



NEWS

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BLET responds to UTU President

(BLET Editor's Note: The following is the text of a letter from BLET National President Don M. Hahs to UTU President Paul Thompson.)

July 16, 2004

Paul C. Thompson
President — UTU
14600 Detroit Ave
Cleveland, OH 44107-4250

Dear Mr. Thompson:

This will acknowledge your letter dated July 13, 2004, wherein you stated that since being elevated to International President of the UTU you have repeatedly done all you could to make peace with BLET. You suggested a review of the BLE/UTU Merger document to determine if the concerns of the BLE membership could somehow be addressed. You further state that my response to your proposal was that peace is impossible unless the UTU joins the BLE in an affiliation with the Teamsters.

In actual fact, my reply to your suggestion was that the BLE has now merged into IBT by a favorable vote of 81% of the BLE membership. The BLET

is a member of the IBT Rail Conference and that any discussion would now have to include the IBT. I offered to set up a meeting between UTU and IBT representatives to determine if any

were not receptive to a meeting with IBT, I did not believe you had drawn a line in the sand on the issue.

Now I find at the end of your July 14, 2004, web page post titled "UTU re-

join the BLET. Your members know that the UTU's failure to join together with other rail unions has seriously undercut the collective strength of all rail labor at the bargaining table. Your members know that the Teamsters Union has a well deserved reputation for getting good contracts for its members in the transportation sector, from United Parcel Service to the major freight companies, to air freight, to carhaul, and elsewhere. And your members know that the Teamsters Union is committed to re-establishing strength and solidarity in rail labor through the recent merger with the BLE, the pending merger with the BMW and IBT's overtures to other rail unions. IBT has guaranteed to preserve the autonomy of these proud organizations while supporting them in their fight to regain strong contracts for their members

BLE members overwhelmingly approved the merger with the Teamsters. A recent poll shows the vast majority of BMW members support a similar merger. When you tried to raid the Teamsters/BLET General Committee at

"Mr. Thompson, it's easy to throw stones and spread disinformation to mislead, but that will not help rebuild Rail Labor. The reality is that everyone knows that Rail Labor is in crisis and that unity and solidarity are the only way forward. We call on you to put aside the rancor and look at what is best for the members of UTU and Rail Labor as a whole."

— BLET National President Don M. Hahs

common ground for additional discussions could be found. BLET did not request to be a part of the proposed meeting. You refused to meet.

In the same discussion, you related several concerns about IBT, to which I said that a meeting may allay what appeared to be personal concerns you have with IBT. I also suggested you survey the UTU membership to determine if they are interested in UTU opening discussions with IBT. A suggestion you also refused. At that time, while you

sponds to unprovoked BLE&T raid," a quote attributed to you at the UTU regional meeting in Boston which does appear to draw a line in the sand. The quote is "Not in my administration will we ever become a member of the Teamsters organization."

Given your stated position on an affiliation with IBT of which the BLET is now a part, you leave the UTU membership without hope of being represented by the strongest transportation union in North America, unless they

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Members of Congress focus on Rail Security Day

Rail security funded less than airline security

BLET and Teamster members joined members of Congress on June 21 to speak out about the state of rail security in the nation at rallies across the country. Among those holding press conferences or rallies were Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) at Grand Central terminal in New York City and Congressman Sherrod Brown (D-OH) at the Amtrak station in Akron, Ohio.

"I thank Congresswoman Maloney and Congressman Brown for taking leadership roles on rail security," BLET National President Don Hahs said. "I thank all members of Congress for focusing on rail security as well as all BLET members who participated in the rallies on June 21."

"The Bush administration is failing to address the threat posed by hazardous materials routed on rails through high target areas. Since 9/11, the government has been focused on airline security while leaving the rails virtually unprotected," said Jim Hoffa, Teamsters General President. "While more attention has been paid to passenger train security in the U.S. after the Madrid bombings, freight rail security has been ignored. With the nation's elevated



Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) speaks at a rally with BLET members at Grand Central terminal in New York City on June 21 as part of Rail Security Day. Maloney serves as Chair of the Task Force on Homeland Security for the House Democratic Caucus. To her immediate right is Congressman Eliot Engel (D-NY), who serves as the Co-Chair of the Task Force on Homeland Security for the House Democratic Caucus.

threat level, much more needs to be done to secure our rail system."

Unlike the airline industry, the rail industry has been left to its own devices to protect against potential terrorist attacks. In fact, the rail industry has

introduced cost-cutting measures that have replaced federally certified locomotive engineers with remote control technology, leaving locomotives unmanned

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BLET NEWS

Railroad security funded less than airline security

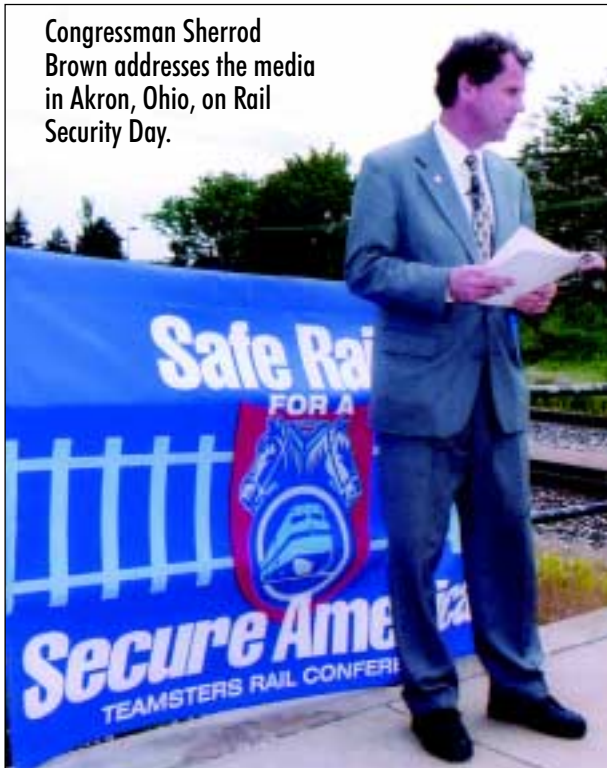
Rail Security

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and the railroad infrastructure vulnerable. The contrast between funding levels for security is startling: since 9/11 the airline industry has been the beneficiary of nearly \$3 billion in Homeland Security Department funds for bolstering security while the rail industry has received less than \$100 million.

“We must shift the focus of the rail corporations from pure profits to the safety and well being of rail employees and the general public. We need the eyes and ears of every railroad employee on the job and helping secure the rails,” continued Hoffa.

Rail Security Day was organized by Democrats in the House of Representatives to increase awareness of the dangerous security gaps in the rail industry. •



Congressman Sherrod Brown addresses the media in Akron, Ohio, on Rail Security Day.



Jim Ong, Chairman of the BLET Ohio State Legislative Board, is interviewed regarding remote control issues as they relate to national security at a press conference in Akron, Ohio.



Left: Mickey Evans, a member of BLET Division 497 (Jersey City, N.J.), is flanked by Congressman Engel and Congresswoman Maloney during the press conference. He works for PATH.



Right: Kelly Cassidy, Legislative Representative of BLET Division 269 (Jamaica, Long Island, NY), talks about rail safety on passenger trains during the press conference. She works for the Long Island Rail Road.

Don Hahs Letter

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Canadian Pacific, your own members turned against you and voted for Teamsters/BLET representation. Again, I challenge you to conduct an impartial poll of your members to ascertain if they want to be part of the new Rail Conference within the Teamsters.

Your letter is a fabric of misrepresentations and half-truths, which was obviously written in a spirit of desperation on your part, accusing the BLET of raiding the membership of the UTU. We do not consider offering trainmen the opportunity to join the BLET as an act of raiding. While the BLET is not raiding the membership of the UTU, I assume that your desperation may be fueled by the fact that in the last several months more than 1,500 former UTU members have seen the wisdom in joining the BLET and recognizing the strength that the Teamsters bring to rail labor.

• I find it outlandish that the UTU would accuse any other union of raiding in view of the fact that the UTU leadership found it necessary to disaffiliate itself from the AFL-CIO to avoid the sanctions involved in its raiding of this organization.

• Do you remember the UTU’s effort to destroy this organization back in 1997 through what has become known as its “Bosnian Amendment”?

• Do you remember the petition filed by former UTU President Charles Little in January 1998 with the National Mediation Board attempting to get the Board to rule that a single craft existed on the Union Pacific Railroad and force a representation election on that property?

• Do you remember the petition filed with the National Mediation Board by the UTU in 2001 for a single craft determination and a representation election on the Kansas City Southern Railroad?

• Do you remember the “war chest” created at the 1999 UTU convention to destroy the BLE?

• If you do not remember those efforts on the part



Left: Mo Morrow, Director of Communications for the BLET National Division, is interviewed by the media at the Amtrak station in Akron, Ohio, on Rail Security Day. Brother Morrow talked about the realities of a terrorist attack on our nation’s rail system.

of the leadership of the UTU to destroy the BLE, you should remember the most recent effort of your Legislative Department to get a bill introduced in the House of Representatives which would require the National Mediation Board to conduct a survey of all railroad employees described in the first division of Section 3 (h) of the Railway Labor Act to determine the membership of those employees in any labor organization? The bill would require the NMB to certify for each rail carrier as a representative of the employees described in Subsection A of that rail carrier, the labor organization with the greatest number of members who were surveyed under this proposed bill. I am enclosing a copy of this proposed bill for your reference.

• And last but by far not least, UTU, after committing more than once to work with the BLE on remote control, entered into a letter of intent with the carriers conference to grab remote control work for so called UTU represented employees while the BLE was in the middle of its International Convention.

• Your allegation that the Van Wart Study Commission of 1982 was a result of the strike by the BLE

is completely untrue. UTU voluntarily accepted the recommendation for creating “the Study Commission” before the BLE strike of 1982. The findings of that study commission, in part, eventually led to the disastrous 1985 UTU Halloween Agreement. Former UTU International President Charles Little even admitted that the 1985 Halloween Agreement was probably one of the biggest mistakes the UTU ever made. That agreement resulted in almost 20 years of substandard pay for operating employees in the railroad industry.

• Another point in your letter described the successes of the UTU in negotiating national agreements. In looking at the last four UTU negotiated national agreements, I would be embarrassed to describe those agreements as successes. I doubt that UTU members would characterize those agreements as anything other than failures. You continue to tout the UTU’s “zero cost health care option” in your latest agreement. The latest numbers available indicate that less than .5 percent of UTU members have cho-

CSX seeking line sale/lease in WV

BLET opposes action that could impact 250 union jobs; UTU says it's OK

According to recent articles by the Associated Press and the Huntington Dispatch, CSX Transportation has put up for bid or lease two major routes in West Virginia and western Maryland, potentially affecting as many as 250 union jobs.

CSX
TRANSPORTATION

CSX or to go to work for the shortline railroad(s) that may purchase or lease the lines, presumably at lower rates of pay and with less benefits.

Don Hahs, National President of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, said the BLET is opposed to such a sale or lease.

"We must do everything in our power to retain the union jobs that so many worked so hard to achieve," Hahs said. "With good union jobs either disappearing or going overseas at an alarming rate, we must fight to keep the good railroad jobs we have."

As devastating as this sale or lease could be to CSX employees, United Transportation Union spokesman Frank Wilner said that the UTU "would not necessarily oppose" the lease or sale of the line.

The UTU spokesman also attempted to downplay the significance of nonunion shortlines by stating that, "the UTU holds more shortline labor contracts than all other unions combined."

The BLET President responded by saying that shortline workers are usually paid less and have lesser benefits than Class 1 workers, so a move to

replace Class 1 operations with shortline operations would have a negative impact on workers. He also noted that the BLE/BLET has successfully organized more shortline railroads in the past two years than any other union.

"While organizing shortlines is an important goal of the BLET, we cannot sit idly by and watch the erosion of our Class 1 carriers' to the short-lines that offer lower pay and less benefits," President Hahs said. "The BLET is working hard to improve the pay and working conditions of shortline employees, but we don't want to sacrifice Class 1 jobs for shortline operations."

President Hahs said that the proposed sale or lease appears to be driven by the forces of Wall Street, and may not be in the best interests of safety.

"I believe CSX's attempts to sell or lease these lines says something about the railroad's financial well-being," President Hahs said. "Perhaps if CSX had not paid \$68 million to former CEO John Snow, then the railroad would be in better financial shape today.



"From our understanding, there is a great deal of coal reserves in those mountains of West Virginia, and prospects for the future look good. Therefore, I cannot understand why CSX would want to sell or lease the lines in question. Many of the locomotive engineers and trainmen in that region are fourth and fifth generation railroaders, and it is their professionalism and skill that makes the trains run safe in the mountainous terrain. If operators of a shortline think they can come in and just hire someone off the street to fill these jobs, then they are just kidding themselves." •

BLET short-term disability insurance available in October

As a result of the last national contract, many members of the BLET will soon be able to take advantage of a short-term disability program obtained by the National Division through MetLife.

The effective date of the plan is October 1. However, those who become disabled after July 1 will be able to collect benefits after October 1. The benefits are not retroactive to July 1. Participants will receive benefits for the period in which they are disabled up to the maximum of 52 weeks.

The benefit rate is \$402 per week for up to 52 weeks. This benefit level is guaranteed for three years from October 1, 2004. The plan's premium is paid for by the railroads participating in the last national contract.

Some of the plan details are as follows:

- Engineers and Trainmen actively employed by a participating railroad are eligible to receive benefits under the plan if they are disabled on or off the job while assigned to a classification covered by a BLET collective bargaining agreement. Full-time representatives and employees of the BLET are also eligible to participate.

- MetLife will not offset benefits received by a participant under the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act or under a disability retirement from the Railroad Retirement Board against benefits paid under the insurance contract.

- Surgery that is recommended by an employee's physician as an element

in a continuing course of treatment, or is intended to improve and/or facilitate an employee's performance of an essential function he regularly performs in his occupation, shall be a covered condition under the Plan and not considered "elective surgery."

- Participants are not required to provide proof of insurability and pre-existing conditions are not taken into account in determining eligibility for payment of initial claims.

- Employers may not offset benefits paid under the Plan against an award paid to an employee under the Federal Employers Liability Act.

BLET National President Don M. Hahs lauded the plan, which was negotiated in the last national contract.

"This is definitely a step in the right

direction toward providing our members much-needed protection in the unfortunate event they should become disabled and can't provide a living for themselves and their families.

President Hahs also commended Vice President Lee Pruitt and Special Representative Jim Bradford for the work they did in establishing the plan.

"They did an excellent job in finding the best plan available for the dollars available," President Hahs said.

BLET members with questions on this new Plan should contact:

Jim Bradford
BLET Short Term Disability Plan
Administrator

E-mail: Bradford@ble-t.org

Office: (830) 896-1592

Cell: (754) 718-5689 •

The UTU is at it again, seeking backdoor takeover of BLET membership

The United Transportation Union is at it again, seeking another backdoor attempt to raid membership of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen.

Right now, the UTU is looking for someone to sponsor legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives that would force the BLET into an all-out war on the nation's railroads.

The proposed bill would allow the

National Mediation Board (NMB) to conduct a survey of all locomotive engineers, conductors and trainmen who work for Class 1 railroads. Based on this survey, the NMB would certify a single union to represent all the workers.

According to the proposed legislation, the single surviving union would be the union with the most members at the time the election. Currently, the

UTU has slightly more members than the BLET.

The bill does not have a sponsor and has not been assigned a bill number. However, BLET and IBT lobbyists in Washington, D.C. are working to make sure it is defeated if introduced.

This backdoor attempt is similar to the "Bosnian Amendment" the UTU attempted to pass in 1997 and the single operating craft idea introduced in 1998.

"The UTU is at it again," said BLET National President Don Hahs, "trying to take by force what it cannot have any other way."

"When given the opportunity to voluntarily merge with the UTU in 2001, our membership overwhelmingly voted no. Apparently, some people just can't take 'no' for an answer."

A copy of the UTU proposal is at: <http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/hrnmb.pdf> •

BLET NEWS

Three General Chairmen win reelection bids

Austin Morrison, Tom Roberts and Dennis Pierce were all reelected to their general chairmen offices in recent months, according to reports received by the BLET Public Relations Department.

BNSF (former C&S, CRI&P, FWD)

General Chairman Austin Morrison won reelection by acclamation at the Burlington Northern Santa Fe General Committee of Adjustment's triennial meetings in Amarillo, Texas, from June 15-16. He is a member of BLET Division 574 in Amarillo, Texas.

Brother B.J. Brown of Division 574 was also reelected by acclamation to his post as First Vice-Chairman of the BNSF GCofA, which represents the former C&S, CRI&P and FWD properties.

Also winning elections were Terry D. Sutton of Division 186 (Denver, Colo.), who will serve as Second Vice-General Chairman; and T.R. Williamson of Division 430 (Trinidad, Colo.), who will serve as Secretary-Treasurer.

National Vice-President Stephen D. Speagle attended the meetings and addressed the delegates on a number of issues of national importance.

CSXT Northern District (Conrail Shared Assets)

Brother Tom Roberts of BLET Division 601 (Newark, N.J.) has been reelected General Chairman of the CSXT Northern District (Conrail Shared Assets) General Committee of Adjustment.

Reelected to the office of Vice-General Chairman was W.J. Lyons of Division 46 (Albany, N.Y.). Reelected to the office of Assistant Secretary-Treasurer was R.E. Smale of Division 851 (Philadelphia).

Newly elected officers are M.C. Kronyak of Division 235 (Union City, N.J.), who will serve as Alternate Vice-General Chairman; and J.P. Louis of Division 421 (Buffalo, N.Y.), who will serve as Secretary-Treasurer.

National Secretary-Treasurer William C. Walpert and National Vice-President Paul T. Sorrow were in attendance to address the delegates. The convention was held May 24-25 in Buffalo, N.Y.

BNSF-MRL

Dennis R. Pierce has been reelected to another three-year term as General Chairman of the BNSF-MRL General Committee of Adjustment at meetings in Las Vegas on July 3. Pierce, a member of Division 98 (Lincoln, Neb.), was elected by acclamation.

Matt O. Wilson of Division 104 (Spokane, Wash.) was elected to the office of First Vice-Chairman; Steve



Front row, from left: William C. Walpert, National Secretary-Treasurer; Paul T. Sorrow, National Vice-President; Tommy Roberts, General Chairman; Tom Vassie, Division 382 (Buffalo); Jim Louis, Secretary-Treasurer; Matt Kronyak, Alternate Vice-General Chairman; and Gene Imler, Special Representative.

Second row: Pat Norton, Division 157 (Jersey City, N.J.); Bill Lyons, Vice-General Chairman; Ron Smale, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer; Mike Fitzgerald, Division 3 (Cleveland); Mike Henry, Division 169 (Syracuse, N.Y.); and Ken Lefauve, Division 382 (Buffalo).

Third row: Greg Durocher, Division 867 (Waterbury, Conn.); Bill Munger, Division 439 (Allston, Mass.); Ron Bernash, Division 63 (Springfield, Mass.); Charlie Otten, Division 46 (Albany, N.Y.); R.M. Evans, Division 169 (Syracuse, N.Y.); and Steve Marko, Division 169 (Syracuse, N.Y.).

Fourth row: Rich Vogt, Division 387 (Camden, N.J.); Angelo J. Chick Jr., Division 227 (Potsdam, N.Y.); Rich Uffert, Division 601 (Newark, N.J.); Greg Lund, Division 421 (Buffalo); and Jim Kermans, Division 1 (Detroit).

Bratka of Division 98 (Lincoln, Neb.) won election to the Second Vice-Chairman position; and Don May of Division 104 (Spokane) was elected Third Vice-Chairman.

James H. Nelson of Division 644 (Galesburg, Ill.) was reelected without opposition to the office of Sec-

retary-Treasurer of the Committee. Joe Zawada of Division 232 (Laurel, Mont.) will fill the position of Alternate Secretary-Treasurer.

Alternate vice-chairmen were also elected. They

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Pine Bluff remote control wreck reinforces BLET's safety concerns

A July 9 remote control accident in Pine Bluff, Ark., underscored a number of concerns the BLET shared with the Federal Railroad Administration during recent safety meetings in Washington, D.C.

BLET National President Don M. Hahs recently visited Capitol Hill for top level meetings with Betty Monroe, Acting Administrator of the FRA, and Congressman James Oberstar, Ranking Democrat on the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee.

A Union Pacific remote control job (K043 YT35 B36R) went through a control point on the Jonesboro Subdivision, crashing into the side of a train on mainline track that was carrying hazardous materials. The remote control unit hit the freight train on the mainline, derailing 11 cars. The remote control unit was pulling over 100 cars and was operated by two junior employees (both were recently employed in early 2004).

The accident happened in Pine Bluff, Ark., where the City Council had passed a safety resolution seeking to

ban remote control train operations in February of 2003.

The accident highlighted several of the safety concerns the BLET has raised regarding the unregulated operation of remote control locomotives, including:

Lack of Training

Both employees were deemed "qualified" to operate remote control locomotives by Union Pacific but had relatively little railroad experience. One employee had only nine paid trips under his belt.

Inexperience

In spite of their inexperience, Union Pacific managers assigned a trainee to work with the crew.

Safeguards Overridden

The accident happened on mainline track. The Union Pacific's failsafe method to allow remote control movements without proper point protection is an automatic train stop system. Transponders known as a "puck," cause remote control trains to slow or stop as they approach mainline tracks. In this case, the puck system was dis-



An ariel view of the accident scene.

abled — per instructions from Union Pacific management — allowing the remote control train to enter mainline track.

Efficiency Over Safety

According to reports from the field, the automatic train stop system was overridden in an effort to increase productivity of the remote control job.

Accident Reporting

According to reports, the Union Pacific did not originally report this acci-

dent to the National Transportation Safety Board as a remote control accident. Nor was remote control reported to the local newspaper, which carried a story on the incident.

Hazardous Materials

The train on mainline track was carrying hazardous materials, and this accident could have resulted in a ma-

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Montana State Legislative Board marks 100th anniversary

The month of May marked the 100th anniversary of the founding of the BLET Montana State Legislative Board, and was acknowledged at a meeting of the Board held in Billings, Montana, May 21-22.

In addition to BLET Division Legislative Representatives from Montana, several invited guests attended, including: Edward W. Rodzwicz, BLET First Vice President; Raymond Holmes, BLET Vice-President & National Legislative Representative; Dale McPherson, BLET Vice-President (and a founding member of Division 180 in Glendive, Mont.); Dennis Pierce, BNSF-MRL General Chairman; and Mike Muscha, Chairman of the North Dakota State Legislative Board.

The Guest of Honor was Brother Calvin Burr, former Montana State Legislative Board Chairman and oldest surviving past Chairman. Brother Burr is a longtime member of Division 392 (Havre, Mont.) and started his railroad career on the Great Northern railroad in the days of the steam engines.

During the business meeting, Montana State Legislative Board Chairman Craig Gilchrist read aloud out of the original hand-written journal containing the minutes from the meeting when the Board was first formed on May 17, 1904.

The journal, which has been preserved over the years, is now a keepsake of the Board.

He noted with interest, that in reviewing the old journal, it reflects discussions as many as 40 years ago about the matter of locomotive engineer licensing.

"The Board has a long history of activism and involvement with the political process in Montana in defense of working men and women, a past of which our members can be proud, and one of which I am honored to continue," said Chairman Gilchrist.

He noted that Montana was the first state to have every Division in the State affiliated with the Montana AFL-CIO and counts that as another means by which the cause of railworkers can be advanced.

In addition to the anniversary celebration, the Board members attended a Railroad Retirement informational conference, met with officials of the Federal Railroad Administration, heard reports from senior BLET officers attending, and held a business meeting.

Election of officers also took place during the meeting. Chairman Gilchrist was re-elected as Chairman. He is a member of Division 298 in Glasgow, Mont. Murray Hurlburt of Division 392 (Havre, Mont.) was elected to the office of Vice-Chairman; Duane C. Wetsch of Division 195 (Forsyth, Mont.) was elected Secretary-Treasurer; and Dave Torgerson of Division 499 (Whitefish, Mont.) was elected Alternate Secretary-Treasurer. •



Delegates and invited guests attending recent Montana State Legislative Board meetings pose on the pilot of engine #1301, a hand-fired steam locomotive used as a switch engine in the Northern Pacific Railroad yards in Glendive, Mont. The locomotive is now on display in Billings, Mont.

The attendees gathered May 21-22 in Billings to mark the 100th anniversary of the Board and to conduct their quadrennial business meeting.

Front row, from left: Evan Schroedel, Division 504 (Great Falls, Mont.); BLET National Vice-President D.L. McPherson (Division 180, Glendive, Mont.); BNSF-MRL General Chairman Dennis Pierce; and Montana State Legislative Board Chairman Craig Gilchrist, Division 298 (Glasgow, Mont.).

Middle row: Barry Green, Division 180 (Glendive, Mont.); BLET Vice-President & U.S. National Legislative Representative Raymond Holmes; Retired Montana State Legislative Board Chairman Calvin Burr, Division 392 (Havre, Mont.); BLET First Vice-President Edward W. Rodzwicz; and MSLB Alternate Secretary-Treasurer Dave Torgerson, Division 499 (Whitefish, Mont.).

Back row: North Dakota State Legislative Board Chairman Mike Muscha; MSLB Secretary-Treasurer Duane Wetsch, Division 195 (Forsyth, Mont.); Jim Cowan, Division 262 (Missoula, Mont.); and MSLB Vice-Chairman Murray Hurlburt, Division 392 (Havre, Mont.)

Present but not pictured is former MSLB Chairman D.B. Ditzel, Division 232 (Laurel, Mont.).

IC&E workers rally for dignity, respect, and first contract



On June 19 in Davenport, Iowa, employees of the Iowa, Chicago and Eastern (IC&E) Railroad represented by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) held a rally to kick off a campaign to win a first contract with the short-line railroad.

The BLET members are looking to secure a labor agreement that establishes better working conditions that will allow them to spend quality time with their families, pay parity with employees at IC&E parent company Cedar American Rail Holding's other short line railroads, and affordable family health insurance.

"It's time for Kevin Schieffer, CEO of the IC&E, to respect the hard work of the employees who have helped make this railroad a success," said Dustin Heichel, General Chairman, BLET-Iowa, Chicago and Eastern Railroad. •

Remote Control

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for hazmat spill.

Remote Control Ban

The city of Pine Bluff, Ark., was one of the first cities in the nation to pass a resolution banning remote control train operations. Citing many of the

safety problems involved in the July 9 accident, the Pine Bluff City Council passed a resolution banning remote control train operations on February 18, 2003.

Conclusion

"This situation is absolutely disgraceful," said BLET National President Don M. Hahs. "That remote control job was attached to over 100 cars; it was operated by raw recruits; safety controls were pur-

posely overridden for productivity's sake; hazardous materials were involved; and all of this happened in a city that had passed a safety resolution seeking to ban remote control train operations in the name of public safety.

"The BLET will continue in its pursuit of safe train operations throughout the United States, and will endeavor to ensure that accidents such as this are not swept under the rug," Hahs concluded. •

BLET NEWS

IN THE LINE OF DUTY Dennis Vinson

BLET Division 230 (Meridian, Miss.) member Dennis Vinson was killed in a collision between his Norfolk Southern train and a gasoline tanker truck on June 25. He was 58 years old.

The train had a three-man crew. The train's conductor, Anthony J. "Tony" Mills, 58, was also killed in the accident, and the brakeman, Charles LaBella, 58, jumped off the rear of the train and suffered minor injuries, police said. The driver of the truck, Henry Blount, also died.

The driver of the truck caused the accident by disregarding safety signals. Shortly before the crash, Blount had picked up more than 8,000 gallons of gasoline at the Chalmette Refining plant. The billowing black smoke resulting from the collision hung in the air and could be seen across the metro New Orleans area.

BLET National President Don Hahs extended deepest sympathy to the Vinson family on behalf of the 50,000 members of the Brotherhood of Locomo-

tive Engineers and Trainmen. He ordered the flag at National Division headquarters in Cleveland, Ohio, to be flown at half-mast in honor of our Brother who lost his life in the line of duty.

Brother Vinson joined the BLET on June 1, 1990.

Services for Brother Vinson were held on June 29 at the Fielding Funeral Home in Covington, Louisiana. •

IN THE LINE OF DUTY Heath Pape

Brother Heath Pape, a member of BLET Division 197 in San Antonio, Texas, was killed in a collision between a Union Pacific train and a BNSF train on June 28. Brother Pape had just joined the BLET. He was 23 years old.

Brother Pape's father, E.G. Pape, has been a member of BLET Division 197 since 1982.

BLET National President Don M. Hahs expressed his deepest sympathy to the Pape family on the behalf of all the members of the BLET. As is customary, the BLET flag will fly at half mast over the BLET's headquarters at the Standard Build-

ing in Cleveland to honor Brother Pape.

The collision unleashed a cloud of chlorine gas and ammonium nitrate. The wreck derailed 40 cars in a rural area southwest of San Antonio. Fire officials say as many as 50 people suffered minor respiratory irritation.

Funeral services were held on July 2 at the United Methodist Church in LaVernia, Texas.

He is the sixth member of the BLET to lose his life in an on-the-job accident in 2004. On May 19, BLET Division 172 (Fort Worth, Texas) member E.M. "Mike" Rogers, 49, was killed in a head-on train col-

lision near Gunter, Texas. On May 18, BLET Division 106 (Muncie, Ind.) member Jeff C. York, 35, was killed in a Norfolk Southern switching accident in Elwood, Ind. On February 21, Anthony C. Rodella, 57, and Jeffrey S. Bohler, 32, were killed in a collision of two Union Pacific trains in Carrizozo, N.M. Both Brothers belonged to Division 192 in El Paso, Texas. BLET Division 230 (Meridian, Miss.) member Dennis Vinson was killed in a collision between his Norfolk Southern train and a gasoline tanker truck on June 25. He was 58 years old.

General Chairmen

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include: Don L. Helander of Division 499 (Whitefish, Mont.), First Alternate Vice-Chairman; Rick A. Olson of Division 746 (Mandan, N.D.), Second Alternate Vice-Chairman; and Charlie E. Sheets of Division 13 (LaCrosse, Wisc.), Third Alternate Vice-Chairman.

The meetings began on June 28 with 44 delegates in attendance. The delegates have considered numerous issues, including some amendments to the General Committee bylaws.

The delegates also participated in an educational workshop for Local Chairmen presented by the BLET Education & Training Department, which helped the attendees hone their skills for use in representing members in company fact-findings.

Delegates also heard a detailed financial report by GCofA Secretary-Treasurer Jim Nelson.

BLET National President Don Hahs addressed the group and took questions on July 1. He was accompanied by BLET First Vice-President Ed Rodziewicz, who also gave a report.

Teamsters International Vice-President John Murphy of Boston presented delegates with a comprehensive report on the status of BLET/Teamster initiatives. The report included a detailed PowerPoint presentation.

Delegates also heard reports from BLET Designated Counsel, BRCA, LE&CMPA and ORBA Financial Services. •



69th SWCM Golf Tournament

Tuesday, September 14 (8:00 a.m.)
Woodforest Golf Club
 6201 Mulligan Drive Montgomery, TX 77316
 (936) 588-8800 · www.woodforestgolf.com

FOUR-MAN SCRAMBLE, \$80 PER PLAYER
 Includes transportation, box lunch and prizes. Drink tickets available.

GOLF CONTACT
 L.R. Martin · Phone: (281) 579-8788 · Email: railroad@ev1.net

MAKE CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO: "BLE&T DIV 62 — 69TH SWCM GOLF"
 Mail this form including payment by August 30, 2004 to:
 D.C. Battle, Secretary-Treasurer, Division 61
 1813 N. Carlsbad Lane · Deer Park, TX 77536-6080



Name: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Team Members: (Optional) (Filled on a first request basis)

Name: _____ Name: _____

Name: _____

Don Hahs Letter

Continued from Page 1

sen this option for their health care plan because they understand that if they get sick or become injured, this plan will cost them thousands of dollars. While the most recent UTU national agreement did address the post-

85 pay issue, it also created a new sub class of operating employee through entry rates that we will have to deal with in future negotiations.

• Teamster/BLET have organized a dozen new shortlines since we started discussing our merger. Each year the Teamsters Union organizes more than 10,000 new workers through NRLA and NMB administered elections.

• During the latest National Master Freight Agreement the IBT "got the hammer back," forcing freight employers to once again recognize the right to strike even during the term of the contract. The Master Freight Agreement has had no negative effect on freight railroads.

See Don Hahs Letter, Page 7

Important advisory to all active members

FRA: Positive test numbers for drug, alcohol testing are going in the wrong direction

The Federal Railroad Administration recently held a meeting in Jacksonville, Fla., with representatives of rail labor and all Class 1 railroads in mid-June to discuss an alarming trend in employee drug testing results.

The FRA expressed concern over a recent increase in the number of positive drug and alcohol results in post-accident testing as well as an increase in the number of positives in random testing.

The rate of testing in the industry is dictated by the percentage of positive tests. The Code of Federal Regulations reads as follows:

"FRA 49 CFR, Part 219:
"219.608 b) The (Federal Railroad) Administrator's decision to increase or

decrease the minimum annual percentage rate for random alcohol testing is based on the violation rate for the entire industry.

"219.608 (c)(1)
"(1) When the minimum annual percentage rate for random alcohol testing is 25 percent or more, the Administrator may lower this rate to 10 percent of all covered employees if the Administrator determines that the data received under the reporting requirements of §219.800 for two consecutive calendar years indicate that the violation rate is less than 0.5 percent.

"219.608(c)(2)
"(2) When the minimum annual percentage rate for random alcohol test-

ing is 50 percent, the Administrator may lower this rate to 25 percent of all covered employees if the Administrator determines that the data received under the reporting requirements of §219.800 for two consecutive calendar years indicate that the violation rate is less than 1.0 percent but equal to or greater than 0.5 percent."

In a similar way, the Administrator determines the drug testing rate.

"219.602(c) When the minimum annual percentage rate for random drug testing is 50 percent, the Administrator may lower this rate to 25 percent of all covered employees if the Administrator determines that the data received under the reporting requirements of §219.800 for two consecutive calendar years indicate that the reported positive rate is less than 1.0 percent.

"219.602(d)(d) When the minimum annual percentage rate for random drug testing is 25 percent, and the data received under the reporting requirements of §219.800 for any calendar year indicate that the reported positive rate is equal to or greater than 1.0 percent, the Administrator will increase the minimum annual percentage rate for random drug testing to 50 percent of all covered employees."

The FRA has allowed for carriers to develop programs for employees, such as Operation Redblock and Operation Stop. It was noted at the meetings in Jacksonville that some carriers are no longer supporting these self-help programs. The employee assistance programs are extremely important, and BLET members can play a key role in reversing this alarming trend by taking a more active role in these self-help programs. •



SWCM 2004 Registration Form

**69th annual Southwestern Convention Meeting
Houston, Texas • Sept. 13-16, 2004**



HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Contact the Woodlands Waterway Marriott Hotel and Convention Center at (281) 367-9797. The BLET Southwestern Convention 2004 group rate is \$115 per night and the hotel registration deadline is Sept. 1. Hotel address is 1601 Lake Robbins Dr., The Woodlands, TX 77380. Attendees flying into town should fly into Houston's Bush Intercontinental Airport to avoid lengthy auto travel to the hotel.

SWCM INFORMATION

Early registration is encouraged. Registration fee is \$90.00 per person if postmarked by August 30, 2004; Fee is \$115 per person if postmarked by September 1, 2004, or later.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail Address: _____

BLET Division: _____ Position: _____
(Division President, LC, LR, etc...)

Spouse/Other: _____

GIA Auxiliary: _____ Position: _____
(Member, President, Sec., etc...)

REGISTRATION FEE (Make Checks Payable to: "69th SWCM")

_____ \$90 Per Person If postmarked by August 30, 2004

_____ \$115 Per Person If postmarked by September 1, 2004, or later

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

ACTIVITIES (Please indicate number attending each activity)

Monday, Sept. 13: Breakfast () BLET Luncheon () GIA Luncheon () Reception ()

Tuesday, Sept. 14: Breakfast () Dinner ()

Wednesday, Sept. 15: BLET Breakfast () GIA Breakfast ()

..... BLET Luncheon () GIA Luncheon () Banquet ()

Thursday, Sept. 16: Breakfast ()

Please mail this form, along with check or money order payable to "69th SWCM" to:

R.T. Windsor, SWCM Treasurer
202 Maple
Frontenac, KS 66763

For additional information: Call G.Y. Bailey at (281) 250-7629 (cell) or email <GYBailey@sbcglobal.net>; OR
Kathie Bailey at (281) 955-5444 (home) or e-mail <KDBailey@sbcglobal.net>.

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

BLET response to UTU President

Don Hahs Letter

Continued from Page 6

• The IBT fought Overnite for three years until the IBT was betrayed by a federal court decision that came out of Overnite's home town in Richmond, Virginia. Even so, Overnite had to spend hundreds of millions of dollars opposing IBT. And, because of IBT's aggressive campaign, Overnite employees saw their wages increase by more than \$5 per hour and now enjoy many other improvements.

• It is interesting that you raise Central States Pension Fund, since nothing at Central States could affect rail employees who are, as you point out, covered by Railroad Retirement. The problems at Central States are no different from those affecting hundreds of other pension funds as a result of the adverse equity markets in 2000-2002. IBT is working hard with the government, employers and pension experts to preserve good Teamster pensions and to solve these problems.

Mr. Thompson, it's easy to throw stones and spread disinformation to mislead, but that will not help rebuild Rail Labor. The reality is that everyone knows that Rail Labor is in crisis and that unity and solidarity are the only way forward. We call on you to put aside the rancor and look at what is best for the members of UTU and Rail Labor as a whole.

Very truly yours,

/s/

Don M. Hahs
President

BLET NEWS

BLET/IBT collective bargaining survey due July 30

In the coming months the BLET/Teamster Rail Conference will begin coordinated national bargaining with the nation's railroads. In order to best represent your interests, this campaign will be member driven and will reflect the desires and priorities of our members whose day-to-day hard work ensures the safe transport of rail freight throughout the United States.

For this campaign to succeed at the highest level, your Union needs member input as we prepare for the many difficult issues that lie ahead over the next several months, everything from determining adequate pay and compensation improvements to addressing new technology. Bargaining with Class I railroads is never easy and your con-



tributions are even more important to making this campaign work.

You will receive a membership survey in the mail in the next few days. Please take a few moments to fill out and return the survey to the IBT Rail Conference no later than July 30. •

New FRA rule proposal targets hearing loss in train crews

A new rule proposed by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) seeks to prevent hearing loss by railroad employees who spend most of their working hours inside the cab of a locomotive.

The FRA entered the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) into the Federal Register on June 23. The new rule would reduce unnecessary noise exposure and potential hearing loss of locomotive engineers and trainmen.

It modifies current noise level standards, which were established in 1980, and also sets out additional requirements.

The new rule would require railroads to conduct noise monitoring and to implement a hearing conservation program for railroad operating employees whose noise exposure equals or exceeds an 8-hour time-weighted average of 85 decibels.

The proposed changes would require manufacturers to design and build locomotives with quieter cabs and for railroads to maintain them to new standards. Noise reduction features such as better insulation, relocation of air brake exhaust piping, and less vibration from cab equipment already are being incorporated into newer locomotives. The rule supports these and

other methods to reduce interior cab noise to the proposed lower levels.

In addition, the rule would require train crews to use hearing protection and railroads to provide training in hearing loss prevention, implement hearing conservation programs and conduct regular noise monitoring.

FRA expects that this proposed rule will reduce the likelihood of noise-induced hearing loss for railroad operating employees.

Now that the NPRM has been published in the Federal Register, there is a 90-day comment period. Written comments must be received by September 21, 2004. This can be done online at: <http://dms.dot.gov/>. The DOT DMS Docket Number is FRA-2002-12357.

The 90-day comment period will be followed by a meeting of the Railroad Safety Advisory Committee (RSAC). RSAC will review those comments before the Final Rule is published. FRA established RSAC in 1996 to develop new regulatory standards through a collaborative process with all segments of the rail community. It includes labor, management, the federal government, shippers, suppliers and other interested parties.

The complete rule is available at <http://dms.dot.gov>. •

JULY 2004 CALENDAR & EVENTS

AUGUST 17-22... 64th Annual International Western Convention, Albuquerque, N.M.
Pat and Barbie Lynch and the members of BLET Division 446 (Gallup, N.M.) will host the 64th annual IWC in Albuquerque, N.M. Reservations at the Hyatt Regency Albuquerque (300 Tijeras NW, Albuquerque, NM 87102) can be made by calling: (505) 842-1234. The BLET room rate is \$99 per night. The deadline for this rate is July 4. After July 4, any rooms still available will be \$199 per night.

SEPTEMBER 13-16... 69th Annual Southwestern Convention Meeting, The Woodlands, Texas
Local Chairman G.Y. Bailey and the members of BLE Division 62 will host the 69th annual Southwestern Convention Meeting (SWCM) in The Woodlands, Texas, a suburb of Houston. Kathie Bailey will serve as the GIA Chairperson for the convention. Reservations can be made by calling The Woodlands Waterway Marriott Hotel and Convention Center at: (281) 367-9797. Brother Bailey suggests flying into Bush Intercontinental Airport to avoid lengthy auto travel to The Woodlands. The hotel address is: 1601 Lake Robbins Dr., The Woodlands, TX 77380. More hotel information is available at: Marriott.com/houmw. See the BLET website for registration information: <http://www.ble-t.org/info/meetings/swcm>

SEPTEMBER 18... U.S. Railroad Retirement Board Informational Conference, Ft. Worth, TX
The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board will conduct an informational conference for BLET officers in Fort Worth, Texas. The meeting will take place at the Holiday Inn South (100 East Alta Mesa Blvd.), with registration beginning at 8 a.m. The program begins promptly at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 12:30 p.m.

OCTOBER 18... U.S. Railroad Retirement Board Informational Conference, Pittsburgh, Pa.
The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board will conduct an informational conference for BLET officers in Pittsburgh, Pa. The meeting will take place at the Greater Pennsylvania Regional Council of Carpenters Union Hall—Green Tree, 495 Mansfield Ave. Registration for the conference begins at 8:00 a.m. and the program begins promptly at 8:30 a.m., ending at 12:30 p.m.

OCTOBER 22... U.S. Railroad Retirement Board Informational Conference, Portland, Ore.
The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board will conduct an informational conference for BLET officers in Portland, Ore. The meeting will take place at the Hilton Garden Inn (12048 NE Airport Way), with registration beginning at 8 a.m. The program begins promptly at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 12:30 p.m.

Advisory Board May Activity

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

International President Don M. Hahs—National Division office: General supervision of BLET activities; General office duties; Health and welfare meetings, Cleveland; AFL-CIO Transportation Trades Department (TTD) meetings, Washington, D.C.; International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) Unity Conference, Las Vegas; Scholarship fundraisers, Kansas City and Texas; National Mediation Board meetings, Las Vegas; National Carriers Conference Committee (NCCC) meetings, Las Vegas.
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; SBRR Section 6 discussions; Division 607 mtg.; IBT Unity Conference; State Legislative Board Chairmen mtgs.; NCCC mtg.; Various telephone, correspondence, conference calls.
General 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; Midwest Rail All Craft Scholarship tournament, Kansas City, Mo.; IBT Unity Conference, Las Vegas; Conrail GCoFA mtgs., Buffalo, N.Y.
Vice-President Paul T. Sorrow—Public Law Board 6619; Advisory Board mtg.; Grand Trunk Western contract discussions; Wheeling & Lake Erie Section 6 negotiations; Worked on issues involving SBA 1063; Assisted GTW, CSX and NS Northern Lines w/ various issues.
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; Safety mtgs., CBA, Metra, Chicago; Remote control negotiations, BRC; Arb. assistance, IHB; Prior rights seniority dispute & general assistance, CN/WC, Green Bay; Metra safety committee mtg. & training agreement mtg., Chicago; Chicago roundtable mtg.; Division 184 mtg., CN/WC; National Academy of Arbitrators & related mtgs., Las Vegas; CN/IC GCoFA Triennial mtg. & training, Tunica, Miss.; FRA Part 240.409 dockets this month: EQAL 01-29, 01-02, 01-16, 03-35, 01-91.
Vice-President Dale McPherson—CP Rail; Port. Term. RR; Longview Portland & Northern; Longview Switching Co.; Indiana RR; Missouri & Northern Arkansas RR; Utah Railroad; UP Eastern Dist.; UP former CNW; BLET National Bargaining Cmte.; PLBs 5604, 5681, 5721, 6040, 6281, 6589; UP work/rest projects; RSAC positive train control cmte.; UP trip rates, ID service mtgs., Omaha; General office duties, telephone, correspondence, St. Paul, Minn.; 401k, pension mtgs., DMIR/CN; IBT Unity Conference, Las Vegas; Montana State Legislative Board mtgs., Billings, Mont.
Vice-President & U.S. Nat'l Legislative Representative Raymond A. Holmes—BLET Washington D.C. office; General office duties, telephone, correspondence; Oklahoma State Legislative Board mtg.; IBT Unity Conference, Las Vegas; Montana State Legislative Board mtgs.
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; New York, Susquehanna & Western RR; St. Lawrence & Atlantic RR; Mtg. w/ GC Clark and Tex-Mex, Corpus Cristi; CN-IC GCoFA mtgs., Tunica, Miss.; General office duties, research, correspondence.
Vice-President Stephen D. Speagle—Assigned to: BNSF, MRL, PHL; General office duties; Mtgs. w/ carrier & GCA, Fort Worth; Mtg. w/ BNSF general chairmen, Fort Worth; Mtg. on switching limits, Fort Worth; Section 6 negotiations, Pacific Harbor Line, Long Beach, Calif.; Interdivisional mtgs., Fort Worth; Wabash Hospital Board mtg., Decatur.
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; UP on property negotiations, UPWL, WR, CR, SR, Omaha; Leadership mtgs. w/ GC Donnigan, UPWR, Salt Lake City; Trip rate mtgs. w/ GC Donnigan, UPWR, Pocatello, Idaho; National Short Term Disability mtgs., Washington D.C.
Vice-President Paul L. Wingo Jr.—Assigned to: NS-Southern Lines and Eastern Region GCoFAs; Iowa, Chicago & Eastern GCoFA; Meridian Southern; BLET Rail Security Officer; Attended IC&E planning w/ IBT, Washington, D.C.; NS shy bladder case w/ FRA; Short term disability negotiations, NS; Mtg. w/ NS General Chairmen, Norfolk, Va.; Security projects; LERB preparation; Office work and conference calls.

SAFETY TASK FORCE HOTLINE

(800) 306-5414



Report major accidents when they happen

LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND TRAINMEN NEWS

Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen
A Division of the Rail Conference, International Brotherhood of Teamsters

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