



# SYSTEM COUNCIL NO. 6

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS

**Tom Owens**  
**General Chairman**

**Shannon Spotswood**  
**Vice Chairman**

**Mike Stacks**  
**Secretary-Treasurer**

General Chairman's Report – September 2023

Brothers and Sisters:

NS Shift Swap Pilot Program – In a joint effort with the IAM, we are testing a pilot program involving our members having the flexibility to voluntarily, temporarily swap a shift. This should prove extremely helpful around vacations as well as around other special life events. This will be a 60 day trial program at one location (to be determined).

The Alabama State Docks – Meeting was held September 20th. No progress, but both parties are willing to continue discussions.

Public Law Board 5332 – Twelve cases against Norfolk Southern were held at the IBEW headquarters in Washington, D.C. We are awaiting the decisions of arbitrator Mike Phillips.

CSX Flex Rules – Discussions have resumed with the Carrier regarding the following rules: shift start time, 4 ten hour days, voluntary relief work, overtime rotation language, lead electrician, and simple task clarification.

NS Temporary Transfers – The Carrier has been offering temporary transfers to furloughed members to allow them to work at nearby locations. This allows the member to retain the right of recall at their home point while working at the temporary point. However, an employee who takes a transfer does not have the right to transfer to a second location, nor does a furloughed member have the voluntary right to return to furlough status.

NS Safety Consultant – SUMMARY OF KEY OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

The following summarizes the “more significant” areas identified and ANS’s recommended actions:

- **Recommendation: Improve learning and dissemination of learning from injury and accident events to reduce the potential for recurrence.** An improved process is needed to consistently accomplish fact-finding and causal analysis for events to achieve alignment of facts, issues, causes, and corrective actions. To enhance learning from events, ANS recommends an improved approach for sharing key event lessons with managers and supervisors to enable them to effectively pass this information face-to-face to craft railroaders.
- **Recommendation: Increase ownership of safety at all levels.** ANS proposes that NS develop and implement a program, like an OSHA Voluntary Protection Program in which management, workers, and labor unions work cooperatively and proactively to prevent fatalities, injuries, and illnesses through a system focused on: hazard prevention and control, worksite analysis, training, management commitment, and worker involvement.

Additionally, NS should develop and implement an effective performance management/incentive program, covering all levels, to appropriately emphasize expectations concerning safety and teaming across operational departments, in addition to production/performance objectives.

- **Recommendation: Resolve staffing shortages, hiring issues, worker support, and worker quality of life issues.** NS should continue hiring to resolve critical staffing shortages and should streamline and enhance aspects of the hiring process and worker support to address current issues surrounding work schedules.
- **Recommendation: Improve supervisor workload and stress issues.** ANS suggests that, in addition to hiring more supervisors, additional effort should be made to limit supervisors' administrative workload and to ensure critical worker-supervisor relationships are clearly identified for all workers. Further, supervisors should ensure schedule pressure is not passed to craft railroaders, such that they can remain focused on completing their work safely and correctly.
- **Recommendation: Shift/balance accountability focus from primarily punishment/discipline to include more teaching/coaching.** ANS recommends that NS develop and implement a revised approach for how supervisors/managers oversee work, to ensure that supervisors/managers provide both positive and negative feedback to workers, start with coaching/teaching rather than punishment for minor deficiencies, and include appropriate accountability for serious and repeat deficiencies.
- **Recommendation: Improve training and leadership development.** ANS proposes that NS develop and implement an effective ongoing training program for managers/ supervisors that includes training on expectations and "what right looks like." ANS also recommends establishing an effective continuing training program for craft railroaders to consistently refresh workers' understanding of expected standards and behaviors, periodically re-sensitize workers to key safety concerns, and provide effective training on new technologies, equipment, and processes.
- **Recommendation: Improve the response process for unexpected conditions (including wayside detector activations).** NS should develop and implement a consistent process for responding to material problems, operational emergencies/ situations, and wayside detector activations to achieve effective risk evaluation and the desired level of coordination, communication, and command & control of responses.
- **Recommendation: Improve teaming across operational departments.** NS should add an initiative to implement periodic reviews at each major rail yard conducted by a team with representatives from each operational department. NS should also consider establishing the Terminal Superintendent as the overall leader at each rail yard, with responsibility to balance all operational departments' objectives to produce optimized performance for the yard.
- **Recommendation: Improve consistency of field operations/work safety, oversight, and feedback to headquarters.** ANS recommends that NS establish a cadre of management personnel with field experience serving as dedicated independent safety representatives to oversee field operations/work and provide direct feedback on the safety and performance of that work to headquarters and field leaders.
- **Recommendation: Improve facility and equipment material condition.** ANS observed the full spectrum of facility material conditions, from outstanding to sub-standard. NS should prioritize restoring facilities with sub-

standard material conditions. Measures should be implemented to optimize the facilities and equipment maintenance and upkeep process.

- **Recommendation: Rebuild relationships to restore worker trust, respect, and pride.** ANS proposes that NS management and union leadership work together to restore workforce trust, respect, and pride. It is critically important to the future of NS that employees be supported and nurtured through learning and development, culture improvements, and workplace safety initiatives with the goal of improving experience and retention.
- **Establish an effective assessment program.** ANS recommends that NS establish a formal assessment program, including operational department self-assessments. Assessments should be planned and scheduled by management to assess programs, systems, and work processes in their operational areas. Assessments provide management with timely, objective feedback on the safety, quality, and work performance of their operational areas enabling proactive correction of identified weaknesses.
- **Develop approaches to address safety issues created or contributed to by workers seniority rights.** ANS recommends that NS work with labor unions to identify whether approaches for spreading the experience and talent of senior craft personnel across shifts can be identified in a manner that is acceptable to craft railroaders with high levels of seniority to improve safety and mentoring of newer employees.
- **Re-evaluate the number and organization of field regions and divisions.** ANS recommends NS evaluate the physical area covered by each region and division, the associated operations within those areas, and the magnitude and complexity of the area's infrastructure, to improve supervisor/manager span of control and ability to respond effectively to issues in their territory.
- **Improve locomotive/train car material condition/material history usage.** ANS recommends that NS pursue opportunities to improve the information input into Locomotive Maintenance Information System ("LMIS") and Enterprise Assessment Management ("EAM") and use of this information to support tracking and timely correction of locomotive and car deficiencies, as well as the opportunity to use LMIS to forecast seasonal locomotive work.
- **Railroad police force safety related concerns.** NS should evaluate staffing and equipment within its railroad police force and determine whether action is required.
- **Update metrics to balance focus on appropriate operational, maintenance, and safety objectives.** ANS recommends that NS consider expanding its operational and accident and injury performance metrics to drive safety culture, safety performance, and operational excellence objectives.
- **Clearly identify applicability of specific OSHA regulations.** ANS recommends that NS improve recognition of activities that fall outside the scope of the FRA's safety regulations but within the jurisdiction of OSHA. The evaluation report is due to be released soon. The initial report was delayed awaiting a FRA evaluation which will be included as part of the report.

Active Claims: Ten new NS cases were opened this month. Three new CSXT cases were opened this month. In addition to normal calls and information requests, the Council is now currently handling 70 active cases. Any issue that involves disciplines/claims advanced to the Council, letter responses, medical delay documentation, RRB benefit issues, health insurance issues, etc., generate a case file with the Council.

Travel: Washington, DC – PLB 5332; Atlanta, GA – Norfolk Southern training class, CSX Redi Center training class, NS Labor Relations meeting

In Your Service,

Tom Owens  
General Chairman



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***P. O. Box 787 • Floyd, VA 24091 • Office 540-494-7366 • Fax 540-301-2798 • [ibewsc6.org](http://ibewsc6.org)***

### **Vice Chairman Report September 2023**

#### **Travel:**

- 1) Attended Local 1865 meeting in Elkhart, IN.
- 2) Traveled to Decatur, IL for a shop walk and meeting with Local 513.

#### **Meetings:**

- 1) Attended shift swap meeting with Labor Relations and the IAM. (Teams)
- 2) Attended PLB 5332 held in Washington, D.C. via Teams.
- 3) Attend weekly SC #6 meeting. (Teams)

#### **Claims, Appeals and Submissions:**

- 1) Submitted appeals for Local(s) 813, 1142 and 2269. (3 Cases)
- 2) Drafted replacement Submission for Case 220.
- 3) Drafted claims for Local(s) 311 and 513. (2 Cases)

#### **Member Issues:**

Assisted Local 813 with dues deduction issue.

Assisted Local 2172 with arrears member issues. (Burchett)

Assisted Local 2273 with ADA issue. (Bdoli)

Assisted Local 813 member with Holiday qualification issue.

Assisted Local 311 Comm member with Agreement language. (PTC Letters)

Assisted Local 1865 Comm member with vehicle issue. (Kapala)

**Vacation:** September 8, September 18-September 22



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# **Assistant General Chairman Report September 2023**

## **Meetings:**

- 1) Traveled to Waycross for shop walk and met with local management.
- 2) Traveled to Jacksonville Service Center for shop walk.
- 3) Traveled to LU 1984 monthly meeting in Waycross.
- 4) Attended Teams meeting with CSX LR Mike Skipper and IBEW RRD Al Russo.
- 5) Attended weekly Teams meeting with SC6 staff.

## **Claims, Appeals and Submissions:**

- 1) Assisted Local 774 with preparations for investigation on 10-5-23 in Evansville IN for member with 2<sup>nd</sup> Rule G. (Merker)
- 2) Assisted Local 311(1), 770 (5) and 1984 (2) with initial claims. 311's claim was for Subcontracting work before serving advance notice. 770's claims were for overtime violations and managers doing craft work. 1984's claims were for overtime violations.

Assisted Local(s) 311 and 2149 with concerns about Subcontracting notices. Processing 1 appeal for Subcontracting out GPS equipment on CSX fleet trucks.

## **Member Issues:**

Assisted members of Local(s) 186, 311, 312, 747, 770, 774, 784, 862, 870, 1047, 1984 and 2149 with Contract, LTI, RRB, Sick Days, pay rate, changing of scheduling questions, ETC.

Assisted Adam Slye SC6 with new hire information and member placement.

Assisted Local's 747 and 770 with Jurisdictional Dispute on CSX Pan Am properties.

Discussed claim opportunities with Local(s) 311, 312, 770, 784, 1984 Local Chairman.

Discussed Rule disputes with Local(s) 186, 770, 862, 870, 1047, 1923 and 1984 members.