ATU wins ILCA Media Awards

ATU is proud to announce that the Union won 16 awards in the National/International Union category of the International Labor Communicators Association (ILCA) 2016 Media Competition. ILCA says the “winners represent some of the best and most inspired work in labor communications and are to be congratulated in promoting the highest standards of labor journalism.” International President Larry Hanley congratulates all staff members involved in these award-winning communications. “The ATU is honored to be recognized for our excellence in communications, design and journalism. With technology and media constantly changing, we strive to find new and innovative ways to effectively communicate with our members and the public.”

FIRST PLACE AWARDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Award</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political Action / Best Flyer</td>
<td>GOTV Cleveland Indians Flyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Action / Best Mail Piece</td>
<td>Trump Cliff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing Campaign / Best Persuasive Message</td>
<td>Trump Dangerous for Public Transit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SECOND PLACE AWARDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Award</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political Action / Best Collateral</td>
<td>ATU Hillary bus t-shirt logo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Design / Magazines (Print)</td>
<td>In Transit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Awards / Best Editorial or Column</td>
<td>What would Rosa Parks do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Awards / Best Electronic Content</td>
<td>ATU Website</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THIRD PLACE AWARDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Award</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electronic Media / Best Promotional Video</td>
<td>ATU International 58th Convention Opening Convention Video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Excellence / Print Publication</td>
<td>In Transit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers and Newsletters / Magazines</td>
<td>In Transit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Front Page/Cover / Magazines (Print)</td>
<td>In Transit Magazine Has Gone MAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Communications / Best Info Graphic</td>
<td>ATU by the Numbers – In Transit Sept/Oct</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HONORABLE MENTION

General Excellence / Electronic Publication

ATU Dispatch

INTERNATIONAL OFFICERS EMERITUS

International President Jim La Sala, ret.
International President Warren George, ret.
International Executive Vice President Ellis Franklin, ret.
International Executive Vice President Mike Siano, ret.
2 International Officers & General Executive Board
   ATU wins ILCA Media Awards
3 Index Page
4 Here are the Locals that have passed the resolution as this edition went to press
5 International President’s Message:
   Locals leading the fight
6 International Executive Vice President’s Message:
   You passed the resolution - now what?
7 International Secretary-Treasurer’s Message: 125 years fighting for dignity
9 Locals on passage of the resolution and the fight for an improved workstation
13 Grand Rapids transit workers call out Mayor Bliss as a union buster
   King County Metro workers approve strong contract
14 Canada wants US to scrap RTW laws in new NAFTA deal
   Illinois Local demands safety changes for workstation
21 ATU endorses Sanders’ Medicare for All Act
   After First Amendment victory, Pensacola transit workers reach deal
22 Retiring Lethbridge member will miss customers, drivers
   Cincinnati driver becomes guardian angel for man who collapses in street
23 ATU announces winners of Burke-MacFarlane Scholarships
24 ATU Scholarship Competition for the 2018-2019 Academic Year in memory of Tommy Douglas - the ‘Greatest Canadian’
25 Canadian Agenda: Time to stop putting a price on humanity
26 Thunder Bay working with ATU, police to investigate recent assault
   Saskatoon Transit sick-day manager has created more problems
27 BC rural communities will be hurt by Greyhound route reductions, eliminations
28 Translations (French)
31 In Memoriam
32 Stay connected for a chance to win an ATU jacket

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www.facebook.com/ATUInternational
Here are the Locals that have passed the Resolution to fix the bus driver’s workstation as this issue went to press:

Local 26-Detroit, MI
Local 85-Pittsburgh, PA
Local 107-Hamilton, ON
Local 113-Toronto, ON
Local 128-Asheville, NC
Local 134-Vancouver, BC
Local 164-Wilkes-Barre, PA
Local 174-Fall River, MA
Local 192-Oakland, CA
Local 241-Chicago, IL
Local 265-San Jose, CA
Local 268-Cleveland, OH
Local 279-Ottawa, ON
Local 281-New Haven, CT
Local 282-Rochester, NY
Local 285-St. Paul, MN
Local 308-Chicago, IL
Local 312-Davenport, IA
Local 313-Rock Island, IL
Local 382-Salt Lake City, UT
Local 416-Peoria, IL
Local 425-Hartford, CT
Local 441-Des Moines, IA
Local 443-Stamford, CT
Local 508-Halifax, NS
Local 519-La Crosse, WI
Local 569-Edmonton, AB
Local 583-Calgary, AB
Local 587-Seattle, WA
Local 589-Boston, MA
Local 615-Saskatoon, SK
Local 618-Providence, RI
Local 627-Cincinnati, OH
Local 689-Washington, DC
Local 697-Toledo, OH
Local 704-Little Rock, AR
Local 713-Memphis, TN
Local 714-Portland, ME
Local 726-Staten Island, NY
Local 732-Atlanta, GA
Local 741-London, ON
Local 752-Bloomington, IL
Local 819-Newark, NJ
Local 821-Jersey City, NJ
Local 823-Elizabeth, NJ
Local 824-New Brunswick, NJ
Local 836-Grand Rapids, MI
Local 842-Wilmington, DE
Local 846-St. Catharines, ON
Local 847-St. Joseph, MO
Local 857-Green Bay, WI
Local 880-Camden, NJ
Local 966-Thunder Bay, ON
Local 987-Lethbridge, AB
Local 996-South Bend, IN
Local 998-Milwaukee, WI
Local 1001-Denver, CO
Local 1005-Mpls/St. Paul, MN
Local 1015-Spokane, WA
Local 1037-New Bedford, MA
Local 1039-Lansing, MI
Local 1056-Flushing, NY
Local 1070-Indianapolis, IN
Local 1091-Austin, TX
Local 1093-Kalamazoo, MI
Local 1095-Jackson, MI
Local 1160-Monroe, LA
Local 1177-Norfolk, VA
Local 1181-New York, NY
Local 1189-Guelph, ON
Local 1197-Jacksonville, FL
Local 1209-New London, CT
Local 1220-Richmond, VA
Local 1235-Nashville, TN
Local 1241-Lancaster, PA
Local 1249-Springfield, IL
Local 1251-Battle Creek, MI
Local 1277-Los Angeles, CA
Local 1285-Jackson, TN
Local 1287-Lincoln, NE
Local 1309-San Diego, CA
Local 1310-Eau Claire, WI
Local 1320-Peterborough, ON
Local 1321-Albany & Troy, NY
Local 1324-Savannah, GA
Local 1328-Raleigh, NC
Local 1333-Rockford, IL
Local 1336-Bridgeport, CT
Local 1338-Dallas, TX
Local 1395-Pensacola, FL
Local 1415-Toronto, ON
Local 1433-Phoenix, AZ
Local 1447-Louisville, KY
Local 1505-Winnipeg, MB
Local 1517-Idaho Falls, ID
Local 1547-Brockton, MA
Local 1548-Plymouth, MA
Local 1555-Oakland, CA
Local 1560-New Orleans, LA
Local 1576-Lynnwood, WA
Local 1582-Niagara Falls, ON
Local 1595-Pittsburgh, PA
Local 1596-Orlando, FL
Local 1602-St. Catharines, ON
Local 1622-Danbury, CT
Local 1637-Las Vegas, NV
Local 1701-Sarasota, FL
Local 1704-San Bernardino, CA
Local 1722-Kelowna, BC
Local 1724-Vancouver, BC
Local 1743-Pittsburgh, PA
Local 1754-Lawrence, KS
Local 1763-Rocky Hill, CT
Local 1767-Sault Ste. Marie, ON

ATU Latino Caucus
Locals leading the fight

Over 100 Local Unions have reported discussing, debating, and passing resolutions at their September membership meetings to fix the bus driver workstation. Those Locals are listed on the opposite page.

If you are sick and tired of transit workers being treated as an afterthought at their own workplace, these are the Locals leading the way in fighting back.* And, we expect to hear from more Locals in the coming weeks. The initiative is already producing results. We made major progress at Local 113-Toronto, ON, with a meeting between the Local’s safety director, and representatives of the International. The Toronto Transit Commission subsequently agreed to join the union in meeting with manufacturers about redesigning the workstation.

This is important because this is the first time we have had management support in any of our meetings with manufacturers. And that matters because management buys the buses.

We want you to know that the International Union will continue to fight this fight and report back to you. We are committed to preventing assaults and saving lives.

Blind to needs of workers

Why is this process necessary? Simply put, transit managers are blind to the needs of their employees and rarely pay attention to the union unless members speak together – and out loud! Remember this in your Local. If you want improvements on the job, you have to move your fellow members.

Get involved, speak up at meetings, join your officers in any action the Local takes. Be visible, outspoken and demand justice at work.

* as In Transit went to press

Workstation effort to expand to all transit workers

This effort will continue and expand, as promised, to fix the workstations of all transit workers. We are looking at school buses, paratransit vehicles, stations, and ergonomics at desk jobs, as well.

In this issue you’ll read some of what many of you told your local presidents at those local meetings, reaffirming the importance of the campaign. It is clear that the issues of assaults, back problems, and blind spots are important to many thousands of our members.
You passed the resolution – now what?

More than a resolution – it’s a campaign for a livable work environment.

It was with guiled indifference that a transit manager was recently quoted as saying that the Union is exaggerating about assaults. That’s like the TV weather person predicting no rain, as you’re getting dripping wet.

The “don’t worry, be happy” attitude is dead wrong! If our employers don’t acknowledge the real numbers (and, yes, thank you to the GMs and transit agencies that do) and work with us to resolve this crisis, more operators, passengers, pedestrians, and motorists will be injured, maimed, or killed. It’s just that simple.

Total protection

As we’ve reported in In Transit, there are vehicles in operation around the world built with safety shields that provide total protection for the operator – that should be our goal in North America. Show those examples to your employer.

Members, go with your officers to transit board meetings and take your community allies with you. Don’t let them sweep this under the rug.

Simple design change

All it takes is a simple design change to fix the killer blind spot problem. Each Local should demand it.

Find out what equipment your agency has, then ask about their replacement plan. Demand that a fix to the blind spot problem be incorporated into your agency’s vehicle replacement plan. Call your Local office, help is a phone call away.

Driver’s seats

Some members will ask, “Javier, beyond going to the meetings described above, what can we, as members, do?”

**Driver’s seats**, my friends. Call your local president, and tell him or her that you’re willing to volunteer at various times for three months. The task is to take an inventory of every operator’s seat in the fleet.

Get a list of all the vehicles in the fleet. Ask each operator about the status of their seat as they leave the garage. Remind them to write it up if it needs repair. Keep your own list of the seats needing repair.

Remember to include maintenance members in the process. They can tell you which buses have been worked on, and if repair orders are being ignored. They can tell you if repair parts are on hand, or even if they’ve been ordered.

Si se puede!

Do another inventory a month or so later and document the progress. Hold your transportation and maintenance managers responsible.

Investigate the longevity of the fleet bus seats. The average life of a bus or van may be longer than the seat. New seats may needed. If so, find out what should be ordered. The back stress and injury you and co-workers avoid are worth it.

Can this be done? Si se puede – if you will it, and make it happen.

Please visit **www.atu.org** for more information and the latest ATU news.
Those of you who were around in 1992, when ATU celebrated its 100th anniversary, will remember that it occurred during a time of great turmoil in the labor movement. Unions were under siege, and many thought their days were numbered.

ATU was no exception. A long national Greyhound strike was exhausting our resources and draining our spirit. There seemed no end in sight. Nevertheless we defiantly celebrated our 100th birthday with pride, and recommitted ourselves to improving the lives of our members.

The following year we settled that strike, and our renewed resolve re-energized the membership. Today, despite the never-ending battle with those who would enrich themselves by impoverishing us, ATU is as strong and vital as ever.

Strength and vitality
That strength and vitality has lasted 125 years because, like all unions, ATU is built on a principle that will never die.

It’s a principle that is fundamental to humanity – the principle that every human being has a right to be treated with the dignity he or she is entitled to by birth.

Everything we fight for – wages, benefits, working conditions, all of it – we fight for because we believe in the dignity of all workers.

And there is no nobler calling on the face of this earth.

Please visit www.atu.org for more information and the latest ATU news.
Locals passing resolution to fix the bus driver workstation

125 years ago, ATU was formed. One of our first fights was to get enclosed driver vestibules (workstations) on the streetcars we operated. Over the past few issues In Transit has been highlighting the workstation problems of today – driver assaults, blind spots, lower back injury, bad air quality, awkward movements required by poor design and ergonomics, and others – and measures to improve the workstation.

As part of ATU’s milestone anniversary we have renewed our fight with a major union-wide effort – the Workstation Initiative – for all Locals to join in demanding that our employers provide us with healthy, safe, and secure workstations.

As part of the campaign every Local was asked to put forth the “Resolution to End Fatalities and Injuries Resulting from Poor Transit Bus Design” at their local union meetings in September to demand workstation improvements across the board.

For our rail and streetcar operators, clerical workers, stations agents, mechanics and other transit workers, we recognize you have similar workplace concerns and will address them in future initiatives.

If your Local has passed the resolution please contact International President Larry Hanley’s office.
Locals on passage of the resolution and the fight for an improved workstation

Locals are passing the ATU resolution for healthy, safe, and secure workstations across North America, here are some of the reactions of members to the effort, as told to us by local officers:

“Members were well in favor of the resolution at our union meeting. Blind spots are a big problem for our drivers, a few drivers have been written up for near misses that were caused by blind spots. We have new buses, but they didn’t address the serious problem of the corner post/A-pillar and the mirrors. Many members have also complained about roaches and bugs on our buses. They put toxic powder on the buses to kill the roaches, but the powder ends up in the bus ventilation system and in the air and falls on the surface of the driver compartment, which our members are breathing in while they work. The members have also developed several illnesses over the years, knee and hip problems, breathing conditions, type two diabetes, colitis, heart and kidney problems.”

Ed Avila, president/business agent
Local 313–Rock Island, IL

“All the members of our Local were very receptive and supportive of the resolution. There was more than 45 minutes of great discussion on the resolution and members expressed serious concerns with blind spots and no protection on our buses if a rider comes on with a knife or other weapon. Even though we operate in a smaller city that doesn’t have as many problems as larger cities, it’s just a matter of time until an assault on a driver happens. It was made clear, as President Hanley has told all Locals, that American bus companies are decades behind in safety of buses and don’t want to address these problems.”

Kevin McGee, president/business agent
Local 164–Wilkes-Barre, PA

“The resolution was received well by the members. Our executive board was very enthusiastic about passing it. Mechanics in our Local were very rejoicedful because the air quality on the new coaches is just as bad as it was in the old coaches. They said it’s about time to look out for drivers. Blind spots have also been a big issue as our Local has lost a number of arbitrations on the issue. So, the members were in favor of those changes. The female drivers were very supportive of the retractable bus shields for protection from riders because currently our buses have no shields.”

Ronald Jackson, president/business agent
Local 268–Cleveland, OH
“We’ve been having many issues concerning our bus workstation. Fumes inside our buses have been a major problem. Our vice president in maintenance said it is a problem with the way our current buses, which are very old, circulate air. We’ve also had way too many attacks on our operators including numerous incidents where our members were spit on and punched. Three or four years ago, we asked the agency about installing Plexiglas shields for protection, but nothing has happened. Our buses have huge blind spots because of the A-pillar and side mirrors. About 7-8 years ago we had a tragic blind spot accident where a child was killed. So, when the resolution was brought before our members, it passed overwhelmingly. Our members wanted to be supportive of the International’s efforts on this. Now we hope for action to fix the workstation.”

Ismael Rivera, president/business agent
Local 1596–Orlando, FL

“Before our Local meeting started, we had the Workstation Initiative posters and the In Transit that focused on the campaign on the tables where our members would sit. When the meeting began and the resolution was introduced, we made reference to the issues covered in the magazine. The point was made that while not all the workstation issues and problems – bugs, fumes and others – are affecting our members, it is impacting our brothers and sisters in Locals in the U.S. and Canada and we have to support them. This is about everyone in ATU coming together for a common cause. Then we voted on the resolution and it passed unanimously.”

Gersham Flynn, president/business agent
Local 1763–Rocky Hill, CT

“It was well received by our membership. Our biggest discussion was about the bus design and the A-pillar causing the blind spots. Also, many drivers asked what we had for ideas on what to use for driver’s seats in place of what is currently available. Lastly the membership who showed up from the maintenance department wanted to know what ideas we had to reconfigure the exhaust and intake on the buses.”

Thomas Leighty, president/business agent
Local 1015–Spokane, WA

“All our members are for a safer, healthier workstation on our buses especially protective shields to reduce the vicious assaults that happen all too often. Also, the bus driver workstation needs to be more ergonomically correct. We see management at TransLink being measured for office chairs, but not the bus drivers, who are many different sizes, heights and shapes and spend more time in our seats. Many of our bus drivers have had back problems, shoulder issues and other ailments due to poor seats. It is very hard to get TransLink to buy the best buses, the one produced by Mercedes, because they are too expensive and instead purchase the cheapest bus possible to save money. Our membership passed the resolution with strong support at our August meeting.”

Geoffrey Devlin, president/business agent
Local 134–Vancouver, BC
“Since our Local is having problems with how the bus mirror is designed and the blind spots, there was overwhelming support for the resolution. In fact, last month we had an accident due to the bus blind spot by the mirror. We also have fumes on the bus, the problem of assaults on drivers, so the whole resolution is a perfect fit for us. At the Connecticut Legislative Conference we are planning to go to Capitol Hill in Connecticut and try to educate state politicians about these issues. We’ve told our general manager about these issues for years, but they’ve done nothing about it.”

Jaroslaw Pizunski, president/business agent
Local 1209–New London, CT

“The resolution was received well and passed unanimously by our membership because they want this important initiative to fix the bus driver workstation to go forward. During our meeting, good questions were raised regarding the details of the resolution, but ultimately the language in the resolution spoke for itself. Our bus operators were very strong in support and also maintenance members in attendance at the meeting voted unanimously for the resolution. We discussed the next steps of the campaign to promote the passage of the resolution to our local press and push for these important improvements to fix the bus driver workstation.”

Clint Crabtree, president/business agent
Local 279–Ottawa, ON

“Our members approved the workstation resolution unanimously. It was very well received and the sentiment from the floor was that this resolution was long overdue. In Hamilton over the past four years we’ve been getting NOVA buses and prior to that New Flyer buses. Both of these companies produce buses that have the most egregious issues and problems with the bus driver workstations – blind spots, exhaust and ventilation issues, no bus shields, and poor ergonomically designed seat/suspension.”

Eric Tuck, president/business agent
Local 107–Hamilton, ON

“Our members voted 100 percent in favor of the workstation resolution. The sentiment among the membership was it’s about time we addressed these issues with a campaign like this. The only thing the TTC, politicians, and bus manufacturers understand and care about is liability and the bottom line. With this resolution, we show that a minor cost would fix dangerous and unhealthy bus driver workstation problems – the blind spot, poor seats, fumes, and other issues. It’s about the bottom line for the agency, elected officials and bus manufacturers and these fixes would bring down health care costs, liability and save them money on litigation.”

Kevin Morton, financial secretary
Local 113–Toronto, ON
"The resolution was unanimously passed by all members in attendance at our September local meeting. Our members are excited to support our sister Locals to ensure their workstation safety. We are looking forward to the resolution that will address workstation safety concerns that address rail properties."

Gena Alexander, president/business agent
Local 1555–Oakland, CA

“We had a quorum and the resolution passed unanimously. While all agreed that bus blind spots are a dangerous problem that needs to be addressed, there were some questions about how easily it can be fixed from our maintenance members. Ergonomically poor seats are a problem for our members that many at the meeting want fixed. We plan to reach out to our local media about the passage of the resolution and also have set up a meeting with the St. Catharines Transit Commission to discuss ways to make the driver workstation safer and better especially concerning the driver blind spot.”

Robert Llord, president/business agent
Local 846–St. Catharines, ON

“The membership voted unanimously to adopt the resolution. They voiced that it was great that these specific issues were being talked about at all properties with ATU employees. They could relate to all the issues to improve working conditions and safety for operators as well as passengers. Several members couldn’t understand why management wouldn’t want to stand with us. During the discussion, the executive board expressed how this started the process of contacting New Flyer to speak with the CEO and engineers who are located right here in Winnipeg.”

Aleem Chaudhary, acting president/business agent
Local 1505–Winnipeg, MB

“We passed the resolution, it was actually received quite well. We took it a step further and went to our retiree chapter to pass it as well. We also went to the Tennessee State AFL-CIO biennial and had the resolution passed there. It just affects so many of our members past and present. We believe the calls really matter. We actually presented the resolution to the board of directors at our transit system. We have a real opportunity to affect changes that need to be made in our system because there will be some large purchases made in the near future.”

Patrick Green, president/business agent
Local 1235–Nashville, TN

“Although the debate was brief at the meeting the membership continued to tell us buses need to change. This is a common theme at Local 583 monthly meetings. Our members regularly bring the conversation on: visibility and the location of mirrors, the workstation design, regen burn off entering the unit, adequate time for proper cleaning, and protection from assailants. Local Unions with the lead of the International need to work with all vested parties to make the necessary changes. Local 583 members supported this initiative unanimously.”

Rick Ratcliff, president/business agent
Local 583–Calgary, AB
Grand Rapids transit workers call out Mayor Bliss as a union buster

Local 836-Grand Rapids, MI, members shut down Grand Rapids Mayor Rosalynn Bliss’s planned speech at a Labor Day march to bring attention to the fact they have been working more than two years without a contract.

Allies, including “Social Alternative Grand Rapids,” came out to work with, and show their support for the workers.

Union supporter?

“She (Mayor Bliss) is largely responsible for this union busting that is going on with The Rapid,” says Social Alternative Grand Rapids Branch Manager Philip Snyder. “Frankly, how dare she speak on Labor Day at Laborfest as a “union supporter,” when in actuality she is fighting unions every step of the way.”

Adding insult to injury, Mayor Bliss is a Rapid Transit board member, who voted in favor of a merit increase for Rapid CEO Peter Varga while transit employees worked without a contract.

“It’s Labor Day, she’s a union buster. She does not belong here, so we came here and started chanting, ‘Go home Bliss, union busting is disgusting,’” said one local member.

King County Metro workers approve strong contract

Local 587-Seattle, WA, representing about 4,100 King County Metro workers, ratified a strong three-year labor contract with wage increases and other benefits.

The contract increases wages by nine percent over three years, and includes key provisions that will help Metro recruit bus drivers to grow service, as well as improve the safety, efficiency and reliability of the transit system.

“This contract is the first agreed upon contract in over six years. This contract by far contains many more sweeping and innovative changes than any other previously negotiated contract between the two parties. These changes will allow our members to obtain fairer, safer and more secure working conditions,” says Local President Michael Shea.

Safety

Local 587 represents employees who operate and maintain Metro buses, Sound Transit’s Link light rail, and the Seattle Streetcar, maintain facilities, and provide customer service.

The contract also includes guaranteed breaks that will promote the health and well-being of members, and create a Joint Safety and Health Committee and a Special Committee to address employee fatigue to assist in these areas.

“In all this is the most innovative and progressive contract this membership has ever approved and we are looking forward to its implementation,” Shea says.
Canada wants US to scrap RTW laws in new NAFTA deal

Canada is showing solidarity with the American labor movement by demanding the U.S. government roll back so-called “right to work” (RTW) laws – that have gutted unions in some states by starving them of money – as part of the renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

The request is part of a push by Ottawa to get the U.S. and Mexico to adopt higher labour standards under the deal. Canadian negotiators are also reportedly pressuring both the U.S. and Mexico “to offer a year of paid family leave,” as Canada does.

Sledgehammer

Economic Policy Institute (EPI) calculations put U.S. factory job losses to Mexico due to NAFTA at between 770,000 and 1 million since the so-called “free trade” pact took effect 23 years ago. Thousands more have been lost in other industries, such as call centers.

A total of 28 states, including three this year, have passed RTW laws, which negotiators call “a sledgehammer that dilutes worker organization and bargaining, paving the way for lower wages and a host of labor violations.”

Illinois Local demands safety changes for workstation

Fox affiliate WSRP-TV in Springfield, IL, did a story on ATU’s Workstation Initiative campaign across North America highlighting Local 1249 – Springfield, IL’s passage of the resolution to demand transit agencies change the bus driver workstation.

International President Larry Hanley told the station that there are three major problems that have been engineered out of European and third-world country buses that continue to exist in North America – dangerous driver blind spots, lack of a bus driver shield, and poorly engineered driver seats.

Poor engineering kills

“Poor engineering is killing bus drivers, it’s killing pedestrians, it’s resulting in people being assaulted on buses that don’t need to be assaulted, and its breaking people’s backs when they don’t have to be broken,” Hanley said in the interview.

The Local pointed out that re-engineering buses would cost about $300 each, and vowed to reach out to lawmakers if these dangerous problems remain unresolved.
The Amalgamated Transit Union celebrated its 125th anniversary on September 15, 2017. In this and coming issues we’ll recount the events of our centennial year, and explore the issues ATU confronted over the following 25.
The Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1992 – a year that would prove pivotal for the Union.

ISTEA

Atu was still hailing the 1991 passage of The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) which provided increased and more flexible transit funding, operating assistance, job protection, and preserved transit workers’ collective bargaining rights. The Union won the victory by mobilizing its members, and other interest groups in a coalition for the bill.

NDP victories

The New Democratic Party (NDP) won elections in Ontario, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia, and passed laws banning permanent replacements in Ontario and British Columbia. ATU joined an AFL-CIO campaign to ban scabs in the U.S.

The strike

ATU Greyhound members had been on strike since March 2, 1990, and there was no end in sight. It dragged on through 1992, bringing many strikers’ close to ruin, while sapping the financial resources of the Union.

Our economies

The American economy was in recession. Workers were taking it on the chin in Canada. Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) President Bob White said, “we now have more Canadians unemployed than ever...”

Darkhorse

Six serious hopefuls campaigned for the opportunity to challenge President George H.W. Bush. Among them was Arkansas’ darkhorse candidate, Governor Bill Clinton, who would rise to the top of the pack to win the Democratic nomination.

Legislation

President Bush submitted a Fiscal Year (FY) 1993 transportation budget proposal that was actually lower than the 1992 appropriation, ignoring the increases authorized in ISTEA.

Health care reform would receive a lot of attention in the U.S. in 1992. Health care advocate Harris Wofford’s impressive Senate victory in a Pennsylvania special election was seen as a good omen for passing a bill.

Several bills were introduced in Congress to expand coverage of the U.S. federal Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) to state and local public employees. Federal law covered only private sector workers.

The U.S. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became effective on June 26, 1992. In Transit saw the legislation primarily as affecting the responsibilities of employers toward employees with disabilities, rather than the service it required transit systems to provide persons with disabilities.

NAFTA continued to inflict much pain in both nations. CLC’s White called the proposed agreement “a prime example of this government’s single-minded attack on working Canadians.”

Supposedly to thwart terrorism, and prevent immigrants from taking Canadian jobs, the Tories made it more difficult for refugees to settle in Canada. “There’s an attempt to create an image,” wrote White, “that our borders are being overwhelmed.”
Women and the Union

ATU women asserted themselves in 1992. The Women’s Caucus, formed the previous year, held its second annual seminar in February at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies in Silver Spring, MD (now the Tommy Douglas Conference Center).

Centennial celebration

Balloons fell from the rafters as the international officers cut a 100th birthday cake to formally celebrate the Union’s September 15, 1992, anniversary, Saturday evening, September 19. The Fiftieth International Convention got underway on Monday, September 21.

International President La Sala, International Executive Vice President Ellis Franklin, International Secretary-Treasurer Oliver Green, and all of the incumbent IVPs were unanimously re-elected. The Convention also added a pledge to the Union’s Oath of Obligation opposing discrimination based on sexual orientation.

‘We will not give up’

In his acceptance speech International President La Sala declared, “We will not give up. We will work, we will struggle, and we will fight on until that day comes when full justice and economic security is achieved for the transit worker in the United States and Canada, and throughout the world.”

A new Labor/management effort

La Sala often sought ways to coax an agreement out of opponents through personal encounters, and he believed he could do the same to improve transit labor relations in our countries. Toward that end, he convened a meeting of the coalition that helped pass ISTEA in December. The group discussed forming an ongoing “working group” to advocate public transit.

Random alcohol testing

On December 10, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) proposed new regulations requiring random alcohol testing of transportation workers in “safety sensitive” positions. ATU opposed several aspects of the rules, including the lack of a rule requiring employee assistance programs at transit agencies.

Driver fatigue

The Bush Administration proposed changes in the hours-of-service rules that ATU said would threaten safety. The new rule allowed drivers who worked 60-hours in seven consecutive days, or 70-hours in eight consecutive days to drive again after a recovery period “reset” of just 24 consecutive hours. A group called Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways (CRASH) opposed the rule citing studies that found “driver fatigue” to be the leading cause of fatal bus and truck crashes.

ATU@125 THE STRIKE

In 1992, the outcome of the nationwide Greyhound strike which began on March 2, 1990, was still in doubt. At that time, the battle was continuing on the picket line, in the courts, before the National Labor Relations Board, and on the streets, as our members fought on, in a determined effort to win back their jobs under a decent contract.

In early 1993, with the company reorganized, and led by a new CEO, Frank Schmieder, the only pressure on the company to settle came from an expected ruling by the National Labor Relations Board in the ATU’s unfair labor practice case. ATU charged the company with premature implementation of contract proposals, and the imposition of a discriminatory seniority scheme which gave special seniority credits to replacements based on their experience with other employers.

With a potentially adverse decision looming, the company decided to respond to new overtures by International
President La Sala for exploratory discussions looking toward negotiating a comprehensive settlement.

Settlement

After extensive meetings with the company, the International and the Greyhound Council, arrived at a tentative settlement early in April 1993. The broad terms of the resolution were signed in outline form on April 20, 1993, at the NLRB’s Washington, DC, headquarters in the presence of Secretary of Labor Robert Reich.

The 39-month Greyhound strike ended on May 7, 1993, after ATU Greyhound members ratified a precedent setting, six-year agreement, establishing what NLRB General Counsel Hunter called, “a new beginning.”

Among its terms were provisions mandating a $22 million back pay award to eligible strikers (the largest such award in NLRB history), and the voluntary resolution of all issues pending in ATU’s unfair labor practice case with the exception of the experienced-based seniority (EBS) issue, which was settled later.

It provided for the reinstatement of nearly 200 strikers and the arbitration of 28 other discharge cases, recall of at least 600 more striking drivers in addition to the 1,700 ATU members already recalled, and the withdrawal of all litigation, including dismissal of the RICO suit by the company seeking over $30 million in damages.

The strike was over, and even though it is a much smaller company, ATU’s Greyhound drivers continue to serve thousands every day in Canada and the United States.

Operators have always worried about assault. Before 1968, drivers carried a cash box to make change, making them vulnerable to attack during a robbery. But, assault was still enough of a concern after the adoption of exact change fare that Locals continued to negotiate “felonious assault” insurance for their members in their contracts.

In 1994, Local 998-Milwaukee, WI, convinced the Wisconsin legislature to pass a bill that made driver assault a felony in the state.

Shock in Seattle

An incident the day after Thanksgiving in 1998, temporarily captured the attention of the nation.

Mark McLaughlin, 587-Seattle, WA, was carrying 34 riders on an express bus downtown. A rider shot and killed him before shooting himself in the head. The bus careened across two lanes of a bridge and plunged 50 feet onto an apartment below.

Legislation introduced

Jim La Sala responded by asking Congress to make operator assault a felony. Subsequently, in March 1999, Rep. Earl Blumenauer, D-OR, introduced the Protect America’s Transit Workers and Riding Public Act that would make it a federal crime to cause the death of, or serious harm to a transit worker or passenger.

Transit terror comes to Canada

Violence was not limited to the United States, or to operators. On March 5, 1999, passenger Tim McLean, 22, was stabbed, beheaded and cannibalized on board a Greyhound Canada bus traveling in Manitoba along the Trans Canada Highway. The driver and the rest of the passengers escaped without harm. The killer was found not criminally responsible by virtue of mental illness, and was remanded to a high-security mental facility until his release in 2015.
Shock in Ottawa

Perhaps it was the unbelievable gruesomeness of the tragedy in Manitoba that limited the spread of the news of that horrendous event. However, the murders that took place on April 6, 1999, would shake Canada to its core.

Local 279-Ottawa, ON, maintenance employees Clare Davidson, Brian Guay, David Lemay and Harry Schoenmakers, were fatally shot by a disgruntled former employee who went on a rampage in the garage adjacent to OC Transpo’s headquarters. The gunman injured two others before killing himself.

Sentences increased in Patriot Act

Little attention was paid to the Blumenauer bill until 9/11 forced Congress to face the terrorist threat to the nation. The bill was added as an amendment to the Patriot Act which passed in the wake of the attacks. Assaulting a transit worker was now a felony in the U.S.

Assaults, nevertheless, escalated in number and severity in both countries, particularly after 2008, when the weight of the Great Recession began to be felt in Canada and the United States.

Vicious attack in Edmonton

One of the most vicious attacks on an ATU operator occurred on December 3, 2009. A rider punched operator Tom Bregg, 569-Edmonton, AB, and dragged him outside to the ground where he repeatedly stomped on the driver’s head and face. Friends say Bregg, left bloodied and unconscious, was unrecognizable.

On July 25, 2011, a judge declared the assailant a “dangerous offender,” which in Alberta means indefinite imprisonment until the lawbreaker is no longer deemed a risk to the public.

Bill S.221

The Canadian Council (Now ATU Canada) decided to build support for a federal law by keeping records on the assaults taking place across the country. They found that bus drivers were attacked 2,000 times per year in Canada.

Over 40 ATU local officers brought that data to Ottawa in the Spring of 2013, to ask Parliament to create a law to protect Canadian bus operators. Bill S. 221 passed the Senate in November, the House of Commons on February 16, 2015, and became law – a great victory for Canadian members. The bill amended the criminal code to require judges to consider a transit driver’s occupation as an “aggravating circumstance” in sentencing.

Harsher sentences only deter crime if they are imposed, and, unfortunately, judges in both countries still levy lighter sentences for operator assault than they could under the law. And so drivers still fear being assaulted every time they get behind the wheel.

Consequently, the objectives of ATU’s work to protect drivers have shifted from changing the law to changing the workstation. Today, in its 125th year, the Union is demanding the installation of flexible barriers and other safety measures to protect drivers from the attacks they still endure today.

In 1964, Lyndon Johnson proposed the Urban Mass Transportation Act (UMTA), which provided federal loans and matching funds “to assist states, local public bodies and agencies in financing transit capital project costs.”

The new law accelerated the public takeover of transit operations in the U.S. – something that concerned ATU. The July 1964, In Transit explained, “As first presented, the legislation did not provide adequate transit labor protection.” As a result of ATU’s work, however, a provision called “Section 13(c)” was added to the bill, which protected the wages, working conditions, pensions...
and collective bargaining rights of transit workers whose jobs migrated from one employer to another.

As might be expected, Section 13(c) was not popular with transit agencies, and they worked hard to repeal the legislation. In 1994, language repealing Section 13(c) was added to the proposed FY 1996, transportation appropriations bill.

Fortunately, working in concert with ATU, Reps. Bob Ney, R-OH, and Ronald Coleman, D-TX, introduced an amendment to strike the repeal language. ATU members rallied to the cause, inundating Capitol Hill with thousands of letters and post cards opposing the amendment.

On July 25, 1995, after Coleman dumped out a huge bag of those letters and postcards on the podium in front of the chamber, the House approved the Coleman-Ney amendment striking the repeal language in a strong, bipartisan vote. The most serious threat to Section 13(c) since 1964, was dead.

**Privatization**

In December 1991, the Ontario government awarded $160,000 to the Canadian Council to study the future of public transit, including the issue of privatization. In the U.S., in 1992, the new Clinton Administration pledged that it would eliminate FTA rules requiring localities to consider employing private companies in their requests for federal financing.

Trouble was brewing, however, in the states in 1993. Privatization bills were introduced in California, Colorado, Florida, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Utah. ATU effectively fought back most of them.

In response to similar proposals in Massachusetts, ATU successfully helped pass a law sponsored by State Senator Marc A. Pacheco that required those who propose privatizing transit to demonstrate a true savings while maintaining quality labor standards and prevailing wages and benefits. It was a great victory for ATU members.

The Canadian Council published a study in 1994, that concluded “there is no readily apparent advantage to wholesale privatization.” And, the International held a special Canadian Privatization Conference in Toronto, ON, in March 1997, to help Locals combat renewed provincial efforts to privatize public transit.

That same month, a study commissioned by ATU demonstrated that, far from saving money, the recent privatization of 20 to 25 percent of the Denver Regional Transportation District’s bus system cost area citizens far more than direct public management.

**After the Great Recession**

Receipts from income and real estate taxes plummeted after the Great Recession began in 2008. This provided transit opponents in state legislatures with an excuse to pass “austerity” budgets that cut service and raised fares. Private transit companies offered their services to local governments claiming to offer better, more efficient, and less costly transportation.

Of course, the only way they could do that was to pay their workers less, and that put them at loggerheads with ATU Locals wherever they were engaged to manage public transit. Despite their claims, private operators have generally delivered less service on poorly maintained buses, while sending as much taxpayer money as possible to their corporate headquarters.

**Infrastructure and P3s**

Privatization has also become an issue in the funding of new infrastructure projects – including public transit – in both Canada and the United States. It even has a catchy, new title – “public/private partnerships” (P3s).

P3s are seen as a great way to fund large infrastructure projects because the costs of construction are shared by private businesses. In transit, the private businesses that enter into P3 agreements expect to reap profits from operating the systems. And they don’t want labor unions to stand in the way of anything they want to do.

‘Like’ us on facebook
www.facebook.com/ATUInternational
Embracing a centerpiece of his groundbreaking presidential campaign, Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-VT, and 16 of his Democratic colleagues introduced legislation to guarantee health care for every American by expanding and improving Medicare. ATU is one of more than 30 organizations supporting the Medicare for All Act of 2017.

“Today, we begin the long and difficult struggle to end the international embarrassment of the United States being the only major country on earth not to guarantee health care to all its people,” said Sen. Sanders in introducing the bill.

A right – not a privilege

“At a time when millions of Americans do not have access to affordable health care,” he continued, “the Republicans, funded by the Koch brothers, are trying to take away health care from up to 32 million more. We have a better idea: guarantee health care to all people as a right, not a privilege, through a Medicare for all, single-payer health care program.”

Under the bill the federal government would establish an annual budget for covered health care services. Medicare’s benefit package would be expanded to include coverage of dental care, vision services and hearing aids. Among many other changes the federal government would establish a standard list of covered drugs, and the secretary of health and human services would negotiate prices with drug companies.
Retiring Lethbridge member will miss customers, drivers

“I’m going to miss the customers and a lot of the drivers,” says Dave Russell, 987-Lethbridge, AB, who recently retired after driving city buses for 33 years. “There are a lot of great people working for this outfit,” he says.

Russell says the things he has seen while driving a bus could “fill a book,” adding, “I’ve watched a lot of young people grow up from when they were little tots. They remember me 30-some years later, and that’s really nice.”

Russell says that bus drivers play a very important role in Lethbridge. “A lot of people, like those with special needs, or seniors – they really rely on these buses and the handy buses.”

“I’ve had a great career,” he concludes. “Now I’ve got a lot of waterskiing to do, and fishing, and seeing the grandchildren.”

Cincinnati driver becomes guardian angel for man who collapses in street

19-year Metro veteran Shalita McDaniel, 627-Cincinnati, OH, became the guardian angel of a pedestrian experiencing multiple seizures who collapsed face-first on the street in front of her bus.

“He was just kind of standing right here. It looked like he was trying to cross the street, then all of a sudden he fell face-first in front of the bus,” said a passenger on the bus.

“My first instinct was to go around him, but something told me just to stop,” said McDaniel. “I felt like if I went around him, the cars behind me would have hit him.”

McDaniel brought the bus to a screeching halt to avoid hitting the man, and ran to his aid while calling 911. The passenger said her quick thinking may very well have saved his life.

‘You always stand up for your members’

Dear In Transit,

I love reading and getting my In Transit delivered to my home in Lethbridge, AB, every other month. The articles and stories warm my heart and your news team is a class act. The format of the magazine is perfect. You always, always, stand up for your members, and tell us what is currently going on in the transit world.

Thank you,
Dave Russell, 987-Lethbridge, AB
ATU announces winners of Burke-MacFarlane Scholarships

The following students beginning post-secondary education in the 2017-2018 academic year won ATU scholarships awarded in memory of Canadian International Vice Presidents Arthur Burke and Angus MacFarlane. Short bios and edited excerpts from their essays appear below:

Deandra Du, daughter of Jason Du, 1277-Los Angeles, CA, is attending the University of California-L.A., pursuing a career in journalism and political science. In addition to her academic achievements, Du was editor-in-chief of her high school newspaper. Her activities included speech and debate, student government, the American Red Cross, and the current events club.

“So much can be attributed to the backbone of American laborers and their fight for labor rights. Because of them we never gave up on the idea of a safe and secure workplace, and we continue to fight for basic human rights.”

Jennifer George, daughter of Oommen George, 726-Staten Island, NY, is attending Macaulay Honors College at Hunter College, to pursue a career as a nurse anesthetist. In addition to her academic achievements, George was the president of the Arts Club, participated in the Robotics Team, Band, and the school’s annual musical.

“It is only because of unions that non-union workers are able to work in safer and more stable positions… If it weren’t for unions, most American workers would have been struggling to care for their families, working long hours with much less pay and in more hazardous work conditions.”

Morgan Martin, daughter of Orville Martin, 113-Toronto, ON, is attending McMaster University, with the goal of becoming a medical doctor. In addition to her academic achievements, Martin participated in the cross country and track and field teams, the Brave (anti-violence) Team, the chaplaincy club, and the “Fast and Servious” Committee. She is a Canadian Music League piano “Pop Solo” winner.

“Organized labour is the driving force in Canada’s economy. Unions help elevate the middle class, as poverty is prominent in countries where there is no union movement, and the economy excels in countries where unions are present.”

Benjamin Moore, son of Troy Moore, 1555-Oakland, CA, is attending the University of California-Davis, to pursue a career in electrical engineering. In addition to his academic achievements, Moore played varsity basketball, and baritone sax in the school’s jazz bands, and participated in “Boys’ State,” the Model U.N., and several volunteer activities.

“Before unions, safety measures and regulations were rarely placed above the profit margins of businesses, which lead to the untimely deaths of thousands of American workers. Union efforts continue to play a key role in circumventing companies’ desires to place their profitmaking ahead of worker protections.”

Amy Nguyen, daughter of Phong Nguyen, 1277-Los Angeles, CA, is attending the University of California-L.A., to pursue a career in medicine. In addition to her academic achievements, Nguyen participated in the American Red Cross and Key Clubs, was a member of the National Honors Society, and was a violinist with the Academy of Performing Arts.

“The core of a union comes down to a group of people who find strength in each other to protect their rights… The inalienable rights of every worker will remain the same with the existence and assistance of labor unions.”

Timel Oswald, son of Susan Byfield-Oswald, 85-Pittsburgh, PA, is attending Centennial College in Toronto, ON, to pursue a career as a truck or motor coach motive power technician. Oswald was a member of the Army Cadets in high school, and participated in charitable activities with his church youth group, and United Way.

“The benefits of organized labour’s contribution to the welfare of Canada are enormous and stretch beyond just the unionized groups but towards non-unionized sectors. If better working conditions, wages, and job security exist in a sector based on collective bargaining, this boosts the whole economy and affects all.”
ATU Scholarship Competition for the 2018-2019 Academic Year in memory of Tommy Douglas the ‘Greatest Canadian’

The man who led the fight in Canada to provide health insurance for all, Tommy Douglas, (1904 – 1986) was a often called “the greatest Canadian.”

A powerful orator and tireless activist, he was elected to serve as a Member of Saskatchewan’s parliament, and later, premier of the province. He introduced the continent’s first single-payer, universal health care program, which was eventually adopted across Canada.

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.

ATU has honored Douglas by naming the Tommy Douglas Conference Center after the great leader.

THE OFFICIAL 2018 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION FORM

RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN JANUARY 31, 2018
TO: ATU SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM, AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION, 10000 NEW HAMPSHIRE AVENUE, SILVER SPRING, MD 20903

Please Print or Type

Name of Applicant: ____________________________

(First) (Middle) (Last)

Address: ______________________________________

Phone Number: ________________________________

Name of Sponsoring ATU Member: _______________________

ATU Member’s Local Union Number: ______________________

Relationship of ATU member to applicant: ________________________

(Self, Child, Stepchild)

High School: ______________________________________

Month & Year of Graduation: _________________________

High School Address: ______________________________

Name of Principal: _________________________________

List in order of preference, the accredited colleges, technical or vocational institutions to which you are applying for admission (no abbreviations):

1. ______________________________________________
2. ______________________________________________
3. ______________________________________________

I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief the above information is true and correct.

Applicant’s Signature _____________________________ Date ________
Here they come again – the neighborhood tax collectors. Someone from Revenue Canada or the provincial department of taxation? Nope.

The only people who come through our neighborhoods and collect hard earned money from working families are urban bus operators, and the taxes they collect are bus fares.

For years, those fares have been going through the roof. That, and recent massive service cuts make for very angry passengers. Unfortunately, when some people are asked to pay more for inferior service, they take it out on the face of the system – the bus driver.

We have seen a dramatic increase in the level and intensity of senseless attacks on defenseless operators. Drivers have been punched, slapped, stabbed, shot, have had bodily fluids thrown upon them, and on February 14, a passenger murdered an operator in Winnipeg, MB. Drivers are confronting all of this while safely steering 40,000 pound vehicles through traffic, and protecting the lives of passengers, pedestrians, and other drivers who are seriously distracted by today’s hand-held gadgets.

The impact on them is clear: Broken eye sockets. Deep puncture wounds. The loss of certain bodily functions. And while broken bones heal with time, the emotional scars linger indefinitely. Ironically, many operators who got into this line of work because of their friendly nature now find themselves unable to interact well with people – especially strangers. Many cannot come back to work. For women who are victims of unspeakable sexual assaults on the vehicles, life is, of course, never the same again.

Five transit employees are assaulted every day. Each year, more than 2,000 transit operators are assaulted, and 755 of these incidents occur on buses, putting passengers and other vehicles at risk.

Thankfully, Bill S-221 is now law. Threatening or assaulting a transit operator can now result in more serious criminal charges and longer jail times. However, our judicial system is failing us because, more often than not, these criminals’ lawyers plea bargain their charges down to a slap on the wrist.

Criminal penalties alone will not stop these heinous acts. The logical next step is making structural changes in bus design – specifically the operator workstation – to ensure that these incidents don’t happen in the first place. Train operators and pilots work in secure, enclosed areas. Yet, public transit “pilots” are still forced to work in areas where they are vulnerable to vicious attacks.

We are in a unique position to enhance safety for the industry. Canada has three of North America’s largest transit bus manufacturers, and together they supply nearly 70% of the entire North American market.

The time has come for our government and transit employers to stop putting a price on humanity. ATU Canada is demanding a stop to these heinous assaults. Join us in demanding a change to the structural design of the transit operator workstation. Together we can keep everyone safe.

– Paul Thorp, president

ATU Canada

Correction: The charter city for Local 1624-Peterborough, ON, was misidentified in the May-June 2017, In Transit. We apologize for the error. Also, in addition to the information presented in Local 1624’s petition it should be noted that Coach Canada has a company policy that states its employees have nine hours off between shifts, and if they do an overnight shift they must have 12 hours off before and after the overnight shift.
Saskatoon Transit sick-day manager has created more problems

Local 615-Saskatoon, SK, is fed up with the company hired by the city to reduce the number of sick days among transit workers saying it has “created more problems than they’ve done by assisting.”

The Local says the $75,000 spent for the pilot project with Bridges Health would be better spent on improving the working conditions of bus drivers, such as allowing sufficient time for drivers to use the bathroom and to eat each day.

‘No necessity’

Local President Jim Yakubowski says the pilot project duplicates the existing daily attendance management program. “There’s no necessity to farm that work out to an outside entity. Our supervisors are dealing with the medical leave issue.”

The Local also chafed at the notion that there is an absenteeism problem, saying that the high-stress nature of the work needs to be taken into account. “We’re dealing with, in some cases, 500 people a day that are coming in and out, right past you with colds and the flu and all kinds of illnesses,” Yakubowski said.

Thunder Bay working with ATU, police to investigate recent assault

Local President Ken Koza, 966-Thunder Bay, ON, says the city’s transit operators “have started to become acceptant” of being yelled at for doing their job at some point during their day, and that “it needs to stop.” He’s calling on Thunder Bay to develop “better processes, procedures and quicker response times to deal with these situations.”

Koza’s comments come in the wake of an incident in which a driver was punched in the stomach in September.

Working closely with ATU, police

General Manager of Community Services Kelly Robertson says Thunder Bay is working closely with ATU and police to investigate the case, which was made public by Local 966, and that the city is committed to both passenger and operator safety.

The city’s safety experts are also being consulted to determine what new measures can be taken to improve safety on the Thunder Bay system. Robertson urges passengers and operators to report any abusive incidents on city buses, saying, “We can’t act on things that we aren’t aware of.”
BC rural communities will be hurt by Greyhound route reductions, eliminations

– excerpted from a column by Financial Secretary Amanda West, 1374-Calgary, AB, published by The Province, September 20, 2017.

The quality of life of rural British Columbians is being thrown under the bus. If we are not careful, it will be done without a plan for the future. We can only hope that our provincial and federal politicians are finally paying attention.

Our collective plea for a national transit strategy that includes intercity bus transportation has fallen on deaf ears for many years. Intercity bus transportation is the transit of the rural community. Without it, citizens have limited access to out-of-town services. Provincial cuts have forced many to travel for medical and other vital services. Provincial and federal governments have a duty to ensure affordable and reliable ways to make these essential trips.

Serious neglect

Many small communities will be adversely affected by Greyhound’s cuts. Regulation of the intercity bus industry has been downloaded to the provinces. But, the provinces are no longer willing to face the challenge and expense of providing safe, clean and reliable transportation to rural constituents. This constitutes a serious neglect of their needs.

Greyhound readily admits that these proposed route cuts and reductions will deprive remote communities of vital service. But, while bemoaning their lack of revenue, Greyhound fails to mention that they, themselves, have caused some, if not most, of the problems we see today (i.e. running coaches at inconvenient times, eliminating stops/agencies in smaller communities).

Any funding provided to a private company such as Greyhound must come with some form of reciprocation to the citizens of BC, such as a dedicated fleet, daily runs and mandatory service to smaller communities. If Greyhound’s application is approved, by spring, communities and small businesses unable to promise big profits for certified curbside providers and private bus lines will bear the brunt of the impacts.

Not a trivial issue

Further isolation also makes a bad situation worse when it comes to rural health care. Census data shows that those in isolated communities have about half the number of healthcare providers that urban patients have. There’s little doubt that a lack of intercity bus service is more than a trivial issue.

Lack of service also puts an unfair financial burden on ordinary British Columbians that cannot be ignored. Factor in safety, and the situation becomes alarming – especially given what has transpired along the Highway of Tears. We are now in danger of replicating this travesty along the Fraser Canyon. Safe and regularly scheduled transportation is a necessity in small communities.

Governments should ensure that the most dangerous roads in BC are not left to private operators motivated solely by profit in a piece-meal system. Guaranteeing regulated, provincial bus service fulfills the government’s obligation to provide vital and essential links to all British Columbians. These links allow for fair and affordable access to services that have been wiped out locally – services which urban residents take for granted.

Rural families should not have to accept less from their government because they do not live in a city.

BC rural communities will be hurt by Greyhound route reductions, eliminations – excerpted from a column by Financial Secretary Amanda West, 1374-Calgary, AB, published by The Province, September 20, 2017.
Des sections locales sur l’adoption de résolutions et le combat pour l’amélioration des habitacles

Des sections locales adoptent la résolution du SUT en vue d’obtenir des habitacles sains, sûrs et sécuritaires dans toute l’Amérique du Nord ; voici quelques réactions des membres à cet effort, telles que rapportées par les présidents locaux :

« Les membres ont fortement exprimé leur approbation à cette résolution lors de notre réunion syndicale. Les angles morts représentent un gros problème pour nos conducteurs, quelques-uns ont signalé des quasi-accidents causés par des angles morts. Nous avons de nouveaux autobus, mais le grave problème du pilier du coin, ou en A, et des rétroviseurs n’a pas été réglé. Plusieurs membres se sont également plaints des blattes et des insectes dans nos autobus. Une poudre toxique est utilisée dans les autobus pour éliminer les blattes, mais cette poudre se retrouve dans l’air et dans le système de ventilation, se dépose sur la surface du compartiment du conducteur et nos membres en respirent durant leur quart de leur travail. Les membres ont également développé plusieurs maladies au cours des années : problèmes aux genoux et aux hanches, problèmes respiratoires, diabète de type 2, colite, problèmes cardiaques et troubles rénaux. »

Ed Avila, président/agent syndical
Section locale 313 – Rock Island, IL

« Tous les membres de notre section locale étaient très réceptifs et ont appuyé la résolution. Nous avons eu une excellente discussion de plus de 45 minutes sur la résolution et nos membres ont exprimé de vives inquiétudes au sujet des angles morts et de l’absence de protection sur nos autobus au cas où un passager monte à bord armé d’un couteau ou d’une autre arme. Même si nous évoluons dans une ville plus petite qui ne compte pas autant de problèmes que les grandes villes, ce n’est qu’une question de temps avant qu’une agression contre un conducteur se produise. Il a été clairement établi, comme le président Hanley l’a mentionné à toutes les sections locales, que les compagnies d’autobus américaines ont des décennies de retard en matière de sécurité et ne veulent pas reconnaître ces problèmes. »

Kevin McGee, président/agent syndical
Section locale 164 – Wilkes-Barre, PA

« La résolution a été bien reçue par les membres. Notre Conseil exécutif était très enthousiaste de l’adopter. Les mécaniciens de notre section locale s’en réjouissaient, car la qualité de l’air des nouveaux autocars est tout aussi mauvaise qu’elle l’était dans les anciens. Ils ont dit qu’il était temps de prendre soin des conducteurs. Les angles morts sont aussi un enjeu de taille après que notre section locale ait perdu bon nombre d’arbitrages sur ce sujet. Alors, nos membres étaient favorables à ces changements. Les conductrices ont fortement appuyé l’idée des écrans rétractables comme barrière avec les passagers, car présentement, nos autobus ne sont pas dotés d’écrans de protection. »

Ronald Jackson, président/agent syndical
Section locale 268 – Cleveland, OH

« Nous avons connu plusieurs problèmes concernant nos habitacles d’autobus. Des émanations à l’intérieur de nos autobus se sont révélées un problème majeur. Notre vice-président à l’entretien a expliqué que la cause du problème est la façon avec laquelle nos autobus actuels, qui sont très vieux, font circuler l’air. Nous avons également eu trop d’attaque sur nos conducteurs, dont de nombreux incidents où nos membres se sont fait cracher dessus et frapper. Deux ou trois ans passés, nous avons demandé à l’agence d’installer des écrans de plexiglas comme protection, mais rien n’a été fait. Nos autobus ont d’énormes angles morts à cause du pilier en A et des rétroviseurs latéraux. Il y a environ 7 ou 8 ans, il s’est produit un tragique accident causé par un angle mort et un enfant a été tué. Donc, lorsque la résolution a été présentée à nos membres, elle a été adoptée avec une majorité écrasante. Nos membres désiraient appuyer les efforts de l’International à cet égard. Nous souhaitons maintenant voir les actions qui corrigeront ce problème. »

Ismael Rivera, président/agent syndical
Section locale 1596 – Orlando, FL
« Avant de commencer la réunion de notre section locale, nous avons placé sur les tables des membres des affiches de l’Initiative habitacle et un exemplaire de l’In Transit qui porte sur cette campagne. Après le début de la réunion et la présentation de la résolution, nous avons pris connaissance des problèmes soulignés dans le magazine. Il a été indiqué que même si ce ne sont pas tous les problèmes soulevés — blattes, émanations et autres — qui affectent nos membres, ils ont un impact sur nos frères et sœurs des sections locales aux États-Unis et au Canada, et nous devons les appuyer. Cela représente à peu près tous les membres du SUT se ralliant autour d’une cause commune. Nous avons ensuite voté et la résolution a été adoptée à l’unanimité. »

Gersham Flynn, président/agent syndical
Section locale 1763 – Rocky Hill, CT

« L’idée a été bien reçue par nos membres. Notre plus grande discussion a été à propos de la conception des autobus et du pilier en A qui cause des angles morts. Aussi, plusieurs conducteurs se sont informés sur les alternatives aux sièges du conducteur qui pourraient remplacer ceux qui sont utilisés présentement. Finalement, les membres du département de l’entretien qui étaient présents voulaient connaître nos idées sur la reconfiguration de l’évacuation et de la prise d’air des autobus. »

Thomas Leighty
Section locale 1015 – Spokane, WA

« Tous nos membres souhaitent un habitacle plus sain et plus sûr dans les autobus, spécialement les écrans protecteurs visant à réduire les agressions brutales qui se produisent trop souvent. De plus, l’habitacle des conducteurs d’autobus se doit d’être plus ergonomique. Nous voyons les dirigeants de TransLink se faire mesurer pour leurs chaises de bureau, mais jamais les conducteurs d’autobus qui sont également de différentes tailles, grandeur et formes et qui passent davantage de temps dans leurs sièges. Plusieurs de nos conducteurs ont des problèmes de dos, d’épaules et autres affections causées par des sièges de piètre qualité. Il est très difficile de faire acheter par TransLink les meilleurs autobus, ceux produits par Mercedes, parce qu’ils sont trop dispendieux alors ils achètent les autobus les moins chers pour économiser de l’argent. Nos membres ont adopté la résolution avec une forte majorité lors de notre réunion en août, même si nous n’avions pas le quorum. »

Geoffrey Devlin, président/agent syndical
Section locale 134 – Vancouver, BC

« Nos membres ont approuvé la résolution portant sur l’habitacle à l’unanimité. Elle a été très bien reçue et le sentiment émanant du groupe était que cette résolution était attendue depuis longtemps. À Hamilton, depuis les 4 dernières années, nous avons acquis des autobus NOVA et des autobus New Flyer auparavant. Ces deux entreprises fabriquent des autobus qui ont les problèmes les plus flagrants avec l’habitacle des conducteurs d’autobus – angles morts, problèmes de ventilation, pas d’écran protecteur, un siège et une suspension dont l’ergonomie est médiocre. »

Eric Tuck, président/agent syndical
Section locale 107 – Hamilton, ON

« La résolution a été bien reçue et a été adoptée à l’unanimité par nos membres, car ils souhaitent que cette initiative visant à améliorer l’habitacle des conducteurs aille de l’avant. Au cours de notre réunion, des questions pertinentes ont été soulevées concernant les détails de la résolution, mais en fin de compte, le langage de la résolution parlait de lui-même. Nos conducteurs d’autobus ont fortement appuyé la résolution et les membres de l’entretien qui assistaient à la réunion ont voté unaniment en faveur de la résolution. Nous avons discuté avec la presse locale des prochaines étapes de la campagne pour promouvoir l’adoption de la résolution et mettre l’accent sur ces améliorations importantes visant à réparer l’habitacle du conducteur d’autobus. »

Clint Crabtree, président/agent syndical
Section locale 279 – Ottawa, ON

« Nos membres ont voté à 100 pour cent pour la résolution sur l’habitacle. Le sentiment exprimé par nos membres était qu’enfin, il était grand temps de s’attaquer à ces problèmes grâce à une telle campagne. Les seules choses que le TTC, les politiciens et les fabricants d’autobus comprennent et ont à cœur sont le passif et le bénéfice net. Avec cette résolution, nous démontrons qu’un investissement à faible coût réglerait les problèmes dangereux et malsains des habitacles des conducteurs — les angles morts, les sièges de piètre qualité, les émanations et autres problèmes. Tout est question de bénéfice net pour l’agence, les élus et les fabricants d’autobus; les mesures proposées diminueraient les coûts en soins de santé, en responsabilité civile et en litiges. »

Kevin Morton, secrétaire aux finances
Section locale 113 – Toronto, ON
« Comme notre section locale éprouve des difficultés avec la conception des rétroviseurs d’autobus et avec les angles morts, nous avons reçu un appui phénoménal à l’égard de la résolution. En fait, le mois dernier, nous avons eu un accident causé par l’angle mort du rétroviseur de l’autobus. Nous avons également connu des problèmes d’émanations et des attaques sur les conducteurs; donc, l’ensemble de la résolution nous convient parfaitement. À la Conférence législative du Connecticut, nous prévoyons nous rendre sur la colline du Capitole pour tenter d’éduquer les politiciens à propos de ces problèmes. Depuis des années, nous signalons ces problèmes à notre directeur général, mais rien n’a été fait pour les régler. »

Jaroslaw Pizunski, président/agent syndical
Section locale 1209 – New London, CT

La résolution a été adoptée à l’unanimité par tous les membres présents à la réunion de la section locale en septembre. Nos membres sont ravis d’appuyer nos sections locales sœurs afin d’assurer la sécurité de leur poste de travail. Nous attendons avec impatience la résolution qui traitera des problèmes de sécurité des postes de travail au sein des propriétés ferroviaires. »

Gena Alexander
présidente/agente syndicale
Section locale 1555 – Oakland, CA

« Nous avions le quorum et la résolution a été adoptée à l’unanimité. Bien que tous soient d’accord pour dire que les angles morts des autobus sont un problème dangereux qui doit être abordé, il y a eu des questions sur la facilité avec laquelle ces problèmes pourraient être réparés par nos membres de l’équipe d’entretien. Les sièges à l’ergonomie inadéquate représentent un problème pour nos membres, dont plusieurs étaient présents à la réunion et qui souhaitent voir ce problème résolu. Nous prévoyons contacter nos médias locaux à propos de l’adoption de cette résolution et nous avons aussi pris rendez-vous avec la St. Catharines Transit Commission afin de discuter des moyens à prendre pour rendre plus sécuritaire l’habitacle des conducteurs, particulièrement en ce qui concerne les angles morts. »

Robert Llord, président/agent syndical
Section locale 846 – St. Catharines, ON

« Les membres ont voté à l’unanimité pour l’adoption de la Résolution. Ils ont exprimé à quel point il était formidable que ces problèmes spécifiques fussent l’objet de discussions à tous les emplacements où œuvrent des employés du SUT. Ils se sentaient concernés par toutes les questions visant à améliorer les conditions de travail et de sécurité pour les opérateurs ainsi que pour les passagers. Plusieurs membres ne pouvaient pas comprendre pourquoi la direction n’appuierait pas nos demandes. Au cours de cette discussion, le Conseil exécutif a exprimé comment cela a amorcé le processus de contact avec le PDG et les ingénieurs de New Flyer, situés ici même à Winnipeg. »

Aleem Chaudhary, président suppléant/agent syndical
Section locale 1505 – Winnipeg, MB

« Même si le débat a été bref lors de la réunion, les membres continuent de nous rappeler que les autobus doivent changer. Il s’agit d’un thème récurrent aux réunions mensuelles de la section locale 583 du SUT. Nos membres mentionnent régulièremment la discussion sur : la visibilité et l’emplacement des rétroviseurs, la conception de l’habitacle, les émanations qui pénètrent dans l’unité, le temps nécessaire pour un nettoyage adéquat et la protection contre les assaillants. Les sections locales, guidées par l’International, doivent travailler avec toutes les parties intéressées pour apporter les modifications nécessaires. Les membres du SUT, section locale 583, ont appuyé unanimement cette initiative. »

Rick Ratcliff, président / agent syndical
SUT section locale 583–Calgary, AB
IN MEMORIAM

Death Benefits Awarded May 1, 2017 - June 30, 2017

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   PATRICK L HARTMAN
   JERRY HUTCHINS JR
   ROBERT K KINSLEY
   BRADY M MORGAN
   ARTHUR R SCHROEDER

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   JOSEPH W BOLDEN
   JAMES P GREENFIELD

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   HUGH HARRIS
   AJA SANDEFER

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   ANTHONY G CHECCHIO JR
   WILLIAM B DAVIS
   BERNARD P KRIGER
   SAMUEL A MARSH
   JAMES C PATCH
   BERNADETTE A MURPHY
   ROBERT P OSBORNE
   THOMAS J SCHICK
   DERICK W E HIGGINS
   DALJIT S DHAMRAIT
   RONALD P CLARKE

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   HENRY NEIL AUSTIN

113 - TORONTO, ON
   JAMES BERRY
   KENNETH H BURBIDGE
   RONALD P CLARKE
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   BRIAN A GRACE

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   GENE C NELSON
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   PETER MARCHUK
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   RICHARD W IRVINE
   CHRISTOPHER KOGUEAS
   JOSEPH W MAGEE
   ALBERTA MAITTOX
   CHERYL ANN MOORE
   WILLIAM M MORRELL
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   EDWARD T BROWN
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   WILLIAM P OSBORNE
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   ALFRED F LANDRY
   CLIFFORD OWEN AYERS
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   ROY HAMILTON
   EARL D HAY
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   OTTO BETZLER
   JAMES W ELSE

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   STEPHEN D BROWNE
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   ERNEST H REYES
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   ROY J FETTERMAN

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   LEONARD HARDING

1505 - WINNIPEG, MB
   OLIVER E GARDNER
   WALTER A JENKINS

1555 - OAKLAND, CA
   ROBBIE CHONG

1573 - BRAMPTON, ON
   SATNAK RAM

1637 - LAS VEGAS, NV
   RICK H DRAW

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