



# Industrial Trades

The Teamster Industrial Trades News

James P. Hoffa, General President • C. Thomas Keegel, General Secretary–Treasurer • Stephen J. Mack, Director



## 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

## School Bus Campaign Continues to Roll Along Strongly



A Great 2009 for the Campaign

From Long Island, N.Y. to Wasilla, Alaska, the “Drive Up Standards” school bus campaign to organize private school bus and transit workers rolled along strong and proud in 2009, picking up thousands of new Teamsters.

The Teamsters now represent more than 30,000 FirstGroup and First Transit workers nationwide. FirstGroup is the parent company of First Student, which serves many school districts nationwide. FirstGroup is the third largest Teamster employer.

The campaign has been expanded to include Durham-National Express workers and achieved major success with the recent victory for 1,700 workers at Baumann Bus in New York. Drive Up Standards is a national campaign to improve safety, service and

work standards in the private school bus and transit industry.

“This campaign has been successful because school bus and transit workers are building a movement for change. At this point I don’t think anything can stop their movement for a better workplace, job security, safety and respect.” said Jim Hoffa, Teamsters General President. “We look forward to representing these workers as we win even more organizing victories.”

### Organize the Industry

“From Alaska to Florida, we’re building a movement of workers empowering themselves to win real improvements,” said Jeff Farmer, Teamsters Organizing Director. “This campaign is bringing these workers into the middle class. Our goal is to organize this entire industry.”

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## A Message From Division Director Stephen J. Mack

### Teamster Family

The success of our school bus campaign has been amazing. From the organizing victories



nationwide to obtaining good contracts, the campaign shows how sticking together and working to

achieve fair wages and good benefits can be done.

The test of a true Teamsters family is how we fare during a crisis, and our country, our union and all the Industrial Trades Division workers are going through a bad economic patch.

We have weathered bitter storms before and survived, and we will do the same again. The school bus campaign's success in 2009 has already spilled over into this year. We expect a busy and successful year with this campaign.

In other sectors of Industrial Trades, we are seeing victories as well, like with our Powerwash workers at Local 637. Hats off to those workers for sticking together to form a union.

I wish the best for all of you during the upcoming year.

## 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 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 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 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 hard-working folks keep their jobs.”

## Hard Work Pays Off

### Industrial Cleaners Gain Power With Local 637

On October 14, workers at Powerwash Services Inc., an industrial cleaning company in Chillicothe, Ohio, voted to join Local 637 in Zanesville. There are 16 workers in the new bargaining unit.

This organizing victory did not come without its huge obstacles.

“In order to win business at some of the surrounding-area nuclear and coal power plants, the company owner was told he had to have unionized employees,” said Rick Kepler, Joint Council 41 organizer. “Not looking out for the best interests of these workers but merely for his own personal gain, the owner went to another state and picked a union that was very employer friendly and demanded that they join that particular one.”

After the workers reviewed the vastly weak contract that the union offered, they immediately sought the Teamsters Union for help.

# Meet the Seamsters



## Kentucky Teamsters 'SEW' Good at Their Jobs Making Uniforms

Chances are, the next time you see a firefighter, police officer, postal worker or someone in the military, their uniform was made at the Nationwide Uniform Corp. by very skilled sewers and pressers represented by Local 783.

About 350 Teamster members work at the garment factory in Hodgenville, Ky., making uniforms for workers all over the world, said Todd Thomason, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 783.

"These workers are extremely skilled at

what they do and the uniforms they make are top notch," Thomason said. "They make uniforms for many Teamsters Public Service Division workers, and they've even made uniforms for the Saudi Arabia National Guard. We are proud to have represented these workers for many decades."

### Skill and Pride

Gwen Spruel has worked at Nationwide Uniform for 37 years and takes pride in how skilled her fellow Teamsters are at cutting out the material and customizing each uniform for their eventual wearers. Her current title is final inspector for trousers.

"It's a good feeling to see the uniforms we make worn by so many workers around the world," Spruel said. "We take pride in what we do."

Like Spruel, many of the workers at the factory are women who have worked there for decades since the work requires a lot of skill.

"The uniforms are all different, from the stitching, to buttons and borders and the material," said Spruel, also the chief steward at the factory. "Different stitches, different buttons, different borders, different material. That's what makes the job interesting."

### Workers Remain Strong

When the company's owner found out about the workers' interest in the Teamsters, he tried to force them to join the union he had selected.

The workers were threatened with physical harm, and the owner even punished them by not giving work to the individuals who wanted to join the Teamsters.

In spite of the threats and retaliation from the company, the workers remained strong and voted in favor of joining the Teamsters.

"Considering that these guys have tough and thankless jobs that are often dangerous, they certainly deserve much more dignity, respect and safety than what the company was originally trying to force down their throats," Kepler said.

Negotiations for their first contract are under way.

## School Bus

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At First Student, victories continue to occur on a regular basis. The campaign launched a major fall offensive at more than 20 yards that proved very successful.

"We know that as Teamsters we can achieve a better workplace, improve safety standards and our voice will be heard," said Donald Robinson, a First Student driver at the Overocker yard in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. who recently voted to join Local 445 in Newburgh, N.Y.

### Baumann Campaign

More than 1,700 bus workers with the Baumann transportation companies on Long Island are now the newest members of Local 1205 in Farmingdale, N.Y. after voting 906-644 in favor of Teamster representation in an election conducted by the National Labor Relations Board.

The drivers, driver assistants and mechanics employed by the Baumann transportation companies—Baumann & Sons Bus, Alert Coach, Acme Bus and Brookset Bus—work at nine locations throughout Long Island. These workers, who provide school bus and other transportation services, prevailed in gaining Teamster representation by standing strong against an aggressive anti-union campaign waged by the private company, which has a combined revenue of more than \$100 million per year. They were fearless in their resolve to make a positive change in their working lives—to gain fair pay; an end to the shorting of their paychecks; affordable and decent health care; respect and fairness on the job—and to vote Teamsters in order to make that happen.

"I've never seen such a show of unity in my life," said Bill Morse, a driver at the Coram location. "We need better wages, better treatment and a better understanding of what we do. We carry the most precious cargo in the world; there is nothing more valuable than our kids."

# A Message from General President James P. Hoffa

## Protecting Jobs



**P**rotecting 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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