

Robert W. Guy — State Director



Bob Guy's roots in railroading—and in Downstate Illinois—go deep. His family is from Lincoln, 29 rail miles north of Springfield, and his grandfather worked for the Illinois Central railroad as a payroll clerk, yardmaster and towerman.

Guy graduated from Western Illinois University 1991 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in broadcast journalism and a minor in marketing. On leaving college Guy worked for the Illinois Department of Employment Security from 1992 to 1994.

It was his grandfather who suggested he hire out as a brakeman in 1994 for the Southern Pacific, working the former St. Louis-Joliet segment of the old Chicago & Alton Railroad's main line connecting Chicago, Joliet, Bloomington-Normal, Springfield and St. Louis. The line passed into the ownership of the Union Pacific Railroad when it acquired SP in 1996. Guy worked north out of Bloomington into Chicago and found the work just as gratifying as his grandfather had promised.

But he also found that despite its rewards, railroad life had its problems, and the problems were best addressed through union activism. Guy started attending local meetings and quickly became sensitized to the issues that separated employees from management. In 1996 he was elected UTU #234's Local Legislative Representative, putting his college training in communications to work.

Guy was reelected Local Legislative Representative for UTU #234 in 1999 and 2003, and at the UTU 2004 Quadrennial Reorganization Meeting was elected to serve as Alternate State Director.

In 2004 Guy began assisting then State Director Joe Szabo and then-Assistant Director John Burner at the State Capitol in the challenging business of representing the interests of UTU members and their families before state government. When Burner retired in the summer of 2007, Guy was promoted to succeed him. He took an active part in UTU's successful campaign to expand State-sponsored Amtrak service and in the union's workplace-safety campaign, which resulted in passage of the Railroad Employees Medical Treatment Act, the Safe Walkways Act and other critical safety legislation. In February 2008 he was elected to his first full term as Assistant Legislative Director.

In May of 2009 Guy was elevated to State Legislative Director when former Director, Joe Szabo, was confirmed as Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration. In 2012 and 2016 Guy was re-elected to new four-year terms as State Director-Illinois Legislative Board of the Transportation Division of the International Sheet Metal, Air and Rail Transportation Workers Union, or SMART-TD (formerly UTU). In June of 2009 Guy was appointed Vice President of the Illinois AFL-CIO, a position he retains to this day.

Guy represents SMART-TD on the U.S. Surface Transportation Board's Rail Energy Transportation Advisory Committee (RETAC). Guy has also served the public as a Governor appointee to the Northeastern Illinois Public Transit Task Force and is currently Illinois' Private Sector appointee to the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC). Guy was elected Chairperson of the MIPRC in October of 2019.

Guy resides in Springfield with his wife Cindy and their two children, Taylor and Bobby.