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VP TOLMAN TESTIFIES BEFORE HOUSE ON PTC

URGES CONGRESS & REGULATORS TO ENSURE THAT POSITIVE TRAIN CONTROL IS FULLY IMPLEMENTED BY THE DEADLINE PG 4



AMTRAK'S SILVER METEOR

On January 27, 2015, Amtrak's Silver Meteor whips up the snow in Elizabeth, N.J., which was dumped by Winter Storm Juno the day before. It will soon arrive in Newark for a brief stop before continuing north to New York and ultimately, Boston.

Photo: by Eric Williams, www.ericwilliams.photography

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Monterey and Washington D.C. will host BLET for 2018 regional meetings

The BLET National Division is hosting two regional meetings 2018, and they are as follows: June 18-22 in Monterey, California; and August 13-17 in Washington, D.C.

The Monterey regional meeting will be held at the Hyatt Regency and the Washington, D.C. regional will be held at the Capital Hilton.

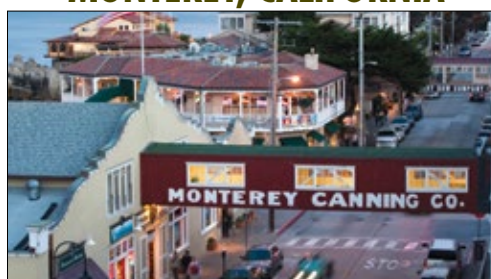
As with the 2017 regional meetings, the 2018 meetings will be arranged on a Monday through Friday schedule. Travel to the meeting, registration and a welcome reception for each of the two meetings will be on Monday (June 18 for Monterey and August 13 for Washington, D.C.). Meetings, training classes and other events will be scheduled throughout the remainder of the week and will include a closing

banquet on Thursday night. Travel home is on Friday for each meeting (June 22 for Monterey and August 17 for Washington, D.C.).

Per the BLET Bylaws, regional meetings are held "for the purposes of membership training, education and discussion of matters of importance to the membership." Additionally, the meetings are structured to include options for fellowship with other members and their families, entertainment, fun and relaxation.

More specific details about the Monterey meeting are on Page 5. Registration information is available online at the BLET National Division's regional meeting website (www.ble-tregionals.org). All members are encouraged to attend one or both of these regional meetings. @@

JUNE 18-22 MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA



Photos: courtesy of seemonterey.com

AUGUST 13-17 WASHINGTON, D.C.



Photos: courtesy of washington.org



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BLET PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY DENNIS R. PIERCE

CRIMINAL PROSECUTION FOR UNINTENTIONAL MISTAKES IS BLATANTLY UNFAIR TO LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND TRAINMEN

In the wake of recent dramatic and highly visible railroad accidents in the United States and Canada, there has been a trend to criminalize railroad workers and prosecute them as the sole cause of these tragedies. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen stands opposed to such actions.

It is a travesty that criminal charges were filed against three former employees of the Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railway for the tragedy of July 5, 2013 in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec. The trial against them began in September of 2017 and concluded on January 19, 2018. What jurors found out is that railroading is a complex system of operations, and many factors go into a safe operation. Determining the root cause of a particular accident is far more complex than simply blaming the workers, but that all too often is what many rail carriers and government agencies have done.

In 2017, criminal charges were brought against the locomotive engineer of Amtrak train 188, which crashed in Philadelphia on May 12, 2015. Those charges were dismissed in 2017 after a judge ruled that the crash was accidental, not criminal. The engineer's lawyer argued in part: "The law recognizes there's a big difference between an accident and a crime." However, a second judge has ruled that dismissal of those charges was wrong, and has reinstated charges of reckless endangerment, involuntary manslaughter, and one count of causing a catastrophe.

The operating employees who



President Pierce (center) with class attendees and instructors at a recent training class for Local Chairmen at BLET National Division headquarters in Independence, Ohio. Also pictured are Steve Bruno, BLET National Secretary-Treasurer (far right), Jim Louis, BLET National Vice President (second from right), and Doug Davidson, Director of the BLET Arbitration Department (to President Pierce's left).

crew trains and locomotives — locomotive engineers, conductors, brakemen and switchmen — have extraordinary safety-critical tasks and responsibilities not found in other industries. An operating employee's readiness for safety-critical constant vigilance is a personal obligation. But this personal duty must be effectively supported — not thwarted — by a management devoted fully to the fundamentals of safety.

Railroad crew members sometimes go on duty without being allowed sufficient rest, and with accumulated sleep deficits, consequently constituting a profound safety problem on and along the tracks. Laws are such that crew mem-

bers are not given enough time to simply rest and have a normal life. On the Amtrak property, many of our locomotive engineers work six-day assignments resulting in operations in excess of 2,500-3,000 miles per week. At times, the crew members are harassed and intimidated if they repeatedly request to lay off for needed rest. Moreover, they have to contend with abiding by unrealistic attendance policy standards imposed by the carrier that often result in disciplinary action despite the fact that additional time off is both necessary and fully warranted. Crew members who are harassed and intimidated by railroad managers are less likely to provide

feedback regarding unsafe operations. Such feedback is crucial to safe train operations.

To please Wall Street investors, railroads have furloughed so many workers that the few who remain are often overworked and stretched too thin. Railroads are increasing the length of freight trains to dangerous levels, trying to do more with fewer workers. Well-rested crew members are essential to safe train operations.

Railroad crew members sometimes complain that they are not given sufficient familiarization trips to become acquainted with the lines over which they operate. Proper training is essential to safe train operations.

At times, crew members pro-

test to railroad managers about hazardous operations, but their protests simply go unheeded. Properly maintained equipment and tracks are essential to safe train operations.

This is not to make excuses, but an effort to explain that it takes more than just blaming the worker to determine the root cause of railroad accidents. Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with the victims, families and workers touched by the accidents mentioned above. But criminalizing the worker is not part of the solution to eradicate similar tragic accidents from happening again.

DENNIS R. PIERCE
BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT

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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 policy is intended to allow the National

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

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



GENERAL PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY JAMES P. HOFFA

WORKERS NEED TO TAKE CONTROL OF THEIR FUTURE

Working Americans are facing many challenges on the job front. While unemployment is low, so is pay. Corporations may be pulling in massive profits, but it's all going to the top, with those who are making these businesses succeed getting little in return.

The struggle is real, and it isn't just those being hit the hardest who realize it. BlackRock chief executive Larry Fink told The Washington Post, "Since the financial crisis, those with capital have reaped enormous benefits. At the same time, many individuals across the world are facing a combination of low rates, low wage growth, and inadequate retirement systems."

So how do we change this? Increased unionization! America had a thriving middle class during the mid-20th century, all thanks to a significant union presence that topped out at more than a third of the workforce. But big business and their corporate cronies buckled down and pushed "no rights at work" legislation in states across the country. Lower wages followed.

Increasingly, however, workers are getting wise to corporate America's games. And they are responding by getting organized. The latest numbers re-

leased earlier this year by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) shows the number of workers belonging to a union grew by 262,000 last year to 14.8 million overall in 2017. Private industry workers who are organized grew by 0.1 percent. Interestingly, union growth was greatest in several anti-union Southern states, with Texas leading the way.

Why join a union? Because union jobs pay more! The BLS reports that union members had a median weekly income of \$1,041, compared to non-union workers, who on average earned \$829 a week. That's a difference of more than \$11,000 a year. It also doesn't address the fact that union workers generally receive better benefits as well.

Workers have seen for decades what happens when they leave it to lawmakers to solve the problems of the middle class — not much. It's time for hardworking Americans to take control of their own destiny and join with their co-workers to gain power in the workplace. That's what a union can do!

Fraternally,

JAMES P. HOFFA
TEAMSTERS GENERAL PRESIDENT



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In the Line of Duty

MICHAEL KEMPF

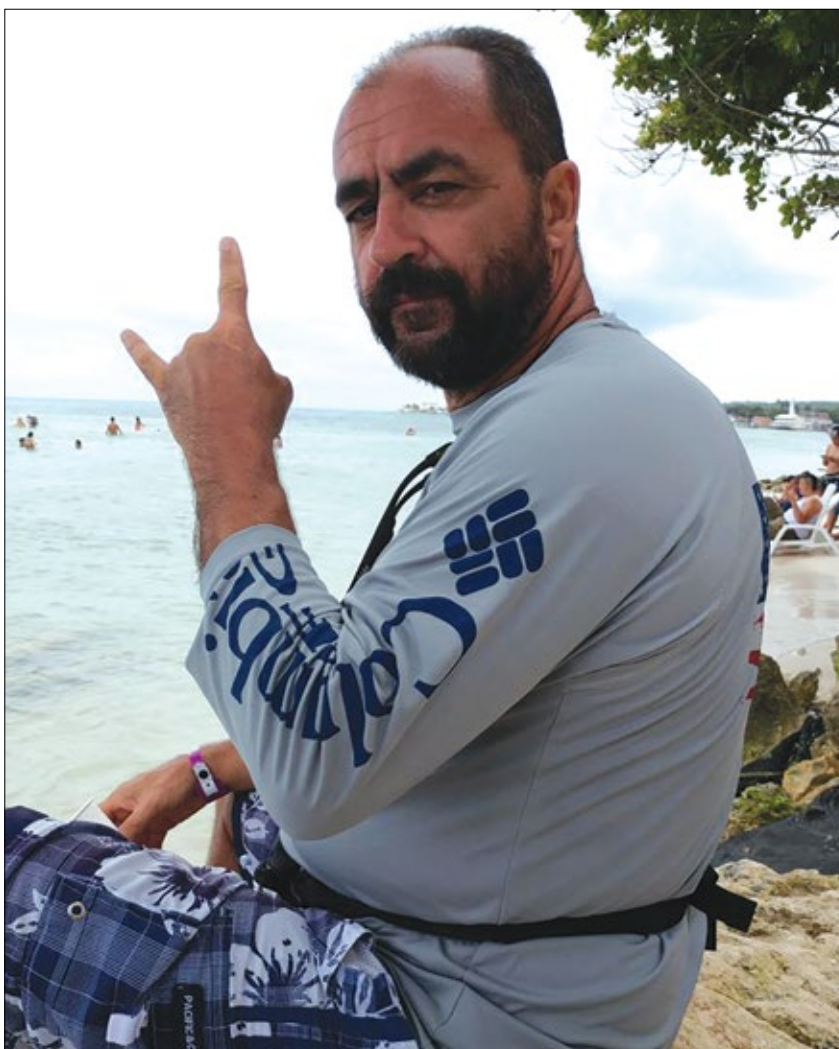
BLET MEMBER MICHAEL KEMPF, a member of BLET Division 35 in Jacksonville, Fla., was killed when his Amtrak train collided with a CSX train tied down in a siding near Columbia, S.C., on February 4, 2018. Brother Kempf was 54 years old. Also killed in the crash was 36-year-old conductor Michael Cella.

Employed by Amtrak, Brother Kempf first joined the BLET on February 1, 2014. He had worked at Amtrak and also at CSX over the years. Prior to his railroad career, Brother Kempf spent 20 years in the U.S. Army serving as a tank commander. He was stationed in Panama and South Korea, among other locations.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is investigating the accident. In addition to the two fatalities, 116 people were injured when Amtrak train 91 entered a siding at Cayce, S.C., and struck a stationary CSX train. The NTSB reported that the switch leading to the siding was improperly aligned, diverting the Amtrak train from the mainline to the siding.

Brother Kempf is survived by his wife and three children. He enjoyed riding his Harley-Davidson motorcycle.

"On behalf of all members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, I extend deepest condolences to the family and friends of Brother Michael Kempf," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "Our most heartfelt thoughts and prayers are with them during this difficult time." ©©



Brother Kempf is survived by his wife Divas (upper right), his mother Catherin, and three children. Photos: Kempf family

Vice President Tolman testifies before House on PTC

BLET Vice President and National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman urged Congress, the railroads, and governmental regulators to ensure that Positive Train Control (PTC) is fully implemented by the current deadline of December 31, 2018. During his testimony, Vice President Tolman also discussed the problem of electronic device distraction (Trip Optimizer and LEADER); the government and industry's failure to address rail worker fatigue; the danger of excessive train lengths; and the need for two person train crews.

Tolman began his testimony by expressing his anger and frustration at having to yet again testify at a hearing where preventable rail accidents and fatalities were the main topic of discussion.

"We strongly urge you to take all appropriate measures to ensure the current PTC deadline is met," Vice President Tolman testified on February 15 before a hearing of the U.S. House of Representatives' Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials. "It is time to get past decades of the industry's 'can't do' excuses, and it is time for all of Congress to get on board the safety train."

With passage of the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 (RSIA), Congress mandated the implementation of PTC nationwide by the end of 2015, then — under pressure from railroads — extend-



BLET Vice President and National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman delivers his oral testimony before the House Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials on February 15, 2018.

ed that deadline until the end of 2018. Many PTC-preventable crashes and deaths have occurred during the three year deadline extension.

"Some railroads have dragged their feet since the [2008] mandate and persuaded Congress to go along with the dithering and — with the [2015] deadline looming in the face of threats to cripple the economy and strand passengers — Congress

granted an eleventh hour extension," Vice President Tolman testified. "We warned Congress in 2015 that their actions would result in people dying from collisions that PTC could prevent. Congress was convinced by the railroad industry that more time was needed. Here we are years later and PTC is not fully implemented. Safety has waited too long and lives have been lost during the last extension."

According to a 2015 report from the National Transportation Safety Board, PTC could have prevented 145 major rail accidents that killed 288 people and injured 6,574 since 1969, when the agency first recommended the technology.

Regarding electronic device distraction, Brother Tolman was critical of the Trip Optimizer and LEADER systems in use on certain North American rail carriers. "Human factor issues will require close attention to be paid to human-machine interface problems as more screens with more buttons and submenus come online to interface with PTC," Tolman said. "We also recognize the challenges PTC will place on train crews who will be forced to interact with more computer screens in the locomotive cab. This will only increase the potential for electronic device distraction, given the already widespread use of technologies such as Trip Optimizer and LEADER."

While PTC was mandated by the RSIA of 2008, the law also addressed the issue of rail worker fatigue. However, the fatigue has not been sufficiently addressed in the past 10 years. Vice President Tolman reminded Congress of this glaring oversight during his testimony.

"[Fatigue] has been wrestled with for decades and Congress made an attempt to alleviate it in the RSIA in 2008. However, the regulator's effort in meeting the requirements of the Act has not produced any measurable results a full decade after Congress mandated that the management sit down with labor and work out genuine fatigue mitigation plans."

Vice President Tolman warned Congress about the danger of excessive train lengths. "Freight trains have been getting longer and heavier in recent years. Some of these trains have been over three miles long. This creates technical challenges with maintaining brake pipe pressure that aids a train in slowing and stopping. There

are currently no federal regulations or laws that address train length. This needs to change."

Vice President Tolman encouraged all members of Congress to consider bipartisan support for two-person crew bills that are progressing through the House and Senate. He thanked Representative Don Young for introducing the Safe Freight Act (H.R. 233) and Senator Heidi Heitkamp for introducing S. 2360, a companion bill in the Senate. Both measures would require two-person train crews on freight trains.

"On the railroad, train crews consisting of Engineers and Conductors form a solid team that moves trains across the United States safely every day," Vice President Tolman said. "True safety requires two crew members on every freight train, and such a goal should have no party lines."

The hearing was titled "Oversight of Positive Train Control Implementation in the United States." Additional witnesses included: Richard Anderson, Chief Executive Officer, Amtrak; Juan D. Reyes III, Chief Counsel, Federal Railroad Administration; Robert Sumwalt, Chairman, National Transportation Safety Board; Edward Hamberger, President and Chief Executive Officer, Association of American Railroads; and Paul Skoutelas, President and Chief Executive Officer, American Public Transportation Association.

A COPY OF VICE PRESIDENT TOLMAN'S TESTIMONY CAN BE FOUND HERE (PDF): WWW.BLE-T.ORG/PR/PDF/PTC_FINAL_2.15.18.PDF



Vice President Tolman responds to questions from members of the Committee.

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Your Peace of Mind Policy

- Protect your income and your family
- Matching accidental death benefit on most policies, covering both you and your beneficiary 24/7*
- Receive your full daily benefit if you are decertified and decline to exercise your seniority

*Accidental Death coverage is not available in California.
Beneficiary Accidental Death coverage is not available in Texas.



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Registration open for BLET's Monterey regional meeting

FOR THE LATEST INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT THE BLET WEBSITE, FACEBOOK PAGE, AND WWW.BLETREGIONALS.ORG

Registration is now open for the BLET regional meeting at the Hyatt Monterey Hotel & Spa in Monterey, Calif., June 18-22, 2018.

The BLET National Division is planning a meeting filled with educational opportunities and entertaining leisure time activities. Guests will stay at the Hyatt Monterey Hotel & Spa (1 Old Golf Course Rd., Monterey, Calif., (831) 372-1234). BLET convention registration as well as hotel registration can be made through the BLET's regional meeting website, <http://www.bletregionals.org>. If making reservations by telephone, you must mention the group code "BLET Regional Meeting." Room reservations must be made by May 21, 2018.

The Monterey regional meeting kicks off with registration and a welcome reception on Monday, June 18 for those who purchased tickets for the event. Opening ceremonies will take place the morning of Tuesday, June 19, with a closed meeting for BLET members that afternoon. A golf tournament will be held on Wednesday, June 20, at the Del Monte Golf Course. There is an additional cost to register for the golf tournament. Non-golfers will be on their own to explore the many entertainment options that Monterey has to offer.

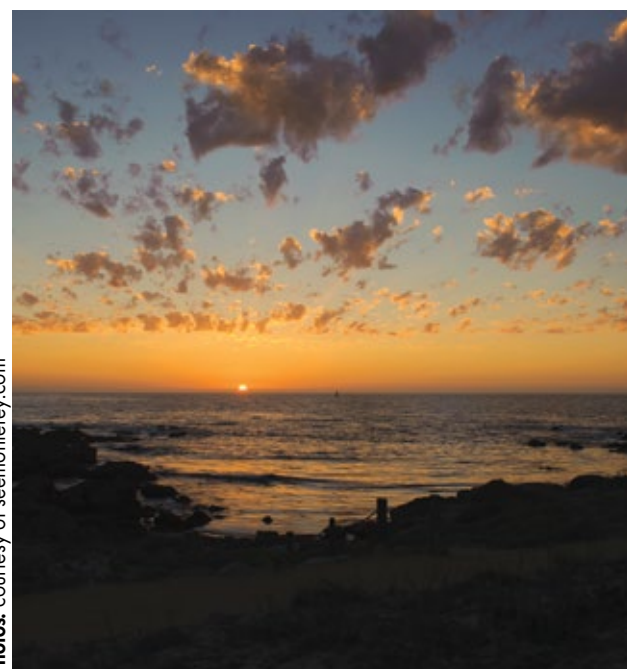
The Hyatt Monterey Hotel is three miles from the Monterey Bay Aquarium, two miles from the Monterey Regional Airport and

seven miles from Carmel River State Beach. Other nearby attractions include the iconic Cannery Row, Carmel-by-the-Sea, the Big Sur coastline, Pacific Grove, and the renowned National Steinbeck Center Museum in Salinas.

Workshops will be held for Local Chairmen, Secretary-Treasurers and Legislative Representatives throughout the day on Thursday, June 21. The BLET's Monterey regional meeting will conclude with a banquet the evening of June 21. Attendees will travel home on June 22.

There is no cost for BLET members who wish to attend the June 19 meetings and June 21 workshops only; however, there will be fees for those members who choose to attend the meals. The cost of full registration (including all meetings, workshops, the banquet and all BLET sponsored meals) is \$200.00 per person. The cost is \$150.00 to register for all of the above EXCEPT the banquet. Additionally, reduced children's registration and a la carte meal registration options are also available. Please visit <http://www.bletregionals.org> for more information about the registration process.

The website <http://www.bletregionals.org> is a one-stop shopping opportunity for all current and future BLET regional meetings. Registration will be open soon for the BLET's second regional meeting in 2018 — in Washington, D.C., which will be held August 13-17, 2018. ©©



Photos: courtesy of seemonterey.com

Heitkamp introduces two-person crew bill in U.S. Senate

On January 30, 2018, Senator Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND) introduced S. 2360, a bill that would mandate a minimum crew size for freight trains in the United States.

The bill was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation. It immediately garnered four Senate co-sponsors: Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI); Senator Ed Markey (D-MA); Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH); Senator Angus King (I-ME).

This bill marks the first time a minimum crew-size bill has been introduced in the United States Senate. Representative Don Young (R-AK) introduced a companion bill — H.R. 233, known as The Safe Freight Act — in the 115th House of Representatives on January 3, 2017. It currently has 75 bipartisan co-sponsors.

"The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen has long advocated for the safety benefits that come from having a minimum of two persons in the cab of the locomotive," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "We support this legislation and are actively lobbying for additional co-sponsors in both the House and Senate. Our Brotherhood thanks Senator Heitkamp

and Representative Young and all co-sponsors for their support of safe freight train operations in the United States."

Senator Heitkamp (D-ND) has long been an advocate for rail safety improvements, even more so since a col-

lision between a crude oil train and a derailed grain train in Casselton, N.D., on December 30, 2013, which caused a huge fire and evacuation. The impact of the Casselton derailment was lessened significantly thanks to the brav-

ery of the multiple crew members who were aboard the locomotive.

According to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), "the heroic actions of the grain train's (three) crewmembers potentially prevented the environmental and property damages from being much worse" in the Casselton derailment. They pulled a cut of 50 tank cars to safety away from the burning derailed cars. The crew later went back and removed 20 additional cars from the scene of the fire. "That wouldn't have happened if there were only one-person crews," President Pierce said. "The BLET continues to oppose single-person freight operations as adverse to worker and public safety."

Like Senator Heitkamp, Senator King (D-ME) is also an advocate for rail safety. His home state of Maine is near Lac-Megantic, Quebec, where an oil train derailment and subsequent fire resulted in 47 fatalities on July 5, 2013. A one-person train crew operated the oil train in the Lac-Megantic tragedy. ©©



Bills in the U.S. House of Representatives (H.R. 233) and the U.S. Senate (S. 2360) would mandate a minimum crew size for freight trains in the United States.

DETAILS OF THE BILL

CAN BE FOUND AT:

WWW.CONGRESS.GOV/BILL/115TH-CONGRESS/SENATE-BILL/2360/COSPONSORS

Lyons elected BLET National Division Trustee; Matt Wilson retires

William P. Lyons was elected unanimously by the BLET Advisory Board to serve as a National Division Trustee effective February 1, 2018. He replaces outgoing Trustee Matt O. Wilson, who has retired.

Brother Lyons is currently serving the Brotherhood as General Chairman of the CSXT-Northern Lines General Committee of Adjustment (GCA), which represents nearly 3,000 active and retired members. He was elected to his first full term of office as General Chairman in May of 2013 and was reelected by acclamation in May of 2017.

Brother Lyons began his railroad career when he hired out as a conductor for CSXT at Columbus, Ohio, on February 28, 2000. He joined BLET Division 34 in Columbus, Ohio, on September 1, 2003, where he immediately became an active and involved leader. In 2004, Brother Lyons became Division 34's first-ever Local Chairman of trainmen after the BLE merged with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. One year later, he became the GCA's first-ever conductor to be elected to the office of Regional Vice General Chairman.

In 2009, Brother Lyons was nominated and elected to the GCA's Second Vice General Chairman office, a full-time position that required him to relocate to Florida. Over the next three years, he was elevated to serve the GCA as First Vice General Chairman and Acting General Chairman. In 2013, he was elected General Chairman, and was reelected by acclamation in 2017.

Brother Lyons has served the Nation-



CSXT-Northern Lines General Chairman William P. Lyons, left, was elected to also serve as a National Division Trustee effective February 1, 2018. He replaces Brother Matt O. Wilson, right, who has retired.



al Division in various capacities. In 2010, he was elected by acclamation to serve as Fifth Alternate National Vice President at the BLET's Second National Convention. In 2014, he was elected by acclamation to the office of Fourth Alternate National Vice President at the BLET's Third National Convention. He also served as a member of the National Division's Arrangements Committee during the 2010 and 2014 conventions. He has twice been elected as his GCA's delegate to the IBT International Convention, in 2011 and 2016.

As General Chairman and Vice General Chairman, Brother Lyons participated in on-property negotiations with CSXT. He also recently led negotiations for an

on-property agreement with Bombardier Transportation Services for his members working in MARC passenger rail service. He was assigned to the National Wage Committee in the recently concluded round of national bargaining as the representative of the BLET's Eastern General Chairmen's Association.

Prior to his railroad career, Brother Lyons attended Eastern Kentucky University where he studied Fire Science Engineering. He and his wife Angie were married in 2003 and reside in Jacksonville Beach, Fla.

"I am grateful to the entire BLET Advisory Board and the Executive Committee of President Pierce, First Vice President Pruitt and National Secretary-Treasurer

Bruno for the confidence they have shown in electing me to the Trustee's office," Brother Lyons said. "I wish Brother Matt the best in his retirement and I look forward to serving the Brotherhood in this new capacity."

"I am proud to welcome Brother Lyons on board as a National Division Trustee," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "He is a tenacious defender of our members who has fostered a sense of Brotherhood throughout his General Committee, and he makes an excellent addition to our Advisory Board."

Delegates at the BLET's Third National Convention in 2014 established three Trustee positions to audit the books of the National Division on a regular basis. Matt Wilson was one of the first men in the history of the Brotherhood to be elected to the Trustee office.

Brother Wilson has been a BLET member since July 1, 1980. He first began serving as General Chairman on April 8, 2008, following the promotion of then-General Chairman Dennis R. Pierce to the BLET Advisory Board. Brother Wilson became a full time Vice General Chairman for the BNSF/MRL GCA in 1999, moving his family from Spokane, Wash., to Ft. Worth, Texas, to serve the Brotherhood. He was elected by acclamation as General Chairman in 2010 and 2013 and 1st Vice General Chairman in 2001, 2004, 2007 and 2016.

"I thank Brother Matt Wilson for his many years of dedicated service to our Brotherhood," President Pierce said. "On behalf of the Advisory Board, I am pleased to extend our best wishes to Matt and Diann for a long, happy, and healthy retirement." ©©

MOODY LAW FIRM OFFERS FREE CONSULTATION TO THOSE TARGETED BY CSX FMLA INVESTIGATIONS

The office of Willard J. Moody, Esq. has extended an offer of service to BLET members who may have been unjustly fired for alleged Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) violations.

According to media reports, CSX pulled dozens of BLET and SMART TD members from service after they took FMLA days over the Christmas and New Year holidays. FMLA protects workers' jobs and allows for unpaid leave from work for medical or family reasons.

Moody said in an email that about 150 CSX employees were taken out of service and targeted for investigation for the alleged violations. Pending the results of the investigation, those workers could lose their jobs.

In an email to the BLET Na-

tional Division office, Moody wrote: "If you have members who have been pulled out of service and are being subjected to adverse action by CSX for alleged abuse of FMLA leave, please let them know we are available for free consultation regarding their rights and may want to include them in the action that we are contemplating. There are limitations on how railroads may treat employees who they believe may have misused FMLA leave, and we believe CSX may have overstepped its legal rights in doing what it has done to employees who are currently out of service."

To contact Moody or Nick Thompson, an attorney with The Moody Law Firm who has experience in FELA and FMLA cases, call (800) 368-1033. ©©

NTSB cites undiagnosed obstructive sleep apnea in recent commuter rail crashes

On February 6, the National Transportation Safety Board published determinations that two commuter railroad terminal accidents in the New York city area were caused by engineer fatigue resulting from undiagnosed severe obstructive sleep apnea.

The Sept. 29, 2016, accident on the New Jersey Transit railroad at Hoboken, N.J., killed one person, injured 110, and resulted in major damage to the station. The Jan. 4, 2017, accident on the Long Island Rail Road at the Atlantic Terminal in Brooklyn, N.Y., injured 108 people. Both accidents involved trains that struck end-of-track bumping posts and crashed into stations.

The NTSB found the two accidents had "almost identical" probable causes and safety issues. The

board also determined that these safety issues were not unique to these two properties, but exist throughout the country at many intercity passenger and commuter passenger train terminals.

In a statement issued in August 2017 the NTSB expressed its "disappointment" with the withdrawal of a Notice of Proposed Rule Making by the Federal Railroad Administration and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration stating, "Obstructive sleep apnea has been in the probable cause of 10 highway and rail accidents investigated by the NTSB in the past 17 years ... Medical fitness and fatigue, two of the NTSB's 10 Most Wanted List of Transportation Safety Improvements for 2017 - 2018, are tied to obstructive sleep apnea."

When operating a train into a terminating track, the engineer's actions,

or lack thereof, solely determine whether the train stops before the end of the track. According to the FRA there are currently no mechanisms installed in the U.S. that will automatically stop a train at the end of the track if the engineer is incapacitated, inattentive or disengaged. Some railroads have over-speed capabilities, including New Jersey Transit and the LIRR. However, as shown in these two accidents, once the engineer slowed the train to the prescribed speed, the system did not stop the trains before they reached the end of the track.

In addition to recommending safety-sensitive personnel be screened for obstructive sleep apnea, the board recommended the use of technology, such as positive train control, in terminal stations and improving the effectiveness of system safety program plans to improve terminal operations. ©©

"OBSTRUCTIVE SLEEP APNEA HAS BEEN IN THE PROBABLE CAUSE OF 10 HIGHWAY AND RAIL ACCIDENTS INVESTIGATED BY THE NTSB IN THE PAST 17 YEARS ... MEDICAL FITNESS AND FATIGUE, TWO OF THE NTSB'S 10 MOST WANTED LIST OF TRANSPORTATION SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS FOR 2017 - 2018, ARE TIED TO OBSTRUCTIVE SLEEP APNEA."

— NTSB STATEMENT EXCERPT

RRB announces spring 2018 conferences and pre-retirement seminars

The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) has announced a schedule of dates for the agency's spring 2018 informational conferences and pre-retirement seminars.

Attendance at the informational conferences is limited to elected union officers only, while the pre-retirement seminars are designed for railroad employees and spouses planning to retire within five years or less. Registration is required for both types of meetings.

INFORMATIONAL CONFERENCES

Started in 1957 by the RRB's Office of the Labor Member, informational conferences are designed to 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, are better prepared to share accurate, reliable information with the members they represent.

Online registration is being offered for most conferences. While mail and fax registration is still available, members can go paperless and register online at the RRB's website, www.rrb.gov.

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 typically begins at 8:00 a.m., with the programs beginning at 8:30 a.m. and ending at 12:15 p.m.

TIPS FOR ATTENDEES:

» If you plan on attending with your spouse or another guest, please indicate so when you register;

» Please let RRB know if you register for a conference and then become unable to attend;

» Please bring your photo identification for entry into Federal buildings (no weapons allowed); and

» Expect parking fees at locations marked with an asterisk (*) below.

DATES AND LOCATIONS OF THE RRB'S SPRING 2018 INFORMATIONAL CONFERENCES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

MARCH 23, 2018: ATLANTA, GA.
COUNTRY INN & SUITES,
4500 CIRCLE 75 PARKWAY

MARCH 23, 2018: ROSEVILLE, CALIF.
MAIDU COMMUNITY CENTER,
1500 MAIDU DR.

APRIL 13, 2018: SANDSTON, VA.
HILTON GARDEN INN
-RICHMOND AIRPORT, 4
41 INTERNATIONAL
CENTER DR.

APRIL 13, 2018: St. LOUIS, Mo.
DRURY INN & SUITES
(ST. LOUIS FOREST PARK),
2111 SULPHUR AVE.

APRIL 20, 2018: CINCINNATI, OHIO*
HUNTINGTON CENTER,
23RD FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM,
525 VINE ST.

APRIL 20, 2018: NEW YORK, N.Y.*
JACOB K. JAVITS FEDERAL BUILDING,
6TH FLOOR
CONFERENCE ROOM A/B

APRIL 27, 2018: ROMULUS, MICH.
HOLIDAY INN ROMULUS,
8400 MERRIMAN RD.

APRIL 27, 2018: ASHLAND, NEB.*
EUGENE T. MAHONEY STATE PARK,
28500 WEST PARK HIGHWAY

MAY 4, 2018: KANSAS CITY, Mo.
SHEET METAL WORKERS
LOCAL UNION No. 2,
2902 BLUE RIDGE BLVD.

MAY 4, 2018: St. PAUL, MINN. *
CORPORATE CONFERENCE CENTER,
180 EAST 5TH ST.,
2ND FLOOR

MAY 11, 2018: ALTOONA, PA.
HAMPTON INN ALTOONA,
180 CHARLOTTE DR.

MAY 11, 2018: LITTLE ROCK, ARK.
COMFORT INN &
SUITES PRESIDENTIAL,
707 INTERSTATE 30

MAY 18, 2018: PARMA, OHIO
SHEET METAL WORKERS
LOCAL UNION No. 33,
12515 CORPORATE DR.

MAY 18, 2018: LAKEWOOD, COLO.
HOLIDAY INN LAKEWOOD,
7390 WEST HAMPDEN AVE.

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. 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, www.rrb.gov.

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 field office listed on the form as soon as possible. Check-in for each seminar begins at 8:30 a.m., with the program starting at 9:00 a.m. and concluding at 1:00 p.m.

Individuals who have not previously submitted documents required for filing a railroad retirement annuity application (such as proof 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 seminar staff.

Those unable to attend the seminars

but still seeking pre-retirement information should contact the RRB field office where they live. Individual retirement counseling is available in person or by phone. Contact the RRB toll-free at (877) 772-5772.

DATES AND LOCATIONS OF THE RRB'S SPRING 2018 PRE-RETIREMENT SEMINARS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

MARCH 23, 2018: ROSEVILLE, CALIF.
MAIDU COMMUNITY CENTER, 1500
MAIDU DR.

APRIL 13, 2018: PATTERSON, N.J.
ROBERT A. ROE FEDERAL BUILDING,
200 FEDERAL PLAZA,
5TH FLOOR (ROOM 527)

MAY 11, 2018: ROANOKE, VA.
ROANOKE SOUTH
COUNTY LIBRARY,
6303 MERRIMAN RD.

MAY 23, 2018: BISMARCK, N.D.
IBEW LOCAL 714 UNION HALL,
1800 COMMERCE DR. ©©

BLET PICKS CORNERSTONE TO MANAGE ITS SHORT TERM DISABILITY PLAN

The BLET is pleased to announce that Cornerstone Benefits Management and their affiliates have been selected as the Third Party Administrator for the BLET Short-Term Disability (Part A and B) Benefit with MetLife, which was created pursuant to Article IV, Part A, Section 5 of the December 16, 2003 National Agreement.

To improve the overall effectiveness and member experience of the Plan, the BLET's Disability and Welfare Benefit Trust Fund entered into an

agreement to administer the benefits with Cornerstone on December 15, 2017.

Open-enrollment dates for Part B of the Plan (on-the-job STD coverage) are currently being scheduled and will be announced shortly. Eligibility requirements will be described in more detail in the upcoming announcement for open-enrollment. For questions about BLET's MetLife Short-Term Disability coverage, please call Cornerstone at (224) 848-4941. ©©

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DAILY BENEFIT	\$80/*\$81	\$120	\$150	\$200/*\$201	\$250/*\$252
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*LE&CMPA #16 Monthly Premium	\$47.25	\$70.00	\$87.50	\$117.25	\$147.00
SMART - TD (UTU) Monthly Assessment	\$64.80	\$97.20	\$121.50	\$162.00	Not Offered

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Independence, Ohio 44131

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Photo of the Month: February 2018

CN OIL TRAIN Canadian National EMD SD70M-2 No. 8901 leads a crude oil train toward Milwaukee on the railroad's Waukesha Subdivision in Richfield, Wisc., on February 11, 2017. **Photo:** Chase Gunnoe



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 January 2018 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, Independence, Ohio; 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; Amtrak CEO meeting, Washington, D.C.; Cooperating Rail Labor Organizations (CRLO) mtg., Hollywood, Fla.; Secretary-Treasurer training class, Independence, Ohio.

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT E.L. (LEE) PRUITT: National Duties include but not limited to: Shortline Organizing Dept.; Trainmen's Dept.; National Publications Committee; National Legislative Board; Teamsters Rail Conference Policy Committee; PRAC; and National Negotiations; National duties, Independence, Ohio; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; 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/Union Track; Pension, STD, 457 plan Trustee; Division, General Committee and SLB monthly Trustee reports; Mtgs. with vendors and financial institutions; Union Track issues, testing, status updates, etc.; Triennial election planning and oversight issues.

VICE PRESIDENT & NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE JOHN P. TOLMAN: Assigned to BLET Washington, DC office; General office duties, telephone and correspondence communications; BNSF-ATSF GCA mtg., San Diego, Calif.; 2017 National Legislative Board mtg., Cleveland, Ohio; Advisory Board mtg., Cleveland, Ohio; Town Hall mtg., Tucson, Ariz.; Teleforum updating Teamsters on NAFTA negotiations w/ Teamsters President Hoffa & Congressman Brian Higgins, Washington, D.C.; Mtg. w/ Teamsters President Hoffa, Washington, D.C.; Mtg. w/ Senate Senior Advisors for the Joint Economic Committee, Washington, D.C.; Conference call w/ Department of Political & Legislative Action Team, Washington, D.C.; Reception in honor of MA Delegation, Washington, D.C.; Numerous receptions and office visits with members of Congress and the leadership of both the GOP and Democratic parties, Washington, D.C.

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, CN-Cedar River, Indiana Harbor Belt, Belt Railway of Chicago, Metra, GRR, Illinois RR and Union Railroad; Assist GC Burns w/ discipline appeals and prep. for PLB 7683, IHB/IR, Chicago; Assist VP Priestester w/ PLB 7503 case prep; Assist GC Reynolds w/ discipline cases, WC, Chicago; PLB 7683 (Myers), IHB, Chicago; Assist 3rd Division Labor member, NRAB, Chicago; Draft First Division Circular 88, NRAB, Chicago; IFC award, UP-N, Chicago; NMB case coding project, NRAB, Chicago; NRAB review award proposals and admin., NRAB, Chicago.

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-Eastern District PLB 7173, Estero, Fla.; UP-Western Region PLB 7228, Chicago; UP-ED/UP-CR GM-0120, New Orleans, La.

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.; Paperwork assisting GTW GCA; Conference call, assist GC Driscoll w/ Galles letter; PLB 7265 review (web mtg.); LIRC trackage rights, assist GC Kerley; DRG prep.; CSXT FMLA investigations; GTW-PLB executed awards 48-50; Division 332 mtg., Troy, Ala.; Training pay conference call; DRC agenda; GTW negotiations prep.; CSXT back pay calculations; ID service call, assist GC Lyons.

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; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; PLB 7503, preparation and assist GC Brown, Amarillo, Texas; PLB 7477 and PLB 771, preparation and hearing, assist GC Thurman and GC Holdcraft, Rosemont, Ill.; Article IX mtg. w/ BNSF General Chairmen and President Pierce, Independence, Ohio; PLB 7503 hearing w/ GC Brown, Rosemont, Ill.

VICE PRESIDENT COLE W. DAVIS: Assigned to: Kansas City Southern (MidSouth Rail, SouthRail, Gateway Western, Illinois & Midland), Texas Mexican Rwy.; CP Rail System/US (Indiana Southern, Iowa, Chicago & Eastern, Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern); Springfield Terminal (St. Lawrence & Atlantic, Delaware & Hudson), Louisville & Indiana, Huron & Eastern; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; Soo contract issues, DM&E issues, assist GC Semenak; MidSouth issues, assist GC Craddock; Tex Mex issues, assist GC Hiese; D&H and Springfield Terminal issues, assist GC Moore; KCS issues, assist GC Spradlin; Huron & Eastern issues, assist GC Ladrig; Louisville & Indiana issues, assist GC Hogan; PLB 7239, assist GC Craddock, Ft. Meyers, Fla.; PLB 6884, assist GC Spradlin, Ft. Meyers, Fla.; W&LE issues, assist GC Fannon; Discuss international crews at Laredo, Texas, assist GC Hiese; Cross border hearing, assist GC Semenak, Toronto.

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; Vice President duties; On duty at home office; PLB 7855, assist GC Cole, Estero, Fla.; CSOR negotiations, assist GC Moore, Hartford, Conn.

VICE PRESIDENT JAMES P. LOUIS: Assigned Amtrak; Long Island Rail Road; New York & Atlantic; Metro North; New Jersey Transit; PATH; SEPTA; Metra; National Division Department Head, Education & Training Dept.; National Division Department Head, Internal Organizing, Mobilizing & Strategic Planning Dept.; Union Track mtgs. and training; Education & Training issues; BLET Regional Meeting planning; SBA 940 arbitration review, assist GC Brown, NJ Transit; PATH contract talks, assist GC Basile; Planning for 2018 regional mtgs. and 4th BLET National Division Convention, Independence, Ohio; Division 269 monthly mtg., Long Island, N.Y.; SEPTA contract talks, assist GC Hill; CalTrain contract talks, assist GC Kenny; Secretary-Treasurer training class, Independence, Ohio; Amtrak contract talks, assist GC Kenny, Philadelphia.

FRA delays deadline for system safety program

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has delayed for another year the effective date of a 2016 final rule it issued that would require commuter and intercity

passenger railroads to develop and implement a system safety program. FRA on Feb. 10, 2017, stayed the rule's requirements until March 21, 2017, and then extended the stay until May 22, 2017, June 5, 2017, and then December 4, 2017. Most recently, in a Federal Register notice published on November 30, 2017, FRA has extended the stay until December 4, 2018. ©©

Senate confirms Batory as Administrator of FRA

On February 13, 2018, the U.S. Senate unanimously confirmed former Conrail president Ronald Batory as Administrator of the Federal Rail-

road Administration. He was first nominated to the position on July 10, 2017. The 46-year rail industry veteran retired from Conrail in the spring of 2017. He previously served as president of The Belt Railway Co. of Chicago. In November 2017, he was appointed as a rail adviser to U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao. ©©

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