

New officer fires up members of Local 1741

Lead, follow or get out of the way.

That is the credo of Ange Beloy, newly elected president of Local 1741, which represents drivers, staff members and yard workers employed by First Student in San Rafael, Calif.; Laidlaw Transit in San Francisco, Calif.; A&E in Daly City, Calif., and the Durham and San Mateo, Calif., school districts.

Activism in all areas, from grievance handling to elections to fraternalism, is the fire that drives Beloy.

The local has been representing drivers and other transit workers in the area for more than 30 years. "Over that time, our membership had become dormant. Well, all this is changing and we are in the process of doing a major overhaul, internally as well as externally," Beloy said.

"I would like to encourage other locals who may be in the same situation by telling our story of 'reorganization' and the things we are doing.

"For example, mechanics on the property belong to the machinists' union, and they had been in negotiations for the last 18 months," Beloy said. "The company kept threatening to take away their cost-of-living adjustments, bumping rights and to make them pay more for their health care. We sent a letter to Laidlaw supporting the mechanics, saying we would not cross picket lines and they should negotiate in good faith.

"On Dec. 6 we took to the streets with informational picketing to let the public know what was going on. Two weeks later the company gave the mechanics pretty much everything they wanted.

"It showed solidarity among the employees and it was a good education for a lot of our newer drivers," Beloy said.

UTU members also walked the picket lines with members of Local 2 of the Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees Union; they also held a food drive for the striking Local 2 members, which generated more than 1,000 pounds of food for their Thanksgiving.

"We also held a drive to raise donations to UTU PAC. Assistant California State Legislative Director Mike Anderson came down to San Francisco and got more pledges than at any other time in the history of our local," Beloy said.

"Local member Barry Prager entered a photo of one of our school buses parked under the Golden Gate Bridge in the *UTU News* photo of the month contest and was the winner last November," Beloy said.

Members of the local also campaigned vigorously for candidates in the presidential election, the San Francisco school board race and for Geraldo Sandoval and Tom Ammiano for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.



The members of Local 1741 in San Francisco, under the leadership of President Ange Beloy, have increased their political activism, heightened their union awareness and are working together for the betterment of all.

"All our candidates won," Beloy said.

"We also are working to educate our new local officers on how to best represent drivers and other workers. We also had many new members who needed to be taught to be good union members," Beloy said. "This local sent 12 representatives to the Reno regional meeting last year. When you are around unionism you feel unionism and then you project unionism.

"We also have been filing and winning numerous grievances up to and including mediations. We have one arbitration result pending, and that is raising morale and teaching the members how labor laws apply."

Four local members accompanied Bus Department Vice President Roy Arnold to the Million Worker March in Washington, D.C., in October, Beloy said.

"Telling our story will definitely be a morale booster to the members of Local 1741 and educational to other UTU members," Beloy said.

UTU wins pay, benefit hikes for engineer trainees

Locomotive engineer trainees on the Norfolk Southern are benefiting from a new agreement just negotiated on their behalf by the UTU and overwhelmingly ratified.

The agreement greatly increases the pay of engineer trainees, and improves benefits available to them as well.

The pact was hammered out by General Chairpersons Paul Emert, L.P. "Pate" King and Bruce Daniels. General Chairperson Jim Houk also was involved in the negotiations.

Under the new agreement, engineer trainees

will receive a guaranteed weekly training rate of pay of \$823.57 per week or \$1,647.14 biweekly while in classroom training, and \$200 per training trip, including deadheading.

Trainees also are entitled to personal leave days in accordance with their years of service.

Also, engineer trainees temporarily called back on a day-to-day basis to train service will receive their trainee pay in addition to their train service pay.

Under the former agreement, trainees received about \$1,599 biweekly, \$130 per training trip, and

no personal leave days.

The agreement applies to members of the UTU and BLET.

The UTU officers negotiated the deal so that train service employees moving into locomotive engineer training positions did not have to take a cut in pay.

"I was getting complaints from men being promoted to locomotive engineer and having to take a pay cut of about \$100 a day," Emert said. "This is a major pay increase for most trainees and it will benefit about 35 members a month."

FRA rules aim to increase train visibility

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Reflective materials will be installed on the sides of locomotives and freight rail cars as a safety measure to make trains more visible to motorists at railroad crossings under a rule published by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).

Nearly one quarter of all highway/rail grade crossing collisions involve motor vehicles running into trains occupying grade crossings, according to the FRA.

The large size and dark colorization of trains in combination with poor lighting or limited visibility may contribute to motorists having difficulty detecting the train in their path.

The reflective material will help reduce the number and severity of these types of accidents by giving motorists an additional visual warning of the presence of a train, FRA said.

ReflectORIZATION has become an indispensable tool for enhancing visibility and safety in virtually all modes of transportation.

Extending the benefits of reflective materials to railroads will improve highway/rail grade crossing safety and prevent many avoidable accidents, FRA said.

The Final Rule on ReflectORIZATION of Rail Freight Rolling Stock requires railroads to install yellow or white reflective materials on locomotives over a five-year timeframe and on freight rail cars over a 10-year period.

The reflective materials will be installed on all newly constructed locomotives and freight rail cars and on existing ones during periodic maintenance or repair, unless alternate implementation plans have been developed that meet the requisite timetables.

The effective date of the rule is March 4, 2005.

The final rule published Jan. 3 is the most recent effort by FRA to increase the visibility of trains at grade crossings.

Previously, FRA issued a regulation requiring locomotives to have headlamps and auxiliary lights to help motorists better judge the distance and speed of approaching trains.

These and many other initiatives of the FRA, the rail industry, states, and local communities, have dramatically improved highway/rail grade crossing safety, FRA said.

Since 1994, the number of vehicle-train collisions at highway/rail grade crossings has decreased by 41 percent and the number of fatalities has been reduced by 47 percent, according to the FRA.