Committees work to create new SMART union

In a joint message to members, the leadership of the UTU and the Sheet Metal Workers' International Association (SMWIA) pledged "to move forward and grow, and place all hostilities behind us" as the two organizations strive to cement a seamless merger.

The merger of the UTU and the SMWIA into the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation (SMART) Workers creates "new, vibrant and exceptional opportunities to organize the unorganized, become more efficient in our daily activities and make our highest calling the representation of the men and women of SMART," the leadership said.

In the first meeting of the UTU and the SMWIA leadership with senior staff in late January, the committees formed in November began the development of joint objectives "to ensure we all pull in the same direction, build trust in one another and use members' dues in the most efficient manner."

Initial goals established include:
- Acceleration of public knowledge of SMART's creation, especially through event staging, such as joint participation in rallies supporting collective bargaining rights. The two organizations will increase state activism efforts to slow and turn back efforts of anti-union law-makers seeking to eliminate collective bargaining rights and impose right-to-work (for less) laws.
- Identifying opportunities for organizing the unorganized. This will be accomplished in the transportation area with the SMWIA's larger organizing staff assisting UTU organizers, and leveraging the UTU's strong state presence through state legislative departments to create opportunities for organizing contractors in the sheet metal and air conditioning industries.
- Joint federal and state legislative activity in furtherance of laws and regulations beneficial to all SMART members.
- Maximizing the use of SMWIA training facilities.
- Aggressive pursuit of federal grants to address safety and security issues.
- Focus on improving the quality of member health care insurance, at the lowest possible cost to members.

Continued on page 10

NTSB urges action on speed-restriction compliance

WASHINGTON – Warnings of speed violations have been issued by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), which is urging unions, their members, carriers and the Federal Railroad Administration to work collaboratively to ensure compliance by train and engine crews with speed restrictions.

The NTSB action followed its investigation of five rear-end collisions where the NTSB concluded that crewmembers “failed to operate their trains at the required restricted speed.”

Two of the rear-end collisions resulted in fatalities.

Said the NTSB:

“Signal systems provide for the safe separation between trains. However, there are times when trains are authorized to occupy the same sections of track. In these cases, safe train operations rely solely on crewmember compliance with the railroad’s restricted speed requirements.

“Typically, these requirements include being prepared to stop within one-half the range of vision. Complete understanding of, and strict compliance with, restricted speed requirements are absolutely mandatory to prevent catastrophic train collisions.

Specifically, the NTSB urged the UTU and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen to educate their respective rail members so that all involved recognize “the importance of operating their trains in accordance with restricted speed operating rules.”

Additionally, the NTSB urged the UTU and the BLET to work collaboratively with railroads “to identify the potential for similar occurrences and to take appropriate mitigating actions.”

The NTSB also urged railroads to “emphasize adequate training and ensure the compliance of train crews operating at restricted speeds.”

The NTSB does not have regulatory authority, only investigative authority. Thus, the NTSB makes recommendations to carriers, labor organizations and the Federal Railroad Administration – the latter having regulatory authority over rail safety.

The five accidents noted by the NTSB were:
- Red Oak, Iowa, April 17, 2011, on BNSF.
- Low Moor, Va., May 21, 2011, on CSX.
- Mineral Springs, N.C., May 24, 2011, on CSX.
- DeWitt, N.Y., July 6, 2011, on CSX.
- DeKalb, Ind., Aug. 19, 2011, on Norfolk Southern.

UTU National Legislative Director James Steen, in commending the NTSB for its “diligence in helping to save lives,” said, “Compliance with restrictive speed is a common-sense application of safety concepts when following another train. This is another example of operating rules that offer good advice.”

UTU member killed in switching accident

GARY, Ind. – Michael M. Shoemaker, 55, a conductor and member of Local 1383, was killed Jan. 30 in a switching accident at U.S. Steel’s Gary Works here. Reports are that he became wedged between two freight cars.

Shoemaker, of Hobart, Ind., was a 10-year employee of Gary Railway, which is owned by U.S. Steel.

Reports indicate he was working as a foreman in a three-person conventional switching operation when the car he was riding “impacted the side of the standing equipment that the crew had placed” on an adjacent track, pinning him.

The accident is being investigated by the Indiana Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Shoemaker is the first UTU member to be killed in a rail accident in 2012. In 2011, there were 10 rail fatalities among UTU members; and 12 in 2010.
Local 5, Kansas City, Mo.
BSNF Engineer Stanley Woford was the winner of a drawing held by this local for a week's stay in a two-bedroom luxury cabin near Ashville, N.C. The raffle raised more than $4,000 for the family of local member Thomas Bleyenberg, who was killed in a railroad accident Aug. 15 in Kansas City, Kan.

Local 95, Rensselaer, N.Y.
As a Dec. 15 celebration commemorating the tenth anniversary of Amtrak's Downeaster service in Portland, Maine, members of this local presented a check for $190 to the U.S. Marine Corp's Toys For Tots Foundation, member James Nawrocke reports. Picture, from left, are vice local chairperson Brian Labreck, U.S. Marine Lance Cpl. Martin Nawrocke, Darilda Foston, Chuck Meyer and John Bokon.

Local 113, Winslow, Ariz.
State Legislative Director Greg Hynes recognized the efforts of the officers of this local after the entire class of 18 new hires last month signed pledge forms to contribute to UTU PAC. “I was completely blown away,” Hynes said. “They collectively pledged a total of $821.26 per month, with several of them pledging $120 per month. I am exhilarated by the efforts put forth by these local officers, who lead by example.” The 340 members of the local currently contribute $3,201.63 per month.

Local 199, Creston, Iowa
Conductor Dennis C. Gross retired Jan. 30 with more than 38 years of service, Local Chairperson Billi Vavra reports. Gross began his railroading career with Burlington Northern in 1973 as a maintenance-of-way employee. “D.C. will be missed greatly. He was a tremendous asset to our local,” Vavra said.

Local 527, Coffeyville, Kan.
The members of this local received a letter from the U.S. Marine Corp's Toys For Tots Foundation thanking them for their generous donation of $500 for its 2011 toy campaign to provide “joy and hope to millions of our nation's less fortunate children during the Christmas holiday season.” This is the second year the members of the local have made this donation, Secretary & Treasurer Sam Vail reports.

Local 528, Chicago
Members of this local are mourning the death of Curtis A. Judice Jan. 30, Secretary & Treasurer Richard Gladkowski reports. Judice retired May 30, 2010, after 32 years of combined service on CN&W and Union Pacific. He is survived by his wife, Luette, and two children. “We all will miss Curtis. Our condolences and prayers to his family,” Gladkowski said.

Local 564, Cleburne, Texas
This BNSF Railway local has changed the time and location of its monthly meetings. Local Chairperson Kevin Kime reports. Monthly local meetings will now be held on the first Tuesday of the month at 1:30 p.m. at Pudlico's Mexican Restaurant, 1029 N. Saginaw Blvd. in Saginaw, Texas.

Local 898, Boston
Massachusetts Bay Commuter Railroad conductor Thomas Booth was recognized in a report by television station WHDH News 7 after passenger and bride-to-be Katelyn Peckman arrived at work Dec. 20 and realized her engagement ring was no longer on her finger. The diamond in the center of the ring was her mother's first engagement stone. About the time Peckman was returning to North Station to search for the ring, Booth saw the ring on the floor of his train as it was making its second trip to the station. The ring and owner were soon reunited. “It's definitely a miracle,” Peckman told WHDH. “I'm just so happy.”

Local 951, Sheridan, Wyo.
At this local's Christmas party in December, members honored former Local President Willie Ford for 40 years of service to the union, as well as Railroad Retirement Board representative Ron Kaminski for 37 years of service to the board and UTU members throughout the western United States. State Legislative Director Stan Blake reports. The state legislative board presented Kaminski with a travel book and atlas and the local presented him with a 15-year service pin. Ron, for all of your help with our retirements and good luck on yours,” Blake said.

Keeping eyes on the ground leads to help for the hungry
A small donation to a local charity became a big deal for a retired UTU member after he was featured in the Vancouver, Wash., media for the fourth time in which he went about collecting his contribution.

As he was retiring retirement, former Union Pacific conductor Larry Sword decided to take up walking to get in shape. Putting into practice a U.P. safety slogan he had long before memorized, Sword was soon on his way to becoming a coin collector, too.

“Never put your feet where your eyes have not been,” Sword said. As it turned out, keeping his eyes on the ground soon led to money in his pocket.

“I was walking all around and I started to find money in theatre parking lots and around fast food restaurants,” Sword said. “One time, I found 26 pennies in a parking lot that someone must have just thrown from their car.”

After stopping at a local restaurant for his regular bowl of oatmeal and raisins, Sword decided to put his newly acquired change in the empty raisin container. Before long, Sword had 15 containers holding $35.74.

While the amount wasn't much, “I just decided that I would give it to people in need,” Sword said. He took the 15 containers along with a note to Share, a Vancouver mission that aids the hungry and homeless. They took his note and story to the press.

Sword was interviewed in a Jan. 1 article in The Columbian newspaper and in a news report by TV Fox 12 in Vancouver. “They interviewed the story two days that day,” he said.

“As a rule, I've contributed regularly to the Portland Rescue Mission; when I found out there was a charity here — Share House — that's where I gave the donation. I gave them the $35 and they can prepare a meal for about 95 cents apiece, so that's about 35 or 36 meals.”

Part of the note that Sword gave to Share was posted on his Facebook page. It read: “It's a great feeling helping people who truly need it, especially around the holidays. Share House is providing a great service to the community. My hat's off to them and my hope is that whomever reads this will get involved with a service that provides for the less fortunate.”

For more information about Share, visit www.sharevancouver.org.

Retired UTU member and conductor Larry Sword, center, and Spooner C. Columbus, Jr. speak about his unique contribution to a local charity.

Local 1081, Glendale, Ariz.
A memorial fund has been established for the family of member Jeff Straub, who died of a heart attack while on his way home from work last year. State Legislative Director Greg Hynes reports. Anyone wishing to make a donation can do so at any area Wells Fargo Bank branch by requesting the donation be deposited to the account of Tracy Straub of the Jeff Straub Memorial Fund. Hynes also credited the efforts of fellow member Mark Lauffer, who tried desperately to revive Straub following the attack.

Local 1327, Peach Creek, W. Va.
Former Local Chairperson and Secretary & Treasurer Gail Porter, 78, died Nov. 19, according to former President Ron Peckman. “He was a fine man and he did a great job in both local positions,” Scaggs said.

CN (IC) GO 436, Collinsville, Ill.
Isabelle Hudson, 88, the wife of former General Chairperson Bert E. Hudson and the general designated legal counsel, and talked about the importance of staying involved, informed and educated if we are to remain a strong and viable union,” Hunstad said.

Local 5, Kansas City, Mo.
Retired U T U member and conductor Larry Sword talks to a Jan. 22 audience about his unique contribution to a local charity.

Local 1098, Ashville, N.C.
The local recently held its 35th annual Chili and Oyster Feed Fund, which was attended by both UTU and BLET members, according to Legislative Rep. Brian Hunstad. “We held a raffle, had presentations by UTUA and UTUA designated legal counsel, and talked about the importance of staying involved, informed and educated if we are to remain a strong and viable union,” Hunstad stated.

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Willie Ford, left, holds a plaque presented to him by Bill & Beverly Montgomery, right, during the local's Christmas party last year.
FRA seeks safer passenger-rail cars

Improvements to existing passenger train emergency systems regulations have been proposed by the Federal Railroad Administration. The improvements are aimed at helping passengers and passenger-train crew members better locate and operate emergency exits during evacuations, and to assist first responders in reaching trapped passengers quickly.

U.S. passenger railroads, including Amtrak and commuter carriers, already have the most advanced passenger safety regulations on the globe. The Congressional Budget Office reported in 2003 that European and Asian nations impose lower crashworthiness standards than are imposed in the United States.

Specifically, the proposed new rules affect vestibule doors, emergency lighting, signage and markings for emergency entrances and exits, and rescue access. The new rules also require photo luminescent materials to highlight emergency exit path markings, and require instructions for emergency systems operations and requirements for debriefing after emergency situations and simula-
tions.

"The proposed new requirements are based on the latest developments in passenger train emergency system technologies and best practices," said FRA Administrator Joe Szabo.

UTU National Legislative Director James Stern said, "These amendments to the passenger train emergency systems rules are based on improvements in modern technology and the experiences of many years of operations."

The proposed new rules were recommended by the FRA’s Railroad Safety Advisory Committee’s (RSAC) Passenger Safety Working Group and its Emergency Preparedness Task Force, and incorporate three industry stan-
dards developed by the American Public Transportation Association.

UTU members participating in making the recommendations included District of Colum-
bia Legislative Director Willie Bates (Local 1933), Long Island Rail Road Vice General Chairperson Michael Denn (GO 505), and retired Amtrak Local Chairperson David Brooks (Local 1470).

LIRR general chair heads general chairs

Anthony Simon, general chairperson on Long Island Railroad, has been elected to a four-year term as chairperson of District 1 of the UTU’s Association of General Chairpersons.

District 1 is made up of some 190 railroad gen-
cral chairpersons. Its purpose is to formulate con-
certed movements relating to wages, rules and working con-
ditions of transportation service employees represented by the UTU.

Simon succeeds BN SF General Chairperson Randy Knut-
son (GO 245).

Simon, a member of Local 645, Babylon, N.Y., began his railroad career on LIRR in 1990. He was promoted to conductor in 1993.

He became interested in the affairs of his union and was elected Local 645 secretary in 1998, local secretary & treasurer in 2000, and general chairperson in 2007. He was re-elected Long Island Railroad general chairperson by acclamation in 2011.

UTU organizes MOW workers on M&NA

In its latest organizing victory, the UTU now represents maintenance-of-way employees on Missouri & North Arkansas Railroad, a Rail-
America property.

Contract negotiations, led by UTU Alter-
mate Vice President Doyle Turner, will begin shortly. Turner heads the UTU’s shortline out-
reach program.

Rich Ross, the UTU’s director of organizing, and International organizer Mike Lewis were commended by International President Mike Putney for this 28th UTU organizing win over the past 48 months.

Missouri & North Arkansas Railroad oper-
s some 530 miles of line in Arkansas, Kansas and Missouri, with trackage rights over Union Pacific and connections with BNSF and Kansas City Southern. Primary commodities include coal, grain, frozen foods, minerals, steel, chemi-
cals and asphalt.

Chicago South Shore members ratify new pact

UTU engineers, conductors and collectors employed by Chicago South Shore & South Bend, an electric-line passenger operation between Chicago and South Bend, Ind., have ratified a new two-year agreement.

The new contract provides for several favor-
able rules changes, certification pay for engi-
neers and conductors, increased mentor com-
pen-sation, a lump sum payment, preservation of a cost-of-living adjustment, and no increase in health-care insurance contribution.

International Representative John Babler, who assisted with the negotiations, praised General Chairperson Tony Wojasiński (GO CSS) and Local 1526 officers Robert Kehoe and Kay Harmon “for their efforts in never wavering in their goal to gain the best possible terms and the parties’ Railway Labor Act Section 6 notices. Also provided by the agreement are general wage increases, additional personal leave days, up to eight new extra board positions, a reduction in the number of years to qualify for additional weeks of vacation, a new bid rule and prior-
right rules. Additionally, the new agreement provides terminal protection for DW&P and DM&IR trainmen, pre-
serves no-furlough clauses on each for-
met property, reduces call windows to four hours, guarantees consecutive days off for extra boards and pools, and establishes an order of call when the extra board is exhausted. "General Chairpersons Flashberger, Koski, Haus and Laurent played key roles in the negoti-
ations, each recognizing the value of a negotiated settlement, and came to the negotiations fully versed on their respective agreements," Babler said in October. “They came prepared to make the tough choices that would best suit their mem-
ers’ needs in the short-term and long-term. They also did a remarkable job holding town hall meetings to inform members about the imple-
menting agreement.”

Watch hammer loops; they can cause injuries

The Federal Railroad Administration is calling attention to an injury where a conductor, while lifting the operat-
ing lever on a freight car, was dragged four car lengths after the lever became tangled in the ham-
mer loop of his coveralls.

The FRA recommends cutting off the hammer loop on coveralls or securing the hammer loop to the pants leg so that it cannot create a hazard.

UTU needs your photos

The UTU International is seeking good railroad, bus and airline photos for its annual calendar and other uses.

High-resolution digital photographs should be emailed to “utunews@utu.org.”

UTUIA: Financially strong, and growing stronger

Congratulations go to Art Rayner, the United Transportation Union Insurance Association’s man of the year for 2011. Art was recognized for his sales and leadership performance – attributes that helped propel the UTUIA last year to one of its strongest financial performances.

The competition Art faced from our other dedicated and determined field service representatives demonstrated that the UTUIA is financially strong and growing. And the UTUIA will grow even stronger as our merger with the Sheet Metal Workers International Association into SMART will eventually allow

150,000 additional trade unionists to join the UTUIA through purchase of insurance and investment products.

For 2011, the UTUIA’s assets grew by $3 million, its annual revenue topped $15 million, and it produced a surplus (net income after costs are deducted) of almost $2 million. The UTUIA’s investment portfolio is generally conservative, primarily invested in government and corporate bonds and companies with the highest credit ratings, with just 15 percent of assets invested in stocks and real estate.

Our field supervisors have been provided with new technology that better helps them provide insurance advice, while the number of UTUIA insurance products has increased.

The UTUIA is working to determine what changes in its constitution are required to make its products available to our new SMWIA brothers and sisters (the current constitution limits sales to transportation workers). The key to improving further the UTUIA’s financial performance is growing sales volume, and inclusion of non-transportation workers represented by the SMWIA is essential.

As the UTUIA’s financial performance improves from inclusion of SMWIA’s 150,000 members and increased sales, product offerings can be widened.

As it has been for 135 years, the mission of the UTUIA, an insurance company owned by its trade-union members, remains the same.

It is to promote the general welfare of its members; disseminate information about life, health and annuity products that provide for the security of its members and their families; provide uncompromising service quickly, efficiently and professionally; and engage in volunteer activities through its local units.

The UTUIA recognizes its obligations to its members and shall constantly strive to live up to the ideals of the fraternal benefit system.

For more information on the UTUIA and its products, including links to UTUIA field service representatives, go to www.utuia.org.

Support our Great Lakes Airlines pilots

Safety is job number one for UTU-represented pilots employed by Great Lakes Airlines.

Yet their current contract with the carrier is substandard in terms of working conditions and wages, and that daily puts pressure on their ability to fly passengers safely.

The image of airline pilots earning high wages and getting access to company-paid top-flight hotel rooms does not apply to our Great Lakes brothers and sisters.

Under the current contract with Great Lakes Airlines, pilots are the lowest paid of any scheduled passenger airline in the U.S.

On Great Lakes Airlines, a first officer can expect to make less than $15,000 in the first year. These pilots are professionals with extensive training and expertise, and some of them are paid less than entry-level retail and food service jobs.

Imagine a pilot on food stamps, or having to sleep in passenger lounges in airports. Don’t imagine. Just ask a Great Lakes pilot.

Their UTU Local 40 has been in negotiations with Great Lakes management for more than two years, with negotiations locked down in difficult mediation under provisions of the Railway Labor Act, which also applies to airline workers.

Local 40 flight attendants, also represented by the UTU, recently ratified a new agreement, but negotiations dragged for – yes – 10 years! The pilots are hoping to reach an equitable settlement with Great Lakes Airlines more quickly.

In a recent poll of pilots, 97 percent supported a job action, but that is not possible until the National Mediation Board releases the parties from mediation.

Based in Cheyenne, Wyo., and with hubs in Albuquerque, N.M.; Denver; Los Angeles; Minneapolis; and Phoenix, Great Lakes Airlines serves 45 of its destinations through federal subsidies provided by the congressionally created Essential Air Service program.

A message to UTU members from Colorado

State Legislative Director

Rick Johnson

The pilots fly 50-passenger Embraer and 19-passenger Beechcraft aircraft.

UTU members can help their brothers and sisters at Great Lakes Airlines by contacting city council members in the cities Great Lakes serves, and by contacting members of Congress.

The message is straightforward:

For the safety of the flying public, pilots on Great Lakes Airlines deserve a contract that provides for a livable wage and appropriate accommodations at layover points to ensure they receive undisturbed rest.

To contact your congressional lawmaker on behalf of our brothers and sisters at Great Lakes Airlines, go to the following website: www.contactingthecongress.org.

Then select your state, click on the names of your senators and representatives, and you have the information needed to send an email or fax, or make a phone call.

For the safety of the flying public, Great Lakes pilots deserve a contract that provides a livable wage.
Arizona

The Ida Shield is a red and white reflective sign, 18 inches long, that is fastened to the bottom of each railroad crossing sign post. It is used to warn motorists as they approach a railroad crossing that it is only protected by a stop sign, or is a passive crossing.

“The sign reflects the lights of the locomotive and it appears to almost flash because of its design,” Millward said. “An Idaho Department of Transportation (IDOT) rulemaking made the Ida Shield a recognized Idaho warning sign. Now, with help from the UTU, legislation has passed both the House and Senate transportation committees and will be voted on soon.

“The UTU has led the fight in getting this legislation passed and we thank all who have helped make it possible, especially the Pocatello Union Pacific/union safety committee, the IDOT, the Idaho State Police, and the Operation Lifesaver committee. I also appreciate the hard work of state legislative board member Brian Johnson of Local 1058, Pocatello. Once this legislation is signed by Gov. Otter, our railroads, employees and public will be much safer at the state’s 2,700 or so passive public crossings,” Millward said.

Kansas

The Kansas State Legislative Board held its 11th quadrennial reorganization meeting Jan. 5, Legislative Director Ty Drago reports.

The following officers were elected to new four-year terms: Drago, legislative director and board chairperson; Chad Henton (L-506), assistant legislative director; Mike Piper (L-774), board secretary; Charlie Ring (L-707), alternate assistant legislative director; and Sam Vail (L-527), alternate secretary.

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Iowa

A rea Transit System, a driver was reinstated with full back pay after the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) over an unfair labor practice at Local 1715, which represents drivers employed by First Student in San Francisco, as they have settled seven of 10 without having to go to arbitration.

With assistance from the UTU International Legal Department, we recently completed a trial at the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) over an unfair labor practice at a UTU property in Riverside, Calif., which had been closed without holding negotiations.

We are seeking from the NLRB a severance package for the 135 members who lost their jobs. Final briefs are due in mid-February.

Alternate Vice President Calvin Studnant has been working with Waverly Harris, general chairperson at Local 1574 (Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority) on numerous grievances, and they have settled seven of 10 without having to go to arbitration.

At Local 1715, which represents drivers employed by Charlotte (N.C.) Area Transit System, a driver was reinstated with full back pay after Calvin Studnant defended the driver in arbitration.

In Washington, we are facing a battle with legislation introduced by the House Republican majority attacking transit operating assistance and pushing for privatization that would permit foreign-based operators to enter the U.S. market and access federal transit aid.

This legislation also attacks 13(c) protections of the Federal Transit Act that we worked so hard to protect. They require continuation of collective bargaining rights, and protection of transit employees’ wages, working conditions, pension benefits, seniority, vacation, sick and personal leave, and other conditions of employment, as well as paid training or retraining, when federal funds are used to take over a transit operation.

The UTU National Legislative Office and other transit unions are working to halt this attack, and donations to the UTU PAC will provide additional assistance in this election year.
### Portland

**Reservations:** (800) 445-8667 toll free; (503) 226-1611 direct  
**Reservation code:** UTU  
**Room Rates:** $139 single/double, plus taxes; rates vary depending upon availability  
**Reservations deadline:** May 4, or until all rooms being held for the UTU are reserved  
**Parking:** $27 per day valet; $18 per day self park  

**Golf outing:** The regional meeting golf outing will take place Sunday, June 17, at the Reserve Vineyards and Golf Club in Aloha, Ore. The cost is $80 per golfer, which includes golf, lunch and more.

### Memphis

**Reservations:** (800) 331-1600 toll free; (901) 329-4000 direct  
**Reservation code:** UTU  
**Room Rates:** $134 single/double, plus taxes; rates vary depending upon three days before and after meeting, depending upon availability  
**Reservations deadline:** June 18, or until all rooms being held for the UTU are reserved  
**Parking:** $15 per day valet; $10 per day self park  

**Golf outing:** The regional meeting golf outing will take place Sunday, July 22, at Minitas Golf Club in Millington, Tenn. The cost is $80 per golfer, which includes golf, lunch and more.

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### Continental Airlines offers discounts
Continental Airlines is offering discounts of 30 percent to 10 percent off published fares to UTU members and others attending the Portland or Memphis regional meetings. To receive the discount, call your travel agent or Continental Airlines MeetingWorks at (800) 408-7622 and provide the Z Code: ZMXGC or Z Code: ZMFPD and Agreement Code: ED15638 for Portland, Z Code: ZMFPD and Agreement Code: ED15638 for Memphis. There will be a $23 service fee collected, per ticket, for all tickets issued through MeetingWorks reservations or any Continental Airlines ticketing facilities. The service fee is non-refundable and applies to all itineraries, one way or round trip.

To avoid a service fee and receive an additional three percentage points back to your reservations online at www.continental.com, enter both the UTU Z Code and Agreement Code, with no space (ZZ15638 for Portland, Z15638 for Memphis) in the Offer Code box. The additional three percentage discount applies to published fares only. A direct link to Continental’s online reservation system can also be found on the UTU’s website by visiting the “Meetings” page.

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### Continental Airlines tours to be offered
The UTU is arranging two different tours of local attractions at both the Portland and Memphis regional meetings. They will take place the day before, as well as the day after, both regional meetings.

- **Tour fee:** $35 per person for each registered attendee or guest, or $75 per tour for each unregistered attendee or guest.

Details of the two tours in Portland and Memphis are still being ironed out and will be announced soon on the “Meetings” page of the UTU’s website.

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### Avis Rent-a-Car offers discounts
The UTU has arranged with Avis Rent-a-Car to offer discounted rates to UTU members attending the 2012 regional meetings. To receive the discount, call your travel agent or Avis at (800) 331-1600 and use the UTU’s Avis Worldwide Discount Code (AWD) number: D150699.

- **For the Portland, Ore., and Memphis, Tenn., regional meetings, UTU members and guests can also reserve a car online. Visit the UTU website at www.utu.org, select the “Meetings” link at the bottom of the UTU homepage, then select the appropriate regional meeting city. When renting a car online, be sure to use the same Avis Worldwide Discount Code (AWD) number as listed above: D150699.**

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### UTU Regional Meeting Registration Form
Registering before the regional meetings speeds sign-in procedures, helps organizers plan more accurately, and saves on meeting costs. Each person attending the regional meeting, including family members and guests, MUST be registered in order to attend any event. Please note that these meetings last 2-1/2 days and conclude on the afternoon of the third day. Registration fees are $150 per person, children 11 years of age and under are complimentary. On-site registration is $200 per person. All fees must be paid in U.S. funds. Cash or personal checks will not be returned, although receipt will be provided for your records. If you have questions, contact your bank. Registration forms with payment must be received at the UTU International by June 4 for the Portland meeting or by July 9 for the Memphis meeting for all members, spouses and guests to be considered pre-registered.

**Which regional meeting will you be attending?**  
- Portland  
- Memphis

**Name:**  
- Local  
- Title (if any)

**Address:**

**City/State/ZIP:**

**Phone number:**

**Email:**

**Meals:**

- Day 1  
- Lunch  
- Dinner  
- Both  
- No meals

**Spouse/guest tour:**

- Portland  
- Memphis

**Child registration**

- Portland  
- Memphis

**Arrival date:**

- Departure date:

**Day 1**

- Lunch  
- Dinner  
- Both  
- No meals

**Day 2**

- Lunch  
- Dinner  
- Both  
- No meals

**Day 3**

- Lunch  
- Dinner  
- Both  
- No meals

**Special needs?**

- Hearing impaired / visually impaired / in wheelchair / other:

**Day 1**

- Lunch  
- Dinner  
- Both  
- No meals

**Day 2**

- Lunch  
- Dinner  
- Both  
- No meals

**Day 3**

- Lunch  
- Dinner  
- Both  
- No meals

**Parking:**

- Monday  
- Tuesday  
- Wednesday  
- Thursday  
- Friday  
- Saturday  
- Sunday  
- No meal

**Special event:**

- Dinner  
- No meal

**Guest name**

- Relationship to member

**Guest registration**

- Portland  
- Memphis

**Phone number:**

- MasterCard  
- American Express  
- Visa  
- Other

**Credit card number:**

**Expiration date:**

- Total charge:

**Signature:**

**If additional space needed, please make copies of this form and attach to the original. Make checks and money orders payable to U.S. funds to: UTU Regional Meeting and mail to UTU Regional Meeting, 2400 COUNTRY CLUB BLVD., SUITE 300, NORTH OLMSTED, OH 44070-5332. Please do not register for the regional meeting but choose to register at the meeting site who will be charged an additional $50. Space on the tours is limited; reservations are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.**
Northern yardmaster to form “Jim Sofie’s Polar Bear Club,” which each yearly may have ice water in his veins. Much he regularly swims in the ice cold waters of Lake Wenauchee in Washington state. He also prefers to take a cold shower every day. Sofie’s love of the cold prompted him in 1992 to form “Jim Sofie’s Polar Bear Club,” which each year sponsors a New Year’s Day dive into the icy waters of Lake Wenauchee. Last year more than 125 people participated.

He jumps in a cold lake every Friday, nine months a year.

“I’m dedicated to bringing the pleasures of ‘polar bear’ to local folks,” Sofie said. “It would be safe to say agreeing to join this elite organization requires a lot of courage.”

Sofie, 78, started railroading in 1952 at Everett, Wash., and worked 44 years, retiring from Burlington Northern in 1994. “A friend talked me into buying a cabin out by the lake and I discovered I loved swimming in the cold water. I swim every Friday morning at 7:30 a.m., regardless of the weather, from September until May. After I swim I go to the nearby coffee shop and sit there in my bathing suit and the people call me crazy,” Sofie said.

Sofie awards T-shirts to those who qualify for his polar bear club. “In order to get a shirt, you have to take three dives, and I mean get completely immersed, on three separate occasions after the first of December, and give me $10,” he said.

The youngest “polar bear” last year was five years old, and it was his third swim. “His mother held his arms and dunked him,” Sofie said.

Anyone interested in joining Sofie and the others at a future New Year’s polar bear swim in Lake Wenauchee should contact Sofie at (509) 763-2197 or bigwhitepolarbear@msn.com.

**Oakland Old Rails to meet**

The Oakland (Calif.) Old Rails Club’s annual corned beef luncheon to commemorate St. Patrick’s Day will be held Thursday, March 15. The luncheon, which includes corned beef and cabbage with all the fixings and the usual abundance of desserts, will be held at the Bjornson Hall, one block east of Fruitvale Ave. on MacArthur Blvd. Meeting starts at noon. Bring your own beverage if you don’t drink coffee. The lunch is free to members of the Oakland Old Rails Club and membership can be obtained for $25 at the meeting.

**UTU offers Pacific Northwest, Alaskan tours**

Landfall Travel, the UTU Alumni Association’s designated travel agent, has put together two tours for members: an eight-day motorcoach tour of the Pacific Northwest, and a seven-day cruise of Alaska.

The Pacific Northwest tour leaves from Seattle June 25 and ends in San Francisco July 2. Highlights include Mt. St. Helens, Portland, Columbia River Gorge, Newport, Redwood National Park and Pier 39. Prices start at $1,049 per person double occupancy. Deposits are due by Feb. 25.

The Holland America cruise will depart from Seattle Sept. 8 and visit Juneau, Glacier Bay, Sitka, Ketchikan and Victoria, B.C. Prices start at $879 per person.

Airfare for both tours is extra and can be arranged by Landfall. Certain other conditions apply.

For complete details call Landfall at (216) 521-7733, or view the UTU Alumni Association page at www.landfalltravel.com.

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**Railroadors to picnic in St. Petersburg, Fla.**

Retired member Joe Alenduff is again organizing an annual picnic for railroadors in the vicinity of St. Petersburg, Fla. The event, scheduled for Saturday, March 17, will run from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Shelter 15 in Fort DeSoto Park in St. Petersburg. Coffee will be provided. Participants are urged to bring two covered dishes to share, their own place settings and cups. Fee is $5, except for vehicles with disabled parking permits. For more information, contact Alenduff at (727) 522-6808 or email him at jalenduff@tampabay.rr.com.

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**UTU Alumni Association**

News, information for members of the UTU Alumni Association

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**UTU retiree jumps in freezing lake... willingly**

Railroadors are said to have “ice water in their veins,” meaning they are cool under pressure. In the case of retired Burlington Northern yardmaster Jim Sofie, however, he literally may have ice water in his veins.

Sofie, you see, hates the heat. He hates it so much he regularly swims in the ice cold waters of Lake Wenauchee in Washington state. He also prefers to take a cold shower every day.

Sofie’s love of the cold prompted him in 1992 to form “Jim Sofie’s Polar Bear Club,” which each year sponsors a New Year’s Day dive into the icy waters of Lake Wenauchee. Last year more than 125 people participated.

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Take U.S. 19 South, or Exit 17 on I-275 at St. Petersburg and follow the signs. Parking is $5, except for vehicles with disabled parking permits. For more information, contact Alenduff at (727) 522-6808 or email him at jalenduff@tampabay.rr.com.

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Alcohol screenings, counseling now covered by Medicare

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recently announced that annual alcohol screenings, plus up to four brief face-to-face counseling sessions per year, are covered services for Medicare beneficiaries.

CMS has implemented this change based on a recommendation from the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF), an independent panel of primary care providers and other non-federal participants charged with reviewing clinical preventive health care services.

Their research found that women who consume more than seven drinks per week, or more than three drinks per occasion, or men who have more than 14 drinks per week, or more than four drinks per session, were more likely to have elevated risks for many health problems.

Medicare will cover the annual alcohol screenings and counseling by the following types of providers: general and family practice; internal medicine; obstetrics/gynecology; pediatric medicine; geriatric medicine; certified nurse midwife; nurse practitioner; certified clinical nurse specialist, and physician assistant.

Deductible and coinsurance do not apply, and these changes were effective for claims with a date of service as of Oct. 14, 2011, and later.

For the behavioral counseling, Medicare beneficiaries (including pregnant women) who screen positive will be allowed up to four brief face-to-face counseling interventions per year.

Benefits must meet the following criteria:

- Must misuse alcohol, but whose patterns of consumption do not meet the criteria for alcohol dependence;
- Are competent and alert at the time counseling is provided;
- Whose counseling is conducted by a qualified primary care physician or other primary care practitioner in a primary care setting. This would include a physician’s office, outpatient hospital, an independent clinic or a state/local public health clinic.
- Each of the four sessions must follow the USPSTF’s requirements relayed in their 5-A’s method:
  1. Assess: this is when behavioral risk factors are discussed;
  2. Advise: this means providing clear, specific and personalized behavioral change advice;
  3. Agree: this happens when treatment goals and methods are selected collaboratively;
  4. Assist: this is when self-help and counseling assist the participant achieve agreed-upon goals;
  5. Arrange: this means scheduling follow-up sessions to provide ongoing assistance. It can be in person or by telephone.

If you have questions about this covered service, please call the Beneficiary Contact Center at (800) 833-4455 or for TTY, call (800) 377-4950. Representatives are available Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. ET. You can also visit www.PalmetoGBA.com/tr and select the link provided under “People with Railroad Medicare.”

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 the policyholder to use as he or she sees fit to help meet household expenses and other continuing expenses. This policy supplements regular hospitalization insurance, thereby protecting savings. Some benefits may vary based on state of residence.

With monthly premiums starting as low as $9 per month, this plan fits into any budget.

“I sold UTUIA cancer plans for years because I believed in the product and thought everyone should have the protection. Then, all of a sudden, there I was, confronted with cancer in my own family. Even with our great medical insurance, the out-of-pocket costs of cancer were significant. Now, having experienced cancer first hand, I believe even more strongly that everyone should include cancer insurance in their family’s protection portfolio.”

– Retired UTUIA Field Supervisor Don Dysart

UTUIA’s Cancer Hospital Indemnity policy offers:

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

The American Cancer Society projects that more than 93 million Americans alive today will be diagnosed with cancer during their lifetimes. That is the equivalent of every man, woman and child living in the red-shaded states above.
High-speed rail would bring jobs, prosperity

In 2008, California voters authorized a $9.95-billion bond measure as a down payment for a high-speed rail project linking the Sacramento area (in Northern California), the San Francisco Bay area and Los Angeles.

The project's $98-billion route subsequently won $3.3 billion in federal grants.

But with California in the midst of a severe budget shortfall, voter opposition has turned negative. A recent poll found that 64 percent of registered California voters would reject the project if given a second chance to vote on it.

But don't assume the California project — or, for that matter, other high-speed rail projects — are down for the count.

While the dramatic increase in costs has imposed sticker shock on Californians, and while Congress has cut off further federal funding for this and other high-speed rail projects, California Gov. Jerry Brown remains an ardent cheerleader, observing: "California's high-speed rail project will create hundreds of thousands of jobs, linking California's population centers and avoiding the huge problems of massive airport and highway expansions."

The former chairman of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, Jim Oberstar, now a private citizen, but still quite active politically, told The Washington Post: "The financial uncertainties facing California's high-speed rail project should be felt as an indictment of such rail development in America.

"High-speed, inter-city passenger rail can be successful, even profitable — as proven in France. The French national passenger rail system wrote a check for $299 million to the national government just before Christmas, and has returned $780 million to the government over the last five years."

"Massive congestion is choking our major metropolitan areas, and American firms saw $10.1 billion in a year in lost productivity and wasted fuel. We must invest in a passenger rail alternative. The longer we wait, the more difficult it will become and the more expensive the alternatives will be. The French have proven that the concept can succeed. We should follow their lead and not give up on inter-city passenger rail."

UTU members ratify new agreements with Apache Railroad and Intermodal Services

UTU-represented employees on two properties—the Apache Railroad and Intermodal Services of America (ISA) — have recently ratified agreements with management.

The engineers and conductors employed by Apache Railroad and Arizona, Arizona ratified a new three-year agreement providing for wage increases, certification pay, improvements in disability and life insurance benefits, an increase in the employer match for a 401(k) plan, substantial improvements in the health-care insurance plan, and a reduction in the employee contribution.

UTU Vice President John Previsch, who assisted in negotiations, praised the efforts of General Chairperson Danny Young (GO 017) for "doing an excellent job of bringing the concerns and wishes of his members to the negotiating table and working to obtain a positive outcome.

Apache Railroad is a shortline operating in Arizona between Snowflake and Holbrook. Its principal commodities include paper, pulpwood, wood chips, and to a lesser extent, concrete. Members employed by ISA, which does contract switching for Union Pacific at Joliet, Ill., and Chicago, recently ratified their first collective bargaining agreement with the company.

ISA voluntarily recognized the UTU as its transportation workers' bargaining representative in 2011.

The five-year contract provides for retroactive pay, a steep jump in hourly wages, a 401(k) plan, a health insurance plan, sick pay, paid vacation, and a discipline program requiring all investigations include the presence of a UTU representative.

Rich Ross, the UTU's director of organizing, and Vice President Paul Tibbist negotiated the agreement. "Paul met with workers on all three shifts to learn their concerns, and brought these concerns to the bargaining table to produce an outstanding first agreement with ISA," Ross said.

Hannibal local aids Salvation Army

The UTU's National Legislative Office is among those educating members of Congress to the long-term benefits of high-speed rail investment. For example, the UTU is reminding lawmakers that construction of America's Interstate highway system began slowly and had to overcome substantial initial opposition.

While legislation to begin construction of Interstate highways was passed by Congress in 1956, it was the culmination of two decades of effort, with President Roosevelt the catalyst, much as President Obama is seeking to be the catalyst for nationwide high-speed rail.

"Patience and persistence achieved the goal of building Interstate highways, and the UTU National Legislative Director James Stem. "Patience and persistence will achieve the 21st century goal of high-speed rail alternative to cars, airports and trucks, and not give up on inter-city passenger rail."

Indianapolis — Gov. Mitch Daniels has signed into law right-to-work (for less) legislation that outlaws union-shop agreements and prohibits union contracts that require those who do not join the union to pay for representation – essentially encouraging free riders and severely damaging the financial ability of unions to serve members.

Contracts covered by the Railway Labor Act are not affected; but union contracts covering bus and local transit workers are.

Indiana becomes the first manufacturing state in the Midwest to enact such a law, which is more common in the South. Twenty-three states have right-to-work (for less) legislation.

The Indiana AFL-CIO stated that the Republican majority in Indiana has "set our state upon a path that will lead to lower wages for all working Hoosiers, less safety at work, and less dignity and security in old age or ill health. Sadly, the passage of this bill not only means that workers' rights and ability to collectively bargain will be significantly weakened, it means that strong arm tactics, misrepresentation, and big money have won at the Indiana statehouse."

Anti-union legislation signed into law by Ohio Republican Gov. John Kasich last year was repealed in a voter referendum supported by the UTU Collective Bargaining Defense Fund and union members throughout Ohio. That law sought to restrict public-sector collective bargaining.

In Wisconsin, there was a successful recall of two senators who supported legislation to curtail collective bargaining rights, and a recall of Gov. Scott Walker, an architect of the legislation, is underway.

It is expected that a voter referendum will be launched in Indiana to repeal the right-to-work (for less) law, and the UTU Collective Bargaining Defense Fund will participate in that effort.


We must invest in a passenger-rail alternative to cars, airports
### Railroads find gold by hauling oil, natural gas

A lot is being written about reducing America’s dependence on foreign energy, and increased domestic exploration of crude oil and natural gas is paying meaningful dividends to railroads – and, by extension, to their workers, whose jobs, wages and benefits are being made more secure.

In North Dakota, where the Bakken Shale reserve is being drilled, some 450,000 barrels of crude oil daily are being pumped, so much that pipelines are at capacity and BNSF and Canadian Pacific (Soo Line) tank cars are originating up to 300,000 barrels of crude oil daily to refineries along the Gulf Coast. In fact, the state estimates that, as drilling expands, railroads could be hauling as much as 700,000 barrels of the black gold in tank cars.

In Canada, CP and Canadian National are hauling increased quantities of crude oil from the Alberta tar sands south across the border, destined to refineries along the Gulf Coast – a 1,700-mile rail route through Montana, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas. Union Pacific, which is sharing in the southbound haul of crude oil, also reports sharp increases in drilling and construction materials headed north.

Kansas City Southern is hauling some 13,000 cars annually of materials to the drillers. There is also a smaller backhaul of waste and debris.

Note: In the earnings reports below, “operating ratio” is a railroad’s operating expenses expressed as a percentage of operating revenue, and is considered by economists to be the basic measure of carrier profitability. The lower the operating ratio, the more efficient the railroad. Also, BNSF is now privately held. When it releases its 2011 earnings, they will be posted at www.utu.org.

### CANADIAN NATIONAL

**Canadian National reported a nine percent increase in profit for calendar-year 2011 versus calendar-year 2010.**

The CN calendar-year operating ratio of 63.5 percent was a slight improvement over the 63.6 percent operating ratio for calendar-year 2010.

CN said “sold operational and service performance helped CN deliver exceptional financial results.”

CN is primarily a Canadian railroad. Its U.S. holdings include what were formerly Detroit, Toledo & Ironton; Elgin, Joliet & Eastern; Grand Trunk Western; Illinois Central, and Wisconsin Central.

### CANADIAN PACIFIC

**Canadian Pacific reported a 12 percent reduction in profit for calendar-year 2011 versus calendar-year 2010.**

The CP calendar-year 2011 operating ratio of 81.1 was a steep increase from the 71.6 percent calendar-year 2010 operating ratio.

CP said, “We exited 2011 having made meaningful progress on the three pillars of our multi-year plan: driving growth, expanding second business, and creating network capacity to safely and efficiently support higher volumes and controlling costs.”

Canadian Pacific is primarily a Canadian railroad. Its U.S. holdings include Class 1 Soo Line and regional railroad Delaware & Hudson.

### CSX

**Despite reductions in agricultural, chemical, coal and intermodal shipments, CSX reported an 11 percent increase in profit for calendar-year 2011 versus calendar-year 2010.**

The CSX calendar-year operating ratio of 70.9 percent was an improvement from the 71.1 percent operating ratio for calendar-year 2010.

For the fourth quarter 2011, the CSX operating ratio increased to 71.5 percent from 70.7 percent for the fourth quarter 2010. CSX Chairman Michael Ward told investors, “Our performance in 2011 has set a strong foundation for growth.”

CSX operates some 21,000 route miles in 23 states and the District of Columbia.

### KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN

**Kansas City Southern reported a 26 percent increase in profit for calendar-year 2011 versus calendar-year 2010.**

The KCS calendar-year operating ratio was 70.9 percent versus 73.2 percent for calendar-year 2010.

For the fourth quarter 2011, the KCS operating ratio was 71.6 percent, an improvement from fourth quarter 2010.

The railroad said 2011 was “the first time in our railroad’s 125 years we attained over $2 billion revenue and two million carloads.”

KCS operates some 3,500 route miles in 10 states in the Central and South-Central U.S., as well as Kansas City Southern de Mexico, a primary Mexican rail line.

### NORFOLK SOUTHERN

**Norfolk Southern reported a 28 percent increase in profit for calendar-year 2011 versus calendar-year 2010.**

The railroad’s calendar-year 2011 operating ratio of 71.2 percent was a one-percentage point improvement over calendar-year 2010.

NS said it “achieved all-time records for revenues, operating income, net income, and earnings per share during 2011, and set fourth-quarter records for revenues, net income, and earnings per share.”

Norfolk Southern operates some 20,000 route miles in 22 states and the District of Columbia.

### UNION PACIFIC

**Union Pacific reported an 18 percent increase in profit for calendar-year 2011 versus calendar-year 2010, citing improvements in “core pricing.”**

UP’s calendar-year 2011 operating ratio of 70.7 percent was but one-tenth of one-percent off its record 70.6 percent operating ratio for 2010. UP’s operating ratio of 68.3 percent was a record fourth-quarter low, and almost two percentage points improved from its 2010 fourth-quarter operating ratio.

UP said it still had 1,030 employees on furlough at year end – down from 1,500 at year-end 2010 and well below the 4,200 on furlough at the end of 2009.

“We expect continued slow but steady economic growth in 2012,” Union Pacific CEO Jim Young said.

Union Pacific operates some 32,000 route miles in 23 states in the western two-thirds of the U.S.

### Railroads find gold by hauling oil, natural gas

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Union Pacific operates some 32,000 route miles in 23 states in the western two-thirds of the U.S.
UTU develops training for Amtrak conductors

The UTU has developed a three-hour training course for Amtrak conductors to teach them how to react in a variety of situations.

The course was recently introduced to some 50 Amtrak instructors, who will present the course to the more than 8,000 Amtrak conductors over the coming year.

Leading the efforts for the UTU is Bruce Feltmeyer, who heads the UTU Education and Training Department.

“In a survey conducted in 2010, Amtrak employees expressed a desire for more training, especially training in emergency situations,” Feltmeyer said. “They said that they are asked to deal with unruly and disruptive passengers, and that they are not trained to handle such situations. They also were confused as to how and when to seek Amtrak police, or local police, assistance.”

In early 2011, Amtrak awarded a contract to the UTU to develop a program to address these concerns, Feltmeyer said. The UTU, working with experts, developed a three-hour program for Amtrak trainers, and guidebooks and other related materials for those receiving the training.

The course contains four “modules”: one for station attendants and one based solely on situational awareness; one for on-board train crews; one for on-board attendants and one based solely on situational awareness techniques.

“The scenario-based training depicts actual events that can happen aboard trains or in stations,” Feltmeyer said. “We believe this training program will help Amtrak on-board personnel cope with these situations, should they arise. I believe this training will create considerable interest among Amtrak conductors.”

Feltmeyer said the UTU is considering expanding this type of training to other UTU members working in commuter rail, bus and aviation occupations. Anyone interested should contact Feltmeyer at b_feltmeyer@utu.org.