



## **What is a Union?**

- A union is a group of workers who join together to achieve certain goals and objectives. Negotiating improved wages, working conditions and benefits are common goals to most of today's organized labor. Ensuring fair treatment from employers in matters of job assignment, layoffs and promotions are other areas of collective bargaining in which unions play a major role.
- Belonging to a union provides services and protection that can only come from coverage of collective bargaining agreements negotiated by experienced labor leaders.

## **The United Transportation Union**

- In 1969, The Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen & Enginemen, the Order of Railroad Conductors & Brakemen and the Switchmen's Union of North America merged to become the United Transportation Union (UTU) with its International office headquartered at Cleveland, Ohio. Although the Organization's membership primarily consists of conductors, brakemen, switchmen, yardmasters, hostlers and locomotive engineers, it has continued to grow and diversify over the years. Its ranks now include other associated railway crafts, bus operators and mechanics, and airline pilots.
- The UTU is a broad-based, transportation labor union representing about 130,000 active and retired railroad, bus and mass transit workers in the United States and Canada. With offices in Ottawa, Ontario and Washington, D.C., the UTU is the largest railroad operating union in the rail industry. It includes approximately 650 locals in North America, representing railroad, bus and mass transit employees on every Class 1 railroad, many regional and shortline railroads, and approximately 34 buss and transit systems. Recently, our membership has grown to include airline pilots, dispatchers and other airport personnel.

## **How is the UTU organized?**

- The collective, or bargaining, branch of the UTU has three levels of operation.
  - The Local Committee of Adjustment (LCA) is the first level of handling for all claims and grievances and has the authority to enter

into and interpret local agreements. Each Local may have more than one LCA depending on the craft diversity of those represented with each one exercising jurisdiction in the designated craft. Each LCA is headed by a Local Chairman who is elected from the craft every four years.

- The General Committee of Adjustment (GCA) handles all claims and grievances once local efforts have been exhausted and generally has jurisdiction over numerous LCAs. This Committee has the authority to enter into and interpret agreements affecting all LCAs under its jurisdiction. It is headed by the General Chairman, who is also elected every four years.
- The International serves as both the administrative body for the entire Organization and the bargaining agent for matters of national scope. Officers serving at this level are elected every four years by the elected delegates from each Local.

### **The UTU Constitution**

- The UTU Constitution is a set rules and regulations by which our organization operates. From the International Bylaws to the duties of the Local Chairman and how local meetings are run, the Constitution is an all encompassing document that is referenced across our union on a daily basis. In order to exercise your rights contained in this document, you must be a member in good standing with our organization. A hard copy of this document will be provided you when your application for membership is accepted.

### **Union Participation**

- For a member to fully benefit from Union membership, they should attempt to attend all regular and special UTU local meetings. Our collective bargaining agreements, local, system and national, are continually scrutinized by the Carrier; thus, requiring periodic changes in our posture. There is no better way to stay abreast of these changes, and protect your collective rights, than to frequently attend these functions and actively participate.
- Members can also participate by volunteering to serve on local special committees or running for many of the elected offices within the Organization. Both can serve as a learning experience and can ensure that your voice is being heard. Unlike a business or corporation where direction is generally borne from senior management, the elected officers of your union are predominantly influenced by the core membership ranks. Union officers are elected to represent and serve their members. Being part of this can provide a sense of gratification and solidarity.

## **UTU Membership Benefits and Services**

- **United Transportation Union Insurance Association (UTUIA) - Membership in the UTU provides access to a multitude of insurance policies offered by UTUIA that are designed to minimize possible losses due to hardship, injury or death. Affiliation with this group also allows any premiums to be conveniently deducted from your payroll earnings. UTUIA employs numerous Field Representatives that continue to hold seniority in the craft and are intimately familiar with your workplace. If you have not had the opportunity to speak with a representative at one of your local UTU meetings, check the listing enclosed in the Section to determine who is responsible for your area/Local.**
- **Designated Legal Counsel (DLC) - Employees who suffer a personal injury while in the service of a rail carrier are subject to the Federal Employee's Liability Act (FELA). The Act was enacted in the early 1900's to address the number and severity of accidents in the industry. Unlike Workman's Compensation, financial remedy under the Act is relative to the employee's culpability or contribution to the incident. It is therefore essential that our members know their rights and have access to professional consultation to assist with the reporting and handling of their injury.**

In an effort to provide our members with this assistance, the UTU has 'designated' legal counsel that are familiar with the provisions of the Act and are experienced and knowledgeable in representing injured employees. Many of these legal counsels also employ field representatives that regularly attend local meetings.

Please take the time to familiarize yourself with your rights when injured on the job and do not hesitate to enlist the help of DLC or their field representatives for additional consultation and advice. A complete list of UTU DLC, with contact information, is included in this Section for your reference.

- **UTU Political Action Committee (UTU PAC) - The UTU PAC allows our Organization to financially assist the people in public service that are sympathetic to the needs of our members. Due to the nature of our industry, the political arena may heavily influence job availability, our workplace environment and your pension. Contributing to the UTU PAC assists our Legislative Department with influencing the decisions important to all of us. More on the UTU PAC may be found later in this Section, or contact your Local's Legislative Representative to learn how to participate.**