



The Highball

Official Publication of
Railroad Workers United

RAILROAD CARRIERS DEMAND CREW SIZE REDUCTIONS

<p>1970s</p>	<p>1980s</p>
<p>1990s</p>	<p>2010s</p>

The advent of new technology together with a decline in union power, coupled with the rail carriers' arrogant disregard for worker and public safety has seen the standard five-person train crew drop first to three, and then to two crew members. Now the big railroad companies have their sights set on implementation of the universal single employee train crew. The only thing that can stop them is YOU! Please join with Railroad Workers United in our effort to stop the implementation of single employee train crews! See the RWU website at www.railroadworkersunited.org to learn more.

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RWU Now Has New T-shirts and Hats Available in the Store

RWU has taken delivery of two new T-shirts orders. One shirt still has the same powerful RWU logo but this shirt has the logo on the BACK, *and* it has a pocket on the left breast with bold letters "RWU" on the right. The second shirt is the same as described above except instead of the RWU logo, the back features the "No Single Employee Crews" cartoon featured on Page 1 of this newsletter.

We have also re-stocked our ball cap inventory, and now have plenty of caps in black, red or stone. The caps have the RWU logo stitched across the front with the words

"Railroad Workers United" across the back above the adjustment strap. Now that we got your attention, we will point out that J.P. Wright's new CD "Singing to the Choir" is also available, together with his first couple CDs, Sue Doro's "Blue Collar Goodbys", Linda Niemann's "Railroad Noir", a DVD of the RWU Founding Convention, RWU lapel pins and more. Check out the RWU Store on the RWU website. Members get 25% discount on most items. All proceeds from merchandise sales help RWU continue our work on the issues that matter to you!

RWU Marches in Dunsmuir, CA Railroad Days Parade



RWU members and supporters march in the Dunsmuir Railroad Days parade as part of this small town's annual festival celebrating the town's railroad heritage. A former SP division point, this Northern California town continues as a crew change location for Union Pacific trains working between California and Oregon. The RWU Northern California Chapter also sponsored a literature and merchandise table and received a warm greetings from railroaders and community members alike. RWU plans more such community outreach activities later this year.

Railroad Workers United

Railroad Workers United was organized in April 2008 at a Founding Convention in Dearborn, MI. RWU grew out of decades of struggle within the craft unions for unity, solidarity, and democracy. We are carrying on a tradition of rank-and-file activity which dates back to the 1890s and the time of Eugene V. Debs.

RWU is a cross-craft inter-union caucus of rail labor activists across North America. All rail workers of all crafts from all carriers who support our Statement of Principles are welcome to join in our efforts. Please write, call or email the address below.

Statement of Principles

- *Unity of All Rail Crafts*
- *An End to Inter-Union Conflict*
- *Rank-and-File Democracy*
- *Membership Participation & Action*
- *Solidarity Among All Railroaders*
- *No to Concessionary Bargaining*

Railroad Workers United P.O. Box 1053 Salem, IL. 62881

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Mark Burrows	UTU #1433	CP	Chicago, IL
Jon Flanders	IAM #1145	CSX	Selkirk, NY
Robert Hill	BLET #75	BNSF	Vancouver, WA
Robert Hull	UTU #199	BNSF	Creston, IA
Ron Kaminkow	BLET #51	Amtrak	Reno, NV
Shaun Kelley	BLET # 642	BNSF	Creston, IA
Ed Michael	UTU #979	BLET #724	UP Salem, IL
Hugh Sawyer	BLET #316	NS	Atlanta, GA
James Wallace	UTU #305	BNSF	Lincoln, NE
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Is "Task Overload" A Hazard? RWU Initiates Survey to Find Out

When the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the rail carriers comment on job performance in the railroad industry, they make liberal use of the term "situational awareness" to reference the level of attention paid by individual workers to the completion of assigned tasks. They claim that if situational awareness is high, that the incidence and severity of accidents will necessarily be reduced. What is given short shrift however in this whole discussion is the fact that the rail carriers themselves may often contribute to compromising situational awareness through what is known as "task overload".

While most all railroad workers would agree that situational awareness is vital to the safe performance of job duties, we would argue that we must be allowed the time and space necessary to maintain our situational awareness. It is meaningless to note that "the wreck was the result of a worker who lost situational awareness" if we do not explore how and why he or she came to lose that situational awareness in the first place. Why do workers sometimes fail to carry out their assigned duties in a safe manner after having performed the same task hundreds, if not thousands of times, perfectly safely?

Perhaps the answer lies somewhere in the whole process of task overload. "Multi-tasking" has become the norm throughout the daily routine for many jobs today, and the rail industry is certainly no exception. Coupled with chronic

fatigue, new technology, along with a multiplicity of complex and ever changing work rules, policies, procedures and directives, and the stage can quickly be set for task overload, resulting in a loss of situational awareness, followed by possible disaster.

To determine if the problem of task overload actually exists, Railroad Workers United (RWU) has designed a short survey that all railroad workers are urged to take the time to fill out at some point this summer. We also would like to know, if such a problem does exist, how serious is it? We have included questions on the rules and policies, manpower issues, and technology. We have also created a section for comments so we can gather ideas for how we might proceed to deal with this issue, reduce task overload and make for a safer workplace.

Please take a couple of minutes to fill out the survey. The first step to solving a problem is to recognize the nature of the problem. If we receive enough responses, we can take the next steps toward creating a better, safer, and less stressful work environment for all of us.

You can find the survey on-line by searching at Survey Monkey or go to the Railroad Workers United website www.railroadworkersunited.org and click on the link to **Take the The Task Overload Survey.**

UP Dispatchers Press On Towards Unionization

The train dispatchers at Union Pacific are working hard at collecting "A" cards to join the American Train Dispatchers Association (ATDA), and they may be getting close to filing for an election.

According to the internal organizers workplace newsletter, "Club 151", the ATDA will be bringing in organizers and train dispatchers from other railroad carriers to go door-to-door and talk to individual dispatchers about questions they may have about the "A" card process, the union election process, and what being a member of the ATDA means.

Management is fighting back and is actively campaigning against the union including a letter from a "dispatcher", clearly written by someone in the Labor Relations Department, about how to "withdraw their A card".

UP management continues to hold the "be a part of the management team" carrot above the dispatchers, but many of them are not falling for that lie. As one anonymous dispatcher writes in a letter to the Harriman Dispatching Center Vice President, Ken Hunt, "While UP brass claims we are management, in reality we don't manage anyone. Dispatching is a craft that takes many years to learn and become good at. The last two union drives I did not send in an A card, but this time I did and I intend on voting 'Yes'

when the election rolls around because the only way to preserve our craft is by joining the ATDA."

All rails should wish the internal organizers good luck and solidarity. We work closely with dispatchers daily and it is not only in their interests to join the union, it's in ours too.

Hats Off to You, Brother Jon!



Jon Flanders, machinist of 25 years in Selkirk, NY and former Co-Chair of Railroad Workers United, pulled the pin on May 31. Jon plans to be an active retiree member of RWU and continue his work with the labor movement.

RWU Builds Transport Worker Solidarity

Workers Fight to Save Union Locomotive Building in Erie PA

The locomotive builders in Erie, PA are fighting back to save union jobs. Multinational giant General Electric (GE) announced earlier this spring that the work of nearly 1000 union workers at the flagship plant would be outsourced to non-union operations elsewhere. As a result, the union (United Electrical #506) is engaged in the fight of its life.

In recent years, GE has dramatically increased its capacity to build locomotives in non-union facilities. In addition to the newest plant in Nigeria, there are numerous GE locomotive assembly plants now in operation, including: San Luis Potosi, Mexico; Contagem, Brazil; Changzhou and Shanghai, China; Astana, Kazakhstan; Eskisehir, Turkey; Johannesburg, South Africa; and the recently opened plant outside of Fort Worth, Texas.

At the end of May, the local conducted a series of "Gate Rallies". With each shift participating, over 2,000 workers and allies took part. UE National President Bruce Klipple, Head Negotiator Gene Elk, UE Local 506 member Jim Harvey, UE 506 President Scott Duke, and UE Eastern Region President Deb Gornall all addressed the membership, along with solidarity speakers from other UE locals.

Brother Klipple and Brother Elk spoke about how big a job and wage destroyer GE has become. Sister Gornall spoke about her time as a member of UE #618 at the Erie Plant and how the Clerical workers have gone from over a thousand strong to less than 30. She talked about what a bad employer the "Best run Company in the World" truly is.

Brother Duke gave us the low down on what these talks are like. GE insists on focusing on work rule changes to things like attendance policies, vacation scheduling, cell phone use, etc. The union repeatedly has asked the company how this will save jobs. They have no answer.

"Be proud of your Union paycheck. Your union forefathers fought and bled for what we have now. We can do no less." GE appears to lack any sincere interest in saving these jobs here. The feeling is that whether UE #506 kneels or stands, GE has no intention of bringing this work back to Erie. From the rank and file, there is no talk of kneeling but there is much talk of standing!

The workers in Texas are not the enemy. The companies that pit worker against worker are. All railroad workers -- especially those who operate and maintain our locomotives -- have a vital interest in supporting the brothers and sisters in Erie, PA. We want to work in, on and around professionally built, union made locomotives. RWU has passed a series of resolutions in support of union locomotive builders in North America. They are available on the RWU website for download and dissemination.

Get involved. Support the workers of UE Local #506 in their struggle to keep locomotives union-made-in-the-USA!



Union locomotive builder in Erie, PA rally earlier this spring to protest GE's attempt to move production of railroad locomotives to non-union facilities.

Longshore Workers Battle Union-Busting Grain Shippers

In May, the bitter labor dispute on Northwest docks escalated as Columbia Grain Inc. locked out Portland longshore workers, accusing them of obstructing exports. This corporate action compounds a similar action at United Grain Corp. in Vancouver, WA. where dockworkers have been shut out since Feb. 27. These grain exporters are bucking for the same terms and conditions that EGT in Longview, WA and the ILWU settled upon last year.

Members of the International Longshore & Warehouse Union (ILWU) are fighting to preserve and protect union conditions that have existed on the west coast for 75 years. A Columbia Grain rep claims that ILWU members were "engaging in 'inside game' tactics, including slowdowns, work-to-rule, and demands for repeated inspections of the same equipment - all designed to negatively impact

Columbia Grain's operations." Hence the company lock-out.

In response, union members have taken their picket line to the water in an effort to stop scab grain loading of ships. Boats carrying longshore union supporters blocked a grain ship at the Port of Kalama in May. "We're not ever going to tolerate a scab boat, and it's going to escalate" if any vessel serviced by non-union workers tries to dock at lower Columbia River ports, said Jake Whiteside, president of Longview-based Local 21 of the ILWU.

Railroad Workers United urges all rail workers to pay attention to this important labor action, to join our fellow workers on the picket lines, and to NOT cross a picket line. RWU has passed resolutions of support for both the Vancouver and Portland locals that have been distributed on the picket line by RWU members.

Rail Labor and Management: Our Interests are Diametrically Opposed

On May 9th, the nation's oldest labor union - the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen (BLET) celebrated its 150th anniversary in the city of its founding, Detroit, MI. Inexplicably, the union leadership felt it in order to invite the chiefs of the major Class I rail carriers, and in fact, a number of CEOs and the like from NS, UP, BNSF and CN were not only in attendance, they were invited to address the members assembled!

The first gathering of engineers in 1863, where locomotive engineers clandestinely met in Detroit to organize the Brotherhood of the Footboard (the predecessor of the BLE) could not have been more different. Meeting in secret, 16 brave brothers successfully organized a craft union of their ilk, knowing that if discovered they could be disciplined, terminated and in all likelihood, blacklisted. Why? Because the rail carriers for whom they worked did not want their employees to have a voice, to have power, to fight collectively for their concerns. In short the rail carriers *did not want* engineers, or other rails, to have a union.

And while these same rail carriers remain our adversary today, somehow the BLET officials find it appropriate to invite our employers to an internal social gathering of the union. What gives? Well, one old-time union leader - Eugene V Debs - had a few things to say about the craft union issue. And who would know better than Debs - the man who assisted in organizing the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, the Brotherhoods of Railroad Trainmen, Brakemen, of Telegraphers among others. Following this experience, Debs came to appreciate the need for an "industrial union" of ALL railroad workers, understanding that the old craft unions were not the solution. "One glance proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that these (craft) unions are exceedingly useful to the corporations," noted Debs. "And to the extent that they serve the economic and political purposes of the corporations, they are the foes - and not the friends - of the working class."

The BLET officials may make the case that the workers' interests and the corporations' interests are identical. We beg to differ. Rather, we tend to agree with Mr. Debs' assessment of the rail corporation that he spelled out in his famous address, directed towards railroad workers in 1906 entitled "You Railroad Men":

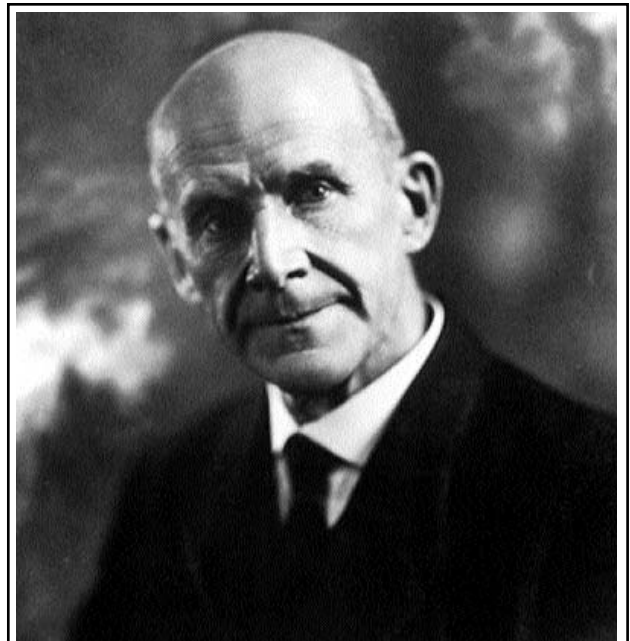
"In what way, Mr. Railroad Slave, is your interest identical with that of "Jim" Hill (James J. Hill, the "Empire Builder" and CEO of the Great Northern Railway), your master? He owns the railway system that you workingmen built and now operate. He pulls every dollar of profit out of it for himself he can, and leaves you not one dollar more than he must. If you don't suit him, he discharges you, and you then have to pull up stakes and hunt another master. He gets the lion's share, you get what's left; and in the aggregate that is fixed by what is required to fill your dinner pail,

cover you with overalls and maintain a habitation where you can raise more wage slaves to take your place when you are worn out and go to the scrap heap."

"The Jim Hills live out of your labor, out of your ignorance, for if you were not densely stupid you would not be their dumb-driven cattle. Now they and their politicians and preachers and 'labor leaders' tell you how bright and smart you are to flatter your ignorance, and keep you from opening your eyes to your slavish condition, and above all, to the wage-system, which lies at the bottom of your poverty and degradation. Your interests as wage slaves are not only not identical with, but are directly opposed to, the interests of the 'Jim' Hills and the railroad corporations, and I challenge any of your 'grand chiefs' to deny it in my presence on any public platform."

"The workers made and operate all the railroads; the capitalists had and have nothing to do with either. They pocket the proceeds on a basis of watered stock and other 'stock,' in the form of employees, and then issue fraudulent reports to show on what a small margin of profit they are actually doing business ... To sum up: They are in the capitalist class; you in the working class. They are masters; you slaves. They fleece and pluck; you furnish the wool and feathers."

As such, you will not see any railroad managers (nor any corporate or government "leaders") invited to any RWU convention, conference, meeting, barbeque ... whatever. They are *not now and never will be* invited!



Founder of numerous rail unions, Eugene V. Debs struggled to build working class organizations designed to directly confront -- not to get cozy with -- powerful railroad corporations.

Opinion & Commentary

The Crisis of Leadership in Our Rail Unions - Part I

How do the perspectives of the leadership of our unions, and the strategies that flow from them, contribute to the deteriorating predicament we find ourselves in today? No discussion on this would be complete without referencing the analysis and conclusions Eugene V. Debs arrived at through his own personal life experiences over 100 years ago. For those of you who may not be knowledgeable of Debs' history and legacy, a brief summary is in order.

Born November 5, 1855 in Terre Haute, Indiana, at the age of 14, Debs started work on the railroad in the paint shop, and soon after became a fireman. He helped to organize his local lodge of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen. When he was appointed editor of the BLF magazine, Debs began to get a hearing among railworkers nationwide. Driven by his righteous indignation in response to the harsh and dangerous working conditions, with his fiery passion and energy, he helped other crafts to organize. In 1880 he became Grand Secretary-Treasurer of the BLF.

Debs came to realize that being separated into numerous different craft unions played right into the carriers' divide and conquer strategy. In 1893 Debs founded the American Railway Union, open to ALL crafts, the first industrial union in the U.S. At its peak, the ARU counted virtually half of rail labor in its ranks.

After a decisive victory over the Great Northern Railway, the ARU threw its weight behind the Pullman Strike in 1894. The workers were winning on the picket line and in the streets, but President Grover Cleveland crushed the strike and the ARU with the federal militia, killing 12 and wounding hundreds. As Debs spent six months in jail, in his own words: "...I began to read and think and dissect the anatomy of the system in which workingmen, however organized, could be shattered and battered and splintered at a single stroke." He dedicated the rest of his life attempting to educate, organize, mobilize and inspire the working class to think for ourselves, to get in touch with and to utilize our dormant numerical and economic power, through unity, solidarity and democracy, not only in the industrial arena, but the political arena as well.

Debs wrote an open letter to railroad workers across the country, titled "You Railroad Men", which ran in the February 6, 1906 issue of "Appeal to Reason", one of several prominent Socialist publications of that era. Here Debs made the case that, while the union leaders of the day paid lip service to the interests of the rank & file worker, their *deeds* served the interests of the carriers. It did not matter whether this was intentional and deliberate or not.

In the last several years, as the attacks on us have intensified, an all too common refrain has been "Boo hoo hoo, the company's so mean to us. Boo hoo hoo, the union's not doing anything." This is sometimes followed by grumbling

about various union officials taking a "suitcase full of money under the table" as the *only* explanation for the concessions freely given without one iota of resistance.

Debs' response to this theme is relevant today. "It is not that Mr. Stone (BLE President at the time) is personally dishonest or corrupt; He may be, and I think he is, perfectly conscientious in what he says and does, and the same is doubtless true of the grand officers of the other railway unions, but that is not the question. If workingmen are betrayed and defeated and made to suffer, it makes little difference if their misfortunes are due to dishonest, or ignorant and incompetent, leadership. The question is not 'Are these leaders honest?'. Let that be conceded. The question is, 'Are they true to the working class?' If their official attitude does not square with the working class as a whole, then they are not in line with the true interests of their own union and are not in fact the friends, but the enemies of labor; not serving, but betraying those who trust and follow them."



Rail union founder and leader Eugene V. Debs with railroad workers in 1908.

It is not our intent, to initiate a public name-calling match with the present leaders of our unions. For that reason, I'll stand down and distance myself from Debs' characterization of "ignorant and incompetent leadership". As with the question of dishonesty and/or corruption, *none* of that matters. *The* question that matters is: "Do their perspectives, and the strategies and tactics that flow from those perspectives, advance *our* interests in the fight for a safe workplace, respect, dignity and quality of life on and off the job?"

RWU contends that the answer to that question is a no-brainer, and that *we, the rank and file* need to discuss amongst ourselves, not only *what* is wrong with the present picture but, more importantly, *why*? If we don't accurately diagnose the source of the "disease", how can we ever possibly figure out the necessary "cure"? Not only is it our democratic *right* to pose these questions but RWU feels it is our collective *responsibility* as rank & file workers to contribute to this vital discussion.

To be continued in the Fall issue of The Highball.

Mark Burrows is a Co-Chair of Railroad Workers United, a member of UTU Local #1433 and an engineer for the CP Rail in Chicago, IL. This is the fourth installment in this series.



Opinion & Commentary

Record Discipline for Us = Record Profits for Them

In the last few months, an interesting pair of key statistics were released that - taken together - display a disturbing correlation. In January, a certain "job insurance" company, one of a number of North American funds for railroad workers, published their numbers for Calendar year 2012, broken down railroad by railroad. Of the seven major Class I railroads, only the Canadian Pacific (CP) showed a spike in the amount of funds paid to their members "held out of service" by their employer. And this was not just any old spike, but a dramatic increase above and beyond the previous year's rate. And while most all Class Is saw an escalation, the year-over-year increase at CP was a staggering 157%!

Just a few months later in the spring, the CP announced its economic numbers for the first quarter of 2013. Similarly, of all the Class Is, only the CP experienced a dramatic spike in earnings and profits. The Canadian Pacific reported a net income of \$217 million compared to \$142 million the first quarter of 2012, a whopping 51% year-over-year improvement. Total revenues were C\$1.495 billion, an increase of 9 percent and a quarterly record. Operating income was \$362 million, an increase of 32 percent and the operating ratio was 75.8%, another quarterly record.

Two sets of statistics pertaining to two completely separate aspects of a corporation. Two sets of numbers both of which display a dramatic spike. Just a coincidence? We think not.

The stockholders at CP demanded last year that their railroad begin to perform as well as the other Class I railroads. E. Hunter Harrison of CN fame was hired as CEO last year, and the railroad soon embarked upon a blitzkrieg against its employees, all designed to increase the company's bottom line. Nothing short of a reign of terror has enveloped the CP property over the last 12 months or so.

Job consolidations and eliminations, wholesale abolition of regular assignments, increased workloads and work hours, closure of facilities and transfer of work elsewhere are now the daily routine at CP. All the while, harassment, intimidation, discipline and firings have become the day-to-day norm at Canadian Pacific in both the U.S. and Canada.

In the past, railroad managers might have been reluctant to engage in such an all-out assault upon the workforce for fear that the workers may just fail to cooperate and render the plan - and the company - unworkable. But Hunter and the gang have learned the sad truth - that they can screw the hell out of us nowadays and we will simply ... take it. Has our pride, our solidarity, our power and our will to resist been broken? Otherwise, how in the world can we explain why and how CP has been able to abuse their workforce so relentlessly with hardly a whimper from either the union nor the rank & file?

But it does not have to be this way. First, all of us in rail labor need to wake up and break with the idea that we are all a "team". For decades now, the corporate and government propaganda that has held sway is that "we are all in this together". Well the two sets of figures we have outlined here surely puts the lie to any such silly notion. (See Pages 5 and 6 for a fuller discussion of the diametrically opposed interests of labor and management).

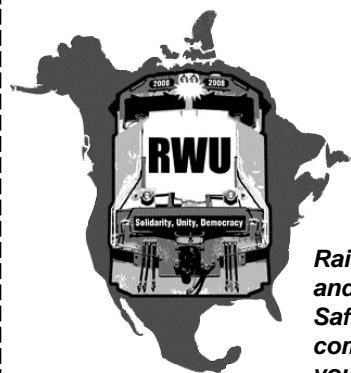
Second, we need to acknowledge the truth of what is really happening on Class I railroads, to our jobs, our livelihoods, and our quality of work life. It is happening in order to make money for other people. Some of these folks are corporate managers, but many more of them are stockholders, most of whom have never worked for the railroad a day in their lives and have no intention of ever doing so.

Third, we need to articulate an alternative vision of what we want our railroads to look like, one that is of course, at odds with the vision of the stockholders and their corporate managers. We must outline what our idea is of the ideal workplace environment, the type of workplace that we want to work in, that we *have a right* to work in.

And finally, we must organize collective resistance by recruiting any and all employees from all carriers for the fight. It is up to us to do it; no one is going to do it for us. And no one group, department, craft, or union can do it alone. In the past we once had the solidarity, the determination, the confidence and the conviction to defend ourselves. Surely, we are capable once again. *We Can Do It!!*



CP has launched an unprecedented attack upon its workforce in Canada and the U.S. While record profits pour in, worker safety is on the decline and employee discipline is at record levels. Meanwhile, E. Hunter Harrison -- Canadian Pacific CEO -- boldly proclaims that his whiney employees "better get ready to deal with fear."



Railroad Workers United

Membership Application

Railroad Workers United needs you! If you believe that our unions should fight the carriers and not each other, then RWU is for you. If you believe that the carriers' "Behavior Based Safety" Programs do more harm to us than good, and If you want real union-based safety committees built upon cross-craft solidarity and rank-and-file control, then RWU is for you. If you want to stop the carriers' push for single employee crews; if you wish to see an active, informed and mobilized union membership -- of all rail labor -- then RWU is for you!

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Email Address _____ Union Position (if any) _____

Union _____ Local # _____ Employer _____

Terminal _____ Craft _____ Years of Service _____

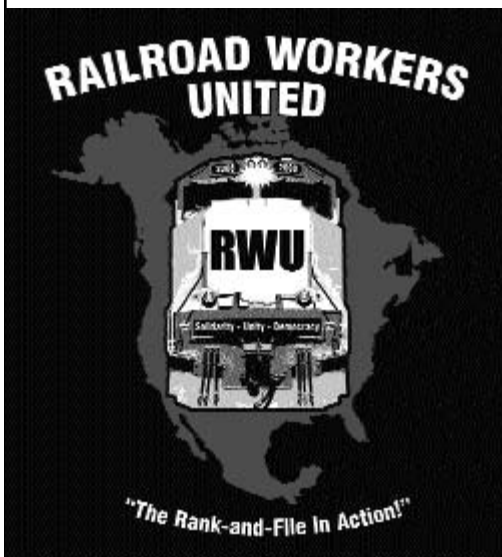
I am a (check one): Railroad Employee Railroad Retiree Railroad Family Member

Please check to affirm this statement: --- I am not a manager or officer of a rail company.

I'd like to join for (check one): 1 year \$50.00 2 Years \$90.00 3 Years \$120.00

Clip and mail together with your dues to:
Ron Kaminkow, RWU Secretary P.O. Box 2131 Reno, NV. 89505
 OR join on-line at www.railroadworkersunited.org

Get Your RWU Union-Made-in-the-USA T-shirts and Hats



T-shirts now available in Black or Gray in S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL, or 4XL. RWU logo at left is on the front of the shirt.

Hats are available in Black, Gray or Red, one-size fits all. RWU Logo on the front is stitched embroidery.

Both T-shirts and hats are union made in the USA, 100% cotton and include the RWU 4-color logo.

T-shirts and hats cost \$20.00 each (15.00 for RWU members)

Postage Paid By RWU if mailed to addresses in the U.S.

Make your check to RWU and mail with your order to:

Ron Kaminkow, RWU Secretary P.O. Box 2131 Reno, NV. 89505

OR

Order and pay with your paypal or credit card via our website at www.railroadworkersunited.org