



# NEWS

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## BLET, Amtrak reach tentative pact

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen initialed a tentative contract agreement with Amtrak on July 19, ending a 7-year stalemate.

The tentative agreement would run through September 2010 and provide wage increases for 1,300 locomotive engineers who operate passenger trains over Amtrak's 21,000 mile, 46-state route system.

Engineers with 2,000 hours of service would receive a \$4,500 signing bonus. Those with less than 2,000 hours would receive pro-rated bonuses. All engineers would receive 10 general wage increases,

seven of them rolled into a single increase on October 1, 2007. Three additional wage increases — two in 2008 and one in 2009 — would give engineers an approximate pay increase of 33 percent over the life of the agreement.

Engineers would also see their certification pay double from \$5 to \$10 per start.

BLET General Chairman Mark Kenny worked for years to obtain the agreement, which was often delayed due to the unstable nature of Amtrak's finances. Heightened media scrutiny of the struggles of Amtrak

workers, plus increased questioning by leaders on Capitol Hill, added pressure to Amtrak leaders to finally come to an agreement.

Ballots were mailed from the BLET National Division in Cleveland at the end of July, and balloting results will be available on or after August 30.

"Our Amtrak engineers are among the most dedicated Brothers and Sisters in the country," General Chairman Kenny said. "I appreciate their patience as we labored long and hard to achieve an agreement that puts us where we need to be." •

## President Hahs helps dedicate environmentally friendly locomotives at Pacific Harbor Line

BLET National President Don Hahs helped the Pacific Harbor Line launch its new fleet of environmentally friendly switching locomotives at ceremonies in Long Beach, Calif., on July 18.

By year-end, Pacific Harbor Line's locomotive fleet will be replaced by 16 remanufactured diesel-electric units that exceed U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's most stringent "Tier 2" standards to reduce air pollutants. This will make PHL the most environmentally friendly switching railroad in the nation.

Port, state and city officials — including the mayors of Los Angeles and Long Beach — joined President Hahs and PHL President Andrew Fox to celebrate delivery of the first four locomotives and to congratulate the railroad for transforming its entire locomotive fleet.

Railroads BNSF, UP and PHL move annually close to 2 million containers directly from and to the docks at these ports. In doing so, they eliminate over 10,000 truck-trips per day.

"The work to move those 2 million containers is done by the dedicated and professional members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen,"



From left to right and up the stairs in front of 62: Andrew Fox, President, PHL; Billie Greer, Office of Gov. Schwarzenegger; Richard Steinke, Executive Director, Port of Long Beach; Dr. Mike Walter, Port of Long Beach Harbor Commissioner; Bonnie Lowenthal, Vice Mayor, City of Long Beach; Tonia Reyes Uranga, Councilwoman, City of Long Beach on first step; Bob Foster, Mayor, City of Long Beach on second step; James Hankla, Port of Long Beach Harbor Commissioner on third step; Dee Andrews, Councilmember, City of Long Beach on nose platform; John Hancock, Port of Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioner on nose platform; and Engineer Geoff Maits (in the cab), a member of BLET Division 214.

In front of 63: Antonio Villaraigosa, Mayor, Los Angeles on first step; Janice Hahn, Councilwoman 15th District, Los Angeles; S. David Freeman, President, Board of Harbor Commissioners, Port of Los Angeles; Peter Gilbertson, Chairman, PHL; and Don Hahs, BLET National President.

President Hahs said during his speech. "I thank Local Chairman Lyle Gibson here for the excellent job he does in representing our members in Division No. 214 at the Pacific Harbor Line."

PHL does much of the railroad work on the docks in Los Angeles and Long Beach.

"On start-up in 1998 PHL initially employed some 17 operating employees," President Hahs said. "These hard working employees continue to enable these Ports to grow and deserve much of the credit. They move a lot of Rail traffic with a few good people. The BLET, as union representative

of operating employees on PHL and engineers on BNSF and UP, is very pleased that PHL has acquired these new low-emission locomotives."

Scientific tests have shown that exposure to die-

See Pacific Harbor Line, Page 2

## Members OK new contract at NYS&W

BLET members ratified a new agreement with the New York, Susquehanna and Western Railway (NYS&W) yesterday, governing wages and working conditions for their train and engine service employees.

The agreement, reached in mid-July, was ratified by a 10-to-1 majority. It provides an immediate increase of 9 percent in the hourly rate of pay and an additional 9 percent general wage increase over the life of the contract, which runs through the end of 2010. It also provides for a \$5,800 lump sum benefit payable in three equal installments beginning shortly after ratification and continuing through 2009. The agreement covers approximately 40 members.

According to BLET National Vice President Marcus Ruef, negotiations had been ongoing since 2003, and were completed under the auspices of the National Mediation Board, with the guidance of Mediator Dick Hanusz, whose services had been sought by BLET.

General Chairman Ben Martin, who was assisted in the last year and conclusion of negotiations by Vice President Ruef, outlined the benefits obtained for BLET members under the new agreement:

See NYS&W, Page 2



BLET NEWS

New contract at NYS&W approved by 10-to-1 majority

NYS&W

Continued from Page 1

“Highlights from the ratified agreement include 9 percent general wage increases to \$21 per hour and will increase to \$22.95 per hour on January 1, 2010 at the end of annual 3 percent wage increases commencing January 1, 2008,” Martin said. “Additional benefits include a \$5,800 per employee back pay lump sum, limitations on the annulment of regular assignments, shoving pay for conductors, increased meal allowances, increased certification allowances, increased work boot allowance, supply of raingear, and strengthened cleaning provisions for locomotives.”

General Chairman Martin went on to say that the limitations that were placed on the Carrier’s manipulation of regular assignments, as well as the preservation of other work rules and health & welfare benefits, were major reasons why members voted in favor of the agreement.

“It was the job protection from annulment that was monumental,” Martin said. “Hardworking union brothers were being given part time hours for a full time job due to a loophole in the previous agreement. Now the incentive to cancel a job multiple times in a week is gone.

“The process was three-plus years of preserving an already outstanding Agreement. It was very important that we retained an excellent health care rule and several work rules that have been achieved over several years.”

Brother Martin thanked a host of officers and members who helped to make the new agreement a reality.

“I’d like to thank National Vice Presidents Marcus Ruef and Merle Geiger from the National Division of the BLET, retired Vice President Paul Wingo, David Cameron from the IBT, Local Committee of Adjustment officers Greg Chandler and Matt Gibbons, and, most importantly, all the Division 521 members at the NYS&W Railway who stood by the organization throughout the lengthy negotiations,” Martin said.

Brother Martin said the over-



The NYS&W agreement is signed on July 15 at the NYS&W offices at Cooperstown, N.Y. Fromleft: BLET General Chairman Ben Martin (standing) looks on as NYS&W President Nathan Fenno (center) signs the agreement, while NYS&W Vice President of Operations Bill Bloomfield (right) looks on.

whelming acceptance of the new agreement is a sign of tremendous solidarity on his property.

“The Agreement passed ratification by a 10-to-1 margin on the first vote,” he said. “I am very proud that Teamster solidarity exists within the Brotherhood on the NYS&W property.”

National Vice President Marcus Ruef said the process that culminated in the agreement was a long and winding road.

“Everyone involved in this process worked very hard to reach a fair contract settlement,” Ruef said. “Vice Presidents Wingo and Geiger both invested a lot of time and effort into this project before my assignment. David Cameron, Senior Communication Specialist with IBT, was very generous with his time and assistance, and set an example of how we can benefit from our affiliation with the Teamsters.

“Brother Martin and his members were steadfast throughout the process. All of our combined efforts led to a satisfactory outcome for our NYS&W mem-

bers, who have an agreement they are rightfully proud of. Mediator Dick Hanusz of NMB also deserves special mention, because it was his efforts to get the Parties together that led to each side seeing its way to making the Agreement that enjoyed such an overwhelming ratification.”

The agreement runs through 2010, and Section Six notices can be served in July of that year.

The NYS& W operates over 400 miles of track in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, serving more than 85 customers. The railroad transports a wide range of commodities such as feed ingredients, lumber and other building materials, chemicals and aggregates for customers in New York State; and plastics, lumber, food products, paper products, motor vehicles, chemicals, aggregates, and metals for customers in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

The NYSW has connections with three Class I railroads: CSX, Canadian Pacific, and Norfolk Southern. •



From left: New York, Susquehanna & Western (NYS&W) General Chairman Benjamin Martin and Northern Division Local Chairman Matthew Gibbons, both members of BLET Division 521, taken at Cortland, N. Y. (Photo courtesy BLET Division 421 Member Joseph Geronimo.)

Pacific Harbor Line

Continued from Page 1

sel exhaust can be harmful to humans.

“By using low-emission locomotives, the Pacific Harbor Line is not only helping the environment, but is helping its workers, too,” President Hahs said. “It is expected that these new low-emission locomotives will help make the workplace cleaner for our BLET locomotive engineers and trainmen.”

Following the ceremony, President Hahs met with Local Chairman Gibson to discuss the new locomotives and other issues of importance to the BLET and the members of Division 214. •



BLET Job Bank  
Amtrak

Amtrak is recruiting to fill Locomotive Engineers to work in the following areas: Jacksonville, Fla.; Raleigh, N.C.; Florence, S.C.; Miami, Fla.; Charlotte, N.C.; and Lorton, Va. (Auto Train).

Duties include safe operation of our locomotives, complying with train orders, wayside signals, railroad operating rules, special instructions, federal, state and local regulations to transport passengers and equipment safely and efficiently. Engineers perform air brake tests as required and must frequently make timely and critical decisions under stressful conditions.

Must have a high school diploma or GED. Candidates must have a current Class I Engineer Certificate and have operated an engine within one year. Candidates must pass the Hogan Personality Inventory. Candidates must be able to report to their crew base within a two hour call period. The starting rate of pay is \$21.20 to \$28.26 full rate per hour (rate depends on how much service you have as an engineer; five years is the maximum rate).

Interested parties should fax their resume to (202) 906-3349 Attn: Sarah Ray ENG – (insert location desired). Interested parties can also mail resumes to:

**Amtrak Human Resources**  
**900 Second St. NE**  
**Washington, DC 20002**  
*(EOE, F/M, D/V - Amtrak is an equal employment opportunity employer) •*



**72nd annual Southwestern Convention Meeting**



**2007 SWCM Golf Tournament**

**Monday, October 8, 2007**  
**Olde Oaks Golf Club**



**FEES AND DETAILS**

Olde Oaks Golf Club, Hal Sutton's first signature course, is at 60 Golf Club Drive, Haughton, La. Phone (318) 742-0333. Tournament is from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Golf fee is \$75 per player. Four person scramble. Lunch will be provided.

**TEAM MEMBERS**

1.	_____	x \$75 =	_____
	(Your Name)		
2.	_____	x \$75 =	_____
	(Team Member)		
3.	_____	x \$75 =	_____
	(Team Member)		
4.	_____	x \$75 =	_____
	(Team Member)		
		<b>Total =</b>	_____

**MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO "72nd SWC Golf"**

Mail this form and check to:

Keith Shea  
5785 Gold Crest Drive  
Bossier City, LA 71112

E-mail: sheakeith@bellsouth.net · Home Phone: (318) 741-9689

**President Bush signs rail security bill into law**

On August 3, President Bush signed into law the "Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007." Passage of the bill is a milestone accomplishment for the BLET and all of Rail Labor.

The comprehensive legislation includes significant rail security measures that had originally been introduced in such bills as H.R. 1269 and H.R. 1401, "The Rail and Public Transportation Security Act of 2007."

According to John Tolman, BLET Vice President and National Legislative Representative, Rail Labor has worked to achieve some of the measures contained in this bill since 2001.

But in recent months, the BLET and Teamsters Rail Conference testified numerous times on behalf of this legislation, and many BLET State Legislative Board Chairmen visited the nation's Capitol to lobby on the bill's behalf. The new law is also a huge first step in addressing many of the concerns raised in the Teamsters Rail Conference "High Alert" report.

The U.S. House and Senate overwhelmingly approved the legislation on July 31, which Democrats introduced when they took over control of Congress in January.

Some of the favorable measures in the law include:

- \$1.2 billion in funding over the next four years for general railroad security enhancements;
- \$650 million over the next 4 years for Amtrak security enhancements;
- Development of a "National strategy for railroad transportation security" within the next 9 months;
- Requirements for railroad carrier security assessments and plans;
- Development and implementation of a railroad security training program in consultation with Rail Labor;
- Due process for rail workers subject to security checks; and
- Whistleblower Protections.

"Many of these measures would not have been addressed to the degree they have been addressed without the diligent work of Rail Labor," Tolman said. "We fought to elect a Congress that would finally address our concerns, and then followed through with that Congress to keep the pressure on to pass this important legislation."

"There will be a considerable amount of additional work to do with some of the regulatory requirements the law stakes out, as well as in the appropriations process where designated money actually gets sent out and spent, but all in all, this is a strong, solid step in the right direction."

"It was also a major goal in our ambitious legislative agenda this year, and we have met it. It was a tough fight, but in the end a bi-partisan bill was overwhelmingly passed by both houses of Congress and was signed by the President. If, throughout the summer and in the early fall, we can accomplish the same with regards to Rail Safety Legislation (H.R. 2095 & S. 1889) our membership, as well as the industry and our country will be well served."

"I congratulate all of the BLET and BWED members of the Teamsters Rail Conference for their victory and thank you all for your hard work." •



**SWCM 2007 Registration Form**

**72nd Annual Southwestern Convention Meeting**  
**Shreveport, La. — October 7-11, 2007**



**HOTEL RESERVATIONS**

Reservations for Sam's Town Hotel and Casino (located at 315 Clyde Fant Parkway, Shreveport, La. 71101) can be made by calling (877) 429-0711. Be sure to ask for the Southwestern Convention rate (code S10-BLE) when making your reservations. Room rates are \$90.00 per night if reserved prior to September 1, 2007.

**SWCM REGISTRATION INFORMATION**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ T-shirt size: L: \_\_\_\_\_ XL \_\_\_\_\_ XXL \_\_\_\_\_ XXXL \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

BLET Division: \_\_\_\_\_ BLET Title (LC, LR, President, member, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

BLET Auxiliary: \_\_\_\_\_ Title (Member, President, Sec., etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse/Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Pre-Registration Fees	Attendees	Price	Total
Registration (if postmarked by September 22, 2007): .....	_____	@ \$100.00 = \$	_____
Registration with Natchitoches Plantation Tour (non-refundable): .....	_____	@ \$110.00 = \$	_____
Attend Banquet Only (non-refundable): .....	_____	@ \$62.50 = \$	_____
Late Registration (if postmarked after September 22, 2007): .....	_____	@ \$125.00 = \$	_____
<b>Total Amount Enclosed:</b> .....		\$	<div></div>

**Please mail this form, along with check or money order payable to "72nd SWCM" to:**  
R.T. Windsor, SWCM Treasurer, 202 Maple, Frontenac, KS 66763

**Activities (please indicate number attending each function):**

Monday:	Natchitoches Plantation Tour _____	Evening Reception _____		
Tuesday:	AFLAC Breakfast _____	DLC Luncheon _____	Dinner _____	
Wednesday:	LECMPA Breakfast _____	BRCF Luncheon _____	BLET Auxiliary Brunch _____	Banquet _____

**Workshops (Wednesday-please note workshops are all day):**

LC Workshop \_\_\_\_\_ ST Workshop \_\_\_\_\_ LR Workshop, FRA 240.409 Training & BLET Radiation Training \_\_\_\_\_

**For additional information,** please contact Bud Pickett, (318) 489-5044 (cell) or budis488@aol.com or Jennifer Pickett, jenlfitz2000@aol.com



# BLET NEWS

## Tom Roberts reelected General Chairman

The Conrail SAA/CSXT Northern District General Committee of Adjustment re-elected Tom Roberts for a third consecutive term as General Chairman at triennial meetings in Buffalo, N.Y., on May 21.

Brother Roberts joined the Brotherhood of Aug. 1, 1973, and is a member of BLET Local Division 601 (Newark, N.J.).

In voting on May 22, the delegates elected Jim Louis (a member of Local Division 421 in Buffalo, N.Y.) as Alternate General Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer; Matt Kronyak (Local Division 235, Union City, N.J.) as Vice General Chairman; Rich Vogt (Local Division 387, Camden, N.J.) as Alternate Vice General Chairman; and Greg Lund (Local Division 421, Buffalo, N.Y.) as Alternate Secretary Treasurer. Brother Louis was reelected by acclamation; Brothers Kronyak and Vogt won first-time election without opposition as well.

Delegates handled a variety of issues during the long, two-day work sessions. Among them were the decision to change from triennial to quadrennial meeting intervals, and the decision to create a new Alternate General Chairman position. The individual elected to that position would succeed the General Chairman should that office become vacant.



Delegates, officers and guests attending the May 2007 Triennial Convention of the Conrail SAA/CSXT Northern District GCoFA.

Front row, from left: Nate Drown, L.C. Div. 867; Kevin Bourassa, L.C. Div. 439; Bill Lyons, Div 46; Tom Roberts, General Chairman; Audrey Pawelczak, Office Mgr.; Jim Louis, Alt. General Chairman, GCA-S/T, L.C. Div. 421; Paul Sorrow, National Vice President; and Brian Baginski, L.C. Div. 601.

Top row, from left: Pat Driscoll, L.C. Div. 382; Jim Kermans, L.C. Div 1; Greg Lund GCA-Alt S/T, President Div. 421; Ron Smale, L.C. Div. 851; Mike Fitzgerald, L.C., Div. 3; Mark Krajewski, L.C. Div. 46; Jamie Bush, V.L.C. Div.169; Ron Bernash, L.C. Div. 63, Matt Kronyak, Vice General Chairman, L.C. Div. 235; Mike Henry, L.C. Div.169; John Lembke, L.C. Div. 227; Rich Vogt, Alt. Vice General Chairman, L.C Div. 387; and Pat Norton, L.C. Div.157.

(Photo by Tony Ocasio)

“We handled a lot of business in two days,” General Chairman Roberts said. “I thank the Delegates and everyone else who supported me, and believe the Delegates elected a talented, motivated and capable General Commit-

tee of whom our membership can be proud.”

BLET National Vice President Paul Sorrow addressed the body and provided an update on the CSX Single System agreement. Also in attendance were New York State Legisla-

tive Board Chairman John Collins, Ohio State Legislative Board Chairman Tim Hanely, and Norfolk Southern-Northern Lines Vice General Chairman Bob Linsey.

The General Committee is comprised of 15 different BLET

Local Divisions on two properties (Conrail Shared Assets and CSXT Northern District) and represents approximately 700 members in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Massachusetts and New Jersey. •

## Chairman Palmer reelected by acclamation in Oregon

Scott Palmer was reelected by acclamation to a second term as Oregon State Legislative Board Chairman at the Boards June 5 meeting in Wilsonville, Ore.

Brother Palmer is a 13-year member of BLET Division 842 in Klamath Falls.

Brother Don Strong of BLET Division 236 (Portland) was reelected as First Vice Chairman and Brother Mike Kelly of BLET Division 476 (Eugene) was reelected to the position of Second Vice Chairman.

Brother Sellar Nugent was reelected as Secretary-Treasurer, a position he has held since the Board's formation in 1990. Brother Robert Armstrong of BLET Division 362 (La Grande) was reelected as Alternate Secretary-Treasurer.

Also in attendance were Brothers Gary Quick, BLET Division 362 (LaGrande, Ore.), and Mike Neale, BLET Division 416 (Salem).

Guest Speakers included Designated Legal Counsel Paul Bovarnick, IBT Joint Council 37 Legislative Director Lynn Lehrback, and U.S. Senate candidate Steve Novick.

During the meeting delegates discussed legislative amendments designed to increase crew safety while



From left: Sellar Nugent, Scott Palmer, Rob Armstrong, Mike Kelly, Gary Quick, Mike Neale and Don Strong.

handling radioactive materials. Also discussed was a bill aimed at standardizing railroad signs such as advance speed boards, trackside flags, and switch targets.

A special committee was formed to investigate safety concerns of shortline railroad employees in the state.

“We have excellent delegates here

and I anticipate they will be very active,” said Palmer. “We have the opportunity to do some real good for the Brothers and Sisters in Oregon.”



## GC Pierce reelected by acclamation at BNSF/MRL

General Chairman Dennis Pierce was reelected by acclamation to a third term as General Chairman at the 11th Triennial General Committee Meeting of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe/Montana Rail Link (BNSF/MRL) General Committee.

General Chairman Pierce is a member of BLET Division 687 (Sioux City, Iowa) and has been a BLET member since April 1, 1981. Brother Pierce was elected as a Local Chairman in 1991 and was first elected as a full time Vice General Chairman on the BNSF/MRL General Committee in 1995, elevating to General Chairman in 2001.

"The delegates elected a good team that is dedicated to working together for the best interests of the membership," Pierce said. "For the first time, all of the officers elected at the GcofA meeting were elected by acclamation, truly a sign of solidarity and support for the officers."

Officers reelected by acclamation were 1st Vice Chairman Matt Wilson of BLET Division 104 (Spokane, Wash.); 2nd Vice Chairman Steve Bratka of BLET Division 98 (Lincoln, Neb.); and Secretary-Treasurer Jim Nelson of BLET Division 644 (Galesburg, Ill.). Brother E.G. "Jerry" Laprath of BLET Division 392 (Havre, Mont.) was elected by acclamation to the office of 3rd Vice Chairman, filling the spot vacated by Don May, who did not seek reelection.



ated by Don May, who did not seek reelection.

Additionally, all alternate officers were elected by acclamation, including: 1st Alternate Vice Chairman K.J. Psota of Division 623 (McCook, Neb.); 2nd Alternate Vice Chairman J.P. Allen of Division 58 (Wishram, Wash.); 3rd Alternate Vice Chairman M.E. Brandt of Division 727 (Sterling, Colo.); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer M.L. Pancost of Division 622 (Alliance, Neb.).

BLET National President Don M. Hahs was in attendance, and spoke to delegates regarding the new national contract and the general state of the union.

BLET First Vice-President Ed Rodziewicz and National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert also gave presentations to the delegates. First VP Rodziewicz,

who is also President of the Teamsters Rail Conference, spoke about various challenges facing the Rail Conference, while NST Walpert discussed the Brotherhood's financial situation and operations of the Standard Building in Cleveland. Vice President and National Legislative Representative John Tolman was also in attendance, speaking to the group on legislative initiatives including H.R. 2095.

NST Walpert, who is also head of the BLET Education & Training Department, assisted with a workshop for Local Chairmen. The workshop was held in conjunction with the BLET's Arbitration Department. BLET Vice President & Director of Arbitration Rick Radek and Assistant Arbitration Director Doug Davidson represented the Arbitration

Department. BLET Vice President Marcus Ruef participated in the workshop as well.

Ken Kroeger, BLET Special Representative and Coordinator of the BLET Education and Training Department, assisted in the organization of the workshop.

Gerald Wallin, a professional arbitrator, was the key note speaker for the class. It consisted of two arbitration cases — one with flaws and a second that was "picture perfect." After the workshop, Arbitrator Wallin took questions and also explained exactly what an arbitrator looks for and how important it is for Local Chairmen to get everything in the record at the investigation, because it is all arbitrators can look at when the get the case.

Other guests included

BNSF General Chairmen Pat Williams and Rick Gibbons, as well as UP General Chairman Tim Donnigan and Montana State Legislative Board Chairman Craig Gilchrist.

The General Committee handled its normal business in session and also celebrated the 30th anniversary of the forming of the General Committee.

"Thirty years ago this year, the former General Committees of the SPS, GN, NP and CB&Q came together and formed a single General Committee," General Chairman Pierce said. "Today, Local Chairmen from all of those former roads as well as MRL sit together not only as Brothers, but as friends."

The BNSF/MRL General Committee of Adjustment represents 3,400 members from 44 separate BLET divisions. •

## GC Priester reelected by acclamation at CP Rail System/U.S.

Michael D. Priester was reelected to his third term as General Chairman of the CP Rail System/U.S. General Committee of Adjustment at meetings held in Las Vegas in late June.

Brother Priester joined the Brotherhood on Feb. 1, 1972, and is a member of BLET Division 754 (Terre Haute, Ind.).

Also elected were: 1st Vice General Chairman Pete Semenek of Division 790 (Chicago); 2nd Vice General Chairman Gordon Kepka of Division 357 (Minneapolis, Minn.); and 3rd Vice General Chairman Randy Edwards of Division 754 (Terre Haute, Ind.).

Secretary-Treasurer Craig Thurow of Division 160 (Harvey, N.D.) was reelected by acclamation, while the new Alternate Secretary-Treasurer is Andy Olson of Division 768 (Thief River Falls, Minn.).

BLET National President Don Hahs attending the meetings, along with National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert. Vice Presidents Rick Radek, Dale McPherson, and Merle Geiger were also in attendance.

National Secretary-Treasurer Walpert, who heads the BLET Education and Training Department, and Vice-President Radek, who heads the BLET's Arbitration Department, held



a Local Chairman Workshop for the delegates. Ken Kroeger, BLET Special Representative and Coordinator of the Education & Training Department, and Doug Davidson, BLET National Division Arbitration Department staff, were on hand to help facilitate the workshop.

President Hahs addressed the delegates and spoke about the recently

ratified BLET National Contract. President Hahs also talked about the status of the Federal Railroad Safety Improvement Act of 2007, an important piece of Rail Labor-sponsored legislation that is currently in the U.S. House of Representatives. He also discussed the importance of supporting the BLET PAC fund in light of the important elec-

tions approaching in 2008.

Also on hand to address the delegates was Debbie Rine of the Rathman law firm, who discussed items of importance regarding Railroad Retirement.

The CP Rail System/U.S. General Committee of Adjustment represents the interests of nearly 600 locomotive engineers and trainmen. •



# BLET NEWS

## Tim Smith elected NASLBC Chairman

Tim Smith was elected Chairman of the BLET's National Association of State Legislative Board Chairmen (NASLBC) during the Board's annual meetings in Las Vegas.

Smith, Chairman of the California State Legislative Board, is filling the vacancy created by the retirement of Brother J.T. Norris (also retiring from his post as Chairman of the Virginia State Legislative Board), who pulled the pin in early May.

"In the short and long term, it's my goal to empower this Board to do the things we are constitutionally bound to do through education and communication," Smith said.

In addition to Chairman Smith, the following officers were elected to serve the NASLBC: 1st Vice Chairman Bill Verdeyen (Indiana State Legislative Board Chairman); 2nd Vice Chairman Terry Todd (Arkansas State Legislative Board Chairman); Secretary-Treasurer Ken Kertesz (Pennsylvania State Legislative Board Chairman); and Alternate S-T Mike McClary (Tennessee State Legislative Board Chairman). Brother Verdeyen was elected by acclamation.

The NASLBC also elected regional chairmen to represent

different areas of the United States. Region 1 Chairman is Tim Hanely (Ohio State Legislative Board Chairman); Region 2 Chairman is Dave Lavery (Florida State Legislative Board Chairman); Region 3 Chairman is Ed Way (Illinois State Legislative Board Chairman); and Mike Muscha (North Dakota State Legislative Board Chairman) was reelected to the office of Region 4 Chairman.

The new NASLBC Chairman and his officers are stepping into office with bright hopes for the future.

"We have a younger group of dedicated State Chairmen who are full of talent and energy," Smith said. "We want to make this legislative body of the BLET a force for the carriers to reckon with."

He also bid farewell and thank you to the retiring officers. In addition to Brother Norris, who is retiring from the office of Chairman, NASLBC Secretary-Treasurer Perry Renfro (Oklahoma State Legislative Board Chairman) is also retiring.

"We will miss J.T. Norris and Perry Renfro, and we aim to do them proud," Smith said.

In addition to the election of officers, members of the



From left: J.T. Norris, retiring Chairman of the National Association of State Legislative Board Chairmen, passes the gavel to newly-elected Chairman Tim Smith. Brother Norris has since retired as Chairman of the Virginia State Legislative Board after many years of dedicated service, while Smith is Chairman of the California State Legislative Board.

NASLBC discussed legislative and political strategies for the coming election cycle. NASLBC members also considered numerous resolutions of importance to locomotive engineers and trainmen, such as two-person train crews and the

safety of train crews who transport spent nuclear fuel.

BLET National President Don M. Hahs, First Vice President Ed Rodzwicz and National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert were in attendance to address the Chairmen. BLET Auxiliary President Becky Schneider also addressed the group.

The Chairmen also enjoyed a special presentation by Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa, who spoke about the importance of the upcoming Presidential elections and the need to support political action funds, such as the Teamsters D.R.I.V.E. fund and the BLET PAC fund.

BLET Vice President and National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman was also in attendance. He spoke about plans to increase donations to the BLET PAC fund, and provided the Chairmen with updates regarding a railroad security bill currently pending

introduction on Capitol Hill. Tolman also said the NASLBC and the BLET's National Legislative Office will work together in the coming months to coordinate a voter registration drive, a push to educate members about using absentee ballots, and boosting donations to the BLET PAC fund.

As part of that plan, the Chairmen are organizing a golf tournament for later this year (which may become an annual event) to raise money for and to help boost the exposure of the PAC fund.

The meetings concluded on April 28. Election of officers was held on April 27. The meetings were held in conjunction with the Teamsters annual Unity Conference, which begins on April 29, and the BLET's Western General Chairman's Association meetings, which begin on May 1. Next year's NASLBC meeting is tentatively scheduled for mid-May of 2008. •



Above, from left: J.T. Norris, outgoing NASLBC Chairman; Don Hahs, BLET National President; James P. Hoffa, Teamsters General President; and Craig Gilchrist, Montana State Legislative Board Chairman. Brother Gilchrist presented the artwork by Montana Artist Don Greytak to President Hoffa on behalf of the NASLBC. Gilchrist's father, Gil, a 38-year veteran of the Great Northern, made the frame himself from wood salvaged from an old church. Calvin Burr, retired Montana State legislative Board Chairman, works with the artist to make sure the locomotives he draws are 100 percent mechanically accurate.



Left, from left: BLET National President Don Hahs; NASLBC Chairman Tim Smith (California); Vice President & National Legislative Representative John Tolman; National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert; and NASLBC 1st Vice Chairman Bill Verdeyen (Indiana).

Standing, from left: NASLBC Region 1 Chairman Tim Hanely (Ohio); NASLBC Secretary-Treasurer Ken Kertesz (Pennsylvania); NASLBC 2nd Vice Chairman Terry Todd (Alabama); NASLBC Region 4 Chairman Mike Muscha (North Dakota); NASLBC Region 2 Chairman Dave Lavery (Florida); and NASLBC Alternate Secretary-Treasurer Mike McClary (Tennessee).

Present but pictured is NASLBC Region 3 Ed Way, Chairman of the Illinois State Legislative Board.



# Western General Chairmen elect Priester

General Chairman Mike Preister (CP Rail-U.S./Metra North/Indiana Southern Railroad) was elected Chairman of the BLET's Western General Chairmen's Association (WGCA) at meetings in Las Vegas on May 2. He was elected by acclamation.

"The Western General Chairmen's Association prides itself in independent thinking with a team approach to the issues facing our members today," Priester said. "We pledge to continue in this time-tested tradition."

Also elected by acclamation were First Vice Chairman Dennis Pierce (BNSF/MRL General Chairman); Secretary-Treasurer Rick Gibbons (BNSF-Former STL-SF); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer Pat Williams (BNSF-former AT&SF). Rounding out the Executive Committee are Tim Donnigan (UP-Western Region) and John Koonce (Illinois Central).

WGCA members kicked off their meetings on April 30 at a reception for Teamster guests Jim Hoffa, General President, Tom Keegel, General Secretary-Treasurer, Ken Hall, Parcel and Small Package Division Director, and John Murphy, International Vice President and Director of the Rail Conference. President Hoffa addressed the group, and Chairman Pierce

presented him and GST Keegel with commemorative BLET pocket watches.

On May 1 and 2, BLET National President Don Hahs updated the General Chairmen on the status of the tentative national contract. First Vice President Ed Rodziewicz gave the Chairmen a report on Rail Conference issues. National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert provided the Chairmen with a report on BLET finances. National Legislative Representative John Tolman spoke about political issues, the BLET PAC fund, and the Railroad Safety Improvement Act of 2007.

BLET Vice Presidents Dale McPherson, Merle Geiger, Lee Pruitt, Steve Speagle and Paul Sorrow were also in attendance, but did not address the group.

The General Chairmen also spent time in roundtable discussions to develop strategies and possible solutions to common issues on their various properties.

Outgoing Chairman Pierce did not seek reelection to lead the WGCA. "Our practice has been to share the chairmanship with the body, and having held it for three terms, I deemed it was time to step aside,"



From left: Dennis Pierce, outgoing Chairman of the Western General Chairmen's Association, presents Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa with a BLET pocket watch during the meeting's opening session.

Pierce said.

Incoming Chairman Priester said, "It is an honor to be elected by my peers, Brothers, and true friends. I would also like to recognize the efforts of outgoing Chairman Pierce." •

## President Hahs talks safety with senior CSX representatives



In July, BLET National President Don Hahs invited top officials from CSX headquarters in Jacksonville, Fla., to a meeting at BLET headquarters in Cleveland. The parties discussed safety topics, locomotives, new derailment prevention technologies, capital projects to increase capacity and various other topics of interest to BLET members and officers. From left: Barry Morton, CSX General Manager-Safety; Jim Marks, CSX Vice President-Safety; Don Hahs, BLET National President; Larry James, BLET System Liaison; and Paul Sorrow, BLET Vice President. Among numerous other duties, Brother Sorrow is the Vice President assigned to the CSX properties.

## BLET testifies before Senate on rail safety

BLET Vice President and National Legislative Representative John Tolman testified on July 26 before the Senate Surface Transportation Subcommittee regarding rail safety and draft legislation that when introduced will be the Senate companion bill to H.R. 2095, the Federal Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2007.

To underscore the importance of the hearing, BLET National President Don Hahs traveled to Washington, D.C., for the Senate hearing.

The proposed Senate bill, which will be titled the Railroad Safety Enhancement Act of 2007, received general praise from Vice President Tolman. He said that the legislation "reflects an understanding of where the industry is,

and where it needs to go over the next decade. It addresses many of the issues rail labor has brought to the hill, and dovetails nicely with the work undertaken by the House (H.R. 2095)." However, he acknowledged that there are a number of issues that still need to be addressed in the process.

As he has in previous testimony, Vice President Tolman reiterated that, with regards to limbo time, the BLET believes that the Supreme Court was wrong in 1996 when it ruled that time spent in limbo is neither time on duty, nor time off duty, and that Congress needs to set the record straight.

"We believe there should be no limbo time, except in narrow circumstances," Tolman said. "The House has laid the

foundation for further efforts to resolve this issue, and we look forward to working with the Senate on this matter."

Vice President Tolman's testimony also included the following with regards to proposed Senate legislation:

- A request that the Senate consider amending a requirement for 24 hours off duty every seven days, to state that the 24 hour period is taken at an employee's home terminal.

- Advocating for further examination of a proposed minimum 10 consecutive hours off duty every 24 hours as it affects commuter railroads, where service is heaviest during the morning and evening rush hours, and a number of

See Senate, Page 8

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# BLET NEWS

A message from Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa

## Standing up for workers



I applaud the recent majority Senate vote in favor of the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), a significant achievement in the fight to restore America’s middle class. The legislation garnered majority support in the Senate of 51-48, but required 60 votes to block Republican opposition to gain passage.

The vote showed us who is standing with workers and which politicians are in collusion with corporate America to destroy the middle class. Workers have the support of a majority in the U.S. Senate in their fight to improve their economic futures, and there is no turning back.

In March, the House passed EFCA on a vote of 241-185. Introduced with bipartisan support in the House, EFCA is the first major attempt to reform labor law since the 1970s. Employees face a 20 percent chance of being fired if they actively campaign to unionize. EFCA establishes penalties for violating workers’ rights during their effort to form a union and in negotiations for a first contract.

“The legal system that is supposed to protect workers is broken, and workers are paying a terrible price. Corporations trample on workers with reckless disregard for the law and they must be stopped.

### The End of Fast Track

Recently, President Bush’s “Fast Track” trade negotiating authority expired for good. It has been a long and difficult five years for workers everywhere. With the expiration of Fast

Track, perhaps this finally means that we can move in an entirely new direction on our trade and globalization policies.

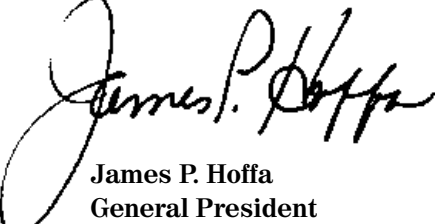
Since Fast Track, trade negotiations have been accelerated to an alarming speed, denying legislators and the public the appropriate time to consider the serious ramifications of these agreements. The U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) has used Fast Track to push too many job killing, NAFTA-style trade agreements.

We have lost more than 3 million manufacturing jobs since 2001, many to offshore outsourcing, while an increasing number of white-collar service-sector jobs are also at risk. At the same time, our trade deficit has ballooned to nearly \$800 billion. For the USTR to call for more Fast Trade deals is ridiculous.

The Teamsters Union strongly opposes these job-killing trade deals. Until the U.S. trade model and policies begin to focus on job creation here at home, we will continue to oppose such deals.

The Teamsters Union looks forward to working with members of Congress on a new economic trade model that creates jobs at home and lifts up workers everywhere.

Fraternally,



**James P. Hoffa**  
General President

## Senate

Continued from Page 7

assignments are for a few hours in the morning, after which employees are released for periods in excess of four hours before returning to work for a few more hours in the afternoon and early evening.

- Limiting communications to a train employee during his/her off-duty period.

BLET testifies before Senate on rail safety.

- Support for a 10-Hour Call pilot program, as well as the suggestion for an industry wide 10-hour call. •

## AUGUST 2007 CALENDAR & EVENTS

- AUGUST 20-23... 69th Annual Eastern Union Meeting Association, Traverse City, Mich.**  
Hosted by Don Zatteau and the members of Division 286, the 69th annual EUMA will be held at the Grand Traverse Resort and Spa in Acme, Mich.
- SEPTEMBER 7... Railroad Retirement Board Informational Conference, Albany, N.Y.**  
At the Clarion Hotel, AV Center, 3 Watervliet Ave. Registration begins at 8 a.m. and conference starts at 8:30 a.m. Elected BLET officers only, please.
- SEPTEMBER 14... Railroad Retirement Board Informational Conference, Fort Worth, TX**  
At the Radisson Inn South, 101 East Alta Mesa Blvd. Registration begins at 8 a.m. and conference starts at 8:30 a.m. Elected BLET officers only, please.
- SEPTEMBER 14... Railroad Retirement Board Informational Conference, Renton, Wash.**  
At the Holiday Inn Select, One Grady Way. Registration begins at 8 a.m. and conference starts at 8:30 a.m. Elected BLET officers only, please.
- OCTOBER 7-11... 72nd Annual Southwestern Convention Meeting, Shreveport, La.**  
Hosted by Bud Pickett and the members of BLET Division 599, the 72nd annual SWCM will be held at Sam’s Town in Shreveport, La. See Page 3 inside this issue for registration information!
- OCTOBER 12... Railroad Retirement Board Informational Conference, Huntington, W.Va.**  
At the Radisson Hotel, 1001 Third Ave. Registration begins at 8 a.m. and conference starts at 8:30 a.m. Elected BLET officers only, please.

## 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; Division 255 mtg., Weirton, W.Va.; Article XIX conference call, Cleveland; Southeastern Meeting Association convention, Orlando, Fla.; 2010 national convention planning, Reno, Nevada; Advisory Board conference call; CP Rail GCofA mtg., Las Vegas.

**First Vice-President & Alternate President Edward W. Rodziewicz**— Assisted President in general operation of National Division Office; Vice President assignments; Organizing department; Shortline department; Passenger department; Various correspondence & phone calls; President-IBT Rail Conference; Southeastern Meeting Association, Orlando, Fla.; Advisory Board conference call.

**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; Standard Building operations mtg.; Southeastern regional mtg., Orlando, Fla.; Site visit for potential convention location, Reno, Nevada; Advisory Board conference call; Canadian Pacific-U.S. General Committee mtg. and Local Chairman workshop, Las Vegas.

**Vice-President Paul T. Sorrow**—Assigned to CSX, NS and GTW general committees of adjustment; Attended Conrail/CSX Shared Assets General Committee of Adjustment Triennial Session; Public Law Board, CSX Western Lines; Mtg. w/ GC Karakian and Sr. Vice President, CN; Mtg. w/ CSX General Chairmen in connection with System Agreement; Advisory Board conference call; 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; Chicago Central & Pacific; Iowa, Chicago & Eastern; CN/WC contract negotiations, Schiller Park, Ill.; Advisory Board conference call, Cleveland; BRC manning dispute procedural board, Bedford Park, Ill.; CP (Soo Line) general committee quadrennial mtg., Las Vegas; Local Chairman training class w/ Education & Training Dept., CP (Soo Line), Las Vegas; FRA Part 240.409 dockets this month: EQAL03-31, 05-10, 02-67.

**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, 6449, 6558, 6589; SBA 585; UP work/rest projects; RSAC positive train control cmte.; National wage/rules; Advisory Board conference call; General office duties, telephone, correspondence.

**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; Montreal, Maine and Atlantic RR; Contract mtgs. w/ GC Twombly and MMA, Bangor, Maine; CPRR GCofA mtg., Las Vegas; SBA 1156 w/ GC Koone and KCS, Chicago; PLB 6884 session w/ GC Parker and KCS, Chicago; PLB 6560 w/ GC Tomblly and D&H, via conference call; Advisory Board conference call; PLB and SBA preparation; Research, correspondence and 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/Rule Committee; Mtgs. w/ Div. 400 (Albuquerque), Div. 446 and 791 (Belen, N.M.) and Div. 264 (Decatur), re: contract proposal; Travel; Vacation; Sign BNSF on-property agreement, Fort Worth; Mtg. w/ Wabash Hospital, Decatur; Advisory Board conference call.

**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.

**Vice-President & National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman** — Assigned to BLET Washington, DC office; BLET Security Officer; General Office Duties, telephone, correspondence; Coordinated content of NLFO website and May Newsletter; Coordinated PAC Contributions; Testified before Transportation and Infrastructure Railroad Subcommittee on H.R. 2095; Attended Alabama State Legislative Board Meeting; Attended International Western Convention Meeting; Spearheaded Washington lobbying effort in which the BLET members visited over 50 Congressional offices to address Amtrak contract and H.R. 2095; Coordinated participation and attended rally for Amtrak contract; Consulted extensively with congressional committee staff with regards to content of H.R. 2095; Continued coordination with IBT Government Affairs Department.

**Vice-President Marcus J. Ruef** — Assigned to Amtrak Long Island Railroad; Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority; New Jersey Transit; Port Authority Trans Hudson; Norfolk Southern (Northern Lines/W&LE); Norfolk Southern (Eastern Lines); Norfolk Southern (Southern Lines); Union Railroad (URR); Allegheny Ludlum Steel Co.; and Birmingham Southern; Assist Amtrak, Septa; Discuss SLE w/ HAR; Assist RGD w/ Alexander LERB petition; Assist URR w/ Article 10 dispute, PLB establishment agreement; Mtg. w/ USWA Local 1196, A-L Steel, Brackenridge, Pa.; PLB 5191; PLB 6912; Set up PLB for NEC CN border crossing dispute; Southeastern Meeting Association, Orlando; Mtgs. w/ NS GC, DMH, CWD, RCW, re: Div. 325 & 590 dispute; NS agreement extension talks, Norfolk, Va.; Mediation case A-13445, Washington, D.C.; Forwarded mediated NYS&W agreement to DMH for approval; Installation of new office equipment; Discuss A-L Steel/USWA w/ HAR.



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