



DAILY NEWS UPDATES
WWW.BLE-T.ORG

Locomotive

ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN NEWS



FEBRUARY 2016
VOLUME 30, ISSUE 2

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

BLET PETITIONS FRA FOR IMMEDIATE HALT TO LEADER, TRIP OPTIMIZER TECHNOLOGY

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) has asked the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) for an emergency order that would immediately prohibit the carrier-mandated use of Locomotive Engineer Assist/Display & Event Recorder (LEADER) and Trip Optimizer technologies.

The BLET contends that the mandated use of these electronic devices creates unsafe distractions for locomotive engineers, and that the technology overrides locomotive engineer decision-making in an unsafe manner.

BLET National President Dennis Pierce made the Organization's position known in a February 4 letter to Robert C. Lauby, the FRA's Associate Administrator for Railroad Safety and Chief Safety Officer. LEADER and Trip Optimizer are auto-control fuel efficiency technologies.

In his February 4 letter, Presi-

"Locomotive engineers have faced new forms of technology since they first climbed on board a locomotive. At every stage in the history of the development of the locomotive cab there has been a story of adapting to and mastering new technology by locomotive engineers."

— DENNIS R. PIERCE

dent Pierce said the technology can create unsafe situations because it can distract engineers. The carrier-mandated use of this technology "... presses an engineer into performing clerical duties while at the controls of a moving locomotive in the name of fuel efficiency, to the detriment of safety caused by these distractions," President Pierce wrote.

The technology was originally conceived as a way to assist engineers in obtaining greater fuel efficiency when operating locomotives. However, some carriers have mandated that this one-time guidance tool should supersede the skill-based judgment of locomotive engineers,

forcing engineers to rely upon the technology as the primary method of train operation.

"Trip Optimizer and LEADER essentially are becoming a 'virtual engineer' — making automated decisions in a manner that transforms the engineer's duties as an operator into that of a spectator or monitor," President Pierce wrote. Use of the technology has created dangerous situations where crew members have been thrown out of their seats because of severe slack action. President Pierce also raised concerns about engineers maintaining proficient operating skills and being lulled into a false sense of security while operating on "cruise control."

President Pierce called the current situation "unsafe and unsatisfactory," and concluded his letter by calling upon the FRA to halt use of the technology until BLET's concerns regarding distraction and forced-reliance have been properly addressed.

"BLET is proud of how this Union and locomotive engineers have fostered and promoted ways to safely integrate new technology, which is reflected in our formal partnering with FRA for the past two decades," President Pierce concluded. "Moreover, locomotive engineers have faced new forms of technology since they first climbed on board a locomotive. At every stage in the

history of the development of the locomotive cab there has been a story of adapting to and mastering new technology by locomotive engineers. ... We respectfully request that FRA issue an emergency order to prohibit the mandated use of and reliance upon LEADER, Trip Optimizer and other similar auto control or advisory control locomotive operating systems until railroads can prove that the relevant safety implications of reliance upon these systems have been properly identified and addressed. Communication-based train control systems that interact with throttle positions, train handling, air brakes and dynamic brakes place them in a category where an engineer is left only in reactive mode, and the current reality is unsafe and unsatisfactory."

A copy of President Pierce's letter to the FRA can be read of Page 2 of this issue. @

2016 BLET REGIONAL MEETINGS

*Join us
in Chicago!*

JULY 11-14, 2016

Registration for the BLET's 2016 Regional Meetings will be available soon!

Please watch the BLET National Division website and Facebook page for the latest information. The Chicago Regional Meeting will be held July 11-14, 2016, at the Drake Hotel. The Long Beach Regional Meeting will be held August 22-25, 2016, at the Hyatt Regency.

The Drake in Chicago is a beautifully restored grand hotel, and the Hyatt Regency in

Long Beach is in the heart of the Long Beach Harbor entertainment area.



BLET MOVES INTO NEW HEADQUARTERS **pg. 7**



BLET President's Message

No to LEADER,
Trip Optimizer **pg. 2**

NJ Transit Update

Tentative agreement reached
pg. 5



BMWED Strike Victory

Job action at CP/D&H
over pay problems **pg. 7**

Register for News Flash email alerts at: www.ble-t.org/newsflash



Follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/BLETNational


BLET PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY DENNIS R. PIERCE

BLET TO FRA: HALT LEADER, TRIP OPTIMIZER

TECHNOLOGY CREATES UNSAFE DISTRACTIONS, OVERRIDES ENGINEER DECISION-MAKING

The following is a letter from BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce to Robert C. Lauby, Associate Administrator for Railroad Safety and Chief Safety Officer at the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), dated February 4, 2016.

Dear Mr. Lauby:

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen ("BLET") is writing to you to express our concerns about the use by certain Class 1 Carriers of the Locomotive Engineer Assist/Display & Event Recorder ("LEADER") and the General Electric Trip Optimizer. It is our view that the current deployment of these technologies presents unsatisfactory risks for a host of reasons. A letter from the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers ("SMART-TD") was sent to you earlier in January 2016 discussing that Organization's problems with LEADER and Trip Optimizer. We associate ourselves with their comments and have some additional concerns, which are not stated in their letter. First, SMART-TD's discussion concerning distractions to operating crews and that use of these technologies should be regulated by the Federal Railroad Administration ("FRA") is on point and we wholeheartedly concur.

The use of cell phones and interaction with Positive Train Control ("PTC") systems currently are regulated by FRA, and we believe the attention capture that is fostered by the use of the LEADER and Trip Optimizer systems has not been properly scrutinized. If the safety risks of diverting the locomotive engineer's attention away from the track ahead and, instead, toward the automatic control system, were not already clear enough,



the situation becomes even more dire when you consider that railroads require — under the threat of discipline — that the engineer track all exceptions to the operation of systems like LEADER during their trip, and then record and report them at the conclusion of the trip. This presses an engineer into performing clerical duties while at the controls of a moving locomotive in the name of fuel efficiency, to the detriment of safety caused by these distractions.

BLET joins SMART-TD in requesting that you issue an emergency order prohibiting the use of these technologies until they are further examined, to ensure that they do not pose risks to the safe operations of freight railroads. At a minimum FRA should examine to what extent new regulatory requirements are necessary to ensure safe operations, testing and maintenance and actual performance of these systems in the field.

An Example of Proposed Use: Union Pacific Railroad's Product Development Plan Submission Regarding Trip Optimizer and LEADER

As just one example of our concern, the 49 C.F.R. Section 236.913(d)(1) Notice of Product Development for Phase I and Phase II Development of its Communications-Based Train Control ("CBTC") System filed by Union Pacific Railroad ("UPRR") describes Trip Optimizer in the following way:

Trip Optimizer provides the locomotive engineer with guidance or automated control for fuel efficient operation of the train based on terrain, train dynamics, permanent and temporary speed restrictions and the train's current authority. The Trip Optimizer software suite resides on a separate non-vital hardware platform on V-TMS equipped loco-

motives, and is designed and implemented in such a manner as to preclude interference with VTMS's train control functions.

See FRA-2007-27322-0013.

UPRR also makes a distinction regarding which CBTC control components perform safety-critical train control functions and those that perform merely a non-vital business function. UPRR places Trip Optimizer in the category of non-vital business functions, which it defines as follows:

Non-vital business functions are those unrelated to train control, but which provide business benefit, such as location reporting, integration with NYAB's LEADER or integration with GE's Trip Optimizer. These functions may leverage operational data provided by CBTC/V-TMS, such as location, speed, etc., but do not impact the operation of CBTC/V-TMS.

Id. at 25 (emphasis added).

UPRR then explains:

General Electric's (GE) Trip Optimizer software suite will be integrated into V-TMS equipped locomotives. Trip Optimizer provides the locomotive engineer with guidance for throttle, dynamic brake and air brake settings for fuel efficient operation of the train based on terrain, train dynamics, permanent and temporary speed restrictions, signal indications and the train's current authority limits. Trip Optimizer provides the capability for automated throttle, dynamic brake and air brake control under the guidance of the locomotive engineer. When automated control is selected by the locomotive engineer, Trip Optimizer will manage locomotive throttle, dynamic brake and air brake settings to operate the train in conformance with the recommended operating profile.

Id. at 33 (footnotes omitted).

In its November 13, 2007 letter to UPRR, FRA placed many conditions on the testing of this equipment, but enough has changed in new requirements for PTC and some very unsettling reports from the field that we firmly believe additional action is warranted by FRA. Some of the conditions actually required a FRA field monitor to be present during the tests. See FRA-2007-27322-0012.

The above example is not intended to single out UPRR regarding its use of LEADER or Trip Optimizer. Rather, what matters is that use of Trip Optimizer and LEADER is represented to be for "guidance" and "business purposes." Any railroad could make this same statement regarding its use of

BLET NATIONAL DIVISION ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Official 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. ©©

the technology, as Trip Optimizer and LEADER is vendor software available to any railroads who desire the product on their locomotives.

Use with PTC

Furthermore, we believe that monitoring auto control systems like LEADER is at least as intrusive and distracting as requiring the locomotive engineer to interact with PTC systems. To be clear, BLET desires at the earliest opportunity to take advantage of a PTC system that saves our members' lives in the event of a PTC-preventable accident. The interaction between PTC systems and LEADER or Trip Optimizer remains a critical question.

The fact of the matter is that PTC operational screens could compete with Trip Optimizer for display screen time. There are only two ways to address presentation of the additional information. One would be to incorporate the non-vital business function data with the vital PTC data, but this could result in shrinking information down to a font that is very hard to read, even by persons having perfect eyesight. The other would be to cycle screens displaying the non-vital business function data with those displaying the vital PTC data. However, this would require a locomotive engineer to devote much more attention to the screen, thereby engendering attention lapses from vigilant observance of conditions ahead and out the window to ensure proper whistling at grade crossings, and visualization of track defects, trespassers, unannounced yellow boards, red boards, red/yellow boards, diverging route signals, etc.

If systems such as LEADER and Trip Optimizer were advisory programs only, we might be able to excuse their intrusive effect; however, railroads such as UPRR and BNSF mandate that locomotive engineers obey these non-vital business function data prompts under the threat of discipline. This puts locomotive engineers in a no-win situation, because they do not have any training regarding when and under what circumstances they need to intervene when a prompt is given in error. There are no error management protocols that reliably inform the locomotive engineer when to override the system or when to trust the system when a developing scenario requires immediate action.

UPRR refers to different states of software use between locomotives that are equipped with Trip Optimizer and those not equipped as "mixed mode" use. The customers of Trip Optimizer and LEADER, the FRA and the end users (i.e., train crews) need to be made aware of the data traces that automation leaves behind, as well as whether the systems make automated moves without leaving a trace. If locomotive engineers are responsible for manual control, the software should be no less responsible for automated control. Once an action has taken place and been monitored, a reaction by a monitoring engineer is already taking place after the fact and can already be categorized as a correction or — even worse — when an automated action is correct, but second-guessed incorrectly by the operator. These problems can arise on any railroad using LEADER and/or Trip Optimizer.

A locomotive's throttle and braking systems are vital to the safe operations of trains. Classifying Trip Optimizer and LEADER as non-vital business systems in order to safeguard them from regulatory oversight ignores too many life-threatening scenarios that require potentially emergent throttle manipulation and braking. These functions may be initiated by a PTC system in the

66 If systems such as LEADER and Trip Optimizer were advisory programs only, we might be able to excuse their intrusive effect; however, railroads such as UPRR and BNSF mandate that locomotive engineers obey these non-vital business function data prompts under the threat of discipline. 99

normal course of events. It has not been made clear how a non-vital business fuel-saving system that uses throttle and braking to save fuel will react with a vital PTC system designed to prevent the worst kinds of train accidents by intervening to prevent a potential violation. Nor is it clear whether event recorders can distinguish between PTC actions taken to override a locomotive engineer's command, and PTC actions taken to override a command that was responsive to the demands of a non-vital business system like LEADER and Trip Optimizer.

Human Factors and lessons from Aviation

The aviation industry has gone through a long period of automation from the late 1970's to the present. The logic of this transition to automated operations is that humans are prone to error and properly designed and maintained machines should not be. Machines do not have the fatigue problems or inattention of humans. And in the aviation industry, a manufacturer typically cannot install new equipment without first having the device or system fully tested,

vetted and type certified. Oftentimes it is the simplest of components that require this vetting, such as a new style of oil pressure gauge fitting. However, in the railroad industry there is severe lack of oversight with respect to new components or systems installed on cars and locomotives. It is our belief that equipment as complex and distracting as automated communication-based control systems should be properly vetted before they are forced upon operating employees. FRA has correctly chosen to do so regarding vital operational systems. Regrettably, FRA has not yet acted upon non-vital business systems such as LEADER and Trip Optimizer, even though locomotive engineers are required to operate their trains pursuant to the data those systems produce.

Flight operations have become very safe and statistics bear out this fact. That being said, as safety gains have been realized with automation, the rate of human error has not decreased. The rail industry has many lessons to learn from



You don't need the wisdom of Confucius to know that Brotherhood's Relief and Compensation Fund members have the best job income protection.

Members receive...

- Initial two months of membership free for all new memberships
- Affordable, low cost monthly dues that offer superior value
- The highest available daily benefits per day
- All members are encouraged to introduce and refer coworkers to this Brotherhood
- Referral program participants earn \$125 when introducing new, approved members
- Earn \$50 for each approved increase to existing members
- An accidental death and dismemberment benefit while on duty that pays up to \$50,000
- A generous retirement benefit based on length of membership
- \$1,000 educational scholarships for the children of members — twenty are awarded each year

To apply for membership speak with a BR&CF member in your terminal or visit our web site at

www.brcf.org



Call **(800) 233-7080** for answers to your questions

DAILY BENEFIT	\$80	\$100/\$102	\$150	\$200/\$201	\$220	\$250
BR&CF monthly dues	\$30.40	\$38.00	\$57.00	\$76.00	\$83.60	\$95.00
LE&CMPA #16 monthly premium	Not listed	\$59.50	\$87.50	\$117.25	Why pay a fortune elsewhere? BR&CF members pay less per month for more in daily benefits.	
SMART - UTU monthly assessment	\$64.80	\$81.00	\$121.50	\$162.00		

aviation with regard to the great many advances in safety. However, we should also attempt to learn from the new human factors issues that arise when one moves from being a primary operator to a passive monitor of automation. We believe that oversight of the adoption of technology in the rail industry is not keeping up with the implementation of certain significant technologies. Train crews are being faced with using technology they are unfamiliar with, and are being instructed to place reliance in those systems all while maintaining their responsibility for the success or failure of the automated operation. The stories of airline pilots attempting to cope with differing and new forms of automation are legion and too numerous to enumerate here. A simple glance at the internet will reveal a myriad of human factors problems and solutions to the adoption of and adaption to automation systems.

Notwithstanding the above decades-long history, concerns regarding how best to maintain skills proficiency in the face of increasingly automated flight deck systems in the aviation industry were underscored earlier this month in a report by the Inspector General ("IG") of the Department of Transportation. The IG found that Federal Aviation Administration "does not have a process to ensure that air carrier pilots are trained to use and monitor automation systems while also maintaining proficiency in manual flight operations." Report No. AV-2016-013 at 2.¹ Thus, the very same issues raised here continue to be of serious concern regarding FAA oversight of commercial aviation.

We must strive to remember that human factors and human error are not only about humans. In addition to being about people, human factors are about the tools people are given to do a job. It is about external pressures, fatigue, task overload, supervision and many other items. It is important for FRA to explore what kind of cues are given to train crews, how they can interpret those cues, what errors are possible at those points, and how recently training to deal with unforeseen events took place.

Experience in the field

We have heard from many of our members that these systems are often positioned directly to the left of the locomotive engineer, such that he is facing the conductor while responding to the system's prompts. In other words, the engineer is physically pointed away from the field of vision he or she is supposed to maintain while operating the locomotive.

Automated communication-based systems such as LEADER or Trip Optimizer were conceived and initially introduced to provide "guidance" for the locomotive engineer and by definition are not considered by UPRR to be a safety-critical system. A guidance system is a tool to be used when guidance is appropriate or necessary. These systems are now being mandated as the primary method of operating. Trip Optimizer and LEADER essentially are becoming a "virtual engineer" — making automated decisions in a manner that transforms the engineer's duties as an operator into that of a spectator or monitor. It strains our expertise to ponder how our members will cope with monitoring multiple systems in potentially conflicting modes (when equipped), and then be required with little or no notice to take over in manual

66

Crewmembers have been thrown out of their seats because of severe slack action; however, they are reluctant to simply disable these non-vital business data systems in these situations for fear of being disciplined for doing so.

99

mode when a system either malfunctions or functions as intended, but in scenarios that engineers are not aware of or have not been trained to manage.

Based on the experience of our members, suspicion of these systems is common. There have been many examples of locomotive engineers being instructed to perform work-arounds to ensure that the system keeps functioning, or inventing ways to cobble together functionality with other onboard systems such as distributed power locomotives. Automatic train control ("ATC") restrictions, which are encountered numerous times on every trip, require these systems to be suspended; when trains are sorted and sent on diverging routes, these systems must be suspended; when special speed restrictions are issued by the foreman in charge of a Form B work area, these systems must be suspended; and when these systems require train handling that is contrary to an engineer's experienced method of train handling, these systems must be suspended. While moving in a dynamic and changing situation an engineer must then decide whether to suspend these systems and operate the train in the safest manner based on his or her experience. In all of these instances, the specifics of each suspension must be reported upon tie-up. There have been many complaints we have heard directly from engineers working on locomotives equipped with Trip Optimizer and LEADER, such as:

- The locomotive engineer is required to turn train handling over to a software program without any knowledge of when and under what circumstances the engineer may be required to reassume manual control.
 - Crewmembers have been thrown out of their seats because of severe slack action; however, they are reluctant to simply disable these non-vital business data systems in these situations for fear of being disciplined for doing so.
 - Uncertainty when operating with Trip Optimizer and unexpected signal changes occur in the field.
 - Complaints about maintaining proficient operating skills — due to no longer manually operating the controls to compensate for the track profile — which must be tested regularly under 49 C.F.R. Part 240.
 - When operating in a "cruise control" like mode there is a risk of being distracted or lulled into a sense of false security, even though the purpose of the technology is to save on fuel and increase profits, and not to enhance safety.
 - Discipline is imposed if an engineer fails to take manual control when the technology fails to comply with regulations such as signals or speed restrictions, even though the engineer is expected — if not required — to defer to the technology up to the point when it fails.
- The above is not an exhaustive list. There are many other examples and reports from the field. We do not know whether FRA is even attempting to capture reports such as these in debriefings. BLET is concerned this absence of data may give FRA a false sense of security

regarding whether and how the agency might regulate the use of systems such as Trip Optimizer and LEADER. This may also affect how those systems safely integrate ... or fail to safely integrate ... with PTC.

Given all the functions that are ceded to Trip Optimizer and LEADER — such as throttle positions, air brake and dynamic brake operation, and train handling — it is our professional view that FRA cannot accept the current designation of these systems as being simply non-vital business data systems, because their mandated use has crossed the line into vital train operations. It also is insufficient in terms of railroad safety to relegate oversight of the use of this technology to waivers or subsume these safety issues in a part 236, subpart H product safety plan. Nothing less than a complete risk assessment must be performed on how Trip Optimizer and LEADER technologies will manage failure, and if such an assessment has been performed we have not seen its results incorporated into the training of locomotive engineers.

BLET is proud of how this Union and locomotive engineers have fostered and promoted ways to safely integrate new technology, which is reflected in our formal partnering with FRA for the past two decades. Moreover, locomotive engineers

have faced new forms of technology since they first climbed on board a locomotive. At every stage in the history of the development of the locomotive cab there has been a story of adapting to and mastering new technology by locomotive engineers. Such mastery can only come about when there is standardization of safety, planning for human error to take place and providing a way to manage failure when it inevitably occurs; that is the end we seek here.

We respectfully request that FRA issue an emergency order to prohibit the mandated use of and reliance upon LEADER, Trip Optimizer and other similar auto control or advisory control locomotive operating systems until railroads can prove that the relevant safety implications of reliance upon these systems have been properly identified and addressed. Communication-based train control systems that interact with throttle positions, train handling, air brakes and dynamic brakes place them in a category where an engineer is left only in reactive mode, and the current reality is unsafe and unsatisfactory.

Respectfully,

DENNIS R. PIERCE
BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK

Accidents are unavoidable.

Losing your income doesn't have to be.

- Claim payments up to your policy limit even if you sign a waiver
- Receive your full daily benefit if you are decertified and decline to exercise your seniority
- Claim payments deposited in your account every week



(800) 514-0010
www.lecmpa.org



Transportation workers protecting each other since 1910.

¹ See, also, *The Hazards of Going on Autopilot*, Maria Konnikova, *New Yorker Magazine*, September 4, 2014.



GENERAL PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY JAMES P. HOFFA

MORE LAWMAKERS ARE SEEING THROUGH THE TPP LIES

Powerful bipartisan voices aired concerns about the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) recently, leaving passage of the lousy trade deal that would ship thousands of jobs overseas and permit unsafe food and products to flood U.S. stores in limbo.

The loudest came when House Speaker Paul Ryan (D-Wis.) noted he "is not the dictator of the House" and cannot force members to pass the 12-nation Pacific Rim trade agreement. He conceded that as it stands, the pact does not have the votes required for passage.

That was followed up by Rep. Sander Levin (D-Mich.), ranking member of the House Ways & Means Committee, who announced he would not be supporting the TPP. He took aim at its failure to address currency manipulation as well as its weak worker rights and country-of-origin rules as his reasons for opposing it.

"Some will say that TPP is an improvement over the status quo," Levin

said. "Trade touches all aspects of our lives, and we are setting an economic framework for generations. We cannot afford to lock-in weak standards, uncompetitive practices, and a system that does not broadly spread the benefits of trade, affecting the paychecks of American families."

Taken together, big business has a problem on its hands. Lawmakers across the political spectrum are seeing what the Teamsters and many pro-worker allies have known all along — TPP won't help anybody but the corporate class.

Congress is in no rush to move forward with the trade deal because elected officials see their constituents rising up and saying no to even more corporate handouts at the expense of everyday Americans. The TPP is just the latest example of crony capitalism run amok.

Fraternally,

JAMES P. HOFFA
TEAMSTERS GENERAL PRESIDENT



66

Lawmakers across the political spectrum are seeing what the Teamsters and many pro-worker allies have known all along — TPP won't help anybody but the corporate class.

99

Tentative agreement announced at NJ Transit

The 11 unions of the NJT Rail Labor Coalition and negotiators from New Jersey Transit (NJT) announced a tentative contract agreement on March 11, hours before a March 13 deadline for a possible strike or lockout. Details of the agreement were not being released in order to give the unions a chance to present the information directly to the membership. The situation was continuing to unfold as this issue of The News went to press.

The unions have been without an agreement for five years. Throughout negotiations, they adopted the impartial recommendations of Presidential Emergency Board (PEB) 248 as their final offer. The PEB recommendations called for a contract averaging 2.5% a year coupled with significant increases in employee health care contributions. NJT's offer was for 0.6% net wage increases per year. The two Presidential Boards consisted of six experienced and expert arbitrators. A second Presidential Emergency Board, PEB 249, selected the unions' final offer as the "most reasonable." In

late February, a Congressional delegation of elected leaders throughout New Jersey sent a letter to the head of NJ Transit, urging the railroad to accept the PEB's recommendations in order to avoid a strike or lockout.

Labor Coalition spokesmen said, "The last thing we want is a strike. We have gone five years without a contract. Our settlement proposal is modest and fair. All we are asking is what has been recommended by two expert neutral panels. Congress changed the Railway Labor Act to try to prevent commuter work stoppages by having a second PEB recommend the most reasonable offer, with penalties imposed on the side that doesn't accept the recommendation. That has almost always led to a settlement."

The unions held a massive rally in Woodbridge, N.J., on March 5. Thousands of union members were in attendance. NJ Transit is the nation's third-biggest mass-transit provider. A strike would have left an estimated 65,000 people in the New York/New Jersey area without a way to work each day. An influential business

group, Partnership for New York City, estimated the strike would have cost the city's businesses \$5.9 million per hour.

The Coalition includes every rail union on NJT, representing more than 4,000 commuter workers.

The NJT Rail Labor Coalition is comprised of: American Train Dispatchers Association (Power Directors, Train Dispatchers); Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, IBT; Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division, IBT; Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen; International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers; International Brotherhood of Boilermakers; International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1573 and System Council No. 7, IBEW; National Conference Firemen & Oilers/SEIU; SMART-Mechanical, SMART-Transportation Trainmen and SMART-Transportation Yardmasters; Transport Workers Union; and Transportation Communications Union/IAM (ARSA Division, BRC Division and Clerical Division). ©



Brother Dave Decker, General Chairman of the BLET's New Jersey Transit General Committee of Adjustment, speaks at a rally for NJ Transit workers on March 5, 2016, in Woodbridge, N.J. Several thousand rail workers attended the rally, where union members urged the management of NJ Transit to accept the recommendations of Presidential Emergency Board 248.

RRB announces dates of Spring 2016 Pre-Retirement Seminars

The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) has announced the dates and locations of the agency's spring 2016 Pre-Retirement Seminars.

Designed for railroad employees and spouses planning to retire within five years or less, Pre-Retirement Seminars will familiarize attendees with the retirement benefits available to them, and also guide them through the application process. Sponsored by the Office of the Labor Member, the program began in 2014 on a pilot basis. Registration is required.

Pre-Retirement Seminars are

open to rank and file railroad employees. However, persons wishing to attend must register by submitting one of the registration forms available on the RRB website: http://www.rrb.gov/lmo/educational_materials.asp.

Seminar space is limited and registration is accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Completed forms should be mailed or faxed to the RRB office listed on the form as soon as possible. Check-in for each seminar begins at 8 a.m., with the program starting at 8:30 a.m. and concluding at 12:30 p.m.

Individuals who have not previously submitted documents re-

quired for filing a railroad retirement annuity application (such as proofs of age, marriage, or military service) are encouraged to bring this material to the seminar (original documents or certified copies required). Attendees should also bring along an additional copy of each item to leave with the RRB field personnel leading the seminars.

Those unable to attend the seminars but still seeking pre-retirement information should contact the RRB. Individual retirement counseling is available in person at an agency field office, or via phone by contacting the RRB toll-free at (877) 772-5772. @@

DATES AND LOCATIONS OF THE AGENCY'S SPRING 2016 PRE-RETIREMENT SEMINARS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

APRIL 22 — Jerome Hill Theater (1st floor), 180 E. 5th Street, St. Paul, Minnesota.

APRIL 28 — Gus Solomon Federal Courthouse, 620 SW Main Street, Room 101, Portland, Oregon.

MAY 6 — Leo O'Brien Federal Building, 11A Clinton Avenue, Room 823, Albany, New York.

MAY 13 — U.S. Post Office Building, 657 Second Ave. North, Room 319, Fargo, North Dakota.

MAY 13 — Can-Do Building, Community Room (2nd Floor), 1 South Church Street, Hazelton, Pennsylvania.

RRB announces dates for March-June 2016 informational conferences

The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) has announced a schedule of dates for the agency's spring 2016 informational conferences.

Informational conferences will be held in 21 locations across the country, beginning on March 11 in Baldwin Park, California, and concluding on June 24 in Barboursville, West Virginia.

Started approximately 60 years ago by the RRB's Office of the Labor Member, the conferences provide rail union officers with a comprehensive overview of the provisions and financing of the railroad retirement and unemployment insurance systems. These officials, in turn, pass on to their fellow rail labor membership the information acquired at the conferences.

Informational Conferences are open to union officials and their spouses by invitation only. Labor representatives who do not receive an invitation to a conference in their area should contact the RRB toll-free at (877) 772-5772 and request that they be added to the agency's invitation database. Registration for each informational conference begins at 8:00 a.m., with the programs beginning promptly at 8:30 a.m. and ending at 12:15 p.m. @@

APRIL 2016

APRIL 1, PIKESVILLE, MARYLAND
DoubleTree by Hilton
Baltimore North-Pikesville
1726 Reisterstown Road

APRIL 8, WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA
Fort Magruder Hotel
& Conference Center
6945 Pocahontas Trail

APRIL 8, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI
Holiday Inn Forest Park
5915 Wilson Avenue

APRIL 15, NEW YORK, NEW YORK
DoubleTree By Hilton
Metropolitan New York
569 Lexington Avenue

APRIL 22, CHEEKTOWAGA, NEW YORK
Holiday Inn Buffalo Airport
4600 Genesee Street

APRIL 29, ROMULUS, MICHIGAN
Holiday Inn Romulus
8400 Merriman Road

APRIL 29, ASHLAND, NEBRASKA
Eugene T. Mahoney State Park
28500 West Park Highway

MAY 2016
MAY 6, KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI
Sheet Metal Workers
Local Union No. 2
2902 Blue Ridge Boulevard

MAY 13, LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS
Comfort Inn & Suites
707 Interstate 30,
Frontage Road

MAY 13, LAKEWOOD, COLORADO
Holiday Inn Lakewood
7390 W. Hampden Avenue

MAY 20, ALTOONA, PENNSYLVANIA
The Hampton Inn Altoona
180 Charlotte Drive

MAY 20, PARMA, OHIO
Sheet Metal Worker's
Local #33
12515 Corporate Drive

JUNE 2016
JUNE 10, BILLINGS, MONTANA
Hilton Garden Inn
2465 Grant Road

JUNE 10, INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA
La Quinta Inn & Suites
5120 Victory Drive (I-465
& South Emerson Drive)

JUNE 17, DORCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS
The Sheet Metal Workers
Union Hall
1157 Adams Street

JUNE 17, TINLEY PARK, ILLINOIS
Tinley Park
Convention Center
18451 Convention
Center Drive

JUNE 24, CLIVE, IOWA
Wildwood Lodge
11431 Forest Avenue

JUNE 24, BARBOURSVILLE, WEST VIRGINIA
Holiday Inn Hotel
and Suites
3551 US Route 60 E

CP Rail offices raided for a second time over train left with no handbrakes

(Reporting from CBC News-Canada)

Transport Canada raided the offices of CP Rail's headquarters in Calgary twice in 2015 to investigate why 57 rail cars — some containing hazardous cargo — were left parked on a mountain slope without proper handbrakes above Revelstoke, B.C., in February of 2015. While Transport Canada hasn't given an official statement, a CBC News analysis of search warrants raises allegations that three CP Rail supervisors — not the train crew — are responsible for the unsafe act, which violates Canada's federal rail safety laws.

The offices were first raided in May, followed by a subsequent raid on No-

vember 2, 2015. Railway safety regulation in Canada is the responsibility of Transport Canada, making it the approximate equivalent of the Federal Railroad Administration in the United States.

In the search warrant for the raid, Transport Canada alleges that the company and three supervisors violated emergency rules intended to prevent runaway trains and derailments made into law after the Lac-Mégantic oil train tragedy in July 2013.

The B.C. incident involves allegations that CP Rail ignored those emergency rules during the night of February 14-15, 2015, as it faced a nationwide strike by locomotive engineers and conductors. CP workers were set to

walk off the job at midnight in a strike and company managers were directing crews to park their trains and tie down their cargo.

Train 401 was descending CP Rail's Mountain Subdivision approaching Revelstoke when the conductor said she was ordered to leave the rail cars on a grade above the town of Revelstoke and not to take extra time to apply hand brakes.

CP's rail charts describe the portion of track in question, at the Greely side road roughly 6.2 miles uphill from Revelstoke, as a "heavy grade" with a slope of 1.2 per cent.

During the first raid, investigators seized audio recordings of radio and telephone calls from the night in question between the train crew and the rail

traffic control center in Calgary.

After listening to those calls, rail safety investigators expanded their investigation. On November 2, Transport Canada obtained a second warrant and searched CP's headquarters again.

According to the warrant papers filed in court, investigators listened to the audio recordings and now believe the train crew was ordered to ignore the rules by three CP Rail supervisors.

Transport Canada won't discuss their investigation, and the regulator has not laid any charges. Penalties for violating an emergency directive under Canada's Railway Safety Act include fines of up to \$1 million against a company and up to six months in jail for individuals. @@

IN THE SEARCH WARRANT FOR THE RAID, TRANSPORT CANADA ALLEGES THAT THE COMPANY AND THREE SUPERVISORS VIOLATED EMERGENCY RULES INTENDED TO PREVENT RUNAWAY TRAINS AND DERAILMENTS MADE INTO LAW AFTER THE LAC-MÉGANTIC OIL TRAIN TRAGEDY IN JULY 2013.

BLET settling into new headquarters

As this issue of the *News* goes to press, the National Division of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen is settling into its new headquarters building in Independence, Ohio.

THE ADDRESS OF THE NEW HEADQUARTERS IS:
7061 EAST PLEASANT VALLEY ROAD
INDEPENDENCE, OHIO 44131

All correspondence should be directed to the new address in Independence as of March 1, 2016. The National Division's telephone number, (216) 241-2630, and fax number, (216) 241-6516, will remain the same.

The BLET sold the historic Standard Building to Weston, a real estate development group, in mid-2014. The National Division had leased back its office space in the Standard Building for the last year or so. The BLET purchased the new space in Independence, a suburb of Cleveland, in March of 2015.

The new headquarters will provide ample room for National Division officers and staff in a more modern work environment. It will also feature an expanded and improved state-of-the-

art Education and Training Center.

The AM Higley Co. of Cleveland is performing the construction services related to renovation of the new headquarters. A 100 percent union workforce is performing all renovation work on the new building.

The BLET is the oldest labor organization in the United States. Cleveland was selected in 1870 as the union's headquarters city due to its central location for serving U.S. and Canadian members. From 1910 to 1989, the union's national office was located in the Engineers Building, the BLET's original headquarters building in Cleveland. That building was sold in 1988 to make way for the Marriott Tower. The Standard Building, which was originally constructed by the BLE and dedicated in 1924, has served as National Division headquarters since 1989.

A dedication ceremony for the new BLET National Division headquarters building is planned for Thursday, April 14. All active and retired BLET members, officers and members of the BLET Auxiliary are invited to attend. As the date approaches, information and other details will be posted on the BLET website (www.ble-t.org) and the National Division Facebook page (www.Facebook.com/BLETNational). ©



Weick reelected to 2nd term as Chairman of North Dakota State Legislative Board

Brother Charles D. Weick was reelected by acclamation to his second term as Chairman of the BLET's North Dakota State Legislative Board during its quadrennial meeting in Bismarck, N.D., January 11-13, 2016.

Brother Weick is a CP Rail locomotive engineer and Legislative Representative of Division 160 (Harvey, N.D.). He hired out with the CP Rail in January of 1994, earning promotion to locomotive engineer in 1998. He has held continuous membership in the BLET since April 1, 1998. Brother Weick began serving his Division as Legislative Representative in 2004 and was elected to serve as Secretary-Treasurer in 2008. He was elected unanimously to serve as Chairman of the North Dakota State Legislative Board on January 24, 2012, following the retirement of outgoing chairman Michael R. Muscha.

Also elected during the quadrennial meeting were: 1st Vice Chairman Sean M. Forschen, Division 746 (Mandan, N.D.); and 2nd Vice Chairman Mark A. Schneider, Division 695 (Minot, N.D.). Secretary-Treasurer Darin L. Hamre, Division 671 (Enderlin, N.D.) was reelected by acclamation. Elected to serve as Trustees of the Board were: Terry L. Pauli, Division 69 (Grand Forks, N.D.); Mark A. Schneider, Division 695 (Minot, N.D.); and Sean M. Forschen, Division 746 (Mandan, N.D.).

BLET Vice President and National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman represented the National Division at the meeting, along with Special Representative Richard A. Olson. Brother Olson is a member of Division 746 (Mandan, N.D.).

"I am proud to thank Brother Weick and all members of the North Dakota State Legislative Board for their ongoing dedication to our Brotherhood," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "I regret that I was unable to attend the meeting in person, but I have every confidence they will continue to do an excellent job



Brother Charlie Weick and his wife Keri at the 2015 IWC in Denver, Colorado.

representing the interests of BLET members throughout the proud state of North Dakota."

Additional BLET members in attendance included: Jim A. Olson, Local Chairman of BLET Division 160 (Harvey, N.D.); Paul P. Ripplinger, Local Chairman of Division 671 (Enderlin, N.D.); and Mike Muscha, former Chairman of the North Dakota State Legislative Board and retired member of Division 671. Kathleen Bisbikis, National 2nd Vice President and National Legislative Representative of the BLET Auxiliary, was also in attendance.

Guest speakers included: Waylon Hedegaard, President of the North Dakota AFL-CIO; Ross D. Keys, Deputy State Director from the Bismarck office of Sen. Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND); and Naomi Muscha, North Dakota State Representative from District 24. Federal Railroad Administration Field Inspector Michael Buchholtz and Hazmat Inspector Dion Miller also were in attendance.

The North Dakota State Legislative Board represents more than 550 active and retired members living in North Dakota. ©

BMWED WAGE SUCCESSFUL STRIKE ON THE CANADIAN PACIFIC'S DELAWARE & HUDSON RAILWAY

On March 7, members of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division (BMWED) went on strike at Canadian Pacific's Delaware & Hudson Railway near Albany, New York.

According to the BMWED, membership of its Northeastern System Federation went on strike over CP's refusal to pay its track workers in a fair and equitable manner. "Our BMWED members on CP have not been fully paid for the time they worked, have not been accurately paid at their contractual hourly rates, have been paid incorrectly or not at all for holidays and vacations, and

have been deprived health insurance and supplemental sickness benefits while on medical leave or furlough," the union said in a press release.

The BMWED claimed victory and called off the strike later that day, after receiving assurances from CP that employees shorted on rates-of-pay, holidays and vacations — or otherwise shortchanged in any way through errors in its payroll department — would be fully compensated and made whole.

Representatives for the BMWED and CP were slated to meet in Chicago on March 14 to hash out the details of the problems with the railroad's payroll processes and to establish procedures to make sure that this does not happen again. Part of that plan will include a dedicated CP representative, whose task will be prompt response to payroll issues for union-represented employees.



BMWED members on the picket line on March 7 near Albany, New York.

"I am proud of our Brothers and Sisters on the D&H. We all stepped out with conviction and courage today. We stuck together and we stood up for what's right," BMWED Northeastern System Federation General Chairman Dale Bogart said. "And I am also very proud of the support we got from every BMWED member across our Brotherhood. We could feel the support from thousands of miles away. Good things happen to good, honest, hardworking people when they embrace unity and solidarity." ©



Locomotive Engineers And Trainmen News Brotherhood Of Locomotive Engineers And Trainmen

7061 East Pleasant Valley Road
Independence, Ohio 44131

BLET Publications Committee:

Dennis R. Pierce, National President
E. "Lee" Pruitt, First Vice President & Alternate President
Stephen J. Bruno, National Secretary-Treasurer
John P. Tolman, Vice President & National Legislative Rep.
John V. Bentley Jr., Director of Public Relations & Editor
Bill Joyce, Art Director & Associate Editor
www.ble-t.org • (216) 241-2630

COPYRIGHT 2016, ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
VOLUME 30 • NUMBER 2 • February 2016

LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN NEWS (ISSN 0898-8625)

is published monthly by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen,
7061 East Pleasant Valley Road, Independence, Ohio 44131
Periodicals postage paid at Cleveland, OH.

USPS: 0002-244 ISSN: 0898-8625

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to

Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen News — BLET Record Department,
7061 East Pleasant Valley Road, Independence, Ohio 44131.

Periodicals Postage
PAID
at Cleveland, OH.

3/16

Photo of the Month: February 2016

A LOUISVILLE & INDIANA TRAIN (LIRC J11A20) departs Jeffersonville Yard office heading north to Speed, Indiana, delivering eight maintenance of way to gondolas for the CSX/LIRC Southwind Project. **Photo:** Alex L. Moss, BLET Division 279 (Columbus, Indiana)



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

images to the "Photo of the Month" section of the Newsletter. 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 2015 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; Teamsters General Executive Board mtg., Washington, D.C.; UP Hub town hall mtg., Kansas City, Kan.; Vacation; Secretary-Treasurer class, Cleveland.

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, Cleveland, Ohio; UP Hub town hall mtg., Kansas City, Kan.; Vacation; Holiday.

NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER STEPHEN J. BRUNO: General supervision of Accounting Dept., Record Dept., Online Services Dept., Tax Compliance Dept.; Safety Task Force; PAC and FEC reports and filings; Implementation and training for BLET membership database; Pension, STD, 457 plan Trustee; Division, General Committee and SLB monthly Trustee reports; Mtgs. with vendors and financial institutions; Publications Committee; Passenger Dept.; National Bargaining Committee; IBT Human Rights Commission; ND office work, Cleveland; UP Hub town hall mtg., Kansas City, Kan.; Holiday; RMA planning mtg.

VICE PRESIDENT & NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE JOHN P. TOLMAN: Assigned to BLET Washington, DC office; General office duties, telephone and correspondence communications; Coordinate content of NLO website; Weekly PAC committee and legislative mtgs.; Attended functions for several Representatives and Senators, Washington, D.C.; Meeting with Frank Voyack, Norfolk Southern Director of Government Relations, Washington, D.C.; Rail Safety Advisory Committee (RSAC) working group on Remote Control, Washington, D.C.; Meetings with Reps. DeFazio, Katko and Capuano, along with several others; Various meetings and functions with Representatives and Senators.

VICE PRESIDENT MARCUS J. RUEF: Vice Chairman, National Railroad Adjustment Board (NRAB); National Mediation Board (NMB) Arb. Adv. Forum; Department Head, BLET Arbitration Department; Assigned to Illinois Central, Wisconsin Central, Indiana Harbor Belt, Belt Railway of Chicago, Metra, GRR and Illinois RR; Assist GC Reynolds with discipline appeals, WC, Chicago; Executive session, vacation settlement SBA, UP-Central, Chicago; DL 381-382, NRAB, Chicago; Assist GC Cundari w/ Illinois Rwy agreement negotiations, IHB/IL Rwy, Chicago; Assist GC Graves w/ prep and investigation, BRC, Chicago; Attend Division 394 mtg., Chicago; Vacation; Holiday; General office duties.

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), Central Region, Southern Region; Tacoma Belt RR, Utah RR, Longview Portland & Northern NO & Longview Switch, Portland Terminal; On duty at home office; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; UP-Southern Region and UP-Western Region joint conference, Phoenix, Ariz.; Up-Central Region grievance mediation 0120, Estero, Fla.;

10 Local Division 587 mtg., Salina, Kan.; UP-Southern Region and UP-Western Region joint conference Spokane, Wash.; Utah Railway Section 6 mtg., Salt Lake City, Utah.

VICE PRESIDENT GIL GORE: Assigned to all CSX; Grand Trunk Western; Union Pacific-Southern Region GCA special assignment; Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC) issues, CSXT; General office duties, paperwork, correspondence, emails, telephone calls, etc.; CSX safety initiatives; PLB assisting GC Karakian, GTW, Chicago; Conference call; CSX bonus update discussion; Bombardier mtg., Baltimore; PLB 7384, Chicago; PLB 7384 executive session.

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, Great Western; Texas Pacifico; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; PLB 7333, M&NA, assisting GC Thurman, Fort Myers, Fla.; Mtg. w/ BNSF and GC Wilson, Fort Worth, Texas; Mtgs. w/ Divisions 940, 186, and 256 with GC Wilson, GC Holdcraft and GC Brown, Denver, Colo.; PLB 7477 w/ GC Holdcraft, Chicago; Vacation.

VICE PRESIDENT COLE W. DAVIS: Assigned to: Kansas City Southern (MidSouth Rail, South-Rail, Gateway Western, Illinois & Midland), Texas Mexican Rwy.; CP Rail System/US (Indiana Southern, Iowa, Chicago & Eastern, Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern); Springfield Terminal (St. Lawrence & Atlantic, Delaware & Hudson), Cedar River, Louisville & Indiana, Huron & Eastern; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; CP Rail Section IV arbitration, assist GC Semenek, Washington, D.C.; Huron & Eastern agreement, GC Ladrig; L&I issues, GC Hogan; D&H issues and Springfield Terminal issues, GC Moore; Div. 569 mtgs and Christmas party, GC Parker, Poteau, Okla.; Huron & Eastern Division mtg. and Christmas party, GC Ladrig, Saginaw, Mich.; PLB 7239, assist GC Craddock, Ft. Meyers, Fla.; CP issues, DM&E issues and MidSouth issues, GC Craddock; PLB 6884, GC Parker, Ft. Meyers, Fla.; Tex Mex issues, GC Ball; L&I issues, GC Hogan.

VICE PRESIDENT R.C. (RICK) GIBBONS: 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; RSAC/RSIA Fatigue Management Group; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications; On duty at home office; PLB 7663 and PLB 7574, assisting GC Peek and GC Wallace, Norfolk, Va.; NS-Southern executive mtg., assisting GC Wallace, Asheville, N.C.; SBA 1063, assisting GC Dehart, Chicago, Ill.; Mtgs. w/ W&LE Divisions, assisting GC Dehart, Brewster, Ohio; Holidays.

VICE PRESIDENT JAMES P. LOUIS: Assigned Amtrak; Long Island Rail Road; New York & Atlantic; Metro North; New Jersey Transit; PATH; SEPTA; Metra; Union Railroad; National Division Department Head, Education & Training Dept.; National Division Department Head, Internal Organizing, Mobilizing & Strategic Planning Dept.; E&T issues; 2016 RMA planning mtg., Cleveland; SEPTA, NMB A13798 and SEPTA contract talks, GC Dixon, Philadelphia; Division 373 mtg. and Christmas dinner, GC Decker, Mount Laurel; PEB 249, NJ Transit, GC Decker, Newark; Amtrak issues, GC Kenny; LIRR issues, GC Sexton; Holidays.

Secretary-Treasurers complete LM-2 training class

In February, the BLET Education and Training Department conducted a training class for all Secretary-Treasurers who file LM-2 reports for their General Committee of Adjustment (GCA), Division, or State Legislative Board (SLB). The class was held in Long Beach, California.

Each year, labor organizations must file a financial report with the U.S. Department of Labor. The filing requirements are determined by the total annual receipts of the union, and the LM-2 is required for units with \$250,000 or more in total annual receipts. The BLET conducts one such LM-2 class each year, and it is generally intended for Secretary-Treasurers from many BLET General Committees of Adjustment and larger Divisions along with some State Legislative Boards.

A special segment of the class focused on the records that must be kept to comply with the new LM-2 form, including itemization of certain expenses as well as estimates of time spent by officers and employees in five "functional activity" categories.

Other segments included an overview of the BLET online dues reporting program, a QuickBooks refresher, and information on the LM-2 digital signatures titled "The Seven Deadly Sins of Union Recordkeeping."

Thank you and congratulations to the Brothers and Sisters who successfully completed this complex training. Please monitor the BLET National Division website and Facebook page for announcements regarding upcoming training classes offered by the BLET Education and Training Department. @@



BLET Secretary-Treasurers during the Education and Training Departments class for LM-2 filers.