



NEWS

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BLET releases RCO hazard study

Rail corporations should no longer be allowed to police themselves regarding new technology

Major U.S. railroad corporations should no longer be permitted to operate remote control locomotives free from regulatory oversight by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).

That is one of several key findings in a report released today by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET), which presented the results of a study sponsored by the National Division to investigate hazards created by remote control locomotive operations in the United States.

The study was conducted by renowned railroad work organization expert Dr. Frederick C. Gamst and former FRA Associate Administrator for Safety George A. Gavalla. Their work included a review of general information and comments, as well as details concerning remote control incidents, gathered over a three-year period from remote control operators (RCOs) and from others who work or supervise in areas where RCO operations have been introduced.

Among the study's most significant findings are the following:

- Because remote control locomotives ultimately are controlled by on-board computers, RCO introduces a level of mechanical hazard into switching operations that does not exist in conventional switching operations.
- Certain design features of the "black box" actually may increase the likelihood that an unintended movement will occur.
- Blind shoves — because of the lack of a requirement to provide human protection at the leading point of a movement — undermine, if not defeat, the purpose of designated "remote control zones."
- Training provided RCOs was routinely criticized as lacking in sufficient time and detail.

The authors recommended that FRA audit accident and injury reports submitted by the railroads, so that reliable baseline data can be amassed for re-

mote control accident and casualty rates. Further, that FRA refine existing accident investigation procedures to include studying technological or systemic factors that may cause or contribute to accidents. Finally, that the industry should no longer be permitted to regulate itself concerning remote control operations.

BLET National President Don M. Hahs said of the study, "This is the latest piece of evidence that the industry's hasty and ill-planned implementation of remote control technology — and the FRA's decision not to grant our 2000 Petition for Rulemaking — have combined to diminish both safety and productivity in switching operations, which is precisely the result we have long predicted. The study also should have a sobering effect on those who continue to advocate a headlong rush to implement new and untested technologies." •

BLET engineers, trainmen approve strong contract with Utah Railway

Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen represented by the BLET ratified a new contract with the Utah Railway on July 29.

The five-year deal calls for a 15 percent general wage increase over the life of the contract. Additional fringe benefits could boost overall earnings slightly higher to approximately 18 percent.

The BLET has represented engineers at the short line for several years, but organized the trainmen on February 28, 2003. Many of the trainmen chose BLET over their former union, the UTU, in order to achieve better representation. Both crafts voted separately on this contract, each approving it by a decisive majority.

"During the organizing drive, the question arose about trainmen voting on their own contract," said Dale McPherson, BLET Vice-President. "We made good on that commitment with this contract."

Vice-President McPherson assisted the negotiating team, consisting of General Chairman Rick Milano, Local Chairman-Engineers John Sloan, Local Chairman-Trainmen Steve Clifton, and General Committee Secretary-Treasurer Todd Hamilton.

"Rick, Steve, John and Todd were

a real pleasure to work with," Vice-President McPherson said. "They did their homework and did an excellent job of representing their members."

Milano said that Brother Clifton, a trainman and former UTU Local Chairman, was an integral part of the negotiating team.

"I'm glad we worked together as a team," General Chairman Milano said. "Conductors and engineers both were on the bargaining committee."

Brother Clifton, the Local Chairman for conductors at the Utah Railway, said many trainmen were somewhat skeptical of the BLET going into this round of negotiations. However, they soon realized those concerns were unfounded when the new contract was unveiled.

"Some people were asking, 'Will the BLET really look out for us or will they try to give locomotive engineers everything?'" he said. "I was kind of hesitant myself. But during negotiations, the BLET was looking out for conductors and engineers both. It wasn't one sided and I think everyone was happy with it. People were happy with the BLET and how the contract turned out."

Clifton said members were most pleased with the back pay and general wage increases negotiated by BLET.

"With this contract we gave nothing up and got increases," he said. "Everybody's pleased with the back pay and 15 percent raise."

Engineers and trainmen will receive back pay retroactive to Jan. 1, 2005.

In addition to the general wage increases and back pay, the contract contains numerous provisions that secure the safety and jobs of BLET members.

While remote control is currently not in use on the property, the BLET took steps to make sure it is implemented properly and in the safest manner possible.

"The organization will be involved in any pre-implementation of remote control, particularly regarding safety features," Vice-President McPherson said.

The new contract also preserves a minimum crew consist agreement of not less than one locomotive engineer and one conductor on each remote control job.

"Engineer only is not an issue on this property," Vice-President McPherson said.

According to General Chairman Milano, the company wanted to give all

See Utah Railway, Page 7

Inexperience a factor again in RCO crash

A serious remote control-related train wreck took place at the General Motors plant in Shreveport, La., on July 23, just one week after the technology was implemented at that location.

Remote control operations were initiated on the Union Pacific-run rail line at the plant in mid-July, and on July 23, a loading ramp at the plant was struck by a railcar being moved by a remote control locomotive.

The impact of the crash pushed the rail loading ramp 14 feet south into the parking lot where it hit yard van number 335. The accident, which occurred at 11:40 a.m., destroyed track number two at the plant's rail yard.

Both crew members were newly certified remote control operators. One of the crew members was only certified as a remote control operator on July 18, five days before the accident.

"This accident demonstrates what we have said all along," said BLET President Don Hahs. "Remote control is being implemented without its operators being properly trained or experienced. It is a dangerous technology when placed in the hands of employees without experience."

BLET NEWS

Would anyone be proud of the UTU?

Eugene V. Debs — or anyone, for that matter — would find it hard to back UTU leaders

Former New York Mayor David Dinkins may have said that “service to others is the rent we pay for the space on earth we occupy,” but two former UTU Presidents spoke with their actions more than their words.

Court documents reveal the actions of two former (infamous) UTU presidents, who may have said, “Bribes and kick backs are the rent you pay to belong to the UTU’s Designated Legal Counsel list.”

These former UTU Presidents and others mentioned in court documents have done irreversible damage to the image of labor unions, perpetuating the ugly stereotype of corrupt union bosses getting fat and rich on illegal payments. But more importantly, they’ve jeopardized the Federal Employers Liability Act (FELA) through their selfish and illegal actions.

Sadly, current UTU leaders conveniently get a case of amnesia and forget this glaring black eye each time they

take pot shots at the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen.

Would Eugene V. Debs be proud of a union like the UTU? Would Debs — or anyone, for that matter — be proud of a union whose two previous International Presidents are now in prison for racketeering and extortion?

Would Eugene V. Debs be proud of a union like UTU, whose leadership has done so much harm to FELA? Or would Debs be proud of a union like the BLET, which went all the way to the United States Supreme Court to protect FELA. As part of a major ruling regarding worker rights in asbestos litigation (Norfolk & Western Railway v. Ayers, 01-963), the BLET filed an Amicus Brief and successfully defended portions of FELA that had fallen under attack by rail management, winning a landmark decision that benefited all of Rail Labor on March 10, 2003.

The UTU leaders are masters of spin. They have a high-priced former

railroad public relations official on their payroll, yet they are critical of the BLET for merging with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Would Eugene V. Debs be proud of a union like UTU that appears to be under the control of a rail management spin doctor? Or would Debs be proud of a union like BLET, which is part of the Rail Labor Bargaining Coalition, seeking to unite rail labor under one umbrella at the negotiating table?

Only UTU has craft autonomy written into its constitution? Then why is it trying to use the National Mediation Board to combine operating crafts at the Union Pacific Railroad? It appears the UTU’s craft autonomy clause in its constitution isn’t doing much good to protect operating crafts. Would Eugene V. Debs be proud of a union that is seeking to eliminate the locomotive engineer and conductor crafts to create a new “train and engine service employee” craft? Or would Debs be proud of union

like BLET, the union fighting to protect the crafts and jobs of locomotive engineers and conductors?

Engineer only operations? UTU is the only railroad in North America to negotiate engineer-only operations at a freight railroad. Take a look at the Quebec, North Shore and Labrador Railway (QNS&L) in Canada. Would Eugene V. Debs be proud of a union that sold out its own members to run freight trains with only one engineer on board? Or would Debs be proud of a union like BLET, which is successfully negotiating for and protecting the jobs of engineers and trainmen throughout the United States, as it did recently with its new agreement with the Utah Railway?

Bribes and kickbacks? High-priced management spin doctors on the payroll? Engineer only operations on freight trains? Yep. Eugene V. Debs would certainly be proud of an organization like the UTU.

BLET sets the record straight on UTU spin doctoring

When sorting through the UTU’s latest smoke and mirrors attempt to obscure the truth (UTU website post, “How to smoke out a pair of skunks,” August 5), BLET and UTU members need to keep one fact in mind:

No amount of spin doctoring will obscure the truth.

Here is a link to UTU’s proposed contract agreement with BNSF, in which UTU leaders propose the elimination of yard engineers from Rivergate Yards in Portland. Not only do UTU leaders propose eliminating these locomotive engineer jobs, they further propose using ground crew employees qualified as engineers to operate locomotives in a conventional manner.

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

BLET and UTU members can recognize a sell-out when they see one. No amount of UTU spin doctoring can obscure that fact. A sell-out is a sell-out, no matter how UTU tries to spin it.

BLET General Chairman Dennis Pierce (BNSF/MRL), a major target in UTU’s August 5 attack, clarified the real story behind the UTU sell out in a letter to his Committee today.

Brother Pierce makes it clear that he has not “climbed in bed” with BNSF management, as UTU falsely claims. In fact, he has had no formal meetings with the carrier regarding this issue as the only

formal meetings that took place were between UTU and BNSF in BLET’s absence. While BLET requested a joint meeting with UTU and BNSF, UTU ignored the request. BLET generated no written contract proposals with the carrier on this issue, however, the UTU did. The UTU has put in writing its willingness to sell out engineers.

What BLET informally suggested was that both unions, BLET and UTU adopt the jointly negotiated compromise agreement that UTU and BLET agreed to on another portion of the BNSF property in 2004. That agreement left one engineer and one conductor on the job in return for agreement language preventing the sale of the line. Brother Pierce notes that it was UTU that agreed to open up its crew consist agreement and eliminate the brakeman’s position in order to prevent the line sale in Texas, not BLET. No negotiations occurred concerning the groundmen’s craft without UTU present in the Texas case, nor did BLET suggest any occur in the Portland case.

Pierce further explains: “Without getting into each and every tired old accusation that UTU has peppered its post with, you can rest assured that BLET did no negotiating behind closed doors to attack the groundmen’s craft,” he said. “Once notified of the proposed sale, we asked for a joint meet-

ing with UTU and BNSF to discuss the possible adoption of the attached agreements. Ironically, unlike any agreements that UTU has negotiated on its own, the agreements that BLET proposed considering actually have hard fast language preventing the Carrier from selling the covered portion of the operation so long as the agreement is in effect. UTU obtained no such protection in its remote control sell out, in fact yards where UTU represented employees operate RCO are also up for sale and UTU has no agreement to prevent the sales.

“As for our request to meet jointly, UTU did not even respond, instead they met alone with BNSF behind closed doors in our absence, returning to their offices after the meeting to draft an agreement that was clearly intended to eliminate a craft for which UTU holds no jurisdiction on this property.”

A copy of Brother Pierce’s letter, along with all attachments, are available here:

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

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

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

<http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/Fitzgeraldrequest080205.pdf>

UTU seeks sell-out of BNSF yard engineers in Wash., Ore.

Once again showing its willingness to sell out operating crafts, leadership of the United Transportation Union has proposed eliminating locomotive engineer jobs on BNSF Railway lines in Washington and Oregon.

To reduce its operating costs, the BNSF is seeking to short line large portions of its territory. BNSF management recently advised that certain portions of the yard operations at Pasco, Wash., and Portland, Ore., were potentially up for sale or lease unless the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and UTU were able to come up with an agreement to reduce costs.

The BLET proposal was one of compromise. BLET suggested that the carrier operate with two man crews in the yard — one BLET-represented locomotive engineer and one UTU-represented remote control operator.

The UTU proposal, however, was one of self-preservation. UTU provided the carrier with a contract proposal that totally elimi-

nates the yard engineer position and uses foremen to operate locomotives conventionally.

It’s just another case of UTU leaders promising one thing but then doing another.

“While the UTU puts out its spin after spin fabricating what BLET would do if it had the representation rights for ground men, they have now put in writing the steps that they are willing to take to eliminate even more yard engineers,” said BLET General Chairman Dennis R. Pierce, who represents engineers in the effected territory. “While these actions no longer come as any surprise to us, we must make every effort to insure that all operating employees are aware of the steps that UTU is willing to take to survive as an organization.”

The BLET has advised the carrier that any action toward considering the UTU proposal will lead to swift action to protect BLET’s work rights in conventional operations.

Burlington Northern Santa Fe



Burlington Northern Santa Fe reported all-time record earnings of \$0.96 per diluted share, a 43 percent increase

over second-quarter 2004 earnings of \$0.67 per diluted share. Second-quarter 2005 freight revenues increased \$406 million, or 15 percent, to a quarterly record of \$3.04 billion compared with 2004 second-quarter freight revenues of \$2.64 billion. Revenue for the second quarter of 2005 included fuel surcharges of \$234 million compared with \$65 million in the second quarter of 2004.

Operating expenses for the second quarter of 2005 of \$2.43 billion were \$251 million, or 12 percent, higher than the same period in 2004, primarily driven by a 4-percent increase in gross ton-miles and 37 percent higher fuel prices after hedge benefit.

In the second-quarter of 2005, BNSF posted an operating income of \$710 million, a \$202 million, or 40 percent, increase over the second quarter of 2004. In addition, BNSF's operating ratio decreased four percentage points to 76.7 percent from 80.7 percent in the same quarter of the prior year. •

Canadian National Railway



CN reported strong financial and operating results for the second quarter and six-month period ended June 30, 2005. Financial highlights included: Diluted earnings per share of \$1.47 for the second quarter of 2005, up 30 percent from \$1.13 reported for second-quarter 2004; Second-quarter 2005 net income of \$416 million, an increase of 28 percent from second-quarter 2004 net income of \$326 million; and Second-quarter 2005 operating income of \$713 million, an increase of 24 percent.

CN also boasted a record second-quarter operating ratio of 61.2 percent, a 4.3-percentage point improvement over second-quarter 2004 performance.

Second-quarter revenues increased by 10 percent to \$1,838 million, largely owing to freight rate increases, which included a higher fuel surcharge as a result of increases in crude oil prices, and the inclusion of revenues from the rail and related holdings of Great Lakes Transportation LLC (GLT) and BC Rail. Partly offsetting these gains was the unfavorable \$80 million translation impact of the stronger Canadian dollar on U.S.-dollar denominated revenues. •

Canadian Pacific Railway



**CANADIAN
PACIFIC
RAILWAY**

Second-quarter profit rose 46 percent at Canadian Pacific Railway Ltd. as stronger freight prices, especially for coal, offset lower overall shipments and higher fuel costs. CP Rail, which maintained

its profit outlook for the year, said it earned C\$123 million (\$101 million), or 77 Canadian cents a share, in the second quarter, up from a profit of C\$84 million, or 53 Canadian cents a share, a year earlier.

Excluding foreign exchange losses on long-term debt, earnings would have been 87 Canadian cents a share, the company said.

The company, which operates in Canada and the United States, said revenue rose 10 percent to C\$1.1 billion in the period, driven by higher revenues for coal, grain, and intermodal shipping. Shipments fell by 2.9 percent, with the biggest drop in carloads coming in coal, down 10.5 percent, sulfur and fertilizers, off 10.1 percent, and automotive, which fell 5.1 percent.

Operating expenses rose 6.5 percent, mostly because of soaring fuel prices.

CP Rail's operating ratio, a measure of efficiency used by the railroad industry, improved to 75.5 percent from 78 percent in the second quarter 2004. •

CSX Transportation



Rail and transportation conglomerate CSX Corp. said that second-quarter earnings rose more than 38 percent on higher surface shipping revenues, especially of coal.

The Jacksonville-based company reported earnings of \$165 million, or 73 cents a share, up from \$119 million, or 53 cents a share, a year ago. Excluding one-time expenses and benefits, earnings were 96 cents a share. CSX said revenues at its core surface transportation business were \$2.17 billion, up about 8 percent from \$2 billion a year earlier. The strength was led by the coal and merchandise shipping markets.

Merchandise revenues were \$1.06 billion, up 7 percent from \$991 million, and coal, coke and iron ore revenues were \$541 million, up 22 percent from \$442 million. Intermodal revenues were \$330 million, up 2 percent from \$325 million.

Its operating ratio improved 4.7 percentage points over the same 2004 quarter to 80.5 percent.

Also in the quarter, CSX repurchased \$1 billion of its debt, which strengthened the company's balance sheet, reduced its interest expense going forward, and improved its credit profile. •

Kansas City Southern



Kansas City Southern reported second quarter 2005 financial results, which included the consolidation of TFM's results following the acquisition of control on April 1, 2005. For the second quarter 2005, KCS consolidated revenues were \$381.1 million versus \$153.9 million in 2004. On a same rail system comparative basis, KCS consolidated second quarter revenues grew 12.5% over the 2004 pro forma combined revenues of the Company.

In connection with the April 1, 2005, acquisition of an additional 48.5% interest in GTFM, KCS consolidated operating expenses for the second quarter of 2005 were adversely impacted by a non-cash, pre-tax charge of \$35.6 million related to a series of Mexican Supreme Court rulings, which eliminated TFM's ability to use net operating losses to offset future employer statutory profit sharing contributions. Primarily as a result of the above charge, as well as others related to GTFM, KCS recorded a net loss of \$25.8 million for the second quarter of 2005, compared with \$7.0 million of net income available to common shareholders for the second quarter of 2004. •

Union Pacific Corp.



Union Pacific Corporation reported second quarter 2005 net income of \$233 million, or \$.88 per diluted share. This is a 47 percent improvement compared to the second quarter of 2004 when the company reported net income of \$158 million, or \$.60 per diluted share. Operating income during the second quarter of 2005 was \$468 million, up 30 percent from \$359 million reported in the second quarter of 2004. Second quarter overview:

• Quarterly operating revenue was an all-time record \$3.3 billion compared to \$3.0 billion in the second quarter of 2004.

• Commodity revenue set an all-time quarterly record, up 10 percent to \$3.2 billion. This compares to \$2.9 billion in the second quarter of 2004 and was driven by a 1 percent increase in volumes as well as higher fuel surcharge recoveries and improved yields.

Norfolk Southern



**NORFOLK
SOUTHERN**

For the second quarter of 2005, Norfolk Southern Corporation reported record net income of \$424 million, or \$1.04 per diluted share, compared with \$213 million, or \$0.54 per diluted share, for the same period of 2004. Second-quarter net income included two previously announced items (the effects of Ohio tax legislation and settlements of two coal rate cases) totaling \$120 million, or \$0.29 per diluted share. Excluding these items, net income would have been \$304 million, or \$0.75 per diluted share. This is the highest income before accounting changes for any quarter in Norfolk Southern's history.

Second-quarter operating revenues of \$2.15 billion were the highest of any quarter in Norfolk Southern's history.

The second-quarter operating ratio of 72.5 percent was an improvement of 4.1 percentage points compared with second-quarter 2004. For the first six months, the operating ratio was 75.8 percent, which was 2.2 percentage points better than the same period a year earlier. •

• Second quarter 2005 operating income of \$468 million was the highest reported since the fourth quarter of 2003.

• The second quarter 2005 operating margin increased to 14 percent compared to 11.9 percent in 2004.

• Average terminal dwell time improved 11 percent from 30.9 hours to 27.4 hours and rail car inventory improved 2 percent to 318,434 cars. Average quarterly train speed fell slightly, from 21.3 mph to 21.2 mph comparing the second quarter of 2004 to 2005.

• The Railroad's average quarterly fuel price increased 44 percent versus the year ago quarter, from \$1.16 per gallon in 2004 to \$1.67 per gallon in the second quarter of 2005.

Second Quarter Railroad Commodity Revenue Summary versus 2004:

• Industrial Products up 19 percent • Agricultural up 16 percent
• Intermodal up 10 percent • Chemicals up 7 percent
• Energy up 5 percent • Automotive up 1 percent

The railroad's operating ratio was 86 percent for the quarter, an improvement of 88.1 percent in the same quarter of 2004. •

EASTERN UNION MEETING ASSOCIATION



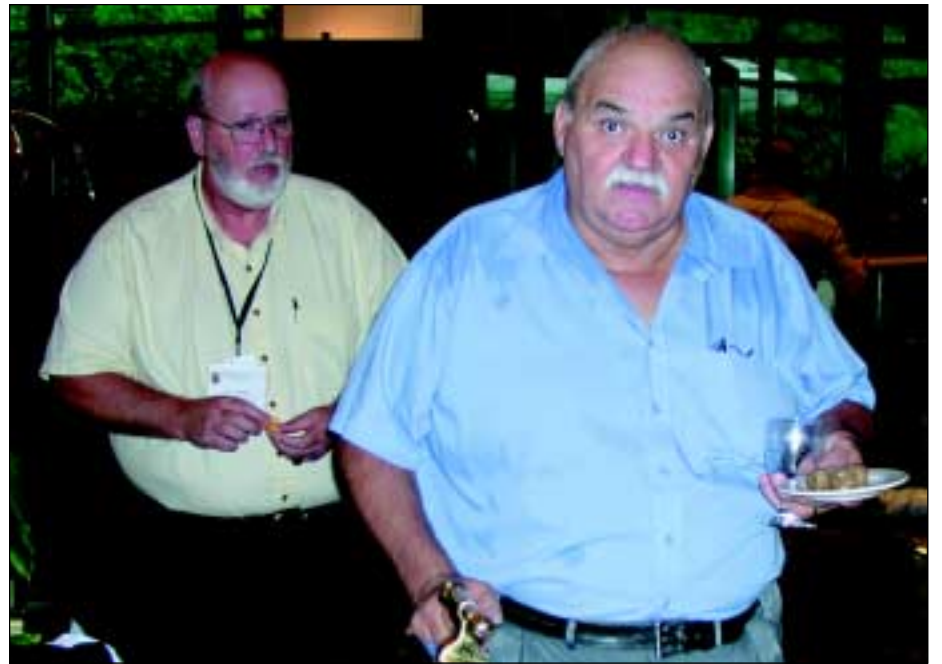
Dottie and Ben Blissett. Brother Blissett is a Primary Investigator of the BLET Safety Task Force and belongs to BLET Division 301 in Roanoke, Va.



Carl and Cheryl Fields. Brother Fields is a Primary Investigator of the BLET Safety Task Force and is Legislative Representative of BLET Division 682 in Hammond, Ind.



Dan Cook III and his wife, Adrienne. Brother Cook is Local Chairman of BLET Division 1 in Detroit, Mich.



From left: EUMA Secretary-Treasurer Gary Brink and EUMA Golf Tournament Chairman Sonny Kertesz. Brother Brink is retiring from his EUMA duties after many years of dedicated service.



From left: GIA Treasurer Bettye Dollar; GIA Vice-President Mabel Grotzinger; BLET Vice-President Stephen Speagle; BLET Vice-President Paul Sorrow; BLET National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert; and BLET National President Don Hahs.



From left: Gregory Durocher, Local Chairman of BLET Division 867 in Waterbury, Conn.; General Chairman Tom Roberts (Conrail SAA/CSX-Northern District); and Jim Louis, Local Chairman and Legislative Representative of BLET Division 421 in Buffalo, N.Y. Brother Louis is also Secretary-Treasurer of the Conrail SAA General Committee of Adjustment.

SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y.



Don Zatteau, Local Chairman of BLET Division 286 in Grand Rapids, Mich., purchases raffle tickets from Pat Murphy, GIA Second Vice-President & Assistant U.S. Legislative Representative. The number of raffle tickets sold was based on each person's arm span, so Brother Zatteau made sure he got as many tickets as possible.



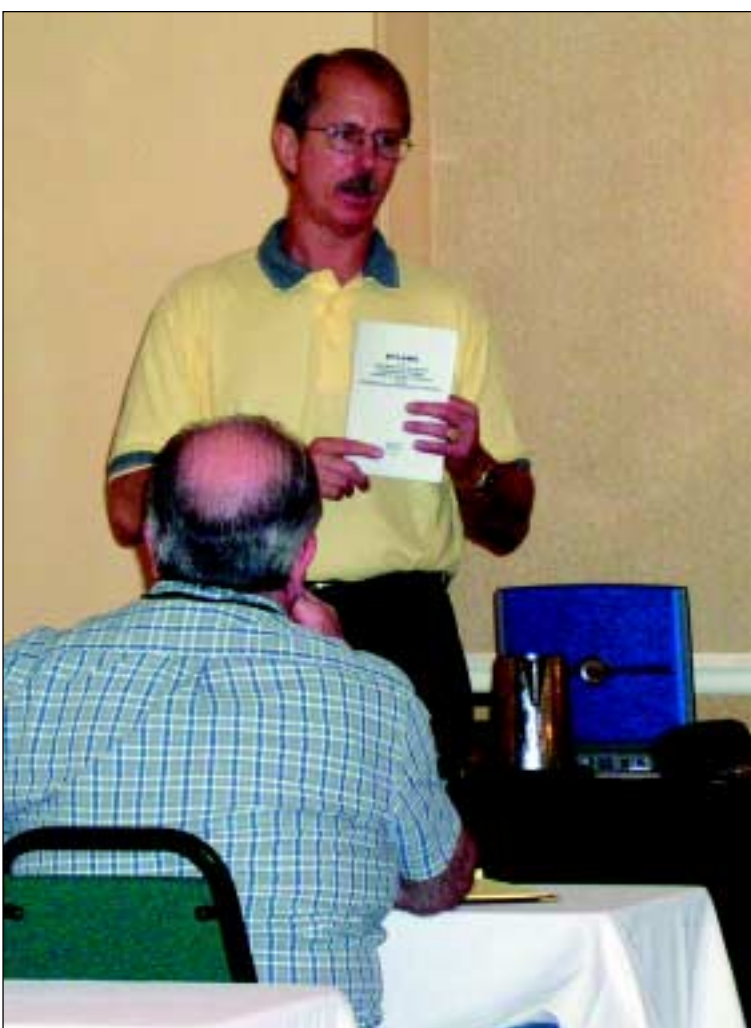
From left: BLET National President Don Hahs presents a plaque to Shaun Louis, honoring him for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout. Shaun is the son of Jim Louis, Secretary-Treasurer of BLET Division 421 in Buffalo, N.Y. Shaun has also earned an American Labor merit badge and is currently working on a Railroad badge. Less than two percent of Scouts achieve the rank of Eagle Scout.



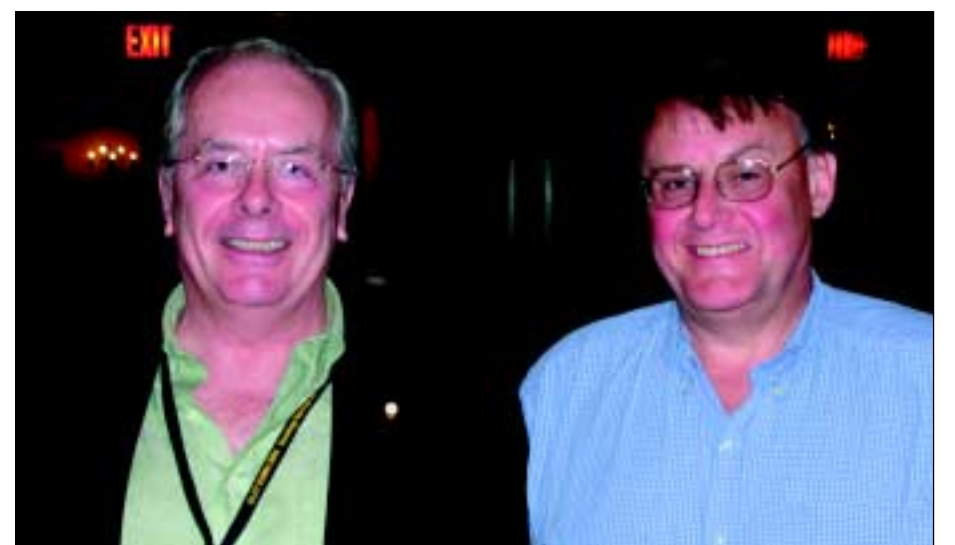
Clockwise, from far right: Sam Caruso, a member of BLET Division 183 in Omaha, Neb.; Anita Caruso, GIA International Secretary; Roxie Twombly; and Mike Twombly, Delaware & Hudson/Springfield Terminal General Chairman.



From left: EUMA Chairman and Amtrak General Chairman Mark B. Kenny and 2005 EUMA Arrangements Chairman Bill Kearsing, a member of BLET Division 46 in Albany, N.Y.



Ken Kroeger, BLET Special Rep and Coordinator of the Education & Training Department, makes a presentation during the Local Chairman Workshop.



From left: Mike Gannon, Legislative Representative of BLET Division 11 in New York, N.Y.; and George Newman, Massachusetts State Legislative Board Chairman.

2006 Eastern Union Meeting Association

Hosted by Arrangements Chairman R.J. Chapter, Co-Chairman T.J. Moraghan and the members of BLET Division 157 at the

Atlantic City Tropicana

in Atlantic City, N.J., from June 12-16, 2006

BLET NEWS

Explaining Railroad Retirement age reductions

Railroad retirement benefits are subject to reduction if an employee with less than 30 years of service retires before attaining full retirement age. Employees with less than 30 years of service may still retire at age 62. However, the age at which full retirement benefits are payable was increased by 1983 social security legislation first effective in the year 2000. This legislation affected railroad retirement benefits through coordinating provisions of the Railroad Retirement Act, and the age requirements for some unreduced railroad retirement benefits changed just like the social security requirements.

The following questions and answers explain how these early retirement age reductions are applied to railroad retirement annuities.

1. What is the full retirement age for employees with less than 30 years of service and is it the same for all employees?

Full retirement age, the earliest age at which a person can begin receiving railroad retirement or social security benefits without any reduction for early retirement, ranges from age 65 for those born before 1938 to age 67 for those born in 1960 or later, the same as for social security.

2. How are the changes in the maximum age reduction being phased in?

Since 2000, the age requirements for some unreduced railroad retirement benefits have been rising just like the social security requirements. For employees with less than 30 years of service and their spouses, full retirement age increases from 65 to 66, and from 66 to 67, at the rate of two months per year over two separate six-year periods. This also affects how reduced benefits are computed for early retirement.

The gradual increase in full retirement age from age 65 to age 66 affects those people who were born in the years 1938 through 1942. The full re-

tirement age will remain age 66 for people born in the years 1943 through 1954. The gradual increase in full retirement age from age 66 to age 67 affects those who were born in the years 1955 through 1959. For people who were born in 1960 or later the full retirement age will be age 67.



3. How does this affect the early retirement age reductions applied to the annuities of those who retire before full retirement age?

The early retirement annuity reductions applied to annuities awarded before full retirement age are increasing. For employees retiring between age 62 and full retirement age with less than 30 years of service, the maximum reduction will be 30 percent by the year 2022. Under prior law, the maximum reduction was 20 percent.

Age reductions are applied separately to the tier I and tier II components of an annuity. The tier I reduction is 1/180 for each of the first 36 months the employee is under full retirement age when his or her annuity begins and 1/240 for each additional month. This will result in a gradual increase in the reduction at age 62 to 30 percent for an employee once the age 67 retirement age is in effect.

These same reductions apply to the tier II component of the annuity. However, if an employee had any creditable railroad service before August 12, 1983, the retirement age for tier II purposes will remain 65, and the tier II benefit will not be reduced beyond 20 percent.

Chart 1 below shows how the gradual increase in full retirement age will affect employees.

4. What are some examples of how this will affect the amounts payable to employees retiring before full retirement age with less than 30 years of service?

Take the example of an employee born on June 2, 1950, who retires in 2012 at the age of 62. In terms of today's dollars and current benefit levels, not

counting future increases in creditable earnings, assume this employee is eligible for monthly tier I and tier II benefits, before age reductions, of \$1,200 and \$800, respectively, for a total monthly benefit of \$2,000.

Upon retirement at age 62, the employee's tier I benefit would be reduced by 25 percent, the maximum age reduction applicable in 2012. This would yield a tier I monthly benefit of \$900; the employee's tier II benefit would also be reduced by 25 percent, providing a tier II amount of \$600 and a total monthly rate of \$1,500. However, if the employee had any rail service before August 12, 1983, the tier II benefit would be subject to a maximum

Take for an example the spouse of a railroader with less than 30 years of service, none of it prior to August 12, 1983, retiring in 2022 at age 62, with a spouse annuity, in terms of today's dollars and current benefit payments and before any reductions for age, of \$1,000 a month. With the maximum reduction of 35 percent applicable in 2022, her net monthly benefit would be \$650, while if this same spouse were retiring in 2005 at age 62 with the maximum age reduction of 30 percent, her net monthly benefit would be \$700.

Chart 2 below shows how this will affect the spouses of railroad employees if the employee retires with less than 30 years of service.

Chart 2: Spouse Age Reductions

Year of Birth*	Full Retirement Age	Annuity Reduction at Age 62
1937 or earlier	65	25.00%
1938	65 and 2 months	25.833%
1939	65 and 4 months	26.667%
1940	65 and 6 months	27.50%
1941	65 and 8 months	28.333%
1942	65 and 10 months	29.167%
1943 through 1954	66	30.00%
1955	66 and 2 months	30.833%
1956	66 and 4 months	31.667%
1957	66 and 6 months	32.50%
1958	66 and 8 months	33.333%
1959	66 and 10 months	34.167%
1960 or later	67	35.00%

*A person attains a given age the day before his or her birthday. Consequently, someone born on January 1 is considered to have been born on December 31 of the previous year.

reduction of only 20 percent, providing a tier II amount of \$640, and a total monthly rate of \$1,540.

As a second example, take an employee born on June 2, 1960, and also eligible for monthly tier I and tier II benefits, before age reductions, of \$1,200 and \$800, respectively, for a total monthly benefit of \$2,000. This employee retires in 2022 at age 62 with no service before August 12, 1983. Consequently, a 30 percent reduction is applied to both the tier I and tier II benefits and the net total annuity would be \$1,400.

5. How are railroad retirement spouse benefits affected by this change?

If an employee retiring with less than 30 years of service is age 62, the employee's spouse is also eligible for an annuity the first full month the spouse is age 62. Early retirement reductions are applied to the spouse annuity if the spouse retires prior to full retirement age. Beginning in the year 2000, full retirement age for a spouse gradually began to rise to age 67, just as for an employee, depending on the year of birth. While reduced spouse benefits are still payable at age 62, the maximum reduction will be 35 percent by the year 2022. However, if an employee had any creditable rail service prior to August 12, 1983, the increased age reduction is applied only to the spouse's tier I benefit.

6. What age reductions are applied to employees who retired with 30 years of service prior to 2002?

Under the Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act of 2001, employees with 30 or more years of creditable service are eligible for full age and service annuities the first full month they are age 60, if their annuities begin January 1, 2002, or later. The spouses of such employees are likewise eligible for full annuities, which can also begin with the first full month the spouse is age 60. Also, if a disability annuitant is age 60 and has 30 years of service, his or her spouse can receive an annuity at age 60 without any age reduction if the spouse's annuity beginning date is January 1, 2002, or later.

However, early retirement reductions are applied to the tier I portion of an employee's annuity if the employee first became eligible for a 60/30 annuity July 1, 1984, or later and retired at ages 60 or 61 before 2002. The tier I benefit awarded such an employee's spouse will also be reduced for early retirement, regardless of whether the spouse retires at age 60 or 62, and regardless of the date the spouse's annuity begins.

7. Are age reductions applied to employee disability annuities?

Employee annuities based on disability are not subject to age reductions

Chart 1: Employee Retires with Less than 30 Years of Service

Year of Birth*	Full Retirement Age	Annuity Reduction at Age 62
1937 or earlier	65	20.00%
1938	65 and 2 months	20.833%
1939	65 and 4 months	21.667%
1940	65 and 6 months	22.50%
1941	65 and 8 months	23.333%
1942	65 and 10 months	24.167%
1943 through 1954	66	25.00%
1955	66 and 2 months	25.833%
1956	66 and 4 months	26.667%
1957	66 and 6 months	27.50%
1958	66 and 8 months	28.333%
1959	66 and 10 months	29.167%
1960 or later	67	30.00%

*A person attains a given age the day before his or her birthday. Consequently, someone born on January 1 is considered to have been born on December 31 of the previous year.

GIA Dialogue

Advice from a seasoned GIA spouse: 'Get involved'

By Sereena Hogan

3rd International Vice President
Grand International Auxiliary

In the June issue, Mabel Grotzinger did a fine job of outlining the challenges and frustrations of being a railroad spouse. In keeping with Mabel's promise to present some coping mechanisms for this lifestyle, I will share a few ideas I have found helpful over the last 17 years I have been married to Southern Pacific (now Union Pacific) engineer, Ken Kroeger.

When Ken and I met, I'd been a single mom for eight years and was fairly independent and capable of handling many situations on my own, which of course is a good fit for a railroad wife. During the two years Ken and I dated before we married, I realized that putting up with the uncertainty of his non-existent schedule was a real headache. He invariably ended up being gone when we had made plans to attend functions together. After explaining to my circle of friends time after time that he had "planned on being here," but was called out, or needed to rest because he was going to be called out, many of them were starting to think that this railroad guy was some figment of my imagination.

What I did find, though, was that when Ken was in town and we socialized with other railroaders, I met some pretty nice people, even if they were somewhat of a different breed, with

their own special language. I will never forget the first time one of Ken's railroad buddies told me that "Ken died last night on the tracks, somewhere out in the desert on his way from Tucson to Yuma." I was relieved to find out what really meant was that he had "died" on the hours of service law, not literally.

By the time Ken and I were married in the spring of 1989, I had met some very nice women who were also railroad spouses. One of them asked me to help organize a spouse's support group so we could get together and socialize as well as talk about ways to cope with the lifestyle. At that time, we were unaware of the GIA. Our support group organized picnics and worked on projects to create more fraternization among the membership, something that seemed to be slipping away in these busy times.

In 1990, Ken was involved in a major derailment just outside of Yuma, Ariz. Although he was unaware of it at the time, this was a turning point in his career. The railroad placed the blame on the crew for the loss of approximately \$10 million worth of brand new General Motors automobiles, not to mention the track damage and railroad car and equipment damage.

In the next few weeks, Ken worked closely with his local chairman to develop a defense for his investigation. The day of the investigation, I called together a group of his railroad buddies for a surprise pizza party that

night. It was fun and lighthearted, and Ken felt supported by these guys. One of them presented him with a plaque that read "General Motors Salesman of the Year."

Ken and the conductor were both dismissed following the investigation, but he filed and won an appeal and went back to running trains. That experience got him interested in becoming a union officer. In 1995, he became the Local Chairman for Division 28.

By now you may be asking yourself what all this has to do with coping and surviving as a railroad spouse? My point is that the way I have learned to cope is by becoming involved. In the beginning of our relationship, I resented the railroad because it kept Ken away from me and the kids. Ken now serves as a Special Rep and Coordinator of Education & Training with the National BLET. That position requires that he attend all four regional conventions. I usually accompany him to assist him and to represent the International GIA. Over the years, we have developed a large BLET "family" that we look forward to connecting with each summer. At each convention, we make more new friends and this family continues to grow.

This summer, I got a true taste of the support of my extended family when I suffered a broken ankle the morning of registration day at the Eastern Union Meeting Association in Saratoga Springs, N.Y. I had been "plowed over" by a couple of large, rowdy dogs as Ken and I took our morning walk. I spent

most of that day in the emergency room, but was able to attend the welcoming reception that evening. My BLET and GIA brothers and sisters all wished me well on the surgery I was to undergo the next day, and after spending a few days in the hospital, I was released in time to attend the banquet on the closing day of the convention. I was very moved by the cards and gifts I received that evening, and especially by the prayers and remembrances throughout the week. I was a little sad I hadn't stayed for the band, when I learned that the disc jockey had been instructed to play "Who Let the Dogs Out" in my honor. Sorry I missed that one!

If you are feeling a little "beaten up" by your role as a railroad spouse, my advice to you is this: You can't beat 'em so you might as well join 'em. Get involved. If you don't have a GIA in your area, take the initiative and start one. No one will understand your plight better than a group of other railroad spouses. Even if you can't change the situations that frustrate you, at least you will have a place to share ideas on how to cope and what to do. Attend your regional meetings; they are for everyone, not just officers, and each one features invaluable opportunities to learn more about railroad life. It's a great way to take a trip with the family, and could be tax deductible if it's job-related. You too will feel that sense of "family" as you interact and connect with your BLET and GIA brothers and sisters, and you may be surprised at what you can learn. •

Utah Railway

Continued from Page 1

remote control assignments to locomotive engineers.

"It was a hot issue and I thought it would be a deal-breaker," Milano said. "But we got a deal that protects both sides and everyone's satisfied. It's a good agreement for both crafts."

Engineers and trainmen will receive one hour of pay in addition to all other earnings when working remote control assignments. In addition, the BLET secured seven years of protection at a defined rate of pay for anyone who may be adversely impacted by implementation of remote control.

In terms of health care, BLET members will be switched to Blue Cross/Blue Shield, and all members will receive a \$500 lump sum payment in the first quarter of 2006 and an additional \$500 lump sum pay-

ment in the first quarter of 2007 to offset any out of pocket expenses that may occur because of this change. Also, monthly contributions are frozen at \$50 per month for the dependent coverage during the life of the contract. Employee health care costs are covered by the company.

The BLET obtained a 50 percent company match on 401k contributions, up to 4 percent of an employee's salary.

"A \$70,000 per year employee who puts 4 percent or more of his earnings into the 401k would receive approximately \$7,000 in matching funds from the company over the life of the agreement. That's \$7,000 in free money," Vice-President McPherson said.

General Chairman Milano was pleased with the fact that every single trainman on the property cast ballots, regardless of how they voted.

"I thank the Bargaining Committee and those who voted, whether they voted for it or against it," he said.

"I'm pleased that they exercised their right to vote.

"John Sloan, Steve Clifton, Todd Hamilton and Dale McPherson did an outstanding job."

The Utah Railway Company, incorporated in January of 1912, transports more than 90,000 carloads of freight per year in central and northern Utah. It transports between 50-60,000 earloads each year for movement to power plants and industrial customers. Additionally, it acts as a switching agent in the Salt Lake City, Provo and Ogden areas of Utah for BNSF. Utah Railway has connections with BNSF and UP at Provo and Utah Railway Junction, Utah, as well as at Grand Junction, Colo.

Genesee & Wyoming Inc. (GWI) purchased the Utah Railway on Aug. 28, 2002. GWI is a leading operator of short line and regional freight railroads in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Australia and Bolivia. •

Railroad Retirement

Continued from Page 6

except for employees with less than 10 years of service, but who have 5 years of service after 1995. Such employees may qualify for a tier I benefit before retirement age based on total and permanent disability, but only if they have a disability insured status (also called a "disability freeze") under Social Security Act rules, counting both railroad retirement and social security-covered earnings. Unlike with a 10-year employee, a tier II benefit is not payable in these disability cases until the em-

ployee attains age 62. And, the employee's tier II benefit will be reduced for early retirement in the same manner as the tier II benefit of an employee who retired at age 62 with less than 30 years of service.

8. Do these changes also affect survivor benefits?

Yes. The eligibility age for a full widow(er)'s annuity is also gradually rising from age 65 for those born before 1940 to age 67 for those born in 1962 or later. A widow(er), surviving divorced spouse or remarried widow(er) whose annuity begins at full retirement age or later will generally

receive an annuity unreduced for early retirement. However, if the deceased employee received an annuity that was reduced for early retirement, a reduction would be applied to the tier I amount payable to the widow(er), surviving divorced spouse or remarried widow(er). The maximum age reductions will range from 17.1 percent to 20.36 percent, depending on the widow(er)'s date of birth. For a surviving divorced spouse or remarried widow(er), the maximum age reduction is 28.5 percent. For a disabled widow(er), disabled surviving divorced spouse or disabled remarried widow(er), the maximum reduction is

also 28.5 percent, even if the annuity begins at age 50.

9. How can individuals get more information about railroad retirement annuities and their eligibility requirements?

Employees should contact their RRB field office for information or refer to the RRB's website, www.rrb.gov.

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

BLET NEWS

A message from Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa

Strengthening labor unions



For the past nine months the Teamsters Union has been proposing changes to the AFL-CIO's structure so that the Federation would concentrate more on organizing, the life-blood of unions, and less on politics. Unfortunately, the IBT and the AFL-CIO were not able to agree on these key issues and we disaffiliated on July 25, 2005.

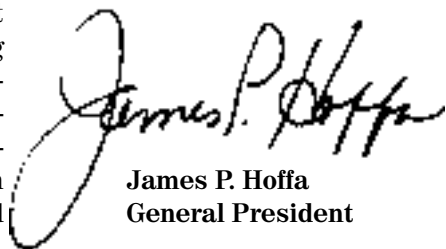
The Teamster plans for reforming the AFL-CIO structure were widely known, and lauded as a fresh approach for the union movement. The plans were, and still are, available on our website. In addition, the Teamsters enthusiastically supported the formation of the Change to Win Coalition, a group of seven Unions (IBT, LIUNA, SEIU, UFCW, UNITE HERE, Carpenters and United Farm Workers). We believe that labor can grow if we leverage our existing resources and focus clearly on empowering workers.

The Coalition sponsored a package of amendments and resolutions to be presented at the AFL-CIO Convention that would have revitalized the Federation (1) be setting organizing as its first priority, (2) by insuring that organizing is aimed not simply at increasing membership but at bargaining strong contracts that improve the lives of working people, (3) by maintaining high standards both at the Federation and

within its affiliates, and (4) by requiring the Federation to act firmly to prevent one affiliate from undermining the standards set by another.

The Teamsters are charting a new course for action. And, we will work with like-minded unions that are part of the Change to Win Coalition, pursue programs that will accelerate organizing, increase union density in our core industries, rebuild the labor movement and insure a better future for workers and their families.

The Teamsters Union is committed to cooperating with the AFL-CIO and its affiliates on actions and issues that vitally affect workers and families. We plan to support and cooperate in political and other actions that matter to working people. We will not allow our differences with the AFL-CIO to affect our fundamental commitment to trade unionism and to working people. We hope that the AFL-CIO will join with us in this pledge that our differences will not affect the interests of workers and their families.



James P. Hoffa
General President

AUGUST 2005 CALENDAR & EVENTS

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

NOVEMBER 4, 2005... Railroad Retirement Board Info. Conference, Pineville, N.C.
The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board will conduct an informational conference in Pineville, N.C., on November 4 at the Holiday Inn Express, 9825 Leitner Dr. Due to space limitations, the RRB asks that only elected BLET officers attend these conferences. Registration begins at 8 a.m. sharp. All conferences begin promptly at 8:30 a.m. at conclude at 12:30 p.m.

JUNE 4-9, 2006... 79th Annual BLET-GIA Southeastern Meeting Association (SMA)
Hosted by SMA Chairman T.L. Reed and the members of BLET Division 205, the 79th annual SMA will be held at the Chattanooga Marriott at the Convention Center in Chattanooga, Tenn. More information to come when available.

JUNE 12-16, 2006... 68th Annual BLET-GIA Eastern Union Meeting Association (EUMA)
Hosted by EUMA Arrangements Chairman R.J. Chapter and the members of BLET Division 157, the 68th annual EUMA will be held at the Tropicana Casino & Resort on the Boardwalk in Atlantic City, N.J. More details to come.

JUNE 19-22, 2006... BLET National Division Convention, Las Vegas, Nevada
The First Quadrennial Convention of the BLET National Division will be held at Bally's in Las Vegas. More details to come when available.

JULY 18-23, 2006... 66th Annual BLET-GIA International Western Convention (IWC)
Hosted by S.V. Halbrook and the members of BLET Division 94, the 66th annual IWC will be held at the Holiday Inn Rapid City—Rushmore Plaza in Rapid City, S.D. More details to come when available.

AUGUST 20-24, 2006... 71st Annual BLET-GIA Southwestern Convention Meeting (SWCM)
Hosted by A.L. Williams and the members of BLET Division 182, the 71st annual SWCM will be held at The Peabody Little Rock in Little Rock, Ark. More details to come.

Advisory Board June Activity

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

National President Don M. Hahs—National Division office: General supervision of BLET activities; General office duties; ARMSE 2005 annual conference, Las Vegas; Mtg. w/ Sen. Reid; Southeastern Meeting Association (SMA), Montgomery, Ala.; Mtgs. in D.C. w/ SEIU, Unite Here, UFCW; RLBC-NCCC mtgs., Washington, D.C.; DOL mtg., Cleveland; Sec. 13c-TEA 21 conference call; Eastern Union Meeting Association (EUMA), Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

First Vice-President & Alternate President Edward W. Rodziewicz— Assisted President in general operation of National Division Office; Vice President assignments; Special Representative assignments; Organizing department; Shortline department; Passenger department; Various correspondence & phone calls; NS organizing campaign; Numerous Town Hall meetings at multiple locations, including Danville, Fort Mitchell, Cleveland, Knoxville, Chattanooga, Atlanta, Birmingham, Macon, Waynesburg, Shire Oaks, Conway, Norfolk, Crewe, Roanoke, Bluefield, Charleston, Williamson, Portsmouth, Charlotte, Linwood, and Greenville.

National Secretary-Treasurer William C. Walpert—General supervision of BLET financial, record depts., ND office; BLET Education & Training Dept.; Internal Organizing, Mobilizing & Strategic Planning Dept.; Safety Task Force; Meetings with vendors and financial institutions; Mtg. w/ BMWV officers, Detroit, Mich.; SMA regional mtg., Montgomery, Ala.; National Democratic Club event, Mitchellville, Mo.; Mtg. w/ Met Life reps, re: Short Term Disability program, Cleveland; EUMA regional mtg., Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

Vice-President Paul T. Sorrow—Performed office inventory; Reviewed cases for Public Law Boards; Attended meeting of Division 498; Assisted CSX, NS, GTW committees with the handling of various issues; Meeting with Local Chairman of Division 598; Performed general office duties.

Vice-President Richard K. Radek— ND Office; BLET Decertification Helpline services; Director of Arbitration Dept; National Railroad Adjustment Board (NRAB); Illinois Central; Wisconsin Central; Indiana Harbor Belt; METRA; Belt Rwy. of Chicago; Paducah & Louisville; Chicago Central & Pacific; CN/WC exec. cmt. mtg., Rosemont-Des Plaines, Ill.; BLET Chicago roundtable mtg.; CN/WC contract negotiations; IHB general assistance; Metra training agreement exec.; Standing Bid tutorial mtg., CN/IC, WC; Labor Management mtg., contract negotiations, IJ&E, WC, Chicago, Homewood, Ill.; BRC labor-management mtg., Manning dispute arbitration procedural; Metra contract negotiations; Arb. Conf. & Cous., Alternative Dispute Resolution; FRA Part 240.409 dockets EQAL 01-16, 03-47, 00-41, 02-52, 02-30, 03-35, 02-45.

Vice-President Dale McPherson — CP Rail; Port. Term. RR; Longview Portland & Northern; Longview Switching Co.; Indiana RR; W&LE RR; Utah Railroad; UP Eastern Dist.; UP former CNW; DM&IR RR; Portland & Western RR; Great Western RR; Appalachian & Ohio RR; Public Law Boards 5604, 5681, 5721, 6040, 6281, 6558, 6589; UP work/rest projects; RSAC positive train control cmt.; National wage/rules; W&LE RR contract negotiations, Cleveland; Portland & Western contract ratification mtgs.; National wage/rule mtgs., Washington, D.C.; Soo Line mediation arbitration agreement; Utah Railway ratification mtgs.

Vice-President & U.S. Nat'l Legislative Representative Raymond A. Holmes — BLET Washington D.C. office; General office duties, telephone, correspondence; Cooperating Rail Labor Organizations (CRLO) mtgs., Miami; AFL-CIO Executive Council mtgs., Las Vegas.

Vice-President Merle W. Geiger Jr.— Assigned to: BLET Trainmen's Department; Kansas City Southern; Gateway Western; Midsouth Rail; Southrail; Texas-Mexican Rwy.; Springfield Terminal, Delaware & Hudson; Indiana & Ohio RR; Louisville & Indiana RR; St. Lawrence & Atlantic RR; Indiana Southern RR; Div. 612 mtg., KCS, Lake Charles, La., w/ GC Parker; Joint Division mtg., 219 (UP), 326 (MidSouth), 599 (KCS) and 632 (KCS), Shreveport, La.; SMA regional meeting, Montgomery, Ala.; EUMA regional meeting, Saratoga Springs, NY; Correspondence, research, communications and other general office duties.

Vice-President Stephen D. Speagle—Assigned to Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Montana Rail Link, Pacific Harbor Line; Missouri & Northern Arkansas (M&NA); National wage/rules committee; NS A-card mtgs., including Kansas City, Moberly, Decatur, Lafayette, Peru, Ft. Wayne, Detroit, Elkhart, Kankakee, Chicago; National wage/rule coalition mtg., Washington, D.C.; EUMA mtg., Saratoga Springs, NY; Safety Summit II mtg., BNSF, Springfield, Mo.

Vice-President E.L. "Lee" Pruitt — Assisted general chairmen & members of: UP-Western Lines; UP-Western Region; UP-Central Region; UP-Southern Region; UP-Tacoma Belt; General office duties, telephone paperwork; UPCR GC Rightnowar, auto-markup arbitration, Boston; PTC symposium, Washington, D.C.; UPWL and UPWR arbitration boards 180, 4450, 4451 and 4452, Detroit, Mich.; Arbitration Board 6833 & 6834, assisting UPSR GC Gore, New Orleans; Trip rates, assisting UPWL GC Hannah, Colton, Calif.; Ebb & flow negotiations, assisting UPWL GC Hannah, San Antonio; Office, paper, filing, STD and calls, assisting.

Vice-President Paul L. Wingo Jr. — Assigned to NS-Southern Lines and Eastern Region GCofAs; Meridian Southern; New York Susquehanna & Western; New England Central; BLET Rail Security Officer; Contract negotiations at NECR, St. Albans, Vt.; Security project; General office duties; Attended numerous NS Town Hall mtgs. and special mtgs.

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