ARE WE SAFE AT WORK?

“We just come to work here, we don’t come to die.”

LABOR SONGWRITER: ANNE FEENEY
More than 13,000 ATU Facebook ‘Likes’ and growing

ATU has been garnering the power of social media. Thanks to more members, riders and transit advocates spreading the word about the ATU Facebook page by sharing and liking stories, and recommending our page to “friends,” ATU has passed the milestone of 13,000 “likes”.

It doesn’t stop there. Our next goal is 15,000.

ATU uses social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to engage and inform our members, riders and others interested in public transit about the latest news and developments about ATU, transit, politics and labor issues across the globe.

Get in on the fun. Invite your “friends” and tell your family to “like” ATU’s Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/ATUInternational) to help spread the word on what we’re fighting for and more. Plus, don’t forget to follow our Twitter handle @ATUComm to stay up to date on what’s trending in public transit, politics and other progressive issues.

Show your ‘ATU Pride’ with items from the ATU Online Store

Get ready to show your “ATU Pride” – the ATU Online Store is up-and-running!

Go traditional with the new polo or hat, or stand out with an awesome mechanic’s shirt. There are plenty of cool new items, like the comfortable polar fleece, along with older ones, like our member favorite leather jacket.

Whether you’re shopping for yourself or someone else, for big gifts or small, you’re sure to find something anyone would want.

You can visit the ATU Online Store by clicking on the link in the far upper right corner of atu.org, or go direct to http://atu.imagepointe.com/atu/
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By all accounts Jake Schwab was a great guy. A 27-year veteran mechanic working for the Erie Metropolitan Transit Authority (EMTA), many co-workers counted him among their friends.

Local President John Renwick, 568-Erie, PA, describes the former shop steward as a very active man who enjoyed life, and loved his motorcycle. He and his wife had just bought a new home, Renwick says, adding softly, “He was my friend. I went hunting with him.”

“Number one – he was a friend, a friend to everybody, we love Jake,” echoes Dispatcher Nathan Faback.

His co-workers thought so much of Jake that they memorialized him with red mechanics’ towels tied around EMTA bus side mirrors after his death.

Before we go any further, with the details of this tragic accident, there is something important to note. Three weeks before, PennDot had released a report critical of the EMTA. It read in part:

“…no staff member is currently assigned the Safety & Security role as their primary function. This is a critical gap in EMTA’s organizational structure.” 1

PennDOT conducts performance reviews of all systems. These typically focus on ridership and revenue metrics, but they went out of their way to point out this safety problem.

Lack of safety culture

The lack of a safety culture – particularly in maintenance shops – is a dangerous, hidden problem plaguing many transit agencies.

Schwab was working on the suspension of a bus EMTA had contracted to maintain from another property. He was killed when the bus shifted, and the suspension’s air bag blew up sending pieces of metal flying into the mechanic’s face. He died later at a local hospital.

The tragedy was covered by the city’s news media, which reported that EMTA was “tight lipped” about the incident. Renwick says management acted like it was just an unfortunate accident.

Amazingly the agency’s insurance organization, the Pennsylvania Association for Transportation Insurance, a division of the state Department of Labor and Industry, is conducting the investigation. It’s not yet known what the finding of their report will be. Not much else has been said, but it doesn’t seem like an insurance organization has the workers’ safety as its top priority.

State public workers not covered by OSHA

Incredibly, it’s possible that no changes will take place as a result of this good man dying on the job. And that’s because unlike the employees of any private enterprise, Pennsylvania’s public workers are not subject to federal OSHA regulations.

There’s no agency looking out for the safety of these transit workers; nowhere to turn when something goes wrong.

1 PennDot “Final Erie Metropolitan Transit Authority (EMTA) Transit Performance Report” October 2014
A deadly fire occurred, January 12, in Washington, DC's Metro system, in which smoke from a subway tunnel billowed into a stalled train, killing one 62-year old woman, and sending 80 more to the hospital. An initial investigation indicates that the smoke resulted from an electrical arc.

Unfortunately, the crisis was made much worse because blowers designed to ventilate smoke out of the tunnels either didn’t work, or blew the wrong way.

Worse yet, terrified riders huddling on the train’s floor had to wait 40 minutes for help to arrive. Responders’ radios couldn’t communicate with each other, and there was confusion about when the third rail would be turned off making it safe to enter the tunnel.

**Woeful neglect**

Local 689-Washington, DC, responded to the incident, saying that the event has “exposed that the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) has woefully neglected its commitment to a safety culture that can save the lives of riders and workers. The cornerstone of a safety culture for Metro should be an environment where Metro employees feel empowered and welcomed to identify accidents and potential hazards. WMATA leadership continues to fail miserably at cultivating this environment.”

**Boston**

Concern about safety on public transit was ratcheted up a notch after another subway car in Boston filled up with smoke on January 29. A failure in the propulsion system was blamed for the problem. Riders got off five of the six cars, but passengers in a sixth had to kick out windows to let passengers out. 

**No safety training**

But, worst of all, Renwick says, is that there is no safety training. And this is a problem encountered by other ATU locals as well.

Renwick wants all this to change. “We have to form a group and talk to our politicians,” he says. If nothing else, he believes they should have OSHA’s regulations put in their contracts.

On February 8, ATU called an emergency meeting of all Pennsylvania Locals to take decisive action to address the safety concerns and fight to protect state public workers.
ATU leaders energized by DC innovative bargaining training

Leaders from more than 30 Locals took part in innovative bargaining training in Washington, DC, in January. Attendees learned from the experiences of their sisters and brothers and heard from experts on topics including “Winning Contract Campaigns,” “Building International Alliances,” “Negotiations Skills Training,” “Healthcare Bargaining.” At the end attendees committed to forming action committees at their Locals to build power for bargaining. They also spent a day at ATU’s recently acquired Parks-Douglas Center in Silver Spring, MD. This training will be offered to all Locals in the year as their contracts expire.

Alabama, Georgia trainings activate members, allies

Alabama

Members of Locals 725-Birmingham, 765-Montgomery, and 770-Mobile, joined with passenger allies to take part in an innovative ATU training in Alabama. More than 20 people took part in the program which covered a wide range of topics and issues. Attendees discussed the unacceptable state of affairs for members and riders and began to develop strategic plans to fight for more, better and safer public transit.

In the coming year Alabama will be the site of several high profile commemorations of historic events in the civil rights movement, including the 60th anniversary of the Montgomery bus boycott, which was triggered by the arrest of Rosa Parks. The 50th anniversary of the voting rights march from Selma to Montgomery will also be remembered in early 2015. ATU Locals and allies will organize a statewide campaign to improve bus service in Alabama.

Georgia

More than 40 Local 732 members took part in an ATU training in Atlanta, GA, to learn new strategies to empower members to get involved, make our Locals stronger, and engage riders in our battles.

The trainings covered topics such as: how to be an effective union member in a hostile work environment, building rider and community coalitions, strategies for bargaining and grievances.

ATU will continue offering exciting advanced training and education programs in 2015. If you would like to take part in one of these please contact your Local or email training@atu.org.

‘Like’ us on facebook
www.facebook.com/ATUInternational
There is a crisis brewing in Washington, DC, and we need your immediate help to stop a bill that will have a direct impact on you and your family. Corporate lobbyists have been hard at work for the past three years working behind closed doors on a massive “free trade” deal called the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

We’ve seen the results of these trade pacts before. Good paying jobs get shipped overseas to countries where workers are paid in pennies rather than dollars. Three of the countries in the proposed trade deal — Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam — are serial human rights abusers who cannot be counted on to comply with labor standards.

TPP is a massive power grab by corporations, which undermines U.S. and Canadian sovereignty. The Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) is a provision in a number of free trade agreements including the TPP that grants a foreign corporation the right to initiate dispute settlement proceedings against a government for failure to enforce the special investor protections contained in trade agreements. These challenges are heard before private UN or World Bank tribunals. What does this mean for you? Here are a few examples:

Phillip Morris used ISDS to challenge anti-smoking laws in Australia and Uruguay. Lone Pine Corporation is using ISDS to sue Canada for $250 million because Quebec instituted a moratorium on fracking.

Not a smoker or an environmentalist? Here’s one that hits closer to home:

Veolia used ISDS to challenge Egypt’s minimum wage. So if you work for a transit system that contracts out work to a company like MV, First Transit, or Transdev, and your state or local government enacts a law to improve your wages, benefits, or working conditions, the private company would be able to sue the government. It’s a gun aimed straight at the heads of working families.

**Transit lays off workers**

With no more jobs here, people move out of our cities, which begin shrinking and crumbling. Then the transit system starts eliminating routes and laying off workers. If you live in a rust belt area, you remember what your city used to look like. Compare that to the Main Street of today. That’s what happens when good paying American jobs are lost.

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**Stop fast-track!**

Corporate America has a two-step plan to jam this trade deal down our throats. First they need to pass a “fast-track” authority bill that would force Congress to quickly take an up-or-down vote on the pact. This would bypass the normal process where they could either filibuster or amend the trade agreement. If that passes, then they would move on to the main bill. The idea here is to get lawmakers to vote before they have had a chance to read the bill. This is no way to run a railroad.

Stopping fast track is the only real way to change and defeat the TPP. We need you to tell your Members of Congress to stand with us against Corporate America. Organized Labor is united in this effort, and ATU is working with many other unions to fight back.

ATU Locals are mobilizing and meeting with key Members of Congress who have said that they are uncertain how they will vote on fast track. A vote is expected this spring, so please get in touch with your Local’s leadership and help us fight back. With your help, we can save what is left of the Middle Class.
The ATU General Executive Board has approved International President Larry Hanley’s recommendation to name the new ATU training center the Parks-Douglas Center after Rosa Parks and Tommy Douglas, heroes ATU members honor as two of North America’s most courageous leaders.

Rosa Parks

A woman who risked her personal safety and perhaps her life for the freedom of all Americans, Rosa Parks (February 4, 1913 – October 24, 2005) took bold action by refusing to give up her seat on a Montgomery, AL, bus in 1955.

Her action came to be regarded as a watershed moment in the history of the civil rights movement.

“Rosa Parks was the most effective transit passenger organizer in the history of our nation,” says International President Hanley. “America is a better place today because of the singular stand she took on a bus against segregation.”

Tommy Douglas

The man who led the fight in Canada to provide health insurance for all, Thomas Clement “Tommy” Douglas, (October 20, 1904 – February 24 1986) has been called “the greatest Canadian.”

A Baptist minister and champion boxer, he left the pulpit to work for political reform. The powerful orator and tireless activist was elected to serve as a Member of Saskatchewan’s parliament, and later, premier of the province – an office he held for 17 years.

He introduced the continent’s first single-payer, universal health care program; a program that would eventually be adopted across Canada.

After setting up the Saskatchewan Medicare program, Douglas was elected as the first leader of the New Democratic Party (NDP), formed in 1935, to advance the cause of Labour. He was a strong advocate of the Canada Pension Plan and was considered the “conscience” of Parliament on matters of civil liberties.

“A staunch supporter of public transit, Douglas believed in the crucial role of civil rights and the great potential of cooperation for the common good,” says Hanley. “He is a role model for the next generation of progressive leaders.”

The Parks/Douglas Center

“The Parks/Douglas Center will open its doors to train many in the tradition of these two leaders,” Hanley continued. “Future generations of organizers will draw from the brilliance, strength and courage of these two models of community action and leadership and we will forever celebrate the generosity of their spirits and legacies. They will live on in us.”
You will find no grass growing under our feet in the ATU these days. We are living up to our promises:

- Training is expanding, and it is getting better. Throughout ATU our members are learning to do more.
- We are running campaigns in Las Vegas, Atlanta, Washington, DC, fighting for member rights.
- In congressional districts across the U.S. our Locals are fighting against Fast Track - Free Trade—also known as sending more jobs to China and Vietnam.
- In Vancouver, BC, our Locals are campaigning for a referendum to raise funds for mass transit.
- In Winnipeg, MB, this In Transit reports on Local 1505 conducting “ride-alongs” with elected officials.
- In Ontario the campaign against privatization continues.
- In Ohio our Locals are preparing a fight for transit funding.
- In Alabama we are working to build a campaign for transit on the 50th anniversary of Rosa Parks’ arrest on a bus.

One ATU star is *Bus Operator Karen Reed* who, as a part of Local 689’s campaign for private sector transit workers, rose in a church packed with 850 activists to tell her story of working 65 hours a week but still being homeless while working for First Transit’s discount wages in the U.S. Capital. Her brilliant speech to the new mayor of Washington can be seen at www.atu.org under videos. Please watch this member tell the story about the impact it has on workers when private companies run transit.

In Scranton, PA, members of Local 168 have done a great job of organizing riders, and through the riders, preventing service cuts and layoffs. I am proud of the energy that is exploding around our Union.

While training continues, we are renovating our own new training center and as you will read in these pages, the General Executive Board has agreed with my recommendation to name our campus in honor of a couple of the best organizers in our two countries’ history, Rosa Parks and Tommy Douglas.

As you read their stories and feel their humanity I’m sure you will sense the power of their compassion for their fellow citizens. Both fought for the dignity of regular people and in winning health care for Canadians (Douglas) and civil rights for Americans (Parks) they set the bar for us all.

We hope that many generations of community and labor organizers will emerge from our trainings at the new campus. We expect a dedication of the new campus in Silver Spring, MD, in the late spring of 2015.

So much is coming together right now for the ATU - we are seeing great success in organizing both new members and our existing ones.

Finally, we are about to establish the Joint Industry Councils and at the same time put more resources into the safety of our members. The recent tragic death of Jake Schwab, a mechanic and member of Erie, PA, Local 568, brought to us a reality we are compelled to deal with. Too many of our mechanics work without proper training and without adequate safety procedures.

We promise to grow our safety campaigns – for mechanics to be trained and protected from hazards and bus operators to be protected from assaults.

Some Locals have really picked up the fight for bathroom breaks and their stories in this issue highlight the success your Local can have. This is again an issue of basic human dignity. So all in all, I can report with sincerity and with confidence that the ATU is, more and more, a Union that makes things happen.

Please visit [www.atu.org](http://www.atu.org) for more information and the latest ATU news.
‘We choose to go to the moon’

On July 21, 1969, the world watched, held its breath, and prayed for the safety of astronaut Neil Armstrong as he began his decent from the lunar module to the surface of the moon. This was the successful culmination of a vision, a plan and a collaborative effort toward a goal shared by many Americans.

The vision was first articulated in an address delivered by President Kennedy on September 12, 1962. In describing his vision and his goal Kennedy declared:

“Its hazards are hostile to us all. Its conquest deserves the best of all mankind, and its opportunity for peaceful cooperation may never come again. But why, some say, the moon? Why choose this as our goal? And they may well ask why we choose to climb the highest mountain? Why?”

...not because they are easy

“We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy,” he said, “but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win”.

Bill Gates had a vision when he established Microsoft. He saw a path to harness the power of room-size mainframe computers and shrink them down to our desktops. While many doubted Gates’ vision, his goal became a reality.

Steve Jobs also had a vision when he started Apple computer. He believed he could take Microsoft’s success one step further. Why be bound to a desktop for information? Why be tethered to a wall to make a call? Jobs took computers from our desktops and put them in our pockets.

These innovators had vision and understood the value of goal setting and follow-through. Their accomplishments were not easy. Indeed, their visions were fulfilled, some might say, against all odds.

ATU’s vision

At our last Convention the delegate(s) from your Local and others approved a vision and plan to move our ATU forward. The Convention was the culmination of President Hanley’s discussions and interactions with Local officers leading to a vision, and the subsequent crafting of a plan, and course of action toward a tangible goal.

To date we have achieved a measure of success, but have many miles to go and can’t afford to rest.

We choose to do this, as President Kennedy said, “not because it is easy.” No, we do this because, no matter how insurmountable the obstacles may seem, it is something we must do if we are to keep faith with our values, and our commitment to provide better service for our passengers, a better life for those we love, and for those who come after us.

A vision, however, is only a daydream until people come together to make it a reality. That’s where you come in. We need you to join us in the great work that you see described in page after page of this magazine.

Nothing can stop us if we all work together.

Please visit www.atu.org for more information and the latest ATU news.
I’m writing on a cold and rainy winter morning in Washington. It’s pretty miserable outside. Far different from Northern California where I lived before coming to DC.

The political climate doesn’t seem much different – at least from the point of view of those of us who fight for working people and public transit. All we hear is “gloom and doom.”

Yes, it’s important to see things clearly. It doesn’t help to pretend that things are better than they really are. They’re not invincible.

But, it also doesn’t help to think things are worse than they really are; that the Koch brothers, the TEA party, and their anti-labor friends in American and Canadian legislatures are all but invincible – because they’re not.

You hear people say that union members don’t get involved in political action because they are comfortable and apathetic. But, I think a lot of people stay home because they think that little can be done about the injustice we’re fighting.

There are many examples in history of leaders who accomplished great things because they refused to believe that nothing could be done about the injustice they experienced in their lifetimes. Leaders like Mother Jones, Tommy Douglas, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., fought on when others said their missions were pure folly, or, even worse – dangerous.

A lot more of us than there is of them

I’m reminded of an old expression: “Don’t give the devil more than his due.”

By that, I don’t mean that those who oppose us are “devils.” What I mean to say is, yeah, things are tough right now, but, even so, our opponents are not all-powerful, 10-foot-tall giants whose ideas can never be defeated.

Nope, they’re just people who have a lot of power because they have a lot of money. But there are a lot more of us than there are of them, and, believe me, no force can beat us if we are united and politically active – in other words, if we have “solidarity.”

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A reason to hope

They attracted thousands to their cause because they gave people hope. By lifting people up, they gave them a reason to get involved. We’d do well to follow their example.

So the next time you hear a news report on the inevitability of bad things happening to workers or public transit – don’t believe it.

We have the power to stop bad things from happening, and to accomplish a lot of good. But, we have to begin exercising that power while it’s still winter.

Remember, no matter how cold, dark and miserable it gets – spring is just around the corner. And spring, particularly here in Washington, is really beautiful.

Please visit www.atu.org for more information and the latest ATU news.

Oscar Owens

Follow us on twitter
www.twitter.com/atucomm
Second Washington Local takes up washroom campaign

In our last issue In Transit reported on the fine the Washington Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) levied on King County Metro for failing to provide bus drivers enough locations and adequate time to use the restroom. The agency was also forced to submit an improvement plan to the state before the end of the year.

The action was a direct response to the work Local 587-Seattle, WA, had been doing on the issue for several years. Now Seattle’s sister Local, 1576-Lynnwood, WA, is undertaking a similar campaign to get First Transit to clean up it’s act there as well.

The campaign was instigated when management took a picture of a messy bathroom in their building that was broadcast on their in-house TV feed with the message: “This behavior is not acceptable, and it disrespects your fellow employees.”

That message provoked the following response from Local 1576:

‘We are not pigs’

“Our members have been subjected DAILY to filthy, unsanitary and inaccessible Sani-Cans out in the field, which are only cleaned every 3-7 days and often not stocked with even basic hand sanitizer, let alone running water and towels.

“We report these conditions, bring them to Labor/Management meetings, and even call the vendors to no avail. In fact, management blames us! Where is OUR RESPECT? We are not pigs. We are human beings, and their employees. It really makes me wonder, when management has to resort to name calling and public humiliation after a few paper towels are left on the floor, while simultaneously refusing to provide us with clean and available restrooms… WHO IS REALLY THE PIG?”

‘Let’s do something about it’

The Local then laid out its plan: “When you see poorly maintained restroom facilities, or if you are driving a route that has no facility available, LET’S DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. Please take pictures of the conditions AND cleaning schedule (posted on the wall) and forward them to the union. If there is no facility available to you, we need to know about that as well. We will be taking our concerns to the company, the Board of Directors, and L&I.”

In Transit will keep you posted.
DC paratransit driver reveals poverty, conditions caused by privatization

TESTIMONY MARKS TURNING POINT IN DC-AREA CAMPAIGN

In heart-wrenching and passionate testimony a Metro Access paratransit operator gave new Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser and 850 DC residents a first-hand look at the grim impact transit outsourcing has on working families.

Speaking on a January evening to a packed house at St. Augustine Catholic Church in Washington, Operator Karen Reed brought tears to Mayor Bowser's eyes as she described the financial struggle she endures as an employee of a private, for-profit company contracted by WMATA (DC's transit agency) to provide paratransit service. Reed was one of several speakers at a Washington Interfaith Network (WIN) forum on public services held for the new mayor.

Second class citizens

Attended by members of Local 689, International President Larry Hanley, and the ATU General Executive Board, the emotional event marked the next phase of ATU’s campaign to fight outsourcing of transit services, to strengthen transit investment in local communities, to unionize, and to raise the wages of area transit workers who for too long have been treated as second class citizens. Through their involvement with WIN, 689 has been building alliances with congregations, riders, community activists, and labor allies to broaden their support.

“Karen's story is the story of thousands of workers in the DC area,” says International President Hanley. “It brought the whole church to tears, including Mayor Bowser.”

The power and emotion of Reed’s story hit home for many.

‘Disposable people’

“It would be a smoother ride for everybody if WMATA and First Transit would stop cutting corners and stop treating me and my fellow workers like disposable people,” said Reed, who emphasized the importance of her job in transporting people with disabilities and seniors.

“Employee turnover is through the roof and customer service suffers.”

She was joined on stage by Barbara Mushette, one of her passengers, who praised Reed's dedication to the job and questioned the scheduling policies of First Transit and its treatment of workers and passengers alike.

$26,000 per year

Reed talked about the importance of her connection with riders and the accompanying dangers she and her co-workers face every day, from bad road conditions to robberies. Reed is dedicated to her work, but is paid only $26,000 per year (less than 30% of area median income), which qualifies her and her daughter for food stamps, housing assistance, and Medicaid. She and her daughter were homeless for three months last year.

“You are going to pay me either way. In my public benefits check – or my paycheck,” she explained in relating her need for public assistance to survive. “I enjoy working for a living. Stop insulting me. Pay me in just one check – MY PAY CHECK!”

Watch Karen’s testimony at: www.atu.org or on the Local 689 web site at: www.atulocal689.org/videos
Recognizing the destructive impact of free trade agreements on working families, ATU has joined all of Labor in its fight against a fast track free trade bill that would establish a process that allows no amendments and limited debate in the U.S. Congress on international trade agreements negotiated by the president.

Fast track passage would let President Obama railroad through three job-losing trade treaties, led by the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement with 11 other Pacific Rim nations. Several of those nations, notably Vietnam and Brunei, feature impossibly low wages, extensive worker repression, or both.

Creates unbalanced system

“Fast track’ is just another name for the corrupt and undemocratic process that has been used to ram destructive trade deals through Congress; deals that have led to a systematic elimination of good jobs, have devastated our communities, and degraded our standard-of-living for the last 30 years.

Fast track legislation allowed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Korea Free Trade Agreement (KFTA) to be quickly passed through Congress with weak labor and environmental side deals. NAFTA and KFTA resulted in the loss of nearly 800,000 jobs and the closing of countless factories.

Many years later, we find an unbalanced system in which profits soar even as workers take home a diminishing share of the national income.

Labor’s strategy to battle fast track will be to pick key congressional districts where unions and their allies, notably in the environmental movement will mobilize for fair trade. A vote is expected in late February or early March.

This is the latest scheme concocted by the wealthy elite to line their pockets at the expense of the middle class.

Shrouded in secrecy

The trade deals the fast track authority would affect are shrouded in secrecy. The bill doesn’t give the public any opportunity to improve a bad deal. Indeed, it doesn’t even require that Congress or an independent body evaluate the trade deal to ensure it has a positive impact on the U.S. trade balance, job creation or environmental protections before the fast track procedures apply – every deal, no matter how bad, is entitled to the same preferential treatment. If passed, the bill would:

1. Keep the very low congressional “standards” that allowed weak trade agreements like NAFTA to pass;
2. Keep the negotiating process behind closed doors, subject to too much Wall Street and special interest influence;
3. Ensure that irresponsible corporations remain unaccountable for labor and environmental violations anywhere in their supply chain.

“ATU will be joining with all of Labor to fight with vigor the president’s and Congress’s fast track and free trade legislation which would do more to hurt working Americans than his progressive programs could do to help,” says International President Larry Hanley.
International Vice President Bill McLean retires

He chose the bus

After McLean completed his studies, he had a choice between starting as an associate professor for $9,000 per year, or driving a bus full-time for $12,000. He chose the bus.

McLean became active in Local 265-San Jose, CA, after the new propane buses they were driving at the time regularly started catching fire. He and other members demanded safe vehicles.

He was elected local executive board member in 1977, secretary in 1984, and president in 1988, where he built a strong and successful local union.

He then chose to stay involved, leading to a 38 year career helping ATU members throughout the U.S. and Canada.

International Vice President Bill McLean retired in January, after serving ATU members in that office since his appointment in 2002. He was elected to that post at the International Convention in 2004, and was re-elected at every subsequent Convention until his retirement.

McLean worked his way through graduate school by driving extra-board for Santa Clara Transit.

He graduated with an associate’s degree in mathematics, and bachelor’s and master’s degrees in history.

He chose the bus

ATU, riders organize around transit

ATU is having great success in mobilizing members and riders to fight for more, better and safer transit across the U.S. and Canada. With events such as May Transit Action Month, the Fund Transit Rally in DC, and the Year of Transit Action campaign there has been a growing movement demanding change for public transit and working families.

Coalitions

One example is in Pittsburgh where ATU members helped establish Pittsburghers for Public Transit (PPT). Founding PPT member Alicia Williamson writes in a recent blog about the importance of coalitions working together to fight rampant layoffs, service cuts, fare hikes, and privatization while building solidarity among the working people who operate and use transit:

“ATU has become an increasingly progressive and activist union in recent years,” writes Williamson. “Worker coalitions organizing locally can help build the cultural movements we need to initiate systemic changes and strengthen public control of resources that are crucial to more sustainable and equitable futures.”

In 2015 ATU will continue its push for more, better, and safer transit, while working for social, environmental, and economic justice, all of which are invariably linked with our cause. Read her full blog at: http://bit.ly/1Dtz4dU

The ATU International Field Mobilization Department can help your Local in this work. The IU also trains local officers to arrange these coalitions.

Alicia Williamson from Pittsburghers for Public Transit
The year was 1886 when the city of Scranton, nestled in Pennsylvania’s coal-rich Lackawanna River Valley, introduced the nation to America’s first-ever electrified streetcar. The event not only gave Scranton its nickname, “Electric City,” but also eventually helped open a new era for transit in the United States.

‘Phantom riders’

Fast forward to last year, when bus riders in Scranton were facing a very different transit future. In early 2014, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) uncovered a scandal. From 2006-2011, they claim, County of Lackawanna Transit System (COLTS) management defrauded the state by creating “phantom riders.” COLTS, which operates the county and Scranton’s bus system, inflated the number of senior citizen riders, claiming to transport more than one million seniors when in fact they were moving closer to 200,000.

Why? Because such increases in ridership would automatically trigger an increase in state funding.

A similar scheme had been uncovered earlier in neighboring Luzerne County. In that case, PennDOT sought to prosecute two managers, and the state reclaimed the fraudulent funding by tapping into LCTA’s reserves.

Solution: Crush transit riders, workers

COLTS, however, lacked such financial reserves. A new management team cooperated with PennDOT to devise a plan to repay the state $5.7 million by crushing riders and transit workers alike.

Six bus routes were to be eliminated, and several others were to be shortened or rerouted. Thirteen bus operators stood to lose their jobs.

Adding insult to injury, the state had no plans to hold the former COLTS managers accountable. You read that right: rather than investigate the culprits, PennDOT wanted working families to pay for management’s crimes.

Local 168 — a 115-year old Local Union with fewer than 80 members — did not wait for the hammer to drop. Using skills they learned at ATU trainings and the connections they have made as community members, local officers like Local President Mark Gifford, the Local 168 executive board, and rank-and-file members like Bob Lesh quickly mobilized members and riders to oppose the cuts.

How they fought back

✔ First, they went online to gather phone numbers for local elected officials, put them on a leaflet with a short message to the public about the proposed cuts,
and began leafleting riders along the routes and at major hubs. Soon, concerned riders joined them.

- **Second**, they launched a petition to oppose the cuts and began gathering signatures from riders. Concerned riders began collecting signatures on their own. Within just a few weeks, the combined effort yielded more than 6,000 signatures.

- **Third**, through a word-of-mouth campaign, they mobilized community members, passengers, and the press to attend COLTS’ public meetings. Hundreds of people participated, all strongly opposing a plan that they said would cost them their jobs, their health, and their only means to get around their city.

The enormous outcry resulted in a series of favorable press reports and spurred a team of elected officials to travel to Harrisburg to meet with PennDOT. In December 2014, PennDOT agreed to revisit the repayment proposal.

### Routes and jobs still intact, but Local not waiting around

COLTS riders still have their routes and drivers still have their jobs, all thanks to a few committed union and community volunteers who sounded the alarm when they saw the devastation that lie ahead.

As of press time, PennDOT and COLTS are currently in talks to extend the repayment window and permanently eliminate the threat of cuts or layoffs. But Local 168 and its riders aren’t waiting around. They are forming a joint committee to plan more actions and ensure that riders and workers aren’t punished for the crimes of a few corrupt managers.

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### Winnipeg local gives legislators hands-on appreciation of transit work

Local **1505**-Winnipeg, MB, has taken legislator “ride-alongs” a step further by providing local officials with a closer look at what it takes to be a transit worker.

Kevin Lamoureux, Liberal MP of Winnipeg North, got a behind-the-scenes look at maintenance work at Winnipeg Transit’s Fort Rouge garage. Lamoureux previously had gone on a bus ride-along with Local President John Callahan earlier in 2014 (photo).

On the facility tour, Callahan showed how things have changed over the years, from the past, when blacksmiths used coal forges to make mechanics’ tools to the ongoing rebuilding of every aspect of a bus.

### Councilor behind the wheel

City Councilor Mike Pagtakhan from Point Douglas, also got a tour of the Fort Rouge facility, and actually learned what it’s like to be behind the wheel of a 40-foot bus (in controlled conditions on the property of course). He experienced how it feels to drive inches beside a loader – without having to worry about picking up passengers or traffic. The Local says he now has much added respect for the operators of Local 1505.
Did you see the story about Detroit’s city workers voting to accept the pension adjustment offered by the City in their collective bargaining contract? If you did you probably thought that the deal offered to the members of Local 26-Detroit, MI, wasn’t great, but it could have been a lot worse.

Problem was – it was a lot worse, but nobody knew it at the time. The majority of Detroit’s public service union members accepted language in their latest contracts that committed them to accepting whatever the city’s U.S. bankruptcy judge decided regarding their pension.

Did you see the story about Detroit’s city workers voting to accept the pension adjustment offered by the City in their collective bargaining contract? If you did you probably thought that the deal offered to the members of Local 26-Detroit, MI, wasn’t great, but it could have been a lot worse.

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The ‘grand bargain’

They did so believing that ratifying that language represented an acceptance of the “grand bargain” proposed by the city’s emergency fund manager at the time which would reduce future retiree pension payments by 4.5%; replace retiree health care with Medicare for retirees older than 62, and a health care stipend of $125 per month for those under 62; and eliminate cost-of-living allowance (COLA) increases.

ATU advised members to vote ‘No!’

It’s worth noting that Local 26 never trusted the deal, and advised its members to vote “No!”

The Local’s fears were borne out when the bankruptcy judge later also decided to plunder workers’ optional annuity funds in addition to their regular pension.

The original annuity fund deal gave workers the option of investing 3%, 5%, or 7% percent of their wages in the fund. The employees were guaranteed no less than 7.9% return on their investment, and more if the fund earned more.

The judge decided that public employees should not have been guaranteed 7.9% return on their money, and should never have earned anything above that.

So it was decided that the City would “claw-back” the “excess” money it had already paid out.

Retirees plunged into poverty

Some retirees with rolled over accounts received bills for over $100,000. The City simply took the money out of the accounts of those whose money was still invested in the annuity fund.

With the average Detroit General Retirement System recipient receiving only $19,000 per year, at least 20% will be pushed below the poverty level. The deal once known as “the grand bargain,” is now being called “grand larceny.”

ATU and the other public union retirees are not going to allow this to happen without a fight.

A group called the Detroit Active and Retired Employees Association (DAREA) filed an appeal of the bankruptcy judge’s decision with U.S. District Court Senior Judge Bernard Friedman.

A lot at stake

ATU members like all public workers have a lot at stake in the outcome of this legal challenge, because it is being viewed as a model for other cities and states to follow in robbing pension money from their own workers while giving larger tax breaks to those who don’t need them.

Artwork saved!

While Detroit is cutting pensions and driving workers and retirees into poverty, the City is holding artwork estimated to be worth between $2.7 – $8.5 billion. Current and retired city employees are wondering why at least some of that art couldn’t have been leased to other cities to restore the pension.
St. Louis, MO, Metro Call-A-Ride operator Lamont Moore, who helped rescue a toddler and an adult from an apartment fire, was recognized November 21, for his bravery at the Bi-State Development Agency Board of Commissioners meeting.

On October 26, Moore had just finished dropping off a Metro Call-A-Ride customer and was getting ready to take his break, when he noticed black smoke in the air. He followed the smoke and saw an apartment building on fire.

He could see people trapped in a second floor apartment. Flames were blocking them from getting out the only door.

Moore instructed a woman to climb out feet first, and then hang from the windowsill before letting go and falling to the ground. With the help of another bystander, he broke her fall and got her to safety.

Catches toddler thrown to safety

The Local 788 member then saw a man holding a toddler at the same window. He told the man he would catch the child. The man dropped the 2-year-old boy and Moore caught the toddler. Moments later, someone arrived with a ladder and got the man out of the burning building. The fire department arrived shortly thereafter.

After everyone was safely out of the burning apartment, Moore looked at his watch and saw that his break was nearly over, so he drove off to pick up his next passenger.

Retired Canadian IVP Arthur Burke passes

Retired International Vice President Arthur H. Burke passed away recently in Canada. Burke was first appointed an international vice president in 1971, and was elected at the following International Convention. He was re-elected IVP at every subsequent Convention until his retirement in 1983.

When he was appointed, Burke was serving as vice-president of Local 113-Toronto, ON, a position he had filled for four years. Prior to his election as local vice president in 1967, he served as the shop steward for the “interurban group” from 1956 to 1959, when he was elected a board member – an office he held until he was elected local vice-president.

Born in Kearney, ON, Burke at 18 joined the Royal Canadian Dragoons and served during World War II in Italy, France, Germany, and Holland. Upon leaving the service, he took employment at Gray Coach Lines, a subsidiary of the Toronto Transit Commission, as a driver in the interurban service. He joined Local 113 in 1946.

Burke served as president of the National Canadian Regional Conference and the Canadian Council during his years as international vice president.

Art Burke was a true ATU man who attended many international events and Conventions during his retirement. The international staff will miss his supportive presence.
Local 1433: ‘Are bus drivers’ lives worth $2,200?’

In the first incident a would-be rider pummeled a 67-year old driver with a skateboard when he was asked for the correct fare. In the other, a driver was punched 20 times.

‘They don’t know what to expect’

Local President Bob Bean says his drivers are under attack every day. “They don’t know what to expect,” he says. “When they tell somebody, ‘You’re short 25 cents, I can’t give you a pass,’ they don’t know whether they’re going to get hit, spit on, kicked or a soda thrown in their face.”

Bean is pushing for harsher sentences for convicted assailants, and protective shields.

He estimates each shield would cost around $2,200 to install, and asks, “What it comes down to is, are these drivers’ lives worth $2,200?”

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Another Cleveland bus driver attacked

Attacks on Cleveland, OH, bus operators have hit epidemic proportions as another driver has been brutally assaulted.

This latest incident involved two passengers violently hitting the driver after they boarded the bus. The driver suffered cuts to his face and was taken to a nearby hospital for treatment. The attackers fled and have not been apprehended.

In the past few months alone, four teenagers were arrested and accused of pummeling a driver with a sock filled with rocks. Another driver was robbed at gunpoint. There have been 14 documented attacks on members of Local 268 through the end of August and more since.

ATU continues to demand that transit agencies address this issue for the safety of both drivers and riders.

Halifax Transit workers sound alarm after latest gun scare

Violent attacks on transit workers are making headlines across North America almost daily. Halifax, NS, transit workers have been expressing serious safety concerns since the arrest of a man who allegedly boarded a city bus with a loaded gun.

It’s the second incident in the last few months and Local 508 President Ken Wilson is calling for immediate changes to toughen up security on buses for the safety of drivers and riders alike.

Wilson says transit drivers are as vulnerable as police officers and home care workers, who are routinely placed in unpredictable and often difficult situations in their line of work.
Transit improves income, reduces unemployment in NYC

Public transit is New York City’s crucial equalizer in matters of housing, income and employment.

That’s the conclusion of New York University’s Center for Transportation and Management, which just published a report on the impact of access to public transit.

The Center found that of the 177 NYC neighborhoods studied, those with the best access to public transportation had the highest median household income and the lowest unemployment rate.

The study reveals that areas with the lowest transit access have lower median incomes and slightly lower unemployment. But over 50 percent of the people in these neighborhoods commute by car – giving them access to more jobs.

Somewhat surprisingly, areas that have a little access to transit have the lowest income, and the highest unemployment rate.

Why do neighborhoods with some public transit do worse than areas that have even less? The answer is the automobile.

Fewer people in the last group drive, and more rely on the limited public transit options available to get to work. That restricts the jobs available to them, as well as their economic mobility.

In other words, the more jobs you can reasonably commute to within an hour, the more job opportunities you’ll have, the more secure your job will be, and the greater your wages will be.

To read the full report go to: http://bit.ly/1AiQLPO

More transit = more jobs

Spending on transit generates more jobs than spending on highways, according to a new report, More Transit = More Jobs, published by the Transit Equity Network (TEN).

Based on data from 20 metropolitan areas, this study shows that the proportion of total transportation dollars spent on transit varies from 15 percent to 75 percent.

Metropolitan areas that give a higher priority to transit generate more jobs per dollar spent on transportation.

If our 20 metropolitan areas shifted 50 percent of their highway funds to transit, they would generate 1,123,674 new transit jobs over a five-year period – for a net gain of 180,150 jobs over five years – without a single dollar of new spending.

If federal spending on transit increased as proposed by Transportation for America and TEN, it’s estimated it would create 1.3 million jobs over the life of the law, and almost 800,000 more jobs than under present federal transportation law (SAFETEA-LU).
Do union members have more fun?

Hard to say, but one thing seems clear from a new study by professors at Baylor and the University of Arkansas – union members are definitely happier than non-union workers.

In Labor Union Membership and Life Satisfaction in the United States researchers ask whether “being a member of a labor union might increase quality of life compared to not being a member,” particularly in areas such as, “…having greater satisfaction with one’s experiences while working, feeling greater job security, being afforded numerous opportunities for social interaction and integration, and enhancing the participatory benefits associated with more engaged democratic citizenship.”

The study shows that “the substantive effect of union membership on life satisfaction is large… across demographic groups.”

Moreover, the study concludes, “The degree to which workers are organized in a society and are able to collectively bargain with their employers can have profound effects on social and political arrangements.”

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Depression highest among transit workers

In Transit readers know that transit workers have more job stress than those in any other occupation, and that they suffer the highest rates of some health problems in the workforce. Now comes word that transit workers suffer from depression at a rate higher than those in any other profession.

A new study reveals that 16.2 percent of transit workers suffer from clinical depression. The average of the 55 occupations studied was 10.45 percent.

The results were tabulated from data received from 214,000 western Pennsylvanians. While the authors acknowledge that the study’s conclusions are based on information from just one area, their findings align with reports from other studies conducted over the last 50 years.

What is clinical depression?

WebMD describes clinical depression in this way:

Most people feel sad or low at some point in their lives. But clinical depression is marked by a depressed mood most of the day, particularly in the morning, and a loss of interest in normal activities and relationships – symptoms that are present every day for at least two weeks. In addition, symptoms can include:

- Fatigue or loss of energy almost every day
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt almost every day
- Impaired concentration, indecisiveness
- Insomnia or hypersomnia (excessive sleeping) almost every day
- Markedly diminished interest or pleasure in almost all activities nearly every day (called anhedonia, this symptom can be indicated by reports from significant others)
- Restlessness or feeling slowed down
- Recurring thoughts of death or suicide
- Significant weight loss or gain (a change of more than 5% of bodyweight in a month)

Transit workers, in particular, should know that depression is high in their line of work, and that there is no shame in seeking professional help.
Buses matter – NYC plan needs improvement

Full funding of New York’s MTA Capital Plan matters less than correctly funding the projects that matter argue Local Presidents Mark Henry, 1056-Flushing, NY, and John Lyons, 1179-New York, NY. The local presidents are responding to proposals in the MTA Transportation Reinvention Commission Report published late last year.

“Calling for funding the plan without regard for what it includes makes little sense,” explains Henry whose Local represents drivers and mechanics who work for MTA at New York City Transit’s Queens Bus Division.

Plan still fails

“Frankly, the plan still fails to adequately provide for current and future needs of Queens public transit; this especially relates to public bus transit,” insists Lyons, whose Local represents bus operators, mechanics and supervisors.

Too many old, deteriorated, inefficient buses

“Queens lacks sufficient buses to meet existing and planned service needs,” Henry notes. “The current fleet of buses in Queens includes too many deteriorated, old, and inefficient buses that operate beyond their expected useful life and often disrupt service.”

“Let’s face the facts,” asserts Lyons, “the current transit administration knows it will not be building any train services in Queens. ATU will continue to advocate a better scheduled service for Queens and so should all concerned about the state of public transit.”
As the critical 2015 world climate talks in Paris near, global climate negotiators met in Lima, Peru for the 20th Conference of the Parties to plan the transition from fossil fuels. And ATU was there to talk about the importance of public transit and workers in this fight.

Stronger social protections are needed in this transition from fossil fuels. ATU told negotiators that Labor must be part of planning the transition, and not solely corporations. It is the only thing that will protect vulnerable communities from greedy corporate decision-making.

ATU also urged increased public transportation worldwide; pointing out it is one of the best ways to fight climate change because it reduces carbon emissions while creating jobs.

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At least one in three women worldwide, according to recent estimates, will be sexually assaulted, physically beaten or otherwise abused in their lifetime. Violence against women occurs everywhere – even at the workplace.

That’s why the ATU is calling on all nations to support the International Labor Organization Convention on gender-based violence, in order to spread awareness about the disturbing problem and help end assaults against women and all workers worldwide.

Zero tolerance

“No one should feel threatened while working to provide for their families. All countries must have a zero tolerance policy on violence against women,” says ATU International President Larry Hanley. “The ATU strongly urges all nations to support the ILO convention. This would be a strong step in ensuring that women and all workers feel safe and protected from abuse and intimidation at work.”

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There’s a big wide world out there, and it’s tough to keep up with all the events which can affect your profession and your livelihood. One of the easiest ways to stay informed is by visiting: www.atu.org.

The old adage “a picture is worth a thousand words” is certainly true. Throughout the years ATU’s In Transit, and more recently the ATU website and Facebook page, have featured incredible photos of ATU members on the job, rain or shine, or snow; at protests; rallies; and other events; as well as captivating shots of buses, railcars, riders, and public transit in action.

Now, we want to give our members and retirees a chance to capture the images that show what makes the ATU the great union it is today, the pride and dedication our members have for their jobs, and the important role public transit plays in our communities.

So grab your camera or smart phone and start taking photos for the first-ever ATU photo contest. Contest rules and details are below.

**Deadline: June 30, 2015.** Prizes will given out for 1st Place, 2nd Place, 3rd Place and Honorable Mention.

**PHOTO CONTEST RULES**

1. The contest is open to active and retired ATU members only. The person submitting the photograph must be the person who took the picture. Members may enter more than one photo.
2. International officers and staff are not eligible.
3. Photos can be submitted as digital files as large as possible, but at least 300 dpi, in color or black and white. The preferred print size is 8x10. For more guidance on electronic photo sizes, go to www.atu.org. Click on the Photo Contest button for the “Contest Rules and Photo Guidelines.”
4. The ATU reserves the right to use the photos submitted for contest.
5. Photo entries must have an ATU theme of some sort — such as ATU members at work, engaged in a union-related activity, rally, action, protest or images of the public transportation industry or ATU.
6. If members are featured in the photo, they should be identified. If large groups are pictured, the name of the group, or the purpose of the gathering (e.g. a protest, training, rally, union meeting, etc.) can be submitted in place of individual names.
7. Photos previously published in ATU publications or the website are not eligible for submission.
8. Entries must be made through the photo contest application on the ATU website at www.atu.org or mailed with the form below to ATU at:

   **ATU Photo Contest**
   5025 Wisconsin Ave., NW
   Washington, DC, 20016

9. ATU International will select finalists and post them on www.atu.org for final judging by the public. The winners will be featured in an upcoming issue of In Transit, the ATU website, social media and other publications.

**Mail form with your photo entry**

| NAME | 
| ADDRESS | 
| CITY | STATE | ZIP |
| EMAIL | CELL NUMBER |
Hardy labor, religious, and political activists gathered during a snowstorm in Washington, DC, January 21, in support of a constitutional amendment to ban big corporate contributions to political campaigns.

More voices across the country decried the U.S. Supreme Court’s controversial *Citizens United* decision, the same day, at rallies, marches, movie showings, and lobby days to mark the ruling’s fifth anniversary.

The nationwide events highlighted the growing momentum for a constitutional amendment to overturn *Citizens United*, which gave corporations and the wealthy the green light to spend unlimited sums to influence elections.

Events included: the DC rally co-sponsored by ATU that called attention to the biggest dark money spender in the 2014 midterms – the U.S. Chamber of Commerce; a press conference on Capitol Hill in which more than a dozen congressional lawmakers introduced measures designed to curb the influence of money in politics; lobby days in Albany, NY, and Olympia, WA; and a march in New Hampshire. Other events included showings of the movie “Pay 2 Play” in Tulsa, OK, and Tucson, AZ; a rally at the Savannah, GA, Chamber of Commerce and a house party in Savage, MN.

The constitutional amendment considered last year by the Senate would enable the government to pass laws ending corporate spending on elections, eliminating or curbing outside donations, imposing limits on overall election spending and adopting mandatory systems of small-donor and public financing.
IS YOUR GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE BEING USED TO TIE UP THE UNION?

VOLUNTEER TO BUILD AN ACTION-BASED UNION TODAY!
ATU: Un Sindicato que hace que las cosas ocurran

Usted estos días no encontrará hierba creciendo bajo nuestros pies en ATU. Estamos cumpliendo con nuestras promesas:

- La formación se está expandiendo y es cada vez mejor. A través de ATU nuestros miembros están aprendiendo a hacer más.
- Estamos llevando a cabo campañas en Las Vegas, Atlanta, Washington, DC, luchando por los derechos de los miembros.
- En los distritos del congreso en todo Estados Unidos, nuestros Locales están luchando contra el Fast Track—Free Trade (Vía Rápida-Libre Comercio) — también conocido como enviar más trabajos a China y Vietnam.
- En Vancouver, BC, nuestros Locales están haciendo campaña por un referéndum para recaudar fondos para el transporte público.
- En Winnipeg, MB, este En-Tránsito informa que el Local 1505 está llevando a cabo la campaña “Ride Alongs” con oficiales elegidos.
- En Ontario, la campaña contra la privatización continúa.
- En Ohio, nuestros Locales están preparando una lucha para la financiación del transporte.
- En Alabama, estamos trabajando para crear una campaña para el transporte en el 50 aniversario del arresto de Rosa Parks en un autobús.

Una estrella de ATU es la Operadora de Autobús Karen Reed quien, como parte de la campaña para los trabajadores de tránsito del sector privado, en una iglesia que estaba totalmente llena con 850 activistas, cuenta su historia de estar trabajando durante 65 horas a la semana, pero aún así no tiene hogar, mientras trabaja para First Transit cobrando sueldos de descuento en la Capital de EEUU. Su discurso brillante destinado al nuevo alcalde de Washington se puede mirar en www.atu.org en la parte de los videos. Por favor, observe a esta miembro contar la historia sobre el impacto que tiene en los trabajadores cuando las empresas privadas dirigen el tránsito de viajeros.

En Scranton, PA, miembros del Local 168 han hecho un trabajo muy bueno de organizar a los conductores, y a través de los conductores evitar los recortes y los envíos a descansar en los servicios. Me siento orgulloso de toda la energía que está explotando alrededor de nuestro Sindicato.

Mientras la formación sigue adelante, estamos renovando nuestro nuevo centro de formación y como usted leerá en estas páginas, la Mesa Ejecutiva General ha estado de acuerdo con mi recomendación de nombrar a nuestro campus en honor de una pareja de los mejores organizadores en la historia de nuestros dos países, Rosa Parks y Tommy Douglas.

Según vaya leyendo sus historias y sienta su humanidad, estoy seguro de que usted sentirá el poder de la compasión que tenían por sus compañeros ciudadanos. Ambos lucharon por la dignidad de la gente normal, y al ganar el cuidado médico para los Canadienses (Douglas) y los derechos civiles para las personas de Estados Unidos (Parks), ellos establecieron el listón para todos nosotros.

Esperamos que muchas generaciones de organizadores de la comunidad y organizadores sindicales emergieran de nuestras sesiones de formación en este nuevo campus. Esperamos que el nuevo campus esté totalmente disponible en Silver Spring, MD, al final de la primavera de 2015.

Hay tanto que está ocurriendo a la vez en este momento para ATU - estamos observando un gran éxito en organizar tanto a los miembros nuevos como a nuestros miembros actuales.

Finalmente, estamos a punto de establecer los Consejos Unidos de la Industria (Joint Industry Councils, en inglés) al mismo tiempo que ponemos más recursos en la seguridad de nuestros miembros. El reciente fallecimiento trágico de Jake Schwab, mecánico y miembro de Erie, PA, Local 568, nos trajo una realidad a la que estamos obligados a enfrentarnos. Demasiados de nuestros mecánicos trabajan sin la formación o capacitación laboral adecuada y sin procedimientos adecuados de seguridad.

Prometemos hacer crecer nuestras campañas de seguridad – para que los mecánicos estén entrenados y protegidos contra riesgos y para que los operadores de autobuses estén protegidos contra los asaltos.

Algunos Locales han elegido la lucha por los descansos para ir al cuarto de baño, y sus historias en esta edición ensalzan el éxito que su Local puede tener. Este es de nuevo un asunto de dignidad humana básica. Así que en general puedo informar con sinceridad y confianza que ATU es cada vez más un Sindicato que hace que las cosas ocurran.

Por favor, visite nuestra website www.atu.org para más información y para las últimas noticias de ATU. ♦
‘Nosotros elegimos ir a la luna’

El 21 de julio de 1969, el mundo observaba, contenía el aliento y rezaba por la seguridad del astronauta Neil Armstrong cuando él comenzó su descenso del módulo lunar en la superficie de la luna. Esta fue la culminación exitosa de una visión, un plan y esfuerzo colaborador hacia la meta compartida por muchos americanos.

La visión fue expresada bien por primera vez en un discurso pronunciado por el Presidente Kennedy el 12 de septiembre de 1962. Al describir su visión y su meta, Kennedy declaró:

“No, la conquista de la luna no se merece lo mejor de toda la humanidad, y su oportunidad para la cooperación pacífica puede que no vuelva nunca de nuevo. Pero algunos dicen ¿Por qué la luna? ¿Por qué elegir esto como nuestra meta? Y también pueden que pregunten, ¿Por qué elegimos subir a las montañas más altas?, ¿Por qué?”

‘...no porque sean fáciles’

“Nosotros elegimos ir a la luna en esta década y hacer las otras cosas, no porque sean fáciles”, dijo él, “sino porque son difíciles, porque esa meta va a servir para organizar y medir lo mejor de nuestras energías y habilidades, porque ese desafío es uno que estamos dispuestos a aceptar, uno que no estamos dispuestos a posponer, y uno que nosotros intentamos ganar”.

Bill Gates tuvo una visión cuando estableció Microsoft. Él vio un camino para aprovechar el poder de las computadoras centrales que ocupaban toda una sala y reducirlas hasta que pudieran estar en nuestras mesas de trabajo. Aunque muchos dudaron de la visión de Gates, su meta se hizo realidad.

Steve Jobs también tenía una visión cuando comenzó con las computadoras Apple. Él creía que podía tomar el éxito de Microsoft y dar un paso más, un paso adelante. ¿Por qué estar amarrado a una computadora de escritorio para tener información? ¿Por qué estar enganchado a una pared para hacer una llamada? Jobs se llevó las computadoras de los escritorios y las puso en nuestros bolsillos.

Estos innovadores tuvieron una visión y comprendieron el valor de establecer una meta y seguir a través de ella y hacia adelante. Sus logros no fueron fáciles. En verdad sus visiones se cumplieron, y algunos podrían decir, que contra todo pronóstico.

La visión de ATU

En nuestra última Convención, el(los) delegado(s) de su Local y de otros aprobaron una visión y un plan para mover ATU hacia adelante. La Convención fue la culminación de las conversaciones e interacciones del Presidente Hanley con los oficiales Locales guiando hacia una visión y la elaboración posterior de un plan, y por supuesto el curso de la acción hacia una meta tangible.

Hasta la fecha de hoy hemos conseguido un éxito medible, pero tenemos muchas millas que recorrer y no podemos permitirnos descansar.

Decidimos hacer esto, como dijo el Presidente Kennedy “no porque sea fácil” No, nosotros hacemos esto porque, no importa lo insuperables que puedan parecer los obstáculos, es algo que debemos hacer si queremos mantener la fe en nuestros valores y nuestro compromiso de proporcionar un servicio mejor para nuestros pasajeros, una vida mejor para aquellos a los que amamos y para todos los que vienen detrás de nosotros.

Sin embargo, una visión es sólo un sueño hasta que la gente se une para hacerlo realidad. Ahí es donde entra usted. Nosotros necesitamos que usted se una en el gran trabajo que usted ve descrito aquí en una página tras otra de esta revista.

Nada puede pararnos si todos nosotros trabajamos juntos.

Por favor, visite nuestra website www.atu.org para más información y para las últimas noticias de ATU.

No ‘darle al diablo más de lo que le corresponde’

Estoy escribiendo en una mañana fría y lluviosa de Washington. Afuera está bastante desagradable, deprimente. Muy diferente del Norte de California donde vivía antes de venir al DC.

El clima político no parece estar muy diferente – al menos desde el punto de vista de aquellos de nosotros que luchamos por la gente trabajadora y el transporte público. Todo lo que escuchamos es “pesimismo, todo negro”.

Es importante mirar a las cosas con claridad. No ayuda el pretender que las cosas están mejor de lo que realmente están.
Ellos no son invencibles

Pero no ayuda el pensar que las cosas están peor de que realmente están; que los hermanos Koch, el partido del TÉ (TEA Party, en inglés) y sus amigos anti-trabajadores en las legislaturas de Estados Unidos y Canadá son casi invencibles – porque no lo son.

Usted escucha a la gente decir que los miembros del sindicato no participan en la acción política porque son cómodos y apáticos. Pero yo creo que mucha gente se queda en su hogar porque piensan que pueden hacer muy poco sobre la injusticia contra la que estamos luchando.

Hay muchos más de nosotros que los que hay de ellos

Me recuerda a una expresión antigua: “No darle al diablo más de lo que le corresponde.”

Al decir esto, no quiero decir que lo que se nos oponen sean “diablos”. Lo que quiero decir es que, si es cierto, las cosas están duras ahora, pero incluso así, nuestros oponentes no son todo-poderosos, gigantes de 10 pies de alto cuyas ideas nunca pueden ser derrotadas.

Tampoco que ellos son sólo gente que tiene mucho poder porque tienen mucho dinero. Pero hay muchos más de nosotros que los que hay de ellos, y créame, ninguna fuerza nos puede vencer si estamos unidos y activos políticamente- en otras palabras, si tenemos ‘solidaridad’.

Hay muchos ejemplos en la historia sobre líderes que consiguieron grandes cosas porque se rehusaron a creer que no se podía hacer nada sobre la injusticia que estaban experimentando en sus vidas. Líderes como la Madre Jones, Tommy Douglas y Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., lucharon sobre cosas en las que otros habían dicho que sus misiones eran simplemente una locura, o incluso peor – peligrosas.

Una razón para la esperanza

Ellos atrajeron a sus causas a miles de personas porque le dieron esperanza a la gente. Al levantar a la gente, les dieron una razón para que se involucrarán y participaran. Nosotros haríamos bien siguiendo su ejemplo.

Así que la próxima vez que escuche un reporte de las noticias sobre la inevitabilidad de las cosas malas que les pasan a los trabajadores del transporte público – no se lo crea.

Nosotros tenemos el poder de parar las cosas malas que puedan ocurrir y de conseguir muchas cosas buenas. Pero tenemos que comenzar con ejercitar el poder mientras todavía es invierno.

Recuerde que no importa lo frío, oscuro y miserable que se pone – la primavera está a la vuelta de la esquina. Y la primavera, particularmente aquí en Washington, es realmente preciosa.

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In Memoriam

Death Benefits Awarded November 1, 2014 - December 31, 2014

1- MEMBERS AT LARGE
GLEN HANSELMAN
AUBREY W MC SWAIN
ROBERT J VERKEST

22- WORCESTER, MA
WILLIAM W BAITTELLE

85- PITTSBURGH, PA
ROBERT M BUTLER
VERLIN D CRESSLEY
JEROME J KOYE
EDWARD HENRY KLOES
ROBERT R KRAMER
EDWARD LANZET
WILLIAM J LANGE
RICHARD FURBELL
HARRY J ROSCOE
JACKSON B THOMS

163- WHEELING, WV
GLEN N CONAWAY

113- TORONTO, ON
CLAUDE L VERNON
PATRICK J TOOMBS
LEONARD ROY CAIRNS
MATTIE L BANKHEAD

192- OAKLAND, CA
DONALD PAUL BOYER

174- FALL RIVER, MA
NORMAN F BELANGER

192- OAKLAND, CA
DONALD PAUL BOYER
JOHN F DURAN JR
ADRIANE KNOX
DARRELL D LIPPSNICK
MURL LEROY RHOADS

241- CHICAGO, IL
CHESTER ANDERSON
MATTHEW BANKHEAD
LEE E CAMPER
PHILIP CARLSEN
CLIFFORD NICHOLS
MARTIN KENDRICK
RICHARD T ROSS

125- ALLAN D ANDERSON
WILLIAM D BILBREY

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