

Goals for Faster Claim Handling

By: General Chairman Nowlin

Since 2007, the UTU General Committee has collected penalties against Union Pacific in cases of agreement violations that are in excess of half a million dollars. (This amount does not include discipline cases.) We began with a huge backlog of time claims that had existed for years, plus all the additional claims that came into this office after January of 2007. These totaled over 7,000 claims.

This was not an easy process. It required the time and talents of several of us working together. I am very grateful for their support to this office.

Now that the backlog has been addressed, we are currently in a position to try new means of claims and grievance handling procedures within the General Chairman's office.

This will not affect the way that a claim is handled on a Local level. In line with current agreements, a claim appealed by the Local Chairman requires no further action if the claim is allowed or if the Local Committee of Adjustment determines that no further handling should be given. (In either case, a report is often given at Local Meetings.)

If the claim is declined to the Local Chairman and sent to the General Chairman for further handling, an appeal is filed and the claim is listed for conference. We are proposing, and are in discussions with Carrier Officers on methods of expediting the process once the claim is sent to the General Chairman's office. We are striving to do so in a faster manner than has been possible in the past.

It is my goal to be at a point that once a claim is sent to our office, we can have it conferenced within 60 to 90 days. We are now at a point to be able to do that. This would provide a means, not only to collect claims faster, but enable us to resolve disputes between this office and Labor Relations faster, and to stop wrongful practices on a Local Level when both this office and Labor Relations are in agreement that it is a violation.

If the parties are in a dispute, we will have one year from the date of the conference to docket the issue for Arbitration and ask an Arbitrator to work with the parties to resolve the dispute.

I want to thank all members and their Local Chairmen that take the time to supply all pertinent information and documentation. Filing proper claims is the best resource we have to protect our agreements. This right included in the Collective Bargaining Agreement was gained for us by our forefathers in the labor movement. It should be respected and utilized for the power that it is.