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BLET dedicates new National Division headquarters building

Approximately 150 members, officers, dignitaries and guests were in attendance at an April 14 dedication ceremony for the new National Division headquarters building of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) in Independence, Ohio.

Headquartered in downtown Cleveland since 1870, the BLET is the oldest labor union in North America. The union was founded as the Brotherhood of the Footboard on May 8, 1863. The union currently represents more than 56,000 locomotive engineers and trainmen throughout the United States.

Speakers at the ribbon cutting ceremony included: Dennis R. Pierce, BLET National President; Anthony Togliatti, Mayor of Independence, Ohio; Ken Hall, General Secretary-Treasurer (GST) of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters; John Ryan, State Director for Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH); and Sean O'Brien, Teamsters International Vice President-Eastern Region.

"Through good times and bad, in peace and in war, our Brotherhood has led the struggle on behalf of our members for economic security and a piece of the American Dream. For generations we also have been a beacon of hope and a shining example for railroad workers and for all American workers," President Pierce said. "And so it is with the utmost humility and pride that I dedicate the BLET's new National Division Headquarters to the memory of well over a hun-



BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce, left, with City of Independence Mayor Anthony Togliatti at the dedication ceremony for the new BLET headquarters building on April 14, 2016.

dred thousand BLET and BLE members in our nearly 153-year history; may we always honor those without whom our great Brotherhood would not exist."

Mayor Togliatti's remarks echoed those of President Pierce. "The skill and hard work of your union members has helped to build the United States," he said. "You are the backbone of America, and it is truly an honor to welcome the BLET to Independence."

GST Hall praised the foresight of BLET leaders for their commitment to the future. "This is

one impressive building, and it is important to our members to have a facility that they can be proud of," Hall said. "This building is an inspiration for others in the labor movement. I am impressed by the focus on training at this new building, and would like to recognize the foresight of the BLET's leadership in putting together this building with an eye on the future."

State Director Ryan praised the BLET for its influence in Washington, D.C. "Your union might not be the biggest, but you

are one of the strongest and most vocal when it comes to speaking out on behalf of your members," he said.

Vice President O'Brien said the new BLET headquarters building symbolizes the Brotherhood's drive into the new century. "As we move ahead in the new century we must not lose sight of how we got here," O'Brien said. "With your training center you prepare your members for the future and with your history museum you are grounded to your past."

A reception and tour of the building followed. The 40,000 square foot building houses offices for the union's National Division officers and staff as well as the union's history museum, which contains railroad artifacts dating to 1855. The museum features the union's massive "History of United States Locomotives" mural, a 110-foot oil on canvas painting finished in 1937 that depicts the evolution of railroad transportation in the United States. The National Division headquarters building also boasts a state of the art education and training center for union officers and members. The BLET is also proud to announce that all renovation work on the structure was done by a 100% Union workforce.

Members of the BLET Advisory Board attended the ceremony. Numerous BLET General Chairmen and State Legislative Board Chairmen were also in attendance, along with officers of BLET Division 3 and Division 607 in Cleveland and various representatives of other rail labor unions. In addition to Mayor Togliatti, representatives from the City of Independence who attended the ceremony included: City Councilman Carl Asseff; Economic Development Director Jeremy Rowan; Police Chief Mike Kilbane; Fire Chief Steve Rega; and City Inspector Mike Gero.

The building address is: 7061 East Pleasant Valley Road, Independence, Ohio, 44131. ©©

SEE PHOTO GALLERY OF THE DEDICATION ON PAGE 6

IN THE LINE OF DUTY

Canadian Pacific locomotive engineer Jeffrey A. Harsh

BLET member Jeffrey A. Harsh, a member of BLET Division 882 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was killed in a railroad accident on March 26, 2016. Brother Harsh was 43 years old.

Employed by the Canadian Pacific Railway, Brother Harsh normally worked as an engineer out of Milwaukee, Wis-

consin, but had been cut back and was receiving familiarization training in a new area. He was killed early on March 26 in St. Paul, Minnesota. He joined the Brotherhood effective March 1, 1998, and is a former President of BLET Division 882 in Milwaukee.

He is survived by parents Sandra and Peter Harsh; sis-

ters Laura and Liana; close friends Kevin A. Williams and Jake Weber; and countless other friends, relatives, and co-workers in his close-knit railroad family.

Funeral services were held on April 4 at the Schaff Funeral Home in West Allis, Wisconsin.

"On behalf of all men and women of the Brotherhood of

Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, I extend deepest condolences to the family and friends of Brother Jeffrey Harsh," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "It is a tragedy to lose anyone in the line of duty, but it's especially tragic to lose someone so young, and our prayers are with the Harsh family." ©©



Brother Harsh



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BLET PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY DENNIS R. PIERCE

WHAT'S WRONG WITH AMERICA

As the presidential nominating process for the two major political parties draws to a close in the coming months, you are sure to be deluged with sound bites from candidates talking about what's wrong with America and how they will fix it if they are elected. And while it is important to consider how the candidates claim they will work for your interests it is, perhaps, even more important that you take a look back to see how they've worked for, or against, your interests in the past.

America is at a crossroads as a nation. The vibrant, dynamic country in which we grew up—with a steadily expanding economy providing good-paying jobs for almost everyone, an ever-increasing standard of living, and an opportunity for everyone to share in the American Dream through their labor—has never recovered from the Great Recession of 2008. And for Main Street America, the ugly truth is that things have been in a steady state of decline for 40 years.

That's because Corporate America has pretty much had its way for the last four decades. From anti-worker federal and state legislatures, to pro-corporate tax and trade policies, to the creation of casino capitalism on Wall Street via elimination of the banking laws and regulations that saved the nation from a repeat of the Great Depression of the 1930s, government has been transformed from an institution that promotes the nation's best interest to a servant of the wealthy.

A March 10 Report by the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) points out that if all workers' wages had risen in line with their productivity, as they did in the three decades following World War II, an American earning around \$50,000 today would instead be making close



National President Dennis R. Pierce speaks at the dedication ceremony for the new BLET headquarters building on April 14, 2016.

to \$75,000 ... that's almost 50% higher. However, nearly all of those productivity gains have gone into Corporate America's profit column.

And America's taxpayers aren't being treated any better than America's workers. In April the Government Accountability Office reported that nearly 20% of profitable major U.S. corporations—those with more than \$10 million in assets—paid no federal taxes in 2012, although many of these same companies took in record profits.

Even those companies that do pay taxes are paying much less today than they have historically. According to the EPI, corporate tax revenue currently makes up only 1.9% of Gross Domestic Product, down by over two-thirds from 5.9% in 1952. That means taxpayers have to make up the difference through increased taxes, reduced government services, or both.

One of the newest corporate tax avoidance schemes is something called "inversion." The

Center for American Progress describes corporate inversion as a U.S. multinational company renouncing its U.S. citizenship by combining with a smaller company in a foreign country to obtain favored corporate tax treatment. According to the Congressional Research Service there have been more than four dozen corporate inversions involving formerly-U.S. companies over the past 12 years. Most recently, inversion was one of the "selling points" in Canadian Pacific Railway's unsuccessful attempt at a hostile takeover of Norfolk Southern.

It's almost certain that you won't hear or see any of the above information in the mainstream media in this election cycle. Instead, you'll hear candidates complain how corporate tax rates are too high, how business is over-regulated, how unions are too strong, and how even the most miserly increase in the minimum wage will bring the entire nation crashing down around our heads.

The reason you will only hear

a severely distorted picture of what ails America is because—thanks to the 2010 Supreme Court decision in the *Citizens' United* case—the same group of super-wealthy folks responsible for putting the American Dream in a coma also funds the vast majority of political campaign activity in this country ... and a small group of them own nearly all of the major media.

The fact of the matter is that the candidates of Corporate America have no plan other than more of the same. So, instead, they run campaigns based on divide and conquer. They sow divisions among the electorate based on geography, race, gender, age, ethnicity and a host of other factors. The intent is to keep us fighting with one another so we're distracted from paying attention to what they're doing to all of us.

This cynical, manipulative strategy is based on creating the false distinction that workers, consumers and taxpayers are three completely different subsets of the population. Consum-

ers are pushed to always look for the lowest price, which often means not union-made, frequently means foreign-made, and may even mean made by child labor.

Taxpayers are told that all taxes are bad and you can have lower taxes simply by busting the teachers' union—or the cops' or fire-fighters' unions—and, well, those public servants will just have to get over it. Not surprisingly, when our own contract struggles make it into the newspapers and on the TV the value of our own labor and our contribution to the country are similarly disrespected.

Corporate America's goal is simple: the longer they can keep us fighting among ourselves over the scraps that fall from their banquet table, the longer they can rake everything else into their pockets. So the subliminal meaning behind many of the campaign messages you will hear in the coming months is that the candidate (representing the powerful) will protect you from the others (who, in reality, are powerless); don't buy it for a minute, because their real intent is to protect themselves from you.

Reversing the tide in America means that the voters must reunite the worker and consumer and taxpayer portions of their brains, and then join with one another to elect candidates whose track records of action match the words of their campaign promises. We in the BLET have an advantage—as do all union members—because acting in solidarity for all is our stock in trade.

But it's not going to be an easy task, even for us, because politicians seldom let the facts get in the way of a good narrative. To that end, I will continue to devote this space every month to telling you the facts that Corporate America doesn't want you to know.

DENNIS R. PIERCE
BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT

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BLET NATIONAL DIVISION ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Official communications between BLET members and the National Division require a hard copy of the correspondence, bearing a signature, being received by the National President to be considered an "official communication." This is to provide that the actual question(s) are addressed, and ensures that when official

interpretations are made they have reference to a specific request and can be used in future correspondence.

The volume of e-mails received makes it impossible for the National President to answer all unofficial communications. Therefore, it is the policy of the BLET that e-mails addressed to the National President will be reviewed and forwarded to

the appropriate officer or staff for a timely response; however, an e-mail message is not considered an official communication.

Moreover, anonymous e-mails and e-mails that do not provide sufficient information concerning the sender to enable National Division staff to confirm the sender's membership status will not receive any reply or acknowledgement. This poli-

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

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



GENERAL PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY JAMES P. HOFFA

TRADE TAKES CENTER STAGE IN ELECTION DEBATE

The Teamsters and many other pro-worker allies have repeatedly protested the devastating effects of bad trade deals in across the U.S. But during the presidential primary process, the importance of the issue has finally caught the nation's attention.

During the Michigan primary in March, for instance, voters across the political spectrum showed both the candidates and the media that lousy trade deals like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) are a major concern that can't be ignored.

Fifty-seven percent of Democrats and 55 percent of Republicans voting in the March 8 primary agreed with the statement "trade with other countries takes away U.S. jobs." Throughout the Midwest and even the Northeast, people are letting it be known they are not okay with the offshoring of jobs.

Those good-paying union jobs aren't recreated even when unemployment ticks down like it has in recent years. Instead, they are replaced with low-paying service jobs that likely don't provide health or re-

tirement benefits.

That message is spreading. Talk about bad trade deals like the TPP having become part of stump speeches for Democratic and Republican presidential candidates. Many now understand hard-working Americans are sick of getting screwed over by lost jobs, less pay, unsafe food and products from overseas, more expensive medicine and a dirtier environment that these trade agreements bring.

Even those in the nation's capital seem to be catching on to it. They are hearing the will of the people, and it's not in favor of this 12-nation Pacific Rim trade deal. The TPP, once considered by many a for-gone conclusion for passage, is no such thing today.

Those in Congress still have a role in this deal. They can vote no if the trade pact comes to a vote later this year. The people have told lawmakers what they want. Soon we'll find out if they are listening.

Fraternally,

JAMES P. HOFFA
TEAMSTERS GENERAL PRESIDENT



66 Many now understand hard-working Americans are sick of getting screwed over by lost jobs, less pay, unsafe food and products from overseas, more expensive medicine and a dirtier environment that these trade agreements bring.

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IN MEMORIAM: BLET Staffer Jessica Coleman

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) National Division is shocked and heartbroken by the passing of our coworker and friend Jessica Coleman.

Jessica, 26, began working full time for the BLET on March 1, 2014. A hard working professional with an eye for details, she provided administrative support to various National Division staffers, including the Director of Benefits, the Short Term Disability Liaison and the Public Relations Department.

Jessica's family reported her missing on April 24, 2016, and police recovered her body on April 25. A homicide investigation is ongoing. Jessica's wonderful personality and warm smile made our office a brighter place, and she will be truly missed.

Jessica is survived by her parents, Clifton and Jamie Coleman; sister Si-toya Coleman; close companion Dion Hayes, a friend of Jessica's since they were 8 years old; and a host of other relatives, friends and coworkers. Funeral services were held on the morning of April 30, 2016 at St. John AME Church in Cleveland, Ohio.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the Coleman family during this difficult time. @@



Jessica Coleman pictured in 2014 when she began working for the BLET

BLET MEMBERS: IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT HEALTH AND WELFARE RATES

All active BLET members are advised that effective July 1, 2016, the monthly employee cost-sharing contributions under the Railroad Employees National Health and Welfare Plan will increase to \$228.89. As of July 1, 2012, the employee contribution to Railroad Employees National Health and Welfare Plan was frozen at \$198.00 per month and that freeze continues through June 30, 2016. In accordance with the provisions of the 2012 National Agreement covering freight railroads, the amount of employee cost-sharing is determined in one of two ways: It is either capped at \$230 per month; or it is equal to 15% of the Carriers' monthly payment rate for 2016. By agreement, the lesser amount is used. The \$228.89 rate will remain in effect unless altered by the next National Agreement. @@

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The News Flash alerts are news articles from the BLET National Division website that are automatically emailed to you.

TO REGISTER ONLINE, JUST GO TO WWW.BLE-T.ORG/NEWSFLASH. On this page, you will find an area to enter your

email address and click *subscribe* to begin receiving the most current news from the BLET National Division.

It is a great way to keep informed on the most recent issues impacting your job, your contract and your Brotherhood.

Buy-outs and Railroad Retirement benefits

Railroad employees frequently ask the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) how the acceptance of a buy-out from a railroad employer affects their future eligibility for benefits under the Railroad Retirement and Railroad Unemployment Insurance Acts. The following questions and answers provide information on this subject.

1. Would leaving railroad work and accepting a buy-out mean that an employee forfeits any future entitlement to an annuity under the Railroad Retirement Act?

As long as an employee has acquired at least 10 years (120 months) of creditable rail service, or 5 years (60 months) of creditable service if such service was performed after 1995, he or she would still be eligible for a regular railroad retirement annuity upon reaching retirement age, or, if totally and permanently disabled, for an annuity before retirement age, regardless of whether or not a buy-out was ever accepted.

However, if a person permanently leaves railroad employment before attaining retirement age, the employee may not be able to meet the requirements for certain other benefits, particularly the current connection requirement for annuities based on occupational, rather than total, disability and for supplemental annuities paid by the RRB to career employees.

In addition, if an employee does not have a current connection, the Social Security Administration, rather than the RRB, would have jurisdiction of any sur-

vivor benefits that become payable on the basis of the employee's combined railroad retirement and social security covered earnings in the future. The survivor benefits payable by the RRB are generally greater than those paid by the Social Security Administration.

2. How are buy-out payments treated under the Railroad Retirement and Railroad Unemployment Insurance Acts?

Buy-out payments that result from the abolishment of an employee's job are creditable as compensation under the Railroad Retirement and Railroad Unemployment Insurance Acts. While the actual names of these employer payments may vary, the treatment given them by the RRB will depend upon whether the employee relinquished or retained his or her job rights. If the employee relinquishes job rights to obtain the compensation, the RRB considers the payment a separation allowance. This compensation is credited to either the month last worked or, if later, the month in which the employee relinquishes his or her employment relationship. While all compensation subject to tier I payroll taxes is considered in the computation of a railroad retirement annuity, no additional service months can be credited after the month in which rights are relinquished.

The RRB considers the buy-out payment a dismissal allowance, even though the employer might designate the payment a separation allowance, if the employee retains job rights and receives monthly pay-



ments credited to the months for which they are allocated under the dismissal allowance agreement. This is true even if the employee relinquishes job rights after the end of the period for which a monthly dismissal allowance was paid. However, supplemental unemployment or sickness benefits paid under an RRB-approved nongovernmental plan by a railroad or third party are not considered compensation for railroad retirement purposes.

3. Suppose an employee is given a choice between (1) accepting a separation allowance, relinquishing job rights and having the payment he or she receives credited to one month or (2) accepting a dismissal allowance, retaining job rights and having the payment credited to the months for which it is allocated. What are some of the railroad retirement considerations the employee should keep in mind?

Individual factors such as an employee's age and service should be considered.

For example, if an employee is already eligible to begin receiving a railroad retirement annuity, he or she may find it advantageous to relinquish job rights, accept a separation allowance, and have the annuity begin on the earliest date allowed by law. Any periodic payments made after that date would not preclude payment of the annuity because the employee has relinquished job rights.

On the other hand, some younger employees may find it more advantageous to retain job rights and accept monthly compensation payments under a dismissal allowance if these payments would allow them to acquire 120 months of creditable rail service (or 60 months of creditable rail service if such service was performed after 1995) and establish future eligibility for a railroad retirement annuity. Also, additional service months might allow a long-service employee to acquire 30 years of service, which is required for early retirement at age 60, or 25 years of rail service, which is required for supplemental annuities paid by the RRB. Establishing 25 years of service could also aid an employee in maintaining a current connection under the Railroad Retirement Act.

4. How would acquiring 25 years of railroad service assist an employee in maintaining a current connection?

The current connection requirement is normally met if the employee has railroad service in at least 12 of the last 30 consecutive months before retirement or death. If an employee does not qualify on this basis but has 12 months of service in an earlier 30-month period, he or she may still meet the requirement if the employ-

ee does not work outside the railroad industry in the interval following the 30-month period and the employee's retirement, or death if that occurs earlier. Nonrailroad employment in that interval will likely break the employee's current connection.

However, since 1981, a current connection can be maintained for purposes of supplemental and survivor annuities, but not occupational disability annuities, if the employee completed 25 years of railroad service, was involuntarily terminated without fault from the railroad industry, and did not thereafter decline an offer to return to work in the same class or craft as his or her most recent railroad service, regardless of the location of the work offered. If all of these requirements are met, an employee's current connection may not be broken, even if the employee works in regular nonrailroad employment after the 30-month period and before retirement or death.

5. Would the acceptance of a buy-out have any effect on determining whether an employee could maintain a current connection under the exception provision?

In cases where an employee has no option to remain in the service of his or her employer, the termination of the employment is considered involuntary, regardless of whether the employee does or does not receive a separation or dismissal allowance.

However, an employee who chooses a separation allowance instead of keeping his or her seniority rights to railroad employment would, for railroad retirement purposes, generally be considered to have voluntarily terminated railroad service, and consequently would not maintain a current connection under the exception provision.

6. An employee with 25 years of service is offered a buy-out with the option of either taking payment in a single lump sum or of receiving monthly payments until retirement age. Could the method of payment affect the employee's current connection under the exception provision?

If the employee had the choice to remain in employer service and voluntarily relinquished job rights prior to accepting the payments, his or her current connection would not be maintained under the exception provision, regardless of which payment option is chosen. Therefore, nonrailroad work after the 30-month period and before retirement, or the employee's death if earlier, could break the employee's current connection. Such an employee could only meet the current connection requirement under the normal procedures.

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7. Is it always advantageous to maintain a current connection?

While a current connection is generally advantageous for railroad retirement purposes, the costs of maintaining a current connection could outweigh its value, depending on individual circumstances. There may be other financial or personal factors involved besides railroad retirement eligibility and/or the preservation of a current connection, and these will vary from individual to individual.

8. Are separation and dismissal allowances subject to railroad retirement payroll taxes?

Under the Railroad Retirement Tax Act, which is administered by the Internal Revenue Service, payments of compensation, including most buy-outs, are subject to tier I, tier II and Medicare taxes on earnings up to the annual maximum earnings bases in effect when the compensation is paid. This is true whether payment is made in a lump sum or on a periodic basis.

To the extent that a separation allowance does not yield additional tier II railroad retirement service credits, a lump sum, approximating part or all of the railroad retirement tier II payroll taxes deducted from the separation allowance, will be paid upon retirement to employees meeting minimum service requirements or their survivors. This lump sum applies to separation allowances made after 1984.

If an employee receives a dismissal allowance, he or she receives service credits for the tier II taxes deducted from the dismissal allowance payments. Consequently, such a lump sum would not be payable.

If an employee has an option about how a buy-out is to be distributed, he or she should consider the impact of both payroll taxes and income tax on the payments. Employees with questions in this regard should contact the payroll department of their railroad employer and/or the Internal Revenue Service.

9. Would an employee be able to receive unemployment or sickness benefits paid by the RRB after accepting a separation allowance?

An employee who accepts a separation allowance cannot receive unemployment or sickness benefits for roughly the period of time it would have taken to earn the amount of the allowance at his or her straight-time rate of pay. This is true regardless of whether the allowance is paid in a lump sum or installments. For example, if an employee's salary was \$3,000 a month without overtime pay and the allowance was \$12,000, he or she would be disqualified from receiving benefits for approximately four months.

10. Can an employee receive unemployment benefits after his or her separation allowance disqualification period has ended?

An employee who has not obtained new employment by the end of the disqualification period and is still actively seeking work may be eligible for unemployment benefits at that time. The employee must meet all the usual eligibility requirements, including the availability for work requirement. An employee can establish his or her availability for work by demonstrating a willingness to work and making significant efforts to obtain work. In judging the employee's willingness to work, the RRB considers, among other factors, the reason the employee accepted the separation allowance and the extent of his or her work-seeking efforts during the disqualification period.

11. How would the acceptance of a dismissal allowance affect an employee's eligibility for unemployment and sickness benefits?

Payments made under a dismissal allowance would be considered remuneration under the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act and the employee would not be eligible for unemployment or sickness benefits during the period the dismissal allowance is being paid. The employee may, of course, be eligible for benefits after the end of this period if he or she is still actively seeking work or is unable to work because of illness or injury.

12. Where can employees get more specific information on how benefits payable by the RRB are affected by a buy-out?

Employees can contact an RRB field office by calling the agency's toll-free phone number at 1-877-772-5772 for information on how a buy-out they have been offered could affect their eligibility for benefits. However, RRB personnel are not equipped to advise on other financial or personal factors, which may also bear consideration. Most offices are open to the public from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on Federal holidays.©©

RRB ANNOUNCES CHANGE IN SERVICE HOURS FOR FIELD OFFICES

Effective at noon on June 1, 2016, U.S. Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) field offices around the country will be closed to the public on Wednesday afternoons. Field office representatives will not be available to assist walk-in customers or to answer the phones during Wednesday afternoons only. All RRB offices will remain open from 9 a.m. to noon on Wednesdays, and during their usual hours of 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on the remaining weekdays, except for Federal holidays.

The change is necessary due to reduced staffing levels, coupled with increased workloads in several key areas, and will allow the staff in the RRB's nationwide network of 53 field offices to focus on processing applications for benefits, conducting necessary verifications for pending applications or claims, resolving complex cases and reducing backlogged workloads.

RRB customers will continue to have the opportunity to conduct most business through the agen-

cy website (<http://www.rrb.gov>) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, or by calling the RRB's nationwide toll-free telephone number, (877) 772-5772, and speaking with a field office representative during regular business hours.

Current railroad employees can use the www.rrb.gov website to apply for and claim unemployment benefits, file a claim for sickness benefits, check the status of their unemployment or sickness claim, view their statement of account under the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act, view their service and compensation history, or get an annuity estimate. Annuitants currently receiving benefits can request a letter verifying the amount of their annuity, a duplicate tax statement, a replacement Medicare card or a copy of their service and compensation history. All services are accessible through the "Benefit Online Services" section of www.rrb.gov or by calling the RRB's toll-free number at (877) 772-5772. ©©

2016
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THE JAMES R. HOFFA
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ESSAY TOPIC:
*What has living in a
Teamster household
meant to me and
my siblings?*



For students attending a community college, 4-year institution or a technical/vocational program, age 23 and younger, who are the son, daughter or financial dependent of an eligible Teamster Member Relation (as defined in the application).

For an essay contest application, contact your Teamsters Local Union office or visit <http://ibt.io/JRHMSFEssay>

Deadline for submissions is **June 15, 2016**



BLET DEDICATES NEW NATIONAL DIVISION HEADQUARTERS BUILDING

Additional photos and information will appear in an upcoming issue of the *Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Journal*



Big rig from the Ohio Conference of Teamsters.



From left: First Vice President Lee Pruitt, National President Dennis Pierce, and National Secretary-Treasurer Steve Bruno.



Vice President John P. Tolman, center, with six State Legislative Board Chairmen.



Independence Mayor Anthony Togliatti



Our new home



John Ryan, Ohio State Director for Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH)



Ken Hall, IBT General Secretary-Treasurer



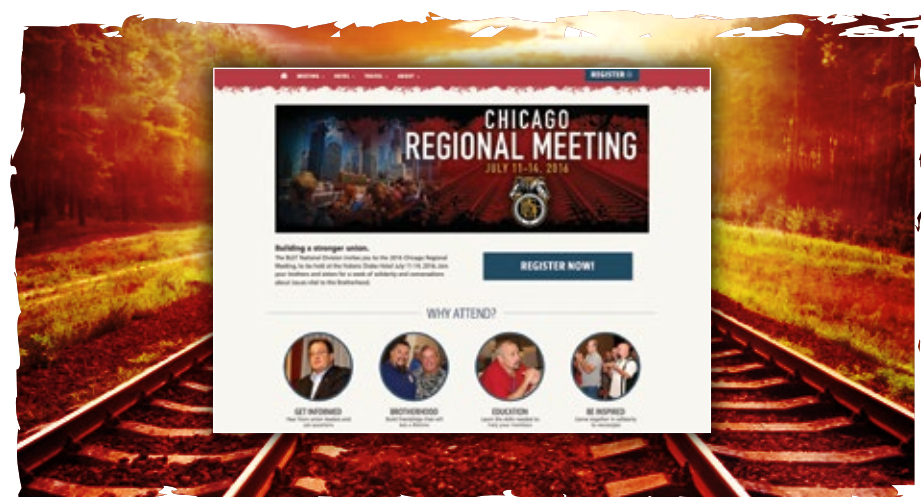
Sean O'Brien, IBT International Vice President

REGISTRATION OPEN FOR BLET'S 2016 REGIONAL MEETINGS

Registration is now open for the BLET's two regional meetings in 2016 — July 11-14 at the Drake Hotel in Chicago, Illinois, and August 22-25 at the Hyatt Regency in Long Beach, California. The BLET National Division is planning a meeting filled with educational opportunities and entertaining leisure time activities.

In Chicago, guests will stay at the historic Drake Hotel (140 East Walton Place, Chicago, IL 60611, (800) 553-7253). BLET convention registration as well as hotel registration can be made through the BLET's new regional meeting website, www.bletregionals.org. If making reservations by telephone, you must mention the group code "BLE." Hotel reservations must be made by June 16, 2016.

In Long Beach, guests will stay at the Hyatt Regency (200 South Pine Avenue, Long Beach, CA 90802, (562) 491-1234). Again, BLET convention registration and hotel registration can be made



at www.bletregionals.org. Use group code "BLET" if making hotel reservations by phone. Hotel reservations must be made by July 11, 2016.

Both meetings are scheduled on a Monday through Friday basis. At each meeting guests will

arrive on Monday for registration and a welcome reception (July 11 in Chicago and August 22 in Long Beach). Opening ceremonies and the closed meeting will be on Tuesday (July 12 in Chicago and August 23 in Long Beach). The golf outing

and an open day for families will be on Wednesday (July 13 in Chicago and August 24 in Long Beach). Workshops and a farewell banquet will be held on Thursday (July 14 in Chicago and August 25 in Long Beach). Hotel check out and travel home will be on Friday (July 15 in Chicago and August 26 in Long Beach). The Chicago golf outing will be held at the Harborside International Golf Course, and the Long Beach outing will be at the Tustin Ranch Golf Course.

There is no cost for BLET members who wish to attend meetings and workshops only; however, there will be fees for those members who choose to attend the meals. The cost of full registration (including all meetings, workshops, the banquet and all BLET sponsored meals) is \$200 per person. The cost is \$150 to register for all of the above EXCEPT the banquet. The cost to register for the golf tournament is \$150 per person. Please visit www.bletregionals.org for more information about the registration process. ©©

The website www.bletregionals.org has been established as a one-stop shopping opportunity for all future BLET regional meetings. Please visit the BLET website, Facebook page, and www.BLETregionals.org for the latest information.

John Reynolds reelected to fifth term as CN-WC General Chairman

Canadian National-Wisconsin Central (CN-WC) General Chairman John W. Reynolds was reelected by acclamation to his fifth term of office at the General Committee's quadrennial meeting in Green Bay, Wisconsin, March 30-31, 2016.

A Wisconsin Central locomotive engineer, Brother Reynolds hired out on the St. Louis-San Francisco Railroad (Frisco) in 1978. He is a member of BLET Division 209 (Green Bay) and has held continuous membership since September 1, 1997. On February 24, 2003, he was elevated to the office of General Chairman of the CN-WC GCA, then reelected by acclamation in 2004, 2007 and 2011. He was reelected a fourth time in 2012 at a special GCA meeting after the CN-WC GCA merged with the Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range and the Two Harbors GCAs. Brother Reynolds also serves as Vice Chairman of the BLET's Western General Chairmen's Association.

Also elected were: Vice General Chairman Eric A. Hau, Division 173 (Fon du Lac, Wisc.), reelected by acclamation; 1st Alternate Vice General Chairman Jason T. Alexander, Division 184 (Schiller Park, Ill.); 2nd Alternate Vice General Chairman Steven L. Moerke, Division 188 (Superior, Wisc.), elected by acclamation; Secretary-Treasurer Eugene "Shy" Ziegler, Division 173 (Fon du Lac, Wisc.), reelected by acclamation; and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer Tim J. Foster, Division 173 (Fon du Lac, Wisc.), reelected by acclamation.

Elected to serve as Trustees of the Committee were: Chuck M. Schulz, Division 175 (Neenah, Wisc.); Mike D. Ostertag, Division 209 (Green Bay, Wisc.); and Jason T. Alexander, Division 184 (Schiller Park, Ill.).

BLET National Division officers in attendance were: National President Dennis R. Pierce; First Vice President E. Lee Pruitt; Vice President and National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman; and National Vice President Marcus J. Ruef. Also representing the National Division was Special Representative Paul T. Aird, the BLET's Director of Organizing and Director of Mobilization-Western Region. Additionally, Sereena Hogan, National President of the BLET Auxiliary, also was in attendance and addressed the body.

"Congratulations to Brother Reynolds on achieving his fifth election by acclamation, which is a rare and admirable accomplishment," President Pierce said. "And I am proud to also thank and congratulate all officers and members of the Wisconsin Central General Committee of Adjustment for their dedication to serving our Brotherhood. I have every confidence they will continue to do an excellent job protecting the rights of our Brothers and Sisters."

Five BLET State Legislative Board Chairmen were in attendance: David K. Brown, Minnesota; Paul S. Piekarski, Illinois; Brian J. Farkas, Indiana; Chuck M. Schulz, Wisconsin; and B.J. Trumble, Michigan. General Chairman Dick Crow, Union Pacific-Northern Region, was also in attendance.

Several additional Brothers were in attendance, including Brett A. Hobbs, former General Chairman of the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railroad (EJ&E) and former Local Chairman of Division 520



Members and officers of the Canadian National-Wisconsin Central General Committee of Adjustment at their quadrennial meeting in Green Bay, Wisc., on March 31, 2016.

(Joliet, Ill.); Ron R. Pasquerella, retired Indiana Harbor Belt General Chairman, Division 682 (Hammond, Ind.); Jack C. Ormes, retired EJ&E General Chairman, Division 520 (Joliet, Ill.); and Ken Kroeger, retired BLET National Division Special Representative and Coordinator of the

BLET Education and Training Department, Division 28 (Tucson, Ariz.).

Delegates went over new and old business and reviewed their by-laws, concluding all business in an orderly and professional fashion.

The Wisconsin Central operates over

approximately 2,850 miles of track and trackage rights in Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, Michigan's Upper Peninsula and Ontario. The BLET organized the Wisconsin Central property in 1997, and the railroad was purchased by CN in 2001 for \$1.2 billion. ©©

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Locomotive Engineers And Trainmen News Brotherhood Of Locomotive Engineers And Trainmen

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Photo of the Month: April 2016

EAGLE EYE: Attentive passengers and train crew members can spot several active bald eagle nests along the Potomac River on Amtrak's route from Washington, D.C., to Fredericksburg, Va. On April 18, 2016, Brother Mike Marra captured Amtrak AutoTrain 53 passing one adult eagle and two eaglets in a nest (lower right) located along Quantico Creek at MCB Quantico, Va.

Photo: Mike Marra, Amtrak AutoTrain engineer and photographer, BLET Division 14 (Washington, D.C.).



Are you a photographer? The National Division's Public Relations Department, which produces the Newsletter each month, has received numerous inquiries lately from BLET members volunteering to contribute their

images to the "Photo of the Month" section of the Newsletter. If you'd like to submit a photo for consideration, you may call Editor John Bentley at (216) 241-2630, ext. 248, or you can email: Bentley@ble-t.org.

Please note only high resolution images can be used. Members are also encouraged to review their employer's policies regarding the use of cameras and other electronic devices while on duty.

Advisory Board February 2016 Activity

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

NATIONAL PRESIDENT DENNIS R. PIERCE: National Division Office, Cleveland; General supervision of BLET activities; General office duties; Correspondence and telephone communications; Supervision of Office Administration; General Supervision of Special Representatives; President, Teamsters Rail Conference; Policy Committee, Teamsters Rail Conference; National bargaining mtgs., Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.; National Division LM-2 class, Long Beach, Calif.; BNSF Local Chairman training, Fort Worth, Texas.

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT E.L. (LEE) PRUITT: National Duties include but not limited to: Director, Passenger Dept.; Shortline Organizing Dept.; Trainmen's Dept.; National Publications Committee; National Legislative Board; Teamsters Rail Conference Policy Committee; PRAC; and National Negotiations; National duties, Cleveland, Ohio; Holiday; CRLO mtgs., Hollywood, Fla.

NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER STEPHEN J. BRUNO: General supervision of Accounting Dept., Record Dept., Online Services Dept., Tax Compliance Dept.; Safety Task Force; PAC and FEC reports and filings; Implementation and training for BLET membership database; Pension, STD, 457 plan Trustee; Division, General Committee and SLB monthly Trustee reports; Mtgs. with vendors and financial institutions; Publications Committee; Passenger Dept.; National Bargaining Committee; IBT Human Rights Commission; ND office work, Cleveland; National bargaining mtgs., Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.; National Division LM-2 class, Long Beach, Calif.

VICE PRESIDENT & NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE JOHN P. TOLMAN: Assigned to BLET Washington, DC office; General office duties, telephone and correspondence communications; Coordinate content of NLO website; Weekly PAC committee and legislative mtgs.; Attended functions for several Representatives and Senators, Washington, D.C.; North Dakota State Legislative Board mtg., Bismarck, N.D.; Press conference with Congress to launch campaign opposing Trans-Pacific Partnership, Washington, D.C.; American Ireland Fund reception for Chairs, Washington, D.C.; Various mtgs. and functions with Representatives and Senators.

VICE PRESIDENT MARCUS J. RUEF: Vice Chairman, National Railroad Adjustment Board (NRAB); National Mediation Board (NMB) Arb. Adv. Forum; Department Head, BLET Arbitration Department; Assigned to Illinois Central, Wisconsin Central, Indiana Harbor Belt, Belt Railway of Chicago, Metra, GRR and Illinois RR; Assist GC Balonek w/ discipline rules, Metra, Chicago; Assist GC Reynolds w/ discipline rules, WC, Chicago; Assist GC Short w/ Section 6 mtg. and National Handling issue, IHB, Chicago; NRAB LM Bragg, NRAB issues, Chicago; Mtg. w/ NRAB 3rd Division LM Bragg, re: procedural issue, NRAB; Illinois Rwy. town hall mtg. to explain Illinois Railway TA, Chicago.

VICE PRESIDENT MIKE TWOMBLY: Assigned to all Union Pacific GCAs (Eastern District, Northern Region (former C&NW), Western Lines (Pacific Harbor Lines), Western Region (Portland & Western), Central Region, Southern Region; Tacoma Belt RR, Utah RR, Longview Portland & Northern NO & Longview Switch, Portland Terminal; On duty at home office; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; UP-Southern Region, UP-Western Region

joint conference, Scottsdale, Ariz; UP-Western Region conference, Omaha, Neb.; Tacoma Rail Section 6 contract negotiations, Tacoma, Wash.

VICE PRESIDENT GIL GORE: Assigned to all CSX; Grand Trunk Western; Union Pacific-Southern Region GCA special assignment; Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC) issues, CSXT; General office duties, paperwork, correspondence, emails, telephone calls, etc.; Holiday; Vacation; CAPS conference call; Inward-facing camera conference call, all CSX GCs; Meal allows and WLC roster, safety, conference call; CSX codification and wrap-up mtgs.; Jacksonville; Operation Red Block mtg., Detroit.

VICE PRESIDENT MICHAEL D. PRIESTER: Assigned to all BNSF (former ATSF, former C&S, CRI&P, FWD, former STL-SF, BNSF/MRL), Panhandle Northern, Missouri & North Arkansas, Montana Rail Link, Great Western; Texas Pacific; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; BLET Education & Training Department class for BNSF Local Chairman w/ GC Brown, LaPrath, Holdcraft and Thurman, Fort Worth, Texas; M&NA Section 6 discussions w/ GC Thurman and Local Chairmen, Fort Worth, Texas.

VICE PRESIDENT COLE W. DAVIS: Assigned to: Kansas City Southern (MidSouth Rail, South Rail, Gateway Western, Illinois & Midland), Texas Mexican Rwy.; CP Rail System/US (Indiana Southern, Iowa, Chicago & Eastern, Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern); Springfield Terminal (St. Lawrence & Atlantic, Delaware & Hudson), Cedar River, Louisville & Indiana, Huron & Eastern; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; DM&E and Soo Line issues, GC Semenek; Huron & Eastern issues, GC Ladrig; Mtgs. w/ KCS labor relations, GC Craddock; Springfield Terminal and D&H issues, Springfield Terminal mediation, assisting GC Moore; Tex Mex issues, GC Silmon, Houston Texas; MidSouth issues, GC Craddock; Mtg. w/ CP and GC Semenek, Soo Line issues, Chicago; D&H contract negotiations, GC Moore, Albany, N.Y.

VICE PRESIDENT R.C. (RICK) GIBBONS: Assigned to: All Norfolk Southern General Committees; Wheeling & Lake Erie; Chicago, Fort Wayne & Eastern; New York, Susquehanna & Western; New England Central; Connecticut Southern; Western New York & Pennsylvania; Indiana & Ohio; RSAC/RSIA Fatigue Management Group; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications; Vice President duties; On duty at home office; Indiana & Ohio Rwy. mediation, assisting GC Chip Cole, Columbus, Ohio; PLB 7574, assisting GC Wallace, Norfolk, Va.; New England Central mediation, assisting GC Martin, Boston, Mass.

VICE PRESIDENT JAMES P. LOUIS: Assigned Amtrak; Long Island Rail Road; New York & Atlantic; Metro North; New Jersey Transit; PATH; SEPTA; Metra; Union Railroad; National Division Department Head, Education & Training Dept.; National Division Department Head, Internal Organizing, Mobilizing & Strategic Planning Dept.; Union Track mtgs., Cleveland; NJ Transit issues; 2016 regional meeting planning, Long Beach, Calif.; SEPTA, NMB A13798, assisting GC Dixon, Philadelphia; LIRR issues, assisting GC Sexton; Assisting Amtrak GC Kenny, Union Track; E&T planning; ND office move, Cleveland.

Convention Call for Teamsters' 29th International Convention

The International Brotherhood of Teamsters' 29th International Convention will be held at the Paris Convention Center in Las Vegas, Nevada, June 27-July 1, 2016.

BLET members wishing to attend the Convention as a Guest or Retiree should register online at <http://ibt.io/2016conreg> no later than June 10, 2016. If a paper form is needed, please contact the IBT Convention office at (202) 624-8117. Delegate and Alternate Delegate registration will be handled through the IBT's General Secretary-Treasurer's office.

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Paris Las Vegas Hotel and the adjoining Bally's Las Vegas Hotel. You may register in one of two ways: Online at <http://ibt.io/convhotel>; or by calling the Paris Hotel at (702) 946-7000 or Bally's Hotel at (702) 987-4111 and asking for the Teamster Convention Room Block.

Hotel registration cutoff is Monday, May 9, 2016, and the room rate is \$157 for both hotels. ©

THE OFFICIAL CONVENTION CALL IS AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD AS A PDF. BLET MEMBERS ARE ASKED TO PRINT AND POST THE DOCUMENT ON BULLETIN BOARDS AT THEIR WORK LOCATIONS: WWW.BLE-T.ORG/PR/PDF/IBT_CONVENTION_CALL_2016.PDF

