

RWU Issues Comprehensive “Annual Report” for 2014

Railroad Workers United has published our *Annual Report* for 2014. The Report highlights various aspects and activities of the organization and chart the progress (or lack thereof) that we have made. This is the third year that a *Report* has been issued for members, supporters and others who might be interested to know what we have been up to in the preceding calendar year. (RWU members who receive this newsletter in the U.S. Mail will find your copy with this issue).

Since the Founding Convention in 2008, RWU has waged three ongoing campaigns: Opposition to Single Employee Crews; Support for Coordinated Bargaining; and Opposition to Behavior Based Safety Programs. The year 2014 may well have been a watershed year for all three campaigns. On the single employee crew front, railroad workers—with the support and assistance of RWU—won a major tactical victory with the defeat of the single employee crew initiative on the BNSF. Importantly, this struggle informed every railroad worker in North America that a) the rail carriers are intent on running trains with a lone employee; b) the rail unions are at worst complicit in this scheme and at best, incapable of mounting a comprehensive united approach to stop it; and c) that railroad workers are ready, willing and able to mobilize and fight back on this front.

On the Coordinated Bargaining Front, there is a hint that the rail union officials are starting to understand and appreciate

just how essential this is for the preservation and protection of our wages, benefits and working conditions, and for the very survival of our unions. The new coalition that includes the two unions of the operating crafts — BLET and SMART — is a major step in the right direction., despite its obvious shortcomings. See Page 5 for more information on this development.

Finally, RWU’s Campaign against Behavior Based Safety is gaining further traction. Rather than focusing on eliminating hazards that are the root cause of accidents and injuries, these safety programs shift blame to individual railroad workers. RWU has campaigned tirelessly for their elimination and replacement with “union-based” safety programs that are democratically controlled by the membership, where we meet the employer at the table and in effect “bargain” safety. The carrier wants to talk about our members’ behavior while we want to talk about eliminating hazards such as crew fatigue, short staffing, lack of proper train line-ups, overwork, etc. Together with our efforts, the contradictions inherent in the carriers’ safety programs—where workers are harassed, disciplined and even fired for sustaining a workplace injury—are coming back to haunt these sham safety schemes. See the Metro-North article on Page 5.

Please find the RWU 2014 *Annual Report* on our website or on the RWU Facebook Page. Or you can email us for a copy at info@railroadworkersunited.org.