Solid gains in first year of Futhey administration

Almost a year has passed since Mike Futhey, Army Vice President for Transportation, took office. They ran on a platform of specific promises, including full disclosure.

Here are the promises and results, so far:

Restructure the International: Reduce the number of International officers in Cleveland and provide the most possible assistance to general committees, state boards and local officers.

The vice president-administration duties were consolidated with those of the general secretary and treasurer (GSET), and the vice president position was reassigned to the field. All full-time officers are assigned on a full-time basis and are required to make detailed and timely reports of their activities.

Communication with local officers was expanded, especially through visits by the International president, assistant president, GSET and International vice presidents. The UTU Alumni Association was structured to provide greater interaction between the UTU International and retirees.

Automation: The Information Technology Department has accelerated the conversion of critical data from an antiquated mainframe computer to modern operating systems. Direct deposit of dues, DIPF and UTUA insurance premiums was implemented on CSX and portions of UP, with other national-agreement carriers to be added in 2009. Automation of billing and auditing is underway. The iLink platform was expanded for use by general committees and state boards, allowing improved and more rapid access. iLink will be directly accessible from the UTU Web site by Dec. 1.

Education: The computer-based UTU University was created, providing structured, self-teaching programs through iLink. Group instruction, to assist officers in getting started, is underway. The awards database search engine is being improved. Regional meeting workshops are being fine-tuned to better meet member needs, especially for officers administering the National Labor Relations Act.

Financial growth: UTU International funds have increased by $3.4 million – 45 percent – to $11 million since Jan. 1. They are managed for the most effective return consistent with a conservative investment approach. Organizing has been accelerated.

“We are committed to building on the accomplishments of the first year, and identifying new objectives.”

UTU shoeleather, commitment helped elect Barack Obama

By shoe leather, telephone, pen, e-mail and personal commitment, hundreds of UTU members scattered nationwide to work on behalf of President-elect Barack Obama this election season.

They knocked on doors, telephoned and e-mailed friends and strangers, and left informal notes on car windshields and taped to front doors.

The message was the same: Job security, better pay, improved benefits and a safer workplace depend on electing a labor-friendly President of the United States and electing more labor-friendly members of Congress.

“The UTU is putting its money where its mouth is,” said UTU International President Mike Futhey in August in creating special Obama campaign committees, calling on the UTU Auxiliary for assistance, enlisting state legislative directors and general chairpersons, and asking UTU staff in Cleveland to become involved in encouraging votes for Obama.

“We will mount the most extensive political campaign on behalf of labor-friendly candidates in the history of the UTU and its predecessor organizations,” Futhey said. “We will build a model for future use by others in rail labor.”

Leading the UTU Obama effort nationwide was a four-person team led by Illinois State Legislative Director Joe Szabo, a personal friend of Obama’s and who has served as transportation policy advisor to the Obama presidential campaign.

Working with Szabo in mobilizing a nationwide get-out-the-vote-for-Obama campaign were Colorado State Legislative Director Rick Johnson, Idaho State Legislative Director George Millward, and Michigan State Legislative Director Jerry Gibson.
Local 117, Seattle, Wash.

On Sept. 13-14, Local President Mark Flanagan participated in the Greater Washington Multiple Sclerosis Society’s MS 150 bicycle ride to raise funds for MS research. Flanagan, 52, an Aurora conductor for 21 years, said many fellow members of the local contributed money to help the cause. “Building a movement and by people with MS moving us closer to a world free of this rotten disease,” he said.

Local 161, Seattle, Wash.

A party was held last month at Mac’s Smokehouse to honor Richard Waring, who retired July 31 after 22 years as a member of UTU Locals 161 and 324. Pictures of the event are available on the local’s web site at www.utu161.org. Click on Archives. “Our thanks go out to Jerry Healy and Sheila Anderson for organizing this memorable event. This get-together was a good example of the camaraderie that exists among our union members over the years,” said Local President Brian Donald.

Local 240, Los Angeles, Calif.

Conductors Mike L. Jones and Jack L. Healy retired in August and September, respectively. Local Chairperson Harry Garvin Jr. reported. Jones had more than 40 years of railroad service on the UP/SP and had previously held local office, which he had held for more than 36 years of service on the Union Pacific. “Good luck, and many happy, long years of retirement to both you and your families,” Garvin said.

Local 298, Garrett, Ind.

Members of the CSX local were keeping the beer flowing at the North East Indiana Central Labor Council’s AFL-CIO Labor Day picnic at Headwaters Park in Fort Wayne, on Sept. 1, reported Local President Rich Michener. Pictured above, from left, are Samantha Murphy, Chairperson Tom Potter, T. V. Johnson, NEICLC Presi- dent Tom Lewandowski, Scott Chapman, Bob Murphy, Michener, Paul Patton, Legislative Rep. Bruce Babbin, Maryjane Babbin, Bob Wheeler and Trustee Ray D’Manta who worked on the beer truck during the festivities.

Local 367 Omaha, Neb.

On Sept. 24, more than 60 members and friends of this UP local held their annual barbeque dinner, sponsored by the low firm of Yaeger, Junghauer & Barcak, Legislative Rep. Kevin P. Kreel reported. Afterwards, the local conducted its annual Chuck Faddler Scholarship Program, in which 56 students were awarded $500 college scholarships to Kelsey Kerwin (daughter of Kevin), Wesley Gerons (son of Scott) and Nathan Kennedy (son of Rob). On Sept. 25, the local held its annual golf tournament at Shore- line Golf Course in Carter Lake, Iowa, with more than 80 golfers participating. In other news, Chairperson the Treasurer, Joe Brown notified UTU News that Kreel and engineer Anthony W. Schnitzer were recognized by the UP for their efforts in heading off a tragic event involving a woman lying on the railroad tracks. Despite inclement weather, the duo spotted the woman and noti- tified their dispatcher, who halted a train traveling in the opposite direction. The woman admit- ted to trying to kill herself and was transported to a hospital for possible alcohol poisoning. “It’s the crew’s vigilance in poor visibility conditions that saved that woman from being run over,” Manager of Yard Operations Bryan Clark said. “They are to be commended for their actions.”

Local 490, Princeton, Ind.

Local President Schuyler V. Smith reported that retired members Paul Schmitt and Eugene Shomate passed away this past summer.

Local 511 Atlanta, Ga.

Members of this local will hold their third annual Christmas party and local cocktail on Dec. 13, at 11 a.m., at the home of Secretary & Treasurer Howell Keown in Kennesaw, Ga. For more information or directions, call Keown at 770-795-1439.

Local 807, Tucson, Ariz.

Conductor Ron Frigberg retired in October after more than 41 years of service, and hostler Ben Adams retired this past August with 31 years of service, Secretary & Treasurer Tom Moroney reported.

Local 1081, Glendale, Ariz.

Members of this BNSF Railway local are coming to the aid of Brother Tommy Duran, a fellow member with kidney problems who has undergone an operation and will need six weeks of treatment on kidney dialysis. “Duran is a single dad and has the normal expenses of any family – house, autos, food and utilities. They need our help,” Local President Steve Coffey said. To assist the Duran family, send a check to: UTU Local 1081, 1510 E. Galbraith Ave, Mesa, AZ 85204, and show in remarks “Tommy Duran Diany Fund.”

Local 1138, Miami, Fla.

Local Chairperson Yvonne Hayes has been elected to the office of assistant general chairperson of the BNSF Railway Committee of Adjustment GO-851, reported General Chairperson John Hancock. The election was held in September due to the retirement of Gerald Foster. Hayes will be reporting to the GO-851 office for this full-time assignment on Jan. 1, Hancock said.

Local 1252, Fresno, Calif.

Retired BNSF Railway conductor Carl “Deputy Dog” Self and his wife, Carol, recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with many railroad friends at an event hosted by their twin sons, who are both BNSF employees, retired former Secretary & Treasurer Donald Heffernan reported. “Carl and his wife shared many meals with away-from-home railroaders who were given the help of our Union,” Heffernan said. Self’s nickname was “Deputy Dog” because of the large cowboy hat he always wore.

Local 1373, Philadelphia, Pa.

A fund has been established to assist the family of CSX conductor Thomas Oliphant, 46, who was killed by a passing train as he was locking down his train for the night on Sept. 24. Dona- tions can be made at any Wachovia Bank to the “Thomas Oliphant Memorial Fund” or to account number 2000018271298 said Secretary & Treasurer Greg Brecker.

Local 1402, Dupo, Ill.

Member and webmaster Daniel J. Meyer has informed UTU News that this Union Pacific local has established a Web site at www.utu1402.org.

Local 1545, Monroe, La.

Local Chairperson Steve Christian- son reports that the address of the local’s Web site has been changed to local1545.sites.com.

Local 1594, Upper Darby, Pa.

Members of this SEPTA bus local are grate- ful for the efforts of Labor Day cookout com- mittee members Brian Caldwell, Wade Harris and Rodyn Wilson for organizing a successful picnic on the property, with the permission of the district management, reports Local Chair- person Ron Bouchard. Those who were work- ing on Labor Day were able to grab a burger or hot dog and something to drink while they were on layover and it was appreciated,” Bouchard said.

Mayor Dorothy Larson, right, Sinclair Gunther, cen- ter, and Kamala Dunham, left, at the grand opening of Antioch Model Trains and Hobby shop.

Whether it’s work or play, railroading is ‘in his blood’

UTU member Jack Scardina first became acquainted with railroading at the age of five, when his grandfather presented him with his first model train set. When he was a little older, his parents gave him a lionel train set, and a passion for model railroading and a career in the industry was born.

This past October, Scardina and his parents opened Antioch Model Trains and Hobby in Antioch, Ill. The store caters to model railroading enthusiasts, with about 90 percent of their merchandise dedicated to model railroading, Scardina said. The business also features slot cars and accessories.

“The store offers just about everything you could want that has to do with model rail- roading,” Scardina said. “We sell trains, buildings, scenery, paints and most anything else you might need.”

“It’s a really nice shop,” said Scardina, a member of UTU Local 583 at Fond du Lac, Wis. “It is very clean and organized.”

Scardina said the store features many dif- ferent lines of model railroading trains, from G-scale to Z-scale, as well as Lionel trains and accessories and HO. He said that many of his products are dedicated to N-scale mod- els, meaning the models are 1/160th of the actual size.

The trains are modeled after actual trains, with details on the locomotives and boxcars recreated based on the actual trains.

The family is not new to the model railroading business. Scardina had opened his first model railroading shop in Antioch back in the 1980s, when it was called No Scale Memories, and Scardina still has the original hand-painted sign from that store hanging in the new shop. He later moved the business to Lindenhurst. He closed the business when he took a job as a conductor with Wisconsin Central – now Canadian National – in 1999.

Scardina said he loves both model rail- roading and the railroad industry. “It is defi- nitely part of my life. I have a passion for it. It’s either in your blood or it’s not,” he said.

Although he is currently off the job due to medical leave, Scardina looks to return to his job as a CN conductor as soon as possible.

Scardina looks forward to visits from fel- low UTU members and is willing to provide UTU dippers with a “special discount.”

“I will be a UTU member for life,” he said.
**After 30-year wait, we win rail-safety legislation with teeth**

WASHINGTON – President Bush on Oct. 16 signed into law the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008. This is the most comprehensive rail safety bill in the past 30 years. In the Senate, which passed the bill Oct. 1 by a 74-24 vote, Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.) voted “yes,” and Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) voted “no.”

The Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 provides for certification of conductors, along with a minimum training requirement. Additionally, it prohibits carriers from interfering with the treatment of injured employees, mandates installation of positive train control, and offers railroads incentives to install electronically controlled pneumatic (ECP) brakes and redundant electronic locomotive operation.

Significantly, the safety bill caps limbo time and requires at least two days off following each six-day work week. But a provision permits general chairpersons to negotiate with carriers a better balance between time off and earnings, while preserving guaranteed time off.

Of significance, the legislative history of the bill supports two sets of eyes and ears in the locomotive cab, notwithstanding the installation of PTC.

**FRA issues cell-phone ban**

WASHINGTON – In an emergency order, the FRA on Oct. 2 banned the use of personal electronic devices by railroad employees while operating trains and in other settings. The emergency order took effect Oct. 27. Violators of this prohibition are now subject to civil penalties and removal from safety-sensitive service.

“Operating freight and passenger trains, and maintaining track and signals requires the full and undivided attention of those charged with carrying out such responsibilities,” said FRA Administrator Joseph Boardman.

“The bottom line is railroad operating employees cannot focus on their critical safety functions while engaging in phone conversations, texting or any other form of unessential electronic communication, often in violation of railroad operating rules.”

**UTU International gets defibrillators**

Two automated external heart defibrillators (AEDs) have been installed at the UTU International offices in Cleveland, thanks to the UTU Cardiac Safety Program.

An AED is a portable automatic device used to restore normal heart rhythm to patients in cardiac arrest, and is designed to be used as a lifesaving device by chairpersons with minimal first-aid instruction while awaiting the arrival of advanced life support.

UTU International employees were instructed in the use of the AEDs by April Furey, a registered nurse and graduate of the Baptist Memorial Hospital School of Nursing in Memphis, Tenn. She is the wife of UTU International President Mike Furey.

The UTU also has notified all tenants in the International headquarters building, which include many doctors’ offices, that the AEDs are available should the need arise.

Studies have shown that the ready availability of AEDs in airports, shopping malls, stadiums and offices saves lives.

“The Canadian legislative board donated these two AEDs to the International in appreciation for the work done by the employees,” said Tim Secord, administrative assistant to the International president. “We hope we never have to use them, of course, but I know we will feel better knowing they are available.”

The Office and Professional Employees Inter-

**Tim Secord**

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**UTU General Chairperson Simon on disability flap: ‘Just give us the rules and we will play by them’**

UTU General Chairperson Anthony Simon is defending his members in the wake of allegations that many Long Island Rail Road retirees improperly received disability payments in addition to pensions.

Federal agents raided the Long Island office of the Railroad Retirement Board in September amid an intensifying investigation into the legitimacy of disability payments to thousands of former employees — including white-collar managers — of the Long Island Rail Road.

The raid came two days after The New York Times reported that nearly all career employees of the railroad — from 93 percent to 97 percent of retirees every year since 2000 — retired early and soon after began getting disability payments from the federal agency.

The retirement board almost never turns down a claim, and since 2000 has paid more than a quarter of a billion dollars in disability checks to former Long Island Rail Road workers, The Times reported.

Simon, in a letter sent to all UTU members, said the UTU “can no longer tolerate the negative perception that is being targeted towards LIRR employees byentityManager, politicians or the leadership of the Long Island Rail Road” regarding allegations that retirees have abused disability provisions of the Railroad Retirement Act.

“Enough. This is a federal matter that is clearly under investigation,” Simon wrote. “It does not make sense to revise the process, so be it. Just give us the rules and we will play by them.”

“It is my belief, as I am sure yours, that the employees of the LIRR are being unfairly depicted as unethical and lazy retirees engaging in criminal activity under the guise of being harassed based on unfounded accusations of disability abuse. Morale is being affected, and safety may be placed at risk due to the constant barrage of articles and informational items creating a misconstrued and irritated riding public,” he said.

“I take pride in knowing our membership, and can assure you I will send the message that our union is ethical, dedicated and hard working. It is the employees who have achieved record-breaking on-time performance numbers and safety awards, not management who showcases the trophies,” wrote Simon.

“We are providing around-the-clock train service, 365 days a year, in safety-sensitive positions through all types of work conditions and circumstances. I will do everything in my power to ensure this organization receives the respect and admiration it deserves.”

Butch Speakman, labor member of the Railroad Retirement Board, issued a statement, saying, “While I share the concern that an anomaly may exist with the Long Island Rail Road situation, I am equally concerned by the misconceptions these articles have propagated with regard to how the occupational disability provisions of the Railroad Retirement Act are administered by our agency.”

**Assistant to the President Tim Secord and April Furey, wife of International President Mike Furey, with one of the automated external heart defibrillators recently installed at the UTU International offices in Cleveland.**
Return of dignity, job security seen in Obama win

Barack Obama is the first presidential candidate to promise in writing that he stands behind the objectives of the United Transportation Union.

We look forward to working closely with President Obama. He is a leader who has put the well-being of working men and women at the heart of his campaign.

Early on, President-elect Obama pledged in writing his support for our rail and bus members, and we have every reason to believe he will fulfill that commitment.

In the weeks ahead, the UTU International leadership will be working with other AFL-CIO-member unions to identify qualified individuals for key appointments in the Obama administration.

Among the posts of importance to us are the secretaries of labor and transportation, members of the National Mediation Board and the National Labor Relations Board, members of the Surface Transportation Board, the Federal Railroad Administration, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, and the Amtrak Board of Directors.

Each of these agencies makes decisions on a daily basis that have impact on our job security, paychecks, benefits and working conditions.

As President-elect Obama has pledged to work on behalf of working men and women, the 125,000 active and retired UTU members and their families will continue our efforts in support of the Obama administration as it works to restore the dignity and hope that was relentlessly taken from us by mean-spirited, anti-labor conservatives.

Indeed, the torch has been passed.

I will preserve the sanctity of Railroad Retirement and the Federal Employers’ Liability Act (FELA) and push for a fair process to receive and maintain a commercial driver’s license.

“We will be working to identify qualified individuals for key appointments in the Obama administration.”

“My administration will push for Amtrak, commuter rail, and public transit system funding, ensuring strong employment levels well into the future.

“I am proud to stand with 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.

“On behalf of your members and their families, I am fighting to make sure that all Americans have access to quality healthcare, enjoy fair treatment at work, and that all children benefit from excellent educational opportunities.

“The brothers and sisters of UTU, and all working families, deserve a president who is committed to improving their lives. I will honor that commitment, as I have for over two decades in public life. Your efforts are a part of this movement, and I look forward to working with you, not just to win in November, but to deliver on the change working Americans deserve.”

That is what Barack Obama pledged to us in writing.

What do we say in response to President-elect Obama’s written pledge?

We say, “Let us move forward together to restore the dignity and economic security of working families, and to better ensure their safety and well-being in the workplace.”

God bless President-elect Barack Obama and the United States of America.

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“Let us move forward together to restore the dignity and economic security of working families.”

“We are looking forward to working closely with President Obama.”

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Thanks to you, the outlook is good

“Barack Obama is the first presidential candidate to promise in writing that he stands behind the objectives of the United Transportation Union.

Many of our old friends in the House – both Democrats and Republicans with whom we have built good relationships – were re-elected. This ensures that the UTU will continue to have influence on both sides of the aisle.

Many new friends were also elected, and we will set about immediately to meet with them and their key staff to ensure they are knowledgeable about your issues.

The good news is that elected many more labor-friendly candidates to Congress. What I can promise you is that everything we want and deserve will be passed into law. Congress is one of the most sophisticated horse-trading enterprises on earth, and compromise enters into every vote.

That said, I am hopeful that most of our key goals will become law over the next two years. Most important, we will be facing fewer conservative assaults on organized labor.

I am not looking over our shoulders as what the White House and the railroads’ friends are trying to do to you or take away from you.

In the Senate, the magic number to stop a filibuster is 60 votes, but we did not reach that number. Still, the Democrats have a significant majority.

This means that UTU members, as well as all of labor, will see more progress on labor-sought legislation.

At the White House, we expect President Obama to seek our opinions on qualified individuals to serve in his administration.

We will be working with the AFL-CIO and other AFL-CIO-member unions to ensure President-elect Obama’s personnel choices are individuals who are true friends of working families.

We also hold a letter from President-elect Obama in which he made specific promises to promote Railroad Retirement, Social Security and the Federal Employers’ Liability Act.

He also promised to work to correct the commercial driver’s license problem and fight for more transit, Amtrak and commuter rail funding.

This is the first presidential candidate who ever made such promises to us in writing.

It is time for the Congress and the White House to do exactly what your union has been doing for you: fighting for a better life.”

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WASHINGTON WATCH

By James M. Brunkenhoefer

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www.utu.org / www.utuia.org
Missouri

State Legislative Director Ken Menges is applauding successful efforts by the state’s Department of Transportation to win a federal grant to expand Amtrak service in the Show Me State.

MDOT recently received a $3.3 million FRA grant that will help increase freight mobility and reduce delays for Amtrak service across the state.

The grant will help fund two new sidings between Jefferson City and Kansas City on the UP projects that will increase rail capacity between the two cities at a critical time when Amtrak ridership is on the rise, increasing 31 percent since last October, Menges said.

“The General Assembly also approved $5 million last session that will be used as matching funds for this grant money and is the first time that Missouri has authorized funds to make track improvements on any railroad,” Menges said.

The federal grant will help fund the preliminary engineering and construction of an entirely new 9,000-foot siding just west of the city of California on the UP line, UP officials said.

The grant will also pay for the preliminary design and engineering to extend an existing siding at Knob Noster on the same rail line.

“With high fuel prices and tightening economic conditions, travelers want additional, dependable transportation options,” said MoDOT Director Pete Rahn. “This federal grant, in addition to funding we received for multimodal operations from the Missouri legislature in May, is just the boost we need to develop a transportation system that better serves everyone’s needs—not just drivers.”

Arkansas

State Legislative Director Steve Evans recently attended a fundraiser for successful state representative candidate Barbara Nix (D), District 28, the UTU-endorsed candidate. Shown with Nix, left, is Evans, right, and Alternate State Director Talmon Preyer, who also serves as legislative representative for Local 656, North Little Rock. “We are pleased the voters elected Barbara Nix and we look forward to working with her on issues of importance to UTU members and their families,” Evans said.

Utah

On his third attempt, State Legislative Director Jay Seegmiller has defeated House Speaker Greg Curtis, making Curtis the first House speaker in at least four decades to lose re-election.

“It has just been the culminating of a lot of work and a lot of volunteers. It’s just overwhelming. I am almost amazed myself that it could be done,” said Seegmiller, who lost to Curtis by just 20 votes in 2006.

Maine

Amtrak conductor and UTU member Mike Shaw has been elected to the Maine House of Representatives. Shaw, 36, is a member of Local 95, Rensselaer, N.Y. He works as conductor on Amtrak’s Downeaster. Democrat Shaw ran unopposed in State House District 102, which covers the town of Standish.

New Mexico

State Legislative Director Dennis Baca reports that, thanks to the efforts of Local 1168 (Clovis) Secretary & Treasurer Buddy Blue, 13 members recently signed up to participate in UTU PAC.

As an added incentive, these new UTU PAC participants were given a T-shirt (photo, right), Baca said.

“The New Mexico legislative board has been very active this year, hoping to change the political landscape in both New Mexico and Washington, D.C.,” he said.

DOT announces new school-bus safety rules

WASHINGTON— The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration last month issued rules that require three-point safety belts on small school buses and taller seats on all school buses.

The new requirement for lap and shoulder safety belts applies only to buses under 10,000 pounds and was proposed last November after a string of high-profile school bus crashes. NHTSA first considered the additional safety steps more than six years ago and they must be implemented by fall 2011.

While school buses remain the safest way to get to and from classes, high-profile crashes renewed the debate over whether school buses should have safety belts.

Five states, Australia and the European Union require safety belts on school buses, while many states already require taller seats.

In 1998, Congress ordered NHTSA to research the issue of school bus safety and reconsider its 1977 decision not to require safety belts on buses.

About 25 million U.S. children travel on 500,000 buses. School bus travel accounts for just two percent of all student fatalities that result from getting to and from school.

Between 1995 and 2005, about five school children died annually in bus accidents, for a fatality rate of 0.1 per 100 million miles traveled.

By comparison, the fatality rate for school kids killed on bicycles is 12.2 per 100 million miles and for children who walk to school, 8.7 per 100 million miles.

NHTSA came under criticism for failing to act on its 2002 recommendations after a November 2006 bus accident in Huntsville, Ala., killed four high school students when the bus tumbled off an interstate overpass.

Since most school buses have no safety belts, the main safety feature is taller seats designed to contain students during a crash.

Community Transit members ratify pact

Congratulations to Community Transit General Chairperson Calvin Studvant in Newburn, N.J., whose members in Local 759 ratified a new contract providing an across-the-board wage increase, an extra holiday with pay, an increase in vacation pay and pension benefits, and no givebacks.

Assisting in the bargaining were Local 759 President David Deleon, Local Chairperson John Blake, Secretary Antonio Ortiz, and Legislative Rep. Kaleem Muhammad.

Assisting in the successful bargaining was New Jersey State Legislative Director Dan O’Connell.

“Take note that all UTU locals are in the election cycle. I strongly encourage any member who wishes to serve the members to run for office. Those who run for office must recognize that they have an obligation to know what their responsibilities to the membership will be, and understand that they must be prepared to sacrifice regarding their personal life.

“A union office is much more than a title. It is serving the membership, knowing it is often without compensation, or even a thank you. True union leaders are reawed by the knowledge that they are serving their membership to the best of their ability.

“The UTU is blessed in having countless dedicated men and women who serve their membership in an exemplary manner. When you, as a member, vote for your local officers, please remember to consider and vote for those individuals who have demonstrated dedication, integrity and a record of service to the membership.

“If you elect individuals of this caliber, you will elect a team of officers that will always put you and your brother and sister members first—and that strengthens your local. Have a happy Thanksgiving.

www.utu.org / www.utuia.org
Support your United Transportation Union’s Political Action Committee

For the second successive congressional election, we sent more labor-friendly lawmakers to Congress – lawmakers pledged to put working families first and fight for our job security, better paychecks, adequate and affordable health care, and improved workplace safety. We also elected more labor-friendly lawmakers to state legislative posts.

We help elect our friends through UTU PAC contributions, which are used by candidates for advertising and campaign travel expenses.

UTU PAC donations are used to protect the rights and interests of active and retired members. They are used to safeguard laws, working conditions and pension rights. Passage of the national rail agreement, the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008, the new Amtrak contract that preserves the jobs of assistant conductors or the Railroad Retirement and Survivors’ Improvement Act of 2001 would not have been possible without the help of UTU PAC-supported lawmakers sympathetic to the needs of active and retired UTU members.

UTU PAC contributes to qualified state and national political candidates, regardless of party affiliation.

UTU PAC has well-organized state advisory committees, and an office in Washington, D.C.

UTU PAC is the largest operating bus and rail political organization in the AFL-CIO!

UTU PAC contributions can be made on a one-time basis by check, any-time, by active members, retirees, and all individuals who seek a more responsive government.

UTU PAC contributions can be started or increased anytime, and can be deducted automatically from your paycheck.

UTU PAC has more than 21,000 members across the country. They welcome your support and investment in the future of our great nation.

Our UTU PAC gives us a voice in Washington and in state capitols. To keep that voice loud and effective, the UTU PAC needs your contributions.

Please consider making regular contributions to the UTU PAC if you do not already do so – or increasing your current contribution.

As we saw on Election Day, the UTU PAC helps get the results we want.

UTU PAC
Emblems of Distinction

PLATINUM CLUB PIN: Awarded to those individuals who contribute $1,200 per year to UTU PAC

DOUBLE DIAMOND CLUB PIN: Awarded to those who contribute $600 per year to UTU PAC

DIAMOND PLUS CLUB PIN: Awarded to those who contribute $400 per year to UTU PAC

DOLLAR-A-DAY PIN: Awarded to those who contribute $365 per year to UTU PAC

DIAMOND CLUB PIN: Awarded to those who contribute $300 per year to UTU PAC

GOLD CLUB PIN: Awarded to those who contribute $100 per year to UTU PAC

UTU PAC PIN: Awarded to those who contribute $25 per year to UTU PAC

To have your voice heard, keep the UTU PAC strong by making a pledge!
Gray Line of Seattle: Keeping people on the move

UTU membership includes bus operators, maintenance, cleaners

When Microsoft holds its annual shareholders’ meeting, it fills much of Safeco Field in Seattle, and UTU members drive the 75 Gray Line buses that provide much of the charter transportation.

UTU members also operate, maintain and repair the Gray Line buses in Seattle that carry business and leisure travelers between Sea-Tac airport, the Amtrak station and downtown hotels.

Forget those myths about Seattle weather. Fire-engine red, open-top double-deck Gray Line buses are tourist favorites for seeing the Seattle sights.

Gray Line has been operating in Seattle since 1909, and it also offers tour and charter bus service to attractions such as Boeing Field, Mt. Rainier, and to and from cruise lines operating between Seattle and Alaska. Additionally, Gray Line carries bus passengers on excursions north across the border to British Columbia.

The UTU represents more than 110 Gray Line drivers, mechanics and other employees.

In environmentally conscious Seattle, Gray Line earned the highest green rating from King County. The bus line employs a wash-water recycler that reuses 90 percent of water used to wash buses, a radiant heating system that recycles waste oil to heat, and water-oil separators that gather run-off water from the parking lot.

John George has 29 years of service behind the wheel of Gray Line charter and tour buses in Seattle.

UTU Assistant President Art Martin, left, with driver Patricia Snell and Local 161 Championer Bob Daigan. Snell, with nine years’ service, attended her first UTU regional meeting in 2008 in Denver, departing, she said, with pages and pages of notes taken at educational workshops.

Michael Splains, 21 years of service, reads a newly acquired retro coach for its daily bath. Gray Line recycles 95 percent of its wash water as part of an environmental effort that includes recycling the used bus engine oil to heat offices and the garage.

Local 161 President Brian Donald, left, says his local has “an excellent working relationship” with Gray Line General Manager Jeremy Buerkoff.

Tourists can explore Seattle at their own pace with Gray Line’s Hop-On_Hop-Off double-decker buses. They can hop off at any stop to explore on their own, and then hop on another bus when ready.

Gray Line bus mechanics Patrick Bergman, left, with 17 years’ service, and Local 161 vice championer Logan Brenden, 10 years’ service.

“You transport some of the most interesting people,” says Local 161 President Brian Donald, left, with former astronaut and retired Boeing chief technical pilot John Creighton, who flew three space missions (June 1985, March 1990 and September 1991). Creighton, other astronauts and several Russian cosmonauts were in Seattle to promote science and math education in the public schools. Gray Line provided local transportation.

www.utu.org / www.utuia.org
The Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) reports that most Railroad Retirement annuities, like Social Security benefits, will increase in January 2009.

The RRB also reports that those Railroad Retirement annuitants subject to earnings restrictions will be able to earn more in 2009 without having their benefits reduced, as a result of increases in earnings limits indexed to average national wage increases.

Most Railroad Retirement annuities are scheduled to increase in January 2009 on the basis of the rise in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) during the 12 months preceding October 2008, RRB said.

Cost-of-living increases are calculated in both the Tier I and Tier II benefits included in a Railroad Retirement annuity. Tier I benefits, like Social Security benefits, will increase by 5.8 percent, which is the percentage of the CPI rise. Tier II benefits will increase by 1.9 percent, which is 3.25 percent of the CPI rise.

(The vested dual benefit payments and supplemental annuities also paid by the Railroad Retirement Board are not adjusted for the CPI rise.)

In January 2009, the average regular Railroad Retirement employee annuity will increase $92 a month to $2,101 and the average of combined benefits for an employee and spouse will increase $14 a month to $2,956.

For those aged widow(er)s eligible for an increase, the average annuity will increase $55 a month to $1,115.

However, widow(er)s whose annuities are being paid under the Railroad Retirement and Survivors’ Improvement Act of 2001 will not receive annual 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.

About 31 percent of the widow(er)s on the board’s rolls are being paid under the 2001 law.

Retiree earnings limits rise

Those railroad retirement annuitants subject to earnings restrictions can earn more in 2009 without having their benefits reduced, as a result of increases in earnings limits indexed to average national wage increases.

Like Social Security benefits, some Railroad Retirement benefit payments are subject to deductions if an annuitant’s earnings exceed certain exempt amounts. These earnings restrictions apply to those who have not attained full Social Security retirement age. For employee and spouse annuitants, full retirement age ranges from age 65 for those born before 1938 to age 67 for those born in 1960 or later. For survivor annuitants, full retirement age ranges from age 65 for those born before 1940 to age 67 for those born in 1962 or later.

For those under full retirement age throughout 2009, the exempt earnings amount rises to $14,160 from $13,960 in 2008. For beneficiaries attaining full retirement age in 2009, the exempt earnings amount, for the months before the month full retirement age is attained, rises to $37,680 in 2009 from $36,120 in 2008.

For those under full retirement age, the earnings deduction is $1 in benefits for every $2 of earnings over the exempt amount. For those attaining full retirement age in 2009, the deduction is $1 for every $3 of earnings over the exempt amount in the months before the month full retirement age is attained.

When applicable, these earnings deductions are applied to Railroad Retirement earnings and Social Security retirement benefits and spousal annuities, and the Tier I, Tier II and vested dual benefit payments of Railroad Retirement employee and spouse annuities, and the Tier I and Tier II and vested dual benefit payments.

All earnings received for services rendered, plus any net earnings from self-employment, are considered when assessing deductions for earnings. Interest, dividends, certain rental income, or income from stocks, bonds, or other investments are not considered earnings for this purpose.

Retired employees and spouses, regardless of age, who work for their last pre-retirement non-railroad employer are also subject to an additional earnings deduction, in their Tier II and supplemental benefits, of $1 for every $2 in earnings up to a maximum reduction of 50 percent. This earnings restriction does not change from year to year and does not allow for an exempt amount.

Special work restrictions continue to be applicable to disability annuitants in 2009. The monthly disability earnings limit increases to $730 in 2009 from $710 in 2008.

George Koval, former director, passes

George J. Koval, former director of the UTU Retiree Program (now the UTU Alumni Association) has passed away. He was 78.

Koval was employed for 33 years by the Pennsylvania Railroad, which became Conrail by the time he retired as a brake- man and conductor.

He served as local chairman and legislative representative of Local 303, Philadelphia, and was the founder of the Railroad Retirees Club, which met monthly in Fortville, Pa.

In addition to his wife of 53 years, Elaine J. Konitsky Koval, he is survived by four daughters, six grandchildren, two sisters and several nieces and nephews.

The family requests memorial contributions be sent to PinnacleHealth Hospice, 301 One Norwegian Plaza, Potomac, PA 17701.

George Koval was a good man who did a lot for the retired members of this organization,” International President Mike Futhey said.
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 Pennsylvania.

Information, please

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

Please print

Full name

Sex

Date of birth

Address

City

State

ZIP

Telephone number with area code

UTUIA local number

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

UTUIA wins lower insurance co-pays

Members covered by the NRCCUTU Health and Welfare Plan and The Railroad Employees National Health and Welfare Plan will soon have a significant health-insurance benefit improvement.

Effective Nov. 1, 2008, office visit co-pays required under the Managed Medical Care Program (MMCP) for in-network nurse practitioners, physician’s assistants, physical therapists and chiropractors were lowered from $35 to $20.

In addition, a new supplemental discount program will soon be applied to charges for out-of-network services and for charges under the comprehensive benefit that should result in considerable savings to participants.

Co-pays under the July 1, 2008, agreement were set at $35 for specialists as one of several inapplicable plan design changes that facilitated the unprecedented expansion of MMCP to almost all geographical areas of the country. As a result of the MMCP expansion, virtually all members covered by the national health and welfare agreements can now enjoy the lower out-of-pocket costs and unlimited lifetime cap of managed care as opposed to the 65/15 co-insurance arrangement of the comprehensive benefit with its $1-million lifetime cap and annual deductibles.

Notwithstanding the tremendous advantages of the MMCP expansion, the placement of co-pays for nurse practitioners, physician’s assistants, physical therapists and chiropractors in the higher “specialist” provider category had substantial impact on some members and was a benefit change the UTU fought hard to avoid.

Ultimately, the UTU was unable to achieve the lower $20 co-pays it sought, and the agreement sent to members for ratification in 2008 reflected the $35 co-pays.

However, by steadfastly pursuing the issue with the carriers through its status as a joint policyholder, the UTU was able to achieve a reduction in co-pays through jointly agreed upon administration action during the moratorium period between contracts.

Likewise, the implementation of the new supplemental discount program was also the result of administration action by the plan’s governing committee.

Benefits improvements between contracts are extremely rare, and UTU is pleased to have achieved these important goals for its members.

UTUIA Healthcare offers open enrollment

During the months of November and December 2008, UTUIA Healthcare will hold an open enrollment under GA-23111.

During this open enrollment, any individual eligible for coverage under one of the GA-23111 plans can enroll and will be accepted for coverage without any medical underwriting or requirement of good health.

There are no limitations for pre-existing conditions.

Enrollment in November and December 2008 will be for coverage effective Jan. 1, 2009.

Only those applicants who mail their completed enrollment forms in November or December 2008 will be considered for open enrollment.

The next opportunity to enroll during an open enrollment period will be in November and December 2010.

This open enrollment is being held:

For individuals who were covered under any railroad health plan and were represented by a railroad labor union.

For individuals who are members in accordance with the constitution or bylaws of one of the participating railroad labor organizations, when coverage under the employer group health plan which applies to them ends.

If someone you know meets the GA-23111 eligibility provisions, open enrollment provides an opportunity for them to become covered.

You may also enroll your spouse or eligible children if they are not currently covered.

In addition, enrollment under Plan F is available for your parent or parent-in-law.

Anyone interested in enrolling should call the following phone number to obtain an enrollment form or additional information:

For persons eligible for Medicare, call (800) 829-6253.

For persons not eligible for Medicare, call (800) 842-5292.

Plans A, B and C are for persons eligible for coverage under GA-23111 except persons eligible under Medicare, and persons eligible under GA-46000. The rate is $250 per month for Plan A, $325 for Plan B and $400 for Plan C.

(Benefits for the three plans vary, hence the different prices. See the “Healthcare News” section of the UTU Web site, www.utu.org, for an explanation.)

Plan E is for persons eligible under The Railroad Employees National Early Retirement Major Medical Benefit Plan (GA-46000). The rate is $150 per month.

Plan F is for persons eligible for full Medicare coverage. The cost is $150 per month.

Plan M is for persons eligible under the Massachusetts Bay Commuter Rail Early Retirement Plan. The rate is $150 per month.

Note: Enrollment during November and December of the open enrollment period provides for coverage effective the following calendar year, Jan. 1 through Dec. 31.

Each June 1 of that calendar year, and only at that time, adjustments to the premium for all plans under GA-23111 may occur.

Additionally, if you are enrolled in either Plan A, B or C under GA-23111, and a change in the premium amount you pay does occur, you will be allowed, at that time, to switch your plan to a different plan (A, B, or C) if available.

www.utu.org / www.utuia.org
The FRA has published rules encouraging the adoption of advanced brake technology that says will enable railroad workers to better control their trains, lower the risk of derailment, and allow trains to safely travel longer distances between required brake tests. The new rules will take effect Dec. 15.

“I believe that railroads and railcar owners will increasingly realize the benefits of electronically controlled pneumatic (ECP) brake systems and will make the necessary investments,” said FRA Administrator Joseph H. Boardman.

Under FRA-approved waivers, Norfolk Southern and BNSF Railway are already operating several ECP-equipped coal trains, and Union Pacific is expected to begin operating some ECP-equipped intermodal container trains soon.

Boardman said the final rule permits trains to travel up to 3,500 miles without stopping periodically for certain routine brake inspections – more than double the current limit – because ECP brake systems contain continual electronic self-diagnostic “health check” capability that will provide advance information when maintenance is required.

For example, an ECP-equipped intermodal container train originating in the ports of Los Angeles/Long Beach may safely travel all the way to Chicago with- out stopping for a routine brake test.

The concept is simple: ECP brakes allow trains to operate more safely,” said the FRA, noting that the agency’s final rule on ECP brakes will facilitate the widespread deployment of this technology by railroads and railcar owners.

The FRA explained that ECP technology provides simultaneous and graduated application and release of brakes on all rail cars within a train, resulting in shorter stopping distances, longer trains that can operate at faster speeds, improved fuel efficiency, and reduced emissions, the agency said.

ECP also complements other advanced rail- safety technologies like positive train control sys- tems, FRA said.

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**Health and welfare premiums to rise**

The new employee contribution rate, which is more than $20 lower per month than what was anticipated going into negotiations, also reflects an expectation that railroad claims in 2009 will increase at a lower rate than the national average, owing to the addition of plan improvements designed to reduce the frequency and severity of treatment and disability, Furthey said.

These plan improvements include telephone contact with a nurse (the Nurse Line), custom- care coordination, disease management programs and strategies for participants to cease smoking and lose weight.

The plans’ total monthly premium costs per employee for 2009 will be $415 for medical care, $12.30 for the life and accidental and dismemberment, $55.98 for the dental premium, and $10 for the vision care premium, or a total of $1,194.74 monthly per employee, an $82.62 increase over the $1,112.12 figure for 2008, and employees will pay $170.96 per month in 2009.

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**UTU shoeleather helps elect Obama**

They focused primarily on the so-called battle- ground states, where neither Obama nor McCain had overwhelming support.

Enlisting assistance from general chairpersons, local officers and rank-and-file members, Szabo, Johnson, Millward and Gibson worked with the Obama campaign to introduce and employ traditional fund- raising techniques, educate them on the issues, obtain absentee ballots for them, and encourage them to go to the polls.

Furthey also enlisted the sup- port of former UTU presidents Al Chesser and Tom DuBose, and retired state legislative directors Jack Shaver (Col- orado), Carl Cochran (Flori- da), Larry Foster (Missouri) and Bill Thompson (Ohio) to reach out to UTU retirees on behalf of Obama. Their mission was to encourage UTU retirees to contact other retirees they know on behalf of Obama. UTU Alumni chapters also participated in the effort.

The UTU Auxiliary, led by its president, Car- ol Menges, similarly reached out to its members, encouraging them to help register friends and neighbors and urge them to vote for Obama.

At UTU headquarters in Cleveland, Furthey authorized a half-day off for employees to vote early, as permitted in Ohio, and to engage in get-out- the-vote activities.

As Assistant to the President Bruce Feltmeyer marked off on vacation to travel Ohio and ring doorbells on behalf of Obama. Joe Szabo and former Illinois Alternate Leg- islative Director John Burner spearheaded an effort among labor leaders in Illinois who had worked with Jack McCall when he was in the Illinois senate, to make a video documenting Obama's pro-labor votes and respect for working families.

There were many individual efforts among UTU members. In Missouri, State Director Ken Menges offered offices to UTU members who reg- istered at least five unregistered voters.

In North Dakota, State Director John Risch com- mitted a voter poll to convince the media that Obama was a viable candidate in North Dakota and that tradi- tionally voted Republican in presidential elections.

In Washington state, Local 426 and Local 855 officers Ed Carlson and Steve Mazulo parked their campers across from a BNSF yard where they posted Obama signs and engaged BNSF employees and passers-by in conversation.

In Minnesota, SLD Phil Quay, Nevada (SLD Jack Petters and ALD Rod Nelms), and New Mexico (SLD Dennis Baca), there were coordinated efforts by these UTU leaders to knock on doors on behalf of Obama. Quay also opened UTU offices for use by Obama staffers monitoring the Republican National Convention in St. Paul during the summer.

California ALD Mike Anderson recruited mem- bers from his state into the battle- ground state of Nevada to help register voters and encourage them to vote for Obama. Illinois ALD Bob Gey led a similar effort among UTU members, who traveled into neighboring Indiana.

The UTU president’s wife, April Furthey, did her part, volunteering as a team captain in Claycounty County, Ohio.

Joe Szabo in Ohio Cleveland was used as temporary office space for Obama campaign workers and local Democratic politicians. April Furthey also recorded a telephone message for use in computer-assisted dialing efforts.

“The Obama campaign here said they wanted my soft southern accent for those phone mes- sages,” she said.

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**Solid gains Continued from page 1**

**Yardmaster commitment:** While there no longer is a vice president of the Yardmaster Department, a yardmaster vice president position remains within the international headquarters to provide assistance as requested.

**Airline commitment:** In spite of the demise of Big Sky Airlines on June 30, member president is assigned to search out the unorganized in the aviation industry. Discussions are underway on two airline properties, where employee interest in the UTU, based on the quality of representation at Big Sky, is strong.

**Research of controlling awards:** iLink now provides better access to controlling awards, plus secure chat rooms for various levels of elected officers to exchange information and ideas.

**Union growth:** Promised was the right merger with the right organization, and full transparency in the process. The UTU International is aggressively defending attempts by the SWMU to force a merger in the face of a federal court decision that members were not provided information on conflicts between the two constituencies prior to casting ballots in 2007.

**Member services:** Leadership reports are post- ed to the UTU Web site, meetings have been held regularly with general chairpersons and state legislative directors in an open-format for- mula that similarly opens UTU News feature to the intro- duxtes members to UTU employees and explains what they do.

**Contract negotiations:** A new national rail agreement bettered the pattern and was over- whelmingly ratified. Arbitration on training and service-scale commenced in mid-November. UTU International officers are available to assist general chairpersons, as requested, including assistance in negotiating individualized agree- ments to satisfy the new rail-safety hill’s changes to hours of service and timelapse.

**Legislative agenda:** The UTU provided leadership in passage of the Rail Safety Improvement Act – the most sweeping safety reform in 30 years. UTU efforts to elect Barack Obama and labor-friendly lawmakers exceeded every effort ever mounted by a labor coalition. The UTU will contin- ue efforts to fix the commercial driver’s license problem, and will work with the AFL-CIO to identify qualified nominees for regulatory agency positions in transportation.

Said International President Mike Furthey, “We have achieved solid gains in pursuing platform objectives. We are committed to building on the accomplishments of the first year, and identifying new objectives to serve the membership.”

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Influenza: To take the flu shot, or not?

By Dr. Norman Brown
UTU Medical Consultant

What is influenza anyway?

Centuries ago, just as today, people developed respiratory infections after getting colds. In the Italian culture, such infections were thought to be caused by “influenza di freddo,” or influence of cold.

A wide variety of viruses, bacteria and fungi lead to colds, bad colds, bronchitis and even pneumonia when the infection goes down into our lungs. Scientists have sorted out a lot, but by no means all of these invaders.

One specific virus has been found in cases of influenza.

The influenza virus has received a lot of attention for several reasons. It spreads in epidemic fashion, transferred by one of us to others through coughing, speaking as we animate the virus into the air, or soiled tissues.

The illness can simultaneously knock out many members of a family, an office, work force or train crew.

The illness is typified by fever and muscle aches with headaches on top of the runny nose, sore throat and cough of your typical cold.

Because influenza virus is now known to be a very specific complex molecule, a fairly successful vaccine has been developed.

An important goal of this column, beside re-emphasizing my “wash your hands, throw away the Kleenex, cover your mouth when coughing” pep talk, is to recommend that most of you get an influenza vaccination — or flu shot for short — each fall.

Unfortunately, for a very curious reason, you currently need a new vaccination each year for the best results.

The influenza virus, the pesky devil it is, changes part of itself a little chemically and structurally each year, so that last year’s vaccine doesn’t trigger the exact antibodies in us that match and stop the new virus.

This is the very reason that the virus is so successful in attacking us humans year after year.

But there is some very recent, exciting news on this score. A brand new vaccine now in development targets a part of the influenza virus that does not change year to year.

If the needle is the reason you are leery of a flu shot, there is a newer nasal spray vaccination method using the usual vaccine components, often a little more expensive.

So, if this vaccine proves effective, a single immunization could be effective for multiple years.

Our government medical officials and your doctor have generally recommended vaccinating all persons 65 and over, and those with any condition reducing immunity or lung strength — think asthma, emphysema, smoking and allergies.

But in addition, workers who function in groups, or interact closely, are excellent candidates, since not only do the viruses’ victims feel terrible, but they can’t do their jobs and also pass it along to others.

From my understanding of railroad work, I would think member-to-member transmission of the virus on the job might well occur.

One note of caution: If you have had a reaction to a prior flu shot, do not take another one without discussing the matter with your doctor.

Fortunately, reactions are not common, as the vaccine is almost pure, preserved, dead virus.

I am sure Louis Pasteur would be proud of the huge progress since his pioneering work with bacteria, in identifying the organism giving us “influenza di freddo” attacks, and the resulting vaccines to date.

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**The UTU International Staff: Here to Serve You**

**Shirley Anderson**
Shirley Anderson started with the UTU in October 1989 as a utility clerk in the Billing Audit Department. She currently serves as a billing auditor, overseeing the financial statements of more than 50 locals. “I check on the accuracy of local treasurer’s billings, check the status of dues collections, retirement dates, answer telephone calls from members and treasurers about billings, reconcile shortages or overages. If I can’t give a member or treasurer an answer, I make sure I connect them with someone who can. I enjoy helping the members with their problems and treasurers with their billings.”

**Greg Hengesbaugh**
Greg Hengesbaugh started with the UTUIA in March 1999 as a policyholder service representative, a position he currently maintains. He holds a bachelor of arts degree in philosophy and psychology. Also, he is a union steward for OPEIU Local 17. Greg primarily corresponds with policyholders regarding various policy changes. He also fields telephone calls from members regarding all of their policies. Also, if members need duplicate policies, he is the go-to guy. “Each day brings new challenges that I deal with by tapping into my diverse educational background in an attempt to exceed the membership’s expectations of service and professionalism. For me, serving the membership is priority number one.”

**Marilyn Spangler**
Marilyn Spangler serves as the director of the union’s updating and Auditing Department. She started in July 1976 as a utility clerk in the Updating Department. “I liked this department because of the variety,” she said. Spangler communicates with local treasurers, who have problems. “I handle whatever problems arise,” she said. Spangler also is president of UTUIA Unit 1, a member of UTU Auxiliary Lodge 5, and is active in fundraising. Through her efforts, thousands of dollars have been donated to organizations such as Coats for Kids, Harvest for Hunger and Matthew’s Lending Library, which supplies equipment for special-needs children. She also was UTUIA volunteer of the year in 2005.

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**Meet your UTU Designated Legal Counsel**

There is no more dangerous work environment than on the railroad, 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 up to the UTU home page at www.utu.org and click on the blue tile, “Designated Legal Counsel.”

**Bradley M. Lakin**
The Lakin Law Firm
300 Evans Ave.
Wood River, IL 62095-0229
(618) 255-1277
(800) 851-5523 toll free
lakin@lakinlaw.com

Choosing a UTU designated legal counsel offers two distinct benefits: (1) Experienced and qualified counsel: The UTU has selected law firms that have demonstrated that they have the experience, knowledge, resources and legal ethic to effectively represent you. (2) Discounted legal services: Designated legal counsel agrees to take all contingency matters on a 25 percent contingency fee. Many non-designated firms will charge much more.

**William W. McVay**
230 Waverly Dr.
Pittsburgh, PA 15241
(412) 854-3250
(800) 854-3250 toll free

An accident report, which clearly demonstrates the manner by which the railroad was whole or in part responsible for causing the accident, is extremely beneficial for an employee’s claim. Subsequently, the employee should always be treated by a doctor of his own choice— not a doctor selected by the railroad.

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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 contest.

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-transport 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 of the individual(s) in the photograph (from 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 E. Clyde Stickley, a retired BNSF Plains Division conductor out of Local 1313, Amarillo, Texas. “This photo was taken on Curtis Hill between Waynoka and Woodward, Okla. It is an eastbound train meeting a westbound train on double track near Curtis, Okla.,” Stickley said.