

ACRE

ASSOCIATION OF COMMUTER
RAIL EMPLOYEES

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" Moving the People who move the World "

Message from the General Chairmen

The past 5 months has been a period of historic significance. We could write a book and still not do justice to everything that has transpired. For the first time, the operating crafts put aside age old hostilities and stereotypes to join together and form an independent union, the Association Of Commuter Rail Employees. The margin of victory by engineers, conductors, power supervisors, train dispatchers and yardmasters demonstrated to all of rail labor our resolve and the full support of all our members. You should be extremely proud of what you have accomplished and you can look forward to a bright and prosperous future.

On our property we have demonstrated that the operating crafts working and negotiating together can produce a much better working environment than they can if they spend their time fighting with each other, as our former internationals continue to do. Ultimately, it is the members who suffer and the carriers who prosper when labor leaders allows petty rivalries to interfere with their responsibility to represent their members. This is a lesson we must never forget.

With these victories and the vote behind us our new organization faces new challenges. Rest assured we are committed and dedicated to making the Association of Commuter Rail Employees the finest labor union in the country. As members of this new union we must also realize that we will always have to struggle to protect our work rules and our agreements. In order for our union to succeed into the future we need strategies that are well thought out. To that end, we have put together a plan that we believe gets us started in the right direction and secures our financial stability well into the future.

On behalf of all the General Chairmen we want to thank you for your support and urge everyone to continue to demonstrate the same solidarity in making this new union the best it can be.

Sincerely,

Tony Bottalico, Local/Division 1
Mike Doyle, Local/Division 9
Jim Fahey, Local/Division 113
Gerry Politi, Local/Division 37

Office Space

One of the Executive Board's top priorities was to secure an office that provided all the Local/Divisions in ACRE the ability to best serve their members. To that end we have been actively working to lease office space in the immediate vicinity of Grand Central Station.

Because the current real estate market in Manhattan is enjoying the best economy in its history, buildings that went begging for occupants a few short years ago are now turning clients away. There is actually a bidding war going on in and around Grand Central between the many new startup companies that has driven commercial real estate prices and required security deposits to all time highs (in most instances 1 full year's rent).

By unanimous agreement of the Executive Board, we resolved that we would not act hastily by getting into a bidding war over office space nor would we accept a space that didn't fit our geographic needs. While the search took longer than originally planned our persistence and patience has paid off. We have been fortunate to find a space that suits our needs and, at the same time, we were able to negotiate a price that doesn't mortgage our future.

We are very proud to announce that we have signed a lease for the space we needed at 420 Lexington Avenue in the Graybar Building adjacent to Grand Central Terminal. We expect to have the office furnished, supplied, and up and running in early July.

Executive Board Business Plan

The Executive Board has developed a business plan that we believe will put us on the path to a strong financial future. This plan provides all members of the Association with a blueprint for the future. Below we have summarized the initiatives already underway and we look forward to bright and healthy financial future.

Technology

One advantage of starting fresh is the ability to upgrade our new office with the most current technology. In order to provide better service to the membership, control costs and increase the productivity of our officers, we need a state of the art office. To that end, we are currently entertaining bids from major computer and telecommunication companies to retrofit our new office.

Finances

As a new Labor Union, we must carefully monitor all expenses and seek ways to hold down variable costs in order to ensure financial stability. One way is to continuously look for vendors who can provide services at the lowest cost. The Executive Board will meet on a regular basis to review the financial records of the Association and make recommendations where necessary. At the latest meeting of the Executive Board it was agreed that a fund would be established for the purposes of creating a surplus to cover unexpected contingencies. It will be funded from the current monthly Executive Board dues.

As we all know, there will be startup costs for the first six months. After the initial costs involved with furnishing and supplying the office are out of the way, the Board is very confident we will meet our financial goals.

AFL-CIO Affiliation

The Board is exploring the advantages and requirements of affiliating with the AFL-CIO. This can be a long process and can take up to two years before final approval. We have been in contact with their state offices and hope to have more to report in the near future.

Marketing Department

The Board is putting together a marketing plan to address the promotion of our organization to all our members. Mike Shaw and RTC General Chairman, Jim Fahey are co-chairing this initiative and are ordering new hats and membership cards. We ask everyone to do their share by helping us promote the organization through good will and pride.

News Updates

The Conductors, Engineers and Rail Traffic Controllers wish to welcome the Yardmasters, the Stationmasters and the Power Supervisors into the Association of Commuter Rail Employees. By an overwhelming majority vote these groups have decided to join our new independent Union because they have clearly seen that self-determination is in their best interest. We welcome these Brothers and Sisters and look forward to a long and fruitful relationship.

We have filed our Constitution and the By-laws for our various Local/Divisions with the Department of Labor. In addition, we have also filed the LM-1 Forms required for all new Unions under the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act.

The Executive Board is happy to announce that Mark Amorello was selected by the Board to be its Secretary/Treasurer. His knowledge of the organization's responsibilities under Federal Labor Laws will be a valuable asset as will his ability to manage union finances and protect the interests of the members. Mark has been working with acting Executive Board Director, Jack Gaines, setting up our accounts and filing all the required forms with the Department of Labor and the Railroad Retirement Board.

Finally, special thanks to Jack Gaines for all the time and hard work he has put in over the past 6 months in his dealings with the National Mediation Board, the Department of Labor, the Railroad Retirement Board, MetroNorth's Labor Relation's Department, and the insurance companies and leasing agencies.