Labor issues warning: truth or consequences

“Once the railroads want to destroy the craft of conductor and trainmen, then we will take them over the cliff with us,” UTU International President Paul Thompson told those attending the recent Asheville regional meeting.

This blunt warning brought officers and members to their feet, applauding and shouting encouragement. Some 1,100 attended the regional meeting.

The theme of Thompson’s talk was how railroads have used rail labor for their legislative objectives and then abused rail labor after gaining that support.

CSX warned of harassment

The UTU and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen have told CSX CEO Michael Ward to stop the “targeted selective stalking, harassment and intimidation of its train and engine service crews.”

In an Aug. 4 jointly signed letter to Ward, UTU President Paul Thompson and BLET President Don Habs provided evidence that CSX officials have instructed lower level supervisors to fulfill discipline quotas in an orchestrated effort to intimidate injured CSX employees from reporting on-the-job injuries and marking off sick — actions the Federal Railroad Administration has condemned in the past and said would be turned over to the Justice Department for investigation and prosecution if found to continue.

Thompson and Habs cited a CSX Southern

FRA slaps BNSF on PTC safety

The Federal Railroad Administration has slammed the credibility of BNSF Railway’s positive train control pilot projects, citing inconsistencies in BNSF’s safety plan.

The agency also complained that descriptive language explaining the railroad’s compliance with FRA safety requirements was written in broad generalities that disguise numerous defects.

BNSF’s Electronic Train Management System (ETMS) is one of the rudimentary positive train control technologies being tested under special FRA waivers from certain safety regulations.

The UTU supports development of PTC systems, but only if they meet adequate federal safety requirements.

“These various experimental PTC systems...
Local 7, North Platte, Neb.
This Union Pacific local, along with locals 200 and 286 (also UP locals in North Platte), this summer sponsored baseball at the city’s American Legion Field, said Secretary, Treasurer and Delegate John Hasenauer. During a recent game, retired member Bob Sparks served as the announcer while Hasenauer, Steve Austin, Steve Coleman, Mike Dutemple, Ben Elmeier, Paul Fitzpatrick, Terry Sigler and Red Weitzel cooked hamburgers for the fans.

Local 30, Jacksonville, Fla.
Members of this Amtrak and Herzog Transportation local offer best wishes to James Searles, who retired after 37 years of rail service, said Local President Thomas W. Pope. Searles most recently served as local legislative rep., secretary and treasurer.

Local 240, Los Angeles, Calif.
This Union Pacific local are mourning the death of conductor Ken Strickland, 59, said his son, Andrew Strickland, a member of Local 1846 in West Colton, Calif. The elder Strickland started on the Southern Pacific in 1969.

Local 343, Hamilton, Ont.
Scott Montani, who serves as local president, legislative rep. and alternate delegate of this CN local, hopes to be wearing another hat soon. He recently announced his candidacy for the post of mayor of Thorold, Ont.

Local 469, Madison, Ill.
A fund has been set up to assist the family of Amtrak Staff Sgt. Philip Baldwin, an employee of the Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis, who recently returned home after being wounded in Afghanistan, said Secretary/Treasurer John Payer. Gunshot wounds left Bald- win’s left leg numb from the knee down. To assist the family, send donations to the Phillip Baldwin Benefit Fund, Shell Community Federal Credit Union, Box 619, 203 S. Sixth St., Wood River, IL 62095.

Local 500, Grand Junction, Col.
Members of this Union Pacific local are hosting an informational meeting for members and their spouses Sept. 25-26 at the Doubletree Hotel in Grand Junction, said Secretary Jeffrey Maxfield. Attending will be a number of UTU international officers, as well as representatives from UTUIA, Designated Legal Counsel firms and various health and welfare providers. For information, call Local Chairperson Clyde J. McCormick at (970) 260-5888 or (515) 371-7557.

Local 762, Montgomery, Ala.
A local of the International of Teamsters, President and Legislative Rep. Dale Barnett Jr. recently attended the National Labor College in Silver Spring, Md., to learn about handling radiactive hazmat spills. Attending with Barnett was Secretary, Treasurer and Legislative Rep. Jim Hagan, a member of Local 1365 in Youngstown, Ohio, which represents Norfolk Southern employees. The two were also taught to train other rail workers.

Local 771, Needles, Calif.
Members of this BNSF local are mourning the death of C.H. “Court” Skinner and Jack Hutcherson, said Local Chairperson Mike Mathews. Skinner had served the local in a variety of positions, including trustee and vice local chairperson for conductors.

Local 800, Jersey City, N.J.
A locomotive engineer for NJ Transit, Alternate Legislative Rep. Steve Hamer, is now in Bahrain where he’s working for the U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, said State Legislative Director Dan O’Connell. Those in the local and at NJ Transit send their best wishes and look forward to his return, said Local Chairperson Jim Albi. Send e-mail to Hamer at schamer@msn.com.

Local 1162, Erwin, Tenn.
This CSX local recently honored retired Local Chairperson Bruce King with a plaque recognizing his years of service. King retired June 1 after 39 years as a conductor and 16 years as the local’s chairperson, said Local Vice President Tony King. Making the presentation were Local President John Hilemon and Vice Local Chairperson Alan Landers.

Local 1252, Fresno, Calif.
A member of this BNSF local, Jason Perales, was badly burned in a recent derailment and admitted to the University Medical Center Hospital in Fresno, said retired member Don Hoffman. Cards can be sent to him in care of Secretary/Treasurer Damon J. Batty, 9678 N. Shannon Ave., Fresno, CA 93722. Perales is the son of retired conductor Dale Perales. Meanwhile, retired member Robert Peabody recently passed away. Included among his survivors is retired conductor Jerry Peabody.

Local 1558, Bergenfield, N.J.
Bus operator Joseph Matthews, employed by Transport of Rockland, was recently honored with a STAR award by the Rockland County Sheriff’s Department for his handling of a suspicious package left behind on a bus, said Alternate Vice President-Bus and General Chairperson Rich Deiser. Alarmed to the package by a passenger, Matthews immediately called his dispatcher and evacuated the bus. A bomb disposal squad determined the package contained a VCR.

Local 1582, Albany, N.Y.
Bus operators in this local employed by Adirondack Transit Lines are mourning the death of 74-year-old active member Jim Fuller, a 42-year member who had accrued more than two million safe miles behind the wheel, said General Chairperson Russ Guillard.

Local 1593, Brownwood, Texas
Members of this Amtrak local recently honored conductor Randy K. Williamson, who succumbed to a heart attack, said Treasurer Thomas F. Lack.

Local 1846, West Colton, Calif.
Members of this Union Pacific local recently honored retired conductor Darold D. Tucker, wishing him the best of health for many years to come, said Local President Richard Escamilla.

GO-505, LIRR & SIRT
General Chairperson Mike Canino and Vice General Chairperson Bob Bilello, who represent more than 2,800 members in various crafts on the Long Island Rail Road and Staten Island Rapid Transit, said they will be retiring Oct. 1. Canino has served as UTL alternate vice president-commuter since 1993, and as the local member on the MTA board in New York. Bilello has served as the delegate from Local 29 (Babylon, N.J.) at the past five UTU conventions and is currently the president and local chairperson for his local. He also has chaired the UTU Constitution Committee, and since 1995 has served the UTU as a voting member on FRA rule-making committees addressing roadway worker protection, track safety standards and locomotive engineer certification.

An editorial cartoon drawn by Alan Nash, a Union Pacific engineer and member of Local 257, sums up the feelings of many fellow UTU members.

**Member’s cartoons drawn from the news**

If one picture is worth a thousand words, then Alan Nash has been doing volumes.

A member of Local 257 in Morrill, Neb., Nash has been moonlighting for the past four years as an editorial cartoonist for The Gering Courier, a newspaper in Gering, Neb.

This year and last, his work was featured in an annual anthology entitled Best Editorial Cartoons of the Year, issued by the Pelican Publishing Company. His drawings also appear in The Report, a quarterly publication issued by the Student Press Law Center, which is dedicated to the U.S. Constitution’s First Amendment and the protection it offers student newspapers at the high school and college level. Railroaders who trawl the Internet also may have seen his handiwork on various rail forums.

“Also do stuff for the North Platte Bulletin and the West Nebraska Observer,” Nash said.

“Cartooning comes naturally to Nash, ‘I never did take any art classes,’ said the 44-year-old Union Pacific locomotive engineer. ‘I majored in political science in college, but always liked the political cartoons in the newspaper. I went to high school with the editor and publisher of The Gering Courier, and when I ran into him a few years back, he let me give it a try.’

Nash attended classes at West Nebraska Community College for two years, then went to Iowa State University for a year. “The money ran out and I went to work as a fleet mechanic for Texaco in 1983, then hired out with the Chicago & North Western in 1993,” he said.

“I served a term in 1994 or 1995, as my local’s vice local chairperson, but it took too much time away from my family,” Nash said.

In a perfect world, Nash would secure a syndication deal. “I’d like to do cartooning full time, but most newspapers try to avoid having full-time employees wherever possible. But I keep submitting periodically to syndicates in the hope that they’ll decide they want to take a chance on me.”

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UTU tells Congress: Focus on fatigue

The UTU has warned a congressional panel that the training of new rail employees working in safety-sensitive positions is inadequate and not focused on safe operations.

In testimony, UTU Alternate National Legislative Director James Stem also said congressional intervention is needed to give the FRA more resources and more authority to have a more immediate impact on the increasing number of train collisions and major accidents that continue to occur.

The subcommittee, in calling the oversight hearing, observed that while commercial airline pilots are limited to 100 hours of work per month, and truck drivers to 260 hours, train and engine service employees are permitted by hours-of-service regulations to work up to 432 hours each month, which is the equivalent of 30 consecutive 14-hour days.

In asking for congressional action, Stem said that “accidents caused by human factors account for about 38 percent of total train accidents” and that such accidents are increasing in number. He cited, as causes:

- Inadequate training programs for new employees;
- Insufficient practical on-the-job experience for new employees;
- An absence of familiarity with the workplace physical environment;
- Substandard recurrent training requirements for existing employees, and
- An unacceptable prevalence of fatigue throughout the rail industry.

“The insufficiency of existing training programs, together with fatigue and the resulting loss of situational awareness, are contributing causes in the majority of accidents attributed to human factor failures,” Stem said. “Cumulative fatigue is the major contributing factor in the loss of situational awareness; however, training deficiencies and other demands on the employee’s time disrupt the ability to focus, prioritize and process the critical information streams that require constant attention.

“The lack of appropriate training is the number-one safety issue facing the rail industry today, and training failures should be of significant and urgent concern to the Congress,” Stem said.

“The UTU is of the strong opinion that newly hired trainmen should not be required to work unsupervised or operate locomotives until they are truly experienced in the trainman craft,” Stem testified. “This ensures they have become proficient in their train service job functions and have gained needed on-the-job experience before assuming additional demanding duties and responsibilities. A one-year minimum in train service prior to becoming a conductor would improve the quality and competency of railroad operating employees, which equates to safer and more efficient operations.”

As to fatigue, Stem said the FRA is not empowered to deal with cumulative fatigue and that railroads “have refused to address the problem in a meaningful manner – that many employees are now told, ‘either come to work or you are fired,’ even though they have not been able to sleep before reporting for duty.

“The incidence of fatigue for railroad operating crews and its significant detrimental effect on situational awareness for safety-sensitive employees covered by hours-of-service limitations is directly associated with so-called ‘limbo time,’ Stem said.

Limbo time covers all time consumed between completion of the maximum allowable 12-hour shift and the time when an employee is completely released from service. Railroads, he said, regularly compel crews to remain at the workplace for many hours following completion of their maximum allowable 12-hour shift to guard the stationary trains until a relief crew is available for service.

Here is what the UTU recommends:

- Establish a reasonable cumulative total hours of permitted service each seven days.
- Require a minimum of 12 hours notice for employees reporting for service on call who do not have a regular starting time.
- Provide FRA additional resources to enforce these safety parameters.
- Provide FRA the authority to further restrict the total time on duty when sensitive operations are involved.

Changes in UTU Discipline/Income Protection Program

As a result of increased costs, D/IPP premiums, known as monthly assessments, will increase from 40 cents to 50 cents per $1 of daily benefits. This change will take effect beginning November 1, 2006.

The new Schedule of Maximum Benefits is provided below.

You may elect to change the benefit level you have selected or cancel your coverage at any time by submitting the appropriate form to UTU.

<table>
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<th>Monthly Assessment</th>
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<th>$5.00</th>
<th>$10.00</th>
<th>$15.00</th>
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<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
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<td>500 Days 24 to 30 Months</td>
<td>750 Days 31 to 40 Months</td>
<td>1000 Days 41 to 50 Months</td>
<td>1250 Days 51 to 60 Months</td>
<td>1500 Days 61 to 70 Months</td>
<td>1750 Days 71 to 80 Months</td>
<td>2000 Days 81 to 90 Months</td>
<td>2250 Days 91 to 100 Months</td>
<td>2500 Days 101 to 120 Months</td>
<td>2750 Days 121 to 150 Months</td>
<td>3000 Days 151 to 180 Months</td>
<td>3250 Days 181 to 210 Months</td>
<td>3500 Days 211 to 240 Months</td>
<td>3750 Days 241 to 270 Months</td>
<td>5000 Days 271 to 300 Months</td>
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</tr>
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<td>15000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

As always, the safety and security of the members’ assets is first and foremost in the UTU’s decision-making process.

The company will continue to respond in a measured and prudent fashion to future market conditions and portfolio performance.
CSX should be ashamed

In the criminal justice system, the word “recidivism” is often used. It describes persistent criminal behavior.

In the railroad industry, recidivism also is a problem. Notwithstanding warnings, entreaties and instructions from Congress and regulators, some railroads cannot stop stalking, harassing and intimidating workers.

As reported on page 1, CSX has gone so far as to institute a quota system. Pressure has been brought on managers to target one percent of the workforce for stalking, harassment and intimidation. Such corporate behavior is immoral, reprehensible and spiteful. It should not be tolerated by the federal government.

UTU President Paul Thompson and BLET President Don Hahs demanded an explanation from CSX President Michael Ward. What they received was a wishy-washy response that sidestepped the railroads’ outrageous behavior toward its employees.

Especially galling is that CSX’s vicious attack on workers is a flip-flop on its publicly stated policy to investigate accidents and injuries in a positive and thorough manner. It also is immoral, reprehensible and spiteful. It should not be tolerated by the federal government.

The railroad industry is higher rates for captive shippers and bigger bonuses for rail executives.

Among those rosters are frozen, those at the bottom would become stuck in the same lousy jobs with bad off days that no one with higher seniority wants.

The next group of losers under your one-person crew scheme would be those offered buyouts. History records that before the ink is dry on your promises, you have your lawyers and friends in Congress figuring out how to void them.

When we previously agreed to reduce crew size, you made promises about preserving two-person crews. Recall we had to take you into court to stop you from breaking those contracts. And still, you persist.

And what might become of those accepting a promised buyout? The first to suffer would be those at the bottom of the seniority roster.

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And what might become of those accepting a promised buyout? The first to suffer would be those at the bottom of the seniority roster.

The solidarity among rail labor unions now extends to solidarity with rail shippers, whom you similarly abuse. You’ve lied to us in the past; we think you are lying now.
Bus Department

By Roy Arnold, vice president/director

Minnesota

The members of Local 911 in Minneapolis recently held a meeting with U.S. Senate Candidate Amy Klobuchar, the UTU-endorsed candidate. “Let’s all get on board and help the woman,” Legislative Director P.J. Quady said. “Her opponent, Mark Kennedy, is no friend of transportation labor.” Quady said the UTU is looking for volunteers to help her on various campaignwide efforts. Call him at (612) 837-4895 if you can help out.

West Virginia

West Virginia State Legislative Director Mark Mewshaw (left) and Local 605 (Grafton) Legislative Rep. Jeff Green (right) recently conferred with Rep. Alan B. Mollohan of the state’s First District. The UTU is supporting the re-election campaign of Mollohan.

Michigan

UTU members in Michigan are being urged to support one of their own.

Steve Kaufman, who serves as local chairperson and legislative representative for UTU Local 1765, which represents CSX workers in the Grand Rapids area, is running for the 74th District seat in the Michigan House of Representatives.

“Many of you may know Steve as the UTU Local 1765 Local Chairmen and Legislative Representative and his passion for assisting and preserving the rights of our members and their families,” Michigan State Legislative Director Jerry Gibson said. “Steve has done an outstanding job to date of getting his name out onto the streets, making great strides in a historically conservative district.”

“I am at the time. The lesson is that we can maintain a balance in life and be able to handle each situation we encounter as if we wore a real Superman cape.”

Today, I often wear an invisible cape – becoming super dad, super friend or super union official. Each of these characters expresses, in my mind, who I am at the time.

You are registered and ready to vote?

The mid-term elections Nov. 7 will decide the make-up of the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate. If current national negotiations reach an impasse and a Presidential Emergency Board is created, the Congress we elect Nov. 7 could decide the terms of our next contract.

UTU members not covered by the national agreement also have an important economic stake in the makeup of the next Congress. Members of the National Mediation Board, for example, must be confirmed by the Senate, and a Democratic-controlled Senate is less likely to accept a White House nomination of an anti-labor individual.

If this is going to be a one-issue vote for you, I hope the issue that decides how you and your family votes is a pocketbook issue.

Your job security, wages, work rules and benefits could be decided Nov. 7. The UTU, along with UTU state legislative boards, will make recommendations based primarily on the labor friendliness of congressional candidates.

Protecting our families and our agreements should be our top priority when casting votes. The UTU recommendations of House and Senate candidates will appear in the centerpieces of the October issue of UTU News.

Time is also running out for you, your family and friends to register to vote. If you, your family members, neighbors or friends are not registered to vote, the UTU has made registering to vote simple.

Go to the UTU Web site at www.utu.org and register to vote online. At the bottom left-hand corner of the Web page is an American flag. Click on that flag and follow the instructions. Help yourself and your family. Register and vote for labor-friendly candidates Nov. 7.
Regional Meeting Photo Scrapbook

Asheville, N.C. – August 22-24, 2006

North Carolina State Legislative Director Dickie Westbrook, left, and International Assistant President Bill Marzocco, right, grant North Carolina congressional candidate and former NFL quarterback Heath Shuler, who addressed the meeting attendees. An autographed Shuler football was auctioned off to benefit the UTU PAC. Local 511 (Norfolk Southern, Advance) Secretary/Treasurer Powell Knaus was the successful bidder.

The Asheville regional meeting local committee worked hard to make the event a success. They are (left to right) Ron Ingerick (L-782, Asheville); Dickie Westbrook (L-1129, Raleigh) and wife Janie; Craig Patch (L-1596, Charlotte); Jack Rackley (L-1011, Hamlet); Gail and Glenn Lamm (L-1129, Raleigh).

UTU members and family were do-seen-doed to and fro by the world-famous Southern Appalachian Cloggers with kick-up-your-heels tunes provided by the Bluegrass Band.

Asheville, N.C. – August 22-24, 2006

Former U.S. senator and 2004 vice presidential candidate John Edwards, left, speaks with UTU International President Paul Thompson before addressing the regional meeting crowd.

UTU members and family same do-seen-doed to and fro by the world-famous Southern Appalachian Cloggers with kick-up-your-heels tunes provided by the Bluegrass Band.
Rail Retirement okay for at least 36 years

The Railroad Retirement Board’s 23rd triennial actuarial valuation of the retirement system indicates that, barring a sudden, unanticipated, large drop in rail employment or substantial investment losses, the pension system will experience no cash-flow problems during the next 36 years.

The long-term stability of the system, however, is not assured. Actual levels of railroad employment and investment return over the coming years will determine whether corrective action is necessary.

Projecting income and outgo under optimistic, moderate and pessimistic employment assumptions, the valuation indicated no cash-flow problems occur for the 75-year projection period of calendar years 2005-2079 under the optimistic and moderate assumptions. Problems occur under the pessimistic assumption, but not until 2042. These results compare favorably with past reports.

The valuation did not recommend any change in the rate of tax imposed by current law on employers and employees.

As of Sept. 30, 2005, total Railroad Retirement system assets, comprising assets managed by the National Railroad Retirement Investment Trust and the Railroad Retirement system accounts at the Treasury, equaled approximately $29 billion. The trust was established by the Railroad Retirement and Survivors’ Improvement Act of 2001 to manage and invest Railroad Retirement assets.

The RRB’s 2006 financial reports on the retirement and unemployment insurance systems are available in their entirety at www.rrb.gov. Information on the National Railroad Retirement Investment Trust, including its quarterly and annual reports, is also available on that site.

V. M. “Butch” Speakman Jr. serves as labor representative for UTU members of the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board.
UTU members staff
Railway Age train

Railway Age magazine recently celebrated its 150th birthday by chartering a special inspection train and operating it as a fundraiser for the American Public Transportation Association scholarship foundation.

The magazine’s editor, William C. Vantuono, wanted the run to be staffed by the best, and with the help of New Jersey Transit General Chairperson Xavier Williams (GO-610), he enlisted the services of brakeman Bobby Nemeth (left) and conductor Linda Maldonado, both members of Local 60 in Newark, N.J.

The two are “conductors for the Jersey Shore Commuters Club private car on the North Jersey Coast Line, of which I am president,” Vantuono said.

“Bobby, who is retiring in about two years and started his career on Penn Central, loved working the vintage PRR cars and E8 locomotives and said our train was ‘a great retirement gift,’” Vantuono said.

UTU, CN reach deal on former B&LE line

The UTU and Canadian National have reached a new three-year agreement covering train and engine service employees on the former Bessemer & Lake Erie Railroad, which is now part of CN North America and now known as CN’s Bessemer Subdivision.

The agreement was ratified by the affected employees.

UTU International Vice President Steve Thompson, who assisted in the negotiations, said the hourly compensation agreement protects employment of those UTU-represented engineers and trainmen by permitting them to transfer to CN subsidiary Grand Trunk Western should the Bessemer & Lake Erie trackage be sold or abandoned.

The agreement provides assigned days off to those on the extra board.

Thompson praised the efforts of General Chairperson John Leasure in negotiating the new agreement.

The Bessemer Subdivision carries primarily coal, iron ore and limestone between the Lake Erie port of Conneaut, Ohio, and steel mills in the Pittsburgh area.

UTU yardmasters ink agreement with D&H

UTU-represented yardmasters on the Delaware & Hudson Railway have ratified – by a three-to-one margin – a new agreement covering wages, work rules and health and welfare benefits.

The agreement is retroactive to Dec. 31, 2005, and its provisions extend to Dec. 31, 2008, when the agreement can be reopened.

In addition to annual general wage increases, the agreement establishes a yardmaster performance plan that could further increase compensation by up to five percent annually.

It also eliminates entry rates for new hires, provides 401(k) plan enhancements and guarantees a separation allowance of the D&H is sold or leased and the Surface Transportation Board does not provide labor protection as a condition of the transaction.

Jim Cumby, vice president of the Yardmaster Department, praised the efforts of General Chairperson Bob Keeley “for all his help in securing this agreement and explaining its positive provisions to members.”
Thompson
Continued from page 1

Mediation Board, the White House (which approved the TEAMS [Train Equipment and Monitoring System] Board) and among conservatives now controlling Congress. Strikes no longer are an effective weapon in the fight for better wages, benefits and working conditions, Thompson said. “A new and completely different strategy is needed in these difficult times.”

“We have risen to the task,” Thompson said, explaining how the UTU, in solidarity with other labor organizations, has forged an alliance with another group suffering abuse by railroads – captive shippers. “By linking arms with captive shippers, we have hit the carriers where it hurts most – in the pocketbook,” Thompson said. “The UTU and other unions have begun lobbying in support of shipper-friendly legislation, including a bill ending the railroads’ antitrust immunity.

“Carriers now understand they no longer can abuse labor without risk,” Thompson said. “It is time for the carriers to harvest a new strategy or reap the harvest they have sown.

“The carriers have forgotten the many times railroads could have protected them from abuse when they needed us,” Thompson said. “They ignore how much help labor has provided in boosting carrier profits to their current record level.”

“In spite of decades of rail labor support for the railroads’ legislative agenda, carriers abuse their employees, they have lied to us during the mediation process, they have attempted to pit one labor union against the other, they have failed to provide employees with sufficient training and rest, and they have failed to hire sufficient numbers of train crews,” Thompson said.

Throughout our working careers,” Thompson said, “rail labor has supported legislation providing carriers with tens of billions of dollars in improved profits. And how do the carriers respond? They use us, then abuse us.

“We supported creation of Amtrak, which allowed freight trains to ride the ex-ante service and save $1 billion annually.

“We supported railroad deregulation, including the Staggers Rail Act; we supported numerous tax-credit and federal loan programs for carriers; we supported railroad subsidy programs; we provided givebacks to save Conrail; we sup- ported carriers in their fight against reregula-tion; we helped the carriers win elimination of a diesel fuel tax; and we have supported federal subsidies for highway-rail grade-crossing improvements.

“And what did the carriers do? They use us, then abuse us,” Thompson said.

“When the carriers needed us, we were there for them. When we need the carriers, they are nowhere to be found. I am disgusted that the car- riers now have developed a web page containing misleading information,” Thompson said.

“Carriers claim we are among the highest paid workers in America,” Thompson said. “They don’t explain how our members are required to work three to four days off, or adequate rest, or how we are subject to stalking, harass- ment and intimidation that we continually must ask the Federal Railroad Administration to investigate. It is a complete lie.

“Our bagging committee offers the carriers a means to get back on track,” Thompson said:

•Stop all attempts to eliminate the con- ductor and trainman through operation of one-person crews that would put pub- lic safety and national security at risk.

•Sit down at the negotiating table to address a reasonable training program whose true objective is improved safety.

•Once employees have completed their required training, treat them as equals and stop this two-tier pay system that creates an underclass.

•Share some of your record profits with your employees who make those profits happen.

•Treat employees with respect;

•Work with labor and the FRA to find a solution to the fatigue problem before another horrific accident snuffs out more innocent lives;

•Reach out to labor to develop a quali- ty of life that makes your company world class in every respect;

•Be honest and truthful in your deal- ings with labor. We may not always agree, but we should deal with one another out of trust.

Thompson said rail labor would not let up the pressure, which could send a wrong signal and encourage railroads to backslide. “I can assure you that United Transportation Union is in bet- ter shape than ever before to meet all challenges.

As an example of unprecedented labor soli- darity, Thompson passed out bumper stickers, with the logos of 11 rail unions, proclaiming: “The Nation’s Railroads: They Use Us – Then Abuse Us!”

Region 2006 Safety Action Plan, updated in June, which orders CSX supervisors to identify so-called “bad actors” at each on-duty location.

Plan instructed CSX supervisors to target 1 per- son – so-called “bad actors” at each on-duty location.

CSX’s new campaign is nothing more than a stalking, harassment and intimidation adven-ture which will reap no benefits and prove to be destructive to all involved. The good intentions and ground work initially set in place are appearing to be nothing more than a façade,” Thompson and Hahls wrote:

“Additionally, we have learned that these employees are ready to engage in random tests and being marked for inves- tigation for any test failures,” Thompson and Hahls wrote.

“We request your immediate involvement and investigation of this coordinated stalking, harass- ment and intimidation of US employees.”

The FRA’s associate administrator for safety, Jo Strang, announced at UTU’s regional meet- ing in Asheville, N.C., that the FRA is investi- gating the UTU/BLET complaints and would be asking specific questions of senior CSX officers.

FRA slaps BNSF
Continued from page 1

are still in their infancy,” said UTU Interna- tional President Paul Thompson. “The FRA clearly is not satisfied with BNSF’s safety plan for implementing the ETMS (Electronic Train Equipment Monitoring System) Board’s recommendations.

In a highly critical June 29 letter to the carri- er, the FRA said it no longer trusts the basic control system that is not specially limited to CSX. However, it’s rare, if not unprecedented, to see a

“Some pilots have been used by BNSF as baubles to entice investors, the media and lawmakers to believe BNSF was advancing rapidly toward introduction of positive train control technology, including ETMS,” Stem said. “The FRA exposed BNSF’s smoke and mirrors approach and termed it a fact that BNSF and other railroads are years away, at best, from perfecting PTC to where it might be implemented safely.”

BNSF sought – and failed to gain in February a FRA approval to operate the experimental ETMS technology with but a single crew per- son.

The UTU, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, Brotherhood of Mainte- nance of Way Employee Division and the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen opposed

The CSX Southern Region Safety Action Plan instructed CSX supervisors to target 1 per- cent of T&ES employees.

“…[Y]ou’ve got a long career ahead of you and you don’t want personal injuries on your record so you need to try to work with us.

“By federal law, once you have an injury, we have to show you an efficiency test failure and it will go to investigation.”

When that employee said he still wanted to seek medical attention he was notified later that day that CSX had filed charges against him.

These despicable actions are in direct contrast to what CSX says on its Web site: “Accident and injury reporting is important for several reasons, not the least of which is the collection of data and root causes that can be used in an effective program of prevention.” The targeting of CSX employees also appears to be a direct contrast to a CSX video, “Right Results, Right Way.”

The CSX video, produced about six years ago for directed at company officers, explained the “right way” and the “wrong way” to interact with injured employees and today is exactly what the video says is the “wrong way.”

“CSX has taken a 180-degree turn and aban- doned the standards previously established by a constructive, positive and proactive thinking rail carrier,” Thompson and Hahls said.

www.utu.org www.utuia.org
FRA to encourage ECP brake installation

Calling it the most significant development in railroad brake technology since the 1970s, Federal Railroad Administrator Joseph H. Boardman announced last month his intention to propose revised federal rail safety regulations to facilitate the installation of electronically controlled pneumatic (ECP) brake systems capable of preventing derailments and shortening train stopping distances.

“ECP brakes are to trains what anti-lock brakes are to automobiles – they provide better control,” Boardman said. “It offers a quantum improvement in rail safety.”

ECP brakes are applied uniformly and virtually instantaneously on every rail car throughout the train, rather than sequentially from one rail car to the next as is done with current air brake technology, Boardman said.

The system provides improved train control when braking and can reduce stopping distances up to 62 percent, he said.

Boardman said the FRA intends to issue a notice of proposed rulemaking next year to revise the federal brake system safety standards to encourage railroads to invest in and deploy ECP brake technology.

In order to achieve the safety benefits as soon as possible, FRA is open to considering plans from railroads interested in using ECP brakes before the proposed rule changes are completed, he said.

In 2005, 14 percent of train accidents on main line track caused by human error involved improper train handling or misuse of the automatic braking system, according to the FRA.

ECP brakes would give locomotive engineers better control over their trains and prevent many potential accidents, Boardman said.

In addition, current problems such as derailments caused by sudden emergency brake applications, and runaway trains caused by loss of brake air pressure, could be eliminated using ECP brakes.

Also, the technology can perform an electronic health check of the brakes to identify maintenance needs.

Boardman also said the deployment of ECP brakes supports the U.S. Department of Transportation’s new National Strategy to Reduce Congestion on America’s Transportation Network.

Better brakes mean longer trains can move more freight faster and more safely to help reduce congestion on America’s rail system, he said.

UTUIA honors 2005 volunteers of the year

Gary Devall and Marilyn Spangler have been selected as the United Transportation Union Insurance Association’s volunteers of the year for 2005.

(Devall and Marilyn Spangler, left, and Gary and Patti Devall, right, proudly display their awards with UTUIA Director of Sales Morgan Cox.)

Devall, a member of UTU Local 1501 at Baton Rouge, La., and Louisiana state legislative director, was selected for his relief efforts following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

“Ten years after 9/11, we are seeing the aftermath of another terrorist attack,” Boardman said. “When we think of the thousands of people who have been affected by Hurricane Katrina, we are reminded of the need for our volunteer network of employees with their unique skills to come together to help.”

Spangler, director of updating and auditing at the UTUIA International, also serves as president of UTU Local Unit 1, based at the International in Cleveland. “Marilyn has a knack for getting our projects off the ground, for finding volunteers and for following through to a grand conclusion,” Thompson said. “Marilyn keeps the unit’s projects in mind when she shops. Because of her, there’s always something available at the UTU International to make kits for the homeless and women and children at the battered women’s shelter. Many times were also sent to victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. She finds volunteers and together they make deliveries to the City Mission, St. Herman’s, the Westside Catholic Center and the Harvest for Hunger Food Bank.”

Bus companies hike security

Bus services have beefed up security in response to the heightened alert for air travel in the United States, according to reports.

Bus provider Greyhound said it had remained on the same “yellow” alert status it had before the attacks in the terror plot.

Greyhound said it took some unspecified measures to increase surveillance and security at its major facilities.

But most bus stations are contract facilities that are open for multiple purposes and aren’t easily secured, said Grayhound spokeswoman Beth Gray.

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Jefferson Bus operators approve new pact

Bus operators who work for the Jefferson Bus Lines in Oklahoma City, Okla., members of Local 1042, have ratified a new contract with the company.

The drivers operate routes between Oklahoma City and Little Rock, Ark.; Dallas and Wichita Falls, Tex., and Kansas City.

The three-year agreement, retroactive to March 1, includes regular increases in wages, a better benefit package, an increased safety bonus, an increase in the guarantee on the extra board and other improvements, according to Rodrick Steele, acting general chairman.

Steele, with the assistance of Bus Department Director and Vice President Roy Arnold and Alternate Local Legislative Rep. Fred Rayman, completed negotiations on the new contract with the company that were begun by former General Chairman Keith Tanner, who passed away a few months ago.

Jefferson operates a fleet of modern coaches in passenger and express scheduled service as well as charter and tour services. Jefferson routes extend from Minneapolis to Dallas, serving eleven states in the heartland of America and the province of Manitoba, Canada.

L.A. MTA operators approve new contract

More than 4,800 UTU-represented bus operators have overwhelmingly approved a contract with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority that gives them a 10.5 percent pay raise over the next three years.

“This represents the best labor contract that we’ve had since the 1980s,” General Chairperson James A. Williams said. “And, this is the first time in 18 years we have reached agreement prior to the expiration of the contract.”

Under the deal, the top hourly rate for those hired before July 1, 1997, goes up to $24.30, effective immediately. Drivers hired after that date will earn as much as $22.55 an hour.

Williams said he was proud of his negotiating committee – Vice General Chairperson Victor Buffoni and local chairpersons Robert Gonzalez, Enrique “Rick” Ortega, Benimjin Cooper and Tim Del Cambre – for their efforts on behalf of members.

“It feels good,” said Local 1563 (El Monte, Calif.) member Frank Munez, 26, who has been through two strikes since he began driving an MTA bus in 2000.

Local 1607 (Los Angeles) member Jacqueline Jones, 39, called the contract “the best since 1999,” when she joined the MTA as a driver.

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This month’s winning photo:

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

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.

This month’s winning photograph was taken by Andrew D'Egidio, a locomotive engineer and member of Local 30 in Miami, Fla. The photo is of the first of six new EM2 EMU locomotives to arrive in South Florida for use by the Tri-Rail commuter system. The photo was taken at Man- gonia Park on the engine’s maiden revenue-service trip on May 18, 2006, D'Egidio said.

Incident illustrates real need for two persons in locomotive

Tragedy may well have been averted recently due to the simple fact that two people – not one – were working aboard a Norfolk Southern (NS) locomotive.

On June 21, engineer Dan Neyhouse and conductor Alan Stuckey, both members of UTU Local 490 in Princeton, Ind., answered the call to operate an NS train to St. Louis, said Mike Lewis, a fellow member of Local 490.

As Neyhouse made preparations for departure, conductor Stuckey released the hand brakes, mounted the third engine of the locomotive consist and advised the engineer he was in the clear and ready to proceed, said Lewis.

Neyhouse failed to acknowledge his conductor, and when conductor Stuckey made his way to the lead locomotive, he again advised the engineer to proceed. Without verbally responding to Stuckey, engineer Neyhouse released the brakes and the train began to move.

Stuckey noticed Neyhouse's speed restriction at an upcoming crossing, but the engineer again failed to respond verbally, a situation Stuckey found odd.

With his view of Neyhouse obstructed by the control stand, and his uncertainty rising due to the lack of verbal acknowledgement from his crew mate, Stuckey, engineer Neyhouse released the brakes and the train began to move.

Stuckey asked again if the engineer heard and understood the speed restriction, but the engineer again failed to respond verbally, a situation Stuckey found odd.

Neyhouse was transported to a local hospital, while Neyhouse's aid, popping him up into a seated position and splashing bottled water on his face in an effort to revive and comfort him.

Doctors treated Neyhouse and released him later that evening, but a definite cause of his ailment could not be determined, Lewis said. The doctors theorized that Neyhouse may have been suffering from severe dehydration.

"This incident is an example of the potential disasters being averted because two employees are required in the locomotive to ensure its safe operation," Lewis said. "And I feel that UTU-represented conductor Alan Stuckey deserves recognition for his alert, calm reaction and dedicated service."

This is another reason that an FRA working group on collision avoidance, which includes representatives of carriers, labor and the FRA, recommends two sets of eyes and ears in the cabs of all trains.