On July 22, BLET National President Don M. Hahs responded to the latest rhetoric from the United Transportation Union. President Hahs characterized the UTU’s July 20 and July 25 website releases as a “Last gasp effort by a desperate union that may very well be bankrupt by 2005 if it stays on its current course.”

The question of the UTU’s shaky finances was first raised in the mid-1990s, when the former BLE pulled out of merger talks with the UTU because of unanswered questions regarding UTU finances. Recent financial information reveals their financial condition has not improved and may even be worse than in the mid-1990s.

President Hahs also reiterated portions of his letter he mailed to UTU President Paul Thompson on July 16. “Mr. Thompson, it’s easy to throw stones and spread disinformation to mislead, but that will not help rebuild Rail Labor,” President Hahs wrote. “The reality is 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.”

President Hahs also suggested that — as with the recent Canadian Pacific Railway situation — UTU members may not be supportive of the direction taken by its International Office in Cleveland. Earlier this year on the Canadian Pacific, the UTU attempted to force their single craft agenda on BLE/Teamster membership and their own members. In a clear display of disgust for the UTU’s misguided Teamster membership and their own members, voted to join the BLET.

President Hahs also noted that there were several misleading and lurid statements in the UTU’s July 20 release. For example, the UTU charged that the Teamsters real interest in rail employees is “aimed at grabbing funds from the solvent Railroad Retirement system.”

As ludicrous as this claim might be, the BLET National Division contacted the office of Butch Speakman, Labor Member at the Railroad Retirement Board. A spokesman for Brother Speakman explained that Railroad Retirement funds are withheld from rail employee paychecks as a tax and placed in the National Railroad Investment Trust, which is equivalent to a private fund. He said it would be impossible to have this money diverted without the passage of federal legislation.

“There’s no way this money could be diverted from the Railroad Retirement Trust to Teamster funds without legislation,” the spokesman said. “It just couldn’t happen.”

President Hahs encouraged BLET and UTU members to visit the RRB website (http://www.rrb.gov) to educate themselves regarding the National Railroad Investment Trust.

President Hahs concluded by pointing out the hypocrisy of the UTU accusing the Teamsters of corruption.

On July 21, the UTU posted a 19-page release on its website regarding IBT history, based on articles from Traffic World (dated May 2004) and the National Institute for Labor Relations Research (dated 1989) titled “Roots of Corruption.”

“This history is a matter of public record and has been the subject of several television shows and movies in the past,” he said. “Some 91 percent of the BLE membership voted to be part of a strong union that has a history of not letting people shoot themselves down. IBT does not hide from its past and it continues to provide its membership with strong representation.

“In light of what has transpired in the UTU recently, it is rank hypocrisy for UTU to accuse anyone of corruption. It is a sad indication of how desperate the leaders of UTU have become.”

— BLET National President Don M. Hahs

W&LE trainmen dump UTU, vote to join BLET

Conductors and trainmen at the Wheeling & Lake Erie Railway have dumped the United Transportation Union in favor of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen. It is the 10th shortline organization to vote for the BLET in the past three years.

By a narrow margin, 60 trainmen voted to make the AFL-CIO affiliated BLET their designated collective bargaining representative in an election certified by the National Mediation Board on July 28.

“I want to thank the engineers and trainmen for sticking together and working toward a single goal — better representation,” said Tommy Miller, the BLET’s Director of Organizing.

The already holds the contract to represent the W&LE’s locomotive engineers. Brother Miller thanked the BLET for a job well done. “Tommy Miller has helped the Brotherhood gain nearly 1,000 new members through 10 successful organizing drives over the past three years.”

With the addition of the Wheeling & Lake Erie, the BLET has successfully organized 10 different shortline railroads since 2001. These organizing victories have brought more than 800 new members into the BLET. The other shortlines are: Louisville & Indiana Railroad; Portland & Western; New York & Atlantic; Great Western Railway of Colorado; St. Lawrence & Atlantic; Utah Railway; Iowa, Chicago & Eastern; Indiana Southern; and the Texas-Mexican Railway.

Headquartered in Brewater, Ohio, the W&LE has an annual gross revenue of approximately $56 million, with trains operating in Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Maryland. W&LE lines interchange with three major Class I railroads — Canadian National, CSX Transportation, and Norfolk Southern. Its major commodities — generating approximately 130,000 carloads annually — include coal, iron ore, steel, aggregates from four quarries; plus, chemicals, forest products, and grain. The W&LE operates over 840 miles of tracks, including trackage rights over some territories owned by the Norfolk Southern.

The BLET now represents more than 150 operating employees at the Wheeling & Lake Erie.
Remote control safety push continues

61 different communities across United States now have remote control safety resolutions

As this issue of the Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen News goes to press, a total of 61 communities—27 cities and 34 counties—have passed remote control safety resolutions.

All resolutions call upon the Federal Railroad Administration to enact enforceable federal regulations—opposed to the current recommended guidelines—to govern the operation of remote control trains.

Currently, the operation of remote control trains in the United States is unregulated by the federal government. To date, the FRA has only issued recommended guidelines for remote control train operations, which are not enforceable in court. Many railroad companies often ignore the FRA’s recommended guidelines in the day-to-day operation of remote control trains, placing corporate greed above safety.

As of June 5, 2004, 56 different cities and 19 counties had passed one resolution apiece, while two communities—Milford, Utah, and Champaign County, Ill.—had passed two resolutions each. The first resolution, passed in January 2003, expresses the intention of the community to pass a second resolution calling for remote control safety regulations. The second resolution calls for the FRA to enact enforceable regulations to govern the operation of remote control trains.

The following communities have now passed remote control safety resolutions:

**Milford, Utah**
The City Council of Milford, Utah, passed a resolution in opposition to remote control locomotives on June 1.

The resolution, which passed unanimously, asks the Federal Railroad Administration to develop enforceable regulations governing the use of remote control technology.

**BLET Utah State Legislative Board First Vice-Chairman Jef Worthington and Councilor Scott Cook**
for his “perseverance in bringing the remote control issue to light to the population and general public of Milford Utah.”

**Erie County, N.Y.**
Officials in Erie County, N.Y., unanimously passed a resolution in opposition to remote control locomotives on July 15.

The effort to pass the resolution was spearheaded by members of BLET Division 421 (Buffalo, N.Y.).

**Brother Jim Louis**
Local Chairman of Division 421 (Milford, Utah), for his “unwavering, continuous support and encouragement.”

**Hon. Brother Jim Louis**
Local Chairman of Division 421 (Milford, Utah), led the effort to pass the resolution. He recognized Becky Schneider, Grand Internationa Auxiliary (GIA) First Vice-President/National Legislative Representative, for her assistance and encouragement, pinch hitting for Terry while he was on vacation.”

**Hon. Brother Jim Louis**
Local Chairman of Division 421, for his “efforts and hard work in getting this information out to the Beaver County Commission and making them aware of the potential hazards associated with remote control technology.”

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Brother Jim Louis, Local Chairman of Division 421, thanked everyone who helped with the resolution.

El Paso County, Texas

On July 19, El Paso County, Texas, adopted a remote control safety resolution.

El Paso County officials adopted the resolution unanimously, requesting that the Federal Railroad Administration “develop comprehensive regulations for the use of remote controlled locomotives, and that those regulations ensure the highest level of skill and qualification of persons operating remote controlled locomotives.”

Larry Schneider, Legislative Representative of BLET Division 192 (El Paso), spent a great deal of time and effort to make sure the resolution was adopted.

He thanked El Paso County Commissioner Betti Flores (Precinct 2) for sponsoring the resolution and placing it on the County’s agenda.

He also thanked the following BLET Brothers and Sisters for their support and assistance: Terry Briggs, Chairman of the BLET Texas State Legislative Board; Diane Ellis, Legislative Representative, for her editing and power point skills, and her “unwavering, continuous support and encouragement.”

He also thanked Joe Grzebiel of BLET Division 192 for his computer expertise and hours of hard work putting together the “El Paso Power Point Presentation.”

The following members were also recognized for their input and support: Richard Myers, Legislative Representative of Division 264; Joseph Martinez, Vice-President of Division 264; Rosemary Martinez, GIA El Paso Auxiliary 591; George Gomez, Local Chairman of Division 264; and Terry Murphy, a member of the Division 192 Remote Control Committee.

“This would not have been possible without the help that each of these brothers and sisters contributed,” Brother Schneider said. “I am in their debt.”

Evansville, Tenn.

A remote control unit ran into a train and derailed eight cars in Evansville, Tenn., on January 26, 2004. At the time these pictures were taken, this was the second remote control accident at this spot in the past six months. According to BLET reports, the remote control operators in this area are not in a zone and they do not ride the leading unit. “They see there is no train in front of them and take off,” the source said.

BLET to conduct advanced Local Chairman Workshop in Oct.

The BLET Education & Training Department is seeking participants for an advanced Local Chairman Workshop scheduled for Oct. 11-Nov. 5.

The workshop will take place at the National Labor College on the campus of the George Meany Center in Silver Spring, Md.

The advanced workshop will start the evening of Sunday, October 31, and will run all day Monday through Friday, concluding with a banquet on Friday night, November 5.

This workshop is one day longer than the regular Local Chairman’s workshop and will go into greater detail on writing, claims handling, and investigations. Among other assignments, the students will be given a topic to research and report back to the class; there will be a session on Duty of Fair Representation (DFR); the Railway Labor Act (RLA); and several appeal letters will have to be written on cases passed out in class. Again, a highlight of the workshop will be when attendees participate in a simulated disciplinary hearing.

To attend this workshop you must be a current Local Chairman and have completed the first Local Chairman’s workshop. Local Chairmen who are interested in registering for the workshop may do so online at http://www.blet-t.org/ed/advance.

Upon successful completion of the course, every one will receive a stipend for an $86 per day stipend from the North American Railway Foundation. The stipends will be paid directly to the Secretary-Treasurer of the respective divisions.

The BLET Education & Training Department presents these workshops in conjunction with the staff of the George Meany Center. Workshops instructors will include: BLET National Secretary-Treasurer William C. Walpert; BLET Vice-President Richard K. Radek; Assistant Director of the BLET Arbitration Department Marcus Ruel; and Special Representative, Coordinator of Education & Training Ken Kroeger.

The BLET pays the costs of books, equipment, tuition and a Friday evening graduation banquet. BLET members who attend are responsible for their transportation cost along with the cost of room and board. Registration for the Advanced Local Chairman workshop is on a first come, first served basis with class size limited to the first 20 who register through the BLET website. For more information, please contact Ken Kroeger, Coordinator of the BLET Education & Training Dept., at (216) 272-0986 or kroeger@blet-t.org.
Burlington Northern Santa Fe

Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corp. said profit rose nearly 25 percent in the April-June period on record shipments and higher prices. BNSF earned $249 million in the second quarter on revenues of $4.5 billion, compared to $200 million, or 54 cents per share, a year earlier. Revenue rose to $2.69 billion from $2.29 billion a year earlier, topping analysts’ forecast of $2.61 billion in sales. Chairman and chief executive Matthew K. Rose told the Associated Press that the company was helped by record volumes and a 2 percent increase in average rates charged to shippers.

Operating costs, however, jumped 16 percent, to $2.18 billion. The company said the increase was due to a 13 percent rise in gross ton-miles, higher fuel prices, and $30 million on environmental improvements at two facilities.

E. Hunter Harrison called Canadian National Railway’s second quarter “a knock-out quarter,” setting records or near-records in every aspect of operating ratio and free cash flow. “It set records in almost any of the metrics you’d care to measure,” said the president and CEO of the railway in a Montreal Gazette article. “It exceeded even my expectations.”

CN record profits of $326 million for the three months ended June 30, or $1.13 per share, compared with $127 million, or 60 cents a share, a year ago.

For the first six months of the year, the company earned $442 million, or $1.18 per share, compared to $387 million, or $1.04 per share, a year ago. Revenue increased to $5.18 billion from $4.53 billion.

BNSF’s operating ratio decreased to 80.7% compared with 81.8% for the same prior year period.

Canadian Pacific Railway

Canadian Pacific Railway said strong growth in five of its seven business lines in the second quarter of 2004 pushed revenue past the $1-billion mark. The revenue increase helped drive net income up 146 per cent to $84 million in the quarter ended June 30. This compares with second-quarter 2003 net income of $34 million, which included a special charge for job reductions, an asset write-down and network restructuring. Diluted earnings per share (EPS) in second-quarter 2004 were up 141 per cent to $0.53, from $0.22.

Excluding foreign exchange gains and losses on long-term debt and the 2003 special charge, income increased 23 per cent to $104 million in the second quarter of 2004, compared with $84 million in second-quarter 2003. On the same basis, diluted EPS were $0.65, compared with $0.53.

CP’s operating income in the second quarter increased 19 percent to $221 million, from $186 million in last year’s second quarter, excluding the special charge. Its operating ratio for the three-month period was 78 per cent, a 1.7 percentage-point improvement.

Canadian National Railway

NA O R F L. S

NA O R F L. S

Norfolk Southern

Norfolk Southern Corp. hauled in record revenues and 55 percent higher year-to-year earnings in the second fiscal quarter, fueled by rising business volumes and better expense controls.

Operating revenues for the three months ended June 30 were $3.1 billion, the highest of any quarter in NS’s history. That was up 11 percent against the second quarter of 2003. For the quarter, the rail company’s earnings were $213 million compared with $137 million a year earlier. Revenue edged up to $3.996 billion from $3.958 billion.

In the quarter, merchandise revenue was up 7% and coal revenue was up 9%, on strong yield and volume. Its operating ratio was 52.2 percent.

Surface Transportation operating income was $280 million, up 21% from the prior-year quarter. Surface Transportation revenue of $1.9 billion drove the increase in operating income. On a consolidated basis, operating revenue was $2.03 billion versus $1.94 billion a year ago.

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BLET officers during a closed meeting during the 77th Annual Southeastern Meeting Association in Greenville, S.C. From left: BLET National Vice-President Paul Wingo; BLET First Vice-President Edward W. Rodzwicz; and BLET National Secretary-Treasurer William C. Walpert.

Spouses and family members participate in a bead-working/jewelry making workshop sponsored by the BLET’s Grand International Auxiliary (GIA).

BLET members and their families participated in a “Casino Night” as part of the SMA festivities.

BLET members prepare for a Secretary-Treasurer Workshop as part of the SMA’s educational program.

K.W. Fuller, left, President of BLET Division 435 (Hamlet, N.C.), is the lucky winner of a BLET gold ring, presented by Richard Edmonds of the Locomotive Engineers & Conductors Mutual Protective Association (LECMPA). SMA Chairman Peace is in the background.

Brother Ray Clark, standing right, and other BLET members and spouses check their raffle tickets. Brother Clark is a retired member of Division 275 (Pensacola, Fla.).

The GIA held a raffle and several other fund-raisers to generate money for its annual scholarship program.
**BLET NEWS**

BLET officers during a closed meeting. From left: 77th SMA Chairman Roger Peace; BLET National Vice-President Paul T. Sorrow; National Vice-President Merle W. Geiger Jr.; and National Vice-President & National Legislative Representative Raymond Holmes.

BLET National President Don M. Hahs.

GIA Guide DeLaine Morris, left, receives a plaque from GIA President Onita Wayland.

GIA Treasurer Bettye Jo Dollar receives a plaque from GIA President Onita Wayland.

**PASSENGER RAIL NEWS**

**Update on Amtrak FY2005 funding**

On July 15, the Transportation and Treasury Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee marked up its fiscal year 2005 appropriations bill and earmarked just $900 million for Amtrak. Amtrak says it needs $1.83 billion to keep the system running. The full committee left it at that mark when it considered the bill on July 22.

Representative John Olver (D-Mass.) was planning to offer an amendment that would have increased the appropriation, but declined to offer it because there were no offsetting cuts made in other areas. The appropriations bill will be considered by the full House in September, at which time an amendment to increase the appropriation for Amtrak may be introduced.

The Bush administration’s budget proposal would give Amtrak $1.4 billion, which would be contingent on Amtrak following the reform proposal outlined by the White House. The proposal calls for the privatization of the system. The Bush administration stands behind a plan that would require private sector competition for railroad operations, and would place the financial burden for passenger rail on cash-strapped states.

The MBTA quietly provided special Orange Line trains for people exiting the FleetCenter on all four nights of the Democratic National Convention, opening the otherwise closed North Station so that some 3,200 delegates, journalists, and others with convention credentials could be whisked to Back Bay Station, free of charge.

MBTA quietly ran trains for DNC delegates

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Five to six of the special trains were swept for bombs at a railyard and then pulled into North Station, starting at about 10:30 each night. The trains departed regularly, and each made an express run to Back Bay until about midnight, primarily as a security measure to clear the FleetCenter area quickly, said Joe Pesaturo, spokesman for the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority.

Regular trains ran in between the special trains, so there was “no impact on service,” Pesaturo said. People on the platforms at the five stations between the FleetCenter and Back Bay “saw a train full of people go by, but there was a train right behind it” to pick them up, he said.

Jeremy Marin, a member of the Rider Oversight Committee, a watch-dog panel of T customers, said he thought it was a good thing that the conventioneers were put on a train, because the alternative was to pile into shuttle buses, taxis, and limousines, which add to congestion and pollution.

(From the Boston Globe).

**Amtrak reservations required during RNC**

As a security precaution, nearly all Amtrak passengers who want to ride the rails between Washington, D.C., and Boston during the Republican National Convention will have to make reservations in advance, the railroad announced on July 26. Amtrak will begin implementing its security measures on Aug. 28.

Amtrak also warned of delays during the convention because of tighter security on all trains to and from New York Penn Station, which is directly below Madison Square Garden, where the convention will be held Aug. 30-Sept. 2. Street access to Penn Station will be limited to two entrances.

Trains will be searched before they leave in the morning, and police will conduct inspections while trains are en route. Bomb-sniffing dogs will be present on trains and at Penn Station, Amtrak said.

(From the Associated Press).

Tommy Miller, center, the BLET’s Director of Organizing, discusses recruitment strategies with BLET members.

Members of the 77th SMA Arrangements Committee, during the banquet.
Weapons of Mass Destruction awareness now part of Meany Center hazmat training

The George Meany Center/National Labor College has expanded its hazardous waste/chemical emergency response training programs for 2004-2005 to include Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) awareness training.

The traditional four-day program will be extended to five days based on feedback the Meany Center received from training participants. Specifically, the evaluation data showed that a majority of rail workers are concerned about security issues and the lack of security training offered to them by the railroad industry.

The new curriculum, including Weapons of Mass Destruction awareness training and additional modules required for OSHA 10 certification, will be begun in October 2004.

The program dates are as follows:
- October 24-29, 2004
- April 17-22, 2005
- May 15-20, 2005
- June 5-10, 2005
- July 10-15, 2005

A total of 19 AFL-CIO State Federations have joined the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen in calling for enforceable federal regulations to ensure the safety of remote control train operations.

Most recently, the Colorado AFL-CIO and the Florida AFL-CIO have taken action in support of the BLET.

In addition to these state-level bodies, city and county level AFL-CIO organizations in Detroit, Seattle, and Toledo have also joined the fight for safe and secure remote control train operations in the United States.

Colorado AFL-CIO

The Colorado AFL-CIO Executive Committee unanimously passed a remote control safety resolution on June 18 after a presentation by BLET Colorado State Legislative Board Chairman George Last.

Chairman Last thanked Colorado AFL-CIO President Steve Adams and Teamsters Local 17 for their support and encouragement.

A PDF of the Colorado AFL-CIO resolution is available at: http://www.blet.org/pr/pdf/colorado.pdf

Florida AFL-CIO

Cindy Hall, the President of the Florida State AFL-CIO, sent a letter to Acting Federal Railroad Administrator Betty Munro on July 1, asking for greater scrutiny of remote control technology use.

In her letter, President Hall cited several accidents in Florida that occurred when remote control technology was in use. She also cited the prevalence of hazardous materials in rail cars.

President Hall wrote the letter after David Laverty, Chairman of the BLET’s Florida State Legislative Board, spoke before the Executive Committee of the Florida State AFL-CIO. After hearing Chairman Laverty’s presentation, the Executive Committee voted overwhelmingly in favor of authorizing President Hall to write the FRA.

Chairman Laverty later noted that several Chairmen of Teamster Central Labor Councils (CLC), who attended the Executive Committee meeting, also plan to send their own letters of concern to the FRA.

Rail workers in full hazmat gear participate in a simulated drill at the Meany Center.

The Metropolitan Detroit Central Labor Council (CLC), AFL-CIO, passed a remote control safety resolution on June 16, which calls on the Federal Railroad Administration to reopen its remote control docket and study this issue further.

The organization, which has approximately 300,000 members, called on the state of Michigan to prohibit the use of remote control technology until the FRA promulgates regulations regarding its use.

BLET Michigan State Legislative Board Chairman Greg Powell thanked BLET Division 920 (Pontiac, Mich.) for affiliating with the Metro Detroit CLC. Chairman Powell also thanked all the members of Division 920, Dave Butler, Local Chairman of Division 920; Russ Woltjer, President of Division 920; Donald Boggs, President of the Metro Detroit CLC; and all the members of the CLC Executive Board for their work on the resolution.

For a PDF of the Metropolitan Detroit resolution, visit: http://www.blet.org/pr/pdf/michiganstate.pdf

King County Labor Council, AFL-CIO

On July 21, the King County Labor Council in Seattle, Wash., adopted a resolution calling for all railroads within county limits to use fully qualified and federally certified locomotive engineers to operate all locomotives.

Further, the King County Labor Council, AFL-CIO, called on the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission to move forward with proposed rulemaking — (CR-102) under Docket #TR-040151 — that would provide protection for train movements, ensuring the safety of Washington State citizens.

Mike Elliott, First Vice-Chairman of the BLET’s Washington State Legislative Board, recognized Will Amaya, Legislative Representative of BLET Division 515 (Seattle), for his efforts in securing passage of the resolution.

“This is a very significant development and we have Will Amaya to thank for his many hours of hard work in making the resolution a reality,” Brother Elliott said. “Brother Amaya really made this whole thing happen. He drafted the resolution, lobbied for support and got our friends in labor to help get the resolution before the King County Labor Council for consideration. Thank you, King County Labor Council and thank you, Will Amaya.”

A copy of the resolution is at: http://www.blet.org/pr/pdf/kingcounty.pdf

Toledo Area AFL-CIO

The Toledo, Ohio, Area AFL-CIO Council recently passed a remote control safety resolution and asked the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to adopt enforceable Federal regulations that would ensure the safe operation of remote control trains.

The resolution calls upon the city of Toledo, Ohio, to prohibit the use of remote control locomotives until safety conditions are improved.

The letter, written by Toledo Area AFL-CIO Executive Secretary/Treasurer George Tucker, reads in part, “Therefore, we call on the Federal Railroad Administration to implement strict regulation, not guidelines that are openly flouted.”

Jim Ong, Chairman of the BLET’s Ohio State Legislative Board, credited Tom Galdoway for going above and beyond the call of duty on this safety effort. Brother Galdoway is Legislative Representative of BLET Division 4 in Toledo. Brother Ong also thanked Executive Secretary Tucker, other members of the Toledo Area AFL-CIO Council, and everyone else involved for making the effort a success.

A copy of the Toledo AFL-CIO resolution is available at: http://www.blet.org/pr/pdf/toledo.pdf

A copy of their letter to the FRA is available at: http://www.blet.org/pr/pdf/toledoletter.pdf
BLET, Teamsters at Democratic National Convention

General President Hoffa addresses DNC as Kerry, Edwards accept Democratic nomination

Teamster and BLET leaders were active participants in the Democratic National Convention in Boston the week of July 24 to 26. Teamster President John H. Hoffa addressed the DNC when John Kerry accepted the Party’s nomination for president on July 29.

Among those present were Ohio State Senator Bob Hagan (D-23), who is a member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen. Brother Hagan is at the DNC in Boston with several other leaders of the BLET.

“I have no doubt John Kerry and John Edwards are the right leaders for America,” Brother Hagan said. “Working families need a labor-friendly presence in the White House.”

Brother Hagan was also on hand as Vice Presidential Candidate John Edwards addressed the DNC.

“When you wake up and sit with your kids at the kitchen table, talking to them about the great possibilities in America, you make sure that they know that John and I believe at our core that tomorrow can be better than today,” said Edwards. “Like all of us, I have learned a lot of lessons in my life. Two of the most important are that first, there will always be heartache and struggle — you can’t make it go away. But the other is that people of good and strong will, can make a difference,” Edwards continued. “One lesson is a sad lesson and the other’s insirng. We are Americans and we choose to be inspired.”

In addition to Brother Hagan, numerous other BLET leaders are in Boston attending the DNC, including BLET National President Don Hahs; First-Vice-President Ed Rodzewicz; Political & Legislative Director John Tulman; President Hagan; Chairman of the Massachusetts State Legislative Board; Walter Nutter, Secretary-Treasurer of the BLET; and Craig Hagan, First-Vice Chairman of the Massachusetts State Legislative Board.

President Hoffa addressed the entire DNC on July 27, giving a speech on behalf of America’s working families.

He also detailed the field campaign the BLET has planned to get-out-the-vote on behalf of Kerry and Edwards.

“Come January, I look forward to gathering with all of you again — this time in Washington, D.C. — to celebrate the inauguration of President John Kerry and Vice President John Edwards,” Hoffa said. “God bless America. God bless working families. And God bless the Teamsters — The union makes us strong!”

BLET President Hahs and the rest of the BLET and Teamster representaives will have met with many prominent senators and congressmen too numerous to list. The BLET President met with Congressman Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio), Congressman Patrick Kennedy (D-RI); Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA); and Teresa Heinz Kerry.

Legislative Chairmen conclude business at annual convention

Brother J.T. Norris of BLET Division 562 (Richmond, Va.) was reelected to another term as the Chairman of the BLET’s National Association of State Legislative Boards (NASLBC) in meetings held in Kalispell, Mont., from August 1-3.

The NASLBC creates a forum for U.S. BLET and Teamster Legislative Directors to discuss current, common issues and to deal with safety and legislative matters that impact the lives and working conditions of BLET members.

The meeting is an annual event designed to give the Chairmen the opportunity to discuss current, common issues and to plan how to deal with the legislative and regulatory front to deal with these issues.

W.M. Veredeyen of Division 734 (Terre Haute, Ind.) was elected to the office of First Vice-Chairman and Craig Gilchrist of Division 298 (Glasgow, Mont.) was elected to the office of Secretary-Treasurer.

Perry Refan of Division 569 (Heaven, Okla.) was reelected to the office of Secretary-Treasurer. Terry D. Briggs of BLET Division 530 (Commerce, Texas) was elected to the office of Alternate Secretary-Treasurer.

The NASLBC also elected four Regional Chairmen to represent the BLET in different geographic areas around the U.S. George Newman of Division 557 (Boston, Mass.) was elected Chairman of Region I; T.G. Mayne of Division 749 (Columbus, Ohio) was elected Chairman of Region II; Jim A. Keele of Division 336 (Boston, Mass.) was elected Chairman of Region III; and M.R. Moe of Division 316 (Atlanta, Ga.) was elected Chairman of Region IV. The officers were elected for three-year terms.

Thirty-one states within the BLET are represented by the NASLBC. The meeting will conclude on Tuesday. A particular focus of this meeting is planning for the fall elections across the nation.

Chairman Norris (Virginia) called the meeting to order on August 1, and members approved an agenda that included reports of several standing committees, a financial report, and break out sessions for working committees that are addressing issues of fatigue in the workplace, children’s safety, addressing sexual harassment, and operations fatality analysis (SOFA), and the full elections.

“This meeting is particularly important to everyone in the political national and state elections this fall,” said Brother Norris, “and the Chairmen are determined to involve themselves in educating our members about the election issues and the candidates, then I am sure the members will do the right thing when they vote to protect their interests and the interests of their family and dependents. Candidates such as Senator Kerry, whom we are supporting for President and others that must have a favorable attitude toward working men and women to gain our support.”

The meeting also included reports by BLET President Don Hahs, who gave an overview of the BLET and some detailed explanation of the soon to be instituted short-term disability insurance program for BLET members recently negotiated by the National Division. An extensive discussion concerning the remote control issue followed.

President Hahs expressed disappointment with the current state of affairs between the BLET and the UTU.

“I had hopes that their leadership would have been willing to take a look at coming in under the IBEW umbrella, but the UTU has the umbral key to protection of the members,” he added.

He encouraged all BLET members to return the membership surveys currently in the field. The purpose of the survey is to ask the BLET’s attitude about the next round of contract negotiations.

BLET First-Vice President Ed Rodzewicz reported on recent organizing successes for the BLET, most recent being the contract for trainmen on the Wheeling & Lake Erie, formerly represented by the UTU. He pledged that the resources now available to the BLET from the UTI as a result of the recent merger will be used to continue our organizing successes.

He remarked on recent developments with the UTU, saying, “We have revised their bylaws and the political national is open. They can come under the Teamster umbrella, either as an independent union or as part of the BLET. Either way, BLET members get the full say on whether or not they are allowed to join the Rail Conference, as per the merger documents. Regardless, UTU members will be better served to come under the Brotherhood on an individual basis at a rate of approximately 200 members per month.”

He also spoke briefly about the upcoming BLET National Convention.

“It may seem to be a long way out, but we are already working on planning the BLET’s national convention, which will start the week of June 18, 2006, in Las Vegas, with the IBEW convention to follow immediately after. We will have about 80 BLET delegates at the IBEW convention, so our organization will be well represented.”

Bill Walpert, National Secretary-Treasurer of the BLET, informed the Board that the BLET has gained almost 1,700 new members in the first six months of this year, and that the BLET’s assets have grown approximately $2 million since the present administration assumed office. “The new BLET-PAC brochure is now available for delivery on property, which we expect to get our hands on as quickly as possible.”

He also detailed the field campaign the BLET has planned to get-out-the-vote for the upcoming fall elections. “We often hear the expression that ‘these elections...”

See NASLBC, page 8
The future of working families in America

Railroad Security Issues

...These types of accidents. • ing rail switching to find ways to reduce is to analyze fatalities that occur dur-

ation. The Group’s central purpose is focused on the urgent need... All of our members need training they need to counter a terror-

senger lines are still lacking the proper Metro North and other freight and pas-

...improve our ability to properly... 11, nearly $4.5 billion in security funds

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...is not getting the attention that it should... public traffic than airplanes. Yet, the fund-

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...A Division of the Rail Conference, International Brotherhood of Teamsters... BLET News · August 2004

Plaintext representation of this document:

Increased investment in the rail industry... and the caboose sector are dominated by corporate interests and

...Train Conference, National Railroad Retirement Board, National Coordinating Council for Rail

...hold the key to reducing these types of accidents. •

...cruelty and well-informed choices when... important of voting for the Kerry-

families in America

Three Congressional leaders, Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), Eliot Engel (D-NY) and Jerry Brown (D-CA) organized events in their districts for a rail secu-

... environmentally significant projects... and emergency evacuation procedures...

...and increased the vulnerability of our rail lines.

A Change in the White House

The Bush White House, often char-

...ing the importance of voting for the Kerry-

...and to counter a terrorist attack. All of our members need training on how to handle personal pro-

...I have to tell you that the importance of voting for the Kerry-

...in the White House... in America

A message from IBT General President James P. Hoffa

International President Don M. Hope – National Division office, General supervision of IBT activities, General office duties, CR/BD meetings, Washington, D.C., FRA/PCA GRPA meeting, Governor, State of Maryland, IBT, U.S. National Legislative Representative, Division 209, CR/BD.

Vice-President & U.S. National Legislative Representative Raymond A. Holmes – Director, CR/BD, General office duties, telephone correspondence.

Vice-Preside... barcode for registration: http://www.ble-t.org/info/meetings/swcm

...Secretary, CR/BD, General office duties, telephone correspondence.

The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board will conduct an informational conference for BLE officers in Portland, Ore. The meeting will take place at the Hilton Garden Inn (1204 NE Airport Way), with registration beginning at 8 a.m. and the program begins promptly at 9:30 a.m., ending at 12:30 p.m.

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...reduce targeting... •

...security; General office duties.

...Public Law Board 6619; Advisory Board mtg.; Grand Trunk Western contract discussions; Wheeling

...U.S. Railroad Retirement Board Informational Conference, Ft. Worth, TX

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