

# Communications

**TEAMSTERS  
ONLINE**
[HOME](#) [ABOUT IBT](#) [PRESIDENT HOFFA](#) [SEC-TREASURER KEEGEL](#) [SEARCH](#) [JOIN IBT](#) [DIVISIONS](#) [DEPARTMENTS](#)
[Teamster Home](#) > [Communications](#) > [Teamster Magazine](#) > [April/May 2000](#)

[Department Services](#)
[About our Publications](#)
[Teamster Magazine Back Issues](#)
[Teamster Leader Back Issues](#)
[Media Guide](#)
[Media Kit](#)
[Press Contact Info](#)

## Teamster Magazine April/May 2000

Table of Contents

- [Teamsters Win Full-Time UPS Jobs](#) In a victory for thousands of Teamster families at UPS, an arbitrator ruled that the company must fulfill its contractual obligation to create 2,000 new full-time jobs as called for in the first year of the 1997 National Master United Parcel Service Agreement. >>>
- [Teaming Up on Kroger](#) The Kroger grocery chain learned the hard way about the strength of Teamster unity. Instead of destroying the union, management came out on the losing end of a 21-week strike at its warehouse in Tolleson, Arizona. >>>
- [Port Truckers Rally for Justice](#)
- [500 Georgia Concrete Workers Vote Teamster](#)
- [Teamsters Support Overnite Strikers](#)
- [Teamsters Win Strike at Florida Juice Plant](#)
- [Master Dairy Contract Returns Power to the Members](#)
- [500 Hardwood Flooring Workers Vote for Teamsters](#)
- [Local 633's Bob Baines Elected Mayor of Manchester](#)




---

## Teamsters Win Full-Time UPS Jobs Arbitration Victory Could Award \$80 million in Back Pay

Angel Nageuroles knows what it's like to work part-time at UPS while putting in full-time hours.

"It was very frustrating," the Local 63 member said. "It's hard to work all those hours and still not see any of the benefits of it. You give full-time labor, yet don't get a full-time commitment from the company."

For many Teamsters, that situation is now a thing of the past. In a victory for thousands of Teamster families at UPS, an arbitrator ruled that the company must fulfill its contractual obligation to create 2,000 new full-time jobs as called for in the first year of the 1997 National Master United Parcel Service Agreement.

Further, the arbitrator ordered the jobs be created within 90 days and required the company to pay back wages with benefits. The total cost to UPS could be more than \$80 million -- the largest award in Teamster history. Add that to the 2,000 jobs for the third year of the contract that UPS is already in the process of creating, and you've got a lot of happy families with new full-time jobs and full-time benefits.

"This victory reaffirms our commitment to protect the gains made during the 1997 UPS strike," said James P. Hoffa, Teamsters General President. "The sacrifices of more than 180,000 brave Teamster members was not in vain."

The contract calls for UPS to create 10,000 full-time jobs -- 2,000 in each year of the five-year agreement. Company officials refused to create the new positions called for in the first two years of the contract, claiming a reduction in package flow as a result of the strike.

In 1999, under pressure from the Hoffa administration, UPS announced the creation of the 2,000 new full-time jobs called for in the third year of the contract. It was the first year Hoffa was involved in contract enforcement. Following the arbitration award, Hoffa called on UPS to settle the Teamster grievance on the companies' failure to create jobs in



the second year of the contract.

The new jobs will move part-time employees into full-time positions. About 60 percent of UPS's hourly employees currently work on a part-time basis.

"We are fully committed to developing more opportunities for full-time work at UPS," Hoffa said. "This victory is the foundation of our effort to build a full-time America."

### Union Fights for Full-Time Jobs

Since taking office last year, the Hoffa administration has continually fought for more full-time job opportunities at UPS. These efforts are paying off. UPS has been forced to:

- Create 1,100 new feeder driver jobs since this time last year;
- Conduct 290 feeder driver training schools;
- Promote 500 Teamsters into service as feeder drivers since last year;
- Create 2,000 full-time jobs in the third year of the 1997 contract;
- Abide by the arbitrators ruling to create 2,000 more full-time jobs for the first year of the contract.

Meanwhile, the union is pursuing a strong grievance that would force the company to create 2,000 full-time jobs for the second year of the contract. Teamster attorneys believe that the recent arbitration award should compel the company to create the jobs.

[back to the top](#)

## Teaming Up on Kroger

The Kroger grocery chain learned the hard way about the strength of Teamster unity.

CS Integrated Retail Services (CSI), the management company that runs the distribution warehouse for Kroger, Fry's and Fred Meyers, attempted to bust Local 104 at the bargaining table. The company proposed eliminating the Teamster health and welfare plans, cutting wages and eliminating the guaranteed 40-hour workweek.

But instead of destroying the union, management came out on the losing end of a 21-week strike at its warehouse in Tolleson, Arizona. In the end, Local Union 104 members overwhelmingly voted -- by a 9-to-1 margin -- to ratify a contract with CSI that preserves Teamster benefits and wages.

"The scope of this victory is truly national," said Andy Marshall, Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 104. "This profitable company tried to impose concessions on our members and we stood up and said, 'No.' We can now hold this agreement up to other Kroger warehouses around the country as an example of what happens when Teamsters stick together."

#### Working Together

The International union engaged in a bold new strategy by extending picket lines to other Kroger-owned facilities (see box). In addition to the extended picket lines, the Teamsters enlisted the help of community activists to educate the public and bring additional pressure on Kroger.

Throughout the strike various civic groups joined strikers on the picket lines. Religious leaders, teachers, politicians and other labor unions all took their turns walking the line with the Local 104 Teamsters.

"The unity of the Teamsters was crucial in obtaining such a far-reaching agreement," Marshall said. "The support of our fellow brothers and sisters in Southern California directly resulted in this favorable contract settlement."

#### A Winning Contract

The new collective bargaining agreement:

- Maintains full coverage under Teamster medical and pension plans
- Defeats the company's plan to eliminate the 40-hour work week and overtime
- Halted a proposed nine percent wage cut
- Maintains seniority credit for the time on strike

Further, the union won a strong measure of job security when the company agreed



to honor the contract in any warehouse in the state where it might move work.

Strike Showcases Power of Unity

Although the strike at Local 104 was just against the one Kroger-owned warehouse in Tolleson, AZ, the Teamsters were able to spread the impact of the strike far beyond the reach of Local 104.

Joint Council 42 authorized the extension of picket lines to the Kroger-owned stores throughout Southern California. Spreading the pickets to other regions accomplished three things:

- \* Unity throughout Joint Council 42 boosted the morale of the striking workers at Local 104

- \* Kroger customers were educated about the company's anti-worker policies.

- \* Management felt a greater impact and more pressure to bargain.

"When we show this type of unity, there are no limits to what we can accomplish," said Jim Santangelo, International Vice President.

The new unity strategy at Local 104 is the first successful effort to save Teamster warehouse jobs threatened by subcontracting.

#### **On the Line : 21 Weeks with Local 104's Art Seechoma**

Art Seechoma was on strike at the Kroger warehouse for 21 weeks, but that doesn't mean he stopped working. As a strike captain, Art's days were much longer than his typical shift as a forklift driver.

"I was responsible for keeping up the strike line," Seechoma said. "We maintained a tent with drinks and snacks for our strikers. Many times I paid for snacks out of my own pocket, but I was determined to do whatever it took to keep morale up."

One of Art's duties was making sure Teamsters remained out of the danger posed by the unsafe scab drivers. The scabs' inexperience not only endangered strikers and the public, but also caused an estimated \$80,000 of damage to goods and equipment.

"The icing on the cake was when a scab driver actually hit one of their security guards on the way into the warehouse," Seechoma said. "These guards were hired specifically for the strike, but the scabs made them sympathetic to our cause. The guards were a vital source of information on what management was doing."

Art and his wife were fortunate enough to have some money in their savings account to help make ends meet during the four-month strike. With three kids to feed it wasn't easy, but between the savings and a weekend side job, the Seechoma's made it.

"My situation enabled me to devote a lot of energy to the strike. The guys knew if I wasn't at the strike line, something must be wrong," he said. "I was determined to put in as much time as I could. This job is our livelihood, and I was going to make sure that I did whatever it took to ensure that my Teamster brothers and sisters get what we deserve."

[back to the top](#)

---

## **Independent or Indentured?**

### **Port Truckers Rally for Justice**

Port trucker Luis Espindola feels the pinch. Maintenance. Fuel. Loan payments.

"I'm lucky if I make 20 cents a mile in this truck," Espindola said.

Espindola's is one of the thousands of port drivers nationwide who haul containers to and from the nation's seaports. Port drivers are among some of the lowest paid truckers in the U.S. and Canada, and they're fed up.

With the support of the Teamsters, Espindola and 450 other port truckers converged on the Port of Houston to air their grievances. They presented industry and port officials with a "Port Driver Bill of Rights" and demanded that the industry recognize their right to bargain collectively. Houston's port truckers joined fellow truckers in New York, New Jersey, Boston, Seattle, South Carolina, California, Florida, Georgia, Baltimore and Detroit in a nationwide call for justice.

"Multinational steamship lines have created a system that imposes third world wages on American and Canadian truckers," said George Cashman, Teamsters Port Division Director. "The steamship lines and our ports are overseeing a cutthroat race to the bottom."

### **Independence?**

While longshore, rail and shipping company employees enjoy comfortable, middle class lifestyles, port truckers struggle to meet expenses.

Instead of being able to form a union, port truckers are classified as "independent." But in reality they aren't independent at all; they are essentially full-time employees beholden to a cartel of wealthy shipping companies. They report to the same company each day, and follow the work rules and route directions of the company.

In the past, the Internal Revenue Service and some trucking companies acknowledged that the truckers are employees. But many companies won't budge,

because they are making money by deferring the expenses of having full-time employees onto the truckers.

"It would be as if an office worker had to purchase their own computer, maintain it and then upgrade their software out of their own pocket," Cashman said. "Why should we stand for this just because these people drive trucks?"

Compounding the problem of sustenance level wages has been the spike in diesel fuel prices. In the span of three weeks diesel fuel prices jumped 20 to 60 cents -- over the past year oil prices have increased by 119 percent. The price spike takes a bite out of the truckers' already thin earnings.

"These working people are being left out to dry," said James P. Hoffa, Teamsters General President. "When you examine the exploited workforces in the United States and Canada, you must include port drivers. The Teamsters are committed to fixing that."

[back to the top](#)

---

## Workers Cement Organizing Win

### 500 Georgia Concrete Workers Vote Teamster

Paul Reed figures that Atlanta's Thomas Concrete ran two campaigns during the Teamsters recent organizing drive.

The first campaign was the typically vicious and brutal anti-union campaign complete with mandatory meetings, films and other propaganda.

The second campaign was equally vicious, but by Reed's estimation, Thomas Concrete unknowingly ran the most efficient pro-union campaign he'd ever seen.

"If it wasn't for the awful way they treated us, we'd never had a union," said Reed, who asked that his real name not be used. "It's tradition down here in Georgia. They don't want unions here. But they treated us so bad, that a lot of folks just got fed up with it."

One particularly intolerable policy was the company's 95 percent attendance rule. If an employee dipped below 95 percent attendance on the company's six day work week, they lost their vacation and holidays.

#### A Quick Start

The drivers had been itching for change, but it wasn't until Reed called Local 528 organizer Scott Chandler, did anything happen. And when it did it happened fast.

After the first meeting, organizers had enough union cards to file for an election. It was an exceptional feat considering that Thomas workers are spread throughout 20 plants in the Atlanta area.

The 500 drivers voted for Local 528 representation and were certified in January.

"They tried to make it hard on us, using scare tactics, but there were still a lot of guys involved," said Jerry Falce, a Thomas driver and volunteer organizer. "I felt really good going into the election. As they were tallying the votes and putting them in piles, it looked dead even for a while. But I just knew our pile was going to be bigger."

"The way I look at it is: When you play by the rules and you get out and do a good job, God smiles on you," said Ken Hilbish, Local 528 President. "The key to this drive was being personal. We just kept in touch and kept staying in touch."

"The company doesn't understand that when you're talking union you're talking about people," Reed said. "The Teamsters didn't come in and organize, the people organized themselves."

[back to the top](#)

---

## AFL-CIO Supports Overnite Strikers

### AFL-CIO Commits \$500,000 to Overnite Campaign

The Teamsters unfair labor practice strike against Overnite Transportation Company recently received a boost from the AFL-CIO.

The Teamsters were forced out on strike against Overnite, a subsidiary of Union Pacific, last October. The strike against the largest non-union, less-than-truckload carrier began in Memphis, Tennessee and quickly spread to 140 Overnite terminals in 39 states.

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney presented a \$500,000 organizing grant to Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa at Teamster headquarters. The grant will usher in an aggressive new phase of the Teamster campaign against the truck line. The activities will include:

- Intensifying and expanding strike line activity
- Communications to Overnite customers
- Lobbying of local and national government officials by Overnite employees
- An information campaign aimed at Union Pacific shareholders
- An advertising campaign calling attention to Overnite's history of law breaking

"The contribution from the AFL-CIO not only gives us momentum for an aggressive new phase of the Overnite campaign, it also sends a strong message to Overnite," Hoffa said. "We are committed to this struggle and the Teamsters will be here as long as it takes."

#### **Making Overnite Sing Soprano Teamsters Brush Fame, Warehouse Brushes Overnite Off**

Ernie Soehl and Danny Gallow brushed up against fame last December. Well, sort of. Soehl of Local 560 and Gallow of Local 807 followed an Overnite truck to a Newman Distributors warehouse in Teterboro, New Jersey. It just so happened that a scene from the Sopranos, HBO's hit series about "family" life, was being filmed at the warehouse. And there were plenty of Teamster drivers from Local 817 ready to honor the Overnite picket line.

"One of the movie captains came out and said they'd pull everything out when we set up the line," Soehl said. "We went and talked to the warehouse manager, and he told the truck to take off. There hasn't been an Overnite truck there since."

[back to the top](#)

## **The Teamster Squeeze**

### **Teamsters Win Strike at Florida Juice Plant**

When Sucocitrino Cutrale bought a Minute Maid juice plant in Auburndale, Florida, it tried to put the squeeze on the more than 200 Local 444 Teamsters. Within days of Cutrale's purchase of the plant, management forced all of the employees to reapply for their jobs, eliminated the pension fund, ended sick leave and terminated worker's life insurance. Workers also saw their health insurance costs double and their salaries cut by one-third.

So, workers were forced to put on a squeeze play of their own. In response to Cutrale's failure to address worker concerns and bargain fairly, more than 200 Local 444 members began an unfair labor practice (ULP) strike on January 7.

After six weeks on strike and a battle over safety waged in the national media, workers overwhelmingly approved a three-year agreement that brings them wage increases and job security. It also addresses the numerous safety and health concerns.



#### **At Risk: Safety and Health**

The strike was as much about safety -- worker and consumer -- as it was about wages and benefits.

After profitably operating the plant for 30 years, Coca Cola sold its Minute Maid facility to Cutrale, a Brazilian juice company.

The new owners weren't just bad for Teamster wages, they were bad for worker health and safety. After the takeover, a worker was killed in an electrical accident when bosses told him to do a job he was not properly trained to do. Ammonia leaks forced the evacuation of the plant and sent several Teamster workers to the hospital.

"When Coke turned over responsibility for plant operations to Cutrale, that's when the safety problems started," said Gary Gibson, a 17-year Teamster at the plant.

Workers weren't the only ones at risk. When Coca Cola owned the plant, it shut down the production line once per week for cleaning. Workers reported that Cutrale rarely closed the lines more than once per month. In fact, the plant failed a December inspection by the Florida Department of Agriculture. Inspectors cited 30 violations including: filth from floor buildup on food containers, flaky paint on ceilings over tanks and mold on ceilings and walls.

Less than one month after the strike began, Coca Cola was forced to recall its Hi-C orange juice fruit drinks produced at the plant.

"The recall showed what workers predicted was true. Coke had lost all quality control at the facility," said Joe Morgan, Jr., President of Local 444.

### Keeping Up the Pressure

Teamsters brought the national spotlight to the concerns workers had attempted to address for months. As a result of the strike and the intense public scrutiny on safety and health issues, procedures at the plant will change. Minute Maid will begin an around-the-clock monitoring program of all production facilities at the Auburndale plant. Cutrale is now working to obtain Coca-Cola's Quality System Certification.

"We're encouraged that Coca-Cola/Minute Maid responded to workers' concerns," said Morgan. "We're looking forward to working with the company to ensure product safety."

"I'm glad to see that Coke is taking our warnings seriously," said Eric Meissner, who has worked at the plant for 29 years. "I hope the monitoring and certification process will bring about real change inside the plant."

### Tickets to Go Around

Rather than focus on the law-breaking behavior of the corporate bosses, Auburndale police decided to clamp down on Local 444 strikers and supporters.

Police started ticketing any motorists passing the picket line that honked their horn in support of the strikers walking the picket lines. Apparently, honking is a violation of the town noise ordinance.

The strikers responded by piping up their protests. "We will not be silenced," said Joe Morgan, Jr., Local 444 President.

### A Unity Contract

Local 444's new three-year contract includes:

- A 5.75 percent bonus in the first year
- 2.5 percent wage increases in the second and third year
- Overtime and seniority provisions remain intact
- Provisions to stop subcontracting

[back to the top](#)

---

## Got National Contract?

### Master Dairy Contract Returns Power to the Members

Lonny Wunn wanted to make some changes at work before his April retirement. After spending more than 30 years in the dairy industry, he got his chance with the Master Dairy Agreement.

Wunn, Chief Steward at Anderson and Erickson in Des Moines, Iowa, rallied his fellow Teamsters to pass the Master Dairy Agreement by a more than nine-to-one margin.

"The best thing about it is that we cannot have contract forced on us anymore," Wunn said. "In the past if we voted down a contract, the Joint Area Committee (JAC) could force us to accept it. Now we have a real say in our contracts."

The Master Dairy Contract covers 35 locals. Members work in various positions including half-pint, half-gallon and gallon operators, cooler, production, dock and intake workers and processing and CIP operators.



### A Victory for Members

Among the many victories, the new contract ended management's ability to impose settlements on local unions, subcontracting and automatic employer takeaways.

For Wunn, ending imposed contracts meant that his brothers and sisters would be guaranteed a voice in future contract negotiations.

"Many years ago, our members suffered due to big economic disadvantages between employers from city-to-city," said Scott Gilchrist, a Business Agent for Local 600 in St. Louis. "At that time, the Master Dairy was changed to allow the Joint Councils to impose agreements once the two-sides had reached an impasse to give everyone a level playing field. This clause was outdated and too often used to the members disadvantage."

**Ready to Strike**

According to Mike Klotwyk, Iowa Dairy Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer of Local Union 387 in Des Moines, Iowa, the negotiations went to the wire.

"We were just one phone call away from going on strike over the imposed contract issue," Klotwyk said. "This single issue made the difference in this contract."

Fred Gegare, who led the contract negotiations and serves as International Vice President and Dairy Director, lauded the work of members like Wunn who led the efforts to pass the contract.

"The members made this effort successful," Gegare said. "This contract will continue to protect our workers well into the new millennium."

[back to the top](#)

---

## **500 Hardwood Flooring Workers Vote for Teamsters**

UPS driver Jerry McCauley isn't afraid to work. Last fall, after 11 hours delivering packages around rural West Virginia, McCauley would start his second job: Teamster organizer.

McCauley joined Carl Jordan and other Local 175 volunteer organizers and stood outside the gates of Bruce Hardwoods in Beverly, West Virginia. They distributed literature and offered insights on the benefits of being a Teamster.

Their words were convincing. The workers, who manufacture hardwood flooring from the raw lumber to the finished product, stood up and got behind the organizing campaign.

"They were firing people on a whim. I mean there were guys working hard, busting their butts and then boom, they're fired," McCauley said. "That's not right. They needed a strong union to stand up to that."

"It was time that we had somebody there for us," said Cindy Lanham, a six-year Bruce employee. "The company would just change policies to suit their needs, and they never took us into consideration."

The company treated its employees with disdain. The turnover rate was 21 percent -- seven times the turnover rate of other employers in the community.

"Job security and dignity on the job were the big issues," said Ken Hall, Local 175 President. "One female worker was fired because she had to go to the doctor. She found two lead persons and told them she was leaving. She brought back a doctor's slip. But they fired her. People don't need to be treated like that."

Bill Shomo is the perfect example. Shomo, a former coal miner, was fired because of his support for the Teamsters.

"It goes to show you why you need a union," said Shomo, who won his case before the labor board. "I'm pretty straightforward about what I do. I pushed for the union and they didn't look to kindly on that."

**A Volunteer Effort**

Local 175 marshaled members and retirees in the effort to make Bruce Hardwoods union. Mike Ringer, another UPS driver, answered Local 175's call.

"The union has done a tremendous amount for me, and I really see it as my duty to help out when I can," Ringer said. "What was really good was that the people knew us from the community. That had a good effect. They see us on the street; they're our neighbors."

Retirees joined the current members in the campaign.

"It was an easy thing for me to do," said Paul Smith, a UPS driver who retired in 1997. "The union worked for us, and in turn, we need to give back."

The effort paid off. Workers voted 277 to 222 for Teamster representation.

"I was confident pretty much all the way," Lanham said. "But when we heard the results I was screaming and yelling. We were on Cloud Nine."

**Hard Work To Come**

Local 175 and Bruce are currently negotiating the terms of a first agreement. The volunteers are watching the negotiations just as closely as the new members.

"It's a great feeling to know that everybody worked together," he said. "I can't wait until they settle their first contract."

[back to the top](#)

---

## **Teamster Mayor**

### **Local 633's Bob Baines Elected Mayor of Manchester**

As a teacher, as a principal and as a Teamster, Bob Baines has always looked for ways to have a positive effect on his community. It's the reason that he chose to run for mayor.

"Our city was built on the backs of working people, and that's a fact politicians often overlook," said Baines, a nine-year Teamster. "Here in Manchester, we needed someone who could focus on the needs of working people -- someone who could stand up for working people."

Last November, Baines was elected as the mayor of New Hampshire's largest city. While squeaking out the victory with an 800-vote margin, Baines won nine of the city's 12 wards. The election also was a testament to the importance of motivating new voters. More than 1,300 new voters registered and voted on Election Day.

#### **Union History**

Local 633's Secretary-Treasurer Dave Laughton knew if anyone could unseat a five-term incumbent who had been hostile to labor, it was Baines.

Baines has been a union member since he started working. As a teacher he organized his coworkers into a chapter of the American Federation of Teachers. But as a principal, he didn't have proper representation. He knew the benefits of unionization and wanted to ensure that school principals were getting a fair shake. So, he organized his co-workers and joined Local 633.

"Bob's a hardworking guy who can relate to people in this city," Laughton said. "People were looking for a change, and Bob represented a change for the better."

#### **A Difficult Fight**

The campaign wasn't easy. Baines, a Democrat, was running against an entrenched Republican incumbent in a largely conservative city. But he and Local 633 were determined to beat the odds.

The Local 633 hall became a gathering spot. Baines held rallies, members worked phone trees and the campaign built up steam.

"We identified issues that were important to people and put a grassroots campaign together," Laughton said.

At one point his opponent ran negative ads and tried to paint Baines as a tool of the unions. The tactic backfired.

"I made it clear that I was proud to be a Teamster and I would stand side-by-side with working people," Baines said. "What that means is that I will treat people with respect and fairness. The citizens will have a mayor that will consult and work with them. And people respect that."

Both Laughton and Baines hope that others will use the election as an example of what is possible.

"This is how to make a difference," Laughton said. "A lot of our members have the talent and the ability to serve as public officials. It's our job to provide them with the opportunities and encourage them, because when people get involved and work together they can make a difference."

[back to the top](#)

---

General questions and media requests: [communications@teamster.org](mailto:communications@teamster.org)  
 Teamster Magazine letters and story submissions: [speakingout@teamster.org](mailto:speakingout@teamster.org)

[Home](#) | [About the Teamsters](#) | [President Hoffa](#)  
[Secretary-Treasurer Keegel](#) | [Teamster Store](#)  
[Search](#) | [Join the Teamsters](#)

©1997-2005 The International Brotherhood of Teamsters