



Automotive, Industrial and Allied Workers

# Local 495 **Flash!**

[www.teamsters495.org](http://www.teamsters495.org)

Robert M. Lennox, Secretary-Treasurer

Spring 2010



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# Local Wins Arbitration Victory: Job and Back Pay for Long-time Member

**W**hen 23-year Ryder mechanic and Local 495 Shop Steward Mark Matelko was suddenly fired last June after a stellar work record, the union knew the termination was baseless.

“The company erred in their judgment. What they did was unjustified and we’re fortunate that the arbitrator agreed,” Local 495 Business Agent George Park said. “We thought we would prevail all along, and we did.”

In February, an arbitrator ruled that there wasn’t a sufficient case to fire Matelko, and ordered that the company make him whole. After eight months off the job, Matelko returned to work at the Ryder Rancho Cucamonga location in March, and will receive full back pay and reimbursement for his COBRA payments.

“I’m thankful to the Local and the union lawyer for protecting my rights,” Matelko emphasized. “I really appreciate all the efforts of Pat Spangler, the steward at Riverside, and the union leadership – George Park, Rigo Tirado and Bob Lennox – for putting their heads together.”

The Menifee resident admits the time off was stressful but he’s

grateful for union representation and the support of his co-workers. “When the union, the stewards and the rank-and-file stick together, we are certain to win and improve our working conditions and lives,” he declared.

“This process took some time, but we weren’t going to give up,” Park stated. “We had a loyal and dedicated group of employees who stood up and acted like Teamster members. The way the guys stood by him was impressive.”

“It was kind of sad that I couldn’t go back to work at Riverside. We went through it together and for me not to be able to return there was hard,” Matelko



Mark Matelko (Technician), 23 years

said, adding, “This happened to me but let it be an example to non-union employees. If you’re not represented by a union, you’re really in trouble.”



Local 495 members at Ryder show their support.





Bruce Pinheiro (Mechanic) 29 years



Dale Kirkpatrick (Location Shop Steward for Rancho Cucamonga)



Pat Spangler (Shop Steward) 32 years



Pete Aguayo (Parts Dept.) 32 years



Steve Crankshaw (Technician) 31 years



Ryder



Jeff Heimer (Technician) 23 years



Richard Ortiz (Mechanic) 25 years





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# 495

*See Page 8 for story about WWL Ratification of New Contract and more pictures!*



# The Health Care Reform Act

## *A Message to the Members*

***“Let’s recognize this great achievement in social policy as a worthy companion to the civil rights laws that were similarly difficult to achieve.”***

**Robert M. Lennox**  
**Secretary-Treasurer, Local 495**



America’s health care landscape was changed forever recently when President Barack Obama signed into law the Health Care Reform Act.

In what is widely considered to be one of the most significant historic moments in our country’s last few decades, Congress has finally recognized the need to make sure all Americans have adequate medical protection. Until now, the United States was the only industrialized nation not providing health care coverage for all citizens.

***This is a major victory, one that benefits all Americans, and shouldn’t be thought of as a win only for Democrats.***

Unfortunately, however, Republican politicians seem intent on doing everything they can to undercut the Obama administration. They are going to use this as the centerpiece for the upcoming mid-term elections, using any flaws they can find to their advantage.

You may be wondering why anyone would want to tear down something as important as health care reform, especially when it was needed so badly. Let’s face it, the business community was against this from

the start, and they are now using the Republican Party as their mouthpiece. Large corporations wanted “employee only” health care. They don’t care about the families of their employees, and “employee only” plans would have saved them billions of dollars.

In the coming months, when the Republican Party is attacking this legislation, you must remember that this bill is only the beginning of health care reform. Over the coming years, it is going to be refined and improved as we learn what works and what doesn’t.

***As Teamster members, your contracts already guarantee that you have quality benefits, so you may feel like you aren’t affected. In the bigger picture, however, you most certainly are.***

Not only will your non-union family and friends be able to receive coverage, but the increased market competition will also result in a reduction in premiums for everyone.

Let’s recognize this great achievement in social policy as a worthy companion to the civil rights laws that were similarly difficult to achieve.

***As working people we know how hard it is to make progress and make it meaningful for all.***





# Barrus Joins Local as Business Agent

In January, 31-year Teamster member and longstanding Hertz Shop Steward Kevin Barrus joined the Local 495 staff as a Business Agent.

"I'm so grateful to Local 495 for giving me this opportunity," Barrus said recently. "My fellow business agents and the staff have welcomed me with open arms and you can't imagine how much help they've been."

**Barrus is representing the roughly 300 members at the Burbank car rental locations – Hertz, Avis/Budget and National/Alamo – as well as members at**

**Hertz off-airport locations, some Penske and Ryder truck leasing sites, UPS, 7-Up and Firestone.**

Among Barrus' many strong points, he brings a first-hand perspective to representing members. "I know the issues and concerns facing my peers on the shop floor. I spent 31 years in the rental car business, 26 of those years as a mechanic and technician."

Born in Idaho but raised in Southern California, Barrus started working at Hertz two weeks after graduating from high school. "It was a great paying job for an 18-year-old." He later married and



Kevin Barrus, Local 495 Business Agent

had two children. "I had a good paying job and the security of the Teamsters," he pointed out.

"The union has been my security blanket and has helped reduce my stress level throughout my life. It made me sleep easier at night. I always knew I would be treated fairly on the job, paid decently, and I knew if something

*CONTINUED on next page*



Bobbye Gipson (28 years) Shop Steward



Group Hertz Service Attendants



Sheridan Khan-Administrator (5 years)



Rosie Quezada (13 years)



Norma Chen (26 years) and Joe Fernandez (5 years)

## Barrus

*CONTINUED from previous page*

were to happen, I always had people looking out for my best interests.”

The active and passionate union member had an opportunity to meet the top Teamster leadership in February. “One of my biggest thrills since taking the new job was meeting President James P. Hoffa in February at the Teamsters Convention,” he proudly said.

Outside of the shop, Barrus was very involved for years coaching and officiating high school sports, particularly football, basketball, baseball and softball. He enjoys playing golf, and being outdoors hunting, fishing, camping and riding quads.

He’s given up high school sports and has focused all of his attention on Local 495 members. “My goals and expectations for myself are to carry on the Teamster way and to make sure members are treated the way they should be, and that they reap the benefits of all of their hard work,” he added.



Miguel Tapia (16 years)



Jose Sanchez (11 years)



Manuel Perez (14 years) – Budget Bus Driver



Walt Burlic (30 years) and Rick Tavalacci (27 years) – Maintenance



Angel Cantuna (27 years) – Shop Steward-



Jorge Avila (30 years)



Julio Euson (10 years) – Greeter



Kitty Lynn (31 years)





Igor Kodzic – Budget Service Rep



Eduardo Gasca (5 years) – Maintenance



Hertz Shuttle Drivers



Gustavo Garcia, Carlos Avila, Mario Cueva, Mark Brown,  
Angel Cantuna (Shop Steward)



Don Marzullo-Avis Service Rep



Gus Moran (26 years)  
– Hertz Service Attendant



Alice Garcia (20 years), Radu Marinescu (15 years), Chris Polydoros (25 years)



Joy Stewart (5 years), Josie Morales (9 years), Leticia Saldaña (5 years)  
– Hertz Attendants



Bill Espinoza (13 years)-Bobbye Gipson (28 years)-Jose Sanchez (11 years)



# Boot Camp Kicks Off Organizing Drive

*In mid-April, Local 495 officials, Business Agents and a dozen members attended a comprehensive Organizing Boot Camp hosted by Joint Council 42. The day-long seminar included a variety of speakers from the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, including General President James P. Hoffa.*

***“The seminar was both informational and motivational,” noted Local 495 Business Agent and Organizing Director Gene Rivera.***

“We are working in conjunction with the Joint Council, which is providing the Local with assistance and guidance in our organizing efforts.

The boot camp was the kick-off for a well planned, coordinated endeavor because we know a collective effort will be most successful.”

Rivera was assigned to head up the Local’s organizing department at the beginning of the year, and stresses that in order for the Local to grow, the union is looking to the membership for leads.

“We need for the membership to keep us informed of family members and friends who are working for non-union companies and those in need of representation,” he explained.



Local 495 members attended a comprehensive Organizing Boot Camp hosted by Joint Council 42



IBT Boot Camp Recruits (Left to Right) George Park, IBT V.P. Rick Middleton, Kevin Barrus, President Rigo Tirado, Roman Delgado, IBT General President Jim Hoffa, Vons Steward J.P. Hernandez, Jim Lennox, Gene Rivera and Secretary-Treasurer Bob Lennox

***“We would like for those employees to have the same benefits our members have enjoyed for years.”***

Additionally, the Local is recruiting volunteer organizers. Currently, roughly 12 members have committed to donating time to the Local’s organizing efforts. “Once an organizing campaign begins, members are called upon to assist with job site rallies, phone banking and house calls,” he added.

***If you’re interested in volunteering or if you have any questions or leads on non-union worksites, members are encouraged to contact Gene Rivera at the Local.***



# WWL Ratification

**In late April, members at WWL (Wallenius Wilhelmsen Logistics) at the Port of Los Angeles overwhelmingly ratified a new five-year agreement with the global company.**

***"I think it's a fantastic contract," 20-year member and Chief Shop Steward Gilbert Rios said. "We got a long-term agreement with full medical and an above average wage increase. The way the economy has been, this is very good."***

The number one priority going into negotiations was maintaining health and welfare benefits, Local 495 Business Agent Gene Rivera pointed out. "Unlike other non-union locations where the employee is paying \$400 or \$500 a month for health care, this is huge."

The company agreed to full maintenance of benefits with no cost to the member for each year of the agreement. Other highlights

of the contract include critical language changes to overtime and grievance procedures. These are key areas of importance to the 150 members covered under the agreement.

The contract also allocates a wage increase every year. "This is the first time we got a raise in the first year of the agreement," 17-year employee and longstanding Shop Steward Orlando Hendrix noted. "If you consider the times and the way things are economically with so many people out of work, this is more than a fair contract with the health and welfare benefits, a raise every year, and no takeaways."

WWL specializes in moving finished vehicles from production to the dealerships. Local 495 has represented WWL members – who process Nissan cars –



for decades in a variety of key positions: allocation, delivery zone, yard services, rail, accessories, quality control, surveying, vehicle maintenance, parts, car wash/detail and buff, and facility maintenance.

In addition to Rivera, Rios and Hendrix, the contract negotiating committee included Local 495 Secretary-Treasurer Bob Lennox, President Rigo Tirado, and five rank-and-file members.

"The Local 495 leadership did an excellent job, especially Bob Lennox. Just when you think that's all there is, he comes up with more magic. When everyone is exhausted, he's still pounding on management trying to get that last dime from them," Hendrix said. "A lot of members don't understand how hard our leadership fights."

"I really want to thank the rank-and-file members who were on the negotiating team. They made some tough decisions for the membership and recommended that the contract be ratified 100 percent," Rivera added.



MORE PICTURES on back page!

