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Local 1741, San Francisco, Calif.

School bus drivers out of this local in February extended solidarity to school bus drivers of Teamsters Local 174 in Seattle, Wash., who were striking for healthcare for themselves and their families.

On Day 7 of the strike, 5,000 members of the Seattle Teachers Association walked out to join the picket line. The day after, First Student and the Union were back in negotiations. The contract agreed upon the following day provided healthcare to all employees and their families and a pension.

“Solidarity across unions is more important than ever in the age of new ‘right to work laws’ and other nationwide attacks on unions like the current Janus case before the Supreme Court,” said a submission from the local.

After the victory, Local 1741 sent 44 pizzas and a letter of congratulations to the drivers.

LCA 887/Local 31, San Jose, Calif.

Members of SMART TD did not cross picket lines and joined members of Teamsters Local 890 when the Teamsters went on strike against San Benito Foods in Hollister, Calif., for a $1 an hour raise last summer. Among participants showing solidarity with the Teamsters local were Vice Local Chairmain Matthew McCrillis and Local Chairman Darin Jessup, both of LCA 887, Local 31. After eight days of picketing, the Teamsters won their raise, and the strike ended.

Local 941, Columbus, Ga.

Pictured, from left: John Privett, Bryan McWhorter, Andrew Beam, NS GO 169 General Chairperson Jimmy Stewart, Local Chairperson Shane Privett, Rap. Kelley, Campbell, Vice Local Chairperson Bo Payne, Shay Harrell, retired TD member and DLC representative, Clay Parker and UTU Field Supervisor Steve White.

Members of Local 941 were proud to welcome Georgia State Representative Trey Kelley (R – Dist. 16) to present an update on 2018 legislative issues and to give a commitment to working with SMART TD, reported Georgia State Legislative Director Matt Campbell.

Bright ideas lead to new flashlight for remote control operators at CSX

The efforts of General Chairperson Dale Barnett (GCA 513 — former Seaboard Coast Line, Louisville & Nashville, and Atlanta and West Point Railroad) have helped to spread some light for his brothers and sisters at CSX and elsewhere.

Barnett, a member of Local 762 in Montgomery, Ala., was given a commemorative flashlight by the carrier for his work in the design of a replacement for the lantern used by Remote Control Operators (RCOs).

In 2009, during a meeting between SMART TD labor safety coordinators and CSX safety department managers, discussion occurred about the need for a better source of light at night for trainmen working remote control assignments.

“This idea was first brought up by a fellow coordinator from Evansville named Brian Hall (secretary of Local 904), but I was tasked with working with CSX Manager of Safety Barry Morton and designing a new modern-day lantern,” Barnett wrote in an email. “It was a group effort, and a shining example of how our organization works together on behalf of our peers.”

After meetings with various design engineers from the Pelican Company, a manufacturer out of Torrance, Calif., a slim-bodied, heavy-duty light with an unbreakable shell and lifetime guarantee with an LED light source was envisioned.

The process involved some troubleshooting by Barnett and Morton. The LED was interfering with the remote control, causing the remote control unit to go into communication failure and put the lead unit in emergency. A new bulb was chosen that didn’t cause interference, but more tweaks were needed.

“When we had the basis for a good flashlight for RCO operations, there were still numerous issues to resolve to make it the best railroad light possible and maybe to replace the lanterns,” Barnett said.

An AA battery turned out to be a “tremendous” power source, Barnett said. A way to separate the body of the flashlight where it could rotate and move, yet stay in the position needed, was found, and a magnet on the back of the clip was vital for tasks such as lacing air hoses, he said.

One more design challenge needed to be met in 2011 in order to further improve the light—it had to provide the ability to signal the engineer on the head end. Barnett tried out plastic cone-shaped devices and tested them at night with different yard crews, and Pelican Co. engineers took Barnett’s lead to design a sliding extendable tube made out of glow-in-the-dark plastic that enabled the light to be seen from afar.

“The cost was actually comparable to the lanterns and much cheaper, considering the required extra parts needed for a lantern and the larger batteries,” Barnett said.

CSX began ordering the new lights to provide to trainmen and recognized Barnett and Morton’s efforts — their names were printed on the first two new flashlights produced, and they received the first two serial numbers for the model.

Morton has moved on from CSX to become the new assistant vice president of safety on Kansas City Southern, and the light design likely will make its way to that carrier, Barnett said.

“I was proud that my work and efforts were recognized,” Barnett said. “The one thing that really means the most to me is when my fellow peers express how much they enjoy these flashlights and how it has helped them with their work and safety.”

Before his 2014 election as general chairperson for GCA 513, Barnett was elected assistant general chairperson in July 2012.

He has served as GCA secretary (2009 – 2012), safety coordinator on the CSX Atlanta Division and as local legislative rep, local chairperson and president of Local 762.

Barnett has also served on the SMART TD Board of Appeals since 2012.

Let us know: What’s news to you?

All members and officers are invited to submit items to the SMART TD News. Whether it’s an item from your local, the latest legislative success, a fundraiser or charity effort or just a great story about a brother or sister, we are here to get the word out. Email your items to news_TD@smart-union.org and we’ll be in touch!
Tax changes will have a negative impact on the returns of some transportation workers

**“Don’t get me wrong, some people get small tax cuts, but anyone on a train loses. This is an attack on unions and on the working class of the United States.”**

Bill Smith, owner of Smitty’s Tax Solutions, which serves more than 300 rail clients

What to do?

Rigney said that there are things members can do to avoid a nasty surprise a year from now in the form of a balance due courtesy of the TCJA. “First thing they can do is find a calculator. These changes will affect virtually all taxpayers,” Rigney said. “Do research and see how their situation is affected.”

Both the IRS (https://www.irs.gov/payments/tax-withholding) and H&R Block (https://www.hrblock.com/tax-calculator/) offer tax calculators that, based on data entered, tell users how the TCJA affects them.

Members should then go to their employer and redo their W-4 form based on the calculator’s findings so that the correct amount is withheld. “They may have been withholding enough before, but if they don’t revisit their W-4, they could end up with a bigger refund or — worst case — a balance due,” Rigney said.

For those in high income or property tax states such as the ones listed above, Rigney tells taxpayers to be vigilant.

A thorough review of prior returns and deductions, measured against the changes imposed by the tax act, is absolutely necessary to ensure no unwelcome surprises. In addition, there could be remedies to save some credits that would otherwise be lost under the TCJA’s cap. “They should keep an eye on the state level,” Rigney said. “New Jersey and California, in particular, are looking at a way to soften the blow.”
Community action reinvigorates our union

By Joseph Sellers Jr.

Our army of volunteers is just as varied as our 200,000-plus members: In Missouri, Transportation Division and Sheet Metal members joined to serve meals at a rally. TD members in southwest Virginia helped the small town of Crewe ensure that Little League players got the opening day they deserved. That event included a screening of the movie “Sandlot” for local families, who thus learned about the role SMART members continue to hold in their area.

Building support, putting it to use
All of this work is important not only for helping our neighbors and to strengthen our union — the brothers and sisters in our locals and our regions. To increase our capacity for delivering results to members in the head negotiators we represent, we must build real power. That means getting involved in the life of our towns and cities, having a voice in the centers of power and advancing our interests at the local, county, state and federal levels.

In our heyday of the mid-20th century, union halls served as the center of local communities. America may look different today, but the connection between working families, the sense of common interest that was the bedrock of labor’s solidarity — it is still there — and people want to restore its strength. Local action builds such a bond and raises awareness of the value we create. This adds to our voice when we fight for our issues, such as safety, jobs and wages. But even a strong voice means nothing if those in power don’t hear us because we don’t vote. To be clear we are not asking or telling you who to vote for. At the same time, for any of us to prosper, all of us must be seen, heard — and counted. Strength in numbers commands respect from those who need our support to hold public office. Your union asks that you stand up and be counted. Register — and vote.

Visit SMARTVote2018.org to check your registration status. Make sure your family, friends and co-workers are registered as well. If you don’t think your one vote matters, ask Bonnie Hobbs, SMART TD Legislative Director for Virginia. He was there when control of the state Legislature was set by picking a name out of a bowl — because the election was a tie.

How did one uncast vote matter? The loser strongly backed two-person crews, but she can’t help us now, because she — we — lost, by one vote. (See Page 9 for more on this.)

Again, check your voter registration at SMARTvote2018.org. Make sure you are ready to stand up and be counted where you live.

We are on the move, but it will all take us to do our part to be visible, to be heard and to keep moving.

Fraternally,

Joseph Sellers Jr.
General President, SMART
carriers reaping billions in gains from changes in federal tax law

CLASS 1 CARRIERS REPORT 4TH QUARTER TCJA GAINS

$3.6 BILLION

$3.48 BILLION

$5.8 BILLION

$488 MILLION

$7.4 BILLION

$406 MILLION

$1.4 BILLION

Fraternally,

President, Transportation Division

State Watch

News from SMART TD State Legislative Boards

Georgia

State Legislative Director Matt Campbell and the State Legislative Board sponsored a luncheon for the General Assembly’s Working Families Caucus at the State Capitol in Atlanta.

“The WFC focuses on legislative issues that affect our members’ well-being and livelihood,” Campbell said. “We are honored to work beside them every day at the Capitol.”

While at the Capitol, SMART TD legislative representatives met several state leaders, including Gov. Nathan Deal, the lieutenant governor, Senate pro tem and minority leaders as well as several senators and representatives.

Midwest

The Kansas State Legislative Board has been working to get the state to expand passenger rail in the state with the Northern Flyer Extension. To that end, State Legislative Director Ty Dragoo has helped introduce SB 409 that provides a mechanism for the project, which would involve Kansas, Texas and Oklahoma all pitching in to help bring the project to fruition.

“The process has been rewarding,” Dragoo said. “Hopefully, the Flyer will extend to Wichita ahead of schedule.

Indiana

State Legislative Director Kenny Edwards said a joint effort with the BLET yielded success when the governor signed an insurance bill March 25 that contains a provision that increases the minimum liability for a contract van carrier hauling railroad employees from $1.5 million to $5 million.

“It was a tough pull that required lots of tact, years of relationship-building with the state legislators and honing a familiarity with the process,” Edwards said. “I gave this legislation a 0 percent chance of passage when it was filed. Goes to show if you don’t try, you have a 0 percent chance. Also goes to show the value of developing and applying our tradecraft!”

Pictured, from left, are Patrick Folsom (Local 1263), Georgia State Legislative Director Matt Campbell (Local 1031), Bernard Gray (Local 1033), Gov. Nathan Deal, Jarvis Jackson (Local 1598) and Charles Johnson (Local 535).

From left, Kansas State Legislative Director Ty Dragoo, Missouri State Legislative Director Jason Hayden and Illinois State Legislative Director Bob Guy pause for a photo at the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC) in Wichita, Kan.

Continued on Page 9
Workshop participation earns two locals free registration

Each year, SMART TD holds a continuing voluntary Certificate of Achievement program at both regional meetings. Based on the number of workshops completed, members can attain a bronze, silver or gold level. Locals who have members attain the gold level of achievement are automatically entered into a drawing to win five complimentary registration packages for the following year’s regional meetings.

At the 2017 San Antonio regional meeting, 200 members participated in the program, and 65 members reached gold status. At a drawing on the last day of the meeting, Local 202 Secretary Jeffrey Maxfield’s name was pulled, winning his local the complimentary registration packages.

At the 2017 New York City regional meeting, 6 members participated and 80 members reached level status. Local 933 Legislative Representative Edward Krawczyk III’s name was pulled. The complimentary registrations are good for one of the 2018 regional meetings to be held in Seattle or by Friday, July 27 for the Hollywood, Fla. meeting, or the registrant will be entered into an on-site registration fee of $200.

The registration fee covers all workshop materials, welcome reception the night before the meeting, three lunches and one evening meal.

Additional fees apply for the tours. You must register yourself or your own room reservations, and certain deadlines apply. Those wishing to attend only the workshops need not register. No one-day registrations are offered. You may cancel your meeting registration days prior to the first day of the meetings without penalty.

Call the Transportation Division office at 216-39400 or email apatchin@smart-union.org immediately regarding changes or cancellations.

Seattle: Emerald City of the Northwest

The ocean, the iconic Space Needle and the Pike Place Market (at right) are just a few of the draws to Seattle, the largest city in Washington state.

There’s no shortage of things to do in this big city of more than 700,000 on Puget Sound with amusement parks, fine dining, pro sports, a thriving nightlife and the legendary music scene among the city’s attractions.

But there’s the quirky side of the city as well — there’s even a wall covered in chewing gum in Pike Place Market’s Post Alley that people come to photograph and contribute to, if so inclined.

And if you happen to stay out a bit late the night before a meeting session and need a pick-me-up in the morning, there’s always the coffee!

Workshop participation earns two locals free registration

Deadline nears for SMART TD’s 2018 regional meetings

The 2018 SMART TD regional meetings are scheduled for July 2-4 in Seattle and August 6-8 in Hollywood, Fla. The meetings have been designed to provide a platform for educational training, leadership growth and a sense of fraternalism and solidarity among members.

As in the past, each regional meeting will run for 2.5 days, ending early in the afternoon of the third day. The evening of the first day has been left unscheduled so you, your family and friends will be free to explore and enjoy the many offerings of the regional meeting cities.

Regional meeting registration and hotel information, as well as links to make hotel reservations online, can be accessed by visiting www.smart-union.org/td and clicking on the “Regional Meetings” box on the right side of the page.

All those attending the regional meetings must be registered in order to participate in the tours planned for the Sundays before the opening reception or in the Tuesday nights out.

The pre-registration fee for the 2018 regional meetings is $150 per member, spouse or child over age 11. Children ages 11 and under who are pre-registered receive complimentary registration. The form is printed on the right, and online registration is available in the Regional Meeting section of the TD website.

A completed registration form listing each attendee, regardless of age, and complete payment in U.S. funds must be received at SMART Transportation Division, 24850 Country Club Blvd., Suite 340, North Olmsted, OH 44070-5333, by Friday, June 22 for the Seattle meeting or by Friday, July 27 for the Hollywood, Fla. meeting, or the registrant will be entered into an on-site registration fee of $200.

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Seattle meeting or by Friday, July 27 for the Hollywood, Fla. meeting, or the registrant will be entered into an on-site registration fee of $200.

The registration fee covers all workshop materials, welcome reception the night before the meeting, three lunches and one evening meal.

Additional fees apply for the tours. You must register yourself or your own room reservations, and certain deadlines apply. Those wishing to attend only the workshops need not register. No one-day registrations are offered. You may cancel your meeting registrations days prior to the first day of the meetings without penalty.

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Avis Rent-a-Car offers discounts

The Transportation Division has arranged with Avis Rent-a-Car to offer discounted rates to members attending the 2018 regional meetings. To reserve a car, contact Avis at 800-331-1600 and use SMART’s Avis Worldwide Discount (AWD) number: D150899. Members and guests can reserve a car online for the meetings. Visit www.smart-union.org/td and select the “Regional Meetings” link on the right side, then select the appropriate regional meeting city.

Discounts at each city are good for seven days before and after the meetings. The discount code will not be valid for the Hollywood, Fla., meeting. Visit www.smart-union.org/td. Select the “Regional Meetings” link on the right side of the homepage. Avis Rent-a-Car offers discounts for the meetings. Visit www.smart-union.org/td and click on transportation Division gear to your wardrobe to show

United offers discounted flights

United Airlines is offering discounted flights for members attending the regional meetings.

**Seattle**
- Valid dates: 06/25/18 - 07/11/18
- Location: Seattle, WA (SEA)
- Offer code: ZEYZ455457
- Z code: ZEYZ
- Agreement code: 455457

**Hollywood, Fla.**
- Valid dates: 07/30/18 - 08/15/18
- Location: Ft. Lauderdale, FL (FLL)
- Offer code: ZEYZ455457
- Z code: ZEYZ
- Agreement code: 455457

Members can book their flights by calling 800-426-1122 or visit www.united.com.

Attend the meetings in style!

You can always add some new SMART Transportation Division gear to your wardrobe to show off your union pride.

Visit www.smart-union.org/td today and click on “Gear” in the navigation bar to get started. All products are union made and/or American made.

You also can look for American Products’ booth at both regional meetings to see all the gear they have to offer.

Tours, social events readied

The Transportation Division is arranging tours of local attractions and social events at both regional meetings.

The tours are tentatively scheduled from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sunday prior to the meetings’ evening welcome receptions; a social event is planned on the Tuesday evening of both meetings from 7 to 10 p.m. Details will be announced and appear at www.smart-union.org/td. Select the “Regional Meetings” link on the right side of the homepage. Tour fees are $35 per tour for each registered guest, or $75 per tour for each unregistered guest.

### Transportation Division

#### Regional Meeting registration form

Registering before the regional meetings expedites sign-in procedures, helps organizers plan more accurately and saves on meeting costs. Each person attending the regional meeting, including family members and guests, MUST be registered in order to attend any event. Please note that these meetings last 2.5 days and conclude on the afternoon of the third day. Registration fees are $150 per person; children 11 years of age and under are complimentary. On-site registration is $200 per person. All fees must be paid in U.S. funds. Registration forms with payment must be received at the Transportation Division by June 22 for the Seattle meeting and by July 27 for the Hollywood, Fla., meeting, for all members, spouses and guests to be considered pre-registered.

#### Which regional meeting will you be attending?

- **Seattle**
- **Hollywood, Fla.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Name</th>
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<th>Title (if any)</th>
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| Phone number | | Email | |
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<tr>
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### Special needs?
(Circle appropriate responses): Registrant / spouse / child / guest is:
hearing impaired / visually impaired / in wheelchair / other:

#### Payment options

Check/money order enclosed
(U.S. funds only - NO CASH) $ _______________________

Credit card □ VISA □ MasterCard

Card number ______________________ Exp. date ________ Total charged $ ______________

Signature _______________________

Please do not send cash. When registering online, payment also can be made online. Persons who do not pre-register for the regional meetings, but choose to register at the meeting site or after the pre-registration deadlines will be charged an additional $50. Space on scheduled tours is limited; reservations are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

www.smart-union.org/td • www.utuia.org
The United State Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) has issued its schedule of informational conferences and pre-retirement seminars for local officers and for members respectively. Registration for both of these types of programs is required and available at the RRB website (www.rrb.gov).

### RRB informational conferences

The RRB’s informational conference program was started by the Office of the Labor Member in 1957 to provide local union officers comprehensive information about the benefits available to rail employees and their families under the railroad retirement and unemployment insurance systems. Union officers who attend can become better prepared to share accurate, reliable information with their members. Union officials planning to attend an informational conference program must register either online by going to https://www.rrb.gov/index.php/OurAgency/LaborMember/InformationalConference/Program for a local conference listed below or print a paper form from the RRB website, then complete and return the registration form to your local RRB field office. If you plan on attending with your spouse or another guest, please indicate so on the designated fields on your registration form.

If you register for a conference and become unable to attend, inform the RRB. Bring photo identification for entry to Federal buildings; no weapons allowed.

- **June 6:** La Quinta Inn & Suites, 5120 Victory Drive, Indianapolis, Ind.
- **June 15:** Hilton Garden Inn, 2465 Grant Road, Billings, Mont.
- **June 15:** Sheet Metal Workers Union Hall, 1157 Adams St., Dorchester, Mass.
- **June 22:** Tinley Park Convention Center, 18451 Convention Center Drive, Tinley Park, Ill.

**Pre-retirement seminars**

Conferences with parking fees are marked with *.
- **June 29:** Joliet Public Library, 150 N. Ottawa St., Joliet, Ill. *(Start time: 9:30 a.m.)*
- **July 20:** Robert A. Young Federal Building, 1222 Spruce St., Room 2,308, St. Louis, Mo.*

#### Former UTU general counsel Clint Miller dies

Clint Miller, general counsel for the United Transportation Union for more than two decades, died March 28 at his home in Lakewood, Ohio. He was 70.

Before his 2012 retirement, Miller was a fixture in the UTU Legal Department for more than two decades, died March 28 at his home in Lakewood, Ohio. He was 70.

At the time of Miller’s retirement, then-UTU International President Mike Futhey said: “In Clint Miller, the UTU has had a lawyer with the best interests of the membership at heart.” Miller is survived by his daughters, Emily (Lewis) Dichage, Hilary (Aaron) Lee, and Sarah (Mark) Gonzales; wife, Cynthia; stepdaughter Stephanie Popik; and grandchildren Annabelle, Greyson, Reese, Ryan and Camden. He was preceded in death by his first wife, Bettie Sue, in 2002.

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**The Final Call**

Following are the names of recently deceased members who maintained annual membership in the SMART TD Alumni Association, according to reports received at SMART TD Headquarters. These brothers and sisters will be missed by their many friends and by fellow SMART TD Alumni Association members.

### SMART TD Alumni

**News and information for members of the SMART TD Alumni Association**

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**2 brothers die performing service in March**

SMART Transportation Division lost two brothers who were performing service in March.

Brother Robert “Rob” J. Hemling, 39, of Randolph, Wis., and a member of Local 590 (Portage, Wis.), died in a train accident March 27 in Sparta, Wis. Brother Hemling, a conductor for Canadian Pacific, was working at Cedar Creek Lumber when he was killed. Police and media reports did not provide details about the circumstances of the accident. He began working for the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad before joining Local 590 in 2003. He is survived by his wife, Megan; his two daughters, Madelynn and Savannah; parents, Randy and Kathy Hemling; other relatives and friends.

A memorial fund directed toward Brother Hemling’s family has been set up at https://www.gofundme.com/conductor-rob.

On March 5, conductor Peter PoChing, 52, of Lincoln, Calif., died of cardiac arrest while in service at Union Pacific’s Roseville Yard in Roseville, Calif.

Brother PoChing had been a member of Local 492 in Sacramento, Calif., since 2009.

He is survived by his wife of 25 years, Brenda, and daughters, Nina and Kaylene.

PoChing studied the martial art of silat for 30 years and was a guru, teaching many others. His skills led him to a role in the 1994 movie “Kickboxer 4: The Aggressor,” according to IMDB. “There will not be a moment this easy-going, guitar-loving, compassionate silat guru will not be missed,” his family wrote.

Brothers PoChing and Hemling are the second and third SMART TD members to die in service in 2018.

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Great Lakes Airlines suspends its flight operations

Continued from Page 4

erating between Denver, Pierre and Watertown.” ADI – Aerodynamics Inc. – operates scheduled service between Denver, Pierre, S.D., and Watertown, S.D.

The company cited changes in flight officer qualification requirements enacted in 2015 as a reason for the shutdown. It said that it had difficulty finding qualified pilots and caused flights to be suspended.

The Regional Airline Association issued a statement on March 28 about the Great Lakes suspension of operations, also cit-
Lobbying for change on Railroad Day

Members of the SMART Transportation Division Legislative Department and legislative directors from multiple states took part in the March Railroad Day lobbying effort coordinated by the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association on March 7 in Washington, D.C. Among the topics discussed were limiting bigger, heavier trucks on the nation’s highways, making the short line rail tax credit permanent and federal rail regulations.

Participants in the effort included Erick Sla-haan, government affairs associate; Assistant National Legislative Director Greg Hynes; Georgia State Legislative Director Thomas Campbell; Pennsylvania State Legislative Director Paul Pokrowka; Minnesota State Legislative Director Phillip Quay; Ohio State Legislative Director Stuart Gardner; National Legislative Director John Risch; Illinois State Legislative Director Bob Guy and Ohio Assistant State Legislative Director Ralph Leichliter; New Jersey State Legislative Director Ron Sabol; Oklahoma State Legislative Director Dennis Schoettler; Virginia State Legislative Director Ronnie Hobos and Washington, D.C., Legislative Director Willie Bates.

Omnibus spending bill’s passage means funds for Amtrak, RRB and NMB

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congress passed and President Trump signed into law March 23 a bipartisan spending agreement known as the “omnibus” spending bill that provides a massive boost toward several union priorities, including transit and passenger rail projects such as $1.9 billion for Amtrak, including $650 million for projects in the Northeast Corridor. This will provide much-needed funding for the Gateway Project that will double passenger train service between New York and New Jersey to reduce congestion while making overdue repairs to tunnels and tracks. For our bus and transit members, the bill provides $2.6 billion to fund major transit capital investments, including heavy rail, commuter rail, light rail, streetcars and bus rapid transit projects nationwide.

In addition, the Railroad Retirement Board received a $10 million boost that will allow the agency to phase out its decades-old information technology services to provide and disburse benefits to our rail-road retirees in a timely manner. Lastly, the omnibus provides the National Mediation Board with $13.8 million that includes the sustained $570,000 funding increase to address the arbitration backlog.

“The SMART TD National Legislative Office continues to inform lawmakers about the importance of funding transit and passenger rail that are vital to our union membership and the nation’s transportation workforce at large. We will continue working to ensure that Congress addresses the full needs of our rail workers by increasing resources and other safety concerns about the numerous dangers posed by longer trains.”

This testimony plus derailments and other safety concerns, such as blocked crossings, did cause members of the House Transportation Committee to take notice. A letter from U.S. Reps. Peter DeFazio (D – Ore.) and Michael Capuano (D – Mass.), members of the committee, spurred the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to begin an investigation in March into the effects of excessively long trains and the safety hazards that they pose. That investigation is ongoing, and representatives of SMART TD’s Legislative Office provided hours of testimony April 12 to assist the GAO.

FRA rejects our request to limit train length

The Trump administration’s Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has declined a request made by SMART Transportation Division to address the safety concerns of excessively long trains.

In an April 25, 2017, letter from National Legislative Director John Risch to Robert Lauby, FRA’s associate administrator for safety, Risch referenced a pair of trains—one CSX train consisting of 234 cars and exceeding 2.5 miles in length and a BNSF train that had 246 cars that also exceeded 2.5 miles.

Risch said in the letter that such “incredibly long” trains pose challenges to crew radio communications and maintain brake pipe pressure, block more rail crossings and that crews are not adequately trained to handle these dangerously long trains.

But those concerns were simply brushed aside by Lauby.

“FRA does not have sufficient data or evidence to justify an Emergency Order limiting the length of trains,” he wrote in his March 7, 2018, response, saying also that the carriers were lengthening trains in an attempt “to enhance service delivery and operational efficiencies.”

“The letter signed by Lauby looked like it was written by some railroad lobbyist,” Risch said. “Anyone who has ever dealt with a longer train knows they are anything but efficient. They tie up the railroad because sidings and rail yards can’t handle them.”

Copies of both letters are available to be viewed on the SMART TD website.

Risch testified last October in a Surface Transportation Board listening session centered on CSX’s service problems about the numerous dangers posed by longer trains.

This testimony plus derailments and other safety concerns, such as blocked crossings, did cause members of the House Transportation Committee to take notice. A letter from U.S. Reps. Peter DeFazio (D – Ore.) and Michael Capuano (D – Mass.), members of the committee, spurred the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to begin an investigation in March into the effects of excessively long trains and the safety hazards that they pose.

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www.smart-union.org/td • www.utuia.org
PTC progress reported by nation’s railroads; FRA offers grants to those lagging behind

The U.S. Department of Transportation’s (DOT’s) Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) in January released a status update this spring on its efforts to assist railroads in implementing positive train control systems (PTC), along with the railroads’ self-reported progress for train control systems (PTC), along with railroads and suppliers are working to update this spring on its efforts to assist railroads in implementing positive train control systems (PTC). The agency’s most pressing goal is interoperability among the systems.

PTC systems are designed to prevent certain train-to-train collisions, over-speed derailments, incursions into established work zone limits, and trains going to the wrong tracks because a switch was left in the wrong position. All railroads subject to the statutory PTC implementation mandate must implement FRA-certified and interoperable PTC systems by the end of the year. Under the Positive Train Control Enforcement and Implementation Act of 2015, however, Congress permits a railroad to request FRA’s approval of an “alternate schedule” with a deadline beyond Dec. 31, 2018, but no later than Dec. 31, 2020, for certain non-hardware, operational aspects of PTC system implementation.

The congressional mandate requires FRA to approve a railroad’s alternative schedule with a deadline no later than Dec. 31, 2020. First quarter data, current as of March 31, 2018, shows PTC systems are in operation on approximately 60 percent of freight railroads’ route miles that are required to be governed by PTC systems — up from 56 percent last quarter. Passenger railroads have made less progress—with PTC systems in operation on only 25 percent of required route miles, up a mere 1 percent from the previous quarter.

Progress on installation of the technology varies widely among the nation’s railroads. Freight railroad BNSF reports that PTC has been installed on 100 percent of its trackage and the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority also has accomplished the same feat. In contrast, New Jersey Transit and Long Island Rail Road have substantial work to do in order to install the system on their locomotives and trackage, respectively.

One main area that railroads, especially the Class Is, still have to work out is interoperability among the systems. BNSF is the leader with only 16 percent progress. Between Jan. 2 and Feb. 14, FRA leadership hosted face-to-face meetings with executives from each of the 41 railroads subject to the statutory mandate. On May 15, FRA announced it would be offering $250 million in PTC systems grants to spur progress among railroads lagging behind.

SMART Transportation Division 2018 budget

Pursuant to Article 21B, Section 16, of the SMART Constitution, below is the 2018 budget for the SMART Transportation Division

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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strike</td>
<td>6,656,334</td>
<td>(5,377)</td>
<td>6,652,957</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6,652,957</td>
<td>499,500</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7,152,457</td>
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<tr>
<td>Convention</td>
<td>3,589,221</td>
<td>(213,819)</td>
<td>3,375,402</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3,375,402</td>
<td>1,332,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4,707,402</td>
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<td>Total funds</td>
<td>$19,140,649</td>
<td>$43,417</td>
<td>$19,184,066</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$19,184,066</td>
<td>$23,787,382</td>
<td>$(22,567,052)</td>
<td>$(1,292,369)</td>
<td>$(20,404,396)</td>
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Sturges named deputy admin at FRA

U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao announced April 18 that Mathew M. Sturges was appointed as the deputy administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).

Before joining FRA, Sturges was majority staff director of the U.S. House of Representatives Commit-tee on Transportation and Infrastructure, where he directed legislative oversight and authorization efforts related to all modes of transporta- tion, including the Fixing America’s Surface Trans- portation (FAST) Act. Previ-ously, he served as the T&I committee’s deputy staff director, staff director of the aviation subcommittee and director of member services. “I am excited to welcome Matt to the FRA executive team. He brings a wealth of Capitol Hill experience to FRA that will be an asset when dealing with some of the agency’s most pressing policy issues,” FRA Adminis-trator Ronald Batory said.

As deputy administrator, Sturges will be responsible for helping lead the agency’s safety regulatory activities, federal investments in freight and passenger rail, as well as legislative initiatives.
Charlotte Area Transit Systems (CATS) bus operator and Local 1715 GCA TMD Vice Chairperson Debra Franklin has been collecting and handing out toiletries to the homeless population in Charlotte, N.C., since November 2016. “It just noticed that when I went into the public bathrooms that women were washing up in the bathroom,” Franklin said. “I noticed that they were using the bathroom pump soap. So I started collecting toiletries and handing them out or leaving them bags of toiletries by their things in the bathrooms. I would also get other bus drivers to tell me where these women were or I’d walk the streets looking for them.”

As a bus operator, Franklin also received frequent complaints from other passengers about how the homeless riding her bus would smell and they’d ask her to kick them off the bus, but she couldn’t just kick someone off of her bus because they smelled bad. “There’s that saying that ‘You can be part of the problem or part of the solution,’ and I want to be part of the solution,” Franklin said. “I started out just helping women, but then I saw that a lot of these women had families with sons. So I started handing out blue bags for the men along with the pink ones for the women.”

Franklin estimates, based on the number of bags she’s given out, that she has probably helped around 800 people. But she has a bigger project in mind: to renovate two retired buses into mobile shower and laundry facilities. She heard about a person who converted an old bus in San Francisco into a shower bus and about a man in St. Louis who turned a bus into laundry facilities for the homeless in that city.

Franklin thought she would combine the two ideas and create a shower bus with laundry facilities – pointing out that it’s not enough for people to be clean, they need their clothes to be clean if they are going to go out, get jobs and become independent. She told local Fox affiliate FOX 46 that, “If you don’t have a place to stay and a place to shower, how are you going to maintain a job? If you look like me and you’re bathed, have your hair done, clean clothes – you can get a job and maintain a job.” After her story went public via FOX 46, Franklin says the donations of toiletries have come pouring in. “Right now everyone’s giving me donations for the showers, but they’ve forgotten about the bus. I feel good that people are donating the products for the shower.”

For her, it’s about helping them take steps to get jobs, not about giving a handout and making them dependent on that handout. But her bigger goal – that of converting the bus to a mobile shower facility – carries a big price. Her online fundraising effort estimates a $200,000 cost to acquire and convert the two buses. SMART TD North Carolina State Legislative Director Ron Ingerick has also been helping Franklin.

He’s made SMART TD North Carolina locals aware of Franklin’s cause and has asked that they contribute toiletries. Ingerick then picks the donations up from the locals when he’s in the area for meetings and delivers them to Franklin. “Debra is a vital member of our NCLB and Local 1715. If there’s anything that needs to be handled, Debra is always there to complete the task,” Ingerick said. Once she gets the funds to buy the buses, Franklin, who also is a local legislative representative, legislative secretary and vice local chairperson, says that the North Carolina AFL-CIO has offered to help her find union volunteers to help her renovate the buses. She’s already had some plans drawn up.

In the meantime, Franklin is trying to get area laundromats to donate free laundry days for people to wash their clothes and has a backup plan if she can’t raise the funds for a bus. “If I can’t get a bus, maybe I can get an abandoned building and convert it into a shower room,” she said. And looking further down the road, Franklin says she plans on renovating a truck or bus into a place where Charlotte’s homeless can get their makeup and hair done.