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By 384-33 majority, House passes H.R. 1140: next stop is the Senate

By a 384-33 majority, the U.S. House of Representa- tives approved the Railroad Retirement and Survivors’ Act of 2001 on July 31.

It is now imperative that H.R. 1140’s companion in the Senate, S. 697, be the first order of business when Senators return from their recess on September 4.

All BLE and GIA mem- bers are encouraged to con- tact their Senators while they are home during the recess.

Members can find the address and phone number of their Senators in the blue pages of their local phone book or via the Internet at: <www.senate.gov>.

As this issue of the Newsletter went to press, S. 697 had a veto-proof major- ity of 72 Senate co-sponsors.

A list of the 28 Senators not supporting S. 697 went to press, on page 7 of this is- sue.

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“The hard work and dedication of BLE and GIA legislative officers and members made this vote possible,” said BLE Interna- tional President Edward Dubroski. “Without the ac- tion of these brothers and sisters, this bill would never have seen the light of day.

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Ballots due Sept. 14 in proposed UTU merger

New union would end century of squable

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers took a huge leap forward in organizing the vast shortline industry on August 3 as workers on the Indiana & Ohio Railroad, a subsidiary of shortline giant RailAmerica, selected the BLE as their collective bargaining representative.

The votes were tabulated on Au- gust 3 in Washington D.C., and an over- whelming majority of the 49 Indiana & Ohio workers selected the BLE in the National Mediation Board-sanctioned representation election.

BLE representatives were invited on the property by I&O workers, who sought relief from management harass- ment and intimidation. The workers also sought a formal channel to redress their grievances with management.

BLE International President Ed- ward Dubroski congratulated all BLE Special Representatives for their fine work in the field.

The Indiana & Ohio is a 492-mile shortline, which runs from Flat Rock, Mich., to Cincinnati, Ohio, hauling mostly soda ash, limestone, automo-biles, trucks, lumber, chemicals and various industrial products. It is one of 39 shortline railroads owned by RailAmerica, the world’s largest shortline railroad operator.

The bill, H.R. 1020, would provide $350 million annually in federal subsidies for rail road Track Modernization Act of 2001.

The vote marks the first time that a majority of members have approved the merger, the Unifi- cation Agreement and Constitu- tion of the new union, which will be called United Transpor- ration Union-Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, pend- ing ratification by a majority of BLE and UTU members. Sep- tember 14 is the cut off date for ballots to be received, and they will be mailed to and tabulated by the American Arbitration Association in Cleveland, Ohio.

After a comprehensive re- view of the proposed Unifica- tion Agreement and Constitu- tion, the BLE’s Advisory Board voted on the weekend of July 28 to support President Ed- ward Dubroski’s decision to refer the merger proposal to the BLE’s rank and file mem- bership, pursuant to Section 1(e) of the BLE Constitution.

In adopting a resolution of support, the Board voiced its agreement that, “the future of the craft of locomotive engi- neer and the collective bar- gaining rights and working conditions, including seniority, of locomotive engineers shall be decided by the vote of the BLE rank and file.”

If a majority of members approve the merger, the Uni- fication Agreement and Constitu- tion of the newly established union will become effective January 1, 2002.

“It was incumbent upon me as President of the BLE to follow the traditions of our democratic organization and allow the members to voice their beliefs on this issue,” President Dubroski said.

A joint website designed to provide members and officers of both unions with informa- tion regarding the merger was launched on August 4. It will be updated regularly with an- swers to pertinent member- ship questions and other infor- mation regarding the proposed joining of the two organiza- tions.

The address is: <www.ble.org/utumerger>.

The merger web page was put to be an important in- formational tool. In the first week that it was launched, more than 1,600 members reg- istered to receive copies of re- sponses to questions. The vol- ume of questions has been so great that they are being cat- egorized, so that numerous questions concerning a par- ticular topic may be addressed at one time.

An informational meeting was held in Cleveland on Au- gust 3-4 for all BLE General Chairmen and State Legisla- tive Board Chairmen. At the meeting, these officers dis- cussed the unification agree- ment, side letters, and constitu- tion of the new union.

If approved, the merger would create the AFL-CIO’s second-largest transportation union and largest railroad union, with nearly 200,000 ac- tive and retired members. Side Letter #1 of the Unification Agreement confirms, “the of- ficers of (the) New Organiza- tion shall promptly apply for membership in the AFL-CIO and the CLC.” The new union would be based in Cleveland.

See Bulletin, Page 8
NEWS BRIEFS

Your BLE PAC pins have arrived

BLE members who contribute to the BLE-PAC fund should have received their lapel pins as this issue of the Newsletter goes to press.

The pins are given to members who contribute to a minimum of $600 per year. Those who have not yet received their pins should contact the BLE’s National Legislative Office by phone at (202) 347-7936 or via e-mail at: blecde@aol.com.

200 BLE members attended a two-day legislative training session in Cleveland on July 22-23, 2001.

The two-day course is designed to educate Division Legislative Representatives regarding their duties and to honor their contribution.

The course highlighted the legislative and political process, describing how federal safety regulations are established.

BEL International President & Chief Operating Officer, Merlyn N. Mineta, conducted the training session, along with professional consultant David Mallino.

Additional training sessions are scheduled for August 8-9 in Chicago, Ill., and August 11-12 in Kansas City, Mo.

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Two BLE officers receive labor degrees

At commencement exercises held on June 30, 2001 in Silver Spring, Md., the National Labor College conferred degrees on two BLE local chairman candidates. Steven L. Christian, local chairman of BLE Division 524 (Van Buren, Ark.), and Rodney K. Cutlip, local chairman of BLE Division 355 (Toledo), both received Bachelor of Arts degrees in labor studies from the college.

Brother Christian became a BLE member on July 1, 1977. He actually completed his degree from the National Labor College late in 2000, but officially graduated in June. Christian, also the Vice-Chairman of the Arkansas State Legislative Board, has been an union officer for more than 20 years, but always wanted to finish his education. He saw that opportunity in the form of the National Labor College.

“Running trains is a great job, but it gets old after a while,” said Christian. “I had always wanted to finish my education and become a better representative for my union. More education increases my effectiveness as an union representative.”

Brother Christian is furthering his education by pursuing a Masters in Labor Relations from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

Brother Cutlip is also considering pursuing a Masters degree. He joined the BLE on October 1, 1988. After beginning his coursework at the University of Toledo in the 1970s, he sat attending the National Labor College as a way to level the playing field between himself and the carrier’s representatives that he often squares off against. “I decided to arm myself with education. More education means that you have more weapons,” said Cutlip. “I think it makes the people I represent more comfortable — knowing that I am equally educated as the carrier’s representatives.”

Both of these members have made the Brotherhood proud, according to BLE International President Edward Dubroski. “These Brothers have set an example for all members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers,” said President Dubroski. “They have followed in the footsteps of other BLE members who have blazed a trail by graduating from the National Labor College at the George Meany Center.”

Five BLE members have graduated from the National Labor College in the past two years. Last year, Brothers R.J. Darcy, M.J. Thieltien and R.G. Shaw also graduated from the National Labor College.

Divisions must be ‘square on the books’ to seat delegates

With the upcoming Seventh Quinquennial BLE International Convention, all BLE divisions are reminded of the importance of their secretary-treasurers filing their monthly dues reports in a timely fashion.

Section 22, page 25, of the BLE Constitution & Bylaws states: “Any delegate whose division is not square on the books and any division that has not paid its pro rata assessments, as provided in the Constitution and Bylaws, also its indebtedness to other divisions, shall not be allowed a seat in the I.D.”

The convention begins September 24. It is essential that each division ensure that its July 2001 International Dues Remittance report is received by the International Division prior to September 24.

All BLE division presidents and secretary-treasurers were formally reminded of this constitutional requirement in a letter dated July 3 from General Secretary-Treasurer R.W. Bennett.

The International Convention, held once every five years, will take place at the Fontainebleau Hotel in Miami, Fla., from September 24-28, 2001.

NEWS BRIEFS

UP cuts fatigue rules, extra boards

OMAHA — The Union Pacific Railroad has ended 18-month-old safety measures designed to ease fatigue for extra board locomotive engineers also in the 33,000-mile system.

The rail company ended work-rest agreements that had given some extra board engineers a guaranteed days off system.

The company also eliminated 50 jobs for additional back-up engineers — back-up substitutes — whose work had made the guaranteed days off possible.

UP says those engineers had been transferred to other jobs.

To curb costs, UP eliminated some work-rest agreements between itself and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. Those agreements were implemented two years ago after a series of fatal train wrecks.

The railroad said its decision would have no impact on safety and was an option it had always preserved.

The BLE, however, says that the changes will result in less engine experience and fatigue for workers working while tired and will compromise safety. It also says engineers’ quality of life will suffer.

General Chairman Mike Young of Cheyenne, UP Eastern District, said engineers fear the loss of guaranteed days off will increase worker fatigue. That could lead to more train accidents and possibly injuries or deaths, he said.

“We’re not very happy,” he said. “We thought they were good agreements.”

BNSF may have violated law

OMAHA — The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has found that the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad may have violated federal law in performing genetic tests on employees without their knowledge.

The EEOC said in a July 10 letter to a BNSF employee that an investigation had found four violations of federal law by the railroad in conducting the genetic tests.

In its letter, the EEOC alleges that BNSF acted “with malice or reckless disregard for employees’ rights.”

In a major victory for organizations labor and workers’ rights, the BNSF settled a lawsuit filed by the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees to stop the coercive genetic testing of its employees.

The BMWE filed suit on February 9 against BSNF and Athena Diagnostics, and was soon joined by the BLE, seeking “to remedy the illegal, compulsory regime of genetic testing of injured employees” by the BSNF.

In the April 6 settlement, BNSF agreed to terminate all genetic testing of employees represented by BMWE and BLE. BNSF also agreed to destroy all blood samples and records of testing previously done (when authorized by the affected individuals), confirming the status of the destruction to the BMWE and BLE and agreed not to discipline any employee for failure to comply with requests for medical information and connection with previously conducted tests.

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Les ingénieurs demandent d'agir sur le sujet de la fatigue

Il est difficile pour les ingénieurs de rester réveillé sur les chemins de fer canadiens

En parlant de déraillements de train, celle-ci en est une bonne. Il n’y a eu aucune blessure et aucun échappement de chimiques ou déchets dangereux lorsqu’un train du Canada a demandé à Ottawa de porter des jumelles jusqu’à l’est est entré en collision avec le côté d’un train du CN en direction de l’ouest à 8h42 près de Basque, CIB. L’ingénieur du train au volant a dormi brièvement avant la collision. Il s’endormit quelques secondes, » a dit David Hucke. L’image d’un ingénieur de train qui s’endort aux commandes est une réalité dans les trains qui s’endorment au volant.

Mais considérez ceci. Un train qui heurte une voiture à un niveau à un même endroit qu’une voiture qui heurte une canette de boisson gazeuse. Dans de telles situations, les voitures sont habituellement détruites bien que le train puisse s’en réchapper avec aucune égratignure. En 1999, il y a eu 109 morts impliquant des trains au Canada. De ce fait, la grande majorité impliquant des collisions avec des véhicules (25 morts) et des piétons (60 morts). Il y a eu aussi sept passagers et trois employés qui ont été décédés.

Bien que la plupart des morts ferroviaires ne sont pas causée par la fatigue, elle a joué un rôle dans un des pires accident de train de l’histoire canadienne. Vingt-trois personnes sont décédées après qu’un train marchandises du Canadien National est entré en collision avec un train VIA près de Hinton, AB, en 1997.

Bien que l’équipe soit reposée avant de prendre les commandes du train, ils n’ont pas eu suffisamment de repos, de conclure les enquêteurs. L’ingénieur qui a dormi plus de 16 heures, l’agent du train, cinq heures, le chef de train, quatre heures. L’accident a amplifié la sensibilisation de la fatigue et a eu pour conséquence de limiter la journée de nouvelle tâche qui a été adoptée à travers l’industrie. Les quarts de travail sont généralement limités à 12 heures et les ingénieurs ne travaillent pas plus de 18 heures dans une période de 24 heures.

Dans de rares exceptions, un quart de travail peut s’étendre jusqu’à 16 heures. Après avoir travaillé un quart de travail d’au moins 10 heures, les ingénieurs ferroviaires ne peuvent pas retourner en devoir jusqu’à ce qu’ils aient eu au moins huit heures hors service. Selon ses désastres, le plus facile devient l’installation d’un bouton d’urgence qui doit être pressé à toutes les minutes ou deux. Si, non, les freins automatiques sont engagés et une alarme sonne.

Le bouton aide à traiter d’une des grandes ironies du domaine du transport. Lorsque les chemins de fer étaient construits, un train au Canada à la fin des années 1800, le train ferroviaire incluait de pelletter le charbon à la main et opérer la locomotive par un ingénieur et rester aux wagons à divers endroits. Ces tâches, telles que demandaient de l’attention et de maintenir une vigilance, ne font plus partie de l’est. Les ingénieurs disaient que les changements au contrat syndical du Canadien Pacifique en 1985 a fait qu’il est même plus difficile de rester réveillé. Ces changements permettent à la Compagnie de déplacer les travailleurs au-delà du lever et à une autre localisation par taxi, sans leur donner une chance de s’inscrire en repos à leur arrivée.

Le porte-parole du CP, Ian LaCovou dit que bien qu’il y ait toujours place pour de l’amélioration, le chemin de fer croit que ses politiques sont sécuritaires. Mais il dit que la question de fatigue n’est pas quelque chose que la Compagnie peut adresser par elle-même. Il dit que les travailleurs ont aussi une responsabilité de s’assurer qu’ils sont bien reposés.

Certains chemins de fer des É.U. ont des politiques en place pour des siestes contrôlées, telles que permettent aux ingénieurs fatigués de retirer le train de la ligne principale pour faire la sieste. Bien que les chemins de fer des É.U. ne permettent pas de siestes contrôlées dans les trains, ils ont établi des installations à différents endroits où les ingénieurs peuvent se reposer avant un quart de travail si un train est retardé.

Mais Monsieur Boyko dit qu’il est encore possible pour un ingénieur ferroviaire d’opérer un train de 7200 tonnes après avoir été debout pour plus de 24 heures. C’est parce que les trains marchandises ne fonctionnent pas d’ordinaire à l’heure prévue. Quand les ingénieurs vont sur appel, ils ne savent pas vraiment quand leurs trains partiront. Les trains de marchandises ne passent pas par les stations, les ingénieurs ne peuvent donc pas surveiller les trains en temps réel. C’est un vrai défi pour les ingénieurs de rester réveillé sur les chemins de fer canadiens.

Mais dans les cas de Basque et Topeka, les ingénieurs travaillaient des quarts de travail pendant environ 20 heures avant de travailler pour la plupart des ingénieurs de locomotives. Tout comme la plupart des ingénieurs, il-t-il dit, il a quelques fois perdu la bataille pour rester réveillé. M. Hekure est maintenant l’homme de pointe du Syndicat pour le sujet de la fatigue. « C’est le sujet principal des gens qui voyagent et s’endorment au volant. Les inquiétudes, à la fin de ces trois ingénieurs de locomotive de trains en direction de l’Est a fait un bref “micro-sommeil” après avoir être réveillé pendant 20 des heures précédentes. »

Il aurait pu être pire. Un accident semblable près de Topeka, Kan en octobre 1997 a causé la mort de l’ingénieur du train et plus de 5 millions $ (US) de dommages et forcé l’évacuation de plus de 1400 résidents de leur maison. Les enquêteurs ont conclu que l’ingénieur mort s’était probablement endormi brièvement avant la collision, sans avoir été réveillé pour 18 heures.

La fatigue est un grand danger sur la sécurité affectant l’industrie du transport, que ce soit les pilotes qui font la sieste dans la cabine de pilote, les camionneurs cognant des clous ou les ingénieurs qui s’endorment aux contrôles. Sous pression de voyager de longues distances sous des conditions monotones, les travailleurs disent qu’ils jouent avec la mort. « Je me bats. Tout le monde se bat. J’ai tombé endormi pendant quelques secondes », a dit David Boyko, un ingénieur de Winnipeg qui a témoin de la collision. Les enquêteurs ont cherché la cause physique de l’accident en octobre 1998 et n’en ont trouvé aucune. Au lieu de ça, ils ont conclu que l’ingénieur est probablement resté surveillé lorsqu’il s’endormait brièvement avant la colli-

À cause de cela, il a planifié dormir tôt dans la soirée. Mais à 12h30, il apprenait que son train parterrait à environ 18h30 et était seulement capable de dormir une heure avant de se rapporter en service. Mike Brown, qui est décédé lors de la collision de Topeka, a vérifié la liste des employés enregistrée lorsqu’il a été réveillé le matin et a découvert que son train n’était pas cédé partir avant 17h. Comme d’habitude, la liste des employés a changé durant la journée et le train de Monsieur Brown n’a pas quitté tard le matin suivant. À cause de cela, il a planifié dormir tôt dans la soirée.

Il ne savait jamais lorsqu’il quittait, combien de temps il serait parti ou même combien de temps il serait à la maison » a dit la veuve de Monsieur Brown au enquêteurs du Conseil national de la sécurité des transports. « La dernière fois que j’ai été appelé par l’ingénieur ferroviaire d’opérer un train de 7200 tonnes après avoir été debout pour plus de 24 heures. »
Canadian railways make it hard for engineers to stay awake

The following article is reprinted with permission from The Globe and Mail. The article was originally published on June 12, 2001.

As train derailments go, this was a good one.

There were no injuries and no release of hazardous chemicals or waste when an eastbound Canadian National train collided with the side of a westbound CN train at 4:42 a.m. near Basque, B.C.

Investigators searched for a physical cause for the October 1998, accident, but found none. Instead, they concluded that the train was not allowed to be moved away when the locomotive engineer on the eastbound train fell into a brief "microsleep" after being awake for 20 of the previous 21 hours.

It could have been a lot worse. A similar incident near Topeka, Kan., in 1997, killed the train's engineer, caused more than $5-million (U.S.) in damage and forced more than 1,400 residents from their homes.

Investigators concluded that the dead engineer probably fell asleep shortly before the collision, after being awake for more than 18 hours.

"Fatigue is a huge safety hazard plaguing the transportation industry, whether it is pilots napping in the cockpit, truckers falling asleep at the wheel, or engineers asleep at the switch."— David Boyko, BLE Division 76 (Winnipeg)

"I struggle. Everybody struggles. I have fallen asleep for a few seconds. You can't ignore this. It's a time bomb."— David Boyko, BLE Division 76 (Winnipeg)

"If you have a very disruptive sleep pattern, then you're asking for trouble in terms of fatigue and people falling asleep at the switch," he said.

In the accident at Basque, the engineer of the eastbound train called in to check the lineup at 5 a.m. and learned that he probably wouldn't be up for duty until that night or early the next morning. As a result, he planned to sleep in the early evening.

But at 12:30, he learned that his train would leave at about 6:30 p.m. and was only able to catch an hour of sleep before reporting for duty.

"This was a common occurrence. He never knew when he would leave, how long he would be gone, or how long he would be home either," Mr. Brown's widow told investigators with the National Transportation Safety Board.

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**Importance of a ‘current connection’**

Under the Railroad Retirement Act, a “current connection with the railroad industry” is one of the eligibility requirements for occupational disability annuities and supplemental annuities, and is one of the criteria for determining whether the Railroad Retirement Board or the Surface Transportation Board has jurisdiction over the payment of monthly benefits to survivors of a railroad employee. The following questions and answers describe the current connection requirement and the ways the requirement can be met.

1. **How is a current connection determined under the Railroad Retirement Act?**

To meet the current connection requirement, an employee must generally have been credited with railroad service in at least 12 months of the 30 months immediately preceding the month a current connection retirement annuity begins. If the employee died before retirement, railroad service in at least 12 months in the 30 months before death must be credited. A current connection requirement for the purpose of paying survivor benefits.

However, if an employee does not qualify on this basis, but has 12 or more months of service in an earlier 30-month period, he or she may still meet the current connection requirement. This alternative generally applies if the employee did not have any regular employment outside the railroad industry in the period between the end of the last 30-month period including 12 months of railroad service and the month the annuity begins, or the month of death if earlier.

A current connection established at the time the railroad retirement annuity begins is permanent. The employee never loses it no matter what kind of work is performed thereafter.

2. **Can nonrailroad work before retirement break a former railroad employee’s current connection?**

Full or part-time work for a nonrailroad employer in an interim between the end of the last 30-month period including 12 months of railroad service and the beginning date of an employee’s annuity, or the date of death if earlier, can break a current connection.

Self-employment in an unincorporated business will not break a current connection. However, if the business is incorporated, compensated service will break a current connection.

Federal employment with the Department of Transportation, the National Transportation Safety Board, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration or the Railroad Retirement Board will not break a current connection.

Also, neither State employment with the Alaska Railroad nor railroad service, so long as that railroad remains an entity of the State of Alaska, nor noncreditable Canadian railroad service will break a current connection.

3. **Are there any exceptions to these normal procedures for determining a current connection?**

A former railroad employee’s current connection can be maintained for purposes of supplemental and survivor annuities if the employee completed 25 years of railroad service, was involuntarily terminated without fault from the railroad industry, and did not thereafter offer to return to work in the same class or craft as his or her most recent railroad service, regardless of the location of the work offered.

If all of these requirements are met, an employee’s current connection may not be broken, even if the employee works in regular nonrailroad employment in his last class or craft as his or her most recent railroad service, and the employee is paying survivor benefits.

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

5. **An employee with 25 years of service is offered a separation allowance in the amount of either taking payment in a single lump sum or of receiving monthly payments until retirement age. Could the method of payment affect the employee’s current connection under the exception provision?**

If the employee had the choice to remain in employee service and voluntarily relinquish his or her seniority rights to railroad employment, the payments, his or her current connection would not be maintained under the exception provision, regardless of which payment option is chosen. Therefore, nonrailroad work after the 30-month period and before retirement or death could break the employee’s current connection.

Such an employee could only meet the current connection requirement under the normal procedures.

A former railroad employee considering accepting a separation allowance should also be aware that if he or she relinquishes job rights to accept a separation allowance, the compensation cannot be used to credit additional service months beyond the month in which the employee severed his or her employment relation, regardless of whether payment is made in a lump sum or on a periodic basis.

6. **What if an employee is given the option of retaining job rights and receiving monthly disability allowances until retirement age?**

If an employee retains job rights and receives monthly disability allowances, the compensation is credited to the employee's railroad retirement annuity account. This is true even if the employee later relinquishes job rights after the end of the period for which a monthly disability allowance was paid. If the payments continued until retirement age, this could extend the employee’s railroad service until that time and thereby also maintain his or her current connection, regardless of years of service.

7. **Could the 1981 exception apply in cases where an employee has 25 years of railroad retirement service and a company reorganization results in the employee’s job being placed under social security coverage?**

The exception provision has been considered applicable by the Board in cases where a 25-year employee’s job changed from railroad retirement coverage to social security coverage and the employee had, in effect, no choice available to remain in railroad retirement covered service. Such 25-year employees have been deemed to have a current connection for purposes of supplemental and survivor annuities.

8. **Where can a person get more specific information on the current connection requirement?**

Railroaders and former employees can contact the nearest field office of the Railroad Retirement Board for information on how their eligibility for benefits is affected by this requirement. Most Board field offices are open to the public from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

In addition, information can be accessed through the Railroad Retirement Board’s Internet website at <www.rrb.gov>.
Representatives who voted "yea" on H.R. 1140

Representatives who voted "nay" on H.R. 1140

Representatives who did not cast a vote on H.R. 1140

U.S. Senate

Non-Cosponsors of S. 697

As of August 15, 2001

1. Mark Kirk (R-IL)
2. John Ensign (R-NV)
3. Jon Kyl (R-AZ)
4. Bill Frist (R-TN)
5. John Cornyn (R-TX)
6. Trent Lott (R-MS)
7. Lamar Alexander (R-TN)
8. Chuck Hagel (R-NE)
9. Richard Lugar (R-IN)
10. John McCain (R-AZ)
11. Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX)
12. Arlen Specter (D-PA)
13. Bill Frist (R-TN)
14. Dick Durbin (D-IL)
15. Joe Lieberman (D-CT)
16. Edward Kennedy (D-MA)
17. John Ashcroft (R-MO)
18. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA)
19. Christopher Bond (R-MO)
20. Chuck Grassley (R-IA)
21. Arlen Specter (R-PA)
22. Jeff Sessions (R-AL)
23. Richard Shelby (R-AL)
24. Richard Burr (R-NC)
25. Jim Bunning (R-KY)
26. Bob Kerrey (D-NE)
27. Rick Santorum (R-PA)
28. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)
29. Jon Kyl (R-AZ)
30. John Ensign (R-NV)
31. Trent Lott (R-MS)
32. Jim Bunning (R-KY)
33. John Cornyn (R-TX)
34. Bill Frist (R-TN)
35. John Ashcroft (R-MO)
36. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA)
37. Edward Kennedy (D-MA)
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46. Trent Lott (R-MS)
47. Jim Bunning (R-KY)
48. John Cornyn (R-TX)
49. Bill Frist (R-TN)
50. John Ashcroft (R-MO)

Of the 108 Senators, 67 cosponsored S. 697 and 28 were not. BLE and GIA members are asked to contact the following Senators, encouraging them to support S. 697. The Capitol Switchboard number is: (202) 224-0131.
The ballot represents a major choice for the BLE’s Canadian members, as well as members of the affili- ated American Train Dispatchers De- partments (ATDD), Traffic Controllers (RCTC). Ballots for each of these groups shall be tabulated separately from each other as well as separating them from BLE members living in the United States.

Should a majority of the ballots cast by BLE members living in Canada ap- prove the unification, then BLE mem- bers living in Canada shall be included in the newly established union effective Jan. 1, 2002; otherwise, BLE members living in the United States shall be part of the UTU-BLE effective Jan. 1, 2002. The same also applies to members of the ATDD and RCTC.

A century of struggling with each other, both unions now are poised to seize the opportunity to unify and concentrate on the real struggle: effective representation.” wrote BLE President Edward Dubroski and UTU President Byon Ford in a joint letter to all BLE and UTU members. “Solidar- ity is what is required in response to the merger, which has been published since 1867. As North America’s oldest labor union, the BLE traces its roots to 1863, when it was founded as the Brotherhood of the Road. The merged union adopted its current name one year later. The United Transportation Union was formed from the merger of four rail brotherhoods in 1963, the oldest of which was the Order of Railway Con- ductors and Brakemen, which traces its roots to 1868.

In addition to the Unification Agreement, Constitution and joint website, a number of other sources of factual information have been provided to BLE members.

The BLE Education & Training Department has prepared a Power Point presentation that recap the events of the past three and a half years, explains key points of both documents and summarizes the structure and operation of the proposed merged union. Special Representatives and members of the BLE National Mo- bilization Team will be available to present this information at meetings throughout the U.S. and Canada and are coordinating meeting sites with General Chairmen who want to partici- pate in this information campaign.

To further assist the membership in reviewing the proposal, a 10-minute video has been provided, which sum- marizes the same subjects covered by the Power Point presentation. In addi- tion, the BLE will facilitate the distri- bution of partisan internal comments to the membership, at the expense of any group or member of groups wish to distribute such comments.

Commenting on this informational campaign, BLE President Dubroski said, “It is vitally important that all BLE members have the most accurate, fac- tual information available so that their valid concerns about the proposal may be fully addressed. With the steps we are taking, the members should have information in hand, which will provide everyone with sufficient time to give their most careful consideration to the proposal. Members should wait to sub- mit their ballots until they have had the opportunity to review these materials.

On August 13, a dedicated tele- phone extension was activated at the International Division headquarters, for BLE members who have not re- ceived their ballots and their copies of the Unification Agreement and Consti- tution. Any BLE members who have not received their first ballot package may call (216) 241-2630, extension 333, and leave their name, division number, home address and home telephone number.

Finally, the BLE is conducting a se- ries of Town Hall Meetings to answer membership questions regarding the proposed merger.

The meetings are being held throughout the month of August at vari- ous points across the country in an ef- fort to allow as many BLE members as possible to participate in the interac- tive seminars, which will be conducted by members of the BLE National Mobilization Team, Special Representatives and regional office staff.

Dates and locations of the remain- ing Town Hall Meetings are available on the BLE website. Meetings are being held:

- August 15 in Dallas, Texas (10 a.m. and 6 p.m. at the IBEW Hall 2194 East Marshall Ave.),
- August 19 in Seattle, Wash. (location and time to be announced).

By action of the delegates of the Fifth Quinquennial Convention, summa- ries of BLE Advisory Board members’ activities are published monthly.