President Hahs: Get out and vote!

BLET National President Don M. Hahs issued the following statement regarding the importance of registering to vote and voting on November 7.

"BLET members are fortunate to have a strong union that supports them by standing up for their rights at work. The BLET works very hard to negotiate and enforce strong contracts to ensure that members receive good pay and benefits. However, each day, BLET members are confronted with news that our American dream is slipping further from our grasp. In other industries, we are presented with challenging issues, and in our own industry, we hear threats from the rail carriers to take away our jobs and benefits, even in a time of record profits.

In other words, the corporate agenda cuts across all industries. Big business wants lax rules for them- selves and for the rich; they want to privatize, downsize and outsource; they want to deregulate in order to enrich themselves and for the rich; they want to privatize, downsize and outsource; they want to deregulate in order to enrich themselves and for the rich; they want to privatize, downsize and outsource; they want to deregulate..."

BLET-supported railroad security bill becomes law in California.

After two years of work by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed a railroad security bill into law on October 1.

"The bill makes the railroads in California much more secure for our members and the general public," BLET National President Don Hahs said. "In this post-9/11 era, it is imperative that we take all steps necessary to secure our nation’s railroads against the threat of terrorism."

By January 1, 2008, rail carriers are required to develop and implement an infrastructure protection program to protect rail infrastructure in the state from acts of sabotage, terrorism, or other crimes. Railroad employees will receive specialized security training as part of the infrastructure protection program regarding how to recognize, prevent, and respond to acts of sabotage, terrorism, or other crimes.

The railroads’ own flagging rules were adopted in the bill. Codification included the use of yellow, red, and yellow/red flags and crew notification; accurate milepost markers; accurate whistle posts and two-mile speed boards.

All points of the new law are covered by “whistleblower protection” with fines of up to $1 million. Additionally, this new law provides the protection of severability; if any entity finds a portion of the law invalid, the rest of it remains law.

The bill was signed after members in the state of California inundated the Governor’s office with phone calls, faxes and emails, according to BLET California State Legislative Board Chairman Tim Smith.

"With the efforts of several, we were successful," Smith said. "First, I would like to thank BLET members of the state of California who took the time to make phone calls, send faxes, email and letters to the Governor. Without your efforts, this would not have been possible."

"Barry Broad and Shane Gusman of CTPAC were instrumental in carrying our bill forward," he said. "Additionally thanks go out to 1st Vice Chairman Darrel Azaro.

"I would also like to thank my Executive Staff of Mike G. Holt, Secretary-Treasurer, and Diz Fraz- eise, 2nd Vice Chairman, for their efforts and encour- age- ment. Thanks also to the BLET National officers and the Teamsters."

BLET State Legislative Boards have introduced Rail Security bills in state legislatures throughout the country.

"Congratulations to all the BLET members in Cali- fornia, who worked diligently with Tim Smith and the Legislative Board to get this bill passed and signed," BLET Vice President and National Legislative Representative John Tolman said. "The workers who lack adequate training are on the front lines of the nation’s transportation system and see the woeful lack of security on our railroads."

"This lack of training should be of critical interest to citizens who live near rail yards and tracks," Tolman said. "The workers who lack this training will be the first ones to respond to incidents. It’s all about the money, of course, but employees still need adequate training. The number one issue in national negotiations is to reduce the crew size from one to two to save money. There should be a minimum of two people on ev- ery train."

"Each and every day, we are on the front lines of the nation’s transportation system and see the woeful lack of secu- rity on our railroads," Tolman said. "This lack of security is more than just troubling; it is tragic because we have seen the damage that can be done by accidents on the roadways and shudder to think of the damage that could be wrought by terrorism or sabo- tage."

He noted that there have been more than 250 terror at- tacks on railroads worldwide since 1995 until June of 2005. Since June 2005, there have been major attacks perpe- trated in London, Madrid, and Mumbai, India. In the United States, plans were recently un- covered to attack the New York subway system on three differ- ent occasions. An act of terror- ism in Hyder, Ariz., killed one Amtrak employee and injured..."
List of BLET-endorsed candidates

Due to FEC regulations, the list of BLET-endorsed candidates is available to members only. Please visit the BLET website at:

http://www.ble-t.org/members/2006endorsements.asp
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Does one vote really matter?

Some Americans don’t vote because they think their vote doesn’t matter. That couldn’t be further from the truth! Throughout history, many important elections were decided by a single vote. Here’s a list to consider when deciding whether or not to vote:

- One vote gave Oliver Cromwell control of England in 1645.
- One vote caused King Charles I of England to be executed in 1649.
- One vote gave America the English language in 1776 instead of German.
- One vote margins in our Electoral College first elected Thomas Jefferson and then John Quincy Adams as President of the United States.
- One vote elected Marcus Norton as Governor of Massachusetts in 1839.
- One vote brought Texas into the Union in 1845.
- One vote also admitted California, Oregon and Washington to statehood.
- One vote defeated President Andrew Johnson’s impeachment in 1868.
- One vote needed when the House of Representatives voted in 1876 to elect President Rutherford B. Hayes.
- One vote changed France from a monarchy to a republic in 1876.
- One vote elected Adolph Hitler as leader of the Nazi Party in 1923.

And…

- John F. Kennedy’s margin of victory over Richard Nixon in 1960 was less than one vote per precinct.

As you can see, one vote is important! Be sure to do your part and get out and vote!
From left: BLET Vice President Steve Speagle, Vice President Paul Sorrow, National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert; First Vice President Ed Rodzwicz; and National President Don Halls.

BLET members enjoyed a scenic dinner cruise aboard this sternwheeler. BLET members also visited the renowned Tennessee Aquarium (background) as part of their SMA experience.

Travis L. Reed served as chairman of the 79th annual SMA, which was held at the Marriott hotel in Chattanooga, Tenn. He received a lot of help and support from his wife and daughters.

Bettye Dollar, Treasurer of the Grand International Auxiliary (GIA), tells members and spouses attending the SMA about the “Mainline Cooking” cookbook available from the GIA.

In addition to leisure time activities, BLET regional meetings offer an abundance of educational workshops for the benefit of the membership. Here, BLET members pay close attention during one such educational workshop offered by the National Division during the SMA.

BLET members enjoyed a scenic dinner cruise aboard this sternwheeler. BLET members also visited the renowned Tennessee Aquarium (background) as part of their SMA experience.

From left: BLET Vice Presidents Dale McPherson and Merle Geiger.

BLET regional meetings offer members the opportunity to spend time with their families. Here, retired Vice President Paul Wingo and General Chairman Ray Wallace (Norfolk Southern-Southern Lines) enjoy time with their grandsons.
JUNE 4-9, 2006

The area around Chattanooga, Tenn., boasts many natural wonders and breathtaking views of the Appalachian Mountains. BLET members enjoyed sightseeing tours of Ruby Falls and Rock City during the annual SMA.

BLET National President Don Hahs gives his state of the union address during the SMA’s opening ceremony. President Hahs provided BLET members with an update on collective bargaining, regulatory, and legislative issues during his presentation.

From left: K.A. Chancey of BLET Division 547 (Etowah, Tenn.), and Kevin Peek, Local Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer of BLET Division 456 (Norfolk, Va.).

BLET Vice President Paul Sorrow, a member of BLET Division 498 (Abbeville, S.C.), enjoys a warm welcome from members at the SMA.

From left: K.A. Chancey of BLET Division 547 (Etowah, Tenn.), and Kevin Peek, Local Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer of BLET Division 456 (Norfolk, Va.).

BLET Vice President Paul Sorrow, a member of BLET Division 498 (Abbeville, S.C.), enjoys a warm welcome from members at the SMA.

From left: BLET General Chairman Dennis Pierce (BNSF-MRL) and General Chairman M.D. Priester (CP Rail/U.S.).

Mark your calendars for the 80th Annual SMA
June 10-15, 2007 • Walt Disney World • Orlando, Fla.
Hosted by Michael Tanner and Earl Karper Sr.
Nevada AFL-CIO passes resolution supporting ‘Safe Rails Secure America’

The Nevada AFL-CIO passed a Safe Rails, Secure America resolution at its convention on August 25. Joe Carter, Chairman of the Nevada State Legislative Board, wrote the resolution as part of an on-going campaign to bring awareness to rail safety and security deficiencies. "I think it is sad when — here in Nevada — casino parking lots are more secure than our railroads," Brother Carter said. "The railroads have profit motives but seem unwilling to make security improvements." The resolution is critical of the Union Pacific Railroad for failing to "live up to its responsibility to the communities for railroad safety in the State of Nevada and the nation at large." There are five Union Pacific Railroad yards in the State of Nevada. None of them are fenced for security, nor do they have a significant security force, or lighting. According to the resolution, “These five railroad yards have limited security, two railroad policemen in Las Vegas and one railroad policeman in Sparks. There are no railroad security police stations in Elko or Winnemucca.”

Brother Carter was not at the convention, held in Las Vegas, but he credited several of his Vice Chairmen for its passage, including: John Passo of BLET Division 158 (Sparks, Nevada), Matt Parker of BLET Division 158, and Jerry Coon of BLET Division 766 (Las Vegas). "These guys really stepped up and did a great job," Brother Carter said. •

Make your vote count on November 7!

By Becky B. Schneider National President, BLET Auxiliary

With every election comes the call to exercise your right to vote. Once again, we are at a pivotal point in our nation’s history to balance the representation of our forefathers envisioned. Over the last six years, the government has been controlled by one party, and the effects of that ideology have taken their toll across a broad spectrum of our society. There seems to be no end in sight for our mounting budget deficits, record trade deficits, erosion of our middle-class standard of living, while the super rich get super richer; and erosion of worker’s rights to some of the lowest points in recent history. Many of the gains labor made over the last hundred or so years have vanished with the stroke of a pen, and if a change is not made, our future is uncertain.

It is said that voters have short memories. We as Auxiliary and BLET members need to keep fresh the memories of those politicians who have voted to railroad employees, retirees, and their families. If your Senator fought to railroadese, railroaders’ stories, and great memories. We as Auxiliary and BLET members need to keep fresh the memories of those politicians who have voted to railroad employees, retirees, and their families. If your Senator fought to railroad employees, retirees, and their families. If your Senator fought to railroad employees, retirees, and their families. If your Senator fought to railroad employees, retirees, and their families. If your Senator fought to railroad employees, retirees, and their families. If your Senator fought to railroad employees, retirees, and their families. If your Senator fought to railroad employees, retirees, and their families. If your Senator fought to railroad employees, retirees, and their families. If your Senator fought to railroad employees, retirees, and their families. If your Senator fought to railroad employees, retirees, and their families.

For us to have any hope of bringing our issues before the 115th Congress, we must see a change in the leadership. A total gain of 15 seats will be needed in the House of Representatives, and 6 seats in the Senate. While daunting, these achievements are not impossible. If the majority make-up changes, then so will the leadership, the committee chairs, and our ability to have important legislation actually make it to the floor for vote. Issues such as: rail safety, including fatigue and hours of service; rail security, including the issuance of federal regulations for remote control operations and positive train control systems; and other issues important to the working class of America, such as an increase in the minimum wage not held hostage by a “pet” tax cut.

A good example of what looks to the horizon if the majority retains the floor is the question concerning national contract negotiations. The carriers have already shown their hand as to their intentions, and are just waiting until after the elections to try it again. No railroader wants Congress deciding the National Contract by way of a Presidential Emergency Board. A change in leadership would help to solid the Carriers’ plans. The Administration has already announced that if they retain the majority, efforts will be once again made to privatize Social Security, which will directly affect Railroad Retirement Tier 1. Social Security needs to be strengthened, not privatized. The only benefits from privatization would be to plan administrators and brokers, while either additionally driving up the deficit or raising the retirement age to pay for the change. For retirees, a change could mean revisiting the disaster Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit, eliminating the “donut hole” that has taken so many seniors by surprise. Of course, I am certain that the Federal Employees Liability Act would once again be on the radar for termination. There are many issues that directly affect us, or our families, that would be stymied if the leadership does not change in November.

Since no substantive campaign finance reform was passed even though scandals abound, we must do our part to counter the obscene amount of funding being poured into key races this year by the RNC. There are a number of ways to accomplish this, which are relatively easy. For instance, BLET members could pick up a few voter registration cards from their Division Legislative Representative, and ask co-workers if they are registered to vote. Auxiliary members and spouses can make sure members of their family are also registered. If they are not, provide them with a registration card. Most importantly, whether your State provides absentee ballots, or early voting periods, be sure to take advantage of that access to the polls. Everyone knows railroaders can never be sure whether they will be in town on election day, so this is the easiest, surest way to make your vote count.

Bottom line, your vote counts. Please exercise your right to vote, and with a little luck and strong candidates, we can once again see a Congress that will work for all of the people, not just for corporate America or the privileged few. •

‘Mainline Cooking’ available for the holidays

Copies of the BLET Auxiliary’s cookbook, “Mainline Cooking,” are still available and would make an excellent gift for the upcoming holiday season.

The book also contains humorous quotes, a section on railroadese, railroaders’ stories, and great tips on eating healthy while working on the railroad.

All proceeds, except postage and handling, benefit the “BLET Auxiliary,” and send it along with your name and address to:
Becky Schneider
515 West Redd Road
El Paso, Texas 79932-1909
Email: becky@earthlink.net

BLET Auxiliary Update

The Nevada AFL-CIO passes resolution supporting ‘Safe Rails Secure America’
### 2006 BLET Fees Objector Policy

**1. Employees’ Rights**

Objectors shall be served by a union or agency shop agreement in the United States. This rule applies only to nonmembers of the union. Nonmembers may, to the extent necessary to validate union expenses not related to collective bargaining, contract administration and internal governance, have the legal right (1) to object to paying union fees, (2) to be given sufficient information to intelligently participate in any objection filed by another member, and (3) to be a party in any internal Union procedures for filing objections. Employees who choose to object shall be given the right to be apprised of the percentage of the reduction, the basis for the calculation, and the right to challenge these figures.

**2. Publication of Policy**

The fees objection policy shall be published annually in the BLET’s newsletter in the ten days preceding the beginning of each period and mailed annually to each objector. It shall also be provided to each new member in the form of a card that contains the conditions for filing an objection. The card shall be distributed upon the election of each new secretary-treasurer.

**3. Making Objection Known**

Objectors shall notify nonmembers by publication to begin and maintain a mailed card describing the procedure for making objections. A notice shall be posted in each shop and department at which the objector is employed. Such notice shall inform the objector of the location of the filing office, provide the name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the objector’s representative, and explain the procedure for making an appeal. Any notice of these procedures shall be published annually in the BLET’s newsletter.

**4. Determination of Charges**

The BLET shall determine the charges by the arithmetic basis for such decision. The BLET shall set forth in the decision the legal and equitable amounts that objectors may be charged, and shall set forth in the decision the legal and equitable basis for such decision.

**5. Payment of Reduced Fees**

Objectors shall make their payments in accordance with the decision of the arbitrator. Any appeal of the decision must be taken within forty-five (45) days after the submission of the fees and expenses. The arbitrator shall have control over all procedural matters involving the arbitrator’s fees and expenses. The balance of such fees and expenses shall be placed in an interest-bearing escrow account. The arbitrator shall have control over all procedural matters involving the arbitrator’s fees and expenses. The balance of such fees and expenses shall be placed in an interest-bearing escrow account. The arbitrator shall have control over all procedural matters involving the arbitrator’s fees and expenses. The balance of such fees and expenses shall be placed in an interest-bearing escrow account.

### Election Supervisor’s Report to BLET Members

The Rank-and-File Vote for BLET International Officers — Starting in October 2006, each and every BLET member, including members of the newly merged BLET, will receive a ballot to cast votes for BLET International officers. Voting for International officers is every member’s democratic right and responsibility. Every member has the right to receive campaign presentations and information.

A ballot will be mailed to you on October 6, 2006. In order to be counted, your voted ballot must be received by November 14, 2006. If you believe you are eligible to vote and do not receive a ballot by October 19, contact 1-888-428-2006 to request a ballot.

Every member has the right to vote their own ballot in secret. It is a serious violation of the Rules for someone to solicit, mark, or mail another member’s ballot. For example, protest rulings issued in two different delegate elections found that ballots had been collected in violation of the Rules. Go to www.ibtvote.org to read 2006 ESD.

The ballot count site is in Alexandria, Virginia. All candidates and their designated observers are permitted to observe all phases of the ballot counting process. Additional information about voting and the count is available at www.ibtvote.org.

### Candidate Forum

The 2006 BLET International Officer Candidate Forum took place on August 25, 2006 in Washington, D.C. The Candidate Forum was General President Tom Leddum and General Secretary-Treasurer Candidate C. Thomas Keegel. General President James P. Hoffa exercised his right to designate the General Secretary-Treasurer Candidate on his slate as his representative to appear at the forum. A panel of journalists posed the questions to the candidates. You can watch the full video recording at any time from any computer with an internet connection (cable modem, DSL, or dial-up with at least a 56K modem). The full video recording can be viewed at www.ibtvote.org OR at www.ibt.org. At least 56K, you can still listen to the forum over the internet, but you will not see the video. Anyone may link to or promote www.ibtvote.org as a source for the Candidate Forum. You can read or download a transcript of the Candidate Forum at any time from any computer with an internet connection. The complete transcript is available at www.ibtvote.org OR at www.ibt.org.

Each General Committee has three copies of a DVD recording of the Candidate Forum, which it must make available upon request to any member, or group of members, for viewing or copying. At least one copy of the Candidate Forum DVD must be maintained at the General Committee through November 14, 2006.

Any BLET member can get a DVD recording and/or a transcript of the Candidate Forum, free of charge, by calling the Election Supervisor’s Office at 888-IBTVote (888-428-2006) or, in the Washington, D.C. area, 202-428-8865; or by sending an email with the member’s name, local union number, and mailing address to ElectionSupervisor@ibtvote.org. Additional information about the election of BLET International officers is available at www.ibtvote.org.
Get out and vote on Nov. 7!

Mid-Term Elections

The mid-term elections will impact every state in one way or another and will affect unions and working Americans dramatically.

In the United States Senate, 33 of the 100 seats are being contested. The election for members in the House of Representatives is scheduled for the same day, as well as many state and local elections, including those for 36 state governors.

These elections are critical to our future. We must remind lawmakers that they represent us — working people not Big Business and Corporate America. Politicians must be held accountable for the actions they take and the votes they cast. If they do not stand with us, we should not stand with them on Election Day.

I urge you to make sure your ballots are cast for pro-labor candidates. Study the issues and see where candidates stand on issues such as jobs, pensions, health care and rail security. Support candidates that support those families.

We have a chance to send a message to our election representatives on November 7, but we can only do it if we remember to Get Out and Vote!

JAMES HOFFA
General President

Rail Security Training
Our government recently approved legislation that includes $3.5 billion for state and local first responders such as firefighters and emergency workers. Although a good step, it only allocated a small fraction of that amount, $1.35 billion, for inspectors and explosive detection on the rail system.

BLET Teamster members and the public deserve so much more. It has been shown that five-times as many passengers travel daily on our rail transit system compared to airlines. And, we know that five-times as many passengers travel daily on our rail transit system compared to airlines. And, we know that five-times as many passengers travel daily on our rail transit system compared to airlines.

A videotape is no substitute for on-the-job training. Employees on how to handle emergency situations — and the public re-serve to have the training and equipment necessary to perform in emergency situations. A videotape is no substitute for on-the-job training.

Although a good step, it only allocated $3.5 billion for inspectors and explosive detection on the rail system.

Rail Security Training

By Teamster members and the public — which is always among the very first to respond to an emergency rail situation. Yet, the rail corporations are still turning a deaf ear to requests for emergency drills and hands-on training.

Some of the rail corporations have distributed a video program that they contend is adequate for training em-employees on how to handle emergency situations. A videotape is no substitute for an on-site instructor and an emer-gency simulator. We have rail corporations that desire to have the training and equipment necessary for emergency situations — and the public re-serve to have the training and equipment necessary to perform in emergency situations. A videotape is no substitute for on-the-job training.

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