



# NEWS

APRIL  
2008

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

## Ed Rodzwicz new BLET President

Ed Rodzwicz is the new National President of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, effective immediately.

Former National President Don M. Hahs was removed from office on March 20 by order of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, based upon the recommendations of a hearing panel appointed under Article XIX of the IBT Constitution. Brother Hahs has appealed the decision.

The decision came about after several months of investigation by the Independent Review Board (IRB) and the Article XIX panel. The panel indicated that it was unwilling to conclude that Brother Hahs committed embezzlement; however, it determined that Hahs violated his fiduciary duties to the BLET and its members in connection with the use and control

of Cleveland Cavaliers basketball tickets purchased with union funds, travel expenses for his wife, and other personal expenses, thereby bringing reproach upon the IBT in violation of the IBT Constitution. The panel's recommendation was reissued as a decision of IBT President James P. Hoffa.

In line with the Panel's recommendations, General President Hoffa also imposed the following penalties upon National President Hahs, effective March 20: Brother Hahs is removed from his current office in the BLET and prohibited from holding any office or employment with the BLET or any affiliated benefit fund, the IBT or any IBT affiliate, until the current term of office for BLET National President has expired in 2010; Brother Hahs is suspended from membership in the BLET and IBT for one year, dur-

ing which time he shall be barred from having any knowing contact, including social contact, with officers, employees and members of the BLET and IBT and any affiliated entities; and Brother Hahs is fined in the amount of \$44,963.97. Members are cautioned against having any knowing contact with Brother Hahs during this one year period.

The decision must be approved by the IRB and the federal court.

Under BLET's Bylaws, the First Vice President assumes the duties of the National President if the latter is unable to continue holding office for any reason. As General President Hoffa's decision became effective immediately upon its receipt, BLET First Vice President Edward W. Rodzwicz assumed the duties of National President on March 20. •

## Advisory Board promotes two

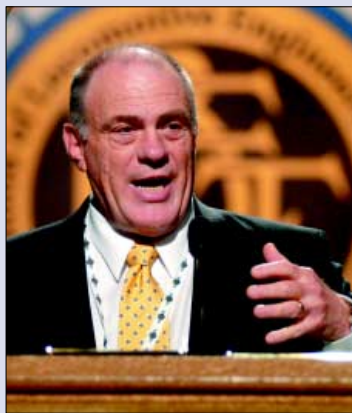
### Sorrow new First Vice President; Pierce promoted to VP

On April 8, the BLET Advisory Board unanimously voted to promote Vice President Paul T. Sorrow to the office of First Vice-President and Alternate President, the union's second-highest office.

First Vice President Sorrow takes the position vacated by National President Ed Rodzwicz, who was promoted to the BLET's top spot on March 20.

Also, Dennis R. Pierce becomes the newest BLET Vice President as he was elevated to fill the vacancy on the Advisory Board. Vice President Pierce previously served as General Chairman of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe/Montana Rail Link General Committee of Adjustment.

First Vice President Sorrow is the senior member of the BLET's Advisory Board. He was first elected to the office of Vice President in 1991 at the Fourth Quinquennial Convention and then reelected in 1996 at the Fifth Quinquennial Convention. He was then re-elected by acclamation twice, first at the Sixth



Paul Sorrow

Quinquennial Convention in 2001 and again at the First Quadrennial Convention in June of 2006.

"Paul's experience and knowledge are tremendous assets to the Brotherhood and our members," National President Rodzwicz said.

Prior to his first election in 1991 to vice-president, Sorrow served as General Chairman on the CSX Transportation (CSXT) Eastern Lines, elected September 1985, and reelected in 1989.

He began his professional railroad career in 1965, with the Seaboard Air Line. One year to the day after he went firing for the railroad, he earned his promotion to locomotive engineer in 1966. He



Dennis Pierce

joined the Brotherhood in 1972, and served as local chairman of his division in Abbeville, S.C., from 1979-83. In 1983, he was elected to the office of Vice-Chairman for the CSX Transportation's Eastern Lines General Committee of Adjustment, and served through August of 1985. He also served as Chief of Staff at BLET National Division headquarters for several years during the mid 1990s.

As Vice President, Sorrow he has helped to negotiate several ground-breaking labor agreements at Norfolk Southern, CSX and Grand Trunk Western. His

See Advisory Board, Page 2

## BLET backs Obama

### Advisory Board endorses Illinois Senator's bid for U.S. President

The BLET's Advisory Board voted on April 9 to endorse Senator Barack Obama for President of the United States.

The endorsement decision comes after a meeting of the BLET's top governing body. The Advisory Board determined that Senator Obama presented the best chance for working Americans to have a voice in the White House.

"We believe Senator Obama is the best candidate to fight for the rights of the 55,000 men and women of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen," BLET National President Ed Rodzwicz said.

"The next U.S. President will make several decisions and appointments that will have an impact on the rail industry. We believe Senator Obama will fight to make the right decisions when it comes to the health and safety of all rail workers."

The BLET endorsement comes on the heels the International Brotherhood of Teamsters' decision to endorse Senator Obama. Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa said the Teamsters endorsed

**As President, Obama would help working Americans.**

— See special message from Jim Hoffa on Page 8

Senator Obama for various reasons, including his plans to rebuild America's transportation infrastructure.

"Senator Obama will fight to rebuild our transportation infrastructure," Hoffa said. "He will work with us to address critical issues from our ports to our highways, rails and airports. We need a president who is focused on rebuilding America and Barack Obama will be that president."

The decision to endorse Senator Obama was not taken lightly by BLET leadership. President Rodzwicz said that Senator Obama is only the fourth Presidential candidate the BLET has endorsed in its 145-year history. Founded on May 8, 1863, the Brotherhood's first Presidential endorsement was Bill Clinton in 1992, followed by Al Gore in 2000 and John Kerry in 2004. •



# BLET NEWS

## BLET gets \$1.3 million award at LIRR

### Court settles 7,500 outstanding claims from 1998-2004

A United States District Judge sided with the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen on March 24 in a case that awards approximately \$1.3 million in back payments to union members who work at the Long Island Rail Road.

The Order, entered by U.S. District Judge Dora L. Irizarry of the Eastern District of New York, enforces the 2006 decision of Public Law Board 6846, which settled approximately 7,500 outstanding claims from BLET members totaling \$1.3 million.

Article 28 of the BLET's collective bargaining agreement with LIRR describes the procedure by which LIRR employees may submit claims for compensation. According to Article 28(c), once an employee submits a claim for compensation, if the LIRR does not notify the employee and the General Chairman of the union of its denial of the claim, in writing, within 30 calendar days from the date the claims were presented, then "the claim shall be allowed."

Between 1998 and 2004, LIRR engineers filed numerous claims in accordance with the procedures set forth in Article 29 of the agreement. In many instances, the LIRR did not notify the employees or the General Chairmen in writing, within the 30 day time limit, that the claims were denied. Accordingly, pursuant to Article 28(c) of the agreement, the union demanded that those claims be allowed.

On August 18, 2006, Public Law Board 6846 issued a final award in favor of the union. The Award

settled approximately 7,500 claims totaling approximately \$1.3 million. However, LIRR paid only a portion of the claims, arguing that certain categories of claims were not covered by the Award. The BLET then pursued the matter in District Court.

In court, LIRR argued that the PLB 6846 Award was ambiguous regarding the BLET's claims.

U.S. District Judge Irizarry found that there was no question that the union was claiming approximately \$1.3 million for over 7,500 claims in the PLB proceeding, and that there was no ambiguity over the claims the railroad must pay.

"LIRR's elaborate argument... merely attempts to obfuscate the simple principles that are applicable here," Judge Irizarry's Order read.

LIRR also argued that there was a conflict between the Award of PLB 6846 and other PLB decisions. However, the Judge ruled that LIRR was foreclosed from arguing that prior awards are contrary and binding because it failed to raise that argument before the original PLB.

"The insuperable problem here is that the LIRR could have raised this argument before PLB 6846 but, for some inexplicable reason, failed to do so," Judge Irizarry ordered.

The court also awarded the BLET its attorneys' fees, and union attorneys will also seek to obtain interest from the date of the original the \$1.3 million award. •



Front: Melanie Kern. Second row: Rich MacDonald and John Hardecker. Third row: Jim Brown, Scott Decker, Rich Martorano and Pete Peterson. Back row: John Bove, Andrew Cummings, Mickey Quinn, Jim Scheidet and Bob Olsen.

## M&NA shortline workers ratify new contract

Members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen have ratified their second collective bargaining agreement with the Missouri & Northern Arkansas Railroad, a RailAmerica regional railroad headquartered in Carthage, Mo. Approximately 71 percent of the members returned ballots with a wide majority (74 percent) in favor of the proposed settlement.

The four-year agreement was ratified on March 15 and became effective on March 30. The agreement covers approximately 90 members and provides a general wage increase package of 10 percent over the life of the agreement. In addition, members are now eligible for the RailAmerica Incentive Compensation Plan (ICP), which provides for the possibility of another 6 percent of the employees' gross wages (calculated and paid quarterly).

The wage package is retroactive to

January 1, 2006, and back pay will be calculated on all wages throughout this period. Also, the members will be eligible for the ICP for the first quarter of 2008.

Several work rules were added or enhanced as part of the new contract, such as a newly structured training program for all employees. There is also a new guaranteed 9x3 work/rest cycle provision, which guarantees three days of rest after nine days of work. The provision provides for a much needed fatigue countermeasure for those working an extra board.

"Although it took us a while to get (and keep) the right players at the table, it seems to be worth the wait," said BLET General Chairman Rick Gibbons. "There were several major obstacles that kept us from advancing the plot over the past two years, such as the sale of RailAmerica to the Fortress Group and the revolving door for General Managers, but we finalized the deal

as shown by the overwhelming return of ballots and the vast majority in favor of the agreement."

Gibbons also thanked the two involved Local Chairmen, Keith Knight of BLET Division 116 and Rick Oeltjen of BLET Division 178 for their continued involvement. He also thanked GCA Vice Chairman Randy Dumey and Vice President Steve Speagle for helping define the bargaining group and for bringing additional expertise and knowledge to the bargaining table.

"I couldn't be more proud of a group of guys in this difficult time for negotiations," Brother Gibbons said. "It was a collective effort and we are very proud of the outcome."

The employees on the Missouri & Northern Arkansas Railroad were first organized in 1999 and their first BLET negotiated agreement went into effect in April of 2000. The MNA is one of several BLET represented properties under the RailAmerica umbrella.

MNA operates approximately 540 miles of line in Arkansas, Kansas, and Missouri. Its main line extends 384.1 miles (plus 40 miles of trackage rights on Union Pacific Railroad lines) from Kansas City, Mo., to Newport, Ark. MNA interchanges with Union Pacific at both points. MNA also interchanges with BNSF Railway at Lamar, Mo., Carthage, Aurora, Springfield, and Joplin, Mo., and with Kansas City Southern Railway at Joplin.

MNA also operates several miles of industrial trackage in the city of Springfield; this segment is disconnected from the rest of the MNA system and traffic is hauled via BNSF to and from the Aurora interchange.

MNA traffic generally consists of coal, grain, frozen foods, minerals, steel, chemicals, asphalt, and forest products. MNA operates unit coal trains to major power plants at Independence, Ark. and Montrose, Mo. •

## Advisory Board

Continued from Page 1

agreements have contained innovative provisions such as bonuses for locomotive engineers tied to the railroad's financial performance and scope rules that protect the craft of locomotive engineer in the face of evolving technology.

"Service to this fine Brotherhood has been a cornerstone of my livelihood for the past three decades," First Vice President Sorrow said. "I am proud to serve the BLET and its members as First Vice President."

Vice President Pierce was elected to the office of First Alternate International Vice President in June of 2006 at the BLET's First Quadrennial Convention in Las Vegas. He comes from the largest BLET General Committees of Adjustment — the BNSF/MRL General Committee represents 3,500 members from 44 separate BLET divisions.

Pierce, 49, is a member of BLET Division 687 (Sioux City, Iowa) and has been a BLET member since April 1, 1981. He was elected as a Local Chairman in 1991 and was first elected as a full time Vice General Chairman on the BNSF/MRL General Committee in 1995, elevating to General Chairman in 2001.

"It is a distinct honor and privilege to serve as

Vice President of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen," Pierce said.

The Advisory Board will continue its meetings today at BLET National Division headquarters in Cleveland.

"I extend congratulations to First Vice President Sorrow and Vice President Pierce on their new positions with the BLET," National President Rodzwicz said. "I know the members will benefit greatly from their experience and expertise. Our new Advisory Board is one of the most experienced, talented and dedicated in the history of the Brotherhood, and I look forward to working together as we tackle the many current and future challenges." •



# Feds propose overhauling tank car safety standards

The BLET is supporting portions of a proposed new rule that would increase the strength of tank cars and significantly improve rail safety, BLET National President Ed Rodzwicz said today.

On April 1, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) published the proposed new rule in the Federal Register. PHMSA is the federal agency responsible for regulation of pipeline and hazmat transportation, and FRA oversees safety in the railroad industry.

President Rodzwicz said the Brotherhood supports aspects of the rule regarding the increased strength of tank cars. He said the BLET also supports proposed operational restrictions on older tank cars that do not meet the new standards.

The BLET has a vested interest in improving tank car safety as a means of protecting the health and safety of its membership. Two BLET members were killed in the line of duty in accidents in 2004 and 2005. In both cases, the deaths were not caused by injuries sustained in derailments — rather, the fatalities were caused by the inhalation of toxic fumes.

In 2004 — the most recent year for which data is available — out of approximately 1.7 million hazmat shipments by rail, there were 29 accidents in which a hazmat was released. In these accidents, a total of 47 hazmat cars released some amount of product, meaning that the risk of a release was less than 0.003 percent. However, releases involving certain types of hazmat, particularly those that are poisonous- or toxic-by-inhalation (PIH or TIH) have had disastrous consequences.

Several recent accidents led Congress to direct the FRA to study the dynamic forces on tank cars under accident conditions and initiate a rulemaking to develop and implement appropriate design standards for pressurized tank cars. In addition to completing the study, FRA held several public meetings in 2006 and 2007, at which the BLET and other stakeholders proposed ways to reduce the risks posed by PIH/TIH shipments.

The Proposed Rule would:



The federal government is proposing new rules to strengthen rail tank cars such as this one to make them less likely to release their hazardous materials in the event of a derailment.

- Establish a performance standard for tank-head and shell puncture-resistance systems for cars used to transport PIH/TIH;
- Require expedited replacement of pre-1989 tank cars used to transport PIH/TIH;
- Limit speeds for PIH/TIH movements in dark territory to 30 mph unless (1) shipped in cars meeting the enhanced performance standard, or (2) FRA has approved a risk assessment and risk mitigation strategy establishing that operating conditions provide at least an equivalent level of safety as that provided by signaled track; and
- Limit speeds for all other PIH/TIH shipments to 50 mph.

A 2002 derailment in Minot, N.D., led to an anhydrous ammonia release that killed one and injured 333 others, 11 seriously. Damages and environmental clean-up and other costs have exceeded \$11 million to date.

A 2004 collision in Macdona, Texas, that led to a chlorine leak claimed the lives of three — including BLET member Heath Pape, whose death was caused by inhaling toxic fumes — and seriously injured 30 others. The price tag for this accident topped \$6.5 million.

The most tragic of these accidents is the 2005

collision and chlorine leak in Graniteville, S.C., which killed BLET member Chris Seeling and eight others. Another 554 people were injured, 75 of whom were hospitalized. Brother Seeling was relatively uninjured in the crash, but was overcome by toxic fumes, which caused his death. If this accident had occurred in the middle of the day, instead of the middle of the night, the number of casualties most likely would have been significantly higher. Monetary damages and costs are well over \$300 million, and vital public services were interrupted for days in the aftermath of the accident.

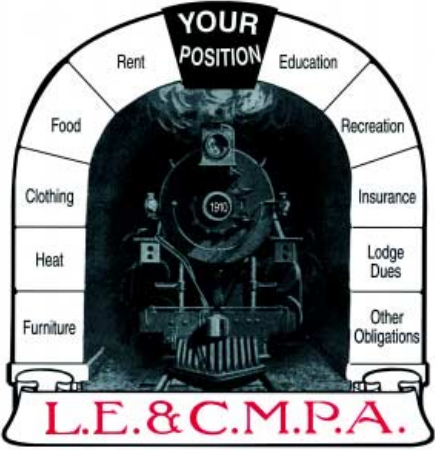
President Rodzwicz applauded FRA's efforts in improving tank car safety, and said the BLET will continue to work with the FRA to do more to protect rail workers.

"This Proposed Rule represents a significant step in preventing accidents such as those in Minot, Macdona, and Graniteville," Rodzwicz said. "We also congratulate FRA for recognizing that a stronger tank car is only one piece of the puzzle, and we will continue to work with FRA to improve safety in other areas, such as the implementation of switch point detection technology in dark territory."

The comment period for the Proposed Rule runs until June 2, and the BLET will file a formal response, President Rodzwicz said. •

## Locomotive Engineers & Conductors Mutual Protective Association

535 Griswold • Suite 1210 • Detroit, MI 48226-3689  
(800) 514-0010 • (313) 962-1512  
FAX: (877) 633-1910 • E-MAIL: [lecempa1910@lecempa.org](mailto:lecempa1910@lecempa.org) •  
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## JOB BANK

# BLET National Division

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen is taking applications to fill a position on the Executive Staff at its National Division headquarters in Cleveland, Ohio.

The successful candidate will work full time at the BLET's Cleveland-based headquarters at the discretion of the National President. Primary duties will include handling issues related to the protective department. Extensive experience in contract negotiations, contract enforcement and contract interpretation is required. Candidate will also be required to perform financial and statistical analysis for bargaining and assist the National Wage/Rule Committee. Candidate would perform other duties as assigned. A college degree is preferred.

Salary is commensurate with education and experience.

Application letters should include a brief biographical description (including a work experience summary) and writing samples (such as a negotiated contract, interpretation letter, etc...).

Interested parties should send their resume to:

**Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen**  
**William C. Walpert, National Secretary-Treasurer**  
**1370 Ontario St., Mezzanine**  
**Cleveland, OH 44113-1702**

# BLET Job Bank: Amtrak

Amtrak is hiring locomotive engineers to work in: Chicago, Ill.; Indianapolis, Ind.; Milwaukee, Wisc.; St Louis, Mo.; Toledo, Ohio; and Little Rock, Ark. Duties include: safe operation of locomotives and compliance with train orders,

wayside signals, railroad operating rules, special instructions, federal, state and local regulations to transport passengers and equipment safely and efficiently, etc...

Applicants must: have a

high school diploma or GED; a current Class I engineer certificate; have operated an engine within past 12 months; must pass the Hogan Personality Inventory; and must be able to report to their crew base within a two-hour call period.

The starting rate for salaries is \$21.20 to \$28.26 per hour. The rate depends on how much service you have as an engineer (five years is the full rate). Fax your resume to (312) 880 5174 (Attn: K. Osbourne ENG – Location desired), or

mail resume to: **Amtrak Human Resources, 525 W. Van Buren, Chicago IL 60607**. If candidates have previously tested for Amtrak as an Engineer, please indicate so on resume. •

BLET NEWS

Open enrollment, new benefit plans for ‘08

In mid-March, UnitedHealthcare announced that for the upcoming open enrollment for 2008, three new benefit plans are available under GA-23111. These new benefit plans, called Plans A, B and C, provide new options with different costs and plan designs allowing individuals to select the plan best suited for their needs. These changes should be of particular interest to former railroad employees and their eligible dependents who are not yet eligible for Medicare.

Special Enrollment Period — April and May 2008

Due to the addition of these three new plans, a special two month open enrollment period is being offered for this year only. The open enrollment period will begin April 1st and run through May 31st with the coverage you select effective June 1, 2008. After this 2008 enrollment period, the next open enrollment will be May 2010. (Note that this 2008 expanded enrollment period also applies to other Plans under GA-23111 such as Plan E and Plan F.)

Plan Design of Plans A, B, and C

Some of the services provided by these new plans are outlined below. Please review the accompanying chart for more details.

- Physician office visits and certain medical services
- Discount savings program - Rx & other health and wellness purchases
- Inpatient hospital services
- Inpatient & outpatient mental health and substance abuse services
- Surgical procedures
- Outpatient rehabilitation services
- Durable medical equipment

While all of the benefits offered by each plan are the same, they differ in the following areas:

- Annual Deductible
- Annual Out-of-Pocket Maximum
- Percentage of Eligible Expenses Covered
- Monthly Cost

You pay a separate monthly cost for yourself and for your dependents. The monthly cost for your dependents is inclusive of all of your eligible dependents (spouse, children under age 19, students age 19 to 25, and incapacitated children age 19 and over).

The monthly cost for each of the new plans effective June 1, 2008 is:

- Plan A - \$250
- Plan B - \$325
- Plan C - \$400

Register to vote!

<https://electionimpact.votenet.com/teamsters/voterreg/index.cfm>

Current Enrollees in GA-23111 Plans B or C Need to Take Action

Current Plans B and C will be replaced by these new options. If you are currently enrolled in Plans B or C, you need to select a new plan or the following will occur, effective June 1, 2008:

- Current Plan B enrollees will automatically default to the new Plan A
- Current Plan C enrollees will automatically default to the new Plan C

Note: Any current enrollees in Plan B or C who do not wish to continue their

participation in one of the new plans can contact the Customer Care Center at 800-842-5252 to cancel their enrollment, or simply not pay the required cost associated with the new plans.

**Obtaining Additional Information on Plans A, B, and C**

If you are interested in enrolling under any of the new benefit plans, please contact UnitedHealthcare at 800-842-5252. One of United

Healthcare’s customer care professionals will provide you with the following:

- Additional information and an enrollment form
- Certificate of Coverage (this document describes each benefit plan in detail)
- Answers to any other questions you may have.

A color chart specifying details of the services provided by these new plans is available below. •

UnitedHealthcare GA-23111 Plans A, B and C Benefit Summaries			
Benefit	Plan A	Plan B	Plan C
Monthly cost	\$250	\$325	\$400
Annual deductible	\$1,000	\$750	\$500
Annual out of pocket limit	\$15,000	\$10,000	\$7,500
Lifetime maximum benefit	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
Inpatient hospital services* (includes maternity & inpatient mental health and substance abuse services)	50% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible.	60% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible.	70% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible.
Surgical procedures (surgeon, anesthesiology & facility; ambulatory surgical center and outpatient surgical center)			
Medical services/ physician’s office visits	50% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible. 100% of eligible expenses w/out deductible for Mammography and Pap Smear.	60% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible. 100% of eligible expenses w/out deductible for Mammography and Pap Smear.	70% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible. 100% of eligible expenses w/out deductible for Mammography and Pap Smear.
Outpatient mental health and substance abuse services	75% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible for first 40 visits in Calendar Year (CY); 60% thereafter.	75% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible for first 40 visits in Calendar Year (CY); 60% thereafter.	75% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible for first 40 visits in Calendar Year (CY); 60% thereafter.
Outpatient rehabilitation (physical, occupational, speech therapy and chiropractic)	50% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible. Limited to 30 visits per CY. Exception: CY visit limit does not apply to services for a child under age 21 with a congenital or birth defect.	60% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible. Limited to 30 visits per CY. Exception: CY visit limit does not apply to services for a child under age 21 with a congenital or birth defect.	70% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible. Limited to 30 visits per CY. Exception: CY visit limit does not apply to services for a child under age 21 with a congenital or birth defect.
Allergy/acupuncture services	50% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible.	60% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible.	70% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible.
Emergency room services	50% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible.	60% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible.	70% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible.
Durable medical equipment*	50% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible.	60% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible.	70% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible.
Prescription drugs (this benefit provides for a discount program; this is not insurance)	UnitedHealth Allies (UHA) Discount RX Program - discount savings avg. 25% to 35% or higher on commonly prescribed generic/brand name Rx’s bought at a participating retail location or UHA mail-order service.	UnitedHealth Allies (UHA) Discount RX Program - discount savings avg. 25% to 35% or higher on commonly prescribed generic/brand name Rx’s bought at a participating retail location or UHA mail-order service.	UnitedHealth Allies (UHA) Discount RX Program - discount savings avg. 25% to 35% or higher on commonly prescribed generic/brand name Rx’s bought at a participating retail location or UHA mail-order service.
Home health care services*	50% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible up to 30 visits per CY.	60% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible up to 30 visits per CY.	70% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible up to 30 visits per CY.
Hospice facility*	50% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible.	60% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible.	70% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible.
Skilled nursing facility* (SNF)	50% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible for up to 31 days per stay in SNF.	60% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible for up to 31 days per stay in SNF.	70% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible for up to 31 days per stay in SNF.
Emergency ambulance services	50% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible in the event of an emergency.	60% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible in the event of an emergency.	70% of eligible expenses after satisfying deductible in the event of an emergency.

\* — Requires prior notification — Care Coordination must be contacted to determind whether the purchase, rental of equipment (over \$1,000) or services provided are medically appropriate.



# Education & Training Photo Album

Under the direction of National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert, the BLET's Education & Training Department recently completed a nationwide tour of hands-on training seminars for BLET members.

Based on feedback from the membership, the workshops were incredibly helpful for first time officers and served as a beneficial refresher course for veterans. The Department's travel schedule is as follows:

- December 2-5, 2007: Workshop for Secretary-Treasurers in Cleveland;
- January 27-30, 2008: Workshop for General Committee Secretary-Treasurers who file LM-2 reports in Madison, Wisc.;
- February 24-27: Workshop for Secretary-Treasurers in Dallas, Texas;
- March 2-5: Workshop for Secretary-Treasurers in Jacksonville, Fla.;
- March 9-14: Workshop for Legislative Representatives in Washington, D.C.; and
- March 16-21: Workshop for Local Chairmen in Champaign, Ill.
- March 30-April 3: Workshop for General Chairmen in St. Louis, Mo.

"I am extremely proud of the work done by the Education and Training Department staff," National Secretary-Treasurer Walpert said. "Nearly 200 BLET members have successfully completed valuable training in just a few months, thanks to a dedicated group of hard working individuals."

For their work in presenting and organizing the Secretary-Treasurer workshops, NST Walpert especially thanked: Ken Kroeger, Special Representative and Coordinator of the Education & Training Department; Bob Broka, Director of Records; Dr. Elaine Reese, Director of Tax Compliance; and Walt Schmidt, BLET Director of Online Services.

He also thanked Rick Radek, BLET National Vice President and Director of Arbitration, and Doug Davidson, Assis-

tant Director of Arbitration, for their leadership roles in the workshop for General Chairmen. Ben Blissett

He also recognized the efforts of John Tolman, BLET Vice President and National Legislative Representative, his staff and Teamsters personnel for their assistance in directing the training seminar for Legislative Representatives.

"I am especially proud of the workshop for Legislative Representatives primarily because it was the first of its kind," Walpert said. "I hope it is the first of more to come as the workshop was well received by all in attendance."

Walper said the General Chairman workshop in St. Louis was significant because leaders of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division were in attendance.

In his role as Coordinator of the Education and Training Department, Ken Kroeger scheduled and organized all workshops. He thanked his wife, Sereena Hogan, for her assistance and patience.

Walpert also thanked Phillip J. Sullivan II, Executive Director of the North American Railway Foundation, for providing stipends to all BLET members who successfully completed an Education & Training workshop.

"I believe the membership of the BLET is one of the most highly educated in all of labor thanks to the North American Railway Foundation and our own Education and Training Department," Walpert said. "I thank Phil Sullivan and NARF for their continued support."

Due to the overwhelming success of these sessions, the Education and Training Department is currently planning more workshops for the future. NST Walpert encouraged all officers to attend and advised members to monitor the BLET website, [www.ble-t.org](http://www.ble-t.org), for announcements regarding dates and locations of future workshops. •

## S-T Workshop: Jacksonville, Fla.



**Front from left:** John Bove, ST Div 269; Bill Hardbarger S-T CSX GCA; Kenneth Moore, S-T Div 621; William Walpert, NST & Director of Education & Training; Ken Kroeger, Coordinator of Education & Training & Special Representative; and Charles Brown, S-T Div 30.

**Second row, from left:** Ryan Brown, S-T Div 170; Tom Danner Jr, ST Div 934; John McClanahan, S-T Div 769; Cindy Peterman, S-T Div 332; Jamie Spivey, S-T Div 706; Craig Fack, OK Alt. State Leg. Rep. ST Div 578; Dave McKinney, S-T Div 26

**Third row, from left:** Robert Olsen, S-T LIRR GCA, Div 269; Daryl Dickey, S-T Div 646; Larris Horton, S-T Div 210; Al Santorelli Jr, S-T Div 495; Lorna Stevens, S-T Div 11; and Andrew Goulet, S-T, Mich. SLB.

**Fourth row, from left:** Bruce Galloway, S-T Div 286; Charles Owens, S-T Div 37; Robin McLean, S-T Div 140; Ron Liles Jr, S-T Div 786; Jeffrey Valentine, S-T Div 158; and Gerry Hirt, S-T Div 730.

**Fifth row, from left:** Cecil Dubberly Jr, S-T Div 59; Jonathan Buck, S-T Div 208; Jason Tolley S-T Div 38; David Wyatt, S-T Div 216; Walt Schmidt, Webmaster; and Bob Broka, Records Department Director.

## S-T Workshop: Dallas, Texas



**Front row, from left:** David Boiles, S-T Division 523; Scott Piekarski, S-T Division 187; Kenton Hastings, Alt S-T Division 144; William Walpert NST & Director of Education & Training; Diane Ellis, Executive Assistant Texas SLB; Ken Kroeger Coordinator of Education & Training & Special Representative; and Jim Bradford Special Representative.

**Second row, from left:** Jim Evans, Secretary-Treasurer Division 527; Christopher Riley, S-T; Matt Williams, S-T Division 736; Pat Murphy, S-T Division 141; Bill Stein, S-T Division 863; Jerry Bullard, S-T Division 212; Fernando Gonzales, S-T Division 871; and James Ussery, Texas SLB ST, S-T Division 834.

**Third row, from left:** Terry Willingham, S-T Division 500; Tyler Jones, S-T Division 740; Rusty Snell, S-T Division 620; and Cary Qualls, S-T Division 392.

**Fourth row, from left:** Ty Rickman, Alt S-T Division 172; David Lively, President Division 172; Anthony Leneer, S-T Division 201; Robby Hunt, S-T Division 703; Kenneth Hachtel, S-T Division 206; Richard Dame, Kansas SLB ST Division 587; Curtis O'Neal, S-T Division 107; and James Carlson, S-T Division 77.

**Fifth row, from left:** Tony Brown, S-T Division 857; Walt Schmidt Webmaster; Bob Broka Records Department Director; and Dr. Elaine Reese Office of Tax Compliance Director.

## S-T Workshop: Madison, Wisc.



**Front row, from left:** Brenda Greenman, GTW GCA ST, Div 33; Louie Fernandez ST, Div 383; Mark Whitchurch, CN-IC 1st VGC & GCA ST; Curt Houston, UP Western Lines AGST and Div. 415 ST; Chuck Fleming, UP Western Lines GCA ST, Div 192; Bill Walpert, BLET National Secretary-Treasurer; Jim Nelson, BNSF/MRL GCA ST, Div 644; Jim Thompson, UP Eastern Region GCoFA ST; Ken Kroeger, BLET Special Representative and Coordinator, BLET Education & Training Dept.; and Thomas Curran LC & ST, Div 659.

**Back row, from left:** Thomas Greenman, GTW GCA ST; James Chappelle, NJ Transit GCA ST; Kevin Leyerle, Div. 81 ST and UP-Central Region GSA ST; David Welter, CSX-North Lines GCA ST; Jerry Elmore, NS-Northern Lines GCA ST; David Estes, Amtrak GCA ST; and Mike Pancost, BNSF Northern Lines AGST and Div. 622 ST.

**Present but not pictured:** Gary Bell UP Central Region GCA ST; Michael Mercer, UP Northern Region GCA ST; Dr. Elaine Reese, Office of Tax Compliance Director; Walt Schmidt, BLET Webmaster; and John Lund, Ph.D Professor, School for Workers University of Wisconsin-Extension.



# DESIGNATED LEGAL COUNSEL

**Our union has designated attorneys who are qualified to serve as counsel for BLET members in accordance with the Federal Employers’ Liability Act (FELA) governing workplace accidents.**

**In the event of an injury or death and before reaching any settlement with a railroad, members or surviving families should contact an attorney listed to get competent advice concerning their legal rights under the FELA.**

**In addition, if you or any members of your family have questions concerning medical malpractice, product liability or other types of injury cases, please don’t hesitate to contact one of these law firms for a consultation concerning your rights and remedies.**

**ARKANSAS**  
Kujawski & Nowak, P.C.  
201 W. Broadway, Suite E  
N. Little Rock, AR 72114  
(501) 372-8047 or (800) 624-4571  
Fax: (501) 372-4379  
Website: <www.kujawski-nowak.com>  
John P. Kujawski

**CALIFORNIA**  
The Crow Law Firm  
700 “E” Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814-1230  
(916) 441-2980 or (800) 795-6555  
Fax: (916) 441-3846  
Email: <Dfrias@crowlaw.com>  
Joseph J. Weninger

Pfiester Law Corporation  
2000 Riverside Drive  
Los Angeles, CA 90039  
(323) 662-6400 or (800) 344-3352  
Fax: (323) 669-8549  
Website: <www.pfiesterlaw.com>  
R. Edward Pfiester Jr.

**COLORADO**  
Rossi, Cox, Vucinovich P.C.  
3801 East Florida Ave., Suite 905  
Denver, CO 80210-2500  
(303) 759-3500 or (800) 325-4014  
Fax: (303) 759-3180  
Website: www.rcvpc.com  
Email: jcox@rcvpc.com  
James L. Cox Jr.

**FLORIDA**  
Moody, Strople, Kloeppel, Basilone & Higginbotham, Inc.  
1400 Baymeadows Way, Suite 105  
Jacksonville, FL 32256  
(904) 256-0018 or (800) 813-8608  
Fax: (904) 256-0019  
Website: <www.moodyrrlaw.com>  
Willard J. Moody Jr.

Sams & Hollon, P.A.  
Baywood Center  
9424 Baymeadows Road, Suite 160  
Jacksonville, FL 32256  
(904) 737-1995 or (800) 327-4552  
Fax: (904) 737-3838  
Alva Hollon Jr.

**GEORGIA**  
Matthews & Steel  
15 Piedmont Center, Suite 1560  
3575 Piedmont Rd. NE  
Atlanta, GA 30305  
(404) 264-1292 or (800) 776-0098  
Fax: (404) 264-0161  
John D. Steel

Jones & Granger  
1201 Peachtree Street, NE  
400 Colony Square, Suite 1900  
Atlanta, GA 30361  
(404) 522-4414 or (800) 628-6470  
Fax: (404) 872-9430  
Email: <btra@jonesgranger.com>  
Robert M. Tramuto

Harp & Callier, L.L.P.  
P.O. Box 2645, The Corporate Center  
Suite 900, 233 12th St.  
Columbus, GA 31902-2645  
(706) 323-7711 or (800) 422-3352  
Fax: (706) 323-7544  
Email: <HarpRailLaw@aol.com>  
Email: <aharp@harp.callier.com>  
Website: <www.harpcallier.com>  
J. Anderson “Andy” Harp

**ILLINOIS**  
Blunt & Associates, Ltd.  
60 Edwardsville Professional Park,  
P.O. Box 373

Edwardsville, IL 62025  
(618) 656-7744 or (800) 323-5538  
Fax: (618) 656-7849  
Email: <michaelb@bluntlaw.com>  
David L. Blunt

Daniel J. Downes, P.C.  
111 W. Washington St., Suite 1100  
Chicago, IL 60601  
(312) 781-1852 or (800) 624-2121  
Fax: (312) 781-1854  
Email: <dan@dandownes.com>  
Website: <www.feladownes.com>  
Daniel J. Downes

Kujawski & Nowak, P.C.  
1331 Park Plaza Drive, Suite 2  
O’Fallon, IL 62269-1764  
(618) 622-3600 or (800) 624-4571  
Fax: (618) 622-3700  
Website: <kujawski-nowak.com>  
John P. Kujawski

Sands & Associates  
33 North Dearborn St., Suite 1630  
Chicago, IL 60602  
(312) 236-4980 or (800) 832-1999  
Fax: (312) 236-1711  
Email: <scsands@ameritech.net>  
Scott C. Sands

Schlichter, Bogard & Denton  
2661 North Illinois, Suite 187  
Swansea, IL 62226  
(800) 873-5297  
Fax: (314) 621-7151  
Email: <jschlichter@uselaws.com>  
Jerome J. Schlichter

Hoey & Farina  
542 South Dearborn, Suite 200  
Chicago, IL 60605  
(312) 939-1212 or (888) 425-1212  
Email: Info@hoeyfarina.com  
www.hoeyfarina.com  
James L. Farina

**LOUISIANA**  
Davis • Saunders Law Firm  
500 Mariners Plaza Drive  
Suite 504  
Mandeville, LA 70448  
(985) 612-3070 or (800) 321-7815  
Fax: (985) 612-3072  
Website: <www.davissaunders.com>  
Email:<Benbsaunders@aol.com>  
Ben B. Saunders

**MASSACHUSETTS**  
Thornton & Naumes LLP  
100 Summert St., 30th Floort  
Boston, MA 02110  
(617) 720-1333 or (800) 431-4600  
Fax: (617) 720-2445  
Website: <www.tenlaw.com>  
Email: rnaumes@tenlaw.com  
Robert T. Naumes

**MICHIGAN**  
E.J. Leizerman & Associates  
24750 Lasher Road  
Southfield, MI 48034  
(313) 962-3666 or (800) 628-4500  
Fax: (419) 243-8200  
Website: www.thefela.com  
Email: ej@leizerman.com  
E.J. Leizerman

**MINNESOTA**  
Hunegs, LeNeave & Kvas, P.A.  
900 Second Ave. South, Suite 1650  
Minneapolis, MN 55402  
(612) 339-4511 or (800) 328-4340  
Fax: (612) 339-5150  
Website: <www.hunegslaw.com>  
Email: <RleNeave@Hunegslaw.com>  
Randal W. LeNeave

Ingebritson & Associates, P.A.  
Medical Arts Building, Suite 1025  
825 Nicollet Mall  
Minneapolis, MN 55402  
(612) 340-8290 or (800) 282-6393  
Fax: (612) 342-2990  
Website: <www.ingebritson.com>  
Russell A. Ingebritson

Yaeger, Jungbauer & Barczak, PLC  
745 Kasota Ave. SE  
Minneapolis, MN 55414  
(612) 333-6371 or (800) 435-7888  
Fax: (612) 333-3619  
Website: <www.yjblaw.com>  
Email: <wjungbauer@yjblaw.com>  
William G. Jungbauer

**MISSOURI**  
Hubbell, Peak, O’Neal, Napier & Leach  
30 West Pershing Road, Suite 350  
Kansas City, MO 64108-2463  
(816) 221-5666 or (800) 821-5257  
Fax: (816) 221-5259  
Gene Napier

Bauer & Baebler, P.C.  
1716 S. Broadway  
St. Louis, MO 63104  
(314) 241-7700 or (800) 682-4529  
Fax: (314) 241-0003  
Website: <www.RailLaw.com>  
Joseph L. Bauer, Esq.

Schlichter, Bogard & Denton  
100 S. 4th St., Suite 900  
St. Louis, MO 63102  
(314) 621-6115 or (800) 873-5297  
Fax: (314) 621-7151  
Email: <jschlichter@uselaws.com>  
Jerome J. Schlichter

Rathmann & O’Brien, L.L.C.  
1031 Lami Street  
St. Louis, MO 63104  
(314) 773-3456 or (800) 238-4122  
Fax: (314) 773-7238  
Dennis T. Rathmann

Yaeger, Jungbauer & Barczak, PLC  
1010 Market St., Suite 1440  
St. Louis, Missouri 63101  
(314) 621-1775 or (800) 878-4074  
Fax: (314) 621-4688  
Website: <www.yjblaw.com>  
Email: <wjungbauer@yjblaw.com>  
William G. Jungbauer

**NEW YORK**  
Collins & Collins  
267 North St.  
Buffalo, NY 14201  
(716) 885-9700 or (800) 933-8195  
Fax: (716) 885-9770  
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**OHIO**  
E.J. Leizerman & Associates, LLC  
717 Madison Ave.  
Toledo, OH 43624  
(419) 243-1010 or (800) 843-3352  
Fax: (419) 243-8200  
Website: www.thefela.com  
Email: ej@leizerman.com  
E.J. Leizerman

**OREGON**  
Rose, Senders & Bovarnick, LLP  
1205 N.W. 25th Ave.  
Portland, OR 97210  
(503) 227-2486 or (800) 998-9776  
Fax: (503) 226-3131  
Paul S. Bovarnick

**PENNSYLVANIA**  
Coffey, Kaye, Myers & Olley  
Suite 718, Two Bala Plaza  
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004  
(610) 668-9800 or (800) 334-2500  
Fax: (610) 667-3352  
Website: http:// www.FELAattys.com  
Email: <mikeolley@comcast.net>  
Michael J. Olley

Keller & Goggin, P.C.  
1528 Walnut Street, Suite 1900  
Philadelphia, PA 19102  
(215) 735-8780 or (800) 666-FELA  
Fax: (215) 735-5126  
Website: www.keller-goggin.com  
William L. Keller

**TEXAS**  
Jones & Granger  
10000 Memorial Drive, Suite 888  
Houston, TX 77210  
(713) 668-0230 or (800) 231-3359  
Fax: (713) 956-7139  
Email: btra@jonesgranger.com  
Robert M. Tramuto

The Cartall Law Firm  
7551 Callaghan Road, Suite 350  
San Antonio, TX 78229  
(210) 344-1111  
Fax: (210) 344-5844  
Bryan P. Cartall, Esq.

McKinney & McKinney  
550 Wescott, Suite 590  
Houston, TX 77007  
(713) 869-1500 or (800) 709-9093  
Fax: (713) 880-4638  
Website: www.piattorney.com  
R.L. Pete McKinney

Tavormina & Young, LLP  
1300 Post Oak Blvd., Suite 1750  
Houston, TX 77056  
(713) 333-3070 or (888) 565-7245  
Fax: (713) 333-3075  
Website: www.TavorminaYoung.com  
Email: syoung@tavorminayoung.com  
Steve Young

**UTAH**  
Hatch, James & Dodge  
10 West Broadway, Suite 400  
Salt Lake City, UT 84101  
(801) 363-6363 or (800) 574-6310  
Fax: (801) 363-6666  
Email: <bhatch@hjdllaw.com>  
Brent O. Hatch

**VIRGINIA**  
Moody, Strople, Kloeppel, Basilone & Higginbotham, Inc.  
500 Crawford St., Suite 300  
P.O. Box 1138  
Portsmouth, VA 23705  
(757) 393-4093 or (800) 368-1033  
Fax: (757) 397-7257  
Website: <www.moodyrrlaw.com>  
Willard J. Moody Jr.

Rutter Mills  
160 West Brambleton Ave.  
Norfolk, VA 23510  
(757) 622-5000 or (800) 933-5879  
Fax: (757) 623-9189  
C. Arthur Rutter, III

Shapiro, Cooper, Lewis & Appleton, P.C.  
1294 Diamond Springs Road  
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23455  
(757) 460-7776 or (800) 752-0042  
Fax: (757) 460-3428  
Website: <www.hsinjurylaw.com>  
Richard N. Shapiro

Hunegs, LeNeave & Kvas, P.A.  
1000 Second Avenue, Suite 3310  
Seattle, WA 98104-1046  
(206) 621-0600 or (800) 525-3352  
Fax: (206) 621-6443  
Website: <www.hunegslaw.com>  
Email: <RleNeave@Hunegslaw.com>  
Randal W. LeNeave

**WASHINGTON**  
Rossi, Cox, Vucinovich P.C.  
10900 N.E. 8th St., Suite 1122  
Bellevue, WA 98004  
(425) 646-8003 or (866) 357-7245  
Website: www.rcvpc.com  
Email: jcox@rcvpc.com  
James L. Cox Jr. •



## SOFA update: Postponing casualties does not prevent them

The Switching Operations Fatality Analysis (SOFA) Working Group is once again reminding rail workers in yard and switching service to remain vigilant.

If crews work safely and avoid casualty in one year, by applying SOFA operating recommendations, then they must also work safely throughout their careers. Crews must always work safely because postponing casualty does not prevent casualty, according to the report.

The original SOFA Report was released in October 1999. Prior to the release, there were 47 switching fatalities related to the report's five operating recommendations in the 7.75-year period January 1992 through September 1999. Expressed as a rate, there were 6.07 switching fatalities per year related to operating recommendations. Slipping, tripping, stumbling, and losing balance were events associated with nearly half of the 1,380 severe injuries occurring from January 1, 1997 through December 31, 2007.

In 2008 year to date, there have been two fatalities. The first occurred on January 8 in Waukegan, Ill. A Union Pacific conductor, working a METRA commuter train, was struck by another METRA commuter train while he was stooped over the crossover switch connecting the two main tracks located just south of the passenger station. The second occurred on February 3 in Chicago. A brakeman, working between cars in his train, stepped out from between two cars and into the path of a main track Canadian National train that was passing the stopped NS train.

The SOFA Working Group makes the following recommendations:

### **Recommendation 1**

Any crew member intending to foul track or equipment must notify the locomotive engineer before such action can take place. The locomotive engineer must then apply locomotive or train brakes, have the reverser centered, and then confirm this action with the individual on the ground. Additionally, any crew member that intends to adjust knuckles/drawbars, or apply or remove EOT device, must insure that the cut of cars to be coupled into is separated by no less than 50 feet. Also, the person on the ground must physically inspect the cut of cars not attached to the locomotive to insure that they are completely stopped and, if necessary, a sufficient number of hand brakes must be applied to in-

sure the cut of cars will not move.

### **Recommendation 2**

When two or more train crews are simultaneously performing work in the same yard or industry tracks, extra precautions must be taken:

- Same Track — Two or more crews are prohibited from switching into the same track at the same time, without establishing direct communication with all crew members involved.

- Adjacent Track — Protection must be afforded when

there is the possibility of movement on adjacent track(s). Each crew will arrange positive protection for (an) adjacent track(s) through positive communications with yardmaster and/or other crew members.

### **Recommendation 3**

At the beginning of each tour of duty, all crew members will meet and discuss all safety matters and work to be accomplished. Additional briefings will be held any time work changes are made and when necessary to protect their

safety during their performance of service.

### **Recommendation 4**

When using radio communication, locomotive engineers must not begin any shove move without a specified distance from the person controlling the move. Strict compliance with "distance to go" communication must be maintained. When controlling train or engine movements, all crew members must communicate by hand signals or radio signals. A combination of hand and radio signals is prohibited. All crew

members must confirm when the mode of communication changes.

### **Recommendation 5**

Crew members with less than one year of service must pay special attention to safety awareness, service qualifications, on-the-job training, physical plant familiarity, and overall ability to perform service safely and efficiently. Programs such as peer review, mentoring and supervisory observation must be utilized to insure employees are able to perform service safely. •

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BLET NEWS

A message from Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa

# Obama’s support for fair trade would help U.S. workers



Sen. Barack Obama is the only presidential candidate who can right the destructive wrongs of the past eight years.

Looking at Obama’s record on trade issues and issues dear to working families — such as his commitment to passing the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) — the choice was clear for the Teamsters Union.

I’ve had several candid conversations with Obama. There’s no doubt in my mind that he has a genuine concern about not only our country’s trade policies, but about the hardworking men and women whose livelihoods and families are affected by them.

Every bit of the Democratic primary fight between Obama and Hillary Clinton, and every bit of the general election, will be an uphill battle to show people how important it is for the United States to have trade policies that take American workers into account.

Obama has long said NAFTA was oversold since its inception, and will work with Canadian and Mexican leaders to fix it so it’s fair for American workers.

Obama understands that America needs fair trade policies that will create a level playing field with our trading partners. He understands that the corporate race to the bottom has had a devastating impact on our economy and our communities. Obama also understands that the trade policies of the Bush administration have done nothing to raise the standards of workers globally.

Labor will work closely with Obama to achieve a better balance — to keep good jobs in America and raise wages, establish benefits and improve working conditions abroad. He has consistently stood firm against agreements that would undermine our nation’s economic security.

But Obama realizes that the misguided trade policies of the Bush ad-

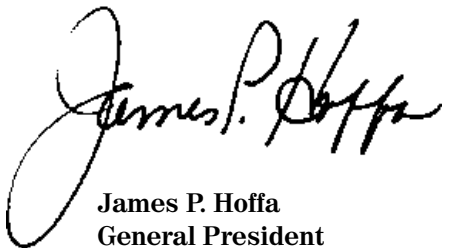
ministration are not the only problems.

As president, Obama will pressure the World Trade organization to stop countries from continuing unfair government subsidies to foreign exporters and nontariff barriers on U.S. exports.

Trade, of course, is not the only reason why we have endorsed Obama. He understands what working people are going through. He will fight for an improved health care system, retirement security and good jobs. He will join us in our commitment to rebuild our nation’s transportation infrastructure and will make appointments that make sense-people who will protect workers.

A President Obama will ensure our toys and food are safe, the Environmental Protection Agency actually protects the environment and the Department of Labor enforces worker safety laws and wage and hour laws.

Fraternally,



James P. Hoffa  
General President

APRIL 2008  
CALENDAR & EVENTS

**APRIL 25... U.S. Railroad Retirement Board Informational Conferences, Mo. and N.J.**  
The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board will conduct two free informational conferences. Registration for the programs is at 8 a.m., with each beginning promptly at 8:30 a.m. and ending at 12:30 p.m. The first is in St. Louis, Mo. (Holiday Inn South County Center, 6921 Sout Lindlebergh Blvd.) and the second is in East Hanover, N.J. (Ramada Conference Center, 130 Route 10 West). Per Railroad Retirement Board request, elected BLET officials only, please!

**MAY 2... U.S. Railroad Retirement Board Informational Conferences, Mo. and Pa.**  
The RRB will conduct two informational conferences on May 2. The first is in Kansas City, Mo. (Embassy Suites, Kansas City Airport, 7640 Tiffany Springs Parkway) and the second is in Altoona, Pa. (Ramada Conference Center, 1 Sheraton Drive). Time of meetings is the same as April 25 listing above.

**JUNE 15-19... 81st Annual Southeastern Meeting Association, Montgomery, Ala.**  
Chairman Jason Popwell of BLET Division 495 will host the 81st annual SMA at the Embassy Suites in Montgomery, Ala. See March 2008 issue or [www.ble-t.org](http://www.ble-t.org) for registration form and convention details.

**JULY 6-10... 70th Annual Eastern Union Meeting Association, Huron, Ohio**  
Arrangements Chairman Rodney Cutlip is planning the 2008 EUMA at Sawmill Creek Resort. Be sure to visit [www.EUMA2008.com](http://www.EUMA2008.com) for information, or March 2008 issue for registration form.

**AUGUST 17-20... 68th International Western Convention, San Luis Obispo, Calif.**  
Chairman Mike Galvani hosts the 2008 IWC at the Embassy Suites Hotel-San Luis Obispo.

**SEPTEMBER 14-18... 73rd Southwestern Convention Meeting, St. Louis, Mo.**  
Chairman David Grimes and the members of Division 42 host the 2008 SWCM at the St. Louis Hilton at the Ballpark (One South Broadway, St. Louis, Mo.). More details to come!

## Advisory Board February Activity

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

**National President Edward W. Rodziewicz**— National Division office: General supervision of BLET activities; General office duties; Various correspondence & phone calls; President, Teamsters Rail Conference; CRLO mtgs.; Regional chairmen mtg.; NASLBC regional chairmen mtg.; Advisory Board mtg.; IBT General Executive Board mtg.; James P. Hoffa Itzhak Rabin Dinner.

**First Vice-President and Alternate President Paul T. Sorrow**—Assigned to CSX, NS and GTW general committees of adjustment; Assist CSX-Northern Lines at mtg. w/ Division 937 and CSXT-Chicago Division officers; Assist Eastern Lines with various issues, including mtg. w/ Labor Relations; Assisted Western Lines with various issues, including but not limited to dispute resolution; Assisted Grand Trunk GCA with issues as called upon by General Chairman; Work on PLB cases, correspondence, telephone calls.

**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; Standard Building operations oversight; Rail Conference policy mtg., Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.; LM-2 Filers Secretary-Treasurer workshop, University of Wisconsin, Champaign, Ill.

**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; Belt Rwy. of Chicago; Chicago Central & Pacific; Iowa, Chicago & Eastern; Tentative C.B.A. and agreed to Q&A's, CN/WC, Schiller Park, Ill.; Various NRAB arbitration, Chicago; Chicago Federation of Labor, re: State funding of transit, Metra, Chicago; DLC issues, grievances, mtgs. re: Progressing to arbitration, IHB, Chicago/Hammond, Ind.; Routine office duties, Cleveland; SBA 1157 arbitration, Union RR; Tentative agreement, CN/WC, Green Bay, Wisc.; Assistance, re: Under-employment and seniority issues, CN/WC, Green Bay.

**Vice-President Dale McPherson** — CP Rail; Port. Term. RR; Longview Portland & Northern; Longview Switching Co.; Indiana RR; W&LE RR; Utah Railroad; UP Eastern Dist.; UP former CNW; DM&IR RR; Portland & Western RR; Great Western RR; Appalachian & Ohio RR; Public Law Boards 5604, 5681, 5721, 6040, 6281, 6449, 6558, 6589; SBA 585; UP work/rest projects; RSAC positive train control cmte.; National wage/rules; General office duties, correspondence, phone; UP negotiations, Edelstein, Idaho; CRLO and Advisory Board mtgs., Hollywood, Fla.; CP Rail mtgs., Minneapolis, Minn.; UP GC mtg., re: Scope rule.

**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; Montreal, Maine and Atlantic RR; Advisory Board mtg., Hollywood, Fla.; PLB 6145 executive session, Springfield Terminal; Mtgs. w/ GC Clark (Tex Mex) and KCS, Kansas City, Mo.; Contract mtgs. w/ GC Twombly and MMA, Bangor, Maine; Holiday; Correspondence, research and general office duties.


**Vice-President Stephen D. Speagle**—Assigned to Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Montana Rail Link, Pacific Harbor Line, Missouri & Northern Arkansas (M&NA), National Wage/Rule Committee; Wabash Hospital mtg.; General office duties; Public Law Board, St. Louis; Travel; Advisory Board mtg., Hollywood, Fla.; Section 6 mtgs., MNA, with Div. 178 Carthage, Div. 116, Mountain Home, Ark. and Batesville, Ark. Travel; Holiday; Vacation day.

**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; Assisting GC Rightnowar, NY Dock negotiations, UPCR; Assisting GC Gore, ebb & flow negotiations, UPSR; Assisting GC Hannah, marking rest dispute, UPWL; Assisting GC Hannah & LC Loudermilk, Division 126 meeting, UPWL; Office work, paper work, filing and calls; Vacation & holidays.

**Vice-President & National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman** — Assigned to BLET Washington, D.C. office; BLET Security Officer; General office duties, telephone, correspondence; Coordinate content of NLO website; Continued coordination w/ IBT Government Affairs Dept.; Coordinated PAC contributions; Ohio State of the Union address, Columbus, Ohio; CRLO mtgs.; IBT State Lobbyist conference call; Yitzak Rabin Center tribute to General President Hoffa; Full RSAC mtg.; Mass. State Legislative Board mtg.; La. State Legislative Board mtg.; Various fundraisers for elected officials in Washington, D.C.

**Vice-President Marcus J. Ruef** — Assigned to Amtrak Long Island Railroad; Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority; New Jersey Transit; Port Authority Trans Hudson; Norfolk Southern (Northern Lines/W&LE); Norfolk Southern (Eastern Lines); Norfolk Southern (Southern Lines); Union Railroad (URR); Allegheny Ludlum Steel Co.; and Birmingham Southern; Assist with briefs for SBA 1063, NS-N; Metra-North issues; Vacation rule research, NYSW; Assist with briefs for PLB 6556, NS-E; PLB 6567, W&LE, Cleveland; Mtg. w/ USWA Local 1196, A-L Steel, Brackenridge, Pa.; Advisory Board mtg., Hollywood, Fla.; Development of claim theory, PATH; Conference call with LIRR GCA; Mtg. w/ Div. 108, Brackenridge, Pa.; Contract negotiations, Amtrak, Washington, D.C.; PLB 7086, NS-S; Prep. for SBA 1063, NS-N; Amtrak conference call with entire GCA, re: Tentative agreement; Holiday; SBA 1063 hearing, NS-N, Norfolk, Va.; Conference call w/ all NS GCAs, re: Contract, carrier cmte. participation.

**Vice-President Dennis R. Pierce** — Assigned to CSX, NS and GTW general committees of adjustment; Assist CSX-Northern Lines at mtg. w/ Division 937 and CSXT-Chicago Division officers; Assist Eastern Lines with various issues, including mtg. w/ Labor Relations; Assisted Western Lines with various issues, including but not limited to dispute resolution;



LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND TRAINMEN NEWS  
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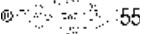
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VOLUME 22 • NUMBER 4 • April 2008

LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN NEWS (ISSN 0898-8625)  
is published monthly by the  
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen,  
1370 Ontario Street, Cleveland, OH 44113-1702.  
Periodicals postage paid at Cleveland, OH.

**POSTMASTER: Send address changes to**  
Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen News — BLET  
Records Department, 1370 Ontario Street, Mezzanine  
Cleveland, OH 44113-1702.

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POSTAGE  
PAID AT  
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