



NEWS

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RLBC seeks workforce stabilization

Rail Labor Bargaining Coalition submits workforce stabilization, growth proposals

On May 19, the Rail Labor Bargaining Coalition (RLBC) put forth a proposal to the rail carriers to stabilize employment in each rail craft.

"For years the rail carriers have been downsizing their work force and increasing the required hours for the remaining employees. This reduction has compromised the safety of our members and has put the safety of the public at risk," said George Francisco, coordinator of the RLBC and president of the NCFO.

The RLBC proposal is structured to address incidents such as that in Macdona, Texas last year when a Union Pacific freight train traveling at 45 mph through a stop signal smashed into another freight train, puncturing a tank car and spilling chlorine gas. The engineer and conductor on the train had worked more than 60 hours over the previous week. Their shifts were long and their hours erratic, as is common in the railroad industry. In the weeks leading up to the crash, each man's work schedule had at least 15 different starting times at all hours of the day.

"The Macdona crash and a multitude of others across the country illustrates a growing fact of life

for thousands of engineers and trainmen who guide giant freight trains: fatigued crews lead to accidents, all too often with deadly results," said Don Hahs, President of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET), a Division of the Teamsters. "It is incumbent upon the RLBC to ensure, for the safety of our members and the public, that the trains are moved by crews that are not overworked and have had adequate rest."

The RLBC proposal seeks to ensure an adequate number of employees on a rail line in relation to the growth in demand for its rail services. The Association of American Railroads has projected the demand for freight service will jump 67 percent by 2020, yet the carriers have failed to maintain a work force sufficient to maintain infrastructure and operate trains.

"This proposal is crucial for reducing fatigue in the rail industry and improving safety of rail operations," said Fred Simpson, national president of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division (BMWED).

The seven unions of the coalition represent nearly

Collective Bargaining Update

85,000 rail workers from American railroad corporations.

- Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division (BMWED);
- Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET);
- National Conference of Firemen and Oilers (SEIU);
- Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen (BRS);
- Sheet Metal Workers International Association (SMWIA);
- International Brotherhood of Boilermakers (IBB); and
- American Train Dispatchers Association (ATDA).

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

Unity Conference boosts BLET, BMWED

On May 8, members of the Brotherhood Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET), and Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division (BMWED) were officially welcomed to the Teamsters during the annual Unity Conference in Las Vegas.

Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa praised the mergers of the two rail unions and how their leaders put the betterment of

their members ahead of their own personal ambitions. "My father, James R. Hoffa, had the idea that the Teamsters should represent all of transportation labor, and these mergers are completely in line with his directive."

Prior to the conference, legislative representatives from both rail unions met to discuss the ways in which they could work together on legislation, and get assistance from the Teamsters Government Af-

airs Department.

"It's dynamite to have the Teamsters' political clout," said John Tolman, BLET Chief of Staff and Legislative/Political Director.

"I thought the meetings were fantastic," said Craig Gilchrist, a BLET state legislative board chairman from Montana. "This recharged our batteries!"

"We feel very good about

See Unity Conference, Page 6

UTU seeks single-craft raid of BLET membership at UP

'A desperate act by a desperate union,' Hahs says

The United Transportation Union's petition for a single craft of operating employees at the Union Pacific Railroad is a reckless effort by a desperate union, said BLET National President Don Hahs on June 3.

UTU's May 27 petition asks the NMB to rule that a single craft of operating employees exists on the UP. The petition also asks the NMB to order a representation election for the supposedly new craft of "train and engine service employees."

"This is like 1998 all over again," said President Hahs, referring to UTU's attempt to raid BLET at UP using the same arguments seven years ago. "But we beat them before and we will do it again. This is a desperate act by a desperate union."

The BLET President condemned the UTU leadership for its reckless behavior that can not possibly benefit operating employees.

"The UTU leaders are only concerned with self-preservation of the UTU enterprise, not with representing the best interests of their members," President Hahs said. "This is an act of desperation on behalf of a union slowly reaching the end of its useful existence."

Several negative consequences could be harmful to rank-and-file rail workers if operating crafts are combined and the UTU is allowed to hold a representation election. Does any other Rail Union believe this will be last attempt to combine crafts if the UTU is successful?

"A single operating craft could lead to fewer jobs in the rail industry, and possibly combined extra boards and dovetailed seniority rosters," Hahs said. "The last time I checked, those things were beneficial to rail management, not rail labor."

See UTU Raid, Page 6

Rail Labor continues fight for Amtrak

Labor's Amtrak Action Alliance meets with Congress to secure funding

The Amtrak Action Alliance, made up of rail labor unions, took the fight for Amtrak funding to Capitol Hill in May. The Alliance held three days of meetings with members of the U.S. House and Senate on May 24-26, urging the legislators to support full funding for the passenger rail carrier.

The lobbying campaign

was a part of the Alliance's ongoing plan to save Amtrak from destruction by both the White House and the railroad itself. During the meetings with the members of Congress, the representatives of the labor organizations urged the members of Congress to support funding for Amtrak, specifically H.R. 1630 and H.R. 1631.

H.R. 1630, also known as

the Amtrak Reauthorization Act of 2005, would authorize \$2 billion in appropriations for the benefit of Amtrak for fiscal years 2006 through 2008. It was introduced by Representative Don Young of Alaska, Representative James Oberstar of Minnesota, Representative Steven LaTourette of

See Amtrak, Page 2

BLET NEWS

New rail security bill introduced in U.S. House

Oberstar-backed bill would provide more than \$1 billion to protect against terrorism

Representative James Oberstar (D-Minn.) has introduced a bill that would require the Department of Transportation and the Department of Homeland Security to develop and implement plans for addressing the issue of rail security. The purpose of the Rail Security Act of 2005, or H.R. 2351, is to provide for the safety and security of the United States railroads, passengers, workers and communities, and to establish an assistance program for families involved in rail accidents.

The bill, which currently has 14 cosponsors, authorizes more than \$1 billion to safeguard our nation's rail network from terrorist threats, \$500 million of which is authorized for grants to state and local governments, railroad carriers, rail labor and others for costs incurred for preventing or responding to terrorist activities or other security threats to

intercity passenger rail and freight rail service.

Under the bill, Amtrak will receive \$100 million for security upgrades, plus a total of \$597 million to make fire and life-safety improvements to tunnels on the Northeast Corridor in New York, New York; Baltimore, Maryland; and Washington, D.C. This funding is critical to protect Amtrak's 25 million passengers, two-thirds of whom travel along the Northeast Corridor.

The bill authorizes \$50 million for the Secretary of Homeland Security to create a research and development program to improve freight and intercity passenger rail security. The Secretary of Homeland Security is also required to develop a national plan for public outreach and awareness and a study on passenger, baggage, and cargo screening.

Moreover, the Rail Security Act of 2005 focuses

on an issue that security bills often ignore: the importance of ensuring that key workers have the support and training required to protect our rail system, whether those workers are railroad employees or emergency responders.

"Rail workers are truly the eyes and ears of the rail industry," said Oberstar. "They greet passengers, sell tickets, operate trains, maintain track and signal systems, dispatch trains, operate bridges, and repair cars. They are in the most direct position to spot security risks and potential threats. This bill requires rail carriers to provide security training to these workers to ensure that they are prepared to take appropriate action against threat conditions."

BLET members are encouraged to call their members of Congress and urge them to support this important piece of legislation. •

BLET gets first contract at Louisville & Indiana RR

Less than a year after joining the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, members on the formerly non-union Louisville & Indiana Railroad (L&I) have their first-ever collective bargaining agreement.

The BLET scored its organizing victory at the L&I on May 7, 2004, and the members ratified their new contract by an 80 percent majority on April 1, 2005.

The contract, which extends over the next three years and 10 months, provides many benefits that were unavailable when the short line was a non-union property.

"Some key provisions that our members did not previously have are a grievance procedure addressing pay issues, a discipline policy as our members are no longer at-will employees and seniority rules," said BLET Vice-President Merle Geiger Jr., who led the negotiating team.

"We were able to secure payments made by the company prior to being represented by the BLET (gain sharing and longevity pay). We were able to maintain an excellent benefit package including vacations, holidays, personal leave days, bereavement leave and jury duty. In addition medical, dental and

life insurance were maintained with no increases in cost sharing at this time for our members."

Vice-President Geiger said compensation for overtime was the Brotherhood's biggest challenge during negotiations. The BLET negotiating team overcame management's best efforts and secured improvements in overtime rules and pay for the L&I membership.

"The overtime was a very difficult hurdle to overcome as management stated at the beginning of negotiations that they would not entertain overtime in any form," Geiger said. "L&I paid no overtime because employees were on a daily salary. It did not matter if they worked six hours or 12 — they were paid the same. Workers also did not

receive overtime for working on the sixth or seventh day of the week — just a \$20 premium. We were finally able to get our foot in the door on overtime and now overtime will be paid on an accumulative basis, either at the pro rata or punitive rate of pay, based on a sliding scale for hours worked in excess of 40 hours on a five day assignment and 48 hours on a six day assignment in addition to the \$20 premium.

"We were also able to establish a basic day provision and payment of the highest rate of pay quali-

fied for whether our member was working in that craft or not."

Brother Geiger thanked Brother John Mullen, BLET Director of Shortlines, and Dan Hartil, BLET member and L&I employee, for their invaluable assistance during negotiations.

Headquartered in Jeffersonville, Ind., the Louisville & Indiana Railroad was formed in March 1994 to acquire 106 miles of rail line between Indianapolis and Louisville. The line serves numerous major companies and an inland port facility. Since formation, L&I has located a number of new industries to its lines. It has been designated a future high-speed rail corridor by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The L&I connects with the CP-Soo, CSX Transportation, Norfolk Southern, and the PAL. Its annual volume is 33,000 carloads. The primary commodities it handles include: grain, cement, steel, scrap, plastics, food products, auto parts, lumber, chemicals, paper, and manufactured goods.

L&I is owned by the Anacostia Rail Holding, whose other holdings include the New York & Atlantic Railway, Pacific Harbor Line, and the Chicago Southshore & South Bend Railroad. The BLET already represents workers at the Pacific Harbor Line, and operating employees at the New York & Atlantic voted to join the BLET on Nov. 20, 2003. •



Rail Labor continues battle to secure full funding for Amtrak

Amtrak

Continued from Page 1

Ohio and Representative Corrine Brown of Florida.

H.R. 1631, also known as the Rail Infrastructure Development and Expansion Act for the 21st Century (RIDE 21), establishes authority for states or interstate compacts to issue \$12 billion in federal tax-exempt bonds and \$12 billion in federal tax-credit bonds for infrastructure improvements for high-speed rail. It was also introduced by Representatives Young, Oberstar, LaTourette and Brown.

These bills counter both the Bush administration proposal and the Amtrak Board proposal. President Bush's spending blueprint for fiscal 2006 would reduce Amtrak's federal subsidy to zero from \$1.2 billion, probably sending the company into bankruptcy and possibly spelling the end of passenger service in many of the 46

states now served by the rail carrier.

In April, the Amtrak board put out its own reform plan. The board's plan is based on three ideas: "uncoupling" Amtrak from intercity passenger rail service and "independently addressing" each; creating a "federal matching grant program" designed to attract increased investment from states and private entities; and "the introduction and development of competition."

Central to the board's plan are a pair of labor reforms that would be a disaster for rail labor. First, the board proposes that Congress enact legislation to shift the workforce away from the Railway Labor Act and to the National Labor Relations Act by providing that "all operators of intercity passenger rail will be subject to the same laws and regulations regarding their labor agreements, and that labor agreements of Amtrak and other intercity passenger rail operators shall terminate when they expire rather than being indefinitely extended."

The board identifies several craft specific bargaining goals that would directly impact the members of the Rail Conference. With respect to maintenance of way employees, Amtrak wants changes that would "increase management flexibility in order to deliver production more efficiently." As for train and engine employees, Amtrak wants "greater flexibility including permitting management to determine the staffing of trains and yard crews."

The second proposal the board makes is that Congress should enact legislation to "transition out of the Railroad Retirement system by allowing all new intercity passenger rail employees to be placed in Social Security with the possible added option of 401(k) requirement plans." The impact of this proposal would be devastating for the Railroad Retirement system for two reasons. One is that, over time, the entire passenger rail workforce would be withdrawn from the system, resulting in increased costs and/or reduced ben-

efits for freight railroad workers. The other is that, it may become a slippery slope down which the freight railroads will decide they would like to slide. It would only be a matter of time before the freight railroads decide that they would like to leave the Railroad Retirement system also.

Third, the board proposes "tort reform." This version of reform would enable Amtrak to move a Federal Employees Liability Act (FELA) suit from the state courts to the federal court.

BLET members are asked to email or call their members of Congress (toll-free at (877) 762-8762) and urge them to support H.R. 1630 and H.R. 1631.

In addition, the AFL-CIO's Transportation Trades Department has launched a campaign to build support among state and local governments and the traveling public to provide Amtrak with adequate long-term funding. Members are urged to visit www.ttd.org for information on how they can participate in this important campaign. •

Burlington Northern Santa Fe



Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corp. reported record first-quarter earnings of \$321 million, or 83 cents

per share, on strong shipment volumes of intermodal and agricultural products, coal and Asian imports through California ports. BNSF earned \$193 million, or 52 cents per share, a year ago. Sales rose 20 percent to \$2.98 billion.

Operating expenses for the first three months of 2005 of \$2.35 billion were \$268 million, or 13 percent, higher than the same period in 2004, primarily driven by a 9-percent increase in gross ton-miles and 31-percent higher fuel prices after hedge benefit.

First-quarter operating income increased \$224 million, or 55 percent, to \$634 million compared with the first quarter of 2004. BNSF's operating ratio decreased more than five percentage points to 78.1 percent from 83.3 percent in the same quarter of the prior year.

BNSF avoided the troubles of rival Union Pacific Railroad, which has struggled in recent quarters because of shortages of crews and locomotives as it has tried to cope with the same record traffic volumes. •

Canadian National Railway



CN reported a net income of \$299 million for the first quarter ended March 31, 2005, an increase of 42 percent from year-earlier net income of \$210 million. CN also reported revenues of \$1,706 million, an increase of 19 percent; and an increased operating income of \$526 million, up 33 percent over first quarter 2004.

Commodity groups that registered revenue gains during the quarter were metals and minerals (49 percent); forest products (26 percent); intermodal (26 percent); coal (18 percent); petroleum and chemicals (10 percent); and grain and fertilizers (eight percent). Automotive revenues declined by six percent.

CN's first-quarter 2005 performance benefited from \$121 million in revenues from the rail and related holdings of Great Lakes Transportation LLC (GLT) and BC Rail, whose operations CN consolidated on May 10, 2004, and July 14, 2004, respectively. Operating expenses for first-quarter 2005 increased by 13 percent to \$1,180 million, largely because of the inclusion of \$96 million in GLT and BC Rail expenses, higher labor and fringe benefits, and increased fuel costs.

CN also posted a record first-quarter operating ratio of 69.2 percent, a 3.3-percent point improvement over first-quarter 2004 performance. •

Canadian Pacific Railway



**CANADIAN
PACIFIC
RAILWAY**

Canadian Pacific Railway reported net income of \$81 million in the first quarter of 2005, more than triple first-quarter 2004 net income of \$24 million. Some of the highlights for CPR's first quarter

2005 include: Operating income up 54 percent to \$179 million; revenue up 14 percent to \$1,014 million, a first-quarter record; operating expenses up 8 percent; and operating expenses up just 4 percent excluding the impact of significantly higher fuel prices.

CPR expects to grow revenue in the range of 12 percent to 14 percent in 2005. Diluted earnings per share, excluding foreign exchange gains and losses on long-term debt and other specified items, are expected to be between \$3.15 and \$3.25, assuming oil prices averaging US\$55 per barrel and an average exchange rate of \$1.23 per U.S. dollar (US\$0.81). Revenue growth was strong across CPR's entire bulk commodity sector, compared with first-quarter 2004, led by coal and grain, which increased 44 percent and 23 percent, respectively.

CPR also boasted an operating ratio of 82.4 percent, a 4.5-percent point improvement over the same quarter of 2004. •

CSX Transportation



CSX Corp. posted a steep rise in first-quarter profit after logging a sizable gain from selling its International Terminals business. Quarterly income jumped to \$579 million from \$30 million in the 2004 period.

Earnings included an after-tax gain of \$425 million from shedding the international business. Surface transportation revenue for the quarter was \$2.1 billion versus \$1.9 billion in the same quarter last year. Revenue gains in the quarter were led by strength in the Company's coal and merchandise markets, which produced 20 percent and 8 percent year-over-year revenue gains, respectively.

Surface transportation operating income was a record \$351 million versus \$151 million a year ago, which was reduced by a \$53 million management restructuring charge in 2004. The Surface Transportation operating income, driven by a 10 percent increase in revenue and better cost discipline. On a comparable basis, adjusting for the 2004 management restructuring charge, Surface Transportation operating income for 2005 increased \$147 million.

The railroad's operating ratio for the quarter was 83.3 percent, an improvement of more than 6 percentage points versus the first quarter of 2004. •

Kansas City Southern



Kansas City Southern (KCS) reported first quarter 2005 financial results that show substantial quarter-over-quarter gains in revenues and operating profit.

Driven by record revenues from The Kansas City Southern Railway Company (KCSR), its principal U.S. subsidiary, and by the inclusion of the recently acquired Mexrail, Inc., KCS recorded consolidated revenues of \$198.2 million. Total KCS operating expenses for the first quarter of 2005 were \$173.4 million. Consolidated operating income was \$24.8 million compared with \$17.4 million in 2004. Revenues from KCS' domestic rail operations, which are comprised of KCSR and Mexrail, Inc., and its subsidiary, The Texas Mexican Railway (Tex Mex), totaled \$196.6 million. Total operating expenses were \$168.1 million. Operating income for the quarter ended March 31, 2005, was \$28.5 million.

KCSR's first quarter 2005 operating income was \$29.7 million, an increase of \$6.2 million over 2004. KCSR's operating ratio for the quarter was 83.4 percent, a slight improvement over 84.0 percent for the first quarter of 2004. •

Norfolk Southern



**NORFOLK
SOUTHERN**

For the first quarter of 2005, Norfolk Southern Cor-

poration reported net income of \$194 million, up 23 percent compared with \$158 million for first-quarter 2004. First-quarter results included approximately \$35 million for expenses (pretax) related to the Jan. 6 train derailment in Graniteville, S.C. Total railway operating revenue grew 16 percent to \$1.96 billion from \$1.69 billion last year, and was the highest of any quarter in Norfolk Southern's history. Intermodal revenues set a first-quarter record of \$408 million, up 24 percent, compared with first-quarter 2004.

Norfolk Southern said traffic volume was up about 106,000 units, or 6 percent during the quarter. General merchandise revenue reached \$1.1 billion, an increase of 12 percent over the same period last year.

For the quarter, the railroad operating ratio improved to 79.4 (even including expenses for Graniteville, which added 1.7 points) compared with 79.6 a year earlier. •

Union Pacific Corp.



Challenged by high diesel fuel prices and service slowed by a West Coast storm and high demand, Union Pacific Corp. on Thursday reported a 22 percent drop in its first quarter net income compared with the same quarter last year.

Net income dropped to \$128 million, or 48 cents a share, in the three-month period, compared with \$165 million or 63 cents a share in the same period last year. Union Pacific reported record operating revenue of \$3.2 billion in

the first quarter of 2005 compared to last year's \$2.9 billion. Operating income in the first quarter of 2005 was \$313 million compared to \$314 million for the same period in 2004.

Commodity revenue was a first quarter record of \$3.0 billion, up 8 percent, compared to \$2.8 billion in 2004. Drivers of the increase were a 1 percent in-

crease in volumes as well as higher fuel surcharge recoveries and improved yields.

First quarter 2005 average revenue per car was at an all-time best of \$1,306 per car, versus \$1,214 in the first quarter of 2004.

The operating margin decreased to 9.9 percent in the first quarter of 2005 from 10.9 percent in 2004, primarily due to the impact of the January storm and higher fuel prices.

The Railroad's average quarterly fuel price of \$1.45 per gallon compares to \$1.02 per gallon paid a year ago.

Although impacted by the January storm, quarterly average system speed, as reported to the Association of American Railroads, averaged 21.1 mph, 0.8 mph slower than the first quarter of 2004, but 0.6 mph higher than the prior quarter.

The railroad's operating ratio for the quarter was 90.1 percent in the first quarter of 2005, compared to 89.1 percent in the first quarter of 2004.

"Demand for our services remains strong and our task is to leverage that strength into better bottom-line results," said UP Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Dick Davidson. "As we continue to restore fluidity to our network, our customers, our employees and our shareholders will benefit." •

Q&A on new train horn regulations

In an exclusive interview, FRA answers BLET questions about new locomotive engineer duties

BLET Editor's Note: The following is a question and answer session with Grady Cothen, Deputy Associate Administrator for Safety Standards and Program Development at the Federal Railroad Administration. This Q&A is intended to help locomotive engineers understand the new regulations that go into effect June 25 regarding train horns and quiet zones.

1. How effective do you think this rule will be in making our communities more livable?

First and foremost this is a safety rule, but we are optimistic that this rule will also begin to reduce the conflicts that are growing up between railroads and communities over noise from railroad operations. Locomotive engineers regularly get caught up in that conflict, because they have a duty to warn; and many residents simply do not understand the need for the warning. We think three aspects of the rule will help. First, the rule facilitates the establishment of quiet zones in areas of low risk or where the local jurisdiction has taken steps to compensate for the absence of the horn. Second, over the next five years the railroads will need to test their air horns and "turn down" the loudest of them, since the new maximum level will gradually go into effect (110 dbA at 100 feet in front of the locomotive, at horn height). Finally, the rule will replace the old distance-driven sounding pattern with a requirement to sound the horn 15-20 seconds prior to arrival of the train on the crossing. For trains going less than 45 mph, that will reduce the noise load impacting the community. Obviously, a train going faster than 60 mph will just start blowing at the whistle board, since starting earlier would not help given the fall-off of horn intensity over the greater distance.

It was important to address the time vs. distance issue in order to make the rule practical. Our impression that state laws requiring horn sounding for 1/4 mile were not strictly enforced. Locomotive engineers running at 10 or 15 miles per hour at 2:00 a.m. have sometimes exercised judgment and showed mercy on communities — by using a standard pattern, perhaps, but starting well after the whistle post. Once you make something a Federal regulation, you've increased the pressure to comply. We wanted to have something that made sense for people using good judgment.

2. How does FRA expect that locomotive engineers will be informed of the presence of Quiet Zones?

They will handle them pretty much like they handle whistle ban jurisdictions today. Timetable notations are recommended. Some railroads also place an "R" above the "W" on the post to indicate that use of the horn is restricted.

3. Has FRA considered including locomotive engineers as participants in a "diagnostic team" used to determine the suitability of crossings for Quiet Zone designation? Would it recommend to State Agencies that we be considered for our expertise on that team?

I think involving train and engine crews is a good idea, because crew members see motorist behavior every day. In fact, one of the final rule appendices, which discusses diagnostic team considerations, recommends that railroad personnel be included in diagnostic team reviews of proposed quiet zone crossings. The perspective of crew members familiar with the territory would be particularly useful in identifying additional things a community could do address pedestrian behavior — an issue about which the rule does not have much to say.

4. What will FRA do if they find that accidents increase at a crossing or crossings in a Quiet Zone?

We are going to see numbers go up and down, depending on the location, special circumstances and random factors. Fortunately when you look at the exposure and number of public crossings, these are relatively rare events. Clearly, if we see that a crossing is turning into a real problem, with collisions and reports of near hits, we will conference with the community and railroad and see if more needs to be done. We retain that discretion under the rule.

5. Could you describe the circumstances allowing or requiring the locomotive engineer to sound the horn regardless of the restrictions of a Quiet Zone?

First, the subject matter of the rule is sounding the horn at public highway-rail crossings, so it doesn't affect other uses like warning roadway workers. Second, there will still be a requirement to sound the horn, even within quiet zones, if warning devices are known to be malfunctioning. Third, when warning systems are temporarily out of service, the horn will be used as before.

Finally, the rule states that notwithstanding other restrictions, "a locomotive engineer may sound the locomotive horn to provide a warning to animals, vehicles operators, pedestrians, trespassers or crews of other trains in an emergency situation if, in the locomotive engineer's sole judgment, such action is appropriate in order to prevent imminent injury, death or property damage." So we are not going to second guess the locomotive engineer who makes a good faith call that the horn needs to be used.

In addition, the rule is clear that use in an emergency is not **required**. The reason for that, again, is that we are not going to second guess the locomotive engineer who can't distinguish the pedestrian in dark clothing against a dark background at dusk, for in-

FRA issues final rule on locomotive horns

The Federal Railroad Administration published its Final Rule on the use of Locomotive Horns in the April 27 Federal Register.

Locomotive engineers need to be on the lookout for instructions from their railroad regarding compliance with the new regulation for sounding train horns.

The final rule will require the locomotive horn be sounded while trains approach and enter public highway-rail grade crossings. The rule allows for an exception to the above requirement in circumstances in which there is not a significant risk of loss of life or serious personal injury, use of the locomotive horn is impractical, or safety measures fully compensate for the absence of the warning provided by the locomotive horn.

Communities that qualify for this exception may create "quiet zones" within which locomotive horns would not be routinely sounded.

The effective date of this final rule is June 24, 2005. However, public authorities may begin to provide quiet zone-related documentation to FRA and other parties 30 days after April 27, 2005. This final rule supercedes the interim final rule, which was published on December 18, 2003. Therefore, the interim final rule will not take effect.

A complete copy of the Final Rule is available on the Internet at: <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/05-8285.htm> . •

stance. We are confident that locomotive engineers will do the right thing when the need arises and circumstances permit identification of the potential risk.

6. The temporal (time interval) requirement of 15 to 20 seconds of warning before reaching the crossing when traveling less than 45 mph will replace the railroads' operating rule and many State laws. What provisions will FRA make to ensure that the railroads give an advance marker for the engineer to determine the location of the crossing?

We are recommending that railroads retain — and maintain — whistle posts as they have in the past. Most whistle posts have been placed at 1/4 mile out. If the train is going 45 mph, the horn should be sounded at that point or within 5 seconds. If the train is going slower, then the pattern will be started later. Engineers know their territory and how fast they are going, and our belief is that locomotive engineers will find that they adapt to this pretty readily.

Of course, where there is a crossing every city block, this will be pretty academic. The locomotive engineer will do what is necessary to get the requisite minimum warning at each crossing.

7. Will locomotive engineers be subject to monetary penalties for violations?

There is always the potential for a civil penalty for a willful act. I'm not expecting that to happen. In our experience, locomotive engineers do a good job alerting the public at grade crossings. Perhaps more than anyone else, train and engine crew members understand the importance of this warning.

If we have to use a penalty to change abusive behavior with respect to horn use at crossings, we will. But, again, I would be very surprised for that

to become an issue.

8. Will the 15 to 20 seconds time interval be enforced should the engineer sound the horn for longer than 20 seconds?

We needed to specify a range that does two things. First, at the short end we have to provide at least minimum warning. We believe 15 seconds will handle that, but locomotive engineers will need to be sure to provide that minimum warning. Second, we wanted to provide a maximum to emphasize that this is a nuisance when it goes on longer than useful. If we had an engineer who abused use of the horn repeatedly and deliberately and a cautionary discussion did not have the desired effect, we would enforce. I don't think we are going to see many, if any, cases of that kind.

I appreciate that there may be a concern about occasionally sounding for a little more than 20 seconds, particularly where visibility is compromised, etc. That should not be an issue as a practical matter. We try to err on the side of safety, and it would be hard to fault an engineer for doing the same thing.

9. How does the rule apply to private and pedestrian crossings?

The rule does not deal with private and pedestrian crossings outside of quiet zones, so whatever use is made of the horn today would continue without change.

The rule does require that the safety of private and pedestrian crossings within quiet zones be considered by the diagnostic team in forming plans for the quiet zone. Taking into consideration comments from railroad industry parties, including your organization, we wanted to make sure that angle was covered.

Understanding the FRA's new rule on locomotive horns, quiet zones

FRA Q&A

Continued from Page 4

10. In the event of an accident, will locomotive engineers be held liable if they fail to sound the horn at a crossing in a Quiet Zone crossing?

The official answer is that the courts will decide, but I would be shocked if any court held a locomotive engineer liable for failing to sound the horn at a crossing in a quiet zone, and if it ever happened I would expect it to be quickly overturned on appeal. The rule defines the standard of care for the railroad, including the locomotive engineer, and for the community. If the rule says the locomotive engineer will withhold the audible warning within the quiet zone, that's that.

11. Does this Final Rule bring additional liability to locomotive engineers for failure to sound the horn at non-quiet zone crossings?

Most States have had laws requiring horn sounding at public crossings, and this just replaces them. Even where there has been no state law, the operating rules have in effect established a standard of care. So, in general, no, I don't think it puts locomotive engineers in a more difficult position.

12. The Final Rule mentions PTC. Has FRA considered malfunctions of a horn system associated with on-board train control?

If a railroad elected to tie in sounding the horn into a train control system they would need to treat it as a safety critical function. Certainly in looking at any product safety plan (under the new rule on Performance Standards for Processor-Based Signal and Train Control Systems) we would focus sharply on that.

13. The rule has two appendices. Appendix A describes the approved Supplementary Safety Measures (SSM) and Appendix B describes the

Alternative Safety Measures (ASM). How does FRA know that these measures actually provide the same level of safety as the locomotive horn?

We picked approaches like medians and four-quadrant gates that seemed to offer obvious advantages, and we have experience with them in demonstration projects as well as in longstanding use at various locations. Then we were somewhat conservative in applying effectiveness estimates. So we have a combination of engineering judgment and data that tells us we are on firm ground. That is not to say there won't be some variability of results from place to place. I'm sure there will be.

14. The Associate Administrator for Safety determines if a proposed SSM or ASM is adequate to provide this level of safety. What recourse is available to someone who disagrees with a decision to approve a SSM or ASM?

The issues that will arise will be around modified SSMs and ASMs, and public authority or railroad that disagrees with the initial decision may petition for reconsideration, which may trigger additional proceedings. If one of those parties remains unsatisfied after reconsideration, the party could petition for review before any Federal court of appeals.

15. How is the public, or in our case, locomotive engineers, provided an opportunity to comment on a proposed Quiet Zone when the Associate Administrator is requested to approve the Quiet Zone after there is agreement among all the other interested parties (railroads, local and State jurisdictions, law enforcement, and private land owners)?

We can't turn each of these into a full-blown rulemaking or waiver proceeding or we will never get our work done. The system is set up to make things as simple as reasonably possible. Having said that, BLET knows our grade crossing managers in the field and our staff here in headquarters.

If there are concerns that working locomotive engineers have about these budding quiet zones, please don't hesitate to step forward.

16. Wayside horns under subsection 222.59 and Appendix E require that the engineer be given advance warning that the wayside horn is operating. How will this be accomplished?

The wayside horn set-up includes a self-monitoring health indication (an orange LED, "X" shape) that tells the engineer that the system is active. If it is not displayed, then the engineer will know to sound the horn.

17. Will the maximum decibel level decrease the incidence of hearing loss among train crews? Was the hearing loss issue taken into account during the writing of this rule?

In the past, we had a minimum horn level in the Locomotive Safety regulations, but we did not have a maximum. So where the horn exceeds the new maximum it will have to be turned down. I don't think we are going to see a dramatic reduction in cab noise levels, but both the maximum level and the time-based pattern should help to reduce the noise "dose." BLET is a valued member of the Railroad Safety Advisory Committee effort on Cab Noise, which has provided recommendations for a final rule on Occupational Noise Exposure of Railroad Operating Employees that was adopted by the full RSAC on May 18. FRA is preparing the final rule in accordance with those recommendations, and it should contribute further to hearing conservation in this industry.

18. Locomotive engineers have experienced trauma following grade crossing accidents. What is FRA doing to address this problem?

Nearly 1000 fatalities occur annually from trains striking motor vehicles and individuals along the track. These events can be very traumatic to train crew members who are powerless to prevent the collisions. Work-related

traumas such as these can cause extreme stress, resulting in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or Acute Stress Disorder. It can affect safety as well.

FRA believes that employee exposure to workplace trauma from grade crossing and trespasser incidents may be an important issue affecting railroad workers. Many railroads have already established what are known as Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) intervention programs. They are varied in their approach, and it is not certain which components of those programs are most effective.

FRA's Human Factors R&D Program has initiated a research project to help understand the magnitude of this concern and to help determine the most effective components of a successful CISD intervention program. This project will help identify "best practices" for CISD programs in the railroad industry. The principal components of this project include: 1) benchmarking rail industry CISD programs; 2) establishing the prevalence of traumatic stress disorders in the rail industry and identify at-risk populations; and 3) evaluating the effectiveness of individual components of CISD programs. FRA has published notices about the study in the Federal Register in compliance with the OMB process.

The overall intent of this project is to ultimately develop the most successful CISD programs possible and to target the highest risk populations. A small CISD Advisory Group has been organized to help steer this effort, consisting of representatives from railroads, unions, and FRA Safety and R&D.

The findings and recommendations from this effort are not intended for use in a rulemaking process. FRA recognizes the railroad industry voluntarily instituted CISD programs to minimize the likelihood of extreme stress among its workforce. Similarly, we are confident that the CISD best practices identified as a result of this study can be implemented most efficiently on a voluntary basis. •

GIA Dialogue

GIA, BLET facing new frontiers in the 21st Century

By Onita Wayland
International President
Grand International Auxiliary

Like the GIA, I have been around a while — not quite 118 years, but a while. As with anything, when times change, we must change with them. The needs and direction of any organization, like our lives, require re-tooling every so often. A positive change is what we see on the horizon for the GIA. We have enjoyed many years of friendship and fellowship with our sisters and brothers, but we need to embrace and adapt to the new challenges that have occurred since the GIA began in 1887. The railroads have "super-sized," creating a tougher, more impersonal working environment. On a more positive note, rail labor unions have begun to merge, with more possibly on the way, creating better bargaining positions and increasing political clout. The current make up of Wash-

ington, D.C., and the various state houses have increased our need for vigilance and unity to make sure that railroad workers' rights do not erode any further.



not yet done. In fact, because of the merger of the former B of LE into the BLET under the Teamsters Rail Conference, we need to broaden our scope, and reach out to all railroaders and their families, who

When I was elected International President in 2001, the motto of my administration has been "Growing, Advancing with Integrity into the New Millennium." I believe we have made enormous strides in continuing to update and promote changes in our organization that are beneficial to our members and our families. However, our work is

are interested in joining our efforts to promote rail safety, quality of life, and all of the issues that make railroad employment a risky business.

In unity, there is strength, and there is not a soul out there who is associated with the railroad that is not aware that with a strong, unified voice, we can continue to make a difference in the lives of those who work for the railroad.

Change, like death and taxes, is an integral part of life. When it is a change for the better, it should be welcomed with open arms, rather than resisted. Looking towards the future, we need to make necessary changes so we can continue "Growing, Advancing with Integrity into the New Millennium." If we do not look to the future and all of the promise that it holds, we will face the inevitable consequences.

I ask all of my brothers and sisters to make suggestions as to how we can continue our mission of helping us to help you. •

BLET NEWS

Planning to work after you retire?

Railroad Retirement Board provides key information you need to know now

Retirees, and those planning retirement, should be aware of the railroad retirement laws governing benefit payments to annuitants who work after retirement.

The following questions and answers describe these railroad retirement work restrictions and earnings limitations on post-retirement employment, and how these rules can affect retirees engaging in self-employment.



1. What are the basic railroad retirement work restrictions and earnings limitations that apply to post-retirement work?

Neither a regular railroad retirement annuity (whether based on age and service or on disability) nor a supplemental annuity is payable for any month in which a retired employee works for a railroad employer, including labor organizations. This is true even if only one day's service is performed during the month and includes local lodge compensation totaling \$25 or more for any calendar month.

A spouse annuity is not payable for any month in which the employee's annuity is not payable, or for any month in which the spouse works for an employer covered under the Railroad Retirement Act. A survivor annuity is not payable for any month the survivor works for an employer covered under the Railroad Retirement Act.

Like social security benefits, railroad retirement tier I benefits and vested dual benefits paid to employees and spouses, and tier I, tier II and vested dual benefits paid to survivors are subject to deductions if an annuitant's earnings exceed certain exempt amounts.

These earnings deductions do not apply to those who have attained full social security retirement age. Full retirement age for employees and spouses ranges from age 65 for those born before 1938 to age 67 for those

born in 1960 or later. Full retirement age for survivor annuitants ranges from age 65 for those born before 1940 to age 67 for those born in 1962 or later. Deductions for all annuitants, however, remain in effect for the months before the month of full retirement age during the calendar year of attainment.

2. What are the current exempt earnings amounts for those annuitants subject to earnings limitations?

For those under full retirement age throughout 2005, the exempt earnings amount is \$12,000. For beneficiaries attaining full retirement age in 2005, the exempt earnings amount is \$31,800 for the months before the month full retirement age is attained.

For those under full retirement age throughout the year, the earnings deduction is \$1 in benefits for every \$2 of earnings over the exempt amount. For those attaining full retirement age in 2005, the deduction is \$1 for every \$3 of earnings over the exempt amount in the months before the month full retirement age is attained.

Earnings received for services rendered, plus any net earnings from self-employment, are considered when assessing deductions for earnings. Interest, dividends, certain rental income or income from stocks, bonds, or other investments are not considered earnings for this purpose.

Additional deductions are assessed for retired employees and spouses who work for their last pre-retirement nonrailroad employer and special restrictions apply to disability annuitants.

3. What are the additional deductions applied to the annuities of retired employees and spouses working for their last pre-retirement nonrailroad employer?

Such employment will reduce tier

II benefits and supplemental annuity payments, which are not otherwise subject to earnings deductions, by \$1 for each \$2 of compensation received subject to a maximum reduction of 50 percent. The deductions in the tier II benefits and supplemental annuities of individuals who work for pre-retirement nonrailroad employers apply even if earnings do not exceed the tier I exempt earnings limits. Also, while tier I and vested dual benefit earnings deductions stop when an annuitant attains full retirement age, these tier II and supplemental annuity deductions continue to apply after the attainment of full retirement age.

4. Can a retired employee's earnings also reduce a spouse's benefit?

A spouse benefit is subject to reductions not only for the spouse's earnings, but also for the earnings of the employee, regardless of whether the earnings are from service for the last pre-retirement nonrailroad employer or other post-retirement employment.

5. What are the special earnings restrictions applied to disability annuitants?

The amount disabled railroad retirement employee annuitants can earn without reducing their benefits is \$400 per month, exclusive of disability-related work expenses. While a disabled employee's annuity is not payable for any month in which he or she earns more than \$400 in any employment or self-employment, withheld payments will be restored if earnings for the year are less than \$5,000. Otherwise, the annuity is subject to a deduction of one month's benefit for each multiple of \$400 earned over \$4,800 (the last \$200 or more of earnings over \$4,800 counts as \$400). However, regardless of the amount of earnings, if a disabled annuitant works after retirement, this may also raise a question about the possibility of that individual's recovery from disability, and such work must be reported.

These disability work restrictions apply until the disabled employee annuitant is full retirement age. This transition is effective no earlier than full retirement age, even if the annuitant had 30 years of service. Earnings deductions continue to apply to those working for their last pre-retirement nonrailroad employer.

6. After becoming entitled to a railroad retirement annuity, a retired employee is thinking of becoming a self-employed contractor or consultant, and might be providing services for a railroad or last pre-retirement nonrailroad employer. How would this affect his or her railroad retirement annuity?

It depends on whether or not the Railroad Retirement Board considers the employee to be truly engaging in self-employed contracting or consulting, or whether the Board considers him or her to be functioning as an employee, and if so, who the Board considers to be the actual employer for railroad retirement purposes.

If a retiree is considered to be functioning as a self-employed contractor or consultant, his or her annuity is subject to tier I and vested dual benefit earnings deductions for net self-employment earnings.

However, if a retiree is considered to be functioning as an employee of a railroad or railroad labor organization, rather than as a self-employed contractor or consultant, the retiree's annuity would be subject to suspension. If the retiree is considered the employee of a nonrailroad employer, the retiree's annuity would be subject to earnings deductions for nonrailroad wages, and to additional deductions if he or she is considered to be working for a last nonrailroad pre-retirement employer.

Board determinations on contracting or consulting services take into account multiple factors which could be evaluated differently depending on the circumstances of the individual situation. Since no single rule covers every case, anyone requiring a determination as to whether contractor or consultant service is valid self-employment should contact the Board for a determination well in advance of making a commitment so as to be sure of the effect on benefit payments.

7. How can individuals get more information about these railroad retirement work restrictions and earnings limitations?

They should contact the nearest field office of the Board for information or refer to the Board's Web site at www.rrb.gov.

Persons can find the address and phone number of the Board office serving their area by calling the automated toll-free RRB Help Line at (800) 808-0772, or from the Board's Web site. Most Board offices are open to the public from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on Federal holidays. •

'Desperate' UTU seeks another raid of BLET membership

UTU Raid

Continued from Page 1

President Hahs also warned that there are no operating agreements in place for the proposed craft of train and engine service employees.

"The carrier could take the position that all current operating rules and pay scales are out the window because there would no longer

be locomotive engineers, conductors and trainmen," Hahs said. "There are no agreements in place for the craft of train and engine service employee."

The May 27 action also makes it clear that the UTU was never sincere about re-affiliation commitments they made to the AFL-CIO.

"The single-craft issue is the very reason UTU withdrew from AFL-CIO five years ago," President Hahs said. "Now that it's back on the table, it sends

the message that they were never serious about their bid to re-affiliate.

"One must wonder why any other labor organization would ever consider merging with such a reckless union. On the one hand, their leaders talk about unity and solidarity, but on the other, their actions have done nothing but divide rail labor and place rail craft unions in jeopardy." •

Unity Conference

Continued from Page 1

being part of the largest transportation union in the world," said Perry

Geller, National Secretary-Treasurer of the BMWED. "Each time we have asked, we have received help from the Teamsters. Let's use the IBT to mobilize so we can make a difference on Capitol Hill."

The BMWED and the BLET are both divisions of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Rail Conference, which currently represents more than 70,000 railroad employees. •

BLET, PHL reach contract agreement

Pacific Harbor Line, Inc. (PHL) and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) have signed a new four-year labor agreement covering PHL's operating and maintenance of way employees.

Signed May 12 after a year and a half of negotiations, the pact substantially increases employees' basic rates of pay, introduces payments for extended hours, enhances eligibility to the 401K plan, and provides a signing bonus and other improvements.

BLET's Division 214 in Long Beach,



Calif., has represented PHL's employees since the railroad was formed in 1998. Union employment has grown from 27 employees initially to nearly 100 in the past seven years.

PHL President Andrew Fox said, "The union was determined, but also realistic in helping us to get this agreement done. Our employees have earned these contract improvements by building this company. At the same time, our customers will benefit from the flexibility and productivity fea-

tures covered by the new pact."

"It took us three tries to get this agreement right," said BLET General Chairman Pat Williams. "But in the end, the company made some essential changes, which allowed us to achieve ratification."

Besides General Chairman Williams, the BLET would like recognize the invaluable efforts of Vice President Steve Speagle and Division 214 President Marlon Taylor and Local Chairman Alvin Sykes. The PHL negotiating team included Andrew Fox and Vice President Bill Roufs.

The BLET is a member of the Rail

Conference of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and represents more than 59,000 employees in the United States. Its predecessor union, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, was the senior national labor organization in the United States and also North America's oldest rail labor union.

PHL provides railroad switching services to customers in the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles. It also dispatches all BNSF Railway and Union Pacific trains within the ports. PHL is a subsidiary of Anacostia Rail Holding, a firm that operates local and regional freight railroads. •

Opinion: UTU misrepresented BLET agreements during recent BNSF strike

(The following are portions of an April 29 memo from BLET General Chairman Dennis Pierce, BNSF (Former BN Northlines)/MRL, issued to all his Local Chairman regarding the UTU's strike at BNSF on April 27.)

Dear Sirs and Brothers:

This is in reference to (the April 27) strike against BNSF Railway by UTU. As most of you know, UTU used the BLET/BNSF Primary Recall Agreement as its justification to strike. Since the strike, BLET's agreement and our actions have been grossly misrepresented and this is to give you the other half of the story that UTU has omitted in its spin.

From what we know, UTU's complaint regarding BLET's agreement is centered around the portion that allows junior demoted engineers to bid or be forced into the engineers' quota at their location, while senior demoted engineers remain on the ground. UTU accuses in its posts that this portion of the agreement created "flow back" as was implemented on the former SF portion of the property with the concurrence of UTU.

The truth is that the Primary Re-

call Agreement did not create "flow back" as was created on the former SF. The former SF "flow back" agreement allows engineers to self demote prior to exhausting the engineer's quota and return to the ground at their own discretion. Quite the opposite, the Primary Recall Agreement changed nothing in that regard. Engineers on the former BN portion of the property must still exhaust the same engineers' positions before returning to the ground that they had to exhaust prior to the new agreement. While UTU may choose to ignore this fact, BLET went out of its way to avoid any changes to the steps that must be followed before engineers on the former BN portion of the property are allowed to flow back to ground service crafts. Rather, the only provisions that were changed in the primary recall are those that govern the promotion or entrance to the engineer's craft.

BLET's agreements have always governed engineer's promotion and the filling of engineer's positions. The last time that our jurisdictional rights on this Committee were challenged in that regard was in 1967. In that case, the UTU predecessor BLFE argued that BLE was not within its rights to implement the 5 day work week agreement

in yard service without UTU concurrence. The complaint then centered around BLE's decision to create the engineer's "hog board," modifying how engineer's vacancies were filled. BLFE lost that argument and we are certain that the former BLFE leadership of the UTU that now brings the same argument forward now will lose the argument again. A critical court decision in 1942 established the "cleavage of power" for any union to begin at the entrance to the craft(s) that it represents. That court precedent was quoted in the 1967 arbitration settlement and has been quoted in other similar arbitration awards as late as 1991.

Ironically, UTU argues in its court case that under UTU Agreements, engineers can never be on the ground when they could hold an engineers position on their district. As most of you know, BLET's agreements have never required that, we have always forced and accepted bids from the junior men when jobs went otherwise "unbid" at other locations. In addition, senior forced engineers have always been released back to the ground when junior engineers were available to properly release them. While the Primary Recall Agreement may have expanded the bid-

ding and forcing of junior engineers to include the home location, that application was in already in effect on the former FWD and CS portions of the former BN property. For many years, junior engineers have been allowed to bid and were forced to vacant engineer's positions at their home location and UTU registered no complaints.

You can rest assured that we will be taking the action necessary to defend our right to negotiate and implement agreements that are specific to locomotive engineers, be that in the court proceeding or in any possible arbitration if that is where things go. Just so you know, multiple disputes around the country concerning ebb and flow related issues have been arbitrated and none have risen to the level of a major dispute up to now. We don't see this one ending up any different.

Fraternally,

Dennis Pierce
General Chairman
BNSF (Former BN Northlines)/MRL

NEWS BRIEFS

New reporting forms available for BLET Divisions, SLBs, GCAs

Under the Constitution of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, all subordinate bodies are required to perform a monthly audit.

Beginning in June, all BLET general committees of adjustment, state legislative boards and local divisions should begin completing a monthly audit to comply with the IBT Constitution.

To assist with the audit, the National Division has prepared a new report form known as a "Trustees/Auditing Committee Report." A copy of the report can be downloaded and printed here:

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

BLET Bylaws provide that divisions will be au-

ditied by "trustees" of the division. The vice president, local chairman and legislative representative are designated as "trustees" by the Bylaws.

The general committees and state legislative boards should be audited

BLET Job Bank: Amtrak

Amtrak is recruiting Locomotive Engineers to work in Miami, Florida, Jacksonville, Florence, S.C. or Raleigh, N.C.

Duties include the safe operation of Amtrak locomotives, complying with train orders, wayside signals, railroad operating rules, special instructions, federal, state and local regulations to transport passengers and equipment safely and efficiently.

Locomotive engineers must perform air brake

tests as required and must frequently make timely and critical decisions under stressful conditions.

Candidates must have a current Class I Engineer Certificate and must currently be working as a Locomotive Engineer with one year of service. Candidate will automatically be disqualified if their driving record indicates a conviction on an alcohol or substance violation or a refusal to submit to testing in connection with a moving violation with the past 36 months. Candidates must have no decertifications (rule violations CFR240.117) within the last three years. Candidates will be required to pass the Hogan Personality Inventory Test.

Interested candidates are asked to fax their resumes as soon as possible to the attention of Sarah Ray at (202) 906-3349. (EOE, F/M, D/V — Amtrak is an equal employment opportunity employer). •

BLET NEWS

A message from Jim Hoffa, Teamsters General President

You've got to fight for your rights!

Since voting to merge the BLE with the Teamsters 18 months ago, our union has made great strides towards strengthening rail labor. One example is the Rail Labor Bargaining Coalition (RLBC), a coalition comprised of the BLET, Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees and five other rail unions.

The RLBC has already been meeting with the rail carriers and has submitted a strong proposal that will curb the crew reductions the carriers have forced upon us and the very long hours that you face every day. Part of the reason you voted to merge with us was to achieve a safer workplace and I can assure you we are fighting for your right to that everyday.

We are aggressively lobbying U.S. congressmen on your behalf, too. In past years, the rail carriers such as Union Pacific, Norfolk Southern and others have had the upper hand with Congress. This caused the regulatory body of the railroads, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), to listen more to rail carrier lobbyists than to the people who work on the rails. But we are working to change that dynamic.

Since the beginning of this year we have held several lobby days in Washington, D.C., where rank and file members and state legislative representatives from both the BLET, the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees and our government affairs department have met with Congressmen and their



staff to explain the need for Amtrak funding and the affects of lax rail regulatory standards. The halls of Capitol Hill are very familiar to the Teamsters Union and we are here to represent you.

By standing together we are growing rail labor strength. A safe workplace is your right as a working man or woman in America. We will fight for your right to it!

Stay United, Stay Strong!

James P. Hoffa
Jim Hoffa
 IBT General President

Teamsters Disaster Relief Fund offering assistance in Pa., N.Y. and N.J.

The Teamsters Disaster Relief Fund recently received a Disaster Alert Notice for the states of Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey due to severe storms and flooding that caused major damage in early April.

BLET members in the following Pennsylvania counties are eligible for aid: Bradford, Bucks; Columbia; Luzerne; Monroe; Northampton; Pike; Wayne; and Wyoming.

Members in the following New Jersey counties are eligible: Bergen, Essex, Gloucester, Hunterdon, Mercer, Morris, Passaic, Sussex and Warren.

Members in the following New York counties are eligible: Broome, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Orange, Rensselaer, Schenectady, Schoharie, Tioga and Ulster.

While funds are limited, the Teamsters would like to help as many people as possible. If you were impacted by the storms, please download and complete the "Request for help" form by Thursday, May 26, 2005. For a PDF of the form, go to:

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

The IBT is also asking for contributions to provide assistance to mem-

bers in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York.

Please send a donation to the Fund to ensure everyone who is in need gets support and help. Send your check to:

Teamster Disaster Relief Fund
 25 Louisiana Avenue, NW
 Washington, DC 20001

Contributions are tax deductible.

MAY 2005 CALENDAR & EVENTS

JUNE 12-17, 2005... 78th Annual Southeastern Meeting Association, Montgomery, Ala.
 Hosted by Brother David Bowen and the members of BLET Division 740, the 78th annual SMA will be held at the Embassy Suites Hotel, 300 Tallapoosa St., Montgomery, Ala. The room rate is \$114 per night and reservations can be made by calling: (334) 269-5055.

JUNE 26-30, 2005... 67th Annual Eastern Union Meeting Association, Saratoga Springs
 Hosted by Arrangements Chairman Bill Kearsing and the members of Division 46, 67th annual EUMA will be held at the Prime Hotel Saratoga Springs, 534 Broadway, in Saratoga Springs. Brother Kearsing reports that the hotel is now accepting early-bird reservations by calling (518) 584-4000 or (888) 999-4711. Members should ask for the EUMA rate when making reservations, which is \$126 per night. Brother Kearsing can be contacted at (518) 869-2297 or <BKearsing@aol.com>.

JULY 3-8, 2005... 65th Annual International Western Convention, Calgary, Alberta
 Hosted by Mike Linkletter and the members of BLET Division 355, the 65th annual IWC will be held at the Fairmont Palliser, 133 9th Ave. SW, in Calgary. Room rates are \$144 per night (Canadian). For details, contact Brother Linkletter at <ble355leg@yahoo.com>.

JULY 10-15... Hazmat Training Workshops, National Labor College, Silver Spring, Md.
 Weapons of Mass Destruction awareness training is now part of the five-day hazardous waste/chemical emergency response training offered at the George Meany Center/National Labor College. The workshop also covers OSHA and DOT required procedures and different levels of response and worker protection in case of a hazardous materials emergency or release. Training includes advanced classroom instruction, intensive hands-on drills and a simulated hazmat response in full safety gear. To register, call (301) 439-2440 or e-mail: crodgers@georgemeany.org.

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

Advisory Board March Activity

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

National President Don M. Hahs—National Division office: General supervision of BLET activities; General office duties; TTD Winter Executive Committee meeting, Las Vegas; AFL-CIO Executive Council Meeting, Las Vegas; Rail Labor Coalition meeting, Washington, D.C.; FRA meeting, Washington, D.C.; National Negotiations, Washington, D.C.; IBT Western Region meeting, San Diego.
First Vice-President & Alternate President Edward W. Rodziewicz—Assisted President in general operation of National Division Office; Vice President assignments; Special Representative assignments; Organizing department; Shortline department; Passenger department; Various correspondence & phone calls; South Buffalo RR contract negotiations; CRLO mtgs., Rail Labor Division mtg.; TTD mtg.; AFL-CIO mtgs.; Metro North mtg.; CN/WC; Norfolk Southern General Chairmen mtgs.; Rail Bargaining Coalition mtg.
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; Secretary-Treasurers Workshops in Denver and Chicago; Local Chairman's Workshop, University of Illinois, Champaign, Ill.
Vice-President Paul T. Sorrow—Performed office inventory; Reviewed cases for Public Law Boards; Attended meeting of Division 498; Assisted CSX, NS, GTW committees with the handling of various issues; Meeting with Local Chairman of Division 598; Performed general office duties.
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; Paducah & Louisville; Chicago Central & Pacific; Div. 815 and 131 mtg.; Metra; CN/WC investigation, Fon du Lac, Wisc.; Div. 173 mtg., general assistance, WSOB, Madison, Wisc.; L/M mtg., CN/WC; Negotiations, WC GCoFA conf. call, Homewood, Ill.; CN/WC negotiations; WSOB organizing mtg.; Local Chairman's Workshop, Champaign, Ill.; IHB negotiations assistance, Hammond, Ind.; BRC and EJ&E general assistance, Chicago; Metra Section 6 notice mtg.; Part 240.409 dockets this month: EQAL 01-16, 00-84, 02-01, 03-31, 02-45, 02-52, 03-35 and 01-23.
Vice-President Dale McPherson—CP Rail; Port. Term. RR; Longview Portland & Northern; Longview Switching Co.; Indiana RR; Utah Railroad; UP Eastern Dist.; UP former CNW; DM&IR RR; Portland & Western RR; Great Western RR; Appalachian & Ohio RR; BLET National Bargaining Cmte.; Public Law Boards 5604, 5681, 5721, 6040, 6281, 6558, 6589; UP work/rest projects; RSAC positive train control cmte.; Utah RR contract negotiations, Provo, Utah; General office duties, telephone, correspondence; National negotiations w/ NCCC, Washington, D.C.; P&W RR contract negotiations, Salem, Ore.; Mtg. w/ members at Indiana RR, Indianapolis; DMIR/CN contract negotiations, St. Paul, Minn.
Vice-President & U.S. Nat'l Legislative Representative Raymond A. Holmes—BLET Washington D.C. office; General office duties, telephone, correspondence; Cooperating Rail Labor Organizations (CRLO) mtgs., Miami; AFL-CIO Executive Council mtgs., Las Vegas.
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; KCS mtg. w/ GC Parker, Kansas City; Mtg. w/ BLET Division 930, Kansas City; Review of awards and Executive Session, PLB 6810 (Tex Mex); Holiday, vacation, correspondence 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); Attend Safety Summit II mtg., BNSF, Fort Worth; National bargaining, Washington, D.C.; Mediation for Pacific Harbor Line, Long Beach, Calif.; Division 264 mtg., El Paso, Texas; Public Law Board 6540, BNSF, Reno, Nev.; PLB 6491, MRL, Reno; Travel, office work.
Vice-President E.L. "Lee" Pruitt—Assisted general chairmen & members of: UP-Western Lines; UP-Western Region; UP-Central Region; UP-Southern Region; UP-Tacoma Belt; General office duties, telephone paperwork; UPCR GC Rightnowar, auto-markup arbitration, Boston; PTC symposium, Washington, D.C.; UPWL and UPWR arbitration boards 180, 4450, 4451 and 4452, Detroit, Mich.; Arbitration Board 6833 and 6834, assisting UPSR GC Gore, New Orleans; Trip rates, assisting UPWL GC Hannah, Colton, Calif.; Ebb and flow negotiations, assisting UPWL GC Hannah, San Antonio; Office, paper, filing, STD and calls, assisting UPWL, WR, CR, SR, Tacoma Belt.
Vice-President Paul L. Wingo Jr.—Assigned to NS-Southern Lines and Eastern Region GCoFAs; Iowa, Chicago & Eastern GCoFA; Meridian Southern; New York Susquehanna & Western; New England Central; BLET Rail Security Officer; Attended meetings with NS, Norfolk, Va; PLB 6728; Special issues with Divisions 899, 239 and Meridian Southern; New England Central contract negotiations, St. Albans, Vt., w/ GC Ben Martin; Vacation; Security project planning; General office duties.



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