The Teamsters Rail Conference has launched the Safe Rails Secure America campaign designed to obtain firsthand information about the true condition of safety and security along our nation’s railroads.

The data collected will provide important information to arm the Teamsters Rail Conference and Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen in addressing dangerous practices by the carriers and in communicating our concerns to the general public and federal authorities.

Since September 11, 2001, billions of dollars have been devoted to the security of the airline industry. Unfortunately, the Bush administration has ignored FBI warnings about likely future attacks on commuter and freight rail lines and has left railroad security up to their friends in private industry.

“The security of America’s railroad infrastructure — bridges, tunnels, tracks and rolling equipment — is of the utmost importance to our nation’s citizens and our national economic well being,” said BLET National President Don Hahs. “I ask that all BLET members use the Safe Rails-Secure America forms to provide first hand information about unsecure conditions or suspicious activity on the railroad. With your help, we can make a difference.”

Railroad employees now have an opportunity to share what they see and know about lapses in rail security by filling out the Safe Rails survey form at right.

If you are a BLET member, feel free to use this form and fill it out. After you fill it out, please return the form to your local chairman.

Recently, RRESQ (Railroad Employee Safety and Quality) circulated an article produced by the UTU that contained false information. Below is one unsolicited response to this article from the BMWE’s Director of Safety and Education Rick Inclima.

Dear Friends from RRESQ:

My name is Rick Inclima, and I am currently the Director of Safety and Education for the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes and have been a member in good standing of the BMWE for over 28 years. I have been on the RRESQ mailing list for some time now and have had the opportunity to interact with RRESQ. I have also responded to safety questions/queries that RRESQ posed directly to me or forwarded to me from other sources, such as the AFL-CIO. I believe that RRESQ serves an important purpose as a voice for railroad safety, and I applaud your efforts in the railroad safety arena.

However, I recently received an email from RRESQ titled, “Are Teamsters Eying Rail Retirement Assets” and felt compelled to respond. As a member of the BMWE, I try not to get in the middle of the ongoing fraternal fight between BLET and UTU. I suggest that RRESQ also refrain from entering the fray or being used as a pawn in that unfortunate spat.

The notion that the Teamsters are somehow going to take over Railroad Retirement is pure bunk, and I am surprised that RRESQ would circulate such false and untrue propaganda on behalf of the UTU. In my humble opinion, this unfounded falsehood has been manufactured by the UTU, plain and simple. There is no factual basis for such an outlandish statement, and it is derived from UTU’s attempt to divide rail labor for its own political purposes. The Teamsters nor any union is going to take over the RRB or combine it with another pension plan. This is just fear mongering from the UTU, with no basis in reality. It would take, at the very least, an act of Congress to make such a change, and none of
BLET sets General Chairman Workshop for November

The BLET Education & Training and Arbitration Departments are offering a General Chairman’s workshop the week of November 15, 2004, to be held in the BLET Arbitration Department offices on the fifth floor of the Standard Building, Room 500, in Cleveland, Ohio.

The focus of this workshop will be on the preparation of Submissions for arbitrations conducted pursuant to Section Three of the Railway Labor Act.

The workshop will be held on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday (Nov. 16, 17 and 18) from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. We anticipate that most attendees will use Monday and Friday for travel. While there is no tuition for the class, attendees are responsible for all other expenses. Attendance is limited to General Chairmen and any subordinates they designate who are engaged in arbitration work. We ask that you bring a copy of your basic Schedule Agreement for reference.

General Chairmen or Vice General Chairmen who are engaged in arbitration work and who are interested in registering for the workshop may do so online at http://www.ble-t.org/ge.

BLET President Hans statement on proposed BMWE-IBT merger

The following is a statement by BLET National President Don Hans regarding the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees’ proposed merger with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters:

I would like to congratulate the leaders of the BMWE for taking the historic step of unani mously approving a merger agreement with the IBT and sending it out for ratification by its membership.

Your vote is the next step in a new era of transportation unity. The proposed merger of the BMWE and the IBT will continue the work that the BLET started with its merger last year.

I urge the brothers and sisters of the BMWE to vote for the merger and hope — one day soon — to welcome them into the Rail Conference with open arms.

Rail Labor needs to be united under one roof, and the entrance of the BMWE into the Rail Conference would be the next step towards this goal. Labor can accomplish a lot by working together.

During the time the BLET was considering its merger with the IBT, one labor leader said that now is the time for Rail Labor to get in the parade or watch it go by. We need to use the strength that we have collectively, and we must get bigger, badder and stronger by joining together.

The integration phase of our merger has just begun, but from the outset, the benefits of this merger have been remarkable. The IBT has been magnanimous in its lending of resources this merger have been remarkable. The IBT has just begun, but from the outset, the benefits of this merger have been remarkable. The IBT has been magnanimous in its lending of resources

BLET Legislative Representatives from across the state of North Dakota elected Mike H. Muscha by acclamation to another four-year term as Chairman of the North Dakota State Legislative Board in meetings held in Bismarck, N.D., on August 27.

Also elected during the quadrennial meeting were: R.K. Huff of Division 746 (Mandan, N.D.) as First Vice Chairman; and R.D. Albrightson of Division 695 (Minot) as Second Vice Chairman.

Dean E. Altringer of Division 160 (Harvey, N.D.) was elected as the Secretary-Treasurer of the Board.

“The national elections this fall are a big area of focus for us right now,” Brother Muscha said. “We emphasized to our delegates at the meeting the importance of getting our members out to vote in November.

Brother Muscha is also a Regional Chairman in the Legislative Department of the BLET, having won election to that position at recently concluded meetings of the National Association of State Legislative Board Chairman in Kalispell, Mont. •
Oberstar works to protect rail workers

‘Champion of working class America’ backs rail security, Railroad Retirement issues

Once again, Rep. James Oberstar (D-Minn.) is proving why he is a friend to members of the Brother- hood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen.

On August 25, Congressman Oberstar took ac-
tion on two pieces of legislation of major importance to railroad workers.

In a Dear Colleague letter, Oberstar announced he is seeking cosponsors for H.R. 4896, the PRO-
TECTS Act (Protecting Railroad Operators, Travel-
ers, Employees, and Citizens Against Terrorism Secu-
rity Act of 2004). The proposed legislation will authorize more than $1 billion in federal funds to boost the security of America’s railroads.

“The PROTECTS Act would ensure that the Fed-
eral government will immediately do its part to take the necessary steps to address security risks on our Nation’s railroads, while protecting rail passengers, rail workers, and citizens who live or work in the communities in which railroads operate,” he wrote.

A copy of his Dear Colleague letter is available on the BLET website at: http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/OberstarDearColleague.pdf.

In a second letter, addressed to leaders of the House Appropriations Committee, Congressman Oberstar asks for full funding for the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board. In its FY2005 budget, the Bush Administration is allocating just $102.6 million for RRB operations, even though the Board had re-
quested $110.6 million.

“The additional funding will allow the RRB to maintain sufficient staff to continue providing high quality service to the railroad community and to con-
tinue with some information technology improve-
ments,” Congressman Oberstar wrote. “Accordingly, I urge you to join me in supporting the $110.66 mil-
lion that the agency has requested.”

A copy of his letter to the Appropriations Com-
mittee is on the BLET website at: http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/OberstarRRB.pdf.

“The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen is sincerely grateful to Congressman Oberstar for his continued efforts to protect the in-
terests of rail and transportation workers,” BLET Na-
tional President Don M. Hahs said. “He is a true chal-
pion of working class Americans.”

UTU guilty of ‘fear mongering’ with latest Railroad Retirement deception

BMWE

Continued from Page 1

the rail unions would agree to share our hard earned RRB benefits that we have paid into for our entire careers. And the Railroads would certainly not agree to give the fund that they have paid into on our be-
half as part of our contract settlements since day one. It’s just nonsense, plain and simple.

The UTU propaganda piece states, “No other transportation union—EXCPT the United Transporta-
tion Union—has as strong a lobbying presence in Washington, D.C. as does the Teamsters.” However, as strong as the UTU proclaims to be in Washington, D.C., their own non-railroad members (e.g., 12,000 UTU bus drivers) are not covered by Railroad Re-
tirement. Why? Because they are not employed by a Railroad employer just as truck drivers, warehouse workers, UPS employees, etc., are not employed by a Railroad employer. If you are not a railroad employee working for a railroad employer or working full time for one of the traditional railroad Brotherhoods (such as BLE, BMW, UTU, BRS, etc.), which are consid-
ered railroad employers under the RRB) you are not eligible to participate in Railroad Retirement. Don’t

you think that if it could be done, the UTU would have already put their non-rail bus drivers under RRB? It hasn’t been done by UTU because it couldn’t be done by UTU any more than it could be done by the Team-
sters or anyone else. It is total fabrication, pure and simple.

I agree with one statement in the UTU article, which said, “When railroaders are divided, they are in imminent danger of being conquered.” In my humble opinion, it’s time for UTU to follow its own words, rejoin the AFL-CIO (which they abandoned in order to raid the BLE), stop trying to divide the rail unions against one another, and stop the ridicu-

ous and unfounded lies regarding the BLET/BIT and Railroad Retirement.

All of our thoughts and prayers are with the family at this time,” he said. “We’re 220 members strong and Skip had a lot of friends here. It’s a real sad situation.

President Hahs ordered the flag over BLET headquarters in Cleveland, Ohio, to be flown at half-mast in honor of Brother York and all other BLET members who lost their lives in the line of duty.

“Brother York is the seventh BLET member lost in the line of duty this year,” National Presi-
dent Hahs said. “In our prayers we still remember Mike Rogers, Jeff C. York, Anthony C. Rodella, Jef-
frey S. Bohler; Dennis Vinson and Heath Pape.”

“I have many close and dear friends in the UTU, and I will stick by those Brothers and Sisters regard-
less of the actions of their leaders. However, as far as the UTU-manufactured RRB lie goes, “It’s never going to happen, it’s never been considered, and it will never be allowed by Rail Labor, the Carriers, the Board, or the U.S. Congress,” and you can quote me on that.

In the interest of fairness and balance, I respect-
fully request RRESQ to distribute this response to all those members of rail labor who received the UTU article. Thank you.

In Unity,

/end

Rick Inelina, BMWE

Freddie N. Simpson elected new President of BMWE

On September 16, the BMWE held elections to fill the offices of President and Secretary/Treasurer due to the retirement of former President Mac A. Fleming following an extended medical leave.

Freddie N. Simpson was elected President and Perry K. Geller Sr. was elected Secretary/Treasurer.

Both had each been serving those offices on an inter-

im basis.

President Simpson said, “I am grateful to be off-
icially elected as your president and look forward to moving our organization forward together with the membership and the rest of the officers and staff.”
Janet Louis, wife of EUMA Arrangements Chairman Jim Louis, gladly greets visitors at the registration table.

Mr. and Mrs. Gale Murphy. Brother Murphy is Local Chairman of BLET Division 255 in Steubenville, Ohio.

Carlos A. Lizarraga, Local Chairman of BLET Division 106 (Muncie, Ind.)

From left: Bob Chapter, Secretary-Treasurer of BLET Division 157 (Jersey City, N.J.); and Vinny Vaccarella, a trainman member of Division 157.

Kathy and Dino Raptis, an Amtrak engineer and a member of BLET Division 12 in Fort Wayne, Ind.

Greg Powell, Chairman of the BLET’s Michigan State Legislative Board.

BLET National Vice-President Steve Speagle with his wife, Sue.

From left: Brother Ben Blissett, Division 31 (Roanoke, Va.), and Safety Task Force Primary Team Member; his wife, Dolly; and BLET National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert.

GIA President Onita Wayland and her husband, Tony.

Teamsters International Vice-President John Murphy.
GRAND ISLAND, N.Y.

BLET members during the opening ceremony.

From left: BLET National Division Staff Attorney Tom Brennan and retired General Chairman Charlie Klimek.

Clockwise, from bottom left: John Bove, Secretary-Treasurer of Division 269; Robert Willis, Committeeeman, LIRR General Committee of Adjustment, Division 269; Gary Lockel, 1st Vice Chairman, GCA, Div 269; James Brown, Committeeeman, GCA, Div 269; Scott Dekker, Vice President, Div 269; Robert Evers, General Chairman, GCA, Div 269; Douglas Willcox, President, Div 269; Michael Quinn, 2nd Vice Chairman, GCA, Div 269.

As part of the entertainment package, EUMA attendees enjoyed a tour of Niagara Falls on board the Maid of the Mist.

From left: Among the BLET and GIA officers in attendance at the EUMA were GIA Guide DeLaine Morris; GIA 3rd Vice-President Sereena Hogan; GIA Treasurer Betye Dollar; Vice-President Mabel Grotzinger; GIA President Onita Wayland; BLET President Don Hahs; National-Secretary-Treasurer Bill Wolfert; Vice-President Merle Geiger; Vice-President Steve Speagle; and Vice-President Paul Wingo.

From left: BLET National President Don Hahs; Vice-President Merle Geiger Jr.; and Carl W. Fields, Legislative Representative of BLET Division 682 in Hammond, Ind., and Safety Task Force Primary Team Member.

From left: John C. Rupp, Local Chairman of BLET Division 74 (Harrisburg-Enola, Pa.); and Bill Thompson, Second Vice-General Chairman, Norfolk Southern-Southern Lines.
Maintaining a ‘current connection’ with Railroad Retirement

Under the Railroad Retirement Act, a “current connection with the railroad industry” is one of the eligibility requirements for survivor annuities and supplemental annuities, and is one of the criteria for determining whether the Railroad Retirement Board or the Social Security Administration has jurisdiction over the payment of monthly benefits to survivors of a railroad employee.

The following questions and answers describe the current connection requirement and the ways the requirement can be met.

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

A “current connection” with the railroad industry generally applies if the employee did not leave the railroad industry in the period immediately preceding the retirement break a current connection. Such an employee could only meet the current connection requirement under the normal procedures for deter- mining whether an employee could maintain a current connection under this exception provision.

In cases where an employee has no option to remain in the service of his or her employer, the termination of the employment is considered involuntary, and regardless of whether the employee does or does not receive a buy-out. However, an employee who chooses a buy-out instead of keeping his or her seniority rights to railroad employment in his or her last class or craft would, for railroad retirement purposes, generally be considered to have voluntarily terminated railroad service, and consequently would not maintain a current connection under the exception provision.

A Transportation Security Administration press release briefly mentioned these topics: that rail operators must designate coordinators for communicating with the TSA; that passengers and employees will be asked to report unattended property and suspicious behavior and that such inspections will be conducted; that in certain locations, trash receptacles must be bomb-resistant or made of clear plastic; that canine explosive detection teams may be used; and that rail operators will ensure that security is at “appropriate levels consistent with the IHS established threat level.”

(Chinese edition)

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

If the employee had the choice to remain in employment and voluntarily relinquished job rights to accept the payments, his or her current connection would not be maintained under the exception provision, regardless of which payment option is chosen. Therefore, nonrailroad work after the 30-month period and before retirement or death would not break the employee’s current connection. Such an employee could only meet the current connection requirement under the normal procedures for determining whether an employee could maintain a current connection under this exception provision.

7. Could the exception provision apply in cases where an employee has 25 years of railroad retirement coverage and a company reorganiza- tion results in the employee’s job being placed under social security coverage?

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

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

Railroad employees and former employees can contact the nearest field office of the Railroad Retirement Board for information on how their eligibility for benefits is affected by this requirement. Persons can find the address and phone number of the Board office serving their railroad by calling the toll-free RRB Help Line at (800) 808-0772 or by checking the Board’s Web site at www.rrb.gov.

NEWS BRIEFS

DOT repeats 15-seat van rollover warning

On June 1, the U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) re-issued a warning to users of 15-passenger vans because of an increased rollover risk under certain conditions. Similar warnings were issued in 2001 and 2002. The safety agency also unveiled an updated consumer handout for users of 15-passenger vans and re- leased three related research reports. One of the reports is a detailed analysis of 15-passenger van crashes between 1989 and 1999. The newly released NHTSA re- search reinforces the fact that 15-passenger vans have a rollover risk that is three times higher than the number of occupants increases to full capacity. In fact, the likelihood of a rollover when a van is fully loaded is about five times greater than when the vehicle contains only a driver. While an increased likelihood of rollover is present for other types of fully loaded passenger vehicles, it is most pronounced in 15-passenger vans.

The new NHTSA analysis also showed that the risk of rollover increased significantly at speeds over 50 miles per hour on and curvy roads. (DOT news release) •

Security directive issued for mass transit

The Department of Homeland Security issued its first anti-terror directive for the nation’s commuter rail and subway systems on May 20, calling for widespread precautions dealing with checks of unattended bags, bombproof trash receptacles and the use of explosive-sniffing dogs.

The regulations were to go into ef- fect on May 23, but operators said they hadn’t been issued copies of the requirements. Fears for the nation’s rail systems rose after Sept. 11, 2001, and again af- ter the Madrid train bombings in March. The announcement of new rules prompted pleas for more money from rail operators, who say that although airlines have received billions in direct assistance for anti-terror measures, the country’s rail- way systems have been given rela- tively little. A Transportation Security Ad- ministration (TSA) press release briefly mentioned these topics: that rail operators must designate coordinators for communicating with the TSA; that passengers and employees will be asked to report unattended property and suspicious behavior and that such inspections will be conducted; that in certain loca- tions, trash receptacles must be bomb-resistant or made of clear plastic; that canine explosive detection teams may be used; and that rail operators will ensure that security is at “appropriate levels consistent with the IHS established threat level.”

(Washington Post) •
As this issue of the Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen News goes to press, 21 different AFL-CIO state federations have passed remote control safety resolutions. The AFL-CIO and its subordinate bodies have continually demonstrated their support of the BLET and stand behind the organization in opposition to dangerous practice.

In addition to the State Feds, five other AFL-CIO bodies have adopted similar resolutions.

Most recently, the Wyoming and Ohio State Federations and the Washington State Labor Council have passed remote control safety resolutions, thanks to the hard work of dedicated BLET members.

Wyoming AFL-CIO

The Wyoming AFL-CIO became the 21st state federation to pass a remote control safety resolution on September 11. The resolution was passed at the state AFL-CIO convention. BLET Wyoming State Legislative Board Chairman Terry R. Jones thanked BLET Division 115 (Cheyenne, Wyo.) Legislative Representative Joe Barrett and Division 103 (Cheyenne) Legislative Representative Charlie Fanning for their work. Brother Barrett introduced the resolution and Brother Fanning presented it to the convention.

Ohio AFL-CIO

On August 24, the Ohio AFL-CIO passed a hazmat resolution that calls for strict controls of automated train technology. Federation President William Burgs confirmed the resolution’s passage at the virtual biennial AFL-CIO Ohio State Convention.

The 704 delegates in attendance unanimously passed Resolution 10: HAZMAT These delegates represented 147 affiliated locals from 38 labor unions.

The Ohio AFL-CIO is the 20th State Federation to adopt a resolution that addresses remote control, but is the first to address new automation technology being developed by rail carriers and the Association of American Railroads. Resolution 10 also calls upon the FRA to require remote control protection zones to be used where remote control is in operation.

Chairman Ong thanked Ohio AFL-CIO President Burgs, Federation Secretary-Treasurer Pierrette M. Talley and Vice-Chairman of the 24th Convention for their support.

Chairman Ong said that the resolution was drafted and proposed by Vice-Chairman Tim Hanely, who also serves as the delegate for BLET Division 36 (Newark, Ohio) to the Ohio AFL-CIO.

Hanely said that nationally, the AFL-CIO represents over 13 million sisters and brothers who share a common cause with the BLET.

“Safety in the workplace has to be our greatest priority,” said Rep. Peter King, Chair of the House Homeland Security Committee. “Safe and secure railroad operations is the inspiration behind Resolution 10,” Hanely said. “We have hundreds of members who are paying too high of a price for rail carriers to make elevated profits.”

Washington State Labor Council


The resolution calls for railroads operating within the state to use fully rested (by society’s standard) railroad workers; locomotive engineers certified to the highest possible skill level to operate locomotives in all railroad operations; and demands that the Federal Railroad Administration promulgate rules to ensure railroad workers are not unnecessarily fatigued.

“I think it sends a strong message that organized labor is not going to sit by and let SEPTA and the other railroads dictate the level of safety, training, and rest railroad workers require to safely perform their duties,” said Dr. Mark Rice, Chairman of the BLET’s Washington State Legislative Board. “Railroad workers demand a higher level and the people of Washington State demand a higher level.”

Iowa Democrats take a tough stand on remote control safety

The Iowa Democratic Party included a section of language opposing unregulated operation of remote control locomotives in its party platform, which was passed without issue at its convention on June 20. It was part of the Transportation/Infrastructure plank.

The delegates to the convention included the following phrase in the party platform: “We support...banning remote control operations until FRA enters comprehensive rules and regulations.”

The effort to include remote control on the party’s platform was spearheaded by BLET Division 125 (Clinton, Iowa) member Pat Johnson. Brother Johnson took the resolution from the county level all the way to the state level. It was passed without issue at each level. Brother Johnson served on committees at the various levels and helped to push the issue through.

“Some people are going to be upset when they see this platform,” Johnson said. “But the resolution is fairly clearly written. It is clear that the platform advocates for an end to remote control locomotives. It will be up to other members of the Iowa legislature to craft the legislation to make this resolution a law.”

The resolution states that the Iowa Democratic Party supports the following action: “Legislative Representative Charlie Fanning presented it to the convention.

Ohio AFL-CIO

On August 24, the Ohio AFL-CIO passed a hazmat resolution that calls for strict controls of automated train technology. Federation President Will-}

LAWMAKERS WARN HOUSE IS UNDERFUNDING AMTRAK

Lawmakers warned that Amtrak could go out of business next year if Congress goes along with a $800 mil-

lion funding level supported by the Bush administration.

“At this level, there should be no surprise next spring when Amtrak must report to Congress that it is not receiving the funds it needs to keep the railroad operating.”

Lawmakers warned that Amtrak officials say $8 billion is needed to keep the railroad operating.

(From the Associated Press)

SEPTA warns of deep cuts

On September 9, SEPTA officials said they would have to eliminate all weekend service, increase fares an average of 25 percent, and fire 18 percent of its employees by January 1 if the state legislature did not increase the agency’s funding and erase a $82 million deficit.

In June, SEPTA adopted a $920 million budget for 2005, but with a $82 million deficit. The agency said if it did not receive money to close that gap by October, it would purchase service cuts and furlough employees.

In the past, SEPTA has detailed a dramatic service cuts to cope with fund-

ings and fare increases. On August 21, it would propose service cuts and fare increases. The administration, said Rep.

James McGovern (D-Mass.), is engaged in the “opponent of the Amtrak and de-

liberative underfunding of Amtrak.”

A Senate subcommittee approved $1.2 billion for Amtrak, while Amtrak officials say $8 billion is needed to keep the railroad operating.

Ricci has spearheaded a campaign to secure a state-level regulation of re-

 mote control locomotive operations. The passage of the AFL-CIO reso-

lution required a state regulation resolution adopted last month by the King County Labor Council of Seattle, Wash. The Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO, represents over 400,000 union brothers and sisters throughout the state.

In addition to Wyoming, Ohio and Washington, the following AFL-CIO State Federations have taken action to improve the safety of remote control lo-}

comotives: Arizona, Texas, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina; Missouri; North Dakota; Nebraska; Wisconsin; Georgia, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Ken-

ducky, Alabama, Iowa, West Virginia, Utah, Colorado; and Florida.

Four other AFL-CIO bodies have acted on the issue of remote control trains. They are: Harris County AFL-CIO (Texas); Toledo Area AFL-CIO Council (Ohio); Detroit Central Labor Council (CLC), AFL-CIO, Iowa Demo-

cratic Party; and the King County Labor Council, AFL-CIO, Seattle, Wash.

More information about remote control trains, and copies of the resolu-

tions adopted by the organizations mentioned in this article, are available at: http://www.blet.org/remotecontrol •

A copy of the Iowa Democratic Party Platform will be available at: www.iowademocrats.org •

National Division clarifies policy on interpretation of BLET bylaws

Effective immediately, any requests for an interpretation of National Division Bylaws received by e-mail will not be an-

swered.

Instead, the sender should be informed that in keeping with Na-

tional Division policy, it will be neces-

sary for him or her to sub-

mit the request for an interpreta-

tion of the Bylaws in written form to the National Division Presi-

dent.

Any questions regarding this policy should be directed in writ-

ing to BLET National President Don M. Hahn, 1370 Ontario St., Mezzanine, Cleveland, Ohio 44113-1702.
Election of a labor-friendly president

The November election

With only one month until Election Day, we must renew our commitment to electing a President who will help workers — not hurt them. A President who will find solutions to the health crisis — not ignore it. A President who will create good jobs in this country — not send them overseas. A President who will give workers a leg up — not a kick in the rear.

John Kerry and John Edwards both have proven records of support for the values of working men and women. The Bush White House, in contrast, has been the most pro-labor member of Congress.

Since you chose to merge with us last year, the power of Rail Labor has been building. I believe we have already made great strides to communicate with the White House and rail corporations that the Teamsters Rail Conference is committed to all rail employees. There are still many issues to work on including the upcoming rail negotiations with the November and security crisis on the rails. These issues affect not only our rail members and their families but also the public who depend on the transport of goods and the commuter rails daily.

John Kerry — for working families

This election may be the most important ever for the labor movement. I urge each and every one of you to stand up for working families and dedicate your energy to electing public officials like John Kerry who will build our nation rather than destroy it. The future of all working families is at stake.

Fratres,

James P. Hoffa
Teammasters General President

New BLET merchandise available

Brand new merchandise bearing the BLET logo is now available from the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen.

Members can download order forms from the website, http://www.ble-t.org/store, to purchase union-made items such as BLET golf balls and towels, golf shirts, coffee mugs, hats, and t-shirts. The order form will be updated as new merchandise arrives.

To make room for the new merchandise, older BLE items are being sold at a discount of 10 percent or higher. These items — bearing the logo of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers — include sweatshirts, jackets, golf shirts and other merchandise. The BLE merchandise is only available in limited sizes and quantities, and is being sold on a first-come, first-served basis. An order form is available at http://www.ble-t.org/store. All of the items sold by the BLE are union-made.

Advisory Board July Activity

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

OCTOBER 15... U.S. Railroad Retirement Board Informational Conference, Pittsburgh, Pa.

The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board will conduct an informational conference for BLE officers in Pittsburgh, Pa. The meeting will take place at the Greater Pennsylvania Regional Council of Carpenters Union Hall — Green Tree, 495 Millvale Ave. Registration for the conference begins at 8:00 a.m. and the program begins promptly at 8:30 a.m., ending at 12:30 p.m.

OCTOBER 22... U.S. Railroad Retirement Board Informational Conference, Portland, Ore.

The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board will conduct an informational conference for BLE officers in Portland, Ore. The meeting will take place at the Hilton Garden Inn (1250 NE Airport Way), with registration beginning at 8:00 a.m. and ending at 12:30 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 2004 CALENDAR & EVENTS

OCTOBER 31-NOVEMBER 5... Advanced Local Chairman Workshop, Silver Spring, Md.

The Education & Training Department and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers will conduct an advanced Local Chairman Workshop on the campus of the George Meany Center’s National Labor College in Silver Spring, Md. Faculty, staff, contacts, agenda and emblems of the BLET Education & Training Dept., at (216) 272-0986 or e-mail: Kroeger@ble-t.org.

NOVEMBER 15-19... BLET General Chairman Workshop, Cleveland, Ohio

The BLET Education & Training Department and the BLET Arbitration Department are offering a General Chairman’s workshop in the BLET Arbitration Department offices on the fifth floor of the Standard Building, Room 700, in Cleveland, Ohio, the week of November 15. 2004. See article on Page 2 of this issue for more details, or contact Ken Kroeger, Coordinator of the BLET Education & Training Dept., at (216) 272-0986 or e-mail: Kroeger@ble-t.org.

JUNE 12-16, 2005... 78th Annual Southeastern Meeting Association, Montgomery, Ala.

Hosted by Brother David Bowens and the members of BLET Division 740. More details to come.

JUNE 26-30, 2005... 67th Annual Eastern Union Meeting Association, Saratoga Springs

Hosted by Arrangements Chairman Bill Keasing and the members of Division 66. Details to come.

JULY 3-4, 2005... 46th Annual International Western Convention, Calgary, Alberta

Hosted by Mike Linkletter and the members of BLET Division 355. More details to come.