

Rail Crew Van Drivers Rally for Better Wages, Benefits and a Union

On September 17th, crew van drivers employed by both PTI and Hallcon (formerly Renzenberger) held a spirited rally near the Norfolk Southern (NS) Haselton Yard in Youngstown Ohio. Drivers came from the NS/PTI yards in Youngstown and Bellevue Ohio, as well as from the Rockport NS/PTI/Pusey Yard in West Cleveland and the CSX /Hallcon/Collinwood Yard in Cleveland. The Ohio drivers are represented by the United Electrical (UE) Local #716 throughout the country. UE also has drivers under contract in places like Chicago, New Jersey and California.

The rally was designed to draw attention to the poverty wages being paid to crew haul drivers, to demand a living wage, and pressure the company to conduct a regular and more frequent schedule of contract negotiations with the union in order that a contract can be reached as soon as possible. UE believes the company is stalling the negotiations process in an attempt to bust the union. In negotiations, the company has claimed that it feels no pressure to negotiate more often, so the union decided it was time to take it to the streets and get the company's attention.

The event garnered positive attention from local Youngstown news channels 21 WFMJ and 27 WKBM. Turnout was diminished due to PTI management putting out the word that drivers would be fired by the railroad if they participated in such an event. So far, no workers have experienced any disciplinary action. The company did send one of its top management officials to surveil the drivers and



Crew haul drivers work long hours for low pay and few benefits. Their attempts to organize and fight back deserve the support of every union railroad worker.

take photographs of the event and its participants, in what was an obvious attempt to intimidate the workers. So in turn, participants decided to take pictures of him sitting in his car, camera in hand. The message: "You cannot intimidate us!"

The union is scheduling an additional rally in Bellevue, Ohio on October 14th at 3 PM in front of PTI's office, adjacent to the Norfolk Southern dorm, and is inviting all trade unionists to come out and support the drivers' fight for livable wages. It is imperative that all railroad workers – particularly those in train and engine service who are regularly driven around in vans owned by Halcon, PTI (and others) – encourage and support the drivers' efforts to organize and win better wages, benefits, and working conditions.