



(May 27, 2009)

An industry in crisis

Our industry has a serious safety crisis. In 2008, fatalities increased collectively on class I railroads. They did not discriminate by craft, location, years of service or age.

This year, unfortunately, the frightening trend of both fatalities and career ending injuries has continued. If current trends continue, 2009 will result in considerably more employee on-duty fatalities than 2008, which itself was a substantial increase over 2007.

While many circumstances may have contributed to these unfortunate incidents, it is apparent that a loss of focus brought on by a myriad of factors both environmental and behavioral is a reason.

Brothers and sisters, this is why unions were formed. Now is the time to come together. We are asking for help of you, the membership, to correct this problem. We cannot wait for the carriers or the Federal Railroad Administration to fix this problem. It is up to us -- those who move America's freight, pound the ballast and pull the throttle. It affects each of us.

We know that many of you, like those assigned to this task force, have been talking with your peers, trying to understand this alarming trend.

In an attempt to resolve this matter, we are working on a two-pronged approach: what can your union leadership do to remedy this situation and what can each member do? We believe answering these questions are the foundation to achieving our goals.

We want to hear from you. Send your comments and suggestions to: [**s_taskforce@utu.org**](mailto:s_taskforce@utu.org)