

OCTOBER 2006

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ATU

LOCAL 587

News Review



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VOL. XXIX, NO. 10

President's Report

By Lance F. Norton

This November voters will be asked to approve two very important transportation issues. Our County Executive Ron Sims has proposed a County wide Initiative titled *Transit Now*. Mayor Greg Nickels has proposed, for voters within the City of Seattle, an Initiative titled "Bridging the Gap." Because both of these Initiatives effect what we do here at King County Metro and the future of public transportation, I urge our membership to support passage of *Transit Now* and *Bridging the Gap*.

Transit Now will expand Metro Transit Service by as much as 20 percent over the next 10 years. Think of how many more jobs that will create! Earlier this month, the

King County Council took bipartisan action to place a measure on the ballot asking voters to decide whether to fund 18 million to 21 million more annual rides within ten years. The proposal is intended to get 50,000 to 60,000 drivers off the road and *into buses* each week-day to keep regional congestion in check while providing traffic relief to commuters. Ordinance 2006-0285 was approved by the King County Council by an eight to one margin.

There will be a lot at stake as voters cast their ballots. As most operators know, Metro service hours have not kept pace with population and employment growth over the years. The county expects to see 250,000 new jobs and more than 150,000 additional residents over the next decade. And there's another factor Metro has taken into consideration—existing regional, county, and local government transportation plans call for Metro to carry a growing proportion of trips to support the county's mobility, economy, and quality of life.

Initiative 695 has also impacted Metro's finances. In 1999, following statewide passage of the initiative, a dedicated source of funding for transit was eliminated. King County voters responded by raising King County's transit sales tax rate from 0.6 percent to .08

percent, which prevented cuts in transit service but did not allow the system to grow at planned rates. This new proposal to increase the transit sales tax by one-tenth of one percent will allow Metro to keep pace with that projected growth. If approved, the proposal would cost the median income household an estimated \$25 the first year, growing to an estimated \$35 in year ten.

So, what will transit riders see in the way of service if *Transit Now* is approved in November?

Metro says the plan would deliver new Bus Rapid Transit, dubbed RapidRide, to five congested corridors in the county. The agency says it would also have sufficient funding to run buses more frequently in many parts of King County and to create partnerships with cities and area employers to increase service in major employ-

ment centers. With the level of expansion proposed in *Transit Now*, more than a half million people would be within walking distance of improved service.

If the measure passes, Metro will install new buses, upgrade passenger waiting areas, add technology to synchronize traffic signals and operate real-time bus arrival signs, and operate RapidRide service on the following corridors:

- Complete the Aurora Avenue North improvements between Shoreline and downtown Seattle;
- Ballard to downtown Seattle along 15th Avenue Northwest and West Mercer Place;
- West Seattle to downtown Seattle with a possible extension to the University District using the downtown transit tunnel and Interstate 5;

continued on page 6



Lance F. Norton

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The Month at a Glance

Tentative Agenda

Membership Meetings:

CHARTER MEETING
Thursday, October 5, 2006
 8:00 p.m.
 The Labor Temple, Hall #8
 2800 1st Ave., Seattle, WA

MORNING MEETING
Friday, October 6, 2006
 10:30 a.m.
 The Labor Temple, Hall #6
 2800 1st Ave., Seattle, WA

JEFFERSON TRANSIT
Monday, October 9, 2006
 8:00 p.m.
 Port Townsend Rec Center
 Port Townsend, WA

CLALLAM TRANSIT
Tuesday, October 10, 2006
 7:00 p.m.
 Vern Burton Memorial Building
 Port Angeles, WA

Among topics to be discussed:

Grievance and arbitration update, upcoming negotiations at Para Transit Services and MV Transportation.

Unfinished business

There is no unfinished business for the month of October.

IN LOVING MEMORY...

*Think not disdainfully of death,
 but look on it with favor, for even death
 is one of the things that Nature wills.*

— Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (121 AD – 180 AD)
 Meditations

Daisy May Wesselius: Transit Operator, and beloved wife of James "Jim" Wesselius retired First Line Supervisor. Daisy joined Local 587 September 01, 1975, retired September 01, 1996 and passed away August 29, 2006 in Shreveport Louisiana. Daisy's bubbly personality and Jim's easy going style were sorely missed when they retired. They moved to Louisiana several years ago to be nearer to Daisy's large extended family. They found

peace and tranquility in a rural community of friends.

Melvin Eugene Luther: Joined Local 587 October 01, 1952, retired September 01, 1987 and passed away August 6, 2006. Melvin was a 35 year Transit Operator and operated the monorail during his many years of service to our community. During the Christmas season Melvin dressed as Santa delighting children and passengers alike.

Please notify the union office of any member's passing so that this information may be shared with the rest of our union family.

Business of the Membership

At the September 2006 cycle of membership meetings the following business was addressed:

- The membership voted to pursue the grievance of Joseph Vaifanua to arbitration.

- The membership voted to purchase a table of 8 at the annual JOBS WITH JUSTICE honoree dinner at a cost of \$500.00. This includes purchasing a ¼ page ad in their program.

- The membership voted to approve nomination of Fredrick

Moore for the Vice President of the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) Executive Board representing the Coalition of Black trade Unionists.

The following members were September pot draw winners: Lori McInnis at the Charter meeting, Joshua Laff at the Morning meeting, Paul Hausmann at the JTA meeting, Ed Stanard at the CTS meeting. Rolling pot draw of \$50.00 was lost by John Biasotti. Next month's rolling pot will be \$75.00.

Executive Board Report

September 26, 2006

All officers were present except for Joe Mangiameli who attended Clallam Transit Budget meeting and Michael Shea was working the First Line pick.

The following business was conducted:

- Motion by Paul Bachtel to authorize expenditure of up to \$3,500.00 for development of the Local 587 web page including home page, navigation and design.

- Motion by Paul Neil to donate \$5,000.00 to the Transit Now initiative.

- Motion by Dee Wakenight that the Officers and Executive Board vehemently oppose the changes to King County Metro policy No. 10 / Medical Appointments (Non-Industrial) and the accompanying form.

According to *In Transit Magazine*

Vernon O. Brenden was the only Retiree that contributed (\$40.00 or more) to ATU COPE 2005. He is a 50-year member, enrolled 01/01/1947 and is 81 years old.

ATU LOCAL 587

News Review

Published monthly in Seattle.

Official publication of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 587, AFL-CIO, representing employees of Metro/King County, Clallam Transit, Jefferson Transit, Seattle Personal Transit, Clallam Paratransit, and MV Transit.

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NEAL SAFRIN
MICHAEL MOORE
DEE WAKENIGHT
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RICK SEPOLEN
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LINDA ANDERSON
LISA THOMPSON
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CHRIS DANIELS
MICHAEL SHEA
JOE MANGIAMELI
NINUS HOPKINS

Web site: <http://www.atu587.com>

WEINGARTEN RIGHTS STATEMENT

I request to have a union representative present on my behalf during this meeting because I believe it may lead to disciplinary action taken against me. If I am denied my right to have a union representative present, I will refuse to answer accusational questions and any I believe may lead to discipline.

Letters to the editor

Letters/contributions must include printed names, signatures, work ID numbers, addresses and phone numbers that can be verified during working hours. Letters that cannot be validated will not be published. All articles/letters are subject to editing and should be limited to 1000 words or less. Not all letters can be published due to space limitations. Cut off is the 15th of each month. Any submission from a member of Local 587 to the *News Review* deemed unprintable by the Recording Secretary shall be forwarded to the Executive Board for final decision to publish.

Send letters to:

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Healthy Incentives for KCM Management, Pt 3

By Joshua Laff, Ryerson Base Shop Steward, Licensed Massage Practitioner, Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences

This article is the third in a series examining working conditions for Transit Operators, and why the King County Council and Metro management (hereafter KCM) should be taking steps to change those conditions. My goal is to continue to demonstrate that if KCM is serious about reducing healthcare costs, unhealthy working conditions need to be remedied.

After submitting my last article, I spoke with Paul Hesseltine, one of the Operators who works with MetroFit. I mentioned my idea of pocket sized relaxation and stretch guides from my last article. He showed me a stretch guide that MetroFit already puts out. Sort of. Paul checked the informational brochure racks at Ryerson Base, where these guides are buried along with ferry schedules, general rider information, CBD information, and many other "miscellaneous" brochures, but the stretch guides were out of stock. Paul indicated why this may be. MetroFit is facing budget cuts, bordering on elimination of the program completely.

Cutting the budget of MetroFit is exactly the kind of contradictory action I'm trying to demonstrate in this series of articles. What does MetroFit do? They're the people you see at the bases about once a month measuring people's blood pressure. They bring awareness to drivers of general health related issues, and job related health issues in particular. They provide health suggestions and ideas, such as the aforementioned stretches and relaxation techniques. They encourage activities that produce a healthier lifestyle. Sound familiar? It should. It's exactly the same thing Harris Health Trends, the administrating company of the Healthy Incentives

program, is doing. If the people you spoke with on the phone for Healthy Incentives were to have a presence at the worksite, it would probably look a lot like MetroFit. So isn't having that on-site presence a good thing? I took my three phone calls from Harris Health Trends, and I probably won't speak with them again until next year to qualify for my 2008 benefits. Wouldn't year round support from someone who knows the health issues of my job greatly supplement those three limited phone calls from a stranger? Clearly, the answer to these questions is, "yes." So why is KCM cutting MetroFit's budget? Healthy Incentives is about King County investing money towards encouragement of healthy lifestyles on the promise that it will save money down the road by cutting down on more serious and costly health issues. So why not fund investments that better the odds of that bet?

Problem 3: Safety

Perhaps it would be easier for KCM to understand this by pointing out an example where I'm extremely impressed by their initiative. I recently discovered a maintenance cycle at Ryerson Base where at least once a year, each bus will have its driver's seat, regardless of condition, replaced with a new or refurbished one. What a great program! My main issue with the seats is that most Operators either can't discriminate when a seat needs to be replaced, or just don't bother to write up the work order. But let's look deeper into this program. Why does it exist? Because someone in KCM understands that if you keep your seats in good repair, it will cut down on L&I claims for lower back pain, cutting both medical costs and time off work. It is an investment

towards healthy working conditions to cut higher costs in the future. This is exactly the kind of rationale I'm advocating with these articles, and why I'm calling it Healthy Incentives for KCM.

In fact, Safety is one area where KCM gets this right more often than not. The fact that we have ergonomic seats and a redesign of the driver's compartment in the new low-floor coaches are a testament to that. With the new radio system coming in, the possibility of hands-free headsets are being looked into (something I knew was necessary the first day I drove a bus in-service). I've had excellent cooperation with Sue Stewart, Safety Officer at Bellevue Base, for not only my own issues but representing other Operators as well. I'm not saying things are perfect. Shoulder harnesses are still too tight and lock up too easily (creating muscle damage, nerve damage and circulatory damage through the left arm due to the pressure on the muscles and resulting impingement of the brachial artery and nerve plexus). I continue to have dialogues with mechanics over the Gilligs that pull off to the right (creating potential for joint damage, muscle sprains and fatigue, and rotational postural problems from pressure on the steering wheel). But it seems even the latter is being mostly addressed with a regular realignment program.

Solutions

Solution 1: Expand MetroFit. Don't just stop cutting its budget, expand the program. I will leave most of the specifics to the MetroFit employees, who no doubt have submitted many proposals that all include some form of the statement, "we need more money." Everyone in King County knows that Harris Health Trends couldn't accommodate the participation in Healthy Incentives. MetroFit can not only pick up that dropped ball, they can do a lot more with it because they're on-site and familiar with driver issues. For all practical purposes, MetroFit is Healthy Incentives targeted for bus drivers.

Solution 2: Use Safety as a model. I encourage our managers and council members to speak with

Safety. Ask them what they're doing, and why. Ask them what kind of results they've had. Ask them what other ideas they have. Spread this kind of thinking to the other departments.

Solution 3: Fix the shoulder harness problem. If driver's seats are already being refurbished and installed at least once a year, and the seatbelt is part of the seat, can't the harnesses be adjusted as part of that process? Despite Shop Steward Bill Clifford's recent efforts to address shoulder harness problems, numerous B.O.s continue to be submitted about them. Why?

Follow-Up: Comfort Stations

I still haven't seen or heard (through the union office) any comments on the Comfort Station issue from KCM. I would rather see resolution of these issues be a private, internal matter, but if necessary, I do have ideas to force the issues. There are a lot of routes passing the Comfort Station at 4th & Washington, and I'm very curious about the traffic impact of every driver that passes by stopping to use that facility.

Follow-Up: Recovery Time

As promised by Kevin Desmond, at least some trips in the new shake-up have improved schedules, including some additional recovery time for trips like the one I mentioned last article. There are still many run cards with schedule problems, but I assume Desmond's OTP team is not yet through with its work. In his article, Desmond states "Key to the current effort is... input from transit operators." I call upon all operators to accept this solicitation for input by making an extra effort this shakeup to fill out the green Service Request forms whenever you notice a problem run card. If we can make a large effort, en masse, we not only empower ourselves by providing cooperative answers to these problems, we also demonstrate an unignorable strength of desire in seeing them solved. Meanwhile, Kenny McCormick is working on other aspects of recovery time. I hope KCM recognizes the future cost-saving benefits of finding cooperative solutions with him.

ARBITRATION UPDATE

- Louise Gredig:** Grieved premature non-disciplinary medical termination. Grievance has been withdrawn.
- Dar-An Kung:** Grieved work done out of classification. Arbitration held April 25th, 2006. Union prevailed – arbitrator upheld union position.
- Mike Whitehead:** Grieved violation of Lead Transit Part Specialists MOA. Grievance being held in abeyance. Settlement discussions underway.
- Clint DeVoss:** Grieved work out of classification. Settled prior to arbitration.
- Riley Jones:** Grieved not sending two mechanics out on a wrecker call per Article 17, Section 2, Par. B. Metro agreed to settle prior to arbitration.
- Earl Mangold:** Grieved failure to assign overtime as outlined in the CBA. Scheduled in October.
- Regan Askew:** Grieved termination for alleged severe preventable accident. Arbitration held – awaiting arbitrator's decision.
- Joseph Vaifanua:** Grieved termination for alleged under reporting earnings while collecting unemployment compensation. Scheduled in October.

Attention All Local 587 Members

**SEATTLE CHAPTER OF
THE LATINO CAUCUS**
At the October Charter Meeting
**Latino Caucus Latino Month
Celebration of Latin America**
Food served at 7:30
Thursday October 5, 2006
All members welcome!

Letters to the Editor...

ATU 587 Is There For You

To the Membership of ATU587

Once again I find myself in the need of thanking my fellow peers for their support and votes during the most recent problems I encountered with King County Metro, and a seemingly wrongful termination attempt. We were able to avoid having to go to arbitration even though we had the support of the ATU 587 membership, and I have been back to work now for a couple of weeks, and very grateful. Thanks for your patience in dealing with my seeming dramatic episodes at times, and most importantly, for being able to set aside whatever your indifferences towards me might be, and being supportive on my behalf. Please remember one and all, to be careful in all that you may do while on your own time, and if you should ever make a mistake on any level, get in touch with your Union. It is

there for you whenever you need it, and remember that is what we pay our dues for.

Once again, thanks for all of your support during this most trying time for me with KCM.

*Dan Edminster, #20358
Central Base*

Inconsequential Grievance

Dear Editor,

At the September meeting we voted on an arbitration case involving a driver whose step pay increase was deferred because he was out on a medical related leave. The dispute centers on when his raise should have taken effect. Having a pay increase extended because an employee was off work is not unreasonable, resulted in no

hardship and certainly does not warrant arbitration. In all do respect to this talented and dedicated union brother; this is an inconsequential grievance in the shadow of such pressing union matters as terminations, safety, security, and health coverage. These are the

kind of concerns that merit our collective attention, dialogue and resources. Refraining from seeking union involvement for minor disagreements enables our union to more efficiently and effectively pursue meaningful causes that will benefit the rank and file at large.

*Sincerely,
Joe Kadushin
Ryerson Base*

SEND IN YOUR OPINIONS

Letters/contributions must include printed names, signatures, work ID numbers, addresses and phone numbers that can be verified during working hours. Letters that cannot be validated will not be published. All articles/letters are subject to editing and should be limited to 1000 words or less. Not all letters can be published due to space limitations. Cut off is the 15th of each month. Any submission from a member of Local 587 to the *News Review* deemed unprintable by the Recording Secretary shall be forwarded to the Executive Board for final decision to publish. Send letters to:

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Views and opinions expressed in News Review articles are those of the authors and not necessarily the official position of Local 587

Labor 2006

Changing the Direction of This Country—One Vote at a Time

Written by Neal Safrin, Labor 2006 Coordinator and Executive Board Officer

My physical therapist told me a story about the last election that he **did not** vote in. He was living in Okanogan County at the time. He and his wife had worked all day. They were tired, hungry, and cranky. The fact that it was voting day for a special election on a school levy, which they both supported, slipped their minds. The levy lost by one vote.

The goal of the Labor 2006 program is to engage Union members in the political process and encourage them to vote for labor-friendly candidates. The AFL-CIO and ATU International have suggested that we use several strategies to accomplish this goal:

1. Voter Registration Drives — We have held several voter registration drives at the COPE tables at some of our picks (as manpower allowed). We have found that the great majority of our members are registered to vote. Still, we have added about 25 new voters to the list of potential voters who can help elect transit- and labor-friendly candidates.

2. Membership Mailings — Mailings reach the greatest number of union members. We have sent out one mailing to our membership, and another will take place in October before the General Election. Other unions have also sent out mailings to their member-

ships. The Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) has sent several mailings to union members across Washington State. This combined effort has resulted in more than 100,000 contacts with union members across the state.

3. Labor Walks (also known as canvassing or doorbelling) — Canvassing produces the best **quality** contacts with union members. A canvasser actually talks to only about six union members per hour, but can leave members with information on the candidates that we are supporting, whether the members are home or not. Those members who indicate that they are undecided can later be contacted by another canvasser or receive a follow-up phone call. Local 587 members have volunteered at three different Labor Walks during the months of August and September this year.

4. Phone Banking — By utilizing the latest technology in Internet-based phone banking, a volunteer can talk to about 30 union members per hour. This phone-banking program is known as *The Next Best Thing*. We have been using the phone and computer set-up at the office of United Food & Commercial Workers, Local 21. The phones at the WSLC Office are also available to us. Local 587 members have participated in four different phone banks during the

Primary election season. More than 4,000 union members have been contacted using this technology. One of the major purposes of both Labor Walks and phone banking is identifying supporters of our candidates, those who are not supporters, and those members who are still undecided.

5. Get Out The Vote (GOTV) — In the days leading up to the general election on November 7th, Labor 2006 will be implementing a massive GOTV program. Calling undecided voters will be the first priority. Next, we will begin calling those supporters of our candidates, whom we have previously identified during Labor Walks and phone banks, to encourage them to vote and offer transportation to the polls if needed. On Election Day, we can determine which of our supporters have not yet voted, and we will place “door-hangers” on their doorknobs, reminding them to vote after they get home from work.

6. Transit Now Campaign — We at Local 587 will also include a campaign to pass the *Transit Now* initiative that will appear on the General Election ballot for King County voters. *Transit Now* will increase transit service, implement Rapid Transit, and increase the number of transit jobs.

The Labor 2006 program has

the potential to become a major contributor to our union's efforts to protect our jobs, improve our wages and benefits, increase the number of transit jobs, and improve our working conditions. It is part of the big picture that also includes COPE contributions to both transit- and labor-friendly candidates, and contract negotiations with our employers.

Local 587 is essentially a rank and file union. We do have four full-time officers, but volunteers do much of the work of our local. Labor 2006 is no different. We need your help to further the goals of our union. Volunteering is a social outlet that can introduce you to many other union members. It is also a way of building personal friendships. And we will, of course, provide drinks and snacks at all Labor 2006 events. For phone banking we usually serve pizza. The energy of our volunteers is part of the campaign message of empowerment. **You can help change the direction of this country, one vote at a time.**

The schedule of events for October will be posted on the Union bulletin boards. I hope to see you at the next Labor 2006 event!

Contact Information:

Neal Safrin
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Local 587's COPE Committee Initiative Recommendations for the November Election

By Linda Anderson, Executive Board Member

Wondering about all the initiatives on the ballot? The ATU Local 587 Cope Committee has some recommendations. As always, we base our recommendations on how these initiatives will affect transit and working families issues, and we expect you to all make up your own minds for yourselves. Only the ballot initiatives on which we made a recommendation are listed. Our recommendations on the following initiatives were in agreement with those of the King County Labor Council and the Washington State Labor Council:

Initiative 920: NO

This measure would wipe out millions of dollars in education funding that the voters just approved (I-728), by repealing estate taxes—but only for estates worth over \$2 million. The money would come out of the Education Legacy Trust, which funds smaller class size, and financial aid for 10,000 working families' college students. Backers of I-920 say it would get rid of an unfair tax on family farms, but family farms are already exempt from estate taxes and would not be affected.

Martin Selig paid for the entire signature gathering for 920. Since then, Selig, John Nordstrom and other millionaires have contributed big bucks to 920 to basically buy their way out of contributing

to the society which helped make them rich, at the expense of the educations of working people. The measure was sponsored by Dennis Falk, a long-time ultra-conservative and John Birch Society member. We recommend a NO vote.

Initiative 933: NO

We recommend a heck, NO! on this black hole for tax money. It's like a bucket with a hole in it set to drain away money from the counties—money we want them to have when it comes time to negotiate our contracts. This measure is a double-edged sword for taxpayers. I-933 says that whenever a law limits what a property owner can do on their property, taxpayers have two options: either pay the property owner to follow the law; or, waive the rules, so the land owner can go ahead and do whatever they want.

In other words, I could move in next door to you and decide to put in a giant condo, or a Wal-Mart. You moved there because it was zoned a quiet residential area? Too bad! Taxpayers would now have to even pay for my lawyer fees to challenge the zoning, and if the government doesn't let me develop, you'll be compensating me for whatever I could have made if I had been able to develop, out of your tax money.

Oregon passed something similar in 2004, and they are paying

out millions of tax dollars just to administer it. Nearly 3,000 claims have been filed requesting almost \$4 billion in compensation—and since I-933 is even more extreme, it will likely cost even more.

Where would the money come from? From the money budgeted for TRANSIT WORKERS, police, and teachers, EMTs, firefighters, etc. Also from road building, infrastructure upgrades...you get the idea. We understand some folks think Ron Sims put too many restrictions on people's property, but this is not a fix; it's so bad even the Washington Association of Realtors and the Seattle Chamber of Commerce oppose it. I-933 is funded by the Farm Bureau.

Initiative 937: YES

This measure would require certain electric utilities with 25,000 or more customers to meet targets for energy conservation and renewable energy. The requirements would not apply to existing energy sources, but would require 15 percent of new energy sources to be renewable (other than hydroelectric) by 2020.

One of the goals of I-937 is to make Washington State a national leader in clean energy technology, production and provide skilled jobs.

Incidentally, this initiative would dovetail with the Apollo Project (a separate project not

part of 937), which is a new program put together by a coalition of government, business, labor, and environmental groups. The mission of the Apollo Project is to transform defunct logging and other facilities into renewable and clean energy production, and provide apprenticeships, training, and hundreds of good-paying, stable jobs to communities which have suffered since the shut-down of logging.

King County's Transit Now: YES!!

Two thumbs up for this one, brothers and sisters! Get out there and talk to your neighbors, wave a sign. Seriously - check your union bulletin boards for up-dates - there may be upcoming volunteer opportunities to help on this issue. This measure would increase Metro service by 20 percent. More routes, more frequent service, more Access service, more jobs. Vote for this, if for no other reason than that Metro would have to hire more people which would get in line behind you on the seniority list, and would add that many more pieces of work for you to choose from in the pick room. Please read the separate article about Transit Now in this same issue of the *News Review*. You can also Google it. The county has lots of details about Transit Now linked to their homepage.

Ballot Measure Transit Now Would Boost Metro Service by 20 Percent

By Linda Anderson, Executive Board Officer

This November we have a unique opportunity to cast a vote on our ballots for more Metro Transit and Access service. A King County measure called *Transit Now* would raise the sales tax by one tenth of a percent, an average cost per taxpayer of \$25 per year.

Transit Now would add a projected \$380 million, or 580,000 hours of service over the next ten years, increasing Metro service by 20%. This would be over and above service increases already planned under Metro's current six-year plan. Transit Now would also add \$10 million to the Access program, boosting ridership by a projected 1.3%. It would provide \$125 million for fleet expansion, and would add shelters. Also planned are roadway modifications, signal synchronization, improvements to terminal and layover facilities, and more.

Transit Now has five main elements:

1. Rapid Ride/Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

2. Core Route/High Ridership Network

3. New Service for Rapidly Developing Areas

4. Service Partnership Program

5. Expanded Service for Paratransit and Rideshare Programs

The main feature of Rapid Ride is to decrease headways between trips to provide ten-minute service on the system's five most heavily used route corridors. There would be a slightly different design and color scheme for the Rapid Ride shelters and schedules to distinguish it from regular service and sell it to potential new riders as "bus rapid transit" (BRT). Rapid Ride corridors are planned to not duplicate upcoming light rail service. The five Rapid Ride corridors are:

- Downtown Seattle to Shoreline via Aurora
- West Seattle to Downtown Seattle via W. Seattle Bridge
- Ballard to Downtown via 15th Ave. N.W.

- Federal Way to Tukwila via Pacific Highway S.

- Bellevue to Redmond via Crossroads and Overlake

Core Route/High Ridership Network is a fancy term for increasing service in other areas that also have high ridership, with a target frequency of 15 minute, all day, two way service. For specific information and maps of Rapid Ride and High Ridership Network, see the King County website. From the home page, select Transit Now.

New Service for Rapidly Developing Areas provides money for increasing service as needed, based on growth in different areas of the County over the ten years of the plan.

The Service Partnership Program sets aside 15% of Transit Now money to be used as matching funds for leveraging contributions from cities or businesses to transit enhancements. These partnerships would be similar to the ex-

isting agreements Metro has with the University of Washington (the U-Pass program) or with Microsoft. At least two hospitals and possibly the city of Seattle are interested in participating in the Transit Now Partnership Program. Partners would make substantial investments in either traffic improvements, pass programs, or directly into increased service. The County would match the money the partners invest at a rate of two to one. After five years, resulting service increases would become part of the regular service.

Access Paratransit increases would mainly go to fill gaps in service areas. Some changes would be made to the **Rideshare Program** to attract more riders.

I would encourage everyone to do what they can to support Transit Now. Please watch the Union bulletin boards for updates and possible opportunities to help campaign for Transit Now.

President's Report, continued

- Bellevue to Redmond on North-east 8th Street and 156th Avenue Northeast via Crossroads and Overlake; and
- SeaTac to Federal Way on Pacific Highway South (State Route 99).

Transit Now would also add more all day, two-way core bus service, with some buses running as frequently as every 15 minutes on high ridership routes. These high ridership routes are a more reliable travel alternative because they are available throughout the day rather than only during peak travel periods.

The proposal would also allow Metro to keep up with the rapid growth in suburban areas that has occurred over the past 20 years. Service would be added in growing residential areas by boosting peak service in areas not currently served, and offering midday service in some areas that currently have peak service only.

The outcome of the upcoming ballot measure will significantly influence the number of service hours and type of service Metro is able to deliver in the future. If voters say yes to Transit Now, Metro can begin implementing some new service in February 2007. It will also begin the task of acquiring new buses and equipment needed for service expansion. (Please see related Article in this edition by Executive Board Officer Linda Anderson)

"Bridging The Gap"

The City of Seattle is seeking approval of the "Bridging the Gap" initiative. Local 587 is urging your support of both King County's

"Transit Now" and City of Seattle's "Bridging the Gap" initiatives.

Phase one, of "Bridging the Gap" is a nine year program to generate about \$545 million between 2007 and 2015. The funds will be raised via a voter approved levy, new commercial parking tax and new business transportation tax.

Where the Money Goes (beginning in 2008)

- \$21.1 million for Paving City Streets
 - \$6.3 million for Bridges & Structures
 - \$4.2 million for Signs, Signals and Safety
 - \$2.7 million for Sidewalks, Trails, Walkways and Stairways
 - \$7.5 million for **Transit**, Freight and Pedestrian Corridors
 - \$8.5 million for Pedestrians, Bikes & Safety
 - \$1.1 million for Trees and Landscaping
- Total 51.5 million in 2008

Bridging the Gap promises:

- Improved transit reliability through out Seattle
- Matching funds to secure Metro service for Seattle — additional 45,000 transit hours in Seattle
- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on key corridors to reduce commute times
- Improvements on Spokane and Lander Streets to help during Viaduct closure.

Regards to all,
Be Safe
Lance F. Norton
President/Business
Representative
Local 587

The Peasants Are Revolting

By Dee Wakenight

Why is it that when we have survived the hottest summer on record, dealt with dramatic understaffing, suffered all the indignities, **now**, the powers that be have to find another way to make our lives and jobs more difficult, with the shake up and all attached changes, the most important issue facing management is uniform compliance?????????

Prior to this new hell, at South Base there was a countdown of the number of days, posted at the window for everyone to see of how long it would be until the compliance issue would be taken out of the friendly hands it has resided in for so long. Evidently it is now critical for all ecru shirts to be banished or the system shall cease to function. For heavens sake get a grip. Find something that actually matters to the SAFE operation of our once fine system.

Many of you remember the days **BEFORE** King County, brown and yellow uniforms, the Metro Daisy, APTA Awards, yes there was crap but it was our crap. Those who had the polyester pants that never wore out, or even the Dacron/Cotton blend pants that at least for me fit very well, and 2 shirt pockets. Evidently those days are gone and we now have the uniform police. The Chiefs have all said that it's not their idea, they are being forced to do this, by the magical, mythical

THEY we all dread but can not ever identify with certainty.

Don't forget that we are approaching the darkest time of the year, shorter days, so make sure that any light colored clothing is eliminated from the uniform so the drivers blend in even better with the dark surroundings, and the busses in the yard. Just ask equipment service workers what they can see when an operator walks next to a bus in a full yard. The current uniform is another tragedy waiting to happen. Management does not care enough about operator safety to allow us a chance to be seen when we are performing our very difficult jobs to best of our abilities. Why else do we all look like fast food workers? The color scheme is the same as a box of Crayola Crayons. Perhaps the idea is that if it's ugly enough we will stop wearing them except when we are actively at work. I hate the Multi-Color embroidery; naturally no one asked my opinion prior to implementation. Evidently King County didn't feel important enough and decided to inflict this butt ugly mess on us.

When something makes me crazy I've got to vent and this is how I've been doing it for years. I for one feel it's time to tell the powers that be that the peasants are revolting, and the bus drivers are none too happy either.



Paul Bachtel

The Recording Secretary's Report

Charles "Chuck" Smither

By Paul J. Bachtel

When life gets me down and I start to lament my situation inevitably someone comes along to put my view of life back in perspective and I realize how lucky I am. While researching Article 12, Section 9, (Benefits, Workers' Compensation – Industrial Insurance) I had the pleasure of contacting one of our retired members to investigate why Metro had changed the method of calculating time-loss in workers' compensation claims. I found our retiree, Chuck Smither, at Veteran Administration (VA) hospital recovering from a second leg amputation.

Many of you will remember Chuck as a long-time report Operator working out of Central Base. Chuck began his career May 27, 1976 and retired August 20, 2001. Chuck earned a reputation

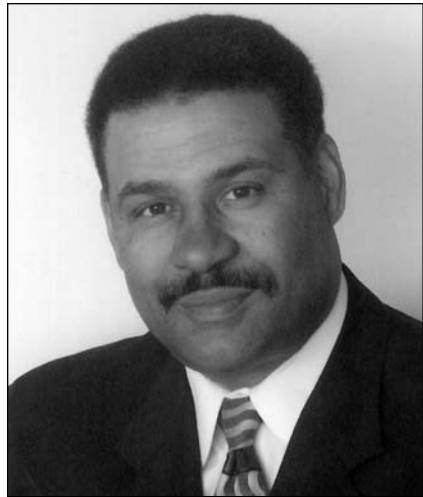
as always having a smile and a willingness to help new Operators find their way. One of Chuck's greatest accomplishments was to challenge the method Metro was using to calculate time-loss in worker's compensation claims. Chuck worked a 13-hour day and thought it was only right that his time-loss payments should reflect his hours worked. Chuck appealed Metro's time-loss calculations to Labor and Industries (L&I) and Metro was ordered to include all hours worked (both straight-time and overtime) at the straight-time rate in time-loss calculations for worker's compensation claims. Chuck was awarded many thousands of dollars in back pay as a result of his challenge and all of his coworkers, who have suffered time-loss as a result of a worker's compensation claim, have benefited as

Chuck Smither epitomizes what a Transit Operator should be; kind, helpful, and pleasant to his coworkers, yet willing to stand up for what is right...

a result of the L&I decision.

Chuck Smither epitomizes what a Transit Operator should be; kind, helpful, and pleasant to his coworkers, yet willing to stand up for what is right benefiting all his coworkers for years to come. Chuck, at the time of this writing,

is recovering from surgery at VA hospital. He asked that I convey a big HELLO to all his friends at Metro and welcomes anyone to stop by and visit. For Chuck's address and phone number give me a call at the Union office.



Kenny McCormick

The Vice President's Report

RCW 49.12 Rest Breaks

By Kenny McCormick

Attention all Operators: currently we are involved with a grievance dealing with rest breaks, and your help is needed. If you work a run or a tripper that does not have enough recovery time, please send a copy of the run card and a brief explanation of where the problem is to the union office. This information will be used to help resolve the problem and create schedules that will have more realistic times for both Operators and the public our customers.

Metro has always contended that the time at the end of the line is recovery time not a rest break and that they are exempt from having to supply rest breaks for drivers. The problem with recovery time is that if your route is late you can not take time to relax and prepare for your next trip, instead, operators are expected to continue. Operators are the only work group in King County that do not receive rest breaks according to the RCW.

An operator out of South base

filed a grievance on not receiving rest breaks and the 2nd step hearing was held in early September. The resolution will have an impact on how Operator assignments are created in the future. We would like to see realistic run cuts with enough time for operators to use restrooms/comfort stations near their terminals. It is unreasonable to have a five minute recovery time at your terminals when the restroom/comfort station is five minutes away. This only leads to operators creating situations for which they can be disciplined.

Article 15 Sec.3.I on page 73 of our contract states,

In order to provide reasonable breaks, Metro shall endeavor to schedule at least one (1) fifteen (15) minute layover in assignment over (5) hours in length. When an Operator working an assignment finds it does not provide reasonable break time, the Operator should notify Metro of such by filing a service report.

...how can the largest workgroup in King County, the Local 587 Operators, be overlooked for rest breaks?

Metro has endeavored and not complied with the law. The RCW requires employers to provide two (10) ten minute rest breaks during the course of an eight hour shift and one (10) ten minute break during a four (4) hour shift. In our contract other workgroups are afforded two (15) fifteen minute breaks. This brings up the question of, how can the largest workgroup in King County, the Local 587 Operators, be overlooked for rest breaks?

Local 587 has asked for and not received a copy of King Metros' exemption on not having to provide rest breaks for Transit Operators. An employer that values its employees would not be seeking a way to avoid supplying rest breaks but would make sure it guaranteed its work force received adequate rest time. There are safety and health issues related to not being given rest breaks and that is why the law was created in the beginning.

Shop Steward Training

For New Stewards

WHEN: WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY – October 11th & 12th 2006
 WHERE: UNION OFFICE
 2815 SECOND AVENUE #230
 BAY VISTA OFFICE BLDG — BETWEEN BROAD & CLAY
 TIME: 9am to 5pm

New Steward training has been extended to a 2-day session
 Please call the Union office if you would like to attend no later than 4pm on Wednesday, October 4, 2006
 Casual attire
 *Boxed lunches will be provided
 Parking available in underground garage

Advanced Steward Training

For Chief Shop Stewards & Executive Board Officers

WHEN: WEDNESDAY – NOVEMBER 8th 2006
 WHERE: UNION OFFICE
 2815 SECOND AVENUE #230
 BAY VISTA OFFICE BLDG — BETWEEN BROAD & CLAY
 TIME: 9am to 5pm

Advanced Steward Training is a 1-day session
 Chief Shop Stewards please call the Union office if you would like to attend no later than 4pm on Wednesday, November 1, 2006
 Casual attire
 *Boxed lunches will be provided
 Parking available in underground garage

WORK SITE VISITS

Kenny McCormick, Vice President / Business Representative will be visiting various work sites during the month of October. Below is a list of times, dates and locations.

- Oct 11th**
 MV Transportation..... 4am–7am
- Oct 13th**
 Information Distribution Center, 6th Avenue
 1pm–1:45pm
- Oct 13th**
 Ryerson Base OPS..... 5am–8am
- Oct 13th**
 Ryerson Base VM 8:15am–9:30am
- Oct 13th**
 Atlantic..... VM 8pm–9pm
- Oct 13th**
 Central VM 9:30pm–10:30pm
- Oct 13th**
 Ryerson Base VM 11pm–Midnight
- Oct 18th**
 Central/Atlantic... Service Quality 4am–4:30am
- Oct 18th**
 Central/Atlantic Bases.. OPS..... 4:45am–8am
- Oct 18th**
 Atlantic..... VM 8:15am–9:30am
- Oct 18th**
 Central VM 9:45am–11am
- Oct 18th**
 Central/Atlantic NRV..... 11:15am–12:30pm

A Modest Proposal

(Or is your body failing?)

By Paul L. Griffin

It's time to start taking a proactive stance on what would be good to achieve in our next round of negotiations with METRO. I have a modest proposal that would not only be a great benefit to our members but would help solve some of Metro's personnel problems.

Some of you may recall that I analyzed our demographics and discovered that the average age of our membership is 54 years. This means that a good many of our members have health issues consistent with ageing. When I worked in the office I heard from many members whose bodies were slowly failing them. They didn't dare go on worker's comp as King County makes efforts to "separate" them. They are often too young to retire or if forced to retire they have a considerably reduced pension. And all of them worry about health benefits. Especially if they haven't reached Social Security/Medicare thresholds.

Meanwhile METRO is canceling work on a regular basis and has a clear shortage of drivers. Especially those who are able or willing to work overtime. METRO management has wished for "flexible utilization" but has only

approached it on traditional command-control management style. And gotten nowhere.

So now that we have defined the basic problem let us discuss a modest proposal to fix the problem. What makes the job enjoyable are choices. Choices of work that fit needs and personalities. We have trippers, combos, 4-10's, straight through, daylighters, reliefs, frags and who knows what else. I am proposing one more choice. A Full Time Operator Five Hour Pick Option.

It works this way. By seniority a full time operator would pick a five hour straight through piece of work. Five hours per day maintains pension service credit and medical benefits. It would pay only five hours. For some operators whose bodies cannot take too many more eight hours days, five hours per day would be just about right. However, if the window had open work and an operator felt up to it they would work something off the call sheet. Something that the labor agreement forbids for part-timers. Meanwhile management solves their personnel problem by combining two three-hour pieces (now being cancelled) into one five-hour piece of work. This

METRO management has wished for "flexible utilization" but has only approached it on traditional command-control management style.

works because the run-cutter naturally gravitates to eights and fives. Enough one-hour overlaps "saved" would create sufficient savings in operational expense that METRO could grant full medical benefits to ALL part-time operators with no minimum qualification and still be money ahead.

Yes, yes. I know — some people are afraid of change. We can agree to a double end pull the pin clause to test the concept. We can easily control the number of five hour assignments much as we already do with day-base units and percentages and minimums already in the contract. Some would say this is "selling" the eight hour guarantee. No it's not! It's just another choice of work. Remember, we already

have 4-10's because some operators like three days off. We also have long time part timers because it suits their situation. What this proposal does is keep long term operators (and you can bet that only the highest seniority will pick "fives") in the work force protecting METRO's investment and benefiting from their experience. It will slow down the retirement drain that is soon to hit all industries — especially transit.

So there you have it, Sisters and Brothers. A modest proposal that I encourage you to write in the negotiation questionnaire when your union starts preparing for the next round of negotiations. Let us make this a priority at the table. We're all in this together.

Ride Free Zone

By Michael Cooper ID # 20062, Ryerson Base

Metro's dirty little secret has to be told from a different perspective. If the marketing of Metro is indeed key to ridership growth, then Metro has done a good job in its marketing and customer development efforts. But, Metro has done a much poorer job collecting fares, and in trying to be all things to all people. The fact is, with ever higher gas prices and much smaller state and federal government subsidies, Metro is terribly inefficient operationally. According to Metro's most recent Annual Operating information, fare box revenues for 2004 were \$73 million. But, this agency's pathetic fare collection policies have resulted in additional millions of dollars NOT collected every year. This lunacy goes beyond ignoring the people who simply won't pay their full fare. (Violation rates of 10 to 30% are not uncommon on some routes); but it also involves the heavily reduced/subsidized passes for people making a solid middle class wage. It's time for some corrective actions, starting with a baseline audit to determine just how much money is not being collected. Just because we are a government agency, doesn't mean

that we can continue to not collect proper fares today, only to tax the public with another fare increase tomorrow.

The free ride zone was started in 1973, initially with the financial support of the City of Seattle and the Downtown Seattle Association, as a way to encourage more people to spend money downtown when the Central Business District was dying, and shoppers were instead flocking to the malls. Downtown is now thriving and we need to take a look at altering, or even eliminating (...if only on the weekends) the free ride zone as a viable way to increase revenue. It then would make sense to take a fresh look at the other inefficiencies in our policies and procedures, in hopes of instilling more confidence in our employees and the public.

We all agree marketing Metro's bus services is crucial. It's just as important that we have a coherent strategy that involves relevant public service announcements, and multi-language in-bus posters that tell passengers when to pay and what to pay. Placards should be placed where passengers can see them clearly, and start enforcing

the no eating/drinking policies (or remove them from the books).

As Metro competes with the other transportation alternatives soon to be available to the public, it is more important than ever to

deliver consistency and quality in our efforts to retain existing customers as well as key to gaining new customers. It's time for Metro to insist the public do their part as well.

Upcoming at Local 587

OCTOBER 1 — Ballots for ATU International Convention Delegates mailed to the membership.

OCTOBER 5 — Charter meeting.

OCTOBER 6 — Morning meeting.

OCTOBER 6 — Shop Steward Nominations close at Metro Operations, Facilities Maintenance and Vehicle Maintenance.

OCTOBER 7 — New shake-up begins at Metro First line.

OCTOBER 9 — Jefferson Transit meeting.

OCTOBER 10 — Clallam Transit meeting.

OCTOBER 19 — Ballots for ATU International Convention Delegates to be counted.

OCTOBER 19 — Shop Steward Elections, if required, at Metro Operations, Facilities Maintenance and Vehicle Maintenance.