BLE, IBT rally for safety

More than 300 protesters demand FRA issue remote control safety regulations

Carrying picket signs and chanting “remote control has got to go,” more than 300 union members rallied in Washington D.C. on March 11 to protest lax federal oversight of remote controlled locomotives.

Members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, and labor leaders representing more than 14 million union members picketed outside of the Federal Railroad Administration’s headquarters for more than an hour. The rally was organized jointly by the BLE and IBT.

In addition to the rally on the front steps of its headquarters, the FRA received two letters on March 11 condemning its inactivity on the remote control issue — one from the AFL-CIO’s Transportation Trades Department and one from Senator Edward M. Kennedy.

More than 300 protesters, the American Train Dispatchers Department-BLE, participated in the rally, along with Mac Fleming, President of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, and Dan Pickett, President of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers.

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BLE, I&O sign first contract

BLE members on the Indiana & Ohio Railway ratified their first collective bargaining agreement on February 28 by an overwhelming majority.

The BLE first organized the I&O, a shortline subsidiary of RailAmerica, on August 3, 2001. Of the ballots returned, 78 percent voted in favor of the agreement.

BLE International President Don Hahs acknowledged the efforts of everyone involved and thanked International Vice-President Merle Geiger for his efforts throughout the intense negotiations. Vice-President Geiger has led negotiations for the past several months. The contract provides for increased pay, profit sharing, and a benefits package. It also establishes work rules and a formal process to address grievances with management.

“I am very happy for our members on the Indiana & Ohio Railway as they finally have a contract,” Vice-President Geiger said. “They have ratified a contract that establishes a sound foundation for today and future contracts on that property. Our I&O members are no longer ‘at will’ employees. They now have the protections provided by a Class 1 discipline rule. The contract provides them with a vehicle to address their grievances with management.

We were able to address many of our members’ concerns including reasonable wage increases, a return to profit sharing, settlement of the court action regarding profit sharing payments that have been suspended since the BLE gained representation rights.

See Rally, Page 5

BLE organizes Utah Railway trainmen

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers scored another organizing victory on February 28 as a majority of trainmen at the Utah Railway chose to leave the United Transportation Union to be represented by the BLE.

The BLE already holds the contract for locomotive engineers at the Utah Railway and the Feb. 28 representation election was for the craft of trainman only. The National Mediation Board announced the election results at 2:15 p.m., certifying the trainmen’s choice to join their Brothers and Sisters in the BLE, a union affiliated with the AFL-CIO.

“This represents a major victory,” BLE President Don Hahs said. “These former members of the UTU have made a conscious effort to leave the UTU and join the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers.”

President Hahs commended BLE Director of Organizing Tommy Miller for the outstanding job he did on the property, as well as all others involved.

Brother Miller said the victory would not have been possible without the efforts of BLE General Chairman Rick Milano, Secretary-Treasurer Todd Hamilton, and Brothers Scott Presley and Lee Woodward. He also thanked Brother Joe Zawada from the Montana Rail Link, who is Local Chairman of Division 232 (Laurel, Mont.), and the members of...
On March 4, the Township of Woodbridge, N.J. became the 11th U.S. city to take action against remote control locomotives. The Township adopted a resolution citing safety risks associated with remote control locomotives and demanded the risks be eliminated before the technology is implemented in Woodbridge. The resolution specifically urges the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to establish guidelines and not regulations in connection with the operation of remote control trains.


The resolution was introduced by Councilman Vincent Martino, according to New Jersey State Legislative Board Chairman Ken Michael.

“I don’t see any reason to run remote-control locomotives,” said Councilman Martino in an article published by the Home News Tribune. “The state of New Jersey is one of the most populated states. It’s too congested. There are many grade crossings.”

Martino added, “This is a way of sending a strong message to the elected officials on a national level. Hopefully, we will get federal legislation to limit the use of remote-control engines in populated areas.”

The resolution notes that the FRA has granted permission to railroads to operate unmanned, remote control locomotives by less trained, tested and qualified employees, and that the FRA has only established guidelines and not enforceable regulations in connection with the operation of remote control trains.


WHEREAS, remote-control locomotives are often operated by less trained, tested, and qualified employees, and that the FRA has only established guidelines and not enforceable regulations in connection with the operation of remote control trains.

WHEREAS, the resolution, passed unanimously by the City Council of the City of Bakersfield, and

WHEREAS, the resolution was introduced by Councilman Vincent Martino, according to New Jersey State Legislative Board Chairman Ken Michael.

“I don’t see any reason to run remote-control locomotives,” said Councilman Martino in an article published by the Home News Tribune. “The state of New Jersey is one of the most populated states. It’s too congested. There are many grade crossings.”

Martino added, “This is a way of sending a strong message to the elected officials on a national level. Hopefully, we will get federal legislation to limit the use of remote-control engines in populated areas.”

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WHEREAS, railroads operate throughout the Township of Woodbridge (the “Township”) over numerous public and private rail crossings accessible to persons of all ages, and

WHEREAS, railroad equipment is known to present significant danger to persons and property from collision, derailment, and possible release of hazardous materials; and

WHEREAS, in addition to accidents, derailments, collisions and spills, the United States government has issued a safety alert against vandalism and terrorist threats against railroads; and

WHEREAS, operation of a railroad is traditionally conducted with the use of locomotives manned by experienced, trained individuals who are required to be certified prior to operating the locomotive; and

WHEREAS, railroads have been granted permission from the Federal Railroad Administrations (“FRA”) to operate unmanned (“remote controlled”) locomotives by less trained, tested and qualified individuals; and

WHEREAS, the FRA has only established guidelines and not regulations in connection with such remote controlled operations; and

WHEREAS, the Municipal Council of the Township of Woodbridge are charged with protecting the health, safety and welfare of the people of the Township; and

WHEREAS, the Municipal Council of the Township of Woodbridge believes that significant safety risks exist which must be eliminated before “remote control” trains are permitted to operate in the Township.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the FRA develop comprehensive regulations for the use of remote control locomotives and those who operate them; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the FRA order an immediate halt to operation of remote controlled trains within the Township of Woodbridge until the following safety concerns are met:

1. Remote controlled locomotives be barred from transporting chemicals and hazardous materials, and be prohibited from operating on or near (i) tracks occupied by hazardous materials; or (ii) facilities which house hazardous materials.

2. Railroads operating a remote control locomotive be required to notify the Office of the Mayor before implementing such operations.

3. Remote control locomotives be barred from operating over a public or private highway rail crossing without a person occupying the cab of the locomotive who has the required skill to stop the locomotive and its attached equipment.

4. The railroad be required to provide effective and reliable protection at the point of operation in any location susceptible to injuries from persons, animals or vehicles for any remote control operation.

5. Remote controlled locomotives have sufficiently secured operating cabs and controls to prevent against terrorists, vandals and other unauthorised persons.

6. Railroad be required to install a track-related device to stop a remote control locomotive in the event of a runaway.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the FRA develop comprehensive regulations for the use of remote control locomotives and those who operate them; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Federal Railroad Administration.

Adopted March 4, 2003

John M. Mitch, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Bakersfield, Calif., asked FRA for remote control regs

Bakersfield, Calif., became the 10th American city to pass a resolution calling for the elimination of remote control locomotives.

The resolution, passed unanimously by City Council on February 26, urges the California Public Utilities Commission and the Federal Railroad Administration to adopt regulations to ensure the safety and well-being of citizens of Bakersfield will not be jeopardized by the use of remote control locomotives.

WHEREAS, many grade crossings, an enormous amount of railroad traffic traveling through the townships consists of potentially lethal chemicals and hazardous materials; and

WHEREAS, in addition to accidental derailments, collisions and spills, the United States government has issued a safety alert against vandalism and terrorist threats against railroads; and

WHEREAS, operation of a railroad is traditionally conducted with the use of locomotives manned by experienced, trained individuals who are required to be certified prior to operating the locomotive; and

WHEREAS, railroads have been granted permission from the Federal Railroad Administrations (“FRA”) to operate unmanned (“remote controlled”) locomotives by less trained, tested and qualified individuals; and

WHEREAS, the FRA has only established guidelines and not regulations in connection with such remote controlled operations; and

WHEREAS, the Municipal Council of the Township of Woodbridge are charged with protecting the health, safety and welfare of the people of the Township; and

WHEREAS, the Municipal Council of the Township of Woodbridge believes that significant safety risks exist which must be eliminated before “remote control” trains are permitted to operate in the Township.

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1. Remote controlled locomotives be barred from transporting chemicals and hazardous materials, and be prohibited from operating on or near (i) tracks occupied by hazardous materials; or (ii) facilities which house hazardous materials.

2. Railroads operating a remote control locomotive be required to notify the Office of the Mayor before implementing such operations.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the FRA develop comprehensive regulations for the use of remote control locomotives and those who operate them; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Federal Railroad Administration.

5. Remote controlled locomotives have sufficiently secured operating cabs and controls to prevent against terrorists, vandals and other unauthorised persons.

6. Railroad be required to install a track-related device to stop a remote control locomotive in the event of a runaway.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the FRA develop comprehensive regulations for the use of remote control locomotives and those who operate them; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Federal Railroad Administration.

Adopted March 4, 2003

John M. Mitch, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Pine Bluff, Ark., bans remote control trains

The City of Pine Bluff, Ark. took action against remote control locomotives within its jurisdiction on February 18 when its city council passed a resolution banning remote control locomotives within the city limits until certain safety requirements are met.

As of February 24, Pine Bluff had joined Baton Rouge, La., Shreveport, La., Detroit, Mich., Marysville, Mich., Boston, Mass. and Cleveland, Ohio in calling for improved safety regarding remote control trains. The Pine Bluff resolution, like many of the others, cites safety at grade crossings by the public, the threat of terrorism and dangers of hazardous materials.

Arkansas State Legislative Board Chairman T.L. Todd and BLE Division S8 Local Committee member Jay Callaway were in attendance at the meeting.

The vote was the culmination of six weeks of hard work for Todd and members of Division S8. Along with Todd and Callaway, BLE Division S8 members Jim Varnell, Travis Trice and Robert Lindsey worked to get the resolution passed. Chairman Todd would also like to thank Alderman Dale Dixon for his help. For a copy of the resolution, visit: <http://www.ble.org/pr/pdf/pbrco.pdf>. •
North Little Rock, Ark., opposes remote control

On February 24, North Little Rock, Ark., joined several other U.S. cities in taking action against remote control locomotives.

North Little Rock is the second city in Arkansas to oppose remotes. Pine Bluff, Ark., passed a resolution on February 18 calling for a ban on remote control locomotives until safety requirements have been improved.

The city also asked the Federal Railroad Administration to conduct a review of the safety of remote control operations and to develop comprehensive regulations to ensure that the public’s safety will not be jeopardized by remote control operations.

The resolution was approved at a meeting of the North Little Rock City Council and signed by Mayor Patrick H. Hays on February 24.

BLY Arkansas State Legislative Board Chairman Terry Todd attended the meeting, Union Pacific and the United Transportation Union sent representatives to oppose passage of the resolution.

The resolution asks railroads to “provide effective and reliable protection at the point of movement in any location accessible to the general public for any remote control operation.”

It also calls for the Federal Railroad Administration to issue comprehensive regulations for the use of remote control locomotives and “that those regulations ensure the highest level of skill and qualification of person operating remote controlled trains.”

The resolution demands that railroad “cease and desist” from all remote control operations within the city limits until the city can adequately implement evacuation plans and emergency responses.

As of March 7, Beardstown joined Baton Rouge, La., Shreveport, La., Detroit, Mich., Maryville, Mich., Boston, Mass., Cleveland, Ohio, Pine Bluff, Ark., and North Little Rock, Ark. in passing resolutions against remote control locomotives.

Two counties have taken action against remote control locomotives. Five cities — Baton Rouge, La., Shreveport, La., Detroit, Boston and Pine Bluff, Ark. — have passed resolutions calling for an outright ban on remote control operations. Three more cities — Cleveland, Maryville, Mich., and North Little Rock, Ark. — have passed resolutions calling for improved safety regulations to govern remote control operations.

The statement was promptly reproduced in a prominent location on the UTU website. The UTU headline read, “FRA finds no safety problem with remotes.”

The fact that the UTU posted the FRA’s statement on its website so quickly after it was issued — in such a prominent location — leads one to conclude that the UTU must agree with the FRA’s position.
Officers of the Grand International Auxiliary (GIA) were out in full force at the March 11 rally. From left: Pat Murphy and Mabel Grotzinger.

Ed Wytkind, Executive Director of the AFL-CIO's Transportation Trades Department, at the podium during his speech. In addressing the FRA, Wytkind said, “Your silence tells railroad workers that their safety isn’t a priority. Your silence must end.” He told the crowd that the TTD had sent a letter to the FRA demanding action on the remote control issue. He also read portions of a letter to the FRA from Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA), in which the Senator said he was “deeply concerned” about safety issues related to remote control locomotives. (See page 5 of this issue for more information regarding these two letters.)

More than 300 union members participated in the rally by carrying picket signs and chanting, “Remote control has got to go.”

Pat Friend, National President of the Association of Flight Attendants, tells how the Federal Aviation Administration scrapped plans to institute remote control of airplanes in the wake of 9-11.

Above: James Hoffa, General President of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, gives a rousing speech at the BLE-IBT rally for remote control safety in front of FRA headquarters in Washington, D.C., on March 11. In his speech, President Hoffa said, “The government must not ignore public safety and the rights of railroad workers. Railroading is a craft, whose professional functions cannot be surrendered to a machine.”

Left: Richard Trumka, Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL-CIO, delivers his speech to thunderous ovation. He condemned the FRA’s unwillingness to meet with BLE leaders to discuss remote control. He said that the BLE was not alone in its fight to improve remote control safety, telling the enthusiastic crowd that remote control was not a BLE issue — it was a labor issue.

More photos will be available in the upcoming Spring 2003 Locomotive Engineers Journal.
More than 300 attend BLE, IBT safety rally

Rally

Continued from Page 1

U.S. Senator Edward M. Kennedy said he is “deeply concerned about the growing threat to worker and public safety from the use of remote control locomotives” in a March 11 letter to Allan Rutter, Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration.

The Senator was critical of the FRA’s inaction and its refusal to meet with BLE leaders regarding the petition for a rulemaking on the remote control issue.

“Time is it for the Federal Railroad Administration to act,” he wrote. “The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (petitioned for a rulemaking) citing the use of remote control devices on November 17, 2000, and has yet to receive a response. An FRA safety advisory in February 2001 contained only recommended guidelines, which are not enforceable.

The Senator also pointed to the increased number of accidents as a concern. The FRA has not yet taken action on a rulemaking submitted by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers on the use of remote control locomotives.

The letter, dated March 11 and signed by TTD Executive Director Ed Wytkind, asked the FRA to initiate a rulemaking regarding remote control because the lack of regulations “jeopardizes the safety of both rail workers and communities located near rail operations.”

The letter cites more than 40 accidents since the major railroads began utilizing the technology. The TTD is also concerned about the increased workloads by the operators of RLCs taking its toll on safety by forcing employees to cut corners because of increased demands on their time.

“The workload associated with operating a locomotive while performing other safety critical tasks, demands too much of a single individual. At some point, workers will, by necessity, take short cuts which will endanger themselves, other workers and the public,” the letter states.

The TTD goes on to urge the FRA to create enforceable regulations because the current guidelines “do not go far enough to ensure that this technology is implemented and utilized safely.”

The letter also cites the troubling refusal by the FRA to provide the public, including rail labor, with the necessary forums and accident/incident data needed to address the safety issue raised with RLCs.

Wytkind also expresses his personal frustrations with the FRA as a result of the FRA’s refusal to even meet with the BLE leadership and urged the FRA to initiate the rulemaking as soon as possible.

A copy of the letter is available on the BLE’s website at: <http://www.ble.org/pr/pdf/ekrco.pdf>.

TTD letter urges FRA action on remote control rulemaking
By Ed Rodzwicz
First Vice-President
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers

This is in response to Clayton Boyer’s editorial titled “Big Lie,” which was dated March 17 on the Traffic World website but posted on the United Transportation Union’s website on March 14.

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers has taken the same stance on remote control since November 17, 2000, when we first petitioned the Federal Railroad Administration for a rulemaking.

Our stance has been consistent — we want the FRA to issue a rulemaking regarding remote control locomotives, so that the technology is implemented in the safest manner possible.

Our stance has been the same — to improve safety for BLE members and all railroad workers. That’s why leaders of the Teamsters and the AFL-CIO joined us in Washington D.C. on March 11 for rally for improved safety of remote control. It’s not a union issue. It’s not a BLE versus that other organization issue. It’s a safety issue. It’s a matter of life and limb.

Remote control can be safe if it is implemented properly and under the watchful eyes of the federal government. There is clearly something wrong with this picture. If the FRA is the regulatory agency on safety and one of the operating unions, along with the AFL-CIO, think there is an unsafe condition out there and the agency won’t discuss it, then there is a problem.

The operations on Montana Rail Link are as different as night and day from those on the Class 1 carriers. In most cases, Montana Rail Link operates with a three-man crew and every crew includes a certified locomotive engineer — the industry’s most highly-trained and experienced employee. Using three employees instead of two makes the job safer.

The FRA, that other organization, some transportation experts predict that customer demand is shifting toward short-haul traffic and away from long-haul traffic, which is mostly shipped by rail.

Research indicates that on a tonnage basis, less than one tenth of one percent of the freight shipped by rail comes from long-haul traffic, which is mostly shipped by rail.

Some transportation experts predict that customer demand is shifting toward short-haul traffic and away from long-haul traffic, which is mostly shipped by rail.

The railroads have more intermodal business available to them than they can currently handle. The amount of intermodal rail traffic handled is limited by the railroads’ physical plant and their ability to get the goods to market in a timely manner.

The fact of the matter is that other organizations’ leadership and the AAR like remote control. The workers in the field hate it. They are the ones on the front lines who risk their lives every day.

We in the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers are doing all we can to make their jobs safer.

There was an article in The New York Times many years ago that stated, “The labor movement’s basic purpose is to obtain a better life for its members. A union that fails in this purpose has failed utterly.” Is that other organization in this category? You decide.

BLE clarifies UTU, carrier spin on Teamsters

By Don M. Hahs
International President
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers

The United Transportation Union and several carriers are circulating stories asserting that the tentative contract between the Teamsters and major tracking companies adversely affects rail employees by reducing the amount of freight that these companies can ship by rail.

One of the carriers has rejected our conditional offer of support. That offer would have meant a merger with the Teamsters to offset increases in health and welfare costs.

To date, our conditional offer of support has been rejected by the carriers.

On February 26, the Association of American Railroads and the United Transportation Union held the fifth annual Railroad Day on the Hill, a lobbying effort for the railroad industry on Capitol Hill.

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and other AFL-CIO affiliates chose not to participate because of a rift between the Teamsters and members of the AFL-CIO, resulting in the Teamsters National Master Freight Agreement — only 2.1 million tons vs. a total of 21.2 billion tons shipped by rail each year.

The Teamsters freight agreement does not take effect until 2005 and reduces the amount of freight these companies can ship by rail from 28 percent to 26 percent. Only one trucking company actually shipped more than 26 percent by rail in 2002.

The facts simply do not support claims that the members of the BLE or any other rail union will be hurt by the new Teamster agreement. The facts show only that the Teamsters Union negotiated a good contract for its members in the midst of a downturn in the economy.

The false claims being spread by UTU and the carriers are just political spin aimed at keeping BLE members from assessing the benefits of a merger based on the true facts.

Rail labor sticks to members’ agenda

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The false claims being spread by UTU and the carriers are just political spin aimed at keeping BLE members from assessing the benefits of a merger based on the true facts.

On the other hand, the AAR and UTU lobbied for issues such as: increased funding for shortline railroads; the pending reauthorization of the Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21); opposition to railroad re-regulation; and repeal of the 4.3 cents per gallon diesel fuel deficit reduction tax.

Over the past several months, the BLE and other AFL-CIO affiliated rail unions have concentrated their lobbying efforts through the Transportation Trades Department of the AFL-CIO. These efforts included increasing funding for Amtrak and keeping transportation employees safe with the specter of terror increasing — issues that directly affect the welfare of railroad workers.

“The BLE is concerned with issues that affect the lives of the employees that it represents,” said BLE International President Don M. Hahs.

“The railroad industry has been crying poor for years in our negotiations, while enjoying great profits. However, our members have been asked to give concessions on wages and health and welfare benefits. This is why we chose not to support the AAR and UTU’s efforts on Capitol Hill.

“We would actively support a repeal of the 4.3 cents per gallon diesel fuel deficit reduction tax if the carriers would be willing to use some of the savings to offset increases in health and welfare costs.

To date, our conditional offer of support has been rejected by the carriers.

“If the AAR would like to tailor a lobbying day to focus on security and safety for railroad workers, increased funding for Amtrak and a host of other issues that would affect the lives of my members, the BLE would be more than happy to participate. Until then, we will stick to working on our own and with the TFD.”
Editorial: Safety hypocrites?

By Raymond A. Holmes

BLE Vice-President & U.S. National Legislative Representative

On March 19, that other organization proclaimed that the BLE’s protest of remote control operations was groundless and somehow the Rail Safety Advisory Committee (RSAC) was the proper forum for developing regulations for remote control operations (RCO). The public needs to know that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has many methods to promulgate regulations outside of the RSAC. They have done so recently and will continue to do so. The RSAC will not take on a regulatory matter unless a majority of the 45 members vote in favor of it. Also, understand that the number of voting members of the RSAC provides a balance in favor of the railroads when combined with management related associations.

The RSACs — once charted — move at a glacial pace and some eventually fail to deliver consensus regulations. Part of the problem is that the RSAC working groups usually end up wrestling with controversial issues that pit labor’s safety interests against management’s perceived need to increase productivity. The consensus-driven approach is often not enough to get the rule in place. There is a pattern developing by some of holding out for even greater concessions using the government’s built-in procedural hurdles. When that tactic fails legal action is taken. In fact, after agreement by the full RSAC to develop regulations for remote control operations RCO BLE will continue to make a sincere effort to support the RSAC process and — despite the desire of that other organization to alienate our 36,000 active members from the railroads and government — we will continue to act responsibly and without hypocrisy when it comes to the safety of railroad workers. BLE believes in safety and cooperation to achieve it. We do not believe “cooperation” means doing what ever is expedient to achieve another goal such as destruction of the railroad craft. That is why other organization wishes to point fingers and accuse the BLE of hypocrisy, then let’s be frank and not forget the recent past.

On December 9, 1989, that other organization issued a press release, which read in part: “The BLE is totally opposed to remote-control operations and we have campaigned actively against them in North America and around the world. Lives have been needlessly lost because of remote controls in switching operations, and they are a danger to every operating employee…” The use of remote-controlled locomotives in switching operations is expected to lead to the loss of scores of jobs for operating employees.” — Charles L. Little, former BLE President. Join the BLE’s protest of remote control operations. BLE continues to support the RSAC process and the FRA to develop regulations for remote control operations. However, considering the forthcoming meeting of the RSAC, BLE will continue to oppose a regulatory process.

In other words, their active campaign against remote control for safety reasons went out the window when the carriers rewarded them with an agreement to represent employees using remote control. It’s all about representation rights and administration of the agreement, not about safety. In nearly every remote control accident, UTU has agreed with the carriers that the accidents were caused by operator error and were not the fault of the technology or the fault of the carriers, who are forcing two people to do the work of three.

In a further display of UTU hypocrisy regarding remote control, one needs look no further than Mr. Brunkenhoefer himself, who made the following statement during the FRA’s public hearings on remote control in Appleton, Wis.: “We have attempted to do as much as was legally possible to achieve another goal such as destruction of the railroad craft. That is why other organization wishes to point fingers and accuse the BLE of hypocrisy, then let’s be frank and not forget the recent past.”

“Only by being a party to a pointless death and disaster will the FRA and rail carriers be forced to rethink this insanity. We are urging them to rethink now, before the inevitable happens,” said the UTU.” — Railway Age, February 1997

The inevitable has happened. Will that other organization’s leadership be driven by safety interests or by expedience or hypocrisy? The BLE will continue to seek a responsible, safe means to remote control implementation.

We refuse to re-state our position and engage in another diatribe with that other organization. One organization (guess who?) never allows the truth to get in the way of a good story.

BLE members ratify first contract agreement with I&O

As with all withheld monies will be paid, much needed work rules, and locked down an excellent benefits package. And, in so doing, also addressed management’s concerns over flexibilities they deemed necessary to remain competitive in the shortline environment. Vice-President Geiger said the negotiations were quite difficult, but the BLE held strong to secure the best possible agreement for its members.

"Initially there was a considerable distrust on both sides of the table, but I believe we were able to open a dialogue that clarified the BLE’s understanding of the unique characteristics of the shortline industry, that we wanted to be partners in the railroads future and that our members play a significant role in the future success of the company. All we ask is that our members are compensated fairly, treated fairly and receive the respect they deserve for the dedication, hard work and long hours that they endure for the success of the company.

"Thanks to the members on I&O for their patience and understanding during the negotiation process," he said. He also recognized the efforts of several BLE Brothers who played an integral role in negotiations.

"This was a very difficult process and we would not have achieved our success if not for the hard work and input from Division 329S Local Chairman Bill Baumiller, Division 581 Committee-man Sam Lowe and Division 281 Presiden Jeff Murray," Vice-President Geiger said. "I would also like to sincerely thank Mo Morrow and Dennis Simmerman of the Internal Staff for their assistance in these negotiations."

The Indiana & Ohio is a 492-mile shortline, which runs from Flat Rock, Mich., to Cincinnati, Ohio, hauling mostly soda ash, limestone, automotive, trucks, lumber, chemicals and various industrial products. It is one of 39 shortline railroads owned by RailAmerica, which calls itself the world’s largest shortline railroad operator. RailAmerica owns nearly 11,000 miles of track in four countries on three continents. •
The results of written and telephone surveys that reveal the BLE membership's opinions regarding a proposed merger with the Interna-
tional Brotherhood of Teamsters will be announced in April.

Results of a survey conducted by the BLE will be revealed in mid-April.

The survey results will provide a good indication of how BLE mem-
bers will vote on the issue of merg-
ing with the Teamsters. More details
to come when available.

The cost of the picnic/game will be
determined each year for movement to
power plants and industrial customers.

Museum officials cancelled the Fair af-

The Texas-Mexican Railway who visited
the Salt Lake City, Provo and Ogden
areas of Utah for BNSF. Utah Railway has
connections with BNSF and UP at
Provo and Utah Railroad Junction, Ut-
thas as well as at Grand Junction, Col.

Brother Barkalow, a 40-year veteran,
is a Sergeant at Burlington. He has
been transferred from the Missis-
sippi Valley Division to the North-West
Division. He has been transferred
from the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul
and Pacific to the Union Pacific.

Each year, you are a CSX employee,
you can donate a personal leave day
to Brother Barkalow by calling Train-
men pick BLE over UTU

Utah Railway
Continued from Page 1

the Texas-Mexican Railway who visited
the Salt Lake City, Provo and Ogden
areas of Utah for BNSF. Utah Railway has
connections with BNSF and UP at
Provo and Utah Railroad Junction, Ut-

MARCH 2003 CALENDAR & EVENTS

JUNE 1-5, 2003... 63rd Annual International Western Convention in Sparks, Nevada
Jeffrey Valentine and members of BLE Division 158 welcome BLE and GIA members to Sparks, Nevada, for the 2003 International Western Convention. The 63rd annual IWC will be held at John Ascuaga's Nugget Hotel & Casino in Sparks. For reservations, call (800) 648-1179 and ask for the IWC room rate, or identify yourself as a BLE member. A room rate of $95 per night has been secured from May 30 through June 7. More details to come when available. Those wishing to contact Challenger Valentine may do so by phone, (775) 857-2013, or by e-mail, jeffvalentineiwc@comcast.net.

JUNE 15-20, 2003,... 76th Southeastern Meeting Association in Pigeon Forge, Tenn
Chairman W.M. "Bill" Overton and the members of BLE Division 239 (Excolex, Tenn.) will host the 2003 SMA at the Grand Resort & Convention Center in Pigeon Forge, Tenn. (Hotel website: www.grandresorthotel.com). Members can make early bird reservations by calling (800) 251-9752. Room rates are $69.77 per night (plus tax). Attractions include the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Dollywood, and the annual golf tournament. Registration is on June 15. The banquet is on June 19. For details, contact Brother Denton at (465) 925-9027 or by e-mail, venton@sunmail.com.

JUNE 29-JULY 3, 2003... 65th Annual Eastern Union Convention in Baltimore
Arrangements Chairmen Paul Reddick and the members of BLE Division 49 will host the 2003 EUA at the Baltimore/Hyatt Regency in the inner harbor area of Baltimore. Early bird reservations can be made by calling (410) 539-1220. Arrangements Chairman Fred Cox reports that tentative activities include a har-

BLE members in Afghanistan

Scott A. Barkalow, a CSX loco-
tomotive engineer and member of BLE Divi-
sion 41 (Nashville), is recovering after being seriously injured on February 11 while serving his country in Afghan-
istan.

Brother Barkalow, 40, is a Sergeant First Class with the Army National Guard. He joined the BLE on April 6, 1999. He sustained the injury when his truck tripped a land mine near his unit's location. He has been transferred stateside to the Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington, D.C., where he is undergoing treatment for pain and infection associated with the ampu-
tation of his right leg.

If you are a CSX employee, you
can donate a personal leave day to
Brother Barkalow by calling Train-

EUMA update: Orioles game, picnic scheduled

EUMA Arrangements Chairman Fred Cox has contracted with the Balt-
timore Orioles for BLE members to at-
tend a 1 p.m. meal inside Camden Yards
followed by an Orioles/Yankees game as part of the 2003 EUMA.

The picnic/game replaces the Bal-
timore and Ohio Railroad Museum’s Day
of the Iron Horse 175, Festival of Trails, on the EUMA’s schedule of events. B&O Museum officials cancelled the Fair af-

The cost of the picnic/game will be
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Trainmen pick BLE over UTU

Utah Railway
Continued from Page 1

the Texas-Mexican Railway who visited
the Salt Lake City, Provo and Ogden
areas of Utah for BNSF. Utah Railway has
connections with BNSF and UP at
Provo and Utah Railroad Junction, Ut-

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