

# IAM Journal

For Fighting Machinists



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Photo by Kaveh Sardari

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# President Obama Embarks on Second Term

President Barack Obama laid out an ambitious agenda as he took the oath of office for his second term as President of the United States on January 21, 2013.

In an Inauguration Day address that sought to harness the energy of the day's second cause for celebration, the federal holiday marking the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., President Obama called for jobs and a more prosperous American middle class, protecting the social safety net, equal pay, equal rights for gay Americans, stronger gun laws, fair voting laws, and immediate action on climate change.

Witnessed by nearly a million spectators on the National Mall, the president declared that the nation's future rests on a thriving middle class. "We, the people, understand that our country cannot succeed when a shrinking few do very well and a growing many barely make it," said the president. "We believe that America's prosperity must rest upon the broad shoulders of a rising middle class.



Photo by Kaveh Sardari

*President Barack Obama laid out an ambitious agenda as he took the oath of office for his second term as President of the United States on January 21, 2013. Tap above to view a video about the historic event.*

We know that America thrives when every person can find independence and pride in their work, when the wages of honest labor will liberate families from the brink of hardship."

President Obama also called for protection for programs like Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security. "We, the people, still believe that every citizen deserves a basic measure of security and dignity," he said. "The commitments we make to each other through Medicare and Medicaid and Social Security, these





things do not sap our initiative. They strengthen us. They do not make us a nation of takers. They free us to take the risks that make this country great.”

And, setting what many hope will be the tone of his second and final term, President Obama called on the carpet the Republican party and its conduct throughout his first term and the 2012 election cycle.

“Progress does not compel us to settle century’s long debates about the role of government for all time, but it does require us to act in our time,” said the president. “For now, decisions are upon us and we cannot afford delay. We cannot mistake absolutism for principle or substitute spectacle for politics, or treat name-calling as reasoned debate. We must act.”

In a letter of congratulations pub-

lished in the official Inauguration Day program, IAM President Tom Buffenbarger thanked the president for his leadership. “It is with great pleasure that I extend sincere congratulations on behalf of all members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers,” wrote Buffenbarger. “The past four years tested this nation like few periods in history and it is a testament to your leadership that we stand here today, firmly convinced that our greatest days are still ahead of us.”

“We salute your strong support, against considerable opposition, for the laws that protect workers’ collective bargaining rights,” continued Buffenbarger. “And we stand ready to help make the goals of the campaign into realities that truly improve the lives of everyday Americans.”



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# Debt Battle Still a Threat to American Economy and Jobs

Economists warn Americans are in for a triple threat as the White House and Congressional Republicans continue their standoff over a deal to curb the nation's debt.

On the clock are three critical deadlines: a \$1.2 trillion sequestration is scheduled to take effect March 2, the government will run out of money to pay its bills by March 27, and by mid-May the country will have reached its debt ceiling.

U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta sharply criticized lawmakers for failing to address the across-the-board sequestration cuts which include \$500 billion in spending cuts to defense over the next 10 years.

“If I’ve got men and women in uniform that put their lives on the line in order to fight for this country, lawmakers can have the small bit of the courage to do what you have to do,” said Panetta while speaking to members of the 173rd Airborne stationed in Italy.

If the cuts are put in place, the Pentagon would be forced to forgo ship and aircraft maintenance, says IAM International President Tom Buffenbarger, putting our nation's security and more than a million jobs at risk.



*Congress delayed action on sequestration's big budget cuts, which means the threat to almost a million U.S. aerospace jobs still exists.*

“This not only impacts our military readiness to sustain and support our troops who are defending this nation, it also impacts the industries that supply those troops – those U.S. jobs that are here at home,” said Buffenbarger noting that the mere threat of sequestration has already created a chilling effect in spending and hiring amongst businesses directly, and indirectly, connected to the defense industry. “Manufacturing supports the defense industry. When you start to see layoffs, there is a spillover.





It's not just those who assemble. There is a cascading effect on the people who make things like the wiring harnesses, the raw materials, titanium and aluminum. It spills over to the general community because people can't afford groceries and the things they need to run their households."

"The answer to this manufactured crisis is to create jobs by investing in infrastructure and education, raising wages, reducing inequality and increasing working

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**"Manufacturing supports the defense industry. When you start to see layoffs, there is a spillover into the general community."**

R. Thomas Buffenbarger  
*International President*

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families' economic security," said Buffenbarger.

The threat of the U.S. government defaulting on its financial obligations – including obligations incurred by the Republican Congress – also lingers. Republican lawmakers are threatening inaction, un-

less President Obama and Congressional Democrats agree to cuts in Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security, as well as no further taxes on the wealthy.

"Republicans are once again ignoring the real problems facing our economy and threatening to hold the country hostage unless they get their way," said Buffenbarger. "Working families must say 'No more.' The GOP's political temper tantrums must end today. While they're carrying on for the benefit of Wall Street and their corporate donors, the livelihoods of millions of Americans are at stake."

And in regard to the nation's debt ceiling, House Republicans reached a deal late this month to raise the ceiling by an unspecified amount, suspending the federal government's borrowing restrictions until May 18.

The U.S. was originally projected to hit its debt limit in a matter of weeks. The bill includes a provision to force lawmakers to either write a budget or forfeit their paycheck, though the measure is "largely symbolic" since the language does not actually require Congress pass a budget and it is unconstitutional to change Congress' pay during a session.

tap here

**to tell Congress to avoid sequestration and avert the debt crisis by creating jobs!**

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# Union Members Honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Legacy

Hundreds of union members, labor leaders, activists and faith organizations gathered in Philadelphia this month for the AFL-CIO's annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday Observance.

The theme to this year's celebration, which marked the 50th anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington: "We Are One: Workers' Rights and Civil Rights –

Protecting and Expanding Democracy."

Diane Babineaux, Chief of Staff to the IAM International President, led a contingent of IAM members to the much-anticipated event, which coincided this year with the second inauguration of the United States' first African-American president, Barack Obama.

"There is an added air of excitement at



*IAM members were out in force in Philadelphia to help carry on the legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Bottom row, from left, Pam Sanders, District 837; Carline Lang, District 837; R. Jean Banks, District 837; Diane Babineaux, Chief of Staff, IAM Headquarters; Patsy Reddick, District 837; Karen Peek, IAM Headquarters; Dave Porter, Southern Territory GLR. Top row, from left, Steve Cooper, Western Territory GLR; Regina Gunn, District 837; Acie Vanhook, District 837; Renata Jones, District 837; Luther Williams, Midwest Territory GLR; Leon "Smitty" Smith, District 837; Rodney Bufford, District 837; Mike Edwards, Business Rep District 837; Bridget Fitzgerald, IAM Headquarters; Linda Fisher, IAM Headquarters; Cindy Williams, IAM Headquarters; Carlos San Miguel, Southern Territory GLR.*







*Tap above to view a video “Machinists Perform Community Service to Honor Martin Luther King, Jr.”*

this year’s MLK celebration as we not only celebrate the life of one of the greatest leaders of the Civil Rights Movement, but we also witness the fruits of Dr. King’s labor as we welcome President Barack Obama to his second term,” said Babineaux. “It’s a momentous occasion that will be marked with remembrance and fanfare, while recognizing the challenges that lie ahead.”

As is tradition, attendees took part in a day of community service by helping to paint Philadelphia’s Francis J. Myers Recreation

Center. The building, which once served the community as an orphanage, now provides an after-school program, sports and activities for adults and kids.

“It’s always an honor and a pleasure to be able to go out and give back to our communities,” said IAM District Lodge 837 Business Representative Mike Edwards. “This is something that we need to do. Community service is a part of our life and a part of our history.”

“It makes me feel really good to know that I’m here helping to make a difference,” said Regina Dunn of Local 837B. “It inspires me. It encourages me to do even more.”

The conference included a series of speakers, workshops, a “Save Our Schools/Don’t Cut Services” panel and solidarity rally, and a panel discussion surrounding the newly-released book *Hands on the Freedom Plow: Personal Accounts by Women in SNCC*. SNCC stands for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, a once prominent group on the front lines of the Civil Rights Movement. Attendees concluded the conference with an Inauguration Watch Party.

tap here  
**to view more photos of the MLK Observance**



**Martin Luther King, Jr.**



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TCU

# Amtrak Financial Gains Could Win Better Funding

Amtrak posted its lowest loss in 38 years, \$361 million in 2012, a sign that the national passenger rail carrier is improving financially and deserving of a boost in capital investment. Amtrak President and CEO Joseph Boardman will make that case when he asks Congress for funds.

“We think the numbers are right. Now it’s time to start talking about what policies we want,” said Boardman, who has argued that Congress has starved the agency of investments in significant capital improvements which could set the railroad on a self-sustaining track.

Demand for passenger rail services remains strong. Amtrak announced a slew of improvements in the year ahead, including an upgrade to higher-speed on-board internet access for passengers,



*Demand for passenger rail service remains strong, as Amtrak posted its lowest loss in 38 years. Proper funding levels from Congress to improve service could set the railroad on a path to being financially independent.*

as well as purchases of new electric locomotives and passenger cars to replace rolling stock that, in some cases, has been in use since the 1940s. But Congress has had a history of short-sighted, inadequate funding that prevents Amtrak from making even more of the kinds of





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improvements that could make the carrier financially self-sustaining.

Boardman expects to get his opportunity to secure proper funding levels for Amtrak later this year when Congress is expected to take up a reauthorization of rail programs. The current authoriza-

tion expires in September 2013.

“Now is the time to make Amtrak a world-class high-speed rail carrier,” said TCU President Bob Scardelletti. “Amtrak needs a long-term funding source, and we are pleased to see Amtrak working to get it.”



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## Transportation

# Delta Flight Attendants Meet at Winpisinger Center

As part of its ongoing support of the Delta Flight Attendant organizing campaign, the IAM opened the doors of its world-class William W. Winpisinger Education and Technology Center to IAM-Delta activists for three days of training and strategy sessions.

“Approximately 40 Delta Flight Attendants volunteered to attend the training,” said Delta Flight Attendant Neal

McMahon. “The turnout was outstanding and demonstrated the commitment of our activists to do the difficult work necessary to get union protection.”

The training included presentations on IAM history and instruction from IAM attorneys on National Mediation Board election regulations and how to organize under the Railway Labor Act. Activists engaged in breakout sessions



Bill Burke, Page One Photography

*More than three dozen Flight Attendants from Delta Air Lines took part in a three-day planning session at the Winpisinger Center to promote their ongoing campaign to win IAM representation.*





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## **“We fully support the efforts of Delta Flight Attendants, and other Delta workers, to join the IAM Family.”**

**Sito Pantoja**  
*IAM Transportation  
General Vice President*

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and devised specific plans to meet the needs of a diverse group of Flight Attendant professionals from different locations.

“The training was extremely informative. It’s obvious the IAM has the resources and ability to address Flight Attendant issues,” said Delta Flight Attendant Julianna Helminski. “We started the training as a group of interested activists and left proud IAM union leaders.”

Delta Flight Attendants unanimously agreed that the three-day training was a rewarding educational experience and all were energized to return to the field and move the campaign forward.

“These dedicated union activists are very enthusiastic and understand the task before them,” said IAM Transportation General Vice President Sito Pantoja. “We fully support the efforts of Delta Flight Attendants, and other Delta workers, to join the IAM family.”



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## Aerospace

# IAM Protects Pensions in Hawker Bankruptcy Case

In an era when corporations use bankruptcy to roll back hard-won wages and benefits, the IAM overcame numerous challenges to protect pensions and other benefits, prevent the sale of the company to a Chinese firm and blocked executive bonus payments during the bankruptcy proceedings for Wichita-based Hawker Beechcraft Corporation (HBC).

A federal bankruptcy judge has approved a settlement in which the IAM preserved pension benefits for current IAM members at HBC, negotiated a new defined contribution pension plan while guaranteeing the continuation of an existing 401(k) savings plan, and maintained pension benefits for retired IAM members.

In too many bankruptcy cases, companies ask for termination of pension



*IAM members at Hawker Beechcraft in Wichita, KS preserved their contract and pensions during the company's bankruptcy proceedings. The company should exit bankruptcy in early 2013 and remain a stable employer in Wichita.*

plans that can lead to a reduction in benefits. But by winning a freeze to the current plan, all current benefits are maintained.

“Preventing the termination of a defined benefit pension for thousands of active and retired workers at a bankrupt





company is a great achievement,” said IAM President Tom Buffenbarger. “It is a credit to both sides of the bargaining table that workers’ interests at Hawker were given the re-

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**“Preventing the termination of a defined benefit pension for thousands of active and retired workers at a bankruptcy is a great achievement.”**

**Tom Buffenbarger**  
*International President*

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spect they deserve.”

In addition to preserving pension benefits, the IAM also set some important precedents in the bankruptcy case. The IAM was instrumental in

turning back the sale of HBC to a Chinese company (the IAM was the only party to oppose the sale); made new law when it opposed and won denial of millions in incentive bonuses to senior HBC management when workers were being asked to take concessions; kept the IAM/HBC Collective Bargaining Agreement intact without any concessions except the pension freeze, and helped position HBC to exit bankruptcy as a stronger general aviation manufacturer specializing in propeller and piston aircraft.

After exiting bankruptcy in early 2013, HBC will be renamed Beechcraft and is expected to remain a stable employer in Wichita for the foreseeable future.



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