



# Building Material & Construction Trade

## Teamster Building Material & Construction Trade News

FEBRUARY 2010

James P. Hoffa, General President • C. Thomas Keegel, General Secretary–Treasurer • Ed Jacobson, Director BMCT Division

## TEAMSTERS VS. WALL STREET

Union Shames Financial Services Companies into Doing the Right Thing

**W**hen jobs are at stake, the Teamsters Union will stop at nothing to save them, even if it means staring down the most powerful financial services companies in the world.

YRC Worldwide (YRCW), a trucking company that employs 35,000 people, 30,000 of which are Teamsters, was loaded with debt and headed for bankruptcy at the beginning of 2010—which would have undoubtedly resulted in massive job losses.

Intervention by the Teamsters Union turned the tide, though. The union shamed powerful Wall Street firms, including Goldman Sachs, into saving tens of thousands of jobs instead of lining their own pockets.

In a story under the headline, “How the Teamsters Beat Goldman Sachs,” the influential political newsletter and web site Counterpunch said: “Goldman proved unwilling to be charged with throwing 30,000 truckers out of work. The bank not only caved, but offered its help.”

“This was the union’s first foray into the cut-throat world of credit-default swaps and high finance, and we came out on top,” said Jim Hoffa, General President. “This is a breakthrough for union activism on Wall Street and great news for YRCW workers.”

See *Teamsters vs. Wall Street* on page 2



## Pipeline Construction Web Site Launched

IBT and Pipeline Contractors Discuss Finding Work and Training

Recently the Teamsters National Pipeline Training Fund (TNPTF) and the Teamsters National Pipeline Labor Management Cooperation Trust (TNPLMCT) coordinated a meeting with several pipeline contractors.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss training needs for pipeline construction scheduled in 2010 and to review the newly developed Teamster pipeline industry web site.

“This was the first time we sat down with a group of contractors to review their training needs and critique the training that was currently being provided,” said Ed Jacobson, Director of the Building Material and Construction Trade Division. “The contractors have a continuing concern regarding

workers who have all the necessary regulatory qualifications and sufficient experience to perform the difficult driving tasks required to haul pipe on a steerable stringer trailer. Contractors would like the training fund to consider giving priority to applicants for training that have had their commercial drivers license for three years with experience driving in the construction industry.”

Although not a specific requirement, the contractors also wanted the training fund to encourage all pipeline construction workers to obtain a Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) card. The reason behind obtaining this card is that many “racking” operations take place in port

See *Pipeline Web Site* on page 3

# A Message From Division Director Ed Jacobson

## Construction Resurgence

Construction projects in the United States are experiencing a resurgence, despite the economy. In this issue there are two exam-

ples of this resurgence: pipeline construction training and a return to work due to the settlement of a jurisdictional dispute.

Pipeline construction continues to grow across the country and now our union

has one of the best training programs for articulated truck drivers. Having Teamster-approved training puts any construction employee on his or her best foot when starting a new job. If you would like more information about training opportunities, please contact our division at (202) 624-6987.

Our division has the resources to assist local unions with jurisdiction disputes such as the one at Local 682 in St. Louis described in this newsletter. When the local brought the matter to our attention we immediately contacted one of our field representatives. He, along with International Union staff, coordinated the paperwork, phone calls and negotiations which led to the opposing union dropping their claim to our work. Our goal was to make certain that work that is historically Teamster stays in Teamster hands.

This year our division became responsible for the Teamsters Helmets to Hardhats program. This is a job resource program for active military and military veterans. Functioning for the past few years, the program has been able to assist military veterans find construction jobs through job fairs and seminars. Also, we are currently putting the final elements together so that active military members of the Marines or Army can use a Teamster curriculum for the commercial driver's license (CDL). Please look for more information about the Helmets to Hardhats program on our web site, [www.teamster.org](http://www.teamster.org).



# Teamsters vs. Wall Street continued from page 1

## Credit-Default Swaps

At issue were credit-default swaps (CDS), which provide “insurance payments” to investors when a company goes bust. Some Wall Street firms essentially made bets and actively made CDS markets in the final days of the exchange in the hopes that the exchange would fail and YRCW would go out of business. The bondholders with CDS coverage stood to make money if it happened.

The Teamsters Union targeted the firms that were banking on YRCW going out of business and essentially shamed them into doing the right thing. The union put the bondholders—institutional banks, brokerage houses, hedge funds and others—on notice that it would call out those firms and hold them accountable for massive job losses at a time when the country can't afford it.

The Wall Street players had a

Tim Geithner: If you want to survive another year in Washington, start channeling your inner Jimmy Hoffa...the one man who has stared down Goldman Sachs and the big-money crowd on Wall Street and come out a winner.”

A union pressuring Wall Street to forsake greed in favor of doing the right thing is a rare sight, and many in the press took notice.

“Taxpayers should pay attention to the kind of deal that can be cut when a tough cookie like Hoffa is driving the negotiations,” wrote the New York Post.

“The taint of the [credit-default swap] issue remains hanging over future reorganizations. Leave it to Teamsters president James Hoffa to remind what's at stake as Congress reshapes financial regulation in 2010,” said the Wall Street Journal.

“Our involvement in this fight brought home how much reform is still

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**—JIM HOFFA, GENERAL PRESIDENT**

choice: They could force YRCW into bankruptcy and line their pockets with a bit more cash, or they could exchange their debt for stock and keep the company afloat, allowing 35,000 people to keep their jobs. As the Wall Street Journal put it, “In the battle between the truckers and the hedge funds, the truckers won.”

A story in the New York Post started, “Memo to Treasury Secretary

necessary to rein in Wall Street greed,” Hoffa said. “I'm grateful to the companies who eventually did the right thing, but we shouldn't have had to shame them into doing it. This isn't just a story about what the union did to save jobs. We had the support of our rank-and-file Teamsters every step of the way, plus the support of a lot of other people and institutions who wanted to see these hardworking folks keep their jobs.”

## Local 682 Wins, Puts Members to Work



### Jurisdiction Dispute Settled

"It's good to be back at work," said Robert Claus, a member of Local 682 in St. Louis. Claus was one of four members recently back at work at the Ameron power plant after the local, with the help of the International, successfully fought back a jurisdictional dispute with the operating engineers.

Ameron is a large power plant near Merrimac, Missouri. It's a company that Teamsters, as well as other unions, have worked with for years. The type of work allotted to the different unions hadn't been disputed, until recently.

"The work was claimed by the operating engineers, even though we had a clear right to it under a 2000 agreement," said Robin Norris, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 682. "The engineers were claiming the work, saying that they had a contract with the company, but we knew we were right and didn't back down."

Jim Woodward and Marion

"Bubba" Davis of the Building Material and Construction Trade Division assisted the local union by calling for a hearing and filing the necessary paperwork to have the work claim investigated.

"The work was part of a national maintenance agreement we had with the power plant," Woodward said. "We followed the process for having a dispute of this type resolved. While we were going through that process the operating engineers alerted us that they would not claim the work as they originally had."

Members of Local 682 are now operating articulating dump trucks and a water truck on the Ameron property.

"We transport fly ash from one location to another," Claus said. "Previously I have transported asphalt and concrete, which was good experience. We have a deadline to finish the project this month then we may move on to the next site."

## Pipeline Web Site

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facilities and rail yards regulated by the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002.

Without this credential a Teamster driver or worker may not be able to enter the facility where pipe is being picked up. This credential may enhance the workers ability to obtain work.

Another area discussed was enhancing the curriculum to provide a strong emphasis on stringer truck tail swing. Tail swing is very dangerous, especially in populated areas. A majority of the accidents that occur with stringer trucks involve the overhanging pipe hitting other vehicles, signs and power poles.

### Web Site Launched

One benefit of the meeting was the formulation of a new web site that provides extensive materials on pipeline projects, and more importantly for most, offers job leads and a system which can match workers with jobs and training opportunities.

At [Teamsterspipeline.com](http://Teamsterspipeline.com) you can find valuable tools and information regarding pipeline work, training and general news. In addition, the new site also works to match workers with jobs and training through an exclusive database.

There is also a direct link to the web site through the Teamsters Union main web site at [www.teamster.org](http://www.teamster.org). When you are checking on news items and federal and state legislation that affects you and your family on the Teamster web site, be sure to go to the Building Material and Construction Trades Division web page for specific materials and links.

# A Message from General President James P. Hoffa

## Protecting Jobs



Protecting Teamster jobs is one of our most sacred duties. Lately, our fight to save jobs has led us to employ new methods, including taking action against powerful Wall Street financial firms.

The Teamsters Union often employs new and innovative methods when organizing potential members and during contract campaigns, but the YRC Worldwide battle (see this newsletter's

cover story, "Teamsters vs. Wall Street") is uncharted terrain for the labor movement.

Our recent Wall Street battle on behalf of trucking giant YRCW, which employs 30,000 Teamsters, got us a lot of attention in the press but also taught us valuable lessons. We are taking what we learned in that dispute to use in other campaigns, like our current fight for the jobs of carhaul Teamsters.

The union is fighting to save 5,000 Teamster carhauler jobs. Automakers have threatened to kill good Teamster jobs by

switching to nonunion haulers. A national campaign by the Teamsters persuaded GM to renegotiate its contracts with union carriers—saving Teamster jobs—and is working to get Fiat/Chrysler and Toyota to back off plans to take Teamster jobs.

In this, as in every campaign the Teamsters embark on, member involvement is crucial. Freight Teamsters stepped up and got involved in the YRCW fight, and carhaulers are stepping up to help in this one.

Hundreds of Teamsters have already taken an active role in the campaign, handbilling at dealerships and attending rallies. The union has also reached out to members of Congress, the White House, safety advocates and other allies. For more information, visit [carbuyersbeware.com](http://carbuyersbeware.com).

The Teamsters Union is always looking for strong, proud members to get involved. For more information on what you can do on these or other issues, please visit [www.teamster.org](http://www.teamster.org).

*DRIVE is a political committee that furthers labor-related goals, including making contributions to support candidates for local, state and federal offices. Individuals may refuse to join or contribute without fear of reprisal.*

Find out more about this exciting program by talking to your local union, or on the web at [www.teamster.org/drive](http://www.teamster.org/drive)



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