



# DRIVER NEWS

UE Hallcon Drivers Union News

March 2018

## Contract Talks Begin Soon

**UE is organizing to prepare for contract bargaining with Hallcon this summer 2018**

Drivers in many parts of the country are meeting to discuss workplace improvements they want to see in their yards and on their road boards. February and March of 2018, stewards and Contract Support Committee (CSC) members spent time handing out contract surveys to drivers. "My conversations with drivers has opened my eyes", said Laura Johnson, President of UE Local 1077. "Drivers have good ideas about how to make improvements on the job", she continued.

The Union also mass texted drivers an electronic form of the survey in order to broaden participation. As this news goes to press, the survey collection is still under way. If you have not filled out a survey and would like to, call your steward or the numbers on the back of this newsletter.

### **Wages must rise!**

UE leaders and staff know already the members number 1 issue is wages. The low wages paid in the rail crew transportation industry has been created by some of the most profitable businesses in the US: class 1 railroads. "I hear these used to be good paying jobs with a railroad retirement and health care" said Larry Hopkins, President of

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**Left: Local 1177 President Larry Hopkins. Right: Local 1077 President Laura Johnson**

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# Cell Phones: The Company Has Failed To Live Up To Its Promises

In March, 2016 UE consolidated grievances filed by drivers from around the country. At grievance meetings, we argued Hallcon was not providing functional cell phones in vans and drivers should be reimbursed for using their personal phones to log in, out or moves.

This grievance is pending before an arbitrator. Hallcon failed to provide a mechanism to track which vans/drivers did not have a functional cell phone. Our contract states that if there is no cell phone in the van or there is no functional cell phone drivers must notify Dispatch to be paid \$1 per trip/shift.

In January 2018 an arbitrator told UE and Hallcon to work on a settlement. We need information from you. If you had to use your personal cell phone, and there was no functional Company cell phone in the van, you may be eligible for \$1 for every trip or shift from February 2016-January 2018.

Please fill out the form on the next page and mail it back in **no later than April 16, 2018**. It is necessary to gather this information if you want to be paid for using your personal cell phone for the past two years.

The Company is required to keep an operational phone in every van throughout the country. If there is no phone, a phone that does not work or one that is not charged and you need to call on your personal phone to log in, do this:

1. Call dispatch and report there is no operational phone in the van
2. Fill out the online form at <http://uelocal1077.org/cell.html> each and every time there is no cell in the van, or no functioning cell.
3. If you do not have internet: record the date, time you called dispatch, van number and trip number or shift.

We need this information from you to present to the Company during our grievance proceedings. Drivers will be paid \$1 per shift or trip where there was no operational phone and they called dispatch to report it.



UE Local 716 members meet in Ohio to talk about local elections and contract bargaining. Read more about Local 716 on Page 7.

# TO BE PAID 1\$ PER TRIP OR SHIFT FOR USING YOUR PERSONAL CELL PHONE READ THIS! RETURN BY APRIL 16, 2018.

The following is a list of documentation that could be used to document no cell/no functioning cell. If you have any of the following documentation between February 2016 – January 2018, please fill out the form and return it. You can also email your union at [jburger@ueunion.org](mailto:jburger@ueunion.org) with your documentation.

DO you have any of the following documentation, check each one that applies:

- \_\_\_ Copies of any inspection sheets showing no company cell phone
- \_\_\_ Cell phone bills with dates you called Hallcon from your phone
- \_\_\_ Dates that there WAS a functioning cell phone in a Hallcon van
- \_\_\_ Personal notes when there was no company cell/non-functioning phone

First Name:

Yard:

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Last Name:

Road or Yard Driver:

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Home Address:

Cell Phone Number:

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Email Address:

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Return to UE, 37 S. Ashland, Chicago, IL 60607

# Local 155 (New Jersey) Fights Unfair and Incompetent Management

Drivers in Local 155 in New Jersey are fighting Hallcon on a lot of problems caused by incompetent and unfair management. New Jersey management has not been following the union contract in filling shifts – they’ve given shifts to less senior drivers, drivers from other yards, road drivers instead of yard drivers, along with other issues. Management also appointed two lead drivers, but then lied to the union and said that they didn’t have lead drivers. We’re also fighting some unfair disciplines.

The union filed a lot of grievances that are still in the process of being resolved, and we’ve had a couple conference calls with higher Hallcon management over the problems in Jersey. So far management has promoted the lead drivers to site supervisors (even though they still deny that they were lead drivers), and they are in the process of working out a resolution with the union to fix the unfair scheduling issues.

We’ve held several driver meetings in the yards, and the drivers elected stewards in north Jersey. Drivers chose Johnny Bardge in the Croxton yard and Nrmeen Daood in the Oak Island yard as their stewards. Johnny and Nrmeen are both yard drivers who have worked for the company for a long time and they have also been yard coordinators. Johnny and Nrmeen have been doing a lot of



great work fighting for the Jersey drivers. In the south Jersey Pavonia yard Michael Paige is acting as the steward.

The drivers also elected Johnny Bardge to be their bargaining committee representative for New Jersey. Romany Mansour, a road driver in Croxton, and Michael Paige were also elected to assist Johnny in representing the interests of Jersey drivers. All three Jersey yards are collecting bargaining surveys from the drivers to prepare for contract negotiations. Wages are a big issue in New Jersey because the cost of living is so high. Most drivers have to have second jobs just to pay for rent. The drivers are also fed up with the bad management there.

## Contract Talks Begin Soon

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UE Local 1177. “Our Drivers Local Unions will be pushing real hard so we can all see fair raises in our paychecks,” he added.

### Working with others in the industry

UE has been developing working relationships with other Unions, in particular the United Steelworkers (USW) who have members at Hallcon as well as with PTI, and SMART. SMART represents both Railroad Engineers and Conductors as well

as Hallcon and RailCrew Xpress drivers. Our work has been discussing common problems in the industry.

“Once we organize enough drivers in the industry, it matters less if Hallcon threatens to be replaced. We need to build our power and will fight to keep our wages and benefits going up, not down” said Ron Russell, UE Local 1077 Bargaining Committee Member out of Needles California.

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“The 3 Unions are looking to introduce common language in the upcoming contract fights. This will help drivers in the long run, because the railroad changes the rail crew company, things stay the same for the driver”, he added.

### **Union needs your help**

With the contract set to expire August 23rd, all Union members are asked to get involved. Yard meetings will be taking place over the next few months, please attend one and raise your voice.

Any great undertaking requires many hands to make it possible. This contract fight with Hallcon is going to require all drivers pay attention and pitch in where they can. Please stay current on the latest news, read the leaflets stewards and CSC members pass out. Please share your ideas and help out as well.



## **Local 1177 (Illinois and Indiana) Needs Contract Volunteers; Grievance Report; IVR 2.0**

UE Local 1177 is looking for volunteers to get involved in the upcoming contract campaign. We need drivers who will agree to handout leaflets and or buttons, talk with drivers about the bargaining the Union will be doing with the Company this summer and report back to the bargaining committee. If you are interested, call Larry at (773) 675-7933.

**Grievance report:** Drivers and their stewards have had many successes in the past few months.

**Road driver differential pay grievance:** Steward Michelle Burke filed a grievance against the Company for paying UE drivers less than the Company Union. We prevailed, and road drivers were all given a \$.50 road differential when they drive on the road. This extra pay, the Company reasoning goes, is because road drivers are on call 24/7 and can work very disruptive schedule that have a negative impact on driver's health and safety.

**Two Drivers reinstated.** A road driver out of Joliet and one road driver out of Cicero were fired recently by Hallcon. Through the grievance process, the Union argued effectively. We were able to reinstate these two drivers. Stewards Clarence Hill (UE Local 1177 Chief Steward) and Larry Hopkins (UE Local 1177 President) championed these two drivers cases.

The Union has an on-going grievance. We allege that the Company has not paid drivers for time worked. Since about June of 2017 until December of 2017, the manager Cedric had told many drivers that they would not be paid for a van swap if it was longer than 1 hour. This is a violation of the contract.

Drivers might not have been paid for the time they spent doing vehicle inspections, time driving to, time spent at and driving home from a DOT physical and or vehicle maintenance. If you suspect any of these instances that you were not paid, please contact Chief Steward Clarence Hill as soon as possible at (773) 706-2199.

### **Trouble with new IVR 2.0**

Recent changes to the prompts of the IVR 2.0 have raised concern of drivers everywhere. The new estimated times don't always fit with reality. “We want to make sure that drivers don't get disciplined for these changes”, said Clarence Hill, Chief Steward. “The Company always sets the driver up to be the one that made the mistake. We want to stop this”, he added.

If you have problems with the new IVR, be sure to ask your supervisor for training. Document when you ask them. If you do not get the help you need, please call you Union Steward.



# Interview with Harold Davis, Chief Shop Steward UE Local 1077 CA and District 2 Bakersfield UP Yard Road Driver

UE is a rank and file Union where the members in each UE Local Union Shop nominate and elect co-workers into Local Union representation leadership positions like E-Board and Shop Stewards. Below is an interview with Chief Shop Steward Harold Davis from UE Local 1077 in California. Harold was nominated and elected by his coworkers over a year ago to the Chief Shop Steward position in District 2 where Harold works as a Road Driver working out of the Bakersfield Yard in the UP side.

## **Why did you decide to be a Chief Shop Steward?**

A: I felt that my co-workers need to have one of their own as a Chief Shop Steward. As a Road Driver that has been dedicated to this job for over five years I know and understand exactly the issues and the problems that us drivers have and experience whether it be yard or road we are all drivers. In my yard we always look out for each other but we felt that things were not being addressed until we realize we are stronger when we have co-workers in our work area be Shop Stewards where we can now have the tools to enforce our Union contract and hold Hallcon Management accountable through the grievance procedure in our contract. I decided to not just be a Shop Steward but I decided to run for Chief Shop Steward position and have a seat in our Union Executive Board and represent my District 2.

## **How has your experience been as a Chief Shop Steward for your Union, UE Local 1077?**

A: At first it was a little rocky getting to know everything and dealing with my co-workers issues not just from my yard but with Drivers from yards in other areas in my District. But what made easy for me to adjust quickly was the fact that I can relate so much to my co-workers they saw me as one of their own so it was easy for me to build those strong relationships with the co-workers. My co-workers also felt very confident and secured



working with me representing them because my co-workers would see that I know the issues very well I understand them.

## **Please share some of your grievance victories you have gotten since becoming Chief Shop Steward?**

A: Sure. I have won co-workers their job's back with back pay. Help negotiate settlements for grievances in my yard and district; I have made sure all my co-workers exercise their rights and made sure there is due process for my co-workers which is part of Just Cause in our contract. Also we always make sure our vans are always well maintained since we always enforce the language in our contract regarding health and safety plus I have helped drivers made sure they got paid properly especially when there is board manipulation grievances.

## **How do you prepare for grievances?**

A: I review all the facts and always make sure I do an information request with management if I need to. I always try to establish if the grievance has merit and I always weigh how strong our evidence

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is. Constant communication with the driver that has the grievance is always important we have to always review the information the company gave us or the information from the grievance like the facts and evidence and help the driver analyze it to help better understand the grievance. Also whenever I need a second opinion or have a legal contractual question I call the UE staff and they are there to help us as Shop Stewards.

**What advice can you give other Chief Shop Stewards and Shop Stewards in your Union?**

A: Apply the training you get from the UE staff apply it out in the field that is how you learn more

how the process works by being a hands on Shop Steward. Understand the CBA and some of the basic company policies that helps. Always give your self that motivation that you are making a difference you are the voice of the co-workers and always make the co-workers feel that they can count on you. It makes the work a lot better when you have the trust of the co-workers. Always show that willingness to fight and win.

**Anything else you'd like to share?**

I'd like to thank Local 1077 President Laura Johnson, all my co-workers from District 2 and the UE staff for all of their help and support.

## Local 716 (Ohio) Winning Grievances

Local 716 in Ohio has been winning a lot of grievances against Hallcon. We've won grievances to overturn unfair disciplines, and we've also won several grievances over management filling shifts with the wrong drivers. We've gotten some schedule problems fixed so that senior drivers' rights are protected, we've gotten disciplines removed from drivers' records, and we've won back pay for drivers.

We just held driver meetings in the Cleveland Collinwood yard and the Crestline yard, and we are in the process of setting up elections for Local 716 officers and the Ohio bargaining committee representative. We have also been collecting bargaining surveys. Bad management and low wages are two of the biggest concerns in Ohio.

## Southern California Education Day

On February 3 UE held our Southern California Education Day. Interim President Laura Johnson, Financial Secretary Jaime Valencia and Chief Steward of District 3 Bobby Rivera all attended the training. There were two workshops that day - one given by UE's Co-Director of Education and International Strategies Kari Thompson, which was about the economy and how it impacts working people; and one given by the UE's Western Regional President Carl Rosen on preparing for a strike. This was a great opportunity for members to come together and hear about the struggles that other members are facing.

Bobby Rivera stated, "I'm glad I went to the Education Day, it was informative and I got to meet members from other locals in CA. I am a member of the Bargaining Committee for our upcoming ne-



gotiations and it was especially interesting to learn what it takes to carry out a strike. There was great discussion about different tactics we can use to pressure Hallcon during negotiations and I'm excited to share this info with other drivers."

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PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

## UE Hallcon Drivers Powering US Railroads

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Visit us on the web at  
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