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UTU News

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The Official Publication of the United Transportation Union

News and Notes

UTU members killed

Two UTU brothers, Henry Salinas and Walter White, were killed recently in separate switching accidents.

Salinas, 43, a member of UTU Local 1381 in Hammond, Ind., was killed Aug. 25 while switching rail cars at the Indiana Harbor Belt yard in Crown Point, Ind. He died about 6:30 a.m. when he was run over by a rail car.

Salinas, a UTU member since 2003, had been married just two months.

White, of Local 1241 in Richmond, Calif., was killed early on the morning Aug. 30 in a switching accident at the BNSF's yard in Stockton, Calif.

According to Local Chairperson Anthony Bojorques Jr., White was riding the side of a rail car being shoved when he struck a tank car on an adjacent track.

White was 50 years old and had only been railroading about two years.

Members ratify contracts

UTU-represented members on both the White Pass & Yukon Route and the Chicago Rail Link have recently ratified new contracts.

The operating employees on Alaska's White Pass & Yukon Route ratified a four-year agreement that includes a year of retroactivity while staving off major rule changes.

Conductors, trainmen and engineers on the Chicago Rail Link overwhelmingly ratified a new five-year agreement, retroactive to January 2005. The carrier, an OmniTrax-owned shortline, provides switching and terminal services over 72 miles of owned and leased track on Chicago's south side.

The new agreement, affecting some 50 operating employees, provides improved wages, benefits and working conditions, including a guaranteed extra board. The UTU represents both sides of the cab on Chicago Rail Link.

UTU International Vice President Carl Vahldick, who assisted in negotiations, praised the hard work, perseverance, attention to detail and dedication of Chicago Rail Link General Chairperson Bob Campbell.

Our local committee put a lot of hard work into this contract, General Chairperson Wade Brown said. Dave Hunz and Matt Taylor did great job. Very helpful to us, though, was International Vice President Arty Martin, who got involved in March 2006. He spent a lot of time with us and offered guidance that made a big difference.

This team really grew to be skillful negotiators, and their efforts resulted in a contract that truly benefits our fellow UTU members, as well as the railroad, Martin said.

Rail safety update

For the latest developments in rail-safety legislation pending before Congress, including the Federal Railroad Safety Improvement Act of 2007 (H.R. 2095), and to learn how you can assist in the passage of these important measures, log onto www.utu.org.

UTU delegates elect new leadership team



Left to right, Arty Martin, Malcolm B. (Mike) Futhey Jr. and Kim Thompson

HOLLYWOOD, Fla. – Malcolm B. (Mike) Futhey Jr., Arty Martin and Kim Thompson have been elected to lead the United Transportation Union into its recently ratified merger creating the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation (SMART) Workers.

Futhey was elected president, Martin was elected assistant president and Thompson was elected general secretary and treasurer (GS&T).

They were elected by more than 560 delegates, representing UTU locals, during UTU's

10th quadrennial convention here at the Westin Diplomat Resort.

Futhey and Martin will take office Jan. 1, the merger's effective date, and lead the SMART Transportation Division. Owing to the retirement of current GS&T Dan Johnson, Thompson took office as GS&T on Sept. 1, becoming the SMART Transportation Division's GS&T on Jan. 1.

Futhey received 291 delegate votes, defeating David Hakey (191 votes) and John W.

Continued on page 10

Sullivan calls creation of SMART 'a brave new world of opportunity'

Calling the merger creating SMART on Jan. 1 "a brave new world of opportunity and reward," SMWIA General President Mike Sullivan warned also of the "uncomfortable reality that comes with change" and counseled that "no matter how uncomfortable things might be, nothing is as dangerous as doing nothing. In fact, our greatest enemy is the status quo."

Sullivan spoke at the UTU's 10th quadrennial convention in Hollywood, Fla.

He will become general president of SMART on Jan. 1. SMART's transportation division will be headed by Mike Futhey.

"For far too long, we have stagnated, along with the rest of the labor movement, as we have been slowly overcome by employers who imposed their own version of change upon us," Sullivan said. "While we remained divided and quarreled over our craft differences, the railroad operators created their own bargain-

ing power by consolidating their operations.

"In that time we have been undermined by predator unions and manipulated by the carriers' divide and conquer tactics. Brothers and sisters, we must take charge of the future together, before the future takes charge of us.

"With this merger, we have the opportunity to take advantage of the enhanced economies of scale that come with our combined organization. It will be far easier to negotiate better health plans, stronger pension plans, and more favorable legislation with the strong backing of 230,000 members than with a divided membership of 150,000 or 80,000.

"At its most fundamental level, this merger will systematically enable us to more effectively serve the membership we have sworn to represent. It is no secret that our enhanced bargaining strength will make each of us as union members stronger than if we chose to remain disconnected and weak.

"The struggle we face will be worth every

Continued on page 10



Sullivan