**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 demonstrate improved or increased safety and security on the rail system.

“In this age of increased demand for safety within our borders, it is unacceptable 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
- Ninety percent of respondents reported witnessing industry trespassers in the yard;
- Ninety-one percent of respondents reported seeing repairs on tracks that were not necessary;
- Ninety-one percent of respondents said that the number of trespassers they observed in the rail yards had increased in the past year;
- Ninety percent of respondents reported that railroad crews did not take adequate safety measures when they were required to work in a “secure” area;
- Ninety percent of respondents reported that they saw trains operating with open gates.

The ‘pretzel logic’ of remote control

(See Pretzel Logic, Page 2)

Since the BLET’s release in late July of a comprehensive study of remote control locomotives to main track territory. (In Part I of the series, we take 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.blet.org/pdf/prezelt.pdf

Part 1 of a three-part series

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The BLET’s Education and Training Department will conduct a Secretary-Treasurer Compliance Work- shop 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 Divi- sion 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 col- lection 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 appli- cations, and minute-taking. They will also learn meth- ods for filing various Department of Labor and Rail- road Retirement reports, as well as Federal tax re- turns. 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 Na- tional Secretary-Treasurer; Ken Kroeger, BLET Special Rep & Coordinator of the Education & Training Department; Dr Elaine Reese, Director of Compli- ance; 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, attend- ees will qualify for a $89 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.org/st.

The room rate at the Crowne Plaza Cleveland Centre Hotel is $86 per night. To make your reserva- tions, please call Patti Smith, Administrative Assis- tant to the NST, at (216) 241-2630, extension 227, or e-mail your information (name – arrival date – departure date – credit card number and expiration date to hold your room) to: psmith@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 $86 per night.

The class will start at 7 p.m. on Sunday, Decem- ber 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 lim- ited 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 RCOs

Pretzel Logic

Continued from Page 1

A major problem with the cruise control system is that the car will increase speed if the desired speed is reached. The computer will then auto- matically maintain the selected speed using a cruise control system. Cruise control is a feature that is standard on most new cars today. It works by constantly applying and releasing the brakes on the rear of the car, which helps to keep the speed constant, regardless of the setting in which it is used.

Third, and as any experienced lo- comotive engineers can tell you, the re- peated application and release of the automatic brake in a short time frame, as described by FRA, will result in the “drilling away” of automatic brake pipe pressure, which is a known haz- ard. 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 defi- ciency of the RCL speed control system, FRA stated three findings that were right on point:

• further modification of RCL tech- nology will not “overcome these limita- tions 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 imme- diately stopping the movement, “on high-speed main tracks could prove catastrophic;” and

• “there is no sound reason to in- troduce additional causes of undue air brake applications.” (emphasis in original)

Based upon the above, it would ap- pear to be a fairly straightforward con- clusion that — other than the occasi- onal pull-out on a main track to clear a switch — using RCL on main tracks is fraught with danger. 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. “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.”

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Important information about UnitedHealthcare coverage

Members urged to act on Senate Amtrak bill

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, the 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 Public 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).

Write to your Senator:

http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.html

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

PASSENGER RAIL NEWS

New relationship with Walgreens

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 UnitedHealthRx, 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.

UnitedHealthRx is a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan (PDP) insured by UnitedHealthCare Insurance Company or UnitedHealthCare Insurance Company of New York for New York residents (together called “UnitedHealthcare”). As a PDP sponsor, UnitedHealthcare contracts with the Federal government.

UnitedHealthcare has announced a special open enrollment under policy GA-23111. The open enrollment period will be held during the months 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) 869-0453. •

Open enrollment under GA-23111
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.

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.

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 National President Don Hahs at the podium flanked by (from left) GIA President Onita Wayland and GIA International Secretary Anito Caruso. In the foreground is the memorial display featured at each SWCM honoring members who have been lost since the last convention.
2005 Brotherhood directories now available online

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

“In an effort to economize on postage and printing costs, we have made the directory available online,” said BLET National Secretaries-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 receive the directories by mail. Those desiring a hard copy must fill out the post card and mail it back to the National Division.

The directories are available on the BLET website at: http://www.blet.org/directory.

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

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 Service Employees International Union.

Joining me at this momentous convention, 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 Advisor John Tolman. Also attending were Union Pacific-Central Region General Chairman C.R. Rightnowar; Illinois State Legislative Board Chairman C.K. Way; BLET Human Rights Omnibudsmen 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 buying power together for a common cause. The Coalition is built on a platform of restoring the American dream.

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.”

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

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 Capital.

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 Man 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.

“The printing and mailing process will take several weeks,” Brother Walpert said. “The online directory is accessible 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 Chairman, General Committee Secretary-Treasurers, State Legislative Board Chairmen, State Legislative Board Secretaries-Treasurers, Division Presidents, Division Local Chairmen, Division Secretary-Treasurers and Division Legislative Representatives.

RBB 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 • Pinewale, N.C. Hilton Garden Inn, Pinewale 423 Towne Centre Blvd.

November 18 • New Orleans, La.CANCELLED

December 9 • Jacksonville, Fla. Holiday Inn—Baymeadows 9190 Baymeadows Rd.
Life at work is hard sometimes. My husband and I were planning for retirement. We were planning on taking long vacations with our grandchildren, and spending time together. As of his 70th birthday, we found out that his treatment for cancer was not covered by our insurance company. We were lucky because we understood the contract and that our family could afford to pay for the treatment.

We had a doctor's appointment scheduled, and the doctor informed us of our right to pick up the insurance company and ask if they would cover the treatment. She said she would send it to us so we could have the paperwork. We went home and filled out the paperwork, and sent it back to the insurance company.

The insurance company informed us that we were covered for inpatient care. We thought the only thing we had left was a premium. We went to the doctor's office and asked about the premium. The doctor said he had worked his last day of the month, and was retired and the time we were left. We had to worry about was getting him well enough to live with gusto every minute he had left.

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 insurance company and ask if they would cover the treatment. She said she would send it to us so we could have the paperwork.

We thought the only thing we had left was a premium. We went to the doctor's office and asked about the premium. The doctor said he had worked his last day of the month, and was retired and the time we were left. We had to worry about was getting him well enough to live with gusto every minute he had left.

John Lennon — “Life is what happens to you while you’re busy making plans.”
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 first-hand observations of railroad workers. Not surprisingly, the railroads 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-MS). “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 behind.”

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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. The railroad industry’s first and only hotline for technology such as this year due to inhaling chlorine gas. The railroad industry’s first and only hotline for technological innovations, emergency preparedness, and technology such as his father, Ed Markey (D-MA). “The committee on Homeland Security must have industry and workers work together. No member of a coalition are trade unionists — united to build a path for the American worker. Our new federation shows the diversity of our membership. The unions in this new federation show the diversity of our membership. The unions in this new federation show the diversity of our membership. The unions in this new federation show the diversity of our membership. The unions in this new federation show the diversity of our membership. 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