

The Official Publication of the United Transportation Union

THE VOICE OF TRANSPORTATION LABOR

“I have instructed our national legislative director to intensify his urging of lawmakers to pass a new rail safety bill that includes effective measures to improve worker training and eliminate employee fatigue.” – *UTU International President Paul Thompson*

NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE

Contract talks are continuing between the UTU and the National Carriers' Conference Committee. The NCCC represents BNSF, CSXT, Kansas City Southern, Norfolk Southern, Union Pacific and a number of smaller railroads.

As this newspaper went to press in late January, the two sides were scheduled to sit down again to discuss proposed changes in wages, rules and working conditions.

To stay current on this and other issues, click on www.utu.org and sign up for UTU “news alerts” by clicking on the “News Alerts” button found on the UTU home page. The UTU home page is updated daily with news stories of interest to all UTU members.

News & Notes

Amendment deadline set

As provided for in Article 13 of the UTU Constitution, proposed amendments to the Constitution may be submitted by any subordinate body or International officer up to 120 days before the convention begins.

Consequently, the cut-off date for the submission of proposed amendments has been set for April 14, 2007.

All proposed amendments shall be submitted in writing to the general secretary and treasurer for referral to the Constitution Committee.

Each proposal shall be submitted separately, typewritten on standard paper, be properly identified, and give a clear and concise explanation of the article to be amended and the proposed change.

FRA OKs train-control plan

The FRA has approved a BNSF plan to test an experimental system aimed at automatically controlling train speeds and movements to prevent certain accidents, including train collisions.

The GPS-based system includes an in-cab electronic display screen that will first warn of a problem and then automatically engage the train's braking system if a locomotive engineer fails to act in accordance with operating instructions.

The FRA action allows BNSF to implement this experimental technology on 35 specific freight lines in 17 states, and requires appropriate employee training before it can be initiated.

The UTU has made clear numerous times that while it supports all efforts at improving train safety, there is no technology that exists that would allow safe train operation without a minimum of two sets of trained eyes in the locomotive cab.

Inspections would head south under UP scheme

On the deadly streets of a lawless Mexican border town, there is being hatched a plot that could bring death and destruction to any number of American towns and cities. Labor-union opposition may be all that will stop it.

Union Pacific Railroad wants to shift from U.S. soil to Mexico the mechanical safety inspection of freight cars headed north. Instead of U.S.-trained and -regulated carmen performing these safety inspections, UP wants them performed south of the border in Nuevo Laredo by Mexican employees of Kansas City Southern de Mexico.

Then, the trains would pass into the U.S. and not have to be inspected again, under FRA regulations, for another 1,500 miles.

That would allow trains originating in Mexico to pass into the U.S. without a further mechanical safety inspection until they reach Atlanta, Dallas, Houston, Kansas City, Little Rock, St. Louis or San Antonio.

As for Nuevo Laredo, where UP wants the mechanical safety inspections performed, neither FRA nor UP officials will visit the proposed facility to assess its capabilities. That is because to enter Nuevo Laredo is to risk being kidnapped or murdered.

Nuevo Laredo is so dangerous that the local

Mexican media call it their version of Baghdad, Iraq. Just last month, two Mexican Army officers were shot in an ambush by drug gangs, whom the FBI says are the real law in town.

The FRA has scheduled a hearing on UP's request for early February (check www.utu.org to keep up to date on this and other issues).

“It is as if 9/11 never occurred and public safety and national security must take a back seat to increased profits and bigger executive bonuses,” said UTU International President Paul Thompson. “Union Pacific, in pursuit of a higher stock price, shamelessly continues to thumb its nose at public safety and national security.”

The FRA rejected a similar request from UP two years ago, saying that the railroad “failed to demonstrate that granting the petition would be consistent with safety at this time.”

In the year after that decision, 110 people were murdered in Nuevo Laredo, including 15 policemen and the police chief, and kidnappings occurred almost daily, according to the BBC Worldwide News Service. One local radio station regularly plays the sound of machine-gun fire, with a voice saying, cheerfully, “We'll be back in a bullet.”

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FRA deals new yard safety advice

New safety recommendations affecting all yard shoving and pushing operations, including conventional and remote control, have been issued by the Federal Railroad Administration in the wake of a Dec. 14 fatality in a CSX yard near Syracuse, N.Y.

Included in the recommendations are that railroads amend their point-protection rules for remote control operations “to clarify that the person protecting the point visually determines, for the duration of the shoving or pushing movement, that the track is clear either within the person's range of vision or for the complete distance the equipment is to be shoved or pushed.”

The fatality, said the FRA, occurred in CSXT's DeWitt yard when a carman backing a pickup truck over a crossing was struck by a

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Rail labor backs switch monitors

The UTU and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen jointly told the FRA last month that they support the installation of rail-switch monitors in dark territory as well as the implementation of electronically controlled pneumatic brakes (ECP) on rail cars.

Of the two, switch monitors are more critical to improved rail safety, the UTU said.

The agency was warned, however, not to allow railroads numerous waivers from safety regulations in exchange for implementing ECP on a limited scale.

Testifying before the FRA was UTU National Legislative Director James Brunkenhoefer, who stressed that the UTU “supports and encourages every technological development that will improve safety in the workplace.

“The safety advantages of ECP in reduced

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Around the UTU

News from around the U.S. and Canada

Local 30, Jacksonville, Fla.

Members of this Amtrak local offer best wishes to **William R. "Robert" Ward Jr.** and **James A. "Jimmy" Newman** on their retirements after 42 years of rail service, said Secretary and Treasurer **James L. Searles**.

Locals 78 & 265, Pocatello, Idaho

These Union Pacific locals, along with the Pocatello chapters of the UTU Auxiliary and *UTU for Life*, enjoyed a Christmas party featuring great food, fun and music on Dec. 16, said State Legislative Director **George Millward**. More than 275 attended, with Legislative Rep. **Todd Clement** serving as master of ceremonies and organizer. Helping plan the evening were Millward and his wife **LaRae**; Clement and his wife **Teara**; **Matthew and Melanie Millward**; **Ralph and Ruth Fuller**; **Scott and Michaeleen Paul** and **Francis and Thelma McCarty**. Representing UTUIA, Matthew Millward hosted a raffle that raised \$1,590 for the Idaho Food Bank.

Local 240, Los Angeles, Calif.

Members of this Union Pacific local are mourning the death last month of retired conductor **Robert W. Cosner**, who had served UTU members for more than 30 years as vice general chairperson and local chairperson, according to **Fred G. Comeau**.

Local 286, N. Platte, Neb.

Members of this Union Pacific local in December spurred the community into action, contributing \$500 to the Salvation Army and sponsoring a series of radio ads to challenge other organizations to meet or beat their donation, said Local President **Steve Coleman** and Secretary and Treasurer **John Hasenauer**. Meanwhile, retired member **Thomas E. Fennell** said his daughter **Madaline** was the state's teacher of the year and serves as vice president of her school district's teachers' union.

Local 590, Portage, Wis.

This Canadian Pacific local invites all of its active and retired members, as well as those from **Local 281** in Milwaukee, Wis., and from the local BLET division, to a Valentine's Day party on Feb. 24 at The Blankehaus Restaurant in Portage. A social hour begins at 5:30 p.m., with dinner served at 7 p.m., said engineer **Steve James**. For information, contact James at (608) 742-8054.

Local 982, Chester, N.Y.

Following a kidney transplant and a return to health, **Dave Murphy** has been re-elected as local chairperson and delegate for this local, which represents CSXT employees.

Local 1067, Virginia, Minn.

Sixteen members of this Duluth, Winnipeg & Pacific/CN local, which has a 98 percent UTU PAC Gold Club participation rate (\$100 per year), recently increased their stake to Diamond Club status (\$600 or more per year), said State Legislative Director **P.J. Qualy**. "Many thanks to **Ron Bodell**, **Jim Busker**, **Patrick Etter** and the local's members for their outstanding effort on behalf of UTU PAC," Qualy said. "I pit this local against any other in the country."

Local 1168, Clovis, N.M.

Members of this BNSF Railway local now have a Web site boasting meeting dates, contract information and other useful links, according to Local Chairperson **Travis Mahan**. Take a look at www.utu1168.com.

Amtrak honors UTU members at ceremony

Late last year, Amtrak recognized five UTU members at its 2006 President's Service and Safety Award presentation for demonstrating, in the words of Amtrak President Alex Kumant, "extraordinary commitment to Amtrak."

The UTU members honored were **Chris Blankenship** and **Jason Cox** of Local 117 in Vancouver, Wash.; **William Herndon** of Local 857 in San Antonio, Texas; **Sal Prisco** of Local 1370 in New York, N.Y., and **Jay Seegmiller** of Local 166 in Salt Lake City.

Of the five, three were recognized for valor (Blankenship, Cox and Herndon), one for participating in the safety committee of the year (Prisco) and one for a safety achievement (Seegmiller). Following is a brief description of the circumstances that led to the awards:



Seegmiller

Assistant conductor **Chris Blankenship** and conductor **Jason Cox** were aboard *Empire Builder* #27 on the cold, rainy morning of April 3, 2005, when it derailed en route from Spokane to Portland. Four passenger cars came to rest at a 45-degree angle, dug into an embankment. Windows and doors were broken, filling cars with dirt and debris. Blankenship, seriously injured, ignored his own needs and immediately began assisting passengers and assessing the crew's situation. Meanwhile, Cox, who also was injured, maintained contact with dispatchers and Amtrak while expediting the triage and clean-up operations, rescuing a number of elderly and handicapped passengers. He was later cited for setting the professional tone and keeping passengers calm.

Conductor **William Herndon** was aboard the *Texas Eagle* with 90 passengers and 13 crew members on the night of Sept. 28, 2005. Traveling at about 55 mph, the train rounded a curve and collided with several boulders, causing the locomotive to overturn and four cars to derail. Shaken and bruised, and working by emergency



From left, Amtrak President Alex Kumant poses with conductor Jason Cox and assistant conductor Chris Blankenship after presenting them with awards recognizing their valor.

lighting, Herndon assisted in evacuating three crew members trapped inside the cab of the locomotive, which was less than 100 feet from a bridge over a deep ravine and leaking diesel fuel. He performed a head-count of passengers, and after they were evacuated, ensured their carry-on luggage followed them to their destinations.

Sal Prisco, yard assistant passenger conductor and a member of the New York Safety Council, helped ensure the committee continued its outstanding record of ranking among the best in the company in the categories of personal and occupational safety. In fiscal year 2005, the division's injury ratio was 2.6 per 200,000 worked hours. Members assisted with clean up and repairs around yards, replaced missing milepost signs and third-rail cover boards, helped relocate the homeless populating various tunnels, held bi-monthly meetings and took steps to raise safety awareness through communication and departmental collaboration. The council was also cited for initiating safety walkabouts in all territories and hosting health fairs.



Prisco

Conductor **Jay Seegmiller**, who serves as UTU Utah state legislative director, took action when the Salt Lake City crew base experienced injuries following an injury-free decade. Realizing the crews needed overshoes and glasses more appropriate for the harsh conditions along the *California Zephyr* route, Seegmiller got Amtrak's permission to sell railroad memorabilia on board, at work, in the depot and at PTA meetings. With the profits, he was able to purchase 44 pairs of special overshoes and 46 pairs of special safety glasses. Seegmiller has either chaired, or been a member of, the Salt Lake City safety committee for years, serves as Utah's special adviser for transportation and rail-safety issues, is an active Operation RedBlock captain and has mentored Boy Scouts through the railroading merit badge.

Local 1373, Philadelphia, Pa.

About 40 active and retired members of this CSXT local in December enjoyed a holiday party at the St. John's Club in South Philadelphia, said Secretary and Treasurer **Greg Brecker**. Among those attending were State Legislative Director **Don Dunlevy** and UTUIA Field Supervisor **Art Rayner**. Thanks go to the local's sponsor and Local President **Tony Mirarchi** and **Scotty Carlile** for arranging the festivities.

Local 1403, Kansas City, Mo.

Members of this Union Pacific local working in the yard and looking for bid sheets, maps, information about hub boards, medical insurance or even the weather need look no further than the local's new Web site, said **Brian Leu**. Check it out at <http://utu1403.com>.

Local 1567, Corbin, Ky.

The members of this CSXT local are offering their best wishes to Local Chairperson **Dennis L. Fox** and **Richard E. Stevens** on their recent retirements, said Secretary, Treasurer, Legislative Rep. and Delegate **Donnie Head**.

Local 1760, Detroit, Mich.

A large turnout of active and retired CSXT employees enjoyed the annual Christmas party, where **Richard K.**

Allen was honored in advance of his February retirement, said Secretary and Treasurer **Jerry D'Ortenzio**. During his more than 30 years as a member of the local, Allen held numerous posts, including president, local chairperson, vice local chairperson and trustee. He was presented with a clock, a brass lantern and letters of appreciation from UTU International President **Paul Thompson** and General Chairperson **John Lesniewski**.

Local 1778, N. Vancouver, B.C.

The winter issue of the joint newsletter, *The Meeting Point*, issued by this local and **Local 1923** in Prince George, B.C., is now available on the Web site shared by these two CN Railway locals, said Secretary and Treasurer **David Moorhouse** of Local 1778. Take a look at www.utubc.com.

Local 1816, Toledo, Ohio

Members of this CSXT local needing information about meetings, pay rates or agreements can now access that, and much more, 24 hours a day on the local's new Web site at www.utu1816.org, according to retired conductor **Howard J. Weith Jr.**

FRA seeking higher fines for rail-safety violations

The civil penalty guideline amounts assessed against railroads for violating numerous federal rail safety regulations would be substantially increased under a proposal announced in December by the FRA.

“Higher fines across all categories of federal regulations will encourage railroads to focus on safety compliance and improve the rail industry’s overall performance,” FRA Administrator Joe Boardman stated, noting that the proposed statements of agency policy would double the current guideline civil penalty amounts for most violations.

The measure takes into consideration the likelihood that a rail accident or graver consequences will occur as a result of failing to comply with a particular section of the regulations. At the low end of the scale, the guideline penalty amount would be \$1,500. At the high end of the scale where a violation is extremely likely to result in an accident or incident, the guideline penalty amount would be \$8,500. Willful violations would range from \$2,500 to \$11,000. The current statutory maximum of \$27,000 for grossly negligent violations or for patterns of repeated violations that have caused an imminent hazard of death or injury, or have caused death or injury to individuals, would remain unchanged.

Examples of some of the increased fines the FRA is proposing include: operating a train above the track speed limit (from \$2,500 to \$8,500); not providing a timely response to a report of malfunctioning highway/rail grade crossing equipment (from \$2,500 to \$6,500); and not performing a pre-departure inspection of a freight car (from \$2,000 to \$5,000). Under the proposal, most fines would increase, but in some instances the amounts would remain unchanged or be reduced where data and experience have shown that a failure to comply with a specific regulatory provision poses less of a safety risk.

The proposal also supports the National Rail Safety Action Plan, a broad effort that focuses on reducing the highest-risk causes of train accidents, Boardman said.

STB turns down rails’ anti-labor proposal

The U.S. Surface Transportation Board has slammed shut the door on a proposal by 65 regional and short-line railroads to permit them to abandon track virtually without regulatory oversight – a strategy that could have been used in collaboration with major railroads to avoid labor protection.

The regional and short-line railroads sought to exempt themselves from much of the existing abandonment oversight because they object to the burden and cost of having to seek regulatory authority.

For example, they do not like having to prove to the STB that they are losing money operating the line, or prove that the abandonment will not impose an undue burden on shippers or communities.

When rail regulations were extensively overhauled by Congress more than a decade ago, Congress was asked similarly to grease the skids for regional and short-line railroad abandonments. Congress declined.

The UTU and other labor organizations warned the agency that allowing willy-nilly abandonment by regional and short-line railroads could encourage major railroads to bypass more stringent abandonment standards by selling track to short lines with the expectation the track would be abandoned.

Already, major railroads sell line segments to regional and short-line railroads to escape labor protection provisions – but there exists with those sales a public-policy expectation that the lines will continue to be operated by the regional and short-line railroads. That expectation would evaporate if the regionals and short lines could bypass having to make an economic case for abandonment, UTU said.

Had the STB approved the sham petition, the eased abandonment procedure for regional and short-line railroads could have been used by BNSF, CSXT, Canadian National, Canadian Pacific, Kansas City Southern, Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific in collaboration with regionals and short lines to facilitate a wholesale subversion of labor-protection requirements in the U.S.

Disabled railroaders get hike in earnings cap

Not only is it now law, but it became effective immediately on Friday afternoon, Jan. 12, when President Bush signed the Railroad Retirement Disability Earnings Act, which raises from \$400 monthly to \$700 monthly the cap on outside earnings for recipients of Railroad Retirement disability benefits.

The new law means disabled rail workers can earn up to \$700 monthly without suffering a reduction in their Railroad Retirement disability payments. In future years, the cap will be increased by a formula based on changes in the federally calculated cost-of-living index.

Those receiving the disability can be afflicted with bad hearts, high blood pressure, failing eyesight and injuries received while on the job. While many were able to find menial work out-

side the railroad industry, the law previously limited their outside earnings to \$400 monthly. Anything earned above that amount resulted in a reduction in disability benefits.

The new \$700 monthly cap is closer in line with what is permitted under Social Security. “This is going to make a meaningful difference in the lives of many disabled rail workers who struggle to keep a roof over their family’s head, pay for prescription medication, buy groceries and clothing and purchase medical care,” said UTU International President Paul Thompson.

“With assistance from the other rail organizations, and thousands of phone calls and e-mails to lawmakers from UTU members and retirees, we achieved passage of the bill this year,” National Legislative Director James Brunken-

hoefer said. “It was the right thing for Congress to do. And it was the right thing for the president to sign the bill into law.”

Especially helpful in gaining passage of the bill were House members Jim Oberstar (D-Minn.), Corrine Brown (D-Fla.), Don Young (R-Alaska) and Steve Latourette (R-Ohio), and senators Mike Enzi (R-Wyo.), Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) and Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.).

Allowing the disabled higher outside earnings while retaining their full disability benefits will not create a financial burden for the Railroad Retirement system, Brunkenhoefer said. Currently, the Railroad Retirement Trust Fund totals some \$27 billion. The estimated cost of this new law to the trust fund will be about \$400,000 annually.

Members on Metra approve new contract

CHICAGO – Conductors and assistant conductors working on Metra have overwhelmingly approved a new seven-year contract, said General Chairperson Kevin King (GO-721).

“We mailed out 337 ballots, and 228 were returned,” King said. “Of those returned, 195 voted in favor of the package, and 33 were against. That’s almost dead-on 85-percent approval.”

Those affected by the pact are employed on Metra’s Fox Lake/Antioch, Elgin, Western Avenue, Heritage Corridor, SouthWest Service, Rock Island and Electric districts.

The pact runs through Dec. 31, 2011.

The package, which includes a retroactive component, was described by King as “a lucrative wage and benefit package with enhancements to work rules.” Among items secured is a daily guarantee on the conductors’ board and a 401(k) contribution from the carrier.

“We set our goals in November 2004 when we began negotiations, and my committee hung in there,” King said. “They did a really great job and we came out pretty good. We’re also grateful for the support we received from President Thompson and the UTU International.”

Members of the general committee who hammered out the pact include Wesley Braswell (Local 281, Milwaukee, Wis.); Barry Abbott (Local 1290, Chicago, Ill.); Jessie Turner Jr. (Local 1290, Chicago, Ill.); John McCarthy (Local 653, Blue Island, Ill.) and Ronald Kelly (Local 1258, Elgin, Ill.).

UTU Auxiliary scholarship deadline nears



Newly elected UTU Auxiliary International Secretary and Treasurer Dana Garvin (left), a member of Auxiliary Lodge 565, Toledo, Ohio, confers with UTU Auxiliary International President Carol Menges about the group’s scholarship program. The Auxiliary awards a minimum of eight \$1,000 four-year scholarships a year to applicants chosen at random. Only the children, grandchildren, stepchildren and stepgrandchildren of Auxiliary members who have belonged to the organization for one year or longer are eligible to apply. Applications must be postmarked by March 31. To request an application or for more information, call (440) 250-0027.

Paul C. Thompson, International President
p_thomps@utu.org

Rick Marceau, Assistant President
r_marceau@utu.org

Dan Johnson, General Secretary and Treasurer
d_johnso@utu.org

James M. Brunkenhoefer, Nat. Legislative Dir.
utunld@aol.com

Contact the UTU:

via telephone at (216) 228-9400

via fax at (216) 228-5755

via e-mail at utunews@utu.org

Railroads fiddle as safety concerns burn

The General Accountability Office, which serves as Congress' watchdog, engaged in some pretty loud barking last month, warning lawmakers that railroads are asleep at the throttle when it comes to national security.

We might title the episode, "At Dawn We Slept," if it weren't so painful a reminder of America's unpreparedness at Pearl Harbor the morning of Dec. 7, 1941. The railroad industry, it seems, has its eyes wide shut to 9/11 and subsequent terrorist rail and subway bombings in Europe.

For corroborating evidence, we need look no further than the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* newspaper, which recently published a series of six articles on the utter lack of security at most rail yards, where deadly hazmat is stored in rolling bombs called tank cars.

A *Tribune-Review* journalist repeatedly went unchallenged into rail facilities across America and placed his business cards where terrorists might attach explosives.

Railroad executives, rather than showing concern over these security gaps, accused the newspaper of sensationalism and criticized the reporter for trespassing on their property, as if a terrorist would obey a "no trespassing" sign.

If railroads choose to sleep at the throttle and put all Americans in peril, then America must look to the Federal Railroad Administration, the Transportation Security Administration and the Congress to sound the alarm and issue appropriate instructions to the railroad sleepyheads and naysayers.



WASHINGTON WATCH

By James M. Brunkenhoefer

With friends in Congress, our hopes now soar

Whistleblower protection. Abolition of limbo time. Limitations on cumulative time a railroad can force employees to be on duty. More predictable work schedules. Uninterrupted rest periods. Improved and more extensive training of new hires. Refresher training for experienced railroaders. Improvements in commercial driver license standards.



Brunkenhoefer

And the list goes on as to how we might enhance workplace safety and national security.

With the labor-friendly majority you helped elect in November, Congress is now poised to ask the tough questions and propose the tough-love responses to rail execs who previously were successful in turning Congress into an ostrich farm, with too many lawmakers' heads burrowed in the sand.

It is time for them to learn that times have changed.

In meetings with Jim Oberstar (D-Minn.), the new chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, and Corrine Brown (D-Fla.), the new chairman of the House Rail Subcommittee, they assured us they will take an aggressive stance to pass the first new railroad safety bill in more than a decade.

Mr. Oberstar and Ms. Brown already have scheduled hearings Jan. 30 and 31, and Feb. 13, at which they will grill rail executives and regulators on problems associated with fatigue and insufficient training. They want to know more

Heed our warnings

By Paul Thompson
International President

At every opportunity, this union stresses to the carriers that they must take immediate action to improve employee training and eliminate fatigue.

If we do not jointly solve these problems, there is going to be a catastrophic accident. Yet the carriers continue to ignore these concerns.

Meanwhile, on the rails and in the yards, there continue to be serious accidents, injuries and deaths. Many could be avoided were there better employee training programs, and work schedules designed to permit employees adequate and uninterrupted rest.

The problem goes beyond the frequency of hazmat cars exploding, communities evacuated and rail workers and nearby residents killed and injured. There also are national security concerns.

A recent series of newspaper articles detailed how easy it would be for a terrorist to create mayhem by placing explosives on or around hazmat cars. Most chilling was an FRA observation that workers are not receiving sufficient training in handling hazmat shipments, or training in how to understand and respond quickly and properly to security threats.

In fact, the carriers shockingly are looking to eliminate the few safety regulations they already face.

BNSF and Norfolk Southern asked the FRA to permit them to

operate trains with up to a dozen or more freight cars having inoperable brakes. Union Pacific wants permission to perform mechanical safety inspections in Mexico on trains headed into the U.S. – a request that has everything to do with avoiding tougher and more detailed inspections on U.S. soil.

Although the Transportation Security Administration is concerned with a terrorist threat to deadly hazmat loads that sit idle in rail yards, railroads ignore those concerns much as they ignore other warnings.

An Association of American Railroads' official said, matter of factly, as if she were talking about gum wrappers littering the sidewalk, "We cannot protect every railcar, every rail yard or every customer's facility all the time."

And that comment came after the Department of Homeland Security warned that "a toxic emission from an attack against [hazmat shipments] is among the most serious risks facing America's highest-threat areas."

With railroads asleep at the throttle, Congress may be the only effective alarm bell.

Accordingly, I have instructed our national legislative director to intensify his urging of lawmakers to pass a new rail-safety bill that includes effective measures to improve worker training and eliminate employee fatigue.

We are talking about innocent lives and the security of the United States of America. This union will not shirk its responsibilities – nor let the railroads shirk theirs.



Thompson

We welcome the chance to tell the new Congress of our many concerns

about harassment and intimidation intended to prevent employees from blowing the whistle on safety and security violations and injuries.

This doesn't automatically mean there will be new legislation providing us all we seek. It does mean we will have our day in court and the ability to prove our case. We are ready and anxious.

The UTU prides itself on being a bipartisan union. We have friends in both major political parties; but the truth is, we have more friends in the Democratic Party.

For sure, our Republican friends have helped us in the past, but anti-labor conservatives who controlled Congress generally kept a lid on our friends. Those days are over, thank goodness.

Among other objectives we will be pursuing in this 110th Congress, which will be more labor friendly, is improved funding for Amtrak; preservation of our national interconnected rail passenger network (no break-up and privatization of Amtrak), and elimination of the loopholes railroads use to sell track and avoid labor protections.

Unless and until we secure a reliable and consistent funding source for Amtrak, efforts at gaining improved wages, rules and working conditions – and saving jobs – cannot succeed.

We will be calling on you to help by sending e-mails, letters and making telephone calls to lawmakers. Together, we can and will make a difference this congressional session.

State Watch *News from UTU State Legislative Boards*

Illinois

State Legislative Director **Joseph C. Szabo** has been elected a vice president of the Illinois AFL-CIO.

Szabo's election comes almost exactly six months after the Illinois Legislative Board announced its return to the Illinois AFL-CIO after an absence of several years. The UTU International had rejoined the national AFL-CIO shortly before.



Szabo

"I am honored and pleased to be made a vice president so soon after the UTU's re-enlistment with the state AFL-CIO," Szabo said.

"I'm particularly honored because my position will enable me to work closely with President Margaret Blackshere and Secretary-Treasurer Michael Carrigan. Both are dedicated, effective union leaders whose experience and wisdom will be very valuable in the struggles railroad employees will face over the next few years."

Szabo said that despite the Illinois Legislative Board's recent record of winning long-overdue health and safety regulations to protect its members, the railroad industry continues to target railroad jobs.

"The bottom line is, the carriers want to use a few token improvements in signal technology as an excuse to go to one-person crews," Szabo said. "After decades of business decline that let the industry slash payrolls, the railroads finally are flush with traffic and hiring again. But they're alarmed by their employment-growth trend, so they're seeking to abolish jobs even in the midst of record traffic."

Szabo said blocking the carriers' campaign for one-person crews now has become the UTU's number-one priority, and the AFL-CIO will be an invaluable ally.

"Protecting our members' jobs is a battle no single union can fight alone," Szabo said.

Indiana



Support of the UTU PAC has paid off for members living in "The Crossroads of America." UTU friend State Rep. Joe Micon, a Democrat elected by residents in the state's 26th District, was recently returned to office thanks in part to the UTU. Above, Assistant State Legislative Director K.O. Edwards (left) and UTU PAC Gold Card Member Arba Richardson (right) are shown presenting Micon with a check in the amount of \$400 for his re-election campaign. Both Edwards and Richardson are members of Local 744, Lafayette. "UTU PAC protects our jobs, wages, safety and benefits," State Legislative Director Thomas Hensler said. "It only costs a few cents, but it makes a lot of sense."

California

State Legislative Director **James "J.P." Jones** is working hard to make sure that only safe, U.S.-inspected trains roll through his state.

Jones recently contacted all 53 members of Congress from California, both U.S. senators, all 40 state senators and 80 members of the state assembly to ask them to oppose efforts by the UP to allow its trains to be safety inspected in Mexico.

"I have asked these lawmakers, as well as the California State Association of Counties, the California League of Cities, the California Public Utilities Commission as well as various passenger train advocacy groups, to join us in stopping this.

"Our organization is very strongly opposed to the granting of this (UP) waiver," Jones

Missouri



State Legislative Director W. Larry Foster and the officers and members of Local 330 (Poplar Bluff) recently joined together to thank Dale Alexander for his years of service to the union. Alexander hired on in 1972 and recently retired from the Union Pacific. He served the union and its members as associate general chairperson, secretary of the state legislative board, local chairperson, local delegate and local legislative rep. At 28 years at the time of retirement, Alexander was the longest-serving member of the state legislative board. "There is no way to express our sincere thanks and appreciation for all your true loyalty to your local brothers, the Missouri State Legislative Board and UTU," Foster told Alexander at the meeting. "You have always been there for us, through good and bad, always a true and honest friend and gentleman. Dale, you will be sorely missed."

wrote to the legislators. "I am requesting that you join us in opposing this unsafe elimination of rail safety requirements.

"If this waiver is granted, freight trains entering the U.S. from Mexico would not be tested or inspected for a minimum of 1,500 miles while operating in the U.S.

"This would expose communities in California to numerous safety hazards.

"This exposure to the general public of unsafe railroad operations is unacceptable and must not be allowed to take place."

Bus Department

By Roy Arnold, vice president/director

New regulations demand attention

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and Congress are considering changes to regulations and laws that will directly affect all bus operators.

The FMCSA is proposing that states be required to place information about each commercial driver's license holder's medical certification on an electronic database available to carriers, drivers, the FMCSA and other authorized users.

Carriers would be required to check the database and place evidence of the driver's qualified status in the driver's qualification file before allowing the driver to operate a commercial motor vehicle.

Congress, meanwhile, is examining hours-of-service limitations, which govern how long a bus operator may drive without a rest period.

Also, bus companies with a history of serious hours-of-service violations may be required to install electronic on-board recorders in all of their commercial vehicles for a minimum of two years.

We also have issues related to buses from other countries that operate in the United States without being subject to the same safety and other regulations as domestic bus operations.

Keeping abreast of these issues at www.utu.org and discussing them in the workplace helps all of us focus on issues of importance. It also helps us find common ground that can be communicated to general chairpersons, state legislative directors and the national legislative office.

By working together we can use our strong voice in Washington, and in state capitals, to ensure a better and safer workplace.



Yardmasters

By J.R. "Jim" Cumby, vice president

Your help needed on FRA safety audit

Railroads and their hazmat cargo have become front-page news, again.

In mid-January, a Pittsburgh newspaper reported how easy it would be for a terrorist to gain entry to a rail facility and create mayhem by attaching explosives to a tank car containing a deadly chemical or gas. The article quoted the FRA as criticizing as inadequate the training of workers responsible for hazmat transportation.

Also, last month, CSX suffered two spectacular hazmat tank-car explosions in Kentucky: one following a derailment; the other after four cars broke free and rolled into a locomotive.

The 2005 Graniteville, S.C., disaster on Norfolk Southern that killed nine following a release of chlorine gas continues to be discussed in newspapers; as does the 2002 Canadian Pacific derailment in Minot, N.D., that killed one and injured hundreds. In San Antonio, a series of derailments and hazmat releases has those citizens on edge.

Each of us has a legitimate expectation to return home safely from our jobs. For this reason, I encourage you to cooperate with an FRA audit, now underway, to determine train placement and proper documentation of hazmat.

It is imperative that yardmasters and ground service crews cooperate to ensure proper placement of hazmat cars in all train pick-ups or movements, and that proper documentation is provided train crews.

As for train crews, you face personal fines from the FRA for failure to have proper documentation on hazmat shipments. Should you be ordered to depart without proper documentation, request and document the name of the person ordering you out and provide this information to your local and/or general chairperson.



Around the UTU in pictures



Members of UTU Local 490 in Evansville, Ind., and their families march in the Labor Day Association Parade, the oldest Labor Day parade in the state (1886) and the second oldest in the nation. The parade rotates between Evansville, Princeton and Booneville, Ind.

Local Chairperson Harry Garvin Jr., center, presents commemorative artwork to nine-year President Ralph Lee, left, and 12-year Secretary/Treasurer Fred Comeau. Local 240 in Los Angeles commissioned the art to honor their years of service to the local.

Hugo Repreza, a member of UTU Local 1608 at Chatsworth, Calif., and a bus operator for the Los Angeles Metro, participated in the transit agency's bus rodeo in 2004. In this photo taken by Ramon Peniche of UTU Local 1565, Repreza stands proudly in front of a Metro bus.

UTU Local 1190 celebrates the retirement of conductor Terry Ogden at the Ludlow Bromley Yacht Club in Ludlow, Ky. Above, Local President Lou Wartman presents Brother Ogden with a brass lantern on behalf of the local for his many years of loyal membership.

This motorized caboose was constructed on a Chevy van frame by members of UTU Locals 305, 367, 646 and 872, and was used in the 2005 Labor Day Parade in Omaha, Neb.



SEPTA General Chairperson Ron Koran addresses members of the media during UTU Local 1594's strike against the transit agency in November 2005. Approximately 325 members of the local operate buses, trolleys and high-speed rail service for the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority.

Local 590 members Tim Welsh, Treasurer Gary Halverson, Local Chairperson James Nelson and Robert Clemmons prepare for the local's twice-yearly clean up of a portion of state Highway 33 just south of Portage, Wis. The stretch of road is designated the Veterans Memorial Highway.

A line forms quickly at UTU Local 1290's ninth annual picnic at Governor's Trail Park in Matteson, Ill., when the children in attendance hear that ice cream is being served. More than 350 attended the picnic, a joint affair with BLET Division 131.

It was a cold day in Flat Rock, Mich., on Jan. 22, 2005, as Keith Shulaw of UTU Local 1075 performed his trainman duties for Canadian National Railway (Grand Trunk Western). The photo was taken by W.G. Glinke, also of UTU Local 1075 at Trenton, Mich.

About 40 active and retired members attended Local 1373's recent holiday party at the St. John's Club in South Philadelphia, Pa. Pictured, from left, are President Tony Mirarchi, Al Lockley, Pennsylvania State Legislative Director Don Dunlevy and UTUIA Field Supervisor Art Rayner.



New Jersey Transit Conductor Ranessa Green of UTU Local 800 at Jersey City, N.J., spends a chilly December morning on a commuter platform in Gladstone, N.J.

From left to right, UTU members Arnie Sand (1509), Dave Fandrich (1344), John Risch (1344), Roger Thompson (1344) and Steve Geller (1509) display their quarry after participating in the Democratic Pheasant Shoot, a fund-raiser for Democratic candidates.

UTU's Oregon State Legislative Director Delmer Hanson, right, presents a brass lantern to retired FRA Regional Administrator Dick Clairmont on behalf of the North Dakota State Legislative Board. The letter from the board congratulated Clairmont "for being an outstanding administrator who applied the rules fairly on both sides." Hanson and Clairmont live in close proximity.

Jason Elm, left, and James Wathan Jr., both Canadian National Railway conductors and members of UTU Local 582 at Fond du Lac, Wis., complete their first Operation Lifesaver program for the first grade students at Roberts Elementary School.

Outgoing Local Chairperson Bruce King, right, receives a plaque for his service and devotion to the membership of Local 1162 in Erwin, Tenn. King retired after 39 years of service as a conductor on CSX and the former Clinchfield Railroad. Local President John Hilemon, left, presented King with the plaque.

UTU for Life

RRB benefits may be payable to survivors

By V.M. "Butch" Speakman Jr.

Monthly benefits may be payable under the Railroad Retirement Act to the surviving widow(er), children and certain other dependents of a railroad employee. Lump-sum death benefits may also be payable to qualified survivors.

Eligibility for survivor benefits (with the exception of one type of lump-sum death benefit) depends on whether or not a deceased employee was "insured" under the Railroad Retirement Act. An employee is insured if he or she has at least 10 years of railroad service, or five years performed after 1995, and a current connection with the railroad industry at the time of retirement or death, whichever occurs first.

If a deceased employee did not have an insured status, jurisdiction of any survivor benefits payable is transferred to the Social Security Administration and survivor benefits are paid by that agency. Regardless of which agency has jurisdiction, the deceased employee's Railroad Retirement and Social Security credits will be combined for benefit computation purposes.

Widow(er)s' benefits are payable at age 60 or over. They are payable at any age if the widow(er) is caring for an unmarried child under age 18 of the deceased employee or a disabled child of any age who became permanently disabled before age 22. Widow(er)s' benefits are also payable at ages 50-59 if the widow(er) is permanently disabled and unable to work in any regular employment.

There are also two kinds of lump-sum death benefits payable in some cases to survivors. A lump-sum death benefit for burial expenses is payable to certain survivors of an employee with an "insured" status under the Railroad Retirement Act if no survivor is immediately eligible for a monthly benefit when the employee dies.

For more information on Railroad Retirement benefits for survivors, including children and other dependants, call or visit the nearest RRB field office. You can find the address and phone number of the RRB office serving your area by calling the automated toll-free RRB Help Line at (800) 808-0772, or from the RRB's Web site at www.rrb.gov.

V.M. "Butch" Speakman Jr. serves as labor member of the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board.



V.M. Speakman



Retiree's cabooses draws all ages during holidays

When he bought Seaboard Air Line Railroad cabooses #5735 in August 2005, he knew it would be a hit with the youngsters, but retired engineer R.W. Willaford soon discovered his cabooses had a magnetic attraction for all ages.

"It's amazing how many older people come out to see it," said Willaford, a member of Local 1221 in Tampa, Fla. "That cabooses brings a lot of old friends and a lot of the people I worked with back to me."

The cabooses sits on a set of rails Willaford installed in front of his house in Plant City, Fla. The last two Decembers, he and his wife, Felice, decorated it with Christmas lights and hired Santa Claus to host the children who visit on school-sponsored field trips.

"Felice makes up a small bag for each child to take home," Willaford said. "The bags include material from Operation Lifesaver, crayons, coloring books and candy. Each child sits on Santa's lap, and my wife takes a Polaroid picture and gives it to them."

Willaford said the youngsters are treated to a short safety video. "We try to get a message through to them and give them a bit of a history lesson," he said. "It's educational, but it's more entertaining than sitting in a classroom. It really opens their eyes."

In the spring, the routine is much the same, with the Easter Bunny and a balloon artist on hand to break the ice. "We do this out of our own pocket," Willaford said. "We don't charge admission and we won't accept donations."

Nearly 130 children went through the cabooses in December 2005, and 284 experienced it in December 2006. "We don't keep count of the adults," Willaford said. "But maybe we should!"

Cabooses #5735 is one of three he bought



Retired engineer R.W. Willaford stands next to the bench he made from rail car wheels as Santa Claus prepares to entertain another request beside the cabooses restored by Willaford.

from people in Wildwood, Fla., who saved five from a scrap yard. "They sold two regular cabooses to other buyers, and I purchased the three wide-body, cushion underframes," Willaford said.

"I sold one on the spot, and kept two," Willaford said. "I put #5757 in the back of my farm. They were built in 1963 by International Car & Foundry in Canton, Ohio. The SAL had purchased about 60 of them for something like \$60,000 each. They were lined up to be scrapped in 1987."

The son of an SAL trainman, Willaford, 69, hired out with the company after graduating high school in 1956, becoming a fireman and joining the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen & Enginemen. He worked 42 years and eight months and retired from CSX in September 1999.

Willaford stays busy running a farm that's been in the family since 1935 and taking care of a 114-space mobile home park. "I miss the people and the environment of railroading, but I don't miss the phone calls at 2 a.m.," he said.

"I've got two daughters and five grandchildren," he said. "And when we get spare time, my wife and I travel. We've been on every Amtrak route except one, and took two trips across Canada on VIA Rail."

THE FINAL CALL

Following are the names of recently deceased retirees who maintained annual membership in the UTU for Life program (formerly known as the UTU Retiree Program), according to reports received at UTU International Headquarters. These brothers and sisters will be missed by their many friends and by fellow UTU for Life members.

Local	Name	City/State	Local	Name	City/State	Local	Name	City/State
2	Myers, Robert W.	Toledo, Ohio	643	Lasswell, Dale E.	Macon, Mo.	1422	Walker, John P.	Chino Hills, Calif.
5	Larson, Alfred L.	Fort Scott, Kan.	679	Amodio, Frank	Maybrook, N.Y.	1458	Griffin, James J.	Westwego, La.
98	Goldman, William L.	Watsonville, Calif.	706	Guilliams, Billy C.	Rocky Mount, Va.	1462	Humphrey, John H.	Roslindale, Mass.
145	Nicholson, Edward A.	Venetia, Pa.	763	Phillips, Gordon F.	Sun City, Ariz.	1491	Regan, John E.	Scranton, Pa.
168	Dawiec, Stanley E.	Streamwood, Ill.	772	Kelly, Benjamin F.	Muscle Shoals, Ala.	1524	Sullivan, Dean D.	Houston, Texas
194	Miller Sr., Marvin R.	Paris, Ill.	783	Tilley, James T.	Greensboro, N.C.	1529	Cymbal, Chester V.	Bradenton, Fla.
259	Johnson, Joseph A.	Troy, Kan.	847	Lovelady, John H.	Mount Olive, Ala.	1534	Leimbach, Herbert G.	New Lenox, Ill.
300	Loscalzop, Andrew D.	Berlin, N.J.	886	Lafleur, James T.	Greenwood, Ind.	1545	Tolbert, James W.	Farmerville, La.
386	Hughes, Donald G.	Baltimore, Md.	898	McHugh Jr., Thomas F.	Watertown, Mass.	1548	Tansel, Eugene A.	Beech Grove, Ind.
386	Snyder, W. E.	West Lawn, Pa.	937	White, Euel E.	Lorena, Texas	1564	Muckelroy, Joe Arthur	Laguna Beach, Calif.
426	Dowling, Thomas E.	Spokane, Wash.	1074	Drake, Ronald O.	Pittsburgh, Pa.	1574	Tuttle, L. F.	Oysterville, Wash.
445	Beck, Henry R.	Chillicothe, Ill.	1334	Madison, Robert L.	Lucedale, Miss.	1598	Akin, John S.	Pembroke Pines, Fla.
445	Parker Sr., Robert E.	Chillicothe, Ill.	1365	Wentworth, Ronald J.	Meadville, Pa.	1601	Dezarn, James C.	Big Stone Gap, Va.
454	Romesburg, John C.	Hampstead, Md.	1370	Weidling, Richard	Winfield, N.J.	1626	Douglas, Claude C.	Anderson, Calif.
464	Gray Sr., Jacques D.	Prue, Okla.	1376	Boyd, Roy E.	Port St. Lucie, Fla.	1687	Gwinn, Mark P.	Phoenix, Ariz.
469	Gibbs, James R.	Granite City, Ill.	1377	Orthmeyer, James F.	Ironton, Ohio	1892	Housewright, Thomas A.	Deer Park, Texas
524	Kitcher, Clifford L.	Palestine, Texas	1390	Perchy, Willard	Levittown, Pa.	1917	Rowland, Larry B.	Dayton, Ohio
528	Newcomb, Howard L.	Cadiz, Ky.	1402	Himstedt, Hilbert H.	Rockaway Beach, Mo.	1918	Haynes, Elwood L.	El Paso, Texas
533	Shelden, James G.	Osawatomie, Kan.	1418	Edmond, Robert P.	New Waterford, Ohio	1928	Wilhelm, James O.	Fruitland Park, Fla.
610	Lopez, Eduardo L.	Lewes, Del.				1929	Keil, Eugene N.	Highland, Ind.
						1976	Mertens, Paul C.	Pewaukee, Wis.

Retire smart...

Make your money work for you!

With so many Americans living paycheck to paycheck, some may wonder how it's possible to save for retirement when there's no money left at the end of the week.

The answer is spending less than you earn.

There are a lot of ways to reduce expenses. Some may be challenging, but some may be easier than you think.

Determining where to cut corners is an individual decision, but once you free up some cash, it's important to get that money into a savings vehicle as soon as possible. Even small amounts can make a big difference given enough time.

Here's an example: A 20-year-old who invests just \$600 per year into a UTUIA IRA can expect a guaranteed annuity value of \$69,708 at the end of the year of age 70. Assuming the current interest rate of 4.25%, the annuity value could be as high as \$103,217. Just by investing \$600 per year! That's less than \$1.75 per day!

Call (800) 558-8842 today for your free annuity illustration, or visit www.utuia.org.



Money Saving Tips

- ✓ Bring your lunch, coffee, pop or bottled water to work with you.
- ✓ Seek out free entertainment such as museums, parks and free concerts.
- ✓ Stop impulse buying. Before buying anything, ask yourself, "Do I really need this?"
- ✓ Borrow movies and books from the library instead of buying books or paying for the theatre.
- ✓ Get rid of the cable movie channels and cut back to basic cable.
- ✓ Cook your own meals instead of eating out. Buy store brands instead of costly name brands.

IRA Information, please

I would like more information on UTUIA's retirement savings plans. **Please print.**

Full name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Date of birth _____ UTU local number _____

Telephone number with area code _____

Are you currently working? Yes No 2/07

Complete and mail to: UTUIA Sales Dept., 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250

UTUIA seeks 2007 Volunteer of the Year

The United Transportation Union Insurance Association is looking for a special person to honor as its 2007 Volunteer of the Year.

Do you regularly volunteer at a hospital or nursing home? Do you lead a Boy Scout or Girl Scout troop or work with the handicapped? Are you involved in some other activity that benefits those in your community?

If so, the UTUIA would like to know about it.

A panel of judges at the UTU International will review all submissions and select the 2007 Volunteer of the Year.

The individual selected as UTUIA Volunteer of the Year will receive a \$1,000 U.S. Savings Bond and a plaque of appreciation from the UTUIA.

Additionally, he or she will be honored at the 2007 UTU/UTUIA Regional Meeting nearest his or her home, with all expenses paid by UTUIA.

Also, 20 runners up will be selected to receive certificates of appreciation for their volunteer efforts.

Nominations must be received or post-marked by Friday, March 30, 2007.

The winning individual will be notified by registered mail, and certificates of appreciation will be forwarded to runners up as soon as possible.

The decision of UTUIA judges is final. Previous nominees may be nominated again; however, former Volunteers of the Year are ineligible to receive awards.

The Volunteer of the Year program is an opportunity for the men and women of the UTUIA to let their fraternal lights shine.

It also provides an opportunity for UTUIA to recognize its volunteers for their outstanding contributions to others.

Nomination forms should be mailed to: UTUIA Volunteer of the Year, Attn.: Tony Martella, director of insurance, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250.

Do not forget to include a separate sheet of paper describing the applicant's volunteer activities.

UNITED TRANSPORTATION UNION INSURANCE ASSOCIATION 2007 Volunteer of the Year Nomination Form

Name _____ Local _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Telephone number _____ Dates of volunteer activities _____

Total volunteer time (hours, minutes) Weekly Monthly \$ _____
Value of contribution (if applicable)

Please attach a separate sheet of paper describing volunteer activities. The more documentation you can provide, the better. 2/07

UNITED TRANSPORTATION UNION INSURANCE ASSOCIATION, 14600 DETROIT AVE., CLEVELAND, OH 44107-4250



UTU BUS LINES

News items culled from the UTU's Daily News Digest, posted every morning on the UTU Web site, www.utu.org.

UTU seeks comment on new CDL rules

The UTU is seeking comment about proposed changes to the medical-certification requirements for holders of commercial drivers' licenses (CDLs).

The new rules would require states to determine if a driver applying for, or renewing, a CDL is subject to federal medical-certification requirements.

If so, then the state must ensure that the driver's current medical certification qualifies him or her to obtain a new or renewed CDL.

A state also could "downgrade" the status of a driver who holds a CDL but does not have an adequate or current medical certification.

States also would be required to place information about each CDL holder's medical certification on an electronic database.

Additionally, carriers would be required to check the database and place evidence of the driver's qualified status in his or her file before allowing the driver to work.

Members on ONE Bus approve new contract

UTU members employed by ONE Bus overwhelmingly ratified a new three-year contract on Jan. 12, according to General Chairperson Nelson Manzano.

Highlights of the package for members of Local 710 in Newark, N.J., provide an hourly pay increase, an additional paid personal day, a uniform allowance and an increase in the company's contribution to health care coverage and a 401(k) pension plan.

The negotiating committee was also successful in holding off the company's efforts to eliminate previously contracted bonus payments for expert bus operators and safety.

Manzano offered gratitude for support received from UTU International President Paul Thompson, Vice President and Bus Department Director Roy Arnold and Alternate Vice President (Bus-Eastern Region) Rich Deiser. He also praised his committee, including James Powell, Jose Rivera and Joe Freirson.

Feds seek recorders to measure work times

Truck and bus companies with a history of serious hours-of-service violations may be required to install electronic recorders in all their commercial vehicles for a minimum of two years, according to a proposed Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration rule.

Specifically, the proposal would require devices to track a driver's duty status, including: identity of the driver; duty status; date, time and location of the commercial vehicle, and distance traveled. It would also add a requirement to use Global Positioning System (GPS) technology or other location-tracking systems to automatically identify the location of the vehicle, which further reduces the likelihood of falsification of data. On-board recording devices that are installed in commercial vehicles manufactured on or after two years from the effective date of a final rule would have to meet these new requirements, but devices voluntarily installed before that time would be allowed to continue for the life of the vehicle.

Switch monitors

Continued from page 1

stopping distances, and the safety and operational advantage of the continuous charging of the brake system, even during a brake application, provide incentives for implementation of ECP," Brunkenhoefer said.

But more important, said Brunkenhoefer, is "the urgency of installing switch monitors on every main-line switch in non-signalized (dark) territory. This is the application of the same technology that turns on the light when the door to a refrigerator is opened," Brunkenhoefer said. "Main-line switch monitors are an 'off the shelf' item today that our rail industry has chosen not to utilize, and the FRA has not required."

Brunkenhoefer said that following a deadly switch-related accident in Graniteville, S.C., in 2005, the National Transportation Safety Board recommended similar action.

Indeed, the UTU and the BLET stressed that

of the two technologies, installation of main-line switch monitors in dark territory should have priority over installation of ECP brakes.

"We do not want to see scarce safety dollars diverted away from main-line switch monitors in dark territory, because such installations will produce the most significant improvements in safety immediately," Brunkenhoefer said.

BNSF and NS are asking, in exchange for implementation of ECP brake equipment on a few train sets, that they be allowed to cease various vital mechanical safety checks, including:

- The now-required daily locomotive inspection of all locomotives used with ECP train sets;
- The maintenance of dynamic brakes on locomotives used with ECP;
- Various manufacturer-recommended maintenance of brake equipment on freight cars;
- The requirement to provide operating crews with conventional train-handling information.

Were BNSF and NS given the exemptions they seek, "then all of the safety enhancements for this equipment will be removed and a signifi-

cant reduction in braking capacity below conventional trains will occur," Brunkenhoefer said.

The request for waivers would, for example, permit BNSF and NS to operate continuously with up to 22 cars of a 150-car train without any brakes – a degradation of safety," Brunkenhoefer said.

Currently, a train leaving its initial terminal is required to have 100 percent of its brakes working. The required brake inspections identify cars that have inoperable brakes and the repairs are made or the car is set out of the train.

But BNSF and NS are demanding that 15 percent of cars in an ECP train can continue to operate without needed repairs.

In fact, BSNF and NS also are demanding, in exchange for installing a few ECP brake sets, to be able to operate locomotives with clogged toilets, inoperable heaters, inoperable windshield wipers, burned out light bulbs, bent grab irons, broken windows, and worn out brake shoes – none of which have anything to do with ECP brakes. "In other words, the railroads want to pay for ECP through deferred maintenance of locomotives," Brunkenhoefer said.

FRA yard safety advice

Continued from page 1

yard movement being shoved by a remote control locomotive.

The leading end that struck the pickup truck consisted of six empty flat cars, which the FRA said are "less perceptible" than the approach of other rolling stock; and that the accident was "exacerbated by darkness."

The FRA also recommended that carriers consider how to make flat cars and other equipment with low profiles more conspicuous when they are the lead car in a shoving movement – especially at yard crossings.

Additionally, the FRA recommended that carriers review the ability of employees to call for assistance in emergency situations through the use of a common emergency radio frequency.

In the CSX fatality, the carman attempted to call for help, but was on a different radio frequency than the crew.

The FRA recommendations are not binding on railroads at this time, but are likely to later be incorporated into FRA operating rules.

Safety heads south

Continued from page 1

But there is nothing funny about deadly hazmat that may travel in freight trains that are not inspected by U.S. crews with specialized training, and who must follow federal regulations and submit to FRA inspections.

The U.S. Navy has estimated that as many as 100,000 Americans in a heavily populated area could die within 30 minutes following a chlorine gas leak from just one ruptured tank car.

UP transports some 700,000 carloads of hazmat each year.

"America should not be rolling the dice on public safety and national security to benefit an already highly profitable railroad able to pay its chairman \$25 million annually and hand out \$1-million year-end cash bonuses to top executives," Thompson said.

"Public safety and national security should not take a back seat to corporate profits. It is that simple and that urgent and we are urging the FRA to again deny the Union Pacific's request," Thompson said.

UTUIA SCHOLARSHIP: A KEY TO SUCCESS

**A message from UTU International
President Paul Thompson**

Education is the key to success, and the key to an education can be a United Transportation Union Insurance Association scholarship.

With college enrollment time upon us, we strongly urge all eligible persons to take a few minutes to fill out the UTUIA scholarship application form printed below and apply for a UTUIA scholarship. It will be one of the smartest things they ever do.



This is the 33rd year UTUIA is making available 50 continuing \$500 scholarships for its members, and the sons, daughters and grandchildren of its members. We are very proud of our scholarship program, a pride that comes from helping thousands of college students over the years.

We realize the amount awarded, \$500 a year, doesn't meet the full cost of the recipient's education, but in this way we can help a larger number of students with educational costs. They may use the scholarship money for tuition, learning materials or other related expenses.

UTUIA scholarship winners will receive the full amount of the award each year for up to four years of undergraduate study as long as they maintain a satisfactory academic record.

With a UTUIA scholarship, we hope to give the recipient the opportunity for a full-time education instead of a part-time education, day school instead of night school, higher education instead of basic training.

We are proud also in knowing that UTUIA scholarship recipients are enrolled in some of the finest and most prestigious colleges and universities in the world. We also can point proudly to the many achievements of past scholarship winners who have contributed so much to our great nation.

UTUIA is proud and happy to provide these scholarships for they are an opportunity for achievement. The success of deserving students is our success and the benefits are boundless. The key to success is education, and the key to education is a UTUIA scholarship. Take a minute to apply for the chance of a lifetime.

As the saying goes: "If you think education is expensive, try ignorance."

Paul C. Thompson

Paul Thompson
International President



DISTRIBUTION

Fifty continuing \$500 scholarships are awarded each year upon verification of enrollment for the fall term. The scholarships are prorated according to the number of UTU members in each of nine districts. The names of the 50 scholarship winners for the academic year 2007-2008 will be drawn at UTUIA headquarters in Cleveland after the March 31, 2007, deadline for submission of applications.

ELIGIBILITY

Requirements for a scholarship applicant are that he or she be at least a high school senior or equivalent; age 25 or under; be a UTU member or UTUIA-insured member, the child or grandchild of a UTU member or UTUIA-insured member, or the child of a deceased UTU member or UTUIA-insured member. (If member is deceased please include date of death). UTU members or UTUIA-insured members must be U.S. residents.

Applicants also must be accepted for admittance, or already enrolled, for at least 12 credit hours per quarter or semester at a recognized institution of higher learning (university, college or junior college, nursing or technical school offering college credit). Graduate schools are not included. Families of full-time International officers are not eligible.

AWARDS

Scholarships are awarded on the basis of chance, not grades. A UTUIA scholar, however, is expected to maintain a satisfactory academic record to keep the scholarship for the full four years.

ADMINISTRATION

The UTUIA Scholarship Committee decides whether individual scholarships should be continued or discontinued. Each successful applicant must provide annual proof of eligibility on or before a deadline set by the scholarship committee to qualify for a continuing award. The day-to-day management of the program is handled by the office of the UTUIA general secretary and treasurer.

INVEST IN THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME

The UTUIA Scholarship Program is an open program. All eligible students, regardless of previous grades or future plans that don't happen to include college, are strongly urged to apply, to take five minutes to invest in the chance of a lifetime, the chance for a better future.

UTUIA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION FORM 2007/2008

(PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT)

STUDENT'S NAME _____ BIRTH DATE ____/____/____
(LAST) (FIRST) (M.I.) (M/D/Y)

MEMBER'S NAME _____ UTU Local # _____
(LAST) (FIRST) (M.I.) or
UTUIA Local Unit # _____

ADDRESS OF MEMBER _____

OCCUPATION _____

EMPLOYER _____

STUDENT'S RELATIONSHIP TO MEMBER _____

COLLEGE YEAR, 2007-2008 FRESHMAN SOPHOMORE JUNIOR SENIOR

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT _____

SIGNATURE OF MEMBER _____

(Please include date of death if member is deceased.)

Applications must be received **no later than March 31, 2007.**

Please submit **only one application per student.** Incomplete, photocopied or duplicate applications will not be accepted.

The application form printed on this page is the official UTUIA scholarship application form and is the only one you will receive. If you need another application form, request one from the address below. Please include your UTU local or UTUIA local unit number with your request.

Complete the form above, cut it out (leaving address label on reverse side, if possible), and mail to:

**UTUIA Scholarship Program
United Transportation Union Insurance Association
14600 Detroit Ave.
Cleveland, OH 44107-4250**

UTUIA SCHOLARSHIP DISTRICTS

District	Scholarships
1 Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire New York, Rhode Island, Vermont	5
2 Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania	5
3 Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia	9
4 Indiana, Michigan, Ohio	5
5 Illinois, Wisconsin	4
6 Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas	5
7 Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota	6
8 Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah	8
9 Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming	3



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 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.



This month's winning photograph was taken by Steven Messina, a member of Local 722 in Babylon, N.Y. This photo of a Long Island Rail Road M-1 commuter car was taken at the carrier's West Side Yard at a ceremony commemorating the last ride of the M-1s, which are being taken out of service. A number of train enthusiasts paid to take part in the last trip, Messina said.



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Three UTU members killed in separate rail, bus accidents

The UTU lost three members recently: **William Magel Jr.** in a rail-switching accident, **Steve Cook** in a bus accident and **David Collins**, who was struck by a passing train.

Magel, 57, of Sioux City, Iowa, was killed in a yard accident Dec. 28, 2006, in Sioux City.

A switchman/conductor and member of UTU Local 306 in Eagle Grove, Magel was killed while separating rail cars by destination.

According to reports, the accident involved a moving rail car and a stationary rail car in the Union Pacific's rail yard at Sioux City.

Magel's rail accident was "horrible," according to Local 306 Local Chairperson Larry Pearson. Magel was riding the side of a car when he was pinched up by a car on an adjacent track, Pearson said.

"I have known him 30 years. He was a hell of a nice guy," Pearson said. "He was a strong union man and was at local meetings all the time. There is nobody on the planet that could say anything bad about Bill Magel. He was a genuinely nice fellow and good family man."

Officials said 35-year-old Los Angeles Metro bus driver Steve Cook, a member of Local 1563 in El Monte, Calif., died early Jan. 4 after his vehicle crashed into a tree in Willowbrook, Calif.

Cook had just dropped off the last passenger on his overnight route between downtown Los Angeles and

Willowbrook when the collision occurred at about 12:45 a.m. It took firefighters about 45 minutes, using the jaws of life, to extricate Cook from the vehicle.

Cook, who was single and lived in Los Angeles, died at King/Drew Medical Center.

Collins, 50, a member of Local 29 at Babylon, N.Y., was working for the Long Island Rail Road, supervising repairs to the tracks between Valley Stream and Rosedale, when he was struck by a train Jan. 17 and later died.

He was leading a crew of four workers at 9:55 a.m. when he was hit by a westbound 9:12 a.m. train from Babylon, Det. Sgt. Andrew Roderick said. "He wasn't actually on the track," Roderick said. "He was just next to it, but he was close enough."

Collins, a 21-year employee, was conscious when emergency workers flew him to Nassau University Medical Center in East Meadow, where he was pronounced dead at about noon, Roderick said.

A horn had sounded to indicate a train was near and the foreman had alerted his crew to get out of the way.

All five moved away from an eastbound train, Roderick said, but Collins apparently didn't realize another train, heading west, was coming about a minute later.

He was walking back to the spot where he had been working when the train hit him, Roderick said.



Magel

Inside this issue of the UTU News:



Amtrak honors five UTU members. See page 2.



Enjoy a photographic journey around the UTU. See pages 6/7.



Member's old SAL caboose draws new visitors. See page 8.



The UTUIA scholarship application? See page 11.