

# MEMORANDUM

February 25, 2009

**TO:** ALL LOCAL CHAIRPERSONS  
**FROM:** JOHN C. HANCOCK, GENERAL CHAIRMAN  
**RE:** FURLOUGHS AND CUTBACKS

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Over the past period, we have communicated with you regarding a number of issues related to furloughs and cutbacks that we have been addressing with the Carrier. In this memo, we would like to touch on some obligations we have to our more junior members that are not covered by the agreement, but fall under the general heading of "Brotherhood".

System-wide there are approximately 2,000 currently in furlough status and the Carrier is predicting further cuts. As of last Friday, one third – 29,000 cars – of the CSX fleet was on mothballs and 457 locomotives had been placed in storage. Business in all sectors is at record lows; to cite just one example, shipments of automobiles are down 64%.

All of us know that this means increased hardships for many of our members. Some no longer stand for work at any location. Others are being forced to locations where they must find housing and feed themselves (not to mention their families left at home) while they qualify on their own time on new territory.

At the local level, there are several things that the union officers can do to help remove any unnecessary obstacles:

- Continue to assist our members who desire to exercise seniority by making sure their requests are documented and that they receive timely response.
- Make the effort to introduce yourselves to those members flowing into your area so that you can answer their questions and help make the transition easier. Even small gestures on your part can ease some of the stress that these members are experiencing.
- Review and monitor the qualification requirements on your territory to ensure that local management does not place unreasonable demands in the way of our members marking up, while at the same time ensuring that people are given sufficient training to guarantee their safety.

- Remind our members who are working that we have no interest in helping the Carrier out when manpower is cut to the bone. While the man or woman who is first out must answer the phone and must accept whatever assignment is presented to them by the caller if they are qualified to do so, we do not need to be looking for overtime or volunteering to work outside the jurisdiction of our assignment. If the manpower levels are too low, the railroad can exercise its right to recall.

It is in times like these that our humanity is truly tested. While this office, with the assistance of the local chairmen, fights to make sure that each receives his/her contractual entitlements, our members also have an obligation to each other. The membership – all of us – must band together to see each other through difficult days, weeks, and months.

For those members arriving in new locations, we urge all of you to make them feel welcome. This means helping them learn their new jobs and learn their way around new towns. From those of you who are able, it might mean the offer of a room to rent or an occasional meal.

For those members who are unemployed, let's think about ways in which those of us still working can assist them and their families. The origin of our organizations lies not only in the battles by workers to get a fair deal from their employers; the unions also emerged from the efforts of working people to help each other when economic crises, on-the-job accidents, or other calamities beset them.

Our local in Augusta has set a good example by working with its unemployed members to help them find jobs. In Miami, furloughed members passed along to each other information about a hiring session at Amtrak.

The Holy Bible, *Corinthians 13:13*, reads:

“And now abide faith, hope, and love, these three; but the greatest of these is love....”

We think the intent of this includes love for your fellow man and – in our case – your union brother and sister.

Nobody likes to be in the position where they need to accept help, but it is important to remember that this crisis is not something we brought on ourselves. We are hard-working people who have dedicated ourselves to providing a service to our communities. For those who have been tossed to the curb by their employer, there is no shame in accepting a helping hand from a brother or sister. For those of us still in a position to help, offering that hand of friendship is both an obligation and its own reward.

YRH:gmt