CPwithdrawsNSmergerbid;SMARTTDreacts

In a press releasdated April 11, 2016, Canadian Pacific Railway (CP) announced that it has terminated its efforts to merge with Norfolk Southern (NS).

CP has also withdrawn its resolution asking NS shareholders to vote in favor of good-faith negotiations between the two companies.

“No further financial offers or overtures to meet with the NS board of directors are planned at this time,” CP said in their statement.

Local treasurers attend SMART TD workshop

Local Treasurers take time out for a group photo. Pictured from left: Auditor John Purcell, David Horree (679), Bryan Rae (262), Keith Lanning (583), Local President Sam Butler (265), Dustin Clermont (256), Steve Wheeler (265), Dan Fredrickson (1574), Dave Unie (223), Ty J. Cirech (798), Auditor Bobby Brantley, Auditor Mike Araujo, Dusty Kemp (1313), Matt Miller (212), Kevin Grant (377), Corey Dietche (339), Kirk Penzky (544), James Talton (756) and John McGrath (262).

Furloughed members: FAQs about medical benefits

Members who have been furloughed should be aware that their health care coverage benefits from their employer extends through the end of the fourth month after being furloughed. Below are Frequently Asked Questions that may be useful to our furloughed members.

Q: How long does my insurance coverage last if I am furloughed?
A: Employee and eligible dependent coverage extends through the end of the fourth month following the month in which you last render compensated service. For example, an employee last rendering compensated service in January, who is then furloughed in February, will have coverage extended through the end of May.

Q: Will vacation pay extend coverage beyond four months?
A: With regard to furlough – no.

Q: Will I be able to continue coverage under COBRA when coverage for me and/or my dependents end?
A: The COBRA eligibility period (18, 29 or 36 months) is measured from the date of the “qualifying event.” For the health and welfare plans, the “qualifying event” is the date you last worked, NOT the date your coverage ends.

The COBRA eligibility period, therefore, runs concurrently with the extended coverage as stated above so that COBRA continuation is available for the remaining months, if any, after the extended coverage ends.

For example – An employee is furloughed in January and coverage extends through May. COBRA continuation is available beginning June 1 and thereafter for an additional 13 months. In these circumstances, no more than 18 months of COBRA is available, less the five months during which the employee remained covered by the Plan after the qualifying event in January.

Q: How will I be notified that COBRA is available to me and/or my dependents?
A: When the railroad reports an employee as eligible.

Furloughed members: FAQs about medical benefits

‘Sullivan Spur’ named after member

Sam Sullivan stood next to his Nebraska Central company pickup truck. Nebraska Central recently chose to rename a spur in Sullivan’s memory.

See full story on page 2

FAA proposes rule to overhaul safety standards

Rule would streamline approval of new technologies

The U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) proposed a rule that overhauls the airworthiness standards for small general aviation airplanes. The FAA’s proposal, which is based on industry recommendations, would reduce the time it takes to get safety-enhancing technologies for small airplanes into the marketplace while also reducing cost.

“This proposal would improve safety, reduce costs and leverage innovation to ensure the highest level of safety is designed and built into small airplanes,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. “General aviation is vital to the U.S. economy, and this proposal would benefit manufacturers, pilots and the general aviation community as a whole.”

The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking restructuring the existing certification standards and replaces the current prescriptive design requirements in Part 23 with performance-based standards that maintain the same level of safety. It would add new certification standards to address general aviation loss of control accidents and in-flight icing conditions. The proposal establishes performance- and risk-based divisions for airplanes with a maximum seating capacity of 19 passengers or less and a maximum takeoff weight of 19,000 pounds or less.

“This proposal would streamline how we approve new technologies for small piston-powered airplanes all the way to complex high-performance executive jets,” said FAA Administrator Michael Huerta. “The FAA’s proposal would improve safety, reduce costs and leverage innovation to ensure the highest level of safety is designed and built into small airplanes.”

Submit your local or legislative stories to SMART Transportation Division by email to: news_td@smart-union.org.
Local 199, Creston, Iowa

Three members of Local 199 retired in March, with a combined service of 120 years, reported Local Chairperson Billi Vavra.

Dan Steinback (Stinger) hired out with Chicago, Burlington and Quincy (CB&Q) in 1976. In November of that same year, he transferred to train service where he stayed for the duration of his career. “He was a permanent staple on the yard job as the foreman for years,” Vavra said.

Dennis Heinzel hired out with CB&Q in 1976 at Burlington, Iowa in the track department. He went into train service in July 1976 where he stayed until he transferred to Creston in 1998. “I will personally miss his great attitude,” Vavra said of Heinzel.

Phil Davis (PK) hired out July 27, 1976 in the track department in Creston. Davis served CB&Q as a foreman for Group 2 machines until he transferred to train service in May 1977. Davis served as local chairperson and delegate for 15 years. “His retirement brought an end of an era,” Vavra said. “A member of the Davis family had worked on the railroad since 1918!”

Local 462, Pine Bluff, Ark.

Secretary/Treasurer Randy Singletary reported that Vice Local Chairperson and Trustee Craig Nattin, 51, died Feb. 29, 2016, as a result of a car accident.

Nattin worked for Union Pacific railroad for just under 12 years as a switchman at the Pine Bluff yard. He also served for two years as a peer trainer and on the safety committee.

Nattin is survived by his son Cain Nattin, mother of his child Penny Harrington, father John Hall Nattin, brother Johnny Nattin, sister Rene Belt and many additional family members and friends.

Local 768, Decatur, Ill.

Secretary General Chairperson and Local Chairperson Dan Calhoun reported that this local recently suffered the loss of Norfolk Southern Conductor Mark Wooten, 37.

Wooten leaves behind his wife, one child and an unborn child. Wooten had just under five years of seniority at the time of his passing.

A GoFundMe account has been established to help support his family. Members can go to www.gofundme.com/434ak to make a donation to help support Wooten’s family.

Local 1177, Willmar, Minn.

State Legislative Director Phil Qualy reported that Rita Croonquist, wife of former Minn. State Legislative Director Willis Croonquist, died April 5 surrounded by her family. Willis Croonquist is a 50-year member of Local 1177.

“Many older and retired UTU members recall Rita as a kind matriarch to our membership, giving support and encouragement to many of our UTU families when in need,” Qualy said.

“Willie and Rita’s home was open to many UTU, inter-raft union and DFL functions.”

Local 1563, El Monte, Calif.

This local suffered the loss of former Local President David Ojeda, 55, Feb. 10, 2016. Ojeda served his union for 18 years as an officer. After being appointed as the steward, Ojeda was unsure about wanting the job.

Local Chairperson Robert Gonzalez encouraged Ojeda, “I told him what a great shop steward and union officer I knew he could be.” Ojeda went on to serve the local as shop steward, delegate, secretary of the LCA and as local president for five terms.

Ojeda is remembered for his willingness and commitment to assist fellow officers and members, to help them identify, improve and advance their mutually beneficial goals for the betterment of all, which he brought to the union everyday.

Local 1582, Albany, N.Y.

General Chairperson Russell Gaillard reports that Local President Wes Wohl and Committee Secretary Aaron Schwartz were recently honored by their employer, Adirondack Trailways.

Wohl was named Trailways Driver of the Year for the fixed route division. Schwartz was named Trailways Driver of the Year for Pine Hill Trailways Charter/Tour division.

Both drivers were honored at the Trailways National Convention held in Florida in February.

Local 1732, San Jose, Calif.

This picture, submitted by member Tina Shepherd, is located at the 22nd street stop for Caltrain in San Francisco. “I took the picture because it resembles a Banksy piece. He’s a very famous graffiti artist,” Shepherd said.

Want to be featured on this page? Email your submissions to: news.td@smart-union.org

Submission deadline is the 15th of the month before the month of the issue.
SMART TD welcomes First Student Bus Operators to the fold

Bus drivers of First Student, a division of FirstGroup America, Inc., at Gardena, Calif., voted for SMART Transportation Division as their union representative. The new members overwhelmingly voted yes for SMART representation, adding 311 new members to SMART’s bus department. The vote took place March 8. A certification of representation was issued by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) March 16.

Director of Organizing Rich Ross, Transportation Representative/Orga- nizer Bonnie Mor, Alternate Vice President Bus - East Alvy Hughes, Organizer Larry Grahams, Alternate Vice President Local 1674 Chairperson David Liddle, led the successful campaign. The organizers had help from Local 1564 Vice President Sam Creer Jr., LCA-875 and Local 1674 Chairperson Jolly (Local 1564 at Los Angeles).

“I am pleased with the outcome of the election and the support of the membership,” said Secretary Greg Smith and Member Joseph Jolly. “This is a testament to the hard work and dedication the SMART TD membership has shown in their efforts to improve safety and working conditions of bus operators.”

For any CMV drivers who are detecting obstructive sleep apnea, the Railroaders’ Guide to Healthy Sleep provides educational information to railroaders and their families about sleep disorders and information to improve sleep quality. The site offers information on the most current physical qualifications standard, which affects people who drive railroad required members to perform service on a territory that they were not qualified for.

“Before departing the CN yard, the yardmaster asked the train crew if they were qualified on the CN territory. The crew informed him that they were not,” Peachy said.

“The crew did exactly what they were supposed to do. They reported to the railroad managers and RTC that they were not qualified on the territory. Ordering the train crew to take the train on a subdivision in which they were not qualified violated FRA regulations,” Peachy said.

While the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) recently cited Canadian National (CN) for violating two FRA regulations, Wisconsin State Legislative Director Craig Peachy reported CN to the FRA, on behalf of the membership, after the railroad required members to perform service on a territory that they were not qualified for.

FRA seeks input on screening & treating Sleep Apnea

The U.S. Department of Transportation’s (DOT) Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) recently cited Canadian National (CN) for violating two FRA regulations. Wisconsin State Legislative Director Craig Peachy reported CN to the FRA, on behalf of the membership, after the railroad required members to perform service on a territory that they were not qualified for.

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Former UTU President Al Chesser turns 102

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FRA cites CN after tip from SLD

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Brasilia Regional Airliners.

Improvements to the passenger screening and seating areas at the terminal are underway in order to better accommodate Denver flights. The terminal building improvements will benefit both local residents and visitors to our community."

The new flights that were scheduled to start April 1, 2016, were postponed due to the lack of TSA security services at Salina airport.

On April 22, TSA announced that the funds needed to secure TSA services and protocols that have been secured and secure screenings are slated to begin soon. Great Lakes Airlines plans to begin EAS flights to Denver sometime in June.

A SMART TD-backed federal bill that mandates the presence of TSA security services at all small, active airports, recently passed the House and is on its way to the Senate.

Solidarity is strength in the workplace and in the election

By Joseph Sellers Jr.

The history of organized labor, like grass-roots movements of all kinds, has many sayings and slogans attached to it. From "eight for eight" more than a hundred years ago, to the "yes we can" of the Farmworkers, these short, simple phrases capture the timeless struggle for respect and dignity at work.

The slogan that comes to mind most often these days is "United we bargain, divided we beg." That sentiment is the central tenet of workers, united, side-by-side.

We work in many industries and market sectors, but our solidarity as union members is what empowers us. This year, as we look ahead to the upcoming election, that collective strength will push us across the finish line—if we put union issues first and work for those who will advance the cause of working families across the United States.

The choice in 2016 is crystal clear. No matter who the final candidates for President are, every union member and family will be deciding between two starkly different visions for America's future.

One looks to improve our infrastructure, address income inequality, secure our workplace rights and raise the low pay and compensation that has seen America's middle class struggle.

The other approach envisions ending unions and lowering wages as a key to "making America great"—while they bring in foreign labor to build their hotels and products, taking more jobs away from domestic, highly skilled workers.

Another historical truism is that those who vote have the most impact on policy and government. It sounds obvious, but politicians do pay extra attention to those people who take the time to participate and make a personal impact on the election process—during the balloting and before.

"We must choose to stand together, in union solidarity, to vote and volunteer for the people who will advance our interests."

Voting—in large numbers—is at the core of unions' electoral power, but our real strength is solidarity. When a large, united force of like-minded workers offers not only their votes but also their time, candidates notice us—and respond when we need their support while at the bargaining table or in a protest for better working conditions.

As working unionists, we spend our days using particular skills on a range of jobs and assignments on the rails, yards, roads and jobsites that we work at every day. Elections, too, have tasks that need doing: Turning out at phone banks, joining neighborhood walks, attending rallies that display power and influence in our local communities. These actions make a difference for candidates up and down the ballot every election year—and are actions those winning officials remember.

This election year will determine much about the future direction of our nation. Our fight is against the relentless and always-expanding assault against workers. Today, there are more conservative employers and politicians with their anti-worker approach, that appear to be saying "beggars" is a worker's natural role in our economy, when we are their most valued resource.

As union members, we know different. We know how much workers accomplish when we work as one, in strength, to support each other. This election will give us two choices: people who listen and respond to our issues or people who openly seek to destroy our jobs, our wages and our rights.

We must choose to stand together; in union solidarity, to vote and volunteer for the people who will advance our interests.

Because united, we bargain—and together we win.

Fraternally,

Joseph Sellers Jr.
SMART General President

Great Lakes provide flights to Salina, Kan.

The U.S. Department of Transportation has selected Great Lakes Airlines to provide Essential Air Service (EAS) Program flights from the Salina Regional Airport (Salina, Kan.) to the Denver International Airport.

Great Lakes will provide Salina-area residents and businesses with nonstop service in 30-seat Embraer Brasilia regional airliners.

Doug Voss, Great Lakes chairman and CEO commented that “we are looking forward to providing Salina passengers access to the Denver hub that offers nonstop, connecting flights to over 180 destinations. Our code share partnership with United Airlines will make ticketing easy and convenient.”

Improvements to the passenger screening and seating areas at the terminal are underway in order to better accommodate Denver flights. The improvements will enable Great Lakes to offer passengers easy check-in and a remodeled boarding area.

Salina Airport Authority board chairman, Mike Hoppock, said, “Denver flights will benefit area businesses and colleges who need to bring visitors and students to Salina from across the nation. The terminal building improvements will benefit both local residents and visitors to our community.”

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Rising in strength, solidarity and action

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) published a proposed rule that sets forth the requirements and exceptions for a minimum crew of at least two people on America’s trains. The proposed rule is a major step forward in SMART Transportation Division’s campaign to bring about this critical rail safety reform.

Requiring a minimum of two crew members on trains not only makes it safer for those who work on the railroads, but it also helps to protect people in communities where trains travel.

SMART TD supports the core requirements and will file comments during the comment period to further improve the proposed rule. John Previsich, SMART Transportation Division president, said: “We thank Secretary Foxx and Administrator Feinberg for tackling this difficult issue and look forward to working with them to improve the proposed rule.

“Requiring a minimum of two crewmembers on trains not only makes it safer for those who work on the railroads, but it also helps to protect people in communities where trains travel.”

“Our view is that one-person operations are unsafe under any circumstances and we believe issuing this proposed rule is a critical first step in helping to ensure that our nation’s trains are operated fully staffed with two-qualified crew members.

“Airplanes are not allowed to fly with just one pilot, and for sound safety reasons; trains, many hauling hazardous materials – should be no different.

“The check, double check and extra set of eyes and ears watching both sides of the train and the division of tasks are safety measures that cannot be replaced by rules or technology.”

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National polling shows that a requirement for two-person crews has overwhelming support on both sides of the political aisle, as more than 80 percent of those polled in both red and blue regions of the country are in favor of a two-person crew mandate.

John Risch, SMART Transportation Division national legislative director, also responded to the proposed rule: “FRA professionals who know and understand rail operations recognize how important it is to have a minimum of two crew members on trains for a host of safety reasons.

“DOT studies also bear this out. We will work to improve this rule by making the case for a final rule that makes it extremely rare for railroads to run single-person operations.

“While this regulatory effort is critical we also call on Congress to pass H.R. 1763, the Safe Freight Act, which would require that all freight trains are operated by a crew of at least two individuals – a certified conductor and a certified engineer.”

Fraternally,

John Previsich
President, SMART Transportation Division

Find us on social media!
Find us on Facebook here: www.facebook.com/SMARTTransportationDivision/
Find us on LinkedIn by searching for “SMART Transportation Division”

State Watch

News from SMART TD State Legislative Boards

Colorado

State Legislative Director Carl Smith reported that over 50 railroaders and supporters attended the Colorado House of Representatives Transportation and Energy Committee hearing on House Bill 1136 (H.B. 1136), the state’s rail safety bill requiring two crewmembers on freight trains. The bill passed out of committee on a 7-4 vote and later passed out of the Colo. House of Representatives on a vote of 34-31.

H.B. 1136 is currently assigned to the Colo. Senate Committee of Reference on State, Veterans, and Military Affairs. Smith (from right) passed next to bill sponsor Danaya Eglin on left (D).

Georgia


State Legislative Director Matt Campbell reported that the legislative board held reorganizing meeting Feb. 18 in Alpharetta, Ga. Pictured above from left are Local President Jeff Vandlingham (571), Legislative Chairperson Patrick Folsom (1426), Vice Local Chairperson Mike Parker (536), Legislative Rep. Kelvin Hill (1245), Legislative Rep. Bernard Gray (1033), Alt. State Legislative Director, Joe Borders (1971), Legislative Rep. Steve Wiley (6742), Campbell Legislative Rep. Michael Branam (1790), Legislative Rep. Chuck Ward (998), Assistant State Legislative Director Jim Finley (1821), Legislative Vice Chairperson Janis Jackson (1598) and Legislative Rep. Isaac Gamble (1033).

Maryland

In a 32-14 vote, the Maryland State Senate voted to require two-person crews on freight trains in the state. This measure now heads to the Maryland House. The vote came on the same day that the FRA unveiled a proposed national rule requiring two-person crews on trains in the U.S. The Maryland measure is moving forward despite the possible FRA national law.

Illinois

U.S. Representative Rodney Davis (R) addressed the Illinois legislative board at their 12th quadrennial reorganization meeting. Pictured from left are Legislative Chairperson John O’Brien, State Legislative Director Bob Guy, Davis and Assistant State Legislative Director Joe Clancy. “I’d like to welcome Brothers Jeff Voteller and Dennis Nee to the Board Executive Committee. They are long-serving legislative representatives who have proven themselves over the years and deserve leadership positions on the board,” Guy said. Voteller was elected to the position of Legislative Vice Chairperson and Nee was elected Legislative Secretary.

Minnesota

The Minnesota Legislative Board presented Minn. Representative Rick Nolan (D) with a UTU brass lantern. Nolan also serves on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. From left are National Legislative Director John Risch, Nolan and Minn. State Legislative Director Phil Quay.

Nebraska

The Nebraska State Legislative Board purchased this parade ‘engine’ last year and repaint it with the SMART logo.
2016 regional meetings facts & information

San Francisco: The City by the Bay

The City by the Bay was originally named Yerba Buena, and on January 30, 1847, it was renamed San Francisco.

- The golden Gate fortune cookie was not invented in China, nor was it invented by a person of Chinese ancestry. This psychic cookie was invented by a Japanese-American resident of San Francisco.
- The Golden Gate Bridge was originally slated to be painted black with yellow stripes. The "International Orange" color of the sealant gained such high approval, that plans changed and "gold" it remained.
- The only National Historical Monument that can move are the cities' cable cars.
- In 1906, three quarters of San Francisco was destroyed by an earthquake and ensuing fire. The remaining quarter of the city was saved by the majestic redwood trees. Redwood has a low resin content and a porous skin, and when fire reached buildings made of redwood, they were slow to burn and were saved.
- Irish coffee was developed and made popular in San Francisco restaurants and cafes.
- The steepest street in San Francisco is Filbert Street, between Hyde and Leavenworth Streets—at a dizzying grade of 31.5 degrees.
- Unlike most financial institutions at the time, not one San Francisco-based bank failed during the Great Depression.
- The last full concert performed by the Beatles was at San Francisco's Candlestick Park on August 29, 1966.

San Francisco regional meeting pertinent information:

San Francisco, July 4-6: Fairmont San Francisco Hotel, 950 Mason St., San Francisco, CA 94108, www.fairmont.com/san-francisco

Reservations: (800) 441-1414 toll free; (415) 772-5000 direct  Reservation code: SMART UNION GROUP  Room Rate: $169 single/double, plus taxes; rates good for three days before and after meeting, depending upon availability.

Room reservation deadline: June 2, or until all rooms being held for SMART UNIO N GRO U P are reserved.

Parking: $58 per day (plus tax)

Golf outing: The regional meeting golf outing will take place Sunday, July 3, at Chuck Corica Golf Complex. The cost is $80 per golfer. Tee-off time is 8:00 a.m.

Airline discount: Visit United Airlines’ website at www.united.com for flight discounts to San Francisco.

Chicago: Chicago

Chicago was originally named for all-talk, all-politicians, not the weather, as most people believe.

- The shortest known public debate in history was hosted in 1917 by writters Ben Hecht and Maxwell Bodenheim. The topic was titled: "Resolved: That People Who Attend Literary Debates Are Imbeciles." The room was filled with attendees, and Hecht began the debate by stating: "The affirmative rests." Bodenheim's reply was: "You win," and the debate was over.
- Wigley Field was not always called Wigley Field - it was originally named Weegham Park, but for not long. It seems more like a "Wigley" anyway.
- Chicago’s reputation for crime began before the notorious escapades of mobsters Al Capone. In 1818, more than 100 watchmen were arrested for poisoning bad tippers.
- In the mid-nineteenth century, the entire city of Chicago was raised several feet by the mammoth fills put in to fix a drainage problem.
- The Twinkie dates back to 1930, when it was invented in Chicago.
- While America’s environmental ethics have evolved, back in 1871, the solution to digging out from under the debris of the Great Chicago Fire was to dump all the ash, rubble and wreckage into Lake Michigan.
- The first Ferris Wheel debuted in 1893 at the World’s Fair in Chicago.
- The shortest known public debate in history was hosted in 1917 by writers Ben Hecht and Maxwell Bodenheim. The topic was titled: "Resolved: That People Who Attend Literary Debates Are Imbeciles." The room was filled with attendees, and Hecht began the debate by stating: "The affirmative rests." Bodenheim’s reply was: “You win,” and the debate was over.
- Wigley Field was not always called Wigley Field—it was originally named Weegham Park, but for not long. It seems more like a “Wigley” anyway.
- Chicago’s reputation for crime began before the notorious escapades of mobsters Al Capone. In 1818, more than 100 watchmen were arrested for poisoning bad tippers.
- In the mid-nineteenth century, the entire city of Chicago was raised several feet by the mammoth fills put in to fix a drainage problem.
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Chicago regional meeting pertinent information:

Chicago, July 25-29: Sheraton Grand Chicago, 301 East North Water St., Chicago, IL 60611, www.sheratonchicago.com

Reservations: (888) 623-7700 toll free; (312) 644-1000 direct  Reservation code: SMART TD Regional Meeting  Room Rate: $199 single/double, plus taxes; rates good for three days before and after meeting, depending upon availability.

Room reservation deadline: July 2, or until all rooms held for SMART TD Regional Meeting are reserved.

Parking: $63.00 for valet; $26.50 for self park (50 percent off)

Golf outing: The regional meeting golf outing is Sunday, July 24, at St. Andrews Golf & Country Club. The cost is $80 per golfer. Tee-off time is 8:00 a.m.

Airline discount: Visit United Airlines’ website at www.united.com for flight discounts to San Francisco.

Chicago: The Windy City

The Windy City was named for all-talk, all-politicians, not the weather, as most people believe.

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- At that same World Fair, Anton Feuchteinger had six stalls of his Bavarian sausages, so he tried serving them in a bun. He sold out within hours and the hot dog was born.

Theme nights announced!

San Francisco

Enjoy an evening out at AT&T Ballpark as the San Francisco Giants take on the Colorado Rockies, Tuesday, July 4. Transportation, game ticket and food voucher will be provided for each registered guest.

Chicago

Pack your fedoras, pin-striped suits and Charleston-style dresses for a speakeasy-themed Tuesday-night dinner complete with a jazz band.

Avis Rent-a-Car offering discounts at airports

**AVIS**

Discounts with Avis Rent-a-Car: If you are available to members attending the 2016 regional meetings.

To reserve a car, contact Avis at (800) 331-1600 and use SMART Avis Worldwide Discount number: D150699.

For the San Francisco and Chicago regional meeting attendees, Avis Rent-a-Car can provide a car online. Visit the Transportation division website at www.avis.com, select the “Meetings” link at the bottom of the homepage, then select the appropriate regional meeting city.

Discounts at each city are good for seven days before and seven days after the meetings.

Should additional space be needed, make copies of this form and attach to the original. Make checks or money orders payable in U.S. funds to “SMART TD Regional Meeting” and mail to SMART TD Regional Meeting, 34890 Country Club Blvd, Suite 340, North Olmsted, OH 44070-3333. Persons who do not pre-register for the regional meeting but choose to register at the meeting site will be charged an additional $50. Spaces on the tours is limited; reservations are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

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Avis Rent-a-Car

Avis Rent-a-Car is proud to offer special savings to members attending the 2016 regional meetings.

To reserve a car, contact Avis at (800) 331-1600 and use SMART Avis Worldwide Discount number as listed above: D150699.
It seems like it’s in the news regularly: a Medicare provider is being prosecuted for filing fraudulent claims for services never rendered or services for which they billed for a higher level of service than what was actually provided. These are a few of the many methods that are being used to bilk the Medicare Trust Fund.

Some of the common ruses are:

- **Overlapping Services** – which means that a provider will bill as if they have given a service to a patient at one location when they have not. An example of this scheme would be billing for an ambulance service when the patient is in an inpatient hospital stay.

- **‘Ping-Pong Beneficiaries** – this is when doctors who have lost the ability to perform services in one area of the country resurface in another area with a different identification number.

- **‘Balloon Effect’** – this is the practice of moving to a different pattern of billing once Medicare stops paying for a previously lucrative scheme.

Some ways that Medicare searches for, and finds those perpetrating these schemes are:

- Medicare contractor medical review – in which the contractor (such as Railroad Medicare) reviews claims for medical necessity and correct billing.

- Railroad Medicare’s Benefit Integrity program – which perform similar functions to the Railroad Medicare’s Benefit Integrity unit.

- Zone Program Integrity Contractors (ZPIC) or Recovery Audit Contractors (RAC) – which perform similar functions to the Railroad Medicare’s Benefit Integrity unit.

Other partners in the fight against these and other Medicare fraud schemes include:

- Office of Inspector General (OIG) – the largest inspector general’s office in the federal government. Its mission is to protect Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) programs, such as Medicare.

- Health Care Fraud Prevention and Enforcement Action Team (HEAT) – a joint initiative between the OIG, HHS and the Department of Justice (DOJ).

- Medicare Fraud Strike Force Teams – a key part of the Railroad, operating in nine areas of the U.S. They use data analysis, as well as Federal, State and local law enforcement entities, to investigate and prevent health care fraud and/or abuse.

Since 2007, the Strike Force teams have:

- Initiated 1,387 criminal actions.
- Won 1,977 indictments.
- Collected $1.8 billion.

To learn more about the activities of the Medicare Fraud Strike Force teams, you may visit their website at http://oig.hhs.gov/fraud/strikeforce/.

You can also visit the Health Care Fraud Prevention and Enforcement Action Team (HEAT) website at www.stopmedicarefraud.org.

As always, you may call Palmetto GBA’s Beneficiary Contact Center at 800-833-4455, or for the hearing impaired, call TTY/TDD at 877-566-3572 to discuss your Medicare Part B coverage.

Customer Service Representatives are available Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. until 7 p.m. ET. Visit their website at www.PalmettoGBA.com for more information.

**Rail members may be eligible for death, dismemberment insurance**

Active and retired railroad employees covered under The Railroad Employees’ National Health and Welfare Plan, or the NRC/Railroad Medicare’s Benefit Integrity plan, may be eligible for Life and Accidental Death and Dismemberment benefits from MetLife.

For eligible active employees, the death benefit in most cases is $20,000, and there may be an additional ADD benefit that could pay up to $16,000. For eligible retired employees, the death benefit is $2,000.

Most employees filled out a designated beneficiary form when they began work for a participating railroad. MetLife urges employees and retirees to keep this form with your other important papers. If you need to update your beneficiary form, or if there is doubt as to whom you designated, it is recommended that you complete a new form and send it to MetLife.

A beneficiary form, as well as a copy of the plan summary, can be found at www.YourTrackToHealth.com. There is a direct link to that web page from www.utu.org. Hoving over the “Healthcare” tab on the SMART Transportation Division home page will provide you with a drop down menu for Your Track To Health.

You can also obtain information about this benefit by calling MetLife toll-free at (800) 310-7770.

This is a very important benefit for all eligible active and retired railroad employees covered under the national health and welfare plans, although many employees, especially retired employees, may not be fully aware of it. It’s recommended that all SMART TD rail locals post this notice at appropriate work locations and remind all retirees with whom you may come in contact that they should contact MetLife to inquire about their eligibility for the $2,000 death benefit.

**Landfall Travel changes dates of Switzerland trip**

Landfall Travel, the official travel agency of the Alumni Association, has informed us that the dates for the train tour across Switzerland has changed from Sept. 23 - Oct. 1, 2016, to Sept. 16 - 24, 2016.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

Rates for this trip start at $2,359 per person, most meals are included. Airfare is not included and rates are subject to change.

The dates for the river cruise up the Mississippi River remain the same: Oct. 2 - 10, 2016. Rates start at $1,874.25 plus $149 port tax per person; rates subject to change.

Interested parties can contact Landfall Travel directly at (440) 799-8977 or toll-free at (800) 835-9233 for more information.

All members are welcome. You do not have to be a member of the Alumni Association to enjoy these travel opportunities.
“There are deficient roads, and there are deficient bridges...all across the country. Our highways are clogged the fastest and most efficient in the world. And we've got to do something about this, because our businesses and our entire economy are already paying for it. “How do we sit back and watch China's high-speed railroads and gleaming new airports, and we're doing nothing? “We're better than that. We've got to get folks in Congress to share the same sense of national urgency that mayors and governors and the American people do all across the country.” -- President Barack Obama

Op-ed: GOP candidates propose devolution of rail law

In a letter to the editor and published by The Hill, AFL-CIO Transportation Trades Department (TTD) President Edward Wytkind warned that GOP presidential candidates want to devolve transportation policies that would make us a loser in the increasingly competitive global economy,” Wytkind said.

“The candidates are in support of deregulating the current rail laws and funding and turning it over to each individual state to mete out transportation policy and funding. GOP candidates Ohio Governor John Kasich, Jeb Bush and U.S. Senator Marco Rubio (Fla.) have come out in support of devolution of transportation policy and funding. (Candidates Bush and Rubio have dropped out of the presidential race since this letter was published)

“...we must not accept candidates for president who fail to grasp the magnitude of this transportation investment crisis, and who advance policies that would make us a loser in the increasingly competitive global economy,” Wytkind said.

“We need a vast transportation system that can deliver goods and people safely and with speed and precision, not some piecemeal experiment dreamed up by anti-government crusaders who can’t seem to get out of their own way.

“Anyone who understands the intricacies of America’s integrated supply chain and vast transportation system that gets people to their destination knows that it is nonsense to think that our economy can succeed if we strip the federal government — through wrongheaded ‘devolution’ proposals — of its role as steward of our national freight and passenger network.

“...If we were to follow these reckless plans and push everything onto the states, including difficult political decisions on funding, the nation would be forced to rely on a patchwork of transportation systems conceived and funded (or, more likely, under-funded) by individual states. Translation? “We’d be living without any guarantee that the state transportation systems would weave together to serve the entire nation.”

Transportation Division needs your assistance

The SMART Transportation Division News needs your input to keep this publication fresh and informative. If you have news about heroes in your local, local meetings, party or picnic information, etc., we would like to hear about it.

You can reach the SMART Transportation Division Public Relations Department by telephone at (216) 228-9400 or by email at news_TD@smart-union.org.

Information can be sent by mail to SMART Transportation Division, SMART TD News, 24950 Country Club Blvd., Ste. 340, North Olmsted, OH 44070-5333.

I would like more information on UTUIA’s available policies:

☐ Accident Indemnity ☐ Life Insurance
☐ Accidental Death and Dismemberment ☐ Accidental Death and Dismemberment
☐ Cancer Hospital Indemnity ☐ IRAs
☐ Whole Life Insurance ☐ Annuities
☐ Term Life Insurance ☐ Whole Life Insurance
☐ Child Life Insurance ☐ Term Life Insurance
☐ Easy Issue Life Insurance ☐ Child Life Insurance

For additional information about any of these policies:

Email sales@utuia.org, call 800-558-8842, or complete the attached form and mail to the address listed at the bottom of the form.

Visit the UTUIA website at www.utu.org for more information on this and other policies.
CP withdraws NS merger bid; SMART TD reacts

Continued from page 1

“Having long opposed the negative impact that mergers and acquisitions such as this have on jobs, I am extremely pleased to hear that CP has officially terminated their quest to takeover NS.”

SMART TD first reported CP’s interest in a merger with NS in November 2015. It soon became clear that NS was not interested when the railroad rejected all three of CP’s offers. CP, however, continued to push for a takeover by trying to bypass the NS board of directors’ decision by going directly to the shareholders for a vote.

“Their decision to scrap this incompetent and ill-advised proposal is good news for our members and for all workers.”

The work and solidarity of SMART, BLET, TDU/PKO, and other unions to write a response letter to the STB asked them to reject CP’s request.

Amtrak’s Boardman, ‘Hudson tunnel top priority’

President Joseph Boardman testified before the Senate Commerce Committee’s Surface Transportation Subcommittee Feb. 23 about the importance of the new rail tunnels under the Hudson River.

In his testimony, Boardman said the tunnels are Amtrak’s top priority.

“Our top priority among a long list of major priorities is the Gateway Program,” Boardman said.

“The Gateway Program—which preserves and expands rail service between New York and New Jersey—took on increased urgency in 2012, when Superstorm Sandy sent too much water into the tunnels connecting to Penn Station, compromising critical electrical and signal systems and threatening the reliability of operations day-in and day-out.

“The first element of the Gateway Program is to build a new, two-track Hudson River rail tunnel that will allow Amtrak to rebuild the existing tunnel without disruption to the 450 daily NJ Transit and Amtrak trains that operate over these two tracks.

“We are committed to embracing innovation that can help drive down costs and enhance value for the American public and have started considering ways to respond to both the changing markets and needs of the nation, while taking the Committee’s expectations into account. In doing so, we must make sure we don’t compromise our ability to offer service efficiently.

“During my tenure [as Amtrak president], I sought a Federal commitment for all of Amtrak’s needs;” Boardman said.

““The FAST Act has taken the critical first step by including Amtrak and the intercity passenger rail program to surface reauthorization. But the key will be whether appropriations levels can grow over time to meet the major capital needs we have in the Northeast Corridor and across the country.”

FAA proposes rule to overhaul safety certification standards

Continued from page 1

not being eligible for benefits, a COBRA notice is automatically sent to the employee’s address of record. The form must be completed and returned to UnitedHealthcare in a timely manner in order to establish COBRA coverage.

For other benefits that furloughed members may be eligible for:

http://utu.org/2015/07/24/furloughed-members-may-be-entitled-to-benefits/


It should be noted by all furloughed members that it is your responsibility to keep your contact information current with your employer, but also with your union. This includes your phone number, mailing address and email address.

You employer will need your correct contact information to call you back to work. Many SMART TD legislative boards and locals are holding informational sessions for furloughed workers and need your correct contact information to keep you informed.

To update your phone number or address call your local officers or call SMART TD headquarters at 216-228-9400 ext. 3908. You may update your address with the union by going to utu.org and clicking on the ‘Address Change’ button on the right side of the home page.

SMART mobile app wins Reed Award

The SMART mobile app won the Campaigns and Electrical Division Best Mobile App of 2015 on February 18 for Best Mobile App of 2015.

This is an industry award for political, non-profit and Government Affairs agencies that vendors submit on behalf of their clients.

The vendor in this case was Resolution Messaging who worked with SMART staff in designing and building the new app.

The SMART Union App is available for download through both apple and android stores.

Apple: https://appsto.re/us/I6tz7.i

Retirees: Do you know the benefits of being an Alumni Association member?

For just $9 per year, you could be part of the Alumni Association! Here are the benefits of becoming a member:

- The SMART Transportation Division News: member newspaper covering subjects of interest to active and retired individuals from the transportation industry, including developments affecting Railroad Retirement, Social Security, and other pension and disability systems.

- Automatic listing in The Final Call: the compilation of recent deaths carried in the SMART Transportation Division News.

An annual SMART Transportation Division calendar: this is a full-size, full-color 12-month wall calendar, with spaces large enough to keep track of important dates.

A UTU Alumni baseball-style cap: monogrammed with the Alumni Association logo.

Representation in Washington and your state capitol: SMART Transportation Division officials are always keeping watch on legislation that affects SMART TD retirees, including Railroad Retirement, Social Security, and Medicare and other programs of interest to senior citizens.

Discounts on car-rental rates: at National Car Rental. Call (800) CAR-RENT (800-227-7368) and refer to ID number 10008107 and contact ID number 5005467.

Discounts on cell phones and service through AT&T: at an AT&T store, show your Alumni Association ID card and refer to FAN #3508840. Or you can sign up online at www.unionplus.org/att. Or call (800) 897-7046 and refer to ID number 10008107 and be able to help your local successfully navigate its provisions.

How is SMART TD organized?

SMART TD has three levels of organization. The local level deals directly with claims and grievances. The intermediate level, which includes the general committee of adjustment (contracts and discipline) and the state legislative board (safety and legislative affairs), has the simple ways you can help.

For instance, your elected leaders, campaign for your company’s local legislative representatives are just a few of the simple ways you can help.

Since members are the union in the workplace, you begin your participation through membership in SMART TD. Attending local meetings, voting in all elections and backing up your local representatives are just a few of the simple ways you can help.

If you have a greater interest or are dissatisfied with your elected leaders, campaign for that job in the next election. The dates of these elections are found in the back of the union Constitution you receive upon joining. The union on your property will only be as strong as the membership supporting its efforts. Remember, when one worker is injured, all are threatened. Proper enforcement of the collective bargaining agreement ensures that everyone is treated equally under its terms and conditions.

A 41-page UTU/UTUIA Assets Manager booklet: designed for recording the legal, insurance, financial and estate information you and your family need.

A 36-page UTU/UTUIA Medical Manager booklet: for recording and updating your complete medical history, special diets, and more, making communication with your doctor or other care provider more effective and accurate.

Automatic enrollment in the UTU Travelers Club: excursions geared to the interests of active and retired members alike.

Trips, announced in the SMART Transportation Division News, have included train tours of Mexico, Canada and Switzerland, and cruises of Hawaii, Alaska and the Caribbean.

Trips arranged by Landfall Travel. Call 800-835-9233 for more information about planned trips.
FRA rule gives us chance to bar most one-person crew trains

This opinion-editorial by SMART TD President John Previsich and AFL-CIO TTQ President Edward Wykind originally appeared on TheHill.com March 26, 2016.

The freight railroads would have you believe that operating massive freight trains with a single crew member is perfectly safe. We know those claims are not true and fortunately so does our government which just issued proposed regulations establishing a two-person crew minimum on most trains. We applaud those rules and will push to make them as tough and rigid as possible.

If former Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan was alive today, he would probably tell the railroads, “you’re entitled to your opinion, but not your own facts.” Despite erroneous claims by the industry lobby that there is a lack of “conclusive statistical data” to support a two-person crew standard, we know from data gleaned from reports on accidents, crashes and fatalities as well as the real-life experiences of frontline employees, that the arguments in favor of a two-person crew standard are compelling.

The railroads rely on skewed statistical analysis to argue that a lack of accidents from the use of one-person crews means that this two-person train crew rule isn’t needed. The reality is that almost all trains in America operate with two crew members and thankfully, one-person crew operations are still the rare exception. Of course there is not a great deal of data available. More to the point, the safety statistics in today’s industry are a product of the skill and professionalism of the two-person and three-person crews that operate trains across America today.

Federal regulators’ own research underscores the necessity of having at a minimum a federally certified engineer and a federally certified conductor on trains. These employees support each other’s decision-making process. They work together to combat fatigue, especially in the real-world of train crews defined by mandated long shifts and unpredictable work schedules. They support safe operations in the event of emergencies or if one of the crew members becomes incapacitated, a fact that is also recognized by the Federal Aviation Administration as it prohibits cockpit crews of fewer than two pilots.

Conveniently, the railroads also fail to mention what happened three years ago in the Quebec town of Lac-Megantic. A runaway train carrying 72 cars of crude oil killed 47 people and leveled most of the town. This fact that is also recognized by the Federal Aviation Administration as it prohibits cockpit crews of fewer than two pilots.

Inside this issue of SMART Transportation Division News:

SMART TD welcomes First Student Bus Operators. See page 3.

Great Lakes to provide flights to Salina, Kan. See page 4.

Register for 2016 regional meetings. See pages 6 & 7.

Rail members may be eligible for death & dismemberment insurance. See page 8.

Local 1626 President Vern Gillis submitted this photo of the infamous “Snow Train.” “Conductor Rod Frank and Engineer Gerry Davis had the opportunity to move snow from Fairbanks to Anchorage. The snow was intended to assist with the start of the 2016 Iditarod dog sled race,” Gillis said. Photo taken by Frank Keller.