Vote your paycheck; vote for Barack Obama

If you don't look out for your paycheck, who will?
It won't be your employer and it won't be your neighbor.
And while the UTU certainly fights for your job security, better wages, improved benefits and safe working conditions, unions can't do it alone – especially if the president of the United States is an avowed labor-hater.

There is a choice on Election Day – and it is a clear choice between voting for our paychecks or voting against them.

As Mike Owens, a Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen general chairperson, says, “We can't keep complaining about agreements that are lousy and continue to vote for people who stick it to us.”

Owens, along with other brothers and sisters from Illinois – members of the BMWE, BLET, IRS and UTU – know Barack Obama from Obama’s service in the Illinois state senate. They made a video to tell their story, and it can be viewed at www.utu.org by clicking on the Obama photo.

Retired UTU Illinois Assistant State Legislative Director John Burner says, “Every issue rail labor brought forward in the Illinois Senate, Barack supported. He had a 100-percent APL-CIO and UTU voting record.”

That record includes support for two-person crews, additional mass transit funding, labor protection, and workplace safety laws and regulations.

For two decades, Barack Obama has walked the walk in the Illinois senate and the U.S. Senate on behalf of working families.

By contrast, John McCain has said publicly that the right to unionize “in class war, an even fare.” Unlike Barack Obama, John McCain opposes “Buy America” provisions in legislation, and McCain voted in the Senate to gut rail and transit bargaining rights, and in favor of opening the U.S. border to Mexican operated trucks, buses and locomotives. McCain consistently has spoken and voted against funding for mass transit.

A vote for John McCain means eight more years of appointing anti-union federal judges, regulators and arbitrators – individuals who, in word and deed, view labor unions as an evil to be eradicated.

Under eight years of the Bush administration, we have been witness to the disappearance of tens of thousands of good paying jobs, an even greater elimination of health care benefits, and a non-stop assault on worker rights and workplace safety.

In a letter to UTU International President Mike Futchey, Barack Obama pledged to “preserve the sanctity of Railroad Retirement and safety, and push for a fair process to receive and maintain a commercial driver’s license. My administration will push for Amtrak, commuter rail, and public transit systems to receive strong employment levels well into the future.

“I am proud to stand with the UTU in our joint efforts to build an America that values the labor of every American and rewards it with a few basic guarantees – wages that can raise a family, health care if we get sick, and a retirement that’s dignified,” Obama wrote.

A vote on Election Day for Barack Obama is a vote for a president committed to improving the lives of working families. It is a vote for our paychecks during a time when too many American families are losing their paychecks, losing their health care insurance and losing their union representation.

The change Barack Obama supports is a change from eight dreadful years under the Bush administration and policies that John McCain has pledged to continue if elected.

If we don’t vote for our paychecks on Election Day, you can be sure nobody else will. That, pure and simple, is why working families should vote for Barack Obama.

For more information on the contrasts between Barack Obama and John McCain, visit www.utu.org.

Rail safety, Amtrak bills poised to become law

The House has passed, and, as the UTU News went to press, the Senate was poised to pass, the most comprehensive rail safety bill in more than 30 years – the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008.

Included in the bill is a separate congressional blueprint to protect Amtrak and expand intercity rail passenger service – the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008.

To keep up to date on the bill’s status – and to download and read the entire bill – visit www.utu.org.

The safety bill provides for certification of rail conductors, along with a minimum training requirement.

It also includes a prohibition against carriers interfering with medical treatment of injured employees, a mandate to install positive train control (PTC), and incentives for carriers to install electronically controlled pneumatic (ECP) brakes and switch position indicators.

Additionally, the safety bill provides for a reduction in limbo time, and requires at least two days off following each six-day work week.

It had appeared the safety bill was dead as Congress prepared to adjourn for the November elections. Then came a crash between a Los Angeles Metrolink commuter train and a Union Pacific freight train, killing 25, which the federal railroad administrator said would have been prevented had PTC been in use. Immediately, Congress was re-energized to move the dormant rail safety bill.

As for the Amtrak portion of the bill, it does not appropriate funds – something that must be done in separate legislation – but does encourage a five-year cumulative $13.1-billion federal subsidy to Amtrak. The funds would help improve service along the Northeast Corridor between Washington, D.C., and Boston, and
Local 30, Jacksonville, Fla.
Secretary & Treasurer David K. Lee reported that three members of this local recently retired and that their fellow hammers wish them the very best. Former Local Trustee Elvert M. Jones retired May 31 with 38 years of railroad service; Steven L. Lord retired June 31 with 35 years of railroad service; and, Luther A. Belcher retired July 11 with 18 years of railroad service.

Local 471, Eugene, Ore.
Local Chairperson Greg Boam reported that retired Southern/Pacific/Union Pacific conductor that their fellow hammers wish them the very best. Former Local Trustee Elvert M. Jones retired May 31 with 38 years of railroad service; Steven L. Lord retired June 31 with 35 years of railroad service; and, Luther A. Belcher retired July 11 with 18 years of railroad service.

Local 471, Eugene, Ore.
Local Chairperson Greg Boam reported that retired Southern/Pacific/Union Pacific conductor that their fellow hammers wish them the very best. Former Local Trustee Elvert M. Jones retired May 31 with 38 years of railroad service; Steven L. Lord retired June 31 with 35 years of railroad service; and, Luther A. Belcher retired July 11 with 18 years of railroad service.

Local 872, Omaha, Neb.
UTU Assistant President Andy Martin was honored by the mayor of Omaha in a Labor Day parade there attended by some 30,000, and including more than 75 floats and 1,000 participants. Although most labor organizations representing workers in the Omaha area participated, the UTU’s Martin was singled out for the special honor. An official proclamation from the mayor was presented, declaring Sept. 1, 2008, as “Arthur ‘Andy’ Martin Labor Day.”

Local 982, Rochester, N.Y.
On Aug. 24, members from locals 92L, 982, and 1007 held a fundraiser at the Back On Track Again Restaurant for Local Vice President Donald B. Redhead, who has been diagnosed with cancer. Additionally, more than 300 bikers from Harley-Davidson clubs in the area participated. Local Chairperson Dave Murphy said fellow employees have also established a “critical relief fund” with UTXS Transportation for any employee who wishes to donate the money to the fund should contact either Local 982 President Dennis Powell (at (315) 655-3950) or Secretary & Treasurer Mike Hoey (at (315) 253-6397).

Local 1075, Trenton, Mich.
Lassen Rashke reports that the local’s Web site address has changed. The site can now be found at utl1075.org.

Local 1168, Clovis, N.M.
This BNSF Railway local held its annual summer picnic on July 26, with food and funds contributed by BNSF, the Auxiliary of the UTU, and the designated legal counsel firm of Ross, Cox, Vaccinovich, Bremer & Flakamp. More than 200 members, their family members and retirees were fed, reported Local Rep. Randy Dunson, who also praised the efforts of “Chef Buddy Blue,” the local’s secretary & treasurer.

Local 1279, Greybull, Wyo.
Member Jim S. Bryan, who transferred here from Missouri, was in a rollover accident in his jeep that has left him paralyzed. Vice Local Chairperson Sandra K. Mueller reported. Bryan is currently in the VA Medical Center in St. Louis, Mo., where he is being treated for his injuries. To help defray expenses to his family, the local has established a fund in Bryan’s name at the American Legion Credit Union, 200 Big Horn Ave., Wyo., 82401, Mueller said.

Local 1344, Mandan, N.D.
State Legislative Director John Risch, on Sept. 18, participated in a debate on the University of Mary campus in Bismarck between supporters of Barack Obama and John McCain. Risch represented the Obama camp, while Republican Bismarck legislator Ron Carlisle represented McCain. “I plan on being cordial to my opponent, but hard on McCain,” said Risch, prior to the event.

Local 1525, Carbondale, Ill.
With only 150 members, Local 1525 is far from the biggest local in Illinois, but thanks to Ken Niebur, it is one of the most generous. Niebur, a 59-year old Amtrak conductor who has never held a union position, decided on his own to be a UTU PAC fundraiser. Since he started, monthly contributions to UTU PAC jumped 30 percent in the last six months. “Ken gets it,” State Legislative Director Bob Stade reported. “He decided to do it himself when he saw how important the Illinois General Assembly and the U.S. Congress are to making sure railroad workers have the right kind of wages, benefits and job security. Our union needs more just like him.”

Local 1594, Upper Darby, Pa.
Members of this SEFTU bus local participated in the 19th annual lake-a-thon for the American Cancer Society this summer to raise money for cancer research. Local Chairperson Ron Koran reported. “It was a hot, humid day, but we made it,” said member Stan Bertnowicz, who chairs the event. “We raised about $500 and it is a worthy cause.” Participants rode approximately 70 miles. Koran also sent best wishes to Al Cheshire Jr., who retired after 26 years of service. “His passengers will miss him dearly,” Koran said.

Local 1741, San Francisco, Calif.
Members of this local, who are employed as bus drivers for the San Francisco Unified School District, will be honored for their volunteer work on behalf of “Support for Families of Children with Disabilities,” Vice Local Chairperson Brock Estes reported. The drivers will be honored at a $125-per-plate dinner at the city’s Jewish Community Center, along with Mission High School Principals Kevin Truitt and BankOne. “These school bus drivers have been out and about in their community, doing good work for the people and families they serve. Their service to the community is recognized and appreciated,” Estes said. Local President Sharon Wheatley, Local Secretary Meg Felts, Estes and member Diane S. Johnson will speak on behalf of the school bus drivers.

Local 1887, Fairfield, Ala.
International President Mike Pathay attended the regular monthly meeting of Local 1887 on Sept. 11, where he reported on pending actions from the UTU/Amtrak, South Broadway Railroad, and other railroads. He also reported on upcoming health and welfare agreements, and stressed the need to elect Sen. Barack Obama for president in November. The local represents conductors, trainmen, maintenance-of-way employees and clerks on the BNSF. State Legislative Director Ronnie Clements was also in attendance.

Pictured, left, are UTU Designated Legal Counsel Mike Blakoe, Secretary & Treasurer Ray Stafford, International Vice President John Provich, retired UTU Field Supervisor Larry Chappell, Pathay, Assistant State Legislative Director Darren Joe Massey, Assistant General Chairperson Rodney Hall, retired General Chairperson Kenny Hardin, General Chairperson Philip Harrison and retired former General Chairperson Eddie Alkins.
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Let’s eliminate suspicion, distrust, FRA chief says

A message to UTU members from FRA Administrator Joe Boardman

Performing inspections and enforcing rules and regulations have effectively contributed to record levels of rail safety in recent years, but they alone are unlikely to bring about further significant improvements. If we are to reach the next level of safety, a risk-based approach should be adopted by rail management and labor.

In August, UTU President Mike Futhey participated in a FRA Safety Summit with senior railroad managers, other railroad labor groups and relevant stakeholders where FRA presented the framework for our Risk Reduction Program (RRP).

RRP is an industry-wide initiative designed to reduce accidents/incidents, and build strong safety cultures. It is intended to supplement the traditional methods used to assure rail safety. And, it employs innovative methods, processes, and technologies to identify and correct individual and systemic contributing factors using “upstream” predictive data.

Risk-based approaches present an opportunity to protect the minimum standard established by regulations while, at the same time, encourage a well-informed and educated workforce that values and supports the voluntary adoption of supplemental risk-reduction methods such as confidential close-call reporting systems, peer-to-peer accident prevention initiatives, and fatigue risk management programs.

By utilizing both the traditional and new, risk-based methodology process, along with proactive risk-based approaches, we have the opportunity to change the current railroad culture from one of suspicion and distrust to one that is mutually beneficial and based upon cooperation to foster true safety improvements.

Although RRP is not yet fully developed, the UTU has provided tremendous support for programs that exemplify the fundamental principles of risk reduction.

“The UTU has provided tremendous support for programs that exemplify the fundamental principles of risk reduction.”

For example, the Changing At-Risk Behavior (CAB) project in Union Pacific’s San Antonio Service Unit is focused primarily on reducing at-risk behaviors in the cab of locomotives operating under signals that are more restrictive than the clear signal.

As a result, there was an 80-percent reduction in the targeted unsafe behaviors in less than two years.

In addition, the Safety Through Employees Exercising Leadership (STEE) project in the Livonia Service Unit utilized the same process for improving safety-related practices and precursor conditions in yard operations, and has thus far removed more than 75 barriers to safety.

The support and partnership of UTU leadership in collaborating with our stakeholders in order to build a successful program. Your input is crucial as FRA continues to develop the RRP.

We look forward to your feedback and comments on two important publications describing the RRP – a white paper that discusses the history of, and need for, voluntary risk-reduction practices, and a draft Broad Agency Announcement (BAA).

The draft BAA, expected to be available in October, describes the process for submitting proposed pilot projects for inclusion in RRP, and lists evaluation criteria for pilot project acceptance. The UTU and other stakeholders are invited to submit comments to help FRA refine the BAA, which is expected to be finalized in early 2009.

It is clear that without the active and passionate support from the UTU, programs like CAB and STEEL would not have succeeded, and the RRP will not be possible.

Thank you for the support you have offered in the past, and I look forward to further deepening our joint commitment to railroad safety.

Futhey, Chesser speeches now available

In response to requests, videos of the speeches delivered at the UTU regional meeting in Nashville by International President Mike Futhey and former International President Al Chesser are now available for viewing on the UTU Web site, www.utu.org. Click the “Leadership Messages” link.

CN members in Canada choose TCRC

OTTAWA — More than 2,000 Canadian National running trades and yardmaster employees in Canada, represented by the UTU, have voted to unionize with the Canadian Rail Conference (TCRC), the Canadian Industrial Relations Board announced Aug. 29.

The practical effect of the vote is that it will save the Union $25 million a year, since the BLET paid more than $100,000 per month, or more than $1.2 million annually. The difference is the difference between the amount of dues collected from these CN-employed members and the cost to the International of representing them.

The vote was expected after it was revealed last year that UTU leaders in Canada had been planning withdrawal from the TCRC.

The revelation came after the UTU Canadian leadership intentionally violated the UTU constitution and commenced a strike without required consent from the UTU International. UTU general chairpersons found to have conspired with the TCRC were removed from office, and immediately proceeded to work openly with the TCRC.

They conspired with the TCRC even though railroads are moving to institute one-person crews, and even though the BLET in Canada, now the TCRC, previously bargained away thousands of conductor jobs on Canada’s VIA Rail.

The BLET BLET held at the time that “it cannot be held accountable for what was said during a campaign and there can be no reasonable expectation on the part of UTU members that they would obtain all that had been promised.”

The Canada Industrial Relations Board subsequently concluded that “the BLET failed to uphold a reasonable standard of competence in representing its members.”

That fact was driven home again last year after the TCRC successfully raided UTU-represented employees of the Ontario Northland. Within 30 days, the newly minted TCRC members decertified the TCRC and, in a new representation election, affiliated with the steelworkers.

The successes of CAB, STEEL and other programs have helped propel FRA toward further development of RRP.

RRP will be composed of a set of pilot projects like those mentioned that target specific risk categories in limited demonstrations. The FRA will work with carriers, rail labor, manufacturers, universities and other interested organizations to conduct the pilot projects.

The FRA will support the development, implementation and evaluation of selected projects, having determined the likelihood of success and to help determine the overall effectiveness and impact of the demonstrations. In this way, we hope to encourage more wide-scale adoption of effective risk-reduction initiatives.

The Safety Summit was an important first step

“…we have the opportunity to change the current railroad culture from one of suspicion and distrust to one that is mutually beneficial and based upon cooperation to foster true safety improvements.”

Members to receive re-enrollment information

If you are covered under the NRC/UTU Health and Welfare Plan or the Railroad Employees’ National Health and Welfare Plan (GA-23000) you will be receiving information advising of your available choices for coverage to become effective Jan. 1, 2009.

You should be sure to review this information carefully to verify the correct listing of eligible dependents, current benefit plans and available benefit plan options resulting from the July 1, 2008 national rail agreement.

If there are any changes to the listing of eligible dependents or benefit plan under which you are covered, you MUST note the changes and return the form to UnitedHealthcare by Oct. 24, 2008, in order for any changes to be processed.

If you have “opted-out” of plan coverage for 2008 you MUST renew the “opt-out” for 2009 by signing the enrollment form and returning it to UnitedHealthcare by Oct. 24, 2008, in order for the “opt-out” to remain effective.

If you have any questions regarding this re-enrollment, you can contact UnitedHealthcare toll-free at (888) 445-4379 or the UTU Membership Services Department at the UTU International by calling (216) 228-9400.

www.utu.org / www.utu.org
Obama: The choice for working families

Remember back in grade school, when we were given a page with four pictures on it – a dog, a cat, a horse, and an apple – and told to identify which one of the four didn’t belong? Imagine, instead, a page with these four pictures: a paycheck, a health-care insurance card, a union contract, and John McCain. Why doesn’t McCain belong in that series of photos?

• McCain said in his presidential nomination acceptance speech that he would take his war on unions to the White House.
• McCain calls labor unions “class warfare.”
• McCain opposes “Buy America” provisions in legislation.
• McCain voted in the Senate to gut rail and transit collective bargaining rights.
• McCain voted against federal funding for mass transit.
• McCain supports privatization of Social Security and Railroad Retirement, which means turning our retirement security over to Wall Street financiers.
• McCain is in favor of opening the U.S. border to Mexican-operated buses and locomotives.
• McCain supports dismantling of Medicare.
• McCain represents the same Bush administration anti-union labor unions as an evil to be eradicated.

We can’t keep complaining about agreements that are lousy and continue to vote for people who stick it to us.

The great election season nightmare – the 24/7 barrage of political ads – is almost over.

That’s a price we pay for democratic elections. A bigger price has been the blood shed on battlefields to preserve our right to vote and right to run for office.

Many of us are turned off by non-stop political ads and requests for donations to fund those ads. But you can be assured that if America’s working families and their labor unions disregarded from the process, the anti-labor political forces would rule.

For Election Day, your union does not want to tell you how to vote. It merely wants to share with you and your family its recommendations and endorsements.

Those endorsements are based on working-family paycheck issues, such as job security, workplace safety, and access to affordable health care.

Your union cannot walk away from politics and retain any hope of delivering to you and other working families what you work so hard to achieve for your families.

Newspapers endorse candidates, as do special interest groups such as employer-financed chambers of commerce and the National Right to Work Foundation. Unions are one of many voices that examine the records of political candidates and make voter recommendations.

Without a doubt, union members’ jobs are important. They provide money for groceries, house payments, car payments, occasional entertainment and well-earned vacations.

It has only been through union activism – in the streets and in legislative and congressional chambers – that workers gained employer-paid health insurance, paid vacations, overtime, and compensation for workplace injuries.

Unions are the only organizations that step up to the plate to protect workers’ rights.

No other organization works to protect job security, paychecks, benefits and workplace safety.

The list is long, however, of organizations that want to make it easier to export jobs, eliminate employer-paid pensions, scrap Social Security and Railroad Retirement, put the burden for health-care insurance entirely on employees, and scrap workers’ compensation plans such as the Federal Employers’ Liability Act (FELA).

What stands between working families, and the anti-labor forces that would turn back the clock back, are labor unions, the ballot box and labor-friendly candidates.

Before Election Day, please examine the voting recommendations of your union, and weigh those recommendations in light of what is best for you and your family.

The vote you cast could well determine your family’s standard of living – now and well into your retirement.
Montana

There are 36 union members running for seats on the Montana Legislature, and State Director Fran Marcoux reports that four of those candidates are members of the UTU.

Bill Wilson, a retiree and past president of Local 730, Great Falls, is the incumbent running for re-election in House District 22.

Perry Miller, a retiree from Local 544, Havre, is a candidate for House District 34. Over the years Miller held many offices in the local including president, local chairperson, secretary/treasurer and delegate. He also served as secretary of the Montana State Legislative Board.

Nick Ethridge is local chairperson for Local 730 in Great Falls. He is a candidate for House District 19.

Dennis Getz, president of Local 486, Glendive, is a candidate for House District 38. Getz has served as the president of his local the past 18 years.

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State Watch

News from UTU State Legislative Boards

State Legislative Director Phil Quady reports he was recently at a rally in St. Paul for Sen. Barack Obama. “The UTU was a part of a private delegation to meet with the senator afterward,” Quady said. “The senator immediately recognized my UTU pin, and was complimentary about union efforts to support him.”

UTU-backed legislation would halt Mexican trucks

WASHINGTON – UTU-supported legislation to kill a Bush administration back-door program permitting Mexican trucks, with Mexican drivers, to operate willy-nilly over U.S. highways was passed by the House Sept. 9.

Whether the Senate will vote a similar bill prior to congressional adjournment this year is not known.

The Bush administration says it is simply adhering to the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) by permitting the cross-border operations for a two-year demonstration project.

Should the project continue, Mexican buses with Mexican drivers could be next – and so could Mexican-operated locomotives.

The UTU has been lobbying hard against this Bush-administration pilot program, which was instituted in the face of strong congressional opposition just before Congress broke for the national political conventions.

The House legislation, H.R. 6630, terminates the so-called cross-border demonstration project and prohibits the Department of Transportation from granting new authority for Mexican trucks or buses to operate beyond 20 miles inside the U.S. border without express authorization by Congress. The bill passed by a vote of 395 to 18.

By announcing the program on the first day Congress recessed for the political conventions, the Bush administration effectively bypassed the will of Congress, which was made clear long before the House passed H.R. 6630 on Sept. 9.

Senate conservatives loyal to the Bush administration are certain to attempt to filibuster the measure in the Senate (House rules do not permit filibusters), and the president can be expected to veto any bill that passes the Senate and House, meaning a two-thirds congressional majority will be needed to override the veto.

“This anti-labor action by the Bush administration is another of so many reasons why, on Election Day in November, we must elect a labor-friendly president and increase the labor-friendly majority in Congress,” said UTU International President Mike Fulco.

“Sen. Barack Obama stands with labor on this and other bread-and-butter economic and safety issues,” Fulco said.

State Legislative Director Dan O’Connell (above, above left) is urging support for two candidates in the Garden State, one a long-time UTU supporter and the other a long-time UTU member.

Rep. Frank Lotardo (R-2nd Dist.) (above, middle) serves on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee; the committee with jurisdiction over railroads. He supported UTU and rail labor on Railroad Retirement reforms, Amtrak and mass-transit funding measures and rail safety legislation. O’Connell said Hammonton (N.J.) town councilman and Local 60 member Anthony Marino (above, right) is the incumbent and running for re-election. “He is the first UTU member to run for office in New Jersey that I know of. He is a conductor on New Jersey Transit’s Atlantic City Line.”

State Legislative Director Delmer Hanson recently met with Sen. Gordon Smith to discuss the merger of the House and Senate versions of the highway safety bill. Sen. Smith sits on the committee assigned to the task of reconciling the two pieces of legislation. “I gave Sen. Smith a wish list composed by our Legislative Department in Washington of how the UTU would like the final bill to look. Sen. Smith is a long-time friend of the UTU and has an outstanding voting record on issues that affect UTU members and their families,” Hanson said.

Oregon

Pictured above, left to right, are Ken and Carol Menges and Judy Baker.

State Legislative Director Ken Menges and wife Carol, who serves as president of the UTU Auxiliary, recently met with Judy Baker, Democratic candidate for Congress from the Ninth Congressional District. Judy Baker has been a strong supporter of the UTU. She has always supported our two state-sponsored Amtrak trains and she has always asked that any information I have on mass transit or railroads be forwarded to her,” Ken Menges said.

UTU’s involvement with the House 

The UTU has been involved with the House of Representatives in recent years. In 2007, the UTU was instrumental in helping to pass the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill. This bill included funding for Amtrak and other transportation projects.

In 2008, the UTU worked closely with the House Appropriations Committee to ensure that Amtrak funding was included in the final version of the bill. The UTU also worked to ensure that the bill included funding for other transportation projects, such as the Atlantic City Rail Line.

The UTU has also worked with the House Appropriations Committee to ensure that the bill included funding for rail safety initiatives. The UTU has been a strong advocate for rail safety, and has worked to ensure that funding was included in the bill for rail safety projects.

The UTU’s involvement with the House has been a success, and the UTU will continue to work with the House to ensure that the needs of rail workers are met.

We are making progress on a number of fronts

Thank you to all who attended regional meeting workshops in Denver and Nashville, and those who made presentations. By the comments received, the workshops were a great success.

Our bus workshops had the largest attendance in many years, and we are working on improving them even more for the 2009 regional meetings in San Francisco and New Orleans.

On the legislative front, our national legislative office has achieved two significant successes.

First, our UTU PAC-supported lobbying helped to convince the U.S. DOT to postpone a proposed new rule requiring direct-observation drug and alcohol testing.

Second, our legislative efforts are behind legislation to halt the Bush administration’s green light for operators of Mexican trucks and buses to send their vehicles and drivers across our border and onto U.S. highways, with few restrictions. We haven’t achieved total victory, but we are making progress on our members’ behalf.

In San Rafael, Calif., Local 1741 concluded negotiations that won a three-year contract that rewards school bus drivers with increases each year of 6.1 percent, 6.2 percent, and 6.8 percent. Some operators will realize as much as a 26-percent raise through a change in the number of years’ seniority required to reach top scale. Many thanks to Pamela Williams, Lois Croreza, Gary Romero, Paul Stein and Jim Charas for their hard work and perseverance.

Finally, vote your job on Election Day. VOTE OBAMA-BIDEN.

Bus Department

By Vic Baffoni, vice president/director
v_baffoni@utu.org
These candidates deserve your vote!

Congressional Recommendations

Alaska

- House of Representatives
  - At Large: Don Young (R)

Arizona

- House of Representatives
  - District 3: Ann Kirkpatrick (D)
  - District 5: Robert Cardona (D)
  - District 9: Harry Mitchell (D)
  - District 7: Raul Grijalva (D)
  - District 8: Gabrielle Giffords (D)

Arkansas

- House of Representatives
  - At Large: Mark Pryor (D)
  - District 2: Mike Ross (D)

California

- House of Representatives
  - At Large: Zoe Lofgren (D)
  - District 2: Nanette Barragan (D)
  - District 12: Janice Hahn (D)
  - District 16: Jimmy Panetta (D)
  - District 20: Jimmy Panetta (D)
  - District 21: Barbara Lee (D)
  - District 23: Lois Capps (D)
  - District 24: Darrell Issa (R)

Colorado

- House of Representatives
  - District 1: Diana DeGette (D)
  - District 2: Jared Polis (D)
  - District 3: John Salazar (D)
  - District 4: Beto O’Rourke (D)
  - District 5: Jared Polis (D)
  - District 6: Joe Neguse (R)

Connecticut

- Senate: Joseph J. Lieberman (D)
  - House of Representatives: At Large: Michael N. Castle (R)

District of Columbia

- House of Representatives
  - At Large: Eleanor Holmes Norton (D)

Florida

- House of Representatives
  - District 1: Alcee Hastings (D)
  - District 2: Gwen Graham (D)
  - District 3: Bill Posey (R)
  - District 4: Corrine Brown (D)
  - District 5: Dennis Ross (R)
  - District 6: Alcee Hastings (D)
  - District 7: Steve Cohen (D)
  - District 8: Charlie Crist (R)

Georgia

- Senate: Kelly Loeffler (R)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Mary Ackerman (R)
  - District 2: Mattie Barrows (D)

Hawaii

- House of Representatives
  - District 1: Neil Abercrombie (D)
  - District 2: Meara K. Himomo (D)

Iowa

- Senate: Tom Harkin (D)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Tom Van Stee (R)
  - District 2: Dave Loebe (R)
  - District 3: Dave Loebe (R)

Indiana

- Senate: Joe Donnelly (D)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 3: Steve Driehaus (D)
  - District 4: Keith Ellison (D)
  - District 5: Dan Lipinski (D)
  - District 6: Jim Clyburn (D)

Maryland

- Senate: Ben Cardin (D)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Elijah Cummings (D)
  - District 2: Steny Hoyer (D)
  - District 3: Anthony G. Brown (D)
  - District 4: Steny Hoyer (D)
  - District 5: John Sarbanes (D)

Massachusetts

- Senate: Edward Markey (D)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Joe Kennedy (D)
  - District 2: Joe Kennedy (D)
  - District 3: Richard Neal (D)
  - District 4: Jim McGovern (D)

Michigan

- Senate: Carl Levin (D)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: John Conyers (D)
  - District 2: John Conyers (D)
  - District 3: John Conyers (D)
  - District 4: John Conyers (D)
  - District 5: Jane McDougald (D)

Minnesota

- Senate: Amy Klobuchar (D)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Tim Walz (D)
  - District 2: Betty McCollum (D)
  - District 3: Jim Hagedorn (R)
  - District 4: Collin Peterson (D)
  - District 5: Tim Walz (D)

Mississippi

- Senate: Thad Cochran (R)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Cindy Hyde-Smith (R)
  - District 2: Gary Peters (D)
  - District 3: Michael Espy (D)
  - District 4: Tom Cotton (R)

Missouri

- Senate: Roy Blunt (R)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Vicky Hartzler (R)
  - District 2: Steven H. Green (D)
  - District 3: Steven H. Green (D)
  - District 4: Steve Stivers (D)
  - District 5: Kay Hagan (D)

Montana

- Senate: Max Baucus (D)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Mike丛 (D)
  - District 2: Steve Daines (R)
  - District 3: Steven Daines (R)

Nebraska

- Senate: Ben Nelson (D)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Cornelia Canfield (D)
  - District 2: Rick Berg (R)
  - District 3: Brad Ashwell (D)
  - District 4: Brad Ashwell (D)
  - District 5: Brad Ashwell (D)

Nevada

- Senate: Harry Reid (D)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Dina Titus (D)
  - District 2: Jacky Rosen (D)
  - District 3: Steven H. Green (D)
  - District 4: Steve Hager (R)
  - District 5: Steven H. Green (D)

New Hampshire

- Senate: Jerry Sanders (D)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Frank Guinta (R)
  - District 2: Frank Guinta (R)
  - District 3: Frank Guinta (R)

New Jersey

- Senate: Robert Menendez (D)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Frank Pallone Jr. (D)
  - District 2: Bill Pascrell Jr. (D)
  - District 3: Bill Pascrell Jr. (D)
  - District 4: Bill Pascrell Jr. (D)

New Mexico

- Senate: Martin Heinrich (D)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Steve Salazar (D)
  - District 2: Steve Salazar (D)
  - District 3: Steve Salazar (D)

New York

- Senate: Chuck Schumer (D)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Nydia M. Velazquez (D)
  - District 2: Nydia M. Velazquez (D)
  - District 3: Nydia M. Velazquez (D)

North Carolina

- Senate: Lisa Murkowski (D)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: David Price (D)
  - District 2: Richard Hudson (R)
  - District 3: Virginia Foxx (R)

North Dakota

- Senate: Heidi Heitkamp (D)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Earl Blumenauer (D)
  - District 2: Zach Wahls (D)
  - District 3: Zach Wahls (D)

Ohio

- Senate: John Barrasso (R)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Steve Stivers (D)
  - District 2: Steve Stivers (D)
  - District 3: Steve Stivers (D)

Oklahoma

- Senate: Jim Inhofe (R)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Steve Russell (R)
  - District 2: Tom Cole (R)
  - District 3: Tom Cole (R)

Oregon

- Senate: Ron Wyden (D)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Peter DeFazio (D)
  - District 2: Peter DeFazio (D)
  - District 3: Peter DeFazio (D)
  - District 4: Peter DeFazio (D)

Pennsylvania

- Senate: Pat Toomey (R)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Louie Gohmert (R)
  - District 2: Louie Gohmert (R)
  - District 3: Louie Gohmert (R)

Rhode Island

- Senate: Sheldon Whitehouse (D)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: David Cicilline (D)
  - District 2: David Cicilline (D)

South Carolina

- Senate: Lindsey Graham (R)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Joe Wilson (R)
  - District 2: Joe Wilson (R)
  - District 3: Joe Wilson (R)

South Dakota

- Senate: John Thune (R)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Tom Kadinger (D)
  - District 2: Tom Kadinger (D)

Tennessee

- Senate: Lamar Alexander (R)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Marsha Blackburn (R)
  - District 2: Marsha Blackburn (R)

Texas

- Senate: John Cornyn (R)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Kevin Brady (R)
  - District 2: Kevin Brady (R)
  - District 3: Kevin Brady (R)

Utah

- Senate: Mike Lee (R)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Mia Love (R)
  - District 2: Mia Love (R)

Vermont

- Senate: Bernie Sanders (I)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Peter Welch (D)

Virginia

- Senate: Mark Warner (D)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Rob Wittman (R)
  - District 2: Rob Wittman (R)

Washington

- Senate: Maria Cantwell (D)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Rick Saccone (D)
  - District 2: Rick Saccone (D)
  - District 3: Rick Saccone (D)

West Virginia

- Senate: Joe Manchin (D)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Nick Rahall II (D)
  - District 2: Nick Rahall II (D)

Wisconsin

- Senate: Ron Johnson (R)
  - House of Representatives
  - District 1: Reid Ribble (R)
  - District 2: Reid Ribble (R)
  - District 3: Reid Ribble (R)

Wyoming

- House of Representatives
  - At Large: Liz Cheney (R)

* denotes incumbent
Rail retirement finances secure

By V.M. “Butch” Spekman Jr.

Labor member, Railroad Retirement Board

The Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) is required by law to submit annual reports to Congress on the financial condition of the Railroad Retirement system and the Railroad Unemployment Insurance System. These reports must also include recommendations for any financing changes that may be advisable, to ensure the solvency of the systems.

The 2008 report on the Railroad Retirement system, which addresses Railroad Retirement financing for the 25 calendar years 2008-2032, was generally favorable, concluding that, barring a sudden, unanticipated, large decrease in railroad employment or substantial investment losses, the Railroad Retirement system will experience no cash-flow problems during the next 25 years.

The 2008 report, which projected the various components of income and outgo of the Railroad Retirement system under optimistic, moderate and pessimistic employment assumptions, indicated no cash-flow problems occur throughout the projected period under any of these assumptions.

Alumni Association serves retirees

The UTU Alumni Association is the new name of the program that serves retired members of the UTU. It is a voluntary, money-saving program for transportation retirees from all crafts.

Established by delegates in 1976 to aid union retirees, the program had over the years been called both the UTU Retiree Program and the UTU for Life program.

This program has no relation to lifetime UTU membership, which is awarded when a member retires in good standing.

UTU Alumni Association benefits include continuation of the UTU News; listing in the “Final Call” section of the UTU News upon passing (see below); an annual wall calendar; discounts on car rentals, hotels and cell-phone service; a baseball hat; enrollment in the nearest UTU Alumni Association chapter (see list at left); a group travel program; an important-papers folder; two books, one to keep track of finances, the other health matters, and discounts on railroad artwork by renowned artist “Scotty.”

The UTU Alumni Association is under the direction of retired Florida State Legislative Director Carl Cochran, who works every day to make sure the program serves the retired members of this union. To join or organize a chapter, contact Cochran at (305) 821-7015 or cochranu@aol.com.

With annual dues set at only $9 (U.S.) per year, membership in this fast-growing program doesn’t cost—it pays!

Check out the UTU Alumni Association page on www.utu.org.
WASHINGTON — Railroads may soon be required by the FRA to report new and more detailed information about injuries and illnesses on rail property, as well as highway-rail grade-crossing incidents, passenger-railroad injuries and fatalities (involving passengers), and attempted suicides by motorists and pedestrians.

“Having the most accurate and complete information available for analysis is critical to ensuring appropriate and effective safety oversight,” said FRA Administrator Joseph Boardman.

Among the proposed reporting requirements are:

- Railroads would be required to report all injuries and illnesses that appear or occur anywhere in the railroad-operating environment, regardless of cause, to prevent premature determinations that such conditions are not rail-related.
- Railroads would be required to notify the National Response Center of any highway-rail grade-crossing fatality occurring within 24 hours of the incident and provide greater detail about grade-crossing incidents.
- Railroads would be required to report for the first time suicides and attempted suicides to help FRA better quantify such incidents and develop mitigation strategies.

Retro-pay withholding set by IRS and states

The UTU International in Cleveland is receiving calls from members inquiring about the amount of federal and state withholding taxes from retroactive payments made under the ratified national rail contract.

Retroactive payments are fully taxable, including Railroad Retirement taxes. Some members say the tax deductions are higher than they expected.

Such taxes are based on instructions from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and state taxing authorities. The deductions are not governed by the national rail agreement.

While the UTU cannot examine each pay stub, the reason for the seemingly higher tax withholding likely is due to what is called the marginal income tax rate — additional income that exceeds average income and is taxed at a higher rate.

It is important to understand that these marginal tax rates are estimated tax withholding rates. In many cases, when members file their 2008 tax returns in 2009, those higher tax rates may, indeed, be higher than necessary and will result in additional tax refunds.

The actual amount of tax due cannot be determined until those tax returns are filed next year.

Thus, if railroads withheld more than is actually necessary, the amount will be credited as an overpayment and returned by the IRS and state taxing authorities as an overpayment of taxes.

• Passenger railroads would be required to identify whether a locomotive was pulling or pushing a train at the time of a reportable accident or incident as well as report for the first time incidents in which a rail passenger is hurt or killed when boarding or alighting a train due to any gap that exists between railcars and station platforms.

The FRA will be taking public comments on the proposed rules until Nov. 10. See www.fra.dot.gov for more information.

UHN reaches deal with Lincoln hospital

UnitedHealth Networks (UHN) reports it has successfully negotiated a new two-year agreement with St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center, located in Lincoln, Neb., avoiding a potential termination of service to members who use the facility.

As a result, UHN said in a press release there will be no break in service at the facility.

UHN said St. Elizabeth’s was very critical to its network and they recognized the significant impact that the loss of this facility would have to UTH members in this market.

UHN said it was committed to a positive outcome and the good-faith negotiations between UHN and St. Elizabeth’s further stresses the dedication they had to UTH members.

Since disruption letters were sent to households who utilized this facility over the last 12 months, those same households will receive a letter from UHN advising of this successful negotiation.

Additionally, UHN will send a letter to all members who reside in the Lincoln, Neb., area to ensure that they are aware of this successful contract renewal.

UTUIA Cancer Hospital Indemnity

UTUIA’s new Cancer Hospital Indemnity policy offers you and your family members the following protections:

- $300 per day for hospital confinement
- $600 per day in extended-stay benefits
- $100 per day for home recovery and convalescence
- $2,000 first-diagnosis benefit
- $15,000 bone marrow transplant benefit

Cancer is often a lingering disease that strikes all age groups. It may require repeated, extensive treatment, resulting in the person being unable to work, high hospitalization bills, and loss of income. The National Cancer Institute reports that cancer will strike in three out of four families.

UTUIA’s Cancer Hospital Indemnity* policy offers peace of mind. The benefits are paid directly to you to use as you see fit – to help meet household expenses and other continuing expenses. This policy supplements regular hospitalization insurance, thereby protecting savings.

*Not currently available in California, Colorado or Pennsylvania.

FRA proposes more detailed reports on illness, injury

Information, please

I would like more information on UTUIA’s Cancer Hospital Indemnity policy.

Full name

Sex

Date of birth

Address

City

State

ZIP

Telephone number with area code

UTU local number

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

1-800-558-8842

Call toll-free:

www.utu.org / www.utuia.org

First Student drivers ratify new contract

The members of Local 172, employed as school bus drivers by First Student in the Darby, Pa., area, have overwhelm- ingly ratified a new three-year contract with the bus company.

The UTU represents about 100 bus drivers and aids at the suburban Philadelphia company.

The ratified contract includes substantial wage hikes, retroactive pay increases, job protections, increases in bereavement benefits and improved work rules.

The ratification also includes the elimi nation of a two-tier pay scale, which was instituted in 2001.

Bus Department Vice President Vic Baffoni praised the work of General Chairperson Theresa Costantini, Trustee Kathleen Sitonga and Vice Local Chairperson Denise Halley for their hard work during negotiations.
UTU warns of non-UTUIA insurance salespersons

Reports continue to reach the UTU Internationa[l that unauthorized, non-UTUUIA insurance salespersons are infiltrating meetings of UTU locals and trying to sell non-UTUIA products to members—sometimes misidentifying themselves as UTU members.

In some cases, these individuals have been identified and barred from attending meetings where they have appeared in an attempt to obtain membership mailing lists and phone lists.

UTU members, and especially officers of UTU locals, are reminded that under most circumstances, participation at UTU local meetings is restricted to dues-paying UTU members, and under Article 45 of the UTU Constitution, all members have an obligation “to keep outsiders from the private proceedings” of the UTU.

Local presidents or others chairing local meetings should not provide a forum for non-mem- bers to sell items competing with UTUIA products and services.

Also, UTU members should not use a UTU meeting to sell products or services that compete with UTUIA offerings or otherwise undermine the strength of this organization.

Such activity is detrimental to the financial security and future of UTUIA, which is limited in its sales to active and retired UTU members and their extended families.

In addition, all members are reminded that membership lists, especially those carrying con- tact information, are confidential and are to be used exclusively for representation purposes or to conduct legitimate UTU business.

If officers chairing meetings are unfamiliar with an individual attempting to attend or par- ticipate in a UTU meeting, they are within their rights to ask for a UTU traveling card, a UTU years-of-service card, a dues receipt, or some oth- er credential offering identification of that indi- vidual as a UTU member.

Under certain circumstances, there may be legit- mate reasons why a non-member is invited to attend and address those at a UTU meeting. Individuals such as government officials, politi- cal candidates, representatives of bona fide char- ities, or retired UTU members may be invited to attend UTU meetings, but may not participate in any business or voting that occurs at such meetings.

Under no circumstances, however, should UTU members permit their meetings to be used as a forum to promote products or services that undercut the strength of our union or its associ- ated insurance organization.

Privileged, confidential information, such as membership lists, are to be used exclusively for representation purposes or to conduct legiti- mate UTU business.

Rail-safety bill

Continued from page 1

Is development of additional high-speed rail corridors?

Following are major provisions of the railroad safety bill:

Conductor certification: Within 18 months of the bill’s becoming law, the FRA must establish a program to certify conductors, includ- ing minimum training standards.

Hours-of-service: Requires at least 10 consecutive uninterrupted hours off duty follow- ing 12 hours on duty. (There is a three-year exception for passenger train employees, during which time their hours-of-service limitations will be studied by the FRA.)

No freight railroad employee covered by the hours-of-service law may be called to work unless they have had at least 10 uninterrupted hours off service for more than a total of 276 hours in any month.

And total limbo time per month is restrict- ed to no more than 45 hours — reduced to 40 hours on the first anniversary of the bill’s becoming law.

The bill also permits general conductors to sit down with carrier labor relations officers and negotiate a better balance between time off and earnings, while preserving guaranteed time off.

Locomotive cab safety: Requires the FRA to study the safety impact of personal elec- tronic devices used by train crews. (The FRA has learned that the FRA already is considering issuing an emergency order prohibiting train crews from using personal cell phones, a Black- berry, iPod and other electronic devices, except for company business — and then only when two crewpersons are in the cab.)

Medical attention: Prohibits railroads from denying delays, or interfering with the medical or first-aid treatment of injured workers, and from disciplining those workers that request treatment. Also requires railroads to arrange for immediate transport of injured workers to the nearest appropriate hospital.

Inspector staffing: Increases the num- ber of federal rail safety inspectors and supporting staff by 200.

Followings is a summary of the Amtrak provi- sions in the legislation:

State corridors: Federal grants are pro- vided to states to develop innovative new servic- es, increase capacity on heavily used rail lines, and attract new riders.

Freight railroads that delay Amtrak trains may be fined.

Support union jobs: Drive union-made vehicles

This guide is prepared by the United Auto Workers (UAW) to provide information for con- sumers who want to purchase vehicles produced by workers who enjoy the benefits and protec- tions of a union contract. All these vehicles are made in the United States or Canada by members of the United Auto Workers (UAW), Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) or International Union of Electrical Workers-Communications Workers of America (IUE).

Because of the integration of U.S. and Canadian vehicle production, all these vehicles include significant UAW-made content and support the jobs of UAW members.

UAW cars
Buick Lucerne
Cadillac CTS
Cadillac STS
Cadillac ATS
Cadillac XLR
Chevrolet Cobalt
Chevrolet Corvette
Chevrolet Silverado
Dodge Caliber
Dodge Dakota
Dodge Durango
Dodge Nitro
Ford Focus
Ford F-150
Ford F-Series
Ford F-250 Super Duty
Ford Explorer
Ford Expedition
Ford Fusion
Ford Ranger
Ford Ranger Taurus X
GM Acadia
GM Yukon
Hummer H1
Hummer H2
Hummer H3
JEEP Commander
JEEP Grand Cherokee
JEEP Liberty
JEEP Patriot
JEEP Wrangler
Lincoln Navigator
Mercury Mariner
Mercury Mountaineer
Mitsubishi Endeavor
Saturn Outlook
Saturn Aura
Saturn Sky
Saturn Vue
Saturn Vue CUV
Ford Escape
Ford Expedition
Ford Fusion
Hummer H3
Hummer H2
Lincoln Mark LT
Lincoln Navigator
Lincoln MKX
Lincoln MKS
Lincoln MKZ
Lincoln Town Car
Lincoln Town Car Signature
Mercury Mariner
Mercury Mountaineer
Mitsubishi Endeavor
Saturn Outlook
Saturn Vue
Saturn Vue CUV
Ford Escape
Ford Expedition
Ford Fusion
Ford F-Series
Ford F-150
Ford F-250 Super Duty
Ford Explorer
Ford Fusion
Hummer H3
Hummer H2
Lincoln Mark LT
Lincoln Navigator
Lincoln MKX
Lincoln MKS
Lincoln MKZ
Lincoln Town Car
Lincoln Town Car Signature
Mercury Mariner
Mercury Mountaineer
Mitsubishi Endeavor
Saturn Outlook
Saturn Vue
Saturn Vue CUV
Ford Escape
Ford Expedition
Ford Fusion
Ford F-Series
Ford F-150
Ford F-250 Super Duty
Ford Explorer
Ford Fusion
Hummer H3
Hummer H2
Lincoln Mark LT
Lincoln Navigator
Lincoln MKX
Lincoln MKS
Lincoln MKZ
Lincoln Town Car
Lincoln Town Car Signature
Mercury Mariner
Mercury Mountaineer
Mitsubishi Endeavor
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Ford F-150
Ford F-250 Super Duty
Ford Explorer
Ford Fusion
Hummer H3
Hummer H2
Lincoln Mark LT
Lincoln Navigator
Lincoln MKX
Lincoln MKS
Lincoln MKZ
Lincoln Town Car
Lincoln Town Car Signature
Mercury Mariner
Mercury Mountaineer
Mitsubishi Endeavor
Saturn Outlook
Saturn Vue
Saturn Vue CUV
Ford Escape
Ford Expedition
Ford Fusion
Ford F-Series
Ford F-150
Ford F-250 Super Duty
Ford Explorer
Ford Fusion
Hummer H3
Hummer H2
Lincoln Mark LT
Lincoln Navigator
Lincoln MKX
Lincoln MKS
Lincoln MKZ
Lincoln Town Car
Lincoln Town Car Signature
Mercury Mariner
Mercury Mountaineer
Mitsubishi Endeavor
Saturn Outlook
Saturn Vue
Saturn Vue CUV
Ford Escape
Ford Expedition
Ford Fusion
Ford F-Series
Ford F-150
Ford F-250 Super Duty
Ford Explorer
Ford Fusion
Hummer H3
Hummer H2
Lincoln Mark LT
Lincoln Navigator
Lincoln MKX
Lincoln MKS
Lincoln MKZ
Lincoln Town Car
Lincoln Town Car Signature
Mercury Mariner
Mercury Mountaineer
Mitsubishi Endeavor
Saturn Outlook
Saturn Vue
Saturn Vue CUV
Ford Escape
Ford Expedition
Ford Fusion
Ford F-Series
Ford F-150
Ford F-250 Super Duty
Ford Explorer
Ford Fusion
Hummer H3
Hummer H2
Lincoln Mark LT
Lincoln Navigator
Lincoln MKX
Lincoln MKS
Lincoln MKZ
Lincoln Town Car
Lincoln Town Car Signature
Mercury Mariner
Mercury Mountaineer
Mitsubishi Endeavor
Saturn Outlook
Saturn Vue
Saturn Vue CUV
Ford Escape
Ford Expedition
Ford Fusion
Ford F-Series
Ford F-150
Ford F-250 Super Duty
Ford Explorer
Ford Fusion
Hummer H3
Hummer H2
Lincoln Mark LT
Lincoln Navigator
Lincoln MKX
Lincoln MKS
Lincoln MKZ
Lincoln Town Car
Lincoln Town Car Signature
Mercury Mariner
Mercury Mountaineer
Mitsubishi Endeavor
Saturn Outlook
Saturn Vue
Saturn Vue CUV
October 2008 UTU News

Show your union pride with UTU apparel
American Products prepares to offer new line of union-made, UTU gear and clothing

It’s not too early to begin your holiday shopping and the UTU Web site is just the place to start, without ever leaving your home or going to a busy shopping mall. Just visit the UTU Web site at www.utu.org and click on the UTU Gear tile.

All of the UTU items featured there are sold through American Products and are union-made and/or made in America.

America Products has announced that the company will be introducing several new lines of UTU merchandise – some of which can be seen here – including the Addison Polo shirt, the “UTU Pride” T-shirt, the Puffwich ballcap, the Spyglass Polo shirt and the Bradford Polo shirt.

All items carry a 100 percent quality guarantee against defects in materials and workmanship. Volume discounts on customized orders are available to UTU locals. Watches and clocks carry a two-year manufacturer’s warranty against defects.

All of the featured items can be ordered by credit card directly through the company’s secure Web site, or by calling the company’s toll-free telephone number: (800) 272-5120.

UTU members may also download and print a custom order form that can be mailed to UTU Merchandise.com, 1600 North Clinton Ave., Rochester, NY 14621.

All orders will be processed within days of receipt.

Prices are shown in U.S. dollars and members should make payment by check in U.S. funds. When using credit cards, transactions will automatically be billed in U.S. funds. Apparel prices may vary depending on size. Visit the UTU online store for complete details about prices and available sizes.

The UTU International Staff: Here to Serve You

Bernie Moran-Zarefoss
Bernie started with the UTUIA in January 1976 as a clerk in the Policyholders Department and has worked for the UTUIA ever since. Her formal title is “insurance conservator,” which means she helps UTUIA insurance policy holders keep their insurance in force and effect. “I contact members if their insurance has lapsed due to oversight or error to see how we can help them,” she said. “Our active members, retired members, widows and widowers, children and grandchildren are all an important part of our UTUIA family. I enjoy helping them with their questions or problems or directing them to the person who can.”

Dale Rauch
Dale Rauch currently serves as the UTUIA’s insurance processor. He started in the Supply Department in 1987, moving to Computer Operations in 1989, working all three shifts. He started his current position in 2005. Dale would like the men and women in the UTU to remember the word “clarity” when filling out hand-written applications. “If you can’t read it, neither can I,” he said. “I have really enjoyed serving the union and members throughout the years in my various duties and look forward to new challenges in the future.”

Lisa Henry
Lisa Henry has been with the UTUIA since 2004 and serves as senior underwriter for the association. She reviews applications for life and disability insurance policies and, guided by years of training, and an extensive set of guidelines, makes a final determination of the insurance risk. “Every application is different; you have to look at the whole picture,” Henry said, “which includes medical exams, lab work, medical records, motor-vehicle reports and telephone interviews. It’s an interesting job.”

Meet your UTU Designated Legal Counsel

There is no more dangerous work environment than on the railroads, where injuries too often are severe. The Federal Employers’ Liability Act (FELA) makes railroads accountable for unsafe working conditions. Railroads retain skilled attorneys to protect their interests. You also have access to skilled and experienced attorneys who understand the railroad industry, its safety hazards, and every aspect of the FELA. They are the UTU Designated Legal Counsel, chosen for their special knowledge and experience. Their job is to represent you. This continuing column introduces you to all of the UTU Designated Legal Counsel. For a complete listing, go to the UTU home page at www.utu.org and click on the blue tile, “Designated Legal Counsel.”

Ronald J. Barczak
Yaeger, Jungbauer & Barczak PLC
745 Kasota Ave
Minneapolis, MN 55414
(612) 333-6371
(800) 435-7889 toll free
rbarczak@yjlaw.com

Three powerful weapons in the FELA arsenal are the Safety Appliance Act, the Locomotive Inspection Act, and Section 53 of the FELA. These “strict liability” sections of the FELA, when properly handled, can eliminate the railroad’s claims of your “contributory negligence” and dramatically increase your recovery. UTU DLCs know how to wield these mighty weapons on your behalf.

Courney S. LeNeave
Hunegs, LeNeave & Kvas PA
900 Second Ave. South, Ste. 1650
Minneapolis, MN 55402-3339
(612) 339-4511
(800) 328-4340 toll free
cleneave@hlklaw.com

Hiring a UTU Designated Legal Counsel even the playing field for injured workers. DLCs have the experience and expertise when it comes to fighting for FELA claimants. We know the law and we know the industry. Why abandon your rights and your future to the claims agent or any other lawyer when you can hire the best? Contact a UTU Designated Legal Counsel before you get railroaded!

www.utu.org / www.utuia.org
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 month.

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

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.

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 name and address of the person taking the photograph, the location, and when 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 Victor Clifton, a conductor with the Union Pacific and member of Local 507 in Van Buren, Ark. “This is a photo I took while visiting my son, who is a soldier at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.” More than 1.6 million cubic yards of dirt and rock were moved in building the railroad to serve Fort Leonard Wood at Newbury, Mo. The 20-mile railroad has 68 cuts and 68 fills through the heart of the Ozark Mountains.

Paul Tibbit knows the winning formula

The formula for a successful general committee is simple, although not so easy to implement. The formula consists of just three words: “Serve the membership.”

BNSF General Chairperson Paul Tibbit (GO 393) is among those who have read, marked and inwardly digested the formula and successfully put it into practice. Tibbit also is alternate International vice president-west.

Following the devastating Gulf Coast Hurricanes Gustav and also just before – Tibbit approached BNSF management and offered a deal they couldn’t, and wouldn’t, refuse.

In exchange for temporarily easing some work rules to ensure BNSF customers would be served in the hurricane-stricken region, Tibbit asked that all train, engine service and yard employees facing furloughs, because of storm-related reduced operations, be guaranteed a minimum level of earnings.

BNSF Assistant Vice President Chris Roberts, knowing a win/win situation when he hears one, agreed. A similar arrangement was made with BNSF General Chairperson Jim Huston (GO 009), another general chairperson who subscribes to the “serve-the-membership” creed.

As a result, operating employees unable to report to work as a result of the storms are “receiving paychecks from BNSF equivalent to the extra-board guarantee,” Tibbit said.

“Members who are benefiting from this guarantee are spread across this general committee, and no one has been left out,” Tibbit said. “I let members know when the carrier gets it wrong, and here I’m letting them know the carrier got it right, and we all appreciate what BNSF has done for this general committee and Jim Huston’s committee.”

BNSF even went an extra mile on behalf of Tibbit’s members in the Beaumont, Texas, area, who were hardest hit. BNSF is providing those families driven from their homes by the storm with temporary lodging, three hot meals daily, electricity generators where necessary, plus fuel to operate the generators and gasoline for their automobiles (as electricity outages have made it near impossible for them to obtain diesel and gasoline from local service stations).

And there is more. Tibbit’s general committee fund is in sufficiently good shape that members of Locals 773 and 597 in Galveston and Sibbee, Texas, where property damage also was extensive, will receive $300 each from the general committee to help with home repairs and temporary relocation.

Inside this issue of the UTU News:

Amtrak conductor Richard Morris is on the run. See page 2.

Why can’t we all just do what’s right? Boardman asks. See page 3.

Mention the UTU and watch Barack Obama light up. See page 5.

It’s not too early to get your UTU holiday swag. See page 11.