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Looking Back on 2007—Moving Forward in 2008

Dispatcher

December 2007

Retrospectiva del año 2007 — Hacia Adelante en 2008

The New Year is almost here, so I’ve been thinking that it’s a good time for us to look back and think about the year we’ve been through, where we fell short, and where we’re heading in 2008.

The ILWU members, 2007 was a challenging year. Nobody knows that better than 300 workers from Local 6 who banded together last year to win low wages at Waste Management in Oakland. They honored Teamster picket lines with the help of their churches of July, and taught us all an important lesson about the power and pain of solidarity. ILWU locals and other unions donated tens of thousands of dollars in financial aid, but that money couldn’t begin to cover the rent, car payments, and other bills those families faced without paychecks. In the recent history of our union, these Local 6 workers have set a new standard for courage and solidarity.

Clerical workers at the ports of LA and Long Beach also won their hard-fought battles for better pay and benefits, as did Northern California warehouse workers who settled their master contracts last year. The providers at Powell’s Books did a great job negotiating their latest contract, along with fellow warehouse workers at Cooperative, Sims Metals, Crescent Wharf and Warehousing, and dozens of other workplaces.

The October Dispatcher gave us a sober look at the challenges facing ILWU warehouse workers who have struggled to maintain their pay and benefits as shops close and union density drops. I’m glad that we’re able to say that Union President Willie Adams took leadership in 2007 to begin holding regular meetings with warehouse locals. Those meetings—along with hard work by our organizing staff and ILWU volunteer organizers—are moving us in the right direction.

One of the greatest challenges I saw in 2007 was how to help California workers at Blue Diamond Growers in Sacramento and the Rite Aid warehouse in San Mateo, and millions more like them, simply want to join a union, but the laws and court decisions are stacked against rank-and-file union employers. We have to change that system because we’ll all benefit from more successful organizing in the ILWU. The relatively small number of us who have good union jobs today are badly outnumbered; only seven percent of private sector workers have a union. That’s why organizing has to be a priority—not just to help other workers—but to protect our own jobs as well.

E lecting a new President in 2008 who can execute the “Employee Free Choice Act” could make a big difference by establishing stronger protections for workers who want to join unions. In the meantime, we’ll keep helping the workers at Blue Diamond, Rite Aid, and wherever workers stand up for their rights and need our support.

ILWU members also need help to learn how to enforce our existing contracts and stand up for our rights on the job. That’s why I was pleased that we held two large training sessions this past year: the Grievance and Arbitration Procedures workshop (GAP) for longshore workers that was sponsored by the Coast Community and the Leadership Education and Development Institute (LEAD), sponsored by the International Union. These projects helped train hundreds of rank-and-file members, providing skills that will help them lead our union in the future.

For most of us who work in longshore, this has been a pretty good year. The work has been steady, union membership is growing, and we’ve got the-best-paying blue collar jobs in America, thanks to the sacrifices of those who came before us.

The pay is good, but our work continues to be incredibly dangerous. Many workers suffered serious injuries last year and four died for the conditions for those who remain, and for future generations.

Our next chance to continue that great legacy will come in 2008, when we’ll bargain for new longshore contracts in the U.S. and Canada. Longshore workers in Canada have been negotiating their new contract through most of 2007, and they’ve worked hard against the employers, the courts, and the government. The ILWU stands ready to help our Canadian brothers and sisters with all the solidarity and support that they need.

Bargaining our new longshore contract will involve many issues, including protecting our health and retirement benefits, better on-the-job safety, dealing with new technology, and pushing for cleaner air on the docks and in our communities.

The final list of priorities for the 2008 longshore contract won’t be finalized until the Coast Caucus completes their work in early February. But our basic strategy is clear: keep everyone informed and keep building support for ILWU locals and local community groups. We also have support and solidarity from other unions across the country and the world, including Mexico, Central America, Latin America, Europe, and Asia. Dockworkers from these other countries, including Mexico, face many of the same tough employers that we face.

Workers in other countries sometimes pay with their lives for organizing a union, just like ILWU members did in 1954—which is why we responded so quickly to support the dockworkers in Guatemala after their union leader, Pedro Zamora, was brutally murdered in January 2007.

The big shippers, tank operators, and investors in our industry have no loyalty to any country—their goal is to move freight cheaply and make money in the process—even if it means doing business where wages are low and safety is ignored.

An important challenge in 2008 will be to keep ahead of this curve and help our rest workers keeping better control over dock workers in any country. That’s why we’ll keep working with our friends at SIU, UNITE HERE, UNITE HERE, and other unions in order to have leverage on employers wherever they operate around the world.

All this means we’re going into 2008 with a number of important priorities, including:

• Electing a new President of the United States and members of Congress who work with people and promote peace in the world.

• Winning good longshore contracts in the United States and Canada. To win, we’ll need to build public support, keep everyone informed and involved, and prepare for action if that’s what it takes to get a fair contract.

• Helping more workers join unions, both at home and abroad, because all of us benefit when union members are stronger.

• Training more of our rank-and-file members and providing them with the skills they need to lead our union now and in the future.

• Putting these priorities into practice won’t happen without the dedication and support from rank-and-file members like you. I look forward to working with you in 2008 and building a stronger union together.

“An injury to one is an injury to all.”
ILWU Safety Committee and feds investigate longshoreman’s death

By John Showalter

ILWU Safety Committee Chairman John Castanho traveled to Savannah, Georgia on Oct. 5 to learn more about the vessel where Local 10 longshoreman Reginald Ross died of injuries while loading contain-er at the Port of Oakland on Sept. 24.

The accident remains under investiga-tion by the Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the United States Coast Guard (USCG). Castanho reported that the ship, named Stut-tgart Express left the Port of Oakland just seven hours after Ross was fatally injured aboard the ship. Despite many inquiries from the ILWU, it remains unclear why the vessel was allowed to leave port so soon after a previous fatal accident, and whether proper reporting and authori-zation procedures were followed by the ship and officials involved.

Federal regulations require OSHA to be notified when shipboard accidents involving longshore work-ers involve more than basic first aid.

Letters to The Dispatcher

THANK YOU FROM THE ROSS FAMILY

It was wonderful to see how in times of great mourning, it can bring out the best in people. The Longshoremen are a special breed of people—they look out for their own. I was astonished at all the love, sup-port and guidance given to our family upon the death of my brother, Reggie Ross, on September 24, 2007.

In particular, I would like to thank Deborah McLeod, Aisha Wright, Craig Merrilees, Parker Dailey, Willie Adams, John Showalter, many people who made monetary contribu-tions, and, of course, all of the Bay Area local union as well as the many speakers at Reggie’s memorial service who spoke and sang so eloquently, with heartfelt emotions. I was par-ticularly glad that Reggie’s daughters were able to see this display of love and respect for their father. There are so many more people that I would personally like to thank, but unfortu-nately I am unable to do so.

On behalf of the entire Ross fam-ily—thank you! May God bless each one of you and your entire families. I will pray that many thought it was acceptable. The wealth is not only in our health, and other institutions. But I also want our schools and health programs have been underfunded for a long time, and that the rich and corporate aren’t paying their fair share of taxes. That’s why I don’t see hungry immigrant workers as the enemy, and hope that all of us in the ILWU will do everything we can as workers as potential allies in our fight for justice, instead of a threat to our own people. With this in mind, I hope we can agree on some solutions.

—Ray Ortiz, Jr.

Cost Committee Member

Dear Editor,

After reading the September Dispatcher, I thought you might like to see a picture of the glass sign for Local 13 when I was still a casual. It was to be hung in the Memorial Hall and file to the piece. The piece is approximately 18x24 inches and is made with reversed chipped glass.

The blue field inside the ring and alabone represent the oceans and interways of the world. The bold strokes of ILWU create an image of self-confidence, capacity for work, and seriousness. The silver ring around the field symbolize never ending solidarity. The colors red, white, and blue evoke patriotism for our sovereign nation, lest we lose our right to freedom as we know it. Red is for the blood shed by our union fathers. The blue is for valor and our strength to fight for what is right and do what is right when the fight is won. The greens including 22k gold, 12k white gold, palladium and silver, collectively represent longevity and wealth. The wealth is not only in the wages but primarily in the benefits we receive while we work, but most importantly when we retire.

—L.E. Yoder

Local 13

Dear Editor,

Today’s illegal immigrants come to the U.S. from any country, not just Mexico. They join unions when they can and are leading organiz-ing drives when they get the chance. Harry Bridges always said that work-er unity has to be our top priority, because the bosses are always dividing us. That’s why we have to make sure that worker unity is always front and center in our approach to issues like immigration.

Like Richard Scharf and Seymour Weinberg, I’m concerned about the stress that illegal immigra-tion is causing on our schools, public health, and other institutions. But I also want our schools and health programs have been underfunded for a long time, and that the rich and corporations aren’t paying their fair share of taxes. That’s why I don’t see hungry immigrant workers as the enemy, and hope that all of us in the ILWU will do everything we can as workers as potential allies in our fight for justice, instead of a threat to our own people. With this in mind, I hope we can agree on some solutions.

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Dear Editor,

Dick Scharf is right about the need of the ILWU. The ILWU is the only labor anti-NAFTA, NAFTA was dreamed up by conservative think tanks in the late 1970s, all of whom were promoting the virtues of deregulated privatization. NAFTA in the past 12 years, by loosen-ing drives when they get the chance. Harry Bridges always said that work-er unity has to be our top priority, because the bosses are always dividing us. That’s why we have to make sure that worker unity is always front and center in our approach to issues like immigration.

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Dear Editor,

I read with great interest the response by high schoolers to the “Eye of the Storm” video that appeared in last month’s Dispatcher. Programs like this are a much needed educa-tion young people about the labor movement and I would like to see more of this kind of effort.

—Jack Berst

Dear Editor,

While in Savannah, Castanho also met with Safety Director Sam Stout of the International Longshoremen’s Association Local 1414, and with ILWU Safety Director and Castanho spoke with several union officials. Pictured (l-to-r) are Local 94 Bridges cup Tournament Dispatcher

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—L.E. Yoder
In front of the Anaheim Convention Center, Angel Warner from the Rite Aid Organizing Committee and more than a dozen friends leafleted attendees at the International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans’ 53rd annual conference.

The Nov. 2 – 7 event drew about 5,000 people. Most of them worked with union health care and pension trusts. Rite Aid set up in the exhibitors’ hall at the conference to market its pharmacy benefits management (PBM) company, Rite Aid Health Solutions. The ILWU, in coalition with 1198SEIU and UFCW wanted conference-goers to get the big picture on Rite Aid. While the company was busy funneling union money to its PBM, it was also busting unions on both coasts. Financial analysts are questioning its future, and the company still faces consumer fraud charges.

Rite Aid took over more than 1,800 Brooks and Eckerd stores last summer. Under Rite Aid’s contracts with SEIU and UFCW, workers in the new stores were supposed to be able to join the union with a simple showing of majority support. But Rite Aid turned its back on those agreements and has been actively fighting the union. It has kept union reps out of the stores, and threatened and intimidated workers—just as the company has done in their Lancaster, CA distribution center where workers are trying to join ILWU warehouse Local 26.

Staff and activists from the three unions leafleted conference-goers, held a reception, and passed out hundreds of tote bags and water bottles bearing the slogan, “Trust Rite Aid? Think twice!”—Marcy Rein

“Feed the Community” upholds tradition of giving

Hundreds of ILWU volunteers handed out 80-pound baskets of food to more than 1,500 needy Los Angeles Harbor Area families as part of the union’s annual Season of Giving. In all, the union collected more than $56,000 in donations for food that was provided to needy families on Nov. 20 at the Local 13 Memorial Hall.

“Of all the checks I write as a union officer, this is the one I most enjoy signing,” said Chris Villamontes, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 13. ILWU Local 13 longshore, Local 63 marine clerks, and Local 94 foremen provided most of the donations and management for the event. The ILWU Southern California Pensioners Group and ILWU Federated Auxiliary Number 8 also contributed funds and provided energy for the union-run occasion.

This marks the 10th year that ILWU workers, volunteers, and locals in southern California have reached into their pockets to help feed the needy who live near the nation’s busiest ports.

Community leaders joined ILWU officials to kick-off the event with a morning press conference. Supporters included newly-elected Congresswoman Laura Richardson (D-Long Beach), State Senator Jenny Osepeuta (D-Laguna Beach) and Assemblywoman Betty Karnette (D-Los Angeles). Other guests who attended the food giveaway included Long Beach Vice Mayor Bonnie Lowenthal, Los Angeles City Councilwoman Janice Hahn, Long Beach City Councilwoman Tonya Reyes Uranga and representatives from the Los Angeles Port Police, LAPD, and LA County Sheriff’s station in Carson.

“I always join the annual food basket giveaway, “said Councilmember Hahn. “They’re committed to feeding the hungry and bringing good jobs to the community so hard-working men and women can feed themselves,” she explained.

Also on hand were Shirley Atencio, of the Wilmington Coordinating Council, which honored the ILWU last year as “Non-Profit of the Year” for the food and toy donation program; Connie Calderon, of the Wilmington Teen Center; and Trini Harris, of Long Beach Head Start.

The food giveaway is one of several charity events organized by the ILWU during the holiday season to help the local community. Last month, ILWU locals 13, 63, and 94 helped raise nearly $150,000 to support the Boys & Girls Club of the Los Angeles Harbor. The “season of giving” will end with a December “toy party” where union volunteers will welcome hundreds of needy kids who get to choose their own favorite toy from among thousands purchased by the union.

A gift from the Boys and Girls Club

Local 13 President Mike Mitre (2nd from right), Local 63 President Joe Gasperov and Local 94 Secretary-Treasurer Frank North (left) displaying framed artwork presented to the hall for their locals’ sponsorship of the 3rd annual fundraiser for the ILWU/PMA Boys and Girls Club of LA Harbor. The event generated more than $155,000 in donations from ILWU Locals, the Southern California District Council, the Southern California Pensioners Group, and from the PMA and shippers.

TALK TO AN ILWU ORGANIZER!

Puget Sound—Jon Brier 206-448-1870 (office)
Columbia River—Mary Winzig 503-223-6057 (office)
Northern California—Agustin Ramirez 916-606-4681 (cell)
or Carey Dall 510-846-5368 (cell)
Southern California—Rodolfo Gutierrez 951-757-7424 (cell)
or Carlos Cordon 213-618-1765 (cell)

December 2007

Halloween visitors to a See’s Candies store in the Seattle area included a large green goblin (ILWU longshore Local 19’s Keith Lowe) and friend (ILWU marine clerks’ Local 52 BA Andrea Stuller) who warned customers that Blue Diamond almonds were lurking inside those delicious confections. Volunteers up and down the Coast visited See’s stores around Halloween. They asked the candy company to use its influence as a big Blue Diamond customer and encourage the almond company to agree to a free and fair union election procedure for the workers at its Sacramento plant.

In Portland, “Rosie the Riveter” paid See’s a visit, warning customers that the almonds in their candy came from working women who can’t get respect from those heartless, anti-union Blue Diamond executives in Sacramento. In downtown San Francisco, the Almond Avenger and Sparkles the Clown joined the other volunteers who talked to hundreds of See’s customers, many of whom were supportive.
ILWU at TransAfrica celebration

ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams attended the 30th anniversary celebration for the TransAfrica Forum in Washington, D.C. Nov. 7. The ILWU International and the Coast Committee helped sponsor the event, along with other unions and organizations. TransAfrica promotes progressive social change in Africa by working with experts, activists and groups in the U.S. Adams serves on its Board of directors. (photos from left:) Willie Adams with actress Ruby Dee Davis, who received the Pan African Lifetime Achievement Award. Ms. Dee has appeared in countless screen, television, and stage productions, including the new film “American Gangster,” which is gaining buzz for a possible Oscar nomination. Ms. Dee has dedicated her life to the arts, the labor movement, and the fight for social justice, as did her late husband Ossie Davis. (center photo) Adams presented the “socially responsible Journalism Award” to Amy Goodman, host of the “Democracy Now!” program that airs each weekday on more than 500 public stations nationwide and has won acclaim for outstanding investigative journalism and aggressive reporting. (right photo) Actor Danny Glover, who chairs the TransAfrica Board of Directors, has also made social change work an important part of his life and acting career. Glover is an honorary member of ILWU Local 10 and narrated the union’s recent “Eye of the Storm” documentary.

Sacto backs Blue Diamond workers

Blue Diamond Organizing Committee members (front row, left to right) Carlos Saraiva, Eliaser Acosta and Ben Monarque join the crowd at the Nov. 18 community forum in Sacramento, applauding the results of the event. The three men, along with their co-workers Alma Orozo, Gloria Hessell and Larry Newsome, described the impact of Blue Diamond’s anti-union campaign to a panel of Sacramento civic leaders. After listening to an hour of testimony, the eight-member panel recommended a fair and timely union election at the plant under specific rules.

“Something very exciting happened today,” said Rev. Dr. David Thompson, from the Westminster Presbyterian Church, where the forum took place. “As a community, we’re getting more and more serious about seeing a fair resolution to the labor situation at Blue Diamond.”

Dr. Thompson sat on the panel at the forum, along with State Sen. Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento), Sacramento City Council member Steve Cohn, Joan B. Lee of the Gray Panthers, Chris Jones of ACORN, Gary Passmore from the Congress of California Seniors, Professor Paul Burke from Sacramento State University, and Guambry Santillan from Sacramento City College MEChA.

“We believe the labor laws in this country need a thorough overhaul,” Sen. Steinberg said. “But for here and now, we recommend that an election be held with additional safeguards for fairness.” The panel suggested that the vote be held in a neutral location away from the plant, such as a school or church; that the union and the management have equal access to talk to workers who will vote; that both sides will agree not to harass or intimidate voters; that impartial persons would oversee the vote itself, and that the parties would agree to community oversight of the whole election process. Panel members agreed to send a letter to Blue Diamond with these recommendations, and report back to the community on the company’s response.

Never forget

ILWU Southern California Pensioners Group Vice President Ray Patricio (left) joins Joe Stahl, one of the oldest West Coast longshoreman, at the group’s annual dinner and dance held Oct. 28 at the Local 13 Memorial Hall.

The SCPG honored Stahl, who turned 100 on Oct. 15, and two other pensioners who are both 90: Miguel Salcido and Ray Radcliffe. All received embroidered ILWU jackets and caps from their fellow Pensioners.

In May 1934, Stahl spent the first six days of the longshore strike working on the wrong side of the picket line. But on the seventh day he apologized, joined the strikers, and donated his pay to the union. Stahl spent the summer chasing scabs off the docks. At one point, he confronted a group of replacement workers in 26 cars who had rallied inside one of San Pedro’s toughest bars, then threatened to cross picket lines and break the strike. Stahl convinced all of them to abandon their plans and turn around.
El año 2007 hasta el 2008 continua desde la página 2

Con los líderes de todos los locales de Norteamérica. Cada reunión—junto con el arduo trabajo de nuestro personal de organización y los organizadores voluntarios de ILWU—nos están llevando en la dirección correcta.

Unos de los mayores retos que presentó fue en 2007, consistía en ayudar a los trabajadores del "Blue Diamond Growers" en Sacramento y a los trabajadores de "Rite Aid Warehouse" en Lancaster. Estos trabajadores, y millones como ellos, simplemente quieren afiliarse a una, pero las leyes y los tribunales han sido "arreglados" para favorecer a patrones contra unión. Tenemos que cambiar ese sistema porque la mayoría de nosotros nos beneficiaríamos si más trabajadores puedan afiliarse a uniones, incluyendo a la ILWU. El número relativamente pequeño de trabajadores que tenemos buenos trabajos de unión está sobreexplotado; solamente el 7% de los trabajadores del sector privado tienen unión. Es por eso que el organizar tiene que ser una prioridad—no solamente para los trabajadores de las uniones—pero también para proteger nuestros propios trabajos.

Seguir el consejo del Presidente en 2008 quien apoyó la Ley de Opción Libre de los Empleados (Employee Free Choice Act) podría hacer una gran diferencia al establecer protecciones a los trabajadores que desean unirse a uniones. Aunque no haya una "unión" para favorecer a patrones contra unión, tenemos que cambiar ese sistema porque la mayoría de nosotros nos beneficiaríamos si más trabajadores puedan afiliarse a uniones, incluyendo a la ILWU. El número relativamente pequeño de trabajadores que tienen buenos trabajos de unión está sobreexplotado; solamente el 7% de los trabajadores del sector privado tienen unión. Es por eso que el organizar tiene que ser una prioridad—no solamente para los trabajadores de las uniones—pero también para proteger nuestros propios trabajos.

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Local 23 longshoreman dies on Seattle docks

DO DEFFIBRILLATORS REALLY SAVE LIVES?

According to the medical examiner, Dan Miller’s death could not have been prevented by the use of an Automatic Electric Defibrillator (AED). But some defibrillators can help save lives.

Longshoreman Tom Clowers suffered a cardiac arrest on the same SSA terminal in Seattle less than two weeks after Daniel Miller had the heart attack.

Clowers had been on longshoreman training and cardiac pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training classes for co-workers. Clowers was filming a vanessa raspberry and electric shocks from an AED unit administered by manager John Arnold.

Arnold said it was a long time that installing AEDs on the docks could save lives, says to ILWU Coast Safety Committee Chairman John Castano. The union asked the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to require employers to install the devices, but the agency declined to make installation of AEDs mandatory—opting instead to merely recommend their use on docks and shipyards.

Employers agreed to place AED’s in their grain elevators in Washington and Oregon, as part of the In-House Grain Agreement of 2004.

Some employers have voluntarily installed a limited number of AEDs, including SSA that has installed four units on their docks in Seattle—two in the center towers and two at the outtake.

The PWU vigorously opposed the ILWU’s effort to make companies install AED’s during the 2002 negotiations. “The companies compared the cost of the new machines with the number of lives that might be saved—and told us it was too expensive to save just a few lives,” said Coast Safety Chairman John Castano. “It was cold-blooded, but it illustrated how much manage- ment values a human life versus their bottom line.” Castano says the Coast Safety Committee will keep pushing to install AED’s on all waterfront terminals and worksites.

News and Notes cont’d from p. 6 contract negotiations and how important all the political races will be in 2006, locally and nationally. “We thanked the members for what they have given to the Political Action Committee and we asked for a little more,” Adams said. “We want to raise a million dollars, and to send a large number of people out to campaign around the country to turn the tide for working people.”

WASHINGTON

Local 23’s aviation security workers at SeaTac International Airport ratified a new three-year contract by a close margin. The deal maintains existing benefits and provides wage increases. Workers will receive a 4.2 percent raise from Feb. 7, plus retro pay back to August that ranged from two to five percent, depending on the classification. They will receive another raise in February 2008 based on the Consumer Price Index with a minimum of two and maximum of six percent. The contract also sched- ules CPI raises for two additional years.

The PWU vigorously opposed the ILWU’s effort to make companies install AED’s during the 2002 negotiations. “The companies compared the cost of the new machines with the number of lives that might be saved—and told us it was too expensive to save just a few lives,” said Coast Safety Chairman John Castano. “It was cold-blooded, but it illustrated how much manage- ment values a human life versus their bottom line.” Castano says the Coast Safety Committee will keep pushing to install AED’s on all waterfront terminals and worksites.

DO DEFFIBRILLATORS REALLY SAVE LIVES?

According to the medical examiner, Dan Miller’s death could not have been prevented by the use of an Automatic Electric Defibrillator (AED). But some defibrillators can help save lives.

Longshoreman Tom Clowers suffered a cardiac arrest on the same SSA terminal in Seattle less than two weeks after Daniel Miller had the heart attack. Clowers had been on longshoreman training and cardiac pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training classes for co-workers. Clowers was filming a Vanessa raspberry and electric shocks from an AED unit administered by manager John Arnold.

Arnold said it was a long time that installing AEDs on the docks could save lives, says to ILWU Coast Safety Committee Chairman John Castano. The union asked the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to require employers to install the devices, but the agency declined to make installation of AEDs mandatory—opting instead to merely recommend their use on docks and shipyards.

Employers agreed to place AED’s in their grain elevators in Washington and Oregon, as part of the In-House Grain Agreement of 2004.

Some employers have voluntarily installed a limited number of AEDs, including SSA that has installed four units on their docks in Seattle—two in the center towers and two at the outtake.

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Herald Ugles said, "We're glad that the Port of Seattle has secured a 42-mile rail corridor that ensures rail transport from Woodinville to Snohomish. The deal reached in early November was sealed with a memorandum of understanding between King County and the Burlington Northern Railway. The agreement also allows the port to lease the southern portion of the corridor to King County for hiking trails. The port is on the site of the former land where the Fisher Flour Mill is sited, near Terminal 10. "This will unroll a very important rail corridor," Local 19 President Herald Ugles said. "We're glad that the new port CEO Tay Yoshitani is protecting the core interest of the port, and that is shipping."

The union is supporting other land use issues before the Seattle City Council to protect industrial lands. The union brought 50 longshore workers and families to a recent City Council meeting, Ugles said.

ILWU Canadian workers have protested the imposition of unreasonable security screening measures, and the dispute could go to Canada's Supreme Court and Parliament in Ottawa. The Canadian government wants to require transport workers to undergo an extensive investigation of their past, including past criminal convictions with no relation to security.

The Transport Ministry would require workers to answer many highly personal, invasive questions. Hearsay testimony could be used to deny a worker an identification card, and without it, he or she could not work on the docks. If the ministry even has "reasonable grounds to suspect" a worker might pose a threat, that person can be denied an ID card and thus denied work. The union took it to arbitration, claiming screening was a condition imposed outside the collective bargaining process. The arbitrator ruled Oct. 29 that it was a federal matter, and he didn't have jurisdiction. The union moved the issue to the Transport Ministry for hearings. Hearings in Parliament might follow, and ILWU Canada believes there are fundamental constitutional issues that Canada's Supreme Court might need to decide.

Local 505 welcomed the first container vessel to the new Fairview Container Terminal in Prince Rupert on Oct. 31, 2007, according to Secretary-Treasurer Tom MacDonald. A large group of dignitaries from the global shipping industry was also on hand to greet the ship, the Cosco Antwerp. Representatives from China and Maher Terminals, the operator, watched as ILWU members moved the first containers from the vessel to rail, where they travelled across Canada, then south to Chicago. Prince Rupert is expected to be the quickest ship-to-rail route from the Far East to the Midwestern United States. Cosco is the first shipping line to announce service to Prince Rupert with weekly visits. A second line is expected by January.

Local 505 has increased its work force by a large amount. Last August, Local 505 and the employer, British Columbia Maritime Employers Association, recruited, tested, and signed up another 200 individuals, the largest hiring drive in the history of the local.

"After more than a decade of decline in hours worked, the tide has finally turned for the longshore workers in Prince Rupert," MacDonald said. "Union members are once again working full time jobs, with preferred casuals getting three to five days, and it’s only going to get better."