

# Special Report from The Heartland

## ***Rank & File Workers Build Cross-Craft Coalition of All Rails in Kansas City***

**William Young, Local Chairman IAM LL#27**

I am privileged to report from Kansas City regarding *Unionism in Action*. I reference Unionism, because our groundswell of participation, action, and communication is nothing more than basic action taken that is part and parcel of organized labor. Far too many dues paying members in this day and age are not familiar with this form of active unionism.

In the Kansas City area, recent conversations between like-minded railroad workers regarding the sad state of contract negotiations has produced a fledgling organization called the All Rail Craft Coalition (ARCC). Using resources from multiple craft local lodges from various unions, we schedule meetings to discuss the issues and strategize future events. Our most recent action took place on September 23<sup>rd</sup> at Union Pacific's Neff yard here in Kansas City, during the carrier's employee "Family Day". What better time to educate families affected by proposed healthcare changes in the ongoing negotiations? Proud to say, participation was better than expected and we were able to disperse more than 700 informational flyers that outline the union's contract proposals in plain language.

Spreading factual information has become our greatest tool. It is very telling to observe the surprised and concerned look on the face of a rail worker's loved one reading the plain facts. All of a sudden 50-60 people with banners and signs at the entrance of a railyard during a company function doesn't seem so "radical".

A local news station came out to cover the rally, and the TV coverage brought our cause to a broader audience. It has been reported to me that this short video clip online is inspiring rail workers across the country to join in the action. I am also proud to say this rally was accomplished well within the laws, even under the supervision of three different departments of law enforcement.

Building on the momentum generated by this rally, ARCC has future meetings and actions planned. We now anticipate even greater attendance at these upcoming events due to the attention that we received from the September 23<sup>rd</sup> action.

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We focus on breaking down the barriers that are used against the guy with his "boots in the ballast" for a fair contract. Current company proposals regarding healthcare and wages are not only unacceptable, but insulting to the working men and women who enable the Carriers' record profits every quarter. This is our only objective, to make that collective voice heard and thereby inspire this kind of action across the country. We are not "radical" or "exceptional" in taking "union action". It is my opinion that we are simply picking up the baton of action that has been set aside for far too long.