In major asbestos ruling, BLE stops carrier attempts to undercut worker protection laws

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers played a key role in protecting the Federal Employers Liability Act — and the rights of all railroad workers — in a landmark Supreme Court decision issued on March 10.

Most media attention focused on the Supreme Court’s ruling that some railroad workers who were exposed to cancer-causing asbestos can win money damages in court even though they do not yet have cancer and may never get it.

The BLE, however, focused its legal eyes on other portions of the railroad’s lawsuit, which attempted to undermine and critically weaken FELA.

While the Respondent and other amici briefs focused largely upon issues regarding asbestosis and fear of cancer, the briefing offered by the BLE was unique in emphasizing that the position advocated by the railroad industry would critically undermine, and at times entirely negate and destroy, important rights and protections afforded to injured railroad workers by Congress under FELA.

The BLE’s briefing made clear that the railroad industry was attempting to weaken FELA in fundamental respects, seeking to accomplish through a judicial decision that which it had been unable to accomplish legislatively over the decades.

The Court was clearly aware that the railroad industry was seeking to undermine and weaken FELA, and refused to let it do so.

Although the decision was divided regarding asbestosis, the justices were unanimous in rejecting the railroad’s attempt to eliminate portions of FELA. The justices held that if a railroad’s negligence plays any part in a worker’s receipt of injury, the worker may recover all damages sustained from the railroad, and need not seek compensation from potentially liable third parties. The court held that the burden should remain upon the railroad to seek reimbursement from any potentially negligent third party, and refused to shift this burden to the worker.

In reaching its decision, the Court made clear that it gave credence to the BLE’s argument and declined to weaken or revisit FELA in the manner urged by the railroad industry.

“This decision constitutes a landmark victory for injured railroad workers under FELA, largely because of the BLE’s willingness to address issues others had ignored,” said BLE International President Don Hahs. “We made an important stand on behalf of injured railroad workers and our Amicus Brief played an important role in the Supreme Court’s decision.”

The ruling was a blow to Norfolk Southern and to big business generally. The railroad and its backers had hoped the conservative-leaning high court would use the case to curb the burgeoning asbestos-related lawsuits in state and federal courts.

Big companies are asking Congress for protection from an estimated $200 billion in asbestos liabilities. There are more than 600,000 asbestos-related lawsuits before courts today and it is expected that many more will be filed.

The BLE’s position was presented by Bill Jungbauer of Vaeger, Jungbauer, Bareczak & Varcinewich.

The BLE filed an Amicus Brief in the case, Norfolk & Western Railway versus Ayers, 01-963.
BLE NEWS

Evansville, Ind., says no to remotes

The Evansville, Ind., City Council unanimously passed a resolution opposing remote control locomotives on April 7, becoming the 15th U.S. city to take action against unmanned trains.

The resolution states that, “The members of the Evansville City Council are concerned about the public safety of the citizens of Evansville, and...the use of remote control locomotives is known to present significant dangers to persons and property from the possibility of collisions, derailments, and the release of hazardous materials.” The City Council also unanimously agreed that the Federal Railroad Administration should conduct a comprehensive and thorough review of the safety of remote control locomotives, and that it should develop comprehensive regulations (not “guidelines”) to ensure that citizens are not at risk by their use. The resolution also formally requests that remote control operations not be implemented or used in Evansville until the FRA develops more comprehensive guidelines to ensure public safety.

President Hahs issued the following statement of support for troops in Iraq and other places around the world: “I am very proud of each and every service man and woman who have served our country and our way of life. They have my full support and best wishes for a speedy return to their homes and loved ones.”

BLE International President Don M. Hahs issued the following statement concerning the war in Iraq:

As of April 17, 16 cities and seven counties pass anti-remote control resolutions

The Village of Dupo, Ill., became the 16th U.S. city to approve a resolution prohibiting the use of remote control locomotives.

Sixteen cities and seven counties have now adopted resolutions that call for improved safety of remote control operations.

The resolution, passed on April 7, urges the Federal Railroad Administration to develop comprehensive regulations governing the use of remote control locomotives.

Members of the group Railroad Engineers for Safety/Quality (RRESQ) worked for the passage of the resolution along with members of the BLE. BLE Illinois State Legislative Board Chairman C.E. Way attended the meetings in support of the resolution.

Dupo Mayor Ron Dell said use of remote control locomotives is “known to present significant danger to persons and property with respect to collision, derailment and possible release of hazardous material.” He added that the risk is especially worrisome in the face of a federal government safety alert related to terrorist and vandalism threats against railroads.

“The idea is to make sure local people are not at risk,” said RRESQ representative Bill Ellert and Rich Nieman, co-sponsors of the resolution.

Also, the Eastern Union Meeting of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers said that Division 742 of the AFL-CIO winter meeting in Florida was joined at that meeting by BLE Division 3 (Cleveland) Legislative Representative Bill Ellert and Rich Nieman of BLE Division 3, who are both delegates to the Labor Council of the AFL-CIO. At the meeting, they met with Mayor Santo T. Incorvaia.

Chairman Ong would like to thank Brothers Ellert and Nieman for their hard work. He would also like to thank Mayor Incoava and Councilman Taylor and the other co-sponsors of the resolution.

BLE scholarship info available on website

Members planning to apply for financial assistance through the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers’ regional meetings can find application forms at www.ble.org.

The Southwestern Convention Meeting (SWCM) has an interactive PDF application form available, meaning applicants may type their information directly on the computer screen before printing it out. It is available at: http://www.ble.org/pdf/swcmapp.pdf

Also, the Eastern Union Meeting Association’s scholarship application form is available at: http://www.ble.org/pr/pdf/evansville.pdf
BLE honors 30-year employee Linda Thomson upon retirement

BLE International President Don M. Hahs and the officers and staff of the International Division honored staff member Linda Thomson, who retired on March 26 after 30 years of service to the Brotherhood. She has worked in various capacities with the BLE, including Director of Personnel and her current position in the Tax Compliance Department. For many years, Thomson has been in charge of the division elections and health and welfare benefits. She began her career at the BLE in July 1973. During her retirement, she plans to visit her two sons and their families in Arizona and Texas. She also enjoys working outdoors and playing golf. While she is looking forward to retirement, she says that it will be an adjustment.

“Linda will be missed by the officers and staff of the International Division, and by all of the members whom she has come into contact with over the years,” President Hahs said. She was presented with a commemorative clock by President Hahs and was given a plaque and a clock by Director of Compliance Dr. Elaine Reese.

S-T workshop approved for college credits

The BLE’s Secretary-Treasurer Training class was recently accredited for college credits at the George Meany Center-National Labor College (GMC-NLC). The S-T Training class is the second class offered by the BLE Education & Training Department to win approval for college credits under the National Labor College. The Local Chairman’s workshop has been accredited since the late 1990s.

In January, Education & Training Coordinator Ken Kroeger applied to the GMC for accreditation for the Secretary-Treasurer Training class, which was first offered by the BLE in January 1998. In March, the GMC accredited the course for two college credits. The four-day course is titled “Union Financial Class No. LBR9985.”

The BLE’s Local Chairman’s workshop, a five-day intensive workshop, is accredited for four college credits. The George Meany Center titled the workshop “Intro to Union Administration (BLE),” Class No. LBUA2919. The BLE Education & Training Department offers the course at least three times a year at the GMC-NLC, and also at other venues around the country on an as-needed basis.

In order to receive college credits for these courses, students are required to pay an additional $90 for the Local Chairman’s Class, and $60 for the S-T workshop.

In addition to the Local Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer classes, BLE members may also take a four-day Hazardous Materials workshop for college credit. The hazmat class, worth three college credits, is titled “Four-day Hazardous Waste/Chemical Emergency Response Training,” Class No. LBSH3400.

For working union members wishing to pursue a Bachelor of Arts degree in Labor Studies, the GMC-NLC offers a complete degree program, which is open to all members of AFL-CIO-affiliated unions. The program is designed for those who cannot be served by traditional educational institutions and conventional educational mechanisms.

“This is a great opportunity for BLE members to continue their education,” BLE President Don Hahs said. For further information or to register for an upcoming class, please contact Ken Kroeger at (216) 272-0986 or Kroeger@ble.org.
Military service and Railroad Retirement

Many railroad employees have at some time served in the Armed Forces of the United States. Under certain conditions, their military service may be credited as railroad service under the Railroad Retirement Act. The following questions and answers provide information on how military service may be credited towards railroad retirement benefits.

1. Under what conditions can military service be credited as railroad service?

The intent behind the crediting of military service under the Railroad Retirement Act is to prevent railroad employees from losing retirement credits while performing active duty military service during a war or national emergency period. Therefore, to be creditable as railroad service under the Railroad Retirement Act, active duty service the employee was required to perform active duty military service.

Only active duty military service is creditable under the Railroad Retirement Act. A person is considered to be in active military service when the United States was at war or in a state of national emergency or has served in the Armed Forces in voluntarily. Military service is involuntary when an employee is required by law, such as Selective Service System conscription, or to troop call-up from a reserve unit, to leave railroad service to perform active duty military service.

Active duty service in a State National Guard or State Air National Guard unit may be creditable only while the reservist is called to Federal active duty by the Congress or the President of the United States. Emergency call-up of the National Guard by a governor for riot or flood control would not be creditable.

2. What would be some examples of creditable service by a member of a reserve component, such as the Army Reserve?

Any military service a reservist was required to perform as a result of a call-up to active duty, such as during the current partial mobilization, would be creditable under the Railroad Retirement Act, so long as the military service was preceded by railroad service in the same or preceding year.

Annual training duty as a member of a reserve component of a uniformed service is also considered active duty and may be creditable, provided the employee service requirement is met. The period of active duty for training also includes authorized travel time to and from any such training duty. However, weekend or evening reserve duty is not creditable.

3. What are the dates of the war or national emergency periods?

The creditable periods that affect current retirements are:
- September 8, 1938, through June 14, 1945.
- August 2, 1990, to date as yet undetermined.

Military service began during a war or national emergency period, any active duty service the employee was required to perform before the end of the war or national emergency is creditable, except that voluntary service extending beyond September 14, 1978, is not creditable.

Railroad workers who voluntarily served in the Armed Forces during June 15, 1943, and December 15, 1950, when there was no declared national state of emergency, can be given railroad retirement credit for their military service if they:
- performed railroad service in the year they entered or the year before they entered military service, and,
- returned to rail service in the year their military service ended or in the following year, and,
- had no intervening nonrailroad employment.

4. How can military service be used to increase benefits paid by the Railroad Retirement Board?

Railroad retirement annuities are based on length of service and earnings. If military service is creditable as railroad service, a person will receive additional earnings credits for each month of creditable military service and railroad service credit for each active military service month not already credited by actual railroad service.

Creditable military service may be used in addition to regular railroad service to meet certain service requirements, such as the basic 10-year or 5-year service requirements for a regular retirement. The 20-year requirement for an occupational disability annuity begins a supplemental annuity, or the 30-year requirement for early retirement benefits.

5. Can United States Merchant Marine service be creditable for railroad retirement purposes?

No. Service with the Merchant Marine or civilian employment with the Department of Defense is not creditable, even if performed in wartime.

6. Are railroad retirement annuities based in part on military service credit reduced if other benefits, such as military service pensions or payments from the Department of Veterans Affairs, are also payable on the same military service?

No. While railroad retirement employees are subject to reductions for dual entitlement to social security benefits and, under certain conditions, Federal, State, or local government pensions, as well as certain other payments, railroad retirement employee annuities are always exempt from reduction for military service pensions or payments by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

7. Are the unemployment and sickness benefits payable by the Railroad Retirement Board affected if an employee is also receiving a military service pension?

Yes. The unemployment and sickness benefits payable by the Board are affected if a claimant is also receiving a military service pension. However, the payments made by the Department of Veterans Affairs will not affect railroad unemployment or sickness benefits.

When a claimant is receiving a military service pension or benefits under any social insurance law for days in which he or she is entitled to benefits under the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act, railroad unemployment or sickness benefits are payable only to the extent to which they exceed the other payments for those days. In many cases, the amount of a military service pension precludes the payment of unemployment or sickness benefits by the Board. Examples of other social insurance payments are civil service pensions, firefighters’ and police pensions, and workers’ compensation payments. Claimants should report all such payments promptly to avoid having to refund benefits later.

8. Can proof of military service be filed in advance of retirement?

Yes. The unemployment and sickness benefits of railroad employees are encourage to file proofs of their military service well in advance of retirement. The information will be recorded and stored electronically until the employee actually retires. This will expedite the annuity application process and avoid any delays resulting from inadequate proofs.

9. How can an employee get more information about the crediting of military service by the Railroad Retirement Board?

For more information, an employee 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.

Employees 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) 908-0772. They can also get this information from the Board’s Web site at www.rrb.gov.

Upcoming Railroad Retirement Board informational conferences

The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board will offer free informational conferences for elected BLE officers during 2003. Registration for all conferences begins at 8 a.m. The program will begin promptly at 8:30 a.m. and end at 12:30 p.m.

April 25 • Baldwin Park, Calif.
- San Gabriel Valley Hotel
1465 Baldwin Park Towne Center

April 25 • Newark, N.J.
- Hilton Gateway Gateway Ctr., Ray Blvd., May 9 • Kansas City, Mo.
- Embassy Suites
7640 N.W. Tiffany Springs Parkway

May 9 • Little Rock, Ark.
- Holiday Inn Airport, Command-Aire Meeting Room
3201 Bankhead Drive

May 9 • Golden, Colo.
- Holiday Inn-Denver West Village
14767 East Colfax Ave.

May 16 • Atlanta, Ga.
- Holiday Inn Select-Capital Plaza, 450 Capitol Ave.

May 16 • Independence, Ohio
- Holiday Inn, Cleveland South/Independence
6001 Rockside Road (I-77 & Rockside)

May 16 • Eagan, Minn.
- Yankee Square Inn, 3450 Washington Drive

June 13 • Ashland, Neb.
- Eugene T Mahoney State Park, Nebraska Room
2500 W. Park Highway

September 12 • Fort Worth, Texas
- Holiday Inn-South, 100 East Alta Mesa Blvd.

November 7 • New Orleans, La.
- Holiday Inn Metairie
3401 Industrial Dr.

Eugene T. Mahoney State Park, Nebraska Room
The Unicoi County Commission in Tennessee unanimously passed a resolution on March 24 against the use of remote control locomotives, becoming the fourth county to do so in the United States. In part, it reads: “Whereas, this legislative body is aware that there are significant safety problems relating to the movement of railroad cars through remote control devices; “Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Unicoi County Legislative Body that it supports any and all municipal, state or federal legislation to prohibit the use of remote control devices for movement of rail cars within Unicoi County.” In addition to four U.S. counties, 11 cities have adopted resolutions that curtail remote control operations. Some of the resolutions call for a ban of remote control. All of the resolutions ask the Federal Railroad Administration to step up and make remote control operations safer.

Unicoi County Executive Larry Rose said The Erwin Record newspaper, “I have gotten several, several requests from people at the railroad, not just engineers, who question the safety of the remote controls.” Officials from CSX, which operates through Unicoi County and the city of Erwin, Tenn., gave county and city leaders demonstrations of the remote control technology. The city officials, however, did not like the show. “I went to the demonstration and I worked for the railroad for about nine years,” Commissioner Kenneth Garland told the Johnson City Press newspaper. “With everything that is going on in the world and the tracks running by a nuclear facility, I just don’t think it’s safe.”

Board Member Edgar Rice also watched a demonstration and told the newspaper he was not satisfied with what he saw. BLET Division 781 Legislative Representative John Little spent nearly three months lobbying local officials in support of the resolution. He thanked Unicoi County Executive Larry Rose, who presented the resolution to the Board. Brother Little noted that the city of Erwin, Tenn., is currently considering a similar resolution of its own.

Brother Little thanked the following people in assisting to obtain the Resolution: the members of BLET Division 781, their family members and friends; the community of Erwin, Tenn.; BLET Division 781 Local Chairman Matt Thornton; Division 781 President Steve Fieic; Division 781 Secretary Rasmick; Division 781 Retired Member David Wilson; Co-Committee Remote Chairmen Brothers Meehan and Wilcos; Tennessee State Legislative Board Chairman Jimmy Brittain; TSNB Secretary-Treasurer John Norman; and Louisiana State Legislative Board Chairman, Mike O’Brien.

“Brother John Norman’s support was invaluable,” Brother Little said. “Our association with the AFL-CIO, CLC also brought support and resources that we look forward to in the future.”

“This was a great experience although exhausting,” he continued. “I am truly overwhelmed by the response of 5,000-plus letters faxed to the County alone. This shows that people, resources and good fortune can bring about results.”

(The Johnson City Press and The Erwin Record contributed to this report.)

Tennessee county opposes remote control

The city of Belen, N.M., is the 13th U.S. city to take action against remote control locomotives, adopting a resolution to ban their operation within city limits until certain safety requirements are met.

Twelve other cities and seven counties in the U.S. have adopted similar resolutions against remote control locomotives.

The resolution, which the Belen City Council passed on April 7, blocks the implementation of the remote control technology until NRSF can prove it meets safety standards set by the city. The resolution also requests that in the interest of public safety, the Federal Railroad Administration develop comprehensive regulations for the use of remote control locomotives.

“We got word that there was a possibility that the railroad will bring remote control operations here. We did check into it with different newsletters and the Internet, and right now it’s not something we are comfortable doing,” Belen Mayor Ronnie Torres told the Belen News-Bulletin.

The safety of trains that come through the city, including those carrying dangerous chemicals, Torres said, poses a concern for the public’s safety. “There are dangerous chemicals that come through here everyday,” Torres said. “I’d rather have people who are trained watching the trains until it can be proven that it is safe.”

A group of railroad employees, including members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and the United Transportation Union, provided safety information to the Belen City Council regarding remote control operations, which prompted the resolution.

The resolution states that no railroad shall operate remote control locomotives until all of the following safety conditions are met:

1. Any railroad operating a remote control locomotive must notify the Office of the Mayor before implementing such operations.
2. Remote control locomotives cannot be used to transport hazardous materials, switch cars containing hazardous materials, or switch other cars on or near tracks occupied by hazardous materials.
3. Remote control locomotives cannot be operated ever or under a public or private highway rail crossing without a person occupying the cab of the locomotive who has the required skills to stop the locomotive and its attached equipment.

A railroad must provide effective and reliable protection at the point of movement in any location accessible to the general public for any remote control operation.

A copy of the resolution is available on the BLET website at: http://www.blet.org/pr/pdf/belen.pdf

(The Valencia News-Bulletin contributed to this report.)

Belen, N.M., becomes 13th city to pass remote resolution

LOCATION OF EUMA 2003

The late Spring of 2003 will bring the 65th Annual Eastern Union Meeting Association to Baltimore, Md. For additional information, contact Arrangements Chairman Fred Cox at: (717) 244-4855 or <euma03@aol.com>

65th Annual Eastern Union Meeting Association

Baltimore, Md. • June 29-July 3, 2003
Registration Form

NATIONAL HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Hyatt Regency-Inner Harbor (800) 233-1244
(BLET Room rate is $163 per night, plus tax. Deadline for reservations is May 22)

EUMA INFORMATION

Name of Attendee: ______________________________

Address: ______________________________________
City: __________ State: ______ Zip: ________________

Phone: __________________________ E-mail: __________

BLET Division: ______________________ Office: ________

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Arrangements Chairman Fred Cox at: (717) 244-4855 or <euma03@aol.com>

Mail this form to: Fred Cox • 4295 Brush Lane • Felton, PA 17322

REGISTRATION FEE (Make Checks Payable to EUMA 2003)
$100 per person; Includes meals and activities (Cost is $55 each for children under 12)

BANQUET MEAL CHOICES, JULY 2, 2003

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For additional information, contact: Arrangements Chairman Fred Cox at: (717) 244-4855 or <euma03@aol.com>

EUMA 2003 Golf Outing

Tuesday, July 1, 2003

Greystone Golf Course

The cost is $75 per person, which includes bus transportation, luncheon at the course, EUMA golf towel and hole prizes. Shotgun start-scramble-tee off at 8 a.m. Proper golf attire only (no t-shirts, tank tops, gym or sweat pants; shorts are OK).

Name: ______________________________

Address: ______________________________________

Phone: __________________________ E-mail: __________

BLE Division: ______________________ Office: ________

Make checks or money orders payable to “EUMA 2003” and mail to: Sonny Kertesz

EUMA 2003 Golf Chairman

2 Debbie Dr.

Brick, NJ 08724

(732) 458-7642

NAME OF ATTENDEE

Address: ______________________________

City: __________ State: ______ Zip: ________________

Phone: __________________________ E-mail: __________

BLET Division: ______________________ Office: ________

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

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Two Louisiana counties oppose remote control

Two counties in Louisiana have joined the growing list of communities to adopt safety-related resolutions regarding remote control locomotives. Formally known as Parishes in Louisiana, West Baton Rouge Parish and Point Coupee Parish recently passed resolutions that call for improved safety of remote control locomotives nation-wide, six counties and municipalities have now adopted resolutions that condemn, ban or oppose current remote control operations.

The West Baton Rouge resolution “objects” to the operation of remote control locomotives within Parish boundaries. The West Baton Rouge resolution calls upon the Federal Railroad Administration to develop comprehensive safety regulations for the use of remote control locomotives.

According to Louisiana State Legislative Board Chairman Michael F. O’Brien, the Point Coupee resolution passed despite a personal presentation by Union Pacific Railroad officials. It was adopted unanimously.

Brother O’Brien also reported that the West Baton Rouge Police Jury heard the BLE’s presentation on February 12, the same day as a Kansas City Southern remote control locomotive derailed in Baton Rouge and shut down Interstate 110 for several hours. Brother O’Brien expressed special thanks to Brother Dale Guillot, Local Chairman of Division 531; Paul Lilly, Legislative Representative of Division 531; and Brother Lawrence Henagan, Legislative Representative of Division 755 in representing the Louisiana State Legislative Board.

Text of the resolutions are as follows:

RESOLUTION West Baton Rouge Parish, La.
A Resolution requesting the Federal Railroad Administration in the interest of the safety of the citizens of West Baton Rouge to develop comprehensive regulations for the use of remote control locomotives.

WHEREAS, railroads operate within the geographical boundaries of West Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana, over public and private highway crossings, and

WHEREAS, railroad equipment is known to present significant danger to persons and property from collision, derailment, and possibly release of hazardous material.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the West Baton Rouge Parish Council does hereby request in the interest of safety of the citizens of said Parish the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) develop comprehensive regulations for the use of remote control locomotives.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this resolution also be forwarded to the Louisiana Congressional Delegation for their expression of support in the development of these regulations for the use of remote control locomotives.

APPROVED 8-0, March 13, 2003

RESOLUTION Point Coupee Parish, La.
WHEREAS, it is the intention of the Union Pacific Railroad Company to use remote-controlled locomotives within their rail yard beginning in 2004; and

WHEREAS, the Point Coupee Parish Police Jury is concerned for the safety of its citizens should an accident involving toxic materials occur; and

WHEREAS, it is a substantiated fact that accidents do occur with these remote-controlled locomotives, as with the February 12, 2003 derailment in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Point Coupee Parish Police Jury does interpose objections to the operation of remote-controlled locomotives in Point Coupee Parish; and be it

RESOLVED further, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the United States Senators John Breaux and Mary Landrieu, House of Representatives Richard Baker, State Senator Robert Marlineaux, Jr., Representatives Robert Carter and Donald Cazayoux, Jr., and municipalities within our Parish for their support of this endeavor.

APPROVED February 23, 2003 •

BLE mourns loss of Rodney Stutes

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers is deeply saddened by the loss of one of its exemplary members, R.J. “Rodney” Stutes. Brother Stutes, 56, passed away on February 22 after suffering a massive heart attack the previous week.

A member of Division 306 (Houston, Texas) since 1972, Brother Stutes was a primary member of the BLE’s Safety Task Force (STF) and a member of the Brotherhood’s National Mobilization Team.

BLE International President Don M. Haws expressed the deep sadness felt by all who knew Brother Stutes.

“Rodney was a remarkable member,” said Haws. “He served this organization with an extraordinary amount of dedication. He was best known for his activities with the Safety Task Force and the Mobilization Team, but he was always willing to lend a hand to any of the BLE’s activities. His contributions to this organization have been myriad and he will be sorely missed. "Our deepest condolences go to his family and friends. I ask all members to continue to keep his family in their prayers."
IWC Chairman Jeffrey Valentine and members of BLE Division 158 will host the 2003 IWC at John Ascuaga’s Nugget, Northern Nevada’s premiere Hotel Resort & Casino. This luxurious property has all the amenities, including eight restaurants, indoor pool, full service spa and nightly entertainment. The has secured a room rate of $89 per night, which is valid from Friday, May 30 through Saturday, June 7. For reservations, please call (800) 648-1177 and mention IWC ’03 or BLE to receive the special room rate. Reservations should be made by May 1 in order to ensure availability.

The annual golf tournament will be held on June 2 at Wildcreek Golf Club, a short distance from the Nugget. For the non-golfers, there will be a short bus trip to historic Virginia City, Nevada — location of the great silver boom of the 19th century — on June 2. Travelers will enjoy shopping and sightseeing at the bustling “ghost town.”

A sunset dinner on June 3 — aboard the M.S. Dixie on Lake Tahoe — promises to be the social highlight of the convention. Wild Island theme park; and Nevada State Railroad Museum in Carson City and the Portola Railroad Museum (both are less than one hour away). Travel to Sparks is easily made on I-80 by automobile; on Amtrak’s California Zephyr by train (Sparks depot is walking distance from the Nugget); and by most major airlines to Reno/ Tahoe International Airport. Transportation to and from the airport is included when room reservations are made. Rental cars are available, but are not a necessity. The Nugget also has RV parking (no hook-ups) available to guests at no charge.

Air and Travel arrangements can be secured by contacting Rebeccah Schalla at Travel Services of Nevada (775) 629-0568 Or e-mail: Rebecca@travelservicesofnevada.com. For more details about the 2003 IWC, members may contact chairman J.L. Valentine at: (775) 857-2013 or jval@accutek.com.

2003 IWC — Sparks
Tentative Itinerary

Sunday, June 1, 2003 (Arrival Day)
• Registration 7-7 p.m.

Monday, June 2
• Registration, 7 a.m.-11 a.m. (865)
• Golf Tournament, 8 a.m. (870)
• Virginia City Tour, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. (819)
• Registration, 3 p.m.-6 p.m.
• FELA reception, 5 p.m.-7 p.m.

Tuesday, June 3
• Registration, 7 a.m.-10 a.m.
• Continental Breakfast, 8 a.m. - 9 a.m.
• Opening Ceremonies, 9 a.m. - Noon
• Luncheon, Noon-1 p.m.
• BLEGIA closed mtgs., 1 p.m.-4 p.m.
• Dinner Cruise on Lake Tahoe, bus leaves at 4:30 p.m. (860)

Wednesday, June 4
• Continental Breakfast 8 a.m.-9 a.m.
• IWC delegates mtg., 9 a.m.-11 a.m.
• Continental Breakfast, 8 a.m.-9 a.m.
• Registration, 7 a.m.-10 a.m. ($65)
• Local Chairman’s Workshop, Part 1, 1 p.m.-5 p.m.
• United Health Care, 1 p.m.-4 p.m.
• Barbeque, outside at the Nugget, 6 p.m.-10 p.m. (820)

Thursday, June 5
• Continental Breakfast 8 a.m.-9 a.m.
• BLE/GIA closed mtgs., 9 a.m.-11 a.m.
• Local Chairman’s Workshop, Part 2, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
• Secretary/Treasurer’s Workshop, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
• Legislative Rep’s Workshop, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
• Convention closes

Unsched-uled attrac-ensions include: the Na-tional Au-to-mobile Museum in Reno; the Pen-derosa Ranch (Home of the “Bon-anza” television se-ries) in nea-ri-ty; In-line Village; and the Portola Railroad Museum (both are less than one hour away). Travel to Sparks is easily made on I-80 by automobile; on Amtrak’s Cali-
The city of Alliance, Neb., is the 14th city in the United States to pass a resolution restricting the operation of remote control locomotives. The resolution imposes five safety requirements on the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway before it can begin using remote control trains in Alliance. One of the requirements mandates that remote control engines handle no more than five mph at public crossings or over/under passes.

The Alliance City Council’s action is significant because all of its members work for the railroad (two locomotive engineers, two conductors and one machinist) and are highly familiar with the issue and its ramifications. The members of the Council cited safety concerns as the main reason for adopting the resolution.

Mayor Mike Dunlop, a locomotive engineer who said he would abstain if the vote were based on job security, voted in favor of the resolution based on safety issues. Dunlop and Kuek are both engineers, Councillmen Kevin Dahlstedt and Gary Goodell are conductors, and Councillman Dan Dickens is a machinist.

Dahlstedt, who also holds the title of Alliance Vice Mayor, cast the lone vote against the resolution. He is a former BNSF locomotive engineer. He drafted the resolution.

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