



NEWS

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Carriers reject bargaining 'ground rules'

Contract negotiations hit a snag as carriers play hard ball with Rail Labor Bargaining Coalition

The second bargaining session over changes in wages and work rules of the national rail carriers concluded prematurely on March 10 when the National Carriers Conference Committee (NCCC), representing the Class One carriers, refused to entertain or even discuss ground rules for negotiations proposed by the Rail Labor Bargaining Coalition (RLBC), representing seven rail unions comprised of 85,000 rail workers. The RLBC proposed the ground rules after questions regarding the bargaining process were raised at the first negotiating session, held January 24. At the March 10 meeting, the rail carriers' chief negotiator, Robert Allen, said, "There will be no ground rules for these negotiations."

"By refusing to even discuss the Rail Labor Coalition's proposed ground rules, the rail carriers have gotten these negotiations off on the wrong track," said George Francisco, coordinator of the Coalition and President of the National Conference of Firemen & Oilers (SEIU). "These ground rules are an attempt to clarify the process in which seven rail unions are bargaining in concert."

The proposed Ground Rules simply covered the following eight issues:

- Who each side represented;
- Who would participate in negotiations;
- The advance notification of presentations by experts;
- The scheduling of negotiations;
- The alignment of common and craft-specific issues so the suitable representatives would be available;

issues so the suitable representatives would be available;

- Mutually agreeing upon negotiation locations and provisions for bargaining and caucus rooms and the sharing of expenses;

- Provisions for information sharing and confidentiality agreements; and

- The finalization of contract language and the process for the ratification of the contract by the members of the coalition.

"Since the 1930s, the NCCC has assumed master contract bargaining on behalf of the majority of the carriers. For the first time in decades, rail unions are joining together in a coalition to make sure our members get a fair contract," said Francisco. "For that reason, we felt a clear set of ground rules would help streamline the process. It is outrageous that the Rail Carriers dismissed our proposal out of hand."

Robert Allen, chief negotiator for the National Carriers Conference Committee (NCCC), representing the Class One carriers, refused to discuss the issue and refused carte blanc to point out what objections the NCCC had to the proposed ground rules.

For the first time in two decades, seven major railroad unions joined together in the creation of the "Rail Labor Bargaining Coalition" to coordinate contract negotiations with the rail carriers. The seven unions of the coalition represent nearly 85,000 rail workers from American railroad corporations. The Coalition has developed a coordinated contract ne-

Collective Bargaining Update

gotiating strategy and each individual union will not sign off on any tentative agreements with the rail carriers until all the coalition members concur.

The Coalition is comprised of the following railroad unions: Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division (BMWED-IBT); Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET-IBT); National Conference of Firemen and Oilers (SEIU); Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen (BRS); Sheet Metal Workers International Association (SMWIA); International Brotherhood of Boilermakers (IBB); and American Train Dispatchers Association (ATDA)

By presenting a unified front at the bargaining table, members of the Rail Coalition have taken an important step in combating rail management's divide and conquer bargaining strategy. That strategy features the coercion of individual labor organizations into divisive contract settlements, which then are said to form a 'pattern' of substandard agreements that are, in turn, forced on other labor organizations through over-long mediation, Emergency Board proceedings or legislation. A united union movement will restore balance to contract negotiations.

This is the second in a series of articles aimed at keeping members informed during the current round of contract negotiations. •

TTD resolutions cite FRA, rail security needs

The AFL-CIO's transportation leaders condemned the Federal Railroad Administration for being "asleep at the switch" and issued a call for improved transportation security during its winter board meeting held in Las Vegas during early March.

The AFL-CIO's Transportation Trades Department (TTD) unanimously adopted five policy statements, calling for greater transportation security; the defeat of a railroad industry-Bush administration proposal to silence rail workers; a re-write of laws governing the transport of hazardous materials; greater federal oversight of rail safety; and stopping the White House effort to kill Amtrak.

The meetings were held in conjunction with the AFL-CIO's Executive Council meetings. AFL-CIO President John Sweeney and Secretary-Treasurer Rich Trumka addressed the TTD members, along with Representative Bob Filner (D-CA), Representative

Shelley Berkley (D-Nev.) and Senator Jon Corzine (D-NJ), who is also running for governor of New Jersey.



The 35 member-unions of the TTD also re-elected Edward W. Wytkind as President of the TTD and Michael A. Ingrao as Secretary-Treasurer.

The TTD strongly condemned the leadership of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) for becoming "too cozy" with the rail corporations they are supposed to police. Leaders of the FRA have been "asleep at the switch" during a recent series of high-profile rail accidents. The FRA has come under intense fire from the Transportation Department's Inspector General and a series of articles in the *New York Times*, citing poor safety practices by the major railroads and weak oversight and enforcement by the FRA. These reports even question why a former FRA leader vacationed with an industry lobbyist whose railroad was under investigation by the FRA.

To address the FRA issue, the TTD is calling for a doubling of federal rail inspectors and is asking Congress to adopt a rail safety bill to curb an industry that, "has clearly proven incapable of policing itself." The TTD says that the "partnership" approach pursued by the FRA does not "replace the role of an independent federal regulator that keeps an arm's length from the industry it is supposed to regulate."

At a time of increased terrorist threats to the United States, the TTD is calling for improved transportation security. Currently, the Federal government has failed to adequately address gaps in the nation's transportation security network, the TTD charged, placing rail employees and the general public at risk. The TTD is asking for a significant increase in federal security aid for rail and transit systems, as well as for greater security training for workers. The TTD is also seeking expanded security for freight trains and rail yards, particularly those that transport

hazardous chemicals.

In other business, the TTD recognized Sonny Hall, the recently retired president of the Transport Workers Union (TWU). The TTD passed a separate resolution honoring Brother Hall and naming him President Emeritus of the TTD.

"Nothing is more important than unity and solidarity, but never forget where you came from," President Emeritus Hall told the union presidents in attendance. "Think about your first day on the job and always remember it. The people holding those jobs today are the people you represent. They are the people you should never forget."

National President Don Hahs First Vice-President Ed Rodziewicz, National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert, Vice-President & National Legislative Representative Raymond Holmes and Chief of Staff/Political & Legislative Director John Tolman represented the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen at the meetings. •

BLET NEWS

Corbin, Ky., passes remote control safety resolution

Becomes 62nd U.S. community to ask FRA for enforceable RCO safety regulations

The city council of Corbin, Ky., passed a remote control safety resolution on March 14 that urges the U.S. Congress to force the Federal Railroad Administration to implement enforceable safety regulations to govern the operation of remote control locomotives.

Corbin is the 62nd community in the United States to pass such a resolution (43 cities and 19 counties).

The resolution, passed unanimously by the Corbin City Council, charges that the FRA, with the support of rail carriers, has circumvented established safety practices by issuing non-binding guidelines for the operation of unmanned remote control locomotives. While these guidelines were originally intended only for use in pilot projects, rail companies have seized the opportunity to use the non-binding

guidelines for full-implementation of remote control systems, thereby created an unregulated and dangerous segment of the rail industry.

Kentucky State Legislative Board Chairman Tommy Mayne thanked the members of BLET Division 463 (Corbin) for their contributions in helping to pass the resolution. In addition, Brother Mayne especially thanked Corbin Mayor Nelson Miller and Commissioners Onkst, Gregory, Farris and Shelton for supporting the resolution.

"I thank the Mayor and City Council for their deep concern for keeping Corbin safe for its citizens and for its railroad employees," Brother Mayne said, noting that Mayor Miller was recently elected. "The new regime here is moving forward for Corbin.

Nineteen counties throughout the United States have also passed remote

control safety resolutions. They are: Douglas County, Wis.; West Baton Rouge Parish (County), La.; Point Coupee Parish (County), La.; Cuyahoga County, Ohio; Huron County, Ohio; Erie County, Ohio; Whitley County, Ky.; Unicoi County, Tenn.; Contra Costa County, Calif.; Knox County, Tenn.; Clinton County, Iowa; Roanoke County, Va.; Harris County, Texas; Greenup, Ky.; San Francisco, Calif.; Champaign County, Ill.; Beaver County, Utah; Erie County, N.Y.; and El Paso County, Texas.

In addition to Corbin, Ky., 42 other U.S. cities have passed remote safety control resolutions. They are: Baton Rouge, La.; Detroit, Mich.; Shreveport, La.; Marysville, Mich.; Boston, Mass.; Cleveland, Ohio; Pine Bluff, Ark.; North Little Rock, Ark.; Beardstown, Ill.; Bakersfield, Calif.; Woodbridge, N.J.;

Maple Heights, Ohio; Alliance, Neb.; Evansville, Ind.; Dupou, Ill.; Durand, Mich.; Flat Rock, Mich.; Woodhaven, Mich.; Flint, Mich.; Sparks, Nev.; Commerce, Calif.; Clinton, Iowa; Montebello, Calif.; Saginaw, Mich.; Mankato, Minn.; Wamac, Ill.; St. Louis, Mo.; River Rouge, Mich.; Melvindale, Mich.; Redford Township, Mich.; Irvington, Ill.; Berwyn, Ill.; Allen Park, Mich.; Central City, Ill.; Carteret, N.J.; Toledo, Ohio; San Francisco, Calif.; Houston, Texas; Janesville, Wis.; South Salt Lake City, Utah; Fort Madison, Iowa.; and Milford, Utah.

A copy of Corbin's resolution is available on the BLET website:

<http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/corbin.pdf>

More information regarding remote control trains is available on the BLET website at:

<http://www.ble-t.org/remotecontrol>

As remote control use continues, safety becomes more of an issue

It is apparent — once again — that the United Transportation Union has missed the mark when it comes to remote control.

The UTU's Legislative Director from North Dakota recently testified against a BLET safety resolution regarding remote control locomotives before the North Dakota Senate Transportation Committee. His testimony was posted on the UTU's website under the headline, "Straight talk about remote control." The author boasts that remote control has "virtually nothing to do with safety," insisting that it is only a jobs issue.

From the BLET perspective, remote control is an issue of safety — pure and simple.

"When there is a remote control amputation, death, or hazmat spill in North Dakota, I would like to see the UTU and the BNSF come here and tell the victim's family that remote control is only about jobs, not safety," said BLET North Dakota State Legislative Board Chairman Mike Muscha.

Since the widespread implementation of remote control in 2002, the number of yard accidents on our nation's railroads have increased markedly, according to statistics obtained from the Federal Railroad Administration's Office of Safety. In 2002, there were 984 yard accidents. In 2003, there were 1,089, which

is an increase of nine percent. In 2004, there were 1,121, which is an increase of 9.7 percent from the previous year.

"Safety is, was, and always will be our top priority regarding remote control locomotives," said BLET National President Don Hahs. "The UTU, FRA and the carriers have allowed RCOs into the industry, and it is our members who are paying the price with injuries, amputations and deaths. Since allowing remotes into the industry, UTU leaders have done little to improve the safety of the operations. Instead, they have spent the majority of their time playing political games and spin-doctoring their way out of a no-win situation. It would be a refreshing change to see UTU leaders fight for the safety of their members instead of making excuses for selling them out."

The Brotherhood was the first railroad union to petition the FRA for a remote control rulemaking, doing so in a letter dated November 17, 1999. This action is evidence that the Brotherhood's top concern is the safety of employees operating trains by remote control.

"Before the UTU began playing its political games and making backdoor deals with the carriers, the Brotherhood was on record seeking the safest way to implement the new technology," BLET National

President Don Hahs said. "We did not seek to stop the implementation of remote control, as the UTU spin doctors would like you to believe. We petitioned the FRA for a rulemaking that would allow for the implementation of remote control in a safe, regulated environment."

However, the carriers, the FRA and the UTU teamed up to allow remote control to be implemented with simple guidelines and unenforceable regulations.

"It is astounding to allow this technology to be used without a rulemaking procedure and without enforceable federal regulations," said President Hahs. "We need a regulation that provides for the safety of the public and all railroad workers. We don't need the games that are being played now — such as calling this a jobs issue. No BLET member is without a job as a result of the implementation of remote control. It is mostly the jobs of UTU members that have been lost. Plain and simple — it's about safety.

"A rulemaking would not stop or impede the implementation of RCO," President Hahs continued. "It would not adversely effect the movement of rail cars. It would just make those movement safer.

"It's about safety," President Hahs concluded. "Period." •

BLET LEGISLATIVE NEWS

State Legislative Board chairmen to meet

BLET Legislative Chairmen from across the U.S. will meet in Las Vegas in early May for their annual business conference, a legislative workshop and the IBT Unity Conference.

"The annual business meeting is always useful and provides the exchange of important information among the chairmen," said J. T. Norris, Chairman of the National Association of State Legislative Board Chairmen. "If a chairman has tried something in one state and someone else is interested in that same situation for their state, then there can be a swap of information and thus no need to re-invent the wheel. In the end, it saves time and money."

The group was formed a number of years ago and now counts 37 BLET

Legislative Boards in the U.S. as members of the Association.

Following the annual business meeting on May 4-5, the chairmen will attend a two-day legislative workshop on May 6-7 presented by the BLET Education and Training Department in conjunction with the Teamsters' Education Department.

The Teamsters Unity Conference follows the legislative workshop on May 8-9. The Unity Conference includes attendees from the full spectrum of IBT constituent member groups.

In addition to the various state chairmen, BLET National President Don Hahs, First Vice-President Ed Rodziewicz, National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert and Vice-President & National Legislative Representative Raymond Holmes are expected to attend the business meeting.

For more information concerning

the business meeting, e-mail NASLBC Secretary-Treasurer Perry Renfro at: prenfro@cebridge.net . •

BLET helps defeat paycheck deception bill in Georgia House

Members of the Georgia House of Representatives defeated a "paycheck deception" bill on March 11 with the help of Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and members of other labor organizations.

The bill, HB 153, would have restricted labor unions from providing money for political activities. However, the bill did not restrict corporate activities in the same manner.

Georgia working families, including BLET members, mobilized against the

bill through the AFL-CIO's e-activist network and phone banks. This victory was major because the Georgia House is dominated by Republicans by a 99-81 margin.

"Seventeen Republicans stood with us on this legislation, along with 79 Democrats," said BLET Georgia State Legislative Board Chairman Buddy White. "We sincerely appreciate the support of our friends on both sides of the aisle."

Paycheck deception laws (or "paycheck protection" as its proponents misleadingly call it) silence working families' voices in politics by placing massive reporting and administrative burdens on unions before they could use dues money for any type of political expenditure — from educating members about issues and candidates to lobbying for pro-working family legislation. •



EUMA 2005 Registration Form

67th annual Eastern Union Meeting Association

Saratoga Springs, N.Y. • June 26-30, 2005



HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Contact the Prime Hotel Saratoga Springs, 534 Broadway, by calling (888) 999-4741, and ask for the BLET-EUMA room rate of \$129 per night. Parking is free. Hotel registration deadline is May 26, 2005.

EUMA REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Registration fee is \$115 per person and includes buffet breakfast Monday-Thursday, Monday's lunch, Wednesday's banquet and a Sunday picnic. Kids under 16 are \$65 each. Golf tournament fee is \$80 (see separate entry from).

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Division: _____ BLET Officer/Title: _____ E-mail Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Spouse's Name: _____ GIA Title & Auxiliary No.: _____

Number of children attending: _____ Ages: _____ Babysitting Required? _____

I AM INTERESTED IN THE FOLLOWING WORKSHOPS:

Local Chairman _____ Division President _____ Secretary-Treas. _____ Legislative Rep. _____

Please mail this form, along with check or money order payable to "EUMA '05" to:

Bill Kearsing, 2005 EUMA Arrangements Chairman
107 Vaughn Drive, Albany, NY 12203

For additional info: Call Brother Kearsing at (518) 281-0783; or email BKearsing@aol.com; or on the web at: www.blet046.org

Please print your name and division as clearly as possible on this form so your name tag will be correct.

EUMA set for Saratoga, NY

Arrangements Chairman Bill Kearsing and the members of BLET Division 46 host the 67th annual Eastern Union Meeting Association in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., from June 26-30.

The meeting will be held at the Prime Hotel Saratoga Springs, and the deadline for reservations is May 26. Reservations can be made by calling (518) 584-4000 or (888) 999-4711.

Saratoga is an outstanding destination for meetings and conventions because of the relaxing atmosphere and the many diversions it offers. Those visiting Saratoga will be pleased with the variety of family oriented establishments. In addition, one will find over 60 restaurants and pubs all located within walking distance of the Prime Hotel.

Tentative EUMA activities include a welcome reception/barbecue at the hotel, the annual golf outing, a family day at Six Flags Great Escape in Lake George, and a Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream social.

EUMA organizers are also planning various educational opportunities for BLET and GIA members, including a Division President's workshop. •

PASSENGER RAIL NEWS

Judge blocks BLET strike threat at LIRR

A federal magistrate sided with the Long Island Rail Road on March 8 in its dispute with locomotive engineers who had threatened to strike over the railroad's use of nonunion labor to move trains in a maintenance yard.

Magistrate Robert M. Levy recommended that U.S. District Judge Allyne Ross grant an injunction that would prevent a job action, and that she deny a request by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen that the railroad be stopped from using non-union labor.

"Sadly, what the court has allowed them to do is whatever they want to do whenever they want to do it," BLET General Chairman Bob Evers said. He added that the issue will likely go to arbitration.

The union has contended the railroad violated its contract by agreeing to allow employees of Bombardier, the Canadian M7 train manufacturer, to move trains for the warranty work at the Arch Street shop in Long Island City, which is under lease to Bombardier.

The attorney for the engineers had argued in court that it was a major dispute, which would not allow the railroad to alter its practices. As such, the attorney said, the railroad should immediately return to the "status quo," meaning union engineers should be the ones to move trains and the act does not permit the LIRR to violate the status quo.

(From New York's Newsday) •



2005 EUMA Golf Tournament

Tuesday, June 28, 2005

Eagle Crest Golf Club



FEES AND DETAILS

\$80 per golfer includes: Green fees, cart, lunch buffet (including mixed greens salad, warm rolls, macaroni salad, baked lasagna and penne pasta with vodka cream sauce and dinner buffet including sausage & peppers, baby back ribs), coffee and tea service, beer, soda, and water served during play.

SHOTGUN START — FOUR-MAN SCRAMBLE

Tee off time at 9:00 a.m. Proper golf attire only (collared shirts, no cutoffs, gym shorts or sweats)!

TEAM CAPTAIN

Name: _____ E-mail _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Check # _____ **Unless there is a large demand, transportation will be self-provided.**

TEAM MEMBERS

Name	Division Number	E-mail
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____

Spouses Attending: 1. _____ 3. _____

2. _____ 4. _____

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO "EUMA '05"

Mail this form and check to:

Sonny Kertesz, EUMA Golf Chairman • 2 Debbie Drive • Brick, NJ 08724 • (732) 458-7642

BLET NEWS

65th annual International Western Convention

An experience of a lifetime is what you will be missing if you do not attend the 65th annual International Western Convention in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. That's according to Brother Mike Linkletter, Chairman of the upcoming IWC, which will take place from July 3-8, 2005.

Brother Linkletter says that once the hard work is done, a party begins in Calgary. That will definitely be the case in July when not only the IWC will be in town, but also the greatest outdoor show on earth — The Calgary Stampede. The Stampede begins on July 9, and members are encouraged to extend their stay in Calgary to witness this must-see rodeo.

Hosted by Brother Linkletter and the members of Teamsters Canada Rail Conference (TCRC) Division 355, the IWC will be held at the Fairmont Palliser Hotel, which is sure to impress. The historic hotel was formerly owned by CP Limited, giving it a rich background in railroading. A room rate of \$144 per night (Canadian dollars) has been secured (using code GRBRL1) for reservations by the June 3 deadline.

Early-bird IWC registration — before April 30, 2005 — is \$60 per person (\$75 Canadian). Registration after April 30, 2005, is \$75 per person (\$99 Canadian). A special "early early-bird" registration is being offered to those who register with the IWC before March 31, 2005. Those who take advantage of the "early early-bird" registration will have their names entered into a special prize drawing to have their banquet fees waived, a \$25 value (\$30 Canadian).

While in Calgary for the convention, members will find that there are many things to do and see around the city. Heritage Park, Spruce Meadows and the Rocky Mountains are only a few.

Activities will include a tour of Banff, a bar stool rodeo dinner, and the annual golf tournament. Educational opportunities and workshops will be offered for Legislative Representatives,

Secretary-Treasurers, and possibly Local Chairmen. In addition, the theme of the 65th annual IWC is effective communication. Brother Linkletter is planning a number of guest speakers including two professional arbitrators. Other educational sessions will focus on effectively communicating with managers (dealing with difficult people), effectively communicating with arbitrators, effectively communicating with our union Brothers and Sisters, and preparing and communicating with the media.

A tentative agenda calls for a July 4 golf tournament and sight-seeing in Calgary; July 5 is the opening ceremony; July 6 is scheduled for workshops and training; July 7 is more workshops and a gala ball; and July 8 is check-out and the beginning of the Stampede, highlighted by the Calgary Stampede Parade.



IWC 2005 Registration Form

65th International Western Convention
Calgary, Alberta, Canada • July 3-8, 2005
Chairman: Mike Linkletter & Division 355



HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Contact the Fairmont Palliser, 133 9th Ave. SW, Calgary, by calling (800) 866-5577, or online at: www.fairmont.com/palliser (use booking code GRBRL1) • Rooms are \$144 per night (Canadian) and the reservation deadline is June 3

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Early Bird Registration (post marked on or before April 30, 2005) is \$60 per person (\$75 Canadian). Regular registration (after April 30, 2005) is \$75 per person (\$99 Canadian). See below for details on drawing for "early early bird" registration.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____ Zip/Postal Code: _____

Division: _____ TCRC/BLET Title: _____ E-mail Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

I plan on attending the following workshops: Local Chairman Secretary-Treas. Legislative Rep.

U.S. Residents: Calculation of fees in U.S. Funds (please include payment with this form):

U.S. Funds: Early-bird registration at \$60 per person (prior to 4/30/05):	..... \$60.00/person	X No. of People	= \$ _____
U.S. Funds: Regular registration at \$75 per person (after 4/30/05):	..... \$75.00/person	X No. of People	= \$ _____
U.S. Funds: Golf tournament registration at \$100 per person:	..... \$100.00/person	X No. of People	= \$ _____
U.S. Funds: Tour of Banff at \$25 per person:	..... \$25.00/person	X No. of People	= \$ _____
U.S. Funds: Banquet registration at \$25 per person:	..... \$25.00/person	X No. of People	= \$ _____
U.S. Funds: Bar Stool Rodeo Dinner registration at \$20 per person:	..... \$20.00/person	X No. of People	= \$ _____
Total Amount Enclosed (in U.S. Funds):	.....		\$ _____

Canadian Residents: Calculation of fees in Canadian Funds (please include payment with this form):

Canadian: Early-bird registration at \$75 per person (prior to 4/30/05):	..... \$75.00/person	X No. of People	= \$ _____
Canadian: Regular registration at \$99 per person (after 4/30/05):	..... \$99.00/person	X No. of People	= \$ _____
Canadian: Golf tournament registration at \$125 per person:	..... \$125.00/person	X No. of People	= \$ _____
Canadian: Tour of Banff at \$30 per person:	..... \$30.00/person	X No. of People	= \$ _____
Canadian: Banquet registration at \$30 per person:	..... \$30.00/person	X No. of People	= \$ _____
Canadian: Bar Stool Rodeo Dinner registration at \$25 per person:	..... \$25.00/person	X No. of People	= \$ _____
Total Amount Enclosed (in Canadian Funds):	.....		\$ _____

Please mail this form, along with check or money order payable to "TCRC Provincial Legislative Board Alberta," to:
 Mike Linkletter • #3 1207 43 Street SE • Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2A 5E5

"Early early registration" on or before March 31, 2005, will be eligible for a special prize draw to have their banquet fees waived.

For additional information: Contact IWC Chairman Mike Linkletter at: minkletter@teamstersrail.ca.



Stunning mountain views (above) and Rocky Mountain wildlife are just two of the natural attractions available to members who attend the upcoming International Western Convention in Calgary, Alberta.

(Photos courtesy: Tourism Calgary.)

78th annual Southeastern Meeting Association

BLET members are in for a dose of southern hospitality at the 78th annual Southeastern Meeting Association in Montgomery, Ala., June 12-17, 2005.

Brother David Bowen and the members of BLET Division 332 will host this year's SMA, which will be held at the Embassy Suites Hotel in downtown Montgomery. A room rate of \$114 per night has been secured for the convention, and reservations can be made by calling 1-800-EMBASSY or (334) 269-5055. Be sure to use discount code SLE when making your reservations. The deadline for room reservations is May 13.

A number of entertaining activities are planned for BLET members to compliment the various educational opportunities also on the agenda. Tentative plans include a trip to the Victory Land

Dog Racing Track (includes a buffet dinner), a trip to the Montgomery Zoo, a historical tour of Old Alabama Town, and a formal banquet. Members will also have the opportunity to attend a bluegrass music show featuring Brother Rod Sanders, a member of BLET Division 332 (Montgomery). This year's golf tournament will take place at the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail in Prattville, Ala.

In addition to these activities, educational workshops will be held for Local Chairmen, Secretary-Treasurers, Legislative Representatives, and Division Presidents (pending membership interest levels).

Early-bird registration for the SMA is \$60 per person for those who register (and pay-in-full) before April 15, 2005. After that date, regular registra-



Skyline of downtown Montgomery, Ala., host city of the 78th annual Southeastern Meeting Association.

tion is \$70 per person.

The 78th annual SMA offers something for everyone and is a convention you will not want to miss!

Tentative Agenda 78th annual SMA

(This tentative agenda is subject to change.)

Sunday, June 12

- 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.: Check-in and registration Special rate at Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail (tee time only \$53.00)
- 3:30 p.m.-6:00 p.m.: Bluegrass music featuring BLET Division 332 member Rod Sanders and his band.
- Open night, dinner on your own

Monday, June 13

(Railroad Retirement Board representatives on hand today through Wednesday)

- 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.: Registration
- 7:00 a.m.-9:00 a.m.: Breakfast in hotel restaurant
- 8:30 a.m.-10:00 a.m.: Opening ceremonies
- 12:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m.: BLET closed meeting
- 10:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.: GIA shopping trip with lunch sponsored by Designated Legal Counsel (DLC)
- 5:00 p.m.: Busses load for a night of dining and dog racing at Victory Land Race Track

Tuesday, June 14

- 7:00 a.m.-9:00 a.m.: Breakfast
- 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.: Workshops for Local Chairmen and Secretary-Treasurers. Working lunch provided by BRCE.
- 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.: DLC Legal Fair
- 6:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.: Casino Night

Wednesday, June 15

- 7:00 a.m.-8:30 a.m.: Breakfast
- 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.: Golf tournament
- 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.: Historical tour of Montgomery and visit to Montgomery Zoo (lunch and transportation furnished)
- Open night, dinner on your own

Thursday, June 16

- 7:00 a.m.-9:00 a.m.: Breakfast
- 9:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.: BLET closed meeting
- 1:00 p.m.-2:45 p.m.: BLET closed meeting GIA luncheon, sponsored by DLC
- 6:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m.: Banquet

Friday, June 17

- 7:00 a.m.-9:00 a.m.: Breakfast
- Check out and good-byes. See you next year in Chattanooga.



SMA 2005 Registration Form

78th annual Southeastern Meeting Association

Montgomery, Ala. • June 12-17, 2005



HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Embassy Suites Hotel, 300 Tallapoosa St., Montgomery, Ala., 1-800-EMBASSY or (334) 269-5055.

Be sure to ask for the BLET room rate of \$114 per night (Code SLE). Registration deadline for the BLET rate is May 13, 2005.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Early Bird Registration costs/activity fee is \$60.00 per person registering and paying-in-full by April 15, 2005 (registration after April 15 is \$70.00 per person). All BLET members must also pay \$20 SMA dues. There is a \$53.00 per person golf tournament fee.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Division: _____ BLET Officer/Title: _____ E-mail Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Spouse's Name: _____ GIA Title & Auxiliary No.: _____

If you are interested in any of the following activities, please indicate the number attending so we know how many plan to participate:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. _____ Victory Land Dog Racing Track w/ buffet dinner | 4. _____ Historical tours of Old Alabama Town |
| 2. _____ Family Day at Montgomery Zoo | 5. _____ Banquet on Thursday evening |
| 3. _____ Golf Tournament at Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail in Prattville, Ala. | |

(Please note that these activities are subject to change based on funding and participation levels.)

Please indicate which of the following workshops you would like to attend:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. _____ Local Chairman Workshop | 3. _____ Legislative Representative Workshop |
| 2. _____ Secretary-Treasurer Workshop | 4. _____ Division President Workshop |

Number of children attending: _____ Ages: _____

Will you be using the baby sitting service that will be available at a minimal fee? Yes _____ No _____

REGISTRATION FEES

- Early Bird Registration fee (before April 15, 2004): \$60.00 (All attendees 13 or older must pay the activity fee)
- Regular Registration fee (after April 15, 2004): \$70.00 (All attendees 13 or older must pay the activity fee)
 - SMA Dues: \$20.00 (All BLET members must pay SMA dues)
- Golf Tournament: \$53.00 per person (Includes green fees, lunch, transportation and prizes)

Please mail this form, along with check or money order payable to "David Bowen, SMA Chairman" to:

David Bowen, SMA Chairman
2835 County Road 59 • Deatsville, AL 36022

For more details: Contact Brother Bowen at: (334) 361-4181 (home); or (334) 201-2200 (cell); or email: <dab332@aol.com>.

Arrival Date: Sunday, June 12, 2005. Check out: Friday, June 17, 2005

Please print your name and division number as clearly as possible on this form so that your name tag will be correct.

BLET NEWS

Benefits under Railroad Retirement, Social Security

Railroad Retirement benefits remain substantially better than Social Security benefits

Employers and employees covered by the Railroad Retirement Act pay higher retirement taxes than those covered by the Social Security Act, so that railroad retirement benefits remain substantially higher than social security benefits.

The following questions and answers show the differences in railroad retirement and social security benefits payable at the close of the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004. It also shows the differences in age requirements and payroll taxes under the two systems.

1. How do the average monthly railroad retirement and social security benefits paid to retired employees and spouses compare?

The average age annuity being paid by the Railroad Retirement Board at the end of fiscal year 2004 to career rail employees was \$2,075 a month, and for all retired rail employees the average was \$1,620. The average age retirement benefit being paid under social security was just over \$925 a month. Spouse benefits averaged \$620 a month under railroad retirement compared to \$450 under social security.

The Railroad Retirement Act also provides supplemental railroad retirement annuities of between \$23 and \$43 a month, which are payable to employees who retire directly from the rail industry with 25 or more years of service.

2. Are the benefits awarded to recent retirees generally greater than the benefits payable to those who retired years ago?

Yes, because recent awards are based on higher average earnings. For career railroad employees retiring at the end of fiscal year 2004, regular annuity awards averaged over \$2,710 a month while monthly benefits awarded to workers retiring at full retirement age under social security averaged about \$1,245. If spouse benefits are added, the combined benefits for the employee and spouse would approximate \$3,820 under railroad retirement coverage, compared to \$1,865 under social security. Adding a supplemental annuity to the railroad family's benefit increases average total benefits for current career rail retirees to nearly \$3,860 a month.

3. How much are the disability benefits currently awarded?

Disabled railroad workers retiring directly from the railroad industry at the end of fiscal year 2004 were awarded nearly \$2,305 a month on the average while awards for disabled workers under social security averaged almost \$950.

While both the Railroad Retirement and Social Security Acts provide ben-

efits to workers who are totally disabled for any regular work, the Railroad Retirement Act also provides disability benefits specifically for career employees who are disabled for work in their regular railroad occupation. Career employees may be eligible for such an occupational disability annuity at age 60 with 10 years of service, or at any age with 20 years of service.



4. Can railroaders retire at earlier ages than workers under social security?

Railroad employees with 30 or more years of creditable service are eligible for regular annuities based on age and service the first full

month they are age 60, and rail employees with less than 30 years of creditable service are eligible for regular annuities based on age and service the first full month they are age 62.

No early retirement reduction applies if a rail employee retires at age 60 or older with 30 years of service and his or her retirement is after 2001, or if the employee retired before 2002 at age 62 or older with 30 years of service.

Early retirement reductions are otherwise applied to annuities awarded before full retirement age—the age at which an employee can receive full benefits with no reduction for early retirement. This ranges from age 65 for those born before 1938 to age 67 for those born in 1960 or later, the same as under social security.

Under social security, a worker cannot begin receiving retirement benefits based on age until age 62, regardless of how long he or she worked, and social security retirement benefits are reduced for retirement prior to full retirement age regardless of years of coverage.

5. Does social security offer any benefits that are not available under railroad retirement?

Social security does pay certain types of benefits that are not available under railroad retirement. For example, social security provides children's benefits when an employee is disabled, retired or deceased. Under current law, the Railroad Retirement Act only provides children's benefits if the employee is deceased.

However, the Railroad Retirement Act includes a special minimum guaranty provision which ensures that railroad families will not receive less in monthly benefits than they would have if railroad earnings were covered by social security rather than railroad retirement laws. This guaranty is intended to cover situations in which one or more members of a family would otherwise be eligible for a type of social security benefit that is not provided under the Railroad Retirement Act.

Therefore, if a retired rail employee has children who would otherwise be eligible for a benefit under social security, the employee's annuity can be increased to reflect what social security would pay the family.

6. How much are monthly benefits for survivors under railroad retirement and social security?

Survivor benefits are generally higher if payable by the Board rather than social security. At the end of fiscal year 2004, the average annuity being paid to all aged and disabled widow(er)s averaged \$1,020 a month, compared to \$880 under social security.

Benefits awarded by the Board at the end of fiscal year 2004 to aged and disabled widow(er)s of railroaders averaged about \$1,410 a month, compared to over \$655 under social security.

The annuities being paid at the end of fiscal year 2004 to widowed mothers/fathers averaged \$1,335 a month and children's annuities averaged \$765, compared to \$670 and \$605 a month for widowed mothers/fathers and children, respectively, under social security.

Those awarded at the end of fiscal year 2004 averaged \$1,555 a month for widowed mothers/fathers and \$985 a month for children under railroad retirement, compared to \$665 and \$615 for widowed mothers/fathers and children, respectively, under social security.

The benefits to aged and disabled widow(er)s and widowed mothers/fathers at the end of fiscal year 2004 reflect a provision of the Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act of 2001.

7. How do railroad retirement and social security lump-sum death benefit provisions differ?

Both the railroad retirement and social security systems provide a lump-sum death benefit. The railroad retirement lump-sum benefit is generally payable only if survivor annuities are not immediately due upon an employee's death. The social security lump-sum benefit may be payable regardless of whether monthly benefits are also due. Both railroad retirement and social security provide a lump-sum benefit of \$255. However, if a railroad employee completed 10 years of service before 1975, the average railroad retirement lump-sum benefit payable is \$950. Also, if an employee had less than 10 years of service, but had at least 5 years of such service after 1995, he or she would have to have had an insured status under social security law (counting both railroad retirement and social security credits) in order for the \$255 lump-sum benefit to be payable.

The social security lump sum is generally only payable to the widow or widower living with the employee at the time of death. Under railroad retire-

ment, if the employee had 10 years of service before 1975, and was not survived by a living-with widow or widower, the lump sum may be paid to the funeral home or the payer of the funeral expenses.

The railroad retirement system also provides, under certain conditions, a residual lump-sum death benefit which ensures that a railroad family receives at least as much in benefits as the employee paid in railroad retirement taxes before 1975. This benefit is, in effect, a refund of an employee's pre-1975 railroad retirement taxes, after subtraction of any benefits previously paid on the basis of the employee's service. However, an employee's benefits generally exceed taxes within two years; this death benefit is, consequently, seldom payable.

8. How do railroad retirement and social security payroll taxes compare?

Railroad retirement payroll taxes, like railroad retirement benefits, are calculated on a two-tier basis. Rail employees and employers pay tier I taxes at the same rate as social security taxes, 7.65 percent, consisting of 6.20 percent on earnings up to \$90,000 in 2005 and 1.45 percent for Medicare hospital insurance on all earnings.

In addition, rail employees and employers both pay tier II taxes which are used to finance railroad retirement benefit payments over and above social security levels.

Beginning with the taxes payable for calendar year 2004, tier II taxes on both employers and employees are based on an average account benefits ratio. Depending on that ratio, the tier II tax rate for employers will range between 8.20 percent and 22.10 percent, while the tier II tax rate for employees will be between 0 percent and 4.90 percent.

In 2005, the tier II tax rate on employees is 4.40 percent and on rail employers it is 12.60 percent on employee earnings up to \$66,900.

More information on this topic is available at: <http://www.rrb.gov/act/pdf/taxrate.pdf>.

9. How much are regular railroad retirement taxes for an employee earning \$90,000 in 2005 compared to social security taxes?

The maximum amount of regular railroad retirement taxes that an employee earning \$90,000 can pay in 2005 is \$9,828.60, compared to \$6,885 under social security. For railroad employers, the maximum annual regular retirement taxes on an employee earning \$90,000 are \$15,314.40 compared to \$6,885 under social security.

Employees earning over \$90,000, and their employers, will pay more in retirement taxes than the above amounts because the Medicare hospital insurance tax of 1.45 percent is applied to all earnings. •

Railroad Retirement and spousal annuities

In addition to the retirement annuities payable to employees, the Railroad Retirement Act, like the Social Security Act, also provides annuities for the spouses of retired employees. Payment of a spouse annuity is made directly to the wife or husband of the employee. Divorced spouses may also qualify for benefits.

The following questions and answers describe the benefits payable to spouses and the eligibility requirements.

1. How are railroad retirement spouse annuities computed?

Regular railroad retirement annuities are computed under a two-tier formula. The spouse annuity formula is based on certain percentages of the employee's tier I and tier II amounts.

The tier I portion of an employee's annuity is based on both railroad retirement credits and any social security credits that the employee also earned. Computed using social security benefit formulas, an employee's tier I benefit approximates the social security benefit that would be payable if all the employee's work were performed under the Social Security Act.

The tier II portion of the employee's annuity is based on railroad retirement credits only, and may be compared to the retirement benefits paid over and above social security benefits to workers in other industries.

The first tier of a spouse annuity is generally 50 percent of the railroad employee's tier I amount. The second tier amount is 45 percent of the employee's tier II amount.

2. How does a railroad retirement spouse annuity compare to a social security spouse benefit?

The average annuity awarded to spouses in fiscal year 2004, excluding divorced spouses, was \$761 a month, while the average monthly social security spouse benefit was about \$335.

Annuities awarded in fiscal year 2004 to the spouses of employees who were of full retirement age or over and who retired directly from the rail industry with at least 25 years of service averaged \$867 a month; and the average award to the spouses of employees retiring at age 60 or over with at least 30 years of service was \$1,062 a month.

3. What are the age requirements for a railroad retirement spouse annuity?

The age requirements for a spouse annuity depend on the employee's age and date of retirement and the employee's years of railroad service.

The following requirements apply if the employee's annuity began after 1974.

If a retired employee with 30 or more years of service is age 60 and receiving an annuity, the employee's spouse is also eligible for an annuity the first full month the spouse is age 60. Certain early retirement reductions are applied if the employee first became eligible for a 60/30 annuity July 1, 1984, or later and retired at age 60 or 61 before 2002. If the employee was awarded a disability annuity, has attained age 60 and has 30 years of service, the spouse can receive an unreduced annuity the first full month she or he is age 60, regardless of whether the employee annuity began before or after 2002 as long as the spouse's annuity beginning date is after 2001.

If a retired employee with less than 30 years of service is age 62 and receiving an annuity, the employee's spouse is also eligible for an annuity the first full month the spouse is age 62. Early retirement reductions are applied to the spouse annuity if the spouse retires prior to full retirement age. Full retirement age for a spouse is gradually rising to age 67, just as for an employee, depending on the year of birth. Reduced benefits are still payable at age 62, but the maximum reduction will be 35 percent rather than 25 percent by the year 2022. However, the tier II portion of a spouse annuity will not be reduced beyond 25 percent if the employee had any creditable railroad service before August 12, 1983.

4. What if the spouse is caring for a child of the retired employee?

A spouse of an employee receiving an age and service annuity (or a spouse of a disability annuitant who is otherwise eligible for an age and service annuity) is eligible for a spouse annuity at any age if caring for the employee's unmarried child, and the child is under age 18 or the child became disabled before age 22.

5. What are some of the other general eligibility requirements?

The employee must have been married to the spouse for at least one year, unless the spouse is the natural parent of their child; the spouse was eligible or potentially eligible for a railroad retirement widow(er)'s, parent's or disabled child's annuity in the month before marrying the employee; or the spouse was previously married to the employee and received a spouse annuity. However, entitlement to a surviving divorced spouse, surviving divorced young mother (father), or remarried widow(er) annuity does not waive the

one-year marriage requirement.

6. Under what conditions can the divorced spouse of a rail employee receive a spouse annuity?

A spouse annuity may also be payable to the divorced wife or husband of a retired employee if their marriage lasted for at least 10 years, both have attained age 62 for a full month, and the divorced spouse is not currently married. The amount of a divorced spouse's annuity is, in effect, equal to what social security would pay in the same situation (tier I only) and therefore less than the amount of the spouse annuity otherwise payable. The average divorced spouse annuity awarded in fiscal year 2004 was \$416.

7. Would the award of an annuity to a divorced spouse affect the monthly annuity rate payable to a retired employee and/or the current spouse?

No. If a divorced spouse becomes entitled to an annuity based on the employee's railroad service, the award of the divorced spouse's benefit would not affect the amount of the employee's annuity, nor would it affect the amount of the railroad retirement annuity that may be payable to the current spouse.

8. Are spouse annuities subject to offset for the receipt of other benefits?

The tier I portion of a spouse annuity is reduced for any social security entitlement, regardless of whether the social security benefit is based on the spouse's own earnings, the employee's earnings or the earnings of another person. This reduction follows principles of social security law which, in effect, limit payment to the higher of any two or more benefits payable to an individual at one time.

The tier I portion of a spouse annuity may also be reduced for receipt of any Federal, State or local pension separately payable to the spouse based on the spouse's own earnings. The reduction generally does not apply if the employment on which the public service pension is based was covered under the Social Security Act throughout the last 60 months of public employment. (This 60-month requirement is being phased in over a five-year period ending March 1, 2009, and there are some exceptions.) Most military service pensions and payments from the Department of Veterans Affairs will not cause a reduction. For spouses subject to the public service pension reduction, the tier I reduction is equal to 2/3 of the amount of the public service pension.

In addition, if the employee was first eligible for a railroad retirement annuity and a Federal, State or local government pension after 1985, there may be a reduction in the employee's tier I amount for receipt of a public pension based, in part or in whole, on employment not covered by social security or railroad retirement after 1956. If the employee's tier I benefit is offset for a noncovered service pension, the spouse tier I amount is 50 percent of the employee's tier I amount after the offset.

The spouse tier I portion may also be reduced if the employee is under age 65 and is receiving a disability annuity as well as worker's compensation or public disability benefits.

9. What if a husband and wife are both railroad employees?

If both the husband and wife are qualified railroad employees and either had some railroad service before 1975, both can receive separate railroad retirement employee and spouse annuities, without a full dual benefit reduction. If both the husband and wife started railroad employment after 1974, the amount of any spouse or divorced spouse annuity is reduced by the amount of the employee annuity to which the spouse is also entitled.

10. Are railroad retirement annuities subject to garnishment or property settlements?

Certain percentages of any railroad retirement annuity (employee, spouse or survivor) may be subject to legal process (i.e., garnishment) to enforce an obligation for child support and/or alimony payments.

Also, with the exception of the tier I portion of a railroad retirement annuity, all other portions of an employee's annuity are subject to court-ordered property settlements in proceedings related to divorce, annulment or legal separation.

11. How can a person get more information about railroad retirement spouse annuities?

For more information and/or a benefit estimate, a person should contact the nearest office of the Railroad Retirement Board. Most Board offices are open to the public from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on Federal holidays. Persons can find the address and phone number of the Board office serving their area by calling the automated toll-free RRB Help Line at (800) 808-0772. They can also get this information from the Board's Web site at www.rrb.gov. •

2005 Railroad Retirement Board Informational Conferences

The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board will offer free informational conferences for elected officers of all rail labor unions throughout 2005.

Registration for all informational conferences begins at 8 a.m. The programs begin promptly at 8:30 a.m. and end at 12:30 p.m.

April 1 • East Hanover, N.J.
Ramada Conference Center
130 Route 10 West

April 8 • Covina, Calif.
Embassy Suites Hotel
1211 E. Garvey Street

April 8 • Roanoke, Va.
Holiday Inn Airport, 6626 Thirlane Rd.
I-581 & Peters Creek Rd.

April 15 • Eagan, Minn.
Yankee Square Inn, 3450 Washington Dr.

I-35E & Yankee Doodle Rd.

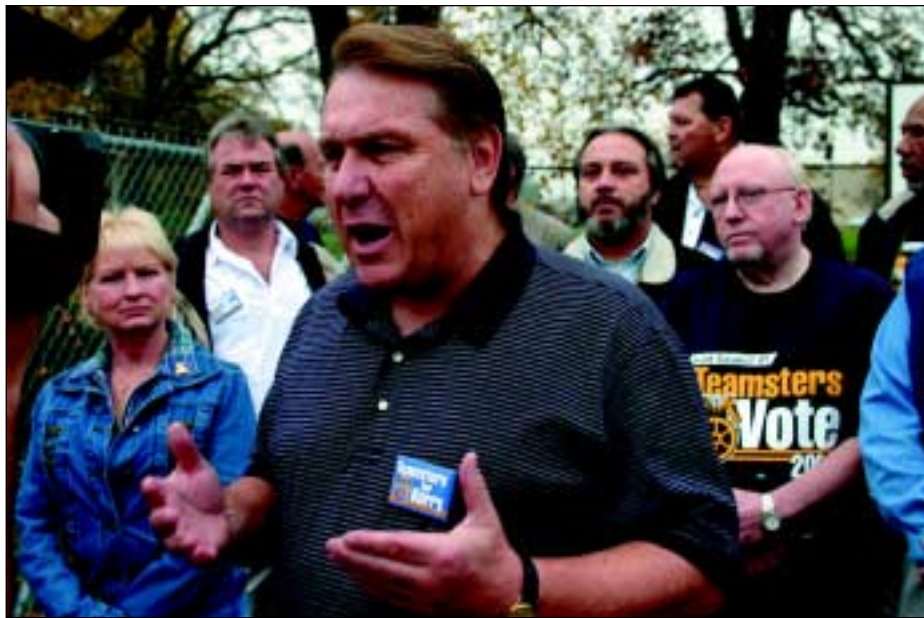
April 15 • New York, N.Y.
Doubletree Metropolitan Hotel
569 Lexington Ave. at 51st St.

April 15 • Nashville, Tenn.
Prime Hotel & Suites
1112 Airport Center Dr.

BLET NEWS

A message from IBT General President James P. Hoffa

Amtrak funding priority



Amtrak Funding Priority

We are once again facing a crisis with Amtrak funding. As you know, President Bush has recommended that Congress not fund Amtrak. I want to assure you that we are fighting this effort and we are taking our fight to the hometowns of members of Congress. We represent nearly 2,000 dues-paying BLET engineers who operate Amtrak locomotives and we are committed to preserving these jobs.

We are also participating in a coalition group for Amtrak funding that is being coordinated by the AFL's Transportation Trades Department. Nearly a dozen rail unions have members which work on Amtrak and it is critical that this mainstay of our nation's transportation system survives and flourishes. In some small towns, it is the only form of mass transit to the larger cities. Therefore, Amtrak is an important component of the economy on a community level.

Rail Signal Safety

Since the tragic accident in Graniteville, S.C., the elimination of dark territory has become a central topic. We need to pressure the rail carriers to install up to date signal systems. Compared to flying a plane without the use of radar, it is unconscionable that there are areas of our nations rails that remain dark, particularly those that carry hazardous materials. The carriers' reluctance to install signal systems, however, is systemic of their overall desire to cut costs. Over

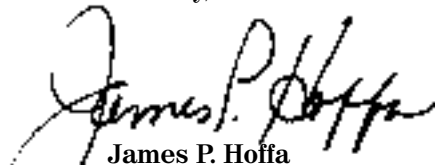
the years we have seen a steady decrease in jobs for operating employees and the consolidation of rail lines. The installation of signal systems by the carriers must be a priority so that this deadly risk our members bear is eliminated.

Challenges Ahead

Rail corporations are growing larger and buying up short lines on nearly a monthly basis. Technology and global forces still threaten American jobs and our standard of living. Therefore, we must elect leaders who understand core trade union principles, who appreciate the need to guarantee retirement security, and who understand that working men and women are the foundation of our country.

Our rail conference unites two of the largest rail unions under the Teamster banner — this provides a new, strong voice for workers. We have already seen our new power in action with the formation of the Rail Labor Bargaining Coalition. The Coalition's opening conversations with the National Carrier's Conference Committee asserted our strength and unity. The carriers are on notice that we will work together to negotiate improved wages and benefits for our members.

In Solidarity,



James P. Hoffa
IBT General President

MARCH 2005 CALENDAR & EVENTS

MAY 4-5, 2005... National Association of State Legislative Board Chairmen meetings
The BLET's legislative leaders conduct their annual meeting in Las Vegas. See Page 2 for details.

MAY 22-27, 2005... Advanced Local Chairman Workshop, George Meany Center
Room is still available for this intensive workshop, and members may register through the BLET's website at: <http://www.ble-t.org/lcadvance>. This workshop goes into great detail on writing, claims handling, and investigations. Among other assignments, the students will be given a topic to research and report back to the class; there will be a session on Duty of Fair Representation (DFR); the Railway Labor Act (RLA); and several appeal letters will have to be written on cases passed out in class. Again, a highlight of the workshop is when attendees participate in a simulated disciplinary hearing. Attendees are eligible for a stipend of \$86 per day from the North American Railway Foundation. For details contact Ken Kroeger of the BLET Education & Training Department at: (216) 272-0986.

JUNE 12-17, 2005... 78th Annual Southeastern Meeting Association, Montgomery, Ala.
Hosted by Brother David Bowen and the members of BLET Division 740. See Page 5 for details.

JUNE 26-30, 2005... 67th Annual Eastern Union Meeting Association, Saratoga Springs
Hosted by Arrangements Chairman Bill Kearsing and the members of Division 46. See Page 3 for details.

JULY 3-8, 2005... 65th Annual International Western Convention, Calgary, Alberta
Hosted by Mike Linkletter and the members of BLET Division 355. See Page 4 for details.

OCTOBER 2-6, 2005... 70th Annual Southwestern Convention Meeting, Oklahoma City
Hosted by John Salisbury and the members of BLET Division 141, the 70th annual SWCM will be held at the Renaissance Oklahoma City Convention Center Hotel, (405) 228-8000 or (800) 468-3571. More details to come when available.

Advisory Board January Activity

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

National President Don M. Hahs—National Division office: General supervision of BLET activities; General office duties; Meetings w/ BMW, GC, Teamsters, re: Rail Coalition, Tucson, Ariz.; Rail Coalition mtgs., Washington, D.C.; IBT General Executive Board mtg., Atlanta; Betty Child Memorial, Fall Church, Va.; NLRC bargaining mtgs., Washington, D.C.
First Vice-President & Alternate President Edward W. Rodzwick— Assisted President in general operation of National Division Office; Vice President assignments; Special Representative assignments; Organizing department; Shortline department; Passenger department; Various correspondence & phone calls; BMW/IBT/BLET mtg.; Vacation day; UP Central/carrier labor relations officer mtgs.; NCCC/Rail Coalition mtg.; South Buffalo Railway negotiations.
National Secretary-Treasurer William C. Walpert—General supervision of BLET financial, record depts.; ND office; BLET Education & Training Dept.; Internal Organizing, Mobilizing & Strategic Planning Dept.; Safety Task Force; Meetings with vendors and financial institutions; IBT Rail Conference mtg., Tucson, Ariz.; Negotiations with Operating Engineers and IBEW, re: Standard Building employees contracts.
Vice-President Paul T. Sorrow—Attended division meetings 717, 323, 498 and 803; Assisted CSX Eastern Lines with establishment of ID Service, Abbeville, S.C., to Greenwood, S.C., and between Greenwood, S.C., and Hamlet, N.C.; Assisted CSX Eastern Lines, Western Lines and Northern Lines with various issues; Assisted Grand Trunk Western General Committee; Prepared for Public Law Boards; Handled myriad of problems and issues with CSX Transportation management.
Vice-President Richard K. Radek— ND Office; BLET Decertification Helpline services; Director of Arbitration Dept; National Railroad Adjustment Board (NRAB); Illinois Central; Wisconsin Central; Indiana Harbor Belt; METRA; Bell Rwy. of Chicago; Paducah & Louisville; Chicago Central & Pacific; IHB negotiations and general assistance, arbitrator orientation mtg.; WSOR organization, Madison, Wisc.; NMB hearing-commentator, Washington, D.C. (Section 3 arbitration filing fees matter); NRAB executive session, UP; CN/WC section 6 notices and quarterly L/M mtg., Green Bay, Wisc.; Manning dispute conference, BRC, procedural board established; EJE negotiation assistance and PLB No. 6808 (procedural); Pool assignments dispute, CN awards dinner, Chicago; CN/WC settlement conference, pre-arbitration, formulating Section 6 notices, arbitration preparation, Chicago.
Vice-President Dale McPherson — CP Rail; Port. Term. RR; Longview Portland & Northern; Longview Switching Co.; Indiana RR; Missouri & Northern Arkansas RR; Utah Railroad; UP Eastern Dist.; UP former CNW; BLET National Bargaining Cmte.; Public Law Boards 5604, 5681, 5721, 6040, 6281, 6589; UP work/rest projects; RSAC positive train control cmte.; General office duties, telephone, correspondence; CP Rail-Elkart Distric agreement, Minneapolis; P&W contract negotiations, Salem, Ore.; Mtg. w/ GC Young-UP Eastern District, Denver; North Platte issues and mtgs.; Prep. & contract negotiations, Indiana RR, Jacksonville.
Vice-President & U.S. Nat'l Legislative Representative Raymond A. Holmes — BLET Washington D.C. office; General office duties, telephone, correspondence; Rail Safety Advisory Committee meetings, Washington, D.C.; Conference call and general administrative activities; Correspondence with State Legislative Board Chairmen.
Vice-President Merle W. Geiger Jr.— Assigned to: BLET Trainmen's Department; Kansas City Southern; Gateway Western; Midsouth Rail; Southrail; Texas-Mexican Rwy.; Springfield Terminal, Delaware & Hudson; Indiana & Ohio RR; Louisville & Indiana RR; St. Lawrence & Atlantic RR; Indiana Southern RR; Mtg. w/ GC Parker and KCS, Fort Worth, Texas; Preparation and session for PLB No. 6810, Fort Worth; Meeting w/ GC Koonce and KCS (MidSouth, Southrail and Gateway Wester), Memphis, Tenn.; Travel to Albany, N.Y.; Research, correspondence and general office duties.
Vice-President Stephen D. Speagle—Assigned to Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Montana Rail Link, Pacific Harbor Line; M&NA; Meetings regarding BNSF Interdivision service, Fort Worth; Safety Summit II, BNSF; Las Vegas; Pacific Harbor Line meetings, mediation, Long Beach; Attend Division 155 mtg., NS.
Vice-President E.L. "Lee" Pruitt — Assisted general chairmen & members of: UP-Western Lines; UP-Western Region; UP-Central Region; UP-Southern Region; UP-Tacoma Belt; General office duties, telephone paperwork; Arbitration Board 6729, 6730, 6731, 6732, Las Vegas; Assisting GC Donnigan, GCofA mtgs., West Yellowstone, UPWR GCofA; Assisting General Chairman Gore, New Orleans, UPSR GCofA; Trip Rate mtgs., Dallas/Fort Worth, UPSR GCofA.
Vice-President Paul L. Wingo Jr. — Assigned to NS-Southern Lines and Eastern Region GCofAs; Iowa, Chicago & Eastern GCofA; Meridian Southern; New York Susquehanna & Western; New England Central; BLET Rail Security Officer; Division 210 special issue, Macon, Ga.; Graniteville, S.C., train wreck/fatality issues, NS; NYS&W contract negotiations, Binghamton, N.Y.; Division 165 special issue; Public Law Board, Norfolk, Va.; NECR negotiations, St. Albans, Vt.

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LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND TRAINMEN NEWS
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen
A Division of the Rail Conference, International Brotherhood of Teamsters

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