

February 8, 2008

To All Amtrak Brothers and Sisters of IBEW System Council No. 7:

I have been involved with Amtrak negotiations over the past eight years and have been the chief negotiator for the past four years. Needless to say, negotiating with this company has been one of the most difficult tasks that I have had in my career, partly because of President Bush's edict to dismantle Amtrak, Amtrak's financial situation, and the arrogant attitude of this company towards their employees and Labor.

As you well know by the letters that I have previously sent to every individual, plus the many letters that I have sent to the Presidents and Local Chairmen of your Locals, this company has taken an extremely hard line in the negotiating process. They wanted work rule changes that would have destroyed our seniority system, our craft, and our wage base. The composite mechanic and the sub-contracting rule changes that they wanted would have literally decimated the number of members that we have on this railroad. However, we steadfastly refused to give in to their demands, and the only reason that we were able to stand up to their "my way or the highway" attitude was due to your overwhelming support of our position in these negotiations. The most important thing that I must say is that I would like to thank each and every one of you on an individual basis for the support and cooperation that you have shown to this Council during these trying times.

Enclosed in this envelope is the agreement that we reached with Amtrak, a summary of said agreement, and a letter from all nine unions that was signed by Ed Hill, our International President, supporting ratification of the agreement. You will also receive a ballot for your vote with a self-addressed, stamped envelope that must be received in our Philadelphia office no later than the close of business on Thursday, March 6, 2008. Any ballot received after this date, or not filled out completely, will not be counted. You must also enter your local union number on the self-addressed stamped envelope next to your name that is printed on the return address label. I strongly recommend that you accept this tentative agreement as I feel that this is the best agreement that we can possibly obtain with the Presidential Emergency Board's findings on this matter.

At the present time we are in the process of having a representative from this Council attend your local union meeting to answer any and all questions that you may have prior to voting. Where it is impractical to attend a meeting due to the time restraints of the ratification process, conference calls are being set up to answer any questions that you may have with the representative from this office.

In closing, I would like to thank IBEW Railroad Director Bill Bohne and his department for the tremendous amount of help and support that he personally showed this Council during these negotiations. I would also once again like to say thank you from the bottom of my heart for all of your support and cooperation throughout these lengthy negotiations. Without your support we would not have been able to reach this agreement, which I feel is fair and equitable for our Membership. We have certainly shown Amtrak that by standing together in solidarity, that their most valuable asset in this company is their employees.

Fraternally yours,

Michael A. Giansante  
General Chairman

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Enclosures