

International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers

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Joseph J. Nigro
General President

Sent electronically

TO: All Local Unions
FROM: General President Nigro
DATE: March 17, 2015

Brothers and Sisters,

I first would like to thank you for your support and hard work during the last few months while I have worked at my recovery from multiple surgeries. As you are all aware, this has been one of the most frustrating times of my life, especially given that patience while waiting to get things done is not one of my greatest strengths. But throughout the times when my health kept me from being physically present, General Secretary-Treasurer Joe Sellers, Chief of Staff Rich McClees, my Assistants Marc Norberg and Joe Powell, and the General Vice Presidents, Directors, Field Staff, and our Office Staff have stepped up to support and implement my decisions and directives.

There are two purposes in my mentioning all of the above. First, I am truly appreciative of their hard work and dedication to performing their jobs. Second, and so important to this International, is that I believe we have built and continue to build a responsive International structure—one that recognizes that when we have a need, our elected officers and staff will step up to the task.

From my first day as your General President it has been my goal to develop a solid succession plan, one where the functions of the International and the work of meeting our members' needs would be maintained and perpetuated into the future—a plan to ensure a seamless transition whenever there was a change in our leadership.

While the International Officers and Staff are important, they are only one leg of the stool. Your support as the elected leadership of your locals is another. You are the boots on the ground supporting our strategies and representing our members—the strength every organization must have if it is to survive.

Your support goes back to my first taking office, and seeing how you put your commitment into practice at the 1st SMART Convention made me proud to be your General President. Your involvement, hard work, and willingness to openly debate changes to the SMART Constitution showed delegates that the changes we needed to make were both fair and reasonable. By removing the “take it or leave it” type of responses from the convention

floor, you showed every one of the merger naysayers that we are one union, brothers and sisters united in representing every member.

It was apparent there was a big challenge in presenting to the delegates, and getting them to accept, that the leadership of the International would not be a Sheet Metal or a Transportation leader, but leadership for all of SMART. I pushed this to the floor in my unique style, never doubting for one moment I would have your support as long as the direction represented the interest of all delegates and locals. The results were something I am very proud of, but just as important was that those results showed we have finally come together as a single union—not perfect, but respectful of everyone's positions.

So we have had some successes and have laid the groundwork for moving onward. But now it is time to build on that groundwork and move the International forward, both in fulfilling the promises we made at the Convention and in addressing issues identified at our GEC Meetings. This work is going to take a 100% effort by everyone and the shared expectation that each of us will do our part to meet these convention and GEC commitments. In this I have every confidence we have collectively built a team of International and Local Union leaders who can get the job done.

I have committed my heart and mind to accomplishing the goals we have set. My working life has been focused on always keeping the union and our membership as my highest priority. I have been able to do the work I love and, with your support and encouragement, reach the highest levels of our organization. There is nothing I would rather do in my life than to continue working with all of you to represent the interest of our members.

But my health has taken me in a direction I did not anticipate. I have tried over the last few months to do everything possible to bring my health back to a level where I feel I can provide the physical commitment SMART needs. Unfortunately, I have been unable to recover to a level which would allow me to commit to the full demands I expect of myself as your General President and the level of effort the members deserve.

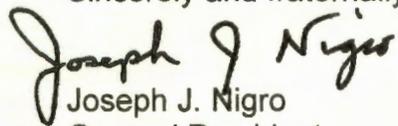
Adding to this, my doctors have advised me that in the interest of my long term health I should retire and concentrate fully on my recovery. I have resisted, thinking if I could get over the next medical hurdle I would be back at full strength in no time. This is not the case, and the time has come for decision on whether to protect my health and commit to spending time with my family. I knew this moment would arrive someday—I just wish it hadn't come as soon as it has and now I have been faced with the toughest decision of my career.

Therefore, with a heartfelt thank you to all of you, I will be resigning my position as SMART General President effective April 30, 2015. I have supported and presented to the General Executive Council my recommendation of General Secretary-Treasurer Joseph Sellers, Jr., to fill the position of General President and Chief of Staff Richard McClees to fill the position of General Secretary-Treasurer. At a Special Called Session of the General Executive Council on March 12, 2015, they excepted my recommendation and thereafter nominated and unanimously elected Joseph Sellers, Jr., as your new General President

and Richard McClees as your new General Secretary-Treasurer, effective May 1, 2015. I have every confidence in both of them and feel this fulfills the promise I made to have a strong succession plan ready so that this International and the representation of our membership is never in jeopardy.

Thank you for allowing me to be a part of SMART. I send my best wishes to you and your families. All of you will remain in my thoughts and prayers.

Sincerely and fraternally,


Joseph J. Nigro
General President

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