Unions form historic bargaining coalition

On January 3, for the first time in two decades, seven major railroad unions have joined together in the creation of the “Rail Labor Bargaining Coalition” to coordinate upcoming contract negotiations with the rail carriers. The seven unions of the coalition represent nearly 85,000 rail workers from American railroad corporations. The Coalition will develop a coordinated contract negotiating strategy and each individual union will not sign off on any tentative agreements with the rail carriers until all the coalition members concur.

The proposal seeks to impose fees on rail employees who seek arbitration services at the hearing as well as members of the Rail Coalition have taken an important step in combating rail management’s divide and conquer bargaining strategy.”

That strategy features the coercion of individual unions into divisive contract settlements, which then are said to form a “pattern” of substandard agreements that, in turn, are forced on other organizations through over-long mediation, Emergency Board proceedings or legislation. A united union movement will restore balance to contract negotiations.

“The Coalition is the reason the BLE and the BMWE merged with the Teamsters under the banner of the Teamsters Rail Conference,” said John Murphy, an IBT International Vice President and Special Assistant to President Hoffa for the Teamsters Rail Conference. “Even though these unions work in a variety of crafts, they are united in their demands for job security, better wages and safer working conditions.”

BLET National President Don Hahs said that by presenting a unified front at the bargaining table, the many BLET representa-
violes at the hearing as well as members of the Rail Coalition have taken an important step in combating rail management’s divide and conquer bargaining strategy.”

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“It would be unfortunate for any rail union leader to not be a part of this coalition,” said Freddie N. Simpson, President of the BMWE. “This coalition will prevent the Carriers from witholding unions, large and small alike, and will strengthen all of rail labor at negotiations.”

The Coalition comprises the following railroad unions:

- Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division (BMWE, IBT);
- Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET, IBT);
- National Conference of Firemen and Oilers (SEIU);
- Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen (BRS);
- Sheet Metal Workers International Association (SMWIA);
- International Brotherhood of Boilermakers (IBB); and
- American Train Dispatchers of America (ATDA).

Unions tell NMB: Reject plan to silence workers

A railroad industry proposal, which enjoys the support of key Bush appointees, was condemned on January 11 by transportation labor unions who said it would suppress rail workers from speaking out on issues of working conditions, safety, and pay.

According to Edward Wytkind, president of the AFL-CIO’s Transportation Trades Department (TTD), the regulatory changes would, “use a thin disguise of new ‘filing fees’ to stifle complaints about unsafe and unfair conduct by the railroads.”

BLET National President Don Hahs and Vice-President Richard K. Radek were among the many BLET representatives at the hearing as well as members of the Rail Coalition have taken an important step in combating rail management’s divide and conquer bargaining strategy.”

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BLET organizes NOGCR shortline

Workers at the New Orleans and Gulf Coast Railway (NOGCR) have selected the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen as their designated collective bargaining representative.

Ninety-three percent of voters selected the BLET and the National Mediation Board certified the election on December 14. It marks the BLET’s 12th shortline railroad organizing victory in the past three years.

“I welcome our new Brothers and Sisters to the House of Labor,” said BLET National President Don M. Hahs. “The Brotherhood will soon begin the process of negotiating an equitable contract for our new members.”

The NOGCR is a 32-mile long railroad that interchanges with the UP in Westwego, N.O. The railroad serves over 20 switching and industrial customers and is the only...
**Railroad Craft Scholarship Foundation deadline is May 1**

The Railroad Craft Scholarship Foundation (formerly known as the Joint Craft Scholarship Foundation) is available through the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen to college-bound children of all railroad-operating crafts.

“To my knowledge this is the first scholarship program that covers all craft lines and is available on any railroad,” said Brother John D. Mullen, a member of BLET Division 500 (Cleburne, Texas).

The scholarships are available to children of employees working on any railroad represented by any railroad union currently covered under the Federal Employers’ Liability Act. It provides financial aid to children of active, retired, or deceased railroad employees who would be unable to attend college without financial assistance.

Established in 1986 by Brother Mullen and other dedicated BLET members, the Railroad Craft Scholarship Foundation has awarded dozens of scholarships over the past eight years.

Intended to provide financial assistance to children whose families would not be able to attend college, the scholarship offers several awards ranging from $500 to $1,000. There are no stipulations if you are already attending college or are just starting out, Mullen said. “The Committee focuses more on the applicant’s financial need rather than his or her academic performance.”

Completed applications must be received by May 1, 2005. Applications will be reviewed and award winners determined by the Railroad Crafts Scholarship Foundation’s Board of Directors at their annual meeting held in May of each year. For an application packet, please write or call:

John D. Mullen
Railroad Craft Scholarship Foundation
2609 S. Chase
Burleson, Texas 76028
e-mail: jdmlullen54@sbcglobal.net

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**SMA Scholarships**

The Southeastern Meeting Association (SMA) Scholarship Committee annually awards the Geiger-Erlandson Scholarships to children of active or retired BLET members whose divisions participate in SMA.

Check with your division secretary-treasurer to ensure your division participates. In general, the SMA includes divisions located in states east of the Mississippi River, and south of the Ohio River and the Mason-Dixon Line.

The scholarship application deadline varies from year to year. Winners are usually selected at the SMA’s annual business meeting held during the convention, which will be June 12-13, 2005.

For an application, see your division officer or write:

Ronald L. Perkins
SMA Sec.-Treas.
505 Chautauqua Avenue
Portsmouth, VA 23707

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**SWCM Scholarships**

The Southwestern Convention Meeting (SWCM) awards approximately two dozen scholarships annually based on academic achievement and financial need.

Applicants must be the child of an active, retired or deceased BLET member whose division belongs to the Southwestern Convention Meeting. Applicants must be accepted for admission to an accredited college, university or institution of higher learning. Only divisions belonging to the SWCM will be eligible.

SWCM application forms can be filled out on your computer screen with the interactive PDF form available on the BLET website. Deadline is August 1, 2005. Applicants must have paid their annual SWCM convention dues for applicants from their Division to be eligible.

Instructions:
- http://www.ble-t.org/pr/swcmarch.asp
- Interactive PDF application form:

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- Interactive PDF application form:

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**BLET Divisions offer assistance**

- **BLET Division 269 (Jamaica, Long Island, N.Y.)** offers two $500 scholarships to the children of BLET members who are already enrolled in college. Participation is limited to members of Division 269.

  Winners are picked at random at the division’s Christmas party. For details, watch your Division 269 newsletter or contact Division President Doug Wilcox at (516) 832-7130.

- **Two $250 scholarships are available to children of BLET members in Division 57 (Boston, Mass.).**

  The scholarships are awarded to college-bound high school seniors, and will be awarded based on their score on a labor history exam, administered by the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, said Walter H. Nutter of Division 57.

  By taking the exam, students also become eligible for eight more scholar-

  ships through the Massachusetts AFL-CIO. While the Division 57 scholarship is limited to children of that division’s members, the general Massachusetts AFL-CIO scholarship competition is open to children of all BLET members living in Massachusetts. Deadline for these scholarships is early December.

  For further details, contact Brother Nutter at 334 Bullard Road, Oakham, Mass., 01067; phone: (508) 233-7087; or whnutter@yahoo.com.

- **BLET Division 11 (New York, N.Y.) awards a one-time $500 scholarship annually to a child of any active member of Division 11 who pays local dues each month. Children who win are not eligible again.**

  The deadline is the Division’s June meeting. For details, contact Division 11 ST J.J. Raia, at 20 East Dr., Edison, N.J. 08820, (732) 396-9076, or email: jrraia@yahoo.com.

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**EUMA Scholarships**

The Eastern Union Meeting Association awards one $2,000 Robert Pentland Memorial Scholarship and several other $5,000 scholarships each year based on academic excellence and financial need. Only children of members (living or deceased) belonging to divisions participating in EUMA are eligible. The division must be reviewed and award winners determined by the EUMA Scholarship Committee annually. Scholarship Division must be square on the books for the child to qualify. States represented in EUMA are Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Washington D.C., and West Virginia.

This year’s deadline is June 15. Send completed applications to:

Gary J. Brink, EUMA Sec.-Treas.
12 Kellogg Ave.
Port Jervis, NY 12771

Applications are on the BLET website at:

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**BR&CF sets March 1 deadline for Luther G. Smith scholarships**

The Brotherhood’s Relief and Compensation Fund (BR&CF) sponsors the Luther G. Smith Scholarship Program. Applications are available to the children, stepchildren and adopted children, age 27 and younger, of active BR&CF members who are in “Good and Regular Standing,” as defined by the BR&CF Constitution.

Financial aid is provided to winners of the Luther G. Smith Scholarship Program for so long as they maintain continuous enrollment as an academic degree of not less than 3.0 (4.0 scale), or the equiva-

lent, until they achieve the degree level sought at the time of the initial scholarship award. Aid is provided to awareness for the period in which they would normally be expected to complete their degree, not to exceed four years.

BR&CF President R.J. Myers reports that the deadline for receipt of applications and the required documentation is March 1, 2005.

If you have any questions, please contact Nita Saultz of the BR&CF at (800) 233-7080. For more details, you can visit the BR&CF website at www.brcf.org, or write:

Brotherhood’s Relief & Compensation Fund
2150 Linglestown Road
Harrisburg, PA 17110
BLET SCHOLARSHIP DIRECTORY

Applications due April 1 for GIA, joint GIA-IWU-EUMA scholarships

The Grand International Auxiliary (GIA) to the BLET offers $1,000 scholarships annually to help children of BLET and GIA members realize their goals in life.

The GIA also offers a joint scholarship program for children of members participating in the International Western Convention (IWC). This covers Divisions, Auxiliaries and Members-at-Large in the following states and provinces: Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and portions of northern Ontario (such as Thunder Bay and Sioux Lookout). Applicants for the GIA-IWC scholarship must have a parent participating in the IWC.

The GIA also administers a joint scholarship program for children of members participating in the Eastern Union Meeting Association (EUMA). This covers Divisions, Auxiliaries and Members-at-Large in the following states: Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Washington, D.C., and West Virginia. Applicants for the GIA-EUMA scholarship must have a parent participating in the EUMA.

In order to continue to be eligible for the GIA-IWU-EUMA scholarship beyond the first quarter and/or semester, the recipient must maintain satisfactory academic status. If the applicant is a graduate student or returning to school as a sophomore, junior or senior, he or she must have a 3.0 grade point average or better to be considered. Finally, the applicant must have been accepted to an accredited school. Deadline for the GIA-IWU-EUMA joint scholarships must be submitted by April 1, 2005. Late applications will not be considered.

The GIA Scholarship application forms are available on the GIA website at: http://mywebpages.comcast.net/mmgrotzinger.

In addition to the application form, the GIA website provides scholarships with more detailed instructions on the application process. To submit an application, simply download, print and complete the forms.

Mail completed forms to:
Anita J. Caruso
International Secretary
3341 S. 112th Street
Omaha, NE 68144-7709
(402) 330-6348

The BLET’s California State Legislative Board offers scholarships each year to a graduating senior who will attend college, trade or vocational school in the coming year.

The applicant’s parent or guardian must be a BLET member in good standing and in a Division represented by the California State Legislative Board.

Last year, the Board offered a $1,000 scholarship. Applications are available on the Board’s website, http://www.cslb.org.

All applications should be mailed to the home office address:
California State Legislative Board, BLET/HTT
610 Auburn Ravine Rd.
Suite C
Auburn, CA 95603

In addition to the scholarships offered by the BLET, railroads also offer college scholarships to railroad workers and their children.

The Burlington Northern Santa Fe Foundation Scholarship Program will begin accepting requests for applications Jan. 1, 2005. The program will award $5 scholarships, $2,500 each, for the 2005-2006 academic school year. The program is available to current high school seniors who are the dependent sons, daughters or stepchildren of full-time BNSF employees or retired, disabled or deceased employees of BNSF or its predecessor companies. Applicants must submit an application postmarked no later than April 1, 2005. A direct Web site link is available again this year so applicants can electronically fill out an application request.

To obtain an application and descriptive brochure, please complete and return the application request form by March 1, 2005.

As in the past, you may request an application starting Jan. 1, 2005, by either mailing or faxing in the request. Now you may also request an application or apply directly online by accessing the following website: http://www.schoolshipadministrators.net and follow the instructions. You will be asked to use the access code BNSF.

Or you can request information and an application by mail:
Scholarship Program
Administrators
P.O. Box 23737
Nashville, Tenn., 37202-3737
Phone: (615) 230-3190 ext. 106
Fax: (615) 523-7100

The Norfolk Southern Scholarship Program — an independent, non-profit organization — administers the

Burlington Northern Santa Fe Foundation Scholarship Program.

The Norfolk Southern Scholarship Program provides 120 scholarships of $2,500 each to assist children of employees with undergraduate expenses at an accredited college or university. Scholarships are awarded for one year only; but recipients are encouraged to apply again for subsequent years. The deadline for applications is May 1. To be eligible, a student must have at least one parent who has been an employee of CSX Corporation or an affiliate for a minimum of one year. (If the parent is retired, furloughed, or deceased, he or she must have been an employee for a minimum of 10 years); be under the age of 24 and unmarried; be attending or planning to attend an accredited college or university at the undergraduate level; and have a grade point average of 3.0 or above.

Winners will be selected on a purely mathematical basis using financial need as indicated by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Family Contribution (50%); FAFSA scores (25%); and grade point average (25%).

For an application form and a brochure explaining the program, contact:
CSX Corporation
Scholarship Service
P. O. Box 5151
Richmond, VA 23220-5151

Union Plus scholarships range from $500-$4,000

The Union Plus program awards scholarships in amounts ranging from $500-$4,000. This is a one-time cash award sent to individual winners for undergraduate study beginning in the fall of the same year.

The deadline for the 2005 awards is January 31, 2005. To download the Union Plus Scholarship application (PDF), go to the Union Privilege website at: http://www.unionprivilege.org.

Members of unions participating in any Union Plus program, their spouses and their dependent children (foster children, step children, and any other child for whom the individual member provides greater than 50% of his or her support) can apply for a Union Plus Scholarship.

Applicants can apply for Union Plus scholarships only to accredited college or university, community college or recognized technical or trade school at the time the award is issued. Graduate students are not eligible. Applicants for scholarships are evaluated according to academic ability, social awareness, financial need and appreciation of labor.

In addition to Union Plus, various state and local AFL-CIO bodies fund scholarships for union members and their children.

For more information, go to the AFL-CIO website at: http://www.aflcio.org.
James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund

Teamsters offer 31 awards that total $10,000 and 69 $1,000 grants to eligible students

BLET members are now eligible to participate in the James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund. The parents or grandparents of applicants must belong to the Teamsters for at least 12 months in order to be eligible for a scholarship.

James R. Hoffa became a Teamster member in 1954 and served as General President for 14 years, and, in recognition of his tireless service to the Union and its members, was honored as General President Emeritus for life. At the November 1999 General Executive Board meeting, General Secretary-Treasurer C. Thomas Kwiat presented a resolution to establish the new scholarship fund.

The Teamsters website describes the James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund and outlines eligibility requirements and application procedures. This information is available at: http://www.teamster.org.

The deadline for applications is March 25, 2005. One hundred scholarships will be awarded this program year. Applicants compete in one of the five geographic regions where the Teamster parent’s local union is located. Thirty-one of the awards total $10,000 each.

Four Secretary-Treasurer Workshops announced for 2005

The BLET’s Education and Training Department will conduct four Secretary-Treasurer Compliance Workshops this year prior to the March 31 deadline for filing Department of Labor reports.

The workshops will take place in Kansas City, San Francisco, Denver and Chicago.

During the three-day sessions, members will learn proper record keeping, techniques, computer applications, and new unionizing. They will also learn methods for filing various Department of Labor and Railroad Retirement reports, as well as Federal tax returns. A representative from the Department of Labor will be on hand to answer Secretary-Treasurer questions and have tips regarding the preparation of LM reports.

As most ST’s already know, there are many changes to the filing of the reports this year, and all these changes will be covered during these workshops.

A major change came when the BLET National Division implemented a new Internet-based dues reporting and collection system on January 1, 2005. There will be an online demonstration and conference call to the Cleveland office regarding this new system to help everyone in class become familiar with the new system.

Presenters will include Bill Walpert, BLET National Secretary-Treasurer; Dr. Elaine Reese, Director of Compliance; Ken Kroeger, BLET Special Rep & Coordinator of the Education & Training Department; and Bob Broka, Director of Records.

The BLET National Division pays the costs of books, equipment and tuition, while Secretary-Treasurers who attend are responsible for their transportation costs as well as their room and board.

Upon successful completion of the course, attendees will qualify for an $86 per day stipend from the North American Railway Foundation. The stipends will be paid directly to the Secretary-Treasurer of the respective divisions.

Secretary-Treasurers will register for the four workshops online through the BLET website at: http://www.blet.org/st.

The workshops will take place from February 6-9 at the Holiday Inn on the Plaza in Kansas City, Mo.; February 20-23 at the Gateway Hotel San Francisco, Calif.; March 6-9 at the Four Points Denver Cherry Creek, Denver Colo.; and March 13-16 at the Holiday Inn City Centre in Chicago, Ill.

Members are responsible for making their reservations at the meetings in Kansas City, San Francisco, Denver and Chicago. Members must ask for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen group rate when calling in order to secure a discounted room rate. Reservations can be made by calling:

- Kansas City, Mo., Feb. 6-9 — At the Holiday Inn on the Plaza, One East 45th St., (816) 753-7400.
- San Francisco, Calif., Feb. 20-23 — At Sheraton Gateway Hotel, San Francisco International Airport (650) 340-8500.
- Denver, Colo., March 6-9 — At Four Points by Sheraton Denver Cherry Creek, (303) 757-3341.
- Chicago City, Ill., March 13-16 — At the Holiday Inn on the Plaza, One East 45th St., (312) 787-6100.
- Denver, Colo., March 6-9 — At Four Points by Sheraton Denver Cherry Creek, (303) 757-3341.
- Chicago, Ill., March 13-16 — At Chicago City Center Holiday Inn Hotel, (312) 787-6100.

Registration for the 2005 workshops is on a first come, first served basis with class size limited to the first 25 who register through the BLET website. For more information, please contact Ken Kroeger at (216) 272-0890 or Kroeger@blet.org.
Brother Christopher G. Seeling, Secretary-Treasurer of BLET Division 85 (Columbia, S.C.), was killed on January 6 when his Norfolk Southern train collided with another train that was stopped in a siding. He was one of nine people to die in the accident.

A toxic cloud of chlorine gas was released as a result of the derailment, contributing to the deaths of seven people in the nearby area and injuring about 240 others. The accident happened in Graniteville, S.C., approximately 11 miles east of Augusta, Ga.

The train’s conductor, William Wright, a UTU member, was hospitalized in critical condition after the accident, but his condition has been upgraded to stable.

Brother Seeling, 28, joined the BLET on March 1, 2001. He died from injuries sustained in the crash. All of the other deaths were a result of the inhalation of toxic chlorine gas fumes.

Brother Seeling was not married and had no children. He is survived by his parents, his brother and his sister.

Brian McLaughlin, Local Chairman of Division 85, was one of Seeling’s friends and co-workers. He described Brother Seeling as a hardworking, dedicated railroader who was focused on safety.

He was always smiling,” Brother McLaughlin said. “He was a man of faith and a hard worker who took pride in his job. Chris always talked about safety. He really cared a lot about the men he worked with. He cared about their safety and cared about making sure everyone got home safe.”

After a recent derailment in the area, Brother McLaughlin said Chris urged co-workers to “mind their Ps and Qs so you could go home to your family.” He said Brother Seeling will be missed by everyone.

“I will remember him as a fun loving guy who was always cracking jokes but also a man who talked about his faith and spirituality. He was sincere in everything he did.”

Brother McLaughlin, 47, has been railroading for 27 years and was a mentor to Brother Seeling.

“I taught him a lot of things about safety,” he said. “I was like a big brother to him and gave him encouragement sometimes when things weren’t going so well. He was very humble.”

Outside of the railroad, McLaughlin said Brother Seeling was an outdoorsman who enjoyed deer hunting and duck hunting. He also enjoyed spending time with his family and attending church.

“He always talked about his family get-togethers, especially around the holidays,” McLaughlin said. “He talked about his faith, which meant a lot to him. He was a man of faith who had strong convictions.”

Since the accident, Brother McLaughlin said there is a “heavy cloud” hanging over all railroaders in the area. Their thoughts and prayers have turned to the families of Brother Seeling and to William Wright, the conductor on Brother Seeling’s.

“We are coping with a great loss and everyone is very upset,” McLaughlin said. “The mood is somber. We’re concerned about the families of Chris and William, as well as the families of the other victims. We just have to work through this and come up with a way to run a safer railroad…not just for us but for the public as well.”

BLET National President Don M. Haahs ordered the flag over BLET headquarters in Cleveland, Ohio, to be flown at half-mast in honor of Brother Seeling and all other BLET members who lost their lives in the line of duty.

“On behalf of the men and women of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, I send my deepest condolences to Brother Seeling’s family and friends,” President Haahs said.

Brother Seeling is the first BLET member killed in the line of duty in 2005. In 2004, eight BLET members were killed in on-the-job accidents.

IN THE LINE OF DUTY
Christopher G. Seeling

IN REMEMBRANCE
Betty A. Child

Honorary Member Betty Child, a loyal and long time Office Administrato of the National Legislative Office of the BLET, passed away on January 5. Sister Betty was 60 years old and leaves her husband, Girard (Jerry), daughter Barbara, and literally thousands of friends in the union movement and Washington, D.C.

Betty could always be remembered for pulling out the stops to help anyone calling the Brotherhood’s Washington Office. She loved a challenge and prided herself and you took good care of your office and you took good care of your friends in the union movement and Washington, D.C.

Betty was a native Washingtonian and knew the legislative history of railroad labor issues. Her 34 years of experience as an assistant to Vice Presidents Ed McColloch, Paul Kerrigan, Don Lindsey, Leroy Jones, Raymond Holmes, and as Secretary to the Rail Labor Executive’s Association (RLEA) gave her contacts and skills to cut through the red tape and get results quickly.

Betty loved her work and loved the Brotherhood. Much will be said about her dedication. Few were able to witness it personally, but those who did recognized a work ethic unequaled and a professionalism driven by both commitment and experience.

Betty, you may take pride in knowing that you did provide a full service office and you took good care of your customers. You will be missed by many and thought of with the greatest respect as you take your place among the many who have passed this way to eternal life.

Sister Betty was an avid reader and enjoyed boating, fishing, and doing crossword and jigsaw puzzles. Her favorite pastime was cooking.

Sister Betty

BLET NEWS

President Bush to nominate Jamison for FRA Administrator slot

President Bush is expected to nominate Robert Jamison as Federal Railroad Administrator. Jamison is now serving as the Acting FRA Administrator, replacing Betty Moran, who in December retired from the FRA’s top spot. He will become the Administrator if approved by the Senate.

Prior to his appointment as Acting Administrator, Jamison served as the Deputy Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

Jamison has more than 15 years experience in domestic and international corporate planning, operations, and management. He came to FTA from the American Red Cross, where he served as an operations manager from 1997 to 1999, when he became Senior Operations Officer, with responsibilities for managing a $2.5 billion budget and a 33,000-employee nonprofit organization.

His management experience also includes 13 years at United Parcel Service, where he had many roles ranging from operations supervision, to oversight of investment in foreign operation infrastructure, to management of systems and infrastructure in the Washington metropolitan area for the $8 billion company.

As deputy administrator, Jamison led the operations of the 175-person, 10-region field staff that administers the 86 billion FTA programs.

Jamison is a 1987 magna cum laude graduate of the University of Memphis.

During his time at the FTA, Jamison has dealt with issues of transit security, among other issues. The BLET hopes that this experience will help Jamison to address the rail security issue more fully than the previous FRA administration.

“I look forward to a harmonious working relationship with Mr. Jamison,” BLET National President Don Haahs said.
UP stuck in the mud

The Union Pacific Corp. said its capacity to move freight from West Coast ports will be cut by a third “for an extended period” after mudslides and flooding severed the railroad’s main line to the Midwest.

The railroad has effectively embargoed all new cargo because of crew shortages, damage, and landslides associated with the storm that has battered Southern California.

By January 13, however, the railroad said only two lines remained shut down — the mainline to the Midwest and the coastal mainline north of Los Angeles that passes through La Conchita, where 10 people died in a mudslide.

“We are facing great challenges in the wake of this severe weather in the West,” said Dick Davidson, UP’s chairman and chief executive. Davidson said he did not know when service would be restored on the two lines.

Because Union Pacific handles roughly half the rail traffic out of California, the disruption could throttle the state’s farmers, shippers in the Mid-west and the Port of Long Beach, where goods imported from Asia are already stacked up on docks awaiting ship-

ments, economists said.

Union Pacific spokesman John Bromley said the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Co., which also operates a mainline from Long Beach to the Midwest and did not suffer any track damage, is permitting the Union Pacific to operate some trains on its tracks. Other trains will be rerouted, probably through Montana.

Union Pacific has suffered the most damage because its tracks are higher in elevation than Burlington Northern’s and were first to be hit by mudslides, Bromley said. The damage was made worse, he said, because “the slides have occurred in areas where we’ve had all the forest fires, and the ground cover was burned off.”

The disruption is the latest that the Union Pacific has had to deal with in the past decade. In the late 1990s, service was shut down as a result of teamwork disruptions. In one of the worst hazardous materials spills in 30 years, nine people were killed and 200 hospital patients were evacuated after a hazardous material spill in Graniteville, S.C.

The FRA also said a train’s conductor and engineer should sign a form acknowledging that they restore track switches to their normal position.

At one point, four of the railroad’s five rail lines in the Los Angeles area had been severed as a result of flooding and landslides associated with the storm that has battered Southern California.

Brother Hahs: ...
The Union Pacific’s request to inspect safety critical equipment on its trains in Mexico was denied on December 17 by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).

The Union Pacific sought a waiver that would allow inspection and testing of locomotive service performed by employees of Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana (TFM). The waiver, if granted by the FRA, would have allowed the TFM railroad to inspect the equipment and fulfill the requirements of "Pre-Departure Inspection," “End-of-Train Device Testing and Inspection,” and the all important, "Initial Terminal Class I Brake Test." The trains then would have been allowed to move into the U.S. for a distance of up to 1,000 miles before receiving another inspection.

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) testified against the Union Pacific’s request at an FRA public hearing in Washington, D.C., on October 1. During the hearing, Terry Briggs, Chairman of the BLET’s Texas State Legislative Board, testified that training materials provided to Mexican employees were faulty. In some cases, Briggs said, the translated material was not a direct translation of 49 CFR 232, 215, 229 and 231, portions of the Code of Federal Regulations that govern locomotive inspections. In addition, Briggs provided evidence that in some cases text was omitted or deleted, ranging from single words to entire sections of code.

The FRA cited the incorrect documentation as one of the four main reasons for rejecting the Union Pacific’s waiver request. Other reasons for rejecting the UP request include:

- Documentaton of employee training and qualifications. The FRA said that UP and TFM failed to provide documentation that TFM personnel are trained in accordance with standards equivalent to those required by the FRA.
- Inspection findings. The FRA found that the condition of autowrack unit trains as delivered by TFM to be unsatisfactory when compared with trains inspected by UP personnel, noting that “general manifest trains were notably inferior in quality.”
- Management of principal/agent relationship. In its decision, the FRA wrote that, “TFM maintains its own active transportation business and delivers trains to Texas-Mexican Railway, as well as UP. The Mexican Government does not yet enforce equivalent or comparable standards. Accordingly, UP will need to actively oversee TFM’s performance of inspections for UP.

In this regard, commenters called attention to safety problems recently evidenced on UP’s Southern Region, in contending in effect that this calls into question UP’s ability to manage this relationship.

BLET National President Don Hahs called the favorable ruling a victory for rail labor and thanked Brother Briggs and Brother Bob Harvey, the BLET’s Regulatory Research Coordinator, for performing critical testimony and evidence.

**FRA denies UP request to inspect trains in Mexico**

Ruling represents major victory for Rail Labor; BLET provides evidence key to FRA decision

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**BLET announces Long Term Disability plan for NS members**

The BLET’s Norfolk Southern Committee of Adjustees of Teachers are pleased to announce details of a Long Term Disability Plan for its members.

Each year, a review of all engineer's earnings will be made from July 1 through June 30 to determine who is eligible. Coverage will be updated every January 1. Coverage begins January 1, 2005.

**What should I do if I become disabled?**

Call the plan administrator, Vice General Chairman W.A. “Billy” Thompson, at his office (724) 695-3445 or his cell (412) 484-1289 as soon as possible if you believe that you will be out of work longer than 30 days. You don’t need to wait until 30 days goes by. This way the process will start sooner, getting you paid quicker.

Vice General Chairman Thompson will complete the employer section of a claim form and verify eligibility. He will mail you the claim form. Fill out the employee section and have your doctor complete the doctor section. Mail or fax the completed form and medical records to UNUM/Provident at the following address. The address is also at the top of the claim form.

**How is my claim processed by UNUM Provident once they receive my claim form?**

Your claim starts out in the Intake Department. A representative of the Intake Department will review your claim to make sure that all sections are included and that all of the required fields have been filled out. Then the Intake Specialist will route your claim to the appropriate benefit specialist, based upon your diagnosis, in one of five impairment units (cardiac, cancer, orthopedic, behavioral health or general medical) for management or payment.

Your benefit specialist will then review the claim and may request additional medical records from your physician. Once the benefit specialist has received all of the requested information, the file will be reviewed and a decision will be determined. You must be considered medically disabled and unable to perform the material and substantial duties of your regular occupation according to your policy.

**How do I check on the status of my claim once it has been received by UNUM Provident?**

Call the UNUM Provident Contact Center at (800) 656-6843. The Contact Center cannot make a decision about your eligibility to collect benefits but can answer many of the questions that you might have about your claim, i.e. “What is needed to complete my claim?” Your claims specialist requested the MRI report from your physician, once he receives that, we can make a decision on your claim.

**What should I do if I have a question or concern about my claim?**

Call Locomotive Disability Specialists at (800) 564-6445. Regina Cione, Christy Del Pizzo or Jim DiDonato will assist you with any questions. A PDF outlining the plan is on the BLET website at:

http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/NegotiatedBenefits.pdf

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**PASSAGER RAIL NEWS**

LIRR under fire from engineers for putting safety, passenger service at risk

The Long Island Railroad (LIRR) is under fire by locomotive engineers for taking unnecessary risks with safety and jeopardizing service to tens of thousands of commuters.

The LIRR, which has engaged Canadian firm Bombardier to perform maintenance work covered by warranty on commuter trains and cars at the Arch Street Yard in Queens, plans to use non-union, unqualified and uncertified Bombardier employees to operate trains beginning January 1, 2005 — putting safety at risk and violating the railroad’s contract with the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET).

Robert M. Evers, General Chairman of the BLET, which represents Engineers on the LIRR, notified LIRR President James Dermody that Locomotive Engineers will walk off the job if and when a Bombardier employee operates a train or moves an M-7 car anywhere on LIRR property.

In light of MTA/LIRR budget difficulties resulting in substantial fare increases and future service cutbacks, "We wonder who is responsible for spending millions of dollars of taxpayers' money to build a facility for the exclusive use of a private company," Chairman Evers said. "Perhaps an investigation by the MTA Inspector General or the appropriate State Agency is in order."

The Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen throughout the United States. It is a Division of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters' Rail Conference.
Coalition building

Coalition building has become a mainstay of progressive organizing in the labor movement. We are seeing the fruits of that strategy in the Teamsters Rail conference due to the recent creation of the Rail Labor Bargaining Coalition.

We recently saw a victory for rail safety when the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) which is part of the U.S. Department of Transportation, sided with law and denied Union Pacific’s UP’s request for a safety waiver. The UP waiver would have allowed locomotive engines to be inspected in a Mexican facility. Once through the Mexican facility, the locomotive would have been allowed to travel, unchecked, for up to 1,000 miles in the United States. We were not going to let this pass us by and we fought, together to bargain collectively with rail corporations.

Shouting “NMIE: Adding Insult to Injury,” and “NMIE: Don’t Silence Workers,” we made the NMIE board members well aware of our opposition to these fees. Let’s keep up the coalition building and solidarity in the rail conference – it’s a force for change in the industry!

Stay United, Proud and Strong!

James P. Hoffa
IBT General President

BLET gets 12th shortline victory

Shortline

Continued from Page 1

railroad operating east of Avondale, La. on the Westabak.

Predominate shipments include a variety of food products, oils, grains, petroleum products, chemicals and steel products. A new construction project for a safety waiver, a shortline and regional railroad holding company with operations in six states, maintains a 100% equity interest in this property. The NOGCR is a former Union Pacific Railroad branch line located outside New Orleans.

The NOGCR has been placed under the jurisdiction of the United States.

Continued on Page 4

Advisory Board November Activity

In accordance with the BLET Bylaws, summaries of BLET Advisory Board members’ activities are published monthly.

National President Don M. Hahs — National Division office: General supervision of BLET activities; General office duties; C&O General Chairman’s office; Office of the General Chairman — assigned to NS-Southern Lines and Eastern Region GCofAs; Missouri & Owyhee GCofA.

Vice-President Merle W. Geiger Jr. — Assigned to Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Montana Rail Link, Pacific Harbor Line; M&NA; Missouri & Owyhee GCofA.

Vice-President Jim Chew — Regional Vice-President, BLET Regional Office of the General Chairman, 15th Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84108; Assistant General Chairman, Southern Region and Eastern Region.

Vice-President Richard A. Mikos — Assistant General Chairman, BLET, Montana Region.

Vice-President David DeStefano — (Current) Assistant General Chairman. Montana Region.

Vice-President William E. Jordan — (Current) Assistant General Chairman. Great Northern Region.

Vice-President Samuel W. Knapp Jr. — (Current) Assistant General Chairman. Southern Region.

Vice-President Taiwanese H. N. Wu — (Current) Assistant General Chairman. Pacific Harbor Line.

Vice-President Dale Collier — (Current) Assistant General Chairman. Montana Region.

Vice-President Glen F. Welsh — (Current) Assistant General Chairman. Great Northern Region.

Vice-President Robert G. J. de Salvo — (Current) Assistant General Chairman. Southern Region.

Vice-President Donald P. Singer — Assistant General Chairman. Montana Region.

Vice-President Jeffrey A. Brandt — Assistant General Chairman. Great Northern Region.

Vice-President Ivan P. Brink — Assistant General Chairman. Pacific Harbor Line.

Vice-President Terry F. Wilson — Assistant General Chairman. Southern Region.

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Vice-President John S. Helm — Public Labor. BLET Board of Directors, 10610 South Central Avenue, Chicago, IL 60617.

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Joint Chief Financial Officer

Raymond A. Wolin
Vice-President & U.S. National Legislative Representative

BLET Press Office

(312) 241-3620

SAFETY TASK FORCE HOTLINE
(800) 306-5414

BLET News

A message from IBT General President James P. Hoffa

January 2005

Calendar & Events

February 20–23, 2005... Secretary-Treasurer Workshop, San Francisco, Calif. See Page 4 for registration information

March 6–9, 2005... Secretary-Treasurer Workshop, Denver, Colo. See Page 4 for registration information

March 13–16, 2005... Secretary-Treasurer Workshop, Chicago, Ill. See Page 4 for registration information

June 12–17, 2005... 78th Annual Southeastern Meeting Association, Montgomery, Ala. Hosted by members of BLET Division 74, the 78th annual OWA will be held at the Embassy Suites Hotel, 300 Tallapoosa St., Montgomery, Ala. The room rate is $114 per night and reservations can be made by calling: (334) 269-5035.

June 26–30, 2005... 67th Annual Eastern Union Meeting Association, Saratoga Springs Hosted by Arrangements Chairman Bill Kearing and the members of Division 46, 67th annual EUA will be held at the Prime Hotel Saratoga Springs, 534 Broadway, in Saratoga Springs. Brother Kearing reports that the hotel is now accepting early-bird reservations by calling (518) 584-6800 (or 888) 999-4771. Members should ask for the EUA rate when making reservations, which is $152 per night. Brother Kearing can be contacted at (518) 869-2297 or BKearing@rail.com.

July 3–6, 2005... 46th Annual International Western Convention, Calgary, Alberta Hosted by Mike Lindsey members of BLET Division 355, the 65th annual OWC will be held at the Fairmont Palliser, 133 9th Ave. SW, in Calgary. Room rates are $144 per night (Canadian). For details, contact Brother Lindsey at: <ble355ple@yahoohome.com>

October 2–4, 2005... 70th Annual Southwestern Convention Meeting, Oklahoma City Hosted by John Salisbury and the members of BLET Division 141, the 70th annual OBC will be held at the Renaissance Oklahoma City Convention Center Hotel, (405) 228-8000 or (800) 468-3576. More details to come when available.

Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen News

A Division of the Rail Conference, International Brotherhood of Teamsters

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FORTHCOMING: See Page 4 for registration information

FOSTERS: Send address changes to: Fosters, BLET, 1370 Ontario Street, Cleveland, OH 44113-1702

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BLET Communications Office

Don M. Hahs, National President
Edward W. Rodzwicz, First Vice-President & Alternate President
Raymond A. Wolin, Vice-President & U.S. National Legislative Representative

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