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# Locomotive

## ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN NEWS



FEBRUARY/MARCH 2013  
VOLUME 27, ISSUE 2

PUBLISHED BY THE BLET, A DIVISION OF THE RAIL CONFERENCE, INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS



## BLET CELEBRATES 150TH YEAR

150TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS PLANNED FOR DETROIT ON MAY 8, 2013

**T**he Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen will mark its 150th year birthday May 8, 2013. It is the oldest transportation labor organization in North America.

Founded May 8, 1863, at Detroit, Mich., the BLET has its headquarters in Cleveland, Ohio. It has more than 500 Divisions (locals) throughout the United States. The first unit of the Brotherhood to be formed was Division 1 in Detroit, Mich., on May 8, 1863.

The Brotherhood is returning to De-

troit in May of 2013 to host a celebration of this historic milestone. A series of meetings and events will culminate with a celebratory banquet the evening of May 8. All active and retired members are invited to attend. Registration information is available in this issue.

In the three decades before the founding of the BLET, locomotive engineers suffered abominable working conditions. The 24-hour workday was commonplace. Railroad magnates ran roughshod over employees. Strikes were mercilessly crushed.

Several attempts to organize locomotive engineers were made between 1855 and 1860. It wasn't until April 1863, however, that William D. Robinson, a Michigan Central locomotive engineer, brought 19 men of the craft together at his home in Marshall, Mich., and inspired them toward the organization, which survives today. A monument marking the event still stands in Marshall.

At a meeting in Detroit the following month, a dozen men agreed to put their destinies together. They cemented a common bond on May 8, 1863,

elected Robinson as their Grand Chief Engineer (president), and named the group the Brotherhood of the Footboard. By August 1863, 10 Divisions had been established — Detroit and Marshall, Mich.; Michigan City, Ind.; Adrian, Mich.; Norwalk, Ohio; two at Chicago, Ill.; Lafayette, Ind.; Crestline, Ohio; and LaPorte, Ind.

The name Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE) was adopted at the first national convention held in Indianapolis in August 1864.

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SEE PAGE 5 FOR MORE DETAILS ON 150TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION • WWW.BLE-T.ORG/BLET150

## BLET leaders press NTSB on safety concerns

**T**op BLET leaders took advantage of a two-day session on railroad safety in late February to bring key safety issues for locomotive engineers and trainmen to the attention to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), which is the transportation industry's primary accident investigation body.

On February 26, the NTSB conducted a hearing in connection with its on-going investiga-

tion into the June 24, 2012 high speed, head-on collision of two Union Pacific Railroad freight trains near Goodwell, Oklahoma. The accident claimed the lives of BLET Division 592 President Dan J. Hall, Division 592 Member John S. Hall and a conductor, and seriously injured a second conductor.

At this hearing, BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce participated in a panel of witnesses

who testified about accidents and incidents in which human factors play a role. Pierce informed the Board about the increasing complexity of the locomotive engineer's job because of new technologies, new regulations, and new operating requirements that force engineers to multi-task more now than ever before. He was also critical of the industry's punitive approach to discipline.

Pierce also pointed out that, at a time of legitimate transportation industry concern over distractions from personal electronic devices such as cell phones, BLET members are buried in a growing blizzard of electronic devices installed to increase productivity and monitor performance in ways that divert their vigilance from the roadway ahead.

A transcript of his testimony appears on Page 2 of this issue.

The BLET's Safety Task Force was in attendance as the union's representative at the hearing. The team included National Chairman W. C. Walpert, National Coordinator C. W. Fields, and Pri-

mary Investigators S. G. Palmer and J. D. Bullard.

On February 27, the NTSB conducted a day-long forum on Positive Train Control (PTC), which focused on implementation problems and delays the railroads say they are experiencing. Among the three panels to testify before the Board was one that included BLET Vice President S. J. Bruno, who coordinated the Organization's participation in developing a PTC regulation in 2009, after Congress mandated installation of the life-saving train control system following the tragic 2008 accident in Chatsworth, California.

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### BLET President's Message

Industry's punitive approach to discipline doesn't work **pg. 2**

### Runion Reelected

Begins third term as Chairman of Wyoming Legislative Board **pg. 4**



### 2013 SMA

Richmond to host BLET for 86th annual SMA **pg. 7**

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## BLET PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY DENNIS R. PIERCE

# NO ONE GOES TO WORK PLANNING ON RUNNING BY A RED SIGNAL

### PRESIDENT PIERCE'S TESTIMONY REGARDING SAFETY IN THE RAIL INDUSTRY

**BLET EDITOR'S NOTE:** On February 26, BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce testified before the National Transportation Safety Board regarding major safety concerns in the rail industry. A transcript of his testimony is published here in its entirety.

**M**adame Chairman — Members of the Board — good morning. I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide the views of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen concerning issues having life and death consequences for the BLET's 37,500 active members.

I'll start with our perspective regarding safety risks and implications and obstacles to improvement — task overload in the operating environment — performance expectations by the railroad — the effectiveness of post-incident remedial actions — and I'll close by contrasting legitimate safety culture with the reality in the field today.

The job of a locomotive engineer has become astonishingly more complicated since I was promoted 32 years ago — so much so that I can only touch upon a couple of critical concerns in the time allotted to me.

It is obvious to most of us that there are limitations on how many tasks any human being can safely accomplish at one time. Whether it be new technology, new regulations, or new operating requirements, engineers must multi-task more now than ever before, much of it under intense scrutiny via the railroads' technology that automatically downloads the locomotives' activities.

Although we are hopeful that current study at the Volpe Center on this very issue lead to the development of industry standards that will help in determin-

ing when task overload has created an unsafe condition, the industry as a whole has shown little interest in addressing this issue. For example, distributive locomotive power placed throughout the train and controlled by the engineer from the lead locomotive has become commonplace in the industry, especially on the Western roads. The challenge of keeping a train intact with different portions on different — and often opposite — grades is magnified today when a mid-train or rear end D-P consist must be operated separately from the head end consist.

Similarly, current regulations governing the use of train whistles require that much more attention be given to the timing and duration of whistling crossings, all under threat of disciplinary action for less than perfect compliance. Add that on many territories, engineers are inundated with written notices, bulletins and train orders that require them to carry and be familiar with reams of paperwork as they traverse the line on which they operate. While no single item on this list of duties would be of concern in most operating situations, the industry cannot deny that task overload exists and expect to avoid the disastrous consequences that follow when any engineer is expected to do more than is humanly possible.

Also from an operating perspective, today's engineers have far fewer approved train handling options than their predecessors. Power braking is largely prohibited; dynamic braking is mandated to conserve fuel and reduce wear and tear on brake shoes. More and more locomotives are being equipped with on-board fuel management electronics, which not only further reduce an engineer's operational choices, but the technology often reduces



President Pierce with newly-elected Local Chairman Randy Gorzell, BLET Division 197 (San Antonio, Texas). On February 19, President Pierce met Brother Gorzell and other new Local Division officers at a joint Local Chairman training class for the Union Pacific-Southern Region GCA (General Chairman Warren Dent); the Kansas City Southern GCA (General Chairman Sam Parker); and the BNSF/MRL GCA (General Chairman Matt Wilson).

available power when an engineer expects it least, further complicating his or her duties.

When I trained to become an engineer, I was taught that if your train isn't braking as expected, your job is to get stopped before passing the next signal — by any means necessary. Today's engineers are so intimidated by the threat of discipline up to and including dismissal for initiating heavy brake pipe reductions to get maximum braking effect, or for placing their train in emergency, that often do neither when they truly should.

It's ironic that — at a time of legitimate transportation industry concern over distractions from personal electronic devices such as cell phones — my members are buried in a growing blizzard of electronic devices installed to increase productivity and monitor performance in ways that divert their vigilance

from the roadway ahead — which no one seems to worry about.

With so many systems to manage, today's locomotive engineers are routinely put in situations where they are severely challenged to balance all that they have to do. Yet, the standard response when things go wrong is to continue to blame the worker by punishing the person, instead of fully investigating the root causes of events in this complex operating environment, then adjusting systems and procedures to reduce risk.

The fact is no one comes to work planning on running by a red signal. And no one learns to become a better engineer by spending up to two years unemployed for passing one. Nor does the industry reduce red signal infractions by firing engineers who pass a red signal to send a message to those that have never passed one. Such messages are

useless; no one passes a red signal on purpose.

In the aviation industry, pilots are trained in simulators to safely handle unexpected operating problems. Although UP has experimented with non-punitive programs — such as Clear Signal for Action and the Confidential Close Call Reporting System — neither program is designed to assess and then train to reduce signal violations. No train powers or brakes the same, and there are locations on every run where the average engineer hopes to never have to stop. I can still name those locations on my old run.

The industry must work with labor to identify problem locations or circumstances, as only through cooperation and training, will we create safer workplace. Anything short of that will fail to address red signal infractions in a way that avoids incidents that result in injury or fatality that the NTSB must investigate.

Every time a train being operated by a BLET member passes a red signal, it is matter of timing and inches that determine whether it will collide with another train being operated by a BLET member — that is life and death. We are a proud craft, and we do not take these risks lightly.

But we do not agree that any engineer should be blamed for the systemic risks created by adding layer upon layer of electronic technology without proper training and retraining, and with inadequate consideration of the complexities of the human-machine interface. The industry can do better than that. We are capable and ready to participate in that effort.

I thank you for your time and attention, and I'll try to answer any questions you may have.

**DENNIS R. PIERCE**  
BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT

66 The industry must work with labor to identify problem locations or circumstances, as only through cooperation and training, will we create safer workplace. Anything short of that will fail to address red signal infractions in a way that avoids incidents that result in injury or fatality that the NTSB must investigate. 99

## BLET NATIONAL DIVISION ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

**O**fficial communications between BLET members and the National Division require a hard copy of the correspondence, bearing a signature, being received by the National President to be considered an "official communication." This is to provide that the actual question(s) are addressed, and ensures that when official

interpretations are made they have reference to a specific request and can be used in future correspondence.

The volume of e-mails received makes it impossible for the National President to answer all unofficial communications. Therefore, it is the policy of the BLET that e-mails addressed to the National President will be reviewed and forwarded to

the appropriate officer or staff for a timely response; however, an e-mail message is not considered an official communication.

Moreover, anonymous e-mails and e-mails that do not provide sufficient information concerning the sender to enable National Division staff to confirm the sender's membership status will not receive any reply or acknowledgement. This poli-

cy is intended to allow the National President to be aware of the opinions and suggestions of the membership, while at the same time providing a timely response to the member's unofficial communication, if a response is necessary, without needlessly expending limited BLET resources.

**ADOPTED AT CLEVELAND, OHIO ON JULY 22, 2010. ©©**





## GENERAL PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY JAMES P. HOFFA

# CREATING JOBS MUST BE THE PRIORITY

Once again, the American people are being held hostage by a Congress that refuses to act. Republican lawmakers' allegiance to big business and the ultra-rich has caused yet another stalemate in our legislative branch. And once again, it will be America's working families that will pay the price.

Sequestration will cause thousands of American families to suffer because of \$85 billion in automatic spending cuts. These cuts will destroy jobs in education, eliminate critical services for the mentally ill and the elderly, cut health care for military families, threaten food safety and lead to the furlough of federal employees.

Austerity is destroying the economies of Europe and worsening the European debt crisis. Austerity here at home will destroy America's already fragile

economy and increase our deficit unless Congress acts.

The real root cause of our budget crisis is due to decades of misguided trade policy that has hollowed out our manufacturing base, caused wages to fall and starved our government of revenue. Bad trade policy hasn't hurt the richest Americans at all, in fact, their wealth has continued to climb while working men and women face less opportunities, inflation and stagnant wages. Our trade imbalance is masquerading as a debt crisis.

By not acting to end the sequester, Republicans are telling us that tax loopholes and their billionaire benefactors are more important than creating jobs and stimulating commercial activity in their own country. They prefer to defend an unfair tax code while attacking retirement and health benefits that Americans

work all their lives to earn.

Our government must get to work on continuing to strengthen our middle class and restore balance to an economy that favors excessive profits over workplace fairness. Job creation in our country is just starting to pick up steam and it would be a huge mistake to kill what little momentum we have with these wrong-headed and unneeded cuts due to sequestration.

This shameful attack on the American people must end and Congress must act to stop the sequester and get America working again.

Fraternally,

*James P. Hoffa*

**JAMES P. HOFFA**  
TEAMSTERS GENERAL  
PRESIDENT



By not acting to end the sequester, Republicans are telling us that tax loopholes and their billionaire benefactors are more important than creating jobs and stimulating commercial activity in their own country.

### NTSB SAFETY CONCERNS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Vice President Bruno echoed some of the themes raised in President Pierce's testimony. He told the Board that "in actuality, a two-mile-long train with a DP consist in the middle is, functionally, two one-mile-long trains coupled together and operated by a single locomotive engineer." Bruno then explained why PTC — as an overlay on top of existing signal systems — was a necessity.

"When first designed and installed, the current fixed signal systems were intended for use for single-train operations, and stopping distances were calculated on this basis, with an added margin for less than optimal braking performance. In many places that added margin is approaching or has reached its limitations for today's train weights and DP train operations. Increased stopping distance requires

increased warning distances to maintain the existing level of safety," Bruno said.

Bruno also urged the NTSB to stand firm against some in the railroad industry who are "resisting, watering down and lobbying against implementing PTC technology."

National President Pierce thanked the NTSB for providing a high-profile forum for the BLET's concerns. "I want to thank Chairman Hersman, all the Board members, and the NTSB's Technical Committees for their work this week," Pierce said.

"We had an opportunity to state our case for this life-saving system for operating employees and the travelling public. As a union, the Brotherhood's goal is to fight for a safe working environment for our members and to see they are able to safely go home to their families each and every time they go to work. I am hopeful that Brother Bruno and I were able to take steps toward achieving that goal," Pierce added. ©©

TO VIEW, DOWNLOAD OR PRINT  
THE TESTIMONY GIVEN BY  
VICE PRESIDENT BRUNO,  
VISIT THE BLET WEBSITE:  
[WWW.BLE-T.ORG/PR/PDF/BRUNO\\_NTSB\\_PTC.PDF](http://WWW.BLE-T.ORG/PR/PDF/BRUNO_NTSB_PTC.PDF)



Vice President Bruno

## SEQUESTER IMPACTS RUIA BENEFITS

REDUCED 9.2% AFTER FEBRUARY 28

The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board announced on March 8 that unemployment and sickness benefits payable under the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (RUIA) for days after February 28, 2013, are being reduced by 9.2% as part of a package of automatic spending cuts required by the Budget Control Act of 2011 (BCA), which was passed in August 2011. Retirement annuities paid under the age and service or occupational disability provisions of the Railroad Retirement Act are unaffected.

The Board's March 8 Notice states as follows: "This sequestration is the result of the failure of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction to propose, and Congress to enact, legislation reducing the deficit, as required by the BCA. Under the BCA, the cuts were triggered to take effect beginning January 1, 2013, if the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction did not agree to a \$1.2 trillion deficit-reduction package by November 23, 2011. The cuts were initially delayed but will now take effect March 1, 2013.

The initial reduction will continue through September 30, 2013. Congress will determine the amount of subsequent reductions for October 1, 2013 and beyond."

The Notice instructs BLET members who have questions regarding the reduction or sequestration of RUIA benefits to contact the Railroad Retirement Board's Quality Reporting Service Center at (312) 751-4992.

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce sharply criticized the forced cut in benefits. "Congress had a year and a half to get its act together and pass a deficit-reduction package that balances revenue increases and spending cuts," Pierce said. "Shame on those who stood in the way of a resolution that would have prevented harm to the most vulnerable of Americans."

Updates will be provided as additional information is obtained. ©©

The Railroad Retirement Board's Notice can viewed, printed or downloaded at: [www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/pl13-04.pdf](http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/pl13-04.pdf)

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enter your email address to begin receiving the most current news from the BLET National Division.

It is a great way to keep informed on the most recent issues impacting your job, your contract and your Brotherhood.



# Runion reelected Chairman of Wyoming State Legislative Board

**C**ory L. Runion was reelected by acclamation to his third term as Chairman of the Wyoming State Legislative Board following triennial meetings that concluded on February 21, 2013, in Cheyenne, Wyo.

Brother Runion, a member of Division 115 (Cheyenne), is a Union Pacific locomotive engineer who first joined the Brotherhood on December 1, 2000. He was elected Vice Chairman of the State Legislative Board in 2007, and assumed the Chairman's office on September 28, 2008, following the retirement for former State Chairman Terry R. Jones. Brother Runion was reelected by acclamation in 2010.

"I am honored to be elected to serve the Board and look forward to taking on the challenges we will face in the future," he said. "We have several new members on the Board and the activities during our meetings I believe have helped them as well as our returning Board members to become energized and given them new tools to do their jobs in their local Divisions."

Also elected by acclamation to three-year terms were: 1st Vice Chairman Terry L. Cooke, Division 103 (Cheyenne, Wyo.); 2nd Vice Chairman Gerald L. Hall, Division 44 (Cheyenne, Wyo.); Secretary-Treasurer Anthony P. Lecholat, Division 624 (Sheridan, Wyo.); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer George W. John-



Officers, members and guests attending the triennial meeting of the Wyoming State Legislative Board on February 21, 2013.



From left: Retiring WSLB Secretary-Treasurer Lawrence F. Kemper and WSLB Chairman Cory Runion.

son, Division 207 (Casper, Wyo.).

Elected by acclamation as members of the Audit Committee were: Steve S. Dyer, Division 31 (Bill, Wyo.); Jeff M. Leaf, Division 142 (Rawlins, Wyo.); and Eddie R. Sjostrom, Division 869 (Greybull, Wyo.).

Delegates honored retiring

Secretary-Treasurer Lawrence F. Kemper (Division 94, Gillette, Wyo.) and recognized his many years of service to the Board. "It has been such a pleasure to work with Brother Lawrence for these past years and he faithfully kept our Board's records in an exemplary manner," Chairman

Runion said. "We wish him the best in the future."

The delegates had a full schedule that included several guest speakers. BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce addressed the group and took questions.

"I congratulate Brother Runion and thank all officers and

members of the Wyoming State Legislative Board," President Pierce said. "I especially encourage the younger members of the Board to continue their work with the union, as you are the future of our Organization. Also, I thank Brother Lawrence Kemper for his many years of hard work on behalf of Brotherhood."

Vice President and National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman provided information about the 2012 election cycle and how the efforts of organized labor created the outcome that it did.

Additional guests included: Dave Geisler, General Chairman, UP-Eastern District GCA; Jim Wilmesher, Chairman, Colorado State Legislative Board; Dave Ditzel, BLET Special Representative; Kim Floyd, Executive Secretary, Wyoming AFL-CIO; John Manutes, Lakewood District Chief Inspector, Federal Railroad Administration; Dan Neal, Executive Director, Wyoming Equality State Policy Center; and retired former BLET Wyoming State Legislative Board Chairman Terry Jones.

The delegates also heard from several members of the Wyoming State legislature, which is currently in session in Cheyenne. Among them was State Senator John Hastert, who is also the Vice President of the Wyoming AFL-CIO.

The meeting was especially proud to welcome State Legislative Representatives Ken Esquibel and Lee Filer, who in addition to their service in the Wyoming legislature are members of BLET Division 115 in Cheyenne. Esquibel's brother Floyd A. Esquibel, a State of Wyoming Senator, was also in attendance. @@

## PROUD MEMBERS OF BLET DIVISION 56, COLTON, CALIF.

**M**embers of BLET Division 56 in Colton, Calif., have submitted a group photo taken at their regular Division meeting on March 13, 2013. A key topic of the meeting was the Article 9 notice for the LA Basin followed by a general discussion for the good of the order. BLET National Vice President Mike Twombly and General Chairman Bill Hannah (Union Pacific-Western Lines GCA) were in attendance. Brother Hannah has been a member of Division 56 since 1982.

**Seated, from left:** Stooky Durazo; Kent A. Richards; Brian J. Becker, Secretary-Treasurer; General Chairman Hannah; and Chris Madera. **Standing:** Andrew Rentas Jr.; Frank Durazo; Eustaquio Durazo Jr.; Charles F. Henninger Jr.; R. Dean Dodson; Scott D. Gonzales; Chris T. Ranford, Legislative Representative; Ken J. Thompson; Vice President Twombly; Bryan A. Millard; Israel Razo; Matt R. Bauman; and Danny L. Holmes.



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# A CELEBRATION 150 YEARS IN THE MAKING

**BLET 150TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT PLANNED FOR MAY 7-9TH IN DETROIT, MI**

**O**n May 8, 2013, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen — the oldest labor union in North America — is celebrating the 150th Anniversary of its founding in Detroit, Michigan.

The BLET's members, friends and colleagues will gather at the Westin Book Cadillac Detroit hotel — the same hotel where we celebrated our 75th and 100th Anniversaries — to commemorate this momentous occasion. To honor this historic milestone, we are planning an event that will demonstrate to government, the industry and the nation why we are proud to be American and proud to be Union. Event registration forms, hotel information, and a schedule of events is on the BLET website, [www.ble-t.org/blet150](http://www.ble-t.org/blet150).

The impetus for creating the Brotherhood began in Marshall, Mich., with engineers employed by the Michigan Central Railroad. But Detroit is the city where it all began for the Brotherhood. On May 8, 1863, American labor history was made in Detroit with the founding of the Brotherhood of the Footboard. The Organization's name was changed one year later to Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, and then to Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen in 2004.

As part of the festivities, members can register for trip to the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Mich., on the evening of May 7. It is one of America's outstanding museums and museum villages. The trip will include trans-

portation to and from Greenfield Village, a cocktail reception, dinner, and a train ride. Greenfield Village's "Railroad Junction" area features an operating steam powered locomotive and the Detroit, Toledo & Milwaukee roundhouse, which was moved to Greenfield Village from Marshall, Mich., approximately 10 years ago. It is the only working late 19th-century roundhouse in the Midwest.

On May 8, members will enjoy guest speakers throughout the day as well as a specially produced video that explores the history of the BLET and the challenges the Organization has faced over the past

150 years. The list of guest speakers was unavailable at press time. The evening will conclude with a celebratory banquet and dance.

On May 9, the festivities come to a close with the BLET 150th Anniversary Fundraising Golf Tournament. Tee time is 10 a.m. at TPC Michigan in Dearborn. The course plays homage to Scottish style links and is a Jack Nicklaus signature course. Built on land originally purchased by Henry Ford, the course was the world's first to receive the John James Audubon Environmental Steward Award for ecological restoration.

We hope you will join us in Detroit for the festivities. ©©

**IN THE EVENT THAT BLET ROOMS AT THE WESTIN BOOK CADILLAC DETROIT ARE SOLD OUT, OVERFLOW HOTEL INFORMATION WILL BE POSTED AT [WWW.BLE-T.ORG/BLET150](http://WWW.BLE-T.ORG/BLET150)**



**Westin Book Cadillac Detroit:** The Brotherhood has held its 75th, 100th and now 150th anniversary celebrations at this same hotel. Photo: courtesy Westin Book Cadillac Detroit

**EVENT REGISTRATION FORMS, HOTEL INFORMATION, AND A SCHEDULE OF EVENTS IS ON THE BLET WEBSITE, [WWW.BLE-T.ORG/BLET150](http://WWW.BLE-T.ORG/BLET150)**

## BLET 150TH ANNIVERSARY

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In 2004, the BLE merged with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters as the founding member of the Teamsters Rail Conference. After 140 years (1864-2004), the organization changed its name to Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET).

The BLET was the first labor organization to obtain contracts with railroads. Among the earliest was an agreement with the former New York Central in 1875. Today, the BLET has scores of contracts with railroads large and small, and represents locomotive engineers on 98 percent of rail trackage in the United States.

The BLET was a pioneer in the field of labor journalism. It began a monthly journal in 1867. Current official publications include a quarterly magazine, Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Journal, and a monthly newsletter, Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen News. The National Division of the BLET has maintained a website since 1996, [www.ble-t.org](http://www.ble-t.org), posting daily news stories and periodic News Flash updates that are emailed to thousands of members.

In cooperation with other railroad brotherhoods, the BLET spearheaded the drive to make the 24-hour workday illegal. This was accomplished in 1907 through the Hours of Service Act, which



In the early 1860s, U.S. Military Railroad locomotive "General J.C. Robinson" and other equipment at City Point, Va. The locomotive is typical of ones operated by early Brotherhood members. Library of Congress photo

set a 16-hour maximum.

The Adamson Act of 1916, providing for the eight-hour day, was also a result of the BLET's leadership. An original copy of the Act is kept at BLET National Division headquarters in Cleveland, along with the fountain pen used by President Woodrow Wilson to sign the legislation. It was the first federal law dealing with overtime pay.

The BLET also had a leading role in persuading Congress to pass the Railroad Labor Act in 1926. The act, amend-

ed several times since then, provides procedures for handling labor-management disputes over wages and working conditions.

The Railroad Retirement and Unemployment Insurance Acts, which became effective in 1937, are railroad industry's counterparts of the Social Security system. They represent another instance of social progress in which the BLET played an important part.

The Brotherhood has always been proud to support America's soldiers and

their families. Our union's membership has been comprised of veterans of every major military conflict since its founding, up to and including the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. With BLET members at the throttle, U.S. railroads carried 90 percent of all military freight and 97 percent of all military passenger movements during World War II.

Greater safety on the job and greater safety for the shipping and traveling public have always been BLET's goals. Legislative activities by the BLET and other rail unions have resulted in the Locomotive Inspection Act and statutes requiring the use of air brakes, automatic couplers, electric headlights, power-reverse gears and other technological improvements.

The BLET was again at the forefront in persuading Congress to pass the Railroad Safety Improvement Act of 2008. The legislation calls for the implementation of Positive Train Control technology to make the rail industry safer and more efficient, and contains important whistleblower provisions to protect workers who report unsafe conditions while on duty.

National President Dennis R. Pierce is the 23rd chief in the BLET's long history. He has held the post since July 1, 2010, succeeding Paul T. Sorrow. The BLET represents more than 55,000 active and retired locomotive engineers and trainmen throughout the United States. ©©

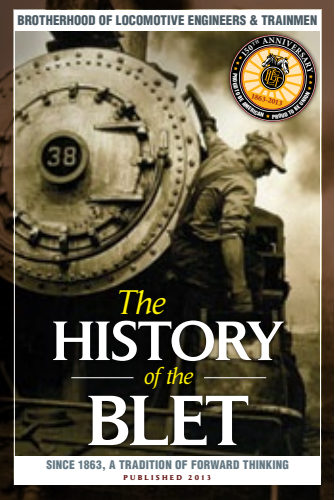


# BLET PUBLISHES 150TH ANNIVERSARY HISTORY BOOK

In honor of its 150th anniversary, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen is publishing a new history book that will be released in May 2013. The book will be mailed along with a commemorative key chain to all active and retired BLET members.

The book describes the difficult working conditions of the earliest locomotive engineers who went on to establish the Brotherhood in 1863, outlining their motivations and drive to form a protective society. The new history book goes on to describe the Organization's greatest achievements over the past 150 years, while touching upon the tough times as well.

The book updates previous histories that were published by the Organization in 1977 and in 1998. The new book contains



updated photography, adding new photography from the modern era along with newly uncovered photographs and artwork from the earliest days of the Brotherhood. A new narrative of events brings members up to speed from 1998 through 2013. Also, the new book contains a



Cover of the new BLET History Book (left) and various versions of the BLET logo over the years.

special section chronicling the evolution of the Brotherhood's logo over the past 150 years.

"The BLET History Book is something I know all members will be proud of," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "This new book is the result of countless hours of research, writing, editing, and design. The final product is a

beautiful book that will be a keepsake for years to come."

Along with the history book, members will be mailed a commemorative 150th anniversary key chain. The key chain will show the current BLET logo on one side and a highly-detailed steam locomotive and modern diesel locomotive on the other. @@

## EXCERPT FROM BLET HISTORY BOOK

**"We are here as gentlemen, representing gentlemen, and desire to be treated as such."**

A group of 13 Michigan Central engineers, failing to find privacy for a meeting on company property, gathered at the home of William D. Robinson of Marshall, Michigan, to discuss conditions and map out a plan of action.

They agreed that if any one of them were discharged by [A.S. Sweet, the Michigan Central's superintendent], the rest would quit on the spot. A circular was prepared and they all signed it. Then they carried further their plan, which they called a Protective Association. If other engineers affiliated with the group, they, too, would be required to promise to quit work if any member was fired.

Copies of the circular were distributed over the Michigan Central and other engineers, subscribing to the oath, joined the movement with enthusiasm. A committee was formed and went to Sweet's office. Sweet refused to see them at first, refusing even to speak to them. But through patiently explaining their mission, the group finally obtained his consent for an interview. He is said to have called out to the waiting members of the committee as he entered his office: "Well, boys, what do you propose to do, shut up the road?"

Sam Hill, one of the committee replied, "We are here as gentlemen, representing gentlemen, and desire to be treated as such."

Hill went on to say that the committee was acting as a unit and that they were speaking for all the engineers from Detroit to Chicago — that they had grievances that they wished to adjust. The committee discussed all of the points at issue very thoroughly and it ended by Sweet granting the whole of their requests.

When the success of this conference became known, it gave a tremendous impetus to the Protective Association and it was decided to extend the movement to all railroads. A call for a general meeting was then issued, to be held in Detroit on May 5, 1863.

The Detroit convention marked a new age in the organization of American railroad workers. It brought together engineers from the Michigan Central, Michigan Southern & Northern Indiana, Detroit & Milwaukee, Grand Trunk, and Michigan Southern. Together, the 12 delegates in attendance drafted a constitution that combined democratic control with efficient central administration, thus solving the fundamental problem that had wrecked many previous labor organizations.

After three days of deliberations and planning for the future, the delegates on May 8, 1863, joined hands and obligated themselves to abide by the constitution, forming the pioneer division of the "Brotherhood of the Footboard," with W. D. Robinson as chief engineer. This division — No. 1 in Detroit — still maintains its proud position as first on the roster of over 500 divisions of the BLET. @@



## BROTHERHOOD OF LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND TRAINMEN

### 150TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION MAY 8, 2013

Reservations are available at **Westin Book Cadillac** 1114 Washington Blvd. Detroit, MI 48226, Reservations Number: 888-627-7150. Attendees are responsible for their own arrangements. Be sure to ask for the BLET-150 Group Rate when making your reservation. The room block at the Westin is limited to 250 rooms. Room rates are \$132.00 per night plus 15% tax if reserved prior to April 17, 2013.

#### 150TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Name	
Address	
City	State / Zip
Phone	Email
BLET Div #	BLET Title
BLET Aux #	Aux Title
Company Name	Company Title

#### PRE-REGISTRATION / REGISTRATION FEES

Date	Activity	Fee	# Attending	Total
Registration Fee for the BLET 150th Anniversary Event on or before April 24, 2013		\$100.00		
Registration Fee for the BLET 150th Anniversary Event after April 24, 2013		\$125.00		
Tuesday May 7, 2013 6:00 PM – 10:00 PM EDT	Cocktail Reception, Dinner and Train Ride: Greenfield Village – Dearborn, MI	\$50.00		
Wednesday May 8, 2013 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM EDT	150th Anniversary Program: Woodward Ballroom Westin Book Cadillac	Included		
Wednesday May 8, 2013 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM EDT	Lunch	Included		
Wednesday May 8, 2013 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM EDT	150th Anniversary Program: Woodward Ballroom Westin Book Cadillac Continues	Included		
Wednesday May 8, 2013 6:00 PM – 12:00 AM EDT	Reception, Dinner Banquet and Dance with Live Band: Westin Book Cadillac Venetian and Crystal Ballrooms	Included		
Thursday May 9, 2013 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM EDT	Fundraising Golf Tournament (See separate form)	Separate Registration		
TOTAL FOR ALL REGISTERED EVENTS				\$

Make checks payable to: BLET 150th Anniversary Celebration Fund  
Please mail them to: BLET 150th Anniversary Event, 1370 Ontario St., Standard Building – Mezzanine, Cleveland, OH 44113-1702





# Richmond to host BLET for 86th annual SMA

All members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) are invited to Richmond, Va., for the 86th annual Southeastern Meeting Association (SMA) from June 23-28, 2013.

SMA Arrangements Chairman Tory Bryant (Local Chairman, Division 532) and Co-Chairman Dave Powers (Secretary-Treasurer, Division 532) have organized a program of entertainment and education for BLET members and their families.

Guests will stay at the Hilton Richmond Hotel & Spa in Richmond/Short Pump, where the BLET has secured a room rate of \$129 per night. Reservations must be made by June 1, 2013. Registration deadline for the SMA convention is May 17. Registration is still open after May 17, but the fee will increase by \$40. Those who make hotel reservations by May 15 will be eligible for a drawing to receive a free night's stay to be given away during the week of the convention.

Hotel reservations and SMA registration forms are available at the SMA website, <http://www.sma2013.net>, or the BLET National Division website, <http://www.ble-t.org/sma>.

Workshops will feature specialized training for BLET Legislative Representatives, Secretary-Treasurers, Local Chairmen, and Division Presidents. Also available are: a workshop on the BLET mobilization network; a mock Public Law Board; a seminar with the Federal Railroad Administration; and an informational presentation on the BLET health & welfare plan.

Entertainment activities will include a welcome reception to kick off the SMA on June 23, a casino night (June 24), the annual SMA golf outing (June 25), a tour of Virginia's historic Maymont estate (June 25), discount tickets to King's Dominion theme park (June 25), and the annual SMA banquet (June 27).

"The members of Division 532 are proud to welcome all BLET members to Richmond for the 86th annual SMA,"



**Historic Richmond:** The Canal Walk (above), Abraham Lincoln Statue (top right) and Monument Avenue (middle right) are among the sights that await BLET members in Richmond (bottom right) during the 2013 SMA.



Brother Bryant said. "Our agenda offers something for everyone — educational opportunities for members, shopping and historic tours for spouses, and theme park attractions for families. I hope to see you all in Richmond in June."

For more information, please contact SMA Chairman Troy Bryant or Co-Chairman at the SMA Hotline: (804) 571-0273 or [86thsma2013@gmail.com](mailto:86thsma2013@gmail.com). @@

2013

## Calendar & Events

### PLAN AHEAD FOR 2013

**June 23-28, 2013**  
**86th Annual Southeastern Meeting Association (SMA)**  
**RICHMOND, VA.**

Arrangements Chairman Troy Bryant, Local Chairman of Division 532, welcomes all BLET members to historic Richmond/Short Pump, Va., for the 2013 SMA. See above.

**July 14-July 18, 2013**  
**73rd Annual International Western Convention**  
**SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.**

Hosted by Co-chairmen Luis Chavez Jr., Local Chairman of Division 283 (Oakland, Calif.) and Oscar Burrola, Local Chairman of Division 839 (Richmond, Calif.), at the Hilton San Francisco Financial District Hotel for the 2013 IWC. [www.iwc2013.org](http://www.iwc2013.org)

**July 28-August 1, 2013**  
**75th annual Eastern Union Meeting Association (EUMA)**  
**BALTIMORE, MD.**

Arrangements Chairman Fred Cox, Local Chairman of BLET Division 52, welcomes all BLET members to Baltimore for the 2013 EUMA. [blet.org/EUMA](http://blet.org/EUMA)

**August 25-29, 2013**  
**78th annual Southwestern Convention Meeting (SWCM)**  
**NEW ORLEANS, LA.**

Arrangements Chairman Arlin Todd, Chairman of the Louisiana State Legislative Board, welcomes all BLET members to the Loews New Orleans Hotel for the 2013 SWCM. More details to come.

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Edit	View	Tools
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Form B - Work Limit		Ctrl + B
Run Through Switch		Ctrl + R
Collision		Ctrl + C
Blue Flag		Ctrl + F
Improper Train Handling		Ctrl + H
Equipment Damage		Ctrl + E
Foul Tracks		Ctrl + L
Bypassed Drawbar		Ctrl + P
Sideswipe		Ctrl + S
Yellow Flag		Ctrl + Y
Crossover Switch		Ctrl + O
Unauthorized Movement		Ctrl + U

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## Locomotive Engineers And Trainmen News Brotherhood Of Locomotive Engineers And Trainmen A Division Of The Rail Conference, International Brotherhood Of Teamsters

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VOLUME 27 • NUMBER 2 • February/March 2013

### LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN NEWS (ISSN 0898-8625)

is published monthly by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen,  
1370 Ontario Street, Cleveland, OH 44113-1702.  
Periodicals postage paid at Cleveland, OH.

USPS: 0002-244 ISSN: 0898-8625

### POSTMASTER: Send address changes to

Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen News — BLET Records Department,  
1370 Ontario Street, Mezzanine Cleveland, OH 44113-1702.

Periodicals Postage  
PAID  
at Cleveland, OH.

2/13

### Photo of the Month: February/March 2013

**MASONIC BROTHERS:** The early members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE) had strong Masonic beliefs, as evidenced by this recently uncovered photo of a BLE meeting in Illinois, which was taken in the early to mid-1870s. During early Division meetings, officers wore Masonic regalia with ornamentation that signified the office held (Chief Engineer, Secretary-Treasurer, Guide, Chaplain, etc...). **Photo:** BLET Archives  
**This is the second in a series of photos from the BLET archives that will be published this year in recognition of the Organization's 150th anniversary. The BLET was founded as the Brotherhood of the Footboard on May 8, 1863.**



**Are you a photographer?** The National Division's Public Relations Department, which produces the News-letter each month, has received numerous inquiries lately from BLET members volunteering to contribute their

images to the "Photo of the Month" section of the News-letter. If you'd like to submit a photo for consideration, you may call Editor John Bentley at (216) 241-2630, ext. 248, or you can email: Bentley@ble-t.org.

Please note only high resolution images can be used. Members are also encouraged to review their employer's policies regarding the use of cameras and other electronic devices while on duty.

## Advisory Board December 2012 & January 2013 Activity

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

**NATIONAL PRESIDENT DENNIS R. PIERCE:** National Division Office, Cleveland; General supervision of BLET activities; General office duties; Correspondence and telephone communications; Supervision of Office Administration; General Supervision of Special Representatives; President, Teamsters Rail Conference; Policy Committee, Teamsters Rail Conference; IBT General Executive Board mtg., Washington, D.C.; BLET Secretary-Treasurer training, Cleveland; Secretary-Treasurer workshop, San Diego, Calif.; CRLO mtgs., Hollywood, Fla.

**FIRST VICE PRESIDENT E.L. "LEE" PRUITT:** National Duties include but not limited to: Director, Passenger Dept.; Shortline Organizing Dept.; Trainmen's Dept.; National Publications Committee; National Legislative Board; Teamsters Rail Conference Policy Committee; PRAC; and National Negotiations; National Duties; Holiday and vacation; Presidential Inauguration, Washington, D.C.; CRLO mtgs., Hollywood, Fla.

**NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER WILLIAM C. WALPERT:** General supervision of accounting dept., records dept., online services dept., tax compliance dept.; Education & Training Dept.; Internal Organizing, Mobilizing & Strategic Planning Dept.; Safety Task Force; Meetings with vendors and financial institutions; Publications Committee; Teamsters Rail Conference Policy Committee; Trustee, National Railroad Retirement Investment Trust (NRRIT); NRRIT mtg., Washington, D.C.; Secretary-Treasurer workshop, Cleveland; Holiday; Secretary-Treasurer LM-2 workshop, San Diego, Calif.; CRLO mtgs., Hollywood, Fla.

**VICE PRESIDENT & NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE JOHN P. TOLMAN:** Assigned to BLET Washington, DC office; BLET Security Officer; General office duties, telephone, correspondence communications; Coordinate content of NLO website; Weekly Drive Committee and Legislative meetings; Hearing on high-speed and intercity passenger rail; Testified at hearing on future of Northeast Corridor (re: options for high-speed rail development and opportunities for private sector participation); Democratic governors' association mtgs.; Attended swearing in receptions for multiple members of the U.S. House and Senate; Mtg. w/ OneRail, Washington, D.C.; Mtg. w/ CSX Vice President-federal relations, Washington, D.C.; Inauguration events, Washington, D.C.; Swearing in of President Obama, Washington, D.C.; Attended several inaugural events and balls; Met with rail labor representatives regarding PRIIA and RSIA reauthorization, Washington, D.C.; CRLO mtgs., Hollywood, Fla.; Mtgs. w/ NMB and TTD; Various receptions and meetings with members of U.S. House of Representatives and Senate.

**VICE PRESIDENT MARCUS J. RUEF:** Vice Chairman, full NRAB; Labor Member, 1st Division; Labor Member, National Mediation Board Arbitration Advisory Forum; Director of Arbitration Dept; Assigned to Illinois Central; Wisconsin Central; Grand Trunk Western; Duluth Missabe & Iron Range; Elgin, Joliet & Eastern; Indiana Harbor Belt; and Belt Railway of Chicago; Assist GC Karakian w/ rules issue, GTW; Assist GC Craddock w/ arbitration prep, IC, Chicago; Assist GC Reynolds w/ mediation prep, WC, Green Bay; Assist GC Rhodes w/ procedural disciplinary issues, UP-C, Chicago; UP grievance mediation, NRAB, Chicago; Assist GC Reynolds w/ EJ&E coordination; NRAB issues w/ Referee Darby; Vacation and holiday; WC section 6 mediation, Chicago; Prep. for PLB hearings, PLB 7591 and 7592, referee Simon, W&LE, Chicago; Assist GC Craddock w/ Section 6 negotiations, IC, Chicago; CRLO mtgs., Hollywood, Fla.

**VICE PRESIDENT MIKE TWOMBLY:** Assigned to all Union Pacific GCAs (Eastern District, Northern Region (former C&NW), Western Lines (Pacific Harbor Lines), Western Region (Portland & Western, Eastern Idaho), Central Region, Southern Region (New Orleans & Gulf Coast); On duty at home office; BLET Division 191 annual holiday and retirement party, Fitchburg, Mass.; Wheeling & Lake Erie mediation cases (A-13672 and A-13673) at National Mediation Board, Washington, D.C.; PLB 7173,

UP-Eastern District GCA, Kansas City, Mo.; SBA 1063, Norfolk Southern-Northern Lines, Roselle, Ill; PLB 7158, UP-Southern Region, Estero, Fla.; Tacoma Rail Section 6 negotiations, Tacoma, Wash.; Longview Switching Co. discipline claims conference, Longview, Wash.; UP-SR NYD S/4 conference, Boston; CRLO mtgs., Hollywood, Fla.

**VICE PRESIDENT WILLARD E. KNIGHT:** Assigned to: All Norfolk Southern General Committees; Wheeling & Lake Erie; Chicago, Fort Wayne & Eastern; New York, Susquehanna & Western; New England Central; Connecticut Southern; Western New York & Pennsylvania; Indiana & Ohio; Ohio Central; Grand Trunk Western; General office duties, telephone, correspondence communications, prepare for PLBs, etc.

**VICE PRESIDENT GIL GORE:** Assigned to all CSX; Union Pacific-Southern Region GCA special assignment; Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC) issues, CSXT; General office duties, paperwork, correspondence, telephone calls, etc.; IRR contract ratification mtgs., Indianapolis, Ind.; Article 61 Qualification conference call, CSX LR and GCs; Attend funeral of former GC Gene Thompson, Scott City, Mo.; Holiday and vacation.

**VICE PRESIDENT MICHAEL D. PRIESTER:** Assigned to all BNSF (former ATSF, former C&S, CRI&P, FWD, former STL-SF, BNSF/MRL), Panhandle Northern, Missouri & North Arkansas, Montana Rail Link, Austin Western RR, Great Western; General office duties, telephone, correspondence communications, etc.; MN&A contract talks, GC Gibbons, Dallas/Fort Worth; Meetings w/ Divisions 238, 402, 518 and 758, w/ BNSF GC Wilson, Vancouver-Pasco, Wash.; Austin Western contract negotiations w/ BNSF GC Wilson, Dallas/Fort Worth; Vacation; Division 238 and 402 meetings, w/ BNSF GC Wilson, Tacoma-Pasco, Wash.; Division 644 mtg. w/ BNSF GC Wilson, Galesburg, CRLO mtgs., Hollywood, Fla.

**VICE PRESIDENT COLE W. DAVIS:** Assigned to: Kansas City Southern (MidSouth Rail, SouthRail, Gateway Western, Illinois & Midland), Texas Mexican Rwy.; CP Rail System/US (Indiana Southern, Iowa, Chicago & Eastern, Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern); Springfield Terminal (St. Lawrence & Atlantic, Montreal, Maine & Atlantic, Delaware & Hudson), Cedar River, Louisville & Indiana, Huron & Eastern; General office duties, telephone, correspondence communications, etc.; Assist GC Parker, KCS issues; Division 548 mtg., GC Linsey, Peru, Ind.; MM&A negotiations w/ GC Moore, Rosemont, Ill.; Assist GC Craddock, KCS issues; Assist GC Rodriguez, Tex Mex issues; Assist GC Semenek, CP issues; Division 527 mtg., GC Parker, Pittsburg, Kan.; Division 569 mtg. and Christmas party, GC Parker, Poteau, Okla.; Assist GC Baringer, Huron & Eastern issues; Section Four notice, GC Parker and GC Craddock; Huron & Eastern issues w/ Lorenz; Louisville & Indiana Section 6, GC Hartill; PLB 7239, GC Craddock, Portland, Ore.; Mtg. on Section 4 notice, GC Parker; CP pending arbitration, GC Semenek; Springfield Terminal issues and Delaware & Hudson issues, GC Moore; CRLO mtgs., Hollywood, Fla.

**VICE PRESIDENT STEPHEN J. BRUNO:** Assigned to various Rail Safety Advisory Committees (RSAC); Regulatory duties as assigned by the President; Amtrak; Long Island Rail Road; New York & Atlantic; Metro North; New Jersey Transit; PATH; SEPTA; Metra; Union Railroad; Birmingham Southern; Telephone calls, correspondence, general office duties, etc.; Metra contract negotiations with labor coalition, Chicago; Division 269 mtg., LIRR, Hauppauge, N.Y.; Division 373 mtg., NJT, Borden-town, N.J.; Mtg. w/ counsel and labor coalition, NMB/PEG, SEPTA, Philadelphia; Briefs for PLB 5210, PATH; Briefs for NRAB First Division, SEPTA; Conference call, re: STB McKeesport & PLB 940 Holt, URR & NJT; Mtg. w/ FRA Strang, re: BNSF pilot, Washington, D.C.; LIRR, Metro North and ACRE issues, Babylon, N.Y.; PLB 5210, PATH, New York, NY; NRAB First Division, SEPTA, re: security vests, Chicago; FMP RSAC, Washington, D.C.; METRA contract negotiations, Chicago; NECSC, Philadelphia; CRLO mtgs., Hollywood, Fla.

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