas	1365	Stear, Robert F.	Jamestown, N.Y.			
483	Carter, Raymond	Midland, Ont.						

**NOTE:** Erroneously included in this listing last month was **Charles Houser** of Local 528, who resides in Mount Prospect, Ill.

# Parents, grandparents...

## This Christmas, give a gift that will last a lifetime

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



**"The best thing I gave each of them was a paid-up \$25,000 life insurance policy."**

Willis G. Croonquist  
Local 1177, Willmar, Minn.

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



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

### Information, please



I would like more information on UTUIA's ULTIMATE PAR policy. **Please Print.**

Full Name of Member _____		Sex _____	Date of birth _____	
Address _____		City _____	State _____	ZIP _____
Telephone Number with Area Code _____		UTU Local Number _____		
Please provide full name, sex, date of birth, and relationship of the child for whom the information is requested on the line below.				
Full Name _____	Sex _____	Date of Birth _____	Relationship _____	

Complete and mail to: UTUIA Sales Dept., 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250 11/05

## UTU drivers, mechanics OK pacts in Buffalo, N.Y.

BUFFALO, N.Y. – Members of UTU Local 1908 in Buffalo, N.Y., who drive and maintain school buses, recently approved a pair of five-year contracts, said General Chairperson Roger Wagner.

The contracts, one for bus operators and one for mechanics, affect those employed by Laidlaw Transit at the Buffalo School District and the Amherst School District, as well as drivers in Cheektowaga and Williamsville. The pact covers about 650 bus operators and 25 mechanics, he said.

The new contracts replace three-year agreements that expired on July 1 but were extended for 90 days.



"Most of the bus operators are part-time workers, so we put a lot of emphasis on wages," said Wagner. "But there are some other noteworthy provisions."

The bus operators' contract, approved in a 283-to-202 vote, runs from July 2005 to July 2010 and guarantees slightly more than a 17 percent wage increase over five years. "That's a bit better than the average for the state," Wagner said. "Statistics show other drivers get an average of about 3 percent wage increases, and those represented by the Teamsters are paying dues that are twice what we pay."

Improvements also were gained in the service award/retirement packages, as well as in field-trip rates, Wagner said. Life insurance for active workers and retirees also was improved. "We also reduced the age at which retirees could qualify for that insurance from age 60 to age 55," Wagner said.

Similarly, the contract approved in a two-to-one vote by the mechanics runs through the same time period, and boosts wages by 55 cents per hour in each of the first two years and 60 cents per hour in each of the last three. Mechanics gained the same life insurance provisions enjoyed by the bus operators, got an increase in the portion paid by the employer into their retirement package and received increased tool reimbursements.

Wagner praised the local committee of adjustment, as well as International Vice President Roy Arnold, for their hard work. "Roy and the people at the UTU International were a big help," he said. "The guys here did a great job. We couldn't have gotten as good a deal without the efforts of Local Secretary Ray Barker and Local Vice Chairperson Bobbie Adams."

## Members of Local 1741 ratify new contract

Members of Local 1741, some 263 school bus drivers in San Francisco, have overwhelmingly ratified a new agreement with Laidlaw School Bus Services. The vote was 143 in favor, 20 opposed.

"We went into negotiations looking to maintain a decent level of health care. Costs were up 36 percent last year, and Laidlaw wanted us to absorb those costs," Local President Ange Beloy said.



Beloy

"We agreed to change health-care providers and that brought the cost down. We had no co-pay before, but now we have one with the new provider but we have better benefits, including chiropractic, which is important in our industry."

"Of major concern was the 20 percent company contribution cap to our health care, but we were able to maintain a monthly member contribution for a Pacific Care health plan that includes chiropractic care and low office and drug co-pays."

The proposed contract also contains a \$1.04-per-hour wage increase, the first wage increase in 20 years. "We have not had a raise in 20 years. We have had cost-of-living adjustments, but no raises," Beloy said.

Drivers received a wage increase of 25 cents per hour upon ratification, retroactive to Aug. 1, and will receive the balance at the start of 2006.

Beloy said the proposed contract also corrects some seniority issues that the company had been exploiting. "They really fought that one," she said. "The whole foundation of what we do is seniority."

"They also tried to weaken the discipline language in our contract," Beloy said. "We have strong, progressive discipline language in our contract. They (Laidlaw) have to go through a lot of steps before they can terminate someone. They wanted to impose language from their Riverside, Calif., operations on us, which are weaker. We ended up keeping our strong language. It took a mediator to get them to withdraw that proposal."

Beloy credited Local Chairperson Melvin Brown and Delegate Paul Stein for their perseverance. "Paul Stein was our numbers guy; he could crunch numbers better than the Laidlaw guy," she said.



## Switch order

Continued from page 1

remote electronic signal monitors failed to follow track-switching procedures. In every case," the agency said, "the failure to reset the hand-operated switches has led to trains running onto the wrong tracks and derailling or colliding with locomotives or rail cars or both."

Transportation Secretary Mineta said, "Railroads must put an end to these avoidable deadly mistakes." FRA Administrator Joseph Boardman, in signing the emergency safety order, said, "There is absolutely no excuse for a switch to be left in the wrong position. This dangerous, preventable and increasingly frequent situation must stop, starting now."

The FRA identified the nine switch-related crashes in 2005 as occurring in Graniteville, S.C.; Bieber, Calif.; Banks, Ala.; Mt. Juliet, Tenn.; Sheridan, Ore.; Florence, Minn.; Nickerson, Kans.; Heber, Calif., and Shepard, Texas.

The worst crash was in Graniteville, where a freight train collided with parked railroad cars in early January and released a deadly cloud of tox-

ic gas. Nine of the 10 fatalities and many of the injuries occurred in that accident.

Deadly chlorine was released from a ruptured tank on the moving train, killing a rail crewmember, six Avondale Mills workers and two others. Graniteville was evacuated for more than a week.

In August 2005, a Union Pacific train rolling eastward at 30 mph at Heber, Calif., encountered an improperly lined switch at the west end of a siding. The train struck a standing cut of cars, resulting in the derailment of two locomotives and two freight cars. The control compartment on the lead locomotive was completely destroyed. The three crewmembers survived only by quickly throwing themselves on the floor of the locomotive immediately before impact. They likely would have been seriously injured or killed but for their quick action.

The Bieber accident happened in January 2005 when a BNSF Railway freight train unexpectedly diverted onto an industrial track. The train struck two loaded grain cars, derailling seven locomotives and 14 cars. Two railroad employees were injured. Damages to equipment and track totaled more than \$1 million.

## Be aware:

- The railroad must provide a copy of Emergency Order No. 24 and instruct all affected employees on its intent. A written receipt of such must be maintained permanently by the railroad for each employee;
- Job briefings must be conducted by employees in connection with the operation of hand-operated switches in non-signalized territory;
- Employees operating hand-operated main track switches are responsible for the proper completion of a switch position awareness form (SPAF) as described in the emergency order. All information required on the SPAF must be entered before an employee reports clear of the limits of a main track territory. SPAFs shall be retained for a period of five days and made available to representatives of the FRA for inspection.
- Each time a crew member operates a main track switch in non-signalized territory, he or she shall communicate with the engineer by radio, stating the switch name, location and the position of the switch (normal/reverse).

## Amtrak perils

Continued from page 1

Amtrak's board of directors, handpicked by the Bush administration, has a new plan to kill Amtrak by dividing its political supporters.

This would be accomplished by separating the Northeast Corridor between Washington, D.C., and Boston from Amtrak's intercity routes that operate over freight railroad track.

Amtrak proponents warn that were our national intercity rail passenger network so

Negotiations with Amtrak, under the Railway Labor Act, have been in progress since mid-2000, with little progress made because of Amtrak's unceasing attack on assistant conductors.

Amtrak employees do receive cost-of-living adjustments every six months while negotiations toward a new contract continue with Amtrak management.

The National Mediation Board has scheduled a public meeting for March 23-24, 2006, in Baltimore to address a wide variety of labor-management issues on all rail passenger systems – including Amtrak and various commuter systems. The UTU has been invited to participate.

### Update on Amtrak funding

Following is an update on congressional activity to fund Amtrak:

Early in 2005, the Bush administration sent to Congress a proposed budget for fiscal year 2006 – which began Oct. 1 – providing zero funds for Amtrak, which would have caused an immediate shutdown of Amtrak on Sept. 30 had Congress accepted the president's proposed budget.

As the House and Senate continue to debate how much money they will provide Amtrak for the 12 months that began Oct. 1, Congress agreed to continue funding Amtrak at its fiscal 2005 level. This is why Amtrak continues to operate while awaiting fiscal 2006 funding.

The good news is that both the Republican-controlled House and Republican-controlled Senate have snubbed the Bush administration's Grinch position toward Amtrak. There are many Republicans standing arm-in-arm with most Democrats in support of Amtrak.

With the UTU PAC and UTU lobbyists influencing labor-friendly Republicans, and with UTU-member phone calls and e-mails

streaming into both Democratic and Republican lawmakers urging adequate funding for Amtrak, a light is appearing at the end of the fiscal year 2006 tunnel.

Indeed, the House recently approved some \$1.8 billion in funding for Amtrak for fiscal year 2006. "Key to that vote were the overwhelming number of calls and e-mail messages sent by UTU members, their families and friends and others from all quarters of labor," said UTU International President Paul Thompson.

The Senate, meanwhile, has approved some \$1.5 billion in funding for Amtrak for fiscal year 2006, also following a barrage of communications from the UTU family. This is about \$300 million above the fiscal 2005 level, while the House figure is some \$600 million higher.

The two chambers still must reconcile their different bills through a conference process; and President Bush has threatened to veto that joint effort. The fight is far from completed. To stay current on this legislation, check the UTU website at [www.utu.org](http://www.utu.org).

### UTU supports dedicated funding

The UTU also is spearheading a longer-term effort to keep Amtrak intact. Senate Bill 1516, the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act, would do just that.

S. 1516 would adequately fund the existing Amtrak – our national intercity rail passenger network – with \$11.4 billion for six years through 2011, which is enough to maintain Amtrak's current operations, upgrade its equipment and return Amtrak's Northeast Corridor to a state of good repair.

The legislation also includes funds to create a new grant program for states that want to add or improve intercity rail passenger service.

## Amtrak is no lame horse in Crawford, Texas

Balkanized, the confederation of lawmakers from various parts of the nation similarly would be split and forced into competition with one another for individual project funding, giving rail-passenger opponents the upper hand in Congress.

Meanwhile, Amtrak's management, thumbing its nose at safety and security concerns, wants to eliminate the assistant conductor position and have just one conductor responsible for the safety and security of upwards of 1,000 passengers. The lessons of 9/11 and train bombings in London and Madrid seemingly are being ignored by Amtrak management at the bargaining table.

Amtrak also is targeting yardmaster positions.

## Hurricane aid

Continued from page 1

Nov. 18, 2005.

"The purpose of this fund is not immediate disaster relief as is being provided by the Red Cross and other organizations," said UTU International President Paul Thompson. "This fund is intended to help affected railroaders rebuild their lives.

"The UTU and its predecessors were created so employees could help their fellow workers in

times of need," said Thompson. "So many workers were injured or killed on the job and they or their families were left with nothing. That is why the early brotherhoods were formed."

Soon after the Nov. 18 deadline, all applications and supporting documentation will be forwarded to UTU general chairpersons, state legislative directors and local officers in the applicant's area for validation.

Those local leaders will return the application to the UTU International with a recommendation based on the following:

- 1) Economic hardship incurred and,
- 2) Membership and employment in the trans-

portation industry and membership in a union (the union does not have to be UTU).

Officials at the UTU International will tally how many of the applications are returned with "yes" recommendations.

They also will determine the dollar amount of benefits to be paid to each applicant based on the number of "yes" applications received.

Local and general committee officers were instructed to download and print copies of the application form for distribution to those persons eligible to apply for the assistance.

## Hurricanes don't dampen spirits of La.'s Gary Devall

When Gary Devall took over the job as Louisiana state legislative director from Tyrone Boudreaux in August, he thought he'd have some time to get his feet wet.

Then Hurricanes Katrina and Rita slammed ashore, and he got more than his feet wet.

"I'm wet up to my head," he said.

Devall has been working overtime to help UTU members adversely affected by these back-to-back disasters find clothing, shelter and the necessities of life so they can get back to earning a living for themselves and their families.

Staff members at the UTU International recently sent Devall boxes of supplies, including clothes and food, and he has been delivering them to union members and their families.



Devall

"He has definitely gone over and above the call of duty," International President Paul Thompson said.

Many of the supplies sent by the UTU were recently delivered to New Orleans Public Belt (NOPB) General Chairperson Joe Solito for distribution.

"The NOPB has called back some of its workforce and are going to work them in two-week shifts, even paying them for the two weeks they are not working," Devall said.

"Things are getting better, but slowly," he said. "One of the CSX yards was completely under water; intermodal containers were floating everywhere. On the CN/IC, Hurricane Katrina wiped out our main line along Lake Ponchartraine. They repaired it, but then Hurricane Rita came through and messed it up again.

"CSX has worked a deal with NS so they can get trains into New Orleans, but the problem is locating employees. Very few employees have marked up. Most of the UP employees out of Lake Charles all left before the hurricane and the phones are in such bad shape you can't reach anyone.

"We have some areas that people have not gotten back into yet. There are many areas still without electricity and phone service. Many of our members lost everything. Their homes are completely gone.

"Street after street of homes will have to be bulldozed.

"A lot of CSX, NS and CN/IC employees lived in Biloxi, Gulfport and St. Bernard Parish, and those were the areas hit the hardest.

"Many railroad workers have transferred to other districts so they can earn a living, and we don't know when, and if, they are coming back.

"Many employees have left families here to go

elsewhere to work. They have to work somewhere to make money to live.

"The biggest problem we have is getting the people back home," Devall said. "There's no way for them to get back to rebuild their homes and work."

Devall said if members want to help they should send work clothes. "Most people left with only a change of clothes, expecting to come back in a few days. But they lost everything."

Devall also said gift cards to Home Depot, Lowe's and local grocery stores like Winn-Dixie and Albertsons would be appreciated.

Devall can be reached by calling (225) 383-5741, or at 429 Government St., Baton Rouge, LA 70821.

"If anyone has not requested Red Cross assistance, please give them my phone number because we now have a back door into the Red Cross and I can hand deliver the forms to them," he said.

The UTU Hurricane Relief Fund has been established to assist railroad workers – regardless of union affiliation – cope with the devastation caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Any UTU-represented bus operators affected by these disasters also will be included as recipients of the aid.

To contribute to the UTU Hurricane Relief Fund, send checks to: UTU Hurricane Relief Fund, United Transportation Union, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250.

## A Miracle worker from Kentucky

Kentucky State Legislative Director **David Miracle** and his wife Lesley, the president of UTU Auxiliary Local 573, spent the first week of October in Slidell, La., working with the Kentucky Disaster Relief Team and the Red Cross.

The couple helped to prepare more than 10,000 meals a day for the volunteers, evacuees and residents of the area, who were without shelter, electricity and telephones.

The Kentucky Disaster Relief Team is a group formed by the Southern Baptist Convention of Kentucky. Groups of about 25 individuals travel at their own expense to help with relief efforts.

"It was an unbelievable experience," Miracle said. "We started to see destruction more than 100 miles north of New Orleans. New Orleans got water damage but Slidell got water and wind damage. There were sailboats on top of houses, on roads, everywhere. There were houses washed onto other houses. It was something else. I knew there was destruction but I had no idea how bad it was. You had to see it to believe it.

"Unless you saw how much destruction there was it was hard to believe. There was no gasoline, no food stores. The Red Cross set up emergency medical stations."

Miracle said the volunteers cooked nonstop. "People would begin lining up at 9:30 in the morning to get ice, bottled water and hot meals. We would serve until we ran out at night. One day we cooked 6,400 hamburgers. We cooked beef stew, vegetables, red beans and



Kentucky State Legislative Director David Miracle traveled to Louisiana to help serve up to 10,000 meals a day to hurricane victims.

sausage, rice, everything.

The Red Cross and others donated the food, Miracle said. "They brought truckloads of food in every day. The National Guard used front-end loaders to unload pallets of food off the trucks. It was unreal."

Miracle noted that UTU Local 1190 (Ludlow, Ky.; Norfolk Southern) Chairperson Jeff Mitchell was also scheduled to travel to Louisiana, one week with the Kentucky Disaster Relief Team, a second week as a volunteer for the Norfolk Southern.

"(Because of the destruction) they will need this same kind of help a year from now," Miracle said.

## Scott Belden, D.C. office director, dead at 62

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Scott Belden, 62, chief of staff for UTU's national legislative office here, died Oct. 12 following a battle with cancer.



Belden

Scott, who also served as Utah state legislative director, was a member of UTU Local 1366 in Salt Lake City. His wife, Charlie, was elected UTU Auxiliary national legislative director in September 2002 and also elected to its scholarship board. Charlie is a member of the Auxiliary's Skyline Lodge 960.

"Scott was the heart and soul of this office," said UTU National Legislative Director James Brunkenhoefer. "He was the person who held

us all together. As important as his family was to him, I hope he knew how important he was to us. Many of us regarded Scott as a mentor. Many of us are better people today for having known him."

Scott and Charlie participated in several motorcycle rides honoring 9/11 victims and spent many weekends traveling the East Coast on their Harley-Davidsons. In November 2001, they represented the UTU in "America's 911 Ride" from Washington, D.C., to the site of the World Trade Center in New York City.

"Even though his office was in Washington, Scott never forgot Utah," Alternate State Legislative Director Jay Seegmiller said. "We spoke almost daily by phone about Utah legislative issues. Scott was the longest-serving UTU state

legislative director and he took great pride in that fact – but, especially, his legislative work.

"I have known Scott for 29 years and he always went out of his way to mentor younger members, including myself. He had a story to tell for every situation imaginable, and was the most committed union man I have ever known. I feel honored to have been able to call him a friend. I will miss him dearly," Seegmiller said.

Galen Scott Belden was born Dec. 23, 1942, and hired out on the Union Pacific in October 1964, as a switchman/brakeman, joining UTU predecessor union Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen Lodge 941. Scott earned an undergraduate degree in political science from Westminster College in Salt Lake City. He was elected Utah state legislative director in 1980.

# This month's winning photo:

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 photograph was taken by **Howard Samarin**, a Caltrain conductor and member of Local 1732, San Jose, Calif. It shows a work train cabooses early in the morning.

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## Local 23 bus drivers, on strike, use own autos to aid riders

SANTA CRUZ, Calif. – With gasoline fetching around \$3 per gallon, you would expect those with no weekly income to be driving less – much less.

Not members of UTU Local 23, who are on strike against the Santa Cruz transit district.

In fact, many of these drivers are pumping more gas into their personal automobiles than before they set up a picket line Sept. 26.

The reason is their elderly and disabled passengers, who are unable, without bus service, to leave their homes to visit doctors, pick up medications from pharmacies, purchase groceries, handle banking and other chores, and attend religious services.

So striking drivers such as Rhonda Carter, Coco Conklin, Bev Edwards, Maria Granados-Boyce and Steve Marcus are running special routes each day in their personal automobiles. Some of these trips are 60 miles roundtrip, but what matters most to these striking drivers is that their regular passengers, currently unable to hail a bus, are not inconvenienced.

Other drivers are shuttling local college students between apartments and campus and even offering rides to pedestrians they recognize as their bus passengers.

"Many of us are so attached to our regular bus riders we cannot abandon them," Edwards said.

UTU Local 23 Chairperson Bonnie Morr said "an otherwise homebound woman was in tears thanking us for driving her to a college campus where she could use a computer and e-mail to keep in touch with her distant family."

The generosity of these UTU bus operators seems without limits in spite of their own financial woes. Many of the drivers with a working spouse have contributed their UTU-paid strike benefits to fellow operators who are single parents and struggling even more.

"You can break our pocketbooks, but you will never break our spirit," said Lisa Saunders, daughter of a former driver and wife of a current one.

Helping to keep the striking drivers' spirits high are local college students who have demonstrated on the drivers' behalf frequently and loudly.

Local citizens have made contributions to the UTU strike fund. Santa Cruz County employees, represented by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), made two separate \$1,000 contributions to the UTU strike fund.

UTU members caring to donate to the UTU Local 23 strike fund should mail checks, made out to UTU Local 23 Strike Fund, to: UTU Local 23, 903 Pacific Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95060.

**"We are so attached to our bus riders we cannot abandon them."**



**Inside this issue of the UTU News:**



Marty Murphy is a knockout in the boxing world. See Page 2.



Diversity is a driving force in the UTU. See pages 6 and 7.



Scott Belden rides off into the sunset. See page 10.



This UTU member is a Miracle worker. See Page 11.