

Railroad Furloughs

From: Bohne, William T. <bill_bohne@ibew.org>

Sisters and Brothers,

Many of our Railroad members are going through difficult times right now because of furloughs the railroads are implementing to adjust to their new business model of "Precision Scheduled Railroading." We are not happy with their change in business model, but there is little we can do to stop it. We can't stop the railroads from furloughing our members, but we are doing all we can to assist them in getting jobs with IBEW construction locals, as well as all benefits they are entitled to. In addition to Railroad Retirement Unemployment Benefits, these benefits may include "protective benefits" provided for under the collective bargaining agreements and any state and federal benefits available to our qualified members, including but not limited to WARN Act requirements. These efforts are presently underway by your General Chairman with assistance of the Railroad Department.

As to any protective benefits provided for under the agreements, certain criteria must be met in order for these benefits to be paid. While your General Chairman will be assisting the Local Unions and *may* be submitting claims for these benefits depending of the individual circumstances, we are certain that the railroads will deny these claims and the cases will end up going to arbitration for final resolution. This entire process can take quite a bit of time, as every time we file a claim, or an appeal, the railroads have 60 days to respond (due to the fact that these are Employee Protection claims, time limits may vary and the process could take a bit longer). Also, once on-the-property handling is complete, the arbitration process can take a year or longer to get resolved. In regards to state and federal benefits for our furloughed members, your General Chairman will assist the Locals with looking into these also, as they may or may not be available depending on the circumstances at the individual locations.

We are doing everything we can to help these members, but it's going to take quite a bit of time to get it all resolved. Cooperation of the Local Unions and our members with our General Chairmen in pursuing these efforts is of the utmost importance. Please let our furloughed members know that we are, and will continue to, fight for them and make certain they receive all of the benefits they are entitled to.

Any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Fraternally and in Solidarity,