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NJT starts pilot close-call project

A confidential close-call reporting system is up and running systemwide on New Jersey Transit, with the UTU, American Train Dispatchers Association and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen participating.

This is the first pilot project involving a passenger operation. The project does not apply to NJT trains operating over Amtrak and Conrail lines.

UTU members participating include more than 1,200 conductors, assistant conductors and yardmasters.

Sponsored by the Federal Railroad Administration, the project permits an employee to make a confidential report of safety concerns, and even violations of operating rules, while receiving immunity from sanction by the employer and the FRA.

The object is for otherwise unreported or underreported information on unsafe events be made available for study by an on-property peer review team of labor, management and FRA representatives.

The analysis of this data will then be used to recommend corrective action, which might include new or improved training methods, changes in the physical plant, changes in existing federal safety laws or regulations, or changes in carrier operating rules.



Reilly

"The involved labor organizations, NJT and U.S. DOT agencies worked closely to forge a quality memorandum of understanding to ensure the program will work on this property," said NJT General Chairperson (Local 60, Newark) **Pat Reilly**. "We all worked together with one goal in mind: a safer workplace."

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Reilly, a former accident investigator for the National Transportation Safety Board, and also a former FRA safety inspector, said the project is "the best I have ever seen in my 38-year railroad career. I believe this project will identify and correct potential problems before they turn into a major problem or a possible accident."

The identity of those reporting close calls remains confidential, including any information as to date or location of the event.

Examples of close calls include running through a yard switch that does not result in an accident, improper blocking, and a train in non-signal territory that proceeds beyond its authority.

Inside this issue of the *UTU News*:



SLD Bates wins coveted Amtrak safety award. See page 2.



CDL-holder Hersman warns drivers of distraction, fatigue. See page 4.



National rail contract negotiations are under way. See pages 6/7.



Former SLD Thompson named to UTUIA board. See page 8.