



Strength in Numbers

Local 555
Membership
Hits 18,000



AIR / 14

Dangerous Firefighter Cuts at Kennedy Space Center and Cape Canaveral



RAIL / 16

Record Wage Boost for Amtrak Workers in New Contract



TRANSIT / 18

No Local Too Small. TWU Intl. Takes Road Trip to North Carolina and Georgia

Joe Biden: A True Friend of Labor



Decades before America's political universe began orbiting around Wilmington, Delaware, TWU's railroad officers who worked at the Penn Central Railroad and later at Amtrak began building a political alliance with a young ambitious pro-trade-union politician named Joe Biden.

America's passenger railroads, the dominant form of intercity transportation for more than 50 years in the early 20th century, began being crushed financially after World War II by the advancement of car, bus, and air travel. By the time Amtrak was created in 1971 as a quasi-public-private corporation to take over operation of the failing lines, it was obvious we would need a 'Godfather' in Congress to carry our water for federal funding. Thanks to the relentless work of our TWU rail leaders, particularly the late James Riley, the longtime Vice President and President of Local 2015 in Wilmington, Joe Biden became that friend and ally we so desperately needed. This alliance, as well as a close personal friendship between Riley and Biden, allowed our TWU Rail Division to punch way above its weight on Amtrak policies and contracts – and it gave Biden tons of street cred as a politician who “got it” when it came to blue collar trade union issues.

From his earliest days in the Senate to the time he transitioned to Vice President in the Obama Administration, Biden almost singlehandedly kept Amtrak a functioning, and eventually profit-making enterprise on the Northeast Corridor, and with it protected the jobs and work scope of TWU Railroad Division workers. It is an alliance that worked for both of us. In fact, in 2021 during the 50th anniversary of Amtrak, Biden invited leaders from only three unions to his nationally televised speech, and we were one of them.

I don't think Biden ever got the recognition he deserved, in the media at least, for his role as one of organized labor's most important go-to guys in politics. As President, his very public support for the autoworkers strike, both in word (where he told the national press corps that that the auto industry had not properly shared its record profits with the workers) and in deed (walking the picket line) was vital in the UAW's ability to craft its historic contract with the industry. I believe Biden's support in that agreement also greased the rails, so to speak, for other unions, including our own, to break through on important contracts in

rail, air, transit, and more. President Biden's support for essential workers during COVID, especially with federal funding covering thousands of TWU members in all the transportation trades, was absolutely vital in keeping most of our people getting paychecks during the pandemic.

Biden was always most comfortable working the room with blue-collar workers in factories or on job sites, preferably union shops, than anywhere else. He constantly promoted the value of union contracts and wages as a means for workers to get ahead. That was his true wheelhouse, and in some ways, alienated him from some of his more high-brow political elites and donors.

The TWU's support for Joe Biden has been well earned and his previous TWU endorsements have proved super beneficial to the economic security of our members. But then the June 27 debate happened, and it was followed by a disgraceful drip, drip, drip of his so-called political allies who started a drumbeat to pull the rug out from underneath him. Then came the shiv to the back from the party's big shots. He deserved better. He deserved a more dignified conclusion to a career spent fighting for TWU members' livelihoods.

A lot of blue-collar workers, including lots of our own members, disagree with President Biden on some social issues, and I understand that sentiment. But one thing Joe Biden never wavered on was his support for the trade unions, and The TWU in particular. We and the labor movement at large are going to miss him. There will likely never be another overt supporter of trade unions like him again.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Samol". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



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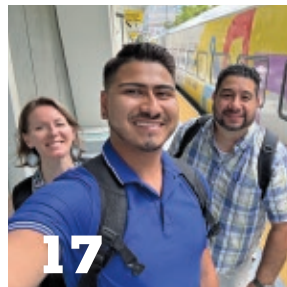
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Providing Our Kids with Opportunities

*By International Secretary-Treasurer
Jerome Lafragola*



We are living in an incredibly divisive time. We are divided over who should run our country, who should have the final say when it comes to medical decisions, which side is right and which side is wrong in wars thousands of miles away, and other issues.

But we all agree on one thing – we all want the best for our kids. It's the common denominator. We want to give them all the tools and opportunities that we can so they can grow and have bright futures. We want them to get good jobs that hopefully are fulfilling and enable them to raise families of their own.

The TWU is doing its part.

I recently had the privilege of representing TWU International leadership at our annual scholarship drawing, where more than 30 students were awarded more than \$100,000 for college.

Most people think of their union as responsible for representing them in the workplace and negotiating contracts that lead to a better quality of life, and make no mistake, the TWU continues to notch victory after victory at the bargaining table. But there's lots of benefits to being in a strong union that aren't always top of mind. The yearly TWU scholarship winners are a perfect example of that.

College is only getting more expensive every year and we hope the scholarships can help with at least some of the financial burden. The TWU is committed to helping the next generation of students as they embark on their educational journey. I encourage any TWU member with a child who is a high school junior to keep an eye out for next year's scholarship application, which will be sent to Locals early next year.

There are also other benefits available to TWU members.

As an AFL-CIO member, you also have access to Union Plus, a website that provides all kinds of benefits for union members. There are perks like discounts on flowers around Mother's Day, big savings on insurance and healthcare, additional protections on major life expenses like mortgages and loans. You can check out the benefits available to you by going to <https://www.unionplus.org/> and entering your information. Union Plus also awards their own scholarships each year for union families.

A strong union provides benefits that go beyond dollars and cents. An organized workplace provides opportunities for camaraderie, friendship and bonds that extend to the entire family – as many of you have experienced at family days and union-organized picnics across the country this summer. Unions help provide the social bonds that build community and lead to lasting, fulfilling relationships that can be hard to come by in our digital age.

Additionally, the TWU provides ways to get involved and build more connections that can benefit your entire workplace. The TWU Working Women's Committee, Veterans Committee, Future Leaders Organizing Committee and the Civil and Human Rights Committee are all ways for locals to learn from one another and for individual members to benefit from the shared knowledge and expertise of TWU leaders across the country.

The TWU provides so many opportunities for members and their families and I'm proud to be part of a union that values workers beyond what they produce for their employer. I encourage anyone with interest to get more involved.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerome Lafragola". The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a white background.



2024 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

The Transport Workers Union in July announced the latest list of scholarship recipients. A total of 32 students across all divisions were awarded a combined \$112,000 in scholarships after a random drawing at The TWU International office in Washington, D.C.

“I want to congratulate the 2024 scholarship winners and their families,” said TWU International Secretary-Treasurer Jerome Lafragola, who participated in the scholarship drawing on behalf of The TWU International leadership. “The scholarships are yet another example of how The TWU works to better the lives of our members and the future leaders of the world.”

The TWU scholarship program was started in 1991, making 2024 the 33rd year of its existence. Some of the scholarships are paid out over a four-year period while others are a one-time award.

“This is what The TWU is all about: Helping the members and addressing their needs on and off the job,” TWU International

Executive Vice President Alex Garcia said. “We all know how big a burden the cost of college is for working families. We hope to make the burden a little lighter with these scholarships.”

M3 Technology President John B. Pescitelli also was on hand for the drawing.

“As President of M3 Technology, again it is my pleasure and honor to be here for the 2024 TWU Scholarships,” he said.

“The Benefit Specialists of M3 Technology have been serving the Supplemental Insurance needs of TWU members and their families throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands since 1980. During that time, they have provided Guaranteed Acceptance Life and Health benefits without medical questions or medical examinations, regardless of present or past medical conditions. Again, it is my honor as President to support the students and continue that tradition of awarding scholarships, which we began 33 years ago, in 1991.”

Michael J. Quill Scholarship Winners – \$4,800

(\$1,200 per year for four years)

NAME	TWU MEMBER	LOCAL
• Hamilton P. Harris,	Lori Harris,	556
• Kyra N. Ray,	Pamela Griffis,	1400
• Conner R. Johnson,	Steven Johnson,	514
• Daniel A. Milenov,	Anton Milenov,	572
• Caroline E. Dinger,	Chad Dinger,	591
• Nathan T. Nolen,	Larry Nolen,	513
• Thomas C. Nellis,	Theodore Nellis,	101
• Adriana Pao,	Amy Paracuelles,	592
• Mishel Khokhar,	Imran Khokhar,	100
• Anatoli D. Velikov,	Daniel Velikov,	241
• David R. Johnson,	Jacqueline Johnson,	514
• Damon L. Darling,	Dana Darling,	2020
• Jamill R. Shelby,	Rashida Shelby,	555
• Shannon E. Solorzano,	Erickson Solorzano,	555
• Gunner L. Greene,	Dena Greene,	556

Acrisure – \$2,500 (one-year scholarship)

NAME	TWU MEMBER	LOCAL
• Tabeeb Chowdhury,	Jayed Chowdhury,	100
• Leila M. Suarez,	Cassie Suarez,	579
• Sora N. Walker,	Serika Walker,	556

• Nasir G. Gilles,	Gary Gilles,	100
• Julie A. Durham,	Molly Durham,	579
• Gage S. Greene,	Dena Greene,	556
• Diego M. Melon-Circuns,	Manuel Melon,	568
• Angel M. Martinez,	Arcel Martinez,	241
• Joseph R. Raygosa,	Patricia Raygosa,	556
• Cyrus Chan Kit,	Fong Chan,	100

M3 Technology – \$2,000 (one-year scholarship)

NAME	TWU MEMBER	LOCAL
• Nicholas A. Fermin,	Adolfo Fermin,	100
• Dane E. Meadows,	Robert Meadows,	592
• Nicholas R. Nolen,	Larry Nolen,	513
• Nathan Limon,	Espevanza Limon,	575
• Solé N. Julien,	Nicholas Clyne,	100

Pitta LLP – \$2,500 (one-year scholarship)

NAME	TWU MEMBER	LOCAL
• Sebastian A. Albuquerque,	Erys Albuquerque,	591

Pitta Bishop Del Giorno LLC – \$2,500 (one-year scholarship)

NAME	TWU MEMBER	LOCAL
• Riley A. Thames,	Brooke Thames,	556

Bus Dispatcher Counsels Addicts In The Bronx

Julio Romero is a man of the streets. As a Surface Line Dispatcher for New York City Transit, Romero orchestrates the movement of buses from his post at a Bronx intersection where multiple routes converge. He troubleshoots any equipment-related problems, like bus breakdowns, and he handles schedule-related issues, like traffic causing buses to arrive late at their appointed stops.

Off duty, Romero helps drug and alcohol abusers, including those who have fallen so low they are homeless and living on the streets. Romero links them with government agencies and nonprofit organizations that provide services, like temporary housing and in-patient detox programs. He gives encouragement and advice. And he serves as an example of someone who turned his life around.

“It’s not the beginning but the ending that counts,” said Romero, a member of TWU Local 106. “I’m proud of who I am. I’m proud of what I became. If I can help someone, I will. It’s what I love to do.”

Romero, 66, grew up in the Bronx and fell in with the wrong crowd as a teenager.

“I started doing things you’re not supposed to do,” he said. “I started going in the wrong direction, doing things I shouldn’t have been doing, wasting time, wasting my life.”



Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson giving Bus Dispatcher Julio Romero an award for his volunteerism in the borough



Surface Line Dispatcher Julio Romero discusses a bus-route issue with a NYC Transit Bus Operator

It was a rut that Romero stayed in for years. Finally, with encouragement from his loyal parents, he received counseling and stopped his self-destructive, bad habits. After working a job in maintenance, Romero was hired as Bus Operator in 1997 and promoted to Surface Line Dispatcher in 2004.

Today, Romero volunteers hours every week to talk with patients at hospitals, detox facilities, and counseling centers. He also will strike up a conversation if he sees someone on the street in clear need of help. Others are simply referred to Romero by community members who have heard about his knowledge and volunteerism.

“Everybody knows somebody using something,” he said. “It could be a grandson, a husband, the check-out person at the grocery store. It’s really bad out there.”

To start with, Romero tells substance abusers to be honest with themselves.

“You have to want to change for yourself,” he said. “If you stop drinking or doing drugs for your mother, or for your brother, or because your wife or husband want you to stop, it’s not going to work. It’s not going to last. You have to do it for yourself.”

For his efforts, Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson presented him with a Citation of Merit in May. He was nominated by Local 106 President Philip Valenti, Recording Secretary Jose DeJesus and MaBSTOA Transportation Chair Mike Rodriguez.

“I can’t tell you how much it means to me personally to have a man like Julio in our organization,” Valenti said. “What this humble man does in the community as a substance abuse counselor is amazing and really is God’s work. He is the best that you can want, not only as a member of your union, but more importantly, as a neighbor.”



Julio Romero on the job at W. 231st St. and Kingsbridge Ave. in the Bronx



Training and Education Coordinator Mitch Lieberman in the classroom with Local 263 officers in El Paso, Texas.

Officer and Shop Steward Training from Coast to Coast

The TWU has been barnstorming the country to conduct training for officers and shop stewards in Locals big and small.

Between January and late July, approximately 225 officers and stewards in a dozen different Locals attended the training sessions, which encompass a range of topics, including arbitration, grievances, the role of executive boards, the International Constitution, building unity and identifying common goals,



International Executive President Alex Garcia says training has been "very well received."

Training and Education Coordinator Mitch Lieberman said. The sessions were held in California, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas and Virginia.

"The mission is to support the Locals and give them the educational tools they need to represent the membership as best as they possibly can," Lieberman said. "At the same time, it's very important that officers and stewards know what is required to

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Local 101, Brooklyn, NY



Local 263, El Paso, TX



U.S. Senate Introduces Key Transit Operations Bill

The U.S. Senate has introduced a bill backed by The Transport Workers Union that would establish a new program within the Federal Transit Administration to support transit operations – a critical step for transit agencies across the country seeking to improve and expand service while facing major budgetary shortfalls.

The bill, introduced by Sens. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) and John Fetterman (D-Pa.) would enable the Federal Transit Administration to support public transportation operating costs in urbanized areas with more than 200,000 people. Outside of emergencies, these funds have been limited to capital projects for the past forty years.

“Now that the pandemic has passed, transit agencies are prohibited from using federal funds for operations, meaning the government will give an agency money to buy new buses but nothing for hiring an operator to drive it,” TWU International

President John Samuelson said. “That needs to change if the federal government is serious about supporting transit.”

The bill would provide every transit agency serving an urbanized area annual funding for operations divided proportionally based on the total amount of operating expenses reported to the FTA nationwide. Transit agencies would also have the flexibility to use up to 10 percent of their federal capital project funding for these operational needs. These funds would be eligible for operating costs, along with safety and security projects.

The Senate bill builds on a TWU-endorsed House bill, H.R. 3744, from Rep. Hank Johnson (D-Ga.). The House bill would authorize \$20 billion per year for four years by formula to pay for operations costs for public transit agencies. Additional investments in the Senate and House bills are needed now more than ever as demand for public transit increases and pandemic-era aid dries up.

Progress Continues on Rail Safety with New House Bill

The Transport Workers Union Government Affairs team is keeping up the pressure on rail safety. As the Senate remains a few votes short of passing a bill with new regulations in response to the East Palestine, Ohio, derailment, House lawmakers are moving forward with new TWU-backed legislation to make freight transportation safer.

Reps. Troy Nehls (R-Texas) and Seth Moulton (D-Mass.) recently introduced a bill that expands on existing rail safety proposals drafted in the last year. The bill establishes a minimum amount of time Car Inspectors will be allowed to inspect each car so workers can realistically, and adequately, assess train components without being rushed.

The new bill also requires at least two crew members on Class I freight trains. That’s a crucial safety measure for TWU members who inspect rail cars because a train will still be manned if a crew member is needed to assist a Car Inspector handling an equipment defect. This is especially important if the issue is related to a defective air brake system. In addition, the legislation includes money to help

install systems enabling railcar owners to track their cargo – and receive data – about wheel-bearing temperatures, which were a major issue in the East Palestine derailment.

“The tragic derailment and subsequent environmental disaster in East Palestine were the direct result of lax federal oversight coupled with greedy railroad executives who constantly prioritize short-term profits over safety and hardworking TWU members,” TWU International President John Samuelson said. “The Railroad Safety Enhancement Act is long overdue, and we look forward to working with Representatives Nehls, Moulton, and others to see it enacted into law as soon as possible.”

“It is crucial to keep up the work on rail safety after the East Palestine derailment,” said TWU Rail Division Director John Feltz. “The TWU will continue work in Washington and elsewhere to help pass these critical bills into law.”

The Senate, led by Ohio Sens. Sherrod Brown and J.D. Vance, successfully passed a rail safety bill out of the Senate Commerce Committee last year but the bill remains a few votes short of passing the full Senate.

Women in Nontraditional Workplace Roles: Marla Johnson



The TWU has a long history of representing women who work in nontraditional workplace roles like Aircraft Maintenance Technicians (AMT) and giving the space for women to grow throughout their careers as leaders in the workplace. In this issue of the Express, we are featuring Marla Johnson, a longtime Aircraft Maintenance Technician based out of Tulsa, Oklahoma, with American Airlines.

What is your job title and where do you work?

I'm the Vice President of TWU Local 514 and an Aircraft Maintenance Technician with American Airlines.

How long have you been a TWU member?

I've been a TWU member for 27 years.

What roles do you hold within the union?

I became Vice President in 2022. I am also active with the Women's Committee. I was a Shop Steward and an E-Board officer. I am also involved with the Employee Assistance Program.

What does The TWU mean to you?

I came from a union family. My dad was a carpenter. I knew a little bit about unions, but I had forgotten some and I didn't take advantage of being a union member for many years. I was a working single mom, and I didn't feel I had time to be involved. But I learned that being in a union gives you power and gives you a voice. The one thing The TWU does is it gives you a voice and a platform to make change in the workplace and, boy, was I in shock when I learned that. I've really grown, not only as an Airline Mechanic and as a union officer, but also as a person, even outside of work.

Tell us about the job you perform and your roles and responsibilities.

I'm a full-time Vice President and I work grievances; I work the E-Board and I manage the grievance committee. I also help with benefits, EAP and the Women's Committee. Before that, I was an Airline Mechanic out in the hangar. I worked in systems and in the

cabin, but I learned a little bit of everything out in the hangar when the planes come in. In Tulsa we do heavy checks that last 14 to 25 days. We literally tear the airplanes down to the bones and look for corrosion and perform maintenance. It's pretty incredible to see a plane fully stripped.

What made you decide to become an Aircraft Maintenance Technician?

I had family that worked at American, so I always knew about American, and knew it would be a good opportunity to work there. I've always been a little bit mechanical. I always wanted to be an auto mechanic in high school, but I was discouraged from doing that, so I went into cosmetology, did hair, and hated it. I started here as an Aircraft Cleaner, and I went to AMT school to get my certificates. It's always been in my blood. I was just detoured for a little while.

What challenges have you faced as a working woman? How many women are in your line of work?

When I started there would be one woman out of hundreds of men. It was very rare that you would see another female working side-by-side with you. We've hired many more women but it's still about three percent I believe. When you go into a new area nobody knows you and everybody stays away from you, they don't know how to treat you because you're a woman. You've just got to build that relationship and that rapport, and I also had to work twice as hard as any man just to prove that I deserve to be out there. I once had a bolt I couldn't break, and I was determined I was not going to ask for help but eventually I asked my partner, and my partner couldn't get it either and that made me feel so much better. We had to get tooling to assist. Sometimes you feel vulnerable when you ask for help but you shouldn't. As long as you pull your weight, you'll be respected.

What advice would you give to other working women?

I encourage any female out there who wants to work with their hands and get greasy and mechanical. Don't be afraid to get your hands dirty to do a good job. Get out there and work your ass off, that's in anything you do, not just a TWU career. We need to voice our opinions, don't hold them in.



John Greer greets President Joe Biden at the 2023 Labor Day Parade in Philadelphia.



Greer, left, Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro, and TWU Local 234 Secretary-Treasurer Joe Coccio.

JOHN GREER

A Living Labor Legend in Pennsylvania

“Blessed, and have another day”

TWU Local 234 in Philadelphia once honored John Greer III with an engraved gold clock. Like a time piece, the 80-year-old former Bus Mechanic just never stops.

Greer retired from the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) in 2001. But for more than 21 years, he has represented Local 234 as a volunteer delegate and board member of the Bucks County AFL-CIO Central Labor Council.

Greer also has been involved – for decades – in nearly a dozen other labor, veteran, community, and political organizations that help provide food to the hungry, shelter the homeless, register voters, promote workplace safety, raise funds for the needy and foster community involvement.

He holds key posts at many of those groups, including Chair of the Hunger Project at his chapter of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Co-Chair of the Tri-State Labor Day Parade, and Executive Director of the Bucks County Association for Retired and Senior Citizens.

He has been a Democratic committee person for 36 years.

“He retired but never retired,” Local 234 Secretary-Treasurer Joe Coccio said. “I’ve never seen anything like him. He’s old school.”

Even a recent bout with cancer, which Greer won through intense treatment, didn’t slow him down.

“He didn’t miss a beat,” Coccio said.

Greer, who served honorably in the Marines from 1961 to 1967, says he has no intention of stopping or scaling back his volunteer activities.

“God blessed me with the ability to help people,” he said. “My purpose, I feel, is not to sit and watch life go by. My purpose is to help as many as I can help for as long as I am here in the world.”

The octogenarian is known for his trademark attire and slogan. He regularly wears a hardhat adorned with the American flag, a TWU T-shirt and a vest covered with pro-union buttons. His slogan: “Blessed and have another day.”

After serving in the military, Greer was hired in 1967 by the Philadelphia Transportation Company. SEPTA purchased the company the following year. Greer worked at the Germantown Car



John and Philadelphia AFL-CIO Director Danny Bauder.

Barn from 7 p.m. to 3:30 a.m. With just three months on the job, a union official asked him to be Shop Steward for that shift.

One night he was asked to accompany a co-worker who was summoned to the boss’ office for an alleged infraction. Greer talked the manager out of disciplining the man.

“I won my first case,” he said. “That put the taste in my mouth, and I have been doing it ever since. It was satisfying helping someone who needed help, someone the employer was trying to intimidate. I didn’t like that. The Marine in me kicked in.”

At various maintenance locations Greer rose through the ranks, serving as Grievance Representative, Recording Secretary, Vice Chair and Chair. He led a union-wide Safety Committee

and was appointed as a Local Business Agent in 1998.

In recent years, Greer was instrumental in organized labor’s successful efforts to turn Bucks County blue and elect labor-friendly county commissioners, Coccio said. Those commissioners in turn have appointed labor-friendly members to the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority Board, which votes on Local 234 contracts. An extremely anti-union SEPTA Board Chair was booted out, Coccio said, and replaced with a pro-union Chair, Bob Harvie.

The labor veteran, who participated in many Local 234 strikes over the decades, urges younger members to learn their history and get involved. Previous generations of workers unionized and fought the powerful to secure many of the standards that are taken for granted today, such as the 40-hour work week, health care, paid vacations, paid holidays, sick days, and safety regulations, he said. Those gains were not by accident. The only way to protect and improve on past gains is through concerted action, he said.

“Our employers are geared toward trying to negotiate a lower standard of living for workers and trying to take things away from you,” he said. “Get involved and stay involved. If you don’t fight, you lose. If you stand together and fight as group, you have a good chance of winning.”

THE TWU AND TOURISM: Navigating LA's Streets and Hills

Spotting a celebrity – or a superhero – counts as just another day on the job for TWU members working for the Big Bus tourism company in Los Angeles.

TWU-represented Bus Operators have had celebrities like Chris Pratt board as part of a promotion. Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson frequently waves to tourists when the double-decker buses pass his home. Jimmy Fallon and Al Pacino sightings are fairly common. And a Bus Operator once had an actor in a full Superman costume crawl on the outside of his bus.

“You’re not stuck at the office,” Maritza Azucena, a Bus Operator, and a Local 100 Shop Steward, said of the work that she and her colleagues do on the West Coast.

Azucena is one of the hundreds of TWU members employed in the tourism industry. It’s a burgeoning sector of the economy for the union. Local 100 first organized Big Bus workers in New York City in 2017. Representation then spread to San Francisco, Washington, D.C., Miami, Las Vegas, Chicago, and L.A. Big Bus is the largest operator of open-top sightseeing tours in the world.

An L.A. native, Azucena operated a bus at L.A.’s public transit authority for 23 years before joining Big Bus four years ago. Now, she doesn’t just operate a double-decker bus around Hollywood for tourists using Big Bus’s hop-on, hop-off route – she operates the largest bus in the fleet. It is 13.6 feet tall, which is about four feet taller than a standard transit bus, and it has 50 seats on the upper level.

“I drive this puppy like a car,” Azucena said as she deftly navigated L.A.’s notoriously intense traffic.



Bus Operator Maritza Azucena



Mini-Bus Operator Rodney Lauderdale

During a recent run of her two-hour route, passengers listened to narrated audio recordings about major attractions like the Chinese Theater and the famous Beverly Hills neighborhood. Azucena helped tourists entering and exiting the bus plan their days, giving suggestions on where to hop off in English and Spanish.

While Azucena drove the largest bus, Rodney Lauderdale drives a much smaller open-air minibus that can navigate L.A.’s narrow hills where the rich and famous live. He pulls double duty – he also serves as the tour guide for the smaller groups taking special tours to see homes that belonged to celebrities like Taylor Swift and Michael Jackson. The work suits his outgoing and inquisitive personality, Lauderdale said.

“I like meeting people,” he said. “I once had riders from 13 different countries in one week.”

He frequently encounters celebrities going about their daily lives while driving the bus, with big names like Dwayne “The Rock,” Fallon and Pacino waving to tourists. But the more memorable encounters for Lauderdale involve wildlife.

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TWU Divisions

The Transport Workers Union of America welcomed Local presidents from across the country and all divisions for the Presidents' Conference in Denver – showing The TWU's collective power and leadership muscle.

The Air, Rail and Transit, Universities, Utilites and Services Divisions gathered in downtown Denver to hear about The TWU's technology program, Government Affairs victories, labor law, and how to deal with stress on the job. TWU Air Division Director Andre Sutton, Rail Director John Feltz and TUUS Director Willie Brown

led the conference, which also included International Secretary-Treasurer Jerome Lafragola and International Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate. The meeting went on

despite nasty weather conditions across the country that led to delayed and cancelled flights, preventing some presidents from making the trip.

"It was great to meet with TWU presidents from across the country and all divisions, strategizing for future fightback campaigns centered on smart, aggressive tactics we can use to go toe-to-toe with management and big tech," Lafragola said. "We are preparing for a future where AI and other tech threatens good jobs so we can fight proactively instead of reactively."

The meeting included a presentation from Ed Wytkind, who leads TWU's tech program. He showed concrete examples of big companies introducing tech "innovations" that aim to cut jobs and yet are unproven and unreliable. He showed a video of a proposed people-mover system in Northern California that local leaders are promoting – instead of actually investing in existing transit infrastructure. He also showed a video of an automated baggage carrier in Singapore that would replace ramp workers.

TWU International Secretary-Treasurer Jerome Lafragola addresses presidents gathered in Denver





Unite in Denver

“The tech presentation was a wake-up call for some of our Local presidents – just because your management or employer isn’t talking about ways to use automation and AI to replace jobs right now doesn’t mean it won’t happen in the future,” Tate said. “We spent the week discussing strategic campaigns against our adversaries and making our union stronger.”

There was also a clear message from presenters: Politics is a major driver behind all management decisions. The TWU needs to be proactively involved in all discussions with elected officials and regulators or risk being left behind. Local leaders heard about the importance of contributing to COPE and backing elected officials who stand for working people, regardless of their party affiliation.

“We know that politics is the driver behind all of this,” Brown said.

Government Affairs Director Zack Tatz and Legislative and Political Representative Heather Laverty discussed recent TWU

wins on the Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization bill, including protections against sending aircraft maintenance abroad and protecting flight attendants from unruly passengers. Future fights lie ahead on transit operations funding.

Labor lawyers Christina Gornail and Holly Oliva-Van Horsten also talked about effective ways to run a local and manage disputes that arise between management and workers. They reminded the presidents in attendance that “it is all about advancing the members and doing the work”

Following the group meetings, participants broke into groups for two days to discuss ongoing issues specific to the Air, Rail, and TUUS Divisions while hearing from additional group speakers.

The three-day affair reaffirmed The TWU’s ongoing work as America’s Fightback Union.

*TWU International
Administrative
Vice President
Curtis Tate*



Dangerous Firefighter Staffing Cuts at the Kennedy Space Center

Firefighter staffing at the Kennedy Space Center and the Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida is dangerously low, a troubling situation that The TWU is urging Congress to fix.

NASA and the U.S. Air Force in recent years have eliminated or left vacant nearly 30 firefighting positions at the two government facilities – a nearly 20% reduction. The number of space launches, meanwhile, has soared.

The agencies have “effectively placed the lives of all those who work on the north end of the Kennedy Space Center and Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in jeopardy at time when America’s space program is booming,” Kevin Smith, a TWU International Representative and the President of Local 525, said.

Smith successfully recruited political support to force NASA and the Air Force to hire more firefighters, including those who were laid off several years ago. Two Florida members of the U.S. House are taking the lead: Republican Rep. Bill Posey and Democratic Rep. Maxwell Frost. There have been two bipartisan successes so far.

First, the House Science, Space and Technology Committee unanimously approved in July an amendment directing the Governmental Accounting Office to evaluate emergency-response capabilities at NASA’s Kennedy Space Center.

Secondly, the U.S. House of Representatives adopted a version of the National Defense Authorization Act with language requiring military space-launch facilities have “optimum manning and optimum services to safeguard life and property.”



**TWU Local 525
President Kevin Smith.**

Both pieces of legislation, if approved by both chambers of Congress, will compel authorities to increase the number of firefighters at both facilities, Smith said. Any serious review will find current staffing insufficient, he said.

There were approximately 80 firefighters at Kennedy in 2019. There are 62 emergency responders there today, Smith said. The number of firefighters at Cape Canaveral has slid from 59 to 50, he said.

The number of rockets launched from Florida’s “Space Coast” rose from 16 in 2019 to 72 last year, Rep. Frost said at a recent committee meeting. Authorities project 111 launches by the end of this year, he said.

The increased activity is partly due to the rise of space exploration and travel by private companies, like Elon Musk’s SpaceX, and NASA’s Artemis program. Artemis aims to again put astronauts on the moon and establish a lunar space station. As a result, there are far more workers – and visitors – to the facility these days.

“The rebirth of Florida’s ‘Space Coast’ has been one of the most important developments in Central Florida,” generating about \$4.7 billion in annual economic activity, Frost said.

Firefighters, who receive extensive hazardous materials training, are at Kennedy and CCSFS to handle any catastrophic event involving spacecraft. But they routinely respond to more everyday calls like car accidents, fires, and medical emergencies, like heart attacks.

In late 2022, NASA told a Florida newspaper the then-open third firehouse was set for closure because it fielded very few calls, and those calls could be adequately handled by the other two firehouses. Smith disputes those claims, adding response times to automobile crashes and medical emergencies in some instances increased by as much as 19 minutes because the remaining firefighters must travel much greater distances.



Kennedy Space Center firefighters participating in a series of drills, including an incident involving injured astronauts and, separately, a small plane fire.



ON THE RISE

Strong Contracts Help Fuel Membership Growth at TWU Local 555

Membership at TWU Local 555 hasn't just rebounded from a pandemic dip, it has soared – keeping alive the longer-term trend of incredible growth at Southwest Airlines.

Hundreds of Southwest's Ramp, Provisioning, Operations, and Freight Agents retired or went on extended leave in 2020 as COVID-19 raged across the country. Headcount dipped to 13,100.

But as the economy recovered, Southwest went on a hiring spree. The company brought approximately 5,000 new recruits into the Agents' workgroup – a 40% jump – in recent years. The longer-term trend is even more dramatic. The number of TWU-represented Ramp, Provisioning, Operations, and Freight Agents has risen from 9,500 in 2013 to more than 18,000 today, according to statistics provided by TWU Director of Economic Analysis and Research Rich Pantoja. That's a 90% increase, and enough people to nearly fill the American Airlines Arena in Dallas where the Mavericks play in the National Basketball Association.

"The growth has been great, really incredible," TWU International Executive Vice President Alex Garcia said.

Southwest's expansion and financial success as a company obviously drove the need to hire more workers. The company



International President John Samuelsen cited the benefits of "organizing the unorganized."

is flying more miles to more cities than ever before. Southwest, which only flew within Texas' borders when founded in 1966, is now the largest domestic airline in the United States. It is in the top 10 globally in terms of airline passengers and revenue.

Southwest's success as an airline, however, is only part of the story. Strong contract language, including provisions related to the union's scope of work, has paid huge dividends.

"Protecting and strengthening the scope of work has been a top priority of The TWU, and it has been a significant factor in our

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TWU International and TWU Local 555 officers, including International Executive Vice President Alex Garcia (fourth from left, second row), International Administrative Vice President Mike Mayes (far left), Air Division Chair Andre Sutton (far right), International Secretary-Treasurer Jerome Lafragola (second from right), and Local 555 President Abilio Villaverde (fourth from right, first row)

RAIL UPDATES



TWU member organizers who have been talking to Brightline workers include, left to right, Lyndi Howard, of TWU Local 579; Danny Mendoza, Local 579; and Alejandro Arroyo, TWU International staff. Not in photo: International staffers Brian DeLucia and Sean Doyle; Rich Rivera, Local 591; and Klarissa Principe, Local 577.

The TWU Organizes Brightline Workers In Florida

Things are looking bright for a group of high-speed rail workers – and The TWU – in Florida.

A TWU organizing campaign at Brightline, which provides service between Miami and Orlando, has progressed rapidly. An overwhelming majority of the company's On-Board Attendants and Lead Attendants signed cards saying they want to join the TWU, and Organizing Director Angelo Cucuzza filed the cards with the National Mediation Board in August.

"There's incredible excitement," Cucuzza said. "They are very eager to have a voice on the job and have the ability to collectively push back on everything management now just imposes on them."

The train Attendants primarily serve food and beverages, but they also have other customer service and safety-related responsibilities.

If Brightline does not voluntarily recognize The TWU as the official bargaining unit for the work group, The TWU will move toward an election, which would be overseen by the National Mediation Board.

The organizing drive comes after a successful contract campaign in Boston that secured groundbreaking raises, first-ever paid sick days, and other gains for Keolis Commuter Rail Service Coach Cleaners and Car Inspectors in Massachusetts.

"We're fighting and winning gains for workers," International President John Samuelsen said. "With every victory, more workers want to join The TWU. We are expanding our footprint across the

rail industry, helping workers gain a foothold in the middle class, improve their livelihoods and their ability to take care of their families."

Brightline workers shared several gripes with TWU organizers. The company has an "unforgiving" and draconian absentee policy. It has rules that make swapping shifts nearly impossible. Managers would rather leave trains understaffed than pay overtime, and they ignore seniority when doling out assignments.

There is a growing interest in high-speed rail in the United States, Rail Division Director John Feltz said. Brightline is building another station between Miami and Orlando and is planning to extend service to west to Tampa. The company is also building a line between Las Vegas and Los Angeles that is expected to open before the 2028 Summer Olympics.

Texas and California, meanwhile, are looking to establish high-speed rail service in their states. Amtrak plans to run trains capable of going 165 mph running between Washington, D.C. and Boston in 2025, Feltz said.

"Before you know it, high-speed rail is going to be everywhere," Feltz said. "That's going to mean better options and service for travelers, and more jobs for workers."

Organizing Brightline employees in Florida will put The TWU in a stronger position when it looks to organize workers hired for the Las Vegas-L.A. service, union officials said.

TWU Wins Largest Wage Increase for On-Board Workers in Amtrak History, With Paid Family Leave

The Transport Workers Union of America secured the largest wage increase for Amtrak workers in the agency's 53-year history after On-Board Service Workers overwhelmingly voted to ratify a new seven-year contract in late July.

The new contract includes a 34% compounded wage increase over seven years. The agreement covers July 1, 2022, through December 31, 2028 – meaning workers will receive full retroactive pay. TWU Local 1460 represents 360 Amtrak on-board service workers, including Train Attendants and Cafe Car Workers, the vast majority working on Amtrak's busy Northeast Corridor. The contract was approved with more than 85% of TWU members voting favorably.

"Amtrak On-Board Workers are a critical part of our nation's transportation system, and this contract includes essential quality-of-life wins," TWU International President John Samuelsen said. "These workers endured significant challenges during the pandemic and the record wage increases in this deal acknowledge their hard work and sacrifice."

In addition to wage increases, the deal includes an industry-leading paid parental leave program, a benefit that far exceeds other



Local 1460 President Amy Griffin

Local 1460 Vice President Wilson Johnson (photo above, far right) and co-workers James Yee and Petitote Evelyn Compere show their positive feelings about the record-setting contract.



TWU member Lonce M. Betha also gives the contract the thumbs-up.

rail carriers in the country. Workers who have been active for at least one year are eligible for 10 weeks of paid parental leave to bond with a newborn or adopted child starting in 2025.

"Paid parental leave is a game-changer and we are proud to deliver benefits that raise the bar for all workers. These members are the first responders in all emergencies," TWU Rail Division Director John Feltz said. "I want to thank the bargaining committee for their hard work on a contract that puts more than \$80,000 in our members' pockets over the next seven years."

The wage increases, bonus payments, backpay, and other forms of compensation will mean workers at the end of the contract will have taken in an additional \$80,000 compared to what they were making before the new contract was ratified.

"I think this was a great win for us and our members at Amtrak On-Board Service," TWU Local 1460 President Amy Griffin said. "It's been a long, hard-fought battle but I know we came out on top. The paid parental leave is phenomenal, and we got a few work rules changed that haven't been touched in 30-plus years."

The contract also includes no increases to monthly health care costs, and some workers will see a decrease in monthly premiums. The deal includes three consecutive workdays of bereavement leave, which can be used in conjunction with actual funeral services regardless of the services' proximity to the date of death.

Road Trip!

TWU International Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate, TUUS Division Director Willie Brown, along with the division's Staff Representatives, hit the road in the TWU bus in June to visit three small Locals in the South: Locals 239 and 279 in Georgia, and 248 in North Carolina. The trip was the latest in a series of regional outreach tours undertaken by the division to learn individual locals' needs and offer them support, Tate said.

The Georgia Locals represent school bus workers in Augusta, Georgia. Local 248 represents Bus Operators, Mechanics, and Paratransit Drivers in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Total dues-paying membership from all three locals is approximately 330.

"We wanted to let them know, even though they are small, that they are not alone," Tate said. "They are part of something greater. It doesn't matter if you have 70 or 100 members. If you carry the TWU name, you count just as much as a Local with 5,000 members. The resources and strength of the entire union are available to you. All you have to do is ask."

The International conducted staff training with Local 248 and helped with its first "Family and Union Solidarity Day" picnic. Officers also were given a plaque with a photo of TWU International founder Michael Quill honoring the local's establishment in 1946.

"It was a great day," International Representative Cassandra Gilbert said. "Members came out to meet with the TUUS team. They played games, ate good food, and engaged with us. We talked about the new company that is taking over management of the bus service in Winston-Salem, REP-Dev, and assured them that we had their back."



International Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate, center, with Local 239 President Yolanda Brown and Local 279 President Sissy Hobbs



Local 248 picnic

International Representatives Jose Cruz, Jeffrey Mitchell, and Christina Scott were also on the trip, along with Administrative Professional Sydni Gibbs. Local 248 President Fran Holt was grateful for the visit.

"I really appreciate them taking time from their busy schedules to talk with the drivers and maintenance, answer their questions, and take the time to check in with us and be with us for the day," she said.

In Augusta, TUUS and Local leaders discussed the officers' working relationship with Richmond County, which operates the school bus service. They also talked about union training sessions and bylaw changes.

Georgia and North Carolina are both right-to-work states with laws designed to weaken unions and make it more difficult



Local 239 and 279

for them to organize, mobilize, and represent workers effectively. There also is a historical anti-union culture in the South fostered by employers, elected officials and other powerbrokers with monetary interests in keeping wages down and employees divided. They have maintained a steady drumbeat of negative propaganda about the motives and usefulness of unions, compounding that by varying degrees of intimidation tactics. This is particularly evident in Georgia, Tate said.

“Employers won’t let you on property, and if they hear you are around, they will call the police,” he said. “Many members are even afraid to talk to you or take union literature for fear of being retaliated against. It’s starkly different than what you experience in states in other regions of the country.”

The next TUUS road trip will be in October to several Midwestern states, including Ohio, Michigan, and Nebraska, Tate said.



TWU Local 248 officers and members and their first “Family & Union Solidarity Day” picnic featuring TUUS Division leaders and staff.



San Francisco Transit Workers Win a New Deal

After raising the possibility of a strike, TWU Local 250A, representing Motor Coach, Trolley Coach, Light Rail, and Cable Car Operators, Transit Fare Inspectors, and other workers, recently won a new three-year contract with a 16% compounded wage increase and zero concessions.

“They didn’t take anything from us, but we negotiated to get the wage increase,” Local 250A President Anthony Ballester said. “We came up with solutions.”

More than 300 Local 250A members with protest signs rallied in front of San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency headquarters in June. The union raised the specter of a strike if City Hall refused to negotiate in good faith. After the rally, San Francisco Mayor London Breed

called Local 250A and asked to negotiate, Ballester said.

“SFMTA and the City of San Francisco thought that our union can never be united, we proved them wrong,” Ballester said.

Transit operators will receive a 13% wage increase and additional 1% increases each July in the latest three-year deal, which was ratified by members in June. Ballester said the union successfully fought efforts from the city to limit sick time usage and extend the probationary period for new hires.

Local 250A, with 2,500 members, made city leaders like Breed stand up and notice the potential devastating effects of a strike – reminding them how important Transit Operators are to city life in San Francisco.

SHARPENING SKILLS

Future Leaders and Working Women's Committee Convene for Summer Sessions

The Transport Workers Union's Future Leaders Organizing Committee and the Working Women's Committee held separate meetings in June and the gatherings included critical lessons for budding TWU leaders around the country.

The Future Leaders Organizing Committee met in Washington, D.C. and heard from TWU lawyer Holly Olivia-Van Horsten about the history and importance of safety laws and regulations. Attendees recounted safety issues they have encountered in the workplace like hot school buses that cause fatigue for children and drivers, poorly maintained equipment, a lack of safety glasses in the workplace and an uptick of unruly passengers on board planes.

TWU International President John Samuelson, TWU Administrative Vice President Mike Mayes and TWU Aviation Director Andre Sutton were in attendance. Samuelson addressed the group of future TWU leaders and told them that fighting the bosses and corporations, while maintaining a positive work environment internally, is essential for becoming a good leader.



TWU lawyer Holly Olivia-Van Horsten addresses FLOC members in the classroom.

"It is always us against them, never forget that," Samuelson said. "When you sit down for a negotiation at the bargaining table, never forget that the person across from you wants to destroy you, while you are there to fight for your members and must do everything in your power to fight for better working conditions."

Olivia-Van Horsten reminded the attendees that safety issues especially can generate widespread public attention. TWU locals and the International have found success showing the public through fightback campaigns that safety is at risk, she said. A recent example of this strategy in action is the ongoing campaign to stop the offshoring of aircraft maintenance jobs. Congress included language in the recent FAA bill that requires foreign repair shops to test workers for drugs and alcohol. That will make offshoring more expensive, and less attractive an option, for airlines.

"This was a great meeting and a great reminder for future TWU leaders about the importance of organizing and holding



FLOC members (photo above) participating in a group discussion.



TWU International President John Samuelson and International Administrative Vice President Mike Mayes (center, second row), with the Future Leaders Organizing Committee in Washington, D.C.



WWC members on the LAX maintenance tour get a briefing before heading to the tarmac.

management accountable when safety takes a back seat to the bottom line,” Mayes said.

The Working Women’s Committee met in Los Angeles, where attendees listened to leaders from Local 591, who hosted the event, about the importance of representing all members fairly in grievances and mediation sessions.

“Management is not your friend,” Local 591 Vice President Pete Caruso said.

Caruso and Local 591 President Gary Schaible talked about the importance of educating union members about being vigilant when communicating with management. Anything said or written down by a member during a dispute can end up in official channels leading to discipline or termination, they said.

Working Women’s Committee members also heard from Psychotherapist Irma Maldonado-Enriquez, who stressed the importance of using diet, proper sleep and exercise to improve your physical and mental health.

On another day, Working Women’s attendees visited American Airlines’ maintenance facility at Los Angeles International Airport. Nan Warren, a

Crew Chief and lead Aviation Maintenance Technician, organized a behind-the-scenes tour of the facility and shared her experiences as a teacher before transitioning to the aviation industry, first as a building cleaner and eventually fixing anything and everything on American Airlines planes.

“I always had really good people encouraging me but some of the stuff I did was because people told me I couldn’t,” Warren said.

More than a dozen women working at the maintenance facility shared their experiences of working in a male-dominated field, with some departments having only one or two women out of more than 100 workers. Committee members then toured a parked Airbus A321 plane and saw the avionics and engine up close.



WWC members in the pilot seat of Airbus A321 at LAX



Members of the Working Women’s Committee visited American Airlines’ maintenance facility at Los Angeles International Airport during a trip hosted by TWU Local 591.

COMMITTEE UPDATES



The Veterans Committee met retired Colonel Gregory D. Gadson, a double-amputee war hero and actor, center, during a tour of the Pentagon.

TWU Veterans Committee Tours Pentagon, Meets a Hero

The TWU Veterans Committee was already in the middle of an eventful tour of the Pentagon on July 10, learning about the inner workings of the country's largest office building, when an unexpected guest appeared.

Retired Colonel Gregory D. Gadson, a double-amputee war hero and actor in the movie "Battleship," appeared as he was signing copies of his latest book for workers in the Pentagon. He thanked The TWU veterans for their service and took the time to sign books and pose for photographs.

"The Pentagon tour was a moving experience, and we are grateful for the police officers who took the time to give us a look at such an impressive building, including the 9/11 crash site," said TWU International Veterans Committee Chair Brian Galarza. "It was really memorable to speak with a hero like Colonel Gadson."

Gadson lost both of his legs while returning from a memorial service in Baghdad in 2007. The former West Point football player became one of the first people to use new prosthetic knee technology and turned to acting, writing and motivational speaking engagements since retiring from active duty. In addition to being cast as a war veteran in the 2012 movie "Battleship," Gadson made a guest appearance in an episode of "NCIS: Los Angeles" last year.

In addition to the unexpected encounter with Gadson, TWU Veterans Committee members toured the Pentagon's "nerve center" where intelligence agents and law enforcement track potential threats to the Pentagon and Capital Region. A flashing red sign alerted workers in the Pentagon command center to the presence of The TWU members so they could hide any sensitive material from their computer screens during the visit.

Veterans Committee members also visited the impact zone of American Airlines Flight 77, which crashed into the Pentagon on 9/11. The point of impact is now a chapel and memorial to



TWU International President John Samuelsen talks with TWU's vets at their summer gathering in Washington, D.C.

the 184 victims of the attack in the plane and in the building. The tour guides explained how the death toll could have been much higher had the plane crashed in another direction – the part of the Pentagon that was damaged had been recently renovated with reinforced concrete and many workers had not returned to their offices at the time of the crash. The death toll could have been in the thousands if the plane had flown into another wing of the Pentagon that had yet to be reinforced, the tour guides said.

The TWU Veterans Committee members also discussed recent events in their local chapters such as organizing honor flights for deceased veterans and providing assistance for VA claims. The most recent meeting of the committee took place at the International headquarters in Washington, D.C.

TWU International President John Samuelsen also spoke to the committee to discuss the importance of strategic fightback campaigns and what The TWU is doing to ensure industry-leading contracts for all of its members.



Members from TWU Locals 291, 555, 556, and 570 all participated in the Endorsement Convention

FLORIDA

Connecting with Candidates and Leaders: A Key Step for Our Members

The recent 2024 Florida AFL-CIO Endorsement Convention in Miami, Florida, was a significant event for our members. At this gathering, we had the opportunity to meet and engage with state and local candidates running for political office. This convention is crucial because it allows us to connect with leaders who will represent our interests and voice our concerns.

During the convention, our TWU local representatives discussed critical issues with these candidates. Building

strong relationships with labor-friendly candidates is essential, especially with the upcoming Florida primary election. We must focus on fostering these connections to ensure our members' voices are heard.

It is particularly important to engage with candidates running for mayor and commissioner positions, as they oversee key areas like airports, rail, and transit depots. These leaders play a vital role in facilitating transportation for our members, ensuring they can commute from home to work easily, and protecting the well-being of our communities.

By staying active and involved, we can ensure that our members' needs and concerns are prioritized by those in power. Let's continue to build strong relationships with our state and local leaders to create a better future for all.

NEW YORK

TWU New York State Conference Endorsement in Assembly Race

The TWU New York State Conference held a press conference July 31 to announce its endorsement of Lou Ingrassia for New York 100th Assembly District. This significant event brought together a host of distinguished leaders and representatives, showcasing their collective support for Ingrassia's candidacy.

The endorsement of Lou Ingrassia by the TWU New York State Conference underscores the collective commitment of these leaders to support a candidate who champions the rights of workers. This gathering highlights a unified effort towards achieving better representation and positive change for District 100.



Left to Right: Senator Peter Oberacker (District 51), Ranking Member of the Transportation Committee, Assembly Member Karl Brabenc (District 98), District 100 Candidate Lou Ingrassia, TWU Local 2001 President Pat Howard, Local 2001 Treasurer Brian Corallo, Sullivan County Sheriff Michael Schiff, and Jose DeJesus, TWU Local 106 Recording Secretary and New York State Conference Co-Chair.

TWU Officers Sworn In

New and incumbent officers sworn in, picnics, and more...



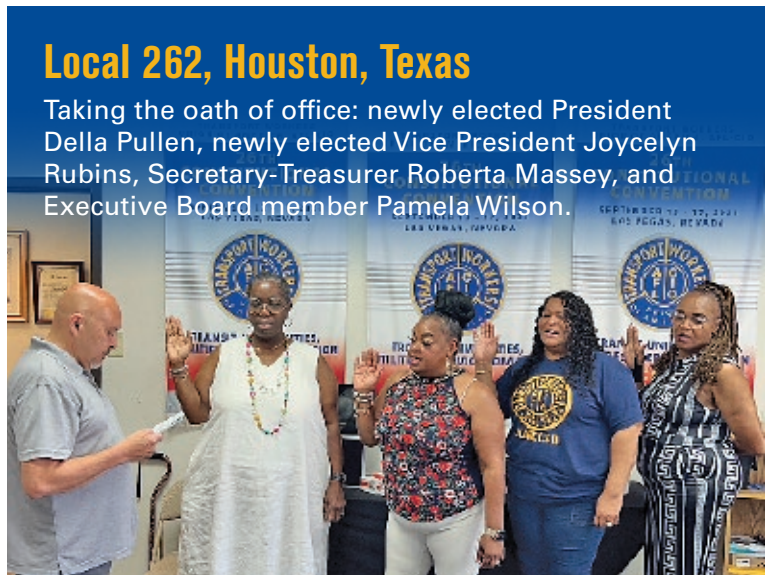
Local 208 – Columbus, Ohio

TWU Local 208 poses for a photo at its Family Day celebration.



Local 250-A – San Francisco, California

International Rep. Jose Cruz swears in new officers.



Local 262, Houston, Texas

Taking the oath of office: newly elected President Della Pullen, newly elected Vice President Joycelyn Rubins, Secretary-Treasurer Roberta Massey, and Executive Board member Pamela Wilson.



Local 260, Houston, Texas

From left to right, Secretary-Treasurer Robert Garrett, Executive Board Member Mary Simon, Vice President Fidel Minor, new Executive Board Member Ellen Trotter, President Horace Marves, Board Member Eddie McGee, new Board Member Aurora Garcia, Board Member Peter Akensola, and Board member Raul Deleon.

Local 512, Chicago, Illinois

TWU International President John Samuelson (center) and TWU Air Division Chair Andre Sutton (third from left) at The TWU Local 512 annual picnic in Chicago, enjoying the festivities with TWU 512 President Juan Elvira (second from right).



Local 263, El Paso, Texas.

Swearing in of new officers: Executive Board Member Bianca Antillon, Vice President Karla Rosales, and E-Board Member Melissa Torres.



Local 291, Miami, Florida

Local 291 leaders attended an educational conference at the A. Phillip Randolph Institute in Hollywood Beach, Florida. Picture left to right are Andre Brown, Shawntrel Jackson, Jesus Guerrero, Treasurer Monique Robinson, International Rep. Jeffrey Mitchell, Recording Secretary Latonya Redmond, James Birkins and Valda Mckinney.

Local 502, Los Angeles, California

Shop Stewards from California, Arizona, and Nevada pledging to do their duty with Air Division Director Andre Sutton officiating.



MEMBERS IN ACTION

Officer and Shop Steward Training

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stay in compliance with the International Constitution and state and local law.”

The International has made it priority in recent years to rebuild

and revitalize the Education Department, International Executive Vice President Alex Garcia said. Lieberman, who comes from the Air Division, was enlisted to lead the effort in August 2022.

“It’s been very positive,” Garcia said. “The training has been very well received. The demand is great. There’s a real eagerness on the part of Locals to take advantage of the program.”



Local 250A, San Francisco, CA



Local 282, Bristol, PA.



Local 505, San Francisco, CA



Local 502, Los Angeles, CA



Local 527, Grovetown, GA



Local 555, Dallas, TX



Local 574, Marquette, MI



Local 1400, Edgewater, NJ

The TWU and Tourism: Big Bus

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“I once had a coyote in the middle of the street, it wouldn’t move for like two minutes. I also see snakes all the time,” Lauderdale said.

Prior to the first TWU-negotiated contract for Big Bus workers in L.A. in 2019, managers could “treat you however they wanted,” Azucena said. There wasn’t a seniority list to protect experienced operators. Union representation and contracts, however, have delivered critically important job protections and quality-of-life improvements, Azucena said. Wages went up and members now have an allotment of personal time off. They also for the first time have a means to challenge unfair disciplinary action by the employer, she said.

“I know if I was treated unfairly, The TWU would do something about it,” Azucena said.

Lauderdale was a limo driver in Las Vegas for years before joining Big Bus. Like Azucena, he values his union membership. He particularly enjoys the stability union contracts provide, he said, noting tourism companies overall are known to provide few protections for workers.

“It’s like second nature for me to drive and talk,” Lauderdale said. “I have no complaints at all.”



ON THE RISE

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exponential growth,” Garcia said. “The company has always tried to erode or destroy the scope, but the union has always strenuously resisted and pushed forward.”

Once Southwest departures at a given airport reach 84 per week, which is on average just 12 flights a day, the Local 555 contract requires the Ramp, Provisioning, Operations, and Freight Agents be directly employed Southwest workers with TWU representation. Once the threshold is hit, Southwest is prohibited from using third-party vendors that pay less and provide fewer benefits. TWU’s contractual threshold is significantly lower at Southwest than at other properties, Air Division Chairman Andre Sutton said.

“The TWU and Local 555, through the collective bargaining



Local 555 Membership Growth 2013 – 2024

DATE	GROUND OPERATIONS EMPLOYEES (555)	ASMS (MILLIONS)	SOURCE
12/31/13	9,500	130,344	Southwest Airlines
12/31/14	10,000	131,003	Southwest Airlines
12/31/15	11,000	140,501	Southwest Airlines
12/31/16	12,000	148,522	Southwest Airlines
12/31/17	12,800	153,811	Southwest Airlines
12/31/18	13,400	159,795	Southwest Airlines
12/31/19	13,800	157,254	Southwest Airlines
12/31/20	13,100	103,456	Southwest Airlines
12/31/21	12,600	132,006	Southwest Airlines
12/31/22	15,260	148,467	Southwest Airlines
12/31/23	17,892	170,323	Southwest Airlines
7/31/24	18,100	Not available	Southwest Airlines

agreement, have been able to secure more hiring opportunities, more employment opportunities, than at any other airline where we have representation,” Sutton said.

For thousands of American workers looking for employment, The TWU’s strong contract has meant thousands of union jobs with good wages, affordable health care, and solid retirement benefits. For Local 555, it has meant more clout.

“More members equal more power at the table,” Local 555 President Abilio Villaverde said. “We have more voices behind us and a bigger presence.”

TWU International President John Samuelsen said: “The growth of our Local 555 workforce is a microcosm of the benefit of the TWU’s longtime commitment to organizing the unorganized. From small things, big things come. This has never been truer than with The TWU represented workforce at 555.”

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UNION OF AMERICA, AFL-CIO**
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*“By joining COPE, WE are investing in a stronger future
for our union and our families. Our voices matter, and
COPE gives us the power to amplify them in the fight
for fair wages, safe working conditions, and the
rights we deserve. Together, we can make a
difference. WE are proud to stand with our
fellow TWU members and support COPE!”*

*– TWU Air Division officers and staff representing
Envoy Air workers. Back row, left to right: Local 570
President Dan Rivera, Local 574 Pres. William Dowling,
and Local 575 Vice President Philip Castilleja. Front
row, left to right: Local 575 Pres. Enrique Guzman,
TWU Intl. Rep. Jose Galarza, Local 575 VP Eduardo
Murillo and Local 576 VP Michael Rasmussen*

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