

ATU #757 members will represent Tri-Met at Rail Rodeo in New York

There are no bucking broncos or charging bulls in the International Rail Rodeo; in fact, there's probably no safer, politer rodeo anywhere. But whoever wins at Coney Island, New York on June 10 will be considered the best rail transit operator in the nation.

Two Tri-Met MAX light rail operators will be competing in this year's event, which takes place yearly prior to conventions of the American Public Transportation Association.

David Bennett and David White will compete as a team representing Tri-Met — one of about 20 transit districts taking part. Both men are members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757.

More than 40 Tri-Met light rail operators competed this year — taking a written test and then operating under the watchful eyes of Tri-Met training supervisor Ron Callahan. Callahan, who won the event in Atlanta in 1996, now serves as judge of the local competition and coach to those who go to the national event.

Out of the 40 Tri-Met contestants, Callahan picked eight finalists, who squared off May 7 in the Ruby Junction rail yard in Gresham.

"There's not a lot of playing around," said Tri-Met light rail manager Terry Dolan. "We're not popping wheelies or doing slaloms."

Instead, operators vied to see how smoothly and safely they can move the trains. That started with a ground inspection: Callahan had booby-trapped each train with more than 40 things that operators should notice and report before starting up. Also tested were customer service, professional appearance and operating protocols. Did they see and stop before hitting the handkerchief on the rails? Did they respond correctly to the "passenger" who boarded with a suspicious-looking object that was meant to resemble an anthrax attack?

Tri-Met values the rodeo, Dolan said, because it motivates operators to get re-acquainted with the rules of operation.

Bennett and White scored highest



At the close of a local "rail rodeo," a Tri-Met MAX light rail train returns to the Ruby Junction garage, with operator David Bennett at the controls. Tri-Met training supervisor Ron Callahan, left, judged the contest, which tested safe driving and adherence to the rules of operation. Both are members of ATU Local 757. Bennett and contestant David White were the local contest winners, and will represent Tri-Met June 7-10 at a national rail rodeo in New York City.

and won the all-expense-paid trip to the rail rodeo. They fly to New York June 7 and have three days to study

the rules and equipment of the host — New York's Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA). On June 10,

they'll compete using New York subway cars in a rail yard on Coney Island.

UA Local 290 members get hero status for rescue effort

Jeff Morgan, Eric Moen and Greg Thrush — all members of Plumbers and Fitters Local 290 — each received awards for heroism last month from the

Washington County Fire Department No. 2 and the City of North Plains for their actions in rescuing three men in an accident that involved a Toyota Corolla

and a tanker truck carrying hot asphalt.

Seven other men, all employees or retirees of Morgan Machinery Moving, also were recognized for their heroic ac-

tions assisting in the rescue. They were Joe Davis, a member of Seattle Millwrights Local 204, Pete Uhler, Joe Morgan, Lee Uhler, Scott Arlen, Nick Lau and Josh Sohler.

Morgan Machinery Moving is a North Plains business that transports heavy machinery. It has 130 employees said Jeff Morgan, president of the company.

On March 30, Eric Moen was heading home from work when he came upon an accident on Jackson School Road a few blocks from where the company is located.

"The tires (on the asphalt truck) were still spinning when he drove by," said Jeff Morgan. Moen immediately called the office on his Nextel radio. "He told us there was a bad accident and to call 9-1-1, and to get over there to help," Morgan told the NW Labor Press.

A tanker truck carrying hot asphalt had come to rest on top of a car and was spilling hot tar onto the vehicle. Two passengers were trapped in the car.

Earlier that day, Moen had been working from a 23-foot boom truck. He told his co-workers to bring the truck. In no time, the workers were on the scene. When rescue workers arrived, Morgan offered his crew's services.

Using the boom truck, a large inflatable airbag and crib-ties, workers were able to lift the tar truck off of the car so the men could be rescued. The crib-ties are large pieces of wood that are placed

under heavy machinery as it is lifted to prevent slippage, Morgan explained.

"Once we got the rig up, they started cutting right away," Morgan told the Hillsboro Argus newspaper. "Once they lifted the roof off of the guy, he started moving right away."

"It's just fortunate we were right down the road."

All of Morgan's employees are trained in first aid and CPR. Arlen, a volunteer firefighter in Banks, Ore., checked the vital signs of the men while trapped in the car.

Passengers Venancio Riscajche-Siquina, 19, and Domingo Sanchez-Lopez, 20, both of Hillsboro, and driver Jose Sanchez-Xiap, 20, of Aloha, were hospitalized with burns, broken bones and bruises. They have since been released.

The driver of the truck, Ronald Belt, 46, of McMinnville, was unhurt.

According to sheriff's reports, the Corolla was northbound on Northwest Jackson School Road when it ran a stop sign at the intersection with Northwest West Union Road and T-boned the asphalt truck.

Rescue workers said the trapped men were lucky to be alive.

Morgan said that without the boom-truck, it might have been a half-hour or more before a tow truck and the proper emergency equipment were on the scene.



Employees at Morgan Machinery Moving in North Plains, Oregon, helped rescue two men trapped in this automobile after it ran a stop sign and plowed into a tanker truck carrying hot asphalt. Four of the men, members of Plumbers and Fitters Local 290 and Millwrights Local 204, assisted six other co-workers in raising the tanker so that rescue workers could extricate the passengers from the vehicle. The men received commendations for their heroism from the Washington County Fire Department and the City of North Plains. (Photo courtesy of Joe Davis)