



A Message from Public Services Division Director Carl Haynes

## Safety In Numbers

Being a Teamster is about having a voice in improving your livelihood.

The struggle for workers' rights and justice is a long and ongoing battle. And though much has been accomplished on behalf of working families, there is much left to be done. As union members, we must be forever vigilant in protecting hard-fought gains and equally aware of new opportunities to advance a pro-worker agenda.

The Teamsters are at the forefront in labor's struggle for safe working conditions and healthy work environments. Whether

minimizing toll workers' exposure to carbon monoxide, safeguarding health care members against infectious diseases or lobbying on behalf of improved ergonomics legislation, the Teamsters are committed to protecting the well-being of our membership.

But the only way we can succeed in making our lives better is by speaking with one voice. By standing as one, our concerns are heard and heeded. Through unity we prosper and make our world a safer, healthier place.

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## A Healthy Contract *continued from page 1*

management would make some cuts that would adversely affect the nurses and patient care."

The new two-and-a-half year contract includes:

- A six-percent wage increase;
- Faster salary progression;
- A nurses' voice in staffing grids;
- A Teamsters National Employee Benefit Fund that includes a dental and vision plan that was previously paid out of pocket;
- Improved short term disability;
- Retiree coverage;
- A streamlined single-step grievance procedure; and
- A Teamsters Southern States Savings and Retirement plan.

"Having our Teamsters' retiree and health care coverage was a big deal to get in there," said Scott.

### Michigan Nursing Assistants Win Long Fight For Contract

On January 28, more than 140 certified nursing assistants at the Michigan Masonic Home, a nursing home in Alma, Michigan, voted by more than an 8-1 margin to ratify a three-year contract with the company.

The contract includes:

- Wage increases of up to 6.5 percent a year;
- Seniority rights;

- Improvements in paid time off benefits;
- An optional pension plan;
- Decreased employee co-pays in health insurance;
- An opportunity to advance to top of wage scale in only five years;
- A grievance procedure with binding arbitration; and
- The elimination of evaluations tied to wages.

Before winning the agreement, the Local 486 members had to battle a union-busting labor consultant and endure three years of stalled and delayed bargaining.

"Our people were pleased with the settlement of the contract," said Ed Morin, a business agent with Local 486 in Saginaw, Michigan. "We didn't give up and continued to fight—that's what ultimately won it for us."



## The High Road To Safety *continued from page 1*

pace of travel, toll workers are exposed to numerous occupational hazards.

Officials in the Teamsters Public Services Division are working hard to curb these injuries and provide increased protections on the job. By coordinating their resources with local unions, the Government Affairs Department, the Safety and Health Department and Corporate and Strategic Initiatives, the Teamsters believe toll worker safety can be elevated to unprecedented levels.

"Safety at toll plazas is a nationwide concern for organized labor," said Azita Mashayekhi, an Industrial Hygienist with the Teamsters Safety and Health Department. "Fatalities and injuries that have affected Teamster members require swift attention from Congress and the taxpayers."

### Lobbying for Change

One major opportunity is congress' reauthorization of

the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), which expires in September of 2003. TEA-21 provides funding for the nation's surface transportation programs. Over the next few months, the Teamsters Government Affairs Department will coordinate with the Public Employee Division to set priorities for TEA-21 reauthorization, which could include providing increased federal funding for important toll worker safety programs.

"Toll collectors literally collect the money which pays public officials' salaries," said Jock Rowe, Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 77 in Fort Washington, Pennsylvania. "Our public officials must now realize that increased funding is required to protect our members."

The Safety and Health Department led a roundtable discussion at the May Public Services Conference that was attended by toll worker locals from New York, Massachusetts, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Maryland. The Public Services Division followed that discussion up with meetings at the International to develop a list of proposed safety and health legislation. The Government Affairs Department is now leading lobbying efforts to have Teamster concerns included in the upcoming transportation reauthorization bill.

Among those concerns are:

- Improving ergonomics;
- Decreased noise levels and exposure to carbon monoxide poisoning; and
- The effective enforcement of speed limits and inherent dangers of express toll programs.

## Shot In The Dark Small Pox Vaccine Raises Questions Not Worker Rights

The Bush Administration is planning to use authority it gained under the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to order broad mandates for vaccinations against smallpox.

The Department of Health and Human Services is planning to administer the vaccine to about 10 million civilian emergency response workers. The Teamsters, other unions, hospitals and clinics are resisting the plan.

Teamsters have concerns about the payment of claims for lost time and medical expenses incurred by workers that have adverse reactions to the inoculation. The Teamsters Government Affairs Department believes that adequate safeguards are not currently in place to make sure people at higher risk of injury, are not vaccinated. If these individuals are accidentally, or unknowingly vaccinated a dedicated fund should exist to ensure coverage of their claims should compensation boards contest their illnesses.

Teamsters are reminded that smallpox vaccinations are entirely voluntary. For further information please visit the Teamsters Safety and Health section at: <http://www.teamster.org/sh/voluntarysmallpoxvacprog.htm>.

**Join the fight to beat back the erosion of worker-friendly legislation!**

Take the wheel and DRIVE home the issues that are important to you, America's working families. Join DRIVE—the Union's political arm—by contacting your Local Union or by calling the IBT Government Affairs office at (202) 624-8741. Contribution forms can also be downloaded off the IBT website at [www.teamster.org](http://www.teamster.org).