

Union Drivers' Journal

Organizing Crew Transporters for a Better Life On and Off the Job

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PTI Union Crew Hauling Driver Update

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Discussions Begin: Today the Union and PTI will convene in Louisville, KY to begin the process of negotiating a new PTI Agreement. The current Agreement expires on March 30th. It is likely that the contract will be extended to allow time to resolve a number of very difficult issues that arose during the current contract. The first work for negotiators will be to review all the active cases in the company-level of the grievance procedure in an effort to resolve the backlog. After that will come discussions over non-money language changes to the Agreement. Finally will be the negotiations over wages, benefits and other money issues. We will keep you updated on our progress.

Why Did We Start? A number of members have asked why the union agreed to begin negotiations without first resolving the failure of PTI to pay its wage raise obligations for 2016 and 2017 under the current agreement. The answer is a legal one. We have an opportunity to open your contract at the expiration date. If we fail to do that, we lose that opportunity. So we have begun the process to assure that we can improve the Contract. We have advised PTI in writing, that resolution of those wage increases requirements (which were upheld in Arbitration) are a baseline requirement to get to a new Agreement. Negotiations are not a spectator sport. All drivers should be very clear with management that they expect the company to be good to its signed contract.

What's Happening in Federal Court: Most drivers are aware that in an attempt to stall off paying its obligations to its drivers, PTI filed a suit in Federal Court, seeking to rip up the Arbitrators decision that favored drivers. As we detailed in the last Update, the court process is extremely slow. The Judge won't begin to think about rendering a decision until all the lawyers' briefs are in, which won't be until early July. The law is clear and the company's chances of success are very low. It's a slap in the face of every driver, that PTI seeks to rip off its workforce this way. And drivers should be clear to management about this, without being disrespectful or giving this company an opportunity to retaliate.

What about the 2017 Wage Case Arbitration?: The arbitration covered the 2016 failure of the company to pay its contractually agreed to wage increases (which averaged 3%). The company did the exact same thing in 2017 and the union had moved to select arbitrators for that case earlier this year. However, with the negotiations giving us an opportunity to resolve both the 2016 issue and the 2017 issue, the company and union agreed to put that case on hold, pending the outcome of negotiations.

The Surveys Are IN: Many thanks to all of you who took the time to fill out the Union Contract Negotiations Survey. We are in the process of tabulating the results and creating an opening presentation of your views when we begin the negotiations of new contract language. We are also

in the process of reviewing every single comment, and many drivers have already been contacted regarding issues they have raised. The number of surveys and the submission from each location have been large enough to qualify the results as representative of the thinking of our full driver workforce. Once again, you have given the Union the information we need to present a bargaining agenda that represents what you want. And that's how the union works best.

Member Support and Encouragement: As we have walked together through the fight with PTI over wages, benefit rights and unjust discipline, drivers have been generous in their support for what the UPSEU/USW partnership is doing. There are still lots of complaints and problems with this company, but drivers write and call us on a regular basis to express support for our collective fight, and understanding of how difficult this company is to deal with. You also let us know that you realize without a union, you would have no opportunity to fight back. That understanding and support is called SOLIDARITY. It is the heart of any union. It requires us all to work together, show we are united, and insist that the contract is upheld. As we move into negotiations, that solidarity is critical to our success. If the company realizes that we speak with one voice, and are unified and determined, they will negotiate. If they think there is an opportunity to divide and conquer, that's what they will do. There is an old union slogan that's worth keeping in mind. "If it is to be, it's up to me". Make this personal and stick together. And thanks for your words of support and encouragement.

Membership Matters: As we've said continuously, the company judges driver solidarity by how many have joined the union. Frankly, we've heard all the excuses why people don't belong, and it comes down to not wanting to pay their fair share for the costs the union has in representing drivers. The USW is not "making money" from our UPSEU/USW service agreement. Far from it. And figuring out how to provide solid union service at a dues cost members can afford will determine if the USW pulls drivers into our union on a permanent basis. We provide lists of non-members to our stewards every month. Each location should be creating an Organizing Committee and all members should be talking to non-members about the need to show solidarity and pay their fair share. Considering what we're going through with this Company, we should be at 100% membership. The Union is YOU!

Steward Needs: As we get to the negotiation table it is really important for us to have at least one Steward at each location that we can touch base with and get a sense of how members feel about various proposals. Quite a few people offered to be Stewards in the Survey. We are contacting those people where Stewards are needed. That still leaves us with locations that do not have a Steward. A Steward has to be a member and has to have email. In locations where there is no union Steward, please have a discussion among your drivers and nominate someone to fill this important position.

Welcome New Ohio Members: We're proud to announce that the PTI Drivers at Bellevue, Mansfield and Youngstown Ohio have voted to become part of the PTI UPSEU/USW family. Welcome and we will need to make sure their needs are taken care of as we work through this round of bargaining.

Be Union Proud - Be Union Strong - Practice Solidarity Every Day