NO MORE Right-to-Work

STOP Tax Cuts for The Wealthy

Republicans & Democrats Should Defend Workers, Not Corporations

Keep Jobs HERE in the US
Since taking office, President Joe Biden has absolutely kept his promises to workers and has accomplished great things, directly bailing out transport sector workers and literally saving our industries in his first few months. But I see the institution of the Democratic Party itself in some trouble. It’s in grave danger of devolving into factional chaos. On one side there are “Pro Right-to-Work”, neo-liberal, blue dog Dems like James Carville or fauxgressives (think NYC Mayor Bill deBlasio) that prioritize cultural leftism rather than economic security. Neither of those group’s first agenda is protecting or advancing working people – which should be the main objective of any politician worth voting for.

It is a sad situation and it’s why working people have “Political Establishment Fatigue.” We are sick of seeing our elected leaders pandering to multi-national corporations, tired of seeing blue-collar jobs being offshored to places like China. And with the prospect of massive technological change rapidly coming, we are concerned that the NAFTA-driven Rust Belt will be replicated by job displacement, this time driven by both Republicans and Democrats embracing potentially dangerous, job-killing advanced technologies.

There are individual Democrats who have done excellent things to help TWU members and other unions, but neither party is focused primarily on the defense of America’s working families. The conclusion drawn from these observations is clear: The trade union movement is the only institution in America solely focused on economic security for working people. We are more important now than we ever were. While we will continue to advance legislation, both nationally and locally, our greatest strength will also be our brothers and sisters working with each other, side-by-side.

“The trade union movement is the only institution in America solely focused on economic security for working people. We are more important now than we ever were.”

By International President John Samuelsen
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Every four years, we convene in Las Vegas to conduct essential union business, as well as celebrate our achievements. As we approach the 26th Constitutional Convention this September, I couldn’t be prouder to be both a leader and a member of America’s Fighting Democratic Union.

Since 2017, and especially during this devastating Covid-19 pandemic, the TWU has held the line, advanced and won nearly every battle, big or small, we’ve faced. And that’s the theme of this upcoming Convention: “Hold the Line, Advance, Win.”

The TWU has organized over 20 new workgroups, including TWU Local 320, the nation’s first ever bike share local union. We’ve served as America’s circulatory system, transporting other essential workers safety to and from their families during this pandemic. We’ve taken on mayors, governors, school boards, transit agencies, airlines – anyone who has tried to treat our workers unfairly.

All three of our Divisions – Transit, Universities, Utilities and Services, Railroad and Air – have gotten stronger with not only increased but engaged membership. Our International Departments, especially Government Affairs, have done incredible things to serve our membership.

Our union has faced many obstacles and at times it seemed like the cards were stacked against us. We faced the threat of the Janus Supreme Court decision, legal battles with American Airlines, mass layoffs and furloughs, and a deadly global pandemic. But we didn’t give up and fought it through, thanks to the talent and dedication of our members.

It’s been over a year since I have seen many of you and I very much look forward to doing so this fall at the Convention in Las Vegas.

Please continue to stay safe and enjoy your summer.

“It’s been over a year since I have seen many of you and I very much look forward to doing so this fall at the Convention in Las Vegas.”
Former Director of Organizing and International Representative Timothy Grandfield passed away on August 25, 2020, at the age of 70.

Grandfield came from a railroad family. He was drafted into the Army right after high school and as soon as he returned from service, he returned to work as a car knocker. Grandfield was elected president of his local, rose the ranks to become an International Rep, traveling across the country assisting members. According to the *New Haven Register*, “He loved all his friends—those from the R.R./TWU/the shoreline and, most of all, his pals from The Hill.”

“He loved all his friends—those from the R.R./TWU/the shoreline and, most of all, his pals from The Hill.”

—New Haven Register
Internal Organizing in Houston

The International TUUS Division, Organizing Department and President John Samuelsen spent time in Houston, Texas in mid-May, doing internal organizing in our school bus locals.

AFL-CIO Organizing Institute

The International Organizing Department continues to work hand-in-hand with the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute, having active participants in every virtual session they have offered.

“Local 555 member Chris Avila and International Campaign Organizer Heather Laverty have really taken the bull by the horns,” Director Angelo Cucuzza said. “The AFL-CIO specifically requests their help for nearly every session.”

If any local presidents are interested in sending members to this virtual training, please reach out to the Organizing Department, acucuzza@twu.org, to get something set up. The training lasts three days and can be given on different levels: from basic, to advanced, to specified clinics on particular topics of organizing.
**Corpus Christi and El Paso**

The organizing drive in Corpus Christi and El Paso, Texas for Bus Operators and related workgroups continues. The TUUS Division and Organizing Department visited Corpus Christi on May 15 and 16, distributing TWU swag and print materials to workers while answering any questions they might have.

Earlier in May, Cucuzza and International Rep JC Cruz flew to El Paso to engage the worker-led committee for the Independent School District and will returned again at the end of the month. Despite legislative obstacles in our way because of outdated and restrictive Texas labor laws, both campaigns are progressing well and worker engagement is strong.

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**Non-Profit Workers at Chhaya Win Voluntary Recognition**

The newest members of the TWU are non-profit workers at Chhaya, located in Queens, NY, who won voluntary recognition on April 16. “It drew a lot of support. Lots of people were surprised we were organizing non-profit workers, but after organizing workers at MinKwon, we wanted to expand,” explained Organizing Director Angelo Cucuzza. “We hope to add these members to Local 241.”

Assemblymember Catalina Cruz (D-NY-36) and Sen. Jessica Ramos (D-NY-13) were some of the biggest supporters, with Cruz’s staff conducting the neutral card recognition.

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**LA Metro Bike Share**

The Organizing Department has been conducting on-site meetings with workers at LA Metro Bike Share. Cucuzza said he anticipates a successful end to this campaign as we continue to grow Local 320.

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**JetBlue Passenger Service & Mechanics**

Our effort to organize passenger service and mechanics (AO and TO) and JetBlue to complement our InFlight Crewmembers continues.

The campaign has been organizing actively on the ground, engaging workers throughout the country. On May 11, International President John Samuelsen, International Administrative Vice President Mike Mayes, and Cucuzza met with JetBlue members at Logan Airport to discuss tactics and mobilization.

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Florida State Conference Stepped Up to Stop Bad Bills

Here’s a quick look at some of the bills that we have been tracking throughout the 2021 Florida Legislative Session and their final status. The list is neither exclusive nor exhaustive but represents some of our top priorities. Please scan the QR code for more information.

FAILED
SB 1014 by Sen. Dennis Baxley/HB 835 by Cord Byrd

These union-busting legislative packages changed dramatically over time, with bills moving and stalling beginning, before the session, and during the Interim Committee process in January. In the end, anti-worker forces settled on SB 1014/HB 853 which would have extended a 50 percent membership requirement, a ban on automatic paycheck deductions for dues and an onerous new recertification process to all public sector unions, except those representing police officers, firefighters and correctional officers.

Florida State Conference Volunteers at Food Drive

When government funding ended, Ray People’s Ministries stepped up and helped provide food for those in need. The weekly food drive provides needed aid to help those who have lost their jobs during this pandemic.

TWU Florida State Conference and Local 556 volunteers Egda Avila, Gisela Alvarez and Drew Shy helped Ray People’s Ministries prepare and exceed the 500-meal bag goal for the food pantry.
Block Walk

Texas State Conference members block walk with the Tarrant County Central Labor Council AFL-CIO for endorsed labor-friendly candidates.

Georgia State Conference Rallies Against Voter Suppression

Members of the Georgia State Conference joined faith leaders, Black Voters Matter, Fair Fight, and other groups at a rally outside of the Masters Golf Tournament in Augusta on Saturday, April 10, to demand corporations and businesses speak out against voter suppression, support voting rights, and voter education efforts. The rally called on corporate and business leaders to speak out against Jim Crow 2.0 and demand that they support federal action (HR1 & 4) on voting rights and voter education.
The TWU endorsed the reintroduction of the Healthy Flights Act of 2021 by the Chair of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Peter DeFazio (D-OR) and Chair of the Subcommittee on Aviation Rick Larsen (D-WA). TWU members continue to sound the alarm about the importance of creating a safe workplace for flight attendants, ground workers, mechanics, and other airline workers. This legislation would issue requirements during pandemics to help keep airline workers and passengers healthy by minimizing transmission of viruses through our aviation system. The Healthy Flights Act of 2021 would:

✔ Clarify the FAA’s authority to impose any requirements on air travel necessary to protect the health and safety of airline workers and passengers.

✔ Require that passengers must wear masks on board aircraft and within airports.

✔ Mandate the development of a national aviation preparedness plan to respond to epidemics or pandemics.

✔ Call for a study on transmission of infectious diseases in airplane cabins.

✔ Create an FAA Center of Excellence on Infectious Disease Response and Prevention in Aviation.

✔ Amend airline passenger briefing requirements to enumerate new federal guidelines during pandemics and subsequent penalties for non-compliance.

The Healthy Flights Act of 2021

The Healthy Flights Act of 2021

Save the Date: Legislative and Political Conference

The next Legislative and Political Conference will be held in Washington, DC on May 15-18, 2022.

Twu President Samuelsen Testifies Before U.S. Senate Banking Committee

On April 15, TWU International President John Samuelsen testified at the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs hearing entitled, “21st Century Communities: Public Transportation Infrastructure Investment and FAST Act Reauthorization.” He advocated for massive increases in public transit investment and policies that create good union jobs. He also announced new principles, endorsed by an array of transportation unions, that should guide action on deployment of zero-emissions vehicles, automated vehicles, and shared mobility. The principles are:

✔ Public policies, research, development, and funding must be used to enhance community voices and ensure input from frontline workers. The goals of the transition to a new technology—including environmentally friendly advancements—must include the creation and retention of good union jobs.

✔ The next generation of environmentally-friendly vehicles should be made in America with union labor.

✔ Procurement of new, hybrid and zero-emission vehicles and infrastructure must be transparent and honest. Transit agencies, trucking and bus companies, motor vehicle and parts manufacturers, and other employers must be required to provide the workforce with early notice before the purchase and deployment of these new vehicles and technology.

✔ Existing safety, labor, environmental, accessibility, and performance standards cannot be compromised in any transition to new technology. Buy America requirements must be strengthened and enforced. These standards protect the public and our workers from harm, support American jobs, and ensure disadvantaged communities have access to opportunity and our transportation systems.

✔ The existing workforce must benefit directly from investments in zero-emission infrastructure. Displaced workers must have access to resources for training, apprenticeship, and career ladder programs for reskilling the existing workforce and providing them with the first opportunity for new jobs created by the adopting new equipment and infrastructure.

You can read the full testimony at bit.ly/jstestimony.
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

Surface Transportation Reauthorization Act of 2021

Separately from the American Jobs Plan, surface transportation reauthorization bills are being written in both chambers of Congress. This legislation, which is passed every four years or so, is important to the TWU because it outlines new policy and funding recommendations for public transportation, Amtrak, and commuter rail systems throughout the country. In the US Senate, several committees write different sections of the bill (called titles) which are merged together before being voted on by the full Senate. The process is a bit simpler in the House of Representatives, where the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee writes almost all of transportation policies. On May 26, the Senate Environment and Public Works got the ball rolling by unanimously passing the highway and bridge title out of committee. The Commerce Committee is expected to move the railroad title in June. The Banking Committee also plans to mark up the public transportation title soon. The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has scheduled a June 9 markup of a bill with significant pro-labor reforms to transit, rail, highway and bridge policies.

DeFazio Demands GAO Study of Precision Schedule Railroad

House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chair Peter DeFazio (D-OR) and Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee Chair Donald Payne Jr (D-NJ) ordered the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to study the impacts of Precision Scheduled Railroading (PSR) on freight railroad workers and the local communities they serve. For years, the railroad industry has used the practice of precision schedule railroading to prioritize the needs of their wealthy shareholders by putting workers health and safety at risk. The GAO study is a good first step in protecting rail workers and holding the railroad industry accountable.

Mask Mandate Updates

In late May, the FAA updated its Safety Alert for Operators (SAFO) 20009, COVID-19: Updated Interim Occupational Health and Safety Guidance for Air Carriers and Crews to comply with the latest CDC guidance on vaccines.
- Fully vaccinated crew members no longer are required to quarantine after exposure to COVID-19 unless exhibiting symptoms.
- Fully vaccinated crew members may be excluded from regular COVID-19 testing.
- Fully vaccinated crew members must continue to present a negative COVID-19 test result prior to arriving in the United States.
- Fully vaccinated crew members must continue to wear masks on aircraft and in transportation hubs.

PRO Act Moves to the Senate

The Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act passed the House for a second time on March 9, 2021. The bill is now in the hands of the U.S. Senate, where it is likely to face a filibuster. The PRO Act would:
- Empower workers to organize and bargain.
- Hold corporations accountable for union-busting.
- Repeal “right to work” laws.

The PRO Act is critical to ensuring the voices of working people are heard. The TVU will continue to work with allied groups and labor affiliates to encourage senators to support the PRO Act. We urge TWU members to call your senators today at 866-832-1560 and urge them to pass the bill.

The American Jobs Plan

In March, the Biden-Harris Administration rolled out its American Jobs Plan which would make enormous investments to rebuild, reinvest, and expand our transportation infrastructure. The President has committed to creating millions of good-paying union jobs and encouraging collective bargaining rights throughout the transportation sector. The TWU is partnering with the President and Congress to ensure that the jobs and rights of TWU members and all workers are advanced as this bill moves ahead.
Over the last few years, a spirit of fightback was instilled in every facet of the TWU. We’ve developed political and organizing strategies that have not only garnered respect, but truly protect and advance the lives of our members. Despite a national pandemic and political unrest, our union is growing. Let’s take a Look Back at some of what the Organizing Department has achieved.

Since the current International Administrative Council leadership has taken office, the TWU has organized more than 20 work groups, including:

- JetBlue Airway InFlight Crewmembers
- Spirit Airlines Customer Service Agents
- PSA Airlines Dispatcher Coordinators
- Kalitta Air Cargo Dispatchers
- Envoy Air Fleet Service
- Envoy Air Pilot Ground Simulator Instructors
- San Francisco Bike Share
- Washington, DC Big Bus Workers
- New York City Big Bus Workers
- Miami Big Bus Workers
- Las Vegas Big Bus
- Chicago Big Bus
- Los Angeles Big Bus
- San Francisco Big Bus
- Phoenix-Mesa-Temple Arizona Bike Share Workers
- Cleveland, Ohio Bike Share Workers
- Queens, NY Racino Aqueduct Shuttle Bus Drivers
- Bronx, NY Quality Schoolbus Company Drivers
- Trans Express NYC
- NY MTA Bus white collar unit
- NYC Transit MTA Computer and Telecom Specialists
- NYC Transit Staff Analysts

“Without a doubt, JetBlue has by far been our most significant organizing victory,” said International President John Samuelsen. “It firmly establishes us as the union representing flight attendants. InFlight Crewmembers at JetBlue specifically chose us because of our track record of fighting – and winning.”

Another giant achievement has been the creation of the nation’s first bike share local – TWU Local 320.

“This is the culmination of several years of organizing. From Day One, after we won the initial election in New York, our goal was to expand our bike share representation from coast to coast – and we accomplished it,” Samuelsen said.

The one major obstacle the Organizing Dept. continues to face is the Covid-19 pandemic.

“We had simultaneous fights against both the physical toll of the virus and the economic fallout, but we prevailed. Without the intervention of the union, hundreds more transport workers would have perished from Covid-19,” Samuelsen explained.

“The locals and the International worked together, holding job actions in city after city over health protections. Our massive, unprecedented legislative operation in Washington, DC was able to prevent the layoffs of 30 percent of our membership. The Democrats wouldn’t have been able to secure these payroll protections without the TWU and our labor partners.”

Looking ahead, the department is eager to resume some kind of normalcy. “We are building out our capabilities in the International so we can continue to lead the way as a fightback union.

“We have multiple organizing drives that are in the fire right now. Covid-19 did have a silver lining because workers have emerged from the pandemic with a better understanding of how protected trade union members are,” Samuelsen concluded.
Over the past four years, as part of the TWU’s Fighting Democratic Union, the Railroad Division (RRD) faced many difficult challenges that they were able to steamroll, securing thousands of good union jobs.

In the Spring of 2018, when Amtrak threatened to contract out On-Board Food and Beverage Service jobs, which would have affected the decade-long careers of hundreds of TWU members, we immediately took action. The multi-pronged “Sh*t Sandwich” campaign focused on how Amtrak was eliminating dining car service and replacing it with pre-packaged, cold meals.

Since all members of the Amtrak Service Workers Council - comprised of the TWU, UNITE HERE and TCU were affected - the TWU took the lead and launched a campaign on social media, held five press conferences/rallies, and reached out to members of Congress to stop the onslaught.

“With the support of the IAC, Communications and Government Affairs Departments, we were able to stop Amtrak from contracting out our work, and Amtrak is now going back to full-service dining,” explained RRD Director John Feltz.

The RRD also was able to secure contracts that protected members and their livelihoods. “The contracts we negotiated were fair and equitable, and we were able to do that based on the outstanding work our members perform,” Feltz stated.

A significant contract was negotiated for the members of Local 2017 who work for the Altoona division of the Union Tank Car Company, which is a rail car manufacturer not covered by the Railway Labor Act.

The RRD is currently negotiating a National Freight Agreement as part of the Coordinated Bargaining Coalition, which consists of eleven National Freight Rail Organizations representing more than 105,000 members nationwide.

“We feel this makes us a strong bargaining unit and will help us get a fair and equitable contract for our TWU members,” Feltz said.

Feltz further noted, “The biggest problem on the RRD’s freight side is Precision Scheduled Railroading (PSR), which affects our members on CSX and Norfolk Southern Railroads. It aims to streamline freight operations, which has caused major safety issues and the furloughing of members. Our members are being forced to work in unsafe conditions. The time that was allotted to complete an inspection, air test, and make any necessary repairs was reduced from 3 minutes per car to 90 seconds per car, which is impossible to do properly.

“The railroads are forcing unqualified conductors and brakemen to do the work of our members, who have received six weeks of extensive training in order to do be able to properly do their job in accordance with FRA and AAR regulations. The trains that the conductors and brakemen are inspecting run through densely populated areas, making the situation extremely dangerous, which could result in a major catastrophe. What has made this such a difficult battle is that we were not only fighting against the railroads but also fighting against the past FRA administration. We are now working with the new FRA administration to try and put a halt to these practices,” Feltz stated.

Feltz revealed the things he enjoys most about his job are his interactions and relationships with members, as well as his ability to represent them. “All the fighting that I have done in the past as a union officer of a Local, I can now do for all TWU Railroad Division members as Railroad Division Director. I not only represent members; I represent their entire families since they are all part of the TWU family.”

Feltz proudly concluded, “I want to thank our members for stepping up during these unprecedented times as essential frontline workers to keep the railroads operating during this pandemic.”
TWU Flight Attendants at FSI Ratify Tentative Agreement

TWU Flight Attendants at Flight Services International (FSI) ratified their first tentative agreement on April 14. There was a 77% participation rate, with 62% voting “yes.” The agreement goes into effect immediately and lasts five years.

These Flight Attendants have been on a long and bumpy road to this contract, with no pay raises or improvements in over 10 years. The challenges of Covid-19 made bargaining especially difficult, because the TWU wasn’t negotiating with an airline, but with a third party. This is the only contract of its kind in place for Flight Attendants.

Provisions include immediate 8% raises in wages and increases in per diem, vacation, and sick time. It also provides protection in case of a merger or acquisition, furlough/recall and unfair discipline.

“I extend my congratulations to these Flight Attendants for securing and ratifying their all-important first contract,” said TWU International President John Samuelsen. “Locking in a collectively bargained agreement is the final piece of a successful organizing drive. The TWU will continue expanding our density and footprint in the airline industry and across all transport sectors.”

“This was a hard-fought battle to finally have the voice and power in the workplace that they deserve. We look forward to helping the flight attendants build a strong union at FSI with the TWU,” said TWU International Vice President Thom McDaniel.

Local 570 Member Thomas Heess Retires

After 30 years of being a member of TWU Local 570, Aircraft Maintenance Technician (AMT) Thomas Heess is retiring. He began his career in Miami with Eastern Airlines and continued onto American Eagle Airlines and Envoy Air. Tom was an excellent AMT, with avionics as his expertise. We wish Tom the very best in his well-deserved retirement.
Local 556 Members Fight for Paid Sick Leave

Two members of Local 556 were instrumental part of introducing paid sick leave bills in two separate states: Corliss King and Jamie Simpson in Illinois and Colorado, respectively.

King’s fight began in 2017, when the state of Illinois passed a family sick leave act with allowed all workers in the state to use sick time to take care of family members. But during the veto session, lawmakers removed any workers covered by the Railway Labor Act, “without any explanation or correlation,” – including King and her co-workers.

“Because my husband had a chronic illness this legislation was very important and I couldn’t find any answers on why it was done,” King said. “I started talking to some flight attendants and we started a grassroots effort to correct that.”

King said they started with Sen. Michael Hastings (IL-D-19), “who was willing to author a bill to bring that parity back to union members.”

Since 2018, “we went through government shutdowns, changes in leadership, the coronavirus, it took us all the way until now to pass the Senate.” The bill was in the State House of Representatives for a vote as this issue went to press.

“The act is so important to us is because of our jobs. For us to take sick leave for one day could mean a week worth of work lost to care for family members. I understand we have FMLA, but those are unpaid provisions,” King explained. “I started this because of my husband who passed in 2020. This would have allowed me to spend more time with him. As the primary breadwinner in family because of his disability, I had to make impossible choices.”

‘Always an Issue for Me’

Simpson is a member of the Colorado State AFL-CIO Legislative Committee and trains union members how to lobby every year.

“Sick leave has always been an issue for me,” she explained. “I feel like it hinders women from having a career.”

Six years ago, there currently were not any paid sick leave laws in the state of Colorado. Simpson worked with the AFL-CIO to write the legislation together, ensuring that flight attendant language was very clear. Although TWU Local 556 members have a contract with Southwest Airlines, they are not guaranteed paid sick leave. As King mentioned, they do have access to FMLA, but FMLA doesn’t include pay.

“We testified at all committees with personal stories. Members lobbied and called their elected officials,” Simpson said. “We got the backing of other unions, which is helpful even though they already have paid sick leave in their contracts. When I explained how ours worked, they were horrified.”

The legislation became a ballot proposition.

“The people of Colorado voted on it and we ended up getting both paid family leave and sick leave: A very happy ending,” Simpson said.
WU Railroad Division Director John Feltz was one of the distinguished guests at Amtrak’s 50th Anniversary celebration at Philadelphia’s 30th Street Station on Friday, April 30, along with President Joe Biden, Amtrak CEO Bill Flynn and TTD President Greg Regan.

“I was proud to represent the TWU, especially since we were one of just four unions invited by the White House to be present as President Biden spoke. This invitation displays the influence that the TWU has on Capitol Hill and in the White House,” Feltz said.

The President’s remarks focused on expanding our nation’s rail network.

“It was exciting to listen to President Biden’s initiatives and vision for the future expansion of Amtrak. It was also encouraging to hear how he attributed Amtrak’s 50-year milestone to the strong efforts of its work force,” Feltz said. “Acting as an advocate for Amtrak is nothing new to President Biden since he always had success in that role as Senator and Vice President. As President and having control of both the House and Senate, this success will continue.

“High-speed rail will certainly be a reality in Amtrak’s future. With the knowledge and success gained through the development of the Acela on the Northeast Corridor and with Amtrak’s intercontinental rail system, the foundation is already in place,” Feltz explained. “It will take hard work and a considerable amount of investment in Amtrak’s infrastructure, but Amtrak will, once again, be as successful as it has been in the past 50 years.

“Congratulations to the committed and dedicated Amtrak members for their accomplishments in creating an extraordinary national rail passenger system. The TWU is grateful for their response to our appeals to lobby their Congressional Delegations to obtain the needed funding to keep Amtrak operating.”
Easily one of the biggest railroad yard facilities in Indiana was built by the New York Central in Avon, a town right across the western county line from Indianapolis. In the 1950's it was the most advanced such facility in the United States. The yard itself would stretch across almost four miles, including connecting tracks, while the facility itself covered 490 acres.

The new Big Four Yards were dedicated on September 15, 1960. President of the New York Central, Alfred E. Perlman and Governor of Indiana, Harold W. Handley, found themselves in a former farm field cutting through a photo-electric beam with a railroad lantern as an electronic ribbon cutting officially opening the facility.

Everything about the new yard was huge and modern. The purpose of the location in rural Hendricks County was to allow a facility that would allow the New York Central to consolidate several other yards in the Indianapolis area that were being hemmed in by neighborhoods in the city itself. At the time, NYC facilities in Indianapolis included a freight house yard east of Union Station, a coach yard at Shelby and Bates Street, a yard facility at Brightwood, and a large yard and maintenance shops at (and creating) Beech Grove.

The new location would allow, if needed, expansion. It already covered over 490 acres. The investment into the facility cost the New York Central, the second largest railroad in Indiana, $11 million. It would be the fourth such yard built by the Central, with others at Elkhart (Indiana), Buffalo (New York) and Youngstown (Ohio). It had a capacity of 4,480 rail cars and an ability to process 3,000 of them a day.

According to Perlman, “the Big Four Yard will save 24 hours in rail shipments from the Mississippi to the Atlantic seaboard.” “Just as the Big Four Railroad was a forerunner in carrying freight by rail, helping develop Midwest farms and factories, the Central’s new finger-tip-controlled yard will spearhead faster rail service to all parts of the nation.”

The entire yard is electronically controlled. This was a big upgrade from the pneumatic handles that had controlled such facilities to that point. The same photo-electric beam that was “cut” in the ribbon cutting would alert controllers that a train was entering the yard. A television camera would scan the numbers on each of the freight cars, passing that information through a closed circuit to receivers in the main yard building.

From there, the cars were classified by the destination. As classification was being done, a yard engine would start moving cars toward a 19-foot (man-made) elevation called a “hump.” The cars were then uncoupled, one at a time, and allowed to roll down the hump to one of 55 classification tracks. Each of these tracks were controlled by a push button panel in the main yard building.

From there, computers and electronics take over. Switches were opened automatically. Computers would measure the car weight, rollability, distance, track conditions and even the wind speed. From there, the computer regulated braking devices, called retarders, slowing the free rolling cars to a safe coupling speed as the car rolled onto the required classification track. As the train was completed, another yard engine moved the new train to departure tracks. Road engines would then take that train on to its destination, whether that be a customer or another yard closer to where the customer is located.

The whole system could “hump” 160 cars an hour, or 3,000 a day. The yard itself contained 66 miles of tracks across the 3.75-mile length of the facility. A total of 2,030 cars could fit into the classification tracks. This was a little less than half of the total capacity of the Big Four Yard. While this was all going on, a microwave link, using 24-channels, connected all this information about the cars to the New York Central’s Southern District offices in downtown Indianapolis, 12 miles away.

In less than eight years after Avon opened, the New York Central would disappear along with its Philadelphia based rival. It would become a junior partner in the new Pennsylvania New York Central Transportation Company, known as Penn Central. Three years after that, the Penn Central would file the largest bankruptcy in American history to that time.

On a weekly basis, our members working in the CSX Avon Yard inspect 112,700 Freight Cars and 140 Intermodal Cars. They dispatch 119 Freight Trains, 21 Intermodal Trains and repair 175 Shop Cars. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of local 2003 CSX members, Avon Yard has survived and, outlived its builder company the New York Central Railroad, the ill-fated merger of the New York Central and Pennsylvania Railroads, and the government takeover and merger of bankrupt northeastern railroad companies into the Consolidated Rail Company (Conrail). Today, it serves CSX.
Meet the TUUS Local Leaders

**Tony Utano**, Local 100, President, Brooklyn, NY, representing 46,000 men and women employed by New York City Transit, MaBSTOA, MTA Bus Company, school buses, Liberty Lines Transit, New York Waterway, tour buses and numerous other private bus companies.

**Constance Bradley**, Local 101, President, Brooklyn, NY. “Has been president of the local for five years. I have been active in my union for over 20 years. I started out as Assistant to the President, appointed shop steward, voted in as a Local 101 delegate. I attended many union functions, meetings, seminars, and became part of the Women’s Committee. I became an Executive Board member and then over time, promoted to all four of the local’s officer positions, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, Vice President and in 2016, became the President. I have a great team that works hard for our membership. My Union represents 1,600 National Grid and Home Serve members. National Grid is the Utility Company for Brooklyn and Queens. Our members are clerical workers, call center reps and physical workers. HomeServe is the Service Company that does heating & air conditioning in the same boroughs.”

**Delisa Brown**, Local 171, President, Ann Arbor, MI. “I am happy to say that I have continuously been the president of this local since January 1, 2004. We drive and maintain bus service for Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti and the surrounding community.”

**Jasmin Charles**, Local 200, San Francisco, CA CCSF Miscellaneous & SFMTA Supervisory Transit Employees

**Jarvis Williams**, Local 208, President, Columbus, OH. “A devoted member of TWU Local 208 for over 29 years. TWU Local 208’s membership is comprised of essential dedicated women and men (motor coach operators, diesel

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**Pedro Mercado**, Local 210, President, Columbus, OH.

**Christina Scott**, Local 210, President, Columbus, OH.

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**Marvin Mallory**, Local 210, President, Columbus, OH.
TRANSIT UPDATES

technicians, facilities maintenance technicians, coach cleaners, farebox pullers, customer care advocates, and cashiers) that provide essential, safe, reliable, and courteous mobility services to the citizens and visitors of the central Ohio metropolitan area. TWU Local 208...Where A Bus is Nothing Without Us.”

**Marvin Mallory**, Local 212, Columbus, OH, Paratransit Division

**Christina Scott**, Local 220, President, Brick NJ “Proud to represent 950 members in 13 contracts that have not stopped working during the pandemic. Our members are school district, municipal, and municipal utilities authority employees. They are in blue- and white-collar titles ranging from school bus driver, bus aid, cafeteria, custodial, maintenance, mechanic, sanitation, clerical, communications operator and EMT. Even though the jobs may be different, we all have the same mission: For our voice to be heard in the workplace.”

**Pedro Mercado**, Local 225, President, Hackensack, NJ. “I am 35 years old and have been a union rep for 8 years, and President of Local 225 for five years. We represent transportation workers, and personal aide workers in New York and New Jersey.

**Steven Hamm**, Local 229, President, Hoboken, NJ, representing workers at Hudson Bergen Light Rail.

**Yolanda T. Brown**, Local 239, President, Augusta, GA. “I am also one of two co-chairs of the TWU Georgia State Conference. We represent the school bus drivers, attendants, monitors and mechanics of the Richmond County School System Transportation Department. Our representation also includes other support staff of the school system, including custodians and lunchroom workers who desire committee member at Callowhill Depot in the early 90’s and was elected to the executive board in 1999. Union through and through.”

**Alex Molina**, Local 234, Executive Vice President, Philadelphia, PA. “I’ve been with the local for close to 31 years. I held the Executive Vice President position in 2008 to 2010 and from 2013 to the present. I also held the Vice President position from 2002 to 2008. I got involved as a grievance rep and safety
to be a part of our membership. Our goal is to fight for the betterment of our school system, and to be a part of changing Georgia from a Right-to-Work to a union state in effort to have a real seat at the table to better effect positive and productive change.”

Alex Molina, Local 241, New York, NY, representing over 1,000 members from Columbia University, Juilliard School of music, Jewish Museum, Jewish Theological Seminary and Minkwon.

Larry Boyles, Local 248, President, Winston Salem, NC. “In 2012 I came to Winston Salem Transit Authority as a driver and joined the union. I held the positions of Sergeant of Arms, shop steward, board member and Vice President. In March 2021, I took over as president of the local.”

Roger Marenco, Local 250A, President, San Francisco, CA. Representing Transit Operators, Automotive Service Workers, Transit Fare Inspectors, Curators, Public Health Inspectors, Disease Control Investigators.

Debra Hagan, Local 252, President, Long Island, NY. Since June 2014, representing approximately 4,200 members in Nassau and Suffolk County. “Members are transit bus operators, school bus drivers and driver assistants, Paratransit bus operators and maintenance/mechanics. The pandemic has been a challenge for all of Local 252’s members with a total loss of 12 members from every section we represent.”

Horace Marves, Local 260, President, Houston, TX, serving the membership three terms (9 years), Metropolitan Transit Authority.

Bedennia Barnes, Local 261, President, Houston, TX at Houston ISD.

Lisa Walton, Local 262, President, Houston, TX, Aldine ISD, School Bus Drivers.

Sissy Hobbs, Local 279, President, Evans, GA. “We represent school bus drivers, special education aides and mechanics for the Columbia County Board of Education Transportation Department. We have been chartered since 2002.”

Michael P. Ferguson Sr, Local 282, President, Bristol, NJ, representing the Bristol Township School District, Easton IU and the Bristol Township Public Works Department.


Jeffery W. Mitchell, Local 291, President, Miami, FL. “I represent Miami Dade County Transit employees, approximately 2,634 members and counting…”

Patrice Delva, Local 320, President. “I am currently a depot mechanic for Capital Bikeshare in DC. Local 320 represents bike share workers from east to west coast.”

TRANSIT UPDATES

Patrick J. Reynolds, Local 1400, President, Edgewater, NJ. “Local 1400 represents employees at the Port Authority of NY & NJ and is the largest civilian union in the Port Authority of NY & NJ. We represent workers at some of the world’s busiest bridges and tunnels, the Port Authority Bus Terminal in Midtown Manhattan, along with John F. Kennedy International Airport, Newark Liberty International Airport, LaGuardia Airport and at other Port Authority facilities, including, 4 World Trade Center, Port Authority Technical Center and Port Authority Offices at 2 Montgomery Street in Jersey City.”

Local 234 Retirees
Two Local 234 members with decades of service retired last year. Carlos Ortiz was a Buildings Department General Helper for 44 years. Dan Thomas was a Vehicle Readiness Coordinator for 36 years. Both performed excellent work and we wish them the very best in their well-deserved retirement.

NOT PICTURED

Vincent Modafferi, Local 106, Bronx, NY, Manhattan and Bronx Surface Transit Operating Authority (NYC MTA)

Joe Boncordo, Local 223, Omaha, NE, Metro Area Transit

Arvol Brumley, Local 263, President, Ysleta, Texas, Tsleta School District


Loma Renane Rancher, Local 265, Conroe, TX, Conroe Independent School District

Tony Price, Local 276, President, Waco, TX, Waco Transit System

Local 260 Still Distributing PPE

Members of Local 260 continue their mission of distributing PPE throughout the city of Houston. Pictured is an N95 mask drive at Fallbrook BOF.
On March 8, International Women’s Day, we celebrate the many accomplishments and contributions that women have made throughout history – despite all the unique difficulties they silently face.

This year, the TWU International recognized the talented, dedicated, selfless women who serve on our International Executive Council & Board:

- Delisa Brown, President, Local 171, Ann Arbor, Michigan
- Bedennia Barnes, President, Local 261, Houston, Texas
- Constance Bradley, President, Local 101, Brooklyn, New York
- LaTonya Crisp, Recording Secretary, Local 100, New York City
- Cassandra Gilbert, Secretary-Treasurer, Local 291, Miami, Florida
- Amy Griffin, President, Local 1460, New York, New York
- Debra Hagan, President, Local 252, Nassau, New York
- Vanessa Jones, Executive Board/Safety Officer, Local 100, New York City
- Shirley Martin, Vice President CED, Local 100, New York City
- Lyn Montgomery, President, Local 556, Dallas, Texas
- Jenny Schar, President, Local 592, Euless, Texas
- Christina Scott, President, Local 220, Brick, New Jersey

We can’t express how much we appreciate all the hard work you do. We thank you for tirelessly and skillfully performing your jobs, going above and beyond on all fronts, Keeping America Moving, today and every day.

Local 575 Executive Board Training

On April 4 and 5, International Rep Jose Galarza trained Executive Board officers at Local 575 in Euless, Texas.
Local 557 Swear In

On March 26, International Rep Jose Galarza swore in Local 557’s new President Robert Vazquez Goretti and Secretary-Treasurer Thomas Simonds. They took office on April 1.

(left to right) Secretary/Treasurer Thomas Simonds, President Robert Vazquez Goretti, Vice President Jim Baird, Board Member at Large Joe Gautille and Intl’ Rep. Jose Galarza.

Local Charter Milestones

Local 208 in Columbus, Ohio, celebrated their 80th anniversary in April 2021.

Local 250A in San Francisco, California, celebrated their 55th anniversary in May 2021.

Local 568 in Miami Springs, Florida celebrated their 30th anniversary in May 2021.

Local 512 Oath of Office

On April 23, Air Division Director Gary Peterson swore in the Officers of Local 512 in Elk Grove, Indiana.
Local 555 Swear In

The first official event held at the new International Headquarters in Washington, DC was the swearing in of Local 555’s new Executive Board on May 5. Local 555 represents Ramp Agents and Operations at Southwest Airlines.

International Executive Vice President Alex Garcia swore in newly elected President Randy Barnes along with the rest of the board: Vice President Jerry McCrummen, Second Vice President Albert Barbosa, Treasurer Jessica Hayes, Recording Secretary Juan Cordova, District 1 Rep Marwyn Hughes, District 2 Rep Karl Mager, District 3 Rep Daniel Chriss, District 4 Rep JP Loregnard, District 5 Rep Yolanda Long, District 6 Rep Tyler Cluff, District 7 Rep James Barrett and District 8 Rep Abilio Villaverde.

International Administrative Vice President Mike Mayes, Air Division Director Gary Peterson, TUUS Division Director Curtis Tate, International Rep Andre Sutton, Special Projects Coordinator Air/Transit and Local 555 member Shirley Duff and COPE/State Conferences Director Andrew Rangolan, were also in attendance.
**Local 556 Swear In**

Local 556’s Executive Board was sworn in at International Headquarters in Washington, DC on May 12. Local 556 represents Flight Attendants at Southwest Airlines.


International Secretary-Treasurer Jerome Lafragola, Air Division Director Gary Peterson, International Rep and Local 556 member Thom McDaniel, and International Legislative & Political Representative and Local 556 member Matt Hettich were also in attendance.

**IN MEMORIAM:**

**JAMES E. MURRAY**

James E. Murray, a former member of Local 2054 and Local 2001 passed away on April 30 after a brief illness.

Murray was a retired CSX Car Inspector and the brother of retired Local 2054 President Thomas Murray and Local 2054 Section Chairman Kevin Murray.

**Local 1400 Swear In**

Members of the Local 1400 Executive Board were sworn in on May 28. Pictured are left to right: Vice President Matt Wright, Chairman of Aviation Jim Denti, TUUS Division Director Curtis Tate, President Pat Reynolds, International Secretary-Treasurer Jerome Lafragola, Recording Secretary Kim Whitfield, Chairman of Tunnel & Bridge Agents Carl Fales and Secretary Treasurer Bob Higgins.
The following women have spent the past four years serving as co-chairs of the TWU International Working Women’s Committee (WWC). WWC Chairperson Latonya Crisp (Local 100’s Recording Secretary) sends her sincere thanks for all their dedicated work.

Shirley Martin, Local 100

Shirley Martin is Vice President of Car Equipment at Local 100 and has been breaking through glass ceilings her entire working career. She is an inspiration to all TWU women who want to get involved in their union and to those who aspire to non-traditional jobs for women at New York City Transit (NYCT).

Martin began breaking down barriers when she became the first girl to opt into the metal craft class at Kingston Technical High School in Jamaica. She graduated at top of her class, and became the first female machinist ever to be hired by Kaiser Jamaica Bauxite Company.

Martin was rejected by numerous employers despite her solid background because, she was told “she looked too feminine to be a machinist.” She finally convinced an interviewer to test her skills in a job setting. Martin showed such skill in her field test that she was hired over 300 men who applied for the position. Martin was elected the first woman union representative of Jamaica’s National Workers Union and was the first woman to sit on the union’s contract negotiating committee. After immigrating to the US, she started working for NYCT and became the first woman to operate the wheel grinding machine at the Coney Island Overhaul shop.

Martin has served as Shop Steward, CED Division Vice Chair, Recording Secretary, Executive Board member, Division Chair and Vice President. She was the first woman Division Chair and Vice President of Car Equipment.

“'You’re never too old to learn, and sometimes you best advice comes from where you least expect it,” Martin said, adding that no one should ever look down on others. “We need people from all walks of life, from the President to the man on the street.”

Coretta Jones, Local 101

Coretta Jones has been employed by National Grid (previously Brooklyn Union Gas) for over 28 years. She currently holds the position as Team Leader in the company’s call center. She has served as Local 101’s delegate since 2010, was appointed a board member in 2016 and re-elected in 2019. She said the most rewarding part of serving on Local 101’s board is having the opportunity to improve communication between the local and management. Her focus is to negotiate favorable working conditions through collective bargaining. From 2013 to 2019, she served as Local 101’s Women’s Committee Chairperson. Since then, she oversees, guides and empowers other women of Local 101 to run the committee. She has a passion for uplifting and servicing her union and creating the best work environment for our members.

Terry Hind, Local 252

Terry Hind recently retired as Business Agent for TWU Local 252 in Suffolk County, New York. Her responsibilities included mediation, contract negotiations, public relations and fundraising. Additionally, she’s particularly proud of the leadership roles she played in numerous community service projects, such as coat and food drives, eyeglass and toy collections, as well as veteran’s outreach and the Keep Islip Clean Highway sponsorship. She is grateful for the opportunity to have traveled to places such as Dallas, San Francisco, Miami and Washington, DC, among others but more so blessed to have learned so much...
COMMITTEE UPDATES

FLOC Elects New Board Members

Members of the Future Leaders Organizing Committee held another virtual meeting on April 13, electing a new board.

New board members are as follows:
- Eric Espaillat, (Local 568) and Jordan Bravo (Local 513), Co-Chairs
- Anthony Hernandez (Local 502), Recording Secretary
- Jarrod Gillen (Local 568), Communications

Locals also reported updates since their last meeting in January with many local FLOC Committees announcing that our FLOC family is growing.

The FLOC Board met on June 2 in Washington, DC as this issue went to press.

The next FLOC meeting will be held in September in Las Vegas, which will be the first in-person meeting since December 2019.

Cheryl Pollock, Local 513

Cheryl Pollock has been working for almost 34 years with American Airlines and is also a Steward. After working 33 years on the ramp, she recently made the move to cargo!! She said, “I love it. It’s a big change, like having a new job. Covid sucks, I miss all my women in the WWC.”

Latonia Benoit, Local 556

Latonia Benoit is a flight attendant for Southwest Airlines. She is currently on the Executive Board of the Texas State AFL-CIO and has served as Chair of the Texas/Oklahoma State Conference, Shop Steward and 2nd Vice President of Local 556.

Amy Griffin, Local 1460

Amy Griffin has worked for Amtrak on-board services as a Lead Service Attendant coming up on 34 years of service. She started off as a TWU Local Chair in 2000 and worked her way up to President of Local 1460, a position she has held for nearly a decade. She is the first female president under the TWU Railroad Division, “so she is told.” She has been a Co-Chair of the Working Women’s Committee since the TWU merged all the division committees into one.

from such a dynamic group of professionals. She has sincere, heartfelt thanks and appreciation for the honor of allowing her to serve as Co-Chairperson of the International Working Women’s Committee.
The TWU Committee on Political Education

Contribute to COPE today to make sure your voice is heard in Washington. For more information, contact COPE Director Andrew Rangolan at arangolan@twu.org

Contributions to the TWU PCC are not tax deductible. Contributions to the TWU PCC are voluntary and no TWU member will be advantaged or disadvantaged for their decision to contribute or not contribute. The TWU PCC is connected to the TWU and may use the money it receives for political purposes including, but not limited to, making contributions to and expenditures for candidates for elected office.

“In the 18 years since I joined TWU COPE, I have been advocating for labor-friendly candidates.”

– Joseph D’Elia, Local 291