

News

SAFETY ON THE JOB

A TREMENDOUS MILESTONE: RIVERSIDE MECHANICS REACH 1,000 DAYS WITHOUT A LOST-TIME INJURY!

By Adolfo Soto, Financial-Recording Secretary and Jeff Shaffer, Treasurer, Local 1277

Congratulations to the hard-working, dedicated, safety-conscious members of Riverside Transit Agency's (RTA) Maintenance Department, who recently reached the outstanding mark of *1,000 days* without a single lost-time injury! This is a remarkable achievement, one in which every ATU Local 1277 brother and sister in RTA maintenance can take great pride.

A lost-time accident is defined as one where a job-related injury results in time away from work. Through a combination of union-mandated training and union/agency emphasis on worksite safety, our brothers and sisters have positively demonstrated that safety, professional achievement and satisfaction, and outstanding service to the public go hand-in-hand.

Safe work is good work! Do your work correctly, do it safely, and everyone benefits: employees, management, and riders.

The agency's maintenance department employs more than 60 mechanics, groundskeepers and supervisors at two facilities. Our members perform a wide, vital range of services that keep RTA buses rolling to serve the mass-transit dependent public throughout the Western Riverside County region. RTA's service area comprises some 2,500 square miles, making it one of the nation's largest under the jurisdiction of a single agency. It operates 34 fixed routes, eight commuter routes and a Dial-a-Ride service.

RTA's Board Chairman, Frank Johnston praised Local 1277's "seasoned employees who are passing on safe work habits and attitudes to new employees." Noting that "safety is an attitude that must be on our minds every day as we perform our tasks," Johnston cited agency policies that prevent injuries: response to safety suggestions; monthly safety committee meetings, and safe worksite practices.

Such practices include using caution around moving equipment, carefully moving around the facilities, and monitoring weather conditions that may negatively affect both worker safety and productivity. In conjunction with our members' ideas and experience, RTA focuses on maintaining a clean and organized

workplace—factors that time and again promote a safe work environment that helps to prevent injuries to employees.

Workplace injuries can cost companies significant money in workers' compensation and lost productivity. With fewer workplace injuries, RTA and other mass-transit agencies can focus its attention and resources on better equipment, rolling stock and service to the public.

We heartily congratulate every Local 1277 brother and sister at RTA maintenance for their outstanding jobsite-safety achievement! This is truly the best of all professional worlds: excellent professionalism and service in a safe working environment. Every member should take great pride in this achievement and continue to work towards extending your record of service and safety well into the future. You have done both your union and agency proud!



Left to right: Local 1277 Maintenance Shop Steward Daniel Rodriguez, RTA Board Chairman Frank Johnston, Director of Maintenance Bob Bach, and Agency CEO Larry Rubio are all smiles at the presentation of a plaque commemorating 1,000 days without a lost-time injury.

Here are the upcoming Local 1277 membership meetings for April and May Please make every attempt to attend the meeting for your unit. It's your Union, and we need your participation at our meetings!

Tuesday, April 5:	Los Angeles area members:
Tuesday, May 3:	L.A. Building Trades Council, 1626 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles. Morning Session: 10:00 a.m. Evening Session: 5:00 p.m.:
Wednesday, April 6:	Riverside area members:
Wednesday, May 4:	1074 E. La Cadena Dr., Riverside. Morning Session: 10:00 a.m. Afternoon Session: 1:00 p.m. Evening Session: 6:00 p.m.
Thursday, April 7:	Palm Springs/SunLine members:
Thursday, May 5:	Cathedral City Branch Library, 33520 Date Palm Drive, Cathedral City Morning Session: 10:00 a.m. Afternoon Session: 4:00 p.m.
Thursday, April 7:	Long Beach:
Thursday, May 5:	Machinists Hall, 319 W. Broadway, Long Beach. Morning Session: 10:00 a.m. Afternoon Session: 3:00 p.m.



MOVING ON UP!

SERVICE ATTENDANT PROMOTION THROUGH THE PROGRESSION PROGRAM

By Art Aguilar, President, Local 1277

During the last two years an impressive total of 74 more Service Attendants have been promoted into the Senior Service Attendant (SSA) program. I am proud to congratulate these new SSAs for their work and desire to move ahead in the careers. For your information and future reference, here is a summary of how MTA's Progression Program works.

Once a Senior Service Attendant leaves the classification, due to promotion, retirement, or any other reason, two Service Attendants (S/As) are entered into the Progression Program. Here is how you can become eligible to qualify for the Progression Program:

An S/A must not have any attendance-policy violation (Step 1 or higher) for a period of 12 months prior to entering the program. Be advised that your attendance record is thoroughly reviewed at the time that positions in the program become available. If your attendance meets this particular standard, then the next qualification hurdle is seniority.

Once you are in the progression program, you will receive a one dollar/hour wage increase. On the anniversary date of entering the program, your attendance record will be re-evaluated over the next three years. If you continue to maintain a good attendance record, you will receive an additional one dollar/hour increase.

In your fourth year, again based on your attendance record, you will receive the total increase difference to full pay of a Senior Service Attendant. Please remember that for purposes of this program, good attendance is defined as no Step 1 violations, or higher, within 12 months.

Note: If you are already in the Progression Program and you incur a Step 1 (or higher) attendance violation, your

wages will freeze at your current rate and then be re-evaluated in 12 months. Once you are in the program, only you can prevent yourself from reaching the Senior Service Attendant rate!

Here are the ATU Local 1277 brothers and sisters who have been promoted in the last 24 months:

Deshaun Ayers, Candido De La Rosa, Jonathan Giles, Vincent Ruiz, Rihan Lowe, Peter Novaselec, Nyeisha Lewis, Samuel Lopez, Kortnie Jackson, Rae Santos, Kenneth Parga, April Williams, Natalie Lara, Nichiel Baszile, Tommy Pham, Matthew Jimenez, Ignacio Camarena, Nestor Maranan, Rafael Gomez, Mario Patulot, Mauricio Delgadillo, Jovan Mccuien, Carlos Gonzalez, Nimal Gunasena, Randy Franco, Jonathan Velazquez, Carlos Rodriguez, Danut Vulgaris, Jose Garcia, Anthony Williams, Roshaun Malone, Moogooch Baban, Andre Johnson, Edward Gray, Eric Burl, William Nguyen, Jeremy Schoen, Adward Vasquez, and Luis Baltazar.

Julio Perez, Robert Castillo, Edward Higuera, Christopher Aguilar, David Tellez, Ernest Lugo, Ivan Rodriguez Franco, Earl Fonseca, Alonso Ortega, Juan Lopez, Eleanor Orozco, Chau Nguyen, Lloyd Mendoza, Belvin Ford, Jack Fry, Aubrey Fields, Tommy Cao, Cinthia Attala, Cesar Saldana, Tracy Presley, Donald Cochran, Alex Gomez, Edwin Gonzalez, Jorge Castro, Bryan Gomez, Matthew Navarro, Ismael Rodriguez Galvaez, Misael Lopez, Eddie Luong, Daniel Vargas, Donald Johnson, Juan Aguilar, Bryant Orense, John Olelewe, Marcos Basil, and Jonathan Rodriguez Camposano.

To date, this gives us a total of 350 new Senior Service Attendants. Please keep your attendance record clean so that you may progress quickly to the top rate of pay. Your Executive Board joins me in warmly congratulating every new SSA for your perseverance and achievement!

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A POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND MORAL ISSUE! WHY “AMERICAN MADE” MATTERS!

By Errol Frazier, Vice-President, Local 1277

This is a truly burning issue that has been kicking around in my head for years: Why is it so important to “Buy American”? Why should “Made in the USA” mean all that much more than “Made in China”, or “Made in Japan”, or “Made anywhere outside of our country”?

It does matter, brothers and sisters.

And it matters for three significant reasons (political, economic and moral). These are reasons that I am going to try to develop and explain so that, hopefully, they may come to guide your own purchasing.

Political

We have entered a Presidential-election year, one that can be seen as a battle for the soul of our nation, the future of our society—the choice between *Democratic Party* fairness and progress, and *Republican Party* economic and social inequality. Numerous candidates are complaining and warning about the rise and dominance of the Chinese economy. Some experts in the field say that it will soon replace our own national economy as the world’s greatest, *if it hasn’t already done so.*

Even allowing for heated—and sometimes wildly inaccurate—campaign hysterics, it is undeniably true that the Chinese overall economy is clearly the world’s second-biggest, and is aiming to dislodge us on top. Even with the recent financial setbacks to their economic growth, the Chinese are relentlessly pressing ahead towards the top spot.

Here’s why what sounds like mind-numbing economic-policy data is so important: *The Chinese, like any non-unionized nation that puts economic growth ahead of human rights and working families, can produce products faster and more cheaply than societies like ours, that still try to value workers’ rights, jobsite safety, and some sort (not enough, though!) of income equality.*

The politicians are all howling about Chinese growth and its threat to our economy and society. *But none of them—so far—has come right out and said the obvious: Buy American! Combat the “Chinese economic invasion” by buying American-made product whenever you can.* As the campaign heats up, as the candidates holler louder and louder for your vote, ask yourself this: Which one is suggesting that one of the best ways to halt Chinese economic influence in this country is, simply, *not* to buy their products.

By greatly undercutting our wages and throwing safety and workers’ rights to the winds, the Chinese can underprice American firms, so much so that far too many of our own companies simply have *stopped* making products they used to turn out by the millions. And even beyond the matters of wages and safety and respect, there looms this vital point: *Quality*

control. Fast and cheap hardly add up to quality, durable products.

Buy American when you can, and listen for the Presidential candidate who stands up for that simple, but very important idea.

Economic

In only the last decade and a half, millions of manufacturing jobs have been lost in this country. Yes, there are positive signs of economic turn-around and job creation, but the fact still remains that millions of jobs have been lost to cheaper, shoddily run operations overseas.

Up until the mid- to late-1970s, America was a manufacturing powerhouse. Our nation proudly and successfully supplied the world with much of its goods. Our economy was thriving, jobs were plentiful and well-paying, and the union-created middle class was strong and growing.

That changed. Now we are a *consumer* nation, more and more buying products made in *other* countries, boosting *their* economies, not ours. Further, we continue to consume a lot more than we export overseas. *Over the past 15 years, we have lost somewhere in the neighborhood of \$2 trillion in overall trade deficit with China.* That \$2 trillion of forfeited production could have generated hundreds of millions of dollars of American revenue and created millions of jobs in *this* country.

Job creation, of course, is the key. More American manufacturing jobs cut down on the unemployment rate, but also expand our tax base to pay for vital and human-right programs like Obamacare, Social Security, infrastructure improvement, housing, education, environmental protection, and medical research. It is not only desirable for manufacturing to lead the U.S. economy to new strength and heights, it is *necessary.*

Bottom economic line: To maintain its economic recovery and growth, America needs a *consumer-led commitment to buying American-made products, thereby supporting our national manufacturing base, and creating and maintaining jobs, family security and the working middle class.*

Buying American is as patriotic and significant as saluting the flag and participating in the electoral process.

Moral

Buying American is simply *the right thing to do.* By doing so, you support millions of families—unionized and even nonunionized—that rely on their jobs to keep afloat economically, provide for their children, and build a secure platform for their retirement.

It has been estimated that for every *single* manufacturing job, there are a number of *other* jobs created—jobs like truck driver, accountant, research and development, and clerical. Further, buying American-made products helps assure a stable working middle class, promotes jobsite safety (imagine the working conditions in Chinese or even cheaper third-world factories), and preserves our environment (our air, water and ground standards are miles stricter than those in most other countries). Beyond that, buying American stops the flood of jobs leaving for overseas sweatshops.

Finally, and very importantly, if the outflow of American manufacturing jobs is curtailed, if the demand for cheap foreign products of doubtful quality is slashed—then China and other

“sweatshop” countries may be forced to change their economy into one that produces quality, high-end products. This would, by necessity, force these countries to pay their more-skilled workforce a better wage, and could even lead to the formation of unions. And we all know that the trade-union movement is the creator and backbone of a strong middle class—the absolute rock upon which all stable democracies rest.

So when you shop—be it for high-end, expensive goods, or everyday hardware- and drug-store items, *think American and buy American.* You may think, well one item here or there doesn’t matter, if I can save a buck or two. *It does matter, brothers and sisters, it really does.* If millions of Americans think and buy American, that can—and will—make a difference!

Twenty Four Local 1277 Members Retire from Careers at MTA

Twenty Four Local 1277 members have retired from MTA after long and productive careers. They all were hard-working employees and loyal members of our Union.

Darrell Bishop, Mechanic A, Division 9, 26 years, May 11, 2015; Phiet Pham, Rail Warranty Equipment Specialist, Quality Assurance, 25 years, May 24; Antonio Bernardino Jr., Rail Electronic Communication Inspector, Rail Comm., 26 years, June 7; Richard Caballero, Rail Electronic Communication Inspector, Rail Comm., 28 years, June 7; Refugio Cabanillas, Service Attendant, RRC, 15 years, September 21; Joe De La Cerda, Mechanic A, Division 15, 35 years, October 29; Michael White, Service Attendant, Blue Line, 15 years, November 12; Russell Ambos, Mechanic A, Division 4, 35 years, December 1; Ryszard Scislowski, Mechanic A, Division 8, 16 years, December 26;

Theresa Baca, Service Attendant, Red Line, 29 years, January 2, 2016; Man Wong, Maintenance Specialist, ITS, 20 years, January 4; Antonia Rodriguez, Service Attendant, Division 4, 26 years, January 5; Benigno Ancheta, Maintenance Specialist, Red Line, 27 years, January 5; Alonso Gutierrez, FST, RRC, 14 years, January 8; Ve Tran, Mechanic A, Division 1, 29 years, January 11; John Bush, Service Attendant, Division 15, 16 years, January 16; Bernard Lomax, FST, Rail 3924, 25 years, January 16; Steven Yakemonis, FST, Rail 3924, 25 years, January 16; Glenn Dimson, FST, Facilities Maintenance, 24 years, January 22; Fernando Macabagdal, Maintenance Specialist, MOW, 26 years, January 22; Abe Esmailzadeh, Mechanic A, Division 18, 36 years, January 25; John Mandl, Mechanic A, RRC, 34 years, January 28; James Gray, FST, Facilities Maintenance, 15 years, February 1, and Serafin Roque, FST, Facilities Maintenance, 24 years, February 4.

Local 1277’s Executive Board and members wish these brothers and sisters long, enjoyable and healthy retirements. They will be missed!

Four More Local 1277 Members Contribute to Vital ATU COPE Fund

Four more members of our Union have generously contributed to the important ATU COPE Fund. As you know, our International Union amasses this war chest in order to support our political friends and causes, and fight the enemies of working people and families. We are proud to present Union pins and jackets to those member who have realized how vital the ATU COPE Fund is for expanding labor’s influence in Congress and advancing our agenda.

Members receiving jackets: Eric Carter, Renson Ramos, Andrew Rella, and Abraham Washington.

To earn a jacket, one must contribute \$12.50/month, for a total of \$150/year. Congratulations to these members for their public-spirited and timely action. The ATU COPE Fund is very important. Please contribute whatever you can to it! Thank you.