



NEWS

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High alert on rail security

Safety, security earn failing grade in Teamster survey of nation's railroads

Rail workers report that America's rail system is no better protected than before terrorist bombings in Madrid and London, despite repeated warnings from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) that trains are a likely terrorist target.

The Teamsters Rail Conference released a report on September 29 documenting vulnerabilities on America's railways. Employees of Union Pacific, CSX, Norfolk Southern, Burlington Northern and others participated in the report. Rail workers from coast to coast tell of a startling lack of safety and security measures in place along the nation's rail network.

"Our members told us that dangerous and possibly deadly situations are a daily occurrence on the rails," said John Murphy, Director of the Teamsters Rail Conference.

"The rail corporations and the Federal Railroad Administration must be held accountable for the appalling state of security on the rails and the lack of safety training our members receive."

The report, titled "High Alert: Workers Warn of Security Gaps on Nation's Railroads," is based on more than 4,000 surveys completed by Class I, regional, short line and commuter railroad employees, warns that U.S. rail carriers have failed to demon-

strate improved or increased safety and security on the rail system.

"In this age of increased demand for safety within our borders, it is unconscionable that these employees witness these frightening lapses in security on our rails each day," said Rep. Ed Markey (D-MA). "The facts in this report show the outcome of the Administration's lack of spending for rail and transit security compared to the billions of dollars committed to airline security."

Workers, who reported the safety and security measures in place on any one workday during a year-long survey period, reported:

- Ninety-four percent of respondents said that rail yard access was not secure;
- Eighty-three percent of respondents said that they have not received any, or additional training related to terrorism prevention and response over the past 12 months;
- Seventy percent of respondents reported seeing trespassers in the yard; and

HIGH ALERT:

Workers Warn of Security Gaps on Nation's Railroads



- Minimal security training for employees who have been warned that they could be the target of a terrorist attack.

"This is a direct result of rail corporations downsizing their workforces and relying more and more on mechanized means of surveilling their infrastructure," Murphy said. "No electronic device can ever replace the eyes and ears of trained rail employees. We are asking Congress to take a long, hard look at our finds and bring the rail corporations to task for having allowed lax systems to continue."

To read the High Alert: Workers Warn of Security Gaps on Nation's Railroads report, go to: <http://www.teamster.org/divisions/rail/pdfs/railsecuritybook.pdf> •

The 'pretzel logic' of remote control

(This is the first in a three-part series of articles in which the BLET takes a look at recent actions of the Federal Railroad Administration, the Association of American Railroads, and the United Transportation Union to further expand the use of remote control locomotives to main track territory.)

(In Part I of the series, we take a look at the FRA's continuing failure to affirmatively regulate remote control, and how FRA's latest action impacts the safety of the nation's railroads. A complete copy of this series is available on the BLET website at the following link: <http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/pretzel.pdf>)

Since the BLET's release in late July of a comprehensive study of remote control locomotive ("RCL") operations authored by renowned railroad work organization expert Dr. Frederick C. Gamst and former Federal Railroad Administration ("FRA") Associate Administrator for Safety George A. Gavalla, the silence from FRA, the As-

Part 1 of a three-part series

sociation of American Railroads ("AAR") — the industry's lobbying arm — and the United Transportation Union ("UTU") has been deafening.

However, in less than a week, FRA, AAR and UTU have joined forces in an effort to sidestep the impact of the Gamst/Gavalla Report ("Report") in a way that only underscores, once again, the industry's folly in its implementation of RCL technology, FRA's continuing abdication of its statutory duty to ensure the safety of the nation's railroad industry, and UTU's role as the industry's lapdog.

Last week — and more than four months after its Final Report to Congress on the safety of RCL became overdue — FRA fired the first salvo with the public release of a September 9, 2005 letter from Associate Administrator for Safety Daniel C. Smith to AAR

and to the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association. That letter, while purporting to caution the industry about inappropriate use of RCL technology, establishes beyond any reasonable doubt the consequences of FRA's failure to affirmatively regulate RCL operations, because the agency raised more questions than it answers.

FRA acknowledged that, as early as May of 2004, it had concerns about the use of RCL outside of yard switching operations and that it had been "surprised to learn that railroads had some RCL operations on main tracks." After "an additional year of monitoring and evaluating the non-incident movements by RCLs over main track," FRA concluded "that, given the limitations of RCL technology, non-incident movements over main track by RCLs can pose an unacceptable safety risk and thus should be strictly limited."

FRA admitted that a "primary problem with the current state of the RCL technology is that it is inadequate to control in-train forces during heavy-

haul operations," and "similarly, ... that the way to operate the RCL over the main track, and its variously graded conditions, without pulling the train apart, may require manipulating the remote control device in a way that is counter-intuitive to the way it was designed to be used." Thus, FRA conceded, the current industry practice of using RCL for main track movements has created "the absurd situation of allowing an RCO [Remote Control Operator] to perform all the same operations as a train service locomotive engineer, just with different equipment and significantly less training."

In describing the operational hazards created by using RCL for main track movements, FRA stated the following:

"... FRA's initial concern was that the current technology might not be suitable to control in-train forces during train movements. The speed control feature on the remote control transmitter ... works like an automobile's

See Pretzel Logic, Page 2

BLET NEWS

BLET to conduct final S-T Workshop of 2005

Will be held in Cleveland from December 4-7; Daily stipends available for members

The BLET's Education and Training Department will conduct a Secretary-Treasurer Compliance Workshop in Cleveland from December 4-7.

The meeting will be held at the Crowne Plaza Cleveland Centre Hotel, 777 St. Clair Ave., which is within walking distance of the BLET's National Division headquarters.

As most STs already know, many changes have been implemented regarding the filing of reports this year. These changes will be explained in class.

A major change came when the BLET National Division implemented a new dues reporting and collection internet-based system on January 1, 2005. There will be an online demonstration of this new system.

During the three-day session, members will learn proper record keeping techniques, computer applications, and minute-taking. They will also learn methods for filing various Department of Labor and Railroad Retirement reports, as well as Federal tax returns. A representative from the Department of La-

bor will be on hand to answer Secretary-Treasurer questions and have tips regarding the preparation of LM reports.

Presenters will include Bill Walpert, BLET National Secretary-Treasurer; Ken Kroeger, BLET Special Rep & Coordinator of the Education & Training Department; Dr. Elaine Reese, Director of Compliance; Bob Broka, Director of Records; and Walt Schmidt, BLET Webmaster.

The BLET National Division pays the costs of books and equipment, while Secretary-Treasurers who attend are responsible for their transportation costs as well as their room and board.

Upon successful completion of the course, attendees will qualify for a \$91 per day stipend from the North American Railway Foundation. The stipends will be paid directly to the Division.

Secretary-Treasurers should register for the workshop online through the BLET website at: <http://www.ble-t.org/st>.

The room rate at the Crowne Plaza Cleveland Centre Hotel is \$96 per night. To make your reservations, please call Patti Smith, Administrative Assistant to the NST, at (216) 241-2630, extension 227, or e-mail her your information (name – arrival date – departure date – credit card number and expiration date to hold your room) to: pmsmith@ble-t.org.

Please make your reservations by November 11, 2005. Requests after the cut-off date will be honored on a space-and-rate-availability basis. You may not be able to obtain the discounted rate of \$96 per night.

The class will start at 7 p.m. on Sunday, December 4, and conclude at noon on Wednesday, December 7.

Registration for the December 2005 workshop is on a first come, first served basis with class size limited to the first 25 who register through the BLET website. For more information, please contact Ken Kroeger of the BLET Education & Training Dept. at (216) 272-0986 or kroeger@ble-t.org.

Carriers, AAR, UTU employ twisted logic to justify RCO

Pretzel Logic

Continued from Page 1

cruise control. A speed is selected, and the computer will increase locomotive power until the desired speed is reached. The computer will then automatically maintain the selected speed using locomotive power and brakes. ... Since plus or minus fluctuations in speeds greater than 0.5 mph often occur as trains move over the main track, the independent air brake will constantly apply and release, or locomotive power will increase or decrease, causing the train slack to run in and out as the train progresses. The longer and heavier the train, the more dramatic this slack action becomes. ... This function is not desirable when controlling longer trains on the main track because the computer works faster than the train air brake system. For example, under certain track profiles (short downhill, uphill track configurations), the system could apply and release the brakes before the brakes fully apply on the rear of a long train. This would create a situation where the brakes would be releasing on the head end of the train at the same time they are applying on the rear end. This condition could cause excessive in-train forces."

There are several problems with FRA's description. First, it relies upon a false analogy: an automobile's cruise control does not alternately apply throttle and brake; it increases acceleration to maintain or increase speed, and relies upon gravity and the weight of the coasting vehicle to reduce speed.

Second, the Gamst/Gavalla Report established that RCOs will occasionally manipulate the beltpack controls to compensate for the actions of the speed

control circuit. See Report at pp. xvii, 31, 85. Thus, this train control deficiency also is present in switching operations, a fact conveniently omitted from FRA's letter. This operational risk is a function of the technology, and exists regardless of the setting in which it is employed.

Third, and as any experienced locomotive engineers can tell you, the repeated application and release of the automatic brake in a short time frame, as described by FRA, will result in the "dribbling away" of automatic brake pipe pressure, which is a known hazard. When that point is reached, there no longer is an ability to safely control the speed of the train regardless of manual or automatic manipulation of the airbrakes.

Behind Door #2

Notwithstanding the false analogy and incomplete description of the deficiency of the RCL speed control system, FRA stated three findings that were right on point:

- further modification of RCL technology will not "overcome these limitations while providing a level of safety equal to that of conventional operations on the main line;"
- a communication failure, which results in the on-board computer immediately stopping the movement, "on high-speed main tracks could prove catastrophic;" and
- "there is no sound reason to introduce *additional* causes of undesired air brake applications." (emphasis in original)

Based upon the above, it would appear to be a fairly straight-forward conclusion that — other than the occasional pull-out onto a main track to clear a switch — using RCL on main tracks is fraught with danger. However,

"However, in spite of this evidence, and nearly a year and a half after being blindsided by the industry's expansion of RCL to an extent not previously disclosed, FRA has chosen to continue to let the fox guard the henhouse."

in spite of this evidence, and nearly a year and a half after being blindsided by the industry's expansion of RCL to an extent not previously disclosed, FRA has chosen to continue to let the fox guard the henhouse.

Even worse, FRA is openly encouraging the industry to plunge full-speed ahead in expanding RCL to main track operations. FRA stated that "RCOs should be as knowledgeable [concerning air brakes, train handling, signal recognition, track-train dynamics, etc. ... all subjects associated with the fundamentals of main track operations, regardless of speed or distance] as conventional engineers. Consequently, FRA believes that RCOs should receive additional training if they operate on main tracks."

To that end, FRA advised that it will "reopen review of railroad RCO training programs where it is clear that the railroad is committed to non-incident main line movements" to determine whether RCOs receive "the equivalent level of classroom training as that provided for conventional train service engineers," and whether they are afforded "a minimum of 120 hours of actual, documented hands-on operating experience." If there is any doubt that this is bald encouragement, FRA also stated that it will consider crediting

hours already worked in main track service in satisfaction of the 120-hour requirement.

Anticipating criticism of this green light for a practice that it has already determined to be beyond the safe capacity of RCL technology, FRA further stated the following:

"At a minimum, we recommend that the following limitations should apply to all RCL movements requiring brake tests under 49 C.F.R. Part 232:

- a. Locomotive consist should not exceed 3000 horsepower, utilizing no more than eight (8) axles.
- b. Train length should not exceed 1000 feet (approximately 20 car lengths).
- c. Train speed should not exceed 15 mph.
- d. Operations should be prohibited on any grade of 0.5 percent or greater that extends for more than 1/4 of a mile."

Once again, however, these "recommendations" are unenforceable by FRA, irrespective of the fact that federal air brake testing requirements have been cited.

(In Part II of this series, we examine the reactions of the AAR and UTU to FRA's September 9, 2005 letter.) •

Important information about UnitedHealthcare coverage

(BLET Editor's Note: United Healthcare issued the following news release on October 18.)

Your current health coverage is changing.

On January 1, 2006, Medicare's new prescription drug coverage will go into effect. As a result, your current plan, GA-23111 Plan D, will no longer provide you with a prescription drug benefit as of that date. Only the prescription drug benefit will be discontinued from your plan; all other health benefits will remain unchanged.

Under GA-23111 Plan D, UnitedHealthcare worked with Medco Health Services to provide prescription drug services. With drug coverage under GA-23111 Plan D ending, United Healthcare will no longer continue its relationship with Medco for GA-23111.

It is important to note that you may receive enrollment materials for a Medicare Part D prescription drug plan from Medco. We want you to be aware that Medco's plan is not the same as UnitedHealthcare's. If you want prescription drug coverage with United Healthcare, you should return the United MedicareRx enrollment form.

Regardless of your choice for prescription drug coverage, your medical and hospital benefits under GA-23111 will not be changed.

Your enrollment materials are coming soon.

You will receive enrollment mate-

rials from UnitedHealthcare within the next few weeks. If you do not receive our package, you can request one by calling our toll-free number at (888) 556-7059 anytime from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. EDT M-F and 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Sat. (For those with a hearing impairment, TTY service is available at (877) 730-4203).

You will be able to enroll in a UnitedHealthcare Medicare prescription drug plan. UnitedHealthcare has been providing excellent, high quality service to railroad employees and retirees, and their dependents, for the past 50 years. We are pleased to continue that service now by offering you the opportunity to enroll in our Medicare-approved prescription drug plan, United MedicareRx. Your enrollment is not automatic; you must complete and return the enrollment form which will be sent to your home in October.

The United MedicareRx Plan was designed for you.

Here are some of the highlights of the United MedicareRx Medicare Prescription Drug Plan:

- Co-payments as low as \$5 for generic drugs and \$28 for preferred brand name drugs.
- Over 50,000 network pharmacies ready to serve you.
- Convenient mail order service available.
- Low monthly premium of \$23 to \$31 per person, depending on where you live.

The Rail Conference has begun publishing a new quarterly magazine exclusively for Teamster rail members called Rail Teamster. Each issue will include a feature story about a BLET or BMWED member that focuses on his or her away from work hobbies and/or activities.

Maybe you are a musician,

Open enrollment under GA-23111

UnitedHealthcare has announced a special open enrollment under policy GA-23111. The open enrollment period will be held during the month of December, 2005. Enrollment is for Plan F only. Enrollments received during December will be for coverage starting January 1, 2006.

Enrollment is open to all eligible railroad retirees regardless of their

state of health.

Plan F pays benefits in addition to Medicare, but does not include coverage for prescription drugs. The monthly premium for the plan is currently \$155 per month for each person enrolled.

Anyone who is interested in Plan F coverage can obtain a plan description and enrollment form by calling (800) 809-0453. •

New relationship with Walgreens and other national drug stores

For our Medicare Part D plans, UnitedHealthcare has established a new agreement with Walgreens Health Initiatives, which in turn has agreements with major national drug chains such as CVS, Rite Aid and others, in addition to Walgreens' retail pharmacies.

We look forward to continuing to serve your prescription drug coverage needs!

If you have qualified for additional assistance for your Medicare Prescription Drug Plan costs, the amount of your premium and cost at the pharmacy will be less. Once you have enrolled in United MedicareRx, Medicare will tell us how much assistance you are

receiving, and we will send you information on the amount you will pay. If you are not receiving this additional assistance, you should contact 1-800-MEDICARE (TTY/TDD users should call 1-877-486-2048), your State Medicaid Office, or the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213 or at the toll-free TTY/TDD number, (800) 325-0778, between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., Monday through Friday, to see if you might qualify.

United MedicareRx is a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan (PDP) insured by United HealthCare Insurance Company or United HealthCare Insurance Company of New York for New York residents (together called "UnitedHealthcare"). As a PDP sponsor, UnitedHealthcare contracts with the Federal government. •

Do you have a special talent or hobby? Tell us about it!

Do you have, or do you know of a co-worker who has a special hobby, talent, skill, interest, or other spare-time activity that you would like to share with other members of the Teamster Rail Conference? If so, then the BLET Public Relations Department would like to hear from you.

writer, inventor, builder, craftsman, record holder or a stand-up comic. Maybe you're a scout leader, a coach, a mentor or a leader within your community or club. We know you are out there and we would love to hear from you.

All entries will be acknowledged and mutually convenient interviews will be arranged as publication schedules

permit. Please send your name, address, phone number, and a brief description of your special talent or hobby to:

John Bentley
BLET Public Relations Dept.
1370 Ontario St., Mezzanine
Cleveland, OH 44113-1702
bentley@ble-t.org

PASSENGER RAIL NEWS

Members urged to act on Senate Amtrak bill

Measure would ensure long-term funding for Amtrak; Members should ask Senators to co-sponsor

BLET members are urged to contact their U.S. Senators and ask them to support S. 1516, a bill that would provide long-term funding for Amtrak.

The Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2005, introduced by Senator Trent Lott (R-MS), currently has 12 co-sponsors. The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation approved the bill on October 18. The bill would provide full funding for Amtrak for FY 2006-2011, giving the passenger railroad the long-term funding it needs to ensure service.

While BLET leaders initially had some reservations about this piece of legislation, they are now fully-

supporting it after a joint meeting between BLET, International Brotherhood of Teamsters and Senator Lott.

"This bill provides a progressive approach to long-term funding for Amtrak," said BLET Chief of Staff and Political/Legislative Director John Tolman. "We think that it is a step in the right direction, especially after meeting with Senator Lott on October 19."

The bill is cosponsored by the following members of the Senate: Senator Conrad Burns (R-MT); Senator Susan M. Collins (R-ME); Senator Mike DeWine (R-OH); Senator Daniel K. Inouye (D-HI); Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ); Senator Olympia J. Snowe

(R-ME); Senator Thomas Carper (D-DE); Senator Jon S. Corzine (D-NJ); Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX); Senator James Jeffords (I-VT); Senator John D. Rockefeller (D-WV); Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK).

BLET Vice-President & National Legislative Representative Raymond Holmes urges BLET members to contact their Senators and ask them to support this critical piece of legislation. Members should also thank their Senators for supporting it if they are listed above.

For contact information for each Senator, go to: http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm

SOUTHWESTERN CONVENTION MEETING



John and Maddie Salisbury. Brother Salisbury was host of the 70th annual SWCM along with members of BLET Division 141. The convention was held in Oklahoma City.



Al and Velma Williams. Brother Williams is President of BLET Division 182 and will be the host/chairman of the upcoming 2006 SWCM in Little Rock, Ark. Sister Williams is a member of GIA Auxiliary 37.



Members of the SWCM Organization Committee, from left: Cheri Canier, 1st Vice; Pat Johnson, Recording Secretary; Jim Keele, Chairman; and Tim Windsor, Treasurer.



From left: Martha Humphrey and Kathy Jackson create a floral display at a GIA event.



LEFT: From left: Bill Paalhar, Local Chairman of BLET Division 75 in Kansas City; Kent Confer, a member of BLET Division 623 in McCook, Neb.; Jim Nelson, Secretary-Treasurer of the BNSF-North Lines General Committee; Ted Stauffer, Legislative Representative of Division 75.



Dennis Walker, a member of BLET Division 42 (St. Louis, Mo.)



Janet Schultz, Secretary-Treasurer of the Iowa State Legislative Board and member of BLET Division 6 (Boone, Iowa); and Ed Way, Chairman of the Illinois State Legislative Board.



Jennifer and Bud Pickett. Brother Pickett is chairman of the upcoming 2007 SWCM.



Cooksey Humphrey, retired member of BLET Division 326 (Bossier City, La.); and GIA President Onita Wayland.

OKLAHOMA CITY



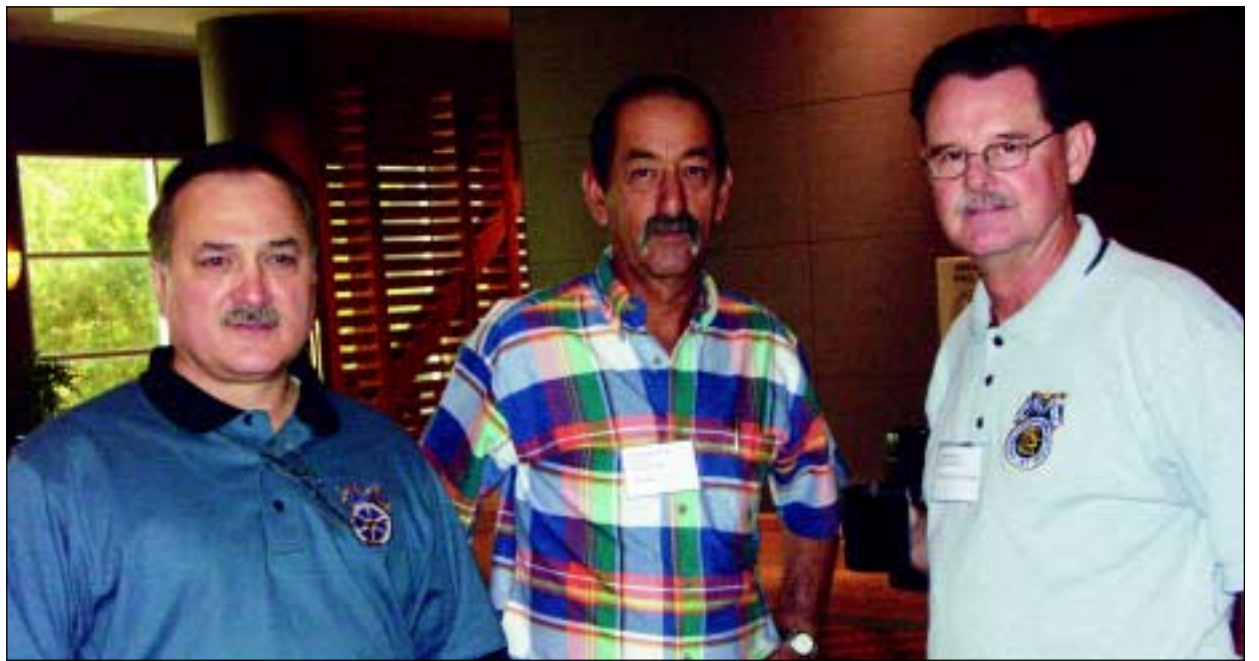
Perry Renfro, Chairman of the Oklahoma State Legislative Board; Dan Boren, U.S. Congressman 2nd District of Oklahoma; and Raymond Holmes, BLET Vice-President & National Legislative Representative.



From left: Randy Dumey, Local Chairman of Division 595 (Chaffee, Mo.); Mike Priester, CP Rail System/U.S. General Chairman; and Rick Gibbons, Burlington Northern Santa Fe General Chairman (former StL-SF). Brother Dumey is also First Vice-Chairman of the BNSF (former StL-SF) General Committee of Adjustment.



GIA President Onita Wayland with Kathie Bailey, widow of the late G.Y. Bailey, during a tearful ceremony.



From left: Catarino A. "Cat" Garcia, Legislative Representative of Division 566 (Del Rio, Texas); Juan Garza, Local Chairman and Legislative Representative of BLET Division 244 (Laredo, Texas); and Terry Briggs, Chairman of the Texas State Legislative Board.



From left: L.J. Rinchuso Jr., Legislative Representative of BLET Division 210; and Mike Davis, Secretary-Treasurer of the Union Pacific-Southern Region General Committee of Adjustment.



BLET National President Don Hahs at the podium flanked by (from left) GIA President Onita Wayland and GIA International Secretary Anita Caruso. In the foreground is the memorial display featured at each SWCM honoring members who have been lost since the last convention.

2006 Southwestern Convention Meeting

Hosted by A.L. Williams and the members of BLET Division 182 at the Peabody Little Rock hotel in...

Little Rock, Ark.

August 20-24, 2006

BLET NEWS

BLET organizes CF&E shortline

BLET National President Don Hahs welcomed the operating employees of the Chicago, Fort Wayne & Eastern Railroad (CF&E) as the newest members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET).

The CF&E win represents the latest in a string of 13 shortline organizing victories for the BLET dating back to 2002, bringing more than 1,000 workers into the house of labor. The National Mediation Board certified the election on September 28.

"This was a total team effort by the BLET Organizing Department," said Tommy Miller, the BLET's Organizing Director.

A Rail America subsidiary, the CF&E is the BLET's second organizing victory this year, as workers at the New Orleans & Gulf Coast Railway voted to join the BLET in January.

"I welcome these new Brothers and Sisters into the House of Labor and look forward to securing a collective bargaining agreement on their behalf," President Hahs said.

The Chicago, Fort Wayne & Eastern Railroad, which was acquired through a lease agreement with CSX by the Central Railroad of Indianapolis, commenced operations on August 1, 2004. Major customers on the line are Central Soya, Steel Dynamics, Procter & Gamble, Cargill and National Lime & Stone. Commodities shipped include agricultural products, chemicals, metals, paper and minerals. The 276-mile line runs from Crestline, Ohio to Tolleston, Ind., east of Chicago. •

Change To Win holds inaugural convention

BLET delegates in attendance as new labor group elects officers, sets ground rules

The following is a statement by BLET President Don M. Hahs on the founding convention of the Change to Win Coalition on September 27 in St. Louis, Mo.

The BLET has embarked on an historic course with our partners, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Earlier this week, I had the opportunity to participate in Change to Win's revolutionary founding convention.

Change to Win is a progressive and activist organization made up of seven labor organizations and six million workers. Its first leader is Anna Burger, the General Secretary-Treasurer of the Service Employees International Union.

Joining me at this momentous convention as delegates from the BLET were: First Vice President Edward Rodziewicz; National Secretary-Treasurer William Walpert; Vice President

& National Legislative Representative Raymond Holmes; and BLET Chief of Staff and Legislative/Political Director John Tolman. Also attending were Union Pacific-Central Region General Chairman C.R. Rightnowar; Illinois State Legislative Board Chairman C.E. Way; BLET Human Rights Omnibusman and Local Chairman of BLET Division 439 (Allston, Mass.) Bill Munger; and Union Pacific-Central Region Vice General Chairman Wes Taylor.

Change to Win is dedicated to organizing workers and has a vision of growth and strength in the labor movement. Through this coalition, we want to change the way labor unions operate by putting more money into organizing and by working together towards a common cause. The Coalition is built on a platform of restoring the American dream.

As Teamsters General President Hoffa said, "We will stand together. We will fight together." This is what Change to Win is all about.

The organization is reaching out to those most in need of help — workers on the Gulf Coast — by training workers to rebuild their communities. We need to help these workers start over by rebuilding their lives.

Change To Win will stand up for all workers. We will give workers a chance to win a voice on the job. We will build the American labor movement—together, brick by brick.

I look forward to working with Change to Win to expand our organization and to fight for the rights of all workers.

For more information about the Change to Win Coalition go to: <http://www.changetowin.org>. •

Marching against injustice in the American workplace

Teamsters, Rail Conference affiliates support Million Worker March in Washington

The Teamsters, including the members of the Rail Conference, fully supported the Million Worker March Movement and their recent events in the nation's Capitol.

The Teamsters are making a financial contribution to the Movement and encouraged members to participate in the March and other events that took place on October 14-16 in Washington, D.C.

The Teamsters Union and the Million Worker March Movement share many goals, including reforming health care and the pension system, as well as fighting for living wages for all

Americans.

The current attacks on workers have made the stakes higher for black workers in particular, and the working class in general, much higher than in years past. In fact, 95 percent of all African Americans are workers; 30 percent of African Americans workers are union members and make up an important segment of the labor movement; nearly 50 percent are women, and 55 percent live in the U.S. South, where right-to-work laws are part of the Southern states structure as a low wage region, with the lowest percentage of unionized workers.

In 1995, the Million Man March mobilized close to two million people to Washington, D.C. It helped to propel successive grass roots mobilizations over a 10 year period as represented by the Million Women's, Million Family, Million Youth, Million Reparations and Million Worker marches; the latter helping to spawn an independent workers movement.

"The labor movement needs to support all workers," BLET National President Don M. Hahs said. "This event provides us one more opportunity to forge alliances with groups that share our goals." •

2005 Brotherhood directories now available online

New BLET Directories for 2005 are now available in the password protected area of the BLET website.

"In an effort to economize on postage and printing costs, we have made the directory available online," said BLET National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert. "However, we will make hard copies available to those who request it."

To facilitate the hard copy process, the National Division is mailing post cards to the BLET officers who normally received the directories by mail. Those desiring a hard copy must fill out the post card and mail it back to the National Division.

"The printing and mailing process will take several weeks," Brother Walpert said. "The online directory is available right now as a PDF."

The online Directory is accessible under the STReport area of the website. The following officers have access to this section: General Chairmen, General Committee Secretary-Treasurers, State Legislative Board Chairmen, State Legislative Board Secretary-Treasurers, Division Presidents, Division Local Chairmen, Division Secretary-Treasurers and Division Legislative Representatives.

The directories are available on the BLET website at: <http://www.ble-t.org/directory>. •

Fund established to help 10-year-old son of Amtrak engineer

BLET Division 27 in St. Cloud, Minn., has established a fund to help with the medical care of Russell Lala, son of member Roseanne Lala.

Russell, 10, was mauled by both a lion and a tiger in June and is now a quadriplegic, requiring both a ventilator and a feeding tube for the rest of his life.

Russell, 10, was attacked while visiting an auto body shop whose owner kept 11 large cats and a bear on the property. When the owner opened the cage, a tiger pushed its way out and attacked the boy. When the owner pulled the tiger off, a lion moved in and bit Russell.

Roseanne Lala has been a member of the BLET since 2002. The Amtrak General Committee of Adjustment has arranged for Sister Lala to receive time off to care for her son.

If you would like to make a donation for Russell Lala's care, please send checks made out to the Russell Lala Fund to:

**Pine County Bank
P.O. Box 25
Royalton, Minn. 56373**

Donations may also be made at any Wells Fargo Bank location. •

RRB offering final two Informational Conferences of calendar year 2005

The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board is offering two more free informational conferences for elected officers of all rail labor unions in 2005. A list for 2006 will be available in coming months.

Registration for all informational conferences begins at 8 a.m. The programs begin promptly at 8:30 a.m. and end at 12:30 p.m.

This list contains the most current information and should replace information published in previous lists.

November 4 • Pineville, N.C.
Hilton Garden Inn, Pineville
425 Towne Centre Blvd.

November 18 • New Orleans, La.
CANCELLED

December 9 • Jacksonville, Fla.
Holiday Inn — Baymeadows
9150 Baymeadows Rd.

GIA Dialogue

If it 'happens all the time,' then problem needs fixing

Mabel Grotzinger

Grand International Auxiliary
Vice President

"Life is what happens to you while you're busy making plans." — John Lennon

Life comes at you fast sometimes. My husband and I were planning for retirement a few years down the road. We were planning on taking long vacations with our grandson, and spending time together at last. With each of his birthdays, as I added another candle to the cake, I would mention how many years until we could walk away from this life they call railroading, at the magical age of 60. My husband was only months from reaching 30 years of service when he was hospitalized. Many tests and two stays in the hospital later, we found ourselves sitting in the office of an oncologist. The doctor told him he had worked his last day on the railroad, and was to retire and enjoy the time we have left. We thought the only thing we had to worry about was getting him well enough to live with gusto every minute he had left.

Wrong! About two months from the time he went off sick, we received a letter from the health insurance company. It informed us of our right to pick up the COBRA option. Also, the letter said if he was disabled they would be giving us coverage for this rest of this year and for two calendar years following. This letter also stated that they needed a statement from the doctor indicating the reason for the disability. We called the insurance company and asked if there was a form, or if they needed a letter from the doctor, since there was no form included in their letter. The

woman he spoke to said they don't usually send out the form until the employee had been off for four months, but she would send it to us so we could have the doctor fill it out. They would keep it on file for the future. We felt we had fulfilled all the requirements of the insurance company, and were taken care of.

About a month later, my husband had to go to a special dentist because of his condition. The dentist informed us that we were not covered by insurance. We were shocked. After all, hadn't we done all the right things? I called the insurance company again, and couldn't get through to their representative what I was talking about. She said, according to the form submitted by the doctor, that my husband was able to return to work on the 31st of the previous month. I had a copy of the form in my hand and read it to her. The doctor had written in the space for the date to return to work "Unknown due to current illness." She said there was nothing she could do, and we were not insured. Panic set in because the next day he was scheduled for chemotherapy, and I didn't want to think about how much that would cost. I went the Vice-General Chairman of my husband's committee. I was so upset, I don't know how he understood me, but I guess he did because he said, "This happens all the time. I will take care of it." His words made me feel a little better, but then began to ring in my head. "IT HAPPENS ALL THE TIME?!" That meant I was not alone in this problem, which is good right? Wrong, it means there are a lot of people out there go-

ing through the same thing. I needed to know more about this situation so others wouldn't have the same trauma that we experienced.

What I learned is that after one calendar month of not performing work for a minimum of seven days in that month, an employee's name is dropped from the list of those eligible for insurance. The insurance coverage is automatically cancelled. The Vice-General Chairman made the call to the Carrier, and made sure that his name was listed as sick. Apparently this doesn't happen automatically.

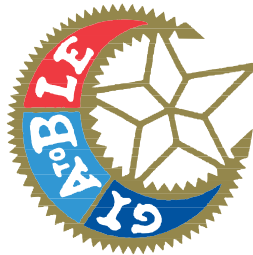
We received a second insurance form for proof of disability in the mail. I took it to the doctor's office, but the office staff that fills these forms out all the time had trouble interpreting it. They did the best they could and faxed it to the insurance company. Well, guess what? We were dropped again on the date the doctor signed and dated the form. The insurance company took that as the date to return to work. The doctor's staff was just as baffled as we were. Why does this insurance company make the form so ambiguous?

The most annoying part of this whole ordeal is that the insurance company does not inform you that you are dropped and no longer have insurance coverage. You find out when you try to get a prescription or go to the hospital. They just drop your coverage.

When I called the insurance company for the third time, I finally spoke to someone who could tell me what the problem was. As it turns out, they require a date of some sort in the space where it says, "date to return to work." The doctor must put in a date, or if per-

manently disabled, the wording must be "Never to return to work," or "permanently disabled." If you do not fit either of those categories, the doctor must indicate some kind of date, like the end of the current calendar year. You can always return to work prior than that but if the doctor is not sure when you will be able to return, it is best to put the end of the current calendar year.

There is a flaw in the communication between the employee and the insurance company. We were lucky because we understood that the contract stated that we were entitled to health insurance for two calendar years after the employee went off sick, and the spouse is entitled to health insurance for one calendar year. If we had not been aware of that, we probably would have bought the COBRA coverage out of fear, paying for coverage that was already guaranteed. In talking to others with similar problems, I have found that this is not the only scenario. If you are injured on the job, whether or not you have filed a lawsuit, there are more problems. All I can address is what my experience has been. When I hear that phrase, "It happens all the time," it sends off signals that something is wrong with the system and it needs to be fixed. If the person who handles the insurance coverage in a doctor's office can not interpret the form, then the form needs to be changed. This ordeal has caused our family a lot of unnecessary anxiety. You have enough to worry about when faced with serious health issues without the added anxiety of worrying about whether you are covered by health insurance on a minute to minute basis. This is cruel and unusual treatment. •



2006 BLET Fees Objector Policy

1. Employees Rights

a. Any employee covered by a union or agency shop agreement in the United States has the legal right to be or remain a nonmember of the Union. Nonmembers have the legal right (1) to object to paying for Union activities not related to collective bargaining, contract administration and grievance adjustment, and to obtain a reduction in fees for such activities; (2) to be given sufficient information to intelligently decide whether to object; and (3) to be apprised of internal Union procedures for filing objections. Employees who choose to object have the right to be apprised of the percentage of the reduction, the basis for the calculation, and the right to challenge these figures.

b. To the extent permitted by law, nonmembers may not participate in Union elections as a voter or as a candidate; attend Union meetings; serve as delegates to the Convention, or participate in the selection of such delegates; or participate in the process by which collective bargaining agreements are ratified.

2. Publication of Policy

The fees objector policy shall be published annually in the BLET's newsletter in the month preceding the objection notice period and mailed annually to each objector. It shall also be provided to each new employee when s/he first becomes subject to a union shop agreement.

3. Making Objection Known

Objecting nonmembers shall provide notice of objection by notifying the National Secretary-Treasurer of the objection by first-class mail postmarked during the month of November preceding the calendar year to which s/he objects, or within (30) days after s/he first begins paying fees and receiving notices of these procedures. The objection shall contain the objector's current home address. Nonmembers wishing to continue their objection from year to year must renew their objection each year as specified in this paragraph. Objections may only be made by individual employees. No petition objections will be honored.

4. Major Categories of Chargeable Expenses

All objectors shall pay their fair share of expenses germane to collective bargaining including:

- All expenses concerning the negotiation of agreements, practices and working conditions;
- All expenses concerning the administration of agreements, practices and working conditions, including grievance handling, all activities related to arbitration, and discussion with employees in the craft or class (or bargaining unit) or employer representatives regarding working conditions, benefits and contract rights;
- Conversion expenses and other union internal governance and management expenses;
- Social activities and union business meeting expenses;

e. Publication expenses to the extent coverage is related to chargeable activities;

f. Expenses of litigation related to collective bargaining, contract administration and internal governance;

g. Expenses for legislative and administrative agency activities to effectuate collective bargaining agreements;

h. All expenses for the education and training of officers and staff intended to prepare the participants to better perform chargeable activities;

i. All costs of strikes and other lawful economic actions;

5. Determination of Chargeable Share

The BLET shall perform an independent audit of the records of the National Division. The BLET shall determine the percentage of expenditures that fall within the categories specified in Section 4. The amount of expenditures that fall within Section 4 shall be the basis for calculating the reduced fees that must be paid by the objector. The auditing firm conducting the annual audit of the BLET National Division shall give an opinion concerning the adequacy of the escrow amounts maintained pursuant to Section 10, and later will verify the existence and the audits of money in any escrow account.

6. Report of Chargeable Share and Basis of Its Calculation

The BLET shall report the determination no later than September 30. This report shall include an analysis of the major categories of union expenses that are chargeable and nonchargeable. A copy of the report shall be sent to all nonmembers whose timely objections have not been revoked.

7. Challenge Procedure

Each person entitled to receive the BLET's report may challenge the validity of the calculations by filing an appeal with the National Secretary-Treasurer. Such appeal must be made by sending a letter to the National Secretary-Treasurer postmarked no later than October 31.

8. Arbitration of Challenges

a. After the close of appeals period, the National Secretary-Treasurer shall provide a list of appellants to the American Arbitration Association (AAA). All appeals shall be consolidated. The AAA shall appoint an arbitrator pursuant to its *Rules for Impartial Determination of Union Fees*. The AAA shall inform the National Secretary-Treasurer and the appellant(s) of the arbitrator selected.

b. The arbitration shall commence by December 1 or as soon thereafter as the AAA can schedule the arbitration. The arbitrator shall have control over all procedural matters affecting the arbitration in order to fulfill the need for an informed and expeditious arbitration.

c. Each party to the arbitrator shall bear their own costs. The appellants shall have the option of paying a pro-rata portion of the arbitrator's fees and expenses. The balance of such fees and expenses shall be paid by the BLET.

d. A court reporter shall make a transcript of all proceedings before the arbitrator. This transcript shall be the official record of the proceedings and may be purchased by the appellants. If appellants do not purchase a copy of the transcript, a copy shall be available for inspection at the National Division during normal business hours.

e. Appellants may, at their expense, be represented by counsel or other representative of choice. Appellants need not appear at the hearing and shall be permitted to file written statements with the arbitrator instead of

appearing. Such statement shall be filed no later than fifteen (15) days after the transcript becomes available, but in no case more than thirty (30) days after the hearing closes.

f. Fourteen (14) days prior to the start of the first hearing, appellants shall be provided with a list of all exhibits intended to be introduced at the hearing and a list of all witnesses intended to be called, except for exhibits and witnesses that may be introduced for rebuttal. On written request from an appellant, copies of exhibits (or in case of voluminous exhibits, summaries thereof) shall be provided to them. Additionally, copies of exhibits shall be available for inspection and copying at the hearing.

g. The National Division shall have the burden of establishing that the reduced fees set forth in the report are lawful.

h. If the arbitrator shall determine that more than one day of hearings is necessary, hearings shall be scheduled to continue from day to day until completed. The parties to the appeal shall have the right to file a brief within fifteen (15) days after the transcript of the hearing is available, but in no case no more than thirty (30) days after the hearing closes. The arbitrator shall issue a decision within forty-five (45) days after the submission of post-hearing briefs or within such other reasonable period as is consistent with the rules established by the AAA.

i. The arbitrator shall give full consideration to the legal requirements limiting the amounts that objectors may be charged, and shall set forth in the decision the legal and arithmetic basis for such decision.

9. Payment of Reduced Fees

Objectors shall pay reduced monthly fees based on the most recent report pending determination of the objection year's chargeable ratio.

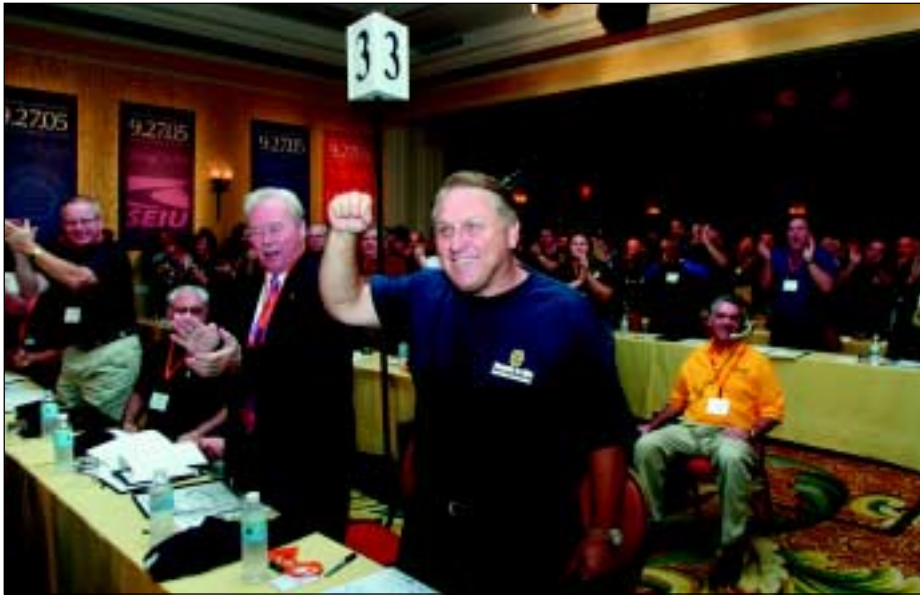
10. Escrow of Disputed Funds

All monthly fees paid by objectors shall be placed in an interest-bearing escrow account pending final determination of the chargeable share. Escrowed funds shall be disbursed to objectors and the Union upon issuance of the arbitrator's decision or fifteen (15) days after the conclusion of the appeal period if there are no challenges to the determination. •

BLET NEWS

A message from Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa

Change To Win!



We recently released "High Alert: Workers Warn of Security Gaps on Nation's Railroads" The report is the first of its kind to rely completely on the first hand observations of rail workers. Not surprising, the rail corporations are disputing the validity of the report.

For years rail corporations have been touting their safety records as proof that they provide safe working conditions for their employees. What we learned from the survey is exactly the opposite. Unsecured engines, crew fatigue and the lack of basic safety and evacuation training were just part of what our members reported.

Several congressmen attended our press conference on Capitol Hill. "We must have industry and workers work collectively on a plan for rail security," said Bennie Thompson (D-LA) the Democratic head of the House's Committee on Homeland Security. "Our rail workers are not being properly trained," said Ed Markey (D-MA). "Security is mediocre, yet there has been no national planning to ensure the safety of the system. The security plan now in place leaves ordinary people behind."

At the same press conference we invited the mother and father of Chris Seeling, the BLET engineer who died this year due to inhaling chlorine gas after a dark territory accident, to speak. "We haven't learned our lessons," said Steve Seeling, Chris' father "We need to eliminate dark territory on today's railroads. With technology such as in-cab warning devices and stronger tank cars, this type of accident

could have been prevented."

We expect that Congress will soon introduce new legislation that boosts funding for rail security and will hold rail corporations accountable for the safety of their employees—something they have shirked for years.

A New Path for the American Worker

At the Change to Win federation convention in September, we set a new path for the American worker. Our new federation is a mighty sum of its parts. Six million workers strong. We are janitors and casino workers; UPS drivers and farm workers; nurses and construction workers; truck drivers and grocery workers; locomotive engineers and meat cutters. We are the backbone of the American workforce.

The unions in this new federation show the diversity of our membership. We are the American rainbow — African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic and white. We are from Alaska, Maine, California and Puerto Rico. We are trade unionists — united to build a stronger movement.

We are here to change the way the American labor movement operates. We are putting our money where it needs to be: organizing. We are working together. No member of a coalition union will ever stand alone again.

We will stand together. We will fight together.

James P. Hoffa
General President

OCTOBER 2005 CALENDAR & EVENTS

NOVEMBER 6-12, 2005... Advanced Local Chairman Workshop, National Labor College
The BLET's Education & Training Department will sponsor an Advanced Local Chairman Workshop on the Campus of the National Labor College, George Meany Center, in Silver Spring, Md. For more details and registration information, contact Ken Kroeger of the Education & Training Department at: (216) 272-0986 or e-mail kroeger@ble-t.org.

DECEMBER 4-7... Secretary-Treasurer Compliance Workshop, Cleveland, Ohio
This is the final S-T workshop of 2005. It begins on Sunday, December 4 at 7 p.m. and concludes at noon on Wednesday, December 7. Workshop will include an online demonstration of the BLET National Division's new Internet-based dues reporting and collection system, that was implemented earlier this year. For other details and registration information, please see Page 3 of this issue.

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

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

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

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

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

Advisory Board August Activity

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

- National President Don M. Hahs**—National Division office: General supervision of BLET activities; General office duties; Midnight Sun PAC meetings, Anchorage, Alaska; TTD Town Hall mtg., Groton, Conn.; Teamsters National Black Caucus 30th Annual Education Conf., Chicago; National Carriers Conference Committee mtgs., San Diego; Div. 79 mtg., Columbus, Ohio.
- First Vice-President & Alternate President Edward W. Rodzicz**—Assisted President in general operation of National Division Office; Vice President assignments; Special Representative assignments; Organizing department; Shortline department; Passenger department; Various correspondence & phone calls; NS organizing campaign; Numerous Town Hall meetings at multiple locations, including Danville, Fort Mitchell, Cleveland, Knoxville, Chattanooga, Atlanta, Birmingham, Macon, Waynesburg, Shire Oaks, Conway, Norfolk, Crewe, Roanoke, Bluefield, Charleston, Williamson, Portsmouth, Charlotte, Linwood, and Greenville.
- National Secretary-Treasurer William C. Walpert**—General supervision of BLET financial, record depts., ND office; BLET Education & Training Dept.; Internal Organizing, Mobilizing & Strategic Planning Dept.; Safety Task Force; Meetings with vendors and financial institutions; Mtg. w/ Office of Election Supervisor, IBT, Washington, D.C.; Standard Building operations mtg.; Joint mtg. w/ BLET Divisions 79, 511, 234, 480, Columbus, Ohio; BLET National Convention planning mtg., Cleveland.
- Vice-President Paul T. Sorrow**—CSX Western Lines GCofA mtg.; Mtgs. w/ CSX General Chairmen regarding dual track bargaining; Public Law Board 1063, NS; CSX Family Day event, Greenwood, S.C.; Mtg. w/ President Hahs; Assisted Grand Trunk Western GCA for planning session with upcoming negotiations and day-to-day issues; Assisted CSX, NS and GTW committees and performed general office duties.
- Vice-President Richard K. Radek**—ND Office; BLET Decertification Helpline services; Director of Arbitration Dept; National Railroad Adjustment Board (NRAB); Illinois Central; Wisconsin Central; Indiana Harbor Belt; METRA; Bell Rwy. of Chicago; Paducah & Louisville; Chicago Central & Pacific; NRAB arbitration, Chicago; Metra negotiations; PLB 6844, Metra; WSOR mtgs, Madison, Wisc.; Quarterly L/M mtg., Metra; Exec. Session PLB 6860, new arbitrator orientation mtg., BNSF, Chicago; Arb. hearing preparation mtg., NRAB arbitration, Chicago; Part 240.409 Dockets this month: EQAL 03-47, 03-56, 01-16.
- Vice-President Dale McPherson**—CP Rail; Port. Term. RR; Longview Portland & Northern; Longview Switching Co.; Indiana RR; W&LE RR; Utah Railroad; UP Eastern Dist.; UP former CNW; DM&IR RR; Portland & Western RR; Great Western RR; Appalachian & Ohio RR; Public Law Boards 5604, 5681, 5721, 6040, 6281, 6558, 6589; UP work/rest projects; RSAC positive train control cmte.; National wage/rules; General office duties, telephone, correspondence; W&LE contract negotiations, Cleveland; Mtg. w/ UP General Chairmen, Kansas City; CN/DMIR contract negotiations, Duluth, Minn.; National contract negotiations, San Diego; Board screening w/ GC Priestler-CP Rail, St. Paul, Minn.
- Vice-President & U.S. Nat'l Legislative Representative Raymond A. Holmes**—BLET Washington D.C. office; General office duties, telephone, correspondence; Rep. Don Young's Midnight Sun PAC, Alaska.
- Vice-President Merle W. Geiger Jr.**—Assigned to: BLET Trainmen's Department; Kansas City Southern; Gateway Western; Midsouth Rail; Southrail; Texas-Mexican Rwy.; Springfield Terminal, Delaware & Hudson; Indiana & Ohio RR; Louisville & Indiana RR; St. Lawrence & Atlantic RR; Indiana Southern RR; Work/rest task force mtg., Washington, D.C.; Mtg. w/ GC Clark (Tex Mex) and KCS, Houston; Mtg. w/ GC Koonce and KCS, Kansas City, Mo.; Mtg. w/ GC Twombly and Springfield Terminal, Billerica, Mass.; NARAP mtg., Washington, D.C.; Research, correspondence and general office duties.
- Vice-President Stephen D. Speagle**—Assigned to Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Montana Rail Link, Pacific Harbor Line; Missouri & Northern Arkansas (M&NA); National wage/rules committee; Wabash Hospital Association mtgs., BNSF, Decatur; National wage/rule mtg., San Diego; Attend First Division, Chicago.
- Vice-President E.L. "Lee" Pruitt**—Assisted general chairmen & members of: UP-Western Lines; UP-Western Region; UP-Central Region; UP-Southern Region; UP-Tacoma Belt; General office duties, telephone paperwork; UPCR GC Rightnowar, auto-markup arbitration, Boston; PTC symposium, Washington, D.C.; UPWL and UPWR arbitration boards 180, 4450, 4451 and 4452, Detroit, Mich; Arbitration Board 6833 & 6834, assisting UPSR GC Gore, New Orleans; Trip rates, assisting UPWL GC Hannah, Colton, Calif.; Ebb & flow negotiations, assisting UPWL GC Hannah, San Antonio; Office, paper, filing, STD and calls, assisting.
- Vice-President Paul L. Wingo Jr.**—Assigned to NS-Southern Lines and Eastern Region GCofAs; Meridian Southern; New York Susquehanna & Western; New England Central; BLET Rail Security Officer; NYSW contract negotiations, Binghamton, N.Y.; PLB 5191, Norfolk, Va.; Special mtgs. of Division 84 (Greenville, S.C.), Division 110 (Cincinnati, Ohio), Division 79 (Columbus, Ohio); Special projects at Div. 301 (Roanoke, Va. and Bluefield, W.Va.); Rail security project; General office work.

Decertification Helpline

(800) 393-2716

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