

THE

TRAIN DISPATCHER



Metra Member Scott Zriny

Metra Member Nancy LoPresti

WE ARE #ATDASTRONG

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Legal Notice – Dues

Article 2, Section 4(b) defines the national dues rate. Effective October 1, 2024, the national dues rate is \$128.35 per month. System dues are determined separately by each system committee as shown below. To determine your monthly obligation, add the system dues amount shown below to the national dues rate.

4b. (1) The monthly National dues of all Active members of this Association ("full dues"), except as otherwise provided in this Section shall be determined annually by multiplying the average trick rail traffic controller (train dispatcher) total daily rate of pay (eight hours straight time pay plus allowances) in effect on July 1 by .295 and rounding up to the next five cents, provided such dues shall not be less than what was in effect on the preceding June 30.

(2) The monthly National dues for active members holding positions rated less than \$300.00 per day as of July 1, 2019, shall be determined by multiplying the average daily rate of pay (eight hours straight time pay plus allowances) in effect on July 1 for each craft by .295 and rounding up to the next five cents.

System Dues Rates

Effective October 1, 2024

Alaska: \$22.15	IHB: \$26.45	NS: \$23.75
Amtrak TD/PD: \$20.90	KRR MOW: \$10.65	PATH: \$24.90
Amtrak LD: \$21.85	KRR TY&E: \$12.25	SIRT: \$20.70
Berkshire & Eastern: \$17.70	L&I BO: \$9.85	SunRail: \$19.20
BNSF: \$26.05	L&I TD: \$15.05	TRRA: \$29.75
BNSF (MRL): \$25.00	Keolis: \$18.20	Trinity TD: \$20.45
BRC: \$25.15	NICTD: \$15.05	Trinity TY&E: \$15.35
Conrail: \$22.85	Metra: \$19.45	Tri-Rail: \$20.65
CPKC: \$24.45	NJT PS: \$20.85	WC: \$24.30
CSX – East: \$23.65	NJT RiverLINE: \$17.00	
CSX – South: \$25.20	NJT TD: \$20.85	

Death Benefit Beneficiary

The Executive Board adopted the following policy change:
"If you have not designated a Beneficiary at the time of your death for any amount of benefits payable because of your death, the benefit amount will be paid to:

1. your surviving spouse, if any;
2. your surviving children, if there is no surviving spouse; or
3. your estate, if there are no surviving children.

Any payment will discharge our liability for the amount so paid."

If you would like to establish a beneficiary or modify an existing beneficiary form, go to our website www.atda.org go to member forms and select ATDA Beneficiary Form. Print out the form and once completed, return the form to the Office of the Secretary-Treasurer.

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*Affiliated with the A.F.L./C.I.O
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From the President



L. Ed Dowell, President

priorities, with each carrying potential for significant impact upon ATDA members.

On the appointment front, new leaders are poised to influence labor and transportation policy for years to come. New Secretary of Labor Lori Chavez-DeRemer, for example, is notable for her support of bipartisan, pro-labor legislation while in Congress. New Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy, on the other hand, recently revoked \$63.9 million in federal funding for the proposed Dallas-to-Houston high-speed rail project. David Fink, former CEO of Pan Am, has been nominated to lead the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). This effectively inserts the perspective of railroad management into one of the most critical positions impacting our ongoing efforts.

In addition to appointments, the Trump Administration has also tested the judicial system by firing a member of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). While waiting for the Supreme Court to weigh in, the NLRB lacks the mandatory quorum it needs to render decisions, which has created a backlog of cases sitting idle at the Board. This has directly impacted ATDA, as we currently have an unresolved dispute pending before the Board.

In the regulatory sphere, the FRA recently extended the deadline for dispatcher certification plans by one full year and canceled the task of and deactivated the Rail Safety Advisory Committee (RSAC) working group on the Confidential Close Call Reporting System (C3RS). Both actions have prompted concern in labor and safety circles.

While the full impact and plan of the Trump administration is yet to unfold, its philosophical priorities are already coming into focus: The plan is to deregulate, cut federal funding, and install leaders allied with this agenda.

Since President Trump took office, his actions have rapidly reshaped the near-term landscape for both rail transportation and rail labor. The changes are due to both his leadership appointments and policy

Despite this apparent shift, ATDA is eager to engage with the Trump administration in securing a better future for our members. Furthermore, I recognize that ATDA includes members who support President Trump and his plans for our Nation. While White House administrations change, however, the mission of ATDA does not. We will relentlessly pursue the best interests of our members, and we will work with governmental leaders to achieve this, regardless of their party affiliation or political ideology.

Earlier this year, the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) and the General Services Administration (GSA) announced 7 Railroad Retirement Board office closures, including one in Jacksonville, FL. Rail Labor quickly and collectively responded to oppose the closures. As a result, the Administration reversed course in mid-April and agreed to keep the offices open. This is a prime example of why we remain engaged within the political sphere and why we remain committed to actively protecting Railroad Retirement.

As a further demonstration of such action, I recently spoke at a listening session for the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. It was an important opportunity for me to advocate that Congress should fully appropriate the Railroad Retirement Board and to stop playing politics with our members' and retirees' benefits.

In May, we will act further on behalf of our members within the legislative arena, when members of the ATDA Executive Board and System Committee Officers participate in Railroad Safety Days on Capitol Hill. This event will put them face to face with legislators from both parties, as your representatives advocate for our members' interests.

Now, more than ever, the dynamic nature of labor and the transportation industry is on full display. But at the same time, our resolve in providing you with the best possible representation remains unchanged. In the days ahead, we remain committed to providing this and to keeping you informed as the political impact unfolds.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Ed Dowell'.

L. Ed Dowell
President

American Train Dispatchers Association

ATDA PRESIDENT DOWELL SPEAKS TO U.S. HOUSE TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE



ATDA President Ed Dowell

Washington, D.C.

– In a continued demonstration of leadership on national rail policy, ATDA President Ed Dowell recently advocated for member interests at a listening session of the U.S. House of Representatives Transportation

and Infrastructure Committee. President Dowell's remarks focused on two urgent priorities for the union: Railroad Retirement and the emerging challenges of automation and artificial intelligence (AI) applications within in railroad operations.

Dowell reminded the committee that Railroad Retirement is funded by rail employees and employers, not federal tax dollars. Based upon this, he contended that "Congress should appropriate the RRB's budget and not allow it to be skewed by politics." Speaking on the critical role of the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB), Dowell emphasized that it should be fully appropriated, because "It now takes an average of 450 days to get approved for a disability. This is unacceptable and must change." Dowell further explained that underfunding and irresponsible Railroad Retirement office closures have a direct negative impact on retirees that have dedicated their working lives to the good of our nation.

Turning to the increasing reliance on automation and AI technologies in the railroad industry, Dowell raised strong concerns about the pace and transparency of implementation. He said, "The time for Congress to act is now. Strong, clear legislation is needed to ensure these technologies are properly legislated, reviewed, and monitored."

Dowell conveyed that train dispatchers, who rely on clear data and sound protocols, cannot afford for automation to fail or make

inconsistent decisions in high-pressure scenarios and that, "railroads are using their employees and the general public, your [U.S. House of Representatives] constituents, to beta test their automation and AI projects with the assumptions that train dispatchers will find the glitches before something bad happens."

He further raised concerns that the Railroads were using these technologies to cut worker positions, stating, "Because of their unchecked ability to use automation and AI, railroads are combining dispatcher jobs to unsafe levels. Technological tools designed to enhance operations are being used in ways that prioritize profit over people and safety."

Dowell concluded by stating, "the work of our members is vital to the safe and efficient operation of the rail industry. But we cannot do this work alone. We need Congress to stand alongside us and take meaningful action to protect the safety, rights, and futures of rail workers."

Dowell's appearance on Capitol Hill, along with that of ATDA Vice President Colin Thurman (who accompanied Dowell to the meeting), signals ATDA's firm commitment to protecting the interests of its members, both active and retired, as well as the safety of the American public. ATDA will continue to aggressively provide such advocacy through political channels while engaging proactively with policymakers on issues shaping the future of the railroad industry.



Rail labor leaders at the recent listening session of the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

ATDA APPLAUDS PASSAGE THE REEF ACT

Cleveland, Ohio – The American Train Dispatchers Association (ATDA) is proud to join the rail labor community in celebrating Congressional passage of the Railroad Employee Equity and Fairness (REEF) Act. This landmark legislation permanently exempts Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (RUIA) benefits (including unemployment and sickness benefits) from sequestration, ending the unfair 5.7% reduction that railroaders have endured for far too long.

Resulting from years of collaborative advocacy among labor unions and across political lines, the legislation's passage represents a moment of political justice for railroad workers. By eliminating the outdated sequestration tax, which reduced Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) benefit payments by \$50 every two weeks, the REEF Act provides additional financial relief to railroaders when they need it most.

"For years, these cuts compounded the financial strain rail labor members felt who were already struggling to make ends meet on limited benefits," said ATDA Vice

President Brandon Denucci. *"While \$50 may not seem like much to some, it could mean the difference between paying a bill or putting food on the table. This legislation is a major step toward treating our industry's workers with the dignity they deserve."*

Denucci went on to emphasize the collective effort required to achieve this success: *"This is a prime example of what can be accomplished when labor unions and legislators work hand in hand to address injustices. Our members and the entire railroad workforce can take pride in knowing their advocacy played a critical role in securing this long-overdue relief, and the ATDA will continue fighting to ensure fair treatment and equity for all railroad employees."*

The ATDA commends the tireless efforts of all who contributed to this victory, including our brothers and sisters from other rail labor organizations who raised their voices, and the lawmakers who championed the cause. With the legislation now passed, it will now advance to the desk of President Joe Biden, who is expected to sign the REEF Act into law.

ATDA MEMBERS RATIFY NATIONAL COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT

Cleveland, Ohio – On January 7, 2025, members of the American Train Dispatchers Association (ATDA) ratified a National Collective Bargaining Agreement that will provide wage and healthcare improvements to members from several railroads. As a result, members from the Conrail and Wisconsin Central (CN) systems will receive wage increases compounding to 18.77% by July 1, 2029. The negotiated agreement also provides healthcare enhancements to those members, along with those from the Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC), Northeast Illinois Regional Commuter Railroad (Metra), Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD), and Tri-Rail systems.

While the agreement's ratification will improve the lives of members from these railroads, it also marks a period of profound negotiating success for ATDA. The Union's members have now ratified wage or healthcare agreements covering members from 12 properties in the last 7 months alone.

Commenting on the latest ratification, ATDA President Ed Dowell said, *"Once again, our members' voices have been heard. This National Agreement was negotiated successfully without our members having to wait for years to receive their pay increases and healthcare enhancements, as well improvements to the National Vacation Agreement. Let's hope this round isn't an anomaly, but the pattern for future negotiations."*



ATDA ATTENDS LABOR INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY SUMMIT, THEN JOINS CULINARY WORKERS ON LAS VEGAS PICKET LINE



CSX System Committee General Chairman Ben Craft (Left) and ATDA Vice President Brandon Denucci (Right) at the 2025 Labor Innovation & Technology Summit.

Las Vegas, NV – During the week of January 6, 2025, ATDA Vice President Brandon Denucci and CSXT General Chairman and Automation and AI Committee Chair Ben Craft attended the sixth annual Labor Innovation and Technology Summit in Las Vegas, Nevada. Presented by SAG-AFTRA and the AFL-CIO, the event brought leaders together from across the labor movement, entertainment sector and technology space to discuss the emerging impacts of technological innovation on workers. More specifically, the event was designed to equip labor in formulating a strategic response to the proliferation of artificial intelligence in the workplace. This included seminars and panel discussions, which covered the topics of collective bargaining strategy, organizing efforts, and potential legislative approaches to the issue.

Additionally, while in Las Vegas, Denucci, Craft, and other members of the AFL-CIO walked the picket line outside the Virgin Hotel and

Casino with members of Culinary Workers Union Local 226. Nearly 700 members of local 226 have been on strike since November 15, 2024, after the hotel failed to present a contract offer containing fair wages and benefits for the workers. The union has maintained a continuous, 24-hour a day picket at the site ever since that day, making it the longest-lasting strike by the union in over 22 years.

Vice President Denucci celebrated ATDA's attendance stating, "The Summit was a great opportunity to hear from our brothers and sisters in other industries who have had success in negotiating protections and other strong language concerning technological advancements in their workplaces, including AI. I believe we can take a lot of what was discussed this week and use it as a starting point in our future negotiations with the carriers. It was also an honor to stand in solidarity with our courageous brothers and sisters of local 226 in support of their cause."

Committee Chair Craft echoed Denucci's comments, adding, "I'd like to thank President Dowell for affording me such a unique opportunity, and Vice President Denucci for his continued support in such a critical area of importance for our members. Artificial Intelligence and Automation technology is set to impact every facet of our industry and is being touted as a means to replace us. So, it was encouraging to see our Union brothers and sisters from every craft across the country unite against this threat as we all prepare for the fight ahead. Also, I'd like to say what a privilege it was to walk the picket line with our brothers

and sisters from Culinary Union 226, and to support their fight for better wages and quality of life. As they say, "when we fight, we win!" The Automation and AI committee was established by ATDA President Dowell in July of 2024 to analyze rail carrier usage of emerging technologies, and to advise ATDA's National Leadership in the development of a strategy to counter technological threats to our members' livelihoods. The committee is overseen by Vice President Denucci, Chaired by General Chairman Craft, and comprised of six additional ATDA members from across the nation.

SARAH GOUTHRO ELECTED AS MBCR GENERAL CHAIRPERSON



North Billerica, Massachusetts – On December 20, 2024, American Train Dispatchers Association (ATDA) member Sarah Gouthro was elected as General Chairperson of the MBCR System Committee. In this role, Gouthro

will represent ATDA members on both the Berkshire & Eastern and Keolis Systems. Prior to this election, Gouthro served as MBCR Vice General Chairwoman and System Treasurer. Commenting on her election, Gouthro said, "Words cannot express how grateful I am to the members of my committee for their trust and support to represent them in this capacity. Our future is together, and I look forward to the opportunity to fight for our future together."



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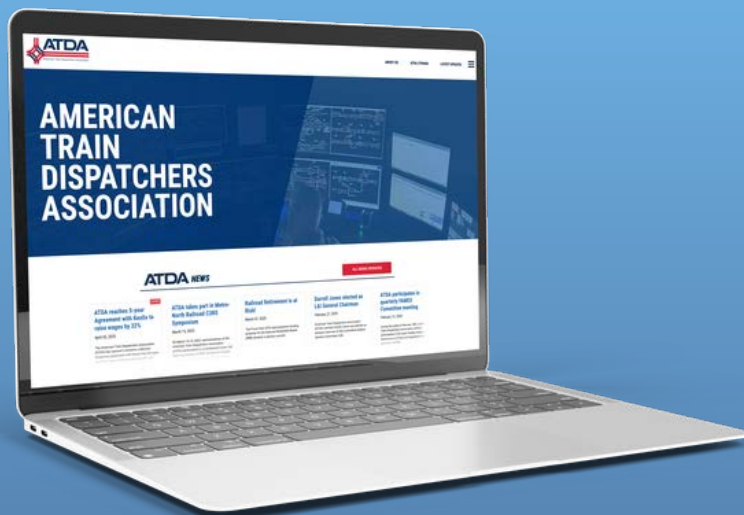


See more at unionplus.org



ATDA 12-2022

ATDA.ORG WEBSITE RELAUNCHED WITH NEW LOOK & FEATURES



The American Train Dispatchers Association has relaunched its official website, ATDA.org, marking a significant step forward for the Organization's digital media presence. Check it out today!

NEW FEATURES:

ATDA STRONG

The solidarity of our members is strength of our union. ATDA STRONG was designed as a video showcase to prominently display that strength within our new digital media footprint.

ATDA ENGAGE

With ATDA ENGAGE, members now have direct login access to our secure membership database, empowering you to manage your own contact details and stay connected.

ATDA GEAR

We're also excited to unveil ATDA GEAR, where members can purchase custom-designed, union-made ATDA apparel at our cost with no markup.

ATDA NOW

ATDA NOW serves as the official organizing web page of the ATDA, providing an informative gateway for rail professionals seeking to organize their workplace and secure ATDA representation.

We invite you to explore the new ATDA.org, and to take advantage of the resources that were designed with you in mind.



ATDA ATTENDS 2025 AFL-CIO DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. HUMAN & CIVIL RIGHTS CONFERENCE



Tri-Rail System Committee General Chair Erica Ray and ATDA Secretary-Treasurer Bill Sikes

Austin, Texas – From January 8-12, 2025, representatives of the American Train Dispatchers Association (ATDA) participated in the 2025 AFL-CIO Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Human & Civil Rights Conference in Austin, Texas. As a gathering of almost one thousand union workers from over thirty labor organizations, the event focused on unity through solidarity for America's labor movement.

The conference featured a variety of speakers who reinforced this theme, including AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler and US Congresswoman Jasmine Crockett. Topical panels were also featured, which focused on the advancement of the Labor movement for all American Workers. Then, on the event's final day, breakout training was provided to strengthen worker advocacy and the collective bargaining process.

Reflecting on the conference's impact, ATDA's liaison to the AFL-CIO for Civil, Human, and Women's rights, Erica Ray, said, *"It was great to be back together with our union siblings from all over the country, especially after the AFL-CIO has now added over 2 million additional members from SEIU (Service Employees International Union). The bigger we are, the better and stronger we are. We know we have a fight ahead for our ATDA members, but we are ready for that fight!"*

ATDA Secretary-Treasurer Bill Sikes, who also attended the event, said *"I am honored to have attended this event, and I was overwhelmed by the welcome we received from so many other union members. It served as an important reminder that our solidarity binds us together as we fight for the pay, benefits, and working conditions that our highly skilled members deserve. We will fight that fight for all of our members because we're all in this together."*



Nearly 1000 union workers gather in solidarity at the event

ATDA TAKES PART IN C3RS SYMPOSIUM



From left to right: ATDA Vice President Brandon Denucci, BNSF System Committee Vice General Chairman Jessica Stone, Amtrak System Committee Vice General Chairman Mike DePue, and ATDA Vice President Kevin Porter.

New York, New York – On March 12-13, 2025, representatives of the American Train Dispatchers Association (ATDA) participated in a Confidential Close Call Reporting System (C3RS) Symposium hosted by the Metro-North Railroad at Grand Central Station in Midtown Manhattan, New York City. Representatives of several labor organizations, railroads, and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) came together for the event, which focused on the current impact of C3RS and its potential to prevent future railroad accidents. Since FRA designed the program to gather root cause analysis of close call railroad events while shielding involved employees from the threat of discipline, this event marks another important and collaborative step toward improving rail safety.

ATDA's attending representatives at the event were Vice President Brandon Denucci (who presented to the symposium), Vice President Kevin Porter, Amtrak System Committee Vice General Chairman Mike DePue, and BNSF System Committee Vice General Chairman Jessica Stone. Reflecting on the importance of making ATDA's

voice heard at the event, Denucci stated, "The opportunity for railroads and labor to share their successes and perspectives within their respective C3RS programs was both enlightening and encouraging." He added, "Presenting ATDA's C3RS experience to attendees was a valuable opportunity to showcase how the Organization has leveraged the program to enhance safety and address longstanding, often overlooked issues."

ATDA Vice President Kevin Porter agreed, saying, "Hearing the success stories of C3RS and about the insight it is providing was encouraging. C3RS is about continuously making the railroads safer, and the opportunity for all sides to share its specific impact is an important way to reinforce its purpose".

ATDA PARTICIPATES IN QUARTERLY FAMES COMMITTEE MEETING



Atlanta, Georgia – During the week of February 10th, American Train Dispatchers Association (ATDA) participated in the latest Fatality Analysis of Maintenance-of-Way and Signalmen (FAMES) quarterly meeting. Held in Atlanta, Georgia, FAMES is a voluntary, consensus-based Committee that identifies risks, trends, and other factors that impact the safety of railroad roadway workers. Designed as a collaborative, non-regulatory effort to save railroad worker lives, the FAMES

committee includes representatives from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), rail labor organizations, railroad carriers, and other United States government agencies.

ATDA has participated in FAMES since its 2009 inception, because it recognizes the importance of its voice in making work safer for all craft workers. The Organization was represented at this event by ATDA Vice President Kevin Porter, who said, *"Being at these meetings and providing a Train Dispatcher's perspective is vital to improving MOW safety. The MOW representatives in attendance appreciate our contribution and they know we're all in this together. We will continue to participate because we know what's at stake and we must work together to protect our brothers and sisters working in the field."*

FRA ANNOUNCES SECOND DELAY OF TRAIN DISPATCHER CERTIFICATION DEADLINES, REOPENS PETITIONS FOR RECONSIDERATION

Washington, D.C. – For the second time in 2025, The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has granted a delay for the implementation of its Certification Program requirements for Train Dispatchers and signal employees. The latest delay extends deadlines by a full year, now requiring railroads to designate certified Train Dispatchers, and issue corresponding certificates by March 17, 2026.

Along with the latest delay, FRA has reopened earlier submitted petitions about the rule for reconsideration. While FRA has already ruled on and rejected many of the petitions, the election of Donald Trump as President could alter FRA's approach to such regulatory action and yield very different results.

Responding to the delays, ATDA Vice President Brandon Denucci said, *"While we struggle with the rationale behind its decision to further delay the implementation of more stringent training and qualification requirements for*

these safety sensitive positions, we respect FRA's decision and its response to the other petitions," said ATDA Vice President Brandon Denucci. *"ATDA will be prepared to thoroughly vet each Certification program as they are submitted to President Dowell and urge FRA to thoroughly consider any concerns raised by the Organization."*



ATDA REACHES IMPLEMENTING AGREEMENT TO UNIFY CSX EAST & SOUTH DISPATCHERS UNDER ONE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT



ATDA Vice President Colin Thurman (Left), CSX System Committee General Chairman Ben Craft (Middle), and CSX System Committee Vice General Chairman Lacrecha Taborn (Right).

Jacksonville, Florida – On November 15, 2024, the American Train Dispatchers Association (ATDA) reached an implementing agreement with CSX Transportation (CSX) to unify its East and South Train Dispatchers under a single Collective Bargaining Agreement. The news follows notice issued by CSX on November 7, 2024, of their intent to merge the two Train Dispatcher groups, pursuant to New York Dock Conditions. CSX was then required to negotiate an Implementing Agreement for the merger with ATDA.

ATDA President Ed Dowell said, *"I have personally been negotiating consolidating the agreements since 2013. In 2014, we were close to an agreement, but concessions were going to make it difficult to ratify. However, last month our CSX-East member's voices were heard loud and clear when they voted down the pattern agreement. This important collective right, that only union members have, made a difference. Shortly thereafter, I spoke with CSX Vice President Labor Relations Jeff Wall about why the agreement failed and what could be done to resolve the pay disparity. I applaud CSX for finding a solution to this long-overdue pay disparity problem that didn't require concessions from the South's dispatchers."*

Practically, the unification of the CSX Dispatchers is an important step, as it ends a decades-long pay disparity between the East and South. Once effective, East Dispatchers will receive a \$30 per day wage increase. In addition to pay, the new Joint Collective Bargaining Agreement will also provide the East dispatchers all the additional benefit enhancements that their South brothers and sisters already enjoy.

ATDA's national representative in the negotiations, Vice President Colin Thurman, celebrated the development, by saying the following, *"Since CSX relocated all dispatchers to Jacksonville, FL in 2017, we've had members working side by side under different agreements. Our brothers and sisters on the East Agreement made less money than their colleagues on the South Agreement. The CSXT System Committee has been trying to resolve this disparity for years, and today, finally found a path forward. This Agreement brings all CSX together under one CBA. General Chairman Ben Craft and Vice General Chairperson Lacrecha Taborn were essential to this effort, and I applaud them on a remarkable accomplishment."*

CSX System Committee General Chairman Ben Craft further emphasized the Agreement's importance, by adding, *"Resolving the East/ South pay disparity was a priority for this Organization. Not only has this agreement accomplished that, but it also codifies longstanding agreements that provide benefits and protections to all ATDA members at CSX. Vice President Thurman, along with Vice General Chairman Taborn, played an integral part in this process, and I'm grateful to each of them for their contributions. Congratulations to our members on the East...I know very well how*

impactful this is for you all, and I'm proud to have been a part of this long overdue change!"

CSX System Vice General Chairman/ East Local Chairperson Lacrecha Taborn also celebrated the news, by saying, *"This agreement fosters a much-needed change in our work environment, bridging the gap in pay disparity and creating a sense of equality amongst the membership. I'm very proud to be a part of this team effort to resolve these longstanding issues. Our East members have spoken in solidarity, and we've answered the call."*

DARRELL JONES ELECTED AS L&I GENERAL CHAIRMAN



Jeffersonville, Indiana – On February 21, 2025, American Train Dispatchers Association (ATDA) member Darrell Jones was elected as General Chairman of the Louisville & Indiana System Committee (L&I). Although

Jones is new to the rail industry (he joined the Louisville & Indiana Railroad in 2024), he brings nearly a decade of union representation experience to the new role. During his 30-year career in auto-parts manufacturing, he served two terms and almost eight years as a shift chairman with the United Steelworkers (USW). Commenting on his election, Jones said *"I will work hard to uphold our collective bargaining agreement and to make sure our members receive the representation they deserve. I look forward to our upcoming negotiations and working toward a fair contract."*

IN MEMORY OF TRINITY GENERAL CHAIRMAN NICK GILBERT



Burleson, TX – Nicholas "Nick" Gilbert, ATDA member and General Chairman of the Trinity System Committee, passed away on March 18, 2025, after a battle with illness. Born in Havre, Montana, Nick

was a second-generation railroader and union representative, proudly following in the footsteps of his father, Harry Gilbert. Beginning his career with Trinity Railway Express (TRE) in 1997 as a foreman, Nick eventually worked as a mechanic, conductor, and engineer before becoming a train dispatcher and ATDA member in 2021. In 2024, he was elected General Chairman of the Trinity System Committee, a testament to his leadership and the respect he earned from his peers.

In private life, Nick enjoyed photography, his pet parrot, and the simple things. Above all however, he was a devoted father to his daughter Channing. Although Nick and Channing's mother Julie divorced years ago, the two remained close friends, and committed to their daughter's well-being. Looking back, Julie celebrates Nick's loving dedication as a father, and his partnership with her as a parent.

In addition to Julie and Channing, Nick is survived by his mother, Jane Conway of Bay City, Wisconsin, brothers Bill and Brian, along with several nieces and nephews. He remains deeply loved and will be sorely missed by all who knew him. ATDA hopes for comfort to those who mourn Nick's passing, and we are honored to recognize our fallen brother.

ATDA REPRESENTATIVES TAKE PART IN FRA WEST/EAST MEETING IN PHOENIX, ARIZONA



Phoenix, Arizona – On December 10-11, 2024, American Train Dispatchers Association (ATDA) representatives from both the local and national levels took part in Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) West/East meetings in Phoenix, Arizona. ATDA participants included Vice President Kevin Porter, CPKC General Chairman Jesse Kottner, and CSX General Chairman Ben Craft.

Designed to facilitate interaction between craft labor representation and FRA leadership, the meetings put ATDA representatives face-to-face with FRA subject matter experts. The event featured presentations on relevant railroading issues, including C3RS and Artificial Intelligence, along with interactive question-and-answer sessions. Additionally, it facilitated dialogue between ATDA representatives and the other craft unions in attendance. Altogether, this served to bolster ATDA's perspective on issues that currently or may soon impact the Organization's members.

Commenting on ATDA's participation at the meetings, Vice President Kevin Porter said, *"It's important that our Organization gets to have this type of direct interaction with the FRA. The perspective gained by the attending craft representatives will benefit labor as we advocate for our members into the future."*

CPKC General Chairman Jesse Kottner further emphasized the event's value by saying, *"This was a great opportunity to discuss safety, emerging technologies, and regulation with the FRA. Thank you to President Dowell for making this possible."*

CSX General Chairman Ben Craft agreed, saying, *"First of all, thanks to ATDA President Dowell for affording this opportunity to gain insight on key issues. I'd also like to thank Vice President Kevin Porter for his perspective throughout the event. I also found it invaluable to hear from our brothers and sisters in other crafts and learn about the ways we can strengthen solidarity as we address current issues."*

ATDA ANNOUNCES 2026 SYSTEM COMMITTEE OFFICER TRAINING EVENT

The American Train Dispatchers Association is pleased to announce its 2026 System Committee Officer training event, which is scheduled for March 2-5, 2026, in San Antonio, Texas. Timed to quickly follow triennial elections that will take place later this year, the event will provide practical training to officers from

each of ATDA's System Committees from across the country. More information on this event and its importance will be provided soon.



The Alamo, a historic Spanish compound located in San Antonio, Texas.

TRI-RAIL SYSTEM DISPATCHER JAMES HOWELL RETIRES, CONCLUDING A 30-YEAR RAILROAD CAREER



Port St. Lucie, Florida – On February 2, 2025, Tri-Rail System Train Dispatcher James Howell retired, concluding a railroad career that began in 1995. Initially hiring out that year with CSX

as a Conductor in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Howell eventually became a Locomotive Engineer three years later, in 1998. Later, in 2007, he became an ATDA member and moved to Jacksonville, Florida, when he was promoted by CSX to the Train Dispatcher craft. The next year, he moved to Baltimore, Maryland when CSX decentralized its Dispatchers to divisional offices around the country. When his seniority allowed, he bid to another Dispatcher position working on the

CSX Huntington Division. But, after about a year, he resigned as a Dispatcher and returned to Michigan, where he worked as an Engineer, flow-back conductor, and RCO operator.

After a stint in East St. Louis, Illinois, and another in Michigan, he resigned from CSX in 2015, when he took a non-union Train Dispatcher position on today's Tri-Rail system, which was then operated by Amtrak. When Herzog took over that operation in 2017, member Howell was part of the successful organizing drive that brought ATDA representation to the system's Dispatchers. He has been an ATDA member there ever since, until his recent retirement.

With his railroad career now concluded, member Howell plans to enjoy retirement with his wife, Alba. They plan to take some vacations, travel, and as James puts it, to "kick back."

ATDA wishes Member Howell a happy and prosperous retirement in the years to come.

CSX SYSTEM TRAIN DISPATCHER DINO CICCONE RETIRES IN JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA



Jacksonville, Florida – On January 2, 2025, CSX System Train Dispatcher Dino Ciccone retired in Jacksonville, Florida. His railroad career originally began in 1977, when he hired out with Conrail as a track gang worker. After only a few months however, Ciccone's

railroad service was interrupted when he opted to join the United States Navy. Initially serving as a Seabee in a construction battalion, he became an underwater construction diver for about the next 10 years. Following this time, he further served as an experimental diver at the Naval Medical Institute. At the conclusion of his 20-year military career, Ciccone was honorably

discharged on October 31, 1997. A few months later, on January 5, 1998, he was hired by CSX as a Train Dispatcher in Jacksonville, Florida, and became an ATDA member. He spent the next 27 years working in that role in both Jacksonville, Florida, and Atlanta, Georgia.

Now retired, member Ciccone plans to spend time with his wife, Remy, who he met during his Military career. The pair plans to travel extensively, with upcoming trips scheduled to both Alaska, and the Philippines. Although he already views himself as busier now than prior to his retirement, Ciccone is planning to take a college class on auditing in the coming months.

ATDA thanks Member Ciccone for his military service to our great Nation and wishes him the best in retirement.

ATDA GEAR IS HERE!

The American Train Dispatchers Association is pleased to introduce a new line of custom-designed apparel honoring the dedication, skill, and sacrifice of our nationwide membership.

DESIGNED WITH MEANING

The new line was designed to celebrate the specialized nature of our members' work, the integral value they provide to the nation, and the unity we share between crafts as ATDA members. There are even design references to the "round-the-clock" work of our members and an option to add initials to the ATDA polo.

UNION-MADE IN THE USA

Each item in the line was sourced from unionized manufacturers, reinforcing our commitment to the broader labor movement.

AVAILABLE AT COST WITHOUT MARKUP

The new apparel is available for purchase at our cost. This isn't about profit. It's about showing the world that we are **ATDA STRONG**.

TRAIN DISPATCHER



ATDA HOODIE



RAIL TRAFFIC CONTROLLER



DIFFERENT CRAFTS, 1 ATDA



ATDA TEE



ATDA BEANIE



MEN'S ATDA POLO



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today to place your order!

WE ARE THE ATDA

A conversation with Alaska General Chairwoman Caitlin Elison

WE ARE THE ATDA is a spotlight that illuminates those making an impact for our organization. In this edition, you'll meet Alaska System Committee General Chairwoman Caitlin Elison. Her insights into union service and dealing with volcanoes are a great reminder that we ATDA members lead very different lives, but all depend on the shared strength that our union provides.



ATDA: Caitlin, you are a Train Dispatcher for the Alaska Railroad. What unique challenges does that present from day to day?

Caitlin: Well, we're located about eighty from Mount Spurr, an active volcano, which is supposed to erupt soon. So, we don't just deal with the cold and the snow, but sometimes volcanic ash, and even earthquakes as well! Extreme weather is always a threat to disrupt our railroad year-round, so it can be crazy coordinating the response to those threats as a dispatcher.

ATDA: That sounds like a great recipe for those "no one is going to believe this actually happened" dispatching moments. Can you share a crazy "this could only happen in Alaska" situation you encountered while dispatching?

Caitlin: Well, I came in to work at 6:30 am one morning for first shift, and one of our trains had literally just run into a huge avalanche. It was quite the day of coordinating the rescue of the crew, cleaning up the mess, and getting maintenance of way in to start the recovery.

ATDA: Ok, I'd say that certainly qualifies. When you're not dealing with nineties disaster movie weather as a dispatcher, you're also the General Chair of the Alaska System Committee. Can you tell our readers about your approach to that position?

Caitlin: My approach is to make sure we look out for the group as a whole. We want to do what's best for everyone, rather than just senior or junior seniority people. We want to keep making the contract better for all Alaska Dispatchers.

ATDA: On the topic of making things better for "all dispatchers", I understand you're one of the first women Dispatchers on the Alaska railroad, is that right?

Caitlin: In the over 100-year history of the Alaska railroad, I'm only the fifth woman Dispatcher, and I was trained by both the second and the third. It can be tough working in an environment that isn't accustomed to female voices, but I take my role seriously, and I enjoy being part of our Women in Rail group on the property.

ATDA: As you know, Triennial System Committee Officer elections are coming up this fall. As a General Chair, what would you tell someone who's thinking about running for office on their System?

Caitlin: I think you should definitely put yourself out there and go for it. Even if you don't make it the first time, the experience can be valuable, and you can meet some great people who can be beneficial connections for the future.

ATDA: With your Anchorage-area work location being over three thousand miles away from and ATDA's Cleveland, Ohio headquarters, you're not exactly "down the street" from ATDA's lower 48-states membership. How have you managed to stay in the loop and keep your members informed about what's happening?

Caitlin: Well, honestly, I have to give a big shoutout to Brandon Denucci in that regard. As the Vice President assigned to our property, he keeps me updated with the latest information. I also share the articles from ATDA.org that have come out frequently, which help our members to stay informed.

ATDA: Ok, enough about work. Let's now turn to the important questions because the members want answers. What's better, Alaska hunting, or Alaska fishing?

Caitlin: *That's a tough question. The hunting can be really exciting, but the fishing seems to be a bit more rewarding. I still haven't been able to bag a moose after 7 years of trying. But I've caught some spectacular fish.*

ATDA: Well, I think you now owe our readers a good fish story. What's a favorite catch that comes to mind?

Caitlin: *I caught a giant arctic char back in 2022. My husband and I were on a float trip in the Brooks Mountain range and even doing some hunting on the same trip. As we*

were floating down the river, he suddenly called out for me to quickly drop my line in a spot he pointed out. I made the cast, immediately felt like I was hooked onto a log, and a few minutes later, out came this spectacular, 28-inch brightly covered fish.

ATDA: After reading this, I think some of our members may be ready to visit your state! Do you think it takes a certain type of person to enjoy Alaska year-round?

Caitlin: *Yes and no. Anybody can enjoy it, but you must be willing to find things you enjoy doing in the dark and in the cold. There's a lot to do, including snow machining, snow shoeing, and even dog-mushing. At the same time, it takes embracing all that comes with it.*



Caitlin and her family preparing for a snow machine ride. If you refer to them as "snow mobiles" she will correct you.

ATDA WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

The ATDA extends fraternal greetings to its newest members, who are listed below. As an organization that has represented Rail Workers for 107 years, we will never forget those who paved the way before us, those who now stand together, or those still to come.

New Member	System Committee	New Member	System Committee
Michael A Pescatore	Amtrak System Committee	Daniel C Peck	CSX System Committee
Neal D McGinnes	Amtrak System Committee	Cassandra D Rose	CSX System Committee
Jens E Reyes	Amtrak System Committee	Jean J Maillet	CSX System Committee
Michael J Cathell	Amtrak System Committee	David J Paulis	CSX System Committee
Anthony J Thompson	Amtrak System Committee	Gabriel J Solano Camilo	CSX System Committee
Louis L Carpinteyro	Amtrak System Committee	William L Carter III	CSX System Committee
Marla L Miller Daniel	Amtrak System Committee	Ashley L Hodge	CSX System Committee
Terrence L Yates	Amtrak System Committee	Anthony L Hooker	CSX System Committee
Ryan P Cornog	Amtrak System Committee	Thomas M Ryan	CSX System Committee
James P Tutt	Amtrak System Committee	Deana W Scott	CSX System Committee
Alexa R Bessler	Amtrak System Committee	Brandon A Ahlgren	G&W System Committee
Kevin T Kirman	Amtrak System Committee	Josh A Renaudette	G&W System Committee
Quandell Ballard	Amtrak System Committee	Keith D Carter	G&W System Committee
Brandi Banks	Amtrak System Committee	Marcus J Dutkiewicz	G&W System Committee
Safinah Bumar	Amtrak System Committee	Sawyer J Gratton	G&W System Committee
Casey A McDonald	BNSF System Committee	Jeffrey J Raymond	G&W System Committee
Heidi A Mills	BNSF System Committee	Savannah J Shover	G&W System Committee
Pablo A Sanchez	BNSF System Committee	Meagan K Rose	G&W System Committee
Joseph D Wolters	BNSF System Committee	Morgan L Lahue	G&W System Committee
Randall E Farrior, III	BNSF System Committee	Cindy L Larned	G&W System Committee
Wesley F Chandler	BNSF System Committee	Shane M Blaise	G&W System Committee
Jordan G Cardenas	BNSF System Committee	Jeffrey M Parah	G&W System Committee
Whitney L Blackwood	BNSF System Committee	David M Steckel	G&W System Committee
Dylan M Keller	BNSF System Committee	Nathan R Dandrow	G&W System Committee
LeDarron M Lee	BNSF System Committee	Jeffrey T Batchelder Jr	G&W System Committee
Kurt R Homan	BNSF System Committee	Marcus W Chaney, II	G&W System Committee
Tate A Bedell	CPKC System Committee	Robert Burroughs	G&W System Committee
Rayquan C Cunningham	CPKC System Committee	Nicholas Carpenter	G&W System Committee
Austin C Slinkard	CPKC System Committee	Hazan Cota	G&W System Committee
Nancy J Harrison	CPKC System Committee	Mitchel Laundrie	G&W System Committee
David S Blodgett	CPKC System Committee	Bryant Lopez	G&W System Committee
Philip A Erban	CSX System Committee	Kaitlyn Paradis-Leclair	G&W System Committee
John A Garner	CSX System Committee	Clifford Patton	G&W System Committee
Joseph B Deignan	CSX System Committee	Ashley Rogers-Kreskey	G&W System Committee
Brian C Ferri	CSX System Committee	Kyle Wilson	G&W System Committee

New Member System Committee

Nicole Wilson	G&W System Committee
Michael J Turco	IHB System Committee
Adam N Larson	IHB System Committee
Blane A Hall	Kiamichi System Committee
Chance A King	Kiamichi System Committee
Juddie B McFadden	Kiamichi System Committee
Casan E Klitz	Kiamichi System Committee
Zachary L Jones	Kiamichi System Committee
Joseph R Dearmond	Kiamichi System Committee
Mallie R Woodall	Kiamichi System Committee
Darrell W Jones	L&I System Committee
Thomas C Conley	MBCR System Committee
Issac D Cardoso	MBCR System Committee
Matthew D Wicks	MBCR System Committee
Timothy G Hairston	MBCR System Committee
Anthony J St. Hilaire	MBCR System Committee
Adam N Grinter	MBCR System Committee

New Member System Committee

Sam P Stokley	MBCR System Committee
Marya R Shander-Reynolds	MBCR System Committee
Craig D Mowery	METRA System Committee
Adriane L Rouse	METRA System Committee
Juan M Yanez	METRA System Committee
Jean L Day	NJT - PS System Committee
Peter M Maher Jr.	NJT RiverLINE System Committee
Jody D Scalf	NICTD System Committee
Henry S Keller	NICTD System Committee
Omar L Thomas	PATH System Committee
Sayed Nieves	PATH System Committee
Graeme H Caldwell	SunRail System Committee
Caleb T Parks	Trinity System Committee
Ryan G Chapski	WC System Committee
Courtney L Gray	WC System Committee
Victor M Ruikis	WC System Committee

IN MEMORY OF BNSF MEMBER TRAVIS PIERCE



Arlington, Texas – Travis Pierce passed away on February 11, 2025, in Arlington Texas, at 38 years old. Travis was a BNSF Train Dispatcher for over sixteen years and was a proud ATDA member. More than that, he was a kind and

sweet son, brother, husband, and uncle to a family that misses him dearly. Travis was devoted to his wife Lisa. His smile always lit up the room, and even while he struggled with depression, Travis still gave everything he could and more to the people he cared about. Music was his passion – starting as a teenager, he played in countless bands and was always working on a new project

and inspiring others to create. Travis traveled the country playing and attending shows, and everyone who was lucky enough to meet him along the way will remember his smile, his laugh, and how genuine of a person and a friend he was. He was a wonderful and compassionate person who worked tirelessly and was loved dearly by his family, friends, and coworkers.

ATDA honors our young brother's memory and hopes for peace to those who are mourning his passing. In lieu of flowers, Travis's family requests that donations be made in his memory to the Riley Gale Foundation or the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

STATUS OF DISPUTES

Docket #	Carrier	Claimant	Subject	Status
PLB-7153-12	KRR	M. Metzger	Discipline	Denied by Arb. Benn on February 18, 2025

PLB-7299-59	NS	E. Johnson	Discipline	Denied by Arb. Phillips on January 16, 2025
PLB-7299-60	NS	K. C. Moore	Order of Call - OT	Settled on property
PLB-7299-61	NS	S. K. Palmer	Discipline	Denied by Arb. Phillips on January 16, 2025
PLB-7299-62	NS	Various claimants	Scope - Form Y	Denied by Arb. Phillips on January 16, 2025

PLB-7578	METRA	F. McGlaston	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. Bohne - Waiting on NMB funding
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PLB-7494-161	CSX	D. Neeley	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. Phillips - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7494-162	CSX	O. Ponce	GAD order of call	Assigned to Arb. Phillips - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7494-163	CSX	M. L. Hucks	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. Phillips - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7474-164	CSX	J. Mitchell	GAD Order of call	Assigned to Arb. Phillips - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7494-165	CSX	C. Hadley	Exercise of seniority	Assigned to Arb. Phillips - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7494-166	CSX	E. Johnson	Order of call - OT	Assigned to Arb. Phillips - Waiting on NMB funding

PLB-7468-54	CPKC	K. Pannell	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. VanDagens - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7468-55	CPKC	J. Chamberlin	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. VanDagens - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7468-56	CPKC	P. Webb	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. VanDagens - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7468-57	CPKC	S. Eames	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. VanDagens - Waiting on NMB funding

PLB-7575-60	BNSF	Z. Manning	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. VanDagens - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7575-61	BNSF	M. L. Penney	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. VanDagens - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7575-62	BNSF	L. Harvey	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. VanDagens - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7575-63	BNSF	L. Harvey	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. VanDagens - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7575-64	BNSF	L. Harvey	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. VanDagens - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7575-65	BNSF	R. A. Reid	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. VanDagens - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7575-66	BNSF	S. M. Sharrer	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. VanDagens - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7575-67	BNSF	S. M. Hogue	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. VanDagens - Waiting on NMB funding

PLB-7560-59	BNSF	R. A. Miller	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. Dent - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7560-60	BNSF	Z. Manning	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. Dent - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7560-61	BNSF	S. W. Brown	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. Dent - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7560-62	BNSF	D. M. Gonzales-Rosas	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. Dent - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7560-63	BNSF	L. J. Chaison	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. Dent - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7560-64	BNSF	C. J. Cawyer	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. Dent - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7560-65	BNSF	S. K. Irving	Order of Call - OT	Assigned to Arb. Dent - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7560-66	BNSF	M. A. Magana	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. Dent - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7560-67	BNSF	R. A. Miller	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. Dent - Waiting on NMB funding

STATUS OF DISPUTES

PLB-7299-63	NS	A. Brimah	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. Phillips - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7299-64	NS	A. Knorre	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. Phillips - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7299-65	NS	E. Jackson	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. Phillips - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7299-66	NS	M. Robinson	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. Phillips - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7299-67	NS	J. Rowe	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. Phillips - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7299-68	NS	D. Patterson	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. Phillips - Waiting on NMB funding
PLB-7299-69	NS	K. W. Nellum	Discipline	Assigned to Arb. Phillips - Waiting on NMB funding

PLB-	BNSF	A. I. Hendrich	Order of Call - OT	Awaiting assignment to a Public Law Board
PLB-	BNSF	C. N. Norris	Discipline	Awaiting assignment to a Public Law Board
PLB-	BNSF	M. Valero	Discipline	Awaiting assignment to a Public Law Board
PLB-	BNSF	M. D. Behrens	Discipline	Awaiting assignment to a Public Law Board

PLB-	WC	K. Gebhardt	Unjust Treatment	Awaiting assignment to a Public Law Board
PLB-	WC	K. Gebhardt	Discipline	Awaiting assignment to a Public Law Board
PLB-	WC	A. Zemaitis	Discipline	Awaiting assignment to a Public Law Board
PLB-	WC	S. Kucharyski	Discipline	Awaiting assignment to a Public Law Board
PLB-	WC	T. Evans	Unjust Treatment	Awaiting assignment to a Public Law Board

PLB-	CSX	J. Maillet	Discipline	Awaiting assignment to a Public Law Board
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PLB-	NS	R. Bailey	Discipline	Awaiting assigned to a Public Law Board
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SUMMARIES OF DISPUTES

The following are brief summaries of recent Arbitration Awards involving ATDA members.

PLB No. 7560 Case No. 57, Arbitrator Dent – BNSF

Failure to ensure a train could comply with a track warrant change.

Claimant was charged with failing to ascertain whether a train crew could comply with a change to their track warrant limits, before issuing a new track warrant which restricted the train's movement, causing a positive train control (PTC) braking event to occur. An investigation was held, and the

Claimant was found guilty and assessed a Level S 30-day record suspension with a 1-year review period. The Organization asserted that the Carrier failed to present any compelling evidence that the train crew ever acted upon or operated under the newly issued track warrant. The Claimant also testified that he realized that he had used the wrong engine number when issuing the new track warrant but that the Carrier's TMDS system would not let him correct or void the warrant before issuing it. The Board found that the Carrier produced substantial evidence supporting the charges against the Claimant,

but that under the specific circumstances in this case, the discipline would be reduced to a standard formal reprimand with a 1-year review period.

Claim sustained in part – discipline reduced.

PLB No. 7494 Case No. 155, Arbitrator Phillips – CSX

Suspension of Supplemental Sickness Benefits pending review of documentation.

This case involved the CSX Supplemental Sickness Benefit Plan for Train Dispatchers and was a result of the Carrier suspending benefit payments to the Claimant pending a review of medical documentation. A Claim was progressed based on a violation of Article 10 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) which required that benefits be paid by the Carrier during the normal payroll cycle. The Carrier suspended payments while its insurance provider reviewed additional medical documentation submitted while the Claimant was receiving sickness benefits, asserting that review and approval of the documents was required before payments could continue. The Organization contended that the CBA contained a specific provision that addresses the recoupment of payments made to Train Dispatchers who were "rejected for coverage account of insufficient grounds after exhausting the appeals process contained in the ATDA Supplemental Sickness Benefit Plan..." and that the Carrier's interpretation would render such language meaningless. The Board found that the Carrier violated the CBA when it failed to compensate the Claimant during the normal payroll cycle and noted, "While the Carrier's references to approval processes are also valid, we do not believe our holding negates them, as the agreement contains multiple references to a process for recouping payment made if an employee is subsequently disqualified by the insurer. We are obligated to interpret agreements as a whole and to give effect to the plain language therein, and we believe that the plain language provided to us required the Carrier to make the payments at issue in the normal pay cycle, subject to its recovery rights if Claimant was subsequently disqualified."

Claim sustained.

PLB No. 7494 Case No. 152, Arbitrator Phillips – CSX

Failure to give clear instructions and to verify train length prior to train meet.

Claimant was charged with failing to give clear and direct instructions to a train crew and with failing to verify train length information prior to planning a train meet in single track territory. As a result of an investigation, the Claimant was dismissed from service. The Organization argued that the record demonstrated that the Claimant clearly understood that the two opposing trains would not be able to meet at the location in question. One of the trains involved had to set out a bad order car and the train crew misunderstood the instructions of the Train Dispatcher and took their whole train to the set out location, instead of leaving the train at a location where the train meet could be made with the opposing train and only taking the bad order to the set out location. When the Claimant noticed his board indicated that the entire train was proceeding to the set out location, the Claimant immediately stopped the movement and had the crew shove back to the location where they could meet the opposing train. The Board concluded that the evidence and testimony presented demonstrated that the Claimant was in violation of the rules present, noting that, "it is most noteworthy that the Claimant himself stated that he should have job briefed better and that he had not done so." The Board determined that in light of the Claimant's long tenure with the Carrier, he should be returned to service with his seniority unimpaired, but without back pay.

***Claim sustained in part – discipline
reduced to long term suspension.***

PLB No. 7494 Case No. 155, Arbitrator Phillips – CSX

Allowing a train to expire on the mainline without a recrew plan.

Claimant was charged with allowing a local train crew to expire on the main track without having a plan in place for a recrew approved by their supervisor. An investigation was conducted and as a result, the Claimant was dismissed from service. The Organization

argued that a plan was in place by the local Trainmaster which was the standard practice, and that the Carrier offered no alternative action that should have been taken by the Claimant. In rendering its decision, the Board found that the Carrier failed to meet the required burden of proof; specifically, that the Claimant was required to seek approval of their immediate supervisor and not the Trainmaster in charge of the territory prior to the crew reaching their hours of service limit. The Board also noted that contradictory testimony at the investigation could have been resolved by allowing witnesses that were requested by the Organization to be present and offer testimony and that in denying the Organization's request for witnesses, the Carrier proceeded at its own peril. The Board ordered the Claimant returned to service with all rights unimpaired, and with compensation for all lost time, except for a period where the Claimant was medically unqualified to perform service.

Claim sustained.

PLB No. 7299 Case No. 57, Arbitrator Phillips – NS

**Absent from dispatching desk
and inattention to duty.**

Claimant was charged with inattention to duty and with performing non-work-related tasks and/or being away from his desk. An investigation was held and as a result, the Claimant was dismissed from service. The Organization argued that the case was based on a complaint from a field Trainmaster submitted after the Claimant's shift, who was never called as a witness. Furthermore, it asserted that video clips of the Dispatcher office presented at the investigation did not have dates embedded in them to verify that they were from the day in question, and it noted that the Carrier produced no evidence to prove that the Claimant was inattentive to duty or that he was performing non-work-related tasks. Finally, the Organization noted that no witnesses who may have been present in the Dispatcher office on the day in question, such as the Chief Dispatcher or other on-duty managers were called to testify or verify the Carrier's assertions. The Board concluded that the Carrier met its burden of proof. It noted that a reasonable mind could conclude that the time the

Claimant was away from his desk, which was over 50% of the eight-hour shift, constituted inattention to duty. The Board noted that the video evidence was adequately confirmed by the testimony of the charging officer and that the Claimant himself never disputed that the video evidence accurately depicted his activities.

Claim denied.

PLB No. 7560 Case No. 56, Arbitrator Dent – BNSF

**Failure to protect against conflicting
movement after granting permission
to operate a dual control switch.**

Claimant was charged with failing to stop a conflicting movement, after granting a train permission to hand operate a dual control switch. An investigation was held and the Claimant was found in violation of related operating rules and assessed a Level S 30-Day Record Suspension with a one year review period. The Organization argued that several of the Train Dispatcher's rules entered at the investigation did not exist. It also maintained that the Carrier failed to meet its burden of proof that a "dangerous condition" existed or that the Claimant failed to report the incident. The Board found no evidence of any procedural irregularity that denied the Claimant his right to a fair and impartial investigation. On the Merits of the case, the Board did find substantial evidence that supported the Carrier's finding of guilt. The Board noted that there was no doubt that a conflicting authority existed when the Claimant granted permission for a train to take a switch on hand. The fact that the incident didn't end in disaster does not diminish its dangerous potential.

Claim denied.

PLB No. 7560 Case No. 55, Arbitrator Dent – BNSF

Absenteeism.

Claimant was charged with marking off on three days in October 2021, which brought the total number of absences in the 12 month rolling review period ending in October 2021

to 9. As a result, an investigation was held and the Claimant was found in violation of the Carrier's Train Dispatcher Guidelines, as well as several GCOR Operating Rules, and assessed a Standard Formal Reprimand with a one year review period. The Organization asserted that the Claimant could not render service on the days in question due to personal illness and a family emergency. In each instance, the proper authority was notified before the scheduled shift. With regard to the additional absences during the 12 month rolling review period, it noted that documentation was provided for all days but one. The Carrier noted that 7 of the absences were in conjunction with Claimant's rest days or other time off and asserted that providing documentation does not automatically excuse the Claimant from the obligation to protect their assignment. The Board found that the Carrier provided substantial evidence to support its contention that the frequency and pattern of the Claimant's absences constituted excessive absenteeism and that according to the Claimant's record, this violation represents the first step in the progressive disciplinary process outlined in the Train Dispatcher Attendance Guidelines.

Claim denied.

PLB No. 7153 Case No. 11, Arbitrator Benn – Kiamichi

Use of cell phone, failure to properly protect shove move.

Claimant was charged with the use of cell phone, failure to properly protect a shoving move over a road crossing, and stepping on a pin lifter while securing cars on this train. A hearing was held and the Claimant was found guilty and dismissed from service. The Organization asserted that the Carrier failed to meet the burden of proof that the Claimant used his cell phone on the day of the incident, or that he did not properly protect a shove movement of his train over a road crossing and into a siding. As to stepping on the pin lifter while securing his train, the Organization noted that the Claimant admitted to inadvertently stepping on the pin lifter. The Organization further noted that the Claimant was never charged with this violation, the act was never observed, and it challenged the Carrier's description of the act as "intentional". The Board found

that there was substantial evidence in the record that the Claimant violated Carrier's rules prohibiting cell phone use that would interfere with safety-related duties and that the Claimant engaged in unrelated tasks while providing protection and that Claimant violated rules that employees must not stand, sit, walk, or ride on uncoupling levers. The Board determined that the Claimant would be reinstated to his former position without loss of seniority but without back pay on a last chance basis.

Claim sustained in part – discipline reduced to long term suspension.

PLB No. 7576 Case No. 76, Arbitrator O'Brien – BNSF

Blue flag protection.

Claimant was charged with failing to provide blue flag protection and failing to restrict operation of a switch leading to a track where blue flag protection was granted. A hearing was held and the Claimant was found guilty and assessed a Level S 30-day Record Suspension. The Board found that while the Claimant did provide Blue Signal Protection, he did not perform one of the key components of providing Blue Signal Protection; namely, absolute prevention of movement into the protected track. Claimant granted maintenance of way employees track and time authority to operate the switch into the protected track, which violated GCOR 5.13 and TDOCOM 40.42. However, the Board determined that, given the multiple layers of protection, including the track and time, which was limited to the control point only, there was no route for equipment to enter the protected track and therefore, the Board did not believe that the violation rose to a level of a service violation.

Claim sustained in part – discipline reduced a Standard Formal Reprimand.

PROCEDURES REGARDING DUES AND FEE OBJECTORS

The following revised policy adopted by the Executive Board is provided to each new employee when he/she first becomes subject to a collective bargaining agreement containing a union security provision and is published annually in the Train Dispatcher.

The Executive Board has adopted the following procedure regarding maintenance of union membership and dues obligations under the union shop agreements between ATDA and the employers for whom its members work, in order to comply with interpretations of the U.S. Constitution and the Railway Labor Act by the United States Supreme Court:

1. An employee whom the ATDA represents who is required to be a member of the union under a union shop agreement, but who objects to joining or remaining a member of the union, will be deemed to have met the requirements of the union shop agreement if the employee pays to the ATDA an amount equal to the periodic dues, fees and assessments (not including fines and penalties) uniformly required of all members of the union ("the service fee") within the time limits provided for in the union shop agreement. Such employee shall be known as a "service fee payer." Service fee payers are not union members; they may not vote in union elections or be candidates for union office, attend union meetings, serve as delegates to union conventions or participate in the delegate selection process, or vote on the ratification of collective bargaining agreements.

2. A service fee payer has the legal right, through timely written objection, to limit his/her service fee payment to expenditures that are necessarily or reasonably undertaken by the union to represent employees for whom it is the exclusive representative, i.e. activities of the union that are related to collective bargaining, contract administration and grievance handling. In such case, expenses unrelated to these activities, will be excluded from the service fee calculation. Such "non-chargeable expenditures" include contributions of money or paid union staff time to political parties, candidates, and charities and other organizations; expenses to recruit new members; legislative lobbying expenses not directly related to collective bargaining agreement negotiation or administration, including time of union officers and employees; AFL-CIO and affiliated organization dues; costs of portions of the union's newsletter and magazine publications not related to the employment interests of the employee; members-only benefit expenses; and expenses for litigation that does not directly concern the objector, his bargaining unit, or the union as an institution.

3. An employee who wants to submit such an objection must do so initially within 30 days after he/she first begins paying a service fee and receives notice of this procedure or thereafter in writing to the ATDA Secretary-Treasurer postmarked during the month of July. The Union will consider your objection to be for the upcoming year unless you expressly state that it is continuing in nature. Once filed, an objection may be revoked at any time in writing by you to the Secretary Treasurer. The objection must

include the employee's name, home address, social security number, employer, job title, work location, and home and office phone numbers. The service fees of new employees who file such objections shall be reduced retroactively to the date they first begin paying a service fee; the service fees of all other employees who file such objections shall be reduced for the twelve-month period beginning the subsequent October after the objection is received and ending September 30th of the following year. Prior to the beginning of this twelve-month period, each employee who has filed an objection will be provided with a full explanation of the basis for the reduced fee, and an explanation of the procedure for challenging the calculation of that reduced fee.

4. The union shall maintain records of the amount of time, dues/assessment/fee income, and assets that are expended for chargeable and non-chargeable activities. Such records shall be subject annually to an independent audit in order to determine the amount of reduced fee to be charged service fee objectors.

5. An employee may challenge the union's calculation of the reduced fee via arbitration before an impartial arbitrator in accordance with the Rules for Impartial Determination of Union Fees of the American Arbitration Association. In such an arbitration, the union bears the burden of proving the propriety of its calculation. To invoke arbitration, the employee must submit his/her challenge in writing to the Secretary-Treasurer postmarked within 30 days of his receipt of the fee explanation. Pending resolution of the challenge, the union shall place in an interest-bearing escrow account a sufficient portion of the fees being paid by those employees who have filed challenges to ensure that the portion of the fee reasonably in dispute will not be expended. After the issuance of the arbitrator's ruling, the union shall promptly distribute the escrowed monies in accordance with the ruling and, if required by the ruling, adjust the amount of the reduced fee.

6. This procedure shall be administered in a manner that is completely fair to service fee payers who register objections. The Secretary-Treasurer is authorized to determine the amount of the reduced fee each year, to provide proper notice of this procedure to service fee payers, and to recommend to the Executive Board the establishment of such other procedures as may be required by state or federal laws for the accommodation of service fee objections.

7. A public employee may not be required to be a member of the union or to pay any fee as a condition of employment though he/she may elect to become a service fee payer.

8. This procedure shall be published by the union in its newsletter or magazine, and sent to each service fee payer, annually. It shall also be provided to each new employee when he/she first becomes subject to a collective bargaining agreement between ATDA and his/her employer.



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NATIONAL HEALTH AND WELFARE BENEFIT DIRECTORY

United Healthcare

National Plan-GA-23000

Managed medical Care
Programs (MMCP) &
Comprehensive Health Care
Benefit (CHCB)
1-800-842-9905
myuhc.com

Retiree Claims-GA-46000

UnitedHealthcare
P.O. Box 30985
Salt Lake City, UT 84130-0985
1-800-842-5252

Retiree Supplemental- GA-23111

UnitedHealthcare
P.O. Box 30304
Salt Lake City, UT 84130-0404
1-800-842-5252

Aetna Healthcare

3541 Winchester Road
Allentown, PA 18195
1-800-842-4044 aetna.com

Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield

Railroad Dedicated Unit

P.O. Box 890381
Camp Hill, PA 17089-0381
1-866-267-3320
bcbs.com

Life Insurance

MetLife

P.O. Box 6122
Utica, NY 13504-6122
1-800-310-7770 metlife.com

Vision Service Plan

EyeMed

Member Support
1-855-212-6003
eyemedvisioncare.com/railroad

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Benefits

For treatment, claims or inquiries call:

United Behavioral Health
1-866-850-6212
liveandworkwell.com
Access code: Railroad
Company identifier: RR

Dental Benefits under Group Policy No. GP-12000

Aetna

P.O. Box 14094
Lexington, KY 40512-4094
1-877-277-3368
aetna.com

Managed Pharmacy Benefits

Optum RX

**UnitedHealthcare Plans
GA-23000 and GA-46000**
1-844-368-8736
Optumrx.com