Delegates at the BLE’s Seventh Quinquennial International Convention on September 27 elected Don M. Hahs to the office of International President.

In a run-off election that began on September 26, President Hahs received a 417-211 majority of the votes. An incumbent member of the BLE’s Advisory Board, he was first elected to the office of International Vice-President five years ago.

Coming to the Brotherhood’s top post was an emotionally draining experience for President Hahs, who nevertheless remained focused on the business at hand.

“There are many pressing issues to be dealt with,” said President Hahs, who specifically mentioned obtaining a fair and equitable national con-

Delegates OK changes to Constitution

Of significant note is a change to Section 1(e) of the Constitution, which governs mergers of the BLE with other labor organizations. The amended Section 1(e) details specific balloting procedures and timelines the International President must follow when considering a merger and/or affiliation.

In other business, delegates approved a dues increase of $6 per month. It is the first increase in International dues since 1992, and will keep the BLE in the black while improving the level of service it provides to its members.

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers will conduct a second referendum vote on whether or not to merge with the United Transportation Union after a lawsuit by three BLE officers halted the original balloting process.

As this issue of the Newsletter went to press, attorneys for the BLE and the three BLE officers reached a settlement on October 19, which was scheduled to be submitted to Federal Judge Ann Aldrich for approval on Friday, October 26.

Newly-elected BLE International President Don M. Hahs said that as a condition of the settlement, the ballots cast by BLE members in the first referendum will be destroyed, and that the settlement — if approved by Judge Aldrich — will alter the balloting process in three major ways:

• The new referendum will be conducted by secret ballot;
• The votes of U.S. and Canadian BLE members will be counted together; and
• The three BLE officers who filed the lawsuit will have the opportunity to submit a written statement in opposition to the merger, which will be included with ballots that will be mailed to all BLE members.

The new ballots will be mailed on November 7, and they must be filled out and returned to the American Arbitration Association (AAA) no later than December 10. The BLE will utilize the services of AAA to handle all phases of the new referendum, including the
ASLEF delegation brings condolences from U.K.

During the afternoon session on September 26, the two top officers of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) spoke to BLE delegates about the long history of friendship between the two unions and the need for solidarity in the face of transportation globalization.

ASLEF General Secretary Michael “Mick” Rix and Executive Committee President Martin Samways spoke to BLE members about the friendship across continents. “In 1863, we started a journal and, 1886, we started a society called the Locomotive Engineer Newsletter,” Rix said.

“ASLEF borrowed several ideas for its founding from the BLE, which was formed in 1863. “Your own journal is called the Locomotive Engineer Newsletter. Well, we pinned that idea in the U.K. and, in 1886, we started a Locomotive Journal, very much similar to your own,” he said.

Rix said ASLEF borrowed several ideas for its founding from the BLE, which was formed in 1863. “Your own journal is called the Locomotive Engineer Newsletter. Well, we pinned that idea in the U.K. and, in 1886, we started a Locomotive Journal, very much similar to your own,” he said.

Rix offered his condolences to the people of the U.S. for the atrocities of September 11 from the people of Great Britain. He believes that this incident and the reaction that has followed will strengthen bonds between the two countries.

General Secretary Rix also discussed the effects of globalization on the workers of the world. “Globalization is having a serious effect on the workers of the world and trade unionists,” Rix said. “Safety and workers’ rights have been put last in the quest for profits.”

During his speech, Rix invited BLE members to work together with ASLEF members against the effects of globalization. He also urged BLE members to work with all other workers around the world against competition between workers and to create a level playing field for all.

“Workers in the transportation industry have a right to collective bargaining and solidarity action without recourse to the courts,” said Rix, who received several ovations throughout his speech. “We must not walk away from these workers not in trade unions,” said Samways. “We believe in furthering the rights of workers in all the world from whatever background and from whatever dialect they speak, and I believe it an honor to be able to do it.”

Both men expressed appreciation for the hospitality shown to them by BLE members and walked away from the podium to standing ovations.
In a stirring speech to BLE delegates the morning of September 25, United Mine Workers of America President Cecil E. Roberts exhorted the delegates attending the BLE’s Seventh Quinquennial Convention as well as all BLE members to join together with mine workers in a coalition for the betterment of both unions.

“I believe we should work in a coalition together,” Roberts said. “The UMWA and the BLE have so many common interests. I believe all of us standing together and fighting together...we can shine light into dark places. We can bring hope where there is no hope, and we can keep hope alive where there is hope.

“We mine it and you haul it,” Roberts said of coal, the main link between BLE and UMWA members. “United we stand, divided we fall. A wrong to one is a wrong to all.”

Brother Roberts, one of the labor movement’s best speakers, received several standing ovations throughout his speech, which carried a strong message of solidarity and brotherhood.

A sixth generation mine worker, Roberts spoke with a heavy heart as he told delegates about the fatal accident that befell 13 mine workers at the Blue Creek No. 5 mine near Tuscaloosa, Ala. On September 22, two gas explosions nearly half a mile beneath the earth killed at least four coal miners and left nine of their rescuers missing and presumed dead. It is considered the nation’s worst mining calamity in 25 years.

Roberts said 11 miners escaped an initial mine collapse, but knew that two of their union brothers were still trapped inside. These brave brothers re-entered the mine to rescue the two missing miners when they, too, became trapped. On September 24, rescue teams located one body and one injured miner, who has since died at a nearby hospital. Roberts was forced to leave the BLE convention early due to this tragedy.

Roberts said the bravery of the miners involved in the Alabama cave-in brought to mind the heroic actions of police and firefighters following the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States. He compared the 11 UMWA miners who re-entered the burning mine to rescue their union brothers to the New York City firefighters and police officers who entered the World Trade Center to rescue victims following the terrorist attacks.

“This is a difficult and trying time for organized labor,” said Roberts, explaining eight airline pilots, 25 flight attendants and 50 SEIU members — including several window washers — were killed in the attacks on the World Trade Center. Roberts said that two members of the Communications Workers of America were actually working on the main antenna on top of the World Trade Center when the first plane crashed.

“We ask for prayers for the victims and survivors,” Roberts said. “But we, as organized labor, like the rest of the United States and, indeed, the world, have a duty and obligation to move forward.” He said 75 members of the Laborers International Union, 40 members of ASFSME and 40 members of the Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees union also lost their lives in the September 11 terrorist attack.

Times of strife often draw people and organizations together, and Roberts thanked the UMWA for its support of the BLE during difficult times in the recent past.

“I am proud to stand with you today, and I thank you for standing with us,” he said. This support has led to a natural bond between BLE and UMWA members.

“Fifty percent of the freight hauled in the U.S. is coal,” Roberts said. “The BLE and UMWA are wonderful partners in all of this. We are linked together.”

Roberts said the BLE and UMWA have an excellent opportunity to forge stronger ties and fight together on issues of mutual interest.

Warren Tolman, Democratic Gubernatorial candidate for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, addressed delegates on the afternoon of September 25 at the BLE’s Seventh Quinquennial Convention.

Tolman introduced himself as a pro-railroad candidate from a railroad family. His brother John is Assistant to the International President and has been a member of the BLE for more than 20 years.

“John and I were two of eight kids of a union railroad leader,” Tolman said. “My father, Dave Tolman, learned some very, very important lessons — lessons that all of you are familiar with — lessons to work hard, to listen to people and be honest.

“These are values that each of you exhibit on a regular basis, working 12 hour days to provide for your family, and I’m honored to be with all of you here today.

A Massachusetts native, Tolman is familiar with the necessity of Amtrak in the Northeast Corridor. He is a strong supporter of funding for Amtrak and acknowledged the important role BLE members play in the success of the National Railroad Passenger Corp.

“During this difficult time in our nation’s history, there’s a lot of focus on air transportation,” Tolman said. “Coming from a railroad family, my belief is that we should put more resources, more money, into rail transportation because it’s safer, it’s environmentally more friendly, it’s more efficient, it’s more economic).

In spite of the terrorist attacks on the United States, Tolman credits organized labor for helping the nation’s economy get back on track.

“We will see a rebirth of freedom, a renewal that is so important to what makes America great,” Tolman concluded.
Vice-Chair.

Board Chairman Mike F. O'Brien.

From left: David Phillips, UP-Southern Region Vice-General Chairman; and James Ussery, Secretary-Treasurer and Legislative Representative of Division 834 (Minoqua, Texas).

From left: Raymondo Holmes, Vice-President & U.S. National Legislative Representative, is the lucky winner of a framed railroad print at the SWCM’s banquet. Presenting the picture is Lee Young, Chairman Dennis Pierce, and UP-Eastern District General Chairman Randy Schneider.

From left: Raymond Holmes, Vice-President & U.S. National Legislative Representative, is the lucky winner of a framed railroad print at the SWCM’s banquet. Presenting the picture is Lee Young, Chairman Dennis Pierce, and UP-Eastern District General Chairman Randy Schneider.

From left: Terry Briggs, Secretary-Treasurer of Division 530 (Commerce, Texas), and James Ussery, Secretary-Treasurer and Legislative Representative of Division 834 (Minoqua, Texas).

From left: Pat Johnson, SWCM Recording Secretary, Tim Windsor, SWCM Treasurer, and Cheri Canion, SWCM Vice-Chair.

From left: Raymond Holmes, Vice-President & U.S. National Legislative Representative, is the lucky winner of a framed railroad print at the SWCM’s banquet. Presenting the picture is Lee Young, Chairman Dennis Pierce, and UP-Eastern District General Chairman Randy Schneider.

From left: SWCM Scholarship Committee. Also pictured is SWCM Arrangements Chairman Randy Schneider, Division 81 (Kansas City, Kan.), and Chairman of the SWCM Scholarship Committee. Also pictured is SWCM Arrangements Chairman Randy Schneider, Division 81 (Kansas City, Kan.), and Chairman of the SWCM Scholarship Committee.

From left: International Vice-President Merle W. Geiger Jr., BNSF North Lines Vice-General Chairman Matt Wilson, BNSF North Lines General Chairman Dennis Pierce, and UP-Eastern District General Chairman Mike Young.

From left: David Phillips, UP-Southern Region Vice-General Chairman; Gary Perrier, UP-Southern Region General Vice-Chairman; Gil Gore, UP-Southern Region General Chairman; and Louisiana State Legislative Board Chairman Mike F. O’Brien.

From left: Standing: Assistant to the President John Tolman, R.W. Windham; and Kansas State Legislative Board Chairman Jim Keele. Seated: from left: Generals Secretary-Treasurer W.C. “Bill” Wulpert; and Jim Jackson, co-chairman of the 2000 SWCM.

From left: Terry Briggs, Secretary-Treasurer of Division 530 (Commerce, Texas), and James Ussery, Secretary-Treasurer and Legislative Representative of Division 834 (Minoqua, Texas).

The objection shall contain the objector’s current home address. Summaries meeting to conclude their objections from the year prior to the current objection each year, as specified in the procedures. The President shall serve a notice to all objectors. No petition objections will be heard.

2001 BLE Fees Objector Policy

5. Employee Rights

5. Employee Rights

The BLE shall retain a certified public accountant to per-

Objectors shall pay reduced monthly fees based on the most

5. Determination of Chargeable Share

f. Fourteen (14) days prior to the start of the first hearing,

8. Arbitration of Challenges

The objection shall contain the objector’s current home address. Summaries meeting to conclude their objections from the year prior to the current objection each year, as specified in the procedures. The President shall serve a notice to all objectors. No petition objections will be heard.

2001 BLE Fees Objector Policy

5. Employee Rights

5. Employee Rights

The BLE shall retain a certified public accountant to per-

Objectors shall pay reduced monthly fees based on the most

5. Determination of Chargeable Share

f. Fourteen (14) days prior to the start of the first hearing,

8. Arbitration of Challenges

The objection shall contain the objector’s current home address. Summaries meeting to conclude their objections from the year prior to the current objection each year, as specified in the procedures. The President shall serve a notice to all objectors. No petition objections will be heard.

2001 BLE Fees Objector Policy

5. Employee Rights

5. Employee Rights

The BLE shall retain a certified public accountant to per-

Objectors shall pay reduced monthly fees based on the most

5. Determination of Chargeable Share

f. Fourteen (14) days prior to the start of the first hearing,

8. Arbitration of Challenges

The objection shall contain the objector’s current home address. Summaries meeting to conclude their objections from the year prior to the current objection each year, as specified in the procedures. The President shall serve a notice to all objectors. No petition objections will be heard.

2001 BLE Fees Objector Policy

5. Employee Rights

5. Employee Rights

The BLE shall retain a certified public accountant to per-

Objectors shall pay reduced monthly fees based on the most

5. Determination of Chargeable Share

f. Fourteen (14) days prior to the start of the first hearing,

8. Arbitration of Challenges

The objection shall contain the objector’s current home address. Summaries meeting to conclude their objections from the year prior to the current objection each year, as specified in the procedures. The President shall serve a notice to all objectors. No petition objections will be heard.

2001 BLE Fees Objector Policy

5. Employee Rights

5. Employee Rights

The BLE shall retain a certified public accountant to per-

Objectors shall pay reduced monthly fees based on the most

5. Determination of Chargeable Share

f. Fourteen (14) days prior to the start of the first hearing,
Above: Members fill up their plates at the buffet-style lunch.

Left: The color guard prepares to present the flags during the SWCM opening ceremony.

From left: International President Don M. Hahs and SWCM Organization Chairman Rodney Stutes.

From left: International President Onita Wayland and GIA Immediate Past President Ruth E. Pillman-Windham.

From left: GIA International President Onita Wayland and GIA Immediate Past President Ruth E. Pillman-Windham.

Seated, from left: Joe Monroe, Division 910 (Beaumont, Texas), and Les Jeanlouis, Local Chairman of Division 366 (Houston).

Standing, from left: Raymond Holmes, Vice-President & U.S. National Legislative Representative; and Gil Gore, UP-Southern Region General Chairman.

From left: GIA International First Vice-President & U.S. National Legislative Representative Becky Schneider; Division 192 (El Paso, Texas) Legislative Representative Larry Schneider; and Division 530 (Commerce, Texas) Secretary-Treasurer Terry Briggs.

A representative of Burlington Northern-Santa Fe demonstrates for engineers one of the railroad’s locomotive cab simulators, one of many simulators used in the field to assist in the training of locomotive engineers.

From left: Raymond A. Holmes, Vice-President & U.S. National Legislative Representative; Mickey Gage, Missouri State Legislative Board Chairman; and C.E. Way, Illinois State Legislative Board Chairman.
Applying for a Railroad Retirement annuity

Railroad employees who are planning to retire should be aware of what steps to take and what documents are required when applying for an annuity from the Railroad Retirement Board. Being prepared can prevent needless delays and insure that payments from the Board begin as soon as possible after retirement. The following questions and answers describe this Railroad Retirement Board application process and other related items that retiring employees should be aware of.

1. How are railroad retirement annuity applications filed?

Applications are filed through the Railroad Retirement Board’s field offices. Applicants may file in person or by telephone and mail. Those filing in person must also file any necessary documents at or one of the office’s Customer Outreach Program (CORP) service locations. Applicants filing by telephone receive the same records and signature instructions that are provided to those filing in person; forms requiring signatures and other documents are then handled by mail.

The addresses and phone numbers of all the Board’s field offices are available on the Board’s Web site at www.railroadboard.gov, or by calling the toll-free RRB Help Line at (800) 808-0772. The RRB Help Line is an automated telephone service available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. All local field offices are open to the public from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

2. Can an application be filed prior to a person’s actual retirement date?

The Board accepts annuity applications up to three months in advance of an annuity beginning date, which allows the Board to complete the processing of most new claims by a person’s retirement date. However, applications for nonrailroad employees cannot be filed until an employee is no longer in compensated railroad service. Compensated service includes the receipt of pay for time lost, some wage continuation payments, or any other employer compensation excluding the payment of railroad retirement contributions.

To expedite the filing process, applicants should contact the Board to schedule time for a pre-retirement consultation, which can be conducted in person, by telephone, or through a Board representative who will provide an estimate, explain a retiree’s benefit rights and responsibilities, and answer related questions.

3. What are some of the documents required with an application?

All applicants have to furnish proof of their age.

• An employee may be required to submit information regarding any other Federal, State or local government pension under which they or their spouse may qualify, as well as certain other payments not covered by railroad retirement or social security, such as from a non-profit organization or from a foreign government or a foreign employer.

• An employee or survivor filing for a disability annuity is required to submit supporting medical information from the employee’s treating physician, as well as any reports or records from recent hospitalizations. He or she may also be asked to give information or medical evidence. All evidence brought or submitted must be submitted.

• An employee will have to furnish proof of any military service claimed. Evidence of all nonrailroad military service, including the dates of all such service must be submitted.

• Employees who are fileing a spouse or survivor’s annuity must file proof of marriage or death to the worker’s spouse, or the divorcee, from the employee, as well as proof that any subsequent marriages have terminated.

• Employees who are filing for survivors’ or survivor annuities also required to receive a public service pension must submit information regarding that pension.

4. Can proofs be filed in advance of retirement?

Railroad employees are encouraged to file their retirement application up to three months in advance of their effective retirement date. This will expedite the application annuity process and avoid any delays resulting from inadequate proofs.

All evidence brought or mailed to the Board office will be handled carefully and returned promptly.

5. What is the retroactivity of a railroad retirement application?

The retroactivity of a railroad retirement annuity application is limited to one year for nonrailroad annuities and six months for full age annuities. Reduced age annuities to those ages 60-63 with 30 years of service and their spouses can also have up to six months of retroactivity; there is no retroactivity for reduced age annuities to those employees under full retirement age with less than 30 years of service.

The maximum retroactivity for widows’ and widowers’ annuities is six months. However, it does not increase the age reduction (this does not apply to surviving divorced spouses or remarried widows’ and widowers’ annuities). Otherwise, there is generally no retroactivity for reduced age widows’ and widowers’ annuities.

6. Are retiring railroad employees required to change their rights to their railroad job?

An employee annuity based on age cannot be paid until the employee stops railroad employment and gives up any rights to return to work for a railroad employee. While an annuity based on disability is not paid until an employee has stopped working for a railroad, employment rights need not be relinquished until the employee attains full retirement age. However, in order for a supplemental annuity to be paid by the Board, or for an eligible spouse to begin receiving annuity payments, a disabled annuitant under full retirement age must relinquish employment rights. And, regardless of age and/or earnings, no railroad retirement annuity is payable for any month in which a retired annuitant or disabled annuitant, or a spouse annuitant or a survivor annuitant works for a railroad employer.

Railroad retirement annuities may be paid in nonrailroad employment, but benefits may be reduced if a beneficiary under full retirement age works after retirement and earnings exceed annual exempt amounts. Additional earnings deductions are assessed if a retired or disabled employee annuitant, or a spouse annuitant, works for his or her last pre-retirement nonrailroad employer, regardless of age or the level of earnings. Special restrictions also apply to any earnings by disabled employees.

7. How soon after filing can an applicant expect payment?

Under the Board’s Customer Service policy, persons who file for railroad retirement annuity or spouse annuity in advance will receive their first payment, or a decision, within 35 days of the date they filed their application. Those who filed for a railroad retirement survivor annuity or lump-sum benefit will receive their first payment, or a decision, within 65 days of the date they filed their application, or became entitled to benefits, if later. Widows or widowers are those who are already receiving a spouse annuity and didn’t file for Direct Deposit, or a decision, within 35 days of the date the Board receives notice of the employee’s death.

For disability annuities, no payment can be made until all medical evidence has been evaluated. Consequently, an annuity based on disability takes longer to process than an annuity based on age and service. And, a waiting period of five months is required after the onset of disability before disability annuity payments can begin. In any case, persons who filed for a railroad retirement disability annuity will receive a decision on their claim, within 65 days of the date they filed their application. If they are entitled to disability benefits, they will receive their first payment within 25 days of the date of that decision, or earliest payment date, whichever is later. Of course, claims for some benefits may take longer than others if they are more complex, or if information from other people or organizations is needed. If this happens, the Board will provide an explanation and an estimate of the time required to make a decision.

8. How are railroad retirement payments made?

Persons applying for railroad retirement benefits will be automatically enrolled in the U.S. Treasury's Direct Deposit Program, which electronically transfers annuity or survivor payments into individuals’ checking or savings accounts. Direct Deposit waivers are, however, available to individuals who do not want their direct deposit, or who have difficulty ensuring that payments will arrive. Direct Deposit waivers can be filed by calling the toll-free RRB Help Line or filing a written request with the Board.

Ballots due Dec. 10 in UTU merger

Merger Vote

Continued from Page 1

The BLE will direct the ARA to destroy the ballots cast by BLE members during August and September — ballots which were impounded by Judge Aldrich’s order of September 11.

“Ultimately, the process of determining whether there should be a merger with UTU will not be complete until the membership has spoken,” President Hahs said. “The final printing, mailing and counting of the new ballots...”
Delegates approve change to BLE Constitution

President Hahs will soon announce who will head the new department and how it will be structured.

A third major revision to the BLE Constitution & By-laws calls on the BLE’s National Legislative Office to provide up to $25,000 annually to the Grand International Auxiliary for assistance in Congressional lobbying efforts. The money will be used in a way of several things, such as letter-writing campaigns and covering expenses of GIA officers who lobby Congress to support key issues of importance to BLE members and their families.

In his acceptance speech on September 27, President Hahs pledged to foster a strong relationship between the BLE and GIA as he recognized Immediate Past President Ruth E. Pillman-Windham and newly-elected General Interna- tional President Onita Wayland.

Delegates established two funds at the Seventh Quinquennial Convention to assist the victims of the New York City terrorist attack as well as the families of the miners killed in Tuscaloosa, Ala. Several thousand dollars were raised for these two funds over the course of the five-day convention, with the possibility that BLE Designated Legal Counsel would offer matching funds for each dollar donated by delegates.

Delegates approved a clean-sweep of the BLE’s Executive Committee and elected three new of- ficers to fill the Brotherhood’s three highest ranking of- fices.

Brother Hahs is the 20th president in the 118-year history of the BLE. He is from Kingwood, Texas, and has been a BLE member since 1975. He was elected to the of- fice of International Vice-President in 1996 and spent 10 years in that position before being elected to the office of General Secretary-Treasurer in 1996. He is a member of BLE Division 636 (Sherman, Texas).

The BLE’s new First Vice-President & Alternate President is Edward Rodzwicz. He was elected to the office of International Vice-President in 1996, and immediately prior to that, he served the Brotherhood in the position of Special Representative since 1988. He was elected a member of Alternate Vice-President in 1991. As First Vice- President & Alternate President, Brother Rodzwicz assumes command of the Brotherhood’s second-highest officer. He comes from the Eastern re- gion of the U.S., having served on the Connal General Committee of Adjust- ment in a variety of offices throughout the years. He is from Pittsburgh, Pa. and he joined the BLE in 1977. He be- longs to Division 225 (Wilkinsburg, Pa.).

William C. Walpert was elected to the office of General Chairman Vice-Presi- dent in 1996, and now — following his election to the office of General Secre- tary-Treasurer in Miami — he serves as the Brotherhood’s chief financial of- ficer. Immediately prior to becoming Vice-President in 1996, he was elected to the office of First Alternate Vice- President.

Brother Walpert will continue to be in charge of a number of BLE depart- ments, including the BLE Safety Task Force, the Library, the Education & Training Depart- ment, and the Education & Training De- partment. He joined the BLE in 1973 and is of the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe’s St. Louis & San Francisco line, having served as its General Chair- man from 1988-92. He is a member of BLE Division 604 (Sherman, Texas).

The members of the new Advisory Board are:

- Don M. Hahs, International Presi- dent; • Edward Rodzwicz, First Vice- President & Alternate President; • William C. Walpert, General Secre- tary-Treasurer; • Paul T. Sorrow, Vice-President; • Joseph A. Cassidy Jr., Vice-Presi- dent; • Raymond A. Holmes, Vice-President and U.S. National Legislative Representative; • Merle W. Geiger Jr., Vice-President; • Stephen D. Speagle, Vice-President; • E.L. “Lee” Pruitt, Vice-President; • Richard K. Radak, Vice-President; • Dale McPherson, Vice-President; • Gilles Hallé, Vice-President & Ca- nadian Director; • T. George Hucker, Vice-President & National Legislative Representative-Canada.

Brothers Hahs, Rodzwicz and Walpert were all incumbent Vice-Presi- dents who moved higher up on the Ad- visory Board as a result of the elections in Miami.

Congratulations to Brothers Sor- row, McPherson and Hallé, who were reelected by acclamation. Brothers Cassidy, Radak and Hucker fended-off challengers win reelection to their cur- rent spots. Finally, congratulations to Brothers Geiger, Speagle and Pruitt, who are the newest members of the BLE’s Advisory Board.

Advisory Board

Continued from Page 3

Among other items, the new income generated by the dues increase will be used to raise the number of local and departmental con- man and secretary-treasurer training programs offered by the BLE, said newly-elected General Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert, the union’s top financial officer.

President Hahs also announced that income generated from the dues increase will assist in the formation of a new Passenger Rail Department at the International Division.

The new department would be responsible for lending assistance to all passenger and commuter rail General Com- mittees of Adjustment on a variety of issues, such as con- tract negotiations and enforcement of existing contracts.

Following a temporary sus- pension of lobbying efforts in light of the September 11 terrorist at- acks on the United States, Rail Labor Action Line resumed its pas- sage of S. 697 in early October.

The Railroad Retirement and Survivors’ Improvement Act of 2001 now has 75 Senate cospos- sors. The House version of the bill, H.R. 1140, was passed by a large bipartisan majority in late July, 384-33.

Raymond A. Holmes, the BLE’s new International Vice- President & U.S. National Legis- lative Representative, asked all BLE members to pass along the following message when contacting their members of the Senate:

While we recognize that the Senate has much unfinished busi- ness related to the events of Sep- tember 11th, please don’t forget to pass S. 697 — the Railroad Retirement and Survivors’ Im- provement Act of 2001.

S. 697 has 75 cosponsors. The Senate has passed its version (H.R. 1140) by an overwhelming vote of 384-33.

Please pass Railroad Retire- ment Act to the House.

S. 697 would reduce the vest- ing requirement under the Rail- road Retirement system from 10 years to five, which would eliminate the actuarial reduction for those who retire prior to age 62, and would increase surviving spouses’ annu- alities.

The 25 Senators who are not cosponsoring this legislation are listed below:

S. 697 Non-cosponsors

1. Allard, Wayne (R-CO) •
2. Bennett, Robert (R-UT) •
3. Bingaman, Jeff (D-NM) •
4. Campbell, B.N. (R-CO) •
5. Domenici, Pete (R-NM) •
6. Feingold, Russell (D-WI) •
7. Gramm, Phil (R-SC) •
8. Grassley, Chuck (R-IA) •
9. Gregg, Judd (R-RH) •
10. Hutchison, K.B. (R-TX) •
11. Inhofe, James (R-OK) •
12. Kohl, Herb (D-WI) •
13. Kyl, Jon (R-AZ) •
14. Lott, Trent (R-MS) •
15. Lugar, Richard (R-IN) •
16. McCain, John (R-AZ) •
17. Murkowski, F. (R-AK) •
18. Nickles, Don (R-OK) •
19. Santorum, Rick (R-PA) •
20. Shelby, Hobie (D-WV) •
21. Stevens, Ted (R-MA) •
22. Thomas, Craig (R-RW) •
23. Thompson, Fred (R-TN) •
24. Voinovich, George (R-OH) •
25. Wyden, Ron (D-OR) •

President Hahs made the following statement:

President Hahs and his team have been working to preserve the Railroad Retirement and Survivors’ Improvement Act of 2001. This bill has 75 Senate cospos- sors. The House version of the bill, H.R. 1140, was passed by a large bipartisan majority in late July, 384-33.

Raymond A. Holmes, the BLE’s new International Vice- President & U.S. National Legis- lative Representative, asked all BLE members to pass along the following message when contacting their members of the Senate:

While we recognize that the Senate has much unfinished busi- ness related to the events of Sep- tember 11th, please don’t forget to pass S. 697 — the Railroad Retirement and Survivors’ Im- provement Act of 2001.

S. 697 has 75 cosponsors. The Senate has passed its version (H.R. 1140) by an overwhelming vote of 384-33.

Please pass Railroad Retire- ment Act to the House.

S. 697 would reduce the vest- ing requirement under the Rail- road Retirement system from 10 years to five, which would eliminate the actuarial reduction for those who retire prior to age 62, and would increase surviving spouses’ annu- alities.

The 25 Senators who are not cosponsoring this legislation are listed below:

S. 697 Non-cosponsors

1. Allard, Wayne (R-CO) •
2. Bennett, Robert (R-UT) •
3. Bingaman, Jeff (D-NM) •
4. Campbell, B.N. (R-CO) •
5. Domenici, Pete (R-NM) •
6. Feingold, Russell (D-WI) •
7. Gramm, Phil (R-SC) •
8. Grassley, Chuck (R-IA) •
9. Gregg, Judd (R-RH) •
10. Hutchison, K.B. (R-TX) •
11. Inhofe, James (R-OK) •
12. Kohl, Herb (D-WI) •
13. Kyl, Jon (R-AZ) •
14. Lott, Trent (R-MS) •
15. Lugar, Richard (R-IN) •
16. McCain, John (R-AZ) •
17. Murkowski, F. (R-AK) •
18. Nickles, Don (R-OK) •
19. Santorum, Rick (R-PA) •
20. Shelby, Hobie (D-WV) •
21. Stevens, Ted (R-MA) •
22. Thomas, Craig (R-RW) •
23. Thompson, Fred (R-TN) •
24. Voinovich, George (R-OH) •
25. Wyden, Ron (D-OR) •
Operation of remotes is BLE jurisdiction

BLE International President Don M. Hahs challenged the United Transportation Union’s attempt to “circumvent the law” and gain jurisdiction over remote control technology, stating that the BLE — not UTU — is the union that carriers must bargain with to implement the new technology.

President Hahs warned that any agreement between the carriers and the UTU regarding remote control technology would be “treated as a direct violation of the BLE’s rights to bargain on behalf of its members.”

“It is our position that any proposed changes in rates of pay, the working conditions resulting from the use of remote control technology would have to be negotiated with our organization,” President Hahs wrote in an October 5 letter to the chief labor relations officers of CSX Transportation, Union Pacific, Norfolk Southern, Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Conrail and the Kansas City Southern.

In late October, the UTU announced it had signed a Letter of Intent with six of the nation’s rail carriers regarding “expeditious” implementation of remote control technology.

“Please be advised that as the duly accredited bargaining representative for the employees of locomotive engineers each of the properties signatory to the Letter of Intent, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers possesses exclusive bargaining power in all matters directly relating to the affairs of the employees employed on your properties,” the President’s letter stated. “This right would be vacated unilaterally and contrary to the implementation and utilization of remote control technology”.

“In our opinion, the Letter of Intent is an agreement to bargain in good faith and we will not allow you to void the law and violate our rights as an organization to bargain on behalf of our members.”

President Hahs noted that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) still has not issued enforceable guide lines governing the use of remote control technology, as requested by the BLE in November 2000.

“If UTU is prepared to abandon its previously stated commitment to rail safety with this apparent sweetheart deal with the carriers, we have to question whether the UTU is really committed to rail worker solidarity, as it claims,” President Hahs said. “This attempted power grab by UTU, illegal and ill-advised, is a signal to rail workers that UTU is not working in their best interests.”

In July of 2000, the FRA held a first-of-its-kind Technical Conference on Remote Control Locomotives in Washington D.C., where at the time the BLE and UTU maintained a united front and issued joint testimony about the dangers of remote control locomotives.

“(Because of the significance of this issue to the lives and safety of the people working in the industry, UTU and BLE are here today united and speaking with one voice,” the UTU testified.

However, President Hahs today expressed dismay that the UTU had wavered from this stance, noting that UTU’s Letter of Intent clearly contradicts the previous agreement it made to work together with the BLE.

In an article titled, “UTU and BLE Jointly,” published on the front page of the August 2000 issue of the UTU News, the UTU reported that, “The UTU and BLE have agreed to work together to develop a joint position on the remote control operation of locomotives.”

“We had hoped to continue working jointly with UTU on the remote control operation of locomotives, but President Hahs said today, that after yesterday’s actions, we acted swiftly to protect the jobs and working conditions of BLE members. That’s our stance.” •

THE LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEER NEWSLETTER
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers
Since 1863, a Tradition of Forward Thinking

OCTOBER 2001 CALENDAR & EVENTS

NOVEMBER 2…Railroad Retirement Board Informational Conference in Louisville
The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board will conduct a free informational conference in Louisville, Ky. On-site registration begins at 8 a.m. with sessions starting promptly at 9 a.m. All sessions end at 12:30 p.m. to be held at the Executive Inn, 976 Phillips Lane. For details, visit the RRB website at www.rrb.gov, or call the toll-free RRB Help Line at (800) 808-0772.

NOVEMBER 9…Railroad Retirement Board Informational Conference in Metairie, La.
The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board will conduct a free informational conference in Metairie, La. On-site registration begins at 8 a.m. with sessions starting promptly at 9 a.m. All sessions end at 12:30 p.m. to be held at the Holiday Inn Metairie, 3400 11th Ct. & Concourse Blvd. For details, visit the RRB website at www.rrb.gov, or call the toll-free RRB Help Line at (800) 808-0772.

Plan ahead for 2002...

JUNE 16-20, 2002…75th Southeastern Meeting Association in Virginia Beach, Va. Chairman T.C. Emy is hosting the 2002 SMA at the Virginia Beach Resort Hotel & Conference Center from June 16-20, 2002. Discount room rates of $99 per night have been secured and reservation deadline is May 24, 2002. Reservations can be made by calling (800) 687-2722 (in Virginia please call (804) 422-4774). For pre-registration form, please contact SMA 2002 Chairman at T.C. Emy 4014 E. Lull Rd., Virginia Beach, VA 23462

Advisory Board September Activity

By action of the delegates at the Fifth Oktogonial Convocation, summations of BLE Advisory Board members’ activities are published monthly.

International President Don M. Hahs—International Office. General supervision of BLE activities; id convention; Southwestern Convention Meeting; Advisory Board mtg.

First Vice-President & Alternate President Edward W. Rodowicz—ID convention; Mtg. w/ former President Delano, Mtg. w/ Vice General Chairman Thompson; Southwestern Convention Meeting; Norfolk Southern Eastern Region; Advisory Board mtg.

General Secretary-Treasurer William C. Welpart—ID convention; Southwestern Convention Meeting; General supervision of BLE financial and record debts; id office; BLE Education & Training Dept.; Internal Organizing, Labor & Strategic Planning Dept.; BLE Safety Task Force Convention.

Vice-President Paul T. Sorrow—ID convention; Advisory Board Mtg.; Southwestern Convention Meeting; SBA 1036, P.O. Box 1619, St. Louis, Mo. 63166; Mtg. w/ all Local Chairmen; Advisory Board mtg.

Vice-President Joseph A. Cassidy Jr.—Study & research; General office duties, duties of local, Mtg. w/ General Chairman Delano; Mtg. 4242, both for upcoming arbitrations; Mtg. w/ Western Causus; Advisory Board mtg.; ID convention; Mtg. w/ Southwest Causus.

V.P. BLE’s N.L. Representative Representative Raymond A. Holmes—Washington D.C. office; Advisory Board mtg.; Advisory Board mtg.; Various activities related to transition into new office.

Vice-President Mark W. Geiger Jr.—Assigned to following properties: Kansas City Southern; Mid-South; Southern; Mtg. w/ BLE office in Kansas City; Mtg. w/ BLE office in Memphis; Mtg. w/ BLE Office in Chicago.

Vice-President Stephen D. Speagle—Assigned to the following properties: All BNSF General Committees of Adjustment; Montana Rail Link; Assigned ID convention; Advisory Board mtg.

Vice-President E.L. “Lex” Pratt—Assigned to following properties: UP Western Lines; UP Western Region; Mtg. w/ General Chairman Thompson; Mtg. w/ various local; Assigned Advisory Board mtg.; Assigned to various properties.

Vice-President Richard K. Radar—International Office. BLE Desenification Helpdesk service, Director of Arbitration Dept. National Railroad Adjustment Board (NRAB); Nova Centra; Washington; Indiana Harbor METRA; Bell of Chicago; Pudico & Louisville; Chicago Central & Pacific; WC GCAF assistance; METRA GCAF assistance; Southwestern Convention Meeting; Mtg. B&O general assistance; Metropolitan Rail; M&NA re-listed mtg.; ID convention; FRA Part 240 Drill; ESAU 41-49, 50-99; 94-04; ID 69-01; Advisory Board mtg.

Vice-President Don McMillan—Mtg. w/ Rail Link; Mtg. w/ CSX/UP; Mtg. w/ IA; Mtg. w/ WP & B&M; Mtg. w/ various Southern Locomotive; Mtg. w/ various RAIL and BLE CEFIL.

Mobilizing & Strategic Planning Dept.; BLE Safety Task Force; Advisory Board mtg.

By action of the delegates at the Fifth Oktogonial Convocation, summations of BLE Advisory Board members’ activities are published monthly.