PEB 248 issues report in NJT/labor dispute

Presidential Emergency Board 248 has issued its recommendations to settle the four-year contract dispute between New Jersey Transit (NJT) and the Rail Labor Coalition of 14 unions representing 4,500 union workers.

The recommendations on the major issues of wages and health insurance contributions fall much closer to the terms proposed by the Coalition than those proposed by NJT, although the Board did backload its wage recommendations to accommodate the railroad’s budgetary concerns.

The Coalition spokesperson said, “The Presidential Emergency Board, composed of three veteran, distinguished neutrals, has proposed terms that represent a reasonable compromise approach to settlement. We sincerely hope that New Jersey Transit will now take this opportunity to bring this protracted dispute to an end.”

The Board’s recommendations are non-binding, and the parties now have 120 days to reach agreement based on the recommendations.

Summary of PEB 248’s Recommendations

The Board recommended wage increases totaling 18.4 percent in compounded wage increases over 6.5 years or 2.6 percent per year. When increases for health insurance were factored in, the recommendations totaled 17.7 percent over the term or 2.5 percent a year.

“Over the years wage settlements at NJT have closely followed the general trend of wage changes at the other large commuter railroads in the region, including LIRR, Metro-North, SEPTA and MBTA. ...The Board’s recommendations are consistent with the average annual uncompounded wage increases at the four other large commuter rail carriers. The average annual wage increases at all four of these commuter railroads is 2.6 percent, the same nominal wage rate increase recommended by the Board.”

The Board rejected NJT’s proposal to eliminate employee ridership passes. The Board also rejected NJT’s proposal to reduce amounts to new hire 401(k) contributions and also recommended provisions for conductor certification pay.

What Happens Next

The Coalition and NJT have until November 12 to negotiate a voluntary agreement. If no agreement is reached by that time, either side or the Governor can invoke a second Presidential Emergency Board. That Board will select the most reasonable final offer. Its recommendations again will be non-binding. The parties will then have until March 11, 2016, to reach a voluntary agreement. If no agreement is reached, self-help (strike) would then be possible.

The Board believes PEB’s 248’s recommendations provide a fair compromise and the basis of a voluntary agreement. New Jersey Transit is currently evaluating the recommendations and deciding on its next steps. No negotiations have yet been scheduled.

WASHINGTON – The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) issued a final rule to prevent unattended trains that carry crude, ethanol, hazardous by inhalation (PIH), toxic by inhalation (TIH) and other highly flammable contents from rolling away. Railroad employees who are responsible for securing a train will now be permanently required to communicate with another qualified individual trained on the railroad’s security requirements to verify that trains and equipment are properly secured.

Today’s rule is part of the Department of Transportation’s comprehensive effort to bolster the safety of trains transporting crude oil and other highly flammable contents,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Fox. “Verifying that a train has been properly secured is a common sense solution to prevent accidents.”

The final rule will go into effect 60 days from publication in the Federal Register. Exterior locks on locomotives will also be required by March 1, 2017, and must be utilized when a locomotive has been left unattended.

The new rule requirements include:

- A qualified and trained railroad employee to properly secure the equipment and verification of the securement with a second trained and qualified employee;
- Additional communication, including job briefings among crew members responsible for the train securement;
- Properly installed and utilized exterior locks on locomotives;
- The setting of sufficient handbrakes;
- Removal of the train reverser; and
- The proper use of trip hazard mats.

The rule applies to the following trains left unattended on a mainline, siding or rail yard:

- Trains carrying any PIH and TIH hazardous materials;
- Trains carrying 20 or more cars of oil or hazardous flammable materials.

“Where the Federal Railroad Administration can take small steps to quickly raise the bar on safety, it will, and that is exactly what we are doing today. Requirements like this, and additional, trained individual double-check that the handbrakes have been set on a train will help stop preventable accidents,” said Acting Administrator Sarah Feinberg. “While today’s rule came out of

Continued on page 10

Conductor dies in CN switching accident

Ryan D. Edwards, 27, of Schererville, Ind. was fatally injured July 25 while performing switching operations at Canadian National Markham Yard in Homewood, Ill. Edwards (Local 1,299 of Schererville, Ind.) hired out in August of 2011.

Throughout his career with the railroad, Edwards worked as an intern for BNSF and as a freight train conductor at both CSX and CN. While at CSX, Edwards graduated number one from his training class.

Edwards attended Columbia College in Chicago. He was an avid St. Louis Cardinals baseball fan and could often be seen wearing a Cardinals hat.

Edwards married his wife, Victoria, May 22, 2010, and welcomed her two children, Edward and Emily, as his own. They later welcomed his son Ryan “RJ” into their family. He loved his family tremendously.

Edwards leaves behind wife, Victoria; their three children Emily, Edward and Ryan; his parents Nicole and John; his siblings ScotEth, Tyra and Josh; his great grandmother; grandparents and many other friends and family.

SMART TD General Chairperson Adren Crawford (Canadian National GO 433) reports, “The NTSB is investigating along with the SMART TD National Safety Team. Please keep his family and friends in your thoughts and prayers during this very difficult time.”

Labor prevails in Missouri

A rally against right-to-work was held in Missouri, Sept. 12, and was attended by hundreds of union members from across the state, including members of SMART. Governor Jay Nixon (D) vetoed the right-to-work legislation June 4 at the SMART Sheet Metal Local 36 facility. Since then a battle has been raging in the state to get that veto overridden.

“The SMART TD Missouri State Legislative Board was privileged to work with a great legislative body of labor leaders who spent tireless hours meeting with our friends in their districts since the end of the regular session in May,” Missouri State Legislative Director Ken Menges said. “Since the end of session, with canvassing efforts, phone banks, urgent member meetings and local meetings nearly 20,000 letters, cards, phone calls and voicemails were delivered to legislators at the capitol.”

A special veto session was held Sept. 16 to override Gov. Nixon’s veto of the legislation. To override the veto, the republican supermajority needed 110 votes, but failed by a vote of 96-63. The legislators voting to sustain the veto included 20 Republicans, 42 Democrats and one Independent.

“This victory demonstrates the importance of elections and being involved in the political arena,” Menges said. “Without a Democratic governor and grass roots efforts by our members to secure bipartisan support, Missouri would be a right-to-work state today. Our friends on both
Local 195, Galesburg, Ill.  

[]

Local 240, Los Angeles, Calif.  

Local Legislative Representative Jeff Nichols reports this local sent two teams (yard vs. road) to parade,” Ginther said. Also in attendance were Illinois State Legislative Director Bob Gay and GO 001 Associate General Chairperson Scott Anderson.

Local 303, Springfield, Mo.  

Local 446, Cheyenne, Wyo.  

Local 195, Galesburg, Ill.  

Local 240, Los Angeles, Calif.  

Local 303, Springfield, Mo.  

Local 446, Cheyenne, Wyo.  

Local 903, Jacksonville, Fla.  

Joseph E. Knight, 71, of Jacksonville, Fla., died Monday, Aug. 9. Knight was a retired Florida East Coast Railway engineer. He was first admitted to SMART TD (formerly the United Transportation Union) on May 1, 1994 and held the position of assistant general chairperson (GO 851). He is survived by his wife of 50 years Judy Knight; his children Mike and Joseph Babia (Barbara) Knight; brother Gene Pyle (Ruth) Knight; and grandchildren Conner, Clayton, Fenwick, Kayla and Kennedy.

Local 1582, Albany, N.Y.  

Pictured from left: Local Chairperson Stu Elkins, Treasurer Aaron Schwartz, Dave Bonanno, Jadium Smith, Secretary and Treasurer Dennis Geisler, Phil Jones, Diane Weinberg, Carleen Traylor, Assistant General Chairperson Robert Jones (kneeling) and Vice Local Chairperson Odessus Stefanis (top middle).

Fink Hill Bus lines Local 1582 held their first annual barbecue and picnic August 1, 2015, at the Robert Post Park, Kingston, N.Y., reports Vice Local Chairperson Odessus Stefanis. “The idea for our local to hold the first annual picnic was presented by our newly elected Local Chairperson Stu Elkins,” Stefanis said. “Under his current term as Elkins and his predecessors have been able to get together at least once a year. The operating nature of the motor coach industry due to varying scheduling and a 24/7 work environment makes it almost impossible for any of the drivers to socialize outside of work, much less foster a sense of union solidarity. We also hope to include operators of Amtrak Transit Lines (also Local 1582) in the future.” The local would also like to recognize attendees Vice President Rosemond Dessalines and Calvin Sharpe, who were both injured on the job in separate accidents. The local would also like to recognize David Weinberger, who, at age 87, is still operating a motor coach. “We, the leadership of Pine Hill Local 1582, want to especially thank these three drivers for their dedication to service and recognize the sacrifices they have made. We recognize the inherent danger of this occupation and it is our unyielding goal to strive and serve all our members during both good times and bad.”

Local 1732, San Jose, Calif.  

LCRA Secretary Rebecca Gentlemen reports the local suffers the loss of 45-year member Mark Simmons unexpectedly at the age of 64. Simmons had a long career at the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad in 1970. He came to Atchison in 1986 and spent most of his years working on the California Zephyr between Emeryville, Calif., and Reno, Nev. Simmons leaves behind wife Kim and son Sean. A fund has been set up to help the family financially during this difficult time. Contributions may be sent to Mark Simmons Beneficial Memorial Fund, c/o Kim Simmons, 1495 Tom Fowler Drive, Tracy, CA 95377.

Submit your local or legislative stories to SMART Transportation Division by email to: news_tdl@smart-union.org
TTD urges exclusion of hair testing from bill

In a letter to the leadership of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), together with member unions and coalition partners, is urging lawmakers to follow established protocol for developing federal drug testing procedures and exclude provisions for hair specimen testing from any Surface Transportation bill.

Historically, experts at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) have determined how and when new drug testing procedures should be administered. Those guidelines are then used by the Department of Transportation (DOT) to create federal drug testing standards for buses and truck drivers with this unproven testing method, said TTD President Edward Wytkind. “We urge the House to reject the Senate’s hair testing provision and ensure that federal drug tests are backed by scientific and forensically sound evidence. Nothing less should be acceptable.”

Studies show that hair testing may have an inherent racial bias. Darker and more porous hair retains some drugs at greater rates than lighter hair. Hair specimens can also cause individuals on a drug test positive for drugs they never ingested, as drugs from the environment can absorb into hair and cause positive results.

“Th scientific evidence has shown that hair testing is questionnable and the drug test results it produces may be discriminatory and could produce false positives,” Wytkind warned.

Despite this, a provision in the Senate’s version of the surface transportation bill would circumvent HHS and allow buses and truck companies to use hair samples to comply with DOT drug testing.

The Senate has undermined the expertise of scientists and potentially jeopardized the jobs of thousands of bus and truck drivers with this unproven testing method,” said TTD President Edward Wytkind. “We urge the House to reject the Senate’s hair testing provision and ensure that federal drug tests are backed by scientific and forensically sound evidence. Nothing less should be acceptable.”

Florida East Coast railroaders hail new hires

CSX OO 851 and Local 921 and 1138 had a special opportunity to host a dinner for 25 Florida East Coast (FEC) new hires Friday, August 7 at the Country Kitchen located at 741 North U.S. Highway 1 in Oak Hill, Fl.

SMRT TD Alternate Vice President A.J. Bright and General Chairperson John Whitaker (OCA 851) said, “This was a special occasion that we could just not pass up, since it gave us the ability to meet with new members, while still in training, to let them know who we are and what we do.”

Indeed, it was exciting to see the next generation of members and their eagerness to join our union family,” Brother Whitaker gave special thanks to the following officers for their attendance and support: SMRT TD Director of Organizing Rich Ross; Vice General Chairperson Joe Bennett; Assistant General Chairperson Jim Bush; Florida State Legislative Director Andres Trujillo; Local 1138 Local Chairperson Jim McCordie; Local 1138 Vice Local Chairperson Jim Barlow and Local 903 Vice Local Chairperson Don Woff.

P&L engineers seal new deal

Engineers represented by SMART TD presented and employed by Paducah and Louisville Railway (P&L) have ratified a new five-year agreement.

The agreement provides for wage increases in each year of the agreement with an initial annual adjustment of three percent, retroactive to January 1, 2014, and additional adjustments of three percent on January 1, 2015 and every year thereafter through 2018. The total general wage increase over the life of the contract is 15 percent, with a 16 percent cumulative increase.

In addition to the general wage increases, the agreement provides for an increase in certification and meal allowance payments; increases in 401K contributions; and a cap to health and wellness contributions for the family plan over the life of the agreement. The agreement also establishes call windows for regular attendance and support: SMART TD Director of Organizing Rich Ross; Vice General Chairperson Joe Bennett; Assistant General Chairperson Jim Bush; Florida State Legislative Director Andres Trujillo; Local 1138 Local Chairperson Jim McCordie; Local 1138 Vice Local Chairperson Jim Barlow and Local 903 Vice Local Chairperson Don Woff.

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SMRT TD Director of Organizing Rich Ross; Vice General Chairperson Joe Bennett; Assistant General Chairperson Jim Bush; Florida State Legislative Director Andres Trujillo; Local 1138 Local Chairperson Jim McCordie; Local 1138 Vice Local Chairperson Jim Barlow and Local 903 Vice Local Chairperson Don Woff.

SEPTA members ratify pact

Twenty-two months ago, SMART Transportation Division Local 61 (Philadelphia) train service workers working at Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) ratified their contract from the previous round. Now, for the first time in recent memory, these same members have ratified a new agreement governing the rates of pay and working conditions of conductors and assistant conductors on that property prior to their next scheduled wage increase. A vast majority of those voting, 87 percent, voted to ratify the agreement. The short-term pact runs through June 4, 2017 and includes general wage increases, increased instructor allowance, increased uniform allowance and same-sex spousal benefits among its provisions.

Transportation Division Vice President John Lesniowski, who assisted with negotiations, expressed his gratitude to General Chairperson Bernard Schwerdt, as well as his negotiating committee consisting of Vice General Chairpersons A.J. Bright, Michael Stevens, Raymond Boyer and General Secretary Nelson Pagan for their professionalism, tenacity and commitment to finding an equitable agreement in a timely manner for the benefit of our Local 61 members.

SEPTA is a metropolitan transportation authority that operates various forms of public transit -- bus, subway and elevated rail, commuter rail, light rail, and electric trolley bus -- that serve 3.9 million people in and around Philadelphia, General Chairperson Norwood and his committee represent approximately 350 active rail members on this property.

CATS maintenance workers vote ‘yes’ to new agreement

With over 75 percent of the voting membership in favor, Local 1596 maintenance workers of Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) based out of Charlotte, N.C., ratified a new collective bargaining agreement.

The new agreement is for three years starting retroactively to June 30, 2015 and going through June 30, 2018.

Leading the way, OCA TMM (Transport Management of Charlotte, Inc.) General Chairperson Craig Patch helped negotiate a new contract on contractural language changes, improvements to the pension plan and wage increases.

Patch, Local Chairperson Billy Belcher, Vice Chairperson Gary Moore and Local Board Secretary Michael Jenkins worked tirelessly on the agreement.

“Brother Patch and I would like to thank Local President James Hinton, Local Vice President Gerald Hudson and SMRT TD for their hard work on getting this accomplished,” Alternate Vice President Bus-East Alvy Hughes said. CATS is the largest transit Southeast Corridor system between Atlanta, Ga., and Washington, D.C.

The transit system operates over 70 local, express and regional buses, a light rail line, services for the disabled and vanpools. CATS makes over 23,000,000 trips each year.

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The stronger we are, the better for everyone — membership in the American labor movement. It has been a tradition of union members to march in lock step with the rise and fall of working families who stood together under the banner of the American labor movement. It is not by coincidence that the rise and decline of the American middle class has marched in lock step with the rise and fall of membership in the American labor movement.

Ironically, I have heard countless times on television and from the Republican campaign trail how much the “1950s economy” is what they aim to replicate with their policies. However, they fail to recognize one very important point: the economy of the 1950s matched the high point of unions’ share of the American workforce. At that time, one out of three Americans was a member of a labor union. It is not by coincidence that the rise and decline of the American middle class has marched in lock step with the rise and fall of membership in the American labor movement. The stronger we are, the better for everyone — our friends, neighbors, and families — regardless of union membership.

This safety advisory recommends that track owners and railroads: (1) Assess current engineering instructions on ballast safety and update them to emphasize the importance of timely repair of ballast defects and conditions on main tracks. The FRA notes that ballast defects and ballast conditions that are not repaired in a timely manner can lead to future defects.

The FRA believes it is important for track inspectors to be aware that ballast defects and conditions can cause track components to deteriorate rapidly and compromise the stability of the track structure, and that inspectors are trained to identify and repair ballast defects and conditions. This safety advisory recommends that track owners and railroads: (1) Assess current engineering instructions on ballast safety and update them to provide specific guidance to track inspectors (designated personnel that are qualified to inspect and repair track) on how to identify and initiate remedial action under 49 CFR 213.231(d) for ballast defects and conditions, as well as on the appropriate remedial action to implement, particularly in areas with one or more additional track conditions; (2) train track inspectors on the updated engineering instructions and this safety advisory to ensure they understand how to identify and initiate remedial action for ballast defects and conditions in a timely manner, and understand the importance of such remedial action in preventing the development of unsafe combinations of track conditions; and (3) ensure that supervisors provide adequate oversight of track inspectors to achieve identification and remediation of ballast defects and other track conditions.

This is our moment in time, and it starts with us — each one of us. In order to attract people to the labor movement and to our union, we must continue to strive to improve upon the representation and bargaining strength we hold today.

We can achieve those improvements by ensuring that your leaders are up to the task, are ready to take advantage of new opportunities as they emerge in this young century. This union has come far in our combined history. Our generation must look to the future, where we will be building and opening new markets and avenues for growth.

Our forbearers witnessed the depths of a Great Depression, fought through the horrors of war and came home to build this nation to levels of prosperity never before seen in the world. They are the giants. Now let’s honor them, on the heels of the not-so-great recession, by building on the foundations that they established. Let’s honor them by strengthening our union and revitalizing our American labor movement.

Then we can pass onward to future generations their union of opportunity.

Your brother,

Joseph Sellers Jr.
National negotiations update: negotiations moving forward

Our rail members are aware that negotiations are underway on a national rail contract. The outcome of this round of negotiations is important to other crafts as well, because the results of a national rail contract traditionally influence negotiations in all transportation-related industries.

Below is a joint press release issued by the participating organizations in the rail labor Coordinated Bargaining Group:

The outcome of this round of negotiations is important to other crafts as well, because the results of a national rail contract traditionally influence negotiations in all transportation-related industries.

October 20, 2015

National Negotiations Update

Members of rail labor’s Coordinated Bargaining Group (CBG), composed of representatives from the SMART Transportation Division, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, the American Train Dispatchers Association, the National Conference of Firemen and Oilers/SEIU, The Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen and the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers met with the National Carriers Conference Committee (NCCC) in Chicago on October 14, 2015, to continue negotiations on a new national rail contract. This meeting was the latest in a series that commenced early in 2015.

Although a final agreement is not yet in sight, substantive progress was made in identifying the issues of greatest importance to both sides and serious discussions are ongoing. Both parties believe that a voluntary agreement is the desired outcome and to that end it was agreed to continue negotiations without the assistance of a federal mediator. The next session is scheduled for November in Crystal City, Virginia, with additional meetings set for the first quarter of 2016.

Substantive progress was made in identifying the issues of greatest importance to both sides and serious discussions are ongoing.

The above communication is very short on details. That is because at this stage of the negotiations the parties are in exploratory talks about a number of issues, the majority of which will not be included in a proposed agreement. The demands set forth in the Section 6 notices served this round are being thoroughly discussed and evaluated for inclusion in a proposed agreement.

Your negotiating team and Coordinated Bargaining Group are committed to obtaining a fair and equitable contract for our members. Negotiations to-date indicate that this will not be an easy task.

Your negotiating team and the Coordinated Bargaining Group are committed to obtaining a fair and equitable contract for our members. Negotiations to-date indicate that this will not be an easy task. I will keep you advised of later developments as they occur.

To view the Section 6 notices go to http://utu.org/2015-national-rail-contract/. Fraternally,

President’s Column

By John Previsich

SMART Transportation Division

What progress was made during the October 20, 2015, meeting of rail labor and the rail industry representatives?

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State Watch

News from SMART TD State Legislative Boards

California

Governor Jerry Brown signed into law bipartisan legislation requiring a crew of at least two individuals to operate all freight trains and light engines September 8, 2015.

National Legislative Director John Risch praised the legislation saying, “I’m very pleased that California has joined Wisconsin, Arizona, and West Virginia in adopting these sensible requirements. Two crew members are vital to ensuring that our trains are operated safely and our communities are secure.”

Minnesota, Wisconsin

Members of the SMART TD Minnesota and Wisconsin legislative boards met with the FRA and Rep. Rick Nolan about safety issues on Canadian National Railway.

Leadership of the Minnesota and Wisconsin legislative boards met with the Federal Railroad Administration and Representative Rick Nolan (D - Minn.) of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to discuss unresolved safety issues on Canadian National Railway May 28, 2015 in Duluth, Minn. Leadership from CN declined to attend the roundtable safety meeting.

Alternate State Director Nick Katch, Legislative Representative Dan Archembeau, Local Chairpersons Matt Koski and Ben Rhodes along with Minnesota State Legislative Director Phil Quayle represented the Minnesota legislative board, while Wisconsin State Legislative Director Craig Peachy, Alternate State Director Jeff Thompson and Legislative Representatives Andrew Hack and Chris Tassone represented the Wisconsin legislative board at the meeting. Quayle and Peachy report that both boards have documented dozens of hazardous conditions, unsafe management directives to train crews, lack of snow removal and many other safety concerns.

“Despite our best efforts to work with the CN leaders who hold ultimate operating and budgetary authority to improve CN, it appears CN management is entrenched to deflect identifiable safety concerns to maintain plausible deniability,” Quayle and Peachy said in a joint statement.

“For the second quarter of 2015, CN reported decreased car loadings, flat operating revenues, operating income increase of eight percent, with an operating ratio that dropped 3.2 points to 56.4 percent. Obviously, CN’s refusal to maintain and repair physical plant safety issues is paying off for carrier bonuses and the shareholders. Unfortunately, CN is another bad incident waiting to happen.”

As a result of the meeting, the FRA has assigned Non-Regulated Safety Oversight Manager Melvin Smith, to the CN property. Both the FRA and SMART TD have requested CN to join in a Confidential Close Call Reporting System pilot program.

New England States

New England States State Legislative Director George Casey reports that Local 262 (Boston) Secretary and Treasurer Richard Andreassi died of a fatal heart attack Thursday, August 27, 2015. Andreassi worked as a conductor for Amtrak out of Boston. He leaves behind a wife and seven-year-old daughter.

Locals 262 and 1462 are taking up a collection on behalf of the Andreassi family. Contributions should be sent to SMART TD Local 262, 8 Saint Brendan Road, Dorchester, MA 02124. Memorial contributions may also be made to the Jacqueline Andreassi Scholarship Fund, c/o Boston Firefighter’s Credit Union, 60 Hallet Street, Dorchester, MA 02124.

Nebraska

Nebraska members ride and walk alongside the Nebraska Legislative Board’s newly-acquired Burlington Northern mini train.

Nebraska State Legislative Director Bob Borgerson reports the state legislative board recently purchased a Burlington Northern mini train. The board plans to use the mini train to help with SMART TD’s community outreach and for special events. The board has used the train for the past 10 years at the Omaha Labor Day Parade. The mini train originally belonged to Harold Jones of Crete, Neb. for the past 29 years. Jones operated the locomotive and its accompanying equipment for local festivals, school and community events.

The Legislative Board used their newly acquired mini train and borrowed two mini trains in this year’s Omaha Labor Day Parade. The board had a record 190 attendees in this year’s parade.

http://utu.org/2015-national-rail-contract/
In consideration of our rail members who are impacted by recent national-wide furloughs, below is a 7 steps for furloughed workers guide to help you through the process of filing a claim for unemployment benefits and sickness benefits.

**Helping our furloughed members: benefits and tips**

Furloughed members may be entitled to benefits from RRBC:

1. **What if your unemployment benefits are being paid for an on-the-job injury.**
   - Under the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) Act of 2011, the RRB will reduce unemployment benefits for those who become unemployed but are ready, willing and able to work, and not able to work because of sickness or injury. Sickness benefits are also payable to female railroad workers for periods of time when they are unable to work because of preganancy or childbirth. A new benefit year begins each July. The following questions and answers describe this benefit and how to claim it.

2. **How long are these benefits payable?**
   - Normal unemployment or sickness benefits are payable for up to 13 weeks of unemployment or sickness in any 12-month period. Sickness benefits are payable for up to 30 weeks of sickness in any 12-month period. Normal unemployment benefits are payable for up to 26 weeks of unemployment over the course of four years. This time does not have to be continuous, however. In a given benefit year, benefits are payable for up to 26 weeks.

3. **How will unemployment and sickness benefits be calculated?**
   - Benefits are normally paid for the number of days of unemployment or sickness over four in a 14-day period. Normal unemployment claims must begin with four consecutive days of unemployment, and sickness claims must begin with two consecutive days of sickness. If the individual is unemployed for more than 26 weeks, unemployment benefits are reduced by one-half for each additional 26-week period of unemployment. For normal unemployment claims, benefits are payable for not more than half of the remaining number of days of unemployment. For sickness claims, benefits are payable for not more than half of the remaining number of days of sickness.

4. **What is the waiting period for unemployment and sickness benefits?**
   - Benefits are payable only after a one-week waiting period, during which unemployment or sickness must be received.

5. **How would an employer’s裁剪 claim affect the applicant’s benefit eligibility?**
   - If an employer’s claim for unemployment benefits is approved, the applicant may be eligible for the same or a reduced benefit.

6. **Is a claimant’s employer notified when the claim is filed?**
   - An employer’s claim for unemployment benefits is required to be filed within 60 days after the employer is advised of the claim.

7. **Are there requirements for filing an unemployment or sickness claim?**
   - To be eligible for unemployment or sickness benefits, an applicant must have worked in railroad employment for at least 7 of the 12 months immediately preceding the benefit year. The applicant must also have worked for at least 40 hours per week and for at least 8 months during any 12-month period ending in or during the benefit year.

8. **How long does it take to receive payments?**
   - Under the RRB’s Customer Service Plan, if a claimant files an application for unemployment or sickness benefits, the RRB will review the claim and either file or deny the claim. If the claim is filed, it will take approximately 10 days for the RRB to review the claim. If the claim is denied, the RRB will issue a written notice of the decision. If the claim is filed and the claimant appeals the decision, it will take approximately 60 days for the RRB to review the appeal and issue a written notice of the decision.

9. **How are payments made?**
   - Railroad unemployment and sickness insurance benefits are paid by the United States Treasury’s Direct Deposit Program. Direct Deposit is a safe and secure way to receive benefits, and it allows for faster processing.
   - The RRB will provide you with a Direct Deposit form, which you will need to fill out and sign. The RRB will then send the form to your bank or credit union, which will confirm your bank account and direct deposit information. The RRB will then begin depositing your benefits directly into your bank account or credit card.

10. **Are there any special considerations for filing claims?**
    - Yes, there are several special considerations for filing claims. For example, if you file a claim for unemployment benefits, you may be required to file a new claim each week, even if your benefits have not yet expired. You may also be required to file a new claim if your benefit period expires and you do not want your benefits to continue indefinitely.

**Financial tips for the furloughed member**

- **Go to your union offices.** They may be able to give you tips or be able to direct you to a program for furloughed workers. Make sure your address and contact information is current with your local union office.
- **Consider exercising your seniority.** You need to transfer to another terminal property. It is always best to check with your next of kin to ensure that you are eligible.
- **Check your State’s website.** Many states offer free programs to help you get back on your feet. You may also have a page dedicated to job listings.
- **Use your UnionPlus Card.** UnionPlus Division is entitled to benefits and discounts through Union Plus. Union Plus also offers hardship help and can be directed online to the UnionPlus assistance. You may also be eligible for health care if you are facing a severe medical condition.
- **Visit the AFL-CIO’s website.** The AFL-CIO offers tips to help prevent foreclosure on your home (Homeowner Assistance and Counseling Program) and general tips for when you are unemployed (http://www.aflcio.org/About-Community/Consumer-Services). They have a site called “community services.” The site also has tips for saving on other financial issues called “NCLC Invoiced” under the same tab that may be helpful to you.
- **Visit workingadvantage.com.** This site is in collaboration with the AFL-CIO and Union Plus. The site offers tips on how to save money on clothing, etc. With the holiday season coming up, this site may help your dollar go further.
- **Make a budget and scrutinize your spending.** Making a budget is the most important thing you can do because you will be able to understand how your money is coming from and where it is going. This will help you determine where you can make money in your current situation.
- **Call creditors.** Notify credit card companies and providers about your financial situation and inquire about hardship policies. Ask about making smaller payments until you can sort out your finances. They may be willing to work with you on time for anything that can be reassessed. Some landlords may offer you the opportunity to pay your rent for a reduced amount. You may also be able to negotiate with your landlord to pay rent over a longer period of time.
- **Use cash.** Studies show that people who do not use debit or credit cards are less likely to make impulsive purchases. Those who use cash spend less than those who use plastic cards. By paying in cash, you will be more likely to stick to your budget. You may also be able to save more money by using cash instead of credit.
- **Limit credit card use.** Keep your credit card balance low and pay off your credit card balance each month. You may also be able to save more money by using a credit card with a low interest rate.
- **Make a grocery list and stick to it.** Sticking to a list will make you less likely to buy things you don’t need. Make sure you stick to your budget and only buy items that you need. You may also be able to save more money by buying generic brands instead of name brands. By buying generic brands, you will be able to save more money on your grocery bill.
- **Consider changing your plans to make the best use of your time.** If you need to get out of the house, plan a picnic or amusement park. You may also be able to save more money by using coupons. You may also be able to save more money by using coupons. You can find coupons for almost anything, from groceries to clothing to entertainment. You may also be able to save more money by using coupons. You can find coupons for almost anything, from groceries to clothing to entertainment.
- **Cut cable and internet services.** Many states offer free program s to help you get back on your feet. You may also have a page dedicated to job listings.
- **Consider participating in the Union Plus program.** Union Plus also offers hardship help and can be directed online to the UnionPlus assistance. You may also be eligible for health care if you are facing a severe medical condition.
- **Visit workingadvantage.com.** This site is in collaboration with the AFL-CIO and Union Plus. The site offers tips on how to save money on clothing, etc. With the holiday season coming up, this site may help your dollar go further.
- **Make a budget and scrutinize your spending.** Making a budget is the most important thing you can do because you will be able to understand how your money is coming from and where it is going. This will help you determine where you can make money in your current situation.
- **Call creditors.** Notify credit card companies and providers about your financial situation and inquire about hardship policies. Ask about making smaller payments until you can sort out your finances. They may be willing to work with you on time for anything that can be reassessed. Some landlords may offer you the opportunity to pay your rent for a reduced amount. You may also be able to negotiate with your landlord to pay rent over a longer period of time.
- **Use cash.** Studies show that people who do not use debit or credit cards are less likely to make impulsive purchases. Those who use cash spend less than those who use plastic cards. By paying in cash, you will be more likely to stick to your budget. You may also be able to save more money by using cash instead of credit.
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As a senior in high school, Ramona “Moni” Allen-Dockter had a dream to follow in her father’s footsteps and work on the railroad. Dockter’s father, Clifford Allen (Local 1059 of Minot, N.D.) was a brakeman with the Great Northern Railroad and later the Burlington Northern Railroad in Minot, N.D.

Dockter was initially rejected by Burlington Northern, but she would not be deterred. When the Equal Rights Amendment passed in the state in 1975, Dockter reapplied.

Dockter’s dream came true when she hired out as a brakeman for Burlington Northern (now BNSF) railroad in 1973 and joined UTU Local 1344 (Mandan, N.D.).

“Like my father, my first task was to pull the system, “Dockter said. “I wanted to get a real job.”

For several months, Dockter worked alongside the men in the industry. Soon after, UTU members and fellow co-workers encouraged Dockter to become an engineer.

Dockter worked hard and after six months of on-the-job-training and three weeks of classroom training, she became the first female engineer at Burlington Northern at age 19 in 1976.

In 1974, only 46,913 employees were working in an industry of 729,000 employees. Out of the 46,913 women working, only 3,993 were engineers. Dockter became number five and the first for Burlington Northern.

“I want to say the hardest part was initially being rejected by the railroad,” Dockter said. “But when they asked you to come in, you’d have 45 minutes to answer their questions. The odd hours and being on-call eventually took their toll on Dockter. In 1984, after nine years in the industry, Dockter retired in order to raise her family.

“I never had the desire to go back. It (the railroad) had a time and place in my life. At that time it was really hard to have children with the hours. It was very freeing when I did quit.”

Although she faced challenges working for the railroad, Dockter still remembers her time as an engineer fondly. “I loved the times when you’re on the train and it’s a beautiful morning or beautiful evening. You can just see the rolling countryside and wonderful landscape outside the windows.”

In recognition of her work with the railroad, Dockter was inducted into the North Dakota Railroad Hall of Fame at the North Dakota State Railroad Museum Aug. 16, 2015.

“I think it’s an honor to be inducted, but I think there’s a lot of people who helped me along the way, and I wish they could get this award too.”

Ramona Dockter is inducted into the North Dakota Railroad Hall of Fame by Bill Englert, chairman of the N.D. Railroad Hall of Fame committee at the N.D. Railroad Museum, Mandan, N.D.

Dockter worked as a real estate agent.

Retired North Carolina State Legislative Director Dickie Westbrook dies

Westbrook


Westbrook hired out in 1973 with Norfolk Southern Railroad as a conductor and trainman and had 39 years and seven months of service upon retirement in 2012. Soon after he hired out, Westbrook became active with Local 1129 (Raleigh, N.C.) and served as local chairperson and as North Carolina State director, a position he held for 14 years. Westbrook also served his local as delegate for one term. Westbrook further served his union brothers and sisters by designing and implementing OSHA training at UTU regional meetings for eight years.

“Dickie Westbrook worked almost 40 years in train service positions and was elected many times by his peers as their representative as local chairperson and as North Carolina State Director,” former National Legislative Director James A. Stem Jr. said. “Dickie worked hard for railroad workers and all workers as their advocate. He earned the respect of decision-makers with his honesty, integrity and perseverance.”

Westbrook is survived by his wife Jane; two daughters, Leslie (Travis) Collins and Tina (John) Dillibough; seven grandchildren, Zoe, Jalen, Bela, Aaliyah, Keira, Joshua and Bridger; a brother, Dan; two sisters, Starla (Scott) Logue and Tammy Newton; six nieces and nephews and many others.

Memorial contributions may be made to Triangle Life Care Hospice at 250 Hospice Cir, Raleigh, N.C. 27697.

Bay Area Railroaders hosted 8th annual reunion lunch

The eighth annual fall luncheon and railroad reunion hosted by the Bay Area Railroaders was held Saturday, Oct. 24, at Spencer’s Seafood and Fish Grotto at 1919 Fourth St. in Berkeley, Calif. All active and retired railroaders from all crafts were invited to attend.

This year, a vegetarian pasta primavera was added to the menu. Lunch included Caesar salad, roll and butter, iced tea, a choice of grilled salmon, chicken romano, grilled sliced sirloin of beef with a mushroom glaze or vegetarian pasta. Entrées included a vegetable and potato side. Desert was your choice of chocolate truffle cake with raspberry sauce or a fruit plate for diabetics and was included in your meal ticket.

This year, “Old Rail Club” t-shirts were available for purchase at the luncheon. Sizes small through x-large were $27; 2xl and 3xl were $29.50.

Robert MacRae provided entertainment on the guitar. The fun was had by all in attendance.

First BNSF woman engineer inducted into North Dakota Railroad Hall of Fame

Ramona Dockter upon her induction into the Railroad Hall of Fame.

Ramona Dockter is inducted into the North Dakota Railroad Hall of Fame by Bill Englert, chairman of the N.D. Railroad Hall of Fame committee at the N.D. Railroad Museum, Mandan, N.D.

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Legislative representative nominations set for October 2015

SMART Transportation Division members are reminded elections are scheduled to be held this autumn to fill the four-year legislative representative positions at each local. Nomination meetings should be held in October 2015, with elections held in November 2015.

In simple terms, the legislative representative process works with the local legislative director to address unsafe or unsanitary conditions affecting the local, and their work to correct such conditions through appropriate measures consistent with local and national policies of the union. They also work to urge all members to vote in all elections.

The alternate legislative representative succeeds to legislative representative and fulfills the remainder of the four-year term if the legislative representative resigns, retires, becomes incapacitated, dies, or for some reason cannot fulfill the responsibilities of the legislative representative position. The legislative representative cannot attend a meeting of the full state legislative board, the alternate can attend and vote in the position.

Each of these positions is an elective position. Ordinarily, no one can be appointed to these positions. Candidates for these offices must be qualified by the local to keep the four-year term of the legislative representative position. Candidates for the position must be elected by the local and serve at least five signatures of members in good standing.

Note that because elections are being held this autumn, that’s your opportunity to vote on other vacancies which may exist. If the vacant position is a Local Committee of Adjustment (LCA) position, only members of that LCA are eligible to make nominations for that position. If the LCA votes in that election, in local having more than one LCA for different crafts, the secretary will provide a separate ballot, all voters of each craft working under the jurisdiction of the committee involved. Any member in good standing with seniority in one of the crafts represented by the LCA can run for an office in that LCA.

If only one member is nominated for a position, that member can be declared elected by acclamation. If there are multiple nominations, the election process begins with an effort to resolve the competitor. Membership addresses are on file for each member. Our constitution’s Article 21B, Section 49, requires each member to keep the local secretary and treasurer advised of their current home address. Similarly, U.S. Department of Labor regulations and the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA) require the local to take steps to update addresses in advance of an election.

Members can update their address by contacting their local legislative director, or by logging into their account through a tab on the homepage of the Transportation Division’s website at utu.org.

If local is conducting its floor election, where voting takes place at a physical location, rather than by mail, it’s important that your address is up to date. Your local secretary (or any local representative—secretary, as the case may be) needs to mail a notice to all active members of the local to advise them, at least 15 days in advance of the ballot, that an election is to take place. The notice will indicate when and where voting will take place. If the local is conducting its election by mail, the ballot itself must be mailed out at least 15 days in advance of the date of tabulation, as the ballot serves as the notice of the election.

The secretary also needs to post a notice at least 10 days in advance of the meeting indicating where and when nominations for which positions will take place. They need not mail this notice directly to members.

Nominations

Nominations may be made by any member in good standing from the floor at the nomination meeting. Nominations do not require being seconded. Any member may self-nominate. If a member wishes to nominate himself, or someone else, but can’t attend the meeting, he can make the nomination through a petition. A nomination petition must state the name of the nominee, the position for which he or she is being nominated, and that he or she has at least five signatures of members in good standing.

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If only one member is nominated for a position, that member can be declared elected by acclamation.

Eligibility

To be eligible to vote, all dues and assessments must be paid within the time frame specified by the constitution. Article 21B, Section 49, indicates dues are to be paid in advance, before the first day of the month in which they are due. Eligibility to be nominated is stated. This means, for example, that to be nominated at the October meeting, the nominee must have paid all dues obligations in September. To vote in November, the voter must have paid all dues obligations in October.

Those in so-called E-49 status are eligible to run for office, even if they have not paid nominations and they cannot vote. If elected, accepted election of pay from the company the union creates a dues obligation.

More information

Members are encouraged to consult Article 21B of the SMART Constitution for information regarding elections. Unless an item within Article 21B directs you to a further stipulation outlined in the constitution, ADR is the exclusive means of dispute resolution and case management. The Alternate Legislative Representative (ADR) program offers whistleblower parties the opportunity to participate in early resolution processes, such as third-party mediation.

OSHA explains process for whistleblower early resolution

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is working with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to improve the whistleblower process and ensure a more efficient means of dispute resolution.

OSHA’s whistleblower program provides a means for employees to report work-related retaliation issues, including those involving health and safety violations. The program offers whistleblower parties the opportunity to reach a settlement directly with the company or the union creates a dues obligation.

The Alternate Legislative Representative (ADR) program offers whistleblower parties the opportunity to reach a settlement directly with the company or the union creates a dues obligation.

Wisconsin State Legislative Director Craig Peachy reports that Auxiliary of the UTU Local 100 held their first annual golf outing August 8.

Local 200 Auxiliary President Niki Wallace said, “The Auxiliary is your ally, we are here to help and assist in any way we can with providing members with the comfort and assistance that is needed for many occasions. We want to be able to help where we can to ease our members on their spouse and family members’ benefits.”

“It was a great day of fun for all that attended and Sister Wallace did a fantastic job of educating our members and their spouses of the many benefits that the UTU Auxiliary has for our members and their families. She is working very hard to strengthen and grow the number of Auxiliary members,” Peachy said.

Former Kan. SLD Lindsey dies

Former Kansas State Legislative Director Donald F. Lindsey, Jr., 67, died Aug. 20, 2015. Lindsey served in the U.S. Army Reserves from 1967 until 1973 and received an honorable discharge.

Lindsey hired out with Missouri Pacific/Union Pacific in 1966 as a conductor and had more than 43 years of railroad and union service upon his retirement. He served his union as secretary-treasurer for Local 533 (Osawatomie, Kan.) for 40 years as well as legislative director for seven years.

Lindsey was also elected Kansas state legislative director for six consecutive terms from 1988 until his retirement in 2010. He served as the UTU representative for BNSF System SAC, serving on two sub-committees.

Lindsey is survived by his wife Judy; two daughters, Suzanne Barbour and Enicka Hart; two sisters Pam Cook and Cheryl Mening; brother Steve Lindsey; five grandchildren and many nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Miami County Cancer Foundation and in care of Perrin-Gabel Funeral Home, 605 O'Neal Ave., Osawatomie, KS 66064.
Union members from Missouri pack the hall at an anti-sides of the aisle will need our help in winning the legislation in the next session that begins January 6, 2016. With large donations from wealthy finance campaigns against both our democratic and republican friends who made this victory possible, "With transit ridership at its highest levels in generations, and our nation's transit agencies facing increased pressure to meet the demand for service, we will continue to ensure that safety remains the top priority," said FTA Acting Administrator Therese McMillan. "This rulemaking is a major step forward in establishing FTA's safety regulatory framework, as all future safety-related rules, regulations and guidance will be informed by the Public Transportation Safety Program.

Public comments on the proposed rule must be received by October 13, 2015. Earlier this year, FTA announced a proposed rule to increase oversight responsibilities of State Safety Oversight Agencies (SSOAs) for rail transit systems, and the publication of a final interim safety certification training program. By early 2016, FTA expects to issue a final SSOA rule, as well as a notice of proposed rulemaking to establish permanent training provisions.

**SMART dept. of education works with locals**

The SMART Department of Education has been working with local unions from across the country on developing strategic plans aimed at building power for members at each affiliate local. This includes the discussion and development of strategic research as well as an introduction to identifying strengths, weaknesses and opportunities tailored to each geographic area and industry members operate in. Organizers at these classes work together and share resources and ideas cemented by their individual experiences.

All Transportation Division local union leaders and activists are encouraged to attend these important sessions where they can share and learn new tactics and strategies to assist in better serving the membership.

Contact the SMART Department of Education at ccarlough@smart-union.org for further information.

**Nigro named General President Emeritus by GEC**

Retired General President Joseph Nigro was unanimously approved by the SMART International Executive Council (GEC) as the union's general president emeritus. Brother Nigro, a career member of Sheet Metal Local 17 in St. Louis, served as general president from July 2011 to May 2015. OP Emeritus Nigro led the union by stressing accountability and transparency and by clearly making members' interests paramount in union decisions at every level. At the same time, Nigro led SMART and the merged union, SMART & UTU, to grow and flourish.

The complex process was completed at SMART's first general convention August 2014, where delegates voted Nigro into the role of SMART's first general president. The GEC cited those and other lasting achievements in awarding Nigro OP Emeritus status.

In honor closer to his roots, Local 17 recently named the main union hall facility in his honor.
School bus safest transportation for students

By NTSB Chairman Christopher A. Hart

Over the next few weeks, nearly 50 million children will head back to school; more than 20 million of those students, including my daughter, will ride on a school bus.

When I talk about how to safely transport children to and from school, and more specifically about school bus safety, one of the first questions I am asked is “Why aren’t school buses required to have seat belts?” The answer isn’t simple, but I’ll explore it below.

First, let me convey something that is simple: school buses, with or without seat belts, are the safest way to go to and from school! Your child is safer riding in a school bus, even without seat belts, than any other way to get to school, including your own car.

Every year, more than 30,000 people are killed on the nation’s roadways. In fact, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for school-age children. Each year approximately 800 school-age children are killed in motor vehicle crashes during normal school travel hours (September 1 through June 15, Monday through Friday, 6:00 a.m. to 8:59 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. to 4:59 p.m.). The numbers are worst for teenagers driving themselves to and from school, who are at the highest risk of injury or fatality. The risk for teens is about 8 times higher than the risk for teens driven by adults.

Which children are safest? The ones on the school buses. Of those 800 school-age children killed in motor vehicle crashes per year, only 20% or 2 percent were school bus related. Five were passengers on a school bus, and 15 were pedestrians approaching or leaving the bus. The other 98 percent were children riding bicycles or motorcycles, or riding in or struck by passenger vehicles.

School buses have the lowest injury and fatality rates of all motor vehicles.

I understand why I am so often asked the question about school buses and seat belts. It’s natural for us, as parents, to question what appears to be a glaring safety gap. We are taught from the moment we bring our children home from the hospital that we need to have them properly restrained in a child safety seat, and a booster seat as they grow older, and we constantly hear the message that all of us need to be buckled up every trip.

The answer regarding school buses is that the regulators and manufacturers have pursued a holistic total protection approach, rather than just focusing on seat belts. To understand how this came to be, some history about school bus safety might be helpful.

Back in 1977, school buses were redesigned because they weren’t protecting students as well as they should. As for the protection that we normally associate with seat belts, regulations called for a design that was known as “compartmentalization” because seat belts were not widely worn in 1977. Compartmentalization requires closely spaced, energy-absorbing, high-backed, padded seats which absorb crash forces and provide the protection needed during a front or rear-im pact crash. And, as the statistics show, compartmentalization works in those types of crashes. Experience has shown that seat belts are an important complement to compartmentalization in side impact and rollover crashes, but experience has also shown that side impact and rollover crashes are very rare.

Other new rules were passed as well. Some of these rules required a stronger roof to protect students in a rollover and a stronger structure to ensure safety during the most severe crashes. Others focused on the stop-arms, the bright (yellow) color, the exterior lights and the rules for other motorists driving near the bus. The fact that students sit high above the ground in a school bus is also an added safety benefit.

Given the success of this holistic approach in school buses, we have not recommended seat belts, but we have pushed for continuing to explore more holistic remedies to protect the students. Taken together, school buses are now required to meet more federal regulations than any other vehicle on the road.

Remember, with or without seat belts, children and teenagers are safest riding to and from school in the school bus.

Have your child ride the school bus and know that they are going to and from school in the safest way possible.

UTU Insurance Association has BIG News!

Our NEW Final Expense Plan offers Peace of Mind to you and your family

You’ve worked hard to provide for your family and they count on you to make the right financial decisions with their best interests in mind.

UTUIA’s Final Expense Plan offers Permanent Whole Life Insurance for people over the age of 50. This affordable plan builds cash value, offers guaranteed level premiums and your benefits never go down!

With three levels of coverage, even with pre-existing conditions, we may have a plan for you.

Applying for coverage is quick and easy:

• simplified underwriting
• no physical exam
• no bloodwork

Ensure that you and your family can enjoy the peace of mind that only comes from knowing that you have done the proper planning.

To receive additional information on our new Final Expense Plan, email sales@utuia.org, visit our website at www.utuia.org or complete the attached form and send it to the address listed.

For information on other products the UTUIA has to offer, Please visit our NEW and IMPROVED website at www.utuia.org.

UTUIA’s Final Expense Plan:

• Offers permanent life insurance coverage that builds cash value
• Provides peace of mind for your family
• Suits everyone’s financial needs
• Low cost
• Spouse, family or relatives of a deceased SMART TD member that was in good standing at time of death.

I would like more information on UTUIA’s Final Expense Plan.

Please print

Full name: __________________________ Date of birth: ________ SMART TD Local: ________

Address: __________________________ City: ________ State: ____ ZIP: ________

Telephone number with area code: ________ Sex: □ Male □ Female

Complete and mail to: UTUIA Sales Dept., 24950 Country Club Blvd., Ste. 340, North Olmsted, OH 44070-5333.

Information, please

Why become an Auxiliary member?

• Unites families of SMART transportation division;
• Eight 4-year scholarships of $1000 awarded every year;
• Staff connected on legislative issues that affect your family, spouse or relatives;
• Access to Union Plus discounts, scholarships and other benefits.

Who can become a member?

• Spouse, family or relatives of a SMART TD or Auxiliary member in good standing;
• Retired SMART TD members or employees;
• Employees of SMART TD at the International;
• Staff of state legislative boards, general committees or the legislative office in Washington, D.C.;
• Spouse, family or relatives of a deceased SMART TD member that was in good standing at time of death.

Offer $5 to join. Visit www.utu.org/auxiliary for an application.
FRA reports most railroads won’t meet PTC deadline

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) sent its Status of Positive Train Control Implementation report to Congress. The report is mandated by the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee and shows that after seven years and significant assistance from FRA, most railroads will miss the Dec. 31, 2015 positive train control (PTC) implementation deadline that Congress established in 2008.

“Positive Train Control is the most significant advancement in rail safety technology in more than a century. Simply put: it prevents accidents and saves lives, which is exactly what we seek to do at the Department of Transportation every single day. We will continue to do everything in our power to help railroads install this technology,” U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx said.

PTC prevents train-to-train collisions, over-speed derailments, incursions into established work zone limits and a train going to the wrong track because a switch was left in the wrong position.

In 2008, Congress passed the Rail Safety Improvement Act (RSIA), requiring all Class I railroads transporting poisonous-by-inhalation hazardous (PIH) or toxic-by-inhalation hazardous (TIH) materials and all railroads providing passenger service to implement Positive Train Control by Dec. 31, 2015.

FRA has provided significant assistance and support to railroads in order to help them become PTC compliant.

Those efforts include:
• Providing more than $650 million to passenger railroads, including nearly $460 million in Recovery Act funding.
• Issuing a nearly $1 billion loan to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to implement PTC on the Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North.
• Building a PTC testbed in Pueblo, Colo.
• Working directly with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to resolve issues related to spectrum use and improve the approval process for PTC communications towers.
• Dedicating staff to continue work on PTC implementation in March 2010, including establishing a PTC task force.

“The Federal Railroad Administration will continue to use its resources and expertise to help railroads achieve the critical goal to have Positive Train Control implemented,” FRA Acting Administrator Sarah Fentin said.

Please recycle

Photo of the month

This photo was taken by retired KCS conductor Philip Moseley of Local 1042 (Guthrie, Okla.) “I took this picture in Roanoke, Va. last July 4th weekend when I rode a steam excursion of the newly restored N&W 611 ‘J’ class steam locomotive.”