



The Highball

Official Publication of

Railroad Workers United

Railroad Workers Bring Safety Conferences to the People

On two consecutive Saturdays in March, Railroad Workers United - together with other labor, community and environmental organizations - sponsored a conference entitled: "The Future of Railroads: Safety, Workers, Community & the Environment." In all, some 225 railroad workers, environmentalists and concerned citizens - many of them movers & shakers in their communities - attended the conferences.

The non-railroaders would come away with a better understanding of the conditions that railroad workers face everyday on the job, while the railroad workers gained insight into the concerns of community and environmental activists. Everyone who participated has learned a series of valuable lessons — that we can have "jobs and the environment"; that in face of the enormous power wielded over us by big business, workers and community are natural allies; that we have fertile common ground to build an alliance; and finally, that we can *and will* support each other in the struggles ahead.

For more information on the conferences, a complete listing of endorsing organizations, an explanation of workshops and discussions, and plans for future conferences and actions, please see the feature articles on Pages 4 and 5 of this issue of *The Highball*.



Railroad workers, community activists and environmental advocates join forces. The participants of the Olympia, WA conference gather here outside of the Longhouse Conference Center on the campus of Evergreen State College on March 21. Will these two west coast conference pave the way for a new labor-community alliance? RWU has plans to make it happen nationwide.

Improving Track Maintenance is the Key to Oil Train Safety

Track conditions are a leading cause of train derailments in the U.S., accounting for approximately one-third of all train accidents, according to data published by the Federal Railroad Administration. Agency statistics confirm 1,220 reportable train derailments occurred in 2014, resulting in nearly \$200 million in repair/replacement costs for damaged track and equipment alone, as well as cost to human lives, property, and the environment. Of these derailments, a full 39% (475) were determined to be track caused.

"The key to reducing the frequency of oil train derailments plaguing North America is improved track maintenance," says Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division President Freddie Simpson. "By every measure, track caused accidents are the most prevalent and the most preventable," said Simpson. "Of ... mainline accidents, 329 were classified as derailments and an astounding 47% (155) of these were reported by the railroads themselves to be track caused. The key to reducing track caused derailments is maintaining the

tracks to a higher safety standard. Unfortunately, the railroads' own statistics speak for themselves and track caused derailments—including those involving highly volatile crude oil—continue to be a threat to the nation. We can significantly improve railroad safety by improving the quality of the track. The technology, the skilled workers, and the higher track standards already exist; this is not rocket science," said Simpson.

Transporting crude oil on U.S. railroads grew from just 9,500 carloads in 2008 to more than 400,000 carloads in 2013. "The wear and tear on the track structure, coupled with the volatility of the commodities being transported, requires additional track maintenance to stay ahead of the rate of track degradation. BMWED has been actively pursuing common sense track safety improvements for years; however, the industry arrogantly claims they cannot afford to maintain the tracks to a higher safety standard," said Simpson. "My question to the nation is, can we afford for them not to?"



Announcing the Railroad Workers Education & Legal Defense Foundation

Railroad Workers United now has a “sister” organization. The Railroad Workers Education & Legal Defense Foundation (RWELDF) was set up last year to serve as the education and legal arm of RWU. The Foundation was recently recognized by the federal government as a tax-exempt, not-for-profit charitable foundation. RWELDF is dedicated to educating and defending railroad workers interests across North America and providing them with the tools they need to win.

In recent years, RWU has considered the prospects of raising funds to help pay the expenses of educational projects like conferences and workshops, literature and other media and to assist our members and railroad workers in general. RWELDF will work very closely with RWU and augment the work of the “parent” organization. According to the Department of the Treasury, “We have determined that you are exempt from Federal income tax under section 501c(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to you are tax deductible under Section 170 of the Code. You are also qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devises, transfers or gifts under section 2055, 2106, or 2522 of the code.”

RWELDF is set up to provide grassroots education and leadership development programs that help railroad workers understand the issues they face, to build unity and solidarity among railroaders, and ensure democracy and transparency in our unions. These programs are to be grounded in the traditions

of solidarity participatory democracy that lie at the heart of all progressive social movements. Whether it be sponsoring a conference on rail safety, assisting railroad workers to attend various educational functions, distributing literature, audio-visual materials and more, RWELDF will be there to help build the power of the railroad workers’ rank & file movement.

Railroad Workers Education & Legal Defense Foundation’s work will be made possible by the generous donations from railroad workers, family members and retirees, as well as from supporters who share our vision of a labor movement that uses rank-and-file power to fight for all working people.

In the coming years, we hope to gain the support of progressive, pro-labor community/social change foundations. Railroad Workers Education & Legal Defense Foundation does not and never will solicit or accept funding from any employer-related or anti-labor sources.

For more information about tax-exempt organizations, including Railroad Workers Education & Legal Defense Foundation, go to www.guidestar.org. Our Federal I.D. is 37-1711643.

To show your support for our efforts to build unity, democracy and solidarity among railroad workers, you can make a tax-deductible contribution to RWELDF through Pay Pal or credit card. See the RWU website at www.railroadworkersunited.org RWELDF.

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 & 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***



International Steering Committee

- Mark Burrows**, UTU #1433, CP, Chicago, IL
- Paul Jenvey**, IBEW #889, UP, San Luis Obispo, CA
- Ron Kaminkow**, BLET #51, Amtrak, Reno, NV
- Paul Matchett**, WSOR, Janesville, WI
- Dreadsen Owen** IWW #520, MRS, Chicago, IL
- Hugh Sawyer**, BLET #316 NS, Atlanta, GA
- Daniel Scudder**, TCU/BRC #6354, NS, Atlanta, GA
- John Vitaska**, NCFD #395, CP, Chicago, IL
- James Wallace**, UTU #305, BNSF, Lincoln, NE
- Andrew Weir**, TCRC-CTY #240, CN, Sarnia, ON
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Railroad Workers & Oil Refinery Strikers - Natural Allies in the Struggle

At the recent conferences sponsored by Railroad Workers United (see front page and Pages 4-5 of this issue of *The Highball*), striking refinery workers spoke about their struggle. In Richmond, nearly a dozen refinery workers - many of them on strike at the Tesoro Refinery in nearby Martinez, CA - attended the conference. Their testimony to the company's imposed "speed-up conditions", short staffing, forced overtime, harsh attendance policies, safety shortcutting and chronic fatigue would mirror what railroaders had to say throughout the conference.

And at the Olympia conference a week later, United Steelworkers of America (USW) Local #12-591 President Steve Garey would confirm the same scenario during his lunchtime address to the conference. Garey, whose local represents striking oil refinery workers at Tesoro in Anacortes, WA talked of the dangerous working conditions that he and his co-workers have been exposed to over the years, and the fatalities that far too

many have suffered at the plant.

In addition to pointing out the similarity in working conditions that railroad workers face, Garey pointed to the need for a labor-community alliance around the oil industry, similar to the one needed by railroad workers. The local union president stated that "there are countless ways that refinery workers and the community can work together", including issues of worker safety, enforcing environmental regulations, and more. "Let's agree to work together on issues that we can agree upon."

Pointing to what is apparently a pattern endemic to the modern American workplace, other workers present —including power plant workers, longshoremen, and public workers — would echo these experiences throughout the course of both the California and Washington conferences.

Stay tuned for future updates and calls to solidarity action.

Let's Not Forget Our Brothers on the W&LE - Fighting for All of Us!

While the fight against the BNSF attempt at engineer only operations was big time news amongst rail workers, our brothers at the Wheeling and Lake Erie (W&LE) remain on the front lines of this critical battle, soldiering on in relative obscurity.

For several years the W&LE has been aggressively pushing engineer-only trains, and the conductors and engineers said "no thanks". On September 13, 2013, the carrier began to run engineer-only with a manager behind the throttle, no less. In response, the BLET represented members of BOTH crafts - conductors and engineers - went on strike September 20, 2013. The strike shut down the regional carrier's operations in Ohio and Pennsylvania before the 100+ union members were ordered back to work by a temporary restraining order.

Since that time, the W&LE remains intransigent on the engineer-only issue. The workers there remain defiant, but they have now gone seven years without a raise. Simply put, the W&LE is attempting to economically bludgeon our brothers and sisters into submission. They are no doubt feeling the pain; who wouldn't? This is an outrage.

If the W&LE has their way, the major Class 1 railroads will get a much needed boost in their attempts to run engineer-only. So the stakes for all of us rail workers is a no-brainer. By logical extension, the general public has a vested interest in safe railroading operations. As some state legislatures and corporations are trying to housebreak our unions at best and bust them at worst, this is one of several battlefronts that the entire working class has a stake in. They deserve and need the solidarity and support from all of us - rails, other workers, and the general public.

At the BLET convention last October, a rank & file

delegate proposed the following resolution from the floor. It carried with unanimous support (minus one "No" vote). RWU encourages all railroaders of all unions - BLET or otherwise - to push adoption of similar resolutions in your respective locals. Then forward them on to RWU. We will send them on to the Local #292 leadership to let them know they are not alone, and that we all have their backs.

Resolution of Support for W&LE Workers

Whereas the single employee crew issue is one of the most important questions facing rail labor, and specifically the BLET; and

Whereas, both SMART and the BLET are supporting federal and/or state legislation to stop the practice of single employee train crews; and

Whereas the workers on the Wheeling & Lake Erie (W&LE), members of BLET #292 have been fighting against single employee crews for a number of years now; and

Whereas the engineers and trainmen on the W&LE have gone on strike to defend the two-person crew and oppose the W&LE use of single employee crews; and

Whereas it is vital that these brothers and sisters win this struggle and demonstrate to the W&LE - and the other rail carriers as well - that union labor will not accept train operations with a single employee; and

Whereas the outcome of this struggle of these brothers and sisters will have a direct impact on engineers and trainmen and all railroad workers throughout North America; their fight is our fight!

Therefore be it Resolved that the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen (BLET) assembled at Convention, October 2nd, 2014 in Las Vegas, NV pledge our unwavering solidarity and assistance to the members of Division #292 to win this fight; and

Be it Further Resolved, that the union encourages all BLET members and all railroad workers - especially those in geographical proximity - to join the picket line, to bring material aid and assistance and otherwise support the workers on the W&LE as necessary in the coming months and years in order to ensure victory.

**Adopted by the Delegates assembled at the BLET Convention
October 2, 2014 in Las Vegas, NV**



Building a Labor -Community Alliance Around Rail Safety

Coming on the heels of a series of oil train derailments in late winter, the conference: "The Future of Railroads: Safety, Workers, Community & the Environment" drew large receptive crowds at both the Richmond, CA and the Olympia, WA events as winter gave way to spring. Some 225 people registered and attended the conferences. Union workers were well represented at both conferences with railroaders, longshoremens and oil refinery workers (on strike in both locales) present, together with first responders, nurses, transit and other workers. In addition, movers and shakers representing dozens of citizens organizations and environmental groups from up and down the west coast were on hand in large numbers.

The effort was spearheaded by Railroad Workers United and represents our "coming out" to the public at large. All during the fight against single employee crews on BNSF last summer, RWU pledged that once the BNSF trainmen defeated the tentative contract proposal, we would then focus our energies on alerting the general public to the problems and dangers - not just of single employee train crew operations - but of all of the unsafe practices of the railroad industry. The two conferences are in effect, RWU's first effort to "blow the whistle" on single employee crews, chronic crew fatigue, short staffing, contracting out, maintenance failures, "blame-the-worker" safety programs, and more. We are bringing the campaign to the people.

The response was overwhelming! Railroad workers in attendance can attest to the fact that our newfound allies in the community and environmental movement support our efforts. They understand that our fight is their fight, and that if railroad workers are not safe, then the community and the environment certainly cannot be. Workshops on single employee train crews, chronic fatigue and basic railroading were well received. Members of the public were astounded that the rail industry is so cavalier about implementing single employee train crews, and in a state of disbelief that rail workers are subject to such demanding working hours, limited time off, harsh attendance policies, and short staffing all resulting in chronic fatigue for our fellow workers.

Each conference was headed up by railroad workers who led workshops and discussions about railroad worker and safety issues. These were then followed by sessions on basic ecology; organizing worker-to-worker support along the logistics "supply chain"; a vision of the future featuring rail electrification, renewable energy, and high speed freight and passenger service; community perspectives on railroads and trains; and what it takes to build a "labor-community" alliance.

The conferences have opened the door to unique possibilities that both railroad workers and community activists have the chance to capitalize on. Together with our friends in the labor movement (longshore, industry, first responders, transit, etc.), the environmental movement (groups like Forest Ethics, Greenpeace, and the Sierra Club) and among community organization (such as Communities for a Better Environment and the Friends of Gray's Harbor), we are infinitely more powerful than if we were to go it alone.

The conference is symbolic of the realignment of forces that must take place in the U.S. and worldwide if we are ever to win our goals and objectives as workers and as citizens. The

corporate world is very powerful, and while it represents a tiny minority of the population, it wields immense power over us. We must build alliances and coalitions that have the ability to confront the power of our adversaries. These conferences are one small step to assist in building that power.



Railroad workers explain today's rail environment to those in attendance at the Olympia conference. The panel of trainmen and engineers explained some of the safety issues facing today's railroad worker, including single employee crews, long & heavy trains, chronic crew fatigue, and "blame-the-worker" safety programs.

Therefore, RWU plans to replicate this conference many times over in the coming months and years. Discussions are currently underway to conduct similar conferences in Chicago, Iowa City, New York and the Twin Cities. Wherever RWU has a foothold and wherever there are citizens groups and environmentalists and other workers open to our message, RWU plans to spread the word and build the alliance.

If you would like to assist in bringing a similar conference to your area, please email to info@railroadworkersunited.org or call 206-984-3051. For more information about the conferences, see the website www.railroadconference.org.



RWU Co-Chair J.P. Wright addresses the Richmond conference March 14th. Community activists are eager to learn about railroad workers' issues and are willing to support our struggles.



West Coast Rail Safety Conferences Point the Way Forward

A Template for Future Conferences & Seminars

The outpouring of support for a labor-community alliance around rail safety at the March conferences has fueled demand for similar conferences to be conducted around North America. The diverse segments of labor and community which came together to create these first two conferences (see the complete listing below) have the potential to organize such conferences in key railroad communities all across the U.S. and Canada.

While RWU expects to spearhead the efforts to hold such conferences, we are ready, willing and able to work with any and all labor, community and environmental organizations who share our goals and objectives. RWU may have some tactical disagreements with any number of these groups, but the bottom line is this: we must agree that if it moves by rail, then it *must* be moved safely, by well-rested trainmen and engineers, together as a (minimum) two-person crew.

These first two conferences have allowed railroad workers to bring our issues to the community. We encourage all RWU members - and all railroad workers - to consider helping to organize a similar conference in your community. Here's the basic template:

1 — The Idea: A one-day conference that is designed to bring railroad workers and concerned citizens together to discuss railroad safety issues, community perspectives, and means by which we can work together to achieve our common goals.

2 — Garnering Support: Seek endorsements from local labor, community, and environmental organizations that might be interested in: A - supporting the event, B - sending representatives and/or C - encouraging their members to attend. See the listing below for an idea of the array of organizations that may wish to endorse and take part in the conference.

3—Logistics: Select a conference hall that is easily accessible to as many participants as possible, ideally one that is located close to a major rail terminal and residential community. Register people in advance to the extent possible through on-line and paper registration.

4 — Finances: Keep registration fees low to encourage participation from all sectors. Solicit funds on-line through crowd sourcing. Accept donations from endorsing organizations (but do *not* make this a prerequisite for endorsement). Pass the hat after lunch so participants can donate if they like what they are hearing. Raffle off railroad items of interest has proven to be a quick and easy funding source.

5 — Workshops: Focus on rail safety issues that are important to railroad workers and that resonate with the broader community as a whole. Encourage community groups to publicize their struggles for a safe and healthy sustainable environment. Build towards the conclusion that a labor-community alliance around rail safety is possible and highly desirable.

6 — Conclusion: Discussion of ways and means by which railroad workers and community activists can build upon this conference and support each others' efforts on the ground going forward.

If you are interested in hosting a conference in your community, RWU can help. We have funds, speakers, ideas, contacts and experience to get the job done. The American people are hungry for this stuff. They want to know our story and they want to help. It's up to each and every one of us rails to bring our issues out into the light of day, and to help to build this labor-community alliance. For more information, please contact RWU at info@railroadworkersunited.org or call 206-984-3051.

Organizations Endorsing the Initial Conferences

- A. Philip Randolph Institute - Seattle Chapter
- Asian Pacific Environmental Alliance
- Aboriginal Alliance of Northern Alberta
- Center for Biological Diversity
- Citizens for a Better Environment—Richmond, CA
- Climate Solutions
- Evergreen Islands
- Forest Ethics
- Friends of Grays Harbor
- Greenpeace USA
- Industrial Workers of the World – Bay Area; Bellingham & Kentucky GMB.s
- SMART—Transportation Division Locals #31 & #239
- ILWU – Oregon Area & Puget Sound District Councils;; ILWU Local #4
- Keepers of the Athabasca Watershed Council
- Mike Elliott - former Chair, BLET Washington State Legislative Board
- National Association of Retired & Veteran Rail Employees (NARVRE)
- PM Press
- Power Past Coal
- Pride & A Paycheck
- Richmond Environmental Justice Coalition
- Richmond Progressive Alliance (RPA)
- Rising Tide Seattle
- Sierra Club — Bay Area Chapter
- Socialist Alternative — Oakland/San Francisco Bay Area
- Sunflower Alliance
- System Change – Not Climate Change
- The Lands Council
- Transport Workers Solidarity Committee (TWSC)
- Troy Area Labor Council (AFL-CIO)
- Washington Environmental Council
- Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility
- Washington State Council of Fire Fighters
- 350 Seattle & 350 Sacramento



Opinion & Commentary

What Drives the Rail Carriers' Relentless Aggression?

The Fall 2012 issue of *The Highball* is when RWU first gave me the honor and privilege of venting thirty + years of accumulated anger and indignation inspired by working for the railroad since 1974. My therapist is convinced that being able to utilize this paper "soapbox" for a cathartic stream of consciousness ranting and raging every three months has done wonders for my blood boiling hatred of the ruling class (especially toward the railroad "robber barons", past and present) and has helped me to control any anger management issues that may flow from all of the above. With my first article back in 2012 "Attention All Rails: Beware the Carriers' Section 6 Notices", I attempted to analyze the carriers' 2009 wish list and pose the stakes involved for us.

Now that the National Carriers Conference Committee (the coalition of most Class 1's and many regional and short line railroads) has issued their 2014 Section 6 Notice, this is as good a time as any to pick up where the last one left off.

While this new edition of their ultimate fantasy wish list is pretty much the same verbiage as the last ten years, over the course of the past year they have decisively ramped up their aggressive determination to make their dreams come true. The most significant manifestations of this include, but are not limited to: 1) The Wheeling and Lake Erie forcing its BLE-T represented engineers and conductors on strike, demanding they submit to engineer only operations after seven years without a raise. 2) The attempt by the BNSF, in shameless collaboration with elements of the SMART-TD leadership, to entice conductors to sell their souls (and their jobs) for an engineer only agreement. 3) The CP (US) attempt to bribe us with a blood money for anything-goes free-for-all agreement, which would further compromise safety, trashing our dignity and what's left of any quality of life. 4) Then CP forced our Canadian brothers and sisters in the operating crafts to go on strike over the same issues before the TCRC leadership surrendered to binding arbitration.

What drives this intensified aggression? I'll let the carriers answer that in their own words with the lead paragraph from their 2014 Section 6 Notice (editorial comments in brackets are mine): "America's freight railroads have combined innovation, enormous capital investments, a commitment to customer service, and a talented [that's right] and highly compensated [not enough for what we endure and sacrifice] work force to forge and sustain a vibrant industry. The railroads must continue to make responsible decisions and investments so that we can safely [give them credit for saying that with a straight face], efficiently and consistently meet and exceed customer expectations. Our success in the marketplace is essential to attracting investors, facilitating industry growth and stability, and providing long term career opportunities to our employees."

From the 2009 Section 6 Notice: Referring to the "...tens of billions of dollars..." needed to maintain and expand the infrastructure, "The funds needed for those massive capital investments will not flow into the industry, however, unless railroads consistently deliver excellent financial results. In-

vestors demand competitive returns, and will take their money elsewhere if we cannot meet their expectations."

I completely agree with these assessments by the carriers. Whoa, I can hear some of you howling, "Hey! Whose side are you on?!" Fair enough, please allow me to explain.

Under the present economic and political realities the above paragraphs accurately describe how the world turns, at least in our neck of the woods. Over the years many co-workers and union officials have observed, "The railroads are making record profits so we should get a nice raise." The problem is that under capitalism, the rate of profit/return on investments is *never* enough. Example: Let's say the railroad pays investors a 10% profit on their investment but Acme Corporation is paying 15%. Seeking the highest rate of return the investors will put their money into Acme Corp. until Brand X Enterprise offers a 20% return. So it goes and so it goes and so it goes... etc. In order to compete with Brand X for the investors' money, the railroads must increase their rate of profit. What the carriers have to pay for locomotives, fuel, rail etc. is pretty much set by the market. There is not much flexibility in their overhead. The one "commodity" necessary to operate that the carriers *do* have flexibility with is what they compensate us for our labor power. This explains their never ending *relentless* quest to squeeze us to the bone, maximizing productivity out of the least amount of workers. Overtime is more cost effective than paying benefits to "excess" employees, in spite of the costs of insurance premiums, deductibles and co-pays.

So as a direct result of all this, my conductors now routinely ride mile long shoves, hanging on for dear life, on ergonomically challenged auto racks — at times in minus 30 degree wind chills and/or blizzard conditions — because the carrier has eliminated all the utility positions. By intensifying the work and flagrantly violating our agreements. The Canadian Pacific has posted record revenues and earnings, a record low operating ratio, and a stock share price that has *more than tripled!* The CEO of CP, E Hunter Harrison was recently awarded "Railroader of the Year" by *Railway Age*. He pulled in a cool \$17.8 million last year. Isn't *that* special?! Is it any wonder I've been a an angry "young" man since I first began to comprehend the concept of injustice in all its many forms?

The bosses' and the bureaucrats' mantra is: "That's the way it is, kid...always has been & always will be." To the angry "young" men & women out there who don't accept what happens in our workplace, our communities and the world around us, RWU welcomes & needs you to join us on this battlefield in the universal struggle for social justice.

To be continued...

Mark Burrows currently serves as the Organizer for Railroad Workers United. He is a member of UTU Local #1433 and works as an engineer for CP Rail in Chicago. He first hired out in 1974. This is the 11th installment in this series.





Opinion & Commentary

Building the Labor - Community Alliance: A Window of Opportunity for Rails

Events of recent months have presented railroad workers and their organizations with an unprecedented window of opportunity. The surprising number of high profile derailments, explosions and collisions has riveted the public's attention on the railroad in a way that has not been seen in decades. Citizens groups are up in arms about the potential dangers of oil trains that are rolling with ever greater frequency through their communities. Environmentalists are aghast at what disaster might strike if and when the next oil train derails in some pristine or protected watershed. Shippers have been outraged over poor service of late. Senators are outraged at commuter train wrecks and loss of life that they say should never have happened. And even the FRA's new acting Administrator is (rhetorically at least) getting into the act.

All this public attention on the railroad makes for a golden opportunity for us as railroad workers to tell our story. The public is ready, willing and able to hear it like never before. Single employee operations of trains; chronic train crew fatigue; excessively long and heavy trains; draconian attendance and disciplinary policies; poor train prediction lineups; improper maintenance; harassment and retaliation for reporting workplace injuries and safety failures. All these issues and more — our issues — are all of a sudden, now issues of grave concern for the public as well.

RWU has grabbed a tiger by the tail and has made the first

effort to channel this public concern and outrage into a progressive direction. Our first attempts to "bring railroading to the people" in Richmond, CA and Olympia, WA have been well received. The general public is hungry for information and ready to stand with us railroaders in our struggles with the rail carriers. Many were shocked and outraged at what they heard at the conferences, and pledged their unwavering solidarity with us.

Never during either conference did we hear even one person speak against trains or the railroad. If anything, those in attendance were more pro-rail than the average citizen. But just like railroad workers, they have a vital interest in trains moving goods and people as efficiently, safely, and sustainably as possible. *To be critical of the rail carriers is not necessarily to be critical of trains nor the railroad!*

The emerging labor—community alliance is just getting started. We are pulling out of the station onto the mainline brothers and sisters. We have the highball. Let's make a run with this thing and see where it takes us. Everyone of you rails - working and retired - can play a role in building this movement. Talk to your friends and neighbors, address your local civic group, join a community or environmental organization and help spread the word, organize a conference like the ones described on Page 4 & 5. RWU can help. Contact us and climb aboard. We need you!

Preparing for the Rail Industry's Counter Attack on Single Employee Crews

Last September, railroad workers won one. By an overwhelming margin, trainmen on the BNSF defeated a tentative agreement (TA) that would have decimated their ranks and provided the BNSF the ability to operate over the road trains with a lone employee. Had the TA been approved, the dominoes would no doubt have quickly fallen, and within a few years, the major rail carriers would likely have achieved their long awaited goal of single employee train crew operations.

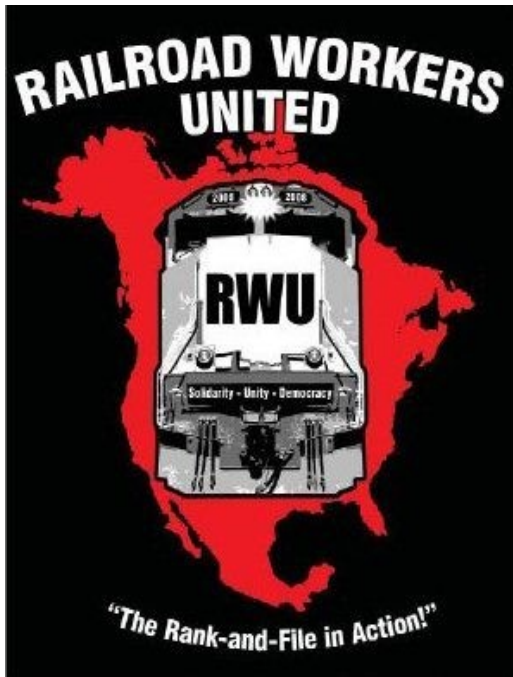
The rail industry (and certain segments of the union officialdom) was shocked and a bit embarrassed by the level of militancy and determination by the rank & file, and the lopsided vote tally (80% voted NO). The BNSF, the rail industry and its mouthpieces were largely muted for the next six months. But the carriers will lick their wounds, regroup, and go on the offensive once again. In March, we got a glimpse of what their strategy may — at least partially — consist of, when the BNSF announced its intention to use drone technology to inspect its property and trains. Not missing a beat, industry mouthpiece *Railway Age* insinuated that the use of drone and "remote" technology just might be the industry's ultimate weapon to render our labor superfluous and to beat us into submission.

Obviously, the fight over single employee train crews is far from over. But while the carriers have their battle plans, we have ours. We are taking this fight to the people, to county fairs, festivals, to the community and to the streets. Our recent experience organizing conferences on the west coast has

revealed to us the depth and breadth of a burgeoning community and environmental movement deeply concerned with railroad safety, one that is open to our message — not just on the single employee crew issue — but for an end to chronic fatigue, excessively long and heavy trains and all the rest.

Building up this alliance with the community is a two-way street. Railroad workers need to come out of the shadows and into the light of day. Show your support for community and environmental efforts. Go to a demonstration for clean air and clean water with a picket signs that reads: "Another Railroad Worker for a Better Environment". Join an organization in your community that is concerned about oil trains and derailments, blocked crossings, and other rail related issues.

Finally, demand that your union leaders get involved. Imagine the possibilities, if our unions — with their vast financial and logistical resources — threw their weight into this fight. RWU just pulled off two conferences that drew 225 participants from a diverse group of labor and community activists. Citizens are aroused like never before around issues of rail safety. Railroad workers have felt their power in voting down the now infamous single crew deal on BNSF. Let's come together and build this labor-community alliance. Let's put the carriers on notice that they will not win this war. That railroad workers and American citizens alike are fired up and we are going to win this one. Together, a coalition of labor, community, and the environment is invincible. We will prevail!



Get Your RWU T-shirts & Hats Now!

T-shirts available in Black or Gray in various sizes. RWU logo at left is on the back (or front) of shirt. See the RWU Online Store for sizes/colors.

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

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)

Shipping & Handling is just \$1.00 if mailed to addresses inside the U.S.

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

RWU P.O. Box 2131 Reno, NV. 89505

OR

Order and pay with your paypal or credit card via our website at:

www.railroadworkersunited.org

Click on RWU Store

"The 'pure and simple' trade unionism of the past does not answer the requirements of today, and they who insist that it does are blind to the changes that are going on about them, and out of harmony with the progressive forces of the age."

Eugene V. Debs, founder of the American Railway Union
The Appeal to Reason, 1904



Railroad Workers United



Membership Application

Railroad Workers United needs you! Please keep your membership dues current. If your membership is about to expire or has already expired, please renew today and remain in good standing. And if you are not already a member of RWU, please consider joining; then fill out the application below and mail it in with your dues. Thanks!

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Email Address _____

Union _____ Local # _____ Employer _____

Terminal _____ Craft _____ Years of Service _____

Union Position (if any) _____

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: **Railroad Workers United P.O. Box 2131 Reno, NV. 89505**

OR join on-line at www.railroadworkersunited.org