



The Official Publication of the United Transportation Union

## THE VOICE OF TRANSPORTATION LABOR

“Your UTU believes there are better ways of preserving your quality health care than you simply opening your wallet and handing back to the carrier your hard-earned wages.”

– International President Byron A. Boyd Jr.

### News & Notes

#### Website offers services

CLEVELAND – UTU members and others who receive the *UTU News* and other correspondence from the union and who have recently moved can now notify the UTU International of their new mailing address through the UTU website, [utu.org](http://utu.org).

A button has been placed on the UTU home page that, when clicked, will take the viewer to a second page where the new address information, including telephone number and e-mail address, can be recorded.

Also new to the UTU website is a button where UTU members and others can register to receive the latest news from the union via e-mail. Members and others who want to receive updates on matters of importance to them and their union, including Amtrak funding and the implementation of remote control, are urged to sign up for this service.

#### Intermodal volume strong

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Intermodal traffic on U.S. railroads remains robust, while carload traffic continues to stagnate, according to the Association of American Railroads (AAR). For the first seven weeks of 2003, carload traffic was up only 0.4% from last year while intermodal volume (trailers and containers) was up 10.5%. Canadian carriers reported similar results, with carload traffic off 0.8% from last year and container traffic up 15%. Mexico's largest rail carrier, TFM, reported carload traffic increases of 29.7% from last year, with container traffic showing an increase of 64.3%.

#### Send your recipes, hints

CLEVELAND – UTU members are reminded that the union is collecting members' favorite recipes and helpful household hints. These donations should be dedicated in the name of a friend or loved one who has suffered from breast cancer. These items will be compiled into a book, with the proceeds from the sale donated to breast-cancer research as a tribute to those whose names are listed in the book. Please send favorite recipes and helpful household hints to: Breast Cancer, UTU, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250.

**TO REGISTER FOR AUTOMATIC  
E-MAIL UPDATES ON ISSUES  
IMPORTANT TO YOU,  
VISIT THE UTU'S WEBSITE:  
[WWW.UTU.ORG](http://WWW.UTU.ORG)**

## First trip rates negotiated; others expected soon

CLEVELAND – Ending the dual basis of pay between pre-1985 and post-1985 rail operating employees represented by the UTU was a principal objective of the ratified contract between UTU and most major railroads.

The ratified national agreement ends the two-tier wage system for post-1985 employees without diminishing the earnings capability of pre-1985 employees.

Trip rates, currently being negotiated by general chairpersons on a property-by-property basis and district-by-district, are to be based upon earnings of pre-1985 employees. Because trip rates are being developed locally, there is flexibility to tailor trip rates to fit the special needs of every district.

The first trip rates agreement was negotiated by Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) General Chairperson Robert D. Kerley (GO-001), with assistance from Local 303 Chairperson Steve McElhany and Local 947 Chairperson Don Seyer. They were effective last month on BNSF's former St. Louis-San Francisco Railway property, and govern runs between Springfield

and Thayer, Mo., and between Chaffee, Mo., and Memphis, Tenn.

Other trip-rate agreements currently are nearing completion on BNSF and CSX.

“The local BNSF trip rates we negotiated accurately reflect the actual earnings of pre-1985 employees in that pool, based upon a test period covering the calendar year 2001, with those wages adjusted for intervening pay increases,” Kerley said.

### Trip rates make paychecks predictable

“The trip rates include only those elements identified as ‘national pay elements’ in Article V, Section 5, of the Aug. 20, 2002, ratified national agreement. All other pay elements remain intact and

will be paid just as before, including crew consist allowances, held-away-from-home terminal pay, etc.,” Kerley said.

In territories affected by the BNSF agreement, each pool will have two separate trip rates – a flip trip rate when service and deadhead are combined into and out of the away-from-home terminal; and a basic trip rate for all other trips, includ-

*Continued on page 10*

## “UTU for Life” serves retirees

CLEVELAND – Retirement should not mean abandoning workplace friends, losing touch with your industry's current events and not having influence over public policy issues affecting retirement.

To keep UTU members together and informed and to amplify their voices on public policy matters of importance to them and their families, “UTU for Life” is being created.

UTU for Life is an expansion of the UTU Retiree Club and its greatest strength will be at the local level.

UTU for Life will bring UTU retirees and active members together for luncheons and other activities aimed at fellowship, information and political action.

“Our retired members from the air, rail and

*Continued on page 10*

## UTU urges rail safety summit

CLEVELAND – Officials of every major freight railroad have been urged by UTU International President Byron A. Boyd Jr. to meet with him and other senior UTU officials to discuss railroad safety following the tragic deaths of four UTU members and the critical injury of another last month. “Initial responses indicate all major railroads will send senior officials,” Boyd said.

“We are all aware that working on the railroad is one of the most dangerous occupations in America,” Boyd said. “When rail operating employees are injured, too often they lose a limb, or die. Rail workers know this and work accordingly. They are highly trained in handling large and dangerous equipment in difficult conditions and bad weather. Each accident must be seen by

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# Around the UTU

## News from around the U.S. and Canada

### Local 171, Aurora, Ill.

Retired former conductors' Local Chairperson **Robert Tinsely** was presented with a UTU Brass Lantern by Local President **Roy Coan** in recognition of more than 26 years of service to the membership at the annual holiday dinner held on Jan. 25. Coan said speakers at the dinner included Railroad Retirement Board Representative **Bob Eggert**, UnitedHealthcare Representative **Jim Reese**, and **Tom Flaskamp** and **Phil Romanchuk**, who represented Designated Legal Counsel **Yeager, Jungbauer, Barczak & Vucinovich, P.L.C.**, sponsors of the event. A raffle awarded candle baskets from Savor the Scent to members **Jim Davis**, **William Christiansen**, **Darryl Bennett** and **Robert Lumley**.

### Local 262, Boston, Mass.

Member **Al Craven** is inviting members to a fundraising party to help meet expenses related to the kidney transplant needed by his brother **Darryl**, who is receiving the desperately needed organ from his sister **Nancy**. The party, which will include a cash bar, deejay, food, and a 50/50 raffle, will be held from 7 p.m. to midnight on Friday, March 14, at the AOH Hall, 58 Lowell St., Peabody, Mass. For information or to purchase an attendance ticket in advance, contact Brother Craven at (781) 598-6809, or write to him at 60 Briar Hill Dr., Lynn, MA 01902.

### Local 313, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Those involved in the preservation effort surrounding the *SS City of Milwaukee*, one of the last railcar ferries to work the Great Lakes, recently received \$1,250 from Designated Legal Counsel **Hoey, Farina and Downes** as part of the law firm's matching grant program, said **George P. Micka IV**. For information about the ship, contact Micka at (231) 755-8755, send him e-mail at [sscitymilw@aol.com](mailto:sscitymilw@aol.com), or view the website at <http://www.carferry.com/>.

### Local 340, Connellsville, Pa.

Members continue to seek financial assistance for 30-year CSXT conductor **Jim Means**, whose cancer-stricken wife, **Gaya**, is undergoing an experimental course of chemotherapy not covered by insurance, said **R.C. "Randy" Matthias**, who noted that an item last month noting the address where donations could be sent was in error. Send donations to the Means family at 624 Breakneck Rd., Connellsville, PA 15425.

### Local 422, Vancouver, B.C.

Although members of the local were grateful for exposure received from a recent article in the *UTU News*, they pointed out a typographical error incorrectly identifying their local treasurer, who is the much-appreciated **Mitch Hodge**, said Local President **John Cowan**. Meanwhile, Brother Cowan said he collects and trades railway uniform caps, badges, uniforms, lanterns, etc., and is especially eager to hear from fellow members working on Amtrak's Northeast Corridor and the new Downeaster service. Contact him via e-mail at [jpc@look.ca](mailto:jpc@look.ca), or write to him at 303-1187 Pipeline Rd., Coquitlam, BC, V3P 4R9.

### Local 469, Madison, Ill.

The **Midwest Railroaders** sponsored their seventh annual Superbowl Sunday Poker Tournament, where \$1,000 was raised to assist the Foursquare Church and food pantry, which provides food and assistance to the needy in the St.



*Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority bus operator Philip Ramirez of Local 1608, Chatsworth, Calif., had his first experience as an actor when he appeared on two recent episodes of the Fox television series "24." (Photo courtesy Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority.)*

## L.A. bus operator adds reality to show

With "reality" TV all the rage, various shows have been incorporating real elements into their scripts to keep viewers tuning in each week. The hit suspense-drama series "24," shown in 24 one-hour segments, features a clock that runs in real time, documenting a single 24-hour period. And when the script calls for a bus to appear, the operator behind the wheel is a real UTU-represented bus operator.

Coincidentally, **Philip Ramirez**, a member of Local 1608 in Chatsworth, Calif., has been a bus operator with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) for 24 years. He's appeared so far in two episodes of Fox television's "24."

The West Valley Division 8 operator was barely visible in his first appearance behind the wheel of Metro Bus 7411. But in the second episode in which he participated, he can clearly be seen as the bus stops to pick up star Kiefer Sutherland.

"It was very exciting," said Ramirez, who had no previous acting experience. "I guess I was picked based on my appearance. They asked MTA to recommend someone, and they picked me because I'm always dressed sharp."

Ramirez said it took about six hours to film one of the scenes he's in, which was shot late last September in Canoga Park, Calif.

He also said his wife of 49 years, Luisa, and his four grown children were very excited about his show-biz turn. While he'd welcome another opportunity to appear on TV, Ramirez hasn't run out and hired an agent.

In fact, he said MTA operators could retire after 23 years of service, but the 68-year-old's only plans are to continue driving. "I like everything about this job," Ramirez said.

Ramirez said prior to becoming an MTA employee, he spent five years as a bus operator with the Chicago Transit Authority. "I moved out here to get away from the winter," said Ramirez, who not only found a place in the sun, but ended up in the spotlight.

Louis Metro East area, said Secretary-Treasurer **John Payer**. Winner of the tournament was **Don "Tater" Gaston**, and two other lucky participants won color televisions. Sponsors of the event included Designated Legal Counsel **John**

**T. Papa** and **Lance Callis**. Joining members of Local 469 at the event were those from **Locals 1388 and 1405** (St. Louis, Mo.), **Local 1517** (Cincinnati, Ohio), **Local 1534** (Chicago, Ill.), and **Local 1929** (E. St. Louis, Ill.).

### Local 583, Fond du Lac, Wisc.

This Canadian National (formerly Wisconsin Central) local recently elected conductor **Jason Elm** to the newly created position of public relations officer when they learned he was an Operation Lifesaver presenter. Brother Elm, along with conductor and Vice General Chairperson **James Wathan Jr.**, recently completed a presentation at Roberts Elementary School in Fond du Lac, and plan to give presentations to other groups in the area, Wathan said.

### Local 773, Galveston, Tex.

Members of this BNSF local are making plans for a picnic in May, said Local Chairperson **Joey Stubbs** and Local President **Don Neuwieler**. Information about the picnic can be discussed at regular meetings, held at 4:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month in the Galveston Daily News Building. Meanwhile, members offer best wishes to **Ken Lister**, who retired in February.

### Local 1373, Philadelphia, Pa.

Now in outpatient therapy, 12-year-old **Cecelia Betson**, daughter of member **Bill Betson**, continues to make great progress healing from burns suffered in an accident, said Local President **Tony Mirarchi**, who joined the family in thanking all those who generously donated funds to help offset the expenses related to her treatment.

### Local 1813, West Colton, Calif.

Union Pacific switchmen in this local are reminding all UTU members that plans are being made for the 25th annual two-man scramble golf tournament, tentatively set to be held at El Rancho Verde Golf Course, said Local Chairperson **Rick Renna**. All UTU members are invited. For information, contact Renna at (909) 946-8984.

### Local 1908, Buffalo, N.Y.

Members of this bus operators' local send their best wishes to **Judith Palistrant**, who recently retired after operating a school bus for Cottrell, National School Bus and finally Laidlaw Transit for 36 years without an accident, according to Secretary **Joann L. Ehrhardt**.

### Local 1933, Washington, D.C.

Amtrak Local Chairperson **Ray Cunningham** recently gratefully acknowledged the invaluable assistance received from Amtrak Labor Relations Officer **Jim Ryan**, who played a key role in restoring and protecting the rights and benefits of Amtrak Zone 5 assistant conductor **K. L. Sparks**, who experienced a break in service when he was called to active military duty from August 2001 through August 2002. Cunningham, who also serves as director of the UTU Human Rights Committee, noted that the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Act, 38 U.S.C. Section 4316, specifically states: "A person who is re-employed is entitled to the seniority and other rights and benefits determined by seniority that the person had on the date of the commencement of service in the uniformed services plus the additional seniority and rights and benefits that such a person would have attained if the person had remained continuously employed."

# State Watch *News from UTU State Legislative Boards*

## North Dakota

The North Dakota Legislative Board is leading the charge against SB 2314, a bill that would repeal the state's corporate and personal income taxes and expand the state's sales tax to recover lost revenue.

Legislative Director **John Risch** said that because no consumer-interest groups have stepped to the forefront to oppose the tax changes, it is up to labor, particularly UTU, to protect citizens from corporate excess.

In his testimony before the Senate Committee on Finance and Taxation, Risch said: "At issue is fundamental fairness. It isn't fair to take the most prosperous entities in North Dakota off the state rolls and shift the tax burden onto the rest of us.

"Raising and expanding the sales tax is more harmful to moderate and lower income people than to affluent people because lower income people spend more of their disposable income on taxable items...It would place more of the tax burden on moderate and low income people while providing the most tax relief for the wealthiest among us."

Unfortunately, the Senate passed the bill on Feb. 20 and has forwarded it to the House of Representatives for consideration.

## New Jersey

The fiscal 2004 budget proposed by Gov. James McGreevey in February contains \$1.1 billion in transportation capital spending, according to the Associated Press.

Although the budget calls for a 5% reduction in operating costs at the state Department of Transportation, New Jersey Transit's \$260-million operating subsidy would not change under the proposal.

The governor has also pledged not to raise New Jersey Transit fares in the coming fiscal year, but the agency will impose approximately \$27 million in spending cuts through a reduction of about 170 nonunion, administrative workers.

"With a budget deficit of some \$5 billion, we're glad to see that the governor has seen fit not to raise fares or reduce services," said Legislative Director **Dan O'Connell**. "This is a perfect example of how TPEL works to protect our members' livelihood."

## Arizona



Arizona State Legislative Director Scott Olson (center) presents UTU shirts to Local 1081 Chairperson Glenn Bay (left) and Legislative Representative Steve Coffey at the local's monthly meeting. As a result of their efforts, Olson said, Local 1081 is now the leading UTU local in the state in per capita contributions to the Transportation Political Education League. Olson said the two local officers contacted each member of their local and explained the importance of TPEL in passing the Railroad Retirement and Survivor's Improvement Act of 2001 and asked each member to contribute to the union's PAC or to increase their current contribution. "The members of Local 1081 responded overwhelmingly by increasing their contributions and I would like to thank all of them," Olson said. "TPEL needs all of the help that it can get and I am asking all UTU members to increase their contributions as soon as you can. It is damage to you and your family that we are trying to prevent."

## Texas

The Bexar County Rural Rail Transportation District has invited representatives of both the Union Pacific and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe to a March 3 meeting to discuss dual railroad access to a new Toyota manufacturing plant.

San Antonio was chosen as the site for Toyota's new North American assembly plant, an \$800-million facility that will initially employ some 2,000 people, but the company stipulated that it must have access to at least two railroad carriers.

The proposed site is currently served only by UP, which to date has not agreed to sell trackage rights on its line to BNSF.

The district is charged with building an estimated \$22-million rail spur to the site in the event no agreement can be reached, said Legislative Director and district member **Connie English**.

## North Carolina

At the invitation of Legislative Board Chairperson **Sheldon Spain**, Cong. Bob Etheridge (D-N.C.) visited CSX employees at Rocky Mount and joined them in a CSX locomotive cab for a 90-minute ride to Fayetteville.

"The congressman continues to increase his knowledge of the rail industry. He asked many questions concerning train velocity, fuel economics, safety, road-crossing violations, meeting trains and many others," said Spain. "He said he enjoyed the trip and learned a lot about rail movements."

This is the second train trip that Spain has arranged for Etheridge in the past year, said Legislative Director **Richard Westbrook**.

"Congressman Etheridge has a better knowledge now of the problems railroaders face everyday when they come to work. I would like to thank Sheldon for his hard work in arranging these trips.

"I would also like to thank the UTU officers and CSX officers in Rocky Mount for making this happen," Westbrook said.



CSX conductor John Jordan, left, a member of Local 1106 at Rocky Mount, N.C., helps Cong. Bob Etheridge (D-N.C.) detrain after the representative took a 90-minute ride to observe railroad operations.

## Bus Department

By Percy Palmer

### UTU urges revision of new driving rules

Last year the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) implemented rules regarding commercial drivers which we consider extremely restrictive and unfair.

Many unions, including the UTU, have filed petitions requesting a reconsideration of the final rule. Issues for reconsideration were:

1. Disqualification periods for driving under the influence (DUI). The FMCSA has failed to realize that DUI offenses committed by Commercial Drivers License (CDL) holders while operating a commercial motor vehicle are usually handled by the employers under their mandatory random testing or their reasonable-cause testing. In most cases these employees undergo rehabilitation or they are fired. I would like the FMCSA to explain which is more serious: to be caught by the employer driving its vehicle under the influence (and sometimes loaded with passengers) or to be caught by the police in a non-commercial vehicle while off duty.

2. Less stringent penalties for foreign-domiciled drivers. FMCSA claims that they have no control over countries that do not adopt laws to disqualify commercial drivers for offenses committed in private vehicles. They indicated they would initiate discussions with Mexico and Canada to modify their policies.

3. Inconsistency between the regulatory language and the Motor Carrier Safety Improvement Act (MCSIA). The FMCSA did change their rules so that disqualifications for offenses committed by a CDL holder while operating a non-commercial vehicle would be applicable only if the conviction for such offenses resulted in the revocation, cancellation or suspension of the CDL holder's license or non-commercial driving privileges.



## Yardmasters

By Don Carver

### Persistence pays off for everyone

"In the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity." – Albert Einstein.

We must reach for new goals. They must be defined and be seriously considered achievable if they are to be obtained. Optimism is a key ingredient in "goal reaching." Lack of optimism can often become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

It is said, "Optimism is like a forest fire. You can smell it for miles before you see it burning." Optimism is contagious and creates teamwork, which produces positive results.

Cooperation and teamwork are cardinal principles of good union representation. Officers and members who share a common direction and a sense of community can achieve goals more quickly and easily because of the strength drawn from one another.

Get involved. When a sister or brother is having a difficult time handling the load, offer to assist. Lend a helping hand. When your representatives have resolved a problem or settled a dispute let them know that you appreciate their hard work and achievements.

By standing behind our leadership and applying these principles on every local committee, general committee, legislative board and in each department of our organization, the United Transportation Union will be even stronger in the future than it is today.



**Byron A. Boyd Jr., International President**

**Paul C. Thompson, Assistant President**

**Daniel E. Johnson, Secretary/Treasurer**

**James M. Brunkenhoefer, Nat. Legislative Dir.**

## Contact the UTU:

via telephone at (216) 228-9400

via fax at (216) 228-5755

via e-mail at [utunews@utu.org](mailto:utunews@utu.org)

via the Internet at <http://www.utu.org>

## Art of negotiation requires patience

Those who imagine that the most effective means of gaining what we want is to march in the streets forget lessons of childhood: throwing tantrums is not likely to produce more than a lot of noise.

Achieving objectives at the bargaining table is much like planning a long trip. There are many routes – some better, some worse. Those most successful at achieving positive results devise a strategy, pay attention to detail, remain flexible and are patient.

It would be nice – and convenient – if we could unilaterally change the culture of Norfolk Southern so that no manager intimidates injured employees. It would be nice – and convenient – if we could unilaterally tell carriers they may not reduce the quality of health care or cease paying 100% of the costs. It would be nice – and convenient – if we could unilaterally eliminate availability policies.

The art of successful negotiations, whether to solve family disputes or those between labor and management, is to make the list of agreed items longer and the list of unsettled items shorter. This is best accomplished when each party addresses the other's needs and concerns in a positive manner.

It is easy to get impatient with the process, but impatience often leads to third party intervention, which almost never produces desired results. Few things worthwhile are accomplished without extensive preparation, intensive effort and patience.

UTU agreements on behalf of its members demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach.



## WASHINGTON WATCH

By James Brunkenhoefer

## Intimidation of workers by NS must stop

Your UTU always tries to display a positive attitude in dealing with carriers. We strive to be a supportive partner and reach out in good faith wherever there is opportunity for mutual benefit.

Examples include our lobbying support in the railroads' fight against bigger trucks, against coal slurry pipelines and against rail-shipper attempts to force carriers into a race to the bottom through so-called open access – the equivalent of opening a factory and its machinery to use by others than the owner and its employees.



Railroads know they would not have been successful without lobbying assistance from the UTU. That fact is echoed repeatedly by lawmakers.

Yet, there is one railroad that does not understand the value of our help or that life is a two-way street. I am talking about Norfolk Southern Railway (NS).

Almost every NS employee represented by this union believes that when they are injured, there will be a company investigation followed by disciplinary action.

Seeking immediate medical attention for injured employees must be made a priority for Norfolk Southern. Injured employ-

## Preserving our health care

By Byron A. Boyd Jr.  
International President

Under the long discarded Roman calendar, certain sacred days were known as ides. In March, the ides fell on the 15th – the date Julius Caesar was assassinated in the Roman Senate. Shakespeare immortalized the event by having a fortune teller advise Caesar, "Beware the ides of March."

Today, that fortune teller might advise us to beware the status quo as to health care. Caesar ignored his warning and lost his life. Your UTU is not ignoring the warning about health care. We are looking outside the box at ways to preserve our health care benefits and keep them affordable.



Boyd

Our health care benefits negotiated with rail carriers are among the best available anywhere. Unlike government-provided health care in Canada, for example, we have almost instant access to health care providers and we are not forced to wait months for urgent treatment such as radiation therapy and many types of surgeries.

A problem faced in the U.S. is that the cost of health care has been rising at almost 20% annually in recent years. Major railroads are now paying about \$900 per employee per month for the health care coverage we enjoy. Many studies suggest there is no end in sight to medical-cost inflation.

That is why rail carriers seek substantial health care cost sharing from employees. Your UTU believes there are better

ways of preserving your quality health care than you simply opening your wallet and handing back to the carrier your hard-earned wages.

Indeed, the national contract with most major railroads that you ratified last year contains a crucial section on health care benefits. The carriers agreed to examine plan redesign, cost containment, cost sharing, administrative change and vendor review. This separates UTU from the unfavorable settlement and arbitration awards of other organizations.

UTU has engaged consultants on medicine and health care plans to assist us in negotiations with the carriers. I have made clear to the carriers that simply sharing the increase in medical-cost inflation does nothing to control that inflation and ensure UTU members retain the valuable health care benefits now enjoyed.

In recent negotiating sessions, we discussed that the carriers' health-care plan has never been audited to ensure premium dollars are being spent wisely. While other industries and their employees have explored and embraced alternatives to traditional health care, there has been no attempt – until now – to do so in the railroad industry.

We are exploring, for example, innovative wellness programs to keep us from getting sick, tailoring health-care based upon family status and age of the insured, and ways to give our members greater control over how health care dollars are spent, including innovative plan features.

Progressive approaches have won for us better pay, benefits and job protection. A progressive approach to health care will continue to keep your UTU in the driver's seat.

ees should not be intimidated to keep them from reporting injuries.

NS is apparently content to simply deny there is a problem. Since the threat of disciplinary actions causes the suppression of injury reporting, there are fewer injury reports. And, because there are fewer injury reports, NS wins the highest Harriman Award each year.

Intimidation should not win safety awards. It is unfortunate that such actions deny this well-intentioned award from going to railroads that do not intimidate injured employees.

When NS employees call this office to complain about intimidation by NS management, there is every reason for me to suggest they call UTU designated legal counsel.

We would rather not resort to sharing your concerns with the Federal Railroad Administration, the media, the investment community and with lawmakers. We just want NS to become a responsible railroad that does what is right by its employees.

It is time for Norfolk Southern to become a more responsible employer and member of the railroad community. This is an open invitation to NS to make that happen for its benefit and for the benefit of the employees we represent.

# Observations of a UTU engineer

by Robert D. Kerley  
UTU General Chairperson, BNSF

I have been a locomotive engineer for 25 years, successfully completing the UTU engineer training program and Federal Railroad Administration engineer certification and re-certification.



Kerley

I have always felt a healthy professional satisfaction in those accomplishments. However, I never assumed that my being an engineer made me superior in any way to the people who shared the cab with me, or that becoming an engineer would guarantee absolute immunity against major technological advances, industrial change or economic upheaval. In fact, I don't know of any industry in the world where mastering a particular craft provides that kind of guarantee.

Blacksmith or software designer, truck driver or astronaut, all have one thing in common: technology and the dynamics of a world economy are constantly changing industry and the labor needed to run it.

I trained for promotion to engineer in 1977 under a UTU agreement, and it was my UTU train service seniority that gave me that opportunity. Although I had to relinquish my train service seniority to enter engine service at that time, I did establish and retain seniority as a fireman under a UTU agreement so that if I became unable to work as an engineer, I could exercise that fireman seniority.

In 1978, UTU secured a rule permitting trainmen to retain and accrue ground seniority while working as an engineer. UTU has always known that the best job protection is a job, and that seniority in only one craft is a fool's bet.

As our industry changed, various crafts were affected in various ways. Clerical workers were replaced en masse by computer technology. Maintenance of track, structures and equipment was reduced by automation and improved engineering design. The result was longer trains and increased productivity, and all railroad operating crafts suffered a shrinking of their ranks - some more than others.

UTU constantly worked to preserve as many jobs as possible, and to provide protection for those whose jobs had to be eliminated due to these changes in technology and industry and economics.

Through attrition or reserve boards, and by expanding job opportunities and seniority rights, UTU strove to protect the long-term interests of all crafts in our industry.

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE) set a very different course. It took advantage of every opportunity to increase the wages of those fortunate enough to still be working as engineers, but did little to protect those who lost jobs or to prepare for the inevitable day when technology would knock on its own door.

In 1985, UTU provided an opportunity for engineers who did not already have ground service seniority to be added to the appropriate ground service rosters. Even then, UTU knew that eventually engineers would face the same threat from technology that had ravaged every other craft.

Sadly, some engineers looked that gift horse in the mouth and rejected the offer because of shortsighted advice from BLE leaders who convinced them that refusing train service seniority would somehow ensure the permanency of their position as an engineer.

When the U.S. Congress enacted legislation forcing reductions in train crew consists in 1991, BLE negotiated a "special pay differential" for engineers directly piggy-backed on UTU agreements. The engineers' additional pay was

contingent upon a member of the train crew receiving compensation for operating short-handed under a UTU agreement, and was payable only to engineers who held ground service seniority that would have entitled them to such payment as a trainman.

Those provisions were refined and revised on individual carriers, but if UTU agreements had never permitted engineers to acquire or retain train service seniority in the first place, BLE would have had no basis at all for an argument to increase the engineers' wages due to reductions in train crews.

BLE repeatedly used this "me too" approach to secure significant improvements in wages and working conditions for engineers, yet BLE leaders still rejected any notion that their members' future was inextricably linked to the other operating crafts.

With the introduction of remote control technology, UTU will continue its tradition of striving to represent the interests of all operating crafts. I only hope that the BLE leadership will seriously consider the consequences of attempting to remain an island in the stream of industrial change.

Unfortunately, it appears that they are now looking outside our industry for a new partner. Perhaps that is a viable option. On the other hand, I have always found it rather disconcerting to hear the words "Teamsters" and "Railroad Retirement" mentioned in the same breath.

Yes, I am proud to be a locomotive engineer. I only hope I can still say that after the BLE leadership has made the critical decisions it now faces.

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**"I only hope the BLE leadership will seriously consider the consequences of attempting to remain an island in the stream of industrial change."**

**-General Chairperson  
Robert Kerley**

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## Insurance billing errors not to be ignored

If you are a UTU member covered under the Comprehensive Health Care Benefit (CHCB), the Early Retirement Major Medical Benefits Plan (GA-46000), or you choose to go out of network under the Managed Medical Care Program (MMCP), you will have to pay a percentage of each bill, called co-insurance.

UTU members getting treatment from network providers still have to pay co-insurance, but network providers have agreed to discount their charge, so the amount on which co-insurance is figured is lower, saving UTU members money.

The Explanation of Benefits (EOB) that members receive provides them with the co-insurance amount they owe.

Sometimes, however, billing errors occur and members will get a statement from the provider for the difference between the provider's charge as billed and the lower network discount rate allowed, which members should not have to pay. What should the member do?

First, do not ignore the bill. Sooner or later, the member will begin to get billing notices or telephone calls from a collection agency, which may take the member to court to get the payment.

In these situations, members are urged to call the provider's office. Members should remind the provider that they are a UnitedHealthcare, Aetna or Blue Cross/Blue Shield (BCBS) network provider, and that the member is not responsible for the amount greater than the network rate. The member can even send the provider a copy of the EOB (send a copy, not the original. Keep the original with other records.)

Frequently, these problems are simple billing errors, and a call may correct the problem.

If the provider continues to send a bill, members should call their health benefits administrator (UnitedHealthcare, Aetna or BCBS) immediately to

report the problem. The benefits administrator will contact the provider, if necessary, to get the records corrected.

The Railroad Plans also have contracted with Coalition America, Inc. (CAI) to obtain discounts from providers who are not part of UnitedHealthcare's, Aetna's or BCBS's provider network. If the discount shown on the EOB is through CAI, there will be a message on the bottom of the EOB telling the member to call CAI if there are any problems. Any billing problems should be handled in the same manner as above, but members should refer to the network name shown in the EOB message when discussing it with the provider's office. If a bill still arrives after a discussion with the provider, contact CAI immediately.

CAI will contact the provider and resolve the billing problem. If the discount was taken incorrectly, CAI will advise the member's health benefits administrator and arrange for the bill to be re-processed correctly. If the discount is correct, CAI will have the provider correct its records to show that the UTU member does not owe an amount greater than the negotiated rate.

Remember that in all of these situations, members will still have to pay their co-insurance part of the bill. Using a network provider or getting a discount through CAI cannot remove that obligation.

More infrequently, UTU members may get a balance-due bill even if they are covered under MMCP and use a network provider. Most of these are simple provider billing errors, and, as explained above, members should call the provider to explain that, under the plan, all they owe is the \$15 co-payment (if applicable).

If members cannot get the provider to remove the charge, they should call their health benefits administrator as soon as possible. The benefits administrator will then contact the provider to get the records corrected.

# Alaska Railroad: UTU single representation means better teamwork, better service, better wages

All photos by UTU Local 1626 member Warren Redfearn

## The Alaska Railroad

The Alaska Railroad, owned by the State of Alaska, is a one-of-a-kind carrier, the only North American railroad to provide freight and passenger service. Last year, it hauled 472,000 passengers and 7.8 million tons of freight in almost 97,000 carloads over perhaps the most scenic track in the world.

After a failed start by private builders in 1903, following discovery of gold in the Yukon, the federal government took charge in 1914. Congress ordered rail construction equipment and locomotives used to build the Panama Canal sent to Alaska. Finally, in 1923, President Warren Harding tapped the symbolic golden spike south of Fairbanks on the west end of a 702-foot bridge spanning the Tanana River. The Alaska Railroad was born. In 1985, ownership was transferred from the federal government to the state.

The railroad consists of 466 miles of mostly single-track, jointed-rail main line, 59 miles of branch lines, 86 miles of yards and 45 sidings for meets on the 400-mile line linking Anchorage with Fairbanks. The carrier owns 52 locomotives and employs 688 workers. The UTU represents all 156 train and engine service employees. The railroad's 1.5 accidents per million train miles is well below the national average of 3.8.



Conductor Mike Rosso updates his track warrant. Most of the single-track main line between Anchorage and Fairbanks is dark territory.



Engineer Bill Hightower, nearing 30 years service, frequently trains student engineers, as he is doing here from the left side of the cab. Even after retirement Hightower said he wouldn't consider leaving Alaska – even in winter.



Student engineer Jason Dennis learning the 400 miles of road between Anchorage and Fairbanks. He was headed to law school in the lower-48 until a dose of part-time rail-roading invaded his bloodstream.

## The Cargo

Petroleum – nearly 800 million gallons a year – is the single-most important commodity hauled by the Alaska Railroad. Crude oil from Prudhoe Bay is piped 400 miles south to near Fairbanks for refining. Several trains of tank cars depart daily to fill the tanks at Ted Stevens International Airport at Anchorage, which serves cargo and passenger jets flying the polar routes. Trains also carry jet fuel to fighter jet squadrons at two Air Force bases: Elmendorf and Eielson.

In Anchorage, piggyback trains for Fairbanks are assembled from containers that have arrived from Seattle aboard roll-on/roll-off ships. At the railroad's Whittier terminal, barges also arrive from Tacoma with railcars and containers lashed to their decks. If it's freight and it's destined to or from Alaska, it arrives and departs via air or water. There are no rail connections with Canada. The Alaska-Canada Highway, which connects the lower 48 states, is a grueling 1,500-mile drive over a 1950s-era roadway.

Specialized shipments, plus heavy and oversized loads such as huge earthmoving machinery and oilfield modules, are frequently hauled inland by rail. The railroad also hauls large amounts of coal and gravel for construction.



Conductor John Fleming sets the hand brakes on a container car. Most consumer goods arriving in Alaska are containerized. The railroad also hauls much heavy equipment north for oil exploration, earthmoving and pipelines.



Engineer Raschad Galimba is Hawaii-born and raised, but says he would never return. "I chased a blonde here," he jokes. "When she went to California, I found another."



It may be 30 degrees below zero Fahrenheit outside, but inside his SD-70MAC cab, conductor Leon Butler says it feels like spring – and he wears short sleeves to prove it. (In the cab, though, is heavy-duty survival gear, including a parka, long johns, insulated boots, gloves and hat.)

## The Climate

Most visitors to Alaska arrive and depart when temperatures are mild and the scenery is green. In February in Fairbanks, when nighttime temperatures may reach 40 degrees below zero Fahrenheit, trainmen typically are found flat on their backs beneath two rail cars holding a lighted fusee. They apply the heat to stiffer-than-a-girder air-brake hoses to make them sufficiently supple to complete a coupling.

Where train meets take place on the mostly single-track railroad, 40-mph gusts and windchills of 70 degrees below zero Fahrenheit await trainmen who turn switches manually and remain on the ground for the run-through inspection of the train holding the main line. The rotary snow plow is a common sight and crews carry survival gear, knowing many hours may pass before help can get to them in the event of an emergency. Don't expect warmer weather when you reach the curiously named station, Honolulu, midway between Anchorage and Fairbanks.

Alaska holds the record for the deepest recorded North American snowfall: 81 feet in one season!



Conductor Wanda Robinson braves the cold to make a connection.



Conductor Dan Forsman helps a local resident hoist food and supplies into the heated baggage car. Much of the railroad's route north from Anchorage to Fairbanks is through wilderness with no roads. Residents flag down the train for travel to and from trading posts and their wilderness homes.

## The Passengers

They arrive mostly in warm weather months, mostly by airplane and cruise ship. Modern single-level dome cars with panoramic windows carry them to the national parks or simply on sight-seeing tours from sea level through mountain passes accessible only by rail.

Specially trained tour guides team with UTU conductors to provide commentary on points of interest, local history and even legends. The teamwork is extraordinary. *Onboard Services* magazine recently named the Alaska Railroad the "Overall Best" railroad in the world, giving the carrier high rankings for on-board services, safety, equipment, entertainment, uniforms and food service.

Even in winter, tourists travel the Alaska Railroad, many of them Japanese headed from Anchorage to hotels in Fairbanks. It is thought among many Japanese that children conceived under the Northern Lights – sometimes best seen well north of Anchorage – are better blessed. In Alaska during winter, night stretches for 67 successive days when there is no sunrise!

By law, the Alaska Railroad must provide flag-stop service used by those living in the wilderness not accessible by roads. Most are armed with pistols or rifles as protection against bears, moose and wolves. They may be traveling to and from trading posts or simply visiting friends. From the tracks in winter, they may use snowmobiles to reach their homes, typically without electricity, telephone or even indoor plumbing.

## The Moose

When snow is deep, moose congregate on the cleared tracks where they can run faster from predators. To moose, locomotives are huge predators. Sensing the locomotive might follow them into the deep snow, moose stay put, eventually ambling away. Sometimes, however, trains can't stop in time.

## One union, indivisible

With one union – the UTU – representing all train and engine service employees, rivalries are virtually unknown on the Alaska Railroad. "When you're hip deep in snow and the temperature is minus 40 degrees and there is a train problem in the bush, every crew member's life depends upon teamwork and trust," says Jerry Valinske, president of UTU Local 1626 in Anchorage.

General Chairperson Wes Rogers cites another reason for no rivalry "We've maintained an even wage for everyone." In fact, with train and engine service employees all pulling together under the UTU banner, the UTU has negotiated one of the premier transportation contracts in North America. By 2008, every member of the extra board will be guaranteed a minimum of \$100,000

annually. "There is strength in union and especially strength in a single operating union," says Rogers.



Valinske



Rogers



Conductor and Vice Chairperson Brett Brown uses a fusee to warm air hoses so they can be connected.

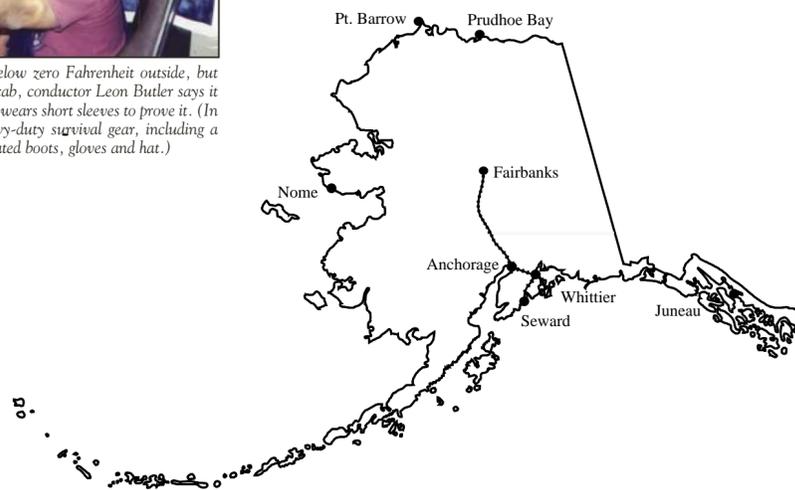
## The Scenery

Alaska Railroad employees never tire of the scenery. "It changes daily," says Engineer Bill Hightower, who has spent almost 30 years on the Alaska Railroad. Crews frequently compare observations on changing ice-flow patterns, the intensity of the Northern Lights and the bald eagles that live high in trees along the right-of-way.

Mountains, valleys, rivers, canyons, cascading waterfalls, tunnels, gorges and glaciers form the pristine landscape inhabited by bears, moose, bald eagles, beavers, mountain sheep and wolves.

Just south of Anchorage, Spencer Glacier, a mammoth wall of ice, sits less than a mile from the tracks. As trains approach Seward, one of the most dramatic tidal changes occurs as a six-foot wall of water rushes in at high tide and sometimes carries Beluga whales toward shore.

North from Anchorage to Fairbanks, trains pass through 400 miles of mostly wilderness, known to locals as "the bush," and unreachable by highway. At Hurricane Gulch, a 918-foot trestle passes almost 300 feet above the creek below and 20,320-foot Mt. McKinley looms just 46 miles to the west.



# Retiree Program News

## Bell's final novel mixes fact, fiction

The novel Retiree Program member **Walter Foster Bell**, 76, has been "toying with" for 15 or 20 years is finally in print. But for readers who enjoy it, the bad news is that Brother Bell has no intention of publishing another.



Walter F. Bell

Bell's novel, *Thunder Snow*, is a combination of historical fact and fiction that revolves around the Civil War. Its seemingly star-crossed protagonist gets caught up in adventures that require Bell to call on his knowledge of history, railroading, the military and geography to weave a spell-binding tale involving a bit of the supernatural.

"In the mountains of North Carolina," Bell said, "there's a phenomenon called 'thunder snow.' It's like a thunderstorm, but instead of rain, you get snow. Legend says a child born during that time is the spawn of the devil. That's when my main character is born. He has trouble with his family, leaves home, takes a rail job, and becomes involved with the Confederate and Union armies, as well as the Underground Railroad."

A member of Local 1106 in Rocky Mount, N.C., Bell served on a destroyer in the South Pacific during World War II, worked for Carolina Phone for three years, and then began his rail career on the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad in 1950 as a brakeman. A member of the former Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, he took promotion to conductor, transferred to fireman and joined the former Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen & Enginemen. He then worked as an engineer until retiring from CSXT in 1985.

Twice elected a local chairperson and a delegate, Bell also served as a UTU organizer. All the while, he wrote historical and newspaper articles, poems and short stories. "I've got stuff that my family may decide to publish, but right now, I don't think I'll publish anymore," Bell said.

To buy a copy of his book, call toll free 1-800-839-8640, or visit <http://www.1stbooks.com> to order it online. Members can contact Bell via e-mail at [walvell@3rddoor.com](mailto:walvell@3rddoor.com).

## Medicare benefit preserves vision

Aging is the single largest risk factor for developing glaucoma, the leading cause of preventable blindness, and as of this year, Medicare will help pay for an annual (once every 12 months) eye exam for Medicare beneficiaries who are at high risk for glaucoma.

Those Medicare beneficiaries covered by the new benefit include people with diabetes, those with a family history of glaucoma and African-Americans 50 or older, according to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMMS).

The eye disease affects about two million Americans who are age 65 or older, and about 120,000 Americans now are blind as a result of glaucoma.

In the past, Medicare paid for routine testing for glaucoma only after a patient was identified as having symptoms of the disease, but early detection and treatment made before there are noticeable symptoms can be critical to helping people keep their eyesight, CMMS said.

The Glaucoma Research Foundation reports that blindness due to glaucoma costs the U.S. government more than \$1.5 billion annually in Social Security benefits, lost income tax revenues and health care expenditures. A glaucoma screening costs Medicare just \$35.

Medicare covers 80 percent of the approved amount for glaucoma screening, after a person has met the \$100 deductible, CMMS said.

## Retired former field supervisor R.J. Davidson dies

**Ralph J. "Jack" Davidson**, 83, retired UTUIA field supervisor and a member of Local 1574 in Portland, Ore., passed away Jan. 13, 2003.

Brother Davidson was a member of the UTUIA's Million Dollar Round Table from 1974 to 1980.

Davidson began his rail career in 1940 as a brakeman on the Pennsylvania Railroad, joined the former Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, and was promoted to conductor in 1942.

He was inducted into the Army in November

1944, he served two years in Japan, and upon discharge returned to the railroad.

He was elected local president and became Pennsylvania assistant field supervisor in 1950. Six months later, he took a temporary assignment in Oregon, and his success led to an offer to take the position of field supervisor for Oregon, Washington and the western half of Montana, a position he held until retiring in 1984.

He is survived by his wife, Ann, six children, a sister, 15 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

## Oakland Old Rails plan annual dinner

Retired railroaders in the vicinity of Oakland, Calif., are invited to take part in the annual Old Rail Dinner and Get Together, sponsored by the Oakland Old Rails.

The social event, set for Sun., April 13, will be held in Dick's Restaurant in San Leandro, with a happy hour at noon and dinner served an hour

later, according to Entertainment Chairperson **Charlie Haynes**, a UTU Retiree Program member who belongs to Local 239 in Oakland.

For information about the dinner, or to learn more about the group's activities and its newsletter, contact Brother Haynes by calling him at (510) 223-0283.

## All rail retirees invited to St. Petersburg picnic

Retired railroaders from all crafts are invited to join the fun in St. Petersburg, Fla., at the annual picnic begun in 1991 by Indianapolis-based New York Central and Conrail retirees, said UTU Retiree Program member **Joe Alenduff** of Local 1963, Louisville, Ky.

This year's Retired Railroaders' Picnic will be

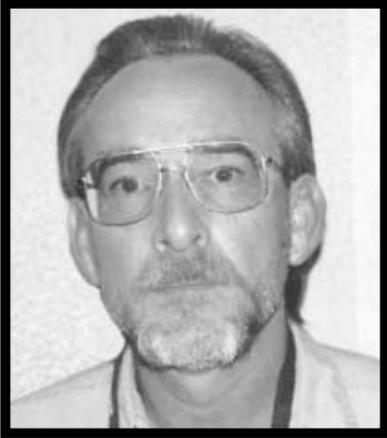
held March 15 in St. Petersburg's Ft. DeSota Park. Alenduff said participants should bring their own place settings and a dish or two to share. Iced tea and coffee will be furnished by the organizers.

For more information, call Alenduff at (727) 522-6808, or send e-mail to [joe.pat@verizon.net](mailto:joe.pat@verizon.net).

## THE FINAL CALL

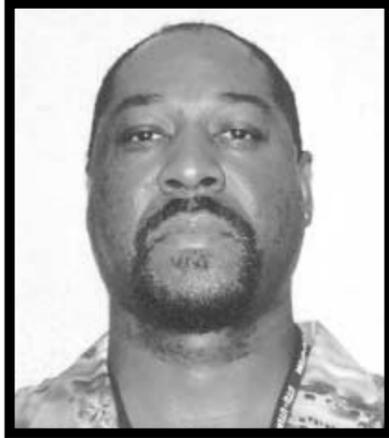
Following are the names of members of the UTU Retiree Program who have died recently, according to reports received at UTU International Headquarters. These brothers and sisters will be missed by their many friends and by fellow UTU Retiree Program members.

Local	Name	City/State	Local	Name	City/State	Local	Name	City/State
2	Cress, Oras H.	Grand Rapids, Ohio	582	Helminski, Frank G.	Stevens Point, Wisc.	1241	Potter Jr., Dean H.	El Cerrito, Cal.
2	Harkison, Frederick	Toledo, Ohio	586	Kiska, Joseph G.	Lorain, Ohio	1290	Schell, William J.	Port Charlotte, Fla.
7	Evans, Grant W.	Springdale, Ark.	598	Mason, Myril N.	Mobile, Ala.	1328	Gilpin, Harold E.	Louisville, Ky.
7	Peters, Eugene M.	N. Platte, Neb.	605	Caldwell, Walter G.	Shinston, W. Va.	1358	Wilson, Floyd E.	Danville, Ill.
171	Milroy, Bernard J.	Batavia, Ill.	627	Philburn, Pearl E.	Lincoln, Neb.	1374	Stulock, George E.	Warren, Ohio
171	Watson, Robert M.	Oswego, Ill.	631	Compher, Claude	Brunswick, Md.	1389	Gwinn, Alfred W.	Raceland, Ky.
238	Dunning, Enoch E.	Evanston, Wyo.	632	Beatty, Theodore W.	Ormond Beach, Fla.	1393	Skeps, John	Williamsville, N.Y.
292	Barber, J.J.	Central Square, N.Y.	674	Harrison, Billy	Augusta, Ga.	1403	Jarrett, Charles W.	Overland Park, Kan.
311	Amunson, William A.	LaCrosse, Wisc.	730	Miller, Grant S.	Helena, Mont.	1403	Zinna, Joe T.	Polo, Mo.
320	Ray, Francis E.	Saginaw, Mich.	733	Bryan, Charles E.	DeQueen, Ark.	1491	Fuller, Carl F.	Middletown, N.Y.
338	Gillespie, Ralph	Rossville, Ga.	783	Hartgrove, Bobby L.	Rural Hall, N.C.	1494	McEleny, Hugh	Glendale, Ariz.
344	Carrothers, William G.	Sarnia, Ont.	783	Logan, Walter Lee	Granite Quarry, N.C.	1502	Jones, Kermit F.	Wildwood, Fla.
376	Lawton, George W.	Louisville, Ky.	793	Sharpe, Plina G.	Aiken, S.C.	1529	Laney, Gerald A.	Walhalla, S.C.
426	Smith, J.R.	Priest River, Idaho	847	Pope Jr., George F.	Birmingham, Ala.	1638	Cerbin, Emil H.	Austinburg, Ohio
445	Burdette, Norman H.	Galesburg, Ill.	923	Dugger, Eugene	Dalhart, Tex.	1732	Roach, Earl A.	Eureka, Cal.
453	Daniels, Charles F.	Springfield, Ill.	1042	Martell, Wm. P.	El Reno, Okla.	1736	Kadlechik, J.	Durand, Mich.
469	Anderson, Arthur P.	O'Fallon, Mo.	1074	Pelley, Eugene D.	Greenock, Pa.	1765	Paasch, Willard L.	Ludington, Mich.
477	Black, Forrest O.	Dodge City, Kan.	1092	Brown, Tim E.	Teague, Tex.	1770	Hamann, Earl D.	Joplin, Mo.
477	Stapleton, Elmer E.	Dodge City, Kan.	1205	Alcorn, Loy D.	Early, Tex.	1949	Brackett Jr., Raymond	Richmond, Va.



**John E. Thompson**  
L-1526, Michigan City, Ind.

"I started railroading in 1992. I'm an assistant general chairperson and an engineer on the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District. A tax cut won't boost the economy at all. It didn't last time. My wife and I got \$600 last year. It's not really a large amount and won't inject a lot into the economy. President Bush thinks I'll go buy a new washer or dryer, but I won't. I'm trying to save a little more, because it seems the economy is only going to get worse. We're not going to make big purchases now. I think Bush is trying to sway public opinion and keep our minds off the real issues, with Iraq on one side and North Korea on the other."



**Rodney Alexander**  
L-1522, Washington, D.C.

"I'm a yard conductor with Amtrak, and I've been in the industry for 30 years. I don't think just cutting taxes will really help. It would be nice to have a tax cut, but somewhere along the line, someone's going to suffer because of it. If we go to war, maybe military contracts would help boost the economy. I think bringing some good jobs back to the U.S. would work best. A lot of companies went to other countries to take advantage of cheap labor and to escape paying union wages. If people had good jobs with union wages, they'd buy more clothes, more food, they'd buy more everything. I think that would boost the economy tremendously."



**Tom King**  
L-740, Joliet, Ill.

"I'm a conductor on the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway, and I'm a local chairperson and secretary-treasurer. I've been in the industry 34 years. The economy today is in a terrible shape. My opinion is that a tax cut will not boost the economy. I think it would have the opposite effect. I'm fearful that a tax cut would lead to programs being cut, resulting in job losses. And if ever there was a time when the government needed money, it would be now. It's probably a popular thing to do, but it's the wrong thing to do. A tax cut is not going to generate jobs. More programs that generate jobs should be created. That's a common-sense view to me."



**Barbara Fosmire**  
L-1951, Albany, N.Y.

"I've been railroading since 1988, starting as a clerk. I've been a yardmaster for CSX since 1990. The proposed tax cut would only help the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, and President Bush is a rich man. I don't think it would help the common man, but big business will see results and make out by it. Bush gave us a tax cut before, and I didn't see anything come of it. The minimal amount doesn't even make a mortgage payment. Resources should be put into education. Years ago, there was a program that educated people and put them to work, but funds for a program like that aren't available now because so much is being put towards defense."

## TPEL HONOR ROLL

Individuals who have begun contributing to TPEL or increased their donations to \$100 or more, per year, during the previous month

Name	Local	City	Name	Local	City
<b>PLATINUM CLUB (\$1,200 OR MORE PER YEAR)</b>					
Tibbitt, Paul W.	331	Temple, Tex.	Tarres, Carlos V.	653	Blue Island, Ill.
<b>DOUBLE DIAMOND CLUB (\$600 OR MORE PER YEAR)</b>					
Eldert, Dennis J.	195	Galesburg, Ill.	*Jernigan, Donald E.	771	Beaumont, Tex.
Bevacqua, Eugene F.	1505	Spokane, Wash.	Fagan, James D.	773	Galveston, Tex.
<b>DIAMOND PLUS CLUB (\$400 OR MORE PER YEAR)</b>					
Linroth, Ralph W.	195	Galesburg, Ill.	Fagan, Jerry R.	773	Galveston, Tex.
Walzing, John E.	329	Boone, Iowa	Fleming, Timothy A.	773	Galveston, Tex.
Edwards, John M.	445	Niota, Ill.	Horelica, Matthew S.	773	Galveston, Tex.
<b>DOLLAR-A-DAY CLUB (\$365 OR MORE PER YEAR)</b>					
*Shaver, Jack V.	202	Denver, Colo.	Kimmons, Kyle G.	773	Galveston, Tex.
Rardin, Randy L.	329	Boone, Iowa	McLaughlin, Tommy	773	Galveston, Tex.
Fields, Jeffery E.	1290	Chicago, Ill.	Nevills, Johnnie R.	773	Galveston, Tex.
Turner Jr., Jessie	1290	Chicago, Ill.	Payne, Byron Keith	773	Galveston, Tex.
<b>DIAMOND CLUB (\$300 OR MORE PER YEAR)</b>					
Boam, Greg W.	471	Eugene, Ore.	Green, Frederick Donell	781	Shreveport, La.
Simenson, Jonathan D.	653	Blue Island, Ill.	Henson, Garland Keith	781	Shreveport, La.
*Graham, Charles P.	891	Whitefish, Mont.	Hughes, Davie S.	781	Shreveport, La.
<b>GOLD CLUB (\$100 OR MORE PER YEAR)</b>					
Wanderman, Phillip	C	Yonkers, N.Y.	Mattison, Steven R.	781	Shreveport, La.
*Rubeling, Claude A.	28	Cheyenne, Wyo.	Stanley, Timothy Johann	781	Shreveport, La.
*Wilson, Isaac	84	Los Angeles, Calif.	Watson, Edwin Hollis	781	Shreveport, La.
*Wilson, Robert D.	94	Kansas City, Kans.	Barlock, Robert J.	792	Cleveland, Ohio
Davis, Stephen D.	195	Galesburg, Ill.	Dorsey, Nicholas R.	792	Cleveland, Ohio
Jackson, Walter K.	195	Galesburg, Ill.	Gall, Ronald J.	792	Cleveland, Ohio
Wallace, Kevin C.	195	Galesburg, Ill.	*Hocker, William A.	792	Cleveland, Ohio
*Daniels, Walter A.	212	Albany, N.Y.	McCurdy, Robert F.	792	Cleveland, Ohio
*Pearson, Warren A.	259	St. Joseph, Mo.	Toca, Nicholas J.	792	Cleveland, Ohio
*Jacobs, Wayne W.	281	Milwaukee, Wis.	Webster, Eugene R.	792	Cleveland, Ohio
*Saylor, William W.	300	Philadelphia, Pa.	*Cote, Kenneth L.	891	Whitefish, Mont.
*Hicks, Merlyn R.	464	Arkansas City, Kans.	*Lockwood, Charles F.	891	Whitefish, Mont.
Kelly, Herald R.	471	Eugene, Ore.	Jaras, Vincent M.	950	W. Memphis, Ark.
*Davis, Wayne J.	489	San Antonio, Tex.	Smith, James R.	950	W. Memphis, Ark.
Brenton, William Joe	490	Princeton, Ind.	Baldwin, Susan L.	951	Sheridan, Wyo.
Frank, Dennis M.	490	Princeton, Ind.	Gadek, Frank J.	965	Dallas, Tex.
Goodman, Christopher J.	490	Princeton, Ind.	Hart Jr., Broadus B.	971	Crewes, Va.
*Wagoner, Donald M.	490	Princeton, Ind.	*Keene, Carl C.	1006	Brownsville, Pa.
Klesh, George R.	498	Allentown, Pa.	*Bragg, Ingram R.	1081	Glendale, Ariz.
MacDonald, Ronald P.	498	Allentown, Pa.	Hammons, James M.	1190	Ludlow, Ky.
Moser Jr., John J.	498	Allentown, Pa.	Bennett, Gerald L.	1290	Chicago, Ill.
Chenoweth, James R.	544	Havre, Mont.	Eaton, Darrell L.	1290	Chicago, Ill.
Carey, Shannon Torrence	577	Northlake, Ill.	Nowitzki, Ivan	1290	Chicago, Ill.
Lumpkin, Garland R.	577	Northlake, Ill.	*Chesser, Al H.	1313	Amarillo, Tex.
Miller, Ken A.	577	Northlake, Ill.	*Merritt, Earl M.	1313	Amarillo, Tex.
*Conlee, Donald W.	643	Ft. Madison, Iowa	Fields, Robert L.	1316	Ravenna, Ky.
Debolt, Kevin R.	653	Blue Island, Ill.	Jett, Clarence E.	1316	Ravenna, Ky.
Godfrey, John T.	653	Blue Island, Ill.	Robinson, Lonnie S.	1316	Ravenna, Ky.
Kuderna, James J.	653	Blue Island, Ill.	*Newell Jr., William	1334	Hattiesburg, Miss.
Lopez, Gene	653	Blue Island, Ill.	*Orthmeyer, James F.	1377	Russell, Ky.
			Scalcione, Greg	1445	Elizabeth, N.J.
			*Walker, Sam F.	1458	Dequincy, La.
			*Lewis, William L.	1477	Dearborn, Mich.
			*Boston, Arthur W.	1532	Kansas City, Kans.
			*Schroeder, Robert W.	1532	Kansas City, Kans.
			*Drake, John W.	1730	Richmond, Calif.
			Davis, Darrell L.	1836	New Orleans, La.
			*Ward, Ralph W.	1918	El Paso, Tex.
			Belden, Charlie	Aux960	Shenandoah, Va.

\* = Retired Member

## Yardmasters ratify pact with NJ Transit

CLEVELAND – Members of the UTU's Yardmaster Department employed on New Jersey Transit have unanimously ratified a new agreement with the carrier.

The three-year contract provides for a 10% pay increase without work-rule changes and continues full payment by the carrier of health care premiums, among other improvements.

"Determination and persistence yields benefits for the membership," said Donald R. Carver, assistant to the president of the UTU and director of the union's Yardmaster Department.

"New Jersey Transit General Chairperson John Eschmann and local chairperson Kevin Kearns are to be commended for their hard work and dedication in negotiating this agreement," Carver said.

"This is another of many examples of how a progressive UTU negotiates favorable agreements for its members," said UTU International President Byron A. Boyd Jr.

UTU-represented yardmasters also recently ratified agreements with the Grand Trunk Western and CSX.

Additionally, Yardmaster Department representatives are negotiating new agreements on behalf of yardmasters employed by Amtrak, Chicago Metra, Indiana Harbor Belt and Soo Line.

Also, the UTU's Yardmaster Department, which represents mechanical supervisors on Conrail Shared Assets, is negotiating a new agreement with that entity, which is jointly owned by CSX and Norfolk Southern.

Mechanical supervisors there are represented by Yardmaster Department General Chairperson Ron Kratz.

"This will be the supervisors' first contract since joining forces with the UTU," Carver said. "We expect to meet with the carrier in March to continue negotiations."

# UTU efforts help Amtrak win federal funding

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Thanks to the combined efforts of concerned UTU members and friends, Congress voted last month to give Amtrak \$1.05 billion in subsidies for the fiscal year that runs through Sept. 30.

Amtrak said that it could maintain all of its service this year even though Congress gave it \$150 million less than the railroad said it needed.

“The amount appropriated by Congress only reinforces that sustaining Amtrak operations will be an ongoing challenge,” the railroad said in a statement. “Though the budget will be extremely tight, this funding level should be suf-

ficient to operate the national system for the remainder of the fiscal year.”

“Conservatives in Congress reluctantly agreed to support this funding level for Amtrak and it is a victory for supporters of Amtrak and UTU members whose jobs are dependent upon a national intercity rail passenger network,” said UTU National Legislative Director James Brunkenhoefer.

“The conservatives agreed to support the measure because of tens of thousands of telephone calls coming into their offices – many of them from UTU members, UTU retirees, UTU families and UTU-member friends,” Brunken-

hoefer said.

UTU International President Byron A. Boyd Jr. said after the vote, “the strength of this union’s political muscle becomes evident every time a crucial vote occurs in Congress. Our members’ phone calls and e-mails helped gain passage of Railroad Retirement reform and now helped to gain passage of funding to keep Amtrak operating.”

“We have 125,000 members of this union who step up to the plate whenever telephone calls and e-mails to Congress are needed. Our Transportation Political Education Fund also is crucial in gaining legislative victories,” Boyd said.

## Trip rates

*Continued from page 1*

ing straightaway, long or short turnaround trips and deadheads. Each trip rate includes compensation for arbitrary payments such as initial and/or final terminal delay or terminal switching that were actually paid to pre-1985 employees in the test period, Kerley said.

“This means our post-1985 members will now receive that compensation, along with a significant increase in compensation for deadheading,

since they will now receive the same trip rate as pre-1985 employees. Overtime on these runs will be based on the actual miles run, plus an overtime extender reflecting those included arbitrary payments that would have previously nullified any overtime,” Kerley said.

“The parties also agreed to continue investigating the relationship between the overtime threshold and those included arbitrary payments, with the aim of identifying a formula that will eliminate the need to roll out any frozen elements before applying future wage increases,” Kerley said.

UTU International President Byron A. Boyd Jr. said that “trip rates do more than end the dual basis of pay. They simplify pay by rolling arbitraries into the trip rates. That eliminates disputes over arbitraries that have led to so many grievances. Trip rates also allow rail employees to collect the money they have earned without a lot of complications.

“Moreover, trip rates will provide predictable paychecks, end forever carrier attempts to eliminate arbitraries and end forever carrier attempts to increase the basic day,” Boyd said.

## UTU for Life

*Continued from page 1*

transit industries deserve the opportunity to stay in touch, swap stories, receive information on health care, retirement benefits and legal issues and be part of UTU’s legislative program,” said UTU International President Byron A. Boyd Jr.

“Wherever UTU retirees live, there is opportunity for a UTU for Life chapter and UTU will assist in its organization,” Boyd said.

The first UTU for Life chapter is being formed in the Seattle/Tacoma area. Retiree Jim Shelley of Seattle is coordinating the chapter’s formation. Local officers will be elected and its members will determine the frequency and location of

lunch, dinner and other get-togethers. Spouses will be invited to participate. “We may soon see separate chapters in several areas of Washington State,” Shelley said. “It will be up to retirees.”

A second chapter is being formed in eastern Pennsylvania/southern New Jersey with coordination by UTU retiree George Koval. Letters will be mailed to prospective members in April.

Members of these two chapters and their spouses will be invited to participate in the UTU Regional Meetings scheduled for Seattle and Philadelphia later this year. Members of UTU for Life chapters will receive commemorative caps with the UTU for Life logo.



“UTU retirees are among our most effective members in influencing lawmakers on issues of Railroad Retirement, Medicare and Amtrak,” Boyd said. “UTU for Life is an additional opportunity for retirees to remain connected and have their collective voices heard on issues before Congress and state legislatures.”

UTU retirees interested in forming chapters in their areas should send a note to: UTU for Life, United Transportation Union, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107.

“UTU for Life is a way for retirees to stay in touch and stay focused – to care and share,” Boyd said.

## Members die

*Continued from page 1*

all involved – rail management, labor and federal regulators – as the tragedy it is and used as a learning experience to prevent a recurrence.

“That is why I have called this safety meeting,” Boyd said. “When four dedicated, career railroaders die in separate accidents in a single week, it is evidence to me that we have to do more than we are doing. Informal labor/management/government efforts, such as the Switching Operations Fatality Analysis (SOFA) working group, are beneficial. But, obviously, more must be done, and done quickly.”

Boyd stressed that the parties “must sit down and review every issue or component that may have led to these incidents, including fatigue, weather, equipment and other conditions.”

Following two of the fatalities last month, Boyd met with Federal Railroad Administrator Allan Rutter to discuss rail safety regulation. Also, UTU National Legislative Director James Brunkenhoefer met with Cong. Corrine Brown (D-Fla.), the new ranking Democrat on the House Rail Subcommittee, to discuss rail safety. Brunkenhoefer also planned to speak with Rail Subcommittee Chairman Cong. Jack Quinn (R-

N.Y.), in whose Buffalo district one of the fatalities occurred.

“This safety issue extends across the entire industry and is not confined to one railroad,” Boyd said. He warned “all involved that inattention to employee safety will not be tolerated and much more drastic steps may be called for if immediate remedies are not forthcoming.

“I warn those who may attempt to politicize this issue in order to promote their own agenda that now is not the time for political games,” Boyd said. “Now is the time for all to come together to ensure the safety of railroad employees.”

As senior UTU officials plan for the safety meeting with carriers, Boyd asked that every UTU member take a moment to remind themselves of the five lifesaving tips developed by the SOFA working group: 1) **Secure equipment before action is taken;** 2) **Protect against moving equipment;** 3) **Discuss safety at the beginning of the job and when the work changes;** 4) **Communicate before action is taken;** 5) **Coach less experienced employees to perform service safely.**

Here are the four tragic deaths and serious injury:

Brother **Timothy E. Kelley**, 57, a member of UTU Local 1075, was killed in a switching accident on Canadian National/Illinois Central near

Flatrock, Mich., Feb. 11. He was found on the ground, apparently struck by a railcar. He is survived by his wife Marilee, six children and four grandchildren.

Brother **Steven D. Thomas**, 38, a member of UTU Local 934, was killed in a train collision on BNSF near Scotts Bluff, Neb., on Feb. 13. He jumped from a coal train that was about to strike a switch engine and was buried under more than 2,000 tons of coal after the collision. He is survived by a wife and two small children.

Brother **John W. Sneddon**, 36, a member of UTU Local 292, was killed in a switching accident on CSX near Syracuse, N.Y., Feb. 16. He was struck by a moving boxcar and died from a blunt-force injury. He is survived by his wife and a four-year-old son.

Brother **Patrick Armstrong**, 50, a member of UTU Local 1393, was crushed to death in a switching accident on CSX in Buffalo, N.Y., Feb. 18. He became pinned between two boxcars and was pronounced dead at the scene.

Conductor **Shane White**, 21, a member of Local 1598 in Manchester, Ga., in late January was riding a boxcar when he realized it was about to collide with another. He jumped but was caught underneath and lost both legs, the right leg above the knee and the left leg close to the hip.

# Register now for the Regional Meetings!

The upcoming UTU/UTUIA Regional Meetings are guaranteed to provide plenty of fraternalism, education and fun.

Each Regional Meeting lasts a full three days, with the President's Banquet on the evening of the third day.

The Seattle Regional Meeting has been designated the joint U.S./Canadian Regional Meeting.

All those attending must be registered in order to attend any planned function. Children age 11 and under who are pre-registered are complimentary. The registration form is printed on the right.

A completed registration form listing each attendee, regardless of age, and complete payment in U.S. funds must be received at the UTU International Headquarters, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107, 30 days prior to the scheduled start of the meetings or the registrant will be charged an on-site registration fee of \$175.

The pre-registration fee for the 2003 Regional Meetings is \$125 per member, spouse or child over 11. You must make your own room reservations at one of the hotels listed below, and certain deadlines apply. One-day registrations also are being offered for those who would like to attend the Regional Meetings but can't spare the time away from work or family. One-day registrations are \$60.

You may cancel your Regional Meeting registration 10 days prior to the first day of the meeting or the golf outing without penalty. Please fax any changes or cancellations immediately to the UTU International Headquarters at (216) 228-5755.

## Lots of fun

In Seattle, there will be a night out at Safeco Field to watch the Seattle Mariners face the Montreal Expos. This will be held on Tuesday, June 10. A pre-game tailgate party inside the stadium will include food and beverages for any registered Regional Meeting attendee.

On Wednesday, June 11, there will be a special tour of Seattle with lunch and transportation provided. The tour will start at 9 a.m., with bus transportation from the host hotel to downtown Seattle, which is one of the nation's newest and most vibrant downtown shopping areas. The tour also will visit the waterfront, the International District and other locations. Buses will return to the host hotel about 3:30 p.m.

Additionally, shuttle buses will run daily from the host hotel to downtown Seattle.

The afternoon tour and evening out in Philadelphia will be announced in the next issue of the *UTU News*.

All persons planning on taking these tours must pre-register (either online or on the registration form at right), and space is limited.

## Golf outings set

The UTU will hold golf outings at 8 a.m. the day before the start of the two Regional Meetings. The dates are Sunday, June 8, in Seattle and Sunday, Aug. 24, in Philadelphia.

In Seattle, golfers will play at the High Cedars Golf Club in Orting, Wash., at the base of Mt. Renier. In Philadelphia, golfers will enjoy playing Ron Jaworski's Valley Brook Golf Club in Blackwood, N.J.

The fee, \$80 per golfer, includes transportation from the host hotel, greens fees, a golf cart for every two players, lunch and much more. Register for the golf outings in the space provided on the registration form printed on this page. Be sure to include your golf fee with your registration fee and your true handicap. There is a limit of 144 golfers per outing.

Online registration available at [www.utu.org](http://www.utu.org). Click on "Meetings."

## June 9-11, 2003, Western Regional Meeting

**DoubleTree Hotel, Seattle Airport**

**18740 Pacific Hwy. S., Seattle, WA 98188**

Hotel reservations: (800) 222-8733 or (206) 246-8600

Reservation code: UTU; Room rate: \$129 single/double; \$139 triple; \$149 quad

Reservation deadline: May 6, 2003

Parking: Self; \$12/day

## August 25-27, 2003, Eastern Regional Meeting

**Wyndham Philadelphia at Franklin Plaza**

**17th and Race Streets, Philadelphia, PA 19103**

Hotel reservations: (800) WYNDHAM or (215) 448-2000

Reservation code: UTU; Room rate: \$99 single/double/triple/quad

Reservation deadline: 5 p.m. EST, July 29, 2003

Parking: Self; \$13/day

## UTU Regional Meeting Registration Form

Registering before the Regional Meetings speeds sign-in procedures at the meeting site, helps organizers plan more accurately, and saves on meeting costs. These savings will be passed on to each pre-registered attendee. Each person attending the Regional Meeting, including family members and guests, MUST be registered in order to attend any planned event. Registration fees are \$125 per person; children 11 years of age and under are complimentary. On-site registration will be \$175 per person. All fees must be paid in U.S. funds. Canadian funds will be returned, possibly delaying your registration. If you have questions, consult your bank. Registration forms must be received 30 days prior to the start of the Regional Meeting.

### Which Regional Meeting will you be attending?

Seattle  Philadelphia

### Member Registration

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Local \_\_\_\_\_ Title (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Home address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime phone number ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

### Spouse Registration Seattle Philadelphia

Spouse name \_\_\_\_\_ Title (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Will spouse/children attend the UTU tours?  Yes  No How many? \_\_\_\_\_

### Child Registration Seattle Philadelphia

Child name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Child name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Child name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Child name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

### Guest Registration Seattle Philadelphia

Guest Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Member \_\_\_\_\_

Home address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

### Golf Registration Seattle Philadelphia

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Handicap \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_ Handicap \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Handicap \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_ Handicap \_\_\_\_\_

Golf fees are \$80 per golfer (include in total payment)

### Payment Options

Check/Money Order (U.S. funds only) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card (please indicate type)  VISA  MasterCard

Card number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_ Total charged \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Should additional space be needed, make copies of this form and attach to the original. This form and payment of \$125 per person over the age of 11, plus golf registration fees of \$80 per golfer (if applicable), must be received at the UTU International Headquarters, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250, 30 days prior to the Regional Meeting. Make checks or money orders payable in U.S. funds to "UTU Regional Meeting." Those who do not pre-register for the Regional Meeting but instead choose to register at the meeting site will be charged a \$50 penalty fee.

# This month's winning photo:

This month's winning photograph was taken by **Clarke W. Sutphin**, a BNSF locomotive engineer and member of Local 486 at Forsyth, Montana. Sutphin's photo is of Amtrak's "Empire Builder" kicking up snow as it runs eastbound near Grizzly, Mont., October 2002.



The UTU Public Relations Department awards UTU gear to the union member who submits the best photograph during the previous months.

The winning photo will be published in the *UTU News*.

Exceptional photographs will be included on the UTU website.

The UTU would like to see photographs or digital photographs of work-related scenes, such as railroad, bus or mass transit operations, new equipment photos, scenic shots, activities of your local, or photos of your brothers and sisters keeping America rolling.

Printed photographs should be mailed to UTU News, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250.

High-resolution digital photographs should be in the JPEG format and e-mailed to "utunews@utu.org".

With each photograph, please include your name and UTU local number, the names of the persons in the photo (left to right), where the photo was taken, and all other pertinent information.

All photographs submitted become property of the UTU.

Remember to review your employer's policies regarding use of cameras on the property or during work hours.



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