Exposing safety culture neglect in public transit
JIC Locals gather for collaborative training

More than 30 Locals from across the U.S. and Canada gathered at the Tommy Douglas Conference Center for an innovative Joint Industry Council training. The attendees heard from experts and staff on the new realities of bargaining and campaigning against large, deep-pocketed multinational employers. The training included a comprehensive understanding of the RFP process, a breakdown of the revenue agreement, negotiations, strategies for building strength within our Locals, and planning for organizing campaigns. The Locals also exchanged ideas and experiences in dealing with these companies that will change our strategic approach for bargaining contracts.

NY voters reject ballot proposal on constitutional convention

ATU Locals across the state of New York joined organized labor and allies across the state to declare victory as voters on November 7 soundly rejected the anti-worker ballot proposal to hold a constitutional convention to amend the state’s constitution. The Locals waged an aggressive campaign against the proposal which would have put important labor protections, pensions and other rights for New York workers on the chopping block.
2 International Officers &
   General Executive Board
   News Briefs
3 Index Page
4 Legislative Agenda: Decisions, Decisions
5 International President’s Message:
   Time to speak up!
6 International Executive Vice President’s
   Message: ‘High tech’ needs ‘high touch’ to
   be successful
7 International Secretary-Treasurer’s
   Message: Reports of unions’ demise have
   been greatly exaggerated
8 Las Vegas bus drivers praised for helping
   people flee concert shooting
   Allentown and Orlando Locals pitch in for
   Puerto Rico relief effort
9 Workstation Initiative Phase II: ATU Safety
   ‘SWAT’ Teams, Locals to Perform Safety Audits
10 Workstation Initiative Phase II:
   Station attendant issues to be examined
   during safety audits
11 Workstation Initiative Phase II:
   Power tool and machine hazards, top list of
   maintenance worker safety concerns
12 38-year old OC Transpo bus operator starts
   on college basketball team
   BART fine confirms management culpability
   in 2013 track worker deaths
13 Small businesses launch SOS for Metro
   Report urges TransLink to run HandyDART
   as a public service
14 ATU applauds introduction of
   Driver Fatigue Prevention Act
20 Regina Local sets course for city’s
   safe workplaces
21 Erie woman credits EMTA bus driver with
   saving her life
   St. Paul man honors mother with bus
   farewell tour
22 Local 583 member, longest serving City of
   Calgary employee, dies at 80
   Kelowna, BC, Local pushes for better
   protections for operators
23 Connecticut Locals rally for safer workstations
24 All-door bus boarding could improve safety
   and service
25 Bus operator shortages concern Cincinnati
   and Guelph Locals
26 The rail that fails
   ATU wins another free speech decision
27 Loudoun Commuter bus drivers back strike
   authorization vote
   Cautionary tale for DC Metro:
   Contracting out risky
28 Translations (Spanish)
31 In Memoriam
32 Stay connected for a chance to win
   an ATU jacket

‘Like’ us on facebook
www.facebook.com/ATUInternational
Decisions, Decisions

By June of next year, you are likely going to have to make one of the most important decisions of your life: whether or not to support your Union.

The U.S. Supreme Court is poised to deal a sharp blow to ATU and other unions representing public employees. Thanks to President Trump, there’s a new Supreme Court Justice (Neil Gorsuch) who will most likely supply the deciding vote that would, in effect, turn all states into right-to-work states for the public sector. Unions have to provide services and representation equally to everyone in a bargaining unit. But if they can get those services for free, a lot of people may not pay them. This is the classic free-rider situation.

Have you ever been to Washington, DC? How about your state capital? Whether you know it or not, the answer is “yes.” ATU members have a voice that is heard loud and clear in legislative chambers across the United States. So when politicians try to pass laws to outsource your job to cutthroat corporations that will slash your wages and benefits and strip your pension, your union is there to stop it. When transit systems turn the other cheek when you get assaulted behind the wheel, ATU is there to push legislation to stop these brutal attacks from occurring and increase penalties against those who commit these horrible crimes. When the economy turns bad and lawmakers propose to eliminate transit funding – resulting in fare increases, service cuts, and layoffs – your union is there, working with passengers to push back.

For more than 125 years, ATU has been fighting for its members in legislatures. Early in the 20th Century, we fought for laws requiring enclosed streetcar vestibules so that our members would stop freezing to death. Today, we are pushing for state and federal regulations to change the driver’s workstation to address blind spots, ergonomic issues, and assaults.

Of course, these legislative activities are made possible only through the monthly contributions of our members. For a few dollars per month, you get a full service organization looking out for you and your family. We help you fight back!

So, if you are indeed given a choice next year on whether to continue to support your union or to use that loose change on a couple of trips to a fast food restaurant, we hope you will strongly consider the impact of that decision on you and your family. Please choose wisely!
Time to Speak Up!

My thanks go out to all the Local Unions working through the Workstation Initiative resolution to get our industry to produce a safer, healthier, more secure bus driver workstation. In this issue, we resume our efforts to bring attention to the safety issues of other ATU workers, as well.

As we continue to pursue OSHA standards for our public sector members, we remember Jake Schwab, 568-Erie, PA, killed at his workstation – a bus repair facility in Erie.

We will examine the issues that concern our maintenance, station agent, and other ATU members, not just to uncover problems, but to find solutions.

Safety surveys have gone out to all of our Locals and we would love to get feedback from you. Just send an email to communications@atu.org. Tell us how your job could be made safer.

International safety team gearing up

In the meantime, the International is offering to send a safety team to Local Unions in January to determine the threats to safety in their buses and garages, and to pursue solutions to those problems. We are training a team now.

Our plan is to make this job safer – one member and one work area at a time.

Fighting privatization

We are running well-oiled campaigns to challenge efforts to privatize transit in Ontario, and Washington, DC.

Let me be clear. Privatization is about lower wages, no pensions, less health care and inferior transit. We at the International can help Locals that want to fight, but Local officers must involve their members in the fight in order to win. And, also, if members don’t engage riders, it’s a lot harder to win.

Working people need to remember that it’s not just in paying dues that we strengthen our Union. It’s in building our presence in the community, and getting riders to actively support us that these fights are won.

If you, like me, are sick of politicians of both parties selling you out, there is something you can do.

The United States of America cannot pay its bills, but we are about to cut taxes for the richest class of people ever to live on this earth. There is something you can do.

Time to fight back

You can fight back. Start by putting your faith in your fellow workers, not the politicians. Go to your union meeting. Formulate a plan to get your riders on our side.

We share the same problems: high fares, cuts in service, lack of funding for our systems, bad schedules, safety problems, bugs on buses, and more.

Our riders are already with us. We just need to ask them to speak up. That starts now, as you read this column. I’m asking you …and you …and you …and you – to speak up! ✨
‘High tech’ needs ‘high touch’ to be successful

I often write about the “world of work” and how technology is changing our workplace. We have experienced the “Wow! factor” in how we communicate. High tech has brought us mobile phones, pods and pads, which we use for email, surfing the Internet, social media, banking, photos, and an endless variety of Apps to enhance our lives. Oh, yes, we still make phone calls too. “What will they think of next?”

High tech’s goal is to make us “smarter, faster, better.” Yet, organizations struggle to harness this productivity promise. High tech is great at allowing us to collect programmable data (being smarter) and doing so faster. Yes, we have become better at this but, is that all there is? No! High tech for our Union has evolved from a back office function of information gathering and dues processing to a means to communicate.

When I ask members how they receive their information about the International or Local’s, some say they visit the International’s and their Local’s website. Some have signed up for text messages. Others say robocalls and telephone town halls are the best way to reach them. And, there is still the Local bulletin board and newsletter, the ATU Dispatch and, of course, this magazine. It’s safe to say the norm is a combination of all the above.

High tech is a means, not an end. High tech alone is useless. It’s the second half of the equation – “high touch,” – that brings value to our workplaces. Absent high touch we are lost in “cyber drift.” It’s like a bulletin board that never gets updated. Members stop looking at it. It’s a lack of focus, an aimless cork floating in a sea of change. High tech makes communication possible, and that’s good, but it’s passive. High touch makes it an active means of back and forth communication.

Evidence shows that, many of our Locals are starting to add high touch to the high tech equation. Whether it’s a group of Locals (members) working together to elect a new governor, to support a transit referendum, engage in a street car debate, or experiment with web streaming a membership meeting or holding telephone town halls, or retaining a high density of membership in a state that recently passed “right-to-work” legislation - these Locals (members) are at the cusp of the next wave of union member-to-member mobilization. Rather than being that aimless cork in a sea of change, they have found focus. They are experimenting with ways to enhance member interaction and developing a shared cultural understanding of what needs to be done – and why.

Each Local has the opportunity to build upon the success of others by utilizing high touch member-to-member engagement. It’s early yet but our ATU Workplace Initiative is showing signs of that sort of success.

Be it discussion of the best design for the driver workplace, repair and design of driver seats, unrealistic schedules, training for mechanics, or the best ergonomic design for office workers, members are talking to one another. Some are setting up short-term committees to examine and act upon questions raised by the initiative.

The question now is not what has the Union done for me lately, but rather how can I be part of making my, our work life, our workplace, better. High tech provides the means to share our new and ongoing Union (member) building projects and chronicle our successes and failures. I encourage all members to jump in, the water’s fine, get involved. There is not a more exciting time in your work life to be part of our movement. We are a Union that makes things happen, these are your good old days in the making. Stay in touch!

Please visit www.atu.org for more information and the latest ATU news.
Reports of unions’ demise have been greatly exaggerated

For as long as I can remember, I’ve seen reports about the “inevitable” demise of the labor movement. The claim has been repeated so often by well-funded anti-union organizations that many assume it’s only a matter of time before unions die.

They say that unions are outmoded because employers have evolved from the way they were in the bad old days. They say that the law now protects employees from being abused by management.

They tie union officers to organized crime by calling them “bosses,” and “thugs.” They say union members are “greedy featherbedders” who don’t deserve living wages.

Stoked resentment

They stoke the resentment of non-union workers by saying union public employees get “Cadillac” health plans, and blame them for government deficits simply because they want a decent retirement.

They say businesses won’t survive if they are forced to recognize a union, and justify eliminating unions by claiming that their members are paid more than “market” wages.

Basically, they blame unions for every economic ill of our nations.

We’re still fighting

We’ve taken it on the chin, and seen the percentage of union membership drop in the U.S. Yet, after decades of malicious attack, we’re still here, we’re still fighting, and still improving the lives of working families in North America. And our efforts have elevated the wages and working conditions of non-union workers, as well.

You’ll soon hear news reports about a ruling that the U.S. Supreme Court is expected to hand down next year that will make “right-to-work” the law of the land. In other words, employees will not be required to join a union or, even pay fees to cover the cost of representing them at union workplaces.

Collapse? Don’t believe it.

You’ll hear that this will lead to the eventual collapse of unions in North America. Don’t believe it.

All of the oppression and violence visited upon union workers in the late 1800s, and early 1900s, couldn’t kill the labor movement, and nothing business or government can do now will kill it.

The evidence bears this out: The Washington Post recently reported, “With the GOP running the White House and Congress, membership in federal unions is on the rise, fed by an administration and legislature that leaves the workforce anxious about budget cuts, layoffs and an erosion of civil service protections.”

I know that when workers in our countries come to the full realization that their livelihoods and the standard-of-living of their families are threatened, they will fight back with everything they’ve got. And they will be successful. You can count on it.

Personally acquainted, as I have been, with the character of our members for over 50 years, I know that my sisters and brothers will fight back strong, and fight back smart, to defend and extend what ATU has achieved over the last 125 years.

So, like Mark Twain, I can confidently say that reports of our death “have been greatly exaggerated.” I look forward to fighting the good fight with all of you.
Las Vegas bus drivers praised for helping people flee concert shooting

Local 1637-Las Vegas, NV, member Richard Kuna was at the end of his line when he parked his bus near Mandalay Bay Hotel and Casino to briefly look for a passenger’s lost wallet just after 10 p.m., on Oct. 1.

That’s when he thought he heard jackhammering and wondered why road work was being done at that time of night. Unaware that a gunman had opened fire from the Mandalay, targeting country music concertgoers attending the Route 91 Harvest Festival at Las Vegas Village, he then drove to the strip.

A crowd of people started pounding on the door of his bus, begging to get in. “They were panicked, crying, screaming and some were bleeding,” Kuna said. “What else could I do?” Roughly 50 people piled into the bus and he took them to safety.

“Thinking back on it now, I was lucky,” Kuna said. “It didn’t dawn on me until the day after that I could’ve been another picture on a memorial wall.”

The Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada recognized Kuna and his fellow driver Antonio McLandau for helping concertgoers flee the deadly shooting. McLandau was credited with driving some of the wounded victims to a hospital.

“Richard and Antonio are the very definition of ‘Vegas Strong,’” RTC General Manager Tina Quigley said.

ATU praises Kuna and McLandau for their bravery and heroism during this tragic shooting.

Allentown and Orlando Locals pitch in for Puerto Rico relief effort

ATU members have a long history of helping those in need.

And Locals 956-Allentown, PA, and 1596-Orlando, FL, are stepping up to help the people of Puerto Rico devastated by hurricanes.

Local 956 is teaming with their transit agency, LANTA, to have members volunteer their time to bring buses to collect new household goods and toys and non-perishable food items to be shipped to Puerto Rico.

“Our union membership is fully engaged in this effort which will benefit the people of Puerto Rico,” Local 956 President Ricky Vega said. “Many of our members have family on the island, as do many LANTA riders.”

In Orlando members of Local 1596 joined forces with a local church group to pack relief boxes with food and necessities for the people of Puerto Rico.
International President Larry Hanley has announced that the Union and its Locals will perform safety audits at ATU properties beginning in January 2018. The action marks the second phase of the international’s Workstation Initiative, which started in September with the passage of safety resolutions by Locals throughout the U.S. and Canada.

International safety “SWAT” teams working in concert with local officers and, optimally, their managements, will review the physical conditions, and workplace procedures their employees experience daily. The goal will be to find whatever problems threaten the wellbeing of our members, and fix them through collective bargaining, OSHA / CCOHS complaints, or public campaigns if necessary.

The International began its campaign for healthy, safe, and secure workstations after research and a survey of Locals revealed their chief work environment concerns. These problems were published in *In Transit* over the last year.

**Managements invited to join**

The International and our Locals will invite transit managements to join us in identifying the issues particular to their own agencies. However, we will begin the audits in January with or without their assistance.

All the Union wants to achieve through this process is a transit workplace with the safeguards most employees take for granted. Our ultimate aim is the improvement of our members’ work environment, so that they can live longer, happier, and healthier lives. ☀
WORKSTATION INITIATIVE: PHASE II

Station attendant issues to be examined during safety audits

Like operators and maintenance personnel, station agents have health, safety, and security concerns about the workplace where they spend most of their days. These issues will be examined as ATU enters Phase II of its Workstation Initiative with safety audits of ATU properties.

Every transit agency will have station problems that will be unique to them, but we know that some problems are widespread.

Air quality

Like operators and maintenance employees, station attendants worry about the possibility of getting cancer, asthma, or other breathing problems as a result of poor air quality in their work environment.

Interaction with the public exposes station attendants to sickness and makes them vulnerable to assault by angry passengers and fare evaders.

Police are too often slow to respond to emergencies that happen on transit lines – particularly in subways.

Station attendants are required to sit or stand for hours at a time. Cushioned anti-fatigue mats and ergonomically designed chairs can help these workers avoid the musculoskeletal disorders that come from working in less than healthy circumstances.

Infestation

Too many transit stations are infested with roaches, mice and other pests that foul the environment station attendants work in. No one should be forced to sit or stand for hours in such an unhealthy workplace.

Like operators, station attendants endure poor ventilation, and broken air conditioning and heating systems at their workstations.

Station attendants often have to work with dangerous electrical wiring, lights, and technology that hasn’t been updated for decades.

Suicides

Like operators, station attendants may have to deal with suicides who place a great physical and psychological burden on all of the employees working at the time of an incident. Training on how to identify and help suicidal persons, and how to cope with the trauma related to these tragedies would help many workers recover sooner from the experience.

These and other problems unique to station personnel will be assessed during the ATU safety audits, beginning in January.
Survey results to serve as guide for maintenance workplace safety audits

Mechanics’ and other non-operations employees’ concerns will take center stage as the Union begins safety audits of maintenance facilities at ATU properties in January.

The issues maintenance members brought up in a 2016 ATU survey (see table) will guide the International as it investigates the conditions and safety procedures found in its members’ facilities and transit garages in the United States and Canada.

Different concerns, but just as serious

As you might expect, the safety problems that affect maintenance personnel are different, but just as serious as those of their sisters and brothers in operations. For example, while bathroom access is a big problem for 100% of transit operators; it comes in dead last, at 7.06%, as a concern of maintenance staff. Similarly, power tool and machine hazards are a safety issue for 100% of maintenance workers, but, at 1.64%, they are almost nonexistent as a safety concern of operators.

The Union will use the results of these audits to press transit managements to provide their maintenance employees with the safe, secure, and healthy workplaces that they have every right to expect.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUE</th>
<th>OPERATIONS</th>
<th>MAINTENANCE</th>
<th>OTHER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Air quality</td>
<td>68.13 %</td>
<td>84.62 %</td>
<td>8.79 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>96.79 %</td>
<td>7.29 %</td>
<td>4.17 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asthma/breathing problems</td>
<td>83.08 %</td>
<td>74.46 %</td>
<td>6.15 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black injuries</td>
<td>91.43 %</td>
<td>69.52 %</td>
<td>6.67 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom access</td>
<td>100.00 %</td>
<td>7.00 %</td>
<td>0.00 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer (job-related)</td>
<td>67.92 %</td>
<td>77.36 %</td>
<td>13.21 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical exposure</td>
<td>25.98 %</td>
<td>94.00 %</td>
<td>4.05 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confined spaces</td>
<td>63.64 %</td>
<td>65.91 %</td>
<td>6.82 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>100.00 %</td>
<td>50.00 %</td>
<td>5.71 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ergonomics and material handling</td>
<td>64.29 %</td>
<td>70.00 %</td>
<td>10.00 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fires, burns and explosions</td>
<td>37.50 %</td>
<td>85.42 %</td>
<td>10.42 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heat/cold</td>
<td>95.54 %</td>
<td>65.06 %</td>
<td>3.61 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing loss</td>
<td>55.38 %</td>
<td>92.31 %</td>
<td>3.08 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High voltage</td>
<td>12.28 %</td>
<td>92.98 %</td>
<td>8.77 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypertension/heart disease</td>
<td>98.82 %</td>
<td>61.16 %</td>
<td>8.24 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infectious diseases</td>
<td>95.45 %</td>
<td>39.39 %</td>
<td>4.55 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musculoskeletal disorders &amp; repetitive work</td>
<td>91.30 %</td>
<td>76.81 %</td>
<td>13.04 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skin rashes</td>
<td>61.22 %</td>
<td>85.71 %</td>
<td>8.16 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power tool hazards and machine guarding</td>
<td>1.64 %</td>
<td>100.00 %</td>
<td>6.56 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slips, trips and falls</td>
<td>84.88 %</td>
<td>80.21 %</td>
<td>12.79 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress, anxiety or depressions</td>
<td>100.00 %</td>
<td>52.43 %</td>
<td>9.71 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle safety</td>
<td>100.00 %</td>
<td>53.19 %</td>
<td>4.26 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welding</td>
<td>10.64 %</td>
<td>91.49 %</td>
<td>4.26 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload/scheduling</td>
<td>95.45 %</td>
<td>51.14 %</td>
<td>7.95 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of the survey of the health, safety, and security concerns of maintenance employees at ATU properties.
38-year old OC Transpo bus operator starts on college basketball team

Local 279-Ottawa, ON, member Dan Stoddard is 38 and a full-time bus operator, but amazingly his college basketball career has just begun.

Stoddard's nearly impossible journey started last summer when he played in his annual high school alumni game in a small town near Ottawa. By chance the referee happened to be the coach of a local college team. After the game, that referee, Trevor Costello, jokingly told Stoddard “Hey man, you could play for me.”

The 6 foot 8 inch Stoddard thought the coach was kidding, but said he believes in fate and went all in. “The coach saw something in me. I don’t know what he saw — I was 386 pounds,” Stoddard said.

As soon as Costello saw Stoddard was serious, he was too, because Costello’s team lacked a true big man.

So, Stoddard, a husband and father of two teenagers, enrolled in the college’s business program online. He also had to get in better shape. Stoddard committed to hitting the gym and playing hours of basketball.

Sure, enough he made the team and starts. His teammates say he is a father figure on and off the court.

His family attends every game and wear “Old Man Dan Fan Club” T-shirts to cheer him on.

And to boot, Stoddard is an ATU hero. Last year while driving he helped a woman get away from an assault.

BART fine confirms management culpability in 2013 track worker deaths

The fine levied by a Northern California judge against Bay Area Rapid Transit for safety violations in the tragic death of two track workers confirms BART senior officials’ culpability and callous disregard for human life and safety in the rush to get service running during the October 2013 strike.

“Two men were killed doing their job, but those responsible for the decisions that lead to their tragic deaths got off with nothing more than a ‘slap on wrist’ with this fine that won’t even come out of their deep pockets,” said International President Larry Hanley. “The lesson here is that if you want to commit manslaughter and face no penalty, kill your target on the job!”

The two were inspecting track when they were struck and killed by a train that was allegedly being operated in automatic mode by an inexperienced manager who was training non-union replacement drivers.

“In their rush to get service back on the street under pressure from the Bay Area Council and others, BART officials put unqualified workers in safety-sensitive positions, and the results were tragic,” Hanley continued. “This could be a criminal act. We call for an appropriate criminal investigation to hold these BART executives responsible for their reckless actions.”
Small businesses launch SOS for Metro

Nearly three dozen Metropolitan Washington DC small business leaders have joined forces to push DC Metro to expand service, lower fares and implement free bus-to-rail transfers to win back riders.

Over the summer management increased rail and bus fares, dozens of bus routes were slashed or modified, and train frequencies were reduced on five of six Metro lines. The system also closes earlier.

The Save Our System campaign of the nonprofit Americans for Transit formed the 35-member roundtable of business leaders calling for urgent changes at Metro, arguing the service cuts — and Metro’s lack of dedicated funding — are “harming the local economy.”

The group issued an open letter to the Metro board asking the panel to restore the old service levels and reverse the fare hike in the agency’s upcoming budget, which Metro’s general manager is set to propose this fall. They are also asking local officials to back dedicated funding for Metro to make service expansion feasible.

“We should be talking about fare-free bus service in the District of Columbia,” says Andy Shallal, founder of DC’s Busboys and Poets restaurants, and round table member. “Instead we are quarreling over whether we can afford the buses and trains we have. Of course, we can. It’s time for the region to put our people first and fund Metro.”

The group opposes a region-wide sales tax, the funding mechanism favored by DC officials, on grounds it would have a disproportionate impact on lower-income residents.

Report urges TransLink to run HandyDART as a public service

Metro Vancouver’s aging population has some concerned that the city’s paratransit service – HandyDART – won’t be able to keep up with demand.

A new report, commissioned by Local 1724-Vancouver, BC, recommends boosting HandyDART funding, and returning it to full TransLink public management to help handle the coming challenge.

“The population of people over 70 is growing very rapidly. We’ve got this rapid increase in demand,” said the report’s author pointing out that changes need to be made before it’s too late.

A recent survey of users uncovered significant dissatisfaction with HandyDART service.

The report argues that contracting-out “will likely compromise quality of service without any real cost saving” and TransLink needs to invest “considerable amounts of money in both capital and operating costs” to improve the quality of service.

The report also called for a variety of wider measures to assist HandyDART users with transit.

Those included using larger, regular buses with more space for wheelchairs and scooters, offering training for seniors and persons with disabilities who want to use regular transit, and improving sidewalks and crosswalks region-wide.
As ATU testified at a NYC Council Committee on Transportation hearing on the recent fatal Flushing casino bus crash, new federal legislation addressing the single largest cause of fatal intercity bus accidents – driver fatigue – was introduced in Congress.

The *Driver Fatigue Prevention Act*, introduced by Senator Bob Casey, D-PA, in the Senate and in the House by Representative Jackie Speier, D-CA, ensures that the overtime provisions in the *Fair Labor Standards Act* (FLSA) are extended to cover drivers of over-the-road buses. Currently, employers of these bus drivers are exempt from these provisions, forcing many drivers to work second jobs during their so-called “rest period” just to make ends meet.

The NTSB estimates that 36 percent of motorcoach crash fatalities over the past decade have been due to driver fatigue. It is the number one cause of fatal accidents, far above road conditions (two percent) or inattention (six percent).

“We applaud Senator Casey and Representative Speier for introducing the *Driver Fatigue Prevention Act* to address the real problem in this industry – driver fatigue,” says International President Larry Hanley. “Is working a 15-hour day not enough to earn a living? This bill will extend important labor protections most other workers take for granted to intercity bus drivers and fairly compensate them for overtime work.”

In NYC, ATU told the committee that when accidents like the fatal Flushing crash happen, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) will announce a crackdown with spot safety checks of bus companies. A tiny fraction of OTR buses will be pulled over in an effort to check rule compliance, examine log books, and determine if required rest periods are taking place. However, there are only 878 federal and state inspectors assigned to conduct safety reviews of 765,000 bus and truck companies, or an average of slightly more than one inspector for 1,000 companies.

“The FMCSA and states are just playing a dangerous game of ‘Wack-a-Mole’ to get unscrupulous operators off the streets. Even when a bad actor is taken out of service, they quickly get back on the road by changing their name,” said Hanley. “But it does nothing to address the real problem of driver fatigue, which is the number one cause of fatal bus accidents on our highways.”

Deregulation of the bus industry in the 1980s gave rise to countless small, “fly-by-night” operators that have been involved in an increasing number of deadly crashes. This has allowed hundreds of intercity bus companies to get away with paying their drivers criminally low wages, forcing drivers to work 100 hours a week or more, often balancing two or three jobs, just to make a living.

“Operators are now free to set their own rates, allowing customers to lock in jaw-dropping fares between certain cities – a relative sweatshop on wheels. Then unsuspecting customers get on these buses and disaster can strike,” Hanley continued.

“How many more people need to die in bus crashes before we deal with the real problem behind these accidents?,” Hanley continued. “Congress needs to put this bill on the fast track to ensure intercity bus drivers don’t have to resort to doctoring log books, working other jobs and wearily reporting for duty with a giant cup of coffee.”

---

ATU applauds introduction of Driver Fatigue Prevention Act
ATU’s membership, like that of organized labor generally, remained static in the four decades leading up to the 1992 Convention. Our 1993 total was nearly 4,000 below ATU’s 1955 peak of 158,000 members.

The election of Bill Clinton however, signaled change. ATU took advantage of the opportunity by refocusing all of its departments’ attention on organizing and building ATU’s strength.

Larger units

The Union began by concentrating on larger groups of employees. In late 1992, International President Jim La Sala set the tone with his commitment to organize the new transit system in Las Vegas, NV, whose workforce at the time numbered 400.

It was a long, hard-fought campaign, but ATU was successful. Local 1637 was chartered to represent the Las Vegas drivers and mechanics and later, over 100 paratransit workers, as well.

The organizing of nearly two dozen bargaining units of over 100 members followed in subsequent years. Three hundred paratransit workers at the Cook/DuPage Transportation Company in Chicago, IL, were organized in 1994, and Local 1704 was organized the following year to represent 200 Omnitrans employees in San Bernardino, CA.

In 1997, Local 1587-Toronto, ON, won the right to represent more than 100 rail maintenance employees. Local 569 followed suit the following year, organizing 100 paratransit operators in Edmonton, AB. Later, ATU was elected to represent over 150 workers at a newly expanded transit system in Aspen, CO.
Major players
We made great strides by targeting major private contractors and otherwise pursuing organizing leads outside of ATU’s traditional scope. Local 279-Ottawa, ON, for instance, became the bargaining agent for the security staff at the Royal Canadian Mint.

School Buses
A concerted effort was made to organize school bus drivers and aides, resulting in victories, among others, for Local 85 in Pittsburgh, PA, and Local 627 in Cincinnati, OH, which formed bargaining units of over 300 Laidlaw employees.

The International Union developed an awards program to recognize those Locals evidencing a dedication to organizing. Named after AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, the initial awards were presented in 1997.

Not long after assuming responsibility for directing the Union’s organizing efforts, International Executive Vice President Warren George announced a goal of organizing 2,000 new members annually in anticipation of the new millennium. It was an ambitious objective, but the goals were met. Local 1181-New York, NY, was perhaps most successful, as it organized not one, but two, bargaining units of over 1,000 members, surpassing Local 113-Toronto, ON, to become the largest ATU Local.

Those numbers added to others from almost 150 successful organizing campaigns augured well for the future of ATU. Between 1992 and 2002, ATU membership would increase by more than 17,000 to over 175,000 members—nearly 10 percent greater than the union’s previous high-point.

The concerted organizing campaign continued during the 2000s. By 2003, the Union was using the slogan—“Union of Choice”—for its organizing campaigns. In Transit announced in the March-April 2003 issue that “membership had topped 180,000” ATU’s success came at a time of increased emphasis on organizing in the AFL-CIO. While union membership declined 0.2 percent in 2002 because of the recession, the actual number of union members increased.

International Executive Vice President Mike Siano took over the organizing portfolio from George after his accession to the international presidency in 2003. In the November-December In Transit Siano expressed the hope that every Local in the Union would commit itself to increasing its membership by 10 percent in the new year.

In the January-February 2004 issue, Siano offered advice on how to do that, writing, “...beginning in April 2004, I am challenging every ATU Local to identify one or more nonunion private companies providing service in their community, especially paratransit and school bus providers which represent the largest unorganized group of transit employees, and investigate the possibility of conducting an ATU organizing campaign.”

In that same column the IEVP frankly addressed some of the problems that make some Locals reluctant to organize:

“While many of our Locals have had notable successes, other Locals have been hesitant to move forward as officers and members alike have voiced a strong reluctance to organize... As a result, we have begun to see other unions enter our industry where the ATU historically has been the leader. ... As new employers grow in the U.S., we must make sure we grow with them to prevent unfair wage competition and more important, to improve their employees’ terms and conditions of employment.

“What we need to do together is to identify new targets and put a good plan in place. And, to those who believe new units will affect their Local’s political balance, I say, take the risk. You are stronger when our members are stronger, and good leaders need not shy away from these efforts.”
Siano’s *In Transit* columns chronicle the emergence of multinational transit operators in the 2000s as they began their drive to take over American and Canadian transit management. In the March-April 2004 *In Transit* he reported:

“…we in the transit industry have been confronted with an invasion of European-based, multinational corporations, who have been buying up and taking over transit services throughout the U.S. and Canada. …they have adopted aggressive negotiating tactics and fierce opposition to union organizing, as part of their efforts to cut costs and keep service contracts in place.

“While we may not be able to stop their expansion, we can certainly do something to make sure ATU continues to represent the workforce where these companies are succeeding our existing employers and move aggressively to organize their new service locations.”

“Over the next several months,” Siano wrote, “we will be providing ATU Locals with information about potential organizing targets involving these companies. At the same time, we will be issuing new organizing kits containing specific guidelines, information and strategies for exploring the potential for representing the workers at these job sites.”

The delegates to the AFL-CIO convention approved plans to double the federation’s organizing budget to $22.5 million, and encourage unions representing similar workers to voluntarily merge in order to create more efficient, non-competitive labor unions.

While increasing the amount budgeted for organizing was a realistic way of adding workers to the labor movement, encouraging unions to merge was not. Few unions were interested in joining with other labor organizations representing workers in similar jobs. And that would continue to divert ATU’s time, money, and attention from time to time in the future when other unions attempted to raid ATU Locals.

Organizing is never easy, and International President Warren George understood that to be effective the Union’s organizing program needed to be continually adjusted to respond to the changes that take place in transit employment. In 1995, George established a special committee to evaluate the Union’s organizing programs and make recommendations for new approaches.

With representation from both U.S. and Canadian Locals, the ATU Organizing Committee was charged with taking a look at what the Union was doing, what was working, what wasn’t, and what changes, if any, could best serve ATU’s needs. The committee would evaluate the ATU’s strengths by sector, region, employers and contract terms and, among many things, make recommendations concerning more effective use of the Union’s existing structure of Locals, conference boards, and councils to support our organizing drives, and improve ATU’s community-based coalitions and develop a coordinated strategy for targeting particular agencies, companies, regions or cities.

The committee brought those recommendations to the GEB at its meeting in October 2005. George stated that the committee’s work would help determine future organizing efforts and activities by the International and Local Unions.

Not all labor unions believed that the AFL-CIO was doing enough, however, and a group of five unions led by the Teamsters left the federation in 1995 to form their own group called “Change to Win” to pursue a more aggressive organizing program. Unfortunately, the Teamsters took the opportunity of their separation from the AFL to raid long-organized unions, rather than organize new ones.

The Teamsters decided to target Local 241-Chicago, IL – one of ATU’s largest – and Local 1028-Des Plaines, IL, and a bitter and expensive fight between the two unions ensued. Eventually, the Teamsters lost that decertification vote, and George convinced Teamster President James Hoffa to renew a no-raid agreement with ATU.

Contractor turnover was becoming a disincentive to organize in 2006. Local President Dwight Mattingly,
West Palm Beach, FL, said that's the reason previous local presidents shied away from organizing Connection (Palm Beach's paratransit operation). In addition, PalmT ran had contracted Connection's work out to three companies — further complicating the process.

But Mattingly took the first step, initiating a campaign to organize Connection's clerical/dispatch workers. And MV Transportation (one of the three contractors) raised the wages of their operators from $6 - $7 per hour to over $10 per hour.

Not surprisingly, all of the operators for the other two contractors left to work for MV. Overall ridership went up 8% in June. Costs went down 15%. Complaints dropped 50%. With one stable contractor providing paratransit, the Local was considering organizing the operators as well.

In November 2006, International President George kicked off a re-energized organizing program with the establishment of the ATU Organizing Department — the first organizing department in the Union’s history — charged with an ambitious program of creating regional organizing committees, developing regional organizing plans, organizing 1,000 employees a month to vote on joining ATU, and ensuring that the Union’s organizing was integrated with the efforts of other ATU departments.

The renewed program organized 1,300 new members in the 10 months before the 2007 Convention.

The Canadian Council pledged that it would support all organizing by Canadian Locals. After hosting an organizing strategy session in the Toronto, Canadian Director Robin West urged local officers to go out and start organizing the unorganized, warning, “If we don't, another union will!”

The 2007 Convention theme would be “The Right Move” emphasizing ATU’s long success in the transit labor movement. Encouraged by recent results, the delegates voted unanimously to dedicate five percent of the Union's per capita tax income to a new Organizing and Activism Fund.

The first resolution the delegates passed committed the Union “to continue to make organizing a top priority at all levels of the Union; to develop specific organizing plans and provide the research necessary to ensure successful campaigns; and to identify, train and utilize volunteer organizers.”

Organizing continued to be a high priority of the Union in 2008. The creation of the Organizing Department led to the development of a more strategic organizing program. The strategy was explained in the January-February In Transit:

“...we organize strategically. By that we mean that we research employers’ strengths and weaknesses before campaigns are launched so that we can best evaluate which targets to focus on first, which companies will be most receptive to organizing, and which places will be most responsive to our bargaining leverage.

“Each organizing drive must include an assessment of the workers’ support and commitment to the union campaign at every stage of the process. If the support is there, we will do the slow, hard work of developing representative rank and file leadership and giving them active roles in their campaigns. And we will recruit, train, and effectively use ATU member organizers.

“We won't move forward unless a representative committee is in place. And we won't file a petition for an election or demand recognition until we have majority support.
“...Building alliances and coalitions is necessary to create a more supportive environment for the workers who are organizing. These groups also help to bring the leverage necessary to restrain employers from more aggressive opposition to organizing efforts and put pressure on them to bargain in good faith for a first contract.”

In Transit also announced, “Last year, we won over 80% of our organizing drives throughout North America. This was the highest winning percentage in ATU’s history. The nature and intensity of the union campaigns played the most critical role in determining the differences in our win rates.”

“I personally pressed the issue in one-on-one meetings with President Obama and Vice President Biden. But even though Congress set aside $8.5 billion for transit in the bill, it refused to budge on operating assistance.

“That’s why I told the legislative conference attendees that operating assistance will be ATU’s “number one” issue, and that “we’re gonna have to fight like hell for it.”

Organizing was thus replaced as the Union’s first priority by the fight for operating assistance which in many respects was a fight for survival.

The Union organized 500 new members in the first six months of 2008, but by the end of 2008, it became obvious that ATU had a greater challenge on its hands.

The Great Recession was forcing federal, state, and local governments to make severe cuts in public transit funding. International President George addressed the crisis in the March-April 2009 In Transit:

“...the massive recession is choking off the funding our systems need to keep rolling. At least 50 ATU properties are facing service cuts and fare hikes. Layoffs of our members have begun in several cities...

“The problem would not be as dire if Congress would just allow our larger U.S. transit systems to use federal dollars for operating expenses such as administration and wages...

ATU organizing continued, however, even though more and more of the Union’s resources were devoted to fighting for funding. In the ensuing years the threat of privatization and right-to-work legislation needed to be addressed by the Union, as well.

ATU grew, nevertheless, to the point where International President Larry Hanley was able to announce at the 2016 International Convention that the Union’s membership had surpassed the 198,000 mark – the highest of all time.

The organizing program continues today under the leadership of International President Hanley, bringing in hundreds of new members every year.
Regina Local sets course for city’s safe workplaces

Local 588—Regina, SK recently passed the “Resolution to End Fatalities and Injuries Resulting from Poor Transit Bus Design” joining more than 120 sister ATU Locals, but 588 had already been a trailblazer for promoting healthier and safer workplaces for all city workers in Regina.

Over the past eight months the Local noticed a growing number of health issues and sick time taken due by bus operators. Concerned with this problem the Local brought it to the attention of the city. After meetings with the city officials to discuss the ways to combat the problem, the city is launching an innovative program to investigate why bus operators are experiencing these health problems. The program is starting with transit then moving through all City of Regina departments.

To launch the program researchers will be spending a three-month period riding bus routes to better understand the job of bus operator and the challenges and issues faced on the job. Every bus will be wired up with sensors on the driver’s seat to monitor and record the vibration, movement, stress, shock and wear on the body. Along with testing the operator’s seat, they will monitor what happens during a shift to operators and the hazards they face from interaction with riders, fare collecting and other distractions including driver blind spots, pedestrians, bicyclists and traffic.

ATU applauds this initiative spearheaded by Local 588 and encourages all Locals to work with their transit agencies, elected officials and allies to push for a healthy and safe work environment.
Erie woman credits EMTA bus driver with saving her life

Briaunna Woodard knew something wasn’t right at work. But she didn’t know she might be dying. She decided to go home and went to her Erie Metropolitan Transit Authority bus stop as she does every day. EMTA driver Rich Lamp, of Local 568-Erie, PA, pulled up and hollered out the door to make sure Woodard was boarding.

Woodard, who is anemic, was near organ failure because her red blood cell count was so low even as she worked her shift as a seafood department manager at an Erie grocery store.

“He kind of looked at me funny,” she said. “I didn’t say anything back, just got on. I take the bus every day. We chat the whole ride normally.”

Woodard’s condition worsened with each block and Lamp noticed and took action. He pulled his bus over and immediately called 911 to get help. He stayed by her side to make sure she was breathing and found cold bottled water to put on her head while waiting for an ambulance to arrive.

Woodard was admitted to a hospital for a week so her red blood cell count could be monitored. When she returned home, gratitude for Lamp was first on her mind.

“He could have gotten in trouble for being late. He didn’t have to do that for me, and I am so thankful,” she said. “I don’t know how else to thank him for saving my life. I know that I would not be here today if not for him.”

Lamp said he would help anyone who might need assistance, but he was especially glad he could aid Woodard. “She’s my friend,” he said. “Just glad she’s OK.” ATU salutes Lamp for his quick action.

St. Paul man honors mother with bus farewell tour

Long time Twin Cities resident Dorothy Carter trusted public transportation throughout her 94 years to get her anywhere she needed.

Carter was described by her son as a “fiercely independent” woman who never had a driver’s license. But that didn’t stop her from getting anywhere.

“If there was the need to get around, she would take the bus and go,” said her son William Carter.

To honor her and promote the benefits of public transit, William embarked on a Metro Transit trip with a sign and an urn containing his mother’s remains. He wanted to take her on one last ride to honor her life and the autonomy public transit gave her. Fellow riders were touched by her story and her son’s tribute to his mother.

“It was kind of bringing joy to other people in the process. It was just a real positive, affirming experience,” he said, adding that the ride helped give him closure.
In 1965, George Dorn began his career with the city of Calgary as a bus driver. When Calgary got its C-Train line in May 1981, Dorn worked that first shift and Calgary transit gave him badge No. 1. And he stuck with the trains after that.

ATU is sad to report that the beloved Local 583-Calgary, AB, member has passed away at the age 80. He was the longest serving City of Calgary employee until his retirement after 50 years of service two years ago.

Dorn developed close relationships with many of his riders over his many years of service. In 2012, Dorn said his kids wanted him to “pack it in” but he “wasn’t quite ready.” He told co-workers he’d never thought of driving trains as a job and truly believed in public service.

“George was the consummate union member: volunteering himself and his home at social functions and being on the social committee for decades, speaking the virtues of the Local at every opportunity no matter who the leaders were” said Local President Rick Ratcliff at the Local’s first Retiree’s Banquet since Dorn passed away. “His contributions to this city and Local 583 won’t soon be forgotten. Rest in Peace Brother George.”

Three years ago, Kelowna BC, resident Caesar Rosales was tragically killed by a random assailant while commuting home on a bus. Since that day members of Local 1722-Kelowna, BC, have pulled their buses over twice to mark that sad day and show their commitment to keep going forward both for the man whose life was lost and for what it meant to their city.

“Violence in transit happens everywhere, but up until that night Kelowna was immune to it,” said Local President Scott Lovell. “We are community and family-oriented …. but the specialness that we have was forever changed in that night. We became a big city transit system.”

But protections – safety barriers – have not made it to Kelowna buses, despite being on buses in bigger cities for years.

There have been cameras put on select Kelowna buses and a lot of talk about implementing security barriers for drivers. However, it’s been two years since BC Transit said they would have some barriers implemented for a pilot project, to date no actual barriers have been installed.

“But nothing has happened,” said Lovell. “The union and the company have worked really hard to get the drivers to completely remove themselves from (violent) situations. But still, even through the bits of education, word of mouth and the postings we have had on a regular basis there are still bus drivers getting assaulted.”

The Local pointed out that it shouldn’t take the death of a transit worker for BC Transit to take operator safety more seriously, pointing out this year a Winnipeg bus driver was brutally murdered while on duty.
Connecticut Locals rally for safer workstations

ATU’s Connecticut Locals gathered in New Haven, CT, to demand better bus design and more safety features to protect drivers, riders, pedestrians, and motorists.

Locals 281-New Haven, 425-Hartford, 443-Stamford, 1209-New London, 1336-Bridgeport, 1622-Danbury, and 1763-Rocky Hill are among more than 120 Locals that have passed the “Resolution to End Fatalities and Injuries Resulting From Poor Transit Bus Workstation Design” at their local union meeting.

“We’re asking our respective transit companies to start asking for buses that are manufactured with better workstations for the drivers and better seating and capacity for the riders,” said Local 1336 President Mustafa Salahuddin at the rally.

The Locals specifically called attention to the rise in verbal assaults on operators, unsafe air quality and insufficient seating, which can lead to chronic back pain and other health conditions.

Ralph Buccitti, Local 281 financial secretary/business agent, said that a disconnect exists between transit management and the state, which buys the buses. “The issues are the way the buses are designed and the safety of our operators. Design flaws cause incidents … after which management puts the blame on the operator.”

Local 1209 President Jaroslaw Pizunski told the crowd that unsafe, wide window pillar designs and hazardous eye-level mirrors create large blind spots that lead to tragedy when drivers don’t see pedestrians crossing in front of them.

The Locals called for their transit systems, elected officials and bus manufacturers to look to European transportation systems that use buses without these dangerous design issues to ensure the safety, comfort and accessibility of drivers and riders.

Stay Connected with the ATU App

Want to stay connected, informed and involved with all things ATU? Then download the ATU App to your smartphone today to get the latest news about ATU, public transit, politics, events, actions, photos of members and videos, and other important content. The ATU Mobile App will regularly deliver news you can use and need to know to your mobile devices.

The ATU App is free and simple to download to iPhones and Android devices. Visit http://www.atu.org/action/atu-mobile-app to get started today with the ATU App.
All-door bus boarding could improve safety and service

All-door boarding on buses with a separate fare-payment system to scan fare cards could improve safety and speed of service if done right.

San Francisco and London currently use all-door boarding and it is being tested at the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) in Boston and the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) in New York City with mostly positive results. The Chicago Transit Authority is also considering a trial with all-door bus boarding.

International President Larry Hanley pointed out that all-door boarding is done most effectively if fare-payment systems are done off the bus on a dedicated platform for buses. “Collection of fares on buses creates a bottleneck, which can create delays of service and also aggravate riders waiting in line to pay their fares or sitting while the bus is idling. That’s why fares should be collected off of buses with or without all-door boarding.”

In Boston, the MBTA buses testing all-door boarding spent 30 percent less time stopped while passengers got off and on, but the passengers didn’t pay fares during the trial. However, the initiative convinced the MBTA to commit to system wide all-door boarding by 2020, as part of its transition to a new fare payment platform.

All-door boarding could also improve safety for bus operators because it will speed up trips and keep buses on schedule, meaning fewer angry riders who could pose a threat to an operator.

“As the years progressed, I found myself being assaulted, verbally abused by customers, and 90% of all of that was because of the conflict and monitoring of the fare box,” said a veteran MTA bus driver in New York City. “I am for concentrating on doing the main purpose of why I am behind the wheel, which is to transport people in a safe manner.”

Another MTA operator pointed out that the time riders spend finding their MetroCards, digging for change, asking questions or folding up umbrellas on a rainy day adds up to late trips and annoyed passengers. “Little by little, I’m getting late by no fault of my own,” the operator said. “I’m the face of this transit authority and I have to answer for all the problems that have no association with my job. Sometimes those guys lash out at us.”

New York City is planning to use all-door boarding on more routes and exploring ways to expand it even further along with the implementation of a high-tech new fare-payment system.
There are bus operator shortages in Cincinnati, OH, and Guelph, ON, which have led to concerns for the ATU Locals in both cities.

**Operator fatigue a safety issue in Cincinnati**

At Metro in Cincinnati, Local 627 says the operator shortage is leading to fatigued workers and unsafe rides. The transit agency disagrees.

The lack of drivers means some drivers are asked to work overtime, which concerns the Local.

“Some of them enjoy making the money but a lot of them say, ‘I’ve worked and I can’t do all of these hours. I don’t want to have an accident and I’m afraid Metro won’t stand behind me if I have an accident,’” said Local President Troy Miller.

Under dispute is the interpretation of the rules in the contract. Metro says a driver who works overtime at night can come in late the next day, with no penalty. The Local says that does not apply to all drivers.

Recently the Local sent an email to the transit board saying a driver was not allowed to claim fatigue after getting off work at 1:38 a.m. and was forced back to work at 6:15 a.m.

The e-mail asked: “Would you want your kids to be in a bus like that with a driver who is worn out?”

This dispute has led to the Local filing a grievance about how the fatigue rules are interpreted. An arbitrator is expected to decide.

**Guelph shortage**

At Guelph Transit, a number of factors, including operators forced off work due to injuries, are resulting in a challenge covering all of the available city transit shifts, says Local 1189-Guelph, ON.

While a recent realignment of routes seems to have been well received, there is some frustration over a lack of drivers covering the “extra board” (part-time drivers who cover for drivers who are injured, or taking vacations, or sick days). And the Local says operators are receiving additional stress due to interaction with some members of the public frustrated with delays.

“Take it easy on the driver. We’re the ones out there trying to move the system along,” says Local President Andrew Cleary.

The Local says the city should accept more feedback about possible adjustments to the routes directly from the operators, who are on the frontlines.

“Management is relying on their data more so than the reality of the route. I have always said you need the human factor in there,” said Cleary.
The rail that fails

Many years ago, streetcars were so common that most urban dwellers didn’t need to own a car. But by the 1970s, streetcars had given way to buses in most cities. Today streetcars are enjoying a renaissance as a funky, classic way to ferry “choice riders” through the historic and commercial areas of our cities.

However, these pricey downtown streetcars - Detroit’s QLine, Washington, DC’s H St. Streetcar, Cincinnati’s Bell Connector line, Atlanta’s streetcar - aren’t used by people who rely on transit each day. Instead these streetcars are undermining overall mobility. But that isn’t stopping city after city from building new lines.

The Detroit streetcar doesn’t even connect directly to the city’s primary bus station, running three miles total.

A similar story is playing out across the country’s other 21st century streetcars. Atlanta saw a 60 percent drop in ridership when it started asking for $1 per rider. Cincinnati and Salt Lake City streetcars are underperforming.

Furthermore, taxpayers are picking up most of the bill, diverting important transit dollars meant for real mobility needs, and instead serving the real estate and business interests in urban areas.

ATU wins another free speech decision

In a big victory for Spokane Transit Authority (STA) workers, a federal court ruled that the transit agency violated the First Amendment rights of Local 1015-Spokane, WA, members by refusing to allow the Local’s advertisement to appear on STA buses.


STA claimed the ad was not allowable under the agency’s policy because it addresses a “public issue.” The court disagreed and concluded that “ATU’s proposed advertisement was ‘commercial and promotional advertising’ as defined in the agency’s Policy, and that STA’s determination to the contrary was an unreasonable interpretation of the Policy.”

“This is a big victory for STA transit workers and all workers’ free speech rights,” says Local President Thomas Leighty. “STA was attempting to trample on our First Amendment right to let workers at Uber, Lyft, charter bus and school bus companies know they have a right to a voice that will protect their interests on the job.”

The Local plans to move forward with their plans to run this advertisement to let these transportation workers know ATU is here for them.
Loudoun Commuter bus drivers back strike authorization vote

Frustrated over lower pay than drivers for neighboring bus services, among other issues, Loudoun County Transit commuter bus drivers have authorized a strike.

The almost 100 bus operators and maintenance workers, who voted to join ATU earlier this year, have had contract talks for their first collective bargaining agreement stall with Transdev, the private company that operates commuter bus service for Loudoun County outside of Washington, DC.

Transdev had increased starting pay and signing bonuses in an attempt to lure more drivers, but is still far below the pay of DC Metrobus and Fairfax Connector drivers who make significantly more.

The workers argue that higher pay and benefits would not only attract and retain drivers, but also ensure commuters keep the most qualified, experienced and safe drivers behind the wheel.

Additional dates have been set for continued contract negotiations, but the workers are frustrated. They don't want to strike, which is always a last resort, but they want to be treated with respect and paid fairly.

Cautionary tale for DC Metro: Contracting out risky

A new study has found that transit systems that employ competitive contracting have not realized promised cost-savings, and that efforts aimed solely at cutting costs usually end in failure.

This comes as DC Metro General Manager Paul Wiedefeld unveiled his long-term plan for putting the cash-strapped transit agency on solid financial ground, including a proposal “to reduce costs with innovative approaches including competitive contracting of targeted functions where permitted.”

Local 689—Washington, DC, has condemned Wiedefeld’s plan as nothing more than attempt at privatization.

“Competitive contracting is privatization in sheep’s clothing. It’s always touted as a way to increase efficiency, save money and provide better service, but these assertions are just the bait used to get a contract,” says International President Larry Hanley pointing to numerous examples of failed transit privatization in Nassau County, NY; Atlanta, GA; Fairfield, CA; San Diego, CA; and many other cities.

“This report confirms it doesn’t work. Private transit operators save money by firing workers, and cutting service and maintenance. Fares often increase too, effectively raising the taxes of the poor who rely on public transportation, while further lowering the taxes of the wealthy.”
Es Hora de Hablar

Doy las gracias a todos los Sindicatos Locales que están trabajando con la resolución para lograr que nuestra industria produzca estaciones de trabajo para conductores de autobuses que son más seguras y sanas. Con respecto a esta labor, resumimos nuestros esfuerzos de darles atención a los otros trabajadores de ATU.

Mientras que continuamos trabajando para obtener estándares de OSHA para los miembros del sector público, recordamos al miembro del Local 568-Erie, PA, Jack Schwab, quien murió en su estación de trabajo en un centro de reparación de autobuses en Erie.

En nuestro trabajo continuo de examinar trabajos de ATU de mantenimiento, agente de estación y demás, no solo buscamos los problemas, sino también las soluciones.

Ya se han enviado las encuestas y nos encantaría recibir sugerencias de nuestros miembros. Simplemente envíenos un email a communications@atu.org. Cuéntenos como podemos hacer que su trabajo sea más seguro.

El equipo internacional de seguridad se está preparando

Mientras tanto, en enero la Internacional ofrecerá un equipo de seguridad para visitar a Locales de sindicato e inspeccionar los autobuses y garajes para determinar cuestiones de seguridad y buscar soluciones a los problemas que se presenten. Actualmente ya estamos preparando a un equipo.

Nuestro plan es hacer que este trabajo sea más seguro, un miembro y un sitio de trabajo a la vez.

Luchando en contra de la privatización

Estamos llevando a cabo una campaña muy bien organizada en Ontario, Canadá y Washington, DC, para retar los esfuerzos de privatizar al tránsito.

Tenga claro que la privatización pretende crear sueldos más bajos, eliminar pensiones, reducir el cuidado de salud y dar un servicio de tránsito de calidad inferior.

La gente trabajadora necesita recordar que no solo se trata de pagar cuotas sindicales a la hora de fortalecer a nuestro sindicato. Se trata también de crear una presencia en la comunidad y conseguir que los pasajeros estén de nuestro lado y nos apoyen activamente; pues así es como se ganan estas luchas.

Si usted, al igual que yo, está cansado de que los políticos de ambos partidos nos traicione, entonces hay algo que puede hacer. Los Estados Unidos de America no logran pagar sus cuentas, y sin embargo estamos a punto de recortarle los impuestos a la gente más rica que jamás ha vivido en la tierra. Hay algo que usted puede hacer.

Es hora de pelear

Usted puede luchar este mes. Todo empieza con poner su fe en sus compañeros de trabajo en lugar de ponerla en políticos. Atienda a su reunión del sindicato. Formule un plan para que los pasajeros de pongan de nuestro lado.

Compartimos los mismos problemas y asuntos: altos costos, recortes al servicio, falta de financiación para nuestros sistemas, malos horarios, problemas de seguridad, bichos en los autobuses…nuestros pasajeros ya están de nuestro lado. Ahora solo tenemos que pedirles que hablen por nosotros. Esto empieza con esta columna. Le estoy pidiendo a usted y todos ellos también… ¡que por favor hablen por nuestro bien! ❖

INICIATIVA DE ESTACIÓN DE TRABAJO: FASE II

 Equipos ‘SWAT’ de Seguridad de ATU, Los Locales harán inspecciones de seguridad

El Presidente Internacional Larry Hanley ha anunciado que el Sindicato y sus Locales llevaran a cabo inspecciones de seguridad en propiedades de ATU comenzando en enero de 2018. Esta acción marca el inicio a la segunda fase de la Iniciativa de Estaciones de Trabajo presentada por la Internacional, la cual comenzó en septiembre cuando se pasaron resoluciones de seguridad por los Locales en los Estados Unidos y Canadá.
Los equipos ‘SWAT’ de seguridad de la Internacional que trabajarán con los oficiales locales e idealmente con sus gerentes, harán inspección a las condiciones físicas y procedimientos en el sitio de trabajo típicas de los empleados. La meta será encontrar cualquier problema que amenace el bienestar de nuestros miembros y arregloarlo mediante negociación colectiva, quejas de OSHA/CCOHS o campañas públicas si fuera necesario.

La Internacional comenzó su campaña para estaciones de trabajo sanas y seguras después de que una investigación y encuestas hechas a los Locales demostraron que había preocupaciones graves con el ambiente de trabajo. Estos problemas fueron publicados en *In Transit* durante este último año.

**Invitamos a que se una la gerencia**

La Internacional y nuestros Locales invitaran a las gerencias de tránsito para que nos acompañen en identificar los problemas específicos en sus agencias. Sin embargo, comenzaremos las inspecciones en enero, con o sin su ayuda.

Lo único que el Sindicato desea lograr mediante este proceso es un sitio de trabajo de transito con sistemas de protección que la mayoría de los empleados típicos dan por sentado. Nuestra meta final es mejorar el ambiente de trabajo de nuestros miembros, para que puedan vivir vidas más largas, felices y sanas.

**INICIATIVA DE ESTACIÓN DE TRABAJO: FASE II**

**Temas relacionados con los empleados de estación para ser examinados durante las auditorías de seguridad**

Al igual que los operadores y el personal de mantenimiento, los agentes de la estación tienen preocupaciones de salud y seguridad sobre el lugar de trabajo donde pasan la mayor parte del día. Estos problemas serán examinados cuando ATU entre en la Fase II de su Iniciativa Sobre las Estaciones de Trabajo con auditorías de seguridad de las propiedades de ATU.

Cada agencia de transporte público tendrá problemas de estación que serán únicos para ellos, pero sabemos que algunos problemas están muy extendidos.

**Calidad del aire**

Al igual que los operadores y los empleados de mantenimiento, los empleados de la estación se preocupan por la posibilidad de contraer cáncer, asma u otros problemas respiratorios como resultado de la mala calidad del aire en su entorno de trabajo.

La interacción con el público expone a los empleados de la estación a enfermedades y los hace vulnerables al asalto por parte de pasajeros enojados y evasores de tarifas.

Con demasiada frecuencia, la policía tarda en responder a las emergencias que ocurren en las líneas del transporte público, especialmente en el metro.

Los empleados de la estación están obligados a sentarse o pararse durante horas a la vez. Las esteras anti fatiga acolchadas y las sillas de diseño ergonómico pueden ayudar a estos trabajadores a evitar los trastornos musculoesqueléticos que surgen al trabajar en circunstancias que están lejos de ser saludables.

**Infestaciones**

Demasiadas estaciones del transporte público están infestadas de cucarachas, ratones y otras plagas que ensucian el entorno en el que trabajan los empleados de la estación. Nadie debería ser obligado a sentarse o permanecer de pie durante horas en un lugar de trabajo tan insalubre.

Al igual que los operadores, los empleados de la estación soportan una ventilación deficiente y sistemas de aire acondicionado y calefacción rotos en sus estaciones de trabajo.

Los empleados de la estación a menudo tienen que trabajar con cableado eléctrico, luces y tecnología peligrosa que no se ha actualizado durante décadas.
Suicidios
Al igual que los operadores, los empleados de la estación pueden tener que lidiar con suicidios que suponen una gran carga física y psicológica para todos los empleados que trabajan en el momento de un incidente. La capacitación sobre cómo identificar y ayudar a las personas suicidas, y cómo lidiar con el trauma relacionado con estas tragedias ayudaría a muchos trabajadores a recuperarse antes de la experiencia.

Estos y otros problemas únicos para el personal de la estación serán evaluados durante las auditorías de seguridad de la ATU, a partir de enero.

Diferentes preocupaciones, pero igual de serias
Como era de esperar, los problemas de seguridad que afectan al personal de mantenimiento son diferentes, pero tan graves como los de sus compañeras y compañeros que forman parte de las operaciones. Por ejemplo, mientras que el acceso al baño es un gran problema para el 100% de los operadores del transporte público; viene en último lugar, en el 7.06%, como una preocupación del personal de mantenimiento. Del mismo modo, los peligros de las herramientas y las máquinas eléctricas son un problema de seguridad para el 100% de los trabajadores de mantenimiento, pero, en el 1.64%, son casi inexistentes como una preocupación de seguridad para los operadores.

El Sindicato utilizará los resultados de estas auditorías para presionar a las gerencias del transporte público a fin de proporcionarles a sus empleados de mantenimiento los lugares de trabajo seguros y saludables, a los cuales tienen todo el derecho.

INICIATIVA DE ESTACIÓN DE TRABAJO: FASE II
Riesgos de herramientas y máquinas eléctricas, lista principal de preocupaciones de seguridad de los trabajadores de mantenimiento

Los resultados de la encuesta servirán como guía para las auditorías de seguridad en el lugar de trabajo de mantenimiento

Las inquietudes de los mecánicos y otros empleados no relacionados con las operaciones ocuparán un lugar central según el Sindicato comienza las auditorías de seguridad de las instalaciones de mantenimiento en las propiedades de ATU en enero.

Los temas que los miembros de mantenimiento mencionaron en una encuesta de ATU de 2016 (ver tabla) guiarán a la Internacional mientras investiga las condiciones y procedimientos de seguridad encontrados en las instalaciones y garajes del transporte público de sus miembros en los Estados Unidos y Canadá.

Follow us on twitter
www.twitter.com/atucomm
In Memoriam
Death Benefits Awarded July 1, 2017 - August 31, 2017

1- MEMBERS AT LARGE
RALPH W SCHLIEVE
PETER WISCONTI

26- DETROIT, MI
MICHAEL D DUMAS
ALONZO C STOKES

85- PITTSBURGH, PA
ELIZABETH J BAUER
WILLIAM VINCENT BLACK
DANIEL J BREWSTER
PAUL D MAKATURA
DAVID M MONINGER
CARL W NIEDERMeyer
CARL BEAULNE

107- HAMILTON, ON
ROBERT G LEMP SR

113- TORONTO, ON
JOHN G COCHRANE
BENJAMIN C DE GUZMAN
JOHN GALEA
DOUGLAS E GARDINER
SAMUEL GREELEY
ANDREW HYNDMAN
SAMUEL GREELEY

241- CHICAGO, IL
JESSE J ALEXANDER
Jr

615- SASKATOON, SK
MICHAEL BODNARCHUK

623- CINCINNATI, OH
ARTHUR F GINTER
TOM SKELTON

IN TRANSIT

IN TRANSIT

www.atu.org

STAY CONNECTED FOR A CHANCE TO WIN AN ATU JACKET

All you have to do is go to www.atu.org and sign up to receive ATU action alerts on the latest news and developments on ATU, public transportation, politics and other important issues. To enter the drawing, simply provide your e-mail, local number and zip/postal code on the bottom bar of the ATU website. If you have already submitted your email you’re still signed up for the contest, simply click “Skip and Continue to Website.” Also, please pass this message along to your fellow members and tell them to sign up for a chance to win an ATU jacket.