Rail Labor to resume bargaining with carriers

Pressure from labor forces NCCC to return to negotiations

Late on February 13, the National Carriers Conference Committee (NCCC) withdrew its request for rail mediation, representing a victory for BLET members and all of Rail Labor.

Withdrawal of the request means that the NCCC has agreed to continue bargaining with Rail Labor as opposed to seeking a formal process through Congress via a Presidential Emergency Board.

“It was a hard-earned victory for our members and Rail Labor,” said BLET National President Don Hahs. “Countless telephone calls, e-mails and faxes from BLET members helped persuade the National Mediation Board to keep the NCCC in mediation, and pressured the NCCC to continue bargaining.”

As part of a joint campaign, BLET and UTU members bombarded the National Mediation Board (NMB) with letters, faxes, e-mails and telephone calls in an effort to make a point: Rail Labor wants a negotiated settlement during this round of collective bargaining. Since February, employees have switchboard has received an average of one telephone call per minute requesting that the Board keep the parties at the bargaining table.

Substantial support for the campaign came from the Rail Labor Coalition (RLC), Change to Win Federation, the AFL-CIO and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

Labor’s campaign influenced two key Republican leaders in Congress, who issued stern warnings to the carriers not to seek the assistance of Congress in imposing a forced contract on Rail Labor through a Presidential Emergency Board.

Representative Don Young (R-Alaska), Chairman of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, issued his warning on January 23.

Representative Steven LaTourette (R-Ohio), chairman of the House Subcommit-tee on Railroads, issued his warning on December 14, 2005, less than a year into the current round of negotiations. Labor protested and the NMB set dates for more bargaining sessions, but the carriers refused to withdraw their request for re-

Carriers’ 99 percent likely to appeal ruling on Family and Medical Leave Act; Won’t change policy for now

Rail Labor secured a major court victory for its members in a decision released by the U.S. District Court in Chicago on January 3 regarding the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

The union challenged a decision made by the major rail carriers to force their employees to exhaust their vacation and personal leave days for FMLA purposes before taking the unpaid leave they are entitled to under federal law. U.S. District Judge Wayne R. Andersen sided with the unions, ruling that the FMLA does not allow carriers to force employees to substitute paid vacation and personal leave for unpaid leave when existing collective bargaining agreements give the employees — not the carriers — the right to decide when to use their paid leave.

The court held that “if a CRA gives employees the right to determine when, or in what manner, they take accrued vacation and/or personal leave, an employer cannot change CRA to use such vacation and/or per-

A copy of the joint letter is available on Page 5 of this issue.

BLET, labor wins first round in FMLA court battle

Carriers’ 99 percent likely to appeal ruling on Family and Medical Leave Act; Won’t change policy for now

Protection and benefits for Rail Labor

Setting past differences aside, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) and the United Transportation Union (UTU) have agreed to work together on a joint campaign to ensure a successful outcome to the current round of collective bargaining.

During negotiations, the major rail carriers have al-
tended to past differences between the BLET and the UTU as a wedge to reduce crew size. Reducing crew size puts the lives of all rail workers and the general public in danger. It also seri-

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Here is the list of official BLET delegates to the First National Convention of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, as reported by BLET delegates to the First National Convention of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen as required by Section 20, Paragraph (g) of the BLET By-laws.

All BLET divisions are listed below in numerical order, followed by the delegate's name.

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As reported by BLET delegates to the First National Convention of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, as reported by BLET delegates to the First National Convention of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen.
Organized labor successfully lobbied for the defeat of a controversial $140 billion asbestos bill in the Senate on February 14 by a vote of 58-41.

Labor, including the Change to Win Federation, opposed the bill for various reasons. The BLET put out a call to its members on February 8, asking them to urge their Senators to vote no on the measure. The Brotherhood’s State Legislative Board Chairmen also spent a great deal of time and effort lobbying against the bill.

“Their efforts were successful as the bill was ultimately defeated by two votes,” said John Tolman, the BLET’s Political and Legislative Director. “With the exception of three unions, all of Labor wanted to see this bill fail.”

For various reasons, numerous special interest groups joined labor to lobby against the bill. From labor’s perspective, the trust fund for resolving claims was too small. In addition, the legislation did not resolve the issues of claims already filed against existing bankruptcy trusts, claims from individuals suffering from both asbestos and silica-related diseases, and it did not contain an orderly sunset process that would have allowed for matters to be resolved before the fund was shut down.

The bill was introduced by Senator Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) and sought to create a $140 billion trust fund to compensate victims for asbestos-related medical problems. Asbestos manufacturers and their insurers would have financed the trust fund. In exchange, those organizations could no longer have been sued if the bill had been passed.

Senator Specter has already pledged to continue the pursuit of similar legislation. However, with the Senate’s attention turning to Patriot Act issues for the rest of the week, then recess next week, it may be some time before the issue resurfaces.

Legislation would have created a trust fund too small; BLET State Chairmen lead the way

so in writing. Escalating pressure from Rail Labor, as part of the BLET-UTU campaign, led to the carriers’ February 13 letter formally withdrawing their request for release.

The BLET and UTU have worked jointly on the campaign, putting past differences aside. Driving the two unions together is the threat of reduced crew size, a dangerous idea put forth by the NCCC. Reducing crew size puts the lives of all rail workers and the general public in danger. It also seriously threatens the financial security of the Railroad Retirement system.

The carriers claim that experimental positive train control (PTC) will permit crew-size reduction and the permanent elimination of thousands of jobs. In fact, the carriers’ attempt to reduce crew size has nothing to do with new technology and everything to do with increasing corporate profits and executive bonuses.

The carriers have told the National Transportation Safety Board that implementation of PTC is many years away. Moreover, the Federal Railroad Administration has not conducted a study into the safety and reliability of reduced crew size, nor its impact on an already highly fatigued workforce operating trains through congested areas carrying highly toxic hazmat during this era of heightened terrorist threats to the security of our nation’s railroads.

As a show of good faith during the current campaign, the UTU has withdrawn its request for a single-craft representation election at the Union Pacific Railroad while the BLET has pledged to refrain from conducting organizing drives at UTU-represented properties.

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BLET NEWS

GIA Dialogue

Mobilization — A plan that works!

By Sereena Hogan
3rd International Vice-President
Grand International Auxiliary

Surely by now most of us have at least heard the term “mobilization” used in connection with the BLET, and are aware that the GIA has a Mobilization Program as well. But do you really know what mobilization is? Quite simply, mobilization is the grassroots involvement of the membership in worksite issues, and in broader issues that affect not only our daily lives, but also our communities. At the heart of mobilization is the recognition that a union’s strength lies with its members. It’s about creating a movement to work together and demonstrate our unity. If we are mobilized, we can take action on a moment’s notice.

The GIA Mobilization network was started in 1997 when a few forward-thinking BLE and GIA officers realized the potential impact that spouses and families could have in effecting changes in working conditions for our engineers and trainmen. A group of GIA members and officers met with BLE educators in Shreveport, La., to learn the concept of organizing Auxiliary Mobilization Coordinators are responsible for creating and maintaining a current list of members, including names, addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses. These lists are forwarded to the GIA International Mobilization Coordinator, a position currently held by International Vice President Mabel Grotzinger.

This network is the most efficient way we have to communicate with our members on important issues. When an issue arises that impacts all of us, we can contact our members quickly to notify them regarding the issue, why we need to support it, and instructions regarding what action needs to be taken. With e-mail becoming a widely used form of communication in almost every household, we can use it to expeditiously contact our members in a very cost-effective manner.

During the Railroad Retirement Reform fight in 2001, and more recently, during the National Mediation Board (NMB) Campaign, our Mobilization Network provided the ability to contact GIA members to urge them to write letters and make telephone calls regarding these issues. During the Railroad Retirement Reform fight, those of us (both GIA and BLET) who had provided our e-mail addresses to our National Legislative Rep, Becky Schneider, were continually updated with detailed instructions on who to contact and even how to word our requests. We believe this movement had a profound effect in the final hours of the voting process on this legislation, resulting in a victory that will impact railroad families for years to come.

The NMB Campaign was another success. The mass of e-mails, phone calls, and letters that the NMB received from BLET and GIA members on a daily basis persuaded the Board not to re-lase the carriers from national negotiations with the BLET and UTU.

We must work to strengthen the GIA so that we have leverage across the country when issues arise that impact the livelihood of all of us. It is imperative that we have accurate information on all of our members in order to be successful during times when we must mobilize quickly. If you have not already done so, please be sure that Mabel Grotzinger or Becky Schneider has your contact information for our Mobilization Program. If you are not currently a GIA member, please consider joining so that you can help make a difference in the lives of our railroad families.

Send your information to: Mabel Grotzinger at: mngrotzinger@comcast.net, or, Becky Schneider at: beckyg1@earthlink.net; or, Phone Becky at (915) 581-1373.

Full house for ST Workshop in Cleveland

Several BLET officers from across the United States successfully completed a Secretary-Treasurer training workshop put on by the BLET’s Education and Training Department in downtown Cleveland in early December.

Seated, from left: Lawrence Morley, Division 22 S-T (El Paso, Texas); Tracy Jensen, Division 200 S-T (Davenport, Iowa); Chris Handley, Division 203 S-T (Jackson, Miss.); Ken Kroger, Coordinator, Education & Training Dept.; Ed Rodzwicz, First Vice-President; Bill Walpert, National Secretary-Treasurer; Monty Murphy, Division 24 S-T (Centralia, Ill.); Dan Cook III, Division 1 Local Chairman (Détroit, Mich.); William Johnson, Division 754 Local Chairman (Terre Haute, Ind.); and Chad Colucci, Division 292 S-T (Beach City, Ohio).

Standing, from left: Richard Edmunds, Retired; Russell Bates, Washington State Legislative Board S-T; Walt Schmidt, BLET Webmaster; Tommy Butler, Division 647 S-T (Phoenix, Ariz.); Mike Crawford, Division 511 S-T (Portsmouth, Ohio); Douglas Myers, Division 447 S-T (Bellewau, Ohio); Mark Anderson, Minnesota State Legislative Board S-T; Paul Finch, Division 2 S-T (Jackson, Mich.); Gene Imiler, BLET Special Representative; Michael Goebel, Division 234 Legislative Representative (Columbus, Ohio); Rusty Jones, Division 239 S-T and Vice-Local Chairman (Knoxville, Tenn.); Karl Mattingsly, Division 548 S-T (Peru, Ind.); Gary Zaharchuk, Division 757 S-T (New Castle, Pa.); Daniel Maynard, Division 271 S-T (Russell, Ky.); Bernard Schmitt, Division 481 S-T (Parkersburg, W.Va.); Nick Johnson, Division 30 (Tucson, Ariz.); S-T; Kevin Peak, Division 456 S-T and Local Chairman (Norfolk, Va.); Michael Huber, Division 100 S-T (Danville, Ill.); Bob Broka, BLET Director of Record Dept.; and Richard Conner, Division 578 S-T (Tulsa, Okla.).

Present but not pictured: Dow Femal, Division 2 Local Chairman (Jackson, Mich.).

ATDA files to represent UP dispatchers

The American Train Dispatchers Association (ATDA) has launched a representation election to organize approximately 550 train dispatchers at Union Pacific Railroad.

“for many years, UP’s train dispatchers have not had a say in their terms and conditions of employment. There is no better time to change that than now,” ATDA President Leo McCann said.

“On behalf of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, I wish the ATDA the best of luck in this campaign,” BLET National President Don Halts said. “I urge all other Rail Labor unions to support the ATDA in their organizing campaign.”

Along with the BLET, the ATDA is a member of the Rail Labor Bargaining Coalition (RLBC), an alliance of seven Rail Labor unions currently engaged in collective bargaining with the National Carriers Conference Committee (NCCC).
PTC is in the experimental stage.

The agents on the front lines for rail safety concerns are the least two people on the train in the United States. Having at least two people on the train enhances the number of eyes on the nation’s railroads.

Railroading is one of the most dangerous occupations in 19th America.

• Rail-related injuries typically result in amputations, other career-ending injuries and death.
• Over past three years, train collisions increased by more than 42 percent, according to Federal Railroad Administration data.
• Also over past three years, employee fatalities are up by 17 percent.
• For period January-September 2005 (9 months), the FRA says there were more than 2,200 train accidents, some 1,200 yard accidents, and 1,655 train derailments and 21 rail-employee fatalities.
• Additionally, more than 350 private citizens die annually in accidents at highway-rail grade crossings.
• This deterioration in safety statistics is NOT the result of more business on the rails, because the FRA “normalizes” these data based on millions of train miles.
• Every major railroad — BNSF, CSX, KCS, NS and UP — has posted an increased in train accidents over past three years.

Railroads haul some of the most deadly of hazardous materials.

• Railroads haul deadly chemicals such as chlorine, nuclear weapons and nuclear waste — all targets of terrorists and all deadly to large areas of every community through which these chemicals travel on trains.
• Terrorists have targeted railroads in foreign countries (bombings in Madrid, Spain) and have threatened to do so in the United States. Having at least two people on the train enhances the number of eyes and ears on the front lines for the benefit of homeland security.
• Positive Train Control may or may not be effective in improving rail safety.
• We don’t know because PTC is in the experimental stage.

• PTC is operating under special waivers from the FRA over just a few hundred miles of track. There are about 1700,000 miles of rail track in the U.S.
• Not only is PTC experimental, but there are thousands of miles of track in the United States today that are considered “dark territory,” which is no more technologically advanced than railroad tracks from the 1800s.
• Where PTC is being tested, such as BNSF’s Beardstown subdivision in Illinois, the technology’s “failure rate” is significant. One third of tests of PTC there have resulted in an unintentional application of brakes indicating a system failure of some sort.
• Carriers operating officers have told the National Transportation Safety Board that implementation of PTC on any wide-scale is 7 to 10 years away. The costs are enormous — some billion — and no railroad has indicated to its stockholders that it is embarking on such a capital expense in the near future. PTC remains an experimental technology.

Railroads want to reduce train crews without adding new technology.

• Railroads have told Wall Street analysts that they want to take advantage of a sudden and sharp increase in retirements by not hiring replacements for these train & engine service employees.
• Railroads predict tens of millions of dollars in savings by not hiring and reducing crew size to one person, who would not have benefit of PTC and who would also be required to leave the train to operate remote control in switching operations and tend to unexpected mechanical problems.

The danger of reduced crews is primarily from fatigue.

• Noted sleep scientist Dr. William Dement, director of Stanford University’s Sleep Disorders Research Center, compared going to work fatigued with going to work drunk. Fatigue impairs the motor skills, concentration, and response time of train crew members.
• Fatigue already is a serious problem in the railroad industry. Insufficient train crews require railroads to demand service employees not to receive even six hours of uninterrupted sleep daily.
• Fatigue is most often cited by the National Transportation Safety Board as a contributing factor in railroad accidents.

One person crews sought by the carriers are a prescription for disaster.

• Trains operating through populated areas and carrying deadly hazmat and considered a target of terrorists should not be permitted to operate with only a single person aboard.
• Medical emergencies, the need for restroom breaks and meal periods all put trains, their contents and communities at risk when there is but a single person aboard to operate and monitor the train and remain in radio contact with nearby emergency responders.
• Railroads transport deadly hazmat on tracks that are within blocks of Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. Train tracks are located in the heart of major population centers and trains carrying hazmat travel next to hospitals and schools.

A Federal Railroad Administration study of reduced crews is needed.

Before Congress allows carriers to turn current labor negotiations into a congressional pachislie on reduced-crew size, a Federal Railroad Administration study into the safety concerns of reduced crews is essential.
The Rail Workers Hazardous Materials Training Program will conduct hazardous materials transportation/chemical emergency response training programs at the George Meany Campus in Silver Spring, Md., on the following dates:

May 7-12, 2006
June 4-9, 2006
July 16-21, 2006

The training, eligible for three academic credits from the National Labor College, addresses OSHA and DOT required procedures and different levels of response and worker protection in a hazardous materials emergency or release, weapons of mass destruction awareness, the incident command system, as well as components required to complete OSHA 10-Hour Outreach Training. Training includes advanced classroom instruction, small group activities, intensive hands-on drills and a simulated hazmat response in full safety gear.

The Rail Workers Hazardous Materials Training Program is funded to provide this training by various sources, including the North American Railway Foundation (NARF) and a federal grant from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS). This funding will provide transportation, lodging, and meals for training participants. In addition, participants who are unable to secure regular pay through the railroad to attend training are eligible for a stipend of $550.00.

In Fall 2005, the Rail Workers Hazardous Materials Training Program was refunded for another five years in partnership with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters as a Hazmat Transportation Consortium. As of August 31, 2005, the Rail Program completed 14 years of training provided to more than 19,500 rail workers.

The BLET Education & Training Department encourages all BLET members to consider taking advantage of these educational opportunities. Even those who have completed hazmat workshops in the past will benefit from new programming that will be offered this year.

The Program’s curriculum has been expanded to include two new training program areas — Hazmat Disaster Worker and U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Radiation Worker Training. The Disaster Training can encompass anything from security and terrorism to natural disasters, such as working in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina with DOE radiation awareness training to rail workers involved with the transportation of radioactive materials shipments.

For your convenience, a registration form is available from the BLET website at:
Completed registration forms should be faxed, mailed or e-mailed to the Hazmat office as soon as possible.

Space is limited to approximately 25 for each program. Check the Rail Workers website for schedule updates and to register online: http://www.hazmatgmc.org.

For more details, contact the following:
Rail Workers Hazardous Materials Training Program
10000 New Hampshire Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20903
Phone: (301) 439-2440
crodgers@nationalalabordercollege

Heath Retirement
Continued from Page 7

my family and enjoy my grandchil- dren.” He also enjoys fishing and old cars.

“I’ve met good people and had dur- ing my career,” said Brother Heath. “I started out on a 6:30 a.m. job and ended on a 10:30 p.m. job. All and all, 30 years at 55 years of age should be enough for those in train service. I’ve worked enough hours to be 65 years old already. Hopefully, the BLET and Team- sters can provide rail workers with bet- ter pay, health insurance and earlier re- tirements.”

Upon retirement, Brother Heath was presented with two clocks. One is a standard issue CP Rail retirement clock and the other is a Stormy Kromer clock presented to him by coworkers. The Heath’s live at 5536 Alameda St., Shoreview, Minn. 55126.

Send us your Last Runs/Honor Rolls

BLET members planning to retire in coming months should contact the National Division to have their Last Run and/or Honor Roll published in the monthly Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen News. Last Runs feature recently retired members while recognize members with 40 more years of con- secutive membership. For details, contact:
BLET Public Relations Dept.
1370 Ontario St., Mezzanine
Cleveland, OH 44113
E-mail: Policy@ble-t.org
Congratulations, Brother Harvey!

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen congratulates Robert A. Harvey on his retirement after many years of dedicated and professional service to the organization. Brother Harvey retired officially on January 1, 2006.

A pioneer in the field of regulatory research for a labor organization, Brother Harvey was hired full-time after the BLE’s 1996 convention. Working out of the BLE’s Washington, D.C. office during the past nine years, he has spent countless hours participating in more than 15 Rail Safety Advisory Committees (RSACs), helping to develop rules and regulations that impact the working conditions of locomotive engineers and trainmen. Bob has also testified on behalf of the BLE at numerous public hearings.

“Bob has an impeccable reputation in D.C., and his integrity has been a positive reflection upon the Brotherhood these past nine years,” said BLET Vice President and National Legislative Representative Raymond Holmes.

Brother Harvey’s work behind the scenes has been noticed by many in the BLET.

“We appreciate his accomplishments — often conducted behind the scenes without much fanfare — on issues of great importance to the jobs of locomotive engineers and trainmen, always relying on his first-hand experience as a locomotive engineer to keep the safety of BLE members at the forefront at all times,” said BLET Vice President and National Legislative Director Don M. Hahs. “Thank you, Bob, for your hard work and dedication over the years, and your attention to detail, which has helped make the rail industry a safer place to work.”

Brother Harvey leaves behind an unparalleled legacy of hard work and devotion to the Brotherhood and the railroad industry. His history of exemplary service to the BLE will be missed by all.

Cleveland Division 607 honors three retirees

BLET Division 607 in Cleveland recently bid a fond farewell to three members who are now enjoying retirement. At a retirement party in the Cleveland area, Division 607 President Bud Ramkey presided over a ceremony to honor the retirees and present them with farewell gifts.

Ronald T. Andolsen of Division 607, Cleveland hired on the Norfolk & Western Railroad on Nov 19, 1964, earning promotion from fireman to locomotive engineer in 1968. He officially retired on October 7, 2004 during his 40-year career.

Bother Andolsen worked various yard assignments in Cleveland and Bellevue, Ohio, and worked many locals as well. He completed his last run on train 62R on March 3, 2005, running between Cleveland and Mingo Junction, Ohio. During his railroad career, he worked for several railroads due to sales and consolidations. He quotes Johnny Cash to explain the wide variety of places he has worked throughout his 40-year career.

“I’ve been everywhere, man.”

He joined the BLE in 1998 after many years as a member of other organizations. Brother Andolsen noted that when he hired out in 1964, he was paid $24.64 for eight hours of work. At the time of his last Run, he earned $172 for eight hours of work.

From left: Division 607 President Bud Ramkey presents George J. Henry Jr. with a model of a NY Central locomotive attached to a Conrail caboose at a retirement party for Brothers Henry, Andolsen and Hunt.

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Richard L. Hunt hired on the Akron, Canton & Youngstown Railroad on May 23, 1964. The AC&Y was absorbed by the Norfolk & Western, which later became the Norfolk Southern.

Brother Hunt’s Last Run came on the former Conrail yard assignment BF-14 at Chrysler Yard in Twinsburg, Ohio, on Jan. 2, 2004. During retirement, he has enjoyed boating, skiing, spending time with his family, and continues to improve his golf game.

As a retirement gift, he was given a desktop model of an AC&Y locomotive by the Brothers and Sisters of his division.

Richard L. Hunt

George J. Henry Jr. is a second-generation locomotive engineer. His father worked as an engineer on the former Big Four (Cleveland, Chicago, Cincinnati & St. Louis division of the New York Central retiring from Conrail in 1981). George Jr. worked as a lineman for a public utility until corporate downsizing took its toll. At age 56, he hired out on Conrail as a trainman on January 11, 1999, and served as a conductor on the road freight pool between Cleveland and Conway, Pa. He later earned promotion to locomotive engineer and made his last run between Cleveland and Mingo Junction, Ohio, on train 62R on March 3, 2005. George plans to enjoy his retirement traveling with his wife, spending time with his grandchildren, and maybe taking some college courses.

Gowan’s career began in 1946

Brother David A. Heath of BLET Division 357 (Minneapolis, Minn.) made his last run as a yard conductor on December 21, 2004, in Canadian Pacific’s St. Paul Yard.

Heath began his railroad career in 1961 as a switchman on the Rock Island lines in Ottawa, Ill. During his railroad career, he worked for several railroads due to sales and consolidations. He quotes Johnny Cash to explain the wide variety of places he has worked throughout his 40-year career.

“I’ve been everywhere, man.”

He joined the BLE in 1998 after many years as a member of other organizations. Brother Heath noted that when he hired out in 1964, he was paid $24.64 for eight hours of work. At the time of his last Run, he earned $172 for eight hours of work.

Brother Heath, with his coveted Stormy Kramer clock — a retirement gift from coworkers.

Brother Heath and his wife, Cheryl, were married on Nov 21, 1964. The couple has a son, Tracy; two daughters, Kari and Jamie; and two grandchildren.

During his retirement, Brother Heath plans to “see the sights, visit friends, be with family.”

See Heath Retirement, Page 6

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LAST RUNS

Gowan’s career began in 1946

Brother T.J. Gowan of BLET Division 192 (El Paso, Texas) made his last run on November 18, 2004 on a road switcher in El Paso.

Brother Gowan followed in his father’s footsteps. He began his railroad career as a clerk for the Southern Pacific Railroad on September 3, 1940 in El Paso. He went in August 1950 and was promoted to the position of locomotive engineer on December 16, 1960. He joined BLET Division 591 on July 1, 1958. Brother Gowan’s father, William T. Gowan, hired out in 1911 as a switchman and, upon his retirement from service in the Army in 1920, worked as an operator/agent for the Santa Fe Railroad.

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Teamster teamwork

Teamsters are proving again and again that teamwork among unions works. When we left the AFL-CIO last year and joined the Change to Win Federation, we did so because we knew it was the right thing to do. I commend the RLBC for standing up and staying united. There will be more bargaining to come as part of a dynamic new labor federation which is open to. We, too, are expanding our alliances and partnerships so that we can compare strategies with other union negotiators. That’s why the Rail Labor Bargain- ing Conference is so important. It has been so effective. Instead of bargaining separately with rail carriers, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) joined with the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, Sheet Metal Workers, Boilermakers, Firemen and Oilers, Train Dispatchers and Railroad Signalmen for the best bargain- ing strength. This year the BLET showed the carriers that they were completely united against the railroad corporation’s plans to reduce the re- quired crew size. The BLET asserted that having at least two crew members on board was the right and safe thing to do. I commend the BLRC for standing up and staying united. There will be more bargaining to come as part of these national negotiations, but we are confident that we will succeed.

Rail Safety Legislation

We were proud to support Rep. Steve Lynch’s (D-MA) legislation for railroad safety that required rail employee training that he introduced last year. For too long, the railroad corporations have kept silent on their safety and security plans. They wouldn’t even give the plans to Congress. Rep. Lynch’s pro- posal was one of the first to recognize the integral part our members perform with safety on the job. No one knows better than you that what you see daily on the rails is valuable information. And, that in order to better perform your jobs, you need the training to compli- ment them. As de facto first-responders to all rail accidents, you need to know how to evacuate a train, what types of suspicious packages to watch out for and how to handle accidents that may include toxic chemicals.

In Nebraska, which boasts some of the largest freight shipments in the United States, State Sen. Matt Connolly (D-NE) just introduced leg- islation that calls for increased commu- nications between the rail corporations and the police and fire officials. This is an example of local government lead- ers taking seriously the threat of acid- ists and terrorism that our rail sys- tem is open to.

We will keep fighting to bring work- place safety and public safety on the rails to the forefront of America’s security agenda.

James P. Hoffa
General President

Advisory Board December Activity

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

National President Don H. Hahn: National Division officers. General membership of BLET activities, general office duties, details, BLET Weekly meetings, Rail Labor Bargaining Conference meetings with National Caucuses Conference, Washington, D.C., Rep. Steve Lynch’s (D-MA) legislation for railroad safety that required rail employee training that he introduced last year. For too long, the railroad corporations have kept silent on their safety and security plans. They wouldn’t even give the plans to Congress. Rep. Lynch’s pro- posal was one of the first to recognize the integral part our members perform with safety on the job. No one knows better than you that what you see daily on the rails is valuable information. And, that in order to better perform your jobs, you need the training to compli- ment them. As de facto first-responders to all rail accidents, you need to know how to evacuate a train, what types of suspicious packages to watch out for and how to handle accidents that may include toxic chemicals.

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MARCH 19-23, 2006... Local Chairman Workshop, University of Illinois-Champaign, IL

The BLET Education and Training Department hosts this workshop on the campus of the University of Illinois-Champaign near Chicago. To register, contact Ken Kroeger at (214) 272-9916 or kroeger@ble-t.org.

JUNE 4-9, 2006... 79th Annual BLET-GIA Southeastern Meeting (SMA)

Hosted by SMA Chairmen L.J. Chapter and the members of BLET Division 157, the 68th annual SMA will be held at the Tropicana Casino & Resort on the Boardwalk in Atlantic City, N.J. More details at www.blet.org.

JUNE 12-16, 2006... 68th Annual BLET-GIA Eastern Union Meeting (EUMA)

Hosted by EUMA Arrangements Chairman L.J. Chapter and the members of BLET Division 157, the 68th annual EUMA will be held at the Tropicana Casino & Resort on the Boardwalk in Atlantic City, N.J. More details at www.blet.org.

JUNE 19-22, 2006... BLET National Division Convention, Las Vegas, Nevada

The First Quadrennial Convention of the BLET National Division will be held at Bally’s in Las Vegas. More details to come when available.

JUNE 25-29, 2006... 27th IBT International Convention, Las Vegas, Nevada

The 27th International Convention of the Brotherhood of Teamsters will be held at Bally’s in Las Vegas. More details to come when available.

JULY 18-23, 2006... 66th Annual BLET-GIA International Western Convention (IWC)

Hosted by L.I. Hahns and the members of BLET Division 102, 278, 585, 586 at the Bally’s in Las Vegas. The 71st annual SWORC will be held at The Peppermill Lodge and Rock in Rock, Austin. contact Brotherton A.L. Williams by e-mail at ALWMS1@sbcglobal.net, or Vic Norman-Baker at (501) 835-0858.

August 22-26, 2006... 71st Annual BLET-GIA Southwesten Meeting (SWCNW)

Hosted by L.I. Hahns and the members of BLET Division 102, 278, 585, 586 at the Bally’s in Las Vegas. The 71st annual SWORC will be held at The Peppermill Lodge and Rock in Rock, Austin. contact Brotherton A.L. Williams by e-mail at ALWMS1@sbcglobal.net, or Vic Norman-Baker at (501) 835-0858.

FEBRUARY 2006 CALENDAR & EVENTS

BLET NEWS

Teamster teamwork

BLET News

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