

## **WESTRAY ACT STATES: KILL A WORKER AND GO TO JAIL**

The United Steelworkers in Canada are calling on all municipalities across the country to support us in our campaign: Stop The Killing — Enforce The Law. The campaign is asking provincial attorneys general to take steps to enforce the Westray Act.

Following the horrific Westray coal mine explosion that killed 26 miners on May 9, 1992, in Pictou County, Nova Scotia, the United Steelworkers (USW) spearheaded a decade-long campaign to demand "No More Westrays."

On Wednesday January 15th, Sylvia Boyce, Director of Health and Safety for District 6, and a small delegation from the Hamilton Steelworkers Area Council made a presentation to Hamilton city council in council chambers. Hamilton city council is unanimously supporting a national campaign aimed at better enforcement of legislation to hold employers accountable for workers' deaths.

The Westray Law was passed unanimously in Parliament in 2004, in response to the 1992 Westray coalmine explosion in Nova Scotia that killed 26 miners. The law is intended to hold corporate executives, directors and managers criminally accountable for workplace deaths. However, more than 9,000 Canadians have been killed on the job over the last decade, but not one corporate executive has faced a single day in jail.

"I commend you for going across the country and asking people to never forget the Westray mining disaster," said Hamilton Counsellor Scott Duvall. A former Steelworkers local union president in Hamilton, Duvall spearheaded efforts at council to pass the motion supporting the USW campaign.

Supporters included Counsellor Brad Clark, a former Progressive Conservative labour minister in Ontario. "I understand and agree with what you are saying," Clark told the Steelworkers' delegation.

The Hamilton Police Association also has supported the motion.

"We appreciate the opportunity to appear before council," said Darren Green, Hamilton Steelworkers Area Council president. "It's quite clear that they all understand what we are trying to accomplish."

The USW is seeking support for its national campaign from municipal councils across the country. The campaign has been endorsed by city councils in Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie.

"We will continue to push for increased education and co-operation among Crown prosecutors, police forces and health and safety regulators. Workers are counting on us," said Sylvia Boyce, the USW's Director for Health and Safety in Ontario and Atlantic Canada.

# **WWW.STOP THE KILLING.ca**

USW Local 7135

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# **Local 7135**

**FEBRUARY 2014 NEWSLETTER**

## **PRESIDENTS MESSAGE:**

### **Orders.**

[P-1] 60' Box Cars will run until the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of March. Looking to begin tank cars by the end of April

[P-2] Potash Cars will run until the third week of May but going 2 shifts mid-March.

[P-3] 155 Open Top Hoppers starting the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of March hoping for add-ons.

[P-5] Tank cars will run until the end of October.

[P-7] 279 Flat Cars run until the third week of March, there is hope for 3 packs.

The company will try to minimize any possible layoffs, with training on the tanker cars.

Unfortunately we lost a member this month. Brother Henryk Grzechnik was well liked and highly respected by many. Henryk was approaching 19 years of service with National Steel Car. Our condolences to his friends and family.

The company has reported to us that members are not to park in the laneways in the parking lot and are subject to being ticketed and towed. We ask that everyone use the proper parking spots to avoid this from happening. We are also concerned with the safety of members having to walk in the reduced laneways because of the improperly parked vehicles we ask those members entering or exiting the parking lot be aware of your fellow workers.

We had a great time on this years Ice Fishing trip, and I was happy to see the large group of members that attended. This was an extremely well run event, and we are looking forward to doing it again next year. Thanks to Joe Paquette for all his hard work in making this so successful.

**Bob Pelletier, USW Local 7135 President**

# RAILCAR MANUFACTURING NEWS

To an extent, rail-car orders provide a glimpse into the North American rail industry's near-term health. But when orders largely are coming from one car type (tank cars) the way they have for a couple years now, it can be a bit harder to make that big-picture health case. Meanwhile, tank-car orders probably will begin to slow down in the quarters ahead, as Rail Theory Forecasts L.L.C.'s Toby Kolstad notes in his 2014 rail-car forecast, which was published in our December 2013 issue. Does that foretell an industry health issue? Not necessarily. Demand for intermodal cars, covered hoppers and autorack flat cars also should begin to pick up, as Kolstad notes. How do those (and other) equation elements factor into Kolstad's 2014 rail-car delivery forecast?

The rail-car industry is not a growth industry by any definition of the term. For the past 50 years, annual when cars were smaller and rail-car fleets larger, and closer to the former total during the past quarter century. In 2012, deliveries reached 59,000 cars, but this year, new-car builds are expected to fall to 49,000 units. Using a statistical methodology that is heavily weighted by past averages, Rail Theory Forecasts L.L.C.'s forecasts have been very close the past two years, projecting 58,500 for 2012 and 47,500 for 2013. Our early forecast for 2014, which is not yet based on the statistical models, is 61,500 deliveries.

Looking at just the total number of rail cars delivered, it would seem that rail-car builders were enjoying a rare period of stability. However, for the past 25 years, the industry has been cyclical, with production levels rising or falling depending on the economic conditions affecting rail operations. That makes the delivery totals from the past two years (and possibly next year's) seem too good to be true. But a peek at the total number of cars delivered reveals a troubling fact: 57 percent of this year's deliveries are tank cars and 80 percent of the backlogged orders in September were for tank cars. It would be remarkable if rail-car demand remained steady for car builders and their material and parts suppliers, but it may be possible.

## Intermodal Impact

For example, demand for intermodal cars should increase from the depressed level of this past year. Trailer and container loads have continued to increase since the Great Recession, and total loads are now well above pre-recession levels. The construction of 53-foot well cars in 2011 and 2012 kept utilization rates below levels that normally signal healthy demand for new equipment, but loads have finally caught up with the fleet size — new cars will be needed in the near future if intermodal traffic continues to grow. As a result, 2014 deliveries could exceed 6,000 units compared with the 1,300 expected in 2013.

Deliveries of covered hopper cars also should increase, given the demand for small-cube cars to handle frac sand and jumbo cars to move plastic pellets. Orders for both car types are the result of the boom in hydrofracking operations that is producing record amounts of natural gas and petroleum. The increased supply of relatively cheap natural gas has prompted chemical companies, especially fertilizer and plastic pellet producers, to ramp up operations in the United States, and these new plants will need new rail cars to move their output. Demand for grain cars, too, is expected to increase in 2014 and beyond as the United States recovers from the two bad harvests between 2011 and 2012, and regains international market share lost as a result of decreased farm production.

## Norma Berti Breakfast 2014

Every year the United Steelworkers celebrate international Women's day by having a breakfast at the District 6 office on Barton street in Hamilton to honor the achievements of Norma Berti.

Norma Berti was the very first woman to be elected as an executive officer into the USW, and became the Financial Secretary for USW Local 1005 .

Breakfast will be served from 9AM until 12PM and the cost will be \$5:00 for adults and \$2:00 for children. The proceeds from this will be donated to local women's charities.

This year it will be held on Sunday March 9<sup>th</sup>/2014. Please contact [joe.paquette@usw7135.ca](mailto:joe.paquette@usw7135.ca) for more information, or to volunteer your time in helping out.

## Poker Tournament

The social committee will be running a poker tournament at the end of March to raise money for events that we will be running in the summer for USW Local 7135 members and their families.

There will be limited amount of spaces available for this fundraising event. Anyone interested, or for more information, contact Joe Paquette or Frank Crowder.

## Social Committee Report

The Social committee will be running a day for the family at Canadas Wonderland this year. We will be chartering busses for our members to head out for the day.

Every year, Wonderland offers special rates to Union Members, for one day at the park. We are not sure as to the exact day yet, but we will inform the membership as soon as we have this information, and have our Local booked.

We will post more information as it becomes available in the plant, and in our newsletters.

## Courses being offered at our Union Hall

There are still spots available for Members and their families for WHMIS Training. We have received all of our course materials and are now ready to run this training. Anyone interested should contact [joe.paquette@usw7135.ca](mailto:joe.paquette@usw7135.ca) for more information and enrollment. This is free training that will provide you a certificate that is accepted across Canada.

We are looking into running a CPR course at the Union Hall. Anyone interested it taking this course, should contact [joe.paquette@usw7135.ca](mailto:joe.paquette@usw7135.ca) for more information. This course will be open to Members and their families



## 5 Great National Steelworker Scholarships for 2014

**Post-Secondary School Scholarships** - The Education Fund of the United Steelworkers is offering 21 scholarships in the amount of \$1,000.00 to qualified secondary school students across Canada. The scholarships shall be awarded to Steelworker members, or children of members, who are completing high school and starting post-secondary studies or enrolled in or graduating from CEGEP this year.

**The David Ellis Scholarship** \$500 awarded annually to five high school students who submit a winning essay or video on health and safety themes. The scholarship is part of the USW Health Safety and Environment Department's New Worker Awareness Program.

**Steelworker Summer 2014** - PAID Internships are open to young adults, 17 years of age or older who are children of members of the United Steelworkers and actively enrolled in school. The program can run up to 10 weeks and will be based from our Canadian National Office in Toronto. Participants will receive a stipend of \$600 per week.

**Rudychuk Scholarship Placement Program** - Bill Rudychuk was a Steelworker staff rep in District 3. Working primarily in mining communities, Bill was always a strong supporter of Steelworker education. In the mid-1990s, Bill passed away, leaving \$100,000 to the Steelworkers for education scholarships. The Canadian Directors of the Steelworkers are pleased to offer the Rudychuk Scholarship Placement Program, giving activists opportunities to apply their skills alongside servicing staff representatives in this unique mentoring program.

**Lifelong Learning Scholarship** - This year, there are 12 scholarships of \$1000 each available. These awards support USW members who are enrolled in a part-time or full-time public post-secondary or accredited labour program including correspondence or distance education.

Please visit [www.usw.ca/scholarships](http://www.usw.ca/scholarships) or contact Joe Paquette at the hall for more information including deadlines and access to course study materials.

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### RAIL CAR MANUFACTURING CONT.

finally, demand for new autorack flat cars should continue to be strong as the North American auto industry climbs back toward the annual sales volume of 19 million units it enjoyed for many years before the recession. Sales of automobiles and light trucks in 2013 are expected to approach that level and reach record volumes in coming years as the economies of Mexico, Canada and the United States steadily improve on the strength of the oil and gas boom.

As previously stated, 2013 tank-car production should exceed 28,000 units and car builders will continue to increase their delivery rates. If the industry produces 30,000 cars in 2014, the 2015 backlog still would exceed 20,000 units if no new orders are received in 2014, which is improbable. Builders could increase delivery rates and produce 32,000 cars in 2014, but orders for new tank cars are expected to decrease in coming quarters and the need to expand may diminish.

### **Rail News: Rail Industry Trends**

#### **Alberta grain growers face rail competition from crude producers**

Grain farmers in Alberta, Canada, are having difficulty moving last fall's record harvest to various groups from Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba plan to issue recommendations to the Canadian government to help improve the grain transportation system.

### **Rail News: Rail Industry Trends**

#### **AAR: U.S. rail traffic ramped up in 2013's last week**

The last full week in 2013 was a good one for U.S. railroads. For the period ending Dec. 28, they reported 230,933 carloads, up 8.1 percent, and 172,396 intermodal loads, up 10.6 percent compared with volumes from the same week in 2012, according to the Association of American Railroads.

Total combined U.S. traffic climbed 9.2 percent to 403,329 units and nine of 10 carload commodity groups posted gains, including grain at 36.8 percent, petroleum and petroleum products at 29.8 percent, and nonmetallic minerals and products at 14.3 percent.

Canadian railroads reported week No. 52 carloads totaling 59,830, down 0.4 percent, and intermodal volume totaling 37,662 units, up 8.1 percent year over year. Mexican railroads' weekly carloads fell 6 percent to 9,690 units and their weekly intermodal volume dipped 9.6 percent to 5,775 units.

Through 52 weeks, 13 reporting U.S., Canadian and Mexican railroads handled 19,480,280 carloads, up 0.2 percent, and 16,140,885 containers and trailers, up 4.4 percent compared with the same 2012 period.



Pictures from our 2014 Ice Fishing trip. We had 57 members come out and enjoy a day on the ice. A great time was had by all, and everyone made it off the ice safely. Special thanks to our sponsors , Union Strategies, Universal Promotions, and Bill's Live Bait and Tackle, for providing all the prizes for the day. Go to Bills Bait and Tackle and say you are from USW7135 to receive discounts on all your fishing gear.