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BLET President Pierce challenges railroads on fatigue, attendance policies

Locomotive engineer fatigue remains a major safety issue in the railroad industry, and BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce has challenged the CEOs of North America's six largest freight railroads to work with the BLET to help alleviate the issue. A less punitive approach to employee relations would go a long way toward making the industry safer, President Pierce said.

In a letter dated September 22, 2015, Pierce wrote: "This is to alert you to a significant problem facing ... locomotive engineers who are being forced by threat of an attendance policy violation to work when fatigued, even though such safety-critical locomotive engineers honestly believe that working in

such circumstances would jeopardize safety."

Countless National Transportation Safety Board accident reports show that fatigued operating employees pose a significant safety risk for every railroad, and that "fatigue induced performance degradation" all too often contributes to or directly causes accidents. Fatigue can seriously degrade task performance, leading to longer reaction times, memory problems, poor decision-making, workload shedding, and inefficient information processing.

Pierce said a main cause of fatigue is variable work schedules, which result in unpredictable and inconsistent patterns of awake and sleep time for engineers. However,

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"Indeed, there can be no question that even the mere threat of a Carrier policy violation in these circumstances is itself an unfavorable personnel action and/or a denial of a safe place to work that not only is dangerous but may constitute a violation of federal law."

— DENNIS PIERCE



From left: Dave Phillips, Warren Dent, Gil Gore, Lee Pruitt and Dennis Pierce.

40-YEAR PINS AWARDED AT SWCM

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce recognized four special Brothers with 40-year membership pins and gold certificates during the banquet of the Southwestern Convention Meeting (SWCM) in Tulsa, Okla., on September 16, 2015.

Brother Dave Phillips boasts 45 years of continuous membership. He joined Division 62 in February of 1970 while working as an engineer for the Houston Belt and Terminal Railroad. Brother Phillips has been very involved

in union affairs over the years, serving his Division as Vice Local Chairman and the Union Pacific-Southern Region General Committee of Adjustment (GCA) as Second Vice Chairman and as First Vice Chairman.

Currently General Chairman of the Union Pacific-Southern Region GCA, Brother Warren Dent has 40 years of continuous membership. He joined Division 187 in September 1975 after hiring out on the Union Pacific in 1974. Over the years, he has served his Division as Local Chairman and the UP-

Southern Region GCA as Third Vice Chairman. Brother Dent has served as the UP-Southern Region General Chairman for the past six years.

BLET National Vice President Gil Gore has 41 years of continuous membership. He hired out with the Texas and Pacific Railroad in 1973 and joined BLE Division 193 on February 1, 1974. Throughout his career, he has held the offices of Division Local Chairman as well as Second Vice Chairman, First Vice Chairman,

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California Governor signs two-person crew law

California Governor Edmund G. (Jerry) Brown signed a two-person crew bill into law on September 8, formalizing a significant boost to railroad safety.

The bill reads in part: "This bill would prohibit, on and after February 1, 2016, a train or light engine used in connection with the movement of freight, as specified, from being operated unless it has a crew consisting of at least 2 individuals."

Primary sponsors of the bill are the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) and the SMART Transportation Division (former United Transportation Union).

"This represents a major victory for all of organized labor, especially our hard working engine and train crews," BLET

National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "While the advancement of technology has made the workplace safer, a machine cannot replace the trained eyes and ears of experienced professionals inside the cab of the locomotive."

The law provides for civil penalties against the railroads for willful violations of the law, ranging from \$250-\$1,000 for the first offense and up to \$10,000 for a third offense and each subsequent violation within a three-year period.

"Technology can only go so far," President Pierce said. "In the event of an emergency situation, a lone crew member cannot properly assess the situation, secure the train, and notify all necessary emergency responders in a timely manner. It is our hope that this legislation serves



California is the largest state in the nation to require two people in the cab of a locomotive.

a model for other states."

President Pierce noted that at least 14 states have introduced minimum crew size legislation this year, including Washington, Nebraska, Minnesota, Wyoming, Iowa, Utah and North Dakota.

California legislators ana-

lyzed possible conflicts with Federal law regarding minimum crew size. The state's analysis of the issue validates their passage of the law, and reads in part: "According to the Federal Railroad Safety Act, it is the policy of Congress that rail safety regulations be nationally uniform

to whatever extent practicable. However, a state is permitted to continue to regulate with respect to any rail safety matter until such time as the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation issues a rule covering the same subject matter. Also, a state is permitted to adopt additional or more stringent standards than the federal standards if the state rule does not create an undue burden on interstate commerce, is not incompatible with federal standards, and is necessary to eliminate or reduce local safety hazards (Federal Railroad Safety Act of 1970)."

President Pierce thanked Brother Tim Smith, Chairman of the California State Legislative Board, and everyone else involved, for their tireless work in securing passage of this major legislation. @@



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BLET PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY DENNIS R. PIERCE

A SALUTE TO OUR REGIONAL MEETING ASSOCIATIONS

As I closed my message in the Spring 2015/Convention issue of the *Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen Journal* earlier this year, I shared with you that the delegates to the BLET's Third National Convention voted to change our Regional Meeting structure beginning next year. As a result, 2015 would be the last year for BLET's four regional meeting structure with a transition to two regional meetings in 2016. It was my honor to have attended the final meetings of all four of our Regional Meeting Associations (RMAs) throughout 2015, and I think that the service, support and education that our RMAs have provided over the years is deserving of recognition.

As a bit of history, the National Office of the former BLE began the regional meeting process in the late 1920s. It was an era of uncertainty that culminated with the Great Stock Market Crash of October 24, 1929. In the years prior there had been a great deal of uncertainty among the membership about the stability of our nation's economy and its railroads. In response, the National Office of the BLE worked with Local Divisions to organize and host a series of regional meetings throughout the United States. The purpose of the inaugural BLE regional meetings was to provide an opportunity for representatives of the National Office to meet with the membership, "placing the real facts before the membership in a clear and concise manner, so that they may be acquainted with the true conditions confronting the organization" (*Locomotive Engineers Journal*, January 1928). Thus, education of the membership became a cornerstone of our RMAs.

This year was no different, and I would like to recognize some of the members who have contributed so much. Please join me in thanking the following Standing Committee officers for their time, energy and dedication to their respective regions:

• **Southeastern Meeting Association (SMA):** Chairman M. D. Frank and Treasurer J. E. Wood;



During the banquet at the 2015 IWC in Denver (from left):

John Tolman, Vice President & National Legislative Representative; Steve Bruno, National Secretary-Treasurer; Cory Runion, IWC Arrangements Co-Chair; Jim Wilmesher, IWC Arrangements Co-Chair; Dennis Pierce, National President; and E. Lee Pruitt, First Vice President.

• **Eastern Union meeting Association (EUMA):** Chairman M. B. Kenny and Treasurer P. T. Driscoll;

• **International Western Convention (IWC):** Chairman M. A. Galvani and Treasurer G. N. Johnson; and

• **Southwestern Convention Meeting (SWCM):** Chairman T. L. Todd and Treasurer N. J. Baker.

In addition to these elected officers of each of the regions, it would not have been possible to hold this year's meetings with the hard work of the host arrangements committee members, and they each deserve our gratitude:

• SMA Arrangements Chairwoman Teresa Bryant and Co-Chair Scott Frederick;

• EUMA Arrangements Chairman Kevin Moore;

• IWC Arrangements Chairman Jim Wilmesher and Co-Chair Cory Runion; and

• SWCM Arrangements Chairman Dana Marlow.

There were many other BLET members and family members who made the final meetings of our RMAs a success. These Brothers and Sisters have carried on a proud tradition and their efforts will not be forgotten.

Memories to last a lifetime were made at the 2015 regional meetings. This year's SMA was held in Buford, Ga., a far northern suburb of Atlanta. Coincidentally, the first-ever SMA also was held in Atlanta, and that proud tradition continued at this year's SMA. The annual presentation of state flags by members of the BLET Auxiliary is a tradition that dates back nearly 100 years. States flags presented in the ceremony included Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. During opening ceremonies each year, a member of the BLET Auxiliary carries her home state's flag into the meeting hall, and all BLET members and guests in attendance from that state stand to be recognized. It is a unique tradition and one that I was proud to witness for the past several years. It was a bittersweet farewell to the SMA as those historic flags were sold at auction during the concluding banquet. All money raised was donated to the BLET Auxiliary Scholarship Fund.

At the EUMA, members en-

joyed all the rich history and tradition that Boston has to offer. Boston is often called "The Cradle of Liberty" because of the many important historical events, meetings and revolutionary activities that took place there in the mid-to late-1700s. Our members and their families toured these historic sites that played such a critical role in the founding of America, which helped add unique local flavor to this year's EUMA.

At Denver for the IWC, members enjoyed the splendor of the Rocky Mountains. A group organized by Local Chairman Ray Young enjoyed a day-long motorcycle tour of the Rocky Mountains. Their spirits were not dampened even as they braved their way through a surprise hail storm in a high mountain pass. Other members enjoyed a tour of the historic Colorado Railroad Museum, and toured and rode on rolling stock that helped inspire appreciation for the Brothers and Sisters who came before us.

At Tulsa for the SWCM, members were treated to a compelling speech by Bill John Baker, Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation. The 2015 SWCM was held at the Hard Rock Hotel and Ca-

sino, which is a Native American casino on Native American soil. Members also enjoyed additional unique local heritage at historic Cain's Ballroom for an evening of live music and authentic Oklahoma barbeque.

As it has since the 1920s, membership education will remain a cornerstone of the new RMA process beginning in 2016. Following the template set with the inaugural RMAs in the 1920s, the National Office will be working with Local Divisions to organize and host two regional meetings next year. I ask that each RMA preserve their heritage by participating in next year's RMAs and organizing events such as those described above.

Plans are already underway for next year: the Eastern Regional Meeting will be held at the Hilton Drake Hotel in Chicago, Illinois, July 11-14, 2016; and the Western Regional Meeting will be held at the Hyatt Regency in Long Beach, California, August 22-25, 2016. Per the BLET Bylaws, regional meetings are held "for the purposes of membership training, education and discussion of matters of importance to the membership." Additionally, the meetings are structured to include options for fellowship with other members and their families, entertainment, fun and relaxation. Both will be structured similarly to past RMAs — travel/registration for each will be on Monday, with events scheduled throughout the week including a closing banquet on Thursday night. Travel home will be on Friday.

I urge you to mark your calendars now and make plans to attend one or both of our regional meetings next year. Your attendance will show that you are proud of our historic traditions, but also mindful of the hard work necessary to secure our craft and our Brotherhood now and in the years to come. I hope to see you in Chicago and Long Beach!

DENNIS R. PIERCE
BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT

BLET NATIONAL DIVISION ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Official communications between BLET members and the National Division require a hard copy of the correspondence, bearing a signature, being received by the National President to be considered an "official communication." This is to provide that the actual question(s) are addressed, and ensures that when official

interpretations are made they have reference to a specific request and can be used in future correspondence.

The volume of e-mails received makes it impossible for the National President to answer all unofficial communications. Therefore, it is the policy of the BLET that e-mails addressed to the National President will be reviewed and forwarded to

the appropriate officer or staff for a timely response; however, an e-mail message is not considered an official communication.

Moreover, anonymous e-mails and e-mails that do not provide sufficient information concerning the sender to enable National Division staff to confirm the sender's membership status will not receive any reply or acknowledgement. This poli-

cy is intended to allow the National President to be aware of the opinions and suggestions of the membership, while at the same time providing a timely response to the member's unofficial communication, if a response is necessary, without needlessly expending limited BLET resources.

ADOPTED AT CLEVELAND, OHIO ON JULY 22, 2010. ©©



GENERAL PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY JAMES P. HOFFA

LET'S GET AMERICA WORKING

Everyday Americans are facing increased challenges at work and at home. The outsourcing of millions of good-paying jobs overseas has led to lower paychecks here in the U.S. That, in turn, has made it more difficult for many workers to provide for their families.

The Teamsters, however, have a plan to help turn the tide. Called "Let's Get America Working," it will encourage both Democratic and Republican lawmakers to endorse a pro-worker platform. At the center of the campaign is the need for this country to invest in infrastructure, which will create good jobs for hardworking Americans.

Buy-in from both parties is necessary to effectuate change. If this nation is going to improve the lives of its citizens, Congress needs to advance bipartisan policies that will encourage good job growth. And it

must put the current and future generations of workers in a position to succeed in the workforce by giving them the skills they need.

Infrastructure presents an opportunity to break the political gridlock. Congress in late July approved a three-month extension for spending on transportation projects that provides a temporary patch until the end of October for continuing road and rail funding. But it is not a real solution.

Since 2008, Congress has transferred more than \$62 billion from the general fund to keep the Highway Trust Fund afloat, and it has been more than a decade since Congress has passed a highway bill more than two years in duration. Meanwhile, the transportation system continues to crumble and the safety of those who work and travel along the vast network of U.S. roads and rails is being jeopardized.

There also is a significant need to

move forward with a broader agenda that puts U.S. workers first. That means standing up against lousy trade deals like the Trans-Pacific Partnership that send American jobs overseas; protecting workers' rights to form unions and collectively bargain; increasing affordability of college and vocational schools; and ensuring retirement and pension security for working families.

If elected representatives from both parties want to rebuild the trust between government and workers, they need to reinvest in the people that make this country great. Better pay will lead to more spending and improve workers' quality of life. Everyone wins.

Let's get America working.

Fraternally,

JAMES P. HOFFA
TEAMSTERS GENERAL PRESIDENT



66 If this nation is going to improve the lives of its citizens, Congress needs to advance bipartisan policies that will encourage good job growth. And it must put the current and future generations of workers in a position to succeed in the workforce by giving them the skills they need. 99

FATIGUE LETTER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the situation is made much worse when railroads routinely fail to provide accurate train lineups.

"Due to the unpredictable nature of their assignments, compounded by glaring deficiencies in the railroad's train lineups as compared to actual call times, these engineers are more frequently subjected to situations where they are not adequately rested through no fault of their own, despite their being in compliance with carrier calling rules," Pierce wrote.

Punitive carrier attendance policies only make the situation worse by threatening employees with discipline for attempting to avoid hazardous conditions by laying off due to fatigue. Under current attendance policy rules, engine and train service employees could be suspended from work or even fired for laying off due to fatigue.

"Indeed, there can be no question that even the mere threat of a Carrier policy violation in these circumstances is itself an unfavorable personnel action and/or a denial of a safe place to work that not only is dangerous but may constitute a violation of federal law," Pierce wrote.

The Federal Railroad Safety Act (FRSA) was enacted to promote safe rail operations, and it protects employees who refuse to work in unsafe conditions and who report such conditions to their management supervisors.

"Therefore, enforcement of Carrier rules and policies violates the FRSA if it denies employees a safe place to work," Pierce wrote.

Pierce suggested the carriers include provisions in their attendance policies that allow engineers to lay off when fatigued, exhausted, overworked or otherwise unable to perform safety-critical duties.

"I strongly urge you to instruct your managers to allow locomotive engineers who find themselves fatigued to lay off due to that fatigue without fear of disciplinary retaliation," Pierce wrote. "It is clear that if forced to work when fatigued by no fault of their own, they will be jeopardizing their own safety as well as the safe operation of the trains to which they are assigned, which in turn directly endangers the safety of the general public and their co-workers."

Pierce told the involved CEO's, "I am sure that you share my interest in seeing that unsafe activities that could result in needless accidents and injuries be avoided. I trust you will investigate this situation and take appropriate action so that the interests of the company, its employees, and the general public are protected against the threat that fatigue brings to safe railroad operations." @@

A COPY OF ONE OF THE LETTERS IS AVAILABLE HERE:
WWW.BLE-T.ORG/PR/PDF/UP_FATIGUE_LETTER.PDF

"I strongly urge you to instruct your managers to allow locomotive engineers who find themselves fatigued to lay off due to that fatigue without fear of disciplinary retaliation." — DENNIS PIERCE

BLET FAMILIES WIN EIGHT HOFFA SCHOLARSHIPS FOR 2015-2016 SCHOOL YEAR

Eight BLET families were winners of scholarships from the James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund for the 2015-2016 academic year, including two top-level \$10,000 recipients.

The \$10,000 awards are renewed on an annual basis. The \$1,000 awards are one-time, non-renewable scholarships.

WINNERS OF \$10,000 SCHOLARSHIPS ARE:

>> **ZANE THOMAS**, son of Erik D. Thomas of Division 681 (Milford, Utah), a Union Pacific locomotive engineer; and

>> **MEGAN WESTERN**, daughter of Russell S. Western of Division 662 (Los Angeles), a Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) locomotive engineer.

WINNERS OF \$1,000 SCHOLARSHIPS ARE:

>> **BRADEN HAUSAUER**, son of Kevin W. Hausauer of Division 746 (Mandan, N.D.), a BNSF locomotive engineer;

>> **SHANNON SCHUETZ**, daughter of C.A. Schuetz of Division 444 (St. Louis, Mo.), a Norfolk Southern locomotive engineer;

>> **HALEY PEREIRA**, daughter of S.

Pereira of Division 57 (Boston, Mass.), a Keolis Commuter Services locomotive engineer;

>> **BLAKE GAMBEL**, son of Chad A. Gambel of Division 604 (Madiill, Okla.), a BNSF locomotive engineer;

>> **DELTON HALL**, son of Doug D. Hall of Division 299 (Amarillo, Texas), a BNSF locomotive engineer; and

>> **JACKSON AIRHART**, son of Jack T. Airhart, Secretary-Treasurer of Division 944 (Forney, Texas), a Union Pacific locomotive engineer.

ABOUT THE SCHOLARSHIPS

The James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund awards scholarships annually to outstanding high school seniors. The application deadline is usually March 31 each year. Recipients are selected by an impartial committee of university admissions and financial aid directors based on academic achievement, SAT/ACT scores, character, potential and financial need. The Teamsters consider all applicants without regard to race, religion, gender, disability, or any other legally protected status. For more information, please visit the Teamsters website (<http://teamster.org/benefits/jrh-scholarship>).

Bipartisan coalition upholds Gov. Nixon veto of “Right-To-Work” in Missouri

On September 16, union workers and middle class families scored a major victory as a bipartisan coalition of legislators in the Missouri House and Senate voted to sustain Governor Jay Nixon’s veto of so-called “Right-to-Work” legislation.

Gov. Nixon vetoed the “Right-to-Work” legislation (House Bill 116) on June 4. However, the Missouri General Assembly reconvened on September 16 and anti-union forces attempted to gath-

er a “super majority” of legislators that would have had the ability to override the Governor’s veto, keeping Missouri free from the damaging impact of “Right-to-Work” legislation.

“BLET Missouri State Legislative Board Chairman Brian Kelley worked tirelessly to contact as many members of the Missouri House and Senate as possible to ensure that our friends on both sides of the aisle stood with us and opposed a veto override,” BLET National President Dennis Pierce said. “Brother

Kelley and all BLET members in Missouri who contacted their members of the General Assembly to voice their opposition to this divisive issue helped play an important part in this hard-fought victory for organized labor and America’s working class.”

The BLET also rolled out its mobilization network in Missouri to help inform the membership regarding the issue and to encourage them to phone their legislators. President Pierce thanked all members who took the

time to call, and thanked National Vice President Jim Louis and BLET National Mobilization Coordinator—West Paul Aird for orchestrating our membership response through the Mobilization network

“Right-to-Work” states lag behind in wages, with workers averaging nearly \$6,000 less annually. Eight of the ten states with the lowest minimum wages and nine of the ten states with the highest poverty levels are “Right-to-Work” states. ©©



VOTE NO ON MISSOURI RIGHT-TO-WORK! BLET members and officers from the state of Missouri hold signs urging legislators to uphold Missouri Governor Jay Nixon’s veto of Right-to-Work legislation at the BLET’s Southwestern Convention Meeting (SWCM) in Tulsa, Oklahoma, on September 15. In June, Governor Nixon vetoed legislation that would have made Missouri the 26th Right-to-Work state in America, and anti-worker forces tried but failed to lobby enough legislators to override the governor’s veto in mid-September.



Missouri State Legislative Board Chairman Brian Kelley (above) did not attend the SWCM this year so that he could remain in Jefferson City to lobby legislators and educate them regarding the harmful aspects of the Right-to-Work bill.

BLET members ratify new contract with Indiana Southern

By an overwhelming majority, members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) ratified a new collective bargaining agreement with the Indiana Southern Railroad (ISRR) on June 30, 2015.

The six-year deal governs rates of pay, work rules, and health and welfare benefits for approximately 26 locomotive engineers and conductors at the short line railroad. The agreement provides for retroactive pay to January 1, 2014, and runs through January 1, 2020. It was ratified by a 95 percent majority of workers who returned ballots.

The BLET’s ISRR membership belongs to Division 270 located in Washington, Ind., which is a part of the CP Rail-U.S. General Committee of Adjustment (GCA). The negotiating team consisted of National Vice President Cole Davis, CP Rail-U.S. General Chairman Pete Semenek, Division 270 Local Chairman Terry Braun, and Division 270 Vice Local Chairman Cord Quakenbush.

General Chairman Semenek said the negotiating and ratification process lasted approximately 16 months. There are several key improvements in the new contract. The BLET was able to secure a new safety incentive bonus program in the contract. Brother Semenek said this was a significant gain because the railroad was able to arbitrarily suspend a similar bonus program in the past. Additionally, the members now

have their health and welfare benefit plan outlined and protected by the new agreement. The contract also provides members with an increased personal protection allowance, which provides reimbursements for work-related safety purchases such as work boots and prescription safety glasses. Brother Semenek said the new deal also provides general wage increases of 21.7 percent compounded over the life of the contract when factoring in retroactive pay and future general wage increases.

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce recognized and thanked the negotiating team for a job well done.

“Brothers Davis, Semenek, Braun and Quakenbush deserve our thanks for their hard work and determination throughout the negotiating process,” President Pierce said. “I am particularly pleased at the high percentage of voter turnout and the overwhelming ratification of the contract. As I have said in the past, union membership is not a spectator sport, and if you want a strong union, then it’s up to you to get into the game. This contract will help our Indiana Southern members enjoy a better quality of life while affording them the protections that come from a strong union contract.”

The BLET first organized the ISRR in September of 2002. A Genesee & Wyoming property, the ISRR operates 196 miles of track between Indianapolis and Evansville, Ind. It handles primarily coal and agricultural commodities. ©©

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BLET concludes 75th annual IWC in Denver

Approximately 230 members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and their families convened in Denver, Colo., on August 18 for opening ceremonies of the 75th annual and final International Western Convention (IWC).

IWC Arrangements Co-Chairman Jim Wilmesher, Chairman of the Colorado State Legislative Board, opened the convention and welcomed all members, families and guests to Denver.

After presentation of the flags by BLET members Daniel Tolzman, Secretary-Treasurer of Division 174, and Kristopher Miller, Vice Local Chairman of Division 940, Alison Anderson sang a beautiful rendition of the National Anthem. Alison is the daughter of Brother Mark Anderson, Alternate Secretary-Treasurer of the Minnesota State Legislative Board. Brother Ryan Snow, First Vice Chairman of the California State Legislative Board, delivered the invocation. Brother Cory Runion, IWC Arrangements Co-Chairman and Chairman of the Wyoming State Legislative Board, presided over the traditional empty chair ceremony. An empty chair, as well as various tools of the engineers' craft, were left at the front of the meeting hall to honor the Organization's departed Brothers and Sisters.

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce introduced members of the BLET Advisory Board and National Division Staff who were in attendance. President Pierce then spoke about the nation's po-



litical climate and its impact on America's middle class, organized labor and the BLET.

Guest speakers included: Walt Barrows, Labor Member of the Railroad Retirement Board; John Hastert, Wyoming State Senator (District 12); Naomi Muscha, North Dakota State Representative (District 24) and wife of retired BLET member Mike Muscha; Jim Souby, President of the Colorado Passenger Railroad Association (ColoRail); Sharice Bass, Assistant to Colorado State Senator Leroy Garcia (District 3); and Dean Moedecker, Vice President of Teamsters Local 455.

The 2015 IWC was the final IWC convention. Delegates to the Third National

Convention changed the BLET's regional meeting structure so that there will be two annual regional meetings sponsored by the National Division beginning next year. They are the Eastern Regional Meeting, July 11-14, 2016, at the Hilton Drake Hotel in Chicago, Illinois; and the Western Regional Meeting, August 22-25, 2016, at the Hyatt Regency in Long Beach, California.

Members enjoyed a tour of the Colorado State Railroad Museum and a Colorado Rockies major league baseball game as part of the IWC festivities. Some also participated in a motorcycle tour of the Rocky Mountains. The 75th and final IWC concluded with a dinner banquet the evening of August 19. @@



BLET concludes 80th annual SWCM in Tulsa

More than 300 members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) convened in Tulsa, Okla., on September 15 for opening ceremonies of the 80th annual and final Southwestern Convention Meeting (SWCM).

As with the 2014 SWCM in St. Louis, attendance at the 2015 SWCM in Tulsa was the highest of any of the four BLET regional meetings this year. SWCM arrangements chairman Dana Marlow, First Vice Chairman of the Union Pacific-Southern Region General Committee of Adjustment, began the meeting by welcoming all members, families and guests to Tulsa.

After presentation of the flags, Brother Daron Watson, President of BLET Division 182, delivered the invocation. Sister Sereena Hogan, National President of the BLET Auxiliary, then presided over the empty chair ceremony. An empty chair, as well as various tools of the engineers' craft, were placed at the front of the meeting hall to honor the Organization's departed Brothers and Sisters. Two BLET members were killed in the line of duty since the SWCM last convened in 2014, and the audience observed a moment of silence in honor of Alexander T. Sassman, Division 692, and Glenn W. Steele, Division 20.

BLET National President Dennis R.



Pierce introduced members of the BLET Advisory Board and National Division staff who were in attendance. His remarks touched upon the BLET's purchase of a new headquarters building in Independence, Ohio, as well as the ongoing attacks upon the labor movement and America's middle class.

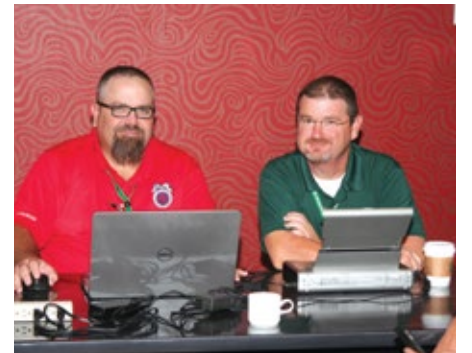
After his remarks, Brother Marlow and Brother Derrick Chick, President of BLET Division 179 (Parsons, Kan.), presented President Pierce with a piece of framed railroad artwork on behalf of the members of Division 179.

President Pierce then introduced keynote speaker Bill John Baker, Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation. Additional guest speakers included: Oklahoma

State Representative Richard Morrisette (District 92); Oklahoma State Representative Eric Proctor (District 77); and Teamsters Local 523 President Gary Ketchum.

This was the final SWCM. Delegates to the Third National Convention changed the BLET's regional meeting structure so that there will be two annual regional meetings sponsored by the National Division beginning in 2016. They are the Eastern Regional Meeting, July 11-14, 2016, at the Hilton Drake Hotel in Chicago, Illinois; and the Western Regional Meeting, August 22-25, 2016, at the Hyatt Regency in Long Beach, California.

The 80th annual SWCM concluded with a dinner banquet the evening of September 16. @@



GTW General Chairman John Karakian elected by acclamation for seventh straight term

The BLET's Grand Trunk Western (GTW) General Committee of Adjustment reelected General Chairman John M. Karakian by acclamation for a seventh consecutive four-year term at its quadrennial meeting in Port Huron, Mich., the week of August 17, 2015.

Brother Karakian, a member of Division 122 (Port Huron, Mich.), first joined the Brotherhood on June 1, 1977. He began serving as General Chairman in 1992, when he replaced outgoing General Chairman Paul Hicks.

Also reelected by acclamation for a seventh consecutive term was Vice General Chairman Marty J. Tyler, who serves as Local Chairman and Delegate of BLET Division 650 (Durand, Mich.).

Brother Chad Willerick, Local Chairman of BLET Division 33 (Battle Creek, Mich.), was elected to his first term as GCA Secretary-Treasurer. Brother Tom Martin, Secretary-Treasurer of Division 122 (Port Huron, Mich.), was elected to his first term as Alternate Secretary-Treasurer of the GCA.

Representing the BLET National Division at the meeting was National Vice President Gil Gore.

"Brother John Karakian works tirelessly on behalf of his members, as evidenced by this seventh consecutive term of office," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "All of our members working at the Grand Trunk Western have benefited from his dedication and tenacity over the decades, and I am proud to offer my thanks and congratulations to Brother Karakian and all officers of the Grand Trunk Western GCA."

Additional members in attendance were: former GCA Secretary-Treasurer Tom Greenman, Division 33 (Battle Creek, Mich.); Jim Vandendries, Local Chairman of Division 920 (Pontiac, Mich.); Dean Selby, Local Chairman of Division 122 (Port Huron, Mich.); and Brian Misickowski, Local Chairman of Division 850 (Flat Rock, Mich.).

The GTW GCA is proud of the significant role its forefathers played in the founding of our Brotherhood more than 150 years ago. The Grand Trunk was one of the four original railroads which sent a delegate, B. Northrup, to meet in Detroit, Mich., with 18 other delegates for four days, beginning on May 5, 1863, resulting in the formation of the original Brotherhood of the Footboard, later to become the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen.

The GTW GCA represents approximately 250 locomotive engineers who operate over 700 miles of track, predominantly in Michigan. The GTW's main corridor is from Port Huron, Mich., to Chicago, but also has operations in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and the province of Ontario, Canada. ©©

John G. Brodnick elected New York State Legislative Board Chairman

Brother John G. Brodnick, BLET Division 382 (Buffalo, N.Y.), was elected Chairman of the New York State Legislative Board at its quadrennial meeting in Boston, Mass., on July 26, 2015.

Brother Brodnick was elected to the office of First Vice Chairman at the Board's quadrennial meeting in August of 2011. A CSX locomotive engineer, Brother Brodnick serves Division 382 as Legislative Representative and he first joined the BLET in July of 1998. He hired out in 1995 and earned promotion to engineer in 1996.

William J. Fleischmann, Division 752 (Rensselaer, N.Y.), was elected by acclamation to serve as First Vice Chairman. Jay J. Carhart, Division 169 (Syracuse, N.Y.), was elected Second Vice Chairman. Reelected by acclamation were: Secretary-Treasurer James M. Libruk, Division 867 (Greenbush, N.Y.); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer Rick Jordan, Division 269 (Jamaica/ Long Island, N.Y.).

Chairman Brodnick said that delegates wanted the composition of the Board to reflect the interests of members who work in freight as well as passenger service. First Vice Chairman Fleischmann is an Amtrak engineer and Alternate S-T Jordan is a Long Island Rail Road engineer, while Chairman Brodnick and Second Vice Chairman Carhart are both CSX engineers.

Elected to the Executive Board were: Rick Jordan, Division 269; Brian R. Burns, Division 87 (Green Island, N.Y.); Theodore J. Podosek Sr., Division 895 (Buffalo, N.Y.); John M. Ostrander, Division 169 (Syracuse, N.Y.); and Dustin J. Deubell, Division 659 (Buffalo, N.Y.).

Elected by acclamation to the Audit Committee were: Michael J. Wickham, Division 46 (Albany, N.Y.); Brian R. Burns, Division 87 (Green Island, N.Y.); and David Kearsing, Division 46 (Albany, N.Y.).

Speakers at the meeting included: BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce; Vice President and National Leg-

islative Representative John P. Tolman; and Amtrak General Chairman Mark Kenny. Also in attendance was BLET National Vice President Jim Louis, former Chairman of the New York State Legislative Board.

"I offer my congratulations to Brother Brodnick and all members of the New York State Legislative Board," President Pierce said. "I know they will do a fine job representing the best interests of our members in the Empire State. I also wish to recognize and thank Brother Dave Kearsing for his service as Chairman and his continuing involvement with the Brotherhood."

Chairman Brodnick said: "Our delegates and officers would like to offer Brother Dave Kearsing, our outgoing Chairman, a debt of gratitude for his honorable service to the New York State Legislative Board. His time and commitment over the past five years to our membership has been an immense contribution to the success of the Board." ©©



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Photo of the Month: September 2015

CSXT AC60CW #618 is seen here in helper service shoving the rear of a southbound loaded coal train through a spring downpour on April 15, 2015. Making its way through Sandy Ridge Tunnel at Trammel, Va., the helpers will cut free from the train at Dante Yard and return along the 100 year-old former Clinchfield Railroad to Elkhorn City, Ky., to assist its next train. **Photo:** courtesy Tishia R. Boggs.



Are you a photographer? The National Division's Public Relations Department, which produces the Newsletter each month, has received numerous inquiries lately from BLET members volunteering to contribute their

images to the "Photo of the Month" section of the Newsletter. If you'd like to submit a photo for consideration, you may call Editor John Bentley at (216) 241-2630, ext. 248, or you can email: Bentley@ble-t.org.

Please note only high resolution images can be used. Members are also encouraged to review their employer's policies regarding the use of cameras and other electronic devices while on duty.

Advisory Board June/July 2015 Activity

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

NATIONAL PRESIDENT DENNIS R. PIERCE: National Division Office, Cleveland; General supervision of BLET activities; General office duties; Correspondence and telephone communications; Supervision of Office Administration; General Supervision of Special Representatives; President, Teamsters Rail Conference; Policy Committee, Teamsters Rail Conference; Congressional hearing, Washington, D.C.; Coordinated Bargaining Group (CPG) mtg., Washington, D.C.; Amtrak mtgs., Washington, D.C.; Southeastern Meeting Association (SMA) regional mtg., Atlanta, Ga.; Trip rate hearing, Chicago; National bargaining, Washington, D.C.; Eastern Union Meeting Association (EUMA) regional mtg., Boston.

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT E.L. (LEE) PRUITT: National Duties include but not limited to: Director, Passenger Dept.; Shortline Organizing Dept.; Trainmen's Dept.; National Publications Committee; National Legislative Board; Teamsters Rail Conference Policy Committee; PRAC; and National Negotiations; ST class, Cleveland; CPG mtg., Washington, D.C.; SMA regional mtg., Atlanta; Vacation; EUMA regional mtg., Boston.

NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER STEPHEN J. BRUNO: General supervision of Accounting Dept., Record Dept., Online Services Dept., Tax Compliance Dept.; Safety Task Force; PAC and FEC reports and filings; Implementation and training for BLET membership database; Pension, STD, 457 plan Trustee; Division, General Committee and SLB monthly Trustee reports; Mtgs. with vendors and financial institutions; Publications Committee; Passenger Dept.; National Bargaining Committee; IBT Human Rights Commission; CRLO mtgs., IBT Rail Conference Policy Committee mtg.; ST Class and trustee audits, Cleveland; CP Rail GCA quadrennial mtg., Las Vegas; SMA regional mtg., Atlanta; EUMA regional mtg., Boston.

VICE PRESIDENT & NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE JOHN P. TOLMAN: Assigned to BLET Washington, DC office; General office duties, telephone and correspondence communications; Coordinate content of NLO website; Weekly PAC committee and legislative mtgs.; CP Rail GCA mtg., Las Vegas; SMA regional mtg., Atlanta; Work with IBT to oppose Trade Agreements on behalf of all labor, Washington, D.C.; Congressional hearing, "The State of PTC Implementation in the U.S.," Washington, D.C.; Mtg. w/ Rep. Stivers, Washington, D.C.; Mtg. w/ BNSF EVP of Operations Greg Fox, Washington, D.C.; Functions for Reps. Kirkpatrick, Brown and Kling, Washington, D.C.; Amtrak labor roundtable mtg., Washington, D.C.; Mtg. w/ Rep. Tsongas, Washington, D.C.; Mtg. w/ Reps. Stivers and Denham, Washington, D.C.; Mtg. w/ Michelle Neundorff, Railroad Retirement Board, Washington, D.C.; EUMA regional mtg., Boston; Various functions and mtgs. with Representatives and Senators.

VICE PRESIDENT MARCUS J. RUEF: Vice Chairman, National Railroad Adjustment Board (NRAB); National Mediation Board (NMB) Arb. Adv. Forum; Department Head, BLET Arbitration Department; Assigned to Illinois Central, Wisconsin Central, Indiana Harbor Belt, Belt Railway of Chicago, Metra, GRR and Illinois RR; New NMB referee orientation, Chicago; Assist GC Reynolds w/ discipline case submissions and rules case submission, WC, Chicago; Conduct NRAB labor member forum, Chicago; Assist GC Semenek w/ claims and arbitration issues, Metra/CP; CP Rail GCA quadrennial mtg., Las Vegas; Assist DRP with Tripe Rate arbitrations, Chicago; Attend Division 602 picnic w/ GC Craddock, IC, Chicago; Illinois Central/IHB/IL RR contract negotiations, Chicago; NRAB grievance mediation case GM-0120, assist GC Rhodes, Chicago; NRAB grievance mediation, Chicago; Assist GC Semenek w/ discipline case, CP/Metra, Chicago; Safety mtg., re: Kirk Yard issues, assisting GC Reynolds, WC, Chicago; Attend Division 520 mtg. w/ GC Reynolds, WC, Chicago; Referee Darby 1st Division dockets, NRAB, Chicago; EUMA regional mtg., Boston.

VICE PRESIDENT MIKE TWOMBLY: Assigned to all Union Pacific GCAs (Eastern District, Northern Region (former C&NW), Western Lines (Pacific Harbor Lines), Western Region (Portland & Western), Central Region, Southern Region; Tacoma Belt RR, Utah RR, Longview Portland

& Northern NO & Logview Switch, Portland Terminal; On duty at home office; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; SMA regional mtg., Atlanta, GA; UP Southern Region & UP-Western Region conference, Spring, Texas; UP-Southern Region NY Dock Section 4 negotiations, Spring, Texas; UP-Southern Region and UP-Western Lines conference, Seattle, Wash.; EUMA regional mtg., Boston.

VICE PRESIDENT GIL GORE: Assigned to all CSX; Grand Trunk Western; Union Pacific-Southern Region GCA special assignment; Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC) issues, CSX; General office duties, paperwork, correspondence, emails, telephone calls, etc.; Holiday; BLET conference calls; Mtgs. w/ Divisions 64, 344 and 462 w/ BNSF GC Holdcraft, Wichita, KS; PLB 7542 w/ BNSF GC Thurman, Fort Myers, FL; Local Chairman's Workshop w/ BNSF GC Thurman and GC Wilson, Fort Worth, TX;

VICE PRESIDENT MICHAEL D. PRIESTER: Assigned to all BNSF (former ATSF, former C&S, CRI&P, FWD, former STL-SF, BNSF/MRL), Panhandle Northern, Missouri & North Arkansas, Montana Rail Link, Great Western; Texas Pacific; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; PLB prep work and mtg. w/ GC Brown, Amarillo, Texas; Division 202 mtg. w/ GC Wilson, Fargo; CP Rail GCA quadrennial mtg., Las Vegas; SMA regional mtg., Atlanta; Local Chairman's Workshop w/ GC Holdcraft, Albuquerque, N.M.; Division 695 mtg. w/ GC Wilson, Minot; EUMA regional mtg., Boston.

VICE PRESIDENT COLE W. DAVIS: Assigned to: Kansas City Southern (MidSouth Rail, South-Rail, Gateway Western, Illinois & Midland), Texas Mexican Rwy.; CP Rail System/US (Indiana Southern, Iowa, Chicago & Eastern, Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern); Springfield Terminal (St. Lawrence & Atlantic, Delaware & Hudson), Cedar River, Louisville & Indiana, Huron & Eastern; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; Springfield Terminal issues and D&H issues, assisting GC Moore; Mid South issues and Illinois Midland issues, assisting GC Craddock; CP Rail and DM&E issues, assisting GC Semenek; CP Rail GCA quadrennial mtg., Las Vegas; KCS issues, assisting GC Parker; CP Rail contract negotiations, assisting GC Semenek, Chicago; PLB 7084, assisting GC Rodriguez, Ft. Myers, Fla.; Division 602 mtg. and picnic, GC Semenek, St. Joseph, Ill.; Attend Division 527 mtg. (Pittsburg, Kan.) and Division 569 mtg. (Heavener, Okla.) w/ GC Parker, KCS; Division 599 and Division 632 mtg., Shreveport, La. w/ GC Parker, KCS; Attend KCS Division mtgs. w/ GC Parker, Joplin, Mo.; Soo Line contract assistance, GC Semenek; Louisville & Indiana issues, assisting GC Hogan; Tex Mex issues, assisting GC Rodriguez; Huron & Eastern issues, assisting GC Latrig; EUMA regional mtg., Boston.

VICE PRESIDENT R.C. (RICK) GIBBONS: Assigned to: All Norfolk Southern General Committees; Wheeling & Lake Erie; Chicago, Fort Wayne & Eastern; New York, Susquehanna & Western; New England Central; Connecticut Southern; Western New York & Pennsylvania; Indiana & Ohio; RSAC/RSIA Fatigue Management Group; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications; On duty at home office; SMA regional mtg., Atlanta, Ga.; PLB 7717, PLB 7718, PLB 7719, assisting GC Dehart, Chicago; Bid system update mtgs. w/ all NS General Chairmen, Atlanta; EUMA regional mtg., Boston.

VICE PRESIDENT JAMES P. LOUIS: Assigned Amtrak; Long Island Rail Road; New York & Atlantic; Metro North; New Jersey Transit; PATH; SEPTA; Metra; Union Railroad; National Division Department Head, Education & Training Dept.; National Division Department Head, Internal Organizing, Mobilizing & Strategic Planning Dept.; ST Training Class, Cleveland; Amtrak issues, assisting GC Kenny; PATH issues, assisting GC Nunziato; NJ Transit issues, assisting GC Decker; Mobilization mtgs.; Union Track issues; LIRR issues, assisting GC Sexton; SEPTA contract talks, assisting GC Dixon, Philadelphia; Planning for 2016 regional mtgs., Chicago and Long Beach, Calif.; EUMA regional mtg., Boston; Eastern General Chairmen's mtg., Boston; PEB 248, NJ Transit, Newark.

40 YEAR BLET PINS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 ←

and General Chairman of the UP-Southern Region GCA. He was elevated to the office of Vice President in 2009 and re-elected by acclamation as Vice President in 2014.

First Vice President E. Lee Pruitt has 43 years of continuous membership. In 1968, he hired out with the Southern Pacific Railroad in Bakersfield, Calif. He earned promotion to locomotive engineer in June of 1972 and joined BLE Division 126 on November 1, 1972. He served as Division Local Chairman for 11 years (1979-1990)

and as Southern Pacific General Chairman for 11 years (1990-2001). Brother Pruitt was unanimously elected to the office of Vice President in 2001 and again in 2006. He was unanimously elected by the Advisory Board to the office of First Vice President on July 1, 2010, and unanimously reelected again in 2014.

Congratulations to these four Brothers on a lifetime of exemplary service to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and its membership! @@

SIGN UP REQUIRED FOR NEW BLET NEWS FLASH EMAIL SERVICE

The BLET National Division encourages all members to sign up for its new automated News Flash email alert system. In early September, our previous system was replaced and contact information from the old system could not be imported into the new system. As a result, previous subscribers will need to sign up again and confirm their email address in order to receive our emails.

If you have not previously subscribed, then this would be an excellent opportunity to sign up and have our News Flashes delivered automatically to your inbox. An informed membership is a strong membership, and our News Flash email alert system helps to keep you informed regarding the business of the Brotherhood. @@

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