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



Fields of green

With storms moving out of the Kanawha Valley at sundown, a northbound coal train is greeted with a little evening color as Norfolk Southern EMD SD70ACe No. 1009 leads 100 coal loads north toward Hobson Yard from the coalfields of southern West Virginia. Photo taken at Grimms Landing, W.Va., on July 1, 2017.

Photo: Chase Gunnoe

RAIL UNIONS FILE PETITION AGAINST FRA

BLET, SMART TD CHALLENGE CREWS CROSSING FROM MEXICO INTO UNITED STATES

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) and the International Association of Sheet Metal Air, Rail and Transportation Workers Transportation Division (SMART TD) filed a joint petition on September 4 challenging actions of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) that allow crews comprised of Mexican nationals employed by a Mexican rail company to operate trains across the United States border and into the U.S. instead of American crews employed by American railroads.

Since July 9, the FRA has allowed foreign crews from Kansas City Southern de Mexico (KCSM), a railroad based in Mexico and subsidiary of Kansas City Southern (KCS), to cross into the U.S.

and run trains on the Texas Mexican Railway Company ("Tex-Mex") line in Laredo, Texas. BLET and SMART TD maintain that this violates long-established federal laws and regulations regarding safety, training, crew qualifications and conduct of locomotive engineers and conductors operating freight trains in the U.S. The FRA is an agency of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), which also is named as a respondent in the petition.

"The Petitioners challenge this conduct as arbitrary and capricious, an abuse of discretion, in excess of the Respondents' statutory authority and otherwise contrary to law," the petition states.

There has been no order, waiver, public notice or documentation published by the FRA regarding the actions being challenged. The unions seek to set

aside the agencies' actions and to require that they divulge all internal records detailing the authorization of the practice, including the vetting of the non-U.S. crewmembers by FRA, and the decision to allow KCSM, a foreign company not incorporated in the United States, to operate across the border into this country.

"FRA's conduct has generated significant safety concerns," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "U.S. crews are held to the highest safety standards while crews coming in from Mexico are held to much lower standards in terms of certification, testing and operating experience. This degradation in safety is unacceptable. Beyond that, while American companies outsourcing jobs to foreign countries is nothing new, all Americans should be angered by this

job giveaway on our own soil."

"We deem it to be unsafe, we deem it to be a threat to American jobs. FRA has not been able to answer simple questions regarding certification and qualification of the foreign crews. Nor have they explained in any way how they plan to enforce American safety rules to hold the foreign crews to the same high safety standards that govern all American railroad workers," SMART Transportation Division President John Previsich said. "We are not going to let FRA stand aside and ignore their responsibilities while a Class I carrier allows foreign crews to cross the border and jeopardize the safety of our members and the American public."

The petition was filed in U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. @@

"THIS DEGRADATION IN SAFETY IS UNACCEPTABLE. BEYOND THAT, WHILE AMERICAN COMPANIES OUTSOURCING JOBS TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES IS NOTHING NEW, ALL AMERICANS SHOULD BE ANGERED BY THIS JOB GIVEAWAY ON OUR OWN SOIL." — PRESIDENT PIERCE



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BLET PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY DENNIS R. PIERCE

DON'T TURN BACK THE CLOCK

When the first Labor Day was celebrated in New York City in 1882, our Brotherhood had been fighting to improve wages and working conditions for locomotive engineers for nearly 20 years. These days, some note the holiday as marking the unofficial end of summer, but the true history of Labor Day is far more somber.

America in the late Nineteenth Century was a decidedly unfriendly place for workers. The six day workweek was the norm, and the typical work day lasted from 10 to 12 hours, without payment of overtime. There were no pensions, health care or vacations for the average worker. The courts considered trade unions to be illegal conspiracies in restraint of trade. A railroad strike in 1877 led to industrial warfare in which railroad workers and citizens were killed by federal troops, and 10 years after the first Labor Day a private army hired by Andrew Carnegie murdered seven steel workers in Homestead, Pennsylvania.

Despite this dark history, the labor movement is the engine that made the American Dream a reality for tens of millions of workers and their families. All of the benefits we enjoy today — including paid holidays like Labor Day — are the result of generations of struggle by American workers and their unions. Those victories were not won just by union leaders fighting on behalf of their members. Rather, they were the product of union leaders and members fighting together in unity, waging struggles that required blood, sweat and tears, and genuine sacrifice to win.

We now carry on the struggle



President Pierce with a group of Norfolk Southern engineers at the BLET's Washington D.C. regional meeting (from left): Keith Holley, Local Chairman of Division 335 (Elrama, Pa.); Casey Pearce, Local Chairman of Division 899 (Birmingham, Ala.); Ray Vigil, Secretary-Treasurer of Division 226 (Newark, N.J.); President Pierce; and Scott Brown, Local Chairman of Division 259 (Easton, Pa.).

initiated by our forefathers. Like the countless generations that came before us, we carry the torch for fair wages, a safe work place, and dignity on the job. We in turn will pass the torch to the next generation to carry in hopes that the struggle to protect our union rights will continue for generations to come.

But that struggle is not easy. Labor unions are under attack like never before. The Supreme Court's recent *Janus* decision has changed the landscape into a decidedly anti-union environment.

The possibility of a national right-to-work law is being considered in the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate. What this type of legislation

does is relieve nonmembers of the obligation to pay for the representation they receive while retaining the union's duty of fair representation.

The biggest con ever pushed on the American worker by corporate bosses is the notion that he or she is better off without a Union contract. To accomplish that, they spew lies and make false promises, and they promote division within the house of labor ... all to create a class of freeloaders that will drive unions into bankruptcy and out of existence because the costs of representation far outweigh the unions' income. So, we really should call this type of legislation "right-to-freeload." Ultimately, it is the right

to make the union weaker, and the bosses richer.

If these corporate-backed politicians succeed in eliminating labor unions from the American workplace, your Union contracts go away with them. Many of our members do not realize that without a union and a union contract, there is no seniority roster or seniority district.

We are in a fight like none of us have ever experienced. And it won't happen in a single, winner-take-all battle. Instead, years of attacks on labor, some hidden in seemingly harmless legislation, lie ahead. That means we need all hands on deck, and we need to educate our membership exactly how stark are

the risks we face if we don't mount an historic struggle.

This fall's election could mark a major turning point for organized labor. Wall Street and Big Business are seeking to turn back the clock to the dark days of the late Nineteenth Century. I don't think anyone in the BLET wants the railroad industry to go back to a non-union environment. I don't think anyone wants the railroad to become a workplace where seniority rosters, contractually negotiated wages, work rules, and benefits are gone.

To restore this nation, and to protect America's middle class and the labor movement, we must elect politicians who are not afraid to say the word UNION and support us in our efforts. On page 6 of this issue, you will find a list of BLET-endorsed candidates for office. These candidates were selected by the BLET State Legislative Board Chairmen who were elected to represent your best interests in the state where you live.

I urge all BLET members to join our fellow Brothers and Sisters throughout the labor movement by electing politicians who understand and support organized labor. Fulfilling your obligation to vote in the national, state and local elections this fall is an investment in the BLET not unlike the sacrifices of those who preceded us, and it can have an equally powerful impact on where we go from here. It also is the best way to honor those who fought for your right to vote. Don't allow anti-union politicians and their wealthy corporate sponsors to turn back the clock!

DENNIS R. PIERCE
BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT

66

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BLET NATIONAL DIVISION ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

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

reference to a specific request and can be used in future correspondence.

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

response; however, an e-mail message is not considered an official communication.

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

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

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



GENERAL PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY JAMES P. HOFFA

MISSOURI WORKERS RALLY TO DEFEAT RTW BALLOT MEASURE

Hardworking Missourians stood up to corporate cronies in August, overwhelmingly rejecting their efforts to enact a so-called right-to-work (RTW) law in the state that would have curbed the ability of workers to join together to negotiate for higher pay, benefits and safety on the job.

By a more than two-to-one margin, voters overruled the state Legislature and former governor that enacted RTW in 2017 after years of failed attempts to do so. The Teamsters and other unions came together in the weeks following the legislation's passage to get voters to place a measure on the state ballot that would overturn the law.

Despite supporters' efforts to sabotage the anti-RTW referendum vote by having it moved to the August primary ballot from the November general election ballot earlier this year, workers made it clear they didn't believe



the lies told by big business interests that wanted to halt collective bargaining in the "Show Me" state.

Destructive RTW laws are designed to drive down wages and

weaken workers' bargaining rights. States that have already mandated right-to-work-for-less have lower wages, higher unemployment and poverty levels, and fewer protections for workers

than free bargaining states.

As voters showed, there was no good reason for them to support such an anti-worker measure. The median salary of a union worker is more than

\$11,000 a year higher than the median non-union workers. Nine of the 10 highest poverty states are RTW. And those living in RTW states are also less likely to receive employer-based health insurance or pensions as well.

Big business says RTW is good for the American economy. But many of these same companies have offshored jobs and helped rig the rules, pushing U.S. wages down and placing the health and safety of workers at risk. Corporations are just looking to pocket higher profits.

For too many, the American Dream is slipping away. But more than 937,000 Missourians put their foot down and said "Enough!" when they voted to throw out this RTW law. They knew it was a ruse.

Fraternally,

JAMES P. HOFFA
TEAMSTERS GENERAL
PRESIDENT

66 Despite supporters' efforts to sabotage the anti-RTW referendum vote by having it moved to the August primary ballot from the November general election ballot earlier this year, workers made it clear they didn't believe the lies told by big business interests that wanted to halt collective bargaining in the "Show Me" state. 99

2019 FEES OBJECTOR POLICY

1. EMPLOYEES' RIGHTS

A. Any employee covered by a union or agency shop agreement in the United States has the legal right to be or remain a nonmember of the Union. Nonmembers have the legal right (1) to object to paying for Union activities not related to collective bargaining, contract administration and grievance adjustment, and to obtain a reduction in fees for such activities; (2) to be given sufficient information to intelligently decide whether to object; and (3) to be apprised of internal Union procedures for filing objections. Employees who choose to object have the right to be apprised of the percentage of the reduction, the basis for the calculation, and the right to challenge these figures. Objecting nonmembers who are public employees have the legal right not to pay any fees.

B. To the extent permitted by law, nonmembers may not participate in Union elections as a voter or as a candidate; attend Union meetings; serve as delegates to the Convention, or participate in the selection of such delegates; or participate in the process by which collective bargaining agreements are ratified.

2. PUBLICATION OF POLICY

The fees objector policy shall be published annually in the BLET's newsletter in the month preceding the objection notice period and mailed annually to each objector. It shall also be provided to each new employee when s/he first becomes subject to a union shop agreement.

3. MAKING OBJECTION KNOWN

Objecting nonmembers must provide notice of objection by notifying the National Secretary/Treasurer of the objection in writing by first-class mail postmarked during the month of November preceding the calendar year to which s/he objects, or within (30) days after s/he first begins paying fees and receiving notices of these procedures. The objection shall contain the objector's current home address. Each nonmember wishing to continue his/her objection from year to year must renew the objection each year as specified in this paragraph. Objections may only be made by individual employees. No petition objections will be honored.

4. MAJOR CATEGORIES OF CHARGEABLE EXPENSES

All objectors shall pay their fair share of expenses germane to collective bargaining including:

A. All expenses concerning the negotiation of agreements, practices and working conditions;

B. All expenses concerning the administration of agreements, practices and working conditions, including grievance handling, all activities related to arbitration, and discussion with employees in the craft or class (or bargaining unit) or employer representatives regarding working conditions, benefits and contract rights;

C. Convention expenses and other union internal governance and management expenses;

D. Social activities and union business meeting expenses;

E. Publication expenses to the extent coverage relates to chargeable activities;

F. Expenses of litigation related to collective bargaining, contract administration and internal governance;

G. Expenses for legislative and administrative agency activities to effectuate collective bargaining agreements;

H. All expenses for the education and training of officers and staff intended to prepare the participants to better perform chargeable activities;

I. All costs of strikes and other lawful economic actions.

5. DETERMINATION OF CHARGEABLE SHARE

The BLET shall engage an outside auditor to perform an independent audit of the records of the National Division annually. Based on this audit, the BLET shall determine the percentage of expenditures that fall within the categories specified in Section 4. The amount of expenditures that fall within Section 4 shall be the basis for calculating the reduced fees that must be paid by the objector. The auditing firm conducting the annual audit of the BLET National Division shall give an opinion concerning the adequacy of the escrow amounts maintained pursuant to Section 10, and later will verify the existence and the audits of money in any escrow account.

6. REPORT OF CHARGEABLE SHARE AND BASIS OF ITS CALCULATION

The BLET shall report the deter-

mination no later than September 30. This report shall include an analysis of the major categories of union expenses that are chargeable and non-chargeable. A copy of the report shall be sent to all nonmembers whose timely objections have not been revoked.

7. CHALLENGE PROCEDURE

Each person entitled to receive the BLET's report may challenge the validity of the calculations by filing an appeal with the National Secretary/Treasurer. Such appeal must be made by sending a letter to the National Secretary/Treasurer postmarked no later than October 31.

8. ARBITRATION OF CHALLENGES

A. After the close of appeals period, the National Secretary/Treasurer shall provide a list of appellants to the American Arbitration Association (AAA). All appeals shall be consolidated. The AAA shall appoint an arbitrator pursuant to its Rules for Impartial Determination of Union Fees. The AAA shall inform the National Secretary/Treasurer and the appellant(s) of the arbitrator selected.

B. The arbitration shall commence by December 1 or as soon thereafter as the AAA can schedule the arbitration. The arbitrator shall have control over all procedural matters affecting the arbitration in order to fulfill the need for an informed and expeditious arbitration.

C. Each party to the arbitration shall bear its own costs. The appellants shall have the option of paying

a prorata portion of the arbitrator's fees and expenses. The balance of such fees and expenses shall be paid by the BLET.

D. A court reporter shall make a transcript of all proceedings before the arbitrator. This transcript shall be prepared within 15 days after the close of the hearing and shall be the official record of the proceedings which may be purchased by the appellants. If appellants do not purchase a copy of the transcript, a copy shall be available for inspection at the National Division during normal business hours.

E. Appellants may, at their expense, be represented by counsel or other representative of choice. Appellants need not appear at the hearing and shall be permitted to file written statements with the arbitrator at the time of the hearing instead of appearing.

F. Fourteen (14) days prior to the start of the first hearing, appellants shall be provided with a list of all exhibits intended to be introduced at the hearing and a list of all witnesses intended to be called, except for exhibits and witnesses that may be introduced for rebuttal. On written request from an appellant, copies of exhibits (or in case of voluminous exhibits, summaries thereof) shall be provided to them. Additionally, copies of exhibits shall be available for inspection and copying at the hearing.

G. The National Division shall have the burden of establishing that the reduced fees set forth in the re-

port are lawful.

H. If the arbitrator shall determine that more than one day of hearing is necessary, hearings shall be scheduled to continue from day to day until completed. The parties to the appeal shall have the right to file a brief within fifteen (15) days after the transcript of the hearing is available, but in no case no more than thirty (30) days after the hearing closes. The arbitrator shall issue a decision within forty-five (45) days after the submission of posthearing briefs or within such other reasonable period as is consistent with the rules established by the AAA.

I. The arbitrator shall give full consideration to the legal requirements limiting the amounts that objectors may be charged, and shall set forth in the decision the legal and arithmetic basis for such decision.

9. PAYMENT OF REDUCED FEES

Objectors shall pay reduced monthly fees based on the most recent report pending determination of the objection year's chargeable ratio.

10. ESCROW OF DISPUTED FUNDS

All monthly fees paid by objectors shall be placed in an interest-bearing escrow account pending final determination of the chargeable share. Escrowed funds shall be disbursed to objectors and the Union upon issuance of the arbitrator's decision or fifteen days after the conclusion of the appeal period if there are no challenges to the determination.

Four rail hazmat training classes available

The Rail Workers Hazardous Materials Training Program is hosting four rail worker training sessions in the coming months. The dates are as follows: November 11-16, 2018; January 6-11, 2019; February 3-8, 2019; and March 17-22, 2019.

These 40-hour rail hazmat/chemical emergency response training courses will run on a Sunday through Friday basis, with an orientation session at 5:30 p.m. on Sunday and departure on Friday. All training will be conducted at the Houston Fire Department's Val Jahnke Training Facility, 8030 Braniff St., Houston, Texas, 77061.

The Rail Workers Hazardous Materials Training Program is funded by a federal grant from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) to provide hazmat training to rail workers. These five-day hazmat training courses will provide rail workers the essential knowledge, skills, and response actions in the case of an unintentional release. These tools will allow rail workers to protect themselves, their co-workers and their communities.

This training addresses OSHA and DOT required training in addition to procedures, different levels of response and worker protection in a hazardous materials emergency or release, weapons of mass destruction awareness, and the incident command system. The training also provides



Railroad workers participate in a simulated hazmat response in full safety gear and other hands-on drills as part of the Rail Workers Hazardous Materials Training Program at the Val Jahnke Training Facility in Houston, Texas.

completion of the OSHA 10-Hour General Industry Outreach requirements. The programs are delivered using interactive classroom instruction, small group activities, hands-on drills and a simulated hazmat response in full safety gear.

The funding provides the following student expenses: travel, lodging and meals. In addition, an incentive of \$175.00

per day is available to all training participants of these programs, except those who are able to secure regular pay through their employer, or are paid union officers.

It is recommended that rail workers complete the 40-hour chemical emergency response training courses once every three years. Please use the following website to register: [http://www.railworker-](http://www.railworker-trainingprogram.org)

[trainingprogram.org](http://www.railworker-trainingprogram.org).

For more information, please use the link above or call the Rail Workers Hazardous Materials Training Program at (202) 624-6963 (Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., EST). A flyer to print and share on bulletin boards at your on-duty location is available here: http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/Hazmat_Flyer_2018-19.pdf. ©



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*LE&CMPA #16 Monthly Premium	\$47.25	\$70.00	\$87.50	\$117.25	\$147.00
SMART - TD (UTU) Monthly Assessment	\$76.80	\$115.20	\$144.00	\$192.00	Not Offered

Apply today - www.brcf.org



BLET concludes 2018 Washington D.C. regional meeting

More than 300 members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) and their families convened in Washington D.C. on the morning of August 14 for opening ceremonies of the BLET's Washington D.C. regional meeting. They heard presentations from 10 different speakers, including Teamsters General Secretary-Treasurer Ken Hall.

In order of appearance, guest speakers were: Jeff Marootian, Director of the D.C. Department of Transportation; Ken Hall, General Secretary-Treasurer of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters; Congressman Anthony G. Brown, who represents Maryland's 4th District; President Pierce; Kathleen Bisbikis, National Second Vice President and Legislative Representative of the BLET Auxiliary; Karl Racine, Attorney General for the District of Columbia; Dana Balter, Democratic candidate to represent New York's 24th District; and Mark Thomson, Assistant to Labor Member Walt Barrows of the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board. The final two speakers were BLET National Vice Presidents Cole Davis and Gil Gore, who are retiring at the end of the year.

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce called the meeting to order. After presentation of the flags by representatives of the D.C. National Guard, Brother Fred Cox delivered the invocation. Brother Cox is Second Vice Chairman of the BLET's Norfolk Southern-Southern Lines General Committee of Adjustment.

President Pierce then welcomed all members, families and guests to our na-



tion's capital. He introduced members of the BLET Advisory Board who were in attendance, and thanked National Vice President Jim Louis, Special Representative Matt Kronyak and Special Representative Jason Wright for their work in planning, organizing and managing the regional meeting. President Pierce also recognized and thanked the regional meeting arrangements committee members who provided support: Dino Raptis, a retired member of Division 12 (Fort Wayne, Ind.) and his wife Kathy; and Steve Tuck, a retired member of Division 17 (Kansas City, Mo.), and his wife Chris.

Speaking on behalf of Washington D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser, Jeff Marootian presented a proclamation to BLET President Dennis Pierce welcoming the Union to Washington and recognizing the BLET's 155th anniversary.

The chief financial officer of the IBT, Brother Ken Hall discussed the strong financial state of the Teamsters and the successful merger of the BLET and IBT, which became effective in 2004. Hall also discussed the need to protect two-person

train crews throughout the United States. Hall condemned the job giveaway currently unfolding on the Texas Mexican Railway in Laredo, Texas, where the Kansas City Southern is giving American jobs to Mexican train crews who will work under less stringent safety standards.

President Pierce delivered remarks regarding the importance of the union movement and the necessity for unions to work together in solidarity. He also warned that rail worker benefits and contracts are under attack due to the anti-worker, anti-union movement in Washington, D.C.

"If these corporate-backed politicians succeed in eliminating labor unions from the American workplace, your Union contracts go away with them. Many of our members do not realize that without a union and a union contract, there is no seniority roster or seniority district," he said.

President Pierce concluded his remarks by challenging all BLET members to resist complacency and do their part to help end these attacks on working class Americans.

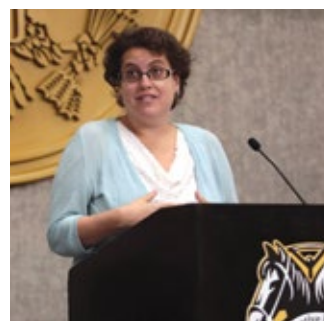
Sister Bisbikis spoke on behalf of Aux-

iliary National President Sereena Hogan, who was unable to attend the meeting. Sister Bisbikis discussed the importance of the BLET and BLET Auxiliary working together. "They say that beside every great man stands a great woman, and there are no greater women than those married to a railroader," she said.

Near the end of the morning session, President Pierce led BLET members in a moment of silence for all BLET members who have been killed in the line of duty since 1989.

Two special presentations took place during the BLET closed meeting on the afternoon of August 14. Prior to the start of business, President Pierce recognized the retirement of former Union Pacific-Western Lines General Chairman Bill Hannah, presenting him with a United States flag that flew over the U.S. Capitol near the time of his retirement in 2017. Also, Herb Harris, Chairman of the BLET's District of Columbia Legislative Board, presented a proclamation to the membership on behalf of the Washington D.C. City Council.

Members took advantage of educational opportunities throughout the remainder of the week. Workshops featured specialized training for BLET Legislative Representatives, Secretary-Treasurers and Local Chairmen. The 2018 Washington D.C. regional meeting concluded with a banquet on the evening of Thursday, August 16. The dates and locations of the BLET's 2019 regional meetings will be announced soon. When available, information will be posted at: <http://www.ble-t.org/regional/>. @@



BLET LEGISLATIVE BOARD ENDORSEMENTS 2018

EDITOR'S NOTE: THESE ENDORSEMENTS ARE BASED ON RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE VARIOUS BLET STATE LEGISLATIVE BOARD CHAIRMEN. THEY REPRESENT THE CANDIDATES WHO YOUR ELECTED BLET OFFICERS BELIEVE WILL BEST REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF RAILROAD WORKERS AND MIDDLE CLASS AMERICANS.

**DUE TO FEDERAL
ELECTION COMMISSION
(FEC) REGULATIONS,
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ARE VIEWABLE
IN THE MEMBERS-ONLY
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BLET WEBSITE:
WWW.BLE-T.ORG/MEMBERS.**



INSURANCE COVERAGE YOU CAN ONLY GET IF YOU ARE A BLET MEMBER

It is without question that unions have paved the way for higher wages, better benefits and safety in the American workplace that have provided union members and their families peace of mind for more than 150 years. As the oldest active labor union in our country, the BLET and its membership know this better than most. There is however a threat that can destroy this security in one fell swoop; the loss of income due to a sickness (cancer, heart attack, stroke, etc.) or on/off-the-job injury. While FELA exists to protect railroad workers' income for on-the-job injuries, the FELA system has limitations and can sometimes leave members fighting for years to receive the benefits they deserve. This is why BLET has partnered with Cornerstone Benefits Management to provide 24-hour tax-free income protection benefits, such as disability insurance, life insurance, and critical illness and accident insurance.

One might ask why union members historically haven't had access to better income protection benefits. The answer is that employers aren't willing to pay for them and unions typically aren't staffed to administer them. Administering group income replacement benefits requires educating



the members on the benefits, enrolling members who wish to participate, coordinating premium payments from the members to the insurer and assisting members who need to file a claim or have claims-related issues. For these reasons, unions have engaged outside consultants to ensure that members can obtain robust income replacement benefits that are affordable and allow them to enjoy true peace of mind.

We've all seen what happens when a member who is injured, suffers a serious critical illness, or worse is killed doesn't have adequate life or disability insurance. The union will typically become a fundraiser for that member and the family. The pass-the-hat scenario, "go fund me" campaigns, and helpful fundraisers of all kinds are all too well

known to most of us. BLET members and their families should be very proud that their union makes 24-hour, cost effective, tax-free income replacement benefits available to all members on a guaranteed approved basis.

The BLET, through its partnership with Cornerstone, now offers all members options to protect their most important asset... their income. This is a unique benefit available only to BLET members. In the rail industry especially, one of the least insurable industries in the nation, only your union representation can provide a fair plan through a group rate.

You must be an active dues paying member to have access to the benefits provided by Cornerstone. The benefits are not available to non-members. All members should know and understand that the only way to preserve the longevity of current benefits and introduce new future programs is for the membership to participate and support these plans, and the union overall.

Below is a list of all the voluntary plans (and enrollment dates) that BLET members can obtain from Cornerstone. All members are encouraged to consider: (1) what would happen if their income is lost

for an extended period of time or permanently due to sickness, injury, or death; and (2) providing themselves and their families peace of mind by enrolling in any of the benefit plans being made available by the BLET. Please call (847) 387-3555 with any questions or to enroll in any of the following benefits.

BLET On-The-Job (Part B) Short-Term Disability Plan (MetLife)

- Open Enrollment is open through September 30

General Committee and Local Division Plans (Principal Insurance Company)

Open Enrollment is **NOW OPEN** and will remain open through **October 31**

- Short Term Disability Insurance
- Long Term Disability Insurance
- Life Insurance

BLET National Aflac and Trustmark Plans

Open Enrollment is **NOW OPEN** and will remain open through **September 30**

- Accident Insurance
- Critical Illness w/ Cancer Insurance



Locomotive Engineers And Trainmen News Brotherhood Of Locomotive Engineers And Trainmen

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Independence, Ohio 44131

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Photo of the Month: August/September 2018

BUFFALO BROTHERS: CSX Geometry train W003-05 inspects the Niagara Subdivision through Buffalo, N.Y., on July 5, 2016. The all-Buffalo crew consists of locomotive engineer Tom Shaver, a member of BLET Division 382, and pilot/locomotive engineer Rodney Kantorski of BLET Division 421. **Photo:** by Brother Richard C. Bartela Jr., a member of BLET Division 382.



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

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

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

Advisory Board July 2018 Activity

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

NATIONAL PRESIDENT DENNIS R. PIERCE: National Division Office, Independence, Ohio; General supervision of BLET activities; General office duties; Correspondence and telephone communications; Supervision of Office Administration; General Supervision of Special Representatives; President, Teamsters Rail Conference; Policy Committee, Teamsters Rail Conference; Vacation; Legislative Representative class, Washington, D.C.

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT E.L. (LEE) PRUITT: National Duties include but not limited to: Shortline Organizing Dept.; Trainmen's Dept.; National Publications Committee; National Legislative Board; Teamsters Rail Conference Policy Committee; PRAC; and National Negotiations; National duties, Independence, Ohio; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; Vacation; National Democratic Committee event, Washington, D.C.

NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER STEPHEN J. BRUNO: General supervision of Accounting Dept., Record Dept., Online Services Dept., Tax Compliance Dept.; Safety Task Force; PAC and FEC reports and filings; Implementation and training for BLET membership database/Union Track; Pension, STD, 457 plan Trustee; Division, General Committee and SLB monthly Trustee reports; Mtgs. with vendors and financial institutions; Union Track issues, testing, status updates, etc.; Triennial election planning and oversight duties; Vacation; National Democratic Committee event, Washington, D.C.

VICE PRESIDENT & NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE JOHN P. TOLMAN: Assigned to BLET Washington, DC office; General office duties, telephone and correspondence communications; BLET Legislative Representative training class, Washington, D.C.; Teamsters Political & Legislative Coordinators mtg., Washington, D.C.; IBT Lobby Political mtg., Washington, D.C.; OneRail mtg., Washington, D.C.; Various meetings with U.S. Senators working on rail issues; Numerous receptions and over 200 office visits with members of Congress and the leadership of both the DOP and Democratic parties, Washington, D.C.

VICE PRESIDENT MARCUS J. RUEF: Vice Chairman, National Railroad Adjustment Board (NRAB); National Mediation Board (NMB) Arb. Adv. Forum; Department Head, BLET Arbitration Department; Assigned to Illinois Central, Wisconsin Central, CN-Cedar River, Indiana Harbor Belt, Illinois Rwy., Belt Railway of Chicago, METRA, GRR, and Union Railroad; Vacation; Holiday; Assist GC Semenek w/ rules case submission, CP, Chicago; NRAB admin issues, Chicago; Assist GC Reynolds w/ discipline cases, WC, Chicago; Further discussion Docket 48365, NRAB, Chicago; Assist GC Balonek w/ prep for NRAB ref. hearing, Metra, Chicago; Referee Wesman Metra DL, Chicago; Assist GC Evans w/ claims conf., IC, Chicago; NRAB administrative matters, Chicago.

VICE PRESIDENT MIKE TWOMBLY: Assigned to all Union Pacific GCAs (Eastern District, Northern Region (former C&NW), Western Lines (Pacific Harbor Lines), Western Region (Portland & Western), Central Region, Southern Region; Tacoma Belt RR, Utah RR, Longview Portland & Northern NO & Longview Switch, Portland Terminal; On duty at home office; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; UP-Western Region Public Law Board 7228, Chicago; UP-Western Region agreement modernization nego-

tiations, Louisville, Colo.; National Democratic Club event, Washington, D.C.

VICE PRESIDENT GIL GORE: Assigned to all CSX; Grand Trunk Western; Union Pacific-Southern Region GCA special assignment; Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC) issues, CSXT; General office duties, paperwork, correspondence, emails, telephone calls, etc.; BLET regional mtg., Monterey, Calif.; CSXT and GTW paperwork; Vaughn conference call, PLB; GTW contract negotiations.

VICE PRESIDENT MICHAEL D. PRIESTER: Assigned to all BNSF (former ATSF, former C&S, CRI&P, FWD, former STL-SF, BNSF/MRL), Panhandle Northern, Missouri & North Arkansas, Montana Rail Link, Great Western; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; General Chairmen's mtg., Article IX, Fort Collins, Colo.; PLB 7886, assist GC Brown, Henderson, Nevada; Democratic National Committee event, Washington, D.C.

VICE PRESIDENT COLE W. DAVIS: Assigned to: Kansas City Southern (MidSouth Rail, SouthRail, Gateway Western, Illinois & Midland), KCS-Louisiana Arkansas Rwy., Texas Mexican Rwy.; CP Rail System/US Soo Line (Indiana Southern, Iowa, Chicago & Eastern, Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern); Springfield Terminal (St. Lawrence & Atlantic, Delaware & Hudson), New York, Susquehanna & Western (Connecticut Southern, New England Central), Louisville & Indiana, Huron & Eastern, Wheeling & Lake Erie Rwy.; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; Tex Mex international border issues, Laredo, Texas; D&H and Springfield Terminal issues, assist GC Moore; KCS issues, assist GC Spradlin; MidSouth issues, assist GC Evans; Louisville & Indiana issues, assist GC Hogan; Huron & Eastern issues, assist GC Ladrig; Soo Line issues, assist GC Semenek; New England Central CBA, assist GC Moore; Wheeling & Lake Erie mediation, assist GC Fannon, Norfolk, Va.; Democratic National Committee event, Washington, D.C.; Division 279 mtg., assist GC Hogan, Louisville, Ky.; Springfield Terminal mediation, assist GC Moore, Washington, D.C.

VICE PRESIDENT R.C. (RICK) GIBBONS: Assigned to: All Norfolk Southern General Committees (Northern, Eastern and Southern Lines); Chicago, Fort Wayne & Eastern; Indiana & Ohio; RSAC/RSIA Fatigue Management Group; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications; Vice President duties; On duty at home office; Democratic National Committee event, Washington, D.C.; SBA 1063/PLB 7238, assist GC Dehart and GC Fannon, Estero, Fla.

VICE PRESIDENT JAMES P. LOUIS: Assigned Amtrak; Long Island Rail Road; New York & Atlantic; Metro-North; New Jersey Transit; PATH; SEPTA; Western New York & Pennsylvania Rwy.; National Division Department Head, Education & Training Dept.; National Division Department Head, Internal Organizing, Mobilizing & Strategic Planning Dept.; Union Track mtgs. and training; Education & Training issues; BLET Regional Meeting planning; BLET National Convention planning; Holiday; BLET Legislative Representative training class, Washington, D.C.; NY&A contract issues and mtg., assist GC Sexton; CalTrain issues, assist GC Kenny; PATH issues, assist GC Basile; GCA issues, assist GC Hill, SEPTA; Mtg. w/ NMB, assist PATH GC Basile, Jersey City; NJ Transit issues, assist GC Brown.

BLET members ratify Cedar River contract

By a unanimous vote, members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen ratified a new collective bargaining agreement with the Cedar River Railroad, a Canadian National subsidiary, on July 30, 2018.

The contract governs six hard working locomotive engineers and runs through December 31, 2019. It provides retroactive pay dating to January 1, 2015, and also includes a 3% general wage increase effective January 1, 2019. The total compounded pay increase

over the life of the agreement (2015-2019) is 13.14%.

The contract provides the same health and welfare plan as BLET members covered by the National Agreement, with monthly payments frozen at \$228.89. There are no work rule changes in the contract.

BLET National President thanked the Cedar River membership for participating in the ratification process. He also thanked National Vice President Marcus J. Ruef, new General Chairman W.D. (Bil-

ly) Evans, and recently-retired General Chairman Clay Craddock for bringing this round of contract negotiations to a successful conclusion.

"I thank our Cedar River members for participating in the ratification process," President Pierce said. "I also thank our negotiating team for a job well done."

Headquartered in Waterloo, Iowa, the Cedar River Railroad has connections with the Union Pacific Railroad, Iowa, Chicago & Eastern Railroad, and the Chicago Central and Pacific Railroad. ☺

"I thank our Cedar River members for participating in the ratification process. I also thank our negotiating team for a job well done."

— PRESIDENT PIERCE